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THE SITUATION.

At last the question of the shortest route between Europe and Yokohama, Japan, has been settled by the Canadian Pacific railway and its Pacific steamer the "Empress of Japan." Using the New York Central as a connecting railway link, the C.P.R. made the run in 84 hours, an average rate of speed of nearly 38 miles an hour. The trip from Yokohama to New York was made in less than thirteen days, and it is likely to be extended to London in time to reduce the whole trip to twenty-one days. A fast Atlantic steamer, the "City of New York," was caught at New York on Wednesday last by this east-going Japan mail. The rate of speed attained is of course very costly, though what has been done once can be repeated if necessary on the arrival of every steamer from Japan. The fact is now demonstrated that the Canadian route is several days shorter than its rival. And this advantage can be gained without the necessity for break-neck speed. Henceforth the Canadian route to the East, where speed is an element of success, must assert itself, by force of its superiority, a fact which means a good deal for our trans-continental railway.

The spoils system has appeared in Canada in its worst form. Mr. Jas. Stanley has sworn before an investigating committee at Ottawa that the general convention of the Conservatives, in the riding of East Northumberland, resolved to demand money for election purposes from persons who were to be appointed to office. The committee assumed the function of recommending individuals for appointment, and in this way \$200 was got from one person who received a Government appointment, and \$150 from another. This is the spoils system in its worst form. Has it been generally applied where money for election purposes was in demand? This is one of the worst features which the investigation at Ottawa has revealed.

The Baie des Chaleurs railway fraud has caused a question to be raised of the desirability of continuing to subsidize railways. There is no doubt subsidies have been a fruitful source of corruption. When individuals get by way of gift millions of other people's money for which they are not required to render any account, the floodgates of corruption are opened. One of the first railways in Canada to get a subsidy was the Northern, the management of which fell into the hands of men who, as the late M. Capreol has often stated, had among them a cash interest in it of less than £40. The subsidy was born of the public impatience for railways which private capital declined to build; it was fostered by promoters and manipulators, who gave their persuasive eloquence in return for solid cash. In some cases, subsidies may have been justified, but the system ought never to have been divorced from the strict accountability which properly belongs to it. When a subsidy was granted and paid, the practice has been to regard that as the end of it. Care should have been taken that all subsidies were employed for the purpose for which they were granted. In future, let strict accountability for all subsidies, whether in money or land, be enforced.

There is a tendency to widen the area covered by the United Alien Labor Law. This is done under pressure of the labor unions. An American living in Cleveland, who advertised in Toronto papers for two Canadian painters, is to be prosecuted for violation of the law for inducing them in this way to go into his employ. It has previously been held by the Department that a case very similar to this did not come under the law; but perhaps in this instance the advertisement named the wages that would be given. But even so, we imagine it will be difficult, judicially, to affirm that this constituted a contract. A case has this week arisen in North Dakota, where a man who hired some Canadians to harvest his wheat is to be prosecuted.

Is the "sick man" at Constantinople about to yield up his last breath? Can it be true that he has agreed to leave the Dardanelles free to Russian vessels when they are closed to those of other nations? The statement is distinctly made by the Constantinople correspondent of the London *Standard*, but it is discredited at Berlin, where it has produced some extremely unfavorable comments. One German journal goes so far as to say that if the Porte had come to such an agreement with Russia, the blotting of Turkey from the independent States of Europe would be justified. The first Napoleon at one time favored a partition of Turkey, and would have been willing that Russia should take a share. It may safely be said that the Porte would not be permitted to carry out such an agreement as is now alleged to have been made with Russia. The other great powers would not take a back seat, when such a strong jealousy exists of the movements of Russia in that quarter. If a Russian fleet could occupy the Dardanelles, in the enforced absence of the fleets of

other great powers, Constantinople might some day be called upon to surrender to the Great Bear of the North.

Chili appears to be on the point of achieving a complete revolution. The forces of President Balmaceda have been defeated and broken in the fall of Valparaiso. The President himself escaped, but it seems certain that he cannot muster any force that has the slightest chance in an encounter with the victorious Congressional army. An incident that occurred in connection with the removal of specie by Balmaceda, makes England specially interested in the events going on in Chili, a British vessel of war having been induced to carry away the coin. The coin, it appears, had been originally deposited to answer demands for the conversion of Government notes. Some say that Balmaceda took away the deposits without authority, others that he had legal warrant for doing so. However this may be, the captain of the British vessel must have believed that the President had a right to deal with the money in the way he was doing; still it would have been better if he had not mixed himself up in the transaction. Some persons regard this friendly act of the British commander as a breach of neutrality. Can such a view be sustained, when there was no admission on the part of England or of any foreign power of a state of belligerency? If a state of belligerency had been admitted, any thing done in favor of either party would have been a breach of neutrality, or if anything had been done against the Government *de facto*, the offence would have been equally clear. The Alabama claims arose out of an act by which the Government of the United States was damaged; here, what was done was in favor of the Government of Chili, when a state of belligerency was not admitted by Great Britain.

Not only have the charges made by A. E. Macdonald and his abettors against the Toronto aldermen in connection with the street railway contract utterly collapsed, but deep discredit has fallen on those by whom they were made. Not a single witness has been produced who pretended to know anything about the alleged corruption. It came out that the promoter of a rival syndicate had made a promise to give something to a person if he would secure the condemnation of the Kieley syndicate and the contract got for an applicant which had offered greatly lower terms. A. E. Macdonald's yarns have all vanished into thin air, and in the opinion of the police magistrate his \$15,000 letter had a strong spice of blackmail. There is in this community probably not one man in a hundred who does not agree with the magistrate. After the utter and disgraceful collapse of charges made with the greatest effrontery, it will be in order to enquire whether there was not a conspiracy to blackmail. We invite the benchers of the Law Society to study the evidence in this connection, to see whether they have no duties in the premises. It is necessary to ascertain distinctly whether the process of the courts has been abused for sinister purposes. The good