

PROPOSED NEW RAILWAY FROM HUDDERSFIELD TO LEEDS.

In bringing before the present session of Parliament a bill for the construction of an alternative line of railway from Huddersfield to Leeds, the London and North-Western Railway Company are keeping pace not only with the requirements of the times, but continuing the enterprising policy which has so long marked the conduct of the company's business. In recent years we have seen not only the doubling of the railway from Manchester to Huddersfield, but a rebuilding, or rearrangement, of town railway stations, which has shown an adequate appreciation of the needs of the day. Now, however, the proposal to make a new line which shall give an additional route between Leeds and Huddersfield, and also place the immense industrial district known as Spen Valley in closer touch with the world around, constitutes an incident which cannot pass without notice. On various grounds the proposal seems to be thoroughly justified. During the last twenty years the traffic on the company's main line has grown enormously, and reflects the extension which has taken place in the district through which it has passed. While this circumstance would form a basis warranting the provision of increased facilities, such places as Cleckheaton, Heckmondwike, Liversedge, and Gomersal have so far been practically left by this company beyond consideration. That they can be no longer ignored will be apparent to all who have followed the endeavours made by those towns to secure municipal incorporation. Whatever might be thought of the claims to that distinction, the statistics of the bulk of trade done, and the character of the goods produced in those towns, show at least that they must already be, apart from what they may in the future become, important feeders of any railway system which sets itself to serve so important a district. Very naturally the Spen Valley people have had a grievance against the railway companies on account of the coldness and inattention of which they have been the subjects. To reach Leeds, they have been compelled to make somewhat tedious journeys by way of Low Moor, of inhospitable aspect; or through Dewsbury, necessitating in the latter case a change to another station some distance apart; whereas in the event of the new line being made, direct approach from Spen Valley to either Leeds or Huddersfield would be possible, and these two towns would in that case stand in an equally good relationship to Bradford with respect to social and business intercourse with Cleckheaton, Liversedge, and Heckmondwike. Taking those three places as of no less importance than Dewsbury in point of population and commerce, we find that in their communication with Leeds they stand at a large disadvantage as compared with Dewsbury. Upon the main line running between Leeds and Dewsbury—the London and North-Western—no less than 51 trains are daily available between Leeds and Dewsbury; while only 29 are available via Low Moor on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway between Leeds and the Spen Valley stations. This manifestly imposes a hardship, which a new railway would do much to minimise, and it is therefore in no way surprising that the project is viewed with much favour in the range of country through which the new line is expected to pass, since it is one that cannot fail to minister to its various requirements.

The new railway, it is proposed, shall have its commencement on the main line between Bradley and Mirfield, at a point known as Heaton Lodge, and join the main line again near Leeds, at Wortley, having in the meantime passed through Mirfield, Heckmondwike, Liversedge, Spen and Cleckheaton, Great Gomersal, Birstall, and Gildersome. The new railway will be 13½ miles in length, and although numerous cuttings and embankments will have to be made, the total tunnelling will only measure 1½ miles. The most costly portions of the line will be that at Heckmondwike, where a quantity of property will have to be acquired. So far as can be gathered, the promoters would appear to prefer to encounter the outlay the new railway will involve rather than proceed with the doubling of the existing line from Huddersfield to Leeds, which, apart from the engineering difficulties at Morley, would form a very expensive piece of work. It seems also probable that the present line may be reserved pretty largely for the express traffic, since it is 1½ miles shorter than the proposed alternative line, and that the latter may be employed for the conveyance of nearly all goods beyond Mirfield for Leeds and the north, as well as for the new local goods and passenger traffic. The promoters give no indication on their plans as to the location of the stations on the new railway, but it may be expected that the needs of the community in this respect will be closely studied. As stated, the new railway will have its commencement from the main line, near Heaton Lodge. At Mirfield a viaduct of 150 yards in length will cross the canal, and 116 yards farther there will be another viaduct of 198 yards, which will just clear Bank Mill. The line will pass through New Scarborough, the principal street of which and Doctor-lane will be spanned by a viaduct 190 yards long. After passing the Grammar School, the line will curve to the left, over Dark-lane, and near to Jill-lane, beyond Northorpe. Skirting the eastern side of the reservoir, near the Park Colliery Sidings, the line is to pass Park Farm (Liversedge). A viaduct 260 yards in length will commence near the Heckmondwike boundary, and terminate at the other side of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Company's line to Ravensthorpe. A little past the Dewsbury-road will be a tunnel 300 yards long. Cemetery-road, Battye-street, Brighton-street, and Mount-pleasant will be passed. The Liversedge boundary will be entered in the vicinity of Leeds-road, and the line will pass near Listing-lane, and from Littletown to Walsh Houses. Spen-lane is next reached; then the bottom of Round-hill, and then Moor-lane. About 180 yards beyond Owllet Hall the line will enter a tunnel 680 yards in length, and will pass on to Great Gomersal, through the Gomersal Hall grounds, cross the bottom of Queen-street, and over Bradford-road, midway between Birkenshaw Bottoms-lane and Nutter-lane. At Birstall the line will pass through Oakwell Wood and across by way of Fieldhead-lane, Geldard-road, and Raikes-lane, on to Howden Clough. At a distance of 220 yards beyond the Birstall boundary a tunnel of one mile and forty-eight yards will commence, and will terminate a little beyond the road in course of construction, passing between the townships of Gildersome and Morley. The fall from the Birstall boundary will be one in seventy the whole of the remaining way, except when close to Wortley station. The tunnel will pass under the Bradford and Wakefield road, south-east of Gildersome-street, and then forward a little to the left of Gildersome Foundry, in Stone Pit-lane, and under the Great Northern Railway at the latter point. The line will then proceed, curved in and out, almost parallel to Geldard-road, but at a distance varying from 200 to 300 yards from it. It will then cross over the London and North-Western Company's line from Leeds to Dewsbury, a little over three-quarters of a mile distant from Wortley station, and will join that line and terminate 320 yards south-west of that station.