

RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY

Hon. Chairman :-

M. P. L. CATON, PH.D., 10 GROSVENOR GARDENS, UPMINSTER, ESSEX.
(TELEPHONE : UPMINSTER 5991)

Vice-Presidents :-

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LORD KINROSS

PROFESSOR C. L. MOWAT, M.A., PH.D.

TORQUIL NICHOLSON, ESQ., B.Sc., A.M.I.E.E.

Appointed at 1968 AGM: Lord Popplewell, C.B.E., J.P.; Professor D.R.P. Wiggins, M.A.;

The Very Rev. J.H.S. Wild, M.A. (Dean of Durham); Dennis F. Taylor, Esq.,

PROGRESS REPORT No. 76

SEPTEMBER 1968

THE TRANSPORT BILL

✓x As we go to press, the Transport Bill is undergoing the final stages of its Parliamentary procedure. The Society's proposals, outlined in our March issue, were submitted to the Government and we have received an official reply. With regard to our submission that the railways should be relieved of their need to provide concessionary fares, we have been informed that they are now under no statutory obligation to provide any such fares unless fully justified on a commercial basis.

Our suggestion that the Minister should be given powers to reverse closure decisions produced the usual negative reply that the existing powers to prevent closures provide a very considerable safeguard. Does it not occur to our legislators that circumstances can change, e.g., through the building of a new town, which can render a railway a vital necessity whereas perhaps it was only of marginal importance at the time of its closure, and that, in any case, even Ministers can make mistakes?

Our proposal that TUCCs^o terms of reference should be widened to permit discussion of all matters relevant to rail closures was also rejected, but it is encouraging to note increasing support for this measure in political circles. This proposal was also among those put forward by the National Council on Inland Transport. In the debate in the House of Lords in which an amendment to the Bill to this effect was moved by Lord Kinnoull, the Council's President, a considerable number of members spoke in favour, although the amendment was unfortunately rejected.

It is regrettable that the Minister of Transport agreed to the withdrawal from the Bill of the sections which provided for (a) a new tax on heavy road vehicles to cover the cost of their damage to the roads and (b) an additional charge for the conveyance by road of excessive loads as payment for the cost to which these give rise. The Society approached the Ministry of Transport for official reasons for this change of policy. We were informed that the charges had been withdrawn from the Bill in view of changes in excise duty and fuel tax imposed in the Budget which charged larger increases for heavier vehicles. We were also told that the charges proposed in the Bill would have imposed an intolerable burden on the road haulage industry, so it appears that

they have been let off lightly in the Budget. Although the imbalance has, to some extent, been corrected, heavy vehicles are still not paying their full costs. One does not hear such soft sympathy for BR, for which subsidies must be justified on strictly social grounds. ✕

FALSE FIGURES

✕ In our last issue, we referred to the false figures of alleged losses in the documents issued to objectors by TUCs. These figures have been criticised by this Society for many years. The matter has, however, assumed new proportions with some of the current closure proposals where large losses are indicated for services for which we have every reason to believe closure would bring no saving whatever.

Two major reasons why these figures grossly exaggerate the saving are (a) their failure to allow for loss of contributory revenue on other lines (which can be considerable) and (b) their over-estimation of the track costs, which, we understand are based on an average for BR as a whole and not on the much cheaper maintenance rate used on these secondary lines which can usually be run as "basic" railways.

We are determined to put an end to this scandal, which has gone on for far too long. Apart from misleading the TUCs, these published losses are liable to deter users from objecting to the closures on the grounds they would not be justified in supporting the continuance of services which are apparently such a considerable burden on public funds. Since we are not allowed to challenge the figures at TUC hearings, we have taken up the matter with the Ministry of Transport. It is hoped to publish more details of our efforts in this direction in our next progress report. ✕

THE GREAT ISLE OF WIGHT TRAIN ROBBERY

As mentioned in our last progress report, this book was duly published on Monday, 27th May, and has received a great deal of publicity. Reviews and reports were published in The Times, Guardian, Daily Sketch and many provincial papers. The July issue of the Railway Magazine had a very favourable review.

In the July issue of the county magazine "Hampshire", the first article (Railway campaign in the Wight, by John Arlott) provides one of the most outstanding reviews of the book that we have seen. Mr. Arlott says that the book "ought to be read wherever people need and cherish their railways or any other institution for, though its specific concern is local, its implications stretch to the limits of the struggle between men and officials." ... "This is a book about railways in the Isle of Wight: it is also, in its implication, a book about painfully undemocratic aspects of a country which calls itself democratic."

Alderman Mark Woodnutt, the MP for the Isle of Wight, recently sent a copy to Mr. Richard Marsh, the Minister of Transport. We await with interest the Minister's comments.

Before publication, a copy was sent to BR, but, although approached by the Press, no statement denying the allegations made in the book has been forthcoming, except the comment "BR figures are never wrong" to one newspaper.

The early sales tended to be in the Isle of Wight and Hampshire, but, as the national importance of the story the book tells and the implications for the whole country have become realised, sales have been building up all over the country. A decision to order a first reprint is expected to be made in the very near future.

The Society should be very grateful to the author, Mr. R.E. Burroughs, who is our representative in the Isle of Wight.

Copies can be obtained, price 7s. 6d. each, from any bookseller, or, in case of difficulty, direct from the Railway Invigoration Society, Spring Vale, The Grove, Ventnor, Isle of Wight, at 8s. 6d. which includes postage and packing.

HAVE YOU SEEN THEM ?

We refer to those little notices in close print, tucked away in a corner of the newspaper where they are unlikely to attract attention, announcing that British Rail are proposing to withdraw all passenger services between A and B and the intermediate stations on a specified date.

Slowly, but relentlessly - year after year - the process goes on and British Rail's deficit continues to rise, whilst in many parts of the country the railway, like the stagecoach, is becoming a memory.

The Railway Invigoration Society needs more members to help it in its efforts to :

- (a) halt the present closure policy;
- (b) amend the present legislation so that lines which have been closed can be reopened;
- and (c) obtain impartial investigation into the true financial position where lines are threatened with closure.

For details of membership, write to the Membership Secretary (Mr. D.J. Bradbury) 59, Dore Road, Dore, Sheffield.

PRESS CUTTINGS

The Cuttings Officer urgently appeals to all members to send him press cuttings on matters of concern to the Society. He comments : "75% have recently been coming from one area only. The majority of cuttings have only included details of closures. More news of local progress is urgently needed, as well as any news on threatened closures. With the total aggregate of cuttings,

25% are from the Great Eastern Section;

20% are from the North Eastern Section;

18% are from the Southern Region;

15% are from the Western Region (including Cambrian Coast line);

15% are from the Midland Region (North-Western Division);

5% are from the Midland Region (Central division);

2% are from the Scottish Region.

I shall be obliged if members will send the cuttings as soon as possible. "

The Cuttings Officer is Mr. B.R. Sageman and his address is : Lenox, Taylor's Lane, St. Mary's Bay, New Romney, Kent.

The Northern England Branch has its own arrangement for press cuttings. As far as the Branch's area is concerned, members are requested to send extracts direct to an official of the Branch. The Branch is particularly concerned about any unfavourable comment, and, if informed accordingly, it will be possible to arrange for a suitable statement or letter to be sent to the editor.

CORPORATE MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following new corporate members :-

Droylsden Urban District Council, (Lancashire)

Shildon Urban District Council, (County Durham)

VENUE OF 1969 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The response to our appeal to members to send Mr. Stanley their views on the venue for the next annual general meeting has been disappointing. As the National Committee is anxious to make a decision on this matter, will all those members who have not yet completed and returned the slip on page 11 of the last progress report, please do so without delay ? The last day for the receipt of slips in order for your voice to be effective is 30th September. Owing to severe pressure on space, it is not possible to repeat the slip in this issue.

COMMENTARY BY THE NORTHERN ENGLAND BRANCH

The betrayal by TUCCs

As members of the Society will be aware, Transport Users' Consultative Committee (TUCCs) (which are similar to consumer councils in other industries) have two functions - considering "quality of service" matters and reporting to the Minister of Transport in connection with proposed closures. It is the latter role which has given rise to a great deal of mistrust during recent years.

There is, of course, no need to discuss at length the follies of restricting a report on a proposed closure to the narrow concept of hardship and its alleviation. It will be sufficient to state that a considerable body of public opinion now feels that TUCCs should report on all relevant matters to the Minister. In reply, the TUCCs claim that the Transport Act, 1962, restricts them to considering hardship only and that they are, therefore, unable to take other factors into account, but an examination of the facts does not appear to bear this out.

Although the Transport Act does require TUCCs to report to the Minister as soon as possible, the Act does not actually restrict them to considering hardship only. True, section 56 (4) does impose certain restrictions on TUCCs, but these relate to "quality of service" matters. At the same time, it should be remembered that TUCCs are under no statutory obligation to report on matters other than hardship, but it would be wrong to think that the Act prevents them from doing so. It is revealing that correspondence with several TUCCs and the Central Transport

Consultative Committee (the parent body of the TUCCs) has not resulted in any evidence being produced contrary to this.

The above case cannot be regarded as the first blunder made by TUCCs regarding the interpretation of the 1962 Act. For some time TUCCs claimed that they could not consider representations received from railway men objecting as users against proposed closures, although no such restriction was imposed by legislation. It was not until 1964, the peak year for rail closures, that they realised that there was nothing preventing them in this connection.

As if TUCCs have not been awkward enough, it seems deplorable that the contents of their reports are not published. Admittedly, short press statements are issued when reports are submitted to the Minister, but how can users, who have much at stake, have confidence in TUCCs when the latter are not even prepared to publish their findings ?

Although the Minister now consults more bodies before appointing TUCC members, it is doubtful whether they can be regarded (as they themselves claim) to be representatives of rail users. Very few TUCC members even travel by rail to hearings into proposed closures. It should be appreciated that most hearings are arranged to be convenient from the rail travel point of view. Naturally, TUCC members, like the travelling public, cannot be expected to use rail facilities if the latter are not convenient. But if TUCC members are not willing to travel by rail when it is convenient, how can they be regarded as sympathetic to rail users ?

In connection with proposed closures, BR prepare documents, known as "Heads of Information" justifying their case for closure. These documents are circulated by a TUCC to objectors before a hearing. It does seem strange that the Yorkshire and the North Eastern Area TUCCs, unlike other TUCCs, do not include a sketch map showing existing and alternative travel routes. For these two TUCCs to include a sketch map would, of course, require more effort, but could it be that such maps are deliberately excluded to confuse objectors regarding alternative facilities ?

The handling of the proposed closure of the Darlington-Richmond line by the North Eastern Area TUCC is a typical example of the half-hearted attitude of TUCCs. This line was subjected to an earlier proposed closure, which was refused by the then Minister in December, 1964. It is intolerable that this line should, within such a short period, be, this year, again the subject of a proposed closure. But what is even worse is that there has not been the slightest protest from the TUCC. Under British justice, no man is tried for the same crime twice. Why must it happen to railway lines ?

The performance of TUCCs during recent years has given, unfortunately, the impression that they are trying to justify BR's destructive closure policy rather than to genuinely assist users. This opinion is confirmed by the press statement made as a result of the TUCC report submitted to the Minister in late July on the Darlington-Richmond line. The statement said, among other things, that hardship would be caused because 'bus fares are higher than rail fares. Then, in what looks to be a tone to appease BR, it adds: "There seems to be a likelihood, however, that rail fares may be increased", which is, because of its unreliability, bound to seriously damage the objector's case for retention of the line. If the TUCC think they can pretend to narrow the gap between 'bus and rail fares, they appear to have intentionally overlooked certain very important points.

Firstly, although rail fares are bound to be increased at some time in the future, it is extremely unlikely that there will be an imminent increase. Secondly, cheap day fares were increased only last November and an increase of ordinary standard rail fares was recently refused by the Prices and Incomes Board. Thirdly, an increase in local rail fares is usually, judging by past experience, followed by a corresponding increase in 'bus fares. Fourthly, 'bus fares in the Darlington/Richmond area were increased last May, although the TUCC appear to have ignored this aspect, which does, in fact, widen the gap between the cost of 'bus and rail fares.

Since the press statement was issued, the TUCC have refused to enter into any correspondence about the report, claiming that the latter's contents are confidential, although, as stated previously, present legislation does not prevent them from publishing their report.

There is little evidence, if any, to suggest that, even though rail closure is subject to the provisions of the Transport Act, 1962, TUCs are acting in the interest of rail users. Indeed, the incompetent way in which proposed closures are handled by TUCs is almost certainly undermining the rail users' point of view.

Perhaps it is now about time that TUCs, whilst still adhering to the provisions of the 1962 Act, became more aware of their responsibilities to users by considering all relevant factors and not being afraid to publish their findings. That way justice would not only be done, but also be seen to be done.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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The editor will consider for publication letters on matters of general interest to members. Any opinions expressed, however, must not be taken as necessarily reflecting the official views and policies of the Society. The editor reserves the right to make "cuts". Letters should normally be signed by writers' real names. Only in exceptional circumstances, which must be clearly stated in a covering note, will a letter be accepted for publication under a nom de plume.

How not to run a railway ?

During Easter week, two friends and I stayed on a farm behind Cemmaes Road station (recently closed) in central Wales. As we had very large rucksacks, I asked the local Divisional Manager if a train on its scheduled journey to Machynlleth could stop at Cemmaes Road. Permission was refused, though the platforms are still extant. In addition, there are staff to deal with the level-crossing and trains slow down to 5 m. p. h. for the passing loop.

On our return journey, we caught a 'bus leaving Cemmaes Road at 8.22 a. m. in order to "connect" with a train leaving Machynlleth at 10.51 a. m. Imagine our chagrin when the train received a signal check at Cemmaes Road, which we had left over two and a half hours previously!

K.H. Rudolph, 48, Cambridge Road,
Battersea, London, S. W. 11.

REPORTS FROM BRANCHES AND AREA REPRESENTATIVES

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(Edited by Mr. H.R. Purser, 30, Staines Road, Feltham, Middlesex.)

Readers seeking more details on particular items should contact the appropriate representatives.

London and Home Counties Branch (formerly London Branch)

Acting Chairman : Mr. R.V. Banks, 121, Ashford Road,
Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent.

Fields in which the Branch has taken an active interest are :- the proposal by the Southern Region to economise on waiting-rooms; change-giving machines in the new Euston Station; the GN suburban service; and the Clapham Junction-Olympia service. The two major points of interest are the proposal by BR to withdraw through bookings from north London stations and the recent diesel train fire at St. Albans. The latter event led to the formation of a Harpenden Commuters' Association, with which the Branch co-operated. Very recently BR announced that they would withdraw the type of diesel unit involved in this fire. The unit had already been the subject of correspondence on the grounds of unsuitability.

X The "meeting on rails" originally arranged for 9th July (but postponed because of the labour dispute affecting late night services) was eventually held on 31st July. This was a tour of north London suburban lines, including Moorgate (BR) - Hampstead - Broad Street - Liverpool Street - Romford - Upminster - Barking - Kentish Town. It was an unfortunate choice of evening, as there was a terrific cloud-burst at Seven Kings and there were train delays of up to 3 hours out of Liverpool Street station. BR permitted the use of the tickets on both the London Transport and Fenchurch Street lines. All the proposed routes were covered except between Romford and Liverpool Street.

Some years ago, a RIS sub-committee made strenuous efforts to persuade BR to keep the Tonbridge-Redhill-Guildford-Reading passenger service going. BR decided to experiment with 3-car diesel-electric sets on a regular-interval basis, augmented in the rush hours. Traffic on this line has built up steadily and it is quite obvious that efforts to keep the service going have been well worthwhile. According to rail staff, the receipts are still rising. X

The AGM of the Branch will take place on Tuesday, 10th September, at 18.30 hours, at Caxton Hall, Westminster. A joint meeting with the RDA (London Branch) has been fixed for Tuesday, 1st October, when a panel of experts will discuss possible improvements in cross-London rail links. The Branch hopes to hold its November meeting on Tuesday, 19th, with a lecture on the Channel Tunnel.

East Suffolk/East Norfolk Branch

Branch Secretary : Mr. B.R.A. Cooper, 1, St. Paul's Close,
Aldeburgh, Suffolk.

X The public hearing of the objections against the proposed closure of the Yarmouth-Southtown-

Lowestoft Central line will be held at the Town Hall, Great Yarmouth at 11.00 hours on Tuesday, 24th September. So far the Branch Secretary has received a protest from only one member. If other members have any comments, they should be sent at once to the Branch Secretary. A body of businessmen have formed themselves into the Norfolk and Suffolk Joint Railway Group with the object of running the line should it be closed. ✕

Merseyside Branch

Branch Secretary : Mr. P. T. Byrne, 13-15 Kilmorey Park,
Hoole, Chester.

✕ At an open meeting of the Society held in Liverpool on Saturday, 25th May, the above Branch was formed. Officers elected were Mr. A. S. Fyne (Chairman) and Mr. P. T. Byrne (Secretary). Mr. C. J. Busler was elected a committee member and Mr. I. N. Huetting has been co-opted to the committee. ✕

✕ Liverpool was without Corporation 'buses from 11th March to 27th May. Many suburban train services proved their worth, notably the Liverpool Central (high level) - Gateacre Line, due to have been closed on 4th May. The City Council lodged an appeal against the granting of a licence to a private 'bus operator for the running of a substitute 'bus service. The appeal was heard on 28th June. At the time of going to press, the result is still awaited. Ironically, this line was closed for a fortnight during the "work-to-rule" only a month after the 'bus strike had ended. ✕

The Chester Northgate-Hawarden Bridge service will be withdrawn on 8th September, assuming replacement 'bus routes have their licences granted. This will mean the end of the Chester Northgate-Wrexham Central/New Brighton service. Only the trains to Manchester Central will then run from Chester Northgate. The Tucc inquiry into the proposed diversions of this latter service into Chester General station (via a new junction at Mickle Trafford) was held on 24th May.

The Minister has asked for a further investigation to be made into the running of the New Brighton - Wrexham service, with a view to making a grant for its continuance on social cost/benefit grounds. ✕

Recent ministerial decisions include rejection of closure of the Wigan Wallgate - Atherton-Manchester Victoria line (including Atherton, Daisy Hill and Walkden stations). Consent has, however, been given to closure of Southport St. Luke's station.

✕ BR has proposed the withdrawal of the Manchester Exchange - Liverpool Lime Street, via Tyldesley and via Patricroft, stopping services, with the consequent closure of Leigh, Monton Green, Tyldesley and Worsley stations (nominal date : 7th October). If these proposals were implemented, a revised direct service between Manchester and Liverpool would be introduced. ✕

Northern England Branch

Branch Secretary : Mr. R. K. Mains, 114, Manor House,
Jesmond, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE2 2 LY.
Northumberland, County Durham and the North Riding of Yorkshire. The Branch condemns

BR's refusal to reopen Ferryhill station. Ever since its closure in March, 1967, the Branch has, in co-operation with the two local authorities (both corporate members of the Society), pressed for the restoration of the station's passenger facilities. Contrary to BR's opinion, the Branch believes that reopening of the station would be economically feasible, using only one platform and encouraging more traffic.

The Branch is most concerned about certain of the "black" lines in the 1967 official "British Railways network for development". On 5th August, the Alnmouth-Alnwick line, which was listed to be developed for freight, was due to be completely closed. The Darlington-Bishop Auckland line, which is supposed to be developed for passenger traffic, has recently had certain trains withdrawn and the lack of improvement, as well as the present inefficiency, is causing concern. These measures could be part of a deliberate attempt to run down the line.

✓✗ The BR spokesman at the TUC inquiry into the proposed closure of the Darlington-Richmond line said that it was not the wish of railway management to close lines, but the above situations clearly show that BR are pursuing a policy of overall deterioration of rail services, although only last year many lines were included for development. ✗

Cumberland, Westmorland and the East & West Ridings of Yorkshire. ✗ The TUC inquiry into the proposed closure of the Hull-Scarborough main line is expected to be held shortly. The Branch will be represented. As it is understood that BR have already admitted that losses could be reduced to some extent, it must be questioned whether they are complying with section 3 (1) of the Transport Act, 1962. ✗

✓✗ In June, the Branch participated in another joint meeting with the Railway Development Association and the Scottish RDA. The subject was the need for railway expansion in north-west England and south-west Scotland. Members may have seen reports in recent issues of the Railway Review from Whitehaven and Workington branches of the National Union of Railwaymen about the poor timing of trains and the lack of adequate publicity of services on the west Cumberland route (Barrow-Whitehaven-Carlisle). The Branch, which is strongly in favour of the development of this route, has written to the NUR branches concerned. A reply is awaited. ✗

✓✗ Mr. Marsh, the Minister of Transport, has approved the closure of the Waverley route (Carlisle-Hawick-Edinburgh). The Branch has since issued a statement, which received favourable publicity in the national and local press, deploring the decision. BR must be blamed for the high deficit, due to the deliberate running down of services and the overlooking of efficiency. ✗

Isle of Wight

Area Representative : Mr. R.E. Burroughs, 3, Spring Hill,
Ventnor, Isle of Wight.

✓✗ Following BR's refusal to meet County Council officials to discuss the reopening of the Shanklin-Ventnor line, The Area Representative wrote to the island's MP, who is now endeavouring to arrange a "working party" consisting of himself, BR and the Ministry of Transport. ✗

Somerset, Dorset and Western Hampshire

Area Representative : Rev. W.M. Andrew, 30, Richmond Wood Road,
Bournemouth, Hampshire.

✓✗ The report of the Tucc to the Minister on the Swanage-Wareham branch line indicates hardship to holidaymakers and day visitors to Swanage if they had to depend on a 'bus service' likely to be seriously dislocated by road congestion. If, as a result of closure of the line, holidaymakers were deterred from visiting Swanage, hardship would fall on trade and business in the town. The Tucc consider that, outside the summer period, closure would cause a little hardship to daily travellers to Poole and Bournemouth, who would be faced with additional journey time and cost. The Committee also indicates that it could see no means of alleviating hardship from road congestion other than by retaining the full train service during the summer period, with perhaps a reduced service at other times - at least until road improvements reduce congestion on the Wareham-Swanage road. ✗

Devon and Cornwall

Area Representative : Mr. A.E. Wilkinson, 41, Cross Street,
Northam, Bideford, Devon.

During the recent BR labour dispute, all London services to, and from Devon and Cornwall were routed via Bristol, usually resulting in a change of trains at that point. Many services were withdrawn for the whole, or part of a day, while some of those still operating were poorly patronised, because potential passengers had found other means of transport in order to be on the safe side.

✓✗ Just as the last progress report went to press, the proposed closure of the Barnstaple Junction-Ilfracombe line was publicly announced. At the beginning of this year, various economies were made. These led people to hope that the line might have a further lease of life, but BR have since stated that they can see no hope of making it pay. An objection has been made on behalf of the Society, but the date of the Tucc hearing has not been announced yet. ✗

✓✗ A regular "freight liner" service is now operating between Par (Cornwall) and London, mainly for the conveyance of china clay. ✗

Three Counties Area (Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire)

Area Representative : Mr. W.H. Parker, M.B.E., Well Meadow,
Pontshill, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire.

It is much regretted that our oldest branch has, for the time being at least, ceased to exist. However, we are very pleased to announce that Mr. Parker, formerly Chairman of the Branch, has kindly agreed to continue to take an interest in its territory in the capacity of Area Representative.

In the past 60 years, Stroud, in Gloucestershire, has made remarkable progress in industry, housing and tourist attraction. Geographically, it is a focal point, with interesting valleys

leading to it from many directions, especially from the Cotswolds. It has many industries. Around it is outstandingly beautiful country. Stroud is 12 miles from Gloucester. It is on the main railway line from Cheltenham and Gloucester to London. Leaving the main line between Gloucester and Stroud is another main line to Bristol and the South-west. Gloucester Eastgate station has been modernised for fast rail traffic from the North and South Wales to London and to Bristol and beyond. Express trains between Gloucester and London have stopped at Stroud and Kemble (for Cirencester). In the past, there have also been, almost hourly, local trains running between Kemble and Gloucester, stopping at about six small stations and halts besides Stroud. Now there are few, so Stroud Valley and Cotswold dwellers and visitors must travel by 'buses through narrow winding roads to Gloucester. What seems to be required for the inhabitants of the district between Gloucester and Kemble, and for the many visitors, is a frequent diesel car service, stopping at the existing small stations and halts which, except for Stroud, would be staffless.

✓~~x~~ BR have under consideration the replacement of Central and Eastgate stations at Gloucester by a new station at Barnwood, an eastern suburb of the city. ✗

Badminton (Glos.) station closed to passengers from 3rd June.

Norfolk (North and West)

Area Representative : Mr. M.R. Thomas, "Shangri-la",
16, King's Lynn Road, Hunstanton, Norfolk,

Although no report has been received from Mr. Thomas, we understand that he is still busily engaged on behalf of the Society. ✓~~x~~ We congratulate him on his election to Hunstanton Urban District Council. ✗

✓~~x~~ The King's Lynn-Dereham line is due to be closed from 9th September. ✗

OTHER NEWS

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The public inquiry into the proposed closure of Manchester Exchange station was held on 7th August.

Intermediate stations on the Bedford St. John's-Bletchley line were reduced to unstaffed halts from 15th July (see also Corringenda, p. 12.)

Conductor-guards were introduced on the Cambrian Coast line from 6th May. 11 of the smaller stations have been reduced to unstaffed halts and 4 others are now staffed for only part of each day.

National Committee member Mr. J. Randall has sent us the following particulars of two private Yorkshire railways :-

✓~~x~~ Keighley and Worth Valley (Keighley-Oxenhope) Regular services on Saturdays and Sundays began on 29th June. It is hoped to run weekday services as well in 1969. ✗

✓~~x~~ North York Moors Railway Preservation Society (Grosmont-Pickering) Negotiations with BR are proceeding well. Membership was nearly 1,100 on 15th July. A diesel railbus has been bought from BR and will be used eventually on a service between Grosmont and Goathland. The latter village has suffered in winter weather since the line was closed in 1965 and 'buses have been unable

to reach the area. Details of this Society may be obtained from John Randall, Porters Headland, Pickering, Yorkshire. ✕

The service on the southern branch of the Isle of Man Railway was extended from Castletown to Port Erin from 2nd June.

Our member Mr. E.L. Acton, of Dingwall (Ross-shire) has sent us the following news about railway happenings in Scotland:-

The Scottish Railway Preservation, with the backing of the Highland Development Board, may run a (tourist-angled) service between Aviemore and Grantown-on-Spey (HR).

BR have been re-routing traffic to Mallaig via Glasgow-Inverness-Kyle. The consensus of opinion is that the Mallaig line is in danger. There is a proposal for an Ullapool-Stornoway ferry service. If this materialised, the Kyle line would also be in danger.

Passenger service closures :-

(a) effected: Manchester Victoria -Stockport from 1st July. Yeovil Junction to Yeovil Pen Mill from 6th May.

✓✕ (b) approved by the Minister: King's Lynn-Wisbech East and Wisbech East-March, both to take effect from 9th September and thus completely depriving Wisbech of a rail passenger service. ✕Birmingham New Street/Moor Street-Stratford-on-Avon locals. Todd Lane Junction (Lancashire). Polegate-Hailsham (Sussex)

CORRINGENDA

We very much regret that certain information which appeared on p. 12 of our last issue must be corrected. As pointed out by two members, with supporting evidence, the Bedford St. John's - Bletchley line has not been closed to passengers- as we stated - but still remains open to such traffic. The editor can but don his sackcloth.

The Northern England Branch state that both they and the Scottish Railway Development Association sent, to the Scottish TUGC, objections to the proposed closure to passenger traffic of the Ayr-Heads of Ayr line. While we gladly publish this correction to our report that the TUGC had received no objections to this proposal, it must be pointed out that our information was based on a source which, from experience, we know to be normally a reliable one.

EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT, Contributions to the next issue (to be published in December) should be sent, by 1st November, as follows:-

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|-------------------------|---|---|
| Branch and area reports | - | Mr. H.R. Purser, 30, Staines Road, Feltham, Middlesex. |
| All other matter | - | Mr. L.G. Hipperson, 21, Ullet Road, Sefton Park, L'pool, 17.
(New telephone number : 051 - 733 - 3446) |

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| Chairman : | - | Dr. M.P.L. Caton, 10, Grosvenor Gardens, Upminster, Essex. |
| General Secretary : | - | (office vacant) |
| Assistant Secretary : | - | Mr. J.M. Stanley, 11, Berkeley Court, Tulse Court, London. |
| Membership Secretary : | - | Mr. D.J. Bradbury, 59, Dore Road, Dore, Sheffield. |
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