

Society for the Revivification of Unremunerative Branch Lines  
in the United KingdomBRANCH LINE REINVIGORATION SOCIETYPROGRESS REPORT, NOVEMBER, 1958THE NEW LOOK FOR SRUBLUK PROGRESS REPORTS:

Starting with this issue, it is proposed to publish Progress Reports more frequently, incorporating not only details of SRUBLUK functions and news of our progress as hitherto, but also details of matters that have been dealt with by your Committee, so that members will be able to feel that they are, too, part and parcel of the central organisation. It is an unfortunate fact that with few - a very few - exceptions, very few members take an active part in the work of the Society and that our influence is accordingly restricted to the amount of time that members of the Committee can give to SRUBLUK affairs.

This issue, too, will be the forerunner of more frequent progress reports, and it is proposed to issue them every three months - in between regular issues, supplementary issues will be made when necessary.

Starting with the next issue, the appearance of the progress reports will be improved as a printed heading will be used. Long consideration was given to the question of the feasibility of having the progress reports printed rather than duplicated, but the Committee felt that the members would prefer more frequent reports rather than more elegantly produced reports at longer intervals. It is hoped that these two changes in the Progress Report will meet with the approval of the majority of members.

SECRETARY'S NOTES:

One of the most difficult questions for a member of SRUBLUK to answer is "What has your Society actually achieved?" The reason for this difficulty lies not in any lack of achievement but in the fact that any course of action advocated by SRUBLUK and which has been undertaken by the authorities is rarely acknowledged by the Authorities as being due to the influence of SRUBLUK or any other pressure group. The Authorities can always argue (and who can disprove it) that they would have taken such a course anyway. For these reasons the facts that I give below cannot be connected officially. However, members are free to draw their own conclusions.

1. Earlier this year SRUBLUK suggested to B.R. that there appeared to be a need for a certain number of unstaffed halts on the Crieff Branch, Scottish Region.
2. A certain number of unstaffed halts have been provided recently on the Crieff Branch, Scottish Region.
3. Early in 1956, it appeared that the West Drayton to Uxbridge, Western Region, was under consideration for closure to passenger traffic. All publicity, cheap day facilities, etc., alluding to the branch has been withdrawn.
4. In co-operation with the local Council, SRUBLUK began a press and poster campaign in the area.
5. Last month, a local newspaper in the area was informed by B.R. that it was not proposed to withdraw passenger services on the West Drayton to Uxbridge Branch, Western Region.

Perhaps the foregoing will give members some idea of how to answer That Question.

A new Policy Statement is being prepared, and will be sent out to all members in due course. It is felt that much of the contents of the present Statement require revision in view of the passage of time, and the new one should present some interesting changes. The present Policy Statement, for instance contains reference to the provision of light weight rail cars; the B.T.C. are now only just beginning to provide such vehicles on rural branches.

A copy of the current Policy Statement is enclosed; any member who wishes to do so, is encouraged to send to the Secretary details of any amendments that he would wish to see embodied in the new issue, and any such suggestions will be embodied in the new Statement if practicable.

The Christmas Cards this year, of which more details appear elsewhere, convey a happy (perhaps unhappy would be more accurate) note of topicality depicting as they do an M & G N steam motor railcar. At the moment of writing, the Committee has not acquired enough data to decide whether or not the closing of the M & G N should be opposed, but it appears that the original sweeping programme has been amended somewhat. We shall see . . . . .

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TRANSACTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE OF GENERAL INTEREST TO MEMBERS SINCE THE PUBLICATION OF THE LAST PROGRESS REPORT IN JUNE:

In the last few months the following branches have been studied:-

- Wallingford
- Looe
- Higham Ferrers
- Uxbridge (but see above)
- Tondu to Abergwynfi
- Banbury to Buckingham

It was decided to discontinue sending circulars to M.P.'s at the House of Commons in view of the very poor response from this form of activity. An M.P. (who shall remain nameless) informed us some long while ago that although he thoroughly agreed with our views it was more than his parliamentary position was worth to run counter to the official view of his party on the subject of rural transport.

A certain amount of work was done by the Society in connection with the threatened closure of West Wycombe Station; however, as the local organisations did not appear to be disposed to work with SRUBLUK, little more could be done; with results with which we are all now familiar. It is the policy of SRUBLUK, by the way, only to oppose a closure if our action has the support of the local authorities and other local organisations.

As mentioned earlier, it was decided unanimously, and in consequence of conversations with past members of SRUBLUK, that the co-operation of members would be more immediately forthcoming if they were to receive circulars more frequently; it was felt that this might also be an additional aid in increasing membership.

As a result of representations made by SRUBLUK, improvements have been made to the service on the Saffron Walden Branch.

There appears to be little local feeling regarding the possible withdrawal of the services on the Banbury and Buckingham Line. In the circumstances it is difficult for SRUBLUK to help very much at present.

A letter from Mr. Bowles of the Steam Locomotive and Railway Preservation Society was considered, wherein Mr. Bowles advocated the taking over of branch lines threatened with the "axe" and running them either by an association of private individuals, or by a private company formed for the purpose; it was agreed unanimously that the policy of SRUBLUK should continue to be that we were not prepared to support any such private schemes, and that any such agitations for private ownership ought definitely to be discouraged.

Preliminary examination of the position regarding the following lines was made:-

- Uppington - Seaton - Rutland
- Stamford - Essendine
- Ross - Monmouth
- Swindon - Andover