

depend upon the intelligence with which it has been exercised. To know that a law has been enacted in Dublin rather than in London will stimulate the pride of the Irishman; but if that enactment be not in conformity with the laws of nature, no permanent good will result. In other words, it is not the source from which the law springs, but the nature of the law itself, that is all important.



First and foremost among the problems that will confront the new parliament will be the land question. No country has felt more keenly the results of land monopoly; and in no country has the question been more widely debated; yet it is doubtful if the Irish are yet ready to deal with it intelligently. The very extremity to which the country has been reduced stands in the way of the right solution. Absentee landlordism was so glaring that many people looked upon it as a question of large holdings by absentee owners; and they took kindly to the peasant proprietary act. But as it makes little difference to the tenant whether his landlord spends his money at home or abroad; so it matters little whether the land be held by a few great landlords, or by many small landlords. Though the Irish landlords spend their money in London, poverty there is as bad as it is in Ireland. And though the French law compels the division of the land into small holdings, the lot of the tiller of the soil is no easier than that of the Irish peasant. The evils of landlordism lie not in the form but in the essence of private ownership. So long as any human being must pay another human being for the mere privilege of using the earth just so long will the evils of landlordism persist.



Ireland has a great opportunity. All other questions sink into insignificance in comparison with the land question. The eyes of the world are upon her. Is the universal sympathy that has been manifested for her during the long struggle for Home Rule, to end in disappointment, or is it to be rewarded by fruitful action? s. c.



### Business Men at School.

"He stood and talked to us like a college professor lecturing a lot of raw undergraduates," reported one of the party of manufacturers that called on President Wilson to protest against so-called "hostile legislation." If President Wilson did talk so it was because the business men badly needed the instruction. Perhaps the attitude of

a college professor was inappropriate. That of a kindergarten teacher might be more effective in imparting information to grown men who have not yet grasped the idea that people in need of food, clothing and other things do not refrain from buying or making these things because of doubt concerning proposed legislation. Whatever depression exists may clearly be traced—not to any proposed laws—but to laws that have long been on the statute books. These are the laws that restrict and prevent access of labor to opportunities, and the laws that interfere with and hamper exchange of products. It is not fear of a proposed anti-trust law that keeps people in need of food from engaging in food production, but fear of an existing law that denies them the right to use of the earth. No pending law is preventing any one in need of clothing from buying it. What does prevent him is denial of a chance to produce wealth to exchange for clothing. Business men or other men, who have failed to take note of such evident facts, are surely incapable of giving advice of any value to the President concerning removal of business depressions.

S. D.



### Roosevelt and the Democratic Party.

In a public statement ex-President Roosevelt blames the administration for failure to solve the trust problem. He claims this would have been accomplished had measures advocated in the Progressive party's national platform been applied. Further he makes the following broad and unverified assertion. "It has been shown that the reduction of the tariff in no shape or way helps toward this solution." Colonel Roosevelt's position is vulnerable, but, nevertheless, Democratic partisans of the Underwood or Champ Clark type will probably be unable to make a satisfactory reply. The strength of Roosevelt's position lies in the unwillingness or inability of those whom he criticizes to take advanced democratic ground.



Solution of the Trust problem requires abolition of all privileges including tariffs and other taxes on labor. The amount of tariff reduction obtained through the Underwood law is ridiculously small in comparison with what a correct settlement of the tariff question requires. Colonel Roosevelt betrays an amazing lack of understanding of this question when he declares that so absurdly inadequate a reduction shows that "reduction of the tariff in no shape or way helps toward this solution." But since the Democratic party

is not yet prepared to make further reductions, it must let Roosevelt's criticism stand unanswered.

There is little in the platform of the Progressive party to justify Roosevelt's claim that its policy would have been more effective than the Democratic policy. Weak and unsatisfactory as the Democratic tariff policy unquestionably is, it is, nevertheless, a step in the right direction. The Progressive party tariff policy, on the other hand, is reactionary, since it upholds Privilege in the form of Protection. Moreover, Roosevelt's well known predilection for militarism has justly or unjustly rendered the Progressive party subject to suspicion of being similarly inclined. Both Progressives and Democrats insist on futile restrictive legislation as the means of dealing with the trust question, and both would empower commissions to further delay a proper handling of the matter. Both lack the knowledge or the courage to advocate entire abolition of underlying privileges.

In both the Democratic and the Progressive party there is an element which is ready and willing to apply efficient remedies. A majority of the Committee on Platform of the Progressive national convention of 1912 favored a Singletax plank. Had this been inserted, Roosevelt's criticism of the Democratic policy would have had more justification than it now has. There is also a large radical element in the Democratic party. If the efforts of this element in Congress had not been opposed by the reactionary wing the party would be in a better position to successfully respond to such an assault as Roosevelt has made. Perhaps this fact will now be realized and the Colonel's criticism may have the beneficial effect of inducing the Democratic party to become more democratic.

S. D.

### Monopolies and Monopolies.

Once more is it made manifest that an intelligent comprehension of economic principles is necessary to an effective handling of the monopoly question. Because monopolies have been found detrimental to the wellbeing of the state, careless thinkers and headlong reformers, are urging the supervision and control of various businesses merely because they are big. Thus, the great trading companies, particularly those known as "mail order" houses, and "chain stores," that have been able to undersell the local individual dealer,

have been condemned as agents of evil, and their suppression or restraint has been urged.

It must be apparent upon further reflection that this confusion of thought is due to an imperfect analogy. Mere size of a commercial unit has little to do with its merit. The small landlords of France and Belgium are as oppressive as the large landlords of England. Nor is the fact that the mail order house can undersell local dealers in itself objectionable. The displacement of hand weavers by the power loom may have caused temporary hardship to a few weavers, but it has been a blessing to the world at large, including, in the end, the weavers themselves. This is the history of all labor-saving inventions and devices. The very essence of progress lies in devising ways of doing a given thing with less labor; and though that device may displace some of the labor in that calling, it inevitably opens up opportunities in new fields.

The protest against mail order houses seems strangely inconsistent at this time, when so much is said about the high cost of living, and so many accusing fingers are pointed at the middle man. If the consumer in the small country town can buy cheaper of the mail order house than of his local merchant, the cost of living to that degree is reduced. If some of the local merchants are forced out of business, they can enter other lines of service where their labor is needed. The only harm that could result would come through the advance in prices by the mail order house, after it had destroyed the local merchant. But this cannot follow so long as there is impartial transportation of goods. The houses that are accused of destroying competitors by cutting prices are prospering to a degree that is inviting the formation of rival houses. For these to combine and advance prices would be to cause the formation of still others. The most efficient regulation possible comes from the competitors. If, as contended by some, the local merchant can sell as cheaply as the big trading company, he has it in his own hands to drive out his menacing competitor. If he cannot do so, then he should retire from the field, and permit his customers to enjoy the cheaper service. To lay arbitrary burdens upon the mail order house in order to preserve the local trader, is merely another application of the protective principle, which has already wrought such havoc in this country. Corporate bodies, or private agents, that have no effective competition, such as railroads, street cars,