

17/1

R E P O R T

FROM

SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

S H A N N O N N A V I G A T I O N :

WITH THE

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE,

AND

A N A P P E N D I X .

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
29 July 1834.

Jovis, 19^o die Junii, 1834.

Ordered, THAT a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the present State of the Navigation of the River *Shannon* and its Tributaries, and the best means of improving the same:

And the Committee is appointed, of—

Mr. James Talbot.	Mr. Lennard.
Mr. Littleton.	Mr. Chapman.
Lord Viscount Duncannon.	Mr. Hallyburton.
Sir Henry Parnell.	Colonel Torrens.
Mr. Secretary Rice.	Sir Richard Nagle.
The Earl of Kerry.	O'Connor Don.
Lord Viscount Oxmantown.	Mr. French.
Lord Viscount Clements.	Mr. Lefroy.
Mr. Sidney Herbert.	Mr. Jephson.
Mr. William Roche.	Mr. Walker.
Mr. David Roche.	Mr. O'Brien.
Mr. Sheil.	Colonel Perceval.
Mr. O'Callaghan.	Colonel Conolly.
Lord Viscount Sandon.	Lord Waterpark.
Mr. Thomas Martin.	Mr. Clive.
Mr. Lynch.	Sir Ronald Ferguson.
Mr. James Loch.	Mr. Potter.
Mr. Nicholas Fitzsimon.	Mr. Guest.
Mr. Maurice O'Connell.	Mr. Wason.
Lord Viscount Ebrington.	

Ordered, THAT the Committee have power to send for Persons, Papers and Records.

Ordered, THAT Five be the Quorum of the Committee.

Ordered, THAT the Reports relative to the River *Shannon* Navigation be referred to the Committee.

Sabbati, 21^o die Junii, 1834.

Ordered, THAT Lord Viscount Forbes and Sir Charles Lemon be added to the Committee.

Veneris, 4^o die Julii 1834.

Ordered, THAT Colonel O'Grady, Mr. Thomas Gladstone and Mr. Francis M'Namara be added to the Committee.

Martis, 29^o die Julii 1834.

Ordered, THAT the Committee have power to report the Minutes of the Evidence taken before them.

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R E P O R T.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE appointed to inquire into the present State of the NAVIGATION of the RIVER SHANNON and its Tributaries, and the best means of improving the same, and to whom the Reports relative to the RIVER SHANNON NAVIGATION, and the Petitions of Stone-cutters of *Limerick*, and of Fishermen of *Limerick*, were severally referred; and who were empowered to report the MINUTES of the EVIDENCE taken before them to The House:—HAVE, pursuant to the Order of The House, examined the matters to them referred, and agreed to the following REPORT.

YOUR Committee think it expedient, before they proceed to detail the measures which they venture to propose for the improvement of the Shannon, to lay before the House some account of the present state of that River, and of the different bodies to whose control it is subject. The River Shannon (which takes its rise in Lough Allen, 15 miles from Sligo, and falls into the Sea near Kerry Head) during its course of 217 miles presents to the Country invaluable means of improved communications, whether the internal intercourse of the 10 Counties whose shores it washes is alone considered, or whether the outlets to Foreign Trade on the one side by Limerick, and on the other side by the Canals to Dublin, be also taken into account.

So far back as the year 1794, the Grand Juries of the Counties of Roscommon, Leitrim, Mayo, Clare, Galway, Limerick, King's County and Tipperary, resolved, "That the completing the Navigation of the River Shannon and the great Rivers adjoining thereto, from Lough Allen to Limerick, will tend effectually to improve and open the Foreign Markets to the produce of more than 2,000,000 Acres of Land in the centre of the Kingdom; and that the execution of this great Navigation will effectually advance the Commerce, Manufactures, Agriculture and Population of this Kingdom, and the consequent strength of the Empire at large."

Your Committee deeply regret that the measures which have been taken since the above date, and partly, perhaps, owing to the above Resolution for the improvement of the Shannon, have not produced a better result, which is so far from being the case, that in 1832, Mr. Rhodes reports, "That the grand designs of Nature have been, in a great measure, frustrated; and the River may not unaptly be compared to a sealed book."

In 1831, the attention of the Irish Government having been again directed to the subject, a Commission was issued, composed of Colonel Burgoyne, (Chairman of the Irish Board of Works,) Mr. Rhodes and Captain Mudge.

The results of that Commission, as it appears to your Committee, have been the establishment of the following facts: That great detriment has

arisen to the Navigation from the Land-floods so prevalent upon the River, and over which there is, at present, no machinery for exercising any control: That throughout the whole course of the River, the want of proper Buoys and Beacons is so great as always to delay and frequently to endanger the passage of Vessels; and that in many parts the depth of water is so insufficient, that even the Canal-boats can only pass when half laden; while along the whole line of River Coast, the deficiency of Piers and Landing-places, and of Roads connecting them with the adjoining Districts, is such as greatly to cripple Trade, and to retard the general prosperity of the Country.

Before proceeding further, Your Committee think it necessary, as explanatory of the subject, to call your attention to the form which Trade is at present assuming upon the Shannon, and to the great alteration which has been effected by the application of Steam power to the purposes of traffic on this River. The difficulties which beset the sailing vessel are well explained by Mr. Rhodes. "From the peculiar form, devious course, and nature of the great line of the Shannon Navigation, its Lakes and Broad Waters, little headway can be gained by sailing, except with a fair wind, and when the course is nearly direct; and many of the parts being deep towards the sides, and others of a shallow nature, covered with reeds, rushes and grass, to such a great extent that any ordinary length of towing-line for tracking the boats would be found insufficient; therefore towing, in a great many parts, particularly in time of floods, is impracticable; recourse must be had then to long sweeps for rowing, pushing along with set poles, or towing with a small boat ahead, and as these several methods are very slow and tardy even in calm weather, but with adverse winds, and prevailing as they do from the west a great portion of the year, detains vessels bound from the Upper Shannon to Dublin and Limerick many weeks on their voyage, which makes it expensive, and in some cases (from the nature of the cargo) this detention proves a loss both to the merchant and owner of the vessel." This state of things has undergone a complete change, owing to the great certainty and security resulting from the employment of steamers as tug-boats. At present, a large steam-vessel starting daily from Killaloe for Portumna, tows across Lough Derg all the boats which have arrived from Limerick at the former place. At Portumna a smaller steamer is substituted for the larger, and conveys the convoy as far as Shannon Harbour, the place of junction of the Shannon and the Grand Canal, whence the boats either proceed by canal to Dublin, or if bound up the Shannon, are taken in tow by a third steamer to Athlone.

Your Committee are of opinion, that great evil has arisen from the distinct Jurisdictions under which different portions of the River have been placed, and also from the defective responsibility to which the parties have been subject in whom the care of the Navigation has been vested.

Your Committee proceed to call your attention to these different Jurisdictions.

It appears to your Committee, that the jurisdiction over the River Shannon below Limerick is claimed by the Corporation of that City, whose officer, the Water-bailiff, levies certain Tolls on the Trade of the River, which in 1830 amounted to 1,150*l.*, and of which the sum of 75*l.* only was then expended upon erecting a few Buoys and Beacons, in number not at all sufficient.

Your Committee recommend, that the powers of the Corporation should be accurately determined, and that as far as possible the funds levied on the Trade of the River should be applied to its improvement.

Your

Your Committee approve most cordially of the improvements suggested in the valuable Report of Captain Mudge on this part of the River, and earnestly hope that they may be shortly executed.

It appears to Your Committee, that the property in the River, from Limerick to Killaloe, was vested, by Act of Parliament (1829), in the Limerick Navigation Company, on their undertaking to expend 3,000*l.* in rebuilding Ball's-bridge at Limerick, which previously had interrupted the communication from the Canal to the tidewaters of the River, and that they should keep the several Works in repair, being allowed to divide to an amount not exceeding ten per cent. upon their capital of 3,000*l.*, the remainder of the Tolls to be expended in the improvements of the Navigation. Considerable alterations having been made upon this Line since Mr. Rhodes's Report, and more being, it is understood, in contemplation, Your Committee content themselves with expressing an opinion, that it is desirable a stronger power than at present exists should be given to some supervising authority, in order to ensure, with greater certainty, the expenditure of the Tolls, which the Company is bound to lay out upon the Navigation, in the most beneficial improvements.

Burgoyne's Rep.

It appears to Your Committee, that the River from Killaloe to Portumna, (Lough Derg,) is in the hands of Government, and is greatly in need of being properly provided with Landing-places, Piers and Beacons.

It appears to Your Committee, that the property in the River, from Portumna to Athlone, from Lough Derg to Lough Rhea, was transferred from the Directors-General of Inland Navigation in 1806, (under powers given them by 40 Geo. 3,) with an advance of 54,634*l.* 18*s.* 4*d.*, to the Grand Canal Company, by a special deed of agreement, under which the Company were bound to keep the Navigation in a proper state of efficiency, and at all seasons to maintain the general depth of water at six feet six inches in the bed of the River, and at six feet over the sills of the Locks.

It appears to Your Committee, after examining Mr. Rhodes's Report and Evidence confirmatory thereof, that these conditions have not been complied with. According to the table of soundings given by Mr. Rhodes, the required depth of water has neither been maintained in the Canals, on the Lock-sills, or in the bed of the River. In many places where six feet six inches was required, there was only four feet one inch, and the Steam-boats drawing three feet six inches are constantly aground.

It also appears, that so far from 110 Beacons having been placed by the Company, according to agreement, there were at the time of the Report only 13.

Owing to these causes, Your Committee regret to state, that serious difficulties have been thrown in the way of the Traders, and that the Canal-boats have been frequently compelled either to lighten their cargoes at particular places, or to proceed half laden, to the great inconvenience, not only of the Owners, but of the Public, on account of the necessary increase of the price of freight. Under these circumstances, Your Committee beg leave to call the attention of the House to the conduct of the Grand Canal Company, and to recommend that, if no severer measures are adopted, the Company should be compelled to put their Works into the state required of them by the agreement, or, at least, into such a state of efficiency as shall appear to the Government to meet the wants of the Shannon Trade. Your Committee consider that it is the duty of the Board of Works, as the successors of the Directors-General of Inland Navigation, to urge upon the Grand Canal Company the necessi-

their maintaining the Navigation of the part of the Shannon in their hands in a proper state: they also recommend, if the legal proceedings which it is at present competent for the Board to institute, should not prove sufficient, the Board should apply to Parliament for further powers to control the Company.

It appears that from Athlone to the source of the River in Lough Allen, the Navigation is in the hands of Government, who have not even taken the pains to complete the Works they had themselves begun.

It is however fair to state, that according to Mr. Rhodes's opinion, the Works were on this part originally constructed on such erroneous principles, that it would require a change of system to put the Navigation into a satisfactory state.

Your Committee think they are entitled to recommend the House to call upon the Government to alter and improve this part of the River, as its present inefficient state must be owing either to the supineness of Government in not providing for repairs, or to an original defect in the contract, for which the Officers of Government are responsible.

Your Committee having considered various Plans and Estimates, beg leave to recommend to the favourable consideration of the House, those contained in the Report of Mr. Rhodes; and while they withhold the expression of an opinion, which they consider themselves hardly qualified to give, of the superiority of his plan over any other scheme, they are prepared to say, that any really beneficial improvement of the Shannon must be grounded upon his able and comprehensive Reports upon the present state of the River, and description of the causes which have hitherto impeded the Navigation.

Your Committee earnestly recommend, that the first step taken towards the improvement of the Shannon, should be the placing a supervising control over the whole River, or rather over all the Bodies under whose immediate jurisdiction the River at present is, in the hands of a Board responsible to the Government and to the Country, and that such Board should have a power to order to be executed such Works as they shall think necessary upon the River, and an authority (where these orders are not complied with) to enter upon the property of the recusant party, and after the execution of the Work, to charge the amount to, and to recover it from, such party.

Your Committee suggest, that additional facilities may advantageously be given by law, to promote the erection of Piers, and the formation of roads to the Landing-places on the banks of Rivers.

The question of Compensation to the owners of property which may be damaged or deteriorated by the improvement of the River, has been brought under the consideration of Your Committee.

It appears to Your Committee to be very doubtful whether the owners of such Eelweirs as are encroachments on the Royalties of the Crown, are entitled to any consideration upon the part of the Public, but whatever Compensation may be hereafter determined upon as required by justice in any case, Your Committee express a strong opinion that such Compensation should be adjudicated by a Commission to be specially appointed for the purpose.

Your Committee are aware, that in calling the attention of the House to the manner in which they recommend the raising of the Funds which will be required for the improvement of the Shannon, they are about to touch on a very delicate subject.

It has been suggested to Your Committee, that it would be advisable to raise a portion of the Sum required upon the District of the Shannon, and to take the remainder from the general Revenue of the Country.

It appearing, however, that a large portion of the River is in the hands of Government, and in a very unsatisfactory condition, Your Committee recommend, that the Government should be called upon to put this part into an efficient state for the purposes of Trade, and to fulfil any obligations to which they may appear to be equitably subject with regard to it.

If the Government shall be disposed to act upon the preceding suggestion, Your Committee are prepared to advise, that the Money required for the Works upon the rest of the River should be in the first instance advanced from the Public purse, and repaid in instalments, without interest, by the district most immediately interested in the improvement of the whole River.

Your Committee are sensible that in asking for assistance from the Public (though only to the extent of an advance eventually repayable) upon account of what may at first sight appear to be a mere local improvement, they are bound to prove that great and important benefits will certainly accrue to the British Public from the expenditure they recommend.

Your Committee refer to the testimony of Mr. C. Williams given before the Committee on the Irish Poor 1830, to show how impossible it is that Irish improvement should not react to English industry.

“Q. 6753. I think the improvement and extension of the inland navigation of Ireland is as important to the interests of England as it is to those of Ireland. England is the manufactory for Ireland; Ireland the granary for England. At present the British manufacturers have no means of reaching the interior of Ireland by navigation in return for the produce which would be sent to England if the means of internal communication in Ireland were equal to what they are in England. I am satisfied the manufactures of England, could they be transported to the interior of Ireland, would find a sale to an extent of which we have but little conception, and in parts where they are now almost ignorant of the existence or use of what they would soon become consumers of to a great extent. The inland navigation of Ireland being extended would enable England to draw her supplies of corn from countries where both the land and the labourers are now comparatively idle; and in return for the produce of the same to throw into the interior her woollen and cotton manufactory, her glass, earthenware, hardware, tea, refined sugars, hats and hosiery, leather, salt, coals, &c.”

If such are the benefits which must accrue to Great Britain from the general improvement of the Inland Navigation of Ireland, Your Committee submit that they may be expected to arise with much more certainty and rapidity when the great navigation of the Shannon is put into a perfectly efficient state, connected as it is by a double line of Canal with the Port of Dublin, and therefore with the Trade of Liverpool.

As a proof of the increasing importance of the Trade of the interior of Ireland, particularly when viewed in connexion with the price of Grain in the manufacturing districts of England, Your Committee refer to a Paper in the Appendix, by which it appears, that the quantity of Wheat brought from the interior to Dublin, by boats belonging to the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company, was, in the year ending 30th April 1834, 9,250 sacks; the number having been in 1833, 1,559; the number of sacks of Flour having also increased from 3,320 sacks, which it was in the year

ending 30th April 1833, to 13,213 in the year ending the 30th April 1834.

Considering the question however merely in a financial point of view, Your Committee are of opinion, that they have ample grounds for calling upon Parliament to assist in the great work of the improvement of the Shannon.

Your Committee refer to several most important facts contained in the able and comprehensive Report of the Committee which sat in 1830 to inquire into the state of the Poor of Ireland, by which it appears, that in several districts of Ireland where great Public Works have been carried on for the improvement of the internal communications of the country, the increase of the annual revenue has been equal to the whole of the expenditure. Your Committee have found so much valuable matter bearing upon the subject matter of their inquiries in the above-mentioned Report that they have judged it expedient to reprint the whole of that portion of it which relates to Public Works.

See Appendix.

Your Committee are also of opinion, that in any plan for putting the Shannon Navigation into a satisfactory state, due regard should be paid to the expediency of levying some part at least of the expense by Tolls upon the Trade which will immediately be benefited by the improvement.

Your Committee are encouraged to think that moderate Tolls can be borne when they perceive the great and satisfactory increase of commercial intercourse even in the present defective state of the Navigation, which is shown by the Returns in the Appendix from the Port of Lime-rick and the Middle Shannon.

Owing to the advanced period of the Session, and the anxiety of Your Committee to report before the close thereof, Your Committee has been precluded from affording the degree of attention to that part of the subject referred to them relating to the Tributaries of the Shannon, which they would otherwise have given; but they feel themselves called upon to state to the House their firm conviction of the importance of the whole subject being considered as a whole by whomsoever and whenever it may be practically taken up.

Your Committee also feel it their duty, before they conclude, to state, that they consider it most desirable, that in the future legislation which may be required to carry this Report into execution, provision should be made for relieving the occupying tenant from a certain proportion of the expense to be incurred.

Your Committee trust that the Irish Government will, without delay, take such steps as shall appear to them to be advisable, to facilitate the legislation necessary to carry this Report into execution, and that directions will immediately be given to the Board of Works to make inquiries, with a view to ascertain the most economical manner of effecting the required Improvements upon the Shannon.

29 July 1834.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

Veneris, 11^o die Julii, 1834.

THE EARL OF KERRY, IN THE CHAIR.

Colonel *John Fox Burgoyne*, called in ; and Examined.

1. YOU are Chairman of the Board of Works in Ireland?—I am.
2. Are you generally acquainted with the river Shannon, and the present state of it?—I have been up the Shannon in a boat from Limerick all the way to Lough Allen, and have had under consideration a great many reports upon the state of the river at different times.
3. Is the river Shannon navigable from its mouth to its source?—It is more or less navigable, but in a very imperfect state the greater part of it.
4. Do you consider that an outlay of money would be desirable to ameliorate the present state of the river Shannon?—I think any outlay of money on the Shannon offers prospects of greater advantages to the country than almost any other public work.
5. Do you consider that any and what great benefits would result to the counties bordering upon the Shannon, and to the country generally, by the improvement of the river?—I think very great benefits will be derived to the country generally, and naturally rather a larger proportion to the counties bordering the river, by the improvement of the Shannon ; but I do not think that the benefits would be exclusively confined by any means to the neighbourhood.
6. Do you consider that the towns of either Dublin or Liverpool would or not derive any benefit from such improvement?—I think both would, particularly Dublin.
7. A considerable benefit?—Yes, considerable ; and also Limerick.
8. Commencing at the mouth of the river Shannon, can you state to the Committee under whose charge that portion is that is below Limerick?—It is under nobody's charge.
9. The Corporation have a kind of official control over it by the charter?—I made particular inquiries into it at the time that Captain Mudge made his report, and he could not ascertain that anybody had any exclusive jurisdiction over it.
10. Practically speaking, is there any individual, or any body of persons, who see that it is kept in a proper state?—The Chamber of Commerce have voluntarily expended a small sum of money in buoys or beacons, which sum is totally inefficient ; it is quite paltry ; it may have been of some little service.
11. Do you consider it desirable that that portion of the river should be put under some sort of control?—I should think it most desirable.
12. What species of control?—There should be some local control connected with the harbour, the pilotage and the shipping interest.
13. Can you state to the Committee what sort of expense would be incurred by the required improvement between the town of Limerick and the sea?—Captain Mudge gave a detailed account of the obstructions that existed in the river, but he made no estimate ; but I can believe what Mr. Steele mentioned in a pamphlet, that any sum from 5*l.* to 20,000*l.* might be laid out and laid out usefully on that navigation.

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14. Are there any funds applicable to the improvement of the river Shannon below Limerick?—None at all: by the new Bill for the Limerick Docks, the commissioners have the power to expend money in removing obstructions, but there is no obligation, nor are they likely to have the means.

15. To proceed to the Shannon above Limerick, taking the portion of it between Limerick and Killaloe, can you state to the Committee the state of the navigation?—From Limerick to Killaloe, it is in a tolerably efficient state.

16. In whose hands is it?—The Limerick Navigation Company.

17. Will you state to the Committee the terms upon which that Company received it?—They got possession of it by Act of Parliament about four years ago; the conditions were, that they should raise 3,000*l.* for the construction of a bridge in Limerick over the Abbey river, at the mouth of the navigation, which they have done; the tolls are given over to them, and they are allowed to pay a dividend of 10 per cent. upon that capital of 3,000*l.*, that would give them 300*l.* a year, and all the remaining tolls are to be expended in the improvement of the navigation.

18. Can you state to the Committee if there are any desirable improvements upon that portion, in reference to the navigation?—Many improvements might be made upon it, and which probably will be carried into execution by the tolls, which are likely to be ample, after paying 300*l.* a year, to which the Company are entitled. I think it would be very desirable that there should be some controlling power to see that the undertakings of the Company were complied with, and also to the management and to the proper outlay of the funds; now, for instance, a case might occur that there was a very great surplus, and instead of laying it out in the improvement of the navigation, they might have large establishments, which would be injurious to the public.

19. Ascending the Shannon, we come to Lough Derg. What is the present state of Lough Derg, and in whose hands is the navigation?—It is in the hands of Government; managed by the Board of Public Works, and is in a good state, requiring merely buoys and beacons to be maintained to point out the line of navigation.

20. Are any great works to be undertaken upon Lough Derg?—None, as public works; small quays, and harbours and roads are wanted very much.

21. Taking the Shannon north of Lough Derg, between Lough Derg and Lough Rhea, in whose hands is that navigation?—The Grand Canal Company.

22. What are the terms upon which they obtained it?—They obtained it by an agreement with the late Directors-General of Inland Navigation; the terms were, that they were to receive between 54,000*l.* and 55,000*l.*, and to place the navigation, and to maintain it, in a certain defined state that was marked out in the agreement, they receiving the tolls.

23. Are you generally acquainted with the state of that part of the river?—It is reported by Mr. Rhodes to be in a very imperfect state.

24. Which report you believe to be correct?—Yes, his report is very minute; but the Grand Canal Company dispute it, I understand.

25. Supposing Mr. Rhodes's report to be correct, do you or not consider that the Grand Canal Company have fulfilled their contract?—Certainly not, if Mr. Rhodes's report is correct.

26. Are you acquainted with any privileges possessed by the Grand Canal Company with respect to the river Shannon?—None, but regulating the tolls, that I am aware of.

27. If they have any other privileges, you are not aware of them?—No.

28. Are there any, and if you consider there are, what are the desirable improvements upon that portion of the Middle Shannon?—Many improvements might be made, even to a greater extent than what the Grand Canal Company are bound to make, but even to that extent would be very desirable, and in order to ensure it I think there should be a controlling power, with authority to make inspections occasionally, as well for the security of the public, as to prevent any unfounded reports against the Company.

29. The Committee understand you to say, that you think much greater works could be executed with great advantage to the public upon that portion of the Shannon, than the Grand Canal Company are compelled by their contract to execute, but even if the works were confined to those they are compelled to execute, you think the addition of a Board, to supervise their execution, would be a great advantage?—Yes, precisely.

30. In

30. In whose hands is the Upper Shannon above Lough Rhea?—In the hands of Government, managed by the Board of Public Works.

31. Are there any navigation works upon that portion of the Shannon?—A great many.

32. Who receive the tolls?—Government; but the tolls are very small, in consequence of the navigation being so imperfect.

33. What state are those works in?—They are generally in a very inefficient state and incomplete.

34. If the tolls are so small, how are those works supported, even in their present inefficient state?—By an annual vote of Parliament.

35. Do you think that the tolls could be very considerably augmented by putting the navigation into such a state as if they were in a private company's hands?—If it was once put in a good state, I can conceive that a private company would be glad to take it for the tolls, but they would not take it in its present state.

36. If the navigation had been begun by a private company, would it have answered to have left it in the state that the Government have at this moment left it in?—All their former expense would have been a dead loss.

37. Is there any traffic upon the Upper Shannon?—Very small.

38. Are those works already made calculated for the reception of the same class of vessels that are received below Lough Rhea?—No; they have not depth of water, except at very short seasons of the year.

39. Was there any time limited by the agreement you have mentioned for the completion of the works by the Grand Canal Company?—The time was regulated by the periods of payment.

40. Is the Grand Canal Company bound by that agreement to keep the works in repair?—They are.

41. Are you aware whether there is any penalty upon the non-performance of their agreement?—I believe not. With regard to the annual vote for the Upper Shannon, I ought to mention, that that has been very small of late years, under the contemplation of the probability of a better description of works being applied there, and that it would be needless to throw away money upon those bad works, that would be afterwards done away with.

42. Are the Committee to understand you to mean, that if the question of the Shannon is looked at as a whole, and any money is expended upon it as a whole, those works in the Upper Shannon are so bad you cannot repair them so as to fit them for the same class of vessels that are upon the Lower Shannon?—Many of them might be improved; but certainly they would require a great quantity of new work.

43. What do you consider the parts of the work in the Upper Shannon most unfinished? Are there not track-ways wanting?—There are impediments in the river where there are no works at all. The most necessary operation would be to apply some remedy to those shoals in the river.

44. In those parts where there are short canals by the side of the river to avoid impediments, have they not omitted to make track-ways by the side of the canal?—I apprehend there is a track-way wherever there is a side cut: it may be in a very imperfect state.

45. What portion of the Shannon can a boat of the ordinary size used on the Shannon ascend in summer?—Up to the head of Lough Rhea.

46. A boat of 50 tons would ascend to Lough Rhea in the summer?—No; I apprehend it would meet with obstructions in the Middle Shannon if fully loaded.

47. Do you mean to say steam-vessels?—Yes; steam-vessels and trading-vessels.

48. You stated that the Middle Shannon was made over in the year 1806 by the Directors of Inland Navigation to the Directors of the Grand Canal Company on certain conditions: could you state in a few words what those conditions were?—I have mentioned them.

49. In detail? You stated that a certain state of navigation was to be kept up; what was the precise depth of the water in the canals and in the locks that was to be preserved by the Grand Canal Company?—The width I do not immediately remember; but the main feature is, that there should be at all seasons six feet depth of water over the sills of the locks, and six feet six inches on all other parts of the navigation.

50. Are you aware when the Directors-General of Inland Navigation closed their

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their accounts with the Grand Canal Company respecting this assignment?—No, I am not aware; but I believe it was at the period that was anticipated.

51. You are not aware of any interference on the part either of the Directors of Inland Navigation or the present Board of Works with the Grand Canal as to those works?—None at all. There was to be a certain proof of the Grand Canal Company having completed their agreement in the first instance: that proof was the passage of a vessel of a certain draught of water from one end to the other of the canal, and that was done.

52. Was any period of the year specified?—Yes, I think there was; but I am not sure.

53. Do you know at what period it was done?—No, I do not; but the result appeared to be satisfactory, for they had a certificate that the proof was sufficient, and they obtained the remainder of the money; but there has been no investigation since to know whether it has been maintained.

54. Have you received many complaints of the state of the Middle Shannon?—Not officially; the fact is we have no authority.

55. What extent of the Shannon is at present used by boats for bringing down produce?—All the way from Lough Allen, by taking the most favourable state of the river; occasionally the river is in such a state that vessels of any size can get up, but that is only a very short time.

56. In ordinary summer seasons what portion of the river can be navigated?—It is with the greatest difficulty they can get up the Upper Shannon through the whole extent, even if not fully loaded.

57. To what point do the steam-vessels go from Killaloe or Limerick?—Up to Athlone; but different descriptions of vessels in different parts.

58. Is there any serious impediment to their going beyond Athlone to Lough Rhea?—I think there is a difficulty in getting into Lough Rhea through the canal of Athlone.

59. If, whatever the river is between Lough Rhea and Athlone, the canal were such as to admit a steam-vessel into Lough Rhea, is there any difficulty in using that entire piece of water by steam?—Not at all, and the impediment is not great. I have gone in there by steam-vessels two years ago.

60. Then as to so much of the impediment between Lough Rhea and Limerick the Shannon would be navigable for steam-vessels to the head of Lough Rhea?—Yes; and that impediment is a matter of no great importance.

61. What does it arise from?—From the sitting up of the canal; some of the banks have been allowed partially to slip; they are very high.

62. Do you not think it would be advisable, if even a moderate sum might be laid out, to keep up the Shannon above Lough Rhea?—It appears to me it would be attended with some useful effect; it would do good to a certain extent. If the whole estimate, for instance, were 50,000 £, one-half would make the navigation half the way up or more.

63. Supposing it to be practicable at present to obtain but a small sum, on what portion of the river do you think it advisable that sum should be laid out to produce the greatest advantage?—From Limerick to the head of Lough Rhea I look upon to be provided for by the existing agreements, and therefore any small sum to be laid out had better be on the Upper Shannon.

64. Do you consider likewise that Government are to a certain degree committed to improve the navigation of the Upper Shannon by reason of the navigation being in their hands?—They have hitherto considered it to be proper policy to improve it, and I do not see why they should not continue to do so; I do not see why they should stop now.

65. But this existing agreement you have alluded to, you do not consider, even if fulfilled, would place the river in a satisfactory situation?—By no means, not to the extent that the works of the Shannon require, and the interests of the country.

66. The answers you have given have all been in reference to the plan laid down by Mr. Rhodes, diminishing the number of locks and altering the system of navigation on the Upper Shannon; supposing the system at present adopted to be retained, and the same number of locks left in the same places, do you think that a smaller expenditure than that which Mr. Rhodes has described as necessary, supposing his plan to be adopted, would be sufficient to render the navigation of the Upper Shannon tolerably good, as much as is necessary according

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ording to the present state of the trade?—To put the present system of navigation in a better state, a very reduced expense would suffice.

67. Are you prepared to state to the Committee whether you would be disposed to recommend the adoption of the latter plan?—I should prefer the grand plan if we can get the means, but otherwise the other plan would be desirable.

68. What do you mean by the Upper Shannon?—From Lough Rhea to Lough Allen.

69. What do you call the Lower Shannon?—From Limerick to the sea, and from Limerick to Killaloe, I call the Limerick navigation, and the middle Shannon is between Lough Derg and Lough Rhea.

70. Putting all considerations of drainage entirely out of the question, and considering the simple question of the navigation, do you think that Mr. Rhodes's plan, this part of it being omitted that relates exclusively to the drainage, or any other plan that might be proposed upon a different basis, would be the best?—I think that the modified plan upon Mr. Rhodes's system would be the best; modified by taking out the consideration of drainage.

71. Did you include Lough Rhea in the Upper Shannon?—No; the lakes are entirely distinct; they require no works, and they are of considerable extent.

72. What sized vessel may proceed from Athlone to Lough Allen, provided the river was placed in such a condition as was recommended by Mr. Rhodes?—The full-sized vessels that navigate the rest of the river.

73. What size is that?—Fifty or sixty tons.

74. What sized vessels might ascend if a modified expenditure was adopted?—I think you might make it equal to the rest.

75. What sum of money do you think would be necessary, having looked over this report of Mr. Rhodes, to put the whole of the Upper Shannon into such a state that those boats could navigate?—I am not prepared to say: Mr. Rhodes's estimate amounted to 50,000 *l.* for putting it on the existing system; the estimate might be reduced considerably.

76. Are you aware of what sized vessels can at present ply between Lough Rhea and Lough Allen?—They have but one class of vessels, but they put half-loading when the season is unfavourable.

77. What class of vessels, for the period during the summer months, could navigate that part?—In the summer time there are not two feet water in the upper part over some of the shoals; over some of the shoals there are only 18 inches; but they are not in the habit of using a small class of vessels, they would rather take the same vessels and put a lighter load in them.

78. You stated just now you had much rather have the Shannon improved by the plan of Mr. Rhodes than by the present plan; do you think the difference of benefit would be equal to the difference of expense?—I think not, in the present state of the communication, but ultimately it might be desirable to go to the full extent; one great difference would be, that by this modified and cheaper system, you would render it applicable to steam-vessels, whereas the other would be more useful for sailing vessels as well as steam-vessels.

79. Can you state your opinion what the modified expense would amount to?—No.

80. Do you not consider it should be steam navigation on the Shannon?—Steam is a great advantage certainly, but if persons choose to employ the sailing vessels they ought to have an opportunity.

81. Are there not great difficulties in the way of their doing so?—Yes, and it is not so cheap.

82. In the consideration of any plan for the improvement of the Shannon, have you at all turned over in your mind the difficulty with which you would have to contend on the part of individuals having existing interests that they may think to be affected?—There are many obstructions in the Shannon very injurious to the navigation, caused by mill-dams and eel-weirs, and the proprietors of them would naturally make difficulties unless they were compensated for their interests.

83. Have you at all turned your attention to the question of compensation; if it was decided they ought to be compensated, how they ought to be compensated?—If it was done in the usual manner, at the public expense, I think the compensation would be a great deal more than it ought to be; and I have no

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doubt, since the question has been agitated, new weirs have been established, and fictitious values given to those in existence, to occasion an increase in the amount of compensation.

84. Several of those weirs are illegal, are they not?—I have no doubt they were in the origin, but they have been so long held, that I apprehend it would make them property.

85. Are you aware that no length of possession can give them a legal title?—They have held them so long, that I apprehend it would make them property; having had it so long, you would have to prove that they had no title.

86. Could not the improvements be so conducted as to interfere but little with those weirs?—No; it is of very great importance the removal of those weirs; and I imagine a compensation, equitably adjusted, would not be very considerable.

87. Would you not, when it could possibly be done, rather avoid meddling with those weirs?—I should be sorry to meddle with any vested interest if you can avoid it.

88. Do you or not consider it advisable for some legislative measure to be introduced to prevent further encroachments on the Shannon?—I think most desirable; it is a measure very much wanted indeed.

89. Is there any salmon-weir above Limerick?—I do not know; I call them all eel-weirs; but I fancy all these fisheries are very inferior to what they used to be.

90. Considering the Shannon from Limerick to the source, do you think it desirable that it should be all under the control of one body?—I think it would be desirable, but it is not very much so.

91. Do you think it desirable that it should all be in the hands of Government?—I think it would be better; it would prevent partial interests interfering with the general public utility of different portions of the river.

92. Supposing by arrangement if it was all removed into the hands of Government, would it not probably be necessary to constitute the same body, or for the Government to avail themselves of the advice of any existing body, for the general supervision of the river, under its own inspection?—Certainly.

93. Do you think that the present Board of Works in Ireland is capable of having its powers enlarged, so as to give that supervision?—It does not require any enlarged powers.

94. Do you think it might be thrown upon the Board of Works without any difficulty or inconvenience?—Without any difficulty or inconvenience.

95. Is the machinery of the Board of Works sufficient for the purpose?—Not at present, but we could add to it easily; an order from Government to us to undertake anything of the kind is quite sufficient; we have no powers, as regards the funds, to undertake it.

96. You cannot apply any money now under your control to that purpose?—No, not a farthing.

97. The powers that the Board of Inland Navigation had, were transferred to you under that Act?—Yes.

98. Do you think those powers sufficient to enable you to carry into effect all the objects that Mr. Rhodes recommends?—I do not think we have power sufficient without an Act of the Legislature; we have not full powers to enter upon lands.

99. What additional powers would you consider necessary?—We should require the usual powers of entering and taking possession of lands and quarries; we have these powers as regards the Upper Shannon.

100. Under what Act?—I really cannot say; but under the old Inland Navigation Act.

101. Do you mean to say you could enter upon lands if you wanted them upon the Upper Shannon?—Yes.

102. With respect to the powers that the Grand Canal Company have got under the Acts, have they power to enter and take possession of lands?—I doubt it; the terms of the agreement did not require it: every thing they had to do was on property that was handed over to them.

103. If Mr. Rhodes's estimate of 50,000 *l.* can be considerably reduced, do you not think if a sum short of 50,000 *l.* were expended on the Upper Shannon, that the entire river, from Lough Allen to the sea, would be in a condition to afford facilities for commercial intercourse?—Yes, certainly; no doubt of it.

104. Would

104. Would it in that case be navigable for vessels of 50 tons?—Yes.

105. At all times of the year?—Yes. I am assuming that the datum you go upon is, that you would make it so on the cheapest terms you could.

106. And you consider that it could be done for considerably less than 50,000 *l.*?—Yes.

107. But as a matter of public policy which should you recommend, the expenditure of 50,000 *l.* or a minor sum?—I should recommend the 50,000 *l.* decidedly.

108. Do you or do you not consider it would be advantageous to the Grand and Royal Canal Companies to have the navigation of the Shannon rendered as perfect as possible?—It would be a great advantage to them.

109. It would increase very much the produce of the tolls, and the intercourse carried on, on the main lines of their navigation?—I have no doubt of it; the whole increased trade must go either down to Limerick or through those two canals, and the greater portion I conceive would go to Dublin.

110. Provided a small sum was laid out on the improvement of the Shannon, would the expenditure of that sum go to forward the execution of Mr. Rhodes's plan?—A part of it would; but Mr. Rhodes proposes to substitute other locks for several of the present ones, and all laid out upon those works would be thrown away; but a great deal of it would go into Mr. Rhodes's plan, such as clearing away the shoals.

111. What sized boats navigate the Grand Canal?—Fifty tons.

112. And the same on the Royal Canal?—Yes, about that.

113. Then is the present state of the navigation of the Shannon sufficient to admit of the largest boat capable of going along either of those canals?—No.

114. Then do you understand that the effect of Mr. Rhodes's improvement would be to enable the Shannon to be navigated by a larger class of boats than navigate the canals?—Yes.

115. One object of that improvement would be, to carry the trade to Limerick, and not into those canals, except by transshipment?—One of his plans for the locks is only to put the canals in as perfect a state as they were and would originally have been.

116. When you speak of vessels of 50 tons, do you contemplate sea-going vessels?—No; they are boats that draw three feet six.

117. Do you include in your answer steam-vessels of a sufficient size?—Steamers can be made not larger than those vessels to answer every purpose of navigating the Shannon except the Great Lough.

118. Do Mr. Rhodes's recommendations in his report go to make the Shannon capable of carrying larger boats than can navigate the canals?—His grand principle was to make it passable for a very large class of steamers all through. If Mr. Rhodes's principle was adopted, it would require a great deal of detailed examination before you put it in practice. He did not go sufficiently into detail to answer for the mode of constructing each of the works, and some of his estimates would be high and others low. I have no doubt that some of the works may be high, but the dredging is too low: there are places where there is rock in the river not known to him; and his common dredging is too low at sixpence per cube yard.

119. Do you not know that several vessels taking cargoes from Limerick are obliged to take the greater part of their lading on board at Grass Island, which is 10 or 12 miles below Limerick, at considerable expense, inconvenience, delay and risk?—No, I am not aware of it. I know there are great impediments from Grass Island.

Mr. Charles Wye Williams, called in; and Examined.

120. ARE you not concerned in the affairs of the Inland Steam Navigation Company, in Ireland?—I am. Mr. C. W. Williams.

121. Have the goodness to state the defects that exist in that part of the Shannon that is in the hands of the Grand Canal Company?—The defects reported to me by commanders of steam-vessels, are occasional want of a sufficient depth of water in some parts of the river, and in the small side canals; the want of beacons, piles and land-marks. Those are the principal defects.

122. Do those defects occur in many places?—In several places.

123. Do

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123. Do they prevent you carrying a full load in that class of vessels that was intended to navigate that part of the Shannon?—They do; but I understand that lately several parts of the canals where there was a great want of water have been dredged, and the engineer of the Grand Canal reports there is sufficient water; for instance, in part of the Athlone Canal; but I cannot say it of my own knowledge.

124. Have they placed 110 beacons and buoys, which they contracted to place at the time they got the work from the Directors of Inland Navigation?—There are not 110 beacons and buoys; there are about a dozen altogether; they originally set up wooden piles, which have been cut down by the people, and the Canal Company have not replaced them yet; they propose doing so, I understand. That would be a very small expense.

125. Have you occasionally been obliged to make any improvements in the river to enable your boats to ply upon that part of the river?—I am not aware that we have done so. We paid one half of the expense of altering the Banagher bridge. It was too low: the boats could not pass under it in winter, and we contributed one half of the cost of altering the bridge.

126. You cannot state whether the navigation in its present state, and with the present works in progress, will place it in the state that was stipulated for under the agreement?—As far as the depth of water is concerned, certainly not. The depth was to be six feet six inches, and I know there is nothing like that in many places.

127. Have your boats ever received much damage from getting aground, and from the defects of the beacons?—Both steamers and trade-boats have received, in the last two years, considerable damage, by rubbing against the ground, by striking against stones, suffered to remain in the canals and the river; and some of the beacons having fallen down the materials are suffered to remain: that is one of the circumstances I most complain of.

128. Are the beacons kept in repair?—Some of them have lately fallen down, and they are now in the act of replacing them. I do not know what proportion are beacons and what proportion are buoys, but there is certainly a want of both and of other land-marks at present.

129. Those beacons that at present exist, do you consider them properly constructed for the purpose?—I think they might have been made stronger.

130. Are the works generally in a state of repair fit for that navigation for which they were intended?—They certainly are not sufficient to allow a boat to pass, drawing the depth of water originally contemplated.

131. Is the navigation considerably interrupted by that?—Yes.

132. Is the depth of water on the sills of the locks six feet?—I cannot speak to that of my own knowledge; Mr. Rhodes reports that it is not.

133. What is the greatest draught of water drawn by any boat belonging to you?—Four feet six inches is the greatest depth that the Grand Canal allow; they fix the maximum at four feet six inches, beyond which they will not allow any boat to pass along that part belonging to the Grand Canal; we have no boat drawing more than four feet six inches; the smallest steam-boats do not draw more than three feet six inches; for instance, that going to Athlone from Shannon Harbour. The small class going towards Lough Derg draw four feet six inches.

134. Is that limitation for the purpose of preventing the boats upon the Shannon exceeding a certain draught of water?—I believe so.

135. Then it is not with reference to the canal itself, but the Shannon?—No; in reference to the canal. I answered in respect to the boats navigating the Shannon, that, being the same boats that navigate the canal, they cannot draw more than four feet six inches water, which is a very fair proportion.

136. But those boats of four feet six inches are apt to ground upon that portion of the Shannon in the hands of the Grand Canal Company?—So it is reported to me, and so I believe to be the fact.

137. Do you think that depth sufficient for the commercial intercourse?—Yes. I think it is so for the canal.

138. So that boats going down to Limerick would be limited to four feet six inches?—Yes; unless larger boats were built, and perhaps it would not be judicious to do that.

139. Your steamers sometimes ground on that part of the river under the Grand Canal Company?—I believe they have touched it, but no great inconvenience

venience arises from it; the great damage is from striking stones and hard ground, and rubbing the banks. The great injury received by steam-vessels is from the cause I have described. Mr. C. W. Williams.

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140. Does not a great inconvenience arise from want of sufficient width?—No; I consider that the scale of the locks and the docks upon the Grand Canal is sufficient for the purposes of the Shannon; they are equal to any inland navigation in England.

141. Were not the Grand Canal Company bound to give six feet over the sills of their locks?—Yes.

142. If I was to build a barge drawing five feet six, at Athlone, it could not get through the locks?—In the summer weather there is not three feet six inches in many parts of the river.

143. Have you ever found it your duty to represent to the Directors of the Grand Canal Company the imperfections and impediments of the river?—I have repeatedly spoken to them, and they have attended to the representations made to a certain extent, and they are attempting to put the river in the best state they can; they are directing the attention of the engineer to it, dredging that part of the river, and owing to the increased traffic upon the river, it is more necessary now; there was formerly so little done upon it, that it was considered almost money thrown away to do anything to it before 1826.

144. You think they have attended to the representations made?—Yes, in some instances; we may have differed in the extent of mischief done to the boats.

145. Do you think 400*l.* would put into an efficient state of repair that part of the Shannon under the control of the Grand Canal Company?—It certainly could not be put into the state laid down in the agreement for 400*l.*; the piles and beacons alone would cost that; but a very moderate sum would be sufficient to put it in a state adequate to the intercourse carried on, or likely to be carried on.

146. Have you ever considered the subject so as to form an opinion of the minimum that would be required to put that part of the Shannon in a navigable state?—If 2,000*l.* was laid out upon it, I should not complain of it; if it was judiciously laid out, that sum would, I think, put it in an excellent state.

147. And render it capable of giving every facility to those boats you are in the habit of employing on the Shannon?—Yes.

148. Does not inconvenience arise from want of sufficient width in the channel of the river?—I have never heard of any impediment arising out of the want of sufficient breadth in the river: there are some narrow passes, but they do not seriously obstruct the navigation of the river.

149. Are your vessels all steamers?—Steamers are employed to tow the trade-boats.

150. You never employ sailing vessels as sailing vessels?—No.

151. If you have a vessel that has a sail, you tow it?—Yes.

152. Do you consider it expedient to remove the eel-weirs that exist in the river?—No doubt many of the eel-weirs in that portion of the river are very injurious.

153. Are you aware that the Directors of the Grand Canal Company entered into a contract with your engineer, the late Mr. Grantham, to erect the beacons, and that you were security for the performance of that work?—I do, and I consider it a very great grievance that the Grand Canal should have imposed upon me the necessity of being the security for the engineer for works they were bound of themselves to maintain. There were complaints made of the want of beacons and buoys to the Company, and they entered into an agreement with Mr. Grantham to do the work, but they would not do it unless I gave a surety that they should be maintained for three years, which I thought a great hardship, but which of course I did, because without them I could not navigate the river.

154. How many beacons and buoys were contained in that agreement?—I really forget; there were but few beacons, but it was so much the interest of our Company that those beacons should be there, that if we had paid the cost ourselves we should have done it; I had no alternative.

155. But the number you contracted for were short of 110?—Yes, very few, somewhere about a dozen.

156. Have they all been erected?—Yes, they were all erected; but they were,

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were, Mr. Rhodes reports, in a very inefficient state, that they were badly constructed, and several knocked down; of course of this I could not complain, as I was bound to keep them up for three years. I was not then aware that they were bound by their agreement to have a sufficiency of beacons.

157. You have stated that 2,000 *l.* might be properly expended in beacons and buoys?—Yes.

158. What else?—The removing the obstructions in the canals and deepening them.

159. Have you any means of forming a calculation how much the tolls would be increased by the improvement of the navigation?—I think it would be considerably increased; but the principle upon which the canal has gone would not increase them: they generally give the benefit of the tolls upon the Shannon in favour of the canal; they do not charge the tolls upon the Shannon to boats passing on the canal, so that the amount of tolls would not apparently be increased to the extent of the advantage which the canal would receive.

160. Their trade on the canal would be considerably increased?—Yes.

161. Do they charge the same tolls up and down the canal to the river and from it?—Yes, the same tolls.

162. Do they charge the same rate of toll upon a boat going into the canal and upon a boat going down towards Limerick?—They charge according to the number of miles you go on the canal.

163. Supposing a boat in the river, and that its destination was down the river to Limerick, and not into the canal towards Dublin, are the tolls they charge the same as if they were performing either voyage?—I do not know any difference.

164. Can you swim as cheaply to Limerick as to Dublin at the rate that they charge?—We could go cheaper to Limerick than to Dublin, we save the tolls of the canal; we can go cheaper to Limerick by the river than to Dublin by the canal.

165. Does the Grand Canal charge more or less as you go to Limerick or to Dublin?—A part of the agreement with our Company was, that the trade should as much as possible be brought upon the Grand Canal, and a part of the agreement was, that on carrying certain articles downwards, we should pay a higher toll than upwards.

166. You pay a higher rate going down the river than if you took the canal?—The amount charged acts as a prohibition; we do not carry any downwards.

167. That affects Limerick considerably?—Yes, as far as our boats are concerned; but the produce goes down by the country boats.

168. Is there any disposition on the part of the Directors of the Grand Canal, by the means of the tolls they levy upon certain goods and merchandize, to prevent you carrying certain descriptions of merchandize to Limerick?—Only as I have stated: on certain articles they impose a toll, if we should take them down to Limerick.

169. What are those articles?—Corn, meal, malt, flour and butter.

170. Those are the principal articles of trade?—They are.

171. Are those what you call prohibited?—The agreement is, that in the event of our bringing those five articles to Limerick rather than to Dublin, there shall be a toll of 3*s.* 6*d.* a ton in addition to the ordinary tolls; that was a part of the original agreement.

172. Do the Directors of the Grand Canal Company, in your opinion, afford all the facilities to the intercourse of the country, that in their situation you think they are bound to do?—Yes; I think that they do, except as to the tolls, and that is a question for their consideration; it is a private company.

173. It is a private company that has received large advances from the Government?—Yes, it has; but as to the policy of continuing their tolls, my opinion is this, that a different policy would give a great increase to the traffic on the canal; they have acceded to several propositions we made; they allowed a reduction of tolls, which produced a considerable traffic in certain produce carried from Limerick to Liverpool by inland navigation, in preference to long sea.

174. With respect to the 2,000*l.* you said you thought would be sufficient to put the river into a proper state on that portion of it that belonged to the Grand Canal Company, in what manner should you propose to lay it out?—

When

When I named that sum, I merely named it as a round sum, and as to the application of it, I have already observed it should be laid out in removing some of the obstructions from the side canals, the bed of the river, repairing the locks, and replacing the necessary land-marks.

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175. Would it be applied to the repair of the canals that at present exist, or applied to the river?—It applies to the river, and also to certain canals upon the river; there are certain canals which are part of the river, in fact, they are to cut off bends or pass shallows; there is one three miles long, another a quarter of a mile.

176. If the 2,000 *l.* were laid out, and Mr. Rhodes's plan was afterwards carried into effect, would not the greater part of the money be lost?—If Mr. Rhodes's grand scheme was carried into execution, as far as a portion of the money was expended in locks, it would be completely thrown away. He proposes to remove all the locks upon the Shannon, and substitute others in different situations, and in the manner he suggests, he proposes all the locks should be sufficient to allow of the large class of steamers of 130 feet long by 30 feet wide to pass: in the policy of that recommendation I differ from Mr. Rhodes.

177. You think locks of the present size sufficient?—Yes; sufficient for any trade that can be there, and as we cannot reconstruct the Grand Canal, it is no use to construct a large lock upon the Shannon, and leave the small locks on the canal.

178. That is supposing all the trade coming down the canal?—Yes.

179. The effect of Mr. Rhodes's plan would be to divert the trade to Limerick instead of Dublin?—No; the effect of it would be merely to give facilities to the large size class of vessels on the river.

180. Was not it butter that went by the interior principally?—Principally flour and meal; butter only latterly.

181. Those articles were to be transhipped in Dublin into the steamers?—Yes.

Nicholas Fanning, Esq. called in; and Examined.

182. ARE you a Director of the Grand Canal Company?—I am.

N. Fanning, Esq.

183. Are you aware of the contract entered into at the time it was constituted in 1806?—I am.

184. By that contract you undertook the charge of the navigation of the river from Lough Derg to Athlone?—We took charge of the northern extremity of the river from Athlone to the northern extremity of Lough Derg at Portumna.

185. By that contract, you bound yourselves to have at all seasons six feet six inches navigable water, and six feet above the sills of the locks?—The contract was entered into long before I was in the direction. I have been in the direction since 1810. It is fit to observe, that there was an agreement entered into before this contract, that agreement was in 1801 or 1802, and this contract was entered into to carry this agreement into effect in 1806. The Grand Canal Company expended upon the works upon the Shannon, upwards of 19,500 *l.* before this contract was entered into with the Directors-General of Inland Navigation, between the years 1802 and 1806; the terms of the contract were, that the locks were to be 18 feet in length by 16 feet in breadth, and six feet on the sills, and the depth of water at all times six feet six inches, in the canals and river.

186. Then it is as was stated, that you were bound by the contract to have six feet six inches of navigable water, and to have six feet over the sills of the locks?—Yes.

187. Is that the case with the navigation now?—I cannot say of my own knowledge; I cannot say it is not; all I can say in answer to this question is this, that the navigation was taken up by the Directors of Inland Navigation, and handed over to the Grand Canal Company as being perfected according to the contract, and, with the permission of the Committee, it is better for me to hand in an official document that will furnish the best information on the subject. The sills of the locks are in the same state as they were when approved if by the Directors-General of Inland Navigation.

188. Put in that document?—This is a certificate of the Directors-General of Inland Navigation, with the Lord Lieutenant's approbation; that was when the works were complete.

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189. What date is it?—The 22d of October 1810.

190. What does that document contain?—It contains a copy of the Certificate of the Directors-General of Inland Navigation to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland approving of the works of the Shannon as being complete according to the terms of the contract; that is a Parliamentary document, and is on the proceedings of the House of Commons.

191. Is it printed?—It is; and is evidence of the contract being fulfilled.

[*The Witness delivered in the following Paper :*]

CERTIFICATE of the Directors-General of Inland Navigation, with the Lord Lieutenant's approbation.

To his Grace *Charles Duke of Richmond*, Lord Lieutenant-General and General Governor of Ireland.

IN pursuance of the provisions contained in an Act passed by the Parliament of Ireland, in the 40th year of his present Majesty's reign, intituled, "An Act for granting to His Majesty the sum of 500,000*l.* for promoting Inland Navigation in Ireland, and for the other purposes therein mentioned, and for authorizing the raising of the said sum by loan," we, being Directors of all works relating to Inland Navigation in Ireland, appointed under and by virtue of said Act, do hereby certify, that by agreement with the Grand Canal Company for making the Navigation of the river Shannon, between Lough Derg and Lough Rhea, (submitted to his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant and to the Lords of His Majesty's Treasury, in our representations of the 3d July 1804 and 26th October 1805, approved by his Excellency the Earl of Hardwicke, on the 7th of November following, as also by the Lords of His Majesty's Treasury,) and by a deed or contract executed the 25th March 1806, in conformity to the said agreement, by us as Directors, and by the said Grand Canal Company under their corporation seal, all the said recited proceedings having been had in pursuance of and in conformity to the before-mentioned Act of Parliament. It is agreed that the Company shall be allowed such sums as they shall from time to time lay out upon the works of the said navigation, not exceeding the sum of 39,634*l.* 18*s.* 7*d.*, three-fourth parts of which sum shall be paid to them by instalments from time to time as they shall have proved the same to have been expended, the other part thereof to remain in the hands of the Government, and not to be paid to the said Company until the whole of the works shall be completely finished; and it is also agreed, that the said Company shall be paid the expense of surveys, not exceeding 1,000*l.* We humbly certify that the said Company have already received, upon certificates upon this Board, several sums amounting to 29,726*l.* 3*s.* 10½*d.*, being three-fourth parts of the estimate of 39,634*l.* 18*s.* 7*d.*, the remaining fourth part whereof being 9,980*l.* 14*s.* 8¾*d.*, hath been reserved agreeably to the contract; and that the said Company have received by certificates from this Board the sum of 1,000*l.* for surveys, agreeably to the contract. And whereas it is by the said contract further agreed, that if the expenses shall exceed the sum before-mentioned of 39,634*l.* 18*s.* 7*d.*, the Company shall be allowed two-thirds of their said exceedings, so far as the sum of 14,000*l.*, we humbly certify, that the said Company have already received by certificates from this Board the sum of 12,026*l.* 5*s.* 3½*d.*, being two-thirds of the sum of 18,039*l.* 7*s.* 11*d.*, which they had then proved to have been expended by them on account of such proceedings. We now humbly certify, that the Grand Canal Company have laid before our Board an account of expenditure by them, from the 14th November 1807 to the 20th of August 1808, amounting to 8,543*l.* 14*s.* 7½*d.* for works done on the said Shannon navigation between Lough Derg and Lough Rhea, and comprised in the contract made with this Board, attested by the Honourable and Rev. John Pomeroy, Chairman of the Court of Directors of the said Company, which account having been examined by William Bower, Esq., Accountant to this Board, he has certified that each item is supported by a proper receipt, amounting in the whole to 8,543*l.* 14*s.* 7½*d.* We have also examined John Killaly, Esq. their principal engineer, and Benjamin Booker, their pay clerk, by whose evidence on oath it appears, that the said sum of 8,543*l.* 14*s.* 7½*d.*, has been expended by the Company agreeably to the terms of the contract. And whereas it appears by the Report of John Brownrigg, Esq. the Board's engineer, that the works of the Shannon navigation are completely finished: And whereas the said John Killaly, Esq. hath made oath that the Grand Canal Company have, to the best of his knowledge and belief, fully completed their contract with the Directors-General in all its parts, (and that the common depth of water in dry seasons upon the sills of the locks and bridges, and throughout the entire of the navigation, is equal to what is required by the contract,); and Mr. Killaly having further made oath, that the Grand Canal Company have, to the best of his knowledge and belief, expended a sum of at least 24,000*l.* beyond the amount of their contract in the completion of the before-mentioned works: And whereas it is further agreed by the said contract, that the said Company shall well and faithfully account before the Commissioners of Imprest Accounts, for the expenditure of all sums which have been paid or advanced to the said Company, we therefore humbly certify to your Grace, that the Grand Canal Company are justly entitled to a sum of 1,973*l.* 14*s.* 8½*d.*, (being the balance of exceedings to make up the sum of 14,000*l.* to be paid them as aforesaid,) and, after reserving a sum of 3,000*l.* until their accounts shall have been passed by the Commissioners of Accounts, the said Company are entitled to the sum of 6,908*l.* 14*s.* 8¾*d.*, (being part of the sum of 9,908*l.* 14*s.* 8¾*d.* heretofore reserved until the completion of the works,) making

making together the sum of 8,882 *l.* 9 *s.* 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* which, with the sum of 29,726 *l.* 3 *s.* 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ *d.* heretofore paid them in part of the estimate, the sum of 1,000 *l.* paid for surveys, the sum of 12,026 *l.* 5 *s.* 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* heretofore paid in part of their exceedings, and the sum of 3,000 *l.* to be still reserved as aforesaid, will make the sum of 54,634 *l.* 18 *s.* 7 *d.*, the total amount of the Grant. And we pray your Grace's approbation hereon, whereby the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury may be sufficiently authorized to pay the said sum of 8,882 *l.* 9 *s.* 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* to the Grand Canal Company, according to law.

N. Fanning, Esq.

11 July 1834.

Navigation Office, }
22 October 1810. }

(signed) *S. Hamilton,*
Hans Blackwood,
Michael Burke.

Dublin Castle, 26 October 1810.

THE Lord Lieutenant approves of the sum of 8,882 *l.* 9 *s.* 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* net, being issued to the Grand Canal Company, pursuant to this representation.

By his Grace's command,
(signed) *W. W. Pole.*

192. It was also a part of the contract that they were to be considered permanent improvements, and were to be kept up in that state?—We were bound to do so.

193. If it should now turn out there is not that depth of navigable water, or that these improvements have not been kept in sufficient repair, do you consider yourselves bound to make them good?—According to the contract we are so far bound to make the navigation what we undertook to make it; but since the time of granting the before-mentioned certificate, the Directors-General of Inland Navigation have frequently had the works examined by an engineer, and they never found fault with the state of the works, and I never heard of its being questioned till I saw an extract of Mr. Rhodes's report. I know it is fully equal to any vessel that can now pass on the Grand Canal. Vessels of 70 tons burthen ply on the Grand Canal with five feet six inches depth of water only, and on the sill of the lock at five feet only.

194. You are bound not to limit the draught of vessels plying on the navigation below five feet six inches; are there any that do draw that now?—There is no boat plying on the Grand Canal Navigation that draws more than four feet six inches. We would not allow boats drawing a greater depth.

195. The contract is six feet 6 inches?—That is on the Shannon. I am speaking of the canal.

196. The Committee have it in the evidence of Mr. Williams that a vessel drawing three feet six inches meets with great impediments?—At some periods of the year and in river navigation it is almost impossible to avoid it, the floods always bring in a quantity of stuff that will require to be attended to; but those parts of the Shannon form but a small portion of that river; the depth of water exceeds eight feet in the greater part of the river.

197. You are bound to keep up the quay walls, and to sink shallows between the islands, and other permanent repairs on the river?—I am not aware of any thing of the kind between the islands: the only canals on the Shannon of importance under our care are the lateral canals at Athlone, Portumna Town and Cloonahunogue; the different harbours are described on the map of the Shannon. I am not aware of any works on the islands.

198. It is stated in the contract that the deepening of certain shallows, and so forth, is necessary to make the whole navigation perfect, and you are bound to keep it up; do you know that it is kept up?—I am not aware of any general neglect. I know a short time after Mr. Rhodes made that estimate and report that the Directors called on their engineer to state what sum it would take to put the Shannon in the same state as when certified to be complete by the Directors-General. I have the engineer's report to our Board, and the whole amount of his estimate does not exceed 200 *l.*, that is exclusive of the beacons: a great part of that work has since been done; every year there has been certain sums of money expended on the Shannon, and all river navigation requires an annual expenditure. At some seasons the water gets very low. I dare say a vessel just now, at least I have heard to that effect, drawing five feet six inches, could navigate from Athlone to Portumna, that is one foot more than the depth allowed on the canal, and one foot more than is necessary for vessels of from 60 to 70 tons burden.

199. You are also bound to have 110 good permanent and sufficient beacons on that line?—I believe that is so.

532.

c 3

200. Are

N. Fanning, Esq.

11 July 1834.

200. Are they there?—No, not at present; and I will state the reason why they are not there. When I came into the direction in 1810 I found the beacons there at that time in perfect good repair; but they were frequently cut down at different periods by the country people for the purpose of making axletrees for their cars, and in order to guard against this we substituted a lighter sort of beacon, which it was not an object for them to cut down, and the boat owners themselves used to run the boats against them and knock them down. Mr. Williams was not the first who had the steam vessels on the Shannon. Mr. Grantham was the first person who had steam vessels on the Shannon, and another company, the Steam Navigation Company, had also steamers; there were then two steamers, and Mr. Williams afterwards purchased up that establishment. Mr. Grantham was afterwards employed by Mr. Williams as an engineer, and had been employed on the Shannon for several years by the Government, and we considered that we could not have employed a more fit person than Mr. Grantham to have those beacons alluded to re-placed, and erecting such as he thought more desirable than the ones that had been destroyed, and upon that contract Mr. Williams became a guarantee for the due execution of the undertaking. We would not give the contract to Mr. Grantham unless Mr. Williams guaranteed that Mr. Grantham would carry it into effect: that guarantee was to extend for three years. In consequence of Mr. Grantham's death, the contract has not been performed, and we have frequently urged upon his representatives to have the contract completed, and upon Mr. Williams also. We are now determined to have all those beacons re-placed, and have given notice to our engineer for that purpose, and to look to Mr. Grantham's representatives and Mr. Williams for any loss sustained by the non-performance on their part.

201. Were the 110 beacons all complete when you came into the direction?—Yes, I think there were 120; I am only accounting now for the reason they are not now as they ought to be; the original beacons were much found fault with by persons trading in the Shannon.

202. Have you got the report of your engineer?—Yes; the report contains every part of the repair, and the whole amount does not, I believe, exceed 200 *l.* as before stated.

203. What does he undertake to do?—To make the works as perfect as they were in 1810.

204. Does it include the beacons?—No; I stated that we had a contract for erecting them.

205. You were aware, from having put in this certificate furnished to the Government, that there is this passage in it: Mr. Killaly, engineer, swears "that the common depth of water in dry seasons upon the sills of the locks and bridges, and throughout the entire of the navigation, is equal to what is required by the contract?"—Yes.

206. You are aware of what the contract is?—Yes.

207. Do you mean to say that 200 *l.* will put the Shannon in the state which it is stated to have been in at that time, and which you are bound to keep it in by the contract?—No; if the facts are as stated by Mr. Rhodes, 10,000 *l.* would not be enough. I do not know whether they are or are not, but I have the report of the engineer upon the subject.

[*The Witness delivered in the following Paper:*]

Sir,

23d April 1834.

You will please to acquaint the Board, that I have been so closely occupied with business of importance, besides attending the assizes at Philipstown and Galway, that I was unable sooner to comply with the directions contained in the Board's order of the 12th ultimo, "to report what it would cost to render the navigation of the Shannon as perfect as it was when the Directors-General closed their accounts with the Grand Canal Company respecting it." Commencing with the state of the canal at Athlone, I beg leave to refer the Board to my letter of the 17th March on the subject of repairs required to be immediately done to this canal, in consequence of the effects of last winter's floods. Proposals, pursuant to order of the 18th March, were submitted, and the weather now being favourable, I have partly put the work in hands; but to place that canal in as perfect a state as when given up to the Directors-General, more is required to be done than was stated in my then estimate, or proposals since received, nothing being included by me more than the ordinary repair after the last severe winter. The following repairs and estimates, if ordered, will render that canal as perfect as when the Directors-General closed their account with the Grand Canal Company; viz.

ESTIMATE.

ESTIMATE.
Athlone Canal.

Earth-work, as stated in former estimate - - - - -	£. s. d.	
Raising and finishing top bank to original height, and gravelling trackway road - - - - -	45 4 -	
<i>Estimate for Bridge over Tail of Lock.</i>		
For re-building bridge and making good the approach walls, per proposal No. 1., as also re-building quay walls - - - - -	£. 146 8 6	
For re-building bridge, making good the approach walls, and re-building quay walls, per proposal No. 2. - - - - -	£. 152 10 6	
To carry on the estimate, and supposing the lowest proposal to be adopted, say - - - - -	146 8 6	
Opening side drains on both sides of the Canal to the river, 142 perches, at 2 s. per perch - - - - -	14 4 1	
Thirty perches of dry wall, head of lock, 2 s. 6 d. - - - - -	3 15 -	
Dredging from river to entrance of lock - - - - -	£. 20 - -	
Ditto above the lock to harbour - - - - -	10 - -	
	30 - -	
Repairing bank for 14 perches (slipped into canal) above the Roscommon Road bridge - - - - -	6 10 -	
Repairing and painting bridge, timber part of ditto - - - - -	1 10 -	
Total - - - - -	£. 256 6 6	

N. Fanning, Esq.
11 July 1834.
Athlone Canal
See Note of Explanation upon Proposals, No. 1 and 2, at foot of Report.—J. W. Stokes.
See Plan of present and improved Bridge, with specifications in Proposal, No. 1.
To Edw. Lawson, Esq. &c. &c.

The lock and gates are in excellent order, with the exception of one sluice broken by idle boys about the harbour.

From Athlone to Shannon Bridge.

The river course is pretty nearly in the same state as when the accounts were closed with the Directors General, excepting the beacons, of which I shall submit a statement at foot of this report. The lock at Shannon bridge is in excellent order.

From Shannon Bridge to Banagher Canal.

The channel or sailing course is, with the exception of the passage through Derryholmes, and part of the entrance to Leehinch, in as good order as ever they were. On the ford of Derryholmes fine stone beacons were erected by the late Captain Grantham on his contract with the Grand Canal Company for beaconing the entire river from Lough Derg to Lough Rhea; three of those beacons have fallen, and a fourth now giving way, and should be taken down. A few days dredging at Leehinch Island will perfect that passage. With the exception before stated of the beacons, the river course from Derryholmes to the Banagher Canal is as perfect as when the accounts were closed with the Directors-General.

Banagher Canal.

Banagher lock in excellent order. The turning or swivel bridge has been lately re-built. The tail walls below the lock, and the pier heads above the lock, require repair, by partly re-building the slips of masonry occasioned by winter floods, and making good the backing, say - - - - -	£. 15 - -
Repairing quay wall and re-setting steps - - - - -	4 15 -
Dry wall, head of bridge, and making good the bank over ditto - - - - -	8 - -
Raising part of low bank near quay wall - - - - -	1 10 -
	£. 29 5 -

Part of this canal will require dredging to restore it to the same depth as when the Directors-General closed their account with the Company.

Cloonahunogue Canal.

From Banagher to the Cloonahunogue Canal, the passage or sailing course is not worse than when settled for by the Directors General, with exception of the beacons. Entrance from River North or Up-Stream end of the Cloonahunogue Canal to be dredged (which is now in progress); as also below the lock to river at south end by steam dredge boat. Some repairs to masonry are necessary, occasioned by winter floods and persons in the mismanagement of boats, say,

Masonry in repairs to approach walls of three bridges over this canal - - - - -	£. 12 - -
To raise, repair and make good the trackway bank, 190 perches, at 2 s. per - - - - -	19 - -
Rebuild tail walls of lock, crumbled down on both sides, containing 62 perches, solid, Irish measure - - - - -	20 3 -
Repair forebay walls of lock - - - - -	6 - -
Sodding over tail-walls and backing ditto - - - - -	2 3 4
Repair earth work in embankments from tail-walls of lock to river - - - - -	5 - -
Making good repair to pier-heads at river - - - - -	1 10 -
	£. 65 16 4

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Connaught Harbour.

The lock on this canal (called Hamilton's Lock) is in good working order and repair. From Cloonahunogue Canal to Portumna Bridge, no material repair is required, with the exception of the small canals, one on either side of the river; the entrance to both of which must be dredged to both harbours, which can be done on return of the steam-dredge boat to Killaloe. The floods of last winter injured and partly washed away the pier-head, on the north side of the Connaught Harbour, and part of the embankment above it has been broken; to make good which will require

348 yards of clay to be boated to it, at 6d. per	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£.	s.	d.
Masonry in pier-head	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		8	14
(Exclusive of dredging.)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		5	5
								£.	13	19

Munster Harbour.

Exclusive of the serious injury done to this harbour by the severity of last winter, some ill-disposed persons have been stealing the firm material, of cut and hammered stone in the harbour walls, and square backing of the quay walls, which to replace as before, will require

159 feet lineal of coping and square backing to be made good; reset and properly bedded in mortar, at 1s. 2d. per	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	£.	s.	d.
To make good the pier-heads on both sides	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		9	5
To raise and make good the embankments north and south side where washed away, 713 yards, at 6d.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		5	-
									17	6
								£.	31	12

ABSTRACT of ESTIMATES for the several Repairs necessary "to render the Navigation of the Shannon as perfect as it was when the Directors-General closed their Accounts with the Grand Canal Company respecting it."

Athlone Canal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	110	-	6	*256	6	6		
Banagher Canal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	29	5	-		
Cloonahunogue Canal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	65	16	4		
Connaught Harbour and small canal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	19	-		
Munster Harbour and small canal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	31	12	-		
Total											-	£.	396	18	10

LIST of BEACONS for pointing out the sailing course or channel of that part of the River Shannon from Athlone to Portumna, put down by order of the Grand Canal Company, in pursuance of arrangement with the Directors-General of Inland Navigation, viz.

From Athlone to Shannon Harbour - - - 87 oak piles
From Shannon Harbour to Lough Derg - - - 42 -

Total - 129

exclusive of swinging beacons placed on the fords where piles or permanent beacons could not be driven.

At present there are but - - - 5 stone beacons
6 oak ditto
14 iron ditto

Total - - 25, consequently 104 deficient

in the whole of this part of the navigation assigned to the Grand Canal Company, which deficiency can only be attributed to the death of the late Captain Grantham, with whom the Board of Directors had contracted for erecting such beacons as were necessary for pointing out the channel or sailing course from Athlone to Portumna, and to whom an advance of 250 l. had been made from time to time on account of the work.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your very obedient servant,
J. Wm. Stokes, Engineer.

P. S. I enclose proposals No. 1 and No. 2, referred to me for work at Athlone.

NOTE upon Proposals submitted for Work to be done in repair of Bridge and Harbour at Athlone :

Proposal No. 1.								£.	s.	d.			
For rebuilding bridge over tail-wall of lock and retaining walls on either side	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		36	19			
For building quay walls instead of earth embankments (which cannot stand the surge of steam-boat) 539 feet long, to Steam Company's ground south of Battery Bridge	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		109	9			
								£.	146	8			
Total No. 1.								-	-	£.	146	8	6

Proposal No. 2.

For rebuilding bridge, items taken from proposal marked thus *	-	-	-	£.	s.	d.	N. Fanning, Esq. 11 July 1834.
For building quay walls as above stated	-	-	-	40	10	-	
				112	-	6	
Total No. 2.	-	-	£.	152	10	6	

6 May 1834.

J. Wm. Stokes, Engineer.

208. Mr. Williams's steamer only draws three feet six inches, and grounds, and the depth of water you are bound to keep up is six feet six inches; how can you say the contract is fulfilled?—There must be some impediment.

209. You are bound to remove them?—Yes, we are.

210. Can you explain why you have not?—There can be no general work done on the Shannon till the summer season sets in, and when the water is low, and we send a dredge-boat to remove the shoals or obstructions.

211. Why was not it done the last summer?—There was a great deal done this summer, and the impediment Mr. Williams speaks to may have occurred early in the last month.

212. It is not one impediment, but it seems to be a common occurrence?—I have not heard of it, nor do I believe it general.

213. Is it your custom, when any impediment is announced to you, immediately to send a dredging-boat?—Always; there may be eight feet water now where Mr. Williams's boat met with the interruption; those impediments sometimes occur from the stone beacons erected by the late Mr. Grantham falling and obstructing the navigation.

214. Do you mean to say the depth of water has been constantly six feet?—It is quite impossible. I cannot say.

215. Do you allow it has not been?—If I am to judge from the reports I have heard from Mr. Williams, and especially the report of Mr. Rhodes, I should say not; but I do not know of my own knowledge.

216. You have sent an engineer to make a survey of the river; did he make any report to you that the depth of water is not according to the contract?—No; he was sent down to report to the Board what it would take to place the navigation in the same state as it was when it was handed over to our Board in 1810.

217. Which was “and that the common depth of water in dry seasons upon the sills of the locks and bridges, and throughout the entire of the navigation, is equal to what is required by the contract.” Is it your opinion that it has ever been kept at that since it was handed over to your charge on the whole?—At least three-fourths of the year. I have heard that the depth of water exceeds that mentioned in the contract, and as to the deficiency of water alleged, it must only occur in the remaining part of the year; but I have no knowledge of the fact.

218. You cannot undertake to say it has been?—No, I cannot.

219. Did that not occur to the Directors when they heard that a steamer drawing three feet six inches had grounded?—I never heard that till this day.

220. Did you not hear that anything grounded?—Yes; we may have heard of boats meeting impediments on the Shannon, but the same thing often occurs upon the canal, and we order them to be removed in all cases.

221. Would it not have been natural, when sending an engineer down to the spot, to have directed him to inquire?—I cannot speak positively to that; but his general instruction is to remove all casual obstructions.

222. Did Mr. Williams ever represent to you that a vessel, drawing the depth of water described, had grounded?—I did not hear it till to-day; if we had heard of it, we should have immediately attended to it; and if the water was to the extent mentioned in the contract, his boats would be liable to the same obstructions, owing to causes which at all times cannot be guarded against.

223. Do you mean if the whole of the depth of water was six feet in the Shannon, that a vessel drawing three feet six inches would ground?—Yes, from the reason I have stated: from the works falling in, and the accumulation of mud and sand in some parts of the navigation.

224. Then they were not in proper repair?—A wall may tumble down unexpectedly.

225. Do you mean to say that your works are kept in such a state that they are apt to fall in, and that the falling in is the rule and not the exception?—I cannot.

N. Fanning, Esq.

11 July 1834.

cannot say what is the rule ; but navigations are always liable to impediments, particularly rivers.

226. A gale of wind may bring down the works?—Yes; and floods an immense quantity of stuff; several rivers flow into the Shannon, and those bring in more or less gravel and mud.

227. Do you recollect at any period a representation, two or three years ago, that a steamer, between the Shannon Harbour and Portumna, while going through a short canal, scraped along the ground so as to compel the men to use poles?—I have no recollection of such occurrence taking place; but the second steamer that was put on by the Navigation Company drew 10 feet water, and her draft of water was necessarily obliged to be reduced.

228. When was that put on?—I do not recollect; but it was previous to Mr. Williams's Company being formed.

229. Are you aware whether, since 1810, any regular outlay has been regularly applied to maintaining the works upon the Shannon?—We have been expending money every year on the Shannon and its works; our contract was 54,634*l.* 18*s.* 7*d.*, and we have expended on the navigation upwards of 80,000*l.*; our original outlay, before the Directors General assigned the Middle Shannon into our hands, was upwards of 30,000*l.* more than our contract above stated, and every year since we have been expending money upon it. I have called for a return, and when I receive it, I will then furnish the information required to the Committee of the sums we have expended; and though we are entitled to charge a halfpenny a ton per mile for goods upon the Shannon, we seldom charge any toll, our object being to encourage the Shannon trade.

230. Has the Board of Directors caused surveys to be made of the state of the Shannon since 1810?—Every year; and the engineer took it for granted, I suppose, that the works were completed as they ought to be when they were taken up in 1810; and if any impediments had taken place in the interval, he immediately had them removed, as was his duty to have done.

231. Is it possible that you as a Director should be ignorant of the state of the navigation at the present moment, so as not to be able to tell whether there is a proper depth of navigable water during the whole of the navigation?—The waters of the Shannon are so entirely governed by the seasons, that I cannot say; that is a matter entirely with our engineer; my impression is this, and I think I am borne out in it, that the Shannon is fully equal for the navigation of boats from 50 to 60 tons burthen, or, in other words, to any boat that can ply on the Grand Canal. From the evidence of Mr. Killaly, the sills of the locks were six feet; they must be the same now, as no change was since made; but this I can tell the Committee, we have not a sill of a lock upon the canal, which extends upwards of 100 miles, where the sills of the lock exactly agree; it is almost impossible to lay a lock to the exact depth of other lock sills.

232. That must be a very minute variation?—It is; but a variation to the extent of five or six inches sometimes occurs.

233. Have the Directors taken any steps to ascertain whether Mr. Rhodes's soundings are correct?—Nothing more than the report of our engineer, handed to the Committee this day.

234. You say you take no tolls upon the Shannon?—Very little.

235. It yields no profit?—No.

236. You consider it a feeder to the trade of the canal?—Yes.

237. The better state the Shannon is in, the better it will act as a feeder to the trade of your canal?—Yes, of course; and any improvement in the Shannon will improve the trade on the canal.

238. Then if it is proved that the depth of water required by the contract does not exist, and taking into consideration that you do not take any tolls on the Shannon, and it does not yield you any profit, should you have any objection to the navigation being taken out of your hands, provided steps were taken that it was kept in a proper state to act as a feeder to your canal?—It would entirely depend upon circumstances; as far as the Directors of the Grand Canal are concerned, I am fully authorized to state, that our Board would not wish to throw any impediment in the way of the general improvement of the Shannon from Lough Allen to Limerick, provided it was taken up upon the scale laid down in Mr. Rhodes's report; upon that ground they would be very willing to enter into moderate terms with that view. We think we have a just claim

claim to the amount we have expended over and above the contract, and that Parliament should at least grant us a large portion of it. *N. Fanning, Esq.*

239. Do you mean the amount expended over and above the contract? *11 July 1834.*

—Yes.

240. It is valueless property to you?—So far as regards the tolls it is; we have the power of charging those tolls.

241. But you do not find it expedient, and you do not contemplate a time when it will be expedient?—That is a matter for consideration hereafter; but as far as I am concerned, my own view is, that it would operate as a discouragement to trade to charge a toll upon the Shannon; the more encouragement given to that trade the better, and no persons are more interested in the improvement of trade on the Shannon than the Grand Canal Company.

242. The first question was, whether you thought it expedient for the Grand Canal Company to give up that portion of the Shannon, knowing that a sum would be laid out that would improve it, and which would increase the trade upon the canal; in your answer you mentioned compensation; the Committee cannot see what claim you can have for compensation for that which is no source of profit?—If the navigation was in the hands of Government, it would not be so objectionable as in the hands of anybody else; it would be injurious to the interest of the Grand Canal if the Shannon was in the hands of private individuals.

243. If it was proposed to vest it in the Board of Works, would you then have any objection?—No further than that we should have an equitable claim for what we expended over and above the contract.

244. What is that?—About 30,000 *l.*

245. By the contract you agreed to expend 30,000 *l.*?—This sum is over and above the contract; the contract was for, say 40,000 *l.*, and if we expended 14,000 *l.* more than the amount of the contract, Government were to allow us to that extent only, and we were allowed that sum; but in addition to that we expended 30,000 *l.* more than is included in the contract, for which we got no compensation.

246. If you think yourself entitled to compensation for money expended, you can only claim it in the event of the works being handed over to the Government in as complete a state as when the Government paid you the money, and as you were bound to keep them?—Certainly.

247. It appears by the report of Mr. Rhodes, there is hardly any part of the navigation where the depth of water is what it ought to be, and as it is stated to be in the report you have given in. If you have allowed it during the time you have had the management of it to get into that state, the public having contributed so largely to those purposes, it does not appear you are entitled to any compensation, from not having completed your contract?—I take it for granted it is quite clear that we are bound to put the Shannon in the same state of repair as it was when we took it out of the hands of the Directors-General of Inland Navigation, which we are ready to do.

248. How are you to indemnify the public for the loss they have experienced from the date when the works ceased to be in that state of repair, till this period?—I am not aware that the public have suffered to any extent, or any loss whatsoever, by the imperfect state of the navigation.

249. Supposing the river to have been kept in the state in which it ought to have been, would not the public have had greater benefit from it?—I am not aware that they could have had more benefit than they have had. I have never heard of any complaints, generally speaking.

Sabbati, 12^o die Julii, 1834.

THE EARL OF KERRY, IN THE CHAIR.

Nicholas Fanning, Esq. called in ; and further Examined.

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250. YOU say 30,000 *l.* has been expended by the Grand Canal Company, over and above the sum you were obliged to expend by the contract?—Yes.

251. In any claim for compensation upon the Government, the Government will call upon you to show how that money has been expended?—Yes.

252. Have you any documents to show that?—Yes, there are such documents in existence, and I think they are to be found in the Parliamentary proceedings in 1814.

253. Was it expended *bonâ fide* upon the river navigation between Athlone and Portumna?—Yes ; and of course we shall ask for nothing but what we can prove to have been actually expended on the works.

254. At what time was that sum expended, or between what years?—It was in 1810 that the navigation was handed over to the Grand Canal Company by the Directors-General of Inland Navigation, and the period of expending this money was from 1802 to 1810, the period when the Grand Canal Company completed the contract.

255. None was expended after 1810?—Yes ; but the great expenditure on it was before we took up the contract, and I take for granted if we added all the expense since it would considerably exceed 30,000 *l.* before mentioned, that is the monies we have expended annually since it was placed under our care in the support of the works on the Shannon.

256. With respect to the 30,000 *l.* in addition to your contract, which you say entitles you to compensation, between what years was it expended?—I think from 1802 to 1810, but I am not certain ; every year there is more or less money expended and paid out of the funds of the Grand Canal Company, as they seldom charge any toll upon any goods brought on the canal from the Shannon, and a small toll going through the lock at Athlone, and on trade boats not entering the Grand Canal.

257. What money has been expended upon the river navigation since 1810?—I have called for that account, but I have not yet received it.

258. You have no knowledge of it?—No.

259. Have you any knowledge of the greatest annual expense that has been incurred in any year?—I can form no opinion ; we consider the Shannon as part of the Grand Canal.

260. Do you take into consideration that if Mr. Rhodes's soundings be correct with regard to the river navigation, and you were to engage to put it into that situation again, that it would cost you 10,000 *l.* to do so ; do you take that into consideration when you say you claim 30,000 *l.* as compensation?—No, certainly not ; my impression is this, that if those locks were to be pulled down, we must, in order to sink the sills, expend at least 10,000 *l.*, taking it for granted that all that Mr. Rhodes states in the way of locks and bridges to be correct, to make it according to the contract ; but my impression also is, that it would be a waste of money, that six feet of water should be at all times on the sill of the locks and bridges. I am satisfied that five feet six inches or five feet water upon the lower sill of the locks would be sufficient depth of water for any trade boat that would trade upon the Shannon, and I am borne out in that opinion by the statement of a very able engineer, Mr. Jessop, and I will hand in his report.

[*Handing in a paper, as follows :*]

(Copy.)

Sir,

London, June 4, 1802.

I HAVE been lately so fully occupied that I have not before had time to take the papers which you sent me into consideration.

In regard to the river Shannon, I have not the same apprehensions that Mr. Rhodes seems to entertain ; I do not think with him, that it will be a tedious and difficult navigation "three parts out of four in the year," nor do I think that the banks for the trackways, sloped as they are proposed to be, and growing grass, will be much liable to be injured by the surge, while I see banks similarly constructed exposed to the lash of the German Ocean without

without materially suffering, and it will be very easy to shelter them by plantations if found necessary.

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In lowering the sills of the locks, which are too high, I should not think it necessary to have them six feet under the lowest water; if they are five feet under common low water, or four feet under an extreme low water, they would do very well; if the fall at Killaloe, or any other fall, should be lowered, the locks must of course correspond; but respecting the eelweirs, I had no idea of taking them away further than temporarily, and restoring them again afterwards.

The cutting a canal in the meadows instead of navigating the river, may possibly in some cases be advisable, but it cannot be done generally.

The using water-wheels for pumping of water may be very advisable where falls may be obtained, but I am afraid there are few cases where you will have this advantage.

Dredging barges, such as Mr. Rhodes recommends, will be useful where they must occasionally pass through locks, but in general where they will be employed to deepen the channel in the river parallel to the trackways, they should by all means be worked by horses, and so should the piling engines which may be used for the trackway bridges, as they may in both cases be worked 50 per cent. cheaper than by men.

I cannot agree with Mr. Rhodes in the proposition of raising water by steam-engines, for if he was correct in his calculation of the saving, I very much doubt the propriety of borrowing water from the lower levels to serve the summit, unless you would ascertain to a certainty that there will be water to spare after serving the lockage for local trade, which will not pass the summit; but Mr. Rhodes's calculations are not quite correct: a 36-inch cylinder will not work two pumps of 40 inches, nine feet high, and unless you can erect engines cheaper in Ireland than in England, which I have never found to be the case, such an engine could not be erected for 1,100*l.* We are erecting one of the same size on the Grand Junction Canal for a similar purpose, because we have no alternative, and we considered it as a cheap contract in getting it done for 1,900*l.*

I cannot cease to recommend the making a reservoir, for if it cannot be filled otherwise, you may certainly fill from the Liffey, and a time will come when it will be very valuable for other purposes, if there should be more than you will want for the canal.

When you have leisure and money for altering some of your locks, which waste so much water, there can be no doubt of its propriety, but as I take it for granted that you have no immediate intention of doing it, I will not at present take up your time and my own in the consideration of it.

The estimate for the Mountmellick Canal appears to be liberal in prices, but I cannot without more particular information form any correct opinion either of the plan or the expense.

(signed) *W. Jessop.*

261. Putting aside the question of the locks, do you think it would be worth your while, by dredging and by placing proper beacons, to bring the navigation into that state prescribed by the contract?—Yes, the locks are the great difficulty, and the bridges; I think before the summer is over, and when the works now in progress are finished, the navigation will have sufficient depth of water.

262. You can have no objection to giving the Board of Works power to enter the navigation and inspect the works, and perform all necessary improvements, and charge you with the expenses?—We have no objection to their visiting or inspecting the works on the Shannon every year, or as often as may be necessary, and that Board has power to do so now; they have all the powers of the Directors-General of Inland Navigation, and the latter Board frequently ordered an engineer to examine the works, and if there appeared any defect in the works or navigation, they were empowered to call upon our Company to make good such defects; but that Board, never to my knowledge, complained of defects in the navigation.

263. But you are so ready to do your part, that you have no objection that they should have a power of compelling you to do so?—I think it would be our interest, if we find there are any defects upon the Shannon that might impede its trade, our interest is to have them removed, and we have always done so; there is no person or persons more interested in the trade on the Shannon than the Grand Canal Company.

264. With respect to the additional powers to be given to the Board of Works, to force you to perform the contracts, you can have no objection to a power being granted to the Board to compel you to perform the contract?—We have always resisted the power being granted to any Board over us; when we got the Parliamentary Grant of 150,000*l.*, there was no Board of Control placed over us. The Royal Canal Company is under certain control of Government and Board of Works, but we would not submit to any control of that kind.

265. Have the Grand Canal Company received any grant of public money since they closed their account with the Directors-General of Inland Navigation?—Yes, the grant of 150,000*l.* in 1814, as before stated; which sum was

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applied to the liquidation of the debt of the Company, together with the advance of 50,000*l.* on the part of the Company; at that period the interest payable on the debt was 65,000*l.* a year, it is now reduced to about 28,000*l.* British.

266. According to your own statement, your compensation should only be 20,000*l.*?—Provided the Government should call upon us to do what, in my opinion, is perfectly useless.

267. But which they have a right to do?—Yes; but it is throwing money away without accomplishing any useful benefit to the trade in the river.

268. If all Mr. Rhodes's recommendations were carried into effect, would not your trade on the Grand Canal be very much increased?—If Mr. Rhodes's plan was generally carried into effect, it would increase the trade upon the Grand Canal very considerably, but not by sinking the river or the present locks and bridges, but the drainage of the ground, that would be of the greatest advantage and importance to the improvement of the country, and the improvement of the rivers that run into the Shannon would prove beneficial to the trade on the Grand Canal.

269. Would not that increased benefit to the trade on the Grand Canal be worth the 20,000*l.* you demand?—I should hope we should have a very considerable advantage from it, if the plan was carried to the extent that Mr. Rhodes has recommended, but not to the extent mentioned.

270. And worth the 20,000*l.*?—Not according to my view of it; but any gentleman on the Committee can form his own opinion upon that subject.

271. You have said you cannot be supposed to be answerable for shoals or other impediments in the river, that you suppose to have been produced by floods or other casual causes?—Certainly.

272. Have you looked at Mr. Rhodes's report?—Only this morning.

273. You are aware perhaps he has stated there are shoals that have existed there for a longer time than you have stated?—No, I am not aware of it.

274. Confining your answer to that portion of the river which you navigate, are you prepared to state your opinion, that there is at this time no permanent shoal, and none but what has accumulated the last few months?—I am not aware of any defect in the river or any shoal, unless it has been occasioned by the beacons erected by Mr. Grantham, that have fallen into the canal, or the beacons that have been put up recently, or from the other causes beforementioned.

275. You are in the habit of having the navigation periodically inspected?—Yes; it is the duty of the engineer to make frequent inspection of the works on the Shannon.

276. Would he not think it his duty to report the beacons falling into the river, or the stones falling in?—Yes, when it comes to his knowledge; the first information of such occurrence sometimes comes from the owners of vessels, and it is the duty of the engineer to immediately attend to such information or representation.

277. If a loaded boat meets with one of those obstructions, the parties make a complaint, in England; is it not so in Ireland?—Yes; we are liable to more obstructions in the Grand Canal than in the river, and where there are six feet water in the body of the canal; these impediments are generally caused from streams or inlets flowing into the canal, which generally convey bog-stuff and gravel into the canal, and on which the boats are liable to get fast.

278. Do you mean to say it is your opinion that the engineer has reported the great majority of those instances, and that the Grand Canal Company has in all those cases made an outlay to remove the obstruction?—Yes; the estimate I gave in yesterday was with that view, and particularly states all the necessary works to be done and expense of execution; every year at least it is his duty to make a report of the works necessary; he gives a detailed estimate of the expense, and the whole amount of those works I believe seldom exceeds 200*l.*

279. Have you any idea of how many beacons that have been put upon the land have tumbled into the Shannon and remained there?—No; I know there are many wanting upon the Shannon, and in the winter season the navigation is very imperfect without those beacons.

280. With reference to those beacons, you say you have entered into a contract with Mr. Grantham to repair them?—Yes.

281. If

281. If that contract had been completed should you have had the whole 110 beacons, as you were bound by your contract, in perfect repair?—Yes; it was to effect that object Mr. Grantham was employed. He engaged to beacon every part of the Shannon where beacons were necessary.

282. Was he to put up the 110 beacons?—As to the number I cannot say; but he was bound by his contract to erect beacons on all parts of the Shannon from Athlone to Portumna, and to keep them up and in good order for three years.

283. He was bound to keep up your number?—For three years. The beacons were complained of; they were very inefficient. The country people were constantly in the habit of cutting the original ones, as before stated, to make axletrees for cars, and Mr. Grantham made complaints of the inefficiency of those beacons. Mr. Grantham was employed on the Shannon by Government for several years, and was sent to Ireland by the late Mr. Rennie to inspect and report on the state of the Shannon for the information of Government.

284. You stated you had upwards of 110 beacons when you took the Shannon?—Yes.

285. And Mr. Grantham was bound to keep up that number?—I am not aware of the number; but I think that was the contract, at least he was bound to erect a sufficient number.

286. Was Mr. Grantham's contract for more than 12?—Yes, considerably more; his contract went from Athlone to Portumna. I cannot charge my mind as to the number.

287. Can you put in Mr. Grantham's contract?—Yes, I can write for it.

288. You have no estimate of the expenses of the repairs required on your part of the Shannon for the current year; you had the estimate laid before your Board this time last year?—I cannot say; it is the duty of the engineer to report on the state of works on the Shannon every year, and I have no reason to doubt his having done so.

289. Can you procure a copy of his report?—Yes, I can write for it.

290. Mr. Rhodes says there are only 16 beacons between Athlone and Portumna; supposing that Mr. Grantham's death has prevented the erection of the additional beacons, how is it you account for your not having gone to Mr. Grantham's securities for the additional 94 that are missing?—Whatever they were we have applied frequently, and Mr. Grantham's death was the cause of their not being erected.

291. When did Mr. Grantham die?—I cannot say. Summer is the only time to erect beacons on the Shannon.

292. When did you enter into the contract with Mr. Grantham?—Upwards of two years ago; we have done every thing we could do to enforce the fulfilment of the contract. We gave directions for completing those beacons before we had any knowledge of Mr. Rhodes's report, or of his being employed on the Shannon.

293. Are you sure Mr. Grantham's contract was for more than 12 beacons?—Yes; the contract went for the beaconing of the entire Shannon. I am satisfied in my own mind it was so.

294. Subsequently to the year 1814 has the Grand Canal Company received any grant of public money?—They have received at different periods when they were making the canal a certain portion; but no grants since 1814.

295. Have they received any since 1814?—Only 150,000 £. before mentioned, and that grant was on special conditions that we should make no dividends, and apply all our surplus profits to the reduction of the debt, and subscribe 50,000 £. of our own money, that is making the entire sum 200,000 £. to be so applied, and we have made no dividend since that period. All the surplus profits or funds have been applied to reduce the debt of the Company.

296. You are acting under those contracts?—Yes, we are.

297. You stated you consider that the improvements in the river navigation will be beneficial to the trade on the canal; will you state why it is you charge an additional toll on the boats that go to Limerick conveying certain articles?—There is no additional toll charged on the Shannon; there is a charge only in one instance, and that is a contract with Mr. Williams; but it does not exceed the usual toll charged to other traders on the Shannon. Upon entering into the contract with Mr. Williams to induce him to expend a large sum of money in establishing a steamer on the Shannon, we made a considerable re-

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duction in the tolls usually charged, as an encouragement to him to undertake the establishment of steam-boats on the Shannon, and reduced the toll from 10*s.* to 5*s.* a ton for goods brought from Limerick, or from a mile below Portumna to Dublin; and the goods from Portumna, or corn brought to Dublin, paid 10*s.*; that agreement was for 14 years, upon the condition of Mr. Williams expending a certain sum of money in establishing those steamers: that shows the Committee how anxious we were, and how much interested we are, in the prosperity of the trade of the Shannon. Our tolls from the Shannon harbour to Dublin on the canal are 8*s.* 6*d.* or 9*s.* 6*d.* per ton, and from Limerick the tolls charged is only 5*s.* upon the canal, and only 3*s.* a ton on corn exported, and the last reduction of toll was given since the first contract was entered into with Mr. Williams at 5*s.* a ton; we have made the further reduction to encourage the export trade from Dublin of corn brought from Limerick, and now corn exported from Dublin brought from Limerick pays only 3*s.* a ton.

298. Are the Committee to understand, that if a boat conveying 50 tons of meal and flour and butter goes down to Limerick, that it is charged half-tollage, but that the corresponding number of tons coming back will be charged 10*s.*?—I was coming to that point. The conditions of the contract with Mr. Williams were, and they were suggested by himself, that in order to secure to the Company the trade of the Shannon, and from the inducements we had given to make the establishment of steamers upon it, that he should, if he employed those steamers to other purposes, such as diverting the trade downwards to Limerick instead of the canal, that he, in that case, should pay the same rate of toll as every other trader paid.

299. Does not it amount practically to a prohibition to carrying on any trade with Limerick?—I do not know that; I believe the full toll was never paid by Mr. Williams.

300. Do you not consider that 10*s.* a ton, put on Mr. Williams under those circumstances, would act as a prohibition to the trade?—I do not know what his feeling may be; it has not acted as a prohibition; we had a considerable trade from the Shannon before Mr. Williams became a trader upon it, and we charge the same rate of toll to Portumna.

301. Then the Committee understand you, that Mr. Williams bringing goods to Dublin from Limerick, pays less than a private trader coming from Portumna?—Yes, one-half less.

302. If he takes goods from any part of the Shannon above Portumna to Limerick, he no longer is allowed that privilege, but he pays the same as a private trader?—Exactly so.

303. Then, practically speaking, you give him a bonus for going up to Dublin, that would induce him not to carry on any trade with Limerick for fear of losing that bonus?—It may operate so on trade from the Shannon to Limerick, but that only extends to one cargo, for the same number of tons he takes up and brings down.

304. And only a particular species of goods?—I believe it only extends to corn and merchandize. I do not think it has operated injuriously to Limerick.

305. If you do not think it operates injuriously to Limerick, why did you enter into it?—I think it is a dead letter. I think the Grand Canal Company do not think its continuance of any importance.

306. Is it the intention of the Grand Canal Company to give it up?—I have no doubt, if Mr. Williams stated to the Grand Canal Company that he considered it interfered with his trade, that the Directors would have no objection to rescind that part of the agreement; this proposal emanated from himself, and if he stated it was injurious to him as a trader, I think it would be given up.

307. Supposing the question was mooted before the Grand Canal Company in this way, that some persons upon the lower portion of the Shannon were to say, this appears to you, according to your own proposition, a dead letter; we think it a hardship; we do not say we shall gain anything by it, but it makes us appear as a foreign country; what would be the result?—My opinion is, that it ought to be given up; it is not worth one farthing.

308. Supposing that portion of the river in your possession were in the hands of Government, or in the hands of a public body, they would not think of making a distinction then as between Dublin and Limerick?—Certainly not.

309. What was the object of the Grand Canal Company in taking upon themselves

themselves the management of a portion of the Shannon?—Decidedly that of getting the trade of the Shannon; particularly the trade to and from Limerick by canal conveyance to Dublin.

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310. Did you understand that the interest expressed by the merchants at present in Limerick, was only to facilitate the trade with Dublin; did they not also make it a point to facilitate the trade with Limerick?—The great object, as far as I can charge my memory, the merchants of Limerick had in view, was the carrying on the export trade through Dublin; from the difficulties and delays attending the navigation from Limerick to the sea, the great object was to send the goods for expedition through Dublin by canal.

311. But you are aware that the merchants of Limerick are supplied from all parts of the country with the produce they export; and if the Shannon navigation was open to them, they would import probably, first, from Lough Allen, and probably, in the next instance, send it to Dublin, if it was a cheaper conveyance than the other way?—I have very little idea that any corn will go to Limerick from Lough Allen unless the price was higher there; in such case it might go. The corn-market at Dublin is generally higher than at Limerick.

312. For that reason you do not give it a fair trial?—We are not carriers or traders in corn.

313. Which of these two alternatives do you think the Grand Canal Company would prefer: that Government should resume, by an Act of Parliament, the possession of the Shannon, without giving any compensation to the Grand Canal Company, on the plea of its being out of order; or that the Grand Canal Company should be compelled to put it into the state in which it ought to be by the contract of 1806?—As to that part in our possession, we should object to it being handed over to Government, unless the entire Shannon was placed under their care.

314. Which of the two alternatives should you prefer?—They would prefer the latter alternative; my answer is in reference to the contract; but provided the entire Shannon was placed in the hands of Government, and the plans suggested by Mr. Rhodes brought into effect, then I say the Grand Canal Company would cheerfully give up that portion of the Shannon which they have, upon such moderate compensation as the Government would be pleased to consider just and equitable.

315. If the Government were to undertake the whole navigation of the river Shannon without putting into effect that part of Mr. Rhodes's plan which is exclusively applied to the drainage, would that equally meet with the approbation of the Canal Directors?—I think that the improvement of the ground by drainage in the vicinity of the Shannon would increase the quantity of corn, and that the improvement of the rivers which flow into the Shannon being put in a navigable state would add to the trade of the canal.

316. You are of course aware that there is a part of the Grand Canal called the Ballinasloe Branch, that stands upon a different footing from the rest; will you state to the Committee the situation of that part of the Grand Canal, and the circumstances under which it was made?—We got a loan for the making of the canal from the Loan Commissioners, I believe in 1824, which was the first money that we received from the Loan Commissioners in Ireland. I believe Mr. Goulburn was Secretary for Ireland at that time.

317. Was it a grant or a loan?—It was a loan, not a grant; the loan was lent to us on a mortgage of the tolls arising from the Canal.

318. In whose hands are the tolls now?—In ours; but they are mortgaged, as before stated.

319. How much do they amount to?—They latterly have very much fallen off, in consequence of the malicious breaches made in the canal; I think they averaged, when the canal was open, to about from 800*l.* to 900*l.* a year.

320. You have not repaired them?—Yes we have; the net receipts of revenue was regularly paid into the Treasury, but it cost 1,700*l.* to repair one of the breaches, and the canal was in consequence six or seven months unproductive.

321. Is the money repaid to Government?—No.

322. Is any part of it?—The net money we receive we pay into the Treasury.

323. Do you receive enough to pay the interest?—No.

324. What

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324. What was the interest?—Four per cent.
325. What does the interest amount to that you pay?—The sum we have hitherto paid, when the canal was open, was about 800*l.* per annum.
326. What was the amount of the loan?—£. 47,000.
327. What is the length of that canal?—About 12 miles, and nine-tenths of it bog, and therefore, in case of breach, more liable to collapse.
328. Those accumulations of gravel that impede the navigation, how are they generally removed on the Shannon?—By dredge-boats.
329. Do you possess a dredge-boat?—Yes, we do; and we have an additional one engaged to get the shoals and other impediments, alluded to by Mr. Rhodes, removed. We hired the boat from Mr. Williams; it is worked by steam.
330. Are there not some impediments that cannot be removed, except by steam?—No; our dredge-boat is more fit to take up the large stones than a steamer.
331. Supposing that the river Suck was made navigable up to Ballinasloe, would the Grand Canal Company think themselves entitled to compensation?—I think so; it would be running a parallel line of navigation to the Ballinasloe Canal. Our Company, before they undertook to make a canal to Ballinasloe, employed eminent engineers to ascertain how far the river Suck could be made available as a navigation, and their opinions were decidedly against an expenditure of money for that purpose.
332. Did you ever hear of a canal receiving compensation from another canal, because it came near it?—No; one of our great misfortunes, was the close approximation of the Royal Canal.
333. Are the tolls on the Ballinasloe branch at the same rate as on the Grand Canal branch?—No. In getting the loan, the Commissioners stipulated we should not charge more than a penny halfpenny per ton per mile, and the loan was to bear interest from the period of our getting each advance of money; but the canal did not come into operation for four years, although interest was chargeable from the time of each advance, and the interest therefore accumulated to a considerable amount, although no revenue was produced from it. A Bill has since been passed authorizing loans to be granted at a less rate of interest, and the interest only chargeable from the time the canal is navigable.
334. Are you aware that Mr. Rhodes recommends a cut from Ballinmaher to Lough Rhea?—No.
335. Supposing this cut was to be made from Ballinmaher to Lough Rhea, would the Grand Canal Company consider themselves entitled to compensation?—It would very much interfere with the trade of the Grand Canal, if steamers were established there.
336. What amount of compensation should you consider yourselves entitled to?—I cannot say; but this is not a new subject, it has already been all before Parliament.
337. What compensation did they ask for?—The Grand Canal Company resisted the extension of the Royal Canal to Tarmonberry on the Shannon, conceiving it would be injurious to their interest, and that it would not be just for the Government to grant money to another Canal Company to enable them to interfere with our rights.
338. Was there ever a question of money compensation?—No; the Privy Council decided in favour of the Grand Canal Company.
339. You cannot state the amount of money that would compensate?—I never heard the amount mentioned; the object was to prevent that line, and to send it more northward.
340. Do you receive any positive income, after paying interest on the money borrowed from Government on the Ballinasloe branch?—No; nor the interest itself, nor anything equal to it.
341. Should you not think it sufficient compensation for rendering the river navigable, if they forbore to ask that interest from you?—The Government cannot call upon us to pay more than we receive from the tolls upon it; they have no claim upon our canal or our tolls, only on the tolls derived from the Ballinasloe line; the mortgage is upon the net profits of revenue from that canal, after all the expense has been deducted for maintaining it and keeping it in repair, and we regularly pay over the surplus when called on.

342. So

342. So that if the navigation of the canal suffers, the compensation should be made to Government?—It is vested in us. N. Fanning, Esq.

343. You are only trustees?—It is regularly mortgaged to Government for a loan of money lent to us upon certain conditions. 12 July 1834.

344. You have said that the Grand Canal Company in taking the Middle Shannon upon themselves contemplated an increase of trade by bringing the Limerick trade up to Dublin?—Yes.

345. Supposing the Shannon below Limerick was improved so as to facilitate the export from Limerick, should you consider yourselves entitled to any compensation?—No, certainly not.

346. Are the boats trading upon this part of the navigation from the Shannon harbour to Ballinasloe often obliged to take half loads in the summer season in consequence of the want of water?—No, I am not aware of it, except during the repairs caused by the breaches.

347. Do you conceive you have any right under that contract or otherwise to prevent any other person or body from making any lateral branch into that part of the Shannon that you claim?—I do not say that we do; the only thing we objected to before was that the public money should not be given to do us an injury. If any private individuals chose to expend it we do not object to it; but it would not be a just thing towards us to set up a rival company.

348. Have you full powers from the Canal Directors to treat with Government if necessary?—Lord Cloncurry came over with me, and the great object of our coming here was, not to enter into a detailed account of all the various impediments stated to exist in the Shannon, but to state to the Committee we should be most anxious to render every facility we could to have the Shannon improved to the extent which it ought to be.

349. You have stated that the only advantageⁿ you derive from this portion of the Shannon under your direction is, that it acts as a feeder to the Grand Canal?—That is the principal.

350. Is that the only advantage?—I do not know of any other.

351. The tolls do not exceed the expenditure?—The tolls of the Shannon in itself are not productive; the tolls are only collected upon such boats as pass through locks.

352. Then the only advantage you derive from it is that it acts as a feeder to the Grand Canal?—Yes, that is the principal advantage.

353. Is that the practical result of the expenditure of this money?—Yes.

354. Supposing it was transferred to the Government, would not the same results arise to you?—No body in whom the navigation might be vested could feel so much interest in keeping the navigation in a perfect state as the Grand Canal Company; and therefore I conclude the results would not be so favourable in the hands of the Board of Works.

355. Explain to the Committee any arrangement that could be made that would ensure to you the same advantages?—I distinctly state that when the Directors-General of Inland Navigation had the Limerick part of the Shannon under their care we sustained great loss by that Board placing a dam across the river, which had the effect of preventing all trade from Limerick for several years.

356. Supposing some arrangement was made that should secure to you all the advantages which, in point of fact, you could fairly make out as arising to the Grand Canal from the Shannon, should you have any objection that it should be transferred to the Board of Works without any compensation?—Yes, I should think that a very great objection would arise so long as another part of the Shannon was allowed to remain in the hands of an individual or individuals.

357. The only advantage which the Grand Canal Company can at present derive from having the Middle Shannon in their hands is as a means of extracting a certain degree of compensation from the Government, as a consideration for giving it back to them?—That is not our feeling at all; we are perfectly satisfied with the Shannon.

358. What other advantage can you name?—It is impossible for me to go into the particular advantages; but the Middle Shannon being in the hands of

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the Grand Canal Company I consider of great importance to the Company, although this navigation produce little of toll.

359. The question considers it being in the hands of Government, and not a rival company?—So long as other companies are allowed to hold other parts of the Shannon, I should consider it would be injurious to the Grand Canal Company's interest.

Lunæ, 14^o die Julii, 1834.

THE EARL OF KERRY, IN THE CHAIR.

Mr. Charles Wye Williams, called in; and further Examined.

Mr. C. W. Williams.

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360. WHAT was the state of the trade on the Shannon before the steam navigation was introduced into the river?—There was so little trade that it scarcely deserved to be named; very seldom a boat was seen passing lower than Portumna, and scarcely any intercourse was maintained between Dublin and Limerick by means of the Shannon.

361. In what year was the steam navigation introduced?—In the year 1827 the first steamer was brought to the Shannon above Limerick.

362. Were there any boats plying regularly between Limerick and the Grand Canal?—There were none that I ever heard of, except as I have stated; a boat from Dublin was frequently a month or six weeks before it arrived at Limerick.

363. Was the trade inferior to what now exists on the Upper Shannon?—I believe there is a much greater trade on the Upper Shannon at present than was ever upon the Middle Shannon before the introduction of steam navigation.

364. Are you aware that Faraday & Co., and other houses in Dublin, have boats plying twice a week between Drumsna and the Royal Canal?—I understand there are persons plying boats regularly; but the navigation is so imperfect that the boats must be able to carry very little, and the intercourse must be maintained at great disadvantage.

365. Would steam navigation confer the same advantages upon the upper part of the river as it has conferred upon the lower; and are there not many places where it is impossible to have track-ways, by reason of the great width of the river, stretching out into lakes?—I have no doubt that the increase of intercourse upon the Upper Shannon, if it could be made a good navigation, would be as great as what has taken place upon the Lower Shannon, but track-ways could not be constructed along the Shannon.

366. Would you run your steam-boats up as high as Carrick and Leitrim, if you were able to do so?—We would run our steam-boats as far as ever they could go, and I have no doubt that we should carry on a very active trade. We have sent up corn from Limerick as far as Jamestown, but the difficulties of the navigation were so great that we were deterred from ever repeating the attempt. At present the steam-boats occasionally go as high as Lanesborough; but were the navigation in a more complete condition, there would be a good trade on the river, and the millers of the Upper Shannon would bring up their wheat for grinding, which is so superior at Limerick, while the wheat for shipment would be brought down to Limerick from the up country: thus both districts of the Shannon would be benefited by the opening the navigation.

367. What articles do you carry up to Lanesborough?—Timber, slates, iron, and generally foreign imported articles, both from Dublin and Limerick, together with British manufactures.

368. Do you think you should be able to increase your trade of timber and slates up to the very top of the Shannon, if the whole river was opened?—There cannot be a doubt of it: timber, slates, earthenware, iron, and British manufactures of all sorts, would find a cheap conveyance into the heart of the country.

369. In

369. In the article of slates, for instance?—I have no doubt that the article of slates would form an important feature in the Upper Shannon trade, inasmuch as the return boats would be able to bring down produce. An instance of that occurred a fortnight ago: two trade-boats that were towed up by the steamer, having to come back, were filled with potatoes, very much to the advantage of the lower district, where potatoes were very dear, while they were very cheap above. The trip was thus rendered a profitable one.

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370. Is the part of the Shannon above Lanesborough entirely in the hands of Government?—From the northern end of the Athlone canal, where the jurisdiction of the Grand Canal ceases, the Shannon is entirely in the hands of the Government.

371. And at present any improvement that is carried on there must be done entirely by Government?—It must be done by the Government.

372. Do you remember the state of the Limerick navigation, that part that is now in the hands of the Limerick Navigation Company, while it was in the hands of the Government?—It was in a very dilapidated state, far worse than Mr. Rhodes has reported of the state of the navigation under the Grand Canal: the lock-gates were almost all in a decayed state, the banks were in very bad order, and the canal and river full of shoals: it is scarcely possible to conceive a navigation in a worse condition than this was while under the direction of Government.

373. Were the track-ways nearly impassable, and the locks in a very dangerous state?—They were.

374. What would be the effect of a lock-gate, which was in a decayed state, bursting?—It might produce incredible mischief. In the first place it would interrupt the entire navigation for a long time, and do inconceivable mischief, and possibly sweep away the navigation below it. There was an instance a good many years ago of a breach taking place of the same kind, and it took Government many thousand pounds to repair it: the whole country was flooded and great injury done.

375. What sum of money have the Limerick Navigation Company spent in improving this navigation?—They expended, in the first instance, above 3,000*l.* in rebuilding Baal's-bridge, and they have expended upon the whole, besides that, above 15,000*l.* They borrowed 8,500*l.* from the Board of Public Works, which was a part of this expenditure.

376. Have they made any improvements since Mr. Rhodes's report?—The greater part of the works were made since Mr. Rhodes's report. Mr. Rhodes surveyed it about the time they were making their alterations, when a large portion of the river and the banks was in a very bad state.

377. Are there any further works required to improve the navigation?—As far as the navigation for the passage of boats is concerned, nothing further can be done; but a great deal is yet to be done to strengthen the banks, and to remove some shoals that the mountain streams bring down, and some other works, but not such as are required to enable the boats to pass along the navigation. As far as regards the passage of the boats, it may be said to be complete, but some of the banks are in a precarious situation. For instance, the bank near Killaloe, a very narrow bank, which requires to be strengthened by a strong river-wall to prevent being swept away by winter floods.

378. Would the Limerick Navigation Company have any objection to be placed more immediately under the control of the Board of Works; that is to say, that the Board of Works should have a power of insisting upon the due performance of the contract with respect to expending money upon the improvement of the navigation?—Certainly not; but I should not recommend the Board of Public Works to have anything to do with the trading part of the establishment. I think that the Government are bad managers of works of that kind. As to keeping their works in repair, I need only refer to the state of that navigation before it was placed under the Limerick Navigation Company, when the slightest repairs could not be executed from want of the Irish Estimates being voted by Parliament; so it must ever be, unless funds are previously provided, and as the tolls of the navigation, if productive, would most likely go into the general fund, as before, and not be expended on this navigation alone. I applied to have permission to repair some damages at my own expense, but was refused.

379. Leaving it still in the hands of the Limerick Navigation Company, would

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would the Limerick Navigation Company have any objection to their being placed immediately under the Government, to see that their contracts should be properly fulfilled?—Not the least; at present they are so in fact. They are bound to expend the whole of their revenue, with the exception of 300*l.* a year, upon that navigation. Government have already a right of inspection, and of directing what works are necessary, under the Limerick Navigation Company's Act. Any other interference than that of inspection and control, and directing the necessary works to be done when such are required, and compelling their execution, would be mischievous to trade. The machinery of Government Boards is ill adapted as a trading executive, and the state of their own works on the Shannon is reported by Mr. Rhodes to be most disgraceful.

380. What state is the navigation of the river from Killaloe, where the Limerick Navigation Company leaves off, to Portumna, across Loch Derg?—It is in a tolerably good state; the beacons and buoys are maintained by Government, with an annual Parliamentary Grant of about 25*l.* a year, and, except for the maintenance of those, Government have no other works there. There is, however, a great deficiency of piers and landing-places on Lough Derg.

381. Does Mr. Rhodes recommend the erection of any landing-places at Lough Derg?—Yes; he has stated that there is a great deficiency of them, and that the erection of piers and landing-places would be very beneficial. There is not single pier or landing-place upon the western side of Lough Derg, and but one or two insignificant ones upon the eastern side, though the Lough presents a coast of from 60 to 70 miles extent.

382. What course would be the most beneficial to your trade for Parliament to adopt, with reference to piers and landing-places on Lough Derg and other parts of the Shannon?—Either the establishing piers and landing-places of themselves, or giving encouragement to individuals who possess land upon the banks to do so, giving them the power of levying a certain toll for the purpose of maintaining them. Government advancing the money, and charging a rent sufficient to cover the outlay.

383. Would the Inland Steam Navigation Company be ready to become the lessee of piers or wharfs, if they were erected?—I have no doubt they would; but I am sure the owners of the land would prefer being the owners themselves upon their own ground, and I have no doubt under such encouragement there would soon be a sufficiency of piers erected.

384. Is there a pier now at a place called Kilrush?—There is a substantially built pier there, but not sufficiently large, which has been erected partly by a grant from the late Fishery Board, and partly by a contribution from Mr. Vandaleur; but there is no provision for its maintenance. Mr. Vandaleur, as lord of the soil, exercises a salutary controlling power; but I believe that if it was disputed he could not maintain it. The toll, however, he levies is light, and cheerfully paid.

385. Are you not yourselves erecting a pier at present at Cow Island?—We are, and another at a place called Garrakennedy. The Board of Public Works have now, at the instance of the Slate Company, granted a sum of money for the erection of a public pier adjoining ours, and where there originally had been one.

386. And there is no power of controlling you as to the degree of accommodation you shall afford to the public?—The pier is quite a private one.

387. You have no right to levy toll?—No; but it is our own property, the same as if it were our own store.

388. Then it would have been more for the advantage of the public if that pier at Cow Island had been originally erected under the control of the Board of Works, and the control put upon those who leased it from them?—Certainly it would have been a much better arrangement for the public, as the pier would then have been a public one, whereas now it is a private one, erected by private means and on private property.

389. At present the pier at Cow Island might be monopolized by you, and you might prevent anybody else having access to it if you were so inclined?—We have a right to do as we like with the pier, it being private property, the same as any individual may do with his own house; but I think the term monopoly does not apply to it. The Company had no alternative but to construct the harbour and erect the pier at a considerable expense, there
being

being previously no way of getting access to the shore for loading or unloading goods. If a man build a store for his own use, is it not a misapplication of terms to call it a monopoly? Any other individual may construct a pier in the same neighbourhood. Mr. C. W. Williams.
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390. In the 43d page of Mr. Rhodes's second report, he mentions that there are only 13 landing-places between Killaloe and Lough Allen, and it goes on to say that it is desirable to erect 11 more, two of which are upon Lough Derg; are you of opinion that those two landing-places are all that are required upon Lough Derg?—No; I am of opinion there should be at least four or five upon each side of the lake.

391. Then practically a great many more landing-places are required for your trade than are mentioned in Mr. Rhodes's report?—For the general trade of the country.

392. You were examined upon a former day as to that division of the river which is in the hands of the Grand Canal Company; have you anything further to add with reference to that portion of the river?—I have only to state, what I believe I have already stated, that the want of water is a great impediment; and since I was examined I have looked over Mr. Rhodes's report, and I find there are many places in which the water is as low as four feet and even three feet.

393. Is Mr. Rhodes's report confirmed by the reports which you receive from your boatmen?—It is; they complain particularly of the shoals in the Athlone and the Cloonahunogue canals; they have been lately dredged partially.

394. Do those shoals oblige you to carry much less loading in your boats than you otherwise would?—They do. For the greater portion of the year we are not able to fill our boats as we otherwise would, very much to the injury both of our trade and the Grand Canal Company, because we would be able to carry at less rates of freight if we could carry greater loads.

395. Do you think the article of Killaloe slates would become more used if you were able to carry them at less freight?—I have no doubt of it. We have contracted to carry the slates of one of the slate companies upon the river; but in consequence of not being able to fill the boats we are not able to make anything by it, when carried to the upper towns on the river; but if we were able to carry the proper loads we should be enabled to make it a profitable trade.

396. Does the existing state of the navigation prevent the extension of the markets both up and down the river?—I think it does, inasmuch as it increases the cost of carriage.

397. What are the parts where, practically speaking, there is most difficulty; is it before you enter the Grand Canal or up higher?—Both before we enter the Grand Canal and after we pass it. There are two or three very dangerous fords and partial obstructions from loose stones suffered to remain in the river, against which the boats often strike. I have no doubt that a very small sum of money would be sufficient to remove those shoals and stones. I understand, as I mentioned before, that the Grand Canal Company have reduced some of the shoals in the Athlone canal.

398. Do you carry on a regular weekly trade to Athlone?—Twice a week between Dublin and Athlone.

399. Do you carry on a weekly trade beyond Athlone?—No, we do not carry any beyond Athlone, except occasionally.

400. You said just now that the Cloonahunogue canal and the Athlone canal had been recently dredged?—Parts of both have been recently dredged. The Grand Canal Company hired the steam dredge-boat belonging to the Limerick Navigation Company, and it has been employed for some time on those canals.

401. But the navigation is still capable of great improvement, provided the contract of 1806 was fully kept up?—Still in many respects it is so very deficient, that our boats cannot pass on fully laden; which, besides the injury sustained by the boats, is one of the greatest inconveniences under which we labour.

402. Could you carry on a weekly trade at Lanesborough if beacons were erected in Lough Rhea?—If beacons and proper marks to point out the sailing course were laid down over Lough Rhea, we should be able to go with much more safety as far as Lanesborough.

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403. If the Grand Canal Company were to give six feet six inches water in every part of their navigation, and beacons were erected on Lough Rhea, do you think you would be able to have a weekly trade to Lanesborough?—I have no doubt of it; but that would depend upon the state of trade. We should certainly endeavour to push our navigation higher up than we do; and I have no doubt that we should push very far up if those improvements were effected.

404. Lanesborough being near Roscommon, do not you think you might establish a weekly trade if Lough Rhea were properly beacons?—I have no doubt that more trade from Lanesborough would pass down the navigation than does at present, and a weekly trade would soon be established.

405. What would be the expense of placing beacons upon Lough Rhea?—I suppose 200*l.* or 300*l.* would be quite sufficient.

406. Then trade can be very imperfectly carried on without steam-boats through Lough Rhea?—It cannot be carried on without steam-boats; it is a very circuitous and intricate navigation in many parts, particularly at the termination, near Lanesborough.

407. So that unless your Company, or some other Company, should be enabled to go along Lough Rhea by steam-boats, it is not probable that any trade will exist there?—It is not probable that any great trade will ever exist there except by the aid of steam-boats, either by our Company or some other; Lough Rhea being near 20 miles long, and the sailing so irregular, owing to the islands.

408. Is there any shoal at Derry Island near Portumna, which is very injurious to your trade?—There is a shoal at the point where the jurisdiction of the Grand Canal ends and the Government jurisdiction begins: that shoal requires deepening. At present there is a doubt whether a steamer can pass that shoal, unless it be smooth water. Mr. Rhodes in his report particularly alludes to that, in page 14. Not being able to induce the Government or the Grand Canal to deepen this, we are obliged at our own expense to do so.

409. Looking at the trade of the Shannon generally, do you consider that your small-class steamers could carry on a profitable trade from Lough Allen to the sea, without incurring the greater expense of the larger class of vessels, for which Mr. Rhodes's locks are suggested?—The small-class steamers would not be sufficient to carry on the trade from Lough Allen to Limerick, inasmuch as they would have to pass Lough Derg, and they would not have sufficient power to contend with the gales and heavy sea upon that Lough, towing the trade-boats; but above Lough Derg I should consider that it would be extremely injudicious to have a larger class of vessels than what now pass upon it. The locks at present on the navigation are adequate to pass a steamer of at least 40 horses power.

410. When you say injudicious, do you mean that you consider a small-class steamer actually a better boat for that kind of navigation than the 130 feet long and 30-foot wide steamers proposed by Mr. Rhodes?—I do; I think that the class of steamers suitable to pass the locks now constructed upon the Shannon is much more useful than a larger class. In the first place, they are navigated at less expense, they are maintained at less expense, and they are more easily managed in the river with the sharp bends and shoals that are so frequent, and they would do the business as well as the larger class of steamers. In fact, if the large locks were at this moment in existence that Mr. Rhodes suggests, I would not think it advisable to put a larger-class steamer than what is now upon the river. When I say a small-class steamer, I mean in point of size, not of power, inasmuch as we are improving in those small-class steamers very much, and we have now an iron steamer constructing upon that very navigation, which is equal to carry two 20-horse engines, whereas the original class of steamers had but one eight-horse engine.

411. Then you do still adhere to your previous answer, that small steamers would be inapplicable for the navigation of Lough Derg, even though an increased power were put into them?—I do, inasmuch as Lough Derg is exposed to heavy gales, almost hurricanes, and requires a powerful steamer, and particularly as great expedition is required on account of the passengers, and a greater number of trade-boats to be towed at a time than can be required on any other part of the river.

412. And you do not find any inconvenience in changing the steamers?—
None

None whatever ; the steamers being only required as tug-boats, the change is but the operation of a few minutes. Mr. C. W. Williams.

413. What amount of horse-power do you consider necessary to traverse Lough Derg?—The Lady Lansdowne is 90-horse power, and we found that the class that we had before was not sufficient. 14 July 1834.

414. What was the class that you had before?—It had one 24-horse engine.

415. What was the size of the vessel?—Eighty feet long.

416. What was the tonnage?—Above 100 tons.

417. Do not you think that power might be placed even in a small vessel sufficient to force up through any gale that could be met with on Lough Derg?—I do not.

418. If the navigation were completed so as to enable you to take your small-class steamer up to Lough Allen, which might be done by giving six feet on the sills of all the locks up to Lough Allen, and improving the navigation so as to give six feet six inches in every part of the river, do you think it would then be equal to any navigation in England?—I do ; there is no inland navigation in England that would have greater advantages ; boats carrying 100 tons might pass through such locks.

419. Then you would be perfectly satisfied if the present rate of improvement were extended the whole length of the river, without attempting Mr. Rhodes's more brilliant scheme?—Yes : Mr. Rhodes's idea of large locks, noble as it is, I do not recommend ; it would entail so great an original outlay, and so increased a charge for maintenance and management, that I am satisfied it would not be compensated by any additional advantages to trade or intercourse.

420. You mentioned a certain expense which you thought would be sufficient to put into proper repair that part of the river at present in the hands of the Grand Canal Company ; would that expenditure put it into such a state that you would be sure of having six feet six inches in all the navigation, and six feet over the sills of the locks?—Certainly not ; because in that event all the locks must be taken up and rebuilt. I do not contemplate any alteration in the size of the locks, I merely contemplated the bringing a sufficient depth in the canals and in the bed of the river.

421. What do you call a sufficient depth?—I think six feet in the bed of the river would be sufficient.

422. And over the sills of the locks how much?—The sills of the locks cannot be altered ; they have now five feet, I believe.

423. Would that satisfy you?—I could not complain, inasmuch as no boat can pass, drawing more than four feet six inches, to Dublin, either by the Royal or the Grand Canal ; so that there would be no necessity (except so far going downwards to Limerick) for making a greater depth upon the lock sills than would be sufficient for a boat going to Dublin by the canals.

424. Would your trade be ruined by suspending its operation during the time that this system of improvement was in operation?—No ; the peculiarity of Mr. Rhodes's suggestions are that there would be no interruption to the trade. He leaves the existing canals as they are, and he makes new canals and new locks in different situations ; but if the locks existing, belonging to the Grand Canal, were altered, then it would interrupt the navigation till the works were renewed.

425. Then compelling the Grand Canal Company to fulfil the letter of their agreement in 1806, by deepening the sills of the locks, would cause such a suspension of your operations as would materially injure your trade?—Yes, it would wholly interrupt or suspend all intercourse until they were completed.

426. What time would it occupy?—I think it could not be done under two years. Should, however, Mr. Rhodes's plan of weirs be adopted, their effect would be to give the required depth on those sills without the necessity of taking them up ; in that case the interruption to the navigation and stoppage of intercourse would be insignificant. Mr. Rhodes's plan of weirs would have the effect of giving ample depth of water in the summer months ; so far their erection would be highly advantageous by giving a certainty for sufficient water. This system of weirs might even be partially adopted were it not thought advisable to carry it the entire length recommended by Mr. Rhodes, as part of his drainage plan.

427. You propose that the same boats should always go from Limerick to
Dublin,

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Dublin, towed by different steamers?—Yes: in fact the steam-boats are changed just like the horses to a coach; the lumber-boat goes on, and the steamer returns with the boats going in the opposite direction.

428. Is that the case at present?—Yes: it is the most judicious mode of prosecuting the trade.

429. Do you tow those lumber-boats across Lough Derg?—We do; the lumber-boats are always towed by the steamers on the Shannon, and drawn by horses on the canal.

430. Have you ever been obliged to put a cargo on a steamer, instead of merely towing?—No; we have met some gales of wind in which the vessels have broken adrift. A few months ago a steamer was towing two vessels on Lough Derg, and there came on a very severe gale of wind, so severe as to break four strong hawsers, and the boat was driven on shore. It happened to be an iron boat, heavy laden with produce from Limerick, but although the boat beat for 12 hours upon the rocks, she was no further injured except that the bottom was disfigured; had she been a wooden boat, she would have been a total wreck and all hands probably lost.

431. If you had had a more powerful steamer plying at the time, would you have been able to avoid that?—No, for the lines broke.

432. You have mentioned that you are frequently obliged to have your vessels only half laden during three months of the year: is that an universal practice?—In the three months from the beginning of August to October, there is not sufficient water to float the boats to their bearings, say four feet six inches.

433. Have you any means of knowing how often your steam-boats have grounded for want of water?—I have not the means of stating exactly, but I know it is frequently occurring; but as we know the depth of the water, we do not load the boats more than we expect they can pass over the sills and fords.

434. What is the tonnage of your luggage-boats, and what is the draught of water when they are loaded?—No boat can be loaded more than four feet six inches, that being canal maximum. The wooden boats generally carry about 40 to 50 tons, and the new improved iron boats can carry as high as 60 to 70 tons.

435. Then it would be useless to have the Shannon at present of a greater depth than four feet six inches?—It would not be useless upon the Shannon, because there are often swells upon the river which demand a greater depth of water than the boat draws.

436. What is the draught of your steamers upon the canal part?—Three feet six is the draught of the small-class steamers to Athlone, and four feet six downwards to Portumna.

437. Are you aware of a steamer having been made of 60 tons burthen, and 60-horse power, for the Ganges, that only drew two feet?—Yes, I have seen that boat, but it was a mere flat; it was very large and long, and made of iron. When loaded, however, it would draw considerably more.

438. Why would such a boat as that be inapplicable to the Shannon?—It would be quite too large. Sixty feet is our largest lock on the canal, and the construction of the boat was not adapted to resist the severe gales on the lake, which is 23 miles in length, and many miles broad in several places; at one place there is a reach of seven miles, sufficient to raise a very heavy sea; I mean from Scariff-bay.

439. What fuel do you burn in your steam-boats?—We have hitherto burnt English and Scotch coal, but within the last six months we have made a very successful trial of burning turf, and we now burn turf in all the small-class steamers; another advantage in favour of that class steamers.

440. Then you have created a trade of turf for your own consumption, which did not before exist?—We have; and very much to the advantage of the country.

441. And if the trade on the Shannon is extended, it will be very much to the advantage of the great turf banks that are in that neighbourhood?—Yes.

442. What would be the probable amount of your expenditure in turf in a year?—It would depend upon the number of boats. We save nearly 500 *l.* a year by the use of turf, instead of coal, on two small steamers.

443. What species of turf is it?—It is the ordinary turf of the country; plain turf,

turf, which we buy of the common people in all directions; some of it by no means what would be called prime turf. Mr. C. W. Williams.

444. Have you ever compared the bulk of turf required with the bulk of coal?—I have never compared them, but the difference is very great; and that is one reason why turf could not be used in a large steam-vessel, as such would almost require a turf-stack to be built on their decks daily.

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445. What are your rates of freight along the Shannon?—They vary according to the article and the distance. We carry, at this moment, corn, flour and meal from Limerick to Liverpool, *via* Dublin, for 16 s. 8 d. a ton, paying the tolls upon the canal, and going through the whole of the inland navigation to Dublin, and then to Liverpool by our steamers.

446. How much of the 16 s. 8 d. goes to the Grand Canal Company?—Five shillings.

447. What other charges are included in the 16 s. 8 d.?—There is 8 s. 6 d. from Dublin to Liverpool by steamer, and 1 s. to the Limerick Navigation.

448. Then 3 s. 2 d. is the freight by canal from Limerick to Dublin?—Yes; independently of toll to the Grand Canal. This low freight is charged as a bounty in favour of bringing produce to the Company's steam-vessels at Dublin, and to the great advantage of the Grand Canal and the shippers of grain, &c.

449. In how many days is the corn taken from Limerick to Liverpool?—It is deliverable in Liverpool upon the fourth day.

450. What would be the rate by long sea to Liverpool of the same article, and what would be the number of days ordinarily required?—The freights by long sea vary so much that we can scarcely form an average; last year they have been unprecedentedly low, as low as 10 s.; the year before last as high as 22 s.; so that the freight by long sea was higher, independent of the insurance, than the charge by inland navigation.

451. What are the freights this year by long sea?—As low as 10 s., and I believe lower; and notwithstanding that low freight from Limerick to Liverpool by long sea, the inland navigation has been enabled to absorb a large portion of the trade, in consequence of the greater expedition of steam navigation, the certainty of delivery, and the diminution of risk and insurance.

452. What is the ordinary voyage from Limerick to Liverpool?—It is from eight days to three months.

453. Is much corn sent by long sea?—Almost all the corn is sent by long sea, except what is brought by the inland navigation.

454. What quantity have you taken by canal?—We did but little last year; we are now commencing it in consequence of the encouragement that the Grand Canal have given. They have given an additional bounty by reducing the toll 2 s. per ton out of the 5 s., leaving the toll at 3 s. for the flour and meal, and other articles; they have given that bounty in favour of produce sent from Limerick by inland navigation direct for shipment in Dublin. This low rate of freight is however in consequence of the articles being brought to the Dublin steamers; there may be said to be no profit on the canal-carriage; the profit arises from the cross-channel steamers. In this way the inland navigation acts as a feeder to the latter.

455. Supposing that 3 s. 2 d. and 3 s. per ton for grain were the freight from Limerick to Dublin, have you compared it with the prices on other canals, so as to say whether that is a higher or lower rate than the other canal prices?—I think it is lower than anything in England.

456. What number of miles is it?—It is above 130 miles to Dublin.

457. Would you say that that low rate of 6 s. 2 d., before the late reduction was made, was owing to any peculiar circumstance affecting it, as, for instance, a desire on the part of the canals to come in competition with the long-sea voyage, or was 6 s. 2 d. the ordinary rate of charge?—The reduction of the toll and freight made all the difference; in fact, those reductions created the trade. The Steam Company also lowered their freight for produce destined for shipment by their vessels at Dublin. The reduction was made to meet the competition of long sea-freight.

458. Do you conceive, that in consequence of this, the produce of the Shannon will seek its ultimate market, not by sea voyage to Liverpool, but by the canals?—I think a large portion of it will, but not only to Liverpool;

Mr. C. W. Williams. we bring it first to Dublin, and then it is shipped to the different British ports. This gives the corn-merchant the advantage of competition.

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459. Then you consider Dublin as the ultimate port for the produce of the Shannon?—We do; previously to shipment to the English market.

460. Is the produce of the Shannon necessarily sent to Limerick previously to being sent to Dublin, or are there other markets along the Shannon where it is shipped?—There are intermediate markets for the purpose of bringing it to Limerick or Dublin for shipment.

461. Is there not the market of Athlone?—The market of Athlone is only a market where purchases are made for the purpose of exporting to Dublin or to the British markets.

462. What other markets would you name besides Athlone?—Portumna is becoming a very large market; but in consequence of the regularity of the conveyance from the interior, many of the Liverpool merchants have stationed buyers along the line of the Shannon.

463. Is there much corn sent from Athlone to Limerick?—Very little; we do not carry any; it principally goes to Dublin.

464. Is there not an additional freight upon all corn sent to Dublin?—The 3s. 6d. additional charge of which I spoke is sufficient to deter us from carrying it downwards to Limerick; but that cannot be called an additional freight on corn sent to Dublin.

465. Is that the reason why corn which might be brought down to Limerick is not at present brought down?—To a certain extent; and I have no doubt, upon the turn of the market, when the Limerick market would be more favourable than the Dublin, that more would come down the river to Limerick.

466. Supposing the tolls were equalized, would not more corn come down?—Yes.

467. Is all your intercourse at present between Killaloe and Athlone carried on through the medium of steam?—It is.

468. Between Athlone and Lanesborough, would it not be absolutely necessary to have tug-boats?—It would.

469. Do you consider that it would be necessary to put the navigation above Lanesborough, as far as Lough Allen, in a situation to allow steam navigation to be used there likewise?—Certainly, as without it the river is nearly useless as a means of intercourse.

470. You consider it indispensable?—I do.

471. In case the steam navigation was not carried up above Lanesborough, would it not be absolutely necessary to have a tow-path along the banks of the river?—Unless for using the small river sail-craft. It is, however, impossible to have a tow-path, from the manner in which the river occasionally spreads out into lakes.

472. What kind of a tow-path have you between Killaloe and Limerick?—For nearly five miles of the river there is a tow-path constructed upon the side of the river; but upon this part there are no occasional lakes, as there are upon the upper part of the Shannon.

473. Is it as good a tow-path as you desire to have?—I cannot say that; it is so high and narrow that the horses often fall off it.

474. Is that portion of the river subject to inundation?—It is, so much so that there is often a sea upon both sides of the high-raised bank, and during last winter a large portion of it was swept away; the whole bank was covered with three feet of water, so that we were obliged to send men with sticks leading the horses, and feeling their way on the banks.

475. What course would you suggest in order to perfect this tow-path?—There is no way of improving it.

476. Could not you widen it?—It could be widened, but at great expense.

477. Would you consider it advisable to introduce steam upon that navigation?—We have already tried steam there.

478. Have you steam upon the Lower Shannon between Limerick and the sea?—We have one steamer, and we are now preparing a large iron boat for that station.

479. What was the state of trade upon the Lower Shannon previously to your establishing a steam navigation?—The trade was carried on by means of small sailing-boats.

480. Of course the trade was subject to great delays and great uncertainty? *Mr. C. W. Williams.*

481. Were there any species of any better description of craft, carrying passengers between Limerick and the different parts of the Lower Shannon, at that period?—There were small cutters called packets, that went down to Kilrush occasionally; but the navigation was so tedious that they carried very few passengers.

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482. There had been a steamer upon the lower navigation some years before?—So I understand; but being very inefficient and badly managed it was abandoned.

483. Do you carry the great mass of the passengers that go down the Shannon at present?—Nearly all.

484. Do you carry much produce?—We do not carry much produce; we carry live stock. We bring large quantities of pigs to Limerick market; we do not carry grain to a great extent, but I think there will be a great increase in it. We should have done more, but for the want of piers and means of getting the grain on board with convenience.

485. At present do you only ship corn from Kilrush?—And from Tarbert.

486. You have a pier at Kilrush, but have no such accommodation at Tarbert?—We have not; but we have placed a floating vessel to act as a temporary depôt, and bring the produce and put it on board that vessel, and then trans-ship it to the steamer as she passes by.

487. Do you take much corn from Tarbert?—A good deal.

488. Of course the pier recommended by Captain Mudge would be a great convenience to you?—No doubt; but I despair of seeing any such erected.

489. Are you aware of any accident having happened upon the Lower Shannon to those sail-boats?—There were several accidents, one very serious one lately.

490. Do you think that if a pier was erected at Tarbert you would be enabled to ship the produce at such a rate as would enable persons to avoid risking their lives and property in the way in which those were lost?—I think we should. The necessity of erecting a pier at Tarbert is so great that our Company are going to erect one at their own expense, of about 1,500 *l*.

491. From Tarbert and Kilrush to Limerick you have no landing-place on either side of the river?—None for 40 miles on either side of the river.

492. Do you think that would be an important improvement, to have landing-places?—I think the country is in great want of them, and a great improvement would follow their erection.

493. Is there not a great deal of grain and produce of various kinds shipped at present from Foynes?—I believe there is, by the small open river craft.

494. Is there not a considerable quantity shipped from Labeshida and from Kildysart?—Yes.

495. Does not Askeaton also supply a considerable quantity of produce?—Yes; but not so much by water as by land, in consequence of the state of the navigation up to Askeaton. That navigation is under the Government.

496. Are you aware of the state of the roads between that part of the county of Clare on the western part of the Fergus and Limerick?—Yes, I am: they are in a very inefficient state.

497. Have you not to travel about twice the distance by land which it is by water?—Upon all parts to the west of the Fergus you have double the distance.

498. What points upon the river between Tarbert and Kilrush would you suggest as proper points for landing-places?—I examined that part of the river lately, and think there might be a pier erected at Foynes, and another at the termination of the Fergus, near where it joins the Shannon, with great advantage.

499. Do you think it would be desirable to erect a pier between Foynes and Mount Trenchard?—No; Foynes being a central spot between Tarbert and Limerick, would be a very advisable point.

500. Have you paid any attention to the possibility of erecting a pier upon one side of the river?—There is no difficulty in that whatever. I never saw a place where so useful a pier could be erected at so small an expense as at Foynes.

501. Have you not the best material close at hand?—Yes, and deep water.

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502. Are there the same facilities in other places?—In several places along the Shannon there are great facilities for erecting piers.

503. You have nothing to bring you up from Tarbert till you come to the Beeves?—There is no intermediate port.

504. And from the Beeves to Limerick the difficulty of navigation commences?—It is certainly more difficult than below; there are many obstructions from occasional rocks and the want of buoys.

505. Have you found that the state of that part of the navigation has detained your steamers occasionally both at Limerick and below the Beeves, in order to wait for tides?—No, the steamer is never detained. The obstacles I allude to were with sailing-vessels. If there were a sufficiency of beacons and buoys there, it would do for steam navigation.

506. Is there a sufficient depth of water at all times of the tide?—No; there is one part of it, near Limerick, where there is a shoal.

507. Which would be removed by the projected improvement?—Yes.

508. And of course the removal of that would materially facilitate the intercourse between Limerick and the sea?—It would very much.

509. Has not this part of the navigation been improved of late by building a lighthouse at Tarbert?—Yes, very much. That lighthouse is a great advantage to the Limerick shipping interests.

510. And have not there been some beacons and buoys erected there?—I am not aware of any beacons having been lately erected.

511. If the trade to Limerick should continue to increase so much in future as it has of late years, would there not be funds arising to the Chamber of Commerce, which will enable them to improve the navigation of the lower part of the river?—I should hope that the trade of Limerick would be sufficient to improve the navigation up to the town.

512. Are not you of opinion that the outlay which Limerick is about to make in the harbour, and the part of the river about the town, will take all the money they can afford to lay out for some time to come?—I am afraid it will.

513. Do not you consider it the duty of the Ballast Board to improve the navigation?—I do not know how far their jurisdiction extends, except in the construction of lighthouses.

514. Is much corn sent from the county of Clare and the county of Galway to Limerick?—It is all sent, except what is exported from the port of Clare; the export from the port of Clare is considerably increased of late.

515. Do you know of any country boats conveying corn to Limerick, which have been lost on the Lower Shannon?—Yes; there have been several, I have heard, of late.

516. Do not you consider that the loss of those vessels would in many instances be prevented if there were quays and proper places along the river in which they could take refuge?—I do not know that the construction of quays would make the navigation of vessels more secure; for that description of craft, after they have once got the cargo on board, the piers that would be erected would not be a safe place of refuge; they would be merely shipping places, nor would they provide any safe anchorage.

517. Do you know the quay at Beh Castle?—I do.

518. Do not you consider that that is a refuge?—No; I think it would be very imprudent to approach it in a gale of wind.

519. Have you ever heard a project started for making a harbour at Kilrush, by building from the end of the present pier across to Hog Island, and along the Hog Island, and then a pier to Scatterry Island?—I have heard of it; but even half of it, say across to Hog Island, would make one of the finest harbours in the world.

520. You have seen Mr. Rhodes's plan for improving the port of Limerick?—I have.

521. He calculates that it would require about 80,000 *l.*, for which he takes about 24,000 *l.* from other sources, leaving about 50,000 *l.* to be charged upon the commerce of Limerick; do not you think that any tolls arising out of the commerce of Limerick would be absorbed by such an improvement as that?—I think it is likely it would be so absorbed for a great many years.

522. You have stated that you have taken some cargoes of produce to Liverpool; have you taken any to other British or Scottish ports?—We have not taken any ourselves except to Liverpool; but we have transferred it to the

the London and Clyde Steam Companies at Dublin, by which it is taken from *Mr. C. W. Williams*.
that port.

523. What class of vessels are those that ply between Limerick and London?—They are very fine vessels; they are of the first class of sailing vessels.

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524. Do you think it would be expedient to establish a communication between Limerick and the British and Scottish ports through the medium of steam-vessels?—I do not; if it had been practicable, we should have done it before; but the navigation is so long and so dangerous, that no trade can compensate for the risk and the great expenditure by it. There would be but little back freight from British ports, and the direct trade in grain and other produce would never support an adequate establishment of steam-vessels.

525. Is there much American trade at Limerick?—There is a very great American trade in timber.

526. Is not it very well adapted for the American trade?—It is.

527. If piers be erected along the river, would you not be able to touch at each of them every day, or would you take each bank of the river on alternate days?—That would depend upon circumstances: the steamers that take passengers would go on without delay, and the other class of steamers might stop in the course of the day and take produce on board, or tow the lumber-boats.

528. Are the Liverpool merchants, connected with the trade of Ireland, anxious for having the proposed improvements in the navigation of the Shannon and the Fergus?—They are; they take a very great interest in the subject.

529. Do you conceive that the erection of those piers would be so beneficial generally as that a portion of the public money granted should be appropriated for their erection?—I think it would be well worthy the attention of the Government to construct those piers; but I think it might be done without doing it in the shape of a grant. I am satisfied that if Government were to encourage the building of those small piers, advancing the money in the first instance, and letting them upon lease to tenants at a moderate rent, and giving those parties a power to raise toll, I am satisfied that a sufficiency of piers would soon be erected along the Shannon. The amount of toll might be regulated by the Board of Public Works; but without the power of levying toll to maintain the pier and compensate the outlay, no individual can be expected to build a public quay or pier.

530. Suppose that in each case the landlord was to advance one-half the necessary sum, and the other half to be advanced by Government?—That would be a very advisable measure. I originally proposed certain clauses to that effect in the Bill which constituted the Board of Public Works, but they were rejected, inasmuch as it was apprehended that the giving power to levy a toll would be a dangerous measure.

531. What are the necessary tolls that one of your canal boats has to pay from the upper part of the Shannon to Limerick?—The necessary tolls are about 1*l.* per ton for five miles upon the river.

532. For example, in Lough Rhea and Lough Derg?—There is no toll upon Lough Rhea or Lough Derg.

533. What is the toll upon the Killaloe navigation?—The maximum charge is 1*s.* per ton for the whole distance of 15 miles.

534. If the necessary expenditure on the Shannon were undertaken by some private company, do you think that the returns by the additional toll would be sufficiently remunerative?—I am quite sure it would be wholly inadequate.

535. Do not you think that piers might be erected in such a manner upon the river as to afford a refuge for small boats trading in corn?—No, I do not: in case of a vessel not being able to keep the sea, the last thing they would do would be to run for shelter to a pier; it is safe anchorage a vessel would look for.

536. Have you ever considered the question of how the money necessary for the improvement of the Shannon should be raised?—I have considered it, and see no way of raising it unless Government advances it; I am afraid there is no other way of doing it.

537. Suppose Government were to offer to advance the money without interest for a certain number of years, can you suggest any plan by which that money should be secured or repaid?—I think it quite impossible to apportion it among the respective counties to give satisfaction, inasmuch as the counties

bordering

Mr. C. W. Williams.

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bordering on where the largest expenditure would be, would be perhaps the least benefited: for instance, I am sure any improvement to the Shannon would very much improve Dublin, and I am sure Dublin would be very unwilling to pay any portion of the expense.

538. You do not think that a plan which should be based on the principle of making the counties bordering on the Shannon repay whatever should be advanced, would be palatable or practicable?—I do not conceive it would be palatable, nor can I conceive how it could be carried into execution.

539. Have you ever considered the question of repayment with reference to laying the expenditure over smaller districts, those which probably would be more benefited by the expenditure, as the districts lying more adjacent to the river?—It would be quite impossible to apportion the expenditure on districts, whether nearer or at a greater distance. In many instances the districts behind that immediately bordering the Shannon would be most benefited: for instance, the county of Roscommon, that portion of it next the river would not be most benefited; it would rather be the interior district. It is impossible to carry into operation any plan based upon such a principle.

540. Do you think that the proprietors within 10 miles on each side of the Shannon would be satisfied to have a tax laid on their estates equivalent to payment by certain instalments of the expenditure?—I think they would resist it by every means in their power.

541. The question then is, if this expenditure is made by Government, whether the property along the banks of the river be willing or unwilling to contribute to it?—Yes; and it would be certainly unjust to charge them with it, when they would not be the most benefited by it.

Mr. Thomas Steele, called; and Examined.

Mr. Thomas Steele.

542. WHAT is your name?—Thomas Steele.

543. What county are you native of?—Clare.

544. Are you a member of the senate of Cambridge?—I am.

545. Are you also a member of the London Institution of Civil Engineers? Yes, an associate member.

546. On what account were you admitted a member of that society; you were not professionally an engineer?—They did me the honour of admitting me in consequence of the invention of my diving-bell, by which I am enabled to hold conversation from under water, instead of depending upon signal strokes of the hammer; and my new theory of artificial submarine illumination.

547. Do you know the river Shannon and the river Fergus?—Permit me to make a distinction; I do know certain portions of the Shannon, and a certain portion of the Fergus very well.

548. Do you mean that portion of the Shannon called the Lower Shannon?—Yes.

549. What portion of the Fergus do you speak of?—The Lower Fergus; the part from Clare to the mouth.

550. Does the navigation of that portion of these rivers require improvement?—Yes, very great.

551. Have you read the report of Captain Mudge and the letters of Colonel Burgoyne on the subject?—Yes, and I have read them with great admiration.

552. Have you written anything yourself on the navigation of these rivers?—I have in this room a good deal of manuscript on the navigation of the Lower Fergus, and some years ago I published a work on the improvement of the navigation of the Lower Shannon; it might rather be considered not as a perfect essay, but as a good basis for some other person to write upon.

553. Do you conceive that Captain Mudge's report has supplied that superstructure?—Yes, I do; I think his report is incomparable; much more comprehensive than mine. I read it with great delight, and I hope with great improvement.

554. Do you know the feeling of the people of Limerick and Clare with respect to this proposed improvement, and the plan of Mr. Rhodes for a floating harbour?—There is an intensely strong feeling in its favour on the part of the people of Limerick and Clare, and the adjoining district on the borders of Galway.

555. Have the Liverpool merchants connected with the Irish trade expressed any

any opinion with respect to the proposed improvement?—They have expressed a very strong opinion in its favour; in support of which I beg leave to put in the following document, which I received this morning:

Mr. Thomas Steele.

14 July 1834.

19 June 1834.

WE, the undersigned gentlemen of Liverpool, merchants and others, hereby indicate that we are anxious that measures shall be taken for the proposed improvements of the navigation of the river Fergus, in Ireland, improvements which have been so strenuously recommended for their commercial importance by Colonel Burgoyne and Captain Mudge, the former the President of the Board for the Extension of Public Works, and the latter the Admiralty Surveyor.

(signed)

Cropper, Benson & Co.
 Alan Francis O'Neill & Sons.
 J. M. Mackay.
 A. F. R. Maxwell.
 C. T. Dunlevie.
 John Brown.
 Daniel Breman & Co.
 John S. Johnson.
 George Campbell.
 James Steel.
 Henry Gibbeson,
 M'Calls, Allum & Co.
 H. & G. Gregg.

Brice & Preston
 Samuel Rickman.
 Samuel Strungman.
 Richard Grudwell.
 Thomas Pyke.
 Fowler & Tunnicliffe.
 John Tipping.
 Segar & Houlding.
 Lyon & Woodward.
 Dugdale & Blanchard.
 Peter Marrow.
 W. & J. Tomlinson.

Wright & Carter.
 Twiname & Maxwell.
 Booth & Walmsley.
 Gibbons & Healing.
 Stack & Horis.
 Thomas Mahony & Co.
 Douglas, Fraser & Co.
 Bryans, Herd & Co.
 Samuel Blain & Son.
 Benjamin Harrison.
 Isaac Miller.
 Daniel Powell, jun.

The first signature is that of the firm of Cropper, Benson & Company, acknowledged to be the first mercantile firm in Liverpool; the second is Mr. O'Neal, a part of whose private correspondence I respectfully beg leave to make part of my evidence; I have erased some part, as it may be supposed to have allusion to politics, from which it is right on an occasion like this I should altogether abstain: "I am favoured with yours of the 9th instant. In reply annexed you have a copy of the memorial we hold, and the signatures already obtained thereto; we have principally confined ourselves in application to those merchants and traders that know the local situation of the Fergus, and the inconvenience sustained by the impediments of the river, in preference to having it more numerous signed; the names attached to it are all of high respectability."

556. Have you any document from these gentlemen regarding the navigation of the Shannon?—No, I have not yet; but I expect one. But I conceive that without exception the most important document I can venture to refer to, is the vote of thanks which I received from the Chamber of Commerce of Limerick, which is published in that book of practical suggestions on the improvement of the navigation, which I did myself the honour of presenting to this Committee.

557. Are you a member of the Royal Western Yacht Club, and why were you admitted?—I believe Mr. Maurice O'Connell, who so perfectly understands the navigation of the river, did me the honour of proposing me in consequence not merely of his private friendship for me, but also in consequence of my having, as far as I could, endeavoured to promote the improvement of the navigation.

558. Have you any document from the Clare mercantile men showing the advantages that would result from this?—I have one which I consider of extreme importance, from Mr. Macbeath, who is the very first merchant in the town of Clare or in the county.

559. Will you put it in?—

[The document was then put in, signed, containing the names of the two county Members, the borough Member, and a great number of merchants and traders of Ennis, and every part of the county; and of a great number of private gentlemen of the highest rank of the county Clare.]

[The following document was written by Mr. Steele on the back of this list of names:]

Clare, June 13th, 1834.

James Macbeath, Esq. who has been for 16 years a most extensive merchant of Clare, on my giving him a general exposition of what I propose making an effort to have effected for the improvement of the port of this town, has, in the first place, given my view of the improvements necessary his fullest sanction and approbation.

Now, with respect to the commercial part of the question, he has been kind enough to give me (I write from his own dictation) the following most important practical information.

First,

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Mr. Thomas Steele.

14 July 1834.

First, in consequence of the present difficulties of the navigation, although they could be so very easily removed, the rate of insurance, even a year ago, was considerably higher than for the port of Limerick; but this rate has been absolutely increased within the last few months, in consequence of the striking of a vessel (the Triton) on Boland's Rock; a circumstance which could scarcely by possibility have occurred had there been a beacon tower, a perch, or even a buoy on that rock, the cost of which would scarcely deserve to be named. The pilots have no guides in our river but land-marks, which by being indistinctly seen, frequently occasion disappointments. "What are they to do in this case," says Mr. Macbeath, "if a fog shall come on?"

Mr. Macbeath informs me, that in consequence of the present state of the navigation of the river itself, and of the port and quay of Clare, he finds, and has constantly found, great difficulty in getting merchants to send their vessels here. It is only by giving them extra freights that he induces them to come here.

Now with respect to the present quay, it lies in a difficult spot, much obstructed at the entrance by a range of rocks, where, should a vessel break from her moorings, it would be actual destruction to the vessel herself and the property. Within a short distance of the present quay, is a place where there is deep water and soft mud, and where vessels could always come in and go out with perfect safety. Mr. Macbeath informs me that eight vessels, four of them his own, have been actually lying here together in the mud, waiting their turn before they could come to the present quay. This detention to vessels must cause of course (as before mentioned) a very strong objection to their coming under present circumstances to the port of Clare. No improvements, or scarcely any, have been made in the port of Clare within the last 30 years, though the trade is now six times the extent of what it was then!

The quay was then built principally for boats. Now the best materials may be had on the spot on very cheap terms for building a new one. Lime and stone as good as any in Ireland; and the wages of mason-work and labour very moderate. Culum and turf and limestone are on the spot.

Masters of vessels, at first unconscious of their danger, (having come to the quay at high water,) when they afterwards saw themselves surrounded with rocks, have strongly expressed their alarm, and often distinctly declared to Mr. Macbeath that they would never come here again.

This points out in the most powerful form the necessity of a new quay in a proper situation. Twenty years ago, there were never more than from eight to 10 vessels loaded in the port of Clare; but within these few years the trade has increased so that from 40 to 50 vessels are loaded here. From the improved state of the country, and the increase of cultivation, what might we not expect a trade to arrive to, which has increased to such an extent as that just described, even under the existing disadvantages? This was a question put by Mr. Macbeath in speaking on this subject.

The navigation of the Fergus to Clare is safer than the navigation of the Shannon from the mouth of the Fergus to Limerick. The flow of the Fergus is gentle in comparison with the rapidity of the currents that sweep through "The Narrows" in the Shannon; at all times the tide flows in to bring as much water to the quays, as to the quay of Limerick.

With respect to Mr. Williams's steamer, Mr. Macbeath says, if the obstacles were removed as herein stated, that a steam-boat could with the greatest safety ply in the river Fergus. In corroboration of this, Mr. Macbeath was informed of the fact, and Mr. James actually saw above the island Margratte, a steamer which brought baggage for the army at Clare Castle.

This shows that the agents of Government and the owners of the vessel considered that steamers could be sent into the Fergus with safety.

Mr. Macbeath and his son tell me that in their present business, they lay out more than 50,000 *l.* a year for grain in this port.

Mr. James, a very extensive farmer in the vicinity of Clare, who came to Mr. Macbeath's while I am engaged in writing this very important practical document, mentioned to us (and Mr. Macbeath entirely coincides in the justness of the observation) that if this port gets its fair advantages, provisions would be made up here in a very short time. There is no part of Ireland where provisions could be made up, procured on better terms or of better quality. Beef, pork, &c.; cattle of all kinds.

All that has been stated, shows powerfully the claim this county has on Government for assistance.

Should the proposed quay be built, vessels of 300 tons could come up to it; at the present quay, vessels of only from 150 to 200 tons come up, and those of 200 tons only at the top of the tide.

[The following is the conclusion of the document by Mr. Macbeath:]

There is a difference of water of six feet at the present quay, and the place proposed for a new one, although it is so near!

I conceived this document to be so valuable, that I wrote it on the back of the list of names, and it was a very powerful inducement to many to give their signatures as members of the society which I was forming for the improvement of the navigation of the river.

560. What are the immediate advantages which would result to that part of Ireland

Ireland if Government were to commence these improvements?—The immediate advantage would be the immediate employment of a great number of the people; it would then be inevitably followed by the reclaiming of large tracts of mountain land, by the drainage of bogs and swamps and riesks, and the embankment of immense tracts of slobs along the river's side, the clearing of limestone crags; and in addition, I should say, not to make anything like a political allusion, but merely speaking on the abstract ethical principles, it would produce an improvement upon the moral state of the country if the people got so much additional employment.

561. Has the introduction of steam navigation on the Shannon been found very beneficial?—Infinitely beneficial; and Mr. Williams is not merely a benefactor to Ireland, but in my opinion he is a benefactor to the human race, in consequence of the impulse which he has given to steam navigation between this country and Ireland, which set an example to the world.

562. Would it be found very beneficial if steam navigation were to be introduced into the river Fergus; and do you think the benefit would increase in proportion to the increase of the extension of the navigation?—Yes, I think the resources of that part of the country are not half developed.

563. Could you give the Committee any practical proof of the general benefit which would result to the country about the Lower Shannon from the introduction of steam navigation?—I think I could, a very strong one. When I was a school-boy, and even much more recently, the west of county Clare, about Milltown, Kilrush, Dumbeg, Kilkee, Carrickaholt, Mulloch, Kilmurry, Ibricane, &c. was considered quite a wild, in a great measure very much unknown by the people of the lower country; but now, since the introduction of steam navigation, (I do not mean the first steamer, which was of very little use, as her power was so small that they were never certain of making a voyage), since the introduction of Mr. Williams's steamers, the voyage is made in general with so much certainty from Limerick to Kilrush, that jaunting cars and other public conveyances are ready to start immediately after the arrival of the steamer, taking you through a line of country that no public carriage ever went before, by Dumbeg, Kilmurry, Ibricane, Milltown, Lahinch and Ennistymon, and so by Morris's Mills to Ennis. There are very considerable tracts of land brought into cultivation; and, what would be considered quite preposterous if any one were at that time to think of such a thing, a great deal of very good wheat is grown in that part of the country.

564. What wheat is at present exported by the Shannon, is it principally from Limerick?—Yes, principally, and which would be very much increased if there were additional facilities: there is one tract, at the extremity of Carrickaholt, perhaps the most remarkable part of Ireland; there is a population about 13,000.

565. You speak from the commencement of the western peninsula to Kilkee?—Yes, there is an immense quantity of wheat of good quality grown there; there is a population of 13,000, who speak little but Irish, but as orderly and well conducted a population as any in the world.

566. Is not a great part of that country almost inaccessible on account of the roads?—The roads were very bad when I was there; but I know Lord Conyngham's agent, Mr. Keane, does everything for that part of the country that he can.

567. Is not Carrickaholt a shipping place?—There is a small pier there where corn is shipped off.

568. We have it in evidence that the roads are very good?—They were bad when I was there, but a gentleman in the room, who is a native of that part of the country, tells me that a good road has been formed near Carrickaholt.

568*. Are you aware of the cause of the road terminating so suddenly?—No.

569. Have you heard it was from the Government grant being insufficient?—No.

570. Can you state whether any application was made for presentments by the grand jury to finish that?—I cannot state it from my knowledge, but at the same time, from my opinion of Mr. Keane's character, and his anxiety for the comfort of the people there, and his anxiety to promote the benefit of Lord Conyngham, I am quite sure he has done everything he can.

571. Who does Carrickaholt belong to?—A portion, I believe, belongs to Lord

Mr. Thomas Steele. Lord Conyngham, and other parts to Sir ——— Burton, Mr. Westly and Mr. M'Donnell and others.

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572. You have handed in a book of yours on the improvement of the navigation of the Shannon; was that, before it was published, submitted to any civil engineer or engineers?—Yes, my friends Mr. Cubitt, and Mr. Penn of Lewisham, were kind enough to give me their opinion; they are two very eminent engineers.

573. Have they any practical knowledge of that part of the country?—Not practical knowledge of that part of the country, though they have both been in it; but I said to them, “if you believe my *data* to be good, do you think my reasoning is good,” and they expressed their approbation of what I suggested.

574. You, I believe, have received the testimony of approbation of the Chamber of Commerce at Limerick, and of the trades, for that book?—The congregated trades of Limerick unanimously admitted me a member. They gave me the freedom of all their guilds.

575. Do you know whether any application has been, or is about to be made, to the grand jury of Clare, at the present assizes, about the improvement of this navigation?—I have every reason to believe, that as far as the grand jury is authorized to present, they will present; 200*l.* I believe is the maximum they have the power to present for; and permit me to observe, that the opinion of a very eminent civil engineer, Mr. Richards, our county surveyor, who got a distinguished place at the general examination, entirely coincides with Captain Mudge upon the subject. I brought Mr. Richards with me down the Fergus, immediately on his arrival into the country in his official character.

576. Mr. Richards is the county surveyor under the new Act?—Yes; a man of great eminence in his profession, and of great private worth and respectability; his opinion entirely coincides with Colonel Burgoyne's and Captain Mudge's, in stating that this important improvement could be effected at a very inconsiderable expense.

577. Are you aware the opinions of any of the gentry of the county of Clare, or any particular persons, on this subject, are favourable to the proposed improvement?—I have the signatures of several of the respectable men of Clare and Limerick, who formed themselves into an association for the purpose of petitioning Parliament. There will be also a petition to Parliament from the Liverpool merchants on this subject, when we send in our own.

578. Are you capable of saying whether it is likely that these gentlemen would object to be taxed to a certain amount for the repayment of any sum advanced for the improvement of the navigation?—It is impossible for me to say whether they would object altogether; but I am very much inclined to coincide with Mr. Williams's opinion, that it would not be easy to raise a sum of money to do it, although, in truth, the sum necessary for the improvement of the Fergus, and running a rail-road from Clare to Limerick, scarcely deserves to be named in comparison with the importance of the object to be attained; such immense resources would be rapidly developed, which are now quite dormant.

579. Have you any document from the Fergus pilots in corroboration of what you introduced in evidence?—I have, and it is in the room; but I do not think it necessary to give it in, I refer to Captain Mudge; I am quite aware of the extreme care with which he made his report, and I think it but a just compliment to him not to refer to anybody's beyond his and Mr. Richards's. I have the document in the room, but I shall respectfully decline presenting it, for the reason I have assigned.

580. Is there not a great objection to sending sharp vessels to Limerick?—Yes, very great; I have had occasion to attend two or three public meetings of the merchants of Limerick, within the last three months, and that fact was stated expressly and distinctly.

581. Do you think that the proposed improvement by Mr. Rhodes would obviate all those objections?—Yes, most certainly; his plan is a noble one; and as such I have always supported it in Ireland.

582. Have the masters of these vessels ever expressed an opinion upon that subject,

subject, relative to the danger?—Very decisively; and often in a strong form declared they never would go there again. Mr. Thomas Steele.

583. Have you yourself been on the Shannon in the course of the last 12 or 18 months?—Yes. 14 July 1834.

584. Have you observed the wreck of any vessel which took place within that period, off the Beeves?—Yes.

585. What vessel was that?—The “Cicero.”

586. What description of vessel was she?—I am not able to inform you very minutely.

587. Is she not a North American trader of the first class?—I cannot say.

588. Are you aware of the circumstances of that shipwreck?—I have heard so many different accounts, that I should be disinclined to give any opinion; but since you have spoken upon the subject, I cannot too earnestly urge the importance of a lantern on the beacon tower on these rocks; I recommended it, as you may perceive by reference to my book, some years ago, and Captain Mudge has in the strongest manner possible recommended it since. The Royal Western Yacht Club have signed a memorial to Government praying it; and I know the Chamber of Commerce of Limerick anxiously desires it.

589. Do you think it would be of advantage that a buoy should be placed on the rock on which the “Cicero” struck, or that any attempt should be made to remove that rock?—I always thought it indispensably necessary, as you will perceive by my book, that there should be a buoy placed on the Herring Rock, near the Beeves.

590. I believe Captain Mudge recommended that?—Yes, and he was quite right in doing so; for although, by keeping the tower of the Beeves close aboard, a passage can be made with security by day, still the pilots have constantly told me, particularly the best of them, Piggott, who taught me to steer through the passage, that they would feel it of great use to have a buoy to rest their eye upon at the time they were keeping the Beeves close aboard, as the current in the ebb drifts obliquely across the river with so much violence on the Herring Rock.

591. Would it in your opinion be useful to lay out any sum in the improvement of the navigation of the Shannon at the point spoken of by Mr. Williams?—I think that a pier at the point that Mr. Williams was speaking of would be of very great benefit. In a late conversation between Colonel Burgoyne and Mr. Williams, at which I was present, Colonel Burgoyne made a suggestion which I thought an excellent one, that is, on alternate days Mr. Williams's steamers might touch at the two opposite points, Foyne's Island and on the Clare side, if the pier were formed. Too much time would be lost if the steamer were to touch at both sides every day.

592. Do you conceive that that pier should be on the western shore of the Fergus?—Yes.

593. Do you think the introduction of steam-tugs would be useful in the Lower Shannon?—I am convinced they would be of the utmost possible importance, for the current sometimes sweeps with such force through the Narrows, and particularly in the ebb of the tide, when the waters are falling off the mud, that unless there be wind to command a ship she becomes quite unmanageable amongst the rocks and shoals and foul grounds. It has been remarked most judiciously in Captain Mudge's report, and since confirmed by Mr. M'Beath, and certainly by my own experience, that the difficulty of the navigation in the Shannon through the Narrows is much greater than the difficulty of navigation in the Fergus, from the mouth of the Fergus to Clare; for in the one case the current sweeps with so much violence as to endanger the ship if there is not wind to command her; in the other case, the current is in general so gentle that it only gives assistance. The navigation of the Fergus is for small vessels decidedly superior to the navigation of the Shannon through the Narrows.

594. Has anything been ever suggested as a substitute for steam-tugs along that part of the Shannon?—Yes, in a particular part near Conagh. I some years ago suggested that a number of buoys, with rings in them to warp vessels, should be laid down there, as in consequence of the peculiar course of the river vessels were frequently greatly retarded in particular winds. I brought down the very best pilots on the river, in order that under their suggestions I might determine the points where the buoys ought to be moored. The Chamber of Commerce ordered that the late water-bailiff should put eight of those buoys at

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my disposal, but some matter or other occurred which prevented his being able to do it. I might adduce as an example of the utility of these things, that in a case near Ipswich, Mr. Cubitt had a canal cut in order to take off the reach of the river Orwell; he had a number of warping buoys on each side. When I was with him at Lowestoft he told me that, if I passed through Ipswich in my return, I should see something of the kind which I had been telling him I wanted in the Shannon.

595. Have you been at Carrickaholt, and what is your opinion as to the practicability of forming a safety harbour there?—I think a safety harbour for small craft might be formed, taking advantage of the ledge of rocks near the castle; but having gone there for the express purpose of examining the place very minutely, I am exceedingly doubtful whether it would be at all practicable to form a safety harbour that would answer for large vessels, by running a pier from near the point of the hill of Kilcredan. It was originally suggested to me to examine the place, by the late secretary of the Limerick Chamber of Commerce; but in the first place such a tremendous sea sets in there, that in wintry storms I should very much doubt whether any work could stand, erected at any expense that would be gone to by the Government for such a purpose; and furthermore I would beg to state this, that even if I could create one at this moment by a mere act of volition, I doubt very much whether it would answer the purpose, for I am not quite sure that it would not become a trap for sand, and in some years a sand bank instead of a safety harbour.

596. Are you aware that the sea has been gaining on the land at Carrickaholt?—Yes, there is historical evidence; we have it told us in the history of Ireland, that in the time of Lord Clare his yellow dragoons manœuvred on the green between the castle and the sea. Even now there is a wild legend of that part of the country, that at midnight in the wintry storms Lord Clare and his yellow dragoons rise from the surges at that point near the ancient castle, and after sweeping over Corkavaskin, plunge again before morning into the billows of the Atlantic.

597. What space is there between Carrickaholt castle and the sea at present?—Not more than a few feet.

598. At what period was that?—1690 was the period when Lord Clare lived at Carrickaholt.

599. Have your notes been compiled from absolute personal observation?—Yes, from actual personal observation, attended on the Shannon by the very best pilots of the river, and the most experienced fishermen; I took fishermen as well as pilots, because I conceive the fishermen know the points where there are rocks with peculiar accuracy, by frequently touching them with their nets. In the Fergus I brought down with me the very best pilots of that river; Mr. Richards, our county engineer, Mr. Creaghe, an admirable practical seaman, and Mr. Pilkington, who is also a practical seaman. I have not on any occasion whatever trusted to my own judgment, unless corroborated by those who of all others I think most competent to confirm me if I am right, and correct me if I am wrong. Permit me, in proof of this, to mention, that on the occasion when I first gave my exposition of what I thought necessary to be done for the improvement of the navigation of the Shannon, at a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce of Limerick, I begged permission to introduce the best pilots on the river, who had accompanied me in my excursion. The Chamber of Commerce thought that I was quite competent myself; but I persevered in requiring it, as it was a matter not of abstract science, but that of practical navigation, and the pilots must therefore be of course the very best judges in the world. They were therefore called in; I gave my exposition in their presence, and they corroborated what I stated.

600. Do you conceive, if these projected improvements were made, that the Shannon would become an object, not merely of trade, but curiosity to travellers for amusement?—I am convinced of it. There is some of the finest river scenery that I have ever seen, near the meeting of the waters of the Shannon and the Fergus.

601. Standing on the shores of the Fergus, and looking towards the county Limerick, what kind of prospect is there?—Standing on the summit of Coney Island in the Fergus, I do not think such a river for scenery is to be found in these countries; as I, of course, consider a great expanse of water an essential element of noble river scenery.

602. Standing

602. Standing on the summit of that island on the Fergus, what extent of water do you see?—It is about four miles across from Paradise to the shore, near the third anchorage; and you have a transverse line of water of 14 or 15 miles, from Manusmore and Island Macgrath, on the Fergus, to the county Limerick shore, with all its beautiful scenery, with the Galtee mountains at a distance; the scene is one of infinite beauty. There are a number of beautiful islands in this part of the Fergus.

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603. Are you acquainted with the passage from the Shannon into the open sea?—What the pilots said to me was this, (I did not want to give too comprehensive a plan, I merely wished to call public attention to it,) “if we get the improvement you recommend in the Narrows, and from thence to Tarbert, we can make the rest of the way ourselves very easily; we require nothing more.” Permit me to mention, that I have got a document from Captain Burton Macnamara, uncle to Captain Macnamara of this Committee, in which he strongly recommends that the lighthouse at Carrickaholt should be raised about 20 feet; he considered it would be a very considerable advantage to vessels on the river, under particular circumstances.

604. What is he?—A captain in the navy; a brave officer, who has seen much service.

605. Are you acquainted with the trade of Limerick?—Not so minutely as to undergo any examination. I refer to my friends, the two city Members, who are so eminently qualified to give the Committee information on this subject.

606. Are you aware that the trade of Limerick experienced considerable pressure, in consequence of the tolls levied with a view to meet the expenses for present and past improvements?—Yes, I am quite aware of it.

607. Are you aware that that pressure on the trade might be rendered still more severe by the contemplated improvements?—That depends altogether on the manner in which those improvements shall be carried into effect; but the general feeling of Limerick, as indicated by the sentiments of two very numerous public meetings, within the last two months, has been most decisive in favour of these improvements.

608. I am not at all applying to the fact whether they would or would not be glad of that, but only to the abstract question, whether the pressure upon the trade by the increase of tolls would not be rendered more severe, if the improvements contemplated were carried into effect?—Decidedly.

609. Are there any lights or buoys that are not recommended by Captain Mudge from the mouth of the Shannon to Limerick, which you would suggest?—On the very contrary, Captain Mudge has recommended many more than I would venture to suggest; he being invested with an official character. There are several that I would have suggested, but I did not like to embarrass the subject by recommending too many things together.

610. You reside in the county Clare?—Yes, latterly; my house and property are in that county.

611. Are you of opinion that any improvement experienced by Limerick would not extend a beneficial influence over the whole course of the Shannon, more or less?—I am quite convinced it would extend a beneficial influence; the geographical situation of Limerick is I think most auspicious for domestic trade and foreign commerce. I recollect I remarked particularly, in what I published, not only the admirable situation of Limerick for foreign commerce, but also the immense advantage of this close and rapid communication with Dublin by the Upper Shannon and the canal. Then if there were steam-tugs to counteract the effects of the westerly winds and the currents of the Lower Shannon, and there was a lighthouse at the Beeves, which I consider indispensably necessary, and a good floating harbour, I think the increase of trade would be very great; it is in the heart of one of the finest countries in the world. Spenser, in his *View of the State of Ireland*, calls Munster “the sweetest soil of Ireland,” and Limerick is the very heart of it; there is, I believe, no such tract of land in the empire. Limerick is in soil the richest county in Ireland; we have along the Shannon and Fergus in the county Clare, “the Corcasses,” a tract of land not exceeded in fertility by any country in the world.

612. You reside in the county Clare; now have you much communication with the gentlemen of that county?—Yes, very great.

613. Is there much anxiety amongst the gentlemen for the improvements which

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which have been suggested?—I take the liberty of referring to the document which I showed the Committee, which has been signed by every one to whom I applied.

614. Do you think the gentlemen generally of the county would be willing to undertake the repayment of any portion of the expense of the works proposed to be executed at the Fergus, if the Government were to advance the money without interest?—I do: you put the question in such a general form; by saying “any portion of the expense,” that I have no hesitation in saying they would; because the anxiety is so very great, and the sum of money which would be necessary to carry these improvements into effect is so very small, in comparison with the value of the object to be attained.

615. Do you think that generally there would be any objection on the part of proprietors of land in the county Clare to undertake that any money the Government should be obliged necessarily to advance for the improvement of this portion of the Shannon along the county Clare, should be repaid by a tax laid on their property in that county?—I am inclined to think they would be quite willing (referring to my former answer) to be taxed for “some portion,” laying down as the basis of my answer, that the necessary sum required would be so very small. The gentlemen of the county Clare are not a rich gentry; they could not in my opinion afford to advance any large sum.

616. If the sum required were very moderate, you think that the return would soon repay it?—They think so well of these improvements, and are so anxious to see them executed, that they would, in my opinion, be willing to submit to a tax for the payment of a certain portion of the money, but the proportion I am not, of course, without consulting them, capable of determining.

617. Are you aware that a considerable inconvenience has been suffered in the neighbourhood of Carrickaholt by the want of the extension of the present pier?—I am perfectly aware of it, and from the very best authority, the Rev. Mr. Duggan, the parish priest, who is better acquainted with the state of his parish than any other man in Ireland.

618. Will you state as near as you can what you conceive would be the expense of executing the necessary improvements in the Lower Shannon from Limerick to the sea?—I would rather request permission to refer to Captain Mudge, who has been there in an official character.

619. Colonel Burgoyne referred to the statement in your book?—The statement that Colonel Burgoyne did me the honour of referring to, was not made without some utility in this way: I said, let Government state any specific sum from 30s. to 60,000 *l.*, and I should be able to show them advantage equivalent. The Committee will, I am sure, as a matter of courtesy to me, permit me to state, with regard to any of these improvements which I have suggested, that even if they were to be carried into effect, I should have nothing whatever to do with the execution. I told Mr. Rice, when I first pointed it out to him at Downing-street, that if Government were to order what I recommended, I would have no more to do with the handling or expenditure of the money than I would have to do with the carving of the workmen’s dinners; that for this the Government should employ their own agents.

620. Then you cannot furnish us with any estimate as to the expense, further than what is stated by Captain Mudge?—Not at present, beyond what I have already published. Captain Mudge is much more competent to do it than I am. I have not the honour of a personal acquaintance, but I judge from his official report. I should say for a very small sum that most important improvements could be made in the navigation of that part of the river where the navigation is most dangerous and difficult, “The Narrows.” I refer to official authority for the *minutiae*, and am content that by publishing what I did, I have established the general principles of improvement of the navigation of those two rivers, and excited the public attention to the subject.

I conclude my evidence by giving in to the Committee a copy of the petition which was adopted with great acclamation by a most numerous and respectable meeting of the merchants of Limerick, held in that city on Saturday the 12th of April last. This petition was drawn by Mr. William Smyth O’Brien, a gentleman eminently qualified to judge of everything in which the interests of Limerick are concerned.

To

To the Commons of the United Kingdom in Parliament assembled.

Mr. Thomas Steele.

THE humble Petition of the undersigned sheweth, That the city of Limerick is, in point of population, the third city in Ireland. That its situation, in the heart of a most fertile and populous district, upon a river navigable below Limerick to the sea, and capable of being rendered fully available to all the purposes of inland navigation for more than 140 miles above Limerick, seems to mark it out as a spot peculiarly fitted for the purpose of trade, and destined to a high attainment of commercial greatness; but that, in aid of these natural advantages, little has as yet been done, either by private enterprise or public encouragement.

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That the want of various improvements in the port of Limerick has for a long time been felt; in consequence of which an Act was procured in the year 1823, for the purpose of enabling commissioners therein named to erect a bridge across the Shannon, and to construct a floating dock for the accommodation of vessels.

That in consideration of the convenience to be afforded to persons desirous to cross the Shannon, this Act authorized a toll to be levied upon persons passing the bridge; and in return for the advantages which the trade and shipping were to derive from the floating-dock and other harbour improvements, the merchants and traders of Limerick consented to the imposition of very heavy rates and duties upon the tonnage and exports and imports of the port.

That the commissioners, in execution of this Act, proceeded to borrow a large sum of money from the Board of Public Works, upon the mortgage of these tolls, rates and duties; the whole of which money has been applied to the erection of the bridge, which is not yet finished, and of the works immediately connected therewith.

That in the passing of this Act, such of your petitioners as are engaged in the trade and shipping, have already paid more than 1,500*l.*, and are subject to an annual burden of of 2,000*l.*, in return for which they have received no advantage whatsoever, but, on the contrary, the greatest inconvenience; and that, without the interference of Parliament, it is not probable that they will for many years receive any equivalent for the heavy tax to which they still continue subject.

That your petitioners conceive this case to be a direct violation of the recognised principle, that no person ought to be called upon to pay a tax without receiving some advantage in return.

That under these circumstances, your petitioners conceive their case calls for the special interposition of Parliament; and that in equity, either the rates ought to be altogether abolished, or that the works and improvements in consideration of which they were originally imposed, should be completed.

Mercurii, 16^o die Julii, 1834.

THE EARL OF KERRY, IN THE CHAIR.

H. M. O'Hanlon, Esq. called in; and Examined.

621. YOU are Parliamentary Counsel for Irish Affairs?—I am.

622. Can you give the Committee any information with respect to the Acts of Parliament relating to Inland Navigation in Ireland?—So early as the reign of George the First, it appears that the attention of the Parliament of Ireland was directed to the necessity and advantage of making some provision, in order to render the great rivers of Ireland, and more especially the Shannon, available to the purposes of inland navigation. In the 2d year of George the First, an Act was passed, c. 12, whereby the justices of the peace and the Members of Parliament for the several counties adjacent to the Shannon and to other great rivers, were created undertakers, for the purpose of improving the navigation of those rivers. That system continued till the 25th of George the Second, when an Act was passed, c. 10, consolidating all those Commissioners for the several counties into one general Board, and directing them to assemble in Dublin, and incorporating them, and directing them to appoint Assistant-Commissioners for the respective counties, for the purpose of superintending the works, but vesting the general control and direction in the corporation assembling in Dublin. That system lasted until the 27th George the Third, when this corporation was dissolved, and the Divisional Commissioners or undertakers were revived; this, the Committee will perceive, was a return to the principle of the 2d of George the First, the consolidation not having answered. Matters continued in this state until the 40th of George the Third, when those Divisional Commissioners were abolished, and all the powers belonging to them individually vested in the Commissioners of Inland Navigation, who were Commissioners nominated by the Lord Lieutenant. I strongly recommend

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the consideration of that Act to the attention of the Committee. By the recent Act of the 1st & 2d of William the Fourth, c. 33, this Board of Inland Navigation was abolished, and their powers transferred to the Commissioners for the extension and promotion of Public Works in Ireland. I should state to the Committee, that concurrently with these general enactments, a series of Acts has passed, divesting the general Commissioners or Corporation of their powers, as respects some particular navigations, and vesting those powers in private companies. Those were the Grand Canal Company, the Royal Canal Company, and the Limerick Bridge Company. The effect of these enactments was to vest in those private companies the property in, and control over, certain branches of the navigation. I am not further acquainted than I have already stated with the present state of the enactments affecting the Shannon; and what I know upon the subject, I know from the circumstance of having been engaged as counsel for the General Steam Navigation Company in Ireland, on behalf of a Bill passed in the last Session of Parliament; and also from having been employed by an honourable Member of the House, the Member for Kildare, to draw a Bill for the drainage of lands in parts of Ireland. I have not been employed upon the subject, in the exercise of my official duties under the Irish Government. The Grand Canal Company was created by the 11th & 12th of George the Third, c. 31. That was amended by the 29th of George the Third, c. 39; further amended by the 31st of George the Third, c. 42; and further by the 55th of George the Third, c. 143, by which a grant of 50,000*l.* was made. The Royal Canal Company was created by the 30th of George the Third, c. 20. That was amended by the 43d of George the Third, c. 22; dissolved by the 53d of George the Third, c. 101. Some further regulations, consequent on that dissolution, were made by the 55th of George the Third, c. 182; and the new Royal Canal Company was created by the 58th of George the Third, c. 35.

Sabbati, 19^o die Julii, 1834.

THE EARL OF KERRY, IN THE CHAIR.

The Right Honourable Lord *Cloncurry*, Examined.

Right Hon.
Lord *Cloncurry*.
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623. YOUR Lordship is a Director of the Grand Canal Company?—I am.

624. For a considerable number of years?—Very nearly for 30 years I have been in the direction of the Grand Canal.

625. Your Lordship has taken always a very active part in the management of the affairs of the Grand Canal?—I have been very much interested as a national concern in the Grand Canal; perhaps not so active as I should be, but very zealous when I had an opportunity.

626. Perhaps your Lordship can inform the Committee how long it is since the Grand Canal Company's works reached the river Shannon?—I should say much about the time when I became a Director; rather more; it was 30 years ago, or more than 30 years ago; they reached the Shannon about 1802, but they had not the advantage of the Shannon navigation so soon, or till the works were done.

627. Can your Lordship state to the Committee whether at that period there was any trade of any considerable amount established on the river Shannon?—The Grand Canal did not find any trade to any amount whatsoever established on the Shannon; it was very small, carried on by inferior boats; but there was an expectation and preparation made for a trade upon the canal joining; it was the great object of the Grand Canal Company and the Government that the Grand Canal should join the Shannon to create a trade.

628. Can your Lordship state whether the outlay which was expended by the Grand Canal Company in improving the navigation of the Shannon has contributed towards establishing a trade on the river?—It was the cause of establishing a very considerable trade on the river. There was an outlay in the first instance by the Company of 18,000*l.* or 20,000*l.* of their own, to endeavour to make it navigable; but it did not succeed to any great extent. It was afterwards further improved by an expense furnished by Government, by contract with the Canal Company.

629. The

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Lord Cloncurry.
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629. The first outlay your Lordship alludes to was expended upon the Shannon by the Grand Canal Company previous to the transfer of the river by the Board of Inland Navigation?—Yes; the Board of Inland Navigation did not transfer it to the Grand Canal Company till a considerable time afterwards, when the Grand Canal Company had expended 54,000 *l.* or 55,000 *l.* of the Government money, and 30,000 *l.* of their own; they had first expended 19,000 *l.* of their own money, which was allowed by the Government in the contract.

630. Can your Lordship state, whether at the time the Grand Canal Company commenced this outlay, there was any understanding between the Grand Canal Company and the Government that the navigation of the Shannon would be transferred to them?—I always understood it to be a part of the contract with Government that the Grand Canal, on executing certain works for a certain sum of money, were to have vested in them those works and the advantages of them; and they were to be subject to the frequent review and examination of the Government officers, to see that they were kept in proper order.

631. £. 30,000 is all of the Grand Canal money that has been expended, independent of the Government money?—Yes, so I am pretty certain.

632. If I understand your Lordship, the sum of 19,000 *l.* or 20,000 *l.* which you allude to, was expended by the Grand Canal Company under the express understanding that the navigation should be transferred ultimately to them, and except under such understanding that outlay would not have been made?—Pardon me. I believe that that 19,000 *l.* was laid out before any positive understanding was come to by the Government and the Canal Company, and in fact the Grand Canal Company laid out the enormous sum of a million and a half of money on their works for the purpose of going to the Shannon, and having the advantage of that great river. Instead of taking the canal through a cultivated country, where they would have a considerable trade, they took it through bog, in order to have the advantage of that river, and when they got there they found there was no considerable trade. They laid out a great sum of their own, then Government came to their aid, and they entered into a contract that for the sum of 54,000 *l.* they would put the river in a certain specified state, and of that 54,000 *l.* the 19,000 *l.* was allowed as a part; and then the understanding was entered into that when the contract was perfected the river was to be vested in them.

633. Your Lordship can inform the Committee what was the course that the Grand Canal Company adopted in constructing and perfecting their canal on the main line; they stopped at a particular point?—They stopped at a place between Banagher and Athlone, which was then called, first, the Shannon harbour; it is now a village of Shannon harbour.

634. Did not the Grand Canal Company at one time stop at Tullamore?—Yes, for a considerable time they stopped there.

635. It was then a matter of consideration whether the Grand Canal Company should extend their line of navigation up towards the Shannon, or to the southward towards the county of Tipperary?—Yes, it was.

636. Does your Lordship consider great advantages would have accrued to the Grand Canal Company by extending the line of navigation towards Tipperary rather than the Shannon?—I am sure great and immediate advantages would have arisen to the Grand Canal Company by extending their line towards Tipperary.

637. Can your Lordship state what those advantages would have been?—They would have found produce for carriage ready to their hands; they would have found a trade ready to take advantage of their canal, a great corn trade, and the great trade of all the produce of the most fertile part of Ireland.

638. Can your Lordship state the line through the county of Tipperary that was in contemplation?—There were two or three different lines suggested, but the line from Tullamore would have gone towards the neighbourhood of Roscrea and towards Nenagh, and the fine corn country between Cahir and Cashel; there would have been one level of 24 miles.

639. What would the distance of the proposed navigation have been?—I dare say with its deviations it would have been more than 40 miles.

640. Is your Lordship aware of the distance which would have been between this line and the Shannon, supposing them to have been parallel?—It went, in the first instance, a considerable distance from the Shannon; it would have

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varied from six to 25 or 30 miles in some places; it would come not very far from the left of Lough Derg, and have communication with some of the best parts of the south of the Shannon.

641. Is your Lordship aware of the distance between Tullamore and the Shannon harbour?—The distance is about 24 miles, I dare say it is 28 English miles or more.

642. Your Lordship has stated that the chief inducement which the Grand Canal Company had in extending their line from Tullamore to the Shannon was the increased facilities for trade; at the time they commenced this extension, have you any reason to know there was any understanding between them and the Government as to the transfer of the Middle Shannon?—I doubt very much if there was at that time; but the original charter, the original formation of the Grand Canal Company, was for the express purpose of running the navigation from Dublin to the Shannon; it was always the title and the understanding that the Grand Canal was formed for the purpose of joining the Shannon with the Bay of Dublin, and in fact the Grand Canal was originally commenced by the Government itself for that purpose.

643. Your Lordship considers that the Grand Canal Company were in some degree bound by their Act of Incorporation to extend themselves towards the Shannon rather than any other direction?—It was absolutely their title, and though there was no specific indenture or law binding them to it, they certainly never carried on their works without the intention of joining the Shannon somewhere; Banagher was the place where for a long while they intended to join.

644. Is your Lordship practically acquainted with the present state of the river Shannon?—Indeed I doubt if I can say that I am; for the river Shannon is so very changeable, so many changes take place in times of flood: I have gone it not very long ago, and I am generally very well acquainted with it by reading the monthly and sometimes weekly reports of its state.

645. Is your Lordship at all acquainted with that part of the Shannon at present under the Grand Canal Company?—Very generally acquainted with it, and have always been so.

646. Your Lordship of course is aware of the terms of the contract under which that part of the navigation was transferred from the Board of Inland Navigation to the Grand Canal Company?—Yes, I have seen the contract, and heard it discussed very often.

647. Can your Lordship form an opinion as to whether the terms of the contract have been conformed to by the Grand Canal Company?—I believe that, generally speaking, they have. I saw the report of the Government officer stating that the contract had been fulfilled.

648. Your Lordship alludes to the correspondence that took place in the year 1810?—I allude to the report afterwards confirmed by Mr. Killaly and by Mr. Brownrigg, and the report agreed to by the Directors General of Inland Navigation, on a review by their officers and themselves, prior to their giving up the Shannon navigation to the Grand Canal Company.

649. I believe you are aware that Mr. Killaly was employed by the Grand Canal Company in 1810, and not by the Directors of Inland Navigation?—I am pretty certain that it is so; I am not quite certain as to the exact date of his becoming servant to the Directors General; it was about that time.

650. Is your Lordship aware of the state of repair in which the works on the river Shannon have been kept up, since they were handed over to the Grand Canal Company by the Board of Inland Navigation?—Generally speaking, I am pretty well aware of it. I have gone down the river myself, and I have read the reports of the officers upon it.

651. Would your Lordship say, that they were in an efficient state of repair?—I would say, that they have almost constantly been in such repair as to give safe passage to any of the boats trading on the Grand Canal; but I will not say that the river navigation is not frequently subjected to interruptions, both from the operations of nature and the unfortunate mischiefs sometimes done by individuals.

652. Can your Lordship inform the Committee, whether the Board of Works possesses, or has exercised, any control over those works, since their transfer from the Directors of Inland Navigation?—They possess that control, by that agreement, that they should, as often as they please, review the works; and if they

they are not in a proper state, they can call upon the Grand Canal Company to set to right anything that may be deficient or wrong.

653. Your Lordship alludes to the power possessed by the late Board of Inland Navigation?—I allude to the power possessed by the Directors General of Inland Navigation, which has been transferred to the present Board of Works.

654. You consider it competent to the present Board of Works to survey any part of the Middle Shannon, and call upon the Company to put it in a state of repair?—They have not only the power, but it is their duty; and it is also the duty of the Grand Canal, because if they do not keep it in an efficient state, their own trade would suffer by it.

655. Should your Lordship have any objection, in case the Board of Works experienced any difficulty on the part of the Grand Canal Company in executing the repairs that the Board of Works thought necessary, that a power of entry should be given to the Board of Works to do the works they thought necessary, and then to charge the expense to the Grand Canal Company?—I should object in my individual capacity, or as trustee for the proprietors of the Grand Canal, to any person expending their money or mine, without an efficient control by ourselves or some proper person.

656. Does your Lordship consider that the Grand Canal Company would object if the management and care of that part of the Shannon which is in their possession, was left to the Board of Works, or any other Government office?—I should not at all myself think it just to the persons I represent to hand over their rights to the Board of Works, though I have a very great respect for that Board; but I certainly think, as a great national advantage, that the entire of the Shannon should be vested in the Board of Works as a King's river, for everybody to have the advantage of it, expecting there would be a liberal outlay in its improvement.

657. But no compensation to the Grand Canal Company?—I should always expect a compensation, because they have laid out an enormous sum of money on the work; and not only that, but they constitute a very industrious portion of our population, and very poor, but a great deal of their poverty has arisen from their exertions to get to the Shannon.

658. Should you think the national advantage so great as to make it worth while to the Grand Canal Company to give it up?—I, as an individual, should say, let the national interest prevail; but I am interested for others, and I should say, there should be a compensation made to persons who had a vested right, which vested right may be to the advantage of the public, if it is transferred from them.

659. You have said, that there was an understanding that the Grand Canal Company should expend 30,000*l.*, upon the understanding that the Shannon should be transferred to them?—We expended 30,000 *l.* to make it useful; there was no understanding of a conclusive contract that they should have any exclusive right to it; that was with regard to the 54,000 *l.*

660. Is that expressed in the contract?—Yes, I believe it is; but I have not lately seen it.

661. Then, according to your Lordship's own principles, if that contract were to be proved not to be fulfilled, the right of the Grand Canal Company to any exclusive navigation would be void?—A Court of Equity, if that was proved, would force them to complete their contract. I do not think any Court of Equity would take it from them, for no man living can say it is not performed. The river Shannon rises seven, eight or ten feet, very suddenly, and the works may be injured, and it would be very hard if the rights of the Grand Canal Company were interfered with from that cause; it should be set right. The public have a right to say, "Traders cannot go by the Shannon, and you must set it to rights;" but I do not think they could say, "We will take it from you, because there was a flood last year, or a riotous mob broke down a lock-house." I have known a bridge thrown into the canal, and the thing rendered impassable for six weeks; it would be very hard that the rights of the Company should be destroyed in consequence of injury inflicted by malicious people.

662. Can your Lordship state any positive injury that would result to the Grand Canal Company, supposing the Government resumed the Middle Shannon, with the view of putting it into, and maintaining it in, an efficient state of repair?—

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repair?—I think the Grand Canal Company would suffer by it, unless the whole of the Shannon was put upon the same footing.

663. Does your Lordship mean that the Grand Canal Company would suffer by the resumption on the part of the Board of Works, in the positive amount of tolls they now receive?—Certainly; because I think, if any part of the Shannon was under a distinct government, that there might be a favoritism or inequality as to the management, and that it would divert the trade from the Grand Canal into other quarters.

664. Suppose the whole of the Shannon to be under a different body, or under the hands of Government, would that objection apply?—If the entire of the Shannon was vested in the hands of Government, or the Government officers, I really think it would be an advantage to the public in general, and not so materially injurious to the Grand Canal Company that they should not gladly allow of it, they receiving some indemnification from the public.

665. Suppose the Government were to take the Shannon into its own hands, and put it in a more perfect state, how could that be an injury to the Grand Canal Company?—It might injure the Grand Canal Company from the facilities given to divert trade, and it would take from the Grand Canal Company the fruit of their outlay.

666. Will you explain the phrase facility to divert trade?—For instance, the Government some years ago made, if I may so call it, a rival canal at a great national expense, of which canal they have bought up the tolls, and if the Shannon was perfectly a King's river, if I may so call it, advantage might be taken of those lower tolls, and the trade be diverted from the Grand Canal. In like manner, any particular company might demand of the Grand Canal Company large sacrifices; if those sacrifices were not made, they might divert the trade to Limerick; or if the navigation was finished, as I hope it will, they might direct it to Galway.

667. The previous questions have presumed that the Shannon would be placed under such management as should be perfectly free from all chance of particular interests being favoured; would your Lordship qualify your answers with reference to that consideration?—Yes; I beg to do so. I hope I have sufficiently explained that my object would be to place the entire Shannon under that control, for the benefit of the public, giving an indemnity to the parties having a right thereto.

668. On what basis do you consider it should be founded?—On the basis of rights vested in the Canal Company at the foot of their contract, and the public faith, under which they carried their canal, at an enormous expense, from the Bay of Dublin to the River Shannon.

669. What should you consider the pecuniary value of the Middle Shannon to the Grand Canal Company, and how far it is peculiarly valuable to that Company?—It is peculiarly valuable to them from giving them a great trade.

670. That is not peculiar value; suppose the Shannon was opened?—If the Shannon was opened, that trade might be diverted in another direction; the peculiar value I set upon it, would be probably the outlay of this additional 30,000*l.*, which is of peculiar value to the Grand Canal Company.

671. On what portion was that 30,000*l.* laid out?—On the Middle Shannon. When I first went on the Shannon as a Grand Canal Director, we found the Lower Shannon cut off from us by a dam thrown across the Limerick Navigation Canal, which had been thrown across by the Directors General.

672. You would claim for the value of that 30,000*l.* expended on the Middle Shannon; was not it to be expended, not for the benefit of the Shannon, but for the benefit of the Grand Canal?—The Grand Canal Company expended it for the benefit they would derive from perfecting the Shannon Navigation.

673. Then the 30,000*l.* was expended for the benefit that the canal would derive from the free opening of the Shannon Navigation?—Entirely.

674. Therefore it was as much expended on the Grand Canal as if any money had been laid out on any portion of that canal?—Not at all.

675. Explain how?—It was laid out on the Shannon, and if it had been laid out on the canal going to Tipperary it would have made an immediate return; but being laid out on the Shannon, it was only laid out in aid of that sum given by the Government to make the Shannon advantageous to the Grand Canal Company, and any other Canal Company, or the public.

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676. The Canal Company could only act as a body of undertakers, without any general motive as far as the country was concerned?—Yes.

677. They laid out the money to open a particular branch of trade for the Grand Canal Company?—No; they could have no advantage from the Shannon without laying out the money, but the Royal Canal got just as much advantage from the money as they did.

678. Where was it expended?—Between Athlone and Killaloe.

679. Whereabouts in connexion with the general trade of the Shannon is the mouth of the Grand Canal?—Eighteen or 20 miles south of Athlone.

680. Was not that 30,000 *l.* laid out at a point between the Grand Canal and the great portion of the traffic of the Shannon?—It was laid out between the Grand Canal and a great portion of the southern traffic of the Shannon, but it also affects a portion of it made towards the north. Athlone is to the north of the entrance.

681. At what distance from the place of this expenditure of 30,000 *l.* is the Grand Canal mouth, and at what distance from the place of expenditure of the 30,000 *l.* is the Royal Canal mouth?—The Royal Canal mouth is 26 miles further north of Athlone.

682. Did you not say in part of your previous evidence that a portion of the positive disadvantage that the Company would derive from giving up the Shannon navigation to the Government, would be the facilities it would give to rival companies?—Yes.

683. Did you refer to the Royal Canal?—Yes.

684. A portion of the disadvantage you conceive from the giving up the Shannon is, that facilities would be given for the formation of two outlets for the produce of the Shannon, instead of confining it to one?—There are facilities given to all those outlets at present by the Grand Canal Company, by giving a bounty; by lowering their tolls upon boats that go along the line, they get an advantage to indemnify them. If all that was done away they could not either increase or diminish the tolls upon the Shannon, and of course traders would pass by their Canal, in some measure, to go to others; because I must inform the Committee that a great number of years ago I believe 200,000 *l.* was offered, if I am not mistaken, to the Grand Canal, if they would lower their tolls to the same degree that the Royal Canal lowered theirs. The answer given by the Directors was, that we could not keep our works and locks in repair if we lowered to that extent, and we refused the offer; but the Royal Canal, being in great distress, accepted it, and they have since broke. The tolls on the Royal Canal are at zero, ours are at a greater rate in order to pay the necessary works and keepers for the preservation of the canal; but notwithstanding that, the proprietors have had no dividend for many years.

685. It is in evidence by Mr. Williams that boats go by the Grand Canal from Dublin to the point of the Shannon close to the entrance of the Royal Canal; how do you account for that, if the tolls on the Royal Canal are at zero, and the tolls on the Grand Canal are high?—Because the Royal Canal is subject to much more frequent interruptions; it goes through a much more disturbed country, and in addition to that, our having the Shannon in our own hands, we are able, from the length of the way, to give a diminished toll; we give as it were a bounty on corn, flour, and so forth, that comes from a certain distance, which is an encouragement to traders.

686. Would not all that exist hereafter in any change we might make?—We should say not; if once the thing was put upon a new plan, the Grand Canal could not give those bounties, or hold them out.

687. Then you are afraid that the result of the Shannon being placed under the superintendence of one Board would be likely to lead to a competition between the Grand Canal and the Royal Canal; do you not think the public would be greatly benefited by that competition?—I think competition, if it did not go so far as that the works of the canals should be neglected from the competition preventing them having sufficient tolls, would do good.

688. Do you not think a fear of that kind is best obviated by allowing those canals to depend upon their own resources, rather than depending upon the assistance of the Government, or any extraneous resources?—That would have been my advice at the commencement, but the mischief has been done by the Government making a rival canal and other works.

689. Does your Lordship consider under the present system the Gran

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enjoys a modified monopoly of the trade on the river Shannon?—I do not think that they have a monopoly by any means; but I think it necessary to prevent the mischief that would arise to them from trade being diverted to that place where Government has reduced the tolls to the extent that it has, or prevent other individuals diverting the trade in different directions.

690. You have mentioned the erection of a dam near Killaloe?—Between Killaloe and Limerick.

691. Which cut off the whole of the commerce of the southern portion of the river?—Yes; the immense quantity of corn that was stored at O'Brien's-bridge was sent to Dublin by cars.

692. That was put up by the Board of Works?—By the Directors-General of Inland Navigation.

693. Owing to whose remonstrances was it removed?—The remonstrances of the Directors of the Grand Canal Company. There may have been other communications to the Directors-General for aught I know. We remonstrated, and after a certain time, not very immediately, it was removed; but the traders had been disgusted away.

694. Are you aware that in a book published by Mr. Williams, which has not been answered by anybody, he expressly charges them with not having made any remonstrance whatever?—I read the pamphlet, because I thought it an ingenious publication; but I have no recollection of that circumstance, and if it struck me, I should have said it was a mistake. I know I did for one individual, as a Director, make some remonstrances. I was very angry at the time. I thought it an abominable thing. I was at war with the Directors for that and other things.

695. What was the object of the Directors in putting it across?—I suppose it was intended to make some of the works on the Limerick Navigation more perfect, and they were very slow, as public officers sometimes are, and careless, in these works; and they had a misunderstanding with the Limerick Navigation Company, and they left the dam an immense length of time, which prevented use being made of a canal that was fit for use.

696. Can your Lordship state positively, that your opinion is, in case the Shannon was rendered, according to your own expression, a King's river from one end to the other, that the profits of the Grand Canal Company would be diminished thereby?—I think the profits of the Grand Canal Company would be liable to a considerable diminution from competition.

697. You do not think that the increased trade that would accrue on the Shannon, from those improvements on the navigation, would amply repay any casual loss that might arise?—I would not say, in a length of time, it might not have that effect; but in the mean time, the Grand Canal being liable to many engagements, they might be ruined by it. I am convinced that great advantage would arise from having everything open, but, under the unfortunate administration of such things in Ireland, the Grand Canal Company have been obliged to make such sacrifices that they ought to have some indemnity, I really and conscientiously think, for the postponement of the advantages they might get in five years.

698. Do you think it a disadvantage to the public to have such a line of navigation as the Shannon in the hands of a private company?—I really think so. I think it would be much better if the whole of the Shannon was a King's river, and any individual or company might make canals to join it; but I am quite convinced the Grand Canal Company could not exist if it was done without indemnity. I have been the greatest advocate to lower the tolls, but we should become bankrupts before the additional trade would put us in the situation that we are at present; just as if a gentleman's estate is under mortgage, he cannot lower his rent if the mortgagee demands the whole.

699. The Grand Canal Company obstructed the progress of the work for the Royal Canal to enter into Lough Rhea; was that under the Act that constituted them a company, or under the Act giving them the Shannon?—It was under the Act constituting the Royal Canal Company. The Grand Canal Company was instituted at the request of Government, and a great number of the first merchants and men of respectability joined in that canal. When they had carried their works on a considerable distance, there was a dispute; a difference arose between the Directors of the Grand Canal, and those who were left in a minority set up a rival to the original work. In the course of their concern, it

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was necessary to get an Act of Parliament; that was opposed by the Grand Canal, and then, from a feeling of justice and propriety, Parliament limited them from entering the Shannon within a certain distance north of the entrance of the Grand Canal. When the Government came to execute the Royal Canal with public money, they wanted to get in by the river Inney, or at some point considerably to the south of Tarmonbarry; the Grand Canal Company stood upon their right, and the Royal Canal was driven more to the north; in fact, if the national interests had been considered, the Royal Canal would have gone north and south at right angles with the Grand Canal; but the Government became partizans to one of these Companies.

700. Have you anything to state as to the Ballinasloe branch?—It is likely to be a great benefit, but it has been a ruinously expensive thing to the Grand Canal, partly from the same causes as the Shannon navigation, and there have been two dreadfully mischievous breaches cut in it, and as it runs through a bog, when the breach was made the canal closed in and became useless; but it is beneficial to the public, and if it be continued on to Lough Rhea, it will repay most amply: at present it does not repay the interest of the money advanced by Government for its execution.

701. You said that you individually made several remonstrances about a dam being placed across the Limerick navigation?—Yes.

702. Were you a director at that time, in 1812?—Yes, I have been in the direction uninterruptedly since 1806.

703. You, as a proprietor in Limerick, probably felt more interested in that part of the navigation than many other directors of the Grand Canal?—I never thought of myself for a moment.

704. You as an individual felt interested probably in the removal of that dam?—Very much.

705. Are you aware that the Grand Canal, as a body, at that moment wished to send their navigation in a totally different direction?—I am quite convinced they did not, because the navigation was finished at that time; it was finished to the Shannon, and it is for the purpose of profiting by the trade from the town of Limerick to Lough Allen or to Lanesborough; I was interested as much for Lanesborough as Limerick: on the contrary, they were losers, and great losers. Any parties who leaned to the supporting of that dam must be traitors to the Grand Canal concern.

706. That dam being thrown across effectually prevented the trade being opened; that is the supposition?—That is a very improper supposition, for the great advantage to the Grand Canal Company is to have everything free and open. They would be very sorry that any individual should have it in his power now to say, "If you do not lower your tolls as low as the Royal Canal, we will take the whole of the trade to Limerick;" that is a thing we should dislike.

707. Are you aware that it is generally supposed that that dam was removed in consequence of the representations of the gentlemen of Limerick, and not of the Grand Canal?—I would rather say it was done in consequence of the representations of gentlemen in Limerick, and other individuals, because there was a kind of hostility between the Grand Canal and the Directors-General of Inland Navigation, for the Directors of Inland Navigation entered into a partial feeling very much against the Grand Canal; but myself and others entered into it, and I urged it very much; but I would not have belonged to the direction half an hour if I thought them capable of any private feeling. I have avoided saying anything of the Shannon as the means of draining the great central bogs of Ireland, as the Committee desired I should do so, but I must say I think the drainage more important still than the navigation.

Mr. Thomas Rhodes, called in; and Examined.

708. YOU were employed by the Board of Works to visit the river Shannon, and report upon it?—Yes, I was. Mr. Thos. Rhodes.

709. There are some reports upon the table to which your name is attached?—Yes.

710. Have you seen any cause to modify any opinion expressed upon those reports?—No, I am of the same opinion.

711. You were directed to consider the Shannon question in a double point
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of view, in respect to the drainage and in respect to the navigation ; supposing you had been directed to consider it with respect to the navigation solely, would that have made any alteration in the recommendation you made?—None whatever ; the drainage or reduction of the water in the winter season is necessary to improve the navigation.

712. In the plan you have proposed for improving the river Shannon, you contemplate the making of locks different from those at present in use, and suitable for a larger class of boats, particularly steam-boats?—Yes ; by reference to my report, it will be seen that I propose to construct the locks 130 feet long, 30 feet wide, and at the least to have a constant depth of water at all times of six feet six inches.

713. Can you state what reason induced you to recommend the construction of those larger locks?—I consider the present locks much too small for the present trade, particularly with regard to steam-boats.

714. Do you mean to say that the steam-boats at present upon the Shannon find any difficulty in passing the locks at present in existence?—Yes ; the small steam-boats pass the locks, but with difficulty in summer, and the larger ones cannot ply beyond Lough Derg, or between Killaloe and Portumna.

715. The steam-boats that pass through now, do they find any impediment?—Yes, they do, particularly through the canals and over the shoal parts of the river.

716. From the construction of the canals?—Yes, from the improper formation at first, also the bad state of repair.

717. Do you mean to say that there are such impediments that no alteration in the canals, short of making new ones, could adapt them for the present steam-boats?—By reference to my report, it will be seen that the depth of water in summer time is not sufficient to get the boats along the canals, as over the sills there was found only three feet nine inches to five feet six inches water, and there ought to be six feet ; and the canals are greatly choked up by the side slopes slipping and washing down to the bottom ; also the improper channel at the various shoals.

718. Do you mean to say, that supposing the present canals were repaired, that the steam-boats could not get through that are used at present?—Yes ; it would admit the small steam-boats, but not the large boats, or those drawing from three feet nine inches to six feet draught of water.

719. Distinguishing between the steam-boats in the Loughs and those upon the Canal, the Committee are alluding to the small steam-boats?—Even the small boats cannot get through the canals ; in some places there are obstructions in the canal, they are greatly choked up ; there are not more than four feet in the canals, and in some places, and along the shoals, considerably less in summer time.

720. They do get through now?—Yes ; but they are frequently obliged to empty their boilers of water.

721. How can they work when the boilers are empty?—They tow them through the canal, and then load or fill the boilers again.

722. Is that owing to the sills?—It is owing to the narrowness and shallowness of the canals and various cuts.

723. What is the depth of water through the present canals, generally?—As I have already described ; some places five feet, others four feet three inches, three feet six inches, and still less.

724. The shallowest depth?—I do not recollect ; it is down in the report, and marked on the section.

725. You think it is impossible to improve the present canals, so as to admit of a passage with convenience without unloading even the steam-boats that at present ply?—I do think it possible, by the alterations suggested in my report.

726. In the plan you propose, do you contemplate that the larger steam-boats that ply upon the Loughs, should ply the whole way?—Yes ; from Killaloe up to Lough Allen, or particularly as far up as Leitrim.

727. Supposing it was not considered necessary to improve the navigation for the passage of such very large steam-boats as that, and that the smaller class was still used for the canals as at present, would that make any great alteration in your plan?—No, I do not think it would ; only repairing the canals, reducing the shoals as suggested in my report, and keeping the works in a good state of repair ; they would also require to make a dam at each of the falls, so
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as to keep up the water in summer-time to a defined height, and let it escape during the floods. Mr. Thos. Rhodes.

728. Would you require an entire new system of locks for the passage of a smaller class of steam-boats than those that ply upon the Loughs?—Yes; in some parts, some of the sills are too high; they do not correspond with each other, that is, the upper sill of one lock with the lower sill of the next; and in other cases I would take the locks down altogether, being of no use when regulated by the dams or weirs.

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729. In all cases, and under all suppositions, you would require weirs to be placed?—Yes; at all the different falls.

730. For the sake of the navigation solely?—Certainly; there is not a weir upon the whole length of the Shannon for the due regulation of its navigation.

731. In the report that is on the table, you estimate the total expense of the improvements you suggest on the river Shannon, at 153,163 *l.* 2 *s.* 10 *d.*?—Yes, precisely that sum.

732. That contemplates a larger class of steam-boats than at present ply upon the canals?—Yes, it does.

733. Can you state to the Committee what would be the expense of improving the river Shannon between Limerick and Lough Allen, in such a manner as that the depth of water should be the same as is specified in the contract between the Grand Canal Company and the Directors of Inland Navigation in 1806?—£. 85,625. 9 *s.* 3 *d.*

734. In the larger sum, you include the expenditure for some bridges in a dilapidated state, not connected with the navigation?—Yes.

735. In the smaller sum you include no bridges whatever?—No.

736. The fact is, it is not necessary to improve any of the bridges for the steam-vessels that at present ply upon the navigation?—No, not the bridges across the river, only those across the canals, as mentioned in the report.

737. What would be the saving in carrying one plan into execution compared with the other?—£. 67,537. 13 *s.* 7 *d.*

738. Could you say what the alteration of all the bridges and the building of new ones, as proposed by you, amounts to, according to your present plan?—

	£.	s.	d.
Altering Killaloe bridge	567	19	—
Rebuilding Banagher bridge	4,774	8	11
Altering the wooden bridge at Shannon harbour	550	—	—
Altering and underpinning Shannon bridge	2,442	—	—
Rebuilding Athlone bridge	5,742	—	—
Altering bridge at Jamestown	1,092	—	—
	£.	15,168	7 11

739. Does it include the improvements upon the Athlone Canal?—Yes, it includes the canal.

740. What is the bridge itself?—It is all connected together, and the weir.

741. By looking over those estimates, you could see what relates only to bridges, and deduct it?—Yes.

742. Are you prepared to state that now?—It will take me some little time to extract from the report and estimate.

743. You will put in as soon as you are able a statement of how much of the larger of the two sums you have just mentioned relates to bridges alone?—Yes, I will.

744. Do you consider it necessary to alter or improve any of the bridges if the navigation is to be kept at the depth of six feet six inches?—It is necessary in all cases that the bridges should be repaired, and if you go upon an extended scale it is necessary to reconstruct and alter the six bridges, viz.: at Killaloe, Banagher, Shannon Harbour, Shannon Bridge, Athlone, and Jamestown, near Lough Allen.

745. What objects have you in constructing those bridges?—On account of constructing the weirs across the river, and deepening the river channel.

746. It is part of the plan relating to the weirs?—Certainly, and to allow the water to escape with freedom.

747. If you keep the weirs in the minor plan must you not also keep the bridges?—No; probably it is not so necessary.

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748. If you say it is necessary to the keeping the depth of water at six feet six inches, and the lesser plan contemplates that depth of water, surely the bridges must be considered?—Why, not so.

749. Could you have the six feet six inches without the weirs?—Certainly not.

750. You said you could make the present scale perfect without altering the bridges?—It is necessary to repair them, but it would not make the work so perfect.

751. Do you not consider that the bridges produce a considerable backwater?—Many of them do, by the archway being too small, and cause inundation to the lands.

752. And one of the objects you have in view by projecting those weirs is to prevent too great a backwater?—Yes, by producing a greater area the water is allowed to pass off with more freedom.

753. You consider the smaller plan would be imperfect unless the bridges are repaired?—It appears absolutely necessary that the whole of the bridges should be repaired; but I should suppose these belong to the counties at large.

754. Are you prepared to state what that is?—I will extract from my estimates and put it in.

755. What would be the effect produced by either of those plans to which we have just alluded, upon the mill sites on the river Shannon; would there be better mill sites than before?—Much better, as the effect would be more constant and uniform.

756. In the course of your survey of the river Shannon, can you state to the Committee whether the shoals which impeded the navigation were such as are produced by floods coming down from the tributary rivers, or were they of long accumulation?—They appear of long formation, their composition being chiefly lime-stone, gravel and clay.

757. If once removed they would not cause any great expense in repair?—No, they would not.

758. Upon what basis do you found the necessity of having a larger class of steam-vessels than that which exists?—By improving and forming a better line of communication, thereby conveying passengers and goods with more expedition than exists.

759. Are you aware of any navigation in the world where so large a class of steamers is necessary as you propose?—Yes, several parts: upon the river Thames, the Clyde, the Humber, the Ouse, and various other rivers, also the Caledonian Canal, &c.

760. Are you aware that the turns in the river Shannon are so abrupt that it is doubted by those who at present trade upon that river whether they would use a larger class of steamers, even if the locks were sufficiently spacious to admit them?—I think the river is sufficiently large for a much larger class of steamers than even the largest that plies on that river.

761. Are you aware that the turns are so abrupt?—They certainly appear abrupt in places, but they will not be too abrupt, when the suggested improvements are carried into effect, to take the largest class of steamers; even the largest that ply upon the Thames might navigate the most parts of the river Shannon.

762. Are you aware that the larger class of steamers can only be used with coal, and the smaller class is worked by means of the consumption of turf?—I do not know any that use turf altogether for generating steam, not upon the river Shannon, that I am aware of; if they do it is very recently.

763. You still have a strong opinion that it would be absolutely necessary to erect the weirs you propose at certain points?—Decidedly so.

764. To improve the navigation?—Yes, it is the only and effectual means to keep the water at the different levels to somewhat an uniform height.

765. Could you state to the Committee shortly the grounds upon which you advocate these works?—In summer time the water is too low, caused by the winter floods descending and scouring out the shoals of gravel situated at the falls, where the weirs ought to be erected, and in the summer-time the water cannot be kept high enough to admit the vessels through the canals; it is therefore necessary to construct capacious weirs, as suggested in my report, to keep the water at some defined height, and also to allow the winter floods to escape with greater facility.

766. Would

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766. Would those weirs prevent the adjoining lands being irrigated or flooded during the winter?—No, they would not entirely prevent it; and if those lands are subject to be flooded for six to seven months in the year, these weirs would be a means of taking it off in three to four months, or even much less time, and it would irrigate the land for a shorter period, and it is my opinion would produce better crops of grass, &c., both in quantity and quality.

767. Where are there any weirs built similar to those you recommend?—Upon almost every navigable river: there are some upon the Mersey and Irwell Navigation, Ayr and Calder, Calder and Hebble, river Ouse, river Weaver, and many others.

768. Precisely upon the same plan?—Yes, upon the same principle.

769. Is it a new theory of yours?—No, it is nothing new; only the sluices, which I should recommend to be self-acting.

770. In the rivers you allude to, are there falls in those rivers?—Yes, precisely similar to the Shannon.

771. Have you seen any weirs of that description with sluices in them?—Yes, I have constructed them. By obtaining the present section of the river, viz. depth and width, and then making a weir spacious enough in area to the section of the river, that would enable the water to escape with the same or greater facility.

772. Do you consider that the improvements you suggest on a large scale on the river would offer any lengthened interruption to the navigation of the river?—Not the slightest.

773. Would the smaller plan offer any interruption?—Not the slightest, if the dams were constructed and the shoals deepened.

774. With a larger description of steamers do you calculate upon any agricultural produce of the country being carried down in them?—There appears little doubt when once the communication is complete, and steamers introduced, trade will increase in these parts rapidly, both as regards produce of the country, and also in passengers.

775. It would materially affect the trade if you had those larger steamers upon the Loughs, and then had to change to smaller ones?—Yes, larger ones would tow other vessels up and down and carry produce at the same time; the small ones are not particularly adapted for such trade.

776. Do you calculate upon the larger vessels carrying produce, pigs and so forth?—Undoubtedly.

777. You have said that neither of the plans you have recommended would cause any interruption on the Shannon; in the small plan, do you not contemplate altering some of the existing locks?—I would take some of them away altogether, which would be useless by the projected improvements.

778. Even upon the smaller plan should you take away every lock?—Not every one. I should alter some and take away others, as described in my report.

779. As far as altering locks, that would be an impediment to the trade?—A very short period.

780. How long?—Not above a week, particularly the middle part between Portumna and Athlone; the upper part between Lanesborough and Leitrim would require longer time. It would be merely taking some of the lock walls down and altering some of the sills; that would not afford much interruption.

781. If boats drawing more than four feet six inches cannot navigate either the Grand or Royal Canals, why would you make the Shannon a navigation for boats drawing six feet, when the great trade of the country bordering on the Shannon would probably be diverted towards Dublin and Liverpool?—Upon the Grand Canal the locks were made for six feet water over the sills, and also the Royal Canal; therefore they ought to be the same depth.

782. Can you state that of your own knowledge?—Yes.

783. Ought not the Grand Canal Company to remedy those interruptions when they occur?—I consider it would be their interest to do so.

784. Cannot you consider a very extensive branch of trade totally independent of the Grand and Royal Canals?—Yes, certainly.

785. Do you not think by far the greater part of the trade would still always go either into the Grand or Royal Canal?—Yes, I do.

786. Would you give your reasons for that answer?—Because it is more direct to England by way of Dublin; at the same time a considerable part of

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the trade would go down to Limerick, because the dues would be cheaper that way, and by means of steam the voyage could be performed with more expedition.

787. It would be cheaper to send them up the canal to Dublin than to ship them at Limerick for Liverpool?—I cannot say that it would or would not, as it depends upon circumstances.

788. Do those lighter vessels that now navigate on the river ride safely upon the Loughs?—Yes; I never heard to the contrary.

789. There is no danger from the smallness of the vessel?—No; they are the same sized vessels, made according to the dimensions for passing the present locks, and do not draw so much water, only about three feet six inches.

790. There is no danger arising from the smallness of size?—I should think not.

791. When there is a high sea?—No; at such times they are too small for towing vessels against a head-wind.

792. Are not the Loughs subject to squalls that are dangerous to small vessels?—A steam-boat built according to the dimensions of the present sized locks is safe enough to navigate the Loughs, although not at a sufficient quick speed for the general trade.

793. Do you consider that the small class of steamers at present constructed for the canal are safe upon the Loughs?—Yes, quite so.

794. Why would you suggest an entire alteration of the Shannon, and for the reception of a larger class of vessels, when another class may be used at less expense?—The larger class being more powerful would go quicker and answer better for towing.

795. It is a question of speed?—Yes, both speed and for towing vessels.

796. It is merely a question of speed?—Speed, and towing vessels with more expedition.

797. Is it not a mere question of speed the sized vessel you shall have?—It is both speed and tonnage; a small one would not carry the same.

798. Will not a larger vessel necessarily tow a greater number of barges?—Yes, certainly.

799. Would it not be perfectly possible to carry on the same amount of traffic that could be carried on by larger sized steam-boats, by the smaller sized steam-boats, even if an additional one was required?—Yes, it is only employing a greater number: the larger the vessel the more commodious and pleasant she is for passengers and the stowage of light goods, and I am of opinion would pay better than small steamers.

800. You said a while ago it would occupy about a week to improve the locks; do you mean to say that with all the improvements of the Shannon necessary to make the present navigation perfect, the navigation would not be interrupted for more than a week?—No more, particularly the middle part.

801. Supposing any improvements to be done on the river Shannon, do you think that the works should be done under the superintendence of the Board of Works?—Decidedly.

802. Why so more than under a private company?—I think they would be better performed and better looked after.

803. Why do you think they would be better performed?—The money would be paid more regularly, and there would be better inspection, and the whole carried on in a more systematic manner.

804. Do you think that the Board of Works would have to contend with any difficulties in repairing the works when executed?—No; not any that I am aware of.

805. Do you not think inconvenience would arise from having to wait for the vote of the Irish estimates?—Yes; a difficulty might arise in that case.

806. Are you prepared with anything to meet that difficulty?—No, I am not.

807. You are aware of the conditions under which the Middle Shannon was transferred to the Grand Canal Company, as to the depth of water and other conditions?—Yes.

808. You have made a report that those conditions have not been fulfilled?—Yes, I have.

809. Are you prepared to state, merely with this object in view, what sum of money it would require to put the navigation into the condition in which they covenanted

covenanted to put it, laying out of the question all your other projects?—I have stated that before; it would take 34,350*l.* for erecting weirs, deepening shoals, the various cuts, repairing locks and gates, &c.

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810. Excluding all consideration of removing the locks, but merely putting the locks and navigation into the state in which the Grand Canal Company ought to have left it?—I am not prepared to answer that question; the particulars are set forth in my report what is required to be done.

811. Do you consider that 500*l.* would come near to it?—I should think it would take 20,000 *l.* or upwards to do the work as specified.

812. Have you seen the plans and sections by which the Grand Canal, at the time they took possession of the Shannon navigation, contemplated to attain the depth of six feet six inches water, as they contracted to do?—I have seen some of the plans and sections.

813. Do you think them insufficient to attain the depth that they contracted to afford?—I do.

814. What alterations do you think would be required to give the depth that they contracted to give?—To erect weirs at the different falls, so as to regulate the water, and keep it near some defined height.

815. Which they never contemplated doing?—I suppose not; there are none erected at present.

816. Then if the Board of Works were given the power to enforce the completion of that contract, and to insist upon the Grand Canal Company having a depth of six feet over the sills of their locks, and six feet six inches depth of water in the canal, it would be necessary for the Grand Canal Company to erect weirs at certain places?—I think it would, as they cannot make a perfect navigation without them.

817. If the Grand Canal Company had prevented those injuries that arise from the falling in of the sides, could a small sized steamer go to Dublin?—No; the locks are too small for those steam-boats that ply on the Shannon Navigation.

818. In your first report, you have given a report of the present state of Portumna bridge?—Yes; with plans and sections for rebuilding the same.

819. Have you made any estimate of the sum necessary to repair it?—Yes, I have; and also for rebuilding it.

820. Do you think that the repair of Portumna bridge is necessary for the navigation?—Yes, I think so; it is in a very dilapidated state. I sent an estimate to the Board of Works; I have not a copy of it with me.

821. Have you seen the plans that were drawn up at the time that the Directors-General of Inland Navigation proposed to undertake the works to open the navigation to Lough Allen?—I have seen some of the sections, and also some of the plans.

822. Do you know the depth of water contemplated by those plans?—No, I do not remember the scale or size contemplated.

823. Do you think there is any plan short of the one you propose, which you estimate to cost 51,273 *l.*, that would give six feet six inches water between Athlone and Lough Allen?—No; I think no other plan would give that depth of water to make it an efficient navigation.

824. In proposing that a larger class of steamers than is at present in use should navigate between Lough Allen and Limerick, do you consider that a great trade could be carried on in passengers and light articles, or do you consider that the greater part of the trade would be heavy and lumbering articles in which speed was not necessary?—I should say passengers and light goods; also towing other vessels with bulky articles.

825. Do you expect to get many passengers from Leitrim to Limerick?—From Carrick, Boyle, and country towns and villages adjacent with the Shannon, a constant intercourse would be kept up by steam-boats, so that the transit of goods and passengers would be cheap and expeditiously conveyed from the different places along the Shannon.

826. In your reduced estimate, do you contemplate erecting swivel bridges across the canals?—Yes.

827. You include those in your estimate?—Yes, certainly.

828. At Athlone and Banagher?—Yes.

829. You have not made any survey or any examination of that part of the Shannon

Mr. *Thos. Rhodes*. Shannon between Killaloe and Limerick, since your first report was published?—No, I have not.

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830. You are not aware of the works completed by the Limerick Navigation Company since that?—I have not particularly noticed them, but I have seen some works going on at O'Brien's Bridge; the deepening some part of the navigation, and putting up some of the lock-gates along the line.

831. Are there any imperfections in the navigation existing between Limerick and Portumna?—There is a bar a little below Portumna at Derry Island.

832. Are there any important imperfections in the navigation between Limerick and Portumna?—Nothing material or of great extent; there are some rocks sticking up in Lough Derg, in various parts, that require lowering; also beacons required in a number of places, as described in my report.

833. Do you consider that if the improvements were effected on your reduced scale, that there would be a considerable sum of money thrown away, supposing at any future time it was thought advisable to extend the scale of the navigation?—It would not be exactly thrown away, but I think the extended scale would be decidedly the best in the end; upon such a grand river as the Shannon, it is very desirable to carry the proposed improvements, as described in my report, into effect.

834. Would not the sum expended upon it be exactly the sum thrown away; it would not tend to the improvement under the greater plan?—No, it would not do altogether for the greater plan; the weirs would do, but it would be necessary to build larger locks, and make the sectional area of the canals larger, as shown in my report, plans, &c.

835. Do you consider there is much apprehension of danger to the drainage, that might result from the improvement of the Shannon?—It would facilitate the drainage, also a reduction of the winter floods; because in winter time, when the banks are covered, it is difficult to navigate vessels, owing to the banks being covered, unless they are towed by steam; between Mellick and Athlone, I calculate that 50 square miles are inundated every year, for a considerable period.

836. Do you consider lowering the Shannon to the summer level would injuriously affect the navigation of any of the tributaries of the Shannon, such as the Brisna, the Suck, or the Boyle river?—It would improve them, because the banks along them are so much inundated it is difficult to find the channel. It would also improve the mill sites on them.

837. Do you consider that your extended plan would in a great measure facilitate the reclaiming of the bogs in the neighbourhood?—I think it would considerably.

838. Do you consider that the reclaiming the bogs on any extended scale is practicable, without some such plan?—I think it would be a very great improvement by taking the water off them, particularly along the verge of the river, as proposed in my report; the weir at Jamestown is a very great evil, and inundates the country about Carrick, Boyle to a very great extent.

839. Are you sufficiently acquainted with the Shannon to state at what time the floods generally take place upon the Shannon?—According to my observations, and according to the registry kept at Limerick and along the line of the Shannon, it is about the months of September and October.

840. But is it not very liable to floods when the people have their hay half made, and to have it carried away in the night?—Yes, it frequently happens, and occasions great loss of property.

841. Is the herbage very luxuriant on the borders of the Shannon?—In some parts; there are great districts of bog along its banks, but this is chiefly about the middle part.

842. Unless a great deal of money is expended upon the Grand Canal, must they not unload the boats, supposing your extended plan is adopted, in going up to Limerick from the canal?—It will be necessary to load the barges to a certain draught of water for passing the Grand and Royal Canals.

843. If the navigation was improved, roads might be made to places to which no access can be had now?—Yes, in a great many parts.

844. It would be a difficult thing for the Grand Canal to make it fit for a larger class of steamers?—It would be a great alteration; next to making a new canal.

845. You do not propose that the steamer, should ascend the canals?—No; they

they would tow the barges to the entrances of the canals, and then they are towed by horses to Dublin, &c. &c. Mr. *Thos. Rhodes.*

846. Do you consider that, supposing the navigation of the Shannon was improved, much greater communication by passengers would take place than does at present?—There is not a doubt of it. 19 July 1834.

847. Do you know of any existing intercourse between the upper part of the Shannon and Limerick?—I do not. I think there would be a great intercourse by these improvements; it would increase and grow up considerably; when I was engaged upon the Caledonian Canal, there was no steam-boat plied from Glasgow to Fort William and Inverness; two or three years afterwards there were three or four, and the inhabitants of Fort William are not above 400; therefore I am led to suppose, by what I have seen in various parts of England and Scotland, that if the steam-boats were introduced upon the Shannon up to Boyle and Carrick, that it would increase the traffic very much.

848. The weir you speak of, as having been so injurious to the navigation, how long has it been erected?—I cannot tell. I should think many years; it appears to have been raised very recently.

849. What depth of water do you contemplate for the small steamers?—Six feet six inches in the canals, and six feet upon the sills of gates; they would have the same draught of water in both cases for the large and small canals.

850. In one case you would consider it advisable to increase the breadth, and in the other not?—The length of the lock should be 130 feet, and the breadth 30 feet, and six feet over the sills in the driest seasons.

851. That would be only in the locks?—Yes.

852. The navigation would remain the same?—Yes, precisely in depth six feet six inches, and the section as described in my Report.

853. Do you not consider that it is advisable that the navigation of the Shannon should be on a larger scale than either of the canals, on account of the necessity of employing steamers as tug-boats on the Shannon, which does not exist on the canals?—Yes, it should.

854. If you were asked on what scale you would consider the present navigation of the Shannon between Lough Derg and Lough Rhea, you would say four feet three inches?—No, I should say six feet six inches to make it efficient.

855. What do you consider at present existing on that line of navigation is the minimum depth of the scale?—In some parts it is not above three feet six inches; the particulars are stated very fully in my Report.

856. Are you aware of the depth of water that the present steam tug-boats draw?—Three feet six inches to three feet nine inches.

857. For the purpose of conveying passengers, would it not be desirable to have a larger class of steamers than that?—You might have steamers of a very large class that draw no more than three feet six inches: it depends entirely upon the build of them. The lighter you can make them draw the better; meeting with less resistance they skim over the water, and do not require so much power to propel them as a large draft.

858. Will you have the goodness to draw out an estimate of what expense would be required to obtain five feet of water over the sills of all the locks from Killaloe to Lough Allen, marking how much of this sum would be applicable in future, supposing six feet should be afterwards required?—It will require the sum of 71,354 *l.* 11 *s.* 3 *d.* to make the navigation efficient from Killaloe to Lough Allen; the Limerick Navigation is in the hands of the city of Dublin Steam Navigation Company. The greater part of this sum would be applicable in case of increasing it to six feet water.

859. Do you consider that the difference would be very great?—No, it would not be very great; but five feet would not answer so well as the large scale; it is reducing it too much on so fine a navigation as the river Shannon.

860. What is the depth of the present Limerick navigation?—Six feet over the sills.

861. At all events, you are prepared to say that the saving of expense would not be equal to the loss of benefit from the diminution of the depth?—Certainly.

Lord Viscount *Clements*, a Member of the Committee, Examined.

Lord Viscount
Clements, M.P.

19 July 1834.

862. ARE you acquainted with the district of the Upper Shannon, and can you state any particulars relative to the trade of that district, and whether any improvement has occurred therein lately?—I have latterly become well acquainted with the district at the extremity of the Upper Shannon, where it borders the county of Leitrim; and though I cannot give the Committee as many details connected with the trade of the district as many other persons, whom it is too late to summon as witnesses, I can state generally, that it is much improved, and though there is the greatest poverty in that neighbourhood, owing to the awful numbers of the population, and to the depression which has taken place in the prices of agricultural produce, we manage to keep our heads above water, by means of the increased facilities which have been afforded to trade.

863. In what articles has this improvement principally shown itself?—The most obvious improvement consists in the growth of wheat. When I first knew the county of Leitrim, in 1825, there was hardly any wheat grown in that county; indeed I do not remember to have seen a single patch of wheat. It is now a very general crop. The export of oatmeal has much increased latterly; the proprietor of the mills at Jamestown informs me, that 1,800 tons of oatmeal have been manufactured at that establishment alone, within the last year, and that most of it has gone to Lancashire. The trade in pigs has also improved.

864. To what do you attribute the increased growth of wheat?—I attribute it to an extension of the Royal Canal to the town of Longford; a trade in wheat commenced on the Royal Canal in the year 1827, previous to which time the farmers had supposed that their soil and climate were not equal to the growth of wheat, but when the canal was extended to Longford, in 1830, which town presented the advantage of a good market, and when substantial buyers offered themselves, the farmers all began to make the experiment, and during the last three years, the growth of wheat has extended from the county of Longford into the county of Leitrim, for a considerable distance, and it is now a general crop.

865. Do you think the growth of wheat would be much encouraged in the neighbouring counties, if the navigation of the Shannon was improved?—From what I have seen under my own eye, I can have no doubt that the growth of wheat may be increased in a surprising degree, if a market can be obtained for it, by means of water carriage.

866. Does the improvement you have described act upon the revenue?—Great facilities given to trade must act sensibly upon the revenue of the district improved. Longford is a remarkable instance of this. The increase of the town, within the last two years, has been surprising, and has been more rapid, in proportion to its size, than anything I have ever seen in the inland parts of Ireland. The increased consumption of timber is very great, and where new houses are built with foreign timber, there must be an increased consumption of all taxable articles within those houses.

867. Was there any exertion previous to the year 1827 to establish the growth of wheat, and to what do you attribute the failure?—The Messrs. Walsh, of Drumsna, built a flour-mill at Jamestown, on the Shannon, which was supposed to have been the only thing wanting to stimulate the growth of wheat, but it did not succeed; they expected to have derived great advantages by the navigation of the river, but the existing state of the Government works caused disappointment, and to this, in a great measure, I understand, they attribute the failure of the scheme. The mill is now advantageously used for grinding oatmeal, which leaves a smaller capital embarked in the uncertainties of the Shannon navigation. The Messrs. Walsh built two boats themselves to bring wheat to their mills, but in the winter the winds prevailed, so as to create great uncertainty in the navigation, and in the summer there was not sufficient water, so they gave them up. I should wish to call the attention of the Committee to a curious letter, published in a pamphlet by Mr. Bermingham, which describes the difficulties which Lieutenant Tully underwent in attempting to take some grain up the river from Limerick to these mills, and which shows also how incompetent a Board constituted by Government must be to frame regulations for the details of trade.

EXTRACT

EXTRACT of a Letter from Lieut. *John Tully*, R.N. on the State of the *Shannon*.

Lord Viscount
Clements, M.P.

19 July 1834.

Sir,

Killaloe, June 27th, 1831.

I SHOULD consider it a dereliction of my duty if I omitted writing to you respecting the present state of the navigation of the river Shannon, from Shannon Harbour to Jamestown.

On the 7th inst. three boats started from Killaloe, with about 30 tons of wheat each, for Jamestown, which was only two-thirds of what they could have taken provided there was no want of water, or the navigation had been in good order: however, from Mr. Barklie's statement, I only had them loaded to draft 3 feet 4 inches, and 3 feet 6 inches, to enable them to travel comfortably. On our journey upwards (having accompanied them myself) we encountered some difficulties between Shannon Harbour and Athlone, such as bad fords, with innumerable detached rocks lying in the very centre of the cut, which made it both difficult and dangerous to ascend the fords. I must here remark, that those rocks and other impediments could be removed with comparatively little expense. There is one cut, called High Ford, near Shannon Bridge, which requires a capstan, being a very rapid current there: we, however, got to Athlone, after a long passage, from the state of the river. On our arrival at Athlone, the three boats (although not drawing more than 3 feet 6 inches) stuck fast in the canal: suffice it to say, we had to lighten them considerably to enable them to get through the canal into Lough Rhea. The steamer had to lighten also. We crossed the Lake with the three boats in tow of the steamer: such a sight was never before witnessed on that Lake, although there are a few beacons and buoys wanted on some bad rocks and islands, which could be done at little or no expense. On our arrival at Lanesborough our troubles only commenced, which induced me to remain with the boats to see it out: I lightened two of the boats to 2 feet six inches and 2 feet 8 inches, and put their cargo into them, being obliged to use some stratagem, not having any boat to hire. The canal is filling up fast; the very walls on its banks are falling into it. We had to take almost the whole cargo out before we could get the boats through. Although the Board of Directors-General must have known very little of the state of the navigation when that part of their regulations was framed, and which was rigidly enforced, that I should not be allowed to discharge a single sack of wheat, either in the lock or in any part of the canal, though it was the shameful state of their navigation which rendered it necessary. We were obliged to haul out into the lake to tranship, with the greatest difficulty and danger, and after six days hard labour, I got two boats to Drumsna. I had there to hire two boats of a man of the name of Blanchefield to take 40 tons, out of the boat which was left behind at Lanesborough, to Jamestown. To describe the labour I had with the two first boats would fill a volume: besides, I had to hire a store at Richmond Harbour for a few days, where I met, I conceive, with great imposition. I was allowed to land one small boat, with only 27 sacks of corn, and then stopped: I was charged 5s. for landing these few sacks, and so on, on account of the neglect of the navigation. Altogether, it was the most vexatious trip that could possibly be. The Government or Directors-General should be called on to pay the expenses incurred. They had a dredge-boat at work last January, when the water was high; now they have none, when it is low, and when it might be useful. The beacons are all washed away or stolen, and a parcel of stones and rocks left behind in their place, which increases the danger considerably. No person to look after or take the least care of anything; and although they exact their tolls, the lock-keepers throwing every obstacle in the way: I, however, persevered, and accomplished the voyage.

John Tully.

868. Is there much trade on the Upper Shannon at the present moment?—There is a regular trade established with Dublin through the Royal Canal, but it struggles against great difficulties. The boats of Messrs. Farley and Killiard start twice a week from Dublin to Drumsna, Jamestown and Carrick on the Shannon, but we have no intercourse with Athlone or Limerick, solely on account of the imperfection of the navigation. Carrick has improved in a remarkable manner from the limited trade which has already established itself there; but the greater portion of the produce of the adjacent country is carried overland to Longford, and almost all the heavy goods, such as timber, slates, iron &c. are brought across the Curlew mountains from Sligo; these latter articles will be brought up from Limerick at a very diminished cost, whenever the steamers are enabled to pass Athlone, and great facilities will be thereby given to the improvement of the counties of Roscommon and Leitrim. The freight from Dublin to Drumsna is now 15s. a ton. The freight from Limerick ought not to be more than a third of that money.

869. In what state is the navigation of the river that has come under your immediate notice?—The greatest complaints are made of it by all those concerned in the trade. The most obvious repairs are neglected; but I need only corroborate the Report which Mr. Rhodes has made to Government; the works “look as if they belonged to nobody.”

870. If the navigation was in the hands of a private company, what improvements do you think they would undertake, with a view to the prompt repayment of the money so laid out by them?—They would immediately repair the

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works at present existing on that portion of the Shannon which lies between the entrance of the Royal Canal and Athlone; this might be done at a very trifling expense, for the most necessary works are all there, though they are falling to decay, and are blocked up by neglect. Their restoration would not put the navigation in a perfectly satisfactory state, but it would enable the steamers to come up during high water for the six winter months, which is the period during which the most active trade is always carried on; and this would give such an additional impetus to the trade of the Upper Shannon, as would enable the navigation to maintain itself out of the tolls. We should thereby obtain, not only access to the Limerick timber market, but the use of steamers would ensure certainty and punctuality in our dealings with Dublin. This is what the Directors-General of Inland Navigation ought to have done long ago; it was their bounden duty. No private company could have overlooked this essential object, without which the navigation cannot pay; but a Public Board have fifty other things to think of, and are not so competent to do the thing economically, or to treat with the Inland Navigation Company, the Canal Companies, or other parties who may be indirectly benefited. If a private company held this navigation, and had a tolerable capital at their disposal, they would next remove obstructions in the bed of the river, which might be done for very little money, and they would afterwards endeavour to get a uniform depth of water over the sills of the locks, at all seasons. Mr. Rhodes proposes a plan which aims at getting a depth of six feet, but even five feet depth would enable boats of 70 or 80 tons to navigate the river, and would float all the canal boats.

871. Do you suppose that there are any peculiar advantages for the immediate creation of trade on the Shannon above Tarmonbarry?—There are many reasons for supposing that the advantages attending the improvement of the navigation would be more immediate on this part of the Shannon than on any other part of its course. There are more roads to the river side here than there are lower down; of the 13 towns and villages on the river between Lough Allen and Limerick, eight are above the entrance of the Royal Canal; these are, Drumshambo, Leitrim, Carrick, Jamestown, Drumsna, Drumod, Ruskey and Tarmonbarry; and of these Drumshambo, Carrick and Jamestown have increasing markets; each of these places would form a centre for the immediate diffusion of the blessings of trade. There are here seven bridges across the river, with roads leading into the county of Roscommon, so that the western and more distant side of the stream would have immediate access to improved markets.

872. Do you believe that any considerable trade could be carried on in the mineral productions of the northern district of the Shannon?—The consumption of lime as a manure is daily increasing since the introduction of wheat, and is absolutely necessary for the proper cultivation of the land. There are large lime-kilns in the neighbourhood of Drumshambo, which have brought down the price considerably by using the native coal for fuel instead of turf as formerly. This important manure might be conveyed by water at a trifling expense. There is a quarry of the whitest freestone situated in the county of Roscommon, two miles from Battle-bridge, which, from the difficulty of conveying it over land, is almost unknown, though it yields stone of very large scantling. I will say nothing of the Arigna iron-works, which have not been in good repute for some years, though the failure experienced there has been partly owing to the state of this navigation; but I may mention that there is a vein of the finest iron upon the very edge of the river, on Mr. Nisbett's property near Drumod, 30 miles nearer Dublin than Arigna. This ore has been examined by Mr. Buckle, of the firm of Buckle and Johnston, mineral agents near Birmingham, and I am informed that he considers it of superior quality to that which they get from Cumberland, for the purpose of making tin plates, and for which they pay 25 s. a ton. I am also informed by Mr. Williams that it might probably be taken down to Limerick for 2 s. 6 d. a ton, exclusive of the toll that might be charged; so I should think it might easily be brought into competition with the Cumberland ore.

873. Are there any other reasons which should induce the Government to take up the question of the improvement of this navigation without loss of time?—The uncertainty in which the public are placed as to the fate of this important navigation checks all private speculation in the neighbourhood of the river, for instance, if the Shannon could be blocked up, it might answer very well to extend

extend the Longford Canal in a direction parallel to the course of the river through the county of Leitrim, and a line was surveyed by Mr. Killally, going through the town of Mohill, with that object; but if private speculation was to succeed in effecting this, and a liberal spirit should afterwards improve the Shannon, the superior advantages offered by opening the course of that stream would divert trade from the Mohill Canal, and injure its proprietors. Again, it is much desired to give Roscommon the advantages of a canal communication, and if the Shannon was to remain in its present state, it would be advisable to extend the canal 12 miles to Cloondrah, opposite the entrance of the Royal Canal; but if a very trifling improvement should take place in the navigation of the river, the canal ought to be cut in a different direction, to Crit Bay, on Lough Rhea, which would be four miles and a half shorter. Government should take care that private speculation be not checked in this manner, and should make up their minds either to finish and restore the works already begun by the public, or hand over the rights which they possess to a private company; and this should be done without loss of time, for it really will be a great hardship upon the province of Connaught, and the other counties interested, if improvements so important should be delayed for any length of time, when they can be effected at such a very trifling expense.

874. Do you think that any private company could be found to undertake the main improvements required out of their own funds, and submit to such control as would check the injurious exercise of their exclusive rights?—I have many reasons for wishing that the necessary works should be executed by Government out of the public purse. It is a splendid national object, and it requires now such a very small comparative outlay to finish it, that I should be sorry to see the whole credit of the undertaking reaped by a private company, when the main expense has already been incurred by the public, under a grant of the Irish Parliament. Moreover, the towns and the traders on the river will always feel jealous of this private company, however it may advance their interests, and will think that more good might have been effected if the river had been left, as originally intended, a free navigation. They will consider themselves ill-treated by such an arrangement; but if it was a question whether the counties should pay the whole expense of the works, or whether the navigation should be placed in the hands of a private company, I should decide for the latter; and in that case, I am informed that there would be no difficulty in finding a Joint Stock Company willing to finish this navigation, and repay themselves out of the tolls. I understand that the Royal Canal Company would consider themselves ill-used if the navigation was given into other hands than theirs: the Grand Canal Company and all the traders would also be exceedingly jealous of such an arrangement; but the Royal Canal Company unfortunately have not sufficient capital to undertake it themselves, so I fear they are out of the question, and that it would be absolutely necessary to form a new Company.

875. What objections do you see to the counties being called on to repay the expense of the works?—I see no very great objection to the landed proprietors and the inhabitants of towns in the immediate vicinity of the river being compelled to repay the expense, but I do not know any mode of effecting that object conveniently. The present cess-payers should not be called upon for any part of the expense. I object on principle to increasing the amount of county cess, when it is so notorious that it is insufficient to meet the claims already imposed upon it, and as it is a direct tax upon some of the poorest classes of the community. I should not object so much to raising the required sum by a land tax levied directly upon the landlords. But even in that case there would be some injustice, for some landlords at a distance from the stream would never reap a farthing advantage from the expenditure, and at all events the traders of all sorts, both on the river and in England, would benefit more immediately by the outlay than the landed interest could.

876. If the cess-payers in Connaught, and the manufacturers in England, were separately consulted, as to their willingness to pay a small direct tax for the completion of this work, which do you think would most readily consent to it?—The English manufacturers would more readily consent to it than the cess-payers. They would get, by one and the same means, cheap food, and a new market for their manufactures; and it would be much easier to explain the advantages of this to an intelligent Manchester man, than to some of the poor

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cess-payers, who live as much as 80 miles from the river, and who cannot understand the indirect advantages to them of opening the Shannon; but really the expense required is so trifling, in comparison with the advantages to be obtained, that I am sure neither the English nor the Irish public would quarrel about the mode of repayment, provided the Government would but open the navigation at once. It is at present in their hands, and they neither finish it themselves, nor allow other parties to do so.