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THE SITUATION.

A new sealing question, in which Canada is interested, has cropped up in Japan. Proceedings have been taken against British Columbia vessels which have been operating in Japanese waters. The Japanese Government is said to claim a 100 miles limit; but as this is entirely in opposition to the principle of international law affirmed by the Behring Sea Board of Arbitration, it is not likely to be allowed. The Japanese promise to look more strictly after their seal fisheries in future. If they seriously set up the claim of a 100 limit, or anything like it, shall we have another sealing arbitration to settle the claim? A reference to the decision of the Paris tribunal ought to settle the matter; and as Japanese are reasonable people, this would probably suffice.

If Mr. Sandford Fleming can prevent it, the French cable between Australia and New Caledonia is not to be allowed to prevent the construction of a cable between Canada and Australia. But, guided probably by acquired knowledge, he does not appear to believe that the cable he proposes can be launched as a commercial enterprise. His plan is that it shall be the property of the Governments interested; and, in this view, it is a serious detriment to the enterprise that some of the Australian colonies have subsidized the French line, as they are less likely to become partners in a rival enterprise. According to Mr. Fleming's estimate, the working of the line would leave a loss of \$300,000 a year to be shared between Canada, Australia and Great Britain. The difficulty would be to apportion this loss in a manner mutually satisfactory. If Mr. Fleming be correct in the supposition that it would be judicious to lower the charge for messages to 2s. a word, the reduction would offer a temptation to the public rather than to the Governments, though it might not afford a sufficient mo-

tive to induce a company to undertake the work as a commercial undertaking. Mr. Fleming has gone to Australia in the interest of the enterprise, and we shall learn in due time whether the necessary encouragement can be got from the Governments interested to make the project a success. Public opinion in England is being thoroughly aroused to the importance of the question, a fact which goes far to give assurance that an independent British cable will be built.

During the week there were all sorts of rumors of compromise on the silver purchase repeal bill, in the United States Senate. But it looks, at the time of writing (Thursday), as if the debate was on the point of closing, and it is possible that before this sheet is in the hands of the reader a direct vote may have been taken on unconditional repeal. The gold in the Treasury is down to about \$80,000,000, and some means will have to be taken to restore the legal reserve, which has been entrenched upon. A bond issue seems to be the only practical resource, but the Treasury seems disinclined to take this step without further authority of law.

The Battle Creek disaster on the Grand Trunk road in Michigan is one of the most ghastly and lamentable occurrences of the kind in recent times. Among the victims are a large number of Canadians. The disaster cannot be added to the list of unavoidable accidents; the collision would not have occurred if all the men in charge of the trains had done their duty. Besides the loss and suffering of the unfortunate passengers, the company will have to pay a heavy bill to compensate the injured and the bereaved. Unfortunately there is no way of absolutely preventing such calamities, though some of their consequences may certainly be mitigated by new precautions as to lighting and heating the cars.

With the war in Mashonaland will revive the vague dream of a South African Anglo Empire. It is surprising how a great colonizing nation like Great Britain is drawn on by degrees. Twice she entered into treaties not to go north of the Orange River; and more than once before she has been drawn beyond this limit. Matabele's kingdom is farther above the Orange River than Toronto is above Montreal. The object or pretext of the extension has more than once been to protect the natives against the Dutch Boers, who, originally planted in the Cape Colony, became themselves the founders of new colonies farther north, and were accused of sometimes enslaving the natives, whom their system does not permit to live in idleness. Matabele will likely lose his territory, though we may be sure that the scandal which clustered around the name of Langalabalele will not be repeated in the case of the present chief. There is a sort of Monroe doctrine, under another name, in South Africa; the Dutch Boers of the Cape Colony look with extreme jealousy upon any British colonization in other parts of South Africa, and when there are any Boers in the region which has become

a subject of dispute, they invariably side with their own kin. The chartered company operating in Mashonaland made the premier of Cape Colony their president, and as he must have the confidence of both English and Boers in his own province, he might be in a position to help them more than any one else. No doubt this belief was acted upon when he was selected for president. But when a new territory has to be dealt with, the British Government cannot give free hand to colonial ministers without taking measures to see that no injustice is done to the natives. Accordingly, Sir Henry Loch, as British High Commissioner, is there to see that nothing like the scandal of the Langalabalele incident is repeated. As is quite natural, Premier Cecil Rhodes, president of the chartered company, and the High Commissioner, are at loggerheads. The business of Sir Henry Loch is ostensibly to see that no injustice is done to Matabele. The Cape Colony will agree with their premier whatever he does, and will show jealousy of the English Government whatever course it may be necessary for the latter to pursue. Nevertheless, Sir Henry Loch will have the making of the treaty for Great Britain when the war is over. A story of atrocities committed by the British in connection with the raid on Fort Victoria having been met by denial, it is proper to suspend judgment as to the fact.

An offer has been made by the Australian militia to furnish 100 men for service in Mashonaland. General Tulloch, in command of the British forces at the seat of war, in Mashonaland, in refusing the offer, affected to see in it evidence that a federation of Imperial colonies already exists. Of course, this is only a figurative expression, and we must not take it literally. When the attempt to confederate the South African colonies was made, it had to be abandoned. The bare suggestion set Cape Colony aflame. The Dutch Boers were not unwilling to come under the flag of England, when Napoleon had occupied their Mother Country, and their own fate as colonists was uncertain; but the colonists of the original Dutch colony are extremely, perhaps above everything, anti-English. Some sort of a confederation may in time evolve out of these separate colonies; but as in Cape Colony to-day, the ruling element is more likely to be Dutch than English. Numerically, the native population greatly preponderates in all these Provinces, and as they do not dwindle away like the Indians in North America, or the natives of Australia, they would, if they ever get the voting power, be able to out-vote both Boers and English. The problem of South Africa's future is being resolved, but it is not possible at present to foresee exactly what the solution will be.

The American consul at Ottawa has reported to his Government the accelerated speed with which Canada has pushed on her Sault Ste. Marie Canal, which he represents as likely to be ready for traffic early next season. To this information he adds the suggestion that this new auxiliary water way will enable Canada to discrimi-