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THE SITUATION.

One more fishery commission is to be added to the many that have gone before, most of them having previously originated in Europe. This time the commission is to be international, Canada and the United States being the two countries directly concerned. The commission is, it seems, an outcome of the conference which took place last winter between members of the Canadian Government and the authorities at Washington. One expert will represent each country on the commission, and through him will be presented whatever information on the subject each government has collected within a given time, say the last two years. Close seasons and modes of destruction will be among the subjects of enquiry. Opinions change as to the sort of engines with which fish can be captured without wastefully or seriously reducing their number. Some twenty years ago a British commission came to the conclusion that no amount of fishing, by any known engines of destruction, could materially lessen the quantity of fish in the sea. Even at that time there were reasons for doubting the accuracy of this view of the case, and now we believe no one is permitted to doubt, after he has examined the subject, that it is not borne out by the facts which experience has collected in recent times. We may expect that some restraint will, as a result of the commission, be put upon fishermen, for the purpose of preserving from serious deterioration the fisheries near the coasts of the two countries.

After all, M. Mercier did not escape trial for malversation in connection with public moneys voted by the legislature. As the trial approached a deliberate attempt, revolutionary in its character, was made to overawe the tribunal which would have cognizance of it. M. Mercier was represented as a persecuted man, and every form of

defiance was hurled at the judges by a section of the press, which lashed itself into a state of fury, or simulated a violence of anger which it did not feel, and for which, in any case, there was no justification. The hope no doubt was that an appeal to party passion would save M. Mercier. The trial was not a political prosecution, much less a political persecution. The charge was that public money had been used for an illegitimate purpose. There are people who dream, or at least talk as if they dreamed, of rehabilitation for M. Mercier, and with them it is impossible to reason. The Government had nothing to gain by the prosecution, and it had nothing to lose. It could not avoid prosecuting, and though it might fail, no dangerous sympathy for M. Mercier could, in the nature of things, be created. In the course of the trial counsel for the defence took the utmost extent of license which it was possible to tolerate. The court remained calm, preserving its dignity and its authority in the face of unusual provocation.

Apparently with the view of influencing the action of the Government in the coming Monetary Conference, certain people in England, who take Mr. Balfour for their guide, are getting up a little agitation in favor of bi-metalism. They have got the notion that, in some mysterious way, a double standard would quicken a dull and sluggish trade. Manchester is the focus of the movement, and efforts are being made to extend it to other places. As an attempt to change the policy of the Government, the movement is bound to fail. American cable despatches, which always require to be read critically, are exaggerating the growth of opinion in England in favor of a double standard. This is shown by the dry remark made by Mr. Lidderdale, Governor of the Bank of England, now in the United States, to an interviewer, that if there had been a growth of feeling in favor of bi-metalism, it must have sprung up since he left. Mr. Lidderdale is one of the British delegates to the conference, and his visit to the United States has special reference to his duties in that capacity. The Monetary Conference will meet at Brussels, November 22, and representatives will be there from most of the principal countries: Great Britain, France, Germany, the United States, Austro-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Roumania, Russia, Servia, Spain, Sweden, Norway, and Switzerland. The counsels of Great Britain are likely to be all-powerful in the conference.

To-morrow is the day fixed for the meeting of Canadian and Newfoundland delegates to discuss the relations of the two countries. Mr. Bowell and Mr. Chapleau will be present on behalf of Canada; Mr. Tupper, who was to have been the third delegate, being required in England on the Behring Sea business, will be unable to attend, but nothing will be lost by his absence, as his place is likely to be taken by Sir John Thompson. There is reason to believe that the delegates of the two countries will approach one another in a

spirit of mutual accommodation, the feeling of antagonism having happily been allayed. If the meeting had taken place six months or a year ago, it would have been safe to predict that it would have come to naught; now, it is only reasonable to hope for better things.

Russia has obtained the privilege of establishing consulates in Central China, Manchuria and Mongolia. The avowed object is the legitimate one of extending her trade, and this it is easy to understand is the first consideration. In Central China, the new consuls may be harmless, but in territory contiguous to the Russian possessions, they will scarcely avoid occasions for studying the possibilities which may occur to Russia of territorial expansion.

Numerous and ingenious are the devices by which some of the Provincial Governments seek to obtain money from the Dominion Treasury. Mr. Longley, of Nova Scotia, is the last to distinguish himself in this way. He, if report speaks truly, is about to make, or has made, a demand on the Dominion Government for a bagatelle of some two millions of dollars. The Province, it seems, subsidized certain local railways which now form part of the Intercolonial, including what are known as the Eastern Extension and the Western Extension roads respectively. Another road so subsidized has since been brought under Dominion control, and on that account a refund is asked. These are the two reasons for which refunds, amounting on the whole to two million dollars, are demanded. What was the purpose for which these subsidies were granted? Doubtless that the railways might be obtained for the benefit of the traffic, present and prospective, of the Province. It could never have been expected that the roads would pay directly, or that the money sunk in them could be got back. It was locked up there for a particular purpose. Is that purpose not being served, as well as there was reason to expect it would be when the subsidies were granted? If the answer is affirmative, what is the ground or equity of the claim? As to the other claim: Dominion control does not carry or disturb ownership, and is, if possible, the weaker of the two; besides it is a kind of claim which has already been rejected. What is meant by some of the roads now forming part of the Intercolonial? Has the proprietorship changed? Or is the Dominion Government running at its own cost roads which do not pay their own way?

Orders have been given by the Privy Council, in England, to trace the Canadian cattle landed at Dundee from the "Monkseaton," for the purposes of slaughtering them. The implication, in the absence of the official report, is that the authorities are acting on the presumption that pneumonia detected among these cattle is contagious. How they could have got the disease is a mystery, since pleuro-pneumonia does not exist in Canada. As a means of clearing up the matter, the Canadian authorities will endeavor to trace