

Even to Single Taxers a word may be necessary as to the appropriateness of the title of this article, for some of them may not have seen the cartoon which portrayed Punch riding an ass and holding in front of him a long stick on the end of which was a carrot. The carrot was suspended an inch or two in front of the utmost reach of the donkey's lips. The hungry animal was galloping at a rate much faster than he could have been driven to with the utmost whipping. And Punch was a merciful man who merely wanted to reach the Capital in the most expeditious manner possible.

## The Irish Situation

WE reprint elsewhere correspondence between the Diplomatic Mission of the Irish Republic to the Argentine and the *Revista del Impuesto Unico*, which our readers may find of interest. There is but one sentence in the letter of N. Gonzalez Revilla to which we deem it necessary to refer. He says "The doctrines of Henry George were known and rejected in Ireland." Presumably Mr. Revilla speaks for the Special Envoy whose secretary he is, but whether he speaks for another or for himself he is egregiously mistaken.

We enjoy the acquaintance of a New York Single Taxer, an Irishman by birth, who is profoundly interested in the cause and who visited Ireland six times between 1890 and 1914. He traveled all over Ireland and tried earnestly to find some among his fellow countrymen who understood the Single Tax, whether accepting or rejecting it. He only found a handful. One member of Parliament from a Dublin constituency, was an outspoken believer. Even Davitt, to whom reference is often made, was a Land Nationalizer and not a Single Taxer. We venture to believe that the Special Envoy to the Argentine would find some difficulty in making the distinction. Bishop Nulty did in his famous pastoral clearly preach fundamental principles and James Fintan Lalor, one of the forerunners of Henry George, did foreshadow some of the great truths of "Progress and Poverty." But outside of these isolated cases which produced no local effect whatever, there has been no Single Tax movement in Ireland, no group, however small, has urged it upon the people, so that, by no possible distortion of facts can they be said to have rejected doctrines of which they have never heard. Though we wish it were otherwise, we fear that Irish Special Envoys are not to be taken more seriously when it comes to economic philosophies that are our own budding diplomats.

More important than any questions as to whether the Irish people did or did not reject the Single Tax, is the reasonable expectation which may be entertained as to the policy of the Irish Free State government. The outlook is not encouraging. The idealists are with DeValera. Arthur Griffith, who is regarded as Ireland's leading statesman, makes no disguise of protectionist sympathies. In his "Resurrection of Hungary" he frankly avows disci-

ple-ship of Liszt, the German economist who built up the German tariff system, and speaks admiringly of our own Carey.

As for the land policy of the new government we must anticipate that it will be intensely conservative so far as rural land is concerned. At least a majority of Irish farmers are now peasant proprietors of holdings for which they are paying under Land Act agreements. Would any policy which could even be twisted into a semblance of attacking their vested interests stand a chance of success? There are, however, two directions in which the new government may possibly proceed along sound economic lines and carry the people with them. The Land Purchase Act in general only related to agricultural land. Hence the town tenants have remained tenants-at-will. The ownership of the towns remains to a great extent in the hands of the old landlord groups. It is possible that a measure giving municipal authorities the power to impose taxes on land values for local purposes may be enacted, unless Griffith is compelled in order to carry on his government to give guarantees to the powerful groups which own city and town sites.

A burning question in the rural sections has been the demand for breaking the large grazing ranches, many of which, strange as it may seem, exist in Ireland. At various times during the past four centuries the British government drove the Irish from their home areas to the barren lands of the West and gave large tracts made up from the consolidation of the vacated farms to British settlers. Thus were these ranches formed. The farmers compelled to eke out a poverty-stricken existence on stony fields have resented the devotion of the rich pasture lands to cattle raising and they want to come back. Perhaps the new Irish Parliament will be wise enough to see that the way to accomplish this end without being obliged to resort to ruinous measures of compensation is to apply some kind of a land value tax.

There can be little doubt that there will be a strong demand for paternalistic action. Within a day or two, announcement has been made of a grant of \$5,000,000. for housing, undeterred by the fact that in England the great Lloyd George housing has gone completely on the rocks. The feeling that Irish hardships in the past have been due to failure of the British government to foster schemes of local improvement is deep rooted. Now that the people are to have a government that is in part at least their own, there will probably be an effort to work it overtime. As a cynical friend remarked recently in answer to the inquiry "What is a Free State, anyway?" "It is a State which is free to set up its own form of despotism."

"I do not wish to have taxes at all. I wish the common expenses reduced to a minimum and paid by the social increment of values."—VICTOR HUGO, "Ninety-Three," Book 7, Chap. 5.