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The Fast Atlantic Line.

The resolutions confirming the fast Atlantic steamship service were moved early last week in the House of Commons by Sir Richard Cartwright, who explained the terms of the contract with Messrs. Petersen, Tait & Co., claiming that it was much more advantageous to Canada than that which the late Government had entered into with the Allans, under which the total subsidies were to have been \$1,125,000, of which Canada was to pay \$750,000 and Great Britain \$375,000. Under the Petersen contract a better service was to be obtained with a Canadian subsidy of \$500,000 and an Imperial subsidy of \$250,000, a total of \$750,000. The Petersen ships were to be larger and faster than the ships proposed to be furnished by the Allans and of a higher standard. In place of ships of 8,500 tons they were to have ships of 10,000 tons; in place of a speed of 20 knots they were to have nearly 21 knots. They were also to have a larger space for merchandise, from 1,500 to 2,000 tons, a considerable portion of which would be devoted to cold storage. The type of vessels was improved and equal to the Campania and Lucania of the Cunard Line. They had also the right to send across 150 immigrants on an outward trip at \$15 a head. There remained only the question of the ability of the contractors to execute their contract, and the Government had every reason to believe in their ability. Her Majesty's Government had given their concurrence. The scheme will not involve an additional \$500,000 to Canada's annual expenditure. Between the saving of the present mail subsidy of \$125,000, now going to the Allans, and of certain other subsidies which may well be discontinued, the total additional cost to Canada will not exceed \$300,000. Sir Charles Tupper expressed satisfaction that at length all had come to agree as to the necessity for an improved Atlantic service, and if there should be any lack of ability on the part of the Petersen firm to carry out the contract he should regard it as a matter of regret. But the opinion of so experienced a man as Mr. Huddart that the service which the contract called for could not be provided for the subsidy named justified some doubt in the matter. Sir Charles criticised the turret type of ship as unsuitable for the service required, and expressed dissatisfaction with the specification in the agreement that Montreal was to "the ultimate terminus of the line when navigation permits." This seemed to him too vague. It was explained by Sir Richard Cartwright and Mr. Dobell that the vessels to be furnished were not strictly of the turret type; it was rather what was known as the "bottleneck" type of ship which afforded special advantages, giving a large amount of cabin and deck room and a walk of one fifth of a mile for promenade.

The Czar's Disappointment.

Sufficient secrecy characterizes the life of the Russian Court to make it a fine field for the play of the newspaper correspondent's imagination. What

one hears through such channels in reference to the Czar and the Czarina and other members of the royal family—their idiosyncracies and their sentiments toward each other and the rest of the world—is therefore wisely taken with a grain of salt. The Czarina has recently presented the Czar with a second daughter, and a Berlin correspondent of a New York paper represents that the autocrat of the Russias is full of grief and refuses to be comforted because his wife has not borne him a son and heir to the throne. "The young Czar," we are told, "shares the superstitious sentiments of all the Muscovites. He also knows that the Grand Duchess Maria Paulowna, the wife of his uncle, the Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovitch, not long since consulted a gypsy fortune teller, who predicted that one of her sons would sit on the throne of Russia. On account of this now widely advertised prophecy the Russian public regards the two sons of the Grand Duchess with special interest. Both of them are robust young fellows, and as officers of the imperial guard are very popular in military circles. Unless a male heir is born to the Imperial couple, which is not likely, as the Czarina's health is greatly impaired by her recent confinement, the oldest son of Grand Duke Vladimir will be the rightful heir to the throne. The elder brother of the Czar, the Grand Duke George Alexandrovitch, is now in the last stage of consumption, and the younger brother, the 19-year-old Grand Duke George Alexandrovitch, is also not expected to live until he has reached his majority." The Czar is represented as being of late subject to serious spells of melancholia. At present it is said he seems to take no interest whatever in the social diversions of the court and it is feared that this domestic disappointment will confirm him in his gloomy mental condition.

Abyssinia.

The delegation sent by the British Government to Abyssinia has reached that country and is reported to have been very cordially welcomed by King Menelek. The failure of Italy to maintain her hold of Abyssinia has opened the way for Great Britain to enter into more intimate relations with that country. To this King Menelek appears to be very favorable. He is said to prefer England to all foreign countries and is willing, even anxious, to make alliance with the British Government. The friendship of Abyssinia, as an English newspaper remarks, is a matter of great importance and high value, and every possible endeavor ought to be made to ripen the good seed which has already been sown almost without our knowledge. We are steadily advancing into the Soudan, and gradually coming nearer to the mountainous region which lies south of Khartoum between the Nile and the sea. The value of meeting friends in this remote region need not be argued, and the Abyssinian nation are friends worth having. Like all mountaineers, they are a hardy people, capable of limitless exertion, and among the stoutest warriors in Africa. Moreover, they are well organized and well armed. An Italian army of 40,000 men, equipped with heavy and light arms of modern warfare was completely routed by the warriors of Menelek. The arms captured from the Italians, with extensive purchases of rifles and ammunition since made from European countries, make the Abyssinians "formidable foes and magnificent allies." The commercial value of an alliance with Abyssinia would be very great. Although not far from the equatorial region, its height above sea-level—on an average 7,000 feet—makes its climate singularly temperate and healthy. Products such

as coffee, tobacco, sugar-cane and bananas grow in abundance, and there are extensive areas of wheat and barley. It is also believed that there is great mineral wealth which only awaits development. If the facts are as represented as to King Menelek's country and his disposition toward England an opportunity is offered which neither British diplomacy nor British enterprise will be likely to neglect.

Excitement in Paris.

Great excitement was caused on Sunday, June 13th, by a supposed attempt upon the life of M. Faure, President of France, while the President's carriage was passing a thicket in the Bois de Boulogne, a bomb, which subsequently proved to be a piece of tubing about six inches long and two inches in diameter, with a thickness of half an inch, charged with gunpowder and swan shot, was exploded. The explosion of the clumsy affair did little or no harm beyond frightening the horses attached to M. Faure's carriage. The detective Busteau, however, who had rushed forward and seized a man whom he suspected as being the bomb-thrower, fared badly, as the crowd, taking the detective for an Anarchist, set upon him and beat him unmercifully. Two arrests were made in connection with the affair by the police. One of the arrested is supposed to be an insane person and the other is a youth. If the explosion was an attempt upon the life of the President it was evidently a very clumsily planned affair, and the general opinion in Paris is said to be that it was either a practical joke or the work of a madman.

Mr. Laurier in England.

The eminently kindly and honorable reception which has been accorded in England to the Premier of this Dominion must be regarded as highly gratifying not only to Mr. Laurier personally and the Government and political party of which he is the recognized leader, but also to the people of Canada at large. For on this unique occasion Mr. Laurier has the happy fortune to be the man to represent at the Imperial Court Great Britain's greatest colony. Mr. Laurier may be trusted to perform the duties pertaining to his present mission with that grace and ability which characterized him and which have won for him a place in the hearts of so many of his countrymen and the position of distinction which he enjoys as Premier of Canada. The circumstances under which Mr. Laurier went to England were highly favorable. Whatever may be the ultimate result of the preferential clauses in the new Tariff bill, it is certain that one immediate result has been to promote very considerably the popularity of the new Canadian Premier and his Government in England. The English people were therefore somewhat predisposed to lionize Mr. Laurier. He has been accorded a most cordial welcome in England. The Prince of Wales as well as the eminent political leaders have shown him much attention. The University of Cambridge has bestowed upon him the degree of LL. D., his graceful oratory has been received with great favor, and there appears to be a general disposition to make the Canadian Premier the lion of the hour. It is remarkable that on this grand and unique occasion Canada should be especially represented at the heart of the Empire by a French and Catholic Canadian. There is certainly an influential body in Canada whose political opinions Mr. Laurier does not fully represent. But there are few, we suppose, who have any feeling of opposition or jealousy toward him as Canada's representative on this occasion, because of either his race or his religion. It may well be too that the cordial welcome and most honorable treatment which is being accorded to the Canadian Premier in London will not be without effect in binding together the two races in Canada in stronger fraternal relations.