

VIII.—*Suggestions for the Irish Census of 1881.* By Henry L. Jephson, Esq.

[Read, 17th February, 1880.]

THE time is rapidly approaching when the next decennial Census for the United Kingdom will be taken. Next April year, one more record of the state of the Kingdom will be added to those already existing: the Acts of Parliament necessary for the purpose must be passed in the course of the present session, and if any additions or alterations are deemed desirable, suggestions should be made without delay, so that they may receive consideration before it is too late.

It is the fashion at times to depreciate the value of statistics; but a glance at the Census Returns proves what invaluable information they are capable of affording. It would indeed be difficult to overrate the importance of these returns. They present to us in a picture of photographic accuracy nearly everything that most vitally concerns the social condition of the people; and as, in the progress of time record is added to record, we are able not only to behold the condition of the people at a particular period, but to trace the history of the nation in many of its most vital affairs.

The popular idea of a census is, that it is merely an enumeration of the people. It is, however, something very much more elaborate and comprehensive. Take for example, the last Irish Census. In it we have detailed statistics as regards the area of the country and its territorial divisions; the number of the people, and the number of the houses they inhabit; the ages of the people, their civil or conjugal condition, their birthplaces, and their occupations; detailed information as to the health of the people, as to the deaf, the dumb, the blind; as to the religious professions and education of the people; and numerous other matters.

These are only the heads of the subjects upon which information is given. One has to examine some of these separate subjects to get a comprehension of what a census really contains. Take as an illustration, the returns relating to the occupations of the people. For each county in Ireland we have the people classified under the following heads;—(1) The professional; (2) the domestic; (3) the commercial; (4) the agricultural; (5) the industrial; (6) the indefinite or non-productive. Then if we take the returns for any of these six classes, we find further subdivisions. The professional class is divided into persons engaged in the general or local government of the country, in the defence of the country, in the learned professions, or in literature, science, and art. These again are subdivided; and a similar process is applied to all the numerous other heads above mentioned. The returns, in fact, are very like those beautifully constructed Indian and Chinese boxes fitting one within the other, and getting smaller and smaller, until the limit of minuteness is reached. Each subdivision one examines appears to have a further subdivision, until, in many cases, one comes down to the individual.

I need scarcely point out to you, gentlemen, the immense value

which such information is to those charged with the responsibility of legislating for the wants and requirements of the people, and to those who, stimulated by philanthropic motives or patriotic feeling, devote their time and labour to evolving from the intricate social phenomena of the country the principles upon which the welfare of the people and the consequent prosperity of the Empire depend. Valuable indeed have been the statistics relating to the health and diseases and physical afflictions of the people. They have been a safe guide towards the improvement and the extension of our sanitary laws and towards making provision for the wants of our weaker and more helpless fellowmen. Valuable, too, have been and are the statistics relating to the education of the people. They enable us to see what places are darkened by that cloud of ignorance and illiteracy which will have to be dispelled before our people can take their position in the battle of life with any fair prospect of success. It is, I think, very much indeed to be regretted that these figures are not studied more closely. A perusal of those that narrow the matter down to a locality, and show the large proportion of illiterate persons that there are in some parishes, could not fail to incite any right-minded person to renewed effort for the removal of such a stigma from their locality. What must any one think of a parish where 50, 60, 70, ay even 80 per cent., of the persons five years old and upwards resident therein are illiterate. These surely are facts to be deeply pondered on and to be grappled with—facts which should bring shame to the faces of those who have ought to say to the education of the people—be they landlords, clergy, or educational boards.

Much of the information given in the Census is useful for purposes of legislation; much of it affords a criterion for gauging the material progress or retrogression of the country. For instance—the changes in the classes of dwelling-houses in which the people live is one of the best tests of the condition of the people.

But I might take up the whole evening, were I to recapitulate the information contained in the Census Report. Such a recapitulation would doubtless be instructive and not a little interesting: there are so many strange facts to be gathered from the Report, such strange inferences to be drawn from the long arrays of figures, and such curious phenomena to be observed; but as the time at my disposal is short, I must proceed to the immediate object of my paper.

Comprehensive as is the information furnished in the Census, it has occurred to me that some additional information might with great advantage be included in the next Census. Our society is so eminently qualified to express an opinion in all matters of statistical science, that I was anxious to bring the suggestions before you with the view of eliciting the expression of your views upon my proposal.

I am sure that you will concur with me when I say that I think that when a great question is being discussed (one in which the social and material welfare of the people is involved), it is desirable that the public should be placed in possession of the fullest and most reliable, I will even say authoritative, information thereon.

There is no greater danger than that of forming conclusions upon insufficient or inaccurate data.

I need not point out to you that the great question of the day is the land question. Both in England and in this country it is felt that a crisis has been reached in the agricultural interest, and consequently in the welfare of the agricultural classes, and men are casting about to see what course can be pursued under the changed condition of things. A Royal Commission has been issued to see what light they can throw on the subject, and if possible suggest in what direction we should move for an improvement. Now, one of the most material points in the matter is the occupation of the land. Upon this I think it is essential we should have the fullest information; and I would venture to propose that the Census about to be taken should be a census of the holdings and farms in Ireland, and number of people resident thereon, as well as a census of the people.

The Census already affords much information upon the subject.

Table VII, of the Census gives for each townland in Ireland the area, houses (inhabited or uninhabited), out offices, and farm steadings, population, and valuation.

Table XXIII. gives the number of farmers, and number and size of farm holdings in each poor-law union in Ireland.

Neither table gives what constitutes the most important information in the matter—the number of families and persons resident on such farms. I would therefore propose that when the Census is being taken, the forms of return should include one in the following shape, giving the following information. (*See opposite page.*)

From this form could be compiled a return for every townland in Ireland. Such a compilation would be a voluminous work; but if it could not be published as a completely separate table, the information might possibly, with a little skill, be worked into Table VII. which I have above referred to. Which of these courses is the best, and which is most feasible, I must leave for consideration hereafter. At any rate the information could be tabulated and published as an additional table, by electoral divisions and poor-law unions. The next table shows the manner in which it could be done. (*See page 50.*)

LAND OCCUPATION RETURN.

County _____ Barony _____ Poor Law Union _____ Electoral Division _____ Townland _____

Name of Occupier.	Area of Tenement. (Acres.)	Valuation of Tenement.	Population of Tenement.			House accommodation of Tenement.		Class of houses.	Number of out-offices and farm steadings on tenement.
			Number of distinct families resident thereon.	Number of persons resident thereon.		Number of inhabited houses on tenement.	Number of uninhabited houses on tenement.		
	M.	F.		Total.					

LAND OCCUPATION.

Table — Showing by Electoral Divisions the number of Occupiers of land, the size of their holdings, and the number of families, persons, and houses thereon.

Poor-law Union.	Electoral Division.	Under One Acre.						One Acre and under Five Acres.						
		Number of holdings.	Valuation of holdings.	Number of families residing on such holdings.	Number of persons residing on such holdings.	Number of houses occupied by such persons.	Number of out-offices and farm steadings.	Number of holdings.	Valuation of holdings.	Number of families residing on such holdings.	Number of persons residing on such holdings.	Number of houses occupied by such persons.	Number of out-offices and farm steadings.	

1840 pnt scac 05 105 arpm
 and 51 ; 51 : 51 arpm pnt scac 5 10
 holdings regarding unimproved artilms

These tables are probably capable of some slight emendations, but they convey substantially what I wish to suggest.

This information, combined with that published in the Tables VII. and XXIII. above referred to, would present us with a very complete view of the condition and circumstances of the agricultural classes in this country; and I need scarcely say that in a country which is so entirely dependent upon its agriculture as Ireland is, and where everything relating to agriculture and the condition of the agricultural classes is of such paramount importance, it is most desirable that the public should have the true state of affairs laid before them.

I trust you will concur with me as to the desirability of obtaining this information. It would, I think, throw a flood of light upon many matters upon which we are at present only able to hazard opinions. It would, as years went on, afford a sure index of agricultural progress and of the agricultural tendencies of the people; and if legislation were found necessary, we should have a guarantee that such legislation was founded on accurate materials, and upon a real instead of an hypothetical basis.

It is not long since, as you are aware, a volume was published giving the owners of land and the size and value of their property, and in spite of many inaccuracies, the work has been of much value. I think the opportunity should now be taken for getting information upon the occupation of land, and I feel that in its way it would be quite as valuable as that contained in the Domesday Book.

One other suggestion I have also to make—a very much smaller one, but nevertheless not unimportant. In the very interesting paper which Dr. Hancock read before the Society at our last meeting, on the subject of the Irish migratory labourers, he was obliged to have recourse to private, and consequently imperfect, sources of information as to the number of labourers that annually leave the western counties of Ireland—seeking temporary employment in England. As Dr. Hancock's statements and arguments must be quite fresh in your memory I need not further refer to them; but it occurs to me that, by a very slight addition to the form upon which information relative to the occupations of the people is returned, complete and reliable information on this point might be obtained. The Census Commissioners of 1841 devoted some pages of their Report to this subject and gave a couple of tables of the persons so migrating. They obtained the information though the constabulary stationed at the nine largest ports in direct communication with Great Britain, I think it might be more satisfactory if the information were obtained when the Census is being taken. Amongst the various subdivisions in which the people are classified according to their "occupations" there is a heading for "agricultural labourers." If when stating their occupation as such, they were requested to state whether they were employed for any period or periods exceeding, say, six weeks in the year, outside the electoral division in which their residence was, or outside the poor-law union, or out of Ireland. A table could be subsequently compiled which would show the number of migrating labourers proceeding from each county in Ireland. I shall be glad to hear your observations also on this suggestion.

One objection I wish to meet in advance in case it should be urged. Great importance is attached to the uniformity of the census returns of this country and Great Britain; and I think very justly so—for unless they are prepared on a uniform method, no comparisons can be instituted between the circumstances of the two countries. The addition of the information I have suggested would not interfere with the existing uniformity, It would only be over and above the information furnished in the English Census—totally separate therefrom, and in no way interfering with uniformity in the other matters.

Our Irish Census is already very much in advance of the English Census, embracing as it does many more subjects. The statistics relating to religious professions and education are entirely absent from the English returns. I do not know whether it is in contemplation to add either of these subjects to the English Census this time. Whether or not, I should be glad to see our Irish Census maintaining its well established superiority, and becoming each decade more and more useful to the public; and I feel that if the suggestion I have made receives your favourable consideration, and has the good fortune to be carried into effect, we should have fresh cause to congratulate ourselves upon the increased value of our Irish census.

IX.—*On the equal importance of the Education, Poor-law, Cheap Law for Small Holders, and Land Questions, at the present crisis.* By W. Neilson Hancock, LL.D.

[Read, 27th January, 1880.]

Migratory labourers from Mayo to England.

In an article in the *Fortnightly Review* for January, I called attention to the case of the migratory labourers in Mayo, and their sufferings from non-employment in England last year, as one branch of the present crisis to which sufficient attention had not been hitherto paid.

Now this connexion between Mayo labourers and England is one of very long standing. So far back as the census of 1841, that accomplished statistician, the late Sir Thomas Larcom, had the number of deck passengers to England ascertained, and in that summer it was 57,651; of these 25,118 came from Connaught—10,430 from the County of Mayo. Attention was called to these figures, in this Society, so far back as 1848, in a paper on the condition of the Irish labourer. The statistics of migratory labourers, though collected in a less perfect form from 1851 till a few years since, were never compiled or published, so it has been necessary to resort to private information. With the development of railways and progress of education, the number of labourers migrating increased; the 25,000 from Connaught rose to 35,000 a few years