

R E P O R T

FROM THE

SELECT COMMITTEE

ON THE

PUBLIC LIBRARIES (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL;

TOGETHER WITH THE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE,

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE,

AND APPENDIX.

*Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
17 July 1894.*

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE,
BY EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE,
PRINTERS TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

And to be purchased, either directly or through any Bookseller, from
EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE, EAST HARDING STREET, FLEET STREET, E.C.,
and 32, ABINGDON STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.; or
JOHN MENZIES & Co., 12, HANOVER STREET, EDINBURGH, and
90, WEST NILE STREET, GLASGOW; or
HODGES, FIGGIS, & Co., LIMITED, 104, GRAFTON STREET, DUBLIN.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

[Monday, 21st May 1894]:—ORDER for Committee read, and discharged; Bill committed to a Select Committee.

Committee nominated—[Tuesday, 29th May 1894]—of—

Mr. Michael Austin.	Sir Thomas Lea.
Mr. Barton.	Mr. James O'Connor.
Mr. Brunner.	Sir Francis Powell.
Mr. Field.	Mr. Ross.
Sir Walter Foster.	

Ordered,—THAT Three be the Quorum of the Committee.

Ordered,—[Monday, 11th June 1894]:—THAT Mr. Ross be discharged from the Select Committee on Public Libraries (Ireland) Acts Amendment Bill, and that Mr. William Johnston be added to the Committee.

Ordered,—[Friday, 22nd June 1894]:—THAT the Select Committee on the Public Libraries (Ireland) Acts Amendment Bill have power to send for Persons, Papers, and Records.

REPORT	p. iii
PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE	p. iv
MINUTES OF EVIDENCE	p. 1
APPENDIX	p. 13

R E P O R T.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE, to whom the PUBLIC LIBRARIES (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL was referred, have considered the said Bill, and taken Evidence thereon, which they have agreed to report to The House; and have gone through the Bill and made Amendments thereunto.

17 *July* 1894.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE.

Friday, 8th June 1894.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir Walter Foster.
Sir Francis Powell.
Mr. Brunner.

Mr. Barton.
Mr. Michael Austin.

Sir WALTER FOSTER was called to the Chair.

The Committee deliberated.

[Adjourned till Friday next, at Twelve o'clock.]

Friday, 15th June 1894.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir WALTER FOSTER in the Chair.

Mr. Michael Austin.
Mr. Barton.
Mr. Brunner.

Mr. William Johnston.
Sir Francis Powell.
Sir Thomas Lea.

The Committee deliberated.

[Adjourned till Friday next, at Twelve o'clock.]

Friday, 22nd June 1894.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir WALTER FOSTER in the Chair.

Mr. William Johnston.
Mr. Barton.
Mr. James O'Connor.
Sir Francis Powell.

Mr. Michael Austin.
Mr. Brunner.
Sir Thomas Lea.

The Committee deliberated.

Motion made and Question "That the Chairman do move for power to send for persons, papers, and records,"—(Sir Francis Powell),—put, and *agreed to*.

[Adjourned till Tuesday next, at quarter-past One o'clock.]

Tuesday, 26th June 1894.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir WALTER FOSTER in the Chair.

Mr. Michael Austin.
Mr. Barton.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Field.

Mr. William Johnston.
Sir Francis Powell.
Mr. James O'Connor.
Sir Thomas Lea.

Mr. Henry A. Robinson was examined.

[Adjourned till Friday next, at Twelve o'clock.]

Friday, 29th June 1894.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sir WALTER FOSTER in the Chair.

Mr. Michael Austin.
Mr. Barton.

Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Field.

The Committee deliberated.

[Adjourned till Tuesday the 10th July next,
at Half-past Twelve o'clock.

Tuesday, 10th July 1894.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sir WALTER FOSTER in the Chair.

Mr. Michael Austin.
Mr. Barton.

Sir Thomas Lea.
Mr. Brunner.

The Committee deliberated.

[Adjourned till Tuesday next, at Half-past Twelve o'clock.

Tuesday, 17th July 1894.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sir WALTER FOSTER in the Chair.

Sir Francis Powell.
Mr. Michael Austin.

Mr. Barton.
Mr. Brunner.

Clauses 1—2, *disagreed to*.

Clause 3, amended, and *agreed to*.

Clauses 4—12, *disagreed to*.

Clauses 13—14, amended, and *agreed to*.

Clauses 15—16, *disagreed to*.

Clauses 17—19, amended, and *agreed to*.

Clauses 20—21, *disagreed to*.

Clauses 22—23, amended, and *agreed to*.

Clauses 24—25, *disagreed to*.

Clause 26, amended, and *agreed to*.

New Clause (Provision for appointment of Commissioners) brought up, read the first and second time, and *added*.

Another new Clause (Power to two or more authorities to combine) brought up, read the first and second time, amended, and *added*.

Another new Clause (Provision as to use of library) brought up, read the first and second time, and *added*.

Another new Clause (Power to limited owner to grant land) brought up, read the first and second time, and *added*.

Another new Clause (Power to make rules) brought up, read the first and second time, and *added*.

Schedules *disagreed to*.

Ordered, To Report the Bill, as amended, together with the Minutes of Evidence, to the House.

EXPENSES OF WITNESS.

N A M E OF W I T N E S S.	PROFESSION OR CONDITION.	From whence Summoned.	Number of Days Absent from Home under Orders of Committee.	Allowance during Absence from Home.	Expenses of Journey to London and Back.	TOTAL Expenses allowed to Witness.
Robinson, Henry A. -	Commissioner, Local Government Board in Ireland.	Dublin - - -	3	£. s. d. 3 3 -	£. s. d. 5 16 -	£. s. d. 8 19 -

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

Tuesday, 26th June 1894.

MEMBERS PRESENT :

Sir Walter Foster.
Mr. Michael Austin.
Mr. Barton.
Mr. Brunner.
Mr. Field.

Mr. William Johnston.
Sir Thomas Lea.
Mr. James O'Connor.
Sir Francis Powell.

SIR WALTER FOSTER, IN THE CHAIR.

MR. HENRY A. ROBINSON, called in ; and Examined.

Chairman.

Chairman—continued.

1. You are a Commissioner of the Local Government Board in Ireland ?—Yes.

2. Have you looked into this Bill ?—I have read it.

3. Can you give us any information as to the practicability of the scheme contained in the Bill ; first of all as regards the area to make the library district ?—I am afraid it will not work in its present shape owing to the Parliamentary polling districts being adopted as the area. The Parliamentary polling districts run into the districts of two or three rural sanitary authorities ; and under the Bill, therefore, there would be two or three different bodies having to put the Act in motion, and two or three bodies financing the scheme ; in fact, it would lead to a conflict of authority and division of responsibility, and I am afraid the friction would be so great that it would be almost impossible to work it.

4. Then your opinion is that the Parliamentary polling district is unsuitable for those three sets of reasons ?—Yes, I think it is. I can show you an example of some of the Parliamentary polling districts if you would care to see them. I took a county haphazard ; it is Galway. I see that in the division of East Galway there are four polling districts wholly within one union, Glenamaddy ; there is one in Tuam Union ; and the sixth district is partly in Loughrea Union, partly in Glenamaddy, and partly in Ballinasloe. One polling district would then be under three separate sanitary authorities.

5. So that you would have three sanitary authorities controlling that polling district for library purposes ?—Yes.

6. And three different rating authorities in order to obtain the rate ?—Yes. You would also have to have three persons to put in motion the Act, to whom the requisition would be sent by the ratepayers.

7. Three bodies ?—Yes ; three clerks of unions.

8. Would not a joint committee of those bodies meet that difficulty ?—If they were all Q.164.

willing I think probably they might, and if they all agreed upon every point.

9. If each union were willing to appoint, or supposing each union were obliged to appoint, two members of its body to the committee for carrying out the Libraries Act in Ireland in that particular polling district, you would then have six gentlemen nominated by those three bodies whose duty it would be to give the people facilities for expressing their opinions ?—It would be very cumbersome. I think it would be better to have each library district under the control of one authority.

10. Supposing the scheme I have suggested to you were carried out, how would the rating be accomplished ?—The expenses of the library district would then have to be in proportion to the rateable value of each particular district, so much in the pound on the entire valuation of the polling district, so far as it could be ascertained.

11. That would have to be collected by three separate authorities ?—Yes.

12. It could not be collected by any one authority ?—No ; no authority has power to act outside its own district.

13. In that case, even supposing you had a joint committee for the purpose of putting the Act in force, you would still have the difficulty of the rating, of raising the funds ?—Certainly.

14. And you would have to get three different rating authorities to levy a rate, according to the rateable value in each portion of that polling district, in their sanitary district ?—In their sanitary district ; and it is quite possible that their financial years might be different. One might levy their rate from September to September, and the other from March to March ; and the money would not be coming in at regular times.

Mr. Brunner.

15. Are those always made annually ?—Yes. In some unions the financial year ends on the 29th September ; in some on the 25th March.

A

16. Do

26 June 1894.]

Mr. ROBINSON.

[Continued.]

Mr. Brunner—continued.

16. Do not they collect their rates half-yearly?—No; I think only one or two unions do.

Chairman.

17. Is there any other point you wish to point out with reference to the map?—No; I only just had this prepared in order to see how far the Parliamentary polling districts differ from the electoral divisions and from the unions.

18. You give that as an instance?—That is just an instance. I can give you the particulars if you like for the entire county.

19. If you please?—In the Connemara district, polling districts 1, 2, and 9 are wholly in Clifden. Nos. 8 and 9a are half in Clifden and half in Oughterard; Nos. 3, 4, 8, and 7 are wholly in Oughterard; Nos. 5 and 6 are half in Oughterard, and half in Galway; No. 7 is wholly in Galway. In the North Galway District, Nos. 4, 6, and 5 are wholly in Tuam; 7, part Galway and part Tuam; 7a, wholly in Galway Union; 3 is part in Tuam and partly in Glenamaddy, and 1 and 2 are wholly in Glenamaddy. Then I think I have given you East Galway before.

20. Do you think that county is a fair typical specimen?—Yes, I presume it is. I made no special selection.

21. You do not know how many polling districts there are in Ireland with more than one union?—No; I know nothing of the polling districts in Ireland beyond what I have seen on these maps.

22. Is there any other point you wish to mention?—If I knew with what object the polling district was decided upon I might be able to say whether I thought it could be made to work.

23. In the first place as regards its size it would be a more suitable size, would it not, for a library district than any other area you know of, than a union, say?—Of course it would not be better than a dispensary district which is wholly within their sanitary authority. I think the size would be very much the same.

24. Some dispensary districts are of considerable length?—Of course a dispensary district is arranged in order to have a good rating area, an area which raises a certain rate, and of course that would be an advantage for library purposes also.

Mr. James O'Connor.

25. Is every dispensary district confined within a certain union?—Yes. Each union is subdivided into a certain number of electoral divisions, and a certain number of electoral divisions go to form each dispensary district.

Chairman.

26. The composition of a dispensary district is, as I understand you, an aggregation of a certain number of electoral districts suitable for the purposes of medical relief?—Yes.

Mr. James O'Connor.

27. Not, of course, Parliamentary electoral districts, but union and poor law districts?—Yes.

Chairman.

28. In that case you would have a different franchise to what you would in a Parliamentary

Chairman—continued.

polling district?—You can elect your Library Committee on any franchise you like. The clerk of the union prepares a list of all the voters within his union, and if you ask him for a list of the voters comprised in a certain dispensary district, I do not see why he should not give them to you.

29. Do you think he could give you the Parliamentary voters for a dispensary district?—Yes.

30. Do you think there would be much expense attending the formation of a register containing the Parliamentary voters in a dispensary district?—He has all the particulars by town lands, and in whatever way the clerk of the peace requires it, or by polling districts; but he knows how much of each polling district is within each dispensary district, and, I presume, he could take it out. The labour in the first start no doubt would be rather heavy, but after he had once got his register, I do not see why he could not go on with it and make the alterations and additions year by year without much labour.

31. Year by year there would have to be a register made for each dispensary district of the Parliamentary voters in that dispensary district?—Yes. It would have to be amended year by year; that is the only difficulty of a dispensary district. In the case of the polling districts, or so much as is within their union, they have the lists ready; in the other case they have to make fresh ones.

32. The Parliamentary register is divided into polling districts, is it not?—Yes.

33. There are no sub-divisions?—Each union only makes up a list of so much of each Parliamentary polling district as is within its own area. Probably a polling district may run into three unions, and the clerks of the three unions prepare their list for so much of that district as is within their union.

34. Is it subdivided into baronies or anything of that kind?—No; they have the boundary of the Parliamentary polling district, and they give all the voters within so much of that as is in their area. I think polling districts include entire town lands.

35. Would it be possible to save the expense of the new register by marking the existing registers in any way?—I am afraid the clerk of the peace might object to having the register, which is given to him, marked. I do not know.

36. The new register, if formed in this way, would be paid for out of the library rate, I suppose?—Certainly. It would be the expense to the clerk of the union of copying it.

37. To sum it up, your proposal, in order to meet the difficulty with reference to the rating and with reference to the different authorities controlling a Parliamentary polling district, is, that there should be some area selected which is wholly within one union?—Yes; if you take the Parliamentary polling district, it should be only so much of that as is within one union. I think when the authority is a poor law authority, and when they have to collect rates to pay for the library, it is better to take some area which is known to the sanitary authority. However, it does

26 June 1894.]

Mr. ROBINSON.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

does not matter very much if the area is within their own district, because they fix special areas to meet particular cases under the Public Health Act.

38. You suggest the dispensary district as a suitable district?—I think it is a district which is already defined and known. It is as suitable, I think, as you can have.

39. How many dispensary districts do you usually get in a poor law union?—Sometimes the lowest is two and up to five. I should think three was about the average.

40. They vary in size from 17 miles across to a few miles across?—Yes.

41. So that some of them would be too large for the library district?—If you got one of the very large ones, and you cut it down to make it suit any size of library district, I am afraid that it would not be capable of raising sufficient funds by a levy of 1*d.* in the £.; it would not raise anything that would meet the requirements of the library district.

42. The difficulty would crop up in this way, would not it, that in the largest dispensary districts you have the most scattered population and the lowest rateable value?—Yes.

43. And consequently you would have in a dispensary district, under those circumstances, very little chance of getting enough money to form the library?—If you take a great many unions in Ireland you would not have enough money, even if you took the entire union. I have the list of what the income will be of every union, and in some the total income of the entire union would only be 40*l.* or 50*l.* a year, and that is made up of three or four dispensary districts.

Sir Francis Powell.

44. You mean each library authority proposed by the Bill?—No, each poor law union; I am sure there are a dozen of them under 100*l.*

Chairman.

45. Give us a few examples?—There is Ballyvaghan in County Clare; a 1*d.* in the £. over the whole union would only produce 82*l.* I may say that is divided into about 14 or 15 electoral divisions. I will take another case; there is Belmullet; 1*d.* in the £. would produce 45*l.* 0*s.* 8*d.* for the entire sanitary district, and if that were split up into sub-districts, they would probably have about 10*l.* a year for each.

46. How many unions in Ireland would yield a rate sufficient to support a library?—That depends upon what will support a library.

47. Say 100*l.* a year?—Do you mean, assuming the library district is the entire union?

48. Yes?—I had better put this paper in (*handing in paper*).

49. That contains all the unions?—Yes.

50. And the amount of money they would have over the entire area of the unions?—Yes, at a 1*d.* in the £.

51. Supposing we took the electoral district as an area, or a grouping of electoral districts as the library area, would there be any difficulty in that scheme?—That is allowing the sanitary authority to group the districts in accordance with their own requirements.

52. Yes?—Oh, no.

0.164.

Chairman—continued.

53. That is to say, in any particular union a certain number of electoral districts might be grouped together for the purpose of forming a library district?—Yes.

54. That is grouping them in such a way as to get a sufficient amount of money to meet the expenses of a library?—That can be done under the Act at present, under the combination clauses.

55. Under the Bill?—Yes.

56. Supposing we adopted the electoral divisions instead of the Parliamentary polling district. In that case what register could you vote on?—You would have to make out lists of the Parliamentary voters for the electoral divisions.

57. Would that be more difficult than making them out for dispensary districts?—No; if you made it out for dispensary districts you probably would have to make it first, for the electoral divisions.

58. So that it would be a simpler process to make out your list of Parliamentary voters for the electoral division than for the dispensary district?—It would be shorter.

59. Therefore less expensive?—Yes.

60. Would there be any difficulty in allowing the vote for the expenditure of this money to be taken by a vote of the Parliamentary voters instead of those rated to the Poor Law. What I want you to come to is this: We are working here in order to spend money which is obtained on the Poor Law rating?—Yes.

61. By a Poor Law authority?—Yes.

62. We are proposing to put in a Parliamentary register, which is not the Poor Law register?—Yes.

63. Would there be any difficulty in that?—Do you mean in putting the guardians in operation by people who do not pay rates?

64. Yes?—I think there would be the greatest possible difficulty, and I believe if the board of guardians made up their minds that they would not have a library authority it would be almost impossible by the scheme as it stands now, to force them to do what they are not disposed to do, even though the Act were practically adopted by the resolution of the voters.

65. That is to say, the action of the Parliamentary voters in a library district of whatever character to enforce the Library Acts would be resisted, you think, by the board of guardians?—I do not know whether it would be resisted or not, but I am sure if it were resisted, and it very likely might be, it could not be enforced as the Act stands at present. I will explain why. We will say that a board of guardians consider whether they will become a library authority or not, and they pass a resolution saying that, having regard to the financial position of the union or some other reason, it is not expedient that the Act should be put into operation. Then some of the Parliamentary voters who pay no rates come to the conclusion that it would be expedient to adopt the Act, and ten of them send in a requisition to the clerk of the union; he then takes the steps provided by the Act and obtains the opinion of the Parliamentary voters, and it is found that the persons who do not pay rates by a majority decide that the Act shall be adopted.

26 June 1894.]

Mr. ROBINSON.

[Continued.]

Chairman—continued.

adopted. The Act thereupon is adopted. Then it has to be put in force. The board of guardians then find that, as the sanitary authority, they have to appoint Commissioners who are to carry out the Act which they do not approve of. If they determine they will not do it they will most likely appoint three of their own body or some other persons who will guarantee that they will not spend any money. Of course, the Act does not say that they shall purchase libraries or buy newspapers or build halls; it says they "may," and of course you cannot provide in an Act what every particular library district shall do. For that reason I think, as boards of guardians have to appoint the authority who are to supersede them, if they make up their minds that they will not become a library authority, they cannot be forced to do so.

66. Would that difficulty or that possibility of conflict be overcome if you took the Poor Law register of voters?—I suppose it would. If the board of guardians did not become a library authority at the next annual election if the voters wished it, they would probably be put out by the voters.

67. A suggestion has been made that in that case the plural vote should be done away with, and the principle of one man one vote introduced into the Poor Law register; do you think that would be satisfactory in its working?—It would work.

68. That is to say everyone who was rated to the Poor Law would have one vote irrespective of his rateable value?—I think that would work.

69. And that would make it a more popular constituency than it is at present?—Yes, it certainly would. Of course that would take a good deal of the decision out of the hands of the landowners; it would have that effect.

70. Would it be open to the same objection as that which you have just urged, that the Board of Guardians might under such conditions repudiate their responsibility to the ratepayers voting in that way and rely upon the plural vote to back them up at the next election?—I think it would be a totally different thing if the requisition was made to the guardians by persons who paid rates. I think if the board of guardians are ordered by persons who do not pay rates to spend their money to the satisfaction of these people who contribute nothing, they might get their backs up and say we will not be dictated to; but I think if the requisition came from persons who pay rates, and who had as much right to express as the guardians they would not have the same objection. They would not be supported by popular opinion in the same way, if they refused.

71. Would you sum it up in this way, that in your opinion it would be the best of the three methods that have been put before you?—I think you can either have the Parliamentary polling district within a rural sanitary area, together with the parts of it in it, or you can have the dispensary district or the electoral division. You can fix any of those for the library authority. If you take the Parliamentary polling districts, the registers are more easily copied,

Chairman—continued.

But after the expense has been gone to the first year of drawing out those new registers by dispensary districts, I do not think the alterations year by year would perhaps be so difficult.

72. You suggest practically three methods by which the Bill would be brought into a practical condition, first, taking the Parliamentary polling districts that are contained in one union, or those portions of them that are contained in one union, as the area, or, secondly, electoral divisions, or a combination of electoral divisions, or, thirdly, the dispensary districts?—Yes.

73. Could you give any preference to either of those schemes over the others as most easily worked?—It is a thing that requires a very great deal of thought, and I have only recently had an opportunity of considering it. I am disposed to think the dispensary district is the best. I am inclined to favour the dispensary district over the electoral division.

74. Can you assign the reason?—The reason is that in the first place the dispensary district is more desirable than the electoral division, because it would enable in most cases sufficient funds to be raised to work a library. I think a dispensary district is more desirable than an electoral division, because the area of the electoral division is so small that in a great number of instances it would not enable a sufficient rate to be levied for the purpose of the Act. I think it is better on the whole than the Parliamentary polling district for this reason, that it is a well-defined boundary, well known, and it is an area on which rates are already levied for a particular purpose. Of course the preparation of the new register is against it compared with the Parliamentary polling district. Summing up the whole three, I think the balance of convenience would be in favour of the dispensary district.

Mr. Barton.

75. In addition to the reasons you gave in favour of the dispensary district there is one that you mentioned before. I take it that the dispensary district is always within a union, and is a well defined sub-area of a union?—Yes.

76. The dispensary district is also, while it is a sub-area of a union, always a group of electoral divisions?—Yes, always.

77. So that really you might put it this way: that the library district should be a dispensary district, or a group of electoral divisions, either smaller or larger?—Yes.

78. The local people would find, if a dispensary district did not suit, that they might group, in some other way, the electoral divisions in a way that would suit?—Yes; it is done under the Public Health Act for special purposes.

79. Is there at present, as far as you know, in any branch of the local government in Ireland any power of the Parliamentary electors to impose a poor rate?—Not unless they are rated.

80. If it were the Parliamentary polling district, with Parliamentary electors, it would really be the Parliamentary electors imposing a poor rate?—Yes.

81. There

26 June 1894.]

Mr. ROBINSON.

[Continued.]

Mr. Barton—continued.

81. There is no such thing, it would be entirely new?—Yes; there is nothing of the sort.

82. The poor rate is half paid by the landlord and half by the tenant over 4*l.*?—About three-quarters paid by the landlord, taking the whole of Ireland. They pay half when it is over 4*l.*, and they pay the whole when it is under 4*l.* It is probably more than three-fourths.

83. Do not you think that besides the landlords there also would be a strong opposition from the farmers?—I am quite sure there would in some places.

84. And while, if I may put it this way, on the other hand those who wish to have the Parliamentary polling district think that they would in that way force a library which the ratepayers might not wish for, do not you think that the mere fact that the Parliamentary electors would be forcing a matter for which they would not pay would lead to friction, and prevent the thing working?—I am afraid it would.

Sir Thomas Lea.

85. In dispensary districts are not there very frequently three or four little towns?—Villages or towns, as the case may be.

86. Say with a thousand inhabitants, or 500 to 1,500?—Yes, in some.

87. Would not it be rather difficult to know where the library would be placed if you had three or four little towns or large villages in the dispensary district?—No. I think that there might be a conflict between the people from the different localities, but I think it would not be difficult to determine which would be the most convenient place in any dispensary district—a good centre, a market centre, or any centre which attracts people from outside—such as a railway, or where fairs or markets are held.

88. It seems to me if you could have a separate library district for each little town you would have a much better chance?—Yes; but I am afraid you could not finance it. A 1*d.* in the £. would not produce enough in some of these towns, which are very small—some of the little villages. And that is just my point; that if you confine it to anything smaller than a dispensary district there will be a great number of cases where you would have no funds which would enable you to carry out the objects of the Act.

Mr. William Johnston.

89. You have expressed a preference for the dispensary district as the area suitable under this Bill?—Yes, compared with the other two.

90. There is an already existing grouping of electoral divisions which would not require any new arrangement for the purposes of the library?—No.

91. About how much money might be raised at 1*d.* in the £. in the dispensary districts on an average?—It varies so very much.

92. Take about the highest and about the lowest?—I should say roughly from 20*l.* up to 500*l.*

93. With regard to the franchise, do you see any great objection to adopting the poor law franchise with a single vote, doing away with the cumulative vote?—Not to the question of working such a scheme.

0.164.

Mr. William Johnston—continued.

94. That each person who now votes for the Poor Law guardians should vote for the library—having only one vote?—I think it would result in less opposition to the scheme. I think it would in that way be an advantage.

Mr. Michael Austin.

95. Taking the Parliamentary division of a county, in what proportion do the number of Parliamentary polling districts exist to the number of dispensary districts?—I should think they were on the whole very much the same. I should not think on the whole there were more polling districts.

96. Of course you are aware that at the present time there is an agitation among the dispensary doctors with reference to the area of their dispensary districts?—No. I am not aware of that. I am aware that there is an agitation to increase their salaries.

97. And it is complained of also by the Poor Law authorities that at the present time dispensary districts are so dispersed in a county that in some cases they run to 20 miles?—That is in very poor counties. I am sure it would be that from end to end in some districts.

98. If your suggestion of a dispensary district were to come into force you would find, I think, as has been remarked that petty jealousy would creep in as to where the library should be?—It might in exceptional cases, such as those which you quote, in which the dispensary district is an enormous area.

99. As compared with the Parliamentary polling district, when you have the Parliamentary polling district circumscribed, would not you think it more desirable than the dispensary districts running along a great tract of country?—If it could be worked. I am sure it would be a very good plan if it were feasible, but that is the objection which I see to it; the difficulty in working it.

100. The only difficulty that I have been seeing is as regards overlapping of one Parliamentary polling district into a union of a different county?—Yes.

101. Could you suggest anything to remedy that?—Not unless you provide that every library district shall be, we will say, the urban district, and that the rural sanitary district shall be divided into library districts, consisting of each polling district or part of a polling district wholly within the area.

102. Do not you think the Local Government Board could very easily decide as to this overlapping of a district into another union through its officials?—No, I am afraid we could not. We have thought it over how it could be managed, and I am quite clear that you must not have a conflict of authority or of responsibility, or the Act will not work.

Chairman.

103. That is to say, you must have it in one union?—Yes.

Mr. Michael Austin.

104. There is no doubt that under the franchise of the poor law union the voting would come into the hands of one class, and those who would

A 3

26 June 1894.]

Mr. ROBINSON.

[Continued.]

Mr. Michael Austin--continued.

would be most anxious to have the library in their district could not avail themselves of the franchise?—I do not see that. I think the elected guardians carry the boards all over Ireland in the great majority of cases. The elected guardians can adopt it by resolution.

105. That is where the poll is given. Under the present Labourers' Acts the labourer has power in spite of the guardians to carry a certain scheme as to cottages, but under this Bill such a scheme is not provided. That is what I wish to point out, that the class who would benefit by this Bill have no power in the matter?—You see there is a very effectual way of making them act under the Labourers' Act, but unfortunately this Bill gives a remedy which I do not think would work as effectively as that provided by the Labourers' Act.

106. Then would not you think that the voting under the ordinary Parliamentary register would be the proper course as against the poor law register?—I think it would lead to more friction. I think that no doubt it would be held that the fairest principle was that the people who pay the rates should be the people who have the determining of the application of the Act.

107. Of course, that is not applied in all legislation?—No.

108. If the Labourers' Acts were carried out on that principle we should have very few of them. At present, under the Parliamentary polling district, the expense would be borne by the poor law union in the ordinary course?—I do not follow that.

109. Who is to provide the expense for the new register?—It will make very little difference. At present they will have to prepare a register, no matter what happens. If they have the Parliamentary polling district, he must have a register made out for the presiding officer, whoever he is. He must have that done, and that will have to come out of the Library Rate, I presume. If he does it for the dispensary district, he would have to prepare the register just the same. It would be a little more troublesome to prepare in the first instance, but he would have to do it. In either case there must be a register prepared.

110. The clerk need not do it?—Then who is to do it?

111. There is nothing to compel him to do it?—There is nothing to compel him in either case.

112. Yes; at present he has the Parliamentary franchise?—He has it already prepared, but your Act says that he shall furnish a copy of that to the presiding officer. It is just as easy to enact that he shall prepare a register of the dispensary district or electoral division.

113. It is your opinion that the dispensary district is the best of the three courses you put forward for adoption?—I have not had very much time to think it over, but, after hearing what has been said to-day, I am inclined to think it is. If you could get over the difficulty of the Parliamentary polling district in any way, it might be a very good one; but I think the advantages of a well-defined area on which rates are levied and assessed will counterbalance the disadvantages.

Mr. Michael Austin--continued.

114. You could not furnish us, could you, with the relative proportion throughout the counties of Ireland as regards dispensary and Parliamentary polling districts?—No. We know nothing whatever about Parliamentary polling districts. We have nothing to say to them. I got that map prepared at the Clerk of the Peace's offices in order to see how far they did correspond.

115. Would there be many such cases as those you put forward?—There are a great many. I know a great many other cases, but I happened to take that one and have that marked out. I think that is a very fair average. I could have any others prepared.

Mr. Field.

116. The first amendment you have here is "Leave out 'Parliamentary polling districts' and insert 'electoral divisions.'" I want to know what you exactly mean by an electoral division?—An electoral division is the portion of the union which is fixed for rating purposes and for election purposes.

117. By electoral division you do not mean the whole union?—No.

118. I think you told us that you would have to put two or three bodies into motion to carry out the idea of Parliamentary polling districts?—I am afraid so.

119. Will you define exactly how the friction would come?—Looking at the Bill first of all, I take clause 3, sub-section 1: "This Act may be adopted, and the limitation of the maximum rate to be levied for the purposes of this Act may, within the limits fixed by this Act be fixed, raised, and removed when the library district is an urban district, by a resolution of the urban authority under this Act, and when the library district is a Parliamentary polling district not within the control of an urban authority then by the rural sanitary authority." Therefore this Act would have to be adopted for this library district by three rural sanitary authorities, and if one declined to adopt it it would not be adopted.

120. These are all sanitary authorities, and probably they would go pretty much the same way on a matter of this kind?—They do not. They have very different views sometimes; there would be that difficulty. In the first place you would have to get three people to adopt the Act. Say that two sanitary authorities adopted it and one did not, then you would have to get a portion of them forced to act by the Parliamentary voters. Then again the Act says: "The authority to ascertain the opinion of the voters for the purposes of this section shall be"—the clerk of the union. It is hard to say which clerk should be the authority. The authority in a particular polling district like that which I have mentioned would be three distinct individuals. Then again the other difficulty would be "the sanitary authority of the place in which such Parliamentary polling district lies shall appoint not less than three or more than nine persons resident in the Parliamentary polling district." There you would have three sanitary authorities, all with the right to appoint

26 June 1894.]

Mr. ROBINSON.

[Continued.]

Mr. Field—continued.

appoint between them nine Commissioners. They would all have the appointment of the Commissioners, and might all disagree.

121. You seem to take it for granted that they are bound to disagree about everything?—No; I say they might disagree.

122. Why should not the people who have something to do with the taxation appoint the representatives. Does not that clause in the Bill go the way of endeavouring to produce something like co-operation among them, and representation?—If you could ensure that there will be co-operation or representation you could no doubt pass the Act with confidence, but an Act must be drafted which will work, and in the event of their not co-operating, the Act would be a dead letter, and could not be carried out.

123. Am I to understand that it is in the fact of the different sanitary authorities not being in the same body exactly that your main obstacle to this Parliamentary polling district lies?—Yes, the conflict of interests.

124. Have you any idea that there is such an enormous number of these Parliamentary polling districts in different unions throughout Ireland overlapping one another as to cause such a serious difficulty as you seem to anticipate?—Taking one county, the majority of them overlap.

125. Galway?—Yes.

126. You took, I think, with all due respect, the most unfavourable county. I know Galway pretty well; I know Oughterard and Clifden, and I know it is a very poor place and a very thinly populated place, and probably of all the counties Galway is the least likely to adopt this Act. Do you say so yourself?—No, I cannot say that really.

127. Have you ever been there?—Yes, constantly in the last 15 years.

128. Do you know that the majority of the people speak Irish?—I do not know if they do.

129. It is not proposed by this Act to give them Irish books to read, I am afraid?—No.

130. I clearly disagree with you. However you are entitled to your opinion. I think you have taken an example which, in my opinion, is one of the most unsuitable, and does not represent the general geography of Ireland?—Allow me to remark that I took it to show you what difficulties there might be; and as an example of what difficulties there might be, and if a Parliamentary polling district overlaps and runs into two or three in any part of Ireland, the difficulty will be just the same as in Galway.

131. Galway is a most unfavourable instance. I think it is hardly fair to take that particular instance and give it to us as an example of a class?—Take anyone you like, and I will have the same information prepared.

132. Could you give us your reason why you think the dispensary districts would be more suitable than polling districts. I do not wish to repeat the evidence, but is it your opinion, from your experience, and you must have a vast experience in the position you occupy, that the dispensary district as a rule would afford the rateable area suitable for these libraries, provided there was a disposition on the part of the voters to have them established?—I think that, in certain districts, not only will the dispensary dis-

0.164.

Mr. Field—continued.

tricts not afford the necessary rateable area, but I am quite satisfied the entire sanitary area will not do it.

133. Of course, in very poor districts, it is not likely that they will carry the Act into force. Is it your experience that at present the unions have too much to do to set about starting libraries?—They do their work.

134. And do it all right?—Well, as a rule, I think they get through it.

135. Is it your experience that poor law unions are used as a kind of legal peg to hang all sorts of work on, because we have no other administrative machinery?—They have a great deal of work to do, certainly.

136. Do you think the library business would come properly within their scope. I want your opinion. You know how this thing is working better than most of us?—I think it is more suitable for an urban district than for a country district.

137. Do you think it is advisable that these unions should have this further work thrown upon them, rather than that it should be started by other means?—Whether you start it by Parliamentary polling districts or dispensary districts you will put it on the union in exactly the same way; you will give them the management of it in precisely the same way, whether it is done by dispensary districts or polling districts.

138. Do you think if you grouped these electoral divisions according to the geographical nature of them, it would be a good thing. It all depends on the kind of villages, or small towns, whether a library would be required or not, because in some electoral divisions, where the people are scattered, there is no necessity for it; but do you think if you grouped the electoral divisions it would be a good and feasible way of getting the Act worked?—Yes, I think it would.

139. How would you group them?—I should leave it to the sanitary authority to group them according to the requirements of each particular district.

140. I think an honourable Member spoke of the Poor Law Register; do you know anything about the Poor Law Register, have you had any experience of it?—Yes.

141. Do you know whether it is a complicated affair?—It is, rather, for people who do not understand it.

142. How would you propose to meet the suggestion made by some members here, that you should give every man a single vote?—There would be no difficulty; if it were required to be done the clerk would have to make out a list of the ratepayers from the rate books.

143. And give the voter a single vote?—And give him a single vote.

143. Do you think from your experience that that is the class of voters who would be likely to support libraries?—It is an entirely new idea. I could not say whether the guardians would do it or not, but I think in a great many cases the guardians would think twice before they would incur any new expenditure.

144. Who would be paid for making out these registers?—I presume the clerk of the union might demand payment.

A 4

145. Arq

26 June 1894.]

Mr. ROBINSON.

[Continued.]

Mr. Field—continued.

145. Are you aware that the clerks of the unions in a great number of unions, are exceedingly dissatisfied with the remuneration which they receive at the present moment with respect to the work that has come under the Registration Act?—I think they would all like to get more.

146. Of course this money would have to come from the libraries' fund?—I do not know whether they could reasonably be called upon to do that as one of the duties pertaining to their office of Clerk of the Union, that would be a matter for the auditor.

147. It is a difficulty?—Yes, if it had to come out of the fund of course it would reduce the means for the support of the library.

148. Are we to take it as your deliberate opinion that the dispensary district is the best way to make this Bill workable?—I think the balance of convenience is in favour of it.

149. Your opinion is that the friction of the authorities in regard to the poor law business in the way it is laid down in this Bill would be almost insurmountable?—Yes.

150. Do you think there might be friction about the taxation of these areas, which would cause it to be unworkable?—Yes.

151. The principal objection that some of my friends have, is, that they do not see how you are going to get these registers; they are not printed?—I think they are printed.

152. You would have to pay for copying them; if this Act is to be worked at all, it must be worked cheaply, and the persons who are inclined to support a library probably would not be able to get copies. I should like some stronger reasons as to why the polling district should be overruled. In your opinion would you be able to group a certain number of Parliamentary polling districts where one Parliamentary polling district would not be sufficient as an area?—It is not because they would not be sufficient as an area; it is because such small portions of one Parliamentary polling district would be within the area of one authority.

153. You think the Local Government Board could not get over that difficulty by the issuing of a Provisional Order in the particular case?—No; I do not think by any Provisional Order we could authorise one sanitary district to go into another sanitary district, and levy a rate for the purposes of the Act.

154. If the rate is only a 1*d.* in the £, and it cannot exceed that, what would you say?—It would not alter it, I am afraid.

155. Have you any further remedy to suggest?—Yes, I say that if you must have Parliamentary polling districts, if you think it would be an advantage over the dispensary district or the electoral divisions, the only way you can do it is to enact that each rural sanitary district shall be divided into a certain number of library districts which shall comprise the Parliamentary polling districts wholly and partially within their area. Then portions of the districts would be so very small that you would have to enact that where a Parliamentary polling district or a portion of one did not include a certain number of voters, it should be amalgamated with the Parliamentary polling district nearest adjoining.

Mr. Brunner.

156. A report has been shown to me which I will hand to you. Will you tell me what that report is?—Mr. O'Brien's special Report on Local Government and Taxation in Ireland.

Sir Francis Powell.

157. It is a Parliamentary Paper?—No, it is a report of a commission.

Mr. Brunner.

158. I think you see there a statement of the number of unions which are in two or more counties?—Yes.

159. Fifteen unions in three counties, and fifty unions in two counties?—Yes.

160. And the total is 163?—That has been reduced very greatly lately. It is about 159 or 158 now. We have amalgamated some of the unions.

161. Have you corrected the boundaries so that there are fewer unions which are in more than one county?—It does not matter for poor law purposes at all.

162. But have you, as a matter of fact?—No. Some time ago electoral divisions were all made wholly within or without a barony. That is the only alteration I can think of.

163. The boundaries of the unions, although you have amalgamated some of them, have not been altered?—That Return is quite right, even at the present time, so far as the unions in two counties are concerned.

164. With regard to the last question put to you by Mr. Field, what authority would decide what parts of unions should form the library area?—I should think the Bill would.

165. The Bill of course contemplates taking the opinion of the people of the neighbourhood in one way or another, but there must be some authority to decide what should be the library area within the union. Have you anything to say as to that?—Is it not in the first section of the Bill? Does not that define what the library district shall be? I think it is going to be defined, it had better be defined by the Act.

Mr. James O'Connor.

166. A Parliamentary division of a county generally includes one or more unions or portions of one or more unions?—Yes.

167. Would not a Parliamentary division of a county, taking the one you mentioned, East Galway, supply a larger area for taxation than a certain number of dispensary districts?—Certainly.

168. For the purpose of raising the expense of supporting a library, the Parliamentary district would be better, it has a larger area of taxation?—It would raise more money.

169. So far a Parliamentary polling district included in a Parliamentary division would be more satisfactory if it could be made to work?—It would not be more satisfactory than a dispensary district.

170. In raising money it would be more satisfactory in supplying a larger area to be taxed?—It would supply a larger area, it would raise a larger sum of money; but then there would be the conflict of authority just the same, because it includes a certain number of unions.

171. You

26 June 1894.]

Mr. ROBINSON.

[Continued.]

Mr. James O'Connor—continued.

171. You would be more likely to sustain a library in a Parliamentary division of a county than you would in a union area?—I think there are very few Parliamentary divisions of a county that would not sustain a library.

172. The difficulty is in working the Act with the Parliamentary division area?—Yes.

173. On account of the several authorities that come into that division?—Yes.

174. But I am speaking of a Parliamentary division which would include four or five districts; it would include of course several polling districts?—Yes.

175. As a larger rating area it would be satisfactory, inasmuch as you could more easily raise the money on the Parliamentary division; but the difficulty is to make the Act work on that basis. The difficulty is the number of authorities in the division, and the unions overlapping one division and another division?—Another thing is, I think it is a rather large area for a library district. If the whole of the division of Galway were made a library division, and if they have the library in the centre of it people 40 or 50 miles would never come near it.

176. They would establish two or three or more small libraries in towns?—If they did, they might as well concentrate the library in a centre of its own particular area.

177. They might have one library in Ballinasloe and one in some other town in the division?—Better let each library pay for itself, I am inclined to think.

178. The polling districts as an area appear to represent almost insuperable difficulties, according to your opinion?—Unless you take parts of them, and they would be a little difficult, perhaps.

179. Then we have the unions as an area. There are not many unions in Ireland, I believe, that would supply 150*l.* a year on a penny rate?—Yes, the majority of them would.

180. I cannot offer an opinion, but perhaps you might be able to state what it would cost to sustain a library say in a union, in the principal town of the union?—It would depend altogether upon what the ideas of the Commissioners would be. If it were merely a room with newspapers and books and everything else it would be a very small thing. I see the Act enables schools to be opened, so of course I cannot form an opinion.

181. Do you think 100*l.* a year on the average would support a local library?—It would support a kind of library with newspapers and books and pay the rent of the room, I should imagine.

182. A library fair enough for a town of 5,000 or 6,000 people?—I find it very difficult to answer that question.

183. Dispensary districts appear to you now to offer the most practicable area for working the proposed Act?—Yes.

184. There are several dispensary districts in each union?—Yes.

185. How would the rate be levied. Would it be by the sanitary authority?—As special expenses under the Public Health Act. So the Bill says.

0.164.

Mr. James O'Connor—continued.

186. You think that is the most workable proposal?—Yes, it can only be levied, as a matter of fact, by the sanitary authority. Nobody else has power to levy a sanitary rate.

187. It would be levied by one authority?—Yes.

188. In case the dispensary district area was selected?—Yes.

189. Then you would have one authority with power to levy the required rate over these dispensary districts?—For all the libraries in the district, yes.

Sir Francis Powell.

190. You have placed in the hands of the Chairman, for printing in the evidence, a statement of the unions in Ireland?—Yes.

191. There appear to be 159 unions?—Yes.

192. Is the very small figure which you gave a few months ago fairly representative of the condition of things in these unions?—What figure is that?

193. You gave several figures under 100*l.* at a penny in the pound?—No, I was only wishing to give an instance; that some of the unions could not possibly support a library; and I think I said there were about 12 or 13 of that class.

194. According to my hasty examination there are something under 15, which would give less than 100*l.*?—I did not count them.

195. You could not state that as a fair representation of the condition of Ireland?—No, I did not intend to; I meant to show how they varied.

196. Will you explain why the dispensary district should be more likely to adopt the Act than a Parliamentary polling district?—I do not think they would be a bit more likely to adopt it.

197. Which would be the more likely, do you think?—I could not say; I do not know which. I said that it would be a more convenient way.

198. It does not strike me, by looking at the matter with one's inferior knowledge as an Englishman, why one is more likely to adopt the Act than the other?—No; it was not with that view that I recommended the dispensary district; it was merely because it was a well-defined area.

199. Is there a printed register now in the dispensary districts?—No; there is a register of the Poor Law union. Of course that shows the voters on each town land and electoral division.

200. How is the voting arranged and conducted now in dispensary districts?—Do you mean for Poor Law purposes.

201. For whatever purposes a register could be used; how is the voting managed?—From the rate book of the Poor Law electoral division; every person who pays rates is entitled to vote.

202. The rate-book is a register, in other words?—Yes.

203. If that acts satisfactorily for present purposes?—It does.

204. Why should it not act equally satisfactorily for the purposes of this Bill if it becomes law?—I understand the Committee wish to have rather an extended electorate.

B

205. I put

26 June 1894.]

Mr. ROBINSON.

[Continued.]

Sir Francis Powell—continued.

205. I put my question in my own form. You stated, no doubt with perfect accuracy, that you have a satisfactory system of voting now in dispensary districts for the purposes of the Acts?—Yes.

206. My question was, why should not the like system be adopted with equal success in the same areas for the purposes of this Bill if it becomes law?—That is a matter for the Committee; of course, it could be adopted.

207. Why should it not?—I do not know why it should not.

208. You see no objection to it?—No, I do not see any objection.

209. In cases of properties under 4*l.* a year, the owner is the sole voter, is he not?—Yes.

210. If we adopted the dispensary district with the present suffrage, the man who does not pay rates would have no vote at all?—No.

211. If we adopted the dispensary district as an area, how should we overcome that difficulty in framing the Statute?—I do not quite see the meaning of the question.

212. I believe your proposal would be to take the dispensary district as an area, but the Parliamentary register for the purpose of voting within the area?—I say it could be done.

213. Would you get over the difficulty by some such arrangement as that?—I think it could be done.

214. That proposal would involve some expense?—It would be rather a heavier expense than copying the whole registers as they stand. The initial expense would be heavier.

215. But I think you say after you once get the register in order the revision would be cheaper?—The revision would not be so troublesome year by year.

216. I suppose your population does not alter so much in Ireland from year to year as it does probably in England?—I do not think it does quite so much.

217. So that the revision of the register would be a simpler task than we find it?—Yes.

218. How do you alter in Parliamentary polling districts in Ireland?—It is done by the Justices at Quarter Sessions, and confirmed by Order of the Privy Council.

219. Are there many alterations?—They do not come under our supervision in any way. It is done altogether by the Privy Council, and not by the Local Government Board. I do not know much about the polling districts in Ireland.

220. Supposing it were to be found that many alterations occurred in these districts, would you consider that a difficulty in the way of adopting that area for the purpose of the Act?—No. Once you adopt your library district, there it is.

221. That would remain the same?—Yes.

222. Then you would have one area for the purpose of this Act, and another area for Parliamentary polling districts for the future?—Yes. It would not matter when the Act was in operation.

223. Would that be inconvenient in practice?—No, I do not think it would much matter.

Mr. James O'Connor.

224. Is not it a fact that the union officers supply the Parliamentary register?—Yes, through the collectors and the clerks.

225. On the ground of expense I think it would not cost very much to supply the Parliamentary register to the library committee where the Parliamentary registers are generally made out by the unions themselves?—Yes.

Mr. Field.

226. Will you be kind enough to write out distinctly a paragraph showing the way in which you propose to amend the suggestion we have made about using the Parliamentary polling districts. How do you propose it should be got over?—Do you mean adopting the Parliamentary polling districts?

227. Yes. I want to be clear about it, because that is the whole difficulty?—This is how it might perhaps be done: "That for the purpose of this Act every urban sanitary district shall be a library district. Every rural sanitary district shall be divided into library districts which shall consist of each Parliamentary polling district, and each part of a Parliamentary polling district within the area of the rural sanitary authority. In the event of a part of a Parliamentary polling district within the area of a rural sanitary authority having less than (so many) voters it shall be deemed for the purposes of this Act to be a part of the Parliamentary polling district adjoining which includes the least number of voters." That is to say, if there was a fraction in which there were only 50 voters it would be joined to one of the two adjoining which have the least number of voters.

Mr. Barton.

228. First of all to clear up what Sir Francis Powell said. There are two theories put before you; one the Parliamentary polling district, and the other the dispensary district as the area?—Yes.

229. The last question that Mr. Field has been asking you has been on the assumption that the Parliamentary polling district is the area?—Exactly.

230. You have shown to him on that assumption that the fragments of Parliamentary polling districts might be, as you say, annexed to neighbouring polling districts?—Yes.

231. But that would not get over the difficulty that this is an entirely new rating area created within the union?—No, of course not.

232. Would not that involve a great deal of inconvenience to the union. You have to make an entirely new rating area and to levy rates on entirely new areas or separate areas?—It would be not so convenient as the other by any means; but it could be done in the same way that they now levy rates for special purposes. The sanitary authority may levy rates for special purposes in any area we lay down, but although I have drafted this scheme to show Mr. Field how it could be done. I am not in love with this suggestion.

233. You have shown how it could be worked if it must be worked?—Yes.

234. But

26 June 1894.]

Mr. ROBINSON.

[Continued.]

Mr. Barton—continued.

234. But you have not any wish to recommend that?—No.

235. Now take the other assumption, that the dispensary district is the area. There there are two alternative proposals as to the franchise. One, that the ratepayers should be the franchise, and the other that the franchise should be the Parliamentary voters within the dispensary district. So far as the present system in Ireland goes, in every case of imposing a rate the franchise is the ratepayer?—Yes.

236. And it would be quite a novel exception to give the Parliamentary voters within the dispensary district the power of imposing the rate?—It would, certainly.

237. At present with regard to the register each electoral division elects a guardian?—Yes; or two.

238. Therefore there must be a register at present of ratepayers for each electoral division?—Yes, in the rate book.

239. And as each dispensary district is a collection of electoral divisions there must be to hand at the present moment a register of ratepayers for each dispensary district, must not there?—Yes, certainly. The rate book as a register of the ratepayers of town lands, electoral divisions, and dispensary districts.

240. Therefore we have at hand as I understand a register of ratepayers according to the dispensary districts?—Yes.

241. There would be hardly any expense with reference to that or inconvenience?—No.

242. Supposing you were to adopt the other proposal, namely, that within the dispensary district the franchise are to be the Parliamentary voters, you have no such register for the dispensary districts, have you?—No; that will have to be made out.

243. Is not the Parliamentary register at present an alphabetical one?—I believe it is made out for the Parliamentary polling districts alphabetically.

244. Is not it revised also every year in that way?—I believe it is.

245. So that for the simple purposes of the libraries, if the Parliamentary electorate is taken, you not only have an entirely new arrangement of the voters in a new register for each dispensary district, but also the revision would have to be adopted each year to that new arrangement?—It would. The amendments in the register would have to be copied on the register each year.

246. So that supposing you choose between the ratepayers and the Parliamentary electors, convenience and expense is all in favour of the ratepayers?—Certainly.

Chairman.

247. I want you to answer this point. In either case, whether you take the dispensary districts or whether you take the Parliamentary polling districts, you have a difficulty. In the case of the dispensary districts you have got to create a new rating area for the library rate?—Yes, in the case of dispensary districts.

O.164.

Chairman—continued.

248. And in the case of the Parliamentary polling districts you have to create in the union a new rating area?—Yes.

249. All the guardians would have to do would be to collect the rate?—Yes.

250. That is to create a new rating area of which the Parliamentary polling districts are a portion?—Yes.

251. In the case of dispensary districts they would be met by the difficulty that they would have to create a new list of voters?—Yes.

252. So that there would be difficulties in either case?—Yes.

253. Which of those difficulties would be the more easily surmounted?—I think that the sanitary authority understand their own area best, and it would be more convenient to them to have the area they understand and which includes every electoral division in which rates are made.

254. So that the dispensary districts would present a less difficulty than the Parliamentary polling district?—I think on the whole it would.

255. Do you think making a new register for any dispensary district would be less expensive than making a new rating area?—There is no expense attached to making a new rating area, because the Act declares that the area of change for the purpose of the library district shall be the Parliamentary polling district.

256. Or a portion of it?—Yes. Then it is merely a question of making up the rate books, including the 1d. in the £ assessed on these particular townlands included within it.

257. Could you supply us with a list of the Parliamentary polling districts in Ireland in more than one union?—It could be got from the Privy Council Office, I daresay.

258. They have got maps?—The clerks of the peace would most likely have it. I will make enquiries and see if it can be done.

259. Let us know before we sit again the names of Parliamentary polling districts in more than one union?—If possible.

Mr. Brunner.

260. I want to understand the nature of the registers in the Parliamentary polling districts. You say that they are alphabetical, but surely they are not alphabetical from the beginning in the whole district. The voters of the whole Parliamentary polling district are not arranged alphabetically?—No; I did not mean the voters were arranged alphabetically by any means. I meant alphabetically for the townlands.

261. I should like to have this cleared up. We hear that the voting lists in the Parliamentary polling districts (that is, for Parliamentary purposes) are made up alphabetically; but that is surely not taking the whole list of voters in the Parliamentary polling district together. There is a separate list for certain districts surely?—Yes. Here is the Act that refers to it. The duties of the town clerk are to prepare on or before a certain date (that is, July 2nd) and

B 2

to

26 June 1894.]

Mr. ROBINSON.

[*Continued.**Mr. Brunner*—continued.

to publish with marginal objections three alphabetical lists made out according to the polling districts, and, if so required by the Corporation, according to streets.

Chairman.

262. It is only in the towns where you get streets that you get them divided?—That is all.

263. I dare say there may be three or four villages in a polling district. You may have villages A. B. C. and D. John Flanagan may live in village A., and Richard Flanagan, who

Chairman—continued.

comes next, may live in village B., but he comes next in alphabetical order?—Yes.

Mr. Brunner.

264. Then I take it they are alphabetical from beginning to end with the Parliamentary polling district?—Yes.

265. From side to side?—Yes. The lists may be made out either alphabetically or by streets, and the authority having power to divide into polling districts may direct in which way the lists shall be made out.

A P P E N D I X.

PAPER handed in by Mr. Henry A. Robinson, 26 June 1894.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (IRELAND).

U N I O N S.	Valuation on 29th September 1893.	Assessment of One Penny in the £. on the Valuation.	U N I O N S.	Valuation on 29th September 1893.	Assessment of One Penny in the £. on the Valuation.
	£.	£. s. d.		£.	£. s. d.
Abbeyleix - - - -	85,075	354 9 7	Castlecomer - - - -	32,075	133 12 11
Antrim - - - - -	125,341	522 5 1	Castlederg - - - -	26,623	110 18 7
Ardee - - - - -	94,393	393 6 1	Castlereagh - - - -	73,087	304 10 7
Armagh - - - - -	205,830	857 12 6	Castletown - - - -	12,103	50 8 7
Athlone - - - - -	88,547	368 18 11	Cavan - - - - -	114,542	477 5 2
Athy - - - - -	110,883	462 - 3	Celbridge - - - - -	114,555	477 6 3
Bailieborough - - -	40,387	168 5 7	Claremorris - - - -	43,006	179 3 10
Ballina - - - - -	49,308	205 9 -	Clifden - - - - -	17,589	73 5 9
Ballinasloe - - - -	77,789	324 2 5	Clogheen - - - - -	63,221	263 8 5
Ballinrobe - - - -	60,405	251 13 9	Clogher - - - - -	56,290	234 10 10
Ballycastle - - - -	45,347	188 18 11	Clonakilty - - - -	51,029	212 12 5
Ballymahon - - - -	61,641	256 16 9	Clones - - - - -	57,700	240 15 10
Ballymena - - - - -	132,752	553 2 8	Clonmel - - - - -	71,632	298 9 4
Ballymoney - - - -	84,077	354 1 5	Coleraine - - - - -	100,168	454 17 4
Ballyshannon - - - -	50,660	211 2 5	Cookstown - - - - -	65,509	272 19 1
Ballyvaghan - - - -	19,739	82 4 11	Cootehill - - - - -	73,455	306 1 3
Balrothery - - - - -	96,126	400 10 6	Cork - - - - -	358,880	1,495 6 8
Baltinglass - - - -	73,642	306 16 10	Corrofin - - - - -	20,379	84 18 3
Banbridge - - - - -	158,921	662 3 5	Croom - - - - -	62,899	262 1 7
Bandon - - - - -	73,859	307 14 11	Delvin - - - - -	53,126	221 7 2
Bantry - - - - -	22,896	95 8 -	Dingle - - - - -	22,973	95 14 5
Bawnboy - - - - -	40,169	167 7 5	Donegal - - - - -	34,598	144 3 2
Belfast - - - - -	883,866	3,682 15 6	Downpatrick - - - -	177,903	741 5 3
Belmullet - - - - -	10,808	45 - 8	Drogheda - - - - -	125,767	524 - 7
Borrisokane - - - -	41,614	173 7 10	Dromore, West - - - -	37,015	154 4 7
Boyle - - - - -	74,478	310 6 6	Dublin, North - - - -	413,977	1,724 18 1
Caherciveen - - - -	23,073	96 2 9	Dublin, South - - - -	716,830	2,986 15 10
Callan - - - - -	71,771	299 - 11	Dundalk - - - - -	110,205	459 3 9
Carlow - - - - -	149,977	624 18 1	Dunfanaghy - - - -	11,449	47 14 1
Carrickmacross - - -	50,108	208 15 8	Dungannon - - - - -	96,277	401 3 1
Carrick-on-Shannon -	48,242	201 - 2	Dungarvan - - - - -	53,304	222 2 -
Carrick-on-Suir - - -	78,386	326 12 2	Dunmanway - - - - -	33,721	140 10 1
Cashel - - - - -	107,435	447 12 11	Dunshaughlin - - - -	105,886	441 3 10
Castlebar - - - - -	46,738	194 14 10	Edenderry - - - - -	95,432	397 12 8
Castleblaney - - - -	75,597	314 19 9	Ennis - - - - -	74,363	309 16 11

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (IRELAND)—continued.

UNIONS.	Valuation on 29th September 1893.	Assessment of One Penny in the £. on the Valuation.	UNIONS.	Valuation on 29th September 1893.	Assessment of One Penny in the £. on the Valuation.
	£.	£. s. d.		£.	£. s. d.
Enniscorthy - - - -	111,030	462 12 6	Monaghan - - - -	95,368	397 7 4
Enniskillen - - - -	108,611	452 10 11	Mounthelaw - - - -	40,393	168 6 1
Eannistymon - - - -	37,004	154 3 8	Mountmelick - - - -	102,751	428 2 7
Fermoy - - - -	103,960	433 3 4	Mullingar - - - -	158,816	661 14 8
Galway - - - -	66,239	275 19 11	Neas - - - -	153,524	639 13 8
Glennamaddy - - - -	31,762	132 6 10	Navan - - - -	99,387	414 2 3
Glenties - - - -	20,493	85 7 9	Neuagh - - - -	94,434	393 9 6
Gorey - - - -	80,557	335 13 1	Newcastle - - - -	63,298	263 14 10
Gort - - - -	43,006	179 3 10	New Ross - - - -	104,405	435 - 5
Granard - - - -	85,875	357 16 3	Newry - - - -	168,396	701 13 -
Inishowen - - - -	39,474	164 9 6	Newtownards - - - -	149,648	623 10 8
Irvinestown - - - -	49,216	205 1 4	Oldenstle - - - -	62,915	262 2 11
Kanturk - - - -	77,358	322 6 6	Omagh - - - -	107,915	449 12 11
Kells - - - -	96,710	402 19 2	Oughterard - - - -	15,039	62 13 3
Kenmare - - - -	19,578	81 11 6	Parsonstown - - - -	102,573	427 7 9
Kilkoel - - - -	45,160	188 3 4	Portumna - - - -	35,341	147 5 1
Kilkenny - - - -	99,785	415 15 5	Rathdown - - - -	271,875	1,132 16 3
Killadysert - - - -	25,314	105 9 6	Rathdrum - - - -	127,976	533 4 8
Killala - - - -	20,470	85 5 10	Rathkeale - - - -	69,718	290 9 10
Killarney - - - -	77,042	321 - 2	Roscommon - - - -	64,500	268 15 -
Kilmaethomas - - - -	33,087	137 17 3	Roscrea - - - -	91,311	380 9 3
Kilmallock - - - -	137,783	574 1 11	Scariff - - - -	26,338	109 14 10
Kilrush - - - -	53,012	220 17 8	Shillelagh - - - -	50,377	209 18 1
Kinsale - - - -	60,300	251 5 -	Skibbereen - - - -	47,289	197 - 9
Larne - - - -	108,127	450 10 7	Skull - - - -	15,241	63 10 1
Letterkenny - - - -	31,646	131 17 2	Sligo - - - -	99,612	415 1 -
Limavady - - - -	69,928	291 7 4	Strabane - - - -	107,343	447 5 3
Limerick - - - -	197,231	821 15 11	Stranolar - - - -	30,464	126 18 8
Lisburn - - - -	181,049	754 7 5	Strokestown - - - -	50,837	211 16 5
Lismore - - - -	50,250	209 7 6	Swineford - - - -	41,145	171 8 9
Lisnaskea - - - -	58,128	242 4 -	Thomastown - - - -	65,995	274 19 7
Listowel - - - -	68,622	285 18 6	Thurles - - - -	90,548	377 5 8
Londonderry - - - -	170,618	710 18 2	Tipperary - - - -	143,241	596 16 9
Longford - - - -	60,581	252 8 5	Tobercurry - - - -	40,836	170 3 -
Loughrea - - - -	76,255	317 14 7	Tralee - - - -	87,705	365 8 9
Lurgan - - - -	147,442	614 6 10	Trim - - - -	109,016	454 4 8
Macroom - - - -	64,304	267 18 8	Tuam - - - -	76,751	319 15 11
Magherafelt - - - -	93,845	391 - 5	Tulla - - - -	33,467	139 8 11
Mallow - - - -	105,976	441 11 4	Tullamore - - - -	83,296	347 1 4
Manorhamilton - - - -	43,811	182 10 11	Urlingford - - - -	48,551	202 5 11
Middleton - - - -	94,409	393 7 5	Waterford - - - -	154,619	644 4 11
Milford - - - -	30,026	125 2 2	Westport - - - -	44,196	184 3 -
Millstreet - - - -	28,252	117 14 4	Wexford - - - -	108,575	452 7 11
Mitchelstown - - - -	49,121	204 13 5	Youghal - - - -	59,823	249 5 3
Mohill - - - -	39,580	164 18 4	TOTAL, 159 Unions - £.	14,134,322	58,893 - 2