

THE DUTIES
OF
CLERKS OF PETTY SESSIONS
IN
IRELAND.

BY
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PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY.

DUBLIN:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR
BY JOHN FALCONER, 53, UPPER SACKVILLE-STREET.

1897.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS book, on THE DUTIES OF CLERKS OF PETTY SESSIONS, has been compiled from all the sources of information at my disposal—Statutes, General Orders, Circulars, Law Opinions, Files of Papers, Registry Books, Returns, &c. The collation of the enormous mass of such, accumulating since 1851 and following the slow growth of the splendid system now in practice, has been a work of excessive labour. Thousands of documents—entries, briefs, &c.—have been consulted, so as to ensure, as far as possible, the most rigid accuracy in the statements set forth, and to make the information given full and complete. The system of arrangement has been adopted after long and very careful thought. I have chosen to give, where possible, the exact words used in Orders, &c., and have placed under each excerpt the source whence derived. Where I have changed the original wording or effected amalgamations I have referred to the authorities. In addition to stating the definite rules laid down, I have endeavoured to hint at the Clerk's policy in the proper discharge of his duties, and have given practical suggestions arising from my own experience as Auditor and as Inspector, and from the experience of those Clerks who have favoured me with their views either by letter or in the course of my inspection.

Experience has shown me that with several hundred men performing daily a multitude of acts of greater or lesser importance, a certain uniformity of method is necessary to lighten their own labour and the labour of those to whom is entrusted the auditing of their accounts and returns. Such subjects as the advisability of uniform filing of papers or folding of returns, of using dots instead of 0's in money columns, or of forwarding returns at the earliest instead of the latest date allowable, may seem too trivial to treat of; yet every Clerk would do well to remember that a rigid adherence to the advice on such matters which I have given would facilitate the audit of the returns almost in the measure of the services of a Clerk in the Registrar's office.

Amongst the multitude of matters, great and small, treated of, many things may have been forgotten or passed over in ignorance, but the difficulty of collating the accumulated facts and theories resulting from the operations of the last twenty-seven years, and from the founding and development of a great and effective system of procedure which must sooner or later be adopted for the whole British Empire, must be my excuse for sins of commission or of omission. Each Clerk can give valuable aid for the future by calling the attention of the Department to any fact requiring alteration or to any blot or weakness in the system, and by suggesting amendments.

My part has been to formulate a Code by the collecting and the collating of an immense mass of materials, the major part of which, having been once carefully examined, need never be referred to again. The perfecting of the work will be aided by those who systematize and record their experience, and must rest with other hands than mine.

BRAM STOKER.

31st December, 1878.