THE RAILWAY RATES AGITATION.

PROTEST BY FISH TRADE.

Yesterday a meeting of those interested in the fishing industry to consider the proposed increase of railway rates was held in the Lecture Room, St Nicholas' Buildings Aberdeen. Mr W. D. Johnston, of Montrose, was called to the chair. The meeting was well attended, representatives being present from the Edinburgh and Leith Fish Trade Association, the fish traders and fishermen of Montrose district, Scarborough Line Fishermen's Association, Aberdeen Fish Trade Association, Aberdeen Fishermen's Association, Buckhaven, Peterhead, Cromarty, St Combs, Seaham, Cove, Gardenstown, Stonehaven, Wick, Lossiemouth, Burghead, Hartlepool, and Sheffield.

The Chairman, in opening the meeting, said what was wanted was a simple, simply just, and even generous, to the railway, as well as to the fish and other trade community. If the railway companies wanted to increase their dividends they should look into their cost of doing business which in many ways was far behind the age, and not raise the rates. The money that was annually thrown away in legal and Parliamentary expenses was simply incredulous. The classification of goods was, so far as the fish was concerned, unnecessarily complicated and cumbersome, and the mode of booking parcels and so on, was longer than it should be, looked more like the beginning of a concern than one that had existed for about a half a century. If the wants of the community in the immediate neighbourhood of each railway station were inquired into and acted on, he was persuaded that from the increased revenue from that source alone a considerable addition would be made to the shareholders' dividend. He then proceeded to show that at present there were five classifications for fish. Numbers 1, 2, and 3 could not be sent by passenger train unless at third-class rate, and there was no "Class 4" in goods train, so that all sorts of fish in class 5 must be sent by passenger trains. Classes 1 and 2 were charged the same rate to London and other places, and he did not know why see why there should be two classes and one rate. From class 1 "whelks and periwinkles" were raised to class 2. From class 2 "sprats, in any state, by-and-large only," were raised to class 3. In Class 3 had been added "dried ling and cod." They were specially exempted from that class before, and were in no better position than any other fish, or any other merchandise in some way he never could comprehend. From class 3 there had been removed, and raised to class 4, eels, fresh cod, ling, haddocks, whitings, plaice, dabs, mackerel, herrings, cod, founders, and gurnets. It was also proposed that class 4 should include such valuable fish as haddocks, herrings, and thornbacks. Thornbacks were all to be put into class 4, paying a rate by passenger train from 4s 9d per cwt, at the sender's risk, and 5s 11d at the company's risk. From class 4 salmon in boxes, turbot, and soles, had been moved altogether, and not placed in any class. It might be thus a bit of generosity came over the complaints of the classification when they reached these, and they thought to themselves that they were treated worse than articles they had punished very heavily in days gone past, and they would now carry them free for the next twenty years. (Laughter.) These they had been left out intentionally he would say nothing further than that it was a joke for railways as well as for fish rates. If this had been intended, then they would be charged in class 5, which included "fresh fish of all descriptions not otherwise classified, including foreign shellfish, prawns, and shrimps." There was no fifth class by goods train, so that all these must go by passenger train. The rate for the fifth class to London was, at sender's risk, 6s 3d per cwt; and at company's risk, 7s 1d per cwt. This included the weight of the box and the ice, which was from one-third to one-half of the whole weight. Ice could be imported from Norway, delivered, at some 5s 6d per ton, and he did not see why they should be charged nearly the same per cwt. for sending it to London. The raising of the classification from class 3 to class 4 meant 1s and 1s 3d per cwt. additional, and from class 4 to class 5 1s 6d to 1s 11d per cwt. Additional according to sender's risk, he thought, at the sender's or company's risk. That was by passenger train. The fish classification was far too complicated, and in his opinion there should not be more than three classes. That, he considered, would be for the benefit of the railways as well as the community. After reading some communications his firm had had with the Caledonian and the Great British Railway Companies on the subject in 1885, Mr Johnson concluded by saying that he cordially trusted with such almost unlimited powers as the railway companies were now asking for, he moved "That this meeting strongly objects to the proposed classification of fish and other merchandise rates and charges proposed to be lodged with the Board of Trade by the various railway companies in connection with the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888, and, so far as applicable to all kinds of fish, declare the same to be excessive, and unsuitable to an extent which will be disastrous to the sea fishing industry, and it resolves to lodge such other objections to the same being sanctioned by the Board of Trade."

Mr Jas. M'Combie, Peterhead, seconded, stating that this was a life and death struggle for the fish trade, and to avoid the extra tax the fish trade had suffered at the hands of the railway companies. The amount of the fish had also suffered to a very marked extent. They were quite entitled then in these circumstances to meet together and organise themselves so as to be able to bring something to save such a large industry from being wrecked and annihilated. A debt of gratitude was due to the Birmingham and Sheffield fish salesmen, who took such a warm interest in asking amendments to the measure put forward. The Act was not as all agreeable to the railway people, and he did not think it was intended that the fish trade could have any great feelings of favour or respect for Mr Bolton, the chairman of the Parliamentary Railway, who made observations in the House of Commons which were not at all favourable to the fishing industry, and statements many of which were quite irrelevant and not according to fact. He considered by begging to thank them for being able to make their opinion felt, if not at the Board of Trade, in the passing of the provisional order through the House of Commons. The resolution was adopted.

Mr John Ross, jun., a representative of the Aberdeen Fish Trade Association, moved "That this meeting do form itself into an association to be called the Scottish Sea Fisheries Association, for the purpose of objecting to and opposing the above-mentioned classification and securing rates and a classification in accordance with the Railway Companies (Carriage of Fish) Bill, 1888, or other reasonable and equitable rates, and of dealing with all other questions relating to the fishing and trade in fish; that such association shall consist of all persons engaged or interested in the fishing industry, who shall become members on terms of rules to be framed by the Council after-mentioned; and that the following office-bearers are hereby appointed:—President, vice-president, a Council consisting of representatives to be appointed by branch associations becoming affiliated and contributing to the funds in terms of the rules, and four representatives to be from time to time elected by each of the Aberdeen Fish Trade Association and Aberdeen Fishermen's Association, and any other person or persons whom the Council may from time to time add to their number; and a secretary, treasurer, and agent." In supporting the resolution, he said they did not wish to level down railway companies, but to level up the fish trade. (Applause.) This was a case of bargain-making, and they wanted to make the best bargain they could for themselves. In regard to railway rates, he had formed an opinion of his own that the railway companies had hitherto possessed maximum rates, and in some instances they were even higher than they proposed just now. What they should not lose sight of was the fact that the railway rates were for anything with which they had to deal particularly. These rates had not been imposed hitherto, and no one company would even dare to impose them in the future. The purpose for which he thought they were asked on the present occasion was to divert attention from the true point at issue. (Hear, hear.) The difficulty of those in the fish trade had been to pay the actual charges that the railway companies made, and what they should endeavour to do was to get the rates lower than was at present charged. He counselled them to take a leaf out of the Irish book, and say "This is what we want, and we mean to have it."

Mr Robert Forman, Buchanhaven, seconded, in a speech in which he dwelt upon the low state of the fishing industry.

Mr Baxter said he could not commit the fishermen of Footdee to the resolution to form an association without consulting them.

Mr James West, Montrose, was in a similar position, although he had no doubt the fishermen in his district would be quite willing to fall in with the proposal.

Mr Forman said he had no power to agree to anything except the associating of themselves against the increase of the railway rates.

Mr Langley, Sheffield, said the only definite instructions he had was that his association would support the movement against the railway rates as far as it was able. They could scarcely expect that a place like Sheffield would associate itself with Aberdeen by being personally represented, but those in the fish trade in his district would be willing to help financially. If all the associations throughout the United Kingdom combined together and went unitedly before the Commission, he did not think the railway companies would have much chance of getting all they wanted. They must not lose sight of the fact that the rates that had been given them were only for goods traffic, and they must themselves take up the question of rates by passenger trains.

A Representative from Boddam said his constituents had not given him power to join the association, but to say that they were willing to contribute 1s per man towards defraying the expenses. (Hear, hear.)

Ultimately the resolution was adopted, with a clause added to the effect that various of the representatives acquainted in the meantime subject to it being adopted by their constituent bodies.

It was also agreed that the signature to all documents of any member of Council and the secretary would be sufficient.

The meeting then proceeded to elect office-bearers of the association. Mr M'Combie, Peterhead, nominated as president Mr Barclay, M.P., and Mr Robert Garrow seconded. Mr Robert Buchan, proposed, and Mr Strachan, Inverallochy, seconded, for Esslemont, M.P. Mr R. W. Duff, M.P., was proposed by Mr Alexander Cowie, Lossiemouth, and seconded by Mr Alexander Fletcher, Montrose. The votes resulted—Mr Barclay 29, Mr Duff 5, and Mr Esslemont 3. Mr Barclay was accordingly elected president. In the event of Mr Barclay declining, it was understood that the office would be offered to Mr Duff. On the motion of Mr James Brown, Aberdeen, seconded by Mr Gauld, Aberdeen, Baillie Mearns, Aberdeen, was unanimously appointed vice-president. On the motion of the chairman, an agent and secretary, Mr Gordon, fish salesman, Aberdeen, suggested that before appointing officials a committee should be appointed to consider as to the carrying out of the business details and arranging the terms. On the motion however of Mr John Ross, seconded by Mr James Brown, Mr J. Ogg Mackenzie was unanimously appointed to the office of agent and secretary.

In the course of further discussion a fisherman complained that at present the fish traders of Glasgow and the Clyde was 20s or 24s per ton, and if the rates were raised he supposed the fishermen would have to pay about 40 a ton.

Mr Doull, Wick, said if the railway companies were allowed to get the rates they asked the result would be disastrous to the fishing community. He moved—"That this meeting invite the fishermen and fishermen throughout Scotland to form local representative associations for affiliation with the Central Association in Aberdeen, and should it be thought the interests of the Scottish fishing industry as a whole may be represented and advanced by united voice and action."

Mr Alex. Gauld seconded, and the motion was unanimously adopted.

Mr Alexander Macdonald, Aberdeen, who represented the Norway fish traders and fishermen, moved "That the proposed increase of the railway association's action effective be provided by contributions from branch associations to be formed at all fishing centres at the rate of one halfpenny in the pound on resident fishermen, and a further sum at least equal to the amount of these contributions from the curers and fish traders."

Mr William Mather, Stonehaven, seconded, remarking that the contribution was very small.

The resolution was adopted.

The Chairman said it would be desirable for local associations to send up within a week the names of their representatives to the Council.

Mr A. Jamieson, on behalf of the Edinburgh and Leith Fish Market Association, intimated the contribution of £10. Mr M'Combie said he happened to be present at a meeting of fish salesmen in Glasgow, and he believed they were going to make a contribution of £50. Mr Mitchell understood that a sum of £25 had been collected in Peterhead. Mr Bookless, Sheffield, said the Sheffield and Rotherham Association would contribute £5 as soon as the Chairman had intimated a subscription of five guineas on behalf of his firm. Mr John Ross, jun., stated that his association, which was prepared to contribute liberally towards the funds, wished it to be distinctly understood that the action of this association should be confined to the question of the entering appearance before the Board of Trade, and not to any other objection. Mr J. O. Macqueen mentioned that intimation had been received of contribution or co-operation from Clydebank, Dundee, and Grimsby.

A vote of thanks to the chairman terminated the proceedings.

KINCARDINESHIRE FARMERS' CLUB.

A meeting was held yesterday in the Commercial Hotel, Stonehaven, under the auspices of the Kincardineshire Farmers' Club, to consider the proposed increase of railway rates. Major Disney Innes of Cowie presided, and there was a large attendance of farmers and others.

The Secretary (Mr A. E. Anundale) read apologies for absence from Captain Carnegie, Redhall, who stated that he entirely sympathised with the movement; from Mr David Pearson, Johnstone Lodge; and from Mr W. J. Sandford-Thompson, commissioner on the Kinross estates.

The Chairman, in returning thanks for the honour conferred upon him by asking him to preside, said, as they were aware, the railway companies, whose rates and charges were proposed to be increased in some cases to double, and even to treble, some of them, one great object of the Board of Trade in asking them to review their schedules was to bring out from chaos. In order that the Board might be able to form a judgment of the railway companies' position that, looking to the fact that a beautiful form had to be brought out of chaos, if it was done, they knew very well there would be a good deal of chipping, and that beautiful form could be produced, and they had made sure that the block should not be of the small dimensions that some seemed to think it was. (Laughter.) This meeting was now called upon to submit their objections to these proposals, but they could not expect that their objections in that favour was smoother question. They were bound, at any rate, to take what steps they thought necessary, in the hope that the Board of Trade would allow them to make their objections. They had to consider whether they should take the initiative in the matter or whether they should combine with other bodies interested in referring as fairly and as possible how heavily they would be taxed by these extreme proposals. (Applause.)

Mr Robertson (Halfhill), explained that the action resolved on by the club was only decided last Friday day, and there was no time to resolve on the line they should go on. He begged to move:—"That in the interests of farmers and others, it would be much to many respects are unduly heavy, and, further, that the proposed rates and charges and terminal charges, as set forth in the proposed classification and schedules of the railway companies serving this district, if authorised by Parliament, would sanction the increase of present rates and charges to such extent as would very materially increase the cost of higher cultivation of agricultural land, and tend very much to decrease its productiveness, thereby injuriously affecting the interests of all departments of the agricultural industry of this country." He thought it would have been out of place, in view of the prestige of the Kincardineshire Farmers' Club, for him to have proposed such without taking part in the present agitation. They had hitherto to complain of the advantages enjoyed by the seaboard towns, which so much militated against the interests of those in inland districts, and now, according to this new schedule under the Traffic Act of 1888, the railway companies were seeking power to level up the rates both on general and local traffic. He would ask if any railway company or any other monopolist had a right to take as much when it would tell to the best advantage the interests of any class of the community? If these rates were sanctioned they would simply be taxed to the extent. (Hear, hear, and applause.) It was all very well for them to come forward and say that they did not intend to levy these rates; but if that was so, why did they ask the power? (Applause.) He was afraid that the result of their bare power would be simply to reduce the value of their produce. (Applause.) Then what would be the result in regard to what they required? They would find that the increased rates would put a tax on the price of their manures and other requisites. (Applause.) The railway company would no doubt advance the plea that the traffic was not paying a percentage on the outlay, but there were many industries in the country that, owing to foreign competition, were not paying a percentage on the outlay, and there was no reason why any agricultural company should get the advantage. He would not quote details of the proposals, but he was sorry that the interests of those being assembled were so very seriously injure the agricultural and other trading communities. (Applause.)

Mr Rae, Haddo, had much pleasure in seconding the resolution. He thought they were sorely handicapped already by the rates at which foreigners, and especially Americans, were enabled to transmit their produce. (Applause.) This was a matter which affected every class of the community—the tradesman as well as the farmer. The produce of the soil was what no class of the community could do without, and any increase in rates must fall upon the consumer. It was all very well that railway shareholders should have a dividend, but he had no sympathy with any such proposal like to see them not getting it—but when it could only be got by crushing out the life of an industry, he thought it was the duty of everyone interested to oppose such proposals. If the railway companies did not venture to change the rates, there could be no harm in giving them the power to charge them. (Applause.)

Mr Taylor, Clashfarquhar, in the course of a lengthy speech, impressed upon the meeting the necessity of having their views carefully considered before approaching the Board of Trade. They should lay stress upon the fact that if they were to be charged too high, the expense would fall upon the producer of the soil.

The resolution was then put to the meeting and unanimously carried.

Mr J. E. Greig, in moving the second resolution, said he thought the railway companies had come forward with their proposals at a very inopportune time. There was much more traffic on the railway, and the rates of passenger fares had been shorn since 1874. The greater favour extended to foreign traffic, he thought, was one of the greatest grievances of the country had to complain. He thought it greatly against the interest of a railway company to foster the trade of the foreigner in opposition to that of the home producer. (Applause.) He hoped a memorial to the Board of Trade resolution would be offered, and that the Board of Trade would see that the interests committed to their care would be fairly considered. He begged to move—"That steps be taken, in conjunction with other bodies having similar interests, to have the grounds of their objections to the proposed classification and schedules of rates properly stated and advocated before the Board of Trade."

Mr Falconer, Cairnton, in seconding, said he did not think it was fair to put any company should carry goods at a loss to themselves, but neither did he think that they should be allowed to carry them at rates which would be a loss to the country. (Applause.)

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

Mr Whiteman, Montrose, who was pleased to find such a large meeting assembled to consider these enormous proposals, impressed upon them the necessity for organised action, as they had a most influential body, largely represented in the House of Commons, to oppose. The schedule was carefully thought out by the railway companies, and no doubt they would fight it out to the bitter end if necessary. He moved—"That a committee be appointed by this meeting with full powers to carry out its resolutions."

Mr Taylor, Clashfarquhar, seconded, and the motion was agreed to.

Rev. Mr Gammell of Drumtochty, in the course of a few remarks, said that they could not go to the railway companies and say that they would not go to the railway station for goods, but they could say that a certain rate we will get some other body to do it." They could not get some other body, and so they had the screw on them. (Laughter.) It had been said that the railway companies did intend to carry these rates, but he said—"Don't give them the chance"—because once they allowed them to get the increased rates they would not have power to prevent their imposing them. (Applause.)

Mr Robertson proposed that the Standing Committee of the club be appointed a committee to take action in the matter.

Mr Gammell seconded, and the motion was agreed to.

A vote of thanks having been passed to the chairman for presiding, the proceedings terminated.

THE LATE MR WM. COUTTS, SOLICITOR, BANFF.

Yesterday afternoon the remains of the late Mr Wm. Coutts, solicitor, Banff, were interred in the New Cemetery, Banff. There was a very large attendance not only from Banff, Macduff, and Alvah, but from other districts in the county, as also a considerable representation of the tenantry on the Forglen and Hatton estates, and others. During the time of the funeral shops and other places of business in Banff were closed, and the Town was literally deserted by the toilet. The coffin, which was of polished oak mounted with brass, bore the inscription—"Wm. Coutts, aged 73 years." Wreaths of flowers were sent by the following ladies and gentlemen:—Miss Coutts, Banff; Miss Lizzie Bremner, Banff; Mr Cameron, gardener, Forglen; Rev. Æneas Chisholm, Banff; Mrs Ogilvie, South Castle Street, Banff; Mrs A. Duncan, Town and County Bank House, Banff; Mrs D. Whitecross, George Street; and Mrs Ramsay and family, Earlhill; Mr and Miss Simpson, Earlhill; Mr and Mrs Ogg, Netherdale; Mr G. M. Hossack and family, St Catherine Street; the Misses Hossack, North Castle Street; and also a wreath from the inmates of the deceased resident at 10 Castle Street, at St Helen's, St Ann's, Banff, and Kennure Cottage, Glasgow. In the afternoon from a cottage started, religious services were conducted in Gaelic by the Rev. Hugh Fraser, Alvah; Rev. W. S. Bruce, Parish Church, Banff; and Rev. James Davidson, Episcopal Church. The pressure was felt by the members and officials of the Banff Town Council, followed by the Society of Solicitors for Banffshire. Next came the coffin carried by bearers. The chief mourners and pall-bearers came next in the following order:—Mr Bruce Coutts, son of deceased; Masters John Barclay and Alexander W. J. Barclay, grandsons; Dr Barclay, Banff; James Barclay, Macduff; James and Mr David Andrew, sons-in-law; Mr Hossack, brother-in-law; Mr Morrison, his nephew, the office staff, the servants at Sandlaw. The Councillors present were—Provost Smith, Banff; W. Munro, Treasurer Forbes, Dean of Guild Robertson, and Councillors Alexander and Lyon, who were accompanied by the Town Clerk, town chamberlain, and Mr George Mearns, inspector of works. The members of the Society of Solicitors present were—Messrs John Adam, Francis Geddes, R. W. Bowie, Alex. Adam, Alex. A. Colville, C. W. R. Gordon, and W. J. Watson, Banff; Messrs Alexander George, J. J. George, and Walter Gerrard, Macduff; Mr Alexander Thomson, Banff; Mr Wm. Ogilvie, James Young, and Wm. Ingram, Portsoy; Mr J. L. M'Naughton, Buckie; and Mr Joseph Kilgour, Aberdeen. The general public included Messrs—Colonel Forbes of Denlugas, Sheriff Hamilton Grierson, Lieutenant-Colonel Mackie, Fyvie; ex-Provost Williamson, Banff; ex-Provost Dunpan, Banff; ex-Provost Ralph, Macduff; Dr Manson, Banff; Baillie Mearns, Aberdeen; General Gellie, Banff; Mr Wm. Paterson, Wanton; Mr Alex. Simpson, Banff; Mr Alex. Ogilvie, Portsoy; Rev. J. W. Geddie, Free Church, Banff; Rev. A. B. Rogerson, U.P. Church, Banff; Rev. W. A. Temple, Tomnavoulin Church, Banff; Rev. James Allan, Parish Church, Alvah; Rev. Hugh Fraser, Alvah; James Gilchrist, baker; Mr Joseph Garden, Glenfronch Distillery; Mr Andrew Cruickshank, Banff; Mr Alexander Auchinleck, Banff; Mr Alexander Greig, Sandlaw; Mr Shanks, forester; Mr Cameron, gardener; Mr George Moir, overseer; Mr Massie, joiner; Mr J. M'Lean, gamekeeper; and Mr Andrew, Forglen House. Mr Jas. Cruickshank, Banff; Mr James Duncan, architect, Turriff; Mr P. Duncan, Belcher; Mr L. L. Lyon, Rose Street, Banff; Mr Charles Grieve, Aberdeen; Mr John Anderson, Macduff; Mr J. M. Burt, Netherton, Millbrex; Mr Scott, Whiteashes; Mr George Innes, Banff; Mr Alex. Ogilvie, Asphyn; Mr J. Morrison, merchant, Banff; Mr W. Cruickshank, architect, Banff; Mr Adam Walker, station agent, Banff; Mr John Lamb, Whitefield; Mr Taylor, Knockenlaw; Mr Jas. Ogilvie, Banff; Mr Boddam, Banff; Mr L. L. Shearer, clothier, Banff; Mr Chas. Shearer, Low Street; Captain M'Gregor; Mr P. Mackie, merchant, Banff; Mr Jas. Ker, R. E. Largue, Haw; Mr L. Cruickshank, Clayfolds; Mr F. Stewart, writer, Bridge Street, Banff; Mr M'Combie, Auchinhamper; Mr W. Anderson, Backhill; Mr Jas. Simpson, Shakeshaft; Mr Roger, painter, Banff; Mr W. Findlay, auctioneer; Mr W. Ogilvie, auctioneer; Mr D. Storm, Banff; Mr Watson, sub-manager; Mr J. Ross, Cathay House; Mr Cullen, Banff, bailie, supervisor, Portsoy; Rev. James Grant, Fordyce; Rev. W. S. Cole, Enzie; Dr Clark, Cullen; Mr A. M'Pah, Tyne Arms Hotel; Mr Sim, Bank of Alvah; Mr A. Rae, druggist, Banff; Mr John Wood, watchmaker; Mr John Yeats, writer, Banff; Messrs Simpson, jewellers; Mr Charles Rathburn, sedan man; Mr Morison of Colvin; Mr G. A. Duncan, Banff Foundry; Mr J. S. Cruickshank, Logie Newton; Mr Strachan, Muirden; Mr A. M. Ogilvie, Polmaise; Mr Jas. Ledingham, Cairnton; Mr A. Jess, merchant, Milbrax; Mr W. Watson, North Castle Street; Mr George Alexander, postmaster, Portsoy; Mr William Munro, postmaster, Banff; Mr Alexander Simpson, Dull House; John William Livingston, Newton of Monthlairy; Mr John Graham, merchant, Banff; Mr William Simpson, Banff Foundry; Mr Jas. Gordon, draper; Mr George Lawson, Parish Church, Banff; Mr George Ellis, chemist; Mr P. Metcalfe, saddler; Mr J. Marshall, veterinary surgeon; Mr A. Strachan, plumber; Mr John Morrison, Knockenlaw; Mr J. G. Nicol, merchant; Mr James Cruden, shoemaker; Mr R. Sheriffs, harbourmaster; Mr A. Bow, draper, Macduff; Mr Ironside, ironmonger, Banff; Mr Forbes, Lairdswell, Fyvie; Mr Hutcheon, Firfolds; Mr Paton, engineer; Mr Lorimer, saddler; Mr Jamieson, Mill of Boyne; Mr Strachan, Mill of Boyne; Mr Morrison, Little Ribrae; Mr Watt, Boyne; Mr F. Walker, Craigneathy; Captain Hodge, Macduff; Mr Tocher, overseer, Old Town, Netherdale; Mr R. Kennedy, superintendent of Deveron fishings; &c. At the cemetery a suitable service was held, conducted by the Rev. Hugh Fraser, Alvah.

CONSUMPTION CURED.—A person cured of consumption, bronchitis, catarrh, and nervous debility, by a simple remedy; will send a description of it free to any person who applies to J. P. Mountain, 64 Chancery Lane, London, W.C.

AGRICULTURAL REVIEW.

(FROM A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.)

The past week has been a most disappointing one for the agriculture. March came in with a leonine ferocity quite in keeping with its proverbial character, and the strong equinoxial gale quickly dried the surface of the soil, giving hopes that the ground would speedily be in a condition for the reception of the seed. Winter, however, appears to be jealous of the advent of spring, and made what almost appeared this week to be a despairing effort to cover the opening snow drops and the budding crocuses with a mantle of virgin snow. The effort was fierce, but comparatively short-lived. The snow quickly disappeared, but it has left a good deal of moisture in the soil, and it is still cold enough to keep back the growth on the surface of the land, even in naturally dry positions, to be fit for sowing the seed. The weather does not appear likely to be settled. The temperature is low, and in the course of last evening some showers of snow fell. The continuance of the low temperature and the quantity of moisture in the ground, has given farmers a uncomfortable feeling about their sowing operations, which will, it is feared, be very late; and a late sowing means, as a rule, a reduced crop. The weather, must mean a late harvest with its accompaniment evils. The grass parks will now soon be let for the season, and it is to be feared that the stocks have grown with less rapidity than usual.

The wisdom of energetic action in dealing with an outbreak of pleuro-pneumonia in cattle, or, rather, I should say, of the necessity of not dealing in a prompt and effectual way with the disease, has been simply illustrated in connection with the fresh outbreak of the subtle malady, which has occurred in Kincardineshire. It will be remembered that almost half a dozen cows, which had come from Cumberland, had been sold at an auction mart in Edinburgh some time ago, and on to Kincardineshire they went into Kincardine. One animal in the Kincardineshire herd was afterwards found to be affected and was killed; a second in association with it was also slaughtered, and then the matter was supposed to have ended. But the events that have since happened have shown that the disease on the farm was more subtle in its initiatory stages that could well be conceived. It may lie dormant—as it has evidently done in this case—for weeks, and then make its appearance in an unmistakable form. It has appeared that one of the cows on the farm was quite recently found to be suffering from the disease, and it has also been slaughtered. The mystery was that this animal had the fresh outbreak could have arisen, seeing, so far as I have been able to ascertain, the animal had not been in contact with the others. Professional opinion, however, is that contact in some more or less direct or indirect way there must have been, whether in the drinking trough, or outside the compulsory association, or in some other indirect way possibly unknown to the owner. In whatever way it happened, the fact remains that a fresh outbreak took place, and that the Local Authority acted in taking up the resolution to the slaughter of the entire herd of over a score of animals. Offers for the stock were given in, and a bargain was made, the purchaser being, it is necessary to mention, bought the whole stock. The cattle will, of course, be slaughtered under proper supervision, and it may now be expected that the disease will be effectually stamped out from Kincardineshire. The cost will not be so great, of course, as if the animals had been actually diseased, but it will be a considerable amount, and the farmer himself, the county will yet have to suffer for a matter in which they were not directly to blame.

The advocates for the transference of the burden of payment of compensation for the loss of animals slaughtered under the new order are not likely to throw up the sponge because of the Kincardine phrase. It is not many weeks ago since the Prince of Wales personally addressed a communication to the Privy Council on the subject, and there is no doubt that the matter will be fully considered, and, if taken up by the Royal Society of England, will have considerable influence with the Government. The representatives of the Government, however, are somewhat cautious in the matter, the heavy cost to Cumberland alone apparently frightening them to some extent. Beyond giving promises, therefore, to inquire into the subject, nothing definite has been yet obtained, and the bodies interested should not slacken their efforts to obtain what must be an ultimate benefit to the country.

The county of Cumberland has suffered very severely from the scourge of pleuro-pneumonia, which is still prevalent in its midst. It has not, unfortunately, been the only one in which Kincardine has had to submit to the inconvenience and expense of a fresh outbreak. In Cumberland about 1000 cows have been slaughtered, the value being set down at about £30000. Of that sum about one-half has, it is true, been recovered as proceeds of the carcases, but when there is added the veterinary and other expenses, the loss to the county is a heavy one which, according to present arrangements, will fall to be paid from the local rates. In addition to the cattle slaughtered, a number of sheep have been doomed, and this will have to be added to the expense.

"Poultry Ailments and their Treatment," is the title of a handy little book now in its second edition, published by Mr Jas. F. Maitland & Co., Dundee; 1s. Upcott Gill, London; and John Menzies & Co., Edinburgh and Glasgow. Mr Jas. F. Maitland, Gray, F.L.S., editor of the "Scottish Fancier and Rural Gazette," is thoroughly competent for the work he has undertaken, and that it has met a felt want is evident from the fact that it is nearly four years ago since the first edition was issued. Since then the interest in this particular portion of the government of the farmyard has grown, and the subject dealing specially, as this one does, with the ailments of poultry is peculiarly valuable to the amateur, who is very often at a loss how to act in an emergency. A clear, short description of the various troubles to which poultry are subject is first given, and then equally succinct directions are given as to the best treatment to adopt. The simple form in which the book it has been revised, partly rewritten, and chapters are added on worms, distended crop, and lice, will, no doubt, make it a favorite in connection with the ordinary ailments with which fowls are afflicted the amateur need not have the slightest difficulty in knowing how to proceed, and there is no doubt that a study of the book will be the means of preventing a great deal of loss in many a poultry yard. I can heartily commend the book.

To the farmers and others interested in, and directly interested in the subject of the proposed rearrangement of railway rates, the subject is one in which the public at large have a very important stake. The increase of rates proposed on cattle feeding stuffs must as once affect the cost of production, with the inevitable result of raising the price of foodstuffs for the cattle, which, if it is not to be unremunerated, and with the further necessary result of giving a fresh impetus to the importation of foreign produce which are already carried at rates that render them dangerous competitors with home produce. Such a state of matters it does not require prophetic vision to foresee would have a disastrous effect on agriculture generally, and on the public, and all that is comprehended under that term. It is therefore of supreme importance that all interested in trading should allow their voice to be heard through the various representatives, if they intend to reach the Board of Trade. It may be quite admitted that some rearrangement or classification of rates may be desirable in the interest of convenience with certain articles of commerce, but in a matter so immediately affecting the food of the nation as this is it is not a matter for tampering with in connection with part of the railway company's proposals, which may be in many instances practically prohibitive tariffs. It is questionable whether the increased rates sought for, if they be conceded, will be found to make traffic which is certain to occur. If anything is more firmly established than another it is that if you give facilities for commerce that commerce will develop, and conversely if such prohibitive tariffs are imposed trade is proportionately crippled. The greatest sufferers will be farmers and home producers, and it is just as easily seen how the value of land would become depreciated. From the traders', farmers', and public point of view, and really in the interests of the railway companies themselves, the proposals now proposed increased rates is a mistake, and I trust they will be very severely modified by the Board of Trade.

At a time when the question of the quick and profitable feeding of stock both for flesh and milk has been brought into the front every contribution to the subject, from whatever quarter it may come, must be welcomed. We cannot get too many facts; they are worth, as the saying is, bushels of theories. I therefore welcome receipt of a pamphlet by Mr John Speir, Newton Farm, Newtonmore, Inverness, for private circulation, and entitled, "An experiment showing the value of mutton peas, Irish beans, and mixed meal as milk producers." This pamphlet is accompanied by a note, which says:—"Considered unworthy of a place in the transactions of the Highland and Agricultural Society." Two classes of peas have within the last few years been imported into this country—one called grey peas; the other called mutton. The grey pea is described as round and fully one-eighth of an inch in diameter; while mutton is nearly three cornered or almost square, some being slightly round, or flat on one or two sides. Both peas are said to be of much the same composition, the analysis approaching very closely to that of home-grown peas and beans. They are very hard and dry; contain much less water than home-grown beans or apes; but, owing to the careless way in which they are handled in India, they are mixed with from 2 to 5 per cent. of dust or clay. Mutton peas were sold in Glasgow during the last two winters at 10s to 11s per 280 lbs.; the grey variety at from 12s to 13s per 280 lbs.; best home beans, costing for same time 9s to 9s 7d. It appears that, where carefully used, the peas are very useful, but if given to horses whole or broken and raw, they appear to produce something like paralysis of the hind-quarters, and, in some cases, death, the cause of death if the feeding is continued. When made into meal and boiled or steamed, however, it is necessary he has seen no ill effects from them. In order to satisfy himself, Mr Speir put the two varieties of peas through a thorough test during the winter and summer of last year, the results of which value as milk producers against home-grown beans, and the value of either as against a more mixed food, Indian meal, were set aside, so that four might continuously be fed on each class of food.

The experiments are detailed at some length, and the conclusions to be drawn from them are always tentative, but, so far as any definite conclusion is concerned, the feeding value of home beans need not be considered as anything other than the best food for milk producers. (1) Mutton peas are not. That their value as milk producers being as it were very nearly equal, there would not be the difference in price which existed when this experiment was made. (2) Mixed meal is not equal to either; the cost is therefore abnormally above its value, or the other is much below it. (3) From previous experience and from this experiment I am convinced that Indian meal is a valuable milk producer. (4) That in this experiment notice has only been taken of the quantity of milk and its percentage of cream which each food has yielded when fed to different lots of cows. No note has been taken of any particular flavour or other quality which either might or might not give to butter produced from such food. My opinion is, and, as Mr Speir says, "viewing practically speaking, there will be very little difference in the flavour of the butter produced by either food. (5) That the flavour of home beans is much more palatable than that of mutton, and, in consequence, a little caution is necessary when beginning to use it. (6) That, owing to the extreme hardness of the mutton, it is better to make it into meal from it of such a homogeneous and soft kind as can readily be made from beans grown in any of the countries of northern Europe. Meal from mutton has always a tendency to be lumpy, and, if not so unless very finely ground, I am inclined to believe will not be so easily digested as that of home-grown beans. (7) That from the experiment mutton peas did not give so good results in this experiment as it may do in others, owing to the meal which was used being much more roughly ground than was that from the home beans, which was subjected to the same treatment, and passed through the same screen. To get good results from mutton, my idea is that in the milking pail it should be passed through the same grinding apparatus two or three times and allowed to lie damped for a day or two between each grinding. By such a means I expect meal from mutton might be made to approach more nearly to beans in feel and appearance, and in consequence be more useful as a feeding substance. (8) That experiments with Indian meal, particularly where carried out on milking animals, are very apt to be misleading unless the animals are changed frequently, and that even then slight inaccuracies may at times creep in. Cows are selected for such an experiment should also be all calved at least three months, and should if at all possible be all bulled at the same time as convenient, or better still not bulled at all."

Last week I called attention to the select herd of Shetland ponies belonging to Mr Gavin Hadden, Dalmunzie, Perthshire, and I now refer to a very small selected brood mares from his stud to Mr Campbell Macpherson Grant of Drumduan. I also mentioned that I had seen a pony had been sold from the same stud to the same gentleman at 70 guineas. On that point I find I was misinformed, the purchaser being Alfred Upston, Esq., of Tillydrone, Aberdeen, named The Giant, and is a bay, six years old, standing only 35 inches high, and in shape is the model of a Clydesdale horse. That such a price as 70 guineas should be paid for a pony selected for a Shetland pony shows how much the breed is appreciated, and is an argument for pressing on the breeders of ponies to be careful in buying they were not getting palmed upon them, as has been known to be done, Iceland ponies for the superior race whose home is in the Shetland Islands.

Americans like to do things on a big scale. They have in nature big rivers, mammoth caves, high mountains, and great waterfalls, so to be in keeping, they must have big cattle and big farms. In the state of Louisiana there is the largest producing farm in the world, the dimensions of which would make a Scotch farmer stare. Here are some particulars of it supplied by an Illinois paper:—Measuring 100 miles north and south, and 25 miles east and west, it is owned and operated by a syndicate of Boston capitalists. About 20 years ago a half acres of the tract were purchased in 1883 from the State of Louisiana, and from the United States Government. At that time it was a tract of land for the cattle of the few dealers in the neighbourhood, over 30,000 head of half wild horses roaming being thereon. Now this immense tract is divided into convenient plantations, or ranches, existing every six miles. The fencing alone cost in the neighbourhood of 50,000 dollars. The land is best adapted for cotton, sugar, corn, and cotton. All cultivating, ditching, &c., is done by steam power. A tract say half acre in extent is taken and an engine is placed on each side. The engines are portable, and are made adjustable attached to four ploughs, and under this arrangement 30 acres a day are gone over with only the work of two men. All the planting, planting, and other cultivation is done in a like manner. There is not a single draught horse on the entire place. Of mules, horses as used in the Old Country, 2000 are in use, which there are 10,000 head. The Southern Pacific Railway runs for 36 miles through the farm. The company have three steamboats operating on the navigable waters, which, in the aggregate, are 600 miles navigable. They have also an ice-house, a bank, a shipyard, and a rice mill.

ROYAL NORTHERN AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

AGRICULTURAL INQUIRY CLUB.

The following scheme has been drawn up by the sub-committee named for Inquiry II., and is circulated for information. Any farmer willing to carry out the experiments should intimate intimate to the convener, Lieutenant Colonel F. N. Innes, Learney, or with the secretary, Royal Northern Agricultural Society, Aberdeen, the number of lots—Cattle feeding—Soiling.—The object is to discover the most profitable kind and proportion of food to give to cattle whilst soiling. The cattle should be young stock of the same breed, and should be fed, divided into marked lots containing each at least four, and every experiment shall include lot 1 as a standard, together with a further number of lots, as more as the experimenter desires. The lots shall be selected, weighed, and valued by the experimenter, and approved by the sub-committee,