

The Malta Standard

Wednesday December 8 1880

The Malta Railway

At length we are glad to be in position to announce that there are unmistakable signs that in a short space of time, the inhabitants of these Islands may be able to boast of possessing a railway. After years of discussion and expectation we may now look forward to the construction of the railway with certainty and confidence, the predictions of those who asserted that the "Iro Horse" would never be seen in this Island in the nineteenth century will in no way be realised. It will be remembered that some two year ago the General Works Company Limited took up the railway scheme but it came to nothing, for after the lapse of some time the Company was wound up. A new company has been, however, started with every prospect of success by some enterprising individuals in London, and the English papers of the 1st instant publish the prospectus of the Malta Railway Company Limited.

There is not the slightest reason to doubt that the scheme will be successfully carried out, and we fervently hope the public of Malta will show their spirit and enterprise by subscribing for shares in the new venture. It will, we feel sure, be in time a profitable investment. Although the railroad in Malta will not be "the grand instrument for effecting a peaceful, social, commercial and agricultural revolution, that dividing rod of the nineteenth century, which not only discovers treasures but creates them," - which it is in large countries, - still we venture to affirm that it will greatly benefit the people of these Islands in different ways.

The notice of the prospectus of the company, taken from the *Post* of the 1st inst. speaks for itself.

"The Malta Railway Company (Limited) is established under concession from the Government of Malta with a capital of £60,000 in £10 shares and with borrowing powers. The concession, which is for 99 years has been approved by the Home Government and is for the construction of a line of railway from Valletta to Notabile, and so important is the making of a railway considered that the construction of a tunnel under the lines of fortifications has been sanctioned by the Government, who have also assured to the company during the next five years the privilege of any extension of the railway. The railway is to be constructed under the supervision of a board of engineers appointed jointly by the Malta Government and the representative of the Home Government. The Prospectus states that the line will commence in the centre of the city of Valletta, opposite the Grand Opera House, and pass underneath the fortifications by a tunnel 1,000 yds. long, and continue six miles and five furlongs across the island through or near the towns of Msida, Cermi, Birchircara, Balzan, Lia, Attard, Zebbug, Mosta and Nasciar, terminating at the city of Notabile or Citta Vecchia, the ancient capital of Malta near which are the palace and gardens and other attractions, which constitute Notabile the great pleasure resort of the Maltese. It will pass through a district containing a population of 100,000 inhabitants and be worked by trains running at frequent intervals, carrying passengers at low fares, and it is estimated when completed to give a return of 9 1/2 per cent per annum. The line is contracted to be completed with stations, telegraphs, and rolling stock to the satisfaction of the engineers for £58,500, ready to open for traffic by 31st December, 1881. Interest at the rate of 5 per cent per annum on the paid up capital being guaranteed until that day or until the line is completed and opened throughout for public use. The shares are payable by instalments extending to 31st of May, or in full on allotment, the amounts paid bearing interest at the guaranteed rate from the day of payment".