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THE SITUATION.

It is gratifying to see for once the Irish members of the House of Commons standing up for the privileges of that body. On complaint that they had been libelled, *en masse*, the defendants were brought to the bar and severely reprimanded. Seeing that this was a quasi judicial proceeding, it might have been in better taste, if the accusers, being also judges, had refrained from jeering the delinquents. But in this they were at liberty to follow their own instincts. The great point is that the Home Rulers have upheld in their own persons the privileges of the House of Commons; the proceeding has strengthened the authority of the Commons, which the Home Rulers are most frequently found defying. They have strengthened an old weapon, chiefly required in exercise against their own delinquencies. Their eagerness to humiliate two press delinquents at their bar blinded them to the effect of their action in strengthening the authority of the House, and thus a happy result has been achieved incidentally, when the only object was to humiliate the editor and the manager of the London Globe.

Several actions have been begun against the Government to obtain a refund of royalties paid on gold by miners in the Yukon, in the spring of 1898. The royalty itself is attacked as unconstitutional and illegal. This allegation seems to rest on the assumption that the Orders-in-Council were not, as required, laid before Parliament within the first fifteen days of the session. This is a purely technical point; it will scarcely be contended that the miners remained ignorant for any great length of time of the Orders-in-Council. The tax is impugned on the ground that Parliament alone can impose a tax. Within a few years, similar objection was taken to certain American legislation, which authorized the President to proclaim certain taxes; but it failed. When Parliament authorizes a tax to be levied, it in effect sanctions the tax, and the form of doing it can scarcely form a loop-hole through which

to escape payment. The claimants go so far as to assert that Parliament cannot authorize the Governor-in-Council to levy any tax. John Hampden, of historic fame, is brought upon the scene, with the anti-ship money Act in his hand; but the theatrical display will scarcely avail to cause a return of the royalties paid. We should conjecture from this singular bit of pleading that the historical reading of the eminent counsel for the suppliants is somewhat limited. The Government in defence alleges that the grants to the miners were issued by the Gold Commissioner in excess of his authority, but this point will not likely be pushed to its legitimate consequence. One point made by the Government is that the miners having voluntarily paid the royalty cannot now recover it back from the Government. The Government does not deign to notice the claim that the royalty is unconstitutional and illegal, probably considering it of no account.

If the project of crossing the Atlantic by steam in four and a half days, between New York and Bantry Bay, Ireland, ever be realized, the hope of establishing a fast line on the St. Lawrence, with any chance of competing in speed, may as well be abandoned, for competition would become out of the question. Since the projectors of the Grand Trunk selected Portland as the Atlantic port of the line, a great revolution in feeling has taken place in Canada, simply because every place on the coast wants to be the Atlantic port, if it can be; if not, an Atlantic port. The commerce of the country, as a whole, has been subordinated to the local rivalry of the ports; and the far-inland port of Montreal makes a great bid of a peculiar kind to become the national port of Canada, in the East. This new line, according to one account, will consist of six large steamers, of which two will be detailed to the Canada trade, with either Sydney or Halifax for the Canadian port. If purely commercial considerations were to rule, the best port as far as it could be ascertained, would be selected; but when the line promoters apply at Ottawa for a subsidy, as they inevitably will, the region of politics will be entered and the rivalry of the ports will revive in all its vigor and unreason.

As a result of the arrangement that has been made with the Government of Newfoundland, Mr Reid is at liberty to put his great interests in the province under a company, of which the capital is put at \$25,000,000. Mr. Reid, as is seemly, will be president of the company, which, it is said, will be organized by the 1st September.

The proposed changes in the German tariff are exceedingly unpopular in Germany. And no wonder. Hitherto the nation has made special efforts to develop her manufactures, and has met great success in so doing. But she is hard pressed, in this line, by old and new rivals; and she has no margin to justify putting her artisans on dear food, made so for the benefit of another class. Her two great rivals, England and the United States, have cheap food, which one grows and the other imports. This new tariff will be death to Germany's manufactures, and the prospect causes consternation. With the development which Socialism has reached in Germany, the new tariff, if enacted and put into force, may cause a general break-up.