

RIS

Railway Invigoration Society

for the retention and modernisation of railway services

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PROGRESS REPORT

No. 91

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"THE FUTURE OF BRITISH RAILWAYS LIES IN EXPANSION AND DEVELOPMENT"

(Text of the Chairman's address delivered at the annual general meeting of the Society held in Yeovil, Somerset, on 15th April, 1972)

In the past year, the success of railway modernisation in Britain has been demonstrated beyond doubt, especially by the highly successful inter-city services which continue to attract new business in the face of fierce competition. Plans are now well advanced for the introduction of trains to run at 125-150 mph, compared to which 70 mph on a motorway will seem like a trip back to the nineteenth century. What is more, this is being achieved using existing assets, without the destruction of the environment inherent in motorway construction.

Much railway development in Britain is severely hampered, however, by lack of solid, long-term support by the politicians and civil servants responsible for Government policy. It is true that the past year has seen the payment of some welcome financial support to the railways, such as the £27 million to enable fare increases to remain within the CBI limit, the grants for the Great Northern suburban electrification and the renewal of grant aid to unprofitable passenger services throughout the system, after initial suggestions that much of this aid would be withdrawn.

By the way, the Great Northern electrification includes the existing London Transport Northern Line to Moorgate. This is a large-bore tunnel route and it does seem that an opportunity could have been taken to extend these large-bore tunnels the short distance necessary to link up with the Southern Region network and so, for a comparatively small amount of money, give London an excellent main-line link between the Eastern and Southern Regions.

However, not only is this support very small compared to the vast sums spent on roads but much of it is only of a short-term nature. The grants to unprofitable services are for a period of two years only, after which lines so aided - and these constitute the major part of the railway system - will again face the prospect of closure.

British Rail cannot be expected to develop these services to anything like their full potential unless they are given an assured future for at least five and preferably ten years. Grants must be guaranteed for such periods to provide this necessary incentive.

The present state of affairs, whereby so much of the railway system survives only in this

hand-to-mouth manner, leaves open the possibility of a return to the mass closures of the Beeching era and there have been suggestions that this is indeed favoured in certain official circles. This must be strongly resisted for the closure plan was an economic disaster. The B.R. deficit, far from being reduced, actually increased after the plan had been implemented. The reason for this, as predicted by this Society at the time, was that line closures led to loss of through traffic on to the system as a whole. People, having lost their local railway, deserted rail travel elsewhere also, making their complete journeys by road.

However, some perverted thinking on this matter still exists. Mr. Ernest Marples, the former Minister of Transport who initiated the Beeching Plan, had the audacity to say in a recent radio broadcast: "I had almost a hundred million pounds a year loss, which I had to turn into a profit, and after about four or five years we got pretty well straight". Straight into the red was what did happen and this will occur again if this policy is repeated!

The section of the railway system likely to be affected most by a second Beeching Plan would be the rural and cross country lines which have already suffered so severely, and this is why we are holding our annual meeting in an area where the problems of rural transport will be fully understood. We are meeting in Yeovil, the Parliamentary Constituency of Mr. John Peyton, Minister for Transport Industries, and it is here, therefore, as much as anywhere, that transport users have an opportunity to take their problems direct to a high Government level.

Rural transport policies of successive governments have been largely negative. The mass rail closures have been followed by withdrawal of replacement bus services and over the past year there has been much talk of the farcical suggestion that the demand for rural public transport should be met by what amounts to begging lifts in other people's cars. An abdication of Government responsibilities if ever there was one!

The demand for public transport in rural areas is still substantial and the primary role of the railway should be to provide fast, limited stop services linking principal centres. This is not a role that can be filled by buses which by their very nature are slow, subject to delay on congested roads, as well as being tiring and uncomfortable for longer journeys even if the most luxurious vehicles are provided.

Many rural and cross country rail services, however, fall far below the standard required and we advocate a policy of development. Faster, more frequent services are needed, which should be aimed not just at those who have no private vehicle available, but at the motorist who could well be persuaded to leave his car in the garage and go by rail for a proportion of his travel, as is already the case on the inter-city routes.

The future of British Railways lies in expansion and development, not in closures and rumours of closures. Officers of the Netherlands railways are convinced that the key to their railway deficit lies in building new routes and they have put forward a plan to build 75 new stations and open 200 km of new lines, thus placing the whole railway network within the reach of more of the nation's population.

This is the positive approach that is so badly needed in Britain. There has been a vast

expansion and redistribution of the population in Britain since the railways were constructed in the 19th century. Now is the time to look at the system afresh to see how it can be expanded to meet the changed situation. Much improvement can be effected to meet the new needs by re-developing rail routes that have been closed or run down and where necessary, new construction should be considered. The Government should give adequate assistance by providing infrastructure grants, which are free of interest, as for road improvements.

Ten years ago the view was widely held that railways were finished and that, except for certain specialist functions, all that need be done was to phase them out as decently as possible. People like ourselves who disagreed with this view were regarded as cranks, with a sentimental desire to perpetuate the past. This attitude has now changed. Throughout the world a railway revival is in full swing and the cranks of yesterday are the "with-it" people of today.

RESOLUTIONS

Among the resolutions passed at our annual general meeting this year were the following:

- (1) Grant-aid to rail passenger services should be given for periods of not less than seven years so as to provide the assurance of continued support which is needed if British Rail is to develop these services to the best advantage.
- (2) No part of the formation of a disused railway line should be disposed of until a transport plan has been prepared for the area concerned, there should be a public right of objection to a proposed disposal and transport plans should include consideration of the re-opening of closed lines.
- (3) Local authorities should be required by Statute, to appoint Transport Officers with a duty to integrate public transport services.
- (4) The RIS presses for a further extension of railway electrification.
- (5) The RIS advocates the adoption by British Rail of a standard passenger tariff, based on distance and with market pricing as a refinement to this structure.
- (6) ✓ X Legislation should require the fitting of programmed fuel injection devices to road and rail vehicles used for public transport so as to reduce the incidence of pollution.
- (7) British Rail should harmonise its operations with those of Continental countries and the Government should provide finance where necessary for this to be achieved. X

S.O.S. CAMPAIGN

- ✓ X A meeting organised by the National Council on Inland Transport as part of its Save our

Services Campaign was due to be held in Bristol on 27th May (after this issue went to press). The object of the meeting, one of a number which it is hoped to arrange in various parts of Britain, was to bring together for discussion of joint action those who are concerned about the threat of further cuts in our railway system. Among the advertised speakers were two members of Parliament for Bristol constituencies, Messrs. Robert Adley and Arthur Palmer, and an officer of the West Somerset Railway Company which aims to restore the Taunton-Minehead service. The chair was to be taken by the chairman of the campaign, Mr. R. V. Banks, who is Press and Publicity Officer of the Railway Invigoration Society.

ROAD v RAIL

When he opened an exhibition of civil engineering plant at Haydock Park, near St. Helens (Lancs.), on 27th April, Mr. Graham Page, Minister for Planning and Development, said: "This year the Government's investment in road-making will be greater by a million pounds a week."

The Minister's statement means that the annual increase of Government expenditure on roads will, therefore, be about fifty million pounds. This amount is equivalent to the total grant-aid at present being made annually to British Rail for the operation of unremunerative, socially-necessary, lines - aid, moreover, which is not guaranteed for more than two years. The unfair treatment of rail as compared with road is made more apparent when one considers that fifty million pounds is the cost of a mere five miles of urban motorway.

The Minister also said that "major road schemes of a total value of £4,250 million are now being planned." Where are the schemes of similar magnitude for the development of rail? pointed out by Dr. M. P. L. Caton, Chairman of the Railway Invigoration Society, in his address at this year's annual general meeting, the amount of Government support being given to rail is very small as compared with the vast sums being spent on roads. We believe that rail should be given that Government aid which will enable it to compete on equal terms with road, so that rail may fully demonstrate its many intrinsic advantages. High among these is the safety factor, as stated in the Radio Times of 4th May, "in the compartment of a British passenger train you are, statistically, nearly 200 times safer than in your car."

RAILWAY REFORM GROUP

✓ X This all-party parliamentary group, dedicated to railway preservation, has been resurrected as a result of the efforts of Mr. Robert Adley, the member for Bristol, North-East, and other MPs. Among the objects of the Group are (a) to stress the social acceptability of rail transport and (b) its value as a tourist attraction, especially when powered by steam.

This Society hopes to have many useful contacts with the Group. X

PUBLICITY

Good press coverage was obtained this year for our annual general meeting, particularly from the Sunday Telegraph. A reporter from that paper travelled to Yeovil and back with our Local members.

IN PARLIAMENT

Selections from the official reports

House of Commons

Questions and Answers

SSE = Secretary of State for the Environment.

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

(Including certain questions and answers which had to be omitted from this feature in our last issue owing to severe pressure on space)

1971

9th November Public transport (rural areas) Mr. Golding (Newcastle-under-Lyme) asked the SSE if he will establish a committee of inquiry into the problems of public transport in rural and semi-rural areas. Mr. Peyton No.

Railway line (Mid-Hampshire) Miss Quennell (Petersfield) asked the SSE whether, when agreeing to the closure of the Mid-Hampshire railway line, he satisfied himself that economies in operation could not have been introduced that would have avoided the need for the closure. Mr. Peyton Yes.

10th November British Rail (investment programme) Mr. Tom McMillan (Glasgow, Central) asked the SSE what is the total cost of the British Railways Board investment programme 1971-75; and how much of the cost will be borne by Her Majesty's Government. Mr. Peyton About £600 million. Grant contributions to the Board's investment are expected to be of the order of £200 million.

24th November Rail services Mr. Joel Barnett (Heywood and Royton) asked the SSE to what extent, when considering applications submitted to him by British Rail for closures of passenger rail services on grounds of unprofitability, he takes into account recommendations from the appropriate passenger transport consultative committees that the services concerned are socially necessary. Mr. Peyton Fully, together with other relevant factors.

Mr. Wallace (Norwich, North) asked the SSE what decisions have been taken regarding the future of the Norwich-Cromer and East Suffolk rail services. Mr. Eldon Griffiths to undertake to pay grant until the end of 1972; and, as with all grant-aided services, to keep them under continuing review.

Mr. David Stoddart (Swindon) asked the SSE if he will now prepare a transportation plan providing for increased use of railways for the carrying of passengers and freight,

together with a policy of positive discouragement of transporting heavy loads for long distance by road. Mr. Peyton It is for the transport industry to develop in such a way as best meets needs of its customers.

Mr. Spriggs (St. Helens) asked the SSE what representations he has received about the government grants (infrastructure grants) referred to in the Railway Gazette, October 1971, a copy of which is in his possession. Mr. Peyton The extension of the grant scheme has been generally welcomed.

29th November Level crossings (automatic half-barriers) Sir Clive Bosson (Leominster) asked the SSE how many level crossings with automatic half-barriers have now been modified in accordance with the recommendations made following the investigations relating to the accident at the Hixon crossing; and how many additional level crossings will be equipped with automatic half-barriers in the near future. Mr. Peyton Modifications of equipment, signs and road markings are complete at 200 of the 203 such crossings now in use. At some of these, associated improvements still have to be carried out. Two further installations of automatic half-barriers have been authorised and applications for another five are under consideration.

15th December Urban transport (costs) Mr. Adley (Bristol, North-East) asked the SSE whether he is satisfied that the information available to his Department enables him fully to compare social and economic costs and benefits of providing urban transport by road and rail; and if he will make a statement. Mr. Graham Page These comparisons are made by major urban local authorities, wherever possible, as part of the comprehensive urban land use transportation studies for which they are primarily responsible. The Department is continuing to develop improved methods to enable this to be done more thoroughly and systematically.

1972

26th January Single-decker buses (road and rail) Mr. J. Hall (Wycomb) asked the SSE what experiments had been carried out into the use of single decker buses capable of running on both rail and road and which could utilise tracks in those areas where the normal train service would be unremunerative. Mr. Peyton None, though some feasibility studies have been carried out on buses running on disused railway tracks.

16th February Railways (timetable changes) Mr. Jessell (Twickenham) asked the SSE if he will give a general direction to British Rail to assess the needs of passengers in the outer areas of large cities before introducing changes in passenger train timetables. Mr. Peyton No.

Railway fares Mr. Dixon (Truro) asked the SSE whether he will publish in the OFFICIAL REPORT a list setting out the standard railway fares, 2nd class, per mile, from 1st February, 1965, to the present time. Mr. Peyton From February 1965 to September 1968, the Railways Board charged a standard second class fare of 3.25 old pence per passenger mile. Special rates applied in the London area and for journeys of over 200 miles. In September, the Board decided to adopt a flexible pricing policy and there has been no standard rate per mile since then.

* 1st March Railways (social grants) Mr. Adley (Bristol, North-East) asked the SSE if he will

to amend the Transport Act, 1968, in order to enable British Rail to apply for social grants on railway lines the passenger service on which was withdrawn prior to the passing of the Transport Act, 1968, thus precluding British Rail from applying for social grants therefore. The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Peter Walker) No, Sir. Mr. Adley Is my right hon. Friend aware that that is a disappointing answer in view of the more enlightened attitude of the Government towards rail transport? Does he appreciate that in the battle between road and rail there were many, particularly urban, lines for which British Railways would have sought a grant had they been able to do so under the 1968 Act and which they now feel might so qualify? Will my right hon. Friend look sympathetically at any such requests he might receive from British Railways? Mr. Walker It is very much in the interest of British Railways to be given freedom on the closure of passenger services, as was given in 1966, to be able to dispose of their resources for the better use of British Railways.

8th March Transport users' consultative committees Mr. John E. B. Hill (Norfolk, South) asked the SSE whether he will take steps to extend the functions of transport users' consultative committees to include responsibilities for bus services provided in substitution of discontinued passenger rail services, as recommended by the Select Committee on Nationalised Industries. Mr. Eldon Griffiths My right hon. Friend is considering this along with the other recommendations of the Select Committee.

Railways Board Mr. Awdry (Chippenham) asked the SSE what is his policy towards providing further financial assistance to the British Railways Board. Mr. Peyton I have no such plans for the present.

* Railways (increased use) Sir Gilbert Longden (Hertfordshire, South-West) asked the SSE if he will now issue a general direction to British Rail to seek to increase the use of the railways for transporting passengers and freight; and if he will make a statement. Mr. Peyton No, Sir.

10th March Unremunerative railway lines Mr. Roper (Farnworth) asked the SSE if he will publish the formulae arrived at for his Department by Cooper Brothers for the calculation of grants for unremunerative railway grants. Mr. Peyton The costs calculated for each grant-aided passenger service consists of its specific operating costs, provision for the long-term replacement and renewal of assets, interest on capital, an allocation according to usage of the costs of facilities and overheads used jointly with other services and an appropriate share of administrative cost. The revenue is that directly attributable to travel on the service itself. The balance is the deficit which is met by grant.

16th March Rail service (Slough-Windsor) Dr. Glyn (Windsor) asked the SSE, in view of local anxiety over the possible closure of the Slough-Windsor rail service which would result if his Department failed to continue its grant after 1972 and of the fact that the permanent closure of the Windsor Bridge increased the importance of this rail link over the Thames, making it vital for communications, if he will undertake to continue the subsidy after the end of 1972. Mr. Peyton I expect the Railways Board to apply for the renewal of grant-aid later this year and will then consider the matter.

20th March Railways (line closures) Mr. Elystan Morgan (Cardiganshire) asked the SSE what weight it is practice to allocate to the unanimous recommendation of a transport users' consultative committee that the closure of a certain railway line will cause inevitable passenger hardship. Mr. Peyton The views and recommendations of these committees are given due weight together with economic, financial and other relevant factors.

22nd March Free transport (London) Sir Charles Taylor (Eastbourne) asked the SSE what is his estimate of the net cost to public funds of the introduction of free transport in London. Mr. Michael Heseltine This is a matter for the Greater London Council.

REPORTS FROM BRANCHES AND AREAS

BRANCHES

London and Home Counties

✓✕ A very successful members' slide evening was held by the Branch in February, despite power cuts, and it is intended to make this an annual event. ✕

✓✕ Eighty five people were present at a public meeting organised by the Branch in conjunction with the London Area of the Railway Development Association which was held at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, on 10th May. The theme of the meeting was "Main line into Europe". The principal speaker was Dr. M. R. Bonavia (Chief Officer (Special Duties), British Railways Board with a special interest in the Channel Tunnel project), who dealt with the impact of the Channel Tunnel on the railway network, particularly in the South-East. Dr. Bonavia said that few new lines would be built and enlargement in provision of tracks would mainly be on the existing network. The Chairman of the meeting was the Earl of Kinnoull. It is hoped that a fuller report of the proceedings will appear in our next issue. ✕

Arrangements are in hand to hold an evening rail tour of inner London lines in July and the Branch annual general meeting will be held on Wednesday, 13th September, at Friends' House, Euston Road, London, N.W.1. An official notice will be sent to Branch members in due course.

✓✕ Following representations from this Society, the Policy and Resources Committee of the Greater London Council has changed its mind regarding the Romford-Upminster line. It has asked the Secretary of State for the Environment that it considers the line should be retained until the road situation has been clarified and/or major maintenance becomes necessary.

✓✕ Of particular note is the Secretary of State's decision to refuse consent to the withdrawal of the Epping-Ongar passenger service of London Transport, owing to the inadequacy of bus services to alleviate hardship if the line closed. This is welcome news for the local action group who

be encouraged by the Society to fight for an improved service and secure future for the line.

At a recent meeting of the Greater London Council, the Leader of the Opposition tabled a question on the Council's continued refusal to subsidise the Romford-Upminster line. ✕

The Secretary of State has refused consent to the withdrawal of the Marylebone-High Wycombe passenger service. If implemented, this would have meant closure of four intermediate stations and the diversion of trains to Paddington.

✕ One matter needs correction. Since the last progress report appeared, British Rail has published a closure for the Wimbledon-Mitcham-West Croydon line. As there have been objections, led by a local action group, a TUC inquiry will have to be held and closure deferred. ✕

A significant development on the Southern Region has been a proposal to withdraw up to 100 allegedly little-used commuter trains to afford economies made necessary by the Government's withdrawal of London and South-East grants. These moves have met with strong opposition from the unions and a campaign meeting by ASLEF at Wimbledon in April was addressed by the RIS Press Officer, who explained the aims and objects of the SOS Campaign. As a result, most of the withdrawals on the South-Western Division, covering all of those on the Epsom and Windsor lines, have been abandoned. The new timetable had in the meantime been printed with these trains omitted and it remains to be seen what official notice will be given of this last-minute change or whether the trains will be allowed to run unadvertised.

✕ The Branch has been represented at recent meetings of the London Passenger Action Confederation Railway Group and has supported its objection to the Greater London Council Bill to allow London Transport to impose on-the-spot fines for Underground passengers found travelling without tickets. The objection has been made because of the difficulties over the manning of booking offices. ✕

✕ The Ashford-Hastings local action committee is receiving increased support from local authorities. British Rail plan to close the Appledore-Ore section to all traffic and to retain the Ashford-Appledore-Dungeness section as a siding for the movement of aggregate and to serve Dungeness power station. ✕

The secretary of the Worthing and District Travellers' Association is an RIS member and thus represents this Society on the Association's committee.

East Anglian

✕ All members of the Branch have been sent a local newsletter. It is hoped to make the issuing of further newsletters a quarterly affair. It is also hoped to hold a meeting in Bury St. Edmunds with a speaker on the SOS campaign.

The new Eastern Region timetable has revealed a slight improvement on the East Suffolk line, but otherwise little change on the lines in the area is evident. ✕

Proposals to close the National Carriers' depots at Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth have been

reported. Apart from putting more heavy lorries on the roads, this could affect possible future growth of these ports when Britain enters the Common Market.

The Branch is to compile information about facilities (waiting rooms, shelters, etc.) at stations in its area, most of which are unstaffed. It is felt that some of these facilities are sadly lacking.

✓✗ Plans to restore four passenger trains a day between Cambridge and St. Ives are being considered by British Rail after talks with representatives of local authorities. The passenger service was withdrawn in October, 1970, but the volume of freight on the line is growing. ✗

Wessex

✓✗ Purbeck Railway Preservation Group has abandoned its attempt to take over the Wareham-Swanage line, owing to lack of money, but will be turning its attention to the threatened Maiden Newton-Bridport line. However, objections will be made by the Branch to any road works which might interfere with the formation of the Swanage line. Swanage UDC is keeping a close watch on the effects of the closure during the holiday months, particularly as regards traffic congestion and the loss of patronage of the resort.

The rail-replacement bus service between Yeovil Junction and Yeovil Pen Mill stations has been drastically revised. With effect from 10th April, no buses have been running in the evening; the Sunday service was withdrawn after 2nd April. ✗

AREAS

Devon and Cornwall

✓✗ The Secretary of State has agreed to the withdrawal of British Rail passenger trains on the Paignton-Kingswear line. However, the service remains in operation, as it is temporarily subsidised by Devon County Council and Torbay County Borough Council. British Rail has agreed to sell the 6½ mile line to the Dart Valley Light Railway Company, whose trains are expected to take over in the autumn.

A letter from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of the Department for the Environment, Mr. Eldon Griffiths, to Sir Frederic Bennett, MP for Torquay, has stated that there is no thought at present by the British Railways Board of closing the Newton Abbot-Paignton railway line. ✗

North-Eastern England

Our correspondent in the North-East reports:-

✓✗ Regarding the news in the last progress report that the Tyneside Passenger Transport Executive wishes to close the Riverside branch of the North Tyneside line, it now quotes a figure of £40,000 loss per year. Shipyard workers who would be affected by the closure are petitioning against it and have the support of Mr. E. Garrett, MP for Wallsend. Another MP who is looking at the situation closely is Mr. G. W. Rhodes (Newcastle upon Tyne, East). ✗

✓✗ It is pleasing to report that the Tyneside PTE proposes to have its rapid transit rail system operational before 1980. At certain points in Newcastle city centre there are displayed notices which indicate experimental borings in connection with the portion which will operate on a tube basis. The Executive is at present looking at underground systems in Europe to try to find a suitable type of train. The system would include twenty new stations, three of which would replace existing ones at Backworth, Pelaw and High Shields. Seven of the stations would be underground and the tube would link the North Tyneside services to the South Shields line. A further plan which has been announced would provide a tube going westwards from Newcastle city centre to the suburbs of Fenham and Denton via Elswick. ✗

During the work-to-rule in April, services in the north-east of England escaped lightly compared with some other parts of the country, yet no trains were operated on the Riverside branch or on the Haltwhistle-Alston line. In the case of the latter, a British Rail spokesman said the withdrawal of the trains had no bearing at all on the possibility of the line's being closed. A strong campaigner for the retention of this line, Councillor Mrs. Nancy Todd, of Haltwhistle Rural District Council, did not accept this and, before normal working was resumed, she had asked Mr. Geoffrey Rippon, MP to intervene.

North-Western England

✓✗ South-East Lancashire and North-East Cheshire Passenger Transport Executive does not object to British Rail's proposal to withdraw the local passenger service on the Stalybridge-Stockport line and agrees that the Oldham-Rochdale line should remain open for at least another year to enable the situation to be considered in more detail. Closure of the Bury-Rawtenstall passenger service has been delayed to allow the East Lancashire Light Railway Company to approach the PTE with a suggestion that the Company should take over the service. ✗

An improved passenger service between Manchester and Sheffield via the Hope Valley was introduced in May. ✗

✓✗ On Merseyside, the service between Liverpool Central (high level) and Gateacre ran for the last time on 15th April. Previously the Secretary of State for the Environment had given his unconditional consent to the withdrawal, although the TUCC for the North-West Area had reported to him that, in its view, "withdrawal of the train service would cause inconvenience to a large number of passengers." A letter of consent from the Department of Environment to the British Railways Board stated that: "The Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive, in whose area the service entirely runs, have no objection to the closure proposal. The Executive consider that there should be no need for extra buses to cater for displaced rail passengers, but they are prepared to operate an additional bus from Liverpool to the Garston area in the evening peak for an experimental period ... One of the main recommendations of the MALTS report was that an underground link be built between Exchange and Central (low level) stations and an infrastructure grant has been approved for development work. The Railways Board have informed the Department that, if this link is finally approved and built, it would be necessary, for unavoidable technical reasons connected with the tunnelling at Central LL station, to cease operating trains into the high level station for a period of 18-24 months prior to the completion of the link

(the date for which is at present envisaged as being mid-1972). No other suitable station is available in central Liverpool for the Gateacre service temporarily. Thus, on the basis of planning for the worst circumstances, the Gateacre service would need to be withdrawn by mid-1974, if the Exchange-Central link scheme proceeds as presently planned." ✕

✓✕ In direct contrast to the sorry story of the Gateacre line is the 123-page report, with copious diagrams and illustrations, prepared by the Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive and giving its proposals to the future development of a passenger transport system in the area as required by the 1968 Transport Act. Published in March, it is the first such report by a PTE to appear. According to a special article in the Liverpool Daily Post, "what the Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive's transport plan does, above all, is to sound the battle cry against cars." More than twenty new stations on local commuter railway lines are envisaged. One of the first proposals to be investigated will be the re-electrification of the line between Aintree (on the Liverpool Exchange-Ormskirk line) and Bootle (New Strand) (on the Liverpool Exchange-Southport line), including the provision of a new station called Giro. The report states that the study of the extension of the electrified line from Rock Ferry to Hooton - and possibly Chester - is already well advanced. This would obviate a change at Rock Ferry. ✕

The MPTE is considering proposals to convert Waterloo railway station (Liverpool Exchange-Southport line) into a major interchange point to include an overhead car park and a bus station.

Land near Hoylake station may be bought by the MPTE for use as a car park. The Executive is also examining the possibility of running feeder buses to West Kirby, Hoylake, Manor Road and Meols stations, all on the same electrified line to Liverpool Central.

A new fares structure was brought into operation on the Wirral electric lines from 23rd April. New-type "single tickets only" are now available. These are of two types: a "peak" single valid by any train and, in many cases, a reduced "off peak" single. Some fares remain the same, some are cheaper and others have been increased, but the average increase does not exceed five per cent. The traditional type season tickets have been discontinued and replaced by zonal season tickets - there are six zones - which are not only cheaper, but (except in one case) allow travel over track additional to that used for one's daily journey to work.

From 1st May, further Wirral line improvements were better connecting services from Rock Ferry. Trains now run every half-hour to Hooton, with alternate trains going through to either Ellesmere Port and Helsby or Chester.

Owing to encouraging sales figures, the MPTE has extended the period of trial of the "Traveller" tickets described in our last issue. Full timetables of local services are now displayed at many Merseyrail stations.

✓✕ In addition to that on the Liverpool inner loop (reported in our last issue), work has also commenced on the burrowing junction at Hamilton Square station, Birkenhead. (Correction - Trains on the inner loop will run in a clockwise direction, not as stated in our last issue.) ✕

✓✕ British Rail has published proposals for the withdrawal of the Chester-Helsby-Runcorn

passenger service, which, if implemented, would cause the closure of no station. The nominal date of closure is 3rd July. Objections must reach the TUGC for the North-West by 12th June. ✕

North and Central Wales

✕ The Transport Users' Consultative Committee for Wales and Monmouthshire has stated that, as the result of a public inquiry held at Harlech on 9th and 10th February into proposals put forward by the Crosville Motor Services, Ltd., for bus services to replace the railway passenger trains provided by the Cambrian Coast line, it is "of the unanimous opinion that the hardships reported upon following our previous hearing on the rail closure proposal would largely remain and be modified only for a comparatively few. It is felt that a bus service attempting to do the work of the trains, which cater conveniently and simultaneously for local, inter-sectional and through passengers, would create hardship. In the comprehensive report which has been sent to the Secretary of State for the Environment, the Committee have confirmed their view that a bus service operating over this wide area, with its exceptional geography and different system of road communication compared with the line of the railway, could not provide an adequate substitute for the trains. The Committee are also in no doubt that the holiday trade and other contingent interests, and indeed the area generally, would suffer because people now using the railway to visit the Cambrian Coast would not consider undertaking awkward journeys by rail and road via railheads which are somewhat remote from the coastal resorts."

It is hoped that Shotton (low level) station, Flintshire, on the main North Wales coast line, will be re-opened in July. The station will probably have a weekday service of five DMU trains each way, with one train each way on summer Sundays. ✕

WHAT OTHER SOCIETIES ARE DOING

The Tenterden Railway Company, Limited.

This Company, which supersedes the Kent and East Sussex Railway Association, is limited by guarantee and has no share capital. It was registered as a charity in May, 1971, and is the only railway company in Britain to enjoy this status.

In June of last year, the Company successfully prevented the lifting of the railway line between Robertsbridge, Sussex, and Bodiam, the end of the section to be preserved. This saved the rail link in time to allow the passage of the last of the Company's rolling stock from Robertsbridge, for which permission was granted by British Rail, after eight months of negotiations, in January of 1972. At the same time permission was given to carry out training movements from Rolvenden along 1½ miles of track south towards Wittersham Road. These have been carried out successfully, although not so frequently as it would have been wished, owing to the coal miners' strike.

The Company has reached agreement with British Rail for the purchase of the ten miles of railway between Tenterden Town and Bodiam for the sum of £60,000, under mortgage facilities, repayment to be made over a period of 25 years. £6,000 deposit has been paid to British Rail and contracts will be exchanged in the near future. Such contracts are, of course, subject to the granting of a light railway order. However, the Company hopes to run its first passenger trains for the public by the end of this year.

Membership has risen to well over 1,100 and is still rising.

Further particulars of this venture may be obtained from The Secretary, Tenterden Railway Company, Limited, Tenterden Town Station, Tenterden, Kent.

Wirral Railway Circle

Among the aims of this Circle are the organisation of visits and rail tours and the encouragement of rail travel. Since its formation as recently as October, 1968, "the Circle has risen from the ranks of being a purely 'local' group to rank with the 'giants' of railway clubs in Britain". Among the tours organised by the Circle have been several which have embraced railway lines of interest to the Railway Invigoration Society.

Fixed for the weekend 6th-8th October is the "Orcadian", a trip from Crewe via Preston and Carlisle to Wick and Thurso, with, subject to demand, breakfast provided on the "Royal Highlander" restaurant car. Provisional fare: £6.40 adult; £3.40 accompanied juvenile (sleeping berth £4 extra). For further details of this and other activities of the Circle, please write to Mr. C. Bakalarski, 161, Spital Road, Bromborough, Wirral, Cheshire, L62 2AE.

Dean Forest Railway Preservation Society

"A working steam-age branch line for Severnside; this is the main aim of the D.F.R.P.S., formed in February, 1970, to save the last remaining section of the former Severn & Wye Railway in the Forest of Dean. Now the only rural branch line to survive the Beeching era in Gloucestershire, it can claim to have one of the longest and most colourful railway histories in Britain ... Since the turn of the century, there has been a gradual rundown of the forest iron and coal industry which has been reflected in the declining fortunes of the Severn & Wye. Passenger services were withdrawn in 1929 and thereafter the system has steadily contracted, until today only the Lydney-Parkend section remains ... Ultimately, the Society proposes to restore the line to its former GW/LMS (MR) condition and to operate a limited public service of steam-hauled passenger trains. It also hopes to eventually extend the line some 2½ miles beyond Parkend, through some of the most beautiful scenery in the forest, to Cannop Ponds and Speech House Road." Further details available from Mr. G. L. Griffiths, 21, Larkfield Avenue, High Beech, Chesham, Bucks, HP8 5BH.

West Somerset Railway Company

This Company has now signed an agreement with British Rail for the purchase of the Minehead branch line, although it is unlikely that a service of passenger trains will re-commence until this autumn (see also previous issue, pp. 11-12).

Strathspey Railway Association has been formed to support the Strathspey Railway Company, Limited, in its efforts to restore the Aviemore-Boat of Garten line as a steam-worked railway. Provisional secretary: Mr. J. Scott, 1, Church Grove, Sauchie, Alloa, Clackmannanshire.

OTHER NEWS

Extensive improvements are now being effected on the east coast main line to Scotland to cater for the higher speed trains of the future. One of the most important changes will be the elimination of the 20 mph speed limit through Peterborough station. All the various schemes along the line should be completed by May, 1973.

British Rail has announced that steam trains will be allowed to run again on five routes. These are Birmingham Moor Street-Didcot; York-Scarborough; Newcastle-Carlisle; Shrewsbury-Newport; and Carnforth-Barrow. This is great news for steam locomotive preservation societies, although the number of runs will be limited. Societies allowed to make a steam run will be responsible for coaling and watering, but footplate staff will be provided by British Rail.

Bristol Parkway station, about five miles from the city centre, was opened to passenger traffic from 1st May. The name is much more appropriate than that originally suggested (Bristol North), as there is parking for nearly 600 cars at the station. This new station is served by express trains to London (Paddington), South Wales and Birmingham and the North.

British Rail has published a proposal to close Stonehouse Burdett Road station to passenger traffic. There is a new-town project at nearby Easington, for which the Bristol Road station would have been more convenient. It has come to light recently that this latter station was closed as a result of a clerical error. The intention had been to close the Burdett Road station and to use the Bristol Road station as the railhead for Stroud Valley to West Country journeys.

Passenger services from Birmingham Snow Hill to Wolverhampton (low level) and to Langley Green were withdrawn from 5th March. As this left Snow Hill station with no passenger services, it too was closed from that date.

Blaby Rural District Council is to pay British Rail £400 a year to cover staffing costs for stopping two extra trains per day at Narborough station (Leicester-Nuneaton line). British Rail is considering the issue of special shoppers' tickets to be available by the service. The Council is already subsidising the running of the station, which was re-opened to passenger traffic from 5th January, 1970, after closure from 4th March, 1968.

A three-year study of all aspects of passenger transport in Wales has been sponsored by the Welsh Council. It is to be under the direction of Professor Graham Rees of the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. The first stage will be a pilot study of an area of Wales; the second will be a detailed review of passenger transport in North Wales; and the third will relate to all aspects of passenger transport in South Wales.

A campaign action committee has been set up by Cowbridge Rural District Council to

press for the re-opening to passenger traffic of the Barry-Bridgend line (closed 15th June, 1964.)

The Isle of Man Railway Co. resumed operations on the Douglas-Port Erin line from 28th May, with a service of four trains in each direction on Mondays-Fridays. The service is scheduled to last until 15th September.

(Correction The operating company will not be the Isle of Man Victorian Steam Railway Company, as stated in our last issue and based on a normally reliable source of information.)

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

PUBLISHED by the RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY

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

RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY

PROGRAMME REPORT No. 91

JUNE 1972

MEMBERS ONLY SUPPLEMENT: ISSUE No. 11.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Reports

A booklet containing copies of the reports presented to the annual general meeting held in Yeovil on 15th April is enclosed.

Officers and National Committee, 1972-3

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

The following officials were re-elected:-

M. P. L. Caton, Esq., PhD, as Chairman;
Mr. J. M. Stanley, M. A., as General Secretary;
Mr. B. R. Sageman as Treasurer;
A. J. C. Read, Esq., FCIS, as Honorary Auditor.

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

Mrs. R. Colyer; Messrs. R. V. Banks, E. R. Barbery, J. W. Barfield,
D. J. Bradbury, P. T. Byrne, G. L. Collett, L. G. Hipperson, E. H. Longland,
R. Macqueen, N. P. C. Madsen, G. F. Manley, H. G. M. Rogers, R. H. Whittaker.

Three new members were elected to the National Committee, viz:-

Messrs. A. F. Johnson, C. Kew, H. R. Purser.

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

Subscriptions

The meeting accepted the National Committee's recommendation that subscriptions should remain unaltered for the year 1973.

Annual general meeting : venues

The decision made at last year's annual general meeting that future AGMs should, in general, be held outside London was reaffirmed. It was agreed that next year's annual general meeting should be held in Ely, Cambridgeshire (see also page iii)

RESOLUTIONS

The resolutions listed in the main progress report are now being acted upon by the National Committee. It will either press via the good offices of the Railway Reform Group or other

parliamentary contacts for Government action or will pass our views to appropriate bodies.

In addition to those mentioned in the main progress report, the following motions were also dealt with:-

- (8) The National Committee should meet less frequently than hitherto, with meetings at approximately 3-monthly intervals. To conduct the business of the Society in the intervening periods, an Executive Committee with between six and eight members should be established. During the forthcoming year, a review of the size of the National Committee should be carried out to determine whether it should be reduced by an amendment to be proposed at the time of the next annual general meeting. (Agreed)
- (9) Branches of the Society (with the exception of the London and Home Counties Branch) should coincide in area with the new territories of British Rail to be established in the near future. (Agreed) +
- (10) A single inter-city terminal should be established in London. *
- (11) Consideration should be given to means of allowing participation by members of the public in the development of railway services by means of a railway bond issue. *
- (12) London Transport Board should be asked to operate through bookings to British Rail stations. X
- (13) The name of the Society should be changed to "Railway Improvement Society". (After a general discussion, not approved, but agreed that the position should be kept under review).
 - + Now receiving attention of the Branches and Areas Sub-Committee of the National Committee.
 - * Owing to the complexity of the issues, referred to the National Committee for further consideration.
 - X Because of its complex nature, referred to the London and Home Counties Branch for further consideration.

VOTE OF THANKS

At the first meeting of the National Committee to be held after this year's AGM, a vote of thanks to the Wessex Branch and particularly to Mr. Madsen for organising the highly successful gathering at Yeovil was carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

✓X In accordance with a decision made at the annual general meeting, the Society's every-day running will from henceforth be dealt with by an Executive Committee of between 6 and 8 members, which will also take over the functions of the Finance Sub-Committee. In addition to the three principal officers - the National Chairman, the General Secretary and the Treasurer - the Press and Publicity Officer (Mr. R. V. Banks) and a representative of the Branches and Areas Sub-Committee (Mr. J. W. Barfield) were appointed to the Executive Committee at a meeting of the National Committee held on 4th May. X

ORGANISATION OF THE SOCIETY

required by paragraph 21 of the Constitution, the National Committee has elected from amongst its members the following officers:-

Vice-Chairman:	Mr. R. V. Banks, 121, Ashford Road, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent.
Assistant Secretaries:	Mr. J. W. Barfield, 70, Alnwick Road, London, E. 16 3 HN. Mr. E. H. Longland, 20a, Rous Road, Buckhurst Hill, Essex.
Membership Secretary:	Mr. D. J. Bradbury, 59, Dore Road, Dore, Sheffield.
Press and Publicity Officer:	Mr. R. V. Banks, (address as above)
Sales Officer:	Mr. G. L. Collett, 451a, Bromley Road, Bromley, Kent, BR1 4PH
Progress Report Editor:	Mr. L. G. Hipperson, 24a, Cable Road, Hoylake, Wirral, Cheshire, L47 2BD.
Progress Report Sub-Editor:	Mr. H. R. Purser, 30, Staines Road, Feltham, Middlesex.
Duplicating Officer:	Mr. A. F. Johnson, 38, Grange Park, Ealing, London, W. 5.
Distribution Officer:	Mr. H. G. M. Rogers, 64, Cowper Road, London, W7 1EJ.
Cuttings Officer	Mr. E. H. Longland, (address as above)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1973

Acting upon a decision made at the annual general meeting this year, the National Committee has made provisional arrangements to hold next year's AGM in Ely, Cambridgeshire, on Saturday, 14th April, under the auspices of the East Anglian Branch.

TRANSPORT IN THE CONURBATIONS

✓ Following the successful meeting of certain branch secretaries and area representatives in Birmingham on 5th December, 1970 (see report in members only supplement no. 6, March 1971), the National Committee decided in the early part of this year that the time was appropriate to review the conclusions reached at that meeting, particularly now that passenger transport executives are exercising powers over local rail services in addition to their responsibilities for bus services. To this end, a further meeting of representatives from the conurbations was held in Birmingham on 18th March.

The meeting considered developments since the previous meeting, had a general discussion on problems in particular areas, came to general conclusions and made a decision on policy for future action.

Among points made were the following:-

...

Towns such as Dudley (Worcs.) object to making a contribution from the general rate fund for the benefit of other towns while they themselves have been deprived of all passenger services, in the case of Dudley since 1964.

Extension of electrification from Ormskirk to Preston is an obvious development, but this would cause conflict of electrification methods at Preston.

The Greater London Council favours motorways in preference to the development of railways.

The RIS is pressing for cross-London links to include the Great Northern routes, King's Cross and Moorgate. The Foulness Airport extension could well be included in this scheme.

It is to be regretted that the Fleet line is to be narrow bore. This represents only a wasted opportunity.

The wisdom of siting the Victoria line terminus in Brixton was queried. It was pointed out that it was difficult to decide at what place the line should terminate beyond Brixton. Doubt was expressed as to whether passenger congestion at Waterloo could be relieved by use of the Vauxhall interchange, as few trains stop at Vauxhall. Mr. Barfield stated that the RIS is taking up this matter with the Greater London Council.

It was decided to hold another meeting of representatives from the conurbations in October.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Particular attention is directed to the questionnaire enclosed with this members only supplement. If you wish the progress report to reflect your ideas in the way it is presented, kindly complete the questionnaire and return it without delay to the editor. Your kind assistance on this occasion would be invaluable.

Published by the Railway Invigoration Society for the exclusive information of its members.
