

THE RAILWAY AND THE SHORE AT GRANGE.

IMPORTANT MEETING OF THE RATEPAYERS.

A meeting of the ratepayers and owners of property was held at the Institute at Grange, on Thursday, "for the purpose of taking into consideration a bill in Parliament promoted by the Furness Railway Company; to take measures to secure access to the shore of Morecambe Bay; and to take such action as to the meeting shall deem desirable and expedient. Mr. Thos. Westwood (Crown Hotel) was voted to the chair, and amongst those present were Messrs. C. T. Clark, of Lancaster (clerk to the Grange Local Board), W. E. Maude, J. S. Riley, W. Mossop, Captain Grimshaw, Tinkler, Fulton, Crankshaw, Harrison, Howarth, Stewart, Riggs, Just, Graham, Popson, &c.

Mr. CLARK commenced the proceedings by saying: At the request of the Chairman, I wish to make a few observations explanatory of the object of the Board of Health in wishing to have you here on the present occasion; and first of all allow me to express the feeling of the Board that they have no unkind feeling whatever towards the Railway Company. (Hear, hear). On the other hand, it is their wish, and they will be very glad, to co-operate with them in everything for the improvement of the place. A bill is now before Parliament in which they thought it right to have the opinion of the owners of property in this district, and also of the ratepayers, as to the course they might think it right to pursue, because it occurred to the Board that this was a serious matter, and if the opportunity be lost it may never occur again. The bill of the Furness Railway Company, which I hold in my hand, proposes to do this:—To "make a new road commencing from and out of the existing road from Grange to Holme Island, near the Grange Station of the Company, and terminating by a junction in the said existing road thirty-seven chains or thereabouts from and to the north-eastward of the point of commencement. And when and as soon as the new road is completed and opened to the public, to stop up and discontinue and appropriate to their undertaking so much of the existing road from Grange to Holme Island as lies between the commencement and termination of the road." They then go on to say:—"All rights of way over and along the several portions of roads which the company are by this Act empowered to stop up and discontinue shall from the time of the stopping up and discontinuance thereof be and the same are by this Act extinguished." Now, there are two points on which the Board will be glad to have the opinion of the owners and ratepayers. They wish to be as careful as possible with the rates and funds of the place, and unless they are supported by the owners and occupiers, they hesitate to enter into any contest. First of all the new road is intended to be 25 feet wide, and the Board are of opinion that it ought to be 30 feet wide. I have had some correspondence with the Railway Company on the subject, and they say that under existing Acts the road, not being a turnpike road, need only be 25 feet wide. I confess I cannot find authority for that, and there is nothing in former Acts to give authority, except in the case of bridges, to make a road only 25 feet wide. The other and the more important point is the proposal to stop up all existing right of way, which the Board think may seriously interfere with the connection between the town and the shore, which, I need not tell you, is a very important thing for Grange, because if it is shut out from the shore it cannot rise very much as a watering place, and visitors will not stay here because there is no safe approach to the shore. That seems to the Board to be a serious matter, and one on which they desire the opinion of the owners of property and ratepayers. Let us look at the existing state of things. There is a public road down to the shore from the Crown Hotel, by a level crossing—a most unsafe one, I think you will agree with me in saying. Anyone with a family of children would not wish to cross that without some protection.

Mr. MAUDE: Is it a public crossing that goes from the Crown Hotel?

Mr. CLARK: Yes. Now all level crossings are objectionable, but that appears to be particularly objectionable, because a train may be on people unawares, and especially children, and it is one of the most objectionable level crossings that could well be conceived. There is another crossing at the Station—a public one, too, I believe. (A voice: Yes.) The Railway Company may, by regulations of their own, practically render that useless. They may say, "You shan't cross while the shunting of the trains is going on;" in fact, they have it entirely in their own power to make what regulations they think fit. Then there is another further on—and I speak with all due deference to Mr. Maude about that—where there is a public way—whether public or private I do not say at the

Mr. Maude handed to Mr. Clark a plan which he said showed the perfect practicability of having a bridge at the place he had alluded to, at a little expenditure of money.

Mr. CLARK: Is it not rather far from Grange?

Mr. MAUDE said in the opinion of many it was considered a convenient place. He would conclude by saying that it was desirable that in any negotiations they should act in as conciliatory a spirit as possible. He felt certain that Sir James Ramsden was exceedingly anxious to do what was right, and had no doubt that he would give them a favourable answer as soon as he returned to England. He thought the best course to pursue would be to forward a carefully drawn up petition to the Furness Railway Company, signed by the whole of the community, asking for the bridge, and framed in such a manner as to avoid any possible legal question that might arise. Before the meeting was called he himself had prepared such a petition, and had that meeting not been called, by that time it would have been signed by half the people in the place—at least, by all the leading people. Everybody who had been spoken to was in favour of the idea of the petition. He would suggest the adjournment of the consideration of any proceedings in an degree of a hostile character, and he would suggest that a petition be sent to the Duke of Devonshire (as Chairman of the Company) in the first instance, provided that course would not prejudice any legal rights they might have.

Mr. CLARK: A very proper course indeed, I think.

Mr. MARTIN: The only thing is as to time. The petition could be signed in three days and sent to Sir James Ramsden, and the telegraph would give us a reply.

The petition which Mr. Maude had drawn up was then read by Mr. Clark, and was as follows:—

"To his Grace the Duke of Devonshire, and the Directors of the Furness Railway Company.

"We, the undersigned, owners of property, residents, and others interested in the prosperity of Grange-over-Sands, beg leave to represent the great importance of safe and easy access to the shore. The level crossings, by which alone it can at present be reached, are inconvenient and dangerous.

"The advantages of the place in many respects are acknowledged and felt. Its sheltered position, the beneficial influences of the limestone formation on which it stands, and the beauty of the neighbourhood, are indisputable. The only drawback to these attractions is the want of bridges across the line of railway. We are of opinion that one on each side of the village would meet the necessary requirements, so as to afford free access at all times for the enjoyment of fresh air brought in by the tide, with the facilities which would probably follow for bathing and boating.

"There is a spot opposite Blawith which appears to us very well suited for the purpose, and another might be found near the landing place of the steamers, where the danger of crossing the metals from the number of persons who have to pass to and from the boats, often in a hurry, is very great, and ought to be, as far as possible, provided against.

"We therefore trust that you will listen to our earnest request that the impediments which we have pointed out to the full enjoyment and more general attraction of a watering place so healthy and agreeable, may be removed, and a prospect opened of amusement, the want of which has been seriously felt and complained of.—Grange-over-Sands, Jan. 13, 1876."

Mr. RIGG: Would it not be well to mention the railway crossing?

Mr. MAUDE: Would it be advisable to seek and get a bridge there if we get one further down?

Mr. CLARK: It is hardly likely that we can get three bridges.

Mr. MAUDE: I don't say anything against a bridge from the "Crown," but I should not like to be left out, especially as I have got an equivalent to give. I think if we get two bridges, east and west of the place, we ought to be satisfied.

Mr. RIGG: We cannot get on to the shore now by the Station crossing. I would not send a carriage of mine that way.

Mr. MAUDE: We might add to the petition a request that that be put in proper order.

The CHAIRMAN: There has been some talk about making a sub-way.

Mr. MAUDE: Yes, I think I have heard Sir James Ramsden speak about it.

Mr. RILEY said if there was a better way on to the sands than the one at the Station, a deal more persons would go riding and driving there than did at present.

Mr. STEWART: You will not find one in a thousand go on to the shore now, because they cannot safely get there.

Mr. MAUDE: Grange has arrived at a certain state of prosperity, and the question is whether we shall remain in a stagnant condition or take a step ahead; and this question of bridges is the key to the matter.

Mr. STEWART asked if there would not be more visitors to

approach to the shore. That seems to the Board to be a serious matter, and one on which they desire the opinion of the owners of property and ratepayers. Let us look at the existing state of things. There is a public road down to the shore from the Crown Hotel, by a level crossing—a most unsafe one, I think you will agree with me in saying. Anyone with a family of children would not wish to cross that without some protection.

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Mr. MAUDE said he had two private crossings—one for carts and the other a private passage—and he should be glad to give them up to the Company, provided they would give them a bridge from the higher part of the new road. He had written to Messrs. Currey and Holland a fortnight or three weeks ago, stating his willingness to sacrifice all private rights for the benefit of the public in having a bridge thrown open to them as compensation from the Company for his private rights. (Applause.) He did so on his own responsibility, without saying a word to anyone. He got his friend Mr. Hogarth to come over; they trespassed a little on the railway, and made a few measurements, and he forwarded a plan to Messrs. Currey and Holland of what they considered practicable. He did this because he did not want to be told that there were any engineering difficulties in the way. All he got in reply was a laconic refusal of the whole thing.—Mr. Maude handed the reply to Mr. Clark, who read it, the portions of the letter relating to the matter referred to being as follows:—

"14, Gracechurch-street, Westminster,
"28th December, 1875.

"Dear Sir,—We duly received your letter of yesterday's date, and regret that we cannot accede to your proposal. Had Sir James Ramsden been in England, we should have requested you to see him on the subject, but in his absence we are compelled to answer you decisively.—Yours faithfully,

"W. E. Maude, Esq."

CURREY AND HOLLAND.

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Mr. STEWART asked if there would not be more visitors to Grange if there was better access to the shore? He could say from experience that many persons refused to stay on that very ground. The place was all right, the houses were all that was required, but the approach to the sands was so bad that persons dare not trust their nurses and children to cross it.

Mr. JUST: Many have gone away owing to the danger of crossing to the sands.

Mr. STEWART: There is another important thing; there is no place where people can go to bathe at present.

Mr. MAUDE: That might be settled when we get the bridges.

Mr. RILEY: Is it your idea that a bridge for carts and carriages should go from the Crown Hotel?

The CHAIRMAN: There is a road there now for carts; they cannot stop that.

Mr. RIGG moved and Mr. Mossop seconded the adoption of the petition submitted by Mr. Maude.—The motion was agreed to unanimously.

Mr. RILEY: There is a piece of land on the other side of the railway, a little bit to the south-westward of the level crossing below the Crown Hotel, and my idea would be to substitute a bridge on the slope from the higher land, from the new road which goes down past Mr. Westwood's to that little bit of land. You would then get a straight access to the shore without any particular incline. You would have a severe incline if you had the bridge below the Crown, and it would be a difficult piece of engineering, whereas the other piece of engineering would be nothing.

Capt. GRIMSHAW said he must protest against tenants furthering the private interests of owners. It looked like that from Mr. Riley's last remark, though he believed it was unintentional.

Mr. RILEY: I thought it was a public road. I have no authority from Mr. Young. I am merely speaking on my own responsibility.

Mr. JUST proposed that a copy of the petition be forwarded to the Duke of Devonshire, with a request that he be kind enough to send it to Sir James Ramsden, with a friendly recommendation; also that an answer be given within ten days.

This was seconded by Mr. Stewart, and carried unanimously.

Mr. MAUDE suggested that the Chairman of the Local Board should call another meeting as soon as an answer was obtained and they then could, if necessary, devise what steps they should take.—The proceedings then terminated.

GRANGE LOCAL BOARD OF HEALTH

A meeting of the Local Board of Health for the district of Grange was held on Monday, the 10th inst. The bye-laws were adopted, and it was ordered that the seal of the Board be affixed thereto. The bye-laws will have to be in the office for a month, and will then require the confirmation of the Home Office.—The Clerk to the Board (Mr. C. T. Clark) reported that he had made the necessary application to the Local Government Board for a loan to the Board of £8000 for the water works, and to the Public Loan Commissioners, from whom the sum will be borrowed. He had received in reply an intimation that an inspector would shortly be sent down.