

LETTER V.

To the Editor of "The Morning Chronicle."

SIR,—When railway speculation was in full bloom in England, a race of very ingenious gentlemen sprung into existence as if by magic, called "traffic-takers," and many voluminous tables were compiled for the enlightenment and guidance of parliamentary committees. These tables proved, however, perfectly fallacious in every instance.

Traffic-takers, at the time of their existence—for they have now as a race become extinct—were considered as legitimate descendants of the renowned Major Longbow, and as being highly creditable to his memory.

They collected all the possible traffic under the most favourable circumstances of their case, and generally quadrupled the amount as the available traffic on the proposed railway. This was considered at the time as an outrage upon the faith of the age—a barefaced exaggeration to catch share-jobbers, and to test the patience of parliamentary committees.

The voluminous returns, however, which pass annually under the inspection of the Railway Commissioners, establish the astounding fact that traffic-takers, who were considered exaggeration personified, would have been much nearer the mark if they had increased the aggregate of their traffic eighty, ninety, or even one-hundred fold. Still it will be perceived that the millions of railway travellers which have passed in review before the Railway Commissioners in compiling their annual report, have rather contracted than expanded their views when considering the probable traffic on the Halifax and Quebec Railway.

Major Robinson, in his Report, states, in reference to traffic, that—

"The direct communication between the two termini, Halifax and Quebec, is of a very limited nature. By land it is confined almost to the conveyance of the mails. Passengers proceed generally by way of the United States. By sea, in 1847, the communication was by 17 vessels, which arrived at Quebec, having a tonnage of 1,257, and 18 departed from that port for Halifax, whose tonnage amounted to 1,386 tons.

"This amount of intercourse does not, at the first view, appear encouraging to expect receipts, but when it is made to appear that this limited intercourse arises entirely from the want of good means of intercommunication, such as would be afforded by the proposed railway, it