

**JOURNAL**  
OF THE  
STATISTICAL AND SOCIAL INQUIRY SOCIETY OF  
IRELAND.

---

PART L., *December*, 1876.

---

I.—*Address at the Opening of the Thirtieth Session.* By Jonathan Pim, Esq., President of the Society.

[Read, 28th November, 1876.]

THE honour you have done me in electing me as your president, brings with it the responsibility of addressing you on the occasion of this, the opening meeting of the thirtieth session of the Statistical Society.

Having been a member of the Society ever since its foundation, my thoughts have been directed to the consideration of the work which it has done in the twenty-nine years of its existence, and of the changes in the social and economic condition of Ireland which have taken place during that period.

Instituted when Ireland was passing through the disastrous crisis of the Famine, it has been the object of this Society to offer to thinking men of all creeds and parties the opportunity for discussing on common ground all questions relating to the well-being of Ireland which are not governed by party or sectarian considerations. Our discussions have ever been conducted with an earnest desire to elicit truth, and though with fulness and freedom, yet they have been carried on without passion or personal antagonism. Many subjects of the highest national importance have come before us for consideration, on which legislation has subsequently taken place. I will not venture to say that our discussions have produced this legislation; but certainly they have had their effect in creating and enlightening public opinion, and have thus prepared the way for the important changes which have been made in the laws.

Coming into existence at such a time and under such circumstances as it did, it was natural that this Society should direct much of its attention to the numerous and varied questions connected with the ownership and occupation of land; and I find that, from the origin of

the Society up to the passing of the Act of 1870, nearly forty papers were read more or less directly bearing on the land question.

Among the first of these were six valuable papers by Dr. Hancock, "On the Economic Causes of the State of Agriculture in Ireland," in which, among other causes injuriously affecting agriculture, he referred particularly to the legal impediments to the transfer of land, and pointed out the means by which those impediments might be lessened. He suggested: Firstly, the establishment of a general register of all land, with the names of all those having estates in, or incumbrances affecting it; secondly, the appointing public sales of land by auction, which should be deemed markets *overt*; thirdly, the enactment that the encumbrances affecting any land should, on its being sold, be transferred to the funds arising from the sale. Now these last two suggestions, though they were then so novel as to be deemed revolutionary, were practically adopted in the Act of 1849, which established the Incumbered, now the Landed Estates' Court, and the provisions embodying them are probably the most important in that Act, as contributing to the efficiency of a court which has been of such value to Ireland.

The general register of land has not yet been established; but the principle is recognised by the "Record of Title Act," passed in 1865, which Act was mainly based on the plan laid before the Society by Sir Robert Torrens, in December, 1863. Neither this Act, nor Lord Westbury's Act, passed in 1862, for "facilitating the proof of title to and the conveyance of real estate," have as yet been much availed of, but the "Land Transfer Act"—passed last year by Lord Cairns for England—is a further development of the same principle, and I entertain no doubt that, before long, this plan of recording the ownership of land in a public register, which has proved itself so useful in other countries, will be carried into complete and effective operation throughout the United Kingdom.

The defective state of the laws relating to the Public Health was brought before us on several occasions, and in particular by Dr. Mapother in three papers read in 1864 and 1865, entitled, "The Sanitary State of Dublin," "The Differences between the Statutes bearing on Public Health for England and for Ireland," and "The Unhealthiness of Irish Towns and the want of Sanitary Legislation." It is certainly not too much to assume that these remarkable papers and the discussions which took place after they were read, had an important effect as respects the "Sanitary Act" which was passed in 1866, in which Ireland was united with England in sanitary legislation.

The working of the Poor-law formed the subject of several papers. The differences between the Irish and English law were pointed out; the question of union rating was discussed; the hardship of compulsory removal of poor persons who had lived for many years in England or Scotland was laid before us; the claims of the imbecile, and the blind, and the deaf and dumb, for relief and education, were advocated; the importance of reformatory establishments for juvenile delinquents was pressed upon our attention; and the great superiority of the family system of rearing orphan children, instead of the system pursued in the workhouse, was forcibly stated. On

all these subjects, public opinion has been enlightened, and public feeling has been roused, and much has been done to remedy the evils complained of, and to meet the wants pointed out. I may in particular refer to the establishment of reformatories for juvenile delinquents, and of industrial schools for the waifs and strays of society; and we may point with much satisfaction to the Act of last session, passed after years of agitation and remonstrance, which at last does away with the forcible return from England and Scotland of Irish poor, after they have spent the best part of their lives in those countries.

To recapitulate all the subjects which have engaged our attention with useful results would occupy too much of your time; yet I may be permitted to refer to the valuable reports on the Patent Laws, and on the Law and Practice in Ireland with respect to Wills, presented in 1851 and 1852, by Mr. Lawson, now The Rt. Hon. Justice Lawson; also the report on the policy of Partnerships of Limited Liability, by Mr. Colles, in 1852, all of which pointed out evils—some of them peculiar to Ireland—which have since been remedied, and suggested legislation which has since been carried into effect.

In 1858 a special committee was appointed by the Council to investigate the question of a General Registration of Marriages, Births, and Deaths in Ireland; the report of this committee was widely circulated; and there is good reason to believe that it had an important effect in promoting the legislation under which the present system of registration was established in 1863.

In 1871, when Lord Emly, then Mr. Monsell, was Postmaster-General, the Council pressed on his notice the importance of extending the money order system to remittances between this country and the United States of America. Mr. Monsell at once saw the value of the proposal as respects emigrants and their friends, and was successful in carrying it into effective operation.

These and other cases which I might adduce, prove that the Statistical Society has done good work in the past, and should act as an encouragement to its members to continue their exertions for the amendment of the laws, and for the social improvement of our country.

I now turn to the consideration of the many changes which have taken place in the social and economic condition of Ireland since the Statistical Society held its first meeting in December, 1847.

The great diminution in the population of Ireland is the most important of those changes. The numbers taken at the different census were:—

In 1841	...	...	8,175,124
„ 1851	...	...	6,552,385
„ 1861	...	...	5,798,967
„ 1871	...	...	5,412,377

being a reduction in the thirty years, from 1841 to 1871, of 2,762,747 persons, or more than a third of the population in 1841—a reduction which is probably unprecedented in any country except as the effect of long-continued wars. Some of the causes which

have produced this depopulation appear to be still in operation ; and the Registrar-General estimates the number on the 31st December, 1875, to have been only 5,313,980. There can be no doubt that the population increased between 1841 and 1846, and probably amounted at the commencement of the Famine in the latter year, to at least 8,375, 000 ; so that it may be assumed that the diminution between 1846 and 1876 has been more than 3,000,000 of persons.

Concurrently with this decrease of the population, there has been a great decrease in the number of small holdings of land, with a corresponding increase in the number of large farms. The statement given below shows the progressive changes up to 1875.\*

By this statement it appears that the small holdings between one and five acres, have been reduced from 310,436 to 69,098 ; and those between five and fifteen acres, from 252,799 to 166,959. The farms between fifteen and thirty acres increased between 1841 and 1851, from 79,342 to 141,311 ; but since that time they have regularly decreased, and are now fewer by 3,642 than they were in 1851. The most important increase has been in the class of farms over thirty acres, which were only 48,625 in 1841, and are now 160,298, or more than three times as many as they were in 1841. These changes took place most largely in the two or three years immediately succeeding the Famine ; but the tendency to the consolidation of holdings has continued to work during the whole period since 1847, and is evidently still in operation. But while the number of small holdings has been so greatly reduced, that those between one and five acres are not now one-fourth of what they were in 1841, it will be seen that the number of holdings exceeding five acres has increased from 380,766 to 464,926 ; and these farms of five acres and upwards bear now a much larger proportion to the population than they did in 1841—being now 87 holdings for every 1,000 inhabitants, while in 1841 there were only 46.

The Commissioners for taking the census of 1841, took all holdings over thirty acres together as one class ; but this has since been divided into five classes. The statement given opposite shows the changes

\* CLASSIFICATION OF HOLDINGS.

Size of Holding.	1841.	1851.	1861.	1871.	1875.
Holdings of 1 to 5 acres	310,436	88,083	85,469	74,809	69,098
Holdings over 5 and under 15 acres ...	252,799	191,854	183,931	171,383	166,959
Holdings over 15 and under 30 acres ...	79,342	141,311	141,251	138,647	137,669
Holdings over 30 acres	48,625	149,090	157,833	159,303	160,298
	691,202	570,338	568,484	544,142	534,024

which have taken place in each of these classes since 1851.\* By this statement it appears that, while the number of farms between 30 and 200 acres has continued regularly to increase, the farms above 200 acres in extent have, on the contrary, decreased in number since 1861—thus giving reason to believe that the economic conditions are more favourable for farms of moderate size than for those of greater extent. We may therefore anticipate the further increase of farms of medium size, and with them the increase of that middle class of which the agricultural districts of Ireland are so much in need.

But there are many cases in which two or more holdings are held by the same person; and returns have been obtained since 1861, for the purpose of ascertaining by how many persons these holdings are actually occupied. The result of this enquiry is given below.†

This statement shows that many of the large farms consist of two or more holdings; but in other respects it strengthens the inferences already drawn from the statistics of the separate holdings, as it shows that since 1861 the number of persons occupying land has decreased

\* CLASSIFICATION OF HOLDINGS ABOVE THIRTY ACRES.

Size of Holding.	1851.	1861.	1871.	1875.
Above 30 acres, not exceeding 50	70,093	72,449	72,787	73,045
" 50 " " 100	49,940	53,933	55,062	55,618
" 100 " " 200	19,753	21,531	21,696	21,909
" 200 " " 500	7,847	8,329	8,190	8,197
" 500 "	1,457	1,591	1,568	1,529
	149,090	157,833	159,303	160,298

† NUMBER OF OCCUPIERS OF LAND.

Size of Holding.	1861.	1871.	1875.
Above 1 acre, not exceeding 5	75,141	67,054	62,104
" 5 " " 15	164,006	152,987	149,723
" 15 " " 30	127,899	124,457	123,579
" 30 " " 50	65,896	65,427	65,722
" 50 " " 100	49,654	50,286	50,569
" 100 " " 200	20,375	20,421	20,696
" 200 " " 500	9,046	8,672	8,697
" 500 "	2,437	2,499	2,413
	514,454	491,803	483,503

by 30,951, and that this decrease has been greatest as respects those who hold less than 30 acres; while the farmers holding farms of 50 acres to 200 acres, have increased in number.

This consolidation of holdings and formation of large farms has been accompanied by a large decrease of tillage, and by a large increase in the number of cattle and other live stock fed principally on the large grazing farms. The abstracts given herewith, which are taken from the tables published annually by the Registrar-General, will show the course of decrease of the one, and of increase of the other.\*

These figures show that the growth of cereal crops has regularly decreased, from 3,313,579 acres in 1847, to 1,916,808 acres in 1875; while the extent of land under green crops continues without much change since 1851, and that under meadow and clover has increased from 1,138,946 acres in 1847, to 1,944,676 acres in 1875. On the other hand, the number of sheep has increased from 2,106,189 in 1841, to 4,254,027; and that of cattle, from 1,863,116 in 1841, to 4,115,288 in 1875. In both sheep and cattle the numbers, therefore, are more than doubled during the last thirty-four years, while horses and pigs, though varying in number from time to time, remain on the average nearly the same. It is satisfactory to notice the large increase in the number of poultry, amounting to nearly 50 per cent., inasmuch as this is peculiarly the stock of the small farmers and cottiers, and the sale of eggs and poultry forms a most important part of their means of support. It is worthy of remark that the number of asses has been nearly doubled since 1841, and is now about one-third of the number of horses and mules, and this may be taken as another proof of the improved condition of the cottiers and the holders of very small farms in Ireland.

The nominal values given in the following table of live stock must not be mistaken for the real value at each of the periods stated. It is merely a rough means of showing the total increase; as notwithstanding the great increase of value, the different kinds of stock have been always priced at the rate fixed on by the Census Commissioners in 1841 as being their fair value at that time. Mr. Thom,

\* NUMBERS OF EACH KIND OF LIVE STOCK, AND TOTAL VALUE, ACCORDING TO THE RATES ADOPTED BY THE CENSUS COMMISSIONERS IN 1841.

	1841	1851	1861	1871	1875
Horses & Mules	576,115	543,312	634,378	557,912	548,119
Asses ...	92,365	136,981	173,711	180,373	180,355
Cattle ...	1,863,116	2,967,461	3,471,688	3,976,372	4,115,288
Sheep ...	2,106,189	2,122,128	3,556,050	4,233,435	4,254,027
Pigs ...	1,412,813	1,084,557	1,102,042	1,621,423	1,252,056
Goats ...	no return	235,313	189,842	231,373	270,691
Poultry ...	8,458,517	7,470,694	10,371,175	11,717,182	12,139,138
	£	£	£	£	£
Value ...	21,105,808	27,737,393	33,434,385	37,553,337	37,964,166

## \* EXTENT OF LAND UNDER CROPS.

	1841	1847 <sup>a</sup>	1851	1861	1871	1875
Cereals ... ..	13,464,300	3,313,579	3,099,401	2,624,957	2,124,034	1,916,808
Green Crops ... ..		727,738	1,372,606	1,571,416	1,511,689	1,370,155
Meadow and Clover ... ..		1,138,946	1,246,408	1,546,206	1,829,044	1,944,676
Flax ... ..		58,312	140,536	147,957	156,670	101,174
Fallow ... ..	374,482	15,581,372	195,053	40,760	20,620	10,864
Grass or Pasture ... ..			8,748,577	9,533,529	10,071,285	10,409,329
Woods ... ..			304,906	316,597	324,990	318,665
Barren Mountains, Bog, Waste, Roads, Towns, Water, etc....}	6,981,165		5,712,460	5,038,525	4,781,615	4,748,276
	20,819,947	20,819,947	20,819,947	20,819,947	20,819,947	20,819,947

<sup>a</sup> This was the first year in which the agricultural statistics were collected under the direction of the Registrar-General, and they were tabulated under only the first four heads. No account appears to have been taken of woods; and all the land not accounted for under cereals, green crops, meadow, and flax, is included along with the grass pastures and waste, so as to make up the total area of land in Ireland.

in the statistical tables given in his *Directory*, estimates the value of the cattle, sheep, and pigs, in 1875, at £47,635,393, and if to this we add the value of horses, mules, asses, goats, and poultry, it will make the total amount to at least £53,000,000, which is more than two and one half times the value of the live stock in Ireland in the year 1841.

This decrease in the cultivation of cereal crops, and the increased extent of land devoted to the rearing and feeding of cattle and sheep, have been the natural effect of economic causes. The law which prevented the importation of corn from foreign countries having been repealed, the price of corn has been kept down by the importation from various, and in many cases, very distant lands. At the same time the increasing prosperity of all classes at home, as well as in England and Scotland, and the great development of manufacturing and mining industry, led to an increased demand for meat, and greatly enhanced its price. Under these circumstances, Irish farmers naturally turned their attention from corn crops to the rearing of stock, and it is well, both for themselves and for the country, that they have done so. It has proved a large source of profit for themselves, and it has given to us a supply of food which could scarcely have been otherwise obtained, as cattle and sheep cannot be imported with advantage from distant countries; and the importation of beef and mutton, however preserved, is not likely, for the present at least, to be so large as materially to affect the price of meat.

Nevertheless it is to be regretted that the tillage of the country should have so much decreased. The climate is certainly better suited for the rearing of cattle than for the growth of corn; but it seems to me that even if the rearing and feeding of live stock be the principal object of the farmer, this object will be attained most profitably by the mixed system of agriculture, in which there will be sufficient tillage to supply him with winter food, as well as with food for house feeding; and this will, I have little doubt, require a greater extent of tillage than at present exists in Ireland. There is, no doubt, pasture land in many parts of Ireland of which the grass is so good for feeding cattle, that to break it up would be an injury which it would require many years to repair; but the greater proportion of the soil of the country requires to be regularly broken up and tilled, in order to obtain from it the greatest production of which it is capable. The experience of Scotland fortifies me in this opinion, as I find that while the tillage of Ireland was decreasing, the reverse was taking place in Scotland—the tillage there having increased from 1,996,000 to 2,085,853 acres, between 1855 and 1876; and this increase of tillage has been accompanied by an increase of cattle from 974,728 to 1,132,587, and of sheep, from 5,694,735 to 6,989,719.

It is satisfactory to find that there has been a gradual diminution in the extent of waste or useless land; but no doubt what has been reclaimed from this has been added to the large area (just half the surface of the country) which is given in the table as “grass or pasture,” and which must comprise much land that has never received any cultivation, and is probably incapable of improvement, or of any use other than that of feeding cattle or sheep, or for the growth of



trees. There are many thousand acres of waste land in Ireland, which, though now of very little value, might become a great source of future wealth, if planted; and this is especially the case in the wilder parts of the west, where two or three hundred years ago there were extensive forests, though now you may travel for miles without seeing a tree. Trees would not only become a valuable property, but the shelter they afford would improve the adjacent land; and if the pasture and tillage lands of the west of Ireland were properly drained, and the barren and rocky parts planted, it would, I have no doubt, have an important effect in ameliorating the climate. Under the present defective state of the law, there is no inducement to a tenant to plant trees, as has been on various occasions pointed out by members of the Statistical Society; even as respects landlords who are limited owners, there are many legal difficulties which greatly lessen the inducements to plant, and which certainly ought, in the public interest, to be removed. Scotland had, in 1874, 734,490 acres under plantations, which is considerably more than double the extent in Ireland.

The operations of the Landed Estates Court have had an important effect on the agricultural condition of the country. I have been favoured by Mr. James McDonnell with some information as to the work which the Court has done, from which I give the following interesting details. The number of estates sold in the Incumbered and Landed Estates Courts may be estimated at above 6,400, which includes a few cases where the owner obtained a declaration of title, or where he took a conveyance of the estate back again to himself. There is no means of stating exactly the acreage of the land sold; but it may be roughly estimated at one-seventh of the area of Ireland, that is to say, about 3,000,000 acres. The number of purchasers cannot be given with certainty, as many persons have bought several lots, and have purchased parts of several estates. The number of conveyances executed has, however, been about 18,500, and allowing for two or more conveyances to the same person, probably 16,000 may be a fair estimate for the number of purchasers. The sales have realized £47,000,000, and the value of the estates of which the title has been declared by the Court, but which have not been sold, would be nearly £2,000,000 more.

The action of the Court has unquestionably been highly beneficial on the whole. It has substituted solvent for insolvent proprietors; it has simplified many complicated titles, and it has taught all landowners that their pecuniary obligations must be punctually discharged. There have been, on the other hand, some drawbacks. It has worked some injustice to the tenants, by setting aside their moral claims on their landlords, and its action in this respect may have hastened the landlord and tenant legislation of 1870.

The sales to tenants under what are called the Bright clauses of the Land Act are introducing a small number of tenants into the ownership of land,\* but it is to be regretted that no means are taken,

---

\*The number of sales to tenants, up to the present time, may be estimated at 580. I find that up to the 31st of March, 456 of these tenants, purchasing their holdings, received assistance from the Board of Works, under the provisions of the third part of the Land Act; and the amount advanced to them was £281,752.

or can be taken under the Act, to consolidate the holdings thus sold, so as to create convenient freeholds. Many of the lots now sold to tenants consist of disjointed fragments, which must be very inconvenient for good management; and much difficulty and expense is experienced in dealing with rights of way and other easements connected with these small plots of land. If the Court were empowered to regulate such matters, it would greatly improve the working of this part of the Land Act.

There is probably nothing more important in its bearing on the well-being of a people than the quality of the houses in which they live, and, regarded in this light, the changes which have taken place since 1841 must be considered as among the most satisfactory tokens of the improvement of the condition of all classes in Ireland. The Commissioners for taking the census in 1841 divided the houses in Ireland into four classes, of which the fourth or lowest was a mud cabin with only one room and one window. The table below gives the number of inhabited houses of each class in each of the years in which the census was taken.\*

The Commissioners do not afford full explanation as respects the increase of fourth class houses in 1871, when compared with 1861, but it appears to have arisen from the new arrangement for dividing the fourth class into two sections—namely, stone-built houses and mud cabins, while, under the arrangement made in 1841, the fourth class appears to have consisted wholly of mud cabins. The number of mud cabins given in the census of 1871 was only 39,177, so that the other 117,564 houses, which were then taken as fourth class, were probably included in the third class in 1861. On this assumption it will appear that the number of first class houses in Ireland increased from 40,080 to 60,483, between 1841 and 1871, and that of the second class, from 264,184 to 381,114; while the third and fourth

The extent of land purchased was 29,967 acres, and the amount of the purchase-money was £476,002. The average size of the holdings purchased was therefore a little under 66 acres; and the average of the purchase-money paid was about £1,044, of which £618 was obtained from the Board of Works, at a rent-charge calculated at 5 per cent., and lasting for thirty-five years, after which time these small estates will be held in fee-simple, discharged of all rent. It is satisfactory to find that this rent-charge is punctually paid. I am informed that as yet there has not been a single defaulter.

\* CLASSIFICATION OF HOUSES.

	1841	1851	1861	1871
1st class...	40,080	50,164	55,416	60,483
2nd „ ...	264,184	318,758	360,698	381,114
3rd „ ...	533,297	541,712	489,668	363,042
4th „ ...	491,278	135,589	89,374	156,741
	1,328,839	1,046,223	995,156	961,380

classes, taken together, decreased from 1,024,575 in 1841, to 519,783 in 1871, being a diminution of nearly one-half; and of these the mud cabins were in 1871 less than one-twelfth of the number in 1841.

But the decrease of the fourth class houses would be no proof of improvement in the condition of the people, if those who formerly occupied them now live in single rooms in houses of a superior quality, and therefore the real test must be sought by the consideration of the house accommodation enjoyed by each family. The Commissioners classified the house accommodation also under four heads, obtaining returns for the rural and civic districts separately, and the tables at foot give the statistics on this subject.\*

\* NUMBER OF FAMILIES WHICH OCCUPY EACH CLASS OF HOUSE ACCOMMODATION.

*Rural Districts.*

	1841	1851	1861	1871
1st class...	14,768	20,318	24,133	26,737
2nd ,, ...	189,138	231,148	261,617	268,380
3rd ,, ...	494,841	501,788	461,543	341,919
4th ,, ...	1,539,289	209,624	133,530	169,750
	1,238,036	962,878	880,823	806,786

*Civic Districts.*

	1841	1851	1861	1871
1st class...	16,565	19,052	20,169	22,956
2nd ,, ...	52,526	61,132	71,823	89,372
3rd ,, ...	79,545	86,652	91,953	90,855
4th ,, ...	86,067	74,605	63,532	57,629
	234,703	241,441	247,477	260,812

*Total of Rural and Civic Districts.*

	1841	1851	1861	1871
1st class...	31,333	39,370	44,302	49,693
2nd ,, ...	241,664	292,280	333,440	357,752
3rd ,, ...	574,386	588,440	553,496	432,774
4th ,, ...	625,356	284,229	197,062	227,379
	1,472,739	1,204,319	1,128,300	1,067,598

By these returns we find that, as respects the rural districts, the number of families occupying first class house accommodation were nearly doubled, having increased from 14,768 to 26,737, and that those occupying second class house accommodation had increased from 189,138 to 268,380—while the third class had decreased from 494,841 to 341,919, and the fourth class were in 1871 considerably less than one-third of the numbers in 1841.

The improvement as respects the towns is less marked, so far as regards the families occupying first class accommodation—the increase being only from 16,565 to 22,956; but the increase of the second class is much greater—the numbers being 52,526 in 1841 and 89,372 in 1871. There is scarcely any change in the third class, if we take into account the increased number of families living in the towns in 1871; but the fourth class has decreased by nearly one-third, from 86,067 in 1841 to 57,629 in 1871. Taking both rural and civic districts, there were in 1841 only 272,997 families occupying first and second class house accommodation, or about 18 per cent. of the whole number of families in Ireland; and in 1871 the number had increased to 407,445 or 38 per cent. of the whole. These statistics certainly show a great improvement in the dwellings of the people of Ireland, as compared with those in which they lived before the Famine.

The facilities for intercourse afforded by railways have greatly promoted the internal traffic of the country, and almost the whole railway system of Ireland has been brought into existence since 1847. I find by a return made to Parliament, that in December, 1848, the length of the railways opened for traffic in Ireland was only 36½ miles; and it appears by the latest Parliamentary statistics that we now have in Ireland 2,148 miles of railways constructed at a cost, in paid up shares and loans, of £30,246,175; while the corresponding figures for Scotland are 2,721 miles of railway, constructed at a cost of £72,886,652; and those for England and Wales are 11,795 miles of railway, constructed at a cost of £527,094,115. These figures are, at all events, satisfactory as showing that our Irish lines have been more cheaply made than those of either Scotland or England—the average cost in Ireland being only £14,081 per mile, while in Scotland it has been £26,786, and in England £44,687 per mile. This comparative cheapness of construction has arisen from various causes. The land which the Irish railways traversed was less valuable than that in Scotland or England, the engineering difficulties were less expensive, and the proportion of single lines is larger. No doubt there are other causes also, one of which is that we have spent less in Parliamentary contests; but whatever causes have tended to this result, it has had a most satisfactory effect in enabling our Irish lines to pay fair dividends, with an amount of traffic which, both as respects goods and passengers, is small when compared with England.

Some years ago, much dissatisfaction was felt in Ireland, as respects the condition and management of the railways. The evils chiefly complained of were: firstly, the excessive number of railway companies, leading in many cases to conflicting arrangements for traffic; secondly, the insufficient accommodation afforded to the travelling public, and especially to third-class passengers; and lastly,

the high scale of fares. Much public attention was directed to this subject, and the remedy proposed was the purchase of the railways by the Government, on the ground that railways, being the great highways of the country, ought to be national property, and should not be left in the hands of private persons to be managed by them for their own personal advantage. Several papers advocating the purchase were read before the Statistical Society, and the subject was pressed on the attention of the Government by public meetings, and by the action of various public bodies. The result was, as you will recollect, the appointment of a commission, which took evidence in London, and the subsequent appointment of another commission to make special enquiry as respects the Irish railways.

The question was discussed in Parliament on several occasions, and was for a long time under the consideration of the Government; but the idea of purchasing was eventually abandoned. Nevertheless, the discussion drew public attention to the evils of the present system, and in 1873 the "Regulation of Railways Act" was passed, with the view of obviating those evils, so far as this can be done while retaining the principle of private ownership.

Some of the evils complained of, will, no doubt, be lessened by the operation of this Act, and others have been met by the amalgamations and arrangements for leasing which have taken place. At present, out of the 2,148 miles of railways in Ireland, 1,869 are in the hands of the six principal companies; but there are still several short lines owned by separate companies, and I think some further amalgamations might take place, with advantage both to the shareholders and to the public.

The Great Southern and Western Railway Company	have	493	miles.
„ Midland Great Western	„	415	„
„ Great Northern	„	472	„
„ Dublin and Wicklow	„	136 $\frac{1}{2}$	„
„ Belfast and Northern Counties	„	150 $\frac{1}{2}$	„
„ Waterford and Limerick	„	202	„
		1,869	

No reduction has been made in the fares; but on some lines greater facilities have been afforded to third-class passengers, and their comforts have been better attended to. Still, the number of third-class passengers on the Irish railways is small, when compared with other countries. In England, the increased facilities now given have led not only to a very large increase in the number of third-class passengers, but also to a considerable increase in the total receipts. On the Continent, in countries where the population is quite as poor as in Ireland, the poorer classes are induced to travel by a scale of fares much lower than ours. This appears to me to show that third-class fares are in Ireland too high for the means of the people; and I believe that the giving still greater facilities to third-class passengers, accompanied with a reduction of fares, would eventually

so increase the number of travellers, as largely to increase the traffic receipts of the railway companies.\*

At the time when the purchase of the Irish railways was urged on the Government, many persons in England looked on it as a job; and said, "the Irish are, as usual, wanting to get a pull out of the English Treasury." They looked on it merely as a scheme to sell insolvent railways for more than they were worth. It may therefore be interesting to compare the present market value of railway property, with what it was when the Commission on Irish railways

\* It appears from the distances and fares given in *Bradshaw's Continental Railway Guide*, that the rate for third class passengers in Belgium averages from  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per English mile. In Germany it is about  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. to  $\frac{1}{2}$ d., but there is, on several of the principal railways, a fourth class, the fare for which is usually about  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per mile. In Austria, the rate is about  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. to  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per mile, and in northern Italy about  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. but in southern Italy it is much lower. The rate in France is a little over a penny. Most of the Irish lines charge exactly one penny per mile; but the Midland Great Western Company charges about  $1\frac{1}{4}$ d., which is higher than any Continental railway of which I have examined the rates. The distances and fares of some of the Continental railways, as given in *Bradshaw's Guide*, are as follows:—

BELGIUM.					
	Miles		Fares for Third Class.		
			Francs	Cents.	Pence
Brussels to Ostend ...	77	...	4	30	equal to 41 $\frac{1}{2}$
"    to Namur ...	68	...	3	40	" 33
Ghent to Charleroi ...	84	...	3	80	" 36 $\frac{1}{2}$
GERMANY.					
	Miles		Marks	Pfcs.	Pence
			equal to		
Hamburg to Berlin ...	177	..	12	60	151
Cologne to Berlin ...	362	...	23	60	284
Berlin to Konigsberg ...	365	..	23	60	284
Heidelberg to Basel .	156	...	8	60	103
Munich to Eger ...	176	...	9	65	116
Bruchsal to Friedrichshafen	172	...	9	15	110
AUSTRIA.					
	Miles		Florins	Krts.	Pence
			equal to		
Vienna to Prague ...	252	...	9	59	192
"    to Cracow ...	259	...	9	99	200
"    to Trieste ..	363	...	14	13	282
ITALY.					
	Miles		Francs	Cents.	Pence
			equal to		
Florence to Turin ...	290	...	26	50	254
Rome to Naples ..	162	...	14	00	134
Bologna to Otranto ...	525	...	...	...	...
Express Train ...	...	...	47	75	458
Ordinary Train ..	...	...	38	20	366
Naples to Foggia ...	123	...	...	...	...
Express Train ...	...	...	11	20	108
Ordinary Train ...	...	...	8	95	86
FRANCE.					
	Miles		Francs	Cents.	Pence
			equal to		
Paris to Marseilles ...	536	...	58	45	561
"    to Havre ...	143	...	15	45	148
"    to Calais ..	190	...	20	15	194
"    to Bordeaux ...	363	..	39	65	381

RAILWAYS.	Length in Miles (c) in 1868.	Amount of Ordinary Stock.	Market Prices of Ordinary Stock.		Increase of Market Price.	Increase of Market Value.
			1868	1876		
		£	£	£	£	£
aBelfast and Northern Counties . . .	99¼	556,703	92½	161	68½	381,341
aCork and Bandon . . . . .	20	175,241	21½	95	73½	128,802
aCork, Blackrock, and Passage . . . . .	6¼	118,340	35	60	25	29,585
bDublin and Belfast Junction . . . . .	55½	873,500	74	106	32	279,520
Dublin and Drogheda . . . . .	74¾	644,800	94	137	43	277,264
Dublin and Kingstown . . . . .	8¼(d)	350,000	200	222	22	77,000
Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford . . . . .	98½	510,000	31	128½	97½	497,250
Great Northern and Western . . . . .	82¾	375,205	50	106	56	210,114
Great Southern and Western . . . . .	418¾	4,107,980	95	126½	31½	1,294,013
Londonderry and Enniskillen . . . . .	60	129,200	10	110	100	129,200
Midland Great Western . . . . .	246½	2,157,175	59	112½	53½	1,154,088
a-bUlster . . . . .	64½	1,000,000	89	170½	81½	815,000
aWaterford and Limerick . . . . .	77¼	501,513	20	69	49	245,741
	1,312¼	£11,499,657	—	—	48 per cent.	£5,518,918

- a The Stock Exchange quotations for these railways being for shares of £50 or under, have been altered to the proportionate rates for stock of £100.
- b The valuation of the stock of these two companies has been arrived at by altering the present price of the Great Northern Railway stock, in proportion to the discount or premium agreed for when these companies were amalgamated with the Dublin and Drogheda Company.
- c The lengths are those stated in the Report of the Commission as being the length of the several lines in 1868. Many of them are now considerably longer. The amount of Ordinary Stock is also taken from the Report of the Commission.
- d This length includes the branch from Kingstown to Dalkey.

reported in April, 1868. I have for the purpose of this comparison obtained the Stock Exchange prices of thirteen of the principal lines, in April, 1868, and at the present time, and give herewith a statement of the increased market value of the ordinary share capital of each company. The total result, as respects these thirteen railway companies, then owning 1,312 $\frac{1}{4}$  miles of railway, and of which the ordinary share stock amounted to £11,499,657, gives an increase of market value, since 1868, amounting to £5,518,918. This, at all events, shows that, whatever advantage the country might have derived from the purchase of these railways, the transaction would not have been a profitable one for the shareholders. (*See Table, p. 15.*)

The increase of trade, as shown by the increase of shipping frequenting the ports of Ireland, is a satisfactory proof of progress. The tabular statement on opposite page shows this increase during the thirty-one years from 1844 to 1875, for each of twelve Irish ports, chosen—three in the north, three in the east, three in the south-east and south, and three in the west. It also gives similar statistics as respects the whole of Ireland, and compares it with Scotland and England. The statistics for 1875 are taken from the report of merchant shipping presented annually to Parliament, and as respects the foreign and colonial trade, include all vessels entered and cleared, whether with cargoes or in ballast, but as respects the coasting trade, refer to those only which carry cargo. The returns for 1844 and 1870 do not state precisely whether or not they include vessels entered and cleared in ballast.

These statistics show that the increase has been greatest in the northern ports, and least in the western. As respects particular ports: Belfast and Waterford have increased the most, both of them having in 1875 entered and cleared more than three times the tonnage which entered and cleared in 1844; Dublin comes next—the increase being somewhat less than three-fold; and then Newry, Cork, and Londonderry, all having increased about two and a quarter fold. The result, as respects the whole of Ireland, is an increase of shipping in the thirty-one years, from 3,903,452 to 10,002,146 tons. This is certainly satisfactory; but we are still behind Scotland, where the increase in the same period of time has been from 4,522,144 to 12,715,956 tons, which is not only absolutely but proportionately greater than with us. I may remark that the tonnage of ships entering the port of Liverpool is considerably more than that of the ships entering all the ports of Ireland, and very nearly equal to the shipping trade of Scotland.\* The great increase in the size of the ships by which trade is now carried on, is worthy of remark. The average tonnage of the vessels which entered and cleared at the port of Dublin in 1875, was more than double the average in 1844—being nearly 258 tons in place of 120. The average for Glasgow was 281 tons, and for Liverpool 471. The great foreign and colonial trade

---

\* In the Parliamentary Return of Shipping for 1875, Liverpool appears to include Birkenhead, but not Runcorn or the other small ports up the estuary of the Mersey. Glasgow does not include Greenock; but it is not clear from the return whether the shipping entering Dumbarton and Port Glasgow are included under Glasgow or Greenock.



COMPARISON OF SHIPS AND TONNAGE ENTERED INWARDS AND OUTWARDS AT THE UNDERMENTIONED PORTS IN  
THE YEARS 1844, 1870, AND 1875.

	1844		1870		1875		Per centage of increase over 1844	
	Ships.	Tonnage.	Ships.	Tonnage.	Ships.	Tonnage.	1870	1875
Londonderry ... ..	1,588	215,652	2,121	429,961	2,334	477,641	99	121
Belfast ... ..	6,462	783,792	11,330	1,893,909	13,327	2,692,149	141	244
Newry ... ..	2,886	230,863	2,201	288,764	2,516	548,835	25	137
Dundalk ... ..	1,099	127,931	1,174	240,250	1,236	250,794	87	96
Drogheda ... ..	1,359	152,314	1,196	237,631	1,108	221,319	56	45
Dublin ... ..	8,295	1,001,351	11,770	2,513,812	10,965	2,827,808	151	182
Wexford ... ..	1,416	100,482	1,138	115,191	971	101,072	14	—
Waterford ... ..	2,717	295,950	3,347	790,346	3,926	959,015	167	224
Cork ... ..	4,863	501,891	4,090	956,705	4,106	1,124,727	90	124
Limerick ... ..	1,070	128,074	707	143,747	930	227,207	12	77
Galway ... ..	303	37,468	235	40,318	303	61,718	8	64
Sligo ... ..	1,069	98,894	644	102,259	1,007	141,584	3	43
Other Ports ... ..	2,554	228,790	3,332	370,312	3,492	368,217	61	60
<b>Total of Ireland ... ..</b>	<b>35,681</b>	<b>3,903,452</b>	<b>43,285</b>	<b>8,123,205</b>	<b>46,221</b>	<b>10,002,146</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>156</b>
Glasgow ... ..	7,847	953,569	9,052	2,378,961	11,326	3,184,494	149	233
<b>Total of Scotland .. ..</b>	<b>50,205</b>	<b>4,522,144</b>	<b>53,705</b>	<b>8,924,814</b>	<b>70,125</b>	<b>12,715,956</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>181</b>
Liverpool ... ..	26,955	4,533,988	25,534	9,878,657	26,055	12,280,356	118	170
<b>Total of England &amp; Wales</b>	<b>280,826</b>	<b>27,822,205</b>	<b>306,618</b>	<b>56,150,105</b>	<b>345,394</b>	<b>67,177,935</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>141</b>

of Liverpool, being carried on in vessels of large size, raises the average, while the coal and other coasting trade depresses that of Dublin.

I may here be permitted to remark on the great improvement which has been made in the port of Dublin. The bar, which fifty years ago had only about six feet of water over it when the tide was lowest, has been so much reduced that now it has sixteen feet of water on it at the low water of spring tides. The quays have been largely extended; and during the past six years nearly 6,000 feet in length of the quay walls have been rebuilt or extended, and so much deepened that the steamers which use them always lie afloat; and even vessels drawing twenty-two feet of water can always lie afloat alongside of the greater part of these deepened quays. Coasting steamers now enter and leave the port at fixed hours, independently of the tide, and Government troop-ships, as well as large foreign vessels, come up to our quays, and lie afloat at all times.

There are now, owing to these improvements, very few better ports in the United Kingdom; and notwithstanding all that has been done, the accommodation is insufficient for the trade, and further extension is required, and is now being carried out. These works, which have been effected without any Government assistance, by an Irish board independent of the Government, and which have been planned and executed under the care of Irish engineers, show that Irishmen are not deficient in enterprise, and the great improvement of the port, and the consequent extension of the trade, prove the soundness of judgment with which these works have been undertaken and carried out. I have referred particularly to the port of Dublin, because I am best acquainted with its condition. But Dublin does not stand alone; other Irish ports might also be named—and Belfast may especially be noticed as keeping fully up to the requirements of the times as to improvements.

This large increase of trade ought of course to be accompanied by an increase of profit; and I have therefore looked to the returns laid before Parliament, of the amounts assessed for income tax, as being the income derived from trades and professions in Ireland since the tax was extended to this country, and I have obtained similar statistics for Scotland and England. By these returns it appears that the net amount on which the tax was paid in the year ending 5th April, 1854, was £4,558,479; while in the year ending 5th April, 1874, it was £9,777,598. In Scotland the increase was from £6,872,705 to £25,292,175; and in England, from £68,135,456 to £214,808,581. But these figures do not fairly state the comparison, inasmuch as the assessment on railways, mines, ironworks, gas works, and some other profits, were, in 1866, transferred from schedule A to schedule D, amounting in all to £1,250,800 for Ireland, £3,662,925 for Scotland, and £27,090,841 for England and Wales; and these additions account for the large increase which appears in the returns for the year ending 5th April, 1867. The assessments for the same sources of income in the year ending 5th April, 1874, appear to have been nearly as follows, viz. :—Ireland, £1,392,569; Scotland, £6,947,956, and England and Wales, £44,118,077, and if we deduct these sums from the assessments for this year, it leaves

the net increase under schedule D, exclusive of what was transferred to that schedule in 1866, to have been, between the years 1854 and 1874—for Ireland, £3,826,550, for Scotland, £11,471,514, and for England and Wales, £102,555,048. Thus the profits from trades and professions in Ireland appear, from these statistics, to have nearly doubled; those in Scotland have been nearly trebled; and those in England and Wales multiplied two and a-half times.\*

The increase of deposits in the Irish Joint Stock Banks, from 5,567,851, in 1840, to £31,815,000 in 1875, and the constantly increasing amount of the payments for the probates of wills and for legacy duty, tell the same story as the increase of shipping and the increase of the assessments for income tax, and prove the increased means of living of the trading and professional classes—while the great increase in the number of first and second class houses show how these increased means are expended. As respects the peasantry, artisans, and other labouring classes in the towns, the improvement as regards their house accommodation is less marked; but the large and general advance in the rate of wages, both in town and country, the greatly lessened proportion of families who are obliged to put up with fourth class house accommodation, and the diminished number of persons in the receipt of poor relief, show that these classes also

\* NET AMOUNT OF PROPERTY AND PROFITS CHARGED TO DUTY  
UNDER SCHEDULE D.

Year ending 5th April	Ireland.	Scotland.	England and Wales.
	£	£	£
1854	4,558,479	6,872,705	68,135,456
1855	4,445,891	6,858,865	68,384,051
1856	4,336,674	6,718,656	67,832,390
1857	4,280,182	6,856,106	69,110,522
1858	4,510,470	7,107,287	73,106,832
1859	4,587,457	6,779,421	73,444,998
1860	4,627,922	7,382,513	76,990,577
1861	4,604,257	7,176,475	77,824,790
1862	4,677,566	7,893,125	81,120,368
1863	4,673,743	8,234,777	85,088,087
1864	4,368,610	8,536,243	87,307,979
1865	4,669,979	9,799,026	95,636,761
1866	5,296,536	10,942,857	103,908,302
1867	7,054,716	15,044,661	135,504,680
1868	7,180,733	15,518,064	138,279,874
1869	7,527,513	16,075,393	149,451,289
1870	7,580,976	16,623,107	154,174,613
1871	7,623,458	17,342,738	164,058,371
1872	8,051,665	18,406,328	176,447,374
1873	9,042,871	21,654,721	198,172,490
1874	9,777,598	25,292,175	214,808,581

The Parliamentary returns up to 1868 state the above as the *net* amount, giving a larger sum under the head *gross* amount. After 1868, only one amount is given. The assessments on mines, iron works, rail-ways, canals, gas works, quarries, fisheries, and some other property, were transferred, in 1866, from schedule A to schedule D.

partake of the general improvement. Still it will be seen, by the statistics which I have given, that, both as respects trade, and as respects the increase of wealth shown by the assessments for income tax under Schedule D, the progress of Ireland during the past thirty years has been much less rapid than that of Scotland, and that both the sister countries are still keeping far ahead of us. There has been with us a large increase of wealth, and the comforts or luxuries of all classes have increased; but the increase in England and Scotland has been so much greater, that the distance between us and them is absolutely greater than it was.

I have no wish to paint the condition of Ireland in roseate hues; but I have desired to show that our progress, although less rapid than that of England or Scotland, has been real and solid. I have no sympathy with those who think it patriotic to declare that their country is going to ruin; and I believe that such language, being unwarranted by facts, is neither creditable to the man who uses it,

AMOUNTS TRANSFERRED IN 1866 FROM SCHEDULE A TO SCHEDULE D.

	Ireland.	Scotland.	England and Wales.
	£	£	£
Mines ... ..	87,150	486,821	4,506,333
Iron Works... ..	—	498,836	1,341,214
Railways ... ..	961,628	1,951,095	15,624,216
Canals ... ..	29,825	86,733	845,648
Gas Works ... ..	85,831	142,698	1,663,939
Quarries ... ..	8,125	62,227	535,305
Fisheries ... ..	15,215	65,399	33,736
Other profits ... ..	63,026	369,116	2,541,350
	£1,250,800	£3,662,925	£27,090,841

AMOUNT OF THE ASSESSMENTS UNDER SAME HEADS IN 1874.

	Ireland.	Scotland.	England and Wales.
	£	£	£
Mines ... ..	29,771	1,262,103	9,253,958
Iron Works... ..	—	1,975,292	5,242,761
Railways ... ..	1,096,870	2,731,810	22,206,671
<sup>a</sup> Canals ... ..	23,522	68,212	663,305
<sup>a</sup> Gas Works ... ..	118,107	202,470	2,345,276
<sup>a</sup> Quarries ... ..	10,856	84,134	719,214
<sup>a</sup> Fisheries & other profits	113,443	623,935	3,686,892
	£1,392,569	£6,947,956	£44,118,077

<sup>a</sup> The returns laid before Parliament do not divide these assessments amongst the three countries. I have therefore estimated the division in proportion to the amounts assessed in each country in 1866.

nor conducive to the best interests of his country. The facts show that in Ireland judicious and well-considered enterprise meets with its reward, and that Ireland affords a safe and remunerative field for the investment of capital.

I have already occupied so much of your time, that my further remarks must be brief; yet I wish, before concluding, to refer to some subjects which appear to me deserving of your attentive consideration. The object of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland is not merely the elucidation of abstract economic questions, but also their practical application to the present condition and circumstances of our country. The progress of time brings with it changes of circumstances which make the unavoidable defects of legislation more injuriously felt, and thus call more loudly for amendments of the law. But in a self-governing state like ours, these amendments cannot be effected until the public mind has been prepared for them by inquiry and discussion, and I am the more desirous to have such subjects brought before the Statistical Society, because I believe there is no other association in Ireland by which they can be discussed with the same freedom and impartiality.

The Irish Church Act secured to all the tenants of church lands, holding directly under the Commissioners, the right of pre-emption of their own holdings, at prices to be named by the Commissioners. I find by the Report of the Commissioners, that up to the 31st December, 1875, offers had been made to the tenants holding in perpetuity in 1,750 cases, of which 712 had been accepted; and 7,600 offers had been made to the tenants holding from year to year, of which only 3,106 had then been accepted. It appears that the offers of sale were at first "often misunderstood;" but the Commissioners state that now "the agricultural tenants are almost universally anxious to purchase their farms," and that "they intend to renew their offers to all their tenants who have not bought, with the object both of carrying out the policy of the Irish Church Act, and also of realizing the full value of the property entrusted to them—better prices being obtainable by treating directly with the tenants, than by any other mode of sale."

This affords full proof of the desire of the Irish tenantry to become owners of their farms, and I have already noted the purchases by tenants under the second part of the Land Act. But will the ownership of these small estates be really useful to the purchasers? The expense of all dealings respecting land, and the difficulties resulting from the disputes which are constantly arising, and which are almost certain to occur upon the death of the owner, whether he leave a will or die intestate, render the possession of these small estates a very doubtful advantage under the present complicated state of the laws relating to the ownership and transmission of real property, and the heavy costs incurred by resorting to a court of law for the decision of any dispute which may arise.

This subject has already received the attention of the Statistical Society. In June, 1870, Mr. Constantine Molloy read a paper urging the extension of the equitable jurisdiction of the Irish County

Courts, so as to make them "complete courts of equity for the poor." Another paper on the same subject was read in February, 1872, by Mr. George Orme Malley; and in 1873 the Council employed a portion of the fund placed at their disposal by the munificence of Mr. Thom, to procure reports from Mr. Molloy "On the application of the principles recommended by the Judicature Commission to the Irish County Courts," and from Professor Donnell "On the best means of Facilitating Land Transfer by means of Local Registry." Some few of the defects pointed out in those papers and reports have since been remedied, but much more remains to be done; and there is perhaps, as respects Ireland, no reform which so pressing demands the attention of the legislature, as that by which, to use the words of the report of the Council in 1873, "the poor can have their rights of property determined at a cost they can afford to pay; the present practical denial of justice in their disputes being, for want of local jurisdiction, the source of contention, violence, and, in extreme cases, of crime, in the struggle to settle by force the questions which the machinery of the superior courts is too expensive to deal with." I trust this subject will continue to receive from the Council of the Statistical Society, and also from individual members, that care and attention which its importance demands.

No step has been taken towards the establishment of a local registry of landed estates, the value of which was so clearly pointed out in the able and exhaustive report of Professor Donnell, and for which he shows that the Ordnance Survey and the tenement valuation of Ireland offer special facilities. This subject also deserves the attention of the Statistical Society, in order that, when the principle of Lord Cairns's Land Transfer Act shall be extended to Ireland, the Irish Act may be so framed as to be really efficacious for the purpose intended, by affording to the owners of small estates in land the advantages of a simple and inexpensive mode of registering all their dealings with them.

The Land Act of 1870 went very far in protecting the equitable claims of the tenants. Still it has not given full satisfaction, and there are, in many places, loud calls for further legislation. A new law, making such extensive and sweeping changes as the Land Act did, is scarcely ever perfect; and I think it is the proper business of the Statistical Society to consider the working of this statute, and whether there are any and what changes not inconsistent with its principle, which would make it work better, and afford a remedy for the grievances complained of. Agriculture is the support of Ireland, and everything which affects it, and which concerns the owners or tenants of land, is worthy of our closest consideration. It may be that the most serious evils which affect the tenants arise from remote causes. The Land Act, by giving legal recognition to tenant-right, and to the tenants' property in improvements, has created equitable rights which did not before exist; and the disputes which were formerly settled by the landlord, or in the agent's office, must now go before a court of law; and, as before shown, the local courts are not competent to deal with them in all cases. Two papers bearing on this subject were read by Dr. Hancock, last year—the first in

reference to complaints made by the County of Down Constitutional Association, as respects the working of the law of judgments, and the jurisdiction of the sheriff in selling land, and the second on the Defects of Banking in Ireland, as respects Loans to the Farming classes. In these papers Dr. Hancock showed that the grievances complained of were serious, and that the remedy was to be obtained by the amendment of the law and of the practice of the local courts. I trust this whole subject will receive the attentive consideration of our members.

There is, perhaps, no subject which so pressingly calls for consideration as the question of local government and local taxation. The working of our municipal institutions has, as you know, been strongly animadverted on, both in Parliament and elsewhere, and there is now a Royal Commission inquiring into it—preliminary, no doubt, to legislation. The management of our county affairs also has for many years been complained of. It has on several occasions occupied the attention of the House of Commons, and more than one committee has been appointed for its consideration. The working of the Poor-laws is far from satisfactory, and there are loud complaints of the heavy expenses, which are the more galling when we consider that, in many Unions at least, the money actually devoted to the relief of the poor, forms but a small part of the total expenditure of the Union. These are all subjects which may well engage our attention; and the consideration and discussion which would be given to them, if brought before us, would attract public notice, and thus prepare the way for useful legislation.

The "Local Government Act," passed for Ireland in 1871, is very defective, as will be evident to anyone who compares it with the English "Local Government Act, 1858," or with the Scotch "General Police and Improvement Act, 1862." The English and Scotch Acts have been very useful in enabling many towns and districts in England and Scotland to obtain powers for local government and local improvement by means of provisional orders, afterwards confirmed by Parliament without the heavy expense of private bill legislation. I give below the statistics of the working of these three Acts from 1866 to 1876, by which it appears that during the years 1866 to 1871, 202 Provisional Orders were confirmed by Parliament under the English Act of 1858, for various cities, and towns, and other places in England; and during the whole period from 1866 to 1876, 14 Provisional Orders were confirmed under the Scotch Act of 1862, for various cities and towns in Scotland. Amongst these was the city of Edinburgh, which thus obtained very full powers as respects paving and lighting, sewerage, nuisances, and ruinous buildings, the laying out of new streets and the improving of old ones, and also as respects assessment and rating, and for the borrowing of money, as may be seen by referring to the Act of 1867, 30 and 31 Vict. chap. 58. These powers were obtained without incurring the heavy expenses incident to private bill legislation, but which must be incurred by the city of Dublin before the Town Council can obtain powers to make the improvements now contemplated. During these eleven years many thousand pounds of Irish money have been

expended in obtaining or seeking to obtain local powers, which need not have been spent if an effective Local Government Act had been passed for Ireland at the same time as the "General Police and Improvement Act" was passed for Scotland. The Act of 1871 has certainly been availed of to some extent, and under it fourteen Provisional Orders have been confirmed by Parliament; but its deficiencies are admitted, and many important amendments are required to make it as useful as the Scotch Act of 1862. This subject appears to me imperatively to demand attention.\*

But even the constitution of the Irish Local Government Board itself is questionable. It is modelled on the Local Government Board for Great Britain, but is practically very different. The Board in London is presided over by a Member of Parliament of high position, under whose special attention the local government of the country is placed, and who is bound to answer complaints and reply to questions in the House of Commons. Nothing of this sort exists in Ireland, and there are other differences as respects the position and standing of several of the officers of the Board; so that the question arises, whether some means should not be taken to strengthen a Board on which so much responsibility rests, and whose responsibility appears likely still further to increase.

There is scarcely a detail of our local government in the rural districts which does not call for consideration. What is the best division of the country for local purposes? and how are the various divisions which now exist to be brought into harmony? The parish is perhaps obsolete; but there is the electoral division, the dispensary district,

---

\* NUMBER OF PROVISIONAL ORDERS CONFIRMED BY PARLIAMENT, UNDER THE "LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1858," FOR ENGLAND; THE "GENERAL POLICE AND IMPROVEMENT ACT, 1862," FOR SCOTLAND; AND THE "LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1871," FOR IRELAND.

Year.	England	Scotland.	Ireland.
1866	39	1	—
1867	35	2	—
1868	37	3	—
1869	25	1	—
1870	12	2	—
1871	54	none	—
1872	9 <sup>a</sup>	1	none
1873	49 <sup>a</sup>	none	1
1874	47 <sup>a</sup>	none	1
1875	77 <sup>a</sup>	1	3
1876	98 <sup>a</sup>	3	9
	482	14	14

<sup>a</sup> These are Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board; but it is not stated in the titles of the acts under what Act they are granted. No doubt they include orders under the Public Health and other Acts, as well as those under the "Local Government (England) Act, 1858."



the union—and besides these, the barony and the county; and again, we have other divisions for sanitary purposes. Is there to be a different division of the country for every different object of local care? or can we, with advantage, make the same divisions serve for all purposes? If so, how can we reconcile the conflicting claims of the county and the union? Or are we to alter the boundaries of the unions, or the electoral divisions, or the dispensary districts, so as to make them conterminous with the counties, and thus make them into subdivisions of counties in place of the present baronies? The settlement of these questions is an essential preliminary to any real settlement of the important and pressing questions of local government, at least in the rural districts.

Then what is to be the nature of the local government? Are we to have county boards; and if so, how are the members of those boards to be elected or appointed? Is there to be one board for the management of the roads and bridges and the other fiscal matters of the country, and other boards for sanitary matters and the relief of the poor; or is the management of all local affairs in the rural districts to be placed under the same authority?

It must be evident, considering the backward state of education in Ireland, when compared with Scotland, and the very inadequate remuneration given to the teachers, that a school-rate is inevitable. We cannot expect to have the whole cost of primary education paid out of the general taxes, when they raise by school-rates over £50,000 a year in Scotland, and over £130,000 in England. But how ought the rate to be assessed and managed? Are we to have school-boards as in England and Scotland, or is this new matter to be confided to the care of the boards of guardians?

Again, as regards taxation for local purposes, what are the expenses which should properly be borne by the locality, and what assistance should the central government afford?—for all admit that the central government, as represented by the Treasury, should afford assistance in some cases. There is also the question, what expenses should be assessed on the barony or electoral division, or other smaller district, and what on the county or the union.

The mode in which relief is given under the Poor-law has on several occasions been brought before us, and there are very many subjects for consideration on the part of those who wish to make the relief effective without encouraging pauperism. What are the proper limitations of out-door relief? Are the orphans and the children of paupers to be brought up in the work-house, or will it not be better, both for the children and the ratepayers, to adopt the plan of boarding-out? What plan should be adopted for the instruction of the blind, and the deaf and dumb, so as to enable them hereafter to earn their own livelihood? What should be done for the instruction and care of imbecile and idiot children? And, as respects these three suffering classes, ought anything to be done, or any assistance to be afforded, for the children of poor persons who are not paupers? These and other kindred subjects call for attention, and must receive careful consideration from many minds before Parliament can be expected to legislate usefully respecting them.

The Statistical Society was pleased to approve of a suggestion made by me some time since for an enquiry into the differences at present existing between the laws of England and of Ireland. The ultimate object of such an enquiry, is the consideration of the means by which a complete identity may best be obtained in all those cases in which local circumstances do not require special legislation. I trust this subject will continue to receive your attention, in order to decide what are the cases in which identity is desirable and practicable, and what subjects require to be treated specially with reference to the special circumstances of Ireland. It would be well also to extend the enquiry to the legislation of Scotland, which, being founded on the Roman law, contains much that is worthy of attentive consideration, and which, as Dr. Hancock has clearly shown us, has some important provisions which would work usefully in Ireland.

I cannot conclude this address without acknowledging my obligations to Mr. Alexander Thom, whose *Directory* stands unrivalled as an accurate and compendious repertory of statistical information. It is universally felt that Mr. Thom's work reflects credit on our city and on Ireland.

It now only remains for me again to express my high appreciation of your kindness, in electing me as your president for the year. This position has, in former years, been held by many eminent men, amongst whom your thoughts will naturally revert to the distinguished Prelate who first presided over your deliberations, and who may be said to have founded the statistical and economic school of Dublin. It is a high honour to be called to a chair which has hitherto been so worthily occupied, and I only regret my inability adequately to discharge the duties of the position.

## II.—*The Report of Council at the opening of the Thirtieth Session.*

[Read, 28th November, 1876.]

At the commencement of the Thirtieth Session, the Council have to submit the following report of the proceedings of the past session.

### *Invitation to the British Association.*

The Council joined with the Town Council, and the authorities of Trinity College, and of other societies in Dublin, in the invitation, which has been accepted, to the British Association for the Advancement of Science, to meet in Dublin in 1878. As the Society took a prominent part in the Section of Economic Science and Statistics, on the occasion of the last meeting of the Association in Dublin in 1857, the Council hope by active exertions between this and 1878 to secure that the results of Irish researches on those subjects in the past twenty years will be no less successfully brought forward in 1878.