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The warnings of the *Vancouver World*, to which we called attention some time ago, have unhappily proved only too well founded. To us here in the East, with a thousand leagues of plain and mountain dividing us from the scene of conflict, the seizure of a Columbian sealing vessel may be of correspondingly remote interest. But to our compatriots of the Pacific Coast it is a matter of vital concern. The tone of our contemporary, in referring to former surprises, reveals a passionate indignation of which it is our duty to try to appreciate the motive. "Here," wrote the *World*, "Canadian vessels have been seized, their crews imprisoned, their cargoes confiscated and sold, even life has been sacrificed, when these vessels and men have been quietly pursuing their legitimate avocations on the high seas, from thirty to one hundred miles from land! And what satisfaction has this country or the insulted British nation received? A question or two has been put to the Home Government in Parliament, and the reply made that nothing has been done: a similar farce has been acted in the Parliament of our own country, and there the matter has rested for years."

Still more pointed are our contemporary's reflections on the text that "circumstances alter cases." It is not the first time the following reproach has been cast at our rulers beyond the seas, and, what is more to be deplored, it was not destined to be the last occasion on which it was justified. "We are safe in saying," continued the *World*, "that if the vessels seized, the fisheries robbed and the property pillaged had hailed from British seaports, the life of the British Government that would not have secured satisfaction on the instant would not have been worth twenty-four hours' purchase. All England would have been aroused, and the fleet and army of England would have been prepared for immediate action. Are these citizens of the Empire who may be plundered with impunity? Does the British flag float over a British population for whom there is no protection against foreign aggression?"

Not long after these words were written, the steamer *Dora*, from Behring Sea, brought the news of the capture of the British sealer *Black Diamond* by the United States revenue cutter *Richard Rush*. In a telegram to the Government at Washington Capt. Shepard, of the cutter, said that he had seized the *Black Diamond* for violation of section 1956 of the Revised Statutes, which had been incorporated in the President's proclamation of March 21 on the subject of the seal fisheries. It forbids the killing by unauthorized

persons of seal and other fur-bearing animals within the limits of Alaska or in the waters thereof, the penalty provided being a fine of from \$200 to \$1,000, or imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months, or both, with forfeiture of the offending craft.

Another vessel, the *Triumph*, which was seized about the same time, had been released, no seal-skins having been found aboard of her. As this vessel is said to have been seized and searched in waters beyond what England recognizes as American jurisdiction, the consequence may be serious. The fact that the *Black Diamond* escaped and got safe to Victoria, B.C., makes no difference as to the principle involved in this clear violation of international law. The alleged explanations of Mr. Blaine and his colleagues are not at all satisfactory. If an understanding exists with Great Britain by which the latter power permits such capture and search really exists, it ought to be duly proclaimed to all commanders of vessels, so that they might be on their guard against infringing the international law or convention. The whole question ought, in fine, to be cleared of the obscurity which has led to so many complications, and is likely to cause grave trouble, if it be not removed without delay.

Concurrently with the little breeze in the Pacific (as it will, doubtless, be considered at London) we have Lord Salisbury's annual assurance that the Empire is at peace with all the world. The sky of Europe had, indeed, been overcast. Ominous rumblings had been heard in the vicinity of St. Petersburg and in the Balkan peninsula. Dr. Peters had been assuming a lofty, and even menacing, tone at Zanzibar, charging England with envious interruptions to the German Emin Pasha Expedition. Farther north, on the same continent, the Dervishes had been threatening the Egyptian frontier. Crete had been once more in a state of partial insurrection. In India the judgment of the new Governor-General and his counsellors had been tested in various ways, while, nearer home, the Irish question was still unsolved, and the Royal grants had been the theme of a somewhat sharp controversy. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister saw no ground for alarms or disquietude with regard to either foreign or domestic affairs.

One decision of Lord Salisbury's caused some surprise in Canada, and not a little dissatisfaction in certain influential circles. It may be recalled that, at the anniversary banquet of the Royal Colonial Institute, Sir Charles Tupper, deeming it advisable that the Imperial Federation League should justify its name by some policy more practical and explicit than that which had hitherto characterized the movement, suggested that a Colonial Convention should be organized to consider what steps would best promote the objects which the members had at heart. The League showed appreciation of the proposal by putting Sir Charles on its executive council, and the council elected him a member of the executive committee. He had then a controlling voice in the direction of affairs. One of the first results of his appointment was the consultation of the Government as to summoning the Convention. Lord Salisbury, however, shrank from assuming any responsibility in such a connection. He feared lest, if the cabinet gave its sanction and name to the undertaking, its action would be misunderstood. It might naturally be inferred that the Premier and his colleagues considered it possible to make the

relations between the Mother Country and the Colonies closer, and their identity of interests more marked than was actually the case. As the Government really had no recommendations in that sense to offer, Lord Salisbury deemed it more prudent to keep aloof from the Convention. As this is virtually a disapproval of the project, the Federationists are displeased, and Lord Rosebery has believed it his duty, as President, to ask the Premier to reconsider his decision.

At the banquet (as on previous occasions) Lord Rosebery showed a reluctance to anything like urgency on the part of the League in entering into details as to its future action. He thought it better not to disturb the public mind, either at home or in the Colonies, with cut-and-dried schemes, but to let the idea of Imperial unity pervade the population of the Empire until any thought of disintegration would be unwelcome through its length and breadth. When that stage had been reached, the Colonies would be disposed, without forcing, to take measures to secure a more intimate union between all parts of the Empire, whereas any premature attempt to change conditions actually existing would be sure to excite alarm and to have results just the contrary of those aimed at. The interests of communities widely separated from each other and from the parent State are naturally diverse, and, in some cases, conflicting. To devise a plan by which all these interests could be reconciled and protected, while at the same time the general interests of the whole Empire would be strengthened and its unity assured, is a task of the utmost delicacy and not to be approached without the greatest deliberation.

The controversy on the Jesuits' Estates Act, which has been agitating the public mind for months past, reached an important stage on the 2nd inst., when a number of deputations from Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, and other points, waited upon His Excellency the Governor-General at the Citadel, Quebec, and presented petitions praying that the Act be disallowed. Lord Stanley received the memorialists with characteristic courtesy, but explained that it was impossible to alter the decision at which the Government had already arrived. As for himself, he was obliged to abide by the counsel of his responsible ministers. In the present instance, he had, moreover, the additional guidance of considerable experience as Secretary of the Treasury, similar moral claims having been repeatedly recognized in cases where there was no attempt to insist on legal rights. As to the Society of Jesus, he did not think that in this country and century its members had been shown to be less observant of the law than other citizens. If he disagreed with his ministers his course would be clear. He had, indeed, been asked to dissolve the House of Commons; but that was a remedy that should be acted upon only in the last resort, and he could not believe that it was justified in existing circumstances. His Excellency regretted that he had to return a negative answer to the petitions presented to him. He could hold out no hope of the disallowance of the measure. The delegates subsequently met in the St. Louis Hotel and passed a resolution expressing regret at the failure of their mission and a determination to continue and extend the agitation against the obnoxious Act.

The change in the French electoral law makes it impossible for General Boulanger to persist in his policy of plebiscites. He must now stand as a