

THE

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EDITORIAL

It is a long-established practice of the retail trade to hold sales at regular intervals and especially at the New Year but it was rather surprising when CIÉ announced that it intended to adopt the tactic in January 1972 and bring out its version of a "sale", full details of which appear below. While CIÉ, in common with most other transport administrations, offers certain seasonal fare reductions, this is the first time in Ireland that cut-rate transport has been offered for such an extended period. The object is to boost revenue on a long-term basis, for it has become obvious that mere increases in the ordinary fares are not likely to achieve this to any significant extent. All too often increased fares chase away some regular passengers, leaving the operator with at best the same revenue he had starting off.

For CIÉ the way was at least indicated by the response over the years to its Winter Cheap Weekend fares. We well recall the outcry when it was once threatened to cease this much-valued concession. Public opinion won the day and in fact the concession was extended, now applying virtually throughout the winter and even on cross-border journeys. The growth of weekend traffic on CIÉ within the last ten years, leading in turn to the necessity for Sunday trains on most of the system, has been a source of great satisfaction to officials and enthusiasts alike.

Outside the weekend and holiday periods, however, many trains are poorly used. The McKinsey Report has suggested that some of these should be examined closely to see if they might be discontinued so in a sense the "Sale" is the final fling for some of Ireland's trains. If this idea fails to revitalise them nothing could.

At this stage it is too early to speculate on the long-term financial effects of the sale. That it has very greatly increased the numbers travelling is not in doubt but in view of the very generous fare concessions made a really big and lasting increase in the passenger figures will be required to produce a significant amount of extra revenue. It will be most interesting indeed to watch the results. The ordinary fares are unfortunately among the highest in Europe so if the sale points to the means of reducing these fares it will have achieved an important objective. It remains to be seen if the cheap fares and the generally high standard of comfort and punctuality which CIÉ can offer will attract a reasonable number of present road users.

In the matter of the fare structure it is widely felt that there are now far too many special and exceptional rates in existence, many of which are not related to the ordinary single fares. It would surely be a benefit, especially to a busy booking office, to have only one basic fare - standard class single - to which all other fares, including first class, would be related by adding or subtracting appropriate percentages. The number of such special fares ought to be reduced to the absolute minimum to streamline the booking procedures as far as possible. It is also widely held that the traditional ordinary standard class return ticket at double the single fare is outmoded by present-day travel trends. By comparison, the first class one-month return ticket is far more useful to the travelling

public.

The whole topic of rail fares, regular and special, is one to which we shall doubtless return, as we report the continuing evolution in the programme courageously undertaken by CIÉ. The implications of the "Rail Sale" and, even more important, of the McKinsey Report are very considerable to say the least and it will surely (and properly) be quite some time before a new definitive policy will emerge. Certainly, as we have remarked above, there is an element of a "last chance" about the present situation and the responsible officials in CIÉ will want to give the most thorough analysis to the position before regularising the question of passenger fares.

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We are grateful to Mr M.E. Bunch for the feature article.

News Section

CÓRAS IOMPAIR ÉIREANN

Notes On The Beet

By the beginning of November the beet campaign was in full swing and our reporters noticed signs of suitable activity in various places. On the Loughrea branch beet was being loaded at Dunsandle, at the halt's truncated goods siding. On one day the afternoon mixed from Attymon picked up two loaded wagons and brought them into Loughrea where they were added to those loaded there. Then the G class loco would bring the short beet special out to Attymon and return light to Loughrea in time for its evening passenger connection into the Up Night Mail.

The Youghal line has, of course, long been important as a "beet artery". For the first three weeks of the season beet was loaded direct at Youghal but then a new piece of equipment - an Armer "HI-VOL" Cleaner/Loader - was brought on stream; it is fed by lorries which discharge their cargoes into it. An empty train left Cork at 11:55 each day to bring back loaded beet wagons on Saturdays and Church Holydays (and on normal days to do the evening goods working). Thus after the Christmas period the working was a little erratic. On 27 December the train operated from Killeagh to Cork with beet and on the 28th from Midleton. The train met with a bit of trouble on 11 January when it was in collision with a car at the new, ungated level crossing at the Midleton Food Factory. A typical loading was 10 wagons from Youghal, 7 from Killeagh and 8 more from Midleton, bringing the load up to the 25 permitted to Rathpeacon.

The Youghal beet trains ceased on Wednesday, 12 January. Mogeely had finished on the 6th while Youghal itself was scheduled to stop on the 10th. That left Midleton as the last loading point, where two lorries were drawing. The last trains were: A34R + 9 beet at 13:18 (special) and A38R + 18 beet at 21:35 (special). The goods that night consisted of B127 + 21 wagons (10 beet).

Suburban Tickets

Since our last issue the following changes have been made in the ticketing system. Firstly, a new type of single ticket was introduced on 18 October. It is similar to the 10-journey tickets in that it may be cancelled in the automatic cancellers at the barriers, but of course it is only valid for one trip. The long-term intention is to use these tickets to release self-service barriers. They are thicker than the earlier Almex tickets and so, like the 10-journey tickets, they must be issued from bus-type Almex machines. A more fundamental change concerns the "Commuter" tickets. The original issue system has proved to

be far too cumbersome and has been replaced by a new one. Each holder will now have a two-piece ticket in a plastic wallet. There is a Polaroid-produced identity card bearing a colour picture of the holder, details of identity and a specimen signature (all reduced in the photographic stage) and a separate card ticket which is very easily replaced at monthly intervals.

A Nasty Rumour?

There has been a rumour recently that the Up road between Rushbrooke and Little Island was to be closed and lifted, leaving a single road to Cobh. However, latest indications are that the matter will be left in abeyance until more is known of industrial developments (including the smelter) in the area.

Kilbarry

Late in October the Grand Canal Street steam crane was in action at Kilbarry, placing a capstan in position near Gouldings old factory. Previously a gantry for wagon loading had been erected at the same point.

Bomb At Heuston

After the evening down trains had left Heuston Station on Sunday 31 October, the cloakroom attendant noticed that petrol was leaking from a case previously deposited there. As President de Valera was expected to arrive from Limerick later that evening the discovery was disturbing, to say the least. Police and Army experts examined the case and found a petrol bomb, but the papers with it suggested that it was destined for someone other than the President. The case had been left on deposit at the cloakroom quite some time previously. Later in the evening the presidential party arrived, unaware of any fuss.

Liner Trial

The first trial train to the new the B+I Line container terminal in Dublin was run on 20 November. Ironically, it was the B+I liner train which was used; it consisted of some 13 bogie conflats with an AR class loco at either end. Two locos were used because of the uncompleted state of the run-round facilities at the end of the line on the date of the test. It is understood that the results were successful, the only difficulty being in surmounting the rise from the North Wall Yard onto Alexandra Road. It is not yet known when regular trains will begin to serve the new terminal and there are hints of a dispute with Dublin Port & Docks Board workers who have worked the Alexandra Road exclusively until now, using shunting tractors. Locomotives had not previously ventured there.

Timetable Alterations

It was incorrectly stated in our last issue that the Sundays-only 18:55 Limerick/Nenagh/Dublin train had been omitted from the timetable booklet. In fact it is shown as running from 3 October 1971 to 22 May 1972 (three holiday weekends excepted). It has not, however, operated as a through train but rather as a special at 18:50 from Limerick to Ballybroy, returning at 20:25.

Guinness Goes North

A new liner train commenced running at 00:40 from Heuston Station to Belfast (via North Wall) on 16 November, and it has operated since then on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays (outwards) returning a day later. It is understood that the trains have so far comprised only two bogie conflats each, with two new-type tanks equipped as 20ft long ISO containers. It is hoped to transfer a considerable quantity of Guinness traffic from the traditional kegs to container transportation, to the mutual benefit of CIÉ and Guinness. As a consequence the time-honoured "Porter Train", the 14:55 goods from North Wall to Dundalk, may in time disappear.

Celebration Special

To mark the repeated success of Malahide Station in both the CIÉ and Bord Fáilte prize competitions a

special train, comprising B146, HV, 4 bogies and HV, ran to Malahide from Connolly Station at 12:21 on 29 October. It conveyed passengers to a function in a local hotel and later brought them back to Dublin.

Bridge At Kilbarrack

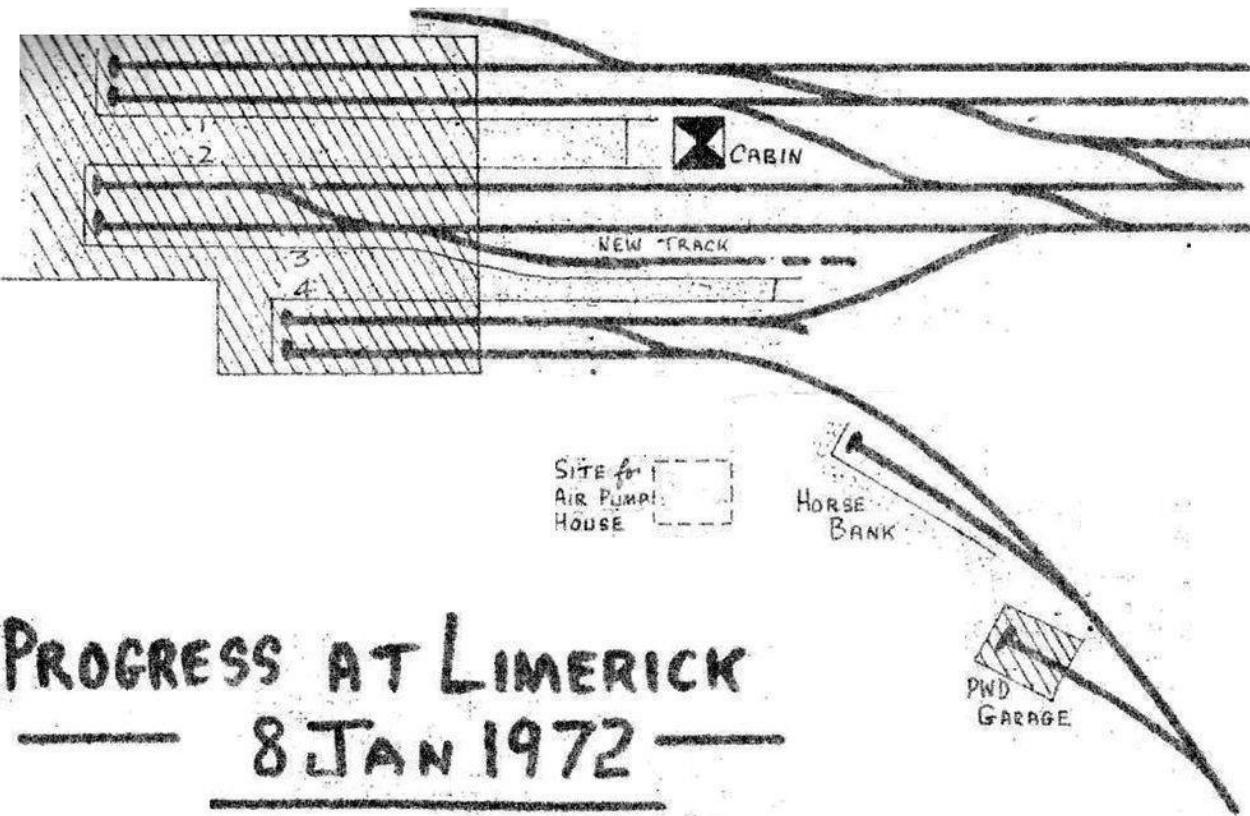
The new overbridge provided by Dublin Corporation at Kilbarrack is almost complete. Contrary to expectations when the station was first mooted the bridge is for pedestrians only, with steps and lengthy ramps at either side to cater both for individual pedestrians and people with prams.

Howth Junction

A long time after it was completed the new building on the Up Branch platform is now in use. The original timber building nearby has been demolished. A new public entrance to the Down Main platform is being provided to cater for people from the rapidly expanding estate nearby.

Limerick Alterations

Considerable progress has been made with the alterations to Limerick (Colbert Station) which were mentioned in our August 1971 issue. The revised platform arrangements are shown on the diagram. The extraordinary layout of Platform 3 is particularly noteworthy. The altered trackwork was not completed when our reporter made his sketch but it is understood that the outer end of No.3 platform road will be made to connect with No.4 platform road. The crossover from No.2 to No.3 road is not yet ready for use and the new point on No.3 road is also fixed temporarily for the straight.



We have omitted signals from the diagram as these are presently a mixture of old and temporary ones. A number of electric signals are to be installed and these will be worked from the existing "Limerick Station" cabin. This has been extensively renovated inside and out, gaining a new low ceiling, new aluminium-framed windows and a small porch inside the original door, rendering it much cosier than before. The original roof has been replaced by one of felt. It is expected that the venerable frame of 72

levers will be either replaced or reduced in size as very many of its levers have been made redundant by the removal of the "Cork Direct Curve" running line. The remaining line was always just a siding, as were its approach tracks. It is intended to convert some of the points from manual to automatic operation. To cater for this last move a new air pump-house is being constructed at present, as shown on the diagram. Further developments will be reported as they occur.

News From Platin

Work on the new cement factory at Platin, Co. Meath, is nearing completion and production may begin later this year. Additional trackwork has been laid at the site. There are two loops on the Down side, one of which is straddled by a silo; there is also a loop on the Up side. As yet there are no signals or subsidiary ETS instrument, but doubtless the latter will appear soon. To provide a stockpile, if that be the correct term, of fuel oil at the new factory a train of four 20-ton oil tankers and a brake van is running from the Drogheda factory to Platin, thus reviving the use of the oil siding at the former location. It was introduced on 31 January 1967 for the short-lived Foynes-Drogheda bulk oil trains and fell into disuse when the traffic was later recaptured from CIÉ by coastal shipping.

Wagon On The Loose

The NIR spoil wagon, M62, which was reported in our last issue as being at Inchicore Works on 4 October, was later seen en route to Nenagh and it was next reported on 6 December arriving back to Heuston (Goods) from Athlone. Next day it returned to Inchicore. There is no definite indication of the purpose of the wagon's visit to CIÉ territory but it seems very likely that consideration is being given to the suitability of these wagons (for which there is no real use now on the NIR) for use with one or other of the mineral traffics being or about to be carried by CIÉ. The Nenagh trip strongly suggests Silvermines, but we await confirmation.

Gas Tanks

On 2 November the 15 disused oil-gas tank wagons, which had been at Clonsilla (on the stub of the old Down running road) since their withdrawal, were brought to North Wall by B232. Next day E403 took them, along with an additional one, to Inchicore. A further 8 such wagons are lying in Buckie's Siding at Drogheda.

Potatoes And Bananas

The unusual bulk traffic in potatoes from Navan to Tuam is unlikely to run after the present season as Erin Foods Ltd have announced that their contracts with Meath growers will not be renewed and supplies will be obtained nearer Tuam. Another of the intermittent banana trains (A8R + 8 containers; liner train) ran Cork/Dundalk on Sunday 14 November.

Kingscourt Alterations

As the volume of the gypsum traffic from Kingscourt is expected to increase very considerably when the Platin cement factory commences production some alterations to the track layout at Kingscourt Station are planned. At present the wagons are loaded, one at a time, from lorries which drive up to a ramp onto a turntable from which they tip into the wagon below. The alterations will include the demolition of the substantial (now disused) loco shed.

Limerick Cement

It is also understood that alterations are to be made at the Limerick Cement Factory to permit gypsum to be delivered there in bulk hopper wagons, instead of in open wagons as at present. The gypsum for the Drogheda cement factory already goes in hopper wagons.

Night Train

Tivoli was very busy with a night magnesite train which ran for five nights from 26 November 1971.

“The Great CIÉ Train Robbery” (sic)

This is the story not of a crime but of the biggest and most dramatic travel-boosting gimmick yet devised by CIÉ. Following a successful pilot scheme on the Waterford/Dublin line in October and November last it was announced that for the month of January 1972 substantially reduced fares would be offered for return rail journeys on CIÉ’s lines. These would be available from all provincial stations every day but from Dublin outward tickets would be issued on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays only. But after the first week this restriction was removed “due to astounding demand”! The new tickets are valid for a month and apart from the basic reduction for adults children under 12 years of age are conveyed free if accompanied by a parent. Half fares apply for those between 13 and 18 years of age. Similar concessions were offered on provincial buses in the Cork and Galway areas only.

The object of this unusual exercise is to fill the many vacant seats on CIÉ trains during off-peak periods. Since January is usually the quietest month of the year for travel the long-term results of the experiment are awaited with great interest. When tried on the Waterford line the number of passengers rose by some 300% but the rise in receipts was less, though still highly significant, at 165%, because of the considerable fare reductions offered. It is too early to speculate on what will happen over an extended period of time but the initial response to the scheme (which was backed by a massive advertising campaign) was very enthusiastic, there being an avalanche of extra passengers. During the first week schoolchildren were on holiday so many parents took the opportunity to bring them on a shopping spree, leading (perhaps inevitably) to some dark comments about the “Great Provincial Town Robbery” - a point which deserves some sympathy.

To cope with the expected extra traffic in the first week some extra or altered services were arranged and most trains were strengthened. Happily, the exercise was accomplished without recourse to the “Secondary” coaching list. Doubtless there were many “new” train passengers and it was fortunate that modern comfortable vehicles were available on all trains. The extra trains were mainly on the Southern line and trains from Heuston Station were as follows:

08:45	Cork	18:00 return	No Limerick connection.
09:00	Limerick	18:30 return	Non-stop. Buffet car.
17:45	Limerick		Via Junction, no Nenagh line portion.
17:55	Limerick		Via Nenagh. Snack car.
18:05	Waterford		Deferment of 18:00.
18:30	Cork		No Tralee portion. Dining car.
18:45	Tralee		Buffet car.
19:00	Cork		With Limerick (via Junction) portion.

In addition to these major changes there were some consequential alterations to Up trains and also to connecting services. It is a tribute to those responsible for the planning of these services that they all operated most punctually. From the loading point of view the only disappointment amongst them was the lightly peopled 09:00 to Limerick.

Elsewhere on the CIÉ system the alterations were less evident. The 07:35 Galway/Portarlington train was provided with a snack car and was extended in running to Pearse Station. The snack cars on the 08:35 and 10:10 ex Westport and the 14:30 and 19:00 Pearse Station/Westport trains were replaced by buffet cars.

All the above arrangements ceased after the first week for the volume of traffic fell because of the reopening of schools throughout the country but the cash receipts were maintained at a level little short of the previous week. Well might a CIÉ official make the hackneyed comment about “laughing all the way to the bank!” CIÉ had indeed good reason to laugh, as a set of very revealing figures in the Sunday Independent showed:

“How they travelled on Tuesday last”

	Tuesday 4/1/1972	Monday 4/1/1971
Cork-Dublin	1,447	135
Waterford-Dublin	755	128
Limerick-Dublin	508	101
Galway-Dublin	861	214
Sligo-Dublin	671	186
Rosslare-Dublin	388	102
Tralee-Dublin	261	74
Westport-Dublin	424	152

Another table put in a nutshell just how drastic the fare reductions were:

“How the fares were slashed”

	Previous Costs	New Costs
Cork-Dublin	£8.30	£3.00
Limerick-Dublin	£6.30	£2.50
Galway-Dublin	£6.50	£2.50
Tralee-Dublin	£10.50	£3.50
Sligo-Dublin	£6.90	£2.50
Waterford-Dublin	£5.70	£2.00
Wexford-Dublin	£4.80	£2.00
Ballina-Dublin	£8.10	£3.00
Westport-Dublin	£8.20	£3.00
Mullingar-Dublin	£2.70	£1.00

According to the accompanying report an estimated 211,000 extra passengers had been carried during the first week of the “Sale”, bringing in some £250,000 to CIÉ.

There can be no doubt about the initiative taken by CIÉ in coming up with this scheme or about the success of its first weeks. Its future remains to be seen and certainly CIÉ are to be commended in that they are keeping an open mind on the subject. The “Sale” will continue as long as it continues to show benefits to CIÉ. At the time of writing no definite details are available but there are strong indications that the cheap fares will be issued during February and possibly March, when the situation will be reviewed again. The Assistant General Manager (Marketing) of CIÉ has been quoted: “I feel myself that the present rate will continue for the whole year round providing we are not losing money.”

With all the goodwill towards CIÉ which has been deservedly created by this scheme it may seem a little ungracious to make one or two minor criticisms. But there are anomalies in the fares which should be ironed out. In some cases the fares from a terminal station to Dublin are less than those from intermediate stations, this position having arisen from the fact that different areas are responsible for the stations concerned. The policy to be adopted should be uniform throughout the system. To do this would make the scheme well-nigh perfect.

New Bridge At Ballygannon

Heavy operations were in progress at Ballygannon, between Greystones and Wicklow, in early November, when a new bridge was installed. Our reporter was on the spot to note some of the train workings:

“A ballast train was due on the scene on Wednesday 10 November but only got as far as Bray that evening and stayed there until the following morning around 11:00, when all the passenger trains were

out of the way. There was another ballast train on the spot on Friday at 11:00 and on Sunday the Inchicore and Athlone cranes were there putting the bridge in its proper position. This job was not much to watch and they ran very late as it was 17:00 before a diesel ran over it, and stones had to be put down and packed after that. The packer which was stabled at Greystones went to Ballygannon to do some work in the early afternoon.”

The new bridge is on a new line and the latter was first used on the previous Sunday, 3 November.

“The first passenger train crawled over it at 5 mph (B141 + 5 bogies + HV + LV + bogie van). As the line improved at Ballygannon they allowed the trains over it at 15 mph.”

THE MCKINSEY REPORT ON CIÉ

Late in 1970 the Minister for Transport and Power set up a committee to examine the reasons for the steadily worsening financial condition of Córas Iompair Éireann. The committee in turn engaged the firm of McKinsey and Company, Management Consultants, to analyse the complex problems and to suggest possible solutions. The resulting report, entitled “Defining the Role of Public Transport in a Changing Environment” but inevitably referred to simply as “The McKinsey Report”, was published on 1 October last, at a price of £3. The main conclusions reached in it are as follows:

- (a) The financial problems of CIÉ arise firstly from the fact that costs are steadily increasing whereas the means of improving productivity have already been exploited, and secondly because CIÉ is facing increasing competition from private transport.
- (b) The major loss producer is the railway system. From a commercial point of view there is no justification for continuing commuter services or many of the freight services.
- (c) From a social point of view many of the railway services make a positive contribution to the community and should be retained and developed, but even taking social considerations into account some railway services can not be justified.
- (d) The present method used by the Government to finance CIÉ should be changed. More emphasis should be placed on giving grants for specific purposes.
- (e) Some changes at management level will have to be made to enable CIÉ to adapt to the changing environment which it now faces.

General Recommendations

- (1) Railway operations should be streamlined.
- (2) Other transport services should be developed.
- (3) The current methods of financing CIÉ should change.
- (4) The management structure should be modified.

These four recommendations are considered in more detail below, special attention being given to the first.

Streamlining Of Railway Operations

Freight Traffic: Sundries traffic is not viable at present but is near the break-even point. To help eliminate the losses the number of stations catering for sundries should be reduced substantially and loading/unloading operations should be mechanised as far as possible. Those responsible for the traffic should be given discretion to choose the lowest cost method for moving sundries, even if this means handing over some traffic to road vehicles, and consideration should be given to making sundries a separate profit-responsible department within CIÉ.

Wagon Load Traffic: This traffic is making heavy losses as, because of competition from road transport, increases in costs cannot always be passed on to the customer. The situation could be improved by concentrating movements between major centres, replacing the present fleet of low-capacity, slow-moving unbraked wagons by new purpose-built wagons, and by undertaking a complete review of the national distribution of current wagon load traffic. Relevant industries should participate in this review.

Bulk Train And Container Services: These are less costly to provide, being less labour intensive and, in fact, they are profitable at present. They should be developed as far as possible.

Commuter Services: These services are not profitable but their retention is justified when their social benefits are taken into account. With steadily increasing traffic congestion in cities the monetary value of these services in getting people quickly from one point to another far outweighs the losses incurred. The consultants feel that the diesel railcar sets which form the backbone of the commuter services are unsuitable as the vehicles have few doors, causing delays in handling passengers at stations. Further, the proportion of standing to sitting accommodation is low, resulting in a reduction of passenger-carrying capacity generally and one of critical proportions at rush hours. The railcar trains have poor acceleration and are costly to repair and to maintain.

It is recommended that CIÉ should consider obtaining carriages of special purpose design, allowing wider doors and higher passenger capacity by having increased standing room. It is also recommended that ticket issuing and checking procedures should be examined with a view to their simplification. Possible innovations would be ticket machines, automatic ticket turnstiles and a system for purchasing season tickets by post.*

Main Line passenger Services: These services cover their operating costs. In many cases the standards of comfort and speed are well above those which could be offered by buses over long distances. It is accordingly recommended that long-distance rail passenger services should be developed as at present. But the lightly-loaded cross-country passenger services should be examined carefully as in many cases buses could be used to provide a more efficient service.

Probable Effects

The implementation of the above suggestions will have an impact on railway stations, routes, rolling stock and personnel.

Stations: About 50 passenger stations at present have a revenue of less than £10,000 a year and are not covering their costs. Therefore, the report recommends, they should be closed progressively or converted into unmanned halts. The relevant stations are scattered all over the system and include those on the Loughrea branch, the South Wexford line and some on the Waterford/Limerick Junction line. Many goods stations should also be closed to traffic as over 30% of the goods stations now open handle less than ten tons per week. Once again they are widely distributed but there is a heavy concentration of them between Dublin and Drogheda and between Dublin and Mullingar. The Loughrea line is included as are almost all stations on the North Kerry line.

Quite a few stations are kept open for technical reasons - either they have level crossings or are crossing points on single lines. The report recommends that CIÉ should consider the elimination of passing loops on single lines, the installation of tokenless block working and the provision of more automatic barrier crossings.

Routes: It is considered that further major closures would not improve matters to any significant extent.

* Some of these suggestions have already been implemented by CIÉ as described in the news columns of the last and present issues of the IRN.

However, some opportunities for closure do exist and it is suggested that the goods only line between Ballingrane Junction and Tralee could be closed at a saving of up to £100,000 a year. Likewise, the Waterford/New Ross goods line could be eliminated. Passenger services withdrawal is a possibility on the Limerick/Claremorris line and on the Ballina branch. The Loughrea branch could also be closed as its present traffic could quite easily be handled by road services.

The Youghal line also came under scrutiny and was regarded as uneconomic. The report considers that the summer Sunday seaside passenger services might be allowed to continue as they are a considerable benefit to the people of Cork. But it is interestingly suggested that the possibility of allowing some other group such as a railway preservation society to operate it should be looked into.

Finally, as part of the reorganisation of the railway system, the report considers that some opportunities exist for diverting passenger trains to alternative routes; for example, the Dublin/Wexford/Rosslare line does not carry many passengers for stations south of Arklow. It would therefore be possible to close the section between Arklow and Wexford to passenger traffic, Dublin/Rosslare passengers would travel via Waterford. A through portion or a bus connection could be given to Wexford. In addition, the Ballybrough/Killonan line could be closed to passenger traffic and a service to Limerick be given via the Junction only.

Rolling Stock: The various changes outlined above would make it possible to reduce the number of classes of locomotive and to curtail the present re-engining programme. It should also be possible to reduce the number of bogie passenger coaches in operation from over 400 as at present to about 200, consisting of the new vehicles now on order along with the better coaches put into service in the 1950s and 1960s. The wagon fleet could be better utilised and many of the present older vehicles could be withdrawn. The present shortage of special purpose wagons and those for container and unit load traffic should be remedied.

Personnel: At present 9,500 men are employed on railway operations. The implementation of the preceding proposals would result in a reduction of about 10%. As any large-scale redundancy programme would be costly it is recommended that as far as possible staff numbers should be reduced gradually through retirement, natural wastage and a restriction on recruitment.

Probable Results Of Recommendations

- (a) A growth in commuter traffic as a result of improved services and rolling stock and continuing city traffic congestion.
- (b) A slight decline in other passenger traffic as a result of station closures, etc.
- (c) An increase in the volume of container and bulk traffic.
- (d) A slight increase in freight traffic.
- (e) A decline in sundries traffic as a more selective approach is taken.
- (f) An increase in revenue of about £1,000,000 a year.
- (g) A like decrease in operating costs.

Developing Other Transport Services

Dublin Bus Services: These are, at present, just about covering costs due to a decrease in passengers carried and increases in expenses. The following remedies are suggested:

- (1) A reduction in the licence charge per bus.
- (2) The making of capital grants towards new bus costs.
- (3) The making of special street and traffic arrangements for buses, e.g. special bus lanes.

- (4) Running Dublin City bus services and Dublin rail commuter services as a single entity, with combined marketing, planning, scheduling and pricing. Buses could be used as feeders to rail services.
- (5) Incorporating public transport planning with long-term regional planning.

Provincial Bus Services: These are operating at a profit although many services lose money. Bus services in provincial centres should be given the same concessions as the Dublin city services and consideration should be given to the payment of subsidies to country bus services.

Road Freight: These services just about cover costs. During the 1960s CIÉ's share in the road freight market declined and this trend is likely to continue as the number of licensed hauliers increases. The report states that road freight operations should be carried on as an independent business and not mainly as a feeder service to the railway. Area managers should have increased authority and should be able to offer either rail or road services to customers within broad policy limits, and be allowed to lease vehicles from other road hauliers to provide the level of service required.

Changes In Methods Of Finance

As it is not known how much the various CIÉ services benefit from the present subsidy and as a blanket subsidy would probably not be permitted under EEC transport policy, it is recommended that CIÉ should receive an annual grant to cover the fixed costs of railway maintenance and special annual grants for socially desirable rail links.

Changes In Management Structure Of CIÉ

While the present basic manager should remain, a railway manager should be appointed to take charge of overall rail financial performance and to implement the recommended changes. Separate managers would be required for the Sundries Division and the combined Dublin Bus/Rail Commuter Division (if these are set up).

The Aim

The report believes that the recommendations will help to promote the evolution of an efficient transport system.

NORTHERN IRELAND RAILWAYS

Central Railway

On 9 December the Leader of the Northern Ireland House of Commons stated that the decision on whether or not to reopen the Belfast Central Railway and to build a new Central Station would be announced "early in the new year". He said that meetings between the Ministry for Development, NIR and the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company had taken place and that information was being made available to the Ministry to enable it to reach a considered view of the proposals.

Bomb Damage

Considerable damage was done at Queen's Quay Station on 27 November when a bomb exploded against the wall of the bar. The bar was wrecked and a great amount of glass in office windows and in the concourse roof was broken. The incident took place at 09:00 and had it not been a Saturday morning very many injuries would have been caused. As it was, three people were hurt, none seriously. No trains were damaged but two had to be cancelled. It took some 50 workmen most of the day to clear up the debris.

Another bomb caused slight damage to Whiteabbey Station on 20 December and next day there was a bomb scare at Great Victoria Street Station. Army experts blew the lid off a box thought to contain

another bomb, but it held nothing more sinister than used football coupons.

Notable Honour

Mr W.J. Topley, the NIR Operating Superintendent, received the MBE in London on 2 December. It is a considerable time since any such recognition has been accorded to anyone in the Irish railway service.

Helen's Bay

Considerable alterations have been made here recently. The crossover was put out of use on 1 November and removed on the 7th. The facing siding on the Down side was lifted on 25 November as far as the accommodation level crossing. Work started on the 22nd on raising the height of the Down platform.

Executive

On 5 November NIR advertised for a Marketing Executive Officer who will be required to make recommendations regarding the entire range of passenger services, fares, etc.

DE Railcars

Railcars 73 and 74 returned to active service in November and October, respectively. Both had been in the works under repair for a considerable time. Car 78 also appeared freshly painted in early November, after having been out of service for approximately two months.

With three motor coaches off the line all at the same time some trains had to be reduced in size. Thus, for example, the Belfast-based DE railcar set for the main line services was only three coaches; it ran without a buffet car.

During this enforcedly slack period the catering services were “balanced” by the temporary withdrawal of buffet car 550, which is based in Derry, from all its rostered workings. So far as is known the public was given no notification of the interrupted buffet car services, an omission which could hardly help a revival of trade when the cars were restored.

Services went back to normal when the Belfast set grew in size on 12 November. As first working it comprised: Nos. 74, 701, 554 (Buffet), 727 and 73.

Permanent Way Notes

Considerable quantities of new sleepers and other permanent way materials are being observed running almost daily northwards through Ballymena.

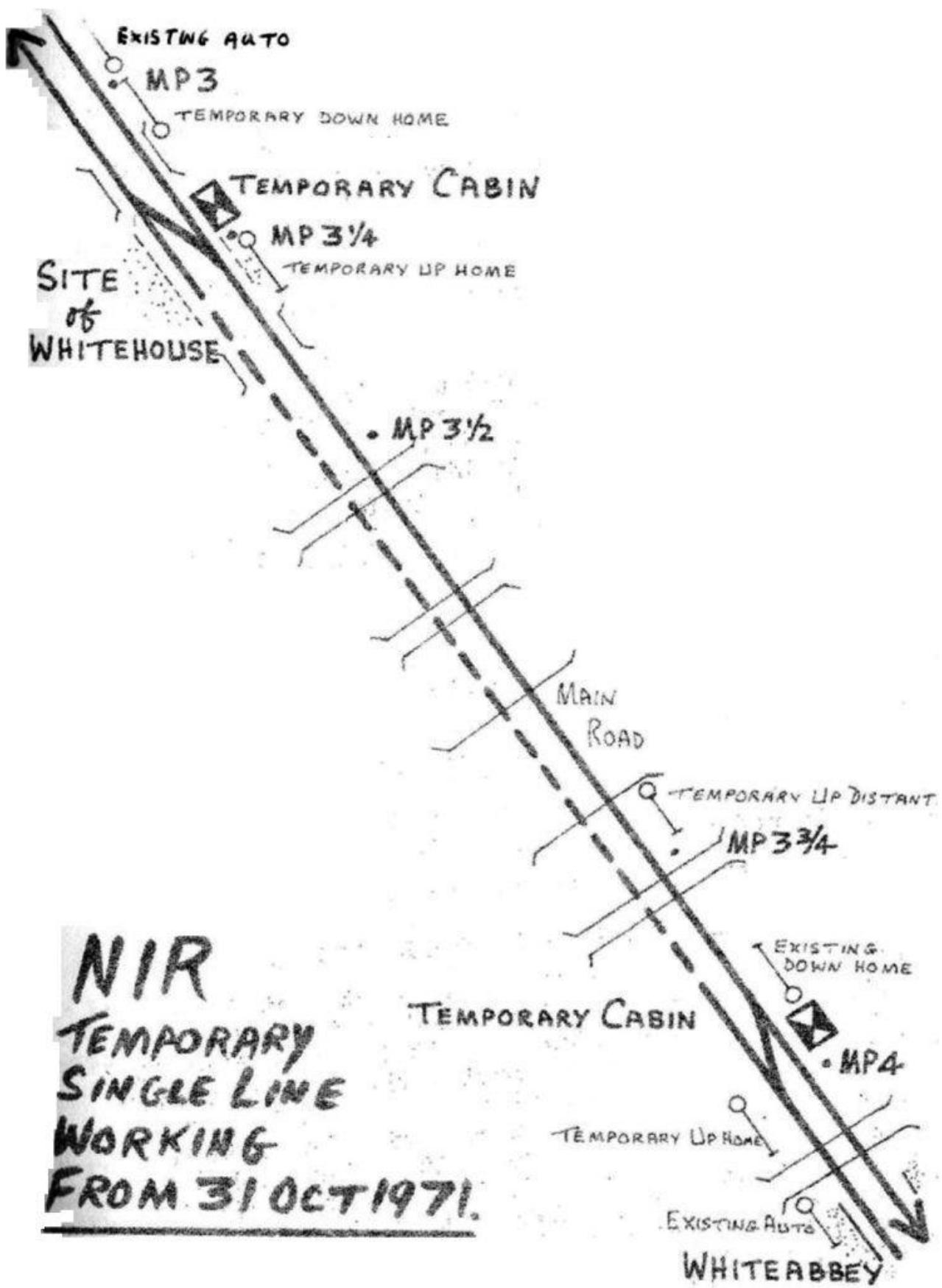
MPD trailers 540 and 542 have been noted in use as brake vans on permanent way materials trains.

Main Line Excavations

To permit heavy repairs to the drainage system under the Up main line between Whitehouse and Whiteabbey single-line operation was introduced on 31 October between those two points. Temporary crossovers, signal cabins and electric signals were installed, as shown on the diagram. Most of the line concerned is located in a very deep cutting and good drainage is essential in view of the very high speeds attainable by Up main line trains hereabouts if the present 50 mph speed limit is raised. During the work sections of the Up line were removed as required, excavators moving in on the site. The line was restored to normal on 6 December.

Larne Line Alterations

For the duration of the work described above a temporary service operated to and from the Larne line. Quite a number of trains were involved. Some had their timings altered while others were cancelled altogether.



Derry Goods

The use of the diesel-hydraulic locomotives on the Derry/Lisburn goods trains has ceased.

Christmas Services

The 1971 Christmas Services booklet showed that the entire system was closed on both 25 and 26 December. Until 1969 at least a skeleton service operated on the Bangor Line on Christmas Day every year, and 1970 was the first year in which even this was omitted.

On 27 December last there were only seven services each way on the Bangor Line, six on the Larne Line, two on the Main Line and three on the Portrush Branch. Apart from the Main Line, on which two train sets were required, one set sufficed for the services on all other lines. There was a reduced service on 28 December also.

Idle

The new colour light signals and tokenless block equipment on the main line between Ballymena and Ballymoney are still not in operation.

Fares For Pensioners

A scheme to allow Old Age Pensioners to travel at half fares was introduced for a trial period on 11 December. As in the case of the free travel scheme for pensioners on CIÉ the tickets are issued on production of the pension book.

SHANE'S CASTLE RAILWAY AND NATURE RESERVE

During the 1971 season the Reserve attracted some 36,500 visitors, most of whom travelled on the railway. This is a most encouraging start and it is hoped that it is a good omen for the future. During the present winter it is hoped to build 2 additional coaches, not 4 as we stated previously. In addition a roof will be fitted to one of the open coaches and one (with a handbrake) will be completely rebuilt as a brake van with a short veranda at each end.

It is planned to lay an additional siding at Antrim Station leading to a small turntable acquired from Larne Harbour. Originally mixed 3ft/5ft3in gauge the turntable will now, of course, be confined to 3ft.

Feature Section

HIGH SPEED ON THE NARROW-GAUGE

(M. E. Bunch)

In the early days of the County Donegal the Derry/Strabane section was the most important part of the system connecting the several branches radiating in the Co. Donegal to the city and port of Derry. Prior to 1900 Strabane had been the railhead of the Donegal lines but because of the need to obviate transhipment of freight onto the GNR for the few miles to Derry a narrow-gauge line was built to that city. It was always worked by the CDR but was owned completely by the Midland Railway.

A look at the timetable for 1906 shows that there were six trains a day each way between Derry and Strabane, which continued onto or came from the extremities of the Donegal network. The fastest was the early morning train from Derry to Ballyshannon, which covered the 14½ miles to Strabane in 36 minutes. The timetable was:

Derry	07:20
New Buildings	07:26
Cullion	07:36
Donemana	07:40
Ballymagorry	07:50
Strabane	07:56

To achieve this timing called for some smart running and quick station work, but it could be done, as I found even in the line's last year.

The first 1½ miles from Derry were dead level, along the bank of the River Foyle, and trains would rapidly accelerate to 40 mph before climbing to New Buildings, 1¼ miles further on. This station was on a 1:81 gradient so that restarts were quite slow and trains would only have reached about 25 mph at the summit (217ft) at 4¾ miles. Once over the summit the long descent to the next station, Cullion, produced speeds in excess of 40 mph but the station had to be entered cautiously because of the level crossing just before it. Cullion was 6½ miles from Derry.

All the way to Donemana the line was on a slight decline - 1:459, 1:279 and 1:81 - but was fairly twisty so that 35 mph was a safe maximum speed. At Donemana (8¼ miles) there was a 2 minute stop during which staffs were exchanged and the crossing gates opened. Then came another, shorter, climb along which there were two short respites - a level patch and a ¼-mile descent - where the train would reach 35 mph. It would reach 40 on the drop into Ballymagorry (11¾ miles), and this speed would be regained beyond the station as far as the 13 milepost, at which speed was eased for a reverse curve. Another ¼-mile brought the line to the sweep round and artificial climb over a series of bridges at the approach to Strabane. But with clear signals the train could easily pull into the platform within the 36 minutes of leaving Derry.

Taking into account station times we have a net time of 32 minutes, which gives an average speed of 27 mph for the 14½ miles - quite a good figure for the Irish narrow gauge. There was an additional "stops on request" halt at Ballyheather, but as trains frequently ran through it has been ignored above. In 1908 a further halt was opened at Desertone and from then on trains were allowed more time. In the final years, up to the closure at the end of 1954, the fastest timing in the timetable was 45 minutes but this was frequently bettered as the trains were light and the track good, being maintained by the NCC and hence superior to the rest of the CDR track.

One good journey recorded in autumn 1954 is worth describing. The train was the Saturday 13:35 from Derry, consisting of 2 coaches and loco only. There was a ten minute late start and at 13:45 the train leapt away for an exciting run to Strabane. By this time there were few regular passengers and most of the stops could be omitted, resulting in a fast run.

New Buildings was passed in some 7¼ minutes and the climb up to Desertone taken in fine style, the halt being passed in exactly 13 minutes. Coming out of the deep cutting and onto the downgrade the speed built up almost to the 40 mark (23 seconds for 5½-5¾). It was then eased for the curves and crossing before Cullion, where the train arrived in just over 16 minutes and made a stop of some 15 seconds. Then off again, covering the 2 miles to Donemana in a little over 5 minutes. By then the passing loop had been long removed and the whole line was one section. Less than a minute was spent at Donemana and then the train tackled the second bank, climbing up through the trees above the River Dennet. The line then turned left away from the river, through a cutting, and onto open moorland, where the little halt of Ballyheather could be seen. It was devoid of intending passengers so the train barely slowed and forged on to Ballymagorry, reached in 9 minutes 10 seconds after leaving Donemana. At one point on this stretch the speed had reached 28.

Half a minute sufficed for the Ballymagorry passengers to climb aboard and the train departed just 32

minutes after leaving Derry, but by this time the loco crew had enough of speed and apart from a spurt down the last bank to the river level there was nothing special. The final curves and climb up over the GNR line at the approach to Strabane were taken very cautiously, as always, but the train came to a stand at the platform in 39 minutes 50 seconds. The net time was about 38 minutes, giving an average speed of 23 mph.

The nearest I ever got again to such a run was on 20 November 1954, when loco No.1 and coaches 17 and 53 maintained the scheduled 45 minutes exactly, including 4½ minutes of station time. Trains in the other direction on the line never seemed to achieve the same speed, in my experience at any rate. The Derry/Strabane line closed after the last train on 31 December 1954 - an event recorded in the first issue of the Irish Railfans' News.

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Advance Notice

At least three Irish transport books will be published in the first part of 1972. In July, David & Charles bring out both "The Clogher Valley Railway" and "The Ballinamore & Ballyconnell Canal", while Transport Research Associates will publish in April/May "The Baronial Lines Of The MGWR", the detailed history of the Loughrea and Ballinrobe lines.