

S R U B L U K

The Society for the Reinvigoration of Unremunerative Branch Lines in the United Kingdom

The Branch Line Reinvigoration Society

PROGRESS REPORT - OCTOBER/NOVEMBER, 1961.

CO-OPERATION WITH THE RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION.

Excellent relations have existed for a considerable time between SRUPLUK and the R.D.A. Joint meetings have recently taken place and it is now hoped to promote even closer co-operation and that where there is a common interest the two bodies will combine their efforts and work together. It has been decided that Committees consisting of delegates from both Societies should be set up as and when required to deal with specific matters over which joint action is to be taken.

PUBLIC MEETING.

It is hoped to organise a Public Meeting in February or March and this is being arranged with the R.D.A. as a joint effort. Negotiations are at present in progress and details will be announced later.

LETTERS TO MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.

In view of the important decisions on the future of railways expected to be made during the present session of Parliament, it is proposed to place the views of SRUPLUK before as many M.P.'s as possible. This will probably be carried out in co-operation with the R.D.A. with the submission of a joint circular from both Societies.

A.G.M. REFERENDUM.

Any further members who wish to complete the referendum, sent out in the June/July Circular, on whether they would prefer future Annual General Meetings to be held on a weekday or a Saturday, are asked to send their replies to reach the Chairman ~~at~~ as soon as possible after receipt of this Circular. The result of this will be borne in mind when fixing the date of the 1962 A.G.M. which will be announced in the next Progress Report.

ADVERTISING SRUPLUK.

The Committee are always anxious to seek ways of increasing the membership of SRUPLUK and an experimental series of advertisements are being placed in the Press. It has been decided to select a suitable newspaper in an area where

we have been active and where there are several lines threatened with closure, East Anglia has been chosen and a series of advertisements is to be appear in the East Anglian Daily Times on several selected dates. The response is awaited with interest.

CHRISTMAS CARDS.

SRUBLUK Christmas Cards are available again this year and may be obtained from Mr. J. Warfield, Central House, Finsbury Square, London, E.C.2. The price is 4d each (postage 2d) or 4 cards for 1/- (postage 4d). Postage will be free on orders of 1 dozen or more. The cards measure 4 inches by 6 inches and have a M. & G.N. Tank Engine and Train on the front, and a seasonal greeting inside. A large number of cards were sold last year so members are advised to order early to avoid disappointment.

INDIVIDUAL LINES ON WHICH SRUBLUK HAS BEEN WORKING.

Chester to Ruthin.

SRUBLUK has submitted an official objection to the Transport Users' Consultative Committee for Wales in connection with the closure proposals for the Chester-Mold-Denbigh-Ruthin line. It was emphasised that the line makes a valuable contribution to the community which it serves and this area of approx: 40,000 population, requires an adequate rail service. It was explained that road transport would be an unsatisfactory substitute and suggestions were made for reducing the operating deficit on this route, as listed in the last Progress Report. Also, since the Denbigh to Ruthin Section carries very little traffic, it was suggested that this section might, if necessary, be closed to passengers in order to improve the overall financial position of the line. Efforts could then be concentrated on saving the Chester to Denbigh Section which carries most of the traffic. It was suggested that a service at least as good, if not better than the present one, could be operated between Denbigh and Chester using three two-car diesel sets and a quite reasonable service could be operated using only two sets.

Close co-operation continues between SRUBLUK and the Chester-Denbigh-Ruthin Users' Association. The SRUBLUK objection was sent to the Association for comments before submitting to the T.U.C.C. and SRUBLUK also commented on the Memorandum prepared by the Association. The Chairman of SRUBLUK met recently M^{rs}. H. Targett, Secretary of the Association, and they had an interesting and informative discussion.

Scottish Closures.

The SRUPLUK Committee is in contact with some of our Scottish members regarding the proposed closures in Scotland and we hope to have more news in the next Circular.

A large number of trains were to have been withdrawn, mostly from lines in Central and Southern Scotland, from 6 November, but owing to the threat of strike action by the railway workers the cuts have been postponed and may now take place from January 8th.

Oxford to Fairford Line.

The fight to save the Oxford-Witney-Fairford line continues. The Oxfordshire County Council is making a detailed submission to the Central T.U.C.C. on behalf of all objecting local authorities. In this connection the County Council asked if SRUPLUK could supply a list of those factors which it is considered are important when investigating the advantages of rail over road in a rural area. This information was gladly given and we understand was used by the County Council in preparing their representation.

NEWS OF THE BRANCHES.

We regret to report that, despite further efforts to save it, the Westerham line closed on October 30th. Passengers at present holding season tickets will be able to use them on buses to reach the main line trains at Sevenoaks for a period of twelve months.

It is proposed to withdraw all passenger services from the Plymouth to Launceston line and to close completely between Marsh Mills and Tavistock, also between Lifton and Launceston; the remainder being retained for freight.

The Plymouth to Turnchapel line closed completely beyond Flymstock on September 30th; the future of the remainder of the line depends on whether the railway wins a contract for carrying cement. Passenger services were withdrawn from this line in 1951, it will be recalled.

The future of several lines in Cornwall is highly questionable and plans are being prepared for the concentration of goods traffic at a small number of central points. With the opening of the Tamar Road Bridge, through bus services have been introduced from Plymouth to Looe, Callington, and Saltash, and will probably have an adverse effect on the patronisation of rail services serving these places.

We hear from Mr. G.J.D.Mallinson that the North-West Area of the T.U.C.C. has approved the withdrawal of passenger services between Southport and Ormskirk but have rejected the closure of New Lane station.

The Merthyr Tydfil to Pantsticill Junction line is to close from November 1954.

It is proposed to close the Bristol to Fortishead line to passenger traffic and much local protest is expected.

Much protest is also expected over the proposed withdrawal of passenger services between Didcot and Newbury.

The fight to prevent the closure of the Great Central Line continues and as many and so widespread are the objections that the T.U.C.C. is to hold a series of hearings to be completed about mid-February. The first will be held at Nottingham on January 9th to hear objections to the closure of the section between Sheffield and East Isake. X

Closure notices are up for the Mildenhall branch.

The Bedford to Hitchin line is expected to close to passengers from January 1st. The T.U.C.C. has approved the closure of the Bedford to Northampton line.

X More cheerful news is that the Kent and East Sussex Preservation Society is making good progress. The Society now has Tenterden Town station as its headquarters and permission has been received for the Society to organise working parties to carry out certain routine maintenance on the line. The offer of at least one locomotive is expected shortly. X

X Passenger services on the Allhallows line are due to cease from December 4th, and for Allhallows-on-Sea station to close completely. The remainder of the route will remain open for goods, however, including Grain. X

The Minister of Transport has approved the withdrawal of passenger services on the Colne Valley line, and the closure from Faverhill to Yeldham, from January 1st.

AN APOLOGY. SRURLUK apologises for the late appearance of this issue, owing to illness amongst the Editorial Staff.

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