The West Highland Railway: the politics of promotion in late nineteenth century Scotland

Thesis

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Chapter 7

The Mallaig Extension and the Treasury Guarantee, 1894-6
Chapter 7

The West Highland Railway (Mallaig Extension) Act was finally secured in 1894 - on the less than certain understanding that the Treasury Guarantee offered by the Conservative Government in 1892 would be honoured by their successors. Discussion subsequently concentrates on the protracted parliamentary sparring which delayed the Guarantee until 1896. This Chapter runs from 1893-4, when the Mallaig Extension Bill passed through Parliament, to 1897, when construction of the Extension at last began. The Light Railways Act, 1896 added further uncertainty to the Mallaig scheme and, in the longer run, ensured that the Mallaig Guarantee remained unique.

The West Highland Mallaig Extension Bill was lodged in conventional fashion for parliamentary session 1893-4. In addition to the tentative clauses relating to state support - tentative because the Liberal Government remained uncommitted to any particular formula, the Bill included an unusual clause empowering the Railway Department of the Board of Trade to relax the conditions to be applied to the new line.

(II) is expedient to provide stations (in the ordinary sense of the word) at the termini ... only and to sanction the use ... of ... rolling stock so constructed to admit of the taking up and setting down of passengers at such points on the line as the Board ... approve.[1]

The same clause had appeared in the Loch Maree & Aultbea Bill of 1893, briefly considered in Chapter 5. The evidence suggests that Tweeddale and Conacher decided to copy it into the West Highland Company’s Mallaig promotion. Conacher was advised that railway and tramway legislation offered no useful precedents. The North British Railway’s legal department sought out both Scottish and Irish examples without success.[2] Tweeddale would return to the subject when the West Highland Railway was opened to Fort William in August, 1894. His speech attacked the inflexibility of the Board of Trade.

(Their) regulations ... are an insuperable bar to construction of lines in sparsely populated districts. (Hard) and fast rules ..., when applied to wild and poor districts, are ridiculous in themselves and oppressive in their cost ... If it is sound policy to encourage railway construction, ... even by grants of public money, it is absurd at the same time to compel obedience to a hard and fast and costly system planned for the service of Lanarkshire or Middlesex.[3]

Sir Courtenay Boyle, permanent secretary at the Railway Department of the Board, judged that the form of words would give the Board of Trade powers which ought to remain with Parliament.[4] Dumfords, for the West Highland Company, suggested that the clause could be modified to the Government’s satis-
faction when the Bill reached the House of Lords. They had earlier asked Boyle to consider how “second class lines” were operated on the Continent. A summary of regulations from Austria, Belgium, France, Holland, Italy and Prussia was appended. Costs could be reduced “to the minimum consistent with efficiency and public safety”. It was unreasonable that “existing requirements ... apply practically without distinction, to a main line running in to London and a branch line in the Highlands”. Forman had intended that the Fort William - Roshven line should be laid out to much the same standard as the rest of his route - a conventional railway, soundly engineered but with the lightest possible track. Ideas of even lighter construction onwards to the coast may have been mooted in 1889, when the North British Company declined to guarantee the West Highland beyond Fort William. Extension of the Skye line to Kyle of Lochalsh may have stirred memories that narrow gauge had once been proposed for this route. There was no doubt that the ten additional standard gauge miles to Kyle would be expensive, and the Mallaig line faced similar country. Narrow gauge was not an option if the North British wanted a through service between Glasgow and Mallaig, capable of meeting the Highland Railway’s charge that the West Highland “short route”, was inferior. It appears that Conacher, about to support forty miles of new construction where Walker had baulked at thirty miles, wanted to investigate every possible saving.

In the event the Railway Department rejected the special clause. Some concessions would be made in the end, when the Mallaig Extension was inspected prior to opening in 1901. As well as waiting for the Board of Trade to decide whether a less rigorous inspection might be allowed, the promoters of the Mallaig Extension went to Parliament uncomfortably aware that the Caledonian Company had invoked the Peace Agreement. During the autumn of 1893 Conacher parried Thompson’s enquiries about North British intentions. With the Mallaig scheme lodged once more, Thompson finally insisted on arbitration during February and March of 1894. A decision in favour of the Caledonian, declaring the district west of Fort William to be one in which the Companies had a shared interest, would have opened the divisions among North British directors, putting the Mallaig line once more in jeopardy.

The Caledonian argued that Oban served a wide region to the north and west, as did the Dingwall & Skye route, which was linked with the Caledonian via Perth and Inverness. And the Caledonian interest was reinforced by the proposed arrangements for exchange of traffic at Crianlarich. Therefore the North British Company was bound, under the Peace Agreement, not to countenance further development of the West Highland system without Caledonian consent. Fish traffic via Oban was long established, but the
West Highland Company, with no powers to build beyond Banavie, could not yet claim to tap the west coast. Mallaig was Roshven in a new guise, and Parliament had recognised the Caledonian Company’s right to oppose Roshven.\[10\] The North British argued that the southern Companies were all equally interested in the Highland Railway’s through traffic; the Caledonian had no special status in respect of the Dingwall & Skye route. By supporting the new route to Fort William the North British had earned the right to oversee further development of the West Highland Company route.\[11\] With the decision still pending, it was impossible to challenge the locus standi of the Caledonian Company and the Callander & Oban Company when the Mallaig Extension Bill reached the Commons at the end of April 1894. In May the arbiter ruled that the Caledonian Railway could not reasonably lay claim to the district west of Fort William.\[12\] On this basis the West Highland Company contested the Caledonian’s right to appear before the Lords Committee in July. But the Caledonian Company, changing tack, argued that a “domestic agreement” could have no bearing, since state subsidy for the Mallaig line was a great national issue. Moreover, the Callander & Oban Company was in no way bound by the Peace Agreement.\[13\] The latter thrust mocked the pretence that the West Highland Company was independent of the North British. In sum, the Caledonian continued to oppose the Mallaig scheme while conceding that the North British was free to support it. It is important to remember that the Peace Agreement endured, despite these fireworks.

The Caledonian Company continued to press for modification of the Mallaig Extension Bill in favour of the Callander & Oban.\[14\] If Parliament eventually decided that a new line to the coast was needed, ‘south of Strome’, then the line should feed, and be fed by, both the Callander & Oban route and the West Highland route. If the Mallaig line secured assistance from the Treasury, the Callander & Oban Company ought to be entitled “to apply to Parliament ... to authorise and require the transfer to them ... of a joint and equal interest”. And the West Highland Company and the North British Company should be forbidden to oppose the promotion of a Callander & Oban branch to Fort William, whereby joint operation of the Mallaig Extension could take effect. J. Wolfe Barry, who had served on the Lothian Commission and was now consulting engineer for the Caledonian, urged the House of Lords Committee to insist on joint ownership. The Caledonian and the Callander & Oban would share the burden of the unremunerative Mallaig line, dividing the through traffic with the West Highland. Baird’s syndicate, claimed Wolfe Barry, would have welcomed this arrangement and the Lothian Report would have endorsed it. (“(The) object ... was, as far as possible, to open up the coast ..., and it is obvious that two Companies working over the line will do that more efficiently than one.”) A subsidised route became “a Government road”, open to all-
comers. He reminded the Committee that this had long been accepted in Ireland. But Sir James King, Deputy Chairman of the Caledonian Company, had not attempted, as a member or the Lothian Commission, to have this principle embodied in the Report. Tweeddale and Conacher suspected that the Caledonian had no real desire to be burdened with Mallaig; these were spoiling tactics. Thompson had sounded the Treasury about Caledonian running powers west of Fort William, but Dumfords knew that the permanent officials would not listen. The threat remained, in that the Caledonian was free to promote a Connel Ferry - Fort William line and thereafter assert an interest in the Mallaig Extension.

On 20 December, 1893 Dumfords informed the Treasury that, as in the previous bill, draft clauses relating to Government support would be the basis of negotiations.

Permissive powers ... to the Treasury to guarantee a dividend of 3 per cent for 30 years from completion of the railway ... on £260,000 of ... capital, and give a grant of £30,000 towards the cost of the pier and breakwater at Mallaig in terms of (the Treasury Letter) dated 16 June 1892, have also been inserted, in the hope that it may be found competent to take such powers in the Bill... On 9 January, 1894 the Treasury replied that the question of allocation of receipts from the Mallaig line, variously committed to working expenses, other expenses and dividend, had not been resolved; and that there could be no circumstances in which a railway act laid charges upon government funds. On 15 January Dumfords reminded the Treasury that the whole matter was "highly technical". That portion of the capital which the Treasury would guarantee had to be earmarked and the rights of the North British, as working Company, safeguarded. Wieland would make himself available to thrash out a comprehensive form of words. Whatever terms were finally agreed, the Treasury's commitment would be diluted from revenue: the state's obligation of £7,800 per annum (3% on £260,000) would always be reduced. Dumfords thought it "not unreasonable" that passenger duty and other extra charges should be met before receipts were divided between the North British Railway and the Treasury; but, in view of the Treasury's objections, 50% of gross revenue would be reserved to the Guarantee "without any deduction whatever". On 20 March the Treasury replied once more. No charge could be laid on the Consolidated Fund by a Private Bill. A distinct Public Bill would be needed, "introduced by, and on the responsibility of, the Treasury". The promoters must delete their permissive clauses, substituting a clause enabling the West Highland Railway to comply with the conditions which the Treasury might require if and when a
Guarantee was offered. The preamble to the Mallaig Extension Bill should be similarly modified. Thus
the terms of subsidy remained undefined while the Bill passed through both Houses during March to July
of 1894.

The Bill as lodged also included a clause empowering the North British Railway to work the Mallaig
Extension in perpetuity for 50% of gross receipts and to guarantee a dividend of 3½% on £400,000 of
capital. In practice, the North British Company would provide nothing unless the Treasury offer of
June, 1892 was renewed. Once the Government agreed to guarantee £260,000, the North British would
guarantee the additional capital required. The terms of the West Highland Agreement renegotiated in
1893, would then embrace the Mallaig Extension, besides the Helensburgh - Fort William line and the
Banavie branch, save that the North British intended to pledge 3% for the Mallaig line as against 3½% for
the West Highland proper. In his evidence to the Lords Committee Conacher explained the practical
import. If the Mallaig Extension did not generate a sufficient income, after covering the dividend on the
"Treasury capital", to pay 3% on the rest of the capital, the North British Company would find the
difference. The pledge of 3% was absolute, and might be increased to 3½%. After thirty years the North
British would take over the Treasury's obligation to secure 3% on the core capital of £260,000. These
commitments could not be comprehensively expressed unless the North British was given, on paper, the
right to guarantee £400,000, being the £100,000 to £140,000 of additional capital which might be
needed, plus the £260,000 for which the Company might have to assume responsibility in the long run.
But the North British had no intention of guaranteeing the full cost of the new line, should Government
support fail to materialise. It was unlikely that 50% of revenue would cover working expenses and just as
unlikely that the other 50% would both dilute the Treasury's obligation to vanishing point and provide a
dividend on the additional capital. The burden would fall on the North British shareholders, a more than
sufficient sacrifice. B.H. Blyth, by this date consulting engineer for the North British, calculated that Simpson
& Wilson had overestimated. The additional capital which the Company would have to guarantee was
likely to be just within the £100,000 limit set by the North British directors in February, 1893, if allow-
ance was made for the anticipated Government grant towards Mallaig harbour. In April, 1894 the
directors accepted Conacher's view that, to make a good showing in Parliament, the North British should
agree to guarantee up to £128,000 of extra capital. The Company would be committed to funding 3%
on approximately £98,000, assuming a £30,000 grant for the harbour, and to working and maintenance
costs in excess of 50% of gross receipts.
The Mallaig Extension was presented as the practical expression of government policy. Local testimony was sparingly deployed. The case rested on the findings of the Napier Commission, the Lothian Commission and the Treasury Committee. *The Scotsman* approved this strategy, describing the Mallaig railway as the essential complement to all the land reforms pursued by the Conservative Government of 1886-92 and an earnest of Unionist (Conservative) intentions for the future. That Mallaig, sixty miles from Oban, fell within the Caledonian Railway’s catchment was too bold a claim. When the Highland Railway took over the Dingwall & Skye Company, the loss had fallen on the original shareholders, not the Highland Company. The Highland directors had accepted public money to continue their line from Strome to Kyle and the Highland shareholders had little reason to plead injury in respect of Mallaig. There was a broad feeling that the issue had really been settled in 1889. The Committees were reluctant to go over the old ground. Perhaps the West Highland promoters had underestimated costs and overestimated traffic. Perhaps the North British Railway’s new willingness to support the Mallaig line revealed earlier miscalculation and pressing need to augment the income of the West Highland route. But the deed was done. Parliament had approved the West Highland Railway and the new line was about to open. It should be extended to the west coast as soon as possible, if all the benefits claimed for the scheme were even to be realised. The opposition argued that a mistake was being repeated. In 1889 Forman and his associates had exaggerated their chances of creating new general traffic. Now the Mallaig promotion took for granted the expansion of the west coast fishery. Both general traffic and fish traffic would be stolen from the Callander & Oban Railway and from the Highland Railway.

The promoters largely succeeded in portraying their Bill as a consensual measure, unreasonably threatened by dog-in-the-manger opponents unable or unwilling themselves to help the crofting and fishing communities.

(The Callander & Oban Company) was for years employed (sic) ... to take up the railway business of the district ... They declined or delayed ... Had they acceded they would now have been in the place of the West Highland Railway Coy and in the enjoyment or anticipation of such grant as the latter Coy expects ...

Malcolm MacNeill (Napier Commission and Lothian Commission), Spencer Walpole (Lothian Commission) and Henry Tennant (Treasury Committee) all gave evidence in support of the Mallaig Extension, as did Lord Lothian. In the Commons Tennant reiterated that two new railheads were needed on the west
coast, one ‘north of Strome’, one ‘south of Strome’. In the Lords he explained how the Treasury Committee had assumed that subsidy was already agreed in principle and that any Treasury Guarantee would be diluted from revenue.

(There) is no probability ... of the Government ever being called upon for their full £7,800 a year (and) if the traffic develops up to £6 or £7 (per train mile) a week there would be scarcely anything for the Government to pay.

Tennant added that English fish traffic might be consigned by any route, beyond Glasgow, without imposing joint arrangements on the Mallaig line itself. Walpole assured the Commons Committee that support for Mallaig with compensating support for Kyle of Lochalsh was “in the spirit of our instructions”. The Mallaig scheme had hung fire; but implementation of the Lothian Commissioners' other proposals, in particular, the subsidised steamers now operating out of Oban, had gone far to vindicate the principle of state assistance for transport improvements. Walpole and his colleagues had felt that their overall formula (subsidy for the Mallaig railway; contingent support for the Strome Ferry - Kyle of Lochalsh railway; subsidised steamers based on Oban) put the West Highland route, the Dingwall & Skye route and the Callander & Oban route on as equal a footing as could be contrived.

Before the Lords Committee MacNeill confirmed that the Commissioners had agreed on a loose interpretation of Lothian’s brief ‘No competition’ was impossible; their yardstick had been ‘least harm’. That Sir James King served on the Commission had been a sufficient safeguard for the Caledonian and Callander & Oban Companies. At some risk of loss, the North British had moved, since 1889, towards giving Mallaig the support earlier denied to Roshven, and this the state ought to recognise. The established rail routes to Oban and Strome Ferry (or Kyle of Lochalsh) would not suffer unless the Mallaig route failed to develop its own traffic. Lothian had already told the Lords Committee, during his own evidence the previous day, that he had no quarrel with the way in which his Commissioners had stretched their instructions. (“(They) thought the public interests were so very great as to override to a certain extent ... the private interests of the railway companies.”) And Lothian confirmed that, as Secretary of State for Scotland in the previous Government, he had regarded railways as part of a general attack on distress. (“The question was not the different interests of the different railways (but) what was necessary for the development of ... the Western Highlands.”) The Mallaig line was one of several schemes which, ideally, would have gone ahead simultaneously. Lothian implied that the Conservatives had favoured two west
coast projects, i.e. the Mallaig line and a ‘north of Strome’ line, in conjunction with light lines in Skye and Lewis. But he added that the detailed terms of any subsidy had always been the business of the Treasury, not the Scottish Office. This broadly reinforced the West Highland case. The North British Company and the West Highland Company were doing their part and success now depended on the attitude of the Liberal Government. Lothian’s testimony undermined the Highland Company’s opposition. He agreed that aid for Mallaig justified corresponding aid for Kyle of Lochalsh, while the Kyle extension, a relatively short addition to an existing line, would be completed before the Fort William - Mallaig line. But Dougall had no reason to suppose that Kyle ruled out Mallaig, unless the new Government had now made a new agreement to that effect. If the Highland Railway and the Liberal Government did not know that the Mallaig promotion remained very much alive, “they were the only people... who were not aware of it”.

Walpole asserted that the instructions given to the Lothian Commissioners in respect of subsidy were “a fresh departure from the ordinary principles of Government”. The Chairman of the Commons Committee agreed: in examining the Mallaig Extension Bill, the Committee had become “practically a court of review for the inauguration of a new description of public policy”. The Committee held that the form of subsidy need not concern them. That the Mallaig scheme, once passed by Parliament, would not be pursued without assistance from the state was highly unusual, the more so when the shape of this assistance had yet to be defined; but their only task was to evaluate the pressing needs of the Western Highlands, which were said to justify the promotion of a loss-making railway. The opposition inevitably argued that it was anomalous to consider the Bill before the Liberals had declared themselves. Dougall tried to persuade the Lords Committee that the Conservative offer of 1892 was defunct.

The present Government have been applied to repeatedly... to renew that offer, they have not done so, and my belief is that they will not do so... Mr. Conacher has stated if they did not get the Government guarantee they (would) not make the line: if so what is the use of passing it? They have no promise... Counsel for the Caledonian and Callander & Oban Companies argued that a fundamental principle was at stake.

(Are) you going to reverse the whole policy on which every public undertaking... rests? (That) Government money... shall not be used against any private enterprise. (It is) wholly without precedent and contrary to public policy to sanction... a railway and harbour upon the anticipation that the Government may at some future time ask Parliament to subsidise the Company... (The) bait of a Government guarantee has the additional vice to its own inherent vice, of... dangling... the further attraction of the North British guarantee, which (depends on) the Government guarantee, which
may or may not come to the front! (Parliament) ought to confirm the policy of the Treasury before any Bill is authorised.\[43\]

But the promoters could show that the Government had insisted on a conventional bill, running the normal parliamentary course, before legislating for any subsidy.

It was generally admitted that Simpson had laid out the best possible standard gauge line and judged his costs fairly.\[43\] Attack was concentrated on Mallaig bay: if the harbour was inadequate the railway would be useless.\[44\] The Mallaig-versus-Roshven debate had not entirely ended and there was no denying that the Lothian Commissioners, in recommending Mallaig, had entered serious reservations. As in the acrimonious examination of Roshven when the West Highland Bill came before the House of Lords in 1889, there were three questions, which both the promoters and their opponents tried to conflate when this served their case. What was the potential of the harbour Nature had provided? How could it be improved within a realistic budget? Could it accommodate mail steamers and fish buyers' steamers besides a local fishing fleet and the additional boats attracted in season? Simpson readily accepted that the Board of Trade should oversee his final plans for the new harbour, a condition on which the Commons Committee insisted; he was already modifying the design in consultation with Admiral Nares, the Board's accredited expert.\[45\] The opposition complained that here was another departure from established principles.

The duty of the Board of Trade is not to sanction works but to see that works sanctioned by Parliament shall be duly carried out. The Treasury is advised of, but does not advise as to, the sufficiency of public works.\[46\]

The terms which the North British Railway now required were more generous than Baird had first asked, and it was an open question whether the Conservatives would have conceded better terms, had they remained in office. But the opponents of the Mallaig Extension Bill made little headway in trying to show that the Lothian Commissioners had not contemplated state assistance on this scale, and they also failed to bring out how the North British had been coaxed into giving additional support after earlier keeping Baird at arm’s length. On the whole, the promoters' selective account prevailed. Lacking the full support of the North British in 1889, the West Highland interest had been unable to overcome the resistance of professor Blackburn in respect of Roshven; but this set back was not to be regarded, whatever the Highland Company said, as closing the whole question. The North British Company had always intended to see the West Highland route completed to the coast. Baird's syndicate had sought
only to ensure that Mallaig was reconsidered after Roshven had been lost. Lochiel explained to the Commons Committee how the West Highland Company had waited until both the Treasury and the North British were committed before adopting Baird’s Loch Eil & Mallaig project. The Conservatives had been defeated before they could properly reassess their first offer of assistance, while the North British Company wanted to bring the West Highland line proper within sight of completion before assuming new responsibilities west of Fort William and Banavie. In the Lords, Lochiel recounted his personal efforts - how he had taken over from Baird, negotiating first with the Treasury and then with the North British. Conacher testified that his Company saw the area beyond Fort William as “our district”; but this was a West Highland, not a North British promotion, and North British support was conditional upon some adequate form of state subsidy. (“We have never known anything about that line, except as a line which the Treasury intended to assist.”) Lothian referred to, but was not pressed to enlarge on, “certain negotiations” with the North British during 1892. As Chapter 6 has shown, Parliament heard rather less than the full story.

The opposition alleged that the North British Company, having miscalculated in supporting the West Highland Railway, was trying to reduce the consequent burden at the expense of the taxpayer. In May, 1894 Tweeddale persuaded his shareholders to approve the North British guarantee of £128,000 for the Mallaig line. He was reported as speaking of “taking advantage of the Government’s generosity”, whereby the Company could develop the contributory traffic of the Mallaig Extension for a relatively small outlay, traffic which would enhance the income of the West Highland route. The opposition also argued that the financial position of the West Highland Company precluded authorisation of further capital powers for new construction. The West Highland had far outstripped the capital approved in 1889. Conacher reassured the Committees that the North British would not retreat, provided the Government gave assistance too. He took the opportunity to reiterate that his Company was being public spirited. And he pledged that there would be no cross-financing. The lavish capital provision in the Mallaig Bill reflected the need to deal in round figures, so as to set apart the core capital which it was assumed the Treasury would guarantee. This was not a disguised attempt to recover some of the cost of the West Highland promotion of 1888-9. Additional capital powers covering the full outlay for construction to Fort William and Banavie would be taken retrospectively once that task was complete.

As in 1889, the Caledonian Company and the Highland Company were not entirely at one. For the
Caledonian, Bolton urged the Lords Committee to reflect on the shift in government policy implicit in subsidy for Mallaig. The disadvantaged Highlands "may as well have two, three, four or five lines ... if it costs them nothing"; at the extreme, every agricultural district injured by the Depression could claim similar aid. Thompson warned that there was bound to be further conflict between the Treasury and the North British Railway over the revenue of the Mallaig line. He feared that the subsidised mail steamers would be transferred to Mallaig, disadvantaging the Callander & Oban route. ("It is only natural to suppose that pressure will be put on the Government to support the route which they are subsidising.") If fish traffic failed to expand, the Government would be left in the risible position of supporting what was little more than a tourists' railway. Anderson repeated his testimony of 1889. Whatever case the West Highland Company might make for special consideration, the supporters of the new route had glossed over the "20 years labour" devoted to building up the traffic of the Callander & Oban Railway; they would soon discover that their projections were unrealistic. As Chapters 5 and 6 have shown, Dougall seems to have calculated on the Liberals agreeing that Mallaig was redundant. The Kyle of Lochalsh extension in conjunction with the Aviemore cut-off ought to suffice. If an additional route was still wanted, the greater need was 'north of Strome', and Lochinver ought to be preferred to Mallaig. This strategy was counterproductive; for it brought into public view the Highland Railway's correspondence with the Scottish Office, the Treasury and various ministers, stretching back to 1889, which in some respects showed the Company in a poor light. There was some expectation that Dougall would seek terms when the Mallaig Extension passed the Commons. It was remembered how the Ten Years Truce had emerged in 1889. Dougall did indeed approach Conacher.

Mr. Dougall ... stated that his Directors had ... decided to renew their opposition ..., and suggested a compromise ... before the Bill came on: - (The) traffic with Stornoway, Portree and Loch Hourn should be pooled (and) we should pay their expenses in the first House ... {58}

Tweeddale refused to pursue the idea, partly because Dougall attached other conditions, including concessions for the Highland Company's through traffic via the Forth Bridge. {59}

For the promoters, there was a danger in Walpole's admission that the Lothian Report had not examined the Loch Eil & Mallaig scheme in sufficient depth. The Commissioners had perhaps allowed themselves to be over-persuaded, because they were met with so many supporting petitions and because Baird claimed to have more than adequate landlord backing and the backing of the North British Railway. {60} Baird's idea of a short term guarantee, on a much smaller capital, had soon proved to be
unrealistic. There was danger, too, in witnesses who had changed their minds about the prospects of the west coast fishery after supporting the Glasgow & North Western Railway in 1883 or the West Highland Railway in 1889.\textsuperscript{[61]} The opposition also deployed witnesses prepared to state that they no longer favoured wintering livestock in the Lowlands and thus no longer felt the same need for a direct route to the South.\textsuperscript{[60]} The general thrust was that, although Roshven had been desirable when the Dingwall & Skye Railway reached no further than Strome Ferry, completion of that line through to Kyle would make the Mallaig Extension unnecessary. A reliable ferry to Kyleakin was already promised and light railways across Skye would follow. There were warnings that a finite fish traffic divided among Oban, Mallaig and Kyle would make it uneconomic to run dedicated fish specials by any route.\textsuperscript{[63]} Two Liberal M.P.s (W.Birkmyre, Ayr Burghs and G.Beith, Inverness Burghs) appeared as hostile witnesses.\textsuperscript{[64]} Birkmyre, whose constituency included Inverary, complained of damage to the Callander & Oban Railway. Beith took an anti-railway, anti-landlord stand. Dr. Donald MacGregor, the Crofter-Liberal M.P. for Inverness-shire, testified that the Mallaig line would be a public benefit, though he questioned whether the landowners associated with the West Highland Company shared his own concern about depopulation. In MacGregor's view, continuing the West Highland route to Mallaig offered a better bargain, cost for cost, than extending the Dingwall & Skye route to Kyle of Lochalsh.\textsuperscript{[65]} Lochiel subsequently acknowledged, if rather tepidly, this useful contribution from a political opponent.\textsuperscript{[66]} The Crofter M.P.s who gave their qualified support to the Mallaig Extension thought in terms of reinvigorating the crofting economy; they had little sympathy with the picture of enlightened proprietors and sporting tenants which the West Highland Company had cultivated.

Just as Parliament contained an element suspicious of any suggestion that the North British Railway or the Highland Railway should obtain assistance from the state, so it contained an element suspicious of landowners who, on the face of things, had not done enough to back Baird and were now seeking help from public funds. Both elements were predominantly Liberal and not without influence in the Liberal cabinet. The theme of public-spirited landlords could not be deployed with as much assurance as in 1889. Lochiel explained yet again that a railhead at Fort William was all that he personally needed. The campaign for Mallaig had been a public duty.\textsuperscript{[67]} Lord Howard of Glossop, Stewart of Kinlochmoidart, MacDonald of Glenaladale and Nicholson of Arisaig were, like Lochiel, old supporters of any line from Fort William to the sea. Howard intended to establish a steamer service on Loch Shiel, so that Ardnanurchan could be served from Glenfinnan.\textsuperscript{[68]} Lord Lovat, despite his ties with the Highland Railway, acknow-
ledged a duty, laid on him by his father, to allow free passage through Morar and to give the land needed
at Mallaig. Of the two unreconciled opponents of the Roshven line, Lord Morton did not resist the
Mallaig scheme, while professor Blackburn was recorded as a supporter, though not an active one.
The station at Corriebeg was sited to accommodate Morton's crofters. Only the Cameron-Head
family at Kinlochailort seriously contested the Mallaig line in Parliament. They claimed that their plans for
a new deer forest had been thwarted. As in the case of the proposed Rannoch deviation discussed in
Chapter 3, the reader is struck by the time which the Committees were prepared to give when injury of
this kind was alleged. The Cameron-Heads' complaint of damage to fishing in Loch Eilt and the river
Ailort had more to do with the untidy boundaries of the Kinlochailort and Arisaig estates, with a hint of
bad feeling between the two proprietors. The Cameron-Heads also contested the public status of the
road - it was more accurately a bridle path, from Kinlochailort to Kinlochmoidart, opposing its improve-
ment.

Counsel for the promoters discouraged all colourful and potentially provocative flights by friendly
witnesses. They were kept strictly to their brief, though one of them managed to add that he saw state
support for Mallaig as the equivalent of "what the Government of Canada did in extending the railway to
the Pacific Coast". Irish parallels were likewise discouraged. The Arisaig farmer who wanted to ex-
plain how local people saw subsidy for the Mallaig line as "a grant to themselves in the same way as the
Irish got a grant" was firmly redirected to livestock and fish. Every opportunity was taken to reiterate
how the outgoing Conservative Government had offered a Treasury Guarantee, which the Liberals were
bound to honour, as if the issue was already beyond doubt. ("We know that the policy of the (Treasury)
when it has been deliberately adopted, even if the Government should change, remains continuous."
And it was stressed again and again that modest assistance from the state would not kill enterprise but
"excite and develop the energy which is in the people themselves"; the new railway, said factor Ranald
MacDonald, "gives a fair chance to all who are able and willing to take advantage of it".

Dumfords hoped that the Liberals would declare their policy before the Mallaig Extension Bill reached
the House of Lords. Having braved the Commons Committee without a clear promise of subsidy, they
held back as long as possible (causing Lochiel to complain that his lobbying for a "good strong chairman"
in the Lords would be wasted). In the event the Bill completed its parliamentary journey with the
Government still silent. Harcourt had not responded to the Highland Company's claim that he had no intention of helping the Mallaig scheme, but neither had he committed himself. On 20 July, 1894 Dumfords reminded the Treasury that the West Highland Railway and the North British Railway anticipated speedy legislation to authorise a Guarantee such as the Conservatives had offered two years earlier.

The promoters of this Bill, which has passed Committee in the Second House, have, at an expenditure of several thousand pounds, complied with the conditions, as specified (in 1892). They have also amended the Bill in terms of (your) letter... of 20 March last, and now... ask that the Government take the necessary steps for the immediate introduction... of the Public Bill...[30]

Much depended on Harcourt's attitude. (“What we have most to fear are the personal objections... of the Chancellor himself...”) Harcourt might all too easily find excuses for not pursuing the Guarantee Bill in the current session.[80] The Treasury officials had warned that the Liberals would certainly postpone the Bill into 1895 if they met with any objections in the House of Commons.[81] An approach would be made to the Unionist (Conservative) Opposition to smooth the way as far as they could. The North British Railway's two Unionist M.P.-directors, J.G. Baird (Glasgow Central) and J. Parker-Smith (Partick), agreed that Lochiel should appeal directly to the Unionist leaders.[82]

(Sir) William Harcourt may plead want of time... I am writing to Mr. Balfour and Mr. Goschen to ask if they will give... a promise of support as may reassure him, but... even an undertaking from the Opposition... may not have any effect.[83]

Lochiel argued that the Liberals could be brought to bind themselves for 1895, on which basis tenders for the new railway might be invited. This “would secure us... from a sudden change of front” on Harcourt’s part.[84] The Highland Company, the Caledonian Company and the London & North Western Company were said to be planning a new campaign against any subsidy for Mallaig; the Duke of Sutherland was in London, sounding out allies.[85] Dumfords could guess what the Caledonian would do.

If the... public bill be delayed..., we shall not be surprised to see a (Callander & Oban) bill deposited for the Connel Ferry - Fort William line so that... the Caledn. might be in a better position to revive their claim for joint ownership (of) or running powers over the Mallaig Extension.[86]

Among hostile M.P.s on the Government side, Birkmyre was likely to fight “tooth and nail” for the Callander & Oban Railway. Dumfords discovered that Birkmyre had ‘paired’ and would not return to the Commons during the summer; this was hopeful, and, in his absence, the North British should press the
Treasury even harder, but it was possible that Birkmyre had colleagues lying in wait. Much of this information derived from the permanent civil servants at the Treasury. Dr. MacGregor pursued Harcourt in the Commons. The Mallaig Extension Act was now an accomplished fact, having received the Royal Assent on 31 July. The Treasury’s conditions had been met. The Guarantee Bill ought to follow. The seasonal fisheries had been disappointing; it would ease distress in the coming winter if employment was available building the new railway. Dr. MacGregor intervened to seek an assurance that the Government would "take the usual course" and honour the pledges of the previous administration. Would Harcourt make it clear that the Mallaig Guarantee was "merely a matter of time"? The Chancellor at last agreed that the Liberals must “carry out the undertaking which has been given by our predecessors”. But he implied that nothing could be done until 1895.

The Glasgow - Fort William service began on 7 August, with an official ceremony four days later. Tweeddale’s speech inevitably addressed the Mallaig Extension.

For the first time ... the Government has made itself responsible for a material proportion of the initial cost. In pursuance of a carefully considered policy designed to help the distressed and distant populations of the extreme north-west to help themselves, the late Government came under an obligation to find £260,000 of the capital ... under certain reasonable conditions which have since been fulfilled ... It is much to be regretted that the necessary (Guarantee) Bill ... was not introduced during the present session, for delay is obviously adverse to public interests.

Tweeddale advised all those interested in ‘north of Strome’ promotions not to fear the West Highland route. Their best course was to "support a grant in favour of the more southern scheme ... and so establish a principle which may be applied ... in the further north". On 12 January, 1895 Harcourt wrote personally to Tweeddale, with New Year wishes. The Guarantee Bill was drafted and would be introduced when Parliament reassembled. Two months later Conacher was still explaining to an impatient Lochiel that, although Dumfords had settled all the details to the satisfaction of the North British, the Treasury had not yet “made a move”. Conacher wanted to make doubly sure that the Mallaig Guarantee, with its own Public Bill, was not conflated with the outright, though retrospective, grant for Mallaig harbour, which required only routine parliamentary approval. And there was the old sticking point. Would the Government accept certain additional items, beyond general working and maintenance expenses, as a prior charge on revenue, before its 50/50 division between the North British Company and the Treasury? By early April Tweeddale was content. (“Sir Wm ... practically gives us all we ask.”) The formal Agreement between the Treasury and the West Highland Company was sealed on 7 May, 1895. The essential
terms of 1892 remained - a 3% Treasury Guarantee on £260,000 of railway capital, plus a £30,000 grant for harbour works, subject to Board of Trade overview. Clause (1) covered the disputed charges.

From the date of opening for traffic ... the (West Highland) Company will ... apply fifty per cent of their gross revenues after payment there out of the charges specified in ... the Third Schedule to the North British Railway Act 1893 towards payment of a dividend of three per cent on the ... capital of two hundred and sixty thousand pounds.\[^{97}\]

During May and June, 1895 the earlier “Treasury Correspondence” relating to the Mallaig Guarantee was published, to a not unfavourable reaction from press and public. The Highland Railway could not probe too far without drawing renewed attention to that Company’s own dealings with government. But the Correspondence went no further than Lochiel’s abortive attempt to renegotiate the terms offered by the outgoing Conservative Government in 1892. Suspicion persisted on the Liberal benches that the North British Railway and their landlord allies had somehow extracted unwarranted advantages from Harcourt. Wieland thought it “an unfortunate document”. Parker-Smith was anxious to demonstrate how “we returned to the (original) terms”. The Guarantee Bill would fare better, wrote Conacher to Wieland, “if the correspondence were supplemented to the extent necessary to remove the impression ... that there was no completed arrangement”.\[^{98}\]

Besides Harcourt’s obvious lack of enthusiasm, the weakness of the Liberal Government after Gladstone’s final retirement in 1894 made it unlikely that the Treasury Guarantee would pass smoothly. There were other threats and complications in parliamentary session 1894-5. As Durnfords foresaw, the Callander & Oban Railway promoted a Connel Ferry - Fort William - Banavie line, and sought joint ownership of the Mallaig Extension. The Ten Years Truce broke down, and the Highland Railway promoted an Inverness - Fort William line, with a spur to Banavie, implying a similar claim to some say in the Mallaig scheme. The North British Company was able to secure the withdrawal of both these Bills; but there is no doubt that they confused the picture and inclined doubting M.P.s towards yet more investigation of the Mallaig scheme. These and other distractions are examined more fully in Chapter 8.

Since the Liberal Government eventually resigned, allowing the Unionists to take office and call a general election, it was feasible to salvage the Guarantee Bill in 1895 instead of beginning all over again in parliamentary session 1895-6. During the election campaign (June-July, 1895), the newly installed Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, the Unionists’ Chancellor of the Exchequer, wrote to Lochiel, promising to safe-
guard the Mallaig scheme.\textsuperscript{99} On 19 August, with the Unionists victorious, Parker-Smith reported that Hicks-Beach was “prepared to go on with it” unless “seriously opposed”.\textsuperscript{100} But a group of Liberal M.P.s, no longer inhibited by the need to sustain their own Government, refused to cooperate. Birkmyre had been defeated. Resistance to the Guarantee Bill was led by T.R. Buchanan (Aberdeenshire East) and J.H. Dalziel (Kirkcaldy Burghs). The North British Company’s monopoly of Fife was Dalziel’s particular target.\textsuperscript{101} Resentment that the “Hicks-Beach Letter” had helped the Unionists to retain Inverness-shire (captured in the by-election after MacGregor’s resignation) enabled Buchanan and Dalziel to recruit among Liberal and Irish Nationalist M.P.s who would otherwise have had no very strong views about Mallaig.

Outside Parliament, those who felt that the West Highland Railway had not fulfilled their expectations had come to realise that lobbying to delay the Mallaig Guarantee could be a useful lever, as Chapter 4 has shown. Until defects were remedied and promises made good on the West Highland proper, state support for the Extension should be denied. The Marquess of Breadalbane, together with the town councils of Perth and Stirling urged the Government to investigate why the Crianlarich spur had not been opened. The fishing interest of Loch Long and Loch Goil threatened to petition against the Guarantee unless facilities were given at Whistlefield or Portincaple. In Fort William, where occupation of the foreshore had set the town at odds with the West Highland Company, similar tactics were suggested. Yet another matter of concern to the North British was the Unionists’ determination, despite being in principle more friendly than the Liberals, to reopen the question of additional charges. The Treasury officials had no doubt that a Guarantee Act would be secured in 1896, if the current Bill could not be saved, but not necessarily in the form that Harcourt had allowed. Parker-Smith reported, “(The) Treasury are trying to squeeze us still further. (The) point ... is a very large one and may make ... a difference of two or three thousand a year... I think the price is too high for getting the bill through this year...”\textsuperscript{102}

Hicks-Beach gave every assurance that he regarded the Crianlarich controversy and other criticisms of the North British Company as “domestic matters” which must not divert public policy.\textsuperscript{103} But he would not pick up the Liberals’ Guarantee Bill unless the Liberals now abstained from all opposition. Parker-Smith was already reconciled to more delay; he comforted himself that the enemies of the Bill, who were likely to continue their campaign into 1896, would be “out into daylight”.\textsuperscript{104} Presenting a Resolution to the Commons, Hicks-Beach summarised the history of the Mallaig Guarantee. It had become a measure as
much Liberal as Unionist. Ireland offered telling precedents. Baird's Lochiel & Mallaig scheme had originated under the Conservatives; but it would have drifted and disappeared if the North British Railway had not come forward, at which stage the Liberal Government were given ample opportunity to state their own policy. With the Mallaig Extension Act in place, the delays to Harcourt's complementary Guarantee Bill had been largely technical. Hicks-Beach said nothing about Harcourt's well-known distaste for the measure. The Guarantee Bill was not, in any reasonable sense, contentious. The "Treasury Correspondence" was being brought forward to 1895 and would be available to M.P.s before Second Reading. The opponents of the Guarantee vowed to force successive votes as the Bill continued. Dalziel argued that a measure hanging fire through five years and three Governments was by definition contentious. On 2 September Balfour, as Leader of Commons, declared that "determined opposition ... exhibited in the past and announced for the future" made it "absolutely impossible to pass the bill during the present session". He laid the blame firmly on the Liberal rebels. Hicks-Beach reminded the House that the Liberals might have pronounced decisively against the Mallaig project in 1892; instead they tacitly accepted it and thus allowed themselves to be bound by the convention of continuity. It was incongruous that Dalziel and other longstanding enemies of the Railway Interest were allowing themselves to be used by the Caledonian Company and the Highland Company to frustrate the North British. Dalziel's potential allies among the Irish Nationalists ought to reflect how Ireland had benefitted from subsidised railway development. There was one concession: the Unionists were committed to reintroduce the Mallaig Guarantee Bill in 1896, but Balfour promised that in the meantime the Government would look more widely at the case for light railways.

There was much debate in the press. The Glasgow Herald held that the "Hicks-Beach Letter", written when the Unionists were about to take office and not during the ensuing election, could not be called a bribe, though Lochiel and the Unionist candidate for Inverness-shire had certainly made use of it. The Liberal Government had already agreed to table the entire Treasury Correspondence and Hicks-Beach had merely pledged continuity of policy, which his party had tried to uphold while they were in Opposition. Both The Glasgow Herald and The Scotsman deplored the Liberals' suspicion that the Treasury had retreated from the terms offered in 1892 or, at least, would do so now that the Unionists were in power. It had been perfectly well known that the Mallaig Extension Act was to be followed by a Guarantee Act, and there had been time enough to examine whatever advantage this might bring to landowners along the West Highland route. Dalziel's allegations that the North British Railway was pro-
Unionist and pro-landlord were attracting ill-advised English and Welsh Radicals. ("A new development of State policy ... has been checked because Inverness-shire has gone Unionist, and because landlords might have made a little by it.") Dalziel was already fighting the next election - several years too soon: his hostility towards the North British was patent. ("(The) West Highlands are to be deprived of railway communication because Kirkcaldy traders are not pleased with the railway service on the East Coast.")

The Oban Times admitted that, on the whole, public opinion favoured the Mallaig Extension. Enterprise was at long last penetrating the crofting and fishing regions, and a judicious use of subsidy would encourage this process. It was wrong that two successive administrations should be embarrassed by a handful of M.P.s, first Birkmyre's "small coterie of Scotch members", then Dalziel's assorted allies. There was little in the complaint that landowners were being favoured. However, Dalziel was right to ask whether the North British Company needed to be assisted. The Oban Telegraph was much more hostile. The Mallaig scheme as presented to Parliament in 1893–4 was not the scheme which the Lothian Commission had approved. New lines 'north of Strome' were "more valuable and more necessary", complementing and not competing with the Highland Railway system. Both the Highland Company and the Callander & Oban Company were fully entitled to continue the fight against subsidised competition. The North British, notorious for bad management and wasteful empire building, was the last Company any Government should assist. Conditions in the Highlands were improving, but misplaced sympathy and faith in outdated remedies continued to "distort the business intelligence of the South". The Mallaig railway would be "a great waste of public money in a region where its wise expenditure might do wonders". If light railways were to be developed, "the amount ... for Mallaig would go far to meet many more important demands".

Dalziel defended himself with vigour. He was not, he insisted, an all-out opponent. Before any Treasury Guarantee was approved, there ought to be binding conditions beyond those laid out in 1892 and 1895 and beyond the conventional formulae of railway legislation. Irish experience taught that time allowed for construction, cost of land, number of trains to be run etc. should be carefully monitored. Should the Treasury not be represented on the West Highland Railway board for as long as the Guarantee was needed? Here Dalziel applied the analogy of the Caledonian Canal and the Crinan Canal in a way not at all to the liking of the North British Company. If and when the Mallaig Extension began to pay its way, should not the Treasury be reimbursed in whole or in part? Again, this echoed the Irish debate. It was cant
to talk of public spirit. Highland proprietors expected to improve their financial position, and Tweeddale had admitted that the West Highland route needed contributory traffic. The Liberal Government had never been explicitly committed. It seemed that Lochiel had either asked too little or asked too much. Now that the emphatic Unionist majority of 1895 made a subsidy inevitable, the whole question should be thoroughly examined ahead of legislation.\[115\]

On 23 January, 1896 the West Highland Company renewed their formal approach to the Treasury.

(The) West Highland Railway Guarantee) Bill ... was introduced ... by the late Government, and read a first time in the House of Commons. The present Government ... accepted the principle of the Bill ... Mr. Balfour, however, having given an undertaking that only non-contentious measures would be proceeded with ..., it fell to be withdrawn. (The) Directors, relying on the expression of the intention of the Government to reintroduce the Bill, hope that this will be done ..., and the Company enabled to proceed, in the ... coming summer, with the construction of the authorised railway.\[116\]

Lord Balfour, the Unionist Secretary of State for Scotland (not to be confused with A. J. Balfour) had already pressed for a speedy response.\[117\] The Scottish Office knew that Hicks-Beach would insist on returning to the terms offered in 1892. Durnford warned Conacher, “We shall have to give way if we wish to have this Bill ... at an early date”.\[118\] Thus the Treasury’s reply on 30 January was no surprise.

(The) Chancellor ... can only consent to reintroduce the Bill on the conditions specified in the Treasury letter of the 16th June, 1892, and on the Company’s consenting to waive the provision in the (Treasury) Agreement of the 7th May, 1895, whereby the items included in Article V1 of the Agreement between the Company and the North British Railway ... are made a first charge on the gross receipts ....\[119\]

Conacher was convinced that the Government would not move. The contested items would have to be “a postponed charge”, which in effect fell on the North British. The concession which Harcourt had been persuaded to make would have to be surrendered.\[120\] The Treasury made sure that 50% of gross income was immediately devoted to diluting the state’s obligations; all other charges would eat into the 50% retained by the North British. Early in March, 1896. Hicks-Beach finally agreed that passenger duty plus “poor, school, county and other rates” would become a prior charge. In return the West Highland Company agreed to meet the expenses of an annual Board of Trade inspection of the Mallaig Extension.\[121\] And the Guarantee Act would emerge with one further allowance - a clause requiring the Assessor to rate
the Mallaig Extension, once completed, as unimproved land.\[122\]

The Guarantee Bill passed through its various stages in the House of Commons between June and August, 1896. Some Unionist M.P.s were hostile, besides the Liberal malcontents. So that friendly M.P.s, like D.N.Nicol (Unionist, Argyll), could do their best for the Bill, Conacher provided a summary of his testimony in support of the Mallaig Extension, explaining how even a very modest growth in traffic over the new line would steadily reduce the Treasury’s obligation.\[123\] Wieland also tried to inform and generally rally parliamentary support.\[124\] Suspicion of North British motives persisted. And the North British was criticised for failing to develop the West Highland route more energetically. The Great Glen interest attacked the Ten Years Truce, complaining that the Highland Company and the North British had conspired to frustrate local needs. The independent Invergarry & Fort Augustus promotion in session 1895-6, parallel with the Mallaig Guarantee Bill, was embarrassing, in that Conacher had to explain why his Company wanted the Mallaig Extension but opposed the Fort Augustus line. All this is discussed in Chapter 8. Some critics complained that local sacrifice, so much talked up by the West Highland Company, was conspicuous by its absence. Leaving aside land given free or at nominal cost, little or no money was being found “by a single landlord or by those professing to be longing to do a large fish traffic”. The local supporters of the Mallaig scheme looked to the Unionist Government “with more than a hint that politics may be changed or laid aside if money is granted from the public purse”.\[125\] North British shareholders complained that the “West Highland has sworn on the North British ... and it does not come out of a West Highland purse”\[126\]. And there were counter-allegations that the North British had discouraged local subscription in order to have complete control of the West Highland Company.\[127\]

Dalziel pressed for an amendment to put a representative of the Treasury on the West Highland board. The Government was not unwilling. By way of compromise, Hicks-Beach eventually agreed to annual reports by the Board of Trade “on the working and receipts of the Mallaig line”.\[128\] Buchanan quoted Conacher’s evidence against the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway. The North British Company had admitted that the contributory traffic of the Great Glen was hopelessly disappointing. Why did the Company set such store by the contributory traffic of the Mallaig Extension? There must be a suspicion that the North British saw the Treasury Guarantee as offsetting the general burden of the West Highland route.\[129\] Like Dalziel, Buchanan wanted to bind the West Highland Railway - in effect, binding the North British, to repay all the Treasury’s outgoings if and when the Mallaig line paid its way.\[130\] An alternative amendment, just as
unwelcome to the North British, would have cut off the Treasury Guarantee in the event of complete amalgamation of the West Highland into the parent Company. E. Strachey (Liberal, Somerset South) combined these proposals: if the West Highland Railway was transferred to “another Company” any profits earned thereafter by the Mallaig Extension would be committed to the redemption of earlier Treasury advances under the Guarantee. On this amendment Hicks-Beach wavered but in the end held firm.

The opponents of the Guarantee Bill saw the Mallaig subsidy as compensating the North British Company, at taxpayers’ expense, for misjudgment in backing the West Highland route in the first place. They held that the North British had been ready enough to risk loss when there was a chance of advantage over the Caledonian Railway and the Highland Railway. Unless they were avowed partisans of the Highland Railway, critics of the Mallaig subsidy were just as ready to question whether that Company needed state assistance for new lines north and west of Inverness. In this climate, the fiction of West Highland independence had to be continued. In 1893, when Conacher had rewritten the North British guarantee on the West Highland proper, preliminary to crafting a similar guarantee for the Mallaig line, he anticipated that full amalgamation would be achieved by 1900 with conversion of all West Highland holdings to 3% North British stock. In June, 1895, when the Treasury Guarantee hung fire, the North British solicitor warned Conacher that the Treasury might make yet more difficulties. The North British did not absorb the West Highland until 1908.

In February, 1896 the spokesman for the Loch Long fishermen threatened to lobby against the Mallaig subsidy.

We were given to understand that part of the Government Grant was to ensure ... a better opportunity to fishermen and crofters ... (The) fishermen (are) desirous to petition ... I suggested to them to delay this - so that we hear from you if your Company are proposing. doing anything (for us).

Conacher replied that the Treasury Guarantee would apply solely to the Mallaig Extension; the West Highland line to Fort William relied entirely on private finance and had no statutory duty to any community along the way. But the question of a station at Whistlefield, which the Loch Long and Loch Goil fishing interest desired, would not go away. In June, when D.N. Nicol wrote to Conacher pledging to help on the Guarantee Bill, he also sought assurances on behalf of his constituents that Whistlefield would not be shelved. (“Excuse my importunity but an M.P. has no manners and no conscience.”) And Breadalbane’s
campaign did not end when the Guarantee Act was secure. Unless Crianlarich became a general junction as promised in 1889, only limited benefits would follow from the completion of the West Highland route to the coast.\[137\]

Supporters of the Mallaig scheme could not but agree that the cumbersome procedure of pursuing a conventional railway bill and then haggling over state subsidy must be improved if more lines were to be developed with government assistance elsewhere in the Highlands. Forman had intended invoking the Light Railways Act of 1868 to reduce the cost and speed the completion of the Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan scheme.\[138\] In his report on the Helensburgh - Fort William - Arisaig route, from which the West Highland Railway emerged, Forman had estimated for light track and slender but versatile bogie locomotives, and he subsequently claimed that bolder engineering for rack-and-pinion operation would have eliminated much of the expensive rock works on Simpson's West Highland Mallaig Extension.\[139\] But the attitude of the Railway Department of the Board of Trade and, in turn, the attitude of the Treasury, discouraged experiment of this sort. The Highland Railway's Kyle of Lochalsh line, under construction during 1893-7, demanded, like the Mallaig line, an abnormal amount of blasting and cutting to achieve a regular standard gauge roadbed, and these costly ten miles from Strome Ferry to Kyle invited comparison with the cheaper and perhaps more useful light lines about to come into being in the gentler countryside of the Black Isle, Cromarty and Caithness. The North British Company insisted on a more robust layout from Helensburgh to Fort William, but subsequently pressed the Board of Trade to relax their regulations in respect of the Mallaig Extension.\(\text{Above}\) All in all, it is not surprising that the terms of the Mallaig Guarantee, as it finally passed through Parliament, were measured against the Light Railways Bill (Light Railways Act, 1896) which passed during the same session.\[140\] And opponents of the Mallaig project had further opportunities, arguing that the Treasury Guarantee could not be more generous than the support which would now be available to new light railway promotions.

A Second Reading motion on the Mallaig Guarantee Bill invited the Commons to recognise as undesirable any Treasury pledge “which would differ materially from the assistance to be given under the Light Railways Bill”.\[141\] Strachey then proposed his two amendments. The main effect would have been to curtail the Treasury Guarantee. No greater sum should be advanced “than the sum which they would by the rules to be made ... under the Light Railways Act, 1896 be allowed to advance ... if the railway had been ... authorised in pursuance of that Act.” This translated, Strachey calculated, into a four year “top
up' commitment, to pay 2½% on £120,000, as against the thirty year’s ‘top up’ to 3% on £260,000 which had been the basis of all negotiations after 1892. The subsidy should be paid “out of moneys granted in relief of local taxation and charged to the Local Taxation (Scotland) Account” - i.e. it should be channelled through local government instead of falling on the Consolidated Fund.[140] These “Strachey amendments” also touched the concerns of Buchanan and Dalziel. The Secretary of State for Scotland should confirm yet again that agriculture and the western fishery stood to benefit from the Mallaig line. The Treasury should investigate yet again the need for special assistance, ensuring, as a condition of subsidy, that landowners, local bodies and other interested parties gave land free. This was broadly the formula for the issue of a Light Railway Order by the Board of Trade under the new Act.[143] And there should be additional conditions circumscribing the West Highland Company.

(The Company should not) pay a dividend upon any preference capital … or upon any of their ordinary capital at a higher rate than (3%) and any surplus revenue … in any half year after paying the full dividend (should) be set aside … as a dividend reserve fund and … applied … in making up deficiencies in any subsequent half year in the revenue available for (the) dividend … to which the guarantee applies.[144]

These unsuccessful amendments were not just a matter of partisan opposition, played out to the end. There was some feeling that the Light Railways Act would make the Mallaig Guarantee anomalous. Construction of the Mallaig Extension had not commenced (and would not commence until January, 1897). Could the line be built ‘light’ under the new Act, with minimal subsidy? Would this release resources for other light railways in the Highlands and Islands? The efforts of Dalziel and his allies threatened to expose how Baird’s prospectus, endorsed with some reluctance by the Lothian Commissioners and the Treasury Committee, had been flawed. The West Highland Mallaig Extension descended from Baird’s Loch Eil & Mallaig promotion, but it was scarcely the same scheme, and it needed more lavish assistance. The motives of the North British Railway, originally non-committal about development west of Fort William, should be scrutinised more carefully. As for the North British, there was a limit to the burden which might be accepted for the sake of contributory traffic. Had the North British withdrawn, faced with new restrictions on the Treasury’s contribution, would the Guarantee Bill have been a third time resurrected within the lifetime of the 1895 Parliament? Would it have been overtaken by a campaign for a comprehensive policy on light railways? From the abortive Fort William - Roshven line of 1888-9 to the building of the Mallaig Extension between 1897 and 1901 the story was more complicated than any popular account allows, and the outcome was, to the end, uncertain.
Chapter 7

1. SRO/BR/PYB(SY/93
   West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1893-4, Clause 5
SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
   Durnford & Co. to J. Watson, Solicitor of the North British Railway, and John Conacher, General Manager of the North British Railway, with a copy of Loch Maree & Aultbea Railway Bill, 1892-3, Clause 6
4 January 1894

2. SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
   Watson to Conacher, 29 December 1893

3. The Scotsman, 13 August, 1894

4. SRO/BR/PYB(SY/372
   Durnford & Co. to the Railway Department of the Board of Trade, 13 April 1894
Included with West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1893-4

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.


8. J. McGregor, 100 Years of the West Highland Railway, page 13

9. SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1 and 2
   James Thompson, General Manager of the Caledonian Railway, to Conacher, 16 January and 1 February 1894
Conacher to Thompson, 18 January and 2 February 1894
SRO/BR/NBR/1/40
   North British Railway Minutes, 18 January 1894

10. SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
   Caledonian Railway, Requisition to Lord Watson, arbiter under the New Lines Agreement between the Caledonian Company and the North British North British Railway, Answers to the Caledonian Company's Requisition
Caledonian Railway, Reply to the North British Company's Answers, February-March 1894

11. Ibid.

12. SRO/BR/NBR/1/40
   North British Railway Minutes, 25 May 1894
SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
   Memorandum on Lord Watson's ruling

13. SRO/BR/PYB(SY/93
   Speeches by counsel, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 10 July 1894

14. SRO/BR/PYB(SY/93
   West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1893-4, Petitions Against by the Callander & Oban Railway and the Caledonian Railway
   It is clear that the Callander & Oban bid for joint ownership of the Mallaig Extension was kept in reserve until the Bill reached the Second House.

15. SRO/BR/PYB(SY/93
   John Wolfe Barry, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 17 July 1894
Speeces by counsel, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 4 May 1894, and Lords, 10 July 1894

Durnford & Co. to Watson, 29 June 1894
Conacher to Tweeddale, 30 June 1894

Durnford & Co. to the Treasury
Included with West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1893-4
(Treasury Correspondence)

J.T. Hibbert, Treasury, to Durnford & Co.
Included with West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1893-4
(Treasury Correspondence)

Durnford & Co. to the Treasury
Included with West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1893-4
(Treasury Correspondence)

J.T. Hibbert, Treasury, to Durnford & Co.
Included with West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1893-4
(Treasury Correspondence)

The clauses to which the Treasury objected appear as '51' and '52' (Guarantee) and '54' (Grant for Harbour)

West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1893-4, Clause 55

Conacher, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 12 July 1894

North British Railway Minutes, 16 February 1893
See also Durnford & Co. to the Treasury, 24 March 1893 (Chapter 6, Note 61)

Conacher, Memorandum, 24 April 1894

B. H. Blyth, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 12 July 1894

Conacher, Memorandum, 24 April 1894

North British Railway Minutes, 26 April 1894

The Scotsman, 5 May 1894
This item, which appeared when the Mallaig Bill passed the Commons Committee, was copied to support the Bill in the House of Lords two months later.

Thompson, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 3 May 1894 and Lords, 13 July 1894
Andrew Dougall, Secretary of the Highland Railway, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 13 and 16 July 1894
John Anderson, Secretary of the Callander & Oban Railway, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 3 May 1894, and Lords, 13 July 1894
28 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/6
Durnford & Co., Memorandum, undated

29 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Henry Tennant, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 27 April 1894

30 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Tennant, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 11 July 1894

31 Ibid.

32 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Spencer Walpole, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 1 May 1894

33 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Malcolm MacNeill, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 11 July 1894

34 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
See also Tennant, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 11 July 1894

35 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Marquess of Lothian, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 10 July 1894

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Walpole, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 1 May 1894

39 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Exchanges between counsel and chairman, Sir Richard Paget M.P., West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 1 May 1894

40 Ibid.

41 Dougall, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 16 July 1894

42 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Speech by counsel, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 4 May 1894

43 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Sir John Fowler, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 2 May 1894, and Lords, 16 July 1894
(Fowler appeared both as an engineer and as a landowner sympathetic to the Highland Railway.)
Speech by counsel, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 10 July 1894

44 Fowler, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1893-4. See Note 43 above
Speech by counsel, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 4 May 1894

45 Alexander Simpson, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 1 May 1894, and Lords, 12 July 1894
Passing the Bill on 4 May 1894, the Commons Committee required that Mallaig harbour be approved by the Board of Trade.
See also the Treasury Letter of 16 June 1892. Chapter 6, Note 26 above

46 West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, June-July 1894, Petition Against by the Highland Railway
Lochiel, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 27 April 1894

SRO/BR/PYB(SYl/93

Lochiel, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 11 July 1894

SRO/BR/PYB(SYl/93

Conacher, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 1 May 1894, and Lords, 12 July 1894

SRO/BR/PYB(SYl/93

Lothian, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 10 July 1894

SRO/BR/PYB(SYl/93

Speech by counsel, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 4 May 1894

Cross-examination by counsel: Conacher, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 12 July 1894

The Scotsman, 26 May 1894

SRO/BR/PYB(SYl/93

Cross-examination by counsel: Conacher, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 12 July 1894

SRO/BR/PYB(SYl/93

Conacher, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 1 May 1894, and Lords, 12 July 1894

SRO/BR/PYB(SYl/93

Joseph Bolton, Chairman of the Caledonian Railway and the Callander & Oban Railway, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 13 July 1894

SRO/BR/PYB(SYl/93

Thompson, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 13 July 1894

SRO/BR/PYB(SYl/93

Anderson, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 3 May 1894

See also Anderson, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Bill, Lords, 3 April 1889, and Commons, 5 July 1889

SRO/BR/PYB(SYl/93

Walpole, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 1 May 1894

William Anderson-Smith, Scottish Fishery Board, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 3 May 1894, and Lords, 16 July 1894

(cf. Anderson-Smith’s Evidence in support of the Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 4 May 1883

SRO/BR/PYB(SYl/93

D. MacDonald, Skye, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 2 May 1894, and Lords, 16 July 1894

(cf. MacDonald’s Evidence in support of the Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 2 May 1883

SRO/BR/PYB(SYl/93; and his Evidence in support of the West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 29 March 1889

SRO/BR/PYB(SYl/93
Robertson had appeared for the Highland Railway in 1889, challenging the West Highland promoters' claim that the new line would attract wintering traffic. See Robertson, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, 3 April 1889 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/342. In 1894 the Highland Railway urged that others had changed their minds and now agreed with Robertson. See MacDonald's Evidence, Note 61 above.

J.M. Morrison, fish curer and shipping agent, Stornoway, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 2 May 1894

Dougall, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 2 May 1894

William Birkmyre M.P., Evidence, and Gilbert Beith M.P., Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 3 May 1894

Dr Donald MacGregor M.P., Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 30 April 1894, and Lords, 12 July 1894

Colonel John A. MacDonald of Glenaladale, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 30 April 1894

(Lord Howard preferred a steamer on Loch Shiel to a loch-side road through his property. MacDonald gave this the best gloss that he could.)

Lord Lovat, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 30 April 1894

Lochiel's speech, Opening of the West Highland Railway, 11 August 1894

The Cameron-Head case was supported by:
- James Barr, land valuator
- Andrew Belfrage, land valuator
- Dudley MacDonald, gamekeeper, Inverailort
- Andrew Weir, farm manager, Inverailort

All were allowed to testify at some length before the Commons Committee, 3 May 1894

West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1893-4, Clause 15
Robert Stewart of Kinlochmoidart, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 30 April 1894

Head, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 2 May 1894
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Ranald MacDonald, factor for the Gordon-Cathcart estates, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 11 July 1894

SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Donald C. Morrison, farmer, Arisaig, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 11 July 1894
(Morrison was spokesman for the crofters and fishermen of the Arisaig district.)

SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Speech by counsel, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 4 May 1894

SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
MacDonald, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 30 April 1894 and Lords, 11 July 1894

SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/3
Lochiel to Conacher, 23 June 1894

SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
Dumford & Co. to the Treasury
Included with West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1893-4
(Treasury Correspondence)

SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Dumford & Co. to Conacher, 20 July 1894

SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/93
J.T. Hibbert, Treasury, to Dumford & Co., 27 July 1894
Included with West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1893-4
(Treasury Correspondence)
It is clear that, besides Hibbert’s formal letter, there was much informal contact with the Treasury.

SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Dumford & Co. to Conacher, 20 July 1894

SRO/BR/NB/8/1764/3
Lochiel to Conacher, 23 July 1894

Ibid.

SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Dumford & Co. to Conacher, 20 July 1894

Ibid.

SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/3
Lochiel to Conacher, 23 July 1894
SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Dumford & Co. to Watson, 31 July 1894

Glasgow Herald, 9 August 1894, reporting MacGregor’s speech, together with a Memorial from the burgh of Fort William warning of unemployment.

PARLIAMENTARY PAPER
No. 280 (1) 1895
Note of proceedings, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1893-4
(Treasury Correspondence)

Ibid.

The Scotsman, 13 August 1894
Ibid.

93 SRO/BR/BR/8/764/2
Sir William Harcourt to Tweeddale

94 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2
Lochiel to Conacher, 2 March 1895
Conacher to Lochiel, 5 March 1895

95 SRO/BR/BR/8/764/2
Watson to Conacher, and Conacher to Watson, 11 March 1895
Watson to Conacher, 12 March 1895

96 SRO/BR/BR/8/764/2
Marquess of Tweeddale to Conacher, 3 April 1895

97 PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS
No. 280 (1) 1895
Agreement between the Treasury and the West Highland Railway Company, signed by R.C.M. Ferguson
and W.A. McArthur for the Treasury and by G.B. Wieland for the West Highland Railway
(Treasury Correspondence)
See also West Highland Railway Minutes, 7 May 1895 SRO/BR/WEH/1/1

98 SRO/BR/BR/8/764/1
J. Parker-Smith M.P. to Conacher, 30 May 1895
Conacher to Wieland, 31 May 1895
Wieland to Conacher, 5 June 1895

99 Glasgow Herald, 24 July 1895

100 SRO/BR/BR/8/764/1
Parker-Smith to Conacher

101 Glasgow Herald, 21 August 1895
See also J. Thomas, The West Highland Railway, pages 89-91

102 SRO/BR/BR/8/764/1
Parker-Smith to Conacher, 29 August 1895

103 SRO/BR/BR/8/764/1
Parker-Smith to Conacher, 19 August 1895

104 SRO/BR/BR/8/764/1
Parker-Smith to Conacher, 20 August 1895

105 Glasgow Herald, 28 August 1895

106 Glasgow Herald, 29 August and 3 September 1895

107 Glasgow Herald, 3 September 1895

108 Oban Times, 7 September 1895

109 Glasgow Herald, 28 August and 3 September 1895
Oban Telegraph, 7 September 1895

110 For what follows see:-
Glasgow Herald, 3, 7, 9 and 11 September 1895
The Scotsman, 7 September 1895
Oban Telegraph, 6 September 1895
Oban Times, 7 and 21 September 1895

- 196 -
III Glasgow Herald, 3 September 1895

112 Glasgow Herald, 7 September 1895

113 Oban Times, 7 September 1895

114 Oban Telegraph, 6 September 1895

115 J.H. Dalziel, The Scotsman, 7 September 1895

116 PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS
No. 449 (2) 1895
G.B. Strickland, Secretary of the West Highland Railway*, to Treasury
(Treasury Correspondence)
*Wieland had ceased to act as Secretary

117 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/2
Scottish Office to Durnford & Co., 25 January 1896

118 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/2
Durnford & Co. to Watson, 26 January 1896
Watson to Conacher and Conacher to Watson, 27 January 1896

119 PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS
No. 449 (2) 1895
F. Mowatt, Treasury, to Strickland
(Treasury Correspondence)

120 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/2
Conacher to Watson, 27 January 1896

121 PARLIAMENTARY PAPER
No. 449 (2) 1895
Agreement between the Treasury and the West Highland Railway Company, signed by W.H. Fisher and Lord Stanley for the Treasury and by Strickland for the West Highland Railway

122 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/2
West Highland Railway Guarantee Act, 1896, Clause 2

123 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/2
D.N. Nicol M.P. to Conacher, 6 June 1896
Conacher to J.G. Baird M.P., 10 June 1896
Conacher to Parker-Smith, 10 June 1896

124 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/2
Watson to Conacher, 11 June 1896

125 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/2
‘Independent’, Oban Times, (7) April 1896
Press cutting from Arnott to Conacher, 18 April 1896

126 Ibid.

127 SRO/BR/PYB(S)1/386
Cross examination by counsel: Conacher, Evidence, Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, Commons, 27, 28 and 29 July 1896
cf. Cross examination by counsel: Lochiel, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 11 July 1894 SRO/BR/PYB(S)1/93

128 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Durnford & Co. to Conacher, 8 August 1896
Glasgow Herald, 7 August 1896

SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/2
Copy of relevant pages of West Highland Railway Guarantee Bill, 1895-6, with amendments inserted by Durnford & Co., Parliamentary Agents

Ibid.

Ibid.
See also Durnford & Co. to Conacher, 8 August 1896 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1

SRO/BR/NBR/1/38
North British Railway Minutes, 22 December 1892
SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
Draft of new agreement between the North British Railway and the West Highland Railway, to be scheduled to the North British Railway Act, 1893
SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/2
Watson to Conacher, 5 June 1895
See also discussion in Chapter 6

SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
John Maclean, Portincaple, to Conacher, (?) February 1896

SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/7
Conacher to MacLean, 15 February 1896

SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Nicol to Conacher, 6 June 1896

Marquess of Breadalbane, 'Crianlarich Junction', The Scotsman, 19 September 1896

SRO/BR/CAC/3/2
For the Regulation of Railways Act 1868, defining a light railway in the period before the Light Railways Act of 1896, see J. Simmonds, The Railway in England and Wales 1830-1914, page 107

WHM
Longhand copy of Forman’s Report
See also discussion in Chapter 3
SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
Tweeddale to Conacher, 6 March 1893

W.J.K. Davies, Light Railways: Their Rise and Decline, Chapter 3 and Appendix G

SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/2
Watson to Conacher, 11 June 1896

SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/2
Copy of relevant pages of West Highland Railway Guarantee Bill, 1895-6, with amendments inserted by Durnford & Co., Parliamentary Agents

W.J.K. Davies, Light Railways: Their Rise and Decline, Chapter 3 and Appendix G

SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/2
Copy of relevant pages of West Highland Railway Guarantee Bill, 1895-6, with amendments inserted Durnford & Co., Parliamentary Agents
Chapter 8

The West Highland Railway: the Great Glen, Ballachulish and Loch Fyne
Chapter 8

The study now retraces the years 1893-7, to consider other promotions in the territory claimed by the West Highland Railway. They are a reminder that the West Highland Mallaig Extension should not be allowed to dominate the story. Carrying the new railway to the west coast was the single most important issue, and here the pursuit of the Treasury Guarantee is the unifying theme, as Chapters 5-7 have explained. But other prospective additions to the West Highland system are not to be overlooked; they had the potential to refocus public and parliamentary attention on the motives and methods of the North British Railway and so call in question the case for the Mallaig Guarantee. The Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway receives particular consideration. This venture is too readily treated as folly or heroic failure; in its setting out to engage the established companies, it recalls both the Glasgow & North Western promotion of 1882-3 and the first attempt to promote a ‘West Highland Railway’ in 1887-8.

When traffic began on the West Highland line in August, 1894, never before in the British Isles had 100 miles of new railway been opened at once. This proved, said Tweeddale, speaking at Fort William, that the North British Company would open up the country - which the Liberal Government ought to acknowledge by speedily bringing forward the Treasury Guarantee to support the West Highland Mallaig Extension. Tweeddale briefly mentioned the branch lines which must eventually follow - from Fort William south to Ballachulish; from Inverlair (Tulloch) by Laggan into Strathspey. For the moment Fort William and Banavie would serve as general railheads.[1] In effect, Tweeddale was serving notice that the North British Railway intended to control Lochaber, including the southern half of the Great Glen, where the Truce with the Highland Railway still held good. Little was said about Oban traffic via the West Highland; for the Crianlarich spur was not yet finished. To reintroduce the possibility of North British running powers to Oban would have strained the Peace Agreement with the Caledonian Company. And, whatever the prospects of capturing Callander & Oban business at Crianlarich, Tweeddale and Conacher were now as much concerned to fend off Caledonian claims to a share in West Highland traffic. Completion to Fort William before the summer season of 1894 ran out had been an expensive race against time, and the Banavie branch would not be completed until 1895.[2] Forman had suggested that the North British settle in the short run for opening to Garelochhead.[3] But neither Oban nor Garelochhead now counted in North British calculations as they had done when Walker first positioned the Company behind Forman's West Highland scheme.
In 1888-9 the North British Company had shown qualified enthusiasm for the West Highland project north of Crianlarich. By 1893-4 Tweeddale and Conacher saw the Mallaig Extension as essential, provided Government assistance was forthcoming. In supporting Forman's project, Walker had hoped to preserve North British territory north of Clyde. But the Caledonian would reach Dumbarton via the Glasgow Central Railway and the Lanarkshire & Dumbartonshire Railway, when the North British had to concede joint ownership of the Vale of Leven line and the Loch Lomond steamers. The North British Company reluctantly faced a sizeable fall in receipts. This was the prospect when Conacher began to review the burden which his predecessor's West Highland guarantee had imposed on the North British. Having decided not to fight for Oban, for Dumbarton or for Loch Lomond, Tweeddale and Conacher were perhaps all the more determined to monopolise Lochaber. By 1894 it was clear that the final cost of construction to Fort William and Banavie would exceed £1,000,000 - almost double Forman's estimates. In Forman's view, the North British had incurred additional expense by stipulating for heavier track and a somewhat easier road, by renegotiating the terms first agreed with Lucas & Aird and by insisting that the work be pressed on during the stormy winters of 1892-3 and 1893-4. With no through traffic to Oban and a very limited "residential" traffic along the Gareloch, his original calculations of likely revenue no longer applied. Business north of Crianlarich would build up in the long run; until it did, the North British must shoulder the guarantee payments pledged by Walker in 1889 and redefined by Conacher in 1893.

In October, 1894 outstanding work along the new railway was taken out of Forman's hands wherever possible and entrusted to the North British Railway's engineer. Forman attributed the backlog to North British insistence, earlier in the year, that all work be postponed save what was necessary to satisfy the Board of Trade and open the line. He added that Lucas & Aird, together with the small firms engaged on station buildings and railwaymen's houses, would have to be compensated. But bad feeling came not just from Forman's now controversial estimates or from the unfinished state of the West Highland line. Forman's dealings with other Companies and with local parties who hoped to advance their own plans were a threat to North British control of the route. As noted in Chapter 3, Formans & McCall engineered the new lines which were to bring the Caledonian to Dumbarton and Loch Lomond. With a rival route into Glasgow, the Caledonian Company might try to compete for traffic as far as Helensburgh or Garelochhead. Joint arrangements or running powers west of Dumbarton were not mooted, and the Peace Agreement afforded some protection; but the North British would have been obliged to provide a more generous service. Forman also proposed a short funicular line from Whistlefield on the West Highland to a new pier.
at Portincaple on Loch Long. A Lochgoilhead syndicate pursued the North British over several years to
take up the scheme, as did the local fishermen whose complaints troubled Conacher while the Mallaig
Guarantee hung fire. These distractions, as the North British saw them, have been treated in Chapter 4.
The Loch Fyne interest sought a branch from upper Loch Lomond by Glen Fyne to Inverary, whereupon
the Callander & Oban Company engaged Forman and Wolfe Barry to occupy the ground with a Dalmally-
to-Inverary line. The ensuing parliamentary contest, in 1896-7, is examined below.

Forman’s speculative efforts had their greatest impact further north. During 1893, backed by Cluny
MacPherson and MacPherson of Glen Truim, Forman surveyed a line along Loch Laggan, connecting
Newtonmore on the Highland Railway with the West Highland.[9] The Ten Years Truce exempted the
Laggan route; but neither the Highland Company nor the West Highland wanted to be drawn in. When
the scheme was lodged for parliamentary session 1893-4, Conacher and Dougall contrived to have it
abandoned.[9] But the West Highland board saw that the Laggan link might have to be taken up sooner
or later. Knowing that Forman could not be relied on to respect the Truce, Conacher and Dougall
anticipated that a Great Glen bill would be deposited along with the Laggan bill.[10] In Forman’s disingen-
uous account, he was requested, during his Laggan survey, to take preliminary measurements between
Spean Bridge and Inverness. He spoke of local persons well-disposed to the West Highland Company
- almost certainly Lord Burton, George Malcolm of Invergarry and the Inverness solicitor, Charles Innes
(Innes & MacKay).[11] There is some slender evidence that Sir John Aird was involved. For Lucas &
Aird the Mallaig Extension was a dubious proposition. A new promotion in the Great Glen, embroiling the
Highland Railway and the North British Railway, may have appeared a surer way of recouping the loss
which the firm had suffered on the Helensburgh - Fort William contract. Aird’s correspondence with
Tweeddale during 1893-4 invites this inference.[12] In 1889, with North British connivance, Forman’s
West Highland promotion had been better prepared than the opposition expected. By 1893-4 the
Highland Company feared that a drive up the Great Glen could emerge just as quickly. North British
control of Lochaber meant that independent schemes unwelcome to both Companies could be deterred;
but the North British, on Tweeddale’s interpretation, had the right eventually to occupy the Glen at least as
far as Fort Augustus, only thirty miles from Inverness.
Before the new Glasgow - Fort William service was a month established, the Highland Railway chose pre-emptive action, putting in hand an Inverness - Fort William survey.\[^{13}\] The Highland Company’s solicitors, Stuart, Rule & Burns of Inverness, were in contact with the legal department of the North British Railway, which suggests that Dougall was angling for a new Great Glen agreement.\[^{14}\] Conacher for his part did not denounce the Truce at once. On 11 September, 1894, having re-examined the terms which Walker had accepted in 1889, he wrote formally to Dougall asking what the Highland Railway intended.\[^{15}\] The agreement bound the West Highland Company and the North British Company but left the Highland Company free. Conacher was briefed to argue that the Highland Railway was bound in spirit; the West Highland had conceded a breathing space but always intended to advance into the Great Glen; using the breathing space to prepare a blocking promotion was bad faith.\[^{16}\] The impending collapse of the Ten Years Truce was widely reported, and the press prepared for a parliamentary battle. “Monopoly, when it serves the public ... cannot be condemned.”, wrote one defender of the Highland Railway.\[^{17}\] The *Dundee Advertiser* offered a lengthy history of railway development in the north of Scotland, echoing the familiar refrain that the Highland Company was the product of far-sighted and patient sacrifice.\[^{18}\] Another writer asserted that the West Highland, with up-to-date equipment, was the model of what the Highland Railway ought to be.\[^{19}\] There would be no all-out “rates war” if the West Highland reached Inverness; legislation had prescribed equalised rates, for existing through traffic between Inverness and the South, whether via Aberdeen or via Perth. But the Highland Company would have to fix, say, Inverness-to-Glasgow rates via Perth on the basis of the shorter route via the Great Glen, and generally improve facilities to retain business.\[^{20}\]

Dougall’s housekeeping was praised; the Highland Railway paid reliable dividends and, alone among the Scottish Companies, had no deferred stock.\[^{21}\] Others retorted that shareholders were protected at the expense of the travelling public, who endured primitive accommodation, weary timetables and mixed trains obnoxious to the Board of Trade.\[^{22}\] There was concern over the fate of Inverness itself. What if competition brought the Highland Company to amalgamate with the Caledonian or with the North British? As the outpost of a bigger system, the town might lose the Lochgorm locomotive works and other railway activity.\[^{23}\] Like the Glasgow & North Western in 1882-3, the West Highland found supporters in Nairnshire and Moray, in Ross & Cromarty, Sutherland and Caithness.\[^{24}\] Once again the Great North of Scotland Railway was expected to seek running powers to Inverness, joining hands with the invader and complicating the pattern of equalised rates.\[^{25}\] (If invasion failed but running powers were secured, the
Great North would not complain.) As in 1882-3 the Highland Company argued that all possible contributory traffic east and north of Inverness must be channelled to the Inverness - Perth main line. Competition would generate little new activity. Competitors abstracting traffic at Inverness, without the burden of the far-flung contributory lines to Wick, Thurso and Strome Ferry, would have an unfair advantage. But opponents argued that the Highland Railway became public spirited only when threatened, by the Glasgow & North Western promotion and the Strathspey, Strathdon & Deeside promotion in the 1880s and now by the West Highland Railway.

On 13 November, 1894 the Highland Company announced the ‘Spean Bridge & Fort William Extension.’ At the southern end of the Great Glen the proposed route divided, one line swinging east to Spean Bridge for through running to Glasgow, the other following the river Lochy to Fort William. A spur to Banavie promised through running to Mallaig, if and when the West Highland Mallaig Extension was built, and implied that the Highland Railway, like the Caledonian, might press for joint ownership or running powers west of Banavie. On 15 November came the ‘West Highland Inverness Extension’, diverging from the Glasgow-Fort William line near Roy Bridge, with a spur across the river Spean, near High Bridge, for through running between Fort William and Inverness. North of Invergloy the rival schemes were almost identical, taking the south eastern side of Loch Lochy and Loch Oich to Fort Augustus and then the north western side of Loch Ness. Forman first offered his services to the Highland Company; but Dougall and his directors relied on their own engineers, and Forman’s plans - suspiciously complete for what he had said was a preliminary layout, were adopted by the West Highland. Though posing as the injured party, the North British Company had given thought to the Great Glen. Conacher was advised that Lord Lovat, Lady Seafield and other proprietors on Loch Ness would favour the Highland promotion; if the West Highland took the same alignment, these landowners could not plead loss of amenity without appearing partisan.

The Highland board presented their Great Glen line, along with the Aviemore cut-off, the Black Isle branch, the Fochabers branch and the Dornoch Light Railway as a development of their own territory now that the time was ripe. This rang hollow, like the Caledonian claim in 1889 that a Callander & Oban branch to Fort William had always been intended. And the Highland Company’s shareholders were alarmed at the uncharacteristic rush of activity. The Kyle of Lochalsh extension would be costly, despite the promised Treasury grant, and the Lochinver line might yet follow. If money was to be spent,
the Garve & Ullapool Railway, already approved by Parliament, ought not to have been so quickly set aside. After years of delay, the Aviemore cut-off was to be finished with all haste. Contractor and subcontractors (local firms all) complained of unreasonable demands, and the landowners of Strathdearn and Strathnairn complained that their wishes were being ignored. Had the Highland directors been panicked by the prospect of West Highland advance to the west coast and into the Great Glen? They could not fight on every front and ought to negotiate.

West Highland supporters happily joined the cry that the Highland Railway was over-committed. The Highland Company should concentrate on improvements in the Far North, leaving the West Highland to complete the westerly route from Glasgow to Inverness, increasing traffic all round. Unlike other elements in the Highland system, a Great Glen line could not be seen, save perhaps at its northern end, as a feeder to the Inverness - Perth trunk; the natural route led south to the West Highland. Local traffic to and from Inverness did not justify the outlay. The through service to Glasgow would be inhibited by dual ownership with a "frontier" at Spean Bridge. The Highland Company should address these arguments or admit that the real aim was to block the Great Glen. Sheer joy of battle seems to have overtaken what had begun, for Dougall and Conacher, as no more than a redrawing of positions. The Highland Company now denied that the West Highland had any title to the Great Glen, though this had been hitherto an open question. The West Highland invoked the vision of the Glasgow & North Western promoters, as if Inverness had always been the goal, quite contrary to the prospectus of 1888-9. Both schemes were elaborate. Inverness was to have a separate West Highland station and harbour branch. The Highland Railway contemplated a tunnel behind Fort William to a combined pier and station south of the town. On the whole the West Highland made the better case and, with North British backing, was better placed to carry the fight to Parliament. But alongside the voices urging the Highland Company to retreat were warnings that the hard fought Mallaig Extension might be lost in a barren struggle for Inverness. North British energies should concentrate on securing the Treasury Guarantee for Mallaig.

Lochiel took the sober view that it was pointless to continue to Inverness. The limitations of Forman's West Highland line, which Dougall regularly attacked, would not matter when the time came to compete for west coast fish. Trunk route competition was different. The Glasgow - Roy Bridge - Great Glen route was shorter than the Caledonian-cum-Highland route and would remain so, by a narrower margin, when the Aviemore cut-off was ready. But journey times would be no better, and to maintain any sort of
express service would require additional expenditure on the West Highland proper. The Highland Railway must be kept away from Fort William and denied any share in the Mallaig Extension. An Inverness-to-Spean Bridge link in Highland hands would do no harm. The Highland Company would have a long branch line. The West Highland would gain contributory traffic; for such business as there was tended to the South. No doubt unconsigned traffic beyond Inverness would still be engrossed for the Perth route; but some consigned traffic would find its way to Spean Bridge. ('Consigned' goods were directed, by senders, to particular routes.) On 14 September Lochiel summarised the financial position of the West Highland Company. The original scheme had cost far more than expected; the Mallaig line would need North British support alongside the Treasury Guarantee. As for the line to Inverness, the North British would have to guarantee 3 1/2% on £750,000, additional to 3 1/2% on the final cost of the Fort William and Banavie lines and 3% on £128,000 towards the Mallaig line. The Inverness Extension would have to earn £8. 4/- per mile per week, besides covering working costs, to show any profit. Tweeddale replied that he fully accepted the need for a new guarantee. What he really wanted was that Lochiel should remain resolute until a new Great Glen agreement could be framed.

It is to be remembered that throughout the dispute of 1894-5, as in the conflicts of 1882-3 and 1888-9, the Highland Railway and the North British continued to exchange traffic at Perth. Like the previous North British chairman, Sir James Falshaw, Tweeddale sat on the Highland board, which betokened the common concerns of the two Companies. Without this countervailing presence, the Highland Railway would have been completely under the influence of the Caledonian and the London & North Western. The North British in some sense helped to preserve Highland independence. Wordy warfare over the Great Glen should not cloud this larger picture. On 3 December, 1894 Tweeddale wrote to MacKintosh of Raigmore, the Highland Company’s Chairman.

I regret I cannot be with you on Wednesday - the more so as I would rather speak than write about decision (sic) ... to go to Fort William. I fully understood that the matter had been hung up for ten years. (It) was not until the official announcement of the intention... to promote a Bill had appeared in the papers, and had been confirmed by Mr. Dougall that the West Highland even considered (promoting) a Bill... If the Highland Co. persists... money, time and perhaps temper will be expended quite needlessly. Is it not possible to avoid or... postpone the fight? The North of Scotland (sic) are on the warpath apparently thinking it a good opportunity to ask for running powers to Inverness.

Raigmore explained that the Highland had suspected Forman of fomenting a speculative promotion. ("My belief was and is that the scheme was to have been brought forward by an independent company..."
and that any delay would have put us at a disadvantage.

On 3 January, 1895 he offered to “appoint a small Committee... to confer with a Committee of the North British and West Highland boards”, in Scotland or in London. He heartily agreed that the Highland Company and the North British both needed to retrench. A compromise “would add greatly to the value of Scottish Railway property”.

The Scotsman anticipated a settlement. The Glasgow Herald believed that the North British would allow the Highland Company to occupy the Great Glen in return for running powers to Inverness. At the West Highland Company’s half-yearly meeting in January Tweeddale and Lochiel, whose doubts remained private, made a powerful showing. They would negotiate from strength, being entirely ready to pursue the Inverness Extension. It may be that Forman and others were deceived as to the imminent settlement. Ten days earlier, studying reports of blizzards in the North, Forman had written to Conacher that they should try to prove, when the rival Great Glen Bills reached Committee, how the westerly route was less vulnerable to snow. A minority of Highland directors sought an alliance with the Callander & Oban Railway, to secure the Great Glen once and for all. The Callander & Oban Bill of 1894-5 for a Connel Ferry - Fort William - Banavie line is discussed below. The Despatch claimed that Tweeddale’s overture would fail, because a “private understanding” bound the Highland to the Caledonian and the Callander & Oban. Raigmore reassured Tweeddale that “the subject of the Fort William line” had no place in any dealings with these Companies. The Highland Company and the North British announced that “the time was ... inopportune for the very large expenditure of capital which ... the two schemes would entail”. The draft of a new Great Glen Truce emerged on 13 February 1895, when directors representing Highland, West Highland and North British met in Edinburgh. The final version soon followed.

(The Companies) agree not to introduce into Parliament nor to support, assist or countenance directly or indirectly ... any Bill for powers to construct any Railway between Fort William, Banavie or Spean Bridge or the neighbourhood of any of these places on the one hand and Inverness or any point on or near the proposed Railway Routes between Inverness and Fort William, Banavie or Spean Bridge or the neighbourhood thereof on the other hand without giving to the other two Companies notice of their intention ... not later than the First day of August immediately previous to the deposit in Parliament of such Bill.

The new agreement was designed to prevent another confrontation over full-blown schemes of the kind prepared in 1894. It also insured against the temptation to take up a ‘half way’ promotion, from Inverness to Fort Augustus or from Glen Spean to Fort Augustus, as a blocking device or as the first step in a two-step advance. In the mood of 1895 the Highland Company remained suspicious that the North
British had always seen Spean Bridge as a staging post towards Inverness; Fort Augustus must not become another staging post. But the agreement could not contain the resentment of local communities in the Great Glen that the Highland and the North British had colluded to deny them a railway. (“Should neither scheme be promoted, there will be widespread disappointment . . .”) [34]

When the Callander & Oban Railway announced the ‘Ballachulish, Fort William & Banavie Extension’ in November to coincide with the Highland Railway’s Fort William extension, Anderson seems to have acted without Caledonian prompting. Wolfe Barry, the Caledonian Railway’s consulting engineer, joined with Forman to lay out the line. [55] Was Anderson in touch with the Highland board? Was Forman an intermediary? The Oban Times declared that the two promotions were complementary. The Callander & Oban Company would occupy the district between Oban and Fort William, and this would balance any loss of traffic to the West Highland route. The Highland Company’s “autocratic monopoly” would end when an Oban - Fort William - Inverness route came into being, a route in which the Caledonian Company and the Highland would share, as they shared the established route via Perth. [56] It is a plausible reconstruction that Anderson expected to achieve agreement with the Highland Railway after the two Bills came to Parliament, and that Thompson, for the Caledonian, was content to let him try, since the Callander & Oban promotion kept in play the Caledonian claim to a share in the West Highland Mallaig Extension. The proposed line ran from Connel Ferry to Fort William, with a branch to Ballachulish quarries. At Connel the junction faced Callander, for through running to and from the South; a spur gave through running between Oban and the North. At Fort William the line followed the hillside above the town. Connections with the West Highland were complicated; one spur faced Spean Bridge, another led to Banavie. [57] There was provision for Caledonian running powers to Mallaig and for joint ownership of the Mallaig line by Callander & Oban and West Highland, if the Treasury Guarantee was authorised, “in order to secure to the public the fullest use of (an) undertaking so aided by public funds”. [58] (Had the Highland Railway and the Callander & Oban come together at Fort William, either the Highland tunnel or the Callander & Oban line on the hillside would have been eliminated.)

Conacher reminded Thompson that the Peace Agreement required the Caledonian Company to discontinue the Callander & Oban scheme. Thompson replied that his directors preferred to wait until both the Callander & Oban Bill and the Highland Railway’s Great Glen Bill had been deposited. [59] On 21
December, 1894 Conacher insisted on knowing where the Caledonian stood. The Caledonian had already admitted, when the Mallaig Extension went to arbitration, that all depended on the Callander & Oban reaching Fort William. Thompson could not argue thus in May and six months later pretend that Anderson’s plans were not his affair. Unless the Bill was withdrawn, the North British would return to arbitration.\[^{[60]}\] On 14 January, 1895 came the ruling that the Caledonian Company must veto the Callander & Oban Bill as it then stood.\[^{[61]}\] At Caledonian behest, the formal Callander & Oban shareholders meeting to endorse the new line was postponed.\[^{[62]}\] Meanwhile Thompson offered to have the promotion recast. The Ballachulish - Fort William - Banavie sections would be abandoned, and the Mallaig clauses deleted, on condition that the North British recognised the whole district between Oban and Ballachulish as Caledonian territory. If the North British refused, the Caledonian would appeal once more to the arbiter.\[^{[63]}\] Tweeddale and Conacher made counter-proposals. The North British would not oppose a Callander & Oban branch from Connel Ferry to Ballachulish, provided that the Caledonian and the Callander & Oban promised not to advance beyond Loch Leven for ten years, during which period the West Highland Company would be free to promote a Fort William-to-Ballachulish line, with joint arrangements at Ballachulish.\[^{[64]}\]

By the time of the Callander & Oban meeting on 8 February, Anderson and Thompson must have known that a new Great Glen Truce was in prospect. The through route from Connel Ferry to Inverness was not obtainable. The Caledonian Company was satisfied to occupy the district south of Loch Leven, leaving the North British to occupy Nether Lochaber. The Callander & Oban Bill was so framed that the scheme could be curtailed in this way, which may have been the intention from the outset.\[^{[65]}\] Both Conacher and Thompson feared that supporters of the Callander & Oban would rebel, like the Great Glen interest, against decisions made over their heads. The Callander & Oban Company and the Highland, but not the West Highland, had a body of small shareholders not unwilling to defy their boards. In the event, a lone Appin proprietor, MacFie of Airds, protested that this was not the spirit which had built the line to Oban over fifteen penurious years.\[^{[66]}\] Discontent did not flare as it flared in the Great Glen; for it was generally assumed that the Caledonian would reach agreement with the North British for a new promotion in parliamentary session 1895-6.

In May, 1895 Conacher suggested that Ballachulish be neutralised ("Either Company shall be at liberty during the currency of the (Peace) Agreement... to extend or secure the extension of railway
The Caledonian board and the North British board appointed a Peace Agreement Joint Committee. Negotiations were interrupted by the general election, in which several directors were personally involved. With the Unionists confirmed in office, the North British wanted above all to pursue the Treasury Guarantee for the Mallaig Extension, as discussed in Chapter 7. A settlement with the Callander & Oban was all the more desirable if it finally ruled out Caledonian claims to a share in Mallaig. In November, 1895 the Callander & Oban Company lodged their Ballachulish branch, a truncated version of the Ballachulish, Fort William & Banavie Extension. This time Caledonian backing was unequivocal. The West Highland Company lodged a Fort William - North Ballachulish line, laid out by Forman, who nevertheless continued his association with the Callander & Oban. The West Highland promotion included a swing bridge over the Loch Leven narrows at Ballachulish Ferry, carrying a tramway to Ballachulish quarries. Parliament disallowed the bridge and tramway but otherwise approved both railways, which effectively drew a 'frontier' between Caledonian and North British at Loch Leven. The Callander & Oban Company returned to Parliament in session 1896-7 for powers to continue from Ballachulish Ferry to Ballachulish village and quarries, in lieu of the tramway and other shared arrangements proposed the previous year.

The Callander & Oban branch to Ballachulish opened in 1903. The West Highland link to Fort William was never built. Conacher saw it as a block line. On Forman’s figures, it would cost £130,000 including swing bridge and tramway. Operating expenses would be kept down by utilising locomotives and rolling stock lying over at Fort William to give a basic shuttle service to North Ballachulish. The tramway would feed some share of the slate traffic to the West Highland route. There would be no through passenger or goods trains between Fort William and the Callander & Oban route via Ballachulish. Conacher accepted that local business south of Ballachulish would always tend to Oban and to Glasgow, and must be left to the Caledonian, to MacBrayne or to the coastal traders. The through route would bring little traffic to the West Highland and might well take traffic away. Here was, in reverse, Lochiel’s argument that a through service in the Great Glen, though operated by the Highland Company, must benefit the West Highland. The North Ballachulish branch would be useful if it fed Ardgour traffic, via Corran Ferry, to Fort William; it must not feed that traffic south to the Callander & Oban. Traffic which concentrated on Corran Ferry might be directed instead to Kinlocheil, Glenfinnan and Kinlochailort on the Mallaig Extension, where it would be securely West Highland. Other things equal, the Highland Company was unlikely to promote another Inverness - Fort William line as long as the Callander & Oban...
was held at Ballachulish. After 1896 Tweeddale and Conacher saw that further arbitration under the Peace Agreement would not improve their position. The West Highland interest in Ballachulish slate and Glen Coe tourists, though not explicitly dropped, was not worth a battle now that the Caledonian was confined, more or less willingly, south of Loch Leven. Powers for the Fort William - North Ballachulish link would not lapse for some years, which kept the barrier in being.

Did these schemes in any way threaten the West Highland Mallaig Extension? A contest for the Great Glen might have distracted the North British Railway, as Lochiel feared, from pursuing the Treasury Guarantee, and it would have added to the number of M.P.s who wanted another review of railway development before the Guarantee was finalised. The opponents of state assistance were encouraged to ask whether subsidy was ever necessary. The Highland Railway and the North British were reluctant adversaries, and it was debatable who was the aggressor; but the result ought to be a completed westerly route to Inverness, just as competition between the Caledonian and the North British had produced the West Highland cut-off route to Oban. The public interest was served without the state stirring. And competition for west coast fish traffic ought to have ensured that additional outlets were created without the Kyle of Lochalsh grant or the Mallaig Guarantee. What was required was not the carrot of subsidy but the stick of inquiry into the Great Glen Truce, the Peace Agreement and other understandings which prevented the benefits of competition reaching the public. Why did the Crianlarich spur remain unopened? Why had the Highland Company and the West Highland Company withdrawn their Great Glen promotions without consulting the local interests whose support they had canvassed? Why did the Government recognise an obligation to subsidise the Mallaig line without thoroughly re-examining the facts of what had become a most intricate case? To preserve the Peace Agreement the North British Company had denied the public a direct connection between Oban and Lochaber. The North British, so anxious to complete the Mallaig Extension where subsidy had been promised, was unwilling to expand the West Highland system in other directions or to integrate with the routes already established.

And the Callander & Oban Railway’s Ballachulish scheme was itself a possible contender for subsidy, on the old argument that the Callander & Oban, like the Highland, had pioneered railway promotion in the region with little immediate reward.

The claims of the ... Company upon the Government need no bolstering up; having already constructed a railway ... from unaided private enterprise, the Company propose to embark upon an
undertaking, the burdens of which are eminently such as (might) be shared imperially as well as locally.\(^\text{[79]}\)

Though the coast between Connel Ferry and Fort William offered relatively easy construction, bridging Loch Etive, Loch Creran and Loch Leven imposed particular “burdens”. If the sea-loch viaducts carried both railway and road, the case for assistance, whether from parliamentary or from local authority sources, would be all the stronger, even if the line reached no further than Ballachulish.\(^\text{[77]}\) The Caledonian Company had always argued that railway improvement ‘south of Strome’, as recommended by the Lothian Commission and the Treasury Committee, meant not just the completion of the West Highland Railway to the sea but also a Callander & Oban link to Fort William. Having settled for a branch to Ballachulish, the Caledonian could no longer press for joint ownership of the Mallaig Extension and a share in the Mallaig subsidy. But the Caledonian and the Callander & Oban were free to seek state aid for a Ballachulish line, citing the Mallaig Guarantee.

This was, after all, what Tweeddale had urged would-be promoters to do; rather than attack the Mallaig scheme, they should exploit it as a precedent. However, the Mallaig Guarantee was not yet secure. Through 1895 into 1896 the North British faced an enigmatic Liberal Government and then a Unionist Government determined to rewrite the terms which the Liberals had agreed, as Chapter 7 has explained. The Mallaig scheme stood apart from rival promotions ‘north of Strome’ because the offer made in 1892 by the then Conservative Government was deemed to bind their successors. ‘South of Strome’, until 1894, the proposed Mallaig line stood alone; extension of the Callander & Oban system north from Connel Ferry had been mooted but not pursued. The promotions of 1894-5 and 1895-6 in the end did not reach beyond Ballachulish. Despite suggestions that the state could not “refuse assistance to another line formed in similar circumstances”,\(^\text{[73]}\) the Callander & Oban Company did not bid for subsidy. The North British Company and the Treasury escaped an unwelcome complication.

During 1895 the Highland Company and the North British had redefined the Ten Years Truce, while the Caledonian and the North British, applying the territorial rationale of the Peace Agreement, marked out a ‘frontier’ between Oban and Fort William. 1895-6 confirmed that Nether Lochaber would be safely West Highland, and Benderloch and Appin just as safely Callander & Oban, while Ballachulish, in no-man’s-land, would not be disputed in earnest. But the promotion of the Invergarry & Fort Augustus
Railway destabilised the Great Glen for a second time. Forman surveyed - in effect, resurveyed, the Fort Augustus line. At the same time he accepted the West Highland commission to engineer the Fort William - North Ballachulish line and the Loch Leven swing bridge and tramway; helped Wolfe Barry to modify the Callander & Oban branch north from Connel Ferry; and tried to reactivate the Laggan link. The North British Company disliked but could not restrain his wide ranging activities.

It is convenient to consider the Laggan project first. Colonel MacPherson of Glen Truirn made a fresh approach to the North British in December, 1894, when the Highland Railway and the North British were at odds over the Great Glen. The Badenoch party may have calculated that the North British would back them, to put more pressure on the Highland Company. In Glen Spean, as Chapter 4 has shown, there was some feeling that a West Highland link with the Inverness - Perth trunk line, at Newtonmore or Dalwhinnie, was preferable to a Great Glen link with Inverness. By October, 1895 Conacher and Wieland were debating whether to lodge a West Highland scheme for Laggan, which would both counter the Invergarry & Fort Augustus promotion and pre-empt a Badenoch promotion. But the Highland Company and the North British were warily united in opposition to the Fort Augustus scheme; a West Highland thrust into Strathspey would have broken the precarious accord. Forman hoped to engage the Great North of Scotland Railway, as he had already tried to do in 1893-4. Given a Laggan link, together with running powers over the Highland Railway and the West Highland Railway, the Great North could have cobbled together an Aberdeen - Fort William route, via Strathspey, Laggan and Spean. It is to be remembered that the Great North offered to operate the Garve & Ullapool Railway and the Achnasheen - Aultbea line. By agreeing to work one of the Lothian schemes in the North West, the Great North would have won running powers to Inverness, and the Company was ready to argue that no Great Glen line should be authorised without complementary provision for through working to and from the Great North system. That the Great North would have traded the Laggan scheme against better facilities at Inverness or other concessions by the Highland Company is more than likely. Forman may have anticipated a three-sided contest, with one of the Companies - Highland, West Highland or Great North, obliged, however reluctantly, to take up the Laggan line. Wieland believed that Forman’s activities were all of a piece; he would entangle the Companies, if he could, in Laggan and in the Great Glen. Moreover there were rumours that the Great North of Scotland Company had investigated the Fort William - Mallaig route.
The Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway, submitted to Parliament in November, 1895 and approved in August, 1896, was a protest against the way in which the Highland Company and the North British had sealed off the territory between Fort William and Inverness. Their Truce, accepted while the West Highland Railway was under construction, had become intolerable. In 1894-5 the Great Glen communities generally favoured the West Highland Inverness Extension.[84] Charles Innes had rallied support in Glen Urquhart and Glen Morriston. At Fort Augustus, Abbot Linse of the Benedictine monastery, together with the Free Church minister, had made a like effort. George Malcolm had spoken for Invergarry.[84] It will be recalled that Forman had already made a survey in 1893 - openly, by his own account, covertly as the Highland Company saw it, and that this was the line briefly adopted by the North British until the Truce was restored. The Invergarry & Fort Augustus promoters appealed to all who felt betrayed. Their Spean Bridge - Fort Augustus line would undermine the new Great Glen agreement and a Fort Augustus - Inverness line would soon follow.[85]

Lord Burton was the main mover.[86] At Invergarry, the Ellice family were equivocal, demanding concessions to protect and improve their amenity. Malcolm was the indispensible go-between. At Fort Augustus, Lord Lovat was not won over. Lochiel, with estates on the northern shore of Loch Loych, stood neutral; as a West Highland director, he was already wary of all Great Glen projects and concerned to keep North British eyes fixed on Mallaig. Lord Abinger (not to be confused with his father, the first Chairman of the West Highland Company) expected further benefits for his Inverlochy estate, but otherwise took little part. The lesser landowners and shooting tenants along the route were broadly favourable. Thus the scheme could make a sufficient showing as a bona fide “proprietors’ line”. It was suggested too, that the landowners were reminding the Railway Interest of their duty.[87] For Malcolm, North British withdrawal from the Great Glen confirmed that the West Highland Railway was not being developed in the way promised in Parliament in 1889. As factor for Sir John Stirling-Maxwell, Malcolm was also at odds with the North British over the West Highland Company’s obligations at Corrour. (Corrour is treated in Chapter 4), Burton and Malcolm hoped to have Stirling-Maxwell’s support.[88] The other promoters were J.C. Cunningham of Craigends and Foyers; E.Ristori of the British Aluminium Company, which would build a pioneering smelter at Foyers; the Glasgow iron merchant, John Neilson; and Sir Donald Matheson of Dalquhurn. Neilson and Matheson had no obvious connection with the Great Glen. Matheson, the principal Turkey Red dyer in the Vale of Leven, was a director of the Lanarkshire & Dumbartonshire Railway and his brother was a Caledonian director - a combination bound to alert the
North British. Agents for the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Bill were Innes & MacKay and the Glasgow solicitors, Keydens, Strang & Girvan. Charles Innes, like Malcolm, was genuinely aggrieved by the renewal of the Ten Year’s Truce, but J. Strang-Watkins of Keydens, Strang & Girvan, knew very well that the Invergarry & Fort Augustus had all the attributes of a speculative “contractors’ line”.

This was confirmed when the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Bill offered running powers and the option of a working agreement to no fewer than five Companies - West Highland, North British, Caledonian, Highland and Great North or Scotland. The West Highland Company, owning no equipment, could not enter into a working agreement. If the North British, working the West Highland, acquired or agreed to work the Fort Augustus line, there would be renewed accusations that the North British had always aimed at Inverness. The Caledonian could not assist without first gaining access to Spean Bridge, whether via the controversial Crianlarich spur or via the coastal route from Connel Ferry. It was conceivable that the Highland Railway and the Great North of Scotland would claim a footing in Lochaber, and so an interest in the Fort Augustus scheme, by virtue of their tentative association with the Laggan scheme. More likely was a Highland attempt to block the northern half of the Great Glen with an Inverness - Fort Augustus promotion. In that case, the North British and the Great North would argue, as in 1894-5, that piecemeal completion of the westerly route between Glasgow and Inverness should not be permitted without parliamentary safeguards for all interested Companies. The Callander & Oban, like the West Highland, could not make a working arrangement. That the Callander & Oban was omitted from the list of prospective working Companies while the West Highland was included, suggests a deliberate attempt to embarrass the North British, by highlighting the sham of West Highland independence.

The Highland Railway argued that the Great Glen Agreement had implicit parliamentary sanction and could not be challenged by a third party. (In 1889 the Commons Committee examining the West Highland Bill had accepted that, on the basis of the Truce, the Highland would no longer oppose.) But the Highland Company did not make common cause with the North British against the new promotion. Instead the Highland voiced the suspicion, echoed by the Caledonian, that, whatever the North British might say, the Invergarry & Fort Augustus would become a West Highland branch, taking the North British even closer to Inverness. And the Highland challenged the North British to promise that, if the Mallaig Extension obtained Treasury support and achieved success, there would be no further additions to the West Highland system. The West Highland Company claimed the southern end of the Great
Glen as their district. The North British reinforced this argument; until West Highland revenue covered the dividend guaranteed by the North British, the Company had the right to oppose premature branch lines. The West Highland and the North British both submitted that the Invergarry & Fort Augustus was inferior to the West Highland Inverness Extension, which would have cut directly into the Great Glen. To satisfy Abinger, Forman’s Fort Augustus line ran by Gairlochy, and there was no provision for through working between Fort William and the North. Moreover, Forman’s plans, based on the Inverness Extension, had been paid for by the North British and ought not to be used without North British permission.

Company was set against Company. The North British put it bluntly.

The real Promoters ... are the Engineer, Mr. Forman, and the Solicitors. It is not a genuine scheme..., but a ... Bill for powers which the Promoters hope ... to dispose of on favourable terms... (Their) intention is, in a subsequent Session..., if the Bill be passed, to promote an extension of the line to Inverness, so that they may... hawk their powers between the Highland Company and your Petitioners... [97]

Charles Steel, the new General Manager of the Highland Railway, accused Forman and his allies of aiming to sell out at a price inflated by the strategic position of a line which, once approved, would be a threat to the Highland Company, a temptation to the North British.

(It will) be made purely with a view of asking either the Highland or the North British Company, or some other ... to take it over... (It) is not reasonable that an independent Company should come in... and practically force the hands of the other Companies to make this line. [98]

But the promoters attacked the Highland Railway and the North British for “locking up” the Great Glen.

It is their action, or their inaction., that forces us to come here... They neither of them care that the other should make (the line), they neither of them want to make it at present, they want ... to quarrel from time to time as to who is to make (it).[99]

The Great Glen landowners had put their trust in the West Highland Railway, and therefore in the North British, only to be abandoned.

The proprietors ... have been hoping for years that they would have a railway, and... they looked to the people who had extended themselves as far as Banavie..., but when they found that the place (sic) was being partitioned ..., the Companies affecting to deal with it at their... pleasure, it raised a storm of indignation.. [100]
Malcolm testified that the Highland Company’s Spean Bridge & Fort William Extension had been recognised for what it was, a blocking device. Forman asserted that the Highland Railway would never willingly complete the westerly route to Inverness. The Aviemore cut-off would cost the Company twenty six revenue miles, which could not be offset by closing the original route by Forres. Equalisation, if the westerly route was in being, would cost an additional twenty miles. As a feeder to the Inverness - Perth main line, no branch from Inverness into the Great Glen could pay its costs. These facts would have been brought out in Parliament, enhancing the West Highland case. Tweeddale had surrendered too readily. Steel admitted that his Company’s Great Glen promotion in 1894-5 had been defensive. (“It was very much better for (us), if a line had to be made, that (it) should be made by (us) rather than by a hostile Company.”) Conacher argued that, laying aside sympathy for communities eager to have rail access, “the time for (theorising) as to probable traffic for railways in the West Highlands has now passed”. Henceforth experience should be the guide, and North British experience had been “exceedingly disappointing”. A line to Inverness would eventually be built. The Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway, considered as a feeder to the West Highland, would be an expensive and unnecessary stop-gap.

Forman replied that much of Scotland’s railway network had been built piecemeal. He challenged Conacher to consider the contributory traffic of the Strathendrick & Aberfoyle Railway or, more to the point, the very satisfactory tourist traffic on the Banavie branch, opened the previous summer. The Caledonian Company clearly wanted the contributory traffic of Appin and Ballachulish, whether or not the coastal line from Connel Ferry ever reached Fort William. Parliament should not pay too much attention to the complaints of established Companies faced with local promotions which did not accord with their immediate preoccupations: in general, they were content to see these lines built and to take them over at a later date. That mature and well-considered schemes were ruled out by hasty promotions was another claim not to be taken too seriously. In 1889 the Caledonian had warned that Parliament, by approving the West Highland Rannoch-and-Spean route to Fort William was destroying all hope of a direct link between Oban and Lochaber. But the Callander & Oban Ballachulish branch and the complementary West Highland branch from Fort William to North Ballachulish were about to he passed. And Forman once again defended his original estimates of 1888-9. The West Highland line was less than two years open. Livestock traffic was expanding. Excursion traffic exceeded expectations. The North British had not given enough attention to the business which could be created at the southern end of the line. There was as yet no “cross traffic” at Crianlarich. He implied that Tweeddale and Conacher were too much con-
cerned with the Mallaig Extension. The fortunes of the West Highland Railway would depend on the long term development of the whole region and not on one particular line which the Government had been persuaded to subsidise.\[105\]

As soon as the Invergarry & Fort Augustus promoters won their Act, there was manoeuvring over the rival bills which might be presented in 1896-7.\[106\] The Fort Augustus Company could utilise Forman’s earlier surveys to produce their own ‘Inverness Extension’. The North British engaged Blyth to resurvey the West Highland Inverness Extension north of Fort Augustus, with a cut-off from Roy Bridge to Invergloy and running powers from Invergloy to Fort Augustus. As a last-ditch defence the Highland Company promoted an Inverness - Fort Augustus line. Malcolm, soon to be an Invergarry & Fort Augustus director, wrote tentatively to Conacher, while first Burton and then Forman made a similar approach to Steel.\[107\] But the Fort Augustus party was ready to see all three schemes go to Parliament. As in 1895-6, they stirred the pot by suggesting that the Caledonian Railway and the Great North of Scotland might intervene, if only to secure arrangements for through traffic. Strang-Watkins believed that the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway was strongly placed. After their evidence in 1896 that any Great Glen line would be unacceptably burdensome for years to come, neither the Highland Company nor the North British would be able to make a convincing case. Now that the injustice and questionable legality of the Ten Year’s Truce had been exposed, Parliament would protect the local Company.\[108\] He did not deny that he might come to terms. (“(If the ... people thoroughly support us we should be able to ... conserve their interests in any arrangements which may be made ... with the Highland or North British Companies.”)\[109\]

The Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway had solid local backing. (“Almost to a man.”, said Lochiel.)\[110\] Yet the charge that Forman and his associates had an eye to their own advantage was not without effect. Lavish capital powers invited comment. In the case of the West Highland Mallaig Extension, the complications of Treasury Guarantee and North British guarantee justified generous provision. The Invergarry & Fort Augustus directors, like the Glasgow & North Western promoters, could be accused of enhancing assets which they always intended to sell. There were rumours that the Highland Railway had offered to buy out the Invergarry & Fort Augustus board at several thousand pounds a head.\[111\] Steel offered terms to Forman on 10 September, 1896. The Highland Company would guarantee the Invergarry & Fort Augustus. Any ‘Inverness Extension’ north from Fort Augustus would be jointly owned, or the Highland could take control of an entire Great Glen line, both the Spean Bridge - Fort Augustus section
authorised in 1896 and the Fort Augustus - Inverness section which might be authorised in 1897. Forman would become consulting Engineer, on condition that he recommended this settlement to the Fort Augustus Company.\textsuperscript{[112]} Negotiations continued throughout October. The Fort Augustus directors wanted an absolute guarantee of 4% on capital and a pledge that the Highland Company, having purchased the powers granted to the Invergarry & Fort Augustus, would indeed build the line and not hold these powers in reserve to block the Great Glen. The Highland Railway contemplated a restricted guarantee of no more than 3½% and insisted that any bill for the Fort Augustus-to-Inverness link would be abandoned if Parliament showed the slightest inclination to award running powers to the Caledonian or to the North British.\textsuperscript{[113]}

As in 1894-5, the North British began robustly, making it known that the West Highland guarantee of 1893 would now embrace both the Fort William - North Ballachulish line approved in 1896 and the Roy Bridge - Inverness scheme to be lodged for parliamentary session 1896-7. The Invergarry & Fort Augustus Company would be confined to semi-independent possession of twenty miles (Invergloy - Fort Augustus) of the completed westerly route to Inverness. The North British demanded the final say: these lines would be built, or the powers to build them traded in negotiations, at the pleasure of the North British. The West Highland directors were informed that they must accept Blyth's survey and allow the North British complete freedom to modify or withdraw the Great Glen Bill. The West Highland Company would neither begin construction without North British approval nor resist a North British decision to build. The Fort Augustus - Inverness section must be jointly owned: this would ensure that the North British had a locus standi in Parliament, which the Invergarry & Fort Augustus promoters had challenged in 1895-6. If these terms were not accepted, the North British would promote a Great Glen line without the West Highland and re-examine the assistance offered to the Mallaig Extension.\textsuperscript{[114]}

Lochiel, again alarmed that the Great Glen would distract the North British from the essential Treasury Guarantee for Mallaig, recorded his dissent. The West Highland Railway could not hope to recover the goodwill which had been lost by first abandoning the Inverness scheme in 1895 and then opposing the Invergarry & Fort Augustus promotion. Let the Highland Railway occupy the Great Glen; it would bring traffic to the West Highland but do the Highland little good. The North British should beware that their combative strategy did not lead to their being obliged to build a line which they did not really want. If powers were once granted, Parliament would not tolerate yet another retreat.
There is a not unnatural feeling ... that the District has not met with fair play ... (In) the face of what occurred last year Parliament (is unlikely to) authorise the line as projected by the NB and WH Cos. ... Strangely enough the result ... is likely to end (sic) in the occupation of the District between Spean and Inverness by the Highland Co, the very best thing that can happen in our ... interest. (Whoever) gets Parly authority to construct the (line) will have to do it; .. procrastination will hardly be possible (again).\[115\]

His prediction proved accurate in that the Highland Company won the triangular parliamentary contest of 1897 and might have absorbed the Invergarry & Fort Augustus. But the Truce was tacitly resumed.\[116\] The Highland Railway’s powers north of Fort Augustus now safeguarded Inverness just as the West Highland powers north of Ballachulish safeguarded Fort William. The Invergarry & Fort Augustus directors made the ruinous choice to build their line and wait upon events.\[117\] In 1902-3 Highland and North British clashed once more - over powers to work the new railway; but the owning Company, now in dire financial trouble, had little opportunity to turn this to advantage.\[118\] For the Highland Railway a working agreement was a further blocking device, while the North British wanted, on principle, to exclude the Highland from the southern end of the Great Glen. Completion of the through route to Inverness was no longer seriously considered. From 1903 to 1907, the Highland operated the Fort Augustus line, detached from the rest of the Highland system. When the North British finally moved in, it was clear that the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway had become a hopelessly unremunerative West Highland branch.\[119\]

In session 1895-6 Parliament had approved the Callander & Oban Company’s Ballachulish branch, the West Highland Ballachulish branch and the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway, besides passing the Light Railways Act and the long-delayed Mallaig Guarantee Act. In session 1896-7 came the three competing Bills to close the gap between Fort Augustus and Inverness - Highland, West Highland-cum-North British and Invergarry & Fort Augustus. There was also a composite Callander & Oban Bill, which included alterations at Ballachulish (Above) and Forman’s branch from Dalmally to Inverary.\[120\] The Highland Railway and the North British could not avoid conflict over the Great Glen. The Caledonian Railway and the North British were now similarly ensnared over Loch Fyne. “Representative landowners and others” had approached the North British for a West Highland branch from Ardlui by Glen Fyne to Inverary.\[121\] Conacher temporarised, holding out the possibility of a line from Arrochar under the Light Railways Act.\[122\] Meanwhile Anderson of the Callander & Oban, with more-or-less reluctant Caledonian approval, took up Forman’s scheme. The Callander & Oban, said Anderson, must occupy the ground before “our friends over the hill” decided to move.\[123\]
Opposing the Dalmally - Inveraray line, the North British pledged that the West Highland Company would promote a light railway to St. Catherine's, with ferry connection across Loch Fyne to Inveraray. The West Highland station at Arrochar & Tarbet was a better railhead than Dalmally; the Loch Fyne community already preferred the West Highland route and a feeder line was a legitimate development. Anderson argued that all of Argyll belonged in equity to the Callander & Oban. ("We were the first in the district and... ought to have the serving of it.") The North British retorted that, but for the challenge from the West Highland Railway, the Caledonian would have done nothing to help the Callander & Oban develop new branches. The Dalmally - Inveraray line was rejected. For the Arrochar - St. Catherine's line, as for the final West Highland promotion in the Great Glen, the North British turned to Blyth. A Light Railway Order was obtained. The branch was not built.

The record of Forman's Inverary promotion provides a recapitulation of this entire study. Witnesses harked back to the expectations of the 1860s, when the Callander & Oban Railway was begun. Lord Malcolm of Poltalloch recalled that his father had gathered support for a branch from Dalmally by Loch Awe to Ardrishaig, while MacLean of Ardgour had paid for a survey from Connel Ferry to Fort William. When the Oban route was at last completed, the Caledonian overlords had little enthusiasm for these feeder lines, and the people of southern Argyll invested their hopes in Forman's Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan railway. Like the would-be promoters of Fort William and Lochaber, they saw that the North British could be set against the Caledonian. There was disappointment, if not resentment, that the North British Company had not done more to save the Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan and would not back the little West Highland branch to Portincaple as the Loch Goil community desired. Sentiment swung back to the Callander & Oban Company.

By Loch Fyne, by Loch Awe and into Kintyre the Inverary scheme was widely supported. In an area lusher and more populous than the Great Glen, the sense of community endeavour was perhaps more intense than that which drove the Invergarry & Fort Augustus promotion. Save for the North British Company and the West Highland, the only formidable opposition came from the Duke of Argyll, whose policies Forman's line invaded. Argyll and his heir, the Marquess of Lome, declared that they would give way to public interest; however, there being no prospect of bringing industry to Inverary, traffic in fish, livestock and general merchandise could be handled at St. Catherine's. A West Highland connection offered a much shorter journey to Glasgow. The Duke would not submit to injury in order that
Anderson could block the West Highland. The Marquess added a general warning that demands of this sort would discourage a resident aristocracy, to the detriment of all the Highlands.\[^{[131]}\] There was ammunition here for critics of the Mallag Guarantee, who questioned the West Highland Company’s involvement with great landowners. Were these proprietors really so public spirited? Would subsidy be needed if they truly pulled their weight? Would subsidy benefit them more than it benefitted the populuation at large?

Parliamentary examination of the Inverary scheme gave scope to those who accused the North British Company of reneging on the promises of 1889, explicit or implicit, that West Highland services would be expanded in every way possible. Forman asserted that full exchange facilities at Crianlarich, in conjunction with the Inverary line, would increase both Callander & Oban revenue and West Highland revenue.\[^{[122]}\] It was still uncertain when and on what terms the Crianlarich spur would be brought into use, and for this Forman blamed the North British. Breadalbane’s tenants in Strathfillan and Glen Orchy concurred; looking both to the West Highland and to the older route, they wanted but were denied an integrated service.\[^{[132]}\] George Malcolm, appearing as an expert witness on livestock traffic, acknowledged that West Highland returns fell short of what had been forecast. But it was “too soon to say that any estimate has been falsified yet”. Conacher and the North British board were too pessimistic. (“They are not doing what they ought”,).\[^{[134]}\]

Much was said about fish traffic, echoing the debate over Roshven, Mallaig and the prospective railheads ‘north of Strome’.\[^{[135]}\] The fish stock of the entire west coast ought to be devoted to feeding the great cities. There were familiar claims that larch for railway sleepers, birch for bobbins and other timber was ready to hand, while Crames quarries would despatch road metal and street sets - so that the wagons which brought coal and general goods could return loaded. And there were all the old counter-arguments that coastal shipping would retain most of the coal and other heavy traffic.\[^{[136]}\] For dairy traffic, which several proprietors and their tenants hoped to develop, the shorter route via Arrochar was obviously desirable,\[^{[137]}\] and the same might be said of Glasgow-bound fish. But Anderson argued that, tapping the West Coast Anglo-Scottish route via Stirling, the Callander & Oban could deliver Loch Fyne fish to London more expeditiously than the West Highland-cum-East Coast or Midland routes via Glasgow and Edinburgh.\[^{[138]}\] And farmers could reach markets in Oban, Stirling and Perth, or wintering ground in the North East, sending by Dalmally.\[^{[139]}\] Here was another opportunity to remind Parliament that the West
Highland, tied to the North British, would send all such traffic via Helensburgh.

In effect, the Dalmally-Inverary line was presented as 'optimum' for southern Argyll. Public opinion, led by Argyll County Council, saw the geography of Cowal & Kintyre as well adapted to light railways, now that the 1896 Act had simplified their promotion.\[^{140}\] The Inverary line, along with its other benefits would become the first link in a chain “leading down to Ardrishaig at any rate and (perhaps) down to Campbeltown”.\[^{141}\] The County Assessor described it as “the beginning of what will be a railway to Ireland”.\[^{142}\] As the anchor of a chain of light railways, the Inverary branch would itself be built to conventional standards. The Arrochar-St. Catherine’s light railway, desirable in itself, did not have the same potential for development south to Kintyre, though it was suggested that the line be extended via Strachur to Dunoon on the route of the abortive Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan.\[^{143}\] Here again was ammunition for the determined band of MPs who argued that light railways, whether in Argyll, in the Far North or in the Hebrides, had a stronger claim on Government aid than a single project for forty miles of conventional railway from Banavie to Mallaig.
Chapter 8

1. The Scotsman, 13 August 1894

2. J. McGregor, 100 Years of the West Highland Railway

3. SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2
   Charles Forman to John Conacher, 1 July 1894

4. SRO/BR/SPC/9/2
   Tweeddale’s review of the North British Railway’s financial position, 14 December 1898, as noted in Conacher papers
   SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/1
   Railway Clearing House, arrangements for Caledonian Railway and North British Railway traffic: exchange at Callander, Crianlarich, Dumbarton and Stirling, following the opening of the Lanarkshire & Dumbartonshire Railway, January 1897

5. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/193
   Conacher, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 12 July 1894

6. J. McGregor, 100 Years of the West Highland Railway, page 41

7. SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/2
   George Wieland, Secretary of the West Highland Railway, to Conacher, 21 September 1894
   James Carswell, Engineer of the North British Railway, to Conacher 24 September 1894
   Conacher to Forman, 19 October 1894
   Forman to Conacher, 20 October 1894
   Forman to Conacher, 5 December 1894

8. SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
   Conacher to Wieland, 16 and 18 November 1893
   Wieland to Conacher, 18 November 1894
   Conacher to Andrew Dougall, Secretary of the Highland Railway, 27 November 1894
   Dougall to Conacher, 28 November 1893
   SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/386
   Forman, Evidence, Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, Lords, 8 May 1896
   (Forman was at pains to justify both his activities in 1893-4 and his original estimates for a ‘light’ West Highland line.)

9. SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
   Conacher to Wieland, 16 November 1893
   Conacher to Dougall, 27 November 1893

10. SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
    Conacher to Wieland, 16 and 18 November, 1893

11. SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/386
    Forman, Evidence, Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, Lords, 8 May 1896

12. SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/1
    John Aird to Conacher, 21 February 1893
    SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
    Aird to Conacher, 14 September 1894

13. SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
    D. MacDougall, Goods Manager of the North British Railway, to Conacher, 27 and 31 August 1894
    William Arnott, District Superintendent, Fort William, North British Railway, to Conacher, 29 August 1894

14. SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
    J. Watson, Solicitor of the North British Railway, to Conacher, 7 September 1894
is SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Conacher to Dougall

16 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Watson to Conacher, 7 September 1894

17 'Justice', The Scotsman, 11 September 1894

18 Dundee Advertiser, 4, 5, 6 and 8 December 1894

19 'Viator', The Scotsman, 11 September 1894

20 'Expert', Inverness Courier, 16 November 1894

21 'Justice', The Scotsman, 11, 17 and 24 September 1894

22 'Viator', The Scotsman, 11 September 1894

23 'Invemessian', The Scotsman, 18 September 1894

24 For example, John Gordon, Nairn, to J. Cathles, Secretary of the North British Railway, 6 September 1894

25 Gordon claimed to be writing on behalf of Nairn Town Council

26 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
For example, John Gordon, Nairn, to J. Cathles, Secretary of the North British Railway, 6 September 1894

27 'Fact', The Scotsman, 13 September 1894

28 Parliamentary Notice for Highland Railway, Spean Bridge & Fort William Extension, Bill, 1894-5
See also Great Glen Railway Bills, 1894-5 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/378, showing the different elements of the scheme for parliamentary and construction purposes and estimating the total cost at £819,000.

29 See also SRO/RHP 49504 and 49504/17

30 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Parliamentary Notice for West Highland Railway, Inverness Extension, Bill, 1894-5
See also Great Glen Railway Bills, 1894-5 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/378, showing the different elements of the scheme for parliamentary and construction purposes and estimating the total cost at £681,000.

See also SRO/RHP 49504
Wieland to Conacher, 19 September 1894

Watson to Conacher, 7 September 1894

The Scotsman, 25 October 1894

'Fact', The Scotsman, 13, 19 and 24 September 1894

Invernessian', The Scotsman, 18 September 1894

keyd's, Strang & Girvan, Glasgow, to Innes & Mackay, Inverness, 19 June 1896

(In this exchange between the two law firms acting for the promoters of the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway, it was suggested that The Mackintosh and other proprietors at odds with the Highland Railway over the Aviemore line could be won over to the Great Glen scheme.)

'Observer', The Scotsman, 10 September 1894

'Fact'. The Scotsman, 13 September 1894

Invernessian', The Scotsman, 18 September 1894

'Pro Bono Publico', The Scotsman, 24 September 1894

Reports of the campaign by Charles Innes (Innes & MacKay) to win support in the Great Glen for the West Highland Railway's Inverness Extension (press cuttings)

Reports of speeches by Innes at Glen Urquhart and Glen Moriston, 12 November 1894

The embattled positions adopted by the autumn of 1894 are well summed up in the Aberdeen Free Press, 15 September 1894

Cameron of Lochiel to Conacher, 29 January 1895, with Memorandum on the Great Glen

The Memorandum enlarged on Lochiel's objections to the West Highland Railway Inverness Extension. It is clear that his argument dated from September 1894

Lochiel to Tweeddale

The detailed figures appear in the subsequent Memorandum. See Note 39 above

Tweeddale to Conacher, 17 September 1894

Tweeddale outlined how he had responded to Lochiel.

For Falshaw's anomalous position during the parliamentary contest over the Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, see Highland Railway Minutes, 6 February 1883 SRO/BR/HR1/1/4

For Tweeddale's election as director of the Highland Company, see Highland Railway Minutes, 5 September and 3 October 1888 SRO/BR/HR1/1/6

Tweeddale to Aeneas MacKintosh of Raigmore

MacKintosh to Tweeddale, 6 December 1894

MacKintosh to Tweeddale, 3 January 1895

The Scotsman, 6 December 1894

Glasgow Herald, 3 January 1895
Glasgow Herald, 18 January 1895
SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4
Forman to Conacher, 8 January 1895

Glasgow Herald, 7 December 1894

The Despatch, 12 December 1894

SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Tweeddale to MacKintosh, 19 December 1894
MacKintosh to Tweeddale, 20 December 1894

SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Memorandum re the Highland Railway - North British Railway - West Highland Railway conference, undated

SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Renewed Great Glen Agreement, signed by George MacPherson-Grant for the Highland Railway, Lochiel for the West Highland Railway and Tweeddale for the North British Railway
See also Charles Steel, General Manager of the Highland Railway*, Evidence, Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, Lords, 11 May 1896 SRO/BR/PYB(SY)/1/386
*Successor to Dougall, who had combined the roles of Secretary and Manager.

Glasgow Herald, 7 December 1894

SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4
Parliamentary Notice for Callander & Oban Railway, Ballachulish, Fort William & Banavie Extension, Bill, 1894-5
See also Great Glen Railway Bills, 1894-5 SRO/BR/PYB(SY)/1/378, showing the different elements of the scheme for parliamentary and construction purposes and estimating the total cost at £431,000.
See also SRO/RHP 46443

Oban Times, 22 September 1894

SRO/BR/PYB(SY)/1/378
SRO/RHP 46443

SRO/BR/PYB(SY)/1/378
Callander & Oban Railway, Ballachulish, Fort William & Banavie, Bill, 1894-5, Preamble and Clauses 27-33 (Great Glen Bills)

SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4
Conacher to James Thompson, General Manager of the Caledonian Railway, 22 November 1894
Thompson to Conacher, 28 November 1894

SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4
Conacher to Thompson
See also Conacher to Thompson, 28 and 31 December 1894 and 2 January 1895, and Thompson to Conacher, 27 December 1894 and 2 January 1895

SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4
Watson to Conacher
See also the North British Railway’s submission to the arbiter (Lord Watson) under the New Lines Agreement (Peace Agreement) of 1891

SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4
Thompson to Conacher, 22 January 1895

Ibid.
64 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4
Conacher to Tweeddale, 23 January 1895
Conacher to Thompson, 25 January 1895

65 SRO/BR/PYB(SY1/378
Callander & Oban Railway, Ballachulish, Fort William & Banavie, Bill, 1894-5 (Great Glen Bills)
SRO/RHP 46443

66 Glasgow Herald, 9 February 1895

67 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4
Conacher to Thompson, 23 May 1895

68 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4
Thompson to Conacher, 11 June and 2 and 8 July 1895
J. Parker-Smith M.P., director of the North British Railway, to Conacher, 11 July 1895
Conacher to Parker-Smith, 12 July 1895

69 J. Thomas, The Callander and Oban Railway, pages 122-6
See also Callander & Oban Railway, Ballachulish Extension, Bill, 1895-6 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1/380

70 SRO/BR/PYB(SY1/385
West Highland Railway, Balluchulish Extension, Bill, 1895-6

71 SRO/BR/PYB(SY1/380 and 385

72 SRO/BR/PYB(SY1/394
Callander & Oban Railway Bill, 1896-7

73 For the background to the West Highland Company’s Ballachulish promotion of 1895-6, see:-
B. H. Blyth, consulting engineer for the North British Railway, to Conacher, 6 August 1895
SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4
William Arnott, District Superintendent, Fort William, North British Railway, to Conacher, 24 September 1895
SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Conacher to Forman, 25 October 1895
Arnott to Conacher, 11 and 23 November 1895
For Parliamentary Notices (press cuttings) of both Ballachulish schemes (Callander & Oban and West Highland), November 1895, see SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4
See also Conacher to MacDougall, 5 March 1896 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6, and MacRae, Flett & Rennie, agents for the West Highland Railway, to Conacher, 1 May 1896 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/4

74 SRO/BR/PYB(SY1/180
Conacher’s notes on Bills of 1895-6 affecting the North British Railway
SRO/BR/PYB(SY1/394
Speeches by counsel, Callander & Oban Railway Bill, Lords, 5 July 1897

75 For the unsuccessful attempt to extend these powers in the North British Railway Bill of 1900-1, see
Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Minutes SRO/BR/IFA/1/2
(The Invergarry & Fort Augustus directors opposed their extension as a bargaining device in negotiations for an agreement whereby the North British would work the Fort Augustus line.)

76 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Press cuttings of November 1895, sent to Conacher by Arnott. (Probably Oban Times)

77 Evening News, 13 September 1894
Glasgow Herald, 7 December 1894

78 Evening News, 13 September 1894

79 SRO/BR/NBR/1/40
North British Railway Minutes, 20 December 1894
Wieland to Conacher, 4 October 1895
Conacher to Wieland, 5 October 1895
Conacher to Arnott, 5 October 1895

Parliamentary Notice (press cuttings) for Great North of Scotland Railway Bill of 1894-5, seeking running powers to Inverness
See also Tweeddale to MacKintosh, 3 December 1894 SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6

Wieland to Conacher, 13 October 1895
See also Amott to Conacher, 57 and 8 October 1895, reporting on Forman's activities

Amott to Conacher, 5 October 1895

Speech by counsel, Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, Commons, 25 July 1895
Reports of Charles Innes's campaign in the Great Glen, press cuttings
See also Note 36 above.

George Malcolm, Evidence, Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, Lords, 7 May 1895

Brief for the Promoters, Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway, 1895-6, Lords
Malcolm, Evidence, Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, Lords, 7 May 1895
Forman, Evidence, Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, Lords, 8 May 1895

For general background to the promotion of the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway, see Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Letter books, 1895-1914 SRO/BR/IFA/4/1-12
See also Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Minutes, 1896-1910 SRO/BR/IFA/1/1-3

Reports of a public meeting at Fort Augustus, in support of the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway, Inverness Extension, Bill, (? ) October 1896 (press cuttings) SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
On this occasion Innes gave a lengthy review of his involvement in the successive Great Glen promotions of 1893-6

Correspondence relating to negotiations with the Highland Railway and with the North British Railway after the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway obtained its Act
The correspondence appears intermittently from September 1896 to March 1897. Some particular references appear below.
Keydens, Strang & Girvan had been agents for the Strathendrick & Aberfoyle Railway and were no strangers to such negotiations.

Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, 1895-6, Preamble and Clauses 49 and 50

Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, 1895-6, Petition Against by the West Highland Railway, Lords
SRO/BR/PYB(SYI/386
Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, 1895-6, Petition Against by the West Highland Railway, Lords
See also combined Petition Against by the North British Railway and the West Highland Railway, Commons

SRO/BR/PYB(SYI/386
Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, 1895-6, Petition Against by the North British Railway, Lords
See also combined Petition Against by the North British Railway and the West Highland Railway, Commons

SRO/BR/PYB(SYI/386
Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, 1895-6, combined Petition Against by the North British Railway and the West Highland Railway

Ibid.

SRO/BR/PYB(SYI/386
Steel, Evidence, Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, Lords, 11 May 1896

SRO/BR/PYB(SYI/386
Speech by counsel, Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, Commons, 25 July 1896

SRO/BR/PYB(SYI/386
Speech by counsel, Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, Lords, 7 May 1896

SRO/BR/PYB(SYI/386
Malcolm, Evidence, Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, Lords, 7 May 1896

SRO/BR/PYB(SYI/386
Steel, Evidence, Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, Lords, 8 May 1896, and Commons, 24 July 1896

SRO/BR/PYB(SYI/386
Steel, Evidence, Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, Lords, 11 May 1896

SRO/BR/PYB(SYI/386
Conacher, Evidence, Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, Commons, 27 and 28 July 1896.
See also Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, 1895-6, combined Petition Against by the North British Railway and the West Highland Railway, Commons

SRO/BR/PYB(SYI/386
Forman, Evidence, Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, Commons, 24 July 1896

J. Thomas, *The West Highland Railway*, pages 110-1
J. McGregor, *100 Years of the West Highland Railway*, page 48

SRO/BR/NBR/8/1764/6
Malcolm to Conacher, 17 August and 15 September 1896
Conacher to Malcolm, 4 September 1896
SRO/BR/CAL/1/152
Forman, Memorandum on meeting with Steel, 10 September 1896
SRO/BR/IFA/4/1
Keydens, Strang & Girvan to Malcolm, 14 September 1896

J. Strang-Watkins to J. Kennedy, Parliamentary Agent*, 16 September 1896
*Kennedy was employed by Dumford & Co. and intimately involved with the West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill and the complementary Treasury Guarantee Bill during 1893-6. See Chapter 7. For the Invergarry & Fort Augustus promoters Kennedy appears to have acted on his own account.
Keydens, Strang & Girvan to Innes & MacKay, 4 December 1896
See also:-
Glasgow Herald, 3 September 1896

Keydens, Strang & Girvan to Malcolm, 25 September, 20 October and 4 November 1896
Keydens, Strang & Girvan to Lord Burton, 15 October 1896
Keydens, Strang & Girvan to Innes, 27 and 30 October 1896
For contact between the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway and the Great North of Scotland Railway, see Keydens, Strang & Girvan to Innes and MacKay, 19 November 1896; and Keydens, Strang & Girvan to Kennedy, 23 November 1896
For allegations that the Invergarry & Fort Augustus promoters had sought Great North support in 1895-6 and that Forman had urged the Great North to promote a Great Glen line. B. H. Blyth, consulting engineer of the North British Railway, Evidence, Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, Commons, 27 July 1896 SRO/BR/PYB(S)/386

Locomotive to Wieland, 28 December 1896

Reports of a public meeting at Fort Augustus, in support of the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway, Inverness Extension, Bill, (?) October 1896, press cuttings
Innes rebutted these and other charges.

Forman, Memorandum on meeting with Steel

Keydens, Strang & Girvan to Malcolm, 20 October 1896
Keydens, Strang & Girvan to Innes
See also Forman, Memorandum of meeting with Steel, 10 September 1896 SRO/BR/CAL/1/152

West Highland Railway Minutes, 22 October 1896 and 5 February 1897
Wieland to Conacher, 28 October 1896
Terms for a joint promotion, imposed on the West Highland Company, November 1896

Lochiel to Wieland, 28 December 1896
See also West Highland Railway Minutes, 22 October 1896 SRO/BR/WEH/1/1

J. Thomas, The West Highland Railway, pages 110-1
J. McGregor, 100 Years of the West Highland Railway, page 48

Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Minutes, 19 February 1897

Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Minutes, 6 December 1900, 10 January, 21 February and 6 June 1901 and 25 June 1902
Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Minutes, 30 June and 10 October 1903

Burton to the Earl of Dalkeith, Chairman of the North British Railway, 30 November 1906
William Whitelaw, Chairman of the Highland Railway, to Dalkeith, 1 January 1907
Agreement between the North British Railway and the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway, March 1907

Callander & Oban Railway Bill, 1896-7
See also SRO/BR/MPS(S)/2/50
121 SRO/B/PYB(S)/1/394
Callander & Oban Railway Bill, 1896-7, Petition Against by the West Highland Railway.

122 Ibid.

123 SRO/B/PYB(S)/1/394
Duke of Argyll, Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway Bill, Commons, 31 March 1897.

124 SRO/B/PYB(S)/1/394
Callander & Oban Railway Bill, 1896-7, Petition Against by the West Highland Railway.

125 SRO/B/PYB(S)/1/394
John Anderson, Secretary of the Callander & Oban Railway, Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway Bill, Commons, 30 March 1897.

126 SRO/B/PYB(S)/1/394
Callander & Oban Railway Bill, 1896-7, Petition Against by the West Highland Railway.

127 SRO/B/M1/9/15
Loch Fyne Light Railway.
See also West Highland Railway Minutes, 13 January 1898 and 10 January 1900 SRO/B/WEH/1/1.

128 SRO/B/PYB(S)/1/394
Lord Malcolm of Poltalloch, Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway Bill, Commons, 26 March 1897.

129 Ibid.

130 Duke of Argyll, Evidence, and Marquess of Lorne, Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway Bill, 31 March 1897.

131 SRO/B/PYB(S)/1/394
Marquess of Lorne, Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway Bill, Commons, 31 March 1897.

132 SRO/B/PYB(S)/1/394
Forman, Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway Bill, Commons, 2 April 1897.
(Forman gave his opinion during examination on the section of the Bill covering increased railway facilities at Oban harbour.)

133 Marquess of Breadalbane, The Scotsman, 19 September 1896.

134 SRO/B/PYB(S)/1/394
George Malcolm, Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway Bill, Commons, 30 March 1897.

135 SRO/B/PYB(S)/1/394
For fish traffic see:-
John Melville, Officer of the Scottish Fishery Board at Ardrishaig; James Alexander, fish salesman, Glasgow; Duncan Strang, director of the Argyll and Bute Fishermen's Association; John MacKenna, likewise a director; John Dewar, fisherman and fish buyer; and Neil MacNab, spokesman for the fishermen of Minard: Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway Bill, Commons, 29 and 30 March 1897.

136 SRO/B/PYB(S)/1/394
Blyth, Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway Bill, Commons, 30 March 1897.

137 SRO/B/PYB(S)/1/394
John MacLeod of Kintyre, Deputy-Lieutenant of Argyll, Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway Bill, Commons, 29 March 1897.

138 SRO/B/PYB(S)/1/394
Anderson, Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway Bill, Commons, 30 March 1897.

139 SRO/B/PYB(S)/1/394
George Malcolm, Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway Bill, Commons, 30 March 1897.
Lord Malcolm, as Convener of Argyll County Council, was questioned by the Committee about the Council's plans for light railways. See also D. N. Nicol M.P., Evidence, Callander & Oban Railway Bill, Commons, 26 March 1897. Nicol testified that the local landowners had been unable to persuade the North British Railway to support a conventional branch line from Ardlui or Arrochar & Tarbet to Inveraray. This being so, the Dalmally - Inveraray line was the best stem for future development of light lines.
Chapter 9

The Mallaig Extension and the Treasury Guarantee, 1901-14
Chapter 9

Where Chapter 4 ranges over the hopes invested in the West Highland promotion of 1888-9, this Chapter offers a narrower picture of the West Highland Mallaig Extension. It examines fish traffic via Mallaig in the period 1901-14, with a postscript on the Treasury Guarantee. Neither Chapter 4 nor Chapter 9 pretends to cover all the social and economic themes identified in Chapter 1. The record of the Mallaig Extension, like the record of the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway, is rich and diverse; this material has been sparingly deployed.

In 1888-9, when Tweeddale and Walker committed the North British Company to Forman’s West Highland scheme, there was no Great Glen Agreement and no New Lines Agreement. It was possible that the North British, by taking over the Glasgow & South Western Railway, would dominate Scotland and re-order the established Anglo-Scottish rail routes. The evidence suggests that, in taking up the West Highland, Walker’s main aim was to secure the North British position north-of-Clyde, to which end the West Highland promotion was more promising than the Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan. Walker insisted that the West Highland would serve a largely undeveloped region, with little or no injury to existing lines; but he happily anticipated the opportunities which might open to the North British if the West Highland succeeded. Walker’s strategic vision certainly included Oban and may have included Inverness. He regarded an extension to Roshven or Mallaig as a possibility, for which state assistance might be obtained at a later date.

From 1892 Tweeddale and Conacher took a more down-to-earth view. They sought to define the territory to which the West Highland Company might lay claim. Conflicts were inevitable, as Chapter 8 has shown; but Walker’s wider ambitions could be jettisoned - and with them the possibility of an integrated railway network in the Scottish Highlands. For Conacher the West Highland Mallaig Extension was essential, at the right price; he was determined that the contributory traffic of the Mallaig line should be exclusively North British. In return the North British Company was ready to respect the territories of the Highland Railway and the Callander & Oban. Policy sometimes wavered. In 1894-5 and again in 1896-7, it seemed that the North British would become thoroughly entangled in the Great Glen. This can be explained by the divisions which beset the North British board. Before the Mallaig Extension was ready, first Tweeddale and then Conacher had been overthrown. Wieland found his way to the chairmanship, but a Wieland now bent on retrenchment, which the new General Manager, William Jackson, pursued as...
Construction of the Mallaig Extension began in January, 1897. Robert McAlpine & Sons built the line to the plans of Simpson & Wilson, as these had emerged from Parliament in 1894. Opening, with almost no ceremony, came on 1 April, 1901. The West Highland timetable now provided a Glasgow - Mallaig service. Local trains between Fort William and Mallaig, to which through coaches were attached, consisted of traditional, rigid-wheelbase vehicles. District Superintendent George Innes was instructed to deploy no more passenger rolling stock than traffic justified. One goods train daily handled all general traffic west of Fort William, including cured fish. Mixed trains were sometimes sufficient. Fresh (or "sprinkled") fish needed special trains when landings were heavy; wagon loads were routinely added to regular passenger trains, with smaller consignments loaded in the passenger brake vans. The North British continued to rely on open wagons and even horse-boxes for West Highland fish traffic. Every fishing season saw a round-up of spare horse-boxes all over the North British system. The Wieland regime made for 'short-term'ism. The passenger platform at Mallaig, surfaced with cheap riddled slag, made it difficult to manhandle barrows of boxed fish to the trains. Innes had to justify the smallest expenditure. ("The sales platform and offices cost about £248 and the barrel storage shed under £100, and from these we are now drawing ... £25 to £30 per annum, which should cover a considerable extension.") That more ought to be done, that the North British would not do more, became a familiar refrain.

In the Islands, complaint fastened on the steamer service. MacBrayne's vessels now gave Skye and Lewis connections at Mallaig, in addition to the connections offered at Kyle of Lochalsh since 1897. A petition from Broadford claimed that this blighted the promise of the West Highland route while diminishing the value of the Dingwall & Skye route; mail, newspapers and parcels, which might have arrived four hours earlier, would now arrive an hour later. The petitioners remembered that the new railway was to turn crofters dabbling in fishing into professional fishermen. ("(The) fresh market keeps up the price of ... herrings, our chief occupation, and ... unless the Government forces the (Company) to give fast communication, we shall be inclined to ... divert ... to the land.") South Uist fishermen had expected a daily steamer direct to Mallaig. The Fleetwood syndicate urged the North British to consider how a single vessel running daily between Stornoway and Mallaig could replace the three which they chartered each season. Angus Cameron, the Fort William auctioneer and cattle dealer, reminded Jackson that the livestock trade needed a seasonal service to Canna, Rhum, Barra and the Uists. To all appeals from
Long Island, Jackson replied in terms suggesting that the remedy lay with the Post Office. ("I fear that no boat which did not enjoy the ... Mail subsidy could be made remunerative.") Operating from Mallaig rather than Oban, the Castlebay-and-Lochboisdale mail steamer could run daily rather than thrice weekly.[11]

Neither the North British Railway nor the West Highland had powers to run steamers out of Mallaig. But they could charter, as the Highland Company and the Callander & Oban did.[12] MacBrayne's mail schedules and charges for boxed fish roused much discontent, and MacBrayne's passenger fares, which the North British could not control, made the West Highland service to Portree and Stornoway relatively unattractive.[13] In 1902-3 M.P.s J.Dewar (Inverness-shire) and J.Weir (Ross & Cromarty) suggested that the Highland Railway and the North British give joint support to a new Stornoway steamer in competition with MacBrayne.[14] Jackson was wary.

(We) should not absolutely refuse ... (I) have no doubt the Highland Company will be willing in the event of a steamer running to Kyle only to give some subsidy to the Owners ... (We) might be compelled for the protection of our ... interests to do something...[15]

Dewar was to be handled carefully; for he also wanted a halt at Lochnanuamh and he had negotiated for assistance from the Congested Districts Board.[16] The background appears in Dewar's correspondence with the parish priest of Arisaig.

(A) railway siding was petitioned for by the inhabitants when they were called upon to furnish evidence (for) the Mallaig line, and it had always been a great grievance. ... The station at Lochailort ... is practically useless for them, as the entrance ... for sailing boats is most dangerous and the station is fully a mile from any landing stage and transport ... very difficult to procure. (The) East Coast boats land ... at Mallaig whereas if there was a siding ... they would make for (Lochnanuamh) as quite near to the fishing banks. The local crews, not having such powerful boats, can command no market, and are obliged to home cure their takes.[17]

Father MacDonald echoed old arguments over Roshven and Mallaig; expert opinion notwithstanding, some feeling persisted that Lochnanuamh made a better anchorage than either of the disputed harbours. And once again it was alleged that the West Highland Company had broken their promises. But the east coast boats set the pace and, as Innes put it, the boats "must go where the buyers are, viz, Mallaig".[18] Dewar noted that "the opening of the Line has really been a disadvantage", since the curers' steamers no longer visited the sea lochs.[19] As the Lothian Commission had discovered, little communities all along the west coast thought to find salvation in local piers and jetties. Now there was a similar faith in local sidings.
The priest argued that no intermediate station on the Mallaig Extension paid its way. Would one more be so very burdensome, when it helped crofter-fishermen to help themselves? Innes saw things differently. General traffic booked at Lochailort averaged 8 cwt per week and the Mallaig herring boats recorded only an occasional shoal in Loch nanuamh, with white fish good but scanty. (The) people are poor and cannot make much use of the railway. They do not send their catches away not knowing how to go about it, and it is necessary for buyers to be there, which is out of all reason with such a trifling fishing. I do not see that there is anything in the district to develop.

By implication, Innes endorsed Lord Abinger’s aside in 1889 (cited in Chapter 1). The railway brought betterment for those who could take advantage of it, but only by confirming conditions in which the surplus population must move away. These sentiments could not be put too bluntly. Dewar had obtained what he considered “a liberal grant”. Nicholson of Arisaig would give land free and local people would clear the site. A platform and siding were designed and costed. But Nicholson was persuaded that the crofter-fishermen of Loch nanuamh might use Beasdale, where the ‘private’ designation was never strictly upheld.

Mallaig became notoriously a shanty town, where the new hotel and railwaymen’s tenement contrasted with the curing sheds and fishermen’s huts clustered round the rocky bay. The water supply could not meet the combined demand of railway, harbour and households. In extreme conditions water was brought in Fort William in improvised tanker wagons. Intervention by the public health authorities came in 1911. There was little prospect of a planned village, on Loch Nevis or inland towards Morar, set apart from the working harbour. The West Highland Company, having taken more land than originally estimated for station, sidings and loco-shed but less for pier and wharfs (in total some 37 acres of the 41 granted by Lord Lovat), sought to let what remained to fishermen and curers. Lovat’s agents insisted on the strict terms of his gift, Lovat himself being on service in the Boer War. Mediation by the Scottish Fishery Board was unavailing. Development remained haphazard, and responsibility for improvement at Mallaig was undefined. Lovat’s factor, Inverness-shire County Council and the North British Company (which finally absorbed the West Highland in 1908) eventually sought an agreement whereby funds could be released by the Congested Districts Board.

The limitations of Mallaig bay, though exaggerated by opponents of the Mallaig Extension, were severe. Until the pier-cum-breakwater was lengthened, MacBrayne’s steamers could not enter safely.
in certain conditions of wind and tide. Ferrying was improvised. The anchorage suffered, as had been predicted, from a northerly fetch. When gales threatened, boats moved to Loch Nevis or, caught at sea, ran there rather than try to make Mallaig. The inner fishing wharf was hazardous for boats of larger draught; at the main pier these boats obstructed the mail steamers. Coaling interfered with the discharge of fish. On the sales platform, herring brine contaminated white fish. Extending the inner wharf into the bay was not the answer, unless they could be widened in proportion to length: more boats could tie up, but there was relatively less space for unloading. Moreover, lengthening the wharf would take it beyond the protection of the pier. As suggested in Chapter 5, the fish traffic which developed at Mallaig was more intricate than the projections of the 1880s had allowed. As well as the local fleet, with a radius embracing Loch Hourn, the south-west coast of Skye and the Small Isles, there were east coast boats and steamers on charter. As steam drifters and trawlers multiplied, free to run to any railhead, quick discharge and quick coaling became the key requirements. Mallaig, with its central position, was potentially the beneficiary of these changes - if the harbour and its facilities were extended. This was not unforeseen. But change came rapidly. It would have been impossible to open up debate before the Treasury Guarantee for Mallaig was secure, without rousing fresh complaints by the Highland Railway and the Callander & Oban. It had been stressed that Mallaig would generate its own traffic. What this might mean in the longer run had not been clearly addressed.

J.M. Davidson, fish merchant and curer, whose business in Aberdeen and Glasgow gave him weight, appointed himself spokesman of the fishing interest at Mallaig. He pressed Jackson to look ahead. The West Highland route could command the west coast. At Fleetwood the Lancashire & Yorkshire Company had “all the place to themselves the same as you have at Mallaig”; investment was geared to the trawlers. With increased capacity, Mallaig would attract the trawlers running to Aberdeen. Davidson’s advocacy recalled the evidence of W. Anderson-Smith, the Scottish Fishery Board’s expert. In 1889 Anderson-Smith emphatically backed Roshven, as he had earlier backed the Glasgow & North Western promoters and their Arisaig branch; but in 1894 he opposed Mallaig, as unable to provide for longer range trawling which had become the best hope of the west coast fishery. Davidson mingled grievances and warnings. When Mallaig was crowded and boats forced to discharge at the pier, the sidings and travelling cranes shut in his horse-and-cart; he had been put to the expense of hiring extra men. The North British should beware, that boats and buyers did not give up Mallaig for Oban. And Davidson enlisted all possible allies, including Sir John Stirling-Maxwell.
The herring fishing...has been fair...We have had daily...special trains...forby the ordinary train with kipper etc. Last Thursday...the harbour was blocked. (The) lack of...nursing the fishing by increased accommodation...is spoiling us. I trust you will again kindly use your influence...

By 1910 Kyle of Lochalsh and Mallaig stood on roughly equal terms; and the North British continued to obtain a modest share of Kyle fish traffic via Perth and Inverness besides West Highland traffic. Oban was a different story. Anderson's earlier efforts to win fish traffic had been disappointing. In the parliamentary battles over Roshven and Mallaig, Anderson and Thompson had claimed that there was no more fish to be found, while the West Highland promoters promised to develop fishing north of Ardnamurchan, for which Oban was too remote. But the Callander & Oban Company had persisted with chartered vessels in the herring seasons, and now drifters and trawlers readily ran to Oban. All fish traffic via Oban was exclusively Caledonian; and the Caledonian was ready to invest in a bigger pier, kippering houses and covered vans dedicated to fish trains. The Caledonian also campaigned to attract buyers to Oban. Davidson was approached; he claimed to have lost money by staying loyal to Mallaig.

I had a big lot of herrings but...lost my trains...(There) are so many White Fish...there is no room to land (and) boats...had to run to other ports. (You) will simply allow the trade to go past you. Once the boats get accustomed running to Oban you can say goodbye to half your traffic.

That the fishermen's colony at Mallaig lay under threat of a public health clearance order played into Caledonian hands. The migrant fish workers had no other lodgings. ("They) fear there will be no place...for them. (Rumours) are current in the Glasgow Fish Market...

Jackson instructed his departmental officers to make the best of Mallaig without further investment on any lavish scale. What this meant is well summed up in a report prepared by the North British Company's Glasgow District Superintendent early in 1913.

(Snow) storms...blocked the West Highland Line on three occasions this month (and) caused very late arrivals in the London market...Work is carried on in ordinary circumstances expeditiously, but when the weather is stormy, the staff...work under very trying conditions. (The) London buyers, (knowing) the way things are done at Hull, Grimsby and other ports, cannot understand why the greater part of Mallaig should not be covered in...yesterday) the storm...was so severe that one could not stand out on the fish-table for half an hour...In ordinary circumstances, a fairly correct estimate can be made...when a special will be started. Yesterday, we thought it would (be) between 3.00 and 4.00 (but) it was actually 7.45... (The) stamina of the men is not of the very best, while they are not clad to withstand the elements. All the labour is...casual, just what can be picked up in the district,...mainly crofters and others who can get some little
work during the Summer ... as ghillies and beaters. Even though there were housing, we could not
get men ... from Glasgow unless at ... very high ... wages.. [40]

From 1905, with the Earl of Dalkeith as Chairman, the North British Railway faced much needed
capital spending, though something of Wieland's erratic parsimony endured for the rest of the Company's
independent existence.[41] Comprehensive improvement at Mallaig demanded an outer breakwater, in-
creasing the sheltered area and allowing separate provision for conflicting activities. The combined pier
and breakwater, which Simpson had finally agreed with Admiral Nares and which owed something to
Forman's plans for Roshven, had turned out a dubious economy.[42] The new breakwater, with additional
wharfs and jetties and an extension to the original wharf, would cost between £78,000 and £92,000.[43]
In June, 1909 a committee of North British directors (including Simpson, who had been elected to the
board) visited Mallaig. A petition urging long term investment followed them back to Edinburgh.[44]

Dalkeith and his directors were ready to provide additional sidings and other railway facilities. The
Government must finance the new breakwater. Public works of this kind would do more good, said
Dalkeith, in a private letter, than the Liberals' “paupering” social legislation.[45] There was no satisfying
the fishing trade. Davidson and his fellows might reflect that the periods of overwhelming pressure at
Mallaig meant unbalanced workings and light engine mileage and that over any given year the West
Highland route did not pay.[46] The new Cameron of Lochiel (who succeeded in 1905), visiting Mallaig as
a county councillor, found the harbour “like Picadilly”.[47] Dalkeith (who was a relative) replied that con-
gestion at Mallaig was no indication of a regularly profitable fish traffic; landowners whose rentals had
been augmented by the West Highland Railway forgot, like the fishing interest, that North British share-
holders were sustaining a loss-making route.[48] In this tetchy correspondence Dalkeith succinctly stated
the North British position.

The real fault was in ever making the line or harbour ... as Mallaig is far too exposed. The Govern-
ment should build a really good breakwater ..., and ... the N.B. would supply sufficient accommo-
dation.[49]

Without state assistance, Mallaig would not be enlarged. The local fishermen at Mallaig and their buyers
demanded priority over chartered steamers. District Superintendent Christie would not exclude the Stor-
noway charter vessels. It was defeatist to “put an embargo on ... traffic which is offering, and which ... we
have made every endeavour to secure”.[50] Christie’s superior disagreed.
(It) is a question whether the local traffic can be dealt with along with the Stornoway fish and... there will be nothing else for it but to prevent the traffic from Stornoway being discharged... The accommodation at Mallaig is utterly inadequate.\[51\]

In this impasse, Jackson began cautiously to pursue the possibility of a west coast fish traffic pool.

When the Mallaig Extension opened in 1901, the West Highland Company was entitled to claim six-monthly ‘top up’ payments from the Treasury, under the Guarantee Act of 1896. No procedure for doing so had been settled. The North British Company held that it was Parliament’s clear intention to give the Mallaig line both direct Treasury support and the indirect benefit of a reduced rating assessment. As Chapters 6 and 7 have explained, the Treasury had conceded that imperial taxation in the form of railway duty and local taxation in the form of various rates should be a first charge on revenue, the balance being divided equally between the state and the North British Railway. The West Highland Mallaig Extension Act (1894) declared that land taken for the Mallaig line should be valued as ‘unimproved’ in perpetuity. The Railway Assessor for Scotland warned the Scottish Office that the relevant clauses were defective, and suggested that appropriate clauses be inserted in the subsequent Guarantee Bill. In 1901 the Assessor was still of the opinion that he had “no power to enter the restricted value provided for in ... the Guarantee Act”.\[52\] To obtain a remedy, the West Highland Company brought an action of Declarator against the County Councils of Argyll and Inverness-shire, the parish councils of Kilmallie, Arisaig & Moidart and Glenelg, Lochaber district committee, the County Assessors and the Railway Assessor.\[53\]

The case in some respects anticipated the general subsidy of the railway industry by ‘de-rating’, which became government policy in the 1930s. The real protagonists were the North British Railway and Inverness-shire County Council. (Argyll was drawn in on a technicality). The County Council was divided. Some councillors argued that it was senseless to “ill treat” the North British. The West Highland route could not be developed without North British goodwill.\[54\] Others, like George Malcolm of Invergarry, were soured by what they considered bad faith, as earlier Chapters have shown. During 1901-3, when the rating dispute was deadlocked, the North British Company refused to agree more generous terms for working the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway and then opposed the working agreement offered by the Highland Railway - which scarcely made for better relations between the North British and the County Council.\[55\] The North British had grievances too: the reproachful letters and petitions calling for
better steamer connections at Mallaig was encouraged by County Councillors.\textsuperscript{[56]}

From 1902, the half-yearly payments under the Guarantee became routine, as did the annual Board of Trade inspections prescribed by the Guarantee Act. The latter not only illuminate the working of the West Highland route, they also reveal how the inspector’s visits offered a channel to government. The Railway Department of the Board of Trade had always functioned in this way; but the regular Mallaig inspections of 1901-14 gave the North British Company a special advantage, when major railway legislation was so clearly only a matter of time.\textsuperscript{[57]}

In the period to 1914, working expenses were never less than £13,000 per annum and usually exceeded £15,000. General maintenance and engineering accounted for some £7,000 in the average year, locomotive power some £4,500. Both figures include wage bills. The gross receipts of the Mallaig Extension rose from £8,500 in 1901-2 to £13,300 in 1913-14. The Treasury ‘top up’ payments never exceeded £5,600 (in 1903-4) and declined to less than £2,000 after 1911-2. Summer traffic became profitable, but not sufficiently to offset the lean winter months.\textsuperscript{[58]} It will be remembered that the North British was bound to work the Mallaig line at 50% and to secure a dividend on the capital not covered by the Treasury Guarantee. The North British shareholders remained burdened. Local traffic was always meagre, and the uninformed both underestimated the cost of unbalanced fish specials and overestimated the extra traffic incidental to fishing. For May and June, 1908 Innes calculated that additional income attributable to a brisk early summer fishing was £225 from general merchandise and £125 from coal.\textsuperscript{[59]}

Dalkeith and Jackson had some hope of state assistance to enlarge Mallaig harbour. They had no hope of redrawing the Treasury Guarantee on any terms that the North British Company could accept. The Liberal Government’s attitude to the utterly impoverished Invergarry & Fort Augustus Company was not encouraging. When the North British withdrew from the working agreement of 1907, there was nothing to be done but dispose of the line for scrap. In 1913 Inverness-shire County Council, not the Scottish Office or the Treasury, found £5,000, which bridged the gap between the rock-bottom purchase price offered by the North British and the scrap value of track and equipment.\textsuperscript{[60]}

It was in this climate that Jackson began to investigate a west coast traffic pool, including Kyle of Lochalsh and Oban. Chapter 7 has noted how in 1894 the Highland Company had offered to pool the
fish traffic of Loch Hourn, Skye and Lewis. In 1902-3 the Highland Railway and the North British had been invited to offer a joint steamer service out of Mallaig and Kyle of Lochalsh. (Above). William Whitelaw, who succeeded Dalkeith as North British Chairman in 1912, may have prompted Jackson’s initiative. Like Tweeddale in the 1890s and Sir James Falshaw in the 1880s, Whitelaw straddled both Companies. As Chairman of the Highland, he approved withdrawal from the Great Glen, leaving the Invergarry & Fort Augustus to the North British. As Chairman of the North British, he oversaw the final purchase of the broken Fort Augustus Company. A policy of tying up the loose ends of the West Highland route was bound to include Mallaig.

The Great Glen Agreement (Ten Years Truce) and the New Lines Agreement (Peace Agreement), which have featured in earlier Chapters, were designed to limit new competitive promotions. The 1900s saw further moves towards limiting operational competition. The Clyde Coast Pool, embracing the Caledonian Railway, the Glasgow & South Western and the North British, is perhaps the best Scottish example. In like spirit the Highland Railway and the Great North of Scotland rationalised their services between Aberdeen and Inverness and gave serious thought to amalgamation. In England several mergers were proposed. But for the 1914-8 War, the Liberal Government, or their successors, would have been obliged to find a legislative framework to contain and direct amalgamations. Wartime Control supervened, and De-Control after 1919 led on to the Grouping of all the pre-1914 Companies into regional blocks. An all-Scotland Group was proposed but rejected. In the event Mallaig passed with the North British to the London & North Eastern Group, while the Highland Company’s Kyle of Lochalsh and Caledonian Oban were included in the London, Midland & Scottish Group. Jackson’s proposals thus become a reminder of what might have been.

Under the 1896 Guarantee Act, the North British Company was bound to send all possible traffic over the West Highland Mallaig Extension, maximising revenue and diluting the Treasury payments. Would the Treasury forbid a pool? Prior to 1913 all discussions with the Caledonian over Clyde Coast traffic, Perth traffic and other areas of competition had excluded the West Highland route “in view of (our) obligation.. to do all we can to secure traffic via (Mallaig)”! All pretence that the West Highland was independent ended in 1908. Jackson spoke directly for the North British.

My Directors have done ... all that is possible ..., without the construction on an expensive Breakwater and yet the (harbour) has been taxed to the limit ... to deal with the traffic offering.
An indirect approach through the Railway Department of the Board of Trade had brought reassurance that the Treasury would be “very likely to consider your proposition favourably”. Jackson was advised to set out the North British case “pretty fully in writing”. He wanted the Treasury to continue the Guarantee on the basis that any pooling agreement would include “protection” for the Mallaig route. On 2 April the Treasury indicated via the Board of Trade that the terms of any pool and the “probable financial effects” would have to be more fully explained. After 1914 preserving the Guarantee became irrelevant. Under Control receipts were fixed at 1913 levels, which meant fixed Treasury instalments. And De Control effectively extinguished the Treasury’s commitment, though it continued in form, as did the annual Board of Trade inspection, until 1931.

Jackson opened discussions with the Highland Company and with the Caledonian. Meanwhile the North British passenger department, goods department and accountant’s office all assessed the prospective west coast pool. Their efforts add up to a useful overview of the way in which fish traffic had developed after the completion of the West Highland Mallaig Extension.

Fast (i.e. passenger rate) fish traffic from Stornoway via Kyle of Llochalsh to Scottish destinations south of Perth, served by both the Caledonian and the North British, was already pooled; the two companies divided the proceeds of the through consignments which the Highland Railway handed over at Perth. Under the proposed west coast rearrangements, Stornoway traffic would sometimes be diverted from Mallaig to the Kyle-Inverness-Perth route, and caught up, to the advantage of the Caledonian Railway, in the existing south-of-Perth pool. Unless Oban was included in the new scheme, the Caledonian would be free to draw Stornoway traffic there at the expense of both Kyle and Mallaig. The Highland Railway and the North British, with or without the Caledonian, could try to rationalise the charter steamer traffic; but they could not control the independent fishermen or the “Stornoway senders”.

We cannot force the steamers ... to any particular port. The senders ... forward by the Mallaig and Kyle routes respectively for reasons of their own as, should any of them have a complaint ..., they immediately consign ... by the opposition route, and any agreement ... thirling the traffic to one route could not compel (them).

Traffic for England was not included in the south-of-Perth pool. The Caledonian Railway and the London & North Western secured most of the through fish traffic off the Highland Railway for the West Coast Anglo-Scottish route. The North British as Scottish partner in the East Coast and Midland routes...
received "comparatively little". Any traffic for England diverted from Mallaig to Kyle would be liable to end in West Coast hands. The East Coast Companies were sure to protest. Since revenue from Anglo-Scottish traffic was divided in proportion to route miles, it paid the North British to send as much English traffic as possible over the West Highland line. ("Our mileage from Mallaig to Berwick (East Coast) and from Mallaig to Carlisle (Midland) is very much in excess of the mileage from Perth"). Such calculations were not so compelling for the Caledonian in respect of traffic via Oban. The Callander & Oban route was sixty miles shorter than the West Highland, and the Caledonian had much the larger share of English traffic via Perth.

Any west coast pool would have to include all three Companies - Caledonian, Highland and North British. Unless the Callander & Oban route was regulated, the North British would be best advised to leave the West Highland unfettered. There was no suggestion that the Caledonian and the North British should reconsider exchanging traffic at Crianlarich, whereby Mallaig fish might be routed via Callander and Oban fish sent 'direct' to Glasgow. Though the pool would ease some of the pressure on Mallaig, it would also make for occasions when an even heavier traffic had to be despatched. Timetabling additional fish specials would be difficult without new passing places to break the longest sections (Ardlui - Crianlarich, Corrour - Tulloch and Banavie - Glenfinnan). Amalgamation of the Highland Railway and the Caledonian into the London Midland & Scottish Group subsequently underlined the disadvantages which Jackson's officers identified. Whether to invest in Mallaig and the West Highland route became the problem of the London & North Eastern Railway. [73]

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Chapter 9 Appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Receipts of Mallaig Extension</th>
<th>Treasury Payments</th>
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<tr>
<td>1901-2 £ 8,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>1902-3 £ 8,500</td>
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<td>1912-3 £12,100</td>
<td>£1,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913-4 £13,300</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 9

1. J. Thomas, *The North British Railway*, Volume 2, Chapter 8

2. SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/8
   George Innes, District Superintendent, Fort William, North British Railway, to William Jackson, General Manager of the North British Railway, 1 April 1901
   J. MacLellan, North British Railway Inspector, report on trains and traffic on the Mallaig Extension opening day

3. SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/3
   David Deuchars, North British Railway Superintendent of the Line, to Jackson, 25 March 1901
   Innes to Jackson, 24 April 1902

4. J. McGregor, *100 Years of the West Highland Railway*, Chapter 6

5. SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/5
   J. Bell, Engineer of the North British Railway, to Jackson, 28 January 1902
   Innes to Jackson, 4 February 1902

6. SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/5
   Innes to Jackson, 15 February 1905


8. SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/8
   Petition of the South Uist fishermen, forwarded to Jackson by J. Dewar M.P., June 1901

9. SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/8
   J. MacKenzie, Stornoway Fish Carrying Company (Fleetwood Company), to A.B. Robertson, District Superintendent, Dundee, North British Railway, 19 August 1900
   See also Deuchars to Jackson, 31 July 1900

10. SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/8
    Angus Cameron, Fort William, to Jackson, 28 March 1901

11. SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/8
    Jackson to South Uist fishermen, 19 June 1901
    SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/3
    Deuchars to Jackson, 27 April 1901

12. SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/8
    Highland Railway circular re rates for fish traffic by the S.S. 'Asia', chartered for the 1901 season
    J. Penman, North British Railway Inspector, Stornoway, to Deuchars, 7 March 1901
    Deuchars to Jackson, 16 March 1901.

13. SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/8
    MacKenzie to Robertson, 19 August 1900
    Deuchars to Jackson, 24 and 31 May 1901

14. SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/8
    J. Weir M.P. to George Wieland, Chairman of the North British Railway, 2 October 1902
    Wieland to Weir, 8 October 1902
    SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/4
    J. Dewar M.P. to Deuchars, 21 November 1902
    Jackson to Dewar, 27 November 1902

15. SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/8
    Jackson to Wieland, 7 October 1902
Dewar to Deuchars, 21 November 1902
Jackson to Dewar, 10 February 1903
Dewar to Jackson, 12 March 1903

Rev. Angus MacDonald to Dewar, 27 May 1903

Innes to Jackson, 26 June 1903

Dewar to Jackson, 12 March 1903

MacDonald to Dewar, 27 May 1903

Innes to Jackson, 26 June 1903

Dewar to Jackson, 12 March 1903

Plan of proposed halt at Lochmanuamh, Glasgow District Engineer, North British Railway, 29 December 1902
Scottish Office, Consulting Engineer’s Office, to Jackson, 19 June 1903, requesting details preliminary to any submission to the Congested Districts Board.
(The cost was estimated at £850, exclusive of access road: a goods siding with no passenger platform was costed at £219.)

Innes to Jackson, 26 June 1903

Haphazard development at Mallaig is well documented in the series SRO/BR/LNE/8/764, which embraces the Roshven scheme of 1888-9, the Loch Eil & Mallaig scheme, the West Highland Mallaig Extension and operation of the Mallaig route after 1901.

For example:
Innes to Jackson, 10 July 1901; “not a drop of water at Mallaig this morning” SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/3
Innes to Jackson, 14 November 1901; “Mallaig steam crane driver down with enteric fever” SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/4
Innes to Jackson, 15 February 1905; congestion and complaints from fishermen and fish salesmen, tidal scour no longer sufficient to keep the harbour clean SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/5
Bell to Jackson, 26 April 1909; desirable to separate kippering sheds from the fishermen’s huts. 150 “female curers” expected in early May when “the question of sanitary accommodation” must be addressed. Ibid
R. Andrew (Goods Manager of the North British Railway) to Jackson, 7 May 1909; permanent housing for the fishing community the only answer. Ibid

Report on Mallaig Fishermen’s Huts, Local Government Board, Edinburgh, 7 July 1911

James Purves of Kingburgh, Portree, to J. Cathles, Secretary of the North British Railway, 2 May 1901
See also Purves’s letter in Northern Ensign, 23 April 1901
Purves had welcomed the Lothian Commission and continued to campaign for new railheads on the west coast, each with its model village.

Innes to Jackson, 21 December 1900, detailing applications for sites at Mallaig
MacDonald and Graham, Inverness, agents for Lord Lovat, to the Secretary of the Fishery Board for Scotland, 20 April 1901
This included a copy of an earlier letter from the West Highland Company, seeking clarification of Lovat’s original grant.

29 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/6
T.M. Cruickshank, Lovat estate office, Beauly, to Jackson, 19 February 1910
William Whitelaw, Chairman of the North British Railway, to Jackson, 16 September 1910
Sir John Stirling-Maxwell to Jackson, 31 October 1910
(Sirling-Maxwell owned an Arisaig property, besides Corrour forest treated in Chapters 3 and 4. He negotiated with Lovat on behalf of the North British Company.)
Lochaber District Committee to Cathles, giving six months notice of summary action, 26 April 1911

30 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/4
Report to Jackson on the bad impression created by ferrying at Mallaig, 18 July 1904
SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/5
David MacBrayne Ltd. to Innes, complaining that the mail steamer ‘Clansman’ had grounded at Mallaig, 10 February 1906
J.M. Davidson, fish merchant, to Jackson, urging action to relieve congestion at Mallaig, 19 May 1909
SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/7
C. Brown, Engineer of the North British Railway, to Jackson, explaining that the inner wharf at Mallaig could not be extended, 15 June 1910
John Christie, District Superintendent, Glasgow, North British Railway, to Deuchars, reporting white fish spoiled by herring brine, 26 January 1911
For a comprehensive review of Mallaig’s limitations during the twenty years after 1901, see the various reports and memoranda prepared for the board and senior management of the newly formed London and North Eastern Railway in 1923
See also Note 73 below.

31 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/5
Davidson to Jackson, 4 December 1908

32 SRO/BR/PYB(SY)/1/325
W. Anderson-Smith, Evidence, Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, Commons, 4 May 1883;
WHM
Anderson-Smith, Proof for West Highland Railway Bill, 1888-9
SRO/BR/PYB(SY)/1/93
Anderson-Smith, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Commons, 3 May 1894, and Lords, 16 July 1894

33 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/5
Davidson to Jackson, 19 May 1909
SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/7
Davidson to Jackson, 4 February 1911

34 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/7
Davidson to Stirling-Maxwell, 1 June 1911

35 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/7
Andrew to Jackson, 22 November 1910
Davidson to Jackson, 4 February 1911
Christie to Deuchars, 26 January 1911
SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/6
Christie to Deuchars, 7 July 1911

36 SRO/BR/LNE/8/764/6
Davidson to James Calder*, 28 February 1911
*Jackson’s deputy and eventual successor

37 Ibid.
Christie to Deuchars, 7 July 1911
See also Davidson to Deuchars, warning that the Board of Trade might intervene, besides the local authorities, 29 March 1911

For example, Jackson to Andrew, 27 May 1909

Christie to John Black, North British Railway Superintendent of the Line*, 31 January 1913
*Successor to Deuchars

J. Thomas, The North British Railway, Volume 2, passim

Alexander Simpson, Evidence, West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, Lords, 12 July 1894
See also Charles Forman, Evidence, West Highland Railway Bill, Lords, 29 March and 5 April 1889

B. H. Blyth, appearing for the opponents of the West Highland Railway, attacked Forman's plans for Roshven. As consulting engineer for the North British Railway, he subsequently endorsed Simpson's plans for Mallaig.

Brown to Jackson, 25 January 1911

Petition of "Fishcurers, Fishermen and Residents interested in the fish trade and general prosperity of Mallaig", forwarded to Jackson by the Mallaig agent of the Bank of Scotland, 25 June 1909
Andrew, Memorandum to the effect that he broadly agreed with the petitioners, 2 July 1909

Jackson to the Mallaig petitioners, 12 July 1909
*Succeeded in 1905

Jackson to Stirling-Maxwell, 7 June 1911

Lochiel to Dalkeith, 25 May 1911

Dalkeith to Lochiel, 28 May and 1 June 1911

Dalkeith to Lochiel, 1 June 1911

Christie to Black, 31 January 1913

Black to Jackson, 27 January 1913

Assessor of Railways and Canals (Scotland) to Jackson, 12 January 1903
Jackson to Assessor of Railways and Canals (Scotland), 31 December 1902
Note of Appeal, Bill Chamber, 9 April 1903, with Pleas-in-Law for West Highland Railway Company COURT of SESSION CASES
West Highland Railway v. Railway Assessor Session Cases 175 1903-4
West Highland Railway and North British Railway v. Inverness County Council Session Cases 176 1903-4

W. Burns, County Councillor for Inverness-shire, to Jackson, 11 February 1903
Jackson to Burns, 12 February 1903
(Burns was a partner in Stewart, Rule & Burns of Inverness, agents for the Highland Railway.)

Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Minutes, 6 December 1900, 10 January, 21 February, 16 April and 6 June, 1901
Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Minutes, 31 June and 10 October 1903
See also J. Thomas, The West Highland Railway, Chapter 7

Petition of the South Uist fishermen, forwarded to Jackson by J. Dewar M.P., June 1901

Deuchars to Jackson, indicating that he had discussed the future of Mallaig with the visiting Board of Trade Inspector, Major Pringle, 28 November 1910
See also G. Alderman, The Railway Interest, pages 185-95 and H. Parris, Government and the Railways in Nineteenth Century Britain, Chapter 6

Tables of receipts and Treasury payments under the Mallaig Guarantee, Reports on the West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, 1906-31

Innes to Jackson, (?) July 1908

Letter from unidentified correspondent to Jackson, reminding him that funds might become available for new public works, 18 May 1911
(The letter implied the contractors, Robert McAlpine & Sons, would act as intermediaries.)
For Lochiel’s efforts to obtain state support for the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway, see Lochiel to Dalkeith, 25 May 1911

Whitelaw to Dalkeith, 1 January 1907

G. Alderman, The Railway Interest, pages 195-218
W.E. Simnett, Railway Amalgamation in Great Britain, Chapters II and III

Andrew to Jackson, 21 April 1913
Jackson to the Railway Department of the Board of Trade (draft), 24 February 1913
F. Marwood, Board of Trade, to Jackson, 21 February 1913
Jackson to the Railway Department of the Board of Trade, 24 February 1913

Marwood to Jackson, 2 April 1913

Memorandum on the Mallaig Guarantee, prepared for William Whitelaw in October 1923
(Whitelaw became Chairman of the London and North Eastern Railway.)

Table of Treasury payments under the Mallaig Guarantee, 1901-31
There were no payments after 1920-1, save for £580 in 1924-5 and £560 in 1925-6. Over thirty years the Treasury paid out just under £49,000, while the Mallaig Extension earned £440,000 and incurred operating expenses of £936,000.

Robert Park, General Manager of the Highland Railway, to Jackson, 17 April 1913
Donald Matheson, General Manager of the Caledonian Railway, to Jackson, 11 October 1913

Andrew to Jackson, 21 April 1913
Black to Jackson, 29 April 1913
Audit Accountant of the North British Railway to Jackson, 20 June 1913

Black to Jackson, 29 April 1913

Report prepared for J. Calder, General Manager of the North British Railway and General Manager designate for the Scottish Area of the London & North Eastern Railway, 3 March 1923
Memorandum on the Mallaig Guarantee, prepared for William Whitelaw in October 1923
Whitelaw to Sir Murdoch MacDonald, M.P. for Inverness-shire, 6 November 1923
Report on proposals for a new breakwater etc. at Mallaig, 25 April 1924

Recommendations for development at Mallaig, c. 1920
Conclusion
Conclusion

This study has been largely concerned with the “politics of promotion”, national and local, in respect of the last major railway constructed in Scotland. The two chapters (4 and 9) which explore expectations and results are far from exhaustive; the richness and diversity of the record precludes complete coverage.

Much material came to light on postal and telegraph services, including the long (and only partially successful) campaign to win mail traffic for the West Highland route. Proofs and minutes of evidence yielded a detailed picture of the livestock trade - the activities of dealers, the decline of local trysts with the rise of regional auction marts, ‘character’ sales (which included wool), and the revival of droving to a handful of strategic railheads. The vast body of testimony on the west coast fishery, with a great deal of special pleading, was less rewarding and could not be used confidently, but for the existing specialist works on the Scottish fishing industry. For sporting estates, railway records offer a wealth of information; Blackmount (Breadalbane), Corrour (Stirling-Maxwell), Fassifern (Cameron of Lochiel), Conaglen (Morton) and Glen Quoich (Burton) could all be studied to some purpose, without recourse to other records. The dubious claims of the Cameron-Head family at Inverailort, that the West Highland Mallaig Extension would frustrate their plans for a deer forest, make for a well-nigh complete story within the larger account of how the Mallaig line was promoted. The growth of tourism is also well represented. The detail on circular tours, which formed a large part of this traffic, reminds the reader that the ostensibly warring companies were, in this matter and others, interdependent. The Shandon Hydropathic Company had high hopes of the new route, as had the Station Hotel Company at Fort William. The proposed mountain railway to the summit of Ben Nevis ought to be added to the list of might-have-been projects complementary to the West Highland. The arrival of railway families in remote communities - and the recruitment of railwaymen from the local population, has many possibilities for future investigation.

There are imperatives both to enlarge the background and to carry investigation onwards. It is a great misfortune that the late Dr Alan Robertson was unable to continue his definitive work beyond the 1850s. The railways of Scotland in the second half of the nineteenth century need comprehensive treatment, to address questions which the present study leaves unanswered. In particular, the motives and methods of those who devised the Glasgow & North Western Railway deserve more thorough investigation. How far did they anticipate the verdict of the Napier Commission? And, like other historians, the present writer was drawn to counterfactual projection. How would matters have developed if war had not come in 1914?
Definitive legislation on the future of the railway system was likely by, say, 1920, whether from an increasingly collectivist Liberal-Labour alliance or from an incoming Conservative Government inclined to pragmatic protectionism. Would this have produced the all-Scotland amalgamation and rationalisation scouted but rejected after wartime Control? This might have reinvigorated the light railway programme which lost its way after 1896, so that at least some of the gaps in the railway system on the mainland - Tulloch to Newtonmore, for example - might have been filled in before the motor bus and the motor lorry ruled them out for all time. (Light railways for the Hebrides ought to be researched in their own right; there is ample material.)

It is a curious outcome that the 'Mania' in the Highlands in the end left three distinct and unconnected routes to the west coast north-of-Clyde - the Crianlarich spur scarcely counts. It is curious that the light railway movement was ambivalent about the much delayed West Highland Mallaig Extension. Final approval of the Napier Commissioners' tentative recommendations took twelve years. What one government had promised (on conditions which the promoters failed to meet), was pledged again (reluctantly) by their successors and finally honoured (in modified form) when those who first made the offer had returned to office. The formula was never likely to be repeated for another major promotion, though modest assistance by Treasury Guarantee was still possible for a little local venture like the Wick & Lybster line. Of course, the guarantee formula had a long history, especially in Ireland, and Treasury Guarantees were cognate with the guarantees which well-found companies offered to their satellites. Moreover, Treasury Guarantees in one form or another supported the big Grouped Companies in the 1920s and 1930s and eased the transition to state ownership in 1948. But the Mallaig Guarantee stands alone.

A more comprehensive account would embrace the "cheap railways" of Scotland earlier in the nineteenth century, showing how a new generation of engineers came to look on the Highlands in a similar light. Forman's West Highland scheme had some such ancestry, along with all the other ingredients here identified. It may be significant that the North British Company's network in the Borders, in Fife and north to Aberfoyle included several "cheap" lines. Was Walker disposed to continue this policy by backing Forman's speculative ventures in the Highlands? The state had no overall plan of development, any more than the state had planned the existing railway system. The rivalries of the principal Scottish companies continued. It is not surprising that events took the complicated and sometimes contradictory course which this study seeks to explain.
Popular histories see the Highland Railway stubbornly beating off successive attacks on Inverness. On the whole, this is a not inaccurate picture. The Highland Company defeated the Glasgow & North Western promoters in committee, thereby also preserving the Callander & Oban route for the Caledonian Railway. Six years later the Highland board preferred to compromise with the West Highland promoters, leaving the Caledonian to fight alone (and successfully) for Oban. Despite all the ensuing battles over the Great Glen, the Highland Railway's monopoly endured. The compromise of 1889 in effect made sure that the westerly route to the North would never be completed. But two questions remain. What drove the opposition to the Highland Company in Inverness and the North - an opposition for which Charles Innes may stand representative, an opposition renewed after every setback? And why did the Glasgow & North Western promoters (and the North British Company?) set such store by the finite traffic of highland Scotland? The revelation that the Highland Railway's highly regarded fiscal management rested on unorthodox accountancy (which ended Dougall's career) seems to have made for a more sober weighing up of costs and benefits.

These issues remain open. However, again and again, this study has called up a sense of changing times. The West Highland Railway was at least in part the product of the wasteful inter-company rivalries of the 1870s and 1880s. By the time the new route was completed, to Mallaig (and to Fort Augustus), economy and rationalisation were more and more in evidence.
Appendix
Witnesses and Proofs

1 Glasgow & North Western Railway Bill, 1883
House of Commons

Witnesses for
Lord Abinger of Abinger and Inverlochy
William Anderson-Smith
Thomas J.A. Armstrong
John Baird of Knoydart
Sir Arthur Bass, M.P., subsequently Lord Burton
James Blackie

John Blackley
The Master of Blantyre
Hugh Boyd
Sir James Brunlees
John Burton
Dr. Donald Campbell
Francis W. Cooper
Matthew Elliot
John B. Falconer
John Forsyth
Charles Fraser-MacKintosh, M.P.

James Gordon
John Gordon
John Grant of Dunain Park, Inverness
William M. Hosack
Thomas Howe
Robert B. Johnson
James Lawrence
Ebenezer MacAlister
Angus MacCallum
Alexander MacDonald
Donald MacDonald
Donald P. MacDonald
Major (Colonel) John A. MacDonald
of Glenaladale
Ronald MacDonald
Alexander MacFarlane

John MacIsaac
George G. MacKay of Glen Gloy
Nigel B. MacKenzie

John MacLean of Glenugig.
Daniel MacLeish
Ewan MacRae
Alexander MacTavish
Charles R. Manners
William Martin
Samuel L. Mason

William Mundell
Donald Paterson
John F. Sim
James Simpson
William Smith
Captain T.A. Swinburne R.N. ret'd,
of Eilean Shona and Muck
William R. Tait
John G. Valentine

Promoter, director and first chairman of the West Highland Railway.
Scottish Fishery Board, expert on west coast fishing.
Representing Dalgethish of Ardmahurchan.
Promoter of the Loch Eil & Mallaig Railway.
Lessee of Glen Quoich.
Fish merchant, Leith and Oban
(sometime partner in James Methuen & Co.),
Land valuator.
Tenant farmer, Sutherland, nephew of the Duke of Sutherland.
Estate manager for Sir Thomas Riddell of Sunart.
President of the Institute of Civil Engineers.
Farm manager for Colonel G. Walker of Crawforddon and Loch Treig.
Lessee of Ballachulish slate quarries.
Timber importer and merchant, Oban.
Butcher and cattle dealer, Inverness.
Partner in the Falconer Iron Works, Inverness.
Land valuer.
Representing Inverness-shire and subsequently Inverness Burghs,
Member of the Napier Commission.
Small proprietor and tenant farmer, Ross Cromarty.
Tenant farmer, Ross & Cromarty.
Sometime coaching proprietor, emigration agent and farmer.
Factor for the Appin Trustees
Farmer, sometime engine driver on the Highland Railway.
Representing Graham of Craighallian.
Corn factor and miller, Forres.
Owner of Carbeth-Guthrie.
Head gamekeeper, Dalness estate, Glen Etive.
Solicitor and bank agent, Fortrose; factor for six estates on Skye.
Tenant farmer, Nairn and Skye, sometime factor for the estates of
Lord MacDonald and Sir John MacLeod.
Distiller, Fort William; partner in Highland Fisheries Company, Barra;
tenant farmer, Lochaber.
Promoter of the Loch Eil & Mallaig Railway.
Factor for the Gordon-Cathcart estates in Harris, South Uist and Barra.
Tenant of the Caledonian Hotel, Inverness; sometime tenant of the
Prince of Wales Hotel, Edinburgh and the Great Northern Hotel,
Callander.
Grocer, with house letting business etc., Oban.
Sometime owner of Oban estate, sometime engineer and general
surveyor for Inverness-shire.
Solicitor and bank agent (British Linen Bank), Fort William; tenant
farmer; factor for the Lochiel estates and other properties in Argyll and
Inverness-shire; agent for the West Highland Railway.
Steamer agent, Fort William; factor for Mrs Cameron-Campbell of
Callart, feudal superior of Fort William.
Tenant farmer, Fort Augustus.
General merchant, Inverness.
Estate manager for Lord Wimborne of Achnashellach and Glen Caron.
Factor for the Poltalloch estates, land valuator.
Sometime Traffic Superintendent of the Great Northern Railway and
General Manager of the North British Railway.
Tenant farmer, Glenelg.
Secretary of the Inverness Farmers Society.
Land agent, Oban, representing nine proprietors.
Sheriff-substitute, Fort William.
Engineer and iron founder, Inverness.
Exponent of fishery improvement.
Factor for Sir Robert Sinclair of Caithness; partner in the
Caithness Quarry Company.
Civil engineer.
T. Waldron-Smith
Lord Wimborne

Witnesses against
Thomas C. Bruce

Peter Burgess

James Cowie
William Crouch
George Cunningham

Andrew Dougall
Sir John Fowler of Braemore, Loch Broom

Alexander Fraser
Hugh I. Fraser

James Grierson
Ralph S. Holmes
William Leslie
Kenneth MacKenzie
Alexander MacLennan
Sir Alexander Matheson
John Robertson
James Simpson
Duke of Sutherland

Civil engineer. Owner of Achnashellach and Glen Carron.

Factor for the Seafield estates; director and Deputy Chairman of the Highland Railway; director of the London & North Western Railway. Bank agent (Caledonian Bank), Inverness; factor for the Glen Moriston estates.

Fisherman, Buckie.

Civil engineer (Crouch & Hogg); consulting engineer for the Caledonian Railway and the Great North of Scotland Railway. Secretary of the Highland Railway and 'Far North' Railways.

Civil engineer; director of the Dingwall & Skye Railway; consulting engineer for the Highland Railway.

Bank agent, Inverness; tenant farmer, Dores, Loch Ness.

Manager of the Northern Agricultural and Foundry Company, Inverness.

General Manager of the Great Western Railway.

Fish dealer, Berwick-on-Tweed.

Provost of Nairn.

Bank agent and honorary sheriff, Stornoway.

General merchant, Inverness.

Chairman of the Highland Railway.

Tenant farmer, Greshornish and Orbost, Skye.

Hotel keeper and tenant farmer, Drumnadrochit, Loch Ness.

Director of the Highland Railway and 'Far North' Railways.

2 Callander & Oban Railway Bill (Glen Falloch), 1889

House of Lords

Witnesses for

John Anderson
Benjamin H. Blyth

Duncan Fraser

Alexander MacNiven

James Thompson

Secretary of the Callander & Oban Railway
Civil Engineer (Blyth & Cunningham); Consulting Engineer for the Caledonian Railway, the Great North of Scotland Railway and the North British Railway.

Tenant of the Dalmailly Hotel and the Loch Awe Hotel; tenant farmer, Kilmun; director of several hotel companies, with coaching interests; promoter of the Glen Falloch Railway (1887-8).

Farmer, Loch Lomond; director of the Loch Lomond Steamboat Company.

General Manager of the Caledonian Railway

3 West Highland Railway Bill, 1889

House of Lords

Witnesses for

Lord Abinger
Alexander Breingan

Angus Cameron
Donald Cameron of Lochiel

Captain (Major then Colonel)
Roderick Colquhoun

William Crouch
Cosser Ewart

Charles Forman

James Forman
Charles Fraser-MacKintosh

(Above)
Banker and businessman, Glasgow and Helensburgh; Provost of Helensburgh; promoter of the West Highland Railway.

Cattle dealer and auctioneer, Fort William. M.P. for Inverness-shire, 1868-80; member of the Napier Commission; promoter and director of the West Highland Railway; promoter of the Loch Eil & Mallaig Railway; Convenor of Inverness-shire County Council.

Promoter and director of the West Highland Railway, representing the Trustees of Sir James Colquhoun of Luss. (Luss Trustees)

(Above)
Professor of Natural History, Edinburgh University; member of the Scottish Fishery Board.

Civil Engineer (Formans & McCall); engineer of the Strathendrick & Aberfoyle Railway, the Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan Railway, the West Highland Railway, the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway etc.

Civil Engineer (Formans & McCall). (Above)
Archibald Jamieson
Lord Lovat.
Robert McAlpine
Duncan MacDiarmid
Alexander MacDonald
Donald MacDonald
John MacDonald
Ranald MacDonald
Alfred MacKintosh of MacKintosh (The MacKintosh)
John MacLean of Glenuig
Thomas MacLean
Hugh MacNeil
George Malcolm

Witnesses Against
John Anderson
Professor Hugh Blackburn
James Blackie
Benjamin H. Blyth
Joseph Bolton M.P.
A.J. Campbell, Captain of Dunstaffnage
Kenneth Campbell
John Curry
Andrew Dougall
Ralph S. Holmes
Dr. Roderick MacDonald M.P.
Kenneth MacKenzie
Colonel J.W. Malcolm of Poltalloch
Captain Henry A. Moriarty R.N. ret'd.
Murdoch Petterson
John Robertson.
John F. Sim.
Rev. Dr. Alexander Stuart
(pen-name 'Nether Lochaber')
James Thompson.
Sir William Thompson, subsequently Lord Kelvin

House of Commons
Witnesses for
Lord Abinger
John Aird M.P.
Duke of Argyll
Lord Burton
Donald Boyd
Alexander Breingan
Donald Cameron of Lochiel
Captain Roderick Colquhoun
William Dunn
Charles Forman
Donald Fraser
Charles Fraser-Mackintosh M.P.
Lord Lovat
Duncan MacDiarmid
Donald P. MacDonald
Parlan MacFarlane
Alfred MacIntosh of MacKintosh (The MacKintosh)
George Malcolm
Sir Robert Menzies of Rannoch
James Morrison
Sir Archibald Orr-Ewing
James Scott
Peter Stalker
John Tawse
John Walker
James Wilson

Witnesses against
John Anderson
Angus Buchanan
Dr. Donald Campbell
Sir Myles Fenton
Rev. Dr. Alexander Stuart
James Thompson

Witnesses for
Lord Abinger
John Burton
Charles Forman
Donald P. MacDonald
Sir Robert Menzies of Rannoch
A. W. Nicholson

Witnesses against
Donald Fraser
John Murdoch

4 West Highland Railway Bill, 1890
House of Lords

Witnesses for
Promoter of the Loch Eil & Mallaig Railway.
(Above)
General Manager of the North British Railway
(Above)
Representing Inverness-shire. (Crofter - Liberal)
(Above)
Shipowner, Stornoway.
(Above)
Harbour master and agent for D. MacBrayne, Fort William.
(Above)

5 West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, Bill, 1894
House of Commons

Witnesses for
Promoter of the Loch Eil & Mallaig Railway.
(Above)
General Manager of the North British Railway
(Above)
Representing Inverness-shire. (Crofter - Liberal)
(Above)
Shipowner, Stornoway.
(Above)
Harbour contractor (Thomas Meik & Sons).
(Above)
Retired ship's captain; harbour master, Stornoway.
(Above)
Fishery Officer, Broadford, Skye.
(Above)
Civil engineer (Simpson & Wilson), subsequently director of the North British Railway.
(Above)
Promoter and director of the West Highland Railway; promoter of the Loch Eil & Mallaig Railway.
(Above)
Director (previously General Manager) of the North Eastern Railway; member of the Treasury Committee 1891.
(Above)
Secretary of the General Post Office, chairman of the Lothian Commission 1889-90.
(Above)
Contractor.
Witnesses against
John Anderson
William Anderson-Smith
James Barr
Gilbert Beith M.P.
Andrew W. Belfrage
William Birkmyne M.P.
George Colvill
Andrew Dougall
Sir John Fowler of Braemore
Captain James Head (Cameron-Head)
Donald MacDonald
Dudley MacDonald
John MacIsaac
Captain Duncan MacKenzie
John MacKenzie
William Anderson-Smith
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6 The Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway Bill, 1896
Selected Witnesses

Witnesses for
Charles Forman
A. MacLennan
George Malcolm
Sir Donald Matheson

(Above) Tenant farmer, Invershiel, Kintail.
(Above) Promoter, director and Chairman of the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway; director of the Lanarkshire & Dumbartonshire Railway.

Witnesses against
Benjamin H. Blyth
John Conacher
Charles Steel

(Above)
(Above)
(Above)

General Manager of the Highland Railway.

7 Callander & Oban Railway Bill, 1897
(which included the proposed Dalmally-Inverary branch).

House of Commons

Witnesses for
James Alexander
John Anderson
John Blair
John Buchanan

(Above)
(Above)
(Above)

Malcolm T. Clark
Peter C. Crerar
John Dewar
Charles Forman
Duncan Fraser
Neil Gillies
Alexander Graham
Duncan MacCall
Rev. Malcolm MacCallum
Peter MacCaul
Colonel A. MacIver-Campbell of Loch Gair
John MacKenna

(Above)

John MacLeod of Kintyre
Neil MacNab
Rev. Farquhar MacRae
Lord Malcolm of Poltalloch

George Malcolm.
John Melville
Robert Miller

John Munro
D. Murray-Maxtone
Donald Nicol M.P.
Thomas D. Richmond
Duncan Strang
Witnesses against

Duke of Argyll (Above)
Benjamin H. Blyth (Above)
Marquess of Lome Heir of the Duke of Argyll
Donald Sutherland Farmer, innkeeper and ferryman, St. Catherines, Loch Fyne.

8 West Highland Railway, 1888-9

Proofs of prospective witnesses, prepared by N. B. MacKenzie. In some cases this shows how evidence was recast for the House of Commons after the Fort William - Roshven section of the West Highland scheme had been lost in the House of Lords.

Lord Abinger
William Anderson-Smith
Thomas J.A. Armstrong
Donald Boyd
Lord Burton
Donald Cameron of Locheil
Ewen Cameron
Bank agent (National Bank), Fort William; secretary of the ‘town party’ of would-be railway promoters.

Ewen Cameron
Kennis Campbell
Alexander Craig
George B. Davy
Factor for Colonel G. Walker of Crawforddon and Loch Treig.

Donald Fraser
Duncan Forbes
George Gow
Hotel keeper, Inveroran.

Rev. Leo Linse
Duncan MacDiarmid
John MacDonald
Yacht hand and fisherman.

Major John A. MacDonald of Glen Aladale
Donald MacDonald
Donald P. MacDonald
Ranald Macdonald
Archibald MacFarlane
Alfred MacKintosh of MacKintosh (The MacKintosh)
John MacLean of Glenug
Michael MacNeil
Ewan MacRae
George Malcolm
Sir Robert Menzies of Rannoch
John Scott
Archibald Stewart
Captain Thomas A. Swinburne R.N. ret’d
of Eilean Shona and Muck.
John Walker
Tenant farmer, Achallader, Strathulla.

9 West Highland Railway Bill, 1889-90

Proofs prepared by N.B. Mackenzie

Lord Abinger
John Burton
Donald Cameron of Locheil
Donald P. MacDonald
Sir Robert Menzies of Rannoch
A.W. Nicholson of Arisaig and South Morar
10  West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, 1893-4
Proofs in fair copy, prepared by MacRae, Flett & Rennie and by N.B. MacKenzie.

Benjamin H. Blyth
Alexander Buchan
Donald Cameron of Lochiel
Alexander Campbell
John Conacher
James Donaldson
Marquess of Lothian
Donald Ferguson
Henry V. MacCallum
Thomas MacCubbin

Ranald MacDonald
John MacKenzie
Nigel B. MacKenzie
James MacKintosh
Archibald MacLellan or MacClellan
Alexander MacLennan
Malcolm MacNeil
Malcolm MacNeil
George Malcolm
P.W. Meik
Donald C. Morrison
Thomas Morrison
William Nisbet
William Reid
Alexander Simpson
Donald Smith
Robert Stewart of Kinlochmoidart
Henry Tennant
Spencer Walpole
James Young

Secretary of the Scottish Meteorological Society (to give expert testimony on weather at Mallaig).

Master of MacKinney & Rafferty’s ‘Marie’.

Master of the Stewart family yacht, Kinlochmoidart; inspected Mallaig bay for Robert Stewart.

11  West Highland Railway, Ballachulish Extension, 1895-6

John Burton
Angus Cameron
P. MacFarlane
John MacInnes
Nigel B. MacKenzie
Donald MacKintosh
John Smith

Provost of Fort William; chemist and druggist.

General merchant, Cuilchenna, Onich.

Tenant of the West End Hotel, Fort William.

Tenant of the Ardgour Hotel; county councillor for Argyll.

12  Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway, 1895-6
Proofs of prospective witnesses against the Bill, prepared by N. B. MacKenzie.

Rev. D. Cameron
Nigel B. MacKenzie

Minister of Kilmonivaig

(MacKenzie’s Proof was accompanied by a memorandum, prepared after the Bill had passed the House of Lords, showing that some of the promoters had no intimate connection with the Great Glen).
PRIMARY SOURCES

1  Scottish Record Office
   Bills
   SRO/BR/PYB(SY1

212  Caledonian Railway - Scottish Central Railway amalgamation and North British Railway -
     Edinburgh & Glasgow Railway amalgamation, 1865

242  Caledonian Railway - Scottish North Eastern Railway amalgamation, 1866

265  Caledonian Railway - North British Railway amalgamation, 1871

279  Caledonian Railway (Carstairs - Larbert cut-off), 1873

323  Caledonian Railway (Alloa & Kirkcaldy Extension), 1883

331  Caledonian Railway (Dunfermline Extension), 1884

150  Caledonian Railway (Comrie - Lochearnhead Extension), 1900

402  Caledonian Railway (Comrie - Lochearnhead Extension, additional powers), 1902

339  Callander & Oban Railway (Glen Falloch Extension), 1889
     Includes brief for North British Railway and petitions

163 and 380  Callander & Oban Railway (Ballachulish Extension), 1896
             380 includes map.

71 and 394  Callander & Oban Railway, 1897
            Improvements at Oban
            Ballachulish Ferry-Ballachulish Extension,
            modifying the Connel Ferry-Ballachulish scheme approved in 1896
            Dalmally - Inverary branch

587 and 588  Glasgow Central Railway, 1888

576  Glasgow City & District Railway, 1882

174, 325, 480 and 481  Glasgow & North Western Railway, 1883
            174 includes agreements and correspondence.
            480 and 481 include brief for Highland Railway and petitions.

79, 328 and 484  Great North of Scotland Railway (Nethy Bridge - Inverness Extension), 1884

487  Great North of Scotland Railway (Inverness Extension), 1890
     Includes brief for Highland Railway

326 and 482-4  Highland Railway, 1884
            Amalgamation with ‘Far North’ companies.
            Strathpeffer branch
            Aviemore - Inverness cut-off

95, 96, 396, 397, 501 and 502  Highland Railway (Fort Augustus Extension), 1897

91, 422 and 513  Highland Railway - Great North of Scotland Railway amalgamation, 1906
            513 includes historical notes, pamphlets opposing the merger, circulars and maps.

94, 386, 387, 388 and 496-500  Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway, 1896
            386 and 496-500 include brief for the promoters.
            387 includes briefs for North British Railway and West Highland Railway

- 262 -
387 and 496-500 include maps.
496-500 include petitions.

95, 96, 398, 399 and 501 Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway (Inverness Extension), 1897
398 and 399 include brief for the promoters, petitions and proofs.

348 Lanarkshire & Dumbartonshire Railway, 1890

355-8 Lanarkshire & Dumbartonshire Railway, 1891
Include map.

376 Lanarkshire & Dumbartonshire Railway, 1895

249 and 534 Midland Railway - Glasgow & South Western Railway amalgamation, 1867

44 Midland Railway - Glasgow & South Western Railway amalgamation, 1873

596 Milngavie, Strathendrick and Port of Mentieth Railway, 1890

69, 98, 175, 176, 348 and 351 North British Railway - Glasgow & South Western Railway amalgamation, 1890

395 North British Railway and West Highland Railway (Roy Bridge - Invergloy cut-off), 1897

160 and 585 Stirling and Western District Railway, 1888

62, 32B, 483 and 484 Strathspey, Strathdon & Deeside Junction Railway, 1884

66, 342 and 485 West Highland Railway, 1889
485 includes brief for Highland Railway

69, 93, 372 and 491 West Highland Railway (Mallaig Extension), 1894
69, 372 and 491 include petitions.
372 includes proofs
491 includes brief for Highland Railway.

163 and 385 West Highland Railway (Ballachulish Extension), 1896
385 includes map.

95, 96, 395 and 501 West Highland Railway (Fort Augustus - Inverness Extension), 1897

402 West Highland Railway (Mallaig Extension, additional powers), 1899
Includes full text of West Highland Railway (Mallaig Extension) Act and map.

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Scottish Record Office
Additional material filed under Parliamentary Bills
SRO/BR/PYB(S)/1

180 North British Railway, General Manager's notes on impending bills, orders etc., 1890 - 1919

348 Agreements, maps and press-cuttings: Caledonian Railway opposition to amalgamation of the North British and Glasgow & South Western Companies; counter-proposals for Caledonian - Glasgow & South Western amalgamation or joint Caledonian - North British control of the Glasgow & South Western

364 Proposals for the Vale of Leven, 1892
Caledonian Railway, North British Railway, Lanarkshire & Dumbartonshire Railway and promoters of the Dumbarton, Jamestown & Loch Lomond scheme

378 Great Glen etc. schemes, 1894-5; estimates, press-cuttings and various details
Callander & Oban Railway - proposed Connel Ferry - Banavie line
Highland Railway - proposed Inverness - Spean Bridge and Fort William line

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- 263 -
West Highland Railway - retrospective authorisation of deviation south of Rannoch. These clauses were appended to the West Highland Railway (Inverness Extension) Bill and survived (West Highland Railway Act, 1895) withdrawal of the Inverness scheme.

410 and 411 Highland Railway - Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway working agreement, 1902-3
Include briefs for North British Railway and West Highland Railway

427 Provisional order for North British Railway - West Highland Railway amalgamation, 1908
Includes plans and statistics

438 Provisional order for North British Railway - Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway amalgamation, 1913-4

503 Fort Augustus - Inverness promotions, 1897; proofs

511 Highland Railway - powers to work Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway, 1903; briefs and map.

615 West Highland Railway (Ballachulish Extension), 1896; Board of Trade report (Ballachulish swing bridge) and brief for West Highland Railway

615 North British Railway - proposed powers to purchase Lanarkshire & Dumbartonshire Railway, 1891
Blane Valley Railway
BVR/1 3 and 4 Minute books, 1882-8 and 1888-91

Clyde, Ardrishaig & Crinan Railway
CAC/3 1 Agreement with David MacBrayne, 1887
2 Agreement with North British Railway; Formans & McCall’s estimate; projected traffic; contractor’s tender; copy of Company’s Act, 1887
CAC/4 1 Agreement with East Coast Companies, 1887

Caledonian Railway
CAL/1 90, 122 and 123 Joint committee on amalgamations, 1860s, (Caledonian, Edinburgh & Glasgow and Scottish Central Companies)
152 Minutes of General Managers’ meetings (Caledonian and North British Companies), 1882-8
CAL/3 12 and 60 New Lines Agreement (“Peace Agreement”), 1891
34 Clyde Coast Pool
CAL/4 24/1 MacBrayne’s Sailings, October 1886
149 Memorandum on relations with Highland Railway, 1887
224 Marquess of Breadalbane’s correspondence re Killin Railway and offer of a North British Railway directorship

Callander & Oban Railway
COB/1 5 Extracts, re Ballachulish branch, from minute books, 1894-1903
COB/4 5 and 6 Proposed Connel Ferry - Banavie line, 1894; book of reference; plans and sections
14 Various reports and other correspondence etc., including items on Ballachulish
18 Crianlarich Junction, miscellaneous papers

Duke of Sutherland’s Railway
DKS/1 1 Minute books and accounts, 1874-84

Dingwall & Skye Railway
DSK/1 1 Minute books, 1864-80

Eyemouth Railway
EYR/1 1 Minute books, 1883-99

Highland Railway
HR/1 1-8 Minute books, 1865-96
HR/3 6 Stewart, Rule & Burns (Company solicitors); miscellaneous papers including relations with David MacBrayne and attitude to be taken on Aviemore cut-off, extension of West Highland Railway to Mallaig and promotion of the Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway
HR/4 47 Abstract of livestock forwarded, 1876-1911
100 Joseph Mitchell’s British Association Paper on Construction of the Forres to Dunkeld line

Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway
IFA/1 1-3 Minute books, 1896-1910
IFA/4 1-12 Letter books, 1895-1914
13 Papers re relations with North British Railway, 1907-13

Killin Railway
KLN/1 1 Minutes of provisional committee, 1882-3
2 Minute book, 1883-1923

Lanarkshire & Dumbartonshire Railway
LAD/1 1 Minute book, 1889-93
North British Railway
NBR/1  17-40 Minute books, 1871-1914
       384  Minutes of General Manager’s meetings (Caledonian and North British Companies,
            1874-1922
NBR/3  15  New Lines Agreement (“Peace Agreement”), 1891
NBR/4  370  Papers re amalgamation with Glasgow & South Western Railway, 1888-91
       389-92 and 394  Morar (West Highland Railway); passenger traffic books; goods balance sheet
            and circular book, 1901-9
NBR/8  General Manager’s files
       1198  Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway, 1906-19
       1209  Proposed Manchester, Newcastle & Glasgow Railway, 1893-1900
       1214  Amalgamation with Glasgow & South Western Railway, 1889-90
       1312  Clyde steamer pool, 1902-10
       1314  Amalgamation of Glasgow & South Western Railway with North British Company
            and/or Caledonian Company; press-cuttings etc., 1889-90
       1373  Clyde Coast traffic pool, 1908-21
       1380  Arrangements for joint working at Dumfarton, 1896-9
       1394  Strathendrick & Aberfoyle Railway, 1882
       1398  Continuation of New Lines Agreement (“Peace Agreement”), 1907
       1401  Invergarry & Fort Augustus Railway, 1898-1903
       1635  Ardlui Pier, 1902-21
       1764  West Highland Railway boxes 1-7
NBR/15  116 and 119  Staff books, including West Highland Railway
       130  6-31  Advices on excursion, relief and special trains, 1894-1914

Strathendrick & Aberfoyle Railway
SAF/1   1-3  Minute books

Sutherland Railway
SLD/1   1  Minute books, with reports and accounts, 1864-84

Sutherland & Caithness Railway
SUC/1   1  Minute books with reports, 1871-84

West Highland Railway
WEH/1   1 and 2  Minute books, 1889-1907
       3  Album of photographs taken during construction.
       4  Tulloch (Inverlair); dispute with The MacKintosh, 1894
WEH/23  1-5  Finance and miscellaneous

London & North Eastern Railway
LNE/8   764 boxes 1-8
       Files on West Highland Railway transferred from North British Railway records
            (includes some early London & North Eastern Railway papers)
| i | Clyde Coast Pool  
SRO/BR/CCP |
|---|---|
| ii | Dumbarton and Balloch Joint Line Committee  
SRO/DBJ/1  
13 Minute books, 1894-1911 |
| iii | Law Cases and Arbitration  
SRO/BR/LCA(S)  
28 Ballachulish, 1895-6 (Caledonian and North British Companies)  
30 Loch Lomond, 1897-8 (Caledonian, Lanarkshire & Dumbartonshire and North British Companies)  
40 Proposed Connel Ferry - Banavie line (Caledonian and North British Companies)  
41 West Highland Railway, Mallaig Extension, 1894 (Caledonian and North British Companies)  
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JOHN ALEXANDER McGRGOR
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THE WEST HIGHLAND RAILWAY:
THE POLITICS OF PROMOTION IN
LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY
SCOTLAND

Maps, Sketch Maps and Illustrations

Presented for the Degree of Ph.D.

Faculty of Arts (History)

The Open University

November 1997
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Lothian Report: proposed steamer routes.

I  Carloway (Lewis) - West Loch Tarbert (Harris), connecting with Oban via Tarbert (Harris). Daily.

II  Stornoway - Tarbert (Harris) and Stornoway Ness, connecting with Strome Ferry via Stornoway. Alternate days, each thrice weekly.

III  Oban - Castlebay - Lochboisdale - Tarbert (Harris) - Dunvegan - Small Isles - Oban and the same circuit in reverse. Two vessels needed to maintain a thrice weekly service both ways.

IV  Portree - Dunvegan, connecting with Oban at Dunvegan and with Strome Ferry at Portree.


VI  Scrabster - Loch Eriboll, connecting with No. V during summer. Thrice weekly; daily in the fishing season.

West Highland Railway

Proposed Deviation 1889 - 90
TULLOCH and KINGUSSIE
(ROYAL ROUTE via LOCH LAGGAN),
AND IN CONJUNCTION WITH
West Highland Railway, Tulloch; Highland Railway, Kingussie.

These well-appointed Four-in-Hand Coaches leave Tulloch station daily
(Sundays excepted) at 7.10 and 11.30 A.M., in connection with the 6.20
and 10.25 A.M. Trains from Fort William, arriving at Kingussie at 11.50 A.M. and
4.30 P.M. Leaving Kingussie at 9.15 A.M. and 1.15 P.M., arriving at Tulloch at
3.30 and 5.45 P.M.; thence Train to Fort William.

Fares from Tulloch Station to Kingussie, 12s. 6d. each.
(Coachman’s Fees not included.)

Note.—Parties wishing to have Private Carriages to Loch Laggan and to
the Shooting Lodges on the route and to Kingussie, and vice versa, can be
arranged for at Coach Office, Fort William and Kingussie, and at Tulloch
Station, West Highland Railway.

Hugh M’Donald,
Coach Proprietor.

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESSES:
“COACH OFFICE, FORT WILLIAM.”

FORT WILLIAM AND ARISAIG

The Royal Mail Coach leaves Fort William Daily at 12.30 P.M., arriving at
Arisaig at 7.30 P.M.; leaving Arisaig at 8.15 A.M., arriving at Fort William
at 3.15 P.M., in time to catch the Steamer for Oban and Train for South (West
Highland Railway).

FARES TO ARISAIG, 11s.
For further information apply at the Post Office, Fort William.

McGregor & Cameron, Proprietors.

N.B.—McG. & C. are now carrying on the Coaching and Posting Business
at the Stables, Gordon Square, Fort William; Alexandra Hotel Stables, Fort
William; and Lochiel Arms Hotel Stables, Banavie.
For further information apply as above, or at the Office, 43 High St., Fort William.
LIST of NOBLEMEN and GENTLEMEN in the North of Scotland
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<td>Right Hon. The Earl of Seafield</td>
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<td>Right Hon. The Earl of Fife</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sir Alex. Matheson, Bart., M.P.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Right Hon. Lord Thurloe</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>His Grace the Duke of Athole</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sir Arnold B. Kimball, K.C.B.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>R. B. A. E. Macleod, Esq., of Cadboll</td>
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£843,713
## Statement of Sheep and Cattle - continued.

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<th>Name of Farm</th>
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<td>Moy</td>
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<td>770</td>
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<td>Lundavra</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sheep Farms</strong></td>
<td>5187</td>
<td>28521</td>
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|                        |            |             |              |
| Arabal Farms, Farms under £100 and Crofts | 2991       | ...        | 1196         |
| Shootings, &c., &c., | 9584       | ...        |              |
| **Total**            | 17762      | 28521       | 1196         |

| **Ardnmuurchan Parish** |            |             |              |
| Meoble                | 530        | 2915        |              |
| Glenmoidart           | 180        | 990         |              |
| Gienforsian           | 730        | 4015        |              |
| Shonabeg              | 210        | 1155        |              |
| Inverailort           | 500        | 2750        |              |
| Carried forward       | 2150       | 11,825      |              |
## List of Subscribers towards the Preliminary expenses of promoting Bill in Parliament

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<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<td>Donald Boyd, Merchant</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>R. Macintyre</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Colin Kennedy, Cameron Square</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Donald Blackstock, Bell End Hotel</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>John Macdonald, Lochabie, merchant</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mr. Doug, Alexandra Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Mr. Callum, Son, Lewis</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Donald Cameron, Hagelcroft</td>
<td>1.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Duncan Maciwan, Solicitor</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Angus Macdonald, Coach Beaufort</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Donald Macdonald, Baker</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>William Fraser</td>
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<td>J. S. Morton</td>
<td>1.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Ewen Cameron, Banker</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Angus Cameron, Castle Beaufort</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Rev. D Cameron, Alloa</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>D. M. Leish, Banker</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>James Guthrie, Ardsie</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Mr. Affleck, Alloa</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>D. Cameron, Greenhill</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Rev. Alex Blackstock, R. C.</td>
<td>1.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Charles Cameron, Merchant</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Donald Gilchrist, Dunoon's Hotel</td>
<td>1.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Duncan Downie, Merchant</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>James Macdonald, Lochabie, merchant</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Angus Macdonald, Merchant</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Duncan Macgregor, Firemaker</td>
<td>1.1</td>
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</table>
# WEST HIGHLAND

NEW ROUTE to OBAN, FORT-WILLIAM, and the WEST

[The undertook Train Service will not]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekdays</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **LONDON (St Pancras)**
  - Leave
  - Arrive
- **EDINBURGH (Waverley)**
  - Leave
  - Arrive
- **GLASGOW (Queen Street)**
  - Leave
  - Arrive

## SPECIAL NOTE

Increased ballings will be given daily between.

- **Oban** and **Fort-William**
- **Oban** and **Banavie**

### Through Carriages

- From London (King's Cross) to **Fort-William** by **Mr. M**.
- From **Oban** to **Tollemos** and **Dalroch**.

### Notes

- **A Through Carriage** will be run from **Glasgow** (Queen St. High Level) to **Oban** by **Mr. M**.
- **A Through Carriage** will be run from **London** (King's Cross) to **Fort-Walliam** by **Mr. M**.

### Train Service

- **Mr. David Macbrayne's Steamers from Oban**
  - To Tobermory, Salen (Lechensauri), and Inveraray

### Train Times

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Train</th>
<th>Leave</th>
<th>Arrive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To Tobermory, Salen (Lechensauri), and Inveraray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## RAILWAY (expected to be opened in duly).

**HIGHLANDS, via DUNBARTON, HELENSBURGH, & ARROCHAR.**

Come into operation until further notice.

### Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Trains In</th>
<th>Trains Out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SPECIAL NOTE.**

Increased Services will be given daily between Fort-William, Banavie, Fort-Augustus, &c., on and after the Opening of the West Highland Railway. For particularss, see future Notice.

### Notes.

- Through Carriages from Fort-Augustus, Dunbarton, &c., by Nos. 6 and 8 Trains.
- A Through Carriage from Oban to Glasgow (Queen Street) will be run by No. 9.
- A Through Carriage from Oban to Glasgow (Queen Street) will be run by No. 9.
- A Through Carriage from Oban to Glasgow (Queen Street) will be run by No. 9.

---

**Me. David Macbrayne's Steamers to Oban.**

- From Tobermory and Sound of Mull to Oban—Daily, at before 8 a.m., by Steamers also by "Claymore," or other Steamers, every Tuesday afternoon, and every Thursday evening.

- From Balloch (Lochgoilhead) to Oban—Every Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday morning.

- From Stornoway, Portree, and Tobermory to Oban.---"Cassian," "Claymore," or other Steamer, from Steamway every Monday and Wednesday, and from Fortrose every Tuesday, at 4-0 a.m., and every Thursday, at 10-0 a.m. Steamers leave at Broadford, Kyleakin, Balintwin, Glascold, Airds, Skye, Stirling, and Oban.

- From Inverary to Oban.---"Cassian," or other Steamer, every Tuesday morning.

- From Arisaig to Oban.—"Cassian," or other Steamer, every Tuesday morning 1 a.m. with Steamer every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday forenoon.

- From Loch Foid-hilc, Dorniean, Lochmaddy, Lochboisdale, and Castlebay to Oban.---See Note to Steamers going north.

- From Banask, Tirre, Coll, and Kilchoan to Oban.---Nick Steamer leaves Balnacass every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday about 4 p.m.

---

**Messrs John M'Callum & Co.'s Steamers "Hebridean" to Oban.**

- From Caithness, Skirpast, Lochboisdale, and Barr, to Oban—Every Thursday.

- From Port Ashaig and Colonsay to Oban—Every Tuesday morning.
To the ROYAL COMMISSION on the WESTERN HIGHLANDS and ISLANDS, this Petition of Residents on the Western Islands and adjacent Mainland, Humbly Sheweth:—

I. That the herring fishery in Lochs Nevis, Hourn, Slapin, Eishort, and others, and in the Sound of Sleat, the Little Minch, near Barra, and elsewhere, is very large and important; and that there are many rich fishing-banks, capable of employing profitably a large number of people in winter fishing, off this coast and the adjacent islands.

II. That this is a pastoral district; and that, under the present system of Sheep-farming, it is necessary to winter away a considerable portion of the sheep stock.

III. That your petitioners are gravely hampered in the profitable prosecution of sheep-farming and fishing, their staple industries, by the want of means of quick communication with Southern markets and wintering grounds.

IV. That the construction of a Railway terminating at Mallaig would largely obviate the disadvantages under which your petitioners labour.

V. That Mallaig lies, practically, on the course of vessels passing North and South along this coast. That it could be easily made an excellent harbour, and that it is the best point on the West Coast for the Terminus of a Railway to serve the Islands North of Coll, and South of Lochmaddy, and the Mainland opposite.

VI. That, to the Islands of Canna, Rum, and Muke, there is at present no regular post; and to Eigg a post only once a week; and that these, and other islands as far West as Barra, which is 60 knots West of Mallaig, might easily have a daily post by steamer from Mallaig on the completion of a Railway to that point, and that postal arrangements on the mainland could be similarly improved.

VII. That the proposed Railway would not be a "competing line," but would serve a large district which is at present entirely destitute of Railway accommodation, as Mallaig is about 70 and 40 miles distant respectively from Oban and Strome Ferry, the nearest existing Railwa Stations, and 50 miles from Fort-William.

VIII. That the construction of light Railways across Skye, to some point on its East Coast, nearly opposite Mallaig, would be of great value to the inhabitants of Skye and the Long Island.

Your petitioners, therefore, beg that your Commission will favourably consider their suggestions, and make such recommendations as may ensure the construction of a Railway to Mallaig, and of light Railways in Skye.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.
Names and Rents of the different Shootings (including Deer, Forests) within the District which might be served by the Proposed Line, as shown on the Plan, coloured Pink.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Name of Shooting</th>
<th>Rent</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>Glendoe</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Doll</td>
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<td>Corriegearth and Killin</td>
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<td>Stronelaig</td>
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<td>Foyers</td>
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Cheap Day Excursion Tickets from INVERGARRY,

By Rail both ways, will be issued by all Trains which will enable Passengers to complete their journey on day of issue.

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<th>To</th>
<th>FAres</th>
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Cheap Day Excursion Tickets from GAIRLOCHY,

By Rail both ways, will be issued by all Trains which will enable Passengers to complete their journey on day of issue.

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<th>To</th>
<th>FAres</th>
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<td>3rd C</td>
<td>s. d.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>F O R T W I L L I A M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G A I R L O C H F A I D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THROUGH TICKETS are now issued on board David MacBrayne, Ltd., Loch Ness Steamers for Fort William, Oban, Edinburgh, Glasgow, &c., by the new route via Fort Augustus and Spean Bridge.

TOURIST ARRANGEMENTS.—During the period from July to September, inclusive, holders of Circular Tour Tickets covering the distance between Fort William and Fort Augustus by David MacBrayne, Ltd., Steamer, have the option of travelling by Train between these points on getting their tickets stamped at the Booking Office at Fort William, Spean Bridge, or Fort Augustus.

For further particulars see the North British Company's Tourist Programme.

The Lessee of the Invergarry Hotel runs a two-horse Conveyance between Invergarry Village and Invergarry Station.—See page 37.
### Particulars as to Fishermen's Huts at Mallaig Station, 6th July, 1911

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name of Owner</th>
<th>Occupant</th>
<th>No. of Apartments</th>
<th>Occupants of Hut</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Alexander Johnson</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Owner, brother, sister child, and servant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Nets &amp;c stored in an outhouse)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tom Mulligan</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Owner, wife and 7 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(one used for storing nets.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Christina McDonald</td>
<td>Takes in Lodgers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Nil. (Hut shut up.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Robert Hossack</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Owner, wife and 5 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Donald McKenzie</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Owner's wife (Owner at Iona)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Alexander Aitcheson</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Owner, wife, brother and one child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Alexander McPhail</td>
<td>Porter in employment of N.B.R</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Owner, wife, 2 children &amp; lodger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>John Duncan</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Owner and wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>George Downie</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Owner and wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>J.M. Davidson</td>
<td>Fishcurer Hut for 8 gutters</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unoccupied at date of visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>J.M. Davidson</td>
<td>Fishcurer Hut</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unoccupied at date of visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>James Ritchie</td>
<td>Fisherman Hut</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unoccupied at date of visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Archibald McPhail</td>
<td>Porter, Fish Platform</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Owner, wife and 4 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>William Ritchie</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hut unoccupied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>George Cowie</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Owner, wife &amp; daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>James Duthie</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hut unoccupied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>James Manson</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Owner, wife and 6 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>J.M. Davidson</td>
<td>Fishcurer Hut for 4 gutters</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unoccupied at date of visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>William Murray</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Owner, wife and 5 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Peter Downie</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Owner, wife and 5 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>James Nicol</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Owner and wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>John Nicol</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hut unoccupied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>John Wiseman</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>1 (very roomy)</td>
<td>Owner, wife and 3 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Alexander McLean</td>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Paul Johnston, wife &amp; child</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>