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# THE BOARD OF WORKS

AND THE

## ULSTER CANAL.

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# PROCEEDINGS

AT

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

HELD AT

Portadown, Armagh, Caledon, Middletown,  
Monaghan, Belturbet, Clones, Moy,  
and Benburb,

*To Protest against the Proposal of the Board of Works to Close the Ulster Canal; to take steps for inducing the Government to put the Waterway in proper order, and thereafter either to keep it in order, or hand it over to a Carrying Company which would be bound to do so.*

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Portadown :

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# THE ACTION OF THE BOARD OF WORKS.

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The following Circular was issued by the Board of Works, and forwarded to the several Public Bodies mentioned therein :—

OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS,  
DUBLIN, *3rd February*, 1883.

SIR,—I am directed by the Commissioners of Public Works to call the attention of the public to the contents of an advertisement published last week by their authority, and to state that unless within a period of three months the Board receive a satisfactory offer for the purchase of the Ulster Canal on the terms advertised, steps will at once be taken to sell the works, houses, and lands in lots to the highest bidder without regard to the maintenance of the canal. I am to add that in the event of a project being formed in a serious and practical spirit for the acquisition of the canal by any combination of local authorities whose joint action would require Parliamentary sanction, the Board would be prepared to submit to the judgment of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury the propriety of furthering the necessary application for Parliamentary approval.

The Board have directed that letters similar to the present one should be sent to the several secretaries of the Grand Juries of the counties adjoining the canal or interested in it, viz.—Tyrone, Armagh, Monaghan, Fermanagh, Cavan, Down, and Antrim, and to the Municipal authorities of the following boroughs interested in the Navigation, viz.—Belfast, Dungannon, Lurgan, Armagh, Portadown, Monaghan, Clones, B. Iturbet, Enniskillen, Cavan, and Lisburn.

I am, sir,

Your obedient servant,

E. HORNSBY, Secretary.

Advertisements of the sale of the Canal, as mentioned above were also published in various Northern Newspapers.

The Belfast Harbour Commissioners, the Belfast Chamber of Commerce, and other Public Bodies passed strong Resolutions condemning the proposed action of the Board of Works.

## MEETING AT PORTADOWN.

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On the 12th February, a very influential meeting was held in the Town Hall, Portadown, to consider the circular of the Board of Works, and take such steps as might be deemed advisable in regard thereto. The chair was occupied by Arthur Thornton, Esq., Chairman of the Town Commissioners, and there were also in attendance—J G V Porter, Lisbellaw; James Malcolm, J P, D L., High Sheriff Co Armagh, and Chairman Lurgan Town Commissioners; Colonel Waring, J P, D L, Waringstown House; Thomas Best, J P; Averell Shillington, J P; Joseph Acheson, J P; Wm. J Paul, John B Atkinson, T D Atkinson, Bank of Ireland; George Greer, J P, Woodville; Henry Shillington, C E; John Acheson, Thomas Shillington (2); Jacob Sinton, James Green, John Lutton, Edenderry; Wm. Adams, jun.; George Bright, John Carter, John Wilson, James Knox, Alfred Goodlate, W R Rea, Secretary Lagan Navigation Company; James Orr, J P; Robert M Kean, J P, Benburb; Hugh Wallace, T C; Henry Tohall, J C Smith, Caledon; J C B Phipson, J P; Wm. Baird, T C; Jacob Orr, Daniel Devlin, Coalisland; W A Robinson, J P, Belfast; Rev Canon Coyne, Moy; A W Sinclair, J P, Newry; David Graham, James M Fadden, Hamilton Robb, Wm Hall, T C; John Richardson, T C; D W Irwin, J G Livingston, James Greer, Rev J E Green, Rev J O Park, George R Armstrong, Secretary Newry Navigation Company, and many others.

It was proposed by Wm A Robinson, Esq, Chairman of the Lagan Navigation Company; seconded by James Orr, Esq, J P, Cranagill; and supported by Jacob Orr, Esq, Cranagill, and Robert M Kean, Esq, J P, Moy—

I.—“That this meeting views with much regret the proposal of the Commissioners of Public Works ‘to sell the Works, Houses and Lands connected with the Ulster Canal, in lots, to the highest bidder, without regard to the maintenance of the Canal;’ and we desire to place on record our strong conviction that this Canal, which has cost the Country £3,000,000, should not be allowed to lapse in consequence of there being now a certain expenditure required to make it available for Traffic.”

It was proposed by Wm John Paul, Esq, Portadown, and seconded by Wm Baird, Esq, Lurgan—

II.—“ That this meeting is strongly of opinion that on public grounds the Government should provide the means necessary to put the Ulster Canal in proper working order, and afterwards lease the Canal for a term of years to a company, which should be bound to levy moderate tolls for the carriage of merchandise, and also to pay a fair proportion of the profits by way of interest on the Government outlay.”

It was proposed by James Malcolm, Esq, D L, J P, Chariman of the Lurgan Town Commissioners, and seconded by A W Sinclair, Esq, J P, Newry—

III.—“ That the Ulster Canal, when made available for traffic, should be handed over by the Government to a carrying company, which could be easily promoted for that purpose, or to an existing company, which could be enlarged so as to secure its ability to carry out any engagements which it might enter into with the Government.”

It was proposed by James Orr, Esq, J P, Cranagill, and seconded by Thomas Best, Esq, J P, Portadown—

IV.—“ That this meeting appoint the following gentlemen to act as a committee, with power to add to their number, viz.—Arthur Thornton, Chairman Portadown Town Commissioners; Thos Shillington, J P, *primus*; J G V Porter, D L; Colonel Waring, D L; James Malcolm, D L; C B Phipson J P; A W Sinclair, J P; W J Paul, Thos. Shillington, *secundus*; Robert M'Kean, J P; Jacob Orr, Joseph Acheson, J P; Thomas Best, J P; Wm R Rea, W A Robinson, Chairman Lagan Navigation Board, Belfast; James Orr, J P, A R Goodlate, Wm Baird, Thomas Sinton, J P; H D M'Master, J P; John Stevenson, J P; Henry Shillington, C E, Esqrs; and the Chairman of the Newry Navigation Company. That they arrange for a deputation or deputations to wait upon the Commissioners of Public Works, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, and the Lords of the Treasury. Members of Parliament interested be requested to form part of the deputation, together with representatives from the various Towns and Public Bodies concerned, and five to form a Quorum.”

Proposed by Wm A Robinson, Esq, Chairman of the Lagan Navigation Company, Belfast, and seconded by Jacob Orr, Esq, Cranagill—

V.—“ That this meeting sympathise with J G V Porter, Esq, D L, J P, in the great exertion he has made to have the Ballinamore Canal and the Canal System of the North of Ireland put into a proper state of repair, and if thought desirable under one Board of Management.”

J G V Porter, Esq, D L, J P, Colonel Waring, D L, J P, and others addressed the meeting at some length in support of all the foregoing Resolutions.

The Committee met subsequently, and the following resolution was adopted :—

“ That the Chief Secretary for Ireland be requested to receive a Deputation on the matter upon an early day, and the following be requested to join in it, viz.:—The Mayor of Belfast, The Chairman of the Town Commissioners of Lisburn, Lurgan, Portadown, Armagh, Newry, Monaghan, Clones, Enniskillen, Cavan, Belturbet, Carrick-on-Shannon, Gifford, Tandragee, Dungannon, Warrenpoint, and Aughnacloy, and that the following gentlemen represent the Towns hereinafter mentioned, viz. Moira, J L Douie, Esq ; Coalisland, John Stevenson, Esq, J P ; William Wilson, Esq, J P ; Mr Daniel Devlin ; Caledon, Mr Smith and Mr Naye, and R J Alexander, Esq ; Middletown, Mr John Barker ; Glasslough, Mr Cargill, Mr M'Callen ; Emyvale, Mr T Clow, Mr N T Butler, Mr Robert Armstrong ; Belleek, Mr R Austin ; Ballinamore,

The Chairman of Belfast Harbour Commissioners, Belfast ; Chairman of Chamber of Commerce, Belfast ; Members of Parliament for Antrim, Down, Armagh, Monaghan, Tyrone, Fermanagh, Cavan, Leitrim, and Roscommon, Boroughs Belfast, Lisburn, Armagh, Newry, Dungannon, and Enniskillen ; and

If the Mayor of Belfast and Chairmen of above Municipal Authorities and Public Boards cannot attend themselves, to be requested to appoint a member of their respective Boards to represent them.”

## MEETING AT ARMAGH.

On Tuesday Evening, 27th February, a largely-attended meeting was held in the Market-House, Armagh, "to consider the proposal of the Board of Works to close up the Ulster Canal, and to protest against the enormous destruction of property that must thereby ensue." The chair was taken by R G M'Crum, Esq., J P, and there were also present, amongst others—Mr James Orr, J P; Mr Jacob Orr, Mr James Best, Mr John S. Riggs, Mr Wm. Best, Mr James M'Mahon, T C; Mr John Hughes, T C; Mr Robert Gillespie, T C; Mr John Gamble, P L G; Mr Wm. Naye, P L G; Mr S Davison, Mr John M'Clelland, T C; Mr James A Allen, Mr Robert Ferris, T C; Dr Riggs, Mr H Hillock, T C; Mr James Hillock, Mr James Gardner, Mr James Wynne, T C; &c., &c.

A deputation from the Central Committee was also in attendance.

Mr ROBERT GARDNER was appointed Hon. Secretary.

Mr JACOB ORR explained the circumstances under which the meeting at Portadown was held, and Mr GARDNER read the series of resolutions passed at that meeting.

Mr ORR, resuming, said he wished to convey to the meeting the strong feeling of those already connected with this movement against the closing of the Canal. It had been under the control and management of the Government since 1865, and was now about to be dismantled on the grounds that it was not self-supporting. But it would be found thoroughly self-supporting if put into proper working order, with a sufficient depth of water for carrying on the traffic. This could be accomplished by an expenditure, according to the calculation of the Engineer to Board of Works, of about £10,000, and vessels would be enabled to trade over it with cargoes of from 65 to 70 tons. The feeling of those who asked that the Canal should not be closed was, that it would be a success if properly managed.

Mr M'KEAN, J.P., in the course of a lengthened address, pointed out the wide interests which were affected by the proposition of the Board of Works, and said that the inland waterways of the country were the only instruments by which they could successfully contend

against railway monopoly. Although the maintenance of the Ulster Canal might be a losing game to Government, it would not be so in the hands of a Carrying Company, if the Government restored it to the condition in which it was when they got possession of it. That was all they wanted the Government to do. After referring to the great benefits the Canal must secure to farmers and traders, he added that the Government could not do better than spend the £10,000 asked for in developing the industries of a loyal and intelligent community such as that of this large district. (Applause.)

Mr JOHN S RIGGS, in moving the adoption of the resolutions passed at Portadown said those resolutions, he was sure, embraced all the objects the meeting had in view (hear, hear). One of the chief objects they aimed at was to check that huge monopoly, the Great Northern Railway. If the Board of Works succeeded in effecting a sale of the Canal the Railway Company would, in all probability become the purchasers, not for the purpose of encouraging canal traffic, but with the object of permanently closing the waterway. They should use every means in their power to prevent such a contingency both for their own good and for the sake of the general prosperity of the country. (Applause.) If the Railway Company obtained possession of the canal there would be no limit to the freights they would levy on traders, farmers and manufacturers. They (the company) tried to do so before, but they failed considerably owing to the attitude taken by the people of Armagh (hear, hear.) If the canal were handed over to the proposed carrying company the traders could have their heavy goods brought to them independent of the Railway Company altogether. (Applause.)

Mr FERRIS, T C, seconded the resolutions which were passed with acclamation.

Mr M'CLELLAND, T C, proposed a resolution approving of the meeting held in Portadown, and naming a committee to act in conjunction with the Central Committee. He referred to the monopoly which the Railway Company would obtain if the Ulster Canal—the only check to the monopoly—were done away with, and said it was to the interest of every district to oppose the pro-



position of the Board of Works as powerfully as possible.

Mr S DAVIDSON seconded the resolution which was passed.

The following Resolutions were also unanimously adopted :—

“ That the Members of Parliament for the Borough and County be requested to give their active support to the movement, having for its object the preservation of the Ulster Canal for public use.”

“ That the Armagh Freight and Traffic Committee be requested to cooperate with the Portadown Canal Committee in all steps deemed necessary, to give effect to the foregoing resolutions.”

Also, a vote of thanks to Mr Porter, Lisbellaw, and the chairman of the evening.

The proceedings then terminated.

## MEETING AT CALEDON.

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A Meeting of the Merchants, Traders and Farmers of this district was held in the Market-House, Caledon, on Wednesday, 28th Feb., 1883. Mr Charles Edward Wilson took the chair, and there were present, amongst others, Messrs. John Charles Smith, proprietor Caledon Woollen Mills; W. Naye, hotel proprietor and general merchant; Joseph Wright, Joseph M'Veagh, W. Wigglesworth, (Wigglesworth & Co.); Charles Mercer, H. Lavery, J. Lavery, &c.

Mr REA, Secretary to the Lagan Navigation Company, who was in attendance as a deputation from the Central Committee, having been called on, said that after an expenditure of £294,000 and £1,200 a year for maintenance this Canal is practically useless. The Lagan, the Newry and the Coalisland Canals were doing a large trade, and the question was very naturally asked why the Ulster Canal was not equally successful. If the Canal is of no use, then the proper course would be to close it, but if it can be of service to the country no time should be lost in making it available for traffic. The Royal Commissioners recently appointed, and which sat in Dublin, to inquire into this Canal question, had before them witnesses from the different towns along the Canal, and every one of these witnesses spoke in favour of having the Canal put right; and showed that if it were put in order in would greatly benefit the country, and would be a paying concern. Notwithstanding this evidence the Commission reported directly opposite—that the Canal was of no use, that the Navigation was useless, and that there was no return for the money expended on it. Now as regards the expenditure, a sum of £22,000 was expended previous to the year 1873 on what was supposed to effect an improvement in the navigation, but the Engineer of the Board of Works reported in the very next year (1874) the Canal to be in a leaky state, and that three and three-quarter millions of cubic feet of water was running out of it in one week. The great defect in the Canal was its insufficient draft of water, and the want of a regular supply all the year round. The expenditure of £10,000 by the Government would not only give a five feet draft for lighters, but would also

relieve the country of an annual expenditure of £1,200.

MR NAYE said he knew well that the feeling of the district was strongly opposed to the proposal of the Board of Works. The Ulster Canal was the only means in a large portion of the country of keeping the Great Northern Railway in check, and if it were dismantled and closed the railway people would charge exorbitant prices as they had done some time previously. He had great pleasure in moving the adoption of the resolutions passed by the first meeting in Portadown, and promised to cordially support the movement.

MR JOHN C SMITH said he knew that the feeling of the people of this district was that it would be a gross injustice towards the commercial and agricultural people of that part of the country to close the Canal. It was a means of transit for coals and general goods such as could be carried over it with great economy and sufficient despatch, and it was highly desirable that not only should it be preserved but it should be placed in the order in which it was taken by the Government, and then handed to the control of a carrying company who would understand how to work it, and who would work it for the benefit of the people. He concluded by seconding the resolutions.

MR JOSEPH WRIGHT said he represented the farmers of the district, who had a large interest at stake in the maintenance of the Ulster Canal, and he desired to protest strongly against the proposal to sell the Canal and thereby render it valueless in the future.

MR WIGGLESWORTH said the people should call upon the various members of Parliament and their representatives at public boards to use their influence in frustrating the proposal of the Board of Works, which would be most damaging to the interests of the people. He moved a resolution (which was seconded and adopted) embodying his suggestion, and copies were directed to be forwarded to the members for the county and the grand juries of this and the adjoining counties.

A committee was then formed to co-operate with the Central Committee at Portadown, and after a vote of thanks to the chairman had been adopted the proceedings concluded.

## MEETING AT MIDDLETON.

A meeting of the inhabitants of Middleton and the surrounding district was held on the 28th February in the Market House in that town. Mr John Barker was called to the chair. A deputation from the Central Committee was in attendance.

ARTHUR BOND, Esq, J P, rose and said there ought to be a strong protest against the closing of the Ulster Canal. His own opinion was that if it were properly worked and properly kept the Canal would be of incalculable benefit to the people of the country.

Mr BARKER agreed with the previous speaker, and added that if the Canal was dismantled they might expect to hear of higher freights on the Great Northern Line. He believed the proposition to be placed before the Government to restore the canal to its original state of efficiency and then placed in the hands of a carrying company was a most advantageous one for all concerned and it should have his cordial support.

Rev Mr O'LEARY, P P, rose and moved the adoption of a series of resolutions :

I.—“ Protesting against the closing of the Canal because a certain expenditure was necessary in order to make it available for traffic.

II.—“ Calling upon the Government to put the Canal in proper working order, and afterwards lease it to a company which could levy tolls for carrying, and also pay a fair proportion of the profits by way of interest on the Government outlay.”

III.—“ The desirability of placing the Canal, in proper working order, in the hands of a carrying company.”

IV.—“ The appointment of a committee to operate with the executive committee appointed at Portadown.”

He (Rev Mr O'Leary) said he was in hearty sympathy with the movement which would, he had no doubt, result in beneficial measures for the country people. As parish priest for thirty years he could say that the closing of the Canal would be of serious injury to the commercial and farming classes. Indeed the general community would suffer more or less if the Board of Works carried out their proposal. If the Government put the Canal in proper working order and followed out the suggestions in the resolutions they would be conferring a lasting benefit on an industrious and

peaceful part of the population.

Mr BOND, J P, seconded the resolutions.

Passed unanimously.

Rev Mr NUGENT, P P, proposed a resolution requesting the Grand Juries and members of Parliament to co-operate with the people in keeping the Canal open.

Mr PORTER seconded the resolution which was adopted.

Other speakers followed and expressed themselves strongly opposed to the proposition of the Board of Works.

The meeting shortly afterwards adjourned.

## MEETING AT MONAGHAN.

A public meeting was held in the Town Hall, Monaghan on Wednesday evening to support the action of the meeting held in Portadown on the 12th February with reference to the proposition to close the Ulster Canal. Present Messrs John B Ross, Chairman of the Town Commissioners, presiding; E F Donnelly, T C; John Treanor, T C; F M'Cleary, T C; Arthur Biennan, T C; P Rafferty; P Gormley, T C; Hugh Martin, T C; Mr M'Nally, T C, Messrs W Condell, W Henry, G Blackburne, T Keown and others.

The Chairman having explained the object of the meeting, and described the proceedings at Portadown, called upon the deputation from the Central Committee to state their views.

Mr JACOB ORR then read the resolutions passed at the initiatory meeting in Portadown, and proceeded to explain what the people wanted, if they might judge from the very unmistakeable expressions of opinion that had already gone forth. It was desired to see the canal floating lighters of from 65 to 70 tons burthen, and not those of 35 or 40 tons, the limit of its navigable capacity at present. In fact he believed with even that tonnage lighters could not approach Monaghan of late years. The present movement was originated simply for the benefit of the people along the banks of the Canal, and if the Government advanced £10,000 to put the waterway in order they would be saving the country £800 a year.

Mr RAFFERTY said it gave him much pleasure to move the adoption of the resolutions read by Mr Orr. Twenty years ago he remembered the canal was doing a good business and giving plenty of employment to a number of men and horses. It was then in the hands of the Dundalk Steampacket Company who were succeeded by Mr Dargan in working the Canal. The railway was not then opened, and he believed that a company such as that suggested in the resolutions—a company formed of men along the banks of the canal, would be very successful. Whether the Canal was in working order, was not for him to say—he knew nothing of navigation—but it did not seem unreasonable to ask Government

to put it in the same state of repair as that in which they had received it. He hoped that in the prosperous Province of Ulster a canal would not be closed up. (Hear, hear.)

Mr CONDELL rose to second the adoption of the resolutions. He concurred with what had been said by the last speaker. He would be sorry to condemn the railway systems of Ireland, but he was prepared to say there was a great deal of merchandise carried to Monaghan by the railway which he believed might be brought cheaper by the Canal if it was in the hands of a carrying company. Timber, he thought, should be conveyed by the canal to Monaghan. The railway waggons were only about fifteen feet long, and if a merchant wished to bring thirty-foot planks to Monaghan by rail he had to engage a couple of waggons for the purpose. This, of course, increased the price of timber in Monaghan. Coal was becoming a very important factor in the industry of the country, and no doubt much of it would be conveyed by the Canal if the present agitation was successful. He had no hesitation in saying that he believed the traders of Monaghan would be much benefitted by the formation of the contemplated company. It appeared inconsistent for a Government professing to have the interest of Ireland at heart to contemplate closing a canal in Ulster at a time when they were having one opened from Liverpool to Manchester (hear, hear).

Mr GEORGE BLACKBURNE said the subject under discussion had the hearty support of the traders of Monaghan. They all knew how they had been treated by the railway company. Monaghan would speak out with unanimity on the question of the Government putting the Canal into repair.

Mr HENRY desired to express his approbation of the adoption of the resolutions. He felt sure the people of Monaghan would unanimously agree with them. He believed the successful working of the Canal would be advantageous to the railway company and the public generally; competition, instead of injuring trade, was beneficial to it. The project had his warmest support.

Mr T. KEOWN said the Government should leave the Canal in the condition in which they had got it. His friends had been

very mealy-mouthed in their remarks respecting the Railway Company.

The adoption of the resolutions was then passed by acclamation.

Mr TRENOR moved—"That a committee be formed to ask the Members of Parliament of the county and the Grand Jury to give their active support to the movement concerning the Canal, and to co-operate with the Central Committee at Portadown."

Mr DONNELLY seconded the resolution. No town he believed felt the want of the Canal more than Monaghan did, and the movement would certainly have his very best support.

A cordial vote of thanks passed to the Chairman terminated the meeting.



## MEETING AT BELTURBET.

A representative meeting was held in Belturbet on Thursday, 1st March to protest against the closing of the Ulster Canal, and to co-operate with the Committees already formed to secure its maintenance. Major Saunderson, J.P., D.L., Castle Saunderson, was called to the chair. Representatives from the Town Commissioners, the Poor Law Board, and the merchants and traders of the town and district were also present. A deputation attended from the Executive Committee.

The members of the deputation having stated the object of the present movement, and given a summarised statement of what had already taken place in the several towns in which meetings were held,

Mr THOMAS KNIPE, Chairman of the Town Commissioners, moved the adoption of the resolutions *in globo* passed at Portadown on the 12th February. On the part of the body over which he presided he entered a protest against the closing of the canal, and said he knew, from the feelings of the people, that there would heartily agree with the terms of the resolutions.

Mr R. WALKER seconded the resolutions, and said that Belturbet was as deeply interested in this question as any town adjacent to the Canal. It would be a shameful thing if the Government, after spending £300,000, should now render useless the important waterway, which, if properly worked, would tend so materially to a development of the resources of the country. The management of the canal by a carrying company would be about the best means of contributing to its success and the prosperity of the district.

The resolutions were unanimously adopted.

Mr BOLAND, T.C, proposed a resolution emphatically protesting against the action of the Board of Works in depriving one hundred miles of country of a means for local traffic and cheap communication with Belfast. He knew the country for one hundred miles himself, and he could say it was in a bad state as far as the carriage of heavy goods was concerned. If the Board of Works persisted in their action the development of the resources of the

country would be greatly retarded, while on the other hand the outlay of the comparatively small sum of £10,000 to put the Canal into serviceable order would confer a lasting benefit on a people anxious to prosper if they got a fair chance of doing so. The matter was of deep interest to the farmers. Facilities for outward traffic would enable them to send their produce to the best markets and get good prices for it. This was particularly applicable in cases where farm produce was being sent to Scotland and the North of England via Belfast, and good inland communication would enable farmers to avail themselves of short sea route. The Ulster Canal could be put into such order as would give a great impetus to traffic in heavy goods from Leitrim and Athlone; timber, slates, iron and coals could be carried with greater advantage by it than by railways, which were only suitable for lighter commodities and passengers. If the gentlemen in Dublin at the head of the Irish Government had any regard for the prosperity of a law-abiding and a loyal community, they would never adopt a course so detrimental to their interests. If they did so they would display a profound ignorance of the wants of the people. The least we might expect from the Government is that they would not act antagonistic to the unanimous feeling of a large section of the people, and that they would accede to the propositions embodied in the resolutions. (Applause).

MR MAHAFFY, T.C, seconded the resolutions. He said that the Board of Works, in proposing to sell the Canal piecemeal, were doing their best to get rid of a bad job. He protested strongly against the action of the Government in not giving the people who were willing to do so a chance of opening up the country. The country at present was in a state of transition, and what the people wanted was less agitation and more capital to enable them to develop the resources of the country. The Company which would be formed to work this canal would supply capital if they were met fairly; if not, no condemnation of those responsible for the welfare of the people would be too strong.

The resolutions were were passed *una voce*.

MR FITZPATRICK, T.C, proposed that the Members of Parliament

and Grand Jury of the county should be requested to give an expression of opinion on this subject and co-operate in the movement.

Mr M'GOVERN, in seconding the proposition, said that the opening up in proper order of the Ulster Canal would largely tend to the development of coal-mining in the North of Ireland.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

The CHAIRMAN then rose and said—Personally, I am extremely interested in the success of this enterprise, and I have heard with regret that the Board of Works have thought fit to propose the abandonment of the Canal. The Government of the day, and, indeed, all who desire to further the prosperity of Ireland, propose to do so by advancing every species of enterprise which might tend to the development of trade and commerce. I cannot conceive any worse means of achieving that result than, instead of making and assisting in making the canals and other national works, absolutely obliterating them from the surface of Ireland. The Ulster is a canal which if properly worked would be a means of developing all the riparian country. We know the Government will meet us with many objections, but I really think if the public were taught the magnitude of this navigation system and the immense benefit it might be to Ireland if maintained in a state of efficiency, we would have an overwhelming opinion in its favour. Here we have a canal system from sea to sea, and the Board of Works propose by one fell swoop to abolish this.

A VOICE—It is horrible.

CHAIRMAN—We have the Shannon from the Atlantic north and south two hundred miles; a canal, partially made, connecting the Shannon with Lough Erne, fifty miles in length, another which cuts Lough Erne on the one side and Belfast further north; and with a little expenditure of money the whole of this magnificent system may be fully utilised. It would make Belturbet a naval centre and keep it in communication by water with Belfast and Newry. I speak for the good of the whole country, because I should look upon it as a most signal disaster if the Government were so blind to the real requirements of the case as to close the Ulster Canal, and to do away with the whole expenditure of money which has already taken

place. The Government would spend £100,000 to keep the water out of an ironclad which would not float, but they will not spend a fraction of that sum to keep open this great Canal and keep a large number of the people perfectly contented. If a carrying company got the Canal in perfect working order it would prevent our being placed at the mercy of the Great Northern Railway. If we had the Canal to help us we would take care the freights on goods would not be raised 100 per cent. There are more arguments in favour of canal traffic now than in former times. Steam traction has been vastly improved, and increased consumption renders inland navigation indispensable in the distribution of heavy traffic through the country (hear, hear.) He concluded by intimating that at the Grand Jury and elsewhere he would advocate the movement, and expressed his willingness to attend with the deputation to meet the Chief Secretary.

After other speakers had addressed the meeting, a vote of thanks was accorded the Chairman, and the meeting terminated.

## MEETING AT CLONES.

On Thursday Evening, 1st of March, an influential meeting was held in the Town Hall, Clones, to protest against the closing of the Ulster Canal. Amongst those in attendance were—Messrs. George Knight, Chairman of the Town Commissioners, (presiding); J. W. Presho, T.C; W. Thompson, J.P; John Robinson, J.P; James Fleming, T.C; John M'Keany, P. T. Donnelly, John Cole, John Loble, Francis Graham, Marshall Fitzgerald, John Noble, James Edward Keenan, Wm. Cassidy, James Ganley, James Armstrong, John Boyle, Benjamin Hall, Daniel Masterson, James Galway, James Gough, T.C; &c.

The CHAIRMAN said they were met to co-operate in the movement which was originated with the principal traders and merchants in the North of Ireland, all of whom were deeply and intimately concerned in the action taken by the Board of Works in proposing to close the Ulster Canal. He referred at length to the excessive rates being charged on heavy goods by the Railway Company, which, he said, had hurt trade in Clones by the manner in which freights had been raised. The canal was opened many years, but had been little used. Many things required to be done before it would or could be fully used. A greater depth of water was required, in the first instance, for heavy lighters. The water supply for the top levels was not sufficient. What was wanted from the meeting was an expression of opinion as to whether they wanted the job perpetuated by the Board of Works or not; or whether they wanted the canal to be restored to its original state by the Government and given over to a responsible company who would keep it open for traffic and supply lighters and all the other necessaries for that purpose. If the canal were opened in that way the freights on heavy goods would be 20 or 30 per cent less than at present, and part of that saving would go into the pockets of the traders and part to the consumers. If the canal were closed it would be a tax to that amount on themselves and their children, and it would go into the coffers of the great Northern Railway Company. Being able to make such a strong case, and having to back it up a com-

pany that would have the confidence of the Government, he failed to see why there should be any hesitation on the part of the Government to put the canal in proper repair and enable it to be kept open. He saw that £2,000 was now set aside in the civil estimates for the maintenance of the Ulster Canal. So that instead of £10,000 it would be practically only £8,000 the Government would be required to spend. Why not do in Ireland as in England, he asked. In the sister country canals and railways were running side by side and paying well. In this case there was not to be incurred the great primary expense of buying or constructing a canal, and he could not see why the interests of the country should be excluded to avoid the paltry outlay of a few thousand pounds. (Applause.)

Mr M'KEAN followed, and gave details as to the cost of the canal, its maintenance, and present condition, and laid before the meeting the propositions which emanated from the meeting at Portadown.

Mr JACOB ORR said they had been received with such a degree of enthusiasm at the several meetings already held, and the movement had been so warmly supported, that he could not see how the Government in the face of such a strong expression of public opinion could really dismantle the canal. In fact to do so would, he was convinced more than ever, be an outrage upon the feelings of the people of the province of Ulster. (Applause.) With reference to the company proposed to be formed as a carrying company, the names of those gentlemen who were connected with it were well known along the whole canal. They were men of business, shrewd, and thoroughly acquainted with what they proposed to undertake, and they were not the men to invest money without knowing what they were about, or with a prospect of losing it. He was sure, judging from the opinions already largely expressed, that if the Government acceded to the wishes of the people they would place this canal in the hands of a carrying company, and so serve the interests of the country at large.

Mr P. T. DONNELLY proposed the adoption of the Portadown resolutions, and quoted statistics to show the restrictive rates being

charged to traders by the Railway Company on heavy goods. He warmly protested against the closing of the canal.

Mr PRESHO, T.C, seconded the resolutions, and said he fully agreed with the previous speakers.

Mr FLEMING supported the resolutions, and also referred to the exorbitant freights of the Railway Company. The traders and farmers would have no chance of getting fair play once the canal was dismantled, a result which he hoped they would never see.

Mr CASSIDY said it was the present inefficient state of the canal which rendered it comparatively useless, and matters would never be any better unless they got the Government to hand over the canal in good working order to a company such as that which was suggested.

Mr GRAHAM and other speakers supported the resolutions, which were passed with acclamation.

A resolution was also adopted calling on the Grand Jury and the Northern Members of Parliament to co-operate with the people in their efforts to keep the canal open and in proper working order.

## MEETING AT BENBURB.

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A MEETING was held at Benburb on Saturday, the 3rd March, 1883, Rev. James MacMin, chairman. Also present—James Orr, J.P.; Henry M'Kean, Jacob Orr, John M'Kenzey, William M'Kenzey, Robert Holmes, W. J. E. Skelton, R. M'Kean, J.P.; W. W. Rolston, Thomas Shannon, &c, &c, &c.

The CHAIRMAN having stated the object of the meeting,

Mr HENRY M'KEAN proposed, and Mr JOHN M'KENZEY seconded, 'That the resolutions adopted by Portadown meeting, and now read, be adopted by this meeting.'

Proposed by Mr JAMES ORR, J.P, and seconded by Mr ROBERT HOLMES, "That a committee be appointed to act with Central Committee, and ask the Members of Parliament and Grand Jury of this county to give their support to the resolutions passed at this meeting."

Names of Committee :—Messrs. Henry M'Kean, Robert Holmes, John M'Kenzey, Wm. M'Kenzey, Thomas Shannon.



## MEETING AT MOY.

A Meeting was held at Moy on Friday, the 2nd March, 1883. Robt. Clarke, Esq, in the chair). There were also present—Messrs Averell Lloyd, J P, C B Phipson, J P; J C Adams, J P; James Orr, J P; Robert M'Keen, J P; Jacob Orr, Rev Canon Coyne, P P; Rev L O'Brien, P P; Rev L Hughes, C C; Rev W Rea, C Hughes, Joseph Patterson, Joseph Alderdice, James Beattie, Felix Fox, Richard Robinson, J Tohall, J M'Alden. R Patterson, Daniel Develin, B Robinson, Rev M Clements, &c. &c.

THE CHAIRMAN having explained the object for which the meeting was called, said that the large and representative attendance showed the importance with which this question was regarded in the neighbourhood. The feeling of the district he knew to be greatly in favour of keeping the Canal open in order to keep the railway companies in check and to enable the traders and farmers to have their goods carried at lower rates than those which they were at present obliged by them to pay.

The Deputation from the Central Committee having placed statistics before the meeting, and explained generally the conditions under which it was proposed to work the Canal after the Government put it in proper order,

Mr. PATTERSON proposed the adoption of the resolutions agreed to at the Portadown meeting. He said it was the unanimous desire of the public generally that the Canal should be kept open as it would be a great accommodation to the towns adjoining it if it were properly worked by a Carrying Company such as that referred to in the resolutions. The closing of the Canal would be a calamity, and would throw a large district on the tender mercies of the Great Northern Railway Company. They had had experience of that Company and it was not very favourable, so that it was earnestly hoped the Canal would be kept open for traffic (applause).

Mr. TCHALL, in seconding the resolutions, said that if a similar canal existed in other countries the Government controlling it would attach more importance to it than the Board of Works did to the Ulster Canal. One thing was certain, they would not allow cabbages to grow in it. (Laughter and applause.) There was a great necessity for the Ulster Canal now, but there would be far greater necessity for it in years to come (hear, hear), and if the Government were to allow it to get into private hands in bits and scraps, it would be a disgrace and

a shame. Every one should do his best to prevent such a calamity, as the previous speaker described it. Moy was not so vitally interested as towns higher up, but the effect of the action of the Board of Works would be to assist or mar the prosperity of a vast area of country. Fifteen or sixteen years ago the Great Northern Railway carried sugar for 9s 2d, now they were charging 15s. A similar loss must be felt by large manufacturers who were constantly receiving heavy goods, and this detriment to trade should at once be removed.

Mr D. DEVELIN supported the resolutions. He was engaged in a trade which was supposed to develop the resources of the country, but owing to the restrictions put upon him in the carriage of his heavy traffic, he experienced great difficulty in his efforts. How, he asked, could there be competition with the North of England and Scotland, where the class of material he had to deal with was almost exclusively conveyed by water? It was an impossibility as had been proved in the past; when the Railway opened works were stopped by a system of traffic organised by English and Scotch capitalists. The consequence was that goods were carried from the North of England to that very town much cheaper than they were carried from Coalisland by the railway. (Shame). After quoting freights at various periods, he concluded by promising this movement his heartiest support.

Mr PHIPSON, J P, said that although this movement might appear to be antagonistic to the Railway Company, the result would be quite opposite. The Canal in good working order would benefit the Railway Company, because it would cause a greater in-flow of raw materials, and a consequent increase in the output from the manufacturing districts, the latter being the commodities most suitable for Railway traffic. It was important to every class that the Canal should not be closed, and he believed that when the Members of Parliament knew how strongly the feeling of the people were that it should be kept open they would heartily co-operate in the movement with that object in view. (Applause.)

The resolutions were adopted.

Mr ALDREDICE proposed a resolution requesting the co-operation of the Members of Parliament and the Grand Jurors in this matter.

The resolution having been seconded by Mr Lloyd, J P, was unanimously adopted.

Other speakers having addressed the meeting, a vote of thanks was accorded to the chairman, and the proceedings terminated.

J. B. ATKINSON, Secretary.

Portadown, 6th March, 1883.



Houses of the Oireachtas