



# Railway Invigoration Society

for the retention and modernisation of railway services

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## PROGRESS REPORT

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### TURN OF THE TIDE?

✓ X In the House of Commons on 28th November, 1973 (too late for mention in our last issue), Mr. John Peyton, the Minister for Transport Industries, made a statement about provision for British Railways. He said that, "in the Government's view, the right course is to maintain a railway network of roughly the present size and to improve it. Unremunerative passenger services should be kept in being as long as they are justified on social and economic grounds." The Minister went on to state that "the Government broadly accept the strategy recommended by the Railways Board." This would mean substantially higher investment in railways, which would be met by "a switch of resources within the transport sector, mainly from urban road to rail."

This announcement is of such importance that we are reproducing it in full (see p2 et seq.) and we give the questions and answers which followed it almost in their entirety, as these contain a wealth of vital information.

Although we consider that the measures announced by Mr. Peyton do not go far enough in certain directions, the new policy represents a dramatic change in the official attitude towards the railways of this country. The ministerial announcement is of considerable encouragement to all those - not least the members of the Railway Invigoration Society - who have been fighting so long for the railways to be allowed to play their full part in the transport organisation of the United Kingdom.

Nevertheless, our expectation must be tempered with caution. While we recognise that concern over the environment and difficulties caused by the energy crisis are major factors in bringing about this change of heart, the fact remains that the enormously powerful road lobby is competing for public money. It remains to be seen whether the much-needed shift in investment towards rail will be fully realised. X

### LEWES-UCKFIELD LINE

✓ X The possibility that the Lewes-Uckfield line will be rebuilt, either via the <sup>Hansley</sup>~~Hornsey~~ Loop or on another route from Isfield, is now becoming a distinct probability, with the East Sussex County Council being interested in the project and entering into consultations with other authorities and organisations.

Since our previous report on this matter (progress report No. 96, Sept. 1973, p2), a further meeting of interested parties has been called by the County Council. Mr. R. V. Banks represented

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the Railway Invigoration Society. There was a full discussion and great pressure to get the line re-opened. A report of the meeting will go to the new County Council, which will assume power from 1st April.

#### ASHFORD-HASTINGS LINE

As reported in our September 1973 issue, East Sussex County Council is prepared to subsidise the Ashford to Hastings line, but only if Kent County Council agree to meet half the cost. Apart from the present crisis, there are other factors which favour the retention of this route. Among these is the likelihood that the line will be used as a test-bed for Channel Tunnel rolling stock should the Ashford railway works secure the contract. Another consideration is the go-ahead for Dungeness "C" power station, which will necessitate the use of the Appledore-Lydd branch for construction material over several years in addition to existing traffic to Dungeness Power Station. (Appledore is a station on the Ashford to Hastings line).

At a public meeting on the Channel Tunnel organised by the Weald of Kent Preservation Society on 18th January, Mr. John Peyton, the Minister for Transport Industries, stated that the line was in no immediate danger and that this applied to all lines threatened with closure, whether consent had been given for closure or not. X

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#### IN PARLIAMENT

#### Selections from the official reports

#### House of Commons

#### Ministerial announcements

1973

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28th November British Railways Mr. John Peyton (Minister for Transport Industries) With permission, Mr. Speaker, I will make a statement about future provision for British Railways. In July last year, I told the House of a significant deterioration in British Railways' finances. This led me to conclude that the financial provisions of the 1968 Act, like all previous attempts to solve the railways' difficulties, had proved inadequate and that new legislation would be needed. Since then, the Railways Board has at my request, in close consultation with my Department, been conducting a series of thorough studies on the prospects and needs of its industry. In considering the conclusions, I have taken account of wider transport policy considerations.

The board's studies showed no prospect in the foreseeable future of a railway network of anything like the present size being viable. Three possible options were therefore considered against the background of social and economic needs, the preservation of the environment and the conservation of energy supplies. The first is wholesale withdrawal from large areas, achieving savings in the long run, but with high transition costs. The second is piecemeal closure of a

significant number of individual loss-making passenger services. The economies would be relatively small, since most of the system costs would remain while revenues fell. The Government do not believe that either of those alternatives would be in the country's interests.

The third and, in the Government's view, the right course is to maintain a railway network of roughly the present size, and to improve it. Unremunerative passenger services should be kept in being as long as they are justified on social and environmental grounds.

The Government broadly accept the strategy recommended by the Railways Board. This will mean substantially higher investment in four key areas.

Fast inter-city services will be improved, beginning with the introduction of the high-speed diesel train on the London-Bristol-South Wales route. The board will also press on with the development of the advanced passenger train, which is ahead of comparable systems elsewhere.

Secondly, conditions will be made more tolerable for the long-suffering commuter. Improvements will include electrification of some suburban services, and there will be new rolling stock, better interchanges and modernised passenger terminals.

Thirdly, rail freight and parcels services will be rationalised and made more efficient; with computer-controlled wagon movement and high capacity wagons to give faster turn-round times and greater reliability. The Government and the board are seeking to identify suitable freight traffic which could be attracted from road to rail. I am accordingly approaching 100 of the largest firms, in consultation with the Freight Transport Association,

Fourthly, increased investment in track and signalling on the key parts of the system will provide even higher standards of safety and efficiency, at the same time reducing operating costs.

I therefore propose a switch of resources within the transport sector, mainly from urban road to rail, to provide the necessary investment for the railways. This will increase over the next five years from some £140 million in 1973-74 to £225 million in 1977-78, which includes provision for the initial stages of a rail link to the Channel Tunnel. The Government will also continue to provide substantial revenue support to the railways. All this is consistent with the determination of my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer to contain the growth of public expenditure, figures for which will be laid before the House next month in the Public Expenditure White Paper.

The Government's proposals for the railways will mean a continuing programme of work both for the railway workshops and for manufacturing industry over a period of years. They will enable all concerned with the railways industry to plan ahead more realistically than in the past. The Government believe that the policies they propose are necessary in order to achieve an adequately equipped industry. They will expect all engaged in it to ensure that the opportunities offered by this increased investment and by the high-speed developments in particular are exploited to the full.

The necessary powers to provide appropriate financial support will be taken in a Bill to be presented to Parliament shortly.

This will be supported by a transport White Paper, which will underline the greater emphasis the Government are giving to railways and other forms of public transport.

Mr. Bradley (Leicester, North-East)

. . . The board asked for a nine-year programme amounting to £1,800 million worth of investment. The right hon. Gentleman has given it only four firm investment years, unlike the British Steel Corporation, which received endorsement for 10 years. Does the right hon. Gentleman's statement represent only an interim plan? Does he agree that the board, for effective planning purposes and to create confidence among its customers and staff, needs a longer-term guarantee of resources?

What account has been taken of the present situation? If we are to have recurring fuel crises, surely it is of paramount importance to develop the railway system on a long-term basis as part of an integrated transport and energy policy? Will the Government themselves answer the questions which they put to the board? Is there a viable network and what is the Government's definition of a necessary railway? How is it proposed to finance this programme? What proportion of it will come from infrastructure grants? Will those grants be more generous?

It is certain that the board will not be able to service the loan debt without running up huge deficits on account of interest charges. What explicit proposals has he for dealing with that problem? Does he envisage a return to deficit financing? On social grants, can he say what effect the EEC regulation 1192/69 will have? What proportion of the investment programme can be attributed to the Channel Tunnel? . . . The right hon. Gentleman will bear in mind that the board's proposals exclude costs related to the Channel Tunnel, which is part of a separate Government decision. We note that the right hon. Gentleman is to consult 100 firms with a view to identifying suitable traffic transference from road to rail. Does not that show how premature he was to withdraw the quantity licensing provisions in the 1968 Act as long ago as July 1970? Finally, when can we expect the right hon. Gentleman's promised White Paper? The Opposition believe that the railways' role can be properly assessed only as part of the entire transport problem. Mr. Peyton I have a good deal of sympathy with the request for a nine-year investment programme. We have produced a five-year investment programme which will roll on year by year as a continuous process. Nobody is more conscious than I am of the need for the railways to see as far ahead as possible. The Government want to see progress made and they will judge their future policies in the light of that progress.

The hon. Gentleman referred to support. I can assure the hon. Gentleman that that matter will be dealt with in a Bill which I hope to present to Parliament before Christmas. The hon. Gentleman asked me whether there would be a return to deficit financing. One of the difficulties which he and I must face is that we have never completely got away from deficit financing. The hopes which were laid upon the 1968 Act were soon dashed and seen to mean nothing.

I was more than surprised to hear the hon. Gentleman ask about quantity licensing. The wisdom of his right hon. Friends, who had a perfect chance to use the quantity licensing system if they had wanted to do so, led them to turn away. I am sure that they were right to do so. The adoption of the system, which is still on the Statute Book, would constitute a bureaucratic spider's web which would frustrate transport and help no one.

Mr. J. H. Osborn (Sheffield, Hallam) Will my right hon. Friend indicate to what extent

there will be a change from diesel to electrification and to what extent there will be further investment in electrification? Second, he mentioned some of the commuter lines. What improvements can be expected on the London-Midland line north of St. Pancras, which has very slow inter-city times? Mr. Peyton I do not doubt that those responsible have heard my hon. Friend's observation. I am grateful to him for his kindly welcome of what I said. There will be further progress made in electrification. That is allowed for in the programme.

Mr. Buchanan (Glasgow, Springburn). Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the question put by my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, North-East (Mr. Bradley) - namely, how do the Government propose to raise the money? Is the board to be involved again in interest payments and deficit financing? Mr. Peyton British Rail will have full access to the national loans fund as it has always had under successive administrations. I have already told the House that I shall be introducing detailed proposals.

Sir R. Thompson (Croydon, South) Will my right hon. Friend say whether his plans for improving the viability of the railway system will include a positive freight policy to encourage heavy freight off the roads, where it is so unwelcome, and on to rail? Does he realise that public sentiment against juggernaut lorries has reached such a pitch that if he does not adopt such a policy he will be compelled to confine the juggernaut lorries to certain trunk roads? Once he does that he will remove the argument for using such lorries because he will have destroyed their flexibility. Will he address himself seriously to the problem of getting the heavy freight off our congested roads to where it belongs - namely, on the railway system? Mr. Peyton I constantly and seriously address myself to the problem referred to by my hon. Friend. It is beyond my power to change things to the extent that every factory, warehouse and farm, for example, will suddenly be provided with a railhead. The majority of freight hauls in this country are comparatively short. No scheme has yet been devised which will provide the degree of flexibility by rail which is available by lorry.

I know that people dislike the lorry very much, but they should remind themselves of their great dependence on it. I have always said that we must move towards a system of designated roads. I am sorry to hear that my hon. Friend does not agree. Such a system would permit large vehicles to move freely on roads where there is a role for them. The idea that vehicles should be free brutally to force a passage down any road without regard for the size of the road or the size of the vehicle is out of date. It takes time, of course, to produce roads, particularly bearing in mind not just the limited resources available but the length of our procedures. The roads are always very acceptable "there" but they are not always acceptable "here".

Mr. Hooson (Montgomeryshire) Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that his decision must be welcomed throughout the House, particularly in view of the present energy supply crisis? Is he further aware that there has been a considerable rundown of personnel services, rolling stock and so on, on the railways over the last two years, particularly in some areas such as my own in Mid-Wales? What does he intend to do about that? Finally, will the White Paper contain arguments for developing and extending the railway services to include perhaps the accommodation of far more freight than is accommodated today? Mr. Peyton ... I would very much like to attract

freight from road to rail, and I have put forward today some proposals as to how we might proceed in that direction.

Mr. Maude (Stratford) Will my right hon. Friend bear in mind, in his welcome progress towards a more rational transport policy, that it is necessary not only to get freight off the roads back on to rail but to prevent more freight coming off rail on to the roads, and that one of the most desirable ways of doing this is to stop building ever larger and larger motorways over more and more of the country, which creates new road freight traffic and takes it off rail? Will he also bear in mind that this would also help to save Government expenditure? Mr. Peyton I can only say that, with respect, I note what my hon. Friend said. If he were to give me advice on how it is to be achieved in practical terms, no one would be more grateful than I.

Mr. Bagier (Sunderland, South) What is the right hon. Gentleman's excuse for saying to the board that it cannot fulfil the 10-year programme for which it asked him? Does not the present situation show clearly the need to go in for widespread electrification? Does not the Middle East situation underline that fact? How is the amount of money the right hon. Gentleman has agreed to grant to be spent by the board? Mr. Peyton That is a question I would rather leave the British Railways Board to deal with in detail rather than attempt to answer it in a question and answer period.

Mr. Spriggs (St. Helens) What does the total investment figure include? Does it include the initial cost of the Channel Tunnel? What other matters are included? Mr. Peyton I am sorry that I did not answer that question when the hon. Member for Leicester North-East (Mr. Bradley) asked it, and I apologise to him. The amount included for the Channel Tunnel will, in 1976-77, be £17 million, and in 1977-78 it will be £24 million.

Mr. Ridsdale (Harwich) I welcome my right hon. Friend's statement, especially for those who, like myself, represent areas with large commuter traffic and whose commuters have had to strap-hang for long periods, covering 90 miles or so. Can my right hon. Friend assure me that investment in the Haven ports, which now constitute almost the second largest port in the country, will not be starved because of the Channel Tunnel and Maplin? What percentage increase in annual investment does this represent for the railways compared with the last 10 years? Mr. Peyton I entirely agree with my hon. Friend's comment about commuters. Their services have been crying out for rejuvenation for a long time. His question about ports goes rather wide of the subject of railways. I should like to write to my hon. Friend about his question on proportions and give him the figure then. But my statement represents a very considerable increase not only in the quantity of investment but also - very important indeed - in the length of look it gives to British Railways for the future.

Mr. Elystan Morgan (Cardiganshire) Will the right hon. Gentleman give an assurance to Welsh members that no further closures will be considered in Wales until the Government-

sponsored Graham Rees survey is finished, that the Cambrian coast line, which is about to be closed, will remain open, and that the Teify Valley line, the closure of which a few weeks ago has brought great hardship to that area, will be re-opened forthwith? Mr. Peyton Consideration of prudence and economy of time suggest that I would be wise not to deal with individual services today. But no services will be closed without being very carefully looked at in the light of this statement. I do not wish to deride in any way the 1968 Act, which was a genuine attempt to solve a most difficult problem. No one would have been happier than I if it had not been necessary to make this statement. Unfortunately, there has been here a problem which, over many years since the war, successive Governments have attempted to deal with, but none has yet been totally successful.

Mr. Bruce-Gardyne (Angus, South) What expected addition to public expenditure in 1974-75 will ensure from my right hon. Friend's statement? Mr. Peyton None at all.

Mr. Leslie Huckfield (Nuneaton) The Railways Board's submission to the right hon. Gentleman was based on the assumption that it would be carrying less freight in 1981 than it carries now. How much of the investment which he has announced will go into freight? Apart from that, in view of the energy situation, how much of the investment will go into electrification? Also, since most European countries have embarked on investment programmes almost 10 times as big as the right hon. Gentleman has announced, how much is he prepared to give the board under the normalisation regulations of the EEC? Mr. Peyton I understand that the Community regulations represent no interference at all in any of the proposals I have made or would like to make for British Railways. If the hon. Gentleman will forgive me, I will not go into too much detail about freight, I very much doubt whether British Railways at the moment could give an accurate forecast as to the quantity of freight which the railways hope to carry in future. I hope that the quantity will be roughly the same, though it will not be of the same character. ✕

#### Questions and answers

SSE = Secretary of State for the Environment

An asterisk denotes an oral answer; those not so marked were written.

1973

29th November Railways Mr. David Watkins (Consett) asked the SSE (1) what proposals have been submitted to him by the Railways Board to electrify the mail line from Bristol to York and to rebuild it where required to make it suitable throughout to high speed running; (2) what proposals have been submitted by the Railways Board for the electrification of the east coast main line from London, Kings Cross, to Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Scotland. Mr. Peyton None, though I understand the Board intends to do so in due course.

4th December Railways (investment) Mr. Spearing (Acton) asked the SSE if he will set out in the Official Report a table showing the existing approved investment plans for British Rail for each of the years 1973 to 1979, together with the additional sums indicated in his statement of 28th November, showing for each year the sums expected to be invested in the new track from

Folkestone to London and separately other facilities, including rolling stock, related to the Channel Tunnel project, Mr. Rippon Total railway investment approved for the period 1973-77 is as follows:

		£ million
1973	...	140
1974	...	141
1975	...	164
1976	...	201
1977	...	223

These figures include investment of £13 million in 1976 and £22 million in 1977 in the Channel Tunnel link, about £1 million of the latter figures being rolling stock.

Investment levels for 1978 onwards have not yet been approved.

Mr. Spearing asked the SSE what capital sums of the sums mentioned in his statement of 28th November, he plans should be devoted to modernisation of commuter passenger terminals of the British Railways; and in what specific ways, other than track and signalling improvements or improvement of visual amenities, will these investments improve travel conditions. Mr. Rippon This is a matter in the first instance for the Railways Board.

Rail Freight Mr. Spearing asked the SSE if his statement of 28th November means any adjustment in the present divisions of responsibilities of British Rail and National Carriers Limited and the National Freight Corporation for carriage of rail freight and parcels. Mr. Rippon No.

Railway policy Mr. Spearing asked the SSE if the statement on railway policy of 28th November excludes further schemes of main-line electrification. Mr. Rippon No.

Mr. Spearing asked the SSE if, in view of the statement of 28th November concerning expansion of rail services, he will make it possible for the British Railways Board to retain serviceable equipment which is already paid for, without incurring a book penalty on calculated returns on nominal capital employed. Mr. Rippon The way in which returns on capital employed in British Rail should in future be calculated has not yet been decided.

Channel Tunnel Mr. Spearing asked the SSE what considerations he has given to extending the proposed new Channel Tunnel railway north of London by adaptation of either ex-Great Western broad gauge lines, or the former Great Central Railway main line. Mr. Rippon None. This is a matter for the Railways Board.

20th December Manchester Underground Railway link Mr. Marks (Manchester, Gorton) asked the SSE if he will now make a statement on his reconsideration of the SelneC (Greater Manchester) Passenger Transport proposals. Mr. Fidler (Bury and Radcliffe) asked the SSE if he will make a statement about the Manchester Piccadilly to Victoria underground railway scheme. Mr. Peyton In October I promised the Greater Manchester Council and the SELNEC Passenger Transport Authority that before the end of the year I would give the Government's decision on



the merits of the Piccadilly/Victoria railway project in Manchester. I had previously made it clear that no start would be possible in 1974-5. The appraisal of the scheme has taken many months. It is costly and the economic rate of return, particularly on the tunnel, is low. By the time a start could be made on such a project, however, the new system of transport grants proposed in the Local Government Bill should have been introduced. It will then be for the Greater Manchester Council to consider what public transport investment should be included in the transport policy and programme which it will have to submit as a basis for grant. It will also be for that council to judge whether such a project appears realistic, in relation to other transport needs such as road building, for the merits of the scheme do not in themselves justify making additional resources available to Manchester.

It seems likely, in view of the massive local support for the scheme, that the metropolitan county will include it in its transport strategy. Its plans should be comprehensive, and include, in particular, proposals for those traffic restraint measures which would increase the benefits from the tunnel. Provided such a total policy could be contained within acceptable estimates the Government would endorse it.

The overriding constraint, however, must continue to be the availability of resources, local and national for this scale of expenditure. I told the Chairman of the SELNEC Passenger Transport Authority last August that the project could in no circumstances start before 1975-6. It will now be for the Greater Manchester Council to review further the prospects for starting such a project in the light of my right hon. Friend's statement last Monday on the economic situation.

1974

X 18th January Railways Mr. Hunt (Bromley) asked the SSE if he will make a statement about the support he intends to provide for unremunerative railway passenger services in 1974 and about the future of those services which are under threat of closure. Mr. Peyton I have undertaken to pay grant of £81 million to the Railways Board in respect of 1974 for these services under Section 39 of the Transport Act 1968. A list of the services or groups of services to receive grant is set out below. ... (the list was omitted from "Hansard". Ed.) ... It includes eight previously unaided services: they are:

Edinburgh - Falkirk - Glasgow  
 Glasgow - Aberdeen  
 Edinburgh - Aberdeen  
 Huddersfield - Wakefield  
 Liverpool - Wigan - Preston  
 Crewe - Chester  
 Swindon - Gloucester - Worcester  
 Didcot - Bristol

In the light of the statement I made to Parliament on 28th November last - (Vol. 865, c. 397-9,) - I have decided that, in general, no closure of substance should take place before 1975, when

the situation can be reviewed again. This will affect the following services which have been under threat of closure:

Services for which consent to closure has been given but the services have not yet been withdrawn -

Ashford - Hastings  
 Bedford - Bletchley  
 Colchester - Sudbury  
 Stonehouse Station (Glos.)

Services on which no decision has yet been taken -

Machynlleth - Pwllheli ("Cambrian Coast")  
 Runcorn - Helsby - Chester  
 Stockport - Stalybridge  
 Wimbledon - West Croydon  
 East Brixton Station

I have already announced I have decided to defer implementation of the Inverness - Kyle of Lochalsh closure, for which conditional consent has been given. The Haltwhistle - Alston closure will go ahead, but not until adequate road improvements - for which the Government are making additional funds available - and satisfactory alternative public transport have been provided. I do not expect there to be any net increase in public expenditure in 1974-75 as a consequence of the deferment of these decisions. I am still considering the future of the Maiden Newport-Bridport service and the board's applications to close the lines between Bradford-on-Avon Junction South and Thingley Junction, and between Turners Lane Junction and Calder Bridge Junction, Wakefield.

(Owing to lack of space, a few questions and answers have had to be omitted from the above selection. We hope to include them in our next issue.) ✕

#### DEBATES

2nd November Railways (Scotland) (adjournment debate; cols. 573-84) During the course of the debate, Mr. Keith Speed (Under-Secretary of State for the Environment) made a statement about the Kyle of Lochalsh line. He said: "We had particularly in mind the possibility that the line could be used to transport heavy freight if there were to be major oil developments on the west coast ... the Minister for Transport Industries recently concluded that it would not be right to implement closure on 1st January 1974 ... He will instead be considering the line's future ..... the line will be kept open throughout 1974".

REPORTS FROM BRANCHES AND AREASBRANCHESLondon and Home Counties

✓✗ At a branch meeting held on 23rd January a number of British Transport films were shown. A joint meeting with the Railway Development Association and the National Council on Inland Transport on the energy crisis is scheduled for 12th March at the Caxton Hall. ✗

The Branch endorses the Greater London Council's approval of a scheme for single-manning of the Hammersmith & City line and Circle line trains at a total cost of £1.65m. This should ease the problems generated by staff shortages in the South-East, particularly on London Transport. It has been noticeable that the Victoria line is least affected by the present troubles.

The modified peak-hour services on the Marylebone-High Wycombe line introduced in May 1973, were not favourably received by commuters and some improvements were effected as from 1st October. In addition, several trains were given extended journeys for a trial period.

✓✗ British Rail's first all-night Inter-City regular-interval service is planned to start on the London-Brighton line in May. Trains will leave Victoria and Brighton every hour throughout the night and call at East Croydon, Gatwick Airport and Haywards Heath for an experimental period of six months. ✗

Sunday trains on the Slough-Windsor line are to run throughout the year.

Improvement of many station buildings continues. Improvements costing a total of £600,000 are to be carried out in the Eastern Region at St. James Street and Wood Street (Chingford line), Stoke Newington (Enfield line) and Cheshunt and Rye House (Hertford East line). Kensal Green, on the Euston-Willesden line, is to be rebuilt. Modernisation of four London Transport stations - Waterloo, Tottenham Court Road, Finsbury Park and Moorgate - has been approved by the Greater London Council. The Government is to be asked to contribute towards the cost of £3.5m., with the balance met by the GLC. Work has begun on a £400,000 modernisation scheme at 24 Western Region stations between Paddington and Reading and on the Henley-on-Thames, Marlow and Greenford branches.

Kentish Town station, destroyed by fire in 1971, has not yet been rebuilt or re-opened. Passengers are advised by British Rail to use either Camden Road or Gospel Oak stations.

British Rail has applied to the Department of the Environment for permission to demolish Brighton station, so that the site may be redeveloped to include a conference centre. As the present station is a listed building, objections to the proposal have been made by historical and environmental interests.

Dr. Caton, Chairman of the Railway Invigoration Society, recently gave a talk to members of the Lea Valley Railway Club. He traced the history of the Society and its work over the past twenty years. Dr. Caton went on to discuss factors which had affected the development of the

railways from the bleak era of the Beeching plan to the present day, when official policy is turning in favour of rail.

A letter headed "Oil crisis highlights need for Channel Tunnel", from Mr. R. V. Banks, Vice-Chairman and Press & Publicity Officer of the Railway Invigoration Society, appeared in the Kent Messenger of 11th January.

The Branch published its fifth newsletter in January and acknowledgement is made to the editor for certain material included in this report.  
(Other news from the Home Counties is on p. 2).

### East Anglian

✓x The Branch annual general meeting was held in Norwich on Saturday, 26th January. This was followed by a public meeting on the present state of rail services in East Anglia and how these could be improved. As a result, a favourable leading article on the work of the Branch appeared in the Eastern Daily Press of 29th January.

In December the Branch issued a policy statement calling for the re-opening to passengers of the Cambridge-St. Ives; March-Wisbech; Wymondham-Dereham (and possibly Fakenham) and Wroxham-Aylsham lines. (All of these are still open for freight). The Branch also suggested the re-opening of eight stations on existing lines. These suggestions were made in view of the petrol shortage and received considerable press publicity, including a favourable editorial in the Eastern Evening News.

The Branch is now pursuing the matter further, collecting and acting upon more detailed local reactions to these proposals. We are also encouraged by the interest shown by some Norfolk County councillors who met representatives of British Rail on 4th February for discussion on the financial aspect. RIS representatives hope to meet British Rail officials in due course.

Local efforts are continuing in the campaigns to re-open the Cambridge-St. Ives line and Magdalen Road station. Under the auspices of Transport 2,000, a meeting of those concerned with the re-opening of the latter was held in King's Lynn on 9th February. Among the bodies represented were local councils and the Railway Invigoration Society. x

On the East Suffolk line, an extra evening train has been introduced between Ipswich and Saxmundham.

Our efforts to get improved publicity for local rail services continue, notably at Cambridge. The Branch is to help publicise British Rail's art and photographic competition, "To capture the spirit of Anglia."

### Three Counties

✓x British Rail has dropped its plan to replace the existing two stations at Gloucester by a new station at Barnwood on the outskirts of the city. Instead it is to build a new station at Gloucester Central. After completion of this, expected in 1976, Eastgate station will be demolished. x

Wessex

✓X Southampton County Borough Council has issued forms to local people to complete regarding the type of transport that the city should plan for the future. Among those who received forms were members of the Railway Invigoration Society residing in and around Southampton. This exercise results from the decision of the Council to abandon the controversial proposed Portswood link urban motorway. The Wessex Branch was among those bodies which took part in the battle against this proposal.

The South Hampshire Structure Plan has gone to the Department of the Environment for study. The Railway Invigoration Society made its presence felt in the Transportation Unit and the Study Groups. As a result, and with general changes of feeling, the plan leans more toward public transport than could have been hoped for even six years ago.

Almost half-a-million more people are using the Coastway line - Portsmouth, Brighton, Eastbourne, Hastings - than in 1971, when British Rail's campaign to boost use of the line started. X

West Yorkshire

✓X This new Branch was formed at a meeting of area members held at Bradford on 14th December, 1973. Among the officials elected was the Branch Secretary, Mr. L. Schofield, of 177, Smithy Hill, Wibsey, Bradford, BD6 1JX.

One of the first tasks the Branch is considering is the drawing up of a list of all key personnel in the area concerned with public transport following local government reorganisation.

West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive has been formed in accordance with the Local Government Act, 1972. Statements are still awaited from the PTE regarding its intentions for the area's railways, particularly the Leeds/Bradford and Ilkley/Keighley services.

West Riding traffic seems to be still increasing. Marsden has two new trains to Huddersfield following local pressure. One is an extension of a Wakefield-Huddersfield train and the other one that formerly ran non-stop through Marsden. The Saturdays only 13.50 Marsden-Huddersfield "shoppers' special", introduced a few years ago, carries about 80-100 passengers regularly. X

AREASNorth-Eastern England

Our correspondent in Newcastle-upon-Tyne reports:-

✓X It continues to be difficult to give definite information on the future of the Haltwhistle-Alston line. A newspaper report stated that the action committee which had been fighting to save the line had given up. This has since been strongly denied. Alston Rural Council and other local bodies have made it very clear that they will continue the battle for the line to remain open and under the control of British Rail.

There has been a report that the line has been reprieved for a further six months beyond

the original date of 1st May, 1975, but this is also in some doubt. The South Tynedale Railway Preservation Society would still like to buy the line, but it faces a bill for £200,000, which is twice what it expected to pay. If this society operated the line, it would do so as a summer tourist attraction. This would leave the line available in winter for the provision of emergency services. One matter which could delay closure is that local residents plan to object to the building of a £80,000 bridge which would be part of the proposed new road. ✕

✓✕ Tyneside Passenger Transport Executive is concerned that the Government's determination to cut local authority spending at the present time could lead to delays in the construction of the rapid transit system. However, the Executive is pressing for a start to be made this year and is hopeful that a major part of the construction will go ahead according to plan. ✕

✓✕ Local authorities have pressed for the re-opening of Fourstones station on the Newcastle to Carlisle line, because of the fuel crisis and poor transport services in the area. British Rail says that it would consider this, on the understanding that £14,000 or thereabouts is spent on improving the station, but stresses that it would not pay any part of this. ✕

Alnwick District Council has pressed for better train services between Alnmouth and Newcastle and an improved bus service between Alnwick and Alnmouth railway station. (The branch line between these two points has been lifted). Berwick's newly elected MP, Mr. Alan Beith, has asked British Rail to provide an extra morning train to Newcastle from Alnmouth and Acklington.

#### North-Western England

✓✕ The Transport Committee of Greater Manchester Metropolitan Council has agreed to keep open the Rochdale-Oldham line for another year at a cost of £70-90,000. ✕

Following a two-year trial at selected stations, car parks are to be provided at all stations within the Merseyside Passenger Transport Area, except those within 4 miles of the centre of Liverpool, on both sides of the river or within the Birkenhead County Borough boundary.

#### North and Central Wales

✓✕ There is local agitation for the re-opening to passengers of the Gaerwen-Amlwch line. There is expectation of traffic from the Shell Oil Terminal to be built at Amlwch. ✕

#### North of Scotland

✓✕ As Mr. Peyton, Minister for Transport Industries announced in Parliament on 2nd November 1973, the Kyle of Lochalsh line is to stay open throughout 1974, while its future is determined in the light of oil developments on the west coast (see "In Parliament", last item). Application has been made to Parliament for a provisional order authorising 440 yards of new track from just west of Duirinish station towards the shore at Port Cam to serve the proposed offshore oil platform construction site at Drumbuie. ✕

OTHER NEWS

✓✗ At separate ceremonies on 17th November 1973, representatives of the two governments signed parallel agreements with the British and French Tunnel companies. On the same day, a treaty was signed between the two governments. Excavation work on the British side of the Tunnel began last month. ✗

New motorail services to be introduced this year are as follows:- Brockenhurst-Stirling; Cambridge-Edinburgh; Dover-Newton Abbot; Dover-St. Austell; Stirling, Perth and Inverness; London (Euston)-Stirling.

British Rail and Foster Yeoman have jointly built a two-mile chord line, the third side of a triangle, to supplement the single line which links the firm's quarry at Merehead (Somerset) with the West of England main line at Witham. This has enabled the number of trains serving the quarry to be increased. Previously both loaded and empty trains had to use the single line to the quarry via a reversing loop at Cranmore.

✓✗ It is possible that the section of the Cheddar Valley line between Yatton and Sandford (perhaps Cheddar) will be re-opened so that it may be used for stone traffic. ✗

✓✗ Various proposals for providing Birmingham with an underground railway are under consideration. For instance, the West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority is thinking about building an underground line from Aston to Five Ways, with provision for interchange at a deep level station under Snow Hill/Colmore Row. The PTA has agreed to the re-opening of Snow Hill station and the Moor Street tunnel to a through service between Stourbridge and Solihull.

The West Midlands PTA has approved proposals for the development of commuter services on the Birmingham-Coventry line, including the building of a new station at Bickenhill to serve the National Exhibition Centre.

From May a regular hourly passenger service will run between Birmingham-Nuneaton-Leicester and give good connections at Nuneaton with electric services. ✗

Telford Development Corporation is considering the use of the trackbed of the former Coalport branch line between Madeley and Coalport for the purpose of a narrow-gauge railway, thus relieving the traffic problem in the area. It has been suggested that the Coalport terminal should be linked by minibus to the Ironbridge Gorge Industrial Museum.

✓✗ Cheadle Rural District Council (Staffordshire), British Rail and the County Planning and Development Department have had exploratory discussions regarding a proposal to re-open to passenger traffic the short Cheadle branch line, which joins the Stoke to Uttoxeter line at Cresswell. ✗

British Rail is being pressed to improve facilities at Hutton Cranswick station, on the Hull-Scarborough line, owing to the increasing population of the village. So many extra commuters have been using the line that coaches have been added to trains so as to provide 600 more seats.

The Amey Roadstone Corporation is negotiating with British Rail for the development of Ribbleshead station, on the Skipton-Carlisle line, as a railhead for the dispatch of locally-quarried limestone and other stone. There is a possibility that the new Cumbria County Council may subsidise the re-opening of Kirkby Stephen station, on the same line, owing to hardship caused by the dearth of adequate alternative passenger transport facilities.

Oxenholme station (junction for Windermere) is to be renovated prior to the electrification of the main west coast line through to Glasgow in May.

The land occupied by the Keswick-Penrith line (passenger service withdrawn from 5th March 1972) is being offered for sale to local authorities by British Rail.

Caerphilly station, on the Cardiff-Rhymney line, is being modernised at a cost of about £82,000, nearly half of which will be met by government grant.

Tynwald, the Manx parliament, is to raise its subsidy to the Isle of Man Railway from £21,000 to £28,000 for one year only. Negotiations as to the future of the railway continue. Various ideas are being considered and include: (i) a service between Ramsey and Ballaugh Wildlife Park only; (ii) the conversion of the Ramsey-Laxey section of the Manx Electric Railway to steam working, with transfer of locomotives and rolling stock from the Port Erin line.

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WHAT OTHER SOCIETIES ARE DOING We regret that material under this heading must be carried forward to our next issue, owing to lack of space.

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#### EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Editor: L. G. Hipperson, 24a Cable Road, Hoylake, Wirral, Cheshire, L47 2BD  
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Mr. Purser is responsible for branch and area reports, Mr. Hipperson for all other matter. To ensure inclusion in the next issue (to be published in June), material must be submitted to the appropriate editor so as to reach him by Saturday, 27th April.

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#### PUBLISHED by the RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY

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MEMBERS ONLY SUPPLEMENT : ISSUE No. 18.

VISITORS FROM USA

✓X Mr. Otto Janssen, a director of the National Association of Railroad Passengers and Managing Editor of Passenger Train Journal, has recently approached the Railway Invigoration Society in connection with railway tours of Britain he is arranging this summer for groups of Americans. Arrangements have yet to be finished, but it is planned to hold the first tour from 1st-15th June, with others following later, depending upon the response. Most parts of Britain will probably be visited and Mr. Janssen would be very pleased to meet our members at various points en route. We also hope to hold a joint meeting between this Society and members of the tour in London. Further details will be given in our next Members only supplement, but meanwhile Dr. Caton would be pleased to hear from any members willing to meet the party when passing through their area and perhaps to point out any local buildings, etc., of railway or general interest. X

TRANSPORT IN THE CONURBATIONS

✓X A meeting of representatives from the English metropolitan areas was held in Hoylake, Wirral, Cheshire, on 17th November.

From 1st April the new metropolitan county councils will become passenger transport authorities for their areas; any adjustments of boundaries of existing passenger transport areas will be made to accord with the new local government areas.

Among points made by representatives were the following:-

Tyneside Work had commenced on the tunnels for the new rapid transit scheme in the centre of Newcastle.

West Midlands The trend towards a more rail-orientated transport system continued.

Greater London The new GLC had scrapped the motorway proposals and was pursuing a more public-transport-orientated policy. One interesting item in the Council's recent discussion paper, "London, the future and you", was the proposal to complete the existing orbital lines by the construction of a tunnel under the Thames from Charlton to Canning Town and thus create an orbital railway. One major set-back had been the postponement of a decision on the extension of the Fleet line to south-east London.

West Yorkshire Proposals had been made to improve services between Leeds, Huddersfield and Manchester and on other lines in the area.

SELNEC The major setback in this area had been the Minister's refusal to finance the Piccadilly-Victoria (Manchester) tunnel. As this was an integral part of the transport plan for the area, this might now have to be completely recast. Whilst there were no representatives from this area to enlarge on this matter, the view was expressed that it was more an accident of timing,

there being limited funds available at present, than a deliberate anti-rail bias. Nevertheless, it still represented a serious blow to the improvement of transport in Greater Manchester and, in particular, to the possibility of invigorating the lesser-used local lines by an integrated cross-town network. It was hoped that pressure which was being exerted would cause the Minister to reconsider his decision.

Merseyside The future of the Wigan diesel railcar service was in some doubt in view of rail developments in central Liverpool. Concern was also expressed that there appeared to be no provision for new rolling stock on local lines; that on the Wirral and Southport services was in particular need of replacement.

The general conclusion reached at the meeting was that, despite the setback in Manchester and the doubtful position of the Tyneside local lines (see last progress report, pp 11 and 12, Ed.), it was considered that the trend in urban transport was still improving.

It was agreed that a further meeting should be held in the spring after the new local authorities had taken over, possibly in Birmingham. ✕

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Attention is directed to the combined notice and agenda of this year's annual general meeting, a copy of which is enclosed with this members only supplement.

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#### ASLEF DISPUTE

The following is the text of correspondence which the Railway Invigoration Society has had with the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen:-

4th December 1973

Ray Buckton, Esq.,  
ASLEF.

Dear Mr. Buckton,

The National Committee of our Society met last Saturday in an atmosphere of great optimism following Mr. Peyton's statement about more finance for British Railways.

However, we were most concerned with the threat of industrial action by ASLEF and I was asked to convey our feelings to you.

First of all, let me say that we are by no means unsympathetic to the ASLEF case, but we are extremely worried that the disruption on the railways is coming at a time when the climate of opinion is changing dramatically in our favour.

We hope, therefore, that your Union will take every possible step to avoid giving the anti-railway lobby an opportunity to claim that the railways cannot be trusted to provide a reliable transport service.

You have plenty of friends in the RIS and, if you keep me advised of the facts of your case, we shall be pleased to put them whenever possible.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) R. V. Banks  
Vice-Chairman.

8th January, 1974.

R. V. Banks, Esq.  
Vice-Chairman,  
Railway Invigoration Society.

Dear Mr. Banks,

Referring to your letter dated 4 December, 1973, I am sorry that I had not written before, but my commitments over the past few weeks have not permitted me to deal with correspondence as expeditiously as I would wish. I fully understand the reasons for you writing and appreciate the interest that you have shown.

For some years now the locomotivemen of British Rail have considered that their skills and responsibilities are not being recognised by the Railway management. During the course of 1971 and 1972 Across the Board Wages Negotiations, I emphasised the need for a special examination to be made of the Train Drivers Wages and Conditions and the agreement of June, 1972 contained a clause making provision for an examination of the Wages Structure of Footplate Staff.

A Joint Working Party was set up, but constant delays hardened the attitudes of the footplatemen, as they considered that the Railways Board had not acted in accordance with the spirit and intention of the 1972 agreement. After some eighteen months, the Railway management drew up a paper setting out their recommendations, but the Society's views on certain matters of fundamental principle were completely ignored. My Society represents ninety-six per cent of the footplate staff employed by British Rail, yet, though we have said that we wished mileage payments to remain for turns in excess of 125 miles, the paper contained recommendations that these penalty payments should start at 200 miles. I have also clearly indicated to the Joint Working Party that, because of the unsocial and irregular hours of footplatemen (they report for duty at any time of the day and night), this factor should be recognised by an additional payment in the basic rate of pay. The Management representatives recommended that a shift allowance should be introduced, though it was acknowledged that, whilst this allowance would cover the majority, it would not embrace all men employed on footplate duties.

My Executive Committee, on giving consideration to the final report of the Working

Party and the report of their representatives attending the meetings, considered that, because the Railway management would not heed the views being expressed on behalf of footplate staff and taking account of the strong feeling which exists among locomotivemen, a policy of non co-operation must be instituted. I appreciate that the anti-railway lobby will endeavour to capitalise on the Society's action, but my members consider it necessary to make a stand on matters of fundamental principle.

A booklet has been compiled setting out the Society's case along with the reply given by the British Railways Board and I am sure that, after you have read the enclosed copy, you will have a better understanding of the issues.

Yours sincerely,

(signed) Ray Buckton

#### GENERAL ELECTION

✓✗ Just before we went to press, official announcement was made that a general election would take place on 28th February. The National Committee at once swung into action with the intention of ensuring that a policy statement and questionnaire was sent to all parliamentary candidates representing the three main political parties. ✗