

THE

IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS

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EDITORIAL

It is with regret that we have to inform readers that "The Irish Railfans' News" will cease publication with this issue.

There are several reasons for the taking of this step, the principal being the lack of time available to us for its production. Not all our readers realise that each issue is not only written but typed, stencilled, duplicated, assembled and posted by the Editorial Committee themselves and it is the "slave labour" that has enabled us to keep down costs and keep the IRN as accurate and up to date as possible. We feel that such a publication could not, satisfactorily, be produced by a commercial firm or by non-railway enthusiasts, and feel it better that publication should cease rather than that it should fail through insufficient attention on our part to its production. We feel sure that most readers will agree. Let it be clearly stressed that it is not for lack of news that the IRN is ceasing - if we had printed all materiel for our July issue we would have filled 27 pages.

It is obvious, however, to us that the IRN did fulfil a function desired by many enthusiasts. We have recently compared our list with that of the Irish Railway Record Society and we were surprised to find that most of our readers in Ireland were also members. In Britain, too, a great many IRN readers, although not as high a proportion as in Ireland, also subscribed to the IRRS. As we feel that news of Irish railways is still worthy of note and is of interest to so many we have arranged with that Society that your editor will edit a somewhat revised "News Extra" in the thrice-annual IRRS Journal. This will to some extent follow IRN form but without its articles. With the reduced frequency and the abolition of production difficulties we feel sure that we will be able to cope with the work involved and provide you with a service quite comparable to that of the IRN. We do, emphatically, need the same co-operation from our country correspondents for this venture and we trust that we can rely on their continued assistance in the future.

Therefore if you are among the minority who are not members of the IRRS we hope that we can persuade you that membership is well worthwhile and reasonably priced when related to the excellent facilities provided. An explanatory leaflet and form of application for membership is enclosed with every copy of this issue.

May we very sincerely thank all our readers and contributors for their support, encouragement and criticism during the 12 years of "The Irish Railfans' News".

BOOK REVIEW

"The Cavan & Leitrim Railway" by Patrick J. Flanagan (David & Charles)

The last steam narrow gauge railway in Ireland is the subject of this book; undoubtedly the best to date in the full size David & Charles series on Ireland. The story of the C&L is told in a readable style and with a fund of information grouped in its appendices. The text does full justice to the many extraordinary characters who at different times made the C&L the fiercely independent line it was.

There is a wealth of stories about the Board, officials and men, for on the C&L, where everyone knew everyone else's business, even minor irregularities were readily noticeable. It was amazing how many got away with so much! If any fault can be found in Mr Flanagan's writing it is the peculiar use of the words "up-facing", etc., in his description which has apparently confused even himself into describing the sidings at Garadice, Ballyheady and Tomkin Road the wrong way round. May we recommend this book as an example of what can be produced through painstaking research and exhaustive investigation. The C&L could not have looked for a better chronicler.

SOME ARTICLES OF IRISH RAILWAY INTEREST

Railway Magazine

October "Province of Leinster" RPSI Special (3 photographs)
Time (Ireland) Act 1916 (Note)

Modern Railways

September UTA DEMUs for Belfast-Londonderry Service
New Ulster Rail Company

IRRS Journal

October The Guinness Railways
Irish Railways in 1864
"His Majesty, the Driver"
The "Avonsides"

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For the information on which our "Journey Jottings" is based we are indebted to Mr R.C. Flewitt

News Section

CIÉ GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Railways' Role

The Deputy General Manager (Operations) of CIÉ Mr D. Herlihy, speaking to the Institution of Civil Engineers in Dublin, said that railways were no longer profitable when judged by the ordinary standards applied to business enterprises. He stressed that our railways were best suited to long distance travel and to mass movement of people and quoted average lengths of passenger journey: rail, 61 miles; provincial bus, 7 miles; and average overall speeds: rail, about 52 mph; provincial bus, 22 mph; express bus, 34 mph. Conceding that even express bus travel, so dependent on road conditions, was, and in this country would remain for the time being, inferior in comfort to rail travel, Mr Herlihy said that the highways would be improved in the course of time. Going on to deal with suburban traffic he said that only 54% of Dublin's commuter traffic was carried by public transport of which only 3% was by rail. The remainder travelled: by car, 34%; by cycle, 7%; on foot, 5%. These figures were established in the course of a census taken some months ago.

Winter Timetable

The winter CIÉ timetable came into force on September 19 and will continue until 11th June 1967. In essence it is the standard timetable, shorn of its summer trains and, indeed, for the first time only the

public book has been reprinted; the WTT is valid for the year from June to June next.

A commendation, which was omitted for lack of space in our last issue, is that of the revised Buffet Car information. It has been moved to the front of the booklet and has been divided much more clearly than previously. Also to be commended is the reduction of footnotes, but this goes a little too far in one instance at least. To squeeze "To Sligo Dec. 12th-31st, except 26th, Jan. 2nd-7th, Mar 23rd-28th & from 27th May 1967" into one column (even 3 times normal width) is cramming - anyway, in modern typography the "th", etc., is superfluous. Here, however, on Page 34, a footnote is desirable, as is done on Page 40. On Page 27, too, the abbreviation "via LJCT" - just like that - takes a little interpretation. Another point; the insertion of Cork (Kent Station) on pages showing Cork bus connections, highlights the necessity for Cork (Bus Station) against the bus departure. Hitherto they both read "Cork" and while this was not clear it was, at least, consistent. Now the indication of the difference is essential especially as "Limerick (Colbert Station)" is shown for both bus and rail times at that city where, as there is no difference, it is not strictly necessary, although desirable.

Of course it had to happen! On Page 41 it is stated that trains from Sligo arrive at Pearse Station (formerly Amiens Street) and then proceed to Pearse Station (formerly Westland Row).

The services call for little comment. The Wexford line continues its two train operation per day. A point of interest is the *modus operandi* for the up 18:50 from September 19 to 24. The 09:00 down towed a 3-coach railcar which returned as the 18:50. This was requisite due to the non-operation of the summer 13:45 down - the balancing working.

Secondary Coaches

During the summer two sets of non-corridor stock worked the 17:07 and 17:42 Amiens Street - Bray but in mid-September they were retired to Bray for storage. A month later almost all the main line secondaries were sent to their normal winter pasture at Sallins in three separate lots. They will unlikely be used before next spring except for the Christmas peak.

Annual Report

One of the most attractive features of the Report for the year ended March 31 last, must undoubtedly be its format and general layout. Printed on high quality art paper (8" x 12") and nicely adorned with very fine photographs and diagrams, the 44 page report would be a model presentation but for the fact that it completely lacks a map to illustrate the range of the Board's operations, now extending to almost every county in Ireland. Particular mention must be made of the numerous delightful symbols used to illustrate each series of figures in the statistics section in the final twelve pages of the report. It is, perhaps, ironic that the contents of such a lavishly produced report should reveal a most disappointing financial return. CIÉ incurred a total net loss of almost £2,229,000 in the year under review, compared with a loss of £1,475,000 in the previous year. Revenue losses amounting to £780,000 were attributable to strikes by the Board's employees during the year and all sections of CIÉ's operations disimproved, with the exceptions of road freight working and canal workings. The loss on railway working amounted to £1,792,000 and was £562,000 higher than the loss in the previous year. Although £245,000 of railway revenue was lost through labour disputes, total rail revenue was only some £20,000 below the level of the previous year. The buoyancy is attributed to increased long-distance passenger travel, the success of cheap winter weekend tickets and the educational tours and, most significantly, an increase in goods train traffic. The greatest increases occurred in fertiliser traffic (+60,000 tons) - due largely to the opening of the NÉT plant at Shelton Abbey near Arklow - and in cement traffic (+87,000 tons). Higher tonnages were also carried of petrol and oils, gypsum, drapery goods, chocolate crumb, bacon, ham and butter. The generally higher earnings of the railways, however, were more than offset by significant increases in expenditure which were largely responsible for the substantial total loss on railway working. According to the report, the higher expenditure was due mainly to the following

causes:

- (a) increased maintenance costs, partly because of the extensive work needed to repair storm and flood damage;
- (b) higher rates of pay, improved staff welfare benefits and increased social insurance contributions;
- (c) a full year's operations of cross-border freight services as compared with only 6 weeks operations in the previous year.

The last reason given is disturbing as the withdrawal of these last remaining rail freight services in Northern Ireland could well cost CIÉ the loss of general support from its largest customers who still remain loyal to the railway because of the convenience of its extensive freight coverage of the whole of Ireland. Finally, the report contains two notes of hope for the future of the railway system. The total output of lead, zinc and barytes to be produced by the two new mining companies in the Silvermines area will be conveyed by rail for export through the port of Foynes and, for this purpose, the new 1¼ mile siding (reported elsewhere in this issue) is being laid near Shallee on the Ballybrophy-Limerick line. The second hopeful note is the achievement during last year of a new record for punctuality - no less than 93% of all trains on time.

Shelton Siding

The sidings at Shelton have been extended to deal with the expanding fertiliser traffic from the factory of Nitrigin Éireann Teoranta. Beyond the bridge across the Avoca River a third siding is being added to the present two, on the factory side. The points were laid on October 3 and track laying followed. The embargo on all other than G class Deutz locomotives entering the factory sidings was lifted in September to the extent of allowing C class locomotives as well but up to mid-October no C class loco had been worked there.

Mallow - Waterford

Although official notice has not yet been given, CIÉ have intimated that the 76 mile Mallow-Waterford line will be closed completely after the last trains of March 25 next. The closure comes as no surprise to those who have followed the passage of the Transport Act of 1966 through the Oireachtas but as the Act did not go unopposed in Dáil Éireann, neither did the preliminary announcement of CIÉ's intentions lack antagonists. On August 24, a deputation including 10 Dáil Deputies presented a case for the line's retention to CIÉ but this has been rejected in view of the loss of £50,000 which, according to the General Manager (Operations), the line incurs each year. With the extensive alterations being made to fit the Waterford - Limerick Junction line for longer trains, it must have been obvious that the visit of the deputation to Kingsbridge was little more than a token of disapproval of CIÉ's intentions.

Waterford - Limerick Junction

In preparation for the closure of the Mallow-Waterford line work is being pushed forward on improvements on the alternative route. The alterations at Carrick-on-Suir were described in our last issue and it only remains to add that the water tower has been removed and two-way signalling has been installed. At Kilsheelan block post the crossing loop has been extended by 200 yards at the Waterford end (and two-way signalling installed) by the expedient of moving the crossover out to the end of the former refuge siding. This took place on October 2 and for the previous week the 11:50 Waterford-Limerick goods was accelerated to cross the 12:15 Limerick-Waterford passenger at Clonmel instead of at Kilsheelan. Two-way signalling arrangements and the reclassification of the loop as suitable for passenger trains came into force on October 24. Work is now about to commence on the improvement of Clonmel yard and installation of two-way signalling. At Cahir two-way signalling exists since 1956 having been installed following the accident there on 21st December 1955 when loco 375 with a laden beet special went into the River Suir killing the driver and fireman. At Tipperary,

work is at present nearing completion on a resignalling project designed to bring the yard at the Limerick Junction end under direct control of the cabin at the other end. It has heretofore been worked by an Annett's Lock on the Tipperary - Limerick Junction staff. Two-way signalling will also be provided. Another improvement, unconnected with the Rosslare Express, is the rebuilding of overbridge No.141 at Ballynaraha, between Carrick-on-Suir and Kilsheelan, to permit the County Council to realign the road.

Locomotive Developments

On August 23, loco D302, which had been lying in Bray, was removed to Inchicore and is apparently to be scrapped. The MAK loco, K801, reported in our last issue as in Inchicore, was returned to traffic at Drogheda in mid-August and was engaged on working the cement trains. Loco B233 (ex C233) appeared in traffic in September - the second of the C class locos re-engined with a 950 hp Maybach power unit. Locos B131 and B132 have emerged from Inchicore works repainted in black and brown livery; they are the first of the former grey and yellow single-ended GM locomotives to be thus painted.

Signalling Developments

On September 26, the colour light installation at Clondalkin was brought into use and the existing semaphore signals dispensed with. There are three new colour light signals in each direction, a distant, a home and a starter. The homes are three-aspect; all the remainder are two-aspect but the signal sequence is in accordance with semaphore practice in that the distant clears only when the two stop signals are also clear. The signals are returned to danger by track circuits but they are worked from the cabin in the normal way - there is not continuous track circuiting from Inchicore and hence purely automatic working is not in force. At Kilmallock a new signal cabin was brought into use on September 11 which will replace the two cabins previously there. The new cabin (24 levers) is near the south end of the up platform. Neither of the new automatic barrier level crossings mentioned in our last issue has yet been brought into use.

Rolling Stock Developments

Work is in progress in Inchicore Works on the first 5 of the 15 new CIÉ carriages. The five under construction will be Craven Type standard class 64 seaters and these will be followed by a further five next year. Later next year the remaining five will follow and are to be brake standards. In wagon building there is considerable activity. Twenty "Heavy Fuel Oil" tankers have been completed and are in traffic from Foynes to Castlemungret on the train run for Cement Ltd. They are numbered 27570-89, each weighs 10 tons tare, has a capacity of 20 tons and is fitted for vacuum braking. Also apparent throughout the CIÉ system are new conflat wagons fitted for the transport of Lancashire flats, and, of course, the Lancashire Flats themselves. Their use will considerably reduce handling and ease the pressure on wagon stock of conventional pattern.

Trial Train

On Sunday September 25 a speed trial was run from Kingsbridge to Cork and back similar to previous tests in January 1965. The journey was performed in 2 hours 40 minutes and it seems likely, therefore, that when the acceleration which was hinted at by the Mechanical Engineer (Rail) of CIÉ eventually comes about, the timing will probably be 2¾ hours. It is, however, possible that this will require signalling alterations to give increased braking distances.

Cheap Weekends

CIÉ have for the first time published the list of cheap weekends in their rail timetable. The facility of weekend returns at single fares is offered on 13 weekends: October 9* and 23, November 6* and 20, December 4*, January 15* and 29, February 19, March 5*, April 9*, May 1, 15* and 29. The UTA have, however, only agreed to those weekends above marked * for through Belfast cheap weekends.

Foynes Branch

Traffic on the Foynes branch has still further increased with the commencement in September of the bulk oil tank trains from Foynes to Castlemungret. The oil is delivered by tanker to a new installation on Foynes Island and then piped to storage tanks alongside the siding - on the site of the former Shell installation. The tankers are worked at present only 3 to 4 days per week from Limerick at 07:30 to reach Foynes at 08:47 and return, loaded, at 12:30, soon after the barytes train from Nenagh arrives. This latter shunts its laden wagons alongside the conveyor belt on to which the contents are transferred by a grab-crane. The loco with the previous day's empties departs for Nenagh at 14:00 on arrival of the down goods. Thus Foynes has a train on hand continuously from 08:47 to 16:00 most days - a far cry from the once daily goods of a few years ago. The oil tankers run in a block of twenty while the barytes train has normally twenty five wagons.

Castlemungret Branch

Work has continued on the extension of the branch from Cement Factory Junction to Foynes Junction, Limerick, and the formation has been cleared for the whole one mile section. On September 25 a new loop was laid between Foynes Junction and the level crossing at Rathbane. This will permit the Foynes-Castlemungret oil trains to reverse without adverse effect on the yard at Carey's Road. The track across the level crossing has been laid and is being extended to Rosbrien crossing at present. Meantime traffic is being worked on the Limerick-Patrickswell line as heretofore, but obviously this is proving a bottleneck to judge from the late running of cement specials noted recently. Traffic is extremely heavy both in bulk and bag load and the former will further increase when the Castlemungret-Cork specials commence regular working. It is anticipated that they will use the Patrickswell - Croom - Charleville line as is done by the present 16:20 special.

Silvermines Branch

Since the report in our last issue, work has continued apace on the job of embanking the road bed at the approach to the Mogul mine. The filling from the cuttings was insufficient for the new embankments which rise to over 20 feet at their highest and lorry loads are being brought in at the CIÉ construction site office, driven on to the top of the embankment and tipped to bring it to its full height. In this section there are underbridges of reinforced concrete which were fabricated in situ before the embankment was made. During September the County Council widened the Nenagh - Shallee road at the point where the railway will cross it. No track has yet been laid except for the turnout at the junction.

New Halt

On and from Monday August 22 a new halt for special passenger traffic only has been in use at Kilmokea - at the east end of the Barrow viaduct on the Waterford - Rosslare Harbour section. The new halt serves the power station under construction at Great Island and has a short platform of sleepers with a top surface of chippings. Regular trains do not call but a special train runs twice a day from Waterford at 08:10 and from Kilmokea at 18:01. The train proceeds through the section to Campile in each direction returning thence empty to Waterford. In the morning it crosses the 07:10 Rosslare Harbour - Cork in Campile, which is deferred two minutes in consequence; in the evening it leaves Waterford empty at 17:25 returning from Campile at 18:01, crossing the 17:45 Waterford - Rosslare Harbour there. The special is at present formed by the railcar set of the 11:05 Waterford-Limerick and its reverse working although the number of passengers using the new service has so far only risen from 5 to approximately 24. It is understood that the cost of the train is guaranteed by the ESB.

Creosoting Plant

The new creosoting plant at the LMS yard, North Wall, is in operation. The cylinder carries a plate

“Daniel Adams & Co.” and is using “Tanalith” - a product of the Hickson’s Timber Impregnating Company of Castleford, Yorkshire. The former plant at Inchicore has been dismantled.

Retirement Of Dr Andrews

When, on October 7, Dr C.S. Andrews vacated the chairmanship of CIÉ he was replaced by Mr T.P. Hogan (already a member of the Board) on a part-time basis for a period up to 31st August 1968. To fill the vacancy on the Board, Mr Frank Lemass, General Manager, has been appointed and will retain his present position. Thus, the primary responsibility for the running of CIÉ will fall on him rather than on the Chairman. The Minister for Transport & Power, in announcing these appointments last September, also intimated that he was handing over responsibility for CIÉ’s labour problems to the newly created Minister for Labour. Before doing so he referred to the difficulties of CIÉ in having 33 trade unions representing 20,000 workers and the consequent impossibility of negotiating any overall agreements. As it was, he said, this structure tended to escalate demands which if met in full would increase CIÉ’s costs by 73%.

Northern Suburban

The bridge carrying the Grange Road over the halt of Raheny at its north end is to be replaced by a much wider structure as part of a scheme for road improvements. The new bridge will cover a considerable length of the platforms and while construction work is going on the platforms will be foreshortened at their north ends and to compensate, extended at their southern extremities. The footpath from the road to the down platform is being replaced by a new and less steep incline. Building continues in the area flanking the railway between Raheny and Howth Junction and even thence to Sutton. It is understood that CIÉ have in contemplation the erection of a new station or halt at the “Swans Nest” between the two last-mentioned places.

Malahide Viaduct

The renewal of Malahide Viaduct commenced on Sunday October 16 and has continued on each Sunday since. Using the existing piers, new pre-stressed concrete spans, fabricated by the contractors, Cementation Ltd, are being used to replace the existing lattice steel girders. The work is being carried out with the aid of the Inchicore and Grand Canal Street cranes and will take the greater part of the winter to complete. While it is in progress a 5 mph speed limit is in force across the viaduct, applicable to both up and down trains.

Farmers Protest

On Wednesday October 19 the National Farmers Association staged a protest march in Dublin. Many of the participants walked to Dublin from places as far away as even West Cork. Those who did not came by train and two up specials were booked; one from Lismore - calling at all stations to Kilkenny - another from Tuam, with a connection from Ennis to Athenry, calling at all stations to Ballinasloe. On the same evening the down trains were heavy, if those noted on the Southern section are any guide.

UTA GENERAL NEWS REPORT

Steam Finale

The final step in the dieselisation of the cross-border services between Belfast and Dublin was completed on October 29 when the last company-sponsored steam train was operated. The train was advertised to the public by the UTA as being in commemoration of 111 years of steam traction on this route. It was the first occasion on which an Irish railway company sponsored a special train aimed particularly at the railway enthusiast market and its success was undoubted.

The motive power was 2-6-4T locomotive No.54 with an 8-bogie train made up of N468 (brake second), N400 (second), N286 (compo), 554 (diner), 404 and 376 (seconds), N470 (brake second) and

150 (ex GNR Directors' Saloon). This stock - all of which is ex GNR (loco excepted) - consisted of vehicles of various ages. The papers reported that to add to the atmosphere of the occasion the UTA included in the composition of the train some of the classic examples of coaches from the past!

The departure from Belfast was at 09:25 and calls were made at Portadown and Dundalk. An uneventful run was recorded but a spirited performance was noted leaving Drogheda; arrival in Dublin Amiens Street was at 12:06. The same train returned from Dublin at 17:58, again calling at Dundalk and Portadown. On the last lap a signal check was experienced at Dunmurry and arrival in Belfast was at 21:14. Both runs were marked by the explosion of detonators with a rousing performance at Dundalk only outdone by the acoustic efforts under the platform canopies at Portadown.

Portrush Hibernates

With the end of the tourist season, the Coleraine-Portrush branch was closed on September 12, for the duration of the winter. This has been the practice for several years leaving local needs to be served by road transport.

Coleraine Harbour Railway

The Coleraine Harbour branch was officially closed on September 30, but has been out of use since April 1963. Before closure, part of the line had been lifted to clear a site for liquid gas tanks.

Mount Threatened?

It is understood that Messrs Courtaulds, who import their coal requirements through Belfast and transport them by rail to their factory at Mount on the Larne line, may now bring in the coal through Carrickfergus. Should this come about, the siding at Mount and the company's two private locomotives could become redundant.

Railcar Developments

Diesel-electric power car 73 has been completed and the second complete set of this type went into service on the main NCC line between Belfast and Derry early in October. This set is identical with the original one described in our last issue but it has been noticed on occasions with MPD trailers Nos. 530 and 531 added.

Lifting

Portadown - Derry: Latest reports indicate that the progress with the lifting of the Derry line is proceeding to schedule, and that the work is now into Pomeroy station. For a period of about one week, while Carrickmore bank was being ascended, it was necessary to retain the services of the steam locomotive, which normally only clears laden wagons, to haul the contractors train. This was because the strain would have been too great for railcar 104 which has carried on this work up to then.

Signalling Developments

Early in October Belfast Central Junction cabin was closed and certain alterations were made to signalling in the vicinity. All of the semaphore signals between Adelaide and Central Junction have been removed and in the case of the down (to Belfast) road, replaced by one junction colour light signal which controls the main line and also the turnout to the goods yard. The up road signals have been replaced by one colour light signal 100 yards on the Adelaide side of Central Junction cabin. The turnout to the goods yard is now worked by a ground frame which has been built almost opposite to the cabin and it is necessary for a shunter to be sent out to admit or despatch goods trains to and from Grosvenor Road goods depot. The crossover from the "Third Line" which now serves Adelaide shed only is protected by a small colour light signal. The semaphore signalling in Great Victoria Street station is not affected although work has commenced on alterations at the North cabin.

Broomhedge cabin, between Knockmore Junction and Moira, was closed permanently on September 10

and all signals were dispensed with. In recent years little use was made of this block post; it only opened between 17:00 and 18:45 normally. On October 27 another intermediate cabin was declared closed - Kilmore, between Moira and Lurgan. Here, however, gatekeepers have to remain in lieu of the signalman.

On September 26, Portadown Junction cabin was closed permanently and block working was established between Poyntzpass and Portadown South cabin. The Junction cabin has been switched out since February 1965 after the closure of the Portadown-Derry line, except for the passing of materials trains serving the contractor who is lifting the line and locomotives using the shed until it too was closed. All up and down signals have been dispensed with and the remaining turnout to the Derry line is worked by a ground frame. The down outer home for Portadown South and the down fixed distant for Portadown North - both on the same post - have been moved out 300 yards to a point near the Junction cabin. The lifting trains for the Derry line now proceed from Portadown station over the down line under authority of the signalman in the South cabin. At the junction the guard works the ground frame and has telephone communication with the cabin.

On September 25 Ballyclare Junction cabin on the NCC section was closed and all points and signals disconnected. A new temporary box with a 7-lever frame was established on the down side near the level crossing. Only the signals are connected to it as the points and sidings will soon be removed. The level crossing will also shortly be eliminated as a bridge will be built over the railway for the new M2 motorway.

On September 11 Larne Town cabin was closed and tablet working was established between Magheramorne Loop and Larne Harbour. From Mondays to Saturdays all trains now run through to Larne Harbour to complete the section, instead of terminating at Larne Town as many did heretofore. On Sundays, however, all trains terminate at Larne Town and, as Magheramorne cabin is closed, "single engine in steam" working is in operation between Whitehead (Ballycarry is also closed) and Larne.

Adelaide Closure

The locomotive sheds and extensive yards at Adelaide, which have been under threat for some time, were closed at the end of October. The steam locos based there are being transferred to the NCC section. During the winter period the only steam working which may have been required is that of pilot at Grosvenor Road goods yard, and a ballast engine. It is understood now, however, that CIÉ who operate the goods services will provide their own motive power and that an MPD unit will work ballast trains as required. All normal passenger workings on the Belfast-Portadown section are now diesel railcars. A recent visit to Adelaide disclosed that ex GNR locos Nos. 37, 48 and 49, with NCC 2-6-4Ts Nos. 51, 55 (both in steam), 53, 54 and 56 were stationed there. Ex GNR compound No.85 - the property of the Belfast Transport Museum - is also stored there.

Loco 171 In Steam

On October 8 GNR 4-4-0 No.171, for the first time working as a preserved locomotive, headed the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland special from Belfast to Larne Harbour and back. The locomotive, now leased to the Society, had been in store for some months at Ballymena and came under her own steam to Belfast a week in advance of the trip. The train consisted of 4 bogies, including an ex GNR tri-composite brake which the Society hopes to preserve. Photographic stops were made as often as possible and time was allowed to inspect the proposed site for the Society's premises at Whitehead, and the Guinness engine in store at Carrickfergus.

JOURNEY JOTTINGS

October 8: Dublin - Belfast

On most Saturdays a cheap day return fare of 25/3^d is in operation between Dublin and Belfast. This has proved most popular and in consequence the 08:30 down and 17:30 up Enterprise Expresses have to be strengthened on such occasions. On this morning the 08:30 train consisted of a heating van, all-first saloon 1146, buffet 97N, six of the new standard class Cravens, brake/standard 1913 and LV 2758; a net unladen weight of 272 tons. The train was headed by two General Motors Bo-Bos working in multiple - B147 and B150.

It has often been claimed that such a train could not keep time on the Enterprise booking while observing all permanent and temporary restrictions and also the overall 70 mph limit. However the driver of the 08:30 was to prove that it could indeed. Leaving Amiens Street almost 1¾ minutes late, Howth Junction was passed in 6½ minutes at 64 mph. Still accelerating, Malahide was approached at 66 mph and then speed was reduced to 50 mph while crossing the estuary viaduct. Despite this setback, MP 16 at the top of Rush Bank was passed in 17 minutes 20 seconds from Dublin and at 58 mph.

Speed was maintained in the high sixties through Balbriggan at which point the train was still one minute down on schedule. No improvement was made to Drogheda which was passed in 32 minutes 19 seconds from Dublin (31¾ miles). Kellystown bank proved no great obstacle and the ascent to MP 37¼ was made in 7 minutes 7 seconds. Speeds bordering on the 70 mph mark were consistently held reaching a maximum of 71 mph near Castlebellinhan (MP 47¼) which was passed in 48 minutes 10 seconds. Halestown bank was crossed at 61 mph and the train stopped at Dundalk (54¼ miles) 35 seconds early - 55 minutes 55 seconds after leaving Dublin. This is 1 minute 55 seconds more than the celebrated 15:15 ex Dublin of summer 1932, which was allowed 54 minutes non-stop to Dundalk with a slip coach for Drogheda. There was no 70 mph speed limit then and no 50 mph restriction at Malahide.

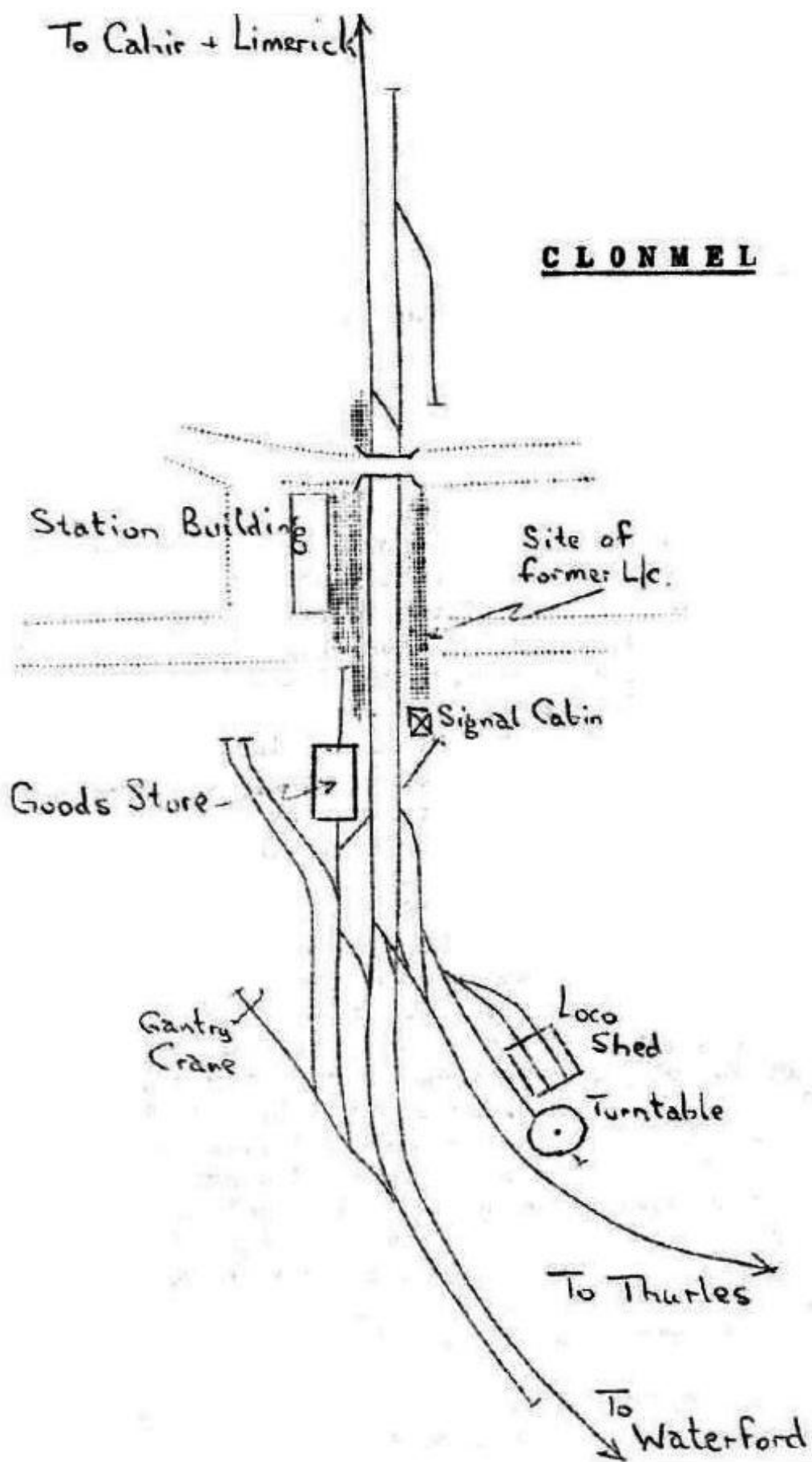
Departure from Dundalk was but seconds late and Mount Pleasant cabin was passed in 5 minutes 40 seconds at 46 mph. This fell to a minimum of 40½ mph before Adavoyle but climbed to 46 mph before crossing the summit of the bank at 65¼ mile post. Seventy miles per hour was reached approaching Bessbrook where due deference was shown to the viaduct and remains of Goragwood station, passed 22 minutes 20 seconds from Dundalk. The restrictions at Poyntzpass and Scarva were rigidly observed and the train stopped at Portadown in 42 minutes 22 seconds for the 33¼ miles.

Leaving Portadown 2 minutes late, time was gradually regained and despite a slow approach to Belfast for the benefit of drivers "learning" the new colour light signals, Great Victoria Street was reached almost half a minute early. Thus a very fine run was completed in text book fashion and fully up to the requirements of modern train travel; of which punctuality, reliability and comfort are the three major principles.

STATION SURVEY

Clonmel

The county town of Tipperary (South Riding) stands on the River Suir almost one third of the way from Waterford to Limerick on the main line of the Waterford and Limerick Railway. This concern opened its line from Limerick to Tipperary in 1848 and was extended to Clonmel on 3rd May 1852. It was continued to Fiddown on 11th April 1853 and eventually reached Waterford in 1854. Thus Clonmel gained communication with the two major cities of the mid-South and, through interchange with the GS&WR at Limerick Junction, with Cork and Dublin.



An 1846 proposal for a Clonmel-Thurles line failed but the “Southern Railway” of Ireland succeeded in reaching Fethard from Thurles in 1879 and making a junction with the W&LR on 1st July 1880. The W&LR (Waterford, Limerick & Western Railway from 1895) worked the “Southern” up to 1901 when it was merged with the GS&WR. The route via Thurles was the natural one for Clonmel-Dublin traffic and up to the withdrawal of passengers on the 25¾ mile branch line after the last trains of 7th September 1963, such traffic passed this way. Neither the replacement service operated by the Shamrock Bus Co. nor the longer and dearer route via Limerick Junction give the appearance of handling the same volume of passengers as the branch trains did. The unconventional route by rail from Dublin to Kilkenny thence by CIÉ bus to Clonmel finds some favour but obviously a great deal of private motoring is being done.

The layout of Clonmel has remained completely unchanged since 1911. In Waterford & Limerick days there was an unusual feature - a level crossing at the Waterford end of the platforms, right in the middle of the yard. In 1906/7 Thomas Street (the street which crossed the railway thus) was diverted to pass in front of the station building and traffic then crossed the line by the overbridge at the Cahir end.

At this time, too, there were three signal cabins, the North at the Cahir end of the loop, the Middle Cabin on the Waterford side of the level crossing and the Junction cabin in the “V” formed by the diverging lines to Thurles and Waterford at the east end. There was also another small cabin controlling the access to the loco shed which was then a short two-road one alongside the running lines opposite the goods store.

The alterations carried out by the GS&WR did away with all this, extended the platforms, provided a new cattle bank at the Cahir end and concentrated control in one cabin, almost on the site of the old Middle Cabin. A larger two-road loco shed (with a new 49’9” Inchicore built turntable) was erected alongside the branch on the west opened in 1911. The goods yard was the only part unaltered at this time but it is understood that CIÉ are to commence work shortly on a programme to remodel it with signalling alterations to suit and to provide two-way signalling at the passenger platforms.

Train services at Clonmel have contracted very considerably. In 1895 there were 4 passenger trains and the Night Mail with, in addition, two goods trains (three on Saturdays) each way between Limerick and Waterford. There were two passenger, one mixed (MWFO) and one goods trains on the “Southern Line”. A similar service persisted up to 1939 with the exception of the branch (reduced to three trains, one mixed) and the addition of a morning Clonmel to Waterford trip in the early 1900s at 08:00 or thereabouts which lasted up to the coal crisis of 1944/5. The lavish service of 1895, however, never recovered from the advent of the Second World War when it was reduced to one passenger, the Night Mail and two goods trains. This service still persists, with the extra passenger trains in summer, but it is likely to be considerably altered but not, perhaps, greatly augmented when the Waterford-Mallow line is closed next March. The Thurles-Clonmel still has a daily goods and, in the beet season, three or more specials nightly to Thurles.

Feature Section

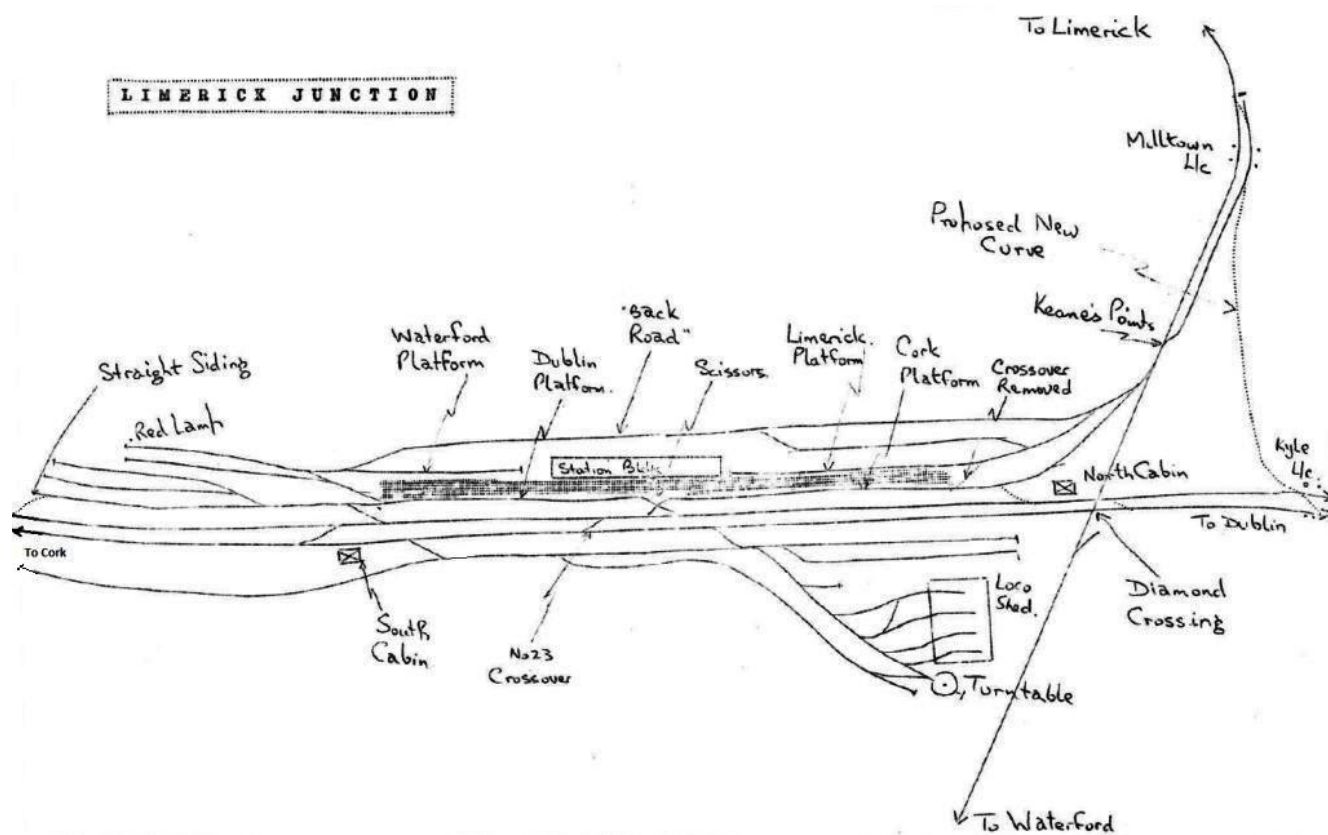
LIMERICK JUNCTION

On 24th April 1848 the Waterford & Limerick Railway opened its line from Limerick to Tipperary for goods traffic, added passenger trains on 9th May of the same year and thus beat, by a very short margin, the GS&WR engineers who were constructing the Dublin-Cork line between Thurles and Mallow. This line was opened to its intersection with the W&LR on 3rd July 1848 and continued to Mallow on 19th

March 1849. The point of intersection was named Limerick Junction. As from the opening of the GS&WR the W&LR trains called there - for the first two months they ran non-stop from Oola to Tipperary.

The naming of junctions after their branch termini is, to many, confusing. The MGWR and D&SER never did it; the B&CDR and NCC did, sometimes; the GNR could never decide which to do, so named their junctions after: a) their locality (Dromin, Shantonagh) or b) their destination (Fintona, Howth) as the mood took them. The GS&WR used method (a) (Ballybrophy, Headford) except for track junctions known to the staff where method (b) was used (Castlecomer Junction, Killarney Junction, Foynes Junction). There were two notable exceptions, Cobh Junction and Limerick Junction, which railwaymen to this day exalt by calling it "The Junction", and the capital letters are emphatic even when the words are spoken!

What precise motives were behind the architects of the extraordinary layout at "The Junction" have been apparently lost in the mists of time. In their favour it can be said that the one platform obviates footbridges or subways with their attendant disadvantages to passengers. Yes, the principal entry to the station is by footbridge but as the station was just planted nowhere (if one dares call the townlands of Ballykisteen and Monatogher nowhere!) there was little expectation of originating traffic and hence the one platform afforded the greatest good to the greatest number. Affording cross-platform interchange to two passenger traffic flows meant that the other two passenger flows would have to traverse the platform's length before crossing it to their train. But granting all this as satisfactory, the designers then went one further in decreeing that no through train should reach its platform without reversal; a case of "bringing the mountain to Mahommed".



Those unfamiliar with the gyrations performed may like to chart the trains' courses on the layout diagram reproduced. Trains to Cork from Dublin run past the station on the down line and reverse across the up line via No.23 crossover and the scissors to the Cork platform No.1. Trains to Dublin from Cork also run past the station on the up line and reverse to the Dublin platform No.3 via the scissors.

Trains to Limerick from Waterford cross the diamond and run into the siding at Keane's points before reversing into the Limerick platform No.2. All these can leave directly for their destinations. To Waterford from Limerick, however, approach is by Keane's points and the "back road" to the red lamp, thence reversal to the Waterford platform No.4 is simple. To depart, the manoeuvre is reversed; forward to the red lamp, reverse along the "back road" to Keane's points and into the siding, thence forward across the diamond.

From Limerick to Cork and vice versa is simple since the installation in 1957 of No.23 crossover previously there was an unslipped diamond across the up main which forced Cork-Limerick trains on to the down line to reach the Cork platform. Perhaps the extreme case is the running round of the loco on a Dublin-Limerick train. It arrives in the normal way (Limerick Junction style normality) at the Cork platform, the loco uncouples, runs down the up main to the south crossover to the "straight siding", reverse to the Dublin platform, forward to the red lamp, reverse on the "back road" almost to Keane's points and then on to the tail of the train. Woe betide anyone who sends out such a train without a van at each end.

The first proposal for alterations to "The Junction" is said to have been put forward in 1849! Whether true or false, some proposal has been put forward at a rough average of ten-yearly intervals ever since. Various new curves, platforms and crossovers have been thought of and each successive plan has been calculated more costly than the last and consequently condemned on financial grounds. Now at last a scheme is afoot whereby CIÉ will make several simple alterations to improve main line working, leaving branch trains as they are at present. The one new curve is not to facilitate the Rosslare Express but to speed a more important series of trains, the Castlemungret-Cabra cement hoppers.

The basis of the plan, estimated to cost £100,000, is to provide a direct run-in to the platforms from Dublin and Cork and a curve from Limerick to Dublin which will avoid Limerick Junction altogether. The Cork and Limerick platform is being extended and the scissors, which is at the half-way mark of the present platform, will be moved towards Dublin to the half way mark of the extended platform. The Dublin and Waterford platform can not be readily extended into the goods yard. The siding alongside the up line will, by inserting a crossover near the Tipperary Road bridge, become a running loop to the Dublin platform. Similarly, a crossover south of the North cabin will give access to the Cork platform but this, of course, means a new crossover just north of the diamond from the down main to the up main. Another such crossover will also be necessary for access to the avoiding curve which will diverge from the up line just south of Kyle level crossing and will rejoin the Limerick line, or rather the tail of the siding from Keane's points, at Milltown level crossing. This siding will have a new crossover at its extremity, permitting access to the Limerick line.

Work commenced in late July with the clearance of the area behind the North Cabin. In August the raising of the Waterford, but not the Dublin, platform face was undertaken and the platform extension at the north end commenced soon after the removal of No.29 crossover on August 28. This extension is almost complete but for the slewing of the Cork platform - Limerick line connection. The new piece is 1'3" higher than the present platform and consequently there is a disparity in height half way along the Cork and Limerick platforms. To offset the loss of the "straight siding" the former cattle bank by the loco shed has been demolished and the former "cripple siding" has been extended.

On the plan attached the new crossovers and curve are shown by a dotted line as also is the removed No.29 crossover. The whole is diagrammatic and not to scale.