

CORK RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION.

THIS association held a meeting on the 3rd inst. in the Assembly Rooms, South Mall.

The Chairman (Dr. Colthurst), in opening the proceedings, said they were all aware of the circumstances of the bridge. The Corporation were to give £15,000 towards the cost of it, and the Harbour Board were to give £10,000, which would make £25,000. It appeared that amount was not sufficient, and the Corporation went for a bill to give them power to borrow £10,000 more. A great number of ratepayers in Cork thought it a marvellous thing that a wretched little bridge should cost so much money, besides other small sums not taken into account at all. The Ratepayers' Association thought it right, as far as their powers lay, to baffle the Corporation in the getting of that bill, and they resolved to go to some expenses distinctly with a view to save greater expenses, because they thought there were other funds upon which the Corporation ought to draw, namely, the securities of Mr. Rooney and Mr. Delany. They of the Ratepayers' Association thought there was no necessity whatsoever for that bill, and that what the Corporation ought to do was to have recourse to the securities and make them payout. At the meeting of the Corporation on Friday last the Town Clerk laid before the Council a report, a few clauses of which he (the Dr.) would take the liberty of making a running comment on. The Town Clerk said—"The *locus standi* of the eight ratepayers was disallowed, as I predicted." "What a prophet he was! He (the Dr.) presumed it was because of their small number that their *locus standi* was disallowed, and if the number was small whose fault was that? It was the fault of the Town Clerk, who sent forth a manifesto that any ratepayer who signed the petition of the Ratepayers' Association would be mulcted in heavy costs. The petition was only out one day, and ninety ratepayers had attached their signatures to it, and it was only by the undue intimidation of the Town Clerk that they withdrew their names.

Mr. Mulcahy—And many an uneasy night he caused to those until they withdrew their names.

Chairman—The Town Clerk further stated in his report that the Committee of the Lords gave no reason why they refused costs against the ratepayers' deputation, therefore they did not say that the opposition to the bill was "vexatious," and did not say it was the ground on which they objected to the petition. The Town Clerk also said he was for allowing the deputation to test their *locus standi* for the purpose of showing how utterly they had failed and broken down. He said he was overruled by the committee, who determined to make their counsel resist the *locus standi* of the deputation. He was for giving the members of the deputation an opportunity of proving "on their oaths the slanderous statements they had been in the habit of indulging in from time to time reflecting on the Corporation and their officers." Now, with reference to these expressions, he would simply designate them as nothing but stale oysters out of season. This was the usual practice of the Town Clerk. He never brings a particular or definite charge, but indulges in vague generalities. He (the chairman) compared the Town Clerk's tactics to those of the attorney who advised the barrister that he had no case, and to abuse his antagonist. And there was this arid Town Clerk having the effrontery to charge that association with having made "slanderous statements," without referring to a single fact. It was impossible to deal with such charges. They had, it was true, made charges of corruption against the Corporation of Cork, and he maintained that those charges were substantially true, and the best proof of the fact that there was jobbery and corruption in the Corporation was that, though they had an income of

£93,000 a year, they were £257,000 in debt; the rates were 11s. in the £, and 700 ratepayers are processed every year for rates. It was not true to say that the Committee of the Corporation went over to London solely on account of the opposition of the Ratepayers' Association, but on account of the Harbour Board.

Mr. Treacey—Some of them admitted that it was on account of the Harbour Board Bill they went over solely. The deputation had succeeded very well in their visit to London. A certain gentleman said in the corridor of the House of Lords that as soon as he got back to Cork he would break up the Ratepayers' Association, but he (Mr. Treacey) could inform that gentleman that there would be a Ratepayers' Association in Cork after he (the gentleman in question) was in Davy Jones's locker.

The Chairman said if their association had not appeared there at all, the Corporation, would have gone over to London all the same; so that it was nor fair to the blame of the cost on them.

Mr. Nunan proposed, "That the decision of the House of Lords rejecting the application for costs by the Corporation clearly proves that the Town Clerk was not justified in threatening those who signed the petition."

Mr. Sandiford seconded the proposition, and in an eloquent speech vindicated the action of the Ratepayers' Association.

Mr. Creedon referred to Alderman Hegarty's impeachment of the Corporation when he stated at a ward meeting that there was jobbery and corruption existing in it, which he also repeated in the Council; and when he asked for a committee to inquire into the truth of his assertion, the Town Clerk immediately said that any discussion upon the subject would be irregular, and thus prevented the investigation taking place.

Mr. Prendergast moved a resolution expressing their confidence in the members of the deputation and thanking them for their services. Mr. Mulcahy seconded the motion, which was supported by Mr. O'Mahony, and agreed to unanimously.

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