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CURRENT TOPICS.

It can readily be believed that the agents of the United States Government may have been able to convince the Canadian steamboat and railway companies that it will be to their advantage to have an inspection of immigrants intending to enter the Republic through Canada on Canadian soil, and to have obtained their promise of help and co-operation in carrying out such an arrangement. But it is far from easy to see on what grounds the American Government or its agents could have based their attempt to persuade the Canadian Government to become a party to such an arrangement. We are no advocates of the *lex talionis*. We hold that it is the business of a respectable nation as of a respectable man to treat his neighbor fairly and justly, irrespective of any cause of complaint it may have against the latter. But a Government is

bound to consult first the interests of its own people. If it has any sympathy to expend, why should not that sympathy go out to the victims of a harsh immigration law, who are sure to be in desperate need of it, rather than to the Government and people whose harsh laws have barred the doors against their entrance into the great western world? It is well known that the United States Anti-immigration Act is being enforced with great rigour against Canadians having or seeking employment across the border, though it was not supposed at first to have any direct application to the people of a neighbouring and friendly nation. We can readily believe the latest report to the effect that the Dominion Government will not become a party to this strange arrangement. We can see no good reason why it should give a *quasi* sanction to a harsh statute which is being enforced with so much rigour against its own citizens.

Every Canadian will wish Mr. Bowell success in his mission to our Australian cousins. The greater the extent and variety of our trade the better. The facilities for transportation now offered should help very materially in any exchange of products with our fellow-colonists which may be found mutually advantageous. It is a pity that the protectionist systems of both countries are so obstructive as to make say such arrangement as is presumably contemplated an intricate and troublesome business. The Mail marshals the obstacles in a formidable array. Some of these may be found easily removable if both parties are in downright earnest. But, assuming the possibility of reaching a satisfactory agreement with one or more of the Australian colonies, and assuming further that no one of them which may fail to effect such an agreement with our Government would play the role of Canada in regard to the Newfoundland Bond-Blaine treaty, and invoke an Imperial veto of any arrangement whose benefits it might not share, it is not easy to see how our Government could escape one or the other horn of the dilemma which would still confront them. They must either discriminate against the Mother Country, which is abhorrent to their avowed principles, or lose the chief advantages which might otherwise be derived from such a treaty, by opening the way for the competition on equally advantageous terms, not only of British products but of those of other nations having "most-favoured nation"

clauses in their treaties with Great Britain. Still it would be unreasonable to suppose that all these obvious difficulties were not fully considered by our Government before Minister Bowell's mission was resolved on. We must, therefore, wait in the patience of hope for the unfolding of the plan.

The action of the Jarvis Street Baptist Church of this City in once more handing over to the City Treasurer the amount at which it computes the taxes its property would be called on to pay yearly were all exemptions of church property done away with, has, together with the protest against the system of church exemptions as wrong in principle and unjust in practice, brought up the question anew for discussion. It is noteworthy, though by no means surprising, that a fillip has been given to the anti-exemptionist propoganda by the recent struggle over the question of Sunday horse-cars. In view of the very prominent part taken by ministers and members of churches in that struggle, nothing is more natural than that some of those who advocated the Sunday cars and opposed the ministers should be glad of an opportunity to turn the search light upon their successful antagonists in their personal and professional relations, and bring under the lash of their merciless logic any flaws or inconsistencies that they may be able to discover in their working out of the lofty principles by which they profess to be ruled. We are bound to admit that they have been quite too successful in their search. They have a perfect right to say, it seems to us, that those who are so rigid and conscientious in pressing their views in respect to Sabbath observance as a religious obligation, should so far make the Golden Rule the law of their lives as citizens, as to refuse to accept exemption from taxation for their church properties, knowing as they must that the deficiency thus created has to be supplied in part by the compulsory taxation of many who would never voluntarily contribute to the spread of religion. There can be no doubt that this inconsistency on the part of the churches has more than a little to do with fostering that feeling of distrust and dislike with which the church is coming to be regarded by large numbers of citizens. The Christian churches should lose no time in setting themselves right in this matter, and prove to their severest critics that they propose to do right in this matter at any cost.

In answer to a question asked by Sir Charles Dilke, the Under-Secretary of