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THE SITUATION.

There seems now to be a probability that the Newfoundland difficulty arising out of the Anglo-French treaty will be settled by compromise between the contracting powers. Taken by itself, this trouble was not felt to be great enough to risk a collision between the two parties to the treaty. But when, in course of time, other difficulties arose between them, the gravity of the situation called for a supreme effort to arrive at a settlement. To France, her Newfoundland treaty rights have lost much of their value: several years ago, officers of the French navy expressed the opinion that, as a recruiting ground, this station had lost most of its utility. It is not the treaty rights, fairly interpreted, that have given trouble; it is the persistent attempts to extend them, under specious pretences, that are responsible for the mischief. England, her energies taxed to a greater extent elsewhere, and obliged to waste her energies on questions that would not wait, found it convenient to temporize. France misinterpreted this action and persuaded herself that England would stand a little more pressure, here and there. This sort of thing could not go on forever; the time came when England found it necessary to take a stand and ask a general settlement. That settlement may be made on principles perfectly equitable, so that neither party will suffer and both will gain, by release from the ultimate danger of war, which began to loom up, an unwelcome spectre to both nations. According to one account a money compensation for the treaty rights of France in Newfoundland is thought to be possible; but whether that or a cession of British territory in Sierra Leone, West Africa, which has been named as a possible alternative, it matters little, so that a final removal of an ever present source of trouble is made.

Almost ever since the first sitting of the International Commission at Quebec, there have been observable attempts to create the impression that England is prepared to sacrifice the interests of Canada in the negotiations. This fear has a traditional basis which is not strictly true. In every country there is a party which is inimical to almost every treaty which the governing party for the time is able to make. Faults must be found in it as

a means of discrediting the party in power. When England made any treaty concerning Canada, the opposition party at home, was bound to pick holes in it. The cry thus raised was readily echoed in Canada, often by persons whose only knowledge of the merits of the treaty was confined to a review or newspaper article, and who on the strength of the knowledge thus obtained set up for authorities. It does not require a profound acquaintance with the facts on which the negotiations turned to convince any candid enquirer that the critics built their conclusions on unstable grounds. Some errors have been made; but it is not true that treaties dealing with Canada are a series of blunders and follies. There were generally as good reasons for making them as there have been for making others. The prejudice which assumes that England is prepared to sacrifice the interests of Canada, so far as its supposed historic basis goes, may be dismissed as unfounded. If any treaty be made now, it will be with the entire consent of the Canadian Government. The fact is there are interests in Canada which do not want reciprocity with the United States, and they are doing all in their power, by indirect means, to prevent it. But this does not account for all the suspicions that the interests of Canada may be sacrificed if any treaty be made.

While some of his own party are crying out for the abolition of the Senate, Sir Wilfrid Laurier tells them he is opposed to that measure; he believes, as experience abundantly proves, that two Chambers are necessary. His impeachment of the Senate is that it is irresponsible. This is true in the sense that it has no constituents to call it to account. Sir Wilfrid does not propose to make the Senate elective. His plan is that whenever a conflict arose between the two bodies there should be a joint vote of the two Chambers. This would not alter the constitution of the Senate, but would put a check upon it in certain cases. The check might not always work. If the majority in the Senate outweighed that of the House, the effect of the joint vote would be to make the House a party to the Senate's views. In such disagreements there must be a possibility of the Senate being in the right. It will not do to ignore this possibility, to assume that the House of Commons must, in case of conflict, be always in the right and the Senate always in the wrong. Opinion is divided on the merits of the Senate's votes on the plan of extending the Intercolonial to Montreal and on the Lake Teslin railway. There is no reason to suppose that the Senate had any idea of doing more than what appeared to it as its duty. The Senate may be far from perfect now, as the critics who seek its destruction affirm, but it scarcely adds to its usefulness to compel it to vote with a rope round its neck. Sir Wilfrid does not join those who seek the destruction of the Senate; his reform is a change of methods, which would clip its wings until the Administration feathers grow strong enough to cope with those of the Opposition. Whatever is done care should be taken not to attempt to punish the Senate for doing what it may reasonably have conceived to be its duty.

England has at last recognized that the State has a duty in connection with the inebriate. A law has just gone into force under which an individual, after a fourth conviction for drunkenness is to be treated as an habitual drunkard and confined in a reformatory at the expense of himself or his friends, if they be able to pay, or at the cost of the State if necessary. This ought to prove an effective method, as far as it will reach. It will not reach the secret inebriety of the well-to-do; it is difficult to see what would. It does not interfere with the liberty of third