

PROGRESS REPORT

No. 92

SEPTEMBER 1972

RAILWAYS ARE NECESSARY ! !

✓✗ Sparked off by the prolonged negotiations in settling the recent railwaymen's pay claim and the prospect of serious financial difficulties to follow, The Economist published in its issue of 6th May an article entitled "The unnecessary railways". This advocated closure of much of the railway system and its replacement by express bus services. Further statements on the same theme have appeared in later issues of this journal, which seems intent on pursuing what can only be described as a vicious anti-railway campaign.

The arguments put forward to support these views take little account of the results of transport policies over the past decade. For example, it is boldly asserted that "railways are an anachronism in a small country in a motorway age". This completely overlooks that railway lines which run parallel to motorways, far from becoming redundant, have been able to substantially increase their business. Thus, the electrified London Midland Region line from London to Manchester, now enjoys about 80 per cent of the total travel market between these places, despite competition from the M1. If anything is to be concluded from results such as this, it is that more money should be invested in railways and less in motorways certainly not the reverse !

The deductions made in this article are not even coherent in themselves. Thus, it is recognised that the Beeching closures created a vicious circle, reducing traffic on the rest of the system and making even more lines uneconomic. Yet it is concluded that even more drastic cuts should be made !

✓✗ The anonymous writer of this article would do well to listen to Mr. Richard Marsh, the present chairman of the British Railways Board. In a recent lecture to the Royal Society of Arts, Mr. Marsh said : "It used to be believed that all you had to do to make the railways more profitable was to make them smaller. That is being totally disproved. One of the most expensive railways networks we have looked at, was one of the smallest, because the inescapable costs that you cannot get out from under are such that they can swallow up the benefits that you receive from the reduced operating costs". ✗

✓✗ The assertion in The Economist that buses are a cheaper means of providing public transport, especially if some of the old railway lines are converted into reserved bus tracks, is

totally misleading. Bus travel is only cheaper, because operators pay less than their share of road costs compared to operators of freight lorries of similar weight. If the buses were ~~run~~ on reserved tracks, far from enjoying the use of roads now paid for largely by other users, they would be in essentially the same situation as the railways and would be required to carry the full cost of track construction and maintenance, signalling and administration. Moreover, even under these conditions, buses would be physically incapable of affording anything like the standard of speed and comfort inherent in rail travel. ✕ They would, no doubt, be largely deserted by the travelling public as have many of the rail replacement services introduced after the Beeching cuts. ✕

If Britain is to have an acceptable system of inland transport, it will only be achieved by proper recognition of the full costs - economic and social - of both road and rail, so that each can fulfil the role to which it is technically best suited. Extreme views of the kind expressed in this article can only hinder the positive work of those who are striving to bring this about, especially when they come from a journal which ought to be giving a lead in presenting a fair and balanced account of all the issues involved. ✕

"THE FAST LANE TO SOCIAL DECAY"

The Sunday Times for 9th July contained a leading article under the above title. This was an excellent presentation of the case for a fairer treatment of rail as compared with road. It put forward in a cogent manner many of the arguments in favour of rail, which have so often been advanced in these columns. In particular, we were very pleased to observe a mention of the need for grant aid to be guaranteed for periods of longer than two years.

We were delighted to have received support in our task from so influential a quarter and we recommend all our members and those who are sympathetic to our cause, to read the article, if they have not done so already, and to persuade those who oppose us to read it also.

Among the lively correspondence to which the article has given rise in subsequent issues, of the paper, we were especially interested in a letter from Mr. C. W. Smith, Clerk and Chief Executive of East Suffolk County Council. This was published in the issue of 30th July under the heading of "Downhill goes the railway". Mr. Smith referred to the position of the East Suffolk railway line, one to which the Railway Invigoration Society has given much attention. He pointed out "a serious impediment to its economic working is the presence of some 26 manned level crossings". But he went on to state that automatic crossing controls had not been installed because British Rail were "understandably reluctant to commit capital which may be written off in two years or less". Mr. Smith suggested that the line should be "given a guaranteed life of say 10 years", so that these necessary improvements could be carried out.

ACHIEVEMENTS!

Two years ago, the Railway Invigoration Society suggested that Ormskirk-Preston trains should be diverted to serve Burscough Bridge station on the Southport-Wigan line, thus restoring interchange facilities between these two lines (see progress report no. 84, September 1970, p. 9)

It gives us great pleasure, therefore, to note that the Merseyside Passenger Transport

Authority and Executive in their recent publication "A transport plan for Merseyside", have accepted this basic idea, although achieving it in a different way. The recommended rail system described in the report provides for an electrified line from Liverpool Central (low level) to Burscough Bridge (incorporating the existing electrified line between Liverpool Exchange and Ormskirk) and for diesel multiple unit services from Southport to Preston and to Wigan Wallgate, both via Burscough Bridge.

In April of last year, the then Acting Area Representative for Merseyside wrote to the Divisional Manager, Liverpool, to urge that intermediate stations on the Rock Ferry-Chester line should not be closed on bank holidays. Although the reply was discouraging, we were pleasantly surprised to find that this year the stations remained open on the spring and late summer bank holidays and were served by hourly trains in each direction.

✓✗ Shotton low level station (Chester-Holyhead line), which was closed from 14th February, 1966, and subsequently demolished, has, after restoration, been open to passenger traffic from 21st August. The initial service on weekdays is six trains in each direction, but the Sunday service of only one train in each direction ceases after 24th September. ✗ The restored interchange between the Wrexham-New Brighton/Birkenhead North line and the North Wales main line will provide shorter and cheaper journeys between many Wirral stations and holiday resorts west of the Dee. The re-opening should be particularly welcomed by users of stations between Shotton and Wrexham, who, for the past 6½ years, have been denied convenient rail access to their nearest seaside towns. ✗

The resurrection of Shotton low level has been made possible because the entire cost (£12,000) has been shared by Flintshire County Council, Connahs Quay Urban District Council, Hawarden Rural District Council and the Department of the Environment. Among the organisations which pressed for this work to be done was the Railway Invigoration Society. ✗

NEW CORPORATE MEMBERS

We welcome the following local authorities to corporate membership of the Society :-

The London Borough of Islington
Whiston Rural District Council (Lancashire)

PERIODICAL ARTICLES

In their answers to the questionnaire which we sent to all members with the last progress report, two or three people have suggested that we should provide lists of articles and letters in recent issues of newspapers and periodicals which might be of interest to our readers.

The editor had hoped to start such a feature in this issue, but lack of space has prevented this. However, he certainly intends to do so in the next issue, although entries must, of necessity, be highly selective.

Meanwhile, the editor would welcome other members' views on the suggestion. He

would also be grateful for details of suitable entries, i. e. title of newspaper or periodical, date of issue, page numbers, title of article or letter, name of author and indication of subject where this is not clear from the title.

IN PARLIAMENT

Selections from the official reports

House of Commons

Question and answers

SSE = Secretary of State for the Environment.

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

* 19th April Channel Tunnel Mr. Adley (Bristol, North-East) asked the SSE at what distance from central London he estimates the advanced passenger train, travelling via the Channel Tunnel will provide quicker city-centre service than travel from London via air. Mr. Eldon Griffiths I regret that at present no worthwhile estimates can be made. Mr. Adley Is my hon. Friend aware that I was given a recent answer to the effect that the travel time from central London to the centre of Paris via the Channel Tunnel and the advanced passenger train amounted to 2 hours and 40 minutes as opposed to 3½ hours by air from Heathrow and a likely longer period from Foulness? Is he further aware that at the moment 24 per cent. of flights from Heathrow are flights of under 300 miles and 38 per cent. of flights are less than 500 miles? Would he agree that much of this traffic is susceptible to direct competition from fast trains? Is he still convinced that we need four 9,000 feet runways at Foulness, with the Channel Tunnel being planned nearby? Mr. Griffiths I admire my hon. Friend's careful research, but I assure him that the interaction between the tunnel and the new third London airport is being carefully studied in my Department.

26th April Public transport (free fares) Sir E. Brown (Bath) asked the SSE if he will discuss the adoption by local authorities of so-called free fares public transport. Mr. Peyton This is a matter for local authorities in the first instance. But public transport has to be paid for in one way or another. I would want to look carefully at any proposal put to me to see who was being asked to pay for other people's travels and on what grounds.

* Railways (uneconomic lines) Sir G. Nabarro (Worcestershire, South) asked the SSE what is his total financial subvention to British Railways during 1972-73 for keeping operational uneconomic railway lines in Great Britain; and what is the amount, ad valorem, and percentage of the total represented by the financial subvention to maintain fully operational the Four Cities line—London, Oxford—Worcester and Hereford—beyond Oxford; and what estimate he has made of the economic viability of the line. Mr. Peyton The answer to the first part of the question is £67.58 million. Grant aid to the passenger services on this line is expected to be £414,000 in 1972. This represents 0.6 per cent. of the total for the year. It is for the Board to assess the line's viability since most services over it are not grant aided. Sir G. Nabarro Does my right hon. Friend realise that this is now the sole remaining rail link between Worcester and Worcestershire and London and that it has already been reduced to single-line working? Will my rt. hon. Friend

bear in mind that £2½ million extra to improve the M5 between Worcester and Birmingham is welcome, but that we must still retain this important rail link between Worcester and the south of the county and Paddington? Mr. Peyton While no one can guarantee the continuation of any line for ever, since that will depend on traffic, there are no current proposals for the closure of this line.

9th. May Public transport infrastructure grants Mr. Alex Jones (Rhondda, West) asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will publish details of grants applied for and grants made to British Rail and other transport undertakings in Wales in accordance with the announcement made on 30 September, 1971, of the extension of the public transport infrastructure scheme. Mr. Peter Thomas The announcement made on 30 September, 1971, by my right hon. Friend the SSE dealt primarily with types of project of special significance to London and the main conurbations. I have approved public transport infrastructure grants to British Railways amounting to £73,000, for improvements to railway stations in the Cardiff area and I currently have under consideration applications for grants for similar works amounting to a further £116,000.

16th. May Local railways (subsidies) Mr. Prescott (Kingston-upon-Hull, East) asked the SSE what was the amount of subsidy given on the grounds of social need for each of the last three years on the Hull-Bridlington-Scarborough line and the York-Selby-Doncaster-Hull lines; and what were the receipts for passenger and goods traffic for the same period. Mr. Peyton The following grants were made under section 39 of the Transport Act, 1968 :-

		1969	1970	1971
Hull-Scarborough	- grants	£335,000	£401,000	£457,000
	- earnings	£223,000	£240,000	£240,000
York-Selby-Doncaster-Hull	- grant	£125,000	£162,000	£163,000
	- earnings	£ 59,000	£ 64,000	£ 82,000

No financial information is available in respect of non-grant-aided passenger services or freight traffic on these lines. Mr. Prescott asked the SSE what proposals he has to continue subsidies to local railways on the ground of social need; and whether the proposed entry into the Common Market will mean greater assistance will be given to maintain a viable railway transport system on the Humberside. Mr. Peyton I intend to continue to grant-aid such unremunerative rail passenger services as are justifiable. I do not expect that entry in the European Communities will significantly change the position on Humberside.

Mr. McNamara (Kingston-upon-Hull, North) asked the SSE when he intends to announce his decision on the future of those railways which are at present receiving grants on the basis of social need. Mr. Peyton All grant-aided passenger services are under continual review. I make decisions as and when appropriate. Mr. McNamara asked the SSE what was the amount of subsidy given on the grounds of social need for each of the last three years on the Hull-Doncaster and Doncaster-Sheffield lines; and what the receipts were for passenger and goods traffic for the same year. Mr. Peyton The following grants were made under section 39 of the Transport Act, 1968 :-

		1969	1970	1971
Hull-Doncaster	- grant	£146,000	£135,000	£150,000

Hull-Doncaster	- earnings	£257,000	£259,000	£259,000
Doncaster-Sheffield	- grant	£116,000	£106,000	£124,000
	- earnings	£ 91,000	£ 95,000	£ 91,000

No financial information is available in respect of non-grant-aided passenger services or freight traffic on these lines.

Mr. James Johnson (Kingston-upon-Hull, West) asked the SSE what the amount of subsidy given on the grounds of social need for each of the last three years on the Hull-Leeds and York-Leeds lines: and what were the receipts for passenger and goods traffic the same years. Mr. Peyton The following grants were made under section 39 of the Transport Act, 1968 :-

		1969	1970	1971
Hull-Leeds	- grant	£291,000	£269,000	£373,000
	- earnings	£351,000	£342,000	£341,000
York-Leeds	- grant	£141,000	£166,000	£203,000
	- earnings	£174,000	£184,000	£213,000

No financial information is available in respect of non-grant-aided passenger services or freight traffic on these lines.

Mr. James Johnson asked the SSE what was the total amount of subsidy given to local railway lines on the grounds of social need for the last three years, nationally and by region. Mr. Peyton The following grants were made under section 39 of the Transport Act, 1968 :-

	1969	1970	1971
British Railways Region	£000	£000	£000
Eastern	14,636	13,226	13,970
London Midland	19,830	18,780	18,781
Scottish	10,087	10,371	10,509
Southern	13,399	13,975	12,727
Western	6,263	6,765	6,543
Sub-total	64,215	63,117	62,530

Adjustments not identifiable with individual services of regions

	-3,100	-1,287	+1,844
National totals	61,115	61,830	64,374

14th. June London (Underground) extension Mr. Mayhew (Woolwich, East) asked the SSE what action he is taking to expedite the extension of the London Underground system to Greenwich, Woolwich and Thamesmead. Mr. Peyton The Government and the local authorities concerned are collaborating in an intensive study of the development potential of the Dockland area of east London. The possibility of improving communications will be part of the study.

28th. June Advanced passenger train Sir Richard Thompson (Croydon, South) asked the SSE what is the present state of British Rail's advanced passenger train project; and if he will make a statement. Mr. Eyre Development is proceeding as quickly as possible. An experimental train is ready for testing on track and experience from these tests will be used in the design of prototype trains for entry into commercial service in the mid-1970's. Production trains should be taking over the main inter-city services by the late 1970's.

* 10th July Transport services (Cardiganshire) Mr. Elystan Morgan (Cardiganshire) asked the SSE if he will request the Welsh Economic Council to make a survey of areas of Cardiganshire which are not at present served by any public transport services and of the economic effects to those areas of the absence of such services. Mr. Peter Thomas The Welsh Council has, with my full agreement and support, already commissioned a major research project on passenger transport needs throughout Wales. Work started in June (see last progress report, p. 15).

26th. July Railways (Hampshire and Sussex) Mr. Judd (Portsmouth, West) asked the SSE what consultations in connection with further grant-in-aid from his Department he has had with British Rail concerning the long-term viability of the Portsmouth to Brighton line; what capital investment is necessary to reduce its running costs; and whether he will make a statement. Mr. Peyton The service costs well over £1 million a year in grant. The Board has been asked to secure some improvement; it does not, I understand, believe that the problem would be solved by further capital investment.

Mr. Judd asked the SSE (1) what consultation he has had with British Rail in connection with further grant-in-aid given by his Department, concerning the improvement of local train services in the Hampshire area, including the modernisation of Portsmouth and Southsea station; and whether he will make a statement; (2) what consultations he has had with British Rail in connection with further grant-in-aid concerning the future viability of diesel services in Hampshire; what proposals have been submitted by British Rail for the electrification of remaining non-electrified track in this area; and whether he will make a statement. Mr. Peyton These services, like other grant-aided services, are under continual review. No proposals for electrification have been submitted to me. The rebuilding of the station will start this year.

4th. August Railways (unremunerative passenger services) Mr. Spearing (Acton) asked the SSE if he will state the total route mileage of railway for which grant aid is given under section 39 (1) of the Transport Act, 1968, the approximate number of passenger miles travelled on the services concerned, the most heavily used route in passengers per mile per year and the route with the most frequent regular service in numbers of trains per day. Mr. Peyton About 8,540 miles; about 11,000 million passenger miles. I regret that the other information requested is not readily available.

Debates

5th. July. Wimbledon-Croydon railway line (An adjournment debate initiated by Sir Richard Thompson (Croydon, South) and replied to by Mr. Reginald Eyre, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment -- see cols. 711-20 of the House of Commons "Hansard").

27th. July. British Railways (finance) (Mr. John Peyton, Minister for Transport Industries made a statement in which he said that rail passenger fares would go up by an average of $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ in September, taking rises in the last six months to $12\frac{1}{2}\%$. Freight charges would be raised by $2\frac{1}{2}\%$. The Railways Board expected a deficit of £40 million this year and a comparable sum next year. It was clear that new financial support would be needed and new legislation would be required. Mr. Peyton went on to announce his consent to proposals from the Railways Board for restructuring their field organisation by setting up eight new territories to replace existing regions

and divisions. The Board estimated that this would save at least £10 million a year in administration costs. --- see cols. 2068-79 of the House of Commons "Hansard").

House of Lords

Questions and answers

23rd. February Observation cars on Scottish rail services Lord Ferrier asked Her Majesty's Government whether British Railways intend to have observation cars running once again on the Fort William-Mallaig and Inverness-Kyle of Lochalsh lines during the 1972 tourist season. Lord Mowbray and Stourton My Lords, I am informed that the observation cars were withdrawn from service in 1967 because it was no longer economical to maintain them. They have since been sold. The Railways Board have no plans to provide new vehicles, because the additional revenue which they would bring would not justify the capital investment involved.

Debates

14th. June Road traffic The Lord Bishop of Chester (The Rt. Rev. G. A. Ellison) called attention to the state of road traffic at present and in the future in the light of the number of vehicles in Great Britain up to the year 2010 contained in table 8 of "Road research, 1970" and moved for papers (see cols. 982-1052 of "House of Lords weekly Hansard no. 833" for report of the debate) (at the end of the debate, the motion for papers was, by leave, withdrawn).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Railway companies registered as charities

Is it correct to say that Tenterden Railway Company, Limited, is the only railway company in Britain to enjoy the status of a company limited by guarantee and registered as a charity?

There are certainly two others and there may be more. One of these is the Main Line Steam Trust (or is this not regarded as a railway?) and the other, from 13th November last, is the North Yorkshire Moors Historical Railway Trust (successor to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway Preservation Society).

W. Martin Andrew (The Rev.)
30, Richmond Wood Road,
Bournemouth, BH8 9DH.

(The editor is grateful to Mr. Andrew for raising this matter and for showing how dangerous it is to make exclusive claims. However, according to publicity literature issued by the Tenterden Railway Co., Ltd., it was the first operating railway company to be granted charitable status (registered 11th. May, 1971). Recently-published reference books confirm Mr. Andrew's statement that the Main Line Steam Trust, Ltd., is also a charity; this company has been incorporated to

continue the work of the Main Line Preservation Group in negotiating for purchase of the ~~burgh~~borough to Leicester line. Moreover, the Railway Magazine for 9th. July, 1972, states that the Peterborough Locomotive Society has been reconstituted as a registered charity and renamed Peterborough Railway Society, Ltd., with the object of securing the Longville Junction - Wansford line as a tourist railway.

The view of readers on this matter would be welcomed. In particular, would they kindly send details of other railway companies in this country which are registered as charities, giving if possible dates of registration?).

Diesel pollution on the railways

✓ X It is my belief, from talking to a number of rail passengers and others, that public feeling about the objectionableness of diesel fume concentrations on the railways has reached a point where it is causing passengers to choose road travel as an alternative, because the latter has less concentrated fumes. This is even though virtually none of them know the extent of the hidden danger from residual carcinogenic hydrocarbon particles. These collect particularly in enclosed premises, like on railways, and even in the rolling stock itself; and remain virulent indefinitely. This collection in rail premises is many times worse than it need be; if only independently driven air brake compressors were provided so that main engines could be switched off in stations and at all stops of any duration. The railways have shown themselves not willing to entertain so far fume-reducing modifications to these engines, such as programme injection. The aggregate fuel saving would be a big contribution to the reduction of the railways' deficit, as a diesel, idling, burns about 25% of max. fuel per rev. X

J. A. Butler (Technical Adviser, Wessex Branch),
Flat 1, Sunnymead, Winchester Road, Waltham Chase,
Southampton.

(Readers are invited to submit their opinions on the matter raised above and to make suggestions as to how the need to do something about it can be brought home to British Rail.

Mr. Butler has spare copies of two pamphlets - "Diesel fumes; an increasing hazard to health" and "The diesel engine: pollutionwise" - which he wrote for distribution from a stand which he mounted at the Environmental Pollution Control Exhibition, held at Olympia, London, last year. He would be happy to send a copy of each - free of charge - to any member who cares to send him a stamped, self-addressed, foolscap envelope. Ed.) X

Free public transport

I am selling "Free public transport" badges in orange and white at fivepence each.

Peter D. Jones,
311, High Street West,
Glossop, Derbyshire,
SK13 8EP.

REPORTS FROM BRANCHES AND AREASBRANCHESLondon and Home Counties

- ✓X As mentioned in our last issue, a joint public meeting with the Railway Development Association was held on 10th. May, when Dr. Bonavia, from the British Railways Board, spoke about the Channel Tunnel under the title "Main line into Europe".

The speaker said that, if the tunnel were built, the London terminus might be at White City instead of Victoria, but this had not been finally decided. It also seemed that, because of the lack of clearance for continental rolling stock, it would be unlikely that through passenger trains would run to destinations other than London. It was unlikely that customs and immigration examinations would take place on the train.

The meeting was the most successful event that the Branch has organised so far. A detailed report was published in Railway Review for 26th. May. X

- ✓X In a recent edition of "Platform" on BBC Radio London, the British Road Federation were given the freedom of the air to put their views. Three members of the Railway Invigoration Society were in the studio audience and Dr. Caton, our National Chairman was able to reply to some of the points raised. The committee of the London Branch is hoping that it will be possible to have its own programme later in this series, but, at the time of writing, it is not known whether or not this will happen. X

- ✓X An evening railtour, using scheduled services over lines in north and east London, was made by nine members of the Branch in early July. X

London Transport's latest fares proposals, which will mean an increase for many journeys, were considered by the Greater London Council on 18th. July. It is understood that the increase has been approved, but not in full.

British Rail and London Transport are to receive 75% grants towards the cost of new rolling stock for the Southern Region, 30 new trains for the Northern line and 35 new trains for the Metropolitan and Circle lines.

- ✓X The Secretary of State for the Environment has consented to the withdrawal of the passenger service between Colchester (Essex) and Sudbury (Suffolk), but he required the service to be retained until 1st. July, 1974, so as to give local authorities a chance to support its continuance. In his letter of consent sent to the British Railways Board, the Secretary of State said: "Bus services are currently run by a private operator between Colchester and Sudbury and stop at or near the respective stations. Not all the timings of these services are convenient for making connections with rail services between Colchester and London, but to re-time them would affect connections with other local bus services. In addition, a service is operated between Wakes Colne and Colchester Bus Station. The view of the Transport Users' Consultative Committee for East Anglia upon objections and representations received was that the closure would cause severe hardship to those people who at present make use of the rail service as part of their commuting journey to

London, and that there would be hardship to a lesser degree for persons commuting to Colchester, and for those using the service for shopping and social purposes, particularly at weekends, and to attend schools or colleges in the area. The Committee subsequently recommended that, if the rail service were nevertheless withdrawn, certain extra bus services between Colchester and Sudbury should be provided. The conclusion reached is that refusal of consent to closure would not, in all the circumstances be justified, but that the service should continue for two years. This would allow time for adjustments to be made and for the local authorities and other interests concerned to review the situation and to make provision, if they see fit, either for the continuance of the rail service in some form or for such additional, or alternative, transport arrangements as seem to them necessary. In these circumstances, and in view of the practical difficulties mentioned . . . above involved in arranging suitable additional bus services, it is considered inappropriate to specify alternative services as a condition of the consent to the closure". X

Worthing and District Rail Travellers' Association and the East Sussex Branch of the National Farmers' Union are among bodies which have pledged themselves to join in the fight to save the Hastings-Ashford line, which is due to be closed to passenger traffic next year.

The next meeting of the Branch will be the annual general meeting. This has been fixed for 18.30 hours on Wednesday, 13th. September, at Friends' Meeting House, Euston Road, London, N.W.1.

East Anglian

X A meeting was held on 17th June at Bury St. Edmunds - the first time that the Branch has met there. Mr. R. V. Banks spoke on the SOS campaign of the National Council on Inland Transport. Also welcomed was Mr. D. Maudlin, secretary of the Newmarket and District Rail Travellers' Association. Mr. Maudlin outlined the work his Association was doing to publicise local services. It received co-operation from BR management, local councils and local traders. It planned a similar campaign in Bury St. Edmunds, where it was considered that many people were complacent about the future of their rail links. X

The Branch has been in contact with National Carriers over the closure of their depôts at Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth at the beginning of June. Goods are now being sent to these towns by road from the Norwich depôt. The service, according to the manager there, will be at least as efficient as before. Rail express parcels and full wagon-load freight will still go to Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth by rail.

In the Eastern Daily Press of 16th. August appeared a letter from Mr. T. J. Garrod, secretary of the Branch. This "viewed with great concern" the rail fare increases to be made this month and pointed out that while "the average increase over the whole country is 7½% . . . many pay-train fares are to go up by much more than that". Mr. Garrod quoted as examples the Norwich-Yarmouth fare (14%) and the Ipswich-Cambridge line fare increases ("considerably more than the average"). He went on to point out that "many inter-city express fares will only rise by 4, 5 or 6 per cent." and said that "pay-train services are in many ways a good solution to rural transport problems. Let us not discourage people by what appear to be illogicalities in fare increases".

✓X The East Suffolk Travellers' Association now has a branch in Felixstowe, which is determined to fight any phasing out of the passenger service to make way for increased freight ~~schedule~~

It is hoped to have Branch meeting in Ipswich during this month.

Wessex

✓X On 25th. July, Mr. John Knopfi a member of the Branch, in attendance at the public inquiry into the proposed Portswood link motorway in Southampton, produced the formal objection to the plan on behalf of the Railway Invigoration Society.

The patronage of the South to the Midlands and North cross-country trains continues to rise, with Reading as the main focal point for passenger movements. The decline of the Bristol-Portsmouth service, however, is in marked contrast.

Another railway preservation society may become active in the South, along the Mid-Hants line from Itchen Abbas to Alton, if and when British Rail withdraws its service. If the proposed venture can be linked with a bus service from Winchester through Kings Worthy to Itchen Abbas, the preservation society may fulfil a much-needed social service. X

AREAS

Devon and Cornwall

The passenger service between Exeter and Okehampton was withdrawn from 5th. June.

North-Eastern England

✓ Our correspondent in the North-East reports :-

✓X As anticipated in recent progress reports, British Rail has now given official notice of its proposal to close the Riverside branch of the North Tyneside line. The provisional closure date was given as 2nd. October, but, as objections have been lodged, this has been deferred. The Railway Invigoration Society is among the objectors.

In an effort to defend the proposal, Tyneside Passenger Transport Executive says that economies must be made, as it claims that Tyneside's local rail services lost about £1m. last year and that, by June, the losses for this year had exceeded £1½m.

One interesting fact to emerge from the closure proposal is that a train operates from St. Peter to West Monkseaton at 19.25 on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. These are the overtime evenings at the local shipyards and engineering works and the running of a train to cater for the workers used to be advertised in the timetable up to some years ago. However, it has been widely believed that the train had been withdrawn. Indeed, upon his inquiring about it at North Shields station, a former official of the Northern England Branch was told that it had ceased to operate. Now it comes to light in the closure proposal that it has continued to run, but as an unadvertised train. X

There are proposals for a new station at South Shields. The idea is that this would be combined rail and bus terminal, based on the present site, with bus services being provided into the central shopping area.

For many years, Chester-le-Street station (situated between Newcastle and Durham) has been run down and served by a very limited number of passenger trains. Recently there have been improvements, although the service still leaves a lot to be desired. Throughout long spells of the day, there are no passenger trains. However, there are now a few commuter trains and it is possible to go to Newcastle for the evening and return by train, a facility unknown at this station for a very long time. For the first time in years, British Rail has published printed sheets of departure times with details of connections where appropriate, plus a footnote giving return times from Newcastle, Durham and Darlington.

North-Western England

✓✗ The Society has objected to the proposed withdrawal of the Stalybridge Stockport passenger service. The Transport Users' Consultative Committee inquiry into this proposal will be held on 19th. September. These trains are worthy of special consideration in that, whilst local traffic from intermediate stations is relatively light, the value of this service lies in its being a connecting link between trains from Crewe and the South and Trans-Pennine services to Yorkshire and the North-East. On these grounds, there is a strong case for retention of the service, at least until the Piccadilly-Victoria Manchester tunnel is in operation. ✗

✓✗ The term of the grant aid for the Buxton line from Stockport is due to expire at the end of 1972 and efforts are being made to present a case to the Minister that will, it is hoped, help produce a renewal of the grant. Local authorities served by the line have formed a joint committee which has commissioned a team from Manchester University to evaluate the results of a survey on a cost-benefit basis. The survey took place on Tuesday, 11th. and Saturday and Sunday, 15th and 16th. July. Members of the High Peak Railway Passengers' Association - a corporate member of the Railway Invigoration Society - were pleased to assist in the passenger count and distribution of questionnaires. A further survey is to be held in October and results of both surveys will be made public in due course. Members may recall that the SELNEC transportation study, published in October 1970, recommended that this line should be electrified as far as Hazel Grove, with the Hazel Grove-Whaley Bridge section being converted into a busway. These proposals were, however, merely guidelines for the future and there are no immediate plans for their implementation. There is strong local feeling for the retention of the train service in its entirety; indeed there is a case to be made for the electrification of the whole branch. ✗

✓✗ A report of the technical control team to the steering committee concerned with transport planning for Greater Manchester has just been published by the committee. Entitled "SELNEC transportation study: a broad transportation plan for 1984", it is obtainable from the Town Hall, Manchester, M60 2JT, at £5 per copy. We appreciate that this price will be beyond the pocket of the vast majority of our members, but those interested may be able to persuade their local public library to purchase a copy of the report. It states that a railway tunnel under central Manchester would be environmentally advantageous, as this would reduce the number of car trips made in the central area and would enable a decrease in the number of buses required to distribute passengers within the city centre. ✗

✓✗ We regret that the passenger service between Bury (Lancs.) and Rawtenstall was withdrawn from 5th June. ✗

✓X Tunnelling of the Liverpool inner loop is now in progress and the bulk of excavation is due to be completed by mid-1973.

On 1st August, it was announced that the Department of the Environment is to pay 75 per cent. of the £11,250,000 cost of building the Exchange-Central rail in Liverpool. This will provide a route for electric trains from Wigan Wallgate to Hough Green (near Widnes). The Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority is to apply for a Government grant towards the cost of the electrified extension to Hough Green, which will allow most of the stations on the Gateacre branch (closed last April) to be re-opened. X

"A transport plan for Merseyside : a joint report of the Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority and Executive", a brief review of which appeared in our last issue (p.12), is available from the MPTE, at 24, Hatton Garden, Liverpool, L3 2AN, at £1 per copy. X

Following the great success of the weekly traveller ticket, the MPTE has introduced a monthly version. This will be contained in a transparent wallet together with a photograph of the holder, which will be taken free of charge. The cost of the new ticket, £7.20, works out cheaper than four weeklies, although the latter type of traveller ticket is to continue. X

✓X Members of the Society recently met representatives of the Chester-Runcorn Rail Users' Association. This body has prepared an excellent case to present to the Transport Users' Consultative Committee public meeting on 28th. September, when objections to the proposal to close this service will be heard. Should objectors be successful in saving the service, it is hoped that full co-operation will be possible between the Association and the Railway Invigoration Society with a view to publicising, and increasing the use of, the line. X

The MP for Blackpool South, Mr. Peter Blaker, has appealed to the Minister for Transport Industries, Mr. John Peyton, to use his influence in preventing a reduction of the rail services to Blackpool South station and its ultimate closure.

North and Central Wales

✓X The Blaenau Festiniog branch has again been open on Sunday afternoons during the summer this time with two trains going through to Blaenau and a third going as far as Betws-y-coed. This is to be welcomed, as the most scenic part of the route lies between Betws-y-coed and Blaenau. It is a pity, however, that again the Sunday service has been omitted from the London Midland regional timetable.

A summer Sunday service - in the regional timetable in this case - has once more been running on the Cambrian Coast line, although we much regret that it has been cut back to Barmouth. We have been co-operating with the Central Wales Line Group in making representations on this matter. X

North of Scotland

From 1st May, the timings of the Mallaig-Kyle-Stornoway ship have been changed to the following :- Stornoway d. 0600, Kyle a./d. 1000/1045, Mallaig a./d. 1215/1230, Kyle a./d. 1345/1500, Stornoway a. 1900.

As a result of this, the 0455 train from Kyle has been discontinued and replaced by a departure at 0815, which is due to arrive in Inverness at 1117, thus giving an excellent connection with the 1125 southbound train. Another addition to the timetable since 1st May has been a departure from Dingwall at 0705 on Fridays and Saturdays only, arriving in Kyle at 0942. This train, which has provided a connection from the 0615 Inverness to Wick & Thurso train, will cease to run after 30th September.

STONEHOUSE BURDETT ROAD STATION

✓✗ As mentioned in our last issue (p.15), British Rail has published a proposal to close Stonehouse Burdett Road station (Gloucestershire) to passenger traffic. This Society has lodged an objection to this with the Transport Users' Consultative Committee for the South-Western Area. ✗

OTHER NEWS

British Rail, Western Region, and a well-known national firm of chemists are sponsoring a photographic competition to attract customers to the region's grant-aided lines.

Stratford-on-Avon Transport Action Committee has proposed to Mr. Richard Marsh (chairman of the British Railways Board) that a short link-line should be built between the main Cheltenham-Birmingham line and Cheltenham Race Course station. This would enable the Cheltenham-Stratford line to be kept open and would free that portion of the line which Cheltenham Town Council wishes to redevelop. The passenger service between the two towns was withdrawn from 25th March, 1968, although since then the line has continued to carry heavy freight traffic and it has been used as a diversionary route for long-distance expresses.

Matlock Bath station (Derby-Matlock branch), which was closed in March, 1967, is the first station on British railways to be re-opened as the result of the efforts of a voluntary organisation. The whole cost of restoring the station was met by the local chamber of trade, although British Rail will be responsible for maintenance and running costs. The station, which is now served by ten trains daily each way, was back in service in time to cater for the peak summer traffic.

The Eastern Region has mounted a tremendous campaign to boost traffic on the entire West Riding of Yorkshire rail network. Publicity, in the form of large-scale press and television advertising and various timetables and leaflets, covers 452 route miles over 15 lines linking 78 stations. The White Rose of Yorkshire is being used as the trade-mark of the campaign. Among the attractive offers of discount travel are Happy Family tickets and Bullseye zone tickets.

The Secretary of State for the Environment has announced his decision over the future of the local passenger services between Leeds/Bradford and Keighley/Ilkley, the TUGC public inquiry into which was held as long ago as May, 1969. Mr. Walker has promised grant aid for

the retention of these services, but has attached conditions which have caused mixed feelings in the district. He requires that trains from Bradford to Ilkley should no longer travel via Baildon and Esholt but via Apperley Bridge (reverse); this would save the cost of maintaining the tunnels and viaducts on the line between Shipley and Guiseley. Another condition is that the through service between Bradford and Keighley should cease and that passengers should change at Shipley to join a Leeds-Morecambe train.

The Dales National Park (West Riding) Planning Committee and the West Riding Highways Committee are uniting in efforts to reduce road congestion from quarry traffic in Upper Wharfedale by the transfer to rail of as much of the traffic as possible.

Scottish Region plans to modernise Edinburgh Waverley station at a cost of half a million pounds.

WHAT OTHER SOCIETIES ARE DOING

Material under this heading has been held over until our next issue, owing to lack of space.

SOS CAMPAIGN

As we go to press, news has reached us of a delegate conference of societies interested in the retention of railways to be held at the Caxton Hall, London, on Thursday, 21st September. The event is being organised by the SOS (Save our services) Campaign Committee of the National Council on Inland Transport. It is hoped that representatives will attend from a wide range of organisations. Full particulars may be obtained from the chairman of the Campaign Committee, Mr. R. V. Banks, of 121, Ashford Road, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent. (Telephone : Maidstone 37579).

EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

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

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

Mr. Purser is responsible for branch and area reports, Mr. Hipperson for all other matter. To ensure inclusion in the next issue (to be published in December), material must be submitted to the appropriate editor so as to reach him by Saturday, 28th. October, 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

PROGRESS REPORT NO 92.

SEPTEMBER 1972

MEMBERS ONLY SUPPLEMENT: ISSUE NO.12

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING RESOLUTIONS

✓ X We are very grateful to Mr. Robert Adley, MP for Bristol, North-East, for drawing the Government's attention to two of the resolutions passed at our annual general meeting held last April.

The resolutions (abbreviated versions of which were published in our last progress report) were as follows: -

(a) That, in view of the entry of this country into the European Economic Community and the possibility of the construction of a Channel Tunnel, Her Majesty's Government should, where necessary, provide extra finance to enable British Railways to harmonise their operations and methods with their European counterparts.

(b) That Government grants to socially necessary rail passenger services should be renewed for periods of not less than seven years in order to give the railway management the incentive to undertake the capital expenditure required to develop such services to realise their full potential.

Mr. Adley has passed on to us the following reply from Mr. Reginald Eyre, Under Secretary of State, Department of the Environment: -

"So far as the first resolution is concerned, British Rail are already closely involved with railway administrations of the Six through a specialist group of the International Union of Railways. In response to a resolution of the Council of Ministers of EEC, these railway administrations are considering, and will provide periodic reports on, the scope for greater technical, operational and commercial co-operation between them. It will be some time before this develops into a firm programme, the financing implications of which can be assessed. But I assure you that we are anxious to see British Railways exploited to the full with entry into EEC and the closer physical integration which the construction of the Channel Tunnel would entail.

On the second resolution, grant undertakings are limited to a maximum of three years at a time by section 39 of the Transport Act, 1968. This ensures that the finances, economies and social benefits of each service are reviewed at regular and reasonably frequent intervals. In any event, the Railways Board would find it very difficult to estimate future costs and earnings with sufficient accuracy for more than three years in advance. The limitation on the length of this formal undertaking does not, however, inhibit capital investment or renewal when this is justified on its merits. In such a case, a view has, of course, to be taken that the service is likely to be worth continuing long enough to justify the capital cost".

The answer to the first resolution seems fair enough as far as it goes, but we can gain little satisfaction from the reply to the second. Despite the assurances we have been given, the fact remains that much capital expenditure which would increase both the efficiency and standard of

service on many grant-aided lines is not being put into effect. We have reason to believe that this is because of the uncertain future of the grant. Whereas it may well be difficult to assess the actual amount of a grant for more than three years in advance, at least it could be accepted in principle that a grant would be paid for a longer period.

We will continue to press this matter. The present arrangement not only discourages the provision of the standard of service of which many routes are technically capable, but also fails to make the best use of taxpayers' money. At present, public funds tend to be used to keep many services going on a hand to mouth basis rather than extracting the best possible results. Achieving the latter requires planning for the long term. ✕

COMMUNITY CO-OPERATION

This Society has often stressed the importance of local communities working closely with British Rail in developing their local rail services. We are at present assisting several groups in this matter. For example, the Romford-Upminster group, in conjunction with British Rail, has recently issued a poster which is on display on railway and local authority notice boards and on the premises of local residents and traders. Timetable cards have also been printed and distributed to households in the catchment area.

British Rail welcomes collaboration of this kind. We believe that it is the most effective means for ensuring the long-term retention and development of many grant-aided lines. The Society will always be willing to assist any other local groups which may care to contact us.

"RAILWAYS IN THE SEVENTIES"

✕ Plans for the publication of a booklet based on our recent statement "Railways in the seventies" are now well advanced and we anticipate a publication date early in the autumn. The text has been fully revised. Suitable photographs are being included and we hope that these will add interest and increase the booklet's appeal to the general public. Copies will be available through booksellers and the Society's sales department. Needless to say, we shall do our best to see that the booklet is read as widely as possible by Government ministers, members of Parliament, civil servants and others responsible for determining transport policies in the years ahead.

OPERATIONAL NEWS

A member has asked for more news of railway operations to be given in the progress report. Much of the information of this type is difficult to obtain, so that the editor would much appreciate any help he can be given in meeting this request.

SALES DEPARTMENT

The Sales Officer wishes to apologise to members for the unfortunate delays which have occurred in the despatch of books ordered through his department. These have been caused by a number of circumstances beyond his control.

Acknowledgement of orders was discontinued some time ago, so as to reduce the Society's expenses. However, should any member require such an acknowledgement, the Sales Officer

will be pleased to make one if a stamped, addressed envelope is enclosed with the order.

PROGRESS REPORT QUESTIONNAIRE: ANALYSIS OF REPLIES

Response

The last progress report, with which every member should have received a copy of a questionnaire on the future shape of the report and members only supplement, was posted on 1st June. On that date, membership totalled 232, consisting of 202 individual members and 30 corporate members.

Up to 2nd August, the editor had received back 47 questionnaire forms, i.e. from 20% of the total membership. 44 forms came from individuals (22% of members in that category) and 3 from corporate members (10%).

Question A listed the 14 regular features of the progress report and members only supplement and made the following request: - "In column (a), please indicate by figures (1,2,3) to show order of preference the three items which you find most interesting and useful; and, in column (b), in similar fashion, the three you would miss the least."

Three forms had to be considered invalid as regards the answer given to this question, as one or more of the figures indicating likes or dislikes were used more than once. On the other hand, on five forms the franchise was not fully exercised, but these have been accepted as valid. The question was not answered on three forms. The net result was that votes on 41 forms were counted, representing 18% of the total membership.

Points in favour or against features were assigned as follows:- The figure 1 was counted as 3 points, figure 2 as 2 points and figure 3 as 1 point.

On this basis, the result of voting was as follows: -

	points in favour	points against
<u>most popular features</u>		
1. Reports from branches and areas	83	0
2. Leading articles	43	3
3. In Parliament	38	10
4. News of RIS at national level	29	3
5. Other news	16	2
6. Confidential news	9	2
<u>least popular features</u>		
1. Bookshelf	2	48
2. New corporate members	3	46
3. Organisation of the Society	0	36
4. Names and addresses of branch secretaries, etc.	0	33
5. Other RIS domestic news	4	17

features to which members collectively expressed indifference

	points in favour	points against
1. Chairman's address at AGM	6	10
2. Letters to the editor	6	6
3. Report of the AGM	0	4

Question B ("Are there any features, at present omitted from the progress report or the members only supplement, which you would like to see included?")

About half the forms gave an answer and some interesting and useful suggestions were made. However, in many cases the member who submitted a certain idea is himself the best person to supply the requested contribution, but, in the past, he has failed to do so !

Question C ("Any other remarks or suggestions . . .")

Again about half the forms supplied an answer. All criticisms and suggestions will be most carefully considered by the editor.

Future editorial policy

Popular features. The two most popular will be expanded. "In Parliament" proves to be the feature on which opinion is most divided. However, as it secured third place (even allowing for adverse votes), it will be continued at its present size, as will the other most popular features.

Least popular features. "Bookshelf" obviously does not justify inclusion in the progress report and will, therefore, disappear, except that information about publications of the Society will still be given. On the other hand, "New corporate members", although it also received a large adverse vote, will remain, because it occupies such little space and may well produce a certain amount of goodwill from members in that class. Less prominence will be given to the remaining unpopular features.

"Indifferent" features will be included only if this can be done without jeopardizing the proper treatment of other features. From time to time, least popular items nos. 3, 4 & 5 may also be omitted, owing to this reason.

Report to National Committee

Certain criticisms and suggestions have been submitted to the National Committee, although members' names have not been divulged. These ideas, to which the editor's comments have been appended, either relate to the organisation of the Society or concern matters on which the editor has sought the Committee's advice or assistance.

Conclusion. The writer of this analysis has been associated with the progress report for $6\frac{1}{2}$ years, $4\frac{1}{2}$ as editor, and felt that the time had arrived when he needed some indication as to how far the report and members only supplement were meeting the needs of the Society. Those members who completed the questionnaire have enabled him to make a clear assessment of the position and he is most grateful for the trouble that they have taken. Finally, the editor wishes to thank those who included complimentary and encouraging remarks in their answers.

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