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 Manager.

TORONTO, CAN., FRIDAY, AUG. 10, 1888

## THE SITUATION.

After a trial of some years the attempt to keep beer out of the North-West is given up. Light beer, of the strength of four per cent. alcohol, is now to be allowed admittance. Permits to receive liquor have always been in vogue; but the smuggler has been the chief agent of supply. Liquor has, through his agency, been run into the North-West in quantities equal to any existing demand. The smuggled whiskey is for the most part of the worst quality. Drinking habits have various degrees of danger, according to the nature of the drink used. There are those who believe that if light beer can be made to take the place of whiskey, a great gain will be made; and this accounts for the present experiment. A form of abstinence has hitherto been imposed on the people of the North-West; they have not pronounced upon the question themselves, though the time must soon come when they will be entitled to do so. If they decide for prohibition, they can have it, but it cannot be forced upon them from outside.

There have been prompt convictions, before the Police Magistrate of Toronto, under the Bucket-Shop Act. Detective Reid bought some shares of Delaware and Lackawanna from Hanrahan & Co. which he did not get, and he said he felt certain he could not have got. But he did not appear to have asked for them; and he volunteered the statement that more shares of this stock are daily sold than there are in existence, a fact about which it is difficult to see how he could be certain. Robert Fitten, who turned Queen's evidence, said on cross-examination that if forty-eight hours' notice were given, the stock assumed to be bought would have been delivered. This was clearly in favor of the Bucket Shop. Dr. McMichael contended that the contract was made in Buffalo, but the magistrate held that it was made here. He took the ground that the Legislature intended to prevent betting on the rise and fall of stocks; and he held it had been proved that this prohibited act had been done. "The mere subterfuge of having an office in Buffalo seems like a scheme to get

round the law." It is difficult to see how any refinement can get over this. Logan, one of the parties, was fined \$100 or sixty days' imprisonment, and three others were fined fifty dollars or fifty days. There ought not to be any difficulty in enforcing the law, and we cannot believe that there will be.

Just now the padrone-system, worked by Italians who have come amongst us, is forcing itself on public attention. The street musicians are probably under hire to padrones, who naturally take a large share of their earnings. The system may be bad, but that is no reason why it should be misrepresented. The little musicians could hardly get along unless they had somebody to look after them. What they get is a question of wages, the same as with boys in any industrial calling. Beggars they can scarcely in fairness be said to be. They give something for the money, which is not begged but taken up by way of collection. And according to some economists, music is indirectly productive, by soothing producers and enabling them the better to perform their part. If the boys under the padrones are subject to ill-treatment, that is a fair subject of complaint and remedy, but there is nothing objectionable in the fact of boys being hired. We certainly do not want a large number of this class of immigrants.

In Hamilton there is some talk, as there has been in Toronto, of establishing an inebriate asylum. To this place it is proposed that persons found drunk should be sent, and not to jail. This is too wide a programme. It does not follow that because a man has once been found drunk, he ought to be sent to an inebriate asylum. For habitual drunkards, or persons tending in that direction, curative treatment is required. Not all will stay cured, but a certain proportion will, and that will be so much gained. If drunkenness be a disease, it is absurd and cruel to send to jail persons suffering from a constitutional defect. No cure is effected or attempted; in jail no good but indefinite harm to the individual is done, and the protection to society lasts only as long as the imprisonment. Until we change our method of treating inebriates, we shall not lessen the sum of inebriety. There are persons who do not come into the hands of the police, who ought to be sent to an inebriate asylum, whether they themselves desire to go or not. Even if it were true that they do no harm to any one but themselves, there is a limit to the mischief which society permits individuals to inflict upon themselves; a man is not allowed to commit suicide by poison, razor, or rope; why should he by a slower process, that of excessive doses of alcohol?

A significant change in the management of the Canadian Pacific Railway comes in the form of Sir George Stephen's resignation of the presidency of the company. This step, he says, is the result of pre-determination to retire when the work was done, going back to the time when the company made its contract with the Government.

The severe strain which the management of the company has put upon him for a period of eight years has told upon his health. This no one will be disposed to question. Sir George avers that a competent successor, in the vigor of life, and entirely devoted to the company, has been found in Mr. VanHorne, from whom two days ago came a blank denial of the intended changes. These are the reasons which it is deemed desirable to give to the public for the resignation. Eight years of the mental strain to which Sir George has been subject would probably be a good reason why he should now take a measure of repose. Besides the reasons given there may be others which are withheld, but which were not less potent in producing the resolution on which Sir George has acted. However that may be, he deserves the credit of having had the courage to take up the work when no one in Europe likely to be able to carry it through would do it. It is one of the most stupendous works of modern times, and his name will for all time be honorably associated with its achievement. Doubtless he has profited largely by his enterprise, but not till others had refused to take the risk did he come upon the scene. It is a good sign that the late president has retained his interest in the road; and no doubt his counsel and experience will be at its service on special occasions.

Senator Blair asks Congress to repeat, with some variations, the invitation of the Continental Congress to Canada, to join the Union. Mr. Blair proposes to bring about the resolution in the most regular way. Great Britain is to be invited to negotiate for the transfer of Canada, and Canada is also to have a voice in her own destiny. If he cannot get the whole of Canada, Mr. Blair is willing to take a part. We don't think the Committee on Foreign Relations will report the resolution, or if it does, that Congress will repeat the invitation. Mr. Blair's eccentricity is we imagine personal and not national; and though he may amuse himself in this way, Congress is not likely to back up his proposal, which we presume is required to do duty in some way in connection with the presidential election.

A change in the express business of the Grand Trunk railway has been made. Hitherto it has been divided between the Canadian express and the American express companies. This arrangement, requiring a transfer from one company to another, entailed obvious inconvenience, which will now be avoided by the express business of the line being done by one company. The accretion of business falls to the Canadian company, which will in consequence establish new offices in the Western peninsula of Ontario. As there will be only one company to divide profits where there were two before, the public cannot suffer but may benefit by the change. No competition is destroyed, because on the different sections of the road none existed, or could exist, from the nature of the case.

Judgment in the disputed territory case is reserved by the Privy Council till its No-