

ACT ONE

Scene 5 : The Railway Bill before the Lords

(ENTER LORD WHARNCLIFFE, MESSRS POLLOCK, MASON, HEMMERSLEY, WARNER, ALEXANDER, LT. GEN. SIR WILLOUGHBY GORDON, LORD BROWNLOW)

ALEXANDER: Mr Oliver Mason. You are a merchant.

MASON: I have been a merchant in Birmingham for 23 years.

ALEXANDER: Do you consider the canal communication sufficient to the execution of your orders?

MASON: There is great inconvenience from stoppages. In the bad winter of three years ago I had some goods frozen in the canal from December 24th until February 20th. Beside the hazard of frost and ice, the canal has frequently to be cleaned which also causes delays.

ALEXANDER: Can you not make use of coaches?