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## THE SITUATION.

Under authority of an Act of last Session, the Minister of Customs has declared that British India, Ceylon, New South Wales and the Straits Settlements are entitled to preference under our tariff. British India and New South Wales are re-admissions, made necessary under the action of the legislature. Care is taken to insure that the goods entitled to preference are the product of the country claiming their admission, or that one quarter of their value is derived from the labor of such country employed upon them. From this rule there is a deviation in the case of refined sugar. The preference is 25 per cent. of the amount of the duties charged on the goods of countries not entitled to the reduction.

Prompt action has been decided upon by the Ontario Government in calling, at the unusual date of August 8rd, a meeting of the newly elected legislature. By this act both parties will learn how they stand, at least until the election courts have had their say. In a memorandum laid before Governor-in-Council, Attorney-General Hardy refers at length to the question, now raised for the first time, of the right of constables to vote at an election of a member of the Legislature. Certain classes are disqualified by name and others in general terms. Among the former constables are not found, and the question is whether they are confined to persons whose business is to forward the interests of one of the candidates, among whom constables cannot be counted. The doubtful thing is the disqualifying any person employed in any capacity, but it is still a question whether the true meaning is not the being employed by or on behalf of a candidate. The legal question was referred to the courts, but for different reasons it was found that it could not be considered till after the holidays, which end with August. Following the precedent set in the Dominion by the late Sir John Macdonald, Parliament unanimously concurring, Mr. Hardy's Government proposes, under the circumstances, to pass a declaratory Act affirming the right of constables at the late election to exercise the elective franchise. A doubt may arise whether such declaration would prevent the courts judicating on the contested question. In the discussion in

the precedent case Sir John Macdonald appears to have assumed that it would not, when he declared that he had no fear of an adverse decision. Mr. Hardy, with equal confidence, asserts his belief that the election law does not disfranchise constables. The Opposition, in raising the question, contended for the disfranchisement of these officers. Mr. Whitney points out that the precedent does not run on all fours.

Imperial penny postage for the half-ounce letter is to get a piecemeal application, as a result of the Imperial Conference. This will give Canada a two-cent postage with Great Britain, Newfoundland, Cape Colony, and Natal. An Imperial postal federal which leaves out Australasia, is but a beginning. Time, the great miracle-worker, may do the rest. The need for the change was not specially pressing, but the reduced rate will be gratefully received, and meanwhile Australia will have an opportunity of seeing how the reduction works. It is almost more important to make the postal service pay its way than that we should enjoy the luxury of postage at less than the cost price. Germany cannot be wrong in aiming to put all State-rendered services on a paying footing, and the sooner Canada imitates her in this particular, as far as circumstances will permit, the better. We welcome the boon of cheap inter-British and Colonial postage, but somehow a self-sustaining postal department would bring more satisfaction.

Perilously near to a dead-lock expresses the result of the British Columbia elections. The Opposition has, perhaps, if anything, the best of it; but neither party has by itself anything like a working majority and the chances for a Coalition are said not to be good. Mr. Martin, when he first went from Manitoba to British Columbia, might have served as a bridge to get over such a state of things as the elections have brought about, but he drifted from neutrality to forcible opposition, till he became the head and front of the forces which the Turner Government had to meet. Reconciliation between men who but yesterday were engaged in a violent struggle for supremacy must be nearly if not altogether impossible, even if the antagonisms of local interest could be overcome. But the two parties, as such, will not be able to unite, individual volition in a few cases would provide a *modus vivendi*. If, when all the returns are beyond doubt, one party has even the smallest numerical advantage, and another appeal to the constituencies were inevitable, it would be impossible to say in advance whether even that resource would overcome the difficulty that now confronts both parties. This makes an attempt to solve the problem by a Coalition, the most feasible thing on the cards, at present, doubtful as it must be in the result. Mr. Turner appears to have conducted the campaign in a way which did not involve the burning of the bridges behind him, and if any of those who engaged in the fight have anything to forget, the sooner oblivion overcomes them the better.

The Yukon judicial district having been separated from the North-West Territories by an Act passed last session, new executive machinery had to be set up. Instead of a Governor and council having been created there is a Commissioner and council. It is a case of the rose by another name. The Commissioner and council are endowed with the same power to make ordinances as the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territories, when the latter acts with the consent of the Legislative Assembly. The Commissioner and his council are subject to the instructions of the Governor-in-Council, or, a notable distinction,