

LONDON AND BIRMINGHAM RAILWAY

How the proposed railway will benefit industry. A review of the evidence in favour of the railway.

We believe we may congratulate our readers on this national undertaking being in a fair train for receiving the sanction of the legislature.

Impressed with a conviction of its great importance to the country, we have carefully watched the progress of the Bill, and are consequently enabled to say that the evidence adduced before the Committee of the House of Commons, has proved conclusively, that the proposed Railway between London and Birmingham will be alike beneficial to the subscribers and the public.

The chief opposition to the measure appears to have proceeded from the proprietors of a part of the land through which the Line passes, from a mistaken idea that it may be of prejudice to their estates.

We have been at some pains to extract from our notes of the Evidence such portion of it as bears particularly on this part of the question; and as it shows how unfounded are the apprehensions of the landowners, we consider that we are rendering an acceptable service to the public in laying our summary before them.

Mr. John Moss, a Magistrate for the county of Lancaster, residing at Liverpool is Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors to the *MANCHESTER* and *LIVERPOOL* Railway Company, and was Chairman of the Land Committee, in which capacity he became acquainted with the price paid for the land required for the construction of the Railway. Has ascertained the value of various portions of land on the line of the Railway, since it was established. The first land which the company bought after leaving Liverpool, belonged to Stephen White: - they purchased 14,000 yards of it at 5s 8d. per yard. All the land around it has since been sold at 22s. per yard. The price of land thereabouts generally has increased very much. The Company originally purchased from Hodgson and Cardwell Company 3 68 yards of land at 7s. per yard; and last year wishing to purchase 700 yards more of them, Hodgson and Cardwell refused to sell it under 10s 6d. per yard, although 10s. were offered. Land was also purchased of Mr. Rathbone at 14d. per yard, and the Company has purchased lately some more on the same spot at 18d. From the assignees of Mr. Crowther land was bought at 9d. per yard, and the Company having occasions to widen this road, have lately applied for some more, which the owner has refused to sell under double the original price. The Company bought from Mr. Bourne 15,000 yards of land; ten miles distant from Liverpool, at 7d. per yard, and Mr. Bourne has lately sold even more at 2s per yard, as there is convenience for coal there. 40,000 yards of land, thirteen miles from Liverpool, were purchased for the purpose of the Railway, from Mr. Bold Houghton, at 5d. per yard. Mr. Houghton's is a very fine estate, with an old family mansion on it.

He was at first a violent opponent of the measure, and petitioned the House against it. The Company made a curve in the line of road to avoid his house, but he has since allowed the road to be made straight for a very moderate compensation. The front land to the railway is of much greater value than the back land; all persons upon the line, stipulated that no more should be taken than was absolutely wanted for the road. The Company required some land from Mr. Leycester, of Toft, when the road was straightened near Mr Houghton's property; not going through so much of Mr. Leycester's property as they had expected, he complained, and they have arranged for him to have a little bit of land with a frontage to the railway again. The Bill was originally opposed by Mr. Heywood, of Manchester, *but he has since complained to the witness of the loss he has sustained in consequence of the Railway not going through his park.*

The witness only recently came up from Lancashire, and travelled in his own carriage twenty miles on the Railway, and the rest with post horses; thus increasing the length of his journey eight or nine miles; but saving £1 in money, and half an hour in time. Has frequently travelled after dark on the Railway with a locomotive engine. *Attributes the increase in value of land in the several instances first named entirely to the operation of the Railway.*

Mr. Hardman Earle, a Director of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway Company. - The land on the line of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway has considerably increased in value, where there is anything like a station. Sees advertisements occasionally for the sale of land, in which it is stated as a recommendation, that this Railway passes near it. Has himself a reversionary interest in some property on the side of it. The name of the house is Spikelands, and it stands about five or six hundred paces from the Railway; he is a great deal there himself, and his mother lives there, but they have never found any inconvenience from the Railway. He apprehended a great deal before the Railway was established, and his mother in consequence petitioned against it. Was himself examined as a witness; is now satisfied from experience that no inconvenience arises from the passing of the engines; there is no smoke or annoyance from them. Has visited other houses on the line of the Railway, and is personally acquainted with many of the residents, but had never heard a complaint from any one of them. They can hear the engines; but it is not so annoying as a cart or carriage passing on a gravel or a paved road. The noise is peculiar, and the speed at which the engines travel, places it out of hearing in a very short time; the carriages are not heard at one hundred yards distance; this noise proceeds from the exhausting of the steam when it is injected into the chimney at each stroke of the piston. Knows several gentlemen living a short distance from Liverpool, who have the facility of going to and fro daily; and one about seven or eight miles from it on the line of the Railway, who come daily to his business in Liverpool. When the tunnel is completed, for which an Act has been obtained, he will be able to leave his own door and be at his business in twenty minutes time. The fare is a shilling each way, but without the accommodation of the Railway, he could not do it without great risk and expenses in horseflesh, perhaps £100 per year. Residences on the line of Railway are very convenient for persons in business either at Manchester or Liverpool: is himself in search of land on the side of the Railway, for the purpose of building a house; should not think of building any where else, having occasion to attend to business daily in Liverpool; should think that others also have the same desire.

The Company have made an arrangement with a dairy-man living at Newton, fifteen miles from Liverpool, near Mr. Leigh's colliery, to bring his milk to Liverpool by the Railway. They are to charge one shilling for the carriage of a can holding eight or ten gallons.

The house before-mentioned, at Spikelands, is rather a large house, with pleasure-grounds. His opposition to the Railway proceeded from a notion that it would prove an annoyance, instead of which it has proved an object of interest and amusement. Believes this has been the case with other houses on the line. The coaches on the Railway are much more commodious than the usual stage coaches and the travelling much more convenient. Gentlemen's carriages are frequently carried on trucks on the Railway. *The confidence of the Public in the Railway is so great, that but one stage coach is supported off the line, which subsists chiefly by parcels; certainly not by conveying the timid, who would prefer travelling by the Railway.* The Company rigidly adheres to the rule of burning coke. He never heard of complaints in consequence of coal being used since the Railway was established. There is a penalty of £5 for burning coal.

Mr. Thomas Lee, an Architect and Land-valuer, employed by Colonel Legh, of Newton, and several gentlemen of property in that neighbourhood. Knows Chat Moss particularly well. Is employed by Mr. Trafford: that gentleman's property on the side of Chat Moss has considerably increased in value in consequence of the Railway; some part of it has been sold for building at three times the sum that it would have fetched before the establishment of the Railway. Great part of Chat Moss is now cultivated; a much smaller portion was cultivated before the Railroad; the quantity brought into cultivation is increasing very much. Does not know what the land used to be let for. *Colonel Legh has disposed of a good deal of land near Newton for building, which he could not have done but for the Railway. A great quantity of this land has been let for villas.* There are about fifty acres sold for manufactures, iron-foundries, chemical works, glass works, and house building. A large hotel has also been erected there; there was none near the Railway before. Both Mr. Trafford's and Colonel Legh's property have been improved in an agricultural point of view; a new market having thus been open to them. They are fifteen or sixteen miles distant from either Manchester or Liverpool, which they allow themselves three quarters of any hour to travel over, but they may do it in half quarters of any hour to travel over, but they may do it in half an hour. Since the arrangements on the railway have been made more complete the farmers have been benefitted; Colonel Legh has let one farm at a higher rate in consequence. Witness has himself taken a farm for building purposes at nearly double the original rent. The farmers are benefitted by being able to send their butter and milk to Liverpool: before they could only dispose of it at Newton: milk is now sent regularly every morning to Liverpool by the Railway at an advance of 3d. per dozen quarts.