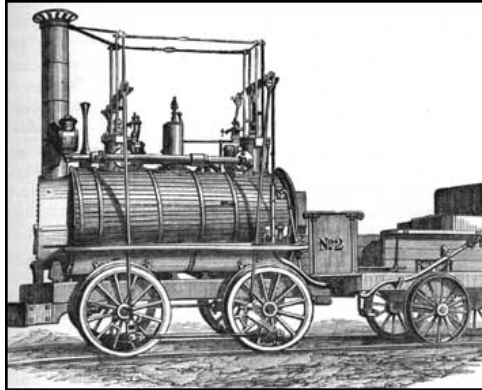


Transport Developments



During the 1870s American and Canadian farmers were helped greatly by developments in transport technology. In the USA, the improvement in steam engines became a major industry in itself. One of the interesting facts is that as the railway companies grew in America a 'multiplier' effect

happened. This basically meant that other industries grew alongside the development of the railway business.

Very quickly the major railroad companies set about covering the whole of the country with a fast, efficient transport network. Americans hard wheat (which did not go off quickly) was moved across America by railroad and then transported by brand new steamships to Great Britain. All the major corn growing areas of America became linked by a vast railway network that quickly paid for itself. At the same time as America's growth as a world corn supplier Australia, New Zealand and Argentina were also starting to produce cheap meat and dairy produce. These five countries all needed a really efficient way to transport their goods to Great Britain.

Steamships

Before the 1870s transporting goods to Britain was not possible or cost effective, but the price of transporting wheat fell by over 90 per cent (33 cents to 2 cents) between 1870 and 1914. The main reason for this was the introduction of cheap steamship transport. Refrigerated steamship development started during the 1880s. This was the death knell for British agriculture. In 1880 the SS Strathleven arrived from Australia with the first cargo of frozen

beef and mutton. Most of this was bought by the lower classes who had never eaten any meat before except pork. Refrigerated steamships were then followed by new canning technology that allowed food to be packaged and transported cheaply and freshly. The British market was flooded with imports. British colonies also started to transport goods back to Britain using the new steamship transport and farmers in Britain faced financial failure. All of this contributed to the Great Depression in British agriculture.

TASK

In fours, role play a conversation that might take place in a farmer's cottage. The conversation will be between four British farmers. They are complaining about the new transport technology and how it is helping America, Canada etc to make more money as they lose it.

You should write out a role play and include the following details:

- ☺ What the new technology actually was?
- ☺ How the Americans took advantage of the new technology?
- ☺ What effects this had on Britain (use last week's notes to help you)?