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Manager.

TORONTO, CAN.. FRIDAY, JAN. 27, 1888

THE SITUATION.

The benefits of the parcel post, which Canada enjoys with Great Britain, are in a fair way of being speedily extended to our intercourse with the United States; an agreement to that effect has been formulated, and if not yet signed, is ready for signature. By this convention, the limit of weight is four lbs. Pre-payment of the postage is one of the conditions. The distribution of the proceeds is made self-adjusting by each country retaining the postage it receives. Of such parcels, Canada will receive more than she will send, owing to the United States producing a greater number of articles than Canada; and if under this rule, that country will get more of the proceeds than Canada, she will have for some time, to carry the greater distance. When our North West fills up, this will cease to be true; but when the arrangement grows to be one-sided, a necessity for readjustment will arise. In one respect this convention will mark a step in advance; the limit of weight is 25 per cent. over that allowed in the parcels' post between Canada and Great Britain. There can be no good reason for retaining this difference; and if the latest arrangement is to be the standard of weight, an important alteration may be looked for in another direction.

Scott Act repeal is a question in which the rate-payers of Halton are shortly to vote. What the effect of the operation of the Act has been it is very difficult to ascertain; the partisans of the Act and its opponents make totally different statements, as to the extent which it has tended to lessen drinking: one side contending that it has accomplished much, the other asserting in a tone equally positive, that it has had little if any effect, in that direction. The facts seem to be that the Act removed some public opportunities and temptations to drink, and that it created some others, more or less secret. On the whole, there was probably a diminution of drinking; but it is extremely difficult to strike the balance or to decide upon evidence which is largely conjectural. The statistics of drunkenness and crime ought to throw some light on the point; but a stricter enforcement of the

law at one time than another, prevents the comparison being an exact criterion of the truth. On the last vote upon the Scott Act in Halton, the majority by which it was sustained was 180.

A recent public sale of Manitoba School lands was brought to an abrupt close by the auctioneer, on the ground that squatters on these lands had organized a conspiracy to keep down prices. Only \$17,900 was realized, at prices ranging from \$5 to \$8 an acre. Many of the lands had been squatted on by persons who had no rights whatever in the lots; and the evidence of the conspiracy consisted of the fact that these squatters were, in nearly every case, the purchasers. A great deal too much license has been given to this form of illegality; and it is time serious efforts were made to put a stop to it. There is no excuse for squatting in a neighborhood where there are plenty of lands open for settlement. In the present instance, the cause of education will suffer the illegal action of these squatters. Every dollar taken from the price the lands would bring, if the squatters did not interfere, is so much abstracted from the education fund; and the man that takes that dollar, filches it from the School Fund. Squatter frauds have been organized on an enormous scale, in the United States; and Manitoba, apart from this revealed instance of the school lands, has had more than her share of them.

Fortunately there is an Act of Congress, under which persons offering or circulating counterfeits of bills issued by foreign governments can be punished. A Dominion two-dollar note, described as exceptionally well executed, has been put in circulation, at Detroit, one of the points where Canadian money has been accustomed to circulate, and where it would be easy to "shove the queer." A man named Linden, charged with this offence has been arrested; and the State District attorney is in communication with the authorities at Ottawa, to obtain evidence which will be necessary to secure a conviction. We may thank Congress for passing the law under which Linden is held.

A cablegram from London, states that the French have organized a naval force at Cherbourg, for the protection of French interests on the coasts of Newfoundland. From this simple fact the inference is drawn, rashly it seems to us, that the French government has determined to disregard the Newfoundland Bait bill, to which, after mature consideration, the royal assent was given by Queen Victoria. The rights of France are not interfered with by this bill, and it is out of the question that France should use force to prevent its going into operation. Whether the Newfoundlanders were wise, for their own interests, in passing the bill, may be doubted. Some of the Island fishermen are anxious to sell bait to the French, if the majority are opposed to it. But what is to prevent bait being sold outside of the maritime jurisdiction? Its purchase there would not contravene any rule of international law. The Bait bill belongs to the category of legislation which can

easily be evaded, and only executed with difficulty.

The Dakota disaster proves to have been far worse than the first accounts indicated. Every day additional information has added to the number of deaths caused by the blizzard, which may fairly be set down as the most fatal on record. Some estimates bring the total up to one thousand deaths, but this is probably an exaggeration. The local papers naturally try to minimize the fatalities; but it is rather a curious argument that future accounts are likely to decrease the number of deaths which has been ascertained and recorded. For five consecutive days, the thermometer was seldom higher than forty degrees below zero, and there was in some places, a great scarcity of fuel, with which to fight death in the form of excessive and continued cold. Minnesota has more recently suffered from a cold wave in which 48 below zero was registered at Minneapolis, the lowest on record. Meanwhile, no serious complaints of injury from cold come from Manitoba or the Canadian North West.

More than one meeting of original shareholders of the Northern Railway has been held, to look after their assumed interests in the transfer, presumed to be possible, of the road to the Grand Trunk Railway Company. Figures are piled up to show that these stockholders ought to get a dividend. It is difficult to believe that any one can seriously have convinced himself that this stock was not practically put out of sight of a possible dividend, years ago. The control of the road was given to the bondholders, on their agreeing to furnish capital to renew the road. The old road was worn out and the stock ceased to have any market value; it has none to-day, and we fear is never likely to have. But if these stockholders conceive they have any interest in the road, however remote, they cannot be blamed for looking after it. They ought, however, to let it be known how far back is the seat on which they are entitled to sit. It is on the uppermost row.

British Columbia is to appeal from the decision of the Supreme Court, which awarded to the Dominion the right to the precious metals in the railway belt of that province. This belt is twenty-three miles wide on each side of the Pacific railway, and was given by the province as a condition of the union with Canada, in aid of that work. Did the conveyance carry, besides the land, the timber and the minerals? is the question in litigation. The Supreme Court decided, last November, in favor of the Dominion. On appeal, the Privy Council will say the last word; and there is this great advantage that whatever it be, it will be freely accepted by both parties.

The new government of Manitoba, in the governor's speech, at the opening of the Legislature, announces a deficiency in the revenue. There is one passage which seems to be self-contradictory. "You will be asked to vote on a special sum to cover such deficiency, so that no loan may be required to anticipate the subsidy; this sum, as requir-