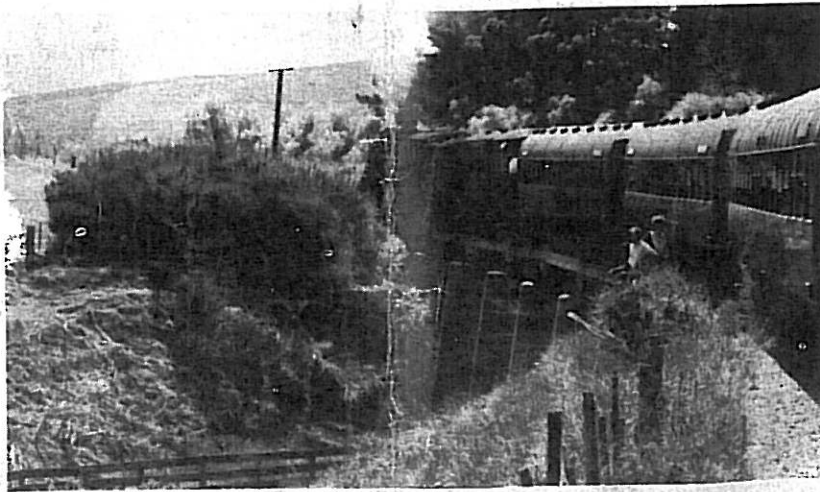


'WHISTLE'

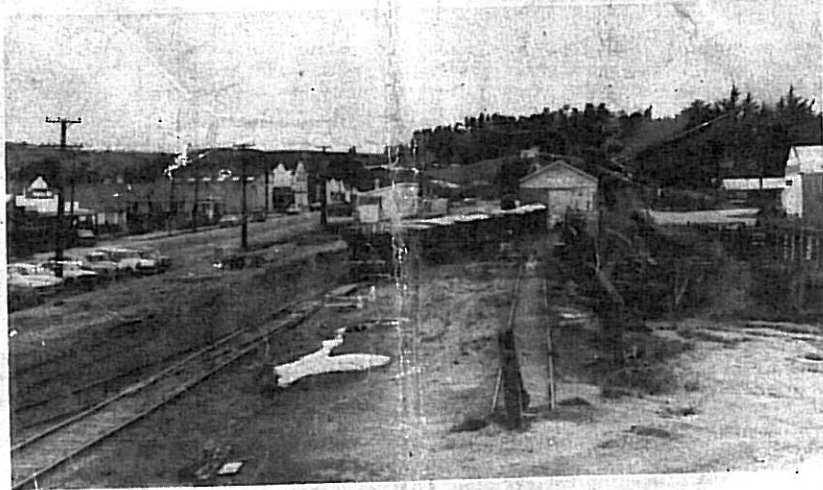
Michael Brook

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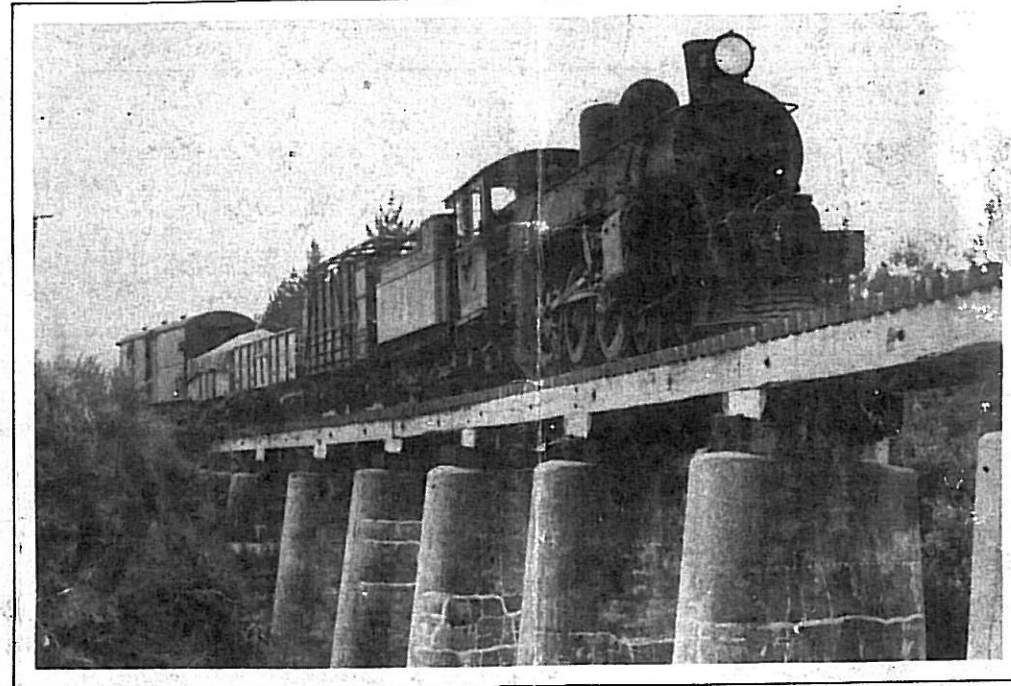
The same scene as on the cover, but of 'A' 71 hauling an excursion train to Edievale to mark the closing of the Heriot - Edievale section of the Tapanui Branch Line in late December 1967.

Photograph - J.W. Sim (Heriot)



Tapanui Branch Line: The Heriot Railway Station yard.

Photograph - J.W. Sim (Heriot)



The last freight train hauled by 'A' 71 crosses a bridge about 2km North of Heriot on the Edievale - Heriot section of the Tapanui Branch Line in December 1967.

The Edievale - Heriot section was closed from 1st January 1968 while the remaining Waipahi Junction - Heriot section was officially closed on 12th January 1979 after being severely damaged by floodwaters in mid October last year.

Photograph - J.W. Sim (Heriot)

MAY - JUNE 1979

"WHISTLE"

The bi-monthly railway news magazine of the Rangitikei Railfans Group, Taihape, N.Z.
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ALAN SIM BARRY O'DONNELL KENDALL JULIAN

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EDITORIAL EXHAUST

A QUID PRO QUO

Consequent upon the publication of the booklet "Time For Change" by the General Manager of Railways, it was subsequently announced that the prestige all sleeper "Silver Star" trains are to be temporarily withdrawn for conversion into a port-seating port-sleeper train, for economic reasons, and to be more "in tune with demand".

It also ushers in another era of decline, the one over-night train service age, after years and years of a two train service overnight on the North Island Main Trunk, as the Railways again beat out the drums of retreat and marketing failure, in the field of long-distance passenger train services.

The refurbished "Northerner" service is to take over the N.I.M.T. run until such time the requisite number of passenger cars are converted from sleeping to a seating arrangement are ready and the modified "Silver Star" service will then take over from the "Northerner" for the running of the only North Island over-night passenger train.

As the top of the line, top of the roster, and top billing luxury train service in this country, it is no wonder that the Unions have reacted sharply to the decision to axe the all-sleeper "Silver Star" service, and to some extent thereby down-grade the manna and prestige of the train with its conversion to a sleeper-cum-seating combination service. It is seen in the eyes of the Railway Unions as the "thin edge of the wedge". Nothing is sacrosanct on the Railways, not even the top-class trains on the Main Trunk!

With the Unions refusing to allow any work to be done on converting the "Silver Star", a situation of stalemates would appear to be the order of the day, and it looks as if the Railways management are equally fixed in their attitude of an uncompromising stance, saying the decision to "withdraw and convert" is absolutely final.

One way round this extremely awkward situation without losing face, could be for the Unions to get really tough and demand, by way of a strong piece of leverage, a "quid pro quo". Agree to do the "Silver Star" conversion job, in return for positive and unrenounceable agreement from Railways management and the Government, to re-instate say two or three withdrawn rail passenger services, for example, a rail passenger service between Auckland and Rotorua and/or Tauranga, or between Wellington and New Plymouth, with a sensible reduction in bus services to make them economically viable.

On both sides, union and management, there is a great amount of wisdom, and each must recognise the reasons behind a particular stance and attitude being emanating from either side. Attitudes and ideas must change in this fast changing world, there has to be some give and take, and sensitive management must be attuned to the desires and aspirations of loyal and hard working railwaymen, who feel deeply threatened by many actions of management and Government towards the Railways.

The "Silver Star" issue, with a little more marketing thrust and expertise, need never have arisen, but now that it has unfortunately come to a head, after the "hard word" has been put on Railways management by Treasury and Government, to reduce services, the situation must be handled with tact, a lot of common sense, and diplomacy, to be satisfactorily resolved, so that rail passengers, the unions and management, can receive the best possible deal to the mutual benefit of all. Paramount however must be the "needs and wants" of rail travellers, so that "repeat business" is generated, one hallmark of success, in any venture.

THE TAPANUI BRANCH LINE (Part Four - Final)

Historical

The West Otago Railway didn't quite make the century, for it was on July 8th 1880, that the first locomotive reached Tapanui, ending the coach service that had supplied the area for more than six years. Kelso was reached next and the section to there opened on the 1st December 1880, and to Heriot on 1st April 1884, thence to Edievale on 18th February 1905.

Moves to get the railway began in 1872 when a petition was sent to the local Provincial Council, which, after approving the scheme, sent it onto the General Assembly for consideration. Not until 1876 was that final approval given for the line, and then it was only for the 12-13 miles between Waipahi and Tapanui. Approval for the extension to Kelso and Heriot followed later.

During 1877 there was a lot of discussion over where the line should come from; some said from the Waikaka Valley to Kelso then a branch line to Tapanui, while others advocated having an extension of the Milton-Tapanui line. These suggestions brought about an uproar from the Tapanui residents, and at a meeting of the Waikaka County Council in January 1878, it was announced that the line would be laid from Waipahi to Tapanui and then onto Kelso.

Later in 1878 the contract for the construction was let to Messrs Proudfoot & McKay for £61,000. Work began on the line in August, and despite financial difficulties experienced by the contractors, it continued under Government pressure until June 1880, when the Pomahaka bridge was completed and tested. With the difficult part over, the line continued up the river valley quickly, to Tapanui.

The railway brought a better supply of goods to and from the district, and made Bluff and not Port Chalmers the port for the district. The passenger service by "mixed train" was discontinued from 1st January 1934, and the Heriot-Edievale section was closed from 1st January 1968.

Late 1970's

Today the wheel has turned full circle, and 99 years on the district is again having to rely on a road service completely. Besides the disastrous floods of October last year - what went wrong?

For a start lets look at tonnages in recent years. In 1963 41,000 tonnes were carried on this branchline, 1965 - 70,000, 1966 - 40,000, 1969 (a bad year?) - 34,000, 1971 - 39,000, 1973 - 40,000, and 1975 - 57,000 tonnes. For a branch line these figures are quite high.

Disregarding the peaks of 1965 and 1975 it would appear the branch did good steady business most years. Therefore when we come to the quoted figures of approximately 11,000 tonnes for the year ending 31st March 1978, we are quite entitled to ask, just where did the other 25-30,000 tonnes go in the last two years of the line's existence? The answer to this question is absolutely crucial we feel to this branch line, because the Railways figures used as an excuse to close or not re-open the line are based on levels which are only one quarter or at the most one third of the total tonnages carried before pre-150km road haulage limit days!!

This, if correct, is absolutely staggering, and illustrates so dramatically how road transport has been allowed and openly encouraged to put branch railways out of business. "Whistle" says this also illustrates so well the completely "unselective" nature of the 150km road limit, that an investment of public monies for nearly one hundred years is completely left to wreck and ruin, without any concern by politicians! If this is "rationalisation" then it is a disaster of the first magnitude for railway branch lines.

It is significant that if the line wasn't making money, then why are there 38 stranded wagons on the branch, for these wagons which all came in on the last train, represent an average South Island train length. Also the branch line to Heriot hasn't had money spent on it for years anyway, but new sleepers stacked at the main stations on the line indicated a re-sleepering programme was about to be undertaken, before the floods came. We also ask why was the track not allowed to have been inspected to assess repairs until after the elections in November 1978 as it indicates a pre-election decision which was kept quiet although spokesmen for the three other main political parties spoke out against continued railway branch line

closures so the people of the district were not consulted.

At the time of going to press no work has been begun on lifting the line or to shift wagons out, because of a railway union ban on any such work. A final thought: Up until three or four years ago the Tapanui Branch Line would have appeared to have a reasonably good chance of survival compared with other branch lines that were under threat. Therefore its demise can only spell more gloom, in railway interest circles, whilst no doubt the road carriers are elated. In fact, the rapid downhill slide of the line, in a relatively short space of time, from a fairly healthy and relatively stable situation, to that of "uneconomic activity" with drastically lowered tonnages, is nothing short of an alarming quick change, and shows only too well the extremely uncertain future faced by Railways in this country, and especially the few remaining branch lines, which, if the Tapanui line lesson can be taken as a pointer, face indeed a very precarious existence. It also again shows, unfortunately too well, the bitter "anti-rail" attitude which is so prevalent amongst many politicians and road transport operators who are not interested in country branch lines any more.

No more shall the sound of the railway whistle be heard in West Otago, under the shadows of the Blue Mountains.

SLIPS CLOSE NAPIER-GISBORNE RAILWAY

The last train to arrive in Gisborne was 978 goods on 21st March after heavy rain in the Wharerata Ranges caused problems to track with flooding at Kopuawhara, causing the rail passenger service from Napier to be held at Wairoa where Gisborne passengers continued onto their destinations by bus, and this bus was used to take passengers back to Wairoa to join the scheduled service the next morning as well.

As the following day the line was blocked by slips between Paritu Loop and Beach Loop, a troublesome stretch of track about 40km south of Gisborne.

The slips were not extensive but four goods trains out of Gisborne and two incoming trains had to be cancelled. The 23rd March still saw the line closed however with some heavy scouring by floodwaters. Several slips north of Paritu Loop had blocked the line, but conditions at Beach Loop and what is known as "the notorious tunnel no. 16" were still good. Gangs of surfacemen from Wairoa and Kopuawhara and four machines had been working during daylight hours to clear the line, as three goods trains were stopped at Wairoa and one at Nuhaka. The line was opened briefly apparently but before a clearance could be issued, further slipping again happened!

On the 25th the line was re-opened to allow the 'Ac' train-set service (Dc1565 + 'Ac' 10) through and to clear thousands of tonnes of freight that had been held up. A load restriction was placed on goods trains passing through the Beach Loop area. Repair work had been hampered by rain for longer than expected and it was thought that the backlog of freight would take several days to clear.

However all the troubles were not over apparently, for on the 26th March, the 25 passengers including a blind person aboard the Ac car, had to dis-embark and walk across a slip which stopped the service from Napier at the entrance to a tunnel near Beach Loop at about 7.15pm

PUKEKOHE SUBURBAN RAIL SERVICE FINISHES

It was announced on the 23rd March that the Pukekohe to Papakura section of the Pukekohe-Auckland passenger train service was to be discontinued.

The service will stop on and including Monday, April 30, because "only four to five passengers a day on average use it". From Papakura on it "picks up quite a few passengers", according to a Railway spokesman. The once-a-day Pukekohe to Papakura service left Pukekohe at 7.20am. The spokesman (anonymous) said that the Railways Road Service buses already provide a service. Our Comment: This train was the former 6.52am Monday to Saturday train from Mercer to Auckland, and was rescheduled to start from Pukekohe at 7.22am Monday to Friday. It was replaced by a bus leaving Mercer at 6.40am.

The Auckland to Mercer train (5.55pm ex Auckland) then terminated at Papakura. This was all in the July 22, 1987, timetable reductions and cuts.

For starters we say that the time of departure was not conducive towards gaining a great number of people. In fact it would have been better if the Railways had shifted the 9.15am Papakura to Auckland service to start from Pukekohe, and run it as a "shoppers special".

ARE THE RAILWAYS BEHIND THE TIMES ?

The increasing move towards the use of bank credit cards in business these days runs up against a stone wall as far as the Railways are concerned. "Not acceptable", because the additional accounting and commission charges out-weigh any marketing or financial advantage. Answer given to the Hon. R.L. Bailey (Oppn - Heretaunga) by the Minister of Transport, Mr C. McLachlan.

Railway patrons will note they do accept cheques, even for suburban tickets, as well as cash, of course ! Do other travel organisations, rental cars, and so on not accept bank-cards ? In some instances bank-cards are more acceptable than cheques, in the move towards a "cash-less society".

NEW AUCKLAND MOTORWAY LINK COSTS \$10 MILLION

When the Prime Minister opened the City to Western Springs motorway in May, he said that even though a lot of people were disappointed at the Government's decision not to spend \$13 million on new carriages for South Auckland suburban trains, as the investment in a motorway was of benefit to a greater number of people. We think he was rubbing salt into the wounds a bit.

"Whistle" however would like to point out that the motorway (which is to be extended to Point Chevalier and the north-western motorway costing another \$8 million) is only for the motorway itself, and doesn't include the value of imported cars, trucks, and buses, costing the country umpteen million dollars above the cost of the motorway, and using millions of dollars of costly imported fuel.

Millions have been poured in to Auckland motorways, at least \$170 million, and what does the poor old rail traveller get, nothing but promises, promises, and still nothing, and the road lobby is out to make sure the Railways in Auckland still get nothing. You would think they had never heard of the petrol crisis !

The motorway has torn a great gash for its path, in fact the land it has taken for its width and sloped back hillsides, is four times that which a railway line would require. Now the nearby residents complain they can't sleep because of the noise of the traffic belting along the new motorway at nights - as the chips used for the road surface are bigger than usual, hence the higher noise factor.

"Whistle" wonders how a Lower Hutt road carrier can get a licence to carry tin cans to Alex Harvey Industries in Auckland, and then backload with a full load of margarine, when the margarine manufacturer has a private rail siding ?

"Whistle" also wonders how a Waikato company can carry timber on its trucks all the way from Rotorua to Auckland, with seeming impunity in breaking the 150-km road haulage limit.

Flood Damage To Roads: The National Roads Board has spent nearly all of the \$6.5 million budgeted in half the financial year. We know of a certain railway branch line closed because of flood damage, the Heriot line, last year, but how many roads have been closed as a result of flood damage and not re-opened ? Not one I guarantee !

ANOTHER DECISION ON AUCKLAND SUBURBAN SERVICES ?

When the Government decided not to call tenders for new carriages for South Auckland services away back in March, it commissioned its officials to prepare yet another report, and in the meantime the trains have rattled on, with the Treasury headed team investigating whether trains or buses should serve the South Auckland corridor. The second report was to be a Joint Railways-Auckland Regional Authority exercise on the line to Waitakere and further out, Helensville. However the reports were expected to be late, and whilst the trains may not be axed immediately some form of co-ordinated transport authority could become into being to run both trains and bus services. The apparent trend was that if Auckland wants its trains then the ratepayers rather than the taxpayer should have to pay.

At this stage it would be appropriate to look at the A.R.A. Transport Controller's report on integration of services, in Western Suburbs. From destination data less than 15% of the 60,000 daily trips generated in the west which travel to the

east of the Whau River because the origins and destinations of people are generally not in the rail corridor. Rails share would not be great unless some restriction was placed on the use of the motor car in the rail corridor (We add A.R.A. buses too!).

In the West the only mode that can compete in the foreseeable future with the private car, is the bus because there is insufficient flexibility in the rail corridor to actually take most of the people where they want to go. To ensure however that there is integration of bus and rail services for the limited catchments available proposed bus services feed to the Ranui, Henderson, Glen Eden, and New Lynn railway stations.

I think that people who say the suburban train services to the West should be axed "need their heads read", because the main morning and late afternoon services are well patronised, often with people having to stand. Services during the day such as they are, naturally are more lightly patronised, but do serve a useful purpose, and three or four car trains are on these off peak services, and with encouragement patronage could rise as bus fares jump, and petrol leaps in price too.

One fallacy that should be disposed of is the use of old and decrepit rolling stock. Well it may be old (car A1616 is 54 years old), but the Railways make every effort to maintain the carriages, and many (about half the fleet) have been refurbished to be almost like new, and the trains run on long stretches of welded rail so the ride has improved - less clackety clack, and rebuilt 'Dc' class locomotives haul a good number of the "subbies", often with a new Fm guards van on the rear, so all is not as bad as the press and some Mayors would lead everyone to believe.

FIGHT ON FOR "KINGSTON FLYER" RETENTION IN SOUTHLAND

The National M.P. for Invercargill, Mr N.P.H. Jones, did not take kindly to the suggestion of Marlborough M.P. Mr D.L. Kidd, that the "Kingston Flyer" could run between Blenheim and Picton.

This was part of the nationwide reaction to the decision to transfer the "Kingston Flyer" from its natural route, "because of excessive expenditure required to maintain a little used line".

Christchurch group Rail Action suggested using the "Kingston Flyer" on the run up to Arthur's Pass, Dunedin could claim it to run on the Central Otago Line, and Auckland could run it to Rotorua as an added attraction to visit Geysersland.

However, the colourful Mr Jones says none of this will happen if he has his say, and he was ready to put up a fight to keep the train in Southland, and put forward two suggestions for a run from Invercargill to Bluff with side trips to Gore, or on the main line to Gore as a regular journey. Support was expected from Wallace M.P., deputy Prime Minister Talboys, the M.P. for Awarua Mr W.R. Austin, and former Labour M.P. Mr A. Begg also expressed preference for keepin the Flyer at least in the province of Southland.

Led by the M.P. for Invercargill Mr N.P.H. Jones the battle was on, and he appealed to all Southland organisations to write to him, interested in keeping the Flyer in the province.

The train had an operating shortfall of \$100,000 and passenger numbers would need a big boost if it was to get anything close to break-even point.

The Southland Progress League had a lively meeting with a lot of feeling and indignation about proposals to remove the train from Southland, as it was closely allied to Southland from the beginning and Southland by rights should be allowed to keep it.

FREIGHT FORWARDING RESUMES

Work began again on the 6th July when agreement was reached on a back to work package deal accepted by the National Union of Railwaymen. It was expected to take several days or up to a week to clear the freight backlog.

Railways were estimated to have lost \$10 million in revenue and the workers about a million dollars in wages. Members of the Locomotive Engineers' Association and Railway Officers Institute caught up in the dispute were to be paid for time lost on a normal flat forty hour week basis.

The fact that the "Silver Star" issue wasn't really settled either was a bit of a loss, or was it a stalemate? "Whistle" knew before the dispute "blew up" that there

was blue asbestos lining in the "Silver Star", and the fact that this didn't come out till late in the dispute was most regrettable, because with strict safety procedures and the use of fully protective gear, under the control or supervision of the Health Department and Railways, the removal of the blue asbestos could be done without hazard to health of the workers which is paramount. It would be replaced by safer sound proofing materials which are available today.

"Whistle" says that while it is most regrettable to remove the "Silver Star" and part alter it to a sleeper cum seating/sleeper train, it is unfortunate that the Railways will lose passengers because in times of high demand they will not be able to accommodate all passengers who plan to go by train from Auckland to Wellington and vice-versa, hence they will become annoyed and frustrated with Railways, and will turn to air travel (getting very costly), or else go to private enterprise.

"SILVER STAR" & "NORTHERNER" EXPENDITURE, REVENUE & LOSSES - 1978-79 LEVEL'S

"Silver Star" Total Expenditure & Provision for car maintenance =	\$3,022,900
Revenue from passengers and catering =	\$1,300,000
	LOSS = \$1,722,900
(Note - Loss includes locomotive purchase and provision for future car maintenance of \$262,900.)	
"Northerner" (operating expenditure \$2,325,300)	
	Total Expenditure = \$2,578,800
Revenue from passengers and catering =	\$1,722,900
	LOSS = \$800,700
* "Silver Star" & "Northerner" combined losses = \$2,523,600.	
Converted "Silver Star" operating expenditure (estimated)	= \$2,807,000
Total Expenditure (including conversion cost) =	\$3,146,500
Revenue (projected) =	\$2,603,400
	ESTIMATED LOSS = \$543,100

Areas of saving would be in catering mainly, and through consequent staff reductions from 133 to 48, with a not so plush service and no full dinner on board. The two services carried a total of 136,680 passengers. The converted service will taken an estimated 132,080 - a loss of 4600 passengers. The Railways expect not to meet demand on 33 days a year. If 5214 passengers cannot get bookings does it mean 158 passengers are turned away on those 33 days? (3-4 bus loads?).

As the "Silver Star" loan was paid off in mid-1978, is the full cost of conversion to the carriages chosen to be seaters going to be written off in one year, or spread out more equitably over a period of several years?

However the big question is that with the increase in fares and carless days, and the price of petrol and motoring, will the revamped service in the "Silver Star" carriages, if it ever gets converted, break-even, or better still actually make money by paying its way?

NZR FREIGHT RATES & FARES RISE:

It was announced on 23rd April, that NZR rail freight and passenger fares were to be increased by 10% and suburban services by 20% from 13th May 1979, to ensure Railway revenue increases with the cost of inflation.

Example of New Fares are - *How Rise Since*

The new rail passenger fares (old fares in brackets) are:-
 "Silver Star": Wellington-Auckland \$37.15 (\$33.75), Wellington-Papakura \$36.15(\$32.75).
 "Northerner": Wellington-Auckland \$24.75 (\$22.50) or with sleeping-berth \$34.65 (\$31.50), Palmerston North-Hamilton \$14.90 (\$13.55) or with sleeping-berth \$24.80 (\$22.55).
 "Silver Fern": Wellington-Auckland \$28.50 (\$25.90), Palmerston North-Hamilton \$17.40 (\$15.80).

"Endeavour": Wellington-Napier \$10.20 (\$9.25), Wellington-Palmerston North \$5.30 (\$4.80), Palmerston North-Napier \$6.35 (\$5.80).

"Southernner" (incl. Sun. Invercargill-Dunedin-Invercargill "Southernner"):
Christchurch-Invercargill \$19.45 (\$17.65), Christchurch-Dunedin \$12.35 (\$11.20), Dunedin-Invercargill \$7.20 (\$6.55).

'Ac' Train-set Services: New Plymouth-Taumarunui \$5.95 (\$5.40), Gisborne-Napier \$6.45 (\$5.85), Wellington-Masterton \$3.55 (\$2.95), Wellington-Masterton-Palmerston North \$6.45 (\$5.85), Christchurch-Pictou \$10.05 (\$9.10), and Christchurch-Greymouth \$6.95 (\$6.30).

Manawatu Local Trains & SIMT Overnight Expresses: Wellington-Palmerston North (via Manawatu Fri & Sun.) \$4.25 (\$3.85), Invercargill-Dunedin \$6.10 (\$5.55), Invercargill-Christchurch \$16.65 (\$15.15), Dunedin-Christchurch \$10.50 (\$9.55).

On the Cook Strait Rail-ferries, the new fare between Wellington and Pictou is: \$8.35 (\$7.60) adults and \$3.35 (\$3.05) children, while day excursion fare is \$10.00 (\$9.10) adults and \$4.25 (\$3.85) children. The charge for a medium-sized family car is now \$34.65 (\$31.50).

NEW ZEALAND RAILWAY SCENE

Auckland Rail News:-

A change to attaching wagon loads of palletised beer directly onto train 73 at Newmarket as from the beginning of May has led to speedier delivery of the beer to Okaihau, and counters a move to have it carried by road. The wagons of beer are usually left on the third road at Newmarket after being taken from the brewery siding by a shunt, then the banker from 73 shunts them onto the rear just ahead of the guard's van. 'Da'1410 was noted around Auckland a good deal in May, was on the 2.22pm subbie to Waitakere on the 2nd, the "Helensville Express" into Auckland next day, and for the George Court's special AES trains to Glenbrook during a week of the school holidays she was specially cleaned for the occasion.

The "Northernner" was an hour late on 4th May and the "Silver Star" half an hour late into Auckland, due to locomotive trouble on the "Northernner". 'Da'1484 was on B16 with 12 wagons of coal for Portland. 'Da'1414 + 'Db'1015 seemed to be Huntly based early May. 'Dx'2644 ran 667 express goods with 2634 on 5th May, but was taken off at Te Rapa to return next day with Sunday morning goods 288.

Four wagons of logs for Henderson & Pollard had to be stored on backshunt at Remuera on 8th May due to a strike at that firm. 'Da'1430 on B16 coal special with heavy load of 22 coal wagons on 10th May. 'Da'1462 broke down on subbie to Papakura in pm at Tamaki and points failure in town delayed 179 Papakura subbie on 11th May. 'Daa'1400 was on Westfield backshunt. A car had to be taken off Helensville Express on 14th and AL1710 was substituted causing a 25 minutes delay, and consequently the 4.34pm Auckland-Waitakere subbie was reduced to 5 cars resulting in over-crowding.

660 ran around the waterfront route on 19th May as block of line Westfield to Penrose, and 'Dc'1552 on work train resleeping the mainline. Two "1500" 'Da's left, ran 93 on 20th May and on wrong line Westfield-Penrose as track tamper machine and 'Dc'1552 were again working on the "up" main.

Heard a good story about reliability of NZR Road Service buses lately ? well, the first bus wouldn't go because the solenoid "packed up", the second bus the driver went to get had two flat tyres, and on the third bus the choke cable broke and came out in the driver's hand ! What to do next ! The fourth and only bus they could find was one of the old Bedford's which they had to take out of the paint shop, and this one was okay. (Some busdrivers reckon those old silver radiator models are the best going ones of the lot).

On 24th May 'Tr'157 noticed in loop at Newmarket while car A1751 is out repainted. Track machine working Waitakere-Kumeu and 'Da'1410 on 4.55 subbie to Papakura. 25 May Dh902 observed on north line at Morningside. Dc1566 reported on Auckland subbies. Di1102 attached to Dx2604 on train 601, former Dunedin bound. Db1006 on Westfield backshunt still - 6 months!

664 on 26 May Wellington-Auckland express goods running 3 hours late with Dx 2605. Dx2633 was on 751 and has a new cab. Dx2607 blew a water pipe south of Puketutu, and Dx 2640 was on 100xing 748 goods. Da1410 was second loco with 1437 on 93 on 27th May, and Dx2614 broke down on 667 26th.

Dh903 took seven Zp wagons and guards van up Mt Eden bank morning 29th May, so must have worked out tonnages they can handle ? Re refurbished A1904 in service. 30th - 4.44 back up to six cars. Dh900 at last seen in service after long delay. No.22 shunt loco broken buffer at Morningside. Silver Fern Am3 two hours late at 9.35pm after delay Wellington union meeting. A1735 ex Invercargill car now in 4.34 subbie.

The last 229 Silver Star ex Auckland was hauled by Dx2624, 8 total, 8th June, and on 688 Dx 2643 ran into Auckland for the final time 8 total as an all-sleeper following morning.

Da1463 had three ground relays go when on 93 with Da1433 17th June at Ellerslie, so returned to Westfield for another pair after backing train to Penrose. 19th June saw Northernner hour and a half late in Auckland as result of Waiouru derailment 662 and 626 40 minutes late 25-26 June. Seems if 1410, 1421, & 1429 could be survivors amongst early Da's.

Northernner 626 ran "over the hill" with surface flooding round waterfront, but slip at Parnell tunnel meant transference to buses last lap. 2nd, Helensville Express cancelled as subsidence/slip between Kumeu & Helensville, cleared late next day. A1955 out refurbished. Dh903 noticed on 5.50pm subbie from Auckland to Papakura 9th July. The first occasion the editor has noted a Dh on a subbie! Da1522 still around 10th July as noted on local shunt.

A1917 due for Wellington wheel lathes, but union want letter confirming in case she gets out of Auckland and doesn't come back ! Da1454 off to Wellington attached to 631 - candidate for Aussie conversion ? No! 23rd July the 4.34 had smoke coming from battery box on one car and delayed 10 minutes in Newmarket triangle shute. Floodlight tower installed at Puhinui dogbox size station. High number Dc1581 up in Auckland to make 7 Dc's here.

Waikato-Bay Of Plenty 17.6.79

Kawerau Da's mid-June were 1447, 1450, 1454, 1457, 1489, and rebuilt Dc's were 1553, 1556 & 1569.

Tauranga - Dsc's 413, 414, 440, 445 Morrinsville Dsc 433. Te Kuiti Dsc 448.

Te Rapa - Dsc's 418, 443, 431 & 415 depot repairs. Dc's 1565 & 1559 depot repairs with traction motor failure.

Kawerau - Db1010, (1011 at Huntly), with 1000, 1003, 1004, 1013, 1015 & 1016. Db1014 was at Tauranga after being recovered from washout. Da1436 towed dead to Westfield after being stripped at Te Rapa.

Round up of Dc's in this area include: 1552, 1557, 1570, 1573, 1574 & 1575.

Wanganui

Locomotives noted at Taupo Quay Depot and Eastown marshalling yards on 3rd June were - Da's 1456, 1472, 1473, 1494. Dsc's 446, 437 (Eastown). Dc 1568. Dsb's 301, 314, 316 plus Dx 2641. Also Ea 3085 Train Examiners & Lifters Instruction Car.

In July 28th at Wanganui Depot Da's 1419, 1420, 1494. Dsc's 449 (new livery) & 437. Dsb's 301, 314, 316 (no change) & Dx 2632.

At Eastown, Dc 1570, Dsc 446, & steam crane no.223. Aramoho Tr 20, & steam crane no.124.

South Island Miscellaneous News

Dsc 450 ex Addington May 16 new colours with cab cream and green! Southernner service down to five cars as gutless Dj's unable to keep time with six over Oamaru-Dunedin section (why don't they double head this part as in the good old days of a Ja & Ab combination for this section with greater numbers of passenger cars too! - Ed.)

Locomotives out of service for major overhaul in May: Addington Dsa 270, 267 Dj 1215, 1223, 1229, 1243. Hillside D1 1101, 1103 Dj 1244 Dg 750, 752, 755, 763, 781, & 759 waiting Dunedin depot for Hillside. Linwood Dg 756, 758 out of service. Dj1233 out of service two weeks in May at Linwood. Dsc430 out of service week in May. Dsc 442 ex North Island to Hillside for o/haul. Several Dj's with new motors and have notch 10 all giving "teething troubles". D1 1837 (formerly 1103) in new colours in Dunedin.

Passenger car A1951 returned North Island ex Addington o/haul. AL1864 returned to Dunedin. At Addington for overhaul - Southernner cars A1930 & 1935, Auckland car A1914, AL2007 (Masterton), A1943 from Wellington, & A1965 & A1848 Christchurch.

C 864 & the Heialer were used at Ferrymead in steam 16th May plus the F, pulling two cars & a van.

Df locos on main north line will run at goods train speed only, with no restrictions on the main line south, but to the west they can only go as far as Springfield.

Tunnel no.23 has been daylighted, and was situated above the horseshoe curve just south of Vernon, so now there are only 22 out of 24 previous tunnels on the Picton line.

Dg 781 with new cab left Hillside in June. Only one D1 left in service in the Dunedin area during the last two weeks in June.

At Addington for o/haul in June were Dj's 1215, 1223, 1229, 1243 & 'Dsa's 267 & 270. Also Dg's 750, 752, 755 & 763.

Waiting out of service at Dunedin were D11102 & 1103 (see above), Dg 759. In Christchurch were Dj's 1226 & 1231 both restricted to running suburban shunts. Dj1246 has appeared in new colours, blue and yellow, with grey cab and roof, back in service about 19th June.

Df's 1661 & 1668 being prepared for service at Linwood depot. Dj 1215 with new motor back in service and Dj 1229 was expected out next in early August.

Saturday 30th June the Rangiora-Waipara Railway Social Club organised a "trolley-thon" from Blenheim to Christchurch during that weekend. The four-man trolley ran in accordance with railway regulations.

Dg 754 & 777 are used specially on Central Otago Line because box type fan heaters have been fitted in the cab for better crew comfort in the winter months.

Because of a fuel shortage at Linwood, all locomotives on the Picton passenger trains were fueled at Picton from 26th June thru to 7th July, and "Southerner" locomotives were taken off at Dunedin and replaced by another 'Dj'.

Otago

Some alterations to mainline trains in this area and Mosgiel-Port Chalmers seem to be mooted. 10 May a work train ran between Green Island and Waitati and return, with ballast discharged at 352km between Waitati and Seacliff. May 18 saw the following extra trains run Dunedin-Damaru, G92, G84, G93 + G85. May 19 and next three days a track maintenance machine group worked Katiki-Shag Point, Deborah-Maheno, then back to Katiki and Shag Point. No.6 Burnside shunt was cancelled for 4 days in May.

Eight speed restrictions between Dunedin and Invercargill, 4 bridge repairs, 3 track and one insufficient warning device activating time.

Early June saw many cancellations with major change in operations for Otago area, e.g. 165, 147, 213 + 253 cancelled, 102 not running Dunedin-Damaru, 104 MTWTH goods + 134 Fri. goods cancelled along with No.10 Burnside shunt. Special trains running G83 Sat. Damaru-Dunedin, G93 Mon-Sat goods Palmerston-Dunedin; G87 Mon-Fri. Damaru-Dunedin goods, G95 Fri. nite Damaru-Dunedin goods, G92 Mon-Sat Dunedin-Palmerston goods and G86 Dunedin-Damaru Mon. afternoon goods. Train G94 takes the place of 172 which was ordinary goods train to Damaru where it became an express goods to Christchurch. No. 20 shunt now works between Port Chalmers and Burnside, and 583 Dunedin-Invercargill, 530 Balclutha-Dunedin, and 500 Invercargill-Dunedin goods trains are all cancelled being replaced by H89 7.15am Dunedin-Invercargill and H88 6.30am Invercargill-Dunedin goods trains.

June 9th saw 14 speed restrictions between Dunedin and Damaru with 1 for tunnel repairs, 1 ballast cleaning machine operations, 2 formation repairs.

Dg locomotives maybe banned from being the lead engine on South Island trains shortly.

Kaikoura Coast-Marlborough

5th May work train Kaikoura to Mina hauled by Dj 1200 + Dg766 ballasting Mina-Spotswood. Concrete sleepers were laid in small portion of Mina-Spotswood section same time as Tormore crossing loop was extended and signals repositioned. The Picton Express was cancelled on 12th and 13th while a small bridge was renewed, and specials L66 Scargill-Dunedin and L68 + L67 ran Kaikoura-Christchurch to move tonnage. A Dsc was used on ballast trains on 15-16th May (Dsc 424) because of severe loco shortage. Between Claverly and Oaro private contractors have been engaged in weatherproofing the mainline with extensive earthworks and use of earthmoving machinery adjacent to the tunnel no.3.

2nd June train 433 was hauled by Dj1212 instead of usual Dg and this day 433 had Dsa 268 intow Kaikoura-Picton.

11th June Dj1250 + Dg766 on work train discharging 3 'Un' flat bogie wagons by steam crane Scargill-Omihi and six wagons of rails were discharged Omihi-Waipara, and next day Dj1237 + Dg784 on work train discharged more rails there. 17th June a new culvert was placed in position between Mina and Spotswood. June 18 track recording car ran Addington to Mina and onto Rakautara the next day. On 23rd the Picton Express 445 and 446 didn't run because of changes in the Kaikoura yard. For a week automatic signalling was suspended in Kowhai-Hapuiku section as a new panel and automatic warning devices were being installed at the north end of Kaikoura yard for Hawthorne Road level crossing. Last four days in June 50 ballast wagons were lifted daily, 25 at Belfast and 25 plus plough van at Rangiora for discharging in the Waipara-Omihi section. Dj/Dg combinations on ballast trains, then Dj1242 on work train 29th recovered rails in Waipara-Omihi section. June 30 saw Dj1242 towed "dead" by Dj1252 on 445 to Picton for Cook Strait ferry transfer to Wellington for tests with Df locomotives.

July 1 only 445 (Dj1219) + Dj1252 on 446 passenger trains ran due to lockout troubles. Dj's 1252, 1213, 1219, 1246 + 1255 ran these services in first week of July. July 8 Dg's 791 + 770 had flat batteries, so couldn't turn over so Dg's 766 + 765 took over their freight runs. 11 July Dg 772 was shipped over Cook Strait to be tested with Df loco. 12th - 49 wagons of ballast ploughed-out between Omihi and Scargill with Dj1217 + Dg 780 lifting 25 wagons and plough van at Rangiora. 15-16th July saw more concrete sleepers discharged between Rangiora-Amberley-Waipara as 17 wagons of concrete sleepers were off-loaded as a new deviation laid with concrete sleepers to bypass a sharp "S" bend where the old Ashley station used to be, also eliminating a 6 year old 10km speed restriction on a small bridge. And on 16-18th steam crane no.197 hauled by Dg's 779 + 757 recovered rails in the Claverly-Oaro and Kaikoura-Rakautara-Clarence sections. 18th July Dj 1229 with new motor was rushed into service on train 449 with Dg 764. 21-22 July concrete sleepers laid Amberley-Waipara and buses were used on Christchurch-Kaikoura and vice-versa. More ballasting continued between Amberley and Waipara on 23-24th July and train 467 on 24th had Dj1214 + Dg790 up front towing Dsc422 for Blenheim while train 471 headed by Dj1239 + Dg754 was towing Tr 180 to Kaikoura. 28th July a work train ran Kaikoura to Mina with Dg 779 + 757 to clear cuttings using a digger on a flat-top wagon and Yd wagons between Spotswood and Domett.

Canterbury

On the 3rd May Rm 108 + 113 were both towed from Linwood Loco Depot to the Pacific Scrap siding at Sockburn, however 'Rm'113 was later returned to Linwood.

May 3 saw Dj1207 + Dg 775 on 105 goods which was unusual as Dj's only run this train on Fridays when renumbered as 137 goods. May 5 - rewiring operations at Glenavy and all trains had to be hand signalled past all signals placed "at stop". May 14 - Dg 777 on train 33 replaced Dg 786 which required minor repairs. 29th May saw Dsc 424 towed to Ashburton by Dj1210 on 103 goods to replace broken-down Dsc 423. 9-10th June some concrete sleepers were laid between Temuka and Washdyke, and 12-15th inclusive a loco + van left Timaru 4.45am to pick up ballast at Glenavy for discharge between Washdyke and Temuka. June 13 Dg 775 three hours late into Middleton on train 106 as D1 hauling train broke down south of Damaru.

Because of severe floods west of Springfield on 7th May, passenger train 657 hauled by Dj1262 ran only to Springfield and passengers were then conveyed by bus thence to Greymouth, while the return service 658 ran Springfield-Christchurch only with 669 that evening running only as far as Cass where Dj1233 was turned on the triangle there to run 674 the return service with buses being used between Cass and Greymouth.

15th May Dj1218 ran a three 'Ac' car excursion Christchurch-Arthur's Pass return and was chartered by the North Canterbury Hospital Board Dental Dept, and extra stops were made for viewing the scenery and taking of photographs at suitable spots.

A good number of Dg's run Middleton-Arthur's Pass goods, double headed, e.g. 778 + 762 on train 621 on 8th June. 19th June Avoca station was re-opened for wagon lots only.

Wellington

6th June, first of Wellington's new Swiss-made cable-cars was put on the rails, and later in the afternoon the second of the two cars. 7th June three different mechanical failures, a points failure, signal failure and a locomotive breakdown meant quite some delay for Wellington commuters in the morning. 8th June a unit passed a signal at "red" and hit the rear of a slow moving goods injuring two people and the front of the unit was demolished somewhat. It seems as if Wellington new electric units were not the first choice of Railways, but with political consideration by the Government accepted the Hungarian tenderer who will build 'corten' steel, which still needs painting and maintenance whilst the Japanese tenderer's sleek carriages would have been in low-maintenance stainless steel.

9th June, the last "Silver Star" sleeper train with Dx 2624 arrived at platform 9 in the morning and the carriages were moved into the Wellington east yard after union meeting.

11th June, twenty new Df locomotives were unloaded off the Italian ship "Expresso Special".

13th June - a late start to suburban services after 12.30pm, following a railwaymen's stopwork meeting. 16th June Dx 2638 hauled Am3 into Wellington at 8.00pm on 333 "Silver Fern" service. The suspended enginedriver from the unit crash as mentioned above was fined \$600 in Wellington Magistrates Court, but was expected to be back driving fairly soon. Long hours and staff shortages were the problem.

22nd June four Cook Strait ferry sailings were cancelled as result of ban on freight forwarders by the NUR.

2nd July slips on the Johnsonville line halted trains for an hour and a half. Apparently it was cleared in a short time, but the 6.39am train to Johnsonville broke down after hitting an obstruction on the line left by a slip. At Taita that day a Da + Ew collided and damaged, but the Ew driver was unhurt (the Da was unoccupied at the time at the head of a line of empty carriages) and there was not much delay to services. 6th July homeward bound commuters were left standing by a lightning stopwork called by the Wellington Locomotive Engineers' Association members which saw six trains cancelled between 4.25-5.50pm while other services were delayed and many faced a half hour wait in crowded trains.

Some of the refurbished 88 seat railcar-cum-'Ac' train-sets are to be used on Wellington peak hour commuter services such as 7.58am Paraparaumu-Wellington and 5.23pm Wellington-Plympton will be extended to Paekakariki, for example. However seating capacity in the Wellington area will not be restored to what it was two years ago until the new trains came into use in 1981.

Rail Action - A Christchurch based Pro-Rail Pressure Group

We have received publicity material from Rail Action, and if you wish to receive their newsletter, write to P.O. Box 32-066, Linwood, Christchurch.

Railways are taking a hammering from the pro-road lobby and anti-rail politicians seem to be in the majority, so those of us who believe in Railways have a tough task ahead to halt the ongoing decline in rail passenger services and the closing of branch lines. In essence their message is do something, speak up about your interest in Railways to those in authority and be active in promoting the rail side of the story.

A WEEK OF IT IN AUSTRALIA (by Geoff Rossiter)

In April I took a look at New South Wales Railways to see how they do it. On the 10th April I went to Parramatta and return travelling both ways in a four-car double-decker electrical unit. The following day some time was spent at Hornsby which is a good train watching spot, with old and new multiple-units coming and going, and the Sydney-Newcastle Express hauled by no.44232, a locomotive with a cab at each end. The return Express about 3.0pm was hauled by an electric no.4635.

12th April I went from Sydney to Gosford and return for only \$2.60. Gosford is about the same size as Temuka, transfer off the suburban unit at Hornsby. From Hornsby to Gosford and return, travel was in a four-car electric multiple unit which was silver with a blue band around it with yellow tinted windows.

453	Christchurch	460	Dunedin
454	Palmerston North	461	Dunedin
456	Christchurch	462	Dunedin
457	Wellington (East Town)	463	Dunedin
458	*Kawerau (Auckland)	464	*Dunedin
459	Greymouth	467	*Westport

'Dj' Re-Engining Programme

This is the modification programme as at 30th April 1979 for the re-engining of the 'Dj' class. All Dj locomotives receiving new engines can be identified by modified turbocharger air intakes on the sides of the engine compartment. All re-engined locomotives also undergo modification to the cooling system including the addition of a prominent roof mounted header tank. However, there are a number of locomotives in service (denoted *) which have received the cooling system modifications but which are not yet equipped with new engines:

'Dj's: 1201*, 1202, 1203*, 1209, 1210, 1211*, 1214, 1218, 1224*, 1232*, 1236*, 1237*, 1239, 1242, 1249, 1251, 1255 + 1256*.

The 'Dg' locomotive rebuilding programme at the Hillside Railway Workshops, as at 30th April 1979:

Dg 760 - completed, Dg 781 - awaiting final fitting out of cab interior.
Dg's 750, 752 + 763 - currently undergoing early stages of rebuilding.

The list of Refurbished Suburban Cars, 'Dsc'/'Dj'/'Dg' Re-engining Programmes was supplied by the New Zealand Railways.

RE-BUILT 'Dc' class LOCOMOTIVES

This is the list of 'Da' class locomotives which have been re-built as 'Dc' class locomotives. A further list to indicate was Da's were re-built after this list was prepared, will be published in our September-October 1979 issue.

'Da' = 'Dc'	'Da' = 'Dc'	'Da' = 'Dc'
1525 = 1551	1513 = 1565	1518 = 1579
1532 = 1552	1478 = 1566	1470 = 1580
1533 = 1553	1511 = 1567	1490 = 1581
1501 = 1554	1500 = 1568*	1536 = 1582
1507 = 1555	1508 = 1569*	* 1528 = 1583
1504 = 1556	1535 = 1570	* 1510 = 1584
1512 = 1557	1527 = 1571	1540 = 1585
1514 = 1558	1506 = 1572	1544 = 1586
1515 = 1559	1529 = 1573	1542 = 1587
1523 = 1560	1502 = 1574	1543 = 1588
1520 = 1561	1455 = 1575	1530 = 1589
1509 = 1562	1531 = 1576	1441 = 1590
1521 = 1563	1483 = 1577	1537 = 1591
1519 = 1564	1493 = 1578	1497 = 1592

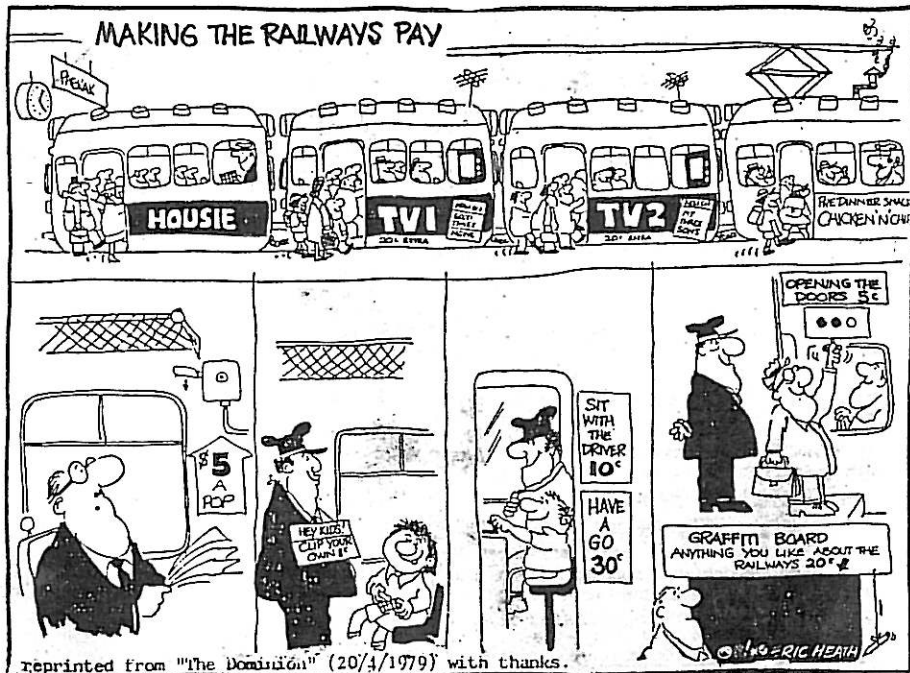
* = unloaded or loaded aboard ship at Lyttelton.

Do all 'Da' class locomotives have the same size fuel tank ?

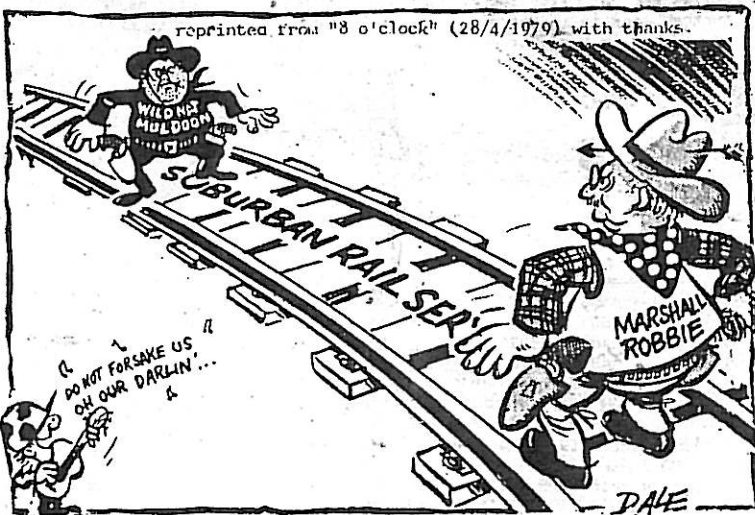
Would you believe - NO ! As -

Da's 1400-1429 fuel tank holds 625 gallons, Da's 1430-1439 hold 770 gallons, Da's *1440-1451 hold 670 gallons, and Da's 1452-1546 hold 698 gallons.

* = originally were 770 gallons.



Reprinted from "The Dominion" (20/4/1979) with thanks.



HIGH NOON

Last Page

* A man gets angry because the train's late. The Irish stationmaster is reading a timetable. The man asks: "Why have a timetable if the train's late?" The Irishman replies "because if we didn't we wouldn't know how late the trains are!"

* An anonymous clergyman was annoyed when no one answered his knock at the door of a house. He left his visiting card, writing on it: "Revelation 3, 20 Behold I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come to him".

The next Sunday a woman attended church service and gave the vicar her card inscribed: "Genesis 3: 10". The vicar looked it up and read: "I heard the sound of thee in the garden and I was afraid, because I was naked and hid myself".

* No Pies for Them! British Rail is staging a competition to find "new and exciting sandwich fillings" to be served at its railway station cafeterias and in its dining cars. "Whistle" wonders what they will come up with? Perhaps the NZR might "beef-up" its sandwiches!

* Christchurch's Harlequin Players' forthcoming production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" was in the last stages of rehearsal for its open-air season at Mona Vale. The players, however, find that they have to cope with more than their fair share of "noises off" - what with the ducks in the nearby Avon River and an occasional passing train. The producer has overcome the latter problem by arranging the play round the Railways timetable. The play, therefore, begins after the first evening train passes through, and the next train whistles through during the interval - provided, that is, that the trains are running to time. But the players discovered a new problem during rehearsals the other evening, when they tried the taped sound effects for the play for the first time. At one stage, the action calls for the baying of hounds in the background. But when the sound effects people turned on the appropriate noise, several real-life hounds near Mona Vale joined in.

* An Australian tourist has returned home after a round-New Zealand tour with this tale which he swears is true. The tour bus-driver was explaining to passengers how glaciers were responsible for the boulder formation at Milford Sound. An American tourist asked: "Where have all the glaciers gone?" The bus-driver pondered for a moment then replied: "Probably gone to get more boulders."

* Shortly before the Tuatapere Branch Line was closed in July 1976, the track ganger stopped opposite the Tuatapere Hotel on his motorised jigger and bought his customary "half-dozen".

He loaded his cargo alongside his dog and gave the jigger a shove to start it. The motor fired, Bill tripped - and away went jigger, "half-dozen" and dog on their lonesome.

The trio were eventually intercepted at Riverton - 49-km down the line!

* A Te Kauhata lady on holiday in Palmerston North was pondering to her six year-old daughter about the lovely clear evening and starry skies and you could hear the trains whistle each night. While speaking the lady heard one and said to daughter: "That must be the "Silver Star".

Also pondering, daughter answered: "P'robably they all are".

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