

# READY TO EXPAND GARFIELD PARK ELEVATED LINE

## Express Service Planned; To Seek City's O. K.

BY OSCAR HEWITT.

The Chicago Rapid Transit company is acquiring the right of way for the first major structural improvement within Chicago since the Kenwood and stock yards branches were completed in 1908. The project in doubling the track capacity of the Garfield park line, of the Metropolitan system, between Marshfield and Cicero avenues.

This line now has two tracks and has the heaviest traffic of any west side branch. A third track is to be added as soon as an ordinance can be obtained and a fourth track within a reasonable time thereafter.

### Gets Land for Expansion.

Surveyors were noticed on the right of way in two spots last Monday and again Friday. Inquiries at the offices of the "L" company yesterday gained the information that it has been acquiring needed land for doubling the width of the Garfield right of way since last August. Every parcel has been obtained which can be bought at a private sale, which is a little more than 60 per cent of the land needed.

The remainder will be acquired by condemnations, the necessary petitions for which have been under preparation by attorneys for the company for three weeks. The estimated cost of the new land is \$2,300,000.

The steel structure, with equipment and other facilities fully to use the new acquired right of way, it is estimated will cost, \$3,900,000.

This makes a total of \$6,200,000. That is approximately one-fourth of the value placed on the Metropolitan west side elevated lines in 1919 by the Illinois Commerce commission, when it announced the net figure of \$25,558,595. The relative size of the contemplated improvement may be indicated in another way. The total value of the land in the Metropolitan right of way in 1919 was fixed by the Utilities commission at \$8,137,086, as compared with an estimated cost of \$2,300,000 for the additional right of way on the Garfield branch.

### More Comparative Figures.

The miles of tracks on right of way owned by the Metropolitan total 56.95, while the tracks on the new right of way will be about 9.5 miles.

The engineers of the company estimate that one full working season will be sufficient to erect the new structure after the steel has been fabricated. It is hoped that the condemnation proceedings can be disposed of in three or four months. After that an ordinance permitting the erection of the new steel highway will be necessary before any actual work can be started.

On the face of these estimates, it might be presumed that the added facilities will be available at the end of 1929; but it may be recalled that this is one of the improvements for which the elevated asked ordinance permission on Sept. 27, 1924. It is one of those on which no action has been taken.

### Makes Other Improvements.

Since then the Chicago Rapid Transit company, its figures show, has

spent a trifle over \$4,000,000 in an attempt to give improved service during rush hours. Structural changes have been made in the loop, and the platforms have been lengthened. 458 new steel cars have been purchased. Trains have been lengthened so that 8-car trains are operated on the north and south sides and 6-car trains on the west side.

About 1,100 cars now are run through the loop during the morning rush hour. Perhaps a better indication of improved service could be conveyed to the layman by the assertion that 74 8-car trains are brought in from the north side in an hour, compared with 36 10-car trains operated in the New York subway in the same period of time.

If the city permits the construction of the added tracks on the Garfield park branch, the company promises that the time saving between Cicero and Marshfield avenues will be from 8 to 10 minutes. The Garfield branch with its two tracks has a skip stop

service at present, but that is not a real express service.

### Type of Homes Changes.

The need for the added track space is due principally to the multiple type of residence. This line ran when opened in 1895 through a territory that was much more built up than the territory then traversed with other elevated systems in Chicago; but the west side was a section of one-family homes. It filled up on that plan in the inner half of the territory. In recent years, the single homes, many of them cottages, have been replaced with flat buildings and a very large part of the construction in the outer edge of the territory also has been of apartment buildings. The result is that the Garfield park branch is the worst congested of the west side "L" branches in the morning rush hours.

In addition to the added tracks, the company plans to purchase 200 more steel coaches, if the Illinois Commerce

commission grants the estimated 20 per cent fare increase requested Feb. 14 last. But that cannot come until next year. The company will file on June 12 a revaluation of its property; but the city and the Commerce commission desire until September in which to present their figures to combat the values of the corporation. No decision is expected in the fare case until October or November.

The local transportation committee of the city council has scheduled a session for next Wednesday morning to decide what its procedure toward transit will be, in view of the failure of the legislature to grant any enabling legislation. Early last week several aldermen suggested that the committee should consider improvements in elevated service; but at the meeting Friday no mention was made.