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THE SITUATION.

Mr. Plimsoll's Bill for the restriction of deck loading goes to the extent of the total exclusion from vessels of live cattle from Canada and the United States. And many members of the British House of Commons are anxious to push the measure through before the session closes. It is probable that among them are members for rural constituencies who wish to get rid of outside competition in cattle by a side-wind. Mr. Plimsoll is urgent to have the Bill pass, and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach quotes the mortality on the Atlantic passage as a reason why cattle should be protected. He mentioned a number of voyages in which the mortality was very great, in one case 314 out of 328. It is clearly the interest of shippers that the mortality should be kept down to the lowest normal point. They may insure the cattle, but the rates payable must be based on the average mortality. The eight instances mentioned by Sir Michael are no doubt quite exceptional. Legislation for exceptional cases is apt to have a false basis, and so it would prove if the exclusion clause of the Plimsoll Bill were retained. Mr. Smith, on behalf of the Government, pleads for delay till the conclusion of the evidence of a committee enquiring into the effect of bulkheads in ships, one of the matters dealt with by this Bill. Meanwhile, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach declares his intention to apply to the President of the Board of Agriculture to exert his powers of prohibition, if they go far enough. The grazers of the United Kingdom may be expected to back up the demand. In this conjuncture, the interests of Canada will require the exertion of all the vigilance of their natural guardians.

If the wreck of the "Idaho," off the coast of Anticosti, should lead to a new survey of the Lower St. Lawrence, good will come out of the unfortunate incident. All accounts of the cause of the wreck will be received with reserve, until the facts are ascertained by official enquiry. But if it be true that the vessel was on an unknown shoal, and if the shoal has formed since Admiral Bayfield's survey was made,

the necessity for a re-survey, which the Department of Marine is said to have in contemplation, would be beyond doubt. The action of the elements is constantly making changes in the sea along the coasts and in the mouths of rivers near the shores, and a knowledge of hidden dangers of new creation is necessary to the safety of navigation. For similar reasons, Admiral Bayfield's work on Georgian Bay has had to be revised, and it is but natural that a similar necessity may exist where the forces which work changes under water are far greater. Ship owners have pointed out the necessity for new surveys in some parts of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and the untoward wreck of the "Idaho" is likely to have the effect of directing attention to this admonition. In some places, notably in the neighborhood of the harbor of St. John, N.B., the navigation appears to have improved, alleged dangers of other days being now declared to be non-existent. This would only show that changes under water may take a form beneficial as well as dangerous to navigation.

Mr. Adam Brown, M.P., is evidently resolved to do his best to justify his selection as Canadian Commissioner to the International Exhibition in Jamaica. He is traveling from place to place in Canada, to learn what different localities have to offer to the West India trade. The imports of Jamaica indicate what Canada has to compete for at present. We must not be surprised if we do not get the lion's share of this trade, or even as large a portion as our Republican neighbor. The United States imports from the West Indies are much larger than our own, due to the vast numerical superiority of her population, and it is but natural that the exports should follow the imports, in the absence of any special arrangements favoring the trade with Canada. If open to their choice, the West Indies would prefer reciprocal trade arrangements with the larger country. Hitherto they have shown no strong disposition to enter into closer trade relations with Canada. How it may be in the future, it requires no prophet to tell: the American market must always have a powerful attraction for the West Indians. This has been true from the first, and it is likely to be true to the end. At the same time, it does not follow that Canada can do nothing to improve its trade relations with the West Indies, and if anything can be done, Mr. Adam Brown is not unlikely to find it out.

The self styled delegates to England, Sir William Whiteway, the Island premier, assures the world through an interviewer, had no authority to represent the people of Newfoundland. They belonged, he added, to a minor party. The fact is now plain that there is a large share of politics in the Newfoundland complaints, each party thinking it has something to gain by outbidding the other. We submit that international questions are not the proper battle ground of local factions; more especially is this true when the questions in dispute are under the control of existing

treaty stipulations. Sir William Whiteway, while rebuking the officiousness of the opposing party, indulges in a little jingoism on his own account. He gave the interviewer a remarkable bit of confidence; nothing less than that the annexation of the island to the United States is "an event certainly possible if England failed to redress the wrongs of the Newfoundlanders." This is an assertion not merely of the right of Newfoundland to cut the British connection, but also of its ability to do so. To outsiders, the statement has a very foolish look. The possibility of annexation without the consent of England is simply out of the question, and Newfoundland is a station of great value to the foremost maritime nation of the world. It is conceivable that half a continent in America might be parted with, while Newfoundland would be resolutely retained. By making silly threats, politicians in Newfoundland only cover themselves with ridicule.

At Washington, senators are being buttonholed and made to listen to the alleged grievance of the owner of the fishing schooner, "Hattie Evelyn," who contends that he has a right to disregard the Newfoundland Bait Act. He refused to pay for a license at St. George's Bay, and in consequence was not allowed to buy bait. He only paid his lighthouse dues under protest. The American Fishery Union has taken up the case, and Mr. Steele, its president, is busy airing the grievance among American senators. If any wrong has been done to the "Hattie Evelyn" it should be remedied. But we are not aware that, from the legal point of view, there is any valid ground of complaint. At the same time, it is unfortunate that these petty disputes should occur. One senator, it is alleged, has expressed the opinion that Canada should be punished in some way for the act of Newfoundland, with which she has no more to do than the State of New York.

A large number of Canadian sealers are reported to have gone to Behring Sea, and the season's catch is expected to be large. Mr. Blaine quotes the fact that the American Government now permits the privileged company with which it has a contract to take only 60,000 seals a year, as against 100,000 under a prior contract. But no conclusion as to the relative number of live seals can be drawn from the incident; and there is no certainty that the company will confine itself to the prescribed limit. Its predecessor did not do so. Heavy takes by Canadian vessels are reported, and the fact that there have so far been no captures goes to show that the United States Government has reverted to the better policy of a former time. From Washington comes a rumor that the cabinet has been considering the revival of the old threat, made by Mr. Cleveland, of retaliation. What connection there may be between catching seals in the open sea and closing American connection with Canadian railways is not apparent. One thing is certain: retaliation in this form would inflict injury on both countries, but more on the United States than on Canada, her interests being larger.