

THE

IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS

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EDITORIAL

The closure of the line from Harcourt Street to Shanganagh Junction has come as a considerable surprise to many who expected that CIÉ, under the powers conferred by the Transport Act 1958, would first concentrate on cutting away short country branches, or lines which are at present dormant or open only for special traffic. Sad though it is to see twenty miles of track - for the Harcourt Street line was double throughout - shorn of its train service, it is perhaps better so than that twenty miles of single track branch line - the life line of a country town and its hinterland - should be closed. For, although the official notice announces that the line will be closed to "both passenger and merchandise traffic", it must be noted that goods trains have not been run for years.

It can safely be said that the principal reason for the closure of the Harcourt Street line is Harcourt Street Station itself. The terminal is situated a good distance from the city centre and is even outside the fringe of the conventional business and shopping areas. This disadvantage - now in part responsible for the withdrawal of services - was realised even before the line was completed and plans were put forward for an extension to St. Stephen's Green which, of course, never materialised. The provision of through rail and bus tickets to the city centre has been suggested as a means of resuscitation of traffic but regretfully one must admit that not only the terminus but also many of the wayside stations are ill-sited for the travelling public of today. It is possible that a costly resiting of certain intermediate stations would have attracted some traffic but with the position of the terminus it is unlikely that such measures would be justified in practice.

It is most important to realise, however, that the circumstances which justify the Harcourt Street closure do not exist elsewhere on CIÉ and that it is therefore quite illogical to use it as an example illustrative of the need or desirability for closure of other lines. Ill-sited stations can undoubtedly be found in places but they do not depend for their continued existence solely on passenger traffic, particularly passenger traffic of a specialised short haul nature, as the Harcourt Street line did. It has been frequently demonstrated how a town or even an area will decline on losing railway facilities. Let us hope, therefore, that CIÉ will not seek to justify further closures on the basis that this apparently "busier" line has been found unnecessary.

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The Committee of "The Irish Railfans' News" would like to wish all their readers a Happy and Prosperous New Year and also, in particular, to thank those of you who completed the questionnaire attached to the renewal order form. Your many commendatory remarks encourage us to hope that you will find future issues at least as interesting as previous ones, but from the comments received it is evident that some readers are unaware of our intended scope. To quote our first editorial: "... this quarterly magazine is the effort of a few Dublin railway enthusiasts to keep you informed of the developments which are taking place from day to day on the railways of Ireland. We feel that while the history of the 'Iron Road' in this country is being catered for in the various railway magazines and

Societies' Journals, present day happenings are being, to some extent, allowed to slip by unnoticed." Where historical information is relevant to news it will be included but, please, bear in mind that this is "The Irish Railfans' News". It is also necessary to stress that this is not the official organ of either a railway company or society and that for news we are dependent primarily on the observation of the members of our committee. Consequently reports from our readers - particularly Irish Readers - are virtually essential to enable us to improve our news service. To those who have thus assisted in the past we tender our sincere thanks and look forward to hearing from them - and many others - whenever any railway news comes their way.

The many suggestions received on the questionnaire are still being sorted, sifted and considered, for they cover, as we had anticipated, many often widely divergent views on our contents and their presentation. As, at the time of writing, there are still quite a number of forms outstanding we do not propose to comment further until we are able to study the suggestions of as many readers as possible. If you have not sent us your form yet, may we ask you to do so without delay.

SOME ARTICLES OF IRISH RAILWAY INTEREST IN 1958

Railway Magazine

| | |
|-----------|---|
| May | Limerick as a Railway Centre Railway Gauges and Mileage in Ireland Widening at Dun Laoghaire Diesel Railcars for Ireland (GNR) |
| July | 6'2" Gauge in Ireland (Letter) |
| August | Changeover to Diesel Traction in Ireland |
| September | The Fastest Trains in Ireland |
| November | Europe's Most Westerly Railhead (Letter) |
| December | Dublin Suburban Line to Close (Paragraph) |

Trains Illustrated

| | |
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| February | Reprieve For CIÉ (Paragraph) |
| March | The UTA's New Dual Purpose Railcars |
| October | The End of the GNR(I) |

Railway World

| | |
|------|-----------------------------------|
| June | Glenariff Iron Ore and Harbour Co |
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IRRS Journals

| | |
|--------|---|
| Spring | Ben Bulbin Barytes Railway Irish Sea Railway Steamers UTA Locomotive Performance Irish Railways in 1857 |
| Autumn | Harcourt Street Accident 1900 The Woolwich Locomotives of CIÉ Horse Traction on Rails Irish Railways in 1857 |

The above list does not include paragraphs on such current news items as also appeared in "The Irish Railfans' News". In response to readers' requests the above feature will in future appear in each issue.

News Section

CIÉ GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Annual Report

The report published in October last revealed a total deficit of £2,230,944 for the year ended 31st March 1958. The loss on railway working of £970,185 showed a reduction of £43,000 as compared with the previous year, due mainly to reduced expenditure. A continuing decline in first class passenger traffic was reported, as opposed to the increase of 131,000 in the number of second class passengers carried during the year. This latter included an increase of 31,000 on the Dublin Suburban section and of 39,000 on the Waterford - Tramore line. Excursion and pilgrimage traffic showed a decrease both in receipts and numbers carried when compared with the previous year. A reduction in the carriage of goods, coal and livestock was reported although the carriage of beet by rail showed an increase of 20%. Reference is made in the report to the experimental non-token working which was introduced in the Clonsilla - Leixlip block section of the Dublin - Galway line during the year under review. This experiment is still in progress. Reference is also made to signalling alterations carried out at Borris station on the Palace East - Muine Bheag line. It may be of interest to recall that these alterations included the closing of the cabin and removal of all signalling equipment from Borris. The entire link line is now operated as a single block section from Palace East to Muine Bheag, a distance of no less than 24 miles - the longest block section in Ireland. The Palace East - Muine Bheag line has been closed to passenger traffic since 1931 and to regular goods traffic since 1947. It has, however, been retained in view of its value as a connecting line for monthly fair specials, occasional passenger specials for GAA fixtures and, in winter, daily beet specials plying between Wexford and Carlow Sugar factory.

New Railcars

Delivery of further railcars in the 900 class has continued, the even numbers going to CIÉ and the odd numbers to the UTA. At date of writing all are in service. We thank and apologise to the many readers who pointed out that our correction of the fleet numbers for the new cars was, in fact, a miscorrection. The actual numbers are:

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Second class duo-directional units | 701-716 | 13 cars |
| New composite single ended units | 901-908 | 8 cars |

Railcars 906 and 908 are in CIÉ green livery and are lined light green. They work the Dublin-based "Enterprise" express.

Rolling Stock Developments

Further progress is reported from Inchicore Works on the construction of the new open second class coaches for main line service described in our last issue. At the date of writing - December 28 - 12 have already been completed and put into traffic. It is understood that further similar coaches will follow. Reconstruction of railcar 2647, which was severely damaged in the collision at Dundrum, Co. Dublin, in December 1957 was completed early in November last and this car has since returned to traffic on the Dublin - Bray suburban lines. Reconstruction of the other victim of the same collision, railcar 2644, is now nearing completion at Inchicore. Some of the 1953/4 buffet cars are being renovated and decorated and since our last issue No.2405 has emerged from the Works. A number of diesel railcars which have recently been repainted have been noted with roofs painted black instead of the former shade of dark green which conformed with their side panelling. This trend has also appeared in

repainted coaching stock as Buffet car 2420 and Compo 2145 are in traffic with black roofs.

SL&NCR Railcar B

Railcar B of the now defunct Sligo, Leitrim & Northern Counties Railway was acquired by CIÉ in October last and was worked under its own power from Enniskillen to Dublin via Omagh and Portadown on the night of October 31. This duo-directional Walker/Gardner 59 seat railcar was taken to Inchicore for a complete overhaul on November 4.

Green GNR Stock

Work is in progress on the repainting of the erstwhile GNR coaching stock in green livery and the first coach to be so treated appeared in traffic on October 21. The coach - No.181, a centre second of class K15 - was redecorated in Dundalk and its number has been prefixed with the letter 'C'. The coach is unlined but it bears the CIÉ emblem on each side. Inside, the seats have been re-upholstered in CIÉ standard second class maroon moquette. On December 24 three further coaches - C264, C346, C380 - arrived in Dublin from Dundalk in green livery similar to that of C181 but lacking crests and having a light green band at the waistline. On December 27 coach C24 joined the three above-mentioned in Dublin in similar livery. Strange to relate, goods wagons are not being prefixed 'C' but suffixed 'N', although the reason is not immediately apparent.

Locomotive Allocation

In addition to the list of locomotives in our October issue we learn that ex GNR loco 106 has been allocated to CIÉ and loco 127 to UTA. These additions bring the total number of locomotives absorbed by CIÉ and UTA to 83 each. In the same lists locos 110 and 176 were transposed; the former belongs to CIÉ and the latter to UTA.

Turf-Burning Locomotive

The prototype turf-burning loco No.CC1, built at Inchicore Works to Mr O.V. Bulleid's design early in 1958, was put into traffic for an experimental period during November working transfer goods trains between North Wall and Kingsbridge. No information has yet been released regarding the locomotive, its performance or the degree of success achieved on these and other trials.

CIÉ LOCAL NEWS REPORTS

MAK Works To Bray

The diesel-hydraulic loco of the former GNR - No.800 - which worked goods trains between Dundalk and Drogheda until September last, was transferred to Inchicore Works on October 19. After some trial runs on the Dublin - Kildare stretch of the main line it was allocated to the working of suburban trains on the Amiens Street - Bray line. The loco has remained on this section since October 27 except for short absences for minor repairs in Inchicore.

Christmas Coaches

During the Christmas rush, when even many of the regular coaching sets were displaced from their links, a miscellany of the ancients was in use to provide for special trains and strengthen ordinary sets. A flash of colour was provided by the use of ex GNR coaches in varnished mahogany livery on a number of trains from Westland Row to the West just before Christmas. On the other hand a green 2600 series railcar set made an appearance on Northern section trains to Drogheda and Dundalk in addition to the Howth working mentioned elsewhere in this issue.

Thurles - Clonmel Branch

As from 1st January 1959, one of the redundant railcar sets from the Harcourt Street line has been sent

to Clonmel to replace steam on the branch.

Suburban Alterations

Simultaneously with the closure of the Harcourt Street - Bray suburban line CIÉ have introduced, with effect from January 1, improved morning and evening business train services on the Amiens Street - Bray - Greystones route. One additional up semi-fast train at 08:25 from Greystones, together with one down semi-fast train at 17:23 from Amiens Street, have now been provided while many of the existing morning and evening services have been greatly accelerated. This most welcome improvement has become possible by reducing the number of stops made by business hour trains through the provision of an integrated pattern of semi-fast trains to and from Dublin. Thus in the new timetable two non-stop, five semi-fast and three slow trains are provided from Dun Laoghaire to Dublin between 08:15 and 09:45 as against one non-stop, three semi-fast and five slow trains prior to January 1. Improved services of a similar pattern are now also available from Dublin between 16:45 and 18:15 on Mondays to Fridays.

Cashel Branch

Work commenced during November last on the dismantling of equipment at Cashel station as a preliminary to the lifting and removal of the 5¾ mile branch from Goold's Cross to Cashel. Although regular services have not operated on the branch since 25th January 1947, occasional excursion trains and fair specials were run to and from Cashel until the branch was finally abandoned in September 1954. Lifting operations are in progress as we go to press.

Cork Dance Trains

Since October last a regular Sunday night excursion has operated from Cork to Cobh at 19:30 in connection with a dance at this latter town. Like the "small hours specials" run occasionally on the Waterford & Tramore line this train has proved popular as it allows of a full evening's entertainment in Cobh before the return train at midnight. We learn that on occasion a second train leaves Cork at 20:00. Although the dance trains are either railcars or DE loco hauled trains, we learn that the former CB&SCR 4-6-0T loco 466 has recently been observed working suburban trains between Cork and Cobh. 466 has had a varied career as it ran in the Dublin area for many years up to October 1956 when it returned to its native "Bandon", only to be transferred to Glanmire when the practice of stabling locomotives at Rocksavage ceased last winter.

Tractive Variety

During the month of November what was undoubtedly a unique railway operation took place on several days when wagon loads of mill-rejected grain were brought from Shannonvale to Timoleague in Co. Cork - a distance of about 8 miles. The grain was being distributed as feeding-stuff around Timoleague by the Barryroe Co-Operative Creamery and the wagons were hauled by horse on the ½ mile Shannonvale siding from the mill to the junction with the Clonakilty line; from there they were brought by the diesel-worked up mixed train to Ballinascarthy to be worked down the Courtmacsherry branch on the trains of empty beet wagons behind 0-6-0T loco 552. Despite expectations to the contrary this loco has worked the beet traffic on the line again this year although on a few occasions one of the diminutive 0-6-0s, 90 and 100, has been used.

West Clare Developments

Since October 1 all passenger trains on the West Clare section call if required at an additional stopping place known as Hanrahan's Bridge. This halt is near MP 22¼ and is between Lahinch and Miltown Malbay. This is the ninth stopping place to be introduced since the advent of diesel railcars on 17th March 1952. The first of the railcars to undergo a general repair and overhaul - No.3387 - has now returned to Ennis and on its return railcar 3389 was removed to Inchicore for similar attention. On

November 17 an important alteration was made to the West Clare goods trains which enables one locomotive to work both the down and up trains of the same day. This has been made possible by retiming the 09:40 down to leave at 08:00 and reach Kilrush at 12:15. The return working is at 13:25 - instead of 10:15 - and reaches Ennis at 18:20. On and from the same date the 08:30 Kilkee - Ennis was altered to 08:05 and is now allowed 2 hours 15 minutes for the 48 miles - a 10 minute deceleration - as it is normally worked by one of the diesel-mechanical locomotives hauling three railcar trailers. This formation is rendered necessary both by the absence of one railcar and the volume of school traffic into Ennistymon from Miltown Malbay and beyond. The locomotive returns to Kilkee on the 16:40 from Ennis with a train. Minor adjustments have also been made in the Kilrush - Kilkee trains in order to maintain connection with the 08:05 at Moyasta. The third locomotive is kept in reserve although it is frequently in use for fair specials or as an auxiliary to the regular goods which, due to an increased beet loading from the section this year, often has a full load.

Banagher Branch

On October 14 the points at Clara & Banagher Junction - Clara, which had been remotely controlled from Clara cabin were altered to operate from a ground frame at the junction. This ground frame is unlocked by a key on the Clara - Ballycumber train staff. Up distant and home signals have been provided on the branch which is now worked by a "single engine in steam". The daily goods train has since October 31 been worked by steam and conveys both goods and beet traffic, while the G class diesel-hydraulic loco which normally works this link has been relegated to shunting duties in Tullamore until the beet season ends in January.

Cavan & Leitrim Coach

Early in November the carriage stock position on the section was alleviated by the entry into traffic of coach 1L which has been rebuilt in Ballinamore. Although the underframe is unaltered the body has been completely re-panelled, the roof re-covered, the open end platforms - typical of all original C&L coaches - enclosed and inward opening doors fitted. Detail alterations made include the fitting of double width windows in each of the long end compartments. All windows, except the droplights, have been made flush with the sides of the coach and are fitted in rubber anti-shock panels. As of old, the seats are longitudinal, upholstered in the standard second class maroon moquette and with an upholstered back strip. Inside, the coach woodwork is finished in grained light oak, the roof is white and the window ledges are black - a pleasing combination. External livery matches the C&L luggage vans well and the coach is without lettering or numbering of any sort except for the 1L transfers on each side. The result is an attractive vehicle which has not lost its individuality but one wonders why in the Irish climate and in the year 1958 any railway coach should still be devoid of any heating arrangements. The coach is lighted by acetylene, presumably on account of the difficulties encountered with battery lighting of coach 7L. At the end of December 1L was working on the 08:00 to Dromod and the 12:20 thence to Belturbet, returning to Ballinamore on the 16:20. Coach 7L is working on the Arigna branch train and the ex Tralee & Dingle coach 21L was on the 14:35 Ballinamore - Dromod link. Coaches 5L and 6L were spare 11L was derelict in the wilderness on the site of the former carriage shed in Ballinamore.

Amiens Street Station

One of the first major changes to take place as a result of the dissolution of the GNR was the combination of the two stations at Amiens Street. Since Monday December 1 the joint station has been under the jurisdiction of one stationmaster and the platforms in both stations have been renumbered 1 to 7 from east to west - the new Nos. 1-4 being the former GNR platforms Nos. 4-1 and the new Nos. 5 to 7 the platforms serving Bray direction suburban trains. As from the same date access to all platforms has been by the former GNR entrance and the entrance to Amiens Street Junction has been closed completely. Tickets for both northern and eastern destinations are issued at the main booking office and

the 'Junction' booking office has been closed. Passengers for Bray must now pass through the barrier of No.3 - Northern departure - platform and can reach the Eastern section trains through a communicating doorway which emerges at the south end of No.5 platform. It is likely, however, that the two entrances may be opened for such special occasions as sporting fixtures at Lansdowne Road.

CIÉ Railcars To Howth

Since December 8 the railcar set of the 13:23 from Dun Laoghaire to Amiens Street has worked through to Howth on Mondays to Fridays forming the 14:00 Amiens Street - Howth and its return working at 14:30 formerly a four-coach steam train link. The train leaves for Howth from platform 5 in Amiens Street. This has been the first instance of regular through working since CIÉ has taken control of the former GNR system within the State.

UTA NEWS REPORT

Acquisition Of Additional Railcars

The division of stock equally between CIÉ and UTA in October revealed to the latter undertaking a shortage of railcars for the working of Belfast - Portadown - Londonderry trains. Subsequently, however, negotiations with CIÉ resulted in the acquisition by the UTA of railcars 702 and 902. These railcars were transferred in October and November to Belfast still, of course, in blue and cream livery. It is also learned that CIÉ have obtained a number of new ex-GNR cement wagons from the UTA in part exchange for the above-mentioned railcars.

Rolling Stock

Up to the time of writing none of the former GNR stock has yet appeared in the Authority's Brunswick green livery. The last units of the 900 class railcars allocated to the Authority appeared in GNR livery as did locos 208 and 210 recently released from Dundalk Works after general overhaul. Neither loco carries any lettering other than the stencilled letters on the buffer beams denoting ownership. On December 20 an unusual pair appeared on the 14:30 Dublin - Belfast at Dundalk as Loco 197 (CIÉ, ex GNR) and 9 (UTA) headed the 9 bogie train northwards.

Newcastle Branch

Lifting of the branch from Knockmore Junction is now in progress, and in November it was reported that track and equipment had been removed between Newcastle and Ballyward. Following the closure of the line, track alterations at Knockmore Junction were carried out last September and are now completed. These included removal of the connection from the up main line to the Antrim branch and the insertion of a facing crossover from the up to down main lines. Similarly, the Newcastle branch now connects into the up main line only.

SL&NCR

As reported elsewhere in this issue Railcar B has been sold privately to CIÉ. It has been learned that the loco "Enniskillen" was not bought by the Pakistani buyer as stated in our last issue. In fact, the loco was bought by a Belfast contractor for £475 and has since been scrapped. Work is at present in progress on the lifting of the sector of the line in Northern Ireland.

JOURNEY JOTTINGS

August 31: Newmarket - Cork

The occasion for this journey was a Sunday evening football fixture in Cork and as the Banteer - Newmarket line is open for goods traffic only, the train was worked light from Cork to work the special

at 18:15 from Newmarket. The train was hauled by C227 with 7 bogies - part of the set which is normally the "Rosslare Express" - and left Newmarket with but 8 passengers. At Kanturk, however, it was a different story as some 600 passengers were waiting and all comers seemed to find room aboard. A stop at Banteer was made and the run was punctual and uneventful thereafter.

December 6: Limerick - Foynes

The 11:15 Limerick - Foynes, although shown in the passenger timetable, is known to Limerick railwaymen as the "Foynes Goods", and with good reason, as on the above date the load comprised one coach, one passenger (the writer), 12 wagons and van. At 11:36¼, loco 133 (0-6-0) propelled the regular set - 6-wheel coach 36M - out of platform 1 and, under the Roxboro' Road bridge, attached the train deposited there by C218, which with C205 was on station pilot duties. There was a short delay while A13, HV, 2 bogies and 2 LVs halted at the Limerick Check platform with the 09:00 from Galway, and at 11:45 a further set back to beyond Limerick Check Junction left 133 ready for departure at 11:48. The "Foynes Goods" then, appropriately, traversed the "Foynes Loop" - the curve between the loco shed and the works, where 0-6-0 187 was seen on pilot duty. At Foynes Junction the Limerick Station - North Kerry line was joined close to Carey's Road goods yard. Just short of the ½ mile post the new level crossing linking two housing areas was crossed while at Cement Factory Junction 106 (0-6-0) was standing with 20 wagons and van on the Castlemungret branch waiting for the road into Limerick. The Castlemungret branch points are worked by a key on either the Limerick Station or Limerick Check to Patrickswell ETS and the insertion of a staff in a subsidiary instrument at the Junction locks a train on to the branch and allows a further staff to be withdrawn for a movement on the Limerick - Patrickswell line, as in the present instance. At Barnakyle level crossing a brief stop was made to deliver oil to the gatekeeper and Patrickswell was reached at 12:16 - some 35 minutes late. A brisk run was then made - without calling at Kilgobbin Halt - to Adare where two wagons were attached and one detached after an amount of shunting. Strange to relate a passenger also joined the train for the run to Ballingrane - reached at 13:05. Quick station work unloading "sundries" cut the station time to 5 minutes and 133 headed down the branch to Askeaton where more "sundries" were unloaded before the final stretch to Foynes was covered. A stop was made outside the station to detach an oil wagon for the siding before coming to rest in Foynes Station at 13:46¾. To enthusiasts who are not in a hurry and who enjoy goods train travel the trip to Foynes is thoroughly recommended.

Feature Section

THE HARCOURT STREET LINE

While the ushering in of a New Year is normally a joyous occasion the New Year bells heralding 1959 carried in their carillon a note of mourning for the end of the Harcourt Street - Shanganagh Junction line. The closure is probably unique in that the "main line" is being outlived by its branch - Shanganagh to Westland Row. The transfer in September 1953, for the first time, of all winter Wexford trains to Westland Row passed almost unnoticed, even though for many winters but token recognition had been paid to Harcourt Street's claim to be a main line terminal.

The line was a result of many schemes to bring rail transport down the south-east coast from Dublin. The pioneer Dublin & Kingstown Railway, opened 1834, had early aspired to an extension to Bray but in 1846 an inland route was mooted by two companies, the Dublin, Dundrum & Rathfarnham Railway and the Waterford, Wexford, Wicklow & Dublin Railway. These two companies were to meet in Dundrum but in the event a newer and less ambitious company - the Dublin & Wicklow Railway -

constructed the Bray - Dundrum section and in accordance with the provisions of its Act took over the Dundrum company's line. The opening took place to a temporary terminal at Harcourt Road on 10th July 1854 although, even earlier, trains were run from Dublin to Bray and back on which the directors and shareholders travelled to a dejeuner held in Bray station. The line was extended to Harcourt Street on 7th February 1859.

Harcourt Street station has an impressive facade fronting on the street from which it takes its name. Mounting the steps between the colonnade the prospective passenger finds the buffet, cloakroom and booking hall, from which last-mentioned he ascends the curved stone stairway to the platform situated some 26 feet above the road level. A second similar stairway from the booking hall is now disused. There is but a single 597 ft platform - a curious state of affairs for a main line station - on the up side of the line. This platform is covered for a portion of its length by an overall roof. At the north end of the station is the 45'9" turntable giving access to the engine release line, which with a carriage siding, is inside the wall supporting the roof. The turntable must be one of the few which diesel locomotives are forced to use in running round their trains, although in recent years almost all the trains have been three-coach diesel railcar sets which do not require turning. Near the south end of the platform the running line and the entire width of the station is carried across Adelaide Road by a wide girder bridge. On the down side there are carriage sidings and a line which formerly served the goods store. There has, however, been no regular goods train shown in the working timetable since the withdrawal of the 11:00 down mixed train with the advent of the 1950 summer timetable. Opposite the end of the platform is the signal cabin. A long-disused two road loco shed completes the station layout.

The line is carried on an embankment to the timber-platformed Rathmines and Ranelagh Halt - one mile from Harcourt Street. Situated in a well-populated district, the halt generates some south-bound traffic but few travel in the other direction as Harcourt Street is so far removed from the city. In the up direction all trains must stop at Ranelagh - a rule which brings to mind the accident of 14th February 1900 when an up cattle special failed to stop and smashed into the buffer stops at Harcourt Street. The locomotive continued through the wall and came to rest perched on the masonry high above Hatch Street. The details of this remarkable accident, together with a photograph, have been ably recorded by Mr A.T. Newham in the IRRS Journal for Autumn 1958.

Milltown Halt - MP 1¾ - is found at the north end of the nine-arch stone viaduct over the valley of the river Dodder. The halt had been little used lately as although there is a large housing estate nearby, it is on the opposite side of the valley and difficult to access from the station.

The first block post, Dundrum, at MP 3 is one of the best sited stations on the line and has a short siding on the up side used for on occasional horse box and sometimes a wagon or two of beet. There is a signal cabin on the up platform which bears a sign "Station for St. Columba's College" - 2½ miles away. Passing through the cutting beyond Dundrum we recall the recent collision of two railcars on 23rd December 1957 which was described in our issue of January last. Since Milltown the line has been climbing at grades of up to 1 in 75 although at MP 4 the grade eases to 1 in 111.

Stillorgan Halt is at MP 5¼ and by now the character of the line has changed; its original suburban pretensions, such as they were, giving place to those of a rural branch with fine views of the Dublin Mountains to the south-west. Close to Stillorgan, Leopardstown Crossing - the first of the two public level crossings on the line - is found. It is unusual in that the gates do not extend across the railway at any time as the road is narrow and requires single gates opened away from the tracks.

Foxrock at MP 6 is the next block post and has a signal cabin on the down platform behind which is a short siding. The up platform - an island - is backed by a third line and platform. This up bay was used for race trains from Harcourt Street (as recently as December 27, 1958) for meetings at the Leopardstown race course which is alongside the railway at this point. At one time the traffic was considerable - in particular for the St. Stephen's Day meeting - but since the introduction of a bus

service from the city centre to the course on race days the number of rail passengers has much diminished. Siding accommodation is provided on the up side for stabling race trains.

1¼ miles further on is Carrickmines, on a falling 1 in 90 grade, where the only unusual feature is the water column on the down platform provided for locomotives off Foxrock race specials but which has been out of use for some time. The fall continues past Tulka level crossing and across the five-arch stone viaduct near Loughlinstown into Shankill - the last station on the sector to be closed - at MP 9¾. There is a short down siding and a signal cabin here although, like Killiney on the Westland Row line, it is rarely used as Shanganagh Junction Cabin, 10¼ miles from Harcourt Street, breaks the long section into Bray thus allowing a train from one line to follow close behind a train from the other. The present Shanganagh Junction dates only from 1918 when the line was moved inland because of the ravages of the sea on the soft sandy cliffs on which the line had previously been laid. In 1869 the first Shanganagh Junction was removed and triple track extended from the convergence of the two lines to Bray. The three lines comprised the double track to Harcourt Street and a single track to Killiney on the coastal route to Westland Row. This triple track was replaced by the present double track in 1918 when the line was moved inland.

Beyond Shanganagh on the present line, there is a halt serving Woodbrook Golf Club before Bray is reached at MP 12¼ (the mileposts through to Wexford are measured from Harcourt Street). One of the earliest major works undertaken by the GSR after its formation in 1925 was the rebuilding of Bray station - completed in 1928. The former D&SER station had but one long platform on the up side of the line capable of accommodating two trains. This platform was retained, a down platform of similar length provided and a through track in between the two platform lines installed. The Signal Department took advantage of the rebuilding programme to eliminate the South signal cabin and Bray has since 1927 been controlled from the North cabin, suitably enlarged. Certain trains from Harcourt Street continued to Greystones - the outer limit of suburban services.

The impending closure of the line on and from January 1 was announced by CIÉ on October 29 and on the following morning "patrons of the Harcourt Street - Bray line" were each given a leaflet explaining the reason for the withdrawal of services in that the line "showed no possibility of being made remunerative". The annual loss was £53,000 and the estimated saving, after providing for a substitute bus service, would be £47,000. In addition it was stated that by the use of equipment from the Harcourt street line on other sections a further saving of £24,000 would accrue to the Board. Some newspaper protests followed the announcement but without avail. On December 29 CIÉ advertised that the line would close during the late afternoon of December 31 and would be replaced by a station to station bus service - a quite unprecedented step destined, presumably, to prevent damage to the last trains. A veil of silence as to the time of the last train was maintained until late on December 30 when it became known that the last train would be at 16:25 from Harcourt Street. The ordinary trains of that final day carried a fair number of passengers but for the 16:25 a six-coach diesel set hauling 2 coaches was provided (2653, 2169, 2648, 2655, 2163, 2650, 808, 1306). This well filled train departed from each station to the echo of detonators although the crowd present were undemonstrative.

The replacement bus service (Route 86) is operating from D'Olier Street since January 1 although there are only 21 trips per day against 23 trains. The time taken by the very circuitous route is approximately one hour - twice the time taken by a train which stopped at all stations.

On January 1 one of the Harcourt Street railcar sets was transferred to the Thurles - Clonmel line in time to work the 19:21 Ballybrophy - Clonmel. From the following day all passenger trains on the link line have been operated by this railcar while a second set has been sent to Waterford for use on the 08:10 to Kingsbridge and its return working at 17:00. While no further economy proposals have been announced by CIÉ as yet it appears likely that the Harcourt Street line will not be the only section to be closed. A pointer in this direction is given by the fact that a number of permanent way employees in the

West Limerick area - presumably Foynes - have been notified that their employment will be terminated early this year.

