

House itself. Lord Dunraven, among other improvements, proposes to introduce representatives of the Colonies into the House of Lords. There he thinks they might with propriety sit, though they could not sit in the Commons, where they would have to vote on English money bills; but there are other things exclusively English besides money bills—franchise bills for example—which must come before the Upper House. The conclusive objection, however, is that Colonists made members of the House of Lords and brought under the influence of aristocratic society in England, would be about the worst, and the least trusted, representatives of Colonial interests that could possibly be selected. Lord Dunraven and other Englishmen who are always devising schemes for improving the tutelage of the Colonies will in time become alive to the fact that these young nations are no longer mere suckers, but have now a life of their own.

THE multiplication of dynamite outrages perpetrated, as is believed, by Fenian emissaries from the United States appears at last to have stung the British Government into remonstrance. As to the flagrant violation of international morality there cannot be two opinions. Nor would the members of the American Government or the mass of the American people hesitate for a moment to give any satisfaction in their power. By them these fiendish acts and their perpetrators are as heartily abhorred, and in private as severely denounced, as they can be by the British Government itself. Yet the remonstrance will probably be ineffectual, because the politicians of the United States, like those of Canada, are the slaves of the Irish vote. Their hypocritical servility will be increased by the prospect of the Presidential election, the intrigues preparatory to which have already commenced. Thus under the party system, national honour as well as domestic policy is at the mercy of an unscrupulous minority which can muster votes enough to turn the scale. Mr. Parnell and his followers find it expedient to avert the storm of public wrath by an affected condemnation of the outrages. Why did they not condemn those public meetings of the Fenians at which the use of dynamite, as well as of the Thug-knife, was openly proposed and applauded, or the subscriptions which were taken up avowedly for a war of assassination? They have been all along deriving their supplies from this very quarter; though now, very likely, there is a division in the councils of the rebel party, Mr. Parnell and the Parliamentarians wishing to keep quiet, and give no alarm till they have got the extended franchise, while the desperadoes in the United States burn for more violent courses, and aim, if possible, at precipitating civil war. The British Government may rest assured that the sentiments of the native Americans are all that can be desired, and it will, no doubt, wisely refrain from pressing remonstrance in any form which might give an advantage to the common enemy, whose object is, above all things, to bring on a quarrel between England and the United States.

To say that every man upon being born into the world, even in Venice, has a right to land, is palpably absurd, unless the State is to be allowed to determine how many men are to be born. But every man has a right to acquire land without artificial let or hindrance, as he has to acquire any other kind of property which his industry may enable him to purchase and the more freely this right can be exercised, the better not only for the individual purchaser but for the State. Agrarianism has its native seat in countries where the enormous difficulty and trouble of conveyance, added to the feudal customs of primogeniture and entail, has caused land to accumulate in the hands of a few, and practically shut out the many from the possibility of acquiring a freehold. In England, the system is attended not only with immense expense and trouble, but with frequent uncertainty of title; and the uncomfortable consciousness that there was a skeleton in almost every family muniment-room had a great influence in inspiring the resistance of the landed gentry to the registration of deeds. In Canada we have registration of deeds, and we are not exposed to the fate of that English family which in the days when conveyances were by lease and release, awakened one morning to the fact that all the releases had been used by the butler as convenient slips of parchment for the addresses on presents of game. But though we have registration of deeds we have not registration of titles, and the transfer of real property is still not only saddled with exceptional expense, but attended with exceptional risks. "Would such a system," asks Mr. Herbert Mason, the managing director of the Canada Permanent, "be endured if it applied to personal property, which can now be transferred in a few minutes at little or no expense? Let us suppose," he adds, "that every purchaser of registered Government, or Municipal bonds, bank stock, or any of the vast railway, mining, shipping, mortgage, or other corporate interests, the outcome of modern civilization, was required to examine the chain of title from the first issue to the present ostensible owner, to see that every previous transfer had been properly

drawn, properly executed, by the proper parties; that it contained this particular property, and that other transfers recorded on the same page and mixed up with them did not; that each previous owner had paid his taxes; that he was of age; that he was unmarried, or if married, that his wife was twenty-one years of age and joined in the transfer; that if a previous owner died intestate, all his heirs joined in the transfer, that all were of age and unmarried, or if married, that their wives or husbands were of age, and joined; and further that for several years at least, the sheriff had held no writs of execution against any of the owners; what, if all this were necessary, would [be the effect on the market value of such property? Ready convertibility and certainty of ownership"being important elements in determining the worth of any investment, it is manifest that the effect would be to detract materially from its value. Yet all this troublesome, expensive, and time-consuming procedure, has to be undertaken at every transfer of real estate, no matter of how small extent, or of how little value." In the tract on Land Transfer Reform from which the above extract is taken, Mr. Mason gives some striking instances of the risk, which, as well as trouble and cost, attends conveyances under the present system. In one case, a deed which formed a link in the long chain having been executed, not by the vendor in person, but by an attorney, proof was insisted on by a careful solicitor that the power of attorney was in force at the time of the conveyance, and at length a tombstone in an English churchyard revealed by its inscription the fact that the person who gave the power had been dead two years when the deed was executed and that the deed was consequently bad. The "Bystander" is not a lawyer and cannot pretend to pass judgment on the Torrens or any other special plan. But it is not easy to see why, except from the lingering force of feudal habit, real estate should be thus burdened and trammelled in comparison with all other kinds of property; and it is certain that an increased facility of transfer, with additional certainty of title, would be welcomed alike by the economist, the agriculturist and the statesman. Free transfer, with free ownership and free tillage, are the only practicable nationalization of land. The North-West seems to open a fair field for the trial of an improved system. The Torrens system has at least been sufficiently tested to warrant an experiment which, if successful, would confer the greatest benefits on a young country.

THERE is all the more reason for carrying out without delay these rational reforms, because agrarian agitation is everywhere rife and everybody is ventilating some fantastic scheme for the alteration of the tenure of land. The motive of all the schemes is radically political and social. Whether the land, under the new system of tenure, will produce more bread for the people than it does under the present, not one of the projectors thinks it worth while to inquire, though this is the only consideration of real importance to the community at large. It is evidently with a political and social, not an economical, object that the English Radical, Mr. Jesse Collings, proposes to tax the whole community, under the guise of a public loan, for the purchase of lots in order to create a peasant proprietary, which fascinates his fancy as it has that of many other philanthropists. Nothing seems more certain than that a hundred men on a large ranch, with all the appliances of machinery and scientific agriculture, can raise as much grain as a thousand French peasants; so that the labour of nine hundred of the peasants is wasted. There are political and social advantages, no doubt, in a numerous proprietary, though, judging from the state of civilization in which the French peasant is content to live, the advantages are more political than social. But the question between one system of agriculture and another will be decided in the end not by the indirect but by the direct results; not by political or social considerations, but by the comparative rate and cost of production. Nor does it appear by any means certain that the taste of the people, as they become educated, points to life on a small farm. On this continent there appears now to be a decided disposition to leave the farm for the more social and gayer life of the cities. Besides his purchase fund Mr. Collings, if he wishes to make his scheme perfect, will have to institute a relief fund for bad seasons, with which the peasant proprietor, having nothing but his annual harvest, is unable to contend. Joint stock farming, if it ever should be found practicable, might combine the political advantage of a numerous proprietary with the economical benefits of scientific agriculture, while life upon the farm would be rendered more sociable and civilized by the employment of a large and skilled staff, which would form a little community in itself.

A BYSTANDER.

A SERIES of excellent photographs of the recent Ice Palace at Montreal were taken by Mr. W. Farmer, of Hamilton, and are now published in various sizes. No prettier memento of the great Canadian Winter Carnival could be imagined.