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THE SITUATION.

Mr. Tyrrell, of the Canadian geological staff, on his return from an exploration of the Yukon region, was intercepted at Vancouver by an interviewer. He has a firm belief in the richness of the country and of the enduring quality of the placers, presumably derived from their enormous extent; but he, strange as it may seem, does not believe in the existence of a mother lode. If this opinion be correct, only placer mining need be looked for in the Klondike country. There can be no doubt that the wide distribution of placer gold will make this region a gold producer for a long time. The cost of working the placer mines is being reduced without, perhaps, reducing the real wage of the miners. This year \$15 to \$20 a day has been paid to miners; but before Mr. Tyrrell left there was a plan on foot, which he thinks may have been put into execution, for paying laborers \$100 a month and their board. This would probably not be a real reduction for them, though there may be some room for doubt as to how it would work out, for when employers make a profit at both ends the workmen generally get the worst of it. Mr. Tyrrell thinks that the change would cause new claims to be worked. So far, only two creeks, Eldorado and Bonanza, have been worked to any great extent, though Hunker, Dominion and others are known to be rich, very rich, Mr. Tyrrell is reported as saying. The permanence of the placers must be understood in a practical, rather than an absolute sense. The deposits are not inexhaustible, but they are probably extensive enough to last as long as this generation and still leave work for its successor. And it may prove that the whole of the gold-bearing rock was not eroded or changed as Mr. Tyrrell thinks, but that some remains of a mother lode may yet be found.

In a public speech at Kingston on Tuesday, Sir Wilfrid Laurier expressed the hope, but he did not, so far as it is possible to judge by his guarded expressions, seem to be confident that the International Commission will settle the difference between the two countries concerned. He professed no certainty, for that was impossible. It would be too much to say that he tried to prepare us for foreseen failure; but till something is done, failure is possible, and if that should come he is right in counselling that we ought not to be discouraged. He goes further,

and says that, in such event, we shall not be. "The fate of this nation [he is fond of calling Canada a nation] is not," as he says, "dependent on the result." If the Commission failed in its objects, he points out, "we shall continue to be a nation, as we are at the present time." "We shall," he says, speaking of the British commissioners, "do everything that is possible to settle the differences that have come to pass between us, but we shall not, neither now nor at any time, make the least sacrifice of our national dignity."

Captain Thayer, surveyor of the American Lloyds, is reported to have gone to British Columbia to appraise the Canadian sealing vessels there with a view to their possible purchase by the United States in connection with the proposed settlement of the question of capturing seals at sea. Captain Herbert Taylor, of Nova Scotia, is said to be the valuator for the Dominion. If we are to surrender our sealing rights at once it would be desirable that the compensation, apart from that due to the actual owners of vessels engaged in the business, should take the form of an equivalent for some concession to be made by the Americans. We do not want to sell any of our sea rights for money, nor at all unless for an acceptable equivalent.

In a public speech made at Sussex, N.B., Mr. Blair touched on the question of Government aid to the Crow's Nest Pass Railway. The late Government, he said, had agreed to give \$5,000 a mile for 380 miles and to loan the C.P.R. Company \$20,000 a mile. Speaking comparatively, Mr. Blair contends that what the present Government did caused a saving of \$5,000,000. But this conclusion is reached by assuming that the loan of \$20,000 a mile would not have been repaid. It is true, as Mr. Blair says, that such loans are not generally repaid, but the C.P.R. has been an exception, for of the \$30,000,000 it borrowed from the Government, \$20,000,000, or two-thirds was repaid in cash and the balance in land. Land is not money, and it is doubtful whether the land, which had been previously given, got back in lieu of money, will ever yield the amount at which it was estimated. But if we drop the comparative view of the question and look at the policy of the actual grant, in its naked form, what are we to think of such a use of the public treasure? Sir Wm. Van Horne, when the late Government had retired and before the present Government had decided upon its policy, had publicly declared that the company would build the road whether they got a subsidy or not. Would it not have been well to have allowed them to carry out their intention in their own way? It is true we got an abatement of fares on another part of the C.P.R.; but even so, was not \$3,250,000 a rather heavy sum to pay for this boon?

Will the lowering cloud that hangs over the Fashoda incident burst in war? This is for England and France the question of the hour. The little regard shown to French susceptibility, in England, has not, at this distance, the most prudent look. It is perhaps to be accounted for by the consciousness that a necessity exists to dispel the notion which some foreign nations may possibly entertain that, no matter what the provocation, England will not fight. But this fatal idea may be negatived without resorting to language that has a slightly hysterical air. To declare, as the Spectator did, that France must be bundled out of Fashoda was to throw oil on the fire. France, on the other hand, is, for once, comparatively calm. Beyond doubt the British nation is united in a firm resolve on this question; the Premier has *carte blanche* to do what he