

RIS

Railway Invigoration Society

for the retention and modernisation of railway service

BM-RIS, London, W.C.1.

Tel. 01-405 0463

Vice-Presidents:

Sir John Betjeman, C.B.E.

Lord Kinross

Lord Popplewell, C.B.E., J.P.

John Arlott, Esq., O.B.E.

The Very Rev. J. H. S. Wild, M.A., Dean of Durham

Torquil Nicolson Esq., B.Sc., A.M.I.E.E.

P R O G R E S S R E P O R T

No. 88

SEPTEMBER 1971

BOUQUETS

The leading article in these reports is usually of a critical nature. It gives us especial pleasure, therefore, to congratulate British Rail on the more forceful tone which it has recently adopted in its press advertising. In particular, we were most impressed by British Rail's statement that £25 million buys 2½ miles of urban motorway or 230 miles of superhighway (i.e., the modern railway).

So often in the past we have felt that the management of Britain's railways lacked faith in the intrinsic merits of that form of transport for which it was responsible, indeed that the whole organisation was possessed by a death wish. We hope that the new spirit now being displayed will be maintained, so that the Government will be persuaded to give rail that support which will enable it to compete on equal terms with road.

We also congratulate the car-hire firm of Godfrey Davis on its advertisements which advocate rail travel for the long journey and the hire of a car for local trips from one's destination station.

RAILWAYS IN THE SEVENTIES

✓X Copies of our policy statement "Railways in the seventies" have been submitted to those members of Parliament known to have a particular interest in railways. ✓X Our covering letter emphasised the need to increase national investment in railways. This is, at present, grossly inadequate and very small compared to expenditure on road transport.

We pointed out that the recent withdrawal of grant aid to London commuter services and the prospect of similar action in other areas means that Government financial support for the railways is, in effect, being drastically reduced. Unless this can be compensated for by some other form of national investment in the railways, it can be expected that large areas of Britain will be faced with declining services, rising fares and more rail closures at a time when most advanced countries are realising that increased use of rail is vital to the relief of road congestion and to conservation of the environment. We believe that an urgent change of Government policy is called for and have asked that our proposals should receive detailed consideration.

"Railways in the seventies" has also been circulated to a number of local authorities, with a letter which urges the formation of local groups to work in conjunction with British Rail to

develop individual rail services. This is a course of action which we consider can play a vital part in ensuring the future of those routes at present grant-aided which could be early candidates for closure proposals if present Government policy continues to favour withdrawal of such financial support. X

NEW CORPORATE MEMBERS

We welcome to corporate membership of the Society the following bodies :-

The Railway Industry Association, Locomotive House,
Buckingham Gate, London, S.W. 1.

Atherton Urban District Council (Lancashire)

Winchester Rural District Council (Hampshire)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The editor will consider for publication letters on matters of general interest to members. Any opinions, 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.

The editor regrets that again there is no material for publication under this heading, but forward to being inundated with correspondence suitable for reproduction in our next issue. Letters and, indeed, other contributions - may be sent to the editor or sub-editor, as appropriate, as soon as these are ready. It is not necessary to await the imminence of a publication "deadline" before submitting material. Your co-operation in this way will much ease the task of the editors.

IN PARLIAMENT

Selections from the official reports
House of Commons

Questions

SSE = Secretary of State for the Environment.

An asterisk denotes an oral answer; those not so marked were written.

28th April Central London line (Epping-Ongar section) Mr. Parker (Dagenham) asked the SSE will take environmental and social considerations as well as economic ones into account when dealing with the proposals for closing the Epping-Ongar section of the Central London Line.

Mr. Graham Page Yes.

Transport (costs) Mr. J. H. Osborne (Sheffield, Hallam) asked the SSE what is the average cost per mile for each form of transport for which he has figures; by how much it has changed since 1st April, 1970, 1965, 1960, 1955, 1950 and 1945; and what was the appropriate index on all these dates. Mr. Eldon Griffiths Following is the information. The table is based on the latest information available and shows the average cost per mile to the consumer of various forms of inland passenger transport in 1969 together with price index numbers based on 1963=100.

Public Transport	Average cost per passenger mile 1969 (np)*	Price index numbers (1963=100)						
		1948+	1950	1955	1960	1965	1969	1970†
British Railways	1.1	59	59	64	83	110	131	139
London Underground	1.4	36	37	59	94	110	134	154
Buses and Coaches	1.2	49	50	66	85	114	143	162
Private transport								
Purchase of cars and motor-cycles (new and secondhand)	Not readily available	83	83	107	115	99	109	117
Running costs of motor vehicles	" "	68	70	87	93	109	134	137

* The cost per passenger mile of any form of transport varies widely according to circumstances, and average figures should be treated with reservation.

+ Figures for 1945 are not available

† Provisional figures.

7th May SELNEC rail services Mr. Roper (Farnworth) asked the SSE what is the extent of grant-aid at present being paid to British Rail for services in the South-East Lancashire North-East Cheshire conurbation. Mr. Peyton About £7½ million during 1971 for services wholly or partly in the area.

Goods traffic (diversion to railways) Mr. Donald Stewart (Western Isles) asked the SSE if he will set up an inquiry to consider action to divert goods traffic from roads to railways.

Mr. Eldon Griffiths No.

19th May Fleet line Mr. Moyle (Lewisham, North) asked the SSE whether his attention had been drawn to the recommendation by Professor Buchanan in his Blackheath and Greenwich study, details of which are in his possession, that the Fleet line be extended to Kidbrooke; and what action he proposes to take. Mr. Peter Walker The initiative for investigating this idea must lie with the Greater London Council to whom the recommendation was made.

Passenger transport authorities Mr. Fox (Shipley) asked the SSE whether, in the light of

the proposals in the Government's white paper on local government in England and Wales, comm. and paper no. 4584, he will make a statement about the future of the passenger transport authorities. Mr. Peyton It is proposed that when local government is re-organised the functions and responsibilities of the passenger transport authorities should be assumed by the new metropolitan councils.

Transport fares Mr. White (Glasgow, Pollock) asked the SSE whether he will seek to extend the terms of the transport users' consultative committees to include the consideration of fares. Mr. Peyton I am considering this and other suggestions made by the Central Transport Consultative Committee.

Central London Epping-Ongar railway line Mr. Bidwell (Southall) asked the SSE if he can now announce his decision regarding the proposed closure of the Central London Epping-Ongar railway line. Mr. Peyton Not yet.

Non-paying rail services (grant aid) Mr. Fox (Shipley) asked the SSE whether, in his current review of grant-aid to non-paying rail services, he will apply the same criteria in each of the various regions affected. Mr. Peyton I will apply in every instance the relevant criteria to the case.

Transport (study) Mr. Montgomery (Brierley Hill) asked the SSE whether he will extend his study of the problems of rural transport to those of urban transport, including the effects of traffic on the environment. Mr. Peyton I am already doing so.

Train service (Euston-Watford) Mr. Pavitt (Willesden, West) asked the SSE if he will publish in the OFFICIAL REPORT the evidence on which his Department decided that the train service from Euston to Watford was over-provided for; what consultation he had with the London Borough of Hammersmith and other boroughs affected before endorsing the cut-back in schedules; and if he will make a statement. Mr. Peyton The reduction should save £120,000 a year while still providing adequate accommodation even in the peak hour. Following normal practice, the Transport Users' Consultative Committee and the Economic Planning Council were consulted.

* 9th June Fleet Line Mr. Spearing (Acton) asked the SSE when he will announce his proposals for capital grant for the Fleet line. Mr. Graham Page As soon as possible. Mr. Spearing Is the Minister aware that his Government have made great claims that they are following the policy of the previous Government in respect of certain aspects of transport policy in London? Will he now follow those precedents and give a 75 per cent grant to this line, as the previous Government did for the Victoria line extension to Brixton? Will he say why the Government have given a 75 per cent grant to Liverpool for an underground railway but are not yet prepared to give such a grant to London? Mr. Page I am not saying at present whether a 75 per cent grant will or will not be given in this case. We are asked to commit £70 million of taxpayers' money and it is important that the Government should examine this matter very carefully before a decision is made.

* 16th June Rail and waterway traffic Mr. Raphael Tuck (Watford) asked the SSE whether, in view of the fact that in absolute terms every railway and waterway administration which makes returns to the Economic Commission for Europe shows an increase of ton-miles in the period 1950 to

except for Great Britain, which shows a reduction, he will take steps to redress this imbalance. Mr. Eldon Griffiths No, Sir. Mr. Tuck Is the hon. Gentleman aware that, parallel with the difficulties with rail and waterways, we are carrying an ever-increasing load of goods by road - the figure is three times that of rail - with all the attendant environmental consequences? Incentives to encourage the carriage of goods by rail will not only help the environment but will do away with the need for ever-increasing expenditure on more roads. Mr. Griffiths I assure the hon. Gentleman that proper account of environment considerations is now taken in approving all new road schemes. It is no part of my right hon. Friend's policy artificially to interfere between a customer and his choice of the best mode of transport, bearing in mind speed, reliability and cost.

21st June British railways (borrowings) Mr. Longden (Hertfordshire, South-West) asked the SSE (1) what is the current rate of increase in borrowings by British Rail and what is its outstanding indebtedness; (2) whether British Rail is now having to borrow in order to pay the weekly wages of its employees. Mr. Peyton There is no question of the Railways Board having to borrow to pay wages. Its first Corporate Plan, however, envisages investment in the years 1971 to 1975 of about £600 million. It expects to finance about half of its total investment needs internally, and may, therefore, need to raise up to £55 million of new capital from the National Loans Fund during this calendar year. The Board's 1970 account shows that the outstanding debt to the NLF at 31st December, 1970 (of course including the commencing capital debt of the undertaking) was £365 million.

In the longer term, the Board's ability to service an increasing capital debt depends upon achieving trading surpluses substantially higher than in the last two years. There is clearly a risk that such surpluses will not be achieved, because profit margins are narrow in relation to costs and turnover, and thus sensitive to comparatively small fluctuations in traffic volumes and cost levels. In preparing its second plan, the Board is well aware of the need to seek ways of improving its financial situation. Meanwhile, I consider it right to make the loans currently needed.

30th June Rail services (withdrawal) Mr. Adley (Bristol, North-East) asked the SSE if, on withdrawal of rail services by British Rail, he will send a circular to local authorities advising them to consider this action to constitute, for planning purposes, a change of use. Mr. Peter Walker No; the withdrawal of rail services would not in itself necessitate a circular from me. The action of British Rail would not, in fact, represent a material change of use.

8th July Railway network and road programme Mr. Spearing (Acton) asked the SSE if, in respect of the totality of his responsibilities, he will publish the results of his appreciation of the potential of the railway network in linking industrial areas to air and sea ports; and how this use of existing facilities affects his proposals for an expansion of the road programme. Mr. Peter Walker The railway network already makes an important contribution and has considerable potential. At the same time, there can be no doubt of the need for good road access: roads carry over 60 per cent. of total goods traffic. The British Railways Board's corporate plan envisages a substantially capital programme over the coming five years.

13th July Railway improvements (south-east England) Mr. Spearing (Acton) asked the SSE if he will publish in the OFFICIAL REPORT a list of the requests he has received from the Greater London Council and the British Railways Board for sanction for major improvements or additions to the railway network in south-east England, together with the date of receipt of each request and cost of each project. Mr. Graham Page No. The GLC do not require my rt. hon. Friend's sanction for such improvements, and he has received no such requests from the Railways Board.

28th July Electric trains (safety) Mr. Dempsey (Coatbridge and Airdrie) asked the SSE if he will list the special steps which will be taken to ensure the safety of electric trains travelling at speeds of 100 miles per hour. Mr. Peyton The safety of operation of the railways is the responsibility of the British Railways Board, but no special steps are required to ensure safety at speeds up to 100 miles per hour, provided that the signal spacing is sufficient and the line fitted with the automatic warning system.

British rail (advertising media) Mr. Cockerham (Bebington) asked the SSE if he will give a general direction to British Rail to submit advertising material to him. Mr. Peyton No.

* Railways and motorways (costs) Mr. Cockerham (Bebington) asked the SSE what assessment he makes, when considering applications from British Rail for additional public finance, of the length of motorway which could be built for equivalent costs. Mr. Peyton Notional comparisons of this kind are not a practical way of getting the right balance between road and rail investment. Decisions are based on assessments of the benefits to be achieved by specific projects which are seldom straightforward alternatives. Mr. Cockerham I thank my hon. Friend for that reply. Would he agree that it is wrong to state, as recently claimed by British Rail in an advertisement, that motorways cost 92 times to build as do comparative railways? Mr. Peyton The House would probably agree that pure truth is not always enshrined in every advertisement. Perhaps in this case there was something in those advertisements that did not commend itself to my hon. Friend. I am sorry that this should be so, but I do not think that one should interfere.

* Advanced passenger train and hovertrain Mr. Michael Roberts (Cardiff, North) asked the SSE whether he is satisfied that there is a requirement for the complementary development of both the advanced passenger train and the National Research Development Corporation hovertrain; and if he will make a statement. Mr. Peyton Yes, Sir. The time-scales and applications of the two projects are different. Mr. Roberts In any decision taken by my rt. hon. Friend, will he take into account the export potential of both these projects, particularly to the EEC countries? Mr. Peyton Yes, Sir.

Mr. Whitehead (Derby, North) Is the rt. hon. Gentleman aware that the two projects are in no way comparable, in that the advanced passenger train now being developed at Derby uses existing tracks and, therefore, does not destroy any more of the environment, that it has proved export potential and is being developed within the original cost estimate? Mr. Peyton Nothing in my answer contains any reflection on the advanced passenger train.

Debates

11th May Transport (London and South-East Region) An adjournment debate - see cols. 337-338 of "Hansard".

BOOKSHELF

Scottish Railway Development Association. The Kyle Railway and the future pattern of transport to Wester Ross and the Isles. The Association, April 1971. 18 pp.
Obtainable from Mr. A. Varwell, Highland Area Secretary, SRDA, 20, High Street, Invergordon, Ross-shire; price: 25 new pence per copy, including postage.

This report is essential reading for all those who wish to see the Kyle line saved. Moreover, for the unconvinced or those who are unacquainted with the line it presents the finest argument in favour of its retention that the reviewer has so far seen.

There are sections on current needs and costs; railways and the principles of future policy; factors favouring the Kyle railway; and methods of operation and marketing. Appendixes cover the advantages and disadvantages of a Kyle-Stornoway vehicle ferry; the nature of rail costs; type of rolling stock required on the Kyle line; a suggested October to Easter timetable; and a suggested Easter to September timetable.

The essential role of the railway in the economy of the area it serves is well argued. The report points out that "it must be realised that the costs of Highland transport and of other Highland services are substantially greater than the income arising from such services. Rail transport is NOT the only loss-maker ... Some £30 million has been spent on Highland road improvements in the 1960s and, if this had been financed through borrowing, the Highland road account would probably have shown a deficit exceeding £2 million a year ... " The total loss on "roads and road, sea and air services" has been £4 to £4.5 million per annum. By comparison, the Highland rail subsidy, covering both track charges and losses on movement, is only £1.5 million a year. " (See also area report from North of Scotland, pp. 11-12)

REPORTS FROM BRANCHES AND AREAS

BRANCHES

London and Home Counties

✓X Two small parties of members visited the power signal box at Willesden Junction in May. The Branch would like to express its appreciation to Midland Region for making these visits possible.

Greater London Council has held four further public meetings on the future of London Transport. Two of these, at Croydon and Woolwich, were attended by members of the Branch Committee. Although many ideas were put forward by persons present, the council's policy statement, put to its meeting on 6th July, did not seem to indicate a very much greater commitment to public transport. The main recommendation appeared to be that reduced fares

for children should be discontinued during peak periods.

In contrast was a public meeting held in early June under the auspices of the London Passenger Action Confederation to consider the future of the North London line. Several senior officers of British Rail were present, including the Divisional Manager, Euston. He said that, while it was essential that the number of passengers should be increased (or that the present passengers should all be willing to pay double the present fares) to offset the effect of the withdrawal of government subsidies to all lines in the South East, it was not his wish to close any railway line whatsoever. Several members of the Branch attended this meeting. Our Vice-Chairman made some suggestions which were well received. As a result of this meeting, local action committees are to be set up at places along the line, with a central committee to co-ordinate their activities.

The annual general meeting of the Branch will be held at Caxton Hall, Westminster, on Tuesday, 21st September, at 18.30. It is also hoped to arrange a film show or other meeting in mid-November. If any members outside the branch area would like to come to this, they should contact the Branch Secretary who will send them details when these become available.

It is understood that the tunnel of the Holborn-Farringdon line is to be used as a car-park, but that it will be possible to reinstate the line should it be needed at any time in the future.

✓✗ A station is to be provided for Basildon, the new town in south Essex. It will be situated between Laindon and Pitsea on the line between Upminster and Southend. The cost of building it will be met by the town's development corporation. ✗

Northern England

The annual general meeting of the Branch has been arranged to take place in Room 1, YM Blackett Street, Newcastle, 1, on Saturday, 2nd October, commencing at 10.30 a.m.

✓✗ The long awaited takeover of Tyneside's commuter rail services by the Tyneside Passenger Transport Executive is now scheduled to take place on 1st January, 1972. However, it is reported that there is still much negotiating to be done between officials of British Rail and the PTE. One item which has given concern to the Branch is that the PTE Secretary talks of looking closely at the services and says that it could be that economies and changes will be worked out. The Branch has written to the local press pointing out that, in the past, attempts to economise have led to less usage of services and increased losses, whereas British Rail's ambitious policies on the Tynerider (North Tyneside line) experiment are reported to have brought about a 40% increase in passenger

The PTE tends to have a "Jekyll and Hyde" attitude to railways. It is often lukewarm in its attitude towards the existing lines. These are capable of providing good services with no extra development, yet the PTE has plans for a Tyneside underground railway, which would require a tremendous capital outlay. ✗

On Monday, 12th July, British Rail's latest air-conditioned coaches were introduced on a limited number of Newcastle-London trains.

When pay trains were introduced on the Newcastle-South Shields line some months ago, it was decided to replace the existing station buildings with modern shelters. Up to now, nothing has been done and most of the buildings look as if they are suffering from bomb damage. Certainly a stranger would not imagine that they are still open. However, a British Rail official has once again promised that there will be an attempt to do something in the not too distant future.

On the Barrow - Whitehaven - Carlisle line, it is proposed to add Millom, Seascale, Sellafield and Maryport to the list of stations on the branch operating as unstaffed halts and, at the same time, to introduce omniprinter ticket issuing machines at Whitehaven and Workington. British Rail states that, although the latter proposal will restrict the range of bookings, all the main flows of travel will be catered for, so that the inconvenience to passengers will be kept to a minimum. Whitehaven Borough Council is concerned that the introduction of this machine at Whitehaven is one step nearer to that station being reduced to an unstaffed halt. At the Council's request, the Branch has raised the matter with British Rail, whose observations are now awaited.

Wessex

✓✗ So far this year, the committee of this new Branch has held bi-monthly meetings at different locations in the area - Bournemouth, Swanage, Alton and Salisbury. The next meeting will be at Winchester on 14th September. ✗

The Branch is awaiting a decision from the Land Use and Transportation Group in Bournemouth as to the setting up of a public study group to comment on urban transport needs in that area. The proposal originated from the Branch, which hopes to participate in the work of the study group.

Following a reply from the South-West Economic Planning Council in Bristol concerning the need for a Wessex Transport Authority, the Branch has been invited to submit its proposals for rapid transit systems within the area. These proposals will be submitted shortly.

✓✗ Letters have been sent to the managers of the Western and Midland Regions and Divisions seeking the promotion of Swanage as a holiday resort and mystery excursion venue. The response has been most encouraging. A courtesy letter was also sent to the South Western Divisional Manager of the Southern Region to explain the activities of the Branch in this matter. His reply was inclined to be pessimistic and pointed out that the Minister of Transport had consented to the closure of the line and that British Rail was awaiting the outcome of an appeal against the granting of the licences required to operate alternative bus services. Experience with existing facilities did not suggest that a package tour arrangement based on Swanage was economically possible. ✗

✓✗ The Branch has protested to British Rail at the withdrawal of certain cheap day fares from Alresford on the Winchester-Alton line. The South Western Division reply pointed out that, owing to the reduction in the Government grant to the South East Area services by £10 million this year, cheap bookings which had a small annual user were withdrawn. Cheap facilities are now afforded only where the demand justifies their provision in revenue terms. ✗

✓✗ British Rail has issued an advance notice of its proposal to close the Maiden Newport-Bridport line. The Branch has announced its intention to oppose this proposal. (A previous attempt to withdraw the passenger service on this line failed when the Minister of Transport reprieved it in 1967. Ed.)

The Branch intends to present proposals for new services on the Weymouth-Westbury-Bristol line (including the Maiden Newton-Bridport branch), to the South-West Economic Planning Council at Bristol. The proposals incorporate completely new timetabling and even-interval services. ✗

AREAS

Devon and Cornwall

Modifications to signalling at Barnstaple Junction now enable all passenger trains to use platform nearest the road approach, to the greater convenience of passengers. With the timetable introduced in May, there are now three fast trains daily between Barnstaple and Exeter, and one through train to and from London on summer Saturdays.

According to a recent statement in the local press, passenger, freight and parcels traffic on the Exeter-Barnstaple line is all on the increase despite the general trade recession. During school holidays, children under 14 will be able to travel on day return trips from stations on this line to anywhere in the Western Region at one quarter the price of adult fares. This enterprising move is being made to encourage youngsters to travel by rail and lasts until 9th September. It is a frightening thought that a generation is growing up in many parts of this area which, because of remoteness from the nearest railhead, has never been on a train and does not recognize rail as a reliable form of public transport which it is.

✓✗ A public meeting was held at Ilfracombe on 26th May at which the whole question of re-opening the Barnstaple-Ilfracombe line was discussed. Although the odds against success appear formidable, a committee has been set up to attempt to purchase the 25-mile line from British Rail and to re-open it for public use, employing steam as the motive power. For further information on this project, readers should write to Mr. C. Hold (Publicity Officer, North Devon Railway Society), c/o North Devon Journal Herald Office, 64, High Street, Ilfracombe, Devon. ✗

After 31st July several bus routes in the area were withdrawn by Western National. It is understood that this was due to certain local authorities being unwilling to pay subsidies. Bude, which lost its rail service in October, 1966, is particularly badly hit, as the Western National depot there was closed completely. Fortunately, a private operator is running the connecting service to the railhead at Okehampton. Territory formerly served by the Halwill to Wadebridge line is also affected by bus withdrawals, as are parts of east Cornwall and the Kingsbridge area of south Devon, the latter also having lost its rail services.

It has been reported that about 190 men at Newton Abbot may lose their jobs following proposals made by British Rail to close the diesel maintenance depot there and also to cease doing carriage and wagon repairs. The local council is joining with the men in protesting to British Rail about this.

Merseyside

✓✗ The public inquiry into the proposal to withdraw the passenger service between Liverpool Central and Gateacre was held in Liverpool on 10th June. We are most grateful to Mr. N.N. Forbes, Chairman of the North-Western Branch of the National Council on Inland Transport, for representing the RIS on this occasion.

A similar inquiry into the proposed withdrawal of the Liverpool Lime Street-Southport passenger service was held in Southport on 26th July. The Society was represented by a member of the National Committee. We had previously submitted to the Tucc an objection to this proposal.

Central (high level) station buildings, Liverpool, are in process of demolition prior to operations on the site in connection with the inner loop. A small wooden booking-office has been erected on the only platform which remains in use for railway purposes. ✗

Experimental rail-bus interchanges are to be set up next year by the Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive at five or six stations on both sides of the river.

Wales

✓✗ The public inquiry into the proposed withdrawal of the passenger service from the Cambrian Coast line was held in Harlech on 22nd and 23rd June. Among the objectors was this Society which had submitted a case made out in co-operation with the Railway Development Association (Midland Branch). ✗

North of Scotland

✓✗ The Transport Users' Consultative Committee for Scotland has recommended in its report on the Dingwall-Kyle of Lochalsh line that closure should not take place at least until the proposed Ullapool-Stornoway vehicle ferry is ready for operation, when the situation could be re-examined. ✗

Attention is directed to an excellent article on the history, attractions and social value

of the Kyle line, Entitled "Threat to a Highland line" and written and illustrated by Tom Weir, it appeared in Country Life of 22nd July, pp. 206-7. The photographs are outstandingly good. (See also Bookshelf, p. 7)

With reference to our March 1971 progress report, we understand from Mr. A. Varwell, the Highland Area Representative of the Scottish Railway Development Association, that "the SRDA has not been involved in the purchase of the Boat of Garten line - the body concerned is the Scottish Railway Preservation Society. It seems that the project has now fallen through." We thank Mr. Varwell for his correction and comment. He also remarks: "I am indeed grateful to you for the publicity that your publications have given to the Kyle line - the battle is far from won yet, but we keep going."

OTHER NEWS

A member who lives in Gloucestershire writes: "Reconstruction has started at Swindon station. One would have expected intensified effort to attract new revenue from the growing town. Day trips are now offered from Swindon to Birmingham, but loadings have decreased resulting from a ban on the issue of excursion tickets on trains to London leaving before 10 a.m."

Melton Constable station, in the "wilds" of Norfolk, has been demolished. It was formerly a most important junction on the Midland and Great Northern Joint Railway, a system which has ceased to exist except for the fragment between Sheringham and Cromer. Melton Constable was noted for the M & GN's locomotive and wagon works, which provided the principal source of employment for the small town and surrounding villages.

According to the Aberdare and Mountain Ash Leader of 11th June, the previous Sunday "was a red letter day for Aberdare when a train carrying 580 passengers left at 8 a.m. on the first British Rail mystery excursion from this Valley. The excitement and enthusiasm recalled the old annual Sunday school outings as the first passenger train to leave Aberdare for over nine years pulled out."

EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Editor: Mr. L. G. Hipperson, 24a, Cable Road, Hoylake, Wirral, Cheshire, L47 2BD
(Telephone: 051 632 4374)

Sub-Editor: Mr. H. R. Purser, 30, Staines Road, Feltham, Middlesex.

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 December), material must be submitted to the appropriate editor so as to reach him by Saturday, 30th October (except that urgent late news will be received by Mr. Hipperson up to 6th November).

PUBLISHED by the RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY

Chairman: Dr. M. P. L. Caton, 10, Grosvenor Gardens, Upminster, Essex.
General Secretary: Mr. J. M. Stanley, 12, Westcombe Park Road, London, S. E. 3.
Membership Secretary: Mr. D. J. Bradbury, 59, Dore Road, Dore, Sheffield.

PARLIAMENT

✓X There is no doubt whatever that the major factor responsible for the imbalance in inland transport in Britain is the size and strength of the road lobby, for which the railways have no parallel. Our various contacts with members of Parliament have clearly revealed that the railways will never be given a fair deal until an effective group can be built up in Parliament which is able to bring continuous and effective pressure on governments to provide the railways with a substantially greater share of national transport investment.

During the last Parliament there was formed the Railways Reform Group, but this ceased to exist when the principal officers lost their seats at the general election. The Society's Chairman has recently had a meeting with Mr. Robert Adley, MP, who is a very keen supporter of the railways and has agreed to go ahead with the setting up of a fresh group. We have supplied Mr. Adley with a list of those MPs known to us to have a particular interest in railways and who would probably be prepared to give their support.

This is very good news. We shall be keeping in close touch with Mr. Adley and wish him every success. He has also kindly offered to ask a question in the House drawing the attention of the Secretary of State for the Environment to our publication "Railways in the seventies". X

RAIL CLOSURES

Dr. M. P. L. Caton, the Society's Chairman, has had interviews with the Department of Environment regarding railway closures, with specific reference to the Romford-Upminster line.

ORGANISATION OF THE SOCIETY

In accordance with paragraph 21 of the Society's Constitution, the National Committee has elected from amongst its members the following officers:-

Vice- Chairmen:	Messrs. R. V. Banks, J. W. Barfield, J. M. Firth
Assistant Secretaries:	Messrs. J. W. Barfield, E. H. Longland
Membership Secretary:	Mr. D. J. Bradbury
Press and Publicity Officer:	Mr. R. V. Banks
Honorary Legal Officer:	Mr. J. M. Stanley
Sales Officer:	Mr. G. L. Collett
Progress Report Editor:	Mr. L. G. Hipperson
Progress Report Sub-Officer:	Mr. H. R. Purser (co-opted for this specific task)
Duplicating Officer:	Mr. A. Johnson
Distribution Officer:	Mr. H. G. M. Rogers
Cuttings Officer:	Mr. E. H. Longland

PRESS CUTTINGS

As shown in the list of officers, Mr. E. H. Longland is the new Cuttings Officer. He would be glad to receive cuttings (however old) from National, provincial and local newspapers on railway matters, except from the following:- Daily Telegraph, The Guardian, The Scotsman, The Observer, Eastern Daily Press, East Anglian Daily Times, Rail News and Railway Review. He has been a regular reader of these papers for the past two years and will continue as such. However, he would be glad to receive cuttings more than two years old from these papers. Where a member would like cuttings returned, he is requested to attach a note, "return". Mr. Longland will then photocopy the cuttings and return them within fourteen days.

SALES LIST

An up-to-date list of publications which may be purchased through the Society's Sales Officer is enclosed. As the RIS is able to secure discount on the sale of books produced by certain publishers, we ask you to give this department of the Society your utmost support and thus provide a useful increase in our funds at no extra cost to members.

NORTHERN ENGLAND BRANCH AGM

As announced in the main part of the progress report, the annual general meeting of the Northern England Branch will be held on Saturday, 2nd October, 1971, at 10.30 a.m. in Room 1, YMCA, Blackett Street, Newcastle, 1. It is hoped that as many members as possible will attend, as it is most urgent that a new Chairman and Secretary should be appointed to enable the work of the Branch to continue. For various reasons it is not possible for the present holders of these positions to remain in office.

The agenda for the meeting is as follows:-

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the AGM held on 21st March, 1970.
3. Matters arising from the minutes.
4. Reports of the Chairman and Secretary.
5. Election of officials and committee for 1971-2.
6. Future policy.
7. Any other business.

PUBLISHED by the RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY for the exclusive information of its members.

PROPOSED NORTH-WEST ENGLAND BRANCH : As we go to press, the editor has been informed that efforts are to be made to form a branch of the Society to cover the counties of Lancashire and Cheshire. It is proposed to hold a meeting to discuss this project in Wigan on Saturday, 18th September, and, if they have not already been circularised by the time they receive this members only supplement, members in these two counties will be sent a notice giving full details of the venue, etc. X