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THE SITUATION.

Intelligence comes from England, dated the 10th inst., that two steamship lines, the Allan and the Dominion, were booking emigrants for Canada. What will the Quebec Board of Health and the Quebec Government say to this? Will they try to prevent the emigrants landing? If so, we suspect they will have to be practically taught that they are exceeding their powers. One mischievous result of the unwise vaporing of the Provincial Board of Health is that the vessels of the Hamburg-American Packet Company, which ran between Hamburg and Montreal, have been withdrawn from the Canadian service and transferred to an American port. True, Hamburg is one of the worst of the cholera-infected spots in Europe, but the Americans have shown that by proper precautions the arrival of vessels from that port can be made harmless. Really the folly of these Quebec people passes comprehension.

If the story of the sealing schooner "Mabelle," of Victoria, be true, her experience in Behring Sea calls aloud for redress. The allegation is that while she was anchored about seventy miles north of Behring Island, during a dense fog, a Russian cruiser, without warning, fired a shot across her bows, which nearly touched the rigging. The frightened Indian crew, without reference to the captain, the story goes, hoisted all sail, when another shot was fired, piercing the schooner above the water line, and passed quite through the fore-castle. The allegation is that the cruiser gave no signal and lowered no boat before she fired the first time, and lowered no boat before she fired the second time. A sifting of the facts and an explanation of the part played by the cruiser are necessary. What evidence had the cruiser that the "Mabelle" had been sealing at all? Does Russia pretend to have a right to fire

into any foreign vessel that may be found where the "Mabelle" was anchored? A somewhat weak point in the story of the "Mabelle" is that the crew hoisted sail without reference to the captain, his "orders being unheard or unheeded in the excitement." This is possible, of course. It is scarcely possible that his orders could have been unheard, for there would be plenty of time to repeat them before all sail could be hoisted; it is possible that they may have been disregarded, though this is a point on which the captain could scarcely have any doubt. Besides, we are not told what his orders were. In other quarters the statement is made that the crews of ten British vessels have met brutal treatment at the hands of their Russian captors.

A great decline in the export cattle trade has taken place during the year. Possibly higher ocean rates for cattle from Canada than from the United States, until recently, may have been a factor in producing the decline, since it would tend to make the competition difficult. The lowering of the rates may have come too late. At present many vessels cannot obtain cattle freights, at Montreal, on any terms; seven having had to leave, within ten days, without any. In future the competition for the supply of meat for the English market is likely to be more severe than in the past. There is some talk, not yet developed into a tangible project, of forming a company of the large shippers for the export of live stock from Canada. If the United States can ship cattle to England at paying prices, what is to prevent Canada doing so? If prices be below the paying point, shipments cannot continue until a change comes. We shall always have an advantage over Australia, which can send only dead meat. The latter, however, in various forms and from different countries, must tend to depress the price of live stock. Ireland is feeling acutely the pressure of the competition for supplying the English market with meat. The average price of Irish oxen fell from \$75 in 1880, to \$42 in 1891, and this year there has been a further decline, stated at fifteen to twenty per cent. In mutton, the fall has not been quite so disastrous, but it has reached about thirty-three per cent. On the other hand, England finds cheap food one of the elements of successful manufacture; but withal it is not without difficulty that she maintains her footing in the world's markets in the face of hostile tariffs.

Uneasiness is being occasioned by the new taxes in the Province of Quebec. They fall with exceptional weight on the cities, especially Montreal, and thence as might be expected, complaint comes. The Chambre de Commerce has passed a series of resolutions on the subject. The new taxes are pronounced excessive and unjust, "because they are not fairly distributed." At cause they are not fairly distributed. At the time they were passed the Montreal Board of Trade, if our memory is not at fault, agreed to accept them; and the Chambre de Commerce could more fittingly have made its objections then. One of the resolutions asks that the collection of the taxes be delayed till after the next session

of Parliament, "to allow the merchants to demonstrate that they are injurious to the material progress of the province." The answer will be that the Government cannot get along without the revenue. It is doubtful whether the Government has authority to do what would be equivalent to passing a stay law. But if the parties liable must pay now, as seems inevitable, they can lay their grievances before the Legislature next session. These taxes which strike the cities heavily, scarcely touch the country. The farmer, in Quebec, is burthened with tithes and other Church dues, and has little to spare for direct taxes. But a fairer mode of distribution, in spreading over a wider area, ought not to be impossible.

The Irish Nationalists have not succeeded in getting an entirely one-sided commission to enquire into evictions. The landlords are to have what is represented as an equal representation with the tenants: but as four lawyers and one judge are to be added, it will be easy to give a preponderance in the way that Mr. Morley may desire. The new Lord Lieutenant, Lord Houghton, has signalized his accession to office by refusing an address from the corporation of Dublin, because this representative body expresses the opinion that the existing union with England ought to be maintained. If addresses to the Lord Lieutenant are to be accepted as evidence of public opinion, opinion must be free to find expression; suppressions of this kind will rob those that are received of much of their value, since at best they will represent only one side of a paramount question.

Mr. Parmalee, Commissioner of Customs, has returned from his visit of inspection to Moose Factory and York Factory ports. He found that in the southern part of the Bay the alleged smuggling by American sailors was mythical; but whether whalers go further north, and what they may do if they do go there, he did not ascertain. The Moose Factory custom house, which serves the whole southern part of the Bay, had not been inspected before for fifteen years. Between Moose and York Factories, owing to the distance, smuggling would not be impossible, and it might be difficult to detect; if the Indians engaged in it, they would not be likely to inform on themselves.

Once more the British farmer is going to have a disastrous year. Such, at least, is the conclusion drawn by the *Times*, on a review of the whole situation. The crop on which the greatest shortage is complained of is wheat; a fact which must tell on prices, but to what extent must depend upon the world's harvest of this grain. The *Times* recommends a substitution of dairy produce for wheat, precisely the process that has been going on in the older provinces of Canada.

As a result of the long race between Vienna and Berlin several horses have died, the winner among the rest. The result marks the exploit as a senseless piece of cruelty, which sported with the lives of the animals. It shows, however, one thing, which, if rightly used, may be of some