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THE SITUATION.

On the opening of Parliament, at Ottawa, the announcement is made that promised tariff changes will move on lines of the National Policy; in other words, that the Government embraces the side of protection against the demand for free trade formally presented by the regular Opposition and that section of the Conservative party which is led by Mr. McCarthy. The issue will be plain and unmistakable, and it must now be fought out between the combatants who have massed their forces for the fray. Mr. McCarthy takes the ground that the time for protection to cease has come. The regular Opposition has disburthened itself of the heavy load of Commercial Union, though some of its members still hold out for an impossible reciprocity not distinguishable from the abandoned plank. But upon any important vote on the question, probably the ranks would be closed. On the main issue, free trade and protection, the McCarthyites will join hands with the regular Opposition. In the present House the Government will maintain a sufficient majority to carry their measure, be it what it may. The decisive contest will come later, at the polls. While the mandate of the members of the present House continues in force, the views expressed at the last general election may be assumed to be still maintained; but it requires very little acquaintance with the actual movement of public opinion to be convinced that this is not true in fact.

Nothing could well be more unpromising than the fate of the Wilson bill as it left the Senate Finance Committee. The free list has virtually disappeared, wool alone of all the leading articles remaining on it. The influence of powerful trusts made itself felt in the general revision. Whether the Senate will endorse the bill, in this

mutilated form, remains to be seen. There are ten or twelve Democratic Senators who, for local reasons, go in direct opposition to the platform on which the Presidential election was carried, a Democratic House of Representatives returned, and a Democratic majority in the Senate obtained. On the supposition that all Democratic candidates accepted the Chicago platform, they are now regarded by the dominant party as traitors in the camp. It remains to be seen what effect protests against their action in virtually joining the McKinleyites may have upon them. They will have to make choice between adherence to the views of the party that elected them and claims of a lower order, local or personal. On this question the value of the transformed Wilson bill, as a measure of tariff reform will depend.

At the outset of Confederation, the question arose whether a provincial legislature could award the punishment of imprisonment for infraction of its laws, the criminal law being the special province of the Federal Parliament. A number of local Acts were, for this reason, treated by the Ottawa Government as exceeding provincial authority; and the objectionable clauses were excised, and re-enacted by the Federal Parliament. Latterly it has become a question whether the provision of local laws at first objected to is really an encroachment on the domain of Federal legislation. In an issue raised by the Government of Ontario, this question has now been decided by the Supreme Court in the negative, and the right to pardon, in such cases, is held to reside in the Local Government. It remains to be seen whether the usual appeal, in such cases, will be made to the Privy Council.

A party of British marines and sailors was some time ago landed at Bluefields, Nicaragua, from a man-of-war, the "Tomas," in response to a requisition from the Mosquito Indians, who asked protection against certain Nicaraguan troops. The significance of the act cannot well be gauged till full explanations of the grounds of it are forthcoming. One thing is certain: by undertaking the Nicaragua canal, the United States violated the Bulwer-Clayton treaty, by which Great Britain and the United States agreed that neither would exercise any control over Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Mosquito Coast, or any part of Central America. It is impossible to imagine any connection between the American vote in favor of the canal and the landing of British marines and sailors at Bluefields. Nor is it easy to say what kind of duty of protection the act implied; the most reasonable supposition is that it was made in the interests of peace and harmony.

No special significance attaches to M. Royal's pamphlet in favor of Canadian independence. It is one of those sporadic outbreaks of eccentric individuality, in this line, which have occurred from time to time, ever since Canada was a British dependency, and which are apt to be forgotten on the morrow of their utterance. M. Royal, judging from his career as a

North-West Governor, is, at best, a poor interpreter of public opinion; at present he speaks for himself alone, and his utterance will but excite a passing remark, and then be swallowed up in the great ocean of oblivion. If he were entitled to speak for anybody, it would be for French brethren, who are Canadians above everything, and who have shown no indications of discontent with the existing state of things. M. Royal desires independence with all its obligations, that Canada may obtain the freedom to make commercial arrangements with other countries, which is within her reach now. The gain he seeks is already an actual possession, and its mention, we must assume, is used only as a pretext to cover some ulterior purpose which he does not find it convenient to avow.

Senator Gallinger, of New Hampshire, proposes to exclude Canada from the operation of the new tariff bill, unless she agrees to make reciprocal tariff reductions through the medium of an international commission. This may be regarded as the last kick of the commercial unionists. The policy embodied in Senator Gallinger's resolution is in direct opposition to the principle on which the Wilson tariff bill is founded, and it has not, if we may judge by appearances, the smallest chance of acceptance. At bottom, it is probably more political than commercial; if it aim at coercion, as apparently it does, it would, if adopted, fail of its object. At the same time, it is only reasonable that concessions freely, though incidentally, made, on one side, should be followed by concessions, in the same spirit, on the other; and if this were done, it would be no more than Sir John Thompson has, in one of his varying moods, made. Each country will make its own tariff for its own purpose; but this is not inconsistent with a reciprocation of boons. The Wilson tariff, when it left the House, contained several stipulations for reciprocity with Canada, but the Senate committee has struck the pen through the whole of them. The bill as reported to the Senate contains one free item, agricultural machines, which depends upon reciprocal freedom elsewhere, which being interpreted means Canada. Though Senator Gallinger's resolution be rejected, and rather in consequence of its rejection than otherwise, Canada ought to be able to see its way to give practical effect to a reasonable measure of reciprocity by means of legislation.

Cotemporaneous with the disappearance of the great figure of Mr. Gladstone from the political arena and the installation of the Rosebery Government, one session of the Imperial Parliament has ended and another begun. The old policy is to be continued by the new Premier; and though Home Rule finds no place in the Queen's Speech, and is confessedly to be postponed for a while, it is not abandoned. But the Parnellites profess to believe that postponement means abandonment, and they openly declare that they have no faith in the new state of things. And certainly the conditions of the realization of Home Rule are altered; for Lord Rosebery admits that before that event can occur, England, which now has a majority of 70 against it, must