



Railway Development NEWS

no.13

40p
Free to
members

Railway Development Society, BM-RDS, London, WC1N 3XX. 01 405 0463

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January 1982

RAC/AA v THE JUGGERNAUTEERS

The motoring organisations and those representing the road haulage industry (such as the Road Haulage and Freight Transport Associations) have in the past been generally accepted as an integral part of the Road Lobby, with common aims and objects, i.e. the building of more and better roads. We shall, however, suggest in this article that the time may not be far off when they see each other in rather a different light.

In a nutshell the members of one group are vulnerable to the activities of the other. One only has to look at the findings of the Armitage Report - a year old last month - to recall that the rate of involvement of heavy lorries in fatal accidents per mile travelled is still about 40% higher than that of other vehicles, and that "car drivers and cyclists are intimidated by the size of lorries and sometimes by the way they are driven". As it was also forecast that the mileage of lorries of over 25 tonnes could well increase by between 50-71% by the year 2000 the problem seems likely to get worse rather than better.

The inspiration for this item came largely from a similar article which appeared in the Summer 1981 issue of "Transport Action" (quarterly magazine of Transport 2000 Canada) which contained the dramatic headline "Trucking Industry Squashes Auto-Users" or if you would prefer the French sub-title "Le Camion va-t-il Ecraser la petite voiture". Much of what follows will probably have a familiar ring about it but the position in North America seems to have been accentuated by the trend towards smaller, more compact, automobiles at the same time as the trucking industry is exerting pressure on governments to allow increases in truck sizes.

Their main reasons are:- to increase load capacity, fuel efficiency and labour productivity. This in itself emphasises the dual standards by which road and rail are judged - at least in the U.K. - where B.R. is being lambasted by its political masters at almost weekly intervals for its poor productivity. Nothing, however, is ever said about the number of lorry drivers needed to keep the road haulage industry running.

Nevertheless it is the safety aspects with which we are mainly concerned and the AAA (American Automobile Association) is coming increasingly to appreciate the risks its members are running as this trend continues to have, for the first time, obtained data which largely corroborates the findings of Armitage, and showing that while trucks accounted for 20% of vehicle exposure on expressways and turnpikes, they were involved in 35% of the fatal accidents, i.e. a fatal accident rate more than twice that of passenger cars. On some routes such as the Pennsylvania, Ohio and New Jersey Turnpikes as many as 50% of all fatal accidents involved a big truck. It was also stressed that the number of large vehicles in the traffic stream has gone up rapidly in recent years.

The most significant part of the TA article, however, was the editorial note which drew attention to the findings of U.S. surveys that the trucking industry is not paying its share of highway construction and maintenance costs - something which we have known in this country for some years - but more importantly the suggestion that, as long-haul trucking becomes non-competitive due to the effects of higher fuel and labour costs, it might be more economic to send more freight traffic by rail. (What a novel idea!!!) One thing seems clear from all this and that is that the railways have a much greater capacity for moving passengers AND freight in safe co-existence and not, as on the roads, at the expense of each other (in terms of human lives).

This therefore calls into question one of the major arguments for building more and better motorways and, with the recent assertion that the much heralded proposals for an Oxford - Birmingham link, so warmly praised by Transport Under-Secretary, Kenneth Clarke, and costing £250m., are based on erroneous figures (Sunday Times 15/11/81) perhaps the time has come when a much harder look needs to be taken by the transport planners at the social utility of more concrete and tar; the loss of so much agricultural land and once and for all to lay the myth that motorways make driving safer. "There are none so blind as do not wish to see" and if you have ever had a juggernaut on your tail whose driver is damned if he is going to get out of top gear for a mere motorist it is a case of being the "quick or the dead".

*Since preparing this item the Government's proposals and White Paper for increasing lorry weights (largely in line with the demands of the road haulage industry) have been published. This reinforces the need for the motoring organisations to reach a decision as to where they stand on this important issue. With the prospects of the proposals being bulldozed through with little provision made to meet the other recommendations of the Armitage Report the lot of the private motorist is not likely to be improved, particularly as one of the lesser-known effects of heavier lorries is their propensity to wear away the skid resistance of road surfaces more rapidly. If, as is likely this makes for an increase in the incidence of accidents, as we have seen above, the drivers of cars are likely to come off worse.

(See also Members Only Supplement)

WITH THIS ISSUE - IN PARLIAMENT - MEMBERS SUPPLEMENT? - A.G.M. NOTICE

A TALE OF TWO CONFERENCES

(A) N.U.R. Chief Denies Overmanning

Delegates representing Rail Users' Groups from Cleethorpes to Felixstowe and from Sheffield to Yarmouth, meeting in Sleaford, Lincs. on 17th October, were told by Bill Fordham - N.U.R. Executive Council Member - that overmanning on B.R. was "utter nonsense" and were quoted figures to show how manpower reductions had been achieved over the past 15 years. He agreed, however, that some staff were not necessarily being used in the most effective way but stressed B.R.'s pressing need for investment in new track and rolling stock, without which, 3,000 track miles might have to be closed by 1983!

Delegates had already received reports from RDS Committee Members John Barfield, Steve Wilkinson and Trevor Garrod on national issues of particular concern to rail users which included:-

- (i) The possible use of B.R.'s profits from sale of surplus land on secondary lines to support the services on those lines, upon which no satisfactory response had been received from either B.R. or the Property Board, and on which the backing of M.P.s was needed;
- (ii) The importance of establishing good relationships with local Transport Users' Consultative Committees and of Users' Groups obtaining representation thereon.
- (iii) The need for greater financial inducements for potential rail users (e.g. season ticket loans, railcards etc.) and for the phasing out of tax concessions for company cars.

The concluding speaker (Mr. D. Nutt, Lincolnshire County Council Public Transport Officer) outlined the positive steps his authority had taken to assist local rail services by such measures as:

- (a) a rolling programme for re-opening local rail stations;
- (b) support for the Peterborough - Spalding service;
- (c) contributing towards the cost of level crossing modernisation on the Grantham - Skegness line;
- (d) co-operation with B.R. on local timetable planning.

Other matters discussed by the 32 delegates, representing 8 Groups and local Branches of R.D.S., included the relationship between the Society and such groups; the need for more direct advertising of rural rail services to the general public and for changes in the somewhat illogical boundaries of "Rail-Rover" and "Ranger" tickets.

(B) "The edges of the railway system are crumbling"

One of the main reasons why 22 delegates and speakers covering Groups from the London Midland and Western Regions met in Birmingham the following Saturday (24th October) to learn of the role of Local Authorities in supporting public transport and to discuss some of the problems faced by the 13 rail users' groups represented.

The opening discussion centred on the financial plight of rural railways. The Cambrian Coast Line was facing the prospect of an engineering led closure (collapse of Barmouth Viaduct) whilst even suburban lines faced speed restrictions due to a 2-year backlog of maintenance. British Rail planners were stating that 1983 would be the watershed year as, for example, make-do-and-mend, such as that now being exercised on the Cotswold Line (Oxford - Worcester) could not keep it going beyond then. There were legal problems over the introduction of outside capital to support B.R.'s activities and even grants from the E.E.C. The Government could, however, change the law if it had the will and Conference Chairman, Dr. Michael Caton (R.D.S. Vice-Chairman) concluded this session with a plea for members to write to their M.P.s and to forward to him any sympathetic replies they received, so that he could compile a dossier.

The Principal Speaker (John Glover, Public Transport Co-Ordinator with Surrey County Council) having overcome a local derailment launched fairly briskly into a historical survey which graphically illustrated the fall in public transport usage and in its competitiveness, and also described the long-drawn-out process by which local authorities allocate grant aid to their public transport services. He personally saw transport as a growth industry but in the eyes of many public transport would do well to hold its own and he set eight important areas where discussion by both public and government (including rail users' groups) would be fruitful.

After the lunch break, in which the B.B.C. "Open Door" film on the Cambrian Coast Line was shown, delegates split into two working groups to study "rolling stock on secondary lines" and "fares and facilities". Key points arising from these were; the local P.T.E.'s preference for electrification rather than new types of DMUs/Railbus etc., there being no single answer to the problems of rural lines; and the fact that a light-axle-load push-pull loco hauled solution should not be lightly dismissed. On the latter subject there was concern at the continuing complexity of fare structures on B.R., particularly when the many different types of Railcards were considered and there was support for an "Investors Railcard" for the residual category of employed/childless/25-65 year old men/women in good health who were not otherwise covered. (presumably B.R. consider they can afford to pay the full fare)

Following a welcome "tea break" delegates turned their attention to practical problem solving for particular Groups ranging from; response to service cuts; absence of train times where increased services were financed by L.As (i.e. decision too late for inclusion by B.R.); conflict of interest when a RUG Member (e.g. Parish Council) disagrees with a rail modernisation proposal to lack of staff co-operation on bus/rail promotional schemes.

On the whole this first round of Regional Conferences seems to have lived up to members' aspirations and the policy for future years will be discussed at the next National Conference in March.

* Summaries of Conferences by Graham Collett and Simon Hartropp.

† The Sleaford Conference was chaired by National Chairman Mr. R.V. Banks.

Full reports of either/both Conferences may be obtained on application to R.D.S. Sales (Mr. A.F. Johnson) 38, Grange Park, London W.5. (Please send 2 x second class stamps to cover printing and postage).

LIGHT RAIL NOTES

TYNE & WEAR

On Friday 6th November 1981 the Queen officially opened the third section of the Metro, between Haymarket station, in Newcastle, and Howarth but public services did not commence until Sunday 15th.

This latest section is probably the most important part of the whole network as, for the first time, it has opened up the heart of Newcastle and Gateshead to Light Rapid Transit. A week later, on Sunday 21st November, another major change in Tyneside's public transport system took place, as from that date most of the buses from all over Tyneside which used to converge on Newcastle City centre, terminated instead at one of the Metro/Bus interchanges at Heworth, Gateshead, Regents Centre of Four Lane Ends, where passengers now transfer from Bus to Metro for the final part of their journey.

One of the main attractions of the Metro is its frequency of service e.g. between Heworth and South Gosforth (where two routes converge) Monday - Saturday up till 18.00 there is a train every 3 mins. (5 mins. after 18.00 and on Sunday).

There have been very few teething troubles with Metro up till now the one serious incident occurring in the week after opening of the latest section when a Metro train hit a car on one of the controversial open level crossings, near Fawdon station on the Bank Foot line. These crossings (two in number) protected only by traffic signals, are situated in densely populated urban areas and it is the first time they have been used in such a situation. Local people consider they are being used as "ginea pigs" by a local transport undertaking forced to save money by omitting any kind of protective barriers. In the incident in question, however, the driver of the wrecked car escaped unhurt and the train only suffered minor damage.

Plans have been put forward for extensions of Metro - to Newcastle Airport and Washington etc., but the Government have refused to allow the land for any further lines to be safeguarded against future development so the prospects for such extensions now seem rather bleak.

Alan Macaulay.

GREATER LONDON

It finally seems that light rail is coming to London. Ever since the last tram ran in 1952 the Capital City has had no form of public transport between the high capacity, sophisticated, enormously expensive tube railway and the relatively low capacity bus which, although cheap in comparison, to operate, is at the mercy of the shared road traffic and therefore unreliable.

London Transport has, however, been studying light rail and has several options for possible routes under consideration although high priority is now being given to the area of the newly formed Docklands Development Corporation. Here it is envisaged that a line will commence at Cubitt Town (on the Isle of Dogs) and run to either Mile End (Underground Station) or in a more North Westerly direction to terminate in the vicinity of the Minories. It is anticipated that the line, when chosen, will be in operation by 1986. The experience gained by this initial enterprise will surely influence policy regarding construction of further light rail projects around London.

This successful method of mass passenger transportation, where the high capacity of a full-sized railway is not required, has been used for many years on the Continent and is fast finding favour in other parts of the world, notably in the U.S.A. and Canada. It is far more flexible than an underground railway as it can be laid in roads similar to bus lanes; in shallow subways (like the old Kingway Tunnel; through pedestrian precincts and shopping malls. It can follow the central reservation of dual-carriageway roads or the track bed of an abandoned railway and perhaps even share freight-only lines. Except in the latter (or in subways) no expensive stations are needed, the cars being entered from ground level. They can also be driven "On sight" like a bus so that no expensive signalling system need be installed.

Vehicles in general use elsewhere are of the six-axle articulated type with a single deck. However the type of car can be varied to suit particular construction and can either be run as single units or coupled in pairs. On routes that have little or no subway construction even double deck cars can be considered.

Among routes studied in earlier years is that following broadly the, now abandoned, railway between Finsbury Park, thro. Highgate, to Muswell Hill which was at one time earmarked as an extension of the Northern Line tube from Moorgate, (the remaining section between Finsbury Park and Moorgate being taken over by B.R. for the G.N. Inner Suburban Electrics.) Traffic between Muswell Hill and Highgate is at present catered for by an intensive bus service to Finsbury Park B.R./L.T. (Victoria and Piccadilly Lines).

It is understood that Haringey Council, in whose area most of the route lies, is very much in favour of the scheme although they have transformed part of the old rail bed between Highgate and Finsbury Park into a "Park Walk". However, to arouse public interest and gain support for the light rail scheme a Group has been formed to encourage London Transport to implement the project and is now actively setting up its organisation and planning its campaign.

Lionel Boylett

Any of our readers who live in the vicinity or have any interest in the light rail scheme and would like to assist are invited to contact the leader of the Group, Mr.K.Twaite, (a London & Home Counties Branch Member) who resides at Flat 7, 81, Mayes Road, Wood Green, N22. (Tel. 01-889 9798) ED.

FREIGHT REPORT

* F.S.C = Freight Sub-Committee

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS AT WELWYN Since our report in July IRDN No.11, p.71 Welwyn Garden City seems set to become one of two locations earmarked for major development. BRS/BR and UMB Transport of St. Albans plan to expand the Feroutage method of bringing goods to a central location by rail and transferring them to lorries for onward distribution. B.R.S. also propose to set up a similar operation at Kentish Town.

Mr. William MacFarlane, of the UMB Group recently unveiled plans for the ten acre site which will include a purpose-built rail-served 50,000sq. ft. warehouse at Bridge Road East, Welwyn, which being situated in the highly populated South East will only require short distance operations by supporting road transport services. Traffic direct from the Continent will be unloaded in bond, thus minimising customs delay, and similar outward flows are proposed.

The Society's London & Home Counties Branch is in touch with Mr. MacFarlane and it will be recalled that development of this site was suggested about a year ago by the Freight Sub-Committee.

CONSIDERABLE RAIL INVESTMENT IN OXON - Lansdown International Facilities opened their new freight complex near Abingdon in June last year. We wish the Company well in this venture and hope the site will live up to its motto of "A Gateway to the World"

NEW LIFE FOR ELY The BSC sugar beet factory has recently been sold to the Potter Group, a storage and transport firm already operating from Ramsey, Ripon and Kidderminster. The factory site is next to the main King's Lynn - Cambridge railway line and already has extensive sidings in situ. The Company are planning to develop the site as a rail distribution centre, viz. the Railstore complex at Romford. Their own shunting loco. is already on the site and the East Anglian Branch have pledged support to their application for a "Section B Grant"

"SUPERSAVERS" FOR B.R. FREIGHT CUSTOMERS? - Commenting on why B.R. had lost valuable milk and spring flower traffic, the NFU representative speaking at a Transport 2000 meeting in Cornwall, said "Charges were too high and that B.R. should introduce "Supersavers" for freight customers as well as passengers.

PIGGYBACK COMING TO BRITAIN - Novatrans the French combined transport company are planning to operate Piggyback trains hopefully by the end of the year, and B.R. are confident of the idea. The first route is likely to connect Manchester with the rail-ferry terminal at Harwich (Parkeston Quay)

NOT SUCH A NEW IDEA - "In all parts of the country road-rail containers are now being used with great success for the transportation of merchandise of every kind" (Not from current advertising blurb - but from a handbill issued by the "Big Four" railway companies in January 1937)

A LONG WAY TO GO BEFORE B.R. MATCH B.L. - Although the freight division of B.R. is suffering in the current economic depression, they are hardly likely to match the loss of £1,000 per minute alleged to be the norm at B.L. according to a recent Policy Studies Report.

FREIGHT ON L.T. - NOT AN IMPOSSIBILITY In recent correspondence between London Transport and the F.S.C. the Executive, whilst not able to commit itself in principle, agreed that an application for a private siding off the Metropolitan Line north of Harrow would receive careful consideration

B.R. APPEARS TO HAVE JAMMED THE WORKS - Despite its proximity to the railway and various amendments in the Local Draft Plan, Chivers Hartley (part of the Cadbury Schweppes Group) are unlikely to consider rail traffic in their £5m. development plans for a new jam plant at Histon. "B.R. were not very enthusiastic about the idea when we consulted them in the early stages" commented a Company official at the Planning Meeting which was called to discuss the traffic implications of this large scheme

WELL KNOWN BEVERAGE KEEPS ON THE RIGHT TRACK - Arthur Guinness have been granted £82,500 towards the cost of renewing special tanks to continue the Freightliner Service from Park Royal (N.W. London) to Runcorn. This will benefit the residential roads of the area by not increasing the already heavy lorry traffic.

MOTORAIL AT ELY CUT BACK THIS YEAR - Due to Motorail losses last year, the Ely/Stirling service will only operate on one night this coming Summer. If, and when, the current recession picks up, it is hoped to restore the service to its former working schedule.

BUZBY GOES TO SLEEP - Over the last few months the F.S.C. has had considerable correspondence with British Rail, British Steel, National Coal Board, British Sugar Corporation and the C.E.G.B. This has always resulted in speedy and informative answers and information. Not so the Post Office however. A letter was sent to them, at Gresham Street, on 16th September, a photocopy and further letters on 20th October and 4th November. At the time of writing a reply has still not been received. POUNC have now been called in to get Buzby to get his wires uncrossed. More next issue (we hope!)

FENLAND GRAIN GOES "AWAYDAY" - In a previous issue we reported that grain was going from March to Leith overnight. Due to the success of this operation, Fen Grain Ltd., Britain's largest cereal co-operative, with its H.Q. at Wimblington, have now altered their contract with the RHM Group at Barry so that grain goes there by rail as well. The "Farmers Weekly" gave the subject almost a full page report.

SECTION 8 FOR PRESTON The recent Section 8 Grant announcements made by the D.Tp. included one of £79,100 towards the cost of discharge facilities in association with a new rail siding for the oil distribution terminal at Preston for Messrs. Williams.

S.F.W.

SPECIAL NOTICE TO RAIL USERS' GROUPS

Don't forget the Society's National Conference in LONDON
27th MARCH - Principal Speaker, Ray Buckton.

If you or your group have not attended one of our Conferences before write to T.J. Garrod, 15, Clapham Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1RQ to be put on the mailing list.

Selected extracts from parliamentary questions and speeches. Commons replies given by Transport Secretary, David Howell, or his Parliamentary Secretary, Kenneth Clarke unless otherwise shown.

C = Conservative, Lab = Labour, Lib = Liberal

An asterisk denotes the reply was given orally

OCTOBER 10 *Chris Patten* (C. Oxford) asked what was the increase in productivity achieved by BR in each of the last five years.

Mr. Howell: Productivity is expressed in passenger miles and net freight tonne miles per member of staff per year

End of year	1976	137.2;	1977	140.9;	1978	144.7
	1979	147.8;	1980	142.9.		

The recent decline is partly attributable to a drop in freight carryings.

CHUNNEL: "Aim is to get on as fast as possible"

OCTOBER 21 - * *Sir Albert Costain* (C. Folkestone & Hythe): Are you aware that my constituents and I hope that your name will be associated with starting the Channel Tunnel?

Mr. Howell: The tunnel - perhaps I should say link, as it may not be just a tunnel - is a project I approach with humility. The way discussions are going with the French suggests they may need a little longer than the end of 1981 to reach decisions. My aim is to get on as fast as possible.

John Prescott (Lab. Kingston-on-Hull East): Are the Government prepared to exercise any pressure on BR to guarantee freight throughputs and raise the possibility of the nationalised sector once more underpinning the private sector?

Mr. Howell: Britain is looking to the private sector to finance the project and bear the commercial risks.

Nicholas Winterton (C. Macclesfield): Do you feel it would be appropriate to make a statement of intent, if not to announce the introduction of legislation in the Queen's speech? Not only would that give confidence to the French Government that we are not planning to go back on the scheme, but it would provide a useful capital project for employment purposes.

Mr. Howell: Before we come to the question of legislation, it is necessary for a clearer view to be established between the two sides on the type of scheme and therefore the form of legislation needed. I recognise your enthusiasm, but we must take one step at a time. The first is to reach agreement in principle.

Arthur Lewis (Lab. Newham North-West): I have asked my question on numerous occasions: however the tunnel is built, how are we to protect it from terrorism?

Mr. Howell: We shall have to address ourselves to the matter when we know the type of scheme involved.

Roger Moate (C. Faversham): Do you agree that a guarantee by BR of a minimum throughput would be the same as a Government guarantee?

Mr. Howell: You are touching on an aspect of some of the conditions in one or more of the schemes. We are looking at the private sector to bear the commercial risks. We shall not look with enthusiasm at propositions which do not satisfy those conditions.

Manchester Airport link planned

* *Andrew Bennett* (Lab. Stockport): There is bitterness in the Greater Manchester area over lack of investment in transport, compared with the investment in other conurbations. Will you consider urgently the question of allowing electrification of the Preston—Bolton—Manchester line and the replacement of many of the out-of-date multiple units operating to the north of the city, and will you encourage BR to investigate the possibility of a rail link from Manchester to its airport?

Mr. Clarke: Priorities for investment are a matter for the BR board. BR and the PTE have many plans for investment in Manchester, including the airport link, replacement of stock on the Bury line and other matters. BR's own priorities seem to indicate that more will be going to this area.

Kenneth Marks (Lab. Manchester Gorton): Expenditure on both road and rail in the city of Manchester in particular was held back for many years because of the possible opening of the Pic-Vic line. Will you take that into consideration?

Mr. Clarke: There is something in what you say. Pic-Vic held up planning when it seemed a real possibility. I have given an answer about rail priorities. We are pressing ahead with Manchester outer ring road.

Roger Stott (Lab. Westhoughton): Mr. Booth (Opposition transport spokesman), Mr. Prescott and I spent a day discussing with BR management the problems in the area. Are you aware that signalling on the north of the city was installed at the beginning of the century? Such problems will be solved only if the Government make serious funding available and extend the financing limits.

Mr. Clarke: Investment propositions will come to the Government in due course. Various proposals are in the pipeline.

* *Walter Johnson* (Lab. Derby South): The BR Board needs an early decision on financial aid, not just for this year but for the future, to enable it to place long-term contracts for the renewal of rolling stock, locos, modernisation of track and signalling, and if this is not done operations on some sections of line will come to a grinding halt.

Mr. Howell: The investment ceiling still stands at £325 million, which was set by the Labour Government. Investment must be influenced by business performance. In view of current pressures, nothing can be absolutely protected. I realise that investment is needed, but investment funds do not grow on trees.

Ray Whitney (C. Wycombe): Will you remind Sir Peter Parker that a 1% addition to the rail pay bill means 5% less available for investment?

Mr. Howell: The 1981 pay settlement is being financed by postponement of the 39-hour week and new productivity on which work is progressing. More funds going into investment is bound to mean restraint and moderation, increased productivity and reduction of restrictive practices.

Warning that 3,000 miles might have to close

* *Gordon Bagler* (Lab. Sunderland South): Do you accept that income from fares is higher pro rata than that of practically any other railway system? Unless investment is forthcoming, within the next few years, the projection of BR is the closure of 3,000 miles of railway. Signalling must be renewed. Instead of selling off North Sea oil and gas, it would be far better to use some of the income from that and invest in this important national asset.

Mr. Howell: I recognise the point you are taking up. I meet the BR board chairman to discuss these matters and it may well be that some may be put before me.

Hal Miller (C. Bromsgrove and Redditch): There is public anxiety about the quality of some of the decisions and frustration at trying to get at the reasons behind them. One example is the closure of the Hereford and Worcester main line to through trains, apparently because BR is unable to maintain the track. How are the public to assess whether BR is using that as a lever, perhaps to prise more funds out of you?

Mr. Howell: The matter you raise is the pattern by which nationalised industries are organised. I am sure the board and the chairman are aware of your views, and I shall see that the points you have made are passed on.

Albert Booth (Lab. Barrow-in-Furness): The rail policy document published by BR indicates that 3,000 miles of track will have to be taken out of commission during the decade unless there is a change in investment policy. Your appointment to your present position will be very welcome if it does no more than lead to an intelligent review of railway investment.

Mr. Howell: I have seen a mention of this general figure of 3,000 miles. There are obviously some very important considerations, such as track maintenance and the tradition of very high safety standards. I shall certainly bear these in mind.

Surprise grant of an extra £110 million

NOVEMBER 24 — *Mr. Howell*: In a written reply to *Ian Mills* (C. Meriden), announced an extra grant of £110m. for BR. "I have decided to accept the BR Board's revised claim for grant for 1981 in the sum of £754.7 million. The increase of £110.4 million over the original claim, announced on March 25, compensates for the reduction in passenger revenue from that forecast." He added in the Commons later that the figures left no doubt of the need to improve the financial position and said that further cost-cutting measures were vital.

NOVEMBER 25 — * *Sir Anthony Royle* (C. Richmond): When you discuss investment with BR, will you discuss the proposal to close Broad Street station and ensure that BR does not close the line?

Mr. Howell: I take note of what you have said.

More spent on policing LT to prevent crime

* *Stan Newens* (Lab. Harlow): What is the current level of Government grants towards the cost of policing London Transport?

Mr. Clarke: No specific grant is made. This is part of LT's overall costs, for which it receives support from the GLC; that support is eligible for supplementary grant from the Government.

Mr. Newens: Is it not fair to assume that BR are unfairly penalised by having to pay for policing services when the road haulage industry does not?

Mr. Clarke: We do not break down grant in quite that way. We agreed with Sir Horace Cutler that there would be increased expenditure of £9 million spread over three years on new equipment for LT policing.

Robert McCrindle (C. Brentwood & Ongar): Can you confirm that as a result of increased numbers of people employed and the improved equipment, there has been a reduction in the incidence of violence on LT?

Mr. Clarke: The supplementary grant was higher than it would otherwise have been to take account of that. Radios and vandal-proof ticket selling machines are being installed. I do not have figures about the reduction of crime, but we hope that these improvements are having some effect.

Frank Dobson (Lab. Holborn & St. Pancras): Is it not one of the reasons for the increase in vandalism and violence on the Underground the demanning policies of successive Governments? Reducing the number of staff on stations means that nobody is available to come to the aid of guards or drivers.

Mr. Clarke: This is just another ingenious way in which a Labour MP for London is trying to increase the staffing on LT. Ratepayers would be better off if manning were brought down to the level actually required.

Albert Booth (Lab. Barrow-in-Furness): Will the Transport Secretary consider introducing legislation to make crystal clear the powers possessed by local authorities to give revenue support in pursuit of democratically declared and supported fares policies?

Mr. Howell: No, sir.

BR trying out prototype DMUs

* *Jack Straw* (Lab. Blackburn): Are you aware that the diesel multiple unit fleet, 25 years old in many areas, has been deteriorating, and that unless more cash is given urgently to replace these fleets, the services they cover will grind into the dust?

Mr. Howell: BR has been trying out prototypes. When it reaches a conclusion, the matter will come before Government. You spend so much time selling BR short and emphasising how difficult things are that you forget that considerable investment is taking place through partnership between Government, BR management and unions. We should do better if we heard a little more of the positive side.

Worries about future of Settle — Carlisle line

* *John Watson* (C. Skipton): On the traditional motion for the adjournment, expressed the fear that the 70-mile line from Settle to Carlisle might be the subject of a closure proposal. He added: It runs partly over something called the Ribbleshead viaduct. This is apparently falling down and costing BR £150,000 a year to keep it standing. A full reinstatement, according to one version of BR's figures, would cost £6 million. According to BR, if that money is not spent, the viaduct will not last longer than six years.

The traffic load, according to BR, has been declining and, quite deliberately, from next May it will decline further because six inter-city trains a day which have been crossing the viaduct between Nottingham and Glasgow will go by the westerly Lancashire route. If the line were to close, one station, Settle, would close too. Some quarry traffic would be lost. Most important, the popular Dales rail service, which brings 6,000 people a year from Leeds and Bradford, would presumably also have to go.

There is a national significance. This is the highest railway in England, passing through the wildest and most beautiful countryside. Its construction in 1874 must have been one of the most heroic acts of the railway age. The line has a strategic significance, linking West Yorkshire to Scotland, and offers a valuable relief to the Shap route.

Does this re-routing have anything to do with the condition of the viaduct? Are we facing a major reduction in the passenger rail network? I am sure my friend Mr. Joplin regrets that his duties prevent him from participating in this debate.

Chief Whip intervenes in support

Michael Joplin (C. Westmorland): Chief Whips do not make speeches, but may I say I share Mr. Watson's views and his feelings about the Ribbleshead viaduct.

Mr. Watson: When I asked BR to what extent the viaduct was used by freight traffic, I did not get a consequential reply. The only figure I was given, informally, was that it was six or seven trains a day. Such is the enthusiasm for this line that volunteers were prepared to sit by it and count the freight trains over a period of days, and they came up with a figure nearer 30 a day. Most significant was the nature of the freight: limestone aggregate, coal, steel and slow-moving heavy goods. The carriage of such freight has declined, in line with the recession. If we are to emerge from the economic recession, one of the first signals may well be greater activity in the limestone aggregate industry or steel. Such rail traffic might be among the first to pick up.

Of outstanding importance to national heritage

What would be the strategic ramifications of closure? Most of the traffic would be transferred to the Shap line. I doubt the feasibility of transferring 25 to 30 trains a day to that line, and if the freight traffic were to increase, the Shap line would become substantially overloaded. What happens if that line needs maintenance? If we lose the Settle—Carlisle, the only alternative route throughout the west of England is the roundabout route through Cumbria and Whitehaven.

What about the condition of the viaduct? It looks okay to me. Who says it will cost £6 million to put it right? I question whether this figure is realistic, or whether it has been injected for some wider cosmetic purpose. Even if we close the line, we cannot leave the viaduct, like some ageing Roman aqueduct, to rot as the centuries pass. Decommissioning would involve some cost and that would have to be taken into account.

That £6 million is the cost of building one mile of extra motorway at today's prices. If the public are to be asked to approve such a proposal, they are entitled to sound and rational answers to the questions I have raised.

Robert Adley (C. Christchurch & Lymington): Of significance to those who, like me, watch the activities of the Steam Locomotive Operators Association is the fact that this is one of the few lines licensed to run steam engines.

In the past BR have often reduced a service and the income, increased costs and then put forward a sound case for closing the line. We need a prompt and honest answer from BR about its intentions towards the line, which it advertises as the most spectacular in England. For how long will it be a main line? What about using the National Heritage Memorial Fund for the line? The National Heritage Act 1980 empowers the fund's trustees to give financial assistance towards the cost of acquiring, maintaining or preserving land, buildings, works of art and other items of outstanding importance to the national heritage.

In its way Ribbleshead is as significant as Ingleborough, which God provided for the nation. The Ribbleshead viaduct is every bit as significant as hundreds of the buildings listed as important. If by some weird and horrible mischance the line is closed, albeit temporarily, the nation should retain a right to the track bed for future use either by BR in an emergency or by others.

Minister's letter about viaduct was a mistake

Christopher Price (Lab. Lewisham West): I was brought up in and around Ribbleshead viaduct. Anyone who knows and loves that part of Yorkshire must endorse the message of the debate that the viaduct must survive as a working railway line which is necessary for the country and is part of the most splendid piece of the Yorkshire environment. I hope that we shall hear some comforting words.

Mr. Clarke: There is considerable local concern about the future of this line, which has been marked by the fact that Mr. Jopling (Government Chief Whip) has broken the silence normally imposed upon him in the House, to express the concern of his constituents.

An announcement was made by the BR Board that the Nottingham — Glasgow service would be re-routed from May 1982 via Manchester and Preston. That gave rise to speculation about the condition of the viaduct. Part of putting the record straight involves explaining a discrepancy in a contradictory statement which Mr. Howell made in a letter to Sir Keith Joseph — a letter written in error and on advice that was mistaken.

Sir Keith asked for Mr. Howell's comments on a letter received from an organisation known as Friends of the Settle—Carlisle Line Association. It expressed the fears described by Mr. Watson. The reply was sent on advice but without consulting the BR Board. The assertion on the face of the letter from the constituents that there was a deterioration in the viaduct was accepted without question by my department. Mr. Howell sent a reply which accepted the premise and proceeded on that basis.

That letter eventually came to the notice of the BR Board, which realised that it was inaccurate. We have since been assured by the board that the decision to re-route the Nottingham — Glasgow service has nothing to do with the condition of the viaduct. The decision was taken on commercial grounds. It is commercially more attractive to take trains through substantial centres like Manchester and Preston instead of Settle.

The board intends to introduce a local service between Leeds and Carlisle, which is not based on the condition of the viaduct. Nevertheless, the BR Board is concerned about the condition of the Ribbleshead viaduct. It requires expenditure. I do not have the estimate; the Transport Department does not produce estimates of the cost of repairing structures. That takes us to the serious question of how that sort of structural renewal will be financed by the BR Board, given its financial difficulties.

Memorial Fund idea will be explored

This gives rise to questions about the level of support given by the Government. This is not based on an item-by-item bill being submitted to us. We faced the same problems, speculations and demands for specific sums of money when there was controversy last year about Barmouth viaduct in Wales.

We have listened to two Members who have visited the Ribbleshead viaduct. We may be talking about a few million pounds, but we must consider that demand against the background of the total cost of the railways. I do not deny that over the years there has been substantial neglect of track renewal and structural repairs on provincial and rural services. That goes back 10 or 15 years. BR has been unable to do much more than patch and mend on provincial services. It is for BR to draw up its own investment programmes, repair the structures and provide the service we oblige it to.

Mr. Adley: Will you ask Sir Peter Parker to take up the idea of the National Heritage Memorial Fund?

Mr. Clarke: I give that undertaking. The suggestion seems ingenious. One difficulty that BR operates under is that it has over 700 listed buildings on its network, through which it is supposed to run a modern railway so far as conservationists and others will allow. There may be advantages in your suggestion: I shall make sure it is explored.

Possibility of EEC help to be explored

Bob Cryer (Lab. Keighley): Will you also suggest to Sir Peter Parker that he explores EEC sources? I understand from a European Assembly representative that money might be available from the Common Market for a specific purpose.

Mr. Clarke: That is worth investigating, but we have had a preliminary look and it is not very encouraging. I do not believe that Ribbleshead is in an assisted area, which means that the regional development fund is automatically ruled out. However, if other European funds are available, BR and the Government will be interested, but at present no specific transport infrastructure funds are provided by the Community. The British Government are among those most active in trying to make progress towards an infrastructure fund.

Because of recent speculation, you fear that sooner or later the Government will be asked to approve closure. We shall cross that bridge when we come to it. We cannot go round the country prejudging closures case by case. It is not possible, as we are sometimes pressed to do, to give an absolute undertaking that not a mile of railway line will go. There is a lot of bidding from friends of the railway, trying to get a bit more to repair this, improve that or electrify the other . . .

Mr. Clarke was still speaking when he was stopped by the time limit.

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REGIONAL NOTES

LONDON & HOME COUNTIES

At the Branch A.G.M., on 28th October, Charles Rowe, who had been elected Chairman on the amalgamation of RIS & RDA in 1978, stepped down to a well-earned retirement in favour of Dr Frank Tomlins. Dr T., a medical man from Chingford, N.E. London, is an all-round rail and tramway enthusiast but has nevertheless been largely instrumental in developing the Society's policy on proposals for a Channel Tunnel, including a number of detailed discussions with officials of B.R. In this respect his knowledge and expertise are on a par with that of Vice-President Dr Arthur Daniel whose other attributes are referred to below.

Dr Tomlins was also a leading protagonist in the successful battle against the L.T. proposal to close down the last section of the Central Line - from Epping to Ongar. Ministerial consent for this proposal was refused last Summer, albeit with the retention of a peak-hour service only and the closure of the impressive but little used station at Blake Hall. Since then Epping Forest District Council has come up with an eleventh hour grant of £20,000 to enable the service to continue largely unaltered (except for the closure of Blake Hall) for at least another year. The Branch will therefore pursue its policy of pressing for a better overall through service to London to make it more attractive.

Highlight of the Branch A.G.M. was a gripping lecture given by Dr Daniel who explained some of the more technical problems that have been bugging introduction of B.R.'s Advanced Passenger Train. He compared the experiments which had been carried out by B.R. and S.N.C.F. into the very high speed running which can be achieved with electric traction and why the latter have managed to get their TGV into revenue earning service ahead of B.R. whose 4hr 10min runs between Euston and Glasgow should finally be operating by the time this item goes to press.

To some extent the phenomenal success of HST (which was only meant to be a stop-gap) has rather stolen its thunder. It has therefore been decided that APT will be run at no more than 125mph - the same as HST - its only advantage being in faster acceleration and the tilting mechanism enabling it to run faster round curves. The main problem, explained Dr. Daniel, was the restriction to only one pantograph (overhead pick-up) due to the dynamics of cable oscillation at very high speeds, a problem solved by the French running a high voltage cable under the roof between the power cars - something not permitted in the U.K. because of the constraints of its loading gauge.

He described B.R.'s solution of providing both power cars in the centre of the train as "somewhat precipitate" and suggested that it might be better to "go-slow" with APT until advancing technology can solve some of the outstanding technical problems. The need to narrow the upper part of the coach to accommodate the tilting action could also lead to unfavourable comparison with the spaciousness of HST and abandonment of this aspect of its design might in the long run be a better solution.

Nevertheless the transport scene in London has been dominated by the debacle over the G.L.C.'s cheap fares scheme on L.T. and meetings held with G.L.C. Transport Chairman, Dave Wetzel, since its introduction indicate that, whatever the House of Lords decide on its legality, some sort of political solution will have to be achieved if the widening gap between the costs of L.T. and B.R. travel (exacerbated by the latter's recent fares rise) is not to make a mockery of integrated transport. When out-

going Chairman, Charles Rowe and other Branch reps. met Mr. Wetzel on 1st October, it became clear that there was complete deadlock between the Labour-controlled G.L.C. and its Tory adversary in "another place" across the river. Until this can be resolved the finer points of Administrative Law are really largely irrelevant to a substantial number of the travellers of the Metropolis (i.e. who use B.R. services) who feel they are being discriminated against in the interests of political ideology.

NORTH HERTS.

So serious are developments in this area (and relevant to London) that we must turn immediately to the shock decision of Transport Minister, David Howell, to cancel the electrification of the Hitchin - Huntingdon section of the ECML. Shortly after the news broke the G.N.O.S. Branch of R.D.S. issued a Press Statement describing the Minister's decision as an "appalling blunder" and stressing that the £13m. scheme to electrify 27 miles of track serving 5 stations was vital to keep the only skilled team of experts employed until the national electrification plan gets under way, believing also that the decision puts the future of local services along the line in danger, in particular the stations at Biggleswade, Sandy and St. Neots. Support of the 3 local M.P.s, whose constituencies are served by the line, has also been sought and the Branch Secretary, Mr. Hadley, has already been interviewed on the issue by at least one local newspaper.

On a more hopeful note, B.R. has been asked to prepare plans for the new station at Watton-at-Stone on which our Corporate Member (the local Parish Council) has worked so hard. The present shortfall of £4,000, which still needs to be raised to meet the cost, is not considered sufficiently serious to prejudice its implementation as it may be possible to make economies in the building costs. All concerned have voted in favour of the station; Herts. C.C. to the tune of £57,000; B.R. £40,000; East Herts.D.C. £5,000; Watton Parish Council £6,000 and Public subscription £4,000. Further cash is promised from an unidentified source, taking the fund up to £116,000. R.D.S. contributions from members made £70 and the Branch has voted £30 of its own funds. Thanks are due to all those who helped but any further contributions will be gratefully received (See R.D.N.No.10, p.17). It is anticipated that construction work will commence sometime after the end of March.

By arrangement with B.R. thousands of overprinted promotional leaflets have been distributed by local members, the most recent being a drop of 400 accompanying an article in the *Breachwood Times* - which serves rural communities between Luton and Hitchin, - designed to give publicity both for the Branch and the facilities offered by B.R. Following a successful year of the G.N. Ranger ticket B.R. have added cheap evening returns to their range of cheap tickets (to London after 17.30 for £1.50-£2.00 from stations north of Hitchin). The Branch is also pressing for other more aggressive promotional ticket schemes through the local press.

WEST MIDLANDS

The Annual General Meeting of the Midlands Branch of R.D.S. was held in Birmingham on 17th October, followed by an enjoyable show of 3 video films of the Tynes & Wear Metro. Shortly afterwards a further local Newsletter was issued in which the most encouraging news was that approval had been given (on 29th October) for the £20m. re-development of Snow Hill (from which trains last ran on 4th March 1972). Work on this project is expected to start in April and in addition to 4 inter-linked tower blocks - fronting Colmore Row - will contain a leisure centre and housing development. More importantly the re-opening of the railway between Moor Street and Snow Hill is to be heralded by the construction of 2 new stations, at a cost of £5m. but work on these is not expected to begin until 1984/85.

Of concern to the Branch (and also our associated Redditch & Alvechurch Rail Users' Association) is the continued refusal of B.R. to advertise in its National Timetable the 26 trains from New Street to Redditch and Alvechurch (financed by West Midlands County Council). The matter is therefore being pursued with the local T.U.C.C. and with Hereford & Worcester C.C. Improved publicity for the line has however increased patronage by 59% in the 12 months since October 1980.

Elsewhere in the area a Walsall Rail Group has been established following a well publicised and attended public meeting in November. Its main plans are for new services to Cannock and Wolverhampton. B.R. and West Midlands C.C. are seriously considering a new £2m. Inter-City station at Oldbury where a former goods yard could provide good car parking facilities.

In October the 120 year old and very restricted Ledbury Tunnel had its $\frac{3}{4}$ miles of track and ballast completely renewed. On the Cotswold Line (Oxford - Worcester) the 1982/83 Timetable will continue to provide for 2 down and 2 up Inter-City trains from Paddington and the line has also recently enjoyed more excursion traffic. The line featured extensively in the Autumn "Modern Railways - Insight". B.R. have told Hereford & Worcester C.C. that the Worcester Parkway scheme is to be shelved indefinitely.

EAST ANGLIA

The latest stage in the Society's campaign for electrification of the main lines in the Region was the launching of a petition to the Secretary of State for Transport, calling upon the Government "to approve investment for the long-planned electrification of the main railway lines to Harwich, Ipswich, Norwich and Cambridge NOW!"

Branch members have been collecting signatures on Inter-City trains and at stations towards the end of the year. The initial response was very positive, with more than 90% of those interviewed signing readily. Branch Chairman, Steve Wilkinson, was interviewed on Anglia T.V. on 12th November and echoed rail users' dismay at the lack of commitment by the Government. Branch Secretary, Trevor Garrod, re-iterated this point during a 15 minute interview on Radio Orwell on 17th November saying that if the Government approved the scheme their commitment to a modernised railway system would be proved. It was in fact the Secretary of State's evasive reply to a Question by David Ennals, M.P. for Norwich North, which sparked off the decision to launch the petition. Mr. Ennals described the reply as "waffle" yet this electrification scheme which has been before the Ministry for a considerable time would produce an 18% return on investment being one of the highest on B.R.'s list of priorities. The petition was due to be presented to Mr. Howell just before Christmas.

In addition to its main line activities the Branch, and its associated rail users' groups, have continued to press the case for the secondary services. To this end the East Suffolk Travellers' Assn. held a well-attended meeting for local councillors at which the "Branches on the Brink" presentation was shown by B.R. officials. In pressing the need for further investment to reduce operating costs ESTA President, Gerard Fiennes, urged Parish Councils not to oppose the introduction of simplified level crossings on minor roads as continuation of the present uneconomic methods could be more than just the "first nail in the coffin for the line."

The Branch is also actively supporting rail users at Frinton and Walton-on-Naze, where economies are threatened. In this instance B.R. propose replacing through trains from Liverpool Street with a shuttle to connect with Clacton trains at Thorpe-le-Soken. Strength of the opposition to this move was measured by a packed meeting of 300

people in Walton in November. On the Sudbury Branch B.R.'s cost cutting plans also threaten the Summer Sunday Morning service (used by day-trippers to the coast this year). Sudbury - Marks Tey R.U.A. are however more confident about introduction of the proposed rail/angling tickets referred to in our last issue.

In conclusion the East Anglian Branch of RDS (formerly RIS) will be 10 years old on 12th February and to commemorate the event an exhibition is being held at the Leeds Building Society Office, St. Stephens, Norwich. The Branch has also published a book entitled "Ten Years On" which is available at £1.20 (incl. postage) from: Mr P.R. Lawrence, 75, Maripit Lane, Norwich NR5 8XN.

YORKSHIRE

West Yorkshire P.T.E. has now started work on the new station at Fitzwilliam, near Pontefract, and plans have been brought forward to re-open those at Slaithwaite, Crossflats and Deighton. As well as a new station at Hawksworth, in 1984, it is proposed to tidy up about 20 others. Some, like Halifax and Normanton, after being partly demolished are in a deplorable condition. Meanwhile in South Yorkshire the P.T.E. is proposing to re-site the station at Chapelton, to make it more accessible to the town centre, and is also considering re-opening Swinton Town station as a bus/rail interchange.

With the precarious condition of Ribbleshead Viaduct B.R. plans to re-route the Nottingham - Glasgow trains via Sheffield, Manchester and Preston - probably this year. In the long term this could lead to Leeds being deprived of its direct service to Glasgow, passengers having to travel to Lancaster and change; a prospect which is meeting with a good deal of opposition in this major urban centre.

The Yorkshire T.U.C.C. organised an "Open Forum" meeting in Harrogate on 20th October at which both its own members and representatives of B.R. were present together with the bus companies; West Yorks P.T.E. and North Yorks. County Council Whilst well-attended much of the discussion dealt with the problems of rural buses. In spite of the annual grant from North Yorkshire of £900,000 (likely to be increased to £1¼million) many rural bus services are being cut back or withdrawn altogether leading to almost total isolation of some villages in the Dales.

The local Branch of R.D.S. has organised a public meeting in Knaresborough on 6th February to launch a Rail Users' Group for the York - Harrogate line, one which features in the Eastern Region's "Branches on the Brink" campaign. As B.R. has indicated that there is no money available for renewal of track and rolling stock there is considerable anxiety in Knaresborough about its future.

SEVERNSIDE

The main cause for concern in this area is the future of the West Somerset Railway which, due to mounting losses, has been forced to axe most of its Winter Services and concentrate on bringing the system up to scratch for this year's Summer Season. One of the main reasons for its plight is undoubtedly the "missing link" between Taunton and Bishops Lydeard, caused solely by the determination of one or two local trade unionists that, come what may, the railway will not be able to jeopardise their members' jobs. It is an accident of history that the successors of former GWR bus drivers are members of the NUR and it is action such as this which brings the Trade Union Movement into disrepute. RDS has pledged its support to Minehead Chamber of Trade, which is pressing the NUR to end its' opposition to the rail link, and its Chairman stated at the end of the last season "It is generally agreed that an efficient transport artery into the area is needed, and the best possible one is the railway."

Somerset County Council have bailed out W.S.R. in the past, with a rent-free period of the land it leases to them but with the present cut-back in Central Government support is unlikely to be able to do so in the future. B.R. is keen to establish a connection with its former Branch Line as it could generate £250,000 worth of extra traffic. (Pity it did not think of this when it closed it down) ED. but with losses mounting to £30,000 in 1980; the effects of the recession and indifferent weather, will this, the longest privately-owned Branch Line in the country which has now been operating for 6 years, become a victim of the times in which we live. If it does the NUR must bear its' share of the blame. R.D.S. is still, however, negotiating with NUR HQ to see if some solution to the problem cannot be found

On a brighter note our local Branch Secretary, Eric Barber, has sent us evidence that Gloucestershire County Council is studying the possibility of re-opening several stations in the area of the Severn Vale, bounded roughly by Tewkesbury, in the North, and Chalford, in the South. Ashchurch seems to be the prime candidate, on the main Bristol - Birmingham main line near Tewkesbury, where there are rapidly expanding industrial and housing developments. B.R. is also canvassing support for a new Parkway Station at Churchdown, between Gloucester and Cheltenham. In the above article which appeared in the "Gloucester Journal" on 17th October, the Society's proposals for rail development in the area also received good publicity.

LANCASHIRE & CUMBRIA

In September last year OPTA received from B.R. details of the 1982/3 Timetable for its line (Ormskirk - Preston). These proposed a reduction of the Monday - Friday services from 12 trains to 10, some of those to be eliminated being very well-used. Average passenger loadings on the 08.30 Ormskirk - Preston are 139 and on the 16.39 return run as high as 170. More worrying is the proposal to eliminate the crossing loop at Rufford which would make the line nothing more than one long siding. OPTA (the local Users' Group) has therefore been alerting the public to this threat and to the need for representations to B.R., the County Council, the T.U.C.C. etc., This has prompted the T.U.C.C. to set up a working party with B.R. to re-consider the matter and in October the Divisional Manager advised OPTA that some amendments may be made. He also confirmed that it was proposed to run an excursion from Ormskirk to the Cumbrian Coast on 31st May. This campaign has provided good publicity for the Group whose membership has now reached 169.

B.R. plans for the Settle - Carlisle line are now becoming clearer (as we have seen above) with a proposal to introduce 3 additional trains from Leeds to Lancaster. Leeds - Settle - Carlisle will therefore benefit with only two trains each way (Monday - Saturday) albeit loco-hauled. More freight traffic is also to be diverted to other routes. The newly-formed Action Group (See last R.D.N. p.10) intends to fight this run down of the line and is urging people to write to their M.P.s., County Councillors; B.R. and the T.U.C.C. Approaches are also being made to the E.E.C. to see if a grant from that quarter cannot be obtained for the repair of Ribbleshead Viaduct.

On a more hopeful note Cumbria County Council has spent £8,000, with the services of 5 unemployed under a Y.O. Project, to re-open Wetherall Station on the Newcastle - Carlisle Line. 4½ miles east of Carlisle it saw its first passengers on 5th October and is served by all stopping trains throughout the week. In the Draft P.T.P. for Cumbria (1982/3) firm proposals are included for making Windermere a "Gateway" station for the Lake District with bus links improved and integrated with the rail service.

MERSEYSIDE & GREATER MANCHESTER

Merseyside public transport fares were cut by an average of 10% from 4th October 1981, financed by the Supplementary Rate which has caused such a furor in London. Whether the HoL. decision on the latter will be binding on Authorities who have acted in a similar manner elsewhere remains to be seen. Work has started on the electrification from Garston to Hunts Cross and approval has been given in principle by Merseyside C.C. to a similar extension from Rock Ferry to Hooton (at the County boundary on the Chester line.) Work on the latter is expected to start in 1983/4 and due for completion in 1986. The service will be covered by the transfer of 43 units of Class 510s from the Southern Region which will also cover the complete renewal of existing Wirral Line 503s.

The Wrexham - Bidston Rail Users' Association ran a special excursion to Wolverhampton and Birmingham on Saturday 28th November covered by a 3-car cross-country set with buffet, from which it served its own refreshments. On 21st October a further Users' Group was formed for the two lines into Southport.

In Greater Manchester B.R. plans to build a new 1/2 mile link from Windsor Bridge to Ordsall Lane, in Salford, by 1988 if Parliamentary Powers can be obtained. It would offer a new Inter-City link across the metropolis for trains from the Preston and Stockport directions and local services could also be developed with a new station to serve the University Campus.

WALES

The "Heart of Wales Line Promotion Group" was duly formed at the meeting held in Llandrindod Wells on 7th November to safeguard the future of the Central Wales Line (Shrewsbury - Swansea) and the R.D.S. liaison officer is Mr. A.M. Watson, 20D Parkdale, Tettenhall Road, Wolverhampton WV1 4TE.

LINCOLNSHIRE

The Transport Users' Consultative Committee's decision that hardship would be incurred if the March - Spalding line were to be closed has given encouragement to those members of RDS who have been actively fighting for its retention. However, at the time of writing, the Secretary of State's decision is still awaited. The apparent willingness of Lincolnshire C.C. to set aside money for a halt at Donington on the Sleaford - Spalding section of the "Joint Line" (March - Doncaster) also gives cause for optimism. Further up the line Finningley station was temporarily re-opened and a shuttle service from Doncaster operated for a recent local Air Show. It has also been revealed that nuclear waste traffic from Sizewell Power Station (in Suffolk) travels via the March - Spalding line; so if it is closed this traffic would have to be diverted via Peterborough. The case for maintaining the Joint Line as a freight route; its potential as a secondary passenger artery and its usefulness as a diversionary route (even though operating economies could be made) are very apparent, and should encourage the newly-formed Fenland Rail Action Group in its campaign for the retention and development of the section "On the Brink"

HALF FARE HARMONISATION - From 29th November travel on B.R. at child fare is now available up to 16 years of age. Under 5's travel FREE. This new arrangement brings B.R. more into line with other European Railways.

EAST MIDLANDS

According to media reports some HST services are to be inaugurated in October between Nottingham - Leicester - St. Pancras. Good T.V. coverage has been given to a local plea for a new station at Wigston, south of Leicester. In November the East Midlands Branch of the Chartered Institute of Transport urged the need for electrification of the Midland line via Leicester.

Meanwhile, to the South, congratulations are due to our Corporate Member, Bedford - Bletchley Rail Users' Assn. for persuading B.R. to issue bargain fares from all stations on the branch (to both Euston and Birmingham) during the Christmas Shopping period. Over 2,000 leaflets were printed and distributed by the Association, publicising the offer, which sets an important precedent in encouraging cheap-rate long-distance travel from its many un-staffed halts.

The Association continues to work for the eventual extensions of the trains from Bletchley into Bedford (Midland Road) providing easy connections with the Midland Main Line. After studying various options members have come to the conclusion that existing business would be retained, and new business gained, if trains were to reverse in the former Cambridge platform at Bedford (St. Johns) en route to the town's main station. B-BRUA will be holding its A.G.M. on Thursday 25th February and anyone who would like to know more about its activities should contact Chairman, Richard Crane, 23, Hatfield Crescent, Bedford.

WESSEX

In May this year B.R. is to introduce a new Inter-City, cross-country link between Birmingham and Portsmouth running via Leamington, Reading and Guildford. Last Summer a holiday special service running (Mon - Thur.) between Swindon and Weymouth proved to be a real success for B.R. The train started as a 3-car DMU but demand was so great that it developed into a 12 coach hauled train carrying up to 500 people a day. Development of the private rail service between Wareham and Swanage, by the Swanage Railway Society, is threatened by use of part of the line for a By-Pass at Corfe Castle.

SCOTLAND

The Secretary of State for Transport has approved the withdrawal of services on the Glasgow - Kilmalcolm line, despite the overwhelming evidence of Hardship presented to the T.U.C.C. *but not until 1/1/83*. It is hoped in the meantime that Strathclyde may think again about the withdrawal of its subsidy to the line. (Whose playing Brinkmanship Politics now - David Howell ???) ED.

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 April) all material must be in the hands of the appropriate Editor by WEDNESDAY 17th FEBRUARY

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

Lithographed by Derby Christian Printing Trust
7c Empress Road, Derby, DE² 6TE.

RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT NEWS

JANUARY 1982

MEMBERS ONLY SUPPLEMENT - ISSUE No 13

HEAVIER LORRIES - NOT SO CERTAIN!

When Transport Minister, David Howell appeared on television on the evening of 1st December, after confirming an almost total cave-in to the demands of the road haulage industry in the Government's White Paper "Lorries, People and the Environment" he gave the impression of an obedient little schoolboy who had just been sent out on to the platform (by his civil servants) to deliver a prepared speech. All arguments which clearly indicated that the Government's decision was contrary to all the evidence were peremptorily brushed aside but he gave the game away when admitting innocently that he "personally didn't really like heavy lorries".

The White Paper is merely a rag-bag re-hash of the Armitage Report with half a dozen or so new By-passes thrown in to appease the environmentalists. In fact the arguments are so similar to those trotted out this time last year that we will not insult members' intelligence by reeling them out again, except to say that the basic proposals are that the weight of the heaviest combinations should be increased from 32.5 tonnes to 40 tonnes in order to save the road transport industry £150m. p.a. and allegedly reduce the actual number of heavy lorries on the road by approximately 12%. A statement which was greeted with somewhat ribald comments from some parts of the House.

It was, in fact, the reaction from M.P.s (of all parties) that came as the biggest shock to the Minister and the Government when the proposal was greeted with almost total condemnation as a sell-out to the road lobby. So much so that there was a major revolt of Tory back bench M.P.s at the end of the Commons debate on 9th December such that Transport Under-Secretary Kenneth Clarke, assured members that there was still time to think again as the Government had done no more than circulate draft regulations and that interested parties would have two months in which to submit comments.

The likely effects of heavier lorries are graphically described in our leading article but RDS will not rest at this and has produced a new leaflet entitled "Stop this Highway Robbery Now!" emphasising the true costs of road transport to the nation. A concerted campaign is being launched through Branch and Area Representatives but if you would like a small supply for selective use (like the Electrification Leaflet it was quite expensive to produce) please send a suitable sized S.A.E. to R.D.S. Sales (Mr A. F. Johnson) 38, Grange Park London W.5.

STOP PRESS

Minister announces early decision on East Anglian electrification

Transport Under-Secretary, Kenneth Clarke, announced in the House of Commons on 10th December that the Minister of Transport would be making an early announcement about the Electrification of Lines in East Anglia which are on B.R.'s Priority List.

WATCH OUT It might be made by the time you read this!

In the meantime the Society's East Anglian Branch has presented its petition (with some 1,500 signatures on it) to David Ennals M.P. for passing on to Transport Secretary, David Howell. Mr Ennals has also tabled a Question to the Minister on the subject for 18th January - the day Parliament resumes after the Christmas Recess.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – Enclosed with this Supplement is the Notice and Agenda for the meeting to be held on 24th April in **READING**.

Bring it along with you and pay particular attention to the footnotes. Directions on how to get to the meeting place are included.

AMMUNITION against the Road Lobby – Press Cuttings Digest.

The Society's Road & Rail Sub-Committee will shortly be completing its Digest of Press Cuttings relevant to its terms of reference (See Members' Handbook).

If you would like some useful ammunition to counter the arguments of the Road Lobby please send a stamped addressed foolscap envelope to the Sales Dept. (Mr. A.F. Johnson) 38, Grange Park, London W5 marked "Road & Rail Digest."

BACK NUMBERS OF R.D.N. – are available from the Editor at 108, Berwick Road, London E16 3DS – going back to February 1980 – and may be of particular interest to members who have joined fairly recently. Did you know what R.D.S. said about heavier lorries in that month – or about the sell-off of B.R.'s assets in October of that year.

Please send a stamped addressed foolscap envelope for single back issues; for bulk supplies, 10p. per copy would be appreciated, any surplus going into the Editorial Board's Budget.

SUBSCRIPTIONS – With this issue will be enclosed to those members who have recently renewed their subscriptions a new **MEMBERSHIP CARD** (look inside the envelope!!) Also as the bulk of Subscriptions fall for renewal at this time **IF YOU ARE ONE OF THEM A RENEWAL FORM IS ENCLOSED**. N.B. Don't forget that if you used to pay by **STANDING ORDER** these are now **OBSOLETE** as the Society has recently changed its Bankers, so please send your subscription with the Form as indicated thereon. A **DONATION** over and above your subscription will also be gratefully received.

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MEMBERS' HANDBOOK – Supplement – National Committee

Please note that Mr. W.J.H. Apsey's address is now 89, Torbay Road, London N.W.6. East Midlands Area Rep. Simon Hartropp's Telephone number is now: **DERBY 47651**

Please note that Mike Savage's telephone number is now:-
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