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TORONTO, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1895.

THE SITUATION.

Senator Morgan, who was a member of the Paris Tribunal of Arbitration on the Behring Sea sealing dispute, speaking in the U. S. Senate, takes the ground that the liability of the United States for seizures of British vessels outside the three-mile limit, is still an open question. He contends that it was not passed upon by the Tribunal of Arbitration; but that tribunal certainly did decide the principle which must control, under the circumstances in which the seizures were made. It decided that the United States' jurisdiction did not extend beyond three miles from the coast of Alaska, and as the seizures were made beyond that limit, the liability is for interfering with vessels engaged in a lawful pursuit on the high seas. The Washington Administration admits the liability unreservedly. Senator Morgan's object, apparently, is to hinder the consideration of these claims by an arbitration arranged for between the Government of the United States and that of Great Britain. The arbitration cannot, he says, be entered on without the consent of the Senate. He has induced the Senate to refer to the Committee on Foreign Relations that part of the President's message which relates to those claims with instructions to report by bill or otherwise. He does, apparently, not deny a liability to British subjects for the seizure, but he pretends to have information that \$96,102, and not \$425,000, is the proper measure of the damages. Ten of the vessels for which damages are claimed, he contends, belonged in whole or in part to citizens of the United States; but they were under British register, and that fixes their nationality. For the rest, Senator Morgan talks very much as if the Paris tribunal had never met, and repeats contentions once made by the United States, but four out of five of which were overruled when the question was passed upon in that international court.

Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland will send delegates to the conference at which the Pacific cable is to be discussed. The Postmasters-General of these Provinces were the ministers on whom it devolved to decide upon this action, showing that the enterprise is there looked at from a postal point of view. Bearing in mind the preference of Australians for government control in great enterprises, such as railways, does the selection of the

Postmasters indicate a possible preference for government over company control of the cable? It seems as if Western Australia was not going to be represented at the conference, though New Zealand may be. Sir Charles Tupper, who is to visit Ottawa, will fully learn the views of our Government before he enters the conference as the Canadian representative.

Succession duties are becoming a favorite form of tax in many countries; and the laws authorizing these duties are developing a tendency to discriminate against large fortunes, and in favor of blood relations. In England, a progressive succession duty took effect in 1894-5, and now France follows suit. Canada and several of the States of the American Union had taken the same road, though they were not the first to enter on it. More than a century ago, Tom Paine proposed a scheme of this kind, but for the time it fell unheeded. His scale ended in confiscation, after a certain figure had been reached. In France, the Socialists will not be slow to see their advantage in this form of taxation. There the liberty of making wills has long been greatly restricted. The new French law places the lower degrees of kinship and strangers on a less favorable level, for the purposes of the tax, than the nearer of kin. The State takes a larger proportion as the blood relationship attenuates or disappears. The Socialist, who wants to take everything for the State, will rejoice that his method has got a foothold, if it be but slight.

There are many indications that a new agitation for the further restriction of the sealing industry is likely to be set on foot in the United States. Men who come into contact with the lessees of the breeding islands in Behring Sea are apt to become violent advocates for increased restriction. Governor Sheakley, of Alaska, is no exception to this rule. No sooner has he returned from a visit to these islands, than he hastens to indite a long report on the alleged want of further protection. If the seals be, as he contends, decreasing so rapidly, how comes it that more were captured this year in the open sea than ever before? He assumes that if sealers carry guns, they will use them on the seals. This is conjectural evidence. The alleged presence of buckshot in the hides, if true, would show that, not having penetrated, the shot had not done much harm. But is the fact real? If so, wrong has been done. Governor Sheakley contends that the killing of female seals ought to cease. On the other hand, he would authorize the lessees of the islands to take every marketable skin between the 1st June and the 10th August in every year, which would only be another means of ensuring the destruction of the herds. But, in that case, the company would reap the profit.

While the United States Senators and Congressmen are preparing to give new form and embodiment to the Munroe doctrine in all the special cases to which at this moment it might be applicable, it is breaking down. While the advocates of this doctrine in the United States are insisting on its application to the British Guiana-Venezuelan boundary dispute, the President of the South American republic concerned declares that he cannot see any reason for the intervention of the United States. And he vouchsafes the information that the Venezuelan officer who made unauthorized arrest of British subjects will be prosecuted. This coming immediately after the refusal of arbitration by Brazil in two similar cases in which France and England are respectively interested, does not look as if the horse could be made to drink after he had been led to the water. If President Crespo has, as alleged, and there is no reason to doubt the fact, discouraged the United States in its