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THE SITUATION.

A plan of accommodation, in the fishery question, has been suggested by the Canadian Government and has been sent to England for the consideration of the Imperial Government, by which, should it be approved, it will be proposed to the United States Government. As the despatch containing the proposals of the Canadian Government had not arrived on Monday when the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs informed the House of Commons of its existence, its nature is unknown. We cannot doubt that some way out of the difficulty will be found. Meanwhile industrious attempts are being made to extract profit out of the shadow of the war cloud at Washington. All sorts of defensive works in forts, vessels and canals, and proposed expenditures, every one of which had been proposed before, under other influences, and which may be proposed again in the distant future.

The response of Lord Salisbury to a deputation which asked State aid to emigration was not encouraging. Emigration, the Premier said, if voluntary, is not likely to be on a large scale; if compulsory it would, judging by the past, prove a failure. The deputation was not satisfied. Perhaps a mean between the two extremes could be found. If a large voluntary emigration be impossible, why not take what can be got? Forcible deportation is out of the question in a free country; but there must be a large number of persons who would emigrate if they had the means, and who remain at home without hope simply because they have not the wherewithal to move. Voluntary, and self-moving emigration is the best; but that does not prove that the next best may not be worth setting in motion. Any extensive scheme of organized emigration would probably look chiefly to our North-West as a place of settlement. A necessity for something like enforced removal from the congested districts of Ireland has lately been declared desirable; but wholesale immigration of this kind would not be desirable, and is not likely to be forced upon us. Could not over-populated parishes find some relief by paying

the passages of redundant laborers to Canada? This has been done before, in an irregular and fitful way, and might, perhaps, with advantage be repeated on a systematic plan.

The White River disaster, by which more than thirty lives were sacrificed, puts in a strong light the desirability of heating cars by some other less dangerous method than that of the stove. The fall of the cars into the river, on this occasion, was not responsible for nearly so much loss of life as the fire that broke out when the stoves were upset. That cars can be heated by steam from the locomotive is certain, although the new plan has not passed the experimental stage. The Massachusetts Railway Commissioners report that the experiments so far made have proved in all respects satisfactory. A train which runs between Boston and Springfield is so heated. A further trial may be necessary before the change could be generally made with an entire assurance of success, although the system is, we believe, successfully operated on the elevated railroads of New York city.

The decision of Mr. Justice Galt, in *Rose vs. Powell*, negatives the claim of the promoters of the Temperance Colonization Company to make profit out of their partners. They bought the land from the Government at \$1.10 an acre and charged the company \$3 for it, crediting themselves with the difference, under the name of "land credit." This credit they assumed to treat as payment for their stock. When a new board of directors was elected, this pretended payment was treated as null, and the members of the inner circle were called upon to pay for their stock like other people. The result of the suit just decided affirms their liability to pay, and treats the "land credit" as mythical. The astonishing thing is that men who acted as trustees should have defiantly sought to make money out of their position by the discreditable juggle resorted to. There is a very large number of other suits, mostly against subscribers. The subscribers refused to pay on the ground that the company had not the lands which it pretended to possess when it obtained subscriptions, for many of which it paid an exorbitant commission, several times as great as it paid to land agents on the smallest transactions. Should these suits go against the company, one very curious result would be that the original manipulators who tried to make money out of their partners would be relieved from paying their subscriptions.

The Winnipeg Board of Trade reports that the year 1886 was one of "activity and persevering effort." It abstains, wisely we think, from discussing the question of reciprocity, during the excitement of an election. It objects to discriminating freights which tell against Winnipeg, and hopes for some advantage from the improvement of the Red River to the boundary line, a work which it has taken special steps to press on the attention of the government. The Board succeeded in obtaining from the C. P. R. a reduction of fifteen per cent. on freight rates to all points in

the west. The Board does not want the Dominion Government to violate its agreement with the C. P. R. Co., but it wants to see the province vested with power to charter railways to the frontier. No candidate for parliamentary honors upholds disallowance. There is no hope of obtaining a repeal of the unjust Stay law of the local legislature, which makes Manitoba a paradise for unprincipled debtors. From enquiries made it has been ascertained that within twenty-five miles of Winnipeg there is a million and a half of acres which the owners are ready to sell at an average of \$6.50 an acre, and that a very large number of farms could be got for \$5.00 an acre. The system of grain and hide inspection is expected to prove of incalculable value; and great faith in the Hudson Bay railway is expressed.

All cities, in northern latitudes, have to complain of a waste of water, on the recurrence of every spell of severe frost. People let their water taps run as a means, often as they believe the only means, of preventing the water getting congealed in the pipes. Grumbling is indulged in, whenever the discovery of wasted water is announced, as happened at the Water Works Committee in Toronto, the other day, and the remedy of increased inspection is insisted on as a preventive. But experience shows that it is a preventive that does not prevent. Why not face the assured fact that this waste will continue to go on, and make an extra charge to meet it? If anything would make people careful it would be this. People will waste the city's water if they can thereby save plumbing bills and avoid the inconvenience of having the supply frozen up. They will not stop to enquire whether the extra cost of pumping be more or less than the extra cost for plumbing. Inspectors are not ubiquitous. The sensible thing is to try the experiment of increasing the water rate sufficiently to cover the extra cost of pumping. It can certainly be made a success, and if not satisfactory in every respect, it would at least be better than the present futile attempt to catch the culprits in the act.

The elections have once more brought to the front the objection to the products of the labor of criminals coming into competition with free labor. There is a notion abroad that this competition is to be got rid of by employing convict labor on public works. But this can be true only on the assumption that the public works are not such as there could be any national or economic motive for undertaking; for if there were, obviously there could be no reason why free labor should not be employed upon them. The proposal is equal to saying that the labor of convicts ought to be wasted. But obviously this is not tenable ground. A convict is not dispensed from the necessity of laboring for his own support. If he were, the entire cost of his support would fall on the public, including the owners of free labor. What is wanted is that the products of convict labor should not be sold at a price unduly to depress the market. If this object could be attained, in whatever way, all ground of complaint