

RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY

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SOCIAL COST-BENEFIT STUDIES

✓ The welcome advance shown by the present Government from the 'pay or close' policy for the railways has recently seen a further important development with the decision to conduct a cost-benefit study of the Machynlleth - Pwllheli line in Central Wales. This is being carried out in order to assess the overall financial balance of keeping open a route which British Rail want to close in circumstances where abandonment would set up complex social problems. It is a pilot study which it is suggested will later be extended to other routes, although not where social necessity of retention is obvious or the rail service a serious loss maker.

The Society has on many occasions criticised the absurd policy of ignoring social costs when assessing savings from rail closures and it is gratifying to note that our views are now receiving official recognition. We plan to submit evidence to the Ministry team which is undertaking this survey.

Another significant development is the authorisation of the London Underground Victoria Line extension from Victoria to Brixton despite the fact that the new service, taken by itself, is expected to show a loss of £1 million per annum; the construction having been justified because of the relief it will bring to road congestion and to other rail routes, which is expected to outweigh the accounting loss. Since such congestion is a heavy burden in financial terms, its relief in this way, if the saving is greater than the direct operating loss on the new railway, is a course of action beyond question. ✕

SAVINGS FROM CLOSURES

Considerable publicity has been given in recent months to the £17 million per annum which

it is estimated is now being saved as a result of rail closures which have taken place since 1962. This figure not only ignores the above social costs, but, as has been admitted in reply to a question in Parliament, does not even allow for the loss of traffic (and hence revenue) to trunk routes resulting from these closures. It is considerations such as this which provide the answer to any prejudiced or ill-informed critics who advocate the restoration of the full force of the Beeching axe on the pretext that the elimination of rail losses will automatically be translated into savings to the taxpayer. The £17 million also, of course, ignores the fact that most of the lines closed if retained could have been operated for a fraction of their original deficit.

THE NEW TRANSPORT ACT

✓ x A new Transport Bill incorporating items in the 1966 Transport White Paper is expected to be published early next year. It will be preceded by a series of White Papers detailing proposals for the railways, buses and coaches, waterways and the National Freight Authority.

The Society will study these White Papers when released and we are preparing a list of items which we consider should be incorporated in the new Act, including suggested amendments of the 1962 Act, which we shall submit to the Minister. Suggestions from members are welcome and these should be sent to the General Secretary. Meanwhile we are continuing to make known as widely as possible the policies detailed in our memorandum 'Transport Policy in Britain'. Copies of this Memorandum are still available on request from the General Secretary, on receipt of a stamped addressed foolscap envelope. x

WITHDRAWAL OF THROUGH SERVICES

There has been an increasing tendency in recent years for a reduction in the number of places served on B.R. by through carriages and on many journeys change of train is now necessary where through services were originally available. This has become particularly pronounced as a result of the L.M.R. electrification where withdrawal of through trains from Central Wales and the Shrewsbury area to London has given rise to considerable public criticism.

The Society has recently taken up the matter with the B.R. Board and in reply we have been informed that this action is not a deliberate policy, but the running of trains with sections for different destinations conflicts with the Board's aim of giving the majority of customers the best possible service. The splitting of trains requires additional standby motive power and men to haul the separate sections which is uneconomical. It is the Board's aim to provide a fast efficient and regular pattern of express trains between the 200 or so main centres of population and business and to link the surrounding, less important, stations with regular feeder services.

Nevertheless, we consider that it cannot be denied that the need to change trains can be a definite inconvenience, especially to the elderly and to those with families and heavy luggage and there are a not insignificant number of people who prefer a through journey by road - however slow and uncomfortable - to one where changes of train are necessary. We do not suggest that every through facility provided in the past should necessarily be perpetuated but feel strongly that public reaction to the new policy should be carefully watched and through

facilities retained where possible.

MINISTRY POST - CLOSURE SURVEY

✕ The Ministry of Transport survey into the effects of the withdrawal of three rail services - Bradford-Huddersfield, Stranraer-Dumfries and Eridge-Hailsham - have now been completed and copies of the report may be obtained from the Ministry at St. Christopher House, Southwark Street, London, S.E.1.

Amongst the main conclusions of the surveys are the finding that most travellers making the rail journey five times a week before closure continued to undertake the same journeys by an alternative means of transport after the closure but those doing the journey only once or twice a week in many cases either ceased to make it or did so less often. Many complained that the general conditions of travel by 'bus were more tiring and crowded and less comfortable than the rail, although for the majority this was considered an inconvenience rather than hardship. No widespread hardship from increases in cost and times of journeys resulted.

The results of the surveys are claimed to be in general, consistent with the T.U.C.C.s' advice on the probable effect of the closures. This seems a fair comment. To justify the findings of the T.U.C.C. with their narrow terms of reference restricted to hardship to existing users is one thing however; to justify the closure is a totally different matter when it would be necessary to consider wider issues such as increased road congestion and social costs. Moreover, it should be noted that interviewing for the survey was undertaken only a short time before closure and hence would not include those former users who, knowing the railway was to close, had already bought cars or commenced to use some other alternative; the effects may thus be considerably underestimated.

Great care must be taken in extrapolating these findings to other cases and there is ample evidence from reports we have received, from our own surveys, and from that conducted by the 'Sun' at Shillingstone on the Somerset and Dorset line, that hardship to former users of at least some routes has been much more severe. Whatever conclusions are drawn from the Ministry surveys, they are much too limited in scope to provide evidence to decide upon further closures, particularly as almost all remaining lines have a much greater social importance than those studied. ✕

CORPORATE MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following corporate members : Jeremiah Ambler Ltd. , ; Spennymoor (Co. Durham) Urban District Council and Settle (Yorks.) Rural District Council.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON INLAND TRANSPORT: ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Mr. G.F. Fiennes, O.B.E., General Manager of BR Eastern Region, will be the guest speaker at the annual conference of the National Council on Inland Transport at Caxton Hall, Westminster, at 5.30 p.m. on 29th September. Mr. Fiennes will talk on "The concept of the

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basic railway", the scheme already operating on some parts of BR whereby operating costs have been reduced to a minimum. Visitors are welcome and we strongly recommend our readers not to miss this opportunity of hearing at first-hand of a scheme upon the success of which the future of large sections of BR may depend.

We recommend two recent publications of the NCIT :- "Transport in Great Britain to-day" by Dr. A.W.T. Daniel - which provides detailed financial evidence to show that closures do not reduce the railway deficit and examines the real reasons for BR losses - and the memorandum "Freight" which details a policy for freight traffic. These are available - price 2s. 6d. and 3d. respectively - from the NCIT, 35-37, Queensland Road, London, N. 7.

REPORTS FROM BRANCHES AND AREA REPRESENTATIVES

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

N.B. See special editorial announcement at end of this issue.

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 Branch is making strenuous efforts to get 'bus services co-ordinated with train services. This seems to be the answer to public transport problems in East Anglia.

BR carried out a survey of the East Suffolk line during the week beginning 13th August.

Norwich Town Planning Department hopes to undertake a transport survey in the autumn in the Greater Norwich area. The Department will issue questionnaires to travellers on trains and 'buses.

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

Branch Secretary : Mr. R.K. Mains, 114, Manor House Road, Jesmond,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2.

✓ With the completion of de-electrification on the North Tyneside lines on 17th June, services have continued to deteriorate and the Branch is pressing for various improvements. It is expected that a land use and transport survey on Tyneside is shortly to be undertaken and it is hoped that the results will strengthen the Branches case for railway development in the area.

The negotiations between BR and local authorities regarding the possible re-opening of the Whitby-Malton/Scarborough and Northallerton-Harrogate lines have failed. The Branch believes that BR were far too unreasonable with their financial demands and that these lines could easily be re-opened on a commercial basis. Our member Mr. J. Randall, of Porters Headland, Pickering, Yorkshire, has formed an organisation which hopes to operate regular services on the Whitby-Malton line and would be glad to hear from interested persons.

The Branch's latest report, issued in July, deals, in greater detail, with the large amount of work recently done by the Branch and is available, price one shilling (excluding postage) from the Secretary (address as above) ✕

Areas for which the North-Eastern Branch has special responsibilities

Cumberland, Westmorland and North Lancashire. Official proposals, involving the reduction of the Preston-Barrow/Windermere services and the closure of certain intermediate stations, are being opposed by the Branch, which has issued a press statement and has written to the local authorities. Sunday services have been withdrawn on the Keswick and Windermere lines at various stations between Carnforth and Barrow and the Branch is pressing for the restoration of the services.

East and West Ridings of Yorkshire The Branch has received a report from the Hornsea Railway Restoration Committee about the disastrous social and economic effects of the closure of the Hull-Hornsea line and the Branch is making representations in favour of re-opening the line.

The Branch has issued a press statement and has written to the local authorities regarding the need to retain and develop services on the York-Sowerby Bridge-Manchester main line and at Brighouse and Horbury stations, which have been recently added to the Beeching Report closure lists.

The proposed closure of Castleford Cutsyke station has been announced, but the Branch is not opposing this, as it is intended to divert Leeds-Goole trains via Castleford, a better-situated station.

(Stop press The Minister has consented to the withdrawal of local passenger trains between Leeds City and Sheffield Midland via Cudworth and to the closure of certain intermediate stations. Ed.)

Three Counties Branch (Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire)

Branch Secretary : Mr. N.G. Gobey.

Until further notice, all communications to the Branch should continue to be addressed to its chairman, Mr. W.H. Parker, M.B.E., Well Meadow, Pontshill, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire.

No report for inclusion in this issue has been received from the Branch, but the following happenings in its area have been noted :-

Closure of Badminton station (Swindon-Newport line) has been proposed by BR (nominal date : 3rd October).

All stations between Redditch and Birmingham and from Montpelier to Severn Beach inclusive are now unstaffed halts. Extra trains were introduced on the Redditch line from 3rd July for a trial period of six months.

London Passenger Transport Area

Area Representative : Mr. P.H. Bailey, 17, Chadbury Court,
Watford Way, London, N.W.7.

At a recent meeting of the Kentish Town-Barking Line Committee, the Society was represented by our Area Representative. The Committee decided to press for better connections at Kentish Town for commuters. It was noted with regret that the railway management had definitely decided that there would be no through trains to the City. This decision was hastened by the accident at Kentish Town some months ago.

South-Eastern England

Area Representatives: (Kent) Mr. R.V. Banks, 121, Ashford Road,
Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent.

(Sussex) Mr. C.A. Rylands, 3, Priory Court,
Mountfield Road, Lewes, Sussex.

Mr. Banks reports :-

✓✗ Following the public enquiry at Tunbridge Wells on 26th-28th April into the proposed closure of the Hurst Green-Lewes-Tunbridge Wells lines, the TUCC for the South-Eastern Area has issued a press statement on their report to the Minister. Having given details of the hardship which would be caused if the lines were closed, the statement ends: "In conclusion, the Committee considered that these hardships could not be alleviated other than by retaining the lines proposed to be closed. They felt that this arises not from lack of alternative 'bus services, existing and proposed, but from the inherent advantages of the railway to those using it and they, therefore, had no proposals to make for additional 'bus services to alleviate hardship". ✗

✓✗ The public hearing into the proposal to close the Hastings (Ore)-Ashford line is fixed for Wednesday, 6th September, continuing the next day if necessary. Although not on the massive scale of the recent Tunbridge Wells hearing, very strong opposition is certain from all the local authorities affected. Counsel are being briefed. The Railway Invigoration Society will be represented at the hearing. ✗

Other news from the South-East includes :-

St. Leonards West Marina station closed from 10th July.

East Sussex County Council are investigating the possibility of the re-opening of the Three Bridges-Tunbridge Wells line by a private company.

Isle of Wight

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

✓✗ It is believed that an offer is being made by Southern Region, BR, to electrify and re-open the Shanklin-Ventnor line, providing the local council will pay the cost of a booster station for the electricity supply. Unfortunately, certain sections of those in authority have their eyes on a £100,000 grant for road improvements which was promised when the Shanklin-Ventnor line was closed. The total cost of electrifying this four-miles line would only be £80,000. It is, therefore, ridiculous to spend £20,000 more of public money on road widening which will do nothing to bring back holiday visitors lost to Ventnor due to rail closure. Efforts are being made to encourage those engaged in the holiday trade and suffering from the effects of rail closure to bring pressure to bear on local councillors, with the aim of making them favourable to the re-opening of the line. ✗

Somerset, Dorset and Western Hampshire

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

✓✗ The Minister has refused consent to the withdrawal of passenger services on the Bridport-Maiden Newton line. ✗

The lifting of track on the Somerset and Dorset line continues. Suggestions that sale of part of the site of the line is contemplated has caused a storm of protest.

Closure of further stations on the Salisbury-Exeter line are in course of being implemented and there continue to be bitter complaints of the "service" on this line.

The inauguration of the full electrification of the Waterloo-Bournemouth line took place on 10th July and led at once to chaos, with trains up to 50 minutes late and some cancellations. Late trains continue to be a feature of the line up to the date of this report and few believe the present time-table can be kept. Few, if any, who have used the service would accept the claim of BR that the coaching stock is superior to the old Bournemouth Belle.

✓✗ It will be remembered that the Swanage branch is shown as a "grey" line (with the exception of a small portion retained for commercial use.) Early in the year, BR spent something like £1,000 in renewing the signal rods at Swanage, but in June the whole of the signalling apparatus was dismantled and most of the staff at Swanage given notice. A protest that this was the busiest time of the year caused the notices to be suspended, but those concerned were informed that their services would not be required after the summer season. The new timetable posted up at Bournemouth station shows the service to Corfe Castle and Swanage as being in connection with Southern National Omnibus and it would seem clear that notice of closure is on the way. In the meantime, there are the usual complaints of the branch line trains leaving a few minutes before

the arrival of the main line trains and, further, that the two-coach DMU in use on the branch is totally inadequate for dealing with the traffic at peak hours. ✕

Devon and Cornwall

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

In a further effort to make the Exeter-Exmouth branch more economical, WR propose to extend the conductor-guard system and to modify signalling and rolling stock movements, without actually cutting any services.

It is understood that single line working is now in force on part of the Salisbury-Exeter line in an effort to reduce running costs. The parcels office at Exeter Central is closing and customers will now have to use the less-convenient one at Exeter St. David's

As from October, there will be no more rail-borne coal to north Devon. Apart from sea-borne coal, all supplies will be delivered by road from the new coal-concentration depot at Exmouth Junction. It has even been hinted that this depot may eventually supply the whole area to the west of it, including Plymouth and Cornwall! This would involve long hauls over particularly busy roads and it is to be hoped that nothing quite so drastic will take place.

Shropshire

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

The following stations have been converted to unstaffed halts:- Craven Arms, Ludlow and Leominster from 22nd May; Church Stretton from 3rd July.

East Midlands and Norfolk (North and West)

(vacant)

The Society continues to take a keen interest in railway matters in this area.

Dr. M.P.L. Caton, our chairman, has kindly supplied the following report :-

✕ A careful watch is being kept on the future of the King's Lynn-Hunstanton and Norwich-Sheringham lines, both of which carry heavy traffic and yet are shown "grey" on the BR map. We are in correspondence with local authorities and interested individuals in these areas. Both lines are now being operated on the basic-railway principle and the degree of success of this will no doubt determine the Board's decision whether to publish closure proposals. Such proposals have already been published for the March-Wisbech line and to close Wisbech East station (nominal date: 11th September) and the proposed closure to passengers of the King's Lynn-Wisbech has previously been announced. The strength of the feeling against further

Closures in Eastern England was made clear at a conference at Wisbech of over 40 local authorities, where a united protest to the Minister was lodged calling for all closures to be deferred until a report of transport facilities in Eastern England had been received from the appropriate regional economic planning councils. X

Merseyside, Wirral and West Lancashire

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

X The Minister has agreed that Woodside station, Birkenhead, should be closed. But consent has not been given to the proposed withdrawal of passenger services between Stanlow and Thornton and Helsby and to the proposed closure of Spital, Ince and Elton and Helsby stations and Upton-by-Chester halt.

The Warrington Central avoiding line closed to passenger traffic from 3rd July; no objections had been received by the TUCC.

X Rationalisation proposals - to which the Society has objected - have been issued for the Southport-Wigan Wallgate-Bolton/Atherton-Manchester Victoria routes. The Wigan-Atherton-Manchester line is threatened with closure to all passengers and most of the minor stations on the remaining Southport-Wigan-Bolton-Manchester line would also be closed. X

As part of the plan to withdraw the Crewe-Barrow/Windermere local service, Balshaw Lane and Euxton and Coppull stations have been posted for closure. The Society has objected to these proposals.

Further to the proposed closure of Chester Northgate station, it is now known definitely that this assumes consent will be given to withdrawal of services to Wrexham Central and New Brighton, as no spur is proposed from Chester Northgate to Chester General.

James Street, Liverpool, station (Mersey line) is to have its present temporary entrance block (erected 1941) replaced by a new, re-styled entrance with a six-storey office block above it. This work is expected to be completed by the end of 1968.

X The same city's Central (high level) station is also proposed for re-development. It has been suggested that the local service to Hunt's Cross and Gateacre which now uses this station should be cut back to St. James' (Parliament St.) station - closed 1916' - which is about a mile from Central. St. James' would be refurbished and a 'bus service instituted between it and the city centre. However, there have been misgivings on this matter, after the Kirby-Aintree-Liverpool Exchange 'bus/rail link which failed so miserably earlier this year. The Society hopes to make contact with the Merseyside Transport Steering Committee over this matter and, maybe, with other bodies.

North Wales

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

The managing director of the Dorothea Slate Quarry Company, Caernarvon, is trying to persuade BR to re-open the disused Caernarvon-Afonwen line for the transport of bulk slate waste from the firm's quarries in the Nantlle valley. This action is being supported by Caernarvonshire County Council. The Area Representative has written to both the Company and the Council to urge them, in the course of their negotiations with BR, not to lose sight of the eventual re-introduction of a passenger service on the line.

OTHER LINES ON WHICH THE SOCIETY HAS BEEN WORKINGIsle of Man

Both the Ramsey-St. John's line and the Port Erin line (as far as Castletown) have been re-opened. A connecting 'bus service between Castletown and Port Erin has been introduced. A new halt to serve Ronaldway airport has been provided.

The Manx Steam Railway Society has changed its name to Isle of Man Steam Rail Supporters' Association.

NEWS OF OTHER LINES

We regret that, owing to severe pressure on space, material under this heading has been omitted from our last two issues. However, we shall continue to include this feature in progress reports whenever possible.

Southern England

Low Street (Tilbury) station was closed to passengers from 5th June. The Minister has consented to the closure of South Aylesbury halt on the Princes Risborough-Aylesbury line.

Grateley and Porton stations and Idmiston halt - all on the Basingstoke-Salisbury line - have been proposed for closure (nominal date: 10th July)

Midlands

Local trains between Sheffield Midland and Nottingham Midland and between Sheffield Midland and Derby Midland ceased from 2nd January.

The following stations closed from 6th March:- Chapel-en-le-Frith Central, Peak Forest,

Miller's Dale, Bakewell, Rowsley, Darley Dale, Matlock Bath and Derby Nottingham Road. All are on the Manchester Central-Derby Midland Line. A new service between Derby and Matlock has been introduced. The Buxton-Miller's Dale service also ceased from 6th March, but that between Buxton and Manchester still operates.

Norton Bridge station (Stoke-on-Trent - Stafford line) became an unstaffed halt from 28th November last year.

The withdrawal of the passenger service between Chinley and Matlock has been proposed by BR (nominal date: 4th September). Manchester-Derby trains would be diverted via the Hope valley and Chesterfield. Cessation of the Nottingham Arkwright Street - Rugby Central passenger service has also been proposed (nominal date: 18th September) (second attempt.)

Passengers on trains on all lines in the Norwich Division of BR are to be asked to complete questionnaires in surveys to be carried out by the rail authorities.

On the Ipswich-Cambridge line all intermediate stations (except Stowmarket and Bury St. Edmunds) are now unstaffed halts and conductor-guards operate.

Northern England

The Minister has agreed to the closure of Manchester Central station.

The following closures to passenger traffic have taken place: Lostock Junction (Bolton) from 7th November, 1966; Rawtenstall-Bacup line, Pendleton station (Bolton Trinity Street-Manchester Victoria line) and Helmshore station (Accrington-Bury line) from 5th December, 1966; and Manchester Central-Cheadle Heath from 2nd January, 1967.

✓ The NW Area TUC has reported to the Minister that extreme hardship would be caused to a few regular passengers should services be withdrawn from the electrified Manchester-Piccadilly-Sheffield Victoria via Woodhead line. As regards BR's proposals to withdraw passenger services on the Macclesfield-Marple line, the TUC consider that great hardship would occur should the proposals be implemented. ✗

Wales

Proposals to withdraw the passenger service on the Pembroke Dock-Whitland line have been published (nominal date: 2nd October)

Scotland

Among the stations which have been closed in Scotland this year are the following : Bogside and Gailles (Kilwinning-Troon line) from 2nd January; Ibrox (Glasgow Central-Paisley Gilmour Street line) from the 6th February; Castlecary, Manuel and Bonnybridge High (all on the Glasgow Queen Street-Edinburgh Waverley line) from 6th March.

The Minister has refused consent to the proposed closure of Springfield station, Fife (Thornton Junction-Leuchars Junction line).

From 4th September, the following withdrawals of passenger services will be effected (Ministerial approval has been given in all cases) :- West Ferry, Easthaven, Elliot Junction and Laurencekirk stations (all on the Dundee Tay Bridge-Arbroath-Aberdeen line); the Strathmore line (Stanley Junction-Forfar-Kinnaber Junction); Falkirk Camelton station (Grangemouth-Larbert line).

✓ X Re the proposed closure of the Edinburgh-Hawick-Carlisle line, the Scottish TUCC considers that substantial hardship would be caused at Galashiels, Melrose, St. Boswells and Hawick. The Committee has also stated that hardship would be suffered by travellers between Newcastleton and Hawick, but, in its opinion, any hardships which would result from the withdrawal of trains from 19 other stations on the line could be overcome by the provision of substitute buses. 12 stations on the line became unstaffed halts from 27th March. X

Electric services on the Glasgow Central-Gourock-Wemyss Bay line commenced on 5th June. Upper Greenock station was closed from the same day and replaced simultaneously by a new station at Branchton, about 1½ miles on the Wemyss Bay side of the old station.

Fresh proposals for the withdrawal of passenger trains include those on the following lines:- Stirling-Alloa-Dunfermline (nominal date: 5th June); Leven-Thornton Junction, Fife, via Cameron Bridge (freight also); St. Andrews-Leuchars Junction (nominal date: 1st January, 1968)

In the Highlands, Scottish Region continue the sensible policy of reducing stations to unstaffed halts instead of closing them completely. Stations dealt with in this way recently include Kinbrace (Inverness-Wick/Thurso line) from 19th June and Lochailort (Mallaig branch) from 3rd July.

Editorial announcement :

Commencing with the next issue, Mr. L.G. Hipperson, of 21, Ullet Road, Sefton Park, Liverpool 17, will take over as editor of these reports and from the same issue Mr. H.R. Purser, of 10, Edward Road, Northolt, Greenford, Middlesex, will edit the Branches and Area Representatives section. Any general news for possible inclusion should reach Mr. Hipperson by 1st November and area reports should reach Mr. Purser by the same date.

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*** See special notice above re change of editorship.