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THE SITUATION.

A French law, such as has just been promulgated, against the adulteration of wines, has an interest for every country in which these wines are used. The penalty for this offence is made severe and includes fine, imprisonment and loss of civil rights. The evil against which it is directed is enormous, only one-twentieth part of the wine used in Paris being genuine. But it must not be hastily concluded that the falsification of exported wines bears anything like this proportion. The false article is largely made for domestic consumption, especially at the tables of French domestics, each servant being allowed from one to two bottles a day. But the so-called clarets which are sent to other countries, at a cost of less than 25 cents a gallon, are of course purely the product of the chemist. It is against these wines that Canadian vintners express fears of having to compete, under the new Franco-Canadian treaty. In this respect we owe ourselves the duty of self-protection, and some means of discovering the adulteration of imported wines should be employed. It is probable that the necessary machinery for this already exists. France first became self-accusing in this particular through the Municipal Bureau of Paris, which detected and exposed the imposture, in this way rendering great service to France and to her customers in other countries.

In Toronto the tide of population has once more taken a favorable turn. The assessment census shows an increase in numbers of nearly 6,500, which is equal to two-thirds of the increase at the height of the boom. When 10,000 a year was added to the city's population a great increase of house-room was necessary; but as building proceeded at random, and without any estimate which aimed to adjust house accommodation to probable wants, the supply outran the demand. The new comers are visibly reducing the surplus houses; in some residential streets a vacant house would be sought for in vain. Three years have passed since the boom collapsed, and now the end of the consequent disaster is looming into view. Adjustments between mortgagees and mortgagors, in hopeless cases, have been going on quietly during the past two years, nearly always without the intervention of legal proceedings. In some form or other the property has, in a great number of cases, gone to the mortgagee. The return to a normal condition will be found in

the process now going on, an increase of the population from natural causes in conjunction with an influx, but it will probably take more than two years to restore the balance between supply and demand. It still remains true that the large city attracts, and large numbers desire to take up their residence therein.

At a dinner at the London Chamber of Commerce, Congressman Wilson explained that the object of the tariff reformers of the United States was to prepare American manufacturers for competition in all the markets of the world. He told his hearers frankly that the British had no cause for rejoicing in the freer policy of the Republic which the new tariff evinces, except at the triumph of a principle. The protective policy of the past has, he thinks, helped rather than hindered the trade of other countries. His meaning is, of course, that while it restricted exports to the Republic, it left outsiders a freer hand in neutral markets, which are not generally entered by the United States as formidable competitors. In seeking monopoly profits, American manufacturers do not accept conditions necessary for success in those markets where the competition of the world must be faced. When they are put on their mettle by the removal of restrictions which make them pay too exclusive attention to the home market, they are likely, in the language of Mr. Wilson, to cease to be "underlings." What they have occasionally done, by pursuing "a sacrifice policy," is no test of what they could do generally, so long as high protection lasts. A sacrifice policy is an aberration from the general line, and it is quite in keeping with the methods of Trusts aiming at monopoly. But when the monopolists grew bad enough to defy the law, and wicked enough to debauch electors and corrupt legislation, Mr. Wilson and those who act with him thought it time to call a halt.

After receiving tenders for electric street lighting, the city council of Toronto, finds that it can get the required street illumination cheaper than by putting in a plant of its own, and a recommendation for the acceptance of the tender will be considered by the aldermen. On ordinary business principles its acceptance is in order, unless it can be shown that collateral advantages are to be obtained by the city which would more than counterbalance those of accepting. Beside street lighting, electric lighting for houses is one of the necessities of city life. Is it true that competition in electric lighting can be got only by the city putting in an electric plant? Would competition in electric lighting further bring down the price of gas? In connection with electric light for the streets, the charge is made, in the gross and anonymously, that half a dozen of the aldermen have attempted to blackmail one of the companies tendering for this service. The aldermen are not named, though the amounts said to have been demanded, which varied at different times, are. The charge will of course be investigated. Meanwhile, it is proper to say that the accusation, when it was allowed to escape, should have been accompanied with the names of the culprits, for in its anonymous form it may cause suspicion to perch on innocent heads.

It is not easy to understand the reason that induced the Quebec Government to add \$1,820,000 to a debt of \$4,000,000, on what is in fact a renewal of the loan. True, the transaction is spoken of as a new loan to replace an old one, but that does not alter its nature. The one patent inducement to add to the debt is the reduction of the interest to the extent of \$4,000 a year; but it would be a long time before this amount would equal the increase of the debt, and it would never do so during the ordinary term of a loan. The difficulty of taking for this purpose \$4,000,000 out of