

THE FREE NAVIGATION OF THE RIVER ST. LAWRENCE.

larly referred, the selection has been most happy. Judge Wilson, who is to be Chairman, is a man of most patient industry, great research and comprehensive mind, and will give the matter no light attention, and with his coadjutors may be relied on to investigate the subject thoroughly. Judge Gwynne, from his intimate knowledge of both systems, practically as well as theoretically, will be especially competent to form a correct opinion as to their relative merits, whenever it may be necessary to contrast the two, and what can best be taken from each to form a complete whole; and he will enter upon the discussion free from any supposed bias of either system, natural enough to those who have devoted themselves almost entirely to one of them. Than Vice-Chancellor Strong, no man is more competent to explain the theory and practice of that Court, which has been a witness of his intellectual power and learning. Mr. Gowan has long enjoyed the confidence of and given great assistance to successive administrations in various ways, and has an increasing reputation. No person in Canada has such intimate knowledge as he of the theory and practical working of the Division Court system, which is really the nearest approach at present to a fusion of law and equity, albeit the notions of some of its judges as to equity are of the crudest. And to conclude, the reputation of Mr. Patterson at the Bar, is very high; without the showy qualities of some others, he is known to be a man with broad views of things, and of much learning and industry, and will be a most useful element in this Commission.

It may be a question, however, how far it is advisable for the Commission to mature any scheme for the consolidation or alteration of any of the Courts as at present existing, until some decided step has been taken in England, where a similar subject has received the careful attention of a most intelligent and learned Commission for some time past. There is no such necessity for an immediate revolution in our Courts, even admitting, for the sake of argument, that a change is advisable, as to warrant any hasty action, whereby we should lose the benefit to be derived from the light to be thrown on this most difficult subject in England.

SELECTIONS.

THE FREE NAVIGATION OF THE RIVER ST. LAWRENCE BY THE CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES.

The consolidation of the Provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, into the Dominion of Canada, has opened a wide field for the exercise of statesmanship to the leaders of the Canadian people. Dependent but in name, Canadians are now free to shape the destinies of their country.

With increased powers have arisen new responsibilities. The Dominion must now bear a full share of the burthens of the realm in lieu of the trifling weights laid on the infant Provinces by the Mother Country. Conflicting rights require adjustment, national and religious prejudices claim treatment, and international difficulties demand settlement. To restore friendly commercial relations with our neighbours, but lately sources of prosperity; to subdue the jealousy of race—the bane of the Province of Canada; to extinguish the embers of religious feud, now threatening to burst into flame; to arrange the Fishery, the St. Lawrence, and the Fenian difficulties, all pregnant with war, if not settled at once and for ever,—are some of the tasks of the Ministry of the day. Verily, the bark of State requires skilful handling by its pilots to avoid the reefs and shoals lying in its course.

With a population of but four millions, Canada is bounded to the south by the United States, inhabited by nearly forty millions of people. The absorption of Mexico and the Dominion into the Union is favoured by many American statesmen; the Continent of North America, with the adjacent islands, forming one vast Republic, is the dream of United States politicians. The instability of parties, the corruption pervading the body politic, and the power of the mob, all combine to make the policy of the United States uncertain and dangerous to their neighbours. No expedient to divert the minds of their people from the strife of party, would be so popular as a foreign war, undertaken for the acquisition of territory on this continent; each individual would think that in the national losses he would secure a fortune, and would smother his patriotism in his selfishness.

For many years past the United States Government have nursed grievances against their neighbours—it is of more importance that the Alabama claims should never be settled than that by a money payment far exceeding the actual losses, the grievance should be abated. The Fishery, the St. Lawrence, and the Fenian questions, are all open sores, irritating to Canada and Great Britain, which, when the opportunity is favourable, may furnish pretexts for a declaration of war.