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TORONTO, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1899.

THE SITUATION.

The setting out of Canada's contingent to the South African war, makes the contest one of domestic concern to this country. Her Majesty the Queen, in sending across the ocean her thanks for this aid, lets it be known that it was the spontaneous offer of the people of this country. The Canadian authorities recognized that there are occasions on which the Government is justified in incurring extra responsibility, and that this was one of them. The necessity in general of obtaining Parliamentary authority in advance for any considerable expenditure if it could be foreseen nobody contests; it is part of the written law; but in this case the exception will be cheerfully covered by an Act of indemnity, on the meeting of Parliament. M. Bourassa resigns his seat in Parliament because this authority was not obtained in advance, and will appeal to his constituents for re-election. He will be re-elected, and the Government will get an Act of indemnity. What will be gained by this move it is difficult to understand. The contingent goes with a hearty and unanimous God-speed from an enthusiastic public in all the provinces except that of Quebec, which however, sends forward a quota. Sir Etienne Cartier said that he was a French speaking Englishman, though of the Gallic race, and Sir Edmund Tache—both of them premiers in their day—that the last gun fired in Canada, in defense of British authority, would be fired by a French-Canadian; and now Mr. Tarte reminds us, as he is entitled to do, that the French-Canadians have, in the past, given repeated proofs of their loyalty. This being so, we need not grudge him a little free speech, though we may not accord with all he says. While the Canadian contingent represents the French and English elements of our population, we need not worry about the exact proportions.

In the beginning of the Boer war the advantage of numbers is on the side of the enemy; this gives them their opportunity, and to do them justice, they are making the most of it. From what has already occurred it is clear that they had been preparing for war for years, and that when they were ready they launched their ultimatum. Nevertheless the results of the two first encounters were such as they had not counted on. The first two battles

of the campaign were decisive victories for British arms, though unfortunately purchased at heavy loss. Both at Glencoe, where the first battle was fought, and at Elands-laagte, the scene of the second, the Boers had occupied advantageous positions on hills, whence they were driven by the British cannon, which silenced their guns, and by perilous charges up steep heights, in which many of our brave soldiers fell. General Joubert, the chief in command of the enemy's forces, rallied the broken Boers, after the second of these battles, and joined them to a large force held in reserve, said to be 9,000, which force again attacked Glencoe. General Yule of the British forces, finding himself greatly outnumbered, began to move in the direction of Ladysmith to make a junction with General White, who, for that purpose, moved in the opposite direction. He found a body of Boers in a position of exceptional strength between Ladysmith and Dundee, and an artillery duel ensued which had the desired effect of preventing the enemy attacking Yule's column, and the two divisions made the desired junction. The Boers in Natal outnumbered the British forces three to one; the latter decided to give them battle with united forces on both sides rather than encounter them in two sections.

From Mafeking the news is, on the whole, good. The attacking force has been repeatedly repelled, with considerable loss, and the Boer General in command there has been killed. Kimberly has been able to hold out. Whatever the Boers can do must be done before the British reinforcements arrive, after which they must inevitably succumb to science and to numbers. The former is now in our favor, the latter in theirs, though they have the services of many skilled German and Dutch officers, the chief of whom is a prisoner in the hands of the British.

The victories gained by the British so far decide nothing, but the moral effect must be considerable; it has broken their prestige and it will prevent such of the Boers in Cape Colony as might be disposed to join their countrymen in arms against Great Britain from doing so. The Africander Bond was formed for party political purposes. When it was formed the Boers in Cape Colony were probably two to one of the British; its existence, as time went on, developed the notion of a great South African Republic and the destruction, not only of British supremacy, but of British rule there. The present war was begun by the Boers of the Transvaal and of the Free State for that purpose. President Kruger told the ignorant Boers that the English intended to take their farms from them and that they must fight to preserve them. These people, who read neither books nor newspapers, believed him and buckled on their armor, under persuasion of this deplorable lie. They will not lose their farms, but the Boer Government will lose its power to tyrannize over British subjects and other foreigners settled in the Transvaal.

The announcement that the late Premier of Ontario, Hon. Mr. Hardy, had taken a clerkship at Osgoode Hall, was received by the public with some surprise, public expectation having assigned to him one of the highest places on the High Court Bench. If the appointment accepted is to be regarded as permanent, we fear it is due to the fact that his remaining strength would not be equal to the more exacting duties of a Chief Justice; and if this be the correct interpretation of an appointment which has puzzled and bewildered the public, he will have the profound sympathy of all parties. The only regret will be that he has not obtained something more worthy of his acceptance, more in accordance with the considerable part which he has long played as a public man in Ontario.