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THE SITUATION.

At a recent meeting of the London Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Baden Powell, M. P. for Liverpool, gave a reason why India is supplanting the United States in supplying wheat to England, that she raises no obstacle to taking her pay in English manufactures. This fact has hitherto not been allowed its due weight. As the disposition of India, in this respect, is likely to continue, the operation of this influence will be felt quite as much, if not more, in the future than in the past, and it will tell against Canada, if in a less degree, as well as against the United States. Under a customs union between Canada and the Republic, the same result need not be expected, to any great extent; for though Canada might take largely of American manufactures, the States which produce a surplus of agricultural products could not reciprocate to any thing like the same relative extent that England does in the case of India. Both Canada and the United States may hereafter feel it more difficult to compete with India in the production of wheat.

The colonial conference has closed. On the last day, Sir Henry Holland, in summing up the work it had done, expressed the hope that it would, in the future, tend to strengthen the empire and draw into a closer union the colonies and the mother country. An incident occurred, during Friday's session, which goes to show how difficult it would be for the representatives of the colonies to agree with the imperial policy, where their parts of the empire are specially concerned. The announcement by Sir Henry Holland, colonial secretary, that the government hoped to arrange with France a joint Naval Commission for the government of the new Hebrides, aroused the ire of the Australian representatives, till it almost reached to scorn. In vain did Sir Henry explain that the commission would have power to protect settlers, traders and missionaries, to land marines and punish the natives for committing outrages, and to maintain order generally; and that, if the commission went into operation, the French garrisons now occupying the chief harbors of the New Hebrides, would retire. The

indignation of the colonial representatives arose from the part assigned to France, whom they desire to treat as an interloper. The premier's attempt to mollify their wrath only added fuel to the flames; and the agent-general for Victoria reproached Lord Salisbury with having made a speech which would have come well from a Frenchman. And yet the question involved the use to which France should put her own territory. This irritability and want of consideration for others, in the colonial representatives, make it difficult to hope much from such a body as that of which the colonial conference was composed.

On questions involving expenditure, the colonial representatives were the reverse of compliant, unless when they expected a direct and special benefit to their own colonies. A scheme of its own that would put others to cost, a colony was willing to support. The Australians are alive to their own defence, but they do not appear to have any intention of aiding in the development of the Canadian scheme of telegraphic communication, between England and Australia, or of assisting the Canadian Pacific mail route. If, at the outset, each colony thinks only of itself, what might not be feared as time went on? An increase of the Australian squadron, the Australians welcomed with demonstrations of joy; to the Canadian cable and postage route they turned a deaf ear. Over an elongation of the Queen's title, they grew rapturous; but when asked to aid, by a money contribution, any scheme in which they had not a paramount interest, they declined; and when England proposed a reasonable arrangement with a foreign country, regarding the new Hebrides, they went into hysterics. On the whole, we cannot say that the experience of the first colonial conference is hopeful, though possibly a second one might improve on the first.

Prince Edward Island, though it has not got a tunnel across the Strait of Northumberland, has got \$20,000 added to its subsidy; and all sums paid as pensions, by the local government, are to be refunded. As things go, this may be regarded as generous, seeing that the erring island sent a majority of representatives to Ottawa to oppose the policy of the men who hold the purse strings. An explanation is made by the local premier, Sullivan, intended to show that this additional grant cannot be drawn into a precedent for other provinces to build upon. It is that the isolated position of the island prevents its profiting to a great extent by the Canadian Pacific railway. There is a grain of truth in this; but if it were five times as large as it is, it would not prevent the example of the treatment of the island being pointed to as one which ought to be followed elsewhere. The thing has been done before, and is quite sure to be done again.

The Nansimo horror will rank high, in its desolating effects, on the dark list of coal mine explosions. The shock was terrific and the loss of life unusually great. Humanity requires us, at the moment, to fix mainly upon the fact that the helpless de-

pendents of the dead are in want and misery, and that means for relieving their distress are greatly needed. The occasion is eminently one for the exercise of a kindly charity. Here the good offices of Parliament would be specially appropriate.

The Canadian fishery cruisers seem to be doing effective work in the least offensive way. Up to last Friday, the Triumph had hailed and boarded no less than fifty American schooners, since the season opened. But in all cases, the vessels had come in shore for legitimate purposes. There was no friction, and a very commendable spirit was shown by the American crews; all being perfectly willing to comply with the regulations. All intercourse by such vessels, during the night, is forbidden; so that the opportunity for a breach of the customs laws is reduced to a minimum. No dissatisfaction is expressed by American crews with the necessity of complying with the regulations. We think we may congratulate ourselves that a better understanding of the actual working of the law is being acted upon, that there is a considerable decrease of friction in the operation of the fishery laws; and this is a great point gained for both sides. An occasional poacher still tries to evade the law.

From New Brunswick comes a report of the worst overflow of the St. John river ever known. A large part of Fredericton has been submerged, and owing to the large quantities of snow still in the woods, on the upper parts of the river, the end is not yet. Lumbermen are suffering greatly through logs being floated away, the erection of booms being impossible. One operator puts his loss at \$50,000. Every mill is shut down. Railway communication with the United States has been suspended more than ten days. Should the losses by lumbermen be as extensive as reported, the banks which made advances cannot fail to suffer, more or less.

Newfoundland sentiment appears to be divided on the bait question. A committee of the legislature has just reported, "That they consider it their bounden duty in the interests of Her Majesty's loyal subjects, in Newfoundland and elsewhere, to respectfully decline assent to the arrangement proposed for our ratification." This declined proposal was a provision for selling bait to French and American fishermen. But on the other hand, it is said that 40,000 people of the west coast of Newfoundland make their living by catching bait and selling it to the French, and these people will suffer greatly if they be forbidden to pursue their calling. Meanwhile the Imperial Government has sanctioned the Bait Bill, to go into effect next year. The French say they will prohibit Newfoundlanders from taking fish on their coast line, and that they will help themselves to herring bait and defy the colonials. "It is about time for two events to occur," says a correspondent, "first, that the French claims for fishing control over any part of the Newfoundland coast should cease, and second, that Newfoundland should form part of the Dominion of Canada." But Canada is in no hurry to shoulder the Newfoundland difficulties.