

House of Lords: "Blackmoor, West Liss, Hants: February 13.—Sir,—In reply to your letter of yesterday, I have to say that I do not agree with those who think that the change, in approval of which Lords Derby and Rosebery and Mr. Morley seem to concur, would weaken the House of Lords. As to its necessity I can say nothing, but if the constitution of the House of Lords is to be altered, I think this is one of the changes which might be expedient. Lord Derby mentions some cases in our past history in which it would have been very convenient (in contingencies which might easily have happened) if succession to a peerage had not removed a leading man from the House of Commons, and at the present moment Lord Hartington's case is at least equally in point. Irish peers eligible to be representative peers for Ireland have sat and exercised great influence in the House of Commons—*e.g.* Lord Palmerston and Lord Londonderry (best known as Lord Castlereagh). To have leading men of its order removed of necessity from the House of greatest power and political influence does not seem to me to be a source of strength to the House of Lords. If young, they are more likely to be actively useful in the House of Commons, and after they have served their time there they will naturally go (as Lord Russell and as many more have done) to the House of Lords and bring with them more strength. Of course, every plan for changes in such an institution as the House of Lords is open to objections; the question is, on which side the reasons preponderate.—I am, sir, your obedient servant, SELBORNE."

BILLS AND NOTES.

The following extract from the official report of the debate in the Senate, April 10, is of interest:—

On clause 51 of the Bill relating to Bills of Exchange, Cheques and Promissory Notes:

Hon. Mr. DRUMMOND—Why should there be any distinction made between the Province of Quebec and other provinces in the noting and protesting of an inland bill for non-acceptance and payment? I heard the opinion expressed within the last day or two,

by a judge of the Province of Quebec, that it was injudicious and improper that there should be any distinction made. I submit that what is sufficient for one province ought to be for the others.

Hon. Mr. POWER—I presume the secret of it is, that the notarial body is a very large and influential one in the Province of Quebec, and is also well represented in the House of Commons, and they have taken care that their fees shall not be taken away from them.

Hon. Mr. ABBOTT—The people of Quebec desire to have their law as it is, and it seems to me, as it is only a matter of procedure and not of law, it is desirable to keep it as it is. It is a process that their forefathers have been accustomed to for centuries; they wish to retain it, and I can see no objection to allowing them to do so.

Hon. Mr. PELLETIER—I must believe the hon. gentleman from Montreal when he says that a judge there expressed the opinion that there should be no difference in the law in the Province of Quebec and elsewhere; but I am sure that the judge does not represent the opinion of the province or of the Bar of the province. I remember an occasion when an attempt was made to have a change in the law of Quebec in this respect, and not only the members of the Bar, but the Bench also, were opposed to it.

Hon. Mr. KAULBACH—It is desirable to have the law uniform—not only the law but the procedure.

Hon. Mr. PELLETIER—Then make it as it is in Quebec, and we will have no objection to it.

Hon. Mr. BOLDUC—I have now heard for the first time that a judge has made objections to the practice in the Province of Quebec. I have, on many occasions, heard those gentlemen state that the commercial law of Quebec was the best that could be had anywhere. Our people are used to the law as it exists in the province, and the slightest change would work very prejudicially against them.

Hon. Mr. REESOR—Will the hon. gentleman explain why notarial fees are more than