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THE SITUATION.

No interference is likely to be made by the United States Government with the free passage of railway cars between Canada and the great Republic. Secretary Windom finds on examination that cars engaged in the transit trade have never been regarded as subject to duty, but "simply as vehicles of transportation for conducting an established and legalized traffic." Departmental rulings to this effect, at different dates, are referred to. And what is more this internal traffic is recognized by Congressional law, to wit, section 3,006 of the revised statutes, which authorizes the merchandise carried to be treated as if the transportation were confined to the United States. This rule has been in force unchallenged for twenty years. Secretary Windom, taking his stand on the long settled rule and practice, does not propose to offer any departmental obstruction to its continuance. But there is nothing in the law or the practice to justify the free importation of foreign cars for purposes of domestic traffic. This may be regarded as a satisfactory termination of the difficulty, so far as the departmental rule is concerned.

As the size of ocean vessels gets larger the depth of water in some ports of the St. Lawrence, even below Quebec, gets less. This latter fact has been signalized by the report of the Hydrographer, Warton, who has surveyed the part of the river between Berthier and Quebec, embracing the channels on both sides of the Isle of Orleans. The north channel has decreased considerably in depth since Bayfield's survey was made, being now unsafe for vessels drawing more than fifteen feet of water, except at high tide. In the south channel very little change was found, though some unknown rocks were discovered. The forces of nature are constantly making changes in the navigable waters of the country, and already much of Captain Bayfield's work has to be done over again. The re-survey of Georgian Bay has become necessary. It becomes the authorities to be on the alert to watch the changes made by the action of the water, otherwise disasters would be

liable to occur from reliance on charts that had become obsolete.

The answer of the Governor-General to the deputation who presented to him the petitions praying for the disallowance of the Jesuit estates, bill must be regarded as the answer of his legal advisers. He not only declined to interfere, but expressed the opinion that the bill is *intra vires* of the Quebec Legislature. The Governor-General could have acted upon the prayer of the petition only in case he had resolved to dismiss his advisers, who had refused to advise disallowance, and appeal to the country. His Excellency evidently does not believe that the country is of the same mind as the petitioners; but we may remark, without disrespect, that quoting statistics to show how many inhabitants the members who voted yea and nay respectively, in Parliament, represented is not to the point, the question being not how the members voted, but how their constituents would vote to-day on the question. With Burke, His Excellency holds that a member of Parliament is not a delegate to obey instruction, but may do as he pleases; and so he may at the risk of not being approved by his electors.

An extension of the parcels post in countries in the Postal Union is engaging the attention of the Ottawa authorities, negotiations with the British Government for that purpose having been entered upon. Practically it would be impossible to make the proposed extension otherwise than through the British post office, on account of the expense that would be involved. We see no good reason why the negotiations should not be successful. The rates, it is assumed, would be those already established between Great Britain and the other countries in the Postal Union, added to those between Canada and England. The latter are too high, and our Government is making an effort to secure a reduction. Success on these two points would be welcomed by every Canadian who has any business of the kind to transact with Europe.

In a public speech, made in presence of Mr. McCarthy, M. P., Attorney-General Martin of Manitoba announced his opposition to the official use of two languages, and to separate schools, in the Province. He said he should soon cease to be Minister unless the use of French in the Legislature and the statute book were abolished. Nearly twice as much, he complained, is voted to a separate as to a common school, though the former is no better than the latter. Mr. Martin advocates a complete separation of church and state. He wants the teaching in the schools supported by public money to be purely secular, and to leave religion for the family and the church. There is some constitutional difficulty, we believe, in the way of abolishing separate schools in Manitoba, but if public opinion should demand it, that difficulty would doubtless be overcome.

One good effect the visit of the German Emperor to England is likely to have. Between members of the royal families of

the two countries relations had been more or less strained, notably between the Emperor and the Prince of Wales. Any adverse feelings which may have existed are, for the time being, set aside, and the meeting of royal personages is likely to lead to a better understanding. There have been speculations on the political effect of the visit. That Germany desires to preserve the peace of Europe and to make friends among the nations may be taken for granted. Should the efforts of Bismarck be successful, the question will be what countries will gain by delay, for there is a general belief that sooner or later war will come. Great Britain avoids formal alliances and keeps on the even tenor of her way. She is strengthening her navy greatly for protective purposes, and so as to be prepared in case the maintenance of her position in the world should require her to use it.

During the holidays, when people seek relaxation and amusement, a carnival, such as that of Halifax, is an enjoyable affair. The harbor was alive with vessels of all kinds, great and small. The sham fight between the Imperial troops and the Canadian militia was exciting. Visitors flocked in thousands from the Upper Provinces and the neighboring States to witness the carnival. Sports of various kinds were indulged in, and the visitors were pleased with what they saw. Anything that makes the people of one section of the country acquainted with those of other sections is for the general advantage. Halifax has a magnificent harbor, and has a great future before her. She has not always faith in herself, but is liable to get into a state of despondency, such as sometimes causes an individual to sacrifice great prospects for a small present advantage. Let her keep her eye steadily fixed on our great North-West, and think of the enormous mass of produce which will seek an outlet on the Atlantic, trying how best she can secure a share of the trade which it will create. It is pleasant to see her in her present jubilant mood, hopeful and self-reliant.

The organization of the millers goes on. A meeting of the millers of the district has been held at Peterboro', the object of which was to perfect a local organization for the part of the country of which that town is the centre. One of the speakers, Mr. Plews, of Brantford, is reported to have said that "the nominal duty of fifteen cents per bushel on wheat was in practice only ten cents." How a duty of one amount is reduced to another figure the report does not tell. The lower the duty on wheat the better for the millers, their complaint being that it is too high relatively to that on flour. And he added that "at first the fifty cents per barrel duty on flour was enough, but the circumstances had changed; for example, the freight charge on flour from Minneapolis was formerly sixty cents per barrel, now it was only thirty." He did not say what the reduction on wheat had been. What the millers desired to get was an outside market for the surplus of their mills; but when they go outside they must meet the competition of the world.

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