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THE SITUATION.

When the Senate of the United States restored the item for the expenses of the International Commission, in which Canada is one of the parties, the meeting of the commissioners, which is to take place at Quebec, was assured. It is fair to assume that the American commissioners have been selected for their special knowledge of the subjects to be dealt with rather than for their individual opinions. Mr. Dingley, one of the members, we know arranged the last tariff, now in force, but he can hardly have been put on the commission to prevent such deviation from it as a commercial treaty implies; it is more reasonable to conclude that he is put there to obtain reasonable equivalents, whether in kind or otherwise. The commission will, of course, act under instructions, from which deviations, if found desirable during the course of the negotiations, would require a fresh authorization. The predilections of the individual commissioners, if embodied in recommendations, would count for something. Mr. Kasson has previously been employed as a negotiator of reciprocity treaties, and on him and Mr. Dingley this part of the work will, on the American side, mainly fall. Mr. Foster's rank as a diplomatist is established. Mr. Gray is well known as a gold democrat. Senator Fairbanks, who is besides chairman of the committee on emigration, will doubtless have much to say on facilities for the international exchange of labor. The point is one on which the workmen, blind to their own interests, make difficulties for the legislator and the diplomatist. The most difficult question to settle will, perhaps, be the Alaska boundary, though that must, of course, depend upon the extent and quality of the evidence. The Commission will meet on the 1st August.

Newfoundland, besides a Royal Commission for internal purposes, gets representation on the International Commission, whose chief mission is to settle differences between Canada and the United States. This has been achieved by the Newfoundland representatives now in England. Receiver-General Morine will be the island's representative on the commission. So far as the island has subjects for negotiation identical in character with those which Canada has to present, joint effort is the best

made of procedure; but Newfoundland has other troubles outside the objects of the present commission and with which it can have no mandate for dealing, notably the French coast question on which France pursues an aggressive policy, which the Newfoundlanders would like to imitate. The trouble comes from both parties desiring to exceed their extreme rights, a game at which France has been permitted to get the advantage. But there is a limit to the provocations which the most peace-loving nation will endure, and that limit has been reached by French license in Newfoundland. A Royal Commission can throw no light on the respective rights of the two nations on the west shore, but it may show the hardships which Newfoundland fishermen are suffering on that part of the island and how far they may be due to French encroachments on the shore to which a loose tradition has affixed the name of a nation to which it does not belong. Incidentally, the evidence taken by the commission can scarcely fail to show that Newfoundland is suffering from her isolation, while it will afford silent suggestion of the true remedy.

As is not unusual, there is a party dispute over the result of the elections in British Columbia. The Government does not claim a victory, but only a tie, while the Opposition claims a majority. The Government cannot live on a majority of nothing, and the Opposition, even if it were certain that it had a bare majority of one or so, could not set up official business on such a slender foundation, with any chance of success. The Government with only an equal number in the House might or might not be able to get a Speaker from the other side; but if it did, it could not live long on the casting vote of the Speaker. If either party could once get a footing in the House which a majority would give, it might gain accessions of strength by means more or less doubtful. A narrow majority would offer temptations to the use of corrupt influences about which we hear so much, but the truth of which is an uncertain quantity. The best thing would seem to be a coalition arranged on a definite basis; it would be preferable to lapsing into such semi-coalition as is implied in individuals crossing the party lines. To the Government this operation ought not to be difficult, for it has posed as well as it could in a non-party attitude, and the Opposition has no flush of victory on its brow that should make it anxious to refuse a partnership in the Government on equitable terms. What will actually be done we must wait patiently to see.

A cable to the Montreal Star represents the Canadian Government as showing a desire, increased by the success of the Postal Conference, for an Imperial Defence Conference. The first Lord of the Admiralty and the Colonial Secretary are represented as "anxious that Canada and the other colonies should make a regular contribution to the maintenance of the navy and the naval reserves." The Canadian official view, it is suggested, is that when the consideration of the question is gone into, "allowance should be made for Canada's sacrifice in the cause of the empire in building the Canada Pacific Railway." This view is not new; it is the one formerly put forth by Sir Charles Tupper; and if this road be allowed to count as a contribution to Imperial defence, the question is, how far it should go; would it entitle Canada to a quittance from further demands, as Sir Charles contended, or be counted as a partial, but not for all time an adequate contribution? The opinion expressed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier has, we think, not been distinctly different from that of Sir Charles Tupper. Both may, of course, be open to revision.