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TORONTO. FRIDAY, APRIL 19, 1901.

THE SITUATION.

Stories are afloat that Jim Hill, as he is familiarly called, is trying to upset the agreement between the Northern Pacific Railway Company, of which he was long president, and the Government of Manitoba, in the railway deal, ostensibly on the ground that the government has made default in the matter of time, the transaction not having been closed, with full ratification at Ottawa, by the 1st April, as it should have been. The impression seems to be that Mr. Hill would be glad of an excuse to break off the agreement. The government of Manitoba was prompt in procuring ratification by the local Legislature; and the bills now before Parliament, at Ottawa, for the same purpose, have been read a second time. Mr. Haggart asked, when the bill was before the House of Commons, the singular question, whether the Ottawa legislation would be binding on Manitoba? It was practically agreed that the whole fight over the bills should take place, in the Railway Committee, and on this understanding the bills were read *pro forma*. In the event of the agreement being broken up, it is reported that the province of Manitoba would build its own railways; but it is scarcely in a position to do so, after the aid it has granted to the Canadian Northern. The C.P.R.'s hand in the matter is no longer seen, but it does not follow that it is not felt. That company is scarcely in a position to interfere except to make an offer, as it did, which was rejected; for it sold its right in the premises when it accepted a sum of money from the Government of Canada, as a condition of surrendering its exclusive right to build railways, in the West, south of its own line.

The progress of the Canadian census taking is slow; and, if we believe half of what we hear, there is room for grave doubt whether the work will be effectually done when it is got through. In the province of Quebec, there is always a temptation to count as in Canada many persons who have quit its shores forever and taken up their abode in the United States. On a previous occasion, the mode of taking the census was

changed, by which many thought this danger was increased. An incident connected with the taking of the census was aired in Parliament on Monday. A circular issued from Toronto to census enumerators was strongly objected to. Objection was also taken to a circular issued by some one from the Department of Agriculture which seems to take no unusual form. The great danger seems to be that the work of census-taking may be badly done; but there is probably no more reason for apprehension than there has been at any previous decade in the last half century, except always the danger of greater confusion.

An unauthenticated rumor has been afloat for a week past of a conspiracy to assassinate ex-President Kruger, of the Transvaal, but nobody seems to credit it. Ex-President Steyn is reported to have lost his health and to have counselled a general surrender of all Boers under arms. Reinforcements of British troops have arrived in South Africa, to the number of 30,000, and there are now 250,000 British troops in the country, with plenty of horses. Some celebrated officers have arrived from British India, and it is thought they will take a prominent part in the lingering campaign. To bring the war to a final close may yet cause the British a vast deal of trouble.

A delegation of lead miners from Kootenay, British Columbia, have waited on the Ottawa Government and asked a bonus of \$5 a ton on all pig lead manufactured in the county for 5 years. The delegates were accompanied by all the British Columbia members of the House of Commons, to back up their demand. Seven members of the Government heard what they had to say. American smelters, since they combined among themselves, refuse to take any more Canadian ores, and as a consequence, the British Columbia silver-lead mines have had to shut down. If a bonus were given, part of the output of our silver-lead mines could be marketed in Canada and the rest shipped to Europe; in the United States, none of it can be sold. In Mexico, silver-lead is produced by low-priced labor, which does not exist in the Pacific province of Canada. The memorialists also, want the tariff on pig lead increased from 15 to 20 per cent., and that permission to build railways anywhere in the province should be granted to any responsible persons. This is rather a question for the Provincial Legislature. Sir Wilfrid Laurier promised the deputation that their views should receive careful consideration.

What the political and economic result of the European intervention in China will be, no one is gifted with prescience to foresee. The British Government is said to favor the concession by China of commercial privileges in preference to indemnities in money, believing that the former would best conduce to the well-being of all concerned, China as well as the allies. If of the former kind, Canada would share in them; if a money indemnity were given, Canada would have no right to a part in them, except in the case of individual Canadian missionaries being killed or injured in person or estate.

Mr. Bickerdike, of Montreal, asks credit for making a remarkable discovery; nothing less than that the Gov-