

14  
Mr. O M E R's

L E T T E R

T O T H E

P U B L I C.

C O M P T R O L L E R O F T H E

Inland Navigation.

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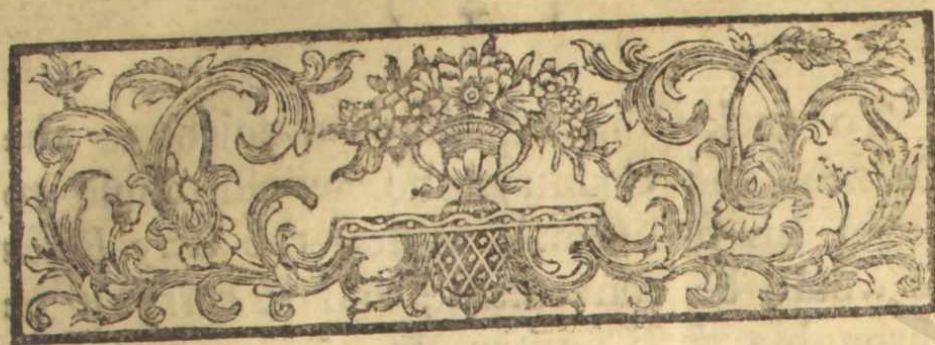
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D U B L I N :

Printed in the Year. M D C C L V.







Mr. O M E R ' S  
L E T T E R  
T O T H E  
P U B L I C.  
COMPTROLLER OF THE  
Inland Navigation.

**T**HE Comptroller of the Inland Navigation, was ordered to form a Scheme, and prepare Plans for making a Navigation from the City of *Dublin*, to the River *Shannon*; and he now is, and always was of Opinion, that such a Thing could not be effected, without the Help of the *Liffey*.



To make this equally convenient to the Citizens and Country, he would chuse to begin his first Canal, as near the *City Bason* as would be convenient ; and to carry it on through a flat Country, to the most proper Place to cross the *Liffey* ; and from thence through the *Bog of Allen* (where are the Heads of several Rivers, which will amply furnish Water to fill the Canals,) and so on, by the *Brofna*, to the *Shannon*. And should the *Bog of Allen* be found troublesome, or expensive, he can easily fall into Part of the River *Barrow* ; whence there is a certain Passage to be had by the *Brofna* to the *Shannon* ; which is in Length, by an accurate Survey lately made thereof, Fifty Five Miles, and Eleven Perches.

By the other Scheme ; From the River *Shannon*, to any Spot of Ground on the North Side the *Liffey*, opposite the *City Bason*, the Ascents and Descents are as follow :

From



	Rise and Fall. Feet.	Numb. Locks required.
From <i>Lough Rea</i> , up the River <i>Inny</i> , to <i>Lough Durvera</i> , the Rise is — — —	53	9
From <i>Lough Durvera</i> to the Head of the <i>Yellow River</i> — —	71	12
From thence down the River <i>Dill</i> to the <i>Boyne</i> — — —	74	12
From the <i>Boyne</i> to the Head of the <i>Rye Water</i> — — —	41	7
From the Head of the <i>Rye Water</i> to <i>Leixlip</i>	Feet. 142	
From <i>Leixlip</i> to <i>Island</i> <i>Bridge</i> — — —	96	
	238	
From the <i>Liffey</i> to the high Ground on the <i>North Side</i> opposite the City Bason, the Rise of Ground is —	60	
Which deducted, leaves Feet 178		
Now, from Head of the <i>Rye</i> Water, to the aforefaid high Ground, on the <i>North Side</i> the River, the Difference of Height is — — —	178	29
In all — — —		69

To this may be added, that the Comptroller is  
of Opinion, that the *Rye-Water* (which they in-  
tend shall be the grand Reservoir) is not half suf-  
ficient to supply the said Canals in Summer Time.



And, whereas by that Scheme, the Line from *Dublin* to the *Shannon* is Seventy Miles Three Quarters long: And that through the *Bog of Allen*, is Fifteen Miles Three Quarters shorter. The Comptroller for that, as well as other Reasons, has with all Submission, recommended the latter. For besides the Difference in the Length of Lines, there is a less Number of Locks. And as he also will thereby avoid navigating two dangerous troublesome Loughs, where there can be no Track Ways made; and probably in many Places, the Navigators can find no Bottom for their Poles, to set them along.

But what influenced his Judgment above all was, his being sure of Water from the River *Liffey*, to supply all the Canals, from the Place where it will be crossed to *Dublin*, which is quite the reverse the other Way.

From what is here offer'd, the Comptroller humbly appeals to the Justice of his Employers, and to the World, for the Impartiality and Honesty of his Representations, to the Hon. Committee of the House of Commons: Notwithstanding the Injurious Reflections cast upon him, in a Pamphlet lately printed and published; as if he had some other Inducements than Truth and Sincerity for what he has said.

THO. OMER.





A FEW  
OBSERVATIONS  
ON  
Mr. OMER'S LETTER.

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*Dimidium Faëti qui bene Cœpit habet.*

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AS few Points can arise, in which the Welfare and Advantage of this Kingdom are more materially concerned, than in the present Critical Determination of the two Lines proposed to Parliament, for an Inland Navigation from the *Shannon* to *Dublin*, it is to be hoped, that Coolness and Candour will lend their impartial Hands, and a Decision of real Use to the Publick will be the Consequence.



Mr. *Omer*, who has wrote the annexed Letter is a Gentleman, who (as I am informed) on Account of his Skill and Knowledge, was sent for from *England*, by the Navigation Board, and under whose Direction he is now employed, with a considerable Salary; from whence I conclude him to be more knowing in his Profession than any Person to be had in this Kingdom; and therefore I should judge, that the Publick may safely rely on the Honesty of his Information as well as his Judgment.

The Reasons he has given in his Letter, are in themselves so strong in favour of the Southern Line, that they must have the greatest Weight on every impartial Person, when supported by adequate Proofs. In Consequence of an Order of the Committee, he is now endeavouring to establish by Proofs, the Opinion he gave to the Committee in favour of the Southern Line; and surely in a Matter of so much Importance, all Gentlemen should hold their Determinations in Suspence, and not let a private or partial Affection either for one Line or the other, or for those who recommend them, break in upon that Judgment, which the Publick Welfare alone has a Right to demand. It is well known of what Consequence a Resolution of Parliament on this Occasion must be, as it ties down  
(with



(with Respect to the Line to be pursued) the immediate Application of the Sum of Twenty Thousand Pounds already granted, as well as all future Sums, should this be injudiciously or ineffectually applied, with what Remorse must any honest Man look on a Transaction, when perhaps his single Opinion prevented the Source of so great Wealth from taking an Effect for the Advantage of his Country.

Great Pains, and (worthy of the Thanks of the Publick) has been taken by a Gentleman, (a known Well-wisher of this Country) to lay before the Committee Proofs and Demonstrations of the Northern Line, all which he had regularly and wisely concerted before the meeting of Parliament. Other Gentlemen not so assiduous, or rather not expecting so immediate and pressing a Call on their Proofs and Demonstrations, have produced Plans of the Southern Line; but surely a Demonstration of the Practicability of the Northern Line, should not exclude the Southern one from an Examination. What cool and impartial Justice is to do, is to take a full Examination of each Line, and then determine which will most conduce to the Publick Advantage.

Mr. Omer besides his Doubts as to the Northern Line, with respect to a sufficient Quantity of Water to carry the Navigation  
on



on in Summer, adds the Difficulty of getting through two Lakes; and declares that the Southern Line is the shortest by Fifteen Miles and more, and will require a less Number of Locks. All these suppose to be proved, (for which he only desires Time,) let us compare the publick Utility that would attend the one Track or the other.

The Northern Line falls into the Head of the *Shannon*, after going through the Counties of *Meath*, *Westmeath*, and *Longford*, all of which are certainly fertile and fit for Tillage in their Nature, but by falling into the *Shannon*, so much towards the Head of it, all the Fertile Countries that are along the *Shannon* Side and to be brought into Tillage, will be obliged to work their loaded Boats against the Stream of the *Shannon*, in order to get up to the Navigation Track. By the Southern Line, all are to come down the Stream, both above and below the Northern Track. The Distance between the two Points proposed for the Tract, one South the other North, is very considerable; the Southern Point is the lowest, and the next to *Limerick*, by which a Communication may be opened between that Capital and *Dublin*, and falls in much about the Center of the *Shannon*. To this there is an Objection made, as it prolongs the Conveyance of Coals from a Colliery which is said to be towards the Head of



of the *Shannon*, and in the County of *Leitrim*. But here let us stop and consider the Intentions of the Committee; it is to promote the Increase of Tillage in the remote Parts of the Kingdom, which cannot otherwise be done but by lessening the Expence of the Carriage of Corn to our Capital. Now if to answer the Ends of this Colliery (of which *Dublin* has never seen Five Barrels of the Coals) we are to put the Counties of *Clare*, *Limerick*, *Galway* and *Tipperary* to such Expence and Difficulties, in bringing their Corn and loaded Boats so many Miles up the *Shannon* Stream, in order to get into the Northern Track, do we not thereby put an evident Tax on Navigation, which the Southern and Lower Line frees us from; and do we not in that Point so far disappoint the Intentions of the Legislature,

Let us now fairly follow the Southern Line to our Capital, and supposing it practicable by Comparison, trace out such Conveniencies as may be allowed to attend it.

Mr. *Omer* in the Paper signed by him, has given up the grand Objection of going through the *Bog of Allen*, in case Inconveniency should attend it; and judiciously fixes on the River *Barrow*; (which is now in the State of Nature almost Navigable to the Sea,) from whence a certain Passage (to use his Words) may



may be had to the *Broshab*, and so to the *Shannon*. On this Scheme he includes a free Communication from *Dublin* Southwards, to the Counties of *Kildare*, *Queen's-County*, *Carlow*, *Kilkenny* and *Wexford*. I believe in favour of the Soil and Tillage of those Counties, little need be insisted on, as it is well known, that they have a greater Share in the Supply of Corn to *Dublin* Market, than the whole remaining Part of *Ireland*. But what I would chiefly insist on, is the Advantages arising from the Two well-known and established Collieries of the County of *Kilkenny*, and *Queen's-County*, within Six Miles of the Banks of the *Barrow*.

I have lately seen what appeared to me the fairest Calculation of the present Price of *Kilkenny* Coal, by the Ton in this City; as also what the Fall of it would be, by taking of the Tax of Land Carriage, which I here insert for the Information of the Publick.

	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Twenty Hundred of <i>Kilkenny</i> Coal, being a Ton, at 1 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i> per Hundred, as sold in <i>Dublin</i> , will amount to	—	1	10
Twenty Hundred of Coals, neat Price at the Pit, at 4 <i>d.</i> per Hun- dred, amounts to	—	0	6 8
			Twenty



l. s. d.

Twenty Hundred of Coals the  
Land Carriage 6 Miles to the  
Banks of the *Barrow*, at 2 *d.* per  
Hundred, amounts to                    0   3   4

Twenty Hundred of Coals, the  
Water Carriage computed at Fifty  
Miles, at 5 *d.* per Hundred a-  
mounts to                    —                    0   5   0

Total amount of one Ton of *Kil-*  
*kenny* Coal in *Dublin*, supposing  
the *Barrow* to be taken in by  
the Inland Navigation                    —                    0   15   0

Saved to the City of *Dublin* in each  
Ton of *Kilkenny* Coal, which  
they now use                    —                    0   15   0

*Note*, One Ton of *Kilkenny* Coal will  
out last one Ton and Half of *Whitehaven*  
Coal.

Some Gentlemen are of Opinion, that  
each of the Lines should be executed, and  
that all Contests would then be removed ;  
I most sincerely wish it could be so, and that  
the Legislator should appear unanimous in a  
Matter of so great Consequence ; but if mix-  
ing the least Necessary one is to be an addi-  
tional



tional Clog of Expence, to the just and necessary Line, why should it receive so burthenfome a Companion ? The grand Point is a Conveyance from the *Shannon* to *Dublin* ; surely one well chosen Line will sufficiently do this ; besides, there has already appeared a very saving Disposition in the Grant of a Sum to any Line ; why then should we leave any Room for further Objections in Point of Expence. When the Grand Line is once fixed, then let others take place ; and in order to make the Expence less striking, as a Demand on our Redundancy, Why should not some Duties lately drop'd be revived ? Nay, I would even desire to go so far (convinced of the Benefit this Kingdom would receive by it) as to wish new Taxes to be created, should not the reviv'd ones prove sufficient. But all by Act of Parliament appropriated only to the Use of the Inland Navigation, and all to be taken off when that is compleated ; and the disposal of the Taxes so arising to be looked into every Session by the Legislator, with an Officer under their Direction appointed for carrying the Work on.

Why shall he who sits at ease in his Coach in the Morning and drinks our worst Enemies Claret in the Evening ? why shall he ? whose Fortune enables him to enjoy the Sports of the Field, not chearfully contribute from his  
Ease,



Ease, his Luxury, and his Pleasure, to benefit the Hand of the industrious Plowman? the poor Man, ignorant of the Sources of Wealth, that may be made out to repay his Toil, trudges on in his old Track, with indefatigable Labour, his Lord should surely in return do his Part. What an Advancement Tillage, and the different Methods of manuring tilled Lands has made in this Kingdom, is apparent to every Gentleman, who looks into the Country; what does all this Industry want to give it full Growth, but to take off the Expence of the Land Carriage of Corn to Market. Are not all the Horses and Men employed in this Work, a dead Weight to Society? when an Inland Navigation is once established, they have then no Resource but to fall to the Plow. That this is clearly pointed to us by a Recommendation of our Inland Navigation, from the happy Administration we are now under, is a Balsam to the Soul of every honest Man of this Country; we therefore surely on our Parts, should not let slip an Opportunity so beneficial, and so recommended.

Facts (or at least a sincere Endeavour at them) thus fairly stated, will no doubt, receive a judicious Determination, and though the Eye of the Publick may be impatient, yet the fixing on any Line should be held in Suspence, till all possible Information can be received, but not to let the Sessions pass over, without



without a final and Parliamentary Determination, lest a future Day should by any unforeseen Means, deprive the Legislator of so golden an Opportunity (as the present is) to exert their wisest Endeavours in a Cause so worthy of their best Intentions.

*P. S.* As several Gentlemen seem desirous of a stronger Act, than those at present in Force, for the Preservation of the Game, suppose the Tax hinted at in this Paper, was Established at five Pounds yearly for every Person that kept Hounds, Beagles or Grey-hounds, and forty Shillings yearly for Pointers, Setters, or *English* Spaniels ; but the Person keeping Hounds, to be only subject to the large Tax. The Fund arising from hence, to be appropriated to the Inland Navigation, I say, *Que-re*, whether this would not put their Neighbours in the Country in better Humour with the Proposers and the Game, than any other penal Law or Qualification Act. As the Tax would be voluntary, and every jolly Countryman that chose to keep Hounds, and pay the Tax, would then have a Right to look on himself as a very useful Member to Society, by contributing to so useful a Work. This Fund added to what might with Propriety be spared now and then, from the Redundancies of the Treasury, would soon compleat these useful Purposes.

*F I N I S.*