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# IRELAND'S WANT:

NOT NEW LAWS AND A PARLIAMENT IN DUBLIN,

BUT A

BETTER ADMINISTRATION

OF

THE PRESENT LAWS

FROM DUBLIN CASTLE.

ONE EMPIRE, ONE QUEEN, ONE LEGISLATIVE  
ASSEMBLY:

ILLUSTRATED BY THE NEGLECT OF THE

CANALS AND ARTERIAL DRAINAGE

OF

LOUGH ERNE.

BY

J. G. V. PORTER.

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"SERMONI CONSONA FACTA."  
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# FLOOD DRAINAGE AND NAVIGATION OF LOUGH ERNE.

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Belleisle, August 16, 1872.

MY LORD

So many matters are pushed on your attention, that this work, though by far the greatest of its kind in Ireland, but which rests simply on its merits; the repeated memorials of 800 tenant-farmers; and the unanimous Resolutions passed on July 23rd by the Town Commissioners of Enniskillen, and sent to you on July 27, have failed to catch your notice.

I, therefore, am now obliged to write, with great reluctance, and after many years of labour and much outlay, that unless the Government's written promises of March 5, 1870, and of December 16, 1871, are fulfilled, (viz., that it would appoint an inquiry into the way the Lough Oughter Drainage and the Ballinamore Canal were made and left by the Board of Works, and into the present state of same Canal); and unless you can comply with the most just and fair Resolutions of these Commissioners, (who are the natural and official guardians of the commerce of Fermanagh), and can desire the Board of Works either to put aside the memorials against this work, which they have privately received, or else to send them to Mr. S. U. Roberts, C.E., their inspector of all plans of arterial drainage in Ireland, in order to be examined in the same manner—viz., in open public court on oath in Enniskillen—as Mr. Lynam's, C.E., plans for this work have been examined six times



(viz., in two courts in 1870, and in four courts in 1872), I must withdraw the latter plans till a government of Ireland will treat them with fair play.

As the Resolutions of the Enniskillen Town Commissioners will, I believe, if necessary, be supported by the Municipal Boards of all the Towns from Belfast to Limerick in the 13 counties through which this great line—258 miles of inland navigation, now quite useless for long traffic—passes; I beg leave to appeal to your excellent intelligence and most sincere wish, as we all believe, to be of practical use, in your high place, to Ireland, to consider in time a few points.

During the last five years I have paid, at different times, to the Board of Works £220, as they required, merely to meet the costs of their inquiry, by their inspector, into Mr. Lynam's plans, (for which, and for the necessary schedule of value of the flooded lands, I have also paid besides more than £830); and I have spared no pains or trouble to make them as good and true and practical as possible; and I may observe that plans for a national work of this kind ought to be promoted and undertaken by government, and not by a private man.

However, all this time men of great influence have been in private correspondence with the Board of Works, sometimes against any flood-drainage of Lough Erne, sometimes (in name) only against Mr. Lynam's, C.E. plans; and so far, that, in September of last year, the Chairman of the Secret Committee, Lord Erne, writes—"that he has got, all but a few, the consents of two-thirds of the flooded landlords to a rival plan."

Now, observe, this work is no hobby or crotchet. From the beginning every public meeting in Fermanagh, Cavan, &c., about this question, (and great numbers have been held), whether only of landlords, or of landlords and tenant-farmers, or of Town Commissioners, has strongly approved and recommended both works—viz., Flood-drainage and Navigation, united by nature, and which must be both abandoned or both undertaken together; and, whenever the question has been between plans, has preferred Mr. Lynam's plan.



All the correspondence and memorials to which I refer have issued *from private rooms, or from a secret committee, which has never once ventured to appear before a public meeting, or even to show its rival plan to an engineer.*

Now, while Lord Erne, &c., have full right to promote any plan they please, or to try to stop the work altogether, *surely the judges, the Board of Works, should not privately examine one plan in Dublin, and publicly examine Mr. Lynam's plan in Enniskillen.*

The time has now come when Mr. S. U. Roberts, C.E., will soon pay his last visit to Lough Erne, to complete his own observations before he sends his final Report to the judges, the Board of Works.

But how can those judges treat Mr. Lynam's plans without prejudice, when they receive such statements from a nobleman of Lord Erne's influence, *as that two-thirds of the flooded landlords in question have already given their consents to a rival and quite different plan?* and that therefore all this course of rigid inquiry in open court in Enniskillen into the faults or merits of Mr. Lynam's plan is only make-believe palaver, and sheer waste of time!

It does not become me to give any opinion about this printed circular statement of Lord Erne, in September, 1871, viz., that two-thirds of the Lough Erne flooded landlords were then already pledged to Mr. Barton's plan of flood drainage; but as it has been received by the Board of Works, and as it comes forth in a series of circulars of correspondence and combination between them and their engineer, Mr. Forsyth, on one side, and the secret committee here, which promotes Mr. Barton's plan, I have now full legal and moral right to ask *that that statement shall either be examined openly and publicly in Court in Enniskillen, or else wholly and utterly dismissed.*

Again, this work, besides the flood-drainage of 17,000 acres, not of bog and morass, as on the Shannon banks, but of good meadow and pasturage, proposes to make good at all seasons—i.e., for steamboats every day in the year—



52 miles of natural navigation, without a single lock, from Belturbet to Belleek, from beginning to end of Lough Erne ; *i.e.*, a line of Inland Navigation quite unique and without parallel in her Majesty's United Kingdom ; and which, besides its local use to the populous counties of Cavan and Fermanagh, will supply the missing link in the 258 miles, through 13 counties, and the Leitrim and Tyrone coal and iron fields, from Belfast or Newry to Limerick, viz. :—

	St. Miles.
From Belfast to Moy, by Lagan Canal, Lough Neagh, and Blackwater river ... ..	43
Ulster Canal by Monaghan and Clones to Lough Erne	44
Across do. through Foalie's cutting ... ..	5
Ballinamore Canal, by Ballyconnell, Ballinamore, and Leitrim to Shannon ... ..	38
River Shannon by Carrick, Athlone, and Killaloe to Limerick ... ..	128
Belfast by Canal to Limerick ... ..	258

	St. Miles.
From Warrenpoint through Newry to Lough Neagh ...	35
Across do. ... ..	10
Through Maghery Cut and Bar of Upper Bann, and up Blackwater River to Moy ... ..	7
	52
Moy to Limerick (as above) ... ..	215
Warrenpoint by Canal to Limerick ... ..	267

There is a noble work, which, if finished, would be new life to the industry of two millions of people, but which long has been, and is now, the scandal and disgrace of Ireland's weak, careless, and alien administration; and in most parts not merely quite useless as a Canal, but far worse than useless, as it is a constant cause of waste and loss without any benefit; yet which has already cost, as I may say, 19s. 6d. in the £1, and only requires the last 6d. to be full of business.



*Cost of this Line of Canal.*

	Already Spent.	Still required for Navigation.
Lagan Canal ... ..	£90,000	
Across Lough Neagh and to Moy ...	30,000	
Ulster Canal ... ..	305,000	say £5,000
Ballinamore do. ... ..	230,000	do. 30,000
River Shannon, Leitrim to Limerick, from 1703 to 1800, say £300,000	985,000	
from 1800 685,000		
	<hr/> £1,640,000	<hr/> £35,000

*Locks between Belfast and Limerick.*

	Number.
Belfast to Moy ... ..	25
Ulster Canal ... ..	26
Across Upper Lough Erne ... ..	0
Ballinamore Canal ... ..	16
River Shannon to Limerick ... ..	15
	<hr/>
Between Belfast and Limerick ... ..	82

	Number.
Warrenpoint to Moy ... ..	14
Ulster Canal to Limerick ... ..	57
	<hr/>
Between Warrenpoint and Limerick ... ..	71

Lough Oughter is merely Irish for Upper Lough Erne. Civilisation came here from the sea, from Ballyshannon, our port; and from Belturbet to Belleek was then called Lough Erne, and all above Belturbet was called Upper or Oughter Lough Erne.

The Board of Works' estimate for its flood-drainage was £30,000, but they spent £110,000, though they omitted its most wanted part, and made the rest so badly that Lord Farnham, Mr. Hamilton, &c., have since been obliged to apply for a supplemental drainage, which will cost £12,000, to repair their faults!!

Again, the Board of Works spent £228,000 of public money on the Ballinamore Canal, 33 miles, *though more than 25 of these miles run through natural rivers and lakes.* They were not only engineers, contractors, and judges all at once, but by some incredible mistake of



Government, or skill on their side, contrived afterwards to get themselves appointed Commissioners of Inquiry into their own work. Thus in 1860 they put a charge of £30,000 on certain Baronies of Cavan, Leitrim, Roscommon and Fermanagh (which, of course, have never got any benefit from a ditch without trade), and saddled the rest on the Public Treasury, and put a false document on the Rolls in Dublin, viz., that they had finished this Canal in accordance with its original signed plans, and which they then passed off their hands to 12 County Trustees, who, misled by these Commissioners, neglected to get the work first examined by a competent and independent engineer, before they took this unfinished Canal into their charge.

The public can now see why Government is so reluctant to fulfil its written promises to me of March 5, 1870, and of December 16, 1871, viz., to appoint an inquiry (and which would now, of course, be a *bona fide*, and not a mock, inquiry) into the way these works were made and left by the Board of Works, viz., *because such inquiry would prove that the Government is now bound to pay a large sum, perhaps £30,000, to make good the mistakes of its agents, the Board of Works.*

Influence also may have been used to press upon Government that this long line of Canals, if put into a fit state for business, would take much goods traffic from railways.

But if so, why is Government from year to year fiddling with the Ulster Canal, its own property, and spending large sums of public money, £5,000 at a time, in its repairs? No man would take that Canal as a gift, with obligation to keep its locks and banks in order, *unless Lough Erne, the Ballinamore Canal, and Shannon are also made good.* I could understand, though I would quite condemn, the policy of giving up these Canals altogether, letting off their waters (unless where legally bound to mills), breaking up their dams, selling their locks, gates, and cut stone, and turning their surface into roads, or gardens, &c.; but is it not mere childishness to pretend to keep them as Canals, yet not to finish



them for use by steamtugs, their only possible mode of use, as in most parts they run through lakes and rivers, and without any side or horse paths ?

Again, there is the same difference between Canals and Railways as between a cart and a carriage. A string of barges, laden to 60 or 80 tons each with coal, mineral ores, lime, building stones, bricks, manures, &c., &c., will get that kind of cheap and slow traffic, which, however, most usefully feeds all the business of the country ; and will thus enable the passenger trains of the Railway to get ample and certain benefit from increased business.

In England the Canals now pay 10 per cent. and upwards, and can hardly pass their work through their locks ; while the Railways are also far more numerous, far closer, than in Ireland ; and certainly, if the Canals were stopped, would be unable to take up their business. The soundness and truth of these views is now so well known that no man openly argues that the navigation of Lough Erne should be checked and thwarted for fear it should hurt the I. N. W. Railway. The whole line of such argument is as stupid and as obsolete as of the spade against the plough, the flail and the scythe against the thrashing or mowing machine, the car or coach against the railway.

Again, in 1870, a Bill, prepared by Mr. Stansfeld and Mr. C. Fortescue, passed through Committee in House of Commons to complete the flood drainage of the Shannon, Government to give £100,000, and the local landlords to pay £100,000 ; but by some intrigue, which will, perhaps, some day, come to light, this measure was dropped.

Now the flood-drainage of that great river, after an outlay of £700,000 since 1800, has been a failure, from the mistake, quite excusable, more than 25 years ago, of an excellent engineer, Mr. Rhodes, who, in the then want of experience in works of arterial drainage on a large scale, planned solid stone weirs across that river in several places only cut, of course, by locks, instead of long lines of sluices, to shut in summer and open in winter, at pleasure. In a few words, what is now



wanted on the Shannon is simply to undo the works of its Commissioners, and to put long lines of opening sluices, of which there are as many different patterns as of a lady's bonnet, in place of those immense masses of mason work, called the weir-mounds.

Happily for us, we on Lough Erne, which at Belleek drains a million acres, can quite avoid that great mistake, and profit by this dear-bought experience.

One of the Resolutions of July 23, of the Town Commissioners of Enniskillen, asks the Board of Works to send to Mr. S. U. Roberts's next Court only the memorials received against this work by any plan, or against Mr. Lynam's plan, *since his last Court*. But I have good reason to believe that this limit was made only by inadvertence,\* and that the Town Commissioners will see that it would not meet the just wants of this case, and that all memorials against Mr. Lynam's plans received by the Board of Works during their trial, 1870-72, by their able Inspector, Mr. S. U. Roberts, C.E., should now be tried in same manner, or else dismissed. What would be said of a judge in Dublin who, in a serious case between A and B, would try A's case duly, publicly, severely, in the Four Courts; and B's case quietly, privately, smoothly, in his own drawing-room in Mountjoy or Merrion-square?

All who wish to see these great works, so long and so fully now discussed, proceed, cannot be too grateful to the Commissioners of the chief town of Fermanagh for their able and steady support; and for my own humble part, I think that I cannot better show my sense of their assistance than by trying to set forth, frankly and plainly, the best way to get these works set to contractors and made, so that men now alive may see and enjoy them.

With this view, I have for two months especially tried to promote a meeting between Lord Erne, Lord Lanesborough, Mr. Francis Graham, &c., &c., large flooded

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\* So much so that one of the ablest men on their Board, Mr. Plunkett, wrote a long letter to the local newspaper, which, however, was not published, to correct its Report. I hope that Mr. Plunkett will still make his views known, for, from his knowledge of local wants and business, as well as from his independence and capacity, they would deserve attention.



landlords, and always anxious for the welfare of their tenants, on one side, and Mr. S. U. Roberts, C.E., when he will soon come to Enniskillen ; and I am happy now to be able to write that Mr. Murray, the Hon. Sec. of their Committee, fully concurs with this view. It is plain that by such meeting Mr. S. Roberts, with his great experience, may be able, and much to their benefit, to remove some of their misapprehensions ; while whatever just grounds may be for their delay or opposition would not be in the least degree hurt by this fair and open attempt to come to a good understanding. This course will also be consistent with their statement, by their attorney, Mr. Alexander, at Mr. S. U. Roberts's last or sixth Court, —viz., that they wish to promote and not to stop or delay the work ; and that they fully agree with the Public Boards of Enniskillen, Belfast, Newry, Belturbet, Cavan, &c., &c., and with the tenant farmers on the shores of Lough Erne, in their opinion of its usefulness, but only wish to be sure of getting a good plan.

On my side I have good right, then, to ask them not now to make needless delay ; for in the two newspapers of Enniskillen, on January 11, 1872, I publicly offered, 3 months before Mr. S. U. Roberts came to Enniskillen to hold his last two Courts, to waive any technical plea on my side, and then to let any landlord or engineer lay on the table any plan which he might think better than Mr. Lynam's.

Now, when an Act of Parliament has most properly and minutely pointed out the procedure for any man to follow who wishes to promote any work of arterial drainage in Ireland, and when I have, at great cost and trouble, and during five years, followed this legal and necessary procedure, and when its main pith and purpose is to require the full public examination by a competent engineer in court, on oath, of any such plan, I protest in the strongest manner against the irregular course of the Board of Works, in receiving such statements as that a plan (Mr. Barton's) which has never been even shown to an engineer—nay, more, which has been refused to be shown by its owners to any



engineer—has obtained the assents of two-thirds of the flooded landlords. I leave to you and to every man of common sense to judge the fairness of asking assents to a secret plan, and the prudence of any landlords who could give such assents. But surely the Board of Works should not encourage a course which may cause delay and trouble to a good plan, but which could not in any manner enable a bad plan to be passed without the necessary legal steps.

Parliament for 157 years has passed Acts for our Canals, and, though Railways have quite superseded them for passengers, they never were so much wanted as now in 1872 for the conveyance of mineral ores and coal to our seaports, of manures from our large towns to the farmers 30, 40, or 50 miles off, (an immense double benefit, health and cleanliness to the town, and good crops to the farmers, and which for many reasons cannot be in any manner undertaken by railways), and of lime, building stones, bricks, &c., from their quarries, kilns, &c., to their places of sale.

In 1715 the members of Parliament for Cavan and Fermanagh were made by 2 Geo. 2nd, Cap. 12, Commissioners for the navigation of Lough Erne from Ballyshannon to Killeshandra; and in 1729 the four Protestant Archbishops, viz., of Armagh, Dublin, Cashel, and Tuam, were, with the Lord Lieutenant and 20 Commissioners from each province, appointed by 3 Geo. 2nd, cap 3, as a Board with great powers for same purpose through all Ireland. Several similar amateur Boards have since been created under different names by Parliament, to make and complete and manage our inland navigations; but I can affirm with truth, which will be acknowledged by all who have paid attention to this question, that never yet, though so much time, paper, and money have been spent, has one uniform system been promoted by one strong and able hand over the inland navigations of all Ireland.

The reference of the Irish Canals by the Lords of the Treasury in October, 1867, to some (so-called) Railway Commissioners, viz., Sir A. Shearman, Bart, and Messrs.



Mulholland, Fowler, S. Clarke, C. Johnston, and Hancock, was on both sides rather a mockery or pretence than a serious duty. It is most shameful that thousands and thousands of the public taxes should be wasted on such commissions, neither appointed nor undertaken for any practical purpose, but, like the Commission on Primary Education, with its immense and most stupid blue books, only to baffle and to mislead public opinion.

At Summer Assizes, 1869, the Fermanagh Grand Jury passed unanimous Resolutions on this question, as, *e.g.*, "We believe that the most practical and certain way to complete and to bring into good order the inland navigations and flood-drainage of Ireland would be the appointment of a first-class engineer, *well acquainted with these special branches of his profession*, as third Commissioner of Public Works, in the place not yet filled since the retirement of Sir R. Griffith; that Ireland has a most just right to the best professional advice and guidance in these matters of its inland navigation and flood-drainage, which, from the nature of its soil and climate, are of paramount consequence to its interests of all kinds; and we believe that the various Acts which Parliament has passed relative to them cannot otherwise be well carried out with success and usefulness, or the failures and excessive costs of works over estimates be avoided, which have been so notorious during the last 20 years."

But Government has not paid the slightest attention to these Resolutions of the Grand Jury of the most loyal county in Ireland, just as it has altogether neglected the late resolutions of the Town Commissioners of Enniskillen, though only a few years ago it sent £500 for bribery in that borough, hoping thus to get a vote in the House of Commons for its own interests.

Now, since those Grand Jury Resolutions, a public trial in Dublin, viz., about the Phoenix Park riot and the police, has brought to light the way Irish business is neglected at the Board of Works; *e.g.*, that though Sir R. Griffith has not even been at their office for several years, his name is still kept before the public, and his signature



obtained at his private house for documents, which, by law, require three Commissioners' assent ; and that no minute book of their business is kept, much less signed ; yet, the first page in their annual Reports shows that about 30 immense branches of public business are left to this Board of all Work for Ireland!! I have no doubt that Colonel M'Kerlie, if required by Government, would undertake any works of any kind— to find the sources of the Nile; to turn the Bog of Allen into patent fuel, &c. ; but is it wise or fair in the government of a country to throw upon any men far more numerous and various duties than they can possibly, with the best abilities, good will, and attention, fulfil to their own credit or to the public advantage? Sir R. Griffith has worked hard during a long life, and has now good right to his pension for life, and should not be asked to fulfil nominal duties. No public officers can be more attentive or trustworthy than Colonel M'Kerlie and Mr. Lefanu ; but what is wanted in this great and special branch is an engineer at head-quarters of first-class ability and experience, (the words in this business, though not quite synonymous, can certainly never be taken apart), in arterial drainage and canals. It is painful to know the great natural resources that could thus be developed in Ireland, and to see how much better these questions are understood, though under great disadvantages, in Holland, Belgium, and France, where the highest skill and the most steady attention is at their service.

As to the great water-power now allowed to run to waste in Ireland, though coal, and therefore steam-power, is getting dearer every year, I believe that Leffel's (American) Turbine Wheel will overcome the disadvantages which, from the requirements of flood-drainage in winter, have hitherto prevented the establishment of factories on many rivers, and especially on the Shannon.

With a Central Board of Inland Navigation, and a good engineer in the third seat of the Board of Works, Canals are now so much wanted, and could pay such good dividends in Ireland, private companies would



be glad to take them off the hands of the Government on fair leases at fair rents.

The follies of our Government on the River Shannon are quite wonderful; as bad as the mistakes described by travellers in the worst Provinces of Turkey.

The mill power of this river is as follows :—

				Fall available for use.	
				Summer.	Winter.
				Ft.	Ft.
From Lough Allen to Leitrim	..	...	...	20	10
At Jamestown, over the Stone Weir Mound		...	...	5	1
„ Roosky	do	...	...	3	1
„ Tarmonbarry	do.	...	...	7	1
„ Athlone	do.	...	...	7	2
„ Meelick	do.	...	...	7	1
„ Killaloe	do.	...	...	4 $\frac{1}{2}$	1
Just below do.	...	...	...	7	7
At Castle Connell and Doonass	...	...	...	50	50
„ Plassy	...	...	...	4	2
„ Corbally	...	...	...	8	8

The surface-slope required in winter to carry off the great floods forms from Lough Allen to Killaloe almost one continuous incline, just the favourable case for Leffel's turbines.

Yet the mills now, 1872, using these falls of this immense river are only 2 large flour mills at Corbally, on opposite sides, a small ditto at Plassy, a little marble mill at Killaloe, Messrs. Swaine's flour mill at Athlone, and a small ditto at Cloondra—altogether only 250 horse power; while many thousands and thousands horse power are always running idle!! Even 4 steam mills have lately been put up on this river, viz., at Messrs. Swaine's flour mill, and at a cloth mill at Athlone, and for flax mills at Cloondra and at Roosky!!

Thirty years ago Sir R. Kane in his well-known book "Ireland's Industrial Resources," reckoned the Shannon water at 38,000 horse power constant. Power is now so valuable, that if this long waterway was in good order, all its mill sites would be taken by Belfast manufacturers.

It is needless to add that this navigation, arterial drainage, and mill power is in the hands of the Board of



Works ; and that more maps, plans, and reports have been printed about this river than would fill a large library.

Lough Erne, in ratio to its quantity of water (or area of catchment basin), yields far more power, applicable at once to mill-wheels, than the River Shannon ; for Lough Erne at Belleek and Lough Allen (on opposite or southern side of the Cuilca Mountains) are at same height, 150 feet, above the sea, though the lower Erne in 5 miles from Belleek reaches the sea at Ballyshannon, while the Shannon, from Lough Allen, runs over 133 miles to Limerick.

Yet between Mr. Armstrong's excellent china mill at Belleek and a wretched flour mill at Ballyshannon, this immense power and these magnificent falls are still as useless as if in Central Africa !

Water is to Ireland, like coal to England, our natural power, and ought not to be thus neglected. I have only taken as examples two great cases ; but there are few lakes or rivers in Ireland where skill could not raise this power to much greater advantage, as could be soon shown and proved by a special Exhibition in Dublin of water-wheels and sluices.

As a general rule, these falls are now, and will continue to be, idle and useless till the main line of canals from Belfast to Limerick is first put in good order.

Now, letters on public questions of this kind in Ireland are seldom written to a Lord Lieutenant or Chief Secretary, which do not end with an application, more or less ingenious, for a grant of public money.

But, in place of asking for money, I affirm that the government can set all these canals at a fair rent and on a long lease to a private company, which will save the government all its present dribbling, childish waste through its agents, the Board of Works ; and, besides, will add immensely to its revenues, from increased industry and taxes in many counties.

As to the flood-drainage, more than 800 tenant-farmers of Cavan and Fermanagh have, through me, given their signed memorials to the Lord Lieutenant



that they are ready and willing to pay the whole fair cost of the work on proper terms.

I thus ask again, openly and publicly, not for any job or favour, but for your fulfilment of your government's written promises in 1870 and '71 of inquiry into the Board of Works' mismanagement of the Lough Oughter flood-drainage, and of the Ballinamore Canal ; then that inquiry will show why the Board of Works oppose the flood-drainage of Lough Erne. As to the navigation of this great lake, fifty-two miles long, and which, if a lake in England, would not require any advocate, let Mr. Macrory, or Lord Erne, or Mr. Collum, &c., &c., be required to set forth their grounds and pleas for delay, &c., &c., in open court in Enniskillen, and to go into the witness box, as I and Mr. Lynam went in June, and are quite ready to go again if called, and then the value of their pleas will be known, and, if right, will prevail, or, if wrong, will not be allowed longer to stand in the way, (to the public scandal and indignation, not only of Fermanagh, but of the whole North of Ireland,) of a great work.

Your obedient,

J. G. V. PORTER.

P.S.—I wrote again, July 27, to Lord Hartington, asking for the inquiry promised by Government, December 16, 1871, because now, August and September, is the only season when it could be well made ; and so that another year might thus not be lost. Then, after waiting three weeks for an answer, I wrote these pages, which I will send to all the municipal towns from Belfast and Newry to Limerick, and I earnestly hope that public opinion will not allow a fair, quiet, straightforward attempt to remove grievous injuries, too long borne, year after year, with patience by the tenant-farmers of Fermanagh and Cavan, and to bring into life and use great natural advantages, too long and too shamefully neglected, to be thwarted and put aside, merely because I will not appeal (as has



too long been the bad habit in Ireland) to some crooked political influence.

However, this day I have got Under-Secretary Burke's answer, with letter of Board of Public Works, as below :—

“ Dublin Castle,  
“ 19th August, 1872.

“ SIR,—I am directed by the Lord Lieutenant to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 27th ultimo, and to inform you that the same was duly referred to the Commissioners of Public Works, and I am desired to transmit to you the accompanying copy of a report which has been received from them on the subject.

“ I am, sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ J. W. BURKE.

“ J. G. V. Porter, Esq.,  
“ Belleisle, Libellaw.”

“ Office of Public Works.  
Dublin, August 13th, 1872.

“ BALLINAMORE AND BALLYCONNELL NAVIGATION.

“ SIR,—I am directed by the Commissioners of Public Works to return the enclosed file, and to state for the information of his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant, that with reference to Mr. Porter's letter of the 27th July, to examine into the present state of the Ballinamore and Ballyconnell Navigation would be work requiring much time and involving considerable expense. Besides the examination of locks, lock gates, &c., a line of soundings would be required almost the whole way, nearly forty miles, and cross sections where any accumulations or shoals have been formed since the works were completed.

“ The Board are not able to spare the services of either of their engineers—whose time is now fully occupied on important works—for the purpose ; but the state of the navigation at the time when it was handed over to the counties through which it passes is already known, and is stated in the following extract from the Report of the Commissioners of Special Enquiry in 1859 :—

“ “ With respect to the navigation, the most important deviations from the original design are, the enlargement of the channel through the shoals in the river downwards from Carrick to Lough Erne, the width at bottom having been increased from 22 to 70 feet, and the reducing the depth of water in two of the upper reaches from 5 feet 6 inches to 4 feet 6 inches, or rather leaving the difference of one foot undredged.



“ ‘ Some few minor alterations in arrangements and detail have also been made, amongst the most prominent of which may be mentioned the adoption of the old river courses instead of the intended new cut opening into the Shannon at Leitrim ; but the principal portions of the works—in fact, all, with the exception of the two soft-bottomed reaches before referred to—have been carried out to the full dimensions designed, the locks having in fact 6 feet of water instead of 5 feet 6 inches on their sills ; and the project practically for the uses to which it is likely to be devoted may be said to have been fully accomplished. An important and necessary addition to the works, also deserving of notice, is the erection of 2 Collectors and 6 Lock Keepers’ houses in suitable positions for the guarding and working of the locks, which were omitted to be provided for in the original plan and estimate.

“ All the circumstances of the case were fully investigated and considered before the award was made. The total cost of the works of navigation, exclusive of drainage, &c., was £224,459, of which only £30,000 was charged on the district ; any change in the state of the works since that time is owing to the neglect of the Trustees for the counties in whom the navigation is vested to maintain them.

“ I am, sir,

“ Your obedient servant,

“ JOHN P. BROPHY.

“ Pro Secretary.

“ The Under Secretary,

“ Dublin Castle.”

Now, in reply, I state at once that the inquiry, dated July 15, 1859, and signed by Sir R. Griffith and Col. M’Kerlie, and here quoted, was a farce, and a pretence, to which Government, if they know the circumstances, ought to be ashamed to refer. How could Sir R. G. and Col. M’K. inquire into their own works or their own fault ? Government might just as well refer Mr. Lynam’s plans to my judgment, or Mr. Barton’s to Lord Erne’s opinion. Local and independent criticism was also in 1859 disarmed and prevented by threats that, if inquiry was then asked, so large a sum as £200,000 would not be remitted. These two commissioners were generous at the cost of the Treasury, and to hide their own mistakes. My statement now is, and to which I challenge inquiry, that this Canal *never was fit for business*, and that



therefore, and not because there would be no barges, or because the traffic has all gone to railways, it has been quite useless and fallen into ruin: *e.g.*, a man standing on Ballyconnell Bridge, and looking westward, will see a long, straight cut, crossed by several wooden bridges. It is *the begun but never finished canal*, abandoned merely to save money, (and no man knows where £228,000 went in these works), while barges, steamtugs, &c., must make their way round the sharp turns of a rapid stream, quite unfit for trade.

Only this week, Mr. Russell, manager of the prosperous spool Mill at Enniskillen, with water power and two steam engines, tells me that he has just come from the Shannon to Lough Erne in a little steamboat, drawing 32 inches, and on even keel only 28 inch, and that he has spent three weeks and great loss in that canal, and in several places found the birds picking on its dry mud bottom!!\* He brought that steamboat from Scotland, relying on the statements of the Board of Works, to bring wood from County Leitrim to his mill at Enniskillen, but must now give up that enterprise. Mr. Russell says that "it would take half a newspaper to tell all he suffered between Leitrim and Ballyconnell."

I beg leave also to refer to the letters on the Leitrim Coal and Iron Mines of Mr. James Pratt, C.E., County Surveyor of Leitrim, and Resident Engineer under the 12 County Trustees of this Canal.

Do the Government want a good riot in Cavan or Fermanagh before they will attend to this great question in a serious manner? or to compel us to apply to the Home Rule Association in Dublin?

J. G. V. P.

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\* So that at these places Mr. Russell was obliged to dig a canal through this mud for his steamboat. Yet, year after year (look back at their printed annual Reports), the Board of Works write about this canal, as if in good order!!



The Resolutions, passed on July 23, 1872, by the unanimous Town Commissioners of Enniskillen, in favour of Mr. Lynam's plans, and whose opinion, as men of business, and from their great attention to all the inquiries about this question for many years, and at its headquarters, are of great value, are as follow :—

*Proposed by Mr. Thomas R. Whitley, and seconded by Mr. George Black, P.L.G.*

“That we view with great dissatisfaction, that while the most praiseworthy efforts are being made to promote a complete system of Drainage and Navigation of Lough Erne, in connexion with the Ulster and Ballinamore Canals, and the Shannon, certain large Landed Proprietors are opposing the plans of Mr. Lynam, now under examination by S. U. Roberts, Esq., and at the same time have not taken the proper steps to lodge the plans they profess to believe to be better than Mr. Lynam's, which are approved by many landed proprietors, rated occupiers, merchants, and the public at large.”

*Proposed by Mr. George Darragh, T.C., and seconded by Mr. Jeremiah Jordan, T.C.*

“That we respectfully request, if any communications, letters, circulars, or statements against Mr. Lynam's plans for the drainage and navigation of Lough Erne have been forwarded to the Board of Works since S. U. Roberts, Esq., held his last open Court in Enniskillen, that such documents be handed to Mr. Roberts, and that he be instructed to hold another open Court in Enniskillen for their investigation.”

*Proposed by Mr. John Whitley, T.C., and seconded by Mr. T. Johnston.*

“That from the great advance in the price of labour, coal, and iron, and the bearing of these on the cost of the transit of goods, we hereby earnestly solicit the Board of Works, by every means at their disposal, to facilitate the execution of works that we believe to be not merely of local, but of national, importance.”

*Proposed by Mr. James Coalter, T.C., and seconded by Mr. Thomas Plunkett, P.L.G.*

“That we await with great Interest the Report expected to be made upon the state of the Ballinamore Canal, in obedience to the inquiry directed by the Government in January last, and now respectfully request that as this is the season when such examination can be proceeded with to advantage, that the Board of Works will have the inquiry pushed forward with vigour.”

*Proposed by Mr. John Whitley, T.C., and seconded by Mr. Jeremiah Jordan, T.C.*

“That the Clerk of the Town Commissioners be directed to have the resolutions of this meeting printed, and Copies sent to the Board of Works, and to the several Proprietors of Flooded Lands.

DAVID WILKIN,

CHAIRMAN OF THE TOWN COMMISSIONERS.



# Houses of the Oireachtas



Belleisle, Aug. 31, 1872.

MY LORD—

I beg leave to request your attention to inclosed statement of reasons for asking that, before S. U. Roberts Esq. C.E. will pay his last visit to Lough Erne, and make his final report, your Government will appoint their promised inquiry into the Board of Works' Management of the Lough Oughter Flood-drainage and Balinamore Canal ; and also that you will request the same Board to send to the same engineer all the memorials, &c., &c., which they have received against the proposed Lough Erne works, so that they may be soon fairly and publicly examined in his 7th or last Court in Enniskillen.

Your obedient,  
J. G. V. PORTER.

To the Right Hon. the Marquis  
of Hartington, M.P.

Dublin Castle Sept. 11, 1872.

SIR—

I am desired by the Lords Justices to acknowledge your further letter of the 31st ult., and to acquaint you, in reply thereto that their Excellencies are informed by the Commissioners of Public Works that they have received no memorials or objections against the proposed Lough Erne Drainage Works.

Your obedient servant  
T. H. BURKE.

Belleisle, Oct. 21, 1872.

MY LORD—

I am much surprised that the Commissioners of Works can write "that they have not received any memorials or objections against the proposed Lough Erne Flood-Drainage Works," when I have now before me the printed circulars of Lord Erne's Secret Committee, signed by himself, showing his constant correspondence and combination with them ; as, for example, April 26, 1871, "that the Committee has had a very satisfactory inter-



view with the Board of Works ;" and again, September 15, 1871, " that he has got, all but a few, the assents of two-thirds of the flooded landlords to Mr. Barton's plan." Now this statement, if true, is not merely an objection which deserves inquiry, but a decisive and fatal objection, that, without requiring more examination, would stop and put out altogether Mr. Lynam's plans for this work, which have been, in every manner as desired by Act of Parliament, before the Board of Works for 3 years, and examined, openly and publicly, in Enniskillen Court-house 6 times by their inspector, S. U. Roberts, Esq., C.E., viz. :—

In 1870, August 25 and 26	...	...	2 days.
September 21	...	...	1 do.
In 1872, March 6	...	...	1 do.
„ 20 and 21	...	...	2 do.
April 24	...	...	1 do.
June 13	...	...	1 do.
			<hr/>
			8 days

And, after this long and rigid inquiry, the last words in court, viz., on June 13, of this able engineer, by far the highest authority in Ireland on arterial drainage, were " that he had never examined a more useful work, or more wanted by the people, and that it would not be his fault if it would not be carried out."

Now, Lord Erne came to the first court, viz., in August, 1870, and made many statements against Mr. Lynam's plans ; so a day was then purposely fixed by Mr. Roberts and himself, viz., Sept. 21, for the next court which he promised to attend, and prove them, *but when that day came Lord Erne never appeared, nor at any public court or meeting since ;* and I have often publicly said, and am ready to prove by reasons which lawyers call coercive, *i.e.*, which command assent, that Lord Erne's is only a mock plan, put forward merely for delay, and without the slightest purpose of practical fulfilment.

Thus it is not fair in the Commissioners of Works, who are by law the judges of Mr. Lynam's plans, promoted by me, and who have therefore demanded and



got £220 from me merely for the cost of Mr. Roberts' inquiry into them, to be during all the time of this inquiry in frequent private communication with my opponent, UNLESS they now, and before this inquiry closes, submit his statements to the same test, viz., an examination on oath in the witness-box in Enniskillen Court-house.

Allow me here to make one observation. This work has for 5 years been under continual public discussion, and yet the Board of Works now write that they have never received one memorial in opposition; though all the landlords and tenants well know that, no matter what plan will be adopted, or how it may be executed, they must pay a large tax. Have I not, therefore, irresistible right to ask you to conclude that its usefulness is strongly admitted by all local interests concerned? and that, therefore, and because those interests are immense, the Commissioners of Works, the agents of Government in these matters, should not treat this question like adverse attorneys trying to pick out flaws and to make petty points, but as administrators of Ireland anxious to remove great grievances, and to develop immense natural advantages for the general public welfare? I am told that this unanimous feeling in favour of this work is quite without precedent, and has never been known in the case of any similar great work.

Last July 5 Mr. Roberts wrote to me "that he would come to Enniskillen immediately after the Galway Summer Assizes to complete his own inquiries on Lough Erne, which would take 7 or 8 days, and then return to Galway, and finish his report as quickly as possible, and before he would take up any other business." You can judge now this eminent engineer's opinion; and it will add to his character for earnestness to state, as I learn now, that he has since been in France to study the *barrages mobiles*, or moveable sluices, on their great rivers, in order to find out the best pattern for use at Belleek.\*

\* I much regret to hear now, October 21, that an attack of illness has been the chief cause of this delay.



But my case is simple : if Mr. Lynam's plan will be condemned by Mr. Roberts, then my trouble and outlay is lost, without one word of complaint. All I want now, as always from the beginning, is to see the best possible plan approved by the Commissioners of Works, then adopted by the local landlords, and then skilfully, and prudently, and honestly executed by contractors under a local "Drainage Board."

But, no matter how favourable Mr. Roberts' report may be to Mr. Lynam's plan, which is, after all, only the honest plan of an engineer of immense practical experience in works of this kind, and prepared without any wish or artificial contrivance to injure the navigation of Enniskillen, (which want is, perhaps, its great fault in some quarters), and which plan is probably capable in many details of most useful amendment, as not only allowed, but required, by the general Act of 1863, from Mr. Roberts' scientific skill—yet, in the next step of the procedure, viz., to get the assents of two-thirds in value of the flooded landlords, how could I succeed if I now, at this stage, allowed to pass unchallenged Lord Erne's serious statement, printed and signed, viz., that already, September, 1871, two-thirds of the landlords are pledged to Mr. Barton's rival plan, which he has refused to show to the Lough Erne Committee, or to any public meeting, and which has never been even seen or examined by an engineer ?

Surely, in a civilized country and under a free and intelligent Government, there are bounds of truth and of common sense beyond which the opposition to a public measure cannot be allowed to pass with impunity, especially to a work of this kind, which, not like a political measure that is judged by opinion and feeling, could if wrong, be proved and condemned in open court by positive and undeniable figures ?

Here are my reasons for stating that Lord Erne's plan, prepared, in accordance with his own previous views, by Mr. Barton, his railway engineer, is only a mock, to stop the way and prevent any plan, and never in the least degree brought forward to be carried out ; and I



appeal to all honest men if these reasons are not quite true, and do not convince them.

1. Mr. Lynam's whole detailed plans were laid on the Grand Jury table in Enniskillen in December, 1867, and were then referred by Hon. Colonel Cole, M.P. for Fermanagh, to a committee to inquire into their merits, of which Lord Erne was appointed chairman; yet this friend of the Flood-drainage and Navigation of Lough Erne, in spite of repeated requests, allowed the whole summer of 1868 to pass, the only season when plans of this kind can be examined, because there was a cattle show at Derry, &c., &c.!! and did not call the necessary meeting of flooded landlords till November 12, just before his son's canvass for Enniskillen Borough!!

2. At that large meeting, the landlords of more than £100,000 a year rental in the room, 2 unanimous resolutions were passed: 1st. That the winter floods are injurious to the lands; and 2nd, That every attempt should be made to keep Lough Erne, as near as possible, always at summer level. I was much asked then to be a member of the committee, but refused, in order that no difference between me and Lord Erne might check a useful work. Then see how Lord Erne proceeds to carry out this meeting's views. In next month, Dec., 1868, when the lowlands were all covered with water, and would not for months be again visible, he asked, by public advertisement,\* engineers to send plans in 2 months, and at their own cost, for this great work!!! Admit his earnestness, but, then, could a child put in a more silly advertisement, or show more complete ignorance of the whole question? yet which Lord Erne claims to hold in his hands, and even says that the public, perhaps the shareholders who have lost fortunes in the I. N. W. Railway Company, look to him with that purpose.

3. Then the committee under Lord Erne's chairmanship allowed a second summer, 1869, to pass without a single good step; so, at their request, I joined them, December 20, and soon got Mr. J. R. M'Clean's plans—a

\* See Dublin *General Advertiser*, December 19.



clever railway engineer, chosen by Lord Erne—printed at full length in *Fermanagh Reporter*, January 20, 1870. His first plan was to make a solid stone weir, 4,000 feet long, across the lake at Rosscor; and his second plan, to let the top of this weir be under water—just the mistake which has been the ruin of £700,000 wasted on the river Shannon. I need hardly add that Mr. M'Clean's plans, though so much praised then by Lord Erne, died at once under the light of public opinion.

4. Then to committee, January 3, 1870, Lord Erne adds Hon. Capt. C. Butler's name, who has always been against any Flood-drainage, because the Nile's floods, under the hot sun of Africa, are useful to the sands of Egypt. At the next meeting, Hon. Capt. C. Butler honourably declined to attend for a purpose of which he disapproves, and every man has a right to his own crotchet. But how can Lord Erne sincerely wish to see a certain work, when he puts on a committee, appointed to find out the best plan, a man who, as he knew, disapproves of any plan of any kind?

5. Again on Jan. 24, 1870, when, after long labour, the committee were now ready to go before the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland with complete plans for the Drainage, and to ask for a grant in aid of Navigation, Lord Erne refuses to join, and leaves us, because, in reply to his disapproval without inquiry of Mr. Lynam's plan, I referred to the great I. N. W. mismanagement.

6. Then when Mr. Lynam's plans are referred to the Board of Works, and serious steps taken in accordance with Act of Parliament, Lord Erne, who for 25 years had seen these floods, and yet never touched the question to relieve them, employs Mr. Barton, and calls together his Secret Committee, to which, (a good proof of its real purpose), as I learn now, Lord Enniskillen, who has always publicly opposed any plan or any work, for fear it should put him to some cost, subscribes £25, though Mr. Barton's plan, if serious, would cost far more than any plan ever yet proposed for this work. Now Commissioners in Dublin, who do not know how public



questions are treated in Fermanagh, should thus see the inside as well as the outside of this case.

Lord Erne's own circular, Sept. 15, 1871, tell us that he has been with you (Lord Hartington), with Lord Crichton, M.P. for Enniskillen, and his engineer, Mr. Barton, in London about this work. You can now judge for yourself whether he wished to see the floods prevented and the navigation made good, or only to mislead you into support of a mock plan. But I now clinch this line of argument, and test the truth of Lord Erne's statement in this decisive manner. He says that he is strongly in favour of Flood-drainage; also that Mr. Barton's is the best plan, which is described by its author in a pamphlet of 23 pages; also that he has got the assents of two-thirds of the landlords in value, the required legal majority. Now if he will only bind himself to carry out his own plan, I will at once withdraw Mr. Lynam's and give him the use of my Notices, Schedules of Value, &c.; so the course will be clear, and he can proceed at once.

If your numerous engagements would allow you to visit Lough Erne, it would be a great pleasure to me to take you in my steam-boat "Knockninny" from Belurbet quay in County Cavan, through the whole length of County Fermanagh, stopping at Enniskillen half way, to Belleek quay at the mearing of County Donegal, 52 st. miles of natural course without a single lock, through several hundred islands, and most picturesque mountain views, and you will admit that Lough Erne is without parallel in the whole United Kingdom.\*

We who wish to see this great work taken in hand — *i.e.*, — the whole people of the country — have a strong claim on you to pay this visit, on the good old rule *audi al-*

\* Last summer I showed an American tourist in my steamboat off Tully Castle the whole lower Lough Erne, more than 7 miles wide; he answered "what you call a lake we would call a river," and he sent to me in a few weeks, to show me the great works of America, a map of one farm of 48 square miles, and the plan of the railway across all North America, *begun and finished since meetings have been held, but before a spade has been yet put in the ground, in this Lough Erne question.*



*teram partem*—i.e., that every man in every question, but especially that a statesman in your high place, should hear both sides before you form your opinion. Thus, as I find by Lord Erne's secret circular, dated Sept. 15, 1871, that in the spring of last year Lord Erne, his son, Lord Crichton, and his railway engineer, Mr. Barton, had a long interview with you in London about this matter. surely you cannot refuse now to hear what the people—the tenant farmers, the town commissioners of Enniskillen, Belturbet, Cavan, &c.—wish to say on this question, which in so many ways affects their interests, their labours, and their health?

You are a prominent member of a Government, filling perhaps its hardest place, on which Ireland has strong claims; for by means of 2 Irish questions (the Church and the Land) you got into power. Now, this question, though of great magnitude, is not of that political class which offers such brilliant advantages; but it, therefore, will enable you to prove that you and your colleagues did not promise to disestablish a Church and to pass a Landlord and Tenant Act merely for the great benefits which yourselves have derived from these measures, but from your strong and honest feeling for the public welfare; and that now you will pay similar earnest attention to this case, though it cannot reward you with the same prizes.

As to the Lough Oughter Flood-drainage and Ballinamore Canal, it cannot be possible that your Government now wish or try to break their written promises, and to evade inquiry into these works, or rather failures, of of their own agents? Putting the special merits of the case aside, surely the word of a Government, its written engagement, ought to be sacred and to be faithfully kept? Is it right or fair that baronies in Fermanagh, Cavan, Leitrim, and Roscommon should be taxed £32,000 (all which they have paid), as their share of outlay in a Canal, which yet was never finished? which was passed into the hands of their trustees by a false statement that it was finished, and which, therefore, has never been of the slightest use to them? and



yet, besides this outlay, they are still taxed from time to time for the maintenance of this useless, unfinished work. There is a gross abuse more like what travellers tell us happens in Turkey or in Egypt than in a free country !

Would any English counties submit to be treated in a similar manner ? Ireland will now be taxed to pay its share of the great Alabama costs, though English ship-owners and merchants got all the benefit from the ruin of the commerce of the United States for several years by that privateer ; and though England, and especially Mr. Gladstone, gave its whole moral influence to help the southern states as long as they were thought likely to succeed. *The Times* is England's mouth piece, and if any man would take the trouble to print in 2 parallel columns a pamphlet of its articles, first proving that we were right, and next proving that we were wrong, it would be a curious weathercock. In plain truth, we now owe this tax to Mr. Gladstone ; for, as he then went beyond his fellows to please Mr. Davis, the Southern President, so he has now been obliged to pass all proper limits in his attempts to please General Grant, the Northern President.

If that Privateer had been built in Cork or Limerick, if Irish greediness had brought all this trouble and disgrace on the kingdom, would not the English press now, as when Providence by the potato disease afflicted Ireland, throw the whole tax upon us ?

Again, full 19s. in the pound of all our war taxes are spent in English naval and military establishments, dock-yards, institutions, &c., &c. ; while our Shannon, the greatest river in the United kingdom, maltreated and disfigured by the mistakes of English engineers, is allowed, year after year, to waste its waters, which, if wisely used, would turn the wheels of 100 factories of industry, and to lay waste its banks, because, for the most paltry reasons, the Government will not pay the salary of a first-class arterial-drainage engineer on the Board of Works.



This abuse is worse than a mistake in economy—it is a breach of faith. Parliament by several Acts requires 3 Commissioners of Public Works ; Sir R. Griffith, after long service, retires on a well-deserved pension, and, I only regret, then puts his large fortune in Bohemian and not in Irish coal mines. It is then a subterfuge, a fraud on Parliament, in Government, to apply to this retired officer, in his private house, for his signature, to fulfil the form, but to break the spirit, of several acts of Parliament.

Again, it is a rule of the Lords of the Treasury that the Chairman at that Board shall be a military engineer, *i.e.*, Lieut.-Colonel M'Kerlie, and who, therefore, I dare say, could well defend or take a Sebastopol and his colleague is Mr. Lefanu, an excellent railway engineer ; but there is as wide difference between the professional training and practice of a military and railway engineer, and an arterial-drainage engineer, though all called by the same general name, as between an oculist or a dentist, and a surgeon, though all called medical men. No man with a pain in his chest or gout in his feet would go to an oculist, and it is equally absurd to submit a case of arterial drainage, *viz.*, by great cuttings to regulate the flow, current, and levels of water in vast quantities, to 2 most respectable engineers who can on dry land make a railway or build a fortress. Of course, commissioners in office, and ministers of all kinds, soon learn various ways to conceal their own ignorance—to thwart, to prevent, to stop a work which would expose them. It is an art soon learnt, and of which we can all see the practice on a large scale in Ireland ; but allow me to observe, that Ireland is sick of this misgovernment, and if Parliament is dissolved tomorrow, its people will chose about 70 out of its 105 members pledged to its meeting in Dublin. Now, the cause of this general discontent is not that the people of Ireland dislike the people of England and Scotland, together with whom, and always paying their share of blood and ability, they have raised up the greatest empire in the whole world ; nor that they dis-



trust the Scotch and English members of both Houses of Parliament; on the contrary, we all believe that their great majority have always felt the strongest desire for Ireland's welfare; still more, it is not that the public of Ireland are disaffected to their gracious Queen—they only regret that her visits to these shores are always short, and that she has not yet seen Lough Erne and our north-west counties. But the true cause of this deep and general discontent is that Ireland hates Dublin Castle; its mean and weak misgovernment; its paid spies, agents, and magistrates,\* now becoming as numerous as formerly in the Papal States; its shabby and continual jobbing and mal-administration of the best laws and measures passed by Parliament; but perhaps, above all, as the worst and sorest grievance, that, though mistakes will happen under the best Government, yet under Dublin Castle no complaint, however just, is referred to proper inquiry and healed by fair redress. There is the sting which keeps all Ireland in irritation, and still drives her emigrants in despair to the United States.†

For my part, my whole purpose from the beginning has been to prepare a complete, truthful, practical, detailed plan for this great work, so that its whole cost and promised advantages might be submitted to the most rigorous examination of a competent and independent engineer appointed by the Board of Works, and in a manner which would enable him to show its faults; trusting, if approved by him, then that with the aid of local public opinion the required majority, viz., two-thirds in value of the flooded landlords in question, would gladly give their assents.

If Mr. S. U. Roberts, the able engineer appointed for this inquiry, will report that Mr. Lynam's plan, amended,

\* For many years the only Castle remedy for Ireland's misgovernment has been the appointment of paid Magistrates. Both sides, Whigs and Tories, or Liberals and Conservatives, have abused the privilege of this pension list. Hence its continuance. It is painful to hear that the applicants for these idle places are numerous as legion. Ireland will never be in good health while so many doctors are so well paid for their extra attendance in sickness.

† See note on Home Rule at page 33.



perhaps, as a plan for so great a work is always likely to be amended, either would not fulfil the promised advantages—*i.e.*, would not prevent the floods which now overflow 17,000 acres—or would fulfil them, but at a cost in execution much larger than Mr. Lynam's estimate, and which Mr. R. therefore, would not recommend, just as gold may be bought too dear, then, without one word of complaint from me, this plan falls to the ground, and my outlay and labour are lost.

But in these pages I have shown, and complain that this fair course of procedure has not been followed, but that, in the various ways which I have described, and to prevent exposure of their own mistakes, the Board of Works all along encourage Lord Erne's secret and underhand opposition to this public work by any plan.

You will please to remember that when, in February, 1870, I feared that Colonel M'Kerlie had laid down the rule that no plan for this work could proceed till first approved by the unanimous local landlords, a letter from Colonel M'Kerlie was sent to me, March 5, 1870, from Dublin Castle, promising that any plan, promoted in accordance with the proper rules laid down by Parliament in 1863, would be examined and judged by its merits, and without reference to the number of landlords, few or many, among its promoters, and whose opinion, of course, without any professional examination of its principles and details, would be a mere prejudice, without the slightest weight with any sensible man.

If I had not got that fair explanation, I would not have proceeded further; for I knew then, just as well as now, that Lord Erne would use every possible means to prevent the Flood-drainage and Navigation of Lough Erne, and that a string of landlords, like Messrs. Collum, Captain Archdall, M.P., &c., &c., would follow him.

Now, you, who do not know Fermanagh, and how the public affairs of its excellent tenant-farmers have for 25 years been mismanaged by a small ring of private interests, will perhaps think that I write under some



mistaken feeling. I, therefore, prove and clinch the truth of my view by a simple statement. Lord Erne tells your Board of Works that he is most anxious for the Flood-drainage and Navigation of Lough Erne; next, that he has got Mr. Barton's plan for that purpose and the assents of two-thirds of the flooded landlords in its favour. Now, if he will bind himself to proceed with that plan, I will at once withdraw Mr. Lynam's, which is before the Board of Works, and then the course will be quite clear for Lord Erne.

But if Lord Erne will then neither proceed with Mr. Barton's plan, described by its author in a pamphlet of 23 pages, or in public court show the reasons of his private opposition to Mr. Lynam's, then I respectfully and firmly think that his secret opposition should not be longer allowed to stop the progress of a public work.

Here I earnestly ask the best attention of all Fermanagh landlords, merchants, &c., &c., who take any interest in the navigation of Lough Erne, whether for steamboats and commerce or for yachts and amusement, to a few points which can be understood by any man of good sense. Steamboats only want one course between quay and quay, and a minimum depth of 5 feet over lock sills and shoals will suffice for any steamboats that will ever be in use here; but in the first  $1\frac{1}{4}$  mile from Belturbet quay, and in the canal\* along right bank from Carrowkeel to Belleek quay, the depth can be cut out to 6 feet. Between these long cuttings all the shoals in Lough Erne, over a course of  $47\frac{3}{4}$  miles, are few and short; if put end to end together they would not make 1 mile in length. All the rest of the course is of ample natural depth. Yachts require as much space as possi-

\* This canal will (along its whole course, but at a few short points of land) be taken off the width of the river, and the bank that will separate the canal from the river will be made by the "spoil" from the great excavations necessary in any case to deepen its bed, a most ingenious contrivance, by which much cost is saved in removing the "spoil" and a canal is provided that will be of the greatest use to the general navigation of Lough Erne, and especially to the Belleek China Works. Owners of similar works have often gladly paid thousands of pounds for a waterway for barges, &c., just to their premises; here it comes to the china mill like a gift of fortune, gifts often not received as well as they deserve.



ble to play here and there as they please, and, for their size, much more depth than steamboats. Now Mr. Maclean's (or Lord Erne's) first plan contains a solid stone weir, across Lough Erne at Rosscor, to be not less than 4,000 feet long, *and with its top at 149.6 feet ordnance height*, which Mr. M. takes as our present summer level. But this height is 3.26, say 3 feet 3 inches **BELOW** the zero of the gauge at Belleisle Bridge, to which zero the lake in summers 1867 and 1871 never fell, and below which zero its lowest level in our 5 last summers has only been 6 inches, viz., on September 5, 1869. Again from Mr. Forsyth's recorded spirit-level observations between Creggan's Point and Silverhill Bay (*i.e.*, between Belleisle Bay, and Lower Lake) we may conclude that in low summer water the level at Belleisle is, at most, 6 inches above the level at Rosscor, or that on September 5, 1869, (the lowest water in 5 years), the ordnance height of lake at Rosscor was  $152.86 - 1$ . or  $151.86$  feet; so Mr. Maclean's (Lord Erne's) summer level of Lower Lake, and the top of his stone weir, would be  $151.86 - 149.6$ , or 2.26, say 2 feet 3 inches, below the lowest level of lower Lough Erne in last 5 years!! *i.e.*, full  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet below its *common* summer level!!

Where, then, would be the navigation of Lower Lough Erne, or playroom for its regattas? or even courses for mercantile steamboats to Enniskillen? Yet this plan came from the quarter which publicly speaks for the navigation of Lough Erne, but privately suggests that by any plan either the navigation or the flood drainage must be spoilt.

I may here observe that Mr. Lynam in his revised, or 1872 plan, proposes 330 feet of sluices in one straight line, at right angles to the course of the Lower Erne, at Carrowkeel, and a canal along its northern bank thence,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles, to a new quay or harbour at Belleek, between its railway station and China Factory, the top of the sluices, when shut, to be 152 feet O. H., which has since been raised in court by Mr Roberts and Mr. Lynam to 153.



We can here see the value of practical experience in these water questions. Mr. Maclean thinks that the winter floods would never rise more than 18 inches above the top of his stone weir, and that their waters would thus pass off, though he proposes no cuttings, no clearance to deepen the river below Rosscor, but only to reduce the rock at the top of the falls at Belleek; just the mistake of the Shannon Commissioners. No doubt, the floods would pass off as they pass now, *in time*, but not without overflowing their banks in the narrow passages of Upper Lake. 18 inches at top, *and without a clear fall into a lower water-level on lower side of weir*, is not head enough to draw off such vast quantities of water as quick as they come by many rivers in wet seasons into the lake. The whole weir must be made moveable, so that from top to bottom, say 7 feet perp., there will, when wanted, be free passage for the waters, by the complete removal, or opening, of the sluice-gates, either by raising them up by racks quite out of the water, or by letting them lie down on their backs flat at the bottom of the river, or by turning them on pivots midway, with their thin edge to the current, the 3 principal patterns, or by using wooden 'needles' or poles, as in many large German rivers, which are put in their places, edge to edge, or removed, singly and by hand, a cheap, strong, and excellent plan.

If Mr. Barton's plan is examined in a similar way, it will be found that it would, if adopted, destroy the navigation, and expose the foreshores, of Lower Lough Erne, and, to put the case as plainly as possible, if engineers decide that it is necessary, for any good plan of Flood-drainage, thus to lower its summer level, then the whole question must be given up, for the balance of advantage, viz., navigation of all kinds, appearance of gentlemen's places, mill-power at Belleek, &c., would be so much greater than the benefit on 17,000 acres of flooded land, that no plan would be proposed, much less adopted.

But Mr. Lynam's whole case is, and to which he asks fair inquiry from the Government (we all trust Mr. S. U. Roberts, C.E.), not only that their interests can be re-



conciled, but that there never was so great a case, with such natural facilities and advantages, if only there is the good-will for its settlement, as Lough Erne.

As an example of the Board of Works' management in these matters, look at their Flood-drainage of Lough Oughter, under their engineer, then and still, Mr. Forsyth. His estimate was £30,969; the sum spent was £111,171, and yet the most useful part, viz, the removal of Dummy's Weir at Belturbet, was omitted, so its cost should be struck off, and we may say that in their hands an estimate of £25,000 grows to a bill of £111,000!! Is it any wonder that landlords, &c., are afraid of any work in which the Board of Works can put their finger! Even in this case Lord Farnham, Mr. Hamilton, &c., have been now compelled to propose a second work, with £12,000 cost to mend their mistake! These men are now judges in this case, *minus* their best head, Mr. Mulvany, whom they drove away because a zealous Irishman, and who is now President over immense and most successful coal and iron mines and works in Prussia.

Your obedient,

J. G. V. PORTER.

*Table to show the present Range of Lough Erne from the gauge at Belleisle Bridge, with its zero set at Ordnance Height, 152.86, say 152 feet 10 inches.*

YEAR.	LOWEST.	HIGHEST.	RANGE.
<i>Summer &amp; Winter.</i>	<i>Inches. Date.</i>	<i>Inches. Date.</i>	<i>Inches.</i>
1867-'67-'68.	9 on July 10.	84 on February 5.	75
1868-'68-'69.	Minus 5 on Augt 6.	89½ on December 31.	94½
1869-'69-'70.	Do. 6 on Sept. 5.	90 on January 15.	96
1870-'70-'71.	Do. 2 on Augt. 22.	88 on October 26.	90
1871-'71-'72.	5 on June 24.	90 on January 20.	85
1872.	9½ on Aug. 6.		

Observe that in nature there is no fixed summer level, *e.g.*, the lowest level in summer 1869 was 15½ inches below the lowest level in summer 1872; and in same way there is no fixed highest winter level, *e.g.*, the highest in 1869-1870 was 6 inches above the highest in 1867-68. Observe also that in these 5 years the



range of difference of highest, or winter, levels is much less than the range of difference of summer, or lowest, levels. I may add that the zero of my guage has been adopted in Court by Mr. Roberts as the official or fair average summer level of Lough Erne, just because it is in some summers above, and in some summers below, the actual lowest level.

*Points laid before Mr. S. U. Roberts' Court in Enniskillen, March 21, 1872, by J. G. V. Porter.*

1. "That the Ordnance heights of some known mark should be ascertained beyond dispute at each of the 5 natural stages of the water-course from Belturbet to Belleek, *e.g.*, at Belturbet, Crom, Belleisle Bridge, Silverhill Bridge, Carrowkeel, and Belleek, and also at the first locks in the Ulster and Ballinamore Canals, and that the proposed high and low (or winter and summer) water levels of each engineer's plan should be referred to them, so that the question as to the necessity of any intermediate lock and weir could thus be studied on admitted scientific *duta*, and not decided by opinion.

2. So great a work as this Lough Erne case has never been even proposed, much less executed, under this Act of 1863. It includes public and private purposes, navigation and drainage, and in its cost, area, and number of landlords and tenants affected, is of vast magnitude. I venture to suggest that it would be wise and just for all interests that a maximum agreed sum should be fixed as the whole charge on the flooded lands; then the government, as their grant, to pay the balance, and therefore to appoint one paid engineer on the Board, and that these clauses should be put in our Special Act, and would save money in the end.

3. That the question of total cost should be carefully ascertained before any works are begun, not by the plan's engineer, who might propose too little, or by the Board of Works, who might propose too much, but, with time for execution and mode of payment first made known, from the competition of contractors, with good security.



4. That necessary clauses for the works of navigation above the works of drainage, and up to Belturbet and to the first locks on the two canals, and also for enabling the "United Northern Canals"—viz., the Ulster, Lough Erne, and the Ballinamore—to be leased and managed by one Board, should be put in same special Act."

I most earnestly and respectfully recommend paragraph 2 to the Government's attention. For several years I have now carefully observed large works of this kind in different parts of Ireland, and I well know the best local Board likely to be formed here, and I dread to see the practical execution of works, which, no matter by what plans, will cost an immense sum, committed solely to its hands without the regular guidance and constant paid presence and attention of a good engineer.

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The Drainage\* Act, Ireland, of this year, viz., 35 and 36 Vic., c. 31, enables the Board of Works to charge the lands of tenants from year to year, and to add to their rents a rate so far as the benefit they will receive from any work of arterial drainage, in any case where the landlord and tenant cannot settle its amount between themselves, *i.e.*, the tenants need not care how much the work will cost, which, as they have no voice in the choice of the plan, or in the management of its execution, is quite fair; the measure of their rate will be not its cost, but their benefit. The landlords must pay all losses for mismanagement, and should, therefore, avoid such failures as in the I. N. W. Railway, where the vast excess of costs over estimates has ruined the shareholders.

\* Since I wrote this paragraph I am told from several quarters that this Act, only 1 page, and which, though so short, is all drawn in legal jargon, will not be interpreted in this manner in the Four Courts, but will leave a latitude to the Board of Works to charge the tenant in occupation more than his benefit; I am also told that it was purposely drawn to be unintelligible without law-suits. Its sense above I give from the words of Lt.-Col. M'Kerlie, before it passed. It is most desirable that its practical force will be soon set forth in the plainest language.



*Railways versus Canals.*

From Mr. Help's life of Mr. Brassey, the great railway contractor, who died worth four millions sterling, and which book is dedicated by permission to the Queen :—

“Mr. Harrison, his father-in-law, was, about 1831, one of the few men with clear sight to perceive that canals would not be ruined by railways, but that in most cases there would be ample employment for both.” See p. 32.

Ireland is now at the same stage, in its means and wants of transit for goods, as England in 1831, and in a similar way, and without proposing to make any new canals, large fortunes may be made by the amalgamation, and better administration, and inter-correspondence of all our present canals in two companies, Northern and Southern.

The only public reason pressed, secretly and underhand, but with great influence, on Government against their aid to the canals and inland navigations of Ireland is that these water-ways compete with railways, and that Government should not help either side.

Now the secrecy of this opposition proves its conscious weakness. If it was true and sound, it would show its face at public meetings.

Still, as it is mischievous, it deserves an answer, viz., nobody asks Government to make new canals, or even proposes to make them in any manner in Ireland, but only to finish, or rather allow to be finished, the canals long since made, and now useless. In my first letter to Lord Hartington I have shown their length and cost, and that about 6d. in the pound of their cost would now complete the link which, while broken, leaves them useless for long traffic.

Also, on the whole, it is quite certain, and becoming better known every year from experience in England, that these Canals in full work would be useful to our railways, just as carts about a town are useful to its carriages, by feeding, supporting, and promoting the



various kinds of active business which supply the trains with passengers.

Again, it is a common but great mistake to suppose that Irish Railways are mismanaged and do not pay ; whereas the truth is that all the chief Irish Railway Companies have been from the beginning far better managed, and have paid their owners better, and are now safer property, than a similar share, say four-fifths, of English Railway Companies. Mr. Haughton, Chairman of the Great Southern and Western, Mr. Cusack of the Midland, Mr. Murland of the Dublin and Drogheda, &c., are men who deserve well of Ireland, and who, though in appearance only heads of commercial companies, are in truth the administrators of great public interests, who, with their brother directors, have for many years fulfilled their duties not merely with success, but with integrity and steadiest attention.

Almost all the sham outcry in needy newspapers for the Government to buy up all the Irish Railways (we can guess what a Donnybrook fair of jobbing Dublin Castle, with 1,500 new places in its gift, would then become) proceeds from the mismanagers of the Irish North-western Railway Company. The speeches in favour of Government purchase, made at artificial meetings, are shams, for this reason, one-half, and the half of most consequence, of the question, viz., that the tenant farmers would then be required to pay a new cess to make up the annual loss to the Government, is always kept back and suppressed. But what is wanted in Ireland, and would be gladly given by any Ministry, if not afraid that the measure would lead to unreasonable political demands, is the permanent establishment in Dublin of a Board of Trade for Ireland, with the same powers to examine all Railway Bills, before they go before Parliament, and also to supervise, for the public welfare and safety, all railways at work, that the London Board of Trade possesses over Great Britain.

But in order to show as plainly as possible the present character of the I. N. W. Railway Company, for whose alleged benefit Government is urged to prevent the



navigation of Lough Erne, I add a few letters which will answer for themselves.

#### THE NORTHERN IRISH RAILWAYS.

(*From Saunders' News-Letter of Sept. 2.*)

Belleisle, Aug. 30, 1872.

SIR,—2 new arrivals will soon take place in Ulster, which will alter the whole railway system of this province, viz. :—First, the Dublin and Meath line, from the Midland Company's Terminus, at Broadstone, will reach Kingscourt, in county Cavan, on its way to Monaghan or to Armagh ; and this new line from Dublin into the heart of Ulster will, no doubt, soon compel the shareholders of the 2 coast companies from Dublin to Portadown to get rid of the needless embarrassment of 2 sets of chairmen, directors, officers of all kinds, time-tables, &c. ; Second, the London and North-Western Company, from Holyhead, will soon put its foot on Irish land at Greenore, from which one line is already made to Dundalk, and arrangements are in progress for making another line to Newry, along the South shore of Carlingford Lough. The probable effect will be that Newry will in some years again become what it was for centuries till about 1820—viz., the chief seaport for England of Ulster, and outlet of all the traffic from Armagh, Monaghan, Omagh, Derry, &c., to Holyhead and Liverpool. It is plain that it is of the highest interest, not only to the shareholders of the Irish North-Western, but to the whole Public of Ulster, to know fully and truly the terms upon which the Irish North-Western Board has invited the London and North-Western to come to Ireland ; and I, therefore, beg leave to request you to publish the following letters. A great number of Irish North-Western shareholders live in Dublin, and I believe that, if they use this occasion well, the same mistake will not be repeated in Ulster as last summer with the Waterford and Limerick in Munster, and that between the just competition (1) of the Central, or Meath, and (2) the coast railways from Dublin to Ulster, and



(3) of the London and North-Western from Greenore, their 145 miles from Dundalk to Derry, through the most tranquil and prosperous counties in Ulster, will obtain fair terms of lease or sale.

Your obedient,

J. G. V. PORTER.

Belleisle, May 6, 1872.

SIR,—In Sept. last year I asked your board if they had made the Irish North-Western Railway Company liable for 5 per cent. on all the outlay and working expenses of the Dundalk and Greenore, and London and North-Western Railway Companies, between Dundalk and Holyhead ; but your board refused to give this information to their shareholders. This item, with the long delay, will now be of large amount ; and I again beg leave to ask if the Irish North-Western shareholders are liable for any charge on this account ?

Your obedient servant,

J. G. V. PORTER.

To the Secy., Irish North-Western Ry. Cy.

Irish North-Western Office, Dundalk,  
May 14, 1872.

SIR,—In reply to your letter of the 6th inst., I am directed to inform you that two agreements, dated respectively 1st July, 1869, and 6th January, 1870, were entered into with the London and North Western Railway Company, whereby the receipts for the cross-channel traffic *via* Greenore of the 2 lines, English and Irish, including the receipts generally of the Greenore line, and of the steamers, are to be thrown into a joint purse, out of which all expenses of the Greenore line and the steamers, including interest at 5 per cent. on the capital expended in the construction of the Greenore line are to be paid (the capital for the construction of the Greenore line being limited to £213,200). And that except the receipts from the cross-channel traffic *via*



Greenore, no other receipts of this company are in any way pledged to the Greenore undertaking. The profits, after providing for the foregoing, are to be apportioned on a mileage average.

“ I am, sir, your obedient servant,  
EDWARD COLLINS, Sec.

Belleisle, May 17, 1872.

SIR,—I thank you for your answer of May 14, but do not quite understand some points, which, however, your intelligence can explain. Pray is its meaning that when the steamboats begin to run between Holyhead and Greenore all moneys received for traffic between Holyhead and Dundalk will be thrown into a joint purse, and (less working expenses of the steamboats and of the railway between Greenore and Dundalk, and also less 5 per cent. on the cost of the steamboats, and of the railway) will be divided every half year between the London and North-Western and Irish North-Western Companies, in ratio to their miles? and that the cost of the Greenore and Dundalk Railway cannot for this purpose be more than £213,200 (*i.e.*, its annual charge cannot be more than £10,660)? and that these same two companies will be liable in the same ratio to provide the balance, if and while the gross sums received for traffic between Holyhead and Dundalk will fail to cover these charges? Pray answer if this blank general formula of this agreement is right; and, if so, how many miles are allowed to the English and to the Irish Company? and what sum, or maximum sum, will be taken as the first cost of the steamboats (which must be quite known now)?

Your obedient,  
J. G. V. PORTER.

Irish North Western Office, Dundalk,  
24th June, 1872.

SIR,—I am instructed to give the following answer to your letter of the 17th May last:—I beg to say that



the receipts from all traffic passing between towns in England and Ireland over any portions of the London and North-Western Company, the Irish and North-Western Company, and the Dundalk and Greenore Company, and in the steamers, and also the local receipts from the Dundalk and Greenore line, are to form a joint purse, out of which are to be paid—the expenses of steamers as per the steam packet agreement, terminal allowances, Government duty on passenger traffic in England, expenses of transshipment, tolls for use of Greenore Works, the working expenses of the Greenore line, and interest on the cost of the Greenore line, not exceeding £5 per cent. on a capital of £160,000, of and such rate as may be agreed on for a debt £53,200 (which latter sum may be increased with the assent of the Irish North-Western Company); and the balance, after the discharge of the above, is to be divided between the London and North-Western and the Irish North-Western Company, in accordance with the mileage proportions of the distance travelled on those companies' 2 lines. The agreements do not provide as to how the loss (if any) arising from the joint working, &c., are to be met, but I would imagine, that as the through traffic receipts alone are to form the joint purse, any deficiency must fall upon (1st) the Dundalk and Greenore shareholders, and (2nd) upon the Dundalk and Greenore creditors and mortgagees.

Your obedient Servant,

EDWARD COLLINS, Secretary.

Dundalk, August 27th, 1872.

SIR,—I heartily concur with your board in hoping that the new route between Dundalk and Holyhead by Greenore (which your board states will open early next spring, *i.e.*, before another half-yearly meeting) will be useful to our shareholders: which depends, however, not only on the amount of traffic which this route will get, but also, and in a great degree, on the terms of our connexion with its owners; and I therefore beg leave to ask what risk, if any, and during what period, has



our board undertaken for the payment (1) of interest on the outlay, and (2) of the working expenses in each half-year (A) of the railway between Dundalk and Greenore, and (B) of the steamboats between Greenore and Holyhead?

As our shareholders are liable for any obligations incurred by your board which are within the powers given to them in 1867, I hope that a full and clear answer will be given to-day to this question, which affects not only our future interests, but the whole North of Ireland.

Your obedient,

J. G. V. PORTER.

To the Sec.

I. N. W. Railway Company.

The following Resolution was proposed at a meeting of this I. N. W. Company 2 years ago, but was not pressed to a division. (See *Dublin Express*, June 4, 1870:)

“That in this company’s circumstances (viz., without money or credit, and when the committee of inquiry, Messrs. M’Creedy and Stephens, appointed by the shareholders’ half-yearly meeting in August, 1869, report that its affairs are in the greatest disorder; but when also its traffic is steadily increasing every year with the steady general improvement of the tranquil and prosperous counties between Dundalk, Enniskillen, and Derry, through which its lines run, it would not be prudent in us to engage in sea-ventures with the London and North-Western Railway Company, because we would not have the slightest control over the movements of that powerful company, and because the success of this new proposed cross-channel line of steamboats will depend much less on the natural traffic between Greenore and Holyhead than on the largeness of the amount of capital which this English company will be willing to risk in this addition to its many present enterprises, or the continuance or settlement of its present warfare with rival English companies for the traffic between London and



Ireland. We, therefore, believe that the prudent course for our shareholders, in order to save their property, already so much injured by the many previous mistakes of their directors, is to give every facility to cross-channel traffic, no matter from what quarter it may come, but not to engage in the risks and guarantees of an enterprise over which it would have no control, and which guarantees would certainly depress its credit. But if the London and North-Western Company think that this company's partnership is necessary in an enterprise in which they propose to risk a million sterling, we recommend our brother shareholders to sell or to lease to them our whole line on such terms as referees, without interest in either company, will think fit to recommend as fair and just for both sides, and that this meeting should be now adjourned for one month, in order to take the opinion of its shareholders on this proposal ; or if all who concur in this view are now overborne by our board of directors and their proxies, that we should take immediate steps to appeal to the railway department of the Board of Trade."

Belleisle, Sept. 9, 1872.

SIR,—At the half-yearly meeting on August 27, Mr. Minnit, Chairman, (in reply to my question then, and to my letter given to you before that meeting), said that the I. N. W. Board had made no engagement of any kind as to the steamboats which will soon run between Greenore and Holyhead (*i.e.*, only as to the railway between Dundalk and Greenore, as set forth in your letter to me of June 24). I replied then at once "that I would be quite satisfied if Mr. Minnit, or yourself, would write that answer to me ;" *but he refused to commit to paper his own statement*, and I since observe that his verbal answer is omitted in the report next day, filling two columns of the *Dublin Express*, though precisely upon this point the future welfare of this Company, and its ability to keep alive, and even to pay any dividend to its owners, will in a great degree depend.

I, therefore, again ask what engagement your Board



has made as to the outlay and renewal of these steam-boats, besides their current running expenses? for I interpret your printed "agreement as to steamers" to mean that the I. N. W. and L. and N. W. Companies guarantee 5 per cent. per annum on both these immense sums, though that obscure "agreement" does not enable any man to ascertain how many shillings of each pound, that will be thus called, will come from the I. N. W., and how many from the L. and N. W. Company.

I also ask what counsel's opinion you have taken, that your Board has any right, by our own Acts of Parliament, or assent to the Greenore Bill in 1867, then pending, to engage our shareholders in any ventures in this new route between Dundalk and Holyhead, beyond a fixed share of its current running expenses?

For obvious reasons, and especially because it now appears that this scheme will not only soon give its chief traffic to Newry and its railways, and not to Dundalk and to our railways, but will even take from our railway a large part of its present traffic, south of Omagh, it is desirable that a clear answer should be given to these queries.

Your obedient,

J. G. V. PORTER.

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I. N. W. Railway Office, Dundalk,  
Sept 11, 1872.

SIR,—Your letter of the 9th instant, received this morning, shall be submitted to my directors at their next meeting.

Your obedient servant,

EDWARD COLLINS, Secretary.

All men can thus see what a farce the half-yearly meeting is in this Company, where its Chairman makes positive verbal statements, but will not put them on paper. The Dublin *Express* always publishes a kind of "Bowdler's" version of this Company's meetings, *e.g.*, in this case quite omitting its Chairman's hopes and prayers for the purchase of Irish railways by Government. Year



after year this Company is getting deeper into debt, and there would be no money to pay its Board's fees if expenses were not added to the the capital account, begun in 1845, and not yet closed.

The Shareholders were, in 1870, urged not to sell their railway, *i.e.*, to leave the Board in office, because they would soon get a dividend. But in the 2 years since, as in the 10 years before, they have not got one penny—not even on preference shares.

This case is quite in point here ; for it is the mismanagers of this wretched Company who move heaven and earth with Government in London, Dublin, &c., to buy up the Irish railways, and use all kinds of influence in Fermanagh to prevent, postpone, &c., the navigation of Lough Erne, and the cheap water-carriage of goods between Enniskillen and Belfast.

Yet, if fair use was made of Enniskillen's wonderful natural advantages, if it became a great commercial centre and depot, with 30,000 or 40,000 people, would not this Company, holding in its hands the 2 avenues to Enniskillen from the seaports of Derry and Dundalk, reap the chief advantage ?

Alas, monopoly has always been the aim and ruin of the I. N. W. Company. Years of intrigue were wasted to give Lisnaskea a monopoly of the market traffic of Fermanagh for England, by preventing any station between Lisnaskea and Enniskillen. Was that struggle made for the benefit of the shareholders ? What is wanted now is a full, true audit of this Company's affairs, and to move its Board and office to Enniskillen, already the residence of its excellent traffic manager, Mr. Plews, and the centre of its business ; also to bring the markets for export at Enniskillen and Lisnaskea stations, as so successfully at Omagh, *close to the Railway Trucks*. Twelve years ago I urged that its Board should promote a railway from Enniskillen by Belcoo, Blacklion, and Glencar Valley to Sligo ; and if made then, all the North Connaught mails, traffic, and passengers would now pass through Enniskillen.

The barony cesspayers, however, will not guarantee



dividends to the shareholders of this new railway. Let the L. and N. W. Company, its secret promoter, come forward openly. If there was a barony guarantee for the main line, between Dundalk and Enniskillen, it would have been demanded for last 22 half years. Would it not much more be wanted for a branch? Besides a guarantee is only impunity for mismanagement.

Was any town ever worse treated and deceived than this capital of Fermanagh, whose name, so honourable in history, has during the last 25 years been joined with most discreditable failures in commerce? Though from Belleek to Belturbet, 52 m., the only bridge across Lough Erne—the only pass for carriages, cattle to drive, &c.—is at Enniskillen, though nature has thus made its street a trap for the business of several rich and prosperous counties, yet its inhabitants decline in number; lose their trade to Omagh and Derry; their old postal arrangements with the seacoast, Bundoran, and Ballyshannon; and though joined by a rail of 60 miles with Dundalk, all their mails, night passengers, &c., to Dublin, are still, in 1872, sent by a one-horse open car to Omagh, and round by an immense circuit to the same town, Dundalk; and now years and years of hard work are necessary, against opponents who do not venture to show themselves in the witness-box at any public inquiry, to let this magnificent lake become useful to Enniskillen and to all Ireland.

*Heads of Mr. Lynam's Estimate for the Flood Drainage of Lough Erne.*

Excavations at BELLEEK	...	...	...	£9,829
Purchase of Eel Fishery	...	...	...	1,500
Do. of Saw Mill	...	...	...	150
China Mill	New Water-Wheel during work			£1,200
	Tail-race			190
	Do. Bridge			200
	Do. Wheel Pit			200
	Do. Head-race and Canal from Carrowkeel			2800
	Compensation for interference			500
330 feet lineal of Sluices, to shut and open, at Carrowkeel				5,649
The Guardian's Cottage	..	...	..	75
Excavations from Belleek to Rosscor	...	...	...	37,670
Do. at Portora	...	..	...	5,125



Do.	at Enniskillen	{ West Bridge	...	...£*2,122
		{ To Market Quay	...	... 272
Do.	at Killyhevlin	...	...	... ,882
Do.	between Knock Island and Little Ring	..	...	... 186
Do.	off Arda	...	...	... 300
Do.	at Carrybridge	..	...	... *1250
Do.	off Drummee	...	...	... 50
Do.	at Black Rocks	...	...	... †665
Do.	off Derrycramph	...	...	... †800
Do.	off Mouth of Arney river	...	...	... †535
Clearance in Swanlinbar and Aghakillymaud rivers				... 700
Clearance in Colebrooke River				... 1,300
Excavations between Gubbe and Inisfendra				... 340
Do.	at Bloxam's Shoal	...	...	... 1,713
Do.	at Derrykerrib, between Ulster Canal and	Belturbet	...	} 330
Do.	at last or 26th lock of do. Canal			
Dredging in Ballinamore Canal (or Woodford River)				} 700
between Crom and Aghalane Bridge				
Purchase of various small points of land				... 398
Engineering, valuation, inspection, &c.				... 2,500
Superintendence of works under Drainage Board				... 5,500
Purchase of 2 Steam Dredges, 22 Horse-power each				£6,000
	1 Steam Hopper Barge	...	...	2,000
	4 Common do. do.	...	...	3,000
				£11,000
Loss by wear and tear during works, 3 summers, and to be then sold				... 5,500
				5,500
Interest on Money				... 7,624
Reserve for incidental charges				... 10,000
				£114,136

\* And underpinning.

† Course on West side of Knock Island and Inismore.

*Clearance of Lower Levels of Rivers.*

Swanlinbar River	... ..	£250	} 12,500
Hollybrook do.	... ..	*590	
Moorlough do.	... ..	*1,903	
Woodford do.	... ..	600	
Rag do.	... ..	*2,591	
Finn River to Annie's Bridge	... ..	*4,768	
Creeny do.	... ..	*458	
Superintendence	... ..	£500	} 1,340
Interest on Money	... ..	840	
			£126,636

\*And Underpinning Bridges.



Chargeable to Navigation	...	...	£21,328	} ££23,048
Do. to Counties, half cost of bridges	...	...	1,720	
Do. to Flooded Lands	...	...	...	£103,588

*Heads of Mr. Brady's Area and Value of Flooded Lands.*

	Area of Land that will be re- lieved from Floods.	Their present Annual value.	Average to Acre.		Their pro- bable in- crease of Value.	Average to Acre.	
	Acres.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Fermanagh ...	14,449	8,638	12	0	5,844	8	0
Cavan ...	2,538	1,446	11	6	1,109	8	8
Monaghan ...	451	245	10	9	201	8	10
	<hr/> 17,438	<hr/> 10,329	11	4	<hr/> 7,154	8	2

N.B.—All the river clearances in this estimate, but a few cases, for which strong special reasons can be given, are for the removal of shoals, &c., &c., in their lowest levels, *i.e.*, merely to give their adjacent lands full advantage of the clearance of the main channel of Lough Erne; or, in other words, these clearances do not ascend the rivers above Lough Erne's floods. All higher clearances are left for the local landlords of each river, and will cost in round numbers about £2 the acre of their flooded lands; while the cost of the similar works along the main channel, from the immense quantities of water, and necessary deeper cuttings, will cost between £5 and £6 an acre.

*Home Rule.*—This Lough Erne case is a fair test of the question whether we ought all to try to get a Parliament for Ireland in Dublin. No doubt, under a *good* Parliament these questions of this kind would be settled quickly and well, with immense advantage to all Ireland. But the whole point is, taking the world, not as we might wish, but as it is, whether a Parliament in Dublin (and *i.e.*, not some, or even many of its members, but its large majority, on whom its work, movement, and character would depend) would be willing and able to be



a good, steady, legislative assembly? or, in place of the many present grievances of bad administration, which perhaps I see and know and feel as well as any national poet in the "Flag of Ireland," we might fall into worse troubles, and be soon overwhelmed, like France, by the most serious social and political disasters. For my part, I see no reason to regret my answer, in June, 1870, to invitations to join the movement for the revival of a Dublin Parliament, viz., *"that I am quite aware of the general discontent in Ireland, and believe that it will find some remedy; but that many years ago I went over all the federal arguments on both sides, and think that any Irish Parliament meeting in Dublin would soon either fail in disgrace, or be driven into attempts for complete independence, because an immense mass of new hopes and feelings would arise, and soon overpower the limited views of its founders. But, in meantime, why should not possible and practical steps be taken to reduce the great and mischievous centralization of Irish business in London, as, e.g., to help the proposal, which I have often made, to get a permanent branch of the Board of Trade established in Dublin for all Irish commercial, local, and railway bills?\*" In our insular system all necessary previous inquiries before such bills are sent to Parliament, and all supervision afterwards, pro bono publico, under Parliament's Acts in their case, could be far better and more cheaply fulfilled from Dublin than from London, where clerks and committees are overwhelmed with too much business."*

Now when, since that time, the great abilities of Mr. Butt ("Irish Federalism, 1871") have failed to show (1) how Irish questions, for discussion and settlement in Dublin, could be always distinguished from imperial questions, for discussion and settlement in London; or (2) how Ireland could send two sets of trustworthy and

\* The late Act, enabling the Poor Law Commissioners under their new name, "Local Government Board," to give various useful municipal powers to Towns, is a good step, if well used, in this line; but a Board of Trade in Dublin, with similar authority for the creation, and control (in certain cases), and supervision of the industrial companies, which are the peculiar life, and want, and feature of this age, without the necessity of tedious and costly reference to London, would be a most just, quite safe, and immense boon to Ireland.



capable members to represent its interests in the 2 houses of Parliament in London, and also in the 2 houses of Parliament in Dublin,\* (as, *e.g.*, Fermanagh 3 members to the Commons in London, and 6 members to the Commons in Dublin); and as these two main points involve the whole question, I think we may conclude that they are insoluble; yet they should be settled not merely in some way intelligible after great debates, but in the clearest, firmest, safest manner. If these assemblies, in London and Dublin, differed as to their share or treatment of any public question, either one must always yield, or the national press and feeling would inflame the slightest divergence into bitter disputes. Could trade, or commerce, or industry of any kind prosper in such fickle political weather? Would there not certainly soon be civil war, and of the worst kind, first in Ireland between Irishmen, and afterwards between Ireland and Great Britain?

Besides, for what adequate reason could the public be asked to run into such risks and costs to their lives and properties? What is the injustice, in any Act of Parliament or in practice, which the people of Ireland, or even 5 out of their 105 members, agree to ask to be removed, or the benefit which they ask to be given? and which injustice is yet pressed upon Ireland, or benefit denied by the imperial Parliament in London? We all know that there is no such cause for so great a change, and that the general discontent arises (1) from weak, careless administration of our laws, a fault which can be removed by Public attention and opinion, and which more or less is found in England and under every government; and (2) from mistaken sentimental feelings, which can only be changed by time.

But true home rule can and should be possessed and enjoyed in every county in Ireland as thoroughly as in England or Scotland.

\* As to a House of Lords in Dublin, it seems to be understood that Peers might spend their time travelling between London and Dublin, and in trying to be in 2 places at once; but how could Irish interests be thus well represented in the Upper House at both capitals?



We have already 32 parliaments—our Grand Juries, and, under them, since their establishment in 1834, Ireland has made as much progress as England from the time of Elizabeth to the 19th century; viz., from horse-paths, pack-saddles, fords across rivers, &c., &c., from a country without roads, bridges, schools, police, letter-posts, hospitals, or poor-houses of any kind, to the present complete system, provided as well as England with all these advantages of civilization.\*

But there is still great room for better arrangements of our grand juries, and especially of the Boards which sit in Dublin over vast and various branches of Irish business, under the pretended control of the Lords of the Treasury in London (*i.e.*, under no practical or useful control), *e.g.*, the Boards of Works, fisheries, endowed schools, national education, loan funds, &c., &c. In place of absentee Lords of the Treasury, a Cabinet or Council in Dublin, under the Lord Lieutenant, could and should superintend these boards, and hear appeals against them. The 2 best-managed branches of public business in Ireland, the police and the post-office, are under authority of one Minister, without any Board.

We have had some glimpses of the probable play of a Parliament in Dublin, as, *e.g.*, that its first measures would be to give Sir William Wilde several millions sterling (to be borrowed, and then paid by our taxes) to reclaim the bogs of Connemara; to Mr. Butt to lend money to the Galway and Limerick fishermen, for them to spend, of course, in nets, and to repay when two Sundays came together; to Mr. Galt to buy up all the Railways, &c., &c.—*i.e.*, we should be soon in communism and bankruptcy. Some men, without house or land, may say in their hearts “so much the better, for we will then get our share in the general scramble;” but history has been written in vain,

\* In this small county, Fermanagh, Mr. Roderick Gray, its present and first county surveyor, has made 270 miles of NEW roads, at an average cost of £960, all paid by the cess-payers, *i.e.*, occupiers (not landlords). Old men remember when there was not one wheel cart, much less carriage, or a single post-office in the whole county, when the judges rode on horse-back to assizes—*i.e.*, just the same social state as in England in the time of Queen Elizabeth.



if its lessons do not teach us that the poorest classes would then suffer most ; their poverty now would be then famine. Still, statesmen should bear in mind that nations are not governed by logic or cool reason. Many revolutions have broken out when the people were most prosperous, and had, therefore, strength to indulge their feelings. It is, I believe, and I hope, quite certain that Ireland will not much longer bear its present weak, careless administration. Mr. Butt's eloquence has been life to a mistaken movement, and his loyalty and moderate temper has kept its course within constitutional bounds ; but where yet in our case is the statesmanlike policy which under Chatham and Pitt attached the Scotch Highlanders, with such mutual advantage, to the crown of England ? If Peel's life had not been cut short, that able minister, with his prudent wisdom, and ample knowledge of Ireland, might have tried this great task with success ; but Mr. Gladstone's violent measures, his secret ballot, and destruction, not reform, of Ireland's ancient ecclesiastical property, and of the strongest link between Ireland and Great Britain, measures utterly needless and wanton, and hatched in the worst school of English radicalism—*i.e.*, the lowest and most sordid, because most causeless, radicalism in Europe, neither tend to promote union between Irishmen in Ireland, or to assimilate Ireland with Great Britain. Without settling in any manner our religious quarrels, or (which would be possible) fencing the state from their injury, these wild measures create a monstrous political future life before Ireland, half French, half American, and show forth only one certainty, that they must either be reversed and corrected, or else proceed further and run their whole career to a democratic republic. It is fearful to think, and a satire on the good reason of the present Parliament, that it has so suddenly allowed such vast and causeless experiments to be tried.

As to home rule, a little noise in calm weather is heard a long way off, but if its advocates showed any earnestness to carry out their own views, they would soon learn that the great bulk of all creeds and classes



in Ireland are determined to maintain one queen, one empire, one legislative assembly.

Let us hope that men with such remarkable abilities as Mr. Butt, such warm patriotism as Mr. O'Sullivan and Mr. Martin, &c., in place of seeking a measure which would be civil war between Ulster and large part of Ireland, or of trying to put down well-won and well-used "home rule" in Italy, will soon turn their attention to the possible and practical question of better administration of Government in Ireland.

Tens of thousands of humble Irishmen like myself put forth this wish with all our hearts, for we feel the grievance and we see the remedy. But the loud outcry for dismemberment of this great empire, the silly seditious newspapers printed every Saturday in Dublin for profitable sale among the Irish colonies in Great Britain, America, Australia &c., &c., only inflame the grievance and prevent the remedy.

Just look at the stupid treatment by Dublin Castle of one bitter sore in Ireland, the Fenian Prisoners, still in gaol, still kept from their families and affairs. Three years ago I urged that, in just allowance for their political ignorance, but sincerity, each prisoner should now get the offer of release if he would obey\* the laws of the land. There is an Amnesty Committee, but which wishes, of course, to keep these poor cell-birds still in their cages for its own use ; but will Government refuse to be wise and merciful, and to consider the general peace of Ireland, till its foes show common sense ? Does it become Mr. Gladstone, formerly ultra Tory, now ultra Democrat, to keep these poor, ignorant men all their lives in prison, because in a time of violent excitement they were misled into miserable folly ?

While these pages are in press the Newtown Butler Grand Jury, at Quarter Sessions, have passed the strongest resolutions in favour of this Flood Drainage.

The Town Commissioners of Cavan, the chief municipal Board in that county, have also appointed a com-

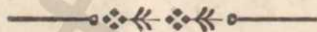
\* *i.e.* Sign a written promise to this purpose.



mittee for a public meeting\* for same purpose, and to promote a link railway from Cavan to Belturbet, for which Parliament has twice passed acts, in order to meet the Navigation from Belleek to that town, the head quay on Lough Erne.

With great pleasure I also hear from Mr. Roberts, C.E., that his report will be out in this month.

\* When full estimates will be shown of the immense damage of this autumn's flood.





Houses of the Oireachtas