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TORONTO, FRIDAY, JUNE 13, 1902.

### THE SITUATION.

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, Chancellor of the Exchequer, in a debate in the House of Commons, on Monday, let drop some words in favor of free trade with the colonies. Referring to the interpretation which Sir Wilfrid Laurier had put on the grain tax, as possibly opening the way to reciprocal preference, Sir Michael guarded himself against being understood to agree with that interpretation; but he added, "if we could have free trade with the colonies, even some sacrifices in that direction might be made." The question is what the Chancellor meant by free trade. He probably has the same idea of it that has been expressed by Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Salisbury, one of whom said something about an arrangement under which Canada would admit British goods free of duty, and the other that under Imperial federation England would have to be supreme. This notion is quite unrealizable, and for two reasons Canada could not even admit that it is open to discussion. The necessities of revenue forbid, and because a system of avowed protection, first established under Sir John Macdonald, and continued to the present, under the pretext of a revenue tariff, has got too strongly rooted to be disturbed. It is pretty clear, we think, what is in the mind of these British statesmen, though their thoughts are expressed with different degrees of directness. Perhaps these utterances would warrant the conclusion that some degree of mutual reciprocity may be within reach, if Canada be prepared to pay high enough for it. If there is to be reciprocity, it must be what the name implies. Canada's contribution to the protection of the Empire is now conceded by the commercial class as something which is fairly due. Hitherto, Sir Wilfrid Laurier has not fallen in with this idea; it appears as if he would oppose the view expressed by the united organs of commerce throughout the country. The answer of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to Sir William Vernon Harcourt's enquiry,

whether the corn duty was exclusively a war revenue measure, was that though it was imposed for revenue only, it was not intended to prejudice the discussion that is to take place with the Colonial Premiers.

An important meeting of manufacturers has been held at Berlin, Ont., to promote the project of conveying power from Niagara Falls to that and other towns along the line. They intend, it is said, to enlist the aid of the municipalities along the route and finally to crown the effort by obtaining Parliamentary authority. What the city of Toronto could not get alone, these united municipalities are expected to obtain. The proposition of Toronto was quite out of the beaten track, and as matters stand, when the street railway comes back under municipal control, matters are so framing that the city may not be able to get power from the Falls at all. But the manufacturers who met at Berlin intend to call a convention of representatives from all the districts assumed to be interested in getting power from the Falls, which would have more weight with the Ontario Parliament. It is probably too late to obtain what has been already disposed of, so far as the exercise of the legislative authority is concerned. The applicants are users of power, and they are not obnoxious to the charge of wishing to exploit, to the exclusion of others, this great gift of nature. From the Falls to Berlin the distance is 90 miles, and one of the speakers at the Berlin meeting admitted that the loss of power in transmission to that point would be from 16 to 20 per cent. This raises a question of the location of manufacturers; but the Berlin people evidently think that, in spite of the local discrimination, it would be to their advantage to get power from the Falls. If the problem has been well considered, and this conclusion be well founded, it is obvious that the united manufacturers in the region covered will be able to exert considerable influence both in and out of the Ontario Parliament.

A society has been formed in France to promote emigration to Canada. Mr. Hector Fabre, the efficient Dominion agent, is one of the members and probably the moving spirit. It is difficult to interest French people in emigration to a colony which ceased to be under the French dominion nearly a century and a half ago. From the day that France ceded the colony to England, French emigration ceased. The effort to revive it may be now made under more favorable circumstances than have existed in the past; but the colonies of France draw what little emigrating population France possesses, especially Algeria, the most favored of all. We do not expect much from the new effort to divert French emigration to Canada.

A Spanish engineer, Senor Clementi Figueras, of Las Palmas, Canary Islands, professes to have discovered a method of using atmospheric electricity without the use of chemicals and practically without any auxiliary power. He claims to be able to store it so as to make it applicable to a vast number of purposes, including the propulsion of ships, railways and manufacturing machinery. Wait and see.

Touching, as well as wise, was the advice of the Boer leaders to the burghers, on the signing of the