

Spalding, 19th February, 1896.

Sir,

## River Welland.

By direction of the Trustees of the River Welland Outfall, we forward to you a short statement of the facts which have induced them to convene a meeting of Proprietors to be held on the 24th February inst., at the Corn Exchange, Spalding, at 12 o'clock at noon.

In the year 1880, an Act of Parliament was obtained by the Proprietors of Lands drained by the River Witham, under which they obtained powers to make a new cut for the waters of the River Witham to a place called Clay Hole, in Boston Deepes, which they proceeded at once to execute, and which was completed within a few years after the passing of the Act.

At the time this Act was obtained the channels of the Rivers Witham and Welland united at a point known as Elbow Buoy, situate one mile-and-a-half beyond the mouth of the confined channel of the River Welland, and proceeded thence in one channel to Boston Deepes.

It was feared that the result of the diversion of the waters of the River Witham by means of the proposed new cut would have the effect of choking the channel which had been formed by the union of the two streams, and so causing an impediment to the discharge of the River Welland waters when deprived of the united force of the two streams.

For some years subsequent to the completion of the new Witham Channel, the seasons being rainy, caused a succession of freshets in the Welland, and consequently very little inconvenience was felt; but upon these wet seasons being succeeded by dry ones, a process of silting up commenced, and this has progressed so rapidly that little, if any, of the waters of the River Welland now find their way into Boston Deepes at all, but proceed by certain tortuous channels until they ultimately find their way to and form a junction with the waters of the Nene; with the result that at the present time very serious impediments exist to the navigation of the River, and to the discharge of the drainage waters of the district forming the watershed of the Welland.

In consequence of numerous complaints as to the state of the River, made by Public Authorities and others, the Welland Trustees directed their Superintendent in November of last year to report to them upon the subject, and he stated that fully half of all the Tides during the year do not reach Spalding at all, and that there were only four or five days in each fortnight that a vessel could come to Spalding with any degree of certainty of getting away, and then her draught must be small; and further, that the same difficulty was experienced when vessels were chartered to Fosdyke only, and the goods were carried thence by lighters. So far as regards the Drainage of the District, he also stated that the River bed was then about four feet higher than it was 15 years before.

*Dated 19th February, 1896.*

RIVER WELLAND.

REPORT

BY THE CLERKS.

CALTHROP & BONNER,

Spalding.

In order to maintain the Channel of the River Welland, and to pay the proportion imposed upon them by Parliament towards the maintenance of the Buoys and Beacons in the Port and Harbour of Boston, the River Welland Trustees are authorised to raise an annual Tax amounting in round figures to £2,160, and they have, in addition, the Tonnage and Port Dues, which in the year 1895 had fallen to the sum of £216 8s. 3d. only, and they have also the Rents arising from the Herbage of the River banks, amounting in round figures to £36 a year, making a total of £2,412 8s. 3d.

The expenditure for the last 10 years upon the works amounts, on an average, to £1,336, the salaries to £352, and the proportion of the payments to the Boston Harbour Authorities for cost of buoys and beacons for 8 years amounts on the average to £194. During the last two years, still larger claims have been made by the Boston Authorities. Questions have arisen, and are still pending, as to whether the whole of such claims can be sustained; if so, the average cost for 10 years will be considerably increased. There are also miscellaneous expenses which amount on the average, in round figures, to £220 annually, and there is an existing mortgage debt of £8,500, the interest upon which amounts to £369.

The Trustees have not any power to increase the amount of taxation as levied by them, and it will thus be seen that any increased income can only arise from an increase in respect of dues on ships navigating the River.

These dues which, before the establishment of the Great Northern Railway, amounted to several thousands a year, have now diminished, until in the year 1895 the total amount received (as previously stated) was £216 8s. 3d., showing a reduction of more than one-half since the year 1890, when £504 16s. 9d. was received, and it is feared that unless the navigation be improved, the amount of dues to be received in the future will continue to diminish.

Since the River was trained seawards, the whole of the cills of the Outfall Sluices into the River have been lowered, with the object of facilitating the discharge of the waters passing thus to sea, and when the bed of the River was cleared from silt, there was a fall from such lowered cills in each instance, though now there is an accumulation of silt upon the cill upon each of such Outfall Sluices.

The result of a sudden and heavy flood in the upper portion of the River Welland might be to cause a breach in one of the Banks of the River, and thus to flood an enormous area of land which must then suffer most serious damage.

The Trustees are advised that the only effective mode of rendering the Welland free from the accumulation of silt would be to train the channel to deep water. If the Trustees were to carry out such training to the before mentioned old point of junction between the Rivers Witham and Welland, the Witham Outfall Board are under a liability to contribute half of the cost of continuing such training from that point to Clay Hole. Clay Hole is distant some four and a half miles from such point of junction.

It has been estimated that the cost of training the Welland from the end of the present piers downwards would amount to £15,000 per mile.

*Port Dues  
216-8-3*

It is obvious that under these circumstances the Welland Trustees have not the power of raising the funds necessary to effect any permanent improvement in the condition of the River, and they, therefore, think it their duty to lay the facts before the Proprietors, in order that they may determine whether any, and if so, what steps shall be taken with the object of meeting the difficulties which must ensue in the event of the silting up of the river continuing.

We are,

Your obedient Servants,

CALTHROP & BONNER,

Clerks to the Trustees.

*Shifting sands may be as now  
confine the Channel*

*Miles  
3 1/2*

*Miles  
4 1/2  
2 1/4  
1 1/2  
3 3/4*

*415-000  
7-5-00  
3-75-0  
46,250*

*415  
216 1/4  
270  
180  
11-5  
2081-5*