

for years entitled to take their places among the rulers of the nation, appeared in the Chamber, as is alleged, for the first time last week?

Certainly, so far as the effect of their appearance and votes upon the ultimate fate of the Home Rule Bill is concerned, it is easy to believe that the Radical papers are right in regarding the summoning of them as a tactical blunder, which will not only tend powerfully to defeat its own end, but will bring the question of the continued existence of the House of Lords itself into the arena of debate.

THE BEHRING SEA AWARD.

It is not a little amusing to see a large number of people and a considerable section of the press in the United States declaring that the award in the Behring Sea arbitration is satisfactory to them, that it gives them more than they contended for, and indulging in similar expressions which indicate a wonderful capacity for extracting sunbeams from cucumbers. Perhaps they have been so accustomed to having the awards in disputes with Great Britain given in their favour that, without stopping to consider the terms of this one, they jump at the conclusion that it must, as a matter of course, be a victory for them. Perhaps when they come to study it they will discover, as the authorities at Washington have done, and admitted, that they have sustained a signal defeat. If it was a victory, as so many of them profess to believe, is it to be supposed for a moment that Senator Morgan would have declined to give his assent to it?

Having given the subject some consideration, during a somewhat protracted stay in Victoria, B. C., the chief centre of the Canadian sealing industry, while the case was being prepared, let me state how the award impresses me.

The subject, as presented to the arbitrators, came under two heads—the jurisdictional rights of the United States in the waters of Behring Sea, and the regulations which are advisable to prevent the seals from becoming exterminated.

Under the first of these heads the contentions of the United States were set aside in every particular. Strange had it been otherwise. The claims were so preposterous that though the arbitrators listened patiently to the evidence, their minds must speedily have been made up that the claimants were out of court. In truth they were condemned out of their own mouths, since they disputed in 1824 the right of Russia to exercise territorial jurisdiction in these very waters, and Russia could transfer only what she possessed. The award on this point carries very important consequences with it, for it means that the action of the United States revenue cutters in seizing Canadian sealing vessels in 1886 and afterwards, was illegal, and that the government will have to pay heavy damages for the conduct of its officers, who, it is assumed, were acting under instructions. An estimate of these damages places the sum at a million and a half dollars, a nice little sum, though it is questionable if the tribunal to which the fixing of the amount is to be referred will allow such an amount. That it will be considerable is certain. The damages by the seizure and detention of the supply steamer *Cocquittan* alone

last season will be large. On this branch of the case, then, the award is clearly against the United States on all the points involved.

As to the restrictions to be imposed on sealing in future, there is no doubt that the regulations laid down by the commission will interfere with the business, but that was to be expected. Hitherto the sealers have pursued their calling without regard to a close season, which applies in the case of the fisheries and many other kinds of hunting. While it may suit those who wish to derive all the profit possible during their day, it is the duty of Governments to guard the public interests and prevent the killing of the goose that lays the golden egg. There is no doubt that pelagic sealing, as carried on in the past, would soon have destroyed the business, and it is only reasonable that the commission should lay down restrictions which would prevent the total annihilation of the seal herds. Whether the negotiations promulgated are reasonable, there must be a difference of opinion, but with all the information respecting seal life before them, the arbitrators were in a better position to judge than any interested outsider. The restrictions apply in three directions—they fix a neutral zone around the Pribyloff Islands; they provide for a close season; and they prohibit the use of shot-guns in sealing in Behring Sea.

The establishment of the sixty mile zone around the Pribyloff Islands will make little difference to Canadian sealers. They could not approach the islands before, and the extension of the preserve will interfere but little with their operations. The establishment of a close season will hurt the business of our sealers to the greatest extent. The vessels have been in the habit of setting out in February, or thereabout, and returning in September or October. The loss of three months in the middle of the season will curtail the catch, but it is probable it will be made up in some measure by enhanced prices. Besides the close season applies to United States as well as Canadian sealers, so that our hunters are placed at no disadvantage in this respect, so far as pelagic sealing is concerned. Both countries fare alike, and no advantage is gained by either. Nor does it appear that the prohibition applies to territorial waters in British Columbia. It does not apply to taking the seals by the usual methods on the Pribyloff Islands, and if United States sealers are allowed to hunt in their own territory during the close season, the arbitrators would hardly attempt to deny to Canadians the same privilege. If this view is correct, a good many seals will still be taken in British Columbia waters during the close season. In Behring Sea, where they most abound, they will be protected.

The prohibiting of the use of firearms (with certain exceptions) appears to be well advised. The arbitrators were doubtless led to make this regulation by the fact that a considerable proportion of the seals sank and were lost after being shot, before they could be reached. The evidence as to the number was very conflicting, the percentage ranging from three to sixty. Taking the mean between these figures there can be no doubt as to a large destruction to no purpose, and though it may interfere with the catch to resort to the old method of spearing, it will not restrict it to the extent that would at first sight appear. The seals are shot or harpooned when asleep on the surface

of the water, so that it is quite possible to get within spearing as well as shooting distance without alarming them. The Indians, who under the changed conditions, will be more employed as hunters than hitherto, are very expert in the use of the harpoon. Besides, the use of firearms is not altogether prohibited as some seem to imagine.

At first the award will doubtless cause some disappointment among those interested in sealing, but the advantage is decidedly with England, whose contentions as to territorial rights have been upheld in every particular, and with Canada, whose sealers will be entitled to heavy damages for the invasion of those rights. The restrictions which will apply in future are not unreasonable. They will tend to protect a profitable industry. Those engaged in it will simply have to adapt themselves to the new conditions.

J. JONES BELL.

PARIS LETTER.

The capital point to know in the result of the general elections is, will the new Chamber supply a working ministerial majority, or will the Old Adam reappear of fractional parties preferring their narrow views to the broad interests of the nation. If not, the old game of Cabinet Aunt Sally will be repeated *ad nauseam*. No journal speaks with confidence on this point, but all hope for the best. The evil is that every Frenchman wants to be deputy, then a minister, and ultimately president of the republic. There are two solid results of the general elections that the second ballotings cannot modify: thenext the utter defeat of the Monarchists and the rump of Bonapartism. The Pope has also been hit home by the verdict; his programme of Catholic republicanism has not been welcomed by the electors, as the two representatives of his ideas, the Comte de Mun and M. Prou, have been defeated. These gentlemen undertook to lead the Monarchists, who, at the bidding of His Holiness, had "rallied" to the present constitution; the dish was evidently unpalatable: the constituencies clearly showed they did not care whether the Monarchists were off with their old love or not, and a great many decidedly objected to the Pope, however worthy the intention in mixing the Church up with the internal politics of France. Emile Ollivier says His Holiness has just received what he predicted and what was deserved.

It is impossible to close the eyes to the seven-league-boots stride of the Socialists: they have not returned many of their men, but they display robust and unmistakable minorities at the polls. The chiefs of the leading Socialist schools have been elected—Guesoe and Vaillant. The Radicals have won a few seats—what was rather undesired than unexpected. But the Radical leaders, Messrs. Goblet, Floquet, and Clemenceau, have been morally defeated by having to undergo the second ballot with its uncertainties. The gain of the Republicans *per se*, has been at the expense of the played-out Royalists and the mosaic Boulangists. But the sectional minorities united may yet rule the situation, as hitherto.

Gratification is felt, and very properly so, that the majority of the new deputies profess moderate and practical opinions. But this is a rather honeymoon view of the situation. The division list on the first test question