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THE SITUATION.

Death duties extending to property held in the colonies form an item in the debate on the British budget which has special interest for Canada. It was pointed out that where similar duties are levied in the colonies the effect of the double tax would be greatly to discourage colonial investments. In these duties Canada was beginning to find a resource, which was the more valuable from the little objection made against it. The death duties of Ontario extend to the property of citizens held outside the Province or of Canada; the British duties run on similar lines, and the result is that double taxation will ensue. To the objection that this will prove seriously detrimental to colonial investments there is no answer; the fact is indisputable. The subject is one which seems to call for an arrangement in the interest of both parties concerned. If Canada and the several provincial governments will agree not to tax the property of citizens held in Great Britain, will the Chancellor of the Exchequer agree that property held by British subjects in Canadian securities shall escape? He would be very likely to reply that such an agreement would establish a verbal reciprocity which would fail to reciprocate. But it does not follow that the case is one that admits of no accommodation.

Nothing in the form of gain from the scientific examination of slaughtered Canadian cattle in England is within sight. The announcement is made that signs of the pleuro-pneumonia have been discovered. According to Mr. Gardiner, these are unmistakable, and never found except when the dreaded disease is present. But Sir Charles Tupper, acting on behalf of Canada, is not satisfied, and has decided to employ independent experts to contest the conclusion arrived at by those employed by the British Government. One of them has

reached the conclusion that the disease discovered is not true pleuro-pneumonia, and we are simply brought back to the old form of dispute: with the power of exclusion in the hands of the British Board of Agriculture, continued exclusion of live cattle may be counted on as certain. As happened before, the experts employed by Sir Charles Tupper see corn-stalk disease or something similar, where the British experts reported a more serious malady. The expert acting for Canada contends that the disease discovered is due to the hardships of the journey across the Atlantic. Experience shows that no degree of demonstrations which independent experts can make will move or convince the President of the British Board of Agriculture. In this matter Scotland has hitherto been on the side of Canada, and Ireland, dreading the competition of the superior cattle of this country, against her. All we can hope to do is to convince non-official and disinterested opinion that the view hitherto contended for by Canada is the correct one: that no pleuro-pneumonia exists in Canada.

The London *Lancet*, a high medical authority, points out that if pleuro-pneumonia existed in Canada, no one would be in doubt about its presence; for the reason that once introduced into a country it "makes its presence felt on every side." Of course, it may be stamped out if great and continuous energy be shown in fighting it; but in Canada no trace of the disease is seen and there is nothing to fight. The fact that the disease is not found anywhere, is surely proof that it exists nowhere, in Canada. It could not be concealed if it existed. The question has been raised whether Mr. McEachren, our Canadian cattle expert, is disinterested or not. This is not of so much consequence as may at first sight appear, since in any case he could not conceal pleuro-pneumonia if it existed in the country.

France, as a result of the late political crisis, has got a Government in which Anglophobia is unusually prominent, no less than five members being reported to be conspicuously affected by the disease. It is in the colonial sphere that this temper finds the best field for its exercise. Canada is practically out of the range of its influence, though our neighbor, Newfoundland, may be made to feel its operation. Baffled in Africa, by the late diplomatic coup, in which Great Britain, without touching on any right of France, curbed her ambition in that quarter, France has lashed herself into something resembling a rage. This temper is of course ready to make things uncomfortable wherever it can find the means of doing so. What has been done in Africa cannot be undone. Small annoyances elsewhere will be in order, and it will be just as well not to be taken unawares if they should arrive.

An experiment is to be made in Toronto in the payment of aldermen a small sum each for their services, \$400 for each chairman of committees, and \$300 for each alderman. If the principle of payment be admitted, no objection can be taken to these amounts. They are not more than

equal to compensation for the loss of time, to say nothing of the expense, which comes every year of election. The question is not so much whether such services could be got for nothing, as what will be the general effect of paying? Will it give us a better class of aldermen? One danger to be guarded against is corruption in connection with municipal administration. Will this malady be more liable to appear under non-paid than paid aldermen? Glasgow and Birmingham are perhaps the two cities which, in the whole world, are the best governed. They draw their aldermen from well-to-do business men who have leisure and inclination for the work. We have not the same materials available here; men of this class do not offer themselves for the work, and it is not certain that they would be accepted if they did. We must make the best use of available materials. To the payment of chairmen of committees there can be no objection, and very often there is put upon them an amount of work for which \$400 is no adequate equivalent. It would, we think, be better to begin by paying only chairmen of committees, leaving the others to win their spurs. The objection was taken in the council that the aldermen ought not to vote themselves money, forgetful of the fact that no objection properly lies against the voting of money under the law. This year may form an exception. When aldermen were elected there was no law under which they could be paid; if they promoted a law under which this could be done, it is not unfair to take the objection that it would have looked better if they had abstained from availing themselves of it till next year.

Just at the time when the Legislature of Prince Edward Island has put a tax on commercial travellers, a United States court has decided that such a tax is unconstitutional in the Republic. It is not improbable that this decision would serve for Canada as well as for the United States. In both countries the regulation of commerce is vested in the federal governments. Is this tax an interference with commerce? In the Republic it is held so to be; and if this be true there, why not in Canada? The legal question is worth considering, and it might be reasonable to test the constitutionality of this Prince Edward Island law.

British Columbia is suffering from calamitous floods, which may have a lasting effect on her prosperity. For hundreds of miles the waters hold revelry over the land, sweeping away trees, buildings, railways, and destroying cattle, sheep and human beings. Nor are these floods confined to British territory. Across Puget Sound, to the south, they have prevailed, causing great damage and loss, great stretches of Northern Pacific railway track being under water. The dread of a recurrence of the calamity, if it should take deep possession of the public mind, will deter settlers from occupying these mountain vales. The floods come not from rain, but from the rapid melting of the snow on the mountains by the early and unusual heat of the season; nothing