

ESTABLISHED 1866.

## THE MONETARY TIMES

AND TRADE REVIEW,

With which has been incorporated the INTERCOLONIAL JOURNAL OF COMMERCE, of Montreal, the TRADE REVIEW, of the same city (in 1870), and the TORONTO JOURNAL OF COMMERCE.

ISSUED EVERY FRIDAY MORNING.

SUBSCRIPTION—POST PAID.

CANADIAN SUBSCRIBERS, - \$2.00 PER YEAR.  
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TORONTO, CAN., FRIDAY, DEC. 14, 1888

## THE SITUATION.

The only question arising out of the northern boundary of Ontario that remained in dispute has been settled by the Privy Council in London. When the extended boundary claimed for Ontario had been settled by arbitration, the Dominion Government set up a claim to the lands, including the timber and minerals. On the strength of this claim it issued mining and timber licenses. Its right to do so was contested by the Ontario Government, in whose favor the final decision, according with that of all the other courts, is now given. The test case was brought to decide the right of the St. Catherines Milling and Lumber Company under its license from the Dominion Government. The fact that no costs were allowed may be taken to mean that the points disputed were fairly arguable. The Dominion relied a great deal upon the fact that it extinguished the Indian title to the lands in question. The decision now is that the province which gets the lands is to bear the burthen of the Indian treaty. But it is reasonable to suppose that the Dominion will be required to pay for the timber which, without legal warrant, as now appears, it authorized lumberers to cut.

This decision of the Privy Council is important to Ontario in more ways than one. It places the Province, in point of territorial extent, in the first rank. Its territory is divided by great lakes, the Georgian Bay and Lake Superior, into Northern and Southern sections. At the east of Georgian Bay, they can be connected by rail. Such a road might prevent a future demand for a division of the territory into two provinces, which the geographical position will be likely to suggest. But this is far in the future. Fortunately, the Canadian Pacific opening up this northern territory from east to west, will facilitate the exploitation of its mines and aid its lumbering operations. The timber wealth of this region is of great value, and will keep the finances of Ontario in a prosperous condition for years to come. There are besides valuable minerals, scattered over a large area of essentially

mining territory. Their development is a thing of the future, very little having been done in that direction so far. In all new mining ventures, it is necessary to proceed with caution. The researches of the Ontario Mining Commission are opportune. But we must not expect too much from the results of the enquiry. If they tell us how to shape our policy of dealing with miners, it is about all that can be expected.

Men who follow fishing for a living are sometimes under strong temptations to poach on forbidden ground; and it is not surprising if they occasionally go astray. Oyster dredgers, it is now shown, are no better. A number of these got on reserved ground, near Chester River, on the Maryland shore, and a fight between them and the authorities took place, in which several persons were killed. Cannon as well as small arms were used. It was a case of dogged defiance of law and authority. The incident may be useful in demonstrating the existence of a predatory disposition in people of this way of life, as it will make credible the fact, which there has been a disposition to deny on the other side of the line, that American fishermen are apt to watch for opportunities of poaching on our coasts, where they have no right to fish. If such a fracas had occurred on our coast as has taken place on the Maryland shore, we should have found ourselves in presence of a serious international complication.

If, as is believed, the United States is asking the consent of the powers to make Behring Sea a close sea, it is not probable that it will succeed. No doubt, Great Britain is most interested; the interest of Russia, which has territory bordering on part of that water, is uncertain, and it is easy to conceive that Russia might incline towards the United States, in the contention which the latter is presumably making. But no other nation will be drawn by interest to take that side; though few nations probably have any strong motive to insist on the rights of navigation which are enjoyed in the open sea; on the other hand, they can have no possible motive for excluding themselves from rights which they may or may not desire to exercise.

A despatch from Halifax to an American journal says an important move has been made in the practical settlement of the vital question in the fishery controversy. An American schooner, the "N. P. Banks," which went to Halifax with a cargo of fish, ostensibly for repairs, was permitted to re-ship her cargo by the steamer "Carroll" for Boston. This was not done by virtue of a license issued under the *modus vivendi*, but, it is assumed, as a result of the altered policy of the Canadian Government. The opinion was expressed, in these columns, a year ago, that on this point of transshipment Canada could afford to be magnanimous; but the action reported at Halifax does not prove to have been in pursuance of the voluntary removal of a barrier which can no longer be maintained with advantage. The vessel put in for repairs; that plea is spoken of as colorable, but it is not necessary to look too closely into every

little matter of this kind, if it bodes no injury to Canadian interests. The reshipping does, in fact, not appear to have been the result of an application to Ottawa at all; it was properly permitted, under the circumstances, for without such permission the cargo would presumably have been liable to suffer great injury; a result by which no mortal could have benefitted. We trust we shall soon hear that the point which the Halifax despatch assumes to have been accorded has really been conceded, in the interests of comity and good neighborhood.

The question asked by Mr. Labouchere, in the British House of Commons, whether ninety per cent. of the shares in the Inman Line of Steamships are not held by Americans, has been answered by the Government. It was known that a large proportion of the stock was held by Americans, and when the contract was drafted that fact was kept steadily in view. The answer as cabled is not very intelligible, but it probably means that in case of war these vessels, unless the contract were broken, would be at the service of the British Government. The fact that the Americans have to sail their Atlantic steamers under the British flag will excite some curiosity. But the explanation of it is not far to seek. Such vessels as the Inman Line is composed of can be built at much less cost in Great Britain than in the United States, and when built, they cannot, under the law, be admitted to American register. Vessels built with American capital are denationalized by the wisdom of the antiquated American navigation laws. Perhaps it may occur to Congress some day to ask whether laws which produce such results are worth preserving, as part of the national glory of the Republic.

The Knights of Labor have succeeded in weeding out what Mr. Powderly calls the Anarchist element, and things may in future work more smoothly within the bosom of the order. But the "Anarchists" will show their hands more freely when not hampered by the action of men who have some common sense to guide them. For one thing, an increase of strikes among the seceders or rejected may be expected. On the question of strikes they have long been at war with Master Workman Powderly. He was always trying to prevent strikes, except as a last resort, while the hot heads within the order were insisting on striking for trivial and often wholly unjustifiable causes. This is why so many strikes have proved unsuccessful. The Knights of Labor will now be better managed; the expelled or seceding Knights will go their own way, and wayward it promises to be. Whatever happens, it cannot be doubted that the Knights are well rid of the seceders and the expelled.

Retaliation is once more suggested at Washington. This time, the suggestion comes not from the President, but from Mr. Morton, Commissioner of Navigation. He wants reciprocity in wrecking, but not in opening the coasting trade. A bill to secure