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THE SITUATION.

In Victoria, B. C., where interest in the sealing trade centres, a Sealers' Committee has been formed to watch developments in Behring Sea and find out whether protection for this branch of enterprise cannot be obtained. When Lord Stanley arrives at the Pacific coast, he will be waited on by a deputation who will ask for protection. The question of Behring Sea fishery is an international one, and falls to be settled by the maritime powers interested. To Great Britain it belongs to look after the interests of the empire. Lord Stanley can transmit to England any complaint or request which may be presented to him, and the Canadian Government is at liberty to strengthen it by representations of its own, founded on the circumstances. The season is now far advanced, and if the remainder of it be consumed in negotiations, it is to be hoped that some arrangements defining the respective rights of the nations will be arrived at before sealing season opens next year. Meanwhile, the British Columbia sealers will have to exercise patience and be careful to do nothing to put themselves in the wrong. For any wrong done them redress cannot be denied in the ultimate settlement which must in the nature of things be made.

Hereafter the strike of the London dock laborers will be pointed to as a model of orderliness and quiet endurance crowned with success. The recorder at the Old Bailey bears evidence that not a single case arising out of the strike, which had lasted some weeks, had come before the court. That the strike was not without cause is shown by the result, the men having got substantially their own terms. Strikers have nothing to gain and everything to lose by resorting to violence, by which their cause is so often discredited and defeated, public sympathy being forfeited and outside aid, moral and pecuniary, withheld. A strike is a contest of moral, physical, and pecuniary endurance, and is decided in favor of either of the two parties that can hold out longest. In the late contest, the whole foreign supplies of the country which were of a perishable nature were in danger of perishing; the preservative qualities of

several of them could not last as long as the strikers could hold out and prevent the goods going into consumption. It is probable that the dock companies did not exhaust all the resources open to them; they could most likely have imported efficient labor at the price which they had been accustomed to pay; but if they had substituted foreign labor, the change might have led to serious disturbances. Whether the men were wholly in the right or not, the pressure they were enabled to exercise was of a kind which might easily tempt to a serious abuse of it. It is a pity that after the men went back to work they spoiled a good record by minor acts of violence.

A sale of all interest in the North-West Central Railway to an English syndicate for £2,000,000 is announced. The charter covers a line of 450 miles in a good country, in the direction of Peace River Valley. If it be true, as stated, that M. Charlebois' share of the purchase money will be as much as \$972,000, it seems reasonable to conclude that a good profit has been made by the vendors. What most interests the public in the sale is the reasonable guarantee it affords for the completion of the road, which will bring assurance of extended settlement. In time, railway communication will no doubt open up the Peace River Valley and the Mackenzie River basin. The value of this region will depend largely upon the extent and richness of its mineral resources, about which those who have made the most enquiry are the most sanguine. But the immediate value of this new road will be the aid it will afford to agriculture in the region which it will traverse. The fictitious cry for land for the landless, which a few people try to raise in the East, will be silenced in a moment if one will only cast his eyes towards the rich prairies of the North-West, where land is a drug, and the means of tilling is the one thing wanted. The world is old, but it is in no want of land, a large portion of the surface of the globe still going to waste for want of tillers. If any one in Ontario feels the land hunger and a thirst for cultivating the soil, he can have what he wants for nothing if he likes, without going out of the province.

As a result of the enquiry ordered by the Dominion Government into the loss of the steamship "Montreal" on the 4th of August, the captain and his officers are exonerated from all blame. The cause of the accident is attributed to an unusual drift, the result of uncertain currents, and to the fact that the fog signal gun was not heard. According to the evidence, this gun was not heard for two hours before the accident, although the vessel was within two or three miles of the lighthouse. There remains behind a question unanswered, whether there was an omission to fire the gun, or if fired, to what cause is to be attributed the fact that it was not heard. The main purpose of the enquiry was of course to ascertain whether the officers of the vessel were to blame or not; to them a certificate for the use of caution and care is given. It was scarcely less important to learn whether the person in charge of

the fog signal gun did his duty. It ought to be known at what distance the gun can, in a given state of the atmosphere, be heard. Not only was the gun not heard two hours before the accident, but at a distance of two or three miles it was not heard for three hours after. We must conclude either that it was not fired for five hours, in which case there would be proof of culpable neglect, or that it cannot at all times be heard at a distance of two or three miles, in which case a louder report would be necessary for safety.

A cotton ring in Liverpool is trying to monopolize the cotton in the market and raise the price for their own profit. The ring is taking advantage of the fact that in September the old cotton stocks run somewhat low, and the new have not come in. The cotton spinners are put on the defensive, and in Manchester and other places they have set to work, masters and men, to try to break the ring. Their mode of procedure is to reduce work to half time during the month, at the end of which time a new supply of cotton may be expected. The men are working in thorough harmony with the masters. They fully understand that the spinners, who buy their cotton from hand to mouth as they dispose of their yarn, mostly from week to week, cannot afford to pay the enhanced price. Previous combinations of this kind have ended disastrously for those engaged in them; and the present one, which is stated to have a Dutch Jew at its head, must share the same fate if the half-time rule be kept up till new cotton comes to market. The cotton held by the ring when it began operations cost £1,500,000, and one estimate is that the operators stand to lose £300,000, provided the short time at the mills be enforced till the monopolists cease to be in a position to control the market.

Before the United States Senate committee now sitting in Boston, one witness remarked that the evasion of Customs obligations on the frontier of Canada would become easier as population advanced. Certain it is that a great increase of the Customs staff will become necessary on both sides; and there will of course be a corresponding increase of business. Our Minister of Customs, now in the North-West, finds that it will be necessary to establish six more Custom houses on our side at once, between Manitoba and the Rocky Mountains. The mounted police have to act as preventive officers, but as such their number is far too small to protect the whole line of frontier. Besides they have numerous other duties, including the general conservation of the peace among Indians, half-breeds, and whites; they have also to keep an eye on timber thieves who come across the border. The six new Customs houses when established will impose a new check upon smuggling. They will naturally be put at the points where old trails give the greatest facility of ingress and egress. When settlement extends along the whole line of frontier, smuggling ought not to be more facile but more difficult, as is proved by analogy of existing settlements on the eastern part of the line.

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