

# THE MONETARY TIMES

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EDWD. TROUT, MANAGER.

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### THE SITUATION.

If the London *Truth* may be credited, the Imperial Government has agreed to subsidize the line of steamers between British Columbia, Hong Kong and Australia, to the extent of £100,000 stg. a year. The steamers will require to be capable of carrying troops and guns, and they will be liable to go exclusively into the service of the government in case of war. It is not probable that even the fall of the Gladstone Government would prevent this arrangement, assuming it really to have been made, from being carried into effect.

The United States Senate, as had been anticipated, has passed resolutions negating the suggestion of an International Fishery Commission. The natural inference is that the Senate is satisfied with the present treaty limitations of American rights in these fisheries. Nothing remains but for both countries to enforce the stipulations of the convention of 1818. Canada may be relied on to do her part, and we presume the Washington authorities will be prepared to do theirs.

Mr. McCarthy's bill for establishing a railway commission, like his previous bills for this purpose, goes among the addled eggs. But Mr. McCarthy's efforts have not on that account been in vain. He has succeeded in attracting public attention to the subject as well as extracting from the government a promise that it will enter on a systematic enquiry into the subject. Mr. McCarthy did himself less than justice, in the method he adopted. All he needed to do to attract attention to the subject was to produce some short resolutions dealing in the most general way with the subject and asking for a committee of enquiry: instead of this he drafted crude bills in insufferable detail which no legislature in its senses would accept. As we pointed out at the first, the proper way to approach the subject was by a committee of enquiry; and this method will, on a future occasion, be resorted to with the consent of Mr. McCarthy himself. Nothing is more preposterous than for private members to introduce elaborate bills on public questions which they know they have not the least

chance of carrying. Mr. McCarthy is a conspicuous offender in this respect; once he did succeed, only once, and his success was more fatal than defeat would have been. He will do well to reform his methods of procedure.

In the last report of the department on Indian affairs, a ray of real hope seems to shine. Many tribes are applying themselves to agricultural industry with more energy than could have been expected. The Indians of British Columbia are of the highest type and most disposed to industry. The arrangements for the allotment of land to them appear to be inadequate, and something more in this direction requires to be done. North of the Lakes and on the plains, most tribes seem capable of industrial progress and several of them have made more than could be expected. In one case they asked for individual allotments of land. Every where the hunter's calling fails longer to afford the means of subsistence. The step from the life of the nomadic hunter to that of an agriculturist has nowhere, at any time, been voluntarily taken by tribes left to their own resources; they have always passed through the intermediate stage of pasturage. But much may be done by assistance from our civilization; by furnishing the Indians with suitable tools and implements and showing them how to use them. The demand for better tools and implements is a common one. We are told that on the Bell farm Indian laborers, especially the women, are preferred to white men. In trained and regular labor lies the hope of the Indian; in its absence, he would be doomed to perish miserably; by its presence he may be saved.

The New York Commercial *Bulletin* points out that too much stress should not be put upon the decline in the value of exports; since it merely means that "goods have been exchanged on a lower basis of values." But we cannot agree that "it indicates a lower purchasing power of money," goods being cheaper, it means exactly the reverse, a higher purchasing power of money. The exports on one side may not command the same equivalent as before, and this would happen from the fall of prices not being generally uniform as it never is. The *Bulletin* in fact proceeds to show the increased purchasing power of money; what \$100 would purchase in January 1883, could be got a year later for \$89.85, in January 1885, for \$81, and last January for \$79.84. These estimates are based upon quantities consumed in the U. S. and do not represent with perfect accuracy the decline in price of exported articles. The decline in the exports as measured by price is less serious than it would be if price were a perfect measure. But the decreasing exports and increasing imports may lead to an outflow of gold, which always and often unnecessarily creates uneasiness in certain quarters.

Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule measure is meeting opposition from all quarters. No doubt Irish Americans tell the truth when they say that it will be regarded by Nation-

alists as a step towards separation. It is full of weak points. The exclusion of Irish representatives from the Parliament of the United Kingdom is the next thing to cutting the painter; and when the Irish bark is just about to float off Mr. Gladstone throws out a boathook, as a means of calling a halt, till he can secure his tribute. He puts into the mouths of future agitators a potent cry of taxation without representation; of the two orders he creates, the more democratic which would be paramount, would make a destructive assault on the other. A demand for the control of the Police would be one of the first that the local legislature would make; and the exercise of the Imperial veto would lash the local agitators into fury. The portion of the Irish excise, and customs' revenue which is to go to England, and to which the odious name of tribute is already given, would be paid under protest, and if the government were made the universal landlord, the concentrated hatred of landlordism would be bestowed on it, plus the political animosity which the new agitation would make more violent than ever. No landlord in the world would be so badly paid. These are some of the consequences with which Mr. Gladstone's bill is undoubtedly pregnant.

There is after all an afterclap in connection with the loan to the Canadian Pacific Railway company. On the repayment of \$19,150,700, the amount actually advanced by the government, the balance of \$9,880,912 is to be settled by what is practically a purchase from the company of land at the rate of \$1.50 an acre. The result of the bonus by the government to the company then will be that about two-thirds of the total amount will be repaid in cash and the balance in land, for which the government has no immediate use. Our conviction was always strong that the whole amount would never be paid in cash, and we are not disappointed. That the lands may be worth the money at which they are rated it would be difficult to deny, but it would have been more satisfactory if the government had not been asked to take truck in payment. But, on the whole, we shall get out of this loan business quite as well as could have been expected, though not so well as could have been desired. On condition of settling the old loans, in this way, authority is asked to issue bonds on the Algoma Branch for the purpose of extending the road as far as Sault Ste. Marie. The government having agreed to both proposals, parliament is asked to give its consent in the form of ratification.

The strike on the Gould roads has been attended with some loss of life during the week. The result of the contest is practically a failure for the strikers, many of whom will find themselves out of employment. Mr. Sherman, in the Senate, has introduced a motion looking to the establishment of a permanent commission to enquire into labour troubles. A government machine for the settlement of labor troubles would require to be endowed with omniscience and to be able to multiply itself to infinity.