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TORONTO, CAN FRIDAY, APRIL 4, 1890

THE SITUATION.

Rightly or wrongly, the American farmer has been won over to the policy of protection. He does not believe that he alone should not have the benefit of protective legislation, when the tariff is being overhauled. To a large extent his hopes are delusive, but they are being utilized for the benefit of other interests. The chances are that nearly all the proposed changes affecting the products of the farm will find favor with Congress, the duty on hides being perhaps the sole exception. Against this the New England leather interest has set its face, and it may or may not succeed in its opposition. Even in articles which the country produces in excess of its own wants and the price of which is fixed by the competition of the world, there is a considerable exchange both ways between Canada and the United States. This is a trade of mutual convenience, which is equally for the benefit of both. Circumstances of time or locality give rise to demands for importation, and both buyer and seller are benefited, the former often receiving the largest share. A hostile tariff would strike a heavy blow at this trade. On both sides of the line a restrictive movement is threatened, the promised benefits of which will prove to be dust and ashes in the mouth. Canada is to be deprived of fruit for months after it ripens in the South, because if she waits long enough she will have some of her own! The mutual restrictions threatened cannot fail to be seriously detrimental to both countries.

Not wholly in vain will the Berlin Labor Conference have been, if its resolves be carried into effect. But that will depend upon the legislative authority of the countries represented. If women and children, who cannot help themselves, receive protection from exposure to undue and dangerous labor in countries where it is not now guaranteed, a substantial gain will have been made. This might have been done as well without a Congress as with one, it is true, but the moral effect of the united recommendation in favor of this reform will count for something. The recommendation in favor of courts of arbitration for the settlement of labor disputes,

to be composed of the representatives of employers and employees, may or may not bear fruit. It is one about which different opinions are likely to continue to be held. Sunday labor wherever it prevails can find only one solution: the men who work on Sunday must rest some other day in the week. The suggestion that, where necessary Sunday labor has to be done, the same man should work only on each alternate Sunday, is only a partial remedy; it needs to be supplemented by the provision that every worker should get one full day of rest in the week. The influence of the Conference is purely moral; the Conference merely recommends what it thinks ought to be done, leaving each nation to act upon the advice or not as it thinks best.

If the Irish land bill be viewed from the point of view of the interest of the tenant, it cannot fail to recommend itself to favorable reception. By the intervention of the credit of the State he can be transformed into a proprietor, not only without any sacrifice on his part, but he will have less to pay while the change is going on than he pays now. A tenant who pays £100 a year rent now, would, if he becomes a purchaser of the land he tills, pay only £80 a year for five years and £70 for forty-five more, and at the end of the time he becomes the owner. The funds available for purchase, from various sources, will reach the large aggregate of \$155,000,000, and when any part of this sum comes back in the form of combined rent and instalments, it can be used again. It is difficult to believe that the operation can be carried on without risk to the British taxpayer. The special representatives of Ireland are opposing the measure, and if it be carried the immense boon to the Irish tenants which it offers will be enforced against the protests of the Irish patriots *par excellence*. This is a curious feature in the game. One representative asks what will be done with tenants who will neither purchase nor emigrate. One would think that they might fairly be left to the consequences of their own folly, whatever these might be.

It is no longer doubtful that looting was permitted in the North-West Rebellion. "I have no doubt now," General Middleton admits, "that I ordered the furs to be confiscated, and that I authorized some of my staff to take some of the furs, and said that I might have some myself, perhaps." He adds that to the best of his belief he never received any of the property himself, and he does not allege that there would have been authority for anyone to share it except for the purpose of preserving mementoes of the campaign. These were the furs of a rebel, and on that fact the confiscation was ordered. Now a committee of the House of Commons recommends that Mr. Bremner, to whom the property belonged, be paid \$4,500 for the loss. This will be the first case on record in Canada of paying a rebel for loss of property in civil commotion in which he took part. But the case is a peculiar one, and payment would seem to be not only

justified, but to be fairly due. Property belonging to rebels, destroyed by the incidents of war, is a legitimate loss for which no compensation can be claimed, but deliberate looting is another matter. The property in question in the hands of the authorities should have been protected, unless there had been special reasons for its destruction, and as it was not destroyed this point does not come up. Destruction of rebels' property might conceivably be an effective way of contributing to suppression of the rebellion; looting could scarcely have the same effect, and there are good reasons why it should not be authorized or practised. The loss will in this instance be properly paid.

Never was the value of the division of the ocean steamship into compartments so clearly shown as in the case of the accident to the "City of Paris." If she had been constructed on the old model which was universal before the days of the "Great Eastern," nothing could have prevented her sinking with her precious freight of over one thousand human beings. Some bit of machinery got deranged, the loosened part became destructive, and besides the engine being broken up, a great hole was made in the bottom of the compartment, to which, however, the inrushing water was confined. Without exactly asking whether the "City of Paris" did not run some risk by racing, a member of the United States Congress, on the morning of the accident, calls attention to the practice of ocean steamship racing, and proposes some precautionary restrictions. Ocean racing there has been, at no distant date, and spectators in New York, wild with excitement, have applauded the rivalry. Dangerous as was the racing, this encouragement of it was even a worse feature, because it showed that racing had won for itself a reckless and unreflecting popularity. Will the ardor of the applauders cool now, in the prospect of preventive measures in the form of an international agreement. Will such agreement should it really take place, prove effective? These are questions which may well claim a passing thought. Any aid towards their solution ought to be welcome.

An invitation has been sent by the British Government to the Government of Newfoundland to send to England a representative to discuss the West Shore fishery question. A *modus vivendi* has been agreed upon by the Governments of Great Britain and France, but it had not, two days ago, yet reached Newfoundland. The object of sending for a representative of the island is of course to try to prevent local opposition to the arrangements taking an inconvenient form. Of course the island legislature may discuss the question, but whether its protest, if it should make one, will be permitted to be effective now as in the past, when analogous questions have arisen, is doubtful. Both Newfoundland and France are apt to claim their full rights, if not something more, and extreme tension is the result. Some of the leading London journals admit that they do not, at the moment, see a way clear out of the diffi-