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TORONTO, FRIDAY, AUGUST 30, 1895.

THE SITUATION.

France has taken a new line of aggression in Newfoundland that must bring the whole of her claims in connection with the island to a crisis. She objects, it seems, to the railway now in course of construction being carried across the island, with a terminus on the west coast. The railway has been under construction for a good while, with the avowed intention that it should cross the island from east to west, and until now there has been no pretence that its construction would interfere with the treaty rights of France. This new claim is sprung suddenly and comes as a surprising piece of audacity. The island was absolutely ceded to Great Britain by the treaty of Utrecht, its full concession being one of the points insisted on in the negotiations which preceded the peace. France has the right to erect wooden huts for the fishery on the west coast, which she is required to vacate in the winter. The English, on their part, were not to interfere with the French fishery. Pretensions of interference are set up for the purpose of depriving the British of a concurrent right of fishery on this shore, which certainly was not surrendered by the treaty. France has pursued a game of worry and aggression, and England not willing to leave her any pretext for complaint, has occasionally yielded something of her strict rights. But there is a limit beyond which concession cannot go; a stand must be made somewhere, or France may lay claim to the west coast, and the partnership, as in the case of St. Lucia, would lead to worse difficulties. She seeks to convert a limited liberty to dry fish on the west coast into a virtual ownership of the territory to the exclusion of the real owner. The more extravagant her claim the sooner it will have to be met by a decided negative.

The Newfoundland railway will have to be completed and carried to a port on the west shore. France has no treaty rights which would entitle her to prevent this being done. For the purpose of carrying on the fishery, there can be no necessity for France to call upon England to prevent this improvement. She will still have hundreds of miles of coast on which to erect her temporary summer fishing huts. She is entitled to necessary room for this, and there is plenty of space at the Bay of Islands for these conveniences and for the railway terminus, with its belong-

ings as well. France cannot be allowed to convert a liberty strictly limited into an absolute and exclusive right; she cannot be permitted to act as if she were the owner of the west shore of the Island and that the real owner had no right there. This new claim is probably set up by France, not with the idea that it will be conceded, but as a means of exerting pressure in some other part of the world; in China or Africa it may be. The responsibilities of empire press heavily on Britain with her world-wide interests, and other countries whose path of ambition she crosses want an opportunity to get their own way.

One statement made about the crops in the North-West is, that the Regina district has more to fear from drought than from frost. This fact gives special interest to the question of irrigation, to which some practical attention has in fact been paid, and more will be in the future. Irrigation which has a mountain range for its water source can best be conducted on a general plan, though the execution may be in detail, and if desirable, by more than one authority. California showed the world how such work could be done, and Australia followed the example, but varied the method. Of the various plans of working, that by companies which look to water-supply for their profit does not seem the best. There is much to be said in favor of the Government keeping the water supply in its own hands, the Government being the natural agent of the common owner, the public, of the source of supply. Irrigation is, indeed, not badly needed in our North-West; is not an absolute necessity, but it can be made to increase immensely the produce of the land. The experiments in irrigation there now going on will afford practical evidence of the value of this aid to agriculture in that promising region.

Some time ago the announcement was made that the railway which is to connect Buffalo with Hamilton was to be extended to Toronto. The statement was made in positive terms, and without any sort of reservation. Now there is a halt, and the city of Hamilton, which has already voted \$250,000 in aid of the road, is called upon for a further contribution of \$250,000 under the threat that unless the amount be forthcoming the extension to Toronto will not be made. Toronto has given nothing, and will give nothing. This new demand on Hamilton, the willing horse, is what, in ordinary life, would be called "cheeky." Toronto is the objective point, and if the extension be made Hamilton will be only a way station, an important one no doubt, but still a way station. She is asked to pay \$250,000 for the privilege of this position. She may or may not fancy that it is worth her while to pay the price asked by the promoters, whose modesty is not overmastering. The plan of governments and municipalities bonusing roads which somebody else is to own, will, in the future, probably be looked back to as monumental folly. The bonus receivers, in addition, generally aim to become the masters of the bonus givers, and they sometimes succeed; if they do not always, it is not their fault. When the Australian Governments built railways, they were reminded that these works would not pay. This result was accepted, at first, as inevitable, with a prospect of better things; that prospect was realized, when the roads with very low rates began to pay interest on the cost of their construction.

It is safe to say that the fine harvest of Manitoba and the North-West will tell favorably on these regions, in more ways than one. It will demonstrate that the virgin soil up there is capable of producing large crops, and increase the hope that climatic conditions which create anxiety at the time of ripening will improve with the exten-