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THE SITUATION.

The occasion of the negotiation of a new commercial treaty between Great Britain and Germany presumably gives Canada the opportunity to get back what she lost as a consequence of the denouncing of the former treaty between these two countries, in which she was a participant. It was at the instance of Canada that the treaty was denounced; the object being to restore to her such liberty of action as was implied in granting a commercial preference to England. The old treaty had for us its advantages as well as disadvantages; and when we renounced the benefits, as we did deliberately and on the whole for good reasons, our grain came under the maximum tariff of Germany, and became liable to higher duties than those of a country which gets the benefit of the minimum tariff. The existence of a double tariff, in Germany, as in France, marks the working of a special trade policy. England makes bargains with nations which pursue such a policy, and it is probable—hitherto it has been practically certain—that Canada can be included in the arrangement, if she desires. Of course the conditions would require to be such as recommend themselves on the ground of reasonable equivalents. The opportunity, we take it, will not be allowed by our Government to pass by without giving to the subject the attention and the consideration which its importance deserves.

By the meeting of the British Empire League, in London, we are once more reminded that the question of Imperial Federation does not readily lend itself to the arts of the fabricators of systems. Yet so certain is the process of unconscious development going on that by an allowable exaggeration, the Duke of Devonshire was enabled to say "the whole Empire has become a British Empire League." Sentiment, strange as it may sound, has done what logic and planning and mechanical organization together could not have accomplished. The question of the defence of the Empire came up, as it always does at these meetings. Lord Brassey had previously called attention to neces-

sity for better organization of the colonial forces, and the Premier of New Zealand has lately done the same thing. In referring to these suggestions, the Duke of Devonshire said: "The Home Government [of which he is a member], shrinks from making our colonies any proposal in the nature of dictation, or even of suggestion, which would be capable of being misunderstood. We think, earnestly as we desire it, that the initiative in these matters should come from the colonial governments themselves." On the right of free action, going to the extent of initiative, the colonies, regarding their local autonomy as inestimable, are super-sensitive; and the course suggested is the only one consistent with prudence. It would only require another English representative to act as Major-General Hutton did recently to put the whole fat in the fire, especially if it were believed, as it might easily be, that he was relying for support on a military governor-general. To get the co-operation of the colonies in the defence of the Empire, the generous sentiments they have discovered must be met by a confidence that has been well earned, and above all their constitutional liberty must remain absolutely secure.

The American Government is taking measures to ensure that pauper immigrants do not get into the United States by way of Canada. On a mission of this kind, Mr. Powderly, Commissioner-General of the United States Bureau of Immigration, visited Montreal last week, to confer with the steamboat and railway companies, through whose instrumentality, chiefly, could immigrants pass. He received assurances that our laws against pauper immigrants were as stringent as those of the United States. The fact that there were then on board of the "Louisiana," in that port, a number of paupers, who were not permitted to land, did not contradict this assurance, the forbidden immigrants having been shipped before the law was passed or before knowledge of its existence came to those in charge of the vessel. A legal question arises on the point of the owners of the vessel being obliged to keep them on board, and in fact to return them, as in an ordinary case they would be obliged to do.

The Ashanti rebellion is reported to be drawing to a close, in the same way and at the same time as the war in South Africa. With these two events and the trouble in China, England has had three wars on her hands at the same time. The first two will not give much more trouble, though the afterclap in one case may be serious; the Chinese enigma is too complicated to make it possible to predict anything certain as to the future extent of the trouble or the ultimate outcome; whether China is to remain a separate nation, or become the prey of the nations that are anxious to find, in her partition, a division of the spoils of war.

United States Consul Stowe, at Capetown, assumes from what he sees and hears that, on the conclusion of the war, the Dutch in South Africa will be disposed to boycott English trade, and with it presumably Canadian. If they thus show trade antipathies, they may be expected to show also trade preferences. In the Transvaal, where the Hollander element has practically had financial control, it needs no wizard to tell us where