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## THE SITUATION.

Senator Howlan, who went to England in the steamer that carried the Newfoundland delegates, naturally had opportunities for learning their views on the situation, particularly as it affects Canada, and the impression he got was that a friendly agreement between the island and this country, especially on the bait question, may be looked for. This hopeful view is deduced from conversations which he held with the delegates, and which were, of course, entirely unofficial. The good understanding with Canada was interrupted by Newfoundland in a moment of pique. A separate treaty between the islanders and the United States being out of the question, the best thing both for Canada and them is to act together in the Washington negotiations. It will be fortunate if Mr. Howlan's interviews with the delegates should open the way to joint action, and there is reason to believe that Canada and Newfoundland are likely to come to an understanding. The attitude of the islanders on the French shore question has done much to damp the ardor of the sympathy which British subjects everywhere naturally felt for them. In insisting on the impossible, and nothing but the impossible, they have shown an utter absence of statesmanlike policy. France and England take totally different views of the treaty obligations, and when the chief point in dispute is referred to arbitration, the islanders raise objections to the only peaceable solution of the question that presents itself; but a better spirit seems to have been manifested since the delegates reached London.

Pending a settlement of the difficulty between Canada and Newfoundland, our fishermen continue to be denied bait by the islanders. Some of the island fishermen are said to insist on supplying bait to their French rivals, against whom the Bait Act was more especially aimed. The

natural desire of the men who deal in bait would be to sell to all comers, though it may be defeated by law or deflected by passion. Regard for law or treaties has not been a marked feature of the attitude assumed by the authorities of Newfoundland, in their contention with France, and it is not surprising if their example has told upon the men who supply bait. Laws of this kind are, no doubt, difficult to enforce; yet it should never be forgotten that the Bait Act is the chief weapon which can legitimately be used against French rivals. But if bait is supplied in unstinted quantity to Americans, there is little prospect of its being withheld from anybody willing to pay a little extra price for it. As a result of the negotiations going on in London, we may expect that the refusal of Newfoundland to supply bait to Canada will not continue long. It is a practical question which needs a prompt solution.

Two labor movements, on the same line, are going in opposite directions. The German Socialists promoted a bill in the Reichstag for gradually cutting down the working day to eight hours, beginning with ten, reaching nine three years hence, and eight hours in 1898. These proposals were rejected. In England, the laundresses, on the contrary, are objecting against further interference with the hours of labor, in the way of curtailing them, as a bill before Parliament proposes to do, in the case of women and children. To protest against this new measure of protection they sent a deputation to the Home Office. They represented that the proposed shortening of the hours of labor would be injurious to them, by making the laundries unworkable and throwing the women whom it is designed to benefit, out of work. This view of the case is at once heroic and unusual; at the same time it is a snub to professional philanthropists, who are informed that their good intentions would work mischief. The women showed a strong feeling against the bill, and the Home Secretary, Mr. Mathews, promised to take up their cause. The reason for throwing the protection of the law around women and children, in this particular of the length of the working day, has been based on the theory that they could not protect themselves. These British laundresses not only say that they do not want this protection, but that if given it would prove injurious instead of beneficial.

A reciprocity treaty between Spain and the United States is announced. It runs generally on the lines of the United States-Brazilian treaty. The sugar, molasses, coffee and hides of the Spanish Antilles will enter free into the United States, while the duty on tea is reduced. In return, American wheat, beans, flour, lard, petroleum and manufactured goods will get entrance on favorable terms into the Spanish American colonies. On some articles there is a complete exemption from duties, while others will be admitted at low rates. American flour will enter on nearly as favorable terms as Spanish. It remains to be seen whether the Cortes will raise any objection in response to the feeling that

Spanish interests will suffer. One effect of this treaty will be to make the British West Indies envious of the good fortune of their Spanish rivals, and anxious to share it. Any possible arrangement with Canada will not be regarded as equivalent to nearly free participation in the wider trade of the Republic. The United States is getting the benefit of the circumstance that a protectionist is in a better position than a free trade country to secure favorable commercial treaties. And to this consideration may be due the fact that Canada has not yielded without an equivalent certain privileges, in connection with the Atlantic fishery, which Americans are anxious to enjoy.

The bonding privilege enjoyed by Canada in the United States, on a footing of mutuality, which has again and again been declared on the brink of destruction, does not, after all, appear to be in imminent danger. The discovery has been made by Secretary Foster, so the report runs, that there exists no authority under which the privilege of the sealing Canadian cars in transit, through the United States, can be denied. To any reasonable regulations in connection with the bonding system, having for their object to secure the United States revenue from danger, no reasonable objection can be made; and this, it is said, is what is now intended, though for some time past there has apparently been an expectation that matters would be pushed further. And even yet, the prospect of Congressional legislation which will put traffic on a new footing is spoken of as something in the near future. Competing American roads have pretended that the Canadian Pacific has, in this particular, enjoyed some advantage over them; but this is denied on behalf of the Canadian company. It looks as if the bonding system would be worked substantially as in the past, at least till after next session of Congress; what may then happen cannot be foretold.

Local option has come within the circle of contested legislative jurisdiction, Mr. Chief Justice Galt having decided that the local option law of Ontario is *ultra vires* of the legislature, and an encroachment on the domain of federation. The question thus raised will probably be fought out to its final issue, the decision of the Privy Council. On a majority of questions of disputed legislative jurisdiction, the ultimate decision has been in favor of Ontario. It would be useless to speculate on what will be the result in the present case. The decision of the Chief Justice will, in the meantime, suspend local option, which had been carried in the affirmative in a few places by slender majorities, and was about to be put to the vote in a much larger number. As neither party is likely to be satisfied with a decision till the ultimate judicial appeal has been exhausted, an agreement to go direct to the Privy Council would seem to be the shortest road to a final conclusion.

Last year, the labor demonstrations of the first of May were looked forward to