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THE SITUATION.

For some time past it has been known that the Government at Washington objects to the alleged discrimination in the rebate of tolls paid on the Welland Canal, and representations on the subject have been made to the Imperial Government. These representations having been referred to Ottawa, two members of the Canadian Government, Mr. Bowell and Mr. Foeter, have gone to Washington to discuss the question.

Sir John Thompson has been appointed one of the Behring Sea arbitrators. The other British arbitrator will be an eminent jurist, while a member of the Government will probably be selected as advocate. Mr. C. H. Tupper will assist in the preparation of the British case.

Newfoundland is anxious to obtain the most favored nation treatment in any treaty which Canada, by the aid of British diplomacy, may be able to obtain from Spain.

Several indications make it plain that preferential trade, to the extent favored by Lord Salisbury, will not be adopted without renewing the old conflict between Free Trade and Protection. The Cobden Club is buckling on its armor for the conflict. Earl Grey, in opposition to the famous Hastings speech, preaches the accepted doctrine of Free Trade, and Mr. Chamberlain's organ sounds the alarm. To the other side the House of Lords may possibly incline. On motion of Lord Dunraven it has called for papers that will show what the Canadian Parliament has proposed in reference to preferential trade. It is significant that Lord Balfour, of Burleigh, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, in accepting the motion on behalf of the Government, expressed the opinion that "the attempt to adopt such a policy would lead to great difficulties." This

means that Lord Salisbury's utterance on the subject is not concurred in by his colleagues, and that what he expressed is to be regarded only as an individual opinion. No change of the kind could be made until it had undergone years of discussion. At the general election, soon to take place, it will scarcely be an issue; certainly it will not be made one by the Government, though the Opposition will try to utilize Lord Salisbury's remarks to his disadvantage and that of his colleagues.

By a treaty with Austria, the United States agrees to admit Austria sugar free of duty. If South American Republics fancied that they were going to get exclusive access to the American market for cane sugar, free of duty, they deceived themselves. The United States properly refuses to make with one country a commercial treaty which would tie her hands from dealing on the same terms with other nations. In this particular, Canada finds the example of the Republic worth copying. For Canada to agree to bind herself practically to buy only from the United States goods which she can get much cheaper elsewhere, would simply be commercial suicide.

Comparative tests having proved the superiority of the Canadian Pacific route to the East, the British admiralty may be expected to favor it in the despatch of troops. Lord George Hamilton, First Lord of the Admiralty, has declared that this route, under certain conditions, is preferable to the others, so that now it may be expected to get fair play in this particular at the hands of the Imperial Government.

Mr. Kirkpatrick, the new Lieutenant-Governor for Ontario, receives a general welcome at the beginning of his career. The duties of a Governor have until lately been popularly assumed to be practically confined to routine of a hum drum character, but the recent awakening in Quebec shows that the career of a usually much restricted official is capable of startling expansion, under grave emergencies. In Ontario, however, no exceptional services are likely to be required from a Governor whose duties involve a social responsibility by which more than anything else the discharge of the duties of the office is sometimes judged. New Year's Day calls are theoretically open to everybody, and those who are excluded exclude themselves. But it is different with invitations, in which a line is drawn, more or less arbitrarily, and, it may be, on the whim of a private secretary. It is impossible that there will not be persons who, finding themselves on the dismal side of the line of exclusion, should fail to recognize the fitness and justice of the sentence. Here lies the danger of laying down laws of social pre-eminence, which cannot be based on any intelligent principle, and making the head of the executive responsible for their application.

How modern missions to the Indians of the North-West should be carried on, is a question on which different denominations

do not agree. The Methodists appeal to the Dominion Government for aid on a per capita basis; the Baptists object and contend that this work should be done by private enterprise, on the voluntary basis. But while they object to grants to denominations for this or any other purpose, they take the ground, in a communication addressed to the First Minister, that the State has larger duties, in connection with the education of the Indians, than has yet been recognized in Canada. They point to the new departure taken by the United States Government, which involves nothing less than the compulsory education of all Indian children. But as this is confessedly a preliminary to the breaking up of the reservation and the distribution of the land among the Indians, it may be taken for granted that most of it would find its way into the hands of whites. Before we adopt this radical measure it will be wise to wait and see how it works out in the Republic. Besides, what might be suitable to the south side of the line, where agricultural land available for settlement is a rapidly diminishing quantity, would not necessarily be equally so on this side, where totally different conditions prevail.

The passage of a Swedish vessel from the north of Europe to Chicago, direct, by way of the St. Lawrence River and the Canadian auxiliary canals, at the present time, when so many eyes are turned to the forthcoming Columbian Exhibition, will attract more than usual attention. The value of our great water-way will come to be better understood. A new link in this system of navigation is proposed, in the novel form of carrying the vessels by rail across the Ontario Peninsula, from Collingwood to Toronto. The projectors promise the saving of a day in point of time, at a total cost estimated at \$15,000,000. This mode of carrying vessels, practicable probably, is as yet untried. But the time is not far distant when the experiment will be made on an ample scale, over the Baie Verte ship railway, now under construction. It would not be prudent to make a second experiment till the first has established its claim to public confidence.

Canada and Newfoundland have acted sensibly in composing their differences. By the issue of mutual proclamations, things have reverted to their normal footing. But there is still a grave question between Great Britain and Newfoundland. In the British House of Commons, the other day, attention was called to the alleged alteration of the Newfoundland Fisheries Bill by two delegates, which was assumed to be the cause of the rejection by the Local Legislature of the Bill. The Parliamentary Secretary of the Foreign Office objected even to discuss a question "involving the most delicate and difficult negotiations with France, and even affecting the relations of Newfoundland to the British Empire. On this intimation the question dropped, the Opposition in the House of Commons not wishing to embarrass the Government on an intricate point of foreign diplomacy. The example is one which might be copied elsewhere with advantage.