

## Transcript of Henry Pease 1875 Speech (Andrew Stoves)

It may be expected that on this auspicious occasion I should say something of the important Event, whose jubilee we are met to celebrate. Our present gathering almost **includiably** reminds me of another meeting that took place in Stockton on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 1825, to celebrate the opening of the first public railway. Of those who were present at that time I am afraid that none are now left. But we know, without a voice from the dead, that the occasion is one of surpassing interest, although carried out, I dare say, on a much smaller and less festive scale than the present. The first twenty five miles of public railway laid in the whole world had then been opened. The first locomotive that ever ran on a public line had then been tried. The first passengers that had ever journeyed in a railway coach (*inserted*) *drawn by a locomotive* on a public railway had then come to their journey's end. But it is not for me to pretend that this is (see back)

the first line of railway constructed. In the eighteenth century there had been numerous (*inserted*) *private* lines opened for the convenience of collieries. Up to the year 1811 it is calculated that there had been a hundred & eighty miles of railway completed in South Wales; & **xxxxx know** that in the North here George Stephenson and others had constructed **several?mineral?** lines for the benefit of Colliery owners. But all these were private lines, and Every One of them except that at Killingworth was worked by horses. The promoters of the first public line had great difficulties to contend with. They were opposed on all hands, not only by ~~land-owners~~ road trustees and (*inserted*) *other* vested interests but by an influential party at Stockton who favoured the construction of a Canal from Stockton to Evenwood Bridge, near Bishop- Auckland. The influence

2

of territorial magnates is also arrayed against them. One noble Lord, whose successor I am proud to see with us tonight, objected to the scheme because it passed through one of his fox-covers (*inserted*) (*Earl of Darlington*) & another member of the peerage, with great local influence wrote to a friend that he thought the people who were **won't** to be sober had gone made over the railway (*insert*) *Lord Eldon*. The first Act is applied for in 1819. It is rejected in (*insert*) *the House of Commons* by a majority of thirteen. Another Act is applied for in 1820, but the death of the King and the dissolution of Parliament prevented it from being passed, (*insert*) *in that year* & (*insert*) *thus* the ~~first Bill~~ Act authorizing the construction of the line ~~is~~ *did* not receive the Royal Assent until the 19<sup>th</sup> April in the following year. The first rail

3

was laid by Mr Meynell, the first Chairman of the Coy on the 23<sup>d</sup> May, 1822, & the line is formally opened on the 27<sup>th</sup> September, 1825, so that its construction occupied a period of rather more than three years. – The Cost of the undertaking was ~~over £120,000,~~ estimated at £92,000 for the main line, and £32,000 for five collateral branches, making a total of £124,000, and it may interest the Engineers present to hear that Mr George Overton, who made the first survey for the Coy, in 1818, undertook to lay a double line for £2,800 per mile. It so happened that the actual Cost of the railway is considerably over the sum calculated upon, but after all, it is much under the sum of

4

£225,000, which is calculated as the cost of the rival Canal scheme. The Estimated **revenue?** of the Coy is £18,000 per annum, and of this amount it is ~~estimated~~-*expected* that coal traffic would furnish about £12,000. But this Estimate turned out to be considerably within the mark, for the Coy's revenue for their second financial year exceeded £18,000, & of this amount more than £14,000 were derived from coals, while only £563 came from passengers. The receipts from coal traffic rapidly increased, & in 1830, the year of the opening of the ~~M~~-Liverpool & Manchester Railway, they reached close on £32,000; but for the same year the receipts from passenger

5

traffic only came to £390, or nearly £200 less than in the second year of the Coy's existence. The claim has been set up on behalf of the Liverpool & Manchester Railway that it is the first public railway in the Country. But I think gentlemen will now see that it has no right whatever to that distinction. The Stockton & Darlington line is not only opened five years previously, but it had both made use of locomotives & carried passengers for the whole of that period. There is, of course, this difference between the two lines that the one did not take the carrying traffic all at once into its own hands, but allowed the proprietors of stage coaches & other vehicles to make use of the line for consideration of so much per mile,

6

while the other began by taking the carrying traffic entirely under ~~thei~~ its own control. It is not until November, 1833, that the directors of the Stockton & Darlington Railway Coy took the conveyance of passengers entirely under their own charge. As a preliminary step to doing so they had to buy out the interest & plant of the various stage coach proprietors then making use of their system; but as the total revenue accruing to the Coy in that year from passenger traffic is only £611, it can easily be imagined that the compensation paid to the coach proprietors would not be very large. The public generally may not be aware of the fact that, not only had the Stockton & D'ton Ry Coy obtained their original Act of 1822, but they had obtained two other Acts

7

for extensions of their system – the first in May, 1823, & the next in May 1824, - previous to an Act being obtained by any other Coy. Previous, also, to the experiments made by the Liverpool & Manchester Railway Coy for the purpose of testing the speed & adaptability of locomotive **signals?** For Carrying purposes, the Stockton & D'ton Coy had thoroughly satisfied the **inclines?** as to their value, and their superiority over fixed engines or horse power. Nearly three years previous to the opening of the ~~M~~-Liverpool & Manchester line they had by repeated experiments ascertained that the locomotive saved (*insert*) *more than* 100 per cent as compared with the cost of animal traction, & they had demonstrated, moreover, that the

8

locomotive is capable of a much greater speed than they dared to sanction. At this time of day it is amusing & almost marvellous to think of the tricks & expedients which our early directors were compelled to adopt to reconcile public opinion to the changes which they had initiated. Orders were issued to all Engine-drivers to slow their locomotives when nearing a turnpike road, so that they might not frighten the horses; & the same rule is enforced when nearing ~~??~~ plantations, in order to

prevent the cinders which came from the Engine, from setting fire to the trees. Up to 1835, indeed, the directors did not allow a speed of more than six miles per hour, & drivers who transgressed this instruction were subjected to pains & penalties.

9

I might at much greater length enlarge on the history & recall my own recollection of the first public railway. But the exigencies of time & your patience demand that I should refrain. I cannot, however, withhold from allusion to some of the wonderful industrial changes brought about by the system which has properly been said to have annihilated time & space. - The first promoters of the Stockton & Darlington Railway calculated that their principal revenue would be derived not from the shipment of coals, not from its consumption by the ~~?~~ of ~~black?~~ & puddling furnaces that are now in operation between the Tees & the Tyne, not from the requirements of chemical factories, ship building Yards, & engineering Works, but from the local domestic requirements of Stockton, Darlington & the flourishing town of Yarm. But gentlemen, I forgot to add that they calculated on the enormous quantity

10

of 14,500 tons of coal going into Cleveland – a district that now, after an interval of *(insert)* only fifty years absorbs considerably more than *(insert)* ~~fifty~~ ~~two~~ times the total quantity of coal that is expected to pass over the Stockton & Darlington line in 1825. - When the railway is opened in that year the total production of the eight or ten collieries then open working in South Durham is considerably under half a million tons. The aggregate annual production of coal in the Southern Division of Durham is now upwards of seventeen million tons. – Fifteen Years ago the total quantity of coal & coke carried over the S. & D Ry is 2 million tons – I do not include the odd figures where they are of small account – ten years later the traffic under this head represented a total weight of four million three hundred thousand tons,

11

being an increase within twenty Years, of two million, nine hundred thousand tons; & at the present time the quantity of coal & coke carried over the Darlington Section is not much short of six million tons. - Equally startling figures represent the increase of revenue, which rose from £169,000 in 1850, to £494,000 in ~~1869~~ 1863, & £958,000 in 1867. I cannot give the ~~act~~ *(insert)* annual measure~~?~~ of the D'ton section at the present time, but it is considerably over a million ~~startling?~~ -

This remarkable increase of volume I need hardly say has been due for the most part to the development of the iron trade of Cleveland. From that district there is little ~~or no~~ traffic previous to 1850; & in 1851, the quantity of iron-stone passing over the line is only 180,000 tons. But in 1860 about 1,100,000 tons of iron ore passed over

12

the section; in 1868, ~~about~~ more than 2,000,000 tons; & last year the quantity of iron stone raised~~?~~ in Cleveland is ~~about~~ nearly six million tons, of which ~~a~~ more than four million tons passed over our line. – The limestone traffic of Weardale has been another valuable source of revenue to the Coy. In 1850 the quantity of limestone that passed over the line is only about sixty six thousand tons; but in

1868 it is over half a million tons; & I believe that at the present time it is little short of a million tons per annum. –

So much for what the S'ton & Dton Railway has done for itself & helped to do for the important district which it serves. But what gentlemen, has our line done for the world at large? What do we now see of the results of the system that is inaugurated at Darlington fifty Years ago? - What is the present position

13

of the great system of which it is the parent & nucleus. If I answer the last question first I reply that the North Eastern Ry Coy, with which the Ston & D'ton line is now incorporated, & has been since 1863, has an Authorised Capital of upwards of fifty five millions sterling, that it carries about thirty million passengers every year, that it runs ~~more than~~ more than twenty million train miles every year, that it owns 1226 Engines, 2232 Carriages, 26,174 merchandise and 50,000 mineral wagons; that it has ~~14,000~~ 1400 miles open for traffic, of which about 900 are laid with a double line of rails, & that its total annual revenue is now nearly six & a half millions sterling!

But these results, not with-standing that they are truly gigantic are very limited as compared with those achieve by the railway system

14

as a whole. Our own country, foremost always to brave the battle & the breezes? & to lead the van of commerce & civilization, was also the first to give an impulse to the growth of railways. If anything perhaps, that impulse is a little too strong, especially in 1837, when notice had been given of seventy five ?? bills to authorise the construction of 1200 ~~new~~ miles of additional railway at a cost of nineteen millions sterling, & again in 1844, & the? two? following years, when Parliamentary sanction is obtained for the construction of 8470 miles of additional railway. But in spite of the two railway ??, the growth of railways in this country has on the whole been judiciously regulated, & has been productive of untold benefit to the community at large. At the end of last Year there were 16,49 miles of line

15

laid in Great Britain, with a total authorised Capital of more than seven hundred millions sterling, the average Cost per mile being about £37,000, or ~~nearly more than~~ £34,0000 per mile ~~more above~~ ?? the cost for which George Overton undertook to lay the S'ton & Dton line with double rails in 1818.

But I need not say gentlemen that the advantages of railways have not been confined to the five hundred million passengers conveyed on the railways of the United Kingdom during last year, nor to the traders & manufacturers whose commerce has been facilitated & multiplied in extent beyond anything that could have been conceived of fifty years ago. Other nations have not only rivalled but even outstripped this one in the rise & progress of railways. Europe has now a total of about 70,000 miles of railway laid down, & several thousands

It seems like there might be a page missing here from the script?

Rlwy? Jubilee 27.28 of Sept 1875

That the celebration be extended over two days – so far as may be delivered? and found convenient.

That with a view to give added interest to the occasion – an Exhibition be formed in a sufficient scale to embrace in ample? of Railway Appliances at the period of the full introduction of the system in ?? part with ?? modern and complete of the present day.

That strangers attending the Celebration drive together.

That on Friday the 27<sup>th</sup> the Exhibition be formally opened at ?? and under ?? empowered as may be deemed most effective.

That the ?? take place at 7 Ocl'k? In the Central Hall.

That on Tuesday there be a public breakfast to which Ladies shall be invited, and that on this occasion the services of ?? Govt shall be engaged to give short ?? say more on the pro?? Of the Rlwy system from its commencement to the present day.

Another – in Rlways is promotion, civilisation – having up? and to ?? manual influence and power for the good of the human ??

That at 12 O'clk – having be ready to convey strangers to ~~the Ear on Ma?~~ different ?? – to visit places of interest in respect either of ?? on manufactures, - and that correspondence, arrangements, be made for their comfort and ??

That in the even'g there be a meeting specially of Rlwy freelance?, and others of the Rlwy staff – when they shall be ?? by one more capable of ??, when that Rlwy Company to which he make grants of money forward inevitable expenses specially of the Exhibition – and mainly to encourage their official to contribute objects of interest to it.