

**"OUR SEALS,"—"YOUR POACHERS."**

"If Canada were as solicitous for the preservation of *our* seals against *her* own poachers as she is for the conservation of *her* trout against *our* harmless tourists, a deal of worrying diplomacy might be spared *our* unhappy land on the brink of a presidential convention." Such is the remark made by the *Philadelphia Record*, when speaking of a regulation in Canada providing that tourists shall not catch more than thirty speckled trout in one day.

The observations are in some respects utterly inappropriate, although, in others, they may not be open to so much objection. They are emphatically Canadian trout, though the ownership of the seals is one of the points at issue between the two countries, and is one of the questions—though it is not defined in as many words—that have to be arbitrated upon. Our neighbors admit that they know far less about seals than they had pretended to do, and so far many of their pretensions in the matter have been proved to be utterly foundationless. If there are any poachers at all, *de facto* and *de jure* they are the "harmless" American "tourists," who not only violate the law, but object to Canadian regulation of *our* own concerns. As for the "unhappy land on the brink of a presidential convention," it is none of *our* business if the contending political factions make the sealing question one of the grounds of their partisan controversies.

The situation as concerns the sealing arbitration that has been resolved upon, is somewhat as follows: "If the decision of the arbitrators be against the United States, the British sealers will have to be indemnified by that country for any loss they may have sustained by the interference with their right of sealing; and if the decision be against Great Britain, she will pay the damages which illegal sealing has caused to the United States." With the matter as it were *sub judice*, it will be early enough at some future time for the Americans to talk about *our* seals, should they be decided to be their property.

Recently the American sealer, the *James G. Swan*, was confiscated by Judge Hanford at Seattle for illegal sealing in the waters of Alaska. The Judge, in giving his decision, alluded to the doubt about the validity of the statutes, which assume to extend American jurisdiction to a greater distance than cannon shot from the shore; but he took the ground that this was a question not for the courts, but for Congress and the President to determine. If it be a political and not a judicial question, it may be inquired, what becomes of the obligation of international law?

A day or two since a bill of exceptions, was filed by the owner of the *Swan*, setting out that the claimant, Peterson, excepts to the ruling because in his pleadings he alleged that Behring Sea is an open sea and that there is no clause in Congress declaring it to be *mare clausum*. The vessel was at a distance of more than seventy miles from the nearest land when seized by the revenue cutter *Richard Rush*, which fact was admitted by the Government. It is admitted by the claim-

ant that for political reasons an order to exclude all vessels from Behring Sea may be made by the President, yet in equity and justice and by the long-established law of nations there was no trespassing. The sealer was not working within one marine league of the Alaska coast or of any island belonging to the United States. It is asked that the bill of exceptions be filed and entered of record, so that in the event that Behring Sea be decided by the international board of arbitration to be an open sea all of the claimant's rights may be awarded him.

It is worthy of note that, as has been the case with the American authorities, those of Britain and Canada, too, do not seem to have been as well acquainted with the subject as they pretended to be or ought to have been, or they would have more heartily supported the claims of the British Columbia interest. However, after Sir Baden Powell's and Dr. Dawson's expedition, they are now admittedly much better informed than are the United States; hence the latter have begun more closely to inquire into the subject of "What We Don't Know About Sealing?" For the present season a *modus vivendi*, practically the same as that of last year, has been agreed upon under which Behring's Sea will be "policed" by vessels of both Governments, and the killing of seals prevented as much as possible.

**THE B. C. SOUTHERN.**

Contrary to the expectations of some people, the British Columbia Southern Railway Bill has passed through the Railway Committee of the House of Commons at Ottawa, a clause being added which provides that the road shall not be constructed so as to obstruct any other roads which may wish to get through. It is intimated that the Alberta Railway will be granted the right to go through the pass. The British Columbia members have been strongly urging that a subsidy be granted by the Dominion to the British Columbia Southern, but it is announced from the Capital that the general feeling among the members is that the subsidy will not be granted, as it is morally certain that a line through Crow's Nest will be built irrespective of the subsidy. The probability appears to be that the Canadian Pacific will take immediate measures to get the Columbia Southern Company's charter, and will commence the construction of the line at once.

WONDERS will never cease. The latest ingenious scheme is in the interest of the farmer, and promises to dispense with plowing, using dynamite to stir up the earth. Holes are drilled in the soil two or three feet deep and five feet apart, making 1,000 to the acre. In each hole is placed a sufficient quantity of the explosive, connected with a wire leading to the battery, and after the holes have been plugged with clay, the whole is discharged by a spark. In recent experiments, after the explosion the ground appeared to be lifted two feet, some clods being thrown to the height of thirty feet, while the earth was found to be broken to the depth of thirty inches at the point of explosion, and for a considerable distance around the holes.

**EDITORIAL NOTES.**

SOME one, evidently with malicious intentions, circulated the report that Mr. R. S. Norton had left the employ of Gordon, Mackay & Co. Mr. Norton is still travelling for that firm, and will be in Victoria in the course of a couple of weeks with a full line of samples.

IN view of the course of the banks and many business men in declining to receive American silver except at a discount, there has been a greatly augmented demand for Canadian silver, of which several considerable consignments have latterly been received by Mr. McLaughlin, of the Government Savings Bank. It is of the various denominations, and, it is said, sufficient will be provided to meet all requirements.

THE appointment of Mr. Robert Ward as representative of the British Columbia Board of Trade at the Trade Congress, to be held in London, Eng., in June, will be approved by everyone interested in commercial matters. Mr. Ward is thoroughly conversant with matters concerning trade, and no doubt his presence in London on this occasion will result advantageously both to the Trade Congress and the body he will represent from this Province.

THE approaching annual report of the Canadian Pacific Railway will, it is said, be the most favorable in the history of the road. One of the most important features of the company's transactions during the last three months has been the tremendous increase of land sales both in Manitoba and the Northwest territories, probably induced by the reduction in the price of these lands from 25 to 33 per cent. The success following the reduction has been worked in the wonderful quantity of land disposed of during the months of January, February and March. President Van Horne believes that if the present unprecedented demand continues, the company will have no more land to sell east of Moose Jaw in two years.

ANY one who has noticed the report of the Department of Marine with all its fulsome and self-gratulation, and has, moreover, seen the estimates of proposed expenditure, will be surprised, remembering how little has been done, to find what a small amount of further consideration is to be shown to the maritime interest of this one of the most important portions of the Dominion. Canada must do much better by us in the future than she has done in the past. In the early days she paid special attention to the Maritime Provinces on the Atlantic, making extra concessions and provisions that were not contemplated in the Act of Union; Quebec has had everything that she chose to demand, but as far as British Columbia is concerned, she gets as little as can be avoided and frequently but scant courtesy, presumably because the majority of her representatives are presumed to be solid for the Government. If a little more kicking were done far better results would be obtained.