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THE SITUATION.

A final conference between the Federal Government and that of Manitoba has failed to bring an agreement on the school question raised by the minority of that province. As a consequence, the Ottawa Government declares its intention to push the Remedial bill through before the close of the present session of Parliament, if possible. Resort to the proceeding known as the closure is foreshadowed as possible. In the absence of some such plan for abridging the debates, the passage of the bill would seem to be impossible within the time that remains before the session will come to an end. If the Winnipeg conference had brought about a settlement of the school question, the course would have been clear for a direct appeal to the country on the tariff. Now, as between tariff and the Remedial bill, the latter will occupy the first place in the electoral contest. This will be almost equivalent to postponing the tariff issue, as an electoral question, to the end of the next Parliament.

British and American trade interests in Madagascar are threatened by the recent subjection of the island by French forces. France, without formally annexing the island, has assumed the right to set up her own tariff there, and so completely to control the commercial policy as to annul the commercial treaties existing between Madagascar and other countries. Both Great Britain and the United States have such treaties with Madagascar, and they are not likely to permit them to be annulled without a protest, which may possibly be made in concert. Great Britain's commercial interest in Madagascar is greater than that of France. The French occupation of Madagascar has a political object also, which is nothing less than to put France in a position to do something towards blocking the way to India by the Cape. Recent events have given this occupation significance as a *point d'appui*, in connection with the future of the east coast of South Africa. Negotiation with France on the subject of the Madagascar treaties is not smoothed by the Egyptian expedition undertaken by England with the consent of Germany, Austria and Italy, which is a new cause of irritation to France. The resignation of M. Berthelot, of the French Foreign Office, may be due to a Chauvinist feeling among the populace that he had not

pressed upon Great Britain the evacuation of Egypt with sufficient energy.

As was foreseen, Mr. Chamberlain's suggestion of a British Empire Customs Union has evoked much comment in Great Britain, but the cable has not supplied us with the bent of colonial opinion on the subject. Lord Rosebery is doubtless correct in saying that colonial protectionists will object. For himself, he cavils and suggests objections instead of offering clear-cut opposition. In suggesting that such a scheme should not be assented to without the fullest consideration, he expresses the predominant view of all parts of the British Empire. Mr. Chamberlain's views very nearly coincide, on the main point, with the aim of those colonial statesmen who think that our tariff should be ultimately assimilated to that of Great Britain. To reach that point they, as well as he, admit that a slow process of development is necessary. In practical politics these speculations will have no marked effect at present.

One result of the withdrawal of a large part of the East African Company's forces, through the Jamieson raid, has been the rising of the Matabeles, and the murder of British settlers and subjects. Some of the natives who had joined the British protective force took the opportunity to swell the ranks of the insurgents. The company, which exercises British authority in that region, has been caught napping. The rebels who carry off cattle and take refuge in the hills of Matoppo may give serious trouble for a time; but their final submission is certain. If, as is assumed, cavalry can operate in these hills, the rebels would still have the advantage of ground, and to dislodge savages from such a situation may cost dear. They are well armed and led by a son of Lobengula, whom the British had banished, without taking security for his good behavior. Many of the arms in the hands of the rebels were put there by a too adventurous British trade. A rifle is the thing which of all earthly possessions the natives most prize. If they have received arms from the traders of any other country, a discovery of the fact may cast a lurid light on some questions connected with this rebellion.

Outbreaks of individual eccentricity, such as that indulged in by Senator Mills, when the question of the United States recognizing the belligerency of the Cuban rebels was up, are apt to be taken or mistaken for the average opinion of Americans. "The United States," said the valiant Senator, "has rights in every foot of soil in the Western hemisphere; rights which they are ready not only to assert, but to maintain with the whole power of the army and navy of the Republic." He thought it would be in order for the Republic to say to Spain that she must leave Cuba or be driven out by a power which claims the right to regulate the whole continent. The United States has not yet taken the Senator's advice, though Congress may be regarded as having taken a step in that direction. To tell the truth, Latin America does not, as a whole, court this kind of patronage. The *Mexican Herald* regards the Monroe doctrine as having "a sinister significance for Latin America," and suggests that until it is made evident that the preaching of it is not intended to be the forerunner of annexation, it will continue to be viewed with suspicion there. Mexico has her experience of 1846 to look back to for a guide in the premises. A Valparaiso journal, taking up the same note, tells the world that "Spanish America has nothing in common with the United States." It goes further, and declares in their name: "We are a thousand times more distant from them than from any European power." The conclusion of this writer is that "it would