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TORONTO, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1898.

THE SITUATION.

Surprise and gratification greet the proposal of the Emperor Nicholas for a reduction of the great armies of the world. The Czar required some courage to brave the militarism of his empire by his bold proposal. A conference to consider the question of a general reduction of armaments may be held, though it is at present doubtful whether France will join. The suggestion of the French press that, as a condition of going into the conference, France would require the retrocession of Alsace and Lorraine is probably her mode of expressing a declination, if her press represents national opinion. Russia having the largest army, actual and proportional, could best afford to make reductions, and she might give an earnest of her sincerity by beginning to reduce in advance of the conference; she has margin enough to spare something in this way. The difficulties which an armament reduction conference would meet would be great. On what principle should the reduction be based? On the present limit of the armies? Or should it be in proportion to population, size of territory, relative extent of defensive frontier, or to all combined? France is one of those countries whose very existence may, within a quarter of a century, depend upon her having a larger army in proportion to her population than, say, Germany. Without it she may soon sink to the relative position which Spain has for the last half century occupied among the nations; with it her future is uncertain, unless she can get rid of the canker which eats out the vitals of her population before birth; this is her danger, and it is a danger which is spreading alarmingly in some other countries where this new Malthusianism holds fatal sway. We shall soon see whether Europe will agree to hold a conference.

After three days' discussion in the European press, the armament-reduction proposal of the Emperor of Russia does not seem to have advanced in public opinion. The indifference or hostility of France is taken as proof that the French government was not consulted before the Imperial manifesto was issued. It is quite clear that France is not going to favor the plan of its ally, which the French press generally treats as impracticable. Spain seems to hope

that a peace conference would somehow help her; and in other countries the possible extent of the objects of the conference is dealt with in a random sort of way. Washington correspondents speak as if the Czar was credited, at that capital, with a diplomatic object, and that to get at the full truth it is necessary to read between the lines; English opinion is not at first very fully expressed: it is certain that England could not afford to sacrifice the naval supremacy on which her safety and her very existence depend. Germany will probably consent to go to the conference; the United States would be likely to want to know the exact limits of the powers of the congress, before consenting to take part in it.

Lieutenant Governor McInnes, of British Columbia, and his late councillors have gone into a discreditable game of reciprocal mud throwing. After the governor had dismissed the ministry, on the alleged ground of their defeat at the polls, and on that ground alone he authorized Mr. Beaven to say that he had kept in the back-ground other reasons which counted in the motives for his action. What those undeclared reasons were could not, in the nature of things, long remain secret. One part of the indictment relating to certain proposed expenditures, which look as if intended to affect the result of the elections in certain constituencies, is *vraisemblable*, and not, we fear, very unusual; they are presumably capable of proof. Mr. Turner, in reply, says they were ordinary expenditures on public works and for other services voted by the legislature. There is besides these, a charge of intended fraud upon the representative of the crown of so gross and clumsy a character as almost to stagger belief. The governor accuses a late minister of sending to him a bundle of warrants for signature "fastened together in such a way that his signature to the last sheet would have indicated approval of all," so a condenser of the correspondence who is not the governor, says; but the governor corroborates this statement when he says: "To my surprise I found inserted therein, in different places, six or seven warrants on [in ?] blank. As I did not propose to approve of blank warrants, I cut them out." This is intended to be a very serious accusation, but it will scarcely bear investigation. Each warrant as much requires to be signed separately, as each bank check, each bank note, each deed of land, each mortgage, or any other important instrument. On receiving a collection of warrants, it would be the duty of the governor to sign them, if at all, separately; and any blank ones that had got in innocently, which is quite conceivable, or were put in with an intent to practice a fraud on the representative of the crown, which is also possible, barely possible only, would have gone for naught. Here is a charge made by a governor of what comes dangerously near to high treason, upon evidence which proves nothing but his own possible negligence, and does not actually prove that. If it indicates, as it apparently does, that he imagines that in signing one warrant, he would in fact be signing several, it attests a degree of innocence which it is impossible conceive of in anyone who has reached the position of governor. It is difficult to foresee the outcome of this quarrel; more difficult to foresee that one party to it or the other should come out of it without bearing upon his front the brand of infamy.

As the best way of getting over the complications arising out of a conflict with his Ministers, Sir Herbert Murray, Governor of Newfoundland, resolved to resign. After the resignation had been accepted some of the Governor's friends and admirers got up a petition to the