

JOURNAL

OF THE

STATISTICAL AND SOCIAL INQUIRY SOCIETY OF IRELAND.

PART LII., *January, 1878.*

I.—*Report of Council at the opening of Thirty-first Session.**

[Read 27th November, 1877.]

Assimilation of the Laws for different parts of the United Kingdom.

THE legislation of the past session was marked by a large amount of assimilation of the laws, a subject to which the exertions of the Society have been specially directed since the committee was appointed at the suggestion of Mr. Jephson and Mr. Jonathan Pim and prizes were offered for Essays on the subject out of the funds raised for that special purpose.

The Irish Judicature Act checks the growing divergence of the laws which arose from the different rate at which law reforms have been carried out in England and Ireland. By establishing a large degree of identity in the jurisdiction of the supreme courts of the two countries, it lays the foundation of still more complete assimilation.

In the provision for an Annual Report of the Council of the Judges, it lays the foundation of progressive reforms, by providing those before whose judicial cognizance the defects in the law present themselves in the most striking form in the cases that they hear, with a prompt and efficient mode of bringing admitted defects under the official notice of the Chief Secretary—a mode of proceeding most likely to lead to early legislation.

The County Officers and Courts Act, so far as jurisdiction is concerned, is another large measure of assimilation, based as it is to a considerable extent on the model of the English law as to local courts. Then the passing of prisons acts for England, Scotland, and Ireland, based on the same general principles, is another step in assimilation.

* The President having printed his Address in different type, it is given as an Appendix.

One benefit that Ireland derives from this assimilation is the extension to Ireland of the provisions for prisoners' aid societies, which were passed for England fifteen years ago. The good which has been achieved by the refuges already existing in Ireland for convict women, can now be extended to all prisoners, and prisoners' aid societies will have for the pursuit of their works of Christian philanthropy whatever sanction or encouragement similar bodies possess in England.

Facilities for the transfer of land.

The working of the purchase clauses of the Irish Land Act, 1870, was brought before this society by Mr. Pim in his address as President last year. It was brought before Parliament by Mr. Shaw Lefevre, M.P., now President of the Statistical Society of England, who, as President of a department of the National Association at Liverpool, had touched upon the land question. The Government granted a select Committee in the Commons, and some members of the Society were amongst the witnesses; the Committee have reported the evidence to the House, and asked to be appointed next session to consider their report. This inquiry will direct attention to a subject which has been frequently brought before the Society in the past thirty years.

Report of Committee on Education of Imbeciles, and on the care of Imbeciles, Idiots, and Harmless Lunatics.

This report, noticed in our last Report, arose from an application from Sir Charles Trevelyan to Mr. Jonathan Pim for Irish co-operation with the English and Scotch movement on the subject.

In the present year Sir Charles Trevelyan organised a deputation to Mr. Sclater Booth, President of the English Local Government Board, on the subject, and having invited our Society to join, we were enabled to have the Irish part of the subject presented concurrently with the English and Scotch branches of the question.

Lord Waveney, Lord O'Hagan, and Mr. John Gilmore kindly attended the deputation at our request, and Lord O'Hagan subsequently brought such portions of the recommendations of the Report as were suitable for a private member to introduce, before the House of Lords, in the Imbecile, Lunatic, and other Afflicted Classes (Ireland) Bill, when the Government stated that the subject would be included in an inquiry as to the buildings available for the afflicted classes proposed to be relieved by the Bill.

Extension of the Scotch Law as to ruined Houses to Ireland.

As stated in the last report, the views of the committee of our society on this subject were embodied by the Town Council of Dublin in their Improvement Bill. As this Bill did not pass, for reasons unconnected with this particular subject, the proposed extension of Scotch law failed with it.

In Scotland the legislation applies to the large number of towns included under the class of royal burghs, and as the proposed extension was approved of by the Town Councils of both Belfast and

Dublin, it is to be regretted that the members for these towns did not join, and bring in a general public bill to extend the Scotch law, which is not a branch of local legislation, but rests on a general statute. When so much is done by societies and town authorities for improvement of artizans' and labourers' dwellings, it would appear an appropriate time to extend to all towns of the United Kingdom this wise Scotch law. Two ruined houses—one in Sackville-street and the other in Grafton-street—the most valuable parts of Dublin, are the best evidence of the want of the reform indicated.

Want of a Local Court in each Irish Port, with permanent Judicial Officers for the prompt determination of all Questions between Foreign Captains and Irish Merchants.

The complaints of the foreign consuls in Ireland on this subject were considered by the International Law Committee of this Society, whose Report was read at one of the meetings, and transmitted to the International Law Congress at Antwerp.

The object sought by the Report has been in part met by the power given by the County Officers and Courts Act to the Lord Lieutenant in Council, of conferring on the Chairman of Limerick, the Chairman of Waterford, the Recorder of Galway, and the Recorder of Londonderry local Admiralty jurisdiction, similar to that already conferred on the Recorders of Cork and Belfast.

The Act further gives such Admiralty Courts jurisdiction to arrest and hold to bail, notwithstanding the amount sued for in the case exceeds the limit fixed by the Court of Admiralty (Ireland) Act, 1867. The Clerks of the Peace of Limerick, Waterford, Londonderry, and Galway are enabled to exercise power of holding to bail when Chairmen are not sitting; and Registrars of Chairmen and Recorders are to have certain powers of Registrars of Admiralty Courts.

Difficulties of dealing with Foreign Sailors.

This subject was investigated by the International Law Committee of this Society, by whom a report was drawn up, which was read at one of the meetings, and transmitted to the International Law Congress at Antwerp. The report recommended a convention with foreign states trading with the United Kingdom, to recognize any contract between sailors and captains not inconsistent with our own laws.

On Legislation by Provisional Orders in England, Scotland, and Ireland.

The committee appointed to consider this subject made some valuable suggestions as to the adoption by resolution of town authority of law sanctioned by general acts. They suggested:—

1. That the principle of the Local Government Act of 1858, as to adopting the whole or part of general town Acts, by resolution of town authority, subject to appeal, be extended to Ireland.

2. That Municipal Commissioners in Ireland should be enabled by resolution to adopt the Towns Improvement (Ireland) Act, 1854, and any part or amendment thereof.

3. That Lighting and Cleansing Commissioners in Ireland should be enabled by resolution to adopt the Town Improvement (Ireland) Act, 1854, and any part or amendment thereof.

4. That the authority to hear appeals against such resolutions should be the Irish Local Government Board.

5. That (except in the case of police, which is specially provided for by statute) town authorities in Ireland should be enabled by resolution to adopt any power for improving the town, or more effectually carrying out their duties, that has been sanctioned in England or Scotland for a town having equal population as the town which proposes to exercise such powers and privileges. Such exercise of power to be subject to like appeal above suggested, and to be further subject to the restriction, that the Irish Local Government Board may require the matters so proposed to be carried out by resolution to be carried out by provisional order.

The Committee also made a valuable suggestion as to Provisional Orders :—

1. That the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1871, be amended, by extending its provisions to all the purposes for which provisional orders may be made under the Scotch General Police and Improvement Act of 1862.

Punishments for Drunkenness, and Non-extension of Justices' Clerks Act, 1877, to Ireland.

The subject of the inadequate punishments for drunkenness by frequent fines, and the extension of the Justices' Clerks Bill of 1877 to Ireland, was considered by a committee, and their report, recommending the extension of the Justices' Clerks Acts to Ireland, read at one of the Society's meetings.

Papers and Essays read at Meetings.

Mr. Dodd's Prize Essay on the jurisdiction of the Local Courts in Ireland, Scotland, and England, was a valuable contribution to the suggestions for legislation in relation to County Officers and Courts.

The Recorder of Dublin read an interesting paper on the importance of a larger infusion of the industrial element into our system of education. He also advocated the extension to Ireland of the Day Industrial School Clauses of Lord Sandon's Act of 1876.

Dr. Hancock read a paper on the Transfer of Land, the main object of which was to recommend the extension of Lord Cairns' Land Transfer Act of 1875 to Ireland.

Dr. Hancock read a paper on the prospects of the manufacture of sugar from beet-root in Ireland. The object of the paper was to point out the importance of a comparison of the relative produce of sugar beet and mangold in Ireland, and a comparison of the actual price of mangold for cattle-feeding and the price which the competition of cane sugars will allow to be offered for beet-root, before any further loss was incurred in renewing the attempts to manufacture beet-root sugar in Ireland.

Mr. Dodd read a paper comparing the preliminary proceedings in criminal cases in England, Ireland, and Scotland.

Representation of the Society at Congresses and Meetings of other Societies.

In addition to the permanent connexion which the Society has with the Statistical Society of London, the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, and the Society of Arts, the Council took steps to have the Society represented, by naming Lord O'Hagan, the President of the International Law Congress, to represent the Society at it. Two delegates were named for the Social Science Congress at Aberdeen—Mr. Garstin and Mr. Rynd; but from private affairs in one case, and domestic affliction in the other, they were unable to attend.

The secretaries, Dr. Hancock and Mr. Joseph T. Pim, attended the British Association at Plymouth, where they were placed by the Council of that body amongst the officers of the section for Economic Science and Statistics, as vice-president and secretary. They were thus enabled to study the proceedings of the section, so as to advise on the best arrangements for securing a successful section of economic science and statistics at the approaching meeting of the British Association on the 14th of August next, in Dublin.

Barrington Lectures in Political Economy.

The Council have to notice with regret the death of Mr. Edward Barrington, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Society, and the senior trustee of the munificent bequest which his brother, Mr. John Barrington, left in 1834, for lectures on Political Economy in Ireland.

Shortly after the Statistical Society was founded in 1848, Messrs. Edward and Richard Barrington, the then trustees, entered into arrangements for the entrusting the management of the Barrington Lecture Trust to the Council of this Society; and the Council can refer with some satisfaction to the lecturers they have from time to time been successful in securing for the working of the trust. The list includes the names of Mr. Justice Lawson, Judge Busted, the Right Hon. the Attorney-General, the President of Queen's College, Galway, Mr. Porter, Q.C., Mr. Monroe, Q.C., Mr. Ross, Mr. Wm. Mulholland, the Rev. Mr. Lysaght, the Rev. Mr. Prenter, Dr. Shaw, the late Professors Cairnes and Hussey Walsh, and Professors Heron, Leslie, Donnell, and McKane.

Whilst the active management of the trust devolved on the Barrington Lecture Committee of the Society, Mr. Edward Barrington and his co-trustees, Mr. Richard and Mr. Arthur Barrington (also brothers of the founder), took an active interest in all the proceedings of the Committee.

During the past year class instruction lectures were given under the auspices of the Church of Ireland Young Men's Christian Association, by Mr. Dodd; to the Dublin Mercantile Clerks' Association, by Mr. Killen; and to a class of working men in Bolton-street under the auspices of a working men's committee, by Mr. F. H. Mussen Campbell. In the provinces several lectures were given—

at the Limerick Model School, by Mr. Moylan; at Dunmanway Model School, by Mr. Reynolds, and at Anahilt Endowed School, County of Down, by Mr. Clements.

During the ensuing year the lectures will be given in Cork, under the auspices of the Cork Literary and Scientific Society, by Mr. Samuel Lombard Brown; in Dublin at the Church of Ireland Young Men's Christian Association, by Mr. J. H. Mussen Campbell. The lectures will be continued in Dublin at the Mercantile Clerks' Association, at Limerick Model School, and at Anahilt Endowed School.

Vacancy amongst Vice-Presidents.

We have filled up the vacancy amongst the vice-presidents caused by the death of Mr. Edward Barrington, by the selection of Mr. Henry Dix Hutton.

Mr. Alexander Thom.

The Council were desirous of marking their appreciation of the great services of Mr. Alexander Thom to the cause of statistical science and research in Ireland (by the statistics of Ireland which were annually compiled and published for so many years in his Almanack, recently transferred to his son-in-law, Mr. Pilkington), and they accordingly sought last spring to nominate him as President of the Society: we annex his reply, which is recorded in our minutes:—

“Donnycarney House, Co. Dublin.

“Dear Dr. Hancock,

“I am more than gratified by your kind letter of the 10th inst., in which you inform me that the Council of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society have decided to nominate me for the distinguished office of President for the ensuing year.

“Believe me I thoroughly appreciate the kind and generous approbation of the Council and members, and were my leisure greater than it is, I would feel it a privilege to accept an honour which is in every way grateful to my inclinations and pursuits.

“I regret, however, to be compelled to decline a distinction which involves a task whose adequate performance would demand an amount of time which I cannot spare, and an amount of labour which I dare not venture to assume. In saying this I assure you I regret the fact, and beg that you will convey to the Council my sincerest thanks for their welcome recognition of such slight aid to the literature of statistics as I have been able to afford.

“I shall always be glad to hear of the success of a society which, without patronage and without popular applause, has achieved so much for the material advancement of Ireland.

“Believe me, dear Dr. Hancock,

“Most truly yours,

“ALEXANDER THOM.

“Wm. Neilson Hancock, Esq., LL.D.”