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TORONTO, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1901.

THE SITUATION.

On the eve of the opening of the Dominion Parliament, Sir Charles Tupper sent a valedictory letter to Mr. Brock, M.P. for Centre Toronto, in which, after recounting the achievements of the conservative party, he mentions among the things political yet remaining to be done "the arrangement of a system of reciprocal preferential trade between the Mother country and the Dominion." If the conservative party accept this suggestion and make reciprocal preference a plank in their platform, its policy will involve the abolition of the present form of preference. They will probably do so; all the leaders were committed to it at the last election, but the fact that most of them were rejected by the electorate cannot be cited as proof that the country favors the change in question. That plank if it did not break beneath their feet was unable to save them. If it be adhered to by the party, at a future election, the protectionists who permeate both political parties, will become divided. Government meets parliament practically without an opposition, and it remains to be seen what will be developed as time goes on.

King Edward has addressed a special communication to "my people beyond the sea," in which he promises to follow the great example of his predecessor and to work for the promotion and common welfare "of our great empire over which I have now been called to reign."

The first blast furnace of the Dominion Iron and Steel Company, at Sydney, Cape Breton, has been set going. The capacity of the works is to be for the first year, 1,000 tons a day, to be increased to 500,000 tons a year. The legislative bonuses will reach a large sum. Much of the product will probably find a foreign market, in which case the country that receives it may benefit in reduced prices. This great manufactory opens under favorable auspices, and means much to Canada.

When the boundary between British Columbia and the United States, which is coincident with the 49th parallel of north latitude, was officially established, by the joint action of the governments of Great Britain and the United States, there were points in the mountains difficult of

access in which practical gaps in the marking of the line were left. These occurred especially in the Cascade range. The Oregon treaty settled the bitter diplomatic dispute; and the only thing to do after that event was to find and mark the 49th parallel. When the work was undertaken it was doubtless done properly with the exception of those spots difficult of access; and if they were slurred over, the reason was that the need for an exact limitation was not then felt. But the mining interests which have since sprung up have made it imperative that persons interested in the industry, on the two sides of the line, should know exactly where their rights end, in order to prevent collisions. Some of the monuments on other parts of the line may require to be verified, or, where injured or buried, to be replaced. For this purpose a movement is on foot to appoint an international commission, which will probably get to work as soon as practicable. The fact that a remedy has become necessary for defective work is a warning to do such work with thoroughness in future.

The Postmaster-General is credited with a desire to try the experiment of a rural post delivery, and for that purpose is enquiring into the working of the system in the United States, where it is being tried. It is said to be practicable where there are an average of two families to a mile, on a distance of 30 miles, to be served. This must mean two actual deliveries per mile and not merely two families resident. In all such cases, the question of expense has to be considered. If rural delivery greatly increases the number of letters carried, that fact would tend greatly to the success of the experiment, when it comes to be made.

Mr. J. B. Tyrrell, mining engineer, writes from Dawson city the opinion that the output of gold in the Klondike will be less this year than last; not only this, but that "there will be a heavy drop." "Bonanza and Eldorado," he says, "are almost deserted." As Mr. Tyrrell's object is to get a reduction of the royalty and larger profits for the mine owners, among whom he ranks, perhaps his estimate will require a little adjustment, self-interest does so warp men's judgments. The working miner, who gets \$5 a day and board, he regards as doing fairly well, and has nothing to urge on his account. The economic aspect of the industry might with advantage be made subject of official enquiry; though in some cases it is nearly impossible to get at the truth.

On the same day, Wednesday, the sessions of the Parliament and of the Legislature of Ontario opened. The opening speech of the Governor of the Province promises to every volunteer enrolled in the Province for South Africa 160 acres of land, and the assurance is given that the survivors of the volunteer militia who participated in defensive service on the frontier in 1866, the year of the Fenian invasion, will receive recognition, the form of which is not mentioned. Toll bars and bridge tolls are threatened with extinction. A bonus is to be given for sugar beets; and there are whispers outside that besides this a Provincial bonus on the sugar produced will be asked, for a term of years. The proposed action of the Government will raise, in a new form, the old question of bounty-fed sugar, which has caused no little friction between Great Britain and countries which grant such bounties.

There are rumors that the Northern Pacific Railway Company is about to transfer the Manitoba sections of its