

THE

IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS

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EDITORIAL

The year 1957 opens on a note of indecision in the history of Irish rail transport in general and of CIÉ in particular. This state of affairs is brought about by the implications of two salient factors; the current oil shortage and the report of the committee of Inquiry into Internal Transport. Of the oil shortage very little can be said. It has been stated by CIÉ that there is no reason to think that the diesel oil supply position would be such as would prevent their serving the public and that they would be able to take all extra passenger and freight traffic thrust on their services with perfect comfort. That rail traffic will increase greatly is certain as the average motorist with a 10-15 hp car is allowed a basic petrol ration of only 7½ gallons per month. Similarly on the freight side it is expected that much of the merchandise and raw material traffic at present handled by private road hauliers or lorries belonging to merchants and manufacturing firms in the country, will accrue to the railways. This diversion of traffic will afford CIÉ a splendid opportunity to display their ability to handle traffic speedily and efficiently and it is hoped that they will not be slow to avail of this valuable chance of advertisement, for the adage that a satisfied customer is one's best advertisement has never been more true than at the present time.

The aura of uncertainty in the field of public transport is further strengthened by the awaited findings of the Committee of Inquiry into Internal Transport which are not now expected to be submitted to the Minister for Industry & Commerce until early this year. It appears, however, unlikely that the Committee will recommend any wholesale closure of railway system on the lines of that envisaged in Northern Ireland. It is evident that there is a considerable body of opinion in agreement with the general implications of the speech made by Mr T.C. Courtney - Chairman of CIÉ - in December when he pointed out that if the railways were abandoned, not only would difficulties arise in the handling of peak traffic but the standard of service provided would fall far short of that to which the public were accustomed. Mr Courtney said that the subsidies paid to CIÉ might be described as the price that had to be paid for the freedom of private individuals to compete with CIÉ.

It may well be that the oil shortage will drive home the point, clearly illustrated in the last war, that the railways, given the necessary traffic, can be the backbone of a valuable and self-supporting public transport system.

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The Committee of "The Irish Railfans' News" wish to extend the compliments of the Season to all our readers and would like to take the opportunity of thanking those who have helped to increase circulation during the past year. All further efforts in this direction will be appreciated and will, we hope, enable us to maintain and, indeed, improve, the standard of our publication.

We would also like to remind our readers that subscriptions are not normally acknowledged otherwise than by a receipt sent with the following issue of "The Irish Railfans' News". This is an economy measure to enable the subscription to be kept as low as possible. If you particularly desire an acknowledgement on receipt we would ask you to enclose with your form a stamped addressed,

envelope.

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For the feature article in this issue we are indebted to Mr C. Creedon.

News Section

CIÉ GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Chairman's Speech

Mr T.C. Courtney - Chairman of CIÉ - speaking to Tralee Chamber of Commerce on December 7 stressed that CIÉ did not favour the abandonment of the railway system in Ireland. In stating that private road freight traffic should be restricted to ensure that the railways were used to their fullest possible extent, he pointed out that although railway abandonment had been suggested as a remedy for the financial situation of the company, the standard of service given by road transport would fall far short of that to which the public were accustomed, as long-distance journeys would take more than twice the present rail timings and no bus could provide the amenities accepted as a matter of course on a train. Mr Courtney also mentioned that considerable difficulty would arise in handling peak traffic such as the 1955 totals of 1,500,000 passengers in 457 special trains spread over 47 Sundays for GAA matches and the 53,000 pilgrims in 152 special trains over 25 Sundays to Knock Shrine. Similarly, too, the damage to the tourist industry would be serious. If, however, rail traffic could be won back even to its 1954 level, the economies attached to the installation of diesel locomotives should, in a comparatively short time, enable CIÉ to be self-supporting. If, on the other hand, private transport was allowed to compete with the public undertaking as at present, Mr Courtney said that there was no alternative to the payment of an annual subsidy to maintain public transport.

Timetable Alterations

The fast Sunday train from Cork to Dublin at 18:00 has, since December 30, been decelerated from its original 3¼ hour timing to one of 3 hours 25 minutes. This has been caused by the addition of stops at Thurles, Port Laoighise and Portarlinton. The down train has, however, not been similarly affected. Since December 31 the 18:50 Westland Row - Galway/Westport stops at Tullamore. The reverse working continues to run non-stop between Athlone and Westland Row. This is the first occasion that either of these West of Ireland expresses has called at a station east of Athlone.

Dieselisation Progress

At the date of writing - December 27 - all but one of the order of 60 A class Metrovick DE locos have arrived in Inchicore. To the same date 7 of the order of 12 B class DE locos had been delivered. As yet none of the 34 C class Bo-Bo locomotives has arrived although delivery is expected to commence early in 1957. Neither the first of the E class Maybach DH locos nor more than the initial G class lightweight branch unit has yet gone into service. In view of the limited increase in the fleet of diesel locos it is not surprising that the only steam service to be substituted by DE motive power since our last issue is the Kingsbridge - Dun Laoghaire Pier boat train which, since December 10, has been operated by the A class loco which works into Kingsbridge on the 15:20 ex Limerick.

Dun Laoghaire Improvements

Rapid progress continues to be made in the work of eliminating the bottle-neck caused by the stretch of single track through Dun Laoghaire station. Following the closure on October 1 of the road passing in

front of the station, the task of erecting a new abutment at the Sandycove end and to the seaward side of the bridge was commenced and, simultaneously, the span of the bridge girders was increased by the riveting of short lengths of similar section to the existing girders of the bridge. This work was completed and the road reopened on November 22. Attention was then focussed on the widening of the Dublin end of the same bridge and at the time of writing this is still in progress. On December 2 a new three-aspect electric colour-light signal was erected at the Sandycove end of the platform where formerly stood a water tank which had been removed the previous week. The semaphore Starting signals situated on the up side of the line being thus rendered redundant, were subsequently dismantled. A new colour light signal for up trains was installed on December 16 a short distance on the Dublin side of the station.

Additions To Railcar Fleet

Work has commenced in Inchicore on the construction of six additional diesel-mechanical railcars of a similar pattern to the 2600 class cars at present in service. Chassis were supplied by British United Traction Ltd and they are fitted with two six-cylinder 125 hp engines, but the bodywork, which in the sixty earlier cars was built by Park Royal Vehicles Ltd, is this time being constructed by CIÉ. The principal difference in the new railcars, therefore, is in their frontal appearance which will be more angular than the present streamlined design. It is not anticipated that the first of the new units will be ready for traffic until early Summer.

Weekend Excursion Experiment

Weekend return tickets at the remarkable concession of single fare for the return journey were issued by CIÉ between all stations for the weekend of November 16-19. In addition, children under 16 years - instead of the normal limit of 14 years - were permitted to travel at half the reduced fare. This novel offer was announced and advertised early in November as an experiment to encourage a type of traffic which had only limited scope prior to the introduction, on July 29 last, of the fast Sunday trains to and from Cork. It is disappointing to report that, although well-filled trains were observed during the period, traffic was not as heavy as would be expected in the circumstances. CIÉ issues return tickets between stations over 30 miles apart, available from Friday to Monday, every weekend at single fare plus 50%.

Automatic Couplings

CIÉ are at present experimenting in the use of automatic couplings for freight stock and at least two cattle wagons have been reported in traffic with these fittings.

Loco 122 Reappears

J15 class loco 122, which was involved in the collision at Kildare on June 22 last and which was reported as withdrawn in our issue of July 1956, has returned to traffic. On examination after the accident it was found that the damage, although extensive, was in the main, only superficial and it was decided that her repair would be undertaken. Therefore, with the aid of some material from 147 of the same class, 122 was returned to the road early in October.

CIÉ PROVINCIAL NEWS REPORT

Castlemungret Branch

Rapid progress in the construction of the Cement factory branch is reported. Earthworks along the entire three mile course between Castlemungret and the intended point of junction with the Limerick - Tralee line are well advanced, as also is drainage work incidental thereto. It appears certain that the first rails of the new branch will be laid in the early months of this year and it is likely that the work will be completed within one year as anticipated.

Waterford & Tramore

On Christmas Eve night an interesting innovation was tried on the Waterford & Tramore section, when the 23:35 from Tramore was altered to leave at 23:30 to facilitate those wishing to attend Midnight Mass in Waterford. A special return train was provided at 01:30 on Christmas morning. On the subject of the Waterford & Tramore section we must correct the impression in our last issue that the booking offices are permanently closed - they are, of course, open to handle the heavy summer traffic. There are now no vehicles of any sort on the section other than the three diesel railcars, one control trailer and one unpowered intermediate coach. All other stock has been either scrapped or, in a few cases, sold as summer residences.

Beet Traffic

Since the beginning of November the annual beet campaign has been under way, requiring the provision of special train services from the growing areas to the four factories at Tuam, Carlow, Thurles and Mallow. These specials perform most of their work late in the evening and in the early hours of the morning in order to enable the wagons to be loaded during the day and unloaded through the night. From the railway enthusiasts' point of view the most interesting factor of the beet campaign is the reopening, albeit temporary, of branch and connecting lines otherwise closed to normal traffic. Among these are the Muine Bheag - Palace East line and the Castleisland, Mountmellick, Ballylinan and Courtmacsherry branches. Of these, special mention must be made of three. First, the Muine Bheag - Palace East line, which carries only occasional passenger and goods specials during other periods of the year, has two beet specials each way daily serving not only itself but also acting as a channel for the laden wagons from Wicklow and North Wexford to the Carlow factory. Second, the Ballylinan branch which is completely dormant enjoys, twice weekly, a re-awakening to beet trains. The Athy end of this branch is, however, used throughout the year by goods trains serving the Asbestos Cement Co.'s siding which diverges from the Ballylinan branch a mile from Athy. Third, and last, is the Courtmacsherry branch which comes into its own during this time of the year as it is situated right in the heart of one of the most prolific beet growing areas in the country. No less than three specials in each direction serve the line, being hauled to Ballinascorthy by the branch loco to continue to Cork behind one of the powerful 4-6-0T locos which also handle three further daily specials out of Clonakilty. The Courtmacsherry line was worked at the outset of this year's season by locos 552 and 557 - with occasional help from loco 90 - but in early December were replaced by loco 559 which has remained on the line since.

GNR GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Closure Proposals

The report of the joint inquiry by the Belfast and Dublin Transport Tribunals into the proposal to close the railway lines between Bundoran Junction and Belleek; Omagh, Enniskillen and Newtownbutler; Portadown, Armagh and Tynan, has been issued. As foreshadowed by the divergent opinions of the Government Ministers who convened the inquiry, the tribunals were unable to put forward an agreed recommendation and consequently the report is in two sections embodying the views of Sir Anthony Babbington and Dr J.P. Beddy - the respective chairmen of the Belfast and Dublin tribunals. In the estimation of the Belfast Chairman the sections named in the inquiry should be closed as soon as possible, purely on economic grounds and without any attempt at modernisation. On the other hand, Dr Beddy advised that the lines should remain open and that the GNR be permitted to introduce diesel traction not only on the sections under review but on the system as a whole. He also remarked that the closure proposals were framed from a Northern Ireland standpoint alone, without consideration of the interests of the Republic of Ireland in these lines of "common service" across the border. Due to the intervention of the oil shortage since the tribunals report was made public, it has been decided that the

proposals will not be implemented until supplies return to normal when, stated Lord Glentoran, the Northern Ireland Minister of Commerce, it was hoped to close the sections without delay.

Abandonment Of Branches

It has been announced by the GNR that the Scarva - Castlewellan and Goraghwood - Markethill lines have been abandoned since October 10. These lines were closed to all traffic as from 1st May 1955 and a note on each of them appeared in our July 1955 issue.

Oldcastle Branch

The threat of withdrawal of passenger services from the Drogheda - Oldcastle branch was made and rescinded during the month of November. Navan Urban Council approached the GNR early in the month and it was stated that the Board intended to operate substitute road passenger services and retain the line, for goods traffic only. Subsequently, however, it was announced that due to the oil shortage, the branch train service would not be altered until the supply position eased, when the whole question would be reviewed. Most passenger trains are worked by the 48 seat, duo-directional Railcar A which suffices for the light traffic. The goods trains and the morning passenger train to and from Oldcastle are interworked by one steam locomotive. Freight traffic is not inconsiderable and the branch is responsible for quite an amount of the sugar beet transferred from the GNR to CIÉ for the Carlow factory. It is worth mentioning that in June 1956, as an economy measure, the crossing loop at Virginia Road was removed and the section from Kells extended to Oldcastle, a distance of 12¾ miles.

Railcars For GNR

Four railcar chassis have arrived in Dundalk from British United Traction Ltd. These are the first of 24 ordered by the GNR in 1955 for main line working and are to be fitted for multiple unit operation in trains of up to eight coaches. Bodies for the new cars are being built in Dundalk works and at the same time intermediate coaches of main line stock are being steel panelled and painted blue and cream for use with the railcars. It has been stated that one of these new trains is to take over the working of the 10:30 up and 17:30 down Enterprise Expresses which is at present handled by either one of the VS class 4-4-0s or, less frequently, by one of the earlier V class compounds of the same wheel arrangement.

Diesel Shops

Erection of the new diesel shed and works alongside the main line at MP 1, near Fairview, is speedily nearing completion. The shops will possess three roads each with spacious inspection pits in a reinforced concrete building roofed with asbestos. Electric light is already installed and a modern concrete water tower stands at the south end of the sheds. A connection, facing Amiens Street, joins the down line just north of the Tolka Bridge and the signals and points for it are controlled by East Wall Junction Cabin. At present railcars stationed at Dublin are serviced in one of the centre roads in Amiens Street station.

New Dublin Suburban Station

Work commenced in mid-November on the construction of a new suburban station on the GNR main line at MP 3. The site between Killester and Raheny is flanked on the north side by the new housing estate of Harmonstown and on the south by an older but still expanding housing area named Ennasfort. The GNR have announced that the halt is to open early in 1957 and at the time of writing drainage work has been completed and the platforms have been erected on both sides of the line.

Landslide On Bundoran Branch

Having been blocked, as reported in our last issue, for three weeks, the 35½ mile Bundoran branch was reopened throughout on October 18. On the resumption of rail services the substitute buses from

Pettigo to Bundoran were withdrawn.

Stewartstown Station

Following the closure of Stewartstown station on the Cookstown branch, as reported in our last issue, the up loop there has been removed and the station is no longer a block post. It has, however, since closure been used at least once for a passenger excursion from Cookstown to Lurgan on December 9.

UTA GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Abandonment Of Branches

It has been announced by the UTA that the Magherafelt - Cookstown and Limavady Junction - Limavady lines have been abandoned since October 10. These lines were closed to all traffic as from 1st May 1955 and a note on each of them appeared in our July 1955 issue.

Portstewart Station

The UTA has decided that as and from January 7, Portstewart - the sole intermediate station on the Portrush branch - will be closed to all traffic. It will, however, reopen during July and August of each year to cater for tourists and holidaymakers. Prior to 1926 a roadside steam tramway linked the station with the resort two miles away, but this was replaced by a bus service which is at present operated by the UTA.

Feature Section

THE JUBILEE OF THE 4-6-0 TANKS OF THE CB&SCR

What more appropriate event could have ushered out the Golden Jubilee of the ex Cork, Bandon and South Coast Railway 4-6-0 side tank locomotives than the return to home metals, in October 1956, of 466 - one of the six survivors of the class - an engine which for a considerable number of years past has done yeoman service on the busy Dublin Suburban lines many miles distant from its parent system. Back on home ground once more, she has joined the five other surviving members of her class in handling the heavy goods, livestock and sugar-beet traffic on the West Cork railway system.

First introduced in 1906, exactly fifty years ago, these engines have proved themselves quite capable of handling the heaviest loads on the sinuous and steeply graded routes of the ex CB&SCR. A total of eight engines were built over a period of 14 years and they replaced many of the smaller 0-6-0 and 2-4-0 types which up to that time were the mainstay of the company's locomotive power. Each new engine, when it entered CB&SCR stock, was allotted the same number as the older locomotive it had replaced. Therefore it did not necessarily follow that the loco bearing the lowest number was the oldest of the class in service as will be clearly seen from the accompanying table. When the GSR was formed in 1925 the engines were renumbered 463-470 inclusive. Between 1935 and 1947 five of them (463, 464, 466, 467 and 468) were rebuilt with Belpaire fireboxes and superheated boilers, but the remaining three continued in service with the original boilers. Two, however, (Nos. 465 and 469) were withdrawn in 1945 and 470 is now the only one still running with the old type boiler. Shortly after the last war 467 was turned out in green livery which she still retains although the remainder are in the standard CIÉ grey.

Throughout their lifetime these locos have proved the backbone of the motive power on the Cork & Bandon section. They operated a large proportion of the regular passenger and goods services on the

Cork - Bantry line until 1954 when a railcar set displaced them from the passenger trains to the latter town. They still continue to work the fast goods trains between the points mentioned and also the mid-day passenger trains between Drimoleague and Skibbereen. Their main use, however, lies in their ability to handle the livestock specials from the monthly fairs at Bantry, Skibbereen, Drimoleague, Dunmanway, Ballineen and Bandon which are often quite heavily loaded. Smaller locos usually handle the fair specials from Clonakilty and Timoleague. At the moment, four of the 4-6-0Ts are engaged in hauling the heavy beet specials which are a feature of the winter traffic on the line. Although diesel railcars are in recent years handling an increasing proportion of the passenger excursion traffic, the 463s are still called upon to haul auxiliary specials on busy weekdays, when the capacity of the diesel is over-taxed and on Sundays during the summer months to haul the seaside trains to Bantry and Ballinascorthy (for Courtmacsherry). Smaller engines are used on the Baltimore excursions, as the large tanks are not allowed South of Skibbereen on account of the light section track and sharp curves on the extension. For the same reason they have never been permitted to run to Courtmacsherry or over the long defunct Kinsale branch. It is interesting to note, however, that many of the class have enjoyed short terms of service on the suburban trains in the Dublin area, usually on "running-in" trials after a major overhaul at Inchicore Works. As already stated, one of them - No.466 - remained on the Dublin Suburban for over 20 years and only returned to Rocksavage in October 1956. Although, like other CIÉ steam locomotives, the 463 class can not have a long life-expectancy, it will indeed be a sad day when these powerful and handsome 4-6-0 tank locomotives become extinct.

The 4-6-0 Tanks Of The CB&SCR

CBSC No.	GSR No.	Makers No.	Date Recd.	Reboilered	Withdrawn
4	463	5954	1919	1942	--
8	464	6034	1920	1946	--
11	465	4752	1906	--	1945
13	466	6077	1920	1947	--
14	467	5265	1909	1935	--
15	468	5413	1910	1944	--
19	469	5822	1914	--	1945
20	470	5616	1912	--	--

Builders: Beyer Peacock (to their own standard design)
 Cylinders: 18" x 24"
 Driving Wheels: 5'2½" diameter
 Boiler Pressure: 160 lbs. per sq. inch
 Weight (in working order): 55 tons

CIÉ CHRISTMAS TRAFFIC

Traffic at Christmas 1956 on the CIÉ system although not of record proportions, was substantially greater than that of recent years. Surprisingly, however, the record number of 25,000 passengers carried on one day was attained on Friday 21. Trains from Dublin to provincial centres were strengthened during the week before Christmas and the more heavily loaded ones, such as the 10:40 and 18:45 to Cork and the 14:30 to Westport, were run in duplicate. Traffic came to a climax on Friday 21 and Saturday 22 when the influx of cross-channel travellers, many of them delayed by fog in England, reached its peak. Consequently, trains from the ports on both dates were packed to capacity. Due to the late arrival of steamers at Dun Laoghaire on Friday night CIÉ ran special trains in the early hours of the morning taking passengers to main line destinations. Saturday at Kingsbridge presented a most animated scene. Details of trains departing are given below.

14:05	A26	7 bogies & van	17:40	A58	10 bogies & van
14:25	A7	9 bogies & van	18:00	322	5 bogies & van
15:40	329/402	11 bogies & van	18:45	8-coach railcar	
16:45	4-coach railcar		18:55	4-coach railcar	
17:00	A56	6 bogies	20:00	B104	6 bogies & 11 vans
17:30	A25	5 bogies & van	21:05	3-coach railcar	

On Sunday 23, in addition to the normal trains, special services from Dublin to Limerick (12:45), Cork (13:30), Waterford (13:45), Galway and Sligo (13:00), Westport and Ballina (13:45) and Rosslare (13:00) were scheduled, but many of them were delayed, again due to cross-channel connections.

Christmas Eve, December 24, was, by comparison, an anti-climax. Similar specials to those on Saturday ran although much less overcrowded. Christmas Day services were confined to a single train each way between Dublin and Cork, boat connections Rosslare to Waterford and Wexford and 4 return trips on the Waterford & Tramore section.

ARTICLES OF IRISH RAILWAY INTEREST IN 1956

Railway Magazine

January	Railbuses in Ireland (2 photos and letter)
March	CDR Railcar (Photo and paragraph)
May	Branch Lines in Co. Kerry Passing of the Co. Down SL&NCR
May & June	Jubilee of the Fishguard - Rosslare Route
September	The Cork & Macroom Direct Railway Irish Experiment: Turf-oil Locos (Paragraph)
November	Ireland's Train Service Transformation
December	Loco Performance: GNR and UTA West Road Signalbox: Dublin

Trains Illustrated

April	Gloom in Donegal (Paragraph) SL&NCR
August	Irish Notes (Paragraphs)
October	Heating Vans (Paragraph)
December	New 960 hp Diesels for CIÉ CIÉ Experience with Diesel Railcars

Railway World

March	Tralee & Dingle Locos (Brief note)
August	Birr Branch
December	Donegal Revisited
January-November	A Trip to Ireland (Serial)

Railway Modeller

August	Diesel developments in Ireland.
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Book

Ulster Tramways & Light Railways by D.B. McNeill. (Belfast Museum, Stranmillis)

The above list does not include paragraphs on such current news items as also appeared in “The Irish Railfans’ News”.