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THE SITUATION.

In any point of view the attempt to blow up the Nelson monument in Jacques Cartier square, Montreal, is a serious affair. Practical joking cannot be associated with the dynamitard. The explosion of a large dynamite cartridge in the square which contains a monument to Horatio, Admiral Nelson, could scarcely have failed to injure seriously adjacent property. If the young men captured on the spot, with the explosive in their possession, went about their work with a light heart, so much the worse, in a moral point of view. Some of them belong to families of note; but it is more likely that their inspiration came from the pestilent fumes of frothy journals than from the hearthstone. *La Presse* had been denouncing the monument and the hero whom it commemorates; and the hatred which these diatribes engendered found a lodgment in the brains of these young men. That is the theory which, at present, is most plausible. It would be interesting to learn to whom the suggestion to use dynamite is due. When the three prisoners were brought before Judge Desnoyers, he was in haste to express an opinion as to the cause of the attempt before a word of evidence had been heard. "I believe," he said, "that this act is the result of the newspaper polemics over the removal of the monument." The expression of any opinion by the judge was premature. We agree with him that the French Canadian population will condemn the Act; and he may be correct in the opinion that "the majority of them would like to see the monument removed." "They think," Judge Desnoyers added, "that there is no sense in having such a monument on a square which bears the name of Jacques Cartier." Under the circumstances, it might have been better if the judge had left this opinion unexpressed. Still, if such a feeling exists, it is better that the fact should be known.

This frenzied freak has made the removal of the monument simply impossible.

At the time when the Committee on Ways and Means at Washington is considering the repeal of the duty on timber, the question is raised, on this side, of reimposing the export duty on logs. And our Minister of Finance so far countenances this agitation as to encourage the expectation that the reimposition may actually take place. It is difficult to regard with patience freaks of this kind. Happily such folly is not likely to prevent additions to the free list at Washington. And when they are made, our Government is pledged, by its own voluntary declaration, to reciprocate in some way. In timber duties, reciprocity has hitherto been in kind, though it may take another form in future. The American Government has not, it is alleged, lived up to the agreement. However this may be, we have to do with the future rather than the past, and in the face of impending changes at Washington, it is sheer fatuity to talk of reimposing the export duty on logs. This is not the sort of policy which the country demands, and if Mr. Foster persists in pursuing it, he is likely to find out the secret of the mistake when it is too late.

Manitoba wheat is being shipped for exportation from Port Arthur to Buffalo. By this route, over half a million bushels (542,032) had gone, up to last week. It remains to be seen whether these shipments are merely experimental, or are likely to continue. If they are due to competitive rates, the question is whether they can leave any profit. Can the rates which tempt shipments by this route be met by reductions on our side? And if so, where are these reductions to fall? One thing is certain: Buffalo is provided with appliances for handling grain which Canadian forwarders, to this day, have failed adequately to supply. They have not made the most of their opportunities, and if the trade slips out of their hands the fault will be their own. Some of them periodically call upon the Government, with all the strength of lungs they can command, to do this and to do that, in the way of reducing or abolishing canal tolls, but they themselves have never erected a single elevator at Kingston, to put them in a position to compete, on the best terms, with the Buffalo route. The competition now announced cannot be met by merely calling on the Government to reduce or abolish canal tolls; the forwarders must do their part on pain of losing the business, the retention of which their traditional apathy has at last seriously imperilled.

Whatever the grounds for difference of opinion on other points, there is a general agreement that the Tariff Bill to be reported by the Committee of Ways and Means, at Washington, will propose an enlargement of the free list. The lumbermen are willing to accept a reduction on lumber, from \$1 to 50 cents per 1,000 feet, and the producers of salt are trying to secure a similar compromise. Chairman Wilson listens to these appeals, apparently without being moved by them; his object

being declared to be, to go to a great extent in giving manufacturers the benefits of free raw materials. If they get raw materials, they would be obliged to admit that they could get on with lower duties on the finished product. The coal and iron interests are opposing, as might be expected, free coal and free iron ore. Delegations from two southern States, Virginia and Alabama, join in this opposition. This makes a break in the "solid south," and creates a passing doubt whether these two articles will be put in the free list. On the proposed income tax, a difference of interest under the guise of a difference of opinion, is manifested. On this question the East is arrayed against the West. The choice, at present, is between an income tax, or an increase of excise duties; and as the lowering of the tariff and an increase of excise duties would touch manufacturing at two points, it will be the more difficult to carry both, and if both cannot be carried, or if it be found inexpedient to try, the framers of the tariff may be under considerable pressure to fall back on an income tax. As a result of the tariff changes, it is likely that the United States will become a formidable rival in third markets of the great manufacturing nations of Europe.

From a test trial, on the Erie Canal, of electricity as a motor in canal navigation, there is reason to believe that the use of horses for this purpose will soon be discontinued. The application was made by means of the trolley pole, and a speed of from four to seven miles an hour was reached. The barge to which the trolley is attached is expected to be able to tow from four to six other boats, and the cost of moving produce by canal to be considerably reduced. Canada, with its deep Welland Canal, is in a position to profit at once by the new motor, supposing it to prove, on further trial, all that may now reasonably be expected from it. New York, before it could reap equal benefit from the new means of propulsion, would have to deepen its canals by several feet, at enormous cost; even supposing, what some engineers doubt, that adequate water supply for enlarged canals could be obtained. If the Erie were enlarged, a restoration of tolls to meet some part of the interest on the cost might become expedient. Enormous sums have been invested in railways along the line of the Erie Canal; and there must be some limit to the State competition against these roads by means of free canals; if capital could be indefinitely expended by the State on the canals without hope of direct return, it would not be fair to push the railways by a competition which private capital could not meet and earn a dividend. Canada has not made canals absolutely free, and if she can cheapen canal navigation by the use of the trolley, the argument in favor of her doing so would lose much of its force. The revolution in canal navigation which now seems among the possibilities of the near future, would give Canada, during the season of navigation, indisputably the cheapest route between the great West and Europe.