

NEWS

Week ending Thursday, Apr. 23.

A convention was held in Dublin on the 16th and 17th which is pronounced by Irish leaders to have been the most important national assemblage in Ireland in a hundred years. It was attended by 2,000 delegates who had been chosen by Irish constituencies for the purpose of acting upon the Irish land-purchase bill introduced in parliament on the 26th of March by the chief secretary for Ireland (vol. v, p. 810), which is as follows in substance:

1. The British government will raise from \$500,000,000 to \$750,000,000, by the sale of 2½ per cent. 30-year treasury stock, to be lent to tenants in Ireland for the purchase of their holdings under the direction of a government commission.

2. In congested districts the limit of the loans will be \$2,500, and in other districts \$5,000.

3. A free gift of \$60,000,000 will be made by the government to Irish landlords, to make up the difference between the price the tenants are able to pay and that which the landlords demand.

4. Tenants borrowing from the government must repay with interest in yearly installments.

Upon assembling at Dublin on the 16th to give formal expression to Irish opinion on this relief measure, the convention mentioned above elected John Redmond, leader of the Irish parliamentary party, to preside over its deliberations. Mr. Redmond begged the delegates in his opening speech to consider well before objecting to the bill. In this connection he said:

Whatever defects Mr. Wyndham's bill has, and I am inclined to minimize them, its object is the complete and final abolition of landlordism in all its essentials. Ireland is united as she never was before. Each man must well weigh his words and remember that the whole future of his country and the welfare of his children and that of unborn generations may depend upon the convention's decision. I hope no man will advocate renewing the struggle of the land war without knowing what that renewal means—the indefinite delay of industrial and economic welfare and even of political freedom. No man must dare to do that unless he is willing to take his share of the terrible fight which would be involved by a refusal of the bill.

At the conclusion of Redmond's

speech, William O'Brien, also an Irish member of parliament, moved that the convention welcome this bill, but that it also suggest amendments in certain respects and intrust their disposition to the Irish parliamentary party. In advocating his motion Mr. O'Brien said that the Wyndham bill, if properly amended, would "make the peasants as safe as the king on his throne in the possession of their land," and that they would never again have to stand trembling in a rent office. He regarded the bill as "the biggest thing English statesmanship has ever done toward restoring the soil of Ireland to Irishmen."

All the delegates were not of O'Brien's opinion. One of them, Patrick White, another Irish member of parliament, moved to reject the bill. But he was loudly hissed and angrily urged to withdraw his motion. It was with great difficulty that the chairman secured him a hearing, and after he had spoken his motion was overwhelmingly voted down.

Michael Davitt was another member who did not join in all the enthusiasm for the Wyndham bill, nor share the confidence of the chairman that it would settle the Irish question. He is reported to have made a strong plea in behalf of the Irish agricultural laborer, maintaining that the bill, even if amended as proposed, would not put an end to the land struggle. At the close of his speech he moved as an amendment to Mr. O'Brien's motion, that the Irish members of parliament refer the bill back to the convention for final approval, after it had passed the committee stage in the House of Commons, so that the Irish people might decide whether they will accept it as amended, and that the convention be merely adjourned instead of dissolved. But as it was urged that this amendment to O'Brien's motion would be construed as an expression of want of confidence in the parliamentary party, Mr. Davitt withdrew it. Before the convention dissolved, however, he presented his views fully in support of the principle of nationalization of the land, showing that nothing short of this would settle the Irish land question, which is not merely a landlord and tenant question but a question of the natural rights of laborers as well as tenants to their native soil.

The convention dissolved on the 17th, after adopting O'Brien's motion to accept the bill and formulating a series of amendments to it. One of the amendments, proposed by Michael Davitt, asserts the principle of the American homestead law, its expressed purpose being to "safeguard the peasants from the results of improvident borrowing and the operations of land grabbers and land jobbers." The adoption of O'Brien's motion and the amendments was supplemented by the adoption of a resolution declaring that the Irish nation will never be satisfied until it obtains a full measure of self-government.

After the convention had dissolved, the chairman, Mr. Redmond, and Lord Dunraven, representing the Irish landlord interest, held an informal conference with a view to fixing a date for the reassembling of the Irish landlords and tenants conference (vol. v, p. 635), at which it is expected that the Wyndham bill, with the amendments proposed by the Irish convention, will be approved. Should this be done, it is understood that the amended bill will go through parliament without hitch, through the coalition of the ministerial party with the Irish parliamentary party, and that thereby the ministerial party in parliament will be saved from defeat on other ministerial measures.

The revolution in Morocco (p. 24), is now reported from Melilla to have succeeded. This news comes by the way of Madrid on the 22d. It is to the effect that Muley Mohammed, the sultan's brother, has been proclaimed emperor at Fez. Another dispatch, coming from Tangier under date of the 22d, tells of the arrival at Tangier from Melilla on that day of Muley Amrani, an uncle of the sultan, with the customs officials and all the government customs property, the government having abandoned Melilla. Taken together the two dispatches make it probable that the government is still holding out but that the revolutionists are in the ascendant.

On our own side of the Atlantic attention is again directed toward Venezuela, where the revolution, of which so much has been told in these columns (vol. v, p. 809), is still in progress. It is meeting with less and less success, however, and the