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### THE SITUATION.

Tariff legislation had better success at Ottawa than it has so far had at Washington. The reduction was made by the same political party that made the increase, in response to a general demand for tariff reform. Resistance came from the protected interests, as was to be expected, and the measure was less comprehensive as it passed than in its original form. If a sweeping change, at a single blow, be possible, it can only come through a change in the positions of the dominant and the subordinate parties; but such a revolution would not probably bring with it all that it seems to imply. A change from a high to a low tariff must be gradual, if disaster is to be averted. The other principal measure introduced by the Government, the insolvent bill, failed to pass. The obstacles in its way were in the questions whether it ought to include farmers and what rate of composition ought to entitle to a discharge. The insolvent bill will reappear, and the old difficulties will again present themselves. It cannot be said that either side of the controverted questions has gained visibly on the other, through the discussion of the measure, during the session.

War is reported to have broken out in Corea, between Japan and China, both of which have certain treaty rights to interfere in the affairs of the native government. England will not take part in the trouble unless forced to do so by third parties prejudicing by their action her interests. It is not probable that any other European nation will become involved in the dispute; but if any should, there is no saying where the conflagration would spread. The different nations interested have sent vessels of war, some one, some more, to the scene of action. Even the United States, which can only have the interests of a few resident citizens to guard, has spared two from the Behring Sea fleet.

Two questions of international fishery practice, one general, the other particular, are before the public. The particular one is the arrest of another American fishing vessel near the mouth of the Detroit river, for violation of the fishery law. As she belongs to a fishing company, the presumption is against her. The general question arises out of a provision of the Canadian law, that American

fishermen who use the rod and line in our waters must take out a license at a cost of \$5 each. It is pointed out by the objectors that no similar exaction is made on Canadians when they fish with the same implements in American waters. But if we compare things which are unequal, for the purpose of demanding equal treatment, we are evidently on false ground. At first blush, it seems a churlish thing to charge the citizens of a neighboring nation \$5 for a license to fish with rod and line. But it is a necessary precaution to prevent destruction of the fishery. We found that our best fisheries were in danger of being depleted, and, in pure self-defence, we were obliged to have recourse to precautionary measures. We would much prefer that no such necessity existed and that we were not obliged to do what can so easily be made to appear in an invidious light; but necessity controls, and we perforce obey. The comparison of rod fishing privileges relates to one rich fishery in course of being seriously reduced, and another in a far greater stage of decline. We trust that, under like circumstances, we should not show ourselves less generous than our neighbors, but the circumstances are not similar.

Mr. Charles E. H. Vincent has interpellated the British Government, in the House of Commons, on the question of the treaty obstacles to preferential trade within the Empire. What he wants to know is whether the stand taken by the colonial conference at Ottawa will lead to the removal of those restrictions. He could not have expected a direct and immediate answer to the query. The reply of the under secretary for the colonies, Mr. Sidney Buxton, was, that the report of the proceedings of the conference by the Earl of Jersey, when it arrived, would receive due consideration. It is not impossible, perhaps not improbable, that something will be done that will permit the colonies to make preferential trade arrangements among themselves, not to the exclusion of Great Britain. But if the colonies preferred the mother country to foreigners, they would be apt to ask that she should reciprocate; and this, we take it, is precisely what her interests will not permit her to do. Will the colonies grant to her a preference without reciprocation? This is doubtful, and it is probably just here that trade preference within the empire will fail to put to test of actual experiment.

The political managers at Hawaii have gone through the form of another revolution. They have changed the name of their management from a Provisional Government to a Republic. They are still said to keep in view future annexation to the United States. Just before the change was made, the story was set afloat that England was intriguing to gain some advantage in the islands. When, more than half a century ago, an independent government offered the islands to Great Britain, she refused the gift, and has never since shown repentance for that act of abnegation. The United States executive does not want the islands, but it cannot be said that Congress sympathizes with this view. If the sugar speculators can get their way by buying up a senator or two, they might consent to increase their outlay somewhat to complete the annexation, if it suited their purpose, for the time being.

Free coal and free iron ore have proved to be the rock on which the Wilson tariff bill is stranded. Senator Gorman, the author of the bill having done his best to wreck the tariff policy of the Democratic party, of which he is a member, finds it convenient to turn attention from his own act by a violent attack on President Cleveland. The charge made is that, as the changes were made by the Senate, the President privately assent-