

LAND OWNERS IN IRELAND.

RETURN OF OWNERS OF LAND

OF

ONE ACRE AND UPWARDS,

IN THE SEVERAL

COUNTIES, COUNTIES OF CITIES, AND COUNTIES OF TOWNS

IN IRELAND,

Showing the names of such Owners arranged Alphabetically in each County; their addresses—as far as could be ascertained—the extent in Statute Acres, and the Valuation in each case; together with the number of Owners in each County of less than One Statute Acre in extent; and the total Area and Valuation of such properties; and the Grand Total of Area and Valuation for all Owners of property in each County, County of a City, or County of a Town.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A SUMMARY FOR EACH PROVINCE AND FOR ALL IRELAND.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.



RETURN
OF
OWNERS OF LAND
IN IRELAND.

THIS Return is intended to show for each County in Ireland :—

- (1.) The number and names of owners of land of one acre and upwards, whether built upon or not; including lessees for terms exceeding 99 years, or with a right of perpetual renewal, with the acreage and net annual value of the property belonging to each owner as shown in the valuation lists.
- (2.) The number of owners of land, whether built upon or not, of less than one acre, with the aggregate area and net annual value of such property.
- (3.) The estimated area of Waste Land.

The directions for preparing the Return originated, as stated in the introductory remarks to the Return of Owners of Land in England and Wales which has been prepared by the Local Government Board in England, in a discussion which took place in the House of Lords in February, 1872, on a question asked by the Earl of Derby whether it was the intention of Her Majesty's Government to take any steps for ascertaining accurately the number of proprietors of land and houses in the United Kingdom, with the quantity of land owned by each proprietor.

The preparation of the Return for England and Wales appears to have commenced in September, 1872, and in the following January the Local Government Board in Ireland received the directions of His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant to prepare a similar Return for Ireland; with directions that it should be, as far as possible, identical with the English Return, substituting, however, the rateable value for the gross estimated rental.

It should be observed that in a correspondence which the Local Government Board had with the Irish Government before receiving the final instructions for the preparation of the Return, the Board deemed it their duty to draw attention to the circumstance that in the instructions issued for the preparation of the Return for England and Wales "the gross estimated rental of the property belonging to each owner as shown in the valuation lists" was required to be given; but that neither the valuation lists nor the rate books in Ireland contain any column from which the gross estimated rental of any tenement could be directly derived, while at the same time it must be of material importance to have the Return made on the same basis of computation as to value in Ireland as in England. To

meet this variation between the materials for making the Returns in the two countries it was directed that a foot-note should be added to the return for each county in Ireland stating the per-centage (to be estimated by the Commissioner of Valuation) that should be added to the rateable value to ascertain approximately the rent value. Subsequently, however, the Commissioner of Valuation informed the Local Government Board for Ireland that he had been instructed to prepare a general explanatory note, applicable to the whole of Ireland, for insertion at the end of the Return. A copy of this explanatory note will accordingly be found at the end of the general summary with which the Return concludes, and a copy is also inserted here :—

“ In this Return, instead of the gross estimated rental being given, as in the Return for England and Wales, the rateable valuation is set forth.

“ This valuation was made many years ago, and is based upon the scale of prices of agricultural produce contained in the Act 15 & 16 Vict., cap. 63, which scale is much below the present average prices of such produce, consequently the valuation cannot be compared in any way with the gross estimated rental given in the Return for England and Wales.”

The documents from which alone the Return could be prepared—viz., the valuation and rate books—being in the custody of the clerks of the several unions, it became necessary to call upon each clerk for a return of the necessary particulars for his union; showing, where the union extended into two or more counties, the portion of the union comprised in each county separately, with a view to the subsequent arrangement of the returns in county order in this office.

The only exception to this course of proceeding was in those parts of the two Dublin unions which comprise the City of Dublin, where the rates being made and collected by the Collector-General and not by the Boards of Guardians the same means were not available to the clerks of those unions for the preparation of the Return as in other cases; and the Collector-General having declared himself unable, with the staff at his disposal, to undertake the duty without prejudice to the progress of the collection of the rate, the necessary particulars were, with the sanction of the Lords of the Treasury, collected and returned to the Board under the superintendence of a gentleman connected with the Valuation Office, specially nominated for the duty by the Commissioner of Valuation.

The forms and instructions used for obtaining the returns from the several unions were framed as far as circumstances permitted in the same terms as those which had been issued in England, and were submitted to and approved by His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant before they were issued.

In the instructions issued to the union clerks they were informed :—

That the Return was intended to show :—

- (1.) The *number and names* of owners of land of one acre and upwards, whether built upon or not; including lessees for terms exceeding 99 years, or with a right of perpetual renewal with the acreage and net annual value of the property belonging to each owner as shown in the valuation lists.
- (2.) The *number* of owners of land, whether built upon or not, of less than one acre, with the aggregate area and net annual value of such property.

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That lessees for terms not exceeding 99 years, unless with perpetual right of renewal, were not to be included as owners.

That incorporeal hereditaments were in like manner to be omitted.

That where there were any commons or waste land in an electoral division, an approximate estimate of their extent should be inserted at foot of the form provided for the return as to owners of land of less than one acre in extent.

That where there were joint owners, the name and address of each owner, so far as they could be ascertained, should be entered, and that each should have assigned to him, as far as practicable, his proportionate part of the property.

That the names and addresses of owners, when they could be ascertained, should be given in full, and as accurately as possible; and that in cases in which trustees, receivers, or other persons not beneficially interested appear in the owners' column, the name of the actual owners should, when known, be substituted in the Return.

It was at the same time suggested to the clerks that they might find it necessary to apply to the collectors of Poor Rates, or persons having the requisite local knowledge, to assist in revising the Return before its final completion; and that they might also with advantage consult the county lists of voters.

These instructions were issued on the 10th February, 1873; but the last return was not received in the office until the month of November, 1875. The delay which occurred in furnishing the return is accounted for in many cases partly by the time of the clerk being necessarily engaged during certain periods in the discharge of other imperative duties devolved upon him by statute—such as the preparation and revision of the Parliamentary voters' lists, the Jurors' lists, the annual election of guardians, and the preparation of the rate books;—also in many cases, especially in towns, by the extreme difficulty of ascertaining the names of the persons who answered the description of "Owner" given in the instructions, and who ought therefore to be entered on the Return; for it must be borne in mind that the "Owner" who is entered in the valuation and rate books has not necessarily such an interest in the property as would constitute him an owner within the meaning of those instructions, but is merely the "Immediate Lessor" or the person in receipt of the rent payable by the occupying tenant, however limited his interest in the property may be.

As soon as a union return was received it was subjected to examination in order to ascertain whether the acreage and valuation returned by the clerk agreed with what was known to be the true acreage of the union according to the Ordnance Survey, and the true valuation, according to the abstracts of the union accounts deposited in this office. In many instances serious discrepancies were found to exist, and the returns had to be referred back to the clerks (in some instances several times) for revision—this involved a very large amount of correspondence, and entailed much additional labour on the office.

When the returns for all the unions in any county were received and examined, and had been subjected to revision where necessary, a return for the entire county was prepared from them in the office—the names of the owners being arranged alphabetically; and when the same owner appeared in the returns for more than one union, the acreage and valuation were amalgamated. The county return so prepared was then set up in type and a proof forwarded

to the Inspector of the district, with instructions to assemble the clerks of the several unions in the county at some convenient place and, in consultation with them, to make a final revision of the county return.

The returns so revised are now presented; and it is submitted that from the course adopted in revising them a very great degree of accuracy in regard to area and valuation has been obtained.

In regard to the names of owners, it must be observed that the person entered in the valuation and rate books as owner would not necessarily have such an interest in the property as to constitute him an owner within the meaning of the instructions for the preparation of the Return, and the union clerks were in such cases dependent on their own knowledge or on local inquiry and information obtained through the collectors of Poor Rate or other trustworthy parties; but even in regard to this part of the Return the course adopted, of submitting the Return for the entire county to the joint examination of all the union clerks of that county under the superintendence of the Inspector of the district, has materially reduced the probabilities of error, and it is hoped that few cases will be found in which the name of the owner is not correctly inserted, or in which the same owner is entered more than once in the same county.

Two sources of apparent, but not real, error should perhaps be noticed, viz. :—(1.) Cases where the person entered as owner holds under a lease for more than 99 years, or under a renewable lease, or a fee-farm grant. In such cases the owner of the fee, or of any interest in the property above that of the person entered in the Return, may expect that he should be entered as the owner; but this of course could not be done, as two owners could not be entered for the same property, and the requirements of the Return are complied with when a person is found having such an interest in the property as to constitute him an owner within the meaning of the instructions under which the Return has been prepared. (2.) In cases where a change of owners has taken place during the preparation and printing of the Return, but too late to be notified or inserted in the proof sheets.

The examination of the voluminous returns received from the clerks of the several unions, the checking the area and valuation in each, and the subsequent re-arrangement and consolidation of the union returns into county returns, as well as the general arrangement and summarizing of them, and carrying them through the press, has devolved upon the statistical department of this office, the principal of which, Mr. DANIEL THOMAS TRACEY, has discharged the heavy additional duty thus thrown upon him with much zeal and intelligence, and in a manner which, in the opinion of the Board, merits the highest commendation.

B. BANKS,
Secretary.