

THE NEW IRISH LAND BILL

Not perhaps since the Conservative Government came into power had the introduction of any parliamentary measure excited such widespread interest as did the new Irish Land Bill introduced by Mr Wyndham in the House of Commons on March 25. From an early hour in the morning members began to arrive at Westminster in large numbers to secure their places in the Chamber, most of the early comers, as might be expected, being members of the Irish Party. By noon fully three-fourth of the seats had been thus reserved, and in the lobbies, corridors, and other portions of the House members were to be seen in large numbers discussing the chances of the Bill. The public lobby, too, presented an appearance of unwonted animation. The demand for admission to the various galleries had been enormous. All the tickets having been snapped up within a few minutes of the result of the members' ballot being made known, those who were fortunate enough to secure places assembled early so as to obtain the best seats obtainable. The moment the gallery doors were open there was a big rush for places, and within a minute every seat was filled. Amongst those to be noted among the throng were many people prominent in the political and official life of Ireland, including Mr. Michael Davitt, Lord Dunraven, Lord Mayo, Lord Londonderry, Captain Shawe-Taylor, Sir Anthony MacDonnell, etc.

Towards two o'clock, the hour fixed for the meeting of the House, the members began to flock into the Chamber, and when the Speaker took the chair there was not a vacant seat in any part of the building.

Mr. John Redmond and Mr. William O'Brien were heartily cheered by their colleagues on taking their places, while Mr. Wyndham was the recipient of a very cordial reception from all parts of the House. Questions had been purposely limited to a very few, and were got through with unusual despatch, there being a general desire to make way for the Chief Secretary.

Mr. Wyndham said at the outset that the Government thought that cash aid was necessary, but subsidiary. They attached more importance to the credit operation in carrying out the scheme. The case which had been made for legislation had become of more importance owing to the load of litigation pressing more heavily than ever upon tenants and landlords alike. He urged that in the interests of the Empire Ireland's chief industry should be placed in a stable and prosperous condition. The system of purchase as applied to Irish land had been invariably successful, while the acts which provided for dual ownership had been as invariably unsuccessful. The taxpayers of this country were paying £170,000 a year for the Land Commission, and £1,400,000 a year for the police, who were principally engaged in connection with land troubles. Nearly 80,000 tenants had bought already, and

The State had never Lost One Penny.

The purchaser did his best for the land. If he failed through idleness he was not an object for sympathy. Public opinion supported land purchase and the payment of this purchase instalment. From the taxpayer's point of view, land purchase in Ireland was a safe credit operation. It was also a safe investment. There were 490,361 holdings of which 56 per cent were valued at £10 and under, more than 69 per cent at £15 and under, and a safe estimate of the money size of the problem is £1,000,000 worth of rent in any given year. It was not possible to go anything like the whole length of the recommendations of the Conference Report. The proposals the Government made would provide that purchase shall in future proceed by way of the sale of the estate. It was hoped the scheme would be complete in 15 years.

The Chief Points

in the provisions of the Bill are as follows—

The rate of repayment will be 3½ per cent, 2½ being interest and ½ per cent. for Sinking Fund.

The terminable annuity will last 68½ years. A perpetual rent-charge is to be provided against sub-division and mortgaging.

There will be no decadal reductions. One-eighth of the annual payment will be perpetual rent-charge, this being in addition to the 3½ per cent previously mentioned.

There will be working capital for improvements of £256,000, and there will be an addition to the working capital of the Congested Districts Board of £20,000 a year.

Advances will be in cash, not stock, but stock will be issued at 2½ per cent to provide the cash.

Rents that have never been revised at all by the Commission are to be treated as second term rents.

The amounts of reduction to be allowed for tenants purchasing shall be between 10 per cent and 30 per cent. for second term rents, while for first term rents the reduction shall be between 20 and 40 per cent.

When the majority purchase, the minority lose their rights of rent revision.

Untenanted land may be added to holdings which are uneconomic owing to their size or quality and this provision would include tenants who within 25 years of the passing of this Act had been owners of untenanted holdings. Not more than £500 shall be advanced for any such holding.

An estate can be purchased in the Land Judge's Court, which may authorise the sale of untenanted land for the benefit of small communities, to be held in trust for them.

The Estate Commissioners would be the Right Hon. Fred Wrench, Mr. Michael Finucane, Companion of the Star of India, Commissioner of Agriculture under the Presidency of Bengal; and Mr. William F. Bailey.

The Estates Commissioners will have power to change rents from first into second term where a purchase proposal is made. The Government propose that the period in which the loan shall be repayable shall be 68½ years, instead of 72½ years as at present.

They will introduce stringent provisions against subdivision and mortgaging. A portion of the annuity will be made permanent so as to prevent the holder from falling into the hands of money-lenders. This may be abolished if the dangers feared are found illusory.

Seven-eighths of the repayment will stand for 3½ per cent, of which £2 15s will be for interest and 10s for principal. The remaining one-eighth will stand at £2 15s per cent.

The Estates Commissioners may purchase an estate from a landlord, but within limits imposed by the Bill: they may not purchase except under the agreement of three-fourths of the tenants in number and value.

It is arranged that the maximum charge in any one year on the Estimates cannot exceed £390,000.

The Government undertake to establish forthwith an economy of £250,000 a year on the Irish Estimates. Complicated legal embarrassments having hitherto stopped land purchase in Ireland, cash was necessary. The Government proposed to give it as needed up to twelve millions.

Advances will in future be made in cash, not stock.

Money to raise the cash will be issued in New 2½ per Cent Stock, redeemable in thirty years.

The date of the commencement of the Bill is the first of November, so no loan is needed until the winter.

It is calculated that only five millions will be needed in any one of the first three years.

Ireland is entitled to £185,000 a year equivalent grant to that made in England last year for education. This money is available for purposes under this Act.

The Bill was read a second time in the House of Commons on Thursday last, just six weeks from its introduction, so that members had sufficient time, notwithstanding its technical and intricate nature, to have thoroughly mastered its provisions. The voting was 413 for, and 26 against the second reading.

Mr. Healy mercilessly attacked the Home Rule Liberals, who opposed the measure, and predicted that the Bill would change more than Ireland; it would change England too.

Mr. Morley, warmly supporting the Bill, elicited from Mr. Wyndham, amid cheers, a promise to discuss the first clause in the committee stage with an open mind.

All the members of the minority consisted of Liberals, excepting two Unionists—Sir C. Dilke and Mr. Hayne.

The very worst cough or cold succumbs to Tussicura. Obtainable from all chemists and storekeepers.—***

A very useful tool is Mawson's Patent Lifting Jack, for lifting waggons and carriages while oiling, etc. It is one of the handiest and best Jacks made. One man can easily lift a ton, and its weight is only 14lb. It is quick in action. A trial will demonstrate its wonderful utility as a great saving in muscular exertion. See it. The price is only 15s. Morrow, Bassett, and Co., sole agents.—***

MYERS and CO., Dentists, Octagon, Corner of George street. They guarantee highest class of work at moderate fees. Their artificial teeth give general satisfaction, and the fact of them supplying a temporary denture while the gums are healing does away with the inconvenience of being months without teeth. They manufacture a single artificial tooth for Ten Shillings, and sets equally moderate. The administration of nitrous-oxide gas is also a great boon to those needing the extraction of a tooth. Read advertisement.—***

MAKE NO MISTAKE!—You may fancy a cough is a trivial affair, but unless you take precautions you will find it rapidly develop into something very serious. Take warning, therefore, and at the first symptom of trouble try TUSSICURA, which everyone who has once taken it acknowledges to be the only certain remedy for complaints of the Throat and Lungs. There will be no difficulty in obtaining it, as all Chemists and Storekeepers keep TUSSICURA, and you should insist on having that and nothing else.—***

For Absolute Strength, Extreme Simplicity, Freedom from Weak or Undesirable Points, and abundance of Excellent Working Features throughout, EXCELSIOR PLOUGHS are UNRIVALLED. They will do perfectly the work that can be expected of any plough, and are guaranteed to give satisfaction in any soils where a plough can work. They have extra length of land beam, specially made mould boards, and steering gear of the most complete and approved kind. Revolving swivel steel circular coulters. Double furrow, £11 10s; three furrow, £16 10s—Morrow, Bassett, and Co., sole agents in New Zealand for Cockshutt Farm Implements.—***

The enormous output of McCormick machines defies the mental grasp of man. If the machines they manufacture were to issue from the gate of their works (the largest in the world), the spectators would see throughout the working day a McCormick machine emerging at full gallop every 30 seconds.—***

At this season everybody is liable to Coughs and Colds. Avoid all danger by taking TUSSICURA.—***