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TORONTO, CAN., FRIDAY, SEPT. 16, 1892.

THE SITUATION.

If there be any reason why Canada should not have commercial agents at the capitals of such countries as she has considerable commercial transactions with, the opposite reasons in favor of them must be the stronger. We could, through such agencies, learn how business is done in other countries, from the point of view of our ability to take part in it, in directions where it does not now exist for us, and to extend it where it does. No doubt we can learn something from the consular reports of other countries, but what we want is to see things with our own eyes. Last session the Dominion Parliament passed a resolution authorizing negotiations with the Imperial Government with a view to establishing some such representation of Canadian interests at foreign capitals, Washington being specially mentioned in this connection; and now, it seems, the Minister of Finance has gone to England on this business. We are satisfied that the United States has largely increased its immigration and extended its commercial relations with other countries through its consular agents. Canada ought to be in a position to do something in this line too.

The Dominion Government has ordered that vessels suspected of having cholera on board may be detained at any maritime port in Canada for twenty days. During the period of detention medical superintendence will be strictly enforced and necessary means of purification used. This is evidently intended to provide precautions as extensive as those enforced in the United States. Emigrants at the American frontier are liable to be stopped on either side of the line; and for several days, beginning on Saturday last, three car loads of emigrants who wanted to enter Canada at the Suspension Bridge were refused reception by the Grand Trunk. If emigrants in such case were admitted, the same difficulty would recur if any of them

farther west. Some hardships are being experienced by passengers on suspected ships or ships from which cholera has departed. For instance, nearly 500 passengers were detained on board the "Cepheus," in New York harbor, long after the cholera cases disappeared. Fifteen days after any signs of the disease had been seen, the passengers made a touching appeal to Governor Flower to be permitted to proceed to their homes. Delicate women and aged and infirm men, mostly American citizens, were without mattresses or blankets, with little food and in some cases none. This is but a faint picture of the horrors that would occur in Quebec if the local Government should be permitted to refuse to allow cholera ships, should any arrive, to land. The precaution of a twenty days' quarantine is surely enough, but if not let the time be extended in any case in which extension may prove to be necessary.

The Quebec Government, it seems, intends to stand by its proclamation not to permit any cholera patients to land in the province, in spite of the fact that emigration is under Dominion control. The plea of the supreme law of self-preservation is set up; but the chances are that any attempt to carry out the prohibition would prove in effect disastrous. If a cholera ship arrives and is not allowed to land anywhere, what is likely to happen? If all communication with the ship be shut off, supposing it to be possible, are all on board to be left to die? To prevent all communication with the ship would not be possible, and if it were done by stealth, so to speak, a very efficacious mode of spreading the disease would have been found. The Ontario Government, in making suggestions to that of the Dominion, has taken a better and a safer course. Querulous officiousness is eminently out of place in the emergency in which we may find ourselves. The Government of Ottawa has the duty laid upon it of vigorously combating the scourge. On it let the responsibility be, for it is not desirable to divide legal authority for the responsibility of action. There is still much to do at Grosse Isle to make the conditions of quarantine there what they should be. The clashing of state and federal authorities on this subject is making great confusion and doing no little mischief in the United States. The suggestion that a medical man should be appointed minister to look after epidemic diseases is liable to the suspicion not merely of smelling of the shop, but of a desire to turn a possible public calamity into an occasion for snatching a bit of coveted patronage.

Sir Edwin Arnold, reported by an interviewer, has no faith in quarantine as a means of barring out cholera, and the experience of New York goes far to prove this contention. The English plan of inspection seems to answer well; but if to inspection, quarantine detention of persons in whom the disease may be believed to be in the incubation stage be added, surely an additional guarantee of safety is taken. Sir Edwin says cholera cannot

be kept out of a country; but that it is a disease of which, after his experience in India, where the disease is never absent, he is not as afraid as he is of bronchitis; that it only attacks the weak and the filthy. The almost superstitious veneration for quarantine which exists in some quarters may seem a curious revival; but it should be remembered that quarantine is armed with means of vanquishing disease which did not exist formerly, and is more likely to be efficient. Sir Edwin says cholera is impossible in a temperature lower than 70°, and that there is practically no fear of its spreading here this year.

Owing to a deadlock in the legislature of the North-West Territories, resulting from an equality of votes, the session proved barren and came to an abrupt termination. But meanwhile, a change of Government took place, Mr. Haultain being superseded by Mr. Cayley as premier. Neither of the two could command a majority in the House. Will the recess bring about a change? If so, in what way is it expected to operate? Should no change of relative legislative forces come in this way, there would have to be a new election to decide the matter. In that event, the school question would be one of the principal issues, for the North-West, not less than Manitoba, has a school question, though it is of a different complexion. In the North-West, sectarian schools are not denied public aid; but whether it is desirable to perpetuate this state of things has begun to appear doubtful to a large section of the electorate. A struggle, in which the Church of Rome will throw all her weight into one scale, seems imminent. The Pope has decided that, in the United States, Roman Catholics may take advantage of secular State education; but he does so only because that system cannot be set aside. So long as there is a hope of the Church imposing sectarian schools on any part of Canada, the struggle will be continued; but it is not the less to be deplored on that account.

Mr. Neelon, the contractor for the new Toronto Court House, has been forcibly ejected from the work on the ground that he was far behind and was not prosecuting it as required by the bond. He took the place of the original contractor, Mr. Lionel Yorke, an excellent man, who died soon after signing the contract. If the architect, Mr. Lennox, has acted aggressively, he does not appear to have proceeded to extremities till long after there was ample cause for his action. To the general public, it appears as if there were good grounds for the severity of expulsion, and that strong steps might in fact have reasonably been taken sooner. If the contractor agreed to furnish a kind and size of stone which he could not in fact supply, his right to take advantage of his own error cannot be admitted. But there is another side to the story, and the ejected contractor has the support of other architects. Alderman Shaw alleged that architect Lennox suggested to him that Neelon should be paid \$40,000 to quit; but, if he is in default, why should he be allowed to profit by his dilatoriness? The