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THE SITUATION.

The Clayton-Bulwer treaty has been superseded by a new treaty, under which the proposed Isthmian canal if built by the United States is to be neutralized, on the guarantee of contracting the powers; but other nations are not to join as guarantors, as was proposed in a prior treaty which the United States Senate refused to ratify, principally because it gave other European powers a say in the matter.

The Ameer of Afghanistan, a royal pensioner of England, is dead, and his possible successor is said to be pro-British. But in Afghanistan succession to the crown is never undisputed. Russia will use her influence to settle the question of succession, so as if possible to derive some benefit from it. England will do the same.

A sub-committee of the Assessment Commission have made a report for the commission to consider, in which the suggestion to abolish the assessment of personal property is made, and to substitute a business tax, based on the rental value. This is for people who are in business; but there are many people paying personal taxes who have no places of business, and there is no rental on which a tax can be based. Are these people to escape taxation altogether? The difficulty of collecting personal taxes is known and recognized; but there are many other difficulties in life equally great, before which the courage of men does not desert them. The sub-committee is represented as remarking in effect, that questions put by assessors are not truly answered. This is a sad falling off from the old Dutch standard of integrity, as represented by Adam Smith, when every man willingly told the whole truth about his income. The orthodox economists all lay down the rule that the public burthens should be distributed according to the ability of individuals to bear them. Will the proposed substitute for personal taxes attain that end? Is the rental a man pays a fair criterion of the amount of business he does? Far from this being true, the variations are great enough to make the proposed plan thoroughly inequitable in practice. In the thing substi-

tuted, no fair remedy for present evils would be found; the amount of the rent and the fairness of the amount when ascertained, would be the new pivots round which the old dispute, in a new form, would revolve. We are sometimes told that when you can see the thing, to be assessed, you cannot go astray. How comes it, then, that so many disputes arise over the value of visible property? For that matter stocks of goods are visible, and over them infinite disputes arise; over the value of visible real property disputes every day arise. The assessment question is a moral question; too many people are trying to shift their fair share of the public burthens on to their neighbors' shoulders. When frauds are committed, the perpetrator suffers in moral degeneracy; and this is the worst thing that could happen to the individual, who congratulates himself on his success in evading an obligation which, as a good citizen, he was bound to meet.

At a congress of French-Canadians, who have emigrated to the United States, held at Springfield, Mass., the statement was made that these people, in New England and the State of New York, count one million of souls. The resolutions passed show that, in some respects, they are ill at ease in their new home. A committee on grievances was appointed. Their first complaint arises in connection with their religion. At present they have to put up with priests who, they complain, have only an imperfect knowledge of the French language, who are unfamiliar with their customs, habits and traditions, and who sometimes openly express antipathy for their traditions and habits. It looks as if these French-Canadians in the States were preparing to send to Rome to ask the application of the remedy which they desire. Hitherto the American bishops have given them Irish and other priests, whom they regarded as being forced upon them against their will. They make other complaints, which they have not formulated in resolutions. Dr. La Rue, president of the congress, strongly advocated Separate Schools, French and Catholic, for expatriated French-Canadians; he wants them to preserve, amid the Americanism and Protestantism with which they are surrounded, a distinct national character of their own. What he desires it to be he scarcely makes plain; when he talks of preserving their national character he probably means a nationality, if such a thing be conceivable, without a country, since they can no longer claim Canada, which they have left, and they cannot claim France, of which they never were citizens, and which but few of them have ever seen. If they want to make Separate Schools and the French language in Public Schools a distinct question, it needs no seer to foretell that they are doomed to disappointment.

Of the French religious orders, only a little more than five thousand, less than a third of the whole, have applied for civil authorization. Of the emigrating orders, vast numbers have flocked to England, where it will be fortunate if some of them do not create trouble, seeing that Jesuits, Passionists and Assumptionists form the great bulk of emigrants. They belong to that section of the Church—it might, perhaps, be asked what section now does not?—who believe that the Catholic Church is a complete theocracy, with full