

# THE IRISH BUILDER.

[JUNE 1, 1880]

## CORK CITY AND ITS ENGINEER.

THE Town Council of Cork met on Tuesday to consider a proposal for the appointment of a "Deputy Surveyor," at a salary of 150 guineas per annum, and an additional draughtsman at 36s. weekly. It appears that Mr. O'Keeffe was, early in last year, appointed to the position of City Engineer, and undertook the duties of the office, as set forth in the advertisement:—"To elect a duly qualified city engineer and local surveyor, who would be required to devote his whole and exclusive time to the works of the Corporation, to take entire control of all current works, including Corporation Waterworks, and all new works, preparing plans and superintending and carrying out of same. He will not be allowed to accept employment from any other body or person; age not to exceed fifty years; salary £350 per annum; and to hold office during the pleasure of the Town Council."

Alderman Nagle called attention to the terms of the advertisement. He regarded the report founded on the demand of Mr. O'Keeffe, made at so early a period after his appointment, as a complete departure from the terms of that advertisement, and he wished to remind them of the fact that at the period of his appointment there was something pending about Anglesea Bridge, and the matter was deferred for the purpose of having the new engineer appointed, who would look over the entire matter and superintend it. No sooner was that done than Mr. O'Keeffe, influenced by some reasons which went down at the time, abjured the superintendence of this bridge, and it was handed over to Mr. Fidler, of London, who was to get a large commission on it. He need not tell them that during the time of Sir John Benson those bridges were constructed without the assistance of an outside engineer. He need only point to Patrick's Bridge and North-gate Bridge as having been done by him, and as having been included in his salary of £200 a-year. Having thrown out so much of his original appointment, the next thing that cropped up was the Artisans' Dwellings Act, and this Mr. O'Keeffe gave up entirely, and required that a special engineer should be appointed for the purpose, at a salary of four guineas a-week. He moved that the report be rejected, and that Mr. O'Keeffe be respectfully requested to re-consider the terms of his original appointment.

Mr. Treacy said it appeared to him that the committee had entered into this matter with great haste, and they never considered what was the expenditure in connection with the engineering of the city for the past two years. Were they to continue in the same groove? If they were, he would prophesy that the engineering expenditure for the next year would be £3,000, and how were the citizens to hear such a heavy burden for one of the departments of the Corporation? He was very much afraid that Mr. O'Keeffe had been led away by the advice of his friends. Mr. O'Keeffe, if he had taken up and completed the Anglesea Bridge as he promised when seeking his present appointment, would have saved £1,200 or £1,500 to the citizens. At the council, when the Artisans' Dwellings scheme came up. Mr. O'Keeffe distinctly stated that he would not undertake to carry it out. What that would cost for the next few years it would be hard to tell. Again, when the question of constructing a reservoir came up, Mr. O'Keeffe refused to carry out the work, even though furnished with Mr. Stephenson's plans. He gave Mr. O'Keeffe credit for refusing to do that work, for, if carried out, it would cost £20,000 or £30,000, while it now appeared there was no necessity whatsoever for the reservoir. Again, the question of the sewerage of the city came on, and Mr. O'Keeffe distinctly refused to have anything to do with it. Now he would ask what work did Mr. O'Keeffe intend to take up? If he required new assistants for every job that turned up, the sooner they looked to it the better, for they could never stand such an outlay of money

Mr. O'Keeffe made a long statement as to the circumstances connected with the city works which induced him to ask for assistance.

In the end, Alderman Nagle's amendment was carried by 24 votes to 6.