

The Week.

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THE same correspondent of the *Globe* who a short time ago was calling for legislation to compel his landlord to reduce the rent of the house now proposes that no landlord shall be allowed to charge more than three dollars an acre for cleared land, whatever the clearing or the land itself may have cost. This is one of a series of measures by which he thinks we might avert the great revolution predicted for the end of the century by that cool-headed and sure-footed investigator, Prince Kropotkin, the Wiggins of political meteorology. We do not know what the correspondent's own occupation may be. Let us suppose that he is a tailor. Tailors are said to be highly communistic. Marr, himself a Communist, is quoted as stating that at the meetings of Communists in Switzerland three-fourths of those present were of that trade. "I felt," he says, "when I entered one of these Clubs that I was with the Mother of tailors. The tailor, sitting and chatting at his work, is always extreme in his opinions. Tailor and Communist are synonymous terms." We propose, then, that no tailor shall be allowed to charge more than five dollars for a coat, let the price of cloth be what it may, and that if the tailors refuse to make coats for us at that price they shall be brought to the whipping-post. The correspondent would of course enact that the landowner should be compelled to clear the land, for which he was to receive no more than three dollars; otherwise the land might not be cleared; and this could only be done with the lash.

THOUGH one party is in power at Ottawa and the other at Toronto, the position of the Opposition leader for Ontario seems as hopeless as that of the Opposition leader for the Dominion. Mr. Meredith plays his part well; he is a good speaker, albeit rather of a mild order; he is personally respected and popular in the highest degree; yet he makes no way. The cause is the same in his case as in that of his Liberal brother in adversity: he has no policy on which to appeal to the people for a change of Government. A policy offers itself to him, but he will not embrace it; indeed, to embrace it is hardly in his power so long as his party is a donkey-engine to a party resting on the support of the Roman Catholics of Quebec. If he were willing, and were left at liberty, to attack the Mowat-Lynch compact by moving boldly against sectarian domination, he would soon find himself borne forward by a strong and enthusiastic following. Self-respecting citizens are sick of the sectarian yoke. But so long as he has to shape his course with a view to the retention of the mere remnant of Roman Catholics which still lingers within his party lines, there is really no reason why anybody should make an effort to put him in and the Mowat-Lynch Confederation out. The balance of parties, therefore, is likely to remain indefinitely as it is. This state of things is to be regretted on grounds broader and higher than any connected with the rivalry between Mr. Meredith and Mr. Mowat. Party in the Local Legislature has always seemed to us transcendently absurd. But if we are to have it, an occasional change of the party in power is absolutely essential to the purity of administration. There can be no political house-cleaning without it. Of all Governments in the world, save us from a party Government without an effective Opposition.

THE defeat by the Government of Mr. Monk's Bill for the extension of the Torrens Act to the County of Carleton, though much to be regretted, was not so injurious to the country as their refusal to comply with the recommendation of the Land Law Amendment Association, that all newly patented lands should be at once brought under the Act. In every one of the Australian Colonies these lands were from the first required to be brought under the Act, and as a consequence a large portion of the landowners have never known any other than the Torrens System; in Queensland, over ninety-eight per cent. of the land being now under the Act. This provision would be a great boon to the new landowners of the Algoma, Nipissing, Thunder Bay, and Rainy River Districts. The owners of land in the last-named district will not be inclined to be thankful that their lot has fallen under the jurisdiction of the Reform Government of Ontario when they find that the Conservative Government of Manitoba has conferred the full benefits of the Torrens System on their neighbours in Manitoba, and has also swept away the last vestige of feudalism from the

land tenures of that Province. Why the inhabitants of the Rainy River District should be pestered with estates tail, base fees, tenancy by the curtesy, and the rule in Shelley's case is hard to comprehend. The Attorney-General's idea of revolutionary legislation must be peculiar when he so designated the sweeping away of such unmixed evils.

As many British Liberals voted with the Government in the Riel division as voted with the leader of the Liberal Opposition. No more need be said. To pretend that Mr. Blake fell into a trap is idle: he had most deliberately considered the question, and had laid out the right line to be taken upon it, in his London speech, with the greatest clearness and force. For Mr. Blake, standing on anything like tenable ground, the Minister of Justice would be no match; but he won an easy victory over Mr. Blake standing on such ground as the cause of Riel. The plea of impunity for political crime ought to be denounced as often as it is put forward. It would place society at the mercy of every scoundrel who preferred agitation to honest work, and at a time when the number of such scoundrels is daily on the increase. The crimes of Robespierre and Carrier were political. The Phoenix Park murders were political. Because a crime is political it by no means follows that it is not selfish. It was to make himself Emperor that Louis Napoleon massacred thousands of innocent citizens and deported other thousands to Cayenne. Riel would have personally profited on the largest scale by the success of his rebellion, and he clearly marked the mercenary character of his enterprise by showing himself ready to sell out. He had actually estopped himself and his defenders from this plea by his own execution of Scott for offering political resistance to his usurpation. Mr. Blake is the prince of Canadian advocates, but in this case he had a bad brief, and a lamentable catastrophe was the result. Unluckily the country suffers as well as the party leader and the party. This fiasco will take all the life out of the much-needed inquiry into the causes of the rebellion. We come back to the same point. The leader of the Opposition has no policy to oppose to the policy of the Government. He is consequently driven to angling for "votes." Now he angles for the Fenian vote, now for the Bleu. Such strategy is weak as well as ignoble. Artificial alliances never last. If Mr. Blake had succeeded in capturing the Bleu vote by affected sympathy for Riel, he would not have held it for six months. The truth is, that the sympathy of the Bleu politicians for Riel is just as hollow as his own.

THE adjournment of the Senate for three weeks in the beginning of the session was a practical confession that it could not initiate legislation. An attempt to initiate legislation on the part of a body which has no authority would of course be idle: bills of any importance, when sent down to that House in which all power centres, would be no more advanced by the legislative endorsement of the Senate than by the printer's name upon their backs. It is in the interest of Conservatism that a reform of the Senate is to be desired. Radicals may well be content to allow the Conservative element in the Constitution to have a nominal organ which, in reality, is a cover for impotence. It is with this feeling that the Radicals in England discountenance a reform of the House of Lords, which they, with much reason, regard as a practical ostracism of the Conservative forces. No Senator surely can persuade himself that real authority will reside in a House three-fourths of the members of which are the nominees of one man, and nominated by him openly and flagrantly in his own interest; or believe that such an assembly would be able to oppose an effectual barrier to any revolutionary or socialistic movement which might gain possession of the popular House. The presence, which nobody denies, of some very able and valuable men in the body will not supply the want of a collective title to public confidence. If there is a genuine Conservative with a brain in his head, in the Senate, he will set himself, before it is too late, to propose a measure of reform.

THE paralysis of legislation at Washington still continues. Of more than seven thousand bills and resolutions introduced so far this session, not more than one or two measures of prime importance have been fully considered. Numerous measures of no importance whatever to the country have of course had abundant attention; but there legislation has stopped. As THE WEEK has already said, it is evident that where, in consequence of too frequent elections, a Representative's whole time and effort is taken up in retaining his seat, but little of either can be given to public business. Where the real business of legislation is done by standing committees, on one or another of which every Representative not otherwise provided with a chairmanship is placed, with unlimited license to introduce bills and resolutions, and with unlimited responsibility toward politicians; where, too, the legislation in the House is conducted without any recognized or