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Employer's

Liability.

The interesting and important question, whether the liability of the employer under the Employers' Compensation Act applies in case of injuries sustained by the employee in consequence of disease contracted by him as a result of his work, has been decided by an English court in the affirmative. The judge held that the family of a workman who died from an infection causing malignant pustule while engaged in sorting wool, is entitled to damages under the Employment Liability Laws, just as in the case of an ordinary accident. It was contended on behalf of the employer that the case involved a disease risk which was to be distinguished from an accidental risk, but the court held that the disease excluded by the law means one which was already present in the workman and there was nothing to show that this man carried a disease with him to his work. The judge then could see no distinction in the principle between being hit by a deadly bacillus while at work and being accidentally hit by a spark from an anvil or the accidental squirting of a poisonous liquid into the eye. The judge's view appears to be a logical one. However the point is a nice one even for masters of the law, and it is expected that the case will be carried to the highest court.

Rapid Transit

for Mails.

Toronto has become a city of so very considerable distances that the need is felt of more rapid methods for distributing the mails throughout the different districts of the city. The large district in the northwestern part of the city, which is now rapidly filling up with manufacturing industries is several miles distant from the Union Station, and the time required to make the distance by present methods of transfer seems too great for business men who naturally wish to be in closest possible touch with their correspondents. It is said that the Postmaster-General is considering favorably the idea of establishing the pneumatic tube system for the despatch of mails to and from the leading postal centres of the city. The time consumed in conveying mail matter a few miles by the pneumatic tube system is almost inappreciable. If the system were introduced in Toronto, it is said that mails arriving at the Union Station at seven a. m. and destined for points three or four miles distant would reach the distribution office in such districts in five minutes, and would be in the hands of the public as soon thereafter as the letter carriers awaiting them could deliver them. Similarly, mail matter from the outlying districts would reach the Union Station in a few minutes.

Newfoundland.

The announcement that there is a good prospect that the long-standing difficulty in connection with the French claims in Newfoundland is in a fair way to settlement is received throughout Canada with great satisfaction, both because the settlement of this difficulty makes for the peace of the Empire and also because it is hoped that it may be preliminary to the incorporation of Newfoundland with the Dominion. It is doubtless of importance to the unity and preservation of British power in North America that Newfoundland, and that portion of Labrador which is connected with it, should become a part of the Dominion. There does not appear at present to be any prevailing sentiment in the colony in favor of confederation. But it is possible that such a sentiment may be developed if the way is cleared for union by the adjustment of the French Shore question. Public sentiment in the Dominion would probably justify the offer of very favorable terms to Newfoundland and the desire of the Imperial Government for the consolidation of the British possessions on this Continent might be expected to have weight with the legislators and people of the Ancient Colony. It is much to be hoped that the settlement of the international question will include the transference to the Dominion of the small islands, St. Pierre and Miquelon, now under the government of France. Their chief use to-day, as the Montreal Witness remarks: "is as a base for smugglers and poachers, and for offensive designs on the Newfoundland coast. Moreover, as long as they are not ours there remains the danger of their falling into other and still more encroaching hands. It would be a wretched pity if the present negotiations made only half a job of it and entailed upon us another generation of bickering."

The Cigarette

Question

in Parliament.

In the Dominion House of Commons on Wednesday last, Mr. MacLaren of Huntingdon moved a resolution in favor of a bill to prohibit the importation, manufacture and sale of cigarettes. A similar resolution was presented to the House last year and the proposed legislation did not materialize. It will be interesting to watch the fate of the present resolution. We observe from a newspaper report of the debate on Mr. MacLaren's resolution, that both the Premier and the leader of the Opposition have declared themselves opposed to the principle involved in the resolution. They recognized juvenile smoking as an evil that should be dealt with but they proposed to deal with it, not by prohibiting cigarettes, but by inhibiting dealers from selling tobacco in any form to boys, and possibly also, in extreme cases, as Mr. Borden suggested, by sending juvenile smokers to a reformatory. Sir Wilfrid Laurier in his remarks proceeded on the assumption that the smoking of tobacco in the form of cigarettes is no more harmful than in any other form unless the cigarettes contained cocaine, morphia or other noxious substances, and if such cigarettes are being sold there is now, he said, legislation to prohibit their use or manufacture. This assumption on the part of the Premier would indicate that he has given very little attention to much that has been written by persons who have carefully studied the effects of juvenile cigarette smoking. It sounds very plausible to say that tobacco wrapped in paper is no more injurious than tobacco in a pipe or in the form of a cigar. But there is abundance of testimony to the contrary. There are probably cigarettes on the market which have been treated with drugs to make the narcotic effect more powerful. But it is a well-recognized fact that the pernicious effects of cigarette smoking are principally not to be charged to the tobacco of the cigarette being materially different from that in a pipe or cigar but to the fact that the cigarette smoker very generally acquires the inhaling habit. The tobacco smoke is thus drawn directly into the lungs, and the poisons with which it is loaded are deposited in the circulation with most disastrous effects to the smoker. No doubt but that tobacco in any form must be highly injurious to half grown boys, but in the case of the cigarette smoker the injury is vastly greater because, as we are told, he is almost sure to acquire the inhaling habit, a habit which once acquired is rarely if ever abandoned, even though the smoker may discard the cigarette for the pipe or cigar. We recently called attention to an article on this subject in *The Independent* by Mr. Charles Bulkley Hubbell, a leading educationist of New York. Mr. Hubbell who has given much attention to this matter declares emphatically that it is the inhaling habit, so generally induced by the use of the cigarette, which is the cause of most of the evil effects connected with the use of tobacco, and he holds that the cigarette and inhaling habit is more disastrous to the health and morals of the boys and young men of the United States today than any other vice that can be named. Legislation to prevent the sale of cigarettes to boys has been enacted in most of the Provinces of Canada, but such legislation is so easily evaded that it appears to have little practical effect. So long as a boy can obtain a package of cigarettes for five or ten cents, it may be expected that the army of juvenile smokers will rapidly increase, and that the evils consequent upon the vice of inhaling tobacco smoke will become more and more serious. As we have previously pointed out, the proposal to prohibit the cigarette does not interfere with any man's indulgence of his appetite for tobacco to the full. Such prohibition could not prejudicially affect the interests of any class of persons in Canada except the tobaccoists, and it appears to be a question whether the material interests of the tobaccoists or the highest interests of the country at large are to be preferred.

The War.

Some interesting items have been reported from the Far East in connection with the war during the past week, but most of these items have had their basis in the fertile imaginations of newspaper correspondents whose business it is to manufacture news when there is none otherwise to be obtained. It has been announced that Port Arthur had been taken by the Japanese, also that the Japanese had succeeded in sinking six merchant vessels at the mouth of the harbor of Port Arthur in such a position as to effectually block its entrance and bottle up the Russian fleet there. There appears to be no basis in fact for either story. Certainly the Russians still hold Port Arthur, and Admiral Makaroff's fleet is probably free to go in and out as its commander chooses. The principal event of the week, which can be regarded as trustworthily reported is an attack upon Port Arthur by the Japanese fleet under Admiral Togo on the morning of March 22nd. The forts and the harbor were subjected to a heavy bombardment, but if the Russian official reports are to be believed, the damage sustained was not very serious. The Japanese commander on his part reports that no serious damage was sustained by his ships. If the despatches correctly represent General Kuropatkin who is now on his way to Manchuria to take chief command of the Czar's forces, he is very sanguine of his ability, supported by the forces of Russia, and with the favor of Heaven (which he seems to regard as a matter of course) to crush effectually the power of Japan. The Russian army when sufficiently reinforced will drive the Japanese out of Manchuria and Korea. Meanwhile the Russian fleet will be so strengthened as to overcome Japan's power on the sea. The Russian warships will sink the Japanese transports, as the soldiers of the Mikado endeavor to reach their native islands. Then Japan will be invaded by a Russian army, and in Tokio, and nowhere else, Kuropatkin, in the name of the Czar, will dictate terms of peace to Japan. So the great man proposes. Since the above was written news has been received that early on Sunday morning, the 27th, the Japanese made another attempt to close the entrance to Port Arthur by sinking in the channel four large merchantmen. Their purpose however was discovered by the Russians, and the combined attack of the batteries and the warships defeated the design of the Japanese. The vessels were sunk but not in a position to obstruct the entrance to the harbor.

Mr. F. S. Spence

on Government

Control.

Mr. F. S. Spence, Secretary of the Dominion Temperance Alliance and well known throughout Canada as a strong advocate of prohibition, discusses in a Toronto paper Premier Ross' proposed measure for the abolition of the bar throughout the Province of Ontario and the restriction of the retail traffic to the sale of liquor in packages under Government control. Mr. Spence is not satisfied with the Government control principle as an ideal in temperance reform. He says—"A Government operated liquor-traffic is not a desirable institution. Whisky will do the same deadly work wherever it is sold for beverage purposes. It is destructive of virtue, morality, character, health and life if sold by a salaried State officer as well as if sold by the keeper of some respectable dive." But Mr. Spence recognizes that the Province has no power of absolute prohibition, and he thinks it best to deal with the problem in a practical way and with a view to securing the best results attainable. It is unwise in his opinion to take an impractical position, based on a strained interpretation of the expressions "Government control" and "partnership in the liquor traffic." He points out that at present, by virtue of the license system, the traffic is under Government control and the people are partners in the business. This is a very unsatisfactory condition of affairs, but it would be still worse if there were no restriction on the traffic. While as a system Government ownership and operation of the liquor traffic falls far short of the logical consistency and usefulness of prohibition, it is still, Mr. Spence contends, far superior in principle and methods to any kind of license system. "Under the license system the Government control is weak and ineffective and the seller is given opportunity and authority to push his business with the utmost energy and skill," which he generally does with disastrous results to the community at large. On the other hand, "Government ownership and operation mean Government control under circumstances and conditions that make the control effective, and hold the Government directly responsible for any violation of prescribed regulations and restrictions. It is a liquor business in which the people are the only partners and from which the greedy, self-seeking man who derives personal profit is excluded. . . . Under Government operation the liquor seller has no interest in pushing the business he conducts. On the contrary, it is his interest to keep the business down and to see enforced the laws by which it is governed. Public opinion will impose on such a business restrictions concerning hours, persons and other matters such as would not be imposed or enforced upon men carrying on the business for private gain. Under Government operation there would be no Retail Liquor Sellers' League to fight the prohibition movement, to keep out local option bye-laws, and to corrupt politics and politicians." Mr. Spence concludes that "where, for any reason, prohibition is not immediately practicable any permitted liquor business will be less mischievous under Government operation than under any system that gives private persons a profit from the carrying of it on."