



Railway Development NEWS

no.11

40p
Free to
members

Railway Development Society, BM-RDS, London, WC1N 3XX.

01-405-0463

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July 1981

MORE INVESTMENT IN RAILWAYS VITAL

That was the theme of the address given by the Chairman, Mr Banks, to the Society's A.G.M. held in Sheffield on 25th April, for not only did B.R. need over £5,000 million to keep it going for the next 10 years, but electrification and the building of a Channel Tunnel would set the seal on the future of this energy efficient means of transport. Without it the railway industry would be denied the considerable export potential which would be released by a rolling programme of electrification and the railway system itself would collapse in the near future with dire consequences for the nation.

He conceded that public finance was tight but this was a valid reason for spending, or rather investing, the limited resources wisely. Capital expenditure, not consumer spending must be the order of the day and in particular our railways must receive a much larger slice of the national cake than has been the case in the past. As for electrification there now appeared to be a consensus of opinion in all political parties, including the Social Democrats, that the go-ahead should be given for the implementation of a rolling programme to deal with a large part of our railway system and he emphasised the arguments contained in our leaflet "Electrify Now!"

Having been promised a decision on the Channel Tunnel later this year he wondered whether the talking which had been going on since 1802 would finally stop and the actual building commence. Would it, as the Select Committee suggest, be a railway tunnel, albeit single track and would the initial traffic quickly justify an immediate start on a second bore. The road lobby of course wanted a bridge and whilst the idea of a rail tunnel was repugnant to them a road bridge was repugnant to everyone else for whilst the country could well be covered with expensive under-used motorways when the oil gets scarce we did not also want a further super "White Elephant" across the English Channel which could be equally as hazardous to its users as to shipping, especially in bad weather.

Talking of the road lobby, what a song and dance there had been about the Chancellor's decision to put an extra 20p. on petrol. Cleverly orchestrated by them was the alleged plight of the rural motorist and he hoped Sir Geoffrey would not be fooled by this ploy (as he was not). After all petrol is still cheaper in this country than in most others in Europe. If the Road Lobby and the many M.Ps who support it really cared about the plight of rural motorists why haven't they fought for a reduction in the Road Fund Tax to help pensioners and others in rural areas who are forced to buy cars because of the inadequacy of public transport. Will these M.Ps fight for more investment to keep, improve and possibly re-open the rural railways? Will they support B.R.'s appeal for more cash to keep these services going or are they only interested in those constituents who are car owners? Their attitudes in future Parliamentary debates on transport will be studied with interest as were their contributions in the past to ensure adequate rural public transport.

Turning to more local matters the Chairman referred to the threat to the Woodhead freight line across the Pennines, due to close on 1st June. Because it did not carry passengers there was no legal obligation to hold a T.U.C.C. Enquiry but there had been massive demands, both locally and nationally for the Minister to hold one, not only in both Houses of Parliament but from a recent delegation of local interests and the rail unions particularly angry at the decision to close this route which in future could prove vital, with its modern tunnel, for the conveyance of international containers.

Particular acclaim should be afforded to Sheffield City Council for its imaginative report "Priorities for Main Line Railway Electrification" which dealt specifically with the potential of Woodhead, but time was running out, and only a change of attitude by B.R. and the Government would prevent its closure.

In conclusion the Chairman emphasised the many decisions which would have to be taken in the next few months and which could either secure the railways' development over the next 20 years or ensure their ultimate decline and possible demise by 1990. For this reason R.D.S. was fully engaged in its fight for a better deal for the railways but with a warning of difficult times ahead he stressed that it was imperative that we grow in numbers and prestige and appealed to all members to recruit at least one new member by the end of the year. At last we were being listened to but were there enough of us to be listened to enough?

FOWLER ON THE TURN

Since coming to power in 1979 Mrs Thatcher has stated consistently that there will be "No U turns" but the time has come when one of her Ministers seems to be about to do just that. Norman Fowler has up to now promised that there will be no "substantial" rail closures but what he has not spelt out is the definition of "substantial". All we can now be sure is that he does not intend to axe the East Coast Main Line even though Dr Beeching, in a recent television interview, still maintains that it is redundant beyond Newcastle. The recent exposure of this spectre from the past together with that of his "peanut vending" master opening the M.1 could well be an omen for the future.

Already the railway unions are threatening more and more disrupting strikes if rail investment is not increased and soon the Embankment may become a continuous Comuter Coach Park from "Big Ben" to Cable Street. Whether the coaches will consistently get their passengers home each evening remains to be seen. What then has brought us to this sorry state? Nothing which R.D.S. (and R.I.S. and R.D.A. before it) has not been forecasting for a long time. B.R. confirms "We are just about on the brink and unless some urgent action is taken soon by Government the industry appears to have little chance of recovery." The Board and the Unions have therefore been urging the Government to extend the present annual cash limit of £920m., by at least £100m., just to keep the services ticking over and pressing for an early commitment to a 20 year electrification programme costing £775m.

What then have they got from the Minister's announcement on 22nd June? Certainly not the commitment they and the industry sought! Instead decisions on electrification will be taken scheme by scheme, albeit as part of a 10 year programme, and then dependent on satisfactory progress on productivity, including the shedding of 38,000 posts between 1980 and 1985. In reality this is not a decision at all but merely a prolonging of the preparation process by yet another stage. Sir Peter Parker, however, commenting on the Minister's statement said "This is the new fighting chance for the railways: in hard times for the country, this amounts to a concrete declaration of faith in rail as a future industry — a ten year view. It is a long time since anybody has taken that long a look at our affairs."

Reaction from the opposition and some conservatives was less than enthusiastic and Albert Booth M.P., its transport spokesman, described it "as a blow to British Rail, to the equipment supply industry and to the regions which will be adversely affected. We will be left with a few lines of excellence whilst the rest of the system crumbles away."

Even so the possibility of the injection of private capital has not been ruled out — but Norman Fowler undoubtedly seems to be on the turn when stating that B.R. "must take immediate steps to match capacity on Inter-city train services closer to profitable demand. Some unprofitable lines may therefore have to close and for the electrification scheme itself without a reasonable element of certainty over a period of several years there seems no chance of it being completed with even modest efficiency.

It now seems inevitable that 3,000 miles of railway will have to be closed by 1990. The reasons for this situation are not hard to find for despite 2 increases in fares; a record income of £2.6bn. and deliberate cuts in rail maintenance B.R. last year lost £76.9m. (not far off the figure predicted in our last issue). Even so traffic reached 20bn. passenger miles in 1979, the highest total since Beeching cut the total system by 30%. How then does the situation differ from the beginning of the last Beeching Era?

In the late 1950s when the railways last faced a major financial crisis the blame was placed by the politicians of the day at the door of gross railway mismanagement and that at a time when the industry had just had a mass injection of capital in the Railway Modernisation Programme. Today the only mismanagement appears to be that of successive Governments for, ever since the Railways Act 1974 introduced an equitable basis for compensating B.R. for the operation of unremunerative but socially necessary rail services (albeit in accordance with edicts from the E.E.C.) the value of P.S.O. Grant has consistently declined, in real terms, to its present level of £633m. (Expected to be £678m. in 1981).

This has been no mere co-incidence but a concerted policy by governments of both persuasions. The Treasury has also insisted that renewal must be paid for out of current cash flow — a demand it does not make for roads — and the rail network has therefore been starved of capital to the point where a sharp decline in efficiency will soon become inevitable as equipment wears out. The result is a decaying infrastructure which will force B.R. to introduce 500 speed restrictions by the end of the year compared with 193 in 1980. Its present external financing limit is £920m. p.a. and Vice-Chairman, Ian Campbell, has described the curbs on investment to which it has been subject as "very proper over periods of adverse trade" but when extended over a decade "as nothing less than pawning the future of the railways."

Over a half of the system is still operated from 2,000 manual signal boxes, more than half over 60 years old. Whilst the present fleet of diesel locomotives still have at least 10 years life in them, even after refurbishment most of the DMUs which run the rural services will have to be withdrawn in increasing numbers up to 1995. B.R. therefore needs £72m. a year to replace its assets and in each year between 1981 and 1990: £36m. for electrification; £92m. to maintain an acceptable London & South East network and £10m. to improve services to Gatwick and Stansted airports, not to mention a further £51m. for the Channel Tunnel. What then if the money is not forthcoming?

The new axe could start to fall from 1983 onwards and B.R. has made contingency plans to close 600 miles in the next 2 years with an ultimate aim of 3,150 miles from the present network of 22,000 — representing roughly one seventh of the system. 580 miles could be closed by 1983 (before the present Government has to justify itself to the electorate); 940 miles by 1986 and 1,630 by 1990 and if past experience is anything to go by once the momentum has started it will be difficult to stop. No money would be spent on the doomed lines after 1982 so what will Mr Fowler do and what alternatives are open to B.R.? It is also now being admitted that some of the Inter-city

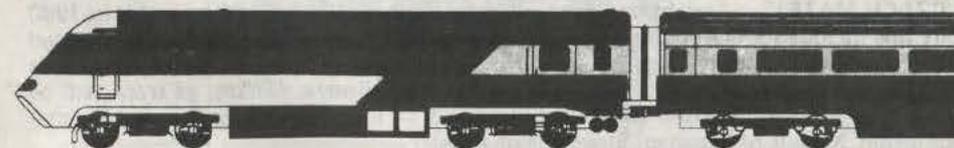
services are less than profitable and the requirement to isolate them, and presumably add them to the pool of Other Provincial Services, may well in the long run lead to an appreciable increase in the level of P.S.O. Grant *but only if Mr Fowler refuses consent to closure.*

Much play has been made about productivity on B.R. but reductions below the present workforce of 239,680 will be difficult to achieve, particularly if the Government does not come up with the money for labour saving investment. Even so the B.R. Corporate Plan calls for 38,300 jobs to go by 1985 and the Government is insisting that this target must be met if it is to approve the electrification schemes. Savings obtained by the latest round of cuts, introduced with the 1st June Timetable, include a 10% reduction in the usual 200 holiday trains, scrapping of 650 old coaches and on the Southern Region alone the loss of 300 train journeys, affecting 88 of its 566 stations.

Before these cuts B.R. operated 23,000 daily train services; owned 2,787 stations; 722 HST power cars and carriages; 16,000 ordinary passenger carriages; 120,000 freight trucks; 48 ferries; 11 harbours; 2 hovercraft; 13 rail workshops and 29 hotels. B.R. Property Board has at its fingertips assets worth £613m. and all B.R.'s rolling stock and other unfixed assets are valued at £1.5bn. Will it all be there in 10 years time or have been dissipated as part of the present Government's plans for privatisation, leaving only the few lines of excellence referred to by Albert Booth?

Clearly no one will want to buy the unremunerative rail services (unless properly compensated for them) and with B.R.'s self-financing ratio having plummeted to 53% its sale as a going concern is out of the question. Nevertheless the problems which now confront British Rail are not confined to that industry but are part of a general trend which has prompted both the C.B.I. and the Labour Party to press for more capital investment to deal with the problem of crumbling motorways, roads and sewers, pointing out that Government spending 2 years ago had dropped to 11%, compared with 20% in 1970. Lines likely to close due to the collapse of civil engineering features include Leeds — Carlisle and Charing Cross/Cannon Street, not to mention the bits of the M.1 and other motorway structures which are falling to bits in less than 20 years. If money *is* in short supply as the Government maintain and investment *must* be contained surely it seems wiser to invest in something which will last and not become a "White Elephant" when oil becomes scarce.

Whether the Unions will co-operate and pay the price which the Government is demanding in return for electrification or dig their heels in and say no, unless there is more investment in B.R., will probably be revealed after the next round of Annual Conferences but there is a clear implication that lines such as Woodhead will have to be sacrificed on the altar of rationalisation of the freight business even though its conversion to 25KV. as part of the electrification programme could give a tremendous boost to the potential of that very same business. All in all it seems to be the perennial problem of which comes first "The Chicken or the Egg"!



FREIGHT REPORT

EMPTIES NOW FULL — CIBA-GEIGY LTD., of Duxford who recently opened a new rail complex with extensive sidings have been using Transfesa Wagons to send finished boxed products to their customers in Iberia.

The wagons, after discharging their mainly fruit cargoes were previously returning to the Continent empty.

BREAD FOR THE STARVING SCOTS — 400 tonnes of grain left March sidings early in June destined for Leith. It is hoped that this will become a regular traffic and a further 600 tonnes is likely to be despatched by rail again in July. Now that the new and faster Speedlink trains have been introduced Fengrain Ltd., of Wimblington have decided that this is the most economical means of transportation. (Road cost is £10.00 per tonne whereas rail cost is only £7.00.) Speedlink wagons, each containing approximately 58 tonnes of top quality milling wheat left on a Monday evening and were ready for discharge at their destination on the following morning. Bulk carrying of grain is a new and fast growing traffic from many depots throughout East Anglia.

SIDING BEING "JAMMED" — B.R. at Marylebone Road have informed R.D.S. that Cadbury-Schweppes have "adopted an anti-rail policy despite the fact that their continental suppliers prefer this mode of delivery."

The company siding at the jam and jelly factory in Histon has now changed into "B.R. ownership" which is usually a forerunner to closure. Last "marmalade season" saw a record number of Transfesa wagons bringing oranges straight from Spain/Sicily into the factory but this year no wagons have arrived there at all. The glass deliveries from Rockware at Doncaster at the end of last year seem to have been a "one-off" experiment. When the company attempted to remove the siding some years ago and make a vehicular access, the East Anglian Branch and Histon Parish Council made strong representations. In view of present "developments" both parties will monitor the current situation closely.

SCRAP METAL STILL GOING BY RAIL — Despite current cut-backs scrap metal continues to be rail-borne and wagons are always to be seen in the Jones Scrapyard siding near Waltham Cross. There have also been special scrap metal trains running between Cardiff and Temple Mills for loading on to the "S.S. Oshunt" at Poplar Docks.

COAL TRAFFIC SEEMS SAFE UNTIL 1999 — The Economic Assessment Service in London have completed a study on the future economics of coal transport. This states quite clearly that rail will continue to be the most widely used method of transportation until the end of the century. B.R. itself has acknowledged this and has produced an excellent booklet on the subject which gives details of wagon moving equipment, door operating gear, modular hopper systems and details of the advantages to be gained from Sec. 8 Grants.

"CZECH MATE!" — Freight transport increased dramatically in Czechoslovakia in 1980 but this included a continuing trend to road transport. The Government have deemed this to be economically undesirable and the present Five Year Plan seeks to allocate the largest portion of transport investment to the railways. 450km. of track will be electrified and new thyristor-controlled locos. will be introduced to *reduce energy* consumption. Moguls of Marsham Street please note!!!

NEW LIFE AT WELWYN — In late January the Society's Freight Sub-Cttee. suggested to British Rail that land at Welwyn Garden City should be developed to form a road/rail interchange depot. This followed correspondence with the Board and with private industrialists near St. Albans. In the railway press it has recently been announced that B.R. is looking into this and we shall needless to say be watching developments closely!

FTA SPELL OUT THE USUAL BLURB — Once again by way of "hidden advertisements" in various local newspapers, the Freight Transport Association have made their hoary old statement "our members are responsible for over 90% of the freight carried by British Rail". The Convenor of the Freight Sub-Committee therefore wrote to them for a breakdown of this figure. Needless to say the information was not forthcoming — only that they had 16,000 members which provided a total cross-section of industry. (They quoted the Post Office, National Coal Board, British Steel and the largest cement and steel companies etc.) They further asserted that B.R. was itself an associate member of the Association!

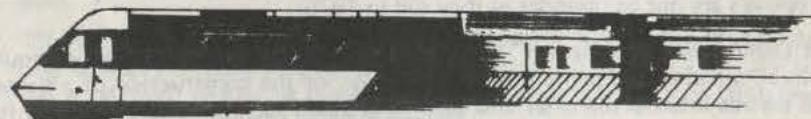
YANKEE WAGONS ON B.R. METALS — Tiger Railcar have for some time provided wagons for the private sector for use on British Rail and now the Railcar & Land of America Co., have recently advertised in the national press that their hopper wagons have an active life of 40 years. "I am tax efficient and can help you save money" is the advertising ploy. Will we see these on B.R. metals?

PRIVATE WAGONS IMPORTANT PART — There is a 20,000 strong fleet of privately-owned wagons running on British Rail which represent 13% of freight vehicles in service in the United Kingdom and according to the Private Wagon Federation they carry 40% of all British Rail's tonnage.

SAND TRAINS CUT BACK — Due to the current economic recession the mid-day sand train from Fen Drayton (on the former Chesterton Junction to St. Ives line) has not run for several weeks. The early morning train is normally Class 37 hauled and carried on average 35 hopper wagons.

RAILFREIGHT IN THE RED — According to the 1980 Annual Report and Accounts of B.R. the general state of depression in industry throughout the country has made its impact on Railfreight, which was down by 10% and £53 million in the red.

S.F.W.



This is the age of the train →

Except over Woodhead!



AJP 1981

A CHUNNEL IN OUR TIME

After the debacle of 1975 there are still many wounds to be healed and obstacles to be surmounted before work can start on a cross-channel link but even since the Parliamentary Select Committee * came out in favour of a rail-only cum road tunnel on 6th March much has happened to raise the sense of guarded optimism referred to in our last issue. (p.3) Not the least have been the results of the French General Election for it is known that M. Mitterand, with his concern for the employment prospects of the Nord region, is more of a Chunnel man than was his predecessor. Even so there is still no consensus on the form the tunnel should take as a combined rail/road tunnel, as preferred by the French, would open up all the old sores which probably led to the cancellation of the project in 1975, not the least its effect on the environment of Kent.

The E.E.C. has also been making favourable noises regarding the construction of a channel link and on 28th April it was agreed that the European Parliament should be asked "to take firm action to re-launch a project, which in the long term can only be of benefit to the Member States most directly concerned and the Community as a whole." This reinforces the desire for progress on community wide infrastructure support (as outlined in our last issue - p.9) but it must not be forgotten that the compromise proposals of the Select Committee indicate that they have been under considerable pressure from the Road Lobby and not the least the shipping interests although Keith Wickenden M.P. dismissed the joint BR/SNCF scheme with its capacity of 8 million passengers and 8 million tonnes of freight by the year 2000 as almost irrelevant to his company's operations. (European Ferries).

The latest state of play was summarised by the Transport Correspondent of "The Times" on 21st May who compared the single tube rail-only tunnel, with small service tunnel costing £765m. proposed by B.R. and S.N.C.F. with the ambitious combined bridge/tunnel for road and rail costing £3,800m. proposed by British Steel. Sitting in the middle is the Tarmac/Wimpey car carrying train project at £1,700m.

Whilst B.R.'s projections of traffic are known to be modest, which is not unexpected in view of the doubtful validity of its figures last time round, Coopers & Lybrand's freight forecasts for the years after opening of the tunnel suggest that "if the B.R. proposal were to be accepted in principle there would be good grounds . . . for provision to be made at the outset for the possible future development of the tunnel's facilities (presumably by construction of a second bore). Nevertheless it is the attitude of the British and French Governments which will finally decide the issue and whilst the banking world seems to see all the projects as good investments and could probably put up most of the money there will still need to be watertight Government guarantees if the present proposals are not to flounder as they did in 1975.

The Select Committee in its Report * therefore recommended "that legislation should be put before Parliament to provide powers *initially* for the construction of a tunnel up to 6.85 metres internal diameter and such land based facilities as are required for the rail-only link. If it is subsequently decided that the expansion of facilities to cater for road vehicle ferrying is desirable, further legislative powers will be required from Parliament and, if necessary, a separate public consultation and inquiry procedure will need to be adopted." It also added a rider that the Government would be justified in paying the cost of increasing the size of the initial bore from 6-7 metres "as a public investment for the future which should not fall on the private developers of the initial scheme."

Whether the threat to take away B.R.'s toy and give it to the road transport industry if it does not perform satisfactorily is the right approach only time will tell, but the Committee concluded that a single track railway tunnel built to dimensions which would permit the expansion of services at a later date "will prove reasonably acceptable to public opinion . . . will be financially profitable . . . and give a much needed boost to railway transport in this country and provide the nation with a mode of Channel Crossing which will bring benefits in terms of time and comfort."

What is most important is that the talking which has gone on since 1802 should finally stop. Only when a tunnel has been built will B.R. be able to become a truly integrated part of the European rail network and undertake the sort of international hauls which can make it truly competitive with road haulage, assuming it has not sunk without trace due to lack of Government investment!!!!

*Second Report from the Transport Committee, Session 1980-1, House of Commons Paper No. 155-1

USERS OF ALL LINES UNITE!

Practical advice on how to combat train cuts - actual or threatened - and constructive suggestions for helping ease British Rail's financial problems were major features of the *Third National Conference of Rail Users' Groups* organised by the London & Home Counties Branch of R.D.S. at Conway Hall, London on Saturday 14th April and attended by delegates from such groups and R.D.S. Branch & Area Representatives from almost all parts of England.

Among the speakers were Messrs: O. Lovell, M. Davies and H. Quayle, representing Groups from the Cotswolds, Sudbury and Felixstowe respectively, who spoke of the problems of their local lines and how their Groups were responding to them. Earlier discussion on financial incentives and the activities of the B.R. Property Board had led to the passing of the following resolutions respectively:-

- (1) "In the interests of energy conservation, this conference calls on Her Majesty's Government to phase out tax concessions which favour the use of company cars; and to introduce instead financial inducements to encourage the use of rail and other public transport facilities; also to make it easier for British Rail to co-operate with local employers in securing contracts for journeys to school, college and work."
- (2) "That income received by the British Rail Property Board from the sale or lease of land adjacent to lines used by Other Provincial Services (i.e. the less remunerative rural lines) should be placed in a trust fund which can then contribute to the sorely needed investment in these services."

Conference also received a talk by Mr Bill Parker, B.R. Divisional Manager at King's Cross which was accompanied by the Eastern Region's audio-visual presentation "Branches on the Brink". This provoked a lively discussion and the Branch Chairman, Mr Rowe, in proposing a Vote of Thanks commented "We've done our bit in trying to get B.R. to move (in pressing for extra investment); it's encouraging to see that they are now on the offensive."

The final session of the Conference was addressed by Mr P. Warner of East Norfolk, not only as Secretary of a local users' group but as a Chartered Town Planner, who gave an illuminating talk on how Rail Users' Groups can participate more effectively in the planning process. A full 8 page report of the Conference can be obtained from the Conference Secretary, Mr T.J. Garrod, 15, Clapham Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1RQ (Please enclose 35p. plus a stamped addressed envelope).

With the present adverse financial trends on the railways R.D.S. will do its utmost to ensure that the rail users' lobby continues to grow and get noticed and *Grow it must* if it is to fight effectively against the cuts which seem imminent and secure the investment necessary for the future of the "Other Provincial Services". Even as we go to press the setting up of further groups is in hand for such lines as Preston - Ormskirk and Ashford - Hastings with Harrogate - York and Blackpool South next in the pipeline.

As part of the continuing campaign, and supplies having been exhausted, the Society's "Guide for Rail Users' Groups" has been re-issued. In a handy A5 format this is the Third and enlarged edition of our guide, first published in 1978 which can be obtained from RDS Sales (Mr A.F. Johnson, 38, Grange Park, London W.5.) Please note new address. - price 50p. excluding postage.

The next National Conference is planned for March 1982 but in the meantime plans are well under way for 2 regional conferences in the Autumn. The first of these (for all Groups in the Eastern Region - from the Tweed to the Thames) will be held in Cinema One, Sleaford, Lincs. on *Saturday 17th October* from mid-day onwards. Individual RDS members will also be welcome and the programme and Booking forms can be obtained from the Conference Secretary (address above). A similar Conference for Midland and Western Region Groups will probably be held in Worcester, also in the Autumn, and details may be available by the time this item goes to press.

RAILWAY RIBALDRY - No. 2 A MOO-VING TALE

Hundreds of years ago, when I was a little boy, during some cheap excursions on the PARIS - HAVRE RAILWAY, a shortage of proper carriages arose, and many of the passengers were put into cattle trucks in which temporary seats were made by putting boards upon boxes or blocks of wood. The passengers at first good-humouredly accepted the situation, but when later a ticket collector entered one of the trucks to inspect the tickets he was met by a chorus of well imitated "Moos". The joke did not end there, for it extended to all the other cattle trucks, and in view of the mooing chorus the ticket collector had to retire. At the next station the station master attempted a remonstrance, but he too had to retreat before the chorus of "Moos" that drowned his words.

Arrived at the terminus at Montvillier the passengers, imitating, the leaping of a herd of frightened cattle stormed the gate by which beasts were usually led from the station. The station master imprudently tried to catch hold of one of the leaping animals, with the result that the whole crowd lowered their heads and butted him vigorously until he was obliged to take to his heels and seek safety in flight, followed by a last long triumphant "Moo". Satisfied with their victory, the passengers then gave up their tickets and passed peacefully out of the station.

R.F.W.

Selected extracts from parliamentary questions and speeches. Commons replies given by Transport Secretary, Norman Fowler or his Parliamentary Secretary, Kenneth Clarke, unless otherwise shown. C. = Conservative, Lab. = Labour, Lib. = Liberal. An asterisk denotes the reply was given orally.

JANUARY 28 (Continued from previous issue)

ANXIOUS TO PROMOTE BETTER CO-OPERATION BETWEEN LT AND BR

(*Nicholas Winterton* (C Macclesfield): Can you say why London Transport costs so much to run, bearing in mind that when B.R. offered cheap fares to pensioners of £1 return, it cost my constituents more to get from Euston station to Westminster than from Macclesfield to Euston and back?

Mr Clarke: The GLC, not the Government, is responsible for LT, and neither body has control over fares policies. The B.R. offer was for one month, but we encourage offers of that kind. We are anxious to try to get L.T. and B.R. to act together better in arranging their fare structures. Anything Mr Fowler and the GLC can do to encourage their respective client authorities to improve matters will be done.

GOVERNMENT HELPS BR MAINTAIN FARE LEVEL FOR A WHOLE YEAR

Jo Richardson (Lab Barking): Do you appreciate the strong feelings of hundreds of thousands of commuters in London and the south-east about the deteriorating services for travel to work in London? In spite of the increase announced, will you recognise that the present provision will not be sufficient to improve the services and remove the frustration and hardship felt by thousands?

Mr Fowler: I appreciate the difficulties for commuters. Given everything else that is happening in the economy today, anyone who looks at the situation objectively will recognise that the railways have a fair deal. The external finance limit for the coming year has been accepted by the B.R. board as being realistic.

Arthur Lewis (Lab Newham North-West): If we cannot get improved services, as we now have Mr Ten per cent presiding over 10% unemployed, why are the trains so filthy? Is it not possible to wash them? They used to be washed. If cattle were being treated so badly, all the various associations would be working for them.

Mr Fowler: I shall pass your comments on to the chairman of B.R. I think that on the general issue you will have the sympathy of both sides of the House.

Michael McNair-Wilson (C Newbury): Has the £23 million extra this year been earmarked to cover wage rises?

Mr Fowler: No. The £23 million is to help maintain the fare level for a full 12 months. We have sought to help B.R. maintain the fare level, instead of having two increases in 12 months.

Eric Cockeram (C Ludlow): Since by choice the majority of passengers and the bulk of freight travel by road rather than rail, will you subject B.R. to the same controls and cuts as the road programme?

Mr Fowler: Both the road programme and the railways have come within the same general constraint. I think we have the balance about right.

John Prescott (Lab Hull East): Do you accept the conclusions of your own Monopolies Commission inquiry, which showed that the decline in services was due to the severe financial constraints of Governments in the past few years, and that productivity alone would not pay for the deficiency? Will you now look at the constraints on the services, as you excluded examination of these constraints from the inquiry?

Mr Fowler: I am talking to the B.R. Board about how the proposals can be put into effect.

"ALLOWING PRIVATE BUS OPERATORS TO CREAM OFF TRAFFIC"

Delwyn Williams (C Montgomeryshire): Are you satisfied with progress in improving rural bus services since the provisions of the Transport Act 1980 have been implemented?

Mr Clarke: Yes, I welcome the range of transport initiatives now being taken, to counter the decline of the past 20 years.

Mr Williams: A bus is becoming a rare sight in Mid-Wales, almost as rare as the red kite. — "The bus has been a declining feature in rural areas. That is why we legislated to make it easier for new operators."

Dr John Cunningham (Lab Whitehaven): Some of the provisions, those which allow private operators to cream off traffic in urban areas, will rebound to the detriment of the already inadequate services in rural areas such as Cumbria.

Mr Clarke: I do not believe there is any evidence that this happened. What you referred to was the ability for new operators to enter this area and provide new services for the public, competing sometimes on fares and quality. It will change the status quo, sometimes in a very beneficial direction.

Iain Mills (C Meriden): Will you encourage parish councils to consider the provision of certain services? — "We are closely involved with parish councils, because they are a valuable way of spreading information about what can be done with unorthodox transport such as car sharing."

David Penhaligon (Lib Truro): In the real world, in rural areas such as Cornwall, of the 80-odd bus routes that still exist in the county, only three make a profit. Why do you believe the private operator will move in a substantial way to take up the slack? — "Revenue support is still required. The Act enables counties to make more sensible use of their resources and to bring on new operators."

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J.E.

Selected extracts from parliamentary questions and speeches. Commons replies given by Transport Secretary, Norman Fowler or his Parliamentary Secretary, Kenneth Clarke, unless otherwise shown. C. = Conservative, Lab. = Labour, Lib. = Liberal. An asterisk denotes the reply was given orally.

JANUARY 28 (Continued from previous issue)

ANXIOUS TO PROMOTE BETTER CO-OPERATION BETWEEN LT AND BR

(Nicholas Winterton (C Macclesfield): Can you say why London Transport costs so much to run, bearing in mind that when B.R. offered cheap fares to pensioners of £1 return, it cost my constituents more to get from Euston station to Westminster than from Macclesfield to Euston and back?

Mr Clarke: The GLC, not the Government, is responsible for LT, and neither body has control over fares policies. The B.R. offer was for one month, but we encourage offers of that kind. We are anxious to try to get L.T. and B.R. to act together better in arranging their fare structures. Anything Mr Fowler and the GLC can do to encourage their respective client authorities to improve matters will be done.

GOVERNMENT HELPS BR MAINTAIN FARE LEVEL FOR A WHOLE YEAR

Jo Richardson (Lab Barking): Do you appreciate the strong feelings of hundreds of thousands of commuters in London and the south-east about the deteriorating services for travel to work in London? In spite of the increase announced, will you recognise that the present provision will not be sufficient to improve the services and remove the frustration and hardship felt by thousands?

Mr Fowler: I appreciate the difficulties for commuters. Given everything else that is happening in the economy today, anyone who looks at the situation objectively will recognise that the railways have a fair deal. The external finance limit for the coming year has been accepted by the B.R. board as being realistic.

Arthur Lewis (Lab Newham North-West): If we cannot get improved services, as we now have Mr Ten per cent presiding over 10% unemployed, why are the trains so filthy? Is it not possible to wash them? They used to be washed. If cattle were being treated so badly, all the various associations would be working for them.

Mr Fowler: I shall pass your comments on to the chairman of B.R. I think that on the general issue you will have the sympathy of both sides of the House.

Michael McNair-Wilson (C Newbury): Has the £23 million extra this year been earmarked to cover wage rises?

Mr Fowler: No. The £23 million is to help maintain the fare level for a full 12 months. We have sought to help B.R. maintain the fare level, instead of having two increases in 12 months.

Eric Cockeram (C Ludlow): Since by choice the majority of passengers and the bulk of freight travel by road rather than rail, will you subject B.R. to the same controls and cuts as the road programme?

Mr Fowler: Both the road programme and the railways have come within the same general constraint. I think we have the balance about right.

John Prescott (Lab Hull East): Do you accept the conclusions of your own Monopolies Commission inquiry, which showed that the decline in services was due to the severe financial constraints of Governments in the past few years, and that productivity alone would not pay for the deficiency? Will you now look at the constraints on the services, as you excluded examination of these constraints from the inquiry?

Mr Fowler: I am talking to the B.R. Board about how the proposals can be put into effect.

"ALLOWING PRIVATE BUS OPERATORS TO CREAM OFF TRAFFIC"

Delwyn Williams (C Montgomeryshire): Are you satisfied with progress in improving rural bus services since the provisions of the Transport Act 1980 have been implemented?

Mr Clarke: Yes, I welcome the range of transport initiatives now being taken, to counter the decline of the past 20 years.

Mr Williams: A bus is becoming a rare sight in Mid-Wales, almost as rare as the red kite. — "The bus has been a declining feature in rural areas. That is why we legislated to make it easier for new operators."

Dr John Cunningham (Lab Whitehaven): Some of the provisions, those which allow private operators to cream off traffic in urban areas, will rebound to the detriment of the already inadequate services in rural areas such as Cumbria.

Mr Clarke: I do not believe there is any evidence that this happened. What you referred to was the ability for new operators to enter this area and provide new services for the public, competing sometimes on fares and quality. It will change the status quo, sometimes in a very beneficial direction.

Iain Mills (C Meriden): Will you encourage parish councils to consider the provision of certain services? — "We are closely involved with parish councils, because they are a valuable way of spreading information about what can be done with unorthodox transport such as car sharing."

David Penhaligon (Lib Truro): In the real world, in rural areas such as Cornwall, of the 80-odd bus routes that still exist in the county, only three make a profit. Why do you believe the private operator will move in a substantial way to take up the slack? — "Revenue support is still required. The Act enables counties to make more sensible use of their resources and to bring on new operators."

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J.E.

FEBRUARY 10 — B.R.'s COMPENSATION LIMIT

During a debate on the 1981 Order fixing the British Railways Board's compensation limit, the Secretary of State, *Mr Fowler*:—

* The purpose of the Order is to provide for the continuing payment of grant — £1,750 million from the end of 1978 — and to increase that limit to £3,000 million. The Public Service Obligation or PSO Grant is paid in accordance with an EEC Regulation of 1969, which provides that railways shall be operated on a commercial basis except where a public service obligation has been imposed.

A much smaller grant is paid under EEC Regulation towards expenditure on level crossings. We have given as much support as the Labour Government thought adequate, but we must continue to look for cost savings; increased productivity and better performance in the commercial business.

B.R. — NEAREST SYSTEM TO BEING SELF-FINANCED

Albert Booth (Lab. Barrow-in-Furness/Shadow Transport Minister):

The PSO has been roughly maintained at the level set when it was introduced. This will not sustain the network. The cost of replacing railway equipment has increased since the PSO was set. It is not for want of increase in fares. We have probably the highest fare levels in Europe. B.R. is facing higher operating costs because it is using out-dated stock. The longer we delay replacing it — and I accept that the problems have not arisen since the election of the Government — the greater will be the cost.

B.R. is the best system in Europe measured by the yardstick of ability to meet costs from fares and freight charges. They are nearer to being self-financed than any other system. It would be tragic if we were to allow our system to rattle into decline. An EEC document: "Community Railway Policy" indicates that between 1973 and 1977 State financial intervention in EEC railways increased by more than 60%. We should see our maintenance of a level of PSO against that. Noting the massive intervention, I assumed that EEC policy would reflect those factors. Strangely, almost perversely, the document advocates "reduction of public service obligations." I want an assurance that the Minister will resist any move by the EEC to suggest that we have a reduction in the P.S.O.

"REDIRECTION OF TRAFFIC FROM RAIL TO BUS"

Stephen Ross (Lib. I of Wight): I hope the minister's undertaking of "no Beeching-type cuts" will apply to the Isle of Wight, where we have the most decrepit underground system overground in the country. We are keeping the lines repaired, but it is quite a ride between Ryde and Shanklin, as the train shakes the daylight out of passengers.

Donald Anderson (Lab. Swansea East): BR has said that if the cash crisis continues there will be widespread line closures. Some of the country lines, especially, are in politically sensitive areas. There is bound to be an effect on the Cambrian coast line and the Central Wales line. The £2½ million needed for the repair of the Barmouth viaduct compares with £265 million for 20 miles of the North Wales motorway.

Stanley Newens (Lab. Harlow): With the proposal to close 150 stations — I am now told it may be only 120 — in the evenings and at weekends, London commuters feel they are being severely penalised. It is quite deplorable that we should be allowing this to take place, when in previous ages, when the community was less wealthy than we are today, it was possible to provide a very much better service.

John Prescott (Lab. Kingston-upon-Hull East): I was left with an impression that investment in high-speed trains and inter-city was not producing the expected return. Why? The minister has introduced the de-licensing of bus services. There is competition between the National Bus Co — a nationalised concern — and British Coachways. Fares have tumbled, to great acclaim by the minister. He even opened one of British Coachways' first services. The reality is that British Coachways has not survived well against the National Bus Co, which is expanding at a far greater rate and is running British Coachways off the road. Unfortunately, British Coachways has run itself off the rural bus services also — exactly as we predicted.

It appears that, on the inter-city network, especially some of the routes to the North-West, the National Bus Co has increased its ridership by about 200%. They are not new passengers but those who were previously travelling on BR. They have changed to buses because of the cheaper fares. The bus service is producing more buses on our motorways on the national network, fewer in the rural areas, and achieving a profitable return. But BR is feeling the effect of that policy. No doubt it will have to knock on the minister's door for more money. That is the sort of policy that we said would undermine the integrated transport system. It will certainly undermine the rail system. I want to know what the minister thinks about that redirection of traffic from rail to bus and whether he is prepared to provide compensation for that difference.

"BR LOSES TRAFFIC AND MUST REDUCE SERVICES"

Mr Fowler: About 200 new services have developed as a result of the delicensing of buses. New bus services operate between cities and fares have come down. I was speaking at a lunch today, where everyone came from Exeter to London. The return fare is £4. That illustrates the difference between the Government and the Opposition. We believe the public should have the right to choose how they travel. New services and lower fares do not happen often.

I remain totally opposed to substantial cuts in the passenger rail system. How can we safeguard the future? By seeking to reduce costs. I welcome the board's recent initiatives in developing low-cost operating techniques. I have travelled on the railbus service in East Suffolk, which sets an example to other rural services.

I understand the concern of Mr Newens about the reduction in rail services. However, BR has suffered a loss of traffic and must respond by making changes. The service cuts are in line with one of the main recommendations of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission — to adjust services to changes in demand. I agree with Mr Ross (I of Wight) that one of the problems has been Southern Region.

FEBRUARY 25

ELECTRIFICATION — OPPORTUNITY TO BACK A WINNER

* *Gordon Bagier* (Lab. Sunderland South): Do you agree with Sir Peter Parker's statement that in electrification we have a golden opportunity to back a winner? Do you further agree that large-scale electrification would give a tremendous uplift to the electrical industries, the supply industries, and the export potential for everything attached to the railway system? Will you implement a rolling programme, and not act in a piecemeal way?

Mr Fowler: We do not want to look at it in a piecemeal way. In the next few months we shall be considering this in conjunction with the BR corporate plan and the plan for electrification. They have to be considered together.

A YEAR OF MEMBERSHIP PROMOTION — 1980—81

(as reported at the A.G.M.)

As with most projects, success in increasing membership of this Society largely rests with meeting the right people at the right time. It must be acknowledged that between the range of the traveller who is merely concerned that a train is available when wanted and one who detests railways in any form, there are no potential members of R.D.S. and it is a complete waste of time and effort to approach them.

There are, however, a large number of people who do not fall into that category, some of whom may be dedicated to rail transport and others who are concerned in one way or another that the railway system of this country should not be neglected and who would be prepared to support any organisation formed to retain, improve and develop the transport of passengers and freight by rail. It is these ranks we must try to get among, try to contact to tell them about our Society and try to persuade them to join with us.

During the period between last year's A.G.M. and the end of February this year I have sent R.D.S. literature with a covering letter inviting them to become members, to 234 people at a cost of £15.00 in postage alone and of which 61 have responded favourably and joined the Society. (a 26% take up rate) The most successful source has been our advertisement in the railway press from which we received 88 enquiries and from which 40 new members were gained. (a 45% take up rate) Least successful was an experiment that I conducted during the Summer months when I sent details to 23 people who advertised rail-tours and who I thought ought to be interested in maintaining a healthy railway system. However, not one responded. I will not take up your time by going into any further details here. I have, however, prepared an analysis of results from all sources and if anyone is sufficiently interested they can see it.

So much for achievements and failures during the past year, what about the year ahead? The Thousandth Member is our aim, a virile Society with a strong backing our objective and we must all work together to achieve that. I ask you all to please try and enrol one new member in the year ahead and a message from the Chairman appears below on this subject.

I know this is not easy, as I try hard enough, apart from my normal duties. I have, however, succeeded in doing this over the past two years and I can tell you that both arose from the most unexpected situations. The first was a gentleman I happened to be seated next to at a dinner not remotely connected with transport of any kind and the other was someone I chanced to meet when visiting a factory. The thing is always to be prepared. Carry one of our leaflets with you and endeavour to turn a conversation to railways and see what the reaction is. If the atmosphere appears at all favourable talk about the work of the Society and offer to let them have full details or, better still enrol them on the spot.

I now extend my thanks to all of you who have supplied me with names and addresses of prospective members and those who have sent newspaper clippings containing letters from people appertaining to railways and which has provided an 8½% return.

L.J. Boylett, Membership Promotion Officer
15, Atheneum Road, Whetstone, London, N.20.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Member,
Enclosed with this issue of "Railway Development News" is a single leaflet Membership Form. Each one of us must know someone sympathetic to our aims.

Why not try to enrol at least one new member and so add to our strength in the continuing battle for RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT?

Increased membership means increased finances to enable the R.D.S. to extend its activities in every way.

Yours sincerely

R.V. Banks

ROBERT AICKMAN BEQUEST

The Chairman has been advised that our late Vice-President, Robert Aickman, whose death earlier this year was reported both in "Railway Development News" and "Railondon" has remembered the Society in his will and we are to receive a bequest of £500.00.

Mr Aickman worked untiringly for better transport during his life and with this bequest R.D.S. will be strengthened to continue his good work in the future.

Your Committee will be considering at its next meeting some suitable project to devote this money in the cause of RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT.

HAVE YOU MOVED? — HAVE YOU RENEWED?

If you have moved recently and have not received "RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT NEWS" it is possibly because we are not Psychic.

Please therefore drop a line to the Membership Secretary, Mr H.G.M. Rogers. (not any other member of the Committee) at 64, Cowper Road, London W7 1EJ.

On reflection if you haven't you won't be reading this!

Also if your membership subscription expired within the first half of this year and you have not yet renewed (look at the date on your Membership Card) we regret this is the last issue you will receive.

A RENEWAL FORM is enclosed for those members whose subscription is now due. As we are not infallible please check that we have not missed you and send your remittance (as per the back panel on R.D.N.)

PUBLISHED BY THE RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY for the *exclusive information of its members.*

Editor: J.W. Barfield

MEMBERS' HANDBOOK — SUPPLEMENT No. 1.

(Replaces Pages: 2 — 6)

A) National Committee for the year 1981—82

- W.J.H. Apsey, 109, King Henry's Road, London N.W.3.
J.W. Barfield, 108, Berwick Road, London E16 3DS
(Tel: 01-474 5722 W. 01-980 4414 x 317)
- A. Bevan, 12, Morris Field Croft, Hall Green, Birmingham, B28 0RN
(Tel: 021-746 6001 W. 021-235 3903/9944)
(Midlands Branch Representative)
- L.J. Boylett, 15, Athenaeum Road, Whetstone, London N20 9AA
(Tel: 01-446 0537)
- D.J. Bradbury, 59, Dore Road, Dore, Sheffield, S.17.
M.P.L. Caton, 10, Grosvenor Gardens, Upminster, Essex.
(Tel: Upminster 25991 W. 01-592 3060 x 3192)
- V.G. Christie, 16, Elm Court, Montague Road, South Wimbledon, SW19 1SZ
G.L. Collett, 62, Glanville Road, Bromley, Kent, BR2 9LW
(Tel: 01-460 1722 W. 01-213 6842)
- M.G. Crowhurst, 26, Cotswold Road, Sutton, Surrey, SM2 5NW
(Tel: 01-642 2895)
- T.J. Garrod, 15, Clapham Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1RQ
(Tel: 0502 81721 W. 0603 28181 x 44)
- R. Macqueen, 20, Culgaith Gardens, Enfield, Middx. EN2 7PE
(Tel: 01-363 2874)
- K. Meyer, 5, Pembridge Crescent, London W11 3DT
D.F. Ogilvy, "Trees", 116, Bucknalls Lane, Garston, Watford, Herts.
(Tel: 09273 72143)
- H.G.M. Rogers, 64, Cowper Road, London W7 1EJ
(Tel: 01-567 5761)
- C.F. Rowe, "Hollydene", 148, Worlds End Lane, Chelsfield,
Kent, BR6 6AS. (Tel: 0689 52535)
- Dr. F.G. Tomlins, 1, The Ridgeway, Chingford, London E4 6QN
P. Wakefield, 43, High Street, Oakington, Cambridge, CB4 5AG
(Tel: 022 023 3230)
(East Anglian Branch Representative)
- S.F. Wilkinson, 52, Manor Park, Histon, Cambridge, CB4 4JT
(Tel: 022 023 3981 W. 0480 62263)

Other Officers: * Not on National Committee

- * *Hon. Auditor:* A.J.C. Read, FCIS, "Beaumont", School Lane, Fetcham,
Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 9JX

Membership Secretary: H.G.M. Rogers, (address as above)

Membership Promotion Officer: L.J. Boylett, (address as above)

- * *Sales Officer:* A.F. Johnson, 38, Grange Park, Ealing, W.5.

- B) Committees:** (Correspondence should normally be addressed to the first named member whose address is given if not on the National Committee)
- (i) *Finance & General Purposes:* R.V. Banks, M.P.L. Caton, R.J.P. Townend, A.R. Macqueen, C.F. Rowe, A. Bevan, S.F. Wilkinson, D.J. Bradbury. (or such other representative as the Branches may nominate)
- (ii) *Branches & Areas:* J.W. Barfield (Midlands, East Midlands, Severnside), W.J.H. Apsey, (Scotland, Lancashire, Merseyside), V.G. Christie (South Wales, North Wales, Cheshire), G.L. Collett, (L. & H.C., Thames Valley, Wessex, Devon & Cornwall), T.J. Garrod, (East Anglia, G.N.O.S., S. Lincs., N. Lincs./S. Humber-side, Yorkshire, Tees-side, Northumberland & Durham)
- T.O.R.* (To advise Branches & Areas, co-ordinate and assist them where necessary, and to improve and expand the Society's organisation throughout the country. N.B. correspondence concerning areas other than those indicated as allocated to specific members should be addressed to any one of the above.)
- (iii) *Publicity & Publications:* R.V. Banks, K. Meyer, R.F. White, D.F. Ogilvy, A. Poole, R.C.D. Edwards.
- (iv) *International & E.E.C.:* J.W. Barfield, K. Meyer, R. Macqueen, Dr. F.G. Tomlins.
- T.O.R.* (To establish and maintain contact between RDS and similar organisations abroad; to consider joint action – where appropriate – to study aspects of foreign railways which may have relevance to the situation in Great Britain)

C) Sub-Committees:

- (i) *Freight:* S.F. Wilkinson, E.R. Barbery, K.O. Cutmore, P. Dunn, P. Wakefield, K. Willson, Miss H. Lingard, H.J. Harvey.
- T.O.R.* (To study rail freight problems, and take appropriate action, in consultation with the National Committee.)
- (ii) *Fares & Facilities:* F.K. Davies, P. Dunn, R. Macqueen, J.M. Cooper, M.G. Crowhurst.
- T.O.R.* (Subject to review)
- (iii) *Channel Tunnel:* R.V. Banks, K. Meyer, Dr. F.G. Tomlins, Dr. A.W.T. Daniel.
- T.O.R.* (To study issues concerning the proposals for a rail based Channel Tunnel and to conduct the Society's long-standing campaign for such a tunnel.)
- (iv) *Rail & Road:* T.J. Garrod, S.F. Wilkinson, B.J. Eyre, M.G. Crowhurst, Mrs. A.P. Moon (More volunteers still welcome)
- (v) *Editorial Board* (Railway Development News): J.W. Barfield, A. Bevan, G.L. Collett, J. Ellis, K. Willson, W.J.H. Apsey.
- (vi) *Re-Openings:* F.K. Davies, T.J. Garrod, Dr. Tomlins, D.F. Ogilvy, W.J.H. Apsey, M.G. Crowhurst, S.F. Wilkinson, (Convenor: J.W. Page, 8, Glebe Way, Histon, Cambs.)
- T.O.R.* (To advise existing reopening campaigns and to co-ordinate these at national level. Its task is not to initiate local reopening campaigns, but it will co-operate with anybody who starts a campaign for which local support is evident.)

2. BRANCHES & AREAS:

(a) *Branches:*

London & Home Counties: (Greater London, Essex (as far north as, and including Dunmow, Braintree and Kelvedon), Surrey, Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex, Hertfordshire (as far north as and incl. Hertford, Welwyn Garden City & Harpenden), Buckinghamshire (east of and excluding Buckingham, Aylesbury and High Wycombe), Berkshire (east of Reading) * Bedfordshire – for the time being.

Branch Secretary: A.J. Kearns, 11b, Aspinall Road, Brockley, SE4 2EH (Tel: 01-732 3232)

Midlands: (West Midlands, Hereford & Worcester, Salop, Staffordshire and Warwickshire)

Branch Secretary: A. Bevan, 12, Morris Field Croft, Hall Green, Birmingham, B28 0RN. (Tel: 021-745 6001)

East Anglia: (Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire *, Essex (north of and including Stansted, Marks Tey and Clacton) *except where covered by G.N.O.S. (see below)

Branch Secretary: T.J. Garrod, 15, Clapham Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1RQ (Tel: 0502 81721)

Yorkshire: (West, North & South Yorkshire, N. Humberside)

Branch Secretary: D.J. Bradbury, 59, Dore Road, Dore, Sheffield S.17.

Great Northern Outer Suburban: (Area north of Hertford and Welwyn Garden City as far as Royston and St. Neots.)

Branch Secretary: M.J. Hadley, 39, Holmdale, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 1QQ (Tel: 72669)

Severnside: (Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset)

Branch Secretary: E.R. Barbery, "Poplar View", Foxmoor Lane, Ebley, Stroud, Glos. GL5 4QQ. (Tel: 045 382 2147)

(b) *Areas:*

Northumberland & Durham: (Northumberland, Tyne & Wear, County Durham – except for Darlington * See below)

Area Representative: A. Macaulay, 27, Hewson Place, Sheriff Hill, Gateshead, NE9 6QS

Tees-side: (Cleveland and the area of Co. Durham around Darlington)

Area Representative: S.J. Benyon, 610, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland

Lancashire: (including Cumbria for the time being)

Area Representative: R.N. Watts, 15, Stanley Avenue, Lower Penwortham, Preston, Lancs. (Tel. 743371)

Merseyside:

Area Representative: R. Wilson, 9, Dutton Drive, Bebington, Wirral, Merseyside, L63 9AE. (Tel: 051-334 8739)

North Wales: (Counties of Gwynedd & Clwyd)

Area Representative: M. Davies, Llys Menai, Menai Ave., Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2HH

Cheshire:

Area Representative: J. Asquith, 24, Links Road, Romiley, Stockport, Cheshire.

East Midlands: (Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire)

Area Representative: S.J. Hartropp, 72, Empress Road, Derby, DE3 6TE (Tel: 0332 44728)

North Lincolnshire & South Humberside: (Lincs., north of and including Lincoln and Firsby + Newark, Retford and South Humberside)

Area Representative: M.J. Savage, 5, Neville Street, Cleethorpes, South Humberside, DN35 7PZ (Tel: 0472 68938)

South Lincolnshire: (Lincolnshire – south of and including Skegness and Metheringham).

Area Representative: P.B. Jowett, 8, Deepdale Drive, Leasingham, Sleaford, Lincs.

South Wales: Gwent, Mid, South & West Glamorgan, Powys and Dyfed)

Area Representative: Andrew Poole, Neuadd Sibly, University College of Swansea, Singleton Park, Swansea, SA2 8PP

Thames Valley: (Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire – west of and including Buckingham, Aylesbury and High Wycombe) and Berkshire (west of Reading)

Area Representative: Rev. T.G. Comber, 32, Alexandra Road, Oxford, OX2 0DB (Tel: 0865 44632)

Wessex: (Hants., Wilts., Dorset and the Isle of Wight)

Area Representative: N.P.C. Madsen, "Dunedin", Bridge Road, Bursledon, Southampton, SO3 8AL (Tel: 042 121 3277 or 2365)

Devon & Cornwall:

Area Representative: Chris Shiel, 4, Priory Terrace, Totnes, Devon. (Tel: 0803 862 476)

RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT NEWS

JULY 1981

MEMBERS ONLY SUPPLEMENT – ISSUE No. 11

OFFICERS & NATIONAL COMMITTEE – 1981/82

Full details of the principal officers of the Society and members of the National Committee together with the other officers and membership of Committees and sub-Committees (appointed at the first meeting of the Committee held in Cambridge on 9th May) are contained in the enclosed yearly supplement to the Members' Handbook. Also contained therein is an up to date list of Branch & Area Representatives.

Please note the new Representative for **NORTHUMBERLAND & DURHAM** and **SOUTH WALES** and the new addresses for Mr Watt and Mr Benyon.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 1982

Following discussion at the first meeting of the National Committee arrangements are being made to hold next year's meeting in **READING**. Further details will appear in the next issue.

RESOLUTIONS: The following Resolutions were passed at the meeting held in Sheffield.

- (1) That this meeting congratulates British Rail on its proposed Railcard for disabled people and urges that the concession for escorts will admit one return journey by the escort for each journey travelled by the disabled person, at the reduced rate. This would help to divert to rail many journeys now made by car for the purpose of conveying disabled people to or from holiday and residential courses.
- (2) That the RDS urge the Secretary of State for Transport to give urgent consideration to the re-structuring of the Central Transport Consultative Committee and the regional Transport Users' Consultative Committees, to provide a more democratic and responsive organisation.
- (3) That in the face of persistent refusals by the Secretary of State for Transport to agree to hold a public inquiry into the proposed closure of the Woodhead route, the RDS pledge support to the rail unions in their campaign to press for such an inquiry; and ask the unions to keep us fully informed of their plans for any action."

Copies of Resolution (2) have been sent to the Department of Transport, and the CTCC and the Chairman is seeking a meeting with Mr Dumelow, Secretary of the CTCC to discuss the implications of the resolution in more detail, including the complaints raised by RDS members about the operation of the T.U.C.S.

Copies of Resolution (3) have been sent to the Secretary of State for Transport and the General Secretaries of the three rail unions and the Chairman gave evidence at the Informal Inquiry set up by the N.U.R. to decide its attitude to the closure of Woodhead. Further information on this issue will appear in the next R.D.N. when the results of the Inquiry are known and the N.U.R. has decided on action after its Annual Conference.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE A.G.M. — 25th APRIL 1981

Once again I am pleased to report a year of growing membership and an expansion of our network of Branches and Area Representatives. Even so, our membership numbers have not reached our 1980 objective but the rate of recruitment has increased significantly.

The National Committee met six times during the year, four times in London and one each in Birmingham and Cambridge. Practically all detailed work is now undertaken by sub-committees thus allowing the National Committee to concentrate on National Policy matters.

We held a well-attended and successful Annual General Meeting in Bristol on Saturday 26th April.

Many useful discussions have been held with Members of Parliament and Ministry officials and on Wednesday 4th June, with our Vice-Chairman Dr Caton and East Anglian Branch Chairman, Steve Wilkinson, I met Mr Kenneth Clarke, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary at the Department of Transport, which was fully reported in the subsequent issue of Railway Development News.

Probably the most important of our activities during the year under review was the holding of two local Users' Group Conferences, one in London on Saturday 29th March and the other in Derby on Saturday 25th October.

A re-openings Conference was also held in Peterborough on Saturday 6th December when full support was promised to Tony Speller M.P., and his efforts to get passenger services re-instated on freight-only lines without B.R. having to be involved in further T.U.C.C. Inquiries if such experimental services are unsuccessful, thereby giving B.R. more incentive to try such experiments.

We have also taken an active part in the Campaign to save the Woodhead freight-only line across the Pennines, due to close on 6th June unless recent approaches to the Minister are successful.

Our newest Vice-President, appointed at the 1980 A.G.M., Lord Gainford, has been very active on our behalf in the House of Lords and is always ready to raise transport matters when appropriate. Although early in 1981 it was with great regret that we have sustained the loss of Vice-President Robert Aickman, a tribute to whom appeared in the latest issue of Railway Development News.

During the year under review (1980) we were only able to produce three issues of Railway Development News, due to circumstances beyond our control. Our programme for 1981 is so far on target and by this meeting members should have received at least two issues, and latest a bumper edition due to the many events which have occurred on the railway scene. Continuous steps are also being taken to improve its quality as the main organ of communication between the Society and its members, many of whom, for various reasons, cannot participate in many of the functions organised at both National and Branch level.

R.V. Banks

Terence Higgins (Con. Worthing): Do you see scope for private investment, which would leave more resources available for electrification?

We are in the Transport Bill seeking private investment in some of the subsidiaries. I shall be eager to look at other opportunities.

Leslie Spriggs (Lab. St. Helens): Callender Cables of Prescot, across the border from my constituency, has made 750 men redundant as a result of lack of orders from BR. Will you assist the BRB to provide work?

Mr Fowler: That is one of the major factors we shall take into account.

Ron Lewis (Lab. Carlisle): BR are forecasting about 3,000 miles of track closure by 1990 unless more investment is forthcoming. How do you expect to live up to your assurances of no substantial cuts?

We are talking about expenditure of less than £20 million a year on the 3,000 miles you mention. With parcels BR is losing £40 million a year. There is considerable scope for providing the sort of investment of which you speak.

Alan Beith (Lib. Berwick-on-Tweed): BR have warned local authorities specifically about lines they will not be able to maintain if they have no additional investment. Are you aware that those lines include the Newcastle to Edinburgh local services?

Mr Fowler: I understand the fears. There are ways in which we can find the investment within the existing provision. I shall talk to BR about that. It is part of the review of policy that we are conducting.

**Ted Leadbitter* (Lab. Hartlepool) asked what process he used to satisfy himself of safety standards.

Mr Fowler: Provisional results for 1980 show that, for the third time in five years, not a single passenger was killed in a train accident, and the incidence of potentially serious accidents was the lowest ever recorded.

Mr Bagier: Will you agree that maintaining this sort of safety record is extremely expensive. The fire at Taunton on a sleeping car train led to a tremendous amount of money being spent to put matters right. When you consider the Armitage report, will you insist on the same strict adherence to safety in relation to lorry users?

Mr Fowler: I agree that there is a comparison. The House will wish to examine, when we discuss Armitage, the question of safety.

Stanley Newins (Lab. Harlow): asked if the minister would prevail on Essex county council to provide the grant available for support of the Epping-Ongar line.

Mr Clarke: I have discussed with Essex its policy towards support of the Epping-Ongar line. London does quite well by the present method.

MARCH 17

TRAIN AND AIR TRAFFIC TO SCOTLAND RUNNING NECK AND NECK

Replying to *Baroness Elliot of Harwood* (C), who asked how many people travelled between London and Scotland by each mode in 1980, the *Earl of Avon* replied: The following estimates, mid-1974 to mid-1979, of the annual average for adults over 16 give an indication: (in thousands) *train 3,381; bus/coach 643; air 3,088.*

CALL FOR HARMONISATION OF EEC TRANSPORT POLICY

APRIL 7 Progress towards a common transport policy for the European Economic Community was the subject of the daily debate on the motion for the adjournment, introduced by *Tom Bradley* (Lab. Leicester East), Chairman of the Select Committee on Transport.

**Mr Bradley:* I am an unrepentant European. It is essential to see the Community budget reflecting an overall approach to transport policy that takes realistic account of recent economic developments, the energy crisis and environmental considerations. Any reduction in transport barriers and frontier procedures should create savings and help the process of convergence of member States' economies.

Recent years have seen a continuing deterioration in the financial situation of railways. Forecasts indicate that with unchanged policies the railways' share of the traffic will continue to fall. There is a great need for change in emphasis in Community railway policy. The fact that the Community's transport sector accounts for about 18% of total energy consumption argues for the need for a transport infrastructure that will reduce our dependence on imported energy sources. The time is ripe for a new impetus. Can we expect this?

Time and again the assembled transport ministers shrugged their shoulders and did nothing. European and national parliamentarians have a duty to break the deadlock. We are coming up to Britain's presidency of the Council of Ministers and a great opportunity exists for an initiative. It is in our national interests that the opportunity should be seized.

Mr Clarke: I regret the lack of progress towards a real Community transport policy. The Government favour the liberalisation of the transport market within the Community, with the steady removal of obstacles to the free movement of goods and passengers and carriers within the Community.

MOVEMENT ACROSS BOUNDARIES — IN OUR CASE THE CHANNEL

Since the signing of the Treaty another objective has emerged — the possibility of European Community financial support for transport infrastructure. I refer in particular to that which facilitates movement across boundaries — in our case the Channel — between member States, when there is a Community interest in removing bottlenecks and improving the free flow of goods and people.

The last Transport Commissioner, Richard Burke, pressed for progress until his period in office came to an end. Before we talk ourselves into a state of gloom we must remember there has been some progress. Since 1975 the Commission has defined, and the Council of Ministers has agreed, broad lines of approach towards harmonising relationships between railways and governments. The aim of policy is independence for railway undertakings in the hope that distortions to the rail market which might obstruct free movement will be removed. Progress has been made but uniformity has by no means been achieved throughout the Community. There has been progress towards common accounting principles and common methods of costing international rail freight traffic, and also as regards the requirements for members to report fully on their railways every two years and disclose the nature of aid they are receiving from the State.

Comparisons are difficult, because, although all member States give assistance in one way or another to their railways, there is a wide divergence of practice. It is therefore difficult to harmonise arrangements as would be desirable. The present PSO payment that we make to BR is in accordance with the EEC directive. There are some current

Commission proposals for revising the rules on PSOs, in which the Government are interested. Steps have been taken, therefore, to clarify the principles of railway finance within the Community.

As regards road haulage, progress on regulating lorry traffic has been more substantial. The Community now subscribes fully to regulations which govern drivers' hours and rest periods. This means that competition is established on a reasonably fair basis, with the same safety obligations resting on operators in each member State. The latest step that this country has taken will be completed when the tachograph becomes compulsory in the UK next year. We have been able to reach agreement on a Community driving licence, where previous British governments have been holding up agreement.

There is a directive for the adjustment of national taxation systems, to ensure that all vehicles above a certain weight meet at least the marginal cost on road infrastructure, although it has not yet been finally implemented. This country is going to move in directions which comply with that directive. In lorry traffic there has been considerable harmonisation, except for the important gap of weights and dimensions. Sir Arthur Armitage has strongly recommended that we do not go to the present proposals for EEC limits on the axle of vehicles, which would be excessive for our roads and cause damage to our bridges.

Once we have established what this country desires, it should be possible to reach some understanding on size and dimensions, weights and so on, which is acceptable to this country and to most EEC countries — one would hope all — because they are subject to the same environmental pressures and interests as we. The Government see potential advantage in establishing some kind of financial support for projects of Community interest. Agriculture accounts for only 5% of GNP for the Community and transport for 6%, whereas the spending of the Community is in quite different proportions.

As long as agriculture dominates the budget, there cannot be substantial EEC funds for other worthwhile purposes of the kind we are talking about. We would like to see sea and air transport included as well as the present road and rail proposals. Work already done on the bottlenecks report has not been wasted, because we have been able to identify ways in which the road system might be helped, and we have the Channel link in which we have a great interest, and which seems a reasonable example of the kind of international link of genuine Community interest which might benefit. We are not among the laggards: we are among those trying to press for progress.

SEALINK: BRB TO CONCENTRATE RESOURCES ON RAILWAYS

APRIL 14 * During discussion on the committee stage of the Transport Bill, *Albert Booth* (Lab. Barrow-in-Furness), chief Opposition transport spokesman, said the Government had raised the fear that they would force BR to sell Sealink.

Peter Snape (Lab. West Bromwich East): If the Monopolies and Mergers commission allows the European Ferries bid for Sealink to go ahead, one private company will control about 80% of the total cross-Channel traffic. Advertisements for European Ferries to be seen on TV represent competition that arose only fairly recently. Six or seven years ago the English Channel was widely regarded as the most expensive stretch of water in the world. Over the past few years there has been intense competition for the available traffic and fares have fallen dramatically. No one believes that the dramatic fall in fares will continue if European Ferries is allowed a virtual monopoly of cross-Channel services, which they will get.

Over the past 20 years, 21 of Sealink's vessels currently in operation have been built in British shipyards. Lloyd's Register of Shipping shows that European Ferries has ordered no vessels from UK shipyards in the past 10 years. The Townsend vessel which entered Cherbourg last summer, during the French fishermen's blockade, playing "Land of hope and glory" was built in Denmark. The ship that immediately followed it into that port, also playing "Land of hope and glory", was built in Bremerhaven, so perhaps "Deutschland Uber Alles" would have been a better anthem.

Mr Fowler: Sealink has undoubtedly suffered from being within the public sector over the years. It has lacked management attention and been deprived of investment. We believe the future will show little or no improvement, because the board intends to concentrate its scarce available resources on railways. The board and the Government agrees that giving Sealink access to private capital is the only sensible solution.

The board hopes that a general floatation of Sealink shares on the stock market will be possible. Obviously that is something the Government would welcome. European Ferries has announced that if the board offered for sale shares in Sealink, it would like to acquire a controlling interest. No bid has actually been made. It is very much a matter for the board of BR.

IMPRACTICABLE TO RESTRICT LORRIES TO SPECIAL ROUTES

JUNE 1 Christopher Murphy (C. Welwyn & Hatfield) asked if when considering the Armitage report the minister would review the possibility of restricting heavy lorries to major roads and special routes.

Mr Clarke: The Armitage inquiry concluded that it was doubtful whether it would be practicable to restrict heavy lorries to a network of lorry routes. It is important to take heavy lorry traffic out of residential areas as far as possible — one of the aims of our trunk road building programme. Lorry routing and restricting the weight of traffic is best done by local authorities. The Government's belief is that, as the road network is improved, local authorities will find it easier to use their powers without merely shifting the lorry nuisance from one place to another.

WELCOME FOR PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL TO HELP LINES RE-OPEN

Gwilym Roberts (Lab. Cannock) asked the minister to study the advantages of re-opening for passenger traffic lines like Walsall-Rugeley, already used for commercial traffic. Would he take steps to amend the Transport Act 1962 to make it easier to carry passenger traffic on such lines?

Mr Fowler: The Railways Board and local authorities are the best placed to consider the merits of re-opening particular lines. I have welcomed the Transport 1962 (Amendment) Act, introduced by *Tony Speller* (C. North Devon), which will enable BR to introduce passenger services on a special experimental basis on lines from which they were withdrawn.

Alec Jones (Lab. Rhondda) asked what was the public service obligation (PSO) grant paid to BR in 1980-81, and how much was spent in Wales.

Mr Fowler: The PSO grant paid to BR by central Government was £594 million. An additional payment, estimated £58.2 million, was made by the passenger transport executives under the Transport Act 1968. It is not possible to say how much was spent in particular areas.

Commission proposals for revising the rules on PSOs, in which the Government are interested. Steps have been taken, therefore, to clarify the principles of railway finance within the Community.

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REGIONAL NOTES

LONDON & HOME COUNTIES

Train service changes in the London area, brought in with the June 1st Timetable, have been a mixture of good and bad. Not all the threatened cuts referred to in our last issue have been carried out so some of our protests have been heeded. Nevertheless some serious cuts *have* been made, such as late evening closure of some stations with the main city termini of Cannon Street and Holborn Viaduct shutting down as early as 7.30 p.m. Whilst there have been improvements, such as more through trains from Braintree to Liverpool Street; an increase to 3 trains an hour on the Waterloo — Portsmouth line with additions to the Great Northern Electric services, cuts on the Southern Region are as high as 300 train journeys a day, affecting 88 of its 566 stations.

For Londoners, however, the main bonus is still to come: a massive 25% cut in tube fares, likely to take effect by October — according to a Greater London Council spokesman — a reduction that puts into the shade the no less welcome cuts of 10% in Greater Manchester just to mention one. More financial support will also be given to the London area services of B.R. which the Branch had been pressing for earlier this year. Altogether the new Labour G.L.C. will be more orientated towards public transport and whilst this must mean a higher level of subsidy, London *had* fallen well out of line with other modern cities in this respect (See last "IN PARLIAMENT" p.i) where the support for and efficiency of public transport has helped them to prosper.

The Branch Committee will seek to obtain more details of the new administration's plans for the Region in the coming months and hopes that one of its representatives will be able to address a public meeting in the autumn. In particular a single transport authority for the area — similar to the P.T.Es in the other major cities — would be a major step forward and G.L.C. Leader, Ken Livingstone, has already stated that in addition to cutting tube fares, "proposals to start supporting B.R. services in the G.L.C. area will be honoured".

This should benefit such services as B.R.'s "Linkline" (from Camden Road to North Woolwich, 2 years old in May, the vigorous user survey report on which, published by the Branch in March, showed it to be far too subject to cancellation, initially due to a shortage of guards. Nevertheless it is understood that the G.L.C. may be voting monies for its electrification which should go a long way to give it a further boost. A similar Survey of Local Opinion is now being undertaken on the Ashford — Hastings line and whilst a special service to Lydd may not now be possible, due to lack of co-operation from B.R., it is nevertheless hoped to hold a Public Meeting in the area in the Autumn.

With a decision on the Channel Tunnel expected later in the year more than 20 Branch members took a heightened interest during a visit to the 1975 workings, under the Shakespeare Cliff, on 27th March, organised by the National Council on Inland Transport. Valuable information is being gained, we were told, from instruments placed in the service tunnel when the boring was halted.

Whilst the Secretary of State for Transport has refused consent for the complete withdrawal of rail services by L.T. between Epping and Ongar he has agreed to the closure of the very lightly used station at Blake Hall. In reaching his decision, he has taken account of the economies which could be made if peak hour only services were operated which would meet the needs of 80% of the existing weekday users of the line.

WEST MIDLANDS

Electric locomotive No. 86 207 was recently named "City of Lichfield" at a ceremony at Trent Valley Station (Lichfield). The new Chairman of the West Midlands T.U.C.C. is Mr Joe Kinsey, a north Birmingham fruit trader, former City Councillor and M.P. Under the Inner City Programme minor works are being undertaken to 3 Birmingham stations. Aston is to be re-painted, Bordesley will have minor improvements and at Tyseley work is in hand to the bridges and platform awnings. First Class accommodation has now been withdrawn from local DMU services: Wolverhampton — Shrewsbury and Birmingham — Leamington. Some of the better Metro-Cammell and cross-country DMUs have however been assigned to the new fast service: Hereford — Malvern — Worcester — Birmingham which is already reported to be proving popular. These are the first regular passenger trains for many years to use the Camp Hill/Kings Heath line into Birmingham.

For 3 weeks, from 20th September, engineering work in Colwall Tunnel, on the Ledbury line, will necessitate alternative road services. After being closed for 12 years Honeybourne station, on the Worcester — Oxford line re-opened as an experiment on 22nd May. On the Redditch branch two extra trains are now operating to City at 17.35 and 18.05 and the West Midlands PTE is considering extending its Travelcard facility at a supplementary charge to cover cross-boundary rail journeys to/from Redditch. This was one of the many issues covered in the latest edition of "Arrow Express" Newsletter of the Redditch & Alvechurch Rail Users' Association. It also expressed concern at the significant loss of revenue on the line from fare dodgers and the lack of a decision at the time of publication by West Midlands C.C. to continue the much improved rail service for a further year. Significantly the Council had not actually incurred any expenditure on the rail service and as the increased patronage had reduced losses by around £10,000 the Association believed it right that the Council should do so. Like others referred to above the Council does plan to reduce local bus and rail fares by 25% in October.

Decisions of the Planning authorities have caused re-development plans for the Snow Hill site in Birmingham to be abandoned for a second time, due to design limitations, and this could mean the 6½ acre derelict site being left dormant for several more years. The Branch Committee of R.D.S. is however urging that interim steps be taken to put back a through rail line serving a temporary station on one of the island platforms still available. B.R. have undisclosed plans to revise services on the North Warwick. Line (via Henley-in-Arden) which may involve closing signal boxes and track alterations. Lines into Stratford-on-Avon are being used for trials of two prototypes. The BRE/BL Railbus, which is a 4 wheel single car vehicle in green/orange/white livery, will be tried out on the Leamington shuttle this summer whilst the 2-car Class 140 lightweight DMU will travel the Birmingham route for 4 weeks from 13th July.

As we saw in our last issue (p. 18) plans by B.R. to withdraw all loco-hauled trains from the 60 mile Oxford — Worcester line in 1982 have met with strong protests from the Cotswold Line Promotion Group; Mr Michael Spicer M.P. for South Worcestershire, and several local councils. B.R. claim they are unable to justify spending £1½m. over 2 years on track renewal and want to divert the Hereford and Worcester Inter-city services via Cheltenham and Swindon. R.D.S. in supporting C.L.P.G., sees the plan as a threat to the whole future of the Cotswold line and we urge a compromise retention of some loco-hauled trains on the route.

EAST ANGLIA

The Spring meeting of the Branch, held in Cambridge on 6th June, attracted nearly 40 members. After a wide-ranging discussion of developments and problems around the region, the meeting heard a fascinating talk by Mr David Pepperell of CIBA-Geigy, about the role played by railfreight at their Duxford chemical works, near Cambridge. From its small beginnings in 1934 consideration had been given to a rail connection to the nearby London — Cambridge main line in 1948 and 1969; but it was not until the 1974 Railways Act, with its Sec. 8 grants for private sidings, that this became a financially attractive proposition. Methanol and urea had until recently been carried the last few miles from Teesside by road and there was a danger that it might be lost to rail altogether. The new rail complex however has ensured that since 1980 it arrives from Billingham entirely by rail and has enabled the firm to send its products to three major customers by similar means. Furthermore CIBA-Geigy are seeking to expand this outward rail traffic, not only to customers within the U.K. but also for export.

The Wensum curve — a short stretch of line that enables freight trains (and some passenger ones) to by-pass Norwich — is closed at present and there are fears that this closure will be permanent. RDS has therefore taken this up with the Central Transport Consultative Committee, whose East Anglian Committee agree that its closure should be formally advertised and the opportunity given for objections to be considered. Concern has also been expressed, by RDS, rail unions and local M.Ps, that freight using the curve — including some dangerous traffics — has now to come into the centre of the city to reverse. This includes Algeco condensate from North Walsham gas terminal, en route for Harwich. One such tanker was de-railed in Norwich goods depot on 3rd June and the fire brigade had to be called — giving further strength to our arguments in favour of retention of the curve.

Fares on the Felixstowe branch have been reduced by 25% this summer — a fact welcomed by RDS and by our Corporate Member, the East Suffolk Travellers' Association, who delivered leaflets door-to-door publicising the experiment. Our Society has for some time argued the case for experimental fare reductions on selected lines, accompanied by vigorous publicity. Whilst on the subject of publicity two members of the Branch, Messrs M.I. Brakewell and S.J. Harman, were due to undertake Sponsored train rides on 20th June in an attempt to break last year's record of 520 miles with a £4 Anglia Ranger ticket, and at the same time raise funds for RDS.

The Society's first chartered train of the year ran on 11th April from Swavesey (on the former St. Ives branch) to London. The 4-car DMU carried 182 people and showed again the potential of the line, if it were re-opened on a permanent basis. However the section into St. Ives itself is now threatened by an extension of ARC's gravel workings and RDS made strong objections to these plans to the Planning Committee of Cambs. C.C. Whilst these were subsequently passed a condition was imposed that the area affecting the trackbed should be left to last and a delegation from RDS is due to see County Council officers on this issue in July.

Meanwhile, the local Ecology Party has suggested the Cambridge — St. Ives — Huntingdon route as a testbed for Lucas Aerospace Shop Stewards' Rail-Roader vehicle, which underwent some tests last year on the West Somerset Railway. RDS has been in touch with the Party and is following the project with interest — though our ultimate aim remains to see B.R. trains running once more to St. Ives.

YORKSHIRE

Following a well attended public meeting called by the Branch in Huddersfield on 21st March a Rail Users' Group was formed for the Sheffield — Huddersfield line and within a fortnight membership had risen to over 100. This line is threatened with closure following cut-backs in PTE grant and the Branch duly gave evidence at the T.U.C.C. Inquiry in Huddersfield at the beginning of April. This revealed that considerable hardship would result for rail users working in Sheffield if the line is closed. At the start of the Inquiry South Yorkshire County Council issued a press release stating that should this occur they hoped to reach agreement with B.R. to subsidise the service by diverting it through Barnsley to Penistone & Denby Dale. Many speakers stressed the potential for developing through train services between Bradford or Leeds and Sheffield.

In March West Yorkshire P.T.E. published a list of nine stations it was planning to open during the next three years on lines radiating from Leeds, at a rate of three stations a year starting in 1982. At 1980 prices it is estimated that the whole scheme would cost about £690,000. The P.T.E. have also informed the Branch that it proposes to undertake an evaluation of the Spen Valley Line for passenger services. This line, which is not at present in use runs from Low Moor, south of Bradford to Thornhill, near Dewsbury and could provide a useful link between Bradford, Wakefield and Doncaster.

B.R. Passenger management in Leeds have told the Branch that when the diversion of the East Coast Main Line between Temple Hirst & Colton is complete it is proposed to maintain a level of train services between Selby, York & Doncaster at least equivalent to that operating at present. It is estimated that the journey time will be about eight minutes longer, as the present line north of Selby will be closed. The re-opening of Dronfield station has been so successful that the number of trains serving the station has been increased. It seems likely that the service will not now need to be subsidised by the Derbyshire County Council and North Derbyshire District Council as had originally been planned.

Knaresborough could be the next venue for a public meeting to form a users' group as the Branch is now turning its attention to another "branch on the brink" — the York — Harrogate line, which serves that town. Yorkshire Branch Chairman, Mr P. Ralph, welcomed into York on 30th May a special train chartered by the East Anglian Branch and the Wymondham & Dereham Rail Action Committee. The train which carried 450 people from Dereham and four other Norfolk stations, gained RDS good local press publicity.

NORTH HERTS.

Thanks are due to those RDS members who contributed towards the appeal for the Watton-at-Stone Station re-opening. This raised over £70.00 and the Branch will be making a donation from its own funds to bring into three figures the cheque to be presented to Watton-at-Stone Parish Council. At the time of writing, no decision has been reached as to what proportion of the re-opening cost will be met by Hertfordshire County Council, and what will have to be met from local fund raising.

A Branch Newsletter has been produced and distributed and a meeting was due to be held on 16th June. The Weekend Ranger, suggested by the local Branch of RDS and operated experimentally by B.R. last Autumn, is in operation again this Summer. For £3.50, it gives unlimited travel between Cambridge, Huntingdon and North Herts, extending down as far as Enfield and Hatfield.

SEVERN SIDING

Cheltenham Lansdown station is to be re-constructed and improved on its present site. The local Branch of RDS has been in contact with Tewkesbury District Council with a view to supporting a new station on the nearby Cheltenham — Worcester main line. The Gloucestershire and Warwickshire Railway Society have now acquired part of the Cheltenham — Stratford line and have purchased an ex GWR 2-8-0 engine No. 2807, located at Toddington.

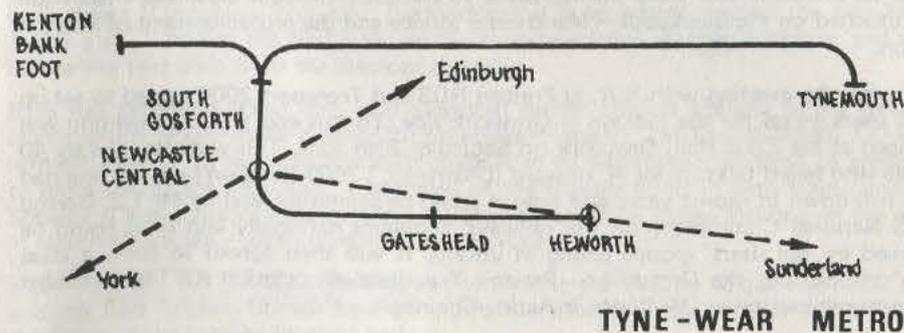
B.R. have stated that no money is available for halt restoration at such places as Cashes Green and Brimscombe yet they are understood to be prepared to lengthen platforms at several country stations still in use. They argue that patronage cannot be guaranteed from new housing estates near railway lines but this is the very reason for re-opening and new halts in many other parts of the country. If this attitude towards the Stroud Valley communities and Yate/Sodbury continues what hope is there for places like Somerton where there is local Council and County Council interest in halt restoration?

Housing estate development has also prompted a request from Weston-super-Mare Council for consideration of a new halt near Worle Junction on a line where HSTs already call at halt platforms. The resignalling of 107 miles of the WR main line between Westbury and Totnes has been approved by the Department of Transport. The £28m. scheme will improve track layout and eliminate the 70 year old mechanical signalling by 1987 and thereby enable increased speeds. At Barnstaple the 107 year old station is undergoing a £108,000 facelift to improve passenger facilities.

Further news of activities in Severnside and the South West generally appear in the latest issue of Rail-South West (No. 3, April 1981) which has been sent to all members in Thames Valley, Severnside, Wessex, South Wales and Devon & Cornwall and may be purchased by members in other areas (price 30p from the Sales Dept. address on p. 10)

NORTH EAST ENGLAND

Tyneside Metro services were extended to the South Gosforth — Kenton Bank Foot line on 10th May and have received favourable response despite concern expressed about two open crossings on the line. For the first month of operation the PTE is providing full-time crossing attendants but after that they will be unsupervised. Newcastle Council still wants to keep open the possibility of building a metro extension from Kenton Bank Foot to serve Newcastle Airport.



Closure proposals have now been published for Gateshead B.R. station as the PTF have withdrawn their subsidy and closure will coincide with the opening of the town's Metro station in late June. Closure of the B.R. station will mean that it will not be possible to travel direct from stations on the Sunderland line to Gateshead without changing into a Metro at Heworth.

British Rail have warned that £12m. is needed to save the Newcastle – Carlisle line from closure within the next 5 years. New trains are needed to replace the present 22 year old DMUs and if modern signal boxes and level crossings were to be provided the cost would be even higher. B.R. stress, however, that they regard the line as one of the most important rural ones in the North and they have no wish to axe it. The Newcastle – Consett branch now carries only one coal train a day and may have to be singled. The prospects for restoring a passenger service therefore seem even more remote.

NORTH WEST ENGLAND

Following an alarming report in the "Lancashire Evening Post" that *all* local lines in Lancashire could close because of the mounting gap between renewal costs and B.R.'s ability to meet them representatives of RDS and Transport 2000 met local railway management to discuss ways of promoting these lines. The main points were:—

"*East Lancs. Line*" (Preston – Colne) All local transport groups are concerned at B.R.'s proposal to single line from Gunnow Junc. to Colne. It would mean the end of loco-hauled trains from Burnley and Nelson, two popular starting points for many excursions. B.R. admitted awareness of these problems but stated that the need to make economies was very urgent. Several options were being looked at e.g. a run-round loop at either Burnley or Nelson. The proposed re-opening of Lostock Hall station (between Farrington Junc. and Bamber Bridge) was also mentioned. B.R. stated that Lancashire County Council wanted a cheaper scheme than the one currently being put forward and new plans were being drawn up. However the latest draft P.T.P. says that there will be no money available for its construction until 1982/83.

(Preston – Ormskirk) Our fares for this line were not lessened by the news that B.R. plan to single it from Farrington Junc. to Midge Hall as an economy measure. This will have little effect on the *present* train service as the passing loop at Rufford is to be retained. Discussion centred on ways to promote the line. B.R. said that whilst the line was managed by Liverpool Division most of the trains and crews were provided by Preston Division. Currently traffic is being lost to the line (the only one in Lancashire to be so affected) and there are no plans to stimulate off-peak business. Discussion also touched on the Blackpool – Manchester service and the redevelopment of Preston station.

Following the meeting with B.R. at Preston RDS and Transport 2000 agreed to set up a rail users group for the Preston – Ormskirk line. To this end a Public meeting was arranged at the Civic Hall, Ormskirk on Saturday 20th June. This was attended by 40 people who heard talks by Mr A. Howard (Chairman, T2000 (NW) on how the line had been run down in recent years and how it could be promoted; and by Mr T.J. Garrod (RDS National Committee) on the railways' problems nationally and what could be achieved by rail users' groups acting in unison. It was then agreed to form a local users' association: the Ormskirk – Preston Travellers' Association (OPTA) of which our local representative, Mr Watts, is Acting Chairman.

Sheffield City Council has produced an excellent document entitled "Priorities for Main Line Electrification" which argues that the assets of Woodhead are worth about £50 million, yet British Rail is prepared to scrap this for a mere £2 million. The report urges its re-electrification and the introduction of a through electric service from London via Sheffield – Woodhead – Manchester to Liverpool and Glasgow. The industrial action on the Manchester to Sheffield line in the weeks before Easter has had two good results. Firstly is the postponement of the closure of Woodhead until July 20th and secondly is the inter-union inquiry into the M.S.W. closure. The Glossop, Hadfield and Longdenale Special Transport Action Group and RDS submitted evidence at the Inquiry.

The threat to the local EMU service to Glossop/Hadfield and the DMU service to Buxton has been lifted by Greater Manchester PTE having decided to review the withdrawal of its subsidy to the parts of the lines outside its area. On 1st June the 2½ mile double track route between Stockport (Edgeley) and Hazel Grove on the Buxton line was opened as a newly electrified line costing the PTE £1.1m.

EAST MIDLANDS

B.R. have introduced a 50p. Evening Rider ticket on the Matlock – Sinfyn line and the local Users' Group have organised publicity for this in local newspapers, community group newsletters and also produced a leaflet "51 things to do on the line". This may also be of interest to any RDS members visiting Derbyshire for a day – or longer (write to the Area Representative – address in Supplement). Meanwhile a delegation from Derbyshire, Nottingham and Leicestershire has visited B.R.B., D.Tp. and M.Ps urging early electrification of lines in their counties. They have also drawn up a detailed technical report on the subject and the benefits electrification would bring to the area.

"Branches on the Brink" (the B.R. audio-visual display) was presented to the Matlock-Sinfyn Rail Users' Group Annual Meeting by Nottingham Divisional Passenger Manager Bob Smalley, on 16th June. A repeat performance for Attenborough Rail Users' Group took place on 29th. RDS members in Leicestershire are also planning a meeting entitled "The Electric Railway Ahead" (Date & details may be included if available at time).

LINCOLNSHIRE

Objections to the March – Spalding closure have been lodged by the RDS Lincolnshire Area Representatives and the East Anglian Branch; by several local users' groups and many individuals. Whilst more objections were received from East Anglia than from Lincolnshire, the local T.U.C.C. has nevertheless announced that it will hold its Inquiry in Spalding (Lincs.) on 31st July. Furthermore it is proposing to start the Inquiry at 10.00 a.m. – before the first train on the threatened line reaches Spalding, and well before the first train from the Sleaford direction.

RDS has protested about this, and suggested certain modest changes to the arrangements which would make it easier for objectors to attend. The East Midlands T.U.C.C. refused initially to agree to any such changes so RDS members resolved to continue to press for, at the very least, a re-timing of the inquiry to fit in with trains; and the Society is also collaborating with the NUR in organising a Public Meeting on the issue in March (the town – not the month) on 18th July.

*STOP PRESS. The T.U.C.C. have agreed to re-time the Inquiry to start at 11.00 a.m. and the East Anglian Branch have been given permission to mount their exhibition in the foyer of the Inquiry meeting hall.

On a more positive note, RDS is pleased at the experimental introduction of a £2 Saturday Ranger ticket for most lines in Lincolnshire (but not covering the March – Spalding line). Such a facility was first suggested by us to BR in 1977, and we hope it will prove successful enough to become a regular feature like the popular Anglia Ranger. "Humberlink" the imaginative rail and bus link between Scunthorpe, Grimsby and Hull, via the Humber Bridge, was due to come into operation in June. Our Corporate Member, Grimsby – Louth Rly. Preservation Society, and its association limited company is negotiating with BR for the trackbed and part of the track of its recently closed freight line. The Society has a steadily growing membership – now over 600 – and is confident of a successful outcome of its efforts.

NORTH WALES

As noted in B & A Bulletin, No. 12, all North Wales M.P.s were sent copies of the RDS Electrification leaflet, together with a covering letter stressing the need for more government investment to safeguard the network of secondary lines in North Wales. On the North Wales coast main line, loco-hauled trains of MK. II stock were introduced from 1st June, replacing the ageing DMUs which had previously operated most of the Bangor – Manchester Victoria services. Meanwhile, work is progressing on Valley Halt, Anglesey; this was closed in 1966 but will be re-opening in the summer. It will be served by the local Llandudno – Holyhead service, which continues to be worked by DMUs.

Barmouth Viaduct re-opened in May for the summer season, but only DMUs are allowed across. This means that there can be no freight traffic, and no through trains from London; last year's highly successful 07.40 Euston – Pwllheli (SO) has now been diverted to Aberystwyth. RDS will therefore continue to press for more investment so that proper repairs can be carried out and the long-term future of the line safeguarded. An illustrated guide to Welsh Railways, published by the Cambrian Coast Line Action Group, can be obtained (Price £1.00 + stamp/foolscap SAE) from John Rogers, Arfryn, Treuddyn, Mold, Clwyd, Wales.

R.D.S. DIARY

"Chiltern Trains", which aims to generate interest in rail travel in the High Wycombe area, run a number of special trains during the year from West Ruislip, Gerrards Cross, High Wycombe and Princes Risborough. Further trips are planned on the dates and to the places indicated below, and their latest brochure can be obtained by enclosing an 11½p stamp (or telephoning) to John Diffey, 1, Druids Walk, Chinnor, Oxford, OX9 4JF (Tel: 0844 52198)

AUGUST 9th – Chiltern Trains – York.

23rd – The Fakenham & Dereham Railway Society Special train from Ryburgh and other stations on the Dereham line to Norwich and Clacton-on-Sea (first excursion of this type from north of Dereham since 1964). Return fare:– £6.50 (children £3.50) From: Norwich £6.00.

Bookings to:– Mr E. Woolley, East End Cottage, Billingford, Dereham, Norfolk.

30th – Chiltern Trains – Windermere or Lakeside Steam Railway.

SEPTEMBER 5th – Chiltern Trains – Edinburgh Tattoo.

19th – RAIL DAY in DEREHAM. RDS and WyDRAC are jointly chartering a 4-car DMU to make four return journeys between Norwich & Dereham. Paytrain facilities available but advance booking preferred to:– Mr J.S. Hull, Cydonia Cottage, Station Road, Yaxham, Dereham, Norfolk from whom further details of fares and Special attractions at Yaxham and Dereham can be obtained.

26th – Chiltern Trains – Blackpool Lights

26th – RDS East Anglian Branch Meeting. 2.00 p.m. at the Assembly House, Theatre Street, Norwich. The meeting will cover all aspects of railways in the region, and will include a showing of Mr R.B. Whipp's film of the LEV around East Anglia.

Further details from Branch Secretary: Mr Garrod, 15, Clapham Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1RQ

26th – Following a successful promotional venture to encourage use of 3 local lines in Wales, on 9th May, (incl. a coach trip to Llandrindod Wells) Vale of Rheidol Supporters Assn. propose to run a similar trip to Shrewsbury, Aberystwyth, and Devils Bridge on this date.

* Further details from RDS Member, Mr C. Magner, 25, Dunval Road, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV16 4NA

OCTOBER 17th – Chiltern Trains – France

17th – RAIL USERS' GROUPS (Eastern Region) CONFERENCE – open to all rail users groups from the Tweed to the Thames and to individual RDS members.

VENUE: Cinema One, Sleaford, Lincs. (direct trains from Grantham, Skegness, Doncaster, March and at certain times Sheffield & Cambridge) The Conference will start at about mid-day.

Full details and booking form from the Conference Sec: Mr T.J. Garrod (address above)

24th – Chiltern Trains – York

28th – London & Home Counties Branch A.G.M. – Further details will be sent to Branch Members with the next Newsletter.

31st – Following an initial special train on 14th March to promote rail travel in the Bridgnorth/Severn Valley Area B.R. & S.V.R. are hoping to provide a repeat service from Bridgnorth, Highley, Arley and Bewdley to Paddington on this date. Further details from Mr C. Magner (address above)

EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

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Mr Bevan is responsible for REGIONAL NOTES, Mr Barfield for all other material. To ensure inclusion in the next issue, (to be published in October) all material must be in the hands of the appropriate Editor by WEDNESDAY 2nd SEPTEMBER.

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ARE YOU A MEMBER OF R.D.S?

If you believe, as we do, that a modern and efficient railway system has an important part to play in the country's economic and social life then we feel sure you will wish to join R.D.S.

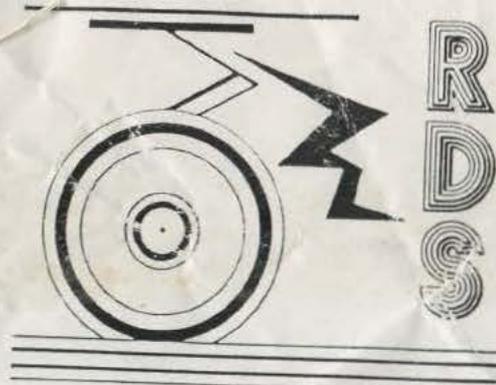
Current Annual Subscription Rates (inclusive of quarterly issues of this journal and where appropriate Local Branch Newsletters) are as follows:

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under 18	£1.50		

Subscriptions should be sent to: Mr H.G.M. Rogers, Membership Secretary, RDS, 64 Cowper Road, London W7 1EJ.

Published by the RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY
BM-RDS London WC1N 3XX

Lithographed by Derby Christian Printing Trust
72 Empress Road, Derby, DE3 6TE.



Late News

R.D.S. DIARY

SEPTEMBER

- 5th 'Energy in Transport' Conference 10.30 am - 5 pm at the Folk House, Park Street, BRISTOL. The Conference is promoted jointly by Bristol/Bath Region of Co-operative Retail Services Education Service and Avon Transport 2000. Admission by programme price 25p available from: Member Relations Dept, Bristol/Region CRS, Fairfax House, Newgate, BRISTOL, BS99 7BP
- 15th R.D.S. East Midlands Area meeting at Leicester.
* Think Electric - The Rail-Way ahead! *
7.30 pm at National Youth Bureau,
17-23 Albion Street, LEICESTER. Details from
Leicestershire Local Representative (address below)

OCTOBER

- 17th Midlands Branch A.G.M. at Br Johnson House, Bull Street, BIRMINGHAM, from 2 pm. Further details will be sent to Branch members.
- 24th Rail Users' Groups Conference (London Midland and Western Regions) to be held at Dr Johnson House, Bull St, BIRMINGHAM. Full details from RUG Conference Secretary, 72 Empress Road, Derby, DE3 6TE Tel Derby 44728

NEW LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE

Leicestershire Mr R Rogers, 23 St James Road,
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