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THE SITUATION.

Russia, on whose invitation the Disarmament Congress met, is the first power, in that assembly, to block the way to a mitigation of the evils of war, by giving a neutral character to private property at sea. She refuses even to discuss the question. Private property on land has long since ceased to be the prey of war, why should private property at sea come under a different rule? Russia in inviting the nations to send representatives to the Congress had her own views, and the suggestion made by England, on an understanding with the United States, has proved the touchstone which reveals one of these, at the very outset of the deliberations. The only advantage of this is that, at this early date, one of the mysteries which cover the motives of the Emperor in suggesting the Congress has disappeared. So long as a distinction is made between private property at sea and private property on land, maritime powers are discriminated against. To seek to perpetuate that discrimination is not the best way to assure the world against the calamities of war or to diminish the evils arising therefrom; quite the contrary. The Congress decides against the reduction of armaments; but in other respects, it is likely to make some useful resolves.

Dawson City has again suffered from the ravages of fire; this time, if the telegraph may be believed, to the extent of \$1,000,000. If any mistakes were made, in connection with the location or character of the buildings destroyed, this untoward incident will give an opportunity of correcting them. Complaints have been made that the Government has spent nothing in connection with the sanitation of Dawson, and if this points to a real grievance, the opportunity of correcting it has now come. It is impossible not to regret that so large a part of the water front was given over to one individual; this evil survives the fire. The destruction of buildings required for business and shelter is a serious matter; the loss of food and other supplies will be felt by individuals, though the pressure will not be so severe as it would have been a year ago when communication with the outside world was much more difficult. The losses will, of course, not be confined to the inhabitants of Dawson City, but will be shared, in some degree, with creditors elsewhere, chiefly perhaps in Vancouver.

Once more the Canadian Senate has ventured to assert itself; this time in the rejection of an addition to the expropriation powers of the Government. The bill rejected would have enabled the Government to expropriate for a temporary purpose and then, the convenience of the occasion being satisfied, hand the property or part of it back to the former owner. The objection was taken that the powers sought by the bill were without precedent, in British or American legislation. The incident is important as showing that the Senate is not cowed by the threats of its practical absorption in the other Chamber, or, as some advocate, its abolition. The Senate acted with cool deliberation, and apparently under a sense of public duty. A nominated Senate is doubtless an anomaly; but, though its constitution is susceptible of improvement, it may, under nomination, be sometimes useful, especially if it avoids indulgence in party spirit.

There seems to be now some prospect that grievances which the Uitlanders complain of, or at least some of them, may be remedied. Sir Alfred Milner, governor of Cape Colony, is to have a conference with President Kruger of the Transvaal, at Bloemfontain, capital of the Orange Free State. Mr. Kruger, for one thing, is willing to reduce from ten to five years the probation which aliens must undergo before they can obtain citizenship. The British Government will recommend the Uitlanders to accept some reasonable compromise, the precise nature of which will doubtless be made known at the conference.

In answer to an enquiry in the House of Commons, Sir Wilfrid Laurier stated that the international negotiations, in which Canada is primarily interested, "were in exactly the same condition as when the Canadian commissioners left Washington." And he added: "At that time substantial progress had been made on all questions submitted with the single exception of the Alaska boundary. That matter had been referred to the Governments interested, and the correspondence was still going on." This statement was made eight days ago. Since then statements have been published that the Alaska boundary question was likely to be submitted to arbitration, the terms of which to be settled by the Imperial Government and that of Washington. Stories published on American authority, represent Canada as playing an obstructive part, which may only indicate a desire to see her left out of the question. If there is to be arbitration, we trust there will be no conditions precedent to tie the hands of the arbitrators, and if British precedent be followed there will be none. There seems to be no warrant for the statement, made with an outward show of confidence, that the International Commission will not reassemble. There is a marked distinction between the other questions on which the Commission made "substantial progress," and the question of boundary, which arbitration could perhaps settle.

Under the constitutional Act which created the existing Canadian Confederation, a redistribution of the constituencies which elect members to the House of Commons, must take place after the taking of each decennial census. The next census will fall to be taken in 1901. The principle which ought to guide the distribution of the representation is, as nearly as practicable, equality of population to members. An equal number of people, in any part of the country, are entitled to an equal representation. This was called, in its inception, "representation by population." To consecrate this principle as a rule of constitutional law and practice, the country was agitated and convulsed for a number of years, till at last the principle becoming sacred in the eyes of the people, swept away all