

IN MANCHESTER STAFF CORRESPONDENTS

The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959); Jan 14, 1930;

A Five Years' Respite.

Manchester has a considerable interest in two incidents that fall on Wednesday in the affairs of her neighbour Stockport, whose Town Council will hold a special meeting in the afternoon to receive, among other matters, a report upon the application for a Government unemployment grant toward the cost of constructing the waterworks in Goyt Valley. Mr. J. H. Thomas has intimated that this is likely to "contribute substantially to the early relief of unemployment," and presumably, therefore, he would do as with Manchester and the Haweswater scheme—pay all the interest on the capital expended during the period of construction. But with that almost certain guarantee in mind the Waterworks Committee will report on Wednesday that, in view of the heavy capital expenditure involved, it is not possible to commence these works for about five or six years.

The same announcement will also be received with interest, no doubt, by the town's meeting to be held in the evening for the purpose of discussing the Parliamentary bill that incorporates the Goyt Valley waterworks scheme. There are Stockport residents among the known opponents of this proposal, and it is expected that the town's meeting will afford them opportunities to express their points of view, particularly since the most recent official declaration that the Waterworks Committee is not prepared to make a public way over the dam toward the southern end of the valley. Meantime, leaders of the Ramblers' Federation and the Footpaths Preservation Society were out in the valley at the week-end tracing on to their ordnance maps every known footpath, however obscure. This is part of the preparation of the case they have to present to the Waterworks Committee when next it receives them.

THE GOYT VALLEY SCHEME.

Stockport Town's Meeting.

ALMOST UNANIMOUS

At a well-attended meeting in Stockport Town Hall last night the consent of Stockport's ratepayers was obtained for the Corporation's Parliamentary Bill dealing with the Goyt Valley water supply and the construction of new roads. The schemes, which involve large sums of public money, offer the prospect of easing the unemployment problem, and, apart from the criticisms of one or two dissenters, were never in any danger. As the meeting was confined to Stockport ratepayers, the ramblers, who might have been expected to enter a protest against the Goyt Valley plans, were mainly ineligible to attend. At the same time it was announced that the Council was in negotiations with their representative organisations

The Mayor of Stockport (Mr. Joshua Preston) was in the chair, and after the Town Clerk (Mr. Robert Hyde) had explained the bill in detail, Councillor William Slack, chairman of the Waterworks Committee, moved a resolution of consent for that part of the bill dealing with waterworks

During the past year, he said, they had had an increase roughly of 6,000 consumers. The committee had had a very anxious time, and it was only by the splendid help of the consumers that a constant supply of water was maintained. From these facts they would see that a committee could not stand still.

Manchester's Conditions.

Other possible sources considered by the committee included a valley adjoining the Kinder, the Manchester water supply, and Wilmslow. To obtain water from Manchester Corporation would not only be too expensive, but the conditions attached to the obtaining of the supply were so onerous that the committee had had no hesitation in dismissing this idea.

As regards Wilmslow the committee had a contractor at work enlarging one of the boreholes so that tests could be made of the quantity of water available from that source and were hopeful that a further 1,250,000 gallons of water per day, in addition to the 750,000 already available there, would be secured, and if their hopes were fulfilled the fear of a repetition of last year would be avoided. The beginning of the work in the Goyt Valley would be postponed for a short time. The committee was convinced, however, that the Goyt Valley was the only place within reasonable distance that would give the water required at a reasonable price

The Goyt Embankments.

It was proposed to make an embankment of earth grassed over about 120 feet high across the valley of the River Goyt, just below the site of the old powder works. This would form a lake about three-quarters of a mile long. At a later stage another embankment of the same description would be made across the valley near Bunsal Fann, and this would form a lake half a mile long. The speaker ventured to say that instead of disfiguring the valley these two lakes would enhance its beauty (Applause.) The access of the valley would be as at present or improved. Some parts of the roads which were now unsafe would be replaced by roads well kept and of easier gradients.

The resolution was carried, the meeting being virtually unanimous, after which the General Purposes Committee asked consent for that part of the bill dealing with new roads, notably the covering over of the river for 412 yards between Mersey Bridge and Lancashire Bridge and the widening of Princess Street. The total cost of the scheme was £210,000, of which the Ministry of Transport were expected to grant £126,000, leaving the Corporation to find £84,000. It was reckoned that it would involve a rate of 1 64d in the pound for 60 years. Consent was also duly given to this part of the bill.

To the Editor of the Manchester Guardian.

Sir,—The meeting of ratepayers of Stockport, as reported in your columns to-day, would appear to have been very much misinformed by those who ought to have known better.

Mr Slack, chairman of the Waterworks Committee, ought to know very well that Stockport can be supplied with water from Haweswater at a cheaper rate than is possible from the Goyt Valley scheme. Mr. Slack, if he will inquire in an impartial manner, will find out that he can save the ratepayers of Stockport large sums of money by supplying Stockport's future needs from Haweswater rather than the Goyt Valley. Stockport ratepayers in this connection will do well to bear in mind that the terms on which they would obtain water from Haweswater would be sanctioned, after inquiry, by a Parliamentary Committee before which Stockport would be as fully heard as Manchester. The attempt to represent Manchester as a huge and brutal dictator is, under the actual circumstances, very wide of the mark. In the interests of their own pockets the Stockport ratepayers will do well to wake up even at this, the eleventh, hour.

Apart from the interests of the ratepayers of Stockport, it is quite absurd to suggest that the creation of reservoirs will improve the appearance of the Goyt Valley. The most beautiful scenery in the Goyt Valley, and indeed in any part of Cheshire or Derbyshire, is that immediately above the Goyt bridge and the stepping-stones. The valley for a mile and a half above the stepping-stones is peculiarly steep on both the Cheshire and the Derbyshire banks of the river. The chestnuts, oaks, pines, and larches which clothe these steep banks add to the beauty of the exquisite scenery, as do the mountain streams which descend in broken waterfalls to the Goyt. This peculiarly beautiful scenery is to be ruthlessly destroyed; for the level of the higher reservoir will submerge all that is most beautiful in the scenery. What will be left above the level of the reservoir will be tame and commonplace. Will not the ratepayers of Stockport join those of Buxton and Manchester to save this exquisite scenery?—Yours, &c.,

GOYT BRIDGE.

Buxton, January 16.