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THE SITUATION.

In spite of denials that any causes of difference between the Governor General and the cabinet have arisen, it is certain all has not been smooth sailing, as over a sea without a ripple. Military men in high civil positions almost invariably blunder; and the fact that the present Governor General is no exception to the rule is patent. That there has been a repetition of the error in some form, is beyond question. If Lafontaine had been in our diplomatic premier's place, there would have been a protest that would have echoed in the remotest corners of the land. It is an excellent thing to avoid open quarrels; but on grave constitutional questions it is necessary to take such a stand as the Baldwin-Lafontaine government took in its day.

When in secularizing the clergy reserves, the then Parliament of Canada declared in the preamble of the Act, that it is desirable to put an end to all connection between Church and State, it did not provide any machinery by which this could be effectually and completely done. There had been, between churches, questions of precedence, and these survived secularization. And now we hear loud complaints that the old preferences cropped up during the late visit to Canada of the royal Duke and Duchess. If in secularizing the clergy reserves, the great source of contention between the churches, the State had decided to regard the clergy of different denominations, on great State occasions, only in their capacity as citizens, all causes of jealousy and heartburning over questions of denominational precedence ought to have died a natural death, though they would die hard. The recollection of old battles and old preferences, of studied exclusions and insults still rankles in the unhappy memories of those times. When one leading member of a denomination is invited to a State dinner, on a notable occasion, the uninvited heads of other denominations demand recognition and complain of being slighted. If none were recognized otherwise than as distinguished citizens, none could say that they were excluded on religious grounds. The com-

plainants obviously resent their not having been made objects of State patronage; but where there is no State Church it is better that such patronage should be extended to none; they want it only because they conceive others get it, so that they may not be put into a position of inferiority. The recognition, on these occasions, of all denominations is practically impossible; the recognition of none otherwise than as citizens seems to offer the only road to that perfect equality which befits a country that has broken loose from the trammels of a State Church.

Precedence, in the early days of Canada, was a well understood thing. Lists were drawn up by authority, in England, for use in Canada, and they had the binding effect of official social laws. These tables have fallen out of use, have become obsolete, or been formally set aside. In their place there is no binding substitute, and great room is left for the play of arbitrary caprice. The representative men of religious societies openly complain when they fancy themselves ignored; a distinguished citizen, when similarly treated, on State occasions, is silent; he cannot complain for himself, and there is nobody to do it for him. At a Provincial Government House cliques will form; some one or a few persons, whose responsibility it is difficult to see, will run the whole thing. You can easily find a Superior Court judge who has not been there for years; distinguished citizens are not necessarily recognized by the caprice that runs riot at what is intended to be the chief social centre, if the Provincial Government houses have any *raison d'être*. Scan the names of the published lists of the invitees, on minor occasions, and judge how far they are representative. For what purpose do Provincial Government houses exist? We fear there is too often a mistaken idea of the purposes for which Government houses in the province exist. The occupants, sometimes, come to look on themselves as having a right to do what they like with what is not their own; they forget that they have certain social duties to perform, and that they are there in a public capacity. To run a government house properly, when the inclination exists, is difficult; but if the managers try only to please themselves and a little circle of private friends, they entirely miss the object of their vocation. The public is long-suffering, but it carefully notes all deviations from the straight path; and distinctive clamors are heard, from time to time, when things become intolerable.

The announcement of the completion of the Isthmian treaty, to supersede the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, is admitted to have been premature; but the difficulty which that question presented is regarded as having been practically overcome. There is an idea afloat that the settlement of this question will clear the way to an agreement on questions now open between Canada and the United States. For this purpose, a Washington despatch says, an effort will be made to reassemble the Joint High Commission in the early part of November. It is said that the New England manufacturers are using pressure on the Washington administration to bring about a reciprocity treaty with Canada. This implies that they expect to get for their goods some special advantage from it. Two powerful influences are set the other way; the Canadian manu-