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THE SITUATION.

A difference in the form of the British and American bills to give effect to the award of the Behring Sea arbitration has, during the week, excited attention in both countries, and caused misapprehension in one of them. The British bill provided that a ship which sailed before the scheduled provisions were published at the place of departure, would not be liable under the Act. This was interpreted in the United States as giving immunity to vessels which sailed for the sealing grounds before the bill should go into effect. The British explanation, by the mouth of Sir Charles Russell, is that if the vessel sailed without notice of the passing of the Act, she would not be liable if she offended against its provisions. The distinction is not easily seized. It marks the difference between giving immunity to a vessel that sailed before the bill goes into effect and a vessel sailing without notice of the passing of the Act. The Act might pass without notice of the fact reaching the owners of a vessel about to sail; and some time would necessarily elapse. It would be no more than would be sufficient to send a telegram to ports where vessels were liable to sail that the bill had passed; and on the opening of the Mackay and Bennett cable communications were made between England and British Columbia in a few minutes. A special effort was made to obtain this result; but what has been done once may be done again. The British bill, having passed the House of Commons, is being amended in the House of Lords so as to remove the objection made by the American Government. On a second occasion, Sir Charles Russell spoke as if notice of the award would be sufficient to render vessels offending against it liable. The British bill contains no provision for paying damages suffered in the past; and without such provision the British Columbia legislature thinks the royal assent ought not to

be given to the bill. This advice is not likely to be acted upon.

British commerce interested in the tea trade objects to the discriminating duty of 10 per cent. against it in the tariff schedules now before the Canadian Legislature. In the tariff of 1849, the late Sir Alexander Galt set the example of discrimination in the article of tea; then it was against the United States, and the object was to favor a direct trade between China and Montreal. This time the object is to favor the Canadian route by the C.P.R. and its Pacific steamship connection. At present, when the trade is at liberty to take its natural course, Canada buys a great deal of tea from England, and the fact that we do so is proof that the operation is advantageous. If this advantage, which inures to the public, be taken away, the C.P.R. may gain something by the change. But what it gains, and probably much more, the tea drinker may lose; no amount of logic will convince the public that the change is purely beneficial. It is useless to tell us that the C.P.R. can bring tea to Canada as cheaply as it can be brought by the round-about way of England. We purchased from Great Britain last year 5,992,000 pounds black and 1,315,000 pounds of green and Japan tea, making in all 7,307,000 pounds, while our direct purchases from China were 2,382,000 and from Japan 7,550,000 pounds. There is no arguing against the fact that the tea trade to a large extent takes a different course from that into which it is to be forced. Besides, we get but little tea from China these days; and for the change which has taken place in the substitution of India for Chinese tea, there must be good reason. Here is an attempt to protect, not tea, but the vessels and the road which may carry tea. It will be strange if this discriminating duty on tea should not have the effect of virtually putting a tax of some cents per lb. on the article before it reaches the Canadian consumer.

Coxey's army of tramps marching on Washington, from many points of the compass, to dictate laws to Congress, is the embodiment of mobocracy in a form sufficiently menacing to create some alarm. At first the affair was treated as a sorry sort of practical joke; but reflection modifies this view and presents the comedy as the possible source of a tragedy. When the army arrives at Washington, it will not be safe to allow it to stand on the steps of the capitol. The scheme of sending it to the poor-house will scarcely work. Luckily an unarmed mob is not the most dangerous of mobs. This mob cannot be said to represent moral force, and its physical force, supposing it free from dynamite, may well be rated low for the numbers. Still the Government must be prepared to oppose force to force, if the necessity should arise. Nothing less than necessity will justify a resort to force. Something will depend upon the way in which this "army" is dealt with, so far as example goes. If the whole thing should prove a wretched fizzle, as it ought and probably will, Coxey will not be likely to have imitators in the near

future. If Coxey should gain from his dismal enterprise the kind of notoriety which will make him the hero of the mob, he is likely to have imitators. Decidedly the movement is one which it would be dangerous to make into a precedent; in subsequent phases, it would be sure to develop more threatening features than the initial stage presented. We hope to see our neighbors well out of the scrape.

An attempt is being made in Nova Scotia to boom some old gold mines, long since abandoned; and if the report may be relied on, one or two cases of success have been reached already. This result has been attained by Nova Scotians working effectively but economically. All right, so far; but it is difficult to say what may be the result if a mining boom should cause men to lose their heads indiscriminately, as sometimes happens. The ore is admitted to be low grade, but rich enough, so it is contended, to insure good profits if properly and economically worked. A sufficient number of trials is apparently being made to test the value of several mines. The result will decide whether gold mining is to become a really great industry in the province.

A deputation from the Dominion Labor Congress has extracted from Sir John Thompson a number of promises or half promises. The deputation wanted an annual holiday, to be called Labor Day, established; and the Minister proposed to meet their views as far as possible, though he intimated that the power of the Dominion might be limited. It may well be questioned whether September 1 would be a convenient day to make a public holiday. The deputation wanted a two cent per mile railway fare; the right to withdraw money from the Government savings banks without notice; in all Government contracts that the contractor should be bound to pay the rate of wages current in the neighborhood of the work; better inspection of gearing and tackle. With regard to notice of withdrawal from savings banks, Sir John pointed out that it was necessary to guard against a sudden run, but he intimated that the Government might agree to permit certain amounts to be drawn out without notice. The Government would see how far they could go in this particular. He doubted whether the Government had power to require ship-owners to substitute other tackle for that they were using. On the wages question in connection with public works, he would consult with Mr. Onimet, and on a two cent railway fare with Mr. Haggart. Sir John explained that the new criminal code had not altered the law in matters which generally concerned working men. The deputation was pleased with the reception it met.

There are now three parties in Parliament holding different views on the tariff question. The Government is protectionist on a declining scale; the Opposition demands the elimination of the protective element; Mr. McCarthy declares for free trade, with a preference in favor of Eng-