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## PILOTAGE.

When Mr. Robert Ward undertakes anything, either in his own interest or that of the public, he always performs his duties not only intelligently but thoroughly, being ever ready to give a reason for following any particular course. In connection with the investigation into the loss of the SS. San Pedro, in the vicinity of the port of Victoria, into which he was appointed to inquire in conjunction with Captains Lewis and Gaudin, Mr. Ward has transmitted his report to the Board of Trade. Not only did the Board of Inquiry decide where the responsibility for the catastrophe lay, but they indicated that in no way was the approach to the harbor of Victoria dangerous, the accident having been caused by miscalculation and neglect on the part of Pilot Christensen, the captain of the steamer, to a certain extent, being entitled to blame. Mr. Ward has gone further than his associates in his special return to the Board of Trade, having undertaken to deal with the pilotage system of the province.

He showed that the system of licensing pilots was not what it ought to be, pointing out that although Captain Christensen held a license for British Columbia, he was at the time of the accident acting under a Nanaimo license, and, in consequence, the Victoria pilotage commissioners had no authority over him although the accident occurred in their district. Moreover, it was demonstrated that although the pilots are well paid for their services, they have no such thing as a schooner or sloop with which to reach vessels who may be in need of their services, masters being compelled to call off Victoria to take on a pilot from shore or to discharge one there. Vessel owners carrying and merchants trading with this port will be well satisfied that the British Columbia Board of Trade adopted Mr. Ward's report, which, moreover, recommended that the government be requested to look into the entire pilotage question, with a view to the adoption of an effective system applicable to all British Columbia waters.

## BEHRING SEA QUESTION.

The British and Canadian Behring Sea Commissioners have, it is announced, left for Washington to compare notes with the American Commissioners and ascertain upon what points the representatives of the two countries agree. We doubt if they will come any closer together than did the lines drawn by the British and American surveyors when their business was to determine the boundary line of British Columbia and the United States.

They were a long way out, yet the United States were given the benefit of the doubt and allowed to take possession of the valuable lands which the British survey had shown to be British territory. If the commissioners agree upon anything, past experiences lead us to anticipate that it will be upon nothing of any very great importance. As it has been all along in this sealing matter, so it was with the Chilian controversy. The Americans cared nothing for the rights and wrongs of the matter. Their object was to secure political effect.

According to recent announcements, President Harrison and Secretary of State Blaine have quarrelled over the question of the personal honor and glory of the thing. The one claims that it was his own special view and treatment of the case that caused Chili to surrender, and to this the other replies that his rival is a liar or something approaching to it. This is all nuts for the Democrats, who want no better thing than to see the two most prominent men in the Republican party quarrelling. Whichever of these men—if either—gets the party nomination, cannot depend upon more than a half support from the other. Mr. Blaine was, upon a previous occasion, accused of apathy in connection with the presidential contest, and it may be readily supposed that he will be sick or something else provided he is not the choice of the Republican convention.

But, as the Frenchman would say, *revenons à nos moutons*! It is the sealing question in which we are specially interested, and the more so since neither of the American political camps is particularly anxious to deal fairly by us. No matter how they may quarrel at home, as concerns outside relations, it is the United States first, last and all the time. The indications are that nothing much can be accomplished as concerns the sealing question until the end of the present year. American as well as British Columbia sealers loudly complain of the manner in which their industry is being prejudiced. And, until we see a definite opinion to the contrary, on the part of the British sealing commissioners, we shall hold to the opinion that the existing policy of sealing "protection"—"Heaven save the mark!"—was not necessary, save in the interest of the individuals and corporations who were the special proteges of the American government.

The outlook for Behring Sea is about the same as it was after the issuance of the joint proclamation, late last fall, save and except that it is likely to require a more numerous fleet of cruisers to do the "protecting." Every man, no matter his nationality, will have but one policy, and that is to catch seal. If he hears he believes unduly interfered with, he will be likely to do something else, irrespective of the flag under which he assumes to sail. In the one case, he will feel that his government has been fooled, and, in the other, he will conclude that he has been made the victim of the exigencies of the political party which is endeavoring to maintain itself in power in his own country. It would not at all surprise us if formal action be not on some excuse or another postponed until after the American elections, which is only adding to the insult and the injury that have already been perpetrated.

## THE OUTLOOK.

The Seattle *Telegraph* publishes an article on the outlook. It remarks upon the low rate of Bank of England discount, 3 per cent., which has been the figure for several weeks, and is not likely to be increased, capital not being at the present times especially timid, and it says that if under all the circumstances business does not speedily revive throughout the world, all the lessons of the past go for nothing. Reference is made to the especial manner in which the attention of the world has of late been devoted to North America, which, while other lands were suffering by reason of a shortage in breadstuffs, had enough for its own use and abundance to spare. This fact is of inestimable value as a recommendation of this continent to investors. With its granaries crowded with wheat and corn and the railways blockaded by a surplus of grain, North America presents to the old world a spectacle in striking contrast to every other continent.

Under all these circumstances it is pointed out as only natural that much European capital will find its way across the Atlantic this year, and that much domestic capital which foreign capital will displace in the East will find its way to the Pacific Coast. For our part, we think that not a small amount of it is likely to find its way to British Columbia, whose mineral deposits are attracting so much attention the world over. Our Kootenay and Cariboo countries are only now becoming known in the East, and the discoveries at Kaslo Creek and elsewhere cannot do otherwise than whet the appetites of those who have money to invest. We therefore think that we are safe in looking for an extraordinary expansion of the mining industry and an inflow of vast sums of money. The opening of our mines is a matter of the utmost importance, for it means a great revival in every line of business, and especially in agriculture. If our mining interest prospers so will every other concern—real estate, commerce, shipping, manufacturing, agriculture. They are all inseparable, and when one prospers almost all the others are sharers of its prosperity.

## FIRE INSURANCE.

Victoria has at length begun to wake up to the importance of ample fire protection. The late Council have made a necessary and not over extravagant number of recommendations to the present body elect now in council, and it only remains with the electors to see that they are supplied with sufficient funds to carry out those suggestions. The fire underwriters have urged again and again the purchase of a chemical engine, and, when we take into consideration the amount of tax they have to pay, we feel they are entitled to some attention, and it is to be hoped that the much needed engine and apparatus will be speedily secured. Its usefulness has been fully shown by the amount of loss sustained at recent fires through water, in fact, the loss at the Arcade fire would alone have purchased two such engines as are required.

Another source of danger to city property is at present troubling the minds of many who have the interests of our city at heart.