

be traced through a dozen or more proprietors, which do not lead to trouble, delay and seemingly extravagant expenses ; and the difficulty is one that increases proportionately with every change of ownership ; for the longer the chain of title, the more difficult it is under our present system to maintain every link in the chain in order, so that it may present no ground of objection on any attempt to deal with the land.

But why there should be all this trouble and difficulty about land transactions, whether it be in buying, or selling it, or borrowing, or lending money, on the security of it, is one of those matters the ordinary lay mind is unable to comprehend.

The study of the law of real estate is a recondite one, and even amongst the legal profession there are few who attain a complete mastery of the subject. It is hardly to be wondered at, therefore, that the idea has got abroad that all this inconvenience, delay, and expense, are somehow or other necessary evils, which must be endured with patience. It appears to be assumed that there is something in land, as distinguished from other classes of property, which makes it necessary that it should be regulated and governed by a more complicated system of law, and that its transfer should be surrounded by difficulties and obstructions from which other classes of property are free.

In Australia it has, however, been demonstrated by over twenty years actual experience, that all these difficulties may be safely swept away, by the adoption of a simpler system of transfer, not not only without injury, but with the most certain and positive benefit to all who own or deal with land.

OUR PRESENT SYSTEM.

Before discussing the Australian system of land transfer, it is well that the reader should first understand, to some extent, the system at present in force in Ontario.

All land in this Province (with some trifling exceptions) was originally, so far as the title goes, vested in the Sovereign. Title to a piece of land is deduced in the following way. For example, by letters patent, a parcel of land is granted by the Crown to a subject whom we will call Jones ; he in process of time, conveys it to Brown by deed ; Brown dies and leaves a will whereby he purports to devise the land to Cowan ; Cowan then conveys to Davis, who dies intestate, leaving a widow and six children his heirs at law. Now all the deeds under which the title has passed may be