

MIRFIELD GAS BILL.

Further evidence in support of the case for the promoters of this bill was taken yesterday in the Select Committee presided over by Lord BLACHFORD. Counsel appeared as on Friday for both parties.

Mr. MICHAEL, Q.C., called *Mr. Day*, secretary to the Mirfield Gas Company, who produced the accounts of the company.

In reply to Mr. LEDGARD, the witness said the only authorised accounts published were those of which a copy was furnished to the Clerk of the Peace. In 1877, wages and salaries were £1,480, but in 1878 the item was £1,645. That increase was explained by higher salaries having been paid and more gas having been produced.

By Mr. CLIFFORD.—Although the consumption of gas in 1878 was less than in 1877, the production was greater, as a great loss had occurred by leakage, caused by the mains being affected by frost. He did not produce the books of the company, because no notice had been given to that effect by the opposition.

Mr. Dempster, C.E., examined by Mr. MICHAEL, said he was well acquainted with the Mirfield Gasworks and the character of the district they supplied. It was a scattered district. The annual production of gas was 43,000,000 cubic feet, and the capital was £43,000, the proportion therefore being £1,000 of capital for 1,000,000 cubic feet of gas. He adduced other figures with the view of showing that the additional capital asked for was required for the necessary extension of the works.

By Mr. LEDGARD.—The new gasholder would cost £10,000, and another £2,000 would be required for new mains. He thought £43,000 new capital would be requisite for the entire extension contemplated in the bill.

Mr. Hawksley, C.E., examined by Mr. STEPHENS, described the Mirfield and Ravensthorpe district as an active manufacturing locality, well supplied with railways, canals, and levels. Since 1841 the population had nearly trebled. It was found by experienced engineers that in nine or ten years there must be a duplication of gasworks, and consequently a duplication of capital. In the present instance the original company had been entirely exhausted.

Mr. STEPHENS.—What new works are necessary at Mirfield? A new gasholder, additional plant in respect of purifiers, some enlargement of mains, and a considerable extension of mains from town to town.

What would you estimate the gasholder to cost? At least £8,000.

By Mr. LEDGARD.—In the House of Commons he had stated that £57,000 of capital would be required for the extension, but that was for a longer period of years than was now contemplated.

On the conclusion of Mr. Hawksley's examination,

Mr. LEDGARD addressed the Committee in opposition to the bill, contending, on behalf of the Mirfield Local Board, that the standard price of gas should be 3s. 6d. instead of 4s. per thousand cubic feet, and that the amount of additional capital should be reduced to £15,000. Moreover he asked that a clause should be inserted to allow the Local Boards to become purchasers of the works.

Evidence for the petitioners was then called.

Mr. Armitage, Chairman of the Mirfield Local Board, stated that the board had paid last year £392 for lighting the public lamps, and the terms charged by the Gas Company were the same as to private consumers. There was a road between Leeds and Huddersfield passing through Mirfield, and that portion of the road was not lighted at all. Other places situate in Lower Hopton, Upper and Lower Crossley, and elsewhere, also required public lamps.

The Committee adjourned.