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THE SITUATION.

In these days people talk jauntily of a winter steam-boat service between Quebec and Europe. In the fight against nature, we might possibly come off conquerors; but at what cost? Would the game be worth the candle? Mr. McNaught, of the Great Northern Railway, of Quebec, is the promoter of this kind of winter navigation which makes its way by breaking the ice. Mr. Tarte's sons made some practical experiments in the business last winter; and the Premier and the Minister of Public Works are said to have encouraged Mr. McNaught in his enterprise, in what way or to what extent report fails to say. But any substantial encouragement means money, and no other would be of any use. One does not like to throw cold water on any promising experiment, but what gain is Canada to make by a navigation of this kind? It does not concern national independence; it is inconceivable that the British fleet could even take advantage of it. If we want access to the sea, independent of the United States, we have it in the Intercolonial Railway. Would it not be wise to rest content with this rather than to try doubtful experiments in navigating ice-bound waters in winter? The regions of phantasy are boundless and her domain is strewn with the wreck of ill conceived schemes, which bring in their train ruin and disaster. Where is the imperative necessity for us to enter on wild schemes of ice-breaking navigation?

Le Journal, which as an Opposition organ cannot be supposed to have special means of access to Government information, tells us that the census returns will show that the French population of Ontario is 300,000, and what is more important, the increased population of the Province of Quebec will have the political effect, under the constitution, of causing a loss to Ontario of three or four seats in the House of Commons, and that the Maritime provinces will experience a similar loss, while Manitoba may, in the redistribution, gain one member. When the union between Upper and Lower Canada was formed in 1841, Lower Canada, with a population considerably larger than the sister province, was accorded only an equal number of representatives in the Legislative Assembly. The unequal representation, on a population basis, not then accepted as

a theory, was intended to insure the supremacy of British interests. Later, when confederation was launched, population was made the basis of Parliamentary representation, and it was made a constitutional rule that a redistribution of seats was to follow every decennial census. Quebec was made the pivot round which the redistribution was to move, while its own number of representatives, 65, remains stationary. The loss of the other provinces will be only a relative gain to Quebec. As for the supposed future numerical supremacy of the French race in Canada, it is a dream that will never be realized. A supremacy not numerical is conceivable, but if it ever arrived its stay would not be likely to be long. The French of old France set the example of abnormal checks on population; but the French of Canada did not follow it; some of the other provinces unhappily did, and the strength of the British race in Canada is accordingly diminished. Nobody expects that in this province, the size of families will be increased for political reasons. In Quebec, the priests do their people no ill duty in urging increase for religious and political reasons.

Of 1,200 Canadian recruits for the South African Constabulary only two have been found unfit. The rest of the men, Inspector General Baden-Powell reports, "have been found in every way satisfactory." The proportion of men found unfit is exceedingly small, and speaks well for the care with which the selection was made.

A proposal has been made that King Edward be styled King of Great Britain and Ireland and Sovereign Lord of Canada. If this were done, we would have to speak of him as our Sovereign Lord, which would be a little awkward. With the old titles of King and Queen we are familiar; but the title has not hitherto made the Sovereign King of Canada. If there is to be a change, this would be the best, so far as Canada is concerned. We have been accustomed to speak of the late Queen as our Queen; why should we not be entitled, in a more special manner, under the change, to speak of King Edward as our King?

A list of some of the rates of the new German tariff has been published, in which some articles are just as high as 300 per cent. This of course is the maximum tariff to which Canada is subject. The duty on wheat is quite prohibitive. The Agrarians are extreme protectionists, as they expect to profit by protection. Two Canadian boards of trade have already called for retaliation against Germany, and others may now follow suit. Such a policy is however of doubtful wisdom, as it would only give Germany excuses for treating Canada still worse, if that be possible. The items in the new German tariffs which have been published are not yet official, but they may not the less be true. If true, their official promulgation must soon take place.

An alleged conspiracy to overthrow the French Republic in favor of Prince Louis Napoleon, as Emperor, has been discovered in time to prevent the attempt being made. September 14 is mentioned as the date on which the movement was to have been made. The Prince is in the Russian army, and it is said that, on that date, the Czar intended to promote him to a full generalship. The men who were to have headed the movement are M. Deroulede and two others. The former is a notorious fire-eater; it is probable though not so stated, that the army was involved in the conspiracy. The facts having leaked out in time, the Republic will know how to save itself,