

Beeching Plan Slashes England's Railroad Service

Editor's note: America's railroads have been in trouble for years, particularly the commuter lines. One proposed solution has been the nationalization of the railroads. The British railroad system has been nationalized for 15 years and is still in trouble. Here is a report on what's been happening.

By DANIEL F. GILMORE
United Press International
London—(UPI)—Britain is taking about as sharp a scalpel to its railroad system as probably any nation ever has attempted. Roughly speaking, it plans to cut the world's most comprehensive network of rail services in half.

The answer is money. The country cannot afford the luxury of a system in which by its own figures half the railway track—17,000 route miles—carries less than eight per cent of the combined freight and passenger traffic, and a third of its depots do practically no business.

In 1961, British railways lost 150 million pounds (\$420 million), about the same last year, and over-all they are more than 1 billion pounds (\$2.8 billion) in debt. On top of that the government has spent another billion pounds on modernization in the last ten years, with no really noticeable effect.

For as long as anyone can remember the railroads here have fought a losing battle to make money, or just break even. They were deeply in financial trouble when the Labor government nationalized them in 1948 and have been getting in deeper ever since.

In 1948 a central railway executive was named to run the newly nationalized rail system. When the executive did not immediately provide a magic solution to the railroads' ills (they had been losing money under private ownership, too) there were charges of government meddling, political ineptitude.

In 1953 the Conservative

government replaced the railway executive with the British Transport Commission. There were six rail "regions" and each had its own general manager, its own "establishment."

Service Down
And still the railroads lost money and service deteriorated.

In 1961, still losing millions and still satisfying practically no one with the over-all service, the government took the first step toward the present drastic attempt to cut losses and put the system on a paying or break-even basis and improve those services that survive the economics, including the over-crowded commuter lines.

A business man, round-faced, balding Dr. Richard Beeching, technical director of imperial chemical industries (ICI) was hired at the highest civil servant salary ever, 24,000 pounds or \$67,200 a year, to "put the railroads on a business basis."

Ever since, Beeching has had the railroads under an accountant's eye and last March 27 he produced his remedies in a 148-page report that was a shocker. "Slasher Beeching" one newspaper called him. "Beeching's Battleax" headlined another. His main proposals hit rail services in every part of the country but hardest at Wales, Scotland, Northern England, small

towns everywhere and scores of coastal resorts. Under the Beeching plan now before parliament for approval, the reorganization would among other things:—Close 2,363 stations out of 4,709. —Withdraw service from 5,000 existing route miles of the 17,800 total. —Discontinue many if not most "stopping services" at points where trains can be

flagged down for passengers. —Coordinate commuter services in eight major cities outside London. —Raise fares. —Establish new mainline trains and services for both freight and passenger traffic. Under his program, Beeching says, the railroads should be "almost" paying for themselves by 1970. —Railroad workers were the first to raise cries of alarm

against the plan. Of approximately 474,000 railroad employees, it is estimated 70,000 will lose their jobs. Beeching and his advisers claim firings may not be necessary and that by 1970 attrition will have brought the necessary reductions. Another problem sure to come under heavy debate is how the country's already inadequate highway system is going to absorb the increased traffic that will be thrown on the roads as rail services diminish. There are 195,217 miles of public road in Britain with a good half the total

little more than widened country lanes. **Wait 3 Years**
As the government brought the railroad program to parliament, spokesmen were saying three years was the target time for putting the Beeching Plan into effect, and to carry out even more economy plans than have yet been made public. Most observers agree the

controversy will be great and could become an issue in the next general election. Beeching himself anticipates that one of the strongest things he will have to fight is the country's traditional resistance to change. "There is no sadder or more frequent obituary on the pages of time," he is reported to feel, "than 'we have always done it this way'."

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School Friends Strike It Rich With Claves Kit

By PATRICIA MCCORMACK
United Press International
New York—(UPI)—Sipping coffee in the kitchen one day, two "beat" women picked up sticks and clicked them in a bossa nova rhythm.

Then they clucked about how the sticks—claves used by Latin dancers to beat out rhythms—could make their silent cash registers ring.

Claire Goodman and Fran Weitzner, school friends who engage in oddment ventures with an eye to striking it real rich, hit simultaneously on the modus operandi; invent a bossa nova kit.

In it put a record—bossa nova instruction on one side; bossa nova tunes on the flip side; two claves and other accessories for the do-it-myself bossa nova fan.

But the two rover girls formerly of Abraham Lincoln High school in Brooklyn, N.Y., given for several years to trying get-rich ventures, knew not a nit about how to knit their idea into action.

Ignorance Pays
Ignorance being a good launching pad, as they figured it, the two Long Island, N.Y., matrons barged into record company offices to learn how one goes about getting into the record business.

"The best way to get into the record business is—don't," they were told.

That sparked their interest. After all, as their past adventures proved, ignorance matters not if you're really determined to tackle the unknown—especially if you for-

tify yourself by cogitating over coffee in the kitchen and never say die.

Their joint ventures of the last several years were in fields foreign to them.

They failed in the private eye business. Their next venture, car salvage business, moved along on flat tires from the start and eventually made them poorer.

Many Failures
Their souperia—a United Nations of soup kitchen—showed some chance of boiling over into riches at \$1 a bowl. But soon as it simmered toward the profit-making margin, the landlord commandeered the souproom for another purpose.

"We clicked the claves in the kitchen that day in December," Mrs. Weitzner recalled. "And somehow we could hear our ship coming in finally—even if it sounded like the click of a train's wheels, it was a ship."

The two matrons said money in the private eye business was good, but they just didn't have the stomach—er, heart—to succeed.

"Our first assignment," Mrs. Goodman said, "was to squeal on a gal who was having cocktails with a gentleman, unrelated to her by marriage."

Didn't Snitch
"After watching for 20 minutes, we found we couldn't snitch. We turned in our badges."

The car salvage business blew its gasket when the partners bought and resold their first car—a sentimental

heap abandoned in a falling-down garage.

"Several days after the sale," Mrs. Goodman said, "the buyer came to us and fumed—no motor."

"Imagine how embarrassing? We had to give the man back his \$10."

Two months after the kitchen session with the magic claves the ambitious matrons tip-toed into the record business—producing a "Magic Claves Bossa Nova Kit."

The kit with claves, record and instructions did well in tests in New York five-and-tens. (And why not? The "rover girls" helped to put on demonstrations.)

Big Money
Recently the two were offered \$50,000 for their record company and kit—"The Magic Claves Beats for the Easy-Does-It Bossa Nova."

"But we've never been closer to our dream of making a million," Mrs. Goodman said. "We're going to hold onto our Claves Beat Record Ltd.—the corporate name for what we're doing."

Why are they doing it? Why do they want a million when each has a husband with substantial income?

"We have good minds and it's a shame to waste talents, that's why," Mrs. Weitzner, mother of two, said.

"Why do we want a million?" Mrs. Goodman, mother of one, asked.

She answered by asking another question: "Why did Columbus want to discover America?"

They'll Do It Every Time

By Jimmy Hatlo

IN THOSE SLICK, NIFTY HOME MAGAZINES THE CHILD'S ROOM IS DEPICTED OH, SO PRETTY AND NEAT—

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Firms Turned Away from Talks With OSU Seniors

Corvallis—For the first time, Oregon State university's school of engineering is turning away companies which had planned to send representatives to the campus for interviews with graduating seniors.

The reason is there simply are not enough graduates interested in more interviews to make it worthwhile for the companies, according to Dean George Gleeson.

The average OSU engineering senior already has taken approximately eight job interviews this year, Gleeson pointed out. Some 200 engineering companies, governmental agencies and research organizations came to the campus for job talks with the June graduates.

Many of the seniors already have accepted jobs; others have definite plans to go on for graduate study or go into the service.

Graduate About 230
Oregon State will graduate about 230 engineers this June but could place three or four times that many in good jobs, Gleeson emphasized. The need for trained engineers is increasing every year, but the number of students in engineering is down in some parts of the nation and barely up from a year ago on the West Coast.

Starting salary for this year's engineering graduate will be about \$588 compared to \$572 a year ago, Gleeson said. Master's degree graduates will start about \$645 and doctor's degree graduates at \$875 up.

Starting salaries for engineers have increased 70 per cent in the last 10 years, the engineering leader said.

The drop in engineering enrollments is cause for real concern to engineering deans across the nation, Gleeson said. Scientific and technological advances are greatly increasing the need for trained engineers.

OSU was one of the few engineering schools in the nation to show undergraduate enrollment increases in 1961 and 1962. Last fall's enrollment was 1,710, a 10 per cent increase. OSU and most other schools show sizeable increases in the number of engineering students working for advanced degrees.

Missing Submarine Named for Shark
New York—(UPI)—The USS Thresher, the nuclear submarine missing in the North Atlantic, was named for the Thresher shark which is found in many oceans of the world.

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