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DECISIONS IN COMMERCIAL LAW.

RUDDELL v. GEORGESON.—The lands, which were originally Crown lands, were in October, 1881, purchased by one Beech, who paid a portion of the purchase money and acquired an estate and interest therein. By divers, *mesne* conveyances, the title and interest of Beech in the lands became vested in the defendant, who in October, 1891, paid the balance of the purchase money and obtained a Crown patent for the same. The lands were assessed by the municipality in which they were situated, and taxes being due, they were sold and purchased by the plaintiff in July, 1887, and in July, 1889, he obtained a tax deed. The plaintiff claimed that the interest acquired by Beech was on interest given or parted with by the Crown, and that such interest became taxable and liable to be sold for non-payment of taxes. The Court of Queen's Bench, in Manitoba, however, held that the lands in question were not liable to be assessed and to be sold for taxes, at the time they were purchased by the plaintiff. When the land were assessed and sold for taxes, Beech had paid *only a portion of the purchase money;* he had no right to a patent, the lands were not wholly alienated from the Crown; the estate and interest acquired by Beech was not a specific and complete interest, it was a contingent interest dependent upon the performance of an unfulfilled condition. By making such a contract of sale the Crown conferred no interest or estate in the lands. The Confederation Act positively exempts from taxation all property of the Dominion Government. However strongly a purchaser may rely on the performance by the Crown of its agreement to sell Dominion lands, the Court cannot treat the certainty, if there be such, that the contract will be performed as transferring, in the meantime, from the Dominion to the individual an interest which thus ceases to be the property of the Dominion, and which becomes subject to taxation by Provincial authority.

UNITED STATES v. RODGERS.—The term "high seas" is applicable to the open, unenclosed waters of the Great Lakes, between which the Detroit River is a connecting stream. [See Justice Field's decision in MONETARY TIMES, November 24th last.] A vessel is deemed part of the territory of the country to which she belongs. The courts of the United States have jurisdiction to try a person for assault with a dangerous weapon, committed on a vessel belonging to a citizen of the United States, when such vessel is in the Detroit River, out of the jurisdiction of any particular State and within the territorial limits of the Dominion of Canada, according to the Supreme Court of the United States. The defendant in this cause was indicted in the District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of Michigan, together with John Gustave Beyers and others, charged with having made an assault with dangerous weapons upon one James Downs, the assault having taken place on the steamer "Alaska," a vessel owned by citizens of the United States, while such vessel was in the Detroit River, out of the jurisdiction of any particular State of the United States and within the territorial limits of the Dominion of Canada, and the said Robert S. Rodgers, and the others indicted with him, having first, after the assault, come into the United States in the eastern district of Michigan. The section of the Revised Statutes of the United States reads: "Every person who, upon the high seas, or in any arm of the sea, or in any river, haven, creek, basin, or bay, within the admiralty jurisdiction of the United States, and out of the jurisdiction of any particular State, on board any vessel belonging in whole or in part to the United States, or any citizen thereof, with a dangerous weapon, or with intent to perpetrate any felony, commits an assault on another, shall be punished by a fine of not more than three thousand dollars and by imprisonment at hard labor for not more than three years." Under this statute the convictions were made and upheld.

SOUTH HETTON COAL COMPANY, LIMITED, v. NORTH EASTERN NEWS ASSOCIATION, LIMITED. —The action, which was tried before Lord Coleridge, C.J., and a jury, was one of libel in respect of an article published in a newspaper belonging to the defendants, which contained statements to the effect that houses provided by the plaintiffs, a colliery company, for the colliers, employed by them, were in an unsanitary condition, owing to the absence of proper conveniences and accommodation, and were unfit for habitation. The defendants contended that an action for libel properly so called would not lie at the suit of a joint stock company, a corporation having no charter which could be defamed, though an action on the case for malicious misstatements affecting its business or property would lie, if actual damage were proved; that the article in question did not relate to the plaintiff's business; and that, in the absence of proof of actual damage, the action was not maintainable. The Court of Appeal in England held that the statements in the article were defamatory of the character of the plaintiff company in respect of the management of their business, and that an action for libel would lie at the suit of a joint stock company for such statements without proof of special damage.

—A coal deposit has been discovered, says the Winnipeg *Free Press*, on the farm of Mr. Duncan McArthur, five miles south of Deloraine, Manitoba, and within two miles of the northern fringe of the Turtle Mountains. A shaft has been sunk over thirty feet, and the seam is ten or eleven feet in thickness. The "historical Deloraine well" has been sunk to a depth of 1,963 feet; a pump has been put in and is down to 120 feet. It is estimated to be capable of furnishing 800 tons of water per day.

—A meeting of the Employing Printers' Association of Toronto was held on Thursday evening, 18th instant. One of the principal topics of discussion was the system in vogue whereby paper-makers give long credit to job printers with little or no capital, while press-builders and type-founders do the like, and secure themselves by chattel mortgage, thereby cutting out ordinary creditors. The system was denounced as iniquitous. The following resolution was passed, after discussion: "This meeting regrets that the Dominion Government has not yet proclaimed the Copyright Act of 1890, as the absence of this proclamation has, to a considerable extent caused the failure of nearly all of those engaged in publishing reprints affected by the copyright in Canada, and further loss of thousands of dollars to printers, bookbinders and paper dealers, which business, through legislation by the United States, has been secured to that country." The following resolution regarding the tariff was also passed: "That the tariff as at present arranged on certain books, raw material, tools and implements, inasmuch as it is opposed to Canadian and in favor of foreign manufacturers, is detrimental to the best interests of the printing, bookbinding and publishing trade in Canada."