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TORONTO, CAN. FRIDAY, DEC. 29, 1893**THE SITUATION.**

In New Brunswick, owing to inattention in the enforcement of the law requiring ferry steamers and tugs to have certificated masters, a state of things has sprung up to which the Federal Government has undertaken to apply a remedy. The penalties incurred by a breach of the law are to be sued for. Another respect in which the law has not been complied with by the ferry boats is the neglect to provide them with life-boats, a deficiency which will have to be supplied in future. This tardy enforcement of the law which exists entirely in the interest of public security, has evoked some protests, instigated presumably by interested parties who are offended because they will no longer be permitted to expose to unnecessary risk the lives committed to their charge. The Government, in the past, has not been free from blame; if, as is alleged, for ten years it neglected its imperative duty of enforcing the law for the protection of the public, its remissness is open to censure; but it is certainly not open to the censure now bestowed upon it for doing its duty. The law has not lost its vigor, and it can never be allowed to become obsolete so long as human life requires protection; it is enforced in the other provinces and must be in New Brunswick. Active opposition to enforcement would be a reproach to civilization.

Steps are to be taken on behalf of the Imperial Government, to recover the advances made to the Crofters who went to Manitoba. Instructions have been given by the Colonization Board to their Manitoba agent to take the necessary proceedings to this effect. It is not thought, however, that forcible attempts at recovery will be made at present. None of these immigrants who went to Salt Coats, Killarney and elsewhere, have repaid any portion of the advance. If this be disap-

pointing, it cannot create much surprise. Immigrants who have been but a few years in a new country are seldom in a condition to repay old debts. Their new start in life taxes all their energies to give them a foothold, and anything they have to the good is not in a shape to be turned into cash for remission in payment of the loan to which they owe their transfer to the scene of their new labors. Sir Charles Tupper represents the Crofters as about holding their own: but it is conceivable that they might be doing more, and yet not be able to make remittance without being thrown back into utter poverty. Further colonization schemes of this kind are not likely to be encouraged, at present, by the British Government. Any scheme that looks to such speedy repayment of advances must end in delusion.

A co-operative bakery is projected in Montreal, and is said to have received the encouragement of some prominent citizens. The capital mentioned is \$200,000, of which \$100,000 is to be offered to the public presumably the chief promoters will take the rest and keep the control. A revolution in the baking business has for some time been going on in several European cities; large bakeries, more economical in working, are taking the place of smaller ones. The change has for some time been looked for in Canada, and it now appears to be about to come. With one proviso, it is a desirable one, and ought to be beneficial alike to those who have the enterprise in hand and the general public: that proviso is that the baking business should not drift into monopoly. There would be no harm in consolidating a few of the existing bakeries, if that be an incident of the plan; but such consolidation should not go to the length of killing competition. We may expect to hear of the movement now going on in Montreal extending to other places. Toronto would be the next most suitable field of operation; and here it is sure to come if success should crown the Montreal venture.

From Montreal comes the statement that 200 printers and bookbinders in that city are out of work. The Typographic Union, No. 145, in a petition to the Roman Catholic Council of Public Instruction, attributes this state of things to the competition of the Christian Brothers, which is represented as unequal and unfair; unequal, because the Brothers pay no taxes, and unfair, because, so the allegation reads, they are subsidized by the Government and get a monopoly of printing school books accepted by the Council. The freedom from taxes does create a discrimination against which it is difficult to make way. But there is something more than this, which may help to account for the number of unemployed printers who do not belong to the religious Order. The Christian Brothers form an Order whose members are willing to accept low remuneration for their services, and among whom strikes and wages troubles are unknown. Ordinary printers do not and cannot live as these Brothers live. Equalize the taxes and throw open the competition for the school books, and the advantage would still remain with the

Brothers; as things are, outside printers have no chance in competition.

The Canada-Australia cable scheme, of which Mr. Sandford Fleming is the conspicuous advocate, is receiving favorable attention in England. Whether to so important a national work the British Government would ask the Parliament to make a contribution has been doubted: perhaps it would not be going too far to say that the general opinion has been that the expectation of obtaining such aid was hopeless; but now so important an organ of public opinion as the *Times* thinks it hardly conceivable that the Imperial Government will abstain from contributing its reasonable share. Nor does this great organ of English opinion speak despairingly of Mr. Fleming's estimates in connection with the scheme. It gives them a negative support in the admission that there is in them nothing extravagantly impossible. Another important journal expresses the opinion that the cable would soon be a paying concern. The scheme seems to be making way, slowly indeed, but surely.

Russia and Germany, it is announced, have agreed upon some articles which are to be embraced in a commercial treaty, by which each country lowers the duties on the exports of the other, of which it is itself in need. Germany, which feeds her troops largely on rye, lowers the duty on rye, as well as on oats. Last year, when famine prevailed in some parts of Russia, the Russian Government prohibited the exportation of rye, and Germany had to seek that cereal elsewhere, as well as to substitute for it, in part, the dearer food of wheat. This treaty will tend to make Germany dependent on Russia for rye, a dependence which may prove vital, since, in case of war, when this food would be most wanted, the supply might fail. Russia, in return for German concessions, reduces the duty on German iron, tin, machinery and agricultural implements from 10 to 20 per cent. below the minimum tariff of 1891. The reduction does not apply to iron and steel rails. It is remarkable that so many agricultural countries are just now insisting on reduced duties, or the abolition of all duties on agricultural implements.

This year has witnessed a great decline of prices in Europe as well as in Canada and the United States. According to the *Bankers' Magazine*, the decline in the selling prices of 384 leading securities, on the London Stock Exchange, aggregates £87,000,000 or nearly \$885,000,000. The disclosures arising out of abuses of the management of corporate concerns is given as the chief reason of the shrinkage. This was one cause and a powerful one; but it did not stand alone. Unsafe and unscrupulous promotion of guaranteeing companies was at the bottom of the mischief. A warning note was sounded long before it was heeded, with the result that unusually heavy losses have been sustained. And as always happens in such cases, sound properties suffered, though in a less degree, with unsound, speculative and hopeless concerns.