



Railway Invigoration Society

for the retention and modernisation of railway services

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P R O G R E S S R E P O R T

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THE COOPER BROTHERS' FORMULA

✓X The following is the text of a letter which this Society has sent to other organisations with an interest in public transport, the environment, etc. The letter was signed by our Chairman (Dr. M. P. L. Caton) and Vice-Chairman (Mr. R. V. Banks).

Railway Magazine, October 1973

"Closure disclosures

Statement by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration ('Ombudsman') in his report on complaints about the closure of the Alton-Winchester line that the Department of the Environment is considering the possibility of publishing a full summary of the financial details relating to future closure proposals will, if implemented, be welcomed by all those who have suspected in the past that the DoE has accepted without question dubious financial details favourable to closure submitted by British Railways Board. However, there is a contradictory ring about the remark that full details of the system used (the Cooper Brothers' formula) involve numerous accounting technicalities which the DoE does not consider to be in a form suitable for general publication. Until this is replaced by a more open attitude, justice will not be seen to have been done."

All of us who are fighting for the retention and development of our railways will agree with the last sentence of the paragraph from the Railway Magazine reproduced above.

We suggest that as many organisations and individuals as possible, in their own capacity, write to their members of Parliament and the Department of the Environment protesting against this attitude of secrecy and press for the publication of the complete details of the Cooper Bros.' formula.

(Complaint on behalf of the objectors was made to the "Ombudsman" by Mr. F. Clifton Sherriff (Director and Secretary of the Winchester and Alton Railway, Ltd., and a member of the Railway Invigoration Society) through his M. P., Miss Joan Quennell. Ed.) X

(see also House of Commons question and answer on the Cooper Brothers' formula on p. 6.)

"WHY CAN'T IT GO BY RAIL?"

✓X The Society arranged a special meeting at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, on 24th October, when Mr. J. R. Ogilvie, C. Eng., M. I. Mech. E., who is one of our honorary members delivered an illustrated lecture entitled "Why can't it go by rail?" It was a tribute to Mr. Ogilvie and to the importance of his subject that members came from as far afield as Oxford and Cheltenham to hear him.

Mr. Ogilvie outlined the limitations of road transport, particularly in environmental terms with reference to the "juggernaut" lorries, which, he said, were becoming the centre of opposition from many quarters. Basically, the problem evolved around the international container size, which had a maximum length of 40 feet. It was also considered too large by many customers and these vehicles had proved unwieldy in many town centres.

Then followed some revolutionary and novel proposals for future methods of parcels and freight handling by British Rail. These included the use of smaller-sized containers, more easily handled by fork-lift trucks without the need for vast cranes and freightliner depots.

The provision of a regular timetable for freight and parcels traffic would provide a more attractive and competitive service to the customer. With improved rolling stock, staff and plant utilisation, including use of multiple units instead of loco-hauled trains, this service could be simpler to integrate with the passenger services, avoiding operation difficulties due to speed restrictions inherent in hand-braked, short wheelbase wagons.

An advanced parcels train and advanced merchandise train travelling at speeds of up to 100 m. p. h. could operate like buses over 300 routes serving 25 areas of Britain. They would be integrated with local road transport at neighbouring railway stations and could offer door-to-door delivery over distances as short as 50 miles with average transit times of between 7 and 16 hours.

Such a scheme would cost money, but a first instalment costing £110M could double the amount of freight moved by rail and a second costing £80M (at today's prices) could provide a fourfold increase in traffic. The first trains could be running in 18 months and national system employing 600 trains completed in 3 years.

What was required was a complete new approach to freight handling with greater emphasis on wagon-load traffic, as freightliner services had only a limited market. X

STONEHOUSE BURDETT ROAD STATION : A BRIGHTER OUTLOOK ?

✓X Following the unconditional consent to the closure of Stonehouse Burdett Road station (Gloucestershire) given by the Secretary of State for the Environment, British Rail deferred closure from the end of September until at least 1st January, 1974, as a result of proposals put forward by Stonehouse Parish Council.

At a parish council meeting, which followed discussions between council members and members of the Committee of the RIS Three Counties Branch, the Council had resolved

in principle to subsidise the cost of station reconstruction, subject to certain guarantees, and, in order to permit negotiations to proceed, to request postponement of closure for at least three months, during which time the Council would compensate British Rail for any losses incurred.

An attempt to obtain financial support from Gloucestershire County Council was unsuccessful, but the County Planning Officer was reported to have suggested that British Rail should be asked not to demolish the station at the present time, because of approval for major local development. ✕

END OF A LOVE AFFAIR

✕ "Britain is coming to the end of its love affair with the car, but the parting will be painful and expensive." So said Mr. Alfred Wood, Chief Planning Officer for Worcestershire, who has secured appointment to a similar post with the new West Midlands Metropolitan County Council, speaking in September at the opening session of the annual conference of the Council for the Protection of Rural England held at the University of Warwick. The Nation had now "to attempt to distinguish between liberty and licence - liberty for many people to use their cars, or licence for them to destroy our civilization." The paradise of universal car ownership was unattainable.

Later, Mr. Wood welcomed experiments with the use of tramcars on redundant suburban railway lines and wondered whether the West Midlands suburban rail network might be electrified.

The theme of the conference was "Transport : co-ordination or chaos?" ✕

(Acknowledgement is made to the editor of the October 1973 issue of the RIS Three Counties Branch newsletter for the use of certain material included in the above report)

DESTRUCTION OF RAIL FORMATIONS

National Committee member Mrs. R. Colyer was the RIS representative at the 1973 annual conference of the Council for the Protection of Rural England. On our behalf, she put forward the following resolution: "That this Conference, being concerned at the piecemeal destruction of the formation of closed railway lines, calls for a ban on sales for any use which will preclude possible re-opening, which possible re-opening was, in fact, envisaged by the Government if local economic circumstances should change". Unfortunately, the meeting ended before the resolution was reached, although the chairman stated that it would be considered by the CPRE Executive in London.

However, Mrs. Colyer was more successful at the annual general meeting of the Dorset Branch of the CPRE held on 27th October, when she submitted a resolution which was carried and forwarded to London. This resolution was : "That this AGM, being concerned at the piecemeal destruction of closed railway formations, when services may well have to be re-opened, urges local authorities to refuse planning permission for all developments prejudicial to re-opening."

NEW CORPORATE MEMBER

We welcome the following new corporate member :- Worcestershire County Council.

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 June Railways (policy review) Mr. Bishop (Newark) asked the SSE if, in his review of British Rail policy, he will consider extending the use of railways, in the light of forecasts of the increased use of roads by heavy vehicles from the Continent. Mr. Peyton The review has been concerned with how railways can best contribute to our transport requirements.

Railways (Cornwall) Dr. David Owen (Plymouth, Sutton) asked the SSE if he will list the date and subject matter of any meeting of officials of his Department with English China Clay Ltd., for the purpose of discussing the future pattern of railways in Cornwall. Mr. Peyton None.

19th June Railways and roads (expenditure) Mr. Nicholas Edwards (Pembroke) asked the SSE what is the total annual expenditure in Wales and the United Kingdom respectively in 1973 and planned for 1974 on (1) grant aid for railway services, (2) road construction and (3) road maintenance. Mr. Peter Thomas The latest estimates of expenditure on road construction and maintenance are as follows :

		£m. at 1972 prices		
1973-4		1974-5		
U. K.	Wales	U. K.	Wales	
623.1	39.3	649.7	41.3	road construction
285.9	19.3	236.0	18.4	road maintenance

Grant aid for railway services in 1973 for Wales and the United Kingdom is expected to be £5.1 million and £67.2 million respectively. The estimates of grant expenditure to be paid in 1974 are not yet available.

British Rail (uneconomic services) Mr. Edward Taylor (Glasgow, Cathcart) asked the SSE how much grant is being given in the current financial year to British Rail to support uneconomic railway services in terms of the Transport Act, 1968; whether it is his policy to continue these grants in future years; and if he will make a full statement on the effect of such grants of EEC obligations which Great Britain has accepted. Mr. Peyton The Government intend to continue support for loss-making passenger services, which are estimated to cost £71 million in 1973-74. EEC regulations allow such services to be retained and supported, although certain procedural changes will be needed.

20th June Railways Mr. Judd (Portsmouth, West) asked the SSE whether he will issue a general direction to British Rail to ensure that, whenever cuts are necessitated by the recent policy statement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the rebuilding of railway stations needing

modernisation will not again be delayed. Mr. Peyton No.

23rd June Railways (Wales) Mr. Elystan Morgan (Cardiganshire) asked the SSE what was the total mileage of railway passenger routes in Wales closed between October 1964 and June 1970 and the total mileage of passenger routes in Wales closed since June 1970. Mr. Peyton 240 miles in the first instance and 17 in the second.

26th June Derby-Matlock railway line (subsidy) Mr. Scott-Hopkins (Derbyshire, West) asked the SSE what was the subsidy paid for the branch line from Derby to Matlock for the past year, 1st January, 1972 to 31st December, 1972, and from 1st January, 1973 up to date. Mr. Peyton The answer to the first part of the question is £131,000; to the second £57,100 up to 31st May, 1973.

9th July Bedford-Bletchley branch line Mr. Skeet (Bedford) asked the SSE whether, in deciding to continue to subsidise passenger services on the Bedford to Bletchley branch line, he will consider using the line in connection with the agreement between the London Brick Company, the Greater London Council and British Rail for the placing of domestic rubbish in the knot holes in Bedfordshire and the likelihood of the recruitment to the agreement of further local authorities to the east of the brickfields, including Milton Keynes. Mr. Peyton I am sure British Rail would consider any proposals from local authorities for new freight traffic.

12th July Railways (electrification) Mr. Skeet asked the SSE what proposals he has received from British Rail for approval of capital expenditure on either the construction or the electrification of railway routes running across country to eastern port. Mr. Peyton None.

13th July Railways (electrification) Mr. Skeet asked the SSE what percentage of the total mileage of British Railways is electrified; and how this figure compares with other leading Common Market countries. Mr. Peyton The following is the information :-

Country	Total route mileage	Total electrified	% electrified
Great Britain	11,537 miles	1,970 miles	17
German Federal Republic	29,267 km.	8,954 km.	30
France	35,624 km.	9,361 km.	26

24th July Railways (noise) Mr. Warren (Hastings) asked the SSE if he will give a general direction to British Rail to institute a study of the noise to which passengers are subject in railway trains, particularly when passing through tunnels. Mr. Peyton No. This is already covered in British Railway's continuing programme of research.

17th October Railway infrastructure Mr. Dalyell (West Lothian) asked the SSE what use has been made of the powers under the Local Employment Act, 1972, to assist investment in railway infrastructure on a regional development basis, and to promote investment in private sidings in development areas ... Mr. Peyton Grant has been made to reconstruct a private rail link in Yorkshire. I am prepared to consider any proposals which may be put to me under the terms of the Act.

Hastings-Ashford railway line Mr. Warren (Hastings) asked the SSE if he will

review the application to close the Hastings-Ashford railway line in the light of his announcement in favour of the construction of a Channel Tunnel. Mr. Peyton No. I have written to my hon. Friend to explain why.

23rd October Railways (London Study) Mr. Spearing (Acton) asked the SSE when he expects to receive the report of the committee looking at rail communications in London; if written and oral evidence on submissions to that committee will be published or made public; and if he will publish in the OFFICIAL REPORT the main business and industrial interests of the chairman.

Mr. Peyton The London Rail Study team is expected to report next summer; it is for the team to decide how to deal with evidence submitted to it. The answer to the third part of the question is "No".

24th October Rail subsidies Mr. Deakins (Walthamstow, West) asked the SSE if any EEC subsidies are available to offset the operating costs of United Kingdom railway lines which, though unprofitable, need to be left open for social reasons. Mr. Peyton There is no provision in the common transport policy for subsidising railway losses from central community funds. EEC regulation 1191/69 enables me to compensate the British Railways Board for operating unprofitable passenger services which are retained for social or economic reasons.

25th October Railway closures (Cooper Brothers' formula) Mr. John Wells (Maidstone) asked the SSE if he will give a general direction to British Rail to publish full details of the system leading to rail closures known as the Cooper Brothers' formula. Mr. Peyton This formula is currently being re-examined in the course of the rail policy review and a general direction would be inappropriate.

Debates

4th July Railways (Committee of Supply) (see cols. 540-604) Mr. Fred Mulley (Sheffield, Park) I beg to move that this House condemns Her Majesty's Government for allowing the uncertainty about the future of British Rail to continue and for its failure to produce a policy designed to ensure the utilisation of our railways to the greatest social, economic and environmental advantage. Mr. Peyton (Minister for Transport Industries) moved an amendment as follows: I beg to move to leave out from "House" to the end of the question and to add instead thereof: "welcomes the continuing support which Her Majesty's Government is giving to British Rail and recognises the need for Her Majesty's Government to complete its assessment of the most effective future role of our railway system as soon as possible". The amendment was, on a division, agreed to. Among members who took part in the ensuing debate were Mrs. Barbara Castle (Blackburn), Mr. John H. Osborn (Sheffield, Hallam), Mr. Walter Johnston (Derby, South), Sir Gerald Nabarro (Worcestershire, South), Mr. Andrew Bowden (Brighton, Kemptown), Mr. David Waddington (Nelson & Colne), Mr. David Stoddart (Swindon), Mr. Tom Bradley (Leicester, North-East) and Mr. Keith Speed (Under-Secretary of State for the Environment). On a division at the end of the debate, the motion, as amended, was agreed to.

19th July Energy policy (cols. 897-920) During this debate, Mr. Leslie Huckfield (Nuneaton) put the case for the retention and development of railways as a means of conserving energy.

House of Lords

Questions and answers

* 12th June Glasgow-Oban rail service The Earl of Dundonald asked Her Majesty's Government whether there is any intention to restrict the existing direct passenger rail service between Glasgow and Oban, bearing in mind, in particular, the developing tourist industry in the Oban area and the Outer Isles. Lord Mowbray and Stourton My Lords, there are no current proposals to restrict the existing direct passenger rail service between Glasgow and Oban. The Government are well aware of the importance of Oban to the tourist industry both on the mainland and the Islands. The Earl of Dundonald My Lords, I should like to thank the noble Lord for that very clear-cut answer, which will put heart into that part of Scotland. May I draw his attention to Occasional Bulletin No. 4 on transport issued by the Highlands and Islands Development Board, and ask whether the wording I am about to quote conflicts in some way with his answer? Paragraph 20 says: "We support the idea that the Oban line should be operated as a branch of the Glasgow-Mallaig railway - without signalling, with minimal track and terminal costs, and with through carriages detached and attached at Crianlarich. In winter the line could perhaps operate on a connecting basis without through carriages" Lord Mowbray and Stourton My Lords ... The document that the Highlands and Islands Development Board have issued is very interesting and useful. It is submitted purely as a basis for discussion for the Secretary of State for Scotland. My right honourable friend will be discussing these matters later. Lord Balfour of Inchrye My Lords if the Government appreciate the importance of the west coast of Scotland, can we have an assurance that they equally appreciate the importance of the east coast, and that there will be no interference with the east coast line up to Dingwall and Wick. Lord Mowbray and Stourton My Lords, being personally affected by the east coast line, I can assure my noble friend that I will certainly take a deep interest in it. Lord Hawke My Lords, will the noble Lord confirm that there is no significance to be attached to the use of the word "current" in his first answer? Lord Mowbray and Stourton. My Lords, there is obviously a significance, because we have guaranteed everything up to January 1, 1974. After that we will be looking afresh in the terms of the rail review policy.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

The editor will consider for publication letters on matters of general interest to members. Any opinions expressed, however, must not be taken as necessarily reflecting the official views and policies of the Society. The editor reserves the right to make "cuts". Letters should normally be signed by writers' real names. Only in exceptional circumstances, which must be clearly stated in a covering note, will a letter be accepted for publication under a nom de plume.

Dangers of increased speed on the railways; and the non-smoker and modern passenger trains.

We should be on our guard not to accept too lightly the assumption - which seems to underly all modernisation programmes, especially those concerning passenger transport - that

speed is all that matters. Total journey time - from door to door - is usually important, but depends to a great extent on connecting services, whether rail or bus, or on traffic conditions from home to station. To hear of a cut of ten minutes in the journey from, say Darlington to London can only irritate the traveller who has to begin or end his journey with one or more ill-timed connecting journeys and long waits between. I admit that, in addition to the irritation, the prospect of increased speed fills me with fears of accidents caused or intensified by speed. Was there not a derailment some years ago south of Northallerton found to be caused by excessive speed in hot weather which had caused buckling?

The present new air-conditioned coaches on the inter-city trains are not the last word in comfort, allowing less space for moving between seats and none at all for standing so that, boarding a crowded train, I had to stand outside the passenger area and therefore outside that part of the coach where the "No smoking" rule applied. As the windows, where they can be opened at all, on the carriage doors, are self-closing, the non-smoker unable to find a seat risks suffocation by other people's smoke, whereas in the older type of carriage he could be certain of a smoke-free, if cold, spot by an open window. For those with physical intolerance to smoke this risk is not acceptable and, if unable to plan their journey in advance and reserve a seat, they will be driven on to the roads or obliged to stay at home. I for one am already planning my travelling so as to make use, as far as possible, of the older type of carriage still found on the slower stopping and mail-carrying trains, and hope we shall not all be condemned to even more up-to-date air-conditioned, windowless carriages with seats made only for the tall and where escape to a drafty end-of-carriage is impossible.

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REPORTS FROM BRANCHES AND AREAS

BRANCHES

London and Home Counties

✓✗ A rail tour was organised, using scheduled services, on 5th July. This included the "forgotten" electric line between Woodside and Sanderstead, now restricted to peak hour services only, and the last evening train on the closure-threatened West Croydon-Wimbledon branch. In addition to the usual electric suburban stock, participants travelled on an L. T. District line train and, much to their surprise, behind a class 3e diesel on the short run between Sanderstead and East Croydon. The organiser of the tour expressed his thanks to the South-Eastern Division of the Southern Region for its co-operation in planning this tour and also for keeping the trains on time, which was essential for the tour to succeed. ✗

Considerable rebuilding of existing stations and construction of new ones continues in the Branch area. The much-needed new passenger concourse at King's Cross station was opened

in mid-June. It is commendable how the new Euston-style of layout, with automatic swing doors, has been integrated with the old station buildings. A minor criticism is that the directions to suburban platforms 9-14 are very poor after one leaves the concourse, although it should be remembered that only platforms 9 & 10 will remain in this part of the station after electrification. At Finsbury Park a £158,000 scheme is now being carried out. This includes the improvement of the road and rail link through the construction of a bus station and the carrying out of various roadworks. Work here is due to be completed next spring. A £1 million modernisation scheme is in progress at S. Kensington. Reconstruction of Cannon Street has been completed.

Outside London, a new station is being built at Basildon (Essex) to serve the town centre. The station is due to open in May 1974 and its cost is to be met by the town's development corporation.

✓✗ The long-awaited new map of all railway lines in the London area appeared in June, accompanied by much publicity in the London evening papers and on Radio London. The map, which has been printed in both poster and pocket sizes, displays 600 stations, with interchanges, up to 20 miles from central London. A noticeable exclusion is the interchange at West Hampstead, which was, however, included in the latest L. T. map published at about the same time.

It is strange that a simple map should arouse so much public interest, but this emphasises its importance. The success of London Transport in terms of passenger journeys is a tribute to its bus and tube maps, which are not only generously provided around London but have even been observed in places as far away as Norfolk. If this map is similarly distributed, then an increase in the patronage of British Rail trains can be expected, together with additional use of interchanges, which should relieve congestion at the main terminals. ✗

A Merry-Maker special was run on Saturday, 5th May, from Highbury and Islington and other North London line stations to the North Wales coast. A bookstall was installed in the brake coach by the North London Line Action Committee who had jointly organised the train with London Midland Region. As the special was well patronised, it is hoped that further trips from the North London line will appear on next year's Merry-Maker programme.

✓✗ Although the Government will not permit London Transport to close the Epping-Ongar line, it has refused grant-aid to cover losses. ✗

There is local pressure for the re-opening of the Aylesbury-Bletchley line, especially to serve the new town of Milton Keynes. The town centre station for Milton Keynes is to be at Loughton, between Bletchley and Wolverton. Construction is expected to start early in 1975.

Guildford Borough Council is inquiring into the possibility of a new station being opened between Guildford (London Road) and Clandon (on the line to Waterloo via Effingham Junction) to serve the town's outer suburbs of Burpham and Merrow.

The annual general meeting of the Branch was held on 20th September. Officials and a committee were elected.

The Branch published its fourth newsletter in September. Acknowledgement is made to the editor of the newsletter for much of the material included in this report.

EAST ANGLIAN

✓✗ The Branch held a public meeting - a freight forum - at Ipswich on 3rd November. The principal speakers were Mr. G. O. B. Clarke, Norwich Divisional Manager of British Rail and Mr. J. R. Ogilvie, C. Eng., M. I. Mech. E., an honorary member of the Railway Invigoration Society. After these two gentlemen had spoken, the meeting continued as an Any Questions session. In addition to Messrs. Clarke and Ogilvie, the panel members included Mr. H. Allcock, formerly an Out-of-Gauge and Cartage Inspector with British Rail and Mr. A. J. Frost, a member of Ipswich Borough Council. Over thirty people attended the meeting and engaged in a lively discussion on ways of getting more freight from road to rail. The Ipswich area suffers especially from heavy road traffic to and from Ipswich and Felixstowe docks. ✗

We have taken up various matters with British Rail, including level crossings and the upkeep of unstaffed stations. Efforts are being made to get local authorities to help more in publicising local rail services and facilities at March, Downham Market and Ely. It is also likely that a Rail Users' Association will soon be set up for the Norwich-Ely line.

An extra early-morning train has been introduced between Downham Station (which serves the small town of Downham Market) and King's Lynn. There are also reports that Magdalen Road Station, on this section of line, may be re-opened, if local authorities will help.

Newmarket and District Rail Users' Association has distributed another newsletter in the town and will be organising another shoppers special to Norwich on 8th December. As a result of the Association's campaigning, an extra evening train has been introduced from Cambridge to Newmarket and back.

✓✗ The campaign to re-open the Cambridge-St. Ives line has been given a boost by the formation of the Cambridge Railway Action Group (C. R. A. G.). A petition has been organised at Swavesey and leaflets have been distributed at Cambridge. It has also been suggested that new halts might be provided on the line at Newmarket Road and Milton Road. Initiators of C. R. A. G. were the local Labour Party and rail unions. ✗

The campaign to keep the British Rail Divisional HQ in Norwich when re-organisation takes place has suffered various setbacks. Appeals by BR employees, local MPs and local authorities to both Mr. Marsh and the Prime Minister have been unsuccessful. The employees have been told that the HQ of the new Anglia Region will be in four different buildings in London.

The Branch Secretary has had letters published in the local press about the location of the BR Anglia HQ, freight traffic and British Rail's staff shortage. (Shortly before we went to press, the Eastern Daily Press published a report that British Rail has confirmed that King's Lynn railway station "will receive a major facelift or a new station will be built". According to Mr. G. O. B. Clarke, Manager of the Norwich Division, British Rail's action in "making a survey of land with a view to seeing what could be done with it was in itself an assurance that the line would not be closing". Ed.)

Three Counties (Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire)

✓✗ Bristol Parkway, the new park and ride station which opened in May 1972, has proved a success and a £76,000 passenger facilities improvement programme is now being carried out. This includes canopies over the footbridge and most of the platform lengths. These were omitted from the original design, as the scheme was regarded as experimental with costs kept to a minimum. ✗

In July, a new overhead wagon loading plant, which can load a 1,000 ton train in an hour, was opened at Tytherington Quarry (Glos.) To gain access to the quarry, British Rail had to relay six miles of the former Yate-Thornbury line, rebuild several bridges and a level crossing. The line was re-opened in July 1972 and in the first year handled 1,000 trains which carried 600,000 tons from the quarry.

(Other news from the Three Counties is on pp. 2 - 3)

AREAS

North-Eastern England

✓✗ Our correspondent in the North-East reports :-

✗ It is difficult to give any clear indication at the moment as to the future of the Haltwhistle-Alston line. Although the South Tynedale Railway Preservation Society still says that it intends to go ahead with plans to acquire the line either by purchase or lease, an action group is giving up its fight to keep the line open. The group feels that there is no point in continuing the fight when the "all weather" road for the South Tyne valley is almost sure to be built. The Department of the Environment has offered £300,000 towards the cost of this road and would not agree to the County Council's proposal that the grant should go instead towards keeping the railway line open. ✗

✓✗ Tyneside Passenger Transport Executive has great faith in its supertrams which will operate the rapid transit system when this starts - in 1979, if present plans work out. It is hoped that the trams will operate to Killingworth New Town, Newcastle Airport and the Team Valley Trading Estate (Gateshead), in addition to the services already agreed to, and, in conjunction with buses, will provide a top-class public transport service, thus eliminating the need to build more urban motorways.

One problem which has arisen concerning the proposed underground stations in Newcastle is that arrangements have not been made to install lifts, which it has been suggested will debar the old and disabled from using the stations. It is thought that this matter will be satisfactorily settled, because Newcastle's Planning Committee says that it will insist on lifts being provided. ✗

✓✗ Bad news is that the forthcoming big shake-up in the system of paying Government grants could spell the end of Tyneside's loss-making commuter rail lines. If the newly-formed Metropolitan County Council should decide against continuance of support for these lines, it is understood that British Rail would apply for immediate closure of all except the Newcastle-Sunderland

line. It has been suggested that express bus services would replace the lines. Considering the present oil crisis and that the bus companies in the area are badly understaffed, this is a remarkable suggestion. Other bad news is that the Price Commission has given permission for fare increases on local services. ✕

North Western England

✓✕ Early in August, the Government announced that it had decided to make no grant at present towards the cost of the proposed underground railway project in Manchester, which would link Piccadilly and Victoria Stations. If support were given, this would not be until 1975-6 at the earliest.

The decision has caused tremendous consternation in Manchester, not only at official level but also among various pressure groups. Attempts are being made to get the Government to change its mind, as the scheme is the linch-pin of railway development in Greater Manchester. The South-East Lancashire and North-East Cheshire Passenger Transport Executive has kept open a large number of heavily-subsidised lines in the hope that extra traffic would be generated by the new rail tunnel. If Government help towards building the tunnel should not be given for at least two years, such lines may have to be closed. Moreover, there is fear that the Government may require the tunnel scheme to be scrapped entirely. ✕

✓✕ More encouraging news comes from Liverpool, where excavation of the inner rail loop tunnel was completed on 8th October. ✕

Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive has under consideration the provision of through rail services between Liverpool and Neston (Wirral). At present, passengers to or from Neston have to change trains at Birkenhead North. For some time, Neston Urban District Council has been pressing for the electrification of the section of line between Bidston* and Neston (this is now used by diesel multiple units operating between Birkenhead and Wrexham). As an alternative, the MPTE is now investigating the possibility of using the Weymouth System for giving a through service. This would mean that trains would use power taken from the third rail between Liverpool and Birkenhead North, but would be hauled by diesel locomotives beyond Birkenhead North. This would be considerably cheaper than electrifying the line to Neston. (Note: * The mile stretch between Birkenhead North and Bidston is already electrified for use by West Kirby trains).

Plans have been made to open a new station near the disused station at Risley (close to Warrington), in about four years' time, to serve the new town of Birchwood.

Oxford

The Abingdon-Radley line, closed to passenger trains a few years ago, is expected to be closed to all traffic by the end of this year, owing to rationalisation of British Leyland's car transport arrangements.

West Yorkshire

✓✕ We welcome Mr. L. Schofield, of 177, Smithy Hill, Wibsey, Bradford, BD6 1JX, as

our representative for this Area.

British Rail's campaign to boost passenger traffic in the West Riding, which was launched just over a year ago, has increased business on almost every line. For instance, on the Leeds / Bradford-Keighley line journeys in June were 11 per cent more than in the same month last year; there was a similar increase (16 per cent) on the Leeds / Bradford-Ilkley line.

Eastern Region has set up a study team to produce ideas for improving local rail services in the Sheffield and Rotherham districts. Among the matters to be examined are the possibilities of re-opening closed routes and stations and of providing new stations and the opportunities for improving existing services. ✕

North and Central Wales

Use of Shotton (low level) station (Flintshire), on the Chester-Holyhead line, has exceeded all expectations since it was re-opened in August of last year. The re-opening was made possible through grants from the Department of the Environment and local councils.

1973 has been a record season on British Rail's only steam-operated service, the narrow gauge line from Aberystwyth to Devil's Bridge (Vale of Rheidol). Traffic this year was 16 per cent up on last year's.

North of Scotland

✓✕ Very heavy passenger traffic was again carried on the Inverness-Kyle of Lochalsh line this summer. A feasibility test was made of the proposed alternative bus in August; this took 4 hours 35 minutes as compared with the proposed 3 hours 25 minutes. The existing train service takes approximately three hours. ✕

OTHER NEWS

A group of university professors from Imperial College (London), the City, Aberdeen and Swansea universities and the Cranfield College of Aeronautics hope to save Britain's hovertrain project by acquiring the track and facilities near Earith (Hunts.) which were used by the defunct Tracked Hovercraft Ltd.,

British Rail plans to introduce its new high-speed train on the London-Bristol-South Wales route in 1976, thus cutting the current best journey time from Paddington to Bristol from 110 minutes to 82 minutes.

West Bromwich Planning Committee has proposed the re-introduction of passenger services on the Dudley-Wednesbury-Walsall-Cannock line and that bus/rail inter-changes should be provided along the route.

Negotiations are in hand for improvement of passenger services on the Leicester-Birmingham line, as patronage has increased very quickly during the past two years.

The Northampton-Market Harborough line was closed to passenger traffic from 26th August.

The Peak Park Planning Board has appointed consultants to advise on the future of the Matlock-Buxton line. Among proposals to be considered by them is the idea of using the line as a tourist railway.

When local passenger services on the Skipton-Carlisle line were withdrawn about three years ago, replacement bus services were provided. The replacement bus for Ribbleshead station was recently withdrawn. That for Dent lasted only a few months.

The replacement bus at Kirkby Stephen was withdrawn very soon after the rail service had ceased.

Scotland

Scottish Region has prepared a detailed study - the Clyderail report - on the development of railways in Glasgow. Among the report's recommendations are :-

(1) the re-opening and electrifying of the Rutherglen to Stobcross via Glasgow Central (low level) line and the provision of a connecting link from this to the Glasgow north electric system at Bridgeton; (2) the electrification of the line from Shields Junction across Enoch Bridge to High Street Junction - with a new connecting line to a resited High Street station, thus providing a link between the Paisley-Gourock/Ayrshire lines and the Airdrie line; (3) the building of a new station at Blythswood Square, between Queen Street and Charing Cross, on the Glasgow north electric system; and (4) the resiting of Partick Hill station to provide interchange with the Glasgow Underground. Total cost of this scheme is estimated at £26½ million and it would take five years to complete. Glasgow Passenger Transport Authority has pressed the Government to give it immediate approval.

Motherwell station (between Glasgow and Carstairs) is being rebuilt at a cost of £140,000. It is used by over one million passengers every year and it is served by Anglo-Scottish inter-city expresses and frequent suburban services.

The 2½-mile single-line Lanark branch is now being electrified. Under the timetable to commence in May, all trains between Glasgow and Lanark will run via Motherwell - non-stop Glasgow to Motherwell - at hourly intervals and will take 37 minutes, a vast improvement on the present service.

There is a possibility that the five miles of closed line between Hamilton and Stonehouse New Town (Lanarkshire) will be re-opened in a few years' time.

A winter Sunday service with connecting trains has been introduced for the first time on Sealink's Stranraer-Larne route.

From 1st October, direct trains from Edinburgh to Dundee via the Dunfermline route have been switched to that via Kirkcaldy. Direct trains via Dunfermline, introduced some years ago, have received very little support and not enough local traffic. Now that all direct trains between Edinburgh and Dundee run via Kirkcaldy, regular-interval timing has been introduced. Passenger services from Lochgelly and Cardenden, between Cowdenbeath and Markinch, have been reduced to peak hours only. Between Markinch and Cardenden there is now only one train

in each direction daily, Mondays to Fridays (no service on Saturdays and Sundays).

Livingston New Town (West Lothian) residents are pressing for the re-opening of Livingston station (on the Bathgate line) for the use of commuters to Edinburgh.

WHAT OTHER SOCIETIES ARE DOING

(Readers are asked to kindly mention this feature when writing to any of the addresses given below).

A4 Locomotive Society organised on 6th October an excursion from Newcastle to Barrow, which proved the great interest that still exists in steam trains. The train was hauled by "Sir Nigel Gresley" from Newcastle to Carlisle and by "Green Arrow" from Carnforth to Barrow, with a diesel locomotive operating over the intervening stretch. The same locomotive arrangements applied on the return journey. Not only was the train packed, but, right through the steam-hauled sections of the journey, people waited at vantage points to see the train pass and, in many cases, took photographs and made tape recordings.

East Suffolk Travellers' Association (a corporate member of the Railway Invigoration Society)
Hon. Secretary, pro tem: Mr. T. S. Sydenham-Clarke, 32, Saxmundham Road, Aldeburgh, Suffolk.

North Devon Railway Society has been formed with the object of purchasing the Barnstaple to Ilfracombe line and five stations from British Rail and bringing the line back to use. Chairman: Sir Gerald Nabarro, M. P. for South Worcestershire, House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1

Scottish Association for Public Transport (formerly Scottish Railway Development Association) proposes a light transit electric railway system in Edinburgh as an alternative to the £130 million road scheme prepared last year by Colin Buchanan and Partners. The system would operate on selected streets and converted stretches of disused railway lines over a route of about 47 miles at an estimated cost of £47 million. The Association's plans are described in "Public transport: the options for Edinburgh", copies of which may be obtained (price 55p. each, including postage) from J. R. Geddes, Esq., Secretary, SAPT, 28, Durham Road, Edinburgh, EH15 1PD.

✓ X Transport 2,000 Among members of the Railway Invigoration Society acting as officials of Transport 2,000's regional groups are the following:-

East Anglia - Secretary: Mr. D. Maudlin (Treasurer of RIS)

South-East - Chairman: Mr. R. V. Banks (Vice-Chairman and Press Publicity Officer of RIS)

Bristol-Avon, Gloucester Liaison Committee - Secretary: Mr. J. H. M. Fawdry,

(Secretary of Three Counties Branch, RIS) X

Welsh Railway Action Group Following representation by the Group to Cardiganshire County Council, the Council has asked the British Railways Board to defer any plans it may have for dismantling the railway line from Carmarthen to Newcastle Emlyn/Lampeter, pending negotiations with the Teifi Valley Railway Preservation Society for its acquisition. The Group has made similar requests to the Carmarthen and Pembroke county councils. Group Secretary: Mr. John Rogers, Mor Awel, Stryd Fawr, Tywyn, Merioneth.

✓ Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway Preservation Co. Ltd., British Rail has accepted the offer of £8,000 made by the Preservation Company for the purchase, freehold, of the eight-mile 2'6" gauge railway from Raven Square, Welshpool, to Llanfair Caereinion. Further details from: Llanfair Caereinion Station, Welshpool, Montgomeryshire.

✗ Winchester and Alton Railway, Ltd., has been formed by the merging of the interests of a consortium (of a private company and local authorities) and the Mid-Hants. Railway Co., with Mr. John Taylor as Chairman and Mr. F. Clifton Sherriff (a member of the RIS) as Director and Secretary. Other members of the Board include Miss Joan Quennell (M. P. for the Petersfield Division), Mr. John Arlott (a vice-president of the RIS) and directors from the Mid-Hants Railway Co. Although Hampshire County Council is not to provide financial assistance, it has given the new company a free hand in negotiating with British Rail for the purchase of the line. The Mid-Hants Railway Preservation Society Ltd., (alternative title: Mid-Hants Railway Trust Fund) has been incorporated as a guarantee company in support of the enterprise. Chairman of the Trust Fund: Mr. L. G. Wheeler, 6, Cherryway, Alton, Hampshire. ✗

FOREIGN NEWS

Canada. Four extra railway lines are to be built in British Columbia as the result of an agreement between the provincial and federal governments, cost to be equally shared. The agreement covers two connecting lines between the British Columbia Railway and the Canadian National Railway and two extensions to the BCR. A 40-mile line up the Bonaparte Valley will link Clinton (BCR) to the CN trans-continental mainline at Ashcroft and a 245 mile line will connect Terrace (CN) with Groundhog on the BCR's Dease Lake extension. BCR is to build a 74-mile branch westward from Klappan (just south of Dease Lake) to Telegraph Creek. The BCR will also be extended to the BC/Yokon border at Watson Lake (from where a further line - not covered by the present agreement - may be built to Dawson). Work on the Telegraph Creek and Watson Lake extensions cannot commence until the BCR reaches Dease Lake, fixed for 1974 but already delayed.

CORRINGENDA

The following corrections should be made to the last issue of the progress report :-

- p.15 Severn Valley Railway Co., last line of paragraph: correct post-code is WV16 5DT
- p.16 Wirral Railway Circle, third line: "Chester" should read "Cheshire"

EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

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(N. B. Correct post-code is as shown above)

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 March 1974) material must be submitted to the appropriate editor so as to reach him by Saturday, 26th January, 1974)

PUBLISHED by the RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY

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RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY

PROGRESS REPORT No. 97

DECEMBER 1973

MEMBERS ONLY SUPPLEMENT: ISSUE No. 17

AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION ON TRANSPORT

✓✗ As announced in our March 1973 main progress report, the Ecological Foundation has set up an independent commission - which it is financing - to examine the present use of, and plans for, all forms of transport in the United Kingdom. Members of the Railway Invigoration Society have assisted Professor D. Wiggins (University of London), a member of the Bishop of Kingston's Committee on Transport, in the preparation of a report on railway matters which the Committee has submitted to the Commission. We have sent Professor Wiggins information about lines on which more expensive than necessary methods have remained in use, on the cost of abandoned lines, on freight traffic refused by British Rail, on the possibility of transferring freight from road to rail, on the degree of difficulty there would be in reversing the policy of freight concentration and in reinstating a more comprehensive network of smaller depots, and detailed proposals to bring back into use the Midland and South-Western Junction Railway (Cheltenham-Andover). ✗

AMMUNITION

Passenger miles produced per therm of energy used :-

supersonic aircraft	3;	subsonic aircraft	7;	private car	9;
diesel bus	16;	inter-city train	153!		

(With acknowledgement to Branch Line News No. 23, 8th August, 1973 (Published by the Branch Line Society).

What does a switch from road to rail mean in visual terms? Two contracts recently obtained by British Rail provide an indication. Nine trains each week will carry car components from Swindon to Birmingham - this would have required 300 lorry loads in the same period. Similarly, one 700-ton trainload a day all the year round will move industrial salt from Cheshire to South Wales - a total of 250,000 tons a year. This would have required some 40-50 loaded lorry trips per day and 40-50 empty vehicle runs.

Today, when the world is concerned with reducing energy consumption and an improved environment, a reduction in individual vehicle movements is crucial.

(With acknowledgement to "Facts on freight", published by Transport 2,000)

In comparison with the French and German railways, British Rail has been starved of funds. The French system (S. N. C. F.) has obtained some £500 million in 1971 and the German system (D. B.) some £700 million; whereas British Rail only received about £100 million. (Figures given by Mr. Richard Marsh, Chairman of the British Railways Board, in his address to the Road Hauliers Association Conference, October 1972)

(With acknowledgement to "How the EEC can benefit British Rail", published by Transport 2,000)

"Getting the best from British Rail", a publication issued earlier this year by Transport 2,000, listed the advantages of railways as compared with road. Ways in which rail ~~saves~~ include the following :-

- Conservation of land : a double-track railway is about 30 ft. wide, a six-lane motorway about 100 ft. wide.
- efficiency : rail can convey 2,900 passengers per hour per foot width of track, private cars only 75 passengers per hour per foot width of road.
- safety : rail deaths were 1 per 237 million traffic units in 1970; the corresponding figure for road was 37,4 million.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1974

Next year's annual general meeting of the Railway Invigoration Society will be held in Gloucester on the afternoon of Saturday, 27th April. Further details will appear in our next issue.

TRANSPORT IN THE CONURBATIONS

A meeting of representative RIS members from the English conurbations was held in Hoylake, Wirral, Cheshire, on 17th November. A full account of the meeting will appear in our next issue.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Society on 8th September was 303, the highest since 1967.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A subscription renewal form for 1974 is enclosed. Please assist ~~the Treasurer~~ by sending him your subscription without delay.

ORGANISATION OF THE SOCIETY

Mr. P. G. Scott, an Assistant Secretary of the Society, has been appointed to a vacancy on the Executive Committee. He recently changed his home address to 11, Duffield Close, Harrow, Middlesex.

KNOW YOUR REPRESENTATIVE !

As members will have noted from the main progress report, Mr. L. Schofield, of 177 Smithy Hill, Wibsey, Bradford, BD6 1JX, has been appointed Area Representative for West Yorkshire. The boundaries of his district have been defined as an imaginary line joining Skipton, Ripon, York, Sleby, Doncaster, Sheffield and the Lancashire border.