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TORONTO, FRIDAY, JANUARY 13, 1899.

THE SITUATION.

In his inaugural address to the council the mayor of Toronto assures us that by the end of the year 1903, "Toronto will be the most lightly taxed of the large cities of America." If this desirable state of things is to be realized the city will have to turn a deaf ear to the calls of railway promoters to grant subsidies for their schemes. The mayor, at the same time, points out different railways which would benefit the city, and which he invites existing companies to build. Suppose they turn round and ask for bonuses? "The policy of the future," says Mayor Shaw, "must be one of strict economy." Let him stick to this policy and the future of Toronto will be brilliant. Within her borders manufactures are progressing at a rate hitherto unprecedented.

During the week public opinion on Sir Wilfrid Laurier's proposal for controlling the Senate has been freely expressed. General satisfaction is felt with his defence of a second Chamber, the necessity of which the experience of nearly all countries shows. The advocates of abolition are found within the ranks of his own party, and it remains to be seen whether they will listen to the voice of their chief. With regard to the proposal itself, a less extended welcome is offered. It is regarded as a plan for silencing the independent voice of the Senate just when independence may be of the greatest value. The generally accepted theory of the function of a second Chamber is that it may check, for a while, till an appeal to the electorate can be made, a hasty or ill-considered or ill devised measure. In this way, it is conceived, the Senate may occasionally better interpret public opinion, for the moment, than the House of Commons. It does not follow that because the Premier has thrown out a suggestion regarding the Senate that he will try to carry it into effect. The political complexion of that body, regard being had to the age of members, will in the nature of things rapidly change. When the Senate was constituted it was not intended that appointments should be mainly from one party; there was an understanding that, under the Coalition, Senators should be alternately taken from each party. But when the Coalition which founded Confederation ceased to exist, the temptation to select Senators from the ranks of the

party in power proved too strong for resistance, and a one-sided Senate in course of time came into existence. But to do it justice, the Senate, far from uniformly acting on party views, tries, with tolerable success, to rise above them. If a second Chamber had now to be created no one would think of constituting it on its present basis; but how to reform the method of selection without running more serious risks in other directions, is a question which may well cause public men to pause before they try doubtful experiments.

Penny postage between this country and England, it is claimed, has more than doubled the Canadian mail. This is a great success and contains a promise that this part of the postage reduction will not be long in proving a financial success. To prevent mistakes, however, comparison should be made, not with the fortnight immediately preceding the one which the increase took place, but with the corresponding holiday period of last year. If this has been done, all right, if not, a wrong inference may be drawn.

A French journal, trying to put the Newfoundlanders in the wrong in their dispute with the French lobster canners, alleges, untruly, that the contention of the Islanders is that lobsters, being crustaceans, cannot be taken as fish, under the treaty. This is not the point at all. When the Treaty of Utrecht was under negotiation no point was insisted on by England with more determination and perseverance than that she must have the whole island of Newfoundland. It was so decided in the end. That treaty is the starting point of the existing French rights and the extensive and untenable claims that have been grafted upon them. The French obtained the right to erect stages of boards on which to dry fish, and temporary huts for shelter. When lobster canning became an industry, France went into it on the coast of Newfoundland, and for that purpose erected permanent buildings on the land, contrary to the terms of the treaty. The English King undertook that the French fishermen should not be interfered with in following their treaty right to fish on a designated shore, a guarantee which these fishermen have known how to draw from all sorts of complaints, made in a spirit of defiant opposition to the inhabitants. The lobster factories were permitted a toleration to which they had no valid claim, with the result that the intruders lorded it over the inhabitants of the soil till their pretensions became unbearable. A day of settlement was bound to come, and the sooner the French realize that it has arrived the better it will be for all concerned.

The British Blue Book about the island of Madagascar has been issued, showing the injuries England sustained in her treaty rights by the unwarranted policy of France since the Republic came into possession of the island. That possession is little more than nominal in many parts of the island, though the capital and neighborhood are occupied. The publication of this Blue Book has raised an excitement in France; it is inopportune, so the French say, looks to provoking a quarrel, and other equally improbable things. They predict the early publication of another Blue Book on Newfoundland, and this too, in anticipation, is made ground of complaint. As there has been a commission on Newfoundland, nothing is more natural than that the evidence collected and the report made should be published. This is the sort of information for which the British public looks, and for which in this case Newfoundland also looks, which Canada will peruse with an anxious wish to see the wrongs detailed