

THE

IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS

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Managing Committee:

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EDITORIAL

There is no doubt that all, railwaymen and enthusiasts alike, will agree with the Benson Report when, in paragraph 197, it advises the Stormont Government to issue a "clear and definite statement of policy ... as regards the future of the rail organisation". Indeed, had such a statement been made after any of the seven earlier reports since 1922, there would likely have been no need for Mr Benson's inquiry.

The recommendations of the report are detailed in the feature of this issue; the distinctly unusual retention of passenger services and abolition of freight is startling in that it shows the inroads made into the UTA rail-borne goods traffic by road hauliers. In fairness, however, the UTA can only partly be blamed for the decline, which has been caused by their inability to compete financially with private hauliers (para 123) and, in particular, with illegal hauliers (para 203) which latter, if the truth be known, may well be a root cause of railway decline; and not only in Northern Ireland either! One feels on reading the report that both the value of rail freight services to the community (para 126 c,d) and the dangers of additional road haulage (para 126 a,b) have been minimised. One also wonders to what extent goods from, say, Dublin to Donegal - "free to free" traffic, as it is known - has been allowed to influence closure decisions. Further, it appears that the condemnation of freight services is based on steam traction (para 32 c), which is "now inefficient and out of date for the operation of railway traction in an area such as Northern Ireland" (para 31).

In regard to passenger traffic it is a rather harsh generalisation to say that "the standard of comfort of the coaches and of the amenities provided on the trains is not high" (para 17), even if in para 18 the Authority is absolved from responsibility for this being so. The regular stock in daily use is normally clean and comfortable, except for certain local trains and even Mr Benson does not demand more than "austere but clean and not uncomfortable" trains for his new commuter service. One again feels that the report gives scant attention to the disadvantages admitted as inherent (para 110) in the cessation of rail services; the comparison of the fastest rail (1 hour 55 minutes) and limited stop bus (3 hours 12 minutes) between Belfast and Derry by the NCC route will please very few regular travellers between the two principal centres of population in Northern Ireland. Even if the bus speed limit is raised to 40 mph it will hardly, with the present increase in road traffic, yield any worthwhile time saving.

In brief, it is fairly obvious that Mr Benson is locking the proverbial stable door after the horse has bolted! Perhaps paragraph 18 sums up well in saying that the trouble "is largely due to a situation inherited by the Authority from the days when the railways were under private ownership. During the 1930s, increasingly poor results made it impossible for the railways to make adequate provision for renewal or modernisation of their assets". If censure is due it is surely due to the procrastination - the lack of a "definite statement of policy" - on the part of the legislature since the early 1930s. The Report itself is well worth obtaining for its detailed schedule of railway closures since August 1914.

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For the “Journey Jottings” in this issue we are indebted to Mr P.J. Currivan.

With this issue is included an order form for 1964. Readers will greatly assist by returning this promptly with the correct remittance. In particular, please avoid sending your subscription in the Christmas and New Year postal rush.

SOME ARTICLES OF IRISH RAILWAY INTEREST

Railway Magazine

September Benson Plan (Editorial comment)
Irish Railways in 1863

Modern Railways

July et seq The Irish Scene

Railway World

July Knockmore-Banbridge Centenary (Paragraph)
Avoca-Enniscorthy Centenary (Paragraph)

September The Irish Light Railway - An Economic Survey

Modern Tramway

May A New Tram for Dublin - Player's '102'

September Belfast Horse Car 118
Londonderry Harbour Tramways

October Hill Of Howth (Editorial comment)

News Section

CIÉ GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Annual Report

The Accounts and Annual Report of CIÉ for the year ended 31st March 1963 reveal an overall net deficit of £1,760,000 compared with a deficit of £1,696,000 for the previous year. Railway operations, however, show an improvement of £231,000 on last year, the deficit having been reduced to £1,362,000. Rail revenue increased by £360,000 and this increase was only partly offset by additional expenditure of £129,000. The number of passengers carried during the year was 9,833,000, a reduction of 324,000 on the previous year, due mainly - according to the report - to the unfavourable weather during the summer and the indifferent tourist season in 1962. Special mention is made in the Report that the cheap weekend fares introduced regularly once a month last winter, with special return rail services on Sundays, were well supported. It may therefore be expected that this programme of cheap weekend fares will be repeated during the coming winter. The total rail tonnage handled by CIÉ during the year under review amounted to 2,462,000 - an increase of 90,000 or almost 4% on the total for the preceding year. Much of the increase in traffic was attributable to higher tonnages of fertilisers, cement and beet - a remarkable achievement in a year when the Board's railway system decreased in mileage by 201 miles. Livestock numbers, however, fell by 154,000 and, according to the Report, this was caused by “a recession in the trade and the restrictions on movement imposed by the Bovine

Tuberculosis Scheme". This year's Annual Report contains a number of interesting statements concerning the Board's endeavours to operate the national transport system within its statutory limitations. These may be briefly summarised as follows: a) in many instances CIÉ does not find it possible to provide services which are at the same time both reasonable and economic; b) the Board has proceeded on the basis that the provision of services is a predominant consideration in the legislature even though some services may be irremediably uneconomic; c) the Board, in some instances, has decided to retain an uneconomic railway line because to provide equivalent services by road would have been even more costly. The Report also discloses that CIÉ during the year initiated a comprehensive investigation into the economics of its rail and road passenger and freight services. This investigation, known as "Operation Pacemaker", is intended to provide data to assist the Government in formulating its public transport policy for the period beyond 31st March 1964 on which date the existing transport legislation is due to expire. Further interesting items in the Report include a statement that in future "all rail services will be operated exclusively by diesel power except for a short period when supplementary steam power will be used for sugar-beet traffic" and that the number of steam locomotives had been reduced to 47 tender and six tank engines.

Board Reappointed

It was announced during August that the present chairman of CIÉ - Dr C.S. Andrews - and the present Board have now been reappointed.

Thurles-Clonmel

The last regular passenger train ran on September 7 on this branch and comprised A22 hauling railcar set 2627/2638. A coach was attached at Thurles and some 40 passengers travelled but arrival in Clonmel was 30 minutes late.

Winter Timetable

The winter timetable, which is valid from 9th September 1963 to 14th June 1964, is one of retrenchment and many trains have been cancelled or combined. On the main line to Cork the 07:30 down and 12:00 up and the Sunday 11:00 down and 12:15 up stopping trains cease to run as also does the 21:15 up night mail, beyond Mallow. In this last case the coaches, of course, continue to Dublin. The decelerations introduced in the summer timetable continue except in the few remaining stopping trains which are accelerated due to station closures. On Sundays the 10:00 down has three extra stops and 10 extra minutes while one extra stop costs the up 18:30, 5 minutes. The night mails from Limerick to Waterford and vice versa now have no passenger accommodation - regrettable, as they were useful local services, especially ex Waterford - which must have cost but little to provide. The 08:40 Limerick - Limerick Junction is cancelled as is its return working at 09:30, but local intermediate passengers now have a substitute bus (not shown in the Dublin-Limerick summary table). The Limerick-Cork summary table - continued from last summer's timetable - is highly commendable. One withdrawal which did not work was the 18:35 night mail connection Tralee-Mallow as, after it week's suspension, it was reinstated hurriedly. With the closure of Headford Junction journeys to and from Kenmare are lengthened as connection is now made at Killarney instead. On the Thurles-Clonmel line, now closed to passengers, the substitute service, operated by the Shamrock Bus Co, is shown with a CIÉ disclaimer. On the Cork - Cobh line there are 18 trains (against 17 last year) on Mondays to Fridays, but the Saturday service has 3 fewer workings in each direction. The "South-Eastern" is changed only by the cancellation of the 09:20 Rosslare Harbour - Wexford and the 21:30 Wexford - Rosslare Harbour. This move enables all the local trains to be operated by the main line sets. The three outstanding cuts in this year's winter timetable are not among those mentioned above. Between Dublin and Waterford, where 12 months ago seven weekday connections were provided, now only three trains run (one via Limerick Junction). This means that the last train from Waterford is the 16:10; without even the 20:20 night mail connection via Limerick Junction. The two trains via Kilkenny call at all the

remaining stations south of Kildare. The second major alteration is the cancellation of evening Dublin suburban trains to Howth and the closure of all stations between Dublin and Malahide exclusive after 19:30. This is in line with the service cuts on the Dublin - Bray suburban line in September 1960, but the busy afternoon Howth service has not been interfered with. Thirdly, on the Midland section, on account of the reduced line capacity, five down trains have now been combined into two. The 08:40 to Galway has a Sligo portion and a Mayo connection, while a new 15:00 departure combines the 14:30 Mayo and 15:35 Galway trains. The chief point of interest is this reversion to a pre-war practice which died out in 1955. The unfortunate effects are the addition of 35 minutes to the recently accelerated morning Westport service and the reduced buffet car facilities - although two cars do run on the 08:40, one to Galway as advertised and one to Sligo. This train now often runs to 13 bogies! And why, why, does page 31 leave the average reader to think that the 15:00 to Galway has no facilities at all when the Westport car is available to Athlone.

Athlone Resignalling

Now entering its final phase is the provision of colour light signalling at Athlone, east of the Shannon, in order to dispense with the 32-lever (4 spares) cabin "Athlone East". At the time of writing the cable laying has been completed, signal posts have been erected but await the fitting of their lamp heads, and the power installations have been sited for working both the points permitting access to the "Southern Yard" and those of the junction between the lines to Mullingar and to Portarlinton. Continuous track circuiting will be arranged to prevent conflicting movements and to protect the Shannon Bridge when opened to shipping. The ETS instruments at present in Athlone East cabin will be moved to the West box. These control the sections to Moate (73 MP box is no longer a section) and Clara (Ballycumber is permanently "switched out", but can if necessary be reopened). In mid-August the east crossover to the former loop at Athlone East Junction was reversed, thus forcing an up train to reverse before starting from the loop. This crossover is worked by a ground frame which is released by Athlone East, but when the new arrangement comes into force it will be released by a key on the staff. A subsidiary ETS instrument will be installed near the entrance to the Southern yard to permit shunting in the yard while the Clara - Athlone section is occupied.

Signalling Alterations

Following the pattern employed on the Midland and Limerick-Sligo lines last June several Southern Area block posts were abolished early in September on the Mallow-Tralee line. The cabins closed were: Lombardstown (9th), Headford Junction (11th), Ballybrack (11th) and Gortatlea (12th) although signals are being retained and as we go to press we learn that the first three are not closing until further notice, but that Gortatlea is. Also closed were Bansha (9th) between Tipperary and Cahir, Horse & Jockey (10th) between Thurles Junction and Laffan's Bridge, and Castleconnell (10th) between Birdhill and Killonan. At the last-mentioned, signals will be altered to protect the level crossing only but at Bansha and Horse & Jockey they will be retained for the beet season. Signals at several former block posts on the other sections have been removed and in instances such as Ferns Lock, Longpavement, Oranmore and Foxford replaced by gate signals only. At Craughwell, however, the existing signals have had "X"s affixed and the cabin will, presumably, open for the beet season. Although the line is still used occasionally for an oil tank wagon to the bus depot, the signals at Liffey Junction to and from the Broadstone line have been removed.

Commons Crossing

On September 2, another installation similar to that at Grange on the Dublin-Cork line was brought into use on the Dublin-Belfast line at Commons crossing, between Castlebellingham and Dundalk at MP 49¾. The apparatus is identical to that at Grange, described in our October 1962 issue. In brief, actuation of a track circuit 1,100 yards from the crossing in each direction causes a warning gong to sound and two red lights to flash. After 7 seconds the two half barriers descend, each blocking the

appropriate side of the road. Provision is made for the warning of a "second train coming" by means of a plaque, illuminated if a train in the other direction strikes its track circuit while another has not cleared the opposing track circuit. The next crossing to be fitted with similar apparatus is to be Dromiskin, some ¼ mile on the Dublin side of Commons. At the same time, CIÉ state that the "more simple type of crossing control", mentioned when the Grange installation was completed last year, will combine warning gongs and flashing lights without barriers. The latter type will be used only where rail traffic is infrequent.

Hurling Final

The All-Ireland Hurling Final in which Waterford and Kilkenny met at Croke Park, Dublin, on September 1 is most notable in connection with one particular CIÉ line - that from Waterford to Macmine. As reported in our April 1963 issue, all regular services ceased on the New Ross - Macmine sector of the line on and from April 1 last. For this match, however, CIÉ took the extraordinary step of scheduling all the Waterford-Dublin specials by this route in view of the near impossibility of operating the volume of traffic via the Kilkenny line with its extended block sections. Accordingly, on Sunday September 1 a procession of six trains, each one hauled by a new series GM loco, used the closed branch line - a happening unprecedented on any line closed completely under the 1958 Transport Act. First movement was B176 and van which left New Ross, having come from Waterford, with a goods brake van at 06:18. This loco was used to take the first special between Macmine and Amiens Street while its loco took the second train and so on. Trains ran at half-hour intervals and all were of eight bogies except the last which had 2 LVs in addition. The first (07:00 from Waterford) managed to gain a few minutes on the timetable, despite the 30 mph speed restriction, and reached Macmine 3 minutes early. It was hauled by B147. The second, likewise 6 minutes early into Macmine, had loco B177. The block sections in use were Waterford - New Ross - Palace East - Macmine and ETS working was in force. B158, with the set which had formed a connection from Durrow to Waterford earlier in the morning, was almost blocked at Palace East, passed at 08:45, 2 minutes early, while the fourth special, hauled by B160, passed New Ross at 08:58. B167 was the next performer and left New Ross northwards at 09:25 having entrained awaiting passengers. The last special, booked to call at New Ross unlike all preceding ones, was double-headed by B148 and B170 and departed from New Ross at 10:00. As proved by the appearance at Macmine, only 11 minutes late, of the 10:45 Westland Row - Rosslare, the specials kept time equally well on the 84½ miles of the South Eastern main line, and many of them arrived in Amiens Street a few minutes early. CIÉ are to be congratulated on the smooth working of these trains. Although during September another opportunity for use of the North Wexford line arose it is notable that it was not seized and the South Wexford line was traversed instead.

Portmarnock Derailment

On July 23 an up crane special was derailed at Portmarnock Halt and caused disruption of services on the Dublin - Belfast line. The train comprised locos B126 and A19, two runners, the crane, loco A9 and a 20 ton van. At 21:45, approaching Portmarnock the crane jib came adrift from its runners, caught the coping stones of the up platform and derailed one runner, itself, A9 and the van, blocking both roads. The Adelaide steam crane set off for the scene at midnight and the Inchicore crane was also in attendance. From 00:30 on July 24 the down line was rendered usable and at 09:30 that morning the crane, re-railed, set out for Malahide. Trouble in getting it there, however, blocked the down line during the morning and it was only with the 08:15 ex Belfast that single line working was instituted from Malahide to Howth Junction at about 12:05. The 11:00 down Enterprise overtook the 09:15 at Howth Junction, and these, the first two down trains since the accident, passed at 12:28 and 12:39 respectively. Work continued until A9 was at length re-railed at 22:30 on July 24 and the line was cleared by 05:00 the next morning. Buses were run to replace local trains late on July 23 and throughout July 24.

Loco Notes

A C class loco deputised for the Deutz on the Loughrea branch during August, but G612 has since returned and with coach 1910 - the Loughrea brake compo with storage heaters - works all branch services. The demolition of Wexford shed took place in late August and early September and at much the same time both the "Kilkenny" and "Limerick" sheds at Waterford were demolished. No steam locos have been in use since our last issue but it is expected that several will appear in October for beet season workings. Loco 800 "Maedbh", still remains outside the diesel shed at Inchicore awaiting her transfer to Belfast.

Rolling Stock Developments

Since our last issue the rebuilding of BUT railcar C908N - the victim of a fire near Finaghy on 28th January 1960 - has begun in Inchicore. Meantime, although both the new Craven coaches and the new all-firsts were observed on trial as long ago as August 23, neither type has been reported in revenue earning service. The new Craven coaches are being numbered in a continuous numerical series following the 7 second class coaches of 1962. They thus commence at 1504.

Siding Near Arklow

The State-sponsored body Nitrigin Éireann Teo is in the course of construction of a factory for the manufacture of nitrogenous fertilisers at Shelton Abbey close to the Woodenbridge-Arklow section of the Dublin-Wexford line. As mentioned in our April issue a siding connection is likely to be built joining the main line at MP 47. A reinforced concrete bridge spanning the Avoca River confirms this, as standard gauge track has been embedded in its concrete deck during construction.

Lifting

The status of lines being lifted is as follows at the time of writing - September 28:

West Cork: Lifting train is presently at work some 1½ miles east of Dunmanway and a train, hauled by a C class loco, runs roughly weekly.

Castlecomer: Work commenced in Deerpark early in July and has now reached Castlecomer station yard. Only a short stub of the line northwards from Castlecomer Junction towards Port Laoise remains.

Ballaghaderreen: Lifting completed in July into Kilfree Junction.

Mountmellick: Lifting completed almost to Coniberry Junction, Port Laoise. The stretch of over 2 miles of the line towards Abbeylisk is being left in situ in anticipation of a future factory development.

Newmarket: Lifting commenced late in June and is now virtually complete.

Palace East - Muine Bheag: This link line was broken near Palace East - at the bridge where the branch diverges from the North Wexford line - in the second week of July and at present the lifting train is just beyond Ballywilliam.

Birr: Lifted to Brosna Siding.

Oldcastle: Work commenced at Oldcastle in July and already three miles of line have been lifted.

Other Lines: No lifting has yet taken place on the Ballylinan, Edenderry, Banagher or North Wexford lines.

Modernisation At North Wall

The second phase of modernisation of the North Wall goods depot came into force on August 6 when the "New Yard", constructed in the "Pole Field" was brought into use for wagon load traffic. The "Point Store" already handles small lots and is completely palletised. From the same date Sheriff Street yard closed completely.

Ardee Branch

Since August 9 the 4¾ mile branch from Dromin Junction to Ardee has been operated on the “single engine in steam” principle and a manual staff has been provided in place of the ETS previously in use. The ETS instruments have been retained and can be reverted to if necessary.

Castleisland Branch

Since September 12 the 4½ mile Gortatlea-Castleisland branch has been operated on the “single engine in steam” principle. As, however, Gortatlea is no longer a block post a subsidiary ETS instrument has had to be installed there, which, on insertion of a Tralee-Farranfore staff, will release the branch manual staff from the instrument. The branch train is then locked in on the branch and the main line ETS section is freed for operation. In our last issue the diagram omitted the completely overgrown loop opposite the passenger platform at Castleisland.

Enthusiast Special

For possibly the first and certainly the last time the 08:55 Kingsbridge-Tralee express stopped at Gortatlea to give a connection to Castleisland on September 7. The party of IRRS members joined the branch special which was of unusual formation - loco G617, two bogies Nos. 1385 and 1310, and LV 2732 - the first enthusiast special to use such lowly motive power. At Castleisland the train shunted to the goods yard to run around, and gave those present a demonstration of the difficulties with such a light loco on curved track. The train left Castleisland at 13:56 and ran through to Fenit non-stop - a train passing through Tralee is an extreme rarity - where the loco proceeded down the pier line and was duly photographed. On the return journey to Tralee a wagon was detached at Fenit - a convenient empty working! Brief stops were made at Kilfenora and Spa, the two intermediate stations, and the party transferred into the 16:50 Tralee - Kingsbridge express on arrival at Tralee. Although the journey home was partly in darkness it completed a most interesting and enjoyable day trip.

UTA GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Winter Timetable

The winter timetable shows very little change from the usual pattern. On the NCC section the 16:35 (SO) Belfast-Dunloy train has been cut back to Cullybackey. The 07:25 Derry-Belfast has had 5 minutes cut from its running time between Ballymena and Belfast to gain an earlier arrival at that point. On the GN section the evening train from Belfast to Dublin retains its summer departure time of 18:20. On the Derry Road, the 14:00 (SO) Belfast - Omagh now gives connection at Omagh into a Derry train instead of a Strabane one only. This connection (16:00 ex Omagh) is steam-hauled.

Signalling Developments

The UTA are in course of installing colour-light signals on the former GNR main line between Belfast and Lisburn. It is intended that this will permit the cabins at Adelaide, Balmoral, Finaghy (already almost out of use) and Lambeg to be dispensed with. It is expected that Dunmurry cabin will be retained to control the level crossing gates. The new signals will be automatic and the line between Belfast (Central Junction) and Lisburn has been track circuited. At the time of writing most of the signal posts have been erected but it is expected that the work will not be completed before the end of the year.

Loco Notes

Loco 2, which emerged from Duncrue Street after repair following the Lisburn crash, remained on the NCC and has not yet returned to the GN section. Locos 33 and 48 (0-6-0) have been overhauled and 170 (4-4-0) has paid a brief visit to the works for firebox repairs. Portadown shed has been fitted with doors on 5 of its 12 roads. This enclosed section is for the use of maintenance crews.

Railcar Notes

The former GNR railcar G, now UTA 105, started work on the Warrenpoint branch on July 13 and has been in constant use since. Although sold in June, railcar 103 is still in Newry as mentioned in our last issue. Railcars 22 and 23 were on the Bangor line during the summer. Railcar 116 has had a much needed complete internal refit and work on the rebuilding of railcar 7, victim of the Lisburn collision, continues. BUT car 129 has been noted working as a single unit on the Belfast-Portadown line.

Siege Of Derry

The annual Apprentice Boys' Demonstration at Derry commemorating the siege of that city some centuries ago was held on August 10 and led to the operation of many special trains, particularly on the GNR line from Portadown and these were all steam-hauled. In striking contrast to the procession of 0-6-0s in 1962, this year was notable for the return to favour of the S and S2 types of 4-4-0 locomotives, made possible by the addition recently of 4 ex CIÉ locos to UTA stock. The first special was from Belfast and consisted of loco 170 (4-4-0) and 8 bogies, followed by 60 (4-4-0) and 8 bogies from Lurgan, 43 (0-6-0) and 8 bogies from Newry, 44 (0-6-0) and 8 bogies from Portadown and 104 (2-6-0) and 5 bogies from Sion Mills. The latter train was propelled from Strabane to Sion Mills due to the lack of run round facilities at that station. 170 (4-4-0) returned from Derry to Belfast on the 10:35 regular passenger, worked back to Derry at 15:00 from Belfast to make the 19:30 special from Derry to Belfast - truly a full day's work. 4-4-0 locos 171 and 174 appeared working the 11:15 from Belfast and the 16:30 from Derry - the regular services.

Bridge 300

Work has continued on the construction of the new bridge at Balmoral. The final girders were put into place on Sunday, September 1. The speed restriction of 5 mph over the bridge has, in the case of the up line, been increased to 20 mph.

Motorway Bridge

Yet another new bridge is being erected on the Belfast-Portadown section of the UTA, this time at mile post 96, near Moira. Designated bridge 265A, it will carry the Lisburn-Dungannon extension of the M1 over the railway line at a point where the latter is in a cutting and will cross the line at such an angle as to constitute a minor tunnel. Excavations at the site have commenced and the erection of the bridge will start shortly.

Adelaide Shed

It is learned that the property at Adelaide loco shed, works and surrounding area has been sold by the UTA to the Ministry of Commerce for development as an industrial area. The area, also known as "Bog Meadows", is to be completely vacated by 1st January 1965.

Walking The Plank!

In this age minor breakdowns seldom attract undue attention, but the events which followed the failure of the 08:20 Bangor - Belfast "Express" on August 26 at Workman's Crossing, near Helen's Bay, are of note. Due to some equipment on one of the railcars becoming detached, the control cables and brake fittings on the following units were damaged, rendering the train inoperable. After a considerable delay, the following 08:25 from Bangor was switched to the down road and brought alongside the disabled train, where it was stopped with the doors opposite to each other. The automatic doors were opened and planks laid down over which the passengers walked and were conveyed to Belfast where they arrived at 10:30, some 109 minutes late. Passengers on following trains were conveyed to Belfast by road. It is understood that the inordinate delay was probably due to an inaccurate location having been given to breakdown fitters who were despatched to the scene by road.

Donegall Quay

During July the track through the Queen's Bridge tunnel was lifted, finally severing the connection with the Belfast Harbour Commissioners' Tramway.

174 On The NCC

An interesting outing was organised by the RBAI Railway Society on September 28 when loco 4 (2-6-4T) with three of the "North Atlantic Express" coaches and van left York Road for Larne. Despite a 4 minute late start a timely arrival was made after a maximum of 73 mph past Mount. On the return journey the train called at all stations to Greenisland where ex GNR 4-4-0 174 was attached and piloted No.4, running bunker foremost, to Kingsbog Junction. Thereafter 174 was on her own to Derry and back. On the outward journey stops were made at Cookstown Junction and Ballymena while at Cullybackey a 3-coach MP diesel with 3 vans was on the 13:05 up. At Macfin the up 15:15 was crossed and at Coleraine railcar 65 was seen working the Portrush branch - its last day of operation for the season. At Limavady Junction the 17:40 was crossed - an 8-piece MPD and van - and arrival at 18:40 in Derry was on time. On the up trip the 17:45 was late and had to be crossed at Bellarena instead of Limavady Junction. None the less, after a water stop in Coleraine, a fast run was made to reach Belfast only 19 minutes late.

BORD NA MONA

Since our last report (January 1961) several innovations have come about at the Bord na Mona Derrygreenagh (3ft gauge) railway system which feeds the ESB power station at Rhode, Co. Offaly, with milled peat. From the West Clare has come one trailer and one railcar body minus power bogie. Both vehicles are in use as 'shift wagons' hauled by a locomotive, for transporting workmen on the bog. They have been mounted on Bord na Mona bogies, have had their seating arrangements altered completely and are now painted with cream upper and chocolate lower panels - a livery akin to the English GWR. Derrygreenagh, the first system to receive the Deutz locomotives, is also one of the first to operate the newest "Wagonmaster" locomotives of which six are so far in service. These 4-wheel locomotives are from the firm of Hunslet and at 80 hp are the most powerful on Bord na Mona. It is understood that the Irish prototype was assembled and tested at Derrygreenagh. An interesting non-railway development is the export of peat by road from Derrygreenagh to Drogheda, thence by boat to London, where it is used in the manufacture of smoke free briquettes combining coke and peat.

LOOSE LINKS

- During July, coaches 1397 and 1399 had advertisements "Next time let CIÉ do the driving" affixed to their roofs and ran in trains passing Woodbrook where a championship golf match was in progress.
- New headboards, designed and made by CIÉ have, since August 19, adorned both the CIÉ and UTA "Enterprise" trains.
- An extension to Roscommon goods store is nearing completion and is to handle sugar traffic.
- Sea defences were renewed near Sletty Viaduct on September 9 and single line working operated between Cobh and Cobh Junction.
- UTA vans N613 and N617 have both been re-bodied at Duncrue Street works.
- The visit of diner N554 to the NCC (see last issue) was as a temporary replacement; she is now back on the GN.
- On August 27 a steam crane was reported unloading containers at Rath Luirc!

JOURNEY JOTTINGS

July 30: Dublin - Athlone & Back

The new summer Galway express left Westland Row fairly full on this Tuesday afternoon but, being the week of Galway Races, greater patronage might have been expected. The train, hauled by B129, ran to 7 bogies (with a buffet car) and 2 HVs, and departed 4 minutes late at 13:39. This was recouped before Kilcock, where a 16 minute stop was required to cross the up Westport, 36 minutes late. Ferns Lock is no longer a block post and Enfield is 7¼ miles away - the crossing should, however, have been made at Maynooth. On account of all this, and a stop to exchange the ETS at 46 Mile Box, Mullingar was passed 18 minutes late. Speed did not quite reach 60 mph past Streamstown, bereft of all its signal arms and its vitrolite nameboard, but even so, time was regained, as B129 stopped in Athlone only 12 minutes behind time, notwithstanding a very cautious approach.

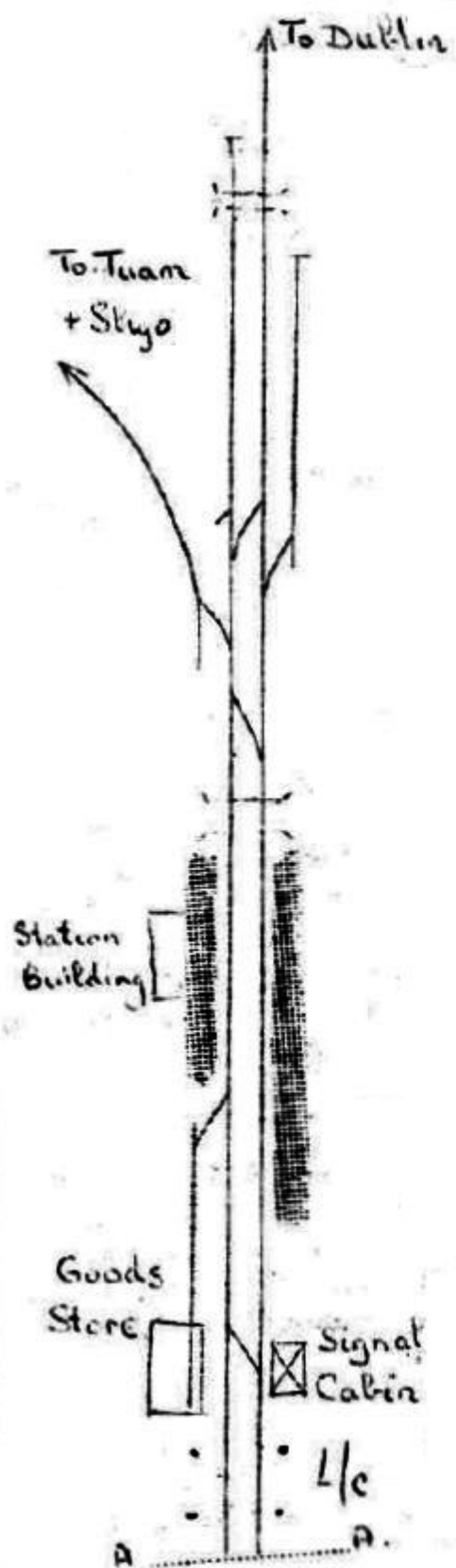
The return journey on the oft-despised night mail was much more punctual, an “on time” start being recorded for B121 with bogie TPO, 4-wheel sorting van, HV, 3 bogies and 3 vans from Athlone. At Moate A60, with the 16:40 Galway-Dublin goods, was overtaken, while a well-filled night mail was crossed headed by B139 with HV, TPO, 3 bogies, LV, 2 bogie vans and 2 wagons. At Mullingar B126 was found waiting to depart with 29 passengers on the Sligo night mail made up of SV, one bogie, HV and 5 P wagons. Timekeeping was unmatchable from Mullingar and arrival was 3 minutes early at 00:27 in Amiens Street.

STATION SURVEY

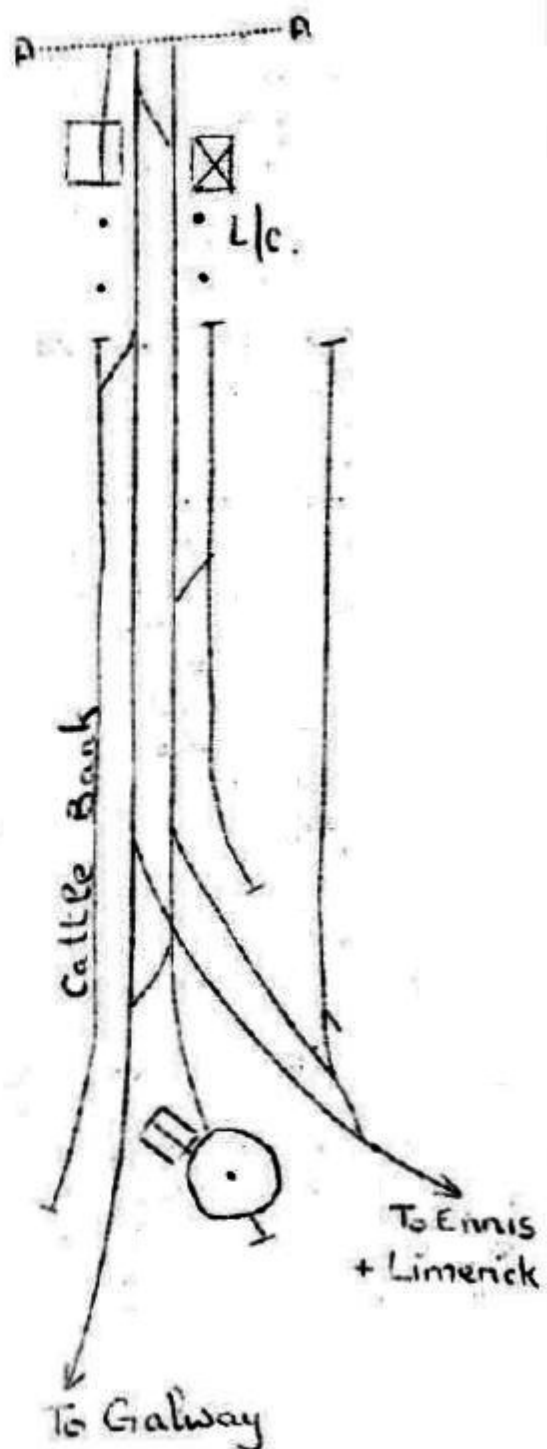
Athenry

The longest mileage of railway in Ireland opened at any one time was that opened on 1st August 1851 by the Midland Great Western Railway and was the 76 mile section of their main line between Mullingar and Galway. Included in this length was the intermediate station of Athenry, just at the 113½ MP from Dublin, Broadstone. Athenry, although only serving a very small town, was destined to become important in the railway system as a “cross-roads” junction. The first limb was the Athenry and Tuam Railway to the north of the MGWR, opened on 27th September 1860. It was followed on 15th September 1869 by the Athenry and Ennis Junction Railway southward to connect with the Limerick and Ennis Railway at the last-mentioned point. The A&EJR was always dominated by the Waterford & Limerick but the A&EJR was worked up to 1870 by the MGWR. Subsequently the two lines and, indeed, the whole line to Collooney became part of the system worked by the WL&WR who had running powers over the MGWR into Sligo and over the 25 chains separating the A&EJR and A&TR metals at Athenry. An interesting survival is the name board on the down platform reading “Athenry & Ennis Junction”, and one must deplore the recent obliteration of the similar “Athenry & Tuam Junction” board on the up side.

As is evident from the diagram, the station is divided by a level crossing into passenger and freight stations although the goods store is in fact in the “passenger” section. The siding at the Dublin end is used to shunt the Ballina-Limerick train to allow it to make connection into and take connection out of the 08:40 Dublin-Galway. The former train, therefore, comes to the platform twice; on arrival, and on departure of the Galway train. The station is signalled for two way working (an innovation brought into use this year) and is controlled by a cabin of 64 levers (no spares). The goods end of the station has a lengthy cattle bank, a relic of the days before the decline of this traffic. In the angle of the diverging lines to the west is a 60ft turntable supplied by Ransomes & Rapier in 1927, which is retained, presumably, for the beet season and occasional use by single ended B class GM locomotives. Several of the disc signals nearby are of GS&WR pattern.



A T H E N R Y



Not to Scale. There is a short overlap at join "A...A"

Train services have shrunk with the discontinuance of the Galway-Tuam and Galway-Limerick passenger workings. Nowadays, there are only 5 passenger trains each way, one on the Tuam - Ennis - Limerick line and four on the main line, including the night mail which has but limited passenger accommodation. Freight traffic on the Limerick-Sligo line is heavy and there are 3 regular (and one "if required") goods trains every weekday from Limerick. In the opposite direction there is one less as the loco of the 10:45 ex Limerick returns light from Athenry at 16:00 to make the 19:30 Limerick-Dublin goods. On the main line there are two goods trains in each direction which principally carry through traffic to Galway.

Feature Section

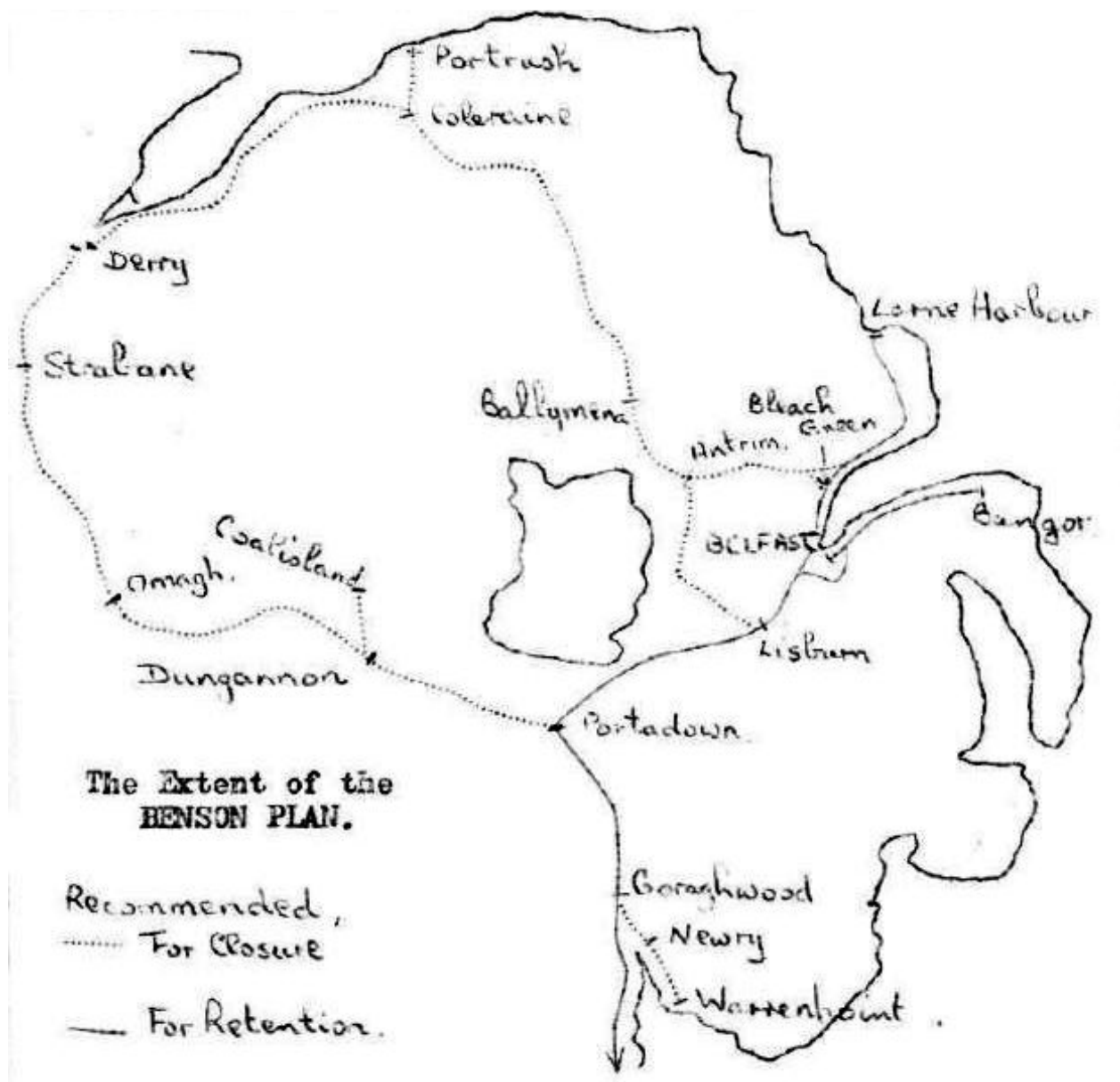
THE BENSON REPORT

The report on railways in Northern Ireland by H. Benson Esq., CBE, FCA, was published in July. Mr Benson was appointed by the Minister of Commerce on 15th February 1962 to investigate the position of the railways, to make recommendations about their future and to report upon the effect which the recommendations would have on the transport system of the Ulster Transport Authority as a whole. Having described the past history of the railways in Northern Ireland and the nature of services provided, the report goes on to give the reasons for the unsatisfactory financial results of the UTA and the future prospects.

The report recommends that as soon as it is practicable to do so the railway system should be reshaped so as to operate fast diesel passenger services only on the commuter lines in and out of Belfast and on the main line between Belfast and Dublin. The Dublin service would operate to the highest standard on the line, whereas the commuter service would provide austere but not uncomfortable travel facilities for passengers between the main population centres in the Belfast area on the following commuter lines: Belfast - Larne Harbour; Belfast - Portadown; Belfast - Bangor. According to the report the whole of the remaining railway system should be closed and freight and merchandise should not be carried on the commuter lines to be retained. Mail and passenger train parcel traffic would, however, be retained. All steam traction would be abolished as soon as it is reasonably practicable. The report recommends that the Derry - Portadown and Dungannon - Coalisland lines be closed by 1st October 1964; all remaining freight services by 1st April 1965; Goraghowood - Warrenpoint by 1st July 1965; Derry - Bleach Green and Coleraine - Portrush by 30th September 1966.

In addition some changes are proposed in the method of operation of the UTA. Any part of the existing organisation which is in any way surplus to requirements should be disposed of. At present the railways have a quantity of surplus land, buildings and rolling stock which should be sold. The new commuter services should be operated on a regular interval basis and the lines should be closed completely between eleven o'clock at night and, say, half-past six in the morning. The stations, including the termini, should be designed for the sole purpose of providing a means for passengers to embark and disembark from the trains. Great Victoria Street station alone would be excluded from this suggestion. The stations at York Road, Great Victoria Street and Queen's Quay are at present too extensive for the amount of traffic using them and they should be reduced to a realistic size. The local service on the Bangor line would be greatly improved if, without prohibitive cost, some trains could be taken over the link line from Queen's Quay to Great Victoria Street so that passengers would disembark at a more central part of the city. The line should in any event be retained to facilitate the servicing of rolling stock of both GN and B&CD sections in one depot.

The section of the former GNR line between Portadown and the Border is of special character and different conditions affect it from those applicable to the commuter lines. It is the only long-haul rail journey emanating from the Northern Ireland system and carries the largest amount of traffic on the GN section after the commuter services between Belfast and Portadown. The report suggests that so long as the line from the border to Dublin is kept open by CIÉ, the line between Portadown and the border should remain open for passenger traffic. With the possible exception of Portadown, trains should run non-stop to the border, thus eliminating the need for intermediate stations. It may be advisable to single the line between Portadown and the border thus reducing maintenance costs. The Belfast-Dublin service should be treated as a prestige service in much the same way as the present "Enterprise" service.



The redeployment of existing diesel rolling stock has been considered by the Authority and it shows that if the closures are carried out there will be sufficient diesel stock available to enable the whole of the new service to be dieselised except for some special trains required for the summer timetable on the Portadown - Border section. To enable this section to be fully dieselised another 7 power cars and 10

intermediate coaches would be required at a cost of £375,000. A further £80,000 would be required to re-site the repair shops now at Adelaide (which is to be sold), and £20,000 to provide a special trailer and loading bays to transport rolling stock to Duncrue Street by road.

Mr Benson states that, if the Authority decides to run a regular service on the Belfast Central line: a) a halt would have to be provided in the neighbourhood of Oxford Street bus station; b) the Lagan viaduct would have to be reconstructed for double line and c) a loop would be required at Belfast Central Junction for direct running into Great Victoria Street station. The cost of these alterations would be £770,000.

If the report is acted on it is anticipated that rail losses would be reduced to a level of £166,000 per annum. The whole transport position treated by the report will be considered by Parliament when it reconvenes in the autumn.

The report is entitled "Northern Ireland Railways" and can be obtained from HMSO, price 8/6^d (8/11^d by post).