

reading in the House, just as it came from the hands of the Grand Committee, and without a division on any amendment. Both sides of the House showed a determination not to permit any re-discussion of the details of a measure which had been exhaustively considered in the Grand Committee. There seems some reason to believe that in the extension of this committee system, a system which was, we think, first introduced into the Commons by Mr. Gladstone, may be found at last a partial relief for the congestion from which Imperial legislation has long suffered, by reason of sheer inability, through want of time, to overtake important matters. English legislators are slow to adopt innovations, but a few successful experiments of the kind described may lead them to entrust details of legislation much more freely to Parliamentary committees, with great advantage to the public.

AFTER an almost unbroken series of violent, *ad captandum* harangues by Republican senators on the Fisheries Treaty, such a speech as that of Senator Sherman the other day, came as a relief and a pleasure. Though singularly weak in its argument, the whole tone of the address was manly, elevated, and friendly. It has the ring of that broader, truer patriotism which is neither ashamed nor afraid to recognize the claims of international justice and courtesy, and of neighbourly good-will. Senator Sherman's speech has raised the discussion to a higher plane, and its effect can hardly fail to be felt to the end. It does, indeed, seem surprising that a man capable of views so broad and sentiment so lofty, could seriously argue that the section of the Treaty which provides for the free admission, in return for certain concessions, of Canadian fish and fish oil, would be a surrender of the right of the United States to levy taxes on imported goods. It is still more surprising how such an one, versed as he no doubt is in history and in knowledge of human nature, could regard a policy of retaliation, leading to partial or complete non-intercourse between two powerful peoples, as consistent with friendly relations, and even an advance towards the haven of peace. Senator Sherman, in common with all his brother Republicans, seems strangely incapable of regarding Canada's enforcement of her fishery regulations as an honest attempt to guard her rights of property, and persists like them in ascribing to it an unworthy and sinister design. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that if all the political leaders in the United States could but approach the question in the same spirit as Senator Sherman the whole vexatious dispute would quickly be set for ever at rest.

As the time approaches at which the new law regulating the infliction of capital punishment in the State of New York will come into operation, public interest is naturally aroused. It does not appear that the exact method in which the agency of electricity shall be made use of in the infliction of the death penalty has as yet been determined. This is evidently a most serious problem. It is of the utmost importance that the arrangements should be so perfect as to render any bungling or failure out of the question, a thing which, in the opinion of some experts, it will not be very easy to effect. The machinery will need to be skilfully devised, and the mode of its application most carefully considered. As the *Star* points out, the new law contains also innovations in other respects. For instance, it provides that no report of the details of any execution shall be published in any newspaper. This requirement, the *Star* predicts, will not be capable of enforcement. Censorship of the press will certainly be a new and difficult experiment in the United States, and, without rigid censorship, descriptions of executions, real or fictitious, with all manner of sensational details, will be pretty sure to find their way into the American newspapers.

THE steamship *City of New York*, which has just brought Mr. Blaine across the ocean, is a fine illustration of the effect of the United States shipping laws in destroying the merchant marine of the Republic. This magnificent new ship is, according to the *Springfield Republican*, owned by two citizens of Pennsylvania. But it was built in a foreign country, by foreign labour, of foreign material, and under foreign laws. Hence it can neither bear the American registry nor fly the American flag, nor in any way become an American ship. It is manned by English officers and crew, flies the Union Jack, and sails under the protection of British laws. Under such circumstances and with such accompaniments do the narrow registry laws of the United States compel the citizen whom the Republicans delight to honour to return to his native land. "The vessel is," says the *Republican*, "not a subsidized vessel, and no subsidies are needed to keep it afloat. Great Britain glories in many such products of American enterprise banished from our shores by laws partaking of the character of the Middle Ages."

THE facts in regard to immigration which are being unearthed by the Congressional Committee now sitting in New York City are worse than could have been suspected by any one not a confirmed pessimist. The law forbidding the importation of contract-labour is clearly shown to be almost a dead letter. For instance a contract has been produced before the Commission, signed by two Italian labour brokers, in which the latter undertake to deliver four hundred labourers from Italy within six weeks. The testimony of very many of the immigrants who have been examined before the Committee shows that they were induced to emigrate by false promises as to the wages they would receive. Many of them have agreed to pay the agents fifty dollars for tickets which cost less than half that sum, and have mortgaged their homes or little vineries in Italy as security for the money, on which meanwhile they have to pay about twenty per cent. interest. No doubt the report of the Committee will lead to immediate and radical revision of the laws in regard to immigration.

THE *Saturday Review* and some other journals are surely taking Senator Blair's resolution in reference to Canada altogether too seriously. If Senator Blair's, or as the *Review* prefers to consider it, Senator Hoar's resolution is an insult to England, it is doubly an insult to Canada. And yet it has not disturbed Canadian equanimity in the least, probably because we, by reason of contiguity, understand better the exigencies of the political situation amongst our neighbours, and the peculiarity of the weapons with which they fight their party battles. The resolution will have done what was expected of it when it has given opportunity to a few Republican Senators and other orators to make certain "buncombe" speeches, and, it is safe to say, the United States Government will not approach that of Great Britain with any such offensive proposition as that for the purchase of her larger half of the North American continent and the transfer of the allegiance of five millions of Canadians. The same observations may be made generally, with regard to Senator Cullome's railway resolution, although it is not improbable that some action may be taken, if any such can be devised, not inconsistent with international and treaty obligation, to bring Canadian railways operating in and through the United States within the scope of the Interstate Commerce bill. This question is, however, clearly a commercial one, and is not likely soon to come within the range of international politics.

SIMULTANEOUSLY with the passage of the Parnell Commission Bill comes the announcement that Mr. Parnell has taken the initiatory steps for prosecuting the *Times* for libel, in the Scotch courts. If this suit is proceeded with, will the Commission also go on with its work, and give the British public the double excitement of two tribunals going on with the same investigation at the same time? Had Mr. Parnell initiated his suit before the passage of the Commission Bill it was understood that the Government would have quietly suffered the latter to drop as unnecessary. Possibly they may feel justified in refraining from issuing the Commission now that the Bill has actually been passed, or the Commissioners may feel justified in postponing the inquiry, pending the action of the court. The double inquiry would certainly seem both unnecessary and anomalous. But, on other hand, it is evident that Mr. Parnell, as the plaintiff in the court, will have a certain power of limiting the scope of the inquiry, contrary to the evident wishes and intentions of the Government and the supporters of the Commission Bill. Now that the public curiosity and interest have been wrought up to such a pitch of excitement, nothing but a thorough and complete inquiry into the whole matter covered by the *Times*' charges, will be accepted as satisfactory.

It is reasonable to suppose that very valuable results are to be gained from such a sham naval warfare as that which has been for some weeks in progress on the coasts of Great Britain and Ireland, else the Government and Parliament would never have consented to inflict upon the nation the enormous expense which must be incurred. Otherwise the pageant must have seemed to the unmilitary mind an empty and useless, but very costly, show. The general results will probably be gathered up and made known by competent authorities when the war is over. Thus far the impression conveyed seems to be one of inefficiency and failure at many important points. The question is, moreover, to what extent any possible equipments and preparations in time of peace can secure the efficiency of a navy, under present conditions, in case of actual war. Of course weak points may be detected and palpable blunders illustrated. But the problem of conflict seems to contain so many unknown or indeterminate quantities, in the present transition state of naval armaments, that the military authorities can scarcely avoid being haunted by the suspicion that the chief sources of weakness or danger may after all be passed