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THE SITUATION.

Sir H. A. Blake, who was appointed Governor of Queensland, has been withdrawn by the Imperial Government, in consequence of the objections made to him in the colony. The Premier of Queensland, Sir R. Griffiths, if we are to believe the cablegram, was ready to make separation the alternative of withdrawal. A man in this state of mind, one may reasonably conclude, is on the outlook for a pretext for making a row, and it will be strange if this concession should prevent him making an explosion. It would seem that Sir R. Griffiths expects the colonial government to be satisfied, in some way, in advance with the governor to be appointed. Sir Henry Parkes, Premier of New South Wales, is reported to support the position taken by the Queensland Minister; and in this way the new doctrine suddenly sprung upon the Colonial Office tends to ask general acceptance. In Canada there is a disposition to smile at the new movement, which to us appears at once captious and unnecessary. We repeat, the day of objectionable governors has passed. When the whole colonial policy was dictated from Downing Street, the appointment of military governors was sometimes a real calamity. Now, in all except imperial concerns, colonial governors of self-governing colonies are subject to the advice of their Ministers, in the same way and to the same extent that the Queen is in England.

License or no license is a question which the Legislature of the North-West Territories has decided to submit to a popular vote. Hitherto occasional permits to introduce liquor have been substituted for licenses. If they have been restricted in number, there has been a great inflow of liquor through illegal channels—liquor of a bad quality, sold at an enormous price. Whiskey has necessarily taken the place of beer, the latter being too bulky for the smuggler to handle, and there could not under the law be any breweries in the country. Whether the existing restriction, modified by permits and smuggling, be preferable to a system of license is a question on which doubts arose among the population;

the Legislature was petitioned to put the question of license to a vote, and it has consented to do so. The issue of permits is of necessity more or less arbitrary; and the granting and the withholding of them are equally occasion of censure. The smuggler who sells inferior liquor at an excessive price, is it contended, can be best put down by licensed and regular trade. It is a choice of evils, and a good or a bad choice, on the part of the electors, may make some difference in the effect on the moral and material welfare of the people.

A financial scandal in connection with the Panama canal is said to be on the point of explosion in Paris. The story is that, in order to obtain financial aid, M. de Lesseps has bribed right and left, two former Ministers of Public Works and fifty members of the Chamber of Deputies being implicated, M. Martin, ex-agent of the Panama Canal Company, has made the charge in a circular addressed to the Deputies. The former ministers whom he names in this connection are Messrs. Baibut and Barbe; and he challenges them to bring him into a court of justice, meanwhile leaving unnamed the fifty members of the Chamber. M. de Lesseps too, in trying to obtain the aid of the Credit Foncier to enable him to raise the wind, is said to be making similar threats of an exposure of the past method of raising funds for the canal. Such an act would indicate a state of desperation, and either of the exposures threatened would be ruinous to the undertaking, for no more money could be raised, even among the French peasantry, when they knew that some of it might be used in bribes. The accused ex-Ministers cannot afford to sit quietly under the accusation of M. Martin; and if they did not move themselves, their inaction would not prevent an investigation. Sooner or later, the truth that lies at the bottom of this well will be drawn up.

Parnell's objection to the Ashbourne Extension Land Purchase Bill is that it does not deal with arrears, that is, does not provide a means of wiping them out. The Government replies that when a purchase is made, under the bill, arrears will *ipso facto* cease to exist. Mr. Parnell apparently wants arrears to be wiped out indiscriminately, though it is notorious that many tenants have not paid, not because they cannot pay, but on account of the coercion exercised upon them by the Land League. To wipe out these arrears would be simply an act of robbery. At the same time it is a mischievous delusion to allow arrears to remain which can never be paid. Mr. Parnell holds that the true solution of the question is the creation of a peasant proprietary, and he is so far in agreement with the aim of the bill. The attainment of this object is most desirable, and it is evident that much can be done in that direction; already a good beginning has been made; but we should only delude ourselves if we imagine that the whole of the Irish peasantry can be converted into proprietors. If the effect of this bill should be to substitute the State for individual landlords, it will, in many cases, increase the trouble which it aims to get rid of. The

Government would find it more difficult to collect arrears than the landlords. There is, we suspect, some truth in the objection that the security for the advances which the Government will make will prove insufficient. But in any aspect in which it can be viewed, the transaction is not strictly of a business character.

On the Canadian route the Atlantic steamers will require to keep up with the increased speed of rivals. The Canadian Government is in possession of a tender which promises a great deal. Anderson & Anderson and F. Greer & Co., of London, offer to put three vessels on this route, with a capacity of not less than twenty knots an hour, and able to make the passage between Plymouth and Halifax in five days, and from Halifax to Rimouski in five or six hours more. The vessels to be of 7,000 tons each. If the ocean steamers at present doing the ocean service fell behind, in an era of increasing speed, towards the end of the contract term, it is no more than might have been expected. When a new contract is made, first-class vessels of the time must be bargained for, whether the firm now tendering or any other be dealt with. More than one tender may be expected, and it will be for the Government to select the one offering the best conditions, with adequate guarantees. The vessels of the firm now tendering are to make twenty knots an hour, on the trial trip. Some guarantee of this kind would be desirable. Care must of course be taken that rapidity is not obtained at the risk of safety; but with this precaution, equal speed with the vessels of any rival line is a necessity.

An extradition treaty between Great Britain and Mexico is under negotiation. A draft copy has been sent to the Canadian government, so that if our government approves, the treaty may extend to Canada. This is about as far as it is possible for the Imperial government to go in allowing Canada to share the treaty-making power. If any treaty offered to our acceptance be not approved, it is in the power of our government to decline the application of it to Canada. This option has once, at least, been exercised negatively. The treaty with Mexico, it is said, will be accepted by Canada. It contains a long list of offences for which extradition is provided, no less than twenty-seven, dynamiters being very properly included, though we may be sure that real political offenders would be excepted in any treaty to which the government of Great Britain would be a party. And this is really the chief exception which it is desirable to make. When there are several others they usually stand as a precaution against the list being made so large as to let in political offenders under some other pretence. The precaution is sometimes carried too far, but it is based on a jealous desire to protect the liberty of political refugees.

The London *Economist* endorses a suggestion of Mr. S. Montague that the Bank of England should charge a lower rate for discounts than for loans, and that this lower rate should be taken as the standard by