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The Standard Oil Company and the Railways.

The relation of the Standard Oil Company to the two great Canadian Railway Companies, the Grand Trunk and the Canadian Pacific, is a subject of general interest to the people of this country, since, if statements which have been made positively and repeatedly are to be believed, the Railway Companies named have so discriminated in regard to transportation rates in favor of the Standard Oil Company as to give that company a practical monopoly in the oil business of Canada, enabling it to enrich itself at the expense of Canadian industries and materially to raise the price of oil throughout the country. The Toronto Globe, which has on various occasions called attention to the relations existing between the Standard Oil Company and the Railways, devotes the leading article of its issue of the 12th inst. to the subject. As there appears to be no reason to think that the Globe is speaking in the interests of any political party or any private corporation in this matter, what it has to say on the subject should certainly receive respectful consideration. That paper holds that the discrimination and extortion which are possible under existing conditions call for some effective remedy to be applied through legislation. "The Standard Oil Company," it is declared, "both in Canada and the United States, is now the most dangerous and most aggressive organization seeking to monopolize trade by secret understandings with railways. Underhand control of the public highways puts all independent producers at a serious disadvantage, and makes it possible for the favored aggregation to crowd out all competitors." It is shown that when the Standard people began to do business in Canada, they protected their interest by securing from the railways rates that openly discriminated against oil imported from the United States. An appeal to the Railway Committee of the Privy Council secured the removal of this open discrimination as being contrary to the laws of the Dominion, but it is charged that the same purpose is now effected through secret discriminations in favor of the Standard Company. "Recent advances in the price of oil," the Globe says, "are entirely unwarranted, and they are made possible by the excessive rates charged from the importing points. The people would not submit to an import tax for the benefit of the Standard monopoly. But the railways usurp the functions of government and impose an excessive import duty, enabling the great monopoly to bleed the Canadian consumers." The Globe further refers to agreements between the Standard Company and American railways—and states that, under such arrangements, "rates to independent refiners were advanced between Cleveland and New York from \$1.25 to \$2.84 per barrel, and \$7,500,000 of over-charges by the railways were handed back to the Standard Oil Company." The effects of such secret agreements, it is charged, are now visible in the Canadian oil business. The monopoly is taking advantage of its position to raise the price of oil, which is from 4 to 5 cents per gallon higher at the present time than it was six years ago. The results of these extortions suffered both in Canada and the United States," we are told, "have recently been disclosed before the United States Industrial Commission. The solicitor of the Company gave evidence to the effect that its dividends amounted to 5 1/4 per cent. in 1882, 6 per cent. in 1883 and 1887, 11 1/4 per cent. in 1888, 12 per cent. in 1889, 1890 and 1891, 12.21 per cent. in 1892, 31 per cent. in 1896, 33 per cent. in 1897 and 1898, and that a quarterly dividend of 20 per cent. was declared during the current year. When the quarterly dividend was announced the shares rose from \$51.25 to \$54.7. Clearly there is need of vigorous action to save the people of Canada from this incubus."

Russia's Opportunity.

While the newspapers of Europe may find it to their financial interests to abuse Great Britain on account of the war in South Africa and threaten European intervention, there is no reason to believe that on the part of the European Governments there is any intention of interference or indeed any special desire to see the war brought to a speedy close. Judging from their complacent inaction in the presence of the atrocities suffered by the Armenians at the hands of the Turks, none of the European powers are likely to interfere from motives of humanity, and they may well be equally complacent over a condition of things which, by tying the hands of Great Britain, affords them the opportunity desired to push their schemes for empire in various parts of the world. Whatever may be the motive of the German Emperor's friendship toward Great Britain at the present time, no one pretends to think that it is purely sentimental and disinterested. France would doubtless, if she could, seize the opportunity of Britain's embarrassment to avenge her fancied wrongs, but if she finds such opportunity it will doubtless be along some other line than that of intervention. And as for Russia, while her pacific soul is doubtless vexed within her at the thought of the bloody war, yet she is not likely to interfere to bring to an end a condition of things which enables her to push her projects of peaceful conquest in Asia. For while Britain is pouring out her blood and treasure in South Africa, Russia is not likely to neglect the long-sought opportunity to add Persia, with its half million square miles of territory and its sea ports upon the Persian Gulf, to her immense domain. The Russian loan to Persia of eleven million rubles (about \$6,000,000 secured by a mortgage on the customs, and a concession to construct railways in that country, is generally believed to mean much more than appears upon the surface. But for Great Britain, Persia would long ago have been absorbed into the Russia's Empire, and those who are acquainted with Russian ambitions and her methods of achieving them, see in this transaction an intimation that she means to make the most of the present situation. It is altogether probable that England will have a word to say—and a very emphatic word it may be—before Russia becomes mistress of the Persian Gulf. But Russia will doubtless go now as far in that direction as she can proceed with safety, though she may have to wait another opportunity in order to the consummation of her purpose.

Opening of the N. B. Legislature.

The New Brunswick Legislature was opened on Monday last. Lieut. Governor McClellan in the speech congratulated the Legislature upon the fact that the past year had been one of progress and advancement. The conflict in South Africa is referred to as having "demonstrated the essential unity of the Empire and the fervent loyalty of the entire citizenship of Canada." The Legislature will be asked to concur in a grant in aid of the provincial fund on behalf of the families of the volunteers. The attention of the Legislature is to be invited to a measure, the object of which will be to make some provision for technical education. The speech alludes to "the mineral development of the Province as a result of the stimulus of recent legislation," and expresses hope of large increase of wealth from that source. The advance in agricultural methods and conditions throughout the Province during the past year is stated to be unparalleled, and the Government is stimulated to greater endeavors to promote this branch of industry by agricultural meetings held in different parts of the country, exhibitions, etc., while endeavors are being put

forth to interest the people of Great Britain in the Province as a field for intending emigrants. The Eastern Extension railway claims of the Province against the Dominion Government are to be settled by arbitration. A revision and consolidation of the statutes of the Province is foreshadowed. The law governing the solemnization of marriage is unsatisfactory, and the Government purposes to secure its amendment.

The War.

The curtain has been lifted in Western Cape Colony, and it is effectively demonstrated that Generals Roberts and Kitchener have by no means been idle since their arrival in South Africa, but that the rigid censorship has concealed operations of the most significant character. On Monday of last week the first important movement was made for the invasion of the Orange Free State, the base of operations being at Modder River, and not—as it would seem the Boers had been led to expect—in Northern Cape Colony where Generals French and Gatacre had been operating. By reference to the map which accompanies this article it will be seen that the Riet river is a southern branch of the Modder, with which it unites near the Modder River station, the waters of the united stream becoming a part of the Orange river farther west. In order therefore to turn the left wing of the Boer army encamped at Magersfontein under General Cronje, which was the initial stroke in General Roberts' plan of operations, it was necessary first to cross the Riet river at a point several miles east of its junction with the Modder, and then cross the latter some 23 miles farther to the north. Accordingly, on Monday, a column comprising a strong force of cavalry under General French, a large artillery force, and two infantry divisions—the sixth, under General Kelly-Kenny, and the seventh, under General Tucker—marched to the Riet river and seized the crossings known as the Dekiel and Waterval drifts, driving out the enemy which occupied them and effecting, with slight loss, a crossing both of the cavalry and infantry forces the same evening. On Tuesday morning General French, with three cavalry brigades and a force of artillery, set out for the Modder river, 23 miles distant, which, in spite of great heat and a blinding dust storm, was reached and crossed the same afternoon. With two brigades General French seized and crossed Klip drift in the face of the enemy, who appear to have been taken wholly by surprise and to have made no effective resistance; and, in the meantime, General Gordon who, with the third brigade, had been sent to make a feint at Rondevaal drift, a little to the westward of Klip, found himself able to seize the drift and effect a crossing, capturing two of the enemy's laagers. General French occupied the range of hills on the north branch of the Modder and captured three laagers in the course of his operations. The infantry division under General Kelly-Kenny followed on Wednesday. After resting and reconnoitring on Wednesday, and thus giving time for the infantry division under General Kelly-Kenny to come up, General French, on Thursday morning, with a mixed force of artillery, cavalry and mounted infantry, pushed forward in the direction of Kimberly, some 17 or 20 miles distant in a northwesterly direction, reaching and entering the town, apparently with little opposition, the same afternoon. The publication of this news on Friday naturally caused jubilation throughout the British Empire, and later despatches appear to show clearly that the relief of the beleaguered town is effective and complete. It will naturally be asked—What has become of the large Boer force which was so strongly entrenched at Magersfontein and Spytfontein under General Cronje and which for many weeks has been holding General Methuen's

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