

DAILY EXPRESS,—EXTRA No. 1.

*Mr. Balfour's Light
Railways Act.*

THE SCHEDULED LINES

WITH

TEXT OF THE ACT

BY A

SPECIAL CONTRIBUTOR.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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PREFACE.

THE Light Railways Act of 1889 is the last of a series of Acts having as their object the extension of railway communication in the poorer districts of Ireland. In order, therefore, to comprehend the new Law a short survey of the position of affairs before the Act was passed will be necessary.

By the Tramways Act of 1860 and its amending Acts Tramway Companies were empowered under certain conditions to run their lines along public roads, and to acquire adjacent lands, but the sanction of Parliament was still required, and no aid was given from Imperial sources. This Act was made but little use of except in towns; and the poorer districts remained as devoid as ever of railway communication. The Government saw that the doubtful financial prospects of new lines discouraged capitalists, and that without some encouragement the funds for railway construction would not be forthcoming. Accordingly the Tramways Act of 1883 was introduced. This Act was an attempt to develop railway extension upon the principle of local responsibility. Under its provisions which are still law, except when they are varied by the Light Railways Act of 1889, an Act of Parliament is no longer necessary for constructing a Tramway or a Light Railway. The necessary inquiries are now held in Ireland, by the Grand Jury and the Privy Council. By an order in Council land may be compulsorily acquired. The expensive provisions of the Board of Trade as to fencing, signals, &c., are dispensed with. As to finance, the principle was adopted of resting primarily upon an unlimited baronial guarantee, with a Treasury guarantee behind the local one—limited to half the local guarantee, but in no case exceeding two per cent.

The success of this attempt has been but limited. About 200 miles of railway have been constructed, mostly on the narrow gauge, and of this only a small part lies in the poor western regions. In the case of several schemes which passed the Privy Council the promoters were unable to raise the capital upon the security of baronial guarantee, and consequently the schemes fell

through. In other cases the Privy Council rejected the schemes on the ground that the financial position of the Grand Juries did not justify them in giving the guarantees required by the Act.

Six years' experience has enabled us to see plainly the defects of the Tramways Act, and why it failed to effect the objects which it was intended to promote. As the Light Railway Act was passed with the special object of remedying these shortcomings, an account of them will help us to understand the spirit of the new Act.

In the first place then, the Tramways Act was defective because it threw excessive responsibility upon the baronies which were at the time unable to bear any additional strain upon their finances. The following brief *resume* of the responsibilities of the Grand Juries will prove this assertion. Grand Juries who were guarantors were called upon to add the following burdens to the rates: viz., to pay the full interest upon the paid-up capital during construction, or at a time when no revenue could accrue; in the case of the default of the promoters, to complete the line at the expense of the barony; in case of the line not paying its way, to pay, in addition to the baronial guarantee, the difference between the working expenses and the receipts; and if at any time the promoters threw up the line, to work it at the risk and expense of the barony. Once the railway ceased to be worked the Treasury guarantee lapsed, and the full dividend was payable by the barony.

But a still graver objection to the Act was the form of the limited Treasury guarantee, which was placed behind the baronial guarantee. No privity was established between the shareholders and the Government. The Company, therefore, had to look to the Grand Jury for the full sum necessary to make good the guaranteed dividend, and the Grand Jury had in the first instance to levy the full deficit. If the Treasury contribution had been paid direct to the promoters, instead of being refunded to the Grand Jury, there would have been no necessity to levy a double rate, and the finances of the barony would have been relieved from a great and unnecessary strain. As might have been expected, great difficulty was found in obtaining the guarantees of Grand Juries, and afterwards in raising money upon the security of overburdened rates at even such a high rate of interest as 5 per cent.

There were other blots in the Act besides its defective finance. Railway companies, though empowered to contribute towards them, were not enabled to become promoters and to construct Light Railways, neither were they empowered to make agreements to work

lines constructed under the Act. In fact the sole persons who were enabled by the Act to construct a Light Railway were capitalists, who, relying upon the baronial and Treasury guarantee, had only a remote interest in its successful working, and no interest in its economical administration. As if to insure their ultimate failure, no provision was made under the Act to meet working expenses. To make the task of promoters still more difficult, obstacles in the way of acquiring land were not removed. Under the Sect. 43 of the Tramways Act of 1860 it is declared that save under the sanction of an Act of Parliament tramways shall not be entitled to take *compulsorily* any mansion, house, or grounds attached thereto. The Privy Council were given no power to make an order that this section should not apply to any particular railway, and consequently in many instances promoters were put to grave inconvenience and expense.

It was to remedy these defects of the Tramways Act as well as to promote railway extension in the poorer districts that the Light Railways Act was passed. The new Act makes a present to Ireland of a sum of £600,000 for the construction of Light Railways, and, as regards the balance of £22,000 a year which remains unexpended under the Tramways Act of 1883, it removes the vexatious restrictions above referred to, and empowers the Treasury to utilize it in the shape either of loans, or annual free payments for the maintenance and working of the railway upon such terms as regards interest and repayment as they shall think fit, but subject to certain conditions imposed by the Act. As to baronial guarantees it is doubtful whether in case of default of the promoters the barony can be called upon to complete the line; whether they can be called upon to pay any deficit in case the working expenses exceed the receipts; or whether they can be called upon under any circumstances to work the line; whether their liability is confined to paying a dividend upon such portions of the paid-up capital of the Light Railway as they shall have guaranteed. Relief is given to the baronies by enabling the Treasury to deal directly with the promoters. It will, therefore, no longer be necessary for the baronies to burden the rates by levying the Government contribution, which will henceforth be payable directly to the promoters. The effect of these provisions will be that the promoters will be able to raise money upon a baronial guarantee at far lower rate of interest than they have heretofore been able. Though it is not expressly stated so in the Act, the Treasury have power to place their guarantee in front of the baronial guarantee, and if this is done no difficulty will be

experienced by the promoters in borrowing money upon baronial guarantees at a low rate of interest.

As the Treasury are dealing with Government money, it behoved Parliament to take every legitimate precaution to provide against squandering money in building useless railways, and, accordingly, instead of the engineering enquiry of the Board of Works, by which they were confined to reporting upon the practicability of the particular scheme before them, the department is now called upon to enquire and report as to the nominal and working capital required to finance the undertaking. They are also called upon to report generally as to the relative merits of the various schemes of railway extensions in the district. By a very wise provision this enquiry will be the first instead of one of the last steps in the proceedings. Grand Juries will, therefore, have the Board of Works reports before them when schemes come up for their approval.

As regards procedure the provisions of the Tramways Acts are incorporated with the new Act, and the consent of the Grand Jury is still required. This is as it should be. For it would have been an invasion of public right to allow the public roads to be made use of for railway construction without the consent of the Grand Jury, even when they are not guaranteeing a dividend.

The sanction of Parliament was formerly required in all cases. By the Tramways Act the approval of the Privy Council was substituted. This approval is still required, and there are sound reasons of statesmanship why this sanction should be retained.

It would appear, however, to have been an oversight that no power was given to the Privy Council to vary the scheme approved by the Grand Jury, and it would appear still to be necessary to send the case back in the event of the promoters having failed to comply with any technicality, as the Privy Council are not given power to waive such non-compliance. As the promoters and the Treasury will have come to an agreement before the case is heard by the Grand Jury, it is hoped that the Treasury will take care to see that everything is in order before the parties are put to the expense of the hearings before the Grand Jury and the Privy Council.

It is a distinct advance upon previous legislation that under the new Act Railway Companies may not only agree to work the lines of other companies, but with the approval of the shareholders, and by an order in Council, without the expense of an Act of Parliament, they may construct a light railway themselves. These two

last provisions will ensure the economical working of lines which are fortunate enough to be taken up or worked by existing Railway Companies. But, even in cases where new companies work the lines, the Treasury have full power, under the 4th section, to make provision for keeping the expenses of management within reasonable limits, and for controlling any unnecessary and wasteful expenditure either in the construction or working of the line. It should be stated that in these last cases a Government grant will not be made unless the promoters propose a baronial guarantee. The effect of such guarantees is that it becomes the direct interest of the locality to see that the line is not extravagantly administered, and thus a further check is put upon the possible waste of public money. There is one other detail to which attention should be drawn. By the 5th section the Privy Council are empowered to declare that the 42nd and 43rd sections of the Act of 1860 shall not apply, and accordingly houses and land of every description can be compulsorily bought without appeal to Parliament.

Viewed as a whole, this Act must be regarded as a generous concession to meet a great want, framed upon broad lines, yet having due regard to wise precedents. It has, at the same time, broken away from many hampering restrictions, remedied grave defects in previous legislation, relieved local authorities of undue burdens, and at the same time imposed precautions to provide against the waste of public funds. If the Act is administered in the same wise and generous spirit in which it has been conceived, the industries in Ireland will receive an impetus which may produce lasting effects upon the well-being of the country.

MR. BALFOUR'S LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT.

15TH OCTOBER, 1889.

PEOPLE living in Dublin hardly realize the intense interest which is taken in this subject in those parts which are expected to be scheduled by the Lord Lieutenant as districts through which it is desirable that light railways should be constructed. For the time being the land question is forgotten, Home Rule is buried in oblivion. The Achill fishermen, who sell their turbot for a few pence a piece, look forward eagerly to the possibility of being able to sell their fish for as many shillings as they now fetch pence. Labourers out of work, farmers in remote districts who depend entirely upon the hucksters for the sale of their butter and eggs, and drive their pigs and cattle thirty, aye forty, miles before they can get a buyer, all fondly hope that a time will come when they will be able to exchange the barest subsistence for comparative comfort. All are now agog to see what places are to be selected by his Excellency to be joined on to the civilized world by the links of a light railway. Under all previous Tramways Acts the burdens thrown upon the locality, the excessive guarantees required, the high rate at which alone money has been advanced by the Government, the ruinously heavy law costs, and the permanent responsibilities cast upon the local authorities, have all combined to frustrate the generous intentions of Parliament, and made owners of land tremble at the bare prospect of a light railway being run through their district.

The latest effort of the Unionist Government in railway legislation has avoided much of what was objectionable in previous Acts, and as we may expect that it will shortly bear fruit, it is desirable that public attention should be drawn to its leading provisions, and to the steps which ought to be taken by those who are desirous of benefiting by it.

A capital sum of £600,000 has been placed at the joint disposal of the Lord Lieutenant and the Treasury, together with a residue of about £22,000 a year (remaining unapplied under the Act of 1883) for the purpose of constructing light railways for the development of fisheries and other industries in districts where, owing to their poverty, special assistance from the State is required.

The first step to be taken by those interested in any line is to memorialize the Lord Lieutenant to declare that it is desirable that a light railway should be constructed to a particular place. This step may be taken by anyone, and for this purpose the promoters need not be registered as a public company.

I have heard various estimates of the number of these memorials. But I believe there is no doubt that the Treasury will be asked to subsidize some forty or fifty different lines at least; and when Mr. Balfour returns to Dublin next week he will find plenty to occupy him in discriminating between the various applicants. Six hundred

thousand pounds will only build about 120 miles of railway ; and even supposing that this sum is largely added to by baronial guarantees and shareholders' money, it is obvious that the great bulk of the promoters must be disappointed.

I believe that these projects include not only every railway which could possibly benefit any congested district or develop any nascent industries, but a large number of others which could only benefit the promoters themselves. There is one piece of information on this point which I have learned with regret, and that is that none of these light railways have so far been promoted by existing railway companies. However, there is this much to be said, that there is nothing to prevent railway companies from becoming promoters after the districts have been scheduled. And this leads on to the consideration of who may and who may not be promoters of a light railway, and thereby qualify themselves for the chance of a slice of the Treasury grant. Under the Act an Irish railway company, having a railway open for traffic, may be a promoter. A company which has made an agreement with a railway to work the line (provided that the Treasury approve of such agreement) may be promoters ; and a company may also qualify themselves to become promoters under the Act by proposing that a barony or baronies shall guarantee payment of dividends upon a portion of the paid-up capital of the light railway. The amount of such guarantee is not fixed, and there would be no legal objection to prevent a company which had a guarantee of only £50 a year from a barony from applying for a share of the Government grant. Under this last clause promoters will have to exercise considerable tact, for, on the one hand, if the proposed local aid is too small, the Treasury may hesitate to help those who are not ready to help themselves. On the other hand, if the guarantee is to be a substantial one, the Government may come to the conclusion that the line can be built without their assistance, and that the small sum at their disposal should be husbanded for those districts in which State aid is absolutely required.

The general construction placed upon the third section is, that in qualifying to be promoters the company need not state the amount of this baronial guarantee, and this would certainly be the safest course to pursue. When the Treasury have declared the amount of aid they will give, it will be easy to assess the amount of baronial guarantees ; indeed it is not improbable that the Treasury grant will be made to depend upon a minimum local guarantee fixed by the Treasury ; and the Grand Jury will be far more likely to approve the promoters' proposal when it comes before them with the sanction of the Treasury and backed up by the promise of a Government grant.

But though a baronial guarantee is a trump card, to rely upon it alone would be a mistake. It may be regarded as almost certain that promoters who can show agreements with railway companies to work their lines will have the best chance of succeeding. The saving effected by such agreements, both as regards rolling stock and

terminal accommodation, and the smaller cost of carriage owing to not breaking bulk, are in themselves overwhelming reasons in favour of giving the preference to promoters who have made such arrangements.

Promoters who wish to have their works in progress next year have not one moment to lose, and should now be hard at work preparing their maps and plans, so as to have them ready to lodge with the Board of Works and the various parties named in the Tramways Acts the moment the district is scheduled ; for it must be remembered that under the Tramways Acts, which are incorporated with this Act, these plans, maps, &c., must be lodged before the 1st of December, or else they will be late for the Spring Assizes. It must not be forgotten that, whether a baronial guarantee is sought or not, the Grand Jury's approval is required.

I have stated that at the time of memorializing the Lord Lieutenant the company need not be registered, but before they can appear before the Grand Jury this must be done. It will be desirable for the promoters to form themselves into a company the moment the district is scheduled. For this purpose, it would appear that a mere promoting company, with a capital of a few thousand pounds, is sufficient at the initial stages, though it must be admitted that a working company will have a great advantage. Having been constituted a public company, the next to be done is to lodge the necessary plans, maps, and notices. Full details of the necessary steps to be taken at this stage are given in the Tramways Acts of 1860, 1861, and 1868 ; so I need not repeat them here.

As soon as the Lord Lieutenant's order has been promulgated, the Board of Works will be set in motion. They will hold public sittings in the locality, and will hear witnesses, and consider the absolute as well as the relative merits of the competing schemes. For, it must be understood that all the Lord Lieutenant decides is that a line should be carried to a particular place. The route will be practically decided by the report of the Board of Works. The scope of these inquiries is so extensive that I anticipate the Board of Works will be hard run to complete them, to make the necessary deviations, and to obtain the Treasury consent, before the Spring Assizes ; and, therefore, I do not anticipate that the time for lodging plans and maps will be extended beyond 1st December, although the Privy Council have power to extend this time at their discretion. In addition to the specific inquiries which are directed to be made by the Act, and which I need not enumerate, Section 7 directs an inquiry into the merits of each proposed railway in all points as compared with any rival scheme.

It will be well, therefore, for promoters to be prepared with figures to show the existence of fisheries and other industries to be developed, the population and valuation of the district, its natural resources, if any ; the number of fishery piers, &c., along the route ; fairs, markets, and other evidences of prospective commerce ; the taxation of the

districts affected ; always bearing in mind that too great a show of wealth will be an absolute bar, for grants will not be made to districts unless special assistance from the State is required.

A preference may fairly be claimed for schemes where there are congested districts and good fisheries which are starved for want of railway accommodation, and where the local parties have made every effort to promote railways, but have failed in being able to procure the necessary capital.

It may also be taken for granted that as Treasury money is to be spent, greater permanence of work will be required than has been done hitherto.

Lines at £3,000 and £4,000 a mile will have small chance of success. Narrow gauge lines, except in connection with narrow gauge lines already in existence, will have no chance at all.

The specifications ought to be for not less than £5,000 a mile—60-lb. rails, whole creosoted sleepers, full gauge, &c. In fact, lines able to stand the test of time.

The working agreements, too, should bind railway companies to work the lines permanently.

One more word of advice at this stage of the proceedings. Promoters who have made arrangements with a railway company to work their line should not forget to consult the railway returns to see whether the company owes arrears of principal or interest to the Treasury on foot of an old loan. If it does, then no loan can be made in respect of the new railway, though a free grant can. I could give the names of these companies, but I prefer not, as I do not wish to gibbet them as defaulters. They may have been only the victim of circumstances. Who knows?

It is not necessary at the present time to advise what steps are to be taken at the Grand Jury and Privy Council inquiries. By that time, no doubt, there will be plenty of text books ready to afford the necessary help. At present I would advise promoters to consult Mr. Fottrell's book on Irish Tramways Acts. I hear that a new edition will be out shortly, but the old edition, though published before the passing of Mr. Balfour's Act, is still valuable, because the Irish Light Railways Act is to be read together with the Tramways Acts, and, save where exceptions are made by the recent Act, the old procedure is retained.

There are some points arising out of the working of the Act which are of great importance, but upon which up to the present, no decisions have been given. Will the Treasury grant be available for the purpose of paying for the costs of promoting light railways? These costs, I regret to say, will still be heavy. There is a very heavy stamp duty. And as the promoters must have registered themselves as a company before they apply to the Grand Jury for their assent, this sum must be paid whether the project succeeds or not. It will be a matter for the Irish Executive to consider whether this impost cannot be remitted, reduced, or, at any rate, provision made that, in case the promoters fail to float

their project, the duty may be returned. The cost of surveying the line, preparing maps, procuring the capital, and promoting the company must be considerable ; but when we add the cost of the Board of Works inquiry, the Grand Jury inquiries—possibly two, and, not improbably, a traverse as well—and the hearing before the Privy Council, it will be seen that a great deal of money will be required to finance these undertakings. The question will arise as to how far the Treasury grant will be available to pay all or any of these expenses. It would certainly appear to be fair that the Board of Works should pay for the entire costs, not only of their surveyors' reports on the line, but also of the expenses of the public sitting. In case of any project finally approved of by the Lord Lieutenant in Council, it would appear to be reasonable that a portion of the initial costs, at the discretion of the Privy Council, should be payable out of the Treasury grant. The fear of incurring these costs has in a large number of cases prevented persons locally interested from combining to promote light railways, and has led to their promotion by syndicates anxious to obtain concessions either for the purpose of dealing in them at a profit, or of constructing railways at a profit to themselves and a corresponding loss to the county. It is better, no doubt, that the country should be opened up even in this way, rather than not at all.

But I think on the whole the Treasury would obtain better value for their money if provision were made which would encourage those most interested and most capable of judging of the requirements of the districts to promote light railways in them. One provision immediately suggests itself to me, which would deter such syndicates from cutting the ground from under the feet of the local promoters. It is that the contracts for the construction of these light railways should be put up to public competition. This would prevent syndicates from making undue profits out of the railways, and would economize the Treasury grants.

COUNTY KERRY.

Having discussed the general features of the Act in my first article, I will now proceed to deal with the claims of the various districts to a share of the Treasury grants.

Undoubtedly the fishery districts have a special claim upon the Government. So have the congested districts ; and districts which combine these claims have the best claim of all. If we look at the maps of Ireland prepared by the Royal Commission on Public Works, it is apparent at a glance that the four counties which have the greatest claims are Kerry, Galway, Mayo, and Donegal, and it is in these counties that the principal lines recommended by the Royal Commission are situate. The claims of each of these counties appear to be on the whole evenly balanced, and, curiously enough, there is

not much disparity between the number of miles of railway which could be constructed with advantage in each county. In each a substantial sum could be subscribed or presented, but in none could the capital necessary to construct and work the line be obtained.

In addition to lines in these four counties, the Royal Commission specially recommend the construction of short lengths of railways to other parts of the coast, and also a limited number of inland lines. Taking these lines together, and adding to them others, such as the Castlecomer and Carlow line for developing the coalfields, we shall not be far out in saying that at least 400 miles of light railways would be required to develop the fisheries, as well as the agricultural and other industries of Ireland. The majority of the inland lines run through fairly rich districts, and I am informed that there ought not to be any great difficulty in providing the capital necessary to construct them provided that a Government guarantee is secured. This being so, the inland lines might well be left alone for the present, leaving, at any rate, the whole of the £600,000 available for the construction of the longer lines to the harbours on the western coast. So far as I am able to gather, it would take the whole of that sum to finance the most important of these lines. If this suggestion should be acted upon, there would be a sum of from £100,000 to £150,000 available for constructing railways in each of these four counties. Let us now see what could be done with such a grant in Kerry. I select the county of Kerry before Donegal, Galway, or Mayo, for various reasons. In the first place, it has already done more to help itself than any of these other counties. It has undertaken several lines of railways under the Tramways Acts, including one to Killorglin, and another to Dingle; and it has obtained an Act of Parliament for the construction of a line of rail from Headford to Kenmare, and an order in Council for the construction of a line from Killorglin to Cahirciveen. Both these lines, and more particularly the Cahirciveen line, would fulfil all the conditions of the new Act of Parliament. But I have a still more cogent reason for pressing upon the authorities the importance of considering the claims of Kerry first, and it is this—that the moment the grant is made the works can be put in hand without delay, for already the requirements of the Act have practically been complied with. In both cases a baronial guarantee has been given, a working agreement entered into with the Great Southern and Western Railway, plans have been approved by the Board of Works, and in one case a provisional contract has been signed for constructing of the line. In the case of the other western lines of light railways which it is proposed to construct, considerable delay must intervene before the works can be commenced. Indeed, if I have formed a right estimate of the work which is before the promoters before they can obtain their grants, it is not likely that any of them will be able to commence active operations before the spring of 1891. All the more reason, therefore, to my

mind, why the Irish Government should at once grant their help to the Kerry lines, so as to prove their earnest desire to help and develop the industrial resources of the country. Such action on their part would stimulate promoters of other lines to make fresh exertions.

THE VALENTIA LINE.

Of the Kerry lines the line from Killorglin to Valentia Harbour is the most important and the most in need of aid. The line is to be of the full 5ft. 3in. gauge. It is to run from Killorglin, through the well-known disturbed and congested district of Glenbeigh, along the south coast of Dingle Bay, to the little fishing pier of Kells, thence inland to Cahirciveen, the property of Trinity College, and also well known as a congested district. From Cahirciveen the line runs to Renard Point in Valentia Harbour, where it is intended hereafter to provide accommodation for shipping,

I must say, *en passant*, that the proposal of the Royal Commission that the line should, in the first instance, be constructed only as far as Rossbeigh, at the head of Dingle Bay, does not appear to be a wise one. Anyone acquainted with Dingle Bay knows that even a railway at Rossbeigh would not induce trawlers and smacks which fish in Dingle Bay to run the risk of landing their fish at this most dangerous place. It would do nothing to develop the grand trawling ground in Ballinaskelligs Bay or the fine mackerel banks at Bray Head and Dursey Head. On the other hand, by continuing the line to Valentia Harbour, not only would the fisheries be benefited, but the slate quarries of Valentia would be enabled to compete on more favourable terms with the Welsh quarries. I shall not myself argue the much-vexed question of the merits of Valentia Harbour as a packet station; but I may remind my readers that so far back as 1860 Sir John Hawkshaw and other eminent engineers, after careful examination, declared in favour of this harbour, not only as the most important harbour of refuge on that part of the coast, but also as a packet station.

But whether or not Valentia is to be an American packet station—as the old Knight of Kerry fondly hoped that it would one day be—it is certain that with a railway to Renard Point it might well become an important harbour for the fishing or coasting trade. If a good hotel were built somewhere in this most picturesque and interesting neighbourhood, a considerable influx of tourists might be anticipated. From Valentia around the coast to Kenmare, (which is on the tourists' route between Killarney and Glengariff,) the drive is as beautiful as anything in Ireland; while close to the road lies the seat of Daniel O'Connell, the Liberator, and the truly marvellous stone forts of Stague and Cahirdaniel.

I have often heard tourists complain that there is not enough sight-seeing in Killarney to occupy them for three or four days. I believe that if this line were built, and a car runs from Cahirciveen to Kenmare, the tourist traffic would be a substantial item in the annual accounts

of the railway. The Barony of Iveragh, which is one of the largest and poorest in the county, with its population of 23,546, and poor-law valuation of only £19,754, has guaranteed a dividend of 4 per cent. on a sum of £112,000. I am informed that a sum of £160,000 will be required to build the line. A Government grant of £40,000 would therefore enable the promoters to build their line, but I trust that a larger grant may be obtained, as the baronial guarantee is out of proportion to its financial resources.

I have just this moment received a paper containing a schedule of requirements by the Great Southern and Western Railway Company, to be complied with by any light railway proposed to be worked by that company. It is so important to promoters that I do not think I can do better than print it in full, leaving the consideration of the Kenmare extension line to my next article. Promoters would do well to give this document their careful consideration, as we know that railway companies act in unison, and by making their specifications conformable to these requirements they may avoid delay in the future. (See Appendix III.)

KENMARE JUNCTION RAILWAY.

This proposed line, which is twenty miles' long, connects the town of Kenmare with Headfort on the Killarney Branch of the Great Southern and Western Railway, and is to be constructed and worked as a branch of the Great Southern system.

Efforts have been made for the past twenty years to effect railway communication with Kenmare, and several Acts of Parliament have been obtained.

¹⁸⁸¹In 1881 Sir George Colthurst promoted a line from Macroom to Kenmare *via* Loo Bridge, but, owing to the costliness of this route, it was abandoned.

In 1884 a further Act was obtained abandoning the portion from Macroom to Loo Bridge, and substituting a connection with the Great Southern system at Headfort Station. This Act was supported by a baronial guarantee of 4 per cent. on £60,000, which was further increased by the Act of 1887 to a 5 per cent. guarantee on £60,000 in perpetuity.

This guarantee and Act of 1887 are still in force, the contract plans are prepared, the line pegged out, the contract let, and portion of the land acquired; and matters are in such a condition that the works can be immediately started, and 500 men employed, if a small Government grant or loan were obtained to enable the financial arrangements to be completed.

The Great Southern and Western Railway Company have arranged to work the line on very favourable terms.

The district has many claims on the assistance of the Government. It has shown its belief in the undertaking by unanimously granting a guarantee in perpetuity on a portion of the capital, the liability for which guarantee under their special Acts of Parliament falls equally on landlord and tenant.

The elements of traffic are not wanting to make the project a success. The area served by the proposed line is, in round numbers, 300,000 square acres, and the population 35,000.

Kenmare is a good market and fair town, and is backed up by an extensive and fairly populated tract of country, containing numerous villages badly in want of railway accommodation, and which would yield a source of railway traffic. There are important fishing industries at the mouth of Kenmare Bay, while there is excellent and abundant salmon fishing in the estuary; and, further, the Kenmare and Headfort line would complete the tourist route to which I alluded in my last article.

The financial position of this railway is rather difficult to explain, as it is complicated by local Acts of Parliament; but this much is easily understood: The barony has guaranteed a dividend of 5 per cent on £60,000, out of a total Parliamentary capital of £140,000.

The Company have power to borrow £70,000 on debentures, and there would be no difficulty in doing so, and in placing the shares secured by the baronial guarantee, if a Government Grant of £30,000, or perhaps a somewhat lesser sum, were made.

So far as I can see, there are very few other lines in which anything like the same amount of local assistance will be given, and, further, the fact must not be lost sight of that the promoters are ready to go to work at once.

It is a matter of great importance to make the £600,000 free grant go as far as possible, and when by an expenditure of twenty or thirty thousand pounds the Government can secure the construction of a useful railway which is to cost £140,000, in my humble opinion they would act wisely if they availed themselves of the opportunity of doing so.

WEST DONEGAL RAILWAY.

After Kerry the County Donegal has done more than any of the western counties to provide itself with railway accommodation under the Tramways Acts, and (on the principle that those who help themselves deserve to be helped) the promoters of the extension to Killybegs preeminently deserve the help of the State. A line of light railway has already been built (under the Tramways Acts) from Stranorlar to Donegal, which is only a tidal port. The Government are now asked to make a grant to enable this line to be carried on to Killybegs, a harbour in which the largest vessels can lie. Though I do not personally wish to enter into the rival claims of the Western ports to become American packet stations, I may here refer to the evidence of William Sinclair before the Royal Commission on Public Works. After pointing out that this is the point where the American mails strike the coast, he states that there would be no difficulty in the packets finishing their journey at Killybegs, thereby saving 130 miles of sea passage for the mails. Apart from this consideration, Killybegs is the natural harbour from which the important fisheries of this part of the coast can be best developed. With the terminus at Donegal,

which is only a tidal port, they can never be properly developed. The returns of the fish traffic from the existing line (published in the appendix to the report of the Royal Commission) show that only 139 tons of fish were carried along the line in 1884. This must be a mere fraction of the fish caught in these waters. It is to be remembered, too, that in Donegal the peasants are industrious and thrifty, and the railway would develop a substantial trade in poultry, eggs, and butter. The whole of the district from Killybegs, through Ardara, as far as Glenties, is engaged in knitting, weaving, sprigging, and other cottage industries, and to such enterprising firms as the M'Devitts a railway would be of great assistance. We must remember, too, that such an export trade would develop a corresponding import trade. Tourists would not be wanting to help the traffic. Even without railway accommodation the hotel at Carrick is always full, and with a railway I have little doubt that the Donegal Highlands would become a favourite hunting ground for tourists. Altogether, although I do not recommend the line as a speculation for financiers, I believe it might pay its working expenses and act as a substantial feeder to the parent line. The estimated cost of the extension from Donegal to Killybegs is £75,000. I am informed that the Grand Jury are opposed to giving any guarantee. This I regret, because, as I have said before, in applying for a Government grant a guarantee is a trump card to rely upon, and the promoters would do well to consider the advisability, if they have not already done so, of proposing a baronial guarantee, and inducing the Grand Jury to give them some help, however small. No doubt the Grand Jury will say that they have already done very well by helping the line to Donegal, but still it would be a pity that the promoters' application should be jeopardised for so small a matter.

So far I have made no reference to the alternative inland route from Stranorlar to Killybegs. It labours under great disadvantages as compared with the Donegal route. In the first place it would be a poor reward to the public-spirited people of the neighbourhood, who taxed themselves to build the Donegal Railway, to tap the line at Stranorlar and divert the traffic from their line. So far as I can see, it would mean bankruptcy, or something very like it, for the West Donegal Railway. But, apart from this consideration, the inland line labours under disadvantages of its own. It would be many miles longer than the coast route; it would travel through a mountainous and thinly-populated district, containing only two villages—Glenties, with a population of 487; Ardara, with a population of 552. And, last but not least, it would cost twice or three times as much money to construct. The one argument of any weight against extending the West Donegal Line is that it is a narrow-gauge line, but £25,000 would convert it into a broad gauge, a small sum compared with what it would take to build a line through Ardara and Glenties to Stranorlar. After a careful consideration of all the facts this appears to me to be just the class of case contemplated by the Act. We find a great fishing industry, a congested district which could be opened up with a very

moderate expenditure of money, but yet a case in which this could not be done without State aid.

NORTH-WEST DONEGAL RAILWAY.

If I were dealing with the various proposed light railways in order of merit, I should not give the North-West Donegal line the place it occupies in this article. Not that it has not strong claims of its own, but when so small a sum as £600,000 has to be dealt with, what we have to consider are the relative merits of each proposal. Compared to many of the other schemes, this one would cost more and would do less to develop the fishing industry. My reason for discussing the North-West Donegal line now is that it forms part of a scheme for the railway development of the county. As in the case of the light railway to Killybegs, there are two alternative routes,* one a circuitous route *via* Letterkenny, and the other the direct route crossing Lough Swilly at Drumboy. The cost of either line would be about the same (£150,000). Both of the proposed lines are narrow-gauge extensions of the existing narrow-gauge line from Londonderry. The object of a light railway under this Act being to develop fishing and other industries, it is rather against the claims of this railway that until it reaches its end at Dunfanaghy it does not approach any fishing ground. Even at Dunfanaghy there is only a poor harbour at the best of times. But, on the other hand, the fishing outside Tory Island is excellent, and if at any future period the line should be continued to Cross Roads and Gweedore, the fishing industry would benefit largely, and a tourist traffic might be developed through the highly picturesque Northern Highlands. We have here an industrious population, which, in addition to agriculture, is engaged in various small cottage industries, but so heavily handicapped by want of railway communication that it is almost impossible for them to reap the fair reward of their labour. Mr. Ernest Hart in his evidence before the Royal Commission brought this out very plainly. He says it costs Mrs. Hart £6 a ton to send goods to London, while it would not cost more to send them to Bombay. His experience is that the people are industrious and eager for work, even at low wages, and that the demand for the Donegal homespun is so great that the market would take up ten times the amount produced at present. The extent of country which is here left without railway communication is said to be 354 square miles, and when we bear in mind that, in addition to marble, there is valuable sand at Muckish, soapstone on the line of railway, granite and flag quarries, and that within the district 120 fairs are held within the year, it cannot be said that the prospect that the line will ultimately pay its working expenses is absolutely hopeless. In dealing with this district we must not forget that there is a considerable migratory labouring population, as many as 2,000 having been known to use the railway to Letterkenny in one week. This traffic would help to make the railway pay, and conversely the railway would help to relieve

* The line *via* Letterkenny alone has been scheduled.

the district of its surplus population. But the principal claim which North Donegal has for State aid is this very fact—that a very large portion of the line would run through congested districts unable to give a sufficient guarantee to enable the promoters to construct the line. The extent of the congestion may be judged by the fact that the population of that part of the Barony of Kilmacrenan which would be served by the railway to Dunfanaghy is 40,000, and the valuation only £35,223. In this context I cannot do better than quote the concluding words of the resolution of the Grand Jury of Donegal, when the promoters of this very line applied to them for a baronial guarantee which would have enabled them to build the line under the Tramways Acts :—“The Grand Jury fully feel the extreme necessity of providing poor districts with railway accommodation, but on such terms as may not overwhelm them with taxation, which under the present circumstances they are unable to bear.” The proposed guarantee, in case the railway paid no dividend, would have amounted to 1s. 7½d. in the pound, and would have brought the taxation up to 5s. in the pound. If the amount available were greater, I would strongly urge that a light railway should be built to Dunfanaghy ; but, bearing in mind the many claims upon the small available capital, it appears to me that on the whole the recommendation of the Royal Commission, that for the present the direct line should not be constructed beyond Kilmacrennan, with a spur to the head of Mulroy Bay, appears to be a fair one.

To sum up, to construct a line to Kilmacrenan would cost about £70,000. The line to Killybegs, alluded to in my last article, would absorb £75,000 or £80,000. In all a sum of £150,000 would be required for this limited development of the industries of Donegal by railway extension. When we take into account the ultimate saving to the rates by the development of the industries of the county, it would not be too much to ask the Grand Jury to guarantee £50,000 for the two railways, while the Treasury might fairly be asked to give the balance of £100,000 as a free gift.

COUNTY CORK.

THE BALTIMORE EXTENSION LINE.

The County Cork is, on the whole, fairly well provided with railway accommodation ; but there are one or two short spurs of line which are wanting, and the lack of this accommodation causes serious loss to the fishing industry. Baltimore is the most serious sufferer, because the Ilen Valley Railway stops short at Skibbereen, eight miles from the shore. Great quantities of prime fish captured here is often comparatively worthless to the fishermen, because it cannot be carried to market in time. Evidence has been given before the Royal Commission of vast hauls of fish allowed to rot for want of transport. Baltimore is the rendezvous of the entire south-western fishing fleet, consisting of first-class boats of from 20 to 30 tons burden.

It embraces English, French, Manx, and Scotch, as well as Irish fishermen. The extent of the fishing may be judged by the fact that, in spite of vast losses, as many as 120 to 150 steamer loads of fish are transported to England annually, and as much as 2,000 tons of fish are carried in one year along the Bandon line to Cork and thence to Dublin. So impressed were the members of the late Royal Commission on Public Works (presided over by Sir James Allport) with the importance of this fishery that they made the strongest representations in their report of the expediency of extending railway communication to Baltimore. There is a well-established market; easy access to deep water; the harbour is well-sheltered from wind and weather, and a light-house has within the last few years been erected at the entrance. A Fishing School, the only one in the United Kingdom, has been erected there at a cost of close on £10,000. It is in full operation, and 100 boys from various parts of the coast of Ireland are trained there to become expert fishermen, and instructed practically in all the attendant industries. If, therefore, there is a spot on the coast of Ireland where the fishing industry deserves State aid it is here, and the aid asked for is not much, for it only needs the extension of the railway for the short distance of eight miles to its shore. But the Baltimore fishermen have another difficulty to contend with. Not only must the fish be carted from Baltimore to Skibbereen, but at Cork again bulk must be broken, and the fish carted over the river to the Cork market, or to the Great Southern and Western Railway Company's terminus. By the time the fish reach the English market the cost of haulage and carriage is so great that only a small part of the price paid by the English merchants finds its way into the pockets of the fishermen. Sir Thomas Brady gave valuable evidence on this point, and gave instances of the kind, showing that not more than about 25 per cent. of the price was received by the Baltimore men. It would be out of place here to allude to the combination of buyers which this state of things gives rise to. It is enough for the present purpose to state that if the difficulties of transport to which I have alluded were overcome, the fishermen would be able to deal on even terms with the buyers, instead of being completely in their hands, as they are at present. The importance of the junction between the Cork and Bandon and the Great Southern and Western Railway lines is quite as important for the development of this industry as the spur to Baltimore, and the Treasury might fairly make a grant in aid of the Baltimore Railway, conditional upon the Cork and Bandon Company bearing their share of the expense of constructing the junction line. The estimated cost of this line is only £30,000, and the Great Southern and Western Railway Company have expressed their willingness to pay their share. The proposed line from Skibbereen to Baltimore would only cost another £30,000, and it would not be much to ask the Treasury to give enough to insure the speedy construction of these lines. It would undoubtedly be the best spent money under the Act.

THE SCHEDULED LINES.

The announcement which appeared in Saturday's *Gazette* scheduling certain towns as places to which it is desirable that light railways should be constructed is one which will be of deep interest to the public.* Without taking credit for possessing the gift of prophecy, I may be allowed to express some satisfaction in finding that so far the Government have proceeded on the lines laid down in these articles. In the first place, with the exception of a short spur of railway from Downpatrick to Ardglass, all the Government grant is to be expended in the West or South-West. In the next place I may take credit that, so far as I have gone, I have indicated pretty accurately the places to which it has now been determined that it is desirable to extend railway communication, viz.:—

Dunfanaghy, Gweedore, and Killybegs, in Donegal; Valentia and Kenmare, in Kerry; and Baltimore, in Cork. In addition to these places the following have been scheduled by this order—Belmullet, in Mayo; Clifden, in Galway; Carndonagh and Glenties, in Donegal; Kinsale Pier and Bantry Pier, in Cork—these two latter being mere spurs which it is proposed to build to save the cartage of fish from the boats to the train.

The lines to Kinsale Pier and Bantry Pier stand much on the same footing as the Baltimore lines which I advocated, but with this difference, that they are much shorter, and will only absorb a few thousand pounds each.

Any one who has given any study to the question might have easily predicted that Clifden and Belmullet would have been among the first places to have been selected; and although I made no reference in my last article to Glenties and Carndonagh, their insertion (in addition to the places which I named in the County Donegal) was a wise provision of the Government, as it affords the authorities an opportunity of deciding which of the many plans of railway extensions within the county are to be adopted. Acting upon the same principle, the Government, when they have found rival schemes in the field for reaching the same destination by different routes, have scheduled both schemes, thereby affording the rival promoters a fair chance of preferring their claims.

Thus we find a line from Letterkenny to Gweedore scheduled, and afterwards a line from Stranorlar to Gweedore.

In like manner, we find that a line has been scheduled from Ballina to Belmullet, and another from Westport to Belmullet. It is most important that the action of the Government in scheduling these rival schemes should not be misunderstood. It would be simply wasteful extravagance to construct two lines to Belmullet or two lines to Gweedore. Promoters, finding their lines included in this schedule, must not therefore take it for granted that their success is already insured. They are now in the position of selected candidates

* For the text of the Order in Council see Appendix II.

who have to undergo a further ordeal. The intention of the Government is plainly expressed by the foot-note to the schedule, which states that it must be distinctly understood that the money voted by Parliament will not be sufficient to construct all the lines so scheduled, and the choice of the Government in finally selecting the lines on which the money shall be expended will, in part, be determined by the character of the arrangements they are able to make with promoters in each case.

The words of the Order in Council, though they do not commit the Government, indicate pretty plainly that the money will be given in preference to those who contribute towards the construction of the railways. Certainly, as between rival schemes, this will be so, and even as regards lines where there is no local competition we cannot forget that all the lines are, in one sense, rivals, and none can be absolutely certain of success. The advice I have already pressed on promoters may be repeated with advantage—Try and secure a baronial guarantee for your schemes.

In the case of rival lines such as the North and South Mayo line, where it would take a vast sum to build the line, the Grand Jury may find themselves in a position to decide the question, if they wish. And it is very proper that their local knowledge should receive due weight in a case of the kind. The sum voted by Parliament is not large enough to justify the Government in paying the whole cost of construction of such a line, and the line therefore could not be built without local aid. The line therefore which the county chooses to support by a substantial guarantee may be the one which the Government will select. If, however, in such a case no baronial guarantee is forthcoming, the Government will find themselves placed in a difficulty.

Either they will have to give the county far more than its fair share of the grant, or else they will have to abandon the undertaking. Under certain special circumstances they might adopt the former course, and allocate, in addition to a free grant, a portion of the annual sum of £22,000 available under the Tramways Acts. But when there are so many rival claimants for the spoil it would be hardly judicious for the Grand Jury to rely upon such an off chance. One point I would strongly press upon the Government, and that is that in railways like the Belmullet, Valentia, Clifden, or Killybegs lines it would be an act of questionable kindness on their part to help to construct railways without seeing that ample provision is made, over and above the baronial guarantee, for their future maintenance. Although they may apply the balance of £22,000 to aid lines other than those scheduled under the Light Railways Act, it is probable that the Government will apply it in aid of the railways constructed under Mr. Balfour's Act, and it would certainly be a wise course for them to adopt. The more I have looked into the question the more convinced I am that in order to make satisfactory and permanent provision for railway extension in the West, not only is the whole of the £600,000 required, but the

balance of £22,000 per annum will be required as an additional security. It might often be desirable for purposes of good government or for the future industrial development of a district to build a railway which might not even pay its working expenses; but to tax the locality too heavily for its support might just produce the opposite effect to that which was intended. The Treasury must, therefore, be very careful not to look for exorbitant guarantees. In my article of the 15th of October attention was drawn to the fact that under existing orders the maps and plans must be lodged before the 1st December. Promoters will, therefore, have to look sharp, or they will not be in time for the Spring Assizes; and, in a race like the present, it will not be the last in who will win. It is rather an unfortunate occurrence that so short an interval should elapse between the scheduling of districts and the lodging of plans, more especially as in several cases lines have been scheduled which have not yet been even surveyed. It will be impossible for the promoters of such lines to comply with the provisions of the Tramways Acts in time for the Spring Assizes. In many cases promoters, in one sense wisely, waited to see whether their lines would be scheduled before they incurred this heavy expense. Now that they are scheduled they will be ready to go ahead if they are only given time; and it will be a matter for the Privy Council to consider whether or not they will extend the time, as they have power to do, so as to enable the authorities to have all the plans before them before they make any final selection.

In deciding this question as to an extension of time there are other matters to be considered. After plans have been lodged the Board of Trade will have to conduct an inquiry of a difficult nature as to the sufficiency of the plans; and they have also to hold a public sitting and hear evidence, so as to enable them to decide between rival schemes. Then necessary deviations will have to be determined upon and surveyed; working agreements with railway companies must be made by the promoters; and, last but not least, the Treasury's approval will have to be obtained and the conditions upon which they will make their grant decided.

All this should be done before the Spring Assizes, so that the matter may be brought before the Grand Jury in its complete state. How far, therefore, it will be possible to extend the time for lodging plans, and yet leave time for the Board of Trade and the Treasury to perform their part, I should not like to take it upon myself to decide. One way of solving the difficulty would be for the Treasury not to show its hand until after the Spring Assizes. If this were done, all applications might be considered together at the Summer Assizes. Although a summer might be lost by such a course there is a good deal to be said in its favour.

But, in any case, the Board of Works will be put to the pin of its collar to get the work done in time. With its present staff it could not possibly overtake the extra duties which will be thrown upon it under this Act; and it will be absolutely necessary, if the work is to be

properly done within the time prescribed, to appoint an additional staff to make the necessary inquiries and surveys, and to hold public inquiries.

COUNTY MAYO.

The question of railway communication in this great district is one of extreme difficulty. With the exception of the line to Westport, which only passes through the southern fringe of the county, and the short line to Ballina and Ballaghaderreen, the county of Mayo, with a population of 245,212, and an area of 1,360,000 acres, is devoid of railways, and, what is more, it is doubtful whether there is any new line of railway which could be constructed through Mayo which would even pay its working expenses for many years to come. So well is this fact recognized in the county that in spite of the advantages offered by the recent Tramways Act, no line has been constructed under its provisions. But though the county has declined to pledge the rates in order to open up the county by railway extension, it is generally admitted by all residents that until the western portion of the county is opened up peace and prosperity are impossible in this disturbed and distressed district. The Government having scheduled Belmullet as a place which it is desirable to connect by railway with both Westport and Ballina, it is now open to the promoters of the three rival lines to press their claims. The question to be decided is one of route. One line follows the North shore ; the second is a cross-country line, *via* Crossmolina ; the third follows the south coast as far as Achill Sound, and then trends north along the coast of Blacksod Bay. All these lines have one feature in common, namely, that for the last twenty miles or so they traverse dreary wastes of rock and bog, thinly populated, and devoid of natural resources. When Belmullet is reached we find ourselves in a village of 852 inhabitants.

To a casual observer it would appear a huge waste of money to build a railway 20 miles through a bog to such a spot, with only a tidal harbour, and as yet but little frequented by the better class of fishing boats. But on examining the map prepared by the Royal Commission on Public Works, it does appear that Belmullet has a future before it. Blacksod Bay is one of the great natural harbours of Ireland. A fleet could lie at anchor in the bay ; in fact, a British fleet has done so on more than one occasion. Its approach from the ocean is well indicated by the lofty Slieve More Mountains. There is a fine wide waterway, and the navigation is simplicity itself. After Berehaven, it is, perhaps, the finest natural harbour on the west coast.

Belmullet lies on a neck of land between this harbour and Broadhaven. There is good fishing off the north coast of Mayo, and good fishing off the west coast, particularly off the coast of Achill and Clare Island. Blacksod Bay and Broadhaven, with which there is water communication, are the harbours from which these grounds must be fished.

Owing to difficulties of communication, the few in number, and smallness of the craft fishing these shores, the quantity of fish exported from Belmullet is small; but there is little doubt that with a railway down to the deep water at Eley Harbour, five miles below Belmullet, Blacksod Bay would be frequented by fishing fleets, and a large fishing industry would be established at Belmullet.

Under these improved conditions Belmullet would, no doubt, become not only a fishing harbour and harbour of shelter, but a trading port, from which not only fish but agricultural produce might be shipped to Scotland. It might also be used, as Berehaven is, as a naval station.

Again, the emigration from the West to America might find an outlet from this and other western harbours instead of from Cork alone. Such an emigration traffic itself would help the western lines, would help Belmullet, and, perhaps, might some day develop a regular packet service, touching at three or four western harbours. But this could only happen if a proper dock, capable of holding the largest ships, were built at one of the western harbours. Such a dock, however, would cost an enormous sum of money.

The Government might take up this question in connection with the Royal Navy, and also as part of a course of remedial legislation; but unless it does, I do not see where the capital is to come from; and without the docks it is hopeless to look for the proper development of our western harbours. This, however, is a subject which may be better treated when we come to consider the recommendations of the Royal Commission as to piers and harbours. Having said my say about Belmullet, the common end of the three lines, and which should most certainly be connected with the outer world by one or other route, I will now examine each line in its turn. Such contradictory statements have been made as to the relative advantages of these railways in the County Mayo, that I have found it necessary to examine closely into the merits of the routes and their respective services to the fishing industry and to the resident population. In doing so, I have carefully considered the physical features of the country and other circumstances affecting each case, and I now give you the results of my study. The north coast line, commencing by a junction with the Midland Great Western system at Ballina, would serve the most populous part of North Mayo, consisting of the township of Ballina and the parishes of Kilmoremoy, Ardagh, Ballysakerry, Killala, Rathreagh, half Kilfian, Templemurry, Lackan, Kilcummin, Kilbride, Doonfeeny, two-thirds Kilcommon and Kilmore, making an aggregate area of 276,800 acres, with a population of 33,600, and a valuation of £44,900. The land embraced in the north coast area from Ballina to Ballycastle is generally fertile and of good quality, while the fisheries of the north coast, from Killala to Broad Haven, consisting of herring, mackerel, and lobster, and the winter trawling in Killala Bay, are amongst the best on this part of the coast. There are piers at Killala, Lackan, and Ballycastle, a large and industrious fishing

population at Lackan, and the fact that Broad Haven Bay is connected with Blacksod Bay by a canal at Belmullet enables the fishermen to avail themselves of the alternative refuge of Broad Haven when the wind is from the south-west. Killala, which was originally the port for the whole of North Mayo, has long been making efforts to have a short spur of railway extended to it from Ballina; and Sir Ralph Cusack (Chairman of the Midland Great Western Railway), Sir Thomas Brady, as well as Mr. Tuke and other witnesses of extensive local knowledge, have given evidence as to the importance of this harbour. No matter what route be suggested to Belmullet, there can be no doubt that the North Mayo people will have a line constructed to Killala, a distance of only eight miles. I say this because a contributory guarantee of 5 per cent. on £40,000 has been obtained from the barony for this object. This length of eight miles to Killala may, therefore, be reckoned upon as an absolutely certain factor in the case. In addition to the fisheries there is an industry in the Belderrig flag quarries, midway on this route from Ballina to Belmullet, where there is an immense supply of flags and paving sets, which are said to be as good as any in the three kingdoms.

As to the Inland Route, it only fulfils the condition of being the shortest distance between Belmullet and Ballina. The only portion of the route with any substantial population is the first eight miles to Crossmolina. This line would serve no sea fisheries till it reached Belmullet. The area served includes the parishes at Ballina, the parishes of Crossmolina, Moygawnagh, half Kilfian, two-thirds Kilcommon and Kilmore, making the following totals—Area, 288,600 acres; population, 30,500; and valuation, £35,500.

Next let us see what are the advantages of the southern route from Westport, *via* Newport, Mulraney, Ballycroy, along Achill Sound, to Belmullet. It would skirt the north shore of Clew Bay, with several small fishing piers, pass within four miles of the island of Achill, with its teeming population, and, following the shore of Blacksod Bay, it would reach Belmullet after a journey of $45\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The population which would be served by this route I estimate at 35,629, and the present poverty of the district may be judged by the fact that, with such a population, the valuation is only £28,052. So poor is it that the promoters do not propose to burden it with a baronial guarantee. On this point I shall have something further to say later on. I should not omit to state, when enumerating the claims of the South Coast line, that the Grand Jury passed a resolution in its favour at the last Summer Assizes; though, on the other hand, it is right to state that the inhabitants of Belmullet have passed resolutions in favour of the Ballina line. Neither ought I omit mention of the valuable salmon fisheries around the Southern and Western coasts at Newport, Burrishoole, Mulraney, Achill, Ballycroy, Bangor, and Carraman Lake.

My attention has been called to the fact that Achill Island has considerable mineral wealth. Copper mines were worked there. There are fine red hematite iron, yellow ochre, and soapstone of good quality and sufficiently accessible to be worked for potters' purposes. I have also been furnished with some interesting particulars which would indicate that the traffic on this route would not be insignificant. There are 84 fairs held in this South-Western district during the year. The traffic in pigs is already pretty extensive; and, with railway communication, in addition to the usual agricultural produce, there would be a considerable development of the poultry and egg traffic. I have no doubt that, as regards the agricultural traffic, the inland route would possess equal claims; and, probably, the northern route would have superior claims, the valuation of the district affected being half as great again.

The following table shows at a glance the comparative lengths of line, area, population, and valuations of the districts served by the rival lines:—

Route to Belmullet and Eley Harbour.	Length of Line.	Area.	Population.	Valuation.
	Miles.			
1. Ballina, <i>via</i> Killala and Ballycastle, to Belmullet and Eley Harbour ...	50	276,797	33,623	£44,916
2. Ballina, <i>via</i> Crossmolina and Bangor. ...	45	288,623	30,533	35,479
3. Westport, <i>via</i> Achill ...	51	296,353	35,629	28 052

It is a difficult task to balance the claims of the Northern and the Southern routes. As regards area and population there is very little difference. The length of the lines would be the same; both would end at Belmullet, both would develop fisheries to about the same extent.

In certain particulars the Ballina line possesses advantages. There is a guarantee of £40,000. There is greater wealth, and, therefore, greater chance of the line paying its way. And the port of Killala is certainly a more important point than any on the rival line. Besides, the line would cost less to build—an all-important consideration when money is scarce. On the other hand, the population along the Southern line is somewhat greater, and there is a natural sympathy with the poor fishermen of Achill, whom all would like to succour. For my own part, I may say in conclusion, that, though my sympathies are with the Southern route, my judgment is in favour of the North Coast Railway.

COUNTY GALWAY.

GALWAY AND CLIFDEN RAILWAY.

There have been various schemes proposed from time to time for effecting railway communication with the West of Galway ; but, in principle, they reduce themselves to three. Each commences at Galway and terminates at Clifden. They are (1) the Coast Line, (2) the Central Line, (3) the Northern or Inland Line.

The Lord Lieutenant has very wisely left the matter of routes an open question, having only scheduled a line joining the two terminal points, Galway and Clifden. The advantage of connecting these points is so well known that it is not necessary to dwell upon it at great length. There are a congested population, particularly along the coast line; good fishing grounds, little developed, but which if developed would go a long way to support a needy population ; and a want of railway communication, owing to which the Galway peasant pays exorbitantly for his bread, sugar, and tea, and other necessities, and, on the other hand, gets very much less for his produce. As for the fish, they have so little commercial value in such an out-of-the-way spot that they are frequently used for manure. There can be no doubt, apart from the commercial aspect of the question, that a railway to Clifden would not only help to bring this people more into touch with the rest of the kingdom, but by increasing their wealth, by affording more employment, and by drawing off the unemployed, it would help materially towards the solution of the problem of governing Connaught. Sir Edward Sullivan, at the Privy Council, declared that this railway was a question of "national importance;" and other eminent public men have expressed equally strong opinions upon the subject. Now let us examine into the claims of the rival routes.

THE COAST LINE.

The Coast Line starts from the Midland Great-Western Railway at Galway, and passes thence close to the projected breakwater, which was to have converted Galway into a Transatlantic Packet Station. It then traverses the populous Southern seaboard of Galway, as far as Cashla, where it turns north until it rounds Kilkieran Bay, after which it again takes a westerly course, still keeping close to the coast until it reaches Clifden. This line would accommodate the following piers :—Claddagh, Barna, Spiddle, Ballykees, Trawndaleen, Killeany, Kilronan, Cashla, Rassaveel, Greatman's Bay, Collaheigue, Beladangan, Kilkieran, Ardmore, Crampaun, Ardwest, Roundstone, Dooleen, Bunowen, Errislannan, Clifden, Cleggan, Barnaderg, Ballynakill, and Renvyle.

This formidable list of piers would suggest the existence of a great fishing industry. Unfortunately, this is not so as yet, for—with the exception of Roundstone, Clifden, Ballynakill, Cashla, Kilkieran, and Greatman's Bay, and, perhaps, one or two more—all these piers and harbours are dry at low water ; and the inhabitants of this coast, with

the exception of the Claddagh men, are not, as a rule, *bona fide* fishermen, but boatmen who combine the occupations of small farmer and labourer with fishing.

Why this Coast Line is so thickly populated puzzles most observers. From what I can gather, the explanation of the riddle is that in the past these coasts were largely inhabited by fishermen. When the kelp-burning industry was established, and when kelp sold for £7 or £8 a ton, the inhabitants of the neighbouring counties flocked to the coast. The profits of this industry were so great that fishing was abandoned. Subsequently, when the price of kelp fell to £2, these poor creatures, living in a district remote from railway communication, could no longer make kelp burning pay, and were obliged to abandon it. The coast population had in the meantime doubled; and when their only other means of subsistence (except the land) was taken away from them, they found themselves reduced to starvation point.

The premium which a coast railway would afford to the fishermen would revive this industry, and it might make kelp burning a fairly profitable industry, even at its present low price. The traffic in agricultural produce would be substantial. While the scenery, though not so well known as the inland parts of Connemara, is highly picturesque, and capable of attracting considerable numbers of tourists, if adequate hotel accommodation were provided. These, however, are points upon which the Board of Works will, no doubt, consult experienced traffic managers before reporting to the Treasury. The area served by the proposed Coast Line amounts to 371,732 acres, with a population of 63,314 (including the town of Galway), and a valuation of £72,597. The length of the line, inclusive of branches, is about 54 miles, and, at £5,000 a mile, this would cost £270,000. The branch lines to the Killeries and Roundstone would cost another £75,000, making a total of £345,000.

As to these branch lines, although they are very desirable, it is quite plain that with the limited grant at the disposal of the Treasury they could not be built. Their importance, however, is so great that we have little doubt that—if the main line is constructed—they will follow, as a matter of course, a few years later. Even without them, however, the fishermen of Galway would be fairly well accommodated.

THE CENTRAL ROUTE.

This route, *via* Oughterard, was recommended by the Royal Commission on Public Works in preference to the line *via* Headford. It is right, however, to state that the claims of the Coast Line were not brought before them at the time they came to this decision. The Central Line starts outside Galway, and follows Nimmo's Road through Moycullen, Ross, and Oughterard, Maam Crossroads, Recess, Ballinahinch, and reaches Clifden, after traversing a distance of 49 miles. A branch line to Killeries and into Roundstone is part of this scheme. The engineer's estimate of the cost of building this line on the 5ft. 3in. gauge is £210,000, but I cannot believe that a line in

accordance with the specifications required by the Midland could be built for less than £5,000 a mile through this district. This would give £245,000 as about the cost; and if we add the expense of the lines to Killery Bay and Roundstone Bay we shall find that it will take about £320,000 to carry out the recommendations of the Public Works Commissioners.

The central line would accommodate the baronies of Ballinahinch and Ross, and part of Moycullen, with a population calculated at 56,000, including the county of the town of Galway, and a valuation of about £70,000. I am not in a position to verify these figures, as the promoters, to whom I applied for information, were not able to give me the names of the parishes through which this line ran. But I have no doubt they have informed me correctly. There is prospect of a paying traffic between Oughterard and Galway, but from Oughterard to Clifden there is a sparse population and poor land, which, however, produces good sheep.

Ultimately much of this land, which is now unproductive, might be planted with profit, but this is rather a remote source of profit to count upon. The traffic which the promoters rely upon at present consists of pigs, cattle, fowl, fish, and butter.

At Oughterard there were lead mines, which were abandoned after being worked at a profit for a few years. Possibly a railway to Oughterard might enable the owners to work the mines again. Galway also produces good marble in abundance.

The promoters when giving evidence before the Royal Commission estimated the traffic receipts of this line at £16,000 a year. If they are right in their estimate, this would enable the company to pay their way and give a dividend. I will not myself undertake to vouch for those figures, which must be more or less fanciful.

This much is plain, that the county refused to go bail for the line, and the Privy Council threw out the line on the ground that the baronies were so highly taxed that they could not bear this additional strain upon them.

As regards the fisheries, this line, with the branches to Roundstone and Killery Bay, would, no doubt afford accommodation to the fishing industry, but without these branches it would be of comparatively little service to them, as the main line only touches the coast at Clifden, which is not a fishing station. Even with them it would not serve the fishermen nearly so well as the coast line, as it would afford no accommodation to the densely populated south coast.

THE INLAND LINE.

Now let us see what can be said for the inland route. It takes the eastern side of Lough Corrib, *via* Headford, Shrule, and Cong, passing through a rich wheat-growing country. At Cong it turns westward, and, skirting the head of the lake, follows a north-westerly course to Leenane, thence it follows the coast to Clifden.

The journey is 70 miles, or twenty miles longer than the central line, but then its promoters urge that it traverses a far richer district. The valuation of the baronies benefitted by it reaches the large total of £168,000, or more than double the valuation of either of the rival lines. If the county is to contribute towards the support of the line, there is no doubt that these baronies could better afford it than the western baronies. But, on the other hand, the cost of this route would be quite £100,000 in excess of the other routes, while the population served would be actually smaller, being only 59,000. Again, except the agricultural interest, it is not easy to see what industry a railway to Clifden would benefit. A study of the railway map would indicate that the interests of this part of the county would be best served by a line joining Galway and Claremorris (*via* Headford, Cong, and Ballyrobe) or, if this is thought too costly, by a junction line between Tuam and Claremorris, or Tuam and Ballyhaunis.

As to the district which would be served by the railway between Cong and Leenane, it is quite as poor as the district between Oughterard and Clifden, and may be disregarded in considering this question. In any future plan for Irish railway extension an East Galway line, from, say, Tuam to, say, Ballyhaunis, and a further extension to Ballaghadereen, would hold a foremost place, as it would be the completing link in a chain which would give a through westerly railway communication to Ireland. Such a through route would do much for the western towns, for it would give them a chance of competing in their own country with the English merchants. From this they are practically excluded at present by want of proper railway facilities.

COMPARISON.

And now let us compare the claims of the three lines. The population along the coast route is the largest and the most congested. The taxation is lowest along the Inland line, and, therefore, while one needs the railway most, the other could better afford to contribute towards its maintenance. The Coast line would, of course, benefit the fisheries the most, the Inland line the least, while the Central route, besides assisting the fisheries to some extent, might develop other resources such as mines, quarries, and forests. The Central route would be the most attractive for tourists. As regards cost of construction, the Central route would have a distinct advantage as far as Clifden, but if the cost of a line to Killery Bay be added there would not be much difference in the cost of construction of the two lines, and, as I have already shown, without such an extension the fisheries would scarcely benefit by this line. The cost of the Inland route would be so large that it would absorb two-thirds of the whole grant available for Ireland.

As respects traffic, that between Cong and Galway would be the largest, and that between Oughterard and Galway would be considerable. But beyond Cong on the one line, and Oughterard on the other, there would be little traffic.

Along the Coast line, though in no part would the traffic be so good as that between Galway and Headford, or between Galway and Oughterard, there is reason to believe that it would be fairly evenly distributed, and that it would at least equal the traffic on the Central route.

On the whole, I am inclined to the opinion that the Coast line would be more beneficial to the country, and that the claims of Oughterard might be met by running a branch line to Oughterard from the head of Kilkeran Bay. The traffic between Oughterard and Galway might be provided for, to some extent, by the steamers which ply on Lough Corrib.

The line to Clifden by the coast would cost £270,000. As I have already pointed out, Galway could not look for more than £200,000 out of the grant, and, therefore, if this line is to be built, the county must provide £70,000, unless, indeed, a further grant is made from the income still available under the Tramways Acts. The Galway Grand Jury passed a resolution to the effect that a baronial railway guarantee should not exceed 6d. in the pound. Curiously enough 6d. in the pound upon the valuation of the baronies affected by this line would exactly enable the promoters to raise the required £70,000. And with this expression of opinion before them, we could not call the Treasury ungenerous if they made a grant in favour of either the Central or Coast line upon condition that the county guaranteed a dividend of 4 per cent. upon £70,000.

(CONCLUSION).

Having considered the claims of the four Western counties—Kerry, Galway, Mayo and Donegal—and before concluding my observations upon the scheduled districts, let me say just a few words on the short spurs of railway connecting existing railways with the fishery piers at Ardglass, Kinsale, and Bantry. A great deal of what I have said with regard to Baltimore applies with equal force to these short lines. The amount of money required in each of these cases is so small compared to the benefits which would be conferred that there can be no two opinions as to the advisability of expending part of the Treasury grant upon them.

Now let us survey the claims of the various scheduled districts; and, having regard to the total funds available, let us try and see from the evidence already before the public how that fund could be best distributed.

There are in all seven principal and four smaller lines—a line to Carndonagh, one to Gweedore, one to Killybegs, one to Belmullet, one to Clifden, one to Kenmare, one to Valentia, and four short spurs to Ardglass, Baltimore, Kinsale Pier, and Bantry Pier. To these perhaps should be added another to Glenties, which I have always regarded as an instalment of an alternative route to Killybegs. This would give us in all something like 260 miles of scheduled railway. It is difficult to estimate the cost of 260 miles of light

railway, but we may take it roughly as between £5,000 and £6,000 a mile. On the 5ft. 3in. gauge, the whole of the scheduled lines would not cost less than £1,400,000, and they might cost as much as £1,600,000. To meet this expenditure there is available (1) a capital sum of £600,000, and (2) an annual surplus under the Tramways Act of £22,000, or thereabouts.

This annual sum, if devoted entirely to the scheduled lines, would enable the promoters to raise an additional £600,000 at 3½, or, in other words, within a few hundred thousand pounds of the total required. If we now add a baronial guarantee of sixpence in the pound upon all the baronies affected, we should arrive at a figure, little, if anything, short of the full sum necessary to build the 260 miles of railway. I do not suggest that the Treasury should insist upon a sixpenny guarantee in each case, because in some cases baronies could afford to pay a 7d. or 8d. in the £1, while in other cases they might not be able to afford so much. It must be remembered that there are districts in other parts of Ireland, such, for example, as the coal districts, whose claims to a share of the money available under the Tramways Act are strong. But, making allowance for these cases, it would appear that, in asking for an additional £600,000, Mr. Balfour gauged pretty accurately the claims of Ireland.

In spite, then, of the misgivings of the faint hearted promoters whose lines have been scheduled may well take heart of grace, and risk £1,000 or so for the chances of railway extension. When there is no rival route in a scheduled district promoters have an excellent prospect of succeeding. Even in Mayo and Galway there are three routes, one or other of which is certain to be built. It is well worth while for the competing promoters to risk £1,000 on the chances of securing a light line of railway costing £300,000. After all the trouble and expense they have already incurred, promoters would be very poor-spirited if they were to hang back now. If they do not push their claims, how are the Board of Works to proceed? Are they to send their officers scouring the country to explore every possible route? No. Anyone can see that the only way these cases can be threshed out is for the rival parties to appear at the hearing and produce evidence in support of their claims. Unless they do so we shall find, on the principle that what is everybody's business is nobody's business, the proper evidence will not be forthcoming. Without skilled and carefully prepared evidence, without maps, specifications, &c., the Board of Works inquiries would be a farce. But it is not only at these inquiries that the Act contemplates that the promoters are to take the initiative. At every step, from the lodging of plans to the final approval of the Privy Council, the promoters must be the moving parties. The course suggested of leaving it to the Government to select the lines, and afterwards to construct them, may have its advantages, but it is entirely contrary to the provisions of the Act. With great respect for the gentlemen, who have made this suggestion, I think that their advice is as bad as their law, and those who adopt it will probably find themselves left out in the cold.

No doubt, difficulties will arise in working out the Act. I have suggested several in the course of these articles ; but the anxiety of the Government to carry it into operation will have the effect of smoothing them away, while the Privy Council, taking a broad view of the question, will not allow mere technicalities to frustrate the evident intention of beneficent legislation.

If, owing to faulty draughting, the Act does contain provisions which interfere with its operations, the Government can introduce an amending Bill next session in time for the Summer Assizes.

There are two or three important points, however, to which I should like to call attention before concluding this series of articles.

In the first place, it is left to the Treasury to fix the rate of interest at which it will lend money for the purposes of this Act.

In lending money they will, of course, take the precaution to see that they have ample security. This being provided for, there does not appear to be any valid reason why they should not lend at 3 per cent. Loans at this rate would do much to develop railway construction. At a higher rate they would in no way facilitate it.

While on the subject of interest I have another important suggestion to put forward. It is this : Where a baronial guarantee is demanded, and where the Treasury agree to make an annual payment in aid of the maintenance and working of the line, it should be part of the arrangement that the barony should not be called on to pay their quota until the Treasury contribution is first exhausted. If this be done the promoters will be able to raise money upon the shares guaranteed by the county at a much lower rate of interest, while the chances of loss to the district will be rendered more remote. It is well known that, except upon guaranteed stock, money cannot be raised in the open market for the purpose of constructing Irish railways save at an exorbitant rate of interest, and, therefore, in fixing the amount of the Government grants for construction, it would be idle to make a less grant than what together with the baronial guarantee would enable the promoters to raise the full capital required. In some cases it may even be necessary to go further, and give an annual grant, which will insure that the line will not be abandoned after a few years, like the Birr and Portumna line. To protect themselves and the baronies from imposition, the Treasury must be careful to insist upon the office and other expenses of the new companies being cut down to a minimum. I am assured, on good authority, that on more than one line built under the Tramways Act the traffic is enough to pay working expenses and dividend, as well as office expenses, and yet the baronial guarantees are regularly called for. If this is true, it is a matter which should at once be remedied ; and in all future arrangements a repetition of such a scandal should be made impossible.

The reference in the Light Railways Act to the Railways Act of 1888 suggests the importance of making provision that in all these new lines, built with Government money for the promotion of fisheries and other industries, a special tariff of rates should be insisted upon by the Treasury for the carriage of fish or other produce of the industry which it is intended to benefit.

In a previous article I pointed out that the charge for carrying of Irish fish to the great fish markets is often prohibitive, and if the Treasury could secure the lowering of the rates they would confer almost as great a boon upon this industry as by constructing light railways.

I do not mean to infer that our railway directors are extortioners. Far from it. They are only the servants of the shareholders, their first duty being to insure the payment of a good dividend. If the development of Irish resources can be carried out without interfering with their duty to their shareholders, then directors are often public spirited, though they do sometimes take a narrow view of the public interest.

It is sincerely to be hoped that directors of existing railway companies in their agreements to work new lines of railway will take a broad view of the question, and will not demand more than the minimum amount required to secure themselves from loss in working the lines, and to protect the interests of shareholders; and that they will give the maximum of encouragement to the scheduled district in the shape of moderate rates and a good service.

There is one other matter upon which I should like to touch, viz., hotels in the West of Ireland. Hitherto English tourists have received no encouragement to tour in Ireland. The railway communication to the most beautiful Irish scenery is indifferent, and with few exceptions, the hotels are poor.

There are a large number of English tourists who take a month's holiday, and they like to travel in a country which will enable them to put in their full time enjoyably. Hitherto Ireland has not fulfilled this condition.

The new fishery railways in Kerry, Connemara, Mayo, and Donegal will do wonders to open up the chief beauties of Ireland to tourists; and if the railway companies, resident landlords, or others locally interested provide comfortable hotel accommodation, I have no doubt that some years hence Ireland will be largely frequented by tourists, as Scotland is.

The constant interchange of ideas engendered by such inter-communication would encourage a friendly spirit between the two countries, and would help in time to remove the English ignorance of Irish affairs which makes legislation so difficult.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DAILY EXPRESS.

SIR,—The public and especially the inhabitants of the distressed western districts owe the EXPRESS a debt of gratitude for the space in its columns devoted to this important subject. It is not surprising that the landlords of Western Mayo, who still retain a portion of their inheritance in their own lands, who pay the entire poor rates, county cess and taxes for that portion, and half the poor rate for the portion let to tenants, should in their present distressed condition view with apprehensive dismay the probability of another burden added on to those they have so grievously borne. The panic produced among them by the retention of the tenth clause of the Act of 1883 is therefore excusable. But, as you have so clearly explained in your leading article of Saturday (and in the communications of your able contributor in previous issues), the apprehension so dogmatically asserted is rather exaggerated. No account is taken of the effect on the future working expenses of the light railway by the munificent gift of the Government. No estimate is entertained of the relief to the cesspayers by the gratuitous opening up of additional means of intercommunication, or the advantages certain to result to landlords and tenants of hitherto unexplored districts from the traffic which will be created or the moneys which will be expended in the construction of a light railway. But, although Mr. Stoney has left these items out of his calculation, the omission might be overlooked if he met the objection to the tenth clause fairly, which, I submit, he has not done. He assumes that the impoverished Barony of Erris would be the only area that would hereafter be taxed for a "rate in aid" of the Belmullet Railway, and on the basis of its valuation—viz., £12,000—he calculates that 4 per cent. on £8,000 would not be realized by a tax of 6d. in the pound on that valuation—a sum not one-tenth of the cost of construction. Surely Mr. Stoney must know that the cost of construction is outside of the purview of the tenth clause. A dividend on a portion of the paid-up capital is the only liability that can be hereafter enforced by the application of the tenth clause. And although the wording of Mr. Balfour's Act in that regard is rather obscure, still no one can doubt that the capabilities of the districts will be taken into consideration in estimating the portion of the paid-up capital on which a dividend will be required. But Mr. Stoney's calculation is made on too narrow a basis. The Southern Line of Railway, via Newport, if it should ever be preferred to the Ballina and Belmullet Line, which is now more than doubtful, will traverse a great part of Burrishoole barony, as well as Erris, inasmuch as to Mr. Stoney's especial knowledge the barony of Erris does not commence until you reach Mulbranny, within a very short distance of Rosturk Castle, Mr. Stoney's beautiful and romantic residence. The valuation of Burrishoole is £22,426, nearly double that of Erris, which on Mr. Stoney's own showing would conjointly with the latter barony give a dividend of 4 per cent. on £24,000, instead of £8,000. But the more important question is what will form the "paid up capital?" That will consist of the sum advanced out of the £600,000, aided by what a contractor may finance the line for, in order to obtain its construction. If the proportion of the £600,000 allotted to the Belmullet line should not suffice, the deficiency will be made good by the contractors, who will look for interest on their advance either to the £20,000 a year unexpended under the Tramways Acts, or, if the Government will not come to the aid of the two baronies, to a rate in the shape of an additional barony cess, as it is called, or, if the county at large derives a benefit, to a

proportion ascertainable on the principle of the drainage and navigation systems. Thus the area may equitably be enlarged, and the assessment reduced to a penny in the pound.

It is to me inconceivable why people who have the welfare of the country at heart should reject the unprecedented advantages which they are certain to derive from this generous boon. A calm calculation of reasonable probabilities ought to allay the fears of those prophets of evil, when they consider that the Treasury will require to be satisfied as to the expenditure, its nature, extent, and purposes, before they consent to make the grant; and some sympathy with a people who are subjected periodically to the agonies of semi-starvation ought to induce them to forego their own private interests, even though to some small extent their prognostications may be fulfilled. They should remember that they are a very small portion of a very large community who look forward with eager expectation to the blessings and advantages which a ready communication with the market centres of this country, England and Scotland would confer. If their apathy or apprehensions should deprive that community of this inestimable boon, when other parts of the country and the coast will be reaping its advantages, the responsibility will be a heavy one.—Yours, &c.,

A MAYO RATEPAYER.

APPENDIX I.

AN ACT TO FACILITATE THE CONSTRUCTION OF LIGHT RAILWAYS
IN IRELAND.—[30th August, 1889.]

BE it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows :

1. This Act may be cited for all purposes as the Light Railways (Ireland) Act, 1889.

2.—(1.) This Act shall not extend to England or Scotland.

(2.) The Lord Lieutenant by Order in Council may from time to time declare that it is desirable that a light railway should be constructed between certain places for the development of fisheries or other industries, but that owing to the circumstances of the district special assistance from the State is required for its construction, and declare that the provisions hereinafter enacted shall be applicable to such light railway, and thereupon the provisions of this Act shall be applicable to a light railway between

the said places ; but the provisions of this Act shall not apply except to a light railway specified in such an Order in Council as aforesaid, and shall cease to apply to such railway unless the same be constructed within a period to be mentioned in the said order or such extended period as shall be named in any subsequent order.

3. This Act shall apply only (a) where the promoters of the light railway are an Irish railway company having a railway open for traffic ; or (b) where the promoters have made an agreement approved of by the Treasury for the maintenance, management, and working of the light railway by such a railway company ; or (c) where the promoters in making application to the grand jury of any county under the Tramways (Ireland) Acts propose that a barony or baronies in the county shall guarantee the payment of dividends upon a portion of the paid-up capital of the light railway, pursuant to the provisions of the Tramways and Public Companies (Ireland) Act, 1883, which promoters are hereby authorised to do.

4.—(1.) If the report of the Board of Works made upon the inquiry directed by the ninth section of the Tramways (Ireland) Act, 1860, as altered by this Act, shall have approved of the undertaking with or without any modification thereof, the Treasury may sanction such undertaking or any modification thereof of which they may approve and make an agreement with such promoters, being a public company, for the construction, maintenance, and working of the light railway, or any or either of the said matters, upon such terms and conditions in all respects as to the execution of the undertaking and any contracts to be made therefor, or as to any other matter relating to the undertaking as the Treasury shall think fit.

(2.) The Treasury may, subject to the limitations as to amount in this Act contained, agree that the undertaking may be aided out of public money either by a capital sum or by an annual payment, or partly in one way and partly in another.

(3.) The capital sum may be a free grant or a loan, or partly one and partly the other, but no loan shall be made to any company which owes arrears of principal or interest to the Treasury, or to any promoters whose agreement for construction, maintenance, or working is made with such a company.

(4.) A free grant or an annual payment shall be paid out of moneys provided by Parliament.

(5.) Any such loan shall be made by the Board of Works, under the directions of the Treasury, out of moneys at the disposal of such Board for local loans, and shall be advanced on such conditions and at such rate of interest as the Treasury may direct.

5. Where such an agreement has been made by the Treasury, the Order in Council which the Lord Lieutenant is authorised to make under the Tramways (Ireland) Acts as altered by this Act, may provide

that the forty-second and forty-third sections of the Tramways (Ireland) Act, 1860, or either of them, shall not apply to such light railway, and may include, in addition to any provisions which it might have contained if this Act had not been passed, a confirmation of the agreement so made as aforesaid, and, where such an agreement has been made with a railway company, may sanction the promotion of the light railway, or the maintenance, management, and working thereof by such railway company, and may authorise such railway company to raise as capital such additional sum of money for such purpose and in such manner as shall be specified in such Order, and for the purpose of such an agreement it shall be lawful for a railway company to be promoters of a light railway; or to make an agreement for the maintenance, management, and working thereof: Provided always, that where such sanction or authority is given to a railway company, such Order shall only be made when the railway company establishes to the satisfaction of the Lord Lieutenant in Council that a copy of the proposed Order has been submitted to the proprietors of the railway company held specially for that purpose, as if such Order were a Bill promoted in Parliament by the railway company, and that all matters and things have been done and have happened, and all times have elapsed which, if such Order were a Bill so promoted as aforesaid, should have been done and have happened and elapsed in order to constitute compliance with the Standing Orders of Parliament applicable to Bills promoted by railway companies for the like purposes to those referred to in this section.

Such Order in Council shall not take effect unless confirmed by Parliament if a petition against it is presented to the Lord Lieutenant in Council and the petitioner appears and proceeds therewith.

6.—(1.) The Treasury shall not undertake, in pursuance of this Act, to pay in the aggregate a sum exceeding twenty thousand pounds a year in addition to the residue, if any, for the time being remaining unappropriated of the sum of forty thousand pounds a year mentioned in the ninth section of the Tramways and Public Companies (Ireland) Act, 1883.

(2.) Any aid given in pursuance of this Act by any capital sum or sums shall not exceed in the aggregate the sum of six hundred thousand pounds or such less sum as hereinafter mentioned.

(3.) The annual amount which the Treasury are authorised to pay by virtue of this Act shall be reduced by an annual sum equal to three per cent. per annum on the amount of any aid given in pursuance of this Act by a capital sum, whether by a free grant or a loan.

(4.) If the Treasury undertake to pay any annual sum or sums under the Tramways and Public Companies (Ireland) Act, 1883, and this Act in excess of forty-two thousand pounds a year, the amount of the aid which may be given under this Act by a capital sum shall be diminished by such sum as with interest at the rate of three per cent. per annum would produce the amount of such excess.

7. In the case of any light railway to which the provisions of this Act shall be applicable, the following modifications of the provisions of the Tramways and Public Companies (Ireland) Act, 1860, shall be made—

(a.) The first regulation contained in Schedule (A) to the said Act, Part V., shall be read and construed as if after the words “neighbourhood of the proposed tramway” there were added the words and figures following, that is to say:—

“(6.) The propriety of the amount fixed as the nominal capital for the construction of the light railway, and the amount of paid up capital which will be necessary for the purposes of the undertaking, and also the amount of capital which will be necessary as a provision for working capital.

“(7.) The merits of the proposed light railway in all points of view as compared with any other light railway which might be constructed opening up communication through the same district as the proposed line.”

(b.) The inquiry directed by the ninth section of the Tramways (Ireland) Act, 1860, as altered by this Act, shall take place before any such application is made to the Treasury as hereinbefore is mentioned, and for the purpose of such inquiry and of enabling them to make their report thereon the Board of Works may obtain and use the assistance of such persons, with the consent of the Treasury as to number, skilled in the subjects of the inquiry, as the Board of Works may consider necessary.

8. The Board of Works shall, at the end of each financial year in which any part of any sum issued under the Tramways and Public Companies (Ireland) Act, 1883, or under this Act (in this section referred to as the said Acts) out of the Exchequer, or out of money applicable for local loans is expended, make up such accounts as may be required by the Treasury of the money issued from the Exchequer, or out of money applicable for local loans, which has been expended in pursuance of the said Acts and the purposes for which it was expended, and the mode in which the money was provided.

9. The Regulation of Railways Act, 1873, and the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888, shall, so far as circumstances may admit, and so far as those enactments are not inconsistent with the Tramways (Ireland) Act, or this Act, apply to light railways constructed under this Act; and for the purposes of this section a light railway shall be deemed to be a railway within the meaning of the Regulation of Railways Act, 1873, and the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888.

10. Where application for a presentment or approval for the purpose of a light railway has been made at the summer assizes one thousand eight hundred and eighty-nine, this Act shall, so far as applicable, extend to such railway: Provided always, that this section shall not apply where an application for a guarantee has been made before the passing of this Act.

11. In this Act, unless there is something inconsistent in the context—

The expression “the Tramways (Ireland) Acts” has the same meaning as in the Tramways and Public Companies (Ireland) Act, 1883, and also includes the said Act.

The expression “light railway” includes tramway as that word is used in the Tramways (Ireland) Acts.

All other words and expressions in this Act which are not thereby defined or explained, and are defined or explained in any of the Tramways (Ireland) Acts, have, unless there is something inconsistent in the context, the same meaning as in the last-mentioned Acts, and the said Acts as varied by this Act, and this Act shall, so far as is consistent with the tenor thereof, be read together and construed as one Act.

APPENDIX II.

By the Lords Justices and Privy Council in Ireland.

EDWARD SAXE-WEIMAR, General.

ASHBOURNE, C.

HEDGES EYRE CHATTERTON.

WHEREAS by “The Light Railways (Ireland) Act, 1889,” section 2, it is, amongst other things, enacted that “The Lord Lieutenant, by Order in Council, may, from time to time, declare that it is desirable that a Light Railway shall be constructed between certain places for the development of Fisheries or other industries, but that owing to the circumstances of the district, special assistance from the State is required for its construction, and declare that the provisions hereinafter enacted shall be applicable to such Light Railway :”

Now We, the Lords Justices-General and General Governors of Ireland, by and with the advice and consent of Her Majesty’s Privy Council in Ireland, and in pursuance and by virtue of “The Light Railways (Ireland) Act, 1889,” and of all other powers Us thereunto enabling, do hereby declare that it is desirable that Light Railways shall be constructed between the places mentioned in the Schedule to this Order, for the development of Fisheries and other industries, but that owing to the circumstances of the districts, special assistance from the State is required for their construction.

And We do hereby further order and declare that the provisions of the “Light Railways (Ireland) Act, 1889,” shall apply to Light

Railways to be constructed between the places specified in the said Schedule.

Given at the Council Chamber, Dublin Castle, the 1st day of November, 1889.

	Belmore.	Arthur James Balfour.	
W. H. F. Cogan.	M. Morris.	O'Connor Don.	P. J. Keenan.
Hugh Holmes.	Peter O'Brien.	H. Hervey Bruce.	

SCHEDULE to the foregoing Order.

Buncrana to Carndonagh.
 Letterkenny to Dunfanaghy and Gweedore.
 Stranorlar to Gweedore.
 Stranorlar to Glenties.
 Donegal to Killybegs and Glenties.
 Ballina to Belmullet.
 Westport to Belmullet.
 Galway to Clifden.
 Headfort to Kenmare.
 Killorglin to Valencia.
 Downpatrick to Ardglass.
 Skibbereen to Baltimore.
 Kinsale to Kinsale Pier.
 Bantry to Bantry Pier.

NOTE.—The foregoing lines have been scheduled by the Lords Justices in Council, under the Light Railways (Ireland) Act, 1889, as lines which it is desirable to have constructed.

It must be distinctly understood that the money voted by Parliament will not be sufficient to construct all the lines so scheduled, and the choice of the Government in finally selecting the lines on which the money shall be expended will, in part, be determined by the character of the arrangements they are able to make with promoters in each case.

APPENDIX III.

SCHEDULE OF REQUIREMENTS by the Great Southern and Western Railway Company, to be complied with by any Light Railway proposed to be worked by the Great Southern and Western Railway.

1. The minimum radius of curves, except near stations, to be 15 chains; where reverse curves occur, there should be at least 600 feet of straight between. In the neighbourhood of stations a minimum radius of 10 chains will be allowed.

2. The steepest gradient to be 1 in 60; where reverse gradients occur, the gradients themselves should not be less than 1 in 100, and they should be eased at point of reverse with a gradient of at least 1 in 300 for a length of at least 600 feet.

3. The formation widths of embankments not less than 16 feet. The formation widths of cuttings in clay not less than 15 feet. The formation widths of cuttings in rock not less than 14 feet.

4. The slopes of embankments and cuttings to be formed at an inclination of not less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet horizontal to 1 foot perpendicular, except of rock cuttings, which shall be formed of one quarter to one half foot horizontal, to one foot perpendicular, according to the nature of the rock.

5. Bridges, &c.—No bridges, viaducts, or culverts will be allowed to be constructed of timber.

6. Fencing—The design for the fencing must be submitted to and approved of by the engineer of the Great Southern and Western Railway.

7. Permanent way rails and fastenings—The rails to be not less than 60lb. to the yard, steel, of a standard length of 30 feet, and of a section to be approved of by the engineer of the Great Southern and Western Railway, fastened with 6 fang bolts and crab washers and 16 hook head spikes to each rail of 30 feet. Where curves occur of 15 chains radius and less, sole plates must be used with the fang bolts. No holes will be allowed in the flanges of the rails, and the fish bolt holes must be drilled, not punched. Deep angle fishplates must be used. The fastenings must not be less than the following weights:—Fang bolts and fangs, 2lb.; crab washers, 1lb. 12 oz.; hook-head spikes, 11oz.; fishplates, each, 12lb.; fishbolts, 1lb. $1\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

8. Sleepers to be of Baltic redwood, rectangular, and creosoted, of the following dimensions:—Length, 8ft. 11in.; breadth, 9in.; depth, $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. Eleven sleepers to each 30 feet rail. No half round sleepers will be allowed.

9. Ballasting—The bottom layer of ballast to be of large broken stone, and hand-pitched for a width of 12 feet, and a depth of 9 inches; above this, and to the top of the sleepers, to be covered with suitable ballasting material for a width of 10 feet on top, the entire depth from formation to rail level not to be less than 1ft. 8in.

10. Signalling—All signal work to be in accordance with the standard patterns and specifications of the Great Southern and Western Railway Company.

APPENDIX IV.

WORKING AGREEMENTS.

I have on several previous occasions alluded to agreements with existing railway companies to work new lines. I am now in a position to give the heads of such a working agreement which has been provisionally entered into by the promoters of a new line with one of

our leading railway companies, subject of course to the approval of the Treasury. In the first place the company practically agree to work the line permanently. The next condition is that the railway and works are not only to pass the requirements of the Board of Trade, but also to be in accordance with certain specifications, somewhat similar to those of the Great Southern and Western Railway Company, which I published in my second article. The station accommodation is to be provided by the working company, the promoters providing any additional land required. The working company are to supply and pay for all rolling stock, locomotive power, plant, stuff, &c., for working the traffic, to maintain the line in good working order, to receive the rates and charges on the traffic, and to run two mixed trains each way on each week day, but no greater number unless the working company think fit. The working company are to pay all outgoings and all other expenses of or incident to the railway and the maintenance, user, and traffic thereof, and usually paid out of revenue, except passenger duty or tax (should it hereafter be imposed) and income tax, and also except one moiety of poor rates and county cess, and one moiety of such other taxes (if any) created or to be created as may affect land or any interest therein, or the earnings of said railway. The promoters are to satisfy all tithe or other rent-charges, also all charges for or on account of clearing-house expenses. In return for services performed the working company are to retain 55 per cent. of the gross receipts. If any default arises in working the line, the promoters are to be exempted from loss; while, on the other hand, the promoters indemnify the working company from all liability for capital moneys, charges, and debts of the promoters. The agreement contains the usual clauses as to furnishing of accounts, settlement of differences, service of notices, &c., and there is only one other clause to which it is necessary to refer. That clause is one to which I beg to call the attention of the Irish Conference on Railway and Canal Rates. It provides that, in respect of all traffic between stations on the light railway and stations on the main line, *terminals* of one shilling per ton shall be paid to each company on goods, and 1s. per waggon for live stock. This raises the very important question of the right of railway companies to charge terminals, and the further question whether it is fair to charge terminals in cases like the present, where no terminal services will be rendered. At this rate, if other companies follow suit, cattle travelling from the West of Ireland to Yorkshire would have to pay terminals six times over, and the result would be that the cattle trade of Ireland would suffer enormously.

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