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THE SITUATION.

Some dissatisfaction has recently been expressed in the French Chamber of Deputies at the disposition manifested by Newfoundland towards the French fishermen in that island. These fishermen and the Newfoundland Legislature have for years been claiming their extreme rights, if not something more, and the difficulty increases as time goes on. Various attempts at compromise or accommodation have been made, at different times, without success. The two parties have been getting further apart, and the hope of settlement on the lines of the existing treaty had almost vanished. In this state of the case, a suggestion has been made, which is quite new, that the British Government should buy out the French rights in Newfoundland, whatever they are. France, on its part, is said to have shown a disposition to sell. The price asked, if the negotiations should get so far, would be likely to be based on the extreme French claim, and there might be some difficulty in coming to an agreement. The compensation would not necessarily be in money; when there was a similar rumor, several years ago, a distant isle in the far Pacific or the Indian Ocean was named as the possible equivalent. Some form of compromise appears to be the only way out of the difficulty. Almost anything would be better than the present unsatisfactory state of things, which encourages mutual aggression and creates bad blood.

At last, there is a prospect of a new extradition treaty with the United States going into effect. To the crimes for which extradition now takes place are added manslaughter, counterfeiting, embezzlement, fraud by a bailee, banker, or agent, perjury or subornation of perjury, rape, abduction, child-stealing, kidnapping, burglary, house or shop breaking, piracy, revolt or conspiracy to revolt on shipboard at sea. All articles found in possession of absconding criminals are to be surrendered. Where demands are made by several States for the same person, surrender is to follow priority. No surrender is to be made for crimes of a political character. A pro-

vision of this kind was inevitable. The danger is that vulgar murder may seek shelter under a political pretence. Does the murder of a public man, in a secret manner, in times of profound peace, give the act a political complexion? Could such frightful murders as those of Phoenix Park find shelter under a political pretence? Could dynamiters who chose to set up a political pretext claim freedom from surrender under this provision? It is to be feared all these questions must be answered in the affirmative. The question whether the offence is political is to be decided by the country to which the fugitive has fled. It is a wise precaution that a fugitive surrendered for one crime cannot be tried for another. The new treaty, which stands a good chance of ratification, is of course not retroactive in its operation.

The new Canadian Copyright Act is finally to be allowed to go into operation. It is a compromise framed in the interest of Canadian publishers, and is an addition to the list of protective legislation. Henceforth foreign reprints of British copyrights will not be allowed entrance into Canada. If there were any prospect that Canadian publishers would take up the whole ground vacated by Americans, the reading public of Canada would not suffer. Novels and other works for which there is a large demand will be republished here, but works of an expensive character, for which there is little sale, will not, and as these cannot be obtained from the United States, Canadian readers will be thrown back on the expensive English editions or nothing. The new Act will give a great impetus to Canadian publishing within certain limits. Compensation to the British authors whose works are republished is provided for, though the author will have no say in the matter. The rate is uniform for all works, ten per cent., and is about what is paid to American authors by American publishers under free contract. The British author will fare better under the new law than he does under the permitted importation of American reprints. If his right to copyright in the self-governing country had been indisputable, undoubtedly he would have had a good ground of complaint, but the matter was clearly one for compromise, and in that spirit it has been dealt with.

From Quebec comes the portentous rumor that at the end of the local session Mr. Mercier will ask the Dominion Government for an addition to the provincial subsidy. As the information comes from a hostile source, its authenticity might be doubtful, if there were not other indications not subject to suspicion which point in the same direction. The Quebec conference of last year asked for an increase of the provincial subsidies, all round. It is not probable, however, that a united demand will be made by the different provinces, for Mr. Mowat sees and admits that increased subsidies can only be granted at the expense of Ontario. The demand recently made that the million of dollars owing by the C. P. R. on the purchase of the North Shore Railway should be made a present to that company in the interest

of Quebec, is one way of asking for better terms. It seems that the company made its bargain in a way that gave it the whip hand over the Government, nothing but the surplus earnings being pledged for this interest. Mr. Mercier would not be likely to recognize the present of this million if it were made, as being in the nature of an addition to the subsidy, but would insist on regarding it as "a dead horse." Unless we are to go all wrong financially, this new claim of Mr. Mercier cannot be admitted. If that province had followed the prudent example of Ontario in the administration of its finances, it would not be in the position it is to-day. Quebec has chosen to take its own course: it should be left to work out its own salvation.

When the Andersons contracted with the Canadian Government to put a fast line of vessels on the trans Atlantic service, they ought to have known whether they were undertaking something which they would be able to carry out or not. It says little for their judgment that they afterwards admitted that they had made engagements from which they desired to be released. Sir John Macdonald says that they asked to have the contract cancelled. What if they had been held to their bargain? Arrangements have now to be made for another fast line, the speed of which may not be equal to that promised by the Andersons. There are people who have held all along that a very fast line would not pay, and on that account the Allans refused to tender for it. Now it seems probable that we shall have to fall back on the Allan and the Dominion lines. Sir John confined himself to the bare statement that the Anderson contract had been annulled at the request of the firm; he gave no explanation of the grounds of the request. The explanation may perhaps come from the Messrs. Anderson; indeed it seems due to themselves that they should make one. Withdrawing from a contract deliberately entered into is an unbusiness-like proceeding. It is not alleged that there was any want of good faith, for the contract was not broken but surrendered on consent. That it should have been necessary to ask the consent of the Government to release the contractors is the puzzle. If there be good reasons why this was done, the firm in its own interest ought not to withhold them.

At the recent meeting in Montreal of the Canadian Society of Engineers, Col. Gzowski stated that, as chairman of the Commissioners of Victoria Park, he was in negotiation to secure the use of the power of Niagara Falls to generate electricity to be used as a motive power. It is proposed to transmit the power to Buffalo, Rochester, and Lockport on the American side, and to Hamilton and Toronto on the Canadian. By this power, it is believed, stationary locomotives can be worked at greatly reduced cost. An enormous force of electricity can be generated by the mighty waters. The extent to which this force can be economically transmitted is a moot point on which electricians differ. One English scientist, some time ago, ex-