

THE MANX NORTHERN RAILWAY
COMING TO BALLAUGH
(1879) *



Notices.

Manx Northern Railway.
Land Compensation Cases.—Ballaugh.

NOTICE is Hereby Given that the sittings at the Arbitrators, appointed to take place at the COURT-HOUSE, Kirk Michael, on FRIDAY, the 3rd October next, at 11 a.m., for hearing of cases with respect to lands taken by the Railway Company in the parish of Ballaugh, will be adjourned to the New School House near the Village of Ballaugh, and the Arbitrators will hear and proceed with cases at such last named place, at 11-30 a.m., instead of at the Court-house, Kirk Michael at 11 o'clock.

All persons noticed to appear at Kirk Michael as aforesaid will be required to appear at the said School-house, Ballaugh, at 11-30 o'clock, on the said day.

J. FRED. GILL,
Advocate of the Company.

26th Sept., 1879.

“[Notices] Manx Northern Railway. Land Compensation Cases.—
Ballaugh.” *Manx Sun* 27 July 1879: 8g.

In 1877, Tynwald established a committee to look into the proposal for a railway line to serve Ramsey and the North of the Island. It was felt that “the Railway will tend to consolidate the interests of the North and the South,” which was spelt out in detail:

The line of mountain land which separates one side of the Island from the other, has a tendency to cause the interests of these portions to be looked upon as separate and distinct from each other, and prejudices occasionally show themselves, which more frequent communication will lessen or prevent.”

Not just physical but social engineering was at work.

At first, the line was to loop round through the Northern Plain after Ballaugh, but the issue of potential revenue from such a route put a stop to that plan. As George Wood testified, “[t]he principal profit would be the excursion traffic in the summer time. The local traffic alone, independent of the visitors, would not be sufficient to

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pay the dividend.” And on the excursion traffic as it was worded, the view of a Mr Thomas was that:

As regards the passenger traffic, we calculate upon a good many visitors to Sulby Glen, which would hardly be the case with the Jurby line. It is to the three months’ summer traffic that we look principally for the dividend.”

Some of the evidence given to the committee suggested that there was little chance of any local traffic at all. John Chrystal, speaking of Andreas, commented simply that “[i]t is a scattered agricultural population,” while Thomas Kneale stated of Jurby that “[t]here is little population at Sandy Gate, and it is a decreasing population.” The railway did indeed come but after leaving Ballaugh ran straight through to Ramsey and so there was never going to be the need for a railway station at Sandy Gate or in Andreas Village. Incidentally, the J. Fred Gill who was the Advocate for the Manx Northern Railway was later the Northern Deemster, and with his brother, W.H. Gill, would collect folk songs in Ballaugh and elsewhere on the Northern Plain, no doubt making use of the railway to make their way there from Douglas where the Deemster lived.

STEPHEN MILLER, 2017

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For the Report of Tynwald quoted from here, see Isle of Man Government, *Northern Railway: Report of Committee*. [Douglas]: [Isle of Man Government], 1877.

