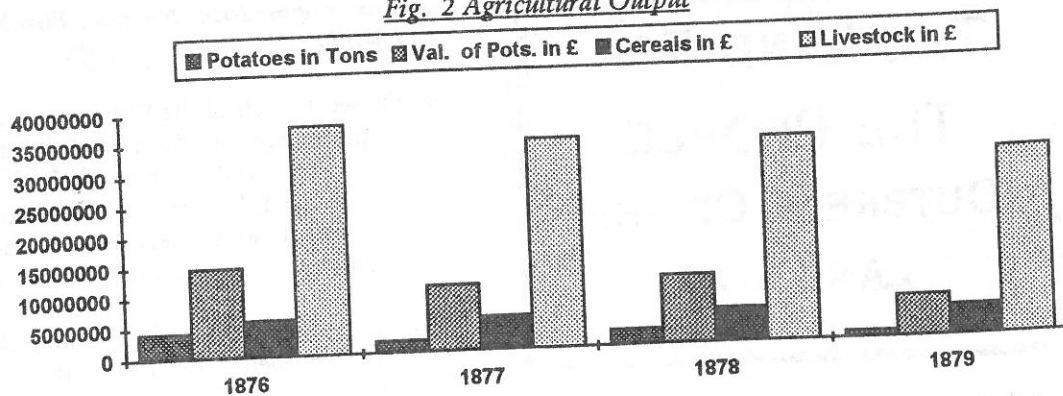


Fig. 2 Agricultural Output



### GRAZIERS

Land that became available through emigration, death or eviction of tenants at the time of the Great Famine was generally leased to large-scale graziers of cattle and sheep. Many such graziers came from Scotland and the North of England, others were speculators who purchased estates which were sold in the courts. The remainder were better-off tenants who had gradually added to their holdings by taking leases on neighbouring farms as they became available. After the Great Famine Graziers were the preferred type of tenant from the landlord's point of view as they had the financial resources to acquire long leases.

As a result of emigration, the number of subsistence-level tenant farmers reduced in the period 1847 to 1877. But as a result of the arrival of graziers, so did the total acreage being leased by subsistence-level tenants.

### TENANT FARMERS

In 1870, in 87% of cases, the tenant farmer held his land on a year to year basis in Connacht<sup>1</sup>. The average holding in 1871 was less than thirty acres<sup>2</sup>. In the typical case, about ten acres of this grew potatoes, the staple food of the tenant, other arable land was used for the growing of a cash crop such as oats, barley, vegetables flax or rape. On the remaining ground the tenant kept pigs, sheep and a cow or goat. To supplement his income the smaller tenant migrated annually to Britain as an agricultural labourer. The tenant farmer provided himself with almost all his own foodstuff which, in the main consisted of potatoes, vegetables and bacon. His purchases consisted of tea, salt, and

<sup>1</sup>House of Commons, 1870, lvi, P. 727.

<sup>2</sup>House of Commons, 1873, lxix, P. 375.

tobacco. Other expenditure included: the purchase of young pigs, second-hand clothes, church dues, alcohol and his passage to England or Scotland for migratory work. Few wore shoes. If his pig died, his cow proved barren or his crops gave a bad return, the tenant was forced into debt because rent consumed all his profit.

Tenant farmers experienced bad harvests in 1877 and again in 1878 due to a partial failure of the potato crop. In addition, an economic depression in Britain caused a slump in the prices of cash crops. See Fig. 2. Rents were left unpaid and the threat of eviction hung over the families concerned. In 1879, tenant farmers genuinely feared another famine, like that of 1847, as their credit with shopkeepers had run out. The number of criminal outrages committed against landlords and their agents by secret societies began to increase. See Fig. 3.

Fig. 3 Agrarian Outrages and Evictions in Connaught

