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## THE SITUATION.

An American company has obtained incorporation under the laws of Wisconsin for the purpose of constructing what is known as the St. Clair and Lake Erie Ship Canal, in the counties of Kent and Essex, Ontario. Of course it will require to get incorporation from the Dominion before it can enter on the proposed undertaking. The canal is one which, if it is to be built at all, ought to belong to the national canal system of Canada. If the work were permitted to fall in the hands of a foreign corporation, unpleasant complications would be sure to occur. The cost is estimated by the company at \$4,000,000; at least that is the sum named as the capital. Estimates of this kind are not always reliable. The cost would not be considerable enough to make the construction a serious matter for the Dominion, once the desirability of the work was accepted. The company feels sure that it will have no difficulty in obtaining a Dominion charter. The Dominion Government, even at this late hour, will do well to consider seriously before it clothes a corporation of foreigners with the powers which are asked in connection with this canal.

In digging a well seven miles from Chatham, Ontario, gas was struck at 60 feet below the surface. The vapor extended to the farm house near by and caused an explosion of considerable force. The importance of the discovery is the fact which it reveals of widely extended gas resources beneath the surface, in different parts of Canada. This agent in the production of caloric, light, and power, has not yet been utilized to any great extent among us as it has been in the neighboring country. Every new discovery makes it more probable that the time will come when it can be made to perform all the services to man of which it is capable. It would be desirable, if possible, to ascertain the chief sources of

the deposit. The value of underground gas depends greatly upon the locality where it is found. Near a large city, it would be capable of rendering the greatest service; and it might, if in sufficient quantity, create new centres of manufactories.

At the half-yearly meeting of the Grand Trunk Railway Company, a dividend of one per cent. on the guaranteed stock was declared; and the directors thought it cause for congratulation that they were able to do this. Sir Henry Tyler encouraged the hope that there would be a better result for the next half year. The disaster of Battle Creek will, there is reason to fear, eat up a large part of the profits made on conveying passengers to the World's Fair. No less than 74,000 passengers were conveyed to Chicago, 60,000 of them being carried in three weeks in October. The enormous capital which the company has to carry makes against its dividend-paying power. So far it has avoided reconstruction, though an attempt is said to have been made by outsiders, during the year, to purchase a controlling interest in the road. At every meeting, Sir Henry Tyler has to encounter criticism of the management from individual stockholders whose discontent crops up; but he contrives to maintain his position. The outlook is not what one could desire to see for a great road which was a pioneer in our railway system, and which has performed great and valuable services in the wide stretches of country traversed.

After a debate of two months, the silver men in the United States Senate have been unable to prevent the repeal of the Silver Purchase Bill. An amendment was carried declaring that silver is to be used as coin at its intrinsic value. Does this mean the enlargement of the dollar so as to make it contain a dollar's worth of silver? The moment it was decided to coin more silver than was called for by the needs of business, this was the only honest course to pursue, but the silver advocates got their hand on the throat of the nation, and they insisted on enforcing unjust and dangerous demands. The mine owners obtained a form of protection for their product which they insisted on retaining as long as they had the power. With the passage of the Anti-Silver Purchase Bill, this branch of protection falls to rise no more. Others will follow, as the need for revenue will permit. The enlargement of the Pension List to the extravagant extent to which it reached was part of the policy of protection; by creating a necessity for an abnormally large revenue, it was hoped that the high tariff could best be maintained, and the scheme was not devoid of reality. The Pension List stands in the way of any great reduction in the tariff, unless other sources of revenue can be found. The amendment made by the Senate was promptly concurred in by the House, and the President signed the bill.

Once more a pleuro-pneumonia scare among Canadian cattle comes across the Atlantic. One of the "Hurona's" cargo of over 700 head is said to have been affected with the disease. It came from a

ranch which Mr. McEachren, the chief Canadian veterinary official, had visited during the summer. He is quite sure that there is no pleuro-pneumonia in Canada, and the English experts are just as sure that they have discovered a case. Mr. McEachren's theory for solving the problem is not unreasonable. It is that the beast in question may have had ordinary inflammation of the lungs years ago, and that a perfect recovery did not take place—he says it never does—and that the long journey may have brought on a new attack complicated with pleurisy, and that the disease is mistaken for pleuro-pneumonia, from which all the disputed cases have differed in form. At the same time, the alleged discovery is likely to cause a prolongation of the scheduling to which Canadian cattle are subjected.

Mr. Bowell, Minister of Trade and Commerce, has been long enough in Australia to have arranged for a meeting of representatives of the several colonies there to confer with him on matters of trade and a Pacific cable. If all the Australian colonies would join in forwarding the cable project, a basis of action which would ensure success might be laid. The steam connection with Canada will be a great aid in the development of inter-colonial trade. Mr. Bowell's visit is opportune, occurring as it does at a time when the interest in trade with Canada has been generally awakened in Australia. Some Australians favor another general colonial conference to take place, as before, in London. Whatever is possible to be done to increase the trade between Australia and Canada could probably be accomplished by the meeting for which Mr. Bowell has arranged. If there is to be another colonial conference in London, it is desirable that its proceedings should move only on practicable lines, and that no time should be lost in the hopeless task of asking England to abandon or modify her Free Trade policy in favor of the colonies.

The Anti-Trust Association of the United States, whose headquarters are Chicago, has just had an important meeting. The association will attack one abuse, fictitious or fraudulent capitalization by corporations, which has survived too long. It will take the place of public prosecutor of illegal combinations. An attempt will be made to procure the establishment of a National Bureau to supervise and control corporations, as well as the passage of laws to prevent combinations of capital on a scale or under circumstances likely to be injurious to the public. Such an organization, properly directed, may accomplish much good, though it is not impossible that it may act in such a way as to do injury.

If we look to the condition of the New York banks, and to them alone, we should be obliged to conclude that the monetary crisis is a thing of the past. They held nearly thirty-four millions in excess of the legal reserve on the 14th October; the gain in one week having been more than \$5,000,000. On the 30th October there was a further increase of \$6,000,000 in the surplus of reserve.