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All articles, contributions, and letters on matters pertaining to the editorial department should be addressed to the Editor, and not to any other person who may be supposed to be connected with the paper.

TWO or three more Canadian vessels in Behring Sea, have, it appears, been subjected to the same high-handed treatment as the *Black Diamond*, by the U. S. revenue cutters. Save to the individual owners and seamen, it matters little whether the outrage is repeated or how often. Too frequent repetitions might possibly stimulate the British Government to more prompt and determined action, though that seems too much to hope for. The case is certainly a most remarkable one. That the Government of a great Christian nation should coolly persevere in seizing and confiscating the vessels and cargoes of a friendly power in waters over which it does not even formally claim to have jurisdiction, is, to say the least, a marvellous procedure. The imagination fails to supply even a plausible guess as to the ulterior design or expectation. Any one of the various conjectures that have been framed seems to presume so far upon the forbearance of England that it can be accepted only on the supposition that the U. S. Government entertains a very uncomplimentary view of the spirit and courage of the latter. If the course is pursued in compliance with some agreement entered into with the Alaska Fur Company, the very existence of such an agreement is both a stigma upon the national sense of honour, and an insult to all the maritime powers. If the design is simply to preserve the seal fisheries from destruction, the method pursued pushes the doctrine that the end justifies the means to an extreme that would, it is safe to say, not be tolerated for a week were the offender a third-rate power, or were fewer millions of British capital invested on the continent. There can be no doubt that the slowness of the Mother Country to interpose effectually for the protection of Canadian vessels tends to undermine colonial confidence in the security supposed to be afforded by British connection. Had the outrages been committed now for the first time, we could well understand and await with all possible patience the slow course of diplomatic communication. The fact that these are but the continuation of a series commenced years ago, changes the situation very materially. The semi-contemptuous tone in which both the English and American journals assure us that the two nations are not going to

quarrel over so trifling a matter makes it the more exasperating. Has it come to this, that the seriousness of an outrage no longer depends upon its character, but only upon the amount of money involved?

A SPECIAL cablegram from England to New York, which bears internal marks of inspiration from pretty high sources, declares with emphasis that the British Government will not follow Canadian counsels in the Behring Sea matter. "They do not mean to provoke a collision in the waters of the North Pacific." "They do not, as matters stand, propose to send a British fleet or any single British vessel to protect the British sealers." "It is known that in Downing Street there is the strongest possible wish to escape the necessity of resenting any American act." And so on almost *ad nauseam*. The burden throughout is that the "angry tone of the Canadian press" finds no echo in England. Now it is clear that no one has so much interest as the Canadians themselves in preserving friendly relations with the United States. THE WEEK has in the matter of the Atlantic fisheries even gone so far as to urge that it might be well for the Canadian authorities to reconsider and revise the rights and regulations maintained under the authority of an old treaty, to see whether some modifications may not be demanded by the changed conditions and spirit of the times. But in this Behring Sea business the case is different. There is no nice question of territorial rights in the matter, even the Americans themselves being judges. The offence against international law and comity is open, palpable. That is the Canadian view, and few of the American papers dispute it. And it is the very fact that the English Government and people refuse to respond to Canadian outraged sentiments which is the aggravating feature of the situation. Canada's own lips are sealed. She can utter no protest at Washington. The theory is that as a part of the Empire her people are entitled to exactly the same measure of protection as the people of England. Do they get it? Were the same outrages committed in European waters upon English vessels would they be permitted year after year, during the slow process of diplomatic correspondence?

THE problems that have been under discussion by the newly-formed Merchants' Convention at Hamilton, and the solutions proposed, have scarcely less interest for the general public, who are the consumers of the commodities in question, than for the distributors themselves. One of the special difficulties which the merchants are anxious to overcome is the derangement of trade caused by the sale at low rates of the bankrupt stocks which are being continually thrown upon the market. Those engaged in other pursuits might at first thought be disposed to say that the public need not complain of a series of occurrences which have the effect of enabling them from time to time to procure articles of apparel or ornament for two-thirds or one-half the prices they would ordinarily be obliged to pay. But a little reflection will show that there is another and a very serious side to the question, even for consumers. It is clear that every case of bankruptcy on the part of a retail dealer, resulting in the sale of his stock-in-trade for less than its value, involves a loss to some one. This loss, in most cases, falls immediately we may suppose upon the creditors of the insolvent, *i.e.*, the wholesale dealers who supplied his goods on credit. But the wholesale merchant, if he retains his solvency and prosperity, must be reimbursed from other transactions. That means, we suppose, in a word that he must, in order to do a safe business, sell his goods to paying customers at a sufficient advance upon what would otherwise be a fair profit to cover the risk of the not infrequent losses caused by insolvent debtors. This increase of cost to retailers means, of course, higher prices to the retailers' customers, that is, to the general public. Seen from this point of view, the effort of the merchants to lessen the number of bankruptcies has a side bearing close relations to all users of the goods. It might not prevent people from making a "good bargain" when opportunity offers, but it would certainly modify their opinions as to the beneficence of the business methods which enable them to do so, if they would reflect that every dollar saved by one who purchases a given article at less than cost of production plus a reasonable profit to dis-

tributors, has to be made up by others, or by himself in the purchase of other goods, and that he, in his turn, has to pay his share of the saving effected by his neighbours when they make similar good bargains.

ANOTHER evil under the sun that shines on the prosperous retail merchant was not, so far as we have observed, referred to at the Convention. Every one familiar with the business customs of this and other cities knows more or less of a species of bait thrown out by some of the more pushing dealers in various forms. One merchant, for instance, will have his "Cheap Friday," or some other day in the week, on which day the purchaser may actually buy certain lines of goods, principally small wares of course, at a price generally far below what the articles must have cost, and often merely nominal. Another rivals this performance by offering to give every fourth or sixth purchase to the lucky buyer for nothing. A third adopts some other form of what is essentially the same device, etc. Two things are obvious in regard to such transactions. First they are in themselves of doubtful morality, inasmuch as the spirit appealed to and relied on for making the method profitable is not remotely allied to the gambling spirit. The other is that for every bargain thus procured the whole body of customers have to pay in the shape of an undue percentage of profit on other goods. Cannot the Merchants' Convention manage to frown down such doubtful forms of competition? Not only are they wrong in themselves and unfair to the general purchaser, but there is good reason to believe they frequently lead the way to those more reckless modes of competition whose legitimate and often speedy outcome is bankruptcy or fraud.

NO thoughtful person can doubt that in fixing upon the abuse of the credit system as the chief cause of the irregularities and bankruptcies which they are trying to prevent or lessen, the merchants are on the right road. The handling of bankrupt stock by local associations of merchants may do something to distribute the losses more equitably, and to lessen the disturbance to trade. It may also put a much-needed check upon fraudulent practices. But it is clear that the only radical remedy for the evils complained of is the abolition of the credit system. Immediate total abolition would be, we suppose, impossible, but sharp curtailment with a view to ultimate abolition is practicable and desirable, and every one who has the prosperity of the country intelligently at heart will wish the merchants success in their efforts to effect this. Here again enlightened self-interest on the part of the public comes in to second the efforts of the tradesmen. No elaborate argument is needed to make it clear that the honest and solvent people who pay for what they purchase have to pay both wholesaler and retailer an additional and considerable percentage above the fair value, to cover first the interest on the capital advanced under the long credit system, and second the large risk of loss through the failure of those who procure stocks or items on credit to pay for them. Here again the loss is not really borne by the merchant, else he would quickly go to the wall. He no doubt collects it, usually in advance, from his paying customers. It was suggested in the Convention that a law rendering accounts above a fixed sum non-collectible might remedy the evil. The suggestion is evidently impracticable, for the fixed amount would need to vary with almost every individual case. Why not advocate the more radical cure which would result from the simple erasure from the statute book of all laws for the collection of accounts? If every dealer were forced to rely wholly upon his own judgment in regard to the character and ability of the customer who asked credit, the credit system would soon fall to the ground. Those who have advocated such a change have been regarded as theorists or visionaries, but there is evidently a good deal to be said in support of their proposal.

THE Toronto *Mail* has recently had several articles advocating the founding of an educational institution for the benefit of adults of the artisan class in the city. The project is well worth the serious consideration of all who take an interest in the promotion of intelligence and skill