

THE DISTRICT OF BLANCHLAND AND ITS PROSPECTS OF IMPROVEMENT.

TO OUR EDITOR OF THE NEWCASTLE DAILY JOURNAL.

SIR,—Perhaps a short notice of the works in progress, and the proposed improvements in the roads of this district, may not be uninteresting to some of your numerous readers.

In the first place, I may mention that, for the improvement of the roads and the benefit of the country, the Rev. D. Cooper is now, at his own cost, constructing a line of railway from the Wansdale Iron Company's Lane, near Belle Law, to the Old White House Lead Mine, at Belle Burn, which is nearly the centre of the Inverness Lead Mining Company's Works. The first portion of the railway, for about a mile in length, is to be a locomotive line, and worked in connection with the Wansdale Iron Company's Lane. The other is upon an incline plane, and worked by a standing engine at the top. The length of this portion is about half a mile, at the end of which, or at Old White House, there is to be a road and line to be built, as well as leading tracks for the produce of the Inverness Lead Mine, which will be sent down by rail to the stopping place of Shields or Hartlepool, via Wolsingham. The construction of the railway has been entrusted to Mr. Richard Gordon, the well-known contractor of Crawley-side, near Mashope; and, from the success which that gentleman has displayed since the project was first started, it is certain that nothing shall be wanting on his part to give the completion of lead in this district the benefit of the most useful means of conveyance for their coal, lime, lead, or other products, as in any remote period.

I believe Mr. Gordon and the Rev. D. Cooper have come to an agreement for the working of the line after its completion. The same gentleman will also supply rails and lines at very much lower prices than those of which they have been obtained elsewhere previously. The advantages of this railway will however much fall in this district, where we consider that all coal, lime, lead, or other goods, have been to date over the hills, a distance of seven or eight miles, the road being very heavy and much exposed.

To make the advantages greater to the district, it is proposed to improve the existing and construct new roads, for the full distance from the terminus of the railway, at Low White House to Bay Bridge.

The first portion of the road, viz., from the terminus to a little below, which is called Inverness level, a distance of about a mile and a half, has been previously offered to be constructed and maintained by the spirited Inverness Lead Mining Company. The other portion is proposed to be done at the joint expense of Lord Clouston's Trustees although whose estate it passed, and the Rev. D. Cooper.

I venture to say that all who have ever had to travel from Blanchland or elsewhere, via Bay Bridge towards Mashope, will hail the proposed improvement as a great boon to the public.

It is proposed, at the suggestion of Mr. Rowlandson, Thelwell, the agent for the trustees, to put a bridge over the water at Bay Bridge, about 25 feet above the level of the present ford, and direct the present road so as to wind round the hill and avoid the heavy part of the bank. The gradient of the proposed road, I believe, is about 1 in 6.25, and the heaviest portion of the improved road will be about 1 in 8.50.

In addition to the above named improvements, Mr. Rowlandson has had a survey made, and levels taken for a new road from Blanchland to Achna Hill, with a view to obtain a better and easier route to Mashope. The existing road has been felt for many years to be very heavy and dangerous for carriages, and almost impossible for any horse to get up with a load. I understand the route selected has many advantages. It passes through the centre of the cultivated land upon the trustees' estate, thus affording easy access for lime, &c., to the several farms. Very easy gradients have been obtained, and the road covers very little of the land in cultivation. Mr. Richard Gordon has been entrusted with the execution of the district and proposed improvements, and I understand he has furnished plans and sections, with estimates of the cost, to Mr. Rowlandson, the trustees' agent; and trust by the united assistance of Messrs. Rowlandson, on behalf of the trustees, and Mr. O. A. Dargy on behalf of the Rev. D. Cooper, a speedy conclusion will be soon to open the subject, and that we long the district of Blanchland will show to the trustees and the Rev. D. Cooper that these improvements have been beneficial, not only to themselves and their property, but to the whole district and the public generally, who will be prepared as with one voice to thank them for what they have done. It is not my worthy of notice that the person who made the survey and took the levels for Mr. Gordon was Alexander of the valuable institution of the trustees of Burnborough Church, and it is these great credit upon the life teacher there, viz., Mr. Thom. Moore.

Allow me, in lieu of seeing the above proposals speedily carried out, to subscribe myself, yours truly,

BLANCHLAND.