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TORONTO, FRIDAY, JANUARY 26, 1900.

THE SITUATION.

After much hard fighting, extending from Saturday morning to Wednesday morning, General Warran succeeded in occupying Spion Kop, the centre of the Boer position on the Tugela. By this achievement the principal Boer army is cut in two, and by whatever issue they seek to escape the Boers will have to fight their way through a British force specially stationed to encounter them. This is the turning point in the war. There are signs that the Boers will now make desperate efforts to secure favorable terms of peace. One is reported to be to get up an agitation in Cape Colony for peace under the pretext that if it be not obtained the sympathizing Boers there cannot be kept in check. Buller's victory, which must soon be complete, is a guarantee against a Boer rising in Cape Colony. And then, President Kruger's cherished schemes of foreign intervention will be worked for all they are worth. It turns out ex-Consul Macrum was anxious to quit his post at Pretoria and return to Washington because he had accepted a mission from President Kruger, with, as the story goes, the offer to President McKinley of a protectorate over the Transvaal, and certain condition of trade and citizenship for aliens. Accounts from Washington say that the ex-consul was not listened to except as a private individual. The ex-consul is reported to have another mission to France, whether with the same offer, as an alternative, is not stated; but what the United States will not do France may be asked to undertake, with, after Buller's victory, we may be sure, the same result. The career of the two South African military despotisms which pose as republics is happily drawing to a close, though there will yet be hard fighting probably, and great loss of life.

Mr. Greenway answers the charge of the new Premier of Manitoba, on the subject of the new railway subsidies, by saying that the Government had only followed the policy which it had uniformly pursued. This may be so, but that is not the question. The objection was to the concealing from the Legislature and the country the fact that orders-in-Council had passed granting certain subsidies. There is no dispute about the fact. It is further

alleged that during the elections the Government denied that any subsidies had been granted. Is this true? Mr. Greenway protests that he made no corrupt bargain with the C.P.R. The question recurs, why this secrecy? Why was the order-in-Council withheld from the knowledge of the Legislature? Somebody once complained that the influence of the East India Company was greater than that of the Crown; it would seem as if the influence of the C.P.R. was greater than that of the two Houses of Parliament in Canada and the representative of the Crown combined.

Hon. Mr. Davis, accompanied by Mr. Archibald Blue, Director of the Ontario Bureau of Mines, has visited Sudbury to make enquiries about the policy of making compulsory the refining of nickel and copper ores in the province. The desirability of doing so, if practicable, is generally admitted; the practicability is a point on which different views are held. At present the Canadian Copper Company's matte is treated in New Jersey, though the preliminary process of converting the raw ore into matte is done on the ground. The Canadian Copper Company, Judge Burke, who is prominently connected with it, is reported as saying, is not in possession of any process that would enable it to compete in the refined product. When they tried to obtain one from Dr. Ludwig Mond, his price was \$1,500,000 for the patent alone, and the judge estimates that the plant would cost another million. Other efforts in the same direction failed. The real question for Canada is, has this company done all in the way of refining that it undertook to do when it entered into an arrangement with the Government of Ontario? If not it is quite beside the question to tell of what it has done, and more so to claim special merit for having discovered the nickel mines. Another gentleman, Mr. Clergue, of Sault Ste. Marie, is establishing a refining plant there, which he expects to have ready by next May. He claims that there are \$3,000,000 behind this enterprise. This concern has a process by which it is claimed that the sulphur and the nickel in the copper ores, which are now wasted, can be recovered. It is further claimed that by this process the nickel and the iron will be so perfectly blended as to make a uniform alloy throughout. A concern which sends its matte to the United States, where it could find a market, would seem to have an advantage over one which sends the finished product there, if it would have to face a higher duty. Mr. Clergue thinks it only reasonable that the Government should require the copper and nickel ores to be refined in Canada. He claims that his company will be able to make for \$30 a ton, a nickel steel, equal to that for which a monopolist company extorted from the necessity of the American government \$400 a ton.

Through an interviewer, Mr. Tarte, Minister of Public Works, has let it be known that he contemplates improving the French River so as to give it a depth of 18 feet in the shallow parts. Dams and three locks will be required. From the Georgian Bay to Lake Nipissing the river length is only 56 miles. When the improvements are made, Mr. Tarte thinks the Canadian Pacific will do just as the Canada Atlantic Railway is doing from Parry Sound, instead of leaving the Western grain freight to find its way by American barges to Buffalo. The experiment of the Canada Atlantic Railway having proved a success is the ground of hope given for the French River route. In making such improvements in the navigation as that contemplated in the French River the Government will be pursuing a policy which will meet universal approval.