



Railway Development NEWS

no.14

40p
Free to
members

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

In this issue

- £58m - was it worth it? p2
- Victory for Users' Group p3
- Hastings commuter line
could close p4
- "Worst crisis facing B.R.
since 1950's",
says Euro-M.P. p10
- Milton Keynes goes Inter-City . p14

April 1982

NO INVESTMENT WITHOUT PRODUCTIVITY

That seems to be the catchphrase coined by the Government during and probably largely the cause of the recent dispute between ASLEF and the BRB (See also IN PARLIAMENT). However it is a formula which could eventually run the railways into the ground and £58 million seems a high price for Peter Parker to pay to prove that he is "boss" although covert government pressure has undoubtedly been behind it all as at least one newspaper (Sunday Times — 31/1/82) was not slow to point out with the headline "Ministers order B.R: don't give in!"

That is in fact how much the recent dispute has cost British Rail and it has been suggested that the Board may be forced to hastily dispose of 26 hotels and 30 Sealink ships to re-coup £56 million of it. The dispute could, in the view of one commentator have been avoided if the agreement for the 3% pay increase had been spelt out in more precise terms but as Mr. Frank Walton, editor of the New Encyclopaedia of Employment Law and Practice, explained in the "Guardian" (14/1/82) "B.R. would not have got an agreement with ASLEF last August if they had not made it ambiguous." "They bought some time but also inherited a load of trouble."

How much trouble can be gauged by the fact that despite the Government's agreement to an additional £110m. in P.S.O. Grant this year, to allow for inflation, they seem determined to resist any pressure to meet the long term costs of the strike by increasing B.R's external financing limit of £920m. for 1981/2 and have only allowed an increase to £950m. in 1982/3. The squeeze is therefore on B.R. and the Minister has also made it clear, when approving the East Anglian electrification that further schemes will only be approved in the light of progress made on productivity. Whether he will also decide against development of a rail-only Channel Tunnel as a childish snub to the railways may be known by the time members receive this issue of the journal.

What the Government seems unlikely to agree to, in the light of the revolt of its own back-benchers, is an increase in lorry weights, however the traditional calls for abolition of the railways, and their conversion into roads, have emerged as usual during the recent industrial strife but some of their exponents need to get their facts right before making these far-fetched pronouncements, so hands-off the West London Line Brig. Lloyd and Major Angus Dalglish or you may be run over by one of the 60 freight (and some passenger) trains which use the line each day not to mention what local anti-lorry groups may do to you!

David Howell has now at least shown his true colours but with the recent departure of his able No. 2 (in Kenneth Clarke who has moved on to higher things as Minister of Health) he is even more unlikely to venture forth into a Beeching type purge so far on in the life of the present government, even more so as it is usually the whim of the thousands of London & South East Commuters who vote in the key "marginal seats" which decides who "rules" Nevertheless, as we see elsewhere in this issue, there are already some "crumbling edges" of the B.R. network down on the borders of Kent and East Sussex which only a positive Government commitment will mend.

B.R's case in the recent dispute is that flexible rostering is needed to enable railway staff to be employed more productively; and is a means of allowing their working week to be reduced from 40 to 39 hours at minimal cost to B.R.; and benefitting them by giving them more rest days away from work and reducing the incidence of duties during "unsocial hours." For drivers, this requires the present *guaranteed 8 hour working day* to be replaced by a *guaranteed rostered day* varying between 7 and 9 hours with no reduction in basic pay or overtime payments. Why then have ASLEF

adopted such an inflexible line on this issue? Is it perhaps as one trade unionist (not from ASLEF) has put it to the writer a symptom of the trade union movement's mistrust of Governments (of all parties) who have promised railway workers a brave new world if they made sacrifices left, right and centre but consistently failed to deliver the goods. Ray Buckton will no doubt be telling delegates to the Rail Users' Groups Conference on 27th March but whatever the outcome it appears that B.R's attempt to "divide and rule" the railway unions has come unstuck and even Sidney Weighell is not out of the wood yet with some of his members.

The Board's action is however clearly born out of desperation, knowing that without productivity it will get no investment to keep the railways going in any reasonable shape or form but once the Government's "covert blackmail" is withdrawn we may perhaps see the way forward to a long-lasting peace formula. If not major cuts in the rail system seem inevitable in the next 5 years and with even the Liberal/S.D.P. alliance courting exponents of "rail into road", such as Prof. Hall of Reading University, their political attraction to those in favour of railway development must be questionable?

However to quote the conclusions of the London Transport Passengers' Committee on the current dispute raging over London fares (reported elsewhere in this issue) "a plague on (all) both your houses!" (We hope to report the progress being made to resolve this other major threat to the future of public transport more extensively in our next issue. ED)

WITH THIS ISSUE

"IN PARLIAMENT" — "MEMBERS ONLY SUPPLEMENT"

OPTA WINS TIMETABLE REPRIEVE

On 25th September 1981 Mr. T. Brazier, BR's Divisional Manager at Preston, sent to the Chairman of O.P.T.A. (Ormskirk to Preston Travellers' Assn.) Mr. R. N. Watts, details of proposed cuts in services with the following comments:-

"British Rail do not have the financial resources to carry out the essential work necessary to maintain the existing two lines of track on the Preston — Ormskirk line. There is also a requirement due to our worsening financial position to achieve economies in the operation of the service. It has therefore been necessary to re-cast the service from 17th May 1982 when the service will consist of one DMU working on a single line. This will result in a reduction in the level of service and there will be some inconvenience to passengers in the morning and evening peaks but the service has been planned to minimise the overall effect on the travelling public . . ."

These proposals, if implemented, would have been disastrous for the line. The train service was to be reduced from 12 to 10 trains (Mon-Fri) the first, in the proposed timetable, being the 07.37 from Preston which would have replaced four trains carrying a total of nearly 200 passengers. The first train from Ormskirk would have been the 08.11, this also replacing three trains carrying a total of nearly 300 passengers. Not only was B.R. intending to decimate the train service but they wished to close the crossing loop at Rufford. This loop is essential for the peak service on the line which is single track for most of its 15 miles. O.P.T.A. therefore decided that the only course of action was to campaign against these cuts as vigorously as possible.

Even before the Transport Users' Consultative Committee knew about B.R.'s proposals for the line they were receiving letters from OPTA members. To encourage as many people to protest as possible a pro-forma was produced and distributed by OPTA members on the trains. A copy of this was sent to the T.U.C.C. and B.R. The sheer volume of opposition led the TUCC to form a Sub-Committee to examine the effects the new timetable would have. In all BR and the TUCC received 85 written complaints from regular passengers who would have been prevented from using the service or been seriously inconvenienced by the new timetable. Not content with this OPTA members also wrote to their local M.P.s and both District and County Councillors. All four M.P.s along the line gave their active support to the campaign as did the Parish Council of Croston; West Lancs. District Council, Preston Borough Council and the County Council.

In the event B.R. decided to find out just what the consequences of its proposal would be and on Thursday 17th and Saturday 19th October last conducted a traffic census. This revealed that some trains were full to capacity with standing passengers and that if the peak hour service were to be compressed then some would simply be left behind. Mr. Brazier subsequently wrote to the OPTA Chairman saying:-

"In view of the recent increase in the number of passengers on the morning and evening services I am now reviewing the situation."

and on 9th December came the welcome news that B.R. were dropping the plan completely and the timetable would remain unchanged. This was a tremendous victory for the Association and showed what a well co-ordinated campaign can achieve but more importantly the need for users' groups on secondary lines such as this.

1987 - CRUNCH YEAR FOR HASTINGS

For those not steeped in railway history it will be sobering to recall that when the South Eastern Railway built its line to Hastings in the middle of the Nineteenth Century the standard of some of the civil engineering works was not all it should have been. As a result some of the tunnel linings had to be strengthened to the extent that the loading gauge was (and still is) less than that on the rest of the railway network. It is for this reason that the former railway companies, and BR in the 1950s, had to build special rolling stock for the line which is by now familiar as the Hastings flat sided diesels.

It is in fact this phenomenon which could be the line's final undoing if a recent letter from Bob Newlyn, South Eastern Divisional Manager, to London Branch Committee Member (and Chairman of Tunbridge Wells & District Railway Travellers' Assn.) H. Trevor Jones, is anything to go by. For whilst BR has prepared a scheme for electrification of the route together with the necessary re-signalling and removal of clearance restrictions it has not yet submitted it to the Department of Transport for the very reason that it is unlikely to meet the Government's criteria for electrification projects. In fact stressed Mr. Newlyn, compared with a non-investment alternative the scheme is simply not viable.

However without such a scheme, for replacing the existing diesel units which were in any event only intended to be a 15 year stop-gap (in 1957), there seems no alternative but for complete withdrawal of the service south of Tunbridge Wells with only a restricted service north to Tonbridge. BR have been examining exhaustively all possible ideas for maintaining a service over the route, including various forms of diesel traction and the continued use of special rolling stock but none have produced a solution that generates an adequate financial return or would provide a comparable service.

Electrification therefore seems the only sensible long term solution but one that involves considerable capital outlay. Sir Peter Parker in replying to the Minister's statement on BR's policy options for London & the South East referred specifically to the Tonbridge - Hastings line as an example of the difficulty they face in maintaining the system at present support levels and financial limits. So we appear to have in our midst yet another "Branch on the Brink" and this not just a secondary (though important) link such as Ashford - Hastings but a main line for thousands of London's commuters.

Time is therefore not on BR's side and the line is already into the timescale needed for completion of electrification before the first of the ageing diesel units will have to be withdrawn. This could well begin in 1985 when the more corroded sets will be fit only for the scrap heap, necessitating a much reduced service (or alternatively a change at Tonbridge) in 1986 and complete closure of the line by 1987. The only alternative, with the removal of the loop at Polegate, will then be a lengthy detour via Eastbourne which would also add considerably to congestion on the Brighton main line.

We have seen (above) what can be achieved with resolve and determination but without a major change of Government policy on the railways' investment and support limits the break-up of the London and South East Commuter Network appears to be at our door!

RAIL LINK COACH - WOULD BR MISS THE BUS?

Two years ago a "Rail Link" coach service was introduced over the 30 miles from Kettering, on the Midland Main Line, to Peterborough, on the East Coast Main Line, calling at Corby and Oundle. An earlier attempt to run a feeder bus to Kettering from Corby (one of the largest towns in the country without passenger services) had not attracted many customers. There was never a direct rail link between Kettering and Peterborough, though the journey was possible, with a change at Manton, up to the mid 1960s. There is now no rail link between the Midland and East Coast Main Lines south of the somewhat circuitous Peterborough - Melton Mowbray - Leicester route.

So, does the Rail Link bus serve a useful role as an Inter-City feeder and a missing link in cross-country rail journeys, as BR suggest? Would a restored rail service between Peterborough, Corby and Kettering, with perhaps a new spur at Manton, be more attractive? Some observers have suggested that if this rail link bus is successful, it will provide a weapon for those senior B.R. officials known to us who support the replacement of some secondary rail services by buses.

It was therefore with considerable interest that our correspondent boarded the Rail Link bus at Peterborough one February afternoon, armed with a through ticket from Norwich to Bedford, having been whisked across East Anglia and the Fens by the Norwich - Birmingham Inter-City train.

There were 7 passengers on the 49-seater coach, painted in BR livery and operated by United Counties. It was quite comfortable with reasonable luggage space (4 seats having been taken out and a luggage rack installed) but the exterior was filthy. The coach left on time at 15.30, dropped one passenger at Oundle and picked up two. At Lower Benefield it came to a halt because of roadworks and, after brief altercations between driver and roadmen, changed course, tearing up a country lane over the rain-swept Northamptonshire hills and landing 4 miles further on at Brigstock. At Corby, which had to be approached by a different route, 3 passengers alighted but not one got on.

4 survivors were eventually dropped 50 yards from Kettering station 5 minutes late at 16.45 but our correspondent was the *only* person to use the service for the entire journey.

Next day, on the return journey, only 5 passengers boarded the 10.00 ex Kettering, after a wait in the pouring rain (there is no bus shelter at this stop). One alighted at Corby and 4 joined; one more at Oundle and so the bus reached Peterborough with a record 9 passengers; having passed the 10.10 ex Peterborough with a grand total of one. It was a faster run than the previous day but our correspondent alighted at Peterborough feeling decidedly queasy (sic!).

CAN BUS REPLACE TRAIN? (RDS Publication, still available at 55p, incl. postage from RDS Sales, (Mr. A.F. Johnson) 38, Grange Park, Ealing, London W.5). Painting a bus in BR livery doesn't stop it from being diverted along minor roads. . . Nor does it make a 30 mile journey any more comfortable.

T. J. Garrod

RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTERS

Why not develop your own railway system? The great new board game, "Railway Rivals", allows you to do just that!

On a map of a selected region, you try to build a better railway network, in spite of hills (and other players) which get in the way. The complete game, including one map (choice of 11) with "wipe-clean" surface, special washable felt-pens, rules, dice and counters costs only £4.20 (plus 30p. part post).

SPECIAL OFFER TO RDS MEMBERS until 31st MAY 1982

Complete game with 2 maps : £5.20 including post
4 maps : £7.20 including post (Overseas, ADD £1.00 extra for each map)

OFFER LIMITED TO FOLLOWING 4 MAPS:

G (Central Scotland); J (Mersey & Humber);
K (London & South East); N (New England).

Include your RDS number — We will pay 20p. to RDS for each set ordered by its members.

ROSTHERNE GAMES

102, Priory Road, Milford Haven, SA73 2ED
(Tel No. for more details: evenings 06462-2752)

RAILWAY RIBALDRY — No. 3

"Andrew McTavish and his wife Jean fra' Aberdeen were on their first visit to London, and in the course of their wanderings found themselves in a lift at an Underground station. The unusual motion somewhat upset Jean, and turning to Andrew, she whispered that she was feeling sick. "Guid sakes wumman" said Andrew in great alarm, "You'll ruin us. Just look at yon notice saying its forty shillings for a wee spit."

SMALL ADVERTISEMENTS maybe inserted in R.D.N. at 5p a word (3p a word for RDS Members). All enquiries to Advertising Manager, James Apsey, 89, Torbay Road, London N.W.6.

FOR SALE: RAIL ATLAS OF BRITAIN — 1977 (OPC). Good condition: £1.50. Apply G. L. Collett, 62, Glanville Road, Bromley, Kent, BR2 9LW.

"RAILWAY RIVALS"

by Rostherne Games

Railway Rivals is a game in which three or more players first compete to construct railway networks between major towns and then run a series of races over their own and other players' lines.

During the first stage of the game players meet their construction costs out of dice throws. At first it is easy to build by the shortest lowland routes but, as the building stage progresses, players have to weigh the extra construction costs of building over hills and rivers against those which have to be paid to competitors for the privilege of joining or crossing their tracks.

Each town on the map is numbered and, in the second stage of the game, the dice is thrown at the beginning of each race to give the starting and finishing towns. Each player then decides whether, by using their own or some of their rival's tracks, it is worthwhile for them to race. The winner is the first player to obtain a specified number of points.

Various hex maps are available of about a dozen real areas in the British Isles, France and the USA. The map of the customer's choice is supplied but extra maps are readily available. We tried the game with Map K (London & South East) and with Map J (Mersey & Humber). Some of the players were railway minded and tried to build actual lines while others with no special knowledge of railway history simply enjoyed a game of strategy and skill.

The tortuous networks that often resulted from "laissez faire" competition were a source of amusement. We found that the construction stage on both maps took about an hour, even though Map J is to a smaller scale and contains many more towns than Map K. The racing stage took between one and two hours to complete using the recommended points goal, but there is no reason why this cannot be extended. The game can be played in an evening or, as we did, spread over several lunch hours.

All the necessary parts to play were supplied. These were the washable hex maps, lumocolor pens, standard and average dice and counters to represent trains. The hex maps are rolled up and really need to be sellotaped to a table or mounted on card to maintain a flat surface, as the train counters tend to slip about otherwise. Everyone who played enjoyed the game. It has the advantage that it can be played at several levels; Standard and tournament rules can be used and there is scope for adventurous players to concoct their own variations. It is reasonably priced and highly recommended and can be obtained from the above Company (See advertisement elsewhere in this issue) for £4.20 + p & p or from some games shops.

K. Willson

STOP THIS HIGHWAY ROBBERY NOW!

"Some highly significant statistics about the comparative costs of subsidising the railways and road transport" New Standard — 10/2/82

"A strong case for putting the emphasis on rail. The price of new roads, road maintenance, policing, pollution, noise and vibration is high" East Anglian Daily Times — 16/2/81

This is what they said about the new RDS leaflet "Stop this Highway Robbery—NOW!" available from RDS Sales (address above). Please send S.A.E. How about sending copies to your local politicians?

MEMBERS PLATFORM

Airport or Tunnel

There is a third alternative to the various suggestions being made about London's Third Airport — the Channel Tunnel.

The time may soon be here when the cost of oil, or the lack of it, will make flying a luxury or a memory and we will look upon electric railways, nuclear powered, as a cheap asset.

I too asked our MP, Mr. Ralph Howell, when will we start the "chunnel" and then, some months ago at a local function, he said "not now" or "not yet". But it seems to me that the time is now when our Prime Minister has met the French President and agreed in principle to a dry crossing, to continue the scheme that started in 1974, without spending more time on plans for a road bridge or tunnel.

A bridge will obstruct the seaway and, like several new bridges in the last few years, may be damaged by a ship. A road tunnel is vast compared with rail and will cost a fortune to ventilate, so let us continue with the only oil-free crossing from Sheffield to Strasbourg, or Reading to Rome for passengers and containerised goods, to keep the monsters of the road.

R.G.Crawley
Hoveton, Norfolk

(For conditions of publication See MEMBERS ONLY SUPPLEMENT)

R.D.S. DIARY

Don't forget to come along to the A.G.M. in READING on 24th April: to bring your Agenda with you and to let the General Secretary know you are coming (by returning the tear-off slip) so we can arrange refreshments accordingly.

N.B. If you can't attend you can still vote on the Constitutional Amendments by returning the voting slip on the back of the Agenda.

12th May — 6.30 p.m. (Wednesday): at Friends House, London N.W.1. (opposite Euston Station). Illustrated talk on the "People Mover" (G.E.C. Transportation Project) by Mr S. McArthur. This concept is already under construction to link Birmingham Airport and International Station and the meeting will include discussion on the development of linear motors. All Members welcome to this London & Home Counties Branch Meeting.

5th June — 2.00 p.m. (Saturday): East Anglian Branch Spring Meeting: Seminar Room YMCA, Gonville Place, CAMBRIDGE (next to the multi-storey car park — opposite Parker's Piece) — 10 mins. from station — (straight ahead; along Hills Road then right at crossroads).

Guest Speaker: Mr. L. Dumelow, Secretary, Central Transport Consultative Committee, will talk on RAIL USERS' WATCHDOGS. All welcome.

IN PARLIAMENT

No. 14

APRIL 1982

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.

M.P.s vote for cheap fares and back Jay's Bill!

What was described in next day's "Guardian" as a "brief and excellent Bill" was introduced in the Commons on 9th February, under the 10-minute rule, by former Cabinet Minister, Douglas Jay M.P. Had it become law this session it could have legalised the G.L.C.'s cheap fares policy but Mr. Jay told our correspondent that Transport Secretary, David Howell, has firmly ruled out any co-operation from the Government. (See — FEBRUARY 9)

Electrification review showed efficiency gains

DECEMBER 22 *Robin Cook (Lab. Edinburgh Central), speaking on the motion for the adjournment, said: The Transport Department participated with BR in a joint review this year which concluded that electrification was a sound investment. Electric traction would permit BR to run trains faster and capable of carrying heavier loads. They would be more reliable and be pulled by locomotives spending less time in maintenance and repair. The maintenance cost of electric locomotives would be one-third that of the diesel units which provide the mainstay of BR's traction power.

Electrification would offer Britain a more efficient railway industry and more attractive transport to the passenger, and wider benefits would flow. It would provide a system more flexible in use of energy, and would utilise the record surplus capacity in our generating system. It would provide a stimulus to the economy that would be felt in many industries, and give the British railway industry a serious chance to compete for the large foreign market in railway electrification.

When the Government refused to give an urgent decision on electrification of the Hitchin to Huntingdon line, Mr. Cliff Moss of Balfour Beatty said that "without a firm home base, the company's chances of getting major work abroad — and there are estimates that contracts worth £750 million are available world-wide in the next 5 years as most railways are modernised — would be drastically reduced." If we are not prepared to invest in electrification in our home base, it will be difficult to persuade foreign governments that we are sufficiently confident in our suppliers and manufacturers of electrification equipment for them to buy from us.

The joint review reported in February 1981. In June 1981 we had a response from the Government: they put up more hoops through which they expected BR to jump before it could gain approval for the electrification programme. The Minister will be aware — although he cannot admit it — why those questions arose at a later stage, after the task of the working party had been completed. The case was torpedoed at a late stage in a street off Whitehall. It was taken apart by a lobbyist, who turned out to be more powerful than the Minister, although he is not a member of the Government nor an elected M.P.

One of the questions I refer to was for a statement of route profitability before any approval is given to a rolling programme. That request is a logical absurdity. You will be aware of the difficulty of taking a particular line and trying to consider it in isolation. The benefits of electrification will be greatest when it has spread widely across the network, and when the initial cost of locomotives and traction equipment has been spread across investment in the network.

£109 Million from EEC on roads and no questions asked.

Peter Snape (Lab. West Bromwich East): The Government have decided to build the M40, but that is not considered section by section, in isolation, as BR's electrification proposals are.

Mr. Cook: That observation buttresses my general case. The £109m. that the EEC has refunded to Britain is to be spent by the Department on the trunk road programme. That is almost three times the amount sought from the review for investment in a rolling electrification programme. It is sad that sums of that size can be found for a trunk road programme that does not have to pass the rigorous tests applied to electrification, for which much more modest sums cannot be found. The test of route profitability is irrelevant to an assessment of whether electrification is desirable. On some lines judged less profitable the rate of return might be higher than for lines that might pass the test. What is the point of the questions? Presumably it is not the Minister's intention to close lines that fail the test of route profitability. If electrification is ruled out, we are reduced to the absurdity of investing in less efficient traction.

NUR agree to variable rostering — "Now Respond!"

With respect to the other hoops, BR must be congratulated on the agility with which it has tried to jump through them. By the Spring, the Minister may expect to receive the different assessments of the 20 segments that make up the electrification programme. His officials have been working closely with BR, and will make it clear to him that there have been substantial improvements in productivity during the last 18 months. Since April 1980 12,000 posts have been shed, with trade union co-operation. The shedding of the posts in parcel delivery was achieved at less cost than originally estimated by BR. Only this evening the NUR executive approved a decision to go ahead with variable rostering and reached agreement with BR.

The Minister should be under no illusion that it will not be possible to maintain the momentum if the Government do not honour their side of the bargain by investing in the future of the industry. Will a decision be announced in the near future on the Anglia proposal? It was not part of the review, but a commitment that that line will go ahead will be an earnest of good intent.

I hope that when he receives responses from BR, there will be a swift decision and not a further series of hoops for BR to jump thro. In short, will the Minister assure us that he will not allow the strategic decision to be mugged in a Cabinet sub-committee on the basis of papers from seconded academics seeking to cause mischief, and that the Department will fight its corner to ensure that the decision which it knows to be the right one will be taken?

The Balfour Beatty team has completed all the design work associated with Bedford — St. Pancras. It will not indefinitely retain that team — the sole team with specialised skills to carry out electrification. Work on a modest section of track from Hitchin to Huntingdon would at least hold together that unique team of specialised skills until a decision is reached on the major programme.

Decision to electrify to Harwich at cost of £30 million

Mr. Clarke replied: There is no real difference in principle between you and the Government. It was not possible for the Minister to divorce whether to approve the Anglia electrification from the deteriorating financial performance of the railways and the need for worthwhile progress on productivity. Only today the NUR confirmed an agreement with BR on variable rostering, as agreed in the autumn pay agreement. That has no direct relationship with electrification, but on hearing of the decision the Minister agreed to approve electrification to Norwich. He announced approval of major electrification to improve services to Ipswich, Norwich and Harwich.

The scheme, costing nearly £30 million, will enable through electric running between Liverpool Street, Ipswich, Norwich and Harwich. Journey times will be cut by nearly 20% between London and Ipswich, and it will no longer be necessary to change trains on the London to Harwich journey. BR plans to rationalise the track and re-signal the line between Ipswich and Norwich before electrification.

Mr. Snape: Will the Government provide additional funds for such matters as re-signalling and track and bridge improvements?

Mr. Clarke: BR contemplates being able to do that under its present investment ceiling. Electrification work will begin as soon as possible — a few years from now. I am not aware that BR faces difficulties. The scheme was on the desk of the former Minister (Mr. Fowler) before we reached decision time on the main electrification review. That review had been set up in 1978 and reported last year. It demonstrated an internal rate of return which looked quite attractive for various networks. But it made certain assumptions about traffic and business performance of both inter-city and freight that unfortunately were then open to question.

Inter-City & freight failing to meet commercial remit

It was already clear by the time we received the review that inter-city and freight business were failing to meet the commercial remit set by the Government. We felt that it must be clearly spelt out that electrification was linked to improve business performance, profitable investment and improving productivity. We asked the board to submit new plans for the commercial businesses of inter-city and freight to achieve a fully commercial performance by 1985, at the same time as we asked it to submit the 10-year programme of electrification. We made it clear that progress on electrification would depend on the changes necessary to achieve manpower reductions. The approval of successive electrification projects would depend upon the achievement of these improvements, as well as the profitability of the investment. At the time of that statement, Sir Peter Parker welcomed it as showing "a positive way ahead."

Shortly after, we explained to the board that to reach further decisions on electrification we required a programme of schemes, ranked in order of return. Separate appraisal of individual schemes is needed to ensure that the programme offers the best possible financial return and that each scheme is fully justified.

Road programmes undergo same examination as rail

I shall not talk of the points made about the road programme by Mr. Cook and Mr. Snape. The Government attempts to submit roads to exactly the same rigorous economic examination. The M40 shows a worthwhile return, otherwise the Government would not proceed with it. As road and rail programmes aim at different markets and carry different levels of traffic, I have never understood why those interested in the rail industry attack the road programme and those interested in haulage attack the railway. I know Mr. Snape would like to reply, but if we start to debate that I shall not reach other matters which interest him.

Delay has been caused by the board's difficulty in reaching decisions on the financial prospects for the inter-city and freight businesses. It has taken longer than it had hoped to settle the commercial plans for those two businesses which are the essential basis of the 10-year programme. We have now received the new policy for inter-city and we expect to receive the plan for freight soon.

All of this is linked to productivity. We indicated in June a target of 38,000 fewer posts at the end of 1985. We have considered the Hitchin - Huntingdon route, but it makes no sense except in the context of King's Cross - Leeds. For the same reason as in road programmes, no case can be made for Hitchin - Huntingdon. Huntingdon is a nice place, but not big enough to justify electric trains.

We shall look as soon as we can at King's Cross to Leeds if, in the board's judgment, it turns out to be the first scheme in the programme, with the highest priority. I am aware of the problems of Balfour Beatty, but for the short-term problems we cannot divorce ourselves from the main policy objectives. We hope that if we can make progress Balfour Beatty and everyone else will match up.

1982 - FEBRUARY 9 *Douglas Jay (Lab. Battersea North): I beg to move that leave be given to bring in a Bill to clarify the meaning of the Transport (London) Act 1969 by providing for the Greater London Council power to make grants towards the current expenses of the London Transport Executive, where such grants appear to the Council to be required to provide, or secure the provision of, such public passenger transport services as best meet the needs of the time being of Greater London; to provide that such grants shall be treated as revenue of the Executive, and for connected purposes.

The Bill (Mr. Jay said) is intended to end the confusion caused by the recent Lords judgment and to restore to the law the meaning which everyone believed it had been before that judgment As a result of the combined efforts of Parliament and the Lords, a legal obligation has been imposed on the LTE which it is economically impossible to carry out

Before the recent cuts in fares, about 75% of LT costs were covered by revenue from fares. After the cuts, the figure was 54%. In Berlin only 39% are so covered, in Paris 44%, in New York 55%, and in Brussels only 30%. If we fly in the face of economic reality and try to force LT to do something which is commercially impossible, considerable damage will be done to the undertaking, to Londoners, and the economy of London. In Sir Peter Masefield's own words (letter to the Times), we shall "seriously undermine the standards of public transport in London." The Lords' judgment rested mainly on the section which requires the executive to balance expenses with revenue so far as is practicable. This was held to qualify the section which says the GLC "shall have power to make grants to the executive for any purpose." Many people took that to mean exactly what it says.

MEMBERS ONLY SUPPLEMENT - ISSUE NO. 14

ASLEF DISPUTE - A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Member,

The recent disruptions on our railways have been the cause of apparent concern and anxiety to you.

However, the National Committee decided early on in the dispute between ASLEF and the BRB to remain strictly neutral as we have friendly relationships with both British Rail management and the leaders of ASLEF.

To members of RDS it was undoubtedly unpleasant to see our friends quarrelling and even more upsetting to experience the anti-rail lobby having such an enjoyable time explaining why the railways were no longer necessary. If indeed they are unnecessary why was there such aggravation because the trains were not running? Of course "everybody" managed "somehow" but what sighs of relief there were when things returned to normal.

There is still a difficult and uncertain time ahead but the signs are that a permanent peace formula will emerge.

As for RDS we will have to re-double our efforts for railway development and to counter all the recent anti-rail propaganda. Even Lord Beeching was dug out of retirement to tell us all how right he was in the 1960s.

All over the world railways are being built and developed. British Railways have a great future especially if linked to the European network by a rail tunnel.

I appeal to all RDS members to play their full part in ensuring an expanding future for rail transport in Great Britain by fighting the very powerful anti-rail lobby in this country and making their views known to Members of Parliament and Local Authorities.

Yours sincerely

R. V. Banks
Chairman

MEMBERS' PLATFORM

The Editor will consider for publication letters on matters of general interest. Any opinions expressed, however, must not be taken as necessarily reflecting the official views and policies of the Society.

The Editor also reserves the right to make "cuts". Letters should normally be signed by the writer's real name. Only in exceptional circumstances, which must be clearly stated in a covering note, will a letter be accepted for publication under a "nome de plume".

SUBSCRIPTIONS - With this issue will be enclosed to those members who have recently renewed their subscription a new MEMBERSHIP CARD (look inside the envelope!!!). If however your subscription falls for renewal at this time A RENEWAL FORM is enclosed. Please return it with your remittance as soon as possible and a DONATION over and above your Subscription will also be gratefully received.

At the time of going to press the following Resolutions had been submitted for consideration at the Society's A.G.M. to be held in Reading on 24th April:-

(1) "This Society believes that construction of a Channel Tunnel, and the improvement of rail links to it, should commence as soon as possible, and that development of a Third London Airport should be postponed until the effect on demand for air travel between the U.K. and the rest of Europe of a double-track high speed rail link with frequent services has been ascertained.

Notwithstanding it considers that land earmarked for such an airport, and the rail links to it, should be safeguarded from other development until the results of such a review are known."

Proposed: Dr F.G.Tomlins

(2) "This Society considers that bus and train operators should make greater effort to co-ordinate their services and publicise connections into each others services wherever their respective operations are complementary (rather than competitive); in particular it urges that greater publicity should be given to the possibility of bus/train interchange at airport railway stations (such as Gatwick)."

Proposed: H.Trevor Jones

(3) "This Society considers that British Rail should take immediate steps to attract those passengers at present deterred by high fares and not eligible for cheap off-peak fares by (for instance) extending the validity of Student's and Young Person's Railcards for a further year.

Whilst accepting that wholesale reductions, without Government backing, might initially increase losses, the Society nevertheless considers that staged fare reductions would in the long run more than pay for themselves and at the same time improve staff morale by offering better prospects.

It also considers that similar concessions should be made at the other end of the scale by (for instance) making persons of either sex eligible for such reductions on production of proof of early retirement or by issuing an additional railcard entitling both parties to a marriage to fare reductions (when travelling together) when only one of them would be entitled on their own.

Depending upon the success of such a scheme these concessions should be extended (over a period) on the basis that the cost of cards could be increased in line with the area of concessionary fares provided. Such cards to qualify the bearer to use services at all times with only "realistic" exceptions when Divisional Managers detect uneconomic "peaking" but admitting - so long as trains are under-used - travel to work (or college) in rural areas."

Proposed: Clare Zilahi

If you agree with and would be prepared to second any of the above Resolutions (or have any suggested amendments thereto) please write to the General Secretary by return. (address on back page of R.D.N.) ED.

A BONUS FOR RDS MEMBERS — Shortly RDS will be introducing a special members' Travelcard. Holders will obtain worthwhile discounts at certain hotels and other services. Details of the available concessions are being negotiated now and full information will be released to readers as soon as they have been finalised.

Travelcards will be available to current RDS members only, at an annual charge of £5.00. The small fee can be saved in one day at the right place and we are confident that this new facility will prove popular with all who move about the country regularly; but please do not rush to apply yet! We will tell you when and how to obtain this added benefit of RDS membership in due course.

The texts of Resolutions so far received for the A.G.M. appear on pages 2 and 3 of this Members Only Supplement.

KNOW YOUR REPRESENTATIVE As a result of the meetings referred to in REGIONAL NOTES the following amendments should be made to the information contained on pages 5 & 6 of the MEMBERS' HANDBOOK:

LONDON & HOME COUNTIES BRANCH (add to area — portion of Hampshire in immediate vicinity of the Alton line) i.e. members in Aldershot, Bentley and Alton.

SEVERN-SIDE: (add to area Wiltshire — north of the Waterloo — Exeter line)

WESSEX: (Dorset — as far north as and including Yeovil and Gillingham, Wiltshire — as far north as and including Tisbury and Salisbury, Hampshire — except the area around the Alton line, Isle of Wight)

Branch Secretary: Miss Hazel Lingard, 9, Beckham Lane, Winchester Road, Petersfield, Hants. GU32 3BU.

Thames Valley Area: (to include members living in the Reading Area unless they opt for membership of London & Home Counties Branch)

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

Editor: J. W. Barfield

Highly serious issue: — early legislation essential

My bill makes it clear that the grants the council can provide include those towards current costs and, secondly, that such grants can be counted as revenue before current revenue is balanced against current expenditure. This would transfer decisions on the economic policy of LT from the courts to the electors of London, where they should reside. The then Minister of Transport (Mrs. Castle), when introducing the 1969 Act, said its purpose was to place the main responsibilities for transport in London "where they belong, with the people of London, through their elected representatives on the GLC."

It is that purpose that my Bill seeks to carry out. I believe the national budget must contribute something towards the cost of LT. I cannot, however, include that in my Bill, because I am advised that it would technically impose a charge. If the Minister will take it over I shall be delighted . . . I hope at least that the Minister will recognise that this is a highly serious economic issue affecting 10 million people or more, that some early legislation is essential, and that it must be treated as such an issue and not simply regarded as a subject for juvenile party political slogans. Almost the entire press, from the Times to the Standard, and the Chairman of LT, agree that new legislation is necessary.

Neil Thorne (C. Ilford South): This gives only one side of the story. Up to last May LT had been run in a sound, forward-looking way. No one can deny that it received a satisfactory share of subsidy, and on top of this there is the free gift of the entire undertaking of the G.L.C. by the Government in 1969. There was no charge for buses, trains, offices, stations, lines, machinery and fixtures and fittings. At that time the GLC had no wish to acquire an expensive albatross round its neck that would have to be passed on to the ratepayers. It was in that light that the 1969 Act was passed. Therefore it comes as no surprise to me that the Lords' ruling was given as it was 0.25 of UK's gross national product subsidised transport.

We find today a belligerent GLC led by a man who has by his actions brought matters near to chaos. He has been assured that if he goes back to the pre-May 1981 position, should there be any doubt about the law, the Government will do their best to help with the necessary legislation. They have made it clear their determination to protect old people's fare concessions, but where is the GLC's sympathy for old people's rates? They get no extra benefit for profligate local public transport.

Old people do not wish to subsidise tourist travel, nor office rents in central London, which is exactly what is done by giving cheap transport. Nor do they wish to subsidise office workers for the whole of the South East. They do not wish to see suburban industry hammered with extra rate burdens that reduce their ability to employ local school leavers. They wish to see sound management, leading to such things as single manning . . . This will not be achieved by a return to the previous situation as proposed by the Bill.

MPs then voted in favour of the Bill by 205/177 — a majority of 28. The Bill was ordered to be brought in by Douglas Jay, Albert Stallard (St. Pancras North), Nigel Spearing (Newham South), Alfred Dubs (Battersea South), Frank Dobson (Holborn & St. Pancras South) and Tom Cox (Tooting) all Labour MPs. The Bill was ordered to be read a second time on February 19 and printed. (It subsequently appeared on the Commons order paper, but will make no progress unless given Government "facilities." J.E.

FEBRUARY 10 **Martin Flannery* (Lab. Sheffield Hillsborough): Have you received proposals for electrification on the St. Pancras - Sheffield line north of Bedford?

Mr. Howell: Not yet, but I look forward to receiving the BR board's 10 year electrification programme.

Mr. Flannery: Will you remind Sir Peter Parker that this line has had problems for 10 years? There are many cities on the line. Ninety per cent of the trains are late. Those who use the line are likely to suffer another 10 years because of miserable rolling stock.

Mr. Howell: Until we receive the full electrification programme, which we expect in a month or so, it is not possible to determine priorities for individual routes. I note what you have said.

John Farr (C. Harborough): I am a regular user of the line. On reflection, do you agree that money spent on electrification north of Bedford would be an utter waste, as the people who operate the trains refuse to modernise their approach to their duties and the way they run the trains?

Mr. Howell: Investment must be related to productivity.

Leslie Spriggs (Lab. St. Helens): As soon as electrification is authorised, it will make good sense to the travelling public and the unemployed in the area served.

Tony Marlow (C. Northampton North): Is there any point in considering any future investment in the railways? It will merely give Mr. Buckton further opportunities to create havoc . . .

Speaker Thomas: You must ask a question, not put forward an argument.

Mr. Howell: The present wretched strike is doing great damage and raising difficult issues about the future finances of, and investment in, the railways. I repeat that investment and productivity go together.

George Foulkes (Lab. Ayrshire South): Have you received a proposal to electrify Glasgow - Kilmarnock - Carlisle, which is reported not to be included? Will you draw attention to the line's importance as a direct link from the south to Prestwick?

Mr. Clarke: There are other lines to which I would expect BR to give higher priority.

Hector Munro (C. Dumfries): Will you bear in mind that most of this line runs through my constituency, that it is a most important link between London and Glasgow and also carries the boat train to Stranraer? Will you provoke BR into giving it high priority and ensure that the inter-city train stops at a station in my constituency?

Mr. Clarke: I wish I could say that the discovery of the constituency through which the line runs would affect the statement I have just made.

William Madel (C. South Bedford): If disruption continues on the railways, is not modernisation bound to be at risk? Will you bear in mind the competing needs of roads, including more bypasses in my constituency?

Need for many measures to overcome strike losses

Mr. Howell: I am aware of discussions of the possibility of our paying 100% for the Leighton - Linslade bypass. I hope that we shall be able to do so. It is correct that deep damage is being caused by the wretched rail strike. There will be a necessity to press ahead with many measures to overcome the losses.

(Another Beeching Era - No doubt ED.) ??

Robert Cook (Lab. Edinburgh Central): Will you at least make sure that BR is not penalised by an unrealistic level of external financing limit next year - meaning no modernisation and little maintenance?

Mr. Howell: The real need is for all concerned to urge ASLEF to end its strikes. It will jeopardise the jobs of many people and the future of many projects.

Robert Adley (C. Christchurch & Lymington): Do you not agree that it would be unfair on most railway men in the NUR, on the BR board and the travelling public, if ASLEF's tactics were to result in the jobs of NUR and most of Tessa being put at risk?

Mr. Howell: When the inquiry is meeting now, it is wrong for me to comment on the merits of the dispute.

John Ward (C. Poole): Will you tell the Chairman that many people have managed to do well without the services of BR, a position that is likely to continue when the strike is over?

Mr. Howell: I recognise that many commuters have been long suffering which reminds the House that the future of the railways depends on its customers.

Albert Booth (Lab. Barrow-in-Furness): Will you tell those who suggest that rail investment is being curtailed as a result of the dispute that they are grossly misrepresenting the facts, and that the Government had curtailed investment long before the dispute?

Mr. Howell: There is a realistic message for those causing disruption that if they believe that higher pay can be achieved without productivity, or investment without de-manning and new work practices, they will cause untold damage.

FEBRUARY 18 *Arthur Lewis* (Lab. Newham North-West): Will you impress on the chairman that improved productivity must apply to all BR staff, including the chairman and all classes of higher paid executives?

Mr. Howell: Sir Peter needs no such advice. The level of service achieved despite the ASLEF strikes is a credit to all concerned.

FEBRUARY 26 *Nicholas Winterton* (C. Macclesfield): In the light of the agreement with ASLEF, would you review the cash limits of BR?

Mr. Howell: It would be premature while issues on productivity are being pursued through procedures laid down in Lord McCarthy's report.

MARCH 1 *Teddy Taylor* (C. Southend East): Are you satisfied that existing ferries linking UK with France, and their planned development, are adequate? (Reply not made known at time of writing.)

Mr. Taylor told our correspondent beforehand: "Don't be carried away on a wave of emotion. The Tunnel sounds exciting, like Concorde, and if a private firm wants to do it, good luck. But if they run out of money half way, there would be moral pressure on the Government to finish it."

J.E.

MARCH 3 **Philip Whitehead* (Lab. Derby North), *Nicholas Winterton* and *Donald Anderson* (Lab. Swansea East) were all asking oral questions on the Channel Tunnel.

PRESERVED STEAM AND DIESEL

on Britain's longest independent
passenger railway

COME & SEE US THIS SUMMER

"Merrymaker" to Minehead or Blue Anchor
or Watchet, by British Rail and W.S.R.
Bargain inclusive fares from Paddington
Birmingham and other locations;
Details from B.R. travel centres

West Somerset Railway

TALINTON—MINEHEAD

Minehead (0643) 4996

REGIONAL NOTES**LONDON & HOME COUNTIES**

Much has happened since our last report not the least of which has been the Great London Fares Muddle, namely the decision by the House of Lords that the G.L.C.'s "Fares Fair" scheme was beyond its powers under the Transport (London) Act 1969.

After taking a great leap forward, reducing its fares by more than a quarter, London Transport has now been forced to take a bigger leap back, by doubling its fares at a stroke. In their latest Newsletter "Railondon" Branch members were told of the attempt by Douglas Jay M.P., to put the whole muddle straight by amending legislation. He told our correspondent that this could be done quickly (in time to avert the threatened fares rise) if the Government co-operated. Alas it was not to be for whilst Mr. Jay's Bill was supported by M.P.s of all parties at its first reading in the commons on 9th February, with voting 205/177 in favour (See also IN PARLIAMENT) the Government has not seen fit to provide adequate parliamentary time to ensure its passing with dire consequences for the transport system of the capital.

At the moment when distant Newcastle can boast of a municipal transport system to rival the best in Europe — aided by a grant from the European Development Fund — London's ailing bus and tube system — once the pride of the metropolis — is destined to go from bad to worse. As traffic falls off, stations will close, services will be withdrawn and there will be fewer buses. Faced with this dire situation the Branch Committee organised a Public Meeting at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, on 11th March, the day when the G.L.C.'s own "Keep Fares Fair" campaign was reaching its climax with a mass lobby of M.P.s. Billed to lead the debate were G.L.C. Transport Chairman, Dave Wetzel (with his Conservative opposite number) and representatives of L.T. & B.R. were also invited to attend. Harmonisation of the fare scales of L.T. & B.R., which the Branch has been advocating for so long, still seems as far away as ever and because of Government edict G.L.C. are even precluded from providing revenue support for B.R. local services.

Another red letter day was the Fourth National Conference of Rail Users' Groups, on 27th March, organised by Trevor Garrod & Leslie Freitag, which the Branch hosted again this year but this time at Friends House, Euston. Billed as guest speaker was Ray Buckton, ASLEF General Secretary, who like other recruits to RDS in recent years has helped to counterbalance the loss of members through adjustment of Branch boundaries or the retirement of Londoners into the country. One such member is Mr. B.D.J. Walsh, a lawyer and former member of the Railway Development Association who once led a debate with devastating success, against the Railway Conversion League. Our loss is East Anglia's gain for he has now moved from Hampstead to Diss in Norfolk.

Another important event, to be staged again at Friends House at 6.45 p.m. on 12th May is a talk on the future of linear motors to be given by the People Mover Group, who are about to install a system of "floating gondolas" experimentally between Birmingham International Station and the adjoining airport. Good news for cross-channel passengers is the agreement by B.R. to continue to operate their part of the Newhaven Ferry service with the modern Sealink ship "Senlac". This was the outcome of a labour dispute after BR had threatened to withdraw the service, claiming that it made an annual loss of £1 million. The French who operate two older and less efficient ships on this route had claimed $\frac{2}{3}$ of the profits. A more satisfactory arrangement

has now been reached. More importantly the Minister may have made an announcement on the Channel Tunnel project by the time members receive this report.

Other projects on which the Branch have prepared papers or given evidence are:-

- (a) the need or otherwise for the development of and provision of adequate rail access to Stansted Airport; (See also East Anglia)
- (b) the G.L.C. (Wood) Inquiry into bans on heavy lorries in Greater London;
- (c) the proposal by B.R. to close Broad Street Station — terminus of the North London Line — to facilitate the redevelopment of Liverpool Street for which an objection has been lodged with the T.U.C.C.

WEST MIDLANDS

Yet another setback has unfortunately befallen our long-awaited Moor Street — Snow Hill rail link. Government cuts in capital grant and lack of priority given by the County Council have combined to defer the first year of expenditure of £200,000 until at least 1983/4. Overall the Snow Hill link will cost some £5 million and the R.D.S. Midlands Committee is again taking steps to urge a more positive and certain acceptance of the scheme for the future. It has also taken the plunge in booking space for a publicity stand at the Inland Waterways Assn. Annual Rally to be held at Sandwell from 28–30 August. With our Walsall Group we have finalised a scheme for re-opening the 6-mile electrified Walsall — Wolverhampton line with a half-hourly non-stop EMU service; and have booked an excursion by DMU from New St., Hamstead, Bescot and Walsall to Matlock on 15th May.

Consequent upon the Law Lords decision (referred to above) West Midlands County Council has concluded that it has no alternative but to similarly raise its bus and (PTE) train fares from 7th March. (Although operated under the Transport Act 1968, the wording is similar to that in the London Act and the Council presumably see no point in further fruitless litigation ED). British Rail report that patronage on the recently introduced Hereford — Worcester — Birmingham fast DMU service has been satisfactory. Hereford & Worcester C.C. have also, for the third year running, agreed to finance the increased service of trains on the Redditch line.

A proposed £2m. Parkway station for Oldbury has prompted criticism that it may well prove detrimental to patronage of nearby local services and that a more beneficial location to serve the Black Country would be at Wood Green, nr. Bescot, where ample space exists for a two level station and a large car park next to Junction 9 of the M6.

EAST ANGLIA

Whilst the Branch has welcomed the Minister's timely decision to authorise the East Anglian electrification, coming as it did only days after presentation of our petition, with over 1,500 signatures, we are concerned that the Secretary of State, in his wisdom has not as yet given the go-ahead for the lines to Cambridge and Branch Chairman Steve Wilkinson has written to Mr. Howell expressing our hope that Cambridge will receive high priority in any subsequent authorisation. The electrification prospects do however encourage us to campaign with increased vigour for certain station re-openings between Colchester and Norwich particularly as the introduction of electric multiple units with fast acceleration will open up possibilities for new traffic on this route.

The Branch A.G.M. was held in Ipswich on 23rd January when we were pleased to welcome Richard Cottrell MEP as guest speaker who gave a frank and hard-hitting assessment of what he described as "the worst crisis facing the BR network since the

mid 1950s". He also attacked the Law Lords' decision over the London fares subsidies, adding that this "could mean the end of public transport in Britain." Labour relations on B.R. also came under fire when he pointed out that Britain was the only country in Europe with more than one rail union.

Another object of his criticism was what he called "political anaemia" for whilst many rail closures had taken place under Labour administrations the Conservative Party's utter dislike for railways "verged upon the pernicious" "Unco-ordinated railway management" and eleven successive changes in structure since 1945 had also taken their toll. It was, said Mr. Cottrell, "amazing short-sightedness" that Felixstowe should not have been included in the East Anglian electrification scheme; although he welcomed the investment in new Freightliner facilities at the port. In summarising his proposals for a healthy B.R. he saw a need for; maintaining the present network and possibly adding some new routes; taking the highest electrification option; expanding rail freight and reversing the trend away from wagon load traffic (No other country in Europe saw "wagon-load" as a bad traffic) and to encourage transport integration — a concept totally lacking in British politicians.

In January the Branch was also represented at the Stansted Airport Inquiry where it stressed the need for direct rail facilities to be incorporated into any expanding airport *right from the start*. Our contribution, which was sympathetically received by the Inspector, also stressed that any rail link should be a loop rather than a terminal spur, as this would provide greater benefit to areas north of the airport. Meanwhile a compromise solution to the drastic cuts proposed for the line to Frinton and Walton-on-the-Naze now seems likely as BR have backed down from their original proposal which would have left one unit shuttling to and fro along what would have been in effect a 5 mile long siding. They are now prepared to allow at least some through trains to continue and Branch Committee member Mike Faraher is keeping in close touch with local users as discussions with BR continue.

At least seven special trains are planned in the region by RDS and its associated Groups this summer, including: seaside trips from Dereham, Sudbury and Wisbech; Inter-City excursions from North Walsham and the East Suffolk Line; and specials to Orton Mere for the Nene Valley Rly. and Park. The Branch is also supporting the Potter Group in its application for a Sec 8 grant to enable it to receive potash traffic by rail from Cleveland at its recently-acquired Ely railhead.

On the local Government front RDS has issued comments on both the Suffolk and Norfolk Public Transport Plans but in Cambridgeshire senior Council officials have told us that they can give us no guarantee that we will be consulted about any rail plans in the county, and the Transport Committee Chairman does not even seem inclined to reply to our letters. On a more positive note Suffolk C.C. has however now given a small donation to Sudbury-Marks Tey RUA to help pay for a publicity poster for their line.

YORKSHIRE

As a climax to its campaign for the future of the York — Harrogate line, the local Branch of RDS held a public meeting in Knaresborough on 6th February. So great was local concern that the 70 people who attended made it necessary for us to find a larger room in the building. After explaining B.R.'s financial constraints, Branch Chairman, Philip Ralph, explained the need to retain and develop secondary lines, how economies in operation could be effected and the successes which had been achieved by other local rail users' groups around the country.

The meeting then voted to set up a Knaresborough & Harrogate Rail Travellers' Association and duly elected a Committee. Among points raised were: the need to publicise Knaresborough station which whilst close to the town centre is tucked away in a side street; overcrowding on some peak-hour trains; need for better co-ordination of local bus & train services; more cheap fares such as are available in the nearby West Yorks. PTE area.

WESSEX/SEVERNSIDE

South West England (with the exception of Devon & Cornwall) has now been effectively carved up between the above two Branches following meetings of R.D.S. members held in January & February.

(See Members Only Supplement)

At the first meeting, held in Southampton on 23rd January it was resolved to set up a Wessex Branch of the Society covering the South Coast area roughly from Portsmouth to Weymouth and extending just north of the Waterloo - Exeter railway line. A Committee of 5 was elected and resolved as their first task to press for the electrification of the lines from Portsmouth to Eastleigh and Southampton in order to facilitate more flexible working for both passenger and freight trains and fill an important gap in the otherwise electrified network. Attention would also be given to the need to maintain and develop rail-freight facilities at Southampton Docks and freight traffic generally in the area. The recent proposal for a tunnel to the Isle of Wight was however considered to be of secondary importance but support and encouragement would be given to the Swanage Railway Society in their attempt to provide a full passenger service (eventually) between Wareham and Swanage.

It was considered that liaison with the Bristol - Weymouth Railway Line Development Group (for one of the longest lines in the country) was more appropriately a matter for the Severnside Branch but Wessex would wish to be concerned with movements south of Dorchester. The Branch also considered that it should have a say in services between Basingstoke and Reading and between Reading and Guildford but conceded that services to Alton were more appropriately a matter for the London & Home Counties Branch (at least until such time as the missing link is restored between Alton and Winchester - the "Watercress Line.")

At its First Annual General Meeting, held in Bristol on 20th February, Severnside Branch Secretary, Eric Barber, reported a year of considerable activity and an increase in membership which was rapidly reaching half a century. Whilst sales of Society publications in the area had proved a somewhat daunting task some station re-opening and line restoration projects were beginning to be taken up by the local authorities concerned, and a detailed discussion took place to concentrate attention on the more promising ones. A Committee of 7 was elected and if progress to date is continued the Branch could well have over 100 members by its next Annual Meeting in 1983. Until such time as a new Area Representative is appointed it will continue to keep a watching brief over events in Devon & Cornwall.

RAILWAY RIBALDRY - No. 4

"Just as the train moved out from King's Cross a passenger rushed up the platform, and by a supreme effort boarded the last carriage. Banging the door after him he stuck his head out of the window and waved at a porter "Am I all right for Finsbury Park?" "Yes sir" replied the porter "change at Peterborough!"

RFW

LANCASHIRE & CUMBRIA

The Friends of the Settle - Carlisle Line have launched a public appeal to raise £6,000 for an independent survey to be made of the Ribbleshead Viaduct. Mr. D. Burton, the Group's Chairman, says that B.R.'s estimate of £6 million to replace the viaduct is on the high side and there is even now some doubt as to the extent of the damage, which may well only be superficial and easily repaired, without requiring a total replacement. If any RDS member would like to contribute to the fund please write to Mr. G. Nuttall, 37, Bar Street, Burnley, Lancs. Make cheques payable to "Settle to Carlisle Survey Fund." Cumbria Tourist Board has come out firmly in favour of keeping the line intact.

STELLA (Support the East Lancashire Line Association) has agreed to adopt Colne Station but have not as yet told us how they propose to effect improvements. At Hoghton the Parish Council are mounting a campaign to get their local station - on the Preston - Colne line between Bamber Bridge and Pleasington - re-opened as it was closed during the Beeching Era and when the population of the village was much smaller. Since then it has grown considerably and a survey carried out by the Council revealed considerable demand from potential passengers. The Parish Council is being assisted in its campaign by both RDS and Transport 2000.

As reported elsewhere in this issue OPTA (Ormskirk to Preston Travellers' Assn.) successfully persuaded B.R. to drop its plans to reduce the service on the line (from 17th May 1982) and close the passing loop at Rufford. The Association is also attempting to get the station at Midge Hall re-opened and to find what potential exists a survey of all local residents is being carried out. A report is to be prepared and sent to the County Council and B.R.

Meanwhile STRATA (Southport Rail Travellers' Assn.), which was formed at the end of last year, is seeking improvements to the Manchester - Southport service and one of their main aims is to get a through service to London restored. They would also like to see restoration of a Preston to Southport service (via Rufford and Buscough Bridge).

MERSEYSIDE

In Liverpool public comment is being sought on the future of the former 12 mile line between Aintree and Halewood which ran via Gateacre and Walton on the Hill.

NORTH EAST ENGLAND

In Northumberland & Durham our Corporate Member the Derwentside Rail Action Group regards 1982 as the crunch year in its campaign to secure the restoration of passenger service on the line to Consett - ideally as an extension of the Tyne & Wear Metro. Whilst it is still used for freight its complete closure is expected in 1983.

"YOUR TRAIN SERVICES NEED YOU!" - New Leaflet

The Society's latest leaflet, published in Mid-March, is short and snappy, stating the case for adequate investment and support without which many services could face cuts and even closure.

5,000 copies of the leaflet have been printed, and it is suitable for mass distribution, e.g. to passengers or door-to-door. It can also be used in any area, and includes a tear-off slip for those wishing to join RDS and/or their local "Rail Users' Group"

Obtainable from RDS Sales (address above) FREE but a donation to cover cost of postage would be appreciated.

LINCOLNSHIRE

B.R. has now published plans to divert all trains to Lincoln into the Central Station, which would involve the closure of St. Marks and the building of a spur at Boutham, from the Newark line on to the western end of the Lincoln avoiding line. Local R.D.S. members have been studying this plan which, in general, has much in its favour. Central is a better equipped station than St. Marks but is relatively underused. B.R., however, also wish to close the avoiding line which would entail *all trains* (both passenger and freight) having to pass through Central. Here the level crossing over Lincoln's main street is already the cause of much complaint because of the severe disruption it causes to traffic. The avoiding line on the other hand has no such problems being on an embankment. There is therefore a strong case for its retention for through freight trains and passenger trains diverted off the ECML when engineering works are in progress.

R.D.S. N.Lincs/S.Humberside Area Representative, Mike Savage, submitted a report to B.R. in November which was very critical of the DMU service introduced as an economy measure to replace some of the Cleethorpes - King's Cross hauled trains. It is some consolation therefore to report that B.R.'s Divisional Manager at Doncaster is now holding out the possibility of some hauled trains being restored between Cleethorpes and Newark this May and the further possibility of a daily HST working between Cleethorpes and King's Cross.

EAST MIDLANDS

Since its re-opening, in January 1981, Dronfield station on the line between Chesterfield and Sheffield has attracted a regular 200 commuters. So much so that it is unlikely that the local authorities will now be required to contribute anything towards its first year of operation. The only expenditure which has been incurred is therefore that on rehabilitating the station and converting a redundant goods yard into a car park.

SOUTH MIDLANDS

Central Milton Keynes Station, which is being constructed jointly by B.R. and the local Development Corporation at a cost of £5 million, is now due to open on 17th May. Situated on the main line exactly 50 miles from Euston (between Wolverton and Bletchley) the 5 platform station includes a 6 storey office block; extensive car parking and bus interchange facilities and will be served by both Inter-City and semi-fast electric trains.

In the Thames Valley Area local RDS members are involved in a campaign to re-open the station at Kidlington on the Oxford - Banbury line. This was one of the items which featured in an occasional letter to local members sent by Area Representative, Tom Comber, in the middle of February. RDS is also helping residents of Haddenham, Bucks., who are pressing for their station, on the Marylebone - Banbury line, to be re-opened.

WALES

As the Vale of Rheidol Railway will be 80 years old this year there will be a Spring Gala on Bank Holiday Monday 3rd May with extra trains and open day events. Also with the opening of the new link between the Ffestiniog Railway and the Conway Valley line at Blaenau Ffestiniog Central this year much two-way traffic is expected and B.R. are catering for this by offering combined route tickets.

PUBLICATIONS - A revised list of Publications, available from the Sales Dept. (address below) from that published on p.8. of the MEMBERS' HANDBOOK appears below:-

(as at 1st March 1982)		Inclusive of postage
		Each
(1)	Can Bus Replace Train?	55p
(2)	Guide for Rail Users' Groups *	80p
(3)	Highway Taxes and the Community (N.C.I.T.)	25p
(4)	Railway Electrification Leaflet	35p
(5)	Railfreight or Juggernaut? (leaflet)	30p
(6)	Railfreight or Juggernaut? (booklet)	70p
(7)	Transport Policy for Today (T.2000 - 1975)	30p
(8)	Vital Travel Statistics (T.2000 & O.U.)	£1.30
(9)	Your Local Trains in the 80s.	80p)
(10)	Your Local Trains in the 80s. (Supplement)	40p) £1.00
(11)	Woodhead Leaflet	25p
(12)	Car Saturation Levels (N.C.I.T.)	70p
(13)	Stop This Highway Robbery Now! (New - 1982)	25p @
(14)	R.D.S. Ties with the Society's Logo (Maroon OR Navy)	£3.75

All of the above items are available from:-

RDS Sales (Mr A. F. Johnson), 38, Grange Park, Ealing, London W.5.

Members are entitled to a discount of 5% on the above prices on all items EXCEPT TIES. (Please state your Membership Number when ordering) and all items are available whilst stocks last.

* New edition

@ Reductions for bulk supply on request.

CORRECTION - On p. 14 of the last issue (R.D.N. No. 13) "Class 510's" should have read "Class 508's".

EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

EDITOR: J. W. Barfield, ARICS, AffCIT, FFB,
108, Berwick Road, London E16 3DS
(Tel: 01-474-6722)

Sub-Editor: A. Bevan, AIH, 12, Morris Field Croft, Hall Green,
Birmingham, B28 0RN.

Mr. Bevan is responsible for REGIONAL NOTES, Mr. Barfield for all other material. To ensure inclusion in the next issue (to be published in July) all material must be in the hands of the appropriate Editor by MONDAY 17th MAY.

RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

Vice-Presidents:

John Ariott, Sir John Betjeman, Dr A.W.T. Daniel, Sir James Farquharson, Lord Gainford, S.C. Hawtrey, Very Rev. J.H.S. Wild.

Chairman:

R.V. Banks, "Savernake", 121 Ashford Road, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent.

General Secretary:

R.J.P. Townand, St. Julians, Sevenoaks, Kent.

Membership Secretary:

H.G.M. Rogers, 64 Cowper Road, London W7.

Hon. Treasurer:

A.R. Macqueen.

Hon. Auditor:

A.J.C. Read, F.C.I.S.

Circulation Manager:

To whom any advice of non-receipt etc. of R.D.N. should be sent:

G.L. Collett, 62 Glanville Road, Bromley, Kent BR2 9LW

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:

Ordinary Members:	£4.00	Corporate Members:	£5.00
Members under 18		Local Authorities:	£5.00
or over 65	£2.00	Parish Councils &	
Registered Students		Voluntary Bodies	£4.00
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.