the particular crops, there are a variety of sundries about a farm, often regarded as of little moment, but which amount to a very substantial sum at the end of the year—such as fencing, road mending, repairs to farm building, insurance—and, largest item of all, repairs to implements. Every one of these items except insurance, has increased in cost. Then horses depreciate in value. Cattle and sheep have their annual losses due to sickness or accident—and there is the liability to epidemic diseases, which may at any moment reduce a poor farmer to beggary. As to interest on capital, or remuneration for one's time, they never enter a tenant's head. Low prices in one article of produce can be endured; but now everything has fallen. What becomes of the sacredness of contract when we are face to face with circumstances which go to the very root of the agreement, but which never entered the head of either of the contracting parties?

The unwonted exertions which a tillage farmer must make under circumstances such as the present lead to the difficulties of his situation not being appreciated. His implements, his crops, his barns, his cornstands, his horses, his fields busy with labourers, are pointed to as a sign of wealth; and yet, so long as the land is to be cultivated at all, these are indispensable.

Too often a premium is put on misery and poor land, by extracting the full rent from the respectable tenant who cultivates and improves his holding. No matter who is the sufferer, the land should be so held that it would pay to cultivate it. The man who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before, is a public benefactor, and yet how often do we see what was once the busy home of industry, a waste, supporting a single caretaker and a herd of bullocks, which wander over the broken down fences, and take shelter in the deserted ruins of the farmyard. Is this prosperity?

Most of the statistics upon which I have had to rely are from a private source, and in bringing them forward, may I hope the Statistical Society will not consider I wish to exaggerate their importance. They will speak for themselves apart from any opinion I have ventured to express.

V.—The Congested Districts of Ireland and how to deal with them.
By E. O'Farrell, B.L.

[Read, Tuesday, 14th December, 1886.]

The phrase congested districts has acquired in the discussion of Irish problems an almost technical meaning. By the congested districts I understand to be meant those parts of the country which are unable, at least in their present state of development, to employ profitably in their cultivation, or to support by their own produce, the population at present inhabiting them.

It has been repeatedly stated by competent witnesses, and cannot, I think, be too strongly impressed on the legislature, that the land problem in these districts is totally different to what it is in the other
The Congested Districts of Ireland. [February,

parts of Ireland; and it has been again and again urged, that Ireland will never be free from agitation and discontent, and that no land legislation can hope to be final, until the question of congestion has been dealt with. I will show further on that Parliament up to the present has made no serious attempt to do so. If we are to have sound and effective land legislation, the problem of over-population in congested districts, and the agrarian question in the rest of Ireland, must be kept distinct. Much mischief has been already done by applying to three-fourths of Ireland conclusions drawn from the state of affairs in the one-fourth in which congestion exists.

For the purpose of illustrating the condition of these districts, I have taken as my unit of area the poor-law union; and the following unions may, I think, be said to be congested, in the sense that in each of them there are large congested districts: In the County of Donegal, the unions of Donegal, Dunfanaghy, Glenties, Inishowen, Milford, and Stranorlar; in the County of Sligo, the union of Tubbercurry; in the County of Mayo, the unions of Ballina, Ballinrobe, Belmullet, Castlebar, Claremorris, Newport, Swinford and Westport; in the County of Galway, the unions of Clifden, Glenamaddey, Galway, Loughrea, Gort, Mount Bellew, Oughterard, and Tuam; in the County of Leitrim, the unions of Carrick-on-Shannon, Manorhamilton, and Mohill; in the County of Roscommon, the unions of Castlerea and Roscommon; in the County of Clare, the union of Kilrush; in the County of Kerry, the unions of Caherciveen, Dingle, Killarney, Listowel, and Tralee; and in the County of Cork, the unions of Bantry, Castletown, and Skibbereen—in all, thirty-seven unions out of one hundred and sixty-three. All these unions were among the number scheduled as distressed by the Irish government in the end of 1879. I do not propose to give in detail the circumstances of each of these unions; but I may mention the plan I have adopted in endeavouring to arrive at a conclusion as to what unions are congested.

Professor Baldwin, in his little hand-book entitled, *Small Farms Made Profitable*, says, very fairly I think, that—

“When a holding is large enough to give continuous employment to an able-bodied man, and occasional employment to members of his family, its skilful cultivation is sure to enable them to pay their way and live comfortably.”

I have assumed, as a rough guide, that in these districts holdings which do not exceed fifteen acres in extent are too small for the employment and support of a tenant; or taking the poor-law valuation as a test, I have assumed that holdings which are not valued at more than £10 cannot employ and support a tenant throughout the year. The latter test, I may mention, would apply to a much larger number of holdings.

If either of these tests be applied to the unions I have mentioned, it will be found that in each of them there is a very large number of holdings which do not come up to either standard.

In all these unions there exists, for they can scarcely be said to do more, a lamentably large number of persons cramped together in particular districts, on holdings entirely inadequate for their sup-
Port; a population intensely agricultural in its instincts, and clinging to the soil with that tenacity so marked in the history of the Irish tenant. In most of the unions these cottiers are half farmers and half labourers, and in some half farmers and half fishermen.

As reported by the Richmond Commission, "upon the slightest failure of their corps, they are unable to exist on the produce of their farms, even if they pay no rent. Many of them plant their potatoes, cut their turf, go to Great Britain to earn money, return home to dig their roots and to stock their fuel, and pass the winter, often without occupation, in most miserable hovels."

A peculiarity of the problem is that the congested populations are always to be found in districts where the land is poor, and the climate exceptionally unfavourable to very small holdings. In fact, the congested unions are situated on the fringe of the western coast of the island, and on the worst parts of that fringe.

It is further important to observe, that although in portions of these congested districts some of these cottier tenants gain a precarious subsistence by fishing or gathering kelp, and may therefore be said not to require holdings sufficiently large of themselves to employ and support them during the year, yet throughout by far the greater extent of these districts the very small holders have no means whatever of adding to their resources, save by getting employment as agricultural labourers. It is precisely in such places that there is no constant or adequate demand for hired services; and as a matter of fact, the few labourers who are required by the wealthier farmers, either live in the houses of their employers or are accommodated with cottages on the farm. The result is, that these cottier tenants are compelled to migrate every summer to England or Scotland in search of employment, seeking there a precarious and varying market for their labour, and in the event of not finding it, returning to burden the rates with the support of themselves and their families; with the further result, that their holdings, small as they are, neglected and but half cultivated, yield only a moiety of the produce which they might if properly worked.

I may add, that, as pointed out by the President in his interesting address at the opening meeting, the diminution of the area of cultivated land in England and Scotland, and the introduction of improved machinery into farming, has diminished the demand for their labour, and thrown them back to a great extent on their small holdings which are inadequate for their support; but I do not think, even assuming that employment for them does exist in England and Scotland, that we can be satisfied with a state of affairs in which these countries get the wealth produced by their labour, while on us is thrown the burden of their support when out of work, sick, or aged. In these unions the rates for the relief of the poor are at all times large, and periodically excessively so; the people are demoralized by the constant receipt of out-door and in-door relief; and still more by the stream of public charity, which, necessary as it may be, has a ruinous effect on the independence and industry of the people. As a consequence of all this, we have chronic misery and discontent, with the natural result of occasional famine and crime.
Professor Baldwin has stated that there are, speaking roughly, in Ireland 100,000 holdings which are too small; but confining myself to the nine counties in which are the 37 unions I have named as congested, I find that there are in these counties 100,934 holdings not exceeding 15 acres; or, taking the very low limit of a £4 valuation, 88,221.

Prior to the Land Act of 1870, the landlord had the power, as he had sometimes the desire, to remedy these evils. He could remove tenants altogether, or he could exercise his right of resumption, stripe the land into convenient holdings, and parcel it out again; he could attempt to equalize the size of the holdings on his estate, and distribute the different qualities of land in convenient shares. The clauses, however, in that Act as to compensation to the tenant for improvements, and for disturbance, and the scale on which such compensation was allowed, practically put an end to all interference by a landlord with a tenant's possession of his holding, except for non-payment of rent; sub-division went on almost unchecked, and the evil of congestion rather increased than diminished.

The tenants were by that Act strengthened in the idea which has always existed in the mind of the Irish peasant, that they had a species of joint property in the soil with the landlord, and they objected to and resisted more than ever all attempts to remove them, no matter how impoverished their condition, or however unable they were to meet their engagements.

The provisions of the Land Act of 1881 appear to me to be calculated to stereotype the evils of congestion. The effect of that Act is perhaps scarcely apparent or appreciated as yet. It practically abolished landlords; it transferred the property in the soil to the tenant, and gave the landlord a rent-charge issuing out of the land, variable in amount, and recoverable by certain methods rather difficult to enforce. It also gave to every tenant, no matter what the size or capability of his holding, the right to sell it in the market to the highest bidder. By practically abolishing ejectments on notice to quit, and by giving the right of free sale to the tenant, it has rendered it impossible for a landlord to remedy congestion already existing; while it is believed that its provisions against sub-division will prove in the hands of a landlord wholly insufficient to check that fertile source of increased congestion.

It is feared also that the Act will have the effect of preventing in the future any expenditure of capital by landlords in the improvement of their properties. An interesting account of what has been done by a landlord prior to the Act of 1881, in the way of reclamation and general improvement of the condition of his estate, may be seen in a pamphlet published by Mr. Mahony of Dromore, in 1880, in which also may be seen his opinion as to the probable effects of legislation such as the Act of 1881. As to the effect of the fair rent clauses in congested districts, it has been constantly pointed out, and is indeed evident, that the fixing of a fair rent is no remedy for the condition of a tenant whose holding could not support him did he pay no rent at all.

I may add that the effect of the purchase clauses of that Act and
of the Purchase Act of 1885, should they prove operative in these
districts, will but render permanent the evils already existing. It will
be found impossible in the future, as it has been in the past, to check
sub-division. If it could not be prevented by individual landlords,
a body such as the Land Commission will certainly be still less able
to deal with it; and the history of the past gives us no reason to hope
that holdings which are unable to support their occupiers, will be-
come consolidated by a natural process of sale. Sales surreptitious
or open always did take place throughout Ireland. But in the few
sales which take place in the congested districts, it will be found
that the holding is bought, not to enlarge an existing holding, but
to provide a homestead for some returned emigrant, or for a younger
member of some growing family.

One word as to voluntary and natural emigration. It will be found
I think, on enquiry, that the bulk of the emigrants, in addition to
being the young and the strong, start from those parts of Ireland
where they can be least spared. They start from districts compara-
tively well to-do—largely from Ulster. The unfortunate inhabitants
of the congested districts have seldom the means of flying from
their miseries; one son or daughter may go, but the instances of a
cottier tenant selling his holding, and emigrating with his whole
family are infinitely rare.

The evil, then, being great and urgent, and there being no prospect
of its disappearing under the present state of the law, it behooves us
to turn our attention to the remedies for it.

There has been a singular unanimity of opinion as to the means by
which congestion may be grappled with; in the evidence of competent
witnesses well acquainted with the subject and the districts, and in the
reports of various commissions, the same remedies have been again and
again suggested. They are: Migration, Improvement of waste lands,
and Emigration, under proper control, of whole families; together with
the fostering, wherever possible, of such Local Industries as may exist
or can be created. These remedies are, I venture to think, the proper
and only practical ones; unfortunately, no plan has been yet dis-
covered by which they can be efficiently applied in the localities
where they are needed.

In my opinion, they can only be successfully employed by a local
authority, acting with extensive powers, and using these several
means contemporaneously and in aid of each other.

In order that migration of tenants from holdings too small for them,
to others of a more suitable character, may be carried out with any
success, it must be carried out as far as possible by the people of the
district themselves, and with their consent and good-will, and by an
authority having an intimate knowledge of the locality, its inhabitants,
and their requirements; it must be promoted gradually, patiently, and
under close supervision. An attempt has been made at migration
by a company under the chairmanship of Mr. Parnell; but up to the
present it has failed—chiefly, I believe, because it has had to be
worked by agents, and from a distance, and because it has not had
the powers necessary for the purpose.

A quantity of evidence has been given from time to time on the
question of the improvement of waste lands, and it may be taken as proved, that there are in the counties in which these congested unions are, large tracts of lands which are capable of improvement and reclamation, and which under careful management will amply repay the labour and capital expended on them. But the evidence also goes to show, that improvement of waste land by companies who sink capital and employ hired labour for the purpose, will not prove remunerative; and the same may be said as to reclamation undertaken by government. The evidence of competent witnesses, such as Mr. Baldwin, Colonel Cooper, Rev. Mr. MacMahon, Mr. Reeves, and others, examined before the Besborough and Richmond Commissions, goes to show that the true plan is to employ the tenants as labourers in improving and reclaiming their own holdings; to charge them no rent, and, where necessary, to pay them wages for working on the improvable land, until such time as it yields a profit, and then gradually to charge them such a rent as would give a fair return for the outlay. Arterial drainage, of course, and large works, must be done by some external authority; but the thing to be aimed at is to let the tenants do their own reclamation and improvement. A remarkable instance of what can be done in this way is given by Mr. Baldwin, in his valuable evidence before the Besborough Commission, at page 989. The evidence also of Mr. E. Bridgers Sayers, before the same Commission, at page 1185, shows the terms on which land may be let for reclamation, the tenants being charged a gradually increased rent as the waste land becomes reproductive.

A combined system of migration and reclamation will require a considerable expenditure, extending over several years; houses must be occasionally built or assistance given towards their erection; roads must be made, and main drainage will be sometimes necessary; and wages must, according to circumstances, be paid to tenants working on their own holdings. The only possibility of such an outlay being made judiciously and economically, is that it should be under the control of a local authority, able to exercise a constant supervision, and guided by local knowledge, and vitally interested in making the expenditure successful and remunerative.

The popular objection to a system of organized emigration would appear to me to be the result of sentiment rather than of reason. Surely the points to be looked to are whether such emigration would be an advantage to the country itself, and also to the people emigrating. That it would be an advantage to the congested districts there can be no question. Would it not be an advantage and a blessing to the impoverished cottier of the west? Lord Dufferin, in his evidence before the Richmond Commission, in eloquent language, which will well repay perusal, has told us how the Irish emigrant, accompanied by his wife and family, and under the guidance of his priest, might exchange the bogs and wastes of the west of Ireland for acre upon acre of the richest soil on the surface of the globe;—how in Canada he would find himself under a government anxious to assist him, in parishes called after Catholic saints, and under the tutelage of a Catholic church, whose social position and traditional prestige is greater even than at home.
The settlement abroad of bodies of emigrants, under the guidance of their priest, would be nothing new; and Dr. MacDonnell, in a letter to The Freeman's Journal, dated 9th September, 1882, has described the continuous prosperity of a large body of Highland Celts, who with their wives and families were brought out to Canada by their parish priest in the beginning of this century.

Organized emigration, however, from Ireland, if it is to be successful, must be promoted by an authority having the confidence of the inhabitants of the localities, and having a knowledge of the people to be emigrated, and a sympathy with them. Care must be taken that their wants, both pecuniary and religious, will be attended to on their arrival at their destination; whole families and families suitable for colonization must be selected; they must go with the approval and advice, if possible under the guidance, of their own priests. All this can be best accomplished by a local authority, elected as far as possible by the people themselves, with ample control of funds and aided by government.

The same remarks obviously apply to the fostering of local industries.

Lastly, the object of all these measures is to remove poverty and relieve the rates, so that the local authority, to which would be entrusted the carrying out of these schemes, ought, if possible, to be also the authority to which is entrusted the relief of the poor and the management of the rates.

I propose therefore, for the purpose of relieving congestion, to schedule certain areas as areas in which congestion exists, and to entrust a local authority in each of these areas with ample powers to deal with the question. We have at present, managing local affairs in Ireland, two principal authorities—boards of guardians and grand juries, and I find from a useful sketch of local government in Ireland, lately published, that the amount of expenditure they respectively control is not very dissimilar. In the year 1884, the expenditure of unions amounted to £1,206,735, and of grand juries to £1,348,884.

The question being one intimately connected with the relief of the poor, it first occurred to me to select the union as a unit of area, and the board of guardians as a local authority. But there are two objections to this. Firstly, it is notorious that the working of boards of guardians is not satisfactory, especially in the west of Ireland. In fact they are unable to perform their duties; and a reform of the system is imperatively called for. It is therefore eminently undesirable to entrust them with further responsible duties, involving the expenditure of large sums of money, and requiring, in a high degree, integrity and business capacity. Secondly, the union is too small an area. A single example will show this. In the union of Swineford, for example, the population in 1881 was 53,714, while its valuation was only £40,991; out of 7,991 holdings, 4,952 were under the standard of 15 acres, while only 57 were over 200 acres, it is enormously congested, and over populated. Obviously, there is no room for migration here. If this union were to be dealt with by itself, nothing would relieve it but wholesale compulsory emigration, which I would be the last to advocate.
The constitution of grand juries is at present indefensible in theory. They do not represent the people whose money they spend. But it is probable that within a short period we shall have a reform of local government; and it is not improbable that that reform will take the direction of transferring the powers at present exercised by grand juries to county boards more representative and more efficient. Probably, also, some of the duties now discharged by boards of guardians will be transferred to the county boards. County boards, therefore, are preferable to Boards of Guardians as local authorities, and counties are preferable as units of area to unions.

I have mentioned congested unions in nine counties; the following are the number of holdings in each of these counties, which do not exceed 15 acres in extent:—Donegal, 14,482; Sligo, 8,045; Mayo, 20,461; Galway, 18,749; Roscommon, 11,570; Leitrim, 6,635; Clare, 5,327; Cork, 10,237; Kerry, 5,422; total number, 100,934; or if we take the very low limit of a £4 valuation, we find in the nine counties 88,221 holdings which do not exceed that valuation.

Everyone of these counties is well able to supply land for its congested population, by utilizing the areas which are undeveloped and uncultivated, or but half cultivated, and capable of improvement.

What therefore I propose is this:—That the counties I have mentioned should be declared by Act of Parliament to be counties in which there are congested districts. That in these counties a system of uniform county rating should take the place of the present combined system of union and county rating, and that the rating should be under the control of the county board. This system of county rating has been already much advocated, and these are the counties in which it could be best tested, and in which, if it succeeded, its advantages would be greatest.

The Act should go on to confer on the county boards in these counties the following powers for the purposes of the Act:—

(1) Power to declare that they intended to purchase any estate in the county, either in whole or in part, as necessary for the purposes of the Act: if the owner objected to the purchase, he would have a right of appeal to the Privy Council, on the ground that the purchase was not necessary for the purposes of the Act, or that the estate was of such a character that it should be exempt, wholly or in part, from purchase; in the event of the owner not so appealing, or in the event of the Privy Council deciding that the board was entitled to purchase the estate, the price would be fixed by agreement; or failing that, by a court consisting of the judicial head of the Land Commission, and not less than two of its lay members; the price of such estate would be paid to the owner in full. By a modification of the Act of 1885, the board would be enabled to purchase on the terms of that Act as to repayment by instalments, but no guarantee deposit would be required from either vendor or purchaser, the state having the security of the rates of the county.

(2) Power to dispose of such estate for the purposes of the Act and the improvement of the district: if it were untenanted, to parcel it out into holdings and let it to occupiers, or plant it; if it were tenanted, to change tenants from one portion of it to another, to add
land to holdings, or take it from holdings, or remove tenants altogether, paying, where necessary, such compensation as would be fixed, failing agreement, by the Land Commission. Any objection by occupiers to the action of the board to be decided by the Land Commission.

(3) Power to execute improvements, such as building, planting, drainage, etc., on such lands, whether in the occupation of tenants or not, and power to pay wages to tenants for working on their own holdings.

(4) Power to assist, under carefully laid down conditions, and under government supervision, the emigration of whole families removed from, or voluntarily quitting their holdings.

(5) And power, also under government supervision, to expend money in fostering local industries.

(6) Lastly, power to borrow, for the purposes of the Act, from the Treasury, sums to be repayable, principal and interest, by easy instalments, to such an amount as might be necessary.

The provisions of this Act would, when necessary, override those of the Act of 1881. The intention would be that the board should be landlords of the estates they purchased, with plenary powers over their tenants as long as necessary for the purposes of the Act, and until they were recompensed for their outlay; but that they should, as soon as possible, sell to the tenants under the Purchase Act—the tenants thus becoming peasant proprietors, and the board being relieved of its responsibilities.

Such are roughly the powers proposed to be given to county boards, to enable them to grapple with this great evil.

With the power of compulsory purchase we are not unfamiliar; the state has always assumed the power of seizing on private property, for the public advantage, as in the case of railways, new streets, etc., due compensation being given for the property taken. Nor do I think we need apprehend much objection on the part of the landlords, particularly when not called on to leave one-fifth of the purchase money as a guarantee deposit. I should add that the owners of congested estates would probably not receive as many years purchase of the rental as the owner of estates occupied by genuine agricultural tenancies, on the same principle as would be applied in awarding compensation to the owner of tenement houses in a bad part of a town; if the cottier tenants earn high wages in England and Scotland, that circumstance would probably not be held to add to the agricultural value of the estate.

It is probable that the board would in most cases find enough land at their disposal for migration purposes, without interfering unduly with any occupying tenant using his land to advantage; but if necessary the power of compulsory purchase could be applied to very large farms, portion of them being taken for the public purposes.

The power of compulsorily removing a cottier tenant from a holding too small for his support, can be justified on the analogy of the powers exercised by the sanitary authorities. In the opinion of the board it would be a holding unfit for a tenant to live on; his continuance on it would be an injury to the man himself, to the public health.
and morals, and to the community which is constantly called on to support him. The board would be empowered to offer such a cottier a choice between migration and emigration, and to compel him to adopt either; competent authorities believe that at least a moiety would choose emigration if the conditions were favourable.

A few figures will show the probable extent of the operations of these boards. Assume that we have in these nine counties roughly 100,000 families living on holdings too small for their support—I think we may safely assume that of these 10,000 are labourers in constant employment, or fishermen able to support themselves by that industry, and therefore not requiring to be dealt with under this Act, save so far as their position would be enormously benefited by any fostering of local industries. Under a generous scheme of emigration it might safely be said that 30,000 families would gladly settle in the colonies. That would leave 60,000 families to be dealt with; if 30,000 of these were migrated, then the existing holdings, with the consequent additions, would be amply sufficient for the remaining 30,000 families, whose holdings would thus be probably trebled in size. There does not therefore appear to me to be any insuperable difficulty in dealing with the numbers.

Touching the financial side of the question, I think that £30 a family, in addition to the assistance they would probably receive from a colonial government, would be a most liberal allowance for each family about to emigrate. This would amount to £900,000, and I propose to throw this burthen on the Imperial exchequer; it would be money out of pocket; but it would be a small price for any government to pay, if this question could be thereby settled, and would result in an immediate saving in police and other expenses. The expenses of the migration of 30,000 families I propose to throw on the counties themselves. The boards, who would be in the position of landlords, ought to be able to collect immediately from their tenants as much rent as would pay the instalments on the purchase-money of the estates to the Land Commission. The rent immediately collectable would provide for the instalments, without any burthen whatever on account of purchases coming on the counties. But in addition to these instalments, the migrating tenants should be assisted by the board with money towards building houses, seeding the land, etc., according to circumstances, and should in many cases be paid wages for working at reclaiming the farms. I put all this assistance down at the high average rate of £30 for each migrating family, or £900,000 for the whole nine counties. This could be borrowed from government on easy terms—say instalments at 4 per cent, for forty-nine years, so that the annual outlay would be £36,000 for the nine counties; and I think we might with safety say, that the relief given to the poor-rates would amount to more than the tax necessary to provide this amount.

The number of families to be provided with new holdings in the county of Donegal would be, according to this proposal, roughly 4,347, at an expense of £130,410; the annual payment by the board on the loan of this would be £5,216; the valuation of the county is £297,000, so that it would be provided for by a rate of
4½d. in the pound. Similarly in Sligo, the migration of 2,414 families would require a rate of 3½d. in the pound; and so on, the amount of the rate varying according to the amount of congestion to be relieved and the valuation of the county. In Mayo, probably the worst county, the rate might reach 7½d. Instead of giving out-door relief as at present, the board would be giving wages and getting good work done in return; and in addition, the board would have in these new tenancies a rental which would be gradually increasing, and in the course of three years the tenants would be able to fully recoup the board the instalments paid on the capital advanced to them. I am confident that such a scheme as this would result, not in an increase of the rates, but in an immediate diminution of them, and ultimately in their enormous reduction. Another way of putting the figures shows this even more clearly; the migration of each family would cost the county £30, or about £1 4s. per annum; but under this scheme the migration of each family means the removal of three families from a state of chronic distress. I think it probable the guardians in the west at present spend more than £1 4s. per annum on the relief of every three families of pauper cottiers.

I regret that the statistics at present available do not enable me to state in a useful form, the amount of suitable land which would be probably available for the purpose of the Act in each county.

If in addition to the £900,000 for emigration proposed above, the Imperial Parliament were to spend half a million in arterial drainage, and in fostering the fishing industries of the west, it would be making a very moderate return for the neglect of the past.

Such an expenditure, and the intelligent and patient carrying out of such a policy as is sketched in this paper, would in a few years make congestion a thing of the past, and thus remove the principal source of Irish agricultural agitation.

I have to apologize for the incompleteness of this paper; but I hope it may provoke discussion on the part of those better entitled to speak on the subject. The two points which I have desired to urge strongly are, that the problem of congestion is one totally different from the agricultural question in the rest of Ireland, and that it should be dealt with by local authorities on the lines of migration and emigration.

VI.—Graduated Taxation in Switzerland. By Murrough O'Brien, Esq.

[Read, Tuesday, 18th January, 1887.]

The object of this paper is to bring under the society's notice a law passed last year in the Canton Vaud, establishing a progressive property and income tax. Such a system of taxation has often been proposed for England, and it may be well to study its application in another country.