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THE SITUATION.

Any apprehension that was felt about the evil influence of Boulanger on the peace of Europe has been dispelled by the result of the French elections. A Government majority has beyond doubt been secured, and Boulangerism, impudent and noisy, is practically harmless. Henceforth it will not be a factor to be taken into account in considering a possible breach of the European peace. The Russian Government had a confused presentiment of what was going to happen in France, and instructed the press not to commit itself too far in favor of Boulanger. The Czarewitch visits Germany, where efforts are evidently made to conciliate Russia, and the royal visitor from the north forbears to extend his peregrinations to Paris. Russia and France are not, for the moment, coming closer together, though in a possible eventuality an alliance between them may be in order. In the defeat of Boulangerism, Russia in some measure slackens her hold on France, though the hope of *revanche* has not died in the heart of the Gaul. In the meantime the maintenance of peace receives one more assurance; but no one can tell when something may happen to cause a turn in the tide and to sound anew the alarm of war.

Soon after the announcement was made of the sale of the Great North-Western Central Railway to an English syndicate came the report that the real purchaser was the Northern Pacific. This is now denied by Senator Clemow, who is in a position to know the real facts. Notwithstanding this denial, it is possible that the American company may have worked through English agents. When built, the question will be under what auspices the Great North-Western Central will be worked. It must either be operated separately or in connection with the Canadian Pacific or the Northern Pacific. The chances are against its standing alone for any length of time, and the question will be to which of the Pacific lines it will become an adjunct. Nothing is more natural than that one of these companies should look ahead a little and try to secure the property or alliance of the new road now. The Northern Pacific would naturally be

most anxious to penetrate as far as possible into the Canadian North-West, and it has stronger motives than the Canadian Pacific can have for securing the new road. For all that it may not be, and Senator Clemow assures us it is not, the direct purchaser, or the purchaser at all.

The *Hamilton Times* is authority for the statement that the Grand Trunk between Hamilton and Toronto will be double-tracked at once; and that the work of laying out the ground, committed to Mr. Hobson, will be gone on with in a few days. No additional right of way will have to be secured. The double track is to be built as a matter of necessity, and is not dependent on the construction or non-construction of a rival road or roads. A double track, while ensuring greater expedition in the movement of freight and passenger trains, affords new assurance of safety; and it will be a clear advantage to have this convenience between the great manufacturing city and the commercial and political metropolis of Ontario.

Strong opposition to the proposal of the British Government to set up a new Roman Catholic University has been developed. The Parnellites regard it up as a bid for Papal support, and object to it on that account, while the Protestants of Ireland object to it for reasons that can be easily understood. The Protestant Alliance sends a protest to the Government. At this point Mr. Balfour explains that there never was an intention to endow the proposed university out of public funds, and that such endowment is not necessary. The whole object of the Government, he says, is to promote higher university education for Catholics. In Germany the Government does not allow the priests to be educated out of the country, and in Ireland it may be deemed an object to give a national impress to their education, though it is doubtful whether much would be accomplished in that direction by the plan proposed.

There can scarcely be a doubt that the taking up of macadamized roads for the purpose of substituting wooden pavements in Toronto, on streets where the traffic is heavy, was a mistake. The block pavement on such streets is now universally voted a failure. It is not nearly so durable as macadam, which however is not best for a great city. The macadam roads have been systematically neglected, instead of being constantly repaired whenever there was need for it; and Ald. Carlyle now explains that the reason is that there are not funds with which to make these repairs. The macadam roads were allowed to go down, and then their condition was made a reason for replacing them by wooden block pavements. The asphalt pavement, such as has been put down on Bay and Wellington streets, is an excellent road, but in some English cities this kind of pavement is being taken up on account of its danger to horses in frosty weather. The snow of a Canadian winter may partly protect us against this danger, but we sometimes have frost without snow. The best and so far as we know the most enduring piece of road

put down in Toronto consists of the stone blocks on Toronto street; it is better now than the bad asphalt put down just north of it. The solid foundation of the better kind of asphalt on Bay and Wellington streets seems to guarantee its durability; and if the objection to it, now treated as fatal in England, be not found to be serious, there is no doubt much to be said in its favor.

An enquiry into the cause of the terrible disaster resulting from the falling of rock on the houses back of Champlain street, Quebec, is bringing out some strange facts. According to the evidence of M. Baillarge, the city engineer, the fissures in the rock had long been visible, and there is danger from one still existing, which eight years ago had a length of 150 feet, which has now extended to 200. There is a fissure immediately under Dufferin (previously Durham) terrace, which is described as dangerous; and this engineer thinks that a piece of the cliff about thirty feet wide should be detached, as a precautionary measure. The fallen rock acts as a buttress to a piece behind connected to the main mass at the line of a fissure, but when this support is gone the danger will be increased. Another witness said that one of the fissures had previously been filled with concrete and covered at the top with a board, a remarkable piece of engineering! And he adds, what was more remarkable still, that the fallen rock, which weighs several thousand tons, had been chained to the mountain side, an extraordinary example of "how not to do it," with a result which of all men living can be surprising only to the astute engineer in whose brain this method of securing safety originated.

It would be a startling question to ask whether the University of Toronto has nothing to fear from federation? And yet, if there be danger, it should be looked in the face, while there is yet time. Look at this incident. Two theological professors of affiliated colleges are trying to influence the appointment of Professor of Metaphysics in University College, and for this purpose are reported to have had an audience with the Government. They want a safe man, from the theological point of view, and would evidently not prefer a disciple of the late Professor Young. Suppose the whole scheme of federation carried out, what would happen? Would the sectarian colleges not get the control, in this indirect way, even of University College? And is there nothing to be feared from their representation in the Senate? The sectarian colleges appoint their own professors; University College has to take Government nominees, and who can secure it against political influence in the future?

Timber is henceforth to be towed in rafts from Canada to San Francisco. With this object a raft company has been formed to make and tow rafts of 8,000,000 to 10,000,000 feet each, and it is expected that the reduction in freight will be about \$2 per thousand feet. When the first Joggins raft was constructed, some alarm was felt lest it might interfere with navigation, and

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