

KERRY

No.8 1975 KAHS

SEÁN Ó LÚING

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Co. Dublin

I

Ní hé Nennius is cáis liom, dá  
ársaidhe a chlú-san,  
Ná Gofraidh Fionn Ó Dálaigh, dhin  
bárda do mhúineadh,  
Ná leathan-hallaí lána, cé breághtha  
iad ná Lúna,  
Ach na bóithre fada bána 's iad am  
shámh-tharraing chútha.

—Osborn Bergin<sup>1</sup>

BAD ROADS, HARD TRAVEL

In modern times the use of tarmacadam has obliterated all the character of old-time roads. The romantic picture evoked by Osborn Bergin's lines, quoted above, about long white roads beckoning into the distance, is true no longer. In times gone by the stone-breaker was a feature of country life, seated at the roadside by his heap of small boulders, reducing them to regulation-sized lumps and handing his hammer at times to eager schoolboys who took turns at breaking while he made conversation with them. The broken stones, used to fill craters in the roadway, served their purpose well enough for horse and cart traffic but many a rueful cyclist (and that includes this writer) was convinced they only made bad worse. With the advance of progress the stonebreaker has disappeared into the realms of tradition and legend, and with his going schoolboys and travellers have lost good company. No doubt the roads have improved.

The general condition of the Kerry roads in the beginning of the last century must have been too wretched for words. Even so sturdy a traveller as Daniel O'Connell complained of them. Writing to his wife on 12 October 1821 he describes the desperate road from Tralee to Limerick as being 'in a frightful state'<sup>2</sup> while on his way from Killorglin to Tralee he was 'jumbled in a carriage over the worst of all possible bad roads'.<sup>3</sup>

1. *Maidean i mBéarra* (Áth Cliath 1918) 37.

2. W. J. Fitzpatrick, *Correspondence of Daniel O'Connell* I (London 1888) 76.

3. *Ibid.*, 77.

16 road 65/65.3/65.3.2

The state of the road, if road it could be called, between O'Connell's native parish and Tralee at a still earlier time must have been really bad. John Wiggins describes its condition when he first came to Glenbeigh in 1807 or 1808. 'There was,' he said, 'one mountain road which passed at the side of a very extraordinary cliff like Penman-mawr in Wales and was extremely rugged and rough, it being the only road in the whole district'.<sup>4</sup> Few wheeled carriages passed by way of it at that time but it was the only passage between the Baronies of Uibh Ráthach and Dunkerron. There was not then a single car in the whole district. 'They had sticks placed with cross-bars and drawn upon the ends, but very seldom even that for back load; horses with baskets were then used.'<sup>5</sup>

#### GRAND JURIES, BAD ROADS

= equivalent to Co. Council

It was the duty of county grand juries to build and maintain roads. These bodies commonly neglected to build roads through hilly or difficult border terrain, each leaving the job to its neighbour, so that nothing useful was done by either body. Very often roads were built in relation to some local object and without reference to making them the nearest possible connection between distant and important points. The overall result was a circuitous and uneconomic road pattern. For this Richard Griffith blamed the grand jury system.<sup>6</sup>

Strong criticism of the Kerry grand jury in its role as roadmaker was uttered by Dr John Church, a land agent near Listowel, formerly in medical practice. He gave as an example of their incapacity, the Kerry portion of the Tralee-Limerick mail coach road which, although built and repaired at great expense, remained in some parts impassable due to their incompetence. This was the road complained of by O'Connell. Dr Church considered that the system of having a road built by 'the gentry of the county' was causing these gentlemen the loss of public confidence and esteem and that the more it was taken out of their hands the better.<sup>7</sup>

4. Evidence of John Wiggins in *Minutes of evidence before select committee on the state of the poor in Ireland: second report* (Parliamentary papers, H.C. 1830 VII) no. 654, 364.

5. *Ibid.*, 365.

6. Evidence of Dr Richard Griffith in *Report from the select committee on post communication with Ireland* (Parliamentary papers, H.C. 1831-2 XVII) no. 716, 181.

7. Evidence of Dr John Church in *Minutes of evidence taken before select committee appointed to inquire into the disturbances in Ireland* (Parliamentary papers, H.C. 1825 VII) no. 20, 429-30. The following is a resumé.

The mail coach road from Limerick to Tralee was placed 'in the hands of the country gentlemen' with the result that it was impassable in parts while some

#### TRALEE-TARBERT POST ROAD, 1810-22

This road had a record of mismanagement. It was described in an official report as 'the great circuit road between Limerick and Tralee', by which judges were designed to travel for legal sittings. Owing to its unfinished condition however, the judges were being obliged to make a detour from Limerick to Cork and thence to Tralee, a round of about sixty miles. In the spring of 1817 a state of confusion existed about the finances of the road, and this, in addition to the deplorable state of the road itself, forced the Kerry grand jury, in an effort to solve the problem, to appeal to the government for a re-survey and valuation.<sup>8</sup> As a result the government sent Sir Charles Coote in the spring of 1817 to Kerry where he made a minute valuation of the expenditure on 'the new post road' between Tarbert and Tralee and an estimate of the cost of completing it. The task was no simple one. According to the figures given him by the county treasurer a total of £20,167/4/8½ had been granted at various times, between the summer of 1810 and the summer of 1815, towards this road. Of this sum only £212/17/4½ remained in his hands. The original estimate, made by Mr Larkin, was for £16,179/4/6. The county treasurer calculated the excess spent at £3,775/2/10. While the Kerry grand jury committee, composed of Messrs M. Fitzgerald, Daniel Cronin and John Collis, claimed it to be £10,309/7/7½, giving a total of £26,488/12/1½.

In ironing out the difficulties, Coote based his survey on the work he found done. He considered he found value for £10,102/15/3, no more. He estimated it would take another £10,997/0/4 to complete the road satisfactorily. His comments on the state of affairs he found along the road, provide if anything, an endorsement of the view that

parts were very well made, depending on whose hands it fell into. The greater part was badly done. £14,000 or £15,000, perhaps more, was spent on it. For some time, it was impassable, then an engineer was appointed, and it was now a fine road. A second presentment was made, the first being 'injudiciously executed'; Dr Church believed the entire expense was between £26,000 and £30,000. The length of road was 26 miles. Before the new road was commenced there was a very good old road. The result of the first expenditure of public money was to fail in giving a new road and to injure the old one. There was 'a good line of communication previous to the expenditure of £30,000, but subsequent to that, the communication was injured'. Dr Church explained: 'They followed the line of the old road; and, in widening it, instead of shaping it properly, they threw down the stuff upon it, neither giving a sufficiency of gravel or other material, nor attending to the drainage; and so they spoiled the old road without making a good new one', pp. 429-30.

8. *Appendix to sixth report from select committee on Holyhead roads* (Parliamentary papers H.C. 1822 VI) no. 513, 54.

grand juries were unfit instruments to provide good roads. The works on this road had been in progress since 1810. No care had been taken to prevent travelling on it before it was finished, and it was impossible to find out at the time of his survey what exactly had been spent on what since the beginning. But he had no hesitation in saying that all the money granted had not been applied. In many parts of the road there had been little or no work done, and in some parts none at all. He explained however that a large part of the road passed through deep soft bog, and that it was impossible to find out what had been spent on this part. If the sums claimed to have been so were actually spent they were a total loss, because the road materials were laid down before the bogs were properly drained.

Upon that portion of road between Tarbert and Listowel there has been a great expenditure, and it is almost entirely of this description of deep soft bog, although it certainly was a most expensive line to make, if even in the most experienced hands; yet had this road been sufficiently drained before gravelling some thousand pounds of the alleged expenditure might have been saved. It seems to have been worked with great industry; but parts of it are now of quite a concave shape, from the road having been sunk in the centre by being travelled on before it was well drained, and which operation of draining requires yet to be performed, or it will soon burst and break up altogether.

To add to Charles Coote's accountancy difficulties many of the deputy overseers were dead or insolvent, making refunds out of the question. He pointed out that unless the money was advanced and the work done the following summer, the damage would be so great by the ensuing winter as to make the road impassable.

He stressed that this was another unhappy instance of not committing work of great importance to the care of professional and experienced persons 'and proves the necessity of the alteration in such part of the post road laws'.<sup>9</sup>

A presentment for Coote's estimate was made in spring and again in summer 1817, but the government refused to advance the money until a proper experienced person, having its approval, should be put under contract to make the road, or superintend the expenditure.

The grand jury did nothing to complete the road for two years afterwards, during which time it continued in use, although in an unfinished condition, and became worse. It was then taken in hand by a contractor who obtained an estimate of about £1,000 higher and

9. *Ibid.* 96-7

the work was stated in a report of 1 April 1822, to be in progress.<sup>10</sup> Dr John Church of Listowel stated that an engineer was appointed and that it was now (in 1825) 'a fine road'.<sup>11</sup> The engineer was probably the celebrated Alexander Nimmo.<sup>12</sup>

#### TRALEE-KILLARNEY POST ROAD, 1811-1822

Sir Charles Coote also made an inquiry into the rather complicated finances of this road and reported his findings to the Secretary of the General Post Office, on 10 February 1815. For various reasons the cost had gone far beyond the original estimate of £10,612/2/0, made by Mr Larkin in spring 1811. According to Coote's calculations, over £10,000 was lost to county Kerry in the making of this short length of road. Coote was critical. He thought the original estimate would have been enough, had the operation been placed in the hands of properly skilled persons. He declined to pass any definite judgement on the soundness of bridges, because he had seen within the past few years 'the grossest imposition in the interior of the abutments of a bridge in that county' and outward appearance was no guide at all. Pipes and gullets had been badly built, many of them being choked, and incapable of carrying the water now lying on the surface of the road. He considered the works to have been done in a slovenly and ill-judged manner without skill or good management and recommended that future work on the road be placed on contract.<sup>13</sup> It seems that Coote's estimate of £4,489/16/6 to complete the road was accepted. A report dated 1 April 1822, states that the road 'was capitally made, and for the amount of my estimate; but is now in want of repair'.<sup>14</sup>

#### THE INSURRECTION OF 1821

Great tracts of Kerry, Cork and Limerick were served by the poorest of roads or had none at all. Generally speaking this was the state of affairs until about 1821. That year the potato crop failed, causing widespread distress.<sup>15</sup> A Whiteboy insurrection broke out in the

10. *Ibid.*, 54.

11. *Minutes of evidence*, etc. (note 7) no. 20, 429.

12. *Minutes of evidence before select committee of the House of Lords* (Parliamentary papers, H.C. 1825 VII) no. 200, 130.

13. *Appendix to sixth report*, etc. (note 8) no. 513, 94-6.

14. *Ibid.*, 54.

15. The general causes of distress were stated by Dr John Church as follows: 'In 1820, there was the failure of the banks, that spread ruin and dismay over the country. In 1821, came on the Whiteboy rebellion; and in the year 1822, came the famine. These calamities, coming over a country, three years in succession, enough to overturn and destroy everything.' (*Minutes of evidence*, etc. (note 7) no. 20, 434.

uplands bordering Kerry, Limerick and Cork. Government forces sent to quell it found themselves baffled by the lack of roads, and the elusiveness of the insurgents.

RICHARD GRIFFITH'S INSTRUCTIONS

In the summer of 1822 Richard Griffith,<sup>16</sup> civil engineer, was sent to survey the disturbed counties with instructions from Marquis Wellesley to carry out public works in the south of Ireland under Acts 1 and 3 George the Fourth. Part of these public works was to consist of roadmaking. The principle laid down by Wellesley was that the roads were to open direct and easy communication through mountains and other districts, in which there were no roads usable by wheeled carriages and where it was improbable that any good road would be built by the local grand juries.<sup>17</sup>

Griffith had a further object in view. It was 'to suggest . . . the adoption of such other public works as appear to me most likely to give a permanent stimulus to industry, and enable the agriculturist and manufacturer to bring their produce to market at a reasonable rate'.<sup>18</sup>

Griffith arrived in Limerick on 6 June 1822. Having completed his business there by July 1 he passed into county Kerry, where his report says he found the inhabitants as distressed as in Limerick without any exertions being made to provide work for them, apart from a few parishes in south Kerry. All relief was distributed free.<sup>19</sup> The insurrection act was in full force owing to the recently disturbed state of the country.<sup>20</sup> There were large garrisons in Newmarket, Kanturk, Millstreet, Castleisland, Listowel, Abbeyfeale, Glin, Newcastle, Dromcollogher and Liscarroll.<sup>21</sup>

16. Sir Richard John Griffith (1784-1878) geologist and civil engineer, born Hume Street, Dublin. 'Between 1822 and 1830 nearly 250 miles of road, some of the best in Ireland, were either constructed or improved under his supervision in what was then one of the wildest and most inaccessible parts of the country.' As commissioner of valuation, he directed the valuation survey of Ireland, the work by which he is chiefly known. See Dict. nat. biog. VIII (London 1908) 681-2. See also Mary Olive Hussey, Sir Richard Griffith—the man and his work, *Dublin Historical Record* (1965) 57-75) *Administration* 14 (1966) 314-26, Sir Richard Griffith Bart: *Dublin University Magazine* 83 (1874) 432-5.  
17. Evidence of Richard Griffith in *Report on the roads at the public expense in the southern district of Ireland* (Parliamentary papers, H.C. 1831 XII) no. 119, 2.  
18. Evidence of Richard Griffith in *Report on the roads made at the public expense in the southern district of Ireland* (Parliamentary papers, H.C. 1823 X) no. 249, 3.  
19. *Ibid.*, 5.  
20. *Report on the roads* (note 17) no. 119, 3.  
21. *Ibid.*, 4.

GRIFFITH IN TRALEE

Arriving in Tralee Griffith called a meeting there on July 2 'of the gentlemen of the western parts of the county of Kerry'. The gentlemen said they were anxious to provide work and to place the direction of it, and the payment of the people, in Griffith's hands. Before leaving for Killarney and Cork, Griffith appointed Hill Clements, an engineer, as his assistant in Kerry. Those present agreed to act under the direction of Hill Clements.

At Griffith's request a meeting was also called of the central committee for the relief of the poor of Kerry. He could get no accurate information from this body about the extent of the distress in each parish, without which he was unable to form a just idea of the real state of the poor in the county. He explained to them that they must procure accurate parochial returns at once. They promised to do this and have a general statement ready for him by the following Saturday.

THE PORT OF TRALEE

July 3

On the following day Griffith inspected the country around Tralee and reported to William Gregory.<sup>22</sup> Under Secretary for Ireland.

This day I examined the bay of Tralee, below Blennerville, which is about one mile to the west of this town. There are two or three situations where a safe harbour might be formed at an expense of 7 or 8,000 l. But there is no accurate survey of the bay, which is a necessary preliminary to fixing on the best situation.

The flat land, skirting the bases of the mountains of the county of Kerry, is fully equal in fertility to any in Ireland; and I am decidedly of opinion, that a safe harbour near Tralee would give a great stimulus to industry by facilitating the export of corn, provisions and butter, direct from Kerry to England. At present, a farmer going with his produce to Cork, is absent from home six days, at a great expense as well as loss of time. The inhabitants of Tralee and its neighbourhood are also desirous of having a canal made from Blennerville up to this town, a distance of one mile, on which vessels of about 80 tons burden could ply. The expense would be about 5000L. Of this sum the inhabitants expect they would be able to raise by subscription about 2000 L. These round sums are mentioned

22. William Gregory (1766-1840), Under secretary for Ireland 1812-30. For career see Lady Gregory (ed.) *Mr Gregory's Letter-Box 1813-1835* (London 1898).

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merely to give his Excellency some idea of the expense at which the proposed works can be executed; but if he desire it, I can have such a survey of the harbours and canal made, as will enable me to decide on the situation of the pier, and form an accurate plan and estimate of the works.

July 4

Tomorrow morning I leave this town for Killarney, where I have called a meeting of all persons interested in presentments granted at last assizes in the Southern Division of the county; and on Tuesday I shall proceed to Cork to effect the same object.

July 5

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant

Richard Griffith

to William Gregory Esq.<sup>23</sup> *Under Secretary for Ireland*

As a result of his inspection, Griffith recommended that a pier be built at Tralee. He said the surrounding land was equal to the best in Ireland but that on account of the prevailing low prices of corn, cattle and butter it would be too costly for a farmer to bring his produce to Cork. If a pier were built in Tralee harbour where vessels of 100 to 150 tons could load and unload, a considerable export trade would follow which would stimulate industry.<sup>24</sup> He estimates the pier would cost £8,000.<sup>25</sup>

#### PLANS FOR TARBERT HARBOUR

Griffith's capacity for work was marvellous. That is only one of the conclusions one may reach from a look through his correspondence in the Public Record Office, amongst other places. On July 25 he had a letter from William Gregory who enclosed a memorial which the inhabitants of Tarbert and district had sent to the Lord Lieutenant regarding the building of a pier at Tarbert harbour. Griffith had already been to inspect this harbour on his way from Limerick. In the course of his reply, dated at Cork 8 July 1822, he said:

Sir,

I have had the honour to receive your letter of the 2d instant, enclosing a memorial to his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, from the inhabitants of the village of Tarbert and its vicinity (in the County of Kerry and Limerick) respecting the erection of a pier at the harbour of Tarbert, on the river Shannon.

23. *Report on the roads* (note 18) no. 249, 19-20.

24. *Ibid.*, 12.

25. *Ibid.*, 13.

On passing from the county of Limerick into Kerry on Monday last I remained several hours at Tarbert, and examined the harbour with great care. Next to Kilrush, it is certainly the most important on the River Shannon, there being deep water, good anchorage, and complete shelter from the prevailing winds. As a fishing station it is of less value than many others, being rather too high up the river; but, in a commercial view, it is of great importance, as giving a direct vent for the agricultural produce of a large portion of the counties of Limerick and Kerry.

In the schedule of the proposed boat harbours, sent by the Fishing Board to his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, Tarbert is mentioned. But as it would be advantageous that vessels much larger than fishing boats, should be able to take in loading at the pier, I am of opinion that it would be advisable to increase the scale of the intended pier, so as to make it subservient to both purposes.

Not being in direct communication with the Irish Fishery Board, I have no means of knowing the exact situation, or what their final views are respecting the proposed piers and harbours on the western coast; and without this information it is impossible for me to give any but very general opinions respecting them.

I have the honour to be, Sir

Your most obedient humble servant

Richard Griffith

Wm Gregory, Esq.<sup>26</sup> *Under Secretary for Ireland*

#### THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF IRELAND

Griffith has set out in detail his roadplanning and other projects in an important series of reports in which he calls his area of operations 'The Southern District of Ireland'. This southern district comprised Limerick, Cork and Kerry. It was bounded on the north by the river Shannon and Keeper mountains, on the east by Tipperary and Waterford, and on the south and west by the Atlantic.<sup>27</sup>

This region Griffith divided into a northern and a southern part, separated from each other by a line drawn along the Blackwater valley by way of Fermoy, Mallow, Millstreet and westwards through Killarney and Castlemaine. Griffith may well have been a reader of

26. *Ibid.*, 20-21.

27. *Ibid.*, 3.

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Caesar's Gaul, for his account of this varied landscape seems to have echoes of that classic.

The southern district in general he described as showing great variety of scenery and soil, east Limerick, north Cork and the 'western part of the county of Kerry' being composed of limestone, covered with rich fruitful soil. These tracts were well served with roads, very populous, interspersed with towns and villages, and had resident gentry.

#### THE NORTHERN UPLANDS, OR HILL DISTRICT

However the fertile parts of Cork, Limerick and Kerry were separated from each other by a wild, neglected and deserted country, which hitherto had formed an almost impassable barrier between them. This country was bounded on the north by the Shannon between Loughill and Tarbert, on the south by the Blackwater between Mallow and Millstreet and from thence by the southern mountains to the west of Killarney. The country was hilly but not mountainous, with clayey soil, the strata composing it being made up of coal and its associated rocks. This large expanse contained 600 Irish or 970 British square miles (Griffith invariably gives both measurements and uses 'British' and 'English' interchangeably). Parts of it were very populous, but there were only two small villages and two resident landlords, namely, the knight of Glin on the Shannon, and Mr Leader of Dromagh on the Blackwater, the district between their two houses being 30 miles Irish or 38½ British.

This district, Griffith noted, had formerly been the seat of the rebellion of the earl of Desmond in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. He pointed out that the only passes ever made through it were those made at the instance and expense of the British Government immediately after the rebellion. These passes, or roads, were then laid out in straight lines without any reference to the nature of the country and ran directly over hill and valley from one military point to another. In many cases the rise in ascent amounted to one foot in four, while one foot in six was common. This, and the imperfect structure of the bridges, was the cause of these roads being neglected by the surrounding grand juries. Consequently during the Whiteboy insurrection of 1821 there was no road passable for horsemen in wet weather.<sup>28</sup>

28. Report on the southern district in Ireland; containing a statement of the progress made on the several roads carried on at the public expense in that district (Parliamentary papers, H.C. 1829, XXII) no. 153, 2.

#### BORDER PROBLEMS

As might be expected in the circumstances, reported Griffith, the people were turbulent, and their abodes being nearly inaccessible for want of roads, 'their wickedness has frequently escaped punishment'.<sup>29</sup> The district was on the confines of Cork, Limerick and Kerry and belonged mainly to absentee proprietors. For these reasons it had been neglected. The Cork and Limerick grand juries were unwilling to spend money on roads at the extremities of their counties. The Kerry grand jury, though anxious to open up communication with Cork and Limerick, had not the power to do so beyond its own limits.

It is not, therefore, surprising, that during the disturbances of the winter 1821, and spring of 1822, this district was the focus of, and asylum for, whiteboys, smugglers and robbers; and that stolen cattle were driven into it from the surrounding flat and fertile country, as to a safe and impenetrable retreat.<sup>30</sup>

#### THE VICISSITUDES OF SMUGGLERS

It will be noted that Griffith mentions smugglers to be amongst the troublesome elements of the upland country. This risky occupation was carried on to a considerable extent on the south-west coast of Ireland, of which the Kerry coastline formed a large part, in 1820 and for several years preceding it. The practice was very nearly abolished in 1821, however, owing to the exertions of the water guard. At the close of 1821 a great number of these smugglers quitted the coast and became Whiteboy leaders in the hill district. Griffith's evidence is explicit and fascinating. He stated:

Smuggling was conducted by a chain of people connected with the coast, and running through the mountains; a great number of these people belonged to the particular district (the southern district) I have been describing, and finding that their trade in smuggling was destroyed by the exertions of the preventive water guard, they turned their attention, and were the chief actors in the Whiteboy warfare.<sup>31</sup>

The insurrection broke out in the autumn of 1821 in Co. Limerick. The smugglers, and some discontented farmers connected with them, became the fomentors of the Whiteboys, and were the chief leaders of insurrection in the mountain parts. This was Griffith's opinion.

29. Report on the roads, etc. (note 18) no. 249, 6.

30. Ibid.

31. Minutes of evidence, etc. (note 7) no. 20, 227-8.

1:4 1:6

Military Roads  
Glensheen  
Pike

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He also thought the presence of the smugglers was acceptable to the people of the mountain district because they gave the people tobacco at a cheaper rate. He thought the farmers of the country, in expectation of the rents being lowered, gave them all the help in their power, and afterwards in many instances joined them.<sup>31</sup>

#### ROADBUILDING PROJECTS

Griffith made this large tract of uplands his special concern.<sup>32</sup>

32. Griffith made a close inquiry into the social and economic state of this area, which he called the hill (or hilly) country in his reports. The following is a condensed account from his evidence in Parliamentary papers, H.C. 1825 VII no. 20, 226-31 (note 7).

He found that a great number of the farms in it were held by non-resident middlemen and that a great number of tenants held, not from the head landlord, but from middlemen. In fact middlemen prevailed to such an extraordinary extent that he found in many instances four such intervening between landlord and tenant and in one case he knew of seven. He had very good opportunities of finding out the facts. 'In opening new roads through the country, I thought necessary to apprise every individual connected with the land, that the work was about to commence; in that case I ascertained who they were, and in one instance it was necessary to communicate with seven individuals, six of whom were interposed between the head landlord and the occupying tenant.' This related to the same piece of ground, each deriving a profit from it. The first of the seven individuals held from the landlord, while the seventh was the occupying tenant. Under the middleman system the landlord generally received from a third to a half of the full rent.

The greater part of the land in the hilly district produced heath and coarse grass. No more was cultivated than was required to support the people. The crops were oats and potatoes. The tenants paid the rent by the produce of butter and eggs. Generally speaking the district was let not by the acre but by the farm. The lower tenants or labourers, who held from the resident farmers, paid a high rate, from one to two pounds an acre for their cottage and field, but the farmers themselves, who held large tracts of mountain and a small portion of arable land, paid by the lump. They paid a good deal less in recent years than formerly.

Griffith considered that 10 to 15 shillings an acre (modern denomination 50p to 75p) would be a fair rent, given the ground was good pasture or land that could be made arable. At the present time they promise to pay the middleman about 20s. and acre. The Irish acre was used in the area, the English or statute acre being unknown as a measure of land north of the Blackwater. The people sold their butter in Cork, conveying it on the backs of horses to Newmarket, where a few of them jointly hired a car to bring it to Cork. The mountain land on which the cattle were fed was generally poor and wet, the herbage consisting of coarse grass, rushes, heath and moss. There were common mountains in the district on which tenants grazed cattle, but usually each farm included a large tract of mountain land on which the cows were fed in summer and the young cattle reared.

Three-fourths of the 970 square miles consisted of rushy and heathy pasture; one-fourth was under cultivation. Griffith considered the whole of it to be capable of improvement and hoped that in consequence of better roads, three times the extent of land would be brought under cultivation within twenty years. In 1824 (when he was describing it) the whole hill country was in a state of nature, the

Despite its desolation and neglect he considered it could be made productive.

Its clayey soil, when dried, and manured with lime, soon becomes fertile, and produces excellent grass . . . The district is everywhere surrounded by limestone, and several hills, containing that substance, occur in the interior. Nothing, then, is wanting but good roads . . .<sup>33</sup>

Approval had in fact been received for three new lines of road through this district on which considerable progress had already been made. Although some of these were outside the Kerry boundary they were related to the country's economy and trade, as Griffith's commentary makes clear. He forecast that the opening of roads through this mountain district would have an effect on its future civilisation and benefit the surrounding country 'and . . . this object has never been lost sight of'.<sup>34</sup> Wellesley's purpose in lacing the district with roads may have been primarily strategic but all through his reports Griffith's preoccupation with improving the living standards of the people stands out clear.

gentle declivities of the hills remained undrained, the cultivated ground was mostly confined to the river valleys and the slopes of some of the drier hills. The height of the hills over sea level was between 300 to 500 feet while the highest hill could not be much over 1,000 feet.

To the question, whether he considered the men of the district more lawless in their habits than the people of the adjoining plains Griffith replied that the men were very similar: 'the women are inferior, because they rarely go beyond the nearest market town'. The men were more inclined to turbulence than the plainmen on account of being less fearful of arrest in cases of riot. More than half the men spoke English, but a great number of the women did not. Griffith never had any feelings of personal insecurity amongst them and never went about armed. Some of the middlemen carried arms and some were attended by horse police. He thought this might be necessary for their protection, as generally they were obnoxious to the people and more likely to be attacked than any others. Griffith himself lived near Mallow in the middle of the most disturbed district in Ireland, outrages taking place within half a mile of his house, but his house was not barred or bolted at night in any particular manner. His family was in residence there with him for upwards of a year. He had no fear of disturbance, neither had Mrs Griffith. When he was away from home, which on an average was six days out of seven, the female servants were afraid, especially if they saw fires around them. Griffith himself travelled the hill country day and night in perfect security. He had no fear of being harmed. His name was known throughout the entire hill district and a large portion of the inhabitants knew him personally.

33. *Report on the roads* (note 17) no. 249, 6.

34. *Ibid.*, 7.

653.2 (7)

## ROADS ALREADY IN PROGRESS

1. *Abbeyfeale to Newmarket*

Communication between north Kerry and Cork city, Griffith points out, was very indirect. By the road in use at the present time it was 78 Irish or 99 English miles from Listowel to Cork. By the new road in progress, which passed through the hilly country in a south-easterly direction, the distance would be reduced to 49 Irish or 62½ British miles. This new road had been laid out along the Feale valley as far as the river's source, and from there it descended to Newmarket through the valley of a tributary of the river Duhallow. In point of level it was better than the circuitous route from Listowel to Cork which skirted the hilly country and passed through Tralee, Killarney and Macroom. In the prevailing depressed state of agriculture, it was most important, argued Griffith, that the farmer should be able to carry his produce to market with the least possible expense. For this purpose the new road would be of great value. According to returns he had obtained from the weigh-house of Cork, upwards of 30,000 firkins of butter, present value about £52,000, were sent yearly from north Kerry and the immediately adjoining district of Limerick, to be sold at Cork. He describes the primitive method of transport used before this time:

In order to save the great length of road by Tralee and Killarney, the small farmers are in the habit, during the summer season, of sending their butter on the backs of horses by the present mountain path, as far as Newmarket, where a few join together, and place the butter in carts, from whence it is drawn to Cork. The distance between Newmarket and Listowel, the nearest part from whence the butter is sent, is 25 Irish, or nearly 32 miles British; and for this distance, from eight to twelve horses, and as many men, are employed to convey twenty-four firkins of butter, the common load for a single horse cart! Similar facts might be stated, respecting other species of agricultural produce, were it necessary to particularize them.<sup>35</sup>

2. *Castleisland to Newcastle*

This road crossed the hill country nearly at right angles with the Abbeyfeale-Newmarket road. £1,500 was granted for opening it; the sum required for its completion, including **two large and several small bridges**, was estimated at £7,000, making a total of £8,500.

Griffith said this road would be very level. It would shorten the

35. *Ibid.*, 7.

distance between Killarney and south Kerry on the one hand, and the cities of Limerick and Dublin on the other, by 23 Irish or 29½ British miles. The existing road from Killarney to Limerick, by way of Tralee, Listowel and Tarbert was 75 miles Irish, 95½ British. By the new road the distance would be 52 Irish, 66 British.

3. *Newmarket to Charleville*

This third road under construction was designed to open up a part of country until then quite inaccessible. Before its commencement there was no safe pass for horsemen through it. Hence during the recent disturbances, several hills near the line of the new road were used for the meetings and even camps of the insurgents.

## OTHER PROJECTED ROADS THROUGH THE NORTHERN SECTION

Griffith proposed three other lines of road through this northern part of his district. He suggested that half their cost be paid by the grand juries of the counties through which they passed and the other half out of a fund deriving from the 1st Geo. IV, c. 81, that is to say, by the government.

The three roads he proposed were:

1. The continuation of the Charleville-Newmarket Road from **Charleville to Castleisland**, a distance of 15 miles Irish or 19¼ British, but in fact requiring only 14 miles of new road, **as one mile of the existing mountain road next to Castleisland might be preserved.** 'This road, if completed, would open a direct and very desirable communication between Tralee, Killarney and the middle part of the County of Kerry, with the northern parts of the County of Cork, and the adjoining districts of the counties of Limerick and Tipperary.'<sup>36</sup> Estimated cost, including bridges, was £6,400.<sup>37</sup>

Where is this road?

2. The opening of a new road between Listowel and Ardagh, Co. Limerick. The length of the new road would be ten miles. It would open up a direct and very short communication from Listowel and north Kerry to the city of Limerick. By the existing road the distance between Listowel and Limerick city was 41 miles Irish, 52½ British. By the proposed road it would be reduced to 30 Irish, 40 British miles. The estimate was £4,650.<sup>37</sup>

3. The third road proposed, five miles in length, connecting the coal mines of Coolclough and Dromagh with Mallow, lay outside Kerry.

36. *Ibid.*, 8.

37. *Ibid.*, 13.

6532 (8)



Griffith considered that these three roads, along with those already in progress, would soon change the character and appearance of the whole country between the Shannon and Blackwater. From being wild, neglected and almost unknown he hoped it would become the principal scene of traffic and thoroughfare between the counties of Kerry, Cork and Limerick.

Such were Griffith's plans for the northern part of his district.

#### A NEW BRIDGE ON THE FEALE

Griffith proposed to build a good bridge over the Feale at Listowel to replace the one carried away in great part by the autumn floods of 1822. The bridge was on the mail coach road between Limerick and Tralee by way of Tarbert, and was of great importance to intercourse between counties Limerick and Kerry, also between north and south Kerry. This partial bridge was the only one remaining (in 1822) over the Feale between its source and the sea. The fords were difficult and deep in dry weather, and impassable after slight rains.<sup>38</sup> The estimated cost was £3,000.<sup>39</sup>

#### POETS AND BRIDGEBUILDERS

Certain methods of bridge-building in the southern counties did not come up to the standard required by Griffith and in his report for 1824 he has this comment to make:

In building bridges deep foundations were never thought of, as the mason working under Grand Jury presentments considered only the superstructure which meets the eye, and had no objection to his bridge being carried away by the next flood, as such catastrophes, which are frequent, create more work. Even in mountain countries, bridges are usually founded on rounded stones, which form the bed of the stream, above which an imperfect pavement is placed, which is intended to serve as an artificial foundation; this soon gives way, and, of course the bridge which may be said to be built on castors, follows it.<sup>40</sup>

He also notes that grand juries often refuse to finance bridges from a feeling that they would be imperfectly built.<sup>41</sup> The collapse of a bridge is in fact the subject of an exchange between two north

38. *Ibid.*, 11.

39. *Ibid.*, 13.

40. *Report on the southern district of Ireland* (Parliamentary papers, H.C. 1824 XXI) no. 352, 5.

41. *Ibid.*, 5.

Kerry poets, Séamas Ó Catháin and Uilliam Ó Cathasaigh. This particular bridge 'went with the flood of the Feale' as Ó Cathasaigh puts it. Bridges over this river, it appears, were not very durable in the early nineteenth century. Griffith points out that a great part of the bridge on the Feale at Listowel was carried away by the autumn floods of 1822,<sup>42</sup> also that the old bridge over the Feale on the Kerry-Limerick border, a 21 arch structure, was 'long since carried away by the impetuous floods of this mountain torrent', having been built on a gravel bank with no foundation.<sup>43</sup>

The poetical interlude between the two men centred particularly on the matter of 'foundation', Ó Catháin gravely reproaching Ó Cathasaigh and his associates for leaving the bridge 'without support or strength' so that it rolled down the incline with the onset of a 'flood or two', something which need not have happened, stated the poet, had his fellow craftsman known how to construct a foundation with proper bastions and fundaments. There follows a hint that the absence of sobriety had connections with the affair.

Ó Cathasaigh replies in a tone of lofty deprecation. The suggestion that the bridge was left in any way defective was an affront to the integrity of its good masons. It was the incessant downpour which caused the torrents which, he explains, hampered their best endeavours so that:

'the work being fresh, with no fine day,  
our labour sped down the slope and away'.<sup>44</sup>

It is doubtful if either poet regarded the matter as seriously as

42. *Report on the roads* (note 18) no. 249, 13.

43. *Report on the roads* (note 40) no. 352, 2.

44. Here are brief extracts from the verses of the two poets. I am indebted to Pádraig de Brún for this reference and a transcript of the extracts:

1. Séamus Ó Catháin chun Uilliam Uí Chathasaigh. Part of this poem was printed by An Seabhad, *Béaloideas* 19 (1949 [1950]) 172-4.

1.81 Da dtuigeadh sibh trá an chéad lá's i ngrinneall ceart cóir  
an *foundation* d'fháil, níor ghá a bheith briste ar a thóin;  
tuille ná trá go bráth ní bhainfeadh dá threoir  
dá leigeadh sibh páil dá buanharda ag seasamh go deo.

2. Freagra Uilliam Uí Chathasaigh:

1.57 Do bhí fearthainn is ár ag tuiteam gach lá  
'na gcaisibh le fánaidh sléibhte  
is tuille gan sánas 'na tulcaibh dána  
tar portaibh go hárd ag scéachtain  
nach tug aga chun pálach, *pile* ná stáca  
do chur i dtathag mar gharda roimh an dtréantsruth;  
do bhí an obair friseáilte 's gan soineann aon lá againn,  
gur imigh chun fáin ár saothar.

65-3-2 (9)

might Richard Griffith. More than likely it was a subject of tavern merriment.

#### SOUTH KERRY ROADS

The southern and more extensive part of Griffith's area presented its own problems. This part he defined as the country south of a line drawn along the valley of the Blackwater westward through Killarney and Castlemaine. Excellent roads served this region from east to west, following the line of the valleys. However, the roads running north and south and crossing mountain chains were laid out so unskillfully as to be impassable for wheeled carriages, except in very few cases. Griffith planned a series of roads to improve communications in south Kerry and economically related parts of Cork, with the grand juries and government sharing the cost half and half. These were as follows:

##### 1. *Macroom to Glenflesk*

The country between Macroom and Glenflesk was mountainous, situated on the borders of two counties, and neglected by the grand juries of both. For want of a carriage road between Glenflesk and Macroom, all the inhabitants of the southern baronies of Kerry, particularly Glanerought and Dunkerron in the valley of Kenmare river, were obliged, if wishing to travel to Cork, to make a very long detour through Glenflesk, almost as far as Killarney, before reaching the coach road. The distance from Kenmare to Cork by the existing road was 64 miles Irish or 81½ British. The distance by the road Griffith proposed would be reduced to 45 Irish or 57½ British. The length of road to be made was only ten miles and the estimated government expense would not exceed £1,750. In other words the total estimate was £3,500. This road would also shorten the distance between Killarney and Cork by five Irish miles. Griffith pointed out its advantages. The principal disposable produce of south Kerry was butter. The quantity sent annually from there to Cork amounted to 10,000 firkins, the entire of which was at present carried on horseback, there being generally two, sometimes three firkins placed on each horse. If a level road were opened, wheeled carriages would soon be introduced, by which means 'one man and horse could, with equal facility, perform the same work, which now requires twelve men, and as many horses'.<sup>45</sup>

45. *Report on the roads* (note 18) no. 249, 10.

##### 2. *Caherciveen to Cove Castle*

South-west Kerry, comprising the baronies of Uíbh Ráthach and Dunkerron, and situated on the north of Kenmare river, is described by Griffith as being for the greater part inaccessible for want of roads. A fairly good road, though hilly in parts, joined Kenmare to Cove Castle, a distance of 22 miles. There was an excellent road 20 miles in length between Killorglin and Caherciveen. Part of this had recently been completed by means of a government loan to the Kerry grand jury which was to be repaid by instalments. Between Caherciveen and Cove Castle there was a totally roadless line of coast, 17 miles in length. Griffith recommended the building of a road between these two points, thus completing the coastal circuit from Kenmare to Killorglin, a distance of nearly 60 miles, and opening up direct communication with Cork city via Kenmare. Today the magnificent scenic road, forming part of the 'ring of Kerry', a favourite tourist route, corresponds with Griffith's project. Griffith was not thinking of tourism. Conscientious public servant that he was, he knew the government tax-collectors did not like the free trade that was still pursued, though on a reduced scale, on this part of the Kerry coast. He writes:

The completion of this road would also greatly facilitate the operations of the Preventive Water-Guard at Ballinskelligs and other points along the coast, by enabling them to approach the creeks and bays with increased celerity, where landings are now made by smugglers with comparative impunity.<sup>46</sup>

##### 3. *Kenmare to Glengarriff*

Griffith stressed the importance of this road. It would complete the direct communication between Bantry Bay and Tarbert. Only fourteen miles separated Kenmare and Bantry, but at the present time, by the most direct road a carriage could pass, the distance was 64 miles. Griffith had not yet had a chance of surveying the proposed line of road to enable him form a correct estimate of its cost, but he thought £4,000 would be sufficient. Half of this should be paid by Cork and Kerry counties or by the landed proprietors on both sides, the marquis of Lansdowne and the earl of Bantry.

##### 4. *Kanturk to Cork*

Griffith proposed building a new road 14 miles in length, which

46. *Ibid.*, 11.

would be a continuation of the line of road already in progress linking Listowel via Newmarket and Kanturk with Cork.

These were the most important and necessary works. Griffith did not intend that they should all be commenced in one season, but gradually, so that the grand juries would not have to tax their counties too heavily.

Griffith used the direct labour system with great success. He contracted with the workmen and tradesmen only, without permitting any middlemen or contractor between himself and them. He divided the different kinds of work into numerous small lots and contracted for each with the labourers of the adjoining lands. This enabled him to be fair to all. It also gave him the chance to introduce improved tools and implements into the country, by entrusting them to the labourers, and taking repayment for them by easy instalments. The result was that the same labourers, from being unable at first to earn more than four pence a day, could now easily earn from ten pence to a shilling, 'and the consequence has been, that the most disturbed districts of the spring of 1822, have remained perfectly quiet during the present winter, and the poor inhabitants express themselves as happy and contented'.<sup>47</sup>

Griffith hoped that when the roads were completed, their farms would become much more valuable. They could draw lime to manure them, and carry their produce easily to market.

#### PROGRESS TO FEBRUARY 1824

##### *Listowel to Newmarket*

By February 1824, considerable progress had been made on some of these roads. On the Listowel-Newmarket line, the first 16 miles, from Newmarket to the junction with the Castleisland road, was in a very forward state. The remaining nine miles between the Castleisland road and Listowel, were only just commenced. This part was not mentioned in Griffith's 1823 report, as that exact line of road had not then been determined.

It passes through the mountainous, and hitherto inaccessible part of the parish of Duagh, in the county of Kerry, and crosses the Oubeg and Smirla River. When completed, it will tend in a great measure to civilize the inhabitants of a wild and extensive district, who have hitherto been literally hemmed in between the rivers above mentioned, neither of which are fordable in wet weather.<sup>48</sup>

47. *Ibid.*, 12.

48. *Report on the roads* (note 18) no. 249, 10.

##### *Castleisland to Newcastle*

In laying out this road many difficulties were met. Close to Castleisland, situated in the limestone valley of Kerry, the hill country rose at a very steep angle to form a ridge nearly 700 feet high at Glansharoon Hill, which was the lowest pass, and which it was necessary to ascend in conducting a road towards Newcastle. The former road by Glensharoon Pass rose in many parts by 1 foot in 7. The new road Griffith laid out rose by 1 in 27½. On reaching the summit, it would descend very gradually to the valley of the Feale, which it was planned to cross by a bridge with one semi-elliptical arch, 70 feet in span. The old bridge of 21 arches had long ago been carried away by a flood. But, as usual, the bridge had been built on a gravel bank, without any foundation. Consequently some of the arches were annually undermined and broken down. At this point the road passed into Co. Limerick.

Good progress had already been made on this road. The greater part of the first 10 miles, from Castleisland towards Abbeyfeale, was drained, formed and fenced, and a large portion of the rough stones required for the bridges had been quarried.

##### *Macroom to Glenflesk*

Considerable progress had been made on this road. Given good weather, Griffith expected it to be nearly completed by the end of the following autumn.

##### *Plans for Kenmare-Bantry road*

Griffith recommended building a road across the mountain ridge separating Bantry bay from the Kenmare river, over which no road passable for wheel-carriages had up to then been made. In the summer of 1823 he examined the country between Kenmare and Bantry and 'discovered a very favourable line for a new road' the laying of which he strongly recommended to the Lord Lieutenant, giving his reasons as follows:

If this road were opened, it would not only benefit the country in its immediate vicinity, but would complete a direct and most important line of communication between the river Shannon at Tarbert, and the south coast of the County of Cork, near Skibbereen, a distance of 84 miles.

In the event of a maritime war, this road would be found very useful to the public service. It runs very nearly parallel to, and is never very distant from, the sea coast; and passes through

165-3.2 (11)

the towns of Tarbert, Listowel, Tralee, Killarney, Kenmare, Bantry and Skibbereen.<sup>49</sup>

GRIFFITH'S SYSTEM

Griffith found the people he had to employ in a wretched and despondent state, as a result of the Whiteboy warfare of the winter of 1821, on which they had been engaged, and the bad famine of the spring and summer of 1822. They distrusted roadmakers, judging them evidently from past experience. They were in no way co-operative at first. They wanted to be employed by the day, and do as little work as possible. Griffith wanted to employ them on piece work and pay for everything by measurement.

He divided the work into numerous small lots, to each of which he appointed 10 or 12 men, one of whom he selected as 'Ganger'. He then let the work by contract to these groups, paying for everything done at a fixed rate, by the perch for fences, by the cubic yard for the excavations of earth and rock necessary to form the road. The ganger kept the accounts and was made responsible for the tools. For this he received an extra shilling in the pound. The works were paid for once a month. Where persons able to read, write and keep accounts were found among the occupants of the land through which the road passed, the gangers were always selected from them. Without special permission, no person was allowed to be employed in any gang who lived more than a mile away from either side of the road. So populous was the country that in every case but one, numbers living within that limit applied for work to whom no immediate work could be given. Griffith often had to change the gang so that each man might have his turn of employment. This system was entirely successful in preventing outlaws and strangers of bad character from gaining admission and making mischief. Griffith found he needed caution, firmness and good temper. The people could not calculate their earnings, had no confidence in the justice of the government officials and often threw up their work at the end of a week or fortnight. By degrees however both sides began to understand each other better. The workmen finding with experience that they could earn good and regular wages became more industrious. Presently some became so expert that they could double what they first earned. Griffith commented:

On the whole, I must say, that when treated with steadiness and justice, no people were more easily managed than these moun-

49. *Ibid.*, 6.

taineers. They are naturally a fine people; but they have been frequently oppressed by their immediate Landlords. They are grossly ignorant and strongly prejudiced: if educated and employed, they would soon become good and peaceable subjects.<sup>50</sup>

ALEXANDER NIMMO IN KERRY

Richard Griffith and Alexander Nimmo<sup>51</sup> were two of the great landscape makers of nineteenth-century Ireland. In the early half of the century Nimmo planned and superintended an extraordinary number of road and harbour works on the coast of Ireland. Inhabitants of Galway city remember him yet in the expression 'Céibh Nimmo'. He is known in Kerry for his survey of the county's bogs. He also superintended the line of mail coach road between Tralee and Limerick.<sup>52</sup> He had charge of the construction of two or three roads in Kerry which were begun prior to the distress of 1822 and had no reference to it<sup>53</sup>. He surveyed and sounded Valentia harbour at the same time as the bog surveys, and surveyed the mouth of Castlemaine river and harbour, and part of Kenmare river.<sup>54</sup> In the course of his evidence in 1824 before the select committee of the House of Lords appointed to inquire into the disturbances in Ireland, he supplied an interesting paragraph to the history of Irish education:

The county of Kerry is particularly celebrated for the fondness of the peasantry for education; most of them can read and write; a great many of them understand Latin; and I believe there are more students in Trinity College from Kerry than from any other county in Ireland; nay, more,—I have had several people working on the roads who had children in the College of Dublin.<sup>55</sup>

In the following report, printed in full, he describes the new road through the picturesque Glenbeigh valley, completed in 1824, which

50. *Ibid.*, 4-5.

51. Alexander Nimmo (1783-1832), civil engineer, born Kircaldy, Fifeshire, died in Dublin. Surveyed Irish bogs. Employed by fishery board to survey Irish harbours and build harbour works and piers. Appointed engineer of western district in 1822, between which year and 1830 a sum of £167,000 was spent under his direction in reclaiming waste lands. (Dict. nat. biog. XIV (London 1909) 512).

52. *Minutes of evidence* (note 12) no. 200, 130.

53. *Ibid.*, 156.

54. *Minutes of evidence before select committee on survey and valuation of Ireland* (Parliamentary papers, H.C., 1824 VIII) no. 445, 92.

55. *Minutes of evidence* (note 52) no. 200, 163.

1653.2 (12)

112 connected Drung with 'the low country of Kerry', and the economic benefits which resulted from it to Caherciveen.

### KERRY ROAD

COPY OF THE REPORT of Mr. NIMMO to Mr. GALLOWAY, dated 1st March 1824, on the subject of the Road through Glenbegh and County of Kerry

PURSUANT to the instructions conveyed in the letter from the Secretary to the Commissioners for the issue of money, I examined, in my visit to the coast of Kerry, that part of the Road into Iveragh, which has been made through the valley of Glenbegh, connecting the new line, along the foot of Drung Mountain, with the level Road near the Bog of Castlemain and low country of Kerry.

I find the whole of the line has been extremely well formed and gravelled, and, in general, well fenced and drained, and that it is now ready for the use of the Public.

Near the west end of the line there are some perches of upper drain wanting, and the fences in many parts are slight, but these objections are of minor importance, seeing that from the care which the contractors have taken of the former portion of Road executed by them, which, after three years service, is now in very good order, I can have no doubt of the particulars I pointed out to them being properly attended to.

Several good rubble stone bridges have been executed on this line, one in particular over the Begh River, above forty feet span; but I am inclined to think the lower part of the line has been kept on too low a level, and some of the smaller bridges, these being built on the gravel, run a risk of being choked by the mountain torrents, so that it will be necessary strictly to attend to them for some seasons and have the channels properly opened.

The portion of the former contract, between the head of Glenbegh and the old Drung Road, has been corrected, as directed in a former Report of mine; also the junction with Lord Headley's Road, and which has been two years in use, so that the balance due by the overseers to the contractors on that account, viz. £.94. 2s. should be paid, in addition to the balance on the Glenbegh line, of £.348. 1s. And I would beg to repeat the recommendation I formerly made, as to having this

113 Road placed under a constant system of superintendence; for, like all mountain Roads, it may, if not attended to, "be exposed to great and sudden injury".

I cannot conclude this Report without alluding to the rapid improvement which is taking place in the barony of Iveragh since the construction of this Road.

A few years ago there was hardly a plough, car, or carriage of any kind; the butter, the only produce, was carried to Cork on horseback; there was not a decent public-house, and I think only one house slated and plastered in the village of Caherseveen; the rest, a few scattered thatched cabins; the nearest post-office thirty miles distant.

Since the new Road was made, there are, in three years, built upwards of twenty respectable two story houses, slated and plastered, with good sash windows. More than an equal number of new lots are taken; for one house the owner demands £.40. rent. A respectable shop, with cloth, hardware, and groceries; a comfortable inn, with six bed rooms and six horse stable: a post office, bridewell, new chapel; a quay which is covered with limestone, brought as a return freight for slates, this barony having no limestone in itself; a salt work; two stores preparing for purchasing oats, and a considerable traffic in linen and yarn. There are, perhaps, forty cars and carts, and a resident gentleman's coach; and it is remarkable, that all this is the result of the individual enterprize of the inhabitants, without any assistance of the proprietor; the ground is either college or glebe land. Nor has any public assistance been obtained, excepting for the quay, which was built by the Board of Fishery, and the bridewell and new road by the county.

I have no doubt of the continuance of the prosperity of this place, and of the consequent improvement of the whole barony.

(Signed) *Alexander Nimmo.*

March 1st, 1824.

Office of the Commissioners  
for the issue of money out  
of the Consolidated Fund, } 20th April 1824  
*John Galloway, Secretary.*<sup>56</sup>

56. *Minutes of evidence* (note 54) no. 282, 1-2.

1653.2 (13)