

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.

Representation at meetings of other societies.

The Society was directly represented at the International Statistical Congress at Buda-Pesth, at the meeting of the British Association at Glasgow, and at the meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science at Liverpool.

At the Congress on International Law at Bremen, some of the officers were selected from members of this Society, who were, however, unfortunately unable to attend.

The Council have appointed a committee of members of the Society, and others, to secure that this Society, and those taking an interest in the subject in Ireland, shall be adequately represented at the International Law Congress at the Hague, next autumn.

The Statistical Society of London has communicated a resolution making as an honorary member of their Society the President of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland for the time being. The State Charities Aid Association of New York has made one of the Secretaries a corresponding member of their society.

It is a source of satisfaction to the Council to be on these friendly relations with societies pursuing the same objects in other countries.

Legislation on Questions discussed in Papers read before the Society.

The legislation of the past session contains three most important enactments connected with the Poor-law, on subjects that have frequently occupied the attention of the Society.

By the English Poor-law Act, a most effectual check is put to some of the greatest hardships of poor removals, by the concession to persons of Irish birth, after a residence of three years in one parish, of a settlement in England, which cannot be lost till another settlement is acquired.

By the Irish Poor-law Act the evils of electoral-division rating are greatly modified : (1) By making the charge for the deaf, the dumb, and the blind, a union charge. (2) By providing that the rate on any electoral division, in respect of indoor relief expenses, shall in no case exceed the average union-rate for such expenses by more than a half.

By the "Orphan and Deserted Children's Act," the limit of age to which such children can be boarded-out is extended from ten to thirteen years.

The legislation also contains some law reforms, which had all been suggested in the proceedings of the Society :—The extension of local jurisdiction in Admiralty cases was recommended by a committee of the Society, which in 1870 investigated the complaints of foreign traders arising out of the want of this jurisdiction ; the abolition of market juries was recommended by the Committee of the Society, which inquired into the excessive summoning of jurors in Dublin in 1874, and the suggestion was in time to be submitted to and approved of by the Select Committee of the House of Commons in that year.

Papers read during the past session.

A paper read during the past session should be specially noticed as having led to immediate practical results. At the January meeting,

Dr. Ingram read a paper entitled, "Additional Facts and Arguments in relation to the Boarding-out of Pauper Children." This paper, following up the views on the same subject in his opening address, contributed to the complete solution of the boarding-out question for Ireland, which was subsequently carried in Parliament.

Charity Organisation Committee.

At the commencement of last session, the Council appointed a Charity Organisation Committee, to collect information as to the working of Charity Organisation, especially in London and New York, and as to the working of charities in Dublin, and as to causes of pauperism.

The Committee held eleven meetings, and made five reports which have all been brought forward at meetings of the Society. Of these, two may be specially noticed as having been followed by immediate results.

The Report on the Education of Imbeciles, and on the Care of Imbeciles, Idiots, and Harmless Lunatics, has brought the case of Ireland, as to these matters, completely under the notice of the Committee of the Charity Organisation Society of London, appointed at the suggestion of Sir Charles Trevelyan: so that Ireland has been placed in a favourable position for getting immediate benefit from the legislation likely to result from the labours of that influential committee.

The report in favour of extending the Scotch law as to ruinous houses in towns to Ireland, has received the approval of the Town Councils of Belfast and Dublin; and Dublin will soon be in advance of the rest of Ireland in this branch of law, as the Town Council has directed the views of the Committee to be embodied in their new Improvement Bill.

Barrington Lectures on Political Economy.

The Barrington Lecture Committee report their opinion that the new system of Class Instruction Lectures, with payment partly by salary and partly by results, on the plan of Science Classes under the Science and Art Department, is working satisfactorily. Lectures on this plan by provincial schoolmasters qualified by the Society's certificate, were given at the Model School, Limerick; the Model School, Dunmanway; the National School of Blackwatertown, County of Armagh; and the Endowed School of Anahilt, County of Down; and the same lecturers have been selected for the ensuing year. The committee propose to have a new examination to qualify schoolmasters as lecturers, in spring, and a new selection of lecturers to hold office for three years.

Lectures by University Prizemen in Political Economy were given at the Church of Ireland Young Men's Christian Association, and at the Dublin Mechanics' Institute.

For the ensuing winter three courses are to be given in Dublin at the Church of Ireland Young Men's Christian Association; at the Mercantile Clerks' Association, and under the auspices of a committee composed chiefly of working men.

Army Schools Certificates and Prizes Committee.

This Society being the only society in Dublin in connexion with the Society of Arts, is enabled by co-operating with a committee consisting of members of the Society and others, to assist Mr. Carnegie, Inspector of Army Schools (one of our members), in securing for soldiers and soldiers' children in Dublin military schools, all the benefits offered in the way of examinations by the Society of Arts.

III.—*Reports of Charity Organisation Committee.*

- (1) ON THE LEGAL PROVISIONS IN IRELAND FOR THE CARE AND INSTRUCTION OF IMBECILES, IDIOTS, DEAF AND DUMB, AND BLIND, WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR AMENDED LEGISLATION.

[Read, 27th June, 1876.]

IN pursuance of the reference of the Council, at the suggestion of Mr. Jonathan Pim, to prepare a report on queries submitted by Sir Charles E. Trevelyan, Bart., K.C.B., viz. :—

“(a) What arrangements have been made for the care of idiots, imbeciles, and harmless lunatics in Ireland ?

“(b) What further ought to be done to complete the provision for the education and care of idiots, imbeciles, and harmless lunatics ?

“(c) Whether the position of the two other classes of naturally afflicted persons—the blind, and the deaf and dumb—are so similar as to make it desirable that they should be included in the same arrangement ?

“(d) Whether, when all cases requiring public aid have been provided for by administrative arrangements, charitable institutions could be relied on to meet cases from the lower middle and upper working classes ?”

we beg to report as follows :—

We find that the subject of a State provision for imbeciles, as well as for the deaf and dumb, and the blind, was brought before the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland, by Mr. Jonathan Pim, so far back as 20th January, 1864, in a paper published in the fourth volume of the Journal of the Society.

In that paper, Mr. Pim quotes the opinion of the Irish Census Commissioners of 1861, repeating words they had used in their Report of 1851 :—

“We respectfully suggest to your Excellency the propriety of taking some steps towards the education and moral improvement of idiots and imbeciles—a subject which at present engages the attention of the philanthropic both in England and on the Continent, where several establishments for the purpose have been erected, and are supported by the state, and in which the susceptibility of this class to a certain amount of education has been demonstrated.”

Mr. Pim states the result of his investigation of the subject :—

“The sufferings of the imbecile, when kept at home by their parents, are sometimes very great, and the ill-treatment they frequently receive when allowed to go at large is painful to witness. In general, their lot in such circumstances is a very unhappy one.

“In the poor-houses, or in lunatic asylums, these poor creatures are,