

"BYSTANDER" ON CURRENT EVENTS AND OPINIONS.

THE two great party organs have been debating, with hot shot, the question between Free Trade and the National Policy. We must be grateful to the *Globe* for having with regard to the National Policy, as well as with regard to Prohibition, taken the question out of the region of polemical generalities and brought it into that of facts, by instituting local inquiries and giving us the result. Its statements are fiercely traversed. Probably they are not untinted by the sombre hue of Opposition. But in their general character they correspond to the indications of trade in the lines of business to which they relate. Had the Finance Minister only kept on the safe ground on which he at first stood, and contented himself with undertaking to raise the requisite amount of revenue in the manner best suited to the industrial circumstances of this country, all would have gone well. His Tariff, in the opinion of those who are best qualified to judge it, was skilfully framed; it not only equalized revenue with expenditure, but produced a surplus, and it did not diminish the volume of trade. Unfortunately he was carried away by his success, flung himself into the open arms of the Protectionists, and undertook to produce prosperity by taxation. The result has been over-investment in the manufactures to which he promised protection, followed by the inevitable recoil, the glutted market, the works running half-time, the men thrown out of employment. At the same time it happens that the lumber trade is in a doubtful state, while the last of Canadian mining enterprises seems to be on the brink of failure. Canadian manufacturers have so far enjoyed a monopoly of the north-western market. This they cannot permanently retain. The people of the North-West will assuredly assert their liberty of buying in the best and most convenient markets; without that liberty they cannot prosper. For Canada at all events Protection will not do. Her case is not like that of the United States. The United States are an assemblage of forty communities, some of them equal in size and wealth to no mean nation, stretching over a territory which embraces the greatest varieties of soil, climate and production, while they enjoy perfect free trade among themselves. On the other hand, it would be at once unwise and unjust abruptly and entirely to reverse our present policy after leading the manufacturers to build their works and invest their money on the faith of its continuance. They are an important part of the community, though they cannot be allowed to insist that the interests of all consumers shall be sacrificed to them as if they were the whole. That for which they must prepare themselves, as their inevitable destiny in the end, is free trade with this continent. The abolition of the Customs line between Canada and the United States is indispensable to the prosperity of this country, and opinion is fast forming in favour of the measure. All along the border our people desire it, and in the Maritime Provinces it would be carried almost by acclamation. That the politicians of both parties have a prejudice against it is true, and its coming may thus be delayed; but come it will, and there are strong indications that it is near.

It seems that what Lord Rosebery tenders to the colonies in exchange for their independence is a representation in the House of Lords. Representation in the House of Lords can hardly, in the present state of the political market, be called a gilt-edged security; but, waiving that reason for misgiving, it surely is strange that after so much discussion of the subject, we should again be called on to state the objections to this scheme. Is it possible that a man of Lord Rosebery's mark should fail to see that a colonist severed from his colony, sent to reside in London and there identified politically and socially with the British aristocracy, would be a colonist, and a trustworthy representative of the colony, no more? Most likely he would become an aristocrat of aristocrats. We see the tendency even when a colonist is knighted. It would be better to put the interests of Canada into the hands of an ordinary member of the House of Lords, who would at all events be under no temptation to betray them for the purpose of ingratiating himself with a society in which his position would be already assured. A member of the House of Lords is irremovable; he is therefore irresponsible; the colonial Peer might and often would outlive the state of opinion which had existed in his colony at the time of his appointment, and he would then become an antagonist of his constituency, while he would remain armed with its commission. But the worst part of such a system would be its inevitable effect on the characters of colonial statesmen, who would be always manœuvring for peerages, instead of devoting themselves heartily to the interests of their own country. Life in high London society is expensive; colonial politicians have not usually long purses; and the temptation to seek increase of income in illicit ways, such as lending the name of a Peer to commercial enterprises of doubtful character, would be as strong as it could possibly be. With what object are

all these complications and liabilities to be encountered? Why should we struggle so desperately against the plain dictates of nature and convenience? A community when it becomes great, as the colonists of England are becoming, no matter what its origin or kinship, must have its administrative centre in itself. Nothing threatens or is ever likely to threaten the moral union between England and her colonies except this unreasoning passion for political aggregation.

THIS seems to be the hour of Federationist fancies. Perhaps it is Australian confederation that sets all brains breeding. In the cable news the other day there was this item: "Jamaicans living in this country (England) will shortly hold a meeting for the purpose of requesting the Solomon (*sic*) of the Jamaica Government, who is now here, to bring before the Jamaica Legislature, on his return in September, the subject of making that island a part of the Dominion of Canada." We have since been told that the admission of the West Indies into the Canadian Confederation is a subject which has been occupying the attention of Sir John Macdonald. Sir John and the "Solomon" of Jamaica, whoever that potentate may be, if they are in communication on the subject, will do well to consider not only the question of distance, but the political character of the population. Dire experience has shown that Jamaica, at all events, is incapable of self-government. She made a trial of Parliamentary institutions but was glad, after a fearful catastrophe, to resign them. Nothing, it seems, can keep the peace between the white and black races, or ensure justice to the blacks, but the strong and impartial rule of a Crown Governor. We bewail the corrupt influence of Quebec in our Parliament, but what do the projectors of this scheme suppose would be the influence of a West Indian delegation? How could there be any unity of interest or unanimity of feeling in a Parliament made up of such heterogeneous elements? St. Domingo flung itself into the lap of the American Republic. The American Republic flung it out again, in spite of the desperate efforts made by President Grant to bring about the annexation. The American people knew too well what sort of addition to their Congress Senators and Representatives from St. Domingo would be. But a Haytian deputation in the Congress of the United States would be a trifling danger compared with a couple of scores of West Indians in the Parliament of Canada. More than two thousand years ago a political philosopher laid it down that every association must have a sufficient object. This is what confederationists at the present day forget. Their conglomerations which they propose have really no object except to gratify the yearning for conglomeration.

THE Committee of "Mr. Tuke's Fund" have issued a report on Emigration from Ireland. The number of persons assisted to emigrate this year, the report says, amounted to little more than half that of last year. The falling off is ascribed to the diminution of over-pressure by previous emigration, and to a good potato harvest. But it is added that there has been an agitation against State-aided emigration, and that "all sorts of absurd stories have been circulated, especially with regard to Canada." Perhaps the last words might be taken in a double sense. The Committee vindicate their care in selection and supervision. Of the despatch of Irish destitution to Toronto, they wash their hands altogether, saying that these families were sent out by Unions. The emigrants sent by themselves to the States or Canada, they aver, have all done well. To the political danger of re-inforcing the Anti-British element on this continent they shut their eyes; perhaps they despair of finding a land in which the Irish emigrant might learn regular industry, improve his condition and advance in civilization, without being duped and fleeced by the traders in a malignant agitation. One thing, at all events, they see, which statesmen have unfortunately not seen, and which political agitators are determined not to see. The condition of the people in the poor districts of Ireland is one of chronic destitution, caused by the existence of a population out of all proportion to the resources of the land upon which it swarms, and liable at any time by a failure of the potato crops to be aggravated to the point of actual famine. But the Committee do not seem so distinctly aware of the fact that for such an evil occasional, or even annual, depletion by emigration, though it may be a palliative, is not a remedy. The population which remains, its character and habits being unchanged, will only multiply all the faster, and be always approaching the famine line. There is no remedy but complete clearance and the conversion of the land, or of so much of it as is cultivable at all, to the purpose of pasture, for which alone it is adapted by nature. If this is hopeless, the malady is beyond cure.

WHEN it was announced by the seceding Independents that their movement was directed exclusively against the character of Mr. Blaine,