

to contribute. Lord Lucan was aware of the fact that legislation for extensions and for MGW contributions thereto had to be enacted by the Summer of 1862.

For their part, the Midland directors considered the Ballina extension and agreed it was inexpedient to avail themselves of the proposed powers. So 1861 came to a close with the strong possibility of the Midland being embroiled in yet another dispute. By the third week of January 1862, little work remained to be done on the Claremorris extension; Lord Lucan inspected the new stretch of line early in February and expressed himself much pleased with the works. Captain Rich from the BoT was not quite so pleased when he inspected the line a month later, most probably in part due to pressures from other sources! On 29th April, the *Roscommon Journal* commented that the Midland directors had 'again exercised dictatorial and uncontrolled powers by refusing to open the extension . . . the Broadstone autocrats were unexorable'. The BoT approval came on 8th May and the line was opened on Monday 19th May, with two trains in each direction.

Following an offer from the GN&W for the carriage of the night mails, the postal authorities, agreed to a payment of 1s.10d. per single mile between Athlone and Castlerea, but declined to accept a proposed 1s.0d from there to Castlebar. In March, the company also tendered for the carriage of the day mails. John Rummens successfully tendered for the Westport extension in August, the engineer being instructed at the same time to take all steps to let the Ballina extension as soon as possible. This latter decision was taken despite the fact that cash was still not forthcoming from the Midland, the matter being referred to arbitration. The GN&W, with considerable celerity, served notice on the Midland's London agents on Friday 27th June, to appear before the arbitration on the following Tuesday morning. The latter requested time to consult their directors in Dublin but this was refused. Unhappy with this turn of events, some of the Midland shareholders obtained an injunction in the Court of Chancery to stop the arbitration proceedings. Vice-Chancellor Wood granted the injunction. The Ballina extension Bill passed through Parliament with all reference to the MGW subscription deleted, and work on the Westport extension stopped immediately.

These actions caused severe embarrassment to the GN&W directors, Rummens claiming compensation as the result of the stoppage. Part of the trouble arose due to the fact that whilst the Midland had two representatives on the GN&W board, they seldom attended meetings. Unsuccessful attempts had been made to have the board meetings transferred from London to

Dublin; apart from this, it would appear that the notices convening the meetings were never sent to the Midland representatives. Lucan was obviously of opinion that once the Midland paid up, they did not require to have a voice as to how their money was spent.

It is hardly surprising that the GN&W now sought to cancel its agreement with the Midland and to make alternative arrangements with the GS&W. In May 1864, the Midland board proposed an amalgamation between the two companies on the basis of a handover of debenture and preference shares. The completion of the GN&W system, including the Westport and Ballina branches, was to be secured, subject to the approbation of the Midland engineer at a total cost not exceeding £698,000, this offer being declined by the GN&W.

The latter company now proceeded with two Bills, one enabling it to raise additional capital, the second more directly affecting the MGW. Clause 4 required it to book through and to convey and forward traffic in both directions to the GS&W station at Athlone. If it refused to provide this service, then the GN&W would be entitled to running powers. Another important aspect of this Act was that it empowered the MGW to dispose of shares held by it in the GN&W.

Apart altogether from the wranglings at this level, it was obvious from the *Mayo Constitution* that the Midland was 'resorting to every artifice to depreciate the Northern line or divert its legitimate traffic'. Scathing editorials appeared condemning the Midland board in relation to lack of services and attempts to divert traffic. By October 1864, the GN&W Deputy-Chairman, John Parsons, was suggesting the desirability of going to Parliament for a Bill empowering the company to raise additional capital for the purchase of rolling stock and also for running powers over both the MGW and the GS&W to Dublin. The matter was raised again at a board meeting in November but was defeated by a majority of four to one, Parsons resigning after the meeting.

By now, it seemed that common sense was beginning to prevail and we find John Kelly tendering for the completion of the various works. By the beginning of the new year, Kelly had commenced work and by April good progress was reported with an opening anticipated by September. It would appear that somewhat similar problems were encountered at Saleen Lake as had been experienced at Lough Owel – see page 19 – with the works sinking into the lake. The new extension was inspected in September by the Earl of Lucan when it was announced that a flag station would be provided at the Islandeady road crossing, although it was to be almost 50 years before a station was opened here in May 1914. A

further inspection was carried out by the directors early in January 1865, but the severe winter, which had led to a cessation of work prevented an inspection by Captain Rich until 28th January, with the line being opened on Monday 29th January.

Two sections of line now remained unopened, that from Westport town to the Quay and from Manulla to Ballina. It was necessary to go back to Parliament in 1866 for an extension of time. The Act laid down that the Quay line should be opened for traffic before any portion of the line between Foxford and Ballina. Work had already begun between Manulla and Foxford, and by the time the Act was passed, it was ready for the laying of permanent way as far as Ballyvary. Despite the requirement in the Act, which was favoured by the directors, Lucan decided that the Ballina line should be pushed forward. Due to difficulties with the Moy River bridge and also the poor state of the money markets, work slowed up and it was 1st May 1868 before the line opened to Foxford.

Despite the opening of the line, some matters remained outstanding. In particular, at Manulla Junction, the signal cabin and waiting room were in an unfinished state as was the goods store at Foxford. These were only completed after the MGW threatened to write to the BoT. In the interim, at the shareholders' meeting in August 1867, Lord Lucan stated that the directors were recommending that no further works be constructed owing to the inability to raise further capital. It was no surprise therefore, when an application was made for an abandonment order for the line beyond Foxford and also for the Westport Quay line. The matter was referred to the BoT who gave their approval for the abandonment of the Ballina extension but not for Westport Quay. The warrant was duly issued on 24th September 1869.

It was to be another five years before the Quay line opened for traffic, and in the intervening period work had recommenced on the Ballina line, which was opened in May 1873. This latter work resulted from a new agreement between the two companies. The original agreement dating from 1859 had been for ten years and by 1867, the Midland board was reviewing the situation and giving consideration to whether its representatives should remain on the GN&W board. This matter came to a head in July 1869 when the GN&W was informed that as no notice of any of that company's meetings had been received for some years, the three Midland directors were resigning their positions.

In the previous February, Messrs. Cusack and Waldron had met the GN&W directors in London and put forward proposals for a renewal of the 1859 agreement. The MGW was to have the entire working of the line,