

RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY

Hon. Chairman :-

M. P. L. CATON, PH.D., 10 GROSVENOR GARDENS, UPMINSTER, ESSEX.
(TELEPHONE : UPMINSTER 5991)

Vice-Presidents :-

JOHN BETZEMAN, ESQ., C.B.E. LORD KINROSS
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PROGRESS REPORT NUMBER 70.

FEBRUARY 1967.

1967 - YEAR OF ACTION?

✓✗ During the past year there have been signs of welcome changes in official transport policy. The White Paper published last July showed that it is the intention to establish an integrated transport system in which the railways would play a larger role than envisaged under the 1962 Transport Act and the recent appointment of regional committees to promote transport co-ordination is a further step in the right direction. However, closures and rumours of more closures - some very serious - are still with us, despite the fact that it has not been shown that these would produce any real overall saving to the taxpayer. Indeed, as far as the railways are concerned, one may sometimes be forgiven for wondering if Marples and Beeching are still in command. ✗

Planning, understandably, takes time but is of no use unless followed by action - will this come about in 1967? ✗ A new Transport Act is expected shortly. We urge the Government to take this opportunity to end the tragic consequences of the 1962 Act, with its inevitable destruction of the greater part of our railway system and at the same time to give the Minister the necessary powers to reopen, where necessary, lines already closed. ✗

MINISTRY POST-CLOSURE SURVEY.

✓✗ In May 1965, Lord Lindgren, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Transport, announced in the House of Lords that the Ministry was to undertake sample surveys to test the effect on travellers of rail closures. The analysis of these were not expected to be available until early in 1966 but, when by last October, nothing had appeared on the subject, the Society took up the matter with the Minister. We were informed that no decision had been taken on publication but it was anticipated that an announcement would be made later in the year. However, nothing has yet appeared as far as we are aware and we have written again to the Minister urging early publication. This is a matter calling for urgent attention, as the considerable hardship shown by our own post-closure surveys has so clearly revealed. ✗

WITHDRAWAL OF REPLACEMENT BUS SERVICES.

On many occasions this Society has received complaints of the curtailment of replacement bus services which had been put into operation after rail closures. Such withdrawals must be approved by the Minister of Transport but this has normally been done without reference to the Transport Users Consultative Committee, which originally recommended their introduction. The recently published 1966 Annual Report of the Central Transport Consultative Committee states that Area T.U.C.C.s will now be advised, through the C.T.C.C., of such variations in the consent to closure.

May we recommend, therefore, that details of hardship arising from such curtailments should be brought to the notice of the appropriate T.U.C.C. as well as the Minister. Indeed, we strongly recommend that similar action should be taken with regard to all hardship arising from closures.

RUNNING DOWN OF SERVICES.

✓~~x~~ Whether deliberate or otherwise, the running down of rail services involving reduction in frequency has so often been a prelude to complete closure. British Rail has received criticism for such running down in the 1966 Annual Report to the Minister of the T.U.C.C. for Wales in connection with recent curtailments in Welsh rail services.

It is heartening to find such action being taken, especially as this problem is becoming increasingly serious. May we remind our readers that T.U.C.C.s are empowered to consider representations on such quality of service matters, which should be brought to their notice. However, such matters should first be taken up with the railways and then the T.U.C.C. informed only if satisfaction is not so obtained. ~~x~~

TRANSPORT POLICY IN BRITAIN

✓~~x~~ The Society's Memorandum 'Transport Policy in Britain' containing our detailed comments on the 1966 Transport White Paper has now been published and copies sent to all M.P.s and to a large number of other interested individuals and organisations. Copies are available on request from the General Secretary, 66, Ewhurst Road, London, S.E.4., on receipt of a stamped addressed foolscap envelope. ~~x~~

RAILWAY FARES.

✓~~x~~ The Society's National Committee recently held a special meeting to discuss the general question of railway fares.

A working document has been prepared and we hope soon to prepare a memorandum on this important subject. We thank those members who sent in their ideas and views. X

SUBSCRIPTIONS.

May we remind those members who have not yet renewed their subscriptions to the Society for 1967 that the Membership Secretary (59, Dore Road, Dore, Sheffield) will be glad to receive their remittance as soon as possible. We sincerely hope that all our members will continue to give us their most valued support.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

Details of the 1967 Annual General Meeting of the Society, to be held at Caxton Hall, Westminster, London, on Saturday April 22nd at 2.45 p.m. are enclosed to members with this report. May we appeal to members to give us their support on this important occasion.

OBITUARY.

Mr. L.J. Roll.

We are very sorry to report the death of Mr. L.J. Roll, our East Midlands and Norfolk representative. A loyal supporter of the Society for very many years, Mr. Roll worked devotedly for the retention and improvement of railways in his area. He played a leading part in the opposition to the Midland and Great Northern line closure and in 1959 was spokesman for a deputation from North Norfolk to the Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Transport, to complain about the manner in which the hearing of the case for that closure was conducted. More recently he has done much work in connection with the Leicester-Peterborough and associated lines.

Mr. E.F. Truswell.

We also much regret to report the death of Mr. E.F. Truswell, our former Birmingham area representative who has been an untiring supporter of our work in the West Midlands. He undertook much valuable work in connection with the proposal to close the Birmingham - Redditch line, which was ultimately reprieved, and more recently has played an important part in the campaign against the closure of Birmingham Snow Hill Station.

REPORTS FROM BRANCHES AND AREA REPRESENTATIVES.

(Edited by Mr. L.G. Hipperson, 21, Ullet Road, Sefton Park, Liverpool 17. Telephone Sefton Park 3446).

Readers who wish for more information about particular items should write to the appropriate representatives.

East Suffolk/East Norfolk Branch.

Branch Secretary: Mr. B.R.A. Cooper, 1, St. Paul's Close, Aldeburgh, Suffolk.

The conductor guard system, which is now operating on the Lowestoft-Yarmouth and Ipswich-Felixstowe lines, will not be in force on the East Suffolk line until 6th March, but the new reduced fares are now current. From 6th March, conductor-guards will be introduced on the Norwich-Yarmouth and Norwich-Lowestoft lines.

As an addition to the special 'bus service Aldeburgh-Saxmundham which has been running since the closure of the branch line, the Society has arranged that the 'bus to connect with the through London train runs direct to Saxmundham station approach.

Three Counties Branch (Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire).

Branch Secretary: Mr. N.G. Gobey, 430, High Street, Cheltenham, Glos.

Moreton-in-Marsh Parish Council are very concerned about the proposal by Western Region to replace the 8.14 a.m. Moreton-Paddington train by one leaving at 7.43 a.m., due to come into operation in March. It is considered that this train would be very inconvenient to people from villages in the area who have found the 8.14 very suitable for travel to London. A letter of protest has been sent to British Rail by the Council.

✓
✗ The rebuilding of Cheltenham Lansdown station (announced in our Progress Report No.67, page 2) has been "axed" under a new economy drive. ✗

We congratulate Mr. W.H. Parker, Chairman of the Branch, who was awarded the M.B.E. in the Birthday Honours, 1966.

South-Eastern England.

Area Representative: Mr. C.A. Rylands, 3, Priory Court,
Mountfield Road, Lewes, Sussex.

✓ X Passenger services on the East Grinstead-Tunbridge Wells and East Grinstead-Three Bridges lines were withdrawn from 2nd January. On the New Romney branch, however, which was due to lose its passenger trains at the same time, a reprieve has been granted for a few months, owing to difficulties which have arisen in the granting of licences for replacement 'buses.

STOP PRESS: New closure date is 6th March. X

Isle of Wight.

Area Representative: Mr. R.E. Burroughs, 3, Spring Hill,
Ventnor, I.O.W.

✓ X A Ventnor councillor has conducted a survey into the effect of the Shanklin-Ventnor rail closure on businesses in Ventnor and states that there is an average drop in trade of 25%. The loss of trade to Hoteliers varied from £400 to £700. At his own establishment his season had not started until the third week in June, and, for the first time since he had been in the town, he had no visitors in September. At the peak holiday period he had only two "casual" visitors. X

✓ X The I.O.W. County Council, which is negotiating with British Rail for the purchase of the Shanklin-Ventnor and Ryde-Cowes lines, has asked them to quote "a sensible price". The figure originally asked for the Shanklin-Ventnor line is said to be astronomically high. If the County Council succeeds in purchasing these lines, it is planned to lease them to the Vectrail Society which will re-open them, using modern diesel-cars. X

Somerset, Dorset and Western Hampshire.

Area Representative: Rev. W.M. Andrew, 30, Richmond Wood Rd.
Bournemouth, Hampshire.

Somerset and Dorset line.

✓ X Recent events must surely portend the end of what remains of the line. When the line was closed to passenger traffic, the section from Bournemouth to Blandford was retained for freight and parcels. British Rail have now informed the staff that it is proposed to close down the parcels department and goods shed at Blandford, 11 of the 12 members of the staff being made redundant or offered jobs elsewhere, one man only remaining on duty at Blandford station. The goods yard is to remain open only for "station to station" traffic and this in spite of the fact that a fleet of four vehicles has

been employed in a daily delivery over a ten mile radius. It is difficult to believe that this arrangement can last long and it is anticipated that, as soon as British Rail can get rid of their contracts with Blandford merchants and the milk traffic at Bailey Gate, the line will be completely closed.

Our National Committee member, Dr. Henson, reports that the track is being lifted at Highbridge and she has sent a telegram to the Minister. Sir Richard Glyn, M.P., has promised to raise the matter with the Minister.

As a result of the initiative of our member Mrs. Ruth Colyer, "The Sun" dated 19th December 1966, carried a special article in which a number of the villagers of Shillingstone were interviewed on their hardships and difficulties. X

Waterloo-Bournemouth. The electrification of this line is due for completion in July. A trial run has already been made by officials as far as Eastleigh and the third rail is now "live" beyond this point. In the meantime, bitter complaints are being made about the condition of the trains, lack of heating and lateness. At a meeting of Dorset M.Ps with the General Manager, British Rail, the M.P. for South Dorset, Mr. Evelyn King, said he had a file of complaints too thick to read. Diesels are steadily ousting steam from this, its last stronghold. X

Devon and Cornwall.

Area Representative: Mr. A.E. Wilkinson, "Upwey" Beach Road, Westward Ho!, Bideford, Devon.

At a recent meeting of the Road Safety and Traffic Committee of Devon County Council, the Chairman said that it was essential that the Railway Board should not remain in isolation but should make some contribution towards the transport problems of the region. As a result of rail cuts in Devon, road improvements for replacement 'buses would cost £213, 000, of which ratepayers would have to pay £121,000.

Against T.U.C.C. recommendation, the Bodmin Road-Wadebridge-Padstow line closed on 28th January; also the short length between Bodmin North and Boscarne Junction. The Bodmin-Wadebridge section was the oldest passenger railway in the West Country. Part of the line will remain open for goods traffic.

The Sidmouth Junction-Sidmouth and Tipton St. John's-Exmouth lines will probably close in March; while the Okehampton-Bere Alston line is expected to close at the end of the summer. X

About 100 men are expected to become redundant as a result of the proposed closure of Exmouth Junction locomotive depot in March. There have been strong criticisms of Western Region management, railwaymen alleging that business is being deliberately turned away.

Shropshire.

Area Representative: Mr. A.R. Jackson, 38, Essex Road,
Church Stretton, Shropshire.

Thanks to the efforts of a borough councillor, a West of England-Manchester express is now stopping at Ludlow, thus giving this town a mid-morning train to Shrewsbury. British Rail's original rationalisation proposals for the Shrewsbury-Hereford passenger service would have left Ludlow (pop. about 7,000) with no train to Shrewsbury between 7.37 a.m. and the early afternoon. Ultimately, British Rail plan to reduce Craven Arms, Ludlow and Leominster stations, all on this line, to the status of unstaffed halts.

Birmingham and the Black Country.

Area Representative: Mr. D. Richmond, 26, Colebrook Road,
Shirley, Solihull, Warwickshire.

✗ The West Midland T.U.C.C. has reported cases of hardship on two suburban lines: Birmingham-Stratford via Henley and Birmingham-Wolverhampton (ex-GWR). These lines are vital all-day services that need development, not running down. The Railway Development Association has put forward a plan for a rapid transit system in the area, which would mean the retention of the line through Snow Hill but with reduced track layout. Mr. A. Faulds, M.P. for Smethwick, is expected to raise the question of a rapid transit system and the retention of the Snow Hill tunnel in the House of Commons. ✗

Criticism of the withdrawal of Sunday rail services from Stratford-upon-Avon has been made in the House of Lords recently. Lord Snow said that the town was in a unique position among major tourist centres in the world. Stratford has already lost its through services to London, the West of England and South Wales and the services to Gloucester, Worcester and Evesham may also be threatened. Many of the local trains terminate at Hatton, so that passengers for London have to change at Hatton and Leamington.

East Midlands and Norfolk (North and West)

Area Representative: As a result of the death of Mr. Roll (see separate notice) this area is now vacant.

✓✗ We are pleased to report that Mr. Roll was more successful than he had hoped in pressing for an additional Saturdays only service between Stamford and Peterborough. The new timetable (commencing 6th March) shows an extra early afternoon train in each direction between these two places on Wednesdays as well as on Saturdays. ✗

Conductor-guards have been working on the Cromer branch from 2nd January and they are due to commence work on the Norwich-Cambridge (via Ely) and Cambridge-St. Ives lines from 6th March.

Merseyside, Wirral and West Lancashire.

Area Representative: Mr. F. Byrne, 164, Park Road, Formby, Liverpool.

✓✗ The T.U.C.C. hearing into the proposed closure to passenger traffic on the Ormskirk-Preston section of the Liverpool Exchange-Preston line was held on 12th January and the Society was represented by Mr. Byrne. The Liverpool Exchange-Ormskirk service was reprieved by the Minister in April of last year, but its future could be jeopardised by closure of the Ormskirk-Preston section. A memorandum on the Liverpool Exchange-Ormskirk-Preston service and associated topics has been prepared by the Society.

A confidential report on the Birkenhead Woodside-Chester/Helsby lines has been submitted by the T.U.C.C. to the Minister. The Society has issued a memorandum about these lines. ✗

The Birkenhead Woodside-Paddington service is to be "axed" on 5th March and a new Chester-Shrewsbury-Wolverhampton DMU service substituted.

The Mickle Trafford-Chester Northgate section of the Cheshire lines has been added to the Reshaping Plan. Northgate is used by New Brighton, Wrexham Central and Manchester Central trains, although the first two services await the Minister's decision as to their future.

Through Liverpool-Shrewsbury-Birmingham Snow Hill-Southampton trains on the "Pines Express" run are to end on 5th March. Connections will be available at Birmingham New Street to Southampton from the new Liverpool-Birmingham electric service which is to start on the following day. There will be a choice of three connecting services in lieu of the one

through train as at present. The Area Representative has written to British Rail's Divisional Manager on these two cuts.

A visit to Liverpool was made by the Minister on 13th January for talks on public transport co-ordination.

The 'bus/Train service between Kirkby and Liverpool Exchange via Aintree station (introduced on 12th December 1966) has not proved successful; and British Rail and the city's Transport Department have agreed that it should cease. There have been suggestions that the service should be replaced by direct trains from Kirkby station, fed by a 'bus service round the town.

The Liverpool Lime Street-Southport DMU service has been retained after its six months trial which ended last December.

✓ x A memorandum on public transport in Bootle is in course of preparation by the Society. x

North-Eastern England (Northumberland, County Durham and the North Riding of Yorkshire).

Area Representative: Mr. R.K. Mains, 114, Manor House Road, Jesmond, Newcastle-on-Tyne 2.

Unfortunately, the Minister has approved the closure of Ferryhill station, and the closure date has been fixed as 6th March. From the same day, Monkwearmouth station will also be closed.

Elswick, Fourstones, Greenhead, Gilsland, Heads Nook and Wetheral stations (all on the Newcastle-Carlisle line) were closed from 2nd January. Scotswood station will also be closed immediately important engineering operations between there and Blaydon station are completed. In the meantime, a connecting road service is operating between the two stations to link with trains from Newcastle to Hexham and Carlisle via North Wylam.

✓ x British Rail are intending to replace the North Tyneside electric train services with DMUs. Under the same plan, British Rail say that stopping services, which at present run at 20 minute intervals during the day, will be reduced to 30 minute intervals and an express service is proposed. The latter will serve only Newcastle, Manors, Wallsend and the stations between North Shields and West Monkseaton. This would mean that services at the remainder of the stations would be reduced during the day by more than 30%. Opposition to the proposed reductions is growing. x

Cumberland-Westmorland and the East and West Ridings of Yorkshire
(Areas for which the North-Eastern Area Representative has special responsibilities).

The T.U.C.C. has reported to the Minister that the proposal to close certain stations on the Sheffield Midland-Leeds City line would cause various degrees of hardship.

The proposed closure of Batley, Ravensthorpe and Morley Low (Leeds City-Huddersfield line) has been published. Also announced is the proposed closure of Stanningley station (Bradford Exchange-Leeds Central line), which British Rail plan to replace by a new station at New Pudsey.

Train services between Wakefield Kirkgate and Pontefract Monkhill were withdrawn from 2nd January.

✓ In his report to the Minister on the effects of the closure since March 1965 of the Whitby-Scarborough and Whitby-Malton lines, Mr. J. Morris, M.P., Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Ministry, has recommended no change in the existing post-closure arrangements. This is disappointing news for many sections of the community in the Whitby area. ✗

An official British Rail announcement is shortly expected as to the proposed closure of Staveley and Burnside stations (Windermere-Oxenholme line) and of Kents Bank, Arnside and Silverdale stations (Carnforth-Barrow-in-Furness line) and the modification of the Carnforth-Windermere/Barrow-in-Furness local train services.

In connection with the proposed closure of Milnthorpe, Shap and Tebay stations (Carnforth-Penrith line), the T.U.C.C. has reported to the Minister that closure of Tebay would cause severe hardship.

Wales.

Mid.

Area Representative: Mr. J.R.M. Moore, Llanfair Isaf, Harlech, Merioneth.

Work is proceeding on the removal of redundant passing loops and closure of signal boxes between Welshpool and Mahcynlleth. Between these two towns loops remain only at Montgomery, Newtown, Caersws, Talerddig and Cemmaes Road.

✓
✗ It was reported on the radio on 9th December that the Minister had given consent to the removal of the track, stations, etc., between Llangollen and Morfa Mawddach on the Ruabon-Barmouth line. On the 16th December the Press reported that it was understood that the transport panel of the Welsh Economic Planning Council had recommended to the Minister that the line should not be dismantled and that the panel are strongly in favour of retaining the line as a vital lateral link in the communication system of mid-Wales. It seems that the Minister did not wait for the Economic Planning Council's recommendations before consenting to the removal of the track, etc., which seems most unreasonable. However, the Area Representative understands that the Minister has refused to allow the removal of the track foundations.

The Area Representative spoke on 20th January to the M.P. for Merioneth, Mr. William Edwards, who said that none of the track between Llangollen and Morfa Mawddach had yet been lifted. Mr. Edwards said it was the responsibility of British Rail to decide what they wanted to do with the track and Mrs. Castle was about to ask them for their plans for the Ruabon-Barmouth line. She also wanted British Rail to tell her if and when they intended to re-open the line. This possibility was not ruled out by Mr. Edwards! ✗

On 21st January the Press reported that, with the Minister's approval, British Rail had decided to sell the track and land on the 21½ mile Aberystwyth-Pont Llanio section of the Carmarthen-Aberystwyth line.

North.

Area Representative: Mr. L.G. Hipperson, 21, Ullet Road,
Sefton Park, Liverpool 17.

✓
✗ The Minister has told British Rail that it may dispose of the track, equipment and station buildings on the Afonwen-Caernarvon line (closed only two years ago). ✗

Our corporate member Prestatyn U.D.C. is seeking the support of other local authorities in North Wales in a campaign to improve railway services in the area.

Scotland.

North.

Area Representative: Mr. F.G. Thompson, 17, Viewfield Road,
Culcabock, Inverness.

As in winters before, the ability of the railways to "get through" has been proved again this winter. Snow and deep drifts which blocked roadways were difficult and expensive to clear, and then there was only one-way traffic!

That the train as a means of communication for passengers, mail, freight and so on is invaluable in this area is without question. Yet British Rail seem to be moving in the direction of more closures. This time it is the Mallaig line which is threatened. Local fish interests are worried about the possible run-down of the rail service there. Dialogues are continuing.

With a flourish, British Rail introduced the Inverness-Aviemore service to the Cairngorm ski area. But the service has not been so well patronised as was hoped. This is a pity, for Highland Lines management are sincerely trying to improve the rail service. In November there was announced a "new deal" with savings of up to £2 and about an hour in time. From 7th November cheap day return tickets were introduced from Inverness/Edinburgh, Inverness/Glasgow. The trains were speeded up to give ticket-holders more time in these cities.

PROGRESS REPORTS.

We hope members like the new format of these reports which we have been able to introduce as a result of employing the lithographic process. This issue is experimental and the Editor will be interested to receive members' comments.

It has been decided at the same time to reduce the frequency of issue from 6 per year to 4. This has been done partly to relieve pressure on the Society's members who can thus divert more time to furthering our aims and objectives. Also, with the slowing down of closures, the need to provide frequent bulletins of such developments at national level has diminished. However, we hope to inform members of local news through the issue of local newsletters wherever area representatives are able to arrange for their production.

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Dore, Sheffield.

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Please reply to :-

TRANSPORT POLICY IN BRITAIN

Statement on the Government White Paper

The Railway Invigoration Society welcomes the White Paper, published by the Ministry of Transport in July 1966 as being the most enlightened and forward-looking official statement on transport policy which has appeared for many years. It recognises, not before time, that all forms of transport must be considered and planned together. In the absence of such an overall plan, reports such as "The Reshaping of British Railways" which attempted to solve the problems of one form of transport in isolation, were bound to lead to unsatisfactory and, in the end, unacceptable conclusions.

The White Paper recognises at the outset the enormous problems arising out of the mass production of the motor car, and the threat to our environment if use of motor vehicles continues to grow unchecked. The construction of new and improved roads has severe limitations as a solution to these problems, not the least of which is that such improvements tend to generate more traffic until they themselves are inadequate calling for still more roads. A policy based on unlimited provision for the private motor vehicle can thus only end in the swallowing up of huge tracts of town and countryside and the destruction of the rural and urban landscape as we know it. For this reason alone there must sooner or later be restriction of the use of motor vehicles.

Even this line of reasoning, however, assumes that the private motor car is always the form of transport to be preferred, with other forms of transport only to be used as second-best, and that the primary aim of a transport policy should be to provide for its maximum use, leaving public transport to fill the gaps. It is too often

forgotten not only that there will always be a substantial proportion of the population who cannot drive, are unable to afford or do not wish to own cars, but that the motor vehicle is not a universal mode of transport suitable for all purposes. Like the train, plane and ship, it has jobs it is better able to do than others. The key to the problems of mass car ownership must be, therefore, in increasing concentration of the use of cars only for those specialised purposes for which they are best suited and, in turn, the increasing use of public transport for the functions it can best perform.

The object of planning should, therefore, be to provide for and encourage a more balanced outlook on transport consistent with a reasonable degree of choice.

It is well known that few motorists regard public road transport as an acceptable alternative to the private car whereas they are much more inclined to forsake their cars for rail travel for all or part of a journey. Unless a comprehensive railway system is maintained and developed, therefore, such an alternative cannot be adequately provided, and the announcement in the White Paper that a much larger network than hitherto will be retained is thus most welcome news. The object of this memorandum is to comment on and make proposals on some of the more important points in the White Paper as they affect the future role of railways in the national transport system.

The True Costs of Road and Rail Transport.

In two particularly important respects the White Paper represents an advance on previous policy. It is at last accepted that there are some rail services which, though they do not pay their way, as required by the 1962 Act, should nonetheless be retained on social grounds. At the same time, the Ministry is stated to be carrying out research into the relative costs of carrying goods by road and rail.

The White Paper, however, fails to draw the connection between these statements. It seems probable that if the true costs of road and rail transport were ascertained, it would be shown that many rail services that now, on paper, run at a loss are, in fact, providing a service that is more efficient than the road transport which would have taken its place were the service to be withdrawn.

Thus the retention of some lines might be justified not only on social grounds, such as hardship to users, but from economic considerations as well.

The present researches of the Ministry, outlined in the White Paper, on costs, do not go nearly far enough, however, since they are confined to trunk freight transport. Moreover, only track costs are considered, whereas such an investigation should cover many other matters. During recent years extensive efforts have been made by the Railways Board to cost operations on the railways, but this has not been done for the roads. Such a costing of the roads, on the same basis, i.e. so that users would pay the costs to which they give rise, would include policing, accident and congestion costs and should extend to all transport, local and long distance, passenger and freight.

Merely to know the true costs of the alternative forms of transport, however, will do little to restore the balance between road and rail, or indeed between public and private transport. It is essential that, as a basic requirement, each transport user should pay the true costs to which he gives rise, not merely as a class of user, but as an individual. This will require a radical overhaul of the whole system of road vehicle licensing and taxation.

Under the present system, a motorist pays the greater part of his costs in standing charges including the initial capital outlay on the vehicle, ~~licence~~ licence fee and insurance and his marginal cost, chiefly petrol, is relatively low, often below that of his fare by public transport. Thus not only are large numbers of motorists who use their cars only occasionally paying for roads used by a small number of high mileage users, but the motorist is encouraged to use his car on every possible occasion - indeed having paid for it he often cannot afford not to - resulting in the end in traffic congestion which is self defeating. The same considerations apply to road freight operators. It is therefore clear that the investigation of transport costs must be followed up by a 'pay as you go' pricing system, possibly a combination of the existing fuel tax and some form of congestion tax in urban areas.

Payment of Subsidies.

The proposal in the White Paper that socially necessary railway lines which are uneconomic should be subsidised is also a welcome development. Contrary to what has been expressed in some quarters, this would in no way give British Rail an unfair advantage over its competitors. On the contrary, so far as subsidies are concerned, the railways are at present the exception since both road transport and internal air services are heavily supported from both national and local funds. Local authorities should therefore be given immediately full powers to spend money to retain and improve local rail passenger services.

It must be stressed, however, that public funds should not be used indefinitely to underwrite losses on any form of transport just because it is unable to balance its accounts. As explained in the last section of this memorandum, it should be a basic requirement that all transport users should pay the costs to which they give rise. Subsidies should only be paid for specific purposes, for example, to improve transport services in a development area, or to support essential services which would otherwise be unable to continue and when this is done, the relative merits of all forms of transport should be looked into objectively to determine which can best fill the role required.

It must be emphasised that the authority paying the subsidy should have full access to the accounts connected with the ~~service~~ concerned so that they can be reasonably satisfied that the most economical methods of operation are being used consistent with safety and an acceptable level of service. Local authorities will be reluctant to offer a subsidy to retain a rail service if, as has often been the case in the past, there is suspicion that an exaggerated picture of the losses on the line concerned has been presented by the Railways Board to justify a proposed closure.

A Halt to ALL Rail Closures.

Although the White Paper envisages a much larger railway system than under the previous policy, it is still proposed to withdraw passenger services from approximately another 400 route miles. Until the transport cost studies advocated in this memorandum have been completed, however, it will not be known whether these closures will produce an overall saving to the nation and it is therefore proposed that they should be suspended at least until such studies have been completed.

In this connection, attention must also be drawn to two other financial matters which have been neglected or ignored in recent years when closure cases have been considered - the possibility of operating the lines concerned by cheaper methods (that such measures are now, belatedly, being introduced in some areas is proof that this can be done) and need to allow for the effect of closures on traffic and hence revenue, on the rest of the railway system. A recent survey * undertaken by this Society revealed that over 70% of former users of a rail service now used other railways much less frequently since their local line had been closed.

It is a matter of deep concern that such vital considerations have been neglected for so long, a state of affairs which is made all the worse by the persistent refusal to introduce legislation to permit objectors to make representations on closure economics at Transport User's Consultative Committee hearings. On the Romford to Upminster line, for example, allowance for cheaper operation and loss of contributory revenue together with the cost of subsidising replacement road services would have completely eliminated the railways' proposed saving of £13,900. The fact that this line was ultimately reprivatised on hardship grounds does not affect the issue that this closure should have been regarded as a non-starter for financial reasons alone.

There are other important reasons why closures should be suspended, not the least of which is that most, if not all, remaining lines have a social importance sufficient to justify their retention at least for the time being. Moreover, it would be wrong to bring about further closures before proper attention has been given to the social problems arising out of those which have already taken place. In this Society's survey *, for example, a considerable amount of hardship was revealed amongst former rail users who found the alternative road services to be slower than the railways, often overcrowded and frequently late due to traffic conditions.

* Post closure hardship survey - Gloucester-Chalford Railcar Service; 1966; Published by the Society 1966.

It is clear from this and reports from other areas that closures have already proceeded too far and that, rather than attempt to eliminate more lines, attention should first be given to the problems arising where services have already been withdrawn. Where required, the services should be reinstated.

It is also desirable from the railway's own point of view that closures should cease. In recent years the contraction of the system cannot fail to have had a most harmful effect on the image of British Railways with the general public, giving the impression that railways are a declining industry with a limited future. The White Paper rightly calls for a period of stability on the railways but this will not be achieved if further closures are proposed. Since these must undergo the usual procedure laid down in the 1962 Transport Act before they are finally decided upon, it will be some time before such stability can be achieved.

It is proposed, therefore, that there should be no further closures for at least three years. This will give time for completion of the necessary cost studies advocated above and at the same time enable the railways to consolidate the present network and with the aid of improved services and publicity to project themselves to the public as the modern, forward looking transport system so vital to national needs.

Freight.

Whilst the proposed national freight organisation is still in the very early planning stage, the proposals in the White Paper concerning freight are in general to be welcomed. In particular, it is to be hoped that this plan will take full account of 'the container revolution' for both land and sea transport. The White Paper, however, fails to emphasise the close connection between the development of the ports for container traffic and the use of containers for rail transport. It is essential that the ports chosen for this type of traffic should be equipped to unload containers directly into rail vehicles for dispatch to inland centres if the railways are to get their full share of this traffic which is particularly suited to rail transport.

The proposal to concentrate general merchandise traffic in as few as fifty rail freight terminals also appears to be not without its dangers. It is appreciated that from the railway operating point of view, it is most economical to handle the long-distance traffic which the railways hope to attract through a relatively small number of terminals. However, this ignores the fact that freight must be brought to these terminals by road - often by routes which are already congested with local traffic. The number and siting of freight depots should therefore have particular regard to the local road system, and it might be found that, taking an overall view, it would be preferable to have railheads at more frequent intervals.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1. The announcement that the Ministry of Transport is carrying out research into the relative track costs of road and rail is to be welcomed but this does not go far enough. All costs arising out of the use of the roads should be assessed and as a basic requirement, users required to pay the costs to which they give rise on the same basis as for the railways.
2. Acceptance of the need to subsidise certain rail services is a valuable step towards bringing rail into line with road and air which already enjoy such financial support. Subsidies to transport should be paid for a specific purpose, not indefinitely ████████ to underwrite losses, and when this is done equal consideration should be given to the merits of all forms of transport for the purpose in question. Local Authorities should be given the necessary powers immediately.
3. A halt should be called to all rail closures for a period of at least three years. Meanwhile the social consequences of closures already implemented should be fully investigated and where necessary the services reinstated.

4. Consideration should be given to siting rail freight depots at more frequent intervals than at present, depending upon the condition of the local road system.

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