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The Sentinel.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1872.

65 SENTINEL OFFICE, in Allan's Brick Building, up stairs.

THE LITTLE BILL.

It was supposed that all disturbing influences had been virtually settled by the action of the Joint High Commission, at Washington. A general basis was determined upon, and it only remained for the claims in detail to be submitted; and these, coming to the attention of the Board of Assessors, it was of course to be expected that the Board of Assessors would be called upon to make a final award.

It is estimated that the sum total of all these claims will reach the nice little figure of \$800,000,000, or over \$3,200,000,000.

The present prospect is that the treaty will be repudiated by England. While as between individuals the claims set up might be regarded as a joke, as between two great nations gravely submitting certain matters to arbitration, the action of the Washington Government seems so insulting in its absurdity as to lead the British Government to scarcely look upon it except as a pretext for prolonging the unsatisfactory and unsettled state of accounts between the two governments.

While on the one hand some of the American newspapers are disposed to bully and brag over the attitude assumed by their government, the conservative press of the United States must regard the matter in its true light and condemn such unparalleled effrontery. At all times the British Government, people and press—now representing all parties in the State—appear to be as an unit, and as the old sentiment of the English heart is death before dishonor, so war or any alternative is demanded rather than even a compromise on terms so insulting.

But our neighbors will back down, or simply content themselves with going back and waiting, "as they were," for "something to turn up."

Our neighbors say, "why not wait and let the arbitrators decide as to the justice of these claims?" The answer to the British government is that these claims do not come within those recognized as admissible by the Joint High Commission. The New York World, an American authority of weight, shows that the claims are purely sensational.

We cannot resist the conviction that the British Government, as well as the London press, has acted with indiscreet haste, hurried away by unreflecting excitement, on this grave subject. We are sure that the British interpretation of the treaty is wholly correct; but that is no excuse for the wild vehemence with which the American "case" has been conducted.

At the time the treaty was ratified, it was our impression, both from a careful study of its text and from what we could learn of the debate on it in the American Senate, that it did not contemplate the payment of remote and consequential damages; and we believe that this was the accepted interpretation in the United States.

This view is confirmed by the offer made by our government in an early stage of the negotiations. It was the desire of the American High Commission to have the claims verified at once, without the intervention of arbitrators, by the payment of a gross sum which should cover all the American claims for injuries to persons and property.

As we stated yesterday, the proposal of our High Commissioners was a settlement for a lump sum of about twenty millions. Now the twenty millions are gone, and the American Commissioners offered to wipe out the whole score, is five millions less than what we have made at Geneva for direct damages. The claim for consequential damages is embodied in the American "case," which is stated by us a few days ago, as follows:—

Vessels and cargoes destroyed, \$17,000,000. Cost of pursuing the cruisers, 7,000,478. Total direct damages, \$24,000,478.

From which it appears that the American High Commissioners were willing to knock twenty per cent. for our just claim for direct damages, and to relinquish all claim for indirect and consequential damages. It is a fact, however, that the British Government, in order to avoid the bother, expense, and uncertainty of a trial before arbitrators. Now, if we have just and tenable claims, we will not accept or ten or twenty times the sum for what our Commissioners offered to settle, on what ground can the American negotiators be excused for their willingness to surrender the greater part of our just claims? If they really thought that a payment of twenty millions would be an equitable settlement, and if they did not know so why did they make the offer? The American Government would be precluded, by its own proposal, from any just expectation of recovering consequential damages. The British Government is acting in a very pusillanimous spirit when it distrusts the impression this argument is calculated to make on a high, impartial tribunal, composed of eminent and just jurists of the first eminence.

If we turn from the history of the negotiation to the text of the treaty, we can discover the little reason for the distrust evinced by the British Government in the soundness of its own case. The treaty seems to exclude the idea of remote and consequential damages. We insert the greater part of its tenth article:

ARTICLE X. In case the tribunal finds that Great Britain is liable to fulfill any duty or duties as stressed, and if the amount of such sum in gross, the high contracting parties agree that a board of assessors shall be appointed to ascertain and determine what claims are valid, and what amount or amounts shall be paid by Great Britain to the United States on account of the liabilities arising from such claims, and what interest, according to the value thereof.

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As will be used by reference to our advertising matter, the Trustees of the Paul's Church, in this town, are about inaugurating a course of lectures. The course will be opened on Thursday evening next, at the Institute, by Rev. Geo. L. Gale. Subject: "Franco-Prussian War."

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The prohibitions are that the Dominion Parliament was met early in March. If the consideration of the Washington Treaty, as now seems probable, is not necessary, the session is not likely to be a long one. The indications are that the government will be able to sustain themselves, and go to the country next summer, under circumstances that seemed likely a while ago.

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precedents have become so very numerous that it is difficult to find any one that is not a precedent. The work of revising the New Testament would not be so long as some people imagine. Being in London the other day, he saw Dr. Lightfoot, one of the leading minds of the day, who was engaged in revising the New Testament, and was told by him that he had got to the second chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and that he had finished his work in six years.

There were one billion, three hundred and thirty-two million, two hundred and forty-six cigars smoked in the United States last year. A bill for a heavy duty on spirituous liquors is to be introduced by the Attorney-General of Manitoba.

Two canal boats, which arrived at Bridgeport, Conn., last night, were engaged in carrying an armament of the fortress at Quebec. They were consigned to the Farrell Foundry and Machine Company's works at Waterbury and Ansonia, where they will be broken up for old iron.

The British mercantile marine consists of thirty-seven thousand vessels, representing six million tons of shipping. There are more steamers and, altogether, the English have more ships than all other nations combined.

A large lumber merchant who expects to pay a school tax of \$3,000, a nice gift from property to the education of the poor! He counts the money well laid out.

In New York on Saturday the Grand Jury landed on a number of indictments, and a report stating that they had examined 400 cases. The frauds which they investigated were of a most extraordinary character, and to the amount of \$2,000,000.

A very unkind astronomer is going to have a meteor strike the earth this year, and kill every man in precisely twenty-four minutes. It is estimated that the two governments have arrested and his case transferred to the court of war and marine, and he will be tried.

It is reported from London that the American Government has ordered a large number of the most modern and powerful steamships, and is in session, and the provisions of the Treaty which require the consent of the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada await its assent.

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