

RIS

Railway Invigoration Society

for the retention and modernisation of railway services

BM-RIS, London, W.C.1. Tel. 01-405 0463

Vice-Presidents:

Sir John Betjeman, C.B.E.

Lord Kinross

Lord Popplewell, C.B.E., J.P.

John Arlott, Esq., O.B.E.

The Very Rev. J. H. S. Wild, M.A., Dean of Durham

Torquil Nicolson Esq., B.Sc., A.M.I.E.E.

Price : 15 pence (free to members)

PROGRESS REPORTNo. 102MARCH 1975"SOUTHERN INTO EUROPE" : TALK ON THE CHANNEL TUNNEL

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✗ On Thursday, 30th January, at a very successful meeting of the London and Home Counties Branch held at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, Mr. J. R. Ogilvie, C. Eng., M. I. Mech. E., M. I. E. E., gave an illustrated lecture entitled "Southern into Europe", in which he reviewed the circumstances which had led to the decision by the Government to cancel the Channel Tunnel project.

Mr. Ogilvie was very critical of British Rail's handling of plans for the rail link with the Channel Tunnel, not only as regards the route and proposed method of operation but also from the public relations point of view. British Rail's statements had been fraught with many anomalies and inconsistencies.

Nevertheless, the whole project had been too narrow in its outlook and too ambitious in its scale. Moreover, the treaty with France had unnecessarily restricted the options open. What was needed was a Roskill-type commission to consider all aspects of transport between Britain and Europe. In planning a rail link, railway operation on both sides of the English Channel should be considered together.

The speaker then presented his alternative proposals, to which he had given the name "Southern into Europe".

He advocated a rail-only Channel Tunnel, with a much lower environmental impact on south-eastern England than previous schemes. This plan could, if the need arose, provide three times the capacity of the original concept at about two-thirds of the cost. Full facilities for motorists would be provided, together with a wide range of freight and passenger services to and from Europe.

"Southern into Europe" would form part of a corporate development plan for British Rail in the eighties. It would benefit commuter and inter-city travellers and maximise the return on an investment in a rail-only tunnel into Europe.

Full-power passenger trains of normal dimensions would operate without overhead wires at an absolute maximum speed in selected places of over 125 m. p. h. (200 k. p. h.).

Environmentalists would also appreciate the recycling of tunnel spoil, trackside sound absorbers and the new incentive for Britain's industries to stay put.

Road traffic would not be drawn into east Kent and motorways would not need to be extended beyond their present limits. There would be no terminal complex at Cheriton or massive freight and passenger facilities at White City.

The talk was followed by a lively discussion.

Dr. A. W. T. Daniel, chairman of the National Council on Inland Transport, summed up the proceedings by describing the cancellation of the Channel Tunnel as a national disgrace and disaster. The environmental consequences of the tunnel and rail link had been grossly exaggerated. The truth of the matter was that those concerned with such consequences were really against the tunnel as such. However, the result of not providing the tunnel would be far worse than if it were built. Politics had bedevilled the issue, which had become unnecessarily bound up with the European Economic Community. Many people who were against Britain's entry into the Community assumed that they should automatically be against the tunnel. This did not follow. Europe would not go away if Britain were to withdraw from the Community and people would still want to travel to and from the Continent. The matter was purely one of communication.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to Mr. Ogilvie, proposed by Dr. Daniel. This received an appreciative ovation. ✕

"SHORT-SIGHTED DECISION" ON CHANNEL TUNNEL

✕ On 20th January, the day on which Mr. Anthony Crosland, the Secretary of State for the Environment, announced that the Government had decided to abandon the Channel Tunnel project, the Railway Invigoration Society issued a statement to the national press and broadcasting system. The statement, which also bore the names of the National Council on Inland Transport Development Society and the Scottish Association for Public Transport, read as follows :-

" (The above societies) deplore the unilateral decision by the Government not to proceed with the Channel Tunnel before reassessment studies have been completed. This short-sighted decision will inevitably increase damage to the environment in the South-East, increase juggernaut traffic and accidents and waste of energy resources. It will further increase pressure on the South-East instead of promoting development in the regions. It will deprive the country of a physical rail link with the Continent, which would allow long distance freight to be switched from road to rail. (The societies), therefore, urge the Government to reverse this negative decision and to proceed with the construction of a rail-orientated tunnel, which will have valuable long-term benefits for the development of rail transport in the U. K. and save energy resources".

The statement was mentioned on BBC 1 television news at 9 p. m. on the day it was issued. During the same evening, Dr. Caton, Chairman of the RIS, was interviewed by Radio

London the Government's decision, and Mr. R. V. Banks, RIS Press and Publicity Officer, gave our viewpoint on the matter on Radio Medway. On the following Wednesday, Mr. Banks participated in a discussion programme (half hour) about the decision to abandon the Tunnel on Radio Medway. Others taking part were the chairman of Kent County Council and a representative of road haulage interests.

RIS CASE FOR A RAIL-ONLY CHANNEL TUNNEL

The following is the text of written evidence submitted by the Railway Invigoration Society to the Channel Tunnel Re-appraisal Committee (Chairman: Sir Alexander Cairncross). At the time this report went to press, the report of the Committee was still awaited.

"We submit the following observations about the Channel Tunnel project for your consideration and, as you are inviting representatives of organisations to give oral evidence in support of written submissions, we would be pleased to do so".

"Financial: It does seem to us that the Tunnel is being costed as an isolated transport project, whereas, if the railway system of Europe and the United Kingdom are linked, so much contributory revenue will accrue to both railway systems, because of the long hauls of freight, vehicle-carrying trains and passengers to and from the Tunnel portals. This contributory revenue must be taken into account when estimating the revenue forecasts for the Tunnel Project."

"The Tunnel must be judged on its merits as part of the European/United Kingdom rail network, i. e. as a link which will enable many convenient and fast trains to give through journeys to all parts of both systems."

"Much is being made of the escalating costs of the project because of inflation, but, if no tunnel is built, the cost of alternative transport systems will also escalate and most of these alternatives, i. e., ships, road vehicles, etc., must be continually replaced, whereas the tunnel, once built, will be permanent and need only routine maintenance. With growing shortages of raw materials of all types this is a most important consideration."

"Still on finance, a rail only tunnel, built to Berne Gauge and the scrapping of the vehicle "roll-on, roll-off" complex at Cheriton could reduce the overall cost dramatically."

"Environmental : A rail-only tunnel, even with a high speed rail link, would cause far less damage to the environment than a constant flow of road vehicles to and from the Tunnel Portal. Furthermore, the proposed huge Cheriton complex would not be needed, to the great relief of everybody in that part of Kent."

"A very substantial saving could result in the cost of roads, both for construction and maintenance, if traffic is diverted to rail from the roads."

"Because of the geographical fact that Kent to France is the shortest distance to the Continent, traffic will continue to grow via this route with or without the Tunnel and the only way to save the environment of Kent and the South-East is to concentrate on a tunnel orientated towards through rail traffic. The opponents of the high-speed rail link and other environmentalists appear

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to have overlooked this aspect of the problem".

"High-Speed rail link : The saving of a few minutes on the journey from London to Paris or Brussels by building a special high-speed link would not attract many more passengers. The main attraction of the rail link would be the great saving in time, even with trains at to-day's speeds, compared with the present ship/train systems, together with the saving of changing from ship to train and vice-versa."

"The overall time from city centre to city centre would be competitive enough to draw many passengers from flying, again especially because of the comfort of the through trains without the frustrations associated with air travel. This has been conclusively proved by the success of the electrified line to Liverpool, etc., from Euston."

"Even so, there is no reason why train speeds could not be improved over the years as technical and congestion problems in the South-East rail network are overcome".

"Because of the escalating oil costs, air travel will probably get much more expensive, making railway travel, via the Tunnel, competitive in terms of cost as well as comfort and convenience."

"Rail links to Tunnel Portal : The load on the existing Southern Region lines could be spread over the three routes from the Coast to London together with Coast route via Hastings and Brighton and the Redhill-Reading route to the West and Midlands. Locomotives could be built to operate on 25 KV A. C. overhead and the 750V D. C. third rail Southern system. This is being done on the new King's Cross/Moorgate electrification system now being built with 25 K. V. overhead on the surface to third rail in the tunnels to Moorgate. (Changes from one electrical system to another on the same locomotive have been in operation on the Continent for many years). There are technical difficulties and it may be that the fastest link only to London, i. e., via Tonbridge, should be equipped for 25 K. V. A. C. overhead working and the other routes should remain 750V D. C."

"Energy: Conservation of energy, especially oil, is becoming increasingly necessary. Electricity can be generated by various fuels, water power and nuclear power. Railways are more efficient users of energy in any case."

"With the construction of the Tunnel, Europe will have connections by electric railways to five major cities in Britain - i. e., London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow - even without further electrification on British Railways."

"Because of the trend towards higher speed, the larger Berne Gauge trains became less attractive than the smaller British loading gauge which could strengthen the case in favour of the through trains being suitable for the British rail network".

"Safety : Railways are the safest form of all generally-used transport systems. Road accidents are now estimated to cost this country £600M per annum. A significant switch from road to rail would reduce this annual cost very considerably - probably enough to pay at least the interest charges on the rail-only tunnel scheme".

Road congestion: Roads in the South-East and Kent in particular are very heavily loaded. Massive inter-continental lorries add greatly to this congestion which will get worse if there is no tunnel. With a tunnel the nation will save the costs of this congestion, otherwise we shall have to spend vast sums of money to alleviate it." X

WINDERMERE SUNDAY SUCCESS

X Following representations made by RIS member Mr. D. W. Green (of Eltisley, Huntingdon, Cambs.) Cumbria County Council has informed him that "British Rail intends to reintroduce a Sunday service to Windermere in the coming season."

Previously the Railway Invigoration Society had been in correspondence with the Transport Users' Consultative Committee for the North-West Area over this matter and also removal of facilities for locomotive-hauled trains at Windermere (see progress report No. 100 (September 1974), p. 4.)

The present position is, therefore, at least a partial success and will open up the south end of the Lake District to weekenders and Sunday day excursionists (service permitting). Well done, Mr. Green!

Members may also be interested to know that Mr. Green is pursuing the question of rail access to the Lakes in general with the County Council and, to this end, he may be helped by an article in the December, 1974, issue of Town and Country Planning. In this article, K. R. Johnson asks: "Could a tramway help save Lakeland?" He proposes a light railway network in the area of the Lakes west of the A591, linking Windermere, Ambleside, Buttermere, Keswick, Cockermouth and Penrith. This would incorporate some disused rail routes. Although the scheme may appear costly (about £31 million) at first sight, when it is considered as the alternative to further large-scale highway investment (e. g., a 15-mile road from Keswick to Windermere at about £15 million) it seems to merit, at least, further study by the County Council. X

HEAVIER LORRIES

The following is the text of letter which was published in the Kent Messenger of 10th January; it also appeared in the Kent and Sussex Courier.

"In recent months the motor industry has launched a campaign to persuade the Government to increase the maximum permitted weights of heavy lorries from 32 tons to 38 tonne (metric weight)"

"This would mean an increase of some six old tons - or 20 per cent - in total weight. The road lobby claims that these larger vehicles will save 20 per cent in ton-miles per gallon".

"Is this campaign really in the interests of improving freight transport or saving fuel? There may be concern to improve the sales of British-made heavy lorries, but I would point out that the growing imports of lorries are, of course, of vehicles within the current 32-ton limit".

"It is said that the 38-tonne lorry would probably have five axles (more weight distributed than at present) and an overall length increased by only 18 inches".

"Even so, the country is being asked to accept lorries that would be 20 per cent heavier overall than at present. This has serious implications for the community".

"Accidents involving heavy lorries are usually very serious for other people. One only has to see the damage caused in crashes".

"Greater savings would accrue to the country at large if the Government were to investigate the patterns of road freight and in particular the significant proportion of empty vehicle mileage. "

"It is obvious that there are many concentrated flows of freight traffic which could be better handled by rail or inland shipping. "

"In suggesting that fuel would be saved by the use of heavier lorries the motor industry carefully avoids mention of the even greater economy of rail and water transport over road. Experience shows that rail and inland shipping are four times more efficient in their use of fuel.

"So the potential savings from a freight policy which relies more heavily on rail and water transport are much more impressive than raising the maximum permitted lorry weight to 38 tonne. For this reason we feel that the campaign for the 38-tonne lorry should be resisted most strongly by Government, the public and local authorities. "

R. V. Banks

Vice-Chairman, Railway Invigoration Society,
Ashford Road, Bearsted.

RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY ; 21st BIRTHDAY DRAW

RESULTS

The draw was made by Dr. A. W. T. Daniel, chairman of the National Council on Inland Transport, prior to the meeting at the London and Home Counties Branch in London on 30th January.

	<u>Ticket No.</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
<u>First Prize</u> (£25)	05444	Mrs. R. Barberry	Ebley, Stroud, Glos.
<u>Second Prize</u> (£15)	00282	A. J. Weller	Collier Street, Kent
<u>Third Prize</u> (£10)	03855	U. A. Gordon	c/o Booking Office, Blackfriars Station

Consolation Prizes

(A) 5 @ £2.00

(i)	05628	Miss I. Connolly,	Hampstead, London. N. W. 3.
(ii)	00102	E. H. Rogers,	Maidstone, Kent
(iii)	00302	Miss S. Banks	Marden, Kent
(iv)	03327	Mr Day	c/o Wessex Branch
(v)	05981	L. F. Slade	Sompting, Lancing, Sussex.

Consolation Prizes (continued)

(B) 5 @ £1.00	(i)	00631	E. D. Dowling	Parkwood, Maidstone
	(ii)	03204	A. Madsen	Netley Abbey, Southampton
	(iii)	01821	D. Fullick	Feltham, Middlesex
	(iv)	00520	Mrs. Gow,	Uckfield, Sussex
	(v)	03911	G. W. Orchard	Chiswick, London. W.4.

IN PARLIAMENTSelection from the official reportsHouse of CommonsMinisterial Statement

20th January Channel Tunnel The Secretary of State for the Environment (Mr. Anthony Crosland) ... When the present administration took office in March 1974, a Channel Tunnel treaty and various agreements had already been concluded. A hybrid Bill had been introduced by the previous administration to enable them to ratify the treaty by 1st January, 1975, as required by these agreements. The present Government reintroduced the Bill with the intention of meeting this ratification deadline. However, the incidence of a second General Election in the course of 1974 affected the timetable, even though the House agreed in November that the Bill should be reintroduced at the stage which it had reached before the Dissolution.

By that time, however, it had become clear that we would not be able to meet the deadline for ratification of 1st January 1975. Moreover, as I told the House on 26th November, the estimated cost of the proposed high-speed rail link had so increased that the Government felt unable to proceed with it. Accordingly, I proposed to our partners - the French Government and the two Channel Tunnel companies - that the whole timetable should be put back to enable alternative lower-cost rail options to be thoroughly examined. This would have meant taking the final decision on whether to build the tunnel in the summer of 1976, instead of the summer of 1975 as previously envisaged. At the same time, I requested our partners to give us some latitude over ratification.

Naturally, our partners expressed concern at these developments, but they all indicated their willingness to discuss ways of carrying the project forward. At the French Government's suggestion, we explored with the companies the possibility of a short standstill agreement designed to protect the interests of all the parties during a negotiating period lasting into the Spring.

Unfortunately, the companies rejected this proposal. They felt obliged in the interests of their shareholders to take advantage of our inability to ratify the treaty by 1st January, and to claim that the Governments had abandoned the project. On 2nd January they served notices of abandonment which expire tonight.

Notwithstanding these notices, the companies on 9th January put forward to British and French officials a scheme for continuing the project. This scheme did not, in the Government's

view, provide a reasonable basis for negotiation. It would have given phase II shareholders the right to withdraw their money at a premium now. It would have given the shareholders who remained the right to withdraw their money at a premium if for any reason the project were abandoned before main construction began.

Also, the timetable proposed - a new Hybrid Bill in autumn 1975 to complete all its stages by summer 1976, with an effective commitment to be given in October 1975 that construction would start by the end of 1976 - was quite unacceptable to the British Government.

I have, therefore, regretfully informed the French Government that I see no alternative to accepting the companies' claim that the present arrangements have been abandoned. Nor, in the current economic circumstances, and, in the light of the Government's first determination to control public expenditure in the difficult years which lie immediately ahead, do I see the slightest prospect of the tunnel being taken over as a directly Government-financed project. The project will, therefore, be run down as soon as possible. However, the studies, plans and works will be preserved in the best possible state so far as practicable in case the tunnel scheme should be revived when circumstances are more propitious. Nothing will be done which might prejudice this possibility ...

(We regret that space does not allow us to reproduce the report of the interesting discussion which followed Mr. Crosland's statement. Ed.) X

Questions and answers (all written)

SSE = Secretary of State for the Environment

31st July Rail and road fares Mr. John H. Osborn, (Sheffield, Hallam) asked the SSE what is now the latest index or cost per mile for public passenger transport by rail around London for commuter distances, commuter distances in provincial towns and cities, rural routes, inter-city, and over the country as a whole, respectively; and how the situation has changed since 1st April 1974, 1973 and 1968. Mr. Mulley, The information is not readily available in the form requested. The average receipt per passenger mile for the British Railways system was 1.10p - 2.65 old pence - in 1968 and 1.59p in 1973, and for the London Transport 1.34p - 3.21 old pence - in 1968 and 2.4p in 1973.

Mr. John H. Osborn asked the SSE what is now the latest index or cost per mile for public passenger transport by road in London, in provincial towns and cities, urban areas, and over the country as a whole respectively; and how the situation has changed since 1st April 1974, 1973 and 1968. Mr. Mulley The information is not available in the form requested, but following are index numbers showing the change in the level of bus fares in Great Britain. (April 1968 = 100)

	All operators	London Transport
April 1968	100	100
April 1972	153	169
April 1973	155	170
April 1974	168	170

In 1972, the last complete year for which information is available, the average cost per mile

to passengers was 1.6p in the whole of Great Britain and 2.2p on the London Transport network.

11th November Railways (electrification) Mr. Snape (West Bromwich, East) asked the SSE if he will list the proposals at present before him for further railway electrification.

Mr. Mulley The Railways Board has submitted an outline proposal for electrification of the Oxted line. The responsible metropolitan county councils have included plans for the electrification of the Hough Green and Kirkby lines and electrification works associated with the Piccadilly-Victoria tunnel scheme in seeking transport supplementary aid.

3rd December Railways (electrification) Mr. Ron Lewis (Carlisle) asked the SSE if he will publish in the OFFICIAL REPORT details of authorisation to date of all plans under electrification ... Mr. Carmichael Schemes on which work is in progress were authorised as follows :- Merseyside loop underground railway - April 1971; Great Northern suburban electrification - August 1971; Merseyside link underground railway - July 1972; Glasgow Central low-level re-opening and electrification - August 1974.

Mr. Ron Lewis asked the SSE (1) if he has given his authorisation to the installation of electrification from Bishop's Stortford to Cambridge planned to begin in mid-1975 ... (2) if he has authorised British Railways to order materials for the electrification of the Ipswich-Colchester-Harwich scheme ... Mr. Carmichael The British Railways Board has not sought authority to proceed with either scheme, or to order materials.

4th December Railways (branch lines) Mr. Buchanan (Glasgow, Springburn) asked the SSE if he will give a general direction to British Railways urgently to consider the re-opening of town and city branch railway lines in order to assist fast container and other inter-city goods traffic to be kept off urban streets. Mr. Mulley No. Additional urban branch railway lines would not significantly reduce the road traffic which is needed to carry rail-borne freight to its final destination.

10th December Railways Mr. Bradley (Leicester, East) asked the SSE what directions he has given to the Railways Board under section 3 of the Railways Act, 1974. Mr. Mulley My right hon. Friend has today directed the British Railways Board to operate a railway passenger service that will continue to provide a public service, from 1st January 1975 onwards, which is comparable generally with that provided by the Board at present.

This direction has been given under section 3 of the Railways Act, 1974, which also empowers my right hon. Friend to make payments to the Board arising from the imposition of this obligation. This will mean that the Board will be able to apply to be compensated for those costs of operating its entire railway passenger system that cannot be met from relevant revenues.

The compensation is offset by revenues from fares, payment by passenger executives, local authorities or others for services required by them, and receipts from various activities related to carrying passengers by rail. It also takes account of the cost that freight services impose on the passenger system. The Board's claim for compensation under these powers for 1975 is £341 million.

The direction does not imply that there will be no changes in the coverage and quality of the passenger services the Railways Board provides. In carrying out its obligation, it will be able

to improve the system in such ways as it may agree with me in drawing up its business plans and investment programmes. It will also be able to discontinue services where my right hon. Friend gives consent for it to do so under the existing closure procedure. I need hardly say that any such consent would only be given after the most careful consideration of all the circumstances of each particular case ... X

Debates

20th December London rail study Debate on motion for the Christmas adjournment, initiated by Sir George Young (Ealing, Acton) (see cols. 2108-22, House of Commons "Hansard")

20th January, 1975 Channel Tunnel Adjournment debate, initiated by Mr. Eric Ogden (Liverpool, West Derby) (see cols. 1094-1162 House of Commons "Hansard").

REPORTS FROM BRANCHES AND AREAS

BRANCHES

London and Home Counties

✓X The Branch Committee has recently received copies of the Greater London Council consultation paper "Fare deal". This outlines the background to the present operating and financial difficulties of London Transport and various combinations of fare and rate increases which could be used to finance its services. The British Rail suburban network is scarcely mentioned, however, presumably because the GLC has no direct control over its fares or services. The Committee is currently studying the report and will be sending its comments to the GLC. X

✓X The Branch is to hold a meeting in the House of Commons on 11th March. Mr. Nigel Spearing, the member for Newham, South, will give a talk on aspects of London railways.

✓X A meeting, jointly sponsored by the Railway Invigoration Society, the Railway Development Association and the National Council on Inland Transport, will be held at Friends House, Euston Road, on 17th March. On this occasion, a representative of the Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive will give an illustrated address on the controversial proposals for rapid transit on Tyneside. Time will be allowed for subsequent discussion. X

Kilburn High Road station - which is served by Euston / Broad Street - Watford Junction trains - is being modernised at a cost of £45,000. Completion of the work is expected by May. Another London station to receive similar treatment (cost £156,000) is West Norwood (formerly Lower Norwood), on the Crystal Palace-Clapham Junction line.

A new maintenance depot, costing £2.5 million, has been opened recently near Wimbledon station. Much additional siding accommodation has also been provided. The depot will be used for maintaining and servicing rolling-stock for most services which operate from Waterloo. It is hoped to provide more reliable services when the depot is fully operational.

Delay in the provision of additional rolling stock has caused the postponement of a revised timetable on the Liverpool Street-Southend/Clacton/East Anglia lines, originally

planned to begin in May.

✓✗ A new station was opened at Basildon, on the Fenchurch Street-Southend line, on 25th November. It is situated near the town centre and has a half-hourly service to London.

It is understood that British Rail intends to electrify the 6-mile branch to Braintree (Essex) from the electrified main line at Witham. Initially, one through train a day to and from Liverpool Street will be included in the branch line time-table. ✗

One of the largest railway terminals in Europe for the handling of horticultural and agricultural produce has been opened at Paddock Wood (Kent). This belongs to the Spanish company of Transfesa and has been built with full support from British Rail.

East Anglian

✓✗ The annual general meeting of the Branch was held in Ipswich on Saturday, 18th January, and was followed by a public meeting.

Among those present was Mr. R. V. Banks, national vice-chairman of the RIS, who said that abandonment of the Channel Tunnel would mean that the expected increased traffic on rail would be forced to use the already overcrowded roads and, in doing so, use fuel which is becoming increasingly scarce and expensive. The Branch resolved that letters, deploring the Government's decision to abandon the Tunnel, should be sent to the Secretary of State for the Environment and to local members of Parliament.

Mr. R. V. Banks also addressed the meeting on the advantages of electrification and some of the problems in electrifying from Colchester to Ipswich, Felixstowe and Norwich were discussed. ✗

There was discussion on the possibility of re-opening five stations in Suffolk, mostly in the Ipswich area, and building an entirely new halt at Norwich Road, Ipswich. People from most of the villages concerned were at the meeting.

✓✗ Mr. R. Callaby, an RIS member, spoke on the successful campaign to re-open Magdalen Road station and the relevance of this campaign to re-opening proposals elsewhere. Suffolk County Council's Planning Officer and two local MPs have shown an interest in the matter.

The Wymondham, Dereham and Fakenham Rail Action Committee (WyDFRAC), set up to continue the RIS-initiated campaign to get that line re-opened, is holding monthly meetings and is embarking on an energetic publicity campaign. The figures given as the cost of re-opening and operating the line are being examined. The MP for South-West Norfolk is taking up with the Department of the Environment the question of level crossings, of which the line has many.

The Wisbech and March Rail Action Committee has published the results of its survey into how many people would use a re-opened line between the two towns. The results indicate that there would be 926 daily journeys on average on the line. Of those questioned, the supporters of a restored rail link outnumbered the opponents by 12½ to 1. The report has been sent to Cambridgeshire County Council and British Rail. The organisers are confident of the outcome. ✗

The Branch has added its voice to those of Norwich people protesting against plans for a £15 million long southern by-pass to the city. In a press statement issued early in December,

the Branch questioned the assumption that car ownership will keep on increasing and that, therefore, more and more roads must be provided, and urged that more of the east-west traffic through Norwich should go by rail.

✓✗ Branch committee member Mr. S. F. Wilkinson has been engaged in correspondence with British Rail and local firms in an effort to increase freight traffic on the Cambridge - St. Ives line. Greater use of the line for freight could halt the decay in its installations and make less costly an eventual re-opening for passengers. ✗

The Branch Secretary, Mr. T. J. Garrod, appeared on a BBC TV programme for East Anglia on 7th January. He put the case for re-opening closed stations and lines. He was questioned by a panel of three people, after which three panels of viewers throughout the region voted 14 to 7 in favour of the RIS proposals. Other viewers were also invited to send their votes to the BBC; subsequently it was announced that all those votes received had been in favour.

The Branch continues to examine the possibilities for more excursions in the area and to pass on suggestions to British Rail. Correspondence from the Branch has been published in the local press on freight and on the usage of the East Suffolk line. (It has been noted that the latest supplement to the "Passenger timetable: Great Britain" shows an extra train each way in the evenings from Monday to Friday between Ipswich and Saxmundham. Ed.) The Branch hopes to submit comments on the King's Lynn area transportation study.

Wessex

✓✗ The Secretary of State for the Environment has given his consent to the ending of passenger services on the Bridport-Maiden Newton branch line and British Rail has announced its intention to withdraw the services from 5th May. Local action to save the line still continues, however, and in this RIS member Mr. D. Rootham is playing a full part (see also Bridport Rail Action Group, p.15) ✗

Yeovil District Council is planning a dial-a-bus service to Yeovil Junction station in an effort to overcome the difficulties to travellers caused by the closure in recent years of Yeovil Town station and its links with Yeovil Pen Mill and Junction stations.

Mr. J. Honeysett, the Branch Secretary, recently gave a lecture at Southampton Technical College on local and national railway operations and the advantages of increased rail usage.

The Branch is to send a letter to every councillor on Hampshire County Council to point out the new possibilities for improved local public transport under recent legislation. The letter will urge the councillors to integrate train and bus services. A meeting was held with three councillors at the beginning of January to urge them to bring to the notice of fellow councillors the new powers available.

The Wessex Branch continues to work closely with the local branch of Transport 2000.

AREAS

Devon and Cornwall

Trains of maize are now being received at Exeter direct from Lavour, near Toulouse, France. The trains are brought across the North Sea on the Zeebrugge to Harwich ferry. The grain, which has been diverted from road transport, is distributed from Exeter to all parts of the South-West.

North-Eastern England

Our correspondent in the North-East reports :-

✓✗ Work on the so-called all-weather road to replace the Haltwhistle-Alston railway will not start until the spring at the earliest. Thus retention of the line is now anticipated until the middle of 1976. Cumbria County Council's appeal to the Department of the Environment to consider keeping the line open has been turned down, although the Prime Minister had earlier promised the Alston line action group that another look would be taken at the question. The County Council sees no further action that can be taken, but the action group fights on. Following a public meeting, the members of the action group have unanimously agreed to seek a meeting with the Secretary of State for the Environment and have asked Mr. William Whitelaw, member of Parliament for Penrith and the Border, to arrange this. This move is being supported by the Bishop of Newcastle, The Rt. Rev. Ronald Bowlby, who has attacked the extraordinarily uneconomical manner in which the line has been run. ✗

✓✗ In addition to work having started on the first of the super-tram tunnels for Tyneside's Metro system, the test site at Backworth is also in course of preparation. As this goes on, there is still controversy about the cost of the system. This is fast approaching double the original estimate of £65 million, but it is still supported by the vast majority of the Tyne and Wear Metropolitan Council members. ✗

In progress report No. 98 (March 1974), it was reported that British Rail had said that it would cost about £14,000 to re-open Fourstones station on the Newcastle-Carlisle line. British Rail now claims the cost could be as much as £20,000 and estimates a potential annual revenue of not more than £2,200. In a further attempt to discourage re-opening, it claims that the increase in journey time between Newcastle and Carlisle could mean a substantial increase in costs.

Following an increase of 20% in the number of passengers using the Tyne Valley rail services and, taking into account the information obtained from 800 interviews, British Rail plans various improvements to services from May. These include a service at 10-minute intervals between Hexham and Newcastle during the 7.30 - 8.30 morning rush-hour, plus a better Sunday service.

Due to heavy usage of the Sunderland-Newcastle evening rush-hour trains, an additional train operates from Sunderland each weekday at 17.05.

North-Western England

✓✗ Merseyside Metropolitan County Council has adopted a report on transport policy. As fifty per cent of families on Merseyside do not possess cars, the report recognises that public transport must be the chief means of movement for the majority of the population. The report points out that 200 people are killed, over 2,000 seriously injured and about 7,000 slightly injured in road accidents on Merseyside each year. The cost of these accidents amounts to £12 million annually. ✗

✓✗ In connection with the possible temporary closure of Liverpool Central station from the middle of this year (see last progress report, p. 11), British Rail asked all passengers using the station on 9th January to complete a brief questionnaire. The results of this survey will be used to examine the need for other public transport services should it be found necessary to close the station for a period to enable the delay in the construction of Liverpool's loop line to be overcome; ✗

14.

✓✕ The Secretary of State for the Environment has agreed to the withdrawal of passenger services between Chester and Runcorn and British Rail has announced that the last trains will run on 3rd May. ✕

Bus-rail interchange facilities may be introduced at Ormskirk station, which is connected with Liverpool Exchange station by a service of electric trains.

A public enquiry, conducted by a Department of the Environment inspector, into the outline plan for the Central Lancashire new town (covering Preston, Chorley and Leyland) the biggest project of its kind in Britain, was held in Preston from 5th November, 1974 to 24th January, 1975. There was a strong division of views expressed between the supporters of private transport and those who advocated improvements in public transport (including railways) Among the latter were representatives of Transport 2000 (North-Western Group), Planwatch (a local group) and Preston District Council.

Since the end of November, "park and ride" facilities have been provided at Bamber Bridge station on the Preston to Colne line.

Southern Scotland

✓✕ We are very pleased to record the appointment of Mr. F. H. Neville as Area Representative for the whole of Scotland, except for the eight counties covered by our Area Representative for Northern Scotland. Mr. Neville is also Hon. Secretary of the Scottish Association for Public Transport, a body with which we enjoy cordial relations. His address is : 351 Kingsway, Dundee, DD3 8LG.

With effect from 1st January, Glasgow Passenger Transport Executive has been financially responsible for seventeen local rail services in accordance with an agreement with British Rail under section 20 of the Transport Act, 1968. ✕

Northern Scotland (counties of Caithness, Sutherland, Ross and Cromarty, Inverness, Nairn, Moray, Banff, Aberdeen).

A new railhead is being built at Stromeferry (Inverness-Kyle of Lochalsh line) for an Anglo-French engineering consortium which has been awarded a £60 million contract to manufacture a 400,000 ton concrete oil drilling platform at nearby Loch Kishorn. This could mean two additional daily freight trains on the Kyle line this summer.

British Rail has recently opened sidings for steel traffic at Evanton, Ross-shire, on the Inverness-Wick line.

At an Aberdeen conference on oil-related investment, it was announced that soon new high-speed trains, reaching 125 m. p. h. will reduce the journey between the Granite City and London to seven hours.

OTHER NEWS

Between now and 1978, £52 million is to be spent on design, development, construction and testing of three electric advanced passenger trains and 32 high-speed trains. The journey time between King's Cross and Edinburgh will be reduced to 4 hours 20 mins. by 1979 by the

use of high-speed trains. Electric advanced passenger trains between Euston and Glasgow will cut the best time on that route from five down to four hours.

✓✗ The West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive plans to revive local rail services in its area. Among improvements due to be made in the near future are more frequent services on the suburban lines from Solihull and north Warwickshire to Birmingham Moor Street; reconstruction of a branch, almost two miles long, from the main Birmingham-Bristol line, to Frankley, where an overspill housing scheme is nearing completion; rebuilding of the line and doubling of the track of the 4½ mile branch from Barm Green to Redditch; and greatly improved services on the electrified line between Birmingham and Coventry. ✗

The station at Corby (Northants) may be re-opened to cater for more than 20,000 people expected at a local Highland gathering this year. Corby has a predominantly Scottish population.

✓✗ Ruskington station (Lincoln Central-Sleaford line) is to be re-opened experimentally from May. Lincolnshire County Council is considering the re-opening of one or two other stations in the Lincoln area. The RIS East Anglian Branch is concerning itself with the matter at the moment, as there is no RIS organisation at present covering most of Lincolnshire. The Branch has made some useful contacts, from which it seems that there is also a good case for re-opening Donington Road Station (Sleaford-Spalding line) ✗

In the North York Moors National Park, the planning authorities are considering the use of rail as an alternative to roads in a scheme that would encourage visitors to the Esk Valley to leave their cars on the outskirts and continue their journeys by train. Car parks would be provided at a disused siding and the existing British Rail service between Whitby and Middlesbrough would take visitors on to picnic areas.

Rebuilding is to be carried at Treforest station (Cardiff-Pontypridd line) and at Porth station (Pontypridd-Treherbert line) as a result of a grant from the Welsh office.

The 101-year-old steam railway on the Isle of Man has been rerieved for this year at least. But it will run over a shortened six-mile stretch of track, from Castletown to Port Erin. Tynwald (the Manx Parliament) has agreed to guarantee the Isle of Man Railway Company up to £20,000 against loss on this year's operations, which will last from May to September

WHAT OTHER SOCIETIES ARE DOING

✗ Bridport Rail Action Group. RIS member Mr. D. Rootham writes that, following the announcement that British Rail is to close the line, a local action group (of which he is joint secretary) was formed to fight the decision. The Group has already published an 8-point action plan to revive the line and a massive "write-in" protest is under way. The Group has appealed to the Railway Invigoration Society for help in challenging British Rail's case for closure. This rests entirely on British Rail's claimed figures: annual costs £69,000; annual revenue £4,000. Any reader willing to help should contact Bridport Rail Action Group, 119, South Street, Bridport, Dorset. ✗

✗ Swanage Railway Society On 7th January, the Dorset County Council's Planning and Transportation Committee recommended that the SRS be granted a licence to use the railway land between Furzebrook and Northbrook Road Bridge to run a scheduled passenger service. An announcement

is expected soon from the SRS about the future of this line. The Minister for Transport recently stated that there were no plans in the near future for this line to re-open under British Rail with grant aid. ✕

Transport 2000 On 11th January, there was a public meeting at Bicester (Oxon) to discuss the future of the Oxford-Bletchley line. The meeting was organised by the Thames Valley Group of Transport 2000 and the Milton Keynes Transport Users' Group. Dr. Chris Harvie, of the Open University, addressed the meeting. He stated that the way to get the line re-opened was to convince local authorities and councillors of the need for this and to persistently put pressure on MPs. A resolution from the meeting is to be sent to Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire county councils, district councils, British Rail area managers and MPs. The resolution calls for the re-opening of the line, because of the inadequate bus service, congestion on the Oxford-Bicester road and the Oxford road system, the necessity to attract car drivers to use public transport and the need for better transport connections. In 1974, a firm of traffic consultants - Freeman Fox and Partners - in a study for Milton Keynes Development Corporation - recommended reconsideration of the re-opening of the Oxford-Bletchley line.

Wirral Railway Circle is running a "Road to the Isles" rail and steamer tour, covering the West Highland line to Mallaig, for the weekend 2nd to 4th May. The Circle has also organised a "Cumbrian Coast express" for a visit to the Carnforth-Carlisle via Barrow-in-Furness and Whitehaven line on Saturday, 19th April. Full details of these excursions and of others to be run by the Circle in 1975 may be obtained by sending a stamped, self-addressed foolscap envelope to Mr. R. W. Thomson, Dovedale, Prospect Road, Prenton, Birkenhead, Merseyside, L42 8LE.

COMING EVENTS

Friday 25th April -- Railway Invigoration Society 25th anniversary dinner.

Saturday 26th April -- RIS 22nd annual general meeting.

Enclosed with members' copies of this progress report are leaflets which give details of the arrangements for these highly-important events. Full reports of both will appear in our next issue.

EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Editor : L. G. Hipperson, 24a, Cable Road, Hoylake, Merseyside, L47 2BD
(telephone : 051 632 4374)

Sub-Editor: H. R. Purser, 30, Staines Road, Feltham, Middlesex. TW14 0HD

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 to reach him by Saturday, 26th April (special arrangements will be made for reports of the 25th anniversary dinner and the 22nd AGM)

PUBLISHED by the RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY

Chairman : M. P. L. Caton, Ph. D., 10, Grosvenor Gardens, Upminster, Essex.

General Secretary: J. M. Stanley, M. A., 12, Westcombe Park Road, London. SE3 7RB

Membership Secretary: D. J. Bradbury, 59, Dore Road, Dore, Sheffield.

RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY

PROGRESS REPORT No. 102

MARCH 1975

MEMBERS ONLY SUPPLEMENT: ISSUE No. 22

21st BIRTHDAY DINNER

Members are reminded that the venue for the Society's anniversary dinner is the Charing Cross Hotel, London. Date : Friday, 25th April. Time : 7 p. m. (subject to confirmation). Cost : approximately £5. 50 per head; this will ensure a good meal. Dress for gentlemen : Lounge suits. Members may bring guests.

The principal guest has not yet been decided, but many distinguished personalities in the world of transport are expected to be present, including trades union leaders, representatives from the railway industry and kindred societies (e. g. NCIT), and some of our vice-presidents.

Combined return rail journey/hotel (bed and breakfast) facilities available for visitors to London were outlined in the previous issue of this members only supplement.

Early application is essential to make sure of a place at this very important RIS occasion, which we believe will be very well supported. Please make your provisional reservation on the form included with the last progress report. Or just write or phone the organiser, Mr. R. V. Banks, of 121 Ashford Road, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent (0622 (Maidstone) 37579).

This is an historic event not to be missed. We hope to produce a souvenir menu card for the evening.

STILL SELLING !

We have just received from Australia an order for a copy of "The great Isle of Wight train robbery", the very successful RIS publication first published in 1968. The book was written by Mr. R. E. Burroughs, who was at that time our area representative for the Isle of Wight, now included in the responsibilities of the Wessex Branch. Mr. Burroughs is still a very keen member of the RIS.

TIMETABLE RESEARCH

One of our recently-joined members, Mr. R. N. Forsythe, of Scoutbush, Hoveton, Norwich, NOR 06Z, has a comprehensive collection of railway timetables covering the whole country from 1960 onwards, plus many useful documents on operating, etc. He is willing to do research in these for any RIS member wanting information. This would be particularly useful in re-opening campaigns, e. g. , if people want to find out how good or bad a service was provided to a certain station or on a certain line prior to closure; whether a service was deliberately run down, if connections were bad, etc. Mr. T. J. Garrod,

Secretary of the East Anglian Branch, has already found these timetables useful in the re-opening campaigns which the Branch initiated in East Anglia, but points out that, as Forsythe is still at boarding school, he has access to his collections only at holiday times.

TRANSPORT IN METROPOLITAN AREAS

Owing to lack of support, the meeting of representative RIS members from metropolitan areas due to be held in Birmingham on 7th December was cancelled. However, a similar meeting has been fixed for 1st March in Leeds and we hope to include a full report of this in our next issue.

KNOW YOUR REPRESENTATIVE !

The following should be added to the information given in Members only supplement No. 19 (June 1974) :-

AREAS

Southern Scotland. The whole of Scotland, except the eight counties covered by the Northern Scotland area.

Area Representative : Mr. F. H. Neville, 351, Kingsway, Dundee, DD3 8LG

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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