

listening to what might just as well be read in a newspaper—if one could be found that would publish it—and the public money is wasted in spreading the talk broadcast in many places where not the slightest regard is paid to it. No doubt it is desirable to preserve a faithful record of all that is said in the House by the members; but if a succinct *précis* of this were prepared and printed, instead of a *verbatim* report of the verbal floundering and repetitions of hon. members, anything pertinent or of real value that might by chance at any time be uttered would be available to us for reference in a convenient shape, and would be preserved to posterity in a form that will give them a much higher opinion of our good sense than what they are likely to get from the present records.

FAILURES of justice through the stupidity, or something worse, of juries are not uncommon; but nowhere in Canada are they so common as in the Province of Quebec, where the institution of trial by jury seems to be one of those British exotics whose proper use the French cannot understand. In a criminal case tried the other day in the Court of Queen's Bench, the accused, who had just been declared by a jury to be not guilty of the crime laid to his charge, was thus addressed by the judge:—"You are discharged; not in the least because you are not guilty, for it has been proven here in this court that you are nothing less than a thief, but solely for a reason, that no intelligent man could comprehend." This verdict was in face of the judge's charge that the case was an exceptionally clear one; that witnesses had sworn that they had seen the accused in the act of committing the crime; that no proof in rebuttal had been adduced by the defence; and that a verdict of "guilty" should therefore be rendered. Consequently, but one moment of the Court's time should be taken up in finding the verdict. The jury, however, took three hours, with this unexpected result; and in discharging them His Honour stated that this was the second verdict that had been rendered in contradiction to the evidence, within a few days. In the first case a merchant was charged with forging and uttering seventy-two promissory notes, each ranging from \$124 to \$300. At the trial his father, a nonagenarian, whose name was as widely honoured as it was known, fell dead while giving evidence for the first time in his life in a criminal court. What connection there may have been between the proximate cause of his death and the position his son stood in, it is not for us to say; but the jury seem to have thought that the death of the father was a clear vindication of the honour of the son—a sort of trial by vicarious ordeal—and accordingly they acquitted him, their verdict being "greeted by cheers." This applause, however, the judge unsympathetically pronounced to be "the most disgraceful demonstration he ever heard in a court of justice, and in the face of a verdict, too, so notoriously in contradiction to the evidence as to shake the very foundations of society." In fact, the sympathy was of the maudlin sort, and is indicative of much. We have all heard of the man who, when brought to trial for seating his aged mother on the kitchen fire, pleaded his forlorn orphaned state in mitigation of punishment: apparently, if this had been in Montreal, the plea would have ensured not only acquittal by the jury but the lachrymose sympathy of a discerning public.

THE British Government appears to have become at last aware that but little reliance can be placed in the Suez Canal as a military road between England and the East. In peaceful times a few hours' delay in traversing the Canal, caused by an obstruction, is not of much moment, but in time of war a similar delay might be fatal to some important movement. And unless commercial traffic were wholly suspended, and the Canal taken possession of by England, the most vigilant police could not guard against obstructions being placed, by the sinking of ships, at half a dozen places on any day. A great commercial convenience, the Canal is likely to fail as a military road just when most needed. Accordingly the same Government that bombarded Alexandria and slaughtered thousands of Arabs, in order to keep open this road to India, is now more than willing to scuttle out of Egypt as soon as may be. The Canal must of course be kept open; and it will be used as far as possible, but not depended on. The alternative route round the Cape is, however, very long, where time may be of the utmost importance; and therefore attention is now turned to the route just opened—wholly through British territory—across this continent. The subject was lately mentioned in the House of Lords, and from the tenor of Lord Granville's observations there is little doubt that this route will be adopted as an alternative road to the East and Australasia, by the Committee which Lord Granville announced had been appointed to inquire into the advisability of establishing a British Mail line between Vancouver Island and Hong Kong. If so, this new and most substantial interest in her colony may be expected to bring about a change in England's attitude towards Canada.

NATIONALISTS are calling attention to the familiar fact that the statistics of crime are lower in Ireland than in Great Britain, whence they argue that to apply the Crimes Act to Ireland is absurd and unjust. This is a palpable fallacy. In a country full of huge cities, the number of ordinary and miscellaneous offences is sure to be greater than in a rural country. But it is not against ordinary and miscellaneous offences that the Crimes Act is directed. The Crimes Act is directed against the organized outrage and the criminal domination of a terrorist league, to which there is nothing analogous in Great Britain. It is very likely that the number of ordinary offences was smaller in Sicily than in the territory of Rome, but that did not prevent the Italian Government from taking special measures against the Camorra. The measures which it took were far more vigorous than the Crimes Act, yet they caused no scandal. The slightest act of repression emanating from a sensitively constitutional power like Great Britain causes, in fact, more scandal than the most drastic application of martial law by more arbitrary governments. Some day, perhaps, Great Britain will be led to the conclusion that it is best to handle rebellion or conspiracy with determination, and let foreign critics say what they please.

MR. GLADSTONE seems to set revolutionary avalanches rolling at the rate of about one in each month. The other day he committed himself and, so far as he could, his party to the project of Mr. Jesse Collings, a hairbrained social reformer, who proposes to give all municipalities the power of expropriating owners of land in order to create allotments, and force into existence a peasant proprietary; a measure which, as everybody who knows anything of the habits of democratic municipalities must be aware, would open a boundless scene of jobbery, as well as of violence and injustice. Now the great man countenances the scheme of Mr. Crilly, an Irish Nationalist, for extending the socialistic principles of the Land Act to houses, and compelling all lessors to make over the fee to the lessees at a price which, of course, would be fixed by some revolutionary tribunal, and having been fixed, would probably be repudiated, as has been done in the case of Irish land. It is remarkable that even Mr. Gladstone's Parnellite Secretary for Ireland deprecates as too extravagant the proposal to which his chief gives ear. These confiscators, whether of land or houses, seem totally blind to the obvious fact that though they may play the trick once they will never have a chance of playing it a second time. When one set of investors in house property has been robbed, there will be no more investment in houses, or, if there is, the investor will demand, in the shape of high rent, a rate of interest on his money sufficient to cover the risk of confiscation. House accommodation will consequently grow scarcer, and then, legislate as you will, everybody will have to pay more than he does now for a house.

THE defeat of the British Government on a Radical motion to reduce the grant for the maintenance of parks belonging to, or used exclusively by, Royalty, shows what a creation and creature of factions it is. We have no information as to the constitution of either majority or minority, but it may be assumed that—though the question touched a Royal privilege—the Tories did not go to the assistance of the Government, but rather let the Radicals have their way with it; and it is plain from the vote that Radical party loyalty to what is essentially a Radical Government has no existence. A few days earlier the cable told us of a "great parliamentary victory" won by Mr. Gladstone, and for the Home Rule party, on a motion of the member for Dublin University deprecating the voting of supplies for Ireland till the House was placed in possession of the Government's Irish policy. But when it is remembered that this question was brought up by a private member; that it was not taken up as a serious party issue at all; and that yet it commanded a very respectable minority, it is somewhat difficult to perceive how it was a victory at all, either for Mr. Gladstone or the Nationalists; and having regard to this other victory, won by the ordinary supporters of the Government over the Government itself, the question naturally arises, What will be the effect of a definite attack on the Government and the fortunes of the Nationalists, when the attack is supported by the party leaders and the whole force of the national sense of Great Britain? The answer will be given in a week or two; and in the meantime both these votes may be held to give some indication of its character.

IT must be said for the French Republic that it works. A few weeks ago the Ferry Government were turned out of office by the new Chamber, and M. de Freycinet was entrusted with the reins of power, on his consenting, as appeared, to carry out the views of M. Clemenceau and the Extreme Left, who occupy much the same position in the French Chamber that the Nationalists do in the British House of Commons. Yet the Cabinet of