

V.—*Report of a Committee of the Dublin Statistical Society on the Registration of Marriages, Births, and Deaths in Ireland. Presented to the Society by the Council.*

#### RESOLUTIONS OF THE COUNCIL.

I.—18th June, 1858.

Resolved,—That under the provisions of the laws of the Society, chap. 3, sec. 5, a Special Committee be appointed to investigate the question of a General Registration of Marriages, Births, and Deaths in Ireland, and to report thereon to the Council; and that such Committee shall consist of the following gentlemen, viz.:—Judge Longfield, Jonathan Pim, Esq., J. A. Lawson, Q.C., LL.D., James W. Murland, Esq., Charles E. Bagot, Esq., Francis Codd, Esq., Michael Morris, Esq., John O'Hagan, Esq., J. Moncrieff Wilson, Esq., W. Neilson Hancock, LL.D., Professor Cairnes, Henry Dix Hutton, LL.B., and that Mr. Wilson be requested to act as Secretary to such Committee; with power to same to add to its numbers as may seem expedient.

In pursuance of the above power, the following gentlemen were added to the Committee:—Mr. Commissioner Senior, S. M. Greer, M.P., and Thomas H. Todhunter, Esq.

II.—16th November, 1858.

Resolved,—That the Report of the Registration Committee be received and printed for circulation amongst the members of the Society, and that copies be sent to the Representatives for Ireland, and the Irish newspapers.

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#### REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

Gentlemen,

We, the Committee appointed by the foregoing Resolution, beg to report as follows:

##### I.—*In regard to Marriages.*

We find that in the year 1844 an Act was passed for the Registration of Marriages in Ireland, (7 & 8 Vic. c. 81) but that statute is obviously imperfect as a measure of general registration, since the marriages of Roman Catholics, who form the majority of the population, are excluded from its provisions.

Such exclusion arose, as your Committee believe, from the following cause. Certain formalities are by the statute required to be observed in the case of every marriage falling within its purview, the omission of which formalities might be held to render a marriage legally invalid. The imposition of such restrictions in the case of their marriages was considered objectionable by Roman Catholics.

Your Committee are of opinion that any measure of Registration of Marriages for Ireland which should seek to embrace Roman Catholic marriages should not impose any formalities as conditions affecting the legal validity of marriages, but should be strictly con-

fined to the object of procuring a record of each marriage when solemnized. We consider that the fact of marriage should be registered by the District Registrar upon a certificate obtained by him from the officiating clergyman, who should receive for each such certificate a small fee.

But in order to carry into effect a complete system of Registration of Marriages in Ireland, your Committee are of opinion that it is necessary to remove the disability and penalty attending the celebration of mixed marriages by Roman Catholic clergymen. At present, by the joint effect of the statutes of the 19th George II. cap. 13, and 7 and 8 Vic. cap. 81, every marriage celebrated by a Roman Catholic priest between two persons, either of whom had, within twelve months previous to the marriage, been or professed to be a Protestant, is null and void, and the clergyman celebrating the same is guilty of felony, and liable to transportation or penal servitude. So long as such a penalty exists, a complete return by Roman Catholic clergymen of marriages celebrated by them could not be reasonably expected.

No law exists to prevent the celebration of mixed marriages by clergymen of the Established Church or by Presbyterian ministers.

Your Committee are of opinion that the disability and penalty above mentioned in the case of Roman Catholic clergymen should be repealed.

## II.—*In regard to Births and Deaths.*

We find that in Ireland there is no general registry of births or deaths, the duties of the Irish Registrar-General and the District Registrars being confined to the registration of marriages.

The provisions necessary to secure a complete Registration of Births and Deaths in Ireland should be, in the opinion of your Committee:—

- 1.—That the registration of births and deaths should be entrusted to the Registrar-General and District Registrars.
- 2.—That it should be the duty of each District Registrar to register all births and deaths in his District upon information supplied by relatives or others who have had personal knowledge of the fact of birth or death.
- 3.—The Registrar should be empowered to apply for information when not voluntarily supplied, and an obligation should be cast upon the persons concerned to answer his inquiries for that purpose.
- 4.—That the number of Districts for registration should be increased in such a manner as may be best suited to the convenience of those who are required to give information.

We cannot conclude without adding that Marriages, Births, and Deaths, are now registered not only in England and Scotland, but (with the single exception of Ireland) in all the civilized states of Europe, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant; and we beg finally to report that we consider the subject to be one of extreme importance, and that a uniform Registration of Marriages, Births,

and Deaths is required as an essential condition for many sanitary reforms affecting the welfare of the population, and as an additional protection to the moral and material interests of society.

All which we submit as our report,

FRANCIS CODD, *Chairman of Committee.*  
J. MONCRIEFF WILSON, *Secretary.*

28th October, 1858.

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## VI.—*Proceedings of the Dublin Statistical Society.*

### ELEVENTH SESSION—SIXTH MEETING.

[21st June, 1858.]

The Society met at the Royal Dublin Society House, the Honorable Judge Longfield in the chair.

Professor Cairnes read a paper entitled, "The Progress of Prices during the last eight years, considered in connexion with the recent Gold Discoveries."

W. Neilson Hancock, LL.D., for J. J. Murphy, Esq. read a paper on "The means of increasing the usefulness of the Post-Office."

### TWELFTH SESSION—FIRST MEETING.

[26th November, 1858.]

The Society met at the Royal Dublin Society House, James A. Lawson, Esq., Q.C. in the chair.

Mr. Henry Dix Hutton read the Report of the Council for the past year.

Dr. Hancock read a paper on "The operation of the statutable provision for the Centralized Audit of the Accounts of Municipal Corporations in Ireland, 3 & 4 Vict. c. 108."

J. J. Murphy, Esq. read a paper entitled "Free Trade in its relation to the Usury Laws and Limited Liability."

### TWELFTH SESSION—SECOND MEETING.

[8th January, 1859.]

The Society met at the Royal Dublin Society House, Jonathan Pim, Esq. in the chair.

James Haughton read a paper on "The Statistics of Free and Slave Labour in America."

Dr. Hancock read a paper on "The importance of substituting the Family System of rearing Poor Orphans for the system now pursued in our workhouses."