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| EDW. TROUT, | J. K. CAMERON, |
| President, | Secy.-Treas. |

OFFICE 70 & 72 CHURCH STREET.
TELEPHONE 1485

TORONTO, CAN., FRIDAY, MAY 29, 1891

THE SITUATION.

A bill to sanction the *modus vivendi* between Great Britain and France has passed the Newfoundland House of Assembly. It is, of course, only intended as a temporary measure, to give opportunity for the arbitration to proceed. The Newfoundland House has done its duty, after much hesitation, and evidently in the face of unreasoning popular opposition. The greater the difficulties under which it acted, the greater the merit of the performance. The British bill to secure the same end was only three days distant in the future. The settlement of the lobster question by the arbitrators will not quench the desire of the Newfoundlanders to be rid of French opposition altogether; a desire which is natural enough, but which is opposed to admitted rights of the French, which they are not willing to sell or exchange. Once more, the way to get rid of their opposition is to leave them without bait; and as long as bait is allowed to go free to American fishermen, the French are likely to get a share of it.

On the broad principle of private property against a collective ownership, the Pope's encyclical decides against the Socialists. He makes no artificial distinction between land and other forms of property, knowing full well that if any one form of property were to be confiscated, all other forms would speedily follow, and he knocks Mr. "Single Tax" on his giddy head, in a sweeping condemnation of overtaxing property of any kind. He upholds Individualism against State absorption, in general terms, but with qualifications of ominous import. When he says that capital and labor are mutually dependent on one another, he merely echoes an accepted maxim of political economy. His admonition against resort to violence in the adjustment of labor disputes is worthy of the fullest acceptance. But, at the same time, His Holiness shows a disposition to toy in

a dangerous way with the social questions, in the limitation of working hours, and he seems to admit that the State may intervene in questions of wages, and that among its duties is the prevention of usury, which many of his predecessors have explained to include all interest for the loan of money. The encyclical, while it strikes at the centre root of Socialism, gives encouragement to some of the branches to spread; and as the Socialists are not thinking much about a general confiscation of property at present, but only of making their way little by little, they are more likely to be elated than depressed by the new encyclical.

At the beginning of a trade with the East it will not be unimportant to consider that Japan proposes to more than double her Customs duties. They are among the lowest in the world, at present, being only 5 per cent., and it is proposed to raise them to twelve. Japan has commercial treaties with different European nations, the modification of which she now asks, to give her freedom over her tariff. Great Britain and Germany have exchanged notes regarding the proposals of Japan, in which an illiberal element meets objection. Much has been said about the desire of Japan to adopt advanced ideas from other countries; she does not want to allow foreigners to acquire real estate, or to hold railway or mining shares within her borders. The sentiment of exclusion is probably forced on the Government by popular pressure, the prejudices of the people being strong enough to shape the course of rulers who are more enlightened than the masses, but powerless to stem the tide of illiberal prejudice.

On Tuesday, the inadequacy of judges' salaries came up incidentally in the House of Commons at Ottawa. Mr. Mulock provoked the discussion, and the consensus of opinion on both sides of the House appeared to be that a rise was desirable. Sir John Thompson was in favor of speedy action, "but," he added, "there were questions relating to the finances and the salaries of other officers which would prevent him at once indicating what course he would advise." He intimated that it was necessary to "convert the Minister of Finance" to Mr. Mulock's way of thinking. As compared with any other men holding positions of great trust, the judges are deplorably underpaid. We have reason to be grateful that, under the circumstances, the Canadian Bench has retained its purity. In some of the neighboring States, low judicial salaries and the cost of elections has created a horrible suspicion that purchasable judges are not an extinct race. We have no right to tempt fate by going to any extent on the same dangerous road. The session ought not to close without witnessing an increase in the salaries of our judges.

Quarantine against Canadian sheep and pigs is naturally to the mind of the American agriculturist, though it is not relished by the railway companies or the commission men. The ground of the order requiring fifteen days' quarantine for those animals, issued by Secretary Rusk, was

that we did not take precautions against disease where these animals are admitted into this country. How could precautionary methods of the kind indicated be made to work? It seems to be expected that we should quarantine these animals on their importation. If we were to do so, the precaution would be principally operative against the United States, unless there were discrimination, and discrimination would seem to be out of the question. It would not trouble us much to quarantine these animals when they come from other countries, for few of them come. The danger, if any, is chiefly from the United States. If we could comply with the conditions practically demanded by Secretary Rusk, it would be likely to secure the withdrawal of the obnoxious order. Can this be done?

Cattle export legislation may be expected at both ends of the line. In England, prohibition of cattle on the upper deck finds powerful advocates, and the Government is expected to permit a clause corresponding with this sentiment. In Canada, cattle shippers and vessel men object to this form of interference as called for only by the illusion of an unreal danger. On unsuitable vessels, such as the "Linda," it is admitted that danger exists, and that the proper remedy was applied when that vessel was ruled out as unsuited to the traffic. Should the English bill contain a prohibition to load cattle on the upper or spar deck, the provision will be opposed by the interests which it would threaten. In England, the influence of the farmer will be used to obstruct this traffic in every possible way. The attempt to schedule our cattle, once more tried during the week, has again failed; it will now be seen whether the proposal to prohibit deck-loading will be more successful. Can any additional security for the safety of cattle on the upper deck be suggested? If so, now is the time to make doubly sure by bringing it forward.

In despatches from Washington the statement is made that the pressing point in the Behring Sea question for some time has been the question of a close season. Lord Salisbury is said to have communicated to the President his desire to come to an understanding on this question, and stated that he is hindered by the feeling which has sprung up in Canada against such an arrangement. Either the preservation of the seal, in which all countries are interested, requires that the animals should have the means of protection during the breeding season, or it does not. If the affirmative be assumed, Canada is interested to a greater extent than any other country except the United States and Russia, and the question would be one of a present gain in exchange for a perpetual loss in future. The question must be decided not upon rash impulse, but on a cool consideration of the consequences. The facts bearing on the present condition of seal production are controverted; if they were established to the satisfaction of both sides, there would be no difficulty in acting upon them at once. But as it is, there is