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THE SITUATION.

In a recent speech the Premier of Ontario stated that the Dominion Government had intimated an intention to veto the Mines Act of 1900; and that to prevent this the local government agreed with that of the Dominion to submit the question of constitutionality to the Supreme Court and, if afterwards thought advisable, to the Privy Council. The control of commerce rests with the Dominion; legislation affecting property falls within the domain of the local government. The local authority in the Mines Act required nickel to be worked up in Canada, and the question is whether the government at whose instance this was done, exceeded its powers. If a province did anything which clearly interfered with the export trade, as levying a royalty on some mineral, it might greatly lessen the export trade in such article and in that case the royalty would be equivalent to an export duty, which a province has no right to impose. It is much better to settle the matter by legal process without the exercise of the veto than with it. The old quarrels between Ontario and the Dominion were conducted in a spirit which we may be thankful time has outgrown.

Premier Ross of Ontario the other day concluded a speech with a political manifesto, setting forth the policy on which he relies to secure him a continuance of popular support. The new policy is largely made up of the development of New Ontario. It is not one which either political party can exclusively claim as its own. There are many things on which both parties agree, in connection with the development of New Ontario, such as the working of pine and spruce in the country. There are others on which their agreement is not so certain, or on which they distinctly differ; and these latter Mr. Ross may claim as the exclusive property of his party. On one point it is clear that the recent legislation of Manitoba has not been without its influence on Mr. Ross. In one of the planks of his new platform he claims "the regulation of rates for passengers on all railways subsidized by the province, and the ultimate control of such railways at the option of the Legislature." The regulation of rates constitutionally rests with the Dominion, but the Province ought to be able, on such a matter, to work in harmony with the Fed-

eral authority. We have seen that difference of politics was no bar to such agreement between Winnipeg and Ottawa; and keeping in view this precedent Mr. Ross was justified in making the promise which this plank expresses.

The International Arbitration and Peace Association is reported to be taking steps to clear up questions of law on annexation and the rules of warfare. The committee which is making the inquiry is collecting opinions from international jurists, and it seems probable that we shall, in this way, get collective views of international jurists on the British annexations in South Africa and American annexations in the Philippines, as well as some opinions on the burnings which accompanied the wars in these countries. In letters which the Committee has sent out, the right of annexation is generally denied, unless by the authority of the Congress of the states or the declared will of the people." The document closes with the remark that the "nominal annexation of the South African republics is in direct contradiction of the above judicial opinions." What is meant by the statement that annexation may take place by the authority of the Congress of the states is not clear. Does it mean a congress of the states comprising the International Arbitration, or the Congress of the United States of America, in the case of the Philippines? Some doubtful points of international law may be cleared up by the new tribunal, but it is obvious that its decisions must be confined to future cases that may arise. Nobody seriously believes that it will assume authority to deal with the results of the war in South Africa or in the Philippines. In these cases no such interference would be tolerated for a moment.

The appeal to the Tribunal of Arbitration cannot be made effectually by the Boers, England having stipulated in advance that the present case of South Africa should remain outside of it. By the aid of the Queen of the Dutch, they have made some sort of an appeal to the Tribunal of Arbitration, apparently in the way of getting separate opinions on points of International Law. Even the report of these doings, as set afloat, has an aspect of one-sidedness.

The report of the British Commission in the Transvaal against recognizing the monopolistic concessions made by the late Transvaal government has alarmed the holders of these concessions and set them to work to try to counteract the recommendations. Dutch and German capitalists are interested in the concessions, the Dutch in a superior, the Germans in a lesser degree. These monopolists command the services of newspapers and through them try to influence the Dutch and the German governments. The used-up politicians late of the Transvaal, with Kruger at their head, see in this incident a straw for them to clutch at. These concessions reveal the character of the late government of the Transvaal, which was embedded in corruption, Kruger and relations and other members of the government being partners in the iniquity. They will make a desperate effort to retain the booty, but they are destined to fail. Meanwhile they will make all the noise they can, crying lustily, thief like, "stop thief." The foreign holders of concessions and shares have in violation of their duties as neutrals, entered actively into the war. The railway company furnished an army of mercenaries in aid of the Boers, and they, forsooth, desire that their iniquities will be forgotten, and the property which they risked as enemies of Great Britain, treated as if they had not ventured it in a game of desperation which they have played and lost.