

PRIVATE PROPERTY IN LAND

The Right Rev. Dr. O'Donnell, addressed \* somewhat lengthy and important communication to the press of Dublin on the now frequently canvassed question of private property in **land**.

The letter to an extent is in answer to Mr. Michael Devitt's **land** nationalisation proposals, though it goes further and deals with the question per se as dissociated from any particular schemes of **land** reform or tenure. The Bishop firmly upholds the principle of private property in land — indeed his arguments pretty clearly prove that all contention to the contrary is bound to have a “screw loose” somewhere, for, manipulate the subject as you may, the eventual result will leave you pretty much where you started.

He says, for instance, “If I were bent on recommending private ownership, I should begin by proving private property in **land**. Those advocates of State ownership who deny private property in **land**, thereby dig the ground from under their own feet. If one man cannot claim ownership in the soil against another, one State a fortiori cannot claim **land** ownership against another. Unless there be individual owners of **land** in Ireland, the Chinese may say the island is proportionately too large for the Irish, and claim a slice off it for three or four million Orientals. The old principle of private property in **land** saves us from these contradictions, and is no obstacle in the way of reform.” This is unanswerable.