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TORONTO, CAN., FRIDAY, APRIL 1, 1887

THE SITUATION.

The Federal government has so far responded to the demands of the Boards of Trade and persons interested in the forwarding business as to reduce the canal tolls to the level of last year: two cents a ton. The success of the policy of reduction last year, justifies the course taken, while the timely declaration of the canal policy of the government will enable forwarders to make the necessary arrangements for carrying on their business to the best advantage. Should the railways increase rates, as a result of the Inter-state traffic legislation, the canals, acting as an independent competitor, will afford relief to trade. A very great increase of Upper lake tonnage is being created, by the mere prospect of an increase of freight rates; but this increase, by producing competition, must in the long run tend to bring back freights to the level from which they may rise.

Complaints are made that the practice of reducing canal tolls from year to year is a hand-to-mouth policy, and is objectionable on account of the uncertainty that attaches to it. This is true; but there were reasons for hesitation, on the part of the Government, in previous years. Ontario's attitude towards abolition was hostile or uncertain; on the occasion of some previous remissions of tolls, forwarders had combined to augment their own profits and prevent the public realizing the benefit which the remissions were intended to confer; and even last year, the forwarders were induced to make conditions with the Government in favor of the public. Even now it is by no means certain that the forwarders, at various points on our great water way, are doing their whole duty. They cry lustily for the abolition of tolls, sometimes when it would be more to the purpose if they had the enterprise to supply better elevating appliances. If canal tolls are to be abolished it will be necessary to have some assurance that the public and not a few private persons will reap the benefit.

A very stringent coercion bill for Ireland has been presented in the British Parliament. For certain crimes it abolishes trial

by jury altogether, and for others it transfers the trial from Ireland to England. Mr. Balfour, the chief secretary for Ireland, explained that the government does not rest the case for coercion on the statistics of agrarian crime, but considers the extent of crime in connection with its causes and character. In 755 cases, no less than 422 injured persons were afraid to appear in the courts to demand justice; and there are under police protection 498 persons in Munster, 175 in Connaught and 251 in Leinster. Juries refuse to convict, in agrarian cases, on the clearest evidence. The National League and the nationalist press aid in the terrorism; no less than 836 persons being boycotted by orders of the League. The suppression of the League appears to be aimed at. The Parnellites meet this measure with defiance, and even make threats of resorting to physical force. With or without modifications, the government measure will be carried by a good majority, having the support of most of the Unionists, and even so radical a member as Mr. Chamberlain.

The Newfoundland seal fishery has so far been very successful. At Bona Vista and King's Cove, from 1,000 to 1,200 seals were captured daily, and at Amherst, Magdalen Islands, no less than 1,500 were taken in one day. This success will tend to make the lot of the Newfoundland fishermen easier. The basest lies about their abject poverty have been concocted by correspondents of American journals, who fabricate sensational stories, often without any foundation at all. An exaggerated chauvinism renders possible this infamous system of journalism; and the detection and exposure of the fraud have so far not even perceptibly checked it. The power of falsehood may be great, but it is a consolation to think that it cannot last for ever.

Whatever may be the result of the Waterworks investigation, now going on in this city, before Judge Macdougall, it is impossible, looking at the evidence thus far presented, to deny that it has justified the action of the mayor in insisting upon it. When Venables was acquitted of the criminal charge on which he was tried, his friends were indiscreet enough to insist on his restoration to the position in the Waterworks from which he had been suspended, and the mayor demurring insisted on this further investigation. The restoration of Venables to office was, from our point of view, out of the question, before this investigation began.

The president of the Toronto Street Railway complains, not without reason, that the piling of snow brought from private premises, on the tracks of the railway, is unfair, and prevented the company putting on the cars by the middle of March, as it is required by law to do. In response, the city council has authorized the removal of the snow from King and Queen streets. The excess of snow in the streets beyond the average has been very great, Toronto having, in this particular, presented very much the appearance of Montreal, during

the whole winter. The omnibus service is hard on horses and men, including the passengers, and overcrowding is often carried to a point of great discomfort. Every one will hail with pleasure the street cars when they once more make their appearance.

The city council of Toronto is asking legislative authority to make the city ferries a monopoly. The mayor objects, but the council is against him, and it looks as if a monopoly would be granted. The arguments for and against this course are almost equally strong. At present, the service is not free from grave danger, and the wonder is that some serious loss of life has not occurred. But does monopoly necessarily imply the safety that results from good management? A well organized ferry service could scarcely fail to afford some security; but if we must have a monopoly, the conditions of the grant should be such as to assure the largest measure of safety. It would be a convenience to persons who live on or visit the Island, to be able to cross by any boat that may at the time be starting. Against monopoly is the argument of unfair exclusiveness. It will be the duty of the legislature and the city council to see that the monopoly is not arbitrarily and oppressively exercised, while the safety of life is guarded in the best way possible.

Attorney General Mowat has a bill for extending the Torrens system of land titles to the whole province. The county councils, which have been active in petitioning for the measure, will soon have an opportunity to put it into practice. Before this can be done a county must provide a fire-proof office and pay the expense connected therewith, including the salary of a local master of titles. But these will be partly covered by fees and the surplus from the existing registry office. This is the best arrangement that could be made, and will give every facility for the change from a registration of instruments to a registration of title. Excuses will probably be made, in some cases, on the ground of expense, and the option which the bill allows to put the new system on trial may not at once be taken advantage of. But the matter will rest with the county councils; and it remains to be seen whether they will back up their petitions by acts which are entirely within their own control.

Professor Tanner, who has great knowledge of the capabilities of the Canadian North West, has set on foot a colonization company, in connection with the Church of England. The company proposes to start with a capital of £50,000, and to give assistance to emigrants, but only on a self-supporting basis. Cottages are to be built for emigrants, near railway communication, and are to be sold in connection with the farms on which they are placed. Professor Tanner has several times been to the North West, and he ought to have a fair knowledge of what emigrants require and what can be done with them. The company counts on only moderate profits, five or six per cent., and with good management this ought to be attainable.