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TORONTO, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1897.

THE SITUATION.

Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Sir Louis Davies have gone to Washington, in connection with the sealing question, though neither of them, it is understood, will attend the Sealing Conference between England and the United States, that duty being confided to experts, one of whom, Mr. Macoun, will represent Canada. Despatches from Washington to the American press, previous to the arrival of the Canadian Ministers, represent that the visit is expected to have an important bearing, not only on the sealing question, but on all pending questions, which have been sources of international complications between the United States and Canada." This is in accord with what Sir Wilfrid Laurier has more than once publicly stated, and may be taken as substantially correct. It is eminently desirable that the slate should be cleared as soon as possible, though the collection of information, on the ground, may not have reached the stage when the Alaskan frontier can be adjusted to the terms of the existing treaty. There is a somewhat formidable array of questions, in which the two countries are interested, awaiting adjustment, on some of which a settlement is imperative, while on others it is a matter of choice. But long as the list is, it is short compared with the number of questions, which at some previous times have been in dispute. For instance, there were no less than eighteen distinct matters forming a subject of negotiation eighty years ago. Some of the questions on which it is desirable, at present, to come to an understanding, are matters of policy, like the international labor question, others involve matters of right, like the adjustment of the Alaskan-Canada frontier and the sealers' indemnity. Looking at what diplomacy has done in the past, there is no reason to despair of the way being cleared now for wiping out all existing subjects of difference. But it is useless to conceal that there is one serious difficulty in the way: when the Governments agree upon a settlement, there is no guarantee that the United States Senate, when the treaty comes before it, may not render of no avail all that diplomacy has done.

informally, between the representatives of Canada and the United States, is of joint or only American origin, it contains most of the subjects on which adjustment is admitted to be advisable. Not only are the unsettled questions liable to give trouble; some that are regulated by international agreement are scarcely less so. Of these the bonding privilege is one, and of them, the most conspicuous. Before international bonding came into operation the privilege of transit over the soil of a neighboring country was treated in connection with the navigation of the St. Lawrence, and it would have saved a world of trouble if both had been settled on the same principle. If, when the United States obtained the privilege of navigating the St. Lawrence for ever, the bonding privilege had been likewise made permanent, it would have saved Canada from much disturbing intrigue, and her carrying interests from the periodical alarms which threats of withdrawal of the privilege are liable to produce. Jingoism do love to have the means of annoyance, and the extreme anti-Jingoism have shown that they are capable of producing substantially the same effect. On the bonding question, these two extremes met some years ago, and occasional proof is still seen that the alliance, though somewhat out of joint, is not yet wholly at an end. This bonding question ought to be settled permanently, once for all. This could be justified by the precedent of the St. Lawrence navigation. At first, the two privileges were conceded together; but the fatal mistake of putting the two concessions on a different footing was committed. If we are to hold the privilege under constant threats that it will be withdrawn, the question may arise whether it would not be for our ultimate benefit that it should be superseded by some other arrangement.

The use of alien labor, and the conditions on which it shall be employed, fall for regulation everywhere by the country to which the aliens go. In Europe, the privileges accorded to aliens partake of almost every possible shade; though, in dealing with the restrictions to which aliens are subjected, the rule of retaliation has become predominant. At the same time, the tendency of modern civilization there is to lessen the restrictions on aliens. Canada has been forced, much against her will, practically to adopt toward the United States, on the labor question, the European law of retaliation. Just at this point, a new factor in the complication came into existence, in the form of the interests which Americans have in British Columbia and the Klondike mines; the consequence is that the offensive and irritating deportation of Canadian laborers at Buffalo and Detroit have, for the time, ceased. But the cessation ought to have some better guarantee for its continuance than caprice. Things have now reached a stage in which the Americans have a stronger motive than we have for regulating, on a basis of mutual interest, the question of alien labor.

Rights of fishery, both on the Atlantic coast and in the lakes, have in the past caused some friction. In regard to the lakes, measures have been in progress for some time, looking to a settlement, which may be mutually advantageous. What is wanted here is preservation of fish from wastefully destructive processes. Here the difficulties are almost as good as overcome. On the Atlantic coast, the Americans are admitted to our shore fisheries on conditions, which require renewal every year, and which are, at the end of any year, liable to be terminated. This element of uncertainty is capable of removal, if equivalents can be agreed upon.

Whether what may be called the published programme of the international discussion expected to take place