

THE

IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS

Volume 9

January 1963

No.1

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EDITORIAL

Since our last issue, the axe has fallen on five further branch and secondary lines of the CIÉ system; two others follow at the end of January while, at the same time, two more systems lose their regular passenger traffic. The first of the station closures under the 1958 Transport Act took place concurrently with the lines just closed and it is certain that more will follow in course. It is a rather depressing picture.

Against this is the somewhat heartening sign that the considered closure of 23 lines, on which we commented in our July 1962 issue, is being "tempered with mercy" or, perhaps more accurately, that the figures on which CIÉ forms its closure decisions are being looked at in the right perspective. Far from the complete closure of the Youghal and North Kerry lines which was expected in many quarters, CIÉ has heard deputations and protests from the affected areas and it is to be hoped that action on the marginal cases among the 23 threatened lines will follow a similar pattern before large tracts of our railway network are sacrificed in the cause of solvency.

It is becoming increasingly clear that as the deadline of March 31 next approaches CIÉ will not be wholly able to balance its books due, in the most part, to industrial disputes and wage increases. It must be realised that Dr Andrews' attempt to break even in the stipulated time had initially to be based on the conditions then - in 1958 - ruling, but while a "blanket subsidy" would likely destroy the competitive circumstances under which CIÉ has to operate, there is a good case for the subsidisation of specific services mentioned by Dr Andrews in comment on the last Annual Report. Otherwise the alternative - increased fares and rates - will soon effectively reduce the traffic to nullify any likely increase in receipts.

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The Committee of "The Irish Railfans' News" offers its best wishes for the New Year to all readers. As always, thanks are due to those who submitted notes and information for the last four issues; we would particularly like to stress that the continuance of our news service at its present standard depends on your co-operation.

SOME ARTICLES OF IRISH RAILWAY INTEREST**Railway Magazine**

December Closures On CIÉ (Paragraph)
 Coaches For Ireland (Paragraph)

January Irish Railway Loco Notes

Modern Railways

October et seq The Irish Scene

Railway World

December Longford-Sligo Centenary (Paragraph)

BOOK REVIEWS

Dr E.M. Patterson can claim the distinction of producing the largest volume of Irish railway writing in any one year with his two books:

“The County Donegal Railways”, David & Charles, 30/-

“The Great Northern Railway of Ireland”, Oakwood Press, 36/-

These add considerably to the store of Irish railway material and the former is an enjoyable 134 page account of one of Ireland’s most enterprising narrow gauge systems. There are a colour plate and 37 illustrations, rather a large proportion of them of recent vintage but none the less characteristic of the line. There are several reproductions of posters and handbills and nine maps or layouts but it is a pity in the case of the last mentioned that the diagrams are undated. A minor error has robbed Glenties of loco run-round facilities at the platform, but the same can not be said of the Strabane diagram which lacks several lines and shows some connections incorrectly. In Appendix 1 it is implied that Friary Halt was provided at the opening of the Ballyshannon branch. Notwithstanding these and other minor faults, the book does capture the spirit of the CDR, makes excellent reading and has provided a considerable amount of information hitherto unknown or unpublished about a strongly independent and highly enterprising railway.

It is with regret that we can not speak as well of the GNR book. Here, undoubtedly, is a good 155 page account of the line, detailing its history, operation and engineering with 46 illustrations, most of them well chosen and well printed. The whole, however, gives an impression of haste, there are a number of minor errors here and there and one feels that Dundalk Works, for instance, gets very scant treatment. But it is in the sphere of diagrams and appendices that this book really seems to fall short of the mark. Again no dates are given in most cases; at Omagh, the Market Branch and the goods yard are confused, Banbridge lacks loco shed, signal cabins are shown on some diagrams and not, or incompletely, (e.g. Newry) on others. The inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the station list are far too numerous to mention, but the implication that the Scarva-Banbridge line is still open and that the Oldcastle line, although never opened, still has a full service, serve as illustrations. Praise is, undoubtedly, due to Dr Patterson for the research he has put into the text but we, at least, would gladly have waited another six months for the tying up of those “loose ends” which is so conspicuously absent.

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In this issue we are indebted to Mr P.J. Flanagan for the Feature and to Mr D. Mansfield for “Station Survey”.

News Section

CIÉ GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Modernisation

The CIÉ modernisation programme has been directed principally towards goods facilities in recent months and to Dublin (North Wall) in particular. It is intended to co-ordinate the handling points north of the River Liffey at the “Point Store” - the former GS&WR depot - and in the “Midland Yard” of the

former MGWR. Sheriff Street, the ex GNR goods depot, will be closed and the first step in this direction was the transfer on and from January 1 of all GN section traffic of "Sundry" grade to the "Point Store". For the time being, up to about next April, wagon load traffic will continue to be handled by Sheriff Street but it will, in turn, be transferred to the new five-road yard under construction in the "Pole Field" adjacent to the East Wall Road. This latter when complete will provide both normal loading banks, rail level loading lanes and a new 50ft long 50 ton road weighbridge. The whole "Point Store" has been reorganised to receive goods for any destination at the one loading bay. Consignments are then segregated by CIÉ using pallets and fork-lift trucks. Previously traders were required to deliver traffic to each bay according to its destination. The "Point Store" has been extensively altered; the old hydraulic capstans have been replaced by electrically powered ones and automatic lifts to the storage space in the upper floor have been installed. Work has commenced on the modernisation of the "Midland Yard" store and is expected to take some nine months. Other goods installations in the country are also being modernised in similar but less elaborate fashion. At Sligo the new store was opened in December while at Ballina a new siding is being provided to cope with the heavy traffic. These improvements are all designed to extend the palletisation scheme and to make possible the increasing use of containers.

Ticket Machines

Following the introduction of the new Alex ticket machine in Donabate station on the Dublin-Dundalk section, as described in our last issue, CIÉ extended its experiment by installing another similar machine at Harmonstown Halt on the same line in mid-October. A further interesting development is the announcement by CIÉ of its intention to install an enlarged machine at Dublin Kingsbridge to handle, as from January 14, the issue of all tickets from that station to destinations throughout the system.

New GM Locos

The first consignment of new 950 hp diesel-electric locomotives for CIÉ from the General Motors Corporation was landed at Dublin North Wall on November 22 and in the ensuing two weeks the total order of 37 had arrived. Although mechanically similar to the previous 15 GM locos (B121-135) the new locos differ in having a cab at each end, are fitted for multiple unit working and have two brake blocks on each wheel enabling them to work on unfitted goods trains. These locos, painted in the new CIÉ livery, are 43'6" long, weigh 67 tons and are numbered B141-177. Trial and driver training runs commenced on November 24 from Inchicore to Hazelhatch, Kildare and Monasterevan and on December 4 to Drogheda and Arklow. On December 10 some of the new locos commenced working on the 11:00 Dublin-Belfast and 16:45 return working; 06:30 Dublin-Cork; 10:40 Dublin-Cork (2 units); 14:25 Dublin-Cork; 20:10 Dublin-Cork night mail (2 units); 21:45 Dublin-Limerick goods; 08:15 Limerick-Dublin and 15:30 Cork-Dublin (2 units). Since then their workings were further extended on the Southern and Northern sections on both passenger and goods trains. Except for one unit based in Claremorris for crew training, the new locos have not so far been used on Midland or South-Eastern sections.

Loco Notes

Loco 801 is presently being cut up at Inchicore as predicted in our last issue. Loco 800, however, remains intact. The list of locomotives scrapped in Mullingar since such work commenced there is: 592, 191, 229, 192, 119, 102, 149, 138, 168 and 607 (all 0-6-0) and 388 (2-6-0). Loco 42 (2-4-2T) has replaced 4-4-0 No.301 as Inchicore steam heating boiler. Since mid-October both the first series of 19 (E401-419) and the new series of 14 (E421-434) Maybach "E" class locomotives are, following the Newbridge derailment of 7th September 1962, restricted to shunting and short trip transfers. It is also understood that a speed limit of 25 mph is imposed on these engines.

Train Alterations

On and from January 1, the 18:15 Westland Row - Sligo train was altered to leave at 18:20 and runs correspondingly later throughout. Its route via Newcomen Junction remains unaltered. In consequence of its later running the 15:45 ex Galway, 19:30 ex Sligo and several goods trains are altered to make crossings.

Signalling Developments

The new colour light signalling at Dundalk South, referred to in our last issue, came into operation on December 16 and the South Cabin was closed. The South cabin's crossover from the up to the down line has been removed, thus necessitating the use of the up main line for all movements between the station and Barrack Street and the loco yard. The up line between the Central cabin and the up advance starter has been continuously track-circuited to protect such movements. The new signals replace all semaphore signals between the South and Central cabins. On the main line, the new signals consist of a two-aspect down distant, a three-aspect down home, a three-aspect down inner home, a three-aspect up starter, a two-aspect up advance starter and a number of discs. All the signals on the Barrack Street line are two-aspect. The crossover from the up main line to the loco yard and Barrack Street is electrically controlled from the Central cabin. All points in the loco yard formerly worked from the South cabin have been converted to hand operation. The down inner home has been fitted with a route indicator displaying the letter "L" when the road is made through No.31 loop - the down line through the station used by non-stop trains and trains not requiring the use of the down platform. The crossover at Killester has been fitted with a ground frame and it is expected that the cabin will shortly be demolished. Block instruments will be placed in the station building at Killester in case of a failure of the electric signals. The cabin has been out of use since the introduction of automatic electric colour light signalling between East Wall and Howth Junction in 1959.

Cork City Railway

The siding off the Cork City railway on to Anderson's Quay saw a spate of traffic in mid-December. For a period 6 grain wagons destined for Dublin North Wall were despatched almost every day and were worked on the South siding, moribund for some years, by a CIÉ road lorry to Clontarf Street where a C class loco was attached to haul them to Albert Quay. Locomotives have not worked on the siding for many years.

Sale By Tender

On December 18, CIÉ invited tenders for the purchase and removal of permanent way materials on unspecified closed railway lines on the Board's system. This is a departure from the normal procedure whereby CIÉ lift closed lines.

Beet Campaign

The Sugar Beet Campaign of 1962 will likely be the last in which steam will play a major part. The campaign commenced in Mallow Factory at the end of September while Carlow, Thurles and Tuam Factories opened early in October. The Carlow programme was entirely worked by steam and gave rise to several interesting workings as ex GNR 0-6-0 locos 179 and 181, or on occasions 161, operated opposite each other on the Kildare-Carlow special. This train worked the Ballylinan branch which had a quota of 6 wagons twice a week on Tuesdays and Fridays. The loco shed at Muine Bheag springs to life during this season and three locos shedded there nightly, one GNR (179 or 181) and CIÉ 151 and 198 or 172 all of which are 0-6-0. The two last-mentioned worked the Carlow - Palace East special and the Carlow - Wexford special after its curtailment to Macmine and before its cancellation in the second week of December. The workings to Thurles factory also commanded several steam locos and for the greater part of the campaign locos 461 (2-6-0) and 249 (0-6-0) or 253 (0-6-0) shared the 12:25 Thurles

- Waterford and 21:15 Waterford - Thurles link. Full support was given by 0-6-0 J15s Nos. 116, 118, 124, 125, 186, and 195 and we understand that 2-6-0 No.462 has also been in use on several occasions. For the duration, the goods trains on the Wexford - Macmine line were steam in each direction as also was the Waterford - New Ross beet special. The B class diesel released by this manoeuvre was utilised on the 17:55 Waterford - Thurles special, returning at 01:00. Diesel locos were, however, mainly concentrated on the Waterford - Rosslare line where they could be used in between their normal workings. The programme was considerably reduced in rail operation due to the closure of the West Cork section, but in East Cork the Youghal and Mallow - Dungarvan lines produced heavy loadings. Among the steam locos in use were 0-6-0s 250, 262, 105 and 133. The Tuam area was, for the greater part, worked by diesel locos this season and in fact only the Craughwell special was regularly steam. Locos 588, 603 and 719 were in evidence.

Weekend Excursions

Special cheap fares have been offered by CIÉ on two weekends since our last issue. On November 9-12 Sunday return trains were not provided but on the next weekend, November 30 - December 3, similar specials operated to those in October. From appearances the second occasion was much more successful than the first.

Rolling Stock Developments

The seven new 64-seat second class coaches under construction by CIÉ at Inchicore Works appeared in traffic during December. They are numbered 1497-1503 and they closely resemble the preceding series of 64-seat seconds, being tabled with centre corridor and two toilets both at the one end. They differ in the contour of the sides to accommodate the interior panelling. Twelve-wheel dining car 353, built in 1906, has been completely overhauled, the kitchen renovated and the exterior painted in the new standard livery. The 57 year old vehicle looks extremely well in the new guise and was in use on relief Dublin-Cork trains over the Christmas period. It has, however, now returned to its former regular link on the Cork-Rosslare expresses. The first of the ex GNR K15 open seconds - C140N - to be overhauled and painted in the new livery of black and brown returned to traffic in time for Christmas and it also presents a pleasing appearance.

Winter Weather

Snow and high seas during the end of December caused disruption to train services in several parts of Ireland. As usual, the former D&SER was hard hit and the line was flooded at Ballygannon, between Greystones and Kilcoole. It is reported that on December 31 a connecting bus off the 07:25 Dublin-Wexford stuck in the snow at Glenealy and the 09:20 up train, which was marooned at Wicklow, was turned to provide the down service. On January 1 the 07:25 was unable to pass Bray due to a slip of earth on the Bray Head sector. Buses bridged the gap to Wicklow. The mishap successfully halted rail traffic up to January 4 although the previous day a down special goods was allowed through with supplies for the relief of villages cut off by the snow in the Rathdrum area. The Macmine Junction - Waterford line was blocked by snowdrifts at Rathgarogue and services were suspended for 4 days, while a similar fate befell the Palace East - Muine Bheag line. Road conditions were so bad that for at least 3 days after the closure the replacement service for the Port Laoise - Kilkenny line failed to operate - a sharp indication to the locality of the value of the service of which they had just been deprived.

Closures

The first stage of the CIÉ rail closure programme, detailed in our July issue, was implemented at the end of 1962 when 75¾ miles of line were closed to all traffic. The five lines involved were: Roscrea - Birr (11 miles), Port Laoise - Kilkenny (28½ miles), Clara (Clara and Banagher Junction) - Banagher (17½ miles), Castlecomer Junction - Castlecomer - Deerpark (11¼ miles) and Port Laoise -

Mountmellick (7½ miles). Of these the first two carried passenger and goods traffic while the remaining three had regular goods, goods “when required” and seasonal beet trains and excursions respectively. Details of the closures are given hereunder:

Roscrea - Birr: Even in the last day of its life the Birr branch handled a considerable traffic. C231 brought 5 wagons in on the morning train and on the last up passenger service at 15:45 had 13 wagons and a van in addition to compo 2106 and LV, and left 6 minutes late. A fair complement of passengers, many of them making the sentimental journey to Roscrea and back, were in evidence on this train. The loco also worked the 19:45 from Roscrea to Birr, the last train in, which was greeted with detonators on arrival. Clearance of the yard was effected by C231 with the 22:30 beet special to Thurles factory.

Port Laoise - Kilkenny: Weather and fallen telegraph lines delayed the 16:00 ex Waterford on December 31 and A45 with 5 bogies, LV and HV was 28 minutes late leaving Kilkenny. The train was well-filled (8 first and 163 second) and most passengers were quite unaware that they were on the last up train, although at Abbeylaxey a large party joined to travel to Port Laoise and back. The last down train, B159, 8 bogies, LV, HV and one wagon, left Port Laoise at 18:44 - 24 minutes late - to a fusillade of detonators. At Abbeylaxey a crowd bade farewell to the line with the aid of a pipe band and crowds also gathered at Attanagh and Ballyragget. At Kilkenny a prolonged stop was made to cross the up 17:00 ex Waterford so that departure for Waterford was 1 hour 39 minutes late.

Clara - Banagher: C212 with 2 wagons and van formed the last train to Banagher, departing from Clara at 12:20, five minutes late. It conveyed sundry traffic for Ferbane, Belmont and Banagher where it arrived at 13:54. Having discharged traffic at the station C212 left for the last time at 15:40, 70 minutes late, conveying 7 wagons and the brake van. At Belmont, 8 wagons were added and Ferbane produced another 5 thus making a train of 20 wagons and van and clearing the line of all stock. Its slow progress in the teeth of a howling blizzard was marked by successions of exploding detonators, while the deathly cold and funereal atmosphere was supplemented by the presence of a permanent way official who, like an undertaker measuring the corpse, busied himself at all stations preparing for the removal of the equipment.

Kilkenny - Castlecomer - Deerpark: Weather reacted even more unfavourably on the closure of the Castlecomer branch, for although scheduled to cease with the other lines mentioned the last train did not, in fact, run until January 1! B101 was the loco which departed from Kilkenny at 14:40 to clear out wagons at Castlecomer and Deerpark, reached at 16:10. The train returned 30 minutes later and at 17:45 the points at Castlecomer Junction were locked for the last time in regular service. It is expected that the line will be lifted from Deerpark to Kilkenny and another gang will lift from the Junction northwards to Port Laoise.

Port Laoise - Mountmellick: The last train to Mountmellick - the evening beet special of December 31 - just managed to clear the branch in 1962. At 22:30 the normal A class loco left Port Laoise and having cleared the yard at Mountmellick departed on its last journey at 23:30 arriving at Conniberry Junction at 23:54.

Forthcoming Closures

On November 30 CIÉ announced its decisions concerning the future of five further branch and secondary lines. All train services will be terminated on February 2 on the Kilfree Junction - Ballaghaderreen (9½ miles) and Banteer - Newmarket (8¾ miles) branches, while passenger services on the Limerick - Tralee route (70½ miles), the Ballingrane - Foynes (9½ miles) and Cobh Junction - Youghal (21 miles) branches will be discontinued after the same date. These decisions reveal some noteworthy departures from the policy hitherto adopted by CIÉ in relation to branch line closures and accordingly merit some comment:

Youghal: An examination of the factors contributing to the loss of £24,513 annually incurred on the

Cobh Junction - Youghal branch indicated that the cost of providing alternative road services for peak traffic handled on this line would be greater than the cost of continuing the rail services. Accordingly CIÉ has been compelled to retain the branch for freight and summer Sunday excursions, notwithstanding the continuing losses entailed in these operations. Thus the Youghal branch has become the first CIÉ condemned branch to have survived complete closure since 1947. Normal weekday passenger services on the line will, however, be replaced by alternative road services on and from February 4 next.

North Kerry And Foynes: Early in November last CIÉ stated that a total annual loss of £31,320 was being incurred in the operation of these lines and that closure was accordingly being contemplated. Following discussions, however, between representatives of CIÉ and the Kerry public authorities it is understood that agreement was reached whereby the local authorities of the areas through which the lines pass would in future absolve CIÉ from certain annual charges on its property along the lines. Since this arrangement would, in effect, substantially reduce the annual loss, CIÉ agreed to retain the lines for freight and excursion traffic. Therefore, only the normal weekday passenger services are being replaced by bus workings on and from February 4 next. Consequent on the withdrawal of rail passenger services, CIÉ has also announced that it will close, as from the same date, the stations of Kilgobbin, Ardagh, Barnagh, Devon Road and Kilmorna which handle very little freight.

Ballaghaderreen: Although both freight and passenger services are being terminated on this branch on February 2 next, no alternative road passenger services are being provided by CIÉ. This will become the first instance in the history of CIÉ where an entire branch line rail service is not being replaced by any alternative CIÉ bus route. Private enterprise has been invited to provide an alternative bus service in the area served by the railway. Substitute road freight services will be run by CIÉ between Boyle (on the Mullingar-Sligo line) and Ballaghaderreen since it has been announced that Kilfree Junction station will be closed to all traffic once the branch service to Ballaghaderreen has been withdrawn.

Newmarket: This branch, originally closed to traffic (except a monthly livestock special from fairs) in January 1947 was opened experimentally on 1st June 1958 to handle freight traffic only. A daily goods train was provided from Banteer to Newmarket and, later, from Mallow to Newmarket. A G class DH 130 hp loco inaugurated and normally operated the service. The latest decision of CIÉ to cease operation after the last train of February 2 marks the end of a courageous experiment to revive freight traffic on a branch which was closed for over 10 years.

Lifting

The present position on the abandoned CIÉ lines is as follows:

West Cork: The Bantry line is now completely removed to Drimoleague and work has ceased, awaiting the "branch connection" - the lifting train working north of Madore on the Skibbereen and Baltimore branch. The Courtmacsherry line is now lifted to Ballinascarthy and work has recommenced on the Shannonvale - Ballinascarthy sector and is over ¾ miles north of Shannonvale Junction.

Abandoned!

On November 30, CIÉ gave notice of its intention to abandon the section of railway from Kinsale Junction (Crossbarry) to Kinsale on which the last trains ran on August 31, 1931 - 31 years ago. At the same time the announcement of the abandonment of the ½ mile line from Macroom Junction (Ballyphehane) to Cork (Capwell) was given. This was closed by the GSR but remained in use for oil tank wagons to the bus garage up to 1946. Track on both sections has been lifted long since.

Stations Closed

The 18:00 Dublin-Waterford on December 31 performed the "last rites" at eight stations which were closed with effect from January 1. They are: Kildangan, Mageney, Milford, Gowran, Bennett's Bridge,

Ballyhale, Mullinavat and Kilmacow. In addition the signal cabins at the above stations were closed, except Mullinavat which is being retained and Kildangan which is not a block post and has no cabin. To cater for the new fast service to and from Waterford work is in progress on resignalling the remaining stations for two way working, with one fast, through line and a loop for stopping trains. At the closed stations pointwork will be spiked preparatory to removal of the unwanted loops and sidings.

Waterford Express

As a result of the Port Laoise - Kilkenny closure the Dublin - Waterford service from January 1 has been completely recast and consequential main line alterations made. A new express service worked by a diesel railcar set now leaves Waterford at 08:45 and, calling only at Kilkenny, reaches Kingsbridge in 2 hours 25 minutes - the fastest timing ever for the 110¼ miles; 25 minutes faster than the former 09:35 which ran via Port Laoise but made 8 stops en route. The new express returns at 18:00 in a similar schedule. Including the express, Waterford now enjoys only 3 through services each way against its former 4, as only one down morning train runs (at 09:15). This performs the journey in 2¾ hours with calls at all remaining stations on the branch - Kildare, Athy, Carlow, Muine Bheag, Kilkenny and Thomastown. This leaves only one up evening service and this departs at 16:15 and, with the same stops, reaches Kingsbridge in 2 hours 50 minutes. The third train, based on Waterford, leaves at 07:45 and returns from Kingsbridge at 18:15, following the express and making all the stops. This train, allowed 46 minutes for the 30 miles to Kildare and 7 minutes for the Kilkenny reversal, contrasts the 39 minutes and 4 minutes allowed the express for the same functions. Connections suffer somewhat from these alterations. No longer is it possible to travel from the Dungarvan line to Dublin by the 17:00 ex Waterford and the alternative route via Mallow is in many cases more expensive. Similarly the connection to Carrick on Suir is broken in the down direction due to the cancellation of the 17:00 from Kingsbridge. Passengers still have a connection via Clonmel and possibly this presages a future for the Thurles - Clonmel branch! If not, Carrick on Suir will lose the facilities so recently gained. On the main line, to replace the former Dublin - Port Laoise - Waterford trains, Kildare and Portarlinton stops have been added to the 10:05 Dublin - Limerick and a Portarlinton call to the 15:20 ex Limerick. The Athlone branch train which formerly connected with Waterford workings at Portarlinton now connects into and out of the morning Limerick train but in the evening it is extended to Kildare to connect into the up 18:15 and out of the down 18:15 Waterford sets. From January 1 also an additional stop at Newbridge has been imposed on the down 17:40 train from Dublin to Limerick.

Derailment At Rush

The 14:15 Belfast - Dublin on Saturday January 5 was derailed at speed in Rush station, amazingly without causing more than minor injuries to a few of the 200 passengers. The train, headed by a new General Motors B class locomotive, was made up of HV 3133 and six UTA (ex GNR) coaches N406, N328, N372, N404, N196 and van N612. Due, apparently, to the fracture of a tyre on N372 the last four coaches of the train left the track at the North crossover in Rush and, miraculously without completely overturning, came to rest at varying angles buried deeply in the ballast at the Dublin end of the station. The train severed between N328 and N372 and the front portion continued for ¼ mile beyond the station. N328, having shed her rear bogie, performed this section of the journey with solebar riding on the rail and came to rest rubbing the abutment of overbridge 38. The loco, HV and N406 did not derail. Both lines were blocked; the up line through the station being devastated but, strangely, the portion over which N328 rode roughshod was hardly damaged. The accident occurred at the foot of the 2 mile Rush bank where normally 60-70 mph is attained and the lack of fatalities is all the more amazing when one realises that the derailed coaches struck the up platform and careered almost the length of the station on the permanent way. The breakdown train was on the scene some three hours after and with the aid of the 35 ton Inchicore steam crane set about clearing the wreckage. By Sunday morning the coaches had been freed sufficiently to enable N372 to be lifted clear and work

continued throughout the day to remove the carriages fouling the down line. For this purpose, the Dundalk steam crane was additionally used and single line traffic was resumed over the down line at about 01:00 on January 7 - a commendable piece of work on the part of the breakdown crew. Considerable disruption to traffic was caused by the derailment. The following 16:40 terminated at Skerries and passengers were brought to Dublin by bus while the up 16:45 "Enterprise" from Belfast was halted at Drogheda. Passengers for the down 17:30 "Enterprise" were, after a delay of over two hours, taken to Drogheda where the up "Enterprise" set was used to take them to Belfast. Similar lengthy delays were suffered by passengers for the 17:35 and 18:30 departures from Dublin. Later in the evening buses were being operated in lieu of trains either to Drogheda or north from Donabate.

Extra Goods

Traffic on the Limerick - Ennis - Athenry line expanded so considerably during the summer of 1962 that a special train at 06:45 from Limerick to Ennis, or often Athenry, was running so frequently as to have become almost a regular working. On 12th November 1962 CIÉ therefore altered the schedule of goods trains to provide a daily relief to the former 08:50 Limerick - Claremorris. Goods trains now leave Limerick at 03:40 to Sligo, 08:30 to Athenry and 11:00 to Claremorris. The DE loco of the 08:30 returns light to Limerick; previously the 06:45 special had frequently been worked by a Limerick steam loco. The increase in traffic is attributable to the package deal arrangements and to heavy loadings of cement and fertiliser. The latter traffics have indeed frequently necessitated the operation of a special 15:00 goods. from Limerick to Rath Luirc via the Croom line. When this runs the loco returns light via Limerick Junction and is usually a B class diesel.

Second Class Suburban

On December 13, 1962 CIÉ formally announced that on and from January 1, first class accommodation would be withdrawn from the Dublin - Bray - Greystones suburban services. It was stated that first class travel accounted for only 8% of the traffic on the line. On December 27, one train set was noted without first class accommodation and naturally protests were aroused which, none the less, did not cause its reinstatement before the correct date of withdrawal. A further complexity is the through working of some Bray line sets on to the GN section and here, too, CIÉ has caused resentment among the travelling public as first class is not being withdrawn from Northern trains.

UTA GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Donegall Quay Closure

Due to delays with the new road bridge over the Lagan, the Belfast Harbour line is not now expected to close before 1st July 1963. As a result of an increase in shipping traffic as many as 100 wagons per day are currently being dealt with on this line.

Rolling Stock Developments

Coach N479 has been converted to an engineer's van and renumbered 8198 that department's number series. Kitchen car N166 and Restaurant car N164 are being currently overhauled at Duncrue Street works.

Railcar Developments

The practice of using single unit ME railcars on the Bangor line has ceased and for a time they were replaced by sets consisting of two units and two trailers. However, following a passenger survey made last October, these sets were reduced to 2 units and 1 trailer. The current Bangor line service is being worked by one 6-car set (4 units and 2 trailers), four 3-car sets (2 units and 1 trailer), sometimes supplemented by two driving trailers or an extra railcar. During October the ME diesels were fitted with bulkhead doors to minimise heat losses when the air operated doors were opened. The new spring-

shut doors open into the passenger compartments and consequently the seating capacity of the coaches has been reduced by 4. On October 23, Railcar 101 (ex GNR "A") was badly damaged at Derry (Foyle Road) in a collision with 0-6-0 No.33. Due to the serious nature of the damage inflicted it is unlikely that it will be returned to traffic. It has been replaced on the Derry-Strabane locals by a single unit BUT railcar. Railcar 103 which was out of traffic at Goraghwood as a result of a broken axle was hauled to Newry on November 27 where it is expected that it will be sold for scrap. Railcar G has been renumbered 105 but has not yet gone into traffic due to mechanical trouble, and is still in store at Queen's Quay.

Belfast Central Junction

During December, alterations were made to track and signalling of the Belfast Central line and Junction with a view to an eventual singling between Central Junction and Maysfields and the closure of Central Junction and Adelaide cabins. The down road to Maysfields has been slewed into the up road so that only a single line joins the main line. Eventually the down line will become a siding and the newly relaid up line will be the single line. It is now possible for a goods train approaching Belfast on the third line to proceed direct to Maysfields without, as heretofore, setting back on to the main line at Central Junction. The Central Junction up and down main line distants have been fixed so that the cabin can be switched out as required. Adelaide up distant is fixed also. It is expected that the provision of fixed distants on the main line will be a purely temporary measure to be in operation only until electric points have been installed at Central Junction and Adelaide which will be remotely controlled from Belfast North Cabin. In preparation for this the main line between Belfast and Lisburn is being continuously track circuited.

Locomotive Developments

Locomotives which have been overhauled at Duncrue Street Works since our last issue include Nos. 7 and 9 (both 2-6-4Ts), 34 (0-6-0) and 67 (4-4-0). Locomotives which have gone in for repairs include Nos. 35 (0-6-0) and 50 (2-6-4T). No.91 (2-6-0) is still being repaired. No.35 became the first ex GNR locomotive to be overhauled by the UTA when it was turned out in February 1960 and now becomes the first such loco to go through the works for a second time. No.50 is being fitted with an ex Mogul boiler and firebox which have been overhauled and repaired at Derby. 0-6-4T No.27 has been transferred from Adelaide to York Road to take up shunting duties there. Diesel shunters 17 and 28 have been overhauled and the latter was observed on pilot duties at Grosvenor Road goods yard during late December. Loco No.74 (4-4-0) "Dunluce Castle" has been restored to her former LMS (NCC) "Midland" maroon livery with the letters "N.C.C." on the tender and LMS crests on the cab sides. In addition NCC type maker's plates, tablet exchange apparatus and NCC chimney have been fitted. The locomotive is now awaiting haulage from Duncrue Street to the Belfast Transport Museum.

Great Victoria Street Station

All lines have been track-circuited and an illuminated diagram has been provided in the North Cabin. Following the repainting of the station roof and concourse, fluorescent lighting has been installed throughout and other minor improvements effected. Although a new train arrival board has been erected, the old platform departure indicators are still in use. An old feature of the concourse has been restored to its place - the working model, in a glass case, of a GNR goods locomotive.

LOOSE LINKS

- Since January 1, CIÉ rambler tickets, both rail and rail/road are dearer by 20/- first class and 10/- second class.
- On October 29 the remaining spur of the Kenmare branch at Headford Junction was removed.

- Unusual sight at Kilkenny was B126 nose to nose with B123 on December 26 heading a HV, 4 bogies, HV and LV. B123 was, however, “dead”.
- At New Ross a new covered shed for cattle loading is under construction.
- Permanent way materials off the Carrickfergus Harbour Junction Railway were auctioned on December 6.
- From December 19 for the Christmas period, the lower, rail, deck of the Craigavon Bridge across the River Foyle was open to road traffic - the first occasion this has been done other than for the “Relief of Derry” celebrations.
- For the first time, regularly, since the reconstruction of the Boyne Bridge in 1932, Loco 154N is based in Dublin - where she was working the Athlone goods opposite 613.

JOURNEY JOTTINGS

December 29: Dublin -Thurles - Clonmel - Waterford - Dublin

In the grip of snow and ice Kingsbridge appeared in the early morning to have devised another new livery of white as B125, three seconds, HV and a compo set out on the 07:30 to the South, 5 minutes late. At Inchicore an A class DE with 36 wagons and van was standing on the up road - the Waterford goods. At Hazelhatch an unscheduled stop was made to check the brakes while at Straffan a momentary stop was required as the train “Slows to deliver newspapers”. The fast Cork goods headed by two new GM “B” class diesels in multiple was passed between Hazelhatch and Straffan with some 40-50 wagons. Our arrival at Newbridge coincided with the departure of the up Limerick goods headed by a Sulzer type “B” class loco.

At Kildare we left 7 minutes late while A13, 24 wagons and van was observed shunting on the slow Cork goods. The only passenger from Dublin (other than the writer) detrained here but from Monasterevan to Port Laoise there were 4, although not the same 4, throughout. At the latter point an A class loco with 15 wagons was just arriving from Thurles with the Mountmellick beet special. Mountrath yielded 2½ passengers and B125 made her first prolonged stop (38 minutes) at Ballybrophy 2 minutes ahead of time.

In this period A9 assembled the up “Rambler” goods - 05:30 Limerick Junction to Dublin - and departed at 10:08 just before the down “Sláinte” passed - B134, 8 bogies and 2 vans - in the opposite direction, 10 minutes late. Later still was the up 08:15 Limerick-Dublin (B156, 7 bogies and HV) which left Ballybrophy 36 minutes behind time, ahead of the 07:45 Cork-Dublin - a four-coach railcar.

The 07:30, having waited for 4 passengers off the Limerick, left at 10:27¾ and called at both Lisduff and Templemore. At the former a p.w. barrow was loaded and at the latter one passenger alighted. Thurles was reached 8 minutes behind time.

Railcars 2633/2638 formed the 12:15 Thurles-Clonmel branch train which had 11 passengers on departure. A short signal check at Horse & Jockey Halt warned that the 08:00 Thurles-Clonmel goods train was stowing away in the siding at Laffan’s Bridge. The train ran late to deputise for the 12:25 beet special to Waterford which had been cancelled.

The railcar reached Clonmel 3½ minutes early and the journey to Waterford was continued on the railcar from Limerick - 2616/1365/2609, 1 van and 1 wagon. At Carrick B110, 38 wagons and van was crossed on a Waterford-Thurles beet special. The Waterford was well filled being the connection, albeit with 2 hours 50 minutes delay in Waterford, for the Rosslare boat and many were returning after Christmas.

For similar reasons the 16:00 Waterford-Dublin was well filled with 138 passengers in a 6 bogie and 2

van train headed by B130. Time was kept to Abbeyleix by which the passenger complement had risen to 250, but at Conniberry Junction there was a 27 minute delay waiting arrival and clearance of the Tralee-Dublin special - an A and 6 bogies. This resulted in an arrival at 19:42 in Kingsbridge - 32 minutes late.

On this evening as over the Christmas period the entire Waterford- Kingsbridge train continued specially to Dun Laoghaire Pier in order to afford some measure of relief to the following 15:30 ex Cork.

STATION SURVEY

Port Laoise

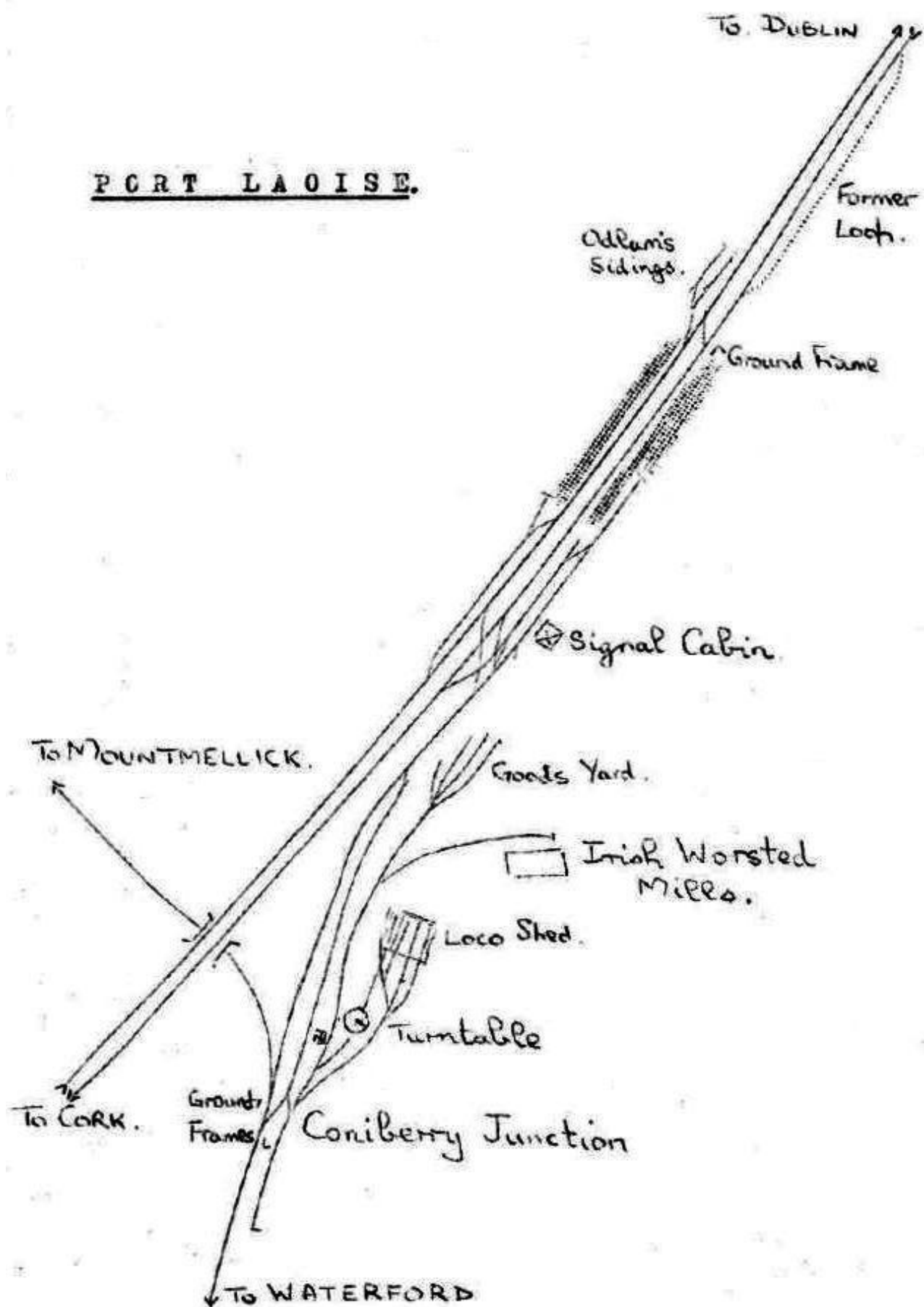
Port Laoise, formerly known as Maryborough, first came upon the railway scene when the GS&WR line thence from Cherryville Junction was opened on June 28, 1847. For this occasion, the Sharp 2-2-2 loco "Grouse" covered the 51 miles from Kingsbridge in 76 minutes. The GS&WR line was continued southwards through Mountrath and was opened to Ballybrophy on September 1, 1847. Now, turning to the Kilkenny line, in 1845 the Waterford & Kilkenny Railway Company began to build southwards from Kilkenny towards Waterford. At Lavistown, 2½ miles south of Kilkenny the W&KR was connected to the GS&WR network at Carlow by the Irish South Eastern Railway on November 14, 1850. A company known as the Kilkenny Junction Railway was formed for the construction of a line from Kilkenny to Mountrath on the GS&WR main line but, on reaching Abbeyleix, it was decided to use Maryborough instead of Mountrath as the northern terminus and Maryborough was duly reached in 1867, the line being opened on May 1. The W&KR and Kilkenny Junction Railway then formed an agreement to construct a line from Maryborough to the GS&WR Portarlinton-Athlone branch at Geashill, and the W&KR thereupon assumed the title "Waterford & Central Ireland Railway". The only portion built, however, was from Maryborough (Conniberry Junction) to Mountmellick, 6½ miles, opened on March 2, 1885.

Port Laoise railway station serves a town of nearly 4,000 people. Passenger facilities were recently much improved when in the summer of 1962, the up and down platforms were raised to standard height, while a new waiting room was built on the up platform. At the north end of the station are two short sidings and a store for the flour millers, W.R. & R. Odlum Ltd, but traffic here is now non-existent. On this side of the station also can be seen the site of the down loop built in 1950 and removed about 5 years ago. The points for this loop were electrically operated from Maryborough South Cabin, the small North Cabin having been dispensed with and replaced by a 3-lever ground frame which works the North crossover and the Odlum sidings.

To the south of the station is the junction for Kilkenny, with the goods store, derelict steam shed and Mountmellick branch at Conniberry Junction. Goods trains can only reach the goods yard by pulling out past the sheds, then shunting into the goods depot which is at a lower level. A spur is provided here for the "Mex" Company. Branching off the goods yard line is a siding which crosses the road to gain access to the Irish Worsted Mills premises. The siding is now rarely used.

The fine 3-road shed, built in 1912, has been closed for about 5 years when steam pilot engines were replaced by a DE loco. Up to late 1960, the Drumm battery trains, Nos. 2404-5 and 2406-7 lay near the shed and were then removed to Sallins. The water tower and turntable are still used occasionally by locos of ballast trains and once a week by ex GNR locos which work stock trial trains. GNR locos 132, 170, 174, 197 and 207 have been regular visitors since 1961.

PORT LAOISE.



Nothing remains but the shell of the 9-lever Conniberry Junction signal cabin, closed on 4th October 1953. A single lever frame is now used to open the South points giving access from the Kilkenny line to the goods yard. A two-lever ground frame operates the points and the signal of the Mountmellick branch. This branch was closed to passenger and goods traffic on January 25, 1947 and is since used only for seasonal beet traffic and a few excursions, although various Railway Society specials have traversed the line in recent years. The track drops under the Dublin-Cork line soon after leaving Conniberry Junction. A crossing loop signalled for passenger trains existed at the junction but was removed with the cabin and the present long goods loop substituted.

Port Laoise Signal Cabin contains 43 levers of which 5 are spare. The down main distant is electrically operated but otherwise there are no electric signals or points since the North loop was removed.

During the summer 9 up and 9 down passenger trains stop. In the current winter timetable there are also 9 down but only 8 up. These include 2 trains each way on the Waterford line which, of course, ceased on January 1. The Waterford based train has been worked by a General Motors B class loco since September 1962 - previously a Sulzer B class was the usual motive power. "A" class locos worked the Dublin-stabled trains to Waterford. At peak periods these have loaded up to 9-12 bogies but the Waterford-based train was then worked by locos of the A class. On all Sundays throughout the year, 2 down and 3 up trains call at Port Laoise - there was no service on the Waterford line. The fastest train to Dublin is the weekday 15:20 ex Limerick, taking 57 minutes.

Feature Section

TIONNSCA ABHAINN EINNE

In times when rail closures are the order of the day, it is a refreshing and very welcome change to report, on a railway system - still only half completed - built to the three foot gauge and which boasts engineering and permanent way features that would put many a standard gauge line to shame. The system in question is operated by Bord na Mona - the Irish Peat Board - on the Oweninny Bog in northwest Mayo. In this region there are three bogs: Glenamoy to the north, which is run as a research station by the Agricultural Institute, and the Oweninny Bog farther south, which is divided into two parts designated Tionnsca Abhainn Einne 1 and 2. It is on the latter two bogs that Bord na Mona are in the course of establishing an extensive railway system.

TAE 1 consists of 16 bog areas - a total of 6,500 acres of which it is hoped to have 4,500 acres in production this year. There will be 23 harvesters employed on the bog during the season from May to the end of August producing milled peat. The complete output is absorbed by the Electricity Supply Board's new power station which went into operation at the end of October and when fully operational will produce 160m units per annum. The production target on the bog is 300,000 tons a year making an average of 1,000 tons a day rising to 1,600 tons a day in the peak period. The scheme was first started in 1952 with the base depot on a site about ½ a mile farther west - nearer the village of Bellacorick and the site of the power station. The original railway system was built using second-hand 30 lb rail in 1953-4 but this was superseded when the building of the present railway with new 35 lb rail commenced in May 1960. The depot now in use was built on a site cleared in 1954 by removing 8' off the surface of the bog at that point. It consists of offices, a hostel, a railway store and workshops as well as fuel installations.

A trip over the railway is full of surprises. The line is unusual among Bord na Mona railways in that the difficult nature of the terrain necessitates cuttings, embankments and bridges both under a road and

over the Oweninny river. The line which is laid with a ruling gradient of 1 in 100, has metal sleepers, an extra sleeper being placed under each rail joint for greater stability in the fashion pioneered by the Tal-y-llyn Railway in Wales. Sand ballast is used extensively on all the main lines. This is conveniently obtained from spoil removed during the excavation of cuttings on the main line. At present there are two such "pits" on the system.

The railway is divided into 3 categories: (1) the main line; (2) other permanently laid lines serving the specific bog areas which are regarded as secondary main lines; (3) temporary sidings which are laid and removed according to the loading requirements. The first-mentioned consists of an inverted "U"-shaped line from the depot to the power station and along a roughly circular loop stretching northwest over the bogs. About a mile from the depot, the loop and power station lines meet - another unusual feature being a triangular junction. Continuing from here to the power station, the Oweninny river bridge is encountered. On this section, the line is double, the right hand road serving as an input and the left hand one as an outlet line. At the river two single line concrete bridges were built on gravel foundations 6' below the surface of the river. These are neatly finished off at the river edge with sandbags. Parallel to these, on a lower level, is a machinery bridge of similar construction. The combination of bridges is most impressive indeed and at once dispels any doubt about the utility of the narrow gauge railway! To complete the picture, there is a fine concrete road bridge over the double line about ¼ mile further on.

The line, which at present is about 17 miles in length - although it is planned to double this eventually - is normally single, but a part of the loop section is double in addition to all the power station line. There is no signalling but the loop will always be worked in an anti-clockwise direction while the power station operation has been mentioned above. At various places on the line there are level crossings for the heavy machinery. At each of these, the track is protected by long wooden longitudinal sleepers placed alongside the rails.

For the operation of the line, 12 locomotives are provided; although it is planned to use 9 in future. Present stock is: 3 25 hp Deutz locos built in 1960, Nos. LM182, LM185, LM196; 7 type 40 DL Ruston & Hornsby locos, Nos. LM130, LM137, LM138 (built 1955); LM96, LM104, LM116 (built 1954) and LM174 (built 1957); 2 type 48 DL Ruston & Hornsby locos, LM18 (built 1946) and another not observed. It is proposed to replace these with 2 48s and seven 80s - a new type of locomotive.

In addition to these, there is a Wickham railcar, with which trouble is experienced due to the wind catching in the roof eaves, and a standard railcar No.C52. The workmen's shift wagon was once familiar to many readers as CIÉ West Clare Section railcar No.3387. The coach part of this has been mounted on Bord na Mona bogies and repainted in the standard brown and cream colours. Yet another CIÉ narrow gauge relic to be found on this amazing system is the body of ex Cavan & Leitrim Section coach 1L which found its way to the power station at Bellacorick also via the West Clare section. This is now without bogies and has been equipped as a short-wave radio control centre for the feeding of the power station from the bog. There are also a number of ex West Clare wagons which serve as shelters in isolated parts of the bog.

Wagon stock consists of 150 Belgian wagons of 13 cu. ft. capacity mounted on two four-wheel bogies. These are equipped with a very ingenious swivel coupling which enables them to be drawn automatically through a tippler at the power station allowing the load to be discharged to the station feed directly without first uncoupling. There are four oil tankers and a total of 35 4-wheel hoppers which came from the original railway and are now worked for permanent way purposes only.

TAE 2 is situated 8 miles west of Bellacorick, near the village of Bangor Erris. Here the total bog area is about 3,500 acres and the produce is sod peat. The output will probably be sold locally although some may be crushed for use at Bellacorick power station. An early proposal of great interest called for an aerial ropeway link with TAE 1, but this idea was later abandoned. It is proposed to lay about 10

miles of railway here eventually, using the 30 lb track from TAE 1, which still exists as long temporary sidings laid on the surface of the bog.

The complete TAE system reflects great credit on Bord na Mona and inspection of the line effectively disproves the idea that railways, especially narrow gauge railways, have outlived their usefulness. In conclusion, acknowledgement is made to Bord na Mona, especially to Mr J.E. Carley, Manager, TAE, for his invaluable assistance.