

The financial and legislative history of the Clyde navigation is not less interesting. In 1758 the first Act was obtained for improving the river upon Smeaton's plan. A lock was to be built with a dam across the channel at Marlindford (four miles below Glasgow) by means of which four and a half feet depth of water was to be secured, upward to the harbour. Fortunately this plan was not carried out, and in 1768 Mr. Gilborne recommended the plan of jetties &c., to assist the action of the tide. In 1770 an Act was got to deepen the whole stretch of the river from Dunbarton up to Glasgow to a depth of seven feet at neap tides. Powers were given in this Act to levy dues upon shipping to be applied towards improving the river and in the same year a revenue of £147 sterling were drawn. In 1771 the revenues amounted to £1071, sterling.

In 1809 an Act was got to deepen to nine feet at neap tides, and to borrow £30,000 on credit of the trust. Previous to this the moneys necessary to carry on the work had been advanced by the town of Glasgow, but at this time had all been repaid out of the trust revenues. In 1824 when the first steam dredging machine was set at work, the river had been deepened to eleven and a half feet, the revenues had reached £8500, the size of the ships was increasing, and Glasgow owned one hundred and eleven vessels, amounting to 14,000 tons. In 1825 a fourth Act was got for deepening to 13 feet at neap tides, and in fifteen years thereafter vessels of 300 and 400 tons drawing twelve and thirteen feet water were numerous in the harbour, although they could not pass the river in neap tides. The number of vessels had increased three fold; their tonnage five fold, and the revenues had increased five fold, amounting to upwards of £40,000 per annum. In 1840, therefore, an Act was obtained defining bold lines of river and harbour improvement and for deepening to seventeen feet at neap tides.

In 1846 an Act was obtained for increased harbour accommodation; the number of vessels belonging to the port then amounted 512, and their tonnage to 134,603 tons. The trust revenues had risen to £51,198 sterling, the total amount drawn since 1770 being £906,554 sterling, and the total expenditure £1,253,951 sterling.

In 1850 the revenues amounted to £64,000 sterling. The customs of the port of Glasgow have risen from £3,000 in 1811 to £640,000 in 1850.

It has been remarked that under the first act obtained for the improvement of the Clyde (that is, for the construction of the lock and dam upon Smeaton's plan) no dues were to be levied until after the works were completed. This requiring a heavy outlay of capital before any return could be made, conditions placing the work in a position similar to the construction of railways. The second Act, however, which authorizes the levying of dues on shipping, created an immediate fund, and the primary cause of the financial success of the Clyde improvements is ascribed to the system of removing ford after ford, and gradually deepening the channel as the revenues increased.

The revenues of the Clyde trust for the year ending 1st July, 1854, were:

From tonnage dues.....	£50,772	4	3
“ Quay do.....	11,582	1	4
“ Shed do.....	8,798	0	6
“ Crane do.....	923	11	2
“ Weighing do.....	1,943	10	11

And from miscellaneous sources.....

£74,019	8	2
12,560	17	2

Making a total of.....

£86,580	5	11
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