

ACT ONE

Scene 4 : A landowner opposes the proposed railway

CREED: Given the present condition of the labouring classes, all who are interested in the welfare and tranquility of the country cannot view with indifference the benefits of a work of which manual labour forms so very large a proportion of the cost. We believe, Gentlemen, that the moment is propitious to build a railway. Our Chief Engineer, Mr Robert Stephenson, will present the report of his preliminary survey.

STEPHENSON: Thank you Mr Creed. The surface of the country from London to Birmingham may be regarded as consisting of a series of basins separated from each other by considerable ridges of hills. Our object was to cross the basins at as high a level and the ridges of hills at as low a level as was consistent with the other considerations that governed us - namely directness and cheapness...