

JOURNAL

Vol. 1 is bound.

OF THE

Dublin

STATISTICAL SOCIETY.

Published Quarterly.

TENTH SESSION.

PART VIII.

JANUARY, 1857.

DUBLIN.

McGLASHAN AND GILL, 50, UPPER SACKVILLE-STREET.

1857.

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THE object of the Society is the promotion of the study of Statistics, Political Economy, and Jurisprudence. The meetings are held on the third Monday in each month, from November to June, inclusive, at 8, P. M. The business is transacted by members reading written communications on some subject in Statistics, Political Economy, or Jurisprudence. No communication is read unless two members of the council certify that they consider it in accordance with the rules and objects of the Society. The reading of each paper, unless by express permission of the council previously obtained, is limited to *half an hour*.

Applications for leave to read papers should be made to the secretaries at least a *week* before the meeting.

Proposals of candidate members should be sent to the secretaries at least a *fortnight* before the meeting.

The subscription to the Society is ten shillings entrance, and *ten shillings per annum*.

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*The preceding numbers of this Journal may be had on application to Messrs. M'Glashan and Gill, 50, Upper Sackville-street.*

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JANUARY, 1857.

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

(Read 17th November, 1856.)

GENTLEMEN,

We now enter upon the tenth session of the Statistical Society, and it is gratifying to reflect that we still continue to progress, and have not yet reached that condition so distasteful to most,—but particularly dreaded by economists,—the stationary state. On the contrary, the session last closed has been marked by such an accession of new members, and such activity on the part of those who belonged to us before, that it was thought necessary, in order to make room for those who desired to join us, to abolish the regulation restricting our numbers to a fixed limit, and to hold an extra meeting in the month of May last, to accommodate some of those who wished to read papers at our meetings.

The attention of the council has not been confined exclusively to the local management of our own society, but has also extended itself to other literary and social institutions or assemblies. Dr. Hancock attended the meeting of the British Association at Cheltenham last August, and the invitation of our society was added to that of other institutions, to induce the Association to meet here next autumn; and we have much pleasure to be able to state that the invitations from Dublin have been attended with success, and also that arrangements have been made by the local committee of the British Association to place several of the officers of this society in charge of that section of the British Association, on the plan of which

our society was originally formed—the section, formerly called the Statistical Section, but now the Section of Political Economy and Statistics—a change of name introduced at the late meeting at Cheltenham, and which it is to be hoped may have the effect of establishing generally a conviction that the communications desired for the section are not mere dry collections of facts which elucidate nothing, and are often not designed to elucidate anything; but such as bear upon important and interesting social questions, and are accompanied by scientific expositions of the connexion between them.

At the Brussels Free Trade Congress, our society was represented by Mr. Henry Dix Hutton. But no more need be said at present on the great and interesting movement embodied into the Brussels Congress, as Mr. Hutton himself will favour us with a communication on the subject after the reading of this report.

The papers read last session related to a great variety of subjects. Of those we printed, four were suggested by circumstances connected with the late Russian war. One of these was by Mr. Cairnes (since elected to the chair of Political Economy in the Dublin University), who, in an essay entitled “Effect of War on Prices,” exposed many of the fallacies prevailing on the subject; another by Dr. Hancock, in which he vindicated the Bank Charter Act of 1844, which many were disposed to assail during the last two years, smarting under the pressure on the money market, then unduly aggravated by the requirements of the State for the prosecution of the war; and a third by Mr. Greer on the same subject, in which he supported the views of those who are unfavourable to the measure. The other paper referred to is that by Mr. Pollard Urquhart, who in an essay entitled, “Plan for the Reduction and Ultimate Extinction of the National Debt,” dwelt strongly on the policy of liquidating in time of peace the liabilities contracted during war—a policy too often neglected by statesmen, more anxious to earn immediate popularity by remission of taxation, than to secure (or, at all events, deserve) the lasting gratitude of the nation, by restoring the public finances to such a condition that there may be no reason to apprehend the contingency once foreshadowed by Lord John Russell, in his “Essay on the British Constitution”—an incompatibility between the safety of the state and the payment of the dividends.

As already noticed, the subjects discussed in the papers printed last session by the society are very numerous. Dr. Lawson recalled attention to the expediency of a cheap land tribunal, a proceeding all the more necessary from the fact, that while the supporters of such a tribunal deem the experiment of that nature afforded by the Incumbered Estates Court so successful, that they are lulled into a feeling of security, and believe that there is no danger of the country being left without some tribunal armed with similar power; the opponents of the principle are not, in like manner, inactive, but are steadily at work, endeavouring to carry out their re-actionary policy. The criminal jurisdiction of our courts of quarter session was considered by Mr. M’Kenna, and the question is one which demands the most attentive investigation. When the liberty of the subject is at stake, we cannot be too careful in securing the excellence of the tribunal before which he is tried; but neither are we to

neglect the question of its cheapness. As matters stand, we have two classes of tribunals to select from; the courts of quarter sessions, where justice is undoubtedly cheap, but its quality not past criticism; and the superior courts, where the article administered is by all admitted to be dear, but, perhaps, when its excellence is in question, there will not be equal unanimity. Mr. Joseph John Murphy, of Belfast, read a paper on the private and local business of Parliament, and showed the impolicy of not transferring such affairs to the localities concerned. The evil must be peculiarly felt in an active commercial town like Belfast, but it exists everywhere, though in different degrees, and any one who directs public attention to it renders a useful service. In connexion with the means by which individuals may best secure their own welfare and comfort, and that of those depending on them, Mr. Haughton noticed the salutary effects of education; and Dr. Hancock, in connexion with different branches of the same subject, pointed out the impolicy of taxes on fire insurances, which act as a check on habits of providence, and discourage individuals from securing their property against casual losses; and also dwelt upon the expediency of personal insurances being payable either when the insured reaches the age of sixty-three, or at death, whichever may first happen, instead of at death only, so that not only he may have an opportunity of securing a provision to those he leaves after him in case of premature death, but also of securing a provision for himself should he pass the age when persons usually lose much of their capacity and aptitude for active pursuits. With regard to emigration, the Rev. Mr. Jordan investigated its efficacy as a mode of relieving distress, especially with reference to classes in this city with whose condition he had become intimately acquainted in the course of his duties as a clergyman; and Mr. Alfred Webb furnished us with very interesting details and reflections about one of the principal countries which emigrants seek—the colony of Victoria; coming to the question with all the advantages conferred by a residence of nearly two years in the Australian colonies, during which he visited Melbourne and Sydney and several of the most important of the gold diggings.

The management of the Barrington Lectures on Political Economy continues to be confided to us by the trustees of the bequest. Last May we re-elected the lecturers of the previous year—Professor Moffett, Mr. Evelyn, Mr. Ross, and Mr. Busted. Courses of lectures have been conferred on the towns of Drogheda, Dundalk, Dunganon and Waterford. Already the lectures have been delivered in one of the towns, Dundalk, by Professor Moffett; and the return forwarded by the Secretary of the Mechanics' Institute of that town discloses the gratifying fact, that the attendance was nearly double at the last lecture what it was at the first, and that it increased progressively between the two extremes,—a sure indication of efficiency on the part of the lecturer, and of appreciation of his efforts by the audience.

We cannot conclude without expressing our thanks to the Royal Dublin Society for their courtesy in affording us the use of this room for holding our meetings.