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THE SITUATION.

Parliament has discussed and rejected, by a vote of 77 to 41, a proposal for conditional preference with the parent State, which was rather in the form of asking than giving by Canada. It could be carried out only by the British Legislature discriminating against foreign products and in favor of the colonies. That would be a very serious thing for England to undertake. At present, she is able to boast, that if her possessions are large enough to create jealousy in other powers, under a policy of exclusiveness, she is not open to the objection of pursuing an exclusive policy; but that, on the contrary, when she opens a savage country to her own trade, she opens it equally to all nations. It is precisely the opposite policy which makes an extension of French colonies objectionable to other countries; for such extension means discrimination against them. That England is prepared to abandon the vantage ground of her present policy is not to be taken as proved, when the whole evidence in favor of the supposition rests upon a few isolated expressions of individual public men, against the general sentiment and the settled policy of the Mother Country. That this form of preference would be good for the Empire at large, there is much reason to doubt; but men who think themselves Imperialists often seem least capable of judging what is best for the Empire. If such a scheme of preference as that proposed and rejected could be carried out with advantage to the Empire, it would be good for Canada, as part of the Empire, but not otherwise.

Our own well-meant policy of preference has proved of little value to Great Britain, whom it ostensibly favors. Under our tariff, taken as a whole, the Americans, against whom discrimination was pointed, have the best of it. Under it their trade with Canada has relatively and absolutely increased, while that of England shows retrogression. This is due in part to the circumstance that the raw materials of our manufactures, e.g., hides, cotton, broom-corn, chemicals,

as well as hard coal, are bought from the Americans, and in part to a condition which forces a portion of the trade in a particular channel. Not that this portion is independent of the tariff; but after all, the part of our tariff which is here effective, is, as is natural, made to suit ourselves more than the country in favor of which we discriminated. It is the extent of the discrimination that misleads opinion. Could we alter this, with advantage to ourselves, even if England would concede what was contended for in the rejected resolution? At present, England takes nearly all our produce, without imposing duty on it. We could not here reciprocate, if we would, and were all Free Traders to a man, to boot. With what face, then, could we ask England to enter on a policy of discrimination for our benefit? It is no argument, to say, in reply, that we ought not to be too squeamish to take what we can get. Perhaps not; but could we get what Parliament, not unreasonably, we think, refused to ask for? The preference we at present give is no more than an equivalent for what we get without reciprocated preference. For reciprocated preference, it has not been shown what more we could give.

Seven years' residence as a basis of franchise does not meet acceptance from the Uitlanders. They have cabled to the British Government a protest against it, as a ground of settlement. We hope they are not becoming, in turn, unreasonable. Mr. Cecil Rhodes, speaking at Claremont, said there would be no danger of war, in Africa, for a century; but when the mental vision seeks to penetrate so far into the future, no human faculty is strong enough to discern the hidden truth with certainty. That war with the Transvaal is no longer to be feared is comfortably certain.

What the Ottawa Government and its supporters called a redistribution of seats, and to which the opposition gave the sinister name of Gerrymander, has had its life cut short by a hostile vote of the Senate. Under the constitution, redistribution is imperative after each decennial census. The representation is intended to be adjusted, with as much equity as practicable, to the population; that is, that the constituencies should be as nearly as possible of equal population. As population tends to increase in some places more than in others, and it may in a few places decrease; a periodical necessity for adjustment by redistribution becomes necessary, and, as stated, it is made constitutionally imperative. Whether the decennial readjustment was intended to be all-sufficing and to preclude readjustment at other dates, is a question that has been raised; and the question whether it would be permitted to be settled by the Privy Council, has been mooted, but not answered. On the part of the Government, it was alleged that the present Bill was intended to correct a previous Gerrymander, which leaned in the wrong direction; to which the reply came that this Bill does a great deal besides lopping off excrescences of this kind; that it creates other and even worse inequalities. At Confederation, it seems we deceived ourselves with the notion that we had found a scientific basis of representation, and as nearly as possible supplied the means of self-acting readjustment of inequalities that would, with the unequal growth of population, spring up. But we neglected to give determinate