

The Railroad Question.

To the Editor of the Express:

Those who occupy public positions being always subject to criticism, railway promoters cannot therefore object to a fair and honest analysis of what is proposed as a public utility and therefore it is important that the people who pay the bills should be fully advised as to the relative merits of propositions made to the people of Middlesex and Elgin are interested.

First, the Hydro Radial engineers have laid before the people seven different schemes, but have condemned all surveys except No. 3 as unprofitable, each showing a deficit.

The London and Lake Erie railway propose an extension of their line from St. Thomas to Aylmer with a branch line from a point at or near Union or Sparta and from Aylmer to Pt. Barwell should the first named lines prove successful, the latter branch is not being included in any proposition of the Hydro Radial.

The Hydro Radial engineers have undertaken to inform the people what the earnings of their schemes would be, but the London and Lake Erie decline so far to make any estimate of earnings, their officials claiming that there is no possible method whereby such an estimate could be made with any accuracy on an undeveloped and untried proposition and claiming that such a view will be supported by the traffic managers of the larger lines who have had experience.

A careful analysis of the situation is therefore desirable. The figures given as cost or rather the guaranteed bonds asked by the Hydro Radial is \$34,500 per mile, and by the London and Lake Erie railway \$20,000 per mile, the character and construction (in case of steel rails at least to be the same, viz: sixty-five pound rails to the yard) both lines being constructed with the intention of hauling freight by electric locomotives and without which no line in the district covered can pay. The claim that the people will own the one line and not the other is not a fact, as the terms offered by the London and Lake Erie railway give the people the ownership, both are to be practically operated by commission, the people not being likely to operate any line themselves any more than they operate the present hydro system although they pay for it. Each claim that the only line that will pay is their's. Experience shows that what the people of the county want is a line within the confines of their own county reaching their county town by the most direct route possible and built for the convenience of the people on the route, and those living adjacent to it. They do not require a line built as steam roads are, viz: through farm lands and only stopping at intersections of crossroads it being a fact that little intermediate business obtains where such lines are constructed. Trolley lines (the name Hydro Radial being a distinction without a difference), which accommodate the public will sometimes pay when all others will fail. They are the feeders to the larger systems, and it will not be in this generation when the public will use electric lines for long distance travel steam having not yet been superseded for that purpose.

The figures giving earnings by the Hydro so-called experts for the line they approve beginning at a point intermediate between London and St. Thomas thence to Tillsonburg, with a stub line to Aylmer—32 miles with an estimated population of ten thousand is \$152,000, being nearly \$5,000 per mile per annum and the earnings of the St. Thomas-Aylmer line connecting two important towns, 12 miles, with a population of twenty thousand is \$60,000, or \$5,000 per mile per annum, yet they claim the one earning the lesser amount per annum to be the paying proposition. Peculiar situation this to say the least. The figures given in the government returns show that 70 per cent, of the gross earnings is the average percentage of expenditure on the most carefully managed roads so that we may assume that being the case the figures given out by the Hydro show for their line of 32 miles, Scheme 3.

Revenue.....	\$151,805 00
Operation, 70 p.c.....	106,263 00
Bonds, \$895,000, 5 p.c.	44,750 00
Profits.....	791 00
St. Thomas to Aylmer, 12 miles.	
Revenue.....	\$65,536 00
Operation, 70 p.c.....	45,875 00
Bonds, \$461,000, 5 p.c.	23,050 00
Loss.....	3,380 00

An evident error in calculation of over \$10,000 on expenditure in the latter proposition. The government return for 1914 shows the gross earnings of the London and Lake Erie railway—29 miles, as \$135,000, or \$4,500 per mile per annum, connecting London, St. Thomas and Pt. Stanley, with a population in intermediate country greater and a summer resort which creates a large revenue in the summer; how then can it be possible that a line 32 miles with none of these advantages will earn \$16,000—\$500 per mile per annum more? It is apparent that the figures in the case are incorrect and misleading. It must not be forgotten that any line built in the territory named will be subject to competition

with the steam roads now in existence who will not relinquish their traffic, and who do not work amicably with electric lines and when forced to do so usually receive the greater revenue. The London and Lake Erie railway do not believe the earnings of the line St. Thomas to Aylmer to be \$66,000. If that were correct the line could be financed and built with private capital, without aid; neither do they believe the expenditure to be \$80,000. If built in connection with either the London and Pt. Stanley or the London and Lake Erie railway, they claim that the only line that will prove a success is a line from St. Thomas to Aylmer whether built as an extension of their line or the Hydro, and that it will not be a success if bonded in figures given by the Hydro.

They challenge the statement that expenses of operation will be less under government control than private and in each case the interest on bonds must be paid either from the earnings or additional taxation. It cannot be shown that municipal ownership of electric railways has so far proven successful, the contrary being the case. Therefore the people will do well to study carefully whether they desire a Hydro line costing \$34,500 per mile or a London and Lake Erie railway costing \$20,000 a mile, the benefits derived being the greater in the London and Lake Erie railway proposition at less cost on account of the route traversed accommodating the people of Elgin which the other does not.

PRO BONO PUBLICO.

The many friends of Rev. Murray A. Hunt, of Desboro, Ont., will read the following paragraph from the Owen Sound Times with much pleasure.

Dear Rector and friends:—We have met here to-night to commemorate your first six months among us as Rector of [Williamsford, Holland Centre and Desboro and to join in the wish that you may be spared to continue the good work among us. It would be out of place to enumerate all the improvements in the parish in the past six months, but in justice it may be said that at Desboro every family calling themselves Anglicans have come back to the church several of whom had dropped out during the past few years. In Holland Centre the attendance has increased very much and a new vestry has been built which speaks for itself. The increase in the attendance at Williamsford is marvelous and we are all delighted with the success of our infant parish. We are glad of this opportunity to publicly express our appreciation of your faithful work among us and pray that you may long be spared to labor for the Master. Signed by Messrs. T. P. Hatten and C. Magee, wardens of St. John's church Desboro. Mr. Hunt is a son of Mr. and Mrs. W. Z. Hunt, of Mt. Salem, of Mt. Salem and a graduate of Huron College, London.

Guarantee

The Redpath Bureau absolutely guarantees the International Grand Concert Co. to be one of the best that has yet appeared here. We guarantee Miss Maud Buschlen to be the best violinist ever heard in Aylmer. Miss Edna Bell, of Chicago, is a charming soprano, Robert Clarke, the ventriloquist makes a great hit with his talking dolls. Miss Beattie Brack is accompanist. Plan now open at Richards' Drug Store. Rush seats only 25c., children only 15c. Order now. Date Tuesday, March 16th.

To Bread Patrons

There is a report that I have not weighed the bread of others than Lackie. On February 15th I weighed the bread of all persons making it or handling it and I have a record of their weights for ten loaves in each case. Some of them sell only 24 oz. bread and some sell 12 oz. and 24 oz. bread which they are entitled to sell. The council have no authority to regulate the price but have to regulate the weight. All parties must make and sell 24 oz. or 48 oz. bread, or they can sell 12 oz. bread, but it must not weigh more than 12 oz. or they may make a 3 lb. loaf according to Chapter 224, Revised Statutes of Ontario.

HIRAM WIDDIFIELD.

Addressing of Mail to the Front.

In order to facilitate the handling of mail to the front and to insure prompt delivery, it is requested that the following method of addressing the troops be used.

Rank.....
Name.....
Regimental No.....
Company, Squadron, Battery or other Unit.....
Battalion.....
Brigade.....
First (or second) Canadian Contingent.
British Expeditionary Force
Army Post Office,
London, England.

For Sale—7 ten-acre blocks of land within 3 miles of Aylmer, good land for gardening purposes, cheap for quick sale, only \$50 per acre, first come first served. Apply to C. O. Learn, Aylmer.

**Early Showing of
SPRING WASH GOODS
for Your Inspection**

Winter is just about over and soon the warm spring days will bring thoughts of lighter dresses to replace the cumbersome garments of the cold weather.

The Big Store has never been in a better position to supply these wants than it is this spring. Our Wash Goods Department is full to overflowing with delicate fabrics of texture and design to please the most fastidious. You really should inspect our stock to fully appreciate the wide range of colors and patterns in these goods.

Figured Crepes

in the Dolly Varden designs which have proved themselves so popular. There will be a great sale for these patterns this season **12½c. and 15c. yard.**

Snowflake Voiles

Can you imagine anything daintier for the new spring dress than these fabrics in sprig and floral designs. Price..... **25c and 50c yd.**

Crepe Voiles

make lovely dresses for general wear. These come in a wide range of colors and designs. Price..... **12½c yd**

Silk Specials

Just a few dress lengths left of our popular Black Duchess Satin. The price on this class of goods is on the raise, so you had better take advantage of our reduced price on this regular \$1.50 value now selling for..... **\$1.19**

Whitewear

Don't forget that our whitewear sale is nearing its close. There are however a few very good values left in broken lines and odd sizes in whitewear with a few left-overs in Towellings and Table Linens.

Our Spring Millinery Opening will take place Saturday, March 20th.
Will tell you more about it next week.

Stratton & Martin

The Kerry Gow

The Immortal Irish Drama to be given in the
AYLMER TOWN HALL
Wednesday, Ev'g, Mar. 24

CAST		
Miss Lila Maxwell	Mr. Harley Ponsford	Mr. Joseph P. Butler
Miss Clotilda Sweeney	Mr. Austin Drohan	Dr. J. M. Casserly
Mr. John Farrell	Mr. Cornelius Doyle	Mr. Leonard Dyer
Mr. Maurice Reath	Mr. Thomas Moore	Mr. M. J. Rallis
Mr. John M. Houston	Mr. J. Chas. Corbett	Stage Manager
Soldiers, Villagers, etc.		Specialties between the Acts.

Admission 35. Children 25c. Doors open at 7.15
"GOD SAVE THE KING"

PHOTOGRAPHS

Easter

will bring the family together again—the boys and girls will be back from school : : :

The Very Time

for a Group Photograph.

The Clarke Studios

AYLMER Canada DELHI

British Hero Spoons

You will be surprised at the beauty of the series of British Hero Spoons. This week we have Kitchener, French, Jellicoe

25 cents Each. Everyone a good Everyday Teaspoon.

W. H. Wegenast, The Jeweller

Patrons of the Springwater Mill

are never held up by combined prices set in Toronto. The present market value of a bushel of wheat being always our gauge. While one isolated instance of an independent country mill might not help much the farmers reap a greater benefit from the few that are left than they can readily imagine their influence benefiting both stranger and patrons alike.

We are now in a condition to unload imported Bran and Shorts at the lowest possible margin, also rough grain feed manufactured by us in Aylmer.

E. R. WHITE GENERAL MILLER Aylmer

Tinsmithing

Plumbing, and Gas Fitting
Hot Water and Steam Fitting

We guarantee our work to be satisfactory. Our wide experience enables us to make this statement. We look after the detail; that's where our work pleases the most. Get our estimate on your next job. It's free.

Geo. A. Ellis