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THE SITUATION.

A cloud of mystery hovers over the great P.P.A. Convention, between 700 and 800 strong, at Hamilton. The efforts to preserve the secrecy on all but merely routine proceedings have so far been successful. The membership is said to be within a fraction of 50,000. The independence of the Order is shown by a resolution not to admit officers of either the Ottawa or the Ontario Government. One object of the meeting is said to have been to revise the constitution. The alleged oath of the Order, which aims at the exclusion of Roman Catholics from office, is now said to be of obligation only in the United States, never having been adopted in Canada. Though based on the American original, the Canadian Order has become separate and independent. If it eschews the intolerance evinced by the American oath, the Canadian Order may get on an enduring basis; if founded on injustice, it could not long survive. The growth of the Order during the last year has been rapid, and apparently it continues to prosper.

Replying to a delegation of Patrons of Industry, the Attorney-General for Manitoba promised to introduce legislation which would meet the views of the Order, in several particulars. These Patrons are also making an appeal to the Ottawa Government for the removal of what they regard as grievances. Among other things, indeed chiefly, the resolutions they are to forward through Mr. Daly will be certain to refer to the tariff; if the American proposal to free agricultural implements succeeds, it will become nearly if not absolutely impossible to retain similar duties on this side.

A deputation has waited on the Marquis of Ripon, Colonial Secretary, to ask a subsidy of £25,000 a year, for ten years, to the Canadian-Australian Steamship Line. If

this sum be granted, the line will comply with the Admiralty conditions, which would make it possible to utilize the vessels in case of war; but in the absence of such aid Mr. Huddart said it would be impossible to build vessels of the kind required by these conditions, which cost £200,000, nearly \$1,000,000, each. The present time, when there is a general demand for an augmentation of the means of maritime defence, no doubt seemed to the deputation a good one to make the appeal. The Marquis of Ripon is understood to be in favor of the subsidy, but in all such cases the difficulty is to convince the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, at the outset, almost always finds it necessary to oppose the extension of unusual and extraordinary expenditure.

Natural selection is doing its work in Atlantic steam navigation, as elsewhere, and in other things. The Guion Steamship Company, the oldest after the Cunard has thrown up the sponge. It had either to keep pace with the Cunard and other lines, or cease to exist as a passenger carrier; the latter is the fate it has accepted. Competition in ocean steam navigation has of late years been keen; and one year even the Cunarders earned no dividend. As time went on, the competition reached a higher plane, in point of speed, and the Guion company declined to make the necessary efforts for an advance which other lines were making. Two of the vessels in its service, the "Alaska" and the "Arizona," which really belonged to outside parties, have been transferred to the Anchor, line; and it is understood that they will run between Glasgow and New York next summer.

Mr. J. S. Larke, Canadian Commissioner to the World's Fair, is given as authority for the statement that at least one award to a Canadian firm of agricultural implement makers was revised, after re-examination or a pretence of examination, with the result that one prize, if not more, was withheld after being granted. The reason given by the Executive Committee for the change, is stated to be that the implements were not of Canadian invention, but were made after American patterns. The insinuation is that some undue influence was used by American rivals of the Canadian manufacturer; an accusation which ought not to be made except on the clearest evidence, but which, if so made, ought to be followed by investigation into the facts with a view to righting the wrong if possible.

Of the 18,000,000 acres of land which the Canadian Pacific Railway Company was to get from the Government in aid of construction, 14,000,000 have been selected and 4,000,000 are soon to be chosen. When the grant was made, it was objected that the company would operate to retard settlement. Of course the road would make settlement possible; and if land was given instead of its equivalent in money, the reason was that land, the property of the Government, was superabundant, and that money would have to be borrowed. For the same reason, governments on this con-

tinental have always made extensive grants of land long in advance of the necessity for actual settlement. Those lands fell into the hands of third parties, by whom they were carried till settlers could be found; sometimes the operation brought a profit, and sometimes, quite as often, perhaps, a loss. Thus land became an article of commerce, like iron or dry goods; and can no more be confiscated, as the single tax men propose, than any other form of property, without robbery being committed.

Complaint is made by the Halifax Board of Trade that the Canadian Pacific and the Grand Trunk Railways have their Atlantic termini in the United States. This is contrasted with construction of the Canadian Pacific, on the alleged ground that it was necessary to have the road across the continent on Canadian territory. The location of a road is one thing, and the course of traffic is another. The C.P.R. had to be built on Canadian territory; but it has not been able to prevent traffic diverging to the United States, when it can do so to advantage. To facilitate this international trade, the C.P.R. was tapped from the south at Winnipeg, and again near the Pacific coast. No doubt the parallel is not complete; but it is near enough to read a lesson on what will certainly happen in given circumstances. It so happens that Vancouver is the best port for the purposes of the C.P.R., but if an American port offered greater natural advantages, in point of distance or otherwise, there is no doubt that, on the principle of natural selection, Vancouver would get the go-by. Still, the road to Vancouver, like the Intercolonial, would be necessary on national grounds. The complaint that the C.P.R. and the Grand Trunk will not make traffic arrangements with the Intercolonial, is, if well founded, more weighty. Other things being equal, all railways, when they have liberty of choice, make for the nearest point of water, for the reason that water-borne traffic costs much less than traffic by rail. Trans-continental railways are built for the whole country, and, if they are to succeed, they must be operated upon the best economical principles. Unless upon economic principles, the Grand Trunk and the C.P.R. railways can be placed in closer connection with Halifax, which would be desirable on many grounds, we fear that no resort to heroic measures will suffice to bring about the change.

TARIFF REDUCTION AT WASHINGTON.

If the Wilson Tariff Bill had made greater reductions it would have been more welcome to the Democratic majority in the United States House of Representatives. As the debate proceeded it became apparent that the bill did not go far enough to please these ardent tariff reformers, and it is only accepted because it is the best obtainable at present, in the judgment of the Committee of Ways and Means, by whom it was drafted. While this temper prevails, it will be surprising if the attempt to raise the duty on barley above the figure in the draft bill should succeed. The resolution to