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EDWD. TROUT, MANAGER.

TORONTO, CAN., FRIDAY, DEC. 31, 1886

## THE SITUATION.

There was a miscarriage in the attempt of the British Columbia legislature to convey certain lands to the Dominion of Canada, in aid of the construction of the Pacific railway. The defect, as declared by a judgment of Judge Henry of the Supreme Court, is that the lands were not properly described and located. So purely technical a defect must be capable of easy correction; at the time the grant was made perhaps the lands were more difficult to locate; now that the selection has been made, there can be no difficulty. The description is not an unusual one of being bad for want of definiteness. It is no doubt technically true that the grant is, for this reason, void; but the intention of the legislature to grant lands cannot admit of a doubt; and if the grant is void meanwhile, good faith requires that the defect be speedily cured. That there will be any difficulty about doing so, it would not be rational to anticipate.

The Prince Edward Island delegates to Ottawa have gone home with a promise that if certain conditions on which the Island joined the Dominion be practically impossible of fulfilment, compensation will be made. This may be taken to have reference to the winter navigation of Northumberland Strait. The navigation may, in spite of all that can be done, prove impracticable; and in that case, the compensation spoken of would be substituted. Attempts have recently been made to cause the Island to swerve from its allegiance to the Dominion, but they have failed. Compensation will, we think, in good faith be due to the Island, should a winter connection between it and the mainland be found impracticable.

The American authorities have at last awoken to the necessity of making a vigorous effort to stamp out pleuro-pneumonia. For this purpose, Congress has appropriated a million of dollars, and three commissioners, with a salary of \$5,000 each, have been appointed. Every diseased animal is to be slaughtered, and the owners are to be paid for them, at the rate of \$160 for each victim with a pedigree, and \$60 for

ordinary. In Canada we pay, in such cases, \$150 and \$20 respectively. Compensation, as allowed in both cases, is generous; for it is not quite certain that the community might not require a sacrifice from the owners of the animals. But it is better that the whole community should bear the cost of getting rid of the pestilence. It is greatly to be feared that a perfect clearance of the diseased stock cannot be effected in a short time. The opinion has been expressed that years will probably be consumed in the process; and should this prove to be the case, the million dollars grant may require to be heavily supplemented. The precautions which Canada took against the admission of the disease, from the United States, though objected to at the time as unduly meddlesome, is now shown to have been both timely and necessary.

It has very properly been decided, by the authorities at Ottawa, that materials and apparatus required in the construction of the St. Clair tunnel will be entitled to come in duty free. These will include hoisting, elevating and pumping machinery. The work is international, and will be of equal advantage to the two countries which it will unite by means of a railway under the waters of Saint Clair River.

England has been visited by a snowstorm, which had one of the characteristics of a blizzard. Though the temperature was not such as is known to the winters of Dakota and the Canadian North-West, the wind blew a hurricane, in which telegraph wires and even poles suffered unprecedented damage, trees were badly injured, and railway trains delayed by entangling wires and broken poles. All telegraphs within a hundred miles of London were disabled. The same storm extended to Germany.

Africa has of late become a subject of unusual interest, not only to Europe, but to the whole civilized world. Discoveries made there have, in some measure, revived the declining spirit of colonization. Germany shows a desire to establish colonies there, and more or less jealousy exists among the colonizing nations. The interests of England, in Africa, cause her to be on the alert, in the face of these movements. She has done her share in explorations, and is likely to do more. Yesterday, Mr. Henry M. Stanley was to start from England for Zanzibar, and his movements will keep up the interest now felt in Africa and its destinies. In his search for Livingstone, he went at the expense of an American journalist, and his mission was in the interest of humanity, if it was not always humanely conducted. Equatorial Africa, as a field for immigration, is a delusion which conducts to a premature grave. It can never furnish a permanent home to the races which inhabit the temperate regions of Europe.

Just is the fate which converts the American fishing schooner, Highland Light, forfeited for violating the law, into a Canadian cruiser, henceforth to be known as the *Vigilant*. The metamorphosis was effected by the government becoming purchaser at the judicial sale. Sailing vessels

have an advantage over steamers, as cruisers on the fishing coast, the smoke of the latter heralding their approach at a great distance, and giving the poachers a chance of escape, and small vessels are required to approach the coast and range the coves. No more suitable vessels, for this purpose, could well be got than American fishers, fitted out with special reference to the speed required to enable a poacher to escape; and the *Vigilant*, *nee Highland Light*, is the first to enter the lists. It is much to be hoped that a happy settlement of the fishery business may be made, by which this will be the last, for it is no pleasure to us to continue on an ill understanding with our nearest neighbours; who are at the same time, with one exception, our best customers.

Canadian legislation providing for the protection of the fisheries has hitherto been defective, in failing to enact a suitable penalty for some forms of violating the fishery laws. Last session an Act to supply this defect was passed by the Dominion Legislature, and reserved for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure thereon. Official notification of its receiving the royal sanction has now been made and the Act is in force. American fishing vessels have the right to enter our waters for the purpose of shelter, wood, water and repairs, but not to buy bait or ship men. By the new Act confiscation is the penalty which such vessels incur for an infraction of the Fishery Acts. Two new cruisers are to be built and added to those already available for the protection of our fisheries. We have 60,000 men, with 1,400 vessels, engaged in the fishery, whose rights and interests require protection. When we consider the number of persons dependent on these 60,000 fishermen, some idea will be got of the magnitude of our fishing interests.

The American Clearing Houses show a considerable increase in exchanges during last week compared with the corresponding week of last year, last year. According to returns compiled by the Boston *Post* from the leading clearing houses the total clearings last week at thirty-two cities aggregated \$894,838,060, against \$879,426,230 last year, and \$599,944,240 in 1884. The clearings of thirty-one cities outside of New York show a gain of 19.3 per cent., against a gain of 17.8 per cent. the previous week. Nearly all the large cities outside of New York show handsome gains, based almost wholly on a legitimate growth in trade. But speculation, as well as trade, may have its part in swelling the totals. Owing to the intervention of Christmas, the comparison is between five business days this year and five business days last year.

The statement of the New York banks issued last week made a more favorable exhibit than had been anticipated, in that the surplus reserve showed a substantial gain, and the other items were of a favorable character. The *Shipping List* of Wednesday last says: "There was a heavy contraction of loans, but the result