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 Manager.

TORONTO, CAN., FRIDAY, AUG. 24, 1888

THE SITUATION.

For the present, the confiscation clause in the Quebec Conversion Act must defeat the object of the measure. In English monetary circles no one will stir a finger to aid conversion so long as the confiscation clause remains. In London, some leading financial houses have addressed the Colonial Secretary, with a view to secure the veto of the measure. Mr. Mercier says that the bill is constitutional, and intimates that the exercise of the veto is out of the question. But if constitutional it is not honest, and dishonesty should no more be encouraged than unconstitutionality. If he is wise, he will forego all attempts at conversion under the law as it now stands, as such attempts would certainly be doomed to failure, and would prejudice conversion under a new Act without the obnoxious clause. The veto would prevent the scandal of an attempt to convert under an Act containing a confiscatory clause; but it would not prevent the scandal of having passed so obnoxious a measure. Mr. Mercier protests once more most solemnly that he does not intend to let fly the poisoned arrow, but he cannot blame the speculators if they insist that that is only an additional reason why he should disarm himself of the forbidden weapon. If he does not mean to shoot, why keep the spectators in a state of alarm, especially as the retention of an unfair weapon can, on his own word, injure nobody but himself?

Efforts to secure a further shortening of the Atlantic voyage continue to be made. The "Etruria," the fastest vessel on the ocean, is to attempt to lower still further her record. But the main hope of reducing the time must be in new vessels and new machinery. What the "New York" will be able to do must not yet be judged. In Wolf & Harland's shipyard, Belfast, two new White Star Line vessels under construction are expected to make the voyage in less than six days; something less than five and a half. This would be a great bound to make all at once, a gain of something like sixteen per cent. on the best time made, with any regularity, by any vessel. From improved machinery and

double screws this result is said to be expected. Such is the prophecy of Sir Edward Harland, whose skill as a ship-builder is at stake. Should the result anticipated be attained, an enormous gain, and one which a year ago could not have been looked for, will have been made. With every rose there is a thorn; and if the Atlantic voyage be reduced to a little more than five days, the passengers will scarcely come to know one another before they will go each his or her own way.

The whereabouts of Stanley, the African explorer, and we must now add warrior, for some months a cause of anxiety, is now thought to be discovered in a shadowy, uncertain sort of way. The reports from Suakim of the presence in the Bahr-el-Ghazel district of a mysterious white Pasha with an enormous force at his disposal, including half-naked natives, are believed to refer to Stanley, as there is no one else to whom the description could refer. As the Khalifa of Khartoum has sent a force of 5,000 against the white stranger, he will get a warm reception, whoever he may be. We can only hope that Stanley has not suffered destruction, and that the conjecture regarding him may soon pass into unquestionable truth. His success would not fail to put considerable obstacles in the way of the slave trade, which just now is extremely active.

The one effect of the unguarded, not to say studiously offensive, speeches of the young German Emperor, is causing a rise of Boulanger stock in the French market, the most notable indication of which is the election of the "pinked" hero for three constituencies at once. Gas, in both countries, is at a premium; it may provoke a smile to see Boulanger blowing it in the face of Germany; but it is not edifying to see a German emperor blow it obliquely back upon the French nation, which, to external appearance, is patient enough under the double infliction.

It is not often that Canadians visit Cuba, and possibly one reason for the restricted intercourse with that island has been that they were not treated, when there, on the same footing as Americans. By an effort of Sir Charles Tupper, our High Commissioner in London, this ground of complaint has been removed. Sir James Fergusson, Under-Secretary of State, writes to say, that "in consequence of representations made by Her Majesty's ambassador at Madrid, the Spanish Government has issued orders that the privilege in the matter of passports bestowed by royal order of July, 1887, shall be made applicable to all foreign subjects, without distinction." Sir Charles Tupper's action was the result of a complaint made in the House of Commons by Mr. Weldon, M. P. for St. John, N.B., and its success is a matter for congratulation.

A great deal of smuggling is said to be carried on between the French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon and Canada. The illicit business is done mainly by captains of coasting vessels, in connection with manufacturers of tobacco in Quebec, who,

in this way, manage to evade the payment of revenue duty. Revenue Inspector Gravelle, who has been in Eastern Quebec on a tour of inspection from Ottawa, thinks that the illicit traffic can best be checked by stationing a Canadian agent at the French islands, where, by examining the invoices, he could balk the smugglers. Three illicit whiskey stills were found at Old Lorette, one of which was destroyed and the other two removed. Eastern Quebec and the Maritime Provinces are favorably situated for smuggling, and the opportunity is not always neglected. Contraband tobacco from Quebec is scattered over the country as far as Gaspé, and leaves that city under pretence of being exported.

Inspector Lackie has been restored by the City Council of Toronto, by an almost unanimous vote. His suspension was in the nature of punishment before conviction, and since the proceedings against him have been arrested, the reason for continuing his suspension was not apparent. At present, the result of the appeal against Judge Robertson's decision prohibiting Commissioner Macdougall from implicating in the investigation a person not under formal accusation is being awaited. Meanwhile Alderman Gillespie throws out a hint that Contractor Godson may soon be tried criminally; to which the contractor replies that the movement cannot be made a bit too soon. Such threats should not be lightly made, for, if groundless, they are in the nature of libels, and if they rest on adequate facts, action would suit the case better than wordy menace. All that Cooper can tell about Godson can be learnt just as well without a commission as with one; so that if this evidence be of any value whatever, it would have served to base an accusation upon. Whether any jury would believe Cooper, a dismissed servant, who is charged with having attempted to levy blackmail, and who admits his treachery to his late employer, is a question. We do not undertake to say what ought to be done, but the matter can hardly rest where it is, or where the decision on the appeal may leave it.

From Manitoba and the North-West the account of the crops is cheering. The grain crop of the Prairie Province bids fair to outstrip that of last year by some millions of bushels. The frost has done some damage, but it is generally believed to be slight. From Eastern Ontario, which suffered earlier in the season from a want of rain, better accounts have lately come. Farmers who in despair sold their cattle at low prices, believing they would be unable to feed them through the winter, have in some cases admitted that they were too hasty in their action. The Province of Quebec, where the crop was good, is now complaining of an excess of rain, which has been continued for a week, on both sides of the St. Lawrence, causing great damage to wheat, oats, and barley, which had been cut but not gathered. Should this wet weather continue, the most serious consequences may be looked for; to the present date the actual injury to the crop is considerable, though its precise extent cannot yet be ascertained.