

Each succeeding year turns up its peculiar subject for discussion. Last year it was agricultural statistics; this it is assuredly the guano monopoly. Almost every one of our leading national societies have already touched upon it. The Farmers' Club, as we have shown, was the first to open the attack; and since then both the English and Scotch Agricultural Societies have given it a prominent place in their proceedings. A fortnight since, Mr. Evelyn Denison, as President of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, was deputed to confer with Lord Clarendon on the subject. We have yet, however, to learn what came of the interview. And only on Monday last a more numerous deputation from the Highland Society paid an official visit to Lord Stanley of Alderley. The object was of course to procure, if possible, a supply of guano from elsewhere; and the first point urged upon the attention of his lordship was the policy of obtaining possession of the Kooria Moorla Islands. These deposits, it will be remembered, have been brought into notice chiefly through the agency of Mr. Caird, who, a week since, at a general council Meeting of the English Society, dwelt at some length upon their value. The representatives of the Scotch agriculturist went on to ask for an exploring expedition; at the same time they warned the Government from sanctioning any further monopoly, as it seems to be the case with Captain Ord and the Arabian Guano. Still the principle of monopoly is broken through when once we can establish an opposition to it; and the possession of these Koorla Moorla islands might work us good in a variety of ways.

We believe such conferences as these to be all in the right direction—the first step to the attainment of what we seek. It is sheer absurdity to say we must not look too much, or depend much upon the Government here. On the contrary, this is just one of those cases that we must look to the Government; and, moreover, let them know that we depend upon them. Pray who is to help us, or to put such a trade as this upon a proper footing, if our own flag does not? Was it any other business—Manchester, Birmingham, or Sheffield—so interested, their leaders would never stay their exertions until something was done. Neither must ours. The farmer has surely some friends in either House who will keep the question alive for him. But what did these Houses or the Government ever do for the farmer yet? the less sanguine may inquire. Little enough, perhaps. A sufficiently good reason for their doing more now they have the opportunity—and when they may do it, and not merely without injury, but with manifest advantage to themselves and the community.

The following conversation took place in the House of Commons:—

Lord Naas asked the Vice-President of the Board of Trade whether any correspondence had taken place between the Government and Messrs. Ord, Hudson, and Hayes, of Liverpool, relative to the license which had been granted to them, giving them for five years the exclusive right of raising and exporting guano from the three islands of Jiblea, Hanki, and Ghurzoad, on the coast of Arabia; and if so, whether he would lay that correspondence on the table of the House? Also, whether any guano had been raised from the islands, or whether the agents of the licenses had been driven away by the Arabs?

Mr. Labouchere believed the facts of the case to be these:—Some time ago this firm of Liverpool merchants applied for a license to obtain guano from these islands, which had been ceded by the Imaum of Muscat to the Government of this country. The discovery of the islands having guano was made by Captain Ord; and the Government, as a proper encouragement, granted to the firm an exclusive license. They were also informed that, as far as practicable, they should receive such support from the Government as could be afforded to them. At the same time, it was an enterprise of a very speculative nature. The parties to whom the licenses was granted went to the islands and endeavored to procure guano. Unfortunately some tribes residing not 20 miles off, who had a sort of trade there, considered their privileges interfered with. Captain Ord and his party applied for assistance to the Bombay Government; but, unfortunately, the Government of Bombay was unable at the time to give that assistance. A good deal of correspondence had taken place upon the subject, and he trusted arrangements would be made by which these parties would be able to proceed to the islands and test whether they did or did not afford a supply of the important article of guano. All that was needed was, that the Government of Bombay should support Captain Ord by the presence for a few days of a small armed vessel. That was the state of things at present. The Government were fully sensible of the importance of encouraging, by any means in their power, the supply of Guano to this country. He believed an hon. friend would shortly move for the papers, and there would be no objection to lay the correspondence on the table of the House (Hear, hear).