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## THE SITUATION.

Self-extinction is the end announced of the London Council of the Imperial Confederation League. The reason given by its members is that it had finished its work; others say there is reason to suspect that the rock on which the council stranded was the absence of a reasonable prospect that any confederation of the empire was possible in which the colonies would consent to bear their share of the national protection. The fact is cited that Sir Charles Tupper, assuming to speak on behalf of Canada, opposed colonial contribution to the general defence. Any man is at liberty to be an Imperial Confederationist or not, as he pleases, but when he becomes one, he cannot consistently decline, on the part of his section of the empire, a reasonable share of the general defence. Sir Charles Tupper's position, as an Imperial Federationist, was inconsequential and impossible. Dissolution of the London Council of the League is their answer to the Canadian High Commissioner. What remains are some scattered colonial branches of the League, which of themselves can do nothing. The London Council of the League never formulated any general plan of confederation; the excuse for not doing so was that the time for forming a general plan had not come. Imperial confederation without colonial contribution to the general defence is an idle dream; and if Canada would not consent to bear her share of the burthen, as Sir Charles Tupper gave the London council to understand, the dissolution now announced was inevitable.

Water waste in Toronto, the figures seem to show, goes on at a rate which is at once prodigal and profligate. According to Chairman Lamb of the Board of Works, 7,000,000,000 gallons were supplied to the citizens last year. At 10 cents per 1,000 gallons, this would have produced \$700,000;

it actually brought only \$449,000. The meter rate now charged is 12½ cents per 1,000, so that water takers who use meters pay about twice as much as those who are at liberty to waste as much as they like. The present proposal, put into form by the city engineer, is that the meter rate for all private dwellings be reduced to ten cents. If the deplorable water waste that goes on be regarded as a matter of conscience, it does not speak well for the citizens. The fact that the water-waster in robbing others robs himself does not operate as a restraint. The remedy is to meter all water served to the citizens. This and this alone will stop the crying evil of water waste. The present waste is a blot on the city, and it is imperative that the scandal come to an end. Hitherto, the pumping of sand into the pipes has put a physical obstacle in the way of the general use of the meter; the deep water now reached by the intake pipe has secured good water free from sand, and prepared the way for the general adoption of the meter.

We shall never cease to hear of deaths caused by the breaking of lamps, as we now hear of one from Newfoundland, so long as lamps made of easily breakable material are permitted to be used. Most of the so-called lamp explosions are no doubt, as in this case, mere breakages; the oil takes fire and the destructive process is so rapid as to baffle all efforts to arrest it. What is the remedy? It is to be found in the prohibition of all but solid metal lamps, which cannot break even if they fall. It is also necessary that the lamp should be so constructed that the oil cannot run out if it falls; for if the oil escapes, the lighted wick over which it passes will set it on fire. Let some one set to work to invent a perfect safety lamp for domestic use: it is an imperative want of the times. Perhaps development will best be found in building on the foundation of the student's lamp. Though not absolutely safe, it is probably safer than any other; the cup that holds the waste oil is its chief danger. When this takes fire it is possible that the lamp may be wrecked; but the progress is not instantaneous and gives time to extinguish the flame. If upset a little oil may run out and take fire without doing serious injury, if prompt efforts are made to prevent it. Who among the inventors of the day will undertake to give us a perfect safety lamp for domestic use?

The earthquake shake at Montreal, the other day, was not a pleasant sensation. Canada is not a country of great and serious earthquakes. It is more than two centuries since anything serious of the kind has happened, and such an occurrence on a calamitous scale, after such an interval, is not much to be feared. Feeble shocks are not unfrequent in many countries, which do no great harm. On the whole, ours is a singularly favored land; our almost absolute freedom from the cyclones which visit the neighboring country, presents a contrast which we cannot too highly value. In the whole Laurentian range, with its North-West connection which reaches the Arctic Ocean, there is not a single active volcano; and the same

is true of the Rocky Mountain range. The earthquake of the latter part of the seventeenth century, which shook new France severely, extended to New England. But of its real severity, it is difficult to form a true opinion. The contemporary accounts, which represent the surface of the earth as undergoing great undulations, and the St. Lawrence as changing its bed in places, are evidently exaggerated. The spots where these changes are alleged to have taken place have never been pointed out or identified. There have, according to Sir Wm. Logan, been great displacements and laps over of rocks at Quebec, but they did not occur in historic ages; and since Sir William's time, the nature of these displacements has become matter of dispute. Sir William Dawson's opinion is that the recent shock was due to a settlement of rocks at the junction of the Laurentian and Salurian formations.

In British Columbia a keen interest is felt in the question of compensation to be paid to sealers for loss by reason of enforced idleness under the *modus vivendi*. The question is debated whether compensation for deprival of the right of sealing in Behring Sea is to be considered alone, or whether what the sealers actually made elsewhere is to be taken into account in abatement of the claim. What all should aim at is a fair and reasonable adjustment, neither more nor less. While the sealers are entitled to be saved from loss, they have no claim to make a profit out of the restraint put on their action. What they may fairly ask is, that they should be neither better nor worse off on account of the restriction put upon them. Beyond this nothing should be attempted, and no attempt, if made, would be likely to succeed. It should be the aim of Canada to present a claim that is not open to serious objection. If this be done, prompt payment may be expected; and this alone is likely to bring a speedy settlement.

The estimate of the loss of revenue from the Wilson tariff bill is variously estimated at from \$85,000,000 to \$50,000,000. How the gap will be filled is in doubt, and the question of an income tax is still under discussion. Secretary Carlisle, it seems, does not favor an individual income tax, but a tax on corporations and liquors. When an income tax is general, the shares of corporations may be taxed in bulk or individually; but an income tax on corporations alone would be partial and unjust. If the choice lies between an increased duty on spirits and on income tax, the resource of an income tax might reasonably be reserved for more exigent circumstances than any that will be created by the tariff bill.

Mr. Sanford Fleming has a plan for overcoming the chief obstacle which stands in the way of the proposed Australian cable the obligation which five of the colonies are under to pay a subsidy of £32,400 a year to the eastern extension company. His proposal is that the capital of the new company should include the sum of £145,000 with which to purchase an annuity to meet the obligation of £32,400 a year for the next