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THE SITUATION.

Once more the fishery question again begins to loom up. Two years was the term during which, under the *modus vivendi*, American fishermen were to be allowed certain privileges in our waters, on condition that they secured a license entitling them thereto. This was provided for in the fishery treaty which failed to secure the ratification of the United States Senate. After the expiration of one year, the period of suspense during which the fate of the treaty was in doubt came to an end, and Canada was not bound to grant licenses for the next year under the *modus vivendi* of an abortive treaty. Nevertheless, pending the change of Administration at Washington, it was thought best to continue the arrangement of the previous year, though Canada was under no obligation to do so. Of course, this exceptional state of things cannot go on forever, and it is now said that the Ottawa Government intends to fall back on its rights, under the treaty of 1818. Our substantial rights in the fishery cannot, of course, be surrendered, but in our opinion concession could be made on some points with a good grace and without injury to ourselves. Why, for instance, should we not permit Americans to transship their fish at our ports for their own market? We might be more liberal, too, in granting them the right to purchase supplies in our ports. It is the commercial rather than the fishing aspect of the question that contains the germ of difficulty. We can afford to be liberal on these points, on which, besides, liberality is the true policy. We trust the Government will not allow itself to be coerced into taking a narrow and illiberal view of these aspects of the case.

Report says that the Quebec Government intends to undertake a provincial geological survey with special reference to the mineral wealth of the province. There can be no good reason why Quebec, or for that matter every province of the Dominion, should not undertake work of this kind. It might be conducted on a narrower basis than the general geological survey carried on by the Federal Government. Fault is sometimes found with the present

geological survey that it does not pay more exclusive attention to the economic minerals; but if it thus narrowed the foundation of its operations, the geological survey, as a whole, would become more defective. At the same time, the interest of the provinces which own the economic material dictate that more attention should be paid to the discovery and delineation of their mineral resources. This is properly the work of such of the provinces as own the land and can best be done by them. If the Quebec Government sets a good example, it will deserve credit and ought to find imitators. Ontario might follow up its rough explorations on the north and north-east by a scientific enquiry. If several provinces are to enter on the enquiry, the available talent within the country for conducting this work will be found to be limited, and the first comers will fare best or the other will have to look elsewhere for aid. Mr. Mercier is said to have his eye on Mr. Sterry Hunt and Mr. Macfarlane, and there is no doubt he is on the right track. Sterry Hunt was at one time looked to as the successor of Sir William Logan, and any province which should secure his services would draw a prize.

A Minneapolis dispatch says that an English syndicate has purchased the C. C. Washburn flour mills, and adds if the statement be true the syndicate now controls the flour production and storage of the North-West. If not true, and the statement has been denied, a near approach to a monopoly must have been made, on the supposition that only the possession of the Washburn mills stood in the way of its completion. It is quite conceivable that the American public would look with less tolerance on a monopoly in foreign hands than on one native to the soil. The extensive purchases recently made in the United States of breweries, distilleries, flour mills, etc., by English capital, emphasises the change from individual to corporate ownership in most or all of these cases. The fact is not proof of the superiority of company ownership, as the transfer can only be made in this way, individuals not being found to take the sole responsibility. Sometimes the buyers appear to have sought the sellers, sometimes the sellers the buyers, and in most if not all sales brokers played a prominent part. Milling has not hitherto been a monopoly in the States; if it is to become so contemporaneously with the transfer of the great mills to English companies, it is highly improbable that the monopolies will long be tolerated, and the purchasers may meet disappointment. The chances are that in all these cases outside prices have been paid, and the chance of earning large dividends cannot be great. Besides, it is impossible to say what new form of opposition may spring up, though opposition has ordinarily only a slender chance against a combined monopoly of great strength.

If report may be credited, the Ogilvies have purchased all the wheat on the market in Manitoba, except half a million of bushels secured by the Keewatin Mill-

ing Company. If this purchase be founded on the belief that the duty on wheat is to be raised, the Ogilvies have given substantial proof of the faith that is in them. What reason had they for coming to such a conclusion? Not a whisper of an intention to raise the duty on wheat has reached the general public; Quebec and the Maritime Provinces are opposed to such increase, and the last heard from the Government was that it did not believe that Canadian flour is discriminated against in the wheat and flour duties. These relative duties were satisfactory to the millers when they were fixed, and the introduction of the roller mill has enabled the miller to get more flour out of a bushel of wheat. But if the railway rates discriminate in favor of American flour, as is alleged, the problem may, in that way, have been altered. The Ontario millers have for some time made loud complaints of discrimination against them and organized a demand for a change. This may have told upon the Ottawa Government, and the Ogilvies, conclusion may have reason in its favor. Or it may be based on intelligence which has mysteriously leaked out. Or, once more, it may be a pure guess and the reported purchase may be merely a speculation.

As between Great Britain and Portugal the African question is getting interesting. Lord Salisbury has called on the Portuguese Government to repudiate the violent action of its agents on the Zambesi River, and demanded a restoration of the *status quo* as it existed before the expedition of Serpa Pinto. Senhor Gomes, on behalf of the Portuguese Government, alleges in reply that Serpa Pinto merely acted on the defensive when attacked by the natives. This is an old trick of belligerents, who always wish to make it appear that aggression came from the other side. He pleads for delay till further intelligence can be got. Meanwhile, Serpa Pinto telegraphed as to the cause of the trouble that several British flags were hoisted by the natives on what he calls Portuguese territory; that they were required to remove them, in which case they would be restored to the British Consul. The ground of the dispute was the disputed territory, and obviously the Portuguese officer had no right to try to settle it by force. Great Britain does not admit the claim of the Portuguese north of the Zambesi River, where the trouble occurred. Bismarck, though reported to sympathize with the British, is said to have asked Salisbury not to press too hard on the Portuguese, for dynastic reasons. As a matter of precaution, some British war vessels have been ordered from the Cape to Delagoa Bay. The South African Company's charter has been gazetted in England. The region to which it assigns the company's operations lies immediately north of Bechuanaland, west of the Portuguese possessions, and north-west of the dominions of the Transvaal Company, and it includes the vast tract of land north of the Zambesi River and west of the coast line in Mozambique. The charter makes it the duty of the company to discourage the slave trade and the trade in arden spirits.

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