

JOURNAL  
OF THE  
**Dublin**  
STATISTICAL SOCIETY.

JANUARY, 1855.

I.—*Report of the Council at the Opening of the Eighth Session of the Society.*

[Read, November 20th, 1854.]

GENTLEMEN,

We have much pleasure in congratulating you on the favourable auspices under which the eighth session of our Society is now opened.

We have a favourable report to give of the several departments of the Society's business entrusted to our care.

Of the communications read before the Society, we have, during the past session, selected several for publication. One of these was by Mr. James Haughton, containing some interesting "Statistics with respect to the progress of the Australian Colonies, since the discovery of gold;" and one by Mr. M'Kenna on the policy of "Partnerships of Limited Liability." This subject is one on which the best authorities on law reform are divided in opinion, and which therefore forms a very appropriate topic for consideration and discussion.

The next paper which we selected for publication was one by Mr. William Harvey Pim, "On the importance of Reformatory Establishments for Juvenile Delinquents," a subject which has recently obtained a good deal of attention in England and Scotland, and which demands our especial consideration, as the calamities of the famine deprived a large portion of the rising population of parental protection and support, and have left them in a destitute and neglected state, exposed to the temptations of vice and crime.

The next paper was by Dr. Lawson on "Irish Agricultural Statistics."

The remaining papers that have been published under our auspices were by Mr. Cairnes, one of the Barrington Lecturers on Political Economy, "On the best means of raising the supplies for a War Expenditure," and "On the Principles of Currency involved in the Bank Charter Act of 1844."

Both these questions are naturally connected with the great contest in which the empire is now engaged. For the last European War gave rise to a suspension of cash payments, and to a depreciation of the currency, which Sir Robert Peel corrected by his Currency Bill of 1819 and his Bank Charter Act of 1844; and it has been held by high authority, that the expenses of that war were much enhanced by the injudicious system of funding then adopted.

The trustees of the Barrington Lectures on Political Economy continue to confide them to our management, and our proceedings with respect to them have been attended with very satisfactory results.

Last winter, Professor Moffett delivered lectures before the Literary and Scientific Society of Belturbet the Literary Society of Lurgan, the Mechanics' Institute of Dundalk, and the Literary and Scientific Institution of Kilkenny.

In May, we selected Professor Moffett, Professor William Edward Hearne, Mr. Cairnes, and Mr. Jemison as lecturers for the ensuing year.

Professor Hearne delivered a course of lectures before the Wexford Mechanics' Institute. He was unable to give his second course of lectures in Dublin, in consequence of his being selected as Professor of English Literature in the University of Melbourne, and having to proceed at once to Australia.

Mr. Cairnes is at present giving a course of lectures at the Mechanics' Institute of Dublin, and he is to lecture before the Mechanics' Institute of Carlow.

Mr. Jemison is to lecture in Clonmel and in Dublin; but the arrangements with respect to his lectures have not been as yet completed.

Professor Moffett has concluded his courses of lectures before the Literary and Scientific Society of Garvagh, the Commissioners of the Borough of Trim, and the Mechanics' Institute of Waterford.

From the various bodies under whose auspices these lectures have been given we have received the most satisfactory accounts, showing that the lectures have fulfilled the munificent intention of Mr. Barrington, the founder, by disseminating in the various towns and villages in Ireland a knowledge of Political Economy in its largest and most useful sense, especially as relates to the conduct and duty of people to one another.

In former reports we referred to the arrangements we had adopted for extending our system of Corresponding members, so as to embrace Corresponding Societies. We have in this way twenty-eight societies in different parts of Ireland in connexion with us. We continue to forward our publications to them, and to extend the privilege of membership to the Corresponding

Officer of each society; and we receive in exchange the annual reports and other publications of these bodies.

The connexion thus established facilitates the management of the Barrington Lectures, which are usually entrusted to these corresponding societies. It also secures for our publications a considerable circulation amongst some of the most intelligent inhabitants of the provincial towns; and it enables us to collect a valuable body of information as to these Institutions, which may at a future period form the basis of some more perfect organization, similar to the Scientific Unions which exist in England.

We notice with much satisfaction the gradual increase in the number of these Provincial Societies, and the continued interest that is taken in their proceedings. Their stability and usefulness would be greatly increased by some legislative provisions for creating a simple and inexpensive form of incorporation, adapted to their purposes and usual mode of government, and suited to the kinds of property generally possessed by them. The various legislative measures for facilitating the incorporation of Joint Stock Companies for commercial speculations have been attended with the most beneficial effects; and we think that associations for the advancement of knowledge are no less deserving of the most careful protection of the state.

In consequence of our connexion with those Societies, we prepared a bill on a matter of considerable importance to them—the extension of the provisions of the Public Libraries Act to Ireland. This bill we brought under the notice of Mr. Chichester Fortescue, M.P. for the County of Louth, and he at once took an active interest in the matter, and introduced and carried the Bill through Parliament. We propose, during the ensuing year, to collect information with respect to the operation of the similar Act in England; and to send this information, with an explanation of the powers conferred by the Act, to the various provincial societies that are in a position to take advantage of its provisions.

We continue to receive from the Law Amendment Society of England, and the Society of Arts, copies of their proceedings and publications. We also receive reports and other documents from several Government departments, especially those that have charge of public health and education. Amongst the publications received from Corresponding members, we must notice a very interesting and able volume of lectures on Capital and Population, by Mr. Rickards, the Professor of Political Economy in the University of Oxford.

The period of seven years, during which our Society has been in operation, is of sufficient length to afford us a means of judging of the value of its proceedings, and to test the principles upon which it was founded. Within that time there has been an increasing tendency in the public mind, to remove social questions from the domain of party politics to the more tranquil region of scientific research. To that change we owe the sphere of our usefulness; for our object is to promote the study of statistics and political economy; and we exclude from our proceedings all communications calculated to produce discussions connected with party politics.

By our statistical inquiries we promote a taste for accuracy of

observation and research; and by the development of Political Economy we teach the application of scientific principles to social questions.

Whilst we can refer with some satisfaction to the past publications of the Society, as indicating the extent to which the time and attention of our members have been devoted to a consideration of the chief changes that have affected the welfare of our country, we are convinced that so far from having exhausted the field of investigation, we have really only made a commencement in the solution of the great social questions of our times.

We cannot conclude without again acknowledging the courtesy of the Royal Dublin Society, in continuing to us the use of this most eligible place of meeting, and in affording to our proceedings such facilities as are in their power.

---

II.—*Address delivered at the opening of the Eighth Session of the Society, by Jonathan Pim, Esq. one of the Vice-Presidents.*

[Read November 20th, 1854.]

Before venturing to ask your attention to the few remarks, which as one of the vice-presidents, I am about to make on the opening of this the eighth session of the Dublin Statistical Society, I must first express my warm acknowledgments for the kindness which has placed me in this honorable position. I feel that I have no claim on account of any services rendered to the cause of science, however sincere have been my desires to assist in promoting the investigation of some of those social and economic questions which are so closely connected with the prosperity of the country.

The changes which have taken place during the seven years which have elapsed since the formation of this Statistical Society have been many and various; and among the most important has been that alteration in public feeling which has disconnected political economy from party politics, and thus permitted us to continue our inquiries into the important truths of this science, without the restraints which prejudice and party considerations had so long imposed upon us.

We are no longer told that the rules of political economy may be very good, but that it will not do to enforce them rigidly under all circumstances; that they may do very well for a prosperous country, but that in Ireland it is quite another affair. Its principles are no longer regarded as arbitrary rules invented by a set of dreaming philosophers, but are generally acknowledged as the natural laws which regulate the material interests of society, and which are therefore fixed and unchangeable as the principles of any other science. It is true that mistakes have frequently been made in the investigation of those laws, and error has thus been mistaken for truth and acted on as such; but these errors have not been