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THE SITUATION.

Doubt about the fate of the French treaty continues to find expression. The whole trouble is traceable to the fact that Sir Charles Tupper exceeded his instructions, signed the treaty with a provision in it which the Canadian Government, in a letter from Mr. Bowell, of January 11, notified him could not be accepted. What is more, in a letter of January 25, Sir Charles admitted that he was exceeding his instructions, and excused himself for going beyond his authority. But it is clear that the fault is his, and that he has fairly laid himself open to rebuke. If he made the French negotiators acquainted with the limits of his instructions, in accordance with usage, France would have no right to complain if the treaty were not accepted by the Canadian Government. The British negotiators who acted with Sir Charles Tupper must have been aware that the Canadian agent was vested with specific authority, to which a positive limit had been set; and the British Government has no cause of complaint; the indignation attributed to it by sensational cablegrams is, we suspect, mythical. A similar miscarriage once occurred at Washington, when Mr. Erskin, the British negotiator, exceeded his instructions, and his Government refused to ratify what he had done. The American Government had no cause of complaint, because it knew at the time of the negotiation that the British agent was exceeding his powers. The draft treaty signed by Sir Charles Tupper contained a clause extending to France any advantage which Canada might in future obtain from a third power; though Mr. Bowell had notified him that any advantage so to accrue to France could not be general, but must be confined to the articles specifically named in the present treaty.

There is now a fair prospect that the restriction on Canadian cattle in Great

Britain will be removed during the coming season. Mr. Gariner, in the House of Commons, has stated that everything will depend on the health of the cattle from Canada, the lungs of which will be examined after the animals are slaughtered, and if the test continuously proves freedom from disease, the barrier will be removed. This course is perfectly fair to Canada and safe for Great Britain. In Canada, the fullest confidence exists that the result will be favorable, on the ground that no disease will be found. Meanwhile, vigilance in Canada cannot safely be relaxed. We must guard against the admission of pleuro-pneumonia on our western frontier, where the possible surreptitious admission of American cattle will have to be closely watched. An additional precaution, in the form of inspection at the shipping port, will be advisable. If there is a danger that another lung disease may be mistaken for pleuro-pneumonia, as some pretend, that is a risk to which we shall still be liable, but it will be small. An open trade is at all times the best thing because it allows us the choice of sending out lean or fat cattle; but the aim ultimately to fatten all our own cattle before shipment, is one which should be kept in view. Yesterday there was a cable statement which seemed to imply that the restriction on Canadian cattle is likely to be removed on the strength of evidence outside of a future lung test.

It is now stated that, as a result of the Russian definition of its "territorial waters" in Behring Sea, the Canadian Government has telegraphed the Collector of Customs at Victoria, B.C., that till the extent of the protective zone is fixed by consent, it will not be safe for Canadian fishermen to go nearer the Russian coast than thirty leagues, ninety miles. Then what becomes of the alleged agreement previously mentioned that ten miles was to be the limit from the mainland and thirty from the chief breeding islands? Although the Russian commission extends the territorial waters sixty leagues from the shore, that does not prevent Russia agreeing upon a less distance in which British subjects can follow sealing. Do the sixty leagues exclude the rights of navigation to foreigners, making a close sea to that extent, or is the definition only for sealing purposes? If foreign vessels are to keep sixty leagues from the coast, there could be no object in their visiting Behring Sea at all, except for fishing or sealing. When extraordinary claims of this kind are made, they are generally mitigated by making one or more ports free to foreigners, or to particular nations, by treaty. But so extensive a claim is not likely to be admitted at this time of day.

Newfoundland, after an experience long enough to test its working, has decided to repeal the Bait Act. The object of the Act was to prevent a supply of bait to the French fishery, and for a time it was doubtful whether the British Government would agree to its going into effect; some delay was caused before assent was given. Thereupon, Newfoundland flared up, as is her custom, and finally got her own way. A similar Act had once been passed by the

British Parliament, so that it may be assumed that this one did not trench upon any treaty right enjoyed by France. As a means of embarrassing the French fishery in Newfoundland, the Bait Act seemed to be an efficient weapon. That fishery has fallen very low, and its continuance can scarcely be worth the cost, bounty included. The French bounty was the cause of the Bait Act being passed; the Act was intended to equalize the conditions under which Newfoundland and French fishermen carried on their operations. But the prohibition had to account to the smuggler, who was himself generally a Newfoundland fisherman, and very often the smuggler got the better of the law. This consideration has doubtless had its influence in inducing the resolution to repeal the Act. Another consideration looks to the revenue which a license system may give. It is proposed that French and American fishing vessels should pay \$15 a ton for the privilege of obtaining bait. The figure seems high. It remains to be seen how those countries will regard the proposed license tax.

A Russian commission which has been enquiring into the extent of the "territorial waters" in Behring Sea, has decided that the national water extends thirty leagues from the coast line. The commission reports just in the nick of time to help the United States, afore the Behring Sea arbitration; but it is doubtful if help can be given in this way. The report of the Russian commission embodies the views of only a single nation, and the special interest of that nation gives a bias quite sufficient to account for the conclusion arrived at. The United States may possibly agree with this Russian deliverance; but other nations, which are anxious only to guard the rights of navigation and fishing common to all, cannot be expected to accept this new definition of "territorial waters": that part of the sea which is appurtenant to the land. It is not possible that the report of the Russian commission can have any influence on the Behring Sea commission which is to determine the rights in that sea of the United States and nominally of Great Britain, but really of all the maritime nations outside of Russia and the United States.

A law passed last session of the Quebec Legislature pronounces non-intoxicating lager beer not exceeding the strength of four per cent. of alcohol. On the strength of this assumption there would seem to be no reason why any one cannot sell this beverage, in that province, without a license. The experiment will be general, and Quebec may be expected to consume a larger quantity of lager while the law is in force. Its advocates contend that it is a temperance measure, and they predict that whiskey drinkers will now substitute a drink declared to be non-intoxicating. The teetotalers see danger in a measure which places lager beer at the disposal of youth, to whom stronger drink cannot be sold. The experiment on which Quebec has entered will be watched with interest elsewhere, especially where something of the same kind has been proposed. The prob-