

THE SITUATION.

THE North-West difficulty continues to be a subject of earnest controversy, and though the situation can hardly be said to have been much changed since the government of the territory was practically allowed to lapse into the hands of the self-constituted Council, yet facts are being developed tending to show that it is more serious than has been heretofore anticipated. Since the return of the Governor expectant and the officers who accompanied him, the journals have been discussing with great acrimony the causes which led to the miscarriage of the Dominion policy. The Hon. Mr. McDougall is reproached for being objectionable to the settlers on personal grounds; the Canadian officials for their over-bearing manners; the Hudson's Bay Company's officers for their indifference to Canadian policy, if not for secret connivance against it; the French priests for having stirred up the half-breeds; the Canadian Government for its injudicious management; and finally, the Hon. Mr. Howe for having fomented discontent during his visit to Fort Garry last autumn! These are all unpleasant incidents in the discussion of the question, and can only tend to obscure a just appreciation of the true state of affairs, or to distract men's minds from duly considering it. However much of truth or falsehood there may be in these reproaches, it ought to be evident that to harp upon them will neither lead to a settlement of the difficulty nor the discovery of the means whereby that settlement may be accomplished. Whether from individual acts of Canadian statesmen or officials, or from the general policy of the Government, or from the Hudson's Bay Company's course in the premises, or the instigation of the half-breeds to revolt, the mischief is now done, and it can only be undone by force or negotiation. Force in the sense of a war with the insurgents is out of the question; they can be effectually put down by peaceful means; and the first and only practical step towards that end, leaving out of the question Col. Dennis's abortive attempt has been well and wisely taken by the Canadian Government in sending Grand Vicar Thibault and Col. DeSalaberry to treat with the insurgents. The result of that mission is not yet known, but it is expected to be either the coming of Riel to Ottawa, or an agreement as to a basis for negotiation in the spring. This, however, is a hopeful view, and may, perhaps, be entitled to little weight, in estimating the situation as it now is.

In addition to the ceaseless newspaper skirmishing already mentioned as going on here, and which is fairly entitled to be taken into account, in estimating the position of affairs, there is a pretty well authenticated statement that the Canadian Government refuses to hand over the purchase money; or, in fact, to accept the transfer until the Hudson's Bay Company is able to give quiet possession. The Imperial Government will, of course, be bound to have its say in the matter as it was the principal with which Canada made the bargain, the Company giving but a half-willing consent, and cherishing, perhaps, a secret hope that, should the contract fall through, it could carry its wares to a better market. Indeed it has been no secret, that many of the Stockholders of the Company have looked forward for years to the day when the United States would step in and buy them out; and though it is utterly preposterous to believe that the Imperial Government would permit the transaction, yet, there was a time when the prevalence of anti-colonial ideas gave room for trusting to the adoption of a different policy. But that time has passed; the value of the "Colonial Empire" is again being better appreciated among public men in England, and the Shareholders of the Company can have no hope now of being allowed to sell out the sovereignty of the Crown. Hence, it may be inferred that between the Imperial and Canadian Governments and the Hudson's Bay Company, this question must be settled in a manner to respect the already recognized interests of each in the issue.

But what of the inhabitants of the Territory? Have they no rights? Assuredly they have; and from a misconception of these rights, on the one side or the other, arose the whole difficulty. To prove which side has fallen into this misconception should be the first end proposed in any negotiations that may take place. When the intentions of the Canadian Government are fairly understood by the insurgents, there may be reasonable ground for an arrangement that would prove naturally satisfactory. But the time lost, unavoidably no doubt, in entering into negotiations, has given the insurgents the occasion to advance their pretensions. It was impossible, after the first attempt at the assertion of authority against them had broken down, that they could maintain the *status quo ante* the Dennis proclamation. Emboldened by a success which, in the actual condition of affairs, was inevitable—for their opponents, though acting in the name of law, had no more law on their side than they—the insurgents exercised acts of sovereignty they had not pretended to before. Authority, whether rightfully

or wrongfully assumed, is strengthened by its repeated exercise at least in the eyes of its possessor, and the insurgents have now thrown off all reserve, and asserted their independence, with the view of ultimately being annexed to the United States. This may not have changed the condition, but it has certainly added to the gravity of the situation.

As our readers already know, the insurgent council, by forcibly taking possession of the Hudson's Bay Company's safe, obtained a loan (!) of some £500 or £800, and with this money they have commenced the publication of a newspaper. Its title is the *New Nation*, and it is of course the accredited organ of the Riel administration. In its declaration of policy it goes further, and is much more plain spoken than the "declaration" issued by Bruce and Riel in the early part of December last, and its significance is enhanced by the fact that its Editor is believed to be Mr. James Ross, until recently one of the principal assistant Editors of the *Toronto Globe*. He, of course, and another gentleman formerly on the same staff, who took up the material of a printing office to Winnipeg last summer, which now forms the plant of the *New Nation*, know well the state of feeling in Canada, and the friendly and liberal policy contemplated for the colonization and development of the North-West; and that they should both have given in their adhesion to the Bruce-Riel government means a great deal more than that a spirit of discontent is abroad among a "handful of French half-breeds." Their defection—assuming current report to be true—means the spread of discontent among, at least, a considerable number of the Scotch and English settlers, and it would not be drawing too much upon imagination to conceive it possible that to this state of feeling, then actually existing, though generally concealed, may be traced several of the accusations brought against the Hon. Mr. McDougall, Col. Dennis, and other Canadian officials. When one has made up his mind to find fault, he is seldom at a loss for a grievance; and admitting that a preference for annexation had been secretly cherished by the party for whom the *New Nation* speaks, one can hardly wonder that so many things done, or said to have been done, by Canadians of all ranks, were tortured into serious offences against the rights of the Nor'-Westers. It is in this light only that we can account for the promulgation of the following "policy," supposed to have been written by a Canadian-trained journalist who once was an ardent advocate of Confederation. The *New Nation* says:—

"Something as to our policy will be expected from us in this number, and we proceed briefly to define our position in common with the majority of this settlement.

"We regard the Hudson's Bay Company's government as obsolete and never to be resuscitated. The Dominion Government, by its criminal blunders and gross injustice to this people, have forever alienated them, and, by its forfeiture of all right to our respect, will prevent us in future from either seeking or permitting its protection. The Imperial Government we consider to be too far distant intelligently to administer our affairs.

"The question arises, then, what form of government is best adapted for the development of this country? And we reply, unhesitatingly, that the United States Republic offers to-day that system of government which would best promote order and progress in our midst, and open up rapidly a country of magnificent resources; but in our present dependent position we cannot obtain what we need in that direction, and hence we will hold it to be our duty to advocate independence for the people of Red River as a present cure for public ills. Our Annexation to the States will follow in time and bring with it the advantage this land so much requires."

This declaration, considering who is believed to have been its author, indicates that there may be something more serious than broad farce at the bottom of the Red River comedy. It is the most outspoken appeal to the Americans that has yet been made, and finds a curious echo from a Washington despatch dated 23rd inst., which says:—

"The recognition of the Red River insurgents by the Hudson's Bay Company as the only legitimate government in Winnipeg has excited much comment in this city. No force will be attempted against the insurgents, but profuse promises of a trans-continental railway are made, to change the rapid course of events toward annexation to the United States. Minnesotians are urging a land grant from Breckenridge, on the Red River termination of the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad, to the Winnipeg border, with assurances of its immediate construction as a sure means against the Canadian scheme."

The opening sentence in the above is a cruel jest upon the Hudson's Bay Company's impotence; but, there is a practical policy in the scheme for carrying American Railways to the British frontier. The Americans have political as well as commercial reasons for such a step, and however much every true Canadian should discourage, and exert himself to defeat, their political aspirations in this direction, no one can reasonably object to their competing for the possession of the North-West trade by the building of railways within their own borders. The obligation resting upon Canada is to push her public works, so far as her means will allow, for the establishment of better communication with the North-West; and without wasting breath upon the mischances of the past to endeavour to

establish better relations with the Nor'-Westers in the future.

In the cartoon on the preceding page our artist has endeavoured to illustrate "The Situation." Brother Jonathan stands by the door of his *cabane* in his easiest of airs, watching with keen interest the direction in which little Miss Winnie Peg is going; he would like to ask her to share the shelter of his own roof, and looks invitingly and coaxingly towards her to assure her that she would be made heartily welcome. Miss Canada, feeling the responsibility delegated to her by old Britannia, extends towards the coy little minx the protecting arms of an elder sister. She regards Miss Winnie Peg as bound by duty, and hopes yet to teach her that she may also be inspired by affection, to cast her lot with hers. And Miss Winnie Peg herself seems half in doubt which way to go. Though disposed to face towards Canada, far enough at least to find out how the latter would treat her, she is still rather inclined to stand alone. Miss Canada must, therefore, overcome her reluctance to the sisterly embrace by the employment of such arts as one experienced in the world's ways ought to know how to use, in leading a younger sister back into the right path. "To this complexion must it come at last," if the people of Canada are true to themselves; but if this "North-West question," in its new and more serious aspect, is again to be made the shuttle-cock to the battle-dore of Party, there is danger that, whichever side may win the game, the country at large will have to pay the forfeit.

PRINCE ARTHUR'S HUNTING EXCURSION.

In this number we give a double page illustration of Prince Arthur's "return to camp." It is enlarged from a photograph taken by Mr. Stiff, of Ottawa, as was also "Prince Arthur as an axeman" in the last number. The Prince, accompanied by Lieut. Picard, arrived at Ottawa from Montreal on the 16th of December, and proceeded thence, under the charge of Mr. Mather, manager of Mr. Allan Gilmour's hunting establishment, to Quio, about thirty miles up the Ottawa. Mr. Gilmour and Mr. Reynolds, of the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Railway, with a few Ottawa sportsmen, were also of the party, which, on the following day, left the Quio at early morn, and after a drive of about seventy miles reached the tent which had already been pitched on a branch of the Gatineau river called the river Pickanock, at Squaw Lake. The ground was found but ill-adapted to the sport, and though the game was not scarce, opportunities for bagging were few. During the whole of the Prince's stay, eighteen moose were started, but only one opportunity offered, and of this His Royal Highness took advantage, and was successful in bringing down a fine moose. The whole bag consisted of a moose, a bear, and a deer. On the 29th His Royal Highness returned to Ottawa, and thence proceeded to Montreal. Though from the unfavourable state of the ground the sport was not so good as anticipated, yet the excellent arrangements made by Mr. Gilmour's manager rendered the trip a very pleasant one. We noticed last week the incident, on the homeward journey, of the Prince's taking part in felling a tree.

THE ECUMENICAL COUNCIL.

In our last number we gave an "illustration" of the solemn procession at the opening of the Ecumenical Council on the 8th ult., with an account of the proceedings at the opening ceremonies and the first sitting of the Council. This week we print an illustration shewing the Fathers in Council at the first sitting, and another giving a view of the south transept of St. Peter's as arranged for the opening ceremonies. The Grand Hall of the Council, we have already mentioned, is formed in the north transept of St. Peter's on the side next the Vatican. This Hall is only used, however, for the full sessions of the Council, as at the opening or on occasions appointed for the promulgation of decrees, &c. A correspondent thus describes the preparations for the opening ceremonies: "In passing up the nave of St. Peter's the arrangements for the opening of the Council at once became visible. On the right curtains of red cloth were put up between the pilasters, and tables were arranged for the vestments of the dignitaries who were to take part in the proceedings of the Council. The arch which leads to the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament was the only one on the north side that was not concealed. The last arch was inclosed with a wooden screen, having a door, which formed one of the entrances to the Council Chamber. On passing under the great dome, the external wall of the chamber presented itself, to the right hand, in the form of a screen or tympanum of wood, stretching across the whole breadth of the north transept of the church, and inclosing it so as to form a distinct apartment. The Council Chamber is thus of the full length of this north transept. The screen, though of wood, is got up with such architectural effect that it yet harmonizes very well with the grand interior of the cathedral. It is painted in imitation of various marbles, similar to those with which the interior of St. Peter's is overlaid. The pilasters supporting the pediment are in panels; on the top of each are the triple tiara and keys, with the Pope's arms on a shield. On the pediment itself is painted a figure of the Deity holding in one hand a book, and with the other hand held out, as if explaining or declaring the true meaning of that which is written. This is expressed in the Latin inscription on a panel underneath, as follows:—

DOCTE OMNES GENTES
ECCE EGO VOBI SCVM SYM OMNIBVS DIEBVS
VSQVE AD CONSUMMATIONEM SÆCULI

The wooden doors are painted to represent bronze, with panels in which are figures of the Saviour, the Virgin, St. Peter, and St. Paul, with the Papal arms, mitre, keys, and other devices. When this door is shut the Council is perfectly concealed from the public view; but there are to be certain days when the decrees which have been passed will be publicly declared, and on these occasions the door will be open. On the opening day, however, the door and all the screen between the two pilasters had been removed, so that the opening ceremonies might be seen by those under the dome; but when the Council began its sessions, the screen was again replaced.