

RIS

Railway Invigoration Society

for the retention and modernisation of railway services

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PROGRESS REPORT**No. 90****MARCH 1972****TWO-YEAR GRANTS NOT ENOUGH**

✓✗ The recent announcement of the renewal of grant aid to rail services outside the London area is welcome news, especially after hints from Government sources that another batch of closures is under consideration. In fact, renewal has been extended for a further one or two years to all grants which expired at the end of 1971, except in eight cases, seven of which relate to services already under consideration for closure.

Whilst this announcement provides a breathing space for many lines which might otherwise have been immediate candidates for closure, the failure to renew any grant for more than two years means, however, that these services are still facing nothing better than a hand to mouth existence. The majority, nevertheless, have growth potential which can only be exploited by the carrying out of certain capital expenditure which British Rail's management will be reluctant to embark upon if their future is to be questioned again after such a short period.

Unless grants are renewed for at least five years - preferably ten - it will be impossible to exploit these services to anything like their full potential. It is now four years since the passing of the 1968 Transport Act. This rightly distinguished between the commercial and social aspects of railway operation, the latter intended to be supported by aid from public funds. The object of such aid, however, should not be merely to prop up ailing railways in the short term, but rather to permit the long term provision of the best possible services. In this way benefit is provided to the travelling public as well as easement to the problems of environmental deterioration arising out of increased use of roads.

The Government must now be urged to give British Rail the necessary time and incentive to develop these services, so as to permit them to fulfil the functions of which railways alone are technically capable. ✗

HIGHWAY PLANNING

The Society's Chairman attended an open forum held by the Institute of Civil Engineers on 5th December to discuss public participation in highway planning. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Richard Marsh (Chairman of the British Railways Board)-although it was not directly concerned with railways - and questions were posed by the audience to a panel of speakers which included Mr. Michael Heseltine, MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for the Environment and responsible for assessing the merits of future road plans.

Many issues were discussed amid much hot air, but what will be of particular interest to members of this Society was that strong feeling was expressed by the audience against the construction of motorways in urban areas. Such feeling would not have been shown ten, or even years ago. It may be taken as an encouraging sign that those concerned with transport planning will eventually be forced by sheer weight of public opinion to place far more emphasis on less environmentally destructive means of travel, such as conventional railways and rapid transit.

COST OF PRIVATE MOTORING

✓✗ Last year, the Department of the Environment published reports of two pilot studies of road transport in Devon and West Suffolk (available from 2, Marsham St, London, S. W. 1.). In each report, it was stated that trips by public transport "tended to cost somewhat more than the cost of petrol to the person travelling by private transport".

Mr. R. V. Banks, our Press and Publicity Officer, pointed out to the Department that "this implies that the journeys surveyed were cheaper by private car than by public transport. This is quite untrue, of course, because the cost of running a private car includes many items other than petrol." (The average cost is between £8 and £9 a week, according to recent figures released by the Automobile Association, Ed.)

In reply to Mr. Banks, the Department stated that they were "very well aware ... of the difference between the total costs of motoring ... and the 'perceived' costs of a motorist once he has a car." They went on to say, however, that, "in practice, they found it confused the motorists who were completing the questionnaire to do it any other way."

Mr. Banks asks: "Are all motorists morons? Or is this a deliberate move to hide the true cost of private motoring?" ✗

S.O.S. CAMPAIGN

✓✗ The Save our Services Campaign was launched by the National Council on Inland Transport on 1st January as a result of a proposal made by our Press and Publicity Officer (Mr. R. V. Banks) and adopted unanimously at the Council's annual general meeting held on 1st October.

Great interest is being shown in the Campaign in all parts of the United Kingdom. The main object is to unite all areas in an effort to get Government policy changed with regard to financial help to railways. It is hoped to arrange public meetings in the near future in England, Scotland and Wales.

The Campaign has the full support of the National Committee of the RIS. Members are asked to publicise it whenever and wherever possible. Further information may be obtained from Mr. R. V. Banks, 121, Ashford Road, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent. ✗

"BLUEPRINT FOR SURVIVAL"

✓✗ Most of the January issue of "The Ecologist" was occupied by a special feature bearing the above title. Of special interest to this Society are paragraphs 269 - 271 which deal with road

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✗ rail. The argument is definitely in favour of rail. For instance, it is stated that "the power requirements for transporting freight by road are five to six times greater than by rail and the pollution is correspondingly higher. The energy outlay for the cement and steel required to build a motorway is three or four times greater than that required to build a railway, and the land area necessary for the former is estimated to be four times more than for the latter." ✗

CHANNEL TUNNEL

✓✗ A public meeting organised jointly by the Railway Development Association and the Railway Invigoration Society is planned to take place at Caxton Hall, Westminster, London, S.W.1, on 10th May. The meeting will discuss the proposed Channel Tunnel. The principal speaker will be Dr. M. R. Bonovia, of the Channel Tunnel Department of the British Railways Board, who will give a talk under the title of "Main line into Europe." Dr. Bonovia is the author of a book, "The organisation of British Railways", which was published last year by Ian Allan at £2.55. Copies of this may be obtained through our Sales Department.

Further details of the public meeting may be obtained from Mr. J. W. Barfield (a national vice-chairman of the RIS) of 70, Alnwick Road, London, E. 16. ✗

NEW CORPORATE MEMBERS

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

- Rochdale County Borough Council (Lancashire)
- Southport County Borough Council (Lancashire)
- Frinton and Walton Urban District Council (Essex)
- Tendring Rural District Council (Essex)
- High Peak Railway Passengers' Association (New Mills, Stockport, Cheshire)

IN PARLIAMENT

Selections from the official reports

Owing to severe pressure on space, this feature must be almost entirely restricted to the reproduction of a long, but highly important, written answer given in the House of Commons on the subject of grants. However, readers, without access to "Hansard", who wish to know details of particular parliamentary questions and answers are invited to write to the editor.

House of Commons

Questions and answers (written)

SSE = Secretary of State for the Environment

18th January Unremunerative passenger services: grants Mr. Edward Taylor (Glasgow, Cathcart)

asked the SSE if he will make a statement on the renewal of grants for unremunerative passenger services. Mr. Peyton I have received 79 applications for the renewal of grant undertakings for 79 services outside the London commuter network. I have decided to give two-year grant undertakings for 48 services and one-year grant undertakings for 17 services, as listed in the table below. I have also renewed grants (on a temporary basis) for six services which have received statutory consent to closure.

Services wholly or partly in the areas of passenger transport authorities have had their grant undertakings provisionally renewed for only one year because agreements on many of those services are expected to be concluded shortly between the British Railway Board and the passenger transport executives under Section 20 of the Transport Act, 1968. The other services for which grant has been renewed for only one year may be subject to alterations in the near future which will affect the amount payable.

In accordance with normal practice, I have renewed grant on the London commuter network for one year. Until the network as a whole pays its way, the deficit to be met by grant will be affected by the limitation of fares increases in compliance with the C. B. I. initiative on price restraint.

The renewal of grant for a further seven services which have been proposed for closure will be considered in the light of the decision which is reached on the proposal in each case.

GRANTS OUTSIDE THE LONDON COMMUTER NETWORK

2 Year Grants: Grant undertakings for two years have been made for the following services:

EASTERN REGION OF BRITISH RAILWAYS			Section 39 grant estimated for 1972
			£000
Bradford-Blackpool	...	...	110
Cambridge-Peterborough	...	...	262
Cleethorpes - New Holland/Barton-on-Humber			204
Colchester-Ipswich	...	...	22
Doncaster-Sheffield	...	...	183
Harwich-Manningtree	...	...	111
Huddersfield- Clayton West/Sheffield	...	...	239
Hull-Doncaster	...	...	295
Ipswich-Felixstowe	...	...	94
King's Cross-Peterborough/Grantham/Stamford			164
Leeds-Barnsley-Sheffield	...	...	354
Leeds-Bradford	...	...	294
Leeds-Doncaster	...	...	122
Lincoln/Grantham-Boston-Skegness	...	...	669
Newcastle-Berwick-Edinburgh (local service)			301
York-Sheffield	...	...	121
York-Shrewsbury	...	...	13

LONDON MIDLAND REGION OF BRITISH RAILWAYS

Section 39 grant
estimated for 1972.

£000

Chester-Llandudno-Holyhead	...	...	457
Llandudno Junction-Blaenau Ffestiniog	...	...	91
New Mills-Sheffield	...	...	111

SOUTHERN REGION OF BRITISH RAILWAYS

Isle of Wight	...	...	204
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SCOTTISH REGION OF BRITISH RAILWAYS

Aberdeen-Inverness	...	...	322
Edinburgh-Dunfermline-Dundee	...	...	351
Edinburgh-Kirkcaldy-Dundee	...	...	414
Edinburgh-North Berwick/Dunbar	...	...	94
Edinburgh-Stirling-Perth	...	...	497
Fort William-Mallaig	...	...	179
Glasgow-Dundee	...	...	343
Glasgow-Falkirk Grahamston	...	...	166
Glasgow-Fort William	...	...	231
Glasgow-Oban	...	...	276
Glasgow-Perth-Inverness	...	...	340
Glasgow-Stirling-Dunblane	...	...	76
Montrose-Dundee-Perth	...	...	225

WESTERN REGION OF BRITISH RAILWAYS

Bodmin Road-Newquay	...	...	149
Bristol-Clifton Down-Severn Beach	...	...	206
Cardiff-Crew	...	...	162
Exeter-Barnstaple	...	...	175
Exeter-Exmouth	...	...	82
Exeter-Paignton/Plymouth	...	...	290
Liskeard-Looe	...	...	60
Oxford-Worcester	...	...	81
Plymouth-Gunnislake	...	...	117
Plymouth-Penzance	...	...	346
St. Erth-St. Ives	...	...	44
Swansea-Carmarthen-Milford Haven	...	...	326
Swansea-Llanelli-Shrewsbury	...	...	400
Truro-Falmouth	...	...	107

One-Year Grants: Grant undertakings for one year have been made for the following services: -

EASTERN REGION OF BRITISH RAILWAYS

Section 39 grant
estimated for 1972
£000

Colchester-Clacton/Walton	...	...	284
Sheffield-Redford-Cleethorpes	...	...	191
Sheffield-Redford-Lincoln	...	...	285

SOUTHERN REGION OF BRITISH RAILWAYS

Brighton-Portsmouth	...	...	1, 168
Portsmouth-Southampton-Salisbury/Fareham-Eastleigh			1, 041

LONDON MIDLAND REGION OF BRITISH RAILWAYS

Birmingham-Lapworth-Stratford-upon-Avon	...	...	70
Birmingham-Leamington Spa	...	...	391
Manchester-Glossop-Hadfield	...	...	304
Manchester-Northwich-Chester	...	...	362
Manchester-Oldham Mumps	...	...	312
Manchester-Romiley-New Mills/Rose Hill	...	...	442
Manchester-Warrington-Chester	...	...	160
Rock Ferry-Helsby/Chester	...	...	275
Wrexham-New Brighton/Birkenhead North	...	...	301
Leamington Spa-Stratford-upon-Avon	...	...	108
Manchester-Derby	...	...	165
Manchester (Piccadilly)-Sheffield	...	...	121

TEMPORARY GRANTS

Grant undertakings have been made on a temporary basis for the following services for which consent to closure has been given:

Section 39 grant
estimated for 1972
£000

* Alton-Winchester	...	...	87
* Ashford-Hastings	...	...	188
* Birmingham-Henley-in-Arden-Stratford-upon-Avon	...	...	191
* Exeter-Okehampton	...	...	38
Inverness -Kyle of Lochalsh (2 years)	...	...	181
Keswick-Carlisle	...	...	27

SERVICES CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR CLOSURE

Grant undertakings for the following services will be considered in the light of the decision on the

current closure proposal in each case:

Bedford-Bletchley
Birmingham-Langley Green
Birmingham-Wolverhampton (Low Level)
Bury-Rawtenstall
Haltwhistle-Alston
Liverpool-Gateacre
Machynlleth-Pwllheli

* Costs exclude replacement provision and joint costs.

26th January Rail services withdrawal (Oldham-Rochdale) Mr. Barnett (Heywood and Royton) asked the SSE, in arriving at his decision to give consent to the closure of the passenger rail service between Oldham and Rochdale, what consideration he gave to the recommendations of the Transport Users' Consultative Committee after its public inquiry, when it stated that there was no way of alleviating the hardship closure of the line would cause; and if he will make a statement. Mr. Peyton The Committee's recommendations were fully considered along with all the other relevant factors. Mr. Meacher (Oldham, West) asked the SSE what improvements in alternative travel services he is making as a result of his decision to agree to the withdrawal of all rail services between Oldham and Rochdale and to the closure of four stations. Mr. Peyton The provision of alternative travel facilities here is primarily a matter for the SELNEC Passenger Transport Executive. Mr. Barnett asked the SSE if he will make a statement on the extent of his own investigation into the costings presented to him by British Rail as to the likely losses from the retention of a passenger rail service from Oldham to Rochdale before he gave his unconditional consent to close the line. Mr. Peyton All relevant figures were subjected to the normal process of examination and discussion as necessary with the Railways Board.

2nd February Oldham-Rochdale line (closure) Mr. Barnett asked the SSE if he will pay an official visit to the area affected by his decision to give consent to the closure of the passenger rail service from Oldham to Rochdale. Mr. Peyton No. Mr. Barnett asked the SSE if he will meet a delegation from the areas affected by his decision to give consent to the closure of the passenger rail service from Oldham to Rochdale to consider the future of passenger transport services in the area in the light of his decision. Mr. Peyton No. This is now a matter for the SELNEC Passenger Transport Executive.

Rail services (closure) Mr. Barnett asked the SSE how many times consent to the closure of a passenger rail service has been given against the advice of a transport users' consultative committee. Mr. Peyton None; these committees advise on potential hardship, not on whether consent should be given to closure.

BOOKSHELF

Rural transport: what future now? Rural District Councils Association, November 1971, 240, illus. £0.25 (post free) (obtainable from the Association at 25, Buckingham Gate, London, SW1E 6LE)

This booklet sets out the principal points made by speakers and from the floor at the Association's conference held on 19th October, 1971, at Central Hall, Westminster, under the title "What future for country buses and trains?" A brief account of the conference appeared in our last issue (pp. 3-4).

But half the booklet is occupied by matter other than the conference proceedings. Among the information given are lists of grant-aided railway lines, British Railways Board and regional and divisional addresses, the duties and a list of Transport Users' Consultative Committees, the National Bus Company and subsidiary companies' addresses and other useful data for all interested in public transport.

We heartily recommend this publication. It is excellent value.

LGH

Underwood, H. Locomotives I have loved, Huddersfield, Advertiser Press, 1971. p. 180, illus., map. £2.95. (obtainable through RIS Sales Department)

This extremely interesting book for the student of railway history concentrates on the network of lines around the former Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway. Writing in a very homely style the author traces his reminiscences back to the "twenties", when the West Riding of Yorkshire possessed a veritable locomotive "box of all sorts" running on lines that carried traffic to every major industrial area in Britain.

Contained in the book are some very interesting photographs, many of which must be of value for their rarity. But most interesting of all are the personal memories of the author, whose understanding of the essential industrious love of locomotives by their crews allowed him a treasured insight into the handling of several classes of engine, some of which are mercifully saved from the scrapheap. Of particular interest is the crews' preference for Stanier's Black Five as against the Jubilee locomotives.

The author finally brings the reader up to within the last decade with his account of a thrilling run down to King's Cross on the footplate of the famous A1 class Pacific in the sad twilight of steam locomotives.

To sum up, the book is a first-class buy and will afford many hours of contemplative reading.

J. A. Butler,

Technical Adviser to Wessex Branch, RIS.

REPORTS FROM BRANCHES AND AREAS

BRANCHES

London and Home Counties

✓✕ A film show provided by the German National Tourist Office was given to members of the Branch in November. Of special interest was the first film, which was entitled "Transport". This showed some very interesting experiments which are being tried out in Western Germany. Some of the ideas in city transport could well be tried in London. ✕

✓✕ It is understood that the proposal to close the West Croydon-Mitcham-Wimbledon line, mentioned in the previous progress report, has been postponed for at least a year. ✕

London Transport increased its fares on 2nd January. A public meeting held in December, under the auspices of the London Passenger Action Confederation (LPAC), to protest at these increases, was attended by several members of the Branch. However, their impression was that little was achieved by this meeting.

✓✕ LPAC, founded in March, 1970, is a federation of public transport users' associations in the Greater London area. Whilst it cannot be described as militant, it has adopted a tough line on a number of recent issues, including poor services on the Northern Line.

The main target of attack has been the Greater London Council Policy and Resources Committee and its Chairman, Mr. Horace Cutler, who addressed a recent public meeting at the Caxton Hall with other representatives of the GLC and the London Transport Executive. This Committee is responsible for directing the policy of the LTE.

The Confederation has also been active in protesting against the withdrawal of services on the Epping-Ongar section of the Central Line and has been instrumental in reviving the Broad Street-Richmond Line Campaign.

Representatives of the London and Home Counties Branch have been appointed to the Railway Panel of LPAC (Chairman) and the Islington Committee (Secretary) of the Campaign.

A public meeting was held in January at Islington Town Hall as part of the effort to save the Broad Street-Richmond line. This was well attended and was considered to have been very useful. British Rail was represented. Its spokesman again emphasised that it was not intended to withdraw this passenger service while the Government grant continued, but that it might prove necessary to do so if the grant were not renewed. ✕

✓✕ A new station is to be built at Stevenage (Herts.) by the Eastern Region of British Rail in association with the town's development corporation. It will be situated about one mile south of the existing station.

St. Albans City station is being almost entirely rebuilt at a cost of £200,000. The new station should be completed by next year.

In February, work commenced on the first stage of the Fleet line. This is the section from

Baker Street to Strand via Bond Street and Green Park. The work is expected to take $2\frac{1}{2}$ years. ✕

The Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway, which faced its first deficit this year, reported in our last issue, has had its future assured. A consortium of enthusiasts, led by Mr. W. H. McAlpine (of Robert McAlpine and Sons, the civil engineers), has bought 75 per cent of the shares in the operating company. It is planned to open the railway as usual at Easter. In future, the railway will be run more as a social amenity than a commercial venture.

East Anglian

✕ At a meeting of local members and representatives of the National Committee held in Norwich on 12th February, it was decided to form an East Anglian Branch of the Society. This will probably cover the whole of the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, although the precise boundaries have to be settled. In any case, the East Suffolk/East Norfolk Branch and the Norfolk (North and West) Area now cease to exist and have been absorbed into the district covered by the new branch. Owing to the size of the territory served by the new branch and the sparsity of its communications, contact between members will be mainly by means of a newsletter and through the post. However, it is hoped to hold about three meetings each year, in rotation at the main centres, say at Norwich, Ipswich and Bury St. Edmunds.

Mr. T. J. Garrod, of 15, Clapham Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, was elected Secretary of the East Anglian Branch. A provisional committee is in process of formation. ✕

"The future of public transport in Norwich", a report made by the City Planning Officer, Mr. A. A. Woods, shortly before his recent transfer to a similar position for the county of Worcestershire, advocated the setting up of a consortium of the Eastern Counties Omnibus Co., British Rail, the Department of the Environment, Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council.

E. C. bus service no. 406, which replaced the rail service between East Dereham and Wymondham, which was withdrawn in October, 1969, has now itself been withdrawn.

British Rail's divisional manager at Norwich, Mr. G. O. B. Clarke, has had a series of meetings with members of local authorities. He told Smallburgh RDC that, should the Government grant now being made towards the running of the Norwich-Sheringham line be withdrawn at the end of this year, he would retain the line as far as North Walsham and run both passenger and freight services. At a conference called by East Suffolk Council to discuss local rail transport problems, Mr. Clarke said that all the East Anglian railways could be kept working for the next 20 years for the same cost as building 20 miles of new motorway. He also said that steam trains might be run on the East Suffolk line as a summer attraction.

On 7th February, Sir Harwood Harrison, MP for Eye (Suffolk), speaking in the debate on the second reading of the Transport (Grants) Bill, under which it is proposed to pay £34 million to British Rail and the National Bus Co. to offset the effects of restraint on price and fare increases, criticised British Rail's method in assessing the cost of running services on the East Suffolk line. He stated that British Rail credited the line with only the "feeder" part of the fare for a journey which continued on the main line. Should the line be closed, his constituents would not leave their cars at Ipswich and join a train there, but would motor the whole way to London. The fare

for the combined "feeder" and main-line journey should be included in the revenue produced by the line.

✓✗ We are delighted to report that Needham Market station (between Ipswich and Stowmarket), which was closed from 2nd January 1967, has been re-opened to passenger traffic from 6th December last. For the time being, Gipping Rural District Council is providing financial assistance towards the cost of restoring facilities. As pointed out in our last issue, local authorities are now empowered, under the 1968 Transport Act, to make financial grants to uneconomic rail services. This includes assistance towards the re-opening of passenger stations.

An action group has been formed at Newmarket to campaign for the retention of the town's rail links with Cambridge and Bury St. Edmunds.

British Rail, St. Ives Borough Council, St. Ives Rural District Council, Chesterton Rural District Council and British Rail have had discussions on the possibility of re-opening for passenger traffic the Cambridge-St. Ives line. ✗

Northern England

✓✗ It is very disappointing to report that, following ministerial approval, the Penrith-Keswick passenger service was withdrawn from 5th March. Closure had been approved despite the Transport Users' Consultative Committee's report which indicated various hardships and evidence that retention of the rail link was regarded as a valuable help to Keswick's holiday trade.

There is also evidence that there is still a very great danger of the Haltwhistle-Alston line being closed. In this case, the TUCC made it very clear that closure would be the cause of extremely severe hardship. The Committee said that it could not see any possibility of bus services being able to operate on the existing roads as an alternative which would alleviate hardship. Mr. John Peyton, Minister of Transport Industries, has promised a decision in the very near future, but, in the meantime, no grant is being made for the line. ✗

✓✗ The Tyneside Passenger Transport Executive took over responsibility for local railway services from 1st January. In the previous progress report, we said that it did not appear to want the Riverside branch of the North Tyneside line. It has now been announced that this branch is to be closed to passengers within a year. A spokesman for the PTE said that the main reasons for closure were that the cost of keeping the line open in proportion to the traffic it carried was too great and that alternative transport services could be provided at much less cost. He said that, although the PTE proposed to close this line, such action did not mean that it was going to close other lines under its control. He went on to say that the Executive had plans to improve the other coast lines and to instal a rapid transit system on the South Tyne line. ✗

Although there is now a new town at Cramlington, on the main line between Newcastle and Berwick-upon-Tweed, the number of trains serving that station is very limited.

Mr. E. Milne, MP for Blyth, is pressing for improvements.

Wessex

✓X This Branch held its second annual general meeting at the Polygon Hotel, Southampton, on Saturday, 20th November, as fully reported in its newsletter no. 6, December, 1971.

Wareham-Swanage passenger services ceased from 2nd January. The Branch considers that, had there been a Wessex Transport Authority in existence, this retrograde step would not have been contemplated. Loss of traffic from the Swanage line is hardly likely to boost the takings on the Bournemouth-Weymouth service. X

Regarding the latter line, British Rail's South-Western Divisional Manager had a meeting with representatives of local councils in Dorset to stress the need for local government co-operation in keeping the line open. As British Rail has spent about £250,000 in reconstructing Pool, Wool and Dorchester South stations, re-ballasting and re-laying with long-welded track and many minor improvements, it seems incredible that the Government can possibly think of throwing away so much of its own money if it never intended to keep this line open. The local rail management has asked the public to make suggestions for improving the existing services. Inclusion in the Golden Rail holiday scheme has been suggested by the Railway Invigoration Society.

✓X As reported in our last issue, despite all the efforts made to keep open the Winchester-Alton line, the decision was made to close it. X Pleas for the retention of the line - on the grounds that the lines at either end are electrified, that the Mid-Hants route would be a secondary link to the South Hampshire Zone, that the travelling time of a replacement bus service would be twice the rail time and nowhere near as attractive to customers - have all been ignored by ministers. X

✓X The Bridport-Maiden Newton line has been proposed for closure from 1st January, 1973. A public inquiry will be held this month. The Branch, which is in touch with Bridport Borough Council on this matter, will be objecting to this proposal and will be making representations to the Department of the Environment. X

The Branch is in close contact with the Southampton Road Action Group, which has asked it to produce a plan for improved integrated public transport as part of the fight to oppose the proposed Portswood link road. This latter would run from the M27 south coast motorway through the centre of the city in a southerly direction to the docks.

AREASDevon and Cornwall

Prior to the recent renewal of grants, Barnstaple Borough Council had formed a committee of local authorities interested in the Exeter-Barnstaple line. It is the intention that this committee should remain in being so as to encourage use of the line and to keep the members in touch with British Rail.

As mentioned in the last progress report, the Dart Valley Light Railway Company is now negotiating with British Rail for the purchase of the Paignton-Kingswear line, which BR intends to close. The Company anticipates running an all-the-year-round service for local needs as well

as making the line a summer attraction by using steam locomotives. The Ashburton-Buckfastleigh section of the Dart Valley Railway has finally been removed to make way for a new section of the A38 trunk road.

Complaints have been voiced in the Torbay area that the new timetables, recently announced, will mean a deterioration in the main line services to London and the Midlands. There will be less through trains and inconvenient changes and delays at Newton Abbot. All this could be the sequel to the running down of Newton Abbot as a locomotive and carriage depot.

North-Western England

The Southport Visitor has recently conducted a campaign in its columns aimed at arousing public interest in the town's railway service to Manchester. The newspaper recognises that, with the service said to be losing in excess of £600,000 per annum, continued payment of the grant is not assured in the light of present Government policy. The campaign concluded with a page of open letters from interested organisations and individuals. All the letters were addressed to the Minister for the Environment and were to be sent to the Minister by the newspaper. The Society was glad to have a letter printed amongst others from all sections of the community.

✓✗ The South East Lancashire and North East Cheshire Passenger Transport Executive took over responsibility for local railway services from British Rail from 1st January. The Manchester Evening News has printed a number of articles recently on railway themes, some including statements by the Director of SELNEC PTE, which have given real cause to expect that the railways in the PTE's area will be allowed to play their full part in the transport organisation of the conurbation. At present, however, a recently revised service is still receiving a great deal of criticism. This is the Altrincham line, now worked by Am4 EMUs, which is suffering from gross peak-period overcrowding on its four-coach trains. The withdrawn DC EMUs were three-coach sets and two were joined at busy periods to form six-coach trains. So far, however, British Rail has refused to form eight-coach trains of the modern stock. ✗

✓✗ One of our new corporate members, High Peak Railway Passengers' Association, is continuing its work in publicising the Buxton and Hope Valley lines. The Association's Secretary is Mr. K. Larkum, of Marsh Lane Head, 11, Marsh Lane, New Mills, Stockport, Cheshire, who would be glad to hear from anyone interested in the future of railways in that area. ✗

✓✗ The Liverpool (Lime Street) to Southport passenger service, withdrawal of which was recently approved by the Minister, has been temporarily reprieved, as the Merseyside PTE is to grant-aid it until the Liverpool inner loop has been completed. ✗

As briefly foreshadowed in our progress report of last September, an experiment, which will last eighteen months, is to be carried out by the MPTE. Its object is to encourage more people to use public transport. Thirteen stations on Merseyside will be served either by feeder buses or extensive car parks, with reduced parking fees. Application has been made to the Department of the Environment to meet half the cost of the scheme.

During January and February, the MPTE carried out an imaginative experiment. "Traveller" tickets, at a cost for one week of £1.95 for adults and £1 for children, were available on all three types of public transport in the area - trains, buses and ferries.

In January, British Rail introduced for an experimental period two remarkable types of ticket. One, known as the "Merseyrover", provides a whole weekend's unlimited rail travel anywhere on the Merseyrail network from 18.00 on Friday to 23.59 on Sunday. The area extends from Southport in the north to Chester in the south and from West Kirby in the west to Warrington in the east. The Southport to Wigan line is also covered by the ticket, which costs only £1 for adults and 50p. for children. The other bargain is a special unifare of only 20 pence second class day return fare, available evenings and Sundays between any two stations on the Liverpool to Southport line.

✓X Work has now started at various sites in Liverpool towards sinking shafts for the construction of the tunnel to contain the inner loop line. British Rail had previously undertaken work to enable trains to continue running between St. James and Liverpool Central stations while the new single track line is being built. Readers are reminded that the line will link St. James with new stations at Central (deep level), Lime Street (low level) and Moorfields (for Exchange). It will enable trains from the Wirral to run round the loop in an anti-clockwise direction and back under the Mersey. Work is expected to finish in 1975.

British Rail has applied to the Department of the Environment for a 75 per cent infrastructure grant, the remainder to be paid by Merseyside PTE, towards the cost of extending underground into Liverpool Central the lines from Southport and Ormskirk which at present terminate at Liverpool Exchange. If this move is successful, the new section of line could be in use in early 1976.

Blackpool North station is to be rebuilt at a cost of £475,000.

North and Central Wales

✓X Although the Transport Users' Consultative Committee for Wales and Monmouthshire, as the result of a public inquiry held last June, reported to the Department of the Environment that widespread hardship would result from the withdrawal of passenger trains from the Cambrian Coast line, the hearing was re-opened on 9th February at Harlech to consider proposals for alternative bus services which were not available at the earlier inquiry.

The Cambrian Coast Line Action Group (12, Corbett Close, Tywyn, Merioneth), in a leaflet it issued before the resumption of the inquiry, has pointed out that the journey between Fairbourne to Barmouth by train is but two miles as compared with eighteen miles by the only possible bus route. It advised the public to "oppose this expensive nonsense!" X

Britannia Bridge (across the Menai Strait) re-opened to railway traffic on 30th January. It was damaged by fire in May 1970.

North of Scotland

✓X Consent has been given by the Secretary of the State for the Environment to the closure of

the passenger service between Inverness and Kyle of Lochalsh. He has imposed the conditions that closure shall not take place before 1st January, 1974, and not until the provision of additional and revised bus services. In a letter from the Department of Environment to the British Railways Board, it was stated that "The Highlands and Islands Development Board considered that no overwhelming case for retention of the service on economic development grounds had been made. But they recommended that, in view of the major transport change in the area that would be caused by the establishment of the new Stornoway ferry at Ullapool, the closure of the rail line should be delayed until firm arrangements had been made for adequate alternative services in the area served by the railway line and by sea from Kyle and, in particular, till the Stornoway-Ullapool ferry service was in operation." This letter also stated that "alternative bus services operate between Inverness and Kyle via Invermoriston. The Scottish Bus Group have proposed to extend that service and to operate a completely new service along the route of the railway, serving intermediate villages. The former service would be scheduled as 28-40 minutes faster than the rail service, the latter 15 minutes slower."

The Scotsman, in a leading article (24th December, 1971), argued "that it is hard to see how bus services could be adequate during severe Highland winters; and, more important, superior bus services, through pollution, the necessity for bigger and better roads and so on, present a threat to the magnificent scenery the line runs through which the railway itself never could. Furthermore, provision of a suitable alternative bus service would cost rather more than the line's loss last year of £267,000. The real point, however, concerns neither scenery nor economics - the line must be retained, for good, because it is socially necessary."

Mr. Torquil Nicolson, a vice-president of the RIS, who is chairman of the Kyle Line Defence Committee, has told the press that "we have now got two years grace in which to publicise this line as a tourist attraction and to modify its timetables to suit local and tourist means." The Committee and the Scottish Railway Development are uniting in an effort to convince British Rail that the line could be made to pay. The SRDA "believes that a vigorous development policy coupled with a growing public awareness of the need to maintain adequate public transport in an area such as the Highlands will by 1974 demonstrate to the Government the need to retain the Kyle line."

OTHER NEWS

Ashchurch station (for Tewkesbury, Glos.) was closed to passenger traffic from 14th November after unconditional consent had been given by the Secretary of State for the Environment. The closure proposal was given only minimum local publicity. Services had previously been slashed to such an extent that the trains which remained were virtually useless to draw visitors to Tewkesbury. Moreover, local residents had already suffered inconvenience and hardship, which, of course, has now been increased.

The West Somerset Railway Co. has paid a deposit to British Rail so as to secure the option to purchase the Minehead branch (closed to passenger traffic from 3rd January, 1971).

The Company hopes that it might be possible to re-open the line by this summer. It is proposed to operate a daily commercial service throughout the year, augmented in the holiday months by the use of steam locomotives. We particularly recommend our readers to support this scheme. Further details are obtainable from the registered office of the Company, 16 Elm Grove, Taunton, Somerset.

The Secretary of State for the Environment has given permission to British Rail to sell the Waverley route from Carlisle to Edinburgh (closed from 6th January, 1969). The scheme for operating the line drawn up by the Border Union Railway Co. has failed (see June, 1969, progress report, p.12).

Among other news from Scotland is that a Greater Glasgow Passenger Transport Authority is to be set up as an interim measure pending the reorganisation of local government; and that Glasgow Corporation is to receive a 75% infrastructure grant for the Subway (the city's underground railway).

For the period between 1st April, 1972, and 12th November, 1974, the Isle of Man Tourist Board will lease from the Isle of Man Railway Co. the Douglas to Port Erin line, including stations, rolling stock, etc. For the same period, the Tourist Board has entered into an agreement with the Isle of Man Victorian Steam Railway Co. whereby the latter will operate a service on the line on behalf of the Manx Government. The Tourist Board has guaranteed the Company against loss, subject to a limit of £12,000 per season.

EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS Should this progress report not reach members until after the usual time, we feel sure that they will understand that delay will have been caused by the present industrial crisis.

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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 June), all material must be submitted to the appropriate editor so as to reach him by Saturday, 29th April, 1972.

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MEMBERS ONLY SUPPLEMENT : ISSUE No. 10

NORTHERN ENGLAND BRANCH

✕ In the last two members only supplements, it was stated that this Branch most urgently required a new Chairman and a Secretary if it were to continue its activities. Up to the time of preparing this members only supplement, no volunteers had been forthcoming, so, regrettably, it appears that, for the time being at least, the Northern England Branch has reached the end of the line. So far as is known, its activities ceased as from 1st February, but, if anyone at this late stage wishes to step forward, he will be most welcome. ✕

PUBLICITY

It is thought that valuable publicity for the aims and objects of the Society could be obtained in the columns of newsletters issued by railway preservation societies. Members who, from personal knowledge, can recommend suitable publications of this type and consider that the editors would be willing to publish brief details of the Railway Invigoration Society are invited to send the Society's Press and Publicity Officer (Mr. R. V. Banks, of 121, Ashford Road, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent) particulars of titles, names of society (where these are not self evident from the titles) and names and addresses of editors.

MEMBERSHIP

Any member who changes his address is requested to inform the Membership Secretary without delay.

ENCLOSURES

Attention is directed to the sales list and the notice of the 1972 annual general meeting which are enclosed with this supplement.

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