

ANALYSIS  
OF THE  
GRAND JURY PRESENTMENTS  
FOR THE  
CITY OF DUBLIN,  
FROM THE YEAR 1822 TO 1834 INCLUSIVE,  
ADDRESSED TO  
THE JUDGES OF THE COURT OF KING'S BENCH,  
BY THE  
OFFICERS OF THE PRISONS  
OF DUBLIN.

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M.DCCC.XXXV.

Houses of the Oireachtas

THE HOUSES OF

THE DUBLIN

TO THE  
RIGHT HONORABLE AND HONORABLE

**THE JUDGES**

OF

**THE COURT OF KING'S BENCH,**

My LORDS,

A recent meeting of the citizens of Dublin having been held for the purpose of considering the “practicability of applying a remedy to the manifold abuses of the Grand Jury system,” (the most prominent amongst which was the alleged enormous amount of the annual assessment,) and a resolution having been adopted to address a memorial on the subject to your Lordships, “setting forth the shameless continuance of that system in all its infamy and corruption;” we, as agents under that system in its criminal department, and as officers of your Lordships’ court, have considered it our duty to lay before you a “plain statement of plain facts,” in illustration of a subject with which your Lordships may be familiar, but of which, unfortunately, the public at

large know little, except through the medium of erroneous and grossly exaggerated statements.

In 1823, during the prevalence of a similar clamour, we had the honor of laying before the members of your Lordships' court, an analysis of the annual presentments for Dublin from 1764 to 1822 inclusive, and are therefore relieved from any necessity of trespassing on your valuable time by further reference to that remote period, more especially as the whole subject of our Grand Jury cess and system was in the most ample and unreserved manner considered by a select committee of the House of Commons, (of which the present Chancellor of the Exchequer was chairman,) which committee did, in 1825, after long and mature consideration, report as follows : " A most important branch of the local taxation of Dublin is the levy raised under the authority of Grand Juries. The amount of this tax, as well as the rapidity of its increase, is very remarkable. Yet with reference to its increased amount, it is but just to state, that it has been in many cases occasioned by circumstances over which the Grand Juries had not the means of exercising any control, the amount of presentments being in some cases fixed by law, and in others subjected but to a limited discretion. During the last twenty years, various very considerable public works have been undertaken and executed : new prisons have been completed : the sessions house built : several new bridges erected : the

Dublin militia and army of reserve raised : poundage paid to collectors : new officers appointed : medicines, necessaries, and bedding, provided for the sick : fees remitted to prisoners : prisoners have become more numerous, and the food furnished has been of better quality and in greater quantity. In the twelve years from 1811 to 1822, during which the presentments amounted to £250,111, a great increase of expenditure has been owing to the erection, furnishing, and annual support of Richmond Bridewell ; to the furnishing and support of Smithfield Penitentiary ; to the increased number of officers and servants for these prisons ; to the appointment of two additional chaplains ; and to an *extraordinary* increase in the number of prisoners, and a consequent heavy expenditure for accommodating, prosecuting, feeding, and clothing them.”

Such, my Lords, was the language of a committee of the House of Commons, when the presentments did not exceed £25,000 per annum, and when the number of committals to Newgate only amounted to 2183 : the presentments now amount to £35,000, and the annual committals exceed 5,000. To explain these facts, and to prove that they are owing to the “extravagancies” of Grand Juries, and to the neglect of their officers, reference has been made to the “evidence given before the royal commissioners, as testified by them in their Report to the legislature.”

What the nature of the evidence, adduced before the royal commissioners, may have been, we cannot know, because it has never been published: its true character, however, may be estimated from the credit attached to it by the commissioners themselves, who in their Report to parliament, (after referring to that already made by a committee of the House of Commons,) thus express their opinions: “ From various causes, the increase in the amount of the Grand Jury taxation of Dublin has been enormous within the last fifty years. The principal have been the additions made by authority of parliament to the salaries of several officers, the provisions made for payment of the fees of prisoners by presentment, and the very considerable addition which has been made to the jurisdiction of the criminal courts of the city of Dublin, by adding to it, under the police act, for purposes of criminal jurisdiction, all such parts of the county of Dublin as are situate within the circular road. From this last cause, as well as from the increase of population and crime, has arisen the necessity of building an increased number of prisons, maintaining an additional staff of officers, the support and payment of the fees of prisoners, who in reality belong to the county, and a serious addition to the expense of prosecutions, while the whole of this vast increase to the burdens, for the sustainment of which the Grand Juries are bound to provide, is left to be borne solely by the county of the city.”

Having submitted to your Lordships these extracts from two valuable Reports respecting the Grand Jury assessments of Dublin, we shall at once proceed to particulars with which our official duties have made us conversant, and are content, without further observation, to rest the defence of our official characters upon the inferences deducible from the succinct analysis we now have the honor of laying before you, of the presentments for the city of Dublin from the year 1822 to the present time. For the general correctness of that analysis (though hastily instituted) we hold ourselves responsible, and to it we confidently appeal for the refutation of ignorant assertions, or wilful misrepresentations. The analysis itself will be found in the annexed Table, to which, from the highly important facts it develops, we earnestly solicit your Lordships' attention. Having been forced reluctantly to trespass on your Lordships' time, we shall not occupy it with further observations than such as are necessary for explaining the nature of the Table, and for specifying a few of the inferences deducible from it.

The Table exhibits, *first*, the year : *secondly*, the total of annual presentments : *thirdly*, the portion thereof unconnected with criminals, their support, or superintendance, &c. : *fourthly*, the most remarkable presentments constituting that portion : *fifthly*, the net amount of criminal presentments, including all expenses incurred for prosecuting, feeding, lodging,

clothing, and employing prisoners, for coals, candles, soap, medicines and necessaries for the sick, for the rents and repairs of four large prisons, and for maintaining the sessions house as a court of justice, for the remission of fees on prisoners, and for the payment of all the officers and servants employed in, or connected with those general prisons and sessions house : *sixthly*, the number of annual committals to Newgate and Smithfield Penitentiary : *seventhly*, the annual expense of medicines directed by physician and surgeon : and *eighthly*, the amount of necessaries ordered by both.

The whole of these details are exhibited in contrast with the year 1822, that year being the last under the immediate cognizance of a parliamentary committee.

A slight inspection of that document will readily warrant the following inferences :

1st. That in the space of twelve years, the presents and the committals have regularly progressed : the *former* in 1822, being to those in 1834 as 25 to 35, whilst the *latter* are in the same years as 21 to 50.

2dly. That the non-criminal portion of the presents constituted in 1822 about *one-fourth* of the entire charge, and was nearly *one-third* of the

criminal portion, whereas now it is more than *one-half* of the entire, and exceeds the criminal portion in amount; the non-criminal portion in 1822 being to the criminal, as £6,700 to £18,428, and in 1834, as £18,847 to £16,135.

3dly. That whilst the non-criminal presentments have thus rapidly advanced, the amount of criminal presentments has declined from £18,428 (Irish currency) in 1822, to £16,135 (British) in 1834, though the committals in the former year were 2,183, and in the latter 5,064. Thus the committals of 1822 are to those of 1834 as 21 to 50, whilst the criminal expenditure in the same years has been but as 18 to 16.

4thly. From these premises it follows, that in all the various objects, already enumerated under the fifth, or criminal head, great and steady economy must have been exercised by the several Grand Juries, and great efficiency manifested by its several prison officers, as otherwise it would have been impossible to have provided for the accommodation and support of 5,064 prisoners in 1834, at a less expense than for 2,183 in 1822, and to have superintended this increased number without any augmentation of the staff of officers and servants, and without any other increased expense, except in changing their salaries from Irish to British currency. In producing this remarkable result, the rate of provisions has, without

doubt, had some influence, but any variation discoverable in that rate cannot account for the steady decrease in the general expense, a special instance of which decrease, totally independent of the price of provisions, is furnished by the last three columns of this Table, in a department peculiarly obnoxious to public cavil. From an inspection of these columns it will appear, that the medicinal charges have gradually fallen from £492 in 1822, to £244 in 1834, a decrease further observable in this present year, the charge for which does not exceed £225; a *fact*, the more creditable to the medical officers, (who have to attend *four* large prisons, and not *one* merely, as has been more than insinuated,) because upon reference to past presentments it may be seen, that previously to the year 1800, and even much later, when the annual committals never exceeded 700, and when there was no Richmond Bridewell or Smithfield Penitentiary in existence, the medicinal charges often amounted to more than £300. The charge for necessaries supplied to the sick has likewise decreased more than half, and did not exceed £120, even in the expensive year of 1832, when cholera was epidemic in all the prisons of Dublin.

All these facts are the more remarkable, inasmuch as the criminal presentments are those in which alone the Grand Juries can exercise some degree of discretion; whereas, with the exception of roads, they can exercise little or no control over the non-criminal

portion. For an explanation of the causes of the increased expenditure on roads, we beg to refer to the statement of Mr. John Semple, which appeared in the *Freeman's Journal* of the 26th ult.

We have the honor to subscribe ourselves,

Your Lordships'

Obedient, humble servants,

THE OFFICERS OF THE PRISONS OF DUBLIN.

November 14th, 1835.

# Houses of the Oireachtas

## TABLE,

EXHIBITING THE GRAND JURY ASSESSMENTS FOR THIRTEEN YEARS ON THE CITY OF DUBLIN, FOR CRIMINAL AND OTHER PURPOSES.

1 YEAR.	2 Total of Annual Pre-sentments.	3 Portion thereof not for Criminal pur-poses.	4	5 Amount of Criminal Presentments.	6 Annual Commitm'ts to Newgate and Smith-field Penitentiary.	7 Medicines ordered by Physician.	8 Surgeon.	Necessaries by both.
			Most remarkable among the latter: viz. Repayment of Loans to Government; three Grand Jury Officers, Secretary, Treasurer, and Accountant, who, with the Charge for the Inspectors General, and for Parliamentary Returns, are estimated at £1,000 per Annum. Hospitals and Dispensaries; Roads; New Works; Bridges; Acts of Parliament; Newgate Guard; Reform Registry; Lunatic Asylum; Board of Health; Poundage to Collectors, &c. &c. &c.*					
1822.	£. 25,128	£. 6,700	Viz. Loan, £2,600. Grand Jury Officers, &c. £1,000. Hospitals, £600. Roads, about £1,000. Poundage on Presentments and Wide-street Tax, at 5 per cent. about £1,500. Total, £6,700.	£. 18,428	2,183	£. 254	£. 238	£. 100
1823.	27,344	7,500	Viz. Loan, £2,600. Grand Jury Officers, &c. £1,000. Hospitals, £600. Roads, £592. New Works at Bridewell, £980. Poundage, £1737. Total, £7,500.	19,844	2,802	230	158	134
1824.	28,892	7,918	Viz. Loan, £2,600. Grand Jury Officers, &c. £1,000. Hospitals, £600. Roads, 1,552. Poundage, £1925. Valuation Act, £241. Total, £7,918.	20,974	2,947	237	172	99
1825.	29,004	8,366	Viz. Loan, £2,600. Grand Jury Officers, &c. £1,000. Hospitals, £600. New Presentments for Dispensaries and Witnesses, £279. Roads, £1,785. Poundage, £1,833. Tread Mill, £269. Total, £8,366.	20,638	2,892	255	199	116
1826.	28,701 British currency.	8,924	Viz. Loan, £2,398. Grand Jury Officers, &c. £1,000. Hospitals, Dispensaries, &c. £1,032. Roads, £1,394. Valuation Act, £1,248. Weights and Measures, £232. Poundage, £1,620. Total, £8,924.	19,777	2,944	253	179	116
1827.	25,426	8,207	Viz. Loan, £2,398. Grand Jury Officers, &c. £1,000. Hospitals, Dispensaries, &c. £1,034. Roads, £1,954. Poundage, £1,821. Total, £8,207.	17,219	3,409	233	119	87
1828.	26,211	8,232	Viz. Loan, £2,398. Grand Jury Officers, &c. £1,000. Hospitals, Dispensaries, &c. £785. Roads, £2,262. Poundage, £1,787. Total, £8,232.	17,979	3,640	173	136	91
1829.	27,303	8,409	Viz. Loan, £2,398. Grand Jury Officers, &c. £1,000. Hospitals, Dispensaries, &c. £1,007. Roads, £2,243. Poundage, £1,761. Total, £8,409.	18,894	3,701	185	134	76
1830.	28,306	9,787	Viz. Loan, £1,938. Grand Jury Officers, &c. £1,000. Hospitals and Dispensaries, £1,027. Donnybrook Bridge, £1,400. Newgate Guard, £351. Roads, £2,141. Poundage, £1,786. Witnesses and Coroner's Fees to Surgeons, £144. Total, £9,787.	18,519	4,003	177	144	63
1831.	29,66.	12,147	Viz. Loan, £1,938. Grand Jury Officers, &c. £1,000. Hospitals and Dispensaries, £1,219. Donnybrook Bridge, £3,000. Newgate Guard, £702. Roads, £2,072. Poundage, £1,869. Witnesses and Coroner's Fees, £347. Total, 12,147.	17,416	4,163	145	145	74
1832.	32,151	15,154	Viz. Lunatic Asylum, £1,911. Grand Jury Officers, &c. £1,000. Newgate Guard, £702. Registry under Reform Bill, £2,787 18s. 9d. Roads, £3,677. Donnybrook Bridge, &c. 1,962. Hospitals and Dispensaries, £979. Poundage, £1,908. Witnesses and Coroner's Fees, £228. Total, £15,154.	16,997	4,025	149	127	120
1833.	32,967	17,176	Viz. Lunatic Asylum, £3,946. Grand Jury Officers, &c. £1,000. Newgate Guard, £702. Cholera Board of Health, £3,000. Hospitals and Dispensaries, £1,023. Roads, £4,741. Poundage, £1,830. Registry Lists, £404. Witnesses and Coroner's Fees, £530. Total, £17,176.	15,791	4,435	124	112	52
1834.	34,982	17,847	Viz. Lunatic Asylum, £2,703. Grand Jury Officers, &c. £1,000. Newgate Guard, £702. Board of Health, £3,000. Hospitals and Dispensaries, £1,097. Ball's Bridge, £2,134. Poundage, £1,153. Roads, £5,157. Witnesses and Coroner's Fees, £901. Total, £17,847.	17,135	5,064	131	113	66

\* It may here be noted, that some of the heaviest items among these remarkable presentments are for objects, which in England are generally provided for out of the poor's rate.

1	2	3	Non Criminal Presentments	Criminal Presentments	5.	6	7	8	
1836	33,565	17,715	Gd. Jury Officers. 565.7.6 Mds. & D. 230.15.6 D. Poundage. 268 ~ 9 H. Bench Offrs. 45 ~ Dub. Militia 50 ~ Insp <sup>r</sup> Gent. - 20 ~ Coroners - 84 ~ D. Medt. Fees 208.3.7 Paol. & Govt. Returns 42 ~ Reg <sup>r</sup> . Lists - 1.056.17 ~ Ass'ty. & Dish. - 1.034.4.5 Staff. Stamps 677.1.3 & Law Costs 3177.1.3	Sept. Present- Fees & Salaries } 2.999.0.5.2 Accruins - 137.3.9 Govt. Officers } 1.527.13.10 of Prisons } Architect 56.17.6 Newgate Officers } & Hatchmen 1.157.12 ~ Food & Sundries } Newgate 2.579.13.7 Com <sup>r</sup> . Fees & } Witnesses 312.11.7 Staff. & Fine } for Juries 20 ~ Jury Lists 14.18.11	15.850	4,742	113	112	65

Newg<sup>t</sup>. Guard 551.6.3  
 Lunaticks 2.272.3 ~  
 Roads Walls &c 4.462.6.7  
 Poundage to Col<sup>r</sup> 2.591.5.10  
 Purchase of Ground 456.19.2  
 Govt. Loan rep'd. 100 ~  
 Bd. of Health 3.000 ~  
 £ 17,715.13.10

App<sup>r</sup>. for Med<sup>r</sup> 235.10.2  
 D. Accessories 65.3.6  
 Hst<sup>r</sup> P. & Co<sup>r</sup> }  
 Hatch & Repairs 658.16.6  
 Smith, d. Penet<sup>r</sup> 1.672.12.9  
 Fish. Board 4.422.1.9  
 £ 15.850.1.0