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THE SITUATION.

Canada has one other boundary, that on the eastern border of Alaska, to ascertain, on the ground. Preparatory to this, interesting accounts of the Yukon country are brought by Dr. George M. Dawson, assistant director of the geological survey, who has returned from a six months' exploration, in that region. The exploration was both geographical and geological, on the upper part of the Yukon river. At the same time, Mr. Ogilvie, of the Dominion Lands Branch, began an instrumental survey from the sea coast, by way of Lewis river, up the Yukon to the 141st meridian, the eastern boundary of Alaska. Dr. Dawson's party proceeded up the Stickeen river as far as Dease Lake, which they descended as far as the Dease and Laird river forks. The survey of the Laird and Mackenzie rivers being part of the plan, Mr. McConnell here separated from the rest of the party to enter on that work; Dr. Dawson going up the Laird into Lake Francis, after which he made a portage of fifty miles to the Pelly river, down which he proceeded till the Lewis river was reached, and which he descended. He went altogether a thousand miles north of Victoria. Mr. Ogilvie will winter on the Yukon, continuing his survey next season as far as the Mackenzie river, on which McConnell is expected to winter. The Yukon is navigable for light draught steamers from its mouth to Lewis river, and after an interruption of three miles, again to the eastern base of the coast range. Stretches of open grass country are found on its tributaries; and though it is well adapted for fur-bearing animals, Indians are rare. It is expected that the information obtained respecting the country will be of service in settling the Alaska boundary.

The gold bearing region, in the Yukon country, is found to be of vast extent; in length not less than five hundred miles, by a width yet to be determined. Miners have for some years been working the placers found there; and Dr. Dawson thinks there are about one hundred of them in the vicinity of Forty-mile creek. As the country produces no supplies, the miners have to depend upon what they can carry in. As always happens in such cases, the miners have found it necessary to make regulations among themselves for the settlement of disputes about claims. Quartz mining belongs to the future; prospecting for quartz has yet scarcely begun. The value of this region as a mineral country has yet to be determined; all that can be said at present is that gold has a very wide distribution and the prospect is good. According to Governor Swinford, of Alaska, many of the miners at Forty-mile creek are Americans; and he adds that if any attempt be made to subject them to miners' license under the Canadian law, the miners will resist and bloodshed will ensue. But nothing of this kind will be done till it is ascertained that this location is in Canadian territory. The question of boundary between Canada and Alaska should be settled as soon as possible; but it seems that the U. S. Congress has not given the necessary authority to enter on this work.

Admiral Sir Michael Culme Seymour, who retires on account of ill-health, will be succeeded in the command of the Pacific squadron by Rear Admiral Heneage. Though the change is in no way connected with the Alaska fishery troubles, the new admiral intends to take a cruise, in his flag ship, around Behring's Strait. He is reported to have said that he should not permit British sealers to be interfered with, when three miles from the coast. He also says that he heard, at the Admiralty Department, before he left England, that the question of the Alaska fishery will come before the fishery commission. Governor Swineford, of Alaska, in his annual report, shows how the Alaska company lords it over a region in which it has no special rights. "The fur trade of Alaska," he says, "is practically monopolized by the Alaska commercial company, which does not confine its operations to the Seal Islands, leased to it by the government, but holds possession of most of the Aleutian chain and the greater part of the mainland as a principality of its own, over which it exercises undisputed sway." The time cannot be far distant when other citizens of the Republic will dispute this usurped control. The company holds the Indians in a condition of practical slavery. It boycotts government officers sent to the islands, when they refuse to do its will. It kept paid agents at Washington to bolster up its monopoly, and in every way blocks the wheels of progress. These complaints thus officially made, must attract the attention of Congress if the national interests are to prevail over those of a private corporation.

In Newfoundland there is a government savings' bank; and it is managed in a way that, in some particulars, may be presented as an example. The deposits are not absorbed in ministering to the necessities of the government; they are employed in a way to bring a profit, which goes to the sinking fund created to pay off the public debt, $290,000 of which has been extinguished out of this source, and during the current year this amount will be increased by the addition of $80,000. Thus the capital remains intact, and continues to produce a revenue to the owners and a profit to the government, after paying interest to depositors. The rate of interest paid is three per cent., and this fact accounts for the profit that is made. Though the general revenue of the province is liable for the deposits, it would be an improvement if some special security were given. The amount at interest steadily increased from $1,219,789, in 1880, to $1,789,054, in 1885, though last year there was a slight decrease of $37,441. Distress may occasionally visit the island, but with this amount in the savings' banks, it is clear that it cannot be general among the industrious class.

Since the discussion on commercial union began, the statement has been made, in very positive terms, that western American farmers are so prosperous that they have been able to pay off their mortgages. This statement has met an official contradiction in the report of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, for 1886. This report shows that, far from being out of debt, western American farmers and eastern too, for that matter, are carrying heavy loads of mortgage debts. Every third farm in Illinois is mortgaged, the loans bearing from six to eight per cent. interest. In Kansas every other farm is mortgaged, and the rate of interest paid is from six to ten per cent.; besides which there are chattel loans carrying interest from ten to eighteen per cent. In the old State of New York, the proportion of farms mortgaged—three tenths—is but little less than that in Illinois, but the average rate of interest, five and a half per cent., is lower. From twenty to twenty-five per cent. of the Missouri farms are mortgaged at an average rate of eight per cent. interest. The rate of interest on mortgages in Kentucky is seven per cent. And there is a form of mortgage, in some of the States, which, so far as we know, is unknown in Canada: mortgages on the growing crops. In South Carolina alone, this form of indebtedness aggregated $8,500,000 in 1885, and this is by no means the maximum figure, the amount having been $3,500,000 higher in 1882. The Georgia farmers pay fifteen per cent. interest to the banks; and in Florida the same class pays from ten to twenty-four per cent. on a large amount of indebtedness. Forty-five per cent. of the Alabama farmers are in debt without any available means of payment, and the interest they pay ranges from eighteen to twenty per cent.; they are obliged to buy store goods on credit at twenty-five to forty per cent. above cash prices. Of the Mississippi farmers one-third are hopelessly ruined, and another third owe debts which they may be able to pay. The Louisiana planters pay from fifteen to twenty per cent. interest. These facts show that American farmers are a long way from being free from mortgage debt. On the whole, their condition is certainly worse than that of Canadian farmers, and the burthen of interest they carry is greater.

The council of La Chambre de Commerce, the French Board of Trade, of Montreal, has passed a resolution asking the government to fix the rates of fare on Canadian