

# THE WEEKLY BRITISH COLONIST.

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## The Irish Land Bill.

It is something like a year since Mr. Gladstone introduced the Irish Church Disestablishment Bill. It will be recollect how that measure agitated and shook the nation to its very centre—made its very institutions fairly crack with extreme tension. Undeterred by difficulties and unshaken by threats, Mr. Gladstone pursued the even tenor of his way; the bill passed the Lower House with a majority which induced the Lords to regard discretion as the better part of valor; and now we find that all parties have settled down in graceful compliance with its conditions and present a striking contrast with the condition predicted by the successors of the Apostles. But Irish reform did not end with that measure. Indeed, no attempt was made to conceal the fact that it was but the first step towards doing justice to Ireland. The nation was given plainly to understand that ecclesiastical reform was to be speedily followed by agrarian reform—that the act which placed religious sects upon the broad basis of equality and voluntaryism must be followed by one which would place tenants on a more just and equitable footing with their landlords, and improve the relations of both to the State. On Tuesday last Mr. Gladstone asked leave to introduce the Irish Land Bill, and its second reading was set down for the 7th proximo. Of the provisions of the new bill we know nothing beyond what one is able to gather from an electric glimpse. In Ireland we know that the relations at present existing between landlord and tenant are extremely unsatisfactory—so much so that the latter class have recently taken to the game so forcibly described by an apostate ecclesiastic as going out quietly and "tumbling" their landords. Those who have been able to spare the time necessary to wade through the huge mass of information furnished by the Times' Commissioner, will be aware of the fact, that a majority of instances the tenant, literally at the mercy of the landlord, that there is no security for anything—improvements, possession, the family roof-tree, all hang upon the caprice or espace of men who in but two many instances would appear to be both cupidacious and capricious. Hence it is, in extreme desperation and demoralization the tenant has adopted the terrible expedient which, in turn, leaves the landlord at his mercy. The bill now before Parliament aims at curing this deplorable and truly alarming condition. It is scarcely to be expected that the bill will go the length of recognizing the natural right of every man to the use of what land may be necessary for the subsistence of himself and those immediately depending upon him, and thus inferentially deny the assumed right of wealth to a monopoly of land. When our common progenitor was turned out into the wide world he was told that "in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return unto the ground"; and although this was to be the penalty for the sin committed by Adam, in having harkened unto the voice of his wife, rather than to the command of God, yet we may, without violence to the text, discover in it an implied incipient title to a homestead and a grave. The penalty thus inflicted by the Creator would appear to have been greatly aggravated by the merciless greed of land monopolists—an evil and a wrong the existence of which is not wholly confined to the Emerald Isle. Turning to the meagre outline of the new bill supplied by the telegraph, its chief object would appear to give

greater security of tenure to tenants and affording them protection against the very summary process of ejection too often resorted to. It also proposes to make provision for facilitating the acquisition of land in fee simple by the tenant. With so little information before us it would serve no good purpose to indulge in comments which must rest on a speculative foundation; but assuming the land measure to be worthy of its great author, we can only wish for it such overwhelming majorities in the Commons as will avert any effective opposition in the Lords. That a measure striking more or less directly at the sacred rights of their order to lord it over the masses will evoke bitter op-

## Legislative Council.

MONDAY, Feb 11, 1870.

Present—Hon President and Hon. Messrs Crease, Trutch, O'Reilly, Hamer, Ball, Saunders, Bushby, Alston, Pember, Carcall, Robson, DeCosmos, Holbrook, Humphreys, Barnard, Drake, Dewdney, Ring, Heimken.

## THE MINUTES.

Upon the minutes being read, Mr. DeCosmos said the Clerk had omitted to record the action of the Council on his motion for the consideration of Confederation. Considerable discussion arose, the Attorney General contending that his notice that the question should be taken up on the 1st of March superseded that of Mr. DeCosmos.

Mr. DeCosmos replied that the report in the Colonist newspaper contained the fact as it occurred, and moved an amendment to the

one." It ought to have been as follows:—"That he [DeCosmos] had no objection to the appointment of Dr. Carroll as a man or as a confederatist but he did not concur in altering the Executive Council by the addition of two popular members, thereby reducing the representative element in the Council." [Applause.]

## THE MINUTES.

Heavy robbery.—On Friday night last a lumberman from Puget Sound got drunk and fell among thieves by whom he was robbed of \$320 in gold coin, besides a number of small articles, abstracted from his cabin. He complained to the police and officers Kennedy and McMillan were instructed to work the case up. They soon ascertained that a trio of half breeds, named Joseph and Francis DaCosta and John Manson, had been expending a considerable sum of money in the purchase of coats and trousers, pomade,

and tobacco, etc., during the day previous, their lavish expenditure leaving no doubt in the minds of the officers that the robbery had been effected by the young condemned miscreants.

John Manson had been found to have had shortly before taken a boat and gone out to the straits, accompanied with his handless companion, living in the passengers. The officers therefore awaited their return with patience, which was shortly rewarded by the return of the trio of DaCosta and the Manson. As they came alongside they were seized and searched and in the pocket of one of the DaCostas was found \$120 in gold and from the boot of Manson was \$100 in gold. The cabin of the interesting young scoundrels was next searched, and there were found two pamphlets and a few other articles which were identified by Ambrose as part of the property stolen. The prisoners were brought before the Magistrate yesterday, solemnly prostrated their innocences and were remanded for three days.

Mr. Holbrook to ask the establishment of a Labor Exchange.

Mr. Drake, that the sum of \$1000 be placed in the Estimates to purchase the Library of Chief Justice Needham for the Colony.

Mr. Barnard, to place on the Estimates a sum for increased postal facilities in the Colony.

Mr. Crease, to move to introduce the Crown Ordinance.

Mr. Dewdney, to ask for an appropriation for a trial to Kotzenay.

ARRAIS TO SCHOOL TEACHERS.

Mr. DeCosmos asked the hon. Colonial Secretary whether the government intended to make provision for the payment of arrears due to school teachers, as set forth in the journal of this House for 1869?

The President said in reply that nothing was placed on the Estimates this year for that purpose, nor did he think the government intended to pay anything unless there was a sum voted by the Council.

LAND REGISTER ORDINANCE.

The Attorney General introduced a Land Registry Bill, which was read a first time.

MEDICINE AND SURGERY.

The Attorney General introduced an Ordinance respecting practitioners in medicine and surgery—which was read a first time.

THE SISTERS.

Mr. Barnard's motion relating to the removal of the Sisters was postponed until the Estimates are before the Council.

COLONIAL CONSTITUTION.

Mr. DeCosmos asked that his motion for the reconstruction of the Colonial Constitution be postponed until Tuesday.

SCHOOLS, ETC. CHRM.

Mr. Alston moved that His Excellency the Governor be respectfully requested to transmit to this Council a return showing—

1. The Schools in existence under the Common Schools Ordinance, 1868; on 3rd December, 1869.

2. The names of the teachers of said schools and the salaries paid or payable to them.

3. The sums granted to each Local Board out of the monies voted for educational purposes for the past year.

4. A statement of receipts and expenditure by each Local Board up to 31st Dec. 1869.

5. The average number of pupils attending each of the said schools during the past year.

Seconded by Mr. DeCosmos and carried without debate.

ROAD TOLLS.

Mr. Humphreys moved that a respectful Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that all four miles from wheat grown in the colony be exempted

from Road Tolls.

After considerable discussion Mr. Robson moved an amendment that a select committee be appointed to investigate the whole question of Road Tolls, as bearing upon colonies flour, bran, shorts and other products.

Amendment carried, and the following committee appointed:—Messrs. Trutch, Alston, O'Reilly, Robson and Humphreys.

COUNTY COURTS ORDINANCE.

Mr. Drake asked the hon. Attorney General whether it is the intention of the Government to make any alterations in the County Courts Ordinance with the view of effecting the better administration of justice.

The Attorney General replied that the Government intended to make no change in such matters, owing to their being under the shadow of Confederation.

DRAGGERS BILL.

Mr. Drake's motion on this matter was postponed until Friday next.

SCHOOL TEACHERS.

The standing orders were suspended and Mr. Drake gave notice that he would move on Wednesday next that the question of School Teachers' salaries be taken up.

Council adjourned till Tuesday at 1 o'clock.

P. M.

[Concussion.] We reported Mr. DeCosmos in the debate about the Executive Council as follows:—He [DeCosmos] had no objection to the appointment [of Dr. Carroll], he [DeCosmos] thought it was a right and proper

thing to add two more members to the Council.

Mr. DeCosmos.

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