

GOYT VALLEY WATER SCHEME.

Questions in Stockport Council.

SIR WILLIAM KAY'S CONTENTION.

A discussion took place at the meeting of the Stockport Town Council yesterday on the Corporation's proposal to construct a reservoir in the Goyt Valley. Sir Thomas Rowbotham asked if some official statement could be made in regard to the proposal. Letters of some considerable importance had been appearing in the "Manchester Guardian" on the matter.

The Goyt Valley was a very popular resort, and in the minds of a good many people there was great regret that it should be altered. The statement had been made on the authority of Sir William Kay, the chairman of the Manchester Corporation Waterworks Committee, that Manchester could supply the needs of Stockport and could do it cheaper than Stockport could do it by going to the Goyt Valley. If that were not true it wanted an authoritative denial from Stockport, and people should be informed of the actual facts.

Alderman Charles Royle said that the Council would have to go to Parliament for consent to the scheme, and the council ought to be very careful what they did and said.

Alderman Henry Green, chairman of the Waterworks Committee, challenged the criticisms that had appeared in the press, and said he resented the interference of the "Manchester Guardian" and of Sir William Kay. Sir William's statement was a wild statement to make, for he did not know the cost of Manchester waterworks from Haweswater himself, still less did he know the cost of the scheme for the Goyt Valley. He assured the people of the town that Stockport Waterworks Committee would get their supply of water in the cheapest and most efficient manner possible, and would not neglect any means of verifying such statements as those of Sir William Kay.

"Why should we go to Manchester?" he asked. "They do not keep the bargains they have already made. They tried to break the bargain that was made years and years ago when they were allowed to take our water in Longendale on the condition that we should have a million gallons of water at 2d. a thousand. They went to Parliament to try and break that bargain, a thing no decent business man would have done."

The Stockport scheme, he claimed, would enhance the beauty of the Goyt Valley, whereas the Corporation would not interfere with the gathering-grounds and the land surrounding the reservoir. Land they had not been able to obtain was being cleared of all timber, and the beauty of that part of the valley was going fast. He hoped the Goyt Valley scheme would go through.

The Goyt Valley.—"H. S." writes:—May I point out to all those interested in the preservation of the Goyt Valley that the proposal of Stockport Corporation Water Board to construct two large reservoirs will shortly come before a Parliamentary Committee? The time is drawing near when every effort will have to be made to save this famous beauty spot, otherwise we shall be providing an excuse for other corporations to follow Stockport's example, as well as losing one of Cheshire's and Derbyshire's most prized possessions. May I suggest that those who are opposed to the scheme should appoint a deputation to meet the First Commissioner of Works and state their case before him? The attention of the local members of Parliament should also be drawn to the matter, and the Stockport Corporation might be asked to reconsider the proposal.

THE GOYT VALLEY.

The Proposed Reservoir.

To the Editor of the Manchester Guardian.

Sir.—With reference to Alderman Green's speech at the meeting of the Stockport Town Council on Wednesday, may I point out that his claim that the Stockport scheme would enhance the beauty of the Goyt Valley is manifestly inaccurate, if he refers to what is infinitely the most beautiful part of the Goyt Valley—namely, that above Goyt Bridge and the stepping-stones. The unique beauty of the two miles above the stepping-stones arises from the extraordinary steepness of the glen and the beautiful blending of trees, conifers, chestnuts, beeches, and oaks, with the heather and moss-covered rocks. It is this peculiarly beautiful part of the Goyt Valley, the most beautiful scenery in Cheshire or Derbyshire, that all lovers of nature are so particularly anxious to save. If this remarkably picturesque glen were to be submerged—as is intended by the Stockport scheme—its beauty would be lost to scores of thousands of citizens of Stockport, alive and yet unborn. I do not know to which part of the valley Alderman Green refers when he speaks of "land they had not been able to obtain being cleared of all timber"; but I do know that both the Derbyshire and the Cheshire sides of the glen in the above-mentioned most beautiful part of the valley are clothed with chestnuts, beeches, oaks, and pines, which are particularly beautiful at the present time of late October.

Alderman Green, having a bad case, has descended to the old tactics of abusing the plaintiff. Alderman Green abuses Manchester for having attempted to raise the price of water supplied by Manchester to Stockport. Does not Alderman Green realise that the cost of the making and upkeep of reservoirs and pumping stations and pipes has risen by at least 75 per cent since pre-war days? Surely not even Manchester can be expected to supply Stockport at a loss.

One fact of supreme importance to the ratepayers of Stockport is to be noted. Manchester can and is willing, and is indeed already by Parliamentary Act bound, to supply Stockport with as much additional water as she may require, as soon as the Haweswater works have been completed. Furthermore, as Sir William Kay, chairman of the Manchester Waterworks Committee, and his engineers and financial advisers have worked out, Stockport ratepayers will be saved much expense if the additional water likely to be required by Stockport in the future is taken from Manchester and not from the Goyt Valley. I appeal to the ratepayers of Stockport to save their pockets and the most beautiful scenery in Cheshire or Derbyshire at one and the same time.—Yours, &c,

M. INGLEBY.

Manchester, October 24.

The Goyt Dissenters.

Recent correspondence and news in these columns has explained the nature of some difficulties which exist between the Stockport Corporation and the two main bodies of walkers, the Footpaths Preservation Society and the Ramblers' Federation. Stockport's plan for the partial flooding of the Goyt Valley will submerge paths commonly used at the week-ends by the holiday-makers, and might even cut them off from a rural valley whose nearness to the towns makes it the more precious. The Society and the Federation, therefore, have twice asked the Corporation to receive a small group of representatives to discuss the plans prepared for Stockport's new Parliamentary bill. Their request has been politely received, but so far no meeting has been arranged. Time is getting short, and it is expected that the delay cannot last much longer.

When application was made for power to construct the Derwent Waterworks the bodies interested in the preservation of footpaths gave evidence before the Committee of the House, and an arrangement with them was observed when the waterworks were completed. It is clearly advantageous that such an arrangement should be made before and not after the bill is introduced, and that is what the walkers' associations desire from Stockport. But if accident prevents them from making out their case to Stockport and obtaining some measure of satisfaction it will still be open to them to oppose the bill.

It is not only footpaths that are concerned, but the beauty of the upper slopes and of the timber that stands there. These are quite material considerations. The Chairman of the Stockport Waterworks Committee said yesterday that the scheme would actually enhance the beauty of the valley. Such a promise will appeal to those who walk in it. Nobody wants the new work to be as unsightly as the old Stockport reservoirs in the Kinder valley, on the shoulder of the Peak.