

THE

# IRISH RAILFANS' NEWS

Volume 14

January 1968

No.1

## Managing Committee:

C. D. Seymour

B. J. Pender

P. J. Flanagan

R. C. Flewitt

---

**EDITORIAL**

Traffic congestion, a problem for cities and towns the world over, is no stranger to Dublin. With the post-war suburban sprawl and industrial expansion, vehicular traffic in the city has reached frightening proportions and has provided a series of headaches for the authorities. Clearways, one-way streets and traffic circuses have helped somewhat, but the problem keeps growing. CIÉ city bus services in turn suffer long delays as a result of this congestion, and Mr F. Lemass, director and general manager of CIÉ, is actively engaged with his officials and those of Dublin Corporation in trying to avoid such delays and consequently to save money. Short of Government legislation, however, there would seem to be no way to make the motorised businessman leave his car at home and join the 51% of commuters on a city-bound bus.

One may wonder at this point if the suburban rail services help at all; in fact, they carry 3% of all Dublin-bound commuters. The under-utilisation of these rail services, we are told, continues to exercise the minds of CIÉ officials. In fact, surveys of 1964 and 1967, carried out with the co-operation of rail commuters, have brought only minor improvements to a service which is irregular and therefore unattractive to prospective passengers. CIÉ should first carry out market research among bus passengers and motorists in suburban rail areas, and then introduce trial services on a regular interval basis. Backed up with a comprehensive advertising campaign, quoting contract rates, the results should be encouraging both for the railways and for reducing city congestion. If success could be achieved on the lines radiating north and south from the city, CIÉ railwaymen could take heart and set about the introduction and development of suburban rail services in westerly directions, to places in the Ashtown, Lucan and Clondalkin areas. All are locations offering great potential for the future.

-o-O-o-o-O-o-

**The IRN Questionnaire**

We are indebted to our readers for their response to our questionnaire, sent out with our last issue. So great has been the number of replies (completed forms reached us up to Christmas) that we are still engaged in analysing the multitude of suggestions. To all who offered comment and advice we extend our thanks, and we look forward to implementing readers' suggestions where practicable in future issues of the IRN.

-o-O-o-o-O-o-

We wish all our many readers and friends a happy New Year.

**BOOK REVIEW**

**“Irish Railways Today”, Brendan Pender & Herbert Richards (Transport Research Associates)**

With the publication of this 168-page book in late October, a new style of literature became available to

the railway enthusiast. Basically, it is a guide to Irish railways (CIÉ and NIR) as they look today. Part One describes in 30 sections all routes in use, with details of stations and other points of interest. Brief historical data are provided for each section of line, and locations of former stations, sidings, etc., are indicated. Part Two deals with locomotives and rolling stock in use on the two systems, and the tables of CIÉ-introduced stock therein will prove invaluable to many enthusiasts. The final portion of the book deals in brief with signalling, traffic, and lineside features, while inside the back cover is a map of the rail network.

Great care has been taken by the authors to ensure accuracy, although some minor errors will be evident to the zealous critic. Apart from accuracy, the biggest single task in compilation has been the need to avoid boredom in describing each station and this has been coped with admirably, although more details of tunnels and major engineering works would have been a useful addition. A more comprehensive map - showing the important lines to Silvermines and Castlemungret - might have been included. However, bearing in mind the attractive cover, 39 half-tone illustrations and 12 line drawings, the volume is modestly priced at one pound. **CDS**

### **SOME ARTICLES OF IRISH RAILWAY INTEREST**

#### **Journal Of The Irish Railway Record Society**

October      Irish Railways in 1865  
                  Dublin Southern District Tramways  
                  CIÉ: Maintaining a Railway Fleet  
                  Webb Compounds for Ireland?

#### **Railway World**

October      The Things That Have Gone  
December    Irish Railways in 1867

#### **Railway Magazine**

December    No.800 (Cover picture in colour of 4-6-0 800)

### **INTERESTING INFORMATION**

#### **Loco Utilisation On CIÉ**

We have often received requests for details of shed allocations of the CIÉ loco fleet and we hope that the following details will be of use. It is, unfortunately, not possible to give specific loco allocations as, with very few exceptions, CIÉ locos work on a cyclic roster or diagram, the object of which is to ensure that each loco visits Inchicore Works once each fortnight for intensive routine examination. Apart from oddities like the G-class on the Loughrea Branch, most engines work to this pattern and thus one cannot say that, for instance, B161 is allocated to Limerick.

The greatest concentration of locos at any given time is at Inchicore, where there are running depots for railcars and locos (the latter being known as "The Ramps") apart from the loco works. Other Dublin depots are at Grand Canal Street (near Pearse Station), Connolly Station (E-class shunters only) and Fairview (railcars only). The main provincial depots are at Cork and Limerick. With lesser depots at Tralee, Galway, Sligo, Athlone, Westport, Ballina, Mullingar and Dundalk. There is a railcar depot at Bray. Maintenance facilities have been withdrawn from Rosslare Harbour and Waterford, but fuel is available at both those points and at certain others, including Limerick Junction, Drogheda, Mallow, Thurles and Loughrea.

Readers anxious to observe pilot locos should not overlook the three yards at North Wall, Dublin.

Pilots are also on duty at Shelton Abbey (Arklow), Kilkenny, Thurles, Roscrea, Ballina and Portlaoise. Some of these are G-class locos.

---

## News Section

---

### CÓRAS IOMPAIR ÉIREANN

#### **Increase in Fares**

From 1 January 1968, the CIÉ rates and fares have been increased. Railway passengers will pay an extra 10% both for ordinary and season tickets, while a similar increase is made on existing freight charges. The Rail Rambler ticket, incidentally, goes up to £8 from £7-5-0 for the standard class rail only ticket. Road passengers will pay even more – 12.5% extra, outside Dublin, Cork and Limerick, where the city fares are increased by 1<sup>d</sup> generally. Unfortunate as the increases are, they are justified if CIÉ are to attempt to work within the £2m subsidy paid annually by the Exchequer. The last rise in fares, in June 1966, did not cover the increase in wages resulting from the “tenth round”. To this must be added the cost of recently improved conditions of employment in all the various ranks, together with that of dearer materials. While the deficit on 31 March 1967 amounted to £398,000, it is estimated that the loss for the current year will reach £600,000, after the subsidy is paid. The present subsidy payments are due to cease on 31 March 1969, but it seems likely that special legislation will be introduced to extend them. Notwithstanding adverse criticism of the present increases, the General Manager, Mr Lemass, announced that further increases would be made in 1968 if the Board deemed it necessary. The one ray of hope for a brighter future lies in the increased productivity and new business (the latter is some 5.7% per annum) of the recent past.

#### **Others Please Note!**

Brake vans are to be removed from all fully vacuum braked goods, mineral and oil trains in the near future, and the guards will ride with the driver in the loco cab. In contrast to the furore caused by a similar proposal on British Rail, the step has been welcomed by CIÉ train crews. In the past, considerable difficulty has been experienced with brake vans on such trains, which make long non-stop runs at over 50 mph. The brake vans were not designed for such workings.

#### **Signalling Notes**

A number of new colour-light signals are in use since our last issue. The Down Distant at Hazelhatch was replaced by a new colour-light signal on 27 November. It is over 1¼ miles from the Home signal. On 1 October the Up Home for Dundalk North Cabin became a 3-aspect colour light, with a new ground disc replacing the former “Up Home to Loop” signal. The GNR style “limit of shunt” fixed arm semaphore on the Up line has been replaced by a sign. The Central Cabin Up Home and “Call On” signals on the footbridge were replaced by one 3-aspect colour light signal.

As mentioned in The 1967 Beet Campaign feature below, Ballyglunin Cabin, which closed on 10 July, was restored on 23 October when the Tuam Beet Campaign commenced. However, it was closed again on 11 December. The ETS instruments and all the points and signals were reconnected for the beet traffic. The former Thurles Junction cabin is now officially “Thurles Sugar Factory Sidings Box”; those at Mallow and Tuam are merely referred to as Mallow BFS” and Tuam BFS” respectively. Other alterations appear in the Station Improvements Report below.

## **Locos Old And Current**

With effect from 27 November, "Vigilance Equipment" is being added to the deadman's device on A- and C-class locos. Every 2½ minutes an amber light on the instrument panel glows and the driver must then release and reapply the deadman's pedal or handle. Failure to do so will cause a brake application and the cutting of power, as if the deadman's handle were released only. No other classes are being so equipped at present. Work is still in progress at Inchicore Works on the installation of General Motors diesel engines in locos A58 and A59.

B122 and B128 are now the only locos of their type to retain the original yellow and grey livery; all others are black and brown. Two of the D-class diesel-electric shunters work at Heuston Goods from time to time, while another of the class, D302, which was reported as withdrawn for scrapping in 1966, is still at Inchicore. Also in the works, redundant, are the 3 F-class (3ft gauge) locos off the West Clare section, which was closed in 1961. Another West Clare engine, 0-6-2T No.5, preserved by CIÉ at Ennis, was repainted during the summer. So also was ex-GS&WR 0-6-0T No.90 at Mallow. It was announced on 9 December at the IRRS Annual Dinner that CIÉ intend to preserve ex-D&SER 2-6-0 461 at Wexford, GNR 4-4-0 131 at Dundalk and GS&WR 184 at Inchicore.

## **Railcar Notes**

Owing to their engines being obsolete, the AEC railcars are being maintained in running order with difficulty. It has become virtually impossible to obtain spare parts and some of the cars have been laid up for a considerable time and cannibalised to keep others going. Cars 2610 and 2627 were observed at Inchicore on 6 December with newly fitted shields below the front buffer beams, similar to those on the General Motors locos. These are apparently intended to protect the vacuum brake quick release cylinders. Many of these cars and the BUT units have been fitted over a period with Clayton Dewandre fan heaters in addition to the existing steam heating equipment. The new heaters are located under certain seats and are fed with hot water from the engine cooling system. An electric fan circulates hot air from each heater. The same type of heater is used on many of CIÉ's buses.

## **Rolling Stock Developments**

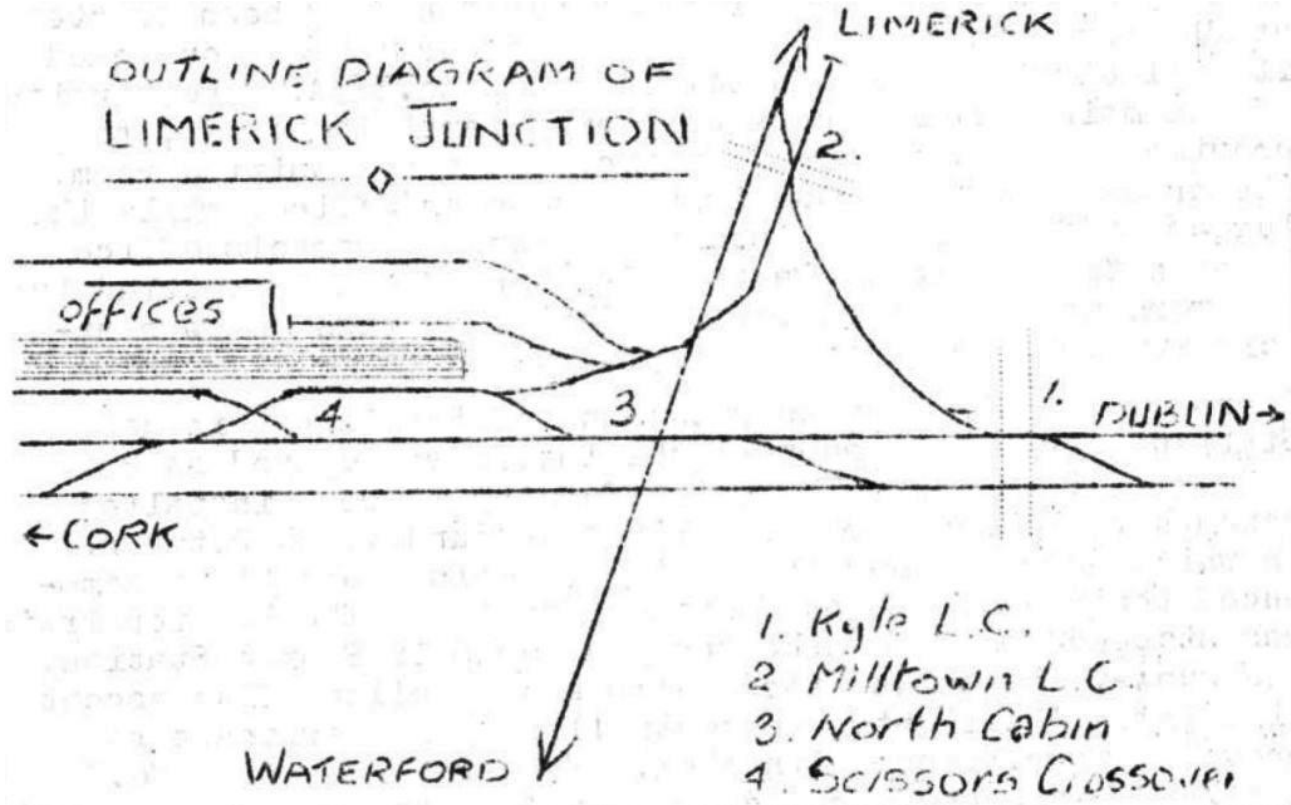
The first of a new series of Craven coaches to be assembled at Inchicore has appeared in traffic. The series will be numbered 1544-58, and to date two of the batch have been in operation. They are open-centre standard class coaches seating 64 passengers, and are similar in layout to the preceding Cravens. The interior appearance has been much improved, however, by the use of imitation wood panelling on the walls in place of the grey panelling previously used. In addition, the appearance is improved further by the use of blue upholstery on the seats. Work is also proceeding on three Post Office sorting vans. These are to be conversions of existing bogie coaches and they will supplement the existing fleet of seven bogie and ten 4-wheeled PO vans.

Early in October, CIÉ invited tenders for the supply of new bogie heating vans. Up to now all heating vans have been 4- or 6-wheeled vehicles and it is believed that the reason underlying the choice of bogie stock is to allow for higher speeds on the main (particularly the Cork) lines in the future. Consequent upon the closing of the oil gas plant at Inchicore, the fleet of 4-wheeled gas tank wagons has been withdrawn and the use of the few remaining gas-lit coaches is now restricted to peak services in the summer. For some time past, all buffet and kitchen cars have been using bottled gas instead of the CIÉ-produced oil gas used heretofore. Ex-GNR kitchen car 272N has been withdrawn from traffic for scrapping and all fittings removed. No work has yet been done on projected improvements to the buffet cars.

## **Station Improvements Report**

Limerick Junction: The new Dublin-Limerick direct curve, which can accommodate 2 locos, 60

wagons and a brake van clear of the main lines, was brought into use, for goods trains only, on 16 October. Owing to a delay over the delivery of electric signalling equipment, the points have to be worked by hand, and all trains are accompanied by a hand signalman. There are no signals in use apart from fixed red lights at each end to mark the fouling points. For the present only the Up and Down Dublin/Limerick goods trains use the loop regularly, but others may do so if the station is congested. The general layout at the station is shown in the diagram.



The scissors crossing was renewed on 12 November on the original site, as experience has established the value of having No.1 platform as long as possible. The new crossover is slightly longer than the original, with a resulting easier curve but it still has a 15 mph restriction. The new canopy on No.1 platform is complete and repairs have been made where the main canopy was damaged in the goods train crash of 28 July.

**Connolly Station:** The mails conveyor belt from the new sorting office was used on 13 December for the first time. It has had some teething troubles but is a great labour and time saver. A number of new barrows has been provided and a Lancing-Bagnall electric tractor is available to haul them; it is the first such unit at the station. In addition to the repainting, some further building work is in progress. A prefabricated building has been erected at Platform 2 for use by Customs Officers; when completed it will displace the "Customs Coach", No.363A. Two portions of the main entrance hall are being partitioned off, to provide a new left luggage office and a new waiting room. The present waiting room is to become an office, while the luggage office will replace the cavernous parcels office beneath the station. Part of Platform 2 has been tiled but the work was suspended for the Christmas rush. New platform number boards have been provided.

**Pearse Station:** The new 8-window booking office is now in use, as is the subway; the latter was opened on 20 December. The units forming it were installed beneath the through running lines on Sunday, 15 October, on which date the morning trains to Galway and Sligo commenced their journeys at Connolly Station. The Up Pier Train was stopped at one of the bay platforms in Pearse Station. The

subway has white tiled walls and excellent fluorescent lighting. The lights are controlled by key-switches to prevent interference with them. The exit ramp from No.3 platform has been narrowed by four feet to give much-needed extra width on the platform. Other innovations are: a new ticket-collector's box on Platform 4, a small wooden hut for the shunter's telephone on No.3, and an impressive new doorway to the offices of the Civil Engineer's Department. The footbridge is at present closed to the public. A new public-address system is presently on trial at Platforms 4/5.

*North Wall:* Several grassy banks in the Midland and British Rail yards have been levelled in the course of a general tidying up operation. The spoil was dumped in the closed Royal Canal (owned by CIÉ) both at the Midland store and at Newcomen Bridge. This was done mostly by lorry, but a train-load was dumped at Newcomen Bridge on 12 November.

*Dunsandle:* A minor improvement in progress in October at one of the few remaining intermediate stations on a branch line was the provision of a bathroom!

*Rosslare Strand:* The footbridge from New Ross is being transferred here to replace the wooden steps leading to the road overbridge. The latter partially collapsed on 23 July, when a Mystery Train from Tipperary arrived, causing slight injuries to a few passengers.

*Arklow:* Work began in early December on a much-needed extension of the loop. A dormitory has been erected on the Up platform for the staff working at the sidings at Shelton Abbey.

*Raheny:* The new road overbridge was completed in October, but the temporary extensions to the platforms are still in place. Work has not yet started on the improved entrance to the Up platform.

*Sligo:* The station buffet was in use last summer, for the second successive season. The catering facilities were provided by an outside contractor. An installation for handling tar and bitumen traffic has been provided at Sligo Quay and much of the grass-grown trackwork has been cleaned up.

*Waterford:* A new dormitory is being provided. Work is at present in progress on the new station building, the construction of which is already well advanced.

### **Lisduff Quarry**

The closure of this important ballast quarry, reported in our last issue, was only a temporary measure while the aerial ropeway from the stone crusher to the loading bunker or "ben" was being removed. It has been replaced by three electrically powered conveyor belts, one of which passes under the public road. The winch-operated siding up to the quarry "works" has disappeared completely apart from the level crossing. The normal working of ballast trains resumed on 6 November.

### **Station Prizes**

Malahide Station, in addition to winning the prize for the best-kept station of its size for the seventh successive year, received the highest marks ever awarded in the National Roadside Gardens competition organised by Bord Fáilte Éireann. This was the third successive win in the latter competition and as a special tribute to Foreman McCann's efforts CIÉ arranged to present him with the trophy in perpetuity and have presented a new trophy to Bord Fáilte for future competitions. (See also below.)

### **Cheap Weekends**

It was 17 October before it was announced that the "Cheap Weekends" were being resumed, the first on 20-23 October. At the same time it was stated that the popular cheap day excursion fares or Sundays would not be reintroduced, and that only the Sunday services shown in the timetable would be run, apart from one leaving Tralee for Mallow at 16:50 on Sunday. Despite the short notice, considerable numbers availed of the first weekend, and on the Sunday the 19:00 Limerick/Dublin train was particularly overcrowded and late. By degrees some of the extra trains on the "Cheap Sundays" have

been restored: Limerick - Nenagh - Dublin (one-way) on 5 November (there was an extra Dublin - Limerick Junction - Limerick train at 18:45 on 3 November), Dublin - Belfast at 18:00 on 5 November, Dublin - Wexford and back on 19 November. The latter was not advertised until very shortly before the weekend, following a notice that such a train would not run; it was poorly patronised. A service from Westport to Athlone, connecting with the 19:30 Galway/Dublin train, was provided on 3 December but not on 14 December. Although the cheap Sunday excursions were popular and did quite a lot to introduce passengers to the advantages of rail travel, illegal transferring of tickets was depriving CIÉ of much-needed revenue. The “Cheap Weekends” for early 1968 are:

|       |          |       |          |
|-------|----------|-------|----------|
| 12-15 | January  | 26-29 | January  |
| 9-12  | February | 23-26 | February |
| 8-11  | March    | 22-25 | March    |
| 5-8   | April    | 19-22 | April    |
| 3-6   | May      | 17-20 | May      |

### **A Novel Use**

Ambulance Coach AM12 was used for an unusual, but appropriate, purpose at Limerick recently. While in the station it was used as a “surgery” for the staff to receive anti-flu injections which are provided free of charge by CIÉ.

### **Trespassers Will Be Prosecuted**

In November thirteen people were fined £1 for walking over the Boyne Viaduct at Drogheda. It was remarked that the prosecution was brought to warn people of the danger of using the bridge as a (very convenient) short-cut, as there was every likelihood of injury to trespassers from moving trains. If not discouraged, people would quickly come to use this route across the Boyne as a matter of routine.

### **Prizes Again**

In the CIÉ station prize scheme the winners were as shown in the table below. As mentioned above Malahide is a prize-winner in a class of its own!

Group A: Mallow; Tullamore/Cork; Limerick.

Group B: Athenry/Ballybrophy; Bagenalstown/Collooney.

Group C: Malahide; Dalkey/Adare; Little Island/Attymon Junction.

### **Malahide Viaduct**

The final span was renewed on 29 October, the NIR 36-ton crane being borrowed once again. On the previous Sunday most of the equipment was taken away and subsequently some of the old girders were recovered from the water. The permanent parapet is all that remains unfinished and the 50 mph speed restriction should disappear soon.

### **Lining Machine**

The latest item of track maintenance equipment is a “Lining Machine” by Plasser & Theurer. Its function is to remove - by lateral pulling - all kinks from track whether straight or curved. It can operate at up to 5 mph on straights and when running between working sites it can attain 40 mph. It was used at first on the Howth Branch, being based at Sutton Tram Shed, and then went to work north of Malahide.

### **News From Rosslare**

The pilot engine at Rosslare Harbour, latterly a C-class, was withdrawn in October. It was rarely needed since goods traffic ceased on the Fishguard steamers. With effect from 2 January 1968 the 02:15 steamer will be retimed to 14:00 and will run on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, returning



on the same days at 23:30. This will mean the replacement of the 06:15 express to Cork with another train, leaving at 18:00 (see below).

It was announced on 5 October that a car-ferry ship would operate from Le Havre to Rosslare on Saturdays (returning on Sundays) commencing on 1 June 1968. It is to be the 5,700 ton MV "Leopard" of Normandy Ferries. As this ship is a stern-loader a special berth is being prepared. A ramp is to be erected at the present No.3 berth and the vessel will use No.2 berth. As the "Leopard" is much larger even than the "Duke of Rothesay" a considerable amount of dredging is required to admit her.

An additional train, on Saturdays only, runs from Wexford to Rosslare Harbour at 13:10. It is for holders of free school tickets and it returns empty following the 15:10 passenger. It is unusual to find special trains operated as part of the free school transport scheme, normally buses (including some old UTA vehicles) are used.

### **Foot & Mouth**

Many strict measures were introduced by the Government in Dublin during November and December to prevent the spread of this cattle disease to Ireland from Britain. Fearing a last-minute rush of Christmas holiday exiles, possibly carrying the virus with them, the Department of Agriculture & Fisheries placed daily passenger quotas on all cross-channel shipping and air services from midnight on Friday 15 December. In fact this limited British Rail steamers to carrying 1,000 persons per voyage via Holyhead and Dun Laoghaire, and 500 on the Fishguard-Rosslare route. Following the announcement British Rail immediately cancelled all the extra sailings which had been arranged on the Holyhead route, but this move was dramatically superseded by the complete suspension of passenger services on both routes from midnight on Sunday 17 December.

The loss of those connections together with many air ticket cancellations left CIÉ with no alternative but to cancel virtually all the special trains planned for the Christmas period. The company estimated the loss of passengers at between 20,000 and 30,000. Sailings were resumed by British Rail on the Holyhead and Fishguard routes after midnight on 27 December. During the suspensions the cross channel mails were routed via Dublin (North Wall) and Holyhead on the cargo services. In December, too, shipments of store cattle to Britain ceased and, with Irish livestock marts and fairs also restricted, cattle traffic was very severely cut.

### **Simple But Welcome**

A seemingly simple operation, but one which in practice often caused the greatest difficulty, is the pouring of tea or coffee from pot to cup in the refreshment car of a moving train! Diners should find it less tricky in future; at the suggestion of CIÉ catering staff, the new menu cards have a little coloured diagram, captioned "How to Pour".

### **Timetable Alterations**

Mentioned previously in brief, the timetable changes resulting from the recasting of the BR Fishguard-Rosslare steamers are given in full below. They are effective on and from 2 January.

| Train              | Now Leaves | Arrives             | Days Run |
|--------------------|------------|---------------------|----------|
| 06:15 ex Rosslare  | 18:00      | 21:55 Cork          | (TTS)    |
| 18:20 ex Cork      | 18:30      | 22:35 Rosslare      | (TTS)    |
| 18:20 ex Cork      | 18:30      | 19:07 Mallow        | (MWF)    |
| 17:45 ex Waterford | 17:55      | 19:20 Rosslare      |          |
| 18:50 ex Rosslare  | 18:55      | 19:30 Wexford North |          |

## NORTHERN IRELAND RAILWAYS

### **UTA Annual Report Out**

The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Report (up to 30 September 1966) was not published until October 1967. A rather melancholy document, it records a deficit of £275,615, which is less by £27,401 than the figure for the previous year. But the 1966 amount is not really comparable with earlier figures, as the Authority's road freight services had been sold during 1965, while the hotels were disposed of for a derisory sum in 1966. Of the loss, £245,450 is attributed to railway operations, divided as follows: Bangor line £16,453; NCC Section £172,907 and GNR section £56,090. The figures for 1965 were, respectively, £1,785 (profit), £105,159 (loss) and £82,387 (loss), giving a total deficit of £185,761. Among the statistics quoted in the Report are "passenger journeys" which show an increase of 131,688 on the Bangor line and decreases on other sections. We wonder how these figures are compiled as the bulk of the traffic, especially on the Bangor line, results from unlimited season ticket holders, whose journeys are not recorded, so far as can be seen.

### **One Line Or Two?**

As our last issue was dispatched it was reported that work was to begin on 1 October on the signalling installations required for the operation of the Portadown/Meigh section of the Dublin/Belfast main line as a single instead of a double line. Although it was intended to commence single-line operations on 1 January 1968, no announcement was made either by the Railway Company or by the Ministry of Development, in spite of the strong opposition previously expressed both by CIÉ and by the Department of Transport & Power in Dublin. It was soon observed that new track circuit bonds had been installed on lengthy stretches of the Up line on the section from Poyntzpass to Meigh. It was apparently intended to control the section by direction levers and continuous track circuiting. In the course of the debate on the 1967 Transport Bill in Stormont, in October, questions about this section were asked and the Minister stated in reply that the matter was still being considered by the Railway Company. Finally, on 21 December, it was announced in Stormont that the project had been shelved, despite the expense involved in maintenance of the double line. The reason behind the deferment of the scheme was to "enable the full potential of the double line to be realised"! This news is welcome, no doubt especially so to CIÉ who operate over two thirds of the trains on the section.

### **Spoil Trains**

No further alterations to the running times have been made since 4 September, when a schedule of 9 trains each way daily (with 4 on Saturdays) was introduced. These continue to leave the main line at Port Arthur despite the existence of the Greencastle entrance to the spoil siding. The latter has seen very little use and a number of minor derailments have occurred there. On 29 November an attempt was made to work a spoil train with two MPD units at the head and a steam loco banking. One unit was No.44 - newly fitted with a Rolls-Royce engine.

### **New Rails For Old**

A large quantity of used 95 lb. bull-head rails have been purchased from British Rail. Some have already been delivered at Larne Harbour and a train-load was observed at Whitehead on 16 December, ready for unloading near Carrickfergus next day. Those at Larne, all 60 foot lengths, were of Scottish manufacture and bore dates from 1940 to 1948. Some old NIR rails are stacked at Larne ready for export as scrap.

### **New Track Machine**

A Plasser & Theurer "05" ballast packing machine was delivered new from Austria on 13 December. It is reported to have cost £40,000 and it is much needed to improve the standard of the track. It bears the works number 014 (NIR).

## **Catering Contract**

A 5-year contract for the operation of the refreshment cars and station buffets and bars was granted to Hamilton & Kirk Ltd with effect from 1 October. An exception was made in the case of Great Victoria Street station where the buffet and bar remain under the control of Grand Metropolitan Hotels Ltd, apparently to ensure that that company will have a beer, wine and spirit licence for the new hotel.

## **Transport Bill**

On 18 October, this important piece of legislation came before Stormont and, after a very quiet debate, was given a second reading by 19 votes to 5. The Minister of Development painted a rosy picture of transport as it would be under the Bill and very little was said in opposition. One Member criticised the installation of automatic barrier level crossings, while another revived the proposal for a railway to Aldergrove Airport.

## **Monkstown**

Although traffic to this reopened halt is proving slow to develop pending building of houses, a train at 18:00 from York Road (Monday-Friday) commenced on 2 October.

## **Loco Notes**

Loco 50 returned to service in November, complete with NIR monogram. No.4 is confined to shunting duties at York Road and is due for shopping very shortly. 53 was struck by some moving spoil wagons during November and has been out of use since then. The right-hand cylinder and motion, and the side tank, were damaged. Nos. 2 and 8 have been brought from Carrickfergus to Belfast for stripping of useful parts. No.8 has already been reduced (like 9) to an "0-6-0T" by this process. Following a trial run, 0-6-4T No.27 assisted RPSI No.186 on an enthusiasts' special between Belfast and Antrim on 28 October. This was its first passenger run for a considerable time.

## **Railcars: MPD**

The first of the new Rolls-Royce engines was fitted to No.38 in place of the experimental RR engine which had been on hire from the makers. Another has been fitted to 44 which returned to service late in November. It had waited since May for the new engine. No.60 is being repainted and converted to RR engine. The heating system on these units, water heated by a heat exchanger built round the exhaust pipe and circulated by a pump, is now confined to the power cars only. All the water bags, 4 to each unit and trailer, have been removed. Smiths paraffin-burning air heaters are being fitted to the trailers; they are similar to those already used on MED trailers.

## **Railcars: MED**

Nos. 20 and 21 returned to service with 4-speed gear-boxes in November, with trailer 508. The controls in the latter vehicle have been disconnected. No.22 which had been derelict since the Greencastle derailment of 21 February 1966 was rapidly converted in November/December and has been put into service, all second class. Nos. 10 and 11 are still in the shops for a similar conversion. Corridor trailer 526 is being completely repanelled and refitted internally, and non-corridor trailer 518 is being repainted. The latter was the only one in the short-lived NCC section suburban livery with the narrow grey band through the windows. Nos. 12, 13, 18, 19 and 23 are all out of use and not as stated in our last issue. On the Bangor line, 24 and 25 are being converted to 4-speed gears at Queen's Quay shops. Nos. 14 and 33 have been repainted red and grey but they retain the torque converter drive. Trailer 513 is receiving a heavy overhaul.

## **Railcars Go "Foreign"**

DE railcars 71 and 72 went from York Road to the CIÉ Inchicore Works on 17 October to have their wheels re-profiled. Other cars will follow.

## **Management Appointments**

Several major appointments were announced in October, and new posts were created. The job of Operating Superintendent has been revived and there will be four Regional managers as assistants. These will control the Midland Region (York Road to Larne and Ballymoney), the North Western Region (Macfin-Derry and the Portrush branch), the Southern Region (Great Victoria Street to the Border and the Antrim branch) and the Down Region (Queen's Quay - Bangor). The traditional section names: NCC, GNR and County Down are now officially discontinued. Other new appointments include a Civil Engineer and an Accountant.

## **Signalling Developments**

Macfin Cabin was closed on 9 November. The date was advanced 3 days following the theft of some essential wires. The new section is: Coleraine-Ballymoney. It is controlled by tablets pending the extension of continuous track circuits from Macfin to Ballymoney; direction lever control will then be introduced. At Monkstown the Up Home has been re-sited just inside the site of the former junction, and re-designated Up Distant for Bleach Green. The former Bleach Green Up Distant is now an Outer Home. The present Monkstown Up Distant and Down Starting signals have been removed.

## **Coaching Stock**

No loco-hauled coaches have been fully repainted since No.180 was painted in unlined maroon in 1965, apart from the ex-GNR Royal Saloon which received a strange navy-blue livery with a 6-inch yellow waistband earlier this year. Several "brown vans" (ex NCC 10 ton 4-wheeled parcels vans) are now painted maroon, some with the NIR monogram. All other 4-wheelers, of which few remain in regular use, are limited to 45 mph. Ex GNR 20 ton bogie parcels vans 618 and 619 have both been refitted and painted maroon; they are at work on the Larne and Derry lines.

## **Queen's Quay Accident**

Three passengers on the 11:25 ex Bangor on Sunday, 15 October, were slightly injured when the train, single unit MED railcar 28, struck another MED already standing at No.3 platform. Neither train was damaged and no other services were delayed. In a postscript to the spate of derailments on the Larne line, Chief NIR Executive Mr Hugh Waring stated on 20 October that those involving spoil wagons had been caused by the suspension of the wagons themselves. Modifications were being carried out and others might follow. The day previous a minister stated that the permanent way on the Larne line was kept at "a high standard"!

## **Station Developments**

*Larne Harbour:* Although incomplete, the new terminal building is now in use. A small single-storey building it comprises a waiting hall, offices, toilet facilities and a refreshment counter, as well as a sweet shop. The offices are arranged around three sides of the waiting hall, while the fourth (facing the steamer berth) is fully glazed. Apart from the toilet facilities, which seem unnecessarily spartan, the building is a wonderful advance on its predecessor. We are greatly surprised that No.2 platform line is being restored across Harbour Road, to reach a canopied platform alongside the new building, and on the site of the former mixed-gauge No.2 platform. The foundation of the level crossing has been renewed and the rails recovered from No.1 road are being laid. The wooden swinging section of No.1 platform has been removed, apparently for use as a pattern for a new one for No.2.

*Larne Town:* The present station may be replaced by a new one, slightly nearer the Harbour, to make way for a new roadway to the Harbour.

*York Road:* After working at Greenisland and Carrickfergus during the year, the painters are now at work in York Road, where other alterations are in progress. A new booking office is being built on the site of the bookstall behind Nos. 1 and 2 platform roads. The ornate wooden bookstall has been pushed

forward temporarily, pending the erection of a new one adjacent to the men's toilet. The latter has been reduced in area and may receive a much-needed refit.

Great Victoria Street: The buffet is to be transferred to the site of the present booking office, apparently with its kitchen on the site of the present Control Office. This will be preliminary to the erection of the new hotel. It is not yet clear where the new booking office will be.

Queen's Quay: In October it was announced that a plan to replace the "archaic, inconvenient and draughty" (ex-B&CDR) station with a "more compact, bright and hygienic" terminal near May Street was under consideration. Such a move would entail the restoration of at least some of the Belfast Central Railway, including Middlepath Street Bridge which was removed in a road-widening scheme in 1965. The Lagan Viaduct might also require extensive repairs to permit of this plan being implemented. It would probably be welcomed by the public, provided that a halt was provided near Middlepath Street or the Newtownards Road for shipyard and other East Belfast workers.

---

## Feature Section

---

### NEWS EXTRA: A GLORIOUS FAREWELL

The topic of the disposal is referred to elsewhere in this issue with reference to the end of the Ballaghaderreen Branch (see below), but in the case of the remains of the Macmine Junction/New Ross line the disposal merits a special mention. Time on television is normally a most expensive "commodity", but nonetheless Radio Telefís Éireann, in a late November edition of its popular programme "Newsbeat", gave extended coverage to the auction of Palace East railway station.

Previously, some film of the disposal proceedings were included in an Irish-language news bulletin, but the "Newsbeat" coverage was complete - film, live recordings of the actual auction, as well as interviews with some of the bidders. The auction of three stations (Chapel, Rathgarogue and Palace East) took place on 16 November, receiving advance publicity in the news columns of a Dublin evening newspaper.

The stations were put up for sale complete with goods stores, signal cabin (at Palace), stationhouses and water tank (the fine high tank at Palace). The land in the vicinity of the station formed a second lot. While buyers were found elsewhere, a large television audience saw the auctioneer withdraw the Palace East station buildings at a final bid of only £130 (Chapel was knocked down for some £1,200). Likewise, despite the best sales efforts of the auctioneer, the land (about four acres) only attracted a bid of £200 and was also withdrawn. So, the station which has lain unused since 1963 will remain deserted until it is disposed of. Any future sale will be by private treaty, it not being the practice to re-auction such property. Those who bid for the property ranged from people with a practical (a farmer who owns adjoining land) to those with a speculative interest (a scrap merchant).

### THE 1967 BEET CAMPAIGN

Ever since the four Irish beet sugar factories of Comhlucht Siúicre Éireann were established in the 1920s there has been an annual "campaign" from October to December during which the beet is harvested and transported to the factories. The beet acreage of each farmer is governed by his contract, and thus from the likely yield it is possible to calculate transport requirements. In former years this was very largely by rail - all four factories have an extensive network of special sidings - but the closure of many branch lines and small stations has diverted much traffic onto the roads. The loss of the West

Cork system, which produced up to 7 specials daily, is noticed most at this time of the year. The closures have dealt most severely with Carlow and Mallow factories. The former has had no specials for some years, while the number serving the latter has been reduced drastically.

For the 1967 season, Mallow was served by three special trains daily: one each from Abbeydorney, Midleton and Youghal. These specials, assisted by the regular goods trains, had a daily quota of some 90 wagons. The Tuam factory, which had a difficult period some years ago, is experiencing a revival due to a greatly increased beet acreage in its area. Although only 5 specials (one each from Ardrahan, Gort and Athlone, and two from Portarlinton) ran to the factory, assistance from the ordinary goods trains and from Loughrea-Attymon and Moate-Athlone connecting specials brought the daily load to almost 200 wagons. To assist with this working the signal cabin at Ballyglunin was reopened in October, and there was a minor surprise in the restoration of Belville Siding between Ballyglunin and Athenry.

The most important factory - so far as rail intake is concerned - is still Thurles. Its area includes the very fertile South Wexford area. 1967 was a particularly testing season as it was the first since the closure of the Thurles-Clonmel branch. Previously all the specials from Wexford ran that way, but were now obliged to operate via Limerick Junction. Careful advance planning ensured that operations went smoothly with few delays. Thurles received specials from Bridgetown (2), New Ross, Ballycullane, Rosslare Harbour and Portlaoise. The total daily intake was over 250 wagons.

The busiest individual stations were Campile and Ardrahan (40 wagons daily) but others had a daily load of one.

### **BULK FREIGHT TRAFFIC IN IRELAND**

In our recent issues readers may have noticed that references to the handling of freight traffic in bulk are appearing with greater frequency. This method of working is most economical as handling costs are cut to the minimum by mechanisation at loading and unloading points. The current trend is to operate special freight trains for this type of traffic, especially cement and minerals. The trains are fully vacuum-braked and are close coupled, so that their running speed is 10 mph faster than the traditional loose coupled "goods". This higher speed reduced line occupation and, more important still, enables greater use to be made of locomotives.

At present the following types of bulk traffic are handled: cement, heavy fuel oil, meat and barytes. Soon, zinc concentrates will be added and, if all goes well for CIÉ, a lucrative traffic in dolomite may be secured. Fertiliser traffic is also carried by special train, as is sugar beet, but so far not in fully fitted wagons. Large quantities of bagged cement, beers, loose grain and tar/bitumen are carried by regular goods train and specials are run when necessary. Strangely, fuel traffic has declined to the point where turf has disappeared, except for station use, coal is rarely seen and motor oils are confined to a small number of centres. The more important types of bulk traffic are covered in greater detail below.

*Bulk Cement:* Traffic commenced in 1964 and initially ran between Drogheda and Dublin (North Wall) only. Before long the attractions of the method were established and a storage silo was erected at Cabra and the workings were diverted from the North Wall to Cabra. At the same time the Limerick cement factory began to supply Cabra. A second silo was recently erected there. Limerick also supplies Cork, while Drogheda supplies Belfast and Derry. Much of the latter traffic goes by regular train but specials are operated to Belfast, often on Saturdays.

The bulk cement specials, known colloquially as "Bubble" or "Balloon" trains (from the appearance of the wagons) do not normally exceed 20 wagons. A brake van at either end obviates running round. They are worked by two General Motors B-class locos on occasion, though one A-class engine is usual. To date 70 wagons have been introduced; they have a capacity of 20/21 tons. The GNR also built a

small fleet of special hopper wagons for the transport of cement in bulk from Drogheda to the Asbestos Factory at Athy. These now operate to Athy from the Limerick cement factory.

*Heavy Fuel Oil:* The contract has been won by the railway from road and sea haulage. This oil is used for heating purposes at the Limerick and Drogheda cement factories. Formerly Limerick was supplied by road tankers from Foynes; Drogheda was fuelled by small tanker ships. In 1965 Cement Ltd found that by purchasing oil in 40,000 ton tanker loads for delivery at Foynes, a substantial saving could be made. CIÉ provided 20 vacuum-fitted oil tankers to transport the oil in 400 ton loads to the factories. Limerick was supplied in this fashion from September 1966, and Drogheda from February 1967, in which month the tanker "Esso Brixham" made her last voyage to the factory wharf.

Initially, only one 25,000 ton storage tank was available at Foynes so that each time a tanker arrived there a train shuttled to and from Limerick as often as possible in order to avoid delay to the ship. This established a stockpile at Limerick and the train was then switched to run to Drogheda for some days, including Sundays. The time taken for the round trip was 21 hours, inclusive of unloading time at Drogheda. An additional storage tank is being built at Foynes and when completed it will permit of a more regular train schedule.

*Barytes And Zinc Concentrates:* Details of these traffics are best given together. Most readers will be aware already that the 1¼ mile Silvermines Branch, opened on 30 December 1966, was specially constructed to serve the mineral deposits and that extensive facilities are being provided at Foynes, from whence the minerals will be exported. At present 27 20-ton barytes ore wagons are in use and normally 25 of these form a train which operates to Foynes once a day (Mondays to Fridays). During 1967, 42 zinc concentrates wagons were built, in preparation for the new traffic which is expected to start in February next. Then, wagons, on arrival at Foynes, will be unloaded by a tippler on a new pier which is reached by a ¼ mile spur from the station yard.

*Fertiliser:* Traffic has been seasonal up to now and the sources of the traffic have changed over the years. For a long time irregular specials ran from Dublin to Wicklow with bulk phosphates for the Dublin & Wicklow Manure Co. factory at Wicklow Junction. This concern was superseded by the Shamrock factory, whose products were loaded at Wicklow Goods. Many seasonal specials ran to Dublin and beyond. The same company had another, larger factory at Foynes, from whence ran several specials. The Shamrock concern was taken over by Gouldings who concentrated fertiliser production at their Dublin and Cork plants. Rail traffic from the former was remarkably small until recently, but Cork dispatched large quantities, mostly from Albert Quay, to avoid cartage through the city centre. The latest development for this firm's traffic is the introduction of a new form of "Lancashire Flat" container, which carries 6 of the firm's standard pallets stacked with fertiliser in polythene bags. This is loaded at both Dublin and Cork and is much quicker than manual loading in conventional wagons.

The Albatros factory at New Ross distributes much of its fertiliser output by road, but some is carried by rail. However, undoubtedly the most important source of this traffic is the Nítrigin Éireann Teo factory at Shelton Abbey, near Arklow. This large factory has 3 long sidings for loading and a 5-road grid pattern yard beside the main line to Wexford. A pilot engine is on duty 6 days a week and, at the height of the season, as many as 4 specials a day run from here. Part of the output is bagged, ready for use, and is dispatched mainly in open wagons. In addition, ammonium sulphate is sent in bulk to Gouldings in Dublin; special wagons adapted from standard open wagons are used.

Although the traffics already dealt with are the most important at present, there are others which contribute very valuable revenue to CIÉ.

*Cattle:* This traffic was of primary importance until the mid-1950s when there was a decline in the number of specials operated. However, in 1966 there was a substantial increase in the number of cattle carried, a trend which continued in 1967.

*Bulk Grain:* This is loaded at many points, mainly for the mills in Dublin's dockland. Most of this is carried in special wagons of GSR, CIÉ and GNR construction, but Ranks Ltd own their own grain hoppers.

*Gypsum:* This is carried both in open wagons and in a small number of hoppers. It is routed from Kingscourt to Drogheda and Limerick cement factories. This is now the only traffic on the 20¼ mile Kingscourt/Navan line, running on Mondays to Fridays only.

*Meat:* Meat is carried mainly to Dublin and Waterford in containers for export. Some of these are BR-owned but CIÉ units are also in use. Occasional specials are run, notably from Roscrea and Rathkeale.

*Turf:* During World War II huge quantities of our native fuel, turf (peat), were carried to the cities in special trains from many centres. In addition to using normal open wagons the GSR fitted creels to some 50 ex-GS&WR open wagons, to increase their capacity. Also in use were a number of 6-wheeled coaches which were stripped of fittings, boarded up, and unroofed. Some of these ancient vehicles survived until the mid-1950s, in "store" at stations of the now lifted Clonsilla/Navan branch. This traffic was also in evidence on the GNR, which company built special turf wagons. Today, this traffic has disappeared although some turf briquettes are delivered by rail to CIÉ depots for official use. It has been partially replaced by the peat moss traffic from Kilberry (near Athy) and Coolnamona (on the old Portlaoise/Kilkenny line, which was left as a stub to the peat loading point). Mainly for export, the traffic is somewhat irregular and, indeed, declined during 1966. Special trains are rarely run.

A few other topics remain to be mentioned.

*Beet:* Still of great importance, as evidenced by the article above, is the beet traffic.

*Fuel Oils:* These are still to be seen in transit on rail, while CIÉ diesel fuel oil is, of course, supplied to the various depots by rail. In all, CIÉ uses a fleet of 50 specially built oil tankers for this departmental oil traffic. A feature of this is the operation of a 3-wagon special train as necessary from the tanker unloading depot at Alexandra Road, Dublin, to the railcar depot at Fairview. Similar specials run to Inchicore Works.

*Spoil:* With the exception of the through cement specials from Drogheda to Belfast, all the traffic discussed is carried on CIÉ metals. In 1965 goods traffic officially ceased on the lines of the NIR. However, since then has come the growth of the necessarily short-term spoil traffic for the building of the new motorway northwards from Belfast, along the shore of Belfast. Details of these operations have regularly appeared in the news pages of the Irish Railfans' News, but it is appropriate, for the sake of completeness, that a summary be included here. Spoil (rock and earth) is loaded at two specially-built banks at Magheramorne, on the Larne line, and brought in 600-ton trains to the new Fortwilliam Sidings, between York Road and Greencastle. The trains consist of new wagons (70 were built) and the motive power is provided by the "Jeep" 2-6-4Ts. An intensive service is operated, six days a week.

Despite the already high intensity of bulk traffic on CIÉ, it is possible that the future will see even greater developments. Two projected schemes at present under consideration will, if brought to fruition, result in much valuable revenue going to the railways.

On 15 November, Cement Limited confirmed their intention to build a new factory at Platin, County Meath, to supplement their existing output. Construction on the site is scheduled to start in Spring 1968, and it is anticipated that the factory will be in production in 1971. The site is some 2½ miles west of Drogheda and is adjacent to the Navan branch (Duleek-Drogheda section), so that a rail connection will very probably be provided. The cement will be produced by a dry manufacturing process (in contrast to Drogheda and Limerick, where a wet process is employed) and fuel requirements will be rather less than at the existing factories. Much of the output of this new factory may be exported, a factor which could well weigh heavily in any decision to provide railway communication to the plant.

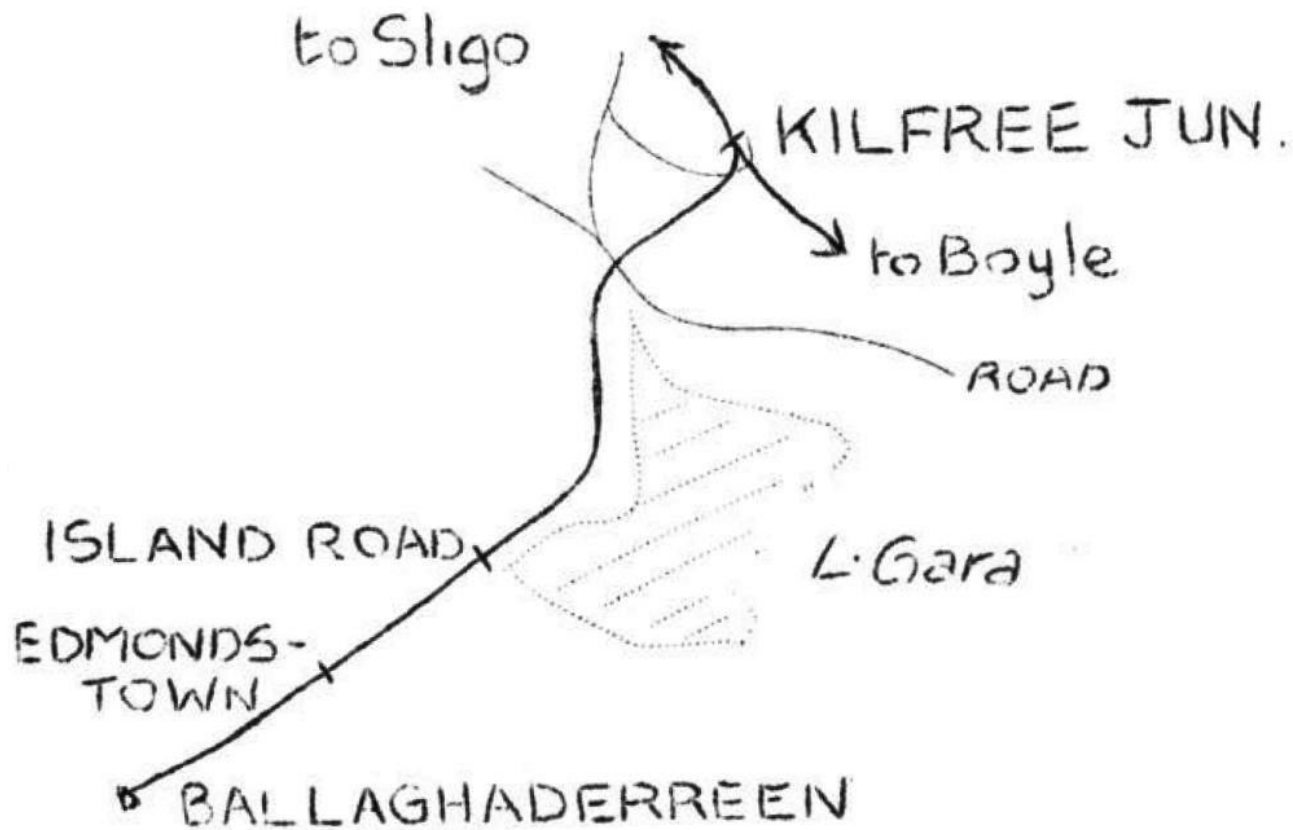


Possibly of even greater significance is the discovery of an extensive deposit of dolomite in the townland of Upper Dunbell, Bennett's Bridge, County Kilkenny. This rarely found mineral has an important use in prolonging the life of the refractory lining of blast furnaces. The deposit lies close to the Kilkenny to Waterford railway, near the site of Bennettsbridge station. A second deposit has been found near Lombardstown, County Kerry, on the Mallow/Tralee line. Some reports indicate that it is intended to set up a processing plant at Dungarvan, County Waterford, and to export the treated mineral from a new pier in Dungarvan Bay. The development of this project would be particularly suited to rail haulage, not only in view of the fact that both deposits lie close to existing rail routes but also because the necessary rail link to Dungarvan - the Mallow/Waterford line - although completely closed is still intact, and could be re-opened partially or wholly. Thus, any new railway construction envisaged would be minimised. No doubt those considering the feasibility of this project are well aware of the unusually favourable situation concerning rail transport of the mineral.

We hope that the dolomite projects will bear fruit and result in the writing of an important new chapter in the story of the development of bulk rail freight.

### POSTSCRIPT TO THE BALLAGHADERREEN BRANCH

The 9½ mile branch from Kilfree Junction to Ballaghaderreen was opened in 1874; the last trains ran in 1963. Right to the end this former MGWR line retained its own character. Indeed, it was notable in two respects: it was the haunt of ex-MGWR steam locos (2-4-0s or 0-6-0s), and it was unique in that its trains ran in the early part of the day only. By 14:00 the branch was slumbering!



The line has recently been revived in memory by developments in its final disposal. In October, Sligo County Council decided to take over maintenance of the of the old bridges and to accept lump sum compensation from CIÉ in lieu of maintenance costs. The bridges involved are at Cloontycarn and

Ballaghaderreen (Callaghan's Bridge). Later in the same month, the station buildings at Kilfree Junction were put up for public auction. Kilfree has always been a rather forlorn place; not even the bright repainting of 1961 could quite dispel feelings of isolation. But at least it did have a tenuous road connection with civilisation, in contrast to what must surely be Ireland's most lonely station: Inny Junction. Prior to auction, Kilfree was divided into lots by new fencing, some of which consisted of steel rails, a feature no doubt not seen since the turn of the century.