THE DUNDEE COURIER AND ARGUS, Monday, October 31, 1864.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

BRIDGE OVER TAY FIRTH.

SIR,—No doubt it would be highly beneficial to Dundee and the opposite district of Fife to have a Railway bridge across from the centre of the city, immediately west of the Harbour—passengers and goods transported over the Firth, a distance of nearly two miles, in less than five minutes—while at the same time it would very much increase the Great Eastern Railway traffic, by it from one of the two very inconvenient, annoying, and hindersome ferries, which prove so great a drawback to this Railway, the result of an error of judgment in its formation, and which, before the commencement of the Perth and Dundee line, and while the Eastern, or Edinburgh and Northern, was only in contemplation, I foresaw, and attempted to obviate by proposing a bridge at Newburgh (see my letters in the Dundee newspapers of October or November, 1835). I also wrote to Sir John Gladstone that one Ferry (preferably was bad enough, would damage a railway greatly; but that a second ferry, where a bridge, by adopting a better and nearer line to Dundee, was quite practicable, was a superfluous absurdity. He approved, but arrangements were already made for two ferries. My answer was, that the sooner such arrangements were unmade the better for all concerned. The present agitation for a bridge goes so far to prove I was not in error.

The fault of the Bridge scheme is the great cost —I believe an insuperable barrier. To erect a substantial bridge, not a flimsy spectral thing, which might or might not vanish at the approach of a storm, or break down under the vibration caused by a heavy, rapid moving train, would, in my opinion, cost nearly double, and probably much more than double, the sum the Engineer has put upon this. I stake my judgment against that of the Engineer. We have the cost of the Thames Tunnel before us: we have the cost of the launch of the Great Eastern before us, showing the enormous sum to which even celebrated engineers are liable. It is the cue of the engineer to make light of the difficulties of the undertaking, in order to induce to allow nothing for the chance—in this case so much exposed to winds and waves—I may say, the certainty of a heavy damage during the progress, which might undo much that had been done. However, a considerably less height than the present 70 feet might suffice. Seldom a vessel goes above Dundee requiring in height more than seventy feet clear, and, indeed, few above twelve. The higher, the much higher, the costlier lower them. Ships are not increasing in height of rigging. Steamers require ease only for funnel, &c.; it is not right that a great public interest should suffer—that in such an object as a bridge at Dundee or Newburgh, such an obstacle to raised to a dangerous or too costly height, to subserve a comparatively minor interest. Such vessels as usually go the Tay can easily lower themselves to pass under seventy feet without any appreciable injury to funnel.

The very desirable object of a rapid and convenient communication with the Fife shore so docks could be attained by means of a suspension bridge, a far more feasible scheme than that formerly proposed farther down the Firth. But the Great Eastern Railway taking Dundee in its course, can be far better served by a bridge at Newburgh, as affording a shorter and better approach to Dundee from the south and south-west especially for the coal and lime traffic that could be obtained by the proposed Dundee bridge and line round by Ferry-Port-on-Craig. At Newburgh the fairway for the small craft trading further up the river is not more than 100 yards wide, and close to the north shore. Here, where the Tay Firth contracts into a quiet, narrow river, a bridge could be constructed at less than one-third the cost of one at Dundee, while the connecting line of rail from its north end onward along the Carse level close to the south bank of Errol, and forming a junction with the Perth and Dundee rail at the bend of that rail near a mile east of Errol Station, or at Inchture Station, would cost little more than the land and the line.

At Newburgh the railway may be about 130 feet above the level of high water, but with a gradual descent, commencing half a-mile south-east of the station, the railway could be lowered to the level of the highest navigable point of the ferry, by one-half-way of about 100 yards wide, through which only vessels would pass upward. The bridge would extend north-east and south-west from the cutting in the Carse side, gradually descending to the Carse level. Most of this distance being dry at low water, and part of it sand, no great difficulty and in the erection would be incurred. With the land ends properly protected, slight damage by floating ice would in one way, would not affect the security. From the geological indices, I would expect the foundation to be quite solid at Newburgh than at Dundee, consequently better.

I am aware that the bridge has been proposed some distance above Newburgh, and also below Dundee—a Dundee line a mile or two further west than I have stated. But the one I have lengthen the line Great Eastern railway several miles. I would rather propose the bridge to be at Newburgh shore, or even a mile or more below Newburgh. This latter would be the shortest, and perhaps the best. The line to the bridge would deflect from the Newburgh line a little south of Lindsay House, and bending north and north-east, in the direction of Dundee, pass along the top of the hill side by the farm of Craig and Parkhill, reducing its level to that of the southmost span of the bridge. The line of crossing, though it would cost a little more than Newburgh, would shorten by another mile or two the length of the Great Eastern line.

When the Perth and Dundee, and the Edinburgh and Northern were first contemplated, I strongly urged that a Dundee line should be built on the south side of Errol, in order, ultimately, to communicate with a bridge at Newburgh. The engineers stated that to be as short as the cheapest and most direct worked line between the two cities Perth and Dundee. I mentioned at the same time that this arrangement would be of great service to the Perth and Dundee line doubly valuable, as at the same time it would form a portion of the Great North and South line, the line of Scotch traffic, and also a portion of one of the most important east and west lines. But, at the time, the Perth and Dundee line, Perth and Dundee line was determined, my proposition to adopt the Engineers' line did not meet a second—the Engineer, I think, himself abandoned his opinion that I might be right; while a bridge at Newburgh was termed in derision "Matthew's Bridge."

I may further mention that a bridge at Dundee would answer the Great Northern and Scotch traffic while a bridge at Newburgh would place it so. When once on Ferry-Port-on-Craig some of the passengers going with might prefer crossing by the steamer to Broughty, to taking a circuit of eight miles round by Dundee.

There is an evil which may result from this bridge castle-in-the-air. Its phantasy and failure may throw a shade over the credit of those trusting to it at Newburgh, which is highly expedient and easily made. It is said that Government will give nothing to fund, thus leaving for division amongst the shareholders £2250 at most.

The proportion of this falling to the holders of Leven capital stock would be £2250 of £6 6s. 6d., which, with £2215 10s 5d from last half-year, makes a total balance of £1814 6s 9d, out of which your Directors propose to pay, as formerly intimated at the end of £1 per cent per annum.

The proportion of the free balance belonging to the holders of *East of Fife* capital stock is £799 9s 2d, to which falls to be added £31 1s 5d, the balance from last half-year, making a total of £830 10s 7d, out of which it is proposed to pay a dividend at the rate of 3 per cent per annum, leaving a balance of £214 10s 7d to be carried to next half-year's account.

The following is an abridgement of the abstract of accounts to which over the recording of the votes, to thank their supporters, and frown on those who prefer another to them. With many of the electors this will have no influence. If they have the frowns of one, they will have the smiles of many. Such men will be equally indifferent about either. But there are others who would act more freely if there were only two officials that, at each candidate may be a personal friend of an elector who may honestly think that he is best fit for the office of Councillor than another candidate. And though, while the canvass is going on, in way of art to pledge himself to a party without actually giving offence, he dislikes, especially if he is a sensitive man, to vote for the opponent of his friend before his face. Then, again, it may become a matter of importance. I do not mean to say that any of the present candidates would deliberately "mark" any man because he did not vote for him on the election day. Yet most men are so constituted that, even unknown to themselves, such circumstances will influence their future conduct. There is another practice at times resorted to which I think it not only is exceedingly bad taste, but also illegal—namely, the opposing party preserving the polling sheet. This, I think, the Polling Sheriff should at once put a stop to. Hoping that you will give publicity to the above, I am, &c.,

AN ELECTOR.

29th October, 1864.

THE POLLING BOOTH FOR THE SECOND DISTRICT.

SIR,—Your daily contemporary on Friday inserted a letter from "An Elector," in which he attempted to trump up a howl of "bigotry," because the "Roman Catholic Reading Room" was not taken this year as the polling-booth for the Second District. I do not need to inform the electors, that, excepting in the case of the polling for the First District, the Town-Clerks, in the exercise of their duties for carrying through the elections are exclusively vested, have invariably avoided "large and commodious" places for recording the votes. In doing this, they have been carrying out the spirit of the Reform Act; for "or both" (a small wooden partition), and not "separate and compartments" is the term used. The Act contemplates entire freedom in the manner and place where they are to be found names without the supervision of interested parties. I cannot understand any proceeding more repugnant to the liberty of voting than that of going to be forced up to jostle his way through a crowd of excited mortals, and to have his deliberative opinion made the object of demonstration of any kind, more particularly when he finds that he has to wait at a window and recording his name and vote. There is no saying how such a document may be used, or how the voter may be made to suffer for the exercise of his free consciousness and death of Mr Anderson, the late Town Clerk, I believe the gentleman entrusted with the duty has uniform rule of former years, and selected a section of the town which, in my opinion, he would have subjected himself to just remark; and it was well he did not have dared to interfere had the case been otherwise. Suppose a vessel goes above Dundee requiring in height more than seventy feet clear, and, indeed, few above twelve. The higher, the much higher, the costlier lower them. Ships are not increasing in height of rigging. Steamers require ease only for funnel, &c.; it is not right that a great public interest should suffer—that in such an object as a bridge at Dundee or Newburgh, such an obstacle to raised to a dangerous or too costly height, to subserve a comparatively minor interest. Such vessels as usually go the Tay can easily lower themselves to pass under seventy feet without any appreciable injury to funnel.

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AN ELECTOR.

29th October, 1864.

FOURTH FORFARSHIRE VOLUNTEER ARTILLERY.

DEMONSTRATION ON RETIREMENT OF CAPTAIN LITTLEJOHN.

On Saturday afternoon, the men of the Fourth Volunteers paid a visit to Captain Commandant Littlejohn, at a farewell dinner given to him at Mr Little John's resignation of the office he has long filled with great advantage to the corps. Notwithstanding the very unfavourable state of the weather, there was a good turn out, upwards of sixty men being present. The day had assembled, and explained the cause of their visit.

Captain Commandant LITTLEJOHN said, it gives me the greatest pleasure to receive this spontaneous visit from men with whom I have been so long intimately connected for five years. It was the summer of 1859 that the Volunteer movement set agoing in Broughty Ferry, and that I was solicited to give my aid in starting it. Various meetings were held, at one of which it was ultimately resolved to form an artillery corps. About the autumn of 1859, I was requested to take charge of sometime for drilling artillerymen in connection with the Broughty corps in Dundee and Carnoustie. I had from the first been of opinion that Broughty Ferry was too limited a locality to muster in sufficiently visible corps to be raised in it; hence the resolution to seek for men in Dundee, Broughty Ferry at that time was full of candidates for commissions, and very good officers could be had, but the difficulty of getting men was not so great. I was asked to seek men in Dundee and Carnoustie, of which I was then first Lieutenant. I sought men out very successfully in Dundee and Carnoustie. In Dundee I soon had upwards of 100 men, and I had in Carnoustie from 30 to 40. The Dundee men, however, finding that they were to be here more than they had at first expected, began to supply the officers, did not quite approve of the arrangement. They held a meeting one night in the Volunteer Shipping Company's hall. It was a perfect mob. The hall was crowded to the doors, and there was not room enough to put men through their facings; and there would be half a dozen men speaking at the top of his voice, and the company in general took up the supply of time as loud as they could. Smoking was the only thing I was allowed to do in peace. I could not smoke. Now at our drills 120 men are paraded, and moved about and drilled at the word of command, and the various movements with all little noise and commotion as if only a single individual were being drilled in the room. Last night I was in the hall, I had 120 men under arms; and while they were standing at attention you could hear a pin drop. The movements of the men were only the differentiandes by drill and discipline; but although the corps was formed in this manner, it was a terrible state of discipline. Both men and officers have got to know their work and their relative positions; and, above all, they have got to know how not to expect from one another, and not to expect more than is their due. In the early stage of the movement, discomforts were not uncommon; but since the first winter, these have been reduced to a minimum, and in all the non-commissioned officers and men have not only given me their hearty support, but have stood by me resolutely, and supported me firmly in troubles through which the corps has passed. Had it not been for their firm support in these days, I frankly confess I would have broken up long ago. While I am speaking of the old times of the corps, I remember of when the corps were born soldiers, and while filled with the highest ideas of service, knowledge and proficiency, we were apt to make little of that of others. We sometimes had what we considered the best of drill sergeants, but it was common enough for learned officers to leave the ranks with the field exercise book in their hand, in order to drill the drill sergeant right, and correct his mistakes. The instructor laughed in his sleeve, and pocketed his pay, and said respectfully, "Sir, if you will return to your place I will ratify the thing in private." By and by, however, a race arose of drill sergeants of days, when a perception of military discipline began to dawn upon us. Then came the tug of war. Officers and men of the corps found that we were ordered back to their ranks. The order was obeyed; but from that moment we were a united people, and we worked at work, and trouble was sure to follow; but, as I have said, the corps stood by me resolutely, and I by them. I commissioned officers have for the last three years been a great source of pleasure to me, for I found that the correct word is pride to me. (Applause.) I am proud of the non-commissioned officers. I have had no opportunity of reporting to my superiors how much I value their responsibility of taking out, or drilling the men; but I have always had a life-boat in such a situation. The final departure of the best staff of men of the corps would be the almost certain consequence of making the attempt. I am proud of the officers and non-commissioned officers. You know as well as I do the merits of the officers, and I have every confidence in saying that the staff upon whom honour is due. (Applause.) Our staff of officers is one of numbers, and I feel that in the inspecting Officer last month, I am better able to work the corps with two or three efficient officers, than if I had a dozen inefficient ones, who must be worked round in order to wear the uniform. (Hear, hear.) And I feel that the staff of efficient officers I have had has been concerned in my views. I must now turn to the interesting work that has been done on the hill side of late day. I mean my approaching resignation. You are all aware of the reasons that compel me to leave Broughty Ferry. I am a busy man, and the pressure of business duties will no longer admit of my giving you regular attendance. I am very sorry to leave. I have served a fair time, and some one else should now take up the position. I fully convinced that my position will be no loss to you. (No, no.) It is not good for any man to be too long in office. Change is healthy and an infusion of new blood is healthy. The only thing which really concerns me is the hall. I have all along considered that the hall was the keystone to the secure permanency to an artillery corps, such a place was necessary for the care of ammunition, for a depot, repository, to armoury, and an open door to serve as a place of meeting for the men on the occasions of drill. It was bought for £212, for Messrs D. and A. Chalmers, shipbuilders, Dundee.

SALE OF RAILWAY STOCK.—A large quantity of stock of the Arbroath and Forfar Railway Company was sold by Messrs Cours Rodger, Stirling, Arbroath, and Dundee, across the Original Stock, of £25, of which twelve and-a-half shares are held by the Marquis of Huntly, at £32 15s. Twenty shares of the Guaranteed Stock, of £212 10s, sold at £16 7s; and twenty-one of the guaranteed Stock at £16 7s; and twenty-one of the Preference Stock at £10 5s per share. This stock has sold cheaply, the last public sale having been at the rate of £33 per share, and the present purchasers are realising a handsome profit.

NOVEL PLAN OF A LIFEBOAT.—An ingenious gentleman has designed a novel plan of a lifeboat propelled by steam. The idea has been suggested to him by the lamentable shipwreck of the Royal Charter. The boat is shaped like M. Purvis, Honorary Secretary to the local branch of the Lifeboat Institution, has written a letter to the editor of a Dundee newspaper explaining the plan. The boat is to be of the usual form, and an inflation of new blood is healthy. The only thing which really concerns me is the hall. I have all along considered that the hall was the keystone to the secure permanency to an artillery corps, such a place was necessary for the care of ammunition, for a depot, repository, to armoury, and an open door to serve as a place of meeting for the men on the occasions of drill. As you are aware, Captain Gourlay, Captain Hynes, and myself, have come into possession of property in the hope that funds might be raised in some way or other to secure it for the corps. In this we have failed, and I have therefore, as I said, to hand back on Captain Gourlay's hands and mine. If I could ask for favour at your hands, it would be to secure for this property as a permanent artillery establishment, I would ask your duty towards it. I need not say that I think a permanent Artillery corps is a necessity for such a town as Dundee in the present position of affairs. (Applause.) I also feel that could persuade the rich men of the place to be of the same opinion, they would be willing to subscribe among them, viz., make the hall the property of the corps for ever. (Applause.) Now that I am going to leave, I feel that I have not been as much with you I have ever been actuated by the sole and sincere desire to found a permanent artillery establishment, and I hope that you will look