

and the members will hold office for eight years. After that period they will retire in rotation, and the vacancies will be filled by the Irish Cabinet. In the event of a deadlock the two Houses will sit together for the purpose of taking a decisive vote. The power of veto and postponement of legislation is to rest with the Imperial authority; a right of appeal to the Privy Council is provided concerning the validity of laws passed by the Irish Parliament; barriers are erected against any possible religious intolerance; and the control of all Imperial affairs and services as they affect Ireland is to remain in London. The Irish revenue is still to be collected by Imperial officers, and will be transferred to the Irish Government with a temporary annual grant of £500,000, to be gradually reduced to £200,000. For a period ranging from six to ten years the constabulary, the post office savings bank, the land purchase system, old-age pensions and national insurance are to continue under Imperial control. The Irish Parliament will be empowered to impose taxes on its own account, but will not be entitled to impose Customs duties, except on articles dutiable in the United Kingdom. Nor will it be empowered to augment the Imperial Customs duties or the Imperial income tax, but it will have certain rights of raising revenue through the stamp duties.

The first question which naturally arises is, Is the Bill a reasonably good one—a reasonable satisfaction of the Irish aspirations and demands, and a reasonable fulfilment of the Premier's specific pledge of 'full self-government' for Ireland? If Mr. Asquith's measure were to be regarded as the last word on the subject, the answers to these questions, in our judgment, would have to be in the negative. As the Bill stands—with its Privy Council checks, its limitations on the legislative powers of the Irish Parliament, and its numerous reserved services—it certainly falls short of 'full self-government' in any reasonable sense of that somewhat elastic expression; and there will, we should think, be general agreement with Mr. William O'Brien's verdict that 'if it was accepted as a final settlement, it would involve some renunciation of dreams which Nationalists had formerly cherished.' The especial weakness of the measure lies in its financial proposals. A grant of £500,000 a year is anything but a generous measure of restitution for the wholesale robbery which Ireland has endured through English over-taxation during the past hundred years; and there seems no adequate reason for withholding from the country the control of her own Customs. The ideal Home Rule scheme is that enjoyed by New Zealand, Australia, Canada, South Africa, etc. Ireland is entitled to as much control of her tariff as New Zealand has of hers; and any arrangement short of that is not likely to be permanently satisfactory. As mentioned by us a fortnight ago, the best Irish thought has for some time past been concentrating with ever gathering force on the desirableness—if not, indeed, the absolute necessity—of complete fiscal autonomy and absolute separation of the English and Irish exchequers as the indispensable condition of any final and fully acceptable system of Home Rule. Even the *Irish Times*, the Dublin Unionist organ, acknowledges the reasonableness of this attitude. 'If Home Rule is inevitable,' it remarked in a recent issue, 'it must be complete Home Rule—Colonial Home Rule. If the Irish people are to accept the tremendous risk of self-government the conditions must be such as will give them at least a chance of success.'

Mr. Asquith's Bill, however, is not the final settlement of the question. The measure will be open to amendment during its passage through the House of Commons; and Ireland will have the opportunity later on—as experience shows the necessity for them—of asking for better terms. We give elsewhere the main provisions of Mr. Gladstone's Bills of 1886 and 1893; and a glance at these will show that the present Bill, as it stands, is out of sight better than either of the two measures which were before accepted by the Party. In regard to the fiscal question, the general Nationalist view is that while fiscal autonomy will alone fully

satisfy, the denial of complete financial control does not justify rejection of the measure. It is with these considerations in mind, doubtless, that Mr. Redmond, Mr. John Dillon, Dr. Kelly, Bishop of Ross, and even Mr. William O'Brien have expressed approval of the broad principles of Mr. Asquith's scheme. Bishop O'Donnell, of Raphoe, has urged all public bodies in Ireland to 'discuss, sift and master the bearings of the Bill in meeting after meeting before pronouncing their considered views'; and it will be immediately submitted also for consideration to a National Convention in Dublin. In the meantime, its introduction in the House of Commons, with a sure majority in its favor, marks another milestone passed. Owing to the certain opposition of the Lords, the Bill is not likely to become law for at least a couple of years; but the goal is now in sight, and Ireland's long-drawn and nobly-sustained struggle for justice and freedom is drawing to its close.

Notes

Previous Home Rule Bills

Readers will be interested to compare the proposals in the new Bill with those brought forward by Mr. Gladstone in the Home Rule Bills of 1886 and 1893. These latter may be thus summarised:—

1886.

A Parliament, composed of two Orders, to sit in Dublin, and transact Irish affairs. The first Order to consist of twenty-eight representative peers and seventy-five elected members, the latter possessing an income of not less than £200 a year. The second Order to comprise 20 members, elected by the existing Irish constituencies. The two Orders to deliberate together and vote together, with power to call for a vote by Orders. Irish members to cease to sit at Westminster. Executive to consist of the Lord Lieutenant, with a Privy Council, practically independent of Great Britain. Irish Parliament to possess powers of taxation, except as to Customs and Excise, but not to interfere with the Army or Navy, or foreign or colonial affairs, and not to enact any religious endowment.

1893.

A Parliament composed of two Chambers to legislate upon and administer Irish affairs. The Upper Chamber, or Legislative Council, to consist of forty-eight members elected by voters possessing a £20 qualification. The Lower Chamber, or Popular Assembly, to comprise 103 members elected by the existing Irish constituencies. In case of deadlock the two Chambers to meet in a Joint Assembly. Irish representation to be retained at Westminster, but reduced to eighty-one members, 'in order,' quoting Mr. Gladstone, 'to give Ireland a full voice on all Imperial matters, but not to vote on subjects affecting only Great Britain.' The new Legislature not to interfere in questions relating to: The Crown; peace or war; treaties with foreign nations; treason; law of alienage; external trade; coinage; religious liberty; personal freedom. All executive power to be devolved by the Sovereign on the Viceroy, who would be appointed for six years and freed from all religious disabilities. Executive power to be exercised by the Executive Committee of the Privy Council, the Cabinet, and the Viceroy. Power of veto to reside in the Viceroy, acting on the advice of the Cabinet, subject to instructions from the Sovereign on any given Bill. Customs, excise, post office, and telegraphs to remain subject to Imperial Parliament. Ireland to bear her fair share of Imperial expenditure.

The Church and Socialism

The four articles on Socialism which appeared in our leading columns some short time ago have, at the request of the Executive of the Australian Catholic Truth Society, been reprinted in pamphlet form, with the abridgment necessary to bring them within the compass of the ordinary 32-page publications of the

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