

THE

# **IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS**

Volume 7

January 1961

No.1

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### EDITORIAL

Judging by the Waterford & Tramore closure it is quite apparent that no amount of public protest is likely to alter CIÉ's intention to "replace" the three condemned sections of its rail network with road services. Despite the strongest protests from a committee of regular travellers, from local authorities and the Tramore Development Association, who pointed out that the closure would "seriously retard the development of Tramore as a holiday resort", the last trains have in fact run. Notwithstanding the aim to "set up the most economic and efficient transport system" claimed in the CIÉ handout "Your New Road Services", the residents resent the increased charges on the substitute bus services so much that they have formed the "Tramore Workers' Association" which, in return for an 8/6<sup>d</sup> per week subscription, permits members to use a hired bus to and from Waterford for four single journeys per day. This rate compares with the CIÉ charge of 11/9<sup>d</sup> for similar transportation - an increase of 3/9<sup>d</sup> on the rail fare. Whether this bus service is successful or not, disapproval of the CIÉ closure measure could hardly be more plainly expressed.

Anti-closure protests are also being voiced in the North of Ireland following a speech made by Mr G.B. Howden in which he stated that the UTA must "inevitably be further pruned, if, indeed, it may not eventually be largely eliminated" unless something drastic was done. Mr Howden, while laying great stress on the cost of rail operation, gave little evidence of any attempt to improve rail revenue. In the sphere of passenger operation alone the UTA timetable shows only too clearly the extent to which the Authority's buses operate in many places in cut-throat competition with its rail services, particularly in the ex GNR area. It is indeed surprising that the volume of rail traffic is as great as it is considering the apparent determined efforts to entice even the hard core of rail users to the parallel road services, instead of endeavouring to woo back to the railway traffic already lost to road transport, both private and public. If the UTA is so dissatisfied with its rail receipts, a policy designed to attract traffic to the railways and to make its stations, trains and services appealing to its clients, seems an obvious rather than a drastic remedy, but one of which, in most cases, there is little evidence as yet.

Unpalatable as it is the CIÉ attitude concerning the present series of closures, it must be said in its favour that strenuous efforts are being made to make its rail system viable, with which the thinly-veiled threat of extinction meted out by the UTA to its railways is in sad but sharp contrast.

**-o-O-o-o-O-o-**

The Committee of the "Irish Railfans' News" would like to wish readers a very happy New Year and to thank those who have helped so much in providing material for the last year's issues. This issue has been delayed intentionally to cover the Tramore closure and our April issue will be similarly late to report the closure of the West Cork system.

## SOME ARTICLES OF IRISH RAILWAY INTEREST

### **Railway Magazine**

October Ballycastle Railway Remains (3 photographs)

### **Trains Illustrated**

October et seq The Irish Scene

### **IRRS Journal**

Autumn Irish Railways in 1858 (Part 2)  
The Dublin & Lucan Tramway  
Dublin Tramways (Part 2)

### BOOK REVIEW

Little enough has been written outside the pages of the IRRS Journal of the minor standard railways of Ireland. Mr C. Creedon in his "Cork & Macroom Direct Railway" has produced an attractive and most interesting survey of the history, rolling stock and services of this 24½ mile line in a compass of 40 pages. There are 15 illustrations, a well drawn map and layout plans of Capwell and Macroom termini, printed on art paper throughout. This book is available from the author, price 5/- (post free) and as only a limited edition has been printed, readers should order their copies without delay. It is very good value; a book no enthusiast should be without. We hope that Mr Creedon's effort will encourage others to deal similarly with the many sections of the Irish rail network not so treated.

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## **News Section**

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### CIÉ GENERAL NEWS REPORT

#### **Decentralisation Report**

Following the announcement by Dr C.S. Andrews, Chairman, of a proposed new system of management for CIÉ, full details of a major reorganisation plan for the undertaking were released at the end of October. The most significant feature of the plan, which is to take effect as from 1<sup>st</sup> February 1961, is the division of the system into five areas, each under the control of an area manager who will have virtual autonomy within his own district. The headquarters of the areas are located in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford and each area, with its own operational, engineering, accountancy and commercial staffs, will have as a major objective the streamlining of both rail and road passenger and freight services. Authority will henceforth be delegated from the area management level instead of as now from Dublin headquarters of CIÉ. From February 1 only the broad policy of the company will be directed from head office, while the actual operation of that policy will be the responsibility of the area managers. CIÉ have stated that this new system of decentralised management would enable more responsibility to be given to all ranks in the organisation and would set up a flexible structure which could be readily adjusted to take the strain of any expansion or new development. Thereby it is hoped to attract greater traffic to a far more efficient public transport system.

#### **Traffic Increase**

In early December, CIÉ announced that its drive for new traffic over the past year had produced excellent results. Freight traffic alone during 1960 was running at a rate which was 8½% higher than

the previous year and up to 30<sup>th</sup> November 1960 CIÉ had earned over £347,000 more in revenue than in the corresponding last year. Receipts from freight train traffic contributed £141,500 of this increase, passenger train merchandise earned a further increase of £22,000, while revenue from the road freight services showed an increase of £183,000. It should be borne in mind, however, that much of the increased revenue earned by the latter department has most probably been yielded by new road freight services provided during last year for the first time to carry traffic formerly conveyed by train services on branch lines which have been closed. These excellent results in winning extra traffic are, in the main, attributed by CIÉ to its new commercial freedom and more particularly to its "package deals". At the end of March 1960, following the first full year of the package deal scheme, a total of 342 deals with a potential revenue of £235,000 was secured. Encouraged by this success, CIÉ set an ambitious "new business" target of £500,000 for the current year and each station on the system was allocated its own target. At the end of October 1960, after seven months campaigning, 203 further "package deals" with an estimated annual potential of £260,500 had already been secured. Some of the most successful such deals to date concern the carrying of motor cars by rail. The staff bonus scheme, introduced by CIÉ in 1959, under which employees were granted a percentage allowance of new business which they secured, has been declared a success. This, allied with the special promotional campaign to boost rail passenger traffic, has resulted in an increase in revenue of up to 400% in some cases. Educational tours in particular have considerably improved rail passenger traffic and so far in the current financial year over 90,000 children, compared with 23,000 last year, have been carried. In spite of the poor weather of 1960, the number of passengers availing of the "Radio Train" trips increased from 13,174 to 13,557. Altogether 1960 appears to have been one of the most successful of recent years for CIÉ and it is hoped that the commendable efforts to win even further traffic in 1961 will be successful.

### **Trial Trains**

Several timed trials held by CIÉ in the last three months may well portend accelerations in the 1961 summer timetable. The first of these, on Sunday October 23, was from Dublin to Cork and back when A33 and A59 - specially adapted for multiple unit working - headed a 320 ton train out of Kingsbridge. This load was hauled to Cork (165½ miles) in the amazing time of 2 hours 37 minutes and returned the same afternoon, despite the failure en route of one of the locos, in 3 hours 20 minutes. On November 27 a five coach railcar set (2608/2637/2646/1361/2619) covered the same journey in an even faster time - 2 hours 33 minutes. In view of various erroneous press reports, it may perhaps be worth mentioning that this is the fastest known time from Dublin to Cork although at least two faster runs have been made from Cork to Dublin. In September 1917 loco 328 (4-4-0) with 6 coaches totalling 137 tons ran from Cork to Amiens Street in 2 hours 54 minutes with 10 minute stops, while in March 1934 loco 402 (4-6-0) with 3 bogies of 93 tons made her celebrated 2 hour 27 minutes non-stop trip to Kingsbridge with a special for the American Ambassador. Returning to 1960, on December 4 the same railcar set was used on a non-stop trial to Belfast (112½ miles). Notwithstanding unfavourable weather with gale force winds, both the down and up runs were completed in 1 hour 58 minutes. A week later, December 11, the UTA ran a speed trial from Belfast to Dublin using a BUT railcar set (134/595/128/135) which achieved an up timing of 1 hour 57 minutes while on the same date CIÉ ran a trial to Galway via Portarlington with the railcar set used previously but, as stops were made at several points, the overall timing is inconclusive.

### **Rolling Stock Developments**

Work has been completed on the five new heating vans mentioned in our last issue and they have gone into service; they are numbered 3148-3152. Eight of a further series of open centre seconds, similar to those introduced in 1958, have also gone into traffic. Work continues at Inchicore on the new buffet car mentioned in our last issue and ex GNR buffet cars 170 and 267 are at present undergoing extensive reconstruction. The second replacement railcar, 2617, mentioned in our July issue appeared in service

in October fitted with 96 seats. Of the 40 new 30 ton goods brake vans under construction, 20 are being fitted with vacuum brake equipment. Their use on goods trains departing from Cork and Kingsbridge renders a banking engine unnecessary.

### **Christmas Traffic**

The usual additional passenger trains were provided on most main lines during Christmas 1960, but due to the holiday falling on a Sunday the total of additional trains did not equal the number operated in other years as the “rush” was spread more evenly this year over the week preceding Christmas. Some aspects of the Christmas traffic arrangements deserve comment, since the holiday services for the first time this year bore the unmistakeable stamp of “more economic operation”. Additional services were confined to the minimum and then chiefly to main lines, indeed, one main line, between Dublin and Wexford was not provided with any additional train over the period. Suburban services in the Dublin area were virtually eliminated during the Christmas holidays. No service was provided on December 25, 26 and 27 on either the Greystones or the Howth lines while only reduced services ran between Dublin, Drogheda and Dundalk. In general this attempt to provide services more closely tailored to the needs of the travelling public was successful. Christmas Eve at Kingsbridge was rather less animated than usual. First during the afternoon A18 left at 14:10 with the 14:00 special for Limerick; the delay being due to the attaching of extra coaches for last minute passengers, making a train of HV and 11 bogies, including a buffet car. The “Fáilte” - 14:25 for Cork ran in duplicate, at 14:27 with A57, LV and 9 bogies and at 14:45, A58 with 6 bogies and HV. The conventional 16:00 special was A31 with 6 bogies for Cork and 4 bogies and HV for Kerry. Buffet car C144N was included although the attachment of it and extra coaches delayed departure to 16:11. The 17:00 was also duplicated: A56, 9 bogies HV and LV at 17:07 and B109, HV and 5 bogies at 17:32, both for Waterford, but the 17:40 to Limerick was not and A32, HV and 11 bogies were quite adequate for the traffic offering. The 18:00 for Waterford via Athy and Carlow was a well filled 4-coach diesel and left at 18:10 while the 18:45 was an 8-coach diesel set for Cork only, a separate special being provided for Kerry at 18:55 which proved to be A33 hauling a 7-coach railcar with engines running! An interesting late extra was the 21:30 to Cork advertised to operate if necessitated by the late arrival at Dun Laoghaire of the 15:00 boat from Holyhead. It ran! The staff at Kingsbridge are to be complimented on their tasteful decorations.

### **Current Closures**

Despite much public protest in each area affected by the sweeping rail closure proposals announced in September, as reported in our last issue, CIÉ continues to pursue its policy and its proposals are at present in the course of implementation. On October 25, public notice was given of the intention to withdraw all services between Waterford and Tramore with effect as from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1961. As reported elsewhere, these services ceased on December 31. On November 18, public notice was given of the intention to withdraw all services on Ireland’s last remaining narrow gauge public railway between Ennis, Kilkee and Kilrush, with effect as from 1<sup>st</sup> February 1961 and this was followed on December 2 by a similar notice in respect of the entire West Cork railway system covering all services between Cork, Bantry, Baltimore, Clonakilty and Courtmacsherry, which are due to cease on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1961, in preparation for which some sidings have already been removed from the fan alongside the loco shed in Bantry. To date no further announcement has been made concerning the future of the Macmine Junction - Waterford and Muine Bheag - Palace East lines. It will be remembered that CIÉ stated in September last that both of these lines would also be closed before the end of the current financial year unless certain specific traffic for which it was negotiating at that time was secured. In the absence of any further statement concerning these two lines it seems possible that CIÉ was successful in securing the “specific traffic” required for their retention. Since our last issue, no further announcement has been made regarding the “small stations” which CIÉ has envisaged it may have to

close within the five year period set by the Transport Act 1958.

### **New Locos Arrive**

On January 3 the MV "Irish Poplar" arrived in Dublin carrying two of the fifteen new 950 hp diesel electric locomotives being supplied to CIÉ by the General Motors Corporation of America. They are an eight-wheel double-bogie type, weighing 61 tons, and have a cab at one end only. Livery is silver-grey with yellow stripes and the two, which were unloaded on January 4, are numbered B124 and B126. The latter, on January 6, was on trial on the Dublin - Cork main line.

### **Steam Loco News**

In mid-November CIÉ locos 634 (0-6-0) and 704 (0-6-0) were taken to Dundalk for scrapping while at the end of November a further three "withdrawn" locos suffered the same fate. These were 532 (4-4-0), 62 (4-4-0) and 660 (2-4-0), which were hauled from Ashtown, where they have been lying for some years, to Dundalk by loco 117N. On December 29 loco 159N headed a further batch of three condemned locos - 137 (0-6-0), 332 (4-4-0) and 703 (0-6-0) - to Dundalk. Late in November, the former GNR crane tank engine No.31, which became the property of the Dundalk Engineering Works on the dissolution of the GNR, was acquired by CIÉ and is in use on shunting duties in Inchicore works. A correction is required to the list of CIÉ locomotive stock in our July 1960 issue; locos 217 and 560 should be added to it while 150 and, apparently, 137 should be deleted. At present there are 8 ex GNR locos shedded in Broadstone. They are 3 (4-4-2T), 91 (2-4-2T), 158 (0-6-0), 163 (0-6-0), 181 (0-6-0), 184 (0-6-0), 197 (4-4-0) and 203 (4-4-0). Loco 85 "Merlin" (4-4-0), which regularly works the Thursday Dublin - Belfast excursion ran a hot box on this turn on December 15 and on December 29 Loco 207 "Boyne" (4-4-0) was noticed on the excursion in replacement.

### **Amiens Street - Killester Signalling**

With the closing of Killester signal cabin on October 23 and the replacement of all semaphore signals between that cabin and East Wall Junction by three-aspect colour signals, the CIÉ re-signalling programme for the Amiens Street - Howth Junction section of the former GNR Dublin - Belfast main line was completed. Absolute block working between East Wall Junction and Killester has been abolished and automatic working is in force over the 4½ miles of double track to Howth Junction. Absolute block working has, however, been retained over the ½ mile between East Wall Junction and Amiens Street, except when East Wall junction is switched out, in which event the automatic working extends to Amiens Street. The crossover situated near Killester cabin has not been removed and provision has been made for the reopening of this cabin should an emergency require the use of the crossover. A total of twelve new three-aspect colour light signals has been installed under this re-signalling programme which also involved the complete track circuiting of both lines as far as Howth Junction. Similar semi-automatic colour light signalling has been in use between Amiens Street and Dun Laoghaire since 1938.

## **CIÉ LOCAL NEWS REPORTS**

### **Suburban Seasons**

To compensate suburban travellers somewhat for the loss of evening rail services, weekly and season ticket holders may now travel without extra charge fare on corresponding bus services after trains cease.

### **Fertiliser Special**

Since the end of October last, the volume of fertiliser traffic between the south and north-west of Ireland has grown to such proportions - over 900 tons per week - that it has become necessary to run a special fertiliser train of some 15-20 wagons each night, Tuesdays to Saturdays inclusive, from Cork to

Sligo. This special is loaded at Albert Quay, Cork, and traverses the Rath Luirc - Patrickswell line to Limerick, runs thence via Athenry and Claremorris to Sligo and is worked by the C class loco formerly used on the Tuam - Galway passenger services. These latter trains are now steam operated whenever the C class loco is engaged on the special fertiliser working.

### **Tramore Closure**

In a manner similar to the Harcourt Street line's closure two years ago the service on the 7½ mile Waterford - Tramore line was replaced by buses during the last day of operation - 31<sup>st</sup> December 1960. Unlike the Harcourt Street, however, no public notice was given of this intention and the information as to which train would, in fact, be the last was kept almost a closely guarded secret until the time came. Last to leave Waterford (Manor) was the 13:25, made up of a two coach railcar set - 2659/2658. The same set returned from Tramore on the 14:10, both journeys being, understandably, devoid of the normal fuss associated with last trains, although quite a few detonators were exploded as had been done with most trains during the day. CIÉ will operate 17 buses against the former 15 trains per day but, in addition, the "Tramore Workers' Association" have hired a local bus for an expected 4 journeys in each direction every weekday. At 15:00 on the last day the railcar set worked light to Tramore to bring the two camping coaches stationed there to Waterford. As lifting has already commenced, it is likely that the five rail vehicles isolated on the self-contained W&T Section (Railcars 2657/8/9, Park Royal coaches 1407/8 - the latter a control trailer) and the camping coaches will shortly be hauled through Waterford's streets to Waterford Ironfounders' siding, formerly Waterford South Station, for restoration to the main line system.

### **Mourne Abbey Signalling**

The signal cabin at Mourne Abbey Halt - between Mallow and Rathduff on the Dublin-Cork line - was closed on December 4 and all semaphore signals worked therefrom were dispensed with. As from the same date, single aspect colour light home and distant signals on the up and down lines were brought into use and these are being operated as intermediate signals from the stations on either side of Mourne Abbey - the up signals from Rathduff and the down ones from Mallow South Cabin. The siding at Mourne Abbey is now opened by a ground frame released by a key kept at Mallow South Cabin. The new intermediate signals at Mourne Abbey are being operated in a manner similar to those at Caragh in the Sallins-Newbridge section of the Dublin-Cork line.

### **Fire at Glanmire Road**

An outbreak of fire on Sunday, October 30, caused considerable damage to the Central Accounts Office at Glanmire Road station, Cork, but, fortunately damage to the restaurant beneath, which contains a unique display of railway crests from many parts of the world, was not as serious as first believed. The ceiling of the restaurant did, however, suffer some damage and it was found necessary to close the premises to the public for a period following the fire to enable repairs to be carried out. These were completed early in December and the restaurant, together with the permanent exhibition of crests, was reopened to the public as from December 13.

### **Liftings**

The lifting of the abandoned sections of CIÉ is proceeding as follows:

*Kenmare*: Proceeding towards Loo Bridge.

*Valentia*: Lifted from Valentia to Gleensk Viaduct - between Kells and Mountain Stage. Early in December the now-disused station buildings at Cahirciveen were completely destroyed by fire. The viaduct near Cahirciveen is still in situ.

*Irish North*: The Monaghan - Clones line is now lifted into Clones and work is proceeding on the section from Corkill Bridge into Clones.

Cashel: The branch lifting has now resumed and track is removed to within a mile of Goold's Cross.

## **UTA GENERAL NEWS REPORT**

### **Locomotive Trends**

From a list of locomotives which have undergone heavy repair, it is apparent that the Great Northern section is in future to be worked mainly by the NCC Moguls and ex GNR 0-6-0s of classes SG3 and UG. The WT class 2-6-4Ts are in almost complete possession of what steam workings remain on the NCC section and also work on the ex GNR main line but not between Portadown and Derry although the Moguls have been working irregularly over this section on goods trains since last September. At the moment the following NCC locos are shedded on the GN section: 2-6-4Ts 6, 9, 51, 53, 55, 56 and 57; 2-6-0s 91, 93, 94, 95, 97 and 99. Of these 6, 99 and 93 are the most recent from York Road. At the time of writing, locos 32 (0-6-0), 50 (2-6-4T) and 98 (2-6-0) are reported in shops for repair while 9 locos have undergone heavy repair during 1960 as follows: January, 2 and 3 (2-6-4T); March, 35 (0-6-0); April, 48 (0-6-0); May, 33 (0-6-0); August, 49 (0-6-0); October, 93 (2-6-0); November, 57 (2-6-4T) and December, 45 (0-6-0).

### **Railcar Rebuilding**

To replace unit 58 destroyed in the accident near Castlerock on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1959 the UTA are at present constructing a new similar MP railcar and work is also to be put in hand on the rebuilding of BUT railcar 129 destroyed by fire at Castlebellingham on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1960. It is also understood that two further MP cars are to be constructed for use on the NCC

### **Repainting**

The repainting of railcars with black and yellow "wasp" fronts has proceeded apace; all cars and driving trailers on the Bangor line had been so treated by the end of November. The new heraldic crest of the Authority is now being affixed to most vehicles repainted after overhaul and BUT railcar 122 was the first to appear in traffic with it.

### **Portrush Branch**

The UTA, as promised, reopened the 6 mile Coleraine - Portrush branch over the Christmas period. On December 23 one train was run, but the following day - Christmas Eve - full Saturday service was operating. One train also ran on December 27 to Portrush while two departed from it. On December 28 one single departure sufficed.

### **Gloomy Outlook**

When addressing the Newry Chamber of Commerce on December 7, Mr G.B. Howden, Chairman of the UTA, gave warning that unless something drastic was done very soon to bring about substantial changes for the better in the financial position of the Authority "the remaining system in Northern Ireland must inevitably be further pruned if, indeed, it may not eventually be largely eliminated". The magnitude of the heavy losses being incurred in working the rail services on the present basis would seriously jeopardise the prospect of attaining that degree of financial stability necessary if the Authority was to discharge its Statutory obligations. Mr Howden said that either the revenue of the railways must be significantly increased or the expenditure still further reduced. Already since 1958 - when the total loss for the railways in Northern Ireland was £574,559 - the loss in working rail services had been reduced by about 60% and for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> September 1960 was estimated to be approximately £215,000. This reduction was the more significant if it was borne in mind that the railway receipts were higher in 1958 than they were today. To reduce expenditure still further, however, in conditions where the cost of labour and materials kept rising, became more and more difficult and a position had now been reached where nothing more could be done in that direction without drastic changes. Mr Howden

stated that the cost of providing the existing services on each section of railway together with the revenue derived therefrom was at present being closely studied, as also was the estimate of capital expenditure involved in providing alternatives to the present methods of working, such as dieselisation. A decision would have to be made very soon, he added, as to whether it will be necessary to close further lines of the railway system in Northern Ireland. In conclusion warning was given of a forthcoming unpopular decision regarding rail services in the Newry area.

### **Lifting**

The lifting of the UTA section of the "Irish North" is nearing Enniskillen and on December 9 the rails and other material there were auctioned. The track in Bundoran station has also been removed. In November a train with a 6 ton crane ran to Cookstown and, in addition, several sidings at Coalisland have been lifted.

### **CDRJC**

### **Preservation**

It is learned that a certain Dr Cox of Philadelphia is interested in the purchase of a considerable amount of material from the CDR. Among items considered for purchase were: one loco (probably No.4), 12 passenger coaches, 15 complete wagons and 20 underframes, a railcar (No.18), a turntable, a signal cabin and fittings, rails and other miscellaneous equipment. He hopes to transport these items to the USA for preservation in working condition. Some of the vehicles destined for the Belfast Transport Museum have been seen en route at Portadown. Loco 2 "Blanche" has replaced Loco 1 "Alice" but the list in our October issue is otherwise unchanged.

### **BORD NA MONA**

#### **New Locos**

Although, heretofore, Bord na Mona has adopted Ruston four-wheel locomotives of varying horsepower as standard on all its bogs, the latest locomotives to be obtained are from the firm of K.H. Deutz who supplied the CIÉ G class locos. A number of these new locos are in use at Derrygreenagh - one of the bogs supplying the new ESB station now in production at Rhode, Co. Offaly.

### **LOOSE LINKS**

- The former main line passenger 4-6-0, 402, has been observed operating beet specials between Cork and Mallow beet factory siding while ex DSER locos 461 and 462 have worked beet specials between Waterford and Thurles during the past two months.
- Larne Aluminium Co. 0-4-0T loco 1, similar to No.2 preserved in the Belfast Transport Museum, was purchased in September by a Belfast enthusiast who plans to preserve it in his garden.
- Emergency block instruments, installed last November in Blackrock, will help to eliminate delays caused by the 'shorting' of the track circuits by flooding on the Dublin-Greystones Suburban line along the coastal stretch between Merrion and Blackrock.
- On October 16 an excursion train from Dublin to Warrenpoint was worked throughout by an A class loco - the first train so worked to traverse this branch.
- Since the introduction of the winter timetable the 13:10 (Saturdays) Amiens Street - Greystones and its return working at 14:32 have been steam hauled, usually by an ex GNR 4-4-0.
- Ex GNR loco 158 (0-6-0) which normally works Dun Laoghaire pier trains has been noted at

Portarlington on a trial train of 30 ton brake vans and has since appeared on the Meath goods.

- CIÉ has announced the introduction of a combined rail/road rambler ticket at £8 (2<sup>nd</sup> class) and £11 (1<sup>st</sup> class), valid on both rail and provincial bus networks.
- The former CB&SCR 4-6-0T loco 466, which was returned to Cork from Dublin in 1956, has reappeared in Broadstone and is employed shunting in the Dublin area since November.
- During December a number of older CIÉ passenger coaches and vans have been sent to the Dundalk Engineering Works to be broken up.
- Recently overhauled and now in traffic on the Bangor line is railcar trailer 503 with its seating increased by 2 to 98 and the van, now minus its coke boiler, fitted with a Smith's Patent battery powered heater.

### JOURNEY JOTTINGS

#### **November 11: Dublin - Clara - Banagher**

The 09:35 Kingsbridge-Waterford was made up of HV, two 64 seat open seconds. Buffet car 838, compo 2160, LV and a 'tail' of three P-wagons of stock, consigned from such diverse places as Roscommon and Dundalk (Barrack Street) to Clover Meats siding, Waterford. After a near punctual start and without exceeding 55 mph the loco, A38, kept time easily with the light load, crossing the up 07:25 from Waterford via Carlow at MP 22 - close to the intermediate signals between Sallins and Newbridge. During an extended stop at Kildare A50 and A20 with 48 wagons and van arrived from the South and locos 606 (0-6-0) and 163N (0-6-0) were noted on shed. On the descent beyond Cherryville Junction the second up Waterford train (08:10 via Port Laoise) was crossed with B105 heading 4 bogies, LV and HV, very well to time. Not far behind, A36 was coping with a 7 bogie and HV set on the 08:15 from Limerick.

At Portarlington, which the nameboard proclaims as the "Junction for Athlone and Banagher branches", passengers from the Dublin direction must change trains and, in view of the lateness (10 minutes) of the Waterford train, the 10:05 Kingsbridge-Limerick - A43, HV and 6 bogies - was allowed to pass through dead on time before the branch railcar (2630/2639 and 1 wagon) was brought finally to the down platform. In the meantime a six-coach railcar set - the normal four-coach set strengthened to accommodate an educational tour - paused punctually at Portarlington on its up journey to Dublin with the 07:50 from Cork. The branch railcar carried 16 passengers and an accumulation of miscellaneous parcels traffic. At Gleashill a four minute stop was made as the "Cu na Mara" - 09:20 Galway-Westland Row via Portarlington - wound its way through the station, an immaculate six-coach railcar with an encouraging complement of first class passengers. At Tullamore the wagon was detached from the Athlone train, 7 passengers alighted, 15 more replaced them and much parcels traffic was transferred, for this town, with a population of some 6,000, is one of the most important in the Midlands. The railway handles a considerable traffic and has a sugar beet quota of 28 wagons per day during the season when the G class loco off the Banagher branch acts as Tullamore station pilot. On this date the loco in question was observed, however, at Clara working light to Athlone for mechanical attention and, consequently, loco 583 (0-6-0), working a stray wagon of beet-pulp, left Clara for Tullamore in replacement shortly after noon. This loco later in the day, was involved in an unusual operation, for it and 606 (0-6-0) were noted double-heading the 14:20 Portarlington-Tuam beet special of 35 wagons and van into Clara, working cab to cab, 606 facing Athlone and 583 facing Tullamore.

On arrival in Clara of the railcar, loco 588 of the same class was standing by for the 12:15 Clara-Banagher goods and empty beet truck train which, during the sugar beet season, is regularly steam worked. After protracted shunting, the 15 wagons were made up against the van, 588 watered and

departed at 13:00. A stop was made at Clara & Banagher Junction, Clara, to unlock the points, pull forward beyond the branch trap-points and restore the road again for the Athlone line before assaying the undulations to Ferbane. On this section at MP 6 the 3' gauge Bord na Mona line serving Lemanaghan bog is crossed on the level and a four-wheel Ruston engine could be seen at the loading bank nearby. At Ferbane 4 wagons, 2 goods and 2 beet, were shunted into the siding while at Belmont 2 beet and 1 goods were similarly dealt with. Arrival at Banagher was at 15:58 with the remaining 5 beet and 3 goods wagons. The writer's thanks are tendered to CIÉ for granting the necessary permit to make this trip possible.

## **STATION SURVEY**

### **Drimoleague**

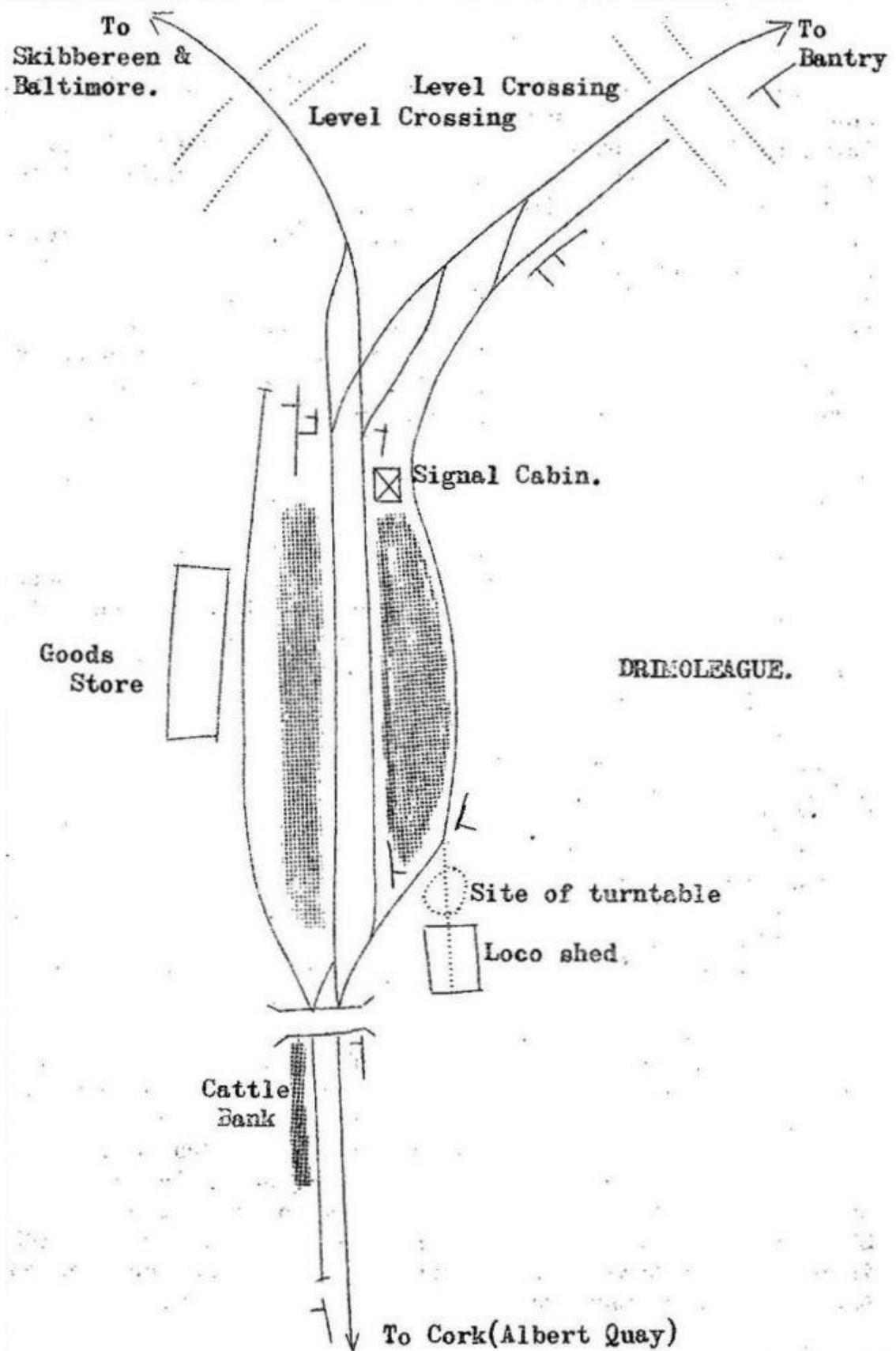
The small market town of Drimoleague in Co. Cork boasts the largest and most important junction on the West Cork railway system, whose future today, alas, will scarcely extend beyond another three months. Yet, when first constructed in 1877, Drimoleague was not a junction but a through station on the line projected by the West Cork Railway Co. from the terminus of the Cork & Bandon Railway at Bandon to Skibbereen. Although Drimoleague station was planned by the West Cork Railway Co., the actual construction was carried out by Ilen Valley Railway Co., formed in Skibbereen in 1872 to complete the railway to that town. Due to financial difficulties the West Cork Railway Co. had been unable to continue their line beyond Dunmanway. The line through Drimoleague was opened on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1877 on completion of the section to Skibbereen by the Ilen Valley Railway. In 1879 this company obtained further powers to extend the line from Drimoleague to Bantry which was successfully completed and opened on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1881, thus raising the status of Drimoleague to a junction.

Meanwhile the Cork & Bandon Railway had acquired the West Cork Railway and then took over the Ilen Valley Railway in 1883, to subsequently become the Cork, Bandon & South Coast Railway.

As will be seen from the accompanying diagram the station consists of a down platform and an up platform which forms an island between the Bantry and Skibbereen lines. The goods shed is situated behind the down platform, the cattle bank slightly to the east of the station on the down side, while on the up side near the east end of the island platform stands the loco shed with the site of the former turntable in front of it. This shed fell into disuse with the replacement of steam by diesel motive power in 1957 and the turntable, together with the rail connection to the shed, was dismantled in the autumn of 1958. The signal cabin, which has a frame of 31 levers including spares, stands at the western end of the island platform. A road bridge spans the railway at the Cork end of the station while both lines westwards are crossed by level crossings.

Today, Drimoleague, by West Cork standards, is a busy railway junction. Each weekday, two passenger and one goods train in each direction between Cork and Bantry account for six train movements while two passenger, one goods train and one mixed train in each direction (Mondays to Fridays) between Drimoleague and Skibbereen or Baltimore account for a further eight (six on Saturdays when the goods does not run). In addition, a pick-up goods train from Cork terminates at Drimoleague each weekday at 12:10 and leaves again for Cork at 16:40, thus bringing the total number of train movements in Drimoleague to 16 (Mondays-Fridays) and 14 (Saturdays). The up passenger trains from Bantry at 08:52/57 and 15:27/29 normally run into the northern side of the island platform, while the passenger connections from Skibbereen and Baltimore come alongside the other face of the same platform to permit cross-platform interchange of traffic. In the down direction the Bantry trains at 13:45/46 and 19:34/38 use the down platform, into which the Skibbereen line connection reverses to pick up traffic on the departure of the Bantry train. The down Cork-Bantry goods train calls at Drimoleague at 06:24/07:00 and is met by an engine and van from Skibbereen which returns at 07:35. The up Bantry goods which calls at Drimoleague between 09:41 and 10:00 has no connection from the

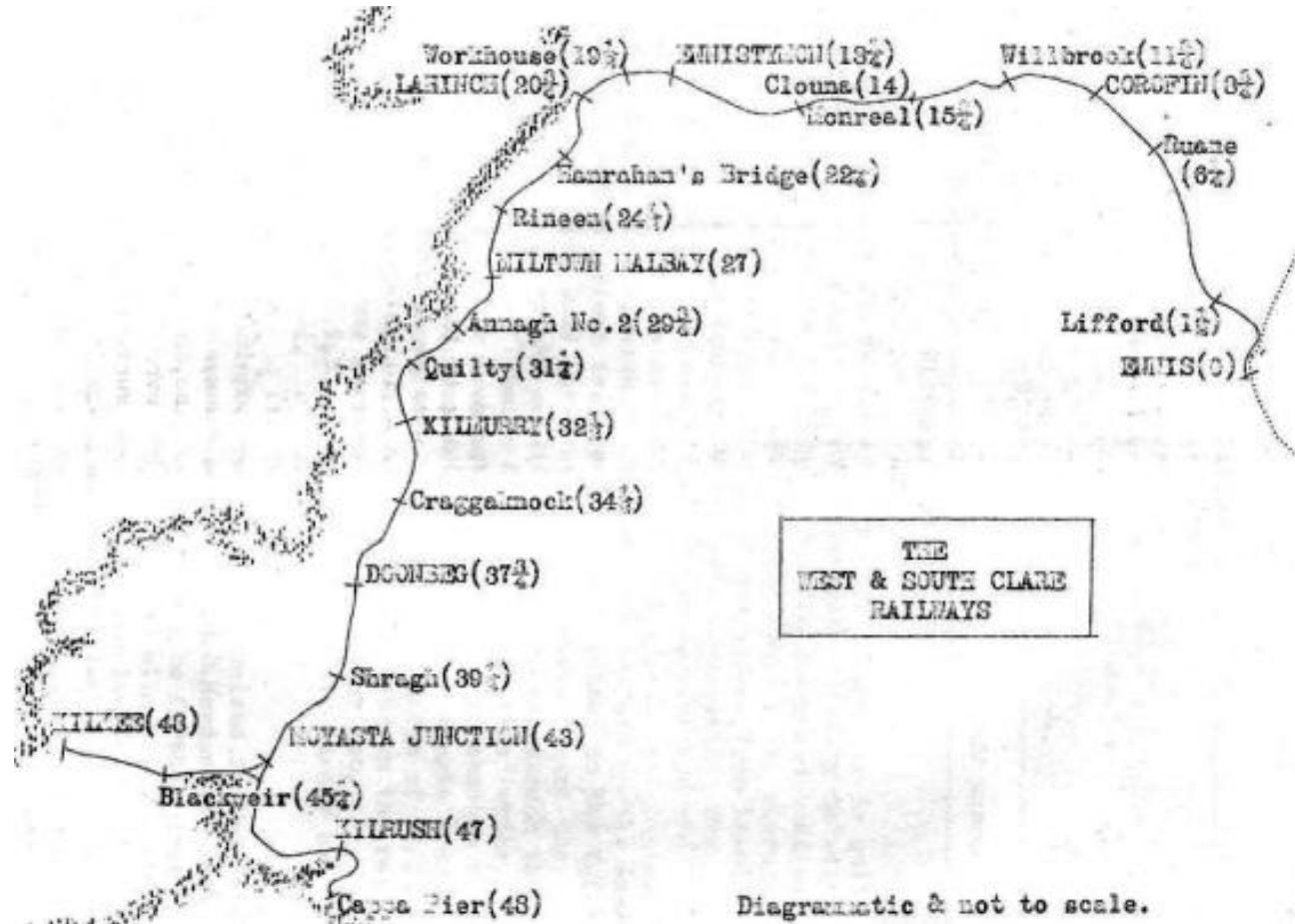
Skibbereen line. The loco links were given in our July 1960 issue and all trains are now worked by C class locos except the two Bantry passenger trains which are AEC railcar sets.



# Feature Section

## TWILIGHT OF THE WEST CLARE

The death sentence on the West Clare section of CIÉ, announced on September 27 last, was confirmed by the statutory notice of closure in the Dublin papers of November 18 which stated that all services would be terminated on and from 1<sup>st</sup> February 1961. This mundane statement conceals the fact that the arrival of the last rains in Kilkee and Kilrush on Tuesday January 31 will bring to an end passenger operation on the 3' gauge in Ireland - once the richest narrow gauge territory in these islands.



What is commonly called the West Clare Section of CIÉ is, in fact, the line from Ennis to Miltown Malbay of the West Clare Railway Co. Ltd, and its extension to Kilrush and Kilkee owned by a separate company, the South Clare Railway Co. Ltd, but which has always been worked by the West Clare. The line was built under the Tramways Act of 1883 which permitted the interest on capital to be guaranteed by certain Baronies through which it passed. The first sod was cut on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1885 by no less a person than Charles Stewart Parnell and the opening to Miltown Malbay took place 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1887. The first sod of the South Clare line was cut by Mrs Reeves of Bessborough House at Kilkee on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1890 and on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1892 the 10 miles from Kilkee to Kilrush and Cappa Pier were opened. On December 23 of the same year passenger services commenced on the intervening 11 mile section from Miltown Malbay to Moyasta Junction. There is evidence that the goods traffic had been handled on the last-mentioned section earlier, but the precise date is not known.

At Ennis the narrow gauge occupies a bay platform on the down (west) side of the Limerick-Sligo line

which it parallels for a little over a mile before diverging westwards past Lifford Halt, opened 5/5/1952, into the rocky barren country typical of this part of Clare. There is another halt at Ruane, first opened in 1888 but closed for many years until reopened with Lifford in 1952. Corofin is the first station and crossing place and the line then climbs past Willbrook Halt to its summit near Clouna Halt (MP 14), opened 4/5/1954. Two miles beyond is found Montreal Halt, opened 14/9/1952, on the descent to Ennistymon - a place of importance with crossing loop, goods yard and two platforms. Workhouse Halt, 1¼ miles beyond, was introduced on 29/6/1953 although the short platform there was a special stopping place in the early years. Lahinch has two platforms and it is the turn-round point of the summer Sunday excursions run on the West Clare. For this reason a disused standard gauge turntable from Kilmessan (on the Clonsilla - Kingscourt line) was suitably converted and installed here in August 1953. The newest stopping place on the section is Hanrahan's Bridge Halt, opened 1/10/1958, near MP 22¼ at the foot of a steep bank to Rineen Halt, opened on 5/5/1952. At Miltown Malbay, the last to have both up and down platforms, there can still be seen the disused loco shed and turntable required when the line terminated here.

The South Clare portion of the line is generally less heavily graded than the West Clare although there is a fall past Annagh No.2 Halt, opened 5/5/1952, to near Quilty. Here is found the anemometer which protects the line from Atlantic gales. When this instrument indicates a wind speed of over 60 mph only ballasted stock can be used while on the gale exceeding 80 mph all traffic on the line is halted. It is said that the highest wind speed recorded here was in January 1927 when a velocity of 112 mph was reached. Kilmurray is the next block post and ETS working, which has been installed from Ennis to Miltown in July 1927, was extended to Moyasta on 21/9/1954. Craggaknock Halt is close to the summit of a long fall to Doonbeg, a crossing place serving a windswept although more populous area. Crossing the Doonbeg river the line traverses the bog of Shragh where a siding is provided for turf traffic. This is also a railcar stopping place since 5/5/1952 and yields considerable passenger traffic to and from Kilrush. At Moyasta there is a triangular junction where the Kilkee line veers away to the West and the Kilrush branch bears southwards. Linking these two is the through Kilrush-Kilkee line, built for the boat trains from Cappa pier when the line was opened. It was out of use for many years up to 1952 when railcars commenced using it when running from Kilrush to Kilkee and vice versa. Between Moyasta and Kilkee is a halt at Blackweir but there is no intermediate station on the Kilrush branch. From Kilrush there is a one mile extension to Cappa Pier where formerly steamers from Foynes and Limerick called. This section is operated as a siding from Kilrush but has been used only occasionally when boats carrying fertiliser called at Cappa. An exceptional working was the enthusiasts' special on July 18 reported in our October issue.

Several times since the amalgamation of 1925, in which the West and South Clare Railways became part of the newly-formed Great Southern Railways, the section has been threatened with closure. In 1951, however, CIÉ decided to give it a new lease of life in relieving the outworn steam locomotives of passenger and mixed train workings by introducing Walker/Gardner diesel railcars similar to those in operation on the CDRJC. Four cars (3386/7/8/9) were ordered from Walker Bros. of Wigan and were delivered to the section in 1952. They went into service, two in March and the remaining two in May. On 5<sup>th</sup> May 1952 an accelerated service of increased frequency was instituted with these cars and five new rail-level halts were opened. The remaining steam locomotives retained charge of the goods trains until 1955 when three diesel mechanical locos (F501/2/3) were obtained to supplant them. It is of interest to recall that loco 5C (0-6-2T) which hauled the last regular steam passenger train out of Ennis on 15/3/1952 was also the last engine in steam on the section as on 5/5/1956, in connection with the making of a film entitled "A Minute's Wait" she ran from Kilkee to Moyasta and back. The greater portion of this film was made in Kilkee station. Despite the fact that 5C was then the only steam loco on the line and had to be hauled to Ennis behind an F class diesel, the current working timetable still avers "Sectional running (Passenger) refers only to steam trains"!

At the time of writing the normal winter schedule is being operated on the line each weekday with down trains 08:00 (goods), 11:00 and 16:20 (passenger) and up trains at 08:05 (passenger) from Kilkee, 13:25 (goods) from Kilrush and an afternoon passenger train from Kilkee at 13:45 (Wednesdays and Saturdays excepted) and at 16:45 (Wednesdays and Saturdays only). The later departure is to allow sufficient time for shopping in Kilrush and the 11:00 down often runs to Kilrush instead of to Kilkee on these days. The 08:05 up and 16:20 down are normally worked by diesel loco with two railcar trailers, coach 1L (rebuilt in 1958 for the Cavan & Leitrim section and transferred to Ennis in June 1959) and a brake van. Railcars 3387/8/9 operate the remainder of the service although 3389 was reported out of traffic some time ago. 3386 is at present in Inchicore Works for an overhaul which will now, presumably, never be completed. 3387 and 3389 have both been “shopped” but 3388 has never left the section since its delivery in 1952 and is accordingly kept as far as possible to the Kilrush branch link, which, having no main line trip, incurs a much shorter mileage than the cars stabled in Ennis. Apart from the disabled coach - 49C - there is no coaching stock on the section other than these railcars, three trailers and coach 1L and this lack, together with the poor weather, severely restricted passenger traffic during last summer. The trailers mentioned, numbered 46C-48C, are bogie vehicles of bus-type construction with, like the railcars, bus-type seating. They were built in 1951 in Inchicore works on the underframes of three former Tralee & Dingle Railway coaches. There are also three four-wheel vans, numbered 200C-202C, built in Limerick on wagon underframes bought by the GSR from the Clogher Valley Railway when that line was closed on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1942. These vans, which still bear the letters CVR on their axle boxes, are used for conveying passengers' luggage as, unlike the County Donegal Railway cars which they so closely resemble, roof racks are not fitted to the West Clare cars.

Traffic on the line is quite considerable, especially on the up morning and down evening services as about 80 schoolchildren travel from stations north of Kilmurry to Ennistymon each day and, in addition, there is quite a number of passengers who travel to Limerick and Ennis by this means. The railcar worked trains are rather more lightly loaded but on Wednesdays and Saturdays shopping traffic to Kilrush is very much in evidence. The West Clare goods traffic is quite heavy and the train often has a full load - 17 wagons and a van - leaving Ennis.

When one considers the extent of traffic carried, it is surprising indeed that the loss on the section is as high as the figure quoted - £23,000. Altogether the closure of the West Clare is unexpected as CIÉ has, since 1952, invested quite an amount of capital in the line, in new railcars, locomotives and permanent way. When even British Railways in the Vale of Rheidol are proving the worth of a narrow gauge line on summer excursion traffic alone, it is regrettable that CIÉ is not prepared to continue operation of a line with a far greater traffic potential.