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THE SITUATION.

The difficulty of making treaties with the United States would seem to be greater than with any other country. One more difficulty between England and France, the Madagascar treaty which existed between England and the island Government, before the French occupation, is reported to be in a fair way of settlement by France agreeing to allow the privileges of the treaty to revive or survive. Negotiations for a new commercial treaty between England and Germany are in progress, each side having presented to the other a draft project, but the replications have not yet come. From Newfoundland comes news that a scheme is on foot there for a separate treaty with the United States dealing with fish, lumber, pulp, minerals, and opening the Cuban market—for this must be what is meant by reference to the West Indies—to Newfoundland fish. If such negotiations have been suggested, the chances are that the prime movers in the business are Americans; on the side of Canada and Great Britain, it is difficult to believe that any such negotiations have been authorized, or that such a movement would be countenanced by either country. The promoters of this movement put forward, in bold relief, the opinion that the joint International Commission will never meet again. It may not, but it is too soon to conclude that it will not; and in the meantime, it is not permissible to act upon an assumption for which there is no warrant.

The sudden and unexpected death of Lord Herschell removes a link from the chain of the International Commission. If a successor were appointed, he would not, for some time, be able to get the thread of the negotiations, and while he was learning time would fly. Lord Herschell's death does not increase the chances of the assembling of the Commission, a third time. What is most in need of settlement is the frontier question of Alaska; on this no temporary arrangement can be as satisfactory as a final settlement. Pure questions of commerce can, if they must, be left to themselves; a question of the international frontier line, where it begins and ends, appertains to territorial sovereignty, and when contested ranks in the first order of international complications. Lord Herschell has been subjected to some ungenerous criticism, on the

poor pretence that he was prepared to sacrifice Canadian rights to square interests which England has in other parts of the world. There is absolutely no evidence that there was the smallest portion of truth in this ignoble suspicion. Jingoism was on the alert to trip up the negotiators; and as it pressed on both sides, it did no doubt make against the chances of agreement. This is one of the things connected with the negotiations which was not done in secret; the Jingo shouted his narrow demands from the housetops and called upon the world to listen. The sober-minded men, in both countries, who did listen, felt very much like saying, "what a nuisance he is; is there no means by which he can be abated?"

In the Standard Oil freight case it is possible to quibble about what constitutes through freights. The point is not worth while cavilling over. Mr. Blair, sitting on the Railway Committee of the Privy Council, suggested the true remedy. "Don't you think," he queried significantly, "that if, under the law, we cannot find a remedy, we can find the means" that will lead to one? If the law be altered, the Trust will probably try to find a means of defeating it. Such efforts are the reverse of reputable to all concerned in them, but they are not the less made. The Trust would not even tell, through its solicitors before the Railway Committee, what it is intended to substitute for the local tariff withdrawn; Mr. Osler did vouchsafe the statement that the companies will stand by the through freight rates tariff till it is set aside by competent authority. The through tariff, the company's counsel contends, treats all parties alike. It does and it does not; if it treats all importers alike, it is so framed as to restrict importation. It is precisely here that the discrimination comes in. The counsel for the Trust can afford to say that they are not concerned with a result which they represent as incidental; the Canadian public is very much interested, and very much in earnest in the search for a remedy. The Governor-in-Council has power to settle the tariff, and though it has no jurisdiction over the American part of the distance carried, the Canadian Parliament has complete power over imports, and the question here is one of imports. We are quite aware that the Trust and its lawyers will fight against the law; it is for the Canadian authorities to see that they share the fate of law breakers. The Ottawa Government is pledged to put down monopolies, and there are no signs that it will disregard that pledge, in a case where a company undertakes to make the Canadian tariff of no effect.

So long as the railway companies maintain a through rate on petroleum oil, which can be made to counter-balance the custom tariff and defeat the facilities for trade which it is intended to give so long the power of negating Dominion legislation, on the matters affected, will be displaced by a species of usurpation, against which it behooves the supreme authorities to find a remedy. In all such cases, experience shows that remedies are not easy to find; the task ought not to be impossible. The Standard Oil Trust, it appears, has been able to advance its price for illuminating oil, in Canada, 2½ cents per gallon. Is this increased price for the same quality of oil? American oil, including that of the Trust, has all along been dearer than Canadian, on account of its superior quality. Whether the difference was ineradicable or due simply to better methods of refining, the fact was there; if the quality of the oil has risen with the price, the public has compensation; if not, it has none. It can scarcely be said that Canadian oil well owners have, in the past, made the most of their opportunities, whether in fully testing the capacity of the oil regions or in using the best chemical