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THE SITUATION.

June 29th is the date at which the Canada-Australian Conference will meet at Ottawa. The Crown colony of Fiji may possibly, in some way, be also represented, and the Hawaiian islands may be asked to send a delegate. The chief business of the conference will be the consideration of the Canada-Australia cable, for which it is desirable to get a financial basis in the form of Government aid from the colonies interested, and, if possible, from the Imperial exchequer. The date fixed for the meeting is a guarantee that the subject will be entered upon at the earliest possible moment, as it is only three months and six days after the Session opens at Ottawa; and it seems to imply that the Session will be over by that time. The threatened renewal of the scandal enquiry and a general overhauling of the tariff may give work enough for a three months' session. Other questions will doubtless be discussed at the conference, and Canada and Australia will come to know one another better and learn something about what mutual exchanges of the products of their respective industries can be advantageously made. The visit of Mr. Bowell broke the ice; the new line of steamships bridges the distance, great as it is, and in the end the cable may put these distant countries and Canada on direct speaking terms.

Arrangements have been made by the Province of Quebec to put £600,000 four per cent. bonds on the London market, through the banking house of Coates & Son. The terms of the loan have not yet been made known, but they are said to be better than were obtainable last year. The necessary basis for the loan was additional revenue, the absence of which was the vice of the financial system carried on under the Mercier regime; and this obtained, the rest became possible. By great

care, Quebec may redeem herself; but to succeed an honest and capable administration of her finances is the first requisite. The present Government had a herculean task to perform, and set about it with a courage which was a good augury of success.

Maine has entered on the experiment of building vessels of steel, and our Maritime Provinces are anxious to know whether they cannot follow the example. With steel ships came a revolution in ship-building, which imperilled, not to say doomed, a great and natural Canadian industry. While the materials for ships were drawn from the forest Canada had a distinct advantage over countries which had to import the raw material. Maine enters on the building of steel vessels without either iron or coal of her own, and therefore at a disadvantage as compared with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, which have not yet entered on the experiment. Their turn will come, though exactly when it is impossible to foresee. The Maine incident has awakened attention to the conditions of the construction of steel vessels in the Maritime Provinces. The real comparison is of course not with Maine, but with other countries which possess special aptitude for building steel vessels. First efforts of this kind must be tentative, and as they are liable to be carried on under unusual difficulties, it requires no small stock of courage to put them forth.

Though the Patrons of Industry did not command enough votes to elect their candidate in South Lanark, they developed a strength which, if general in the constituencies, will make no end of changes when new Houses come to be elected. It will not be a question of obliterating small majorities merely, but of drawing from large majorities as well enough votes to elect a third party candidate, or when this is impossible, unequal drawing from one of the two old parties may make the majority pass from the one which previously had the benefit of it to the other. The possible displacements would seem to put all calculations at defiance. The Patrons are emancipated entirely from the two old parties, and there are no signs of amalgamation with either. The P.P.A. was not heard of in this election. When both these new organizations act in a single constituency, the chance of changes is even greater.

Employment has been found for men, in Toronto, in removing from the streets snow, which, if left alone for a while, would have moved itself. When the corporation is at its wit's end to find something for men to do, it would be much better to set them to work at something that would tell permanently. Let them, as Alderman Hallam suggests, be put to work to fill hollows in the public parks. This is something that would stand for all time. If the city had the material at hand, and the means of working, it might in this way help to fill up parts of Ashbridge's Bay, which would be better in land than water; or it might do something at High Park, or on

the Island. But moving snow, when the operation is not necessary, is a waste of labor which might be put to real use.

A reasonable suggestion was made by the Countess of Aberdeen at a meeting of the local council of Toronto in affiliation with the National Council of Women, that there ought to be female as well as male inspectors of factories. The same is true of inspectors at police stations. Lady Aberdeen pointed out that she had aided in getting female factory inspectors in England. Girls, she says, cannot be expected to complain what they suffer to men. There is one woman employed on the Toronto police force and others might reasonably be added.

As the assault on the British House of Lords proceeds, it looks more like an attempt to procure material for an electoral campaign, in which the existence of the second chamber shall be in question. On the Employers' Liability Bill and Home Rule the House of Lords is at issue with the Commons. In this way the Irish Nationalists and the English Radicals might be got to vote death to the Lords. If Welsh disestablishment could be thrown in, a distinct issue between the two houses, on English, Irish and Welsh questions, would give a vote which would kill the Lords, while it saved the Government. But the game of revolution once begun, where would it stop? The Chancellor of the Exchequer, who is looking for the reversion of the leadership of the Liberal party against Lord Rosebery has every motive to attack the Lords. The extent of the popular response to the attack on the Lords is still a matter of uncertainty. Rumor says that a dissolution will take place within a month.

Italy, in the desperate state of her finances, the deficiency for the year being 155,000,000 lire, proposes to resort to an irredeemable paper currency; to issue 20,000 lire of a new nickel coin to pass for twenty centimes; to increase the land tax one-fifth and thereby obtain 4,000,000 lire; to get 4,000,000 lire from the succession tax, 1,000,000 lire from a tax on the registration of deeds, 10,000,000 lire from an increased income tax, and 3,000,000 from an increased tax on spirits. The whole of the new taxes will bring only 52,000,000 lire, so that a repetition of a deficit is not yet provided against. The new taxes are all for revenue; in the past Italy suffered much from protective duties. The condition of her finances makes Italy a weak member of the Triple Alliance.

On the question of the right of the Roman Catholic minority in Manitoba to appeal to the Governor-General-in-Council in favor of Separate Schools, the Supreme Court of Canada, three to two, delivers an adverse opinion. The cleavage is fortunately not on the lines of the creeds of the judges. Six questions were put to the court, to which answers were required. These answers were merely opinions not having the force of judicial authority; the belief is expressed in some quarters that appeal to