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PROGRESS REPORT**No. 94****MARCH 1973****"RAILWAYS IN THE SEVENTIES"**

✓ The Society's book with the above title was published on 19th February. It was introduced to the press at a successful conference in London six days previously. With its eye-catching front cover, excellent illustrations and clean, well-designed, modern typeface, it is a work of which every member should feel proud. The joint authors are M. P. L. Caton, Ph.D., our Chairman, and J. M. Stanley, M.A., our General Secretary. They present a well-argued case for the retention and development of Britain's railway services. The book has been published at a time when railway policy is very much in the news. We feel confident that it will effectively remove any vestige of doubt which may exist in the mind of the general public as to the forward-looking nature of this organisation. In his foreword, Mr. John Arlott, O.B.E., one of our vice-presidents, states: "There can be no doubt of Britain's need for a Railway Invigoration Society". Dr. Caton was interviewed about the book on Radio London on 13th February, the same day as that of the press conference. ✕

Orders for copies (40p. each, plus 4p. postage and packing) should be sent to Mrs. Barfield, 35 Collinsdale, Camden Walk, London, N.1.

SOS (SAVE OUR SERVICES) CAMPAIGN

✓ Following the delegate conference held on 21st September (see last progress report, p.2), a public meeting of the Campaign was held at Caxton Hall, London, on 5th December. The Earl of Kinnoull presided.

The meeting was told that the Department of the Environment had sent a reply, dated 12th October, to the resolution of the delegate conference. The reply stated that the resolution was "noted with interest", but that the Secretary of State "had many calls on his time and was unable to receive a delegation from the Campaign".

Speakers at the meeting included Mr. Brian Johnson, Lecturer on Environmental Studies at Sussex University, Labour MPs Mr. Walter Johnson (Derby, South) and Mr. Arthur Palmer (Bristol, Central) and Conservative MP Mr. Andrew Bowden (Brighton, Kemptown). Mr. Eric Robinson, Vice-Chairman of the Liberal Party Midland Region, was one of many speakers who had been "converted" to the railways' case during the past few years.

1973 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, The Old Maltings, Ely, Cambs., Saturday, 14th April, 2.15 p.m. Make a note in your diary!

✓✗ A large number of speakers advocated complete electrification of the present system as being the most successful way of attracting new business to the railways. Opposition to the role of "juggernauts" was also widespread.

Lord Kinnoull expressed his confidence that railways were now at the threshold of a revival. Never had there been such a good case for turning to railways to relieve our overcrowded cities. Most important of all was public opinion on this issue. ✗

An SOS Campaign meeting, organised in conjunction with the Three Counties Branch of the Railway Invigoration Society, will be held in the Shaftesbury Hall, Cheltenham, on Saturday, 31st March.

ASHFORD-HASTINGS LINE: "A TEST CASE"

✓✗ In December the Secretary of State for the Environment agreed once again to the closure of the railway line between Ashford and Ore (Hastings) via Rye. This is subject to the granting by the Traffic Commissioners of licences for the operation of substitute buses.

✓✗ In a statement, the Ashford-Hastings Rail Users' Association points out that, in 1967, the Transport Users' Consultative Committee declared that closure would cause severe hardship and that, in 1970, the Traffic Commissioners rejected a previous application for bus licences. Moreover, according to the Association, "it is obvious that the National Bus Company have no wish to operate the services ... Since 1970 bus services between Rye and Ashford have collapsed from 76 to 2 journeys per week. The majority of the substitute bus services will be withdrawn as soon as possible (after 2 years) ... leaving the area with no effective public transport." Among the other points made by the Association are that "the line could be of considerable regional strategic value", "the line is part of a potentially vital substitute coastal rail route" which could save the "attractive coastal towns of East Sussex" from "being wrecked by heavy lorries and other traffic to and from the Continent", "about half a million journeys are made on the line each year" and "the route carries much freight traffic". ✗

The fresh hearing before the Traffic Commissioners has been fixed for Tuesday, 3rd April, Friday, 6th April. The local authorities will be objecting strongly to the granting of the bus licences. The Ashford-Hastings Rail Users' Association will also be putting in a very strong case for retention of the rail service. Local amenity groups will be objecting to the certainty of more and heavier traffic on the roads if extra people are forced to use buses or private cars.

The SOS Campaign, together with the National Council on Inland Council and the Railway Invigoration Society, will be representing those users of the line who do not live locally. The number of these is considerable and we would like to hear from them.

✓✗ In a circular letter supporting the statement issued by the Rail Users' Association, the NCIS states that "the fight for this line is in the nature of a test case, the outcome of which could affect future policy on rail closures everywhere." ✗

"FOR STUDENTS OF THE TRANSPORT CRISIS"

In addition to "Railways in the Seventies", as announced on p. 1, the Society has recently published "Railway economics; a bibliography", which is described as "a brief bibliography for students of the transport crisis". This latter work, which has been compiled by a member of the National Committee with special knowledge of the subject and technical qualifications, has a foreword by the Society's Chairman, Dr. M. P. L. Caton. Copies of the bibliography are available from our General Secretary (address on p. 16) at 14p. each (including postage), but members may obtain a free copy by sending 4p. only (to cover postage and packing).

NEW CORPORATE MEMBERS

We extend a hearty welcome to the following new corporate members of the Society :-

Hove Borough Council (Sussex, East)
 Stretford Borough Council (Lancashire)

IN PARLIAMENT

Selections from the official reports

House of Commons

Questions and answers

SSE = Secretary of State for the Environment.

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

1972

6th November Railways (Wales) Mr. Elystan Morgan (Cardiganshire) asked the SSE if he will give full facilities to the Welsh Economic Council to examine the study of the possibilities of a reduced passenger rail network produced by his Department and to make available to the Committee the data which they have concerning railway lines in Wales. Mr. Peyton I will, of course, consider any request which the Council make.

* Mr. Macbride (Swansea, East) asked the Secretary of State for Wales ... has he been consulted about the map which is extant at Strasbourg showing the railway services of the Nine and indicating much worse rationalisation for Wales than is contained in the Department of the Environment report? Will he, on behalf of Wales, fight for the retention of the existing railway services in Wales, which are so important in industrial, social and employment terms? Mr. Thomas ... No decision will be taken about railway services in Wales without consultation with me and without full consideration of all the implications.

* 8th November Railways Mr. Walter Johnson (Derby, South) asked the SSE if he will undertake to make available to the House reports prepared by the Department of Transport Industries concerning the size of the railway network before these are published in the press. Minister for Transport Industries (Mr. John Peyton) I will report to Parliament as soon as the review of rail

policy is completed. Mr. Johnson Is the rt. hon. Gentleman aware that the recent "leak" to the press about the future state of the railway network caused widespread alarm and despondency among railwaymen and the general public? In view of the Minister's obvious dislike for nationalised industries, which he has expressed to the House, it is essential for him to give a categorical assurance that there will be no reduction in the size of the railway network. Mr. Peyton I cannot give any assurance of that kind at this stage.

* Mr. Bradley (Leicester, North-East) Will (the rt. hon. Gentleman) take this opportunity of assuring the House and the country that the study published by the Sunday Times will not become Government policy? Is it not essential to devote more money, not less, to investment in the railways? Mr. Peyton The hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that, in asking the present administration to devote more money to the railways, he is pushing at an open door ... When the current review has been completed, the Government will wish to put it to Parliament, I hope that there will then be revealed a series of choices, so that the Government, Parliament and the country can consider the size of the railway system that they want and the price they have to pay for it.

Railways (closure) Mr. Donald Stewart (Western Isles) asked the SSE if he will undertake not to approve the closure of the Mallaig-Glasgow railway line. Mr. Peyton No such closure has been proposed. (Mr. Stewart asked similar questions re the Inverness-Perth, Inverness-Thurso, Glasgow-Oban lines and received a similar answer in each case)

Mr. David Stoddard (Swindon) asked the SSE not to close the Swindon Gloucester line. Mr. Peyton There is no proposal to close this line.

Mr. David Stoddard asked the SSE to undertake not to approve closure of the London-Exeter railway line. Mr. Peyton There is no proposal to close any of the railway lines from London to Exeter.

10th November Railway services Mr. Lomas (Huddersfield, West) asked the SSE if he will issue a general direction to British Railways that regional executives should consult at an early stage with local authorities whenever proposals are made likely to affect the structure or level of local services. Mr. Peyton No. But I expect local authorities and passenger transport operators, including British Rail, to work closely together.

14th November Scottish railways (subsidies) Mr. Donald Stewart (Western Isles) asked the SSE what subsidies would be required from him to eliminate the deficit on all the presently operating lines in Scotland. Mr. Peyton For grant-aided passenger services operating wholly or partly in Scotland, between £12 and £13 million a year.

Railway closures Mr. Mudd (Falmouth and Camborne) asked the SSE if he will undertake not to approve the closure of the Plymouth to Penzance main railway line or the branch line from Truro to Falmouth. Mr. Peyton No proposal to close these lines has been made.

Railways (Wales) Mr. Elystan Morgan (Cardiganshire) asked the SSE if he will give an undertaking that the grants currently being paid in respect of loss-making railways in Wales will continue to be payable until the Graham Rees Committee has made its final report on

a specific, interim report thereon. Mr. Peyton In making decisions about these services, I will, of course, consider any reports referred to me by the Welsh Council.

15th November Railway land Mr. O'Halloran (Islington, North) asked the SSE what is the estimated acreage of disused railway land to be made available to local authorities in the inner London area over the next five years. Mr. Peyton ... the British Railways Board expects to release about 118 acres of land to local authorities in the inner London area within the next three years and are examining the possibilities of further releases.

21st November Aberystwyth-Shrewsbury railway Mr. Elystan Morgan (Cardiganshire) asked the Secretary of State for Wales if he will request Professor Graham Rees to include in his study of transport services in Wales a special survey of any rundown which has occurred within the last two years in services on the Aberystwyth-Shrewsbury line. Mr. Peter Thomas No. This is an independent study being undertaken on behalf of the Welsh Council.

22nd November Railways Mr. David Watkins (Consett) asked the SSE to what extent proposals for the development or curtailment of the rail system in the United Kingdom will be subject to the conditions imposed by the European Economic Community. Mr. Peyton At present, not at all; in future, so far as EEC legislation requires, as part of common transport policies.

Mr. David Watkins asked the SSE what proposals have been submitted to him by the Railways Board to electrify the east coast main line from London Kings Cross to Newcastle upon Tyne, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen. Mr. Peyton None.

Mr. Elystan Morgan (Cardiganshire) asked the SSE if he will give an assurance that no closure of the Aberystwyth-Shrewsbury line will be sanctioned by him before the report of Professor Graham Rees on transport services in Wales. Mr. Peyton No such closure has been proposed.

Mr. Carmichael (Glasgow, Woodside) asked the SSE what consultations he has had concerning the proposals for the reduction in railway track mileage in Scotland ... Mr. Peyton I have not made any such proposals.

Mr. David Watkins asked the SSE what proposals have been submitted to him by the Railways Board to electrify the main line from Bristol to York via Birmingham, Derby and Sheffield and to rebuild it on the sections where required to make it suitable throughout for high speed running. Mr. Peyton None.

29th November Advanced passenger train Mr. Edward Taylor (Glasgow, Cathcart) asked the SSE if he will make a statement on the advanced passenger train. Mr. Peyton The advanced passenger train is at present undergoing modification to improve its performance. The British Railways Board hopes that the first electric prototype will be tested in 1975 and put into experimental passenger use in 1976.

4th December European Economic Community Mr. Atkinson (Tottenham) asked the SSE on which date he endorsed the application submitted by British Railways to the European Economic Community commissioners for membership of the proposed European Railways Company ... Mr. Peyton No such application has been submitted.

5th December Mr. Adley (Bristol, North-East) asked the SSE what is the total amount of public funds, including grants, loans and written-off debts, received by British Rail from 1962 to 1971, inclusive, and for 1972 to date. Mr. Peyton £3,160 million from 1962 to 1972 and £123 million in 1972 to date.

6th December Railway branch lines Mr. Hooson (Montgomeryshire) asked the SSE if he will publish the various reports prepared in his Department concerning the future of branch lines on British Railways, so that the whole future of British Railways can be debated publicly before any final decision are taken. Mr. Peyton I have nothing to add to my reply to the Hon. Member for Derby, South (Mr. Walter Johnson) on 8th November (see p.3 of this progress report).

11th December Railways (finance) Mr. Moate (Faversham) asked the SSE what sums have been made available in each of the last five years by the Government to British Rail, specifying the separate figures for general subsidy and capital grants; and what figures are estimated for the current year. Mr. Peyton The information is as follows:-

	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972 Esti- mate
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
REVENUE						
GRANTS:						
Revenue Deficit						
Grants	151.4	148.5	-	-	-	-
Unremunerative						
Rail Passenger						
Service Grants	-	-	16.1	61.6	63.1	65.7
Special Grant to						
enable the Railways						
Board to meet its						
statutory obligations	-	-	-	-	-	27.0
Surplus Track						
Grants	-	-	15.0	12.0	7.5	-
Others	-	-	0.4	2.0	1.6	2.0
Sub Total	151.4	148.5	76.5	75.6	72.2	94.7
CAPITAL GRANTS:						
Infrastructure Grant	-	-	0.4	0.5	0.6	12.0
BORROWING:						
Net lending from						
National Loans Fund	10.0	-	-	-	39.0	-
Grand Total	161.4	148.5	76.9	76.1	111.8	106.7

Note: In addition to the estimated grants payable for 1972 it is expected as I explained in my Statement to the House of 27 July 1972 that about £40m. will be paid by way of grant to meet the Railways Board cash flow shortfall.

18th December Railways (goods and freight) Mr. Denzil Davies (Llanelli) asked the Secretary of State for Wales whether he will ask the Welsh Council to include in its study of transport in Wales an examination whereby more heavy goods and freight can be carried by the railways. Mr. Peter Thomas The Welsh Council's research programme is concerned with the passenger needs of Wales. It is for the Council itself to decide whether to undertake any additional study of freight transport.

19th December London-Maplin high speed link Sir Stephen McAdden (Southend, East) asked the SSE whether he has reached a decision on the mode to be adopted for the London-Maplin high speed link. Mr. Peyton The Government has decided that, initially, the high speed link to Maplin should be a conventional rail track terminating at King's Cross. This could offer a service running initially at up to 125 mph, with the possibility of 150 mph or even higher speeds later. We intend, however, to examine the possibilities of keeping open options to introduce new advanced technology systems at a later date. I have, therefore, set in hand an urgent study of this whole matter ... We are appointing consultants to undertake an urgent study to show how the King's Cross terminal can provide an attractive and convenient interchange for national and international air passengers ... A separate study, announced earlier this year, into possible routes for a motorway/rail corridor across south Essex is already well advanced.

20th December Railways Mr. Bradley (Leicester, North-East) asked the SSE whether he has consulted the Freight Integration Council over the future size of the rail network. Mr. Eldon Griffiths No.

Mr. Mikardo (Poplar) asked the SSE whether he will bring up to date the statistics given on pages 82 and 83 of the report "The reshaping of British Railways", part 1. Mr. Peyton No. These statistics were produced by British Railways for specific purposes about 10 years ago and are not necessarily relevant to its present needs.

Mr. Mikardo asked the SSE whether he will bring up to date the statistics for the annual allocation of British Railways' revenue and expenses given on page 63 of command paper no. 3439. Mr. Peyton No. These forecasts were produced by the Railways Board for the specific purposes of the Joint Steering Group on Railway Policy in 1967. British rail provides full financial and statistical information on current performance in its annual report and accounts.

Road and rail transport Mr. Arthur Lewis (West Ham, North) asked the SSE why he will not introduce legislation to empower himself to control all means of road and rail transport. Mr. Eldon Griffiths This would be going much too far

1973

23rd January Railway passenger services (grants) Mr. J. H. Osborn (Sheffield, Hallam) asked the SSE if he will make a statement on the renewal of grants for unremunerative railway passenger services. (Mr. Peyton in his reply stated that he had renewed all the grant undertakings due for renewal at the end of 1972 for the services eligible for grant under section 39 of the Transport Act, 1968. This applied to 122 individual services, of which he gave a list, and to the London commuter network as a whole. The total including three currently-operating services for which statutory consent to closure had been given, i.e., Ashford-Ore (Hastings), Bedford-Bletchley and

Haltwhistle-Alston. Grant for these three services had, therefore, been given only on a temporary basis. Fifty four services operated wholly or partly within passenger transport authority areas. He understood that fifteen of these would be supported by the PTEs concerned under agreements made with the Railways Board and would, therefore, be eligible for Exchequer grants under section 20 of the Transport Act, 1968. He expected that most of the remaining thirty nine, for which grant had been renewed under section 39, would also be financially supported in part by the PTEs under the same agreements. All renewed grant undertakings had been limited to a period of one year, since, from 1st January 1974, financial support for loss-making railway services would be made mainly under European Economic Community regulation 1191/69. The renewal of grant for a further five services which had been proposed for closure would be considered in the light of the decision reached in each case.) (For full text of the answer, including tables of grants to be renewed, see the separate document enclosed to members)

* 24th January Railway network Sir Gerald Nabarro (Worcestershire, South) asked the SSE what mileage of railway routes he has shut down in each of the 10 years 1963 to 1972 inclusive ... Mr. Peyton Following is the information:- The route mileage closed to passenger traffic as a result of the withdrawal of passenger services with my or my predecessors' consent, for each of the years 1964-1972 inclusive, is listed below. A figure for 1963 is not readily available:

1964	930 miles;	1965	359 miles;	1966	573 miles;
1967	251 miles;	1968	332 miles;	1969	264 miles;
1970	250 miles;	1971	23 miles;	1972	71 miles.

* Mr. Robert C. Brown (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, West) When the Minister decided on the closure of Alston branch line, did he consider not only the £300,000 required for road improvements but also the amount of money the Northumberland County Council will have to pay to maintain a bus service at Alston? Mr. Peyton Nobody knows better than the hon. Gentleman that all relevant considerations are taken into account.

* Sir Richard Thompson (Croydon) May I take it from my rt. hon. Friend's reply that the reprieve extends to the West Croydon-Wimbledon line? If so, may I ask that when these closure matters are considered representations made by transport users' consultative committees will be given more weight and consideration than seems to have been the case in the past? There is a feeling that this is something of a window-dressing exercise. Does my rt. hon. Friend agree that such an impression should not be allowed to get about? Mr. Peyton I can assure my hon. Friend that representations made by those committees are taken very seriously indeed. I would prefer to write to my hon. Friend about the line he has mentioned.

* Mr. Edward Taylor (Glasgow, Cathcart) In considering future plans will my rt. hon. Friend bear in mind that discoveries of oil off Scotland have transformed the whole scene in the North, having regard to the fact that existing roads between Perth, Inverness and the north of Scotland are deplorable and congested? Will he have firmly in mind the importance of keeping these rail links open since they can provide a service to industry in the North? Mr. Peyton My hon. Friend has raised a most intelligent point which I have very much in mind.

* Mr. Russell Johnston (Inverness) Will the Minister give an assurance that he will postpone closure of the Kyle line and certainly not allow closure to proceed until the fullest and

most thorough examination has been carried out of all new factors, including that raised by the hon. Member for Glasgow, Cathcart (Mr. Edward Taylor)? Mr. Peyton The matter has been considered on a number of occasions and I know that the hon. Gentleman is concerned about it. If there are any new factors - and I must say that none has yet appeared - which could make a case for the extension of the line, they will be considered.

* Mr. Stokes (Oldbury and Halesowen) Is my rt. hon. Friend aware that there is also considerable discontent in the West Midlands about the state of public transport, both rail and road? In particular, can he give an assurance that the Birmingham-Stourbridge railway to the West will be kept open? Mr. Peyton I think that hardly arises on this question, but I think I am right in saying that they are in no immediate jeopardy.

Debates

19th December, 1972 Welsh affairs (adjournment debate: cols. 1173-6, 1240-2 and 1246-7 concern railways. Re the Cambrian Coast line, Mr. David Gibson-Watt, Minister of State at the Welsh Office, said: "It will be a little while yet before the final decision can be announced, but I can say that the trains will continue to run next year (i.e., 1973) ... that the service will continue in the summer")

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR It is regretted that, owing to extreme pressure on space, material under this heading must be carried forward to our next issue.

REPORTS FROM BRANCHES AND AREAS

BRANCHES

London and Home Counties

✓✕ The recent announcement by the Greater London Council that London Transport fares would probably not be raised in 1973 was welcomed by the Government and passengers alike. An expected £2½m. profit for 1972, much larger than had been anticipated earlier in the year, enabled the GLC to promise to make up any operating losses that may be incurred by London Transport during the present year as a result of the prices and wages freeze.

On 12th November, the "Outer Circle Pathfinder" left Broad Street station to the accompaniment of stereo "pop" music, complete with 500 rail enthusiasts, ecologists, the press, TV, Radio London, travelling poets, balloons and streamers. Commitment (an independent national "eco-action" group) organised this demonstration to show the authorities that (to quote the BBC) "it was possible to travel on the rail equivalent of the proposed Ringway 2 in a fraction of the time it now takes by road". The trip traversed the proposed orbital "ring-rail" system as far as it is practicable - from Broad Street to Woolwich Dockyard via Richmond and Clapham Junction, returning via Neasden and South Tottenham to North Woolwich, then back to Broad Street via Stratford.

✓✕ On 6th February, the Branch organised a meeting at Caxton Hall, Westminster. The main part of the proceedings was an illustrated lecture by Mr. J. R. Ogilvie, C. Eng., M. I. Mech. E., who

explained his revolutionary plan for rationalising railway services south of the Thames in a way which could increase commuter capacity by 100% and enable more freight and parcels traffic to be conveyed during off-peak periods. ✕

At King's Cross main-line station, work is now well under way on the construction of a modern and spacious passenger concourse. This will allow much easier and quicker interchanges with buses, taxis and Underground services.

Work has begun on the construction of Heathrow Central station, which will be the terminus of a 3½-mile extension of the Piccadilly line from Hounslow West. Completion is expected in about two years' time.

RIS member Peter G. Scott has written a booklet entitled "The Harrow and Stanmore Railway". This is a 36-page illustrated history and description of the Harrow & Wealdstone-Belmont-Stanmore Village branch line. It includes "Epitaphs for Stanmore Village Station" and "Foul deeds on the Belmont branch" (the latter an account of filming). The work also contains plans, a map and a bibliography. Copies (price 50p. each, post-paid) are obtainable from the author, at "Hartest", 9, Morley Crescent East, Stanmore, Middlesex, HA7 2LG.

Hatfield (Herts.) station is being rebuilt in preparation for the introduction of electrified services in 1975.

✕ A closure date of 30th December, 1972, had been announced for the Bletchley-Bedford line, but, as local authorities have lodged an appeal against the granting of licences for re-placement bus services, closure has been indefinitely postponed. ✕

✕ The Southern Region of British Rail is seeking the help of local authorities in efforts to boost travel on the cross-country line which links Reading, Guildford, Redhill and Tonbridge. ✕

East Anglian

This Branch held its annual general meeting in Norwich on 27th January. The Chairman and Secretary were re-elected.

✕ At the following public meeting, Dr. T. R. Gourvish, of the School of Social Studies at the University of East Anglia, spoke on the need for a strong rail lobby, the problems of grant-aid, and various ways in which public transport (and consequently the environment) could be improved. Mr. D. Maudlin suggested further ways of increasing patronage of trains, and subsequently of improving services, in the light of the experience of the Newmarket and District Rail Travellers' Association. ✕

✕ Concern has been expressed recently about British Rail's refusal of certain big freight orders. Five grain shipments from Lowestoft, averaging 700 tons each, were refused. A total of 180 wagons would have been needed and this number did not appear to be available. In another case, reported from King's Lynn, insufficient rolling-stock caused imported steel to be imported by road. From British Rail's own statements on the matter, it appeared to be a case of over-economising rather than a deliberate embargo. The Secretary of the Branch has had letters published in the local press on this and other issues. ✕

Combined rail-and-theatre tickets to Norwich have been offered from half a dozen towns

within a radius of about 30 miles of the city.

Lowestoft Branch of the East Suffolk Travellers' Association is planning a rail excursion to "a place of economic and railway importance" and is in close liaison with British Rail's divisional management. So is Newmarket and District Rail Travellers' Association, which took 117 people on an excursion to Norwich last November.

Three Counties

✓X The Branch has put forward a plan for the future of railway facilities in Cheltenham, the adoption of which would cause minimal cost to British Rail. The plan is in stark contrast to the scheme advocated by the consultants to Cheltenham Town Council. These consultants have proposed massive disruption and the severance of the vital Cheltenham to Stratford-upon-Avon line. The retention of this line is believed by the Society to be essential. It should be used by the slower and heavier freight traffic, especially in view of the eventual use of the Birmingham-Bristol main line for electrified express passenger services and the advanced passenger train.

The plan requires the retention of Lansdown as the principal station in Cheltenham, but with an extra platform for the Stratford line trains and with provision for a further platform to accommodate anticipated extra demand. An important feature of the plan is the construction of a new link between the north end of Lansdown station and the Stratford line, so as to obviate the need for trains using that line to reverse either into or out of the station. It is urged that some existing passenger services from London, Swindon and Newport to Gloucester and Cheltenham should be extended to Stratford-upon-Avon. Also proposed is the limited development of the Lansdown site to accommodate connecting bus services and the re-opening of Cheltenham Racecourse station on a regular basis to provide connection with passing buses serving Tewkesbury, Evesham, Ashchurch and Bishop's Cleeve. X

Proposals have been made for the introduction of a Mondays to Fridays rush-hour service on the Bristol-Portishead line (closed to passengers on 7th September, 1964) and for the costs of operation in excess of receipts to be met by subsidies from local authorities.

Wessex

At the annual general meeting of this Branch, held at the Polygon Hotel, Southampton, on 16th December, the existing officers and committee were re-elected. An assistant secretary was elected to help with the administration of the Branch.

The Society, through the Branch, is well represented on a committee of members of Parliament, trades union representatives and others set up to tackle transport problems in South Hampshire.

✓X News of local lines is both good and bad. The Winchester-Alton line was closed from 5th February, despite last-minute offers of financial help from local authorities, but it appears likely that running powers into the island platform at Alton will be secured by a society which hopes to take over part of the line. (see p. 16). The Bridport branch, on the other hand, has had a stay of execution for three months and it appears likely that it may survive through the summer. A joint committee of twenty local authorities has been told by the Minister for

Transport Industries that, so long as the Salisbury-Exeter line is making a useful contribution to the finances of British Rail, there will be no need to consider closing the line. The Southern Region of British Rail has launched a big campaign under the name of "Dorsetway" to persuade more people to travel on the Bournemouth-Weymouth line. ✕

The replacement bus service between Yeovil Junction and Yeovil Pen Mill via the town centre ceased on 30th June, 1972.

AREAS

North-Eastern England

Our correspondent in the North-East reports:-

✕ Following explanatory talks by Dr. Ridley, Director-General of the Tyneside Passenger Transport Executive, it was reported that the vast majority of local councillors now recognise the need for, and the potential value of, the proposed rapid transit rail system. There are now great hopes that construction will commence in 1974, with the scheme becoming operational in 1979. The plans have been approved by the Government, which has decided to make a grant of £49m. towards the estimated cost of £65m. The National Union of Railwaymen believes that the system could save the jobs of 800 men. There are still some snags to be overcome. One major problem that has been resolved, however, is the siting of a large bus-rail interchange at Heworth. The old Newcastle-Ponteland line is to be used as far as Kenton Bank Foot, which is 1½ miles from Newcastle Airport. Northumberland Parliamentary Committee members have said that it is ludicrous to stop short of the airport. ✕

✕ The Transport Users' Consultative Committee has now reported to the Secretary of State for the Environment on the proposal to close the Riverside branch of the North Tyneside line. It said that hardship would be caused to a number of passengers, probably not more than 50, with inconvenience being caused to a further unstated number of passengers. The hardship would be caused mainly to the users of St. Peter's and Walker stations and the Committee was unable to suggest any practicable means of alleviating it. ✕

At the request of Cramlington residents, British Rail introduced about a year ago a 22.11 train from Newcastle to Morpeth, calling at Cramlington. The train returned from Morpeth to Benton at 22.47, providing a connection to Newcastle. (There were subsequent slight alterations to these timings). The service was withdrawn from 1st January, because, according to British Rail, far too few people were using it. Seaton Valley Urban District Council protested strongly at this change, as they considered it ridiculous and detrimental to the progress of the new town at Cramlington. With the withdrawal, the last train from Newcastle to Cramlington is at 17.40 and in the reverse direction at 18.50.

Durham County Planning Committee has agreed to a councillor's suggestion to call for a report on the possibility of re-opening the Durham-Consett line. Primarily this would be to give a direct service for iron ore trains from Consett, but the restoration of passenger trains from Consett, to link with inter-city services at Durham, was also suggested.

On the same day that it was announced that the Secretary of State for the Environment had approved widespread road development in the Lake District, despite wide opposition, news also broke that workmen had started to lift the Penrith-Keswick railway line (closed in March, 1972).

Since the above report was received, RIS member Miss O. M. Richardson, of Earby, Colne, Lancs., has sent the editor a cutting from the Cumberland & Westmorland Herald of 27th January. According to this, the Secretary of State has consented to the closure of the Alston-Haltwhistle railway service but not until May, 1975, so as to give time for the improvement of the road system in the area at a cost of £300,000, which will be paid by the Government.

North-Western England

SELNEC (South-East Lancashire and North-East Cheshire) Passenger Transport Authority announced at the end of November its development plan as required by the Transport Act, 1968. The main features include a system of improved rail services fed by buses, a new "fast-transport" system of 20 miles in the central area (estimated cost £100m.) and possibly a second underground railway in addition to the one already planned and for which borehole trials have now been made. Total cost of the plan would be more than £200.

A spokesman for British Rail has denied that it has plans to discontinue local services on the Preston-Colne and Blackburn-Manchester lines and to substitute a fast circular service linking certain towns in east Lancashire.

A group of local authorities may pay for the electrification of the central section of the Manchester-Liverpool (via Warrington) line. This stretch lies between Glazebrook and Hough Green and is outside both the SELNEC and Merseyside passenger transport areas.

In January an agreement was reached between the Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive and British Rail whereby the latter will, in future, act as agent for the Executive in the provision of rail services. The agreement, which should have been reached in January of last year but had been delayed owing to negotiating difficulties, has been backdated to 1st January, 1972.

Work will start in the very near future on extending the Ormskirk and Southport electrified lines from Exchange Station to Central station in Liverpool by means of twin tunnels. A new low level station at Moorfields will replace Exchange. (At both Moorfields and Central there will be interchange with the deep level Liverpool inner loop line, due to be completed in 1975.) From Central electrification will be extended to Hough Green, allowing through running from Ormskirk and Southport to Widnes, with a possibility of re-opening certain stations on the former Central to Gateacre line. Total cost of the scheme will be £11m, and it is expected to be completed by the end of 1976.

A combined timetable of rail, bus and ferry services for its North and South divisions (east side of the Mersey) has been issued by the MPTE. A similar timetable is to be issued for the Wirral Division.

Oxford

✓X This new Area covers Oxfordshire, west Buckinghamshire, west Berkshire and north Wiltshire and fills an important gap in our organisation. We extend a warm welcome to the Area Representative, the Rev. T. G. Comber, of 32, Alexandra Road, Oxford, OX2 0DB, and hope to publish a report from him in our next issue. X

North and Central Wales

As a result of a more imaginative marketing policy, the 1972 income of the Stoke-on-Trent Division of British Rail is likely to be considerably more than was estimated. The Crewe-Shrewsbury-Cardiff and Central Wales routes have both shown income increases of about 15% on 1971.

In the summer of this year, Sunday excursions are to be run from Birmingham to Aberystwyth and Barmouth, but there are to be no local trains between Barmouth and Aberystwyth via Machynlleth on that day.

Since the beginning of this year, early morning and late services on the Birkenhead North-Wrexham line have terminated or commenced in Wrexham at Exchange, not Central, station.

North of Scotland

✓X On the Kyle of Lochalsh line, there was an increase last year of a third in passenger use as compared with 1971, itself a record year. Rose and Cromarty Council may provide financial assistance towards the running of the passenger service after the end of 1973, provided other local authorities are also willing to contribute a share of the cost. X

Caithness County Council has been advised by the Department of the Environment that the cessation of passenger services on the line to Wick and Thurso is unlikely. British Rail are being pressed by local action to re-open Alness station on this line (between Dingwall and Invergordon). It is possible that additional trains may run between Inverness and Tain.

OTHER NEWS

British Rail has authorised steam operation on a further 460 miles of track. This is in addition to the 300 miles on which such operation was authorised last year.

The Rural District Councils Association is fighting to prevent heavy lorries from quarries using country roads. It has urged the Government to promote new railway lines and to re-open old lines. The Association also advocates that planning consent should be based on the use of rail transport for the removal of heavy spoil.

✓X The Ecological Foundation has set up an independent commission (including Sir John Betjeman, a vice-president of the Railway Inigation Society) to examine the present use of, and plans for, all forms of transport in the United Kingdom, domestic and international; to

establish criteria for a national transport policy; and to make specific recommendations. The report of the commission is expected to be published in the spring of 1974. ✕

Off-peak fares introduced in the Western Region on 31st December, offer savings of up to 40% on normal day-return prices.

✕ The West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority published its development plan on the same day as the SELNEC Authority. Its proposals would cost £15m. and consist mainly of improving the railways south of Birmingham and developing the bus routes to the north. There are no firm proposals for fast public transport in the central area. It is planned to develop the Birmingham-Coventry train service in time for the opening of the National Exhibition Centre in 1976 and to build up the Birmingham-Redditch train service to serve Redditch new town. New stations are planned at Longbridge and Birmingham University and it is proposed to restore the station at Five Ways. ✕

In the West Riding of Yorkshire, Baildon station was re-opened on 5th January as a result of the decision of Bradford County Borough Council and other local authorities to subsidise the direct line from Bradford to Ilkley.

At Bradford Exchange, services were transferred to a new station, 200 yards south of the old station, from 16th January.

In our last issue, we stated that British Rail was being asked to re-open a number of closed stations on the Huddersfield-Penistone line. We seem to have been misinformed and it appears that this statement should refer to the Sheffield-Penistone line, but the comments of readers would be welcomed.

The Scottish Region of British Rail is carrying out a detailed study into the possible re-opening of Glasgow Central low level line. This extends under the heart of the city between Rutherglen and Kelvinhaugh, a distance of $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and was, for all practical purposes, the world's last underground steam railway before it closed in October, 1964.

Work has begun on the electrification of the Hamilton Circle line (near Glasgow), which covers the $7\frac{3}{4}$ miles from Newton to Motherwell via Blantyre and Hamilton. Work is scheduled to be completed by May, 1974.

The Glasgow-Kirkcaldy direct service ceased from 1st January. Passengers must now travel via Edinburgh Haymarket.

WHAT OTHER SOCIETIES ARE DOING

Branch Line Society is to run a trip to Lydd Town and/or Beeding on Wednesday, 25th April. Details from Dr. M. Dean, 34F, Norris Hill Drive, Heaton Norris, Stockport, Cheshire, SK4 2NR.

Dart Valley Light Railway, Ltd., took over operation of the Paignton-Kingswear line from 1st January.

Cambrian Coast Line Action Group and the Aberystwyth-Shrewsbury Railway Protection Group are to carry out a joint study for the production of a detailed technical plan for the kind of services which they want to see run on the lines between Shrewsbury, Aberystwyth and Pwllheli.

Flint and Deeside Railway Preservation Society is negotiating with British Rail for the purchase of the 3½-mile long Prestatyn-Deserth line, which was closed to passenger traffic on 22nd September, 1930.

Institute of Contemporary Arts Transport Action Link is, through its newsheet "All Change", providing an excellent clearing house of information for all those interested in the various socio-economic aspects of public transport. Copies may be obtained £1 for six issues) from Nash House, 12, Carlton House Terrace, London, S. W. 1.

Mid-Hants Railway, Ltd., plans to run a railcar service (steam at weekends) between Alton and Alresford (10 miles). Details from Alresford Station, Alresford, Hampshire.

Scottish Association for Public Transport is the new name, adopted in September, for the Scottish Railway Development Association. The Association is pressing for better connections between buses and trains in the Highlands. It has published an excellent study paper on "The Far North line: a plan for the future" (copies, 30p each, obtainable from the Membership Sec; retary, 92, Hillview Drive, Clarkston, Glasgow, G76 7JD).

Transport 2,000 is the short title for the National Federation for the Promotion of Railways. This has come into existence through the initiative of the National Union of Railwaymen and brings together groups opposed to further railway closure and in favour of development of the railway system. The Railway Invigoration Society is among the organisations which support this venture.

CORRECTION Last progress report, p. 7, para. 3, last line: Mr. Cogar's correct post-code is: SE1 4QS.

EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Editor: Mr. L. G. Hipperson, 24a, Cable Road, Hoylake, Wirral, Cheshire, L47 2B (telephone: 051 632 4374)

Sub-editor: Mr. H. R. Purser, 30, Staines Road, Feltham, Middlesex.
Mr. Purser is responsible for branch and area reports, Mr. Hipperson for all other matter. To ensure inclusion in the next issue (to be published in June), material must be submitted to the appropriate editor so as to reach him by Saturday, 28th April.

PUBLISHED by the RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY

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RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY

PROGRESS REPORT No. 94

MARCH 1973

MEMBERS ONLY SUPPLEMENT: ISSUE No. 14

TRANSPORT IN THE CONURBATIONS

✓X Another meeting of RIS representatives from the conurbations was held on Saturday, 25th November, 1972, the venue again being Birmingham. Reports relating to Greater London, the West Midlands, Merseyside, South East Lancashire and North East Cheshire, and Tyneside were received and led to a fruitful exchange of news and views.

A further meeting was held in Manchester on 17th February, 1973, and will be reported in our next issue. X

CLOSURES

It is not the Society's policy to object to rail closures "willy nilly". In districts served by a branch of the Society or one of its area representatives, the decision as to whether we should lodge an objection to a particular closure proposal is left to our local officers. Information and suggestions should be passed by members to their branch secretary or area representative. The names and addresses of these officials and details of the district for which each is responsible are given at frequent intervals in these members only supplements.

In cases where no branch or area exists, members are invited to send news of closure proposals to the General Secretary. It is particularly important that, wherever possible, evidence of hardship which would result were a closure proposal implemented should be supplied.

In all instances where a railway line or station is threatened with closure, members should not only pass information to the appropriate official of the Society but are also urged to make a personal objection whenever they can make a valid case.

RELATIONS WITH BRITISH RAIL

In recent years relations between the Railway Invigoration Society and British Rail have greatly improved. In many ways we now find ourselves on the same side as the railway management and united in struggles against certain third parties. It would, therefore, be a tremendous help to the Society in achieving its objects if members would kindly refrain from public criticism of British Rail unless all other means of redressing complaints have failed. Members are asked to send their grievances regarding railway services to a Society official, in the first instance, so that we may attempt to obtain rectification through the cordial contacts that we now enjoy with certain rail executives.

"RAILWAY IN THE SEVENTIES" .. Please send Newspaper cuttings marked with source and date to Mr. R. V. Banks, 121 Ashford Road, Bearstead, Maidstone, Kent.

AMMUNITION

✕ (This is a new feature which is intended to help members in their defence of the railway cause. They are invited to send the editor suitable material for inclusion under this heading.)

In recent weeks, the Government has agreed to vast capital investments in certain nationalised industries. The coal industry is to spend £1,000m., steel £3,000m. over the next ten years and the Post Office the even bigger sum of £4,000m. in the next five years.

The investment in railways on capital account over the last three years for which figures are available was:-

		in millions £		
		1969	1970	1971
vehicles (including ships)		15	22	17
plant, machinery		8	9	10
new buildings, works		53	57	74
	totals	76	88	101

(S.O.S. Campaign newsletter 8th January, 1973)

✓✕ If 700 people wanted to come into London, they filled 500 cars, 14 buses, or one train. (Sir Richard Way, Chairman of London Transport Executive, in a speech at the Common Market capital cities conference, as reported in The Guardian, 11th January, 1973). ✕

BRANCH SECRETARIES AND AREA REPRESENTATIVES

Amendments to the list given in the last members only supplement

BRANCHES

London and Home Counties As a result of the formation of the Wessex Branch and the Oxford Area, the territory of this Branch has been reduced by the loss of the western half of Buckinghamshire and most of Berkshire (see below for boundaries of the Oxford Area and see last members only supplement for boundaries of the Wessex Branch).

Three Counties Correct spelling of Branch Secretary's name is: "Fawdry". His address is now:- 24 St. James Street, Cheltenham, Glos. GL52 2SH.

AREAS

A new Area has been formed as follows:-

Oxford North and west of an imaginary line joining Westbury, Newbury, Reading, High Wycombe, Aylesbury, Buckingham and Banbury, extending to the borders of Warwickshire, Gloucestershire and Somerset.

Area Representative: The Rev. T. G. Comber, 32, Alexandra Road, Oxford, OX2 0DB

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