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THE SITUATION.

M. Mercier's financial mission to Europe has not been an entire failure, for while he was not able to get the loan of \$10,000,000 in quest of which he went, on terms that could be accepted, he obtained a temporary loan of \$4,000,000, which he says will keep the Government going for two years. The Banque du Paris, the Credit Lyonnais and the Credit Foncier all took a hand in the agency by which the loan was secured, and M. Mercier speaks as if the whole loan had been eagerly taken by the public, nine days ago. How much the agents took and how much went to individual investors, need not concern the borrower, since the proceeds of the loan are in a position to be drawn against. Considering the unfavorable state of the money market, it is not surprising that the \$10,000,000 required was not obtained. As soon as the look-out is more favorable, a new appeal for the amount required will be made, and when that happens, M. Mercier promises himself "great success." Whether this expectation be realized or not, there is no question that the Province of Quebec is going into debt too fast. Before the loan is made, adequate means of meeting the interest upon it in the shape of new taxes ought to be provided. This is a point to which prudent lenders look, and it will be strange if M. Mercier be not required to show that he has the revenue necessary to meet the interest of any loan he desires to make. Some doubt on the legality of the temporary loan made has been thrown.

An American commission has gone to Europe to enquire into alleged abuses connected with emigration in sending undesirable emigrants to the United States, including pauper children and other undesirable persons. The assertion is made that they find their way thither through Canada; to what extent this route has been used is uncertain, but that some come this way is

probable. On the report of the commission it is expected that legislation will be based, and a strong effort made to put a stop to undesirable immigration into the Republic. Canada, there is no question, is being made a dumping ground for criminals from the north of Europe, and measures will have to be taken to put an end to this abuse of national hospitality. Specific cases of the practice have been pointed out. The American pre-contract law affects emigrants who are not at all personally objectionable, and whose exclusion is decreed to prevent the cheapening of labor in the Republic, against whose interests it sometimes distinctly operates. A large number of tin plate workers in Wales have been thrown out of employment by the McKinley tariff; and in the transfer of this industry to the United States, it is necessary to secure their labor on this side of the ocean. But no bargain can be made with them, nor, perhaps, money advanced to enable them to move. Thus, while the tin plate industry languishes in the one country, the greatest obstacles are thrown in the way of its rise in the other.

Before the Royal Labor commission now sitting in England there is likely to be a strong demand for protection to the freedom of labor, at present said to be infringed by the action of the labor unions. Mr. Laws, secretary to the Shipping Federation, when examined before the committee, complained that it is almost impossible for a free sailor to obtain access to a shipping office unless he belongs to the Seamen's and Firemen's Union, non-union men being liable to attack and ill-treated. For this reason, Mr. Laws argued, picketing ought to be made illegal. But there is picketing and picketing. It is not always accompanied by violence or undue pressure. Outrages connected with picketing are punishable, as any other are. Actual intimidation is an offence, but what Mr. Laws calls "moral intimidation" is not so easy to deal with. Anything that strikes at the freedom of labor is incompatible with the right of the individual, and may properly be prevented. Moral intimidation requires to be defined before it can be dealt with. If it means simply persuasion, there is no intimidation; if there be intimidation, it cannot properly be qualified as moral. It is possible that the right of picketing needs a clear definition, and a line should be drawn that would separate it from intimidation.

That any necessity should have arisen for the revival of seizures of American fishing vessels by our coast guard is to be deplored. The fact that seven were captured at one time, near the frontier of Maine, shows that illegal fishing is occasionally done on a large scale. There is really no excuse for such conduct on the part of American fishermen. There was a way open to them to obtain the right to fish on our shores, at a small cost, and the seven offenders that have been caught preferred to run the risk of capture rather than take out a license. Taking advantage of the shelter of the fog, in which, doubtless, they fancied they could hide, and beginning their operations near the Ameri-

can frontier, they probably calculated on being able to escape if detected. We trust the illegality of the act which led to the seizure does not admit of dispute, though the pretence that some of the seizures were made in American waters is being set up. The only difference between these fishermen and other offenders is that their offence is international; and in cases of this kind there are always to be found some who act as if the party injured and obliged to seek redress was the one culpable. And if anything is to be gained by such a course, politicians make an appeal to the Anglophobia, which, if it ever slumbers, always retains enough of the germ of life to enable it to be galvanized into momentary activity.

In the negotiations going on between Great Britain and Portugal an offer is said to have been made by the former to purchase the Portuguese possessions in Mozambique. For all the good they do her, Portugal might as well make the sale, and just now the purchase money would fill a gap which has remained open for some time. The truth is, Portugal has not obtained celebrity as a colonizing country, though of the European nations she was among the first in the field. If the serious trouble that was recently threatened in her African possessions had occurred, Portugal would have found herself at a disadvantage. The colonists might not relish the transfer any more than the French colonists of Florida did when made over to Spain in 1763, and they might give some trouble at first. In such cases it is usual to provide that the colonists may, if they desire, retire to the mother country; but the choice is rather nominal than real for all but a few of the better to-do. France would naturally not desire England to make the acquisition, which, however, even from her point of view, might contain a germ of consolation. The British Empire cannot be indefinitely extended without weakening its protective force, and France does not at present desire to see the effective strength of Great Britain increased.

A representative of the United Empire Trade League, in the person of Mr. Howard Vincent, has arrived in Canada. He determined to go to Ottawa first, and confer with the members of Parliament who are in accord with the League. After this, it is expected that he will speak in public at Montreal and perhaps in other places. So far the suggestions thrown out by Sir Charles Tupper, on the kindred subject of Imperial Federation, have not been officially backed up by the organization formed to forward some sort of closer connection between the colonies and the mother country, and we are told to wait till the end of the year to see what will be done. The Cobden Club, as might have been expected, opposed the suggestion to tax foreign products while colonial are admitted free. France, it is true, makes a discrimination in favor of her colonies, but she is not in possession of an extended colonial system. It would not be safe to conclude that the Government party at Ottawa is a unit in