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CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.

Montreal, Saturday, Sept. 22nd, 1877.

THE FISHERIES COMMISSION.

Our Halifax exchanges bring us detailed information concerning a decision of the highest importance purporting to have just been given by the Fisheries Commission sitting there.

In arguing the value of the fisheries to the Americans, the British agents have laid much stress upon the great advantages the Americans enjoy in obtaining bait and provisions at Canadian ports and in transshipping their fish, their vessels being thus able to take much larger quantities of fish in a given time than they could if they were compelled to return to the United States whenever they were short of supplies or had a full fare. The Americans met this by the extraordinary plea that these valuable privileges could not be considered by the Commissioners, as the Washington Treaty only provided for the payment of compensation for the right to catch fish in British waters. The British agents assumed that the privileges referred to were included in the right to catch, and showed that these privileges were actually enjoyed. The Americans replied that if they enjoyed those privileges, they did so entirely irrespective of the Treaty of Washington, and as the Commissioners' duties were defined by the treaty, no outside matter could be introduced. After a protracted argument, the Commission unanimously decided that it was bound by the strictest construction of the treaty, and that as (according to the U. S. argument) the privileges of obtaining bait, ice, and provisions, and of transshipping fish, were not specifically granted by the Treaty, the Commission could not take them into consideration in fixing the compensation to be paid by the United States for the privileges accorded by the Treaty.

This decision narrows the question before the Commission, and no doubt will largely diminish the prospect of obtaining just compensation for the privileges now enjoyed by the Americans. In one respect, however, the decision is favourable to Canada. It establishes the fact that the Americans only possess the right to catch fish within the three-mile limit. The other privileges they are receiving through the favour of the Canadian people, and the Canadian Parliament may by an Act at its next session debar American vessels from purchasing bait, ice, or provisions, and from transshipping fish at Canadian ports—if, indeed, existing laws do not already debar them. Stripped of these privileges, the right of the Ameri-

cans would be reduced to small dimensions. Their own construction of the treaty places it in the power of Canada to practically defeat the treaty's apparent intention for the remainder of the period, as without the privileges mentioned the right to catch fish is of little value. The Americans, of course, have not lost sight of this. Their shrewd agents at the Commission fully realize the effect of the decision they have procured. They do not believe, however, that Canada will take the extreme step that they admit is within her power. Their idea is that the purchasing of supplies and the handling of the fish are sources of profit to the Canadian people near the fishing grounds, and that those who are interested in this trade will be able to bring sufficient influence to bear upon Parliament to prevent the passage of any Act interfering with the business. There is some ground for this view, but probably not so much as the Americans think. A few years ago, when the fishery question was troubling the country, and the Canadian Government sent out a fleet of vessels to protect the grounds, a great many people thought that, pending the settlement of the difficulty, it would not be wise to enforce the extreme construction of the laws then existing, but rather to allow the Americans to purchase bait, &c. This, however, was a mere temporary feeling, arising from a hope that a Reciprocity Treaty would be made. Comparatively few people—and these directly interested in trading with the American vessels—will probably still be anxious to have the present arrangement continued. But the mass of the people, when they understand that the American Government counts on this feeling as a means of obtaining privileges that do not belong to them, will justify the Government in enforcing the rule that the Americans have now laid down.

THE GREAT INDIAN FAMINE.

The successive accounts of the Indian Famine are more terrible in the future they foreshadow than in the already fearful records of starvation and loss of life. It is all as a great Thunder Cloud settling over the Empire, in its helpless dependents of the Indian Presidencies. The English race has now a tremendous occasion to prove itself Imperial in its instincts and habits of thought, and the late assumption of a dignified addition to the titles of the Sovereign is of itself insufficient for this. The ideas that have formed the British public opinion were evolved out of long contests for public freedom and do not at once embody the notion of control. Admitting that any race of people existing on the globe, whatever the breadth of its Christianity and right feeling, would be staggered by such a task as is now set before the statesmen and people of Britain, we may nevertheless begin in the midst of calamity to study the essential principle of Empire, and to get more enlarged views of the forethought and the self-sacrifice the relation demands. If the British people cannot be said to have thus far done the best conceivable in being so taken by surprise as they now find themselves, it cannot, we say, be asserted that any other race would have done better. But this unfortunately will not be sufficient to altogether remove the imputation of un wisdom, nor to undo the mischiefs which the economic philosophy, when allowed to supplant and displace the human, will always be the occasion of. The trouble has come on too rapidly to be effectually grappled with, but it needs something in the nature of a shock to arouse the energies of a Government already overtaken with home affairs and local contentions. The statesman who makes the human constitution his postulate, and who would never think of setting men to work without enabling them to maintain the physical strength requisite for the work, must take the place of the economist who still persists in resolving all human relations into a conflict of divergent wills, and for the enormous material provisions needed the Empire has to do what it can and all that

it can. As a mere saving of Imperial interests that will be found now to be the only policy. The House of Commons is not sitting, but we should apprehend there can be no reason why there might not be an autumn session for India in an emergency the greatest probably that has ever overtaken an immense agricultural region in the history of mankind.

Of the outflowings of private beneficence either at home or in the Dependency, all that need be said is that excellent as are the dispositions they manifest, they cannot be looked upon as anything more than an adjunct to the chief resource which we understand to be the monetary and sumptuary action of the Imperial powers. For the mischief arising out of the delusions of caste, the Christian masters of these poor people cannot be deemed responsible. For physical impossibilities in supply and transport present blame will not accrue, whatever neglects in the past in transit communications, and the storage of water may have led up to them—but the human constitution in its depressed Indian aspects—and the material needs as the scientist and engineer can set them forth—are the true studies of the hour—and we make the broad assertion that in view of this dreadful isolated era and abyss of misery, deriving its destructive force from centuries of native error and governmental omission, the Imperial means should be permitted to flow as if for a great war. Such will actually be safest and most economically protective for the future of the Empire. The novelties in requirement and in method might well daunt the subjects of this great responsibility, but great things have already been accomplished in the same line, and we may all be brought to admit that the huge adversary has to be met in full panoply, and the corpse-strewn field made at least to show a mitigated carnage. This Dominion, a sort of Empire in itself, though certainly not too imperial in its ideas, or too sensible, as yet, of its relations with the other portions of the vast and comprehensive British Regime, may one day become an important defence for India against famine in the supplies of human food, in grain and cattle that its prairie lands will furnish from year to year, and the means that will be provided for transporting those supplies even to the ends of the earth. We may add that since the above was written, the *London Times* of the 1st September has come to hand, and that its leading article embodies a not very different view of the public duty from the one above presented.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE GRASSHOPPER.

We lately devoted an article to the mechanical modes of destroying this pestilence of the North-West. To-day we supplement the information by giving a number of practical hints, devised by Professor C. V. Riley, the renowned entomologist of St. Louis, who has just returned from an official visit to Winnipeg:

1. Encourage game birds and locust-feeding species.
2. Let inducements be offered to the Indians to collect and destroy the eggs and young along the west side of the plains.
3. Some system is wanted for preventing the extensive prairie fires in the fall that are common in the country where the insects naturally breeds, and then subsequently firing the country after the young hatch, and before the new grass gets too rank.
4. Locusts are particularly fond of tansy, cocklebar, amarantus, and timothy—these might be sprinkled with Paris green water or powder. A strip of poisoned timothy around a wheat field might save it.
5. Irrigation is the best preventive: inundate the land and drown the young locusts out after hatching, or use kerosene in the ditches.
6. Hogs and poultry delight to feed on

the young hoppers and will grow fat on them.

7. When, in the spring, the young locusts hatch out in threatening numbers, delay the planting of everything that cannot be protected by ditching until the very last moment. The idea is to let the locusts devour all they can find and then to let them starve before any crops grow for them to feed on.

8. Grain should be sown in "lands" or strips 50 to 100 feet wide, to permit of ditching between them, and those who have fall wheat up and doing well, where the eggs are laid thickly, should make ditches at intervals through the fields, to facilitate the saving of the grain in the spring.

9. As the disastrous swarms which reach the south-eastern country come from the extreme north-west, it is proposed that the number of signal stations be increased in that region. The movements of swarms might thus be daily recorded, and the farmers of the east and south-east be apprised of their probable coming for weeks in advance.

10. Professor Riley thinks that the army might "be utilized to destroy locusts instead of Indians. A few regiments," he says, "armed with no more deadly weapon than the common spade, sent out to sections of country that are suffering from locust ravages, might in a few weeks measurably rout the pigmean army, and materially assist the farmer in his ditching operations."

ANOTHER FORM OF FIRE ESCAPE.

We have said already something about Safety Towers, and have perhaps hardly done sufficient justice to the admittedly inferior class of permanent fire-escapes the germs of which have presented themselves in the columns of the press. The most important of these were the iron ladders from balcony to balcony, and the reason these have proved hitherto unacceptable is that, while they would in many cases provide an efficient escape through the window from a raging fire within, they would also, if always extended down, form an equally efficient means of invading the premises by burglars or other evil-disposed persons in the night season. Now this defect at least may very easily be obviated. Let a certain number of windows in a large manufactory or hotel be provided with iron balconies and, attached to the flooring of each of these balconies, let there be an iron ladder folded up in several joints. There must also be a small trap in the floor of the balcony, and when a fire occurs, the ladder will be let down through this trap on to the balcony immediately below. A simple apparatus in the balustrade of the lower balcony will catch the foot of the ladder as it falls and hold it fast. There will then be a perfectly firm means of descent from the one floor to the next, and so on down to terra firma. The plan seems complete as a fire-escape in every respect but one, namely, the contingency of a body of flame pouring out of one or more of the series of windows between the highest floor and the ground. The only way to obviate this danger would be by increasing the number of windows in series so furnished with balconies and folding ladders. The sole advantage the plan presents over the permanent Safety Tower with iron doors, and complete exclusion of the flames, is in the lessened expense which would be necessary to furnish a building in this way. That expense is small indeed compared with the appalling risks to human life which so many of our great buildings are now presenting, in fact, and observation, to the thoughtful students of the public safety. Our St. John friends, who have just been legislating in earnest on these questions, have their interest continued in solving problems in connection with them, and we respectfully claim their attention to the suggestions offered for a purpose engaging so much of the thought of their citizens.