

THE

IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS

Volume 12

July 1966

No.3

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EDITORIAL

Motoring from Cahir to Dublin one recent Sunday evening, we were struck by the obviously considerable investment in new improved roads over trunk routes. To Clonmel there is a lengthy "slack" for improvement work which, if it matches the standard north of that town for much of the 46 miles to Port Laoise, will raise average speeds, even in a small car, to around the 50 mph mark. Ironically, the worst hazard in the 46 miles is the bridge where the road crosses the Thurles-Clonmel branch at Horse & Jockey station!

The average speed of our best trains - the Dublin-Cork 3 hour expresses - is some 55 mph; a speed which can be easily surpassed by a motorist in a Mercedes or, indeed, in many lesser cars. The arguments in support of passengers using their own car are its privacy, availability when required and flexibility of route and stopping places. Against this the train can eliminate driving strain, permit movement and the service of meals en route, supply toilet facilities and up to now be considered as a faster means of transport. This last-mentioned asset it now bodes fair to surrender, particularly if the terminal times (house to station and vice versa) are included in the calculation. Since the introduction of the Cork Express workings and their attendant Limerick connections, Irish rail speed has remained static except on those lines on which the closure of stations has accelerated journey times. With the considerable lengths of the Dublin-Cork main line on which 75 mph is now permitted it is surely possible to decrease the journey time, even if only by 15 minutes. Granted this might, with our present motive power, mean limiting train weight unless the new locomotives which are "in the wind" are of sufficient power to handle such expresses. But such a restriction would present a problem only on a few summer weekends and, we feel, could be readily overcome by the division of trains into Cork and Limerick portions or in extreme cases by duplication.

In this context it is encouraging that CIÉ's Mechanical Engineer (Rail), speaking in Drogheda, said "In the coming years the number of private car owners will increase considerably and to entice these people to use our passenger services we must provide faster trains". The railway has, nowadays, no price advantage over a private car with 2/3 passengers. It could, however, keep its superiority in speed with even a minor acceleration and, we believe, this is just possible inside the present speed restrictions and thus without costly upgrading of track standards. The best form of defence is attack; an attack is now almost overdue.

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The Committee of "The Irish Railfans' News" wishes to apologise to readers for the late appearance of this issue. We are grateful to those who have written to us for their kind remarks regarding the value they place on each issue and we would ask them to accept this note in acknowledgement.

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For "Station Survey" in this issue we are indebted to Mr J.R.L. Currie.

SOME ARTICLES OF IRISH RAILWAY INTEREST

Railway Magazine

August RPSI Special at Kingscourt (Photograph)

IRRS Journal

June Diesel Traction in Everyday Operation

Irish Railways in 1864 (1)

The DSER 2-6-0s

The Dublin & Kingstown Railway and its Workers

News Section

CIÉ GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Glenealy Accident

On Tuesday May 24 the 09:00 Westland Row - Rosslare collided with a tractor driven across the line at Ballymerrigan crossing (MP 30, 62 chains) between Rathnew and Glenealy. The tractor driver died a few minutes after the accident which occurred about 10:00. The entire railcar set - C904N, C24N, C712N, C714N and LV 2738 - except the van, left the rails and came to rest in its own length blocking the Wicklow-Rathdrum section. None of the seventeen passengers was hurt.

Breakdown cranes from Grand Canal Street and Inchicore were despatched to the scene and the former arrived at the Wicklow end about 16:30, worked by A42 with breakdown van, and removed 2738 to clear the way for lifting the railcar. Meantime the Inchicore crane had travelled via Waterford and Rosslare Strand to Rathdrum. Thence to Ballymerrigan, A2 propelled vans 448A and 449A, the runner and the crane, jib leading. It left Rathdrum at 21:40, reaching the scene at 23:30.

Clearance work continued to early Wednesday afternoon and emergency arrangements had to be put into operation.

On Tuesday the passengers off the 09:00 were taken onwards by bus. The up 15:05 was made up of A50, 3101, 1376, 1429, 2142 and 2701, which worked back as the south part of the 18:25 down; buses bridged the gap to Wicklow. North of the accident B173 with LV, 3 bogies and HV, left Westland Row empty at 15:29 to work the northern part of the 15:05 up. As this did not reach Amiens Street until 19:00 it was impossible for the same train to form the 18:25 down which was B122 and 6 bogies - the regular train - which returned empty from Wicklow.

On Wednesday morning the 02:25 North Wall - Wexford goods terminated at Wicklow as also did the 09:00 - B148, LV, 3 bogies and LV. About noon A9 with 40 empty wagons and van set out for Shelton and at 13:05 reached Greystones. At 19:00 it was still in two parts in Greystones! The same arrangement as on Tuesday applied for the evening trains: A47 with 3 bogies and HV went down empty, formed the 15:05 as from Wicklow, while the 09:00 set formed the 18:25 down. As the line was clear this train ran through; the set which had formed the southern section of the 15:05 had already returned to Rosslare. At 14:00 the Grand Canal Street crane returned and at 16:33 the Kingsbridge crane stopped in Westland Row en route for home the short way. The railcars were taken to Inchicore for repair and C714N had been returned to traffic by mid July.

Castlemungret Branch

With the commencement of the Silvermines branch, the Castlemungret line becomes Ireland's second newest railway but, far from relegation to inferior status, is still developing. The bulk cement trains mentioned in our last issue are running regularly from Castlemungret to Cabra which, in addition, has two or more specials per day from Drogheda. The combination of the bulk specials, ordinary Limerick (Carey's Road) - Castlemungret bagged cement transfers, the Foynes barytes trains and the regular Limerick-Cork and Limerick-Tralee goods trains, has greatly increased the occupation of the 1¼ miles of line from Foynes Junction, Limerick, to Cement Factory Junction where the Castlemungret branch diverges from the Limerick-Tralee line. In view of the impending increase in traffic when zinc concentrates will be railed from Silvermines to Foynes and when barytes traffic reaches its anticipated 250,000 tons per annum, CIÉ have decided to eliminate Cement Factory Junction and extend the Castlemungret branch into Limerick (Carey's Road) alongside the North Kerry line. The chief motivation is the length - 6¾ miles - of the section Limerick-Patrickswell (16 minutes goods train sectional timing) often causing delay to the cement trains which must wait for a preceding goods to clear Patrickswell before they can leave for the Cement factory. Work commenced on the project in late May and the widening of Rosbrien level crossing was completed by the end of June. The only other level crossing in the section, at Jonesboro, was constructed of double line width because thoughts of an independent connection to Castlemungret have been voiced several times since the branch was opened in 1957. During July work was in progress on clearing and preparation of the roadbed but to date of writing (August 14) no track had been laid.

New Siding At Wicklow

The siding, mentioned in our October issue, will serve a new factory now nearing completion on the "Murrough", Wicklow. The siding, which serves Veha Ltd, manufacturers of central heating equipment, is off the 50 chain branch to Wicklow goods station - the former terminus of the Dublin & Wicklow Railway. The contractor building the factory has already availed of the siding for the transport of materials and machinery to the site.

Silvermines Branch

On April 22 the Minister for Transport & Power made a Railway Works Order under the powers of the 1963 Transport Act which authorises CIÉ to "lay down, make and maintain" the branch from the Ballybroughy-Limerick line to the Silvermines. The line authorised is 1.27 miles long and diverges from the main line at MP 35¼ facing towards Limerick. The rough directions will be as indicated in our January issue. The Order contains the remarkable and probably unique provision: "the line of railway shall consist of two steel rails each weighing approximately 63 lbs per linear yard, resting on metal plates laid on timber sleepers and clipped thereto with two bolts at each rail on every sleeper and laid on a bed of not less than 4 inches of gravel or stone ballast". Let us hope the gangers are warned never to thread in concrete sleepers or to re-use old rails on the branch. Two years are allowed for the completion of the railway although this can be extended by the Minister up to a further year. From all appearances this extension will not be required as CIÉ have set about the work with zest. Early in June the first ¾ mile had been fenced and has since been levelled and embanked. At the junction some excavation was necessary as the main line is in a shallow cutting. The turnout was fabricated alongside its intended site and on Sunday July 24 it was lifted into place. The branch curves sharply and the crossing of the Nenagh-Shallee road is but 800 yards from the junction. At this crossing the Order authorises the erection of "good and sufficient gates" - not, be it noted, barriers - with red discs or targets on each side of the crossing. All trains approaching the crossing must stop before opening the gates and then "pass over the crossing immediately". Meantime the series of special trains from Nenagh to Foynes, mentioned in our last issue, continues but with some timing alterations of the evening trains.

Midland Store

Although incomplete, the North Wall Midland Store was reopened for traffic in sundries from July 4 and rebuilding, following the fire of 28th October 1965, continues. Outward sundries for the Midland and South-Eastern sections had been temporarily transferred to the "Point Store" since 1st November 1965 and the resumption of this traffic at the Midland Store again permitted the acceptance at the "Point Store" of Southern section sundries which, during the period, had been confined to Kingsbridge goods.

Rolling Stock Developments

In Inchicore Works during July, frames were laid for the first of CIÉ's new carriages of which 15 are programmed. There will be 10 standard class Craven type and 5 brake standards. Meantime, following the completion of bulk cement wagons, other capital projects on hand include a series of 634 wagons, mainly conflats presently in production, as also are some of the 100 Lancashire flats to be constructed. It is understood that early next year two batches of special purpose wagons will be made; the first, a set of barytes wagons and the second for the carriage of zinc concentrates, both for the Silvermines-Foynes traffic. CIÉ have decided to dispense with the use of oil gas and, thus, the plant required for its production. This is being achieved by the fitting of Kosangas to dining cars and so far the following have been converted: buffet cars 97N, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2416, 2419, 2420; diners 2093, 353; kitchen car 2403. A storage tank has been erected at the south end of the "Military Platform" No.3 in Kingsbridge for recharging these vehicles. One result of the conversion is the withdrawal in May last of 353 from her normal Rosslare Express duty on which 268N has deputised since May 9 except during the seamen's strike when the train was cancelled. 353 has been noted acting as second car on Knock pilgrimage trains partnering 2400. Two new ambulance vehicles have emerged from Inchicore and are in traffic. They are numbered AM14 and AM15 and are respectively conversions from standards 1380 and 1408. The latter has been out of use since removed from the Waterford & Tramore on the closure of that line on 31st December 1960. It is of interest that both vehicles are fitted for Kosangas from the outset. Two further conversions to appear from Inchicore in July were two new studio coaches for the Radio Train: RS25 and RS26 (ex 2117 and 2118) - two of the 1935 GSR suburban composites. The first to appear in traffic was RS25 on the Galway Radio Train on July 20.

Cheap Weekend

In addition to the advertised series of "Cheap Weekends" which extended up to the weekend of May 22, cheap weekend tickets were issued at the single fare for the return journey rate on the weekend July 1-4 the first such concession weekend ever in the period of the summer timetable. Response was excellent, as might be expected, and filled trains which had been poorly supported due, in part at least, to the British seamen's strike.

Special To Quarterstown

On May 21 the Munster Area of the IRRS organised a special train from Mallow to Quarterstown siding, better known perhaps, as Webb's Mills. This was the first passenger train ever to use the 90 chain long line which diverges from the Killarney Junction - Tralee line at MP 1/4 and curves northwards to the short loop at the mills, now owned by Ranks Ltd and used as a store. The siding was opened in 1863 and on 8th February 1864 was the scene of an unusual accident when a goods train from Mallow to Tralee was diverted on to the siding and thinking itself on the main line made a spectacular pile-up at the mills. No such fate befell C212 when it propelled standard 1315 and LV 2756 south out of Mallow down platform on May 21 at 16:20. It was necessary to stop on the Kerry line and again on the siding, beyond the gate, for the opening and restoring of the points and at a crawl the train continued to the terminus. At 17:00 it, now hauled, started back, making a photographic stop, a gate stop, the junction stops and a stop at Killarney Junction waiting clearance of the 16:15 Cork to

Limerick Junction goods (A30, transformer truck, 12 wagons, a van, 6 wagons and another van). Traffic on the siding is nowadays almost non-existent - the last working was in the 1964/65 grain season but up to about 1962 there were often 35 wagons per week in the season.

Lifting

The removal of closed lines, now coming to an end, is as follows.

Macmine - New Ross: At the end of July the railhead was close to MP 84½, and barely a mile remained to the junction at Macmine. It is likely that the work will be completed in August and the equipment and ETS removed.

Cork Albert Quay: The siding from Albert Quay station to the Cork Milling Co. was disconnected on June 28. A considerable amount of the one-time extensive layout in the station yard has also been removed and now only the tracks to the tar depot and the precincts of Goulding's loading bank remain in situ. The latter provides the staple outward traffic while tar tankers are the principal feature of inward trains. The timetable schedules two trains per day (the afternoon one "if required") but on occasion three and four workings have been noted.

Station Names

Renaming ceremonies have taken place in several places at the stations listed in our last issue and the new names are being used in newspaper advertisements, in the public timetable and extensively in the weekly circulars. In all except the last-mentioned case, however, the previous name is given either parenthetically, i.e. Dublin, Connolly Station (formerly Amiens Street) or in the form of a locational indication, i.e. Pearse Station, Westland Row. Nevertheless at Westland Row the new nameboard in black lettering on a white ground reads "Staisiun Piarsach, Pearse Station" without any indication of the former title although passengers are still enjoined, even over public address systems, to change at Westland Row! The official renaming of Kingsbridge as Heuston and the unveiling of a plaque by Oisin O'Ceallaigh has yet to take place. Outside Dublin where differentiation between stations is not necessary the new names are all shown in parenthesis and the use of the same name for Cork and Galway has been overcome by calling the former "Kent Station" and the latter "Ceannt Station" in each case omitting the Christian name. At Sligo in English, instead of "MacDermott Station" the name used is "MacDiarmada Station" and one smiled at a reference to "Wexford (O'Hanrahan Station) South" when, in fact, only the North station was renamed.

Bridge 193

Readers will recall the devastation caused by floods in November and December last, the damage suffered by bridge 193 (MP 40, 48 chains) between Rathdrum and Avoca, and the repairs which enabled it to be used - with a 5 mph speed limit - from February 1. During June and July the Civil Engineer was again at work, for, with the river at its lowest, it was possible to divert it to the opposite side of its bed away from the damaged south abutment. A wide platform of stones was erected and the work of building a secure foundation was undertaken. The temporary props under the bridge girders have been removed and a concrete base has been made to protect the abutment. These works have been proceeding without interruption to traffic and are so far completed that with effect from the end of June the double-heading of trains across the bridge is again permitted. The existing speed restriction of 5 mph has not, however, been relaxed even in the case of trains with one locomotive.

Signalling Developments

Work is now progressing on the construction of a new automatic barrier crossing at 49 miles 4 chains close to Ardrahan station on the Limerick-Athenry line. If it continues to progress at the speed at present evident its opening may even precede into use that at 106 miles 3 chains on the Athlone-Westport line, which, although operating on the passage of each train has no road traffic and the road

cut-off to it is still blocked and traffic must use the former Bellaher crossing nearby. On June 14 a special train ran from Amiens Street to Commons and Dromiskin crossings near Castlebellingham. The two-piece railcar set carried officials of both CIÉ and Dublin Corporation with the purpose of demonstrating to the latter barrier crossing operation. This is believed to presage barrier crossings at either Baldoyle Road, Sutton, or Serpentine Avenue, Sandymount, or both. At Clondalkin a series of two-aspect colour lights, three in each direction, will be worked by the cabin there while at Reilly's crossing, between Liffey Junction and Ashtown, on the Dublin-Galway line, colour light signal protection has been afforded to the level crossing in both directions. Colour light signals were briefly in trouble on May 9, when a temporary failure was caused by a strike of ESB fitters. Only a minor delay ensued. Small type ETS has replaced the large type on the Greystones-Wicklow section. A new type staff-exchanging apparatus has been designed and a prototype is now being tested. The down outer home signal at Wexford has been dispensed with.

Pier Train

A new pier train set is in operation between Westland Row and Dun Laoghaire since July 4 and comprises ex GNR stock: brake composite 47N, standards 63N, 78N, 75N and 185N. These five have been attractively appointed and the seating capacity of the standards - formerly class K15 seconds - has been increased to 80 each by the addition of 16 bus type seats in lieu of toilets. An unusual provision is the instruction that the set may not exceed 50 mph - an unlikely enough occurrence on these 6½ mile workings. A number of carriages were painted during the same period in an unusual location - the bay platform at Dun Laoghaire.

Mallow - Waterford

Following a lengthy discussion on its second reading in Dáil Éireann, the Transport Act 1966 became law in mid July. The Act gives CIÉ power to terminate train services on the Fishguard & Rosslare Railways & Harbours Co. in Ireland - a provision not enshrined in the Transport Act 1958. F&RR&H lines extend from Rosslare Harbour to Fermoy and from Rosslare Strand to Wexford but only the closure of the Waterford-Fermoy section, under the new Act, and the Fermoy-Mallow section, under the 1958 Act (it is owned solely by CIÉ), is contemplated. As yet no notice of their intention has been given by CIÉ but works on the Limerick Junction - Waterford line are being pressed forward. The Minister for Transport & Power said in Dáil Éireann that the number of passengers joining at and alighting from the "Rosslare Express" at intermediate stations averaged 8/9 per day and "if the final investigation clearly indicates the need to close the line there would be no intention to withdraw the Rosslare Express" which "would be diverted via Limerick Junction with a 20 minute increase in overall time". It may well be that when the closure is announced some of the stations between Waterford and Rosslare - notably Killinick - may be included. Whether the siding to Waterford Ironfounders - the old South station - will be retained is doubtful as access to it involves the maintenance of the Suir Bridge, presently being painted.

For One Day

On August 7, the closed halt at Kilcoole, between Greystones and Newcastle, was used for one train only. This was a special three-piece railcar set of which new first 1146 was the intermediate coach, which carried President De Valera and party to a ceremony commemorating the gun running at Kilcoole during the "Troubles". The railcar was attached to the 12:00 between Amiens Street and Bray whence it continued to Kilcoole independently.

Fares Increased

On June 13 a general increase in fares and rates was implemented by CIÉ ranging from 5% to 12½% on freight charges and rail passenger fares were increased by 10%. One Concession only is evident. From the same date family tickets by rail were introduced and these allow families travelling together

to obtain a reduction of 75% for the first child and 85% for the second child - age limit in each case is 16 years.

Eastern Section Alterations

Westland Row is to be modernised in the near future and already evidence of this can be seen in the new parcel office on the car-way behind No.1 platform. Recently the platform face of No.1, which receives boat trains from Dun Laoghaire pier, has been newly paved; part of it in black and white tiles. Further improvements to come are a new booking office to replace the two presently in use. This will be sited on the down platform and will mean an alteration in position of the fruit stall and bookshop. The circulating area outside the platform barrier is also to be increased and an escalator will carry passengers thence from street level. At Sandycove the new station buildings described in our last issue were opened on May 25 and both temporary entrances and the booking office on the up platform were dispensed with.

Carrick-on-Suir Alterations

In view of the likely closure of the Mallow-Waterford line CIÉ have commenced fitting out the stations on the diversionary route via Limerick Junction to cater for the additional traffic. Most evidence of this is at Carrick-on-Suir where in July the loop was being extended to enable longer trains to be crossed. The turnout at the Waterford end, formerly at the end of the platform, is being moved out nearer to the underbridge which effectively demarcates the eastward limit of the station. This will permit the siding behind to be lengthened and the up platform will be extended towards Waterford. The down platform will also be elongated, but in the opposite direction, necessitating the removal of the water tower at its Clonmel end. The signalling is being altered to suit these layout revisions and a call-on arm is fitted on the up home signal. These installations can still be controlled from the present cabin - 15 levers, 3 spare.

Locomotive Developments

The 950 hp B234 (ex C234) locomotive returned to traffic in June but it has not yet been joined by B233. The experimental turf-burner CC1, which has lain derelict in Inchicore for some six years, has now been cut up although it is learned that the boiler has been retained for possible re-use. The MAK locomotive - K801 - is still in Inchicore Works.

Seamen's Strike

Rail services all over Ireland were badly affected by the British seamen's strike which lasted from May 16 to July 1. The worst hit were those trains depending on the Rosslare-Fishguard sailings of which the last was the 23:15 from Rosslare on May 14. After the 18:20 ex Cork of May 21, the Rosslare Expresses were cancelled although the 07:10 from Rosslare and 13:30 from Cork continued to operate. When the summer timetable came into operation on June 13 the cancellation, of course, extended to the extra express workings and additionally to the 06:25 Rosslare Harbour - Wexford and 10:30 Wexford - Rosslare Harbour. This involved two empty trains, from Wexford at 16:00 and from Rosslare at 19:15. Normal services resumed on July 2 when B151 with 5 bogies and van (including diner 268N) worked the 06:15 from Rosslare and the 13:20 ex Cork. On the same day there were 36 passengers ex Rosslare Harbour for the 18:50 to Dublin. About 20 joined at Wexford, 10 at Enniscorthy, 35 at Gorey and another 20 at Arklow. Thus, although the complement ex boat was small it would appear that the intermediate traffic justified the running of the train. The boat trade, however, filled the evening train to Cork (B172, 8 standards, compo, buffet and 2 LVs) to the extent of about 150 passengers.

Road Freight Survey

The preliminary results of the first comprehensive study ever made of road freight movements in

Ireland were released by the Central Statistics Office in April last. The survey, covering each week of 1964, has yielded valuable information which will undoubtedly influence future policy on internal transport, both road and rail. In 1964, about 54½ million tons of goods were moved by road, compared with some 2 million tons moved by rail. While the total carried by rail amounted to only 4% of the total tonnage, the ton-mileage figure for rail was 17% of the total, indicating relatively longer hauls by the railways. It is of interest to compare this latter figure with the analysis of ton-miles by road freight, which reveals that CIÉ vehicles accounted for only 6%, other licensed hauliers for 11% while traders hauling on their own account represented no less than 83% of the total. This confirms the common belief held in railway circles that the private trader using his own lorries constitutes the greatest threat to the survival of the railways in Ireland.

Rosslare Improvements

Improvement work continues at Rosslare Harbour. A new customs examination shed has been completed at the landward end of the main platform to facilitate passengers from the 02:15 sailing ex Fishguard which is required to dock at the adjacent No.3 berth. The entire area of the main platform which heretofore had three different surfaces - slab, timber and tarmacadam - has been resurfaced with slabs and this greatly improves its appearance. A new road has been constructed at the back of the loco shed and in future all motor cars arriving from the steamer will leave Ballygeary yard at the seaward end, encircle the loco shed and thus gain the old road. Motor cars on the outward journey will continue to cross the "concrete bridge" which will have one way traffic only.

Summer Timetable

The summer timetable came into operation on June 13 and most additional services will work until September 18. The main exceptions are the 10:45 and 19:30 Sunday trains between Dublin and Rosslare Harbour which will cease on September 4, and the 18:10 Sunday train from Rosslare Harbour to Dublin which also ceases on that date. Thus, whilst there is no down service on Sundays September 11 and 18 there still remains one up service on these dates ex Rosslare at 07:00. Additional summer trains operate from Dublin to Limerick and to Tralee from July 9 to September 3, but the extra Waterford service continues to the end of the timetable. On the GNR section, the 06:30 Mail train to Portadown is extended to Belfast on Saturdays and makes the up 08:15, thus obviating the need for passengers to change at Dundalk as on other days. The 09:15 Dublin-Dundalk is also extended to Belfast on certain weekdays and on all Saturdays. There is a corresponding up working at 15:00. CIÉ have also produced a graphic timetable for the public, covering most main line services. This is an excellent idea and it is hoped that further developments will follow along these lines.

Limerick Junction

Work has commenced on the improvements of platform and track facilities in anticipation of the closure of the Mallow-Waterford route. The height of part of the platform has been raised and clearance work at the north end of the station commenced in mid-August.

UTA GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Tourist Train

One of the most important features of steam operation during the summer months on the GNR section is the "Tourist Train", as it has become known. It operates on most Thursdays from Belfast to Dublin and back, and also on certain Tuesdays and Fridays. It has been traditionally steam hauled due to the use of a kitchen car to supplement the restaurant car. It was also notable as the preserve of ex GNR type locos (particularly 207) as the NCC type locos had a somewhat chequered history on this working. 2-6-0 No.97 was, perhaps, the only regular NCC loco on this train. The 1966 season, however, got off to a lean start for steam enthusiasts, as the British seamen's strike caused a serious coal shortage, and it

has been said that such coal as there was available was allocated to the NCC section. During May this train operated on Thursdays 5, 12 and 26, being worked by 2-6-4T No.54 and 5 bogies. By the end of May the coal supplies were being exhausted and on Tuesday May 31 the steam locomotive only worked between Belfast and Dundalk, the southern section being worked by a CIÉ diesel loco. On June 2, 7, 9, and 11 the train was being worked throughout by CIÉ diesel locos of the second General Motors series. Then on June 16 No.54 again appeared, only to be replaced by UTA diesel railcars from June 21 to July 7, by which time the seamen's strike was over and the position returned to normal. Also due to the coal shortage on June 11 it was found necessary to work the diesel (B135) through to Belfast on the 18:30 ex Dublin.

Queen's Quay Signalling

Recent signalling alterations being carried out in the vicinity of Queen's Quay station were completed during June. A new signal cabin with a 45-lever frame (15 spares) has been built to replace the existing cabins at Queen's Quay (36 levers, 21 spares) and Ballymacarrett (57 levers including spares). Both of these have now been demolished. The new cabin is situated on the up side directly opposite the site of the former Queen's Quay cabin. The gantry over the main lines near the diesel sheds now carries a route indicator, a two aspect call-on signal and a single aspect home signal. On the Bangor side of the former Ballymacarrett Junction, the working up distant is the former down distant ex Goraghwood. Alterations to the track layout have yet to be completed.

Annual Report

An air of utter hopelessness pervades the Annual Report for the year ended 30th September 1965. Reminiscent of the last report of the former GNRB in 1958, the Authority dutifully records the virtual dismemberment of its organisation "in furtherance of government policy". Indeed, the latter phrase is so often repeated in the report that one is left with the feeling that the Authority's wishes were completely overruled in the reorganisation planned by the Government of Northern Ireland.

The report records the withdrawal of general freight services on the railways, the transfer of entire road freight operations to a new commercial company "Northern Ireland Carriers Ltd", the setting up of "Ulsterbus Ltd" to which road passenger activities are being transferred, the setting up of a separate Board to manage the remaining 203 miles of railways and finally, the sale of the 6 hotels to commercial interests. What remains to be managed by the UTA is not clear.

During the year reviewed in the report railway operations were better by £199,603; the loss of the previous year of £385,364 being reduced to £185,761. Improvement was largely attributable to the closure of the Portadown - Derry and Goraghwood - Newry - Warrenpoint lines. In spite of the largely reduced loss on the railways and the increased profits of their hotels, the UTA's overall trading loss deteriorated by £30,181, resulting in a trading loss of £179,011, as compared with a loss of £148,830 in the previous year. Deficit on road freight operation and some deterioration in road passenger working is blamed for this unhappy situation.

Of interest to readers is the £750,000 scheme of partial modernisation of the railways "to give the remaining railway system the best possible chance of survival" and also the consideration being given to the possibility of arranging with commercial interests to take over as a going concern the Authority's main railway and road workshops at Duncrue Street.

Belfast Fire

On May 29, fire destroyed Nos. 3 and 4 roads of the shed at Grosvenor Road goods yard. Two containers loaded with 2,760 bottles of brandy were destroyed as well as 15 wagons, one container and 2 tank wagons. 30 wagons and containers were saved and the fire was fought by 6 brigades. Grosvenor Road depot is one of the two points on the UTA into which goods services are operated by CIÉ since

the cessation of rail freight services by the Authority.

RPSI Railtour

On May 14 a special steam hauled train was provided for the RPSI from Belfast to Kingscourt and back, taking in the Dromin Junction - Ardee branch line. The six-coach train was worked from Belfast to Dromin Junction by 2-6-4T No.54. Ex GNR No.49 then took over and continued to Ardee and back to Drogheda. Having turned, No.49 worked to Navan and Kingscourt and vice versa. On the return journey to Drogheda some "runs past" were staged for the benefit of cine photographers and tape-recording enthusiasts. No.54 replaced No.49 at Drogheda and worked the train to Belfast. No.49 returned later as a light engine.

NCC Specials

July 13, which is a holiday for most people in Northern Ireland, provided the usual spate of activity on the NCC section. Specials from Belfast to Portrush ran at 08:40, 08:55, 09:25, 10:20, 11:10, 13:15 and 15:40. The 08:40, 13:15 and 15:40 were diesel worked while the other specials were worked by 2-6-4Ts Nos. 3, 4, 6 and 10. No.10 returned from Portrush to Coleraine after working the 08:55 special and, having watered, proceeded to Ballymena, Cullybackey and Dunloy to reassemble goods trains from Dublin to Derry which had been abandoned the previous night in order to have the MPD units correctly stationed for July 13. No.10 worked non-stop to Derry from Coleraine, which it left at approximately 14:15. It then returned light to Portrush to take up the working of its special back to Belfast. 2-6-4T No.56 worked a goods train from Lisburn to Coleraine where it arrived at 16:45. It was relieved by railcars 46/62/63 which took the train on into Derry leaving No.50 to return light to the GN section.

Lifting

The lifting of closed lines has been continued as detailed below.

Portadown - Derry: Latest reports indicate that the lifting has now reached the Sixmilecross area. There was a delay of some weeks at Omagh as the UTA were unable to provide a steam locomotive to clear laden rail wagons due to the coal shortage brought on by the British seamen's strike. On July 27, a laden ballast train returning from the railhead became derailed near Pomeroy. As a result of this a special working was run the following Sunday - July 31.

Mount Derailment

On August 20, a three-coach MED train became derailed near Mount on the Belfast-Larne line when it struck a bullock which wandered out in front of it. The train was an empty working to Whitehead which had departed from York Road at 07:50. No.8, the leading railcar was derailed causing considerable damage to the permanent way. Single line working was instituted and some delays were experienced, it being expected that it would take breakdown gangs the remainder of the weekend to clear the line. This was the second occasion within six days on which an animal was struck by a train on this line.

Railcar Developments

The first set of the new English Electric diesel-electric railcars went into service on July 4. There are to be seven power units in all, numbered 71-77. The power units consist of cab, engine compartment and passenger compartment seating 44 second class passengers. They are 64'8" in length and are equipped with electric heating. The upholstery is red and dark grey and is of nylon and wool plaid. There is no toilet accommodation in the power units. There are three brake first trailers seating 24 passengers in 4 compartments. These coaches are 57'4½" in length and have two toilets at one end. The upholstery is blue and the series is numbered from 701 to 703. There will be two driving trailer brake composites numbered 711 and 712. They are centre corridor and seat 12 first class and 24 second class passengers;

one toilet is provided.

To make a suitable number of second class coaches, five 56 seater side corridor vehicles numbered 721 to 725 will be provided. These coaches will be fitted with two toilets. The first three car set made its first run on trials from York Road to Greenisland on May 28. During the following week the trial run was extended to Whitehead and later to Ballymena and Coleraine. The train consisted of driving trailer 711, power unit 71 and second trailer 724.

The first 6-car set went into operation on July 4 and a special press run was made to Derry on July 2. Refreshment car 550 is included in the set and 549 is being rebuilt to take up duty in the second set. On July 10, the set made its first run to Portrush and it is expected that the new units will be tried out on the Derry-Lisburn goods services before the end of August. No more than normal teething troubles were experienced with the new cars.

Track Alterations

The siding at Ballykelly airfield has been lifted. This siding was laid in 1943 when the runway extension across the NCC main line was being built. The air/rail level crossing on the main line and the co-ordinated signalling are still in existence. Track has been removed from the Limavady branch bay platform at Limavady Junction. Work is in hand at Magheramorne in laying sidings in connection with the "muck traffic" - filling for the new roadway alongside the NCC main line at Belfast Lough - which will be working from there to Belfast for 3/4 years.

Transport Act 1966

A new Transport Act (Northern Ireland) was passed on March 24 and is mainly concerned with the new road licensing scheme. With regard to the railway it provides for the grants being paid to the UTA to be increased by £2½ million to £6½ million. It also authorises the Authority to erect automatic barriers and other such devices at level crossings and provides for compensation for gate-keepers.

New Headquarters

On June 11, the entire railway division headquarters was moved to York Road. It is sited in a single storey building (at York Road, behind the loco sheds) which was a wartime extension. It has now been completely decorated and a small canopy has been erected over the entrance. The reception hall has been attractively furnished displaying pictures of MPD, MED and BUT railcar sets, each in its new livery.

Railcar Fire

On July 1, railcar No.56, while working a goods train from Derry to Lisburn, caught fire at Brookmount on the Antrim branch. Lisburn fire brigade fought the fire until the water supply ran out. The railcar was hurriedly moved to Lisburn where the fire was finally quenched. The body was extensively damaged but the engine (AEC type) and chassis were not. The other units hauling the same train were railcars Nos. 36 and 44.

"Muck" Trains

The first shipment of the order for hopper wagons from Cravens of Sheffield which will be used on the movement of spoil from Magheramorne to Belfast Lough at Greencastle arrived before the seamen's strike commenced. Numbered M1, it is fitted for vacuum braking and is painted light blue. It has hand-operated side discharge mechanism, but for one side only.

LOOSE LINKS

- The Annual Report of the NI Tourist Board strongly recommends the use of the rail link between Belfast and Aldergrove airport.

- It is understood that terms have been agreed for the transfer from Corporation to Government control of the Belfast Transport Museum.
- The tail lamp used at Kingsbridge No.2 platform has been replaced by an electric stop light on the buffer stop.
- On July 2 the 18:40 Rosslare-Cork contained buffet car 2418 with a “Cu na Mara” nameboard.
- In May a consignment of concrete girders was carried from Dublin to Campile for the new ESB Great Island power station.
- A recent CIÉ official document is reported to have referred to the spoilation of motor cars on flat trucks by “diesel fall-out”!!
- The coaling gantry at Inchicore is being demolished piecemeal as it is now no longer required.

JOURNEY JOTTINGS

July 24: The Glens Of Antrim

The CIÉ “Glens of Antrim” excursion has been operated for several years as an “all-in” excursion train providing meals on the outward and return train journey to and from Belfast with a coach tour of county Antrim. This year for the first time it is being operated as an “All-in Radio Train” excursion in addition to the already long established Radio Train to Killarney and Galway. In all, five Glens of Antrim trains will be operated during this summer season.

On July 24 the first of these left Amiens Street sharp to time at 10:00. It consisted of B129 hauling LV 2726, diner 2400, and standards 1498/1499, Radio Studio coach RS22 and LV 2763. After a brief introduction and an outline of the day’s programme, a pleasant musical interlude accompanied the serving of coffee and biscuits as the train passed Howth Junction.

The first stop was Skerries at 10:21 where it picked up three passengers. The timing of this train is not unduly fast and Drogheda was passed at 10:39 where A11 and A43 were seen standing outside the shed. Dundalk was reached exactly at 11:03 and during the four minute stop there the up 09:30 ex Belfast departed for Dublin on time at 11:06 being worked by a BUT railcar set.

The next event of note was the serving of an excellent lunch which arrived shortly after passing the desolate ruin that was once Goraghwood - all rails other than the main lines have been removed and the station buildings demolished.

On arrival at Portadown at 11:50 the train was given a cursory glance by the Customs officials and departed again at 11:57 having waited while 2-6-4 tank No.54 shunted a ballast train into platform 2. The up 12:00 from Belfast to Dublin was passed just north of Lisburn at 12:18 and the special arrived in Belfast at 12:31.

UTA touring coaches were provided for the tour that followed which was not without railway interest. The route taken was through Antrim to Ballymena whence to Retreat the road frequently follows the route of the Ballymena, Cushendall & Red Bay Railway - notable as the first narrow gauge railway in Ireland, which was opened in 1875/6. This line also had the distinction of reaching the highest summit of any Irish railway (1,045ft) near Essatathan siding. For most of the journey by coach the formation of the railway is clearly distinguishable.

At Glenariff the coaches stopped for 1½ hours to permit a visit to the Vale of Glenariff, owned by the UTA and originally developed and opened to the public by the B&NCR. In continuing to Cushendall and on to Larne the route passed the site of the Glenariff Land Development Company’s narrow gauge line at Waterfoot where the remains of an overbridge still stand. Travelling along the Antrim Coast

Road the coach passed through Carnlough - site of yet another narrow gauge mineral railway. After a stop of approximately 1½ hours in Larne, the coaches returned to Belfast.

Departure from Great Victoria Street was prompt at 19:50 and high tea was served as the train passed Adelaide. Apart from the stops at Portadown and Dundalk for customs and Drogheda and Skerries to drop the 3 passengers the train journey was without noteworthy incident.

Throughout the outward and return journeys a brief commentary was given on points of interest en route and a pleasant selection of musical items and interviews with some of the passengers was relayed throughout the train.

STATION SURVEY

Coleraine

The first railway into Coleraine was opened on 18th July 1853 and was the Londonderry & Coleraine. It had a station on the north bank of the Bann near the present road bridge and when the next railway into the town was opened on 7th November 1855 by the Ballymena, Ballymoney, Coleraine & Portrush Junction Railway, the two were linked by omnibus. The Bann was bridged in 1860 by an ugly swing bridge and the BBC&PJR station then became the only one, the L&CR station being closed in May 1861.

In 1861 the BBC&PJR became part of the Belfast & Northern Counties Railway and in 1871 the L&CR did likewise. In 1880 the Derry Central Railway from Macfin to Magherafelt was opened with Coleraine as its northern terminus. In 1892 a branch was made off the main line to run to Coleraine Harbour. In 1903 the line became part of the MR (NCC) and in 1923 part of the LMS (NCC). Finally it became part of the UTA in 1948.

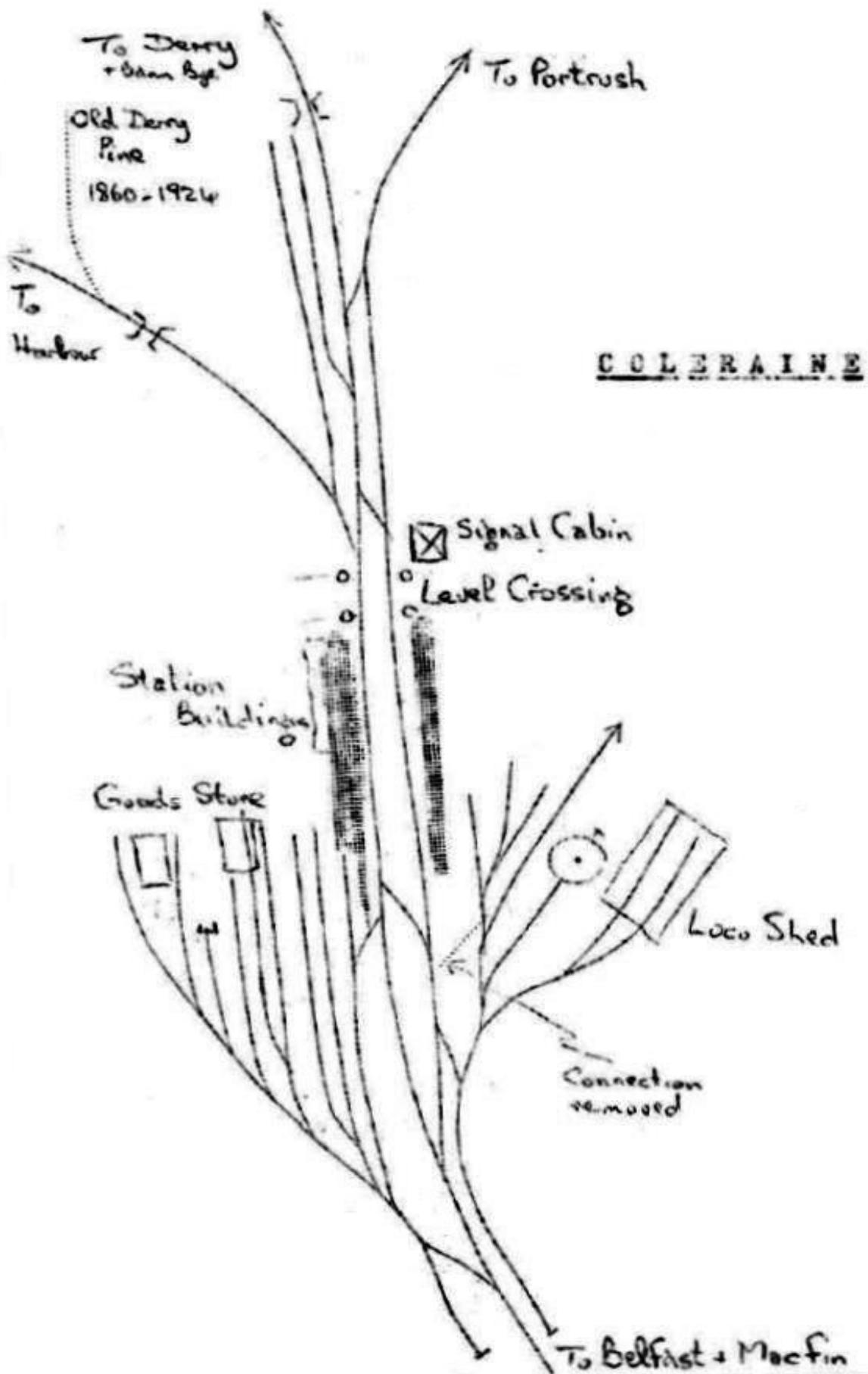
On 21st March 1924 the new Bann viaduct was opened to traffic with its associated loop line; the stretch of line between the harbour line points and the deviation points together with the old bridge was closed. The new bridge has nine fixed and one bascule lifting span and this is raised by an electric motor.

In consequence of these track changes an elaborate new signalling system worked by the South and Junction boxes was brought into use. A device is attached to the Castlerock tablet instrument to ensure that the Bann Bridge can not be opened while a tablet is out. The Bann Bridge is locked by a King Lever (No.1) in the Junction Box. This box contained 48 levers and operated the level crossing gates by a wheel while the South Box had 46 levers. A feature of the signalling was the provision of "inner" or through distant signals, the only ones on the NCC.

In November 1938 the South Box was closed and colour light signals controlled by the Junction Box, with the aid of an illuminated diagram, were installed. These were the first position light signals in Ireland and at the same time tablet working on the Coleraine-Macfin section was replaced by electric direction control levers with track circuiting not only in Coleraine station but through the entire section to Macfin.

In 1938 a coaling plant was installed in the locomotive yard. It is the only one on the UTA outside Belfast.

To the left, approaching from Macfin, is the extensive goods yard, now out of use for the past 15 months and on the right is the loco shed and coal yard, now only infrequently used. The passenger station contains two platforms - the third, a bay, has now had its connection lifted. The up line here is the straight or fast road. At the far end of the platform is the level crossing, now operated by electricity. To the left the Harbour branch, closed to traffic in April 1963 but still in situ, makes a sharp turnout and the Londonderry line continues to the left to cross the Bann Bridge.



Shortly after passing the signal cabin the fast line curves gently to the Portrush branch which is connected to the down line by a long crossover. From the down line there are two lengthy sidings which extend to the Millburn Road bridge. These were built during the war but are now virtually disused.

Coleraine was formerly the principal engine shed, outside Belfast, hence the unusual size of the coal yard. It was the headquarters of the District Civil Engineer and there is a line into the Engineer's yard. Coleraine is also the headquarters of a permanent way inspector and was also that of a lineman until recently.

The Derry Central line was completely closed - except for goods traffic from Magherafelt to Kilrea - in August 1950. The Portrush branch was closed to winter traffic in 1960 and all goods trains - except the CIÉ trains through to Derry - on the main line ceased in January 1965. With the introduction of Multi-Purpose diesel railcars in 1958 the engine shed has gradually fallen out of use but is still busy for a few months in summer when the engines of excursion trains to Portrush appear.

While the Harbour remained open, a "jeep" usually shunted in the goods yard and harbour as a multi-purpose was unable to climb the Harbour branch. Just prior to the cessation of goods traffic, however, a multi-purpose often shunted the yard. It is felt that the lifting of the goods yard, harbour line and, perhaps, even the loco yard can not be long delayed.

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Due to the volume of news covered in this issue our normal feature article has had to be omitted.