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# Railway Invigoration Society

for the retention and modernisation of railway services

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## PROGRESS REPORT

No. 103

JUNE 1975

### OUR "GREAT AND NOBLE STRUGGLE"

(Text of speech - slightly abridged - delivered by Dr. L. S. Taitz, Chairman of Transport 2000, at the 21st anniversary dinner of the Railway Invigoration Society held at the Charing Cross Hotel, London, on 25th April)

Last week Mr. Banks very kindly sent me a brief history of the Railway Invigoration Society. I find that it has only increased my trepidation at my temerity for having accepted the invitation to propose the main toast this evening. For, having seen the great and noble struggle that this organisation has made over the last 21 years, I can only ask myself what I as a Johnny-come-lately am doing under the spotlight tonight.

It is a sad fact that only in the last five years have more than a comparative handful of people come to realise the enormous value of our rail system and the criminal way it has been wasted. The history of your society shows, as clearly as anything can, the evolution of the transport crisis.

You had your birth in the pre-Beeching era, when there was a gradual and progressive erosion of the rail system. These were the locust years of the 1950s, when the laissez faire attitude of the Government of the day allowed us to drift into a situation which was to lead to the virtually uncontrolled growth of road traffic. Long-term planning was sacrificed on the altar of short-term profit. A chronically under-capitalised railway was simply unable to compete with road as resources were poured into improving the road network.

Then came the Beeching axe and the 1962 Transport Act. Your society made many valiant efforts to counter the consequent destruction, but, in a pre-cost-benefit era, it was to little avail. It was just too easy for the authorities to produce questionable figures which could not be challenged. By this time, too, the road lobby had the bit between its teeth. Much of the misfortune which was to follow can be put down to mere foolishness, to economists who seem to think things either too large or too difficult to measure can be ignored, to a failure to appreciate that rural bus services would not be able to make good the lost branch lines and to an inability to recognise that the rail system existed as an integrated network and could not be treated as a series of isolated sections.



But there was more to it than mere foolishness. Much of what was done was done deliberately to appease the road lobby and the highwaymen who dominated the Ministry of Transport and the planning of local authorities. They have a lot to answer for, these destroyers of our cities, towns and countryside.


Dr. Beeching did little more than carry out the brief devised by Whitehall. Perhaps he found his task congenial. Perhaps that is why he was appointed. The 1960s will go down in history as the era in which the nation was gripped by a disastrous fallacy - that we could solve our transport problems by road construction. We were the victims of a gigantic confidence trick which involved the virtual dismantling of the finest railway system in the world and a general rundown of public transport.

Towards the end of that era there began to be signs that some at least were beginning to have second thoughts. The continued efforts of your society played no little part in this re-appraisal. The 1968 Transport Act went some way to stopping the rot by recognising that certain lines had social benefits which could not be measured by the naive bookkeeping of the Beeching era. Unfortunately, the Act still perpetuated the myth that each part of the network could be regarded independently and we were saddled with the notorious Cooper Brothers' formula.

Since then two great issues have arisen which have totally altered the situation. The Railway Invigoration Society has been quick to recognise both. The first was the gradual realisation that a transport policy based on road in a country as over-crowded as Britain was environmentally disastrous. The second was the energy crisis and all that that entailed for mobility and living standards in the future. The 1974 Railway Act, which appears to accept at last that the rail network cannot make a profit in the conventional sense and must be seen as a whole, is, at first sight, a great victory for the rail lobby and a vindication of all the arguments which your society has been pressing during the last 21 years.

The rot appears to have been stopped, at least for the moment. If the Government has truly learnt the lessons of recent events, we should see a switch of resources from road to rail, so that the railways can carry out two basic duties: to increase both passenger and freight mileage. If this is not achieved, then we have failed.

We must not make the mistake of underestimating the magnitude of the task. The road lobby is so powerful and so entrenched that it is capable of a formidable counter-attack. Until policy-making on transport is taken out of the hands of those who at present decide it - the old Ministry of Transport mandarins now masquerading under their positions within the Department of the Environment - we will continue to have no effective transport policy in this country. Until this is changed, there is no prospect of proper transport integration and no real hope of railway improvements.

This then is the task that confronts you in your 22nd year. I can assure you that you will have many friends in the battles which lie ahead. ... I give you the Railway Invigoration Society. May it have an adulthood which justifies its name! 



## RAIL DEVELOPMENT PLAN NEEDED FOR NEXT TEN YEARS

(Text of the Chairman's address delivered at the annual general meeting of the Society held in London on 26th April).

✕ At a time when British Rail is having to grapple with the problems of serious inflation, it is not inappropriate to look back and note the measures taken to tackle the railways' financial difficulties on previous occasions.

This year this Society celebrates its 21st birthday and throughout our history we have seen the railways face a succession of crises, all of a very similar pattern. Each crisis starts with the failure of BR, as a result of mounting costs, to meet its financial targets as laid down by Parliament. The issues involved are then fervently debated in the press and in Parliament and, needless to say, the anti-railway lobby loses no opportunity to cast a shadow of doom over the future of the railways and to extol the virtues of road transport.

Eventually it is decided to heal the breach by a package deal involving closures, higher fares, economies in operation and a re-adjustment of the railways' financial targets with some additional Government support. All is then all right for a while - until the next crisis arises and then the whole process is repeated all over again.

To the extent that it is the consequence of excessive inflation, the present financial crisis is far more serious than those that have preceded it; but then here BR shares the same problems with other industries and these are national problems, not confined to the railways. However, before any action is taken to deal with the problems as specifically applied to the railways, a very careful examination must be made of the success of the measures taken in the past to see whether they are likely to be helpful if applied again.

One thing is certain - the answer does not lie in closures. During our Society's 21-year life we have repeatedly warned that closures - because they eroded traffic from the rest of the system - would not reduce the railways' deficits and subsequent events have proved we were right. Thus the closure of thousands of route miles under the Beeching Plan, far from cutting losses, actually led to an increase in the annual BR deficit.

Rail closures are now recognised by informed opinion as quack economics and, furthermore, a raising uncertainty of the future of more lines, especially as governments of both major parties have agreed to keep the system at around its present size. The closure solution reveals a lack of direction and a failure to face the real issues.

Needless to say, an angry public, deeply annoyed by the inadequacies and ultimate demise of much of the alternative transport promised after previous closures, is hardly likely to react calmly to what would almost certainly amount to a total elimination of public transport in the areas concerned. The railways' financial gap can probably be closed to some extent by fare increases, but, as a result of steep rises in the past year, the limit to this is near, and, as the Railways Board Chairman, Mr. Richard Marsh, has said, further increases would bring diminishing returns. Furthermore, whatever improvement it may bring to BR's finances, every fare increase can only result in



the diversion of traffic away from the railways on to more fuel-hungry transport modes at the very time when the Government is conducting a save energy campaign.

This Society has always supported the implementation of sensible economies in manpower and we were amongst the first to suggest the reducing of stations to unstaffed halts, a policy which has now been widely adopted. BR and the unions in co-operation must now look hard to see what further economies can be made. It is also reasonable to ask the Government to provide further financial backing for the railways. Despite recent increases, much of which is in any case a result of inflation, Government support to BR falls well below that given to their railways by governments of other major industrial continental countries. Local Authorities should also help here.

Having said all this, however, there are more fundamental issues to be faced and lessons to be learned from what has been a mistaken attitude to railways of successive governments, which, far from solving the railways' problems, have helped to precipitate them.

Mr. Richard Marsh has recently criticised the Government for granting the railways sums for investment and then shortly afterwards taking some of it away again, playing havoc with any reasonable attempt at long-term planning. Throughout our history we have seen this stop-go policy applied time and again.

When the Society was first formed the railways were not too efficient, mainly steam operated and suffering from years of neglect. The 1955 Modernisation Plan was put forward as a (belated) attempt to put this right and place the railways on a viable footing. Since the Plan was to take 15 years, it was probably inevitable that the BR deficit would first get worse whilst BR was bearing much of the cost of modernisation without reaping its benefits. However, instead of leaving the Plan to take its intended course, the Government of the day repeatedly interfered and, in a panic measure, appointed Dr. Beeching, which led not only to the mass closures but to upheaval and uncertainty of the future of rail transport as a whole. Modernisation was re-appraised and for a time it was thought that even the London-Manchester/Liverpool electrification would not proceed.

When, however, modernisation was completed and proved to be a major success, instead of immediately implementing further railway development, little further investment transpired and even the continuation of electrification to Glasgow, a logical extension of the earlier scheme, was delayed by bureaucracy for several years. Had modernisation of this and other routes been pursued with vigour and BR left alone to get on with the job, the railways would now be in a far more competitive position and much of the need to find subsidies to prop up losses would not have arisen. There is little doubt that much of the reluctance to make investment in railways has resulted from the massive power of the road lobby and the manner in which successive governments have given way to its demands at the expense of the railways.

Whereas there is a cry of alarm every time the railways are in financial difficulties, little concern is expressed at the massive expenditure of taxpayers' money on roads, without any attempt to justify it in commercial terms. Not only have these powerful vested interests twisted



the arm of successive governments to spend these massive sums, but they have justified them on the false premise that track - i. e., road costs - are the only costs to which road users give rise. They make no mention of the massive hidden subsidies; for example, the use of millions of pounds worth of valuable land for free parking, the cost of accidents, and of traffic control. Planners, both in central and local government, have been heavily biased in favour of roads, which have been built as a matter of course with little thought as to whether the money could have been more wisely spent on rail.

The time has now come for a radical change of heart at local and national level. Because of the energy crisis and the rising prices of hydrocarbon fuels it is essential that much traffic should be transferred to rail. If this is to be achieved, we must plan for the future with vigour, despite the present difficulties. OUR ADVICE TO BRITISH RAIL IS "BE BOLD - PRODUCE A DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS, INCLUDING EXTENSIVE ELECTRIFICATION, PLACE IT ON THE MINISTER'S DESK AND CHALLENGE THE GOVERNMENT TO ACCEPT IT." PEOPLE HAVE SHOWN THAT THEY WANT RAILWAYS AND THAT IF THE SERVICES ARE GOOD ENOUGH THEY WILL USE THEM - WE BELIEVE SUCH A PLAN WOULD RECEIVE STRONG PUBLIC SUPPORT. ✕

#### RIS 21st ANNIVERSARY DINNER

A thoroughly enjoyable evening was spent by those members and guests who attended the twenty-first anniversary dinner of the Railway Invigoration Society on Friday 25th April. Appropriately, this was held on railway property, in one of the rooms of the banqueting suite of the sumptuous Charing Cross Hotel. Before dinner, participants assembled in a private bar.

The toast to the Queen was proposed by the retiring RIS Chairman, Dr. M. P. L. Caton. This was followed by a toast to the Railway Invigoration Society, proposed by Dr. L. S. Taitz. The text of his speech, slightly abridged, begins on the front page of this progress report.

Replying to the toast to the Society, Dr. Caton said that it was a great honour to the RIS to have Dr. Taitz as its principal guest at the dinner. There was a great need for an effective transport policy and Transport 2000, of which body Dr. Taitz was Chairman, was doing much to promote this. Dr. Caton observed that when one looked back on the history of the Society, it had had its successes and failures. At the time that Dr. Beeching was wielding his ~~favour-axe~~, it appeared <sup>famous</sup> that railways in this country would disappear altogether. That we still had a railway system was a tribute to the work of the Railway Invigoration Society and similar bodies. Owing largely to their efforts, railways still ran to such remote parts of the United Kingdom as Penzance, Wick & Thurso and East Anglia.

During the course of its activities, the Society had learned much about the way in which this country was run and who really decided policies. There were powerful vested interests which opposed all that we stood for. The supporters of railways had been classed as cranks and sentimentalists, but there was no object for which people had a more sentimental regard than the private motor car.



Dr. Caton claimed that the Railway Invigoration Society had been in the forefront of the movement which had been pressing for a modern railway system. In this movement, Transport 2000, with its strong call for more electrification, had also played a notable part.

Mr. R. V. Banks, Vice-Chairman of the RIS, proposed the toast to guests and visitors. These included representatives of the National Council on Inland Transport, the Railway Development Association, Transport 2000 and the SOS (Save our Services) Campaign.

Mr. C. F. Rowe, Chairman of the London Area of the Railway Development Association, in his reply stressed how that organisation, which had been founded two years before the RIS, had always enjoyed cordial relations with us. Their aims were very similar to our own and he was very happy to be the RDA representative on the RIS National Committee. He particularly admired the RIS countrywide branch and area organisation, to which the RDA possessed no counterpart. On behalf of all the guests and visitors, he expressed grateful thanks for the generous hospitality which they had received from the Railway Invigoration Society.

The duties of toastmaster were most capably carried out by RIS National Committee member Mr. H. G. M. Rogers.

Mr. Banks, organiser of the evening's proceedings, has, very deservedly, received many letters which express appreciation of the excellent result of his efforts.

#### CHANGE IN RIS CHAIRMANSHIP

At this year's AGM, Dr. M. P. L. Caton announced that, owing to pressure of his professional and other commitments, he was compelled to resign as Chairman. This news was received with great regret, though understanding, by those present.

Dr. Caton, who was elected Chairman at the AGM in 1961, had held that office for a longer period than any of his predecessors. He succeeded Mr. G. F. Manley, happily still a valued member of the National Committee. Before he became Chairman, Dr. Caton had been a member of the National Committee for a year or so. From 1960-7, he was editor of the progress report (succeeding Mr. K. G. Judd), so that for a period of six years (1961-67), he carried out the duties of two vital positions within the Society.

The new Chairman is Mr. R. V. Banks, who has been a member of the Society for fifteen years. He was first elected to the National Committee in 1964 and held office as Press and Publicity Officer from that year until last month. In 1969 he was elected a Vice-Chairman, which post he occupied until the recent AGM. An Executive Committee member of Transport 2000, he is Chairman of the Kent Group of that body.

Of a genial and modest nature, Mr. Banks has, since his retirement eleven years ago, devoted much of his time to the work of the RIS and to the cause of railways in general. He has been extremely energetic in persuading booksellers to stock RIS publications, travelling hundreds of miles each year in so doing.



In acknowledging his election to new office, Mr. Banks told those members present at the AGM that it was with considerable trepidation that he had agreed to be nominated to take the place of Dr. Caton, who had set an extremely high standard. On behalf of the Society, he thanked Dr. Caton for the tremendous volume of work he had carried out for it. These sentiments were enthusiastically echoed by several other members.

THE SETTLE AND CARLISLE RAILWAY

✓X Five stations on the Settle-Carlisle line were re-opened (after being closed since 1970) on the weekends 3rd/4th May and 31st May/1st June and will be so again on the weekend 5th/6th July. The stations are Horton-in-Ribblesdale, Ribbleshead, Dent, Garsdale and Kirkby Stephen. It is anticipated that these stations will also be re-opened on the first weekends in August and September.

The re-opening arises from the chartering of special trains by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Committee. Trains stop at Bradford Foster Square, Shipley, Bingley, Keighley, Skipton, Settle and the stations named above (except that Ribbleshead is served by Southbound trains only). On the Saturdays, a train leaves Leeds at 8.03 a.m. for Appleby, from whence it returns at 10.50 am. to bring shoppers into the cities of Bradford and Leeds. At 5.03, a train leaves Leeds to take shoppers back home and returns at 7.55 p.m. from Appleby with those who have spent a day in the Dales. On the Sundays, there is one train in each direction, 8.38 a.m. from Leeds and 6.30 p.m. from Appleby. From Garsdale, connecting buses run to and from Sedbergh, Hawes, Keld and Dent village - for the last two places on Sundays only. Walks, led by National Park guides, are organised in connection with the trains, which, on the first weekend of running, were loaded to capacity. X

Further details, including advance booking forms, may be obtained from the National Park Officer (Dales Rail Project), Yorebridge House, Bainbridge, Leyburn, North Yorkshire, DL8 3BP.

✓X North Yorkshire and Cumbria county councils have shared the cost (about £3,600) of repairing platforms at the re-opened stations, while the National Park Committee has paid £5,000 for such work as rebuilding gates and handrails, repairing lavatories and putting up Dales Hill station signs decorated with the Park symbol, a black-faced Swaledale ram. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Committee hopes that its experiment in chartering special trains will be so successful that British Rail will be persuaded to run its own specials along the Settle-Carlisle line. X *Rail X*

SENIOR CITIZEN RAILCARDS

We welcome the new senior citizen railcards, introduced by British Rail on 1st April. These entitle retired people to travel anywhere in the country until 31st March next year at half the full 2nd class single or return fare. Full details may be obtained from inquiry offices or agencies.

Two drawbacks are (1) the cost of £4 (plus 32p. VAT) per card; and (2) the restricted validity for travel on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays only.



IN PARLIAMENTSelections from the official reportsHouse of CommonsQuestions and answers

SSE = Secretary of State for the Environment.

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

✓ \* 15th January Railways (re-opened lines) Mr. Gwilym Roberts (Cannock) asked the SSE how many railway lines have been re-opened in each of the past five years; and how many proposals he is currently considering. Mr. Mulley Two in 1970, one in 1972, three in 1973 and one in 1974 were authorised for re-opening as light railways. In addition, the Railways Board re-opened their Peterborough-Spalding line in 1971. There are two other current proposals. Mr. Roberts Does my right hon. Friend agree that that is a sad record in view of the considerable need to improve public transport? Does he accept that if urgently required railway lines, such as the Walsall-Cannock-Rugeley line, are to stand any chance of being re-opened, we cannot depend on local authorities or British Rail, but there must be additional Government money? ... Mr. Mulley ... I have to work out my programme from instructions which come from my right hon. Friends who think that there is a need to reduce public expenditure, I have every sympathy with my hon. Friend's interest. This kind of proposal must come from the local authorities and/or the Railways Board. Under the Railways Act, which we enacted last session, I shall be required to find between £300 and £400 million for revenue support for the railways under the new system.

\* Rear-Admiral Morgan-Giles (Winchester) Is the Mid-Hants railway, the so-called "Watercress line", one of the two proposals currently under consideration? Mr. Mulley I am not sure whether that question should be addressed to my right hon. Friend the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. The two proposals which are currently under consideration are the Taunton-Minehead and Sheringham-Weybourne lines. X ?

✓ X \* Mr. Grocott (Lichfield and Tamworth) In view of the need, even at this late date, to try to repair some of the vandalism of the Beeching era, may I ask whether my right hon. Friend agrees that it is a mistake for British Rail in any area to sell off assets, to demolish station buildings or to remove the track bed or embankments of railways closed in the past which may very likely need to be re-opened in the near future? Mr. Mulley It is difficult to make a blanket statement. My hon. Friend says that it is a question of whether they are likely to be re-opened, and that is the kernel of the argument. It must remain largely a matter for British Rail. I accept the great importance of British Rail, but I am rightly under strong pressure to do even more than we have been able to do to support road passenger public transport as well. X

30th January Wales: Transport expenditure Mr. Wigley (Caernarvon) asked the Secretary of State for Wales what were the original estimates and the latest estimates of grants to each of the



counties of Wales for 1974-75 for the expenditures which will be covered in 1975-76 by the new transport supplementary grants, Mr. John Morris The information is as follows:-

County	Original Estimate (£m.)	Out-turn forecast (£m.)
Gwynedd	0.70	0.70
Clwyd	1.51	1.05
Dyfed	0.65	0.60
Powys	0.42	0.54
West Glamorgan	1.56	1.63
Mid Glamorgan	0.57	0.46
South Glamorgan	1.00	0.80
Gwent	2.89	2.71

Actual expenditure by authorities is, of course, bound to depend upon the progress made with schemes and other factors.

Sir Raymond Gower (Barry) asked the Secretary of State for Wales ... what is the level of expenditure accepted by him for each county in 1975-76. Mr. John Morris The accepted levels of expenditure for the purposes of transport supplementary grant for the year 1975-76 at November 1973 prices are:

	£ million	
Gwynedd	3,308	
Clwyd	4,864	
Dyfed	4,724	
Powys	2,851	
West Glamorgan	4,904	
Mid Glamorgan	5,212	
South Glamorgan	4,791	
Gwent	5,946	36,600.

4th February Transport expenditure Mr. Dudley Smith (Warwick and Leamington) asked the SSE what representations he has received from local authorities on his decisions on the level of local transport expenditure accepted for each county for 1975-76. Mr. Mulley One, from the Greater Manchester Council that its allocation of transport supplementary grant is insufficient to enable a start to be made on the Piccadilly-Victoria tunnel.

5th February Railways (capital investment) Mr. Teddy Taylor (Glasgow, Cathcart) asked the SSE what estimate he has made of the capital investment to be expended by British Rail in 1975; and what were the comparable totals 5 and 10 years previously respectively. Mr. Mulley £187m. and £125m. for 1975 and 1970 respectively. The 1965 figure was £221m., but this is not comparable since it provided for not only a much larger rail network but also for activities since transferred to other bodies.



Railways (electrification) Mr. Gwynfor Evans (Carmarthen) asked the SSE how many miles of electrified railways there were in England and Wales respectively. Mr. Mulley In England, 1,920 route miles; in Wales, none.

Transport grants Mr. Wigley (Caernarvon) asked the SSE what proportion of the new transport supplementary grants proposed for Wales and England for 1975-76 has been allocated to the Greater London, Birmingham and Manchester metropolitan areas. Mr. Mulley Greater London 34 per cent; West Midlands 7 per cent; Greater Manchester 5 per cent.

13th February Railways (Government investment) Mr. Gould (Southampton, Test) asked the SSE whether he will publish the amount of Her Majesty's Government present investment programme in British Rail. Mr. Carmichael The planned levels of investment were set out in the white paper "Public expenditure to 1978-9" (Cmnd. 5879), published last month.

24th February Railways (electrification) Mrs. Winifred Ewing (Moray and Nairn) asked the SSE how many miles of electrified railway there are in Scotland and England respectively. Mr. Carmichael In Scotland 230 route miles and in England 1,920 route miles.

26th February Railways (container traffic) Mr. Ronald Atkins (Preston, North) asked the SSE what tonnage was carried by rail-borne container traffic in 1973 and 1974, compared with that estimated in the Beeching report. Mr. Carmichael British Rail estimates that the total rail-borne container traffic borne in 1973 and 1974 was 7.7 million tonnes. The Beeching report contained no forecasts of the container traffic which would be carried, but estimated the potential market at about 40 million tonnes in 1973. X

#### Debates

31st January Railways (electrification) Adjournment debate, initiated by Mr. Peter Snape (West Bromwich, East) (see cols. 902-12, House of Commons "Hansard")

6th February Public transport Adjournment debate, initiated by Mr. Geoffrey Dodsworth (Hertfordshire, South-West) (see cols. 1744-54, House of Commons "Hansard")

13th February Pic. -Vic. Railway, Manchester Adjournment debate, initiated by Mr. Frank Hatton (Manchester, Moss Side) (see cols. 768-78, House of Commons "Hansard")

14th April Railway industry Adjournment debate, initiated by Mr. Timothy Raison (Aylesbury) (see cols. 107-68, House of Commons "Hansard")

15th April London Transport Bill (2nd reading) (see cols. 345-74, House of Commons "Hansard")

15th April Rail services (north of Scotland) Adjournment debate, initiated by Mr. Hamish Gray (Ross and Cromarty) (see cols. 374-91, House of Commons "Hansard")

#### House of Lords

#### Debates

4th December Urban transport, initiated by Lord Byers (see cols. 196-211, 227-90, House of Lords "Hansard")



11th December Future of the railways, initiated by Lord Somers (see cols. 647-89, House of Lords "Hansard").

(It is much regretted that, owing to severe pressure on space, this feature has been drastically curtailed. We hope to bring coverage up-to-date in our next issue. Ed.)

## REPORTS FROM BRANCHES AND AREAS

### BRANCHES

#### London and Home Counties

✓✗ The Branch Committee has written to the Greater London Council giving its views on the consultation paper "Fare deal - your choice". The GLC estimates that London Transport costs will rise from £145m. in 1973 to £365m. in 1977 and suggests three strategies: nil, 30% or 45% fare increase, the balance being provided in each case by a rates increase. The Committee feels that an intermediate fare increase of 15-20%, with a rates increase of typically 18-20p. per week, would provide the best compromise. ✗

The easing of the staff shortage should enable London Transport to restore a full service on the Underground by May. A full bus service is expected by the end of the year.

✓✗ Part 1 of the London Rail Study (the Barran report) was published on 28th November and is available from the GLC Bookshop, County Hall, London, SE1 7PB, price 25p. (The more comprehensive part 2 is also available at £3.30). Its recommendations give highest priority to station modernisation, including improved interchange facilities and car parks, and electrification of all remaining diesel-operated radial commuter services into London. The report did not recommend the introduction of the Ring-Rail scheme yet, but considered improvements to existing non-radial routes in north London worthwhile, including a service over the Clapham Junction to Willesden Junction link. It suggests that the Fleet line be extended to Thamesmead, via the Dockland area (where redevelopment should be integrated with the railway) and Woolwich (to provide relief to British Rail's north Kent services). It also recommends an immediate feasibility study on the Cross-Rail proposals to link Paddington with Bethnal Green and Victoria with London Bridge; and an increase in the frequency of the off-peak suburban services wherever this can be justified, particularly on the Bakerloo line north of Queen's Park. ✗

A special "Away-day" bargain was available during the Easter holidays throughout the South-East area. For each adult day-return ticket bought, a child's ticket was available for 25p., representing a considerable saving on long journeys and helping to reduce the cost of family travel. It is expected that the scheme will be repeated in the summer.

✓✗ Support is growing in Surrey for the campaign to re-open the Guildford-Horsham line, at least as far as Cranleigh, where the old route has been blocked by a recent shopping development. The campaign is being led by Mr. Gareth Floyd, a Liberal county councillor, who believes there is a substantial number of London commuters living in Cranleigh and the surrounding area. He is also concerned over heavy traffic, especially timber lorries, on the Cranleigh-Guildford main road,



Mr. R. V. Banks, the new Chairman of the RIS, recently had an informal talk with Mr. Floyd to discuss the possibilities of action. An editorial in the Surrey County Advertiser of 5th February, while sympathetic to the aims of the campaign and critical of the original closure decision, doubted whether re-opening would be practicable. A spokesman for Surrey County Council, while expressing interest in the idea, doubted whether a financial case for re-opening could be made. ✕

### East Anglian

The Branch has submitted a 1,000-word document to the planning authorities and British Rail concerning the recently-published King's Lynn Area Land Use/Transportation Study. Included in the document are the following suggestions:- (1) a new halt for the Hardwick Road Industrial Estate - and possibly a halt at Stow Bridge; (2) as the present King's Lynn station is outdated, a new, somewhat smaller, one should be built on the same central site; (3) freight should be boosted in several ways, including restoration of a lifted branch to the Quayside, a new full-loads depot and approaches to firms with lineside premises; (4) as a long-term measure, the feasibility of re-laying the King's Lynn-Hunstanton line should be investigated, especially in view of an expected increase in population in that area.

✓✕ The Society's investigations into the possibilities of more freight on the Cambridge-St. Ives line continue and these were discussed at the Branch meeting held in Cambridge 17th May. on/x

In evidence submitted at hearings into the proposed Cambridge northern by-pass, the Branch urged the re-opening to passengers of the Cambridge-St. Ives line and also a route from Cambridge to Bletchley and Oxford. This evidence, which received good press publicity, stressed the importance of studying the rail alternatives to further expensive road-building schemes. ✕

The Branch replied in similar vein to proposals (inspired by the British Road Federation) for a "Haven Expressway" (east-west motorway) published in the Ipswich local press.

In view of soaring car-parking costs in Norwich, the Branch Vice-Chairman, Mr. P. R. Lawrence, wrote to the Eastern Evening News to stress the need of better public transport, including the restoration of passenger services on the Wroxham-Aylsham and Wymondham-Dereham-Fakenham lines. ... Mr. Lawrence is also organising a survey of the line from Norwich to Cromer and Sheringham. A questionnaire is being sent to local authorities and all other interested bodies (about 60 in all) to seek their opinion on the usefulness of the present service and on how it might be improved, etc.

✓✕ The Wymondham, Dereham and Fakenham Rail Action Committee (WyDFRAC) has questioned some of the figures quoted by Norfolk County Council in a partial breakdown of the costs of re-opening their line (e. g., £10,000 for one unstaffed halt!), though other figures (e. g., £20,000 for an automated level crossing) seem reasonable. The Action Committee has just issued its first newsletter. It has started an associate membership scheme for non-active supporters and it is raising money by, among other things, the sale of "Back WyDFRAC" pens. ✕



Following the RIS proposals for re-opening stations and building new halts in the Ipswich area, the Ipswich Industrial Group has also called for a halt at Norwich Road and has made interesting proposals for other new halts.

With the help of school pupils, the local authority is to carry out a survey at Soham (Cambridgeshire) into the possibility of re-opening the station there.

A freight survey is being undertaken in the Yarmouth area by RIS member Mr. K. O. Cutmore. A questionnaire has been sent to firms asking how much - if at all - they use rail freight services at present and in what circumstances they would send more goods by rail, etc.

✓✗ The future of the Peterborough-Spalding line is uncertain. The county and district councils that have been subsidising the passenger service to the extent of £23,000 per annum are reconsidering their position. The future of the service may depend on whether it is included in the public service order providing for any operational loss being met by central government. The Branch has arranged a meeting in the South Holland Centre, Spalding, on Saturday, 14th June, at 2 p.m., to discuss this and other matters concerning rail services in the east midlands, particularly Lincolnshire. ✗

Recently, British Rail announced a plan to extend electrification to Norwich. This would enable an appreciable reduction to be made in the journey time between that city and London. However, the Eastern Daily Press, in a leading article, argued that the cost of electrification would not be justified. Subsequently, a letter from the Branch Secretary, who put forward strong reasons for supporting the proposal, was published in the paper.

### Three Counties

✓✗ The AGM of this Branch was held in Cheltenham on 7th March. . . . The Branch issued a newsletter in February. This included the following items:- ✗

On 29th January a high-speed train made some test runs on the Bristol to Barnt Green line, which includes the Lickey Incline. The first line to obtain the high-speed train will be the Paddington-Bristol/Swansea route in 1976, followed by the east coast main line in 1977, and then the Paddington-Penzance line. The north-east/south-west service would be a logical next step, because the maintenance depots would by then be at Newcastle, Bristol and in the South-West. However, the Society does not have a date for the introduction of the HST on the north-east/south-west route.

The Branch Chairman has carried out a considerable volume of correspondence with British Rail, Bromsgrove District Council, the Transport Users' Consultative Committee, Bromsgrove Passenger Association and the local member of Parliament regarding the poor rail service from Bromsgrove station. The District Council and the RIS referred the matter to the TUCC, which produced a long report after investigations. The TUCC was surprised that neither British Rail nor the District Council and the RIS had produced statistical evidence to support their views. A few improvements in the service were, however, introduced in May. . . . Since Stonehouse station was given an improved train service, the revenue collected there has doubled. The Department of the



Environment has listed the station building as one of architectural interest. Hence it cannot be demolished and will have to be renovated. ✕

### West Yorkshire

✓✕ The boundaries of this Branch's area have been retracted to the north but extended to the east, so that the area covered is now bounded by an imaginary line joining Skipton, Ripon, York, Bridlington, Hull, Doncaster, Sheffield and the Lancashire border. Obviously, the name of the Branch needs changing.

At the Branch AGM, held in Leeds on 10th May, the Acting Secretary stated that the Branch had been granted permission to participate in the West Yorkshire Structure Plan and Land Use Transportation Study. Among other matters discussed were the promotion of tourist traffic on freight lines and the possible re-opening of the Malton-Pickering line.

The Branch has been considering connectional excursion facilities to Windermere from West Yorkshire, the Dales Rail project (see p. 7) and the re-opening of stations, these subjects to be included in a report to be submitted to the West Yorkshire SP & LUTS and other bodies. ✕

✓✕ A provisional plan for Sheffield and Rotherham has been prepared by the LUTS team for South Yorkshire. The main features incorporate ideas for an improved public transport system, including railways. A new loop line, partly underground and with four stations, is suggested for Sheffield city centre. Among the team's conclusions are (1) that it is uneconomic to build new roads, especially for the use of motorists in the rush hours, unless public transport is helped; and (2) that present public transport is inadequate, especially in the outer areas where people will live in the future.

Brief items: Passengers using a new shuttle service of 104 trains daily between Leeds and Bradford travelled free on the first day 5th May. - Transport 2000's ideas for rail electrification in West Yorks. have been well received by the local press. - Availability of the Metro card (sold in West Yorks.) is to be extended to rail by the summer. ✕

### AREAS

#### North-Western England

✓✕ Work has started on rebuilding Altrincham station so as to provide a bus/rail interchange - the first in the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Area. In this, the PTA is a year or two behind Merseyside, which already has several stations with such facilities. ✕

✓✕ In Liverpool, Central station is to be closed temporarily from 28th July to allow work to proceed on the new deep level station, which will be served by trains on the inner loop. The Central Station Action Committee, which was formed earlier this year by businessmen in the Bold St. area to oppose the closure on the grounds of feared loss of trade, has now decided not to delay the completion of the scheme, as this will be to the benefit of Merseyside in general, traders included. The Action Committee has now become a sub-committee of the Liverpool Stores Committee in order that an eye may be kept on the alternative transport arrangements. ✕



From 5th May, the four stopping trains per hour on the Liverpool-Southport line have been reduced to three. But the withdrawn trains have been replaced by hourly expresses, which call only at Formby, Ainsdale and Birkdale.

In the Preston Division of British Rail, a campaign has been launched aimed at getting increased use of local passenger services. Each line in the Division has been given its own title and distinctive colour. Extensive publicity is taking place and special fares are being offered.

In a report on transport policy which it has made to Lancashire County Council, the Ribble Valley District Council has suggested the re-opening of the Clitheroe-Blackburn line.

People at Lytham St. Anne's, on the Fylde coast of Lancashire, are annoyed that their town has been omitted from the list of Golden Rail resorts.

✓X As a result of the withdrawal of the shipping service between Heysham and Belfast, British Rail has published a proposal to withdraw the rail passenger service between Morecambe and Heysham. The nominal date of closure is 23rd June. X

#### Southern Scotland

The latest consultants' report on a future transport system for Edinburgh and its environs concludes that a light rail transit network "could offer significant benefits in Edinburgh", but recommends further studies.

#### OTHER NEWS

Among improvements included in the new British Rail timetables which came into force from 5th May are:-

- an extra 100 passenger trains daily on Eastern Region - these include more between London and Edinburgh and a new direct Leeds-Dundee link;
- 28 extra trains daily between Newcastle and Sunderland;
- a new Plymouth-Edinburgh train on Sundays;
- a new Sunday train between Bristol and Leeds at 8.10 a. m. ;
- a new service between York and Tenby (Dyfed) on summer Saturdays.

On the Paddington-South Wales route, in connection with the improvement of track to take high-speed trains, the section of line between Westerleigh Junction (east of Bristol Parkway) and Wootton Bassett (west of Swindon) was closed from 5th May for a period of five months. Trains are being diverted via Bath. Temporary timetables are available free from inquiry offices.

✓X Ruskington station (between Lincoln and Sleaford) was re-opened from 5th May for normal passenger services for an experimental period of 12 months. Lincolnshire County Council is making a grant towards the cost of re-opening. Metheringham station (Blankney and Metheringham), on the same stretch of line, will be opened on a similar basis from October. Information gained from the experiment will be used to decide whether other stations in the area should also be re-opened. X

Local campaigns are in progress for the re-opening to passengers of the following lines and



stations:- Walsall-Wolverhampton; Coventry-Nuneaton; Stourbridge-Dudley/Whitacre  
(Birmingham-Nuneaton); Whittington (Shrewsbury-Chester).

From late May to 28th September inclusive, five trains in each direction will run each Sunday on the Oxenholme-Windermere line.

Tynwald, the Manx Parliament, has agreed that the Manx Electric Railway should operate in the summer only, so that from mid-September this year it will close down completely. In 1976 and subsequent years, the Railway will be open from mid-May to mid-September. However, the Laxey-Ramsey section will remain permanently closed after the end of this season.

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#### WHAT OTHER SOCIETIES ARE DOING

✓ Swanage Railway Society Arising from a recommendation from the Planning and Transportation Committee of Dorset County Council adopted by the full council on 27th February, the County Council, when it has completed purchase of the Wareham-Swanage line from British Rail, will grant a licence to the Swanage Railway Society to use the land between Furzebrook and Northbrook Road Bridge, Swanage, to run a scheduled passenger service. Among the conditions is one which requires the SRS to run a weekday service of not less than four trips daily in each direction between Swanage and Wareham. ✕

Transport 2000 (North-West Group) has urged Lancashire County Council to drop its support of the Calder Valley motorway in favour of "more general transport improvements" between Preston and north-east Lancashire. The Group considers "that the needs of public transport are much more urgent than the need for substantial expenditure on new and improved highways". It calls for the revival of a passenger service on the Blackburn-Clitheroe-Hellifield line and the introduction of a Manchester-Blackburn-Burnley-Todmorden-Rochdale-Manchester circular service, as suggested by Burnley Chamber of Commerce.

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CORRECTION to last progress report, p. 2. Short-sighted decision on Channel Tunnel. We regret that in para. 1 a few words of copy were missed out. The last sentence should read: "The statement, which also bore the names of the National Council on Inland Transport, the Railway Development Association, the Electric Transport Development Society and the Scottish Association for Public Transport..."

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#### EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Editor: L. G. Hipperson, 24a Cable Road, Hoylake Wirral, 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 September) material must be submitted to the appropriate editor so as to reach him by Saturday, 26th July.

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#### PUBLISHED BY THE RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY

Chairman: \* R. V. Banks, 121 Ashford Road, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent.  
General Sec. J. M. Stanley, M. A. 12 Westcombe Park Road, London, SE7 RB.



22nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Reports

A booklet containing copies of the reports presented to the annual general meeting held in London on 26th April is enclosed.

In the top line on p. 8 of the booklet, "St. James station" should read "James Street station".

In presenting his report, the Membership Secretary, Mr. D.J. Bradbury, tendered his resignation after nine years in office. Tribute was paid to the efficient way in which he had performed his exacting duties.

Officers and National Committee, 1975-6

All vice-presidents, as shown at the head of the main progress report, were re-elected, subject to their agreement.

The following chief officials were elected:-

- R. V. Banks, Esq., as Chairman;
- \* J. M. Stanley, Esq., M. A., as General Secretary;
- \* D. Maudlin, Esq., 4, Churchill Avenue, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 0BU  
as Treasurer;
- \* A. J. C. Read, Esq., F.C.I.S., as Honorary Auditor.

\* re-election.

The following were re-elected to the National Committee:-

Mrs. R. Colyer; Messrs. J. W. Barfield, D. J. Bradbury, G. L. Collett,  
L. G. Hipperson, A. F. Johnson, C. J. Kew, R. Macqueen, N. P. C. Madsen,  
G. F. Manley, A. C. B. Mercer, H. R. Purser, H. G. M. Rogers, P. G. Scott.

Arising from his resignation as Chairman, Dr. M. P. L. Caton was elected a member of the National Committee.

Two vacancies now exist on the National Committee. Under the Constitution, these may be filled by co-option.

In addition, all branch secretaries and area representatives are ex-officio members of the National Committee.

Subscriptions

The meeting empowered the National Committee to increase the annual subscription for ordinary members to a sum not exceeding three pounds with effect from 1st January, 1976, and to increase other subscription rates in proportion.



Annual general meeting, 1976

It was agreed that next year's annual general meeting should be held in York.

Resolutions: The following resolutions were passed (name of proposer in brackets):-

- (1) This Society deeply regrets the utter failure of British Railways and the Government to agree and introduce a co-ordinated rolling programme of railway electrification. (Mr. Fawdry, on behalf of the Three Counties Branch)
- (2) This Society deplors the indication that the Freightliner service is to be reduced, not least because of the low return on capital expenditure resulting from the under utilisation of special-purpose vehicles and equipment. (Mr. Fawdry, on behalf of the Three Counties Branch)
- (3) That high priority be given to the establishment of an effective Fares and Facilities Sub-Committee of the Railway Inivigation Society, which should concentrate its efforts on:-
  - (a) collecting information on disparities between facilities in different areas (e. g. , availability of day-return fares on pay-trains) and, where appropriate, persuading British Rail to standardise such facilities;
  - (b) campaigning for the improvement or introduction of facilities on a national basis (e. g. , facilities for bicycles, and possible extension of the motorail network).  
(Mr. T. J. Garrod)

The following resolutions were referred for consideration by the National Committee:-

- (1) British Railways should carry maritime containers by wagon-load traffic in competition with Freightliners. (Mr. Davies)
- (2) The Government's policy of increasing rail fares as a short-term expedient is to be deplored. (Mr. Fawdry.)

A resolution which proposed that at least one member of the London regional committee on rail-ways should be elected by season-ticket holders was referred to the London and Home Counties Branch. (Mr. Davies)

ORGANISATION OF THE SOCIETYExecutive Committee

At its meeting held on 14th May, the National Committee decided that the Executive Committee should comprise the three principal officers - the Chairman, R. V. Banks, Esq. ; the General Secretary, J. M. Stanley, Esq. , M. A. ; and the Treasurer, D. Maudlin, Esq. - and Dr. M. P. L. Caton and Messrs. J. W. Barfield, H. G. M. Rogers and P. G. Scott.

Appointment of officers

As required by paragraph 21 of the Constitution, the new National Committee, at its first meeting on 14th May, elected from amongst its members the following officers:-



- + Vice-Chairman: Dr. M. P. L. Catonn, 10 Grosvenor Gardens, Upminster, Essex.
  - Asst. Secretary: Mr. P. G. Scott, 11 Duffield Close, Harrow, Middlesex, HA1 2LG
  - + Membership Secretary: Mr. H. G. M. Rogers, 64 Cowper Road, London, W7 1EJ.
  - + Press and Publicity Officer: Mr. R. Macqueen, 20, Culgaith Gardens, Enfield, Middlesex, EN2 7PE.
- Mr. Banks (Chairman) will act as PRO when Mr. Macqueen is not available.
- Distribution Officer: Mr. H. G. M. Rogers (address as above)

+ Change in office holders.

Future arrangements for the editing of the progress report are still being worked out, but adequate notice will be given to members.

#### TRANSPORT IN METROPOLITAN AREAS

✓ X A meeting of RIS representatives from English conurbations was held in Leeds on Saturday, 1st March. Among points made by the participants (and not covered in the main progress report) were :-

Greater London Bus and tube fares had been held down since autumn 1972. Although a profit was made in 1972-3, a loss had been incurred in 1973-4. Fares, which were to be increased from Sunday, 23rd March, were higher than on other parts of the British Rail system, e. g., the 62p. single fare from Hertford East to Liverpool Street, a distance of 24 miles.

West Midlands Former GWR suburban services were being increased. Between Paddington and Stratford-on-Avon there were to be introduced some loco-hauled services.

Merseyside The "Rapidride" bus service between Heswall and Liverpool Exchange station, introduced in December 1973, had shortcomings. Although it served both the Lower Village and the town centre at Heswall (neither of which were near Heswall Hills station, on the Birkenhead North-Wrexham line), it did not operate in the early morning or evening or on Sunday.

Greater Manchester After the Minister of Transport's recent visit to Manchester, there was much better hope for construction of the PiccVic line, as Mr. Mulley had said that he hoped to be able to afford the cash for the line to be started later this year. The Stockport-Stalybridge line, which had been reprieved, had been given greater publicity. The Bury line was to be converted to 25kV AC operation to fit in with the PiccVic Scheme and the fifty miles or so of the present electric network to the south of Manchester.

South Yorkshire A report on the Sheffield and Rotherham Land Use and Transportation Survey, prepared jointly by Mr. Proctor (on behalf of the RIS) and Mr. English (on behalf of the National Council on Inland Transport), with comments by Mr. Roger Calvert (Secretary of the NCIT), had been submitted to the consultants, Messrs. Freeman, Fox and Partners. The report stated that new railway lines should serve Mossborough new town and Stocksbridge and that any money left over from these schemes should be spent on new tramways to the west of Sheffield and the east of ...



Rotherham. These ideas had been well received by the consultants, whose suggested possibilities included the re-opening of Sheffield Victoria station (if Midland became too over-crowded), and a Midland-Victoria link line, with an intermediate station in the city centre.

Humber-side No rail closures had occurred since 1970. The publicity campaign for the Humber-rail network had made the public more aware of their local railways. Part of the Withernsea line might be re-opened to serve a new chemical works. Completion of the Humber Bridge had been postponed from early 1976 to late 1977. The Hull-Liverpool Freightliner service had been withdrawn, even though it conveyed 66% of Freightliner traffic from Hull. Since its closure in February 1970, the Colne-Skipton line had been cut in two by a new haulier's yard. With the withdrawal of the Heysham-Belfast steamer service (in April), the Camforth-Skipton line was threatened with closure.

Tyne and Wear The rapid transit scheme was being pressed ahead, although the British Road Federation was campaigning against 70% of the Transport Committee's budget being spent on public transport. There was, however, a group in existence to counter the road lobby. Bus and rail fares, which were increased from 9th February, were 50% up as against the 20-27% originally intended.

Conclusions reached The trend towards integration was noted, but there was a need to be vigilant. South Yorkshire, in particular, needed to be watched. A subscription by the RIS to the minutes of the Greater London Council was recommended. ✕

AMMUNITION Dr. W. Robert Jondorf, of Cambridge, has been in correspondence with the Department of the Environment (Eastern Road Construction Unit, Bedford) and has kindly given us permission to include the following extract from one of his letters ... "Among reasons for which any scheme which diverts traffic from rail to road is strategically unsound are the following:-

- (a) the energy balance is more favourable by rail, 624 BThU/ton-mile verses 3462 BThU/ton-mile by lorry. (Figures from "The environmental cost of economic growth", by Professor B. Commoner. In Chemistry in Britain, 1972, 8, p. 52);
- (b) the amount of power required for producing steel for railway track versus cement for a four-lane road to accommodate heavy traffic - on a mile to mile basis - is approximately 1 : 3.5;
- (c) a railbed is narrower than the right of way envisaged for a trunk road ... and is thus more economical in its potential encroachments on agricultural land."

Since electrification, the number of passengers on the west coast mainline has increased. For the period from 11th August to 7th September, 1974, compared with the corresponding period during 1973, the number of passengers on day trains increased by 42% between London, Glasgow and Inverness and by 51% between Liverpool/Manchester and Glasgow/Edinburgh. Moreover, on the Bristol/Birmingham-Glasgow/Edinburgh service the increase was 116%. (From the February 1975 issue of the newsletter of the Three Counties Branch).

KNOW YOUR REPRESENTATIVE!

BRANCHES

West Yorkshire (for revised area, see main progress report, p. 14)

Acting Branch Sec: Mr. L. M. Lumsdon, 16 Richmond Mount, Headingley, Leeds, LS6 1DG.

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