

RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY

for the retention and modernisation of railway services

Vice-Presidents:

Sir John Betjeman, C.B.E., Lord Kinross, Lord Popplewell, C.B.E., J.P., Prof. C. L. Mowat, M.A., Ph.D.
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P R O G R E S S R E P O R T

No. 83

JUNE 1970

RAILWAYS, ROADS AND CONSERVATION

(Copy of the Chairman's address delivered at the annual general meeting of the Society held in Caxton Hall, Westminster, London.S.W.1. on 25th April, 1970)

✓✕ The past year has been unique in the sixteen year history of this Society in that we are able for the first time to congratulate British Rail on making a profit. Although this is largely due to the capital reconstruction under the 1968 Transport Act, there has been a very real upsurge of freight and passenger business which shows clearly that modern railways are capable of more than holding their own in the fiercely competitive market of today.

This is an encouraging note on which to begin the seventies but I believe the full potential of rail transport in Britain is far from fully realised. 1970 is European Conservation Year and at long last it is being appreciated that 'profitability', however vital, is not an end in itself and, unless it can go hand in hand with the provision of a worthwhile environment, man is a poor creature indeed. ✕

There are few greater threats to our environment than the uncontrolled development of road transport, not only through contamination of town and countryside with noise and fumes but through the rapid consumption of land for the construction of highways and car parks. The proper use of the motor car is, of course to be welcomed, but there are few better ways of ruining the face of Britain than to regard the unlimited use of two or three cars per family and the massive road construction this would require as a necessity we must provide for, regardless of the cost. What use is a transport system which cannot function without destroying the places it is designed to serve?

Railways can play a unique part in saving us from this. Experience has shown that buses lack the speed and comfort a motorist demands if he is to be persuaded to leave his vehicle behind in the garage; and air services, for the foreseeable future, are unlikely to play more than a limited role in internal communications. Rail alone is capable of providing the major alternative acceptable to the increasing numbers with access to private vehicles. This is evident from the increased carryings on British Rail's inter-city routes even in the face of mounting car ownership.

However, motorists will only forsake their cars for trains if the service is good enough and the fares sufficiently attractive. For many the cost of rail travel is a major deterrent particularly when several people can travel cheaply in a car at a marginal cost of little more than the fuel consumed. Rail will only increase its share of the market by a more realistic fares policy; one outstanding need, for example, is for a family fare with substantially reduced overall charge.

The standard of service on British Rail has greatly improved over the past few years but our major criticism is still that the spectacular high-speed trains are confined to a relatively few routes. Elsewhere services are too often indifferent in either speed or comfort and many areas have been robbed of railways altogether as a result of closures. Nobody expects London Midland Region electrification standards on every route but a great many more improvements are needed if the whole system is to meet the requirements of today.

Outside the inter-city routes, lines may be roughly divided into three groups:- cross-country, suburban and branch services and I should like to comment briefly on how each of these can be developed. In all cases I believe the key to success lies in greater co-operation between British Rail and the local communities, through joint efforts to develop the traffic and advertise the services. A few lines have already been saved from closure by this means and this Society is endeavouring to assist action of this kind wherever possible.

To take the first group of lines, the cross-country services. Whereas it is in the interests of British Rail to develop these as part of their main system, local communities along the routes can assist in many ways such as by distributing publicity material and by putting across constructive suggestions for timetable improvements. Local authorities can help by taking over the maintenance of station buildings and approach roads which can often be developed in conjunction with connecting bus services and as railhead car parks. At the same time British Rail must be persuaded of the need to effect much needed improvements in the services on these routes; the majority of which need revitalising by the introduction of regular-interval services, higher speed and more refreshment facilities. More through services are needed to reverse the trend of recent years which has increased the need for change of trains, a deterrent to rail travel which in our opinion has been greatly under-estimated by British Rail.

The future of the second group of services, the suburban lines, lies heavily in the hands of Local authorities, especially in areas under passenger transport authorities where local rates will eventually provide the grant aid. Here there is grave danger that the value of the railways will be under-estimated owing to a failure to recognise true transport costs. Several Authorities currently favour bus to rail on the grounds of cheapness, but in fact this is only because much of the cost of bus operation is underwritten by the taxpayer in substantial rebates on fuel tax, compared with commercial vehicles of similar weight; whereas the railways are required to bear their full total cost in accordance with the Ministry grant formula, which includes a substantial contribution to British Rail's central overheads.

It is imperative that this should be taken fully into account in the planning of urban transport. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that the network of rail lines, often at present under used, which penetrate into the centres of all our major cities, provides the basis

of a rapid transit system at a much lower capital cost than the extremely expensive urban motorways.

Thirdly there are the branch and feeder lines. Although these have been severely reduced in number, most of those remaining are valuable feeders to the main lines for which road transport, often because of congestion, would be an unacceptable alternative. Many of these face an uncertain future and could be closed unless determined effort is made to develop their potential. An active local development group can usually achieve the desired result. A large proportion of these lines serve holiday places and local tourist interests can do much to encourage their use for example, by arranging for all-in holidays by rail to the resort and by advertising the services and cheap fares in local hotels, shops and restaurants.

In the coming year we shall once again be confronted with a General Election and this Society will be seeking candidates' support for a fair deal for the railways at Parliamentary level. Railways cannot adequately serve the Nation unless they are given proper treatment in relation to other forms of transport. The glaring mistake of the 1960s was undoubtedly the obsession with making the railways pay whilst at the same time ignoring the fact that heavy road haulage almost certainly does not pay the costs to which it gives rise and this matter has still not been properly resolved. Subsidies to road transport, like the railways must only be paid on properly identified social grounds, otherwise it is the responsibility of users to pay them in full.

Railways must also receive adequate investment for their future modernisation. The recent authorisation of the Crewe-Glasgow electrification is welcome news but it took several years of deliberations to decide whether this expenditure was justified - yet what a bargain it is - 250 miles of Britain's most important trunk route electrified for no more than the cost of construction of $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles of urban motorway! It is hoped that the present and future governments will realise that this is indeed money well spent and that there are other electrification schemes worthy of consideration, such as north-east England to Bristol and Wales, the east coast main lines and routes from London to South Wales and Bristol, to say nothing of many other major modernisation projects requiring capital expenditure which must go ahead if the railways are to succeed. Let us make a determined effort at both national and local level to give our railways a fair opportunity to play their unique role in the closing decades of this century.

(The above speech was quoted by BBC (Sound) on the AGM afternoon, and made front-page news in at least one evening paper that day, the Liverpool Echo. - Ed.)

RESOLUTIONS

The following resolutions were passed at the annual general meeting held on 25th April.

Copies have been sent to the Minister of Transport, to the chairman of the Railway Reform Group in the House of Commons, and to Mr. Edward Taylor, MP (the Opposition spokesmen on railways).

...

- ... (1) ✓✗ That, since the Ministry of Transport has assessed the value of saving a human life at £9,800 to offset against the cost of a new motorway, this same figure should be taken into account when considering the cost of maintaining or re-opening rail services. ✗
- (2) That the Railway Invigoration Society, being concerned at the short-sighted policy of both the Minister of Transport and British Railways in allowing closed railway lines to be sold piecemeal, thereby precluding the re-opening of services in the future, urges them to suspend such sales forthwith.
- (3) That, in order to avoid giving local authorities and other objectors a false impression of the losses on lines proposed for closure, British Railways should be required to publish the figures of the direct saving which would result if a closure is implemented and not the unrealistic figures based on the Cooper Bros. formula which is at present used to calculate social grants or justify closures.

WEST RIDING TRANSPORT SURVEY

✓✗ The Society's Chairman, Dr. Caton, was guest speaker at a meeting of Leeds University Union Railway and Transport Society on 6th March. He outlined the Society's policy on railways and explained the work we are doing at national and local level.

Particular reference was made to the West Riding area, where a comprehensive transport survey has recently been completed by local authorities. Although this survey recommends the development of four rail routes centred on Leeds, this must be regarded as a typical case of failure to realise the full potential of rail as a fast, reliable and comparatively cheap solution to urban transport problems. The survey rightly accepts that private vehicle entry into city centres must be restricted, but fails to mention that motorists generally regard rail as the only acceptable short-distance public transport alternative to the car. Buses, sometimes on reserved lanes, are proposed as the major part of the public transport network on so-called grounds of cheapness, ignoring, as we have so often pointed out, their failure to pay true costs.

We hope that Leeds, along with Birmingham, London and other road-biased authorities, will think again before it is too late and will recognise, with many continental cities, that rapid-transit rail systems are the only solution to increasing urban road congestion. ✗

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ATLANTIC

✓✗ Our member John J. Bowman, Jr., of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., has kindly sent the editor a copy of the February, 1970, issue of the news-sheet of the National Association of Railroad Passengers, the American counterpart of the Railway Invigoration Society.

Many of the problems which face NARP have a familiar ring to members of this Society.

as the following extracts from the news-sheet show:-

"NARP has joined California and other parties in a Federal court suit to compel the Interstate Commerce Commission to establish and enforce standards of service on intercity passenger trains ... In a statement issued in Washington, NARP Chairman Anthony Haswell declared: 'A number of railroads, notably the Southern Pacific whose contempt for its patrons brought this question to a head, have been providing inferior service as a means of deliberately discouraging passengers. They then appeal to regulatory authorities to let them discontinue service on the grounds of lost patronage'."

"The National Association of Railroad Passengers has asked the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Securities and Exchange Commission to order Penn Central to cease 'misleading statements and bookkeeping practices' in relation to passenger service costs of operation. A similar request was made by NARP regarding Northern Pacific Railway."

"...NARP and other interested parties won at least a temporary victory when the ICC, reacting to numerous protests, agreed to order a hearing on C & NW's bid to drop its last remaining passenger train between Chicago and Green Bay, Wis., on the Shore route via Sheboygan and Manitowoc. This means the train must keep running until the ICC decides its fate." ✕

REPORTS FROM BRANCHES AND AREAS

BRANCHES

London and Home Counties

✓✕ The Branch recently approached British Rail concerning the re-opening of the Willesden Junction-Clapham Junction line. Although BR did not feel able to grant this request, useful publicity and a favourable editorial comment were obtained in the West London Observer. ✕

✓✕ The traffic commissioners have refused all applications for bus services to replace the train service on the Ashford-Ore line. Following a five-day hearing, they have issued a report of 11 pages in which they state that many road improvements would be necessary in the area before the highways could be regarded as suitable for the safe and free flow of traffic. Since it is estimated that the roadworks could not be completed in a period of under two years, the applications have been refused. ✕

A recent decision in the High Court has ruled that Mrs. Barbara Castle acted wrongly when, as Minister of Transport, she blocked in 1967 an agreement by British Rail to sell the Robertsbridge-Tenterden line to a private company for the sum of £13,000. The Kent and East Sussex Light Railway Association now hopes to reach an agreement with the Ministry to run the

line as a youth adventure project.

The Minister of Transport has agreed to the withdrawal of passenger trains from the High Wycombe-Bourne End line.

The Branch is planning a railtour for Saturday, 18th July, using scheduled services on the Southern Region. The cost will be about £1. 8s. Any member who does not belong to the London Branch and would like to participate will be welcome. Further details may be obtained from the Branch Secretary (address below).

A branch member writes as follows:

British Rail's Eastern Region operates a rather curious train service, presumably a relic of LNER days, which they seem rather shy about.

- 2.26 a.m. Stratford to Epping (not Sunday). Not in timetable.
- 3.11 a.m. Epping to Stratford (not Sunday). Not in timetable.
- 3.50 a.m. Stratford to Epping (not Sunday). "Available only for passengers already in possession of tickets." In London Transport timetable only
- 4.49 a.m. Loughton to Stretford (not Sunday). Not in timetable.
- 5.06 a.m. Epping to Liverpool Street ER (Sunday only). In London Transport timetable.
- 5.36 a.m. Epping to Liverpool Street ER (Sunday only). In London Transport timetable.
- 6.20 a.m. Liverpool Street (Platform 13) to Loughton (Sunday only). "Available only for passengers already in possession of tickets." In London Transport timetable only.
- 6.57 a.m. Liverpool Street (platform 14) to Loughton (Sunday only). "Available only for passengers already in possession of tickets." In London Transport timetable only.

Rumour has it that these trains are under threat. Has anyone any information about them? Are they British Rail trains rather than London Transport ones? Presumably the former, as they go to Liverpool Street, Eastern Region. How many people use them? Why are they not in the British Rail timetable? Why are only half of them in the London Transport timetable? Are they on the station departure lists at Liverpool Street and Stratford?

Does anyone know of any other interesting early hours journeys around London, for instance, the 23.00 Shoburyness to Liverpool Street? Is anyone interested in a headline-catching, beauty-sleep-losing railtour on trains like these?

Please send comments to the Branch Secretary, Mr.D.J.Martins, of 54, Canonbury Road, London.N.1.

East Suffolk/East Norfolk

✓X It is with great disappointment that we have to report that the passenger service between Yarmouth South Town and Lowestoft Central was withdrawn from 4th May. British Rail caused the patronage of this line to decline disastrously by adopting disreputable tactics, with

which, unfortunately, we are only too familiar. Through workings to and from the East Suffolk line (Ipswich-Lowestoft) were discontinued and awkward connections at Lowestoft were substituted. These changes have had a serious effect on the East Suffolk line itself. We are anxious as to what further damage will be caused now that the Yarmouth-Lowestoft service has ceased. This Society was among the almost 2,000 objectors to the proposed withdrawal of this service in 1965. Will we have to fight the battle again? ✕

✓✕ As a slight offset to this sad news, we note with pleasure the re-opening of a short line at Felixstowe. This is a 650-yard spur (closed in 1898), which will enable goods trains to and from Felixstowe Dock to by-pass Felixstowe Town station, thus saving a mile in distance and reducing movements. ✕

Northern England

✓✕ The Minister of Transport announced in February his approval to the extension of electrification over the west coast route from Crewe to Glasgow via Carlisle. This decision will do much to boost services on the west coast and will greatly benefit Cumberland and Westmorland by providing swift rail links with the South and Scotland. While the Branch welcomes electrification, it is hoped that the need to develop other rail services in the North-West will not be overlooked. ✕

✓✕ The Branch held its third annual general meeting in Newcastle on 23rd March. Although the meeting expressed concern about the lack of improvement to the loss-making rail passenger services in the North-East, it was pleased that a number of important improvements would be made from 4th May in inter-city services on the east coast main line. ✕

The meeting welcomed the move by British Rail to introduce from 4th May a new low-cost rail facility between Newcastle and London. This introduces, on weekdays in the summer months, one train in each direction between Newcastle and London (Finsbury Park), calling at Sunderland, Hartlepool, Stockton, Eaglescliffe, Stevenage and Potters Bar. This costs only thirty-five shillings, which is cheaper than the present coach fare. Although this train, called "The Highwayman", is slower than the normal inter-city services, it is nevertheless much quicker than road travel. The Branch considers that this facility offers excellent value, especially when it is borne in mind that the ordinary single fare by inter-city train costs £4. 6s., and feels that it is bound to prove very popular.

✓✕ At the end of April the Tyne-Wear Transportation Study, which is independent of the Tyneside Passenger Transport Authority, put forward two schemes aimed at improving transport in the Newcastle and Sunderland areas. The first plan recommends extensive railway development and the second suggests rail development on a smaller scale. ✕

The electrification of the lines from Newcastle to Whitley Bay, Cramlington and South Shields, together with an underground railway from West Jesmond to Felling via Newcastle's Northumberland Street area, are the main features of the first plan. New rail passenger services for the Team Valley (near Gateshead) and the area west of Sunderland are also put forward. For the remainder of the rail system on Tyneside and Wearside, the plan suggests that improvement

should be achieved by means of new rolling stock and station redevelopment.

One of the important aspects of the second plan is the proposal that a rail service between Newcastle and Sunderland should be adapted to operate via Hebburn, Jarrow and South Shields.

The Branch obviously strongly favours the first plan.

Whilst the amount of rail expansion varies considerably between the two plans, the fact that both recognise that railways have an important role in local travel represents a tremendous step forward, as the past few years have seen a steady deterioration in local rail services in the North-East. Moreover, the attitude of the Tyneside Passenger Authority towards rail services is not as favourable as the Branch would wish to see. ✕

✕ From the 4th May rail passenger services were discontinued between Newcastle and Tyne Commission Quay, although the matter had not previously been referred to the Transport Users' Consultative Committee. All intermediate stations between Carlisle and Settle (except Appleby West) also lost their passenger trains from the same date. ✕

✕ Closure proposals for the Keswick-Penrith line have been announced. The Branch has already contacted a number of bodies about opposition to the closure. It will lodge an objection with the Transport Users' Consultative Committee and intends to be represented at the hearing.

The Branch is firmly convinced that rail transport has an important part to play in local travel in the West Riding of Yorkshire and is drawing up suggestions for improving local services in that area. Ideas from members would be most welcome. ✕

AREAS

Devon and Cornwall

With the possibility of Falmouth becoming a container port for shipping, it is hoped that the future of the Truro-Falmouth line may be more secure. There would undoubtedly be an increase of freight traffic in the area, probably freight-liners.

✕ The closure date for the Barnstaple Junction-Ilfracombe line has now been given as 4th October. It has been decided to keep the line open during the summer after all, so as to assist rail passengers who have already booked holiday accommodation. ✕

A special train was run on 28th March from Paddington to Torquay and back to give potential holiday makers to the Torbay area a chance to look at the district and to see possible accommodation. The project was jointly organised by British Rail and the Torbay Publicity Committee, both of whom are to be congratulated on their initiative.

In progress report No. 79 (June, 1969), mention was made of the plight of residents of a new housing estate being developed alongside the closed Sidmouth Junction station. This

situation is now worsening as more properties are built. Moreover, some of the replacement bus services were withdrawn from 10th May. This Society has been approached for its assistance in getting the closed station re-opened to at least some of the trains that pass during the day.

Greater Manchester

✓X The editor of the Lancashire Evening Telegraph has shown an interest in the activities of the Society in the area. This newspaper is currently running a "Save the trains" campaign, highlighting the need for improved rail services to east Lancashire, i.e., Blackburn, Accrington, Burnley, Nelson and Colne. There has been local suspicion of British Rail's motives in these towns recently, the latest development being the alteration in timing of some commuter trains to Manchester - an alteration for the worse in many ways. The services in the area do, of course, receive grant-aid and British Rail has denied that services are to be withdrawn as long as the aid is forthcoming. X

When rail services were withdrawn from the Leigh and Tyldesley loop in May, 1969, a condition was that the morning and evening peak buses ran non-stop from Leigh and Tyldesley to connect with trains at Manchester (Victoria) at Atherton (Central). It is no real surprise to find that these bus services are now to be withdrawn altogether from Leigh and reduced to two from Tyldesley. The Manchester-bound traveller from Leigh (population 46,200; distance 13 miles) now has the choice of catching a stopping service bus to Atherton to catch a train - an expensive and time-consuming operation - or of catching the regular-service Leigh to Manchester buses - over an hour's journey in the peak period. More than likely the extra traffic caused by withdrawal of rail services has been borne by the already overcrowded A580 and A6 roads. Congestion in the city will be increased due to car-parking. When diesel multiple-unit trains were introduced on this line in 1961, they ran non-stop to Manchester from Leigh in 28 minutes. At the end, the journey time had been increased to 32 minutes. A 25-minute schedule with 4 stops should have been easy to maintain. It may be remembered that the reason for closure of this line was to enable £250,000 to be saved on the cost of building a motorway bridge over it.

Merseyside

✓X The Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority has decided to go ahead immediately with drawing up plans and making trial borings for its inner-loop scheme. This will link James Street, Exchange Line Street and Central stations by means of underground single track. A new underground station - Moorfields - will be constructed along this track and will take the place of Exchange when it closes. As part of this scheme, a single track dive-under will be constructed at Hamilton Square station, Birkenhead, to accommodate Liverpool to West Kirby trains. The Authority is also planning an underground line between Moorfields and Liverpool Central; this would enable trains from Ormskirk and Southport to continue to Central. An excellent summary of all these plans and of exciting proposals to extend third-rail electrification in the Liverpool area is contained in the June issue (pp. 312-3) of the Railway Magazine. X

The National Union of Railwaymen considers that Liverpool should be linked with

Wigan by means of an electrified line, so as to connect with the Crewe-Glasgow line which is definitely to be electrified following approval given by the Minister of Transport. The Union thinks that Blackpool and other towns in the North-West should also be included in the scheme to extend electrification along the west coast route to the Scottish city.

In condemning a recent suggestion that commuter buses should be run through the existing and new Mersey road tunnels, the Liverpool Daily Post, in a leading article stated: "We have made ample and sufficient sacrifice at the altar of the motor car. Look at the high-level concrete monuments sweeping across the centre of Liverpool; look how the heart of Birkenhead has been transformed into a desert of tarmac and flyovers; look how the green oases of Wirral are being gobbled up by the motorway; consider how much urban acreage is given over to car parks ... a well-developed local railway network suggests itself as a viable alternative. In many cases the tracks are already in existence. What is needed is a firm belief in the philosophy and the will to execute it."

From the list of subsidised lines enclosed with this progress report, it will be noted that three lines radiating from Liverpool and one line on Wirral are not guaranteed grant-aid after the end of 1970. Attention is also drawn to the Manchester-Warrington-Chester line (of interest also to Greater Manchester Area members) for which the Minister of Transport has undertaken to pay grant covering 1970 only. The Area Representative earnestly requests the help of all local members, and of any outside the area who know or use the lines, in watching for any threat to the continuance of these passenger services.

Norfolk (North and West)

The Area Representative, Mr. M.R. Thomas, in his capacity as president of Hunstanton and District Chamber of Trade, has stated that, in his opinion, British Rail's action in holding an internal training conference for area managers and their assistants in the town in April was an "insult" to Hunstanton, as it came a year after the closure of the Kings Lynn-Hunstanton line.

North and Central Wales

✓x Members will be pleased to hear that Glan Conway station, on the Conway Valley branch, has been re-opened from 4th May. The Conway Valley Railway Liaison Committee, led by RIS corporate member Nant Conway Rural District Council, has persuaded British Rail that sufficient traffic would be generated by a new estate being built there to justify the re-opening. British Rail is reported to have suggested a "swap" with Dolgarrog station, further up the valley, but a "minimal" service has been negotiated for the latter station. This news certainly makes a pleasant change from that of closures. However, there is no room for complacency, as connections on to the main line at Llandudno Junction remain poor on the whole in the new timetable which commenced on 4th May. x

✓x The first report of the Ministry of Transport's Special Unit for the Study of Unremunerative Rail Services was published in January. This was a social/cost benefit study of the Cambrian

Coast line (Machynlleth-Pwllheli). The report dealt with the effects of the railway on a wide variety of people, organisations, and industries. Agriculture, industry, tourism, redundant railwaymen, related public-transport services and development prospects in the area were just a few of the matters considered.

All passengers travelling on the line during two separate weeks (one in August, 1967, the other in October, 1967) were issued with fairly detailed questionnaires on their use of the service. All industries in the area were circulated with another questionnaire to determine to what extent rail is used for transport of freight and parcels.

The report considers three alternative "fates" for the line:- (1) retention for an indefinite period; (2) retention for ten years; and (3) retention of the Machynlleth-Barmouth section for ten years. In all cases, the costs of retention were calculated to outweigh the benefits. The third alternative, however, was significantly "cheaper" than the other two.

Our member Mr. C. J. Busler has commented on the significance of the report's publication date - just after the closure of the Bangor-Caernarvon line. This closure makes the prospects even poorer of the North Wales coast and Cambrian coast ever again being linked by a railway.

It is thought that the Society will deplore the lack of any consideration given to the possible development of services on the line rather than just its retention.

Public reaction to the report has been almost entirely adverse. Mr. W. Edwards (MP for Merioneth) has asked the Welsh Economic Planning Council to investigate the accounting on the whole of British Rail's Mid-Wales system.

Although the line has a Ministry grant for the next two years, an action group has been set up by local authorities in the area. Our member Machynlleth UDC is a member of this group and is keeping the Society's representative informed of current developments.

On the cheerful side, a summer Sunday service of two trains in each direction is to run between Aberystwyth and Pwllheli, with connections to and from Shrewsbury, from 5th July to 6th September inclusive. The British Rail decision on this matter came too late to be reflected in the newly-published timetables. X

Merionethshire County Council has made the suggestion that a 28-inch gauge line should be built around the shores of Bala Lake, from Bala to Dolgellau, and, if possible, to the coast at Morfa Mawddach. The County Council has already bought the formation from British Rail. Society members in the area are considering their attitude to the proposals.

Extensive changes have been made to the scheduling of the North Wales coast trains in the London Midland 1970-1 timetable. These include a reduction from four to three of the number of weekday through trains from North Wales (except Holyhead) to London. One of these trains now runs to and from Llandudno instead of Holyhead. This move to provide Llandudno with through trains to and from London throughout the year is welcomed.

Local services to Chester and Manchester have been retimed in many cases.

✓✗ A meeting of representatives of local authorities and the Society's area representative took place at Bangor on 16th April in the presence of British Rail's Divisional Passenger Manager and Area Manager. The meeting was called to discuss the above timetable changes and to suggest possible improvements. A resolution was passed calling for "at least one fast through train daily, in each direction, between North Wales and Cardiff." This meeting also pressed for booking facilities to be extended at North Wales stations. Representatives were pleased then by British Rail's announcement that cheap day concessions would be granted from all stations on the 08.44 Holyhead-London train. ✗

OTHER NEWS

Narborough station (Leicester-Nuneaton line), which was closed to passengers from 4th March, 1968, re-opened to such traffic from 5th January, 1970. Blaby Rural District Council is paying £1,450 towards the cost of operation in the first year and £900 for the next two years.

✓✗ The Minister has consented to the closure to passenger traffic of the Cambridge-St. Ives line. It will be recalled that the Society published a memorandum on the proposal (see progress report No. 79 for summary). ✗

Shortly after we went to press, the Fleetwood-Kirkham line was due to be closed to passenger traffic - from 1st June. Last-minute attempts to save the service were, however, being made by the local MP, Mr. Walter Clegg.

A campaign in the district is aimed at securing the re-opening of Lostock Hall station (near Preston) which was closed to passengers last year. All trains between Preston and Blackburn which run at frequent intervals, have, from 4th May, been re-routed to pass through the station. Re-opening would do much to relieve congestion on local buses. On the other side of Preston, local pressure exists for the re-opening of Wrea Green and Moss Side stations (between Kirkham & Wesham and Lytham stations), closed in 1961. The idea is to compensate for recent cuts in bus services in South Fylde.

EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

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(Please note slight change in address)

Mr. Purser is responsible for branch and area reports, Mr. Hipperson for all other matter. To ensure inclusion in the next issue (to be published in September), material must be submitted to the appropriate editor so as to reach him by 1st August (except that urgent late news will be received by Mr. Hipperson up to 8th August).

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Private and confidential

PROGRESS REPORT No. 83

JUNE 1970

MEMBERS ONLY SUPPLEMENT: ISSUE No. 3

GENERAL ELECTION

Owing to the energetic co-operation of all members of the National Committee, a policy statement and questionnaire will be sent to all parliamentary candidates representing the three main political parties at the general election to be held on 18th June.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT GROUPS

✓✗ We have not proceeded with our proposed local development group for the Exeter-Salisbury line, as there is already a committee of local authorities working for the retention of the line. We have offered this committee our assistance with their work. Meanwhile, we are investigating the possibility of forming groups in other areas; but our efforts are severely limited by the active help we have available. Our appeal in this respect in the last progress report was disappointing. The next two years could well decide the ultimate future of much of the grant-aided network. Unless these lines are publicised and developed, traffic will fall away. Even the most pro-railway Minister will be forced to reject renewal of grants. British Rail has indicated its willingness to work together with interested parties to promote these services. In the few areas where this has already been done, positive results have followed. Please will all members willing to assist this work on any line they care to name, contact the General Secretary. ✗

COST-BENEFIT SURVEYS

✓✗ The Society is preparing a memorandum commenting on the Ministry of Transport's cost-benefit study recently completed for the Cambrian coast line and this will be published shortly. It has recently been announced that a similar survey is to be conducted in Cornwall and others may follow. It is thus most important that general observations on the methods used by the Minister in this pilot scheme should be brought out now to enable improvements to be made in the costing techniques in future cases. ✗

USE OR LOSE - On the authority of the National Committee, the Publicity Sub-Committee is

to produce a completely revised version of the Society's popular leaflet "Use or lose your local railway line!"

SYMBOL COMPETITION

✓X The winner of the competition for a Railway Invigoration Society symbol was Mr. R. Macqueen, of 20, Culgaith Gardens, Enfield, Middlesex who will receive a prize of rail travel to his specification up to a value of five pounds. The judges were Dr. Caton (Chairman), Mr. R. V. Banks (Public Relations Officer) and Mr. R. H. Whittaker (a member of the National Committee). X

SUBSIDIES TO PASSENGER SERVICES

✓X Accompanying this members only supplement is a reproduction of the lists of grant-aided passenger services which were published in "Hansard" of 18th December last. X

PRESS CUTTINGS

Mr. Sageman, our Cuttings Officer, is most grateful to the large number of members who send him material. Masses of cuttings reach him every day from all parts of the country, so that it is impossible for a separate acknowledgement to be made for each batch. Nevertheless, members are urged to keep up their support of the Society's work in this way. Mr. Sageman particularly asks, however, that no more cuttings from the Railway Gazette should be sent to him, as he is a subscriber to that periodical.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

About twenty people attended the seventeenth annual general meeting of the Society which took place at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, London, S.W.1. on Saturday, 25th April.

Reports

A booklet containing copies of the reports presented to the meeting is enclosed to members.

Officers and National Committee, 1970-71

All vice-presidents, as shown at the head of the main progress report, were re-elected.

M. P. L. Caton, Esq., PhD, and Mr. J. M. Stanley were re-elected to the positions of Chairman and General Secretary respectively.

Mr. B. R. Sageman was elected Treasurer. This appointment means that the temporary arrangements for dealing with the Society's financial affairs mentioned in the last members only supplement have now ceased.

The following were re-elected to the National Committee:-

Mrs. R. Colyer; Messrs. R. V. Banks, J. W. Barfield, D. J. Bradbury, J. M. Firth, L. G. Hipperson, P. I. Lighton, R. Macqueen, G. F. Manley, D. J. Martins, R. G. Pullen, H. R. Purser, H. G. M. Rogers, A. W. Sharp, R. H. Whittaker.

Three new members were elected to the National Committee, viz.,
Messrs. E.R. Barbery, D. Fennell, E.H. Longland.

In addition, all branch secretaries and area representatives are ex-officio members of the National Committee.

Subscriptions

It was agreed that subscriptions for the year commencing 1st January, 1971 will be as follows:-

		per annum *
Corporate members		
Local authorities serving a population of 12,500 or more	£3.	(£3.00)
Local authorities serving a population of under 12,500	£2.10s.	(£2.50)
Parish councils	£1.10s.	(£1.50)
All other corporate members	£3	(£3.00)
Ordinary members		
Ordinary individual members	£1.10s.	(£1.50)
Registered students	15s.	(£0.75)
Aged under 18 or over 65 (minimum)	10s.	(£0.50)

* Decimal currency equivalents in brackets.

Future annual general meetings

✓ The meeting decided that next year's annual general meeting should be held outside London, but that the exact place would be fixed by the National Committee after members had been consulted as to suitable locations. Suggestions included Sheffield, Birmingham, Salisbury and Crewe. ✕

Future policy

Local authorities (other than the new conurbation transport authorities) are limited to spending on contributions to rail transport (e.g. subsidies to cover running costs) a penny rate, which also has to provide for many other local needs. Local authorities in Scotland have no such limitation. It was suggested by a member present that the Society should press for the removal of this anomaly.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR : (Accepted on the same conditions as for the main progress report)

Future policy?

Under the Transport Act, 1962, and its predecessors, British Rail was required to run at a profit, but, because of the closure procedure, was not allowed to. Ministers of Transport, concerned to some extent with public opinion, had the final say in closure cases and the decision, inevitably, varied with the Minister. But each time the Minister went on public opinion he did so at a cost to British Rail - costing money which could have been spent developing commercial routes. Under the 1968 Act, the Ministry of Transport acknowledges this ("Transport policy." Cmnd. 3057) and makes provision for grants to British Rail for running uneconomic, but socially-necessary,

lines. Virtually anyone can make the grants. British Rail is obliged, within limits, to run purely those sections which pay - through fares or grants.

This, I feel, gives a different emphasis to the Society's activities. No longer should straight and closure procedures be given priority. More urgent is persuading local authorities, the Ministry of Transport and the public that money spent on railways is well spent, that roads are costly and give no great return - just a drain in policing costs, accident costs and amenity costs. Road haulage has a powerful lobby in its favour. We must be a powerful lobby "pro-rail". The effects of not having a powerful voice will be felt in Birmingham, where the West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority is not interested in trains. Critics of rail are difficult to confound, (Brigadier T.I. Lloyd, for example), but important ones must be convinced. It is their cash which invigorates railways. British Rail is no longer legally obliged to provide reasonable facilities, after repeal of a Victorian statute. They need only do what is economic. So it will be increasingly up to local pride and civic pocket to get any railways and facilities, leave alone good ones, where British Rail does not consider operations profitable.

Stanislaus Poniatowski.

The Society's Chairman replies to the above letter as follows:-

These observations are very much in line with current thinking of the National Committee. Indeed for many years the Society has publicly advocated that, if the true costs of road transport were recognised, it would be seen that transfer of more public expenditure to rail development is not just a social necessity but sound economic sense. The success of the road lobby in bringing about the present situation is largely due to the vast private funds that road interests are able to pour into political parties in order to achieve their ends. Rail, being a nationalised industry, has no counterpart. However we as a Society are doing what we can to persuade politicians of the need for more investment in railways, which is indeed money well spent.

We are in contact with several local authorities and, fortunately, all are not as backward-looking as the West Midlands Transport Authority. Some are now considering local expenditure on their railways. For this they will certainly reap the reward in the years ahead when worsening congestion renders their towns even more difficult to enter by road than at present.

We will do our best to increase our efforts along the lines suggested. Our major limitation is that there are few of us. We need more active members to assist in this sort of work.

M. P. L. Caton.

BRANCH SECRETARIES AND AREA REPRESENTATIVES

Amendment to list on p. iv, Members only supplement No. 1.

Areas

North of Scotland. The correct name of the Area Representative is Mr. F. G. Thompson. He has moved to 31, Braeside Park, Balloch, Inverness.

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