

deems best, so that he make no surrender of the rights of Egypt and England, which have now become inextricably interwoven in the region of the Nile. There is more than the Egyptian question at stake. France has for a long time been pursuing a policy of petty irritation against England in several quarters, notably in Newfoundland. She has certainly been acting with great unreason there, stretching her rights under treaty and minimizing those of Newfoundland. She has erected permanent lobster canning premises, where she is distinctly debarred from putting up anything beyond temporary sheds. For the sake of peace, England has made temporary concessions which the treaty rights of the two parties did not warrant. But such a policy, though it may be suffered to prevail exceptionally, cannot be endured forever. It has led to new and unreasonable demands on what is absurdly called the "French shore" of Newfoundland, a shore on which that nation has not a foot of land. The royal commission which is looking into this question is an indication that the time approaches when a national settlement must be made.

Until the returns of the plebiscite vote are officially published there will be doubt as to the exact majority on either side. If there were a small majority for prohibition, which now seems to be hardly possible, and the prohibitionists were to press for legislation, the attitude of the Opposition would weigh considerably in the scale. But the Opposition, any more than the party on which the Government leans, is not an unit on the question. While Mr. Foster continues his traditional attitude as a prohibitionist, Sir Charles Tupper is on the other side. To an interviewer the latter is reported to have said that the recent vote puts prohibition out of the question. There is a strong temptation for politicians to play with the question, as some of them have done in the past, from the fact stated by Sir Charles, that "most of the Protestant churches were almost wholly in favor of it." The fact that the leader of the Opposition has no faith in prohibition must, under any circumstances, count for something. He says that the only real attempt at prohibition in a self-governing province was made by New Brunswick, with the result that there was "free trade in drink." Sir Charles admits that he failed to get the Government pledged to action in case the vote should favor prohibition, so that Sir Wilfrid would be free to take his own course, even if there were a small majority in favor of prohibition. But as, on both sides, there are plenty of members who are politicians before anything else, we shall certainly hear in Parliament more about the Government's duty in the premises as seen by the critics.

The great activity in the navy yards of France, both at Toulon and Brest, may be intended to influence negotiations on the Fashoda affair. Opinions differ as to why Russia has sent a diplomatic agent to the French capital at this juncture. One French press view is that Russia desires to encourage France not to give way in the Fashoda business; another view, which is English, is that Russia wishes to warn France not to rush into war over this incident, expecting her support. The latest sign of the continued unanimity of British opinion is the outspoken declaration of Sir Michael Hicks Beach that France has no rights in Fashoda. He declines to believe that France, when she gets Major Marchand's report, will refuse to withdraw.

Two adverse decisions have been given on the intoxicating quality of what is known as temperance beer, one in Montreal and the other in Toronto. The Toronto

decision declares this beer not to be intoxicating, the Montreal decision says that it is intoxicating. Unless there was some difference in the strength of the two liquids the conflict of opinion is direct. The Montreal beer, which was of an alcoholic strength of 2 to 7 per cent. was certainly intoxicating. The remedy there is a license, here free and unrestricted sale is permitted. It is possible that, in view of this decision, the license law may undergo an amendment. The licensed sellers of liquor will object to the interference with their business; the teetotalers will object too. The drinking of small beer, considered by itself, is the least objectionable of all forms of drinking.

In the arbitration to determine the claim of the Canadian Pacific Railway Co. to a differential in their favor between San Francisco and eastern ports, the decision has been in the negative.

THE PEACE CONFERENCE AT PARIS.

That the peace commissioners, at Paris, would have a tussle over the Cuban debt was foreseen. To the proposal that the United States should pay the debt, the American negotiators gave an emphatic negative. The United States, they said, would neither pay nor guarantee any part of the debt. The Spanish commissioners then put in a plea that Spain was unable to pay and that if she were left to deal with the debt alone she would be obliged to scale it down fifty or sixty per cent.; but that rather than do this she would prefer to surrender to the United States the whole of the Philippines. This may possibly open the way to a solution of the difficulty which the Cuban debt presents. Opinion in the United States has been divided on the desirability of the Republic acquiring the whole of the Philippines; but the tendency in favor of the acquisition is growing, though it has hardly reached that stage when it could produce a coercive effect on public men. As yet a choice is open to the Washington authorities to accept or decline the responsibility of the whole of the Philippines. If the negotiations were prolonged it would perhaps not be in their power to refuse what is offered to their acceptance. The Senate may, on this matter, possibly be a manageable factor, but who can guarantee that it would long remain so? The transfer of the Philippines to the United States would probably afford the best guarantee for their good government. If any other power were inclined to offer objections, the necessities of Spain and the consent of the two countries most interested in the peace under negotiation would probably prove decisive. The influence of England might be relied upon to favor a settlement in this form if Spain and the United States desire it.

The Paris correspondent of the London Times reports that the American commissioners at the Peace Conference, on Monday, refused, on behalf of their Government, to accept the sovereignty of Cuba. If this be a final resolve, in what way is Cuba to be governed? The step now taken is in accordance with the attitude of the United States before the war; the Senate declaring, in so many words, that the Republic renounced the idea of seeking territorial advantages. But public opinion has outgrown this stage of the question and informally decided that Cuba must become part of the United States. If at present the ante-bellum professions of the Senate stand in the way of the realization of this idea, how is the government of the island to be carried on? It cannot be abandoned to the rebels; the necessity of exercising the power of a protectorate will compel the United States to see to it that the respectable inhabitants, on whom the rebels have hitherto made