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THE SITUATION.

A new international conference to deal with the silver question, if we may trust statements spread abroad by Washington press correspondents, is almost within sight. This prospect is said to have been produced by correspondence between Mr. Goschen, Chancellor of the British Exchequer, and the Treasury Department at Washington. It is not the function of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to correspond directly with foreign nations; such correspondence may, however, have been transmitted through the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Mr. Goschen is reported to desire the conference for the purpose of suggesting the extended use of silver as money. Mr. Goschen has been looking in that direction for some time, but it is a new conquest if he has carried the cabinet with him in the desire to use silver otherwise than as token money. The English press does not receive the movement favorably. No doubt India is suffering severely from the present depreciation of silver, and there can be as little doubt that if the nations agreed to adopt a double standard the price of silver would rise more or less. A double standard is not likely to be accepted; and if it were, silver would have to be content to take its place at a proportion considerably lower than that which has hitherto existed. On this condition only could its extended use become possible.

The policy of encouraging emigration has found favor at Ottawa, \$700,000 having been put in the estimates for that purpose. An increase of population is, at the present time, one of the great wants of the country. During the decade covered by the last census, we are reminded, 86,000 emigrants came into the country; and that this number is in excess of the total increase of the population. This is only saying, in other words, that many emigrants on their journey from Europe to the United States come by

way of Canada, deeming it the most favorable route. These figures ought not to be confounded with immigrants who had Canada for their final objective point. There is little or no connection between the immigration which does come to Canada to remain and Canadians who emigrate. To a certain extent the two movements, besides being entirely independent, are natural. Emigration is part of the movement by which the East furnishes population to the West. Because emigration does not cease, that is no reason why immigration should not be encouraged, but the contrary. Many parts of the Eastern States have ceased to be cultivated, being unable to compete with the rich virgin soil of the West; but is this a reason why immigration to the States should not be welcomed?

Not much significance is likely to be attached to the resolution passed at Ottawa, pledging the House of Commons "That if and when the Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland admits Canadian produce to the markets of the United Kingdom upon more favorable terms than it accords to the products of foreign countries, the Parliament of Canada will be prepared to accord corresponding advantages by a corresponding reduction in the duties it imposes upon British manufactured goods." The resolution, it will be seen, is modelled upon the precedent of American reciprocity resolutions. A principle which the United States applies to foreign countries, it is open to the British Empire to apply to its different parts. The resolution was met by the Opposition with an amendment, "that, inasmuch as Great Britain admits the produce of Canada into her ports free of duty, this House is of opinion that the present scale of duties exacted by Canada on goods mainly imported from Great Britain should be reduced." The original motion was carried by a vote of 97 against 68. The amendment, like the original motion, was skillfully worded; but it did not propose any discrimination in favor of British goods. It is difficult to take either the resolution or the amendment seriously. But the amendment may enable the Opposition to escape from the net of restriction in which it had become entangled in proposing preferential treatment in favor of the United States. In this way, it has made for itself the opportunity to get back to the advocacy of free trade.

On the existence or non-existence of corruption in dealing with the road money grants, in Nova Scotia, the committee of enquiry failed to agree. The majority report, while admitting grave irregularities, offered a balm for the honor of the members which the accusations had aimed to wound. The minority report expressed the opinion that Mr. McDonald had connived at the personation of supposititious beneficiary who had purported to make a declaration of expenditure which had a false name attached to it. Here, we suppose, the matter will end. The enquiry, if it does not sustain the gravest charges, goes to show that certain members of the legisla-

ture obtain political influence through the expenditure of the road grants; a fact which gives them a motive not to desire to substitute, for road creation and maintenance, municipal for provincial grants. This is the lion in the path of progress which needs to be banished. "Better terms" have afforded the means of squandering money obtained from the Dominion treasury which ought to have come from the localities benefited. Whatever there may be of municipal waste in western cities, there is less waste in rural municipalities in Ontario than under the legislative grants of Nova Scotia. By all means let that province inaugurate a general municipal system which will relieve the province of these local expenditures and put an end to scandal in connection with the present provincial expenditure.

A motion made in the House of Commons to abolish the duty on binder twine was defeated by a large majority. During the discussion the statement was made, on the authority of its own report, that the American Cordage Company controls all the binder twine factories in Canada; and it was argued that there is little reason why Canada should go out of its way to protect an industry controlled by a foreign monopoly. If the facts be as stated, Canada is not in the position of being necessarily placed between two fires. If she keeps on the full duty, binder twine will continue to be dear; but if she removes or reduces it the American monopoly would not then be enabled to exact their price in our market, since we could rely upon receiving a supply, at a cheaper rate, from Great Britain; though, in the absence of all duty, no Canadian competition could arise to fight the American monopoly. The duty might reasonably be reduced by one-half. Binder twine is in the nature of raw material to the farmer in the production of grain, and it is difficult to see why he should be denied a privilege that has been granted with lavish hand to all sorts and conditions of manufacturers. His interest is infinitely more extensive than that of the manufacturer of the twine which he is obliged to use.

Dynamite outrages and dynamite alarms continue to be the order of the day, in France. Ravachol and Simon have been found guilty of exploding bombs for the destruction of human life; but they have escaped the guillotine and got off with a sentence of penal servitude for life. There has been a pilgrimage of this class of Socialists to England, where the police is carefully watching their movements. Society in Europe is face to face with a danger against which it is extremely difficult to guard. The possession of a dynamite bomb makes an individual without conscience or humanity as formidable for mischief as a thousand men were before this or some similar explosive was invented. Laws will be passed to regulate the sale of dynamite; but as the Socialists steal and fabricate the explosive, the effect of such restraints upon them will be limited. At present, no one can see the end of the disquieting movements of these monsters in human form, the Socialist dynamiters.