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EDW. TROUT,
Manager.

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THE SITUATION.

It is satisfactory to know that while menaces of hostile legislation are made at Washington, friendly negotiations are going on between the United States and British Governments with the view to a settlement of the fishery question. When the subject came up in the House of Commons, Sir James Fergusson, under secretary of the foreign office, stated that despatches had been received from Washington "which were of a pacific character and afforded material grounds for hope of a final settlement of the dispute." Attempts to create excitement on the question in the United States are not wholly disinterested. The fishermen, and those who speak for them, are utterly unreasonable, being possessed of the idea that if they make noise enough they will some how be able to get what they know they are not entitled to. The cry of war, so absurdly raised, brings up the question of coast defences, and unites two classes of advocates; one which regards the building of fortifications and the creating of a navy as a matter of ordinary prudence, and another which is glad to find some means of expenditure that will make a reduction of the tariff impossible. Incidents are invented or magnified out of which to create excitement. Canada is preposterously described as bellicose; the prospect of the British fleet taking part in the protection of the fisheries, in the future as in the past, is tortured into a menace; and the statement that Canadians are fishing within the three mile limit off the American coast is made, as if it furnished a complete answer. Americans often committing the same offence in Canadian waters. If individual Canadians violate the law, by all means let them be punished; there is no desire here to screen them, quite the contrary.

The action of the Senate on the fisheries question, in initiating legislation without consultation with the Administration, is a departure from a long established constitutional usage. The sub-committee on foreign affairs, which has charge of the subject in the House, resolved to avoid this mistake; and the

various movements made in either House have been reported to Secretaries Bayard and Manning, from whom suggestions are asked. The precipitancy of the aggressive legislators may arise from the uncertain reception which their proposals would have met at the hands of the Administration. We know that one member of it would have approved of a good deal that has been done and threatened. There are people both in and out of Congress who see, and are not afraid to say, that if the proposed retaliatory legislation were carried out, the United States would be greater sufferer than Canada; but what effect their sane and prudential views may have on the excited fishermen and their backers is uncertain; probably it will not be great.

The St. John Board of Trade has put in for that city a claim to be made the winter port for Atlantic steamers of Canada. The advantages offered by the port for this purpose are dwelt on at great length. The suggestion is made not merely in the interests of the city, or of the Province, but of the Dominion. The Board seeks to pledge the candidates for election to the federal legislature to sustain this view, on broad and patriotic grounds, and most of them may be relied on to take the pledge. It is claimed that no port north of Cape Hatteras is so entirely free from ice, and is so safe, in winter and summer; and that there is no other port, except St. John, north of Baltimore, which is not sometime frozen over. A terminal port for the transmission of mails, St. John asks to be made. The Board of Trade Report, on the subject, would be satisfied, after the completion of the Short Line, to have the British mail steamers call alternately at St. John; but the resolutions claim for that city the winter port. The alternate system would suit the competing ports of Halifax and Sidney better; though each would naturally prefer to have the whole of a good thing rather than divide it with a rival or rivals. Nevertheless all cannot have the desired monopoly.

Imperial officers when employed in the colonies are henceforth to look to the colonies exclusively for pay. The Imperial allowance hitherto paid to officers so employed is to be cut off. Under this rule, if General Middleton continues in the service of Canada he will lose £500 a year. An analogous rule has, for some time, been acted upon in the case of Imperial pensioners. A person in receipt of an imperial pension, when he becomes governor of a colony, loses his pension, which however revives with the cessation of his governorship. The new regulation will indispose British officers to take colonial employments, unless their salaries are increased. But of British officers so employed, the number is now a minimum. In Canada, the adjutant-general of the militia is the sole officer who is in this position. A Canadian adjutant-general would get the preference, liberty to make the change being first obtained, if one with the requisite experience could be found; but in the absence of this qualification, we shall probably go on as at present, paying something more than

before by way of inducement and compensation.

The contract for the construction of forty five miles of the Cape Breton railway, between Sydney and the Narrows, has been let to Messrs. Sims and Slater, of Ottawa. Docks at Point Tupper, on the Strait of Canso, will be undertaken next summer. When this road is completed, Sydney will be the point to which mails must be sent in order to ensure their speediest delivery, on either side of the Atlantic. In this particular, Sidney can have no possible rival; through freight, taking care of itself, will seek the water at ports which can be reached by shorter railway reaches.

Whether the Grand Trunk or the Canadian Pacific or both shall build a branch or branches to the Sault Ste. Marie is becoming a litigated question; the Grand Trunk disputing the right of its rival to extend its branch from Algoma Mills. Could the two companies not agree, on this section, a common line? Would not one line carry all the traffic, at least for a time? And when the capacity of a single line proved insufficient, then would be the time to build another line. If this natural order of development were observed, neither contestant would be injured and both would be benefited.

The social disease known by the name of anti-rent is proving infectious. Fifteen thousand 'long-shoremen on strike in New York threaten to refuse to pay rent. This, of course, means rent of houses, not of land. It cannot be said that houses are a gift of nature; but that makes no difference to people who accept the anti-rent theory. This is a lugubrious triumph for the principles of Henry George, a little mis-applied perhaps its author would say.

The conviction of the anarchist, at Chicago, followed by a death sentence, has not prevented a resort to dynamite as a weapon of social warfare. During the strike of the 'long-shoremen, in New York, non-union men have had to be got to load vessels. This happened in the case of the Guyandotte of the Old Dominion line. On Monday she went out, and when she got off Long Branch a dynamite explosion occurred on board, making two great holes in her decks fifteen feet square. The fuse of the infernal machine by which the explosion had been caused was found in the cabin. One young man on deck sustained a slight injury. The explosive was placed in a closet; had it been in the hold, the vessel must have had a large hole made in the bottom, and she would probably have sunk before relief could have been got. There can scarcely be a doubt about the motive for the outrage or the agency by which it was effected.

—The Iron Trade Review, of Cleveland, Ohio, publishes the fire losses in iron works in 1886. One hundred and twenty establishments in different parts of the country were damaged by fire during the year, involving a loss of \$3,400,000, on which there were insurances of \$1,350,000.