



NUI MAYNOOTH

Oilteoil na hÉireann Mú Nuad

**THE LETTERKENNY & BURTONPORT
EXTENSION RAILWAY 1903-47:
ITS SOCIAL CONTEXT AND
ENVIRONMENT**

by

FRANK SWEENEY

THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF PH. D.

DEPARTMENT OF MODERN HISTORY

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND

MAYNOOTH

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: Professor R. V. Comerford

Supervisor of research: Professor R.V. Comerford

October 2004

Volume 2

VOLUME 2

Chapter 7	In the shadow of the great war	1
Chapter 8	The War of Independence	60
Chapter 9	The Civil War	110
Chapter 10	Struggling under native rule	161
Chapter 11	Fighting decline and closure	222
	Epilogue	281
	Bibliography	286
	Appendices	301

ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME 2

Fig. 41	Special trains to and from the Letterkenny Hiring Fair	10
Fig. 42	School attendance in Gweedore and Cloughaneely 1918	12
Fig. 43	New fares Derry-Burtonport 1916	17
Fig. 44	Delays on Burtonport Extension	42
Fig. 45	Indictable offences committed in July 1920 in Co. Donegal	77
Fig. 46	Proposed wages and grades	114
Fig. 47	Irregular strongholds in Donegal 1922	127
Fig. 48	First count in Donegal General Election 1923	163
Fig. 49	Population trends 1911-1926	193
Fig. 50	Comparison of votes between 1923 and 1927 elections	204
Fig. 51	L&LSR receipts and expenses plus governments grants in 1920s	219
Fig. 52	New L&LSR timetable introduced in 1922	220
Fig. 53	Special trains to Dr McNeely's consecration 1923	221
Fig. 54	Bus routes in the Rosses 1931	230
Fig. 55	Persons paid unemployment assistance	247
Fig. 56	Unemployment trends 1934-5, County Donegal	247
Fig. 57	Unemployment recipients in northwest 1935 and 1935	248
Fig. 58	The L&LSR bus network in Donegal from 1939 onwards	263
Fig. 59	Exports of turf from northwest Donegal	267
Fig. 60	Population trends 1911-1946	274

APPENDICES

1	Mileposts, gatehouses and stations	301
2	Accident log of Burtonport Extension 1919-1935	303
3	Goods carried in 1913	308
4	Merchandise carried in 1921 on all L&LSR lines	309
5	Passengers carried 1903-16	310
6	Itemised costing of the L&BER	314
7	Two sample accounts from Duffy's shop, 1888	318
8	Creeslough Station	329

CHAPTER 7.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE GREAT WAR

The declaration of war between Britain and Germany in August 1914 was to profoundly affect the whole L&LSR network and the Burtonport Extension in particular. First, the British Admiralty took over the Derry shipyards and recruited fitters, boilermen, mechanics, tradesmen, skilled workers of many sorts, as well as good labourers, into its workforce. The railways feeding into Derry city provided a natural recruiting pool for the shipyard but the L&LSR suffered more than most because it had a history of low wages, long hours and poor conditions under the stewardship of John McFarland. Secondly, the war soon changed the working conditions of many railway employees. By early 1915 Irish railwaymen were 'seething with discontent'.¹

All railways in Britain had been taken over by the War Office for war purposes in 1914 and a war bonus amounting to three shillings per week was paid to all British railway employees from that time. However, the Irish railways were not touched by this legislation but Irish railwaymen demanded payment of the war bonus, nevertheless, as it had been policy to attempt to maintain parity between Irish and British railway workers. The Irish railway companies refused to meet the workers or discuss the question of a war bonus and this led to much ill-feeling. With the naval base at Lough Swilly and the shipyards and munitions works in Derry the L&LSR workers believed that they were making a substantial contribution to the war effort because the military used the L&LSR Buncrana railway as the principal method of communication and carriage between these two bases. The National Union of Railwaymen sent representatives to Ireland to try and persuade the railway

¹ *DJ*, 26 Mar. 1915, p. 5.

companies to negotiate but without success. Meetings were held at centres throughout the country, including Derry, and with threats and talk of striking and disruption, many railway employees in that city headed for the shipyards where life was easier and pay and conditions were much better.²

This flight of labour denuded the railways and the Burtonport Extension, in particular, because it was always difficult to find personnel to stay in such a remote outpost as was evident in 1912 when the most severe punishment that could be meted out to driver Deeney was that he be 'punished by being permanently transferred to Burtonport'.³ In November 1915, when Hugh Law, M.P., once again, raised the poor performance of the Burtonport Extension in parliament the L&LSR replied that its engines were not up to the task because nearly all its mechanical engineers had gone to the munitions' works or to the shipyards.⁴

Another consequence of the war was that the price of many materials rose very sharply. Coal had been rising in price since 1911, due, particularly, to the militancy of the coalminers in Britain who were determined that high coal prices would form the basis for continued high wages. With the declaration of war, transport ships and coal carriers became expensive to hire and difficult to obtain with the result that coal prices rose to three shillings a bag in Derry City and the L&LSR could only get 500 tons of inferior coal for its locomotives in times of severe distress.⁵ The city of Derry witnessed 'extraordinary prices' with demands from the Derry Railwaymen's Union for the government to take over the distribution of goods to the needy and to control prices when its coal stocks were reduced to a few days' supply.⁶ Hugh Law told parliament that even in northwest Donegal the necessities of life

² *DJ*, 29 Mar. 1915, p. 8.

³ Patterson, *The Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway*, p. 74.

⁴ *DJ*, 24 Nov. 1915, p. 7.

⁵ *DJ*, 17 Feb. 1915, p. 6.

⁶ *DJ*, 10 Feb. 1915, p. 4.

were costing 20 per cent more than formerly.⁷ With many of the heavy industries in Britain switching to the production of war material spare parts for trains became very expensive and difficult to obtain. When engines on the L&LSR lines broke down during the war years they were often pushed into sidings and left there with the grass growing around them.⁸

The war also had serious consequences for the fishing industry of northwest Donegal. It was estimated that 7,000 people were engaged, either directly or indirectly, in the industry prior to the declaration of war.⁹ The Scottish and English steam drifters and large motor vessels had control of the industry but thousands of locals occupied all the labouring or subsidiary positions in the industry by 1914. The fast Scottish steam drifters were first to reach the shoals of herring which they scooped up and carried back at high speed to Burtonport, Kincasslagh, Downings or Buncrana where they got the first and best prices from the agents for their catches which were then loaded on the trains and sent off immediately to the cities in Britain. The locals were mainly confined to open sailing boats of Zulu lugger rig or open Greencastle yawls which were the most common boats in northwest Donegal because they could be hauled up on the beaches for safety in the many areas where there were no piers or developed harbours.¹⁰ The cost of these boats was relatively small and they were favoured by the locals because they could retain most of their earnings. However, these were no matches for the Scottish or English fleets. When the locals zigzagged their sailing yawls in an effort to gain advantage of the winds to reach the fishing shoals and then repeated the operation on their return to harbour, they were usually many hours late for the markets or, more commonly, had to make land where there were few markets

⁷ *DJ*, 22 Feb. 1915, p. 6. Hugh Law, M.P.

⁸ Patterson, *The Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway*, p. 152.

⁹ *DJ*, 8 Jan. 1915, p. 8.

¹⁰ *DJ*, 10 May 1915, p. 6.

or none at all.¹¹ They were then condemned to sell their fish in the locality by horse and cart for whatever price could be got. The disparity in the average weekly earnings of the various fishermen ranged from 14*s.* 7*d.* to £3 7*s.* 5*d.* but the drifters and motor vessels completely dominated the trade.¹² Many local fishermen wanted to abandon the sailing boats and go for powerboats but they were tied into 'loan' or 'share' arrangements with the Congested Districts Board or with local businessmen who had mimicked the Congested Districts Board and had bought boats which they then leased out to local men who were later unable to get out of such agreements. Anyway, for motor vessels to be successful they would need to fish for ten months of the year and the problem in northwest Donegal was that many who were engaged in fishing were predominantly farmers who had only recently become aware of the riches of the sea but were not yet ready to abandon their few acres of land to depend fully on fishing for a livelihood.¹³

In late 1914 the admiralty laid mines along the northwest Donegal coast and forbade fishing in the area from Tory Island to Malin Head. Furthermore, they took over all the steam drifters for war purposes, including those of the Congested Districts Board, thereby denuding the Donegal coast of more than 200 of such elegant and powerful boats.¹⁴ The Scottish drifters departed from Donegal and with them went the heart and soul of the industry. The whole chain in the fish trade was broken. The international traders and buyers departed from the scene and the auxiliary workers such as gutters, packers, loaders, coopers, carters and fuel merchants were left without work. People were doubly struck for, in an area of such poor land, the increased prices of grain, bread and foodstuffs, added to their woes.¹⁵

¹¹ See Conaghan, *The Zulu fishermen*, for the story of these boats, their crews and the fishing practices.

¹² *DJ*, 10 May 1915, p. 6.

¹³ *DJ*, 10 May 1915, p. 6.

¹⁴ *DJ*, 6 Jan. 1916, p. 8. It was necessary to get a special pass to visit Tory Island.

¹⁵ *DJ*, 8 Feb. 1915, p. 8.

Fishing was now left in the hands of the locals who were not so much affected by the mines laid out at sea because their boats were only suitable for inshore fishing and their reduced catches could only fetch 30s. to 35s. in the Derry market where foodstuffs were beginning to become scarce. But as time passed local dealers appeared to fill the void in the reduced market and the industry steadied itself and began to improve slowly. The Burtonport Extension coped reasonably well with this reduced fishery transport although Edward Boyle, a fish exporter from Dungloe, had good reason to complain in March 1915 when he delivered a consignment of cured herring to Kincasslagh Road station destined for New York, only to find the herring still at the station eight days later.¹⁶

The depleted income earned from fishing by the ordinary workers could not be supplemented by seasonal migration either because fear of conscription in Scotland prevented vast numbers of traditional migrants from leaving home. The army recruitment campaign became invigorated in the northwest during the latter months of 1915. The Royal Irish Fusiliers and the Irish Guards with their bands and regalia attended the local fairs and held recruitment drives.¹⁷ On 8 November 1915, a full-page advertisement appeared in all the local papers for men, aged twenty to thirty years, to join in the war effort.¹⁸ This action was taken locally as an indication that compulsory enlisting was inevitable. The migrant labourers became subject to harassment in Derry when going to or coming from the boat by army sergeants and RIC trying to enlist them. By 1916, their position in Scotland became hopeless due to severe pressure to join the army and animosity from the native population. Consequently, many of these young men departed for America in order to avoid being called to the colours because the weekly press

¹⁶ *DJ*, 23 Apr. 1915, p. 4.

¹⁷ CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, April 1915 (CO 904/96); *DJ*, 12 Nov. 1915, p. 6.

¹⁸ *DJ*, 8 Nov. 1915. The call was for 50,000 men to join the army.

reports giving the dead and wounded lists were not conducive to further enlistment.¹⁹ 1916 saw growing pressure coming on the migrant labourers. When they started arriving in the Scottish Lothians in July of that year for the turnip singling, they 'received a very cold reception from many farmers' because they had not enlisted for service. 'Many were told that their services were not required'. In August of that year large numbers of them returned home from Scotland due to fear of conscription and the further problem that Scottish labourers refused to work alongside them.²⁰ However, many were arrested in Scotland for avoiding service. Such pressure was particularly acute in Motherwell and some were press-ganged into joining up.²¹ Though Hugh Law, MP for Donegal, asked many questions in parliament about the plight of Irish migratory workers and the residency qualification of Irish harvesters, the situation in Scotland changed little and most migrants were forced to return home.²² James F. O'Donnell, Burtonport, wrote to General Sir John Maxwell about the problems of migratory labourers from Donegal and the poverty suffered in the northwest because of its location in the congested area. The Derry boat had ceased going to Glasgow and the Sligo to Glasgow boat which was used by many harvesters had ceased also. The labourers that ventured to Scotland now had to go via Belfast which cost 30s. and took thirty-six hours on the journey.²³ In August 1916, Law again raised the issue of the many arrests and ill treatment of Irish labourers throughout Britain and got promises from the government that new instructions would be issued.²⁴ However, the Donegal papers carried many articles in the following weeks of local migrants having to abandon the harvest in Britain and being forced to return home.²⁵

¹⁹ DJ, 7 Apr. 1915, p. 5; 27 Oct. 1915, p. 7; 17 Nov. 1915, p. 6; 7 Jan. 1916, p. 6.

²⁰ CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, Aug. 1916 (CO 904/100); DJ, 7 July 1916, p. 3.

²¹ DJ, 14 Aug., 1916, p. 2.

²² DJ, 12 Apr. 1916, p. 4.

²³ DJ, 2 June 1916, p. 4.

²⁴ DJ, 16 Aug. 1916, p. 8.

²⁵ DJ, 21 Aug. 1916, p. 4.

A committee was formed in the Rosses for the unemployed migrants and it asked farmers in Derry and Tyrone to give them work, if possible.²⁶ It is significant that the summer of 1916 saw a proliferation of soccer teams in northwest Donegal where the young men representing Glenties United, Killybegs Emeralds, Maghera Shamrocks, Kincasslagh Rovers, Keadeue Rovers, Kincasslagh Hibernians, Gweedore Guilds, Falcarragh, Creeslough and Milford forgot about conscription and competed on the soccer fields, Sunday after Sunday, when in normal times such fields would be empty during the summer migration.²⁷ It is further noticeable that the court reports grew much longer with cases of drunkenness, fighting, assault, and abusive language dominating among these young men.²⁸

Efforts were made to organize the labourers into a Migratory Labourers Association which would affiliate with the Irish Transport and General Workers Union. However, this body came to little significance and, by April 1918, an open letter from Hugh Law, M.P. for West Donegal, was published in the *Derry Journal* warning all migrants that, 'popular feeling in Britain is getting more and more anti-Irish and is directed particularly against Irishmen of military age who are suspected of taking the jobs of Englishmen and Scotchmen who have joined the army. They [migrant labourers] should try for jobs in other parts of Ireland'.²⁹ But to these young men in the northwest, the rest of Ireland was much more of a foreign land to them than the familiar and traditional landscapes of northern England or lowland Scotland.

Such numbers of young able men, living poorly without money in a depressed community with little to do were a potential danger to the stability of western Donegal society especially in the months when news of the

²⁶ CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, Aug. 1916 (CO 904/100).

²⁷ *DJ*, 10 July 1916, p. 1; 11 Aug. 1916, p. 8; 25 Aug. 1916, p. 3; 4 Sept. 1916, p. 4.

²⁸ *DJ*, 27 Oct. 1916, p. 3; 17 Nov. 1916, p. 7.

²⁹ *DJ*, 24 Apr. 1918, p. 2.

consequences of the Easter rebellion were beginning to reach the ordinary citizens. Arrests and harassment by the RIC on foot of warrants from Scotland for migrant labourers who had returned home did nothing to endear the local police to these young men, either.³⁰ For example, three young men in Donegal and six men around Ballyshannon were arrested and sent to Glasgow under the Military Service Act.³¹ There were many similar reports especially during fair days when the police mounted tracking operations on foot of warrants from Scotland.

For the first time, the County Inspector who penned the crime report for September 1916 showed his alarm, not at the events of Easter 1916, but at the premature return of these migratory labourers:

In the [Rosses] the great majority of the young men are afraid to go away this year owing to the prospect of conviction and threats received from Scotch and English labourers. They had to come home in August so they had saved no money and are now in debt for the provisions supplied by the local shopkeeper and they have no prospect of being able to pay their debt.

Those men and their families have become sullen and discontented and may blame the army, police and government for all their troubles, real or imaginary. As these men have little land and do little or nothing during the winter months there is little doubt but that they will come together, discuss their grievances, form some societies, secret or otherwise. Extremists will hear of their discontent and will probably endeavour to utilise it for their own ends.³²

He advocated generous relief schemes to occupy these men in order 'to direct the thoughts and energies of these labourers into a wholesome channel'.³³ When Joseph Sweeney of Burtonport returned to the Rosses after

³⁰ *DJ*, 19 Sept. 1916, p. 2; 27 Sept. 1916, p. 3; 16 Oct. 1916, p. 1.

³¹ *DJ*, 11 June 1917, p. 4.

³² *CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, Sept. 1916 (CO 904/101)*.

³³ *Ibid.*

his exploits in the GPO in Dublin during the Easter Rising followed by imprisonment in England and Wales, he 'was greatly surprised and encouraged at the warmth of reception' given him. Sweeney took charge of the local Volunteer remnant organization and, though their time had not yet come, the disaffected young men found an outlet for their frustrations at last.³⁴

The girls' circumstances were little better. The disruption of the fish business at home left many girls without work and war deprived the gutters from working in the Scottish ports where they were highly respected and earned good money, because nearly all the trawlers were requisitioned for war duties and most of the Scottish fishermen were in the army. Before the war, the carpet factories at Crolly and Annagry were very uncertain about their markets and redundancy was looming for many employees. By 1915, both factories had closed down leaving almost two hundred girls unemployed.³⁵ James F. O'Donnell, public representative from Burtonport, was warning about 'threatened distress' and wrote: 'the people, through want of money and want of credit, are using up their seed and how they are to exist during the coming spring and summer is a mystery'.³⁶ O'Donnell's next statement shows that despite the advancement and development which had taken place during the twelve years since the Burtonport Railway had come into existence the northwest economy was quite brittle and attitudes and old practices had altered very little, for he mimicked the old days by begging Donegal County Council for 'assistance from the Board of Agriculture to revive the kelp industry, now that the poor people are hit by the slump in fishing during the war and so much need for employment'.³⁷ The lack of industrial progress is further reinforced when one considers the 'Dungloe

³⁴ Joseph Sweeney, 'Donegal and the War of Independence' in, *Capuchin Annual*, 1970, p. 427.

³⁵ *DJ*, 3 Apr. 1916, p. 4.

³⁶ *DJ*, 8 Jan. 1915, p. 8.

³⁷ *DJ*, 21 Apr. 1915, p. 3.

Fig. 41 Special trains to and from Letterkenny Hiring Fair, 1915

Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway

Letterkenny Hiring Fair,

FRIDAY, 14th MAY, 1915

On above date the TRAIN SERVICE between BURTONPORT and LETTERKENNY will be as under:-

	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.		a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
LEAVE BURTONPORT	6.00	8.30	10.40	3.30	LEAVE LETTERKENNY	9.2	1.30	4.0	6.43
Do. DUNGLOE ROAD	6.06	8.37	10.46	3.36	Do. OLDTOWN	9.8	1.36	4.10	6.48
Do. KINCASSLAGH RD	6.13	8.45	10.53	3.42	Do. NEWMILLS	c.	1.46	4.20	6.58
Do. CROLLY	6.33	9.03	11.10	4.00	Do. FOXHALL	9.26	1.53	4.27	7.04
Do. GWEEDORE	6.48	9.20	11.21	4.15	Do. CHURCHILL	9.39	2.4	4.38	7.15
Do. CASHELNAGOR	7.7	9.39	11.39	4.34	Do. KILMACRENAN	9.53	2.19	4.50	7.30
Do. FALCARRAGH	7.17	9.52	11.49	4.44	Do. CREESLOUGH	10.22	2.50	5.30	8.00
Do. DUNFANAGHY RD	7.39	10.16	12.11pm	5.9	Do. DUNFANAGHY RD	10.28	2.55	5.35	8.05
Do. CREESLOUGH	7.50	10.27	12.22	5.20	Do. FALCARRAGH	10.53	3.22	5.55	8.29
Do. KILMACRENAN	8.16	10.52	12.48	5.47	Do. CASHELNAGOR	11.06	3.35	6.05	8.41
Do. CHURCHILL	8.26	11.05	12.58	5.58	Do. GWEEDORE	11.27	4.10	6.29	9.1
Do. FOXHALL	8.38	11.17	1.10	6.10	Do. CROLLY	11.38	4.26	6.45	9.10
Do. NEWMILLS	8.43	11.22	1.15	6.15	Do. KINCASSLAGH RD	11.57	4.41	7.0	9.29
Do. OLDTOWN	8.51	11.31	1.23	6.24	Do. DUNGLOE ROAD	12.4 p.m.	4.46	7.5	9.35
ARRIVE LETTERKENNY	8.55	11.34	1.27	6.28	ARRIVE BURTONPORT	12.10	4.50	7.10	9.40

MARKET TICKETS will be issued at Letterkenny by 6.0 and 8.30 a.m. Ordinary Trains

J. L. CLEWES, General Manager.

Source: E. M. Patterson, The Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway.

Industrial Show' of August 1912. After nine years of railway communication, one expects to see the fruits of development and progress. Yet, the products on display were the traditional hand knitted golf jackets, butter, home made bread, lace, afternoon tea cloths, stockings, eggs, chickens and vegetables.³⁸ It seemed as if little had changed from the bad old days.

When it was announced in February 1915 that a grant of £30,000 and a loan of £11,500 for the development of Burtonport and Downings harbours was being withdrawn because of the need for further investment in the war effort, and when Congested Districts Board finances were severely curtailed by government, there was gloom with the public representatives calling for road building programmes to ease the suffering throughout the northwest.³⁹ The traditional calls for relief measures and road building schemes to ease the distress which many had thought had disappeared for good, were now being demanded again though, in the years after 1914, the government had more important issues to deal with than the problems of northwest Donegal.⁴⁰

With the restrictions placed on the earning capacity of the adult men and women, the children had to 'make sacrifices for the sake of the home'.⁴¹ The Gweedore and Rosses Teachers Association became so frustrated with their empty classrooms by the winter of 1917 that they went public through letters in the *Derry Journal* about the crying scandal of school attendance in northwest Donegal. They accused the general population of 'valuing education not one jot'. Madge Rodgers, a Falcarragh teacher, wrote that 'whole families grow up and not one member ever passes second standard and some don't even reach it. Two thirds of the children attending school only attend from the middle of November till the beginning of March, when

³⁸ *DJ*, 19 Aug. 1912, p. 3.

³⁹ *DJ*, 8 Feb. 1915, p. 8; 22 Nov. 1916, p. 3.

⁴⁰ *DJ*, 26 Apr. 1916, p. 1.

⁴¹ *DJ*, 9 Nov. 1917.

Fig. 42 School attendance in Gweedore and Cloughaneely 1918

School	Number under 14 years struck off rolls since 1/3 /1918	Number of pupils hired under 14 years of age.	Number hired under 10 years of age.	Attendance as % of children still on roll June quarter 1918.
Magheraroarty	25	20	3	61
Carrowcannon Girls	31	15	1	65
Carrowcannon Boys	25	10	4	64
Ray	1	0	0	77
Ballyboes	49	34	7	69
Meenderry	56	25	7	35
Knockfola	33	25	7	36
Meenacladdy	44	23	8	50
Derrybeg Girls	20	13	4	55
Bunaninver	49	32	13	37
Derrybeg Boys	33	18	4	47
Luinnagh	56	40	16	54
Dunlewey	15	7	0	69
Derryconner	72	57	28	75
Cashelnagor	54	32	4	63
Gortahork	84	27	4	75

Source: *Derry Journal* 2 Aug. 1918, p.4. Table compiled by Gweedore and Rosses Teachers Association. Note: Most of the children remaining were in junior classes.

the hiring season is over'.⁴² The principal reason for this was the change of employment circumstance for the migratory labourers. With the men unable to go to Scotland and the women having no gutting jobs to go to, increased child labour was the solution to cope with the problem. In the adults' stead

⁴² *DJ*, 9 Nov. 1917, p. 3; 14 Nov. 1917, p. 4; 16 Nov. 1917, p. 7; 26 Nov. 1917, p. 6.

the Burtonport Extension carried mothers or fathers taking more of their employable children with them to join the gangs of 'tattie hokers' [potato pickers] in Lowland Scotland or parade them at the Letterkenny hiring fair on six month contracts in the Laggan where labour was in much demand due to the high agricultural prices pertaining due to war. The national teachers compiled the table in fig. 44 in July 1918 to indicate the severity of child labour and school absence in the Gweedore and Cloughaneely areas.

While the above table only applies to the Cloughaneely and Gweedore regions, much the same picture would be evident if the poorer areas of the Rosses were examined.⁴³ It is also well to remember when examining the above table that few children in northwest Donegal were on school rolls above third class because many were on year round hire in the Laggan. Despite efforts to have the rural district councils and Donegal County Council enforce the Compulsory School Attendance Act nothing was done because the practice was so deeply ingrained and the perceived resultant economic upheaval so great, that there was fear of the consequences, if action were taken. Even the bishop of Raphoe and the clergy were silent about the plight of these children and the depth of the problem.⁴⁴

It was in this depressing scenario that Sir John McFarland and his board of directors met in late February 1915 to review the year gone by. In spite of all the negative factors, they had favourable results to analyse despite the gloom of war which was beginning to have a major effect on the running of their railways because of the prices of materials, especially coal, the scarcity of spare parts and the drift of skilled labour to the shipyards. McFarland told his shareholders about excellent receipts from all sources for the year ended

⁴³ This author's mother was sent to hire in 1917 at eight years of age. Her sister who was two years older had already been hired for a couple of years. Her brother who was about three years younger went to hire in Tyrone when he was about thirteen years of age.

⁴⁴ *DJ*, 9 Nov. 1917, p. 3.

1914 which showed an increase of £2,305, despite the fact that 'the Burtonport Railway showed a decline in net receipts [which] was partly due to the general depression in trade and partly to the heavy outlay, defrayed out of revenue, on additions and repairs'.⁴⁵ But McFarland was in one of his depressed moods about the Burtonport Extension in particular, for he predicted that 'this portion of the line [Burtonport] would be costly in maintenance and repairs and might not prove to be such a profitable adjunct to our system as some people expected'. The chairman told the shareholders that he

clearly foresaw a time coming when the heavy expenditure on the extensions [Burtonport and Carndonagh] they had undertaken for the good of the country – the good of Donegal and Derry – would drag the company into bankruptcy. They had saddled on them the maintenance in perpetuity of seventy-five miles of railway through the poor, straggling, struggling district without either industries or labour or population.⁴⁶

The constrictions of war were clearly affecting the railway costs for it was not long after this meeting when the L&LSR dropped its first shock on an unsuspecting public by announcing a decreased service on the Burtonport line from three trains each way daily to two, with the afternoon train in each direction being discontinued. The new timetable was to come into effect in April 1915 but the new measures quickly antagonised an already sceptical public that soon went into action.⁴⁷ The new timetable would delay post and papers by a couple of hours each day. Burtonport and Gweedore would not receive mails until two o'clock or later. Feelings ran high. A letter appeared in the *Derry Journal* stating 'the convenience of the people living from Letterkenny to the coast must depend on the whims of the Lough Swilly

⁴⁵ *DJ*, 24 Feb. 1915, p. 2.

⁴⁶ *DJ*, 24 Feb. 1915, p.2. Half-year results of L&LSR.

⁴⁷ *DJ*, 12 Apr. 1915, p. 3.

magnates and the price of coal. To make matters worse, the whole area from Letterkenny to Dunfanaghy had an evening post and delivery service long before the Burtonport Railway was constructed'.⁴⁸

A large public meeting in Burtonport condemned the new timetable and the L&LSR for their 'callous disregard for the convenience and welfare of the entire country from Letterkenny to Burtonport'.⁴⁹ One of the worst effects of the new timetable was on the fairs of the northwest. Jobbers had traditionally come on the morning trains and taken their purchases away on the early afternoon train. Now they had to remain with their animals until the last train at night thereby missing connections to boats and other railways which action was bound to destroy the local cattle trade.⁵⁰

Once more the Board of Works entered the fray against McFarland and the L&LSR and when no resolution could be found, both parties appeared before Mr Justice Barton in the Chancery Division Court in Dublin in April 1915.⁵¹ The Board of Works argued that the L&LSR was bound by Clause 13 of their 1898 agreement to run as many trains as would fulfil the requirements of the passenger and goods traffic between Letterkenny and Burtonport. The L&LSR replied that the agreement specified only two trains each way daily with one each way on Sunday. The Board of Works made certain that John McFarland's substantial holdings in the railway were brought to the fore in court, where he admitted that he held between £15,000 and £18,000 worth of preference shares and about the same amount of ordinary shares, with about £1,200 of baronial guaranteed shares and about £500 debenture stock.⁵² Such a large shareholding in a railway provided out of a free grant by the state which neither McFarland nor his board of directors had put their own funds

⁴⁸ *DJ*, 12 Apr. 1915, p. 3.

⁴⁹ *DJ*, 12 Apr. 1915, p. 3.

⁵⁰ *DJ*, 12 Apr. 1915, p. 3.

⁵¹ *DJ*, 14 Apr. 1915, p. 4.

⁵² *DJ*, 30 Apr. 1915, p. 8.

into had always rankled with the Board of Works and the annual dividend of 5 per cent on preference shares and 7 per cent on ordinary shares antagonized them further, when during the thirty years before the war, the Midland Great Western Railway only paid 3 per cent dividend annually and most other Irish railways paid similar amounts.⁵³ Justice Barton reviewed the history of the Burtonport Extension since opening. It had delivered a profit against all forecasts each year between 1903 and 1915 making a total of £12,000 in all for each of the parties for the period. In 1904 the line had been granted £7,000 by the government for rolling stock. Since 1904, the goods traffic had doubled and the passenger traffic had increased by 10 per cent. Three trains daily had been run in each direction since the opening in order to satisfy the demands of the railway's hinterland. He then concluded that, under clause 13 of the agreement, 'to work and maintain the extension line so as to develop the resources of the district between Letterkenny and Burtonport' the L&LSR would be in breach of the agreement in reducing the daily trains from three to two. He awarded one half of the Board of Works' expenses against the L&LSR and ordered that the three trains each way daily be restored immediately.⁵⁴

But McFarland was determined that extra money would be found if the three daily trains were to continue. The L&LSR had been pressing for increased fares for some time to balance the ever-increasing costs of running the railway. Eventually, it won its case with the Board of Works when the below fares structure was authorized between Burtonport and Derry to come in to operation on 1 May 1916 (fig. 43).⁵⁵ Further negotiations between the L&LSR and the Board of Works resulted in extended regulations being

⁵³ *DJ*, 24 Feb. 1915, p. 2.

⁵⁴ *DS*, 5 May 1915.

⁵⁵ 'Fares structure 1915' (NAI, OPW 'Railways', *The Letterkenny Railway, 12877 – 15*).

Fig. 43 New fares Derry-Burtonport 1916

Stations	1 st . class single.	2 nd class single	3 rd class single.
Londonderry	11s. - 8d.	8s.-7d.	5s.-8d.
Letterkenny	8 - 4	6 - 3	4 - 2
Oldtown	8 - 2	6 - 2	4 - 1
New Mills	7 - 8	5 - 9	3 - 10
Foxhall	7 - 4	5 - 6	3 - 8
Churchill	6 - 10	5 - 1	3 - 5
Kilmacrenan	6 - 2	4 - 7	3 - 1
Creelough	4 - 10	3 - 8	2 - 5
Dunfanaghy Road	4 - 8	3 - 6	2 - 4
Falcarragh	3 - 6	2 - 8	1 - 9
Cashelnagore	3 - 0	2 - 3	1 - 6
Gweedore	2 - 0	1 - 6	1 - 0
Crolly	1 - 4	1 - 0	0 - 8
Kincasslagh Road	0 - 6	0 - 5	0 - 3
Dungloe Road	0 - 4	0 - 3	0 - 2
Burtonport			

Source: N.A.I. OPW 'Railways', 12877 - 15.

implemented on 1 June 1916. First-class passengers were allowed 120 lbs. luggage, second-class passengers were allowed 100 lbs. and third-class passengers were allowed 60 lbs. with the provision that all must be personal baggage. Smoking in the carriages (except in the carriages or compartments provided for that purpose) or, inside the stations, was strictly forbidden and parties refusing to desist, when requested, would be dealt with according to law. Children under three years would travel free. Those between three and twelve years could travel at half price with a minimum charge for children being one penny.⁵⁶

Just when such progressive and enlightened regulations were being implemented a new controversy arose named locally as 'the cow and fish-workers dispute'. According to Allely's report,⁵⁷ a number of fish workers travelling on the 10.20 a.m. up train from Burtonport on 5 July for Killybegs missed the connection at Letterkenny with the 1.15 p.m. train for Strabane owing to delay in getting their luggage transferred. The passengers were delayed in Letterkenny until 7 p.m. and had to wait overnight in Strabane in

⁵⁶ 'Complaints', 1915 (NAI, OPW 'Railways', The Letterkenny & Burtonport Railway, 13090 - 15).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

consequence. The train from Burtonport arrived at Letterkenny at 1.14 p.m. and the train for Strabane did not leave until 1.25 p.m. and the luggage was not delivered to the Strabane company until after the departure of the trains. A cow in a wagon by the same train for Convoy also missed the connection.

The L&LSR vigorously denied any complacency on their part when they replied to the Board of Works' fury.

There was a considerable amount of luggage on the 10.20 a.m. train ex Burtonport on this date and it was all duly trans-shipped with the exception of that belonging to the half dozen girl fish workers who got out of the train and sat on a seat on the platform. They were asked by the porter if their luggage was to go across [to the Strabane line train] and they replied that a man, who was in charge of the party, had gone over to the other railway to see if they could get it through to Killybegs. It was some time before he returned and made a request for it to be taken over to the S & L. [Strabane and Letterkenny Railway] but that company could not wait after 1.25 p.m. Hence, these passengers being left behind. There was no fault to be attached to our people in the matter.⁵⁸

Allely was annoyed when he replied:

If these passengers had been tourists or first or second class through passengers they would have been besieged with porters and accommodated without any delay, but as they were only poor fish workers, they were treated as being of no importance. The Lough Swilly Company's officials were well aware the luggage had to be transferred and that it would not get through to destination by a later train same day. The Lough Swilly people are entirely at fault in the matter. The same excuse cannot be made about the delay to a cow in a wagon for Conway[sic] by the same train.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

During all of this period Allely continued to send weekly and monthly reports to the Board of Works detailing the poor timekeeping of the Burtonport trains.⁶⁰ They were generally late and continued to miss the connections with the Letterkenny to Strabane train which was vital for passengers travelling on to Dublin or Belfast. Forbes, the manager of the Strabane line, would make no concessions and always ensured that his trains left on time, an action that continued to frustrate the L&LSR. Eventually, with the aid of the Board of Works, the L&LSR mounted a campaign to compel Forbes to delay his train but, after much negotiation, five minutes was all he would grant, probably knowing that the timekeeping habits on the Burtonport Extension would ensure that their trains would still continue to miss the connection.⁶¹

J. L. Clewes, the new manager of the L&LSR, took an abnormally conciliatory attitude towards the Board of Works during this period, stating in answer to one complaint that

I can give you my assurance that this train shall have constant attention with a view to keeping it up to time, and I trust that, with all our summer posters and guide books distributed, you will agree to the continuation of the present timings. If so I will send you a further report in a weeks time on the working of this train.⁶²

In a Board of Works' memorandum some days later it is stated:

Mr Clewes, the general manager, who is in town at present in connection with the revaluation of the Lough Swilly system, called here yesterday afternoon, and among other things referred to this subject. He told me that only a few days ago further instructions had been issued to the staff as to the necessity for improved working of the morning trains and that he felt confident better results would be attained. He

⁶⁰ 'Complaints 1907-19', (NAI, OPW 'Railways', The Burtonport Railway, 5873-19).

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² 'Timetable arrangements', (NAI, OPW 'Railways', the Burtonport Railway 13090 – 15).

purposes travelling occasionally over the extension by the first down train and the second up train so that he can give personal attention to the matter of punctual working.⁶³

Punctual and efficient working became essential to the fishing trade in 1915 and 1916. With the steam drifters gone, the spawning beds had time to revive with the consequences that the winter fishing of 1915 was very good and the winter fishing of 1916-17 was the best in fifteen years with the herring coming in close to the shore where the local boats could easily scoop them up.⁶⁴ The absence of the Scottish and English steam drifters meant that the local fishermen had the whole catch to themselves and local buyers filled the market void, principally Maurice Ward, Burtonport, Forker, Burtonport, James F. O'Donnell, Burtonport, Mr Hardy, Omeath and Liverpool, McGinley, Falcarragh, McFadden, Gortahork, Coll, Gortahork, Haughey, Kilcar, Curran, Derryconner, Gortahork, McGee, Dunfanaghy and Hay, Downings, all of whom were becoming important operators in the trade.⁶⁵

This business community had been increasing its wealth, influence and power since the departure of the Scottish and English dealers and the amazing prices being received for herring during the war years were indicative of the probable fortune to be had. But to realize that wealth they were dependent on the Burtonport Extension to get the large quantities of fish out to the markets in Northern Ireland and in Britain. Catches on the Donegal coast were so great that it was estimated that the Donegal fish could supply the needs of all English cities for months.⁶⁶ On the first day of the big takes from Burtonport to Downings the price reached a phenomenal 160 shillings a cran, more than

⁶³ 'Timetable arrangements' (NAI, OPW 'Railways', 13090 – 15, July 1915).

⁶⁴ *DJ*, 6 Jan. 1916, p. 8.

⁶⁵ *DJ*, 16 Oct. 1916. p. 4.

⁶⁶ *DJ*, 2 Jan. 1917, p. 2.

eight time the price of a few years previously.⁶⁷ Such prices created somewhat of a frenzy but, just when the interested parties were about to calculate their takings and massive profits, the L&LSR announced that they could only carry thirty-five tons of fish by rail that day with the consequence that prices collapsed as fish had to be sent for curing or, worse still, dumped back in the sea. Each consequent day saw more than 300 cran being landed but when the railway quota of thirty-five tons was fulfilled there was little market for what remained.⁶⁸ With the Burtonport and Kincasslagh fisheries taking up the bulk of the allotted railway tonnage, there was little or no capacity left when fish were presented for loading at Gweedore, Falcarragh, Dunfanaghy Road or at Creeslough Station where the massive take from Downings could not be accommodated.

Local frustration at the railway was near to breaking point, not only in the fishing community but among the general public as was evidenced by Eamonn O'Toole, secretary of Cloughaneely Irish College who wrote to the *Derry Journal* complaining about the

serious inconvenience to students... by the irregularity and unpunctuality of the train service. Students returning from Falcarragh station to Dublin were suppose to leave Falcarragh at 11.28 a.m. But the train was much later with the result that they missed connection to Strabane. They had to go to Derry but were late arriving there so they missed the connections there and did not leave that city until after 9 p.m. They reached Dublin at 5.10 a.m next morning.⁶⁹

Another letter stated:

⁶⁷ *DJ*, 29 Jan. 1917, p. 4. Cran: a measure of herring, originally intended to represent the volume of fish that a barrel could hold; later standardized at 37.5 Imperial gallons (170.46litres), English wine measure. Locally this measure was often represented as 700 - 1000 fish depending on size.

⁶⁸ *DJ*, 29 Jan. 1917, p. 4.

⁶⁹ *DJ*, 30 Aug. 1915, p. 8.

I travelled from Derry to Burtonport on Tuesday. That train was one hour late at each station along the line. The train on Tuesday night was in utter darkness from Derry to Burtonport'.⁷⁰

The L&LSR blamed the war and the difficulty of getting spare parts or skilled fitters to keep the rolling stock in working order. But these excuses received little sympathy from fishermen and fish traders who were witnessing their fortunes disappearing before their eyes. On top of this inefficiency freight charges then became a sore point. In January 1917, the *Derry Journal* reported:

Yesterday, 30 crans of herring were sold at Burtonport for 99s. per cran. Prohibitive freight charges on the railway are destroying business. A barrel of herring can go cheaper from Burtonport to New York than from Burtonport to Clones. The same quantity can go cheaper from Burtonport to Chicago than to Cork or to an area like Waterford and Limerick which is seeking such herring.⁷¹

On 22 January 1917, the L&LSR notified buyers at Burtonport, Kincasslagh, Dunfanaghy, Gweedore and Creeslough that they would not take any fish for British markets until further notice. They stated that there were difficulties in making connections with other railways and with the boats so that through traffic could not be guaranteed. Although there was a massive catch taken that day in each of the ports, nothing was exported. There was consternation in the fishing communities that such a valuable catch was going to be lost with the possibility that all the subsequent takes would be treated likewise by the Burtonport Extension management. Fishermen, curers,

⁷⁰ *DJ*, 11 Oct. 1915, p. 3.

⁷¹ *DJ*, 31 Jan. 1917, p. 2.

buyers, carters and labourers saw their potential fortunes collapse before their very eyes through the action of the Burtonport Extension.⁷²

This crisis initiated a series of events that was to have dire consequences for the railway management. The people's action displayed where the perceived power and influence lay in Donegal society. They did not contact councillors, members of parliament or government officials but instead communicated their treatment and plight directly to Bishop O'Donnell and to Fr McCaul of St Eunan's College, Letterkenny. The bishop and Fr McCaul immediately set to work and presented the gravity of the situation to the Food Controller, the Ministry for Transport and to the managers of different railways. The result was almost immediate. The L&LSR announced that it was immediately to restore the fish-transport service to the delight of the fishing communities. James F. O'Donnell wrote that: 'so successful were their [Bishop O'Donnell's and McCaul's] efforts that within forty-eight hours they were able to notify buyers that the railways were open again. Since then over fifty tons of fresh fish have been sent from Burtonport daily thanks to Dr O'Donnell and Fr McCaul'.⁷³

Unperturbed by all of this criticism McFarland made no mention of these various problems when he addressed the shareholders a month later. Gross receipts for the latter half-year 1916 were up £1,189. Passenger revenue was up £387 which derived mostly from third class passengers. Parcels were up £111. Goods were up £532. Livestock receipts fell by £44. Regarding expenses the locomotive department expenses went up £2,246, made up of wages of £501 and materials £1,667. The cost in working locomotives rose by £3,453 over 1915 levels. This was mainly due to raised wages to men and the increased price of coal. Fuel costs alone had risen by

⁷² *DJ*, 31 Jan. 1917, p. 2.

⁷³ *DJ*, 2 Feb. 1917, p. 8.

£3,213 over 1915. Increased bonuses and wages had been paid to all the staff and this accounted for the £532 extra.⁷⁴

McFarland said the year was full of labour troubles with demands for increased wages and he stated 'that it would be impossible for the railways to grant them if the shareholders were to get any return for the capital'. They were 50 per cent below normal strength in mechanics who left shortly after the beginning of the war to join the munitions factories though the normal wages of the district were paid to them. Now the mechanics were prohibited by the Munitions Act from returning to the railway even if they wanted to. McFarland felt this was unfair. He spoke further about the impossibility of obtaining spare parts. He said that the market in labour and materials was against the company.⁷⁵

A letter from the Office of Public Works with regard to the Letterkenny Railway was supposed to be read out at this meeting but it was not. The Letterkenny Railway contract was now up for renewal after thirty years in the ownership of the Board of Works with the L&LSR operating the line. But the L&LSR refused to discuss any changes in the Letterkenny Railway despite many efforts from the Board of Works to do so. The Board blamed the L&LSR administration for the mess of the railway. Between 1903 and 1916 there were six managers, eight engineers and ten locomotive superintendents on the line. The Board of Works stated that 'regular railway communication has ceased to exist on lines on which the state has expended £400,000 and the L&LSR expanded nothing while it was making a large profit for itself from all four L&LSR lines although three of them cost the L&LSR nothing'.⁷⁶ The Board looked on McFarland's refusal as an attempt by him at empire building by running all four lines as one L&LSR entity which action would eliminate

⁷⁴ *DJ*, 28 Feb. 1916, p. 4. L&LSR a.g.m. report.

⁷⁵ *DJ*, 28 Feb. 1917, p. 4.

⁷⁶ *DJ*, 28 Feb. 1917, p. 2.

the government from receiving its share of profits from the Burtonport, Carndonagh and Letterkenny railways. Indeed, McFarland's actions over the years in obliterating the L&BER lettering from the Burtonport locomotives, carriages and wagons in 1913, his refusal to hold separate annual general meetings for each individual railway and, further, his refusal to invite the nominated baronial directors to the Burtonport Extension meetings and the presentation of annual accounts treating the four railways as one entity all might be justifiably interpreted as indicative of just such intentions.⁷⁷

For the Board of Works this refusal to read the letter seemed the last straw in its long contest with the L&LSR and it determined to take action. This Board of Works resolve in early 1917 was, no doubt inspired by the government's decision to place all Irish railways under the control of the Irish Railways Executive Committee [IREC]⁷⁸ which took control over all railways to operate in the war interest from 1 January 1917. This action was brought about through the National Union of Railwaymen [NUR] in Ireland calling an all-out strike to achieve the war bonus. On the 14 December 1916, on the day before the strike was to take place, the war bonus was granted to Irish rail workers at the rate of 7s. 2d. for men, 3s. 7d. for boys and 3s. 6d. for women. The achievement of this concession proved a tremendous impact to NUR recruitment when numbers increased from less than 5,000 to 19,000 in the succeeding four years.⁷⁹ This growing strength was reflected later that year when a conference between the Irish Railway Executive Committee and the Railway Shops Organising Committee met in the Shelbourne Hotel in Dublin. The demand was for an increase in the war bonus to fifteen shillings a week and, further, that the war bonus be converted into war wages. This

⁷⁷ IRC, p.192.

⁷⁸ The Irish Railway Executive Committee took charge of all Irish railways from midnight, 31 December 1916.

⁷⁹ Philip J. Bagwell, *The Railwaymen: the history of the National Union of Railwaymen* (London, 1963), p. 357. See also *New Way*, March 1917.

decision was agreed. Now Irish railwaymen were treated as equals with their British counterparts in all things.⁸⁰

Despite John McFarland's great antipathy to all forms of trade unionism, NUR recruitment started on the Burtonport Railway in September 1916 when sixteen railwaymen attended the first meeting. By March 1917, the membership had grown to ninety and only two men between Burtonport and Letterkenny refused to join. The local secretary wrote:

We will mention the names of their stations next month if they are not in. One major reason why recruitment was so good on the Burtonport Extension was the vexed question of unpaid overtime. One porter worked over thirty hours and was paid half-a-day overtime. Some genius has applied 'daylight saving' there all right. But we have our eye on him.⁸¹

The growing militant attitude of the men on the Burtonport Extension was apparent a few months later when their secretary wrote:

Branch still continues to enrol new members, yet a few have got cheek enough to look us in the face whilst we fight and pay for the fighting, to get them the wages which keeps them from the workhouse or having to seek work in other spheres of life Just compare the poor hardworking surfaceman earning his 25s. a week and paying out his 8d. per fortnight to his union, with his fellow workers who with their clean collars and polished peck get 40s. a week including war bonus and pay nothing to the union. On the Swilly it's the poor that helps the poor.⁸²

The IREC quickly broke through McFarland's resistance and ordered that the broken Burtonport engines be towed from their grass encasements and

⁸⁰ *DJ*, 10 Sept. 1917, p. 3.

⁸¹ *The New Way*, Mar. 1917. Report from Burtonport branch secretary, W. J. Robinson.

⁸² *The New Way*, July 1917.

brought to the enemy, the CDRJC, for immediate repairs.⁸³ The report on one such engine testified to the malaise prevalent in the L&LSR system by 1917.

The whole engine has evidence of gross neglect, everything about it was in a filthy state; very little or no attention had been paid to lubrication, even washing out of boilers appears to have been neglected, for the bottom of the firebox sides appear to be choked up solid with dirt; even a finger could not be inserted at washout doors owing to the amount of solid matter gathered there.⁸⁴

A special meeting of Donegal County Council was called in late 1916 to deal with the mounting problems concerning the L&BER. Orders were given that gates and gatemen were to be put on all level crossings, and 'that engines be sufficient to have passengers conveyed up to or near the scheduled times in their timetables'. Allegations were made that carriages were travelling without lights and cattle were straying onto lines. A public enquiry was demanded.⁸⁵

When an increase in railway rates was granted throughout Ireland by IREC to all companies, including the L&LSR, some days later this action only led to further annoyance among the fishing communities in Donegal.⁸⁶ David Hay, a fish dealer from Downings, put his thoughts on paper in the *Derry Journal*:

The catches of the past week have been the best in 15 years. One reason is the absence of steam drifters in the area. Ten local boats realised over £600 each in the past week. In the steam drifter days these boats were in debt. As regards the railway fresh fish sent to Britain usually don't reach there for over a week. Empty barrels are left at various stations for weeks. The government have taken over the

⁸³ Patterson, *The Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway*, p. 83.

⁸⁴ Patterson, *The Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway*, p.152.

⁸⁵ *DJ*, 4 Oct. 1916, p. 2.

⁸⁶ *DJ*, 30 Oct. 1916, p. 2.

railways. The L&LSR can't cope with the fresh fish traffic from Burtonport or Creeslough simply because they do not put on wagons, trucks or special trains during the fishing season and they are always short of men at the centres. Fresh fish has lain three days at these stations before shipment. If the railways don't do it then motor transport must come in.⁸⁷

By February 1917, the *Derry Journal* wrote an editorial on the 'laxity and neglect' of the L&LSR in general with special reference to the Burtonport Extension. The demand from all quarters was for a change of management and a public enquiry.⁸⁸

With the IREC behind them now the Board of Works felt confident enough to go public with press releases and letters to the various Derry papers denigrating McFarland and his board for their inadequacies and omissions.⁸⁹ At this same time a great petition began in northwest Donegal demanding a public enquiry into the Burtonport Extension. It was organised on a parish basis although particular areas insisted that their own grievances should be aired independently. Whether the Board of Works had anything to do with the petitions or whether it was simply the frustration of the communities is impossible to tell but it seems credible that there might have been a hint of organised co-operation which brought together all strands of society in northwest Donegal from the householders, clergy, county councillors, rural district councillors and members of parliament in a concerted effort or organised conspiracy with the Board of Works to rid the county of the influence of John McFarland and his Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway board for all time.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ *DJ*, 29 Jan. 1917, p. 2.

⁸⁸ *DJ*, 21 Feb. 1917, p. 2.

⁸⁹ *DJ*, 28 Feb. 1917, p. 2.

⁹⁰ *DJ*, 28 Feb. 1917, p. 2.

The memorials were drafted and circulated throughout each area of the northwest for signatures during the months of January, February and March of 1917. The clergy, followed by prominent businessmen, had pride of place in the list of signatories. Their complaints were that the train service was simply intolerable and was being worked on some sections without even the usual railway safeguards to human life that was provided by the electric staff system. Their central demand was that the County Donegal Railway Joint Committee [CDRJC] which ran the trains from Strabane to Derry, Glenties, Killybegs, Letterkenny and Ballyshannon, would take over the Burtonport Extension which would open the east-coast ports of Greenore, Belfast and Dublin for the fish traffic, improve the mail deliveries in the northwest and coordinate the passenger trains at Letterkenny to facilitate passengers travelling to or returning from Dublin and Belfast. Significantly, Derry was not one of the destinations mentioned. Implicit in the wording was the simple assumption that the new operators would run the trains on time. This memorial was signed by almost every householder in the northwest from Templecrone to Downings and such was the intensity of feeling in the Rosses, that the Dungloe, Burtonport and Kincasslagh areas forwarded their own memorials detailing their own particular grievances.⁹¹

The Kincasslagh memorial asked to have 'the present incompetent management of the [Burtonport] railway displaced by a more satisfactory one'. They stated that 1,600 tons of fish with a value of £30,000 had been landed at Kincasslagh annually but could not be sold because of the Burtonport Extension's 'inadequate efforts to have it duly placed in markets and at reasonable rates'. They alleged that Kincasslagh Road station, situated four miles from the fishing port, had been under the charge of a fifteen-year old lad and a surfaceman had to act as porter at the station due to lack of

⁹¹ 'Memorials, The Letterkenny and Burtonport Extension Railway' (NA, MT6/2595/6/59374).

personnel. As a result, all the portage had to be done by the fishing carriers themselves. Curers often missed sales with American buyers through inability to comply with delivery conditions of contracts. Consignments had been known to lie at the station for a fortnight after having been delivered. Of the empty barrels to be returned to them over 75 per cent never reached them. Claims against the L&LSR were rarely entertained and everything had to be consigned to them at the customers' risk. If they did not get a public enquiry they would withdraw their entire business from the railway.⁹²

The Gweedore and Cloughaneely memorial begged the Board of Trade to arrange with the CDRJC to give them a 'train service that would be free from the numerous breakdowns which have been a source of constant worry to the travelling public and a serious menace to their important fisheries'.⁹³

On top of these memorials and petitions from the fishing, business and trading communities came, for the first time, the wrath of the church in the guise of Fr P. D. McCaul, St Eunan's College, Letterkenny. In February 1917, he begged the president of the Board of Trade to 'free the district from what has been for years an intolerable service. No other people in the world would have put up with it so long'.⁹⁴

At the end of February 1917, in the midst of these petitions, the L&LSR held its half-year meeting and McFarland declared himself happy with progress and avoided all reference to any unpleasantness. One would have thought that not a complaint was being received. He announced accounts for the year ended December 1916, stating that £12,621 16s. 3d. was available for payment of dividends at the traditional rates.⁹⁵

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Fr P. D. McCaul to Secretary, Board of Trade, 21 Feb 1917 (NA, MT 6/2595/4, 59374).

⁹⁵ LS, 20 Feb. 1917.

This performance infuriated the protesters. Fr McCaul was scathing in his next attack on the company. 'The Lough Swilly has only one aim – large dividends. They don't seem to care about the district for which the [Burtonport] Extension was built out of public funds'.⁹⁶ By 8 March, Fr McCaul's rage had further intensified when he wrote to the secretary of the Board of Trade:

Yesterday, I had an interview with his Lordship, the bishop of Raphoe, on the railway service provided by the Lough Swilly Company. He is very much displeased at the trains being left in darkness. On last Saturday night, the last train to Burtonport left Letterkenny with its carriages in darkness. This would not be tolerated in a pagan land. This is the usual treatment meted out to the travelling public as the following extract from a letter received yesterday conveys: 'The trains are running, without lights, night after night, summer and winter, between Letterkenny and Burtonport. All over the system from Carndonagh to Burtonport the carriages are badly lighted but there is usually a compartment or two having lights. On the Burtonport section there is seldom a compartment at all lighted, or, if they go through the form of lighting at Letterkenny or Burtonport, the lights go out very soon after'. It is bad enough to lie for hours (sometimes all night) subject to cold and hunger on the mountainside, but when there is no light, the agony of many of the poor passengers must be fearful. You know this has been going on ever since the line opened and that it is going constantly from bad to worse and that it has never been so bad as within the last six months.

For all sakes, let us have done with the Lough Swilly Company's service without any further delay. The Donegal [County Donegal Railway Joint Committee] Company can be instructed by the State Authorities to give us the service for which the people have unanimously asked.⁹⁷

With the householders of the whole northwest coast, the clergy of the diocese, the backing of the bishop, the support of the Dunfanaghy Rural

⁹⁶ *LS*, 20 Feb. 1917.

⁹⁷ Fr McCaul to Secretary, Board of Trade, 8 March 1917 (NA, MT 6/2595/4, 59374).

District Council, Donegal County Council and the Board of Works all enjoined in the revolt it only remained now for the rebellion to be brought to the House of Commons for the final execution. A barrage of parliamentary questions from Hugh Law, stating 'the matter is urgent' and from Edward Kelly, both M.P.s for Donegal, ensured that the problems associated with the railway were kept continuously in the public mind, through parliamentary inquiries, press reports and comment during the first months of 1917.⁹⁸ Their clever tactic of asking a variety of questions dealing with safety, mismanagement, engines, punctuality, delays, efficiency, lost goods, mails, fish, telegraph and many other problems involved a number of ministries and broadened the controversy especially when they concentrated on public safety. In February, Law asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland about 'consignments of fish ... so much delayed as to be rendered useless for human consumption'.⁹⁹ Later, he complained about the small farmers of west Donegal who had made great strides to increase the cultivation of oats but who then had to pay full rates each way on the Burtonport Railway to the mills of Letterkenny while the merchants only paid half fares for the same produce.¹⁰⁰ Law asked the Postmaster General 'if he was aware that on Friday last the mail train from Burtonport was two hours late in reaching Letterkenny thus missing all connections'. He asked further, 'whether breakdowns and unpunctual running of trains have been increasingly frequent of late on this line'?¹⁰¹ But yet the official side prevaricated. Stanley Baldwin, lord of the Treasury, had no doubt about the cause of all the inefficiency when he replied that 'the present highly unsatisfactory condition of affairs on the Burtonport Railway is due to the mismanagement of the Lough Swilly Company and

⁹⁸ General file containing correspondence, letters and comment on House of Commons' questions and replies, Jan. - Apr. 1917 (NA., MT 6/2595/4, 59374).

⁹⁹ *Hansard 5 (Commons) 1917*, xc, 827, (15 Feb. 1917).

¹⁰⁰ *Hansard 5 (Commons) 1917*, xc, 1009, (19 Feb. 1917).

¹⁰¹ *Hansard 5 (Commons) 1917*, xc, 2056, (28 Feb. 1917).

particularly to their neglect even before the war firstly, to keep the locomotives and stock in proper working order and, secondly, to maintain an adequate and efficient staff.¹⁰² Throughout, all of these questions led to one singular demand - a full enquiry and the removal of the L&LSR from the control of the Burtonport Extension.¹⁰³

After the Donegal M.P.s had delivered the memorials from every corner of northwest Donegal to parliament in March 1917 the questions began again. In April 1917, Edward Kelly, M.P., once more began his questioning in parliament by asking the Chief Secretary if 'the electric signalling apparatus on the Burtonport Railway and on other lines worked by the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company had broken down; if so, what steps had been taken to safeguard persons using these lines and how long has this state of things been in existence?'¹⁰⁴ The other Donegal member, Hugh Law, asked was he aware 'that a dearth of provisions existed in certain parts of West Donegal mainly due to the long continued failure of the Burtonport Railway to deal with the conveyance of certain foodstuffs'.¹⁰⁵ Chief Secretary Duke said the maintenance and working of the Burtonport Railway had long been the subject of very grave complaints tending to show that it was not fulfilling the purposes for which public funds had been expended on its construction to the extent of upwards of £300,000. Then, after years of complaints by the public and stalling by the government, Mr Duke caused great relief when he announced that 'the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland, acting under the powers conferred on them by the statute, have appointed Mr Joseph Tatlow to inspect and report on the condition of the railway and the working, maintenance and development of same'.¹⁰⁶ It was not a full public enquiry.

¹⁰² *Hansard 5 (Commons) 1917*, xc, 1010, (19 Feb. 1917).

¹⁰³ Board of Trade documents 1917, nos 1423, 1447 and 1343 (NA., MT 6/2595/4, 59374).

¹⁰⁴ *Hansard 5 (Commons) 1917*, xcii, 1832 (19 Apr. 1917).

¹⁰⁵ *Hansard 5 (Commons) 1917*, xcii, 1832 (19 Apr. 1917).

¹⁰⁶ *Hansard 5 (Commons) 1917*, xcii, 1832, (19 Apr. 1917). Also *Freeman's Journal*, 20 April 1917.

Neither was another visit by Joseph Tatlow what the public agitators had in their demands, but still the feeling was that it had come through parliament and was near enough to the real thing to have the L&LSR removed from the Burtonport Railway. The rebellion had been a success.

The *Irish Times*' report of the parliamentary proceedings displayed its sense of excitement.

At last, that old sinner, the Burtonport Railway, is to be taken seriously in hand. The Board of Works have asked Mr Tatlow to render a special report upon its condition, and, meanwhile, are taking steps to enable the rolling stock to roll.¹⁰⁷

The presumption among all the protestors in Donegal was that the County Donegal Railway Joint Committee (CDRJC) which operated the south Donegal lines and the Letterkenny to Strabane Railway, would now be given the management of the Burtonport Railway. Its manager, Forbes would run a proper railway and have the fish wagons rolling again and there would be no more late trains. It seemed only a question of time until the bad old experience of John McFarland and his board would be wiped forever from the hinterland of the Burtonport Railway where there was jubilation on hearing the news.

The immediate task for all concerned with the rehabilitation of the Burtonport Railway was the alleviation of distress in the northwest. The stock of potatoes had run out completely by May 1917 and neither Indian meal nor flour could be purchased.¹⁰⁸ Edward Kelly, M.P. told the House of Commons that 'famine would be imminent'. Fodder for animals had been exhausted and cattle and horses had died of hunger in the mountain areas of the northwest.¹⁰⁹ The Right Hon. T. W. Russell M.P., Vice-President of the Department of

¹⁰⁷ *Irish Times*, 20 April 1917.

¹⁰⁸ *DJ*, 4 May 1917, p. 4.

¹⁰⁹ *Hansard* 5 (Commons) 1917, xciii, 1814, (19 Apr. 1917).

Agriculture and Technical Instruction visited Donegal and with Bishop O'Donnell they motored to the Carrigart district.¹¹⁰ The Chief Secretary authorized that 730 tons of fodder, 320 tons of seed oats and seventy tons of seed potatoes to the value of £10,000 be brought into the distressed areas immediately and disposed of for cash. The Department of Agriculture took control of the situation and further supplies were sent in as required on the Burtonport Extension's special trains which were organized by IREC.¹¹¹

While the Commissioners of the Board of Works were awaiting the results of Tatlow's investigation they carried out their own estimation of the report which Tatlow would finally produce because they already had many files of reports in their offices about the deficiencies of the Burtonport Extension.¹¹² Not wanting to be caught unawares they made prior plans for the time when the report would be made public. They 'semi-officially' approached the board of the County Donegal Railway Joint Committee and ascertained that, in the event of the lord lieutenant appointing a receiver or manager over the Burtonport Extension, the CDRJC committee would be prepared to allow their Secretary and Traffic Superintendent, Mr Henry Forbes, to be appointed as such manager or receiver and, in addition, that they would also be prepared to allow him to work the Letterkenny Railway for the Board of Works, if necessary.¹¹³

But news of this approach leaked out and there was consternation in many quarters. Of all managers who might take charge of the Burtonport railway, Henry Forbes was the last name to appeal to any of the L&LSR people. Since 1910, Forbes had been in charge of the County Donegal Railway Joint Committee and was well known for ruthless efficiency, order,

¹¹⁰ *DJ*, 11 May 1917, p. 4.

¹¹¹ *Hansard 5* (Commons) 1917 xciii, 1797, (19 Apr. 1917); *DJ*, 11 May 1917, p. 1.

¹¹² 'Complaints from 1907 to 1919' (NAI, OPW 'Railways', The Burtonport Railway, 5873 – 19).

¹¹³ 'Reports and inspections relating to working and management (including Tatlow's report to the Commissioners, 1917', The Burtonport Railway (NAI, OPW 'Railways', 13749 – 19).

reliability and good management, as well as being a railwayman through and through, all qualities which appealed greatly to the Board of Works who had great respect for him. But to the L&LSR and the business community in the city of Derry, Forbes was the enemy, hated and despised for his every deed and, more especially since the Strabane to Letterkenny railway opened in 1909 which action was seen by the L&LSR and the Derry business community as a direct assault on their territory. The furtherance of his railways was Forbes' only objective and, to the disgust and consternation of L&LSR, he had sent sales people into the various parts of Donegal, even on to the quays in the heart of Burtonport Extension territory, to pinch business for the CDRJC railway. What would he do if he got control of the Burtonport Railway? He would route everything from Letterkenny through Strabane from whence he would connect with the Great Northern Railway to the ports of Belfast, Greenore and Dublin. Derry would lose the bulk of its trade from its western arm, sales in the city would be heavily depleted, and the trade in the port would be severely affected.¹¹⁴

Urgent meetings were held in Derry and pressure was brought to bear on anyone who could influence proceedings. Everyone knew that Tatlow's report would be damning and could not be overlooked. They knew also that the historical performance of the Burtonport Extension had reached too far in the world of politics, in the public consciousness and in the press for any camouflage to be effective. Drastic action would have to be taken to save the city of Derry and protect the interests of the L&LSR.¹¹⁵

News that Tatlow would present his report in early May led to a considerable quickening of events. A hearing before the judicial committee of

¹¹⁴ *DJ*, 23 May 1917, p. 1. See Patterson, *The County Donegal Railways* (Devon, 1962), chapters 4 and 5.

¹¹⁵ *DJ*, 23 May 1917, p. 5.

the privy council in Dublin was set for 30 and 31 May.¹¹⁶ But before the vital meeting the various pressures from trade and commerce in Derry prevailed against Sir John McFarland and he was forced to step down from his position as chairman of the L&LSR.¹¹⁷ In an Office of Public Works report of 27 June 1917 it is stated 'that prior to the hearing of 30 May, Sir John McFarland who had been chairman of the Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway Company for many years, found it expedient, owing to pressure brought to bear on him by his co-directors, to retire from the board of the company'.¹¹⁸ It was felt that the fall of such a major figure would be sufficient to protect the vital interests of Derry, the L&LSR and the Letterkenny Railway and prevent the appointment of Forbes. McFarland was succeeded as chairman by Mr J. Brice Mullin, D.L., a respected and prominent Derry businessman.¹¹⁹ It had taken a long time but, finally, the perseverance of the Board of Works had worn down John McFarland. This in many ways was the end of a turbulent era for the railways of northwest Donegal and for Derry city.

Joseph Tatlow presented his report to the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland on 7 May 1917.¹²⁰ He left no stone unturned to discover the malaise that affected the Lough Swilly Company and the Letterkenny & Burtonport Extension Railway in particular. He wrote

The next three days I devoted to a close inspection of the Burtonport line. Accompanied by Mr Hunt, the General Manager, I travelled from Londonderry to Burtonport by motorcar and visited and inspected each station en route. Travelling in this way enabled me to pass through towns and villages served by the railway, a number of which are at some distance from the stations. It also enabled me to meet

¹¹⁶ The privy council was the body which gave official sanction to any measure involving the government. Without its authorization no action could be taken against the L&LSR or the Burtonport Extension.

¹¹⁷ *DJ*, 25 May 1917, p. 2.

¹¹⁸ Joseph Tatlow's report with correspondence and comment (NAI, OPW 'Railways' 13749-19, The Burtonport Railway). Tatlow's report is typed and enclosed in this file. It was not officially published.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

merchants, traders, etc. in the district, many of whom had expressed a desire to see me.¹²¹

First, he found the six Burtonport engines in poor state with only two of them in reasonable condition to work on this line.¹²²

The engine tables at Letterkenny and Londonderry are too short to enable two of the Burtonport engines (Nos 5 and 6) to be turned and, in fact, they are never turned. These engines are designed as double enders to run either chimney or bunker first, but the locomotive superintendent states that wear and tear, when running bunker first, is much greater than when running chimney first and that it is a great drawback in the economy of working that the engines cannot be turned.¹²³

Tatlow questioned the locomotive superintendent as to how he accounted for the engines being in such deplorable condition. He replied that he was satisfied it could only be caused by serious neglect in the past in maintenance and repairs, to the employment of an incompetent mechanical staff, and to careless and inefficient drivers. He stated that when he took up duty in April 1915, he discovered he would have great trouble owing to the dissatisfied condition of his men, that the directors interfered too much and he was not allowed proper control. In the first twelve months, there were continual disputes and stoppages and, for a considerable part of this time, they were without the services of fitters or boilermen. There was no fitter or other mechanical man stationed at the Burtonport end of the line and, therefore, running repairs had to be performed by the Derry staff which caused loss of time and unnecessary labour costs. He had addressed various communications to the then general manager regarding the condition of affairs and complained

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

that the men were underpaid and that he was unable to get good men in consequence. He also complained that the men were not all treated fairly, in regard to hours of duty and wages and that the hours were, in many instances, excessive.¹²⁴

In this regard the drivers were treated very badly. Despite theoretical improvements in working conditions and the length of the working day, Tatlow found alarming evidence of malpractice when he examined the records of the actual hours of duty of three drivers who worked the Burtonport ordinary trains during the month of March (Sundays excluded). For the first seven days driver number one worked between 12 and 13 hours per day. He worked between 13 and 14 hours per day for the next seven days. He worked between 14 and 15 hours per day for a further seven days. During one day he worked between 15 and 16 hours. For one day he worked between 18 and 19 hours. On another day he worked between 19 and 20 hours. For one day he worked between 20 and 21 hours. Other drivers fared much worse.¹²⁵

Tatlow noticed that there was a shortage of men both on the permanent way and in the workshops. When he went through the record sheets, he found several cases of men who were employed and should have been working on the Burtonport Extension and were being paid to do so, but they had been transferred at various times to the employment of Messrs McCrea and McFarland, either in connection with their Lough Swilly steamers, their Londonderry Tramways, their cartage department, or to the chairman of the L&LSR for work on house property or other tasks unconnected with the Burtonport Extension. Payment for these men was being deducted from the Burtonport payroll on a full-time basis and, as the Board of Works were

¹²⁴ Ibid. p. 15.

¹²⁵ Ibid. p. 16.

entitled to half the profits made on the line, this activity diminished their income substantially.¹²⁶

He also found that stores were being supplied to Messrs McCrea and McFarland and to their many businesses from the Burtonport Extension's stock without any payment for such being made and, on asking how long this had been going on, Tatlow was informed that it had been in operation for many years. The stores were requisitioned by Messrs McCrea and McFarland, on the Burtonport Extension's letterheads, for all sorts of articles, such as oil, white lead, paraffin, glass, nuts, studs, bolts, waste etc., much of it unconnected with the railway. Again, this deprived the Board of Works of its rightful income. In general, it seemed as if all the McFarland businesses were being run as one entity without books of account being kept of the various transactions and it seemed that the Burtonport Extension was making a substantial contribution to these external activities without being reimbursed in any way.¹²⁷

The condition of the stations on the Letterkenny & Burtonport Extension was most unsatisfactory. Practically nothing has been done in the matter of painting since the railway was opened in 1903 and a general slovenliness and shabbiness was apparent which Tatlow found inexcusable, especially in the case of a comparatively new line. Many minor repairs were required. The walls of the waiting rooms and shelters were greatly disfigured by the plastering up of bills and notices. At Oldtown station, within the confines of Letterkenny town, there was no water closet for either men or women. The urinals at Kilmacrenan station were flooded and access to the ladies' toilet was objectionable. Gweedore station was a disaster.

¹²⁶ Ibid, pp 16-17.

¹²⁷ Ibid, p. 17.

This station [Gweedore], being in the centre of an important tourist district, and having adjacent a well-known hotel, [Gweedore Hotel] frequented by a good class of tourist, would, by any self-respecting railway company, be kept in a clean, tidy, and, as far as possible, attractive condition. I am sorry to say that the reverse is the case; it is dirty, slovenly, untidy and very deficient of paint. The ladies waiting room is a disgrace. It has a concrete floor, which looks rude and uncouth. Gweedore is a well enough constructed station and, with ordinary care and attention, could be kept quite attractive looking. The palings of the station are in bad order.¹²⁸

Burtonport was likewise deficient and similar faults were found at all stations.¹²⁹

Tatlow also learned that the passengers and travelling public on the railway were subject to much discomfort. The lighting of the carriages was done by acetylene gas but many complaints were received from the public regarding its constant failure during the previous winter. The company admitted its failure and confirmed that the trains were frequently run without any light whatever in the carriages. There was no provision for heating or foot-warmers on the trains. Many complaints were made of the suffering caused to passengers in wintertime in consequence.¹³⁰

The business community had complained about serious delays. Many traders and merchants interviewed on the subject of delay to goods traffic, and more especially, to feeding stuffs, stated that both they and their customers suffered much loss and inconvenience in consequence. Frequently, the customers sent their carts to the stations but had to come away empty. It was said that meal, bran, flour, sugar, groceries, timber, and other goods were

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, pp 18-19.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*., pp 18-20.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*., p. 20.

Fig. 44 Delays on Burtonport Extension 1 Jan. to 21 April.

Between 2 and 4 days late	337 instances
Between 4 and 8 days late	124 instances
Between 8 and 12 days late	30 instances
Exceeding 12 days late	3 instances
Total	494 instances

Source: N.A.I. PWI, 9395, p. 23

often delayed for ten days or a fortnight in transit. For the period between 1 January and 21 April Tatlow discovered that the extent of the delays were as indicated in fig. 44.

With regard to artificial manures, it was admitted by one stationmaster that delays of from seven to ten days had generally occurred in transit to Creeslough and that carts frequently came to the station and had to go back empty. He also mentioned that a week's delay was not an unusual occurrence in the transit of feeding stuffs from Derry to his station. He admitted to Tatlow that strong complaints were made to him by several traders about the frequency of pilfering and loss of goods that occurred on the line and the difficulty experienced in getting any satisfaction from the L&LSR in the settlement of their claims.¹³¹

Tatlow also found that a practice had been in operation by the L&LSR of granting free tickets to traders and cattle dealers and that, in the year 1916, quarterly or annual free tickets were given between Derry and all stations, including the Burtonport line. In addition, a book, containing 100 vouchers, was given to all merchants and traders of any importance entitling the holders to return tickets at single fares. Apart from the irregularity of this, it, of course, had the effect of depriving the Burtonport Railway of revenue and the Board of Works of its half share of profits.¹³² Of course, the Burtonport

¹³¹ *Ibid.* p. 23.

¹³² *Ibid.* p. 23.

Extension was only responding to the severe pressure inflicted on it by Forbes and the Strabane and Letterkenny Railway which desired the general merchandise on the Burtonport line and the fish traffic in particular. But the Strabane Railway was not under investigation and, consequently, the Burtonport Extension bore the brunt of the criticism.

Tatlow dealt with many more faults, discrepancies, accusations and deficiencies covering almost every aspect of railway life. Indeed, throughout his whole report, he found little positive or praiseworthy to say about any aspect of the Burtonport Extension. Tatlow concluded:

The [Burtonport] railway is not efficiently developed, nor could it be with the penurious character of the management, working and maintenance which has so long existed; with an inadequate and unsuitable accommodation at Londonderry; with the engines in the state they are, and have so long been; with the irregular running of the trains; and with the business methods that have prevailed. The passenger traffic suffers in consequence, and neither goods, fish, nor livestock get fair play. I need not point out that fish and livestock are particularly susceptible to damage from delay.¹³³

After fourteen years of the Burtonport Extension's operations he discovered that only very small successes were apparent in the development of natural resources. Soapstone, in both crude and manufactured condition was sent from Churchill to the extent of 489 tons in 1915 and 316 tons in 1916. Small quantities of soapstone are also sent from Burtonport station. Bog-ore was forwarded from Kilmacrenan station in loads of two or three wagons at a time. 'Mr Sweeney of Burtonport and The Bog Ore Company of Belfast, are seeking to develop it'. Except for these small amounts the development of

¹³³ Ibid, p. 25.

local resources was still embedded in hope. When he enquired into this aspect of progress he concluded that

there are deposits of iron ore in the Burtonport district and the Company is in correspondence with a Glasgow firm, in regard to which Mr Sweeney of Burtonport, is also interested. In the past a considerable quantity of granite was sent from Dungloe station. The general manager informs me that Mr Sweeney intends re-opening the [granite] quarry. The mountains of Muckish are stated to contain large deposits of sand suitable for glass making. Samples have been sent from Dunfanaghy Road to Belfast and the place has been visited by several representatives of English firms. I have been shown a prospectus, dated London, April 17th. 1917, of the Muckish Silica Sand Company Ltd., formed with the consent of the Treasury and the support of the Ministry of Munitions, for the purpose of developing this silica sand deposit.¹³⁴

It appears that Tatlow had been overcome by the mists of promise in the development of the natural resources once more. He was on more firm foundations when dealing with strictly railway matters, however, for he concluded with a damning indictment of the people who ran the Burtonport Extension.

The Lough Swilly Company, without providing any of the capital for its construction, have, from the first enjoyed a direct profit from the Burtonport Line, apart from the benefit derived from its contribution of traffic to their own system. Leaving out 1916, when the working expenses were abnormally high, the net profit to the Lough Swilly Company from the Burtonport connection, for the five years preceding 1916 averaged £1,400 per annum; and since the Burtonport Line was opened, the Lough Swilly Company has paid a dividend on its ordinary stock of seven per cent per annum. How far the temptation to maintain a high dividend on their own line has overcome the sense of duty of the Chairman and Directors of

¹³⁴ Ibid. pp 25-26.

Lough Swilly Company, and led them to starve the Burtonport Extension, is not for me to say?¹³⁵

When the meeting of the judicial committee of the privy council was held on 30 and 31 May 1917 to consider this report on the Burtonport Railway, the members were told by counsel that they could not dispute the facts in Mr Tatlow's report. He pointed out that Sir John McFarland - 'to whose parsimonious administration, combined with the fact that he was the dominant figure of the previous board of directors, the neglected state of the railway was due'- had retired from the Board and that it had been otherwise strengthened and that Mr Tatlow, in his report, had commented favourably on the ability and efficiency of the L&LSR L&LSR's general manager, Henry Hunt who had been with the L&LSR only since September 1916 and was keen to do everything possible to improve matters and develop the line.¹³⁶

During the judicial committee's hearing Henry Hunt was proposed as the new manager of the Burtonport Extension by the L&LSR's barrister. This was very strongly supported by the L&LSR and by Derry's commercial community which was 'protecting the city's interests'.¹³⁷ But the Board of Works strenuously objected to him and they received strong support in their objection from Donegal County Council which was strongly on Forbes' side in case the Burtonport Extension became a burden on the county council by its continuing crisis. The pro-Hunt faction banded together in a strategic alliance and, as a result, the L&LSR came forward with an offer of £10,000 for Mr Hunt, if appointed, 'to be used in placing the line in proper condition'. It appears that the Commissioners of the Board of Works were wrong-footed by the £10,000 offer. But it is possible that Forbes was not enthusiastic about

¹³⁵ Ibid. p. 26.

¹³⁶ Tatlow to the Secretary, Board of Works (NAI, OPW 'Railways', 5RW/268/02).

¹³⁷ *DJ*, 23 May 1917, p. 1.

becoming manager either. Local lore in Donegal says that he was scathing in his criticism of the Burtonport line and its efforts 'trying to run engines through bogs'.¹³⁸ The Board of Works and Donegal County Council were still holding out for Forbes when the pro-Hunt lobby came up with another fresh idea. They would be quite agreeable to Mr Hunt acting under the supervision of an independent expert such as Mr Tatlow, if appointed manager. This new formula had possibilities. Donegal County Council withdrew its objections and then, the Board of Works withdrew theirs.¹³⁹

In their summing-up the commissioners stated:

that having regard to the facts that Sir John McFarland (to whose personality the Commissioners are convinced, much, if not all, of the past trouble regarding these lines is due) is removed from the management of the Company, that the spending of the sum of £10,000 on the placing of the line in proper order is assured, and that Mr Hunt in his capacity as Manager of the Burtonport Railway will be subject to the supervision of Mr Tatlow, the Commissioners are satisfied that the outlook regarding the future working of the Burtonport line is satisfactory.¹⁴⁰

However, the signatories of the memorials in northwest Donegal were most unhappy with the outcome because Mr Forbes and the CDRJC were the only solutions they wanted. Once more, the outcome of the protestations proved to them 'that the Burtonport line is controlled by Derry people'.¹⁴¹

An order in council was made by the lord lieutenant and the privy council of Ireland on 4 July 1917 confirming Hunt as manager under Tatlow's supervision.¹⁴² Mr Hunt was given a two-year contract. Mr Tatlow was paid his expenses of £5 5s. for each day plus one guinea per night subsistence

¹³⁸ Rory Delap, Letterkenny.

¹³⁹ 'Land Plans' (NAI, OPW, 'Railways', 268/02, The Burtonport Railway).

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ *DJ*, 6 June 1917, p. 2.

¹⁴² Orders from Privy Council, Dublin in 1919 concerning management of railway being handed over to Joseph Tatlow and Henry Hunt. (NA, MT 6/2595/4, 59374, Privy Council Office, R 1772).

when away from home on Burtonport Extension business. In all, he received £134 9s. 1d.¹⁴³

The Burtonport Railway had 114 NUR members in 1917 and they were happy with this new development but they also had many expectations as their secretary wrote in *The New Way* two months after Hunt's appointment:

It has been a source of great pleasure to the workers that our manager, Mr Hunt, has got the government appointment as the manager of this railway as he is a real practical railwaymen in every way. We now trust that he will associate himself with his men in such a way as will produce the best results for the working of the line and for the financial position of the men. Their working hours need a vast alteration seeing that there is no end to the traffic or locomotive man's day. We would like to know how many of the Irish railways have a train service during the day on all Sundays of the year and what remuneration is given to the staff that do that duty We would like some of our [NUR] members to pay up their contributions with a little more regularity and act a little more loyally to their brother members in every way.¹⁴⁴

Tatlow and Hunt set to work and a comprehensive programme of repairs and modernisation was undertaken immediately. Engines were repaired, stations were cleaned, painted and put in order, the viaducts were repainted, drivers' hours of work were regularised, staff in the locomotive workshops were increased from twenty-three to thirty-eight, 132 men were put to work on the permanent way, six carriages and thirty wagons were thoroughly repaired, acetylene lamps were installed in the passenger compartments and even footwarmers were purchased and made available at Letterkenny and Burtonport. The permanent way was extensively repaired.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Inspections relating to working and management of Burtonport Extension Railway (NAI, OPW 'Railways', 13749-19).

¹⁴⁴ *The New Way*, July 1917.

¹⁴⁵ Tatlow's Report, pp 1-11 (NAI, OPW 'Railways', 13749-19).

It is ironic that one of the most extensive changes which Hunt and Tatlow had to execute were those dealing with conditions of work. Though nearly all Irish railways were undergoing major change in working conditions due to trade union membership and the government control of railways through IREC since 1 January 1917, none of these had yet impacted on the Burtonport Extension where multi-tasking, open-ended working hours, work flexibility and low wages were still the main pivots of railway operation. John McFarland's yardstick for wages, irrespective of the position, qualification or deployment of any employee was the agricultural wage which he deemed to be sufficient remuneration for all positions. The changes now made would bring the railway into line with other modern lines but, as in the case of other railways, would come back to haunt the accounts in later years.

These improvements were carried out against the backdrop of war. Some time later, Tatlow himself reported that

a good deal has been done in the past year and it is an earnest of what would have been accomplished but for the difficulties due to the War. An instance of the delay experienced in obtaining materials I may mention [is] that Fang Bolts ordered in August 1917 were only delivered in June last. Another matter, which delayed progress, was the fact that everything in the way of tools and appliances was in such a deplorably broken-down state that a proper start could not be made until they were mended. Shovels, pick-axes, adzes, hammers, wrenches, etc. etc. all had to be got into decent condition.¹⁴⁶

It was soon obvious that the relationship between Tatlow and Hunt was working well for Tatlow stated in late 1917, 'I cannot refrain from saying that Mr Hunt has, throughout a very difficult period, shown great capacity and

¹⁴⁶ Tatlow's Report, pp 1-11, (NAI, OPW 'Railways', 13749-19).

untiring assiduity in his management of the Burtonport Line since my appointment, by the privy council, to the duties of supervisor'.¹⁴⁷

Even the *Irish Times* reported favourably on their progress.

Much satisfaction is expressed in Londonderry and throughout North West Donegal at the great improvement which has already been made in running of the trains on the Burtonport line and in the service generally. Mr Tatlow has just returned from an inspection. In carrying out his supervision, under the Privy Council Order of July last, he makes regular and frequent visits to Derry and Donegal. Greater progress still would have been made had the times been normal, but everyone knows the difficulty which exists, during these unfortunate war times, in obtaining materials and getting work done. The improvements apply, not only to the Burtonport line, but also to the whole of the Lough Swilly railway system.¹⁴⁸

Sadly for John Brennan, he would not be around to see the new dawn. A porter at Burtonport station, he was killed in a shunting accident there on 24 September 1917. He left a wife and eight children ranging in age from twelve years to one year. His widow, Mary, was awarded £178 compensation, one third of which was to be paid to herself and the remaining two-thirds was to be lodged in court for the benefit of the children when they came of age.¹⁴⁹

And little Ellen Kelly, aged two and a half, would never travel on the train either. She wandered from her home in Bomany near Letterkenny onto the railway line and despite the best efforts of driver Robert Quinn to bring the train to a halt, she was killed on Saturday 27 April 1918.¹⁵⁰

Despite these sad accidents, the traumatic developments of 1917 resulted in the Burtonport Extension discovering itself again. After the years of neglect, Hunt and Tatlow had managed to haul it back to some dignity once

¹⁴⁷ *Irish Times*, 12 Dec. 1917.

¹⁴⁸ *Irish Times*, 12 Dec. 1917.

¹⁴⁹ *DJ*, 24 Sept. 1917.

¹⁵⁰ *DJ*, 29 Apr. 1918.

more. They did this in a climate seriously affected by the First World War between 1914 and 1918. This war was abroad, far away from them but it deprived them of spare parts, materials and machinery which would have made their efforts more productive. However, they overcame this problem and enforced great changes for the benefit of the railway and its people.

But the militant NUR members were still not happy that Tatlow and Hunt were dealing with their problems. A letter appeared in *The New Way* in May 1918 from the Burtonport Railway branch complaining about the vexed question of railway bonus. 'In Donegal men working seven days per week receive only the 21s. bonus, the same as the six day week men. If the man is a day off work 3s. 6d. is deducted from his pay'.¹⁵¹ The letter-writer, 'Errigal' then showed his contempt for the Railway Clerks Association. 'They threw off their jackets at Derry station a few years ago and did the work of the porters who went on strike. The NUR lacks "tone" for the Clerks'. A stationmaster wrote in *The New Way* in May 1918: 'Men in Donegal are working seven days for six days pay. Stationmasters whose duties expire with the departure of the last train are required to attend specials which sometimes run six hours after the ordinary trains. While drivers, firemen, guards and porters receive overtime the stationmasters do not'.¹⁵²

Despite these problems Hunt and Tatlow's efforts were so good that the Burtonport train was depended upon to run on time when Eamonn de Valera made his historic journey to the northwest in February 1918. After visiting Letterkenny and then Carrigart in the company of Bishop O'Donnell he then headed into the 'back country' and took the train from Cashelnagor station through Gweedore, Crolly and Meenbanad where large crowds of people were everywhere to greet him. From Dungloe Road Station he was led to

¹⁵¹ *The New Way*, Apr. 1918, letter from 'Errigal'.

¹⁵² *The New Way*, May 1918.

Burtonport by a band and a torchlight procession and more than one thousand people listened to him in Dungloe. But, for probably the first time in many a long year in northwest Donegal, the absence of priests from the political platforms was noticeable.¹⁵³

The reason for the decline of the clergy's influence in west Donegal is complex. While a large part of the county shared in the boom from high agricultural prices during the war, the congested western areas of the county suffered from these same prices because they were purchasers. By 1916 the migration to Scotland had almost ceased, the fishing industry went into serious decline and the Donegal seaboard experienced one of the worst harvests for many years. The normal valve of relief schemes in times of such difficulty became closed off as the Treasury curbed the heavy expenditure of the CDB. The result was the serious retreat from the improved living standards in the pre-war years. The unemployed young men grew increasingly frustrated with their situation. They had little money and were bitter at their exclusion from Scotland and resented their harassment by the RIC at home. The Easter Rising in 1916 provided an additional emotional injection around which these frustrations could be moulded. When the conscription and recruiting campaigns began Sinn Fein found a ready audience for its attacks on the British, on the IPP, the UIL, the AOH and the politics of hope and dependency on the will of Westminster. Bishop O'Donnell was devoting little time to local politics because of his involvement in the Irish Convention and it was left to individual priests to combat the republican march. Following Bishop O'Donnell's break with Redmond, and the failure of the Irish Convention, there was a massive withdrawal of clergy from political life in Donegal which allowed Sinn Fein to take the initiative.¹⁵⁴ And of course, the Sinn Fein

¹⁵³ *DJ*, 13 Feb 1918, p. 2.

¹⁵⁴ Murphy, *Derry, Donegal and modern Ulster*, chapter 7.

movement was a national organisation drawing much of its sustenance from sources outside the diocesan boundaries or influences.¹⁵⁵

And their chance for recognition came in early 1918. On New Year's night 1918, James Duffy of Meenbanad and James Ward of Cloughlass, Burtonport were arrested by the R.I.C. while attending a dance in Kincasslagh. They were brought to Burtonport barracks where they were held for desertion from the army. Arrangements were made for their transfer by train to Ebrington Barracks in Derry on 4 January 1918, a Dungloe Fair day.¹⁵⁶

Joe Sweeney of Burtonport who had organised and commanded the Irish Volunteers in the Rosses heard of the arrests but was not too interested until he heard that Duffy's rifle had been seized by the RIC. He then felt that they had to recover the rifle. The locals favoured a rescue attempt at Burtonport Railway Station but Sweeney was sure that an armed party of the RIC would accompany the escort which normally was unarmed except for side arms. How far would the RIC travel? Sweeney gambled on their getting off at Dungloe Road Station and he suggested that the attempt should be made at Meenbanad or, as it was officially known, Kincasslagh Road. His brother, Bernie Sweeney, secured a couple of revolvers for the Volunteers and he then visited the prisoners and managed to warn them to be alert on the train.

The following morning the escort consisting of Lance Sergeant Robert Shaw, Private Holland and Private Henderson of the 3rd Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, arrived in Burtonport on the first incoming train about 10.15 a.m. and moved about freely while awaiting the outgoing afternoon train. 'They were steered into the late Jim Maguire's premises where the hospitality was

¹⁵⁵ CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, Feb. 1916 (CO 904/99), Mar. 1916 (CO 904/100) and Sept. 1916 (904/101).

¹⁵⁶ This account is a composite written from *DJ*, 18 Jan. 1918: Joe Sweeney, 'Donegal and the War of Independence' in *Capuchin Annual* 1970; NAI, BMH 1913-21, WS 1448, Patrick Breslin (one of those involved and *DS*, 4 Mar. 1918.

unlimited and, by the time they took their prisoners to the train they were more than a little befuddled'.¹⁵⁷

Constable M'Cabe said he saw the three enter the premises of a local spirit grocer. About 2.30, he saw Robert Shaw and Private Holland who was staggering from the effects of drink and was unfit to carry out his duty as escort. Private Henderson, the other member of the escort, was then absent but in a few minutes he came from the direction of Maguire's public house. He was drunk and shouting. Shortly after 3 o'clock McCabe saw Sergeant Shaw and Private Holland going to the railway station with the two prisoners. He went in search of Henderson and met him coming to the station, with the assistance of two civilians. He staggered on to the station, falling on the platform. He was not fit to carry out his duty. He was very drunk.¹⁵⁸

Sergeant Cafferty, RIC, Burtonport, said he remarked to Sergeant Shaw that he would require to be cautious with the prisoners who were handcuffed and handed over to him about 3 o'clock. Shaw previously told him that his escort in his absence had too much drink. The sergeant and a constable accompanied Shaw, Holland and the prisoners to the railway station. Holland was dazed and sick looking, the worse of drink and not competent to carry out his duty. Private Henderson came to the station staggering and drunk. Henderson fell twice at the station and Cafferty had to assist him up.¹⁵⁹

Meanwhile the rescue party had gone to Meenbanad Station where they found the platform crowded with people returning from the Dungloe Fair. John M'Cole, the guard, said when the train reached Kincasslagh Road Station, (Meenbanad) a crowd of about a 100 or 150 rushed along the platform and surrounded the carriage where the prisoners were. The crowd was very angry. Three quarters of them were women who were very excited. There

¹⁵⁷ Sweeney, 'Donegal and the War of Independence' pp 425- 429.

¹⁵⁸ DS, 4 Mar. 1918.

¹⁵⁹ DS, 4 Mar. 1918.

were about twenty or thirty men and a lot of young boys or girls on the platform.

Joe Sweeney remembered:

Paddy Gallagher was the first man who entered the carriage by the back and he struck one of the escort. 'One of the Colls, - I think it was Charlie, Neil Boyle, fiddler – struck me [Joe Sweeney] in mistake for one of the escort...The Sergeant in Charge was in possession of my rifle and bayonet. They were wrenched from his hands by John Bonner. Jim Bonner held up the driver of the train.¹⁶⁰

Patrick Gallagher, the stationmaster at Meenbanad, said the crowd was unusually large. Before the train arrived he learned the object was to bid goodbye to the prisoners and, on that account, he allowed the crowd to remain on the platform. The door of the compartment, in which the prisoners were, was opened and a woman got out. The door was then closed and a soldier stretched out his hand as if to bid someone goodbye. The door of the carriage then opened again and a soldier came out and pulled another after him. The latter fell on the platform. Gallagher said that then he saw the 'poor boys' running away.¹⁶¹

Neil Boyle, guard on the train, said the crowd at the station appeared to be quite quiet. After the departure of the train he saw the two prisoners running down the railway track in the direction of Burtonport. Many of those at the station came to see the prisoners off and bid them good-bye.¹⁶²

At his court martial in Derry Robert Shaw gave his version of events: When the train drew up at Kincasslagh Road Station, Shaw opened the door of the carriage to allow two women who were in the same compartment to get out. The door was then closed. The mob on the platform rushed towards the carriage. Some of the men in the crowd had sticks with which they threatened the occupants of the carriage and a voice shouted 'where are they; we must

¹⁶⁰ Joe Sweeney, *Donegal and the War of Independence*, p. 428.

¹⁶¹ *DS*, 4 Mar. 1918.

¹⁶² *DS*, 4 Mar. 1918.

have them'. Shaw understood them to refer to the prisoners. The carriage door was immediately dragged open from the outside and the prisoners were dragged out by the mob. 'We held on to the prisoners as long as we could but the door of the other side of the carriage was opened by part of the mob and we were attacked on that side by sticks and stones. That was the time the prisoners were rescued and we then had to draw our bayonets to protect ourselves'.¹⁶³

Lance Sergeant Robert Shaw, Inniskilling Fusiliers, was charged with allowing two deserters to escape while being conveyed from Burtonport to Derry, allowing an escort of which he was in command to get drunk, and for himself escaping when in arrest. The court found him guilty and ordered his detention for fifty-six days. Twenty-eight days of this sentence were remitted. He was also to be reduced in rank.¹⁶⁴

Sinn Fein clubs had been formed in almost every parish and a West Donegal Sinn Fein Executive was formed to fight the 1918 election. Joseph Sweeney was selected to contest the seat held by UIL favourite, Hugh Law for seventeen years. Law resigned before the election and when the UIL met in Glenties in November it was a subdued affair. Dan McMenamin was selected as their candidate but Bishop O'Donnell was not present and the verve and swagger of former years seemed lost. The powerful Canon James McFadden had died and many of the clerical motivators of the good years were now entering old age or had abandoned the old politics. It seemed that the new politics belonged to the young.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ *DS*, 4 Mar. 1918.

¹⁶⁴ NAI, BMH, WS 1448, Patrick Breslin, pp 4 -5; *DS*, 4 March 1918.

¹⁶⁵ *DJ*, 17 Oct. 1917, p. 2.

In an analysis of the I.R.A in Cork,¹⁶⁶ Peter Hart identified youth as one of its basic components. He wrote:

This youth subculture was a collective one, formed around semi-permanent groupings of brothers, neighbours, schoolmates and the like who played and often worked together Such groups were close-knit and assembled frequently, often every day or night. There was, in any case, an absence of alternative groups or activities. 'The boys' would gather at a house or cross roads to play cards or talk. They went to dances, played on the same football field or became followers of a local band.¹⁶⁷

In northwest Donegal the same principles would hold. The hundreds of young men driven back from Scotland found themselves idle and penniless. Their lives were without focus when the normal valve of employment in Lowland Scotland was withdrawn from them. They were ready for the excitement of organisation when other young men such as Joe Sweeney came to lead them. It appears that in northwest Donegal membership of the Volunteers ran in families as was also evident in Cork.¹⁶⁸

The election campaign brought further distress for the clergy still involved. As they visited the various fairs with their candidate McMenamin or held public meetings on his behalf they encountered the young men who had suffered the frustration of being confined at home with little money. The old messages from the Irish Party had done little for them and they were now in the bosom of Sinn Fein hoping for better things from their new philosophy though Sinn Fein were ensuring that they claimed the continuity from the great warriors of the past by stating that 'the policy of Fr McFadden in those

¹⁶⁶ Peter Hart, 'Youth culture and the Cork I.R.A'. in David Fitzpatrick (ed) *Revolution, Ireland 1917 – 1923* (Dublin, 1990) p. 10. I will use Hart's *The I.R.A. & its enemies* (Oxford, 1998) study of Sinn Fein and Volunteers (IRA) in Cork for comparison when dealing with these subjects in this thesis.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, pp 13-14.

¹⁶⁸ Hart, *The I.R.A. and its enemies*, pp 168-9 does not accept that the stoppage of emigration was the cause of many youths joining Sinn Fein. However, I do believe from anecdotal evidence that it contributed significantly in northwest Donegal.

[Plan of Campaign] days is the policy of Sinn Fein today in Gweedore'.¹⁶⁹ They attended the meetings and harassed the Irish Party speakers with chants of 'four hundred a year', 'oath of allegiance' and 'why don't you wear khaki'? Despite pleas from the clergy, their UIL man could not be heard because these people would not be intimidated.¹⁷⁰

Long before the election, it was obvious that the old order had lost its way. The youthful Sinn Fein candidate, Joe Sweeney, beat McMenamín by a large margin of almost 3,000 votes.¹⁷¹ The migrant labourers have often been given credit for the Sinn Fein victory in west Donegal but there was more to it than that. Bishop O'Donnell had already lost faith in the ability of the Irish party to achieve independence and his accompaniment of De Valera in February 1918, during his visit to the northwest, gave Sinn Fein the seal of respectability. The Irish party had little innovation to offer the electorate in 1918 except the same old message of waiting for Westminster to bestow its charity. Sinn Fein had also stolen the land policies from the UIL concerning the estates to be purchased and settled in the northwest and with this action they garnered to themselves the historical emotional attachments connected with the land problems. Sinn Fein had excitement, youth and fanaticism. The actions of the RIC and soldiers in northwest Donegal was of no help to the Irish Party when both of these bodies spent the entire period during the election tearing down Sinn Fein's posters and literature thereby associating McMenamín and his supporters with the soldiers and police.¹⁷² Harassment by police in Scotland and Derry during the war years now seemed to be mirrored at home.

¹⁶⁹ *DJ*, 18 Mar. 1918, p. 4.

¹⁷⁰ *DJ*, 6 Dec. 1918, p. 3.

¹⁷¹ Patrick Breslin, account of the election campaign and the result.(NAI, BMH, WS 1448).

¹⁷² *DJ*, 22 Nov. 1918, p. 3.

But the leadership and organisation which won the election did not come from the migrant labourers alone or their class during 1918. Businessmen, publicans, teachers, young shop assistants, Gaelic League activists, solicitors, doctors and many educated people occupied the important, influential positions that drove the Sinn Fein organisation.¹⁷³ Joseph Sweeney was an engineering student in UCG and a member of an influential Rosses business family. Eoin O'Searcaigh was a journalist and Gaelic League activist. Seaghan McMenamin was also a Gaelic League leader. Hugh O'Duffy was the Gaelic League organiser in West Donegal. John Sweeney was an hotelier and extensive businessman and John E. Boyle was a prominent merchant in Dungloe. Peadar O'Donnell and the Mac Grianna brothers, Seamus and Seosamh, were national teachers. All the other executive members were substantial people in their own right and their location in the Gaeltacht areas brought them in close contact to the language movements and ideals.¹⁷⁴ As Hart stated, the Gaelic League activists 'tended to be active outside it as well, as cultural or republican nationalists under the rubric of Sinn Fein'.¹⁷⁵ These people had the connections and ability to embrace the wider horizons of the national movement and establish it in the remote northwest. The labourers did most of the work but, without the leadership qualities available to them in the form of their executive, they would have had little power to bring about the victory of Sinn Fein.¹⁷⁶

It is probable that Tatlow and Hunt understood little of these significant political developments happening about them. Their lives had been spent running Irish railways on the English model. With the good comments on their efforts on behalf of the Burtonport railway coming from many parts they

¹⁷³ Patrick Breslin - growth of Sinn Fein and the Volunteers (NAI, BMH, WS 1448). Also BMH, WS 1382, Denis Houston details the growth in the Rosses.

¹⁷⁴ *DJ*, 17 Oct. 1918, p. 4. Hart, *The I.R.A.*, p. 157 called these the 'foot soldiers of the rebellion'.

¹⁷⁵ Hart, *The I.R.A.*, p. 44.

¹⁷⁶ See Pádraig O Baoighill, *Óglach na Rosann* (Dublin, 1994), chapter 4 for an account of the growth of the Volunteers in the Rosses.

could feel well satisfied. Even Fr McCaul, St Eunan's College, wrote to say that the Burtonport Extension was doing its best and was very good carrying the fish. The delays and problems were now with other railways at Derry and Strabane.¹⁷⁷

However, because of the war crisis the IREC cut all train services in Ireland by 25 per cent in 1918 and then increased wages for men from 21*s.* to 25*s.* per week. Women were granted 12*s.* 6*d.* No doubt, major shareholder John McFarland was astonished. With the end of the World War in November 1918 Hunt and Tatlow's task would be made easier and they could concentrate on running a normal railway again. They might have been preparing to enjoy the fruits of their hard-won endeavours. But then, a new problem arose over which they had less control and which would affect the Burtonport line more seriously than anything which had happened before. Being strangers, they probably had less understanding of the impulses and passions driving the people around them. That problem was the war at home.

¹⁷⁷ *DJ*, 22 May 1918, p. 2.

CHAPTER 8

THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

When the L&LSR shareholders held their annual general meeting in February 1919 they were sanguine that better days lay ahead. The new chairman, Brice Mullin, spoke of 'the happier conditions under which we meet this year'. Despite the problems encountered by the railway during the war years, receipts from all sources had again improved during 1918 under the management of Henry Hunt for whom there was fulsome praise from all parties attending the meeting. Mullin was positive about the future and was hopeful enough when he told the shareholders that dividends would be paid at the traditional rates of 7 per cent on ordinary shares and 5 per cent on preference shares again this year and he further assured them that the Burtonport Extension had undergone very considerable improvements. Despite Mullin's upbeat presentation, John McFarland, now seated in the audience as an ordinary shareholder, had his usual worries about the new eight-hour day and the massive increase in wages and coal costs which had taken place under government control.¹

The pre-war wage bill for all of the railways under the control of L&LSR had been £15,000 per annum but, by 1919, this had risen to £67,300, equal to an increase of 60 per cent per annum since 1913. The coal bill had gone up from £6,155 pre-war to £17,771 post-war, the equivalent increase of 32 per cent per annum.² Because of the length and gradients of the Letterkenny to Burtonport line, drastic cost reductions had to be effected with the result that only two trains ran each way daily which action seriously hampered the fishing exports and the fairs of the northwest. Even in 1919, the threat of coal shortages was ever present and that summer saw a general coal strike in Britain which left Ireland with a 50 per cent reduction in train services. By September, the coal supply had

¹ *DJ*, 24 Feb. 1919, p. 4.

² *DJ*, 23 Feb. 1920, p. 4.

almost run out in Derry and the closure of the railways was expected day after day.³

This was also a period of further crises within all of the English and Irish railway networks. There had been many changes brought about in railway practices while under government control during the war years. Established principles and traditions, jealously preserved by the railway companies over many years, had virtually disappeared during wartime. Since the end of the war in November 1918 the National Union of Railwaymen in England and Ireland, eagerly guarding the concessions won from government during the war years, were in tough negotiations with the government over the post-war conditions and pay which were to prevail in peacetime. Eventually, in August 1919, agreement was reached for pay increases which would reflect the changes brought about by the war which, by and large, had led to great measures of standardisation regarding pay and conditions throughout the industry. In this new proposed agreement, drivers and motormen were to receive 12s. to 15s. per day according to length of service. Fireman and assistant motormen were to be paid between 9s. 6d. and 11s. per day. These two payments were to include the bonus paid during wartime. Cleaners were to receive between 4s. 6d. and 7s. daily according to age plus a war wage on top of that amount.⁴

To frugally operated companies such as the L&LSR, these were astronomical sums when, at this time, their influential shareholder and former chairman, John McFarland was still paying 14s. per week to his tram-drivers operating for long hours in the city of Derry which sum was more in keeping with the mentality of many L&LSR board members than the negotiated post-war wage.⁵

As expected, many railway companies throughout Britain rejected the proposals because they felt such increases were extravagant. By

³ *DJ*, 1 Oct. 1919, p. 2.

⁴ *DJ*, 22 Aug. 1919, p. 5.

⁵ *DJ*, 1 Oct. 1919, p. 4.

September 1919, there was a rail shutdown in England which had a very negative effect on Ireland because neither imports nor exports could be moved. In Derry, the railwaymen held a meeting, elected a strike committee, and demanded that 'any agreements or settlements arrived at on behalf of English railwaymen shall also cover railwaymen in this country'. By October, a sort of peace was restored on the railways but the proposals generally stood.⁶

Despite the ending of the war the government still continued to hold overall control of Irish railways through IREC and the post-war continuation of this extension only served to dilute the powers of the railway companies. Indeed, many companies now feared that the railways would be returned to them with all the problems which had accumulated during the war still having to be resolved but without the subsidies given during the war years. There was talk of nationalization of the complete railway system, an action which would have been welcomed by many in the railway business, including the owners and shareholders, if the terms were favourable.

These problems might have been enough to engage all of Henry Hunt's energies, despite all the praise being heaped on him, but there were moves afoot behind the scenes in the L&LSR to have him removed from the management of the Burtonport Extension which position had been conferred on him by the privy council. Only £1,369 of the £10,000 promised by the L&LSR for repairs to the line had been utilized by Hunt by the time his contract was running out after two years and the L&LSR calculated that if Hunt's contract was not renewed then they would escape the payment of the balance and have John McFarland restored to his 'rightful' role as chairman once more.⁷

⁶ *DJ*, 29 Sept. 1919, p. 3.

⁷ *DJ*, 18 June 1919, p. 2.

Donegal County Council became alarmed at the manoeuvring of the railway company and feared that any further running down of the railway would throw traffic on to their road system which was grossly inadequate as it was. Furthermore, during those months the road contractors of northwest Donegal were threatening to strike stating that 'no class was as badly treated as they'.⁸ They were being forced to operate quarries, employ and pay men, hire horses and carts, maintain and repair roads and yet, they had to wait for months to receive their money from the county council.⁹ At their June meeting the county councillors heard that the L&LSR were definitely going to oppose the appointment of Mr Hunt for a further two years so they decided to have legal representation in place in case there might be an outbreak of dirty dealing when the matter came before the privy council in Dublin some days later.¹⁰

The Board of Works sought the order in council from the privy council for the re-appointment of Mr Hunt, stating that the locomotives and passenger coaches needed looking after and the permanent way was not yet in absolutely safe condition. They wanted Mr Hunt's reappointment to secure the balance of the £10,000 still unpaid by the L&LSR. Donegal County Council strongly supported Hunt's reappointment. When the L&LSR saw the opposition to its own plan they did not press their case and Hunt was appointed for a further two years.¹¹ His task now was to deal with the changing political landscape of northwest Donegal.

The period following the election of Joe Sweeney as Sinn Fein member of parliament or Teachda Dála for West Donegal provided Sinn Fein with an opportunity for constructing the foundations and building the structures of the new politics which had fired the electorate at the end of 1918. During the first months of 1919 Sinn Fein clubs were founded in every part of the northwest and membership was enthusiastically recruited

⁸ *DJ*, 27 June 1919, p. 7.

⁹ *DJ*, 27 June 1919, p.7.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *DJ*, 20 June 1919, p. 8.

from the former ranks of the AOH and UIL and members were tutored in the new Republican doctrine.¹² The national question was intermingled with the necessity for gaining control of the local rural district councils and Donegal County Council as well as maintaining the overall focus of supporting all aspects of the fight for freedom when such became necessary.¹³ The Rosses, Gweedore and Cloughaneely became quickly organised and within a short while, a successful network was working from Letterkenny to Dungloe with many of the Burtonport Extension staff, such as Neil Plunkett O'Boyle, Neil Boyle, John Duddy and stationmaster Kelly of Cashelnagor,¹⁴ surreptitiously involved in the intelligence and courier service on behalf of Sinn Fein and the Volunteers as well as transporting the arms which were being purchased in Scotland and returned to Ireland.¹⁵

As a backup for the men, Cumann na mBan, for which a formidable lady named Miss Cashel, B.A., was appointed local organizer, became particularly strong in the area. She travelled the northwest giving lectures on the functions of the clubs in the support of the Sinn Fein organisation. The members spent many hours learning to drill, taking lessons in First Aid and taking a full part in the preparations and the conduct of the rural and council elections that would take place in 1920.¹⁶

In contrast to their AOH and UIL opponents who still concluded their meetings with a rendition of 'A nation once again', the Republicans new battle hymn was 'the Soldier's Song'.¹⁷ These new organisations took over the social events which had been organised and dominated for so

¹² *DJ*, 1 Jan. 1919, p. 2; 22 Jan. 1919, p. 4; 2 Apr. 1919, p. 4; 25 Apr. 1919, p. 7; 14 May 1919, p. 4; 30 May 1919, p. 5; 30 May 1919, p. 4. See also Pdraig O Baoighill, *Óglach na Rosann* (Dublin, 1994) p. 93 about the numbers who walked out of AOH meetings to join Sinn Fein. See also Joost Augusteijn, 'The importance of being Irish' in David Fitzpatrick (ed.) *Revolution* (Dublin, 1990) p. 28 with reference to recruitment from AOH to Sinn Fein in County Mayo.

¹³ NAI, BMH, WS 1448, Patrick Breslin.

¹⁴ CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, Apr. 1916 (CO 904/99). Kelly was the first person arrested in Donegal after the 1916 Rising. He was interned for a period.

¹⁵ *DJ*, 2 Apr. 1919, p. 4; 14 May 1919, p. 4. Also NAI, BMH, WS 1448, p. 20. Patrick Breslin says 'railwaymen were good friends of ours' [Volunteers].

¹⁶ NAI, BMH, WS 750, Eithne Coyle (O'Donnell); *DJ*, 29 Jan. 1919, p. 4. See Aideen Sheehan, 'Cumann na mBan' in David Fitzpatrick (ed.) *Revolution Ireland 1917 - 1923* (Dublin, 1990), pp 88 - 97, for the function and role of Cumann na mBan during this period.

¹⁷ *DJ*, 3 Sept. 1919, p. 4.

many years by the clergy, the Ancient Order of Hibernians and UIL. The St Patrick's Day celebrations of 1919 were described as 'the most remarkable in this locality or probably in West Donegal' when 'over 9,000 people congregated in Annagry', in the Rosses and were conveyed in procession to Crolly led by seven horsemen, 'being suitably caparisoned' followed by a number of Sinn Fein marching bands, serried ranks of Volunteers, uniformed Cumann na mBan members, with all groups bearing banners, sashes and the ostentatious regalia reminiscent of the greatness of the rival organizations which had carried most of the celebratory occasions during former years. The changed atmosphere of St Patrick's Day 1919 signalled the metamorphosis within northwest Donegal society in the fact that the priests took little part in the events of the great day.¹⁸ It seemed from the reports that the great traditional occasions dominated by the manipulation of the clergy had only been remnants of a long departed culture contingent on the accepted beliefs of a distant age.

The great Gaelic celebrations of Easter, liberation day for the penitential submissives of the Lenten fast and abstinence, had changed utterly by 1919. No longer within the exclusive grasp of the clerical hold, new prophets proffered a different redemption in that year, with the martyrs of the 1916 Rising to the fore. Now, it was acceptable to discard old ties, abandon long-held binding allegiances, reject the cherished ceremonial of strongly respected traditional beliefs, question the veracity of hitherto unquestioned opinion formers and venture into the uncertain bosom of the advocates of the new Ireland where new names, different values, lofty aspirations and idealistic ambitions fuelled the march of the advocates of the new generation. On this Easter Sunday the revolutionary order of this new republicanism was entirely within the control of the Sinn Fein clubs which organised the banners and the bands, the airs and the tunes, the sashes and the marches, the crowds and the enthusiasts at Dungloe,

¹⁸ *DJ*, 2 Apr. 1919, p. 4.

Cloughaneely and Gweedore where the throngs once more turned out to be inspired and entertained.¹⁹ The majesty, power and dominance of the new order overwhelmed the ordinary onlooker. To those who walked the weary miles to their homes at evening's end, there must have been little doubt but that the standard bearers of the Gaelic Ireland and the new faces on the platforms offered a greater spectacle than that represented by the fading colours of the past. The new order was youthful, innovative, exciting and powerful and the common people liked it. Much of the old order was buried without the decency of a falling tear. Sinn Fein had come to stay and they had issues to excite the public. On 23 March 1919, they held fourteen after-mass meetings in Donegal in condemnation of the treatment being meted out to the political prisoners and Dr J.P. McGinley condemned the police 'in his usual abusive style'. The speeches on Easter Sunday were 'chiefly noticeable for abuse of the police'.²⁰ Only in Kilmacrenan did the AOH manage to dominate the Easter festivities.

Even the dances, traditionally within the moral and physical control of the clergy, found new liberation when they were taken over almost completely by the Sinn Fein and Cumann na mBan clubs which enlivened the events with rousing performances of 'the waves of Tory' or 'baint an fhéir' rather than 'Shoe the donkey' or the highlands, half sets or lancers of the old order. Sports days and outings came under the control of the new order as well. It seemed that no facet of life could be lived without the involvement of Sinn Fein.²¹ Dungloe even had a Sinn Fein dramatic club.²²

The minority who could not find spiritual redemption within the bosom of Sinn Fein tended now to join the AOH which became the established opposition to the new order.²³ Bands also split into Sinn Fein or AOH bands, dances were frequented by one party or the other and even

¹⁹ *DJ*, 25 Apr. 1919, p. 7.

²⁰ *CI Monthly Report*, County Donegal, Mar. 1919 and Apr. 1919 (CO 904/108).

²¹ *DJ*, 23 June 1919, p. 4.

²² *DJ*, 11 July 1919, p. 7. Hart, *The IRA & its enemies*, p. 44. He mentions the attachment of the Sinn Fein movement in Cork to 'home-grown theatre'.

²³ *DJ*, 9 Jan. 1920, p. 7.

pubs and shops were designated according to their political allegiance. The local petty sessions began to hear cases of assault 'between the old Constitutional Party members and Sinn Fein members'.²⁴ But the AOH organization was in a much-weakened state since their defeat at the 1918 election and Sinn Fein's ascendancy was everywhere apparent without opposition.

Feeble efforts were made in some areas of northwest Donegal to reorganize the United Irish League but, despite some meetings, there was little success.²⁵ Some priests, such as Canon Scanlon of Dungloe, showed enthusiasm but, generally, the majority of the clergy deemed it wiser to remain aloof from politics altogether after the scorching they had received during the elections of the previous December.²⁶ Little was heard from Bishop O'Donnell during this period and it seemed as if his attachment to John Dillon, to the UIL and to Irish politics had run its course. Both bishop and clergy kept a very low profile during the first half of 1919 and it was not until the Feis Thírconail celebrations in Ardara in June 1919 that they appeared in the traditional outturn. Their speeches, however, had none of the bravado of former years. The only reference to the changed political situation was O'Donnell's admission that 'the struggle for the language is also a stiff piece of work'. He conceded that the 'craoibhini [of the Crann Eithne organisation] have suffered setbacks in the conflicts of the times'. Like a patient on the death bed or the seanchai in the last years of old age, there was a harking back to the beloved times of long ago and the cherished ancient ways which had disappeared and would, seemingly, never come again.²⁷

By 1920 the new organiser for the Gaelic League in northwest Donegal, James Greene (Séamus Ó Grianna), or under his new sobriquet, Máire as he was later to be known, was finding the promotion of Irish a

²⁴ *DJ*, 16 June 1919, p. 4.

²⁵ *CI Monthly Report*, County Donegal, May 1919 (CO 904/109).

²⁶ *DJ*, 9 May 1919, p. 4.

²⁷ *DJ*, 30 June 1919, p. 3.

'stiff piece of work' also. After taking on the position, he enthusiastically called for the Gaelic League programme to be introduced into schools in the Irish speaking parts of the county and stated that the support of priests, managers, teachers, Sinn Fein, Cumann na mBan, GAA and the Temperance Association were all necessary for the successful revival of the language.²⁸

However, his frustration was apparent not long afterwards as he began to discover that Sinn Féin and Republicanism did not exactly equate with the adhesion of the Irish language to the cause. He found that

it is a common thing to meet ardent Sinn Feiners who have supreme contempt for the Irish language. In the opinion of the people, Irish is still a thing to be ashamed of – a mark of vulgarity, a badge of poverty. It seems a fundamental characteristic of human nature that the *bacach* [beggar] will imitate the *bodach*. [big-wig, gentry] Not long ago I was present at a Republican court. Of the eight justices on the bench, five were native Irish speakers and the remaining three at least understood the language well. The court was held in a village in the centre of the Donegal Gaeltacht. But the whole business of the court was done in English. One old man, a fluent Irish speaker, told the court that defendant kicked him on the side and, he added, 'I was not able to draw a bucket of water out of my side for six weeks'.²⁹

When Ó Grianna had departed from the post of Gaelic League organiser, he was highly critical of the clergy in the diocese of Raphoe for their lack of enthusiasm and support for the promotion of Irish despite their attendance and prominent positions in the language movement.³⁰

Another strange anomaly which had survived among the teaching profession in the heartland of the Gaeltacht was the practice of conducting highly formalized Irish National Teacher Organisation meetings through the medium of English with seldom a word of Irish spoken among the

²⁸ *DJ*, 1 Oct. 1920, p. 7.

²⁹ *DJ*, 3 Nov. 1920, p. 4.

³⁰ *DJ*, 17 Feb. 1922, p. 6.

native Irish speakers. It was not until November 1920 that the Gweedore and Rosses Teachers Organisation, at Ó Grianna's prompting, passed a resolution that all future business of the branch would be conducted through Irish.³¹ But in small ways token concessions were being made to the Gaeilge with Donegal County Council changing its name to Tirconaille County Council, although, before long, this was being again anglicised in some parts to Tyrconnell County Council.³²

If the struggle for the advancement of the language was difficult, the attempts of fervent Gaels to establish Gaelic games in the northwest proved equally difficult. After the feeble efforts of 1905 faded into oblivion, soccer continued to be the natural game in the northwest, especially in the Irish-speaking areas. By 1918, Donegal lagged behind most other Irish counties in not fielding teams in the GAA inter-county championship and the County Inspector of the RIC only noted four clubs with 189 members in the county in August 1919.³³ After the success and acceptance of the Sinn Féin philosophy in late 1918, such an omission was an affront to the latent Gaelic spirit of the time. The English speaking regions of east and south Donegal became organised in 1919 with Gaelic football leagues and competitions. But because of the attachment to Glasgow Celtic and Edinburgh Hibernians of the emigrants from the northwest over many years progress was slower there and it was only in July 1919 that an attempt came about to break the soccer stranglehold. In that month, players from Carrigart, Downings, Glen and Creeslough came together at Downings to learn the rules of the Gaelic Athletic Association. The novelty of the occasion brought many 'players, people and peelers' to witness the event.³⁴ A week later, the players were deemed to be sufficiently acquainted with the rules of this new game and a match was organised at the same venue for

³¹ *DJ*, 22 Oct. 1920, p. 3.

³² Proper procedures were not adopted for this change of name in late 1919. It was a majority vote of members and as we will see later the name Donegal county council had to be restored when the Irish name was deemed to have no legal status.

³³ CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, Aug. 1919 (CO 904/109).

³⁴ *DJ*, 16 July 1919, p. 3.

the following Sunday where a team selected from the seaboard Downings and Carrigart area played against their rivals from the Creeslough and Glen inland region. The *Derry Journal* reported that, 'they fought with savage agility, urged on by their tribe following, shouting their war cry, 'brat dearg abú'. More practice matches were then arranged.³⁵

In that same year a GAA club was founded in Cloughaneely and although there was no local club in the Rosses, Bernard Sweeney from Burtonport, a member of the rebel family, became the first GAA player from the northwest to gain a place on the Donegal county team which was dominated by players from the east of the county. When the Donegal GAA convention took place in March 1920 there was a remarkable absence of representation from the northwest corner of the county.³⁶ At the annual GAA congress in Dublin in April 1920, Mr Fay, Cavan, proposed that immediate steps be taken to appoint a GAA organiser in County Donegal where 'they had more than half the people speaking Irish and yet, these men were playing Association football'. He then stated that the Irish Football Association were 'making wonderful efforts to establish their code in county Donegal.'³⁷

Otherwise, this increasing advancement of an 'alien' philosophy, with all its attendant theatre and convention, was being looked upon critically by the members of the Royal Irish Constabulary. The attendance of the police at all local meetings, where they took copious notes of the utterances of the speakers, was a further step in their alienation from the general populace following the harassment of the Scottish migrants during the war years.³⁸ It was not long before they were gathering in numbers to disperse such meetings and following up their actions with raids on the orators' homes during the late hours of night.³⁹ Then the houses of

³⁵ *DJ*, 25 July 1919, p. 8.

³⁶ *DJ*, 26 Mar. 1920, p. 7.

³⁷ *DP*, 10 Apr. 1920, p. 3.

³⁸ *CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, Sept - Dec. 1919* (CO 904/110).

³⁹ *DJ*, 5 Sept. 1919, p. 6.

prominent Sinn Fein members were raided for arms⁴⁰ which actions often led to public outcry such as the night raid on the home of the Gaelic League organiser, Hugh O'Duffy, in Cloughaneely when only his two young daughters were in the house during the incursion. The *Derry Journal* was scathing in its condemnation of these nocturnal activities, stating that, 'The servants of the law are thus adding one more to the increasing number of silly incidents connected with the present military regime'.⁴¹ Throughout the winter months of 1919 these spasmodic raids were being carried out on Sinn Fein members who were suspected of having arms, ammunition or seditious literature but, in nearly all cases, nothing incriminating was found. But some arrests of speechmakers and agitators were taking place.⁴²

However, public sentiment remained calm until Charles McBride and Anthony McGinley⁴³ were arrested in Dungloe on 11 December 1919 for soliciting subscriptions to the Dáil Eireann loan. They were taken to Dungloe police barracks. During the evening the Sinn Fein clubs of the Rosses organised and, together with the Volunteers and Cumann na mBan, they gathered outside the barracks and roared disapproval at the arrests and demanded the prisoners' release. Later, they were joined by a pipe band which led the throng up and down the Main Street calling for their release.⁴⁴

District Inspector Wallace and Sergeant Farrell together with two constables took the prisoners to Dungloe Road railway station next morning and conveyed them to Letterkenny on the 7.20 a.m. train. On the policemen's return to Dungloe Road station that night there was no transport to meet them following orders from the local Volunteers that car

⁴⁰ CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, Sept. 1919 (CO 904/110).

⁴¹ *DJ*, 19 Sept. 1919, p. 5.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Joseph Sweeney, 'Donegal and the war of independence' in the *Capuchin Annual* 1970, p. 431. Sweeney gives the names of the Volunteers as Anthony McGinley and Dinny Houston, while the newspapers give the names above.

⁴⁴ *BMH*, WS 1448, Patrick Breslin; *DP*, 10 Jan. 1920, p. 1.

drivers were forbidden to carry the RIC.⁴⁵ The four policemen started walking to Dungloe. When they reached the Rampart, about a mile from the station, a fusillade of shots was fired at the party from both sides of the road by about twenty to thirty men, all of whom seemed armed with shotguns.⁴⁶ Sergeant Farrell was seriously wounded and Constable Cunnane received heavy fire also.⁴⁷ When the raiders scattered the RIC tried to regroup but could not find Sergeant Farrell. They made their way to Dungloe and returned with a party to search for the wounded man. Eventually, they found him bleeding seriously but they had to commandeer a donkey and cart to carry him to Dr Gardiner's house in Dungloe because none of the local taxi men would come out. Dr Gardiner said the two injured men would have to be sent to Lifford Hospital but again, a car could not be found to carry them there. Eventually, a taxi was found in Letterkenny which travelled to Dungloe and carried the wounded men to Lifford Hospital. Sergeant Farrell had his leg amputated in order to save his life.⁴⁸

A week before this incident, the Sinn Fein clubs in northwest Donegal had passed a motion that members would not attend or support any AOH functions. In the immediate aftermath of the ambush at the Rampart the assailants decided to give themselves an alibi by attending a local dance run by the AOH. They were later severely censured for their consorting with the AOH enemy.⁴⁹

In December 1919, the County Inspector reported that 'it is significant that there has been no denunciation of the Rampart shooting by the local Roman Catholic clergy – both moderate men'. He later stated that 'underneath, Nationalists, whatever their private opinions may be, seem

⁴⁵ Hart, p. 61 states that a boycott on driving the RIC was also in existence in Cork by Nov. 1918.

⁴⁶ NAI, BMH, WS 1448, Patrick Breslin gives the names of the twelve men involved, including himself.

⁴⁷ CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, Dec. 1919 (CO 904/110).

⁴⁸ *DJ*, 15 Dec. 1919, p. 5. In his account in the *Capuchin Annual* 1970, p. 432, Joseph Sweeney incorrectly gives the sergeant's name as McKenna.

⁴⁹ NAI, BMH, WS 1382, Denis Houston, p. 7.

disinclined to make themselves prominent in any way in condemning disorder'.⁵⁰

Great police activity followed in the Rosses then. A lorry load of the Dorset Regiment travelled from Derry but when they were on the road at Loughanure, five miles from Dungloe, the lorry sank down through the road and 'all efforts to retrieve it failed'. They had to walk the remaining part of the journey.⁵¹

A number of simple issues in early 1920 led to increased militarism in the northwest. On Friday 2 January, a dance was organised to take place in the parochial hall in Dungloe in aid of the Dungloe Prisoners' Dependents' Fund. The police proclaimed it but there were strong rumours that the dance would go ahead. On that morning fifty military arrived from Derry by train at Dungloe Road station. Nobody would take their luggage to Dungloe so they commandeered a horse and cart that happened to be outside the station. They occupied the hall in Dungloe but the dance went ahead in a local school where a big crowd attended. On the next day they set out in pouring rain to catch the 8.20 a.m. train for Derry but, for probably the only time in the history of the Burtonport Extension, the train had departed long before the scheduled time and the military had to spend a miserable day at the station until the 3.30 p.m. train took them away.⁵² After these incidents the Dungloe police were furnished with a Ford motor van, Verey lights for night searches and light grenades.⁵³

The posting of soldiers to the Rosses was typical of the response which usually followed every incident which took place in the northwest from the time of the murder of District Inspector Martin in Gweedore in 1889. However, since 1903 the Burtonport train had facilitated the speedy transport of the Iniskilling Fusiliers from Ebrington Barracks in Derry or the Dorset Regiment and Rifle Brigade from Letterkenny to the trouble

⁵⁰ CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, Dec. 1919 (CO 904/110).

⁵¹ *DJ*, 17 Dec. 1919, p. 5.

⁵² *DJ*, 21 Jan. 1920, p. 3.

⁵³ *DJ*, 21 Jan. 1920, p. 3.

spots in the northwest. The close association that the military and naval personnel had with the L&LSR had been established many years previously because of the naval base at Lough Swilly for the fleet and the military base at Fort Dunree, both of which provided solid business for the town of Buncrana. The Derry to Buncrana railway depended on the military and the fleet for a large part of its income, both passenger and cargo, over many years and the L&LSR's loyalty to these bodies was total and never in the slightest doubt. However, when they demanded the same loyalty from the ordinary citizens of the northwest in 1920 they were in for a rude awakening.

But, for Hunt and Tatlow, this war at home was something totally different for them. It probably smashed the idealism and principles that had guided their paths for many years. This war was on their doorstep but the enemies were difficult to define. The behaviour of many within the local population puzzled them. Their trains, stations and depots were sucked into the battle before they knew it and every report was awaited anxiously for possible disaster on their own lines. Whereas the causes of small nations and the bullying by the German chancellor were easily understood, the offensive Irish freedom fighters attacking Britain and its institutions, the defender of the small nations, was incomprehensible. Hunt and Tatlow were shocked. As time progressed they came to expect the worst. And the locals did not disappoint them.

The intensification of the new offensive policy in the northwest can be dated from the release from his second period of imprisonment of Joe Sweeney, Teachta Dála and leader of the Volunteers in West Donegal, in May 1920. 'Thousands' had come out on the roads and in the villages to welcome him home.⁵⁴ Very soon afterwards, the boycott of the police and military was extended to cover the exclusion of their every need and they

⁵⁴ *DP*, 15 May 1920, p. 1. Also *Capuchin Annual* 1970, p. 434 for an account of Joe Sweeney's time in Wormwood Scrubs and his activity in northwest Donegal on his release from prison.

were shunned by the public in general.⁵⁵ A rumour was spread throughout the Rosses that the water supply to the army barracks in Burtonport had been poisoned. This led to the soldiers being withdrawn by train every Friday evening to Derry from whence they returned on Monday mornings with each soldier carrying a five-gallon drum of water which had to be rationed during the week.⁵⁶

Their weekend absence provided opportunities for the locals to practise their military manoeuvres and adopt more aggressive tactics in their resistance. The Burtonport railway was the main target of this intensification. The train was the principal artery of supply for the control of the northwest and conveyed the police and soldiers to the region on every occasion when there was trouble and was used to carry the prisoners to Derry's Ebrington and Victoria barracks where they had to stand field general court martial without any support from home.⁵⁷

The strategy adopted by the Volunteers and their supporters was the complete isolation of the RIC and the military. Their mail would be intercepted and destroyed. Telegraph wires to every barracks and police station would be cut. Shops would boycott the police, the military and their families. Taxis would refuse to carry them. Carters and carmen would not service their needs. Even the turf suppliers would boycott them.⁵⁸ But central to all these strategies would be their isolation from their reserve support in Letterkenny and Derry through control of the train on the Burtonport line. Without the train the troops would have to travel at a very slow pace on the poor roads and be subject to ambush and attack in the mountain passes.⁵⁹

In his June 1920 report the RIC County Inspector reported that the county

⁵⁵ See Charles Townshend, *The British campaign in Ireland 1919-1921* (Oxford, 1975) pp 22 and 31 for an account of the general exclusion of the RIC throughout the country.

⁵⁶ Eileen Sweeney, sister of Joe Sweeney, Rathfarnham, Dublin.

⁵⁷ Eileen Sweeney.

⁵⁸ NAI, BMH, WS 1382, Denis Houston.

⁵⁹ Eileen Sweeney.

has not been in a satisfactory condition during the past month. – the Sinn Fein agitation has become more pronounced more especially in the North West, West and South of the county and has been responsible for a long list of outrages. The situation is becoming increasingly difficult for the police to deal with because people not in sympathy with the agitation are afraid to give the police any information. There have been public boycotting notices at Dungloe, Burtonport and Killybegs. Reports of the further burning of Gweedore vacated barracks in June, the burning of Meenmore old military barracks on 8th June, of Aranmore courthouse on 20th June, and further damage to police boats by fire at Burtonport on 24th June.⁶⁰

Again, a simple issue lit the fuse which intensified the struggle. On the evening of the Dungloe fair day, 4 July 1920, the three O'Donnell brothers who were United States citizens were walking home from the fair when they met three RIC members. One of the RIC coughed as they passed by. One of the O'Donnell brothers coughed in return and within seconds he was hit by Sergeant Mooney's rifle butt and had his jaw broken. He was carried by his comrades to the nearest house in Crickamore and was said to be in critical condition.⁶¹ On the Monday following the altercation Sergeant Mooney went to the post office in Dungloe and collected the mail for the barracks. On his return, while walking down the Main Street, he was shot from a house previously occupied by District Inspector Wallace, and was seriously wounded.⁶²

The usual plan to flood the area with troops was put into action and on 13 July, a party of military containing fifty men of all ranks, fully equipped and armed, marched and took their seats on the 7.20 a.m. train at Derry bound for Burtonport. The engine driver and guard refused to take the train out. This action was in accordance with Trade Union Congress policy which had begun on 20 May 1920 when dockworkers at Dublin Port

⁶⁰ CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, June 1920 (CO 904/112).

⁶¹ NAI, BMH, WS 1448, Patrick Breslin, p. 11; *DP*, 17 July 1920, p. 3; *DJ*, 9 July 1920, p. 5.

⁶² *DP*, 17 July 1920, p. 3; *DJ*, 12 July 1920, p. 5. See also *Capuchin Annual*, 1970, pp 434 – 435 for Joe Sweeney's perspective on the shooting.

Fig. 45 Indictable offences committed in July 1920 in County Donegal

Courthouses burned

Burnfoot	9 th .	Buncrana	15 th .	Carndonagh	20 th .
Churchill	28 th .	Malin	22 nd .	Records burned	7 th .

Police barracks burned

Pettigo	1 st .	Convoy	8 th .	Churchill	16 th .
---------	-------------------	--------	-------------------	-----------	--------------------

Police ambushed

Sgt. Mooney	Dungloe	10 th .	
Sgt. Coleman and party	Killybegs	26 th .	
Const. Bell	Ramelton	21 st .	assaulted.

Notices boycotting the police

Annagry	2 nd .	Fintown	21 st .
Dungloe	4 th .	Mountcharles	21 st .
Creeslough	4 th .	Ardara	20 th .
Middletown, Gweedore	6 th .	Donegal Town	21 st .
Falcarragh	7 th .	Glenties	20 th .
Annagry	7 th .	Dunkineely	21 st .
Kilmacrenan	11 th .	Killybegs	21 st .
Glenties	14 th .	Ballyshannon	20 th .
Bundoran	21 st .		

Trains held up

Crolly	15 th .
Churchill	20 th .
Letterkenny	13 th .

malicious injury to railway line

Mails robbed

Fintown – Dungloe	14 th .	Mails robbed
Burtonport	16 th .	Mails stolen from postman.
Glenties – Ardara	23 rd .	Mail car driver held up. Mails robbed.
Barnesmore	23 rd .	Mails robbed from train.

Coastguards

Magheraroarty (Gweedore) coastguard station burned	8 th .
Burtonport coastguard station burned	7 th .

Threatening and boycotting notices

Dungloe	1 st .	Mary Bonner, barrack servant.
Falcarragh	17 th .	Jane McClintock – supplying milk to RIC.
Carrigart	20 th .	Persons supplying articles of food to RIC.
Creeslough	23 rd .	Mandy McLoughlin, supplying turf to RIC.
Ballyshannon	27 th .	Received by Unionist traders who supplied RIC.

Source: CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, July 1920 (CO 904/112).

refused to handle 'certain war material'. Soon afterwards, they were joined by the Irish Transport and General Workers Union. The railwaymen then refused to take the cargo from the docks. By June, this embargo had spread across Ireland and had embraced troops and police as well as munitions though certain other military stores, such as food and building materials, were excluded from the ban.⁶³ By the end of July, the situation regarding the travel of the military and their supplies was deteriorating sharply. The Derry branch of the National Union of Railwaymen passed a resolution on 26 July stating that under no circumstances would they convey armed police or military to be utilized for the destruction of their fellow countrymen.⁶⁴ Train staffs steadfastly refused to work trains conveying the armed forces and, as a consequence, about thirty railway employees had been suspended by the L&LSR. Deadlock ensued at the Derry station until 8.50 a.m. when the soldiers left the train and returned to barracks. The *Derry Journal* reported: 'It is stated that the railwaymen were intimidated, the threat, as alleged in some quarters, being that if they worked the train carrying armed military or police, serious consequences would befall them'. The soldiers later made the journey in military motors and arrived at Dungloe without mishap.⁶⁵

The evening goods train from Derry to Burtonport was held up by twenty armed and masked men at Crolly Bridge on Thursday 15 July and a thorough search was made. The raiders seized hampers of provisions consigned to the troops stationed at Dungloe and they threw them into the river nearby. The train was detained for an hour before being let proceed. Police and military who had gone to Dungloe Road station to collect the goods found on their return that a barricade had been thrown across the road. Mr Hunt, manager of the Burtonport Railway happened to be on the train. When the train reached Burtonport four masked men seized the

⁶³ Townshend, *The British campaign in Ireland*, p. 71.

⁶⁴ *DJ*, 28 July 1920, p. 3.

⁶⁵ *DJ*, 14 July 1920, p. 3.

mailbags and carried them away. After police correspondence was extracted the letters were returned⁶⁶.

The RIC County Inspector reported:

As a result of the situation at Dungloe, a military detachment has been stationed there since 14 July 1920 and this is a policy I am endeavouring to get extended as soon as possible.

A large number of employees have been suspended on the Lough Swilly line for refusal at Derry to convey military to Dungloe and elsewhere – as a result the service to Carndonagh has had to be reduced and passenger trains from Letterkenny to Burtonport have been completely suspended.⁶⁷

However, the locals were intent on frustrating the County Inspector's efforts in every way. When the trains were introduced again they were held up at Letterkenny on 13 July, at Crolley on 15 July, at Churchill on 20 July, and at Barnes Gap on 23 July.⁶⁸ Boycotting campaigns against the soldiers and police were initiated at Annagry on 2 July 1920; Dungloe on 4 July 1920; Creeslough on 4 July 1920; Middletown, Gweedore on 6 July 1920 and Falcarragh on 7 July 1920.⁶⁹

In late July, the Derry to Burtonport train was held up at Churchill by seven or eight raiders, each of which carried a revolver and the driver, guard and staff were taken to the waiting room. It appears that the exclusion of food and building materials from the ban was being ignored in northwest Donegal by this time because the rest of the attackers then focussed their attention on a wagon containing supplies for the military and police stationed at Dungloe. The booty captured contained tins of bully beef, a large quantity of fresh beef, loaves of bread and sacks of potatoes as well as ten cases of petrol. All of this, except the petrol, was thrown away or destroyed. The petrol was placed on a waiting car which drove off. Some of the passengers provided themselves with tins of bully beef and bread.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ *DJ*, 18 July 1920, p. 3.

⁶⁷ CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, July 1920 (CO 904/112).

⁶⁸ *DJ*, 19 Jul. 1920, p. 3; 23 Jul. 1920, p.7; 30 Jul 1920, p. 5.

⁶⁹ CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, July 1920 (CO 904/112).

⁷⁰ *DJ*, 23 July 1920, p. 7.

Just before the 7.30 a.m. train was due to leave Derry for Burtonport on Saturday, 24 July a group of soldiers got on for Dungloe and took their seats. They were accompanying a consignment of food and other supplies for the military there. In accordance with NUR policy the driver and guard refused to work the train which sat at the platform until 5 p.m. when the military transferred into another train bound for Burtonport but that train staff also refused to go. The soldiers sat on the train until 10 p.m. at which time they withdrew to barracks. It was then too late for the train to travel and many passengers were thus left stranded in Derry for the weekend. As a result of these incidents eight men on the L&LSR railway were suspended for their refusal to work the trains.⁷¹

In Derry on the following Monday morning a party of the Queen's Own West Surrey Regiment boarded the train for Burtonport but the driver refused to start. The troops remained in the carriages throughout the day and the deadlock continued. Eventually, sufficient staff was procured to work the train including Robert Quinn, the driver. It departed from Derry at 5 p.m. with the troops, the hampers of food and a large number of the stranded passengers on board. When the signalman at Letterkenny heard that there were troops aboard he left his cabin without 'making the road' for the train to Burtonport. Consequently, it was held up at Letterkenny Station with some of the railway staff declining to facilitate its further journey and there it remained. After about two hours the fireman left in a motorcar for his home in Burtonport. About 9 p.m. all the passengers had left the train and then, too, the military left carrying a large hamper. They found accommodation in the local police barracks. At 11 p.m. a motor lorry full of soldiers arrived from Derry and took possession of the station and posted sentries. During the night, motorists and other passers-by were

⁷¹ *DP*, 31 July 1920, p. 3; *DJ*, 26 July 1920, p. 3. Townshend, *The British campaign in Ireland*, p. 71 states that over 900 railwaymen had been dismissed throughout Ireland by August 1920.

challenged and searched. The train remained at the station all day on Tuesday.⁷²

Shortly before the departure from Derry of another goods train for Burtonport, containing food and supplies for the boycotted police and military in the Rosses, on the following Tuesday, a party of some thirty soldiers and an officer got on top of the wagons. Then a passenger carriage was made available for them and placed in front. But as soon as the military entered the carriage the driver and staff refused to move the train which remained for the rest of the day at the outward platform. At 10.30 p.m. the troops withdrew from the train and returned to barracks.⁷³

Robert Quinn, the L&LSR driver who had volunteered to drive the train carrying the troops the previous week after other drivers had been suspended for refusing to do so, was kidnapped from his home in Derry and taken by car into County Donegal and driven to Burtonport. There his captors compelled him to sign a declaration not to work any military trains in future. On the following Monday, they motored him back again and dropped him off on the roadside near Letterkenny. He walked to Letterkenny station and got a train home to Derry. Quinn said that on the way to Burtonport and again on the return journey, the car was stopped by various groups of men who had conversations with the men in charge of the vehicle. On the way also the men in the car left it and other men took over from them. They were given tea at a house on the way. By that time the L&LSR had only four unsuspected drivers and the effort to get a goods train to Burtonport had been given up.⁷⁴

Riots in Derry had been severe in June and July but the 1920 summer riots in Belfast had resulted in a pogrom against the Catholic population there. Feelings began to run high in most parts of the country that the Unionist population, particularly the business element, was backing the

⁷² *DP*, 31 July 1920, p. 3; *DJ*, 28 July 1920, p. 3.

⁷³ *DJ*, 28 July 1920, p. 3.

⁷⁴ *DP*, 7 Aug. 1920, p. 3; *DJ*, 2 Aug. 1920, p. 2.

atrocities against the Catholics. As a consequence, the question of trading and dealing with these Unionists was brought to the fore. Sean MacEntee proposed at a meeting of Dáil Eireann on 6 August 1920 that, in view of the pogrom against Catholics which was raging at the time, 'an embargo be laid upon the manufactures of the ... city of Belfast'. MacEntee believed that although 'they could not reduce Belfast by force of arms they could bring her to reason by economic force'.⁷⁵ Though Michael Collins spoke against it MacEntee's proposal was successful and, thereafter, became Dáil policy.⁷⁶ This had particular relevance in Donegal because of its trade links with Belfast and the question of trading with Unionists had been raised there even before MacEntee's proposal and action was being taken, an indication that MacEntee was only reflecting the sentiment prevailing in the northern counties at the time. During the last week of July, the representatives of a Belfast tea firm who visited the town of Donegal had notices handed to them that stated:

To representatives of Belfast firms.

You are hereby ordered to leave this area within twenty-four hours and no return by you or any member of your firm will be permitted until the Unionist population of Belfast learns that fair play and tolerance, which has always characterized the people of Donegal, are also necessary virtues to the city.

By Order, Competent Military Authority.⁷⁷

A week later, the representative of a Belfast drapery firm was given ten minutes to gather his things and clear out of Buncrana.⁷⁸ Many individual northwest Donegal traders then decided to boycott Belfast businesses and some travellers from the firms were warned off. A meeting was held at Dungloe regarding Belfast firms and the attitude to be regarded

⁷⁵ Charles Townshend, *Ireland the 20th century* (London, 1998) pp. 88-9.

⁷⁶ Tim Pat Coogan, *Michael Collins* (London, 1990), p. 337.

⁷⁷ *DJ*, 6 Aug. 1920, p. 2.

⁷⁸ *DJ*, 6 Aug. 1920, p. 2.

towards certain Derry firms was also under discussion which, in reality, had much more relevance to northwest Donegal. Pending inquiries into the Derry firms which were to be made at once, action was suspended.⁷⁹ Some weeks later, a great meeting of Dungloe and Burtonport Volunteers, merchants and Sinn Fein members took place in the Rosses where it was decided to boycott all Belfast Unionist firms until the workers victimized in the recent violent outbreaks were reinstated.⁸⁰

Indeed, as had happened in Monaghan⁸¹ and many other counties, this boycott of Belfast goods and, consequently, goods from many prominent Derry traders, soon found echoes of threats and boycotts against Protestant traders in Donegal who were warned not to trade with the police or military and desist from trading with Belfast. In August 1920 a Kilmacrenan Protestant merchant, Samuel Burns, was bound with ropes and had his horse shot dead for failing to comply with such an order by the Volunteers.⁸² In late 1920 seventy year-old Major Johnstone was shot dead in his own home near Ardara. An inquest could not be held because none of the jurors attended.⁸³ By September the *Belfast Newsletter* was carrying reports of nightly raids on the homes and businesses of Protestants in northwest Donegal.⁸⁴ No doubt, this was the start of a campaign against the Protestant community and, between 1911 and 1926, the Church of Ireland numbers in the county fell by 23.5 per cent and the number of Presbyterians decreased by 19 per cent during the same period.⁸⁵

The Belfast boycott had long-term effects on the trading communities in the northwest. Long established connections with Belfast and Derry wholesalers had to be forsaken and new suppliers found in Sligo, Dublin and other centres in the south. This broke much of the control that

⁷⁹ *DJ*, 9 Aug. 1920, p. 3.

⁸⁰ *DJ*, 11 Aug. 1920, p. 3.

⁸¹ Terence Dooley, *The plight of Monaghan Protestants 1912 – 1926* (Dublin, 2000) pp 45-6.

⁸² *DJ*, 25 Aug. 1920, p. 3.

⁸³ CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, Aug. 1920 (CO 904/112).

⁸⁴ *Belfast Newsletter*, 13 September 1920.

⁸⁵ W. E. Vaughan and A. J. Fitzpatrick (eds), *Irish historical statistics, population 1821-1971* (Dublin, 1978) p. 67 and p. 70.

local merchants held over their own particular accession to these goods to the exclusion of other merchants which led to an opening up of the market. The boycott further gave rise to new ways of trading with 'black market' suppliers, travelling shops and lorry salesmen creating a new class of merchant to challenge the *status quo*. The boycott almost certainly hastened the flight from the northwest of many Protestant merchants who had long been established there. It also tightened the IRA grip of the localities where its rule, like Cork, 'was enforced with threats, guns and kerosene'.⁸⁶

But there was no cessation in hostilities against the railway and its supplies for the police and military. On Tuesday, 3 August 1920 about 240 feet of the railway line between Crolley and Kincasslagh, in the Rosses, was torn up and the rails and sleepers thrown into the nearby Lough Chonail. On the Derry side of Crolley, twenty-four large boulders, weighing from three to five tons each, were hurled down from the side of the cutting on to the line which was then completely blocked. No trains ran from Letterkenny to Burtonport for a fortnight with the exception of one goods train which made the journey as far as Crolley. A Press Association message said: 'The outrage seems to have been due to a wild rumour that the government meant to flood Donegal with troops carried on trains manned by soldiers'.⁸⁷

These actions increased the shortage of food and supplies in the area and with the trains unable to operate, motor transport was largely availed of and supplies were also being brought from Glasgow and Derry by steamers. Motor fishing boats were also being utilized for cargo purposes. One of these boats arrived in Derry and, after being investigated, it was permitted to obtain the supplies and leave for Burtonport. But despite these privations the northwest yielded no ground in the campaign. One merchant wrote to the papers denying reports in the English press that northwest

⁸⁶ Hart, *The IRA*, p. 102.

⁸⁷ *DJ*, 6 Aug 1920, p. 8.

Donegal merchants had pleaded for goods trains to be put on. He stated that they were getting sufficient goods by steamer at prices much cheaper than on the railway.⁸⁸ However, foodstuffs in the northwest were running particularly low by August 1920 and, after appeals were made to the L&LSR, the company agreed to run a special goods train as far as Letterkenny on Friday 6 August 'from which food [would] be carted into the district isolated by the destruction of the line'.⁸⁹

When the service was, once more, restored to Burtonport a fortnight later the attacks restarted with increased vigour. When the morning train from Derry to Burtonport reached Cashelnagor on the last day of August a party of armed and masked men entered the station and, after covering the engine driver, guard and other officials with revolvers, they then proceeded to ransack the guard's van from which they removed the mailbags to the platform. All official letters were seized and the remainder of the mails returned. The train proceeded after half an hour. There were a considerable number of passengers aboard, none of whom was interfered with in any way.⁹⁰ Mails were taken at Cashelnagor some days later and then the mail cars coming from the stations along the railway were systematically attacked so that the postal service became irregular and unreliable.⁹¹

If this period of mayhem was not enough to drive Henry Hunt to distraction, a series of different events gave him cause for further despair. David Hay, a prominent fish merchant in Downings, began a letter campaign in the papers about the lack of trains to service the fishing industry when the new herring season opened in September 1920. Without the means of sending the fish to market there would be little fishing and thousands of pounds in much needed cash would be lost. Hay indicated that he expected little more from the Burtonport Extension, stating that 'the

⁸⁸ *DJ*, 13 Aug. 1920, p. 3.

⁸⁹ *DJ*, 6 Aug. 1920, p. 8.

⁹⁰ *DJ*, 1 Sept. 1920, p. 2.

⁹¹ *DP*, 18 Sept. 1920, p. 1; *DJ*, 13 Sept. 1920.

line was built, not for the good of Ireland, but to keep the tyrant in power'.⁹² Hay then introduced an accusation of discrimination against Hunt and the L&LSR by stating that 'Unionists are getting privileges but the poor Republican is boycotted'.⁹³ Hunt countered that only one train was running in each direction between Derry and Burtonport daily and the reason for that had arisen from circumstances outside the L&LSR's control. It was a passenger train which could only take a few wagons and such an arrangement was impossible to deal with fish which arrived spasmodically in varying amounts. He rejected the accusation of favouritism towards Unionists stating: 'In fact, it is a slur on the management of a railway company whose principle is to offer to the public generally the best and most expeditious travel'.⁹⁴ Yet, Hay was not to be silenced and continued with his campaign calling for deputations reminiscent of 1917 to have the fish business revived again.⁹⁵ But nothing improved. Small quantities of fish were loaded irregularly at Burtonport when there was capacity and, by the time the train reached the stations between Gweedore and Creeslough, no more fish could be taken on. So the once booming fishing industry of Downings came to a standstill. By October, catches of 200 cran were being thrown back into the tide at a time when cross channel markets were wiring to northwest Donegal begging for fish and Sheephaven Bay was full of herring. Without the means of conveyance to the markets, the larger Scotch and English steam drifters to be seen out in the deep around Tory Island, headed away from the northwest coast with their catches to ports where they were sure of immediate transport for their takes.⁹⁶

In the face of this disaster, the local communities involved in the fishing industry came together to try and cope with the crisis in the winter of 1920. A new Co-operative Fishery Society was founded in an effort to

⁹² *DJ*, 18 Aug. 1920, p. 4.

⁹³ *DJ*, 22 Aug. 1920, p. 4.

⁹⁴ *DJ*, 22 Sept. 1920, p. 4.

⁹⁵ *DJ*, 24 Sept. 1920, p. 7.

⁹⁶ *DJ*, 8 Oct. 1920, p. 7.

initiate marketing strategies, alternative means of transport and stable prices as a remedy in their present predicament, but it had little success and as catches increased, prices continued to plummet because of the small limited amount of fish that could be transported to market. All the time, the Burtonport Railway was being heaped with blame for the disaster it had caused to the fishing industry.⁹⁷

By October 1920, the triumph of the Sinn Fein policy of boycotting and harassment became apparent when the RIC County Inspector reported that the police and military were withdrawing from most regions of the west coast of Donegal.

During the month the military decided to withdraw from the worst of the county and the detachments at Killybegs, Ardara, Glenties and Dungloe have been removed. The Battalion (Rifles Brigade) will now be based at Lifford or Strabane with detachments at Donegal, Ballybofey and Letterkenny with a special one guarding the wireless station at Bunbeg. This move, advisable perhaps for military reasons, is an unfortunate one for police purposes and for general control of the west of the county – it has necessarily involved (1) the complete evacuation by the police of Dungloe district, the men being concentrated at Falcarragh and Dunfanaghy and (2) the closing of Ardara station.

The rather difficult operation of evacuating the Dungloe district was carried out successfully in spite of much breakdown of transport. The isolation of the Dungloe area will be accentuated by the anticipated closing down of the Burtonport railway.⁹⁸

As Hart has written of similar retreats in Cork, ‘this withdrawal tipped the moral balance even further against the beleaguered force’.⁹⁹

While Hunt was coping with these problems he was upstaged by Henry Forbes because of an incident which happened on the rival CDRJC

⁹⁷ *DJ*, 4 Oct. 1920, p. 4.

⁹⁸ CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, Oct. 1920 (CO 904/113).

⁹⁹ Hart, *The IRA & its enemies*, p. 61.

railway but which, nevertheless, cast Hunt in a bad light. Forbes happened to be travelling on one of his own trains which stopped at Drumbar Halt one day in September. Suddenly, ten armed and masked men¹⁰⁰ surrounded the train and demanded the mails. On hearing the commotion, Forbes drew his pistol and faced the raiders who turned and fled across the fields. To everyone's amazement, Forbes took off after them and continued the chase until he lost them in the woods some distance from the train. Such action grabbed the public's imagination and the story of the feat grew greater with each telling and cast the Burtonport railway and its management in a poor light with its trains being searched and halted at will, even by women, without ever a sign of retaliation.¹⁰¹

There were very few employees left on the Burtonport Extension in the autumn of 1920 to staff the odd train going to the northwest but it was noticeable that none of the employees on the Burtonport or Carndonagh lines applied for reinstatement despite the deplorable condition of these areas especially in the northwest where it was said that roads were rapidly deteriorating and the suffering of the people was very accentuated. 'The weather is not favourable and is making road transport increasingly difficult. The Christmas trade is likely to be ruined'.¹⁰²

The Derry trading community began to apply pressure to the L&LSR to get the trains running again because of the loss of business to the city. One Derry merchant stated that, 'merchants in Derry and district are beginning to complain in the strongest terms about the large arrears of orders which were accumulated for the Letterkenny and Burtonport districts and the huge financial loss consequent upon the suspension of transport services'.¹⁰³ Dunfanaghy traders issued a statement that their stocks were exhausted. Without the railway's restoration they feared for the survival of their business for 'anyone who has travelled on the roads of

¹⁰⁰ The number has a tendency to grow with each telling.

¹⁰¹ *DJ*, 10 Sept. 1920, p. 8.

¹⁰² *DJ*, 10 Dec. 1920, p. 8.

¹⁰³ *DJ*, 10 Dec. 1920, p. 8.

West Donegal recently can testify to their shockingly bad condition but no more can be expected when one brings to mind the enormous and ever increasing quantity of traffic which has passed over them since the cancellation of the trains'.¹⁰⁴

However, the reply from the L&LSR office to these complaints was that they found that none of the railwaymen in the northwest district was apparently desirous of resuming work and neither had any written assurance been received from responsible people in West Donegal that no interference would take place with the trains should they resume. On hearing of this deadlock, the *Derry Journal* felt compelled to appeal to railwaymen and also to the chief traders of northwest Donegal to consider fully whether the continuance of the present struggle was really in the interests of the nation.¹⁰⁵

But when Mr Johnston of the Irish Labour Executive advised all striking railwaymen to return to work and to handle all munitions 'in consequence of the changed condition of the Irish situation' and further, when the N.U.R. met in Dublin on 21 December and unanimously adopted a motion that they resume normal working, if not victimized, hope grew that normality would be soon restored.¹⁰⁶ A few days later the Carndonagh line opened but the Burtonport line, because of the damage inflicted on the permanent way, was slower in resuming operations which were planned for January 1921 for traffic, the public being warned, however, that any interference with the company's property or servants would lead to the closing of the line.¹⁰⁷

The trains resumed in January 1921. But, in the northwest it seemed that nothing had changed. Sharp intelligence by the Volunteers in the Rosses reported that plans were afoot to occupy the deserted barracks at Dungloe and Burtonport so local activity was intensified. On 12 January

¹⁰⁴ *DJ*, 10, Dec. 1920, p. 8.

¹⁰⁵ *DJ*, 10 Dec. 1920, p. 8.

¹⁰⁶ *DP*, 25 Dec. 1920, p. 5; *DJ*, 22 Dec. 1920, p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ *DJ*, 10 Dec. 1920, p. 8.

1921, two guards on the Burtonport Extension, Neil Boyle and John Duddy, informed the Volunteer leader, Joe Sweeney, that a fish train was coming from Derry to arrive in Burtonport about seven o'clock that night. This seemed strange for the L&LSR had been ignoring the whole fishing industry for months and anyway, there was no fishing being conducted at Burtonport during that time. Consequently, the Volunteers concluded that there was reason to suspect a military operation was in progress. A contingent of thirty-five Volunteers was gathered under the command of Joe Sweeney and they took up positions overlooking Paddy Ghraíne's Cutting, about one mile on the Crolly side of Kincasslagh Road Station, about 2 p.m. in the afternoon of 12 January.¹⁰⁸ A scout was sent further up the line to examine the train with the instruction to explode a grenade if it contained military. If the Volunteers had been sure that it contained soldiers they would have lifted the rails but, instead, they placed large boulders on the track and waited. They heard the whistle of the train as it approached gatehouse number 20 and then the grenade exploded. Paddy Turner's engine hit the boulders and ploughed through them, carrying the train onward for another hundred yards beyond the positions where the Volunteers had dug in, thereby forcing them to vacate their positions and relocate beside the train in inferior positions which left them at a disadvantage because they were on lower ground than their enemy in the train. A Lewis machine-gun opened fire from the engine sending bullets whizzing past the assailants. After about ten minutes the whistle was given for the attackers to retreat. One Derryman was left behind and was captured. Although the train was riddled with bullets nobody ever found out if there were casualties or not. Joe Sweeney thought that twelve military were shot but the papers reported that no casualties occurred. The

¹⁰⁸ NAI, BMH, WS 1448, Patrick Breslin, pp 20-22. He was one of the attackers.

army believed that five assailants were killed and several were wounded. However, this seemed untrue also.¹⁰⁹

The Unionist press went into torrents of rage at the incident writing that bonfires lit the whole of the Rosses and that celebrations continued for days because of the death and wounding of the soldiers. There was a thorough search made of the area within a few miles radius of the incident.¹¹⁰ A cap bearing the initials JOD was discovered by the soldiers at the scene of the ambush. Following a search of all the houses in the locality the only person with the initials JOD was the principal of Meenbanad National School, James O'Donnell. He was arrested and taken to prison in Derry where he spent more than a month. Following an energetic campaign by the Rosses and Gweedore branch of the I.N.T.O. and local clergy he was eventually released. He was totally innocent in the whole affair.¹¹¹

On 7 February fifteen soldiers boarded the 2.15 p.m. train at Burtonport bound for Derry. Near Kincasslagh Road it ran into boulders and the engine and first carriage were derailed but no serious injury took place. A breakdown gang had to come from Derry to replace the line before any more trains could move.¹¹² When news of this last action reached Derry it was decided that control would have to be exerted over the unruly forces in the northwest. Consequently, a big round-up was organised in northwest Donegal but it was decided not to utilize the train but, instead, to invade by boat in the silence of the night.¹¹³ Sailors in khaki assisted the military around the coast and the islands. Several hundred young men were rounded up but were released after questioning with the exception of

¹⁰⁹ NAI, BMH, WS 1338, Patrick Breslin, p 19-22. He was one of the raiders and he states that there were 34 others; Joe Sweeney in *Capuchin Annual 1970*; *DJ* 14 Jan. 1921, p. 8 and *DJ*, 17 Jan. 1921.

¹¹⁰ *DJ*, 17 Jan. 1921, p. 4.

¹¹¹ Timmy McBride, Meenbanad. Also *DJ*, 11 Feb. 1921, p. 2.

¹¹² *DJ*, 9 Feb. 1921, p. 3.

¹¹³ Hart, *The IRA & its enemies*, p. 94, states that these round-ups, sweeps and drives were a feature in Cork also.

sixty.¹¹⁴ On Friday 11 February, a special train with fifty soldiers on board started from Burtonport with some of the prisoners. As a precaution against attack, a pilot engine was sent out before the train but, as this engine approached Kincasslagh Road Station, it crashed into boulders on the line and was derailed and wrecked. The engine driver and fireman had narrow escapes, each only receiving severe shaking. The train conveying the prisoners was pulled up and delayed for three hours while the track was being cleared. It then proceeded on its journey but, near Creeslough, it ran into a further obstruction and the engine was damaged. The train arrived in Derry during curfew hours on Saturday morning and the prisoners were brought to Victoria Barracks.¹¹⁵ On the following Saturday, the remainder of the sixty prisoners were brought to Derry by special train under the charge of another large military escort. These prisoners were then taken to Ebrington Barracks in four lorries. A number of the prisoners were released after brief questioning and returned home on the evening train from Derry, which also encountered a boulder on the line but no damage was caused. After this latest episode, the L&LSR admitted defeat and Henry Hunt announced that the Burtonport train service would remain suspended until further notice.¹¹⁶

The RIC report for February stated that no person had been made amenable for these railway outrages. The inspector wrote: 'I have most reliable information that seventeen gunmen from the south and west of Ireland are now operating in the south and west of this county and to them may be attributed the increase in grave crime'.¹¹⁷

A chastened and humble Brice Mullin faced his shareholders a few days later. He told them that the past year had been one full of anxiety not only for the L&LSR, but also for other companies, owing largely to the unsettled condition of the country and the concomitant general falling off

¹¹⁴ NAI, BMH, WS 1448, Patrick Breslin, p. 30.

¹¹⁵ *DJ*, 14 Feb. 1921, p. 2.

¹¹⁶ *DJ*, 14 Feb. 1921, p. 2.

¹¹⁷ CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, Feb. 1921 (CO 904/114).

of trade. In June the whole of the salmon traffic from West Donegal district, out of which the company had normally received substantial receipts, was diverted from the Derry route. Then the munitions crux was the cause of most of L&LSR lines being closed for periods as long as eight weeks in the case of the Burtonport Extension. Much damage was done to the company's property and trains were being held up and searched for mails. Consequently, traffic had been driven away from the railway services and into other channels, which would take much time to recover, that is, if the trade of the district had not been permanently damaged by the untoward incidents that had occurred. There were other causes for loss of traffic also. The rates and fares being charged by the Ministry of Transport were too high having regard to the road facilities of the district.¹¹⁸ In spite of Henry Hunt's dramatic improvements in the performance of the company's trains, the future looked poor. In the previous year, 85 per cent of the trains arrived at their destinations less than five minutes late. The staff on the line had been brought up to a high standard of efficiency. It was expected that the privy council management of the Burtonport Extension would cease in June. The L&LSR engineers reported that the permanent way, buildings, fencing, etc., were now 300 per cent better than in 1917 and the whole of the engines, carriages and wagons were in good condition. Mullin told the meeting that the government was expected to terminate control of all railways in August 1921 and it had exercised authority as to what wages would be paid, the hours that staff worked and the charges that were made to the public for the use of the railway. The result was that, whereas in 1913, the wages bill for the L&LSR was £15,533, the 1921 bill would be £87,672 or an increase of 464 per cent. The Unemployment Insurance Act and Health Insurance would cost an additional £600 per year. The total receipts in 1921 would only amount to £109,000. But the cost of coal, stores and other day-to-day expenses for

¹¹⁸ *DJ*, 14 Feb. 1921, p. 2.

running the railway would come to £48, 988 and had to be added to the wages bill. These figures came to a total expenditure of £136,660 and receipts of £109,000 which was a loss of £27,000. All the other railway companies in Great Britain and Ireland were in the same position though the Irish companies generally were much worse than the English. A famous link with the past was broken when John McFarland retired from the board and Basil McFarland, his son, was elected in his place.¹¹⁹

By April 1921 the Donegal RIC County Inspector's confidence was at a low ebb when he reported:

The whole of the Dungloe district is without police. This area comprises about one sixth of the county and it seems to have become a miniature republic. Strangers and men on the run have congregated there. They have instructed the young men to drill with arms and this is done openly. Marauding parties sally forth from this area to adjoining districts on horseback and on cycles and commit outrages; stolen motor cars and bicycles are known to be in the area; in it motor cars are used freely without permits; ambushes are laid for the police and military if they attempt to invade this lawless region; all the roads leading to this area have been rendered impossible for motor transport; the railways leading to it have been so frequently injured that trains have ceased to run. Several police stations have no telegraphic communication, owing to the cutting of wires. The extremists in the county are doing their utmost to keep up the pressure on the crown forces. They encourage their followers with the promise that the fight is almost over and won.¹²⁰

He further added:

24 April-Goods store at Kilmacrenan Railway Station raided by armed and masked men who burned a large case of matches.

25 April – goods train with mails for Falcarragh, boarded at Falcarragh Railway Station by armed men. All mails taken out and sorted. – some letters taken away by raiders. Gweedore Railway station entered by unknown persons – Belfast

¹¹⁹ *DJ*, 14 Feb. 1921, p. 2.

¹²⁰ CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, Apr. 1921 (CO 904/114).

goods destroyed. Telegraph wires cut at Falcarragh, Crolly, and Dunfanaghy. 6 raids on trains and mails. 16 cutting of telegraph wires.¹²¹

Things had come to a critical point by May 1921 for he reported:

No trains are running on the Letterkenny to Burtonport line or on the Stranorlar to Glenties line. Railway line maliciously torn up near Falcarragh.¹²²

In 1921 a train load of Black and Tans being transported to Burtonport was ambushed at Poll Gorm in Cruckakeehan, between Crolly and Kincasslagh Road. After the snipers vanished the soldiers rushed from the train and were detailed to fan out in various directions to search the surrounding houses. As was the normal practice in the area when such events happened, all the active men disappeared into hiding placed for fear of being arrested. The soldiers entered O'Donnell's house in Bunaman and spiked the straw mattresses on the beds with their bayonets in case there might be guns hidden there. One of the soldiers looked at the baby in the cradle and said, 'I suppose, when this joker grows up, he'll be for the I.R.A. too'.¹²³ Grace Sweeney of Bunaman was aged about eleven years then and she remembers watching the train that day and the soldiers visiting every house but the soldier that came to her own home looked around the one-room building without touching anything. He then looked at the children and told her mother that he was married himself and had children of the same age.¹²⁴

During this period also a Crolly man was about to cross the railway one day when he thought he heard a train coming through a cutting. He stopped and listened carefully for there was not a train due. As he stood beside a fence the train emerged from the cutting. As it approached him he could see the Black and Tans hanging out the windows with their guns

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, May 1921(CO 904/115).

¹²³ Manus O'Donnell, Dungloe.

¹²⁴ Grace Sweeney, Bunaman, Annagry.

firing at anything that took their fancy. He was aware that they had been drinking at the Gweedore Hotel and it was common philosophy in the area that they were at their worst after such sessions. He dared not move for fear they would target him. When they had passed him by he ran to Paddy Óg's pub and ordered a stiff drink. The landlord asked him did he see a train passing.

'I did, confirmed the man.

'How many carriages'? the landlord enquired.

'Only two', came the reply.

'A very short train?' one of the drinkers commented.

'It was the longest train ever passed me', commented the man who had been scared out of his life.¹²⁵

The *Londonderry Sentinel*, was incensed at the outrages taking place in the northwest because of the dire effects such actions were having on the business of Derry City and the disregard for the rule of law and order in Donegal. On 21 June 1921, it carried a headline:

PAYING PENALTY FOR REBEL MADNESS.

Five hundred men from Aranmore Island, Burtonport, Dungloe and other parts of Donegal are cursing the madness, which has deprived them of railways, telegraphs and newspapers. They are men who go annually to Scotland. For the past few days they have been crowding the lodging houses of the city [Derry] and have even to establish a camp at Cartruse awaiting a steamer for Glasgow. They complain that they had to walk forty miles, some to Letterkenny and others to Stranorlar, before getting a train. Worse still, they had received no newspapers to tell them when the steamer was sailing nor were they able to get any information by telegram so that they had to come to Londonderry by chance. Yesterday, they were to be seen lounging about the shipping offices or wandering aimlessly about the streets. They leave by the steamer tonight.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Donnchadh Devenney, Ranafast.

¹²⁶ *LS*, 21 June 1921.

Three weeks later, the *Sentinel* further added that practically all the roads in West Donegal were then ditched or trenched. The Letterkenny-Burtonport railway had been torn up at four points, the area of destruction in each case about three quarters of a mile in length. The railway staff on the branch had been dismissed, there being no work for them to do. At one or two points the disused railway track was being used by the local people as a roadway, the ordinary roads being impassable. The telegraph had also ceased to exist.¹²⁷

But northwest Donegal had managed to survive despite the absence of the railway during these months because it had all the available fishing craft engaged in bringing foodstuffs from Derry. During the first week in June 1921 the military authorities ordered a complete ban on all trawler traffic to West Donegal in an effort to starve the people into submission.¹²⁸ Since 1918 onwards Britain's policy of coercion depended on punishing the whole population for I.R.A. actions.¹²⁹ This was reflected in the *Freeman's Journal* of 16 November 1920 which complained that Ireland 'was being starved into submission by a Geddis-Greenwood plot'.¹³⁰ Paddy the Cope Gallagher wrote about the ban stating that

a Colonel Moore, who was stationed in Belfast, on the advice of the big Unionist merchants of Londonderry, decided to blockade the Rosses and Gweedore. No one knew better than the Derry merchants that, from April to August, there never was more than a week's provisions in these districts, and that all the supplies came through Derry. They advised Col. Moore that if he prevented provisions leaving Derry for North West Donegal by rail, the rebels would be coming on their knees begging for mercy. He issued an order forbidding the railway to carry any goods to North West Donegal in June 1921.¹³¹

¹²⁷ *LS*, 18 June 1921, p. 5.

¹²⁸ *DJ*, 13 June 1921, p. 6.

¹²⁹ Hart, *The IRA & its enemies*, p. 102.

¹³⁰ *Freeman's Journal* 16 Nov. 1920. Geddis was Minister for Transport. Sir Hamer Greenwood was Chief Secretary for Ireland from April 1920.

¹³¹ Paddy 'The Cope' Gallagher, *My story*, pp. 157-8. See also *LS*, 11 June 1921, p. 5.

No explanation of the order which was conveyed through the constabulary had been received. Since the suspension of the train service the trawlers had been carrying foodstuffs to northwest Donegal and three of them were loading foodstuffs at Derry Quay when the order was issued and one of them, the *Orient Star*, loaded with a full cargo on board for Burtonport, was lying at the Derry quay. The two others, the *Spring Star* and the *Better Hope* are also lying empty at the quay. The stoppage of the service was regarded as a sequel to the blocking of the roads and the attacks on the trains in northwest Donegal which was then completely isolated.¹³²

But Paddy the Cope and Thomas John McBride of Bunbeg and other strong-minded merchants on the northwest Donegal coast were not to be out-manoeuvred. They chartered, hired or bought boats and imported their goods on the high tides into Burtonport and Bunbeg. In the weeks following the embargo cargoes of flour from Glasgow and Cardiff were landed at Bunbeg and a Buncrana steamer delivered cargo from Derry to northwest Donegal.¹³³ Though the ban on the trawlers only lasted for a month before being lifted the public perception in West Donegal was that it was a hostile act 'which emanated from the well-fed irresponsible parasites of the British Army'.¹³⁴ Paddy the Cope concluded:

When the blockade was a failure the Derry merchants again organised a deputation to meet Col. Moore. They urged him to lift the blockade of Derry if he could not block all the ports. They argued that the Derry trade was being diverted and that they were already suffering. The blockade was lifted the next day, but from that day to this, Derry never regained the trade she lost.¹³⁵

¹³² *DP*, 18 June 1921.

¹³³ *LS*, 2 July 1921, p. 5.

¹³⁴ *DJ*, 3 Jan. 1922, p. 2.

¹³⁵ Paddy 'The Cope' Gallagher, *My story*, p.160.

These actions as well as Donegal's embrace of Sinn Fein's philosophy soon had the *Londonderry Sentinel* exercised.

Has county Donegal gained by throwing itself head and heels into the arms of Sinn Fein? Time was when the county enjoyed railways – built by the state – had well-maintained roads, low taxes and absolute freedom in transport and commerce. In those days the county had prosperity. What are the conditions today? All the state structured railways, with one exception have been closed owing to the repeated outrages to which they have been subjected. The roads in many places have been destroyed. Telegraphy and telephony have virtually ceased as a result of the continual tearing down of the wires and cutting away of poles. The regular letter and parcel service has been suspended in many areas and people only get their communications at long intervals and after paying locally for their carriage in addition to the postage charge. Taxation has enormously increased as the outcome of refusing to recognise the Local Government Board. Confidence and security have disappeared. A reign of terror has replaced the former condition of peace. The flow of visitors has ceased. The coastwise transport by trawler which was organised as an alternative to the broken up railways and trenched roads has now come to an end, the military position doubtless being that people who show that they require neither roads nor railways do not require the use of steamers.¹³⁶

But the tide had definitely turned for most northwest Donegal businessmen by that time. In his book, *My Story* Paddy the Cope gives the point of view of the businessman from West Donegal during those years.

From 1918 to 1921 I had a miserable time of it.... Things were getting a bit hot in North West Donegal. Mr Hunt, manager of the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company, wrote a letter to some of the merchants advising them to call a meeting of the Rosses and Gweedore traders, telling them that if they did not bring pressure to bear on the young irresponsible blackguards and compel them to stop interfering with military supplies sent by his line, he might have to close down the line. The traders burned Mr Hunt's letters and, as far as I

¹³⁶ *LS*, 11 June 1921, p. 5.

know, not one of them was acknowledged. Shortly afterwards the military made a great raid on the Rosses and hundreds of men were loaded on to the train at the various stations and taken to Derry before being transported to Ballykinlar, in County Down without any trial.¹³⁷

Following the Truce which came into effect on Monday 11 July 1921, the military authorities agreed with the railway companies that from Wednesday afternoon, 13 July the various railway companies should reopen for traffic the lines that had been closed for some time. These applied to the L&LSR railways including the Letterkenny to Burtonport Extension.¹³⁸

How the general populace of the northwest felt about the rebel campaign is difficult to ascertain because, by May 1920, the Volunteer police and republican courts were in total command of the area.¹³⁹ At a republican court held at 7 p.m. on Thursday 24 June 1920 in the parochial hall in Dungloe the chairman, or 'President' as he was referred to, together with seven judges formed the court. Four cases were listed for hearing. Two were assaults and two were land disputes. Volunteers were present and preserved order during the proceedings.¹⁴⁰ The second sitting was filled with spectators. Many of the litigants were represented by Mr C. A. Flattery, solicitor.¹⁴¹ By the time the third sitting was held on 22 July 'the bar was ably represented by solicitors Flattery, Sweeney and McMenamin'. Two cases of assault were heard where a penalty of ten shillings was imposed on each defendant. An equity suit was adjourned for six months pending the return of an important witness from Scotland. A right-of-way case was adjudged.¹⁴² In Burtonport, Mick Forker and Barney McCarron were the judges in a courtroom setting on the top storey of the cooperage.

¹³⁷ Paddy 'The Cope' Gallagher, *My story*, pp 154-5.

¹³⁸ *DP*, 16 July 1921.

¹³⁹ *NAI*, *BMH*, *WS* 1448, Patrick Breslin, p. 14.

¹⁴⁰ *DJ*, 28 June 1920, p. 4.

¹⁴¹ *DJ*, 13 July 1920, p. 3.

¹⁴² *DJ*, 28 July 1920, p. 3.

The Volunteer police charged a woman from Annagry with having two men on her licensed premises after hours but, during the hearing, it was discovered that a third man was also present but, because of his relationship to one of the Volunteers, he was excluded from the charge. The judges told the prosecuting Volunteers that they were very lucky not to be charged with perjury. At the same court, a man who was found guilty of stealing a bag of flour was compelled by the court to take the bag of flour back to the shop in full daylight.¹⁴³

For the severe cases the Republican courts needed a prison and after much deliberation, the abandoned herring curing station at Meenacross on the shores of Traeanna Bay, about five miles south of Dungloe was designated Magherameelan Prison. Not alone did it house the local offenders but British prisoners of war were also interned there under armed guard. Neither the RIC nor any of the British forces ever became aware of its existence. The prison and the courts operated 'very smoothly' until the end of October 1922 when the official Irish system was introduced.¹⁴⁴

But good citizenship was also a function of the Volunteers in the northwest. In Dungloe they took a patient to Letterkenny asylum. A man continuously under the influence of drink and accused of putting his place and family to loss was court-martialled and taken away to Magherameelin Prison to serve a sentence with hard labour. It was stated by the Volunteers that if no improvement became apparent when he returned he would be deported.¹⁴⁵ Volunteers claimed they foiled the introduction of poiteen by outsiders at a dance in the Irish College, Cloughaneely.¹⁴⁶ This Sinn Fein aversion to the drink culture was apparent throughout the country as a Military Intelligence account shows:

¹⁴³ Niall Mac Fhionnghaile, *Dr McGinley and his times*, (Letterkenny, 1985), p.43.

¹⁴⁴ NAI, BMH, WS 1448, Patrick Breslin, pp 14-16. Breslin was Registrar of West Donegal District Court during the years of operation of the Republican courts.

¹⁴⁵ *DJ*, 9 July 1920, p. 5. See Hart, p. 150 for similar Sinn Fein 'policing' in Cork.

¹⁴⁶ *DJ*, 2 July 1920, p. 8.

The whole Sinn Fein movement is peculiarly well disciplined, having regard to similar political organisations in the past Drunkenness is almost unknown among those deeply implicated and is apparently severely dealt with. This is ... foreign to the usual state of things in similar movements.¹⁴⁷

A measure of the success of the republican court system was evidenced on 22 July 1920 in Dungloe when Major Brett, R.M. arrived to hold the petty sessions but found an almost empty courtroom and no business before the court.¹⁴⁸ Throughout the northwest the pattern was the same. In Ardara, the press attended the republican courts in numbers and a half-holiday was declared for the town on the occasion of the court sitting on every second Tuesday of the month, an initiative that was hugely popular with the apprentices and shop assistants of the town.¹⁴⁹ With such innovation the new republic was on its way. Whether the people agreed or not it was plain that the future of litigation was with the new order and the republican philosophy.¹⁵⁰

In July 1921, a truce was declared between the IRA and the British Army but it took some weeks before hostilities in Donegal ceased. General Mulcahy signed an order which was received by all the First Northern Division informing them that 'active operations by our troops will be suspended as and from noon Monday 11 July.'¹⁵¹

Henry Hunt must have been greatly relieved at the news. He had come to the Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway as manager in 1916 from the English Great Central Railway. Before he had time to settle in to his job he found the Burtonport Extension under an official enquiry which

¹⁴⁷ Military Intelligence report, Dec. 1917 as quoted in Townshend, *The British campaign in Ireland 1919 - 1921*, p. 7. Also CI Monthly Report, County Donegal, Mar. 1919 (CO 904/108) states that drunkenness in Co. Donegal had decreased from 1800 cases in 1915 to under 700 cases in 1918. The absence of Scotch earnings might have accounted for a large portion of this decrease.

¹⁴⁸ *DJ*, 28 July 1920, p. 3.

¹⁴⁹ *DJ*, 30 July 1920, p. 6.

¹⁵⁰ See David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life* (Dublin, 1977) pp 174 - 97 where he argues that local Sinn Fein organisations rather than central government were responsible for the success in changing local allegiance to Sinn Fein. He sets out the strengths and weaknesses of these courts particularly in County Clare.

¹⁵¹ Joe Sweeney, *Capuchin Annual* 1970, p. 445.

resulted in Hunt himself being made direct manager of the Burtonport section with Joseph Tatlow as his overseer. As well as reforming the railway he had to cope with five years of turmoil when war was strangling his line and almost brought it to the point of collapse. He probably breathed a sigh of relief when he heard that there was to be peace when activities ceased on 11 July 1921 and that the War of Independence against Britain was to end. However there were major problems facing him from many directions and all would need his expertise.

The first was the distribution of leaflets by the Irish General Railway Managers who represented the major Irish railway companies, in early August 1921, announcing that an all-round reduction in railway wages would to be introduced shortly. It would apply to all the different grades of Irish railway workers and it caused much uneasiness among all classes of employees in the railway companies of Ireland irrespective of size for the smaller companies would reduce wages if the bigger entities did so.¹⁵² In Derry, the Railway Clerical Workers Union which included many members of L&LSR stated that they would, under no circumstances, accept the reductions as proposed by the Irish General Railway Managers. They would act to prevent violation of the national agreement.¹⁵³

Of all places, however, the workers of Derry were not in a position to offer opposition to the proposed cuts. It was stated in the local press that the reductions would be acquiesced in without demur. Following the munitions strike there was a split in the ranks of the Derry railway workers on religious and political lines despite the fact that, in the distribution of the monies provided to assist those affected by the munitions strike, no distinction had been made. However, a section of Protestant railway workers, professing Unionist principles and favouring partition, decided to cut themselves adrift from the parent branch of the N.U.R. A new branch

¹⁵² *DJ*, 5 Aug. 1921, p. 5.

¹⁵³ *DJ*, 12 Aug. 1921, p. 8.

was then formed in Derry from which Catholic railway workers were rigidly excluded. Though some Protestant workers remained with the original branch through loyalty to the union, the two groups were hopelessly divided.¹⁵⁴

It was in this atmosphere that the government set up an arbitration court to try and achieve a railway settlement which would be fair to all but, as the year set into deep winter, calls were being made for the withdrawal of negotiators from the court, an action which threw both employers and employees into some disarray.¹⁵⁵

When the County Donegal Railway Joint Committee, the beloved infant of the Board of Works but sworn enemy of the L&LSR, presented its half-year results up to June 1921, there was shock in Donegal and Derry. The virtuous paragon had proved to have feet of clay just like the rest of the railways. For the six months up to the 30 June 1921 receipts were £39,000 and expenses amounted to £49,000, a loss of £10,000. Its manager, Henry Forbes announced that from 16 August new economies would be affected and conditions of service would be varied. Wages would be reduced and men discharged. The wages reduction would be in three instalments over six months and would begin in the next pay-sheet after 16 August. Unions or none, Henry Forbes was doing it his own way.¹⁵⁶

But at least Forbes was trying to run a full train service, unlike the Burtonport Extension which was severely curtailed even after the Truce. The fishermen begged for more trains but there was no response from Hunt, Tatlow or the L&LSR board. Like many fishermen on the Donegal coast, David Hay continued to watch the steamers from England and Scotland fishing in the deep off the Donegal coast and running to Oban, Belfast and other ports where herring fetched between £8 and £10 per cran. Hay wrote that motor companies came into the Downings area offering

¹⁵⁴ *DJ*, 5 Aug. 1921, p. 5.

¹⁵⁵ *DJ*, 5 Dec. 1921, p. 4.

¹⁵⁶ *DJ*, 17 Aug. 1921, p. 4.

cheap rates and quick transit for fishing and were prepared to carry fish to any Irish destination from the landing spot but the railways offered nothing.¹⁵⁷

The problem however, in Cloughaneely, Gweedore and the Rosses was that the roads were in such awful condition by the winter of 1921 that road transport was not a feasible option. From Burtonport the cartage system might carry a reasonable amount of fishing catches to the station at Fintown for transport to the markets by the County Donegal Railway Joint Committee if they could manage to overcome the road conditions. To add to the depression Tirconaill County Council decided in December 1921 to cut road expenditure by 20 per cent on main roads, 25 per cent on secondary roads and 30 per cent on third class roads because of the difficulty throughout the year in collecting rates because attempts were made, particularly in the Gweedore and Cloughaneely areas, to recreate the mayhem of Land League days by having a rates strike. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that 'in Donegal, Dáil justices and IRA officers were actually the leaders of the anti-rates campaign'.¹⁵⁸ Eventually, the campaign did not succeed but the roads' programme was to suffer nevertheless. For the northwest, the bad railway service would have to satisfy most of their needs.¹⁵⁹

Of more serious import for Hunt and the L&LSR, however, was the accusation of bigotry and discrimination against its Catholic workforce which broke out in the autumn of 1920. It was an echo of David Hay's accusation of Republicans being abandoned for Unionists but this time it related to the employees of the L&LSR. The first accusation was made in the *Derry Journal* on 1 October 1920 regarding ten employees who were 'Nationalists' and had been let go by the L&LSR although they had never refused to do anything they were asked by those placed above them'. The

¹⁵⁷ *DJ*, 7 Sept. 1921, p. 2.

¹⁵⁸ Tom Garvin, *The birth of Irish democracy*, p. 74.

¹⁵⁹ *DJ*, 14 Dec. 1921, p. 7.

allegation was that Protestants who had been 'only a few months in the company's service were kept working away as usual'. Due to the curtailment of services, the staff had to be reduced but the writer asked: 'why pay off men who had given six to seventeen years service to the Swilly Railway Company and yet retain recent arrivals'? The writer answered that this was a 'glaring instance of intolerance.'¹⁶⁰ These claims were refuted by various people within the L&LSR but the accusations continued to be made. By December 1920, many more of the 350 L&LSR employees who had been dismissed started to apply for reinstatement and they stated their willingness to work the rules when the railways opened again as was expected in early January. By March 1921 the case of an L&LSR man in Letterkenny who was laid off during the coal strike and was not reinstated while a young signaller took his place, was gaining prominent headlines. Of course, the accusation was that the older man was Catholic and the younger, reinstated man was an Orangemen.¹⁶¹

The accusations continued to be made spasmodically until August 1921 when the issue became really controversial as articles on the victimization of Catholic railway workers on L&LSR lines were prominent.¹⁶² It was stated that nearly all the workers were suspended after the recent deadlock. Since traffic resumed the suspended workers applied for reinstatement but in many cases, this was refused, even to some with six and seven years experience. No reason was given but everyone refused reinstatement was said to be a Catholic. Furthermore, it was alleged that their places were filled with Orangemen, some with a little over one year's service. The traffic on these lines was chiefly 'Catholic'. One writer stated that, 'I can safely say that 85 per cent of the traffic is Catholic'.¹⁶³

The *Derry Journal* reporter visited the head-office of the L&LSR and was told that there was no foundation to the allegations. No

¹⁶⁰ *DJ*, 1 Oct. 1920, p. 7.

¹⁶¹ *DJ*, 4 March 1921, p. 7.

¹⁶² *DJ*, 10 Aug. 1921, p. 2.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

victimization on account of religion, politics or trade unionism had occurred. But the fact remained that not all the staff had been re-employed.¹⁶⁴ Another correspondent wrote that when the Burtonport Extension closed down all the victims were Catholics with the exception of two Protestants, one a clerk and one a porter. He continued:

The porter had since been reinstated and the clerk had found another job in Head Office while the clerks of long and varied experience were dismissed for no reason, evidently only that they happened to be Catholics, who hailed from the disturbed areas. The Burtonport line is now in full swing and a full train service exists on all branches and why are the dismissed men not reinstated? All the Catholics were dismissed on the pretext of want of work when, as a matter of fact, about 40 clerks were retained at the Derry terminus and Head Office awaiting the advent of the reopening of the Burtonport line. In consequence of the motor service having usurped practically all the traffic on the Carndonagh and Letterkenny sections there was nothing doing or expected off these favoured or loyal subjects who are only to be found at Pennyburn but to sit tight and make no noise. Whilst their Catholic brethren who were in inferior grades of the service were given permission to inspect the public buildings on an empty stomach as there was nothing else left seeing that the Railway Clerks Association failed to come to their assistance or consider the plight of these poor men in their hour of need and are still out of employment and near to starvation.¹⁶⁵

On the 11 August the Railway Clerks Association and the National Union of Railwaymen rejected the accusations. Henry Hunt replied about the accusations of discrimination against the Catholics. 'There has not been and, so long as I am associated with the management of the Lough Swilly Railway, there never will be any discrimination'.¹⁶⁶ But Patrick McCauley, a Derryman who had no association with the railway company, then took up the case for those victimized. He wrote in late August that

¹⁶⁴ *DJ*, 10 Aug. 1921, p. 2.

¹⁶⁵ *DJ*, 12 Aug. 1921, p. 8.

¹⁶⁶ *DJ*, 22 Aug. 1921, p. 2.

five workmen in Derry who had between five and seven years experience with the L&LSR and were all Catholics, had not been reinstated. Their places had been taken by men of between eleven months and two years experience. All of these men were Protestant. He pointed out that the directors were all, or nearly all, Protestant also.¹⁶⁷

In September McCauley asked the following questions about the L&LSR lines:

Is it not a fact that a systematic boycott of Catholics has been going on for years on these lines?

Is there a Catholic in the employ of the company holding anything other than a minor position?

Is there any Catholic holding the position of stationmaster in any of the principal stations or a Catholic clerk in the office other than a junior?

Is it not a fact that about 85 per cent of the total employees of the company are non-Catholics?

Why is there about 90 per cent of the employees suspended owing to the closing down of the line, who have not been reinstated and why are their places filled, not by experienced workmen or according to seniority of service but by non-Catholics?

Is not 95 per cent of the revenue of the company derived from Catholics?¹⁶⁸

Fearing that the campaign might destroy the company, concessions to Catholics became apparent by October when, at least, some were being reinstated again. McCauley wrote, 'I can't say how many but there are some'.¹⁶⁹ However, it was enough to take most of the heat out of the situation although a lingering bitterness remained.

In the months after the Truce at least some semblance of calm descended on the Burtonport Extension and one train travelled each way

¹⁶⁷ *DJ*, 26 Aug. 1921, p. 3.

¹⁶⁸ *DJ*, 5 Sept. 1921, p. 4.

¹⁶⁹ *DJ*, 3 Oct. 1921, p. 4.

daily most of the time. On 14 August 1921, the government began the process in parliament to sever its control over British and Irish railways through the Irish Railways (Settlement of Claims) Bill 1921.¹⁷⁰ As a result IREC was abolished. The railway companies of Great Britain would receive £60 million, less a certain sum for income tax, and Irish companies would receive a pro-rata amount in the region of £3 million. These amounts would be taken as full settlement of all claims. But in addition, it was expected that there would be a grouping of several competing companies and small lines in order that economies of one kind or another might be affected.¹⁷¹

As the autumn days of 1921 began to close the question was would Henry Hunt and the L&LSR be forced to combine with the enemy CDRJC after all in the cause of survival? This question must have exercised his mind but so also was the announcement that the king would visit Belfast on 7 July 1921 to open 'The Freak Parliament' and participate in the 'The Solemn Farce in Belfast' as the *Derry Journal* was wont to term proceedings which took place in the new land it called 'Carsonia'.¹⁷² Hunt probably spent sleepless nights about these difficulties and the new creation called 'partition.' With L&LSR's headquarters and a couple of miles of railway as well as its main terminus in 'The Six Counties' and almost ninety-eight miles of track across the border in the Free State, there were many questions to be answered. He must have hoped that whatever the future held, he would at least be able to return to railway matters after the nightmare of the last few years. But the worst was yet to come.

¹⁷⁰ Irish Railways (Settlement of Claims) Act, 1921, 11 & 12 George V, c. 50.

¹⁷¹ *DJ*, 25 May 1921, p. 4.

¹⁷² *LS*, 23 June, 1921, p. 5; *DJ*, 8 June 1921, p. 3.

CHAPTER 9

CIVIL WAR AND LOCAL STRIFE

When the truce came into effect in July 1921 an effort was made throughout northwest Donegal to return to normality. The much-reduced squads of labourers headed off to Scotland for the season. David Hay of Downings fretted once more about the herring industry in Donegal. 'Fresh herring are realizing from £8 to £10 per cran in Oban and Mallaig. Yet there is no railway to any fishing port in Ireland. Now with motor and steamboats the boats will proceed to any better market. The industry cannot last'.¹ But Feis Thírconail had taken place though with less publicity than usual and the student teachers returning from the De La Salle Training College in Waterford to the northwest finally brought home to the locals how Gaelic football should be played through their impressive displays during the summer months.² The RIC were adopting a much lower profile among the rare communities where they operated.

However, on Sunday evening, 9 July 1921, a severe attack was made on Falcarragh RIC barracks. Rifle fire opened from short range and bullets passed through the building. Two RIC members had narrow escapes. A constable had the dinner plate off which he was eating shattered while the head constable was passing through the door to his own room when a bullet pierced the partition wall and smashed a picture within a few inches of his head. The fire was vigorously returned and the attackers soon withdrew.³ Some days later the Sweeney family in Burtonport were arrested and taken for court-martial to Derry. Bernard Sweeney got five years penal servitude and

¹ *DJ*, 13 July 1921, p. 4.

² *DJ*, 9 Sept. 1921, p. 7.

³ *DJ*, 16 July 1921, p. 8.

his brother Dan got two years.⁴ The 'tattie-hokin' squads of women and children continued to wait for telegrams to go to Ayrshire but few came because the miners' strike that started in Lowland Scotland in April 1921 saw many coal workers' families replace the Irish on the farms.⁵ By the late summer there were riots about unemployment in the traditional strongholds where the Irish congregated such as Dundee.⁶ It seemed that a long season of hunger and want lay ahead

December 1921 saw the arrival of many internees from the prisons. There were rousing welcomes in all the towns with Sinn Fein flags flying and the crowds singing the Soldier's Song.⁷ These ex-prisoners, having been hardened and sanctified by their internment experience were secure in the knowledge that the forces of law and order had either vacated their stations or were bound to barracks with their powers curtailed. However, on 30 September 1922 the first fifty Civic Guards arrived in Letterkenny under Superintendent McManus and some of the prisoners were somewhat surprised to find former comrades in the uniforms of the Free State keeping law and order now.⁸

Politics and the destiny of the nation grabbed the attention of the populace in the weeks around Christmas with great meetings held to determine the attitude to the Treaty. On 29 December 1921, West Donegal Comhairle Ceanntair of Sinn Fein held a special meeting in Dungloe and 'passed a resolution by 16 votes to 10 urging the ratification of the peace Treaty and requesting the six Tirconaill deputies to vote for acceptance'.⁹ Significantly, the word 'peace' was attached to each mention of the Treaty and the desire for such serenity appeared to be a dominant element in the debate.

⁴ *DJ*, 15 Aug. 1921, p. 2. They were brothers of Joe Sweeney, TD.

⁵ *DJ* 1 Apr. 1921, p. 5; 4 Apr. 1921, p. 3

⁶ *DJ*, 7 Sept. 1921, p. 3.

⁷ *DJ*, 14 Dec. 1921, p. 7; Pádraig Ó Baoighill, *Óglach na Rosann*, chapter 9.

⁸ *DJ*, 7 Sept. 1921, p. 3; Pádraig Ó Baoighill, *Óglach na Rosann*, pp 180-1.

⁹ *DJ*, 2 Jan. 1922, p. 3.

Tirconail County Council also voted for the Treaty a few days later but significantly, the former Gaelic League organizer, Hugh O'Duffy from Gortahork, in northwest Donegal, resigned because he could not accept it.¹⁰ A relative peace descended on the northwest and the trains ran most of the time even if the boycott on Belfast goods left many a shop shelf empty, newsreaders without their favourite papers, and many a businessman cursing the penalty he had to pay for politics and idealism.

Whatever hopes Henry Hunt had of a return to railway normality after the Truce was declared in July 1921 must have been tempered by the mounting chaos apparent all around him from his Derry office. There was a sustained series of pogroms against Catholics in many places in Northern Ireland with the most severe attacks happening in Belfast where eight people were killed and over 100 wounded in one weekend in June 1921¹¹ though Derry was far from being an upholder of ideal society during this period either with reigns of terrorism occurring on a regular basis.¹² During the winter of 1921 there was much distress in the city after many Catholic factory workers were expelled from their places of employment or feared to go in to work through intimidation.¹³ In Claudy, during February 1922, groups of special constables systematically attacked, beat-up and ill-treated Catholics, an issue that caused much distress to Laggan migrants from the northwest.¹⁴ Bigotry and accusations of discrimination on religious grounds became a part of everyday life in the city and the L&LSR and Hunt did not remain unscathed by becoming the objects of continuous invective for not re-employing the Catholics that had been suspended as a result of the attacks on the railway during the War of Independence. Despite Hunt's fervent denials the issue

¹⁰ *DJ*, 2 Jan. 1922, p. 3.

¹¹ *DJ*, 11 July 1921, p. 3.

¹² *DP*, 26 June 1920, p. 3.

¹³ *DJ*, 16 Jan. 1922, p. 2.

¹⁴ *DJ*, 15 Feb. 1922, p. 2.

refused to go away and continued to simmer throughout the winter of 1921 – 22.¹⁵

There was nervousness in all the railway companies at the prospect of having to deal with two governments whose policies might be very different with customs and excise matters to be dealt with at border crossings. This particularly affected the L&LSR whose lines from Carndonagh, Buncrana, Letterkenny and Burtonport all converged on Derry as the principal centre. Within the railway companies throughout Ireland there was disaffection, militancy and fear. The post-war situation had left Irish railways unable to operate within the financial constraints set down for them but the workers had become unionised during the government control of railways and had enjoyed massive wage increases and improved conditions of service which they were not prepared to surrender easily. They were vehemently against the return to private enterprise and the *laissez faire* methods of pre-war railway operators. 1917 Russia inspired many of them to dream and pursue the ‘workers republic’ utopia though the republican ideal held out by the freedom fighters who tore up their railways and put them out of work cooled their embrace for such a philosophy in Ireland.

Hunt was one of those selected to sit on the Railway Arbitration Board under the chairmanship of Mr Carrigan, K.C. (commonly called the Carrigan Tribunal) in an effort to broker a settlement between railway companies and their workers with regard to standardisation of wages and the eight-hour day, but their efforts came to nothing in December 1921 when the Railway Clerks Association rejected the findings and called for the withdrawal of its members from the process.¹⁶ Carrigan did, however, put forward a set of proposals regarding grades, wages, and conditions of service in an effort to quell the

¹⁵ *DJ*, 3 Feb. 1922, p. 2.

¹⁶ *DJ*, 5 Dec. 1921, p. 4.

disorder. When the new grades for railway employees were published on 1 January 1922 there must have been shock and horror among many railway

Fig. 46 Proposed wages and grades

Category	Proposed standard weekly wage
Porters	51s 0d
Parcel porters	54s 0d
Ticket collectors	56s 0d
Shunters	64s 0d
Station foremen	64s 0d
Signalmen	65s 0d
	GOODS GRADES
Porters	54s 0d
Carters	51s 6d
Passenger /goods guards	50s to 59 s
Drivers	66s to 90s
Firemen	50s to 63s
Cleaners	24s to 42s.

Source: *Derry Journal*, 2 January 1922, p. 4

managers at the proposed rates of pay and improved grades as indicated in fig. 46.¹⁷

On the Burtonport Extension employees were expected to be multi-skilled and perform any variety of tasks according to the demands of the moment. How these new grades would be handled in such conditions would be the ultimate test of skill for Hunt and his staff. When a general railway strike was called by the NUR during the first week of January 1922 Joe McGrath, the Minister for Labour, stepped in and promised to investigate all the issues. As a consequence the strike was postponed.¹⁸

Whatever hopes Hunt might have had for a return to normality on his own lines were soon disabused in February 1922 when a mass meeting took place in Letterkenny of Letterkenny and Burtonport railwaymen who were all

¹⁷ *DJ*, 2 Jan. 1922, p. 4.

¹⁸ *LS*, 14 Jan. 1922, p. 4; *DJ*, 16 Jan. 1922, p. 4.

members of NUR.¹⁹ This was the first meeting of organized labour to be held in Letterkenny since Bishop O'Donnell departed for Armagh after being appointed coadjutor to Cardinal Logue in January 1922. It was commonly believed by the Donegal general public that the bishop would have been able to ameliorate the militancy of the men had he been in Raphoe. However, the tone of the meeting displayed a different type of employee in 1922 to that which operated a few years earlier and it is doubtful if the bishop's intervention would have counted for much in the industrial relations maelstrom of 1922.²⁰

The Letterkenny & Burtonport NUR criticized the Carrigan award and expressed their disappointment that the national strike did not take place on 14 January. Resolutions were passed as follows:

1. That we demand a re-grouping of the railways for it is evident that a line like the L&LSR, by paying a dividend of 7 ½ per cent, should not be classified in Group 3 but should be in its rightful place in group 1 and that an appeal to Mr Joseph McGrath, Minister for Labour, be at once made with a view of having witnesses examined on the subject who will be able to show to an impartial judge that the grouping is entirely unfair.²¹
2. Thanks to the NUR executive who, when the line was closed, voted to the unemployed the munificent sum of £1,086 and thereby frustrated the starvation threat which emanated from the well-fed irresponsible parasites of the British Army which closed it.

¹⁹ NUR: National Union of Railwaymen which was a British based union with extensive Irish membership.

²⁰ *DJ*, 3 Feb. 1922, p. 2.

²¹ Carrigan proposed that railways should be divided into group according to their financial strength and profitability ranging from the strongest group 1 to the weakest group 4.

3. That we urge upon the Irish Free State to take immediate legislative action for the nationalisation of the Irish railways for, until the state assumes control of transport, no peace shall exist in Ireland.
4. That the time has arrived when we will no longer work with men who do not belong to the NUR or some other recognized trade union.²²

During these months stories appeared in the papers of 'soviets' being created in certain railway yards in the south of Ireland and Cobh station was taken over by strikers for a number of days in what the *Londonderry Sentinel* described as 'communism in the south'.²³ Although peace broke out in February 1922, the Derry NUR strongly rejected Carrigan's findings so the lines emanating from that city were liable to disruption at any time.

It was in this atmosphere that the L&LSR held its shareholders meeting in February 1922. The chairman, Brice Mullin, was in sombre mood as he declared a heavy working loss due to reduced traffic and high expenses for the year ending December 1921. Total net income from all sources fell £1,777 compared to the same period in 1920. From 14 August 1921 government control of Irish railways had ceased so, without the annual government subsidy paid during the control period, the actual loss between 14 August and 31 December was £10,761 and this was mostly due to a slump in trade. Merchandise fell for the year 1921 to 36,560 tons from 57,285 tons in 1920. Livestock fell from 25,253 to 17,355. Even with all their cuts, wages were 250 per cent above pre-war days and the increased wages, eight-hour day and stricter conditions of service made life extremely difficult for management. The railway companies did not get the relief under Carrigan that they hoped because the men rejected it. During 1922, wages would be £53,560 as against £15,530 pre-control on 1 January 1917. Mullin told the shareholders:

²² *DJ*, 3 Feb. 1922, p. 2.

²³ *LS*, 9 Feb. 1922, p. 3; *DJ*, 3 Feb. 1922, p. 8.

I fear drastic reductions must be made not only in the staff and the personnel of the line but in every other conceivable direction if the railway is to continue to run as a paying commercial concern. We are being called upon to work with a staff which is altogether non-commensurate with the traffic which we have to carry.

Mullin continued his bleak forecast when he told the shareholders that the wages and salaries paid on the line were unquestionably out of keeping with the normal aspects of the railway and it was an absolute necessity for them to be brought more in keeping with the earning capacity of the line at an early date unless the railway was to be closed down and the men thrown out of employment. Still, £8,412 was made available for dividends but, significantly for the first time in the history of the L&LSR, the dividend was reduced from 7 per cent to 5 per cent on ordinary shares although the dividend of 5 per cent on preference shares was continued. £14,000 received from the government under the Irish Railways (Settlement of Claims) Act 1921²⁴ which was to compensate railway companies for the transport of naval and military personnel and stores during the war years as no direct payment had been received from government for these services during that period. The L&LSR's share was £68,000 payable over three years and was mainly appropriated towards losses in 1921, 1922 and 1923. Without this payment there would not have been funds for dividends and there would have been a deficit in working. Mullin told the meeting that 'the outlook at the moment is black'. Until they were allowed to work their trade on a normal basis, unfettered by rates of pay and conditions of service based upon the necessities of other railways and districts – all wholly inapplicable to that railway - it could never again be a paying concern.²⁵

²⁴ Irish Railways (Settlement of Claims) Act 1921, 11 & 12 Geo. V., c. 50.

²⁵ *LS*, 25 Feb. 1922, p. 2.

Mullin had one piece of uplifting news for the shareholders though and it must have given some little satisfaction to John McFarland who was in the audience. On Wednesday 22 February 1922, the Minister of Transport, acting on the recommendations of the Commissioners of Public Works, cancelled all the privy council and other orders which had been issued in regard to the Burtonport line which again reverted to the L&LSR management as it did prior to the issue of the first privy council Order in 1917. Mullin told his audience that the Burtonport line was in thorough good order, condition and repair and the obligations placed upon the directors by the privy council orders in 1917 had been 'honourably carried out in every respect'. In this matter he could not speak too highly of the general manager, Mr Hunt. It was entirely due to his energy that not only the Burtonport line but the whole of the Derry and Lough Swilly Railway system had been brought to a high standard of efficiency, notwithstanding the very adverse circumstances which had militated against this line in the previous two or three years.²⁶ Mullin had been careful to make little reference to the political situation or to the Government of Ireland Act 1920²⁷ which, in effect, had separated the L&LSR's headquarters in Derry from its sprawling network in the northern half of Donegal.

No sooner had Mullin resumed his seat than Sir John McFarland was immediately on his feet in a rage. He told the meeting that during the forty-seven years he had been connected with the [L&LSR] railway, a more disastrous report had not been submitted. It was appalling to see the large decrease in all sorts of traffic and, more appalling, that they had been working at such a great loss. How could it be otherwise than deplorable when they looked at the expenditure? Not alone had there been an exorbitant increase in

²⁶ *LS*, 25 Feb. 1922, p. 2.

²⁷ Government of Ireland Act 1920, 10 & 11 Geo. V, c. 67 (23 Dec. 1920).

wages but working hours had been reduced. The Carrigan award which the workers had repudiated was wholly inadequate to meet anything like the loss now being incurred in the working of the line. McFarland had no doubts about the cures to be effected. The railway company should be masters in their own house, he told the shareholders, because they knew the earning capacity of the railway and the wages and hours suitable for that working. Rather than continue at such a loss, he urged the shareholders to close down the whole L&LSR railway system when in a position to liquidate their debt. For a beginning, there should be an all-round reduction of £1 per week in the wages of the men and, if they were not satisfied, let them clear out of the railway houses and find employment in the agricultural fields. Some of them were not doing any more work than would keep them in bodily health and he had heard complaints last summer that permanent way men were lying basking in the sun on the slopes when the men in the adjoining fields were bathed in perspiration slaving at the harvest. Let there be a reduction of £1 per week which would still leave the men with 100 per cent in excess of pre-war wages and with a higher wage than that paid to agricultural labourers who did more work in one day than these railwaymen did in three. The cost of living had gone down but the workers would not admit this. As far as arbitration was concerned he was against it for though honourable and decent men represented the railway side, there was no honour on the workers' side. The companies should fix the wages and if the workers did not accept them, let them find better employment. McFarland's only positive words were reserved for the general manager, Henry Hunt who received his praise for his great work.²⁸

When the press reports were published the following weekend, there was negative reaction and bitter criticism from Letterkenny NUR of the L&LSR

²⁸ *DJ*, 24 Feb. 1922, p. 8.

shareholders meeting and the comments of John McFarland in particular. The NUR members mentioned that it would surprise readers to know that the pre-war wages of milesmen on the L&LSR were twelve shillings a week for sixty hours. The L&LSR would not even allow these men to cut turf on the railway slopes for the fires in their homes. There then followed a tirade against the L&LSR for their participation along with the Unionists to starve the population of northwest Donegal into submission during the War of Independence. The statement concluded with some benevolent advice for the [L&LSR] company.

They must forge ahead with the times, cease threatening their servants, culture a friendliness with their employees, cater in a worthy manner for the public, assist in the revival of local industries and, as sure as they do so, so surely will their dividends rise.²⁹

The Letterkenny NUR men were particularly bitter about the L&LSR because of the discrimination issues which indeed surfaced against the L&LSR again. It was alleged that the L&LSR had only reinstated a few of the many men suspended on their system. No effort had been made by the company to re-employ the others. Non-union men were started to fill their places and were placed under the charge of a union official who never uttered a word of protest. They asked why were the suspended L&LSR men not being paid £2 10s. per week out of the union funds in Derry if others were receiving such a sum.³⁰

If Hunt was inclined to look to the Burtonport Extension and its hinterland for inspiration during these troubled times he would surely have been disappointed. The month of March 1922 saw the northwest sink into famine crisis once more. It seemed that all the outlets for stability and betterment of society had been closed off from the population there. At a

²⁹ *DJ*, 13 Mar. 1922, p. 4.

³⁰ *DJ*, 3 Mar. 1922, p. 2.

meeting of Tirconaill County Council,³¹ James F. O'Donnell, Burtonport, referred to the widespread distress especially along the coast of the Rosses and Gweedore. He begged for some means of employment as a relief measure. He then told the councillors of the problems of the locality. Scotland was a complete failure this year and several of their people, after attempting to get employment on three or four different occasions, had to return home. There were, moreover, above 5,000 of these migratory labourers between Gweebarra and Barnes Gap beyond Creeslough and assuming that each of these earned £20 for the season in Scotland, then that was £100,000 in lost earnings. With regard to the fishing industry the landings of fish from 1916 to 1921 averaged £72,000 per annum for herring, mackerel, salmon, lobster and other shellfish. Owing to want of railway facilities and the difficulty of procuring gear, this industry had practically disappeared in 1921. The carpet factories at Crolly and Annagry had almost 300 girls employed at the start of the war but these factories were now closed. The kelp industry had disappeared also. The knitting and hosiery business which gave much employment during the war years had gone into severe decline also. Their livestock was unsaleable and foodstuffs had rocketed in price. He begged for a road construction programme to ease the starvation facing the people.³²

The councillors had little to offer. In accordance with the provisional government's declared policy of rate reduction, Tirconaill County Council had reduced the rates by amounts of up to fourteen shillings in the pound to the delight of many ratepayers in the county. However, such a cut in income left little surplus for road or employment schemes which were not regarded as absolutely necessary. The councillors' only response to O'Donnell's pleas was to pass a motion referring the famine threat to the provisional government

³¹ Donegal County Council had voted to change its name to Tirconaill County Council. However, no legal steps were taken to give legal effect to the members' vote. Later this change was found illegal.

³² *DJ*, 31 Mar. 1922, p. 3.

in Dublin and further to ask the Irish White Cross³³ for its intervention and help.³⁴

In Dublin Maude Gonne McBride launched an appeal for the poor of West Donegal. She wanted the immediate distribution of seed potatoes, the provision of work, either road mending or agricultural, the provision of meals for schoolchildren and pleaded for donations of clothes for children.³⁵ A letter from one West Donegal resident to the *Derry Journal* told about how hard it was to live in West Donegal 'especially the labouring class'. Goods were 100 per cent dearer than in 1914 'due largely to the profiteering of shopkeepers'. The writer continued, 'There is no demand for anything we have to sell. It is almost useless to bring stock or farm produce to market. Migratory labour to Scotland has failed and a lot of people about Lettermacaward and the Rosses depended on Scotland for a living'.³⁶ Another reader to the same paper showed his annoyance at the lack of action. 'The relief measures there [northwest Donegal] are absolutely necessary. They are even more urgent than the teaching of Irish or the participation in hurling and football to which considerable attention is being devoted in the northwest'.³⁷ The realization that many regions along the west coast of Ireland were not viable entities surfaced once again and the Commission for Congestion's hearings of 1907 were being recalled in many quarters with demands being made for a resettlement of the people from the congested areas along the west coast to the good soil of inland and eastern Ireland.³⁸

³³ The Irish White Cross which was a pro-Sinn Fein body was founded in late 1920 to help those who suffered from the War of Independence, especially families whose breadwinner was killed, wounded or sentenced to a term in prison. The lord mayor of Dublin was chairman of the society with Cardinal Logue of Armagh as president and Dr Walsh, archbishop of Dublin also a member. Their campaigns for funds realized sums in excess of £40,000 within the first year with generous sums being donated by Irish emigrants, especially in America.

³⁴ *DJ*, 31 Mar. 1922, p. 8.

³⁵ *DJ*, 24 Mar. 1922, p. 2.

³⁶ *DJ*, 1 Mar. 1922, p. 4.

³⁷ *DJ*, 31 Mar. 1922, p. 6.

³⁸ *Irish Independent*, 1 Apr. 1922.

By April 1922 the herring fishing was almost a complete failure reaching its nadir without even the semblance of an industry in motion. Like the farming it had reverted to subsistence fishing due to lack of money, railway problems, absence of road transport, abandonment by the Scottish and English fleets, the collapse of local markets and the running down of the boats and nets. During April and May the eagerly awaited letters from the Scottish potato merchants asking squads of potato pickers to come over to the Lowlands on certain days never materialized just as they had failed to do the previous year. Nor were there any public works of note in Scotland which normally employed many of the young men. In such a deteriorating situation the merchants and shopkeepers re-assessed the credit risk of their customers and began to withdraw credit lines completely, throwing many communities into chaotic collapse as a consequence.³⁹ Charlotte Despard and Maude Gonne McBride visited northwest Donegal in April and found that many children had no clothes to go to school and families were living entirely on Indian meal without sugar or milk.⁴⁰ In desperation many of the younger people went to Scotland 'on tramp'⁴¹ hoping for something. Some had to return empty handed. Some found work but the pay rates in Scotland had, by June 1922, collapsed so that those who found work were so poorly paid that no money was available for remittance to home.⁴²

The situation in Northern Ireland created a climate of fear for those who frequented the hiring fairs, especially with reports in February 1922 of Catholics being beaten up by Special Constabulary in the rural Derry areas

³⁹ *DJ*, 3 Apr. 1922.

⁴⁰ *DJ*, 19 Apr. 1922, p. 5. Despard and McBride were members of the White Cross.

⁴¹ On tramp: a term in northwest Donegal defining the migrants who had no pre-arranged work to go to and who tramped throughout the country until they found some employment.

⁴² *DJ*, 9 June 1922, p. 6.

and threats made to the migrant workers by Protestant elements in Derry city.

⁴³ In these conditions the economy of northwest Donegal suffocated.⁴⁴

Government intervention and county council action were needed immediately to lift the distress and famine. However, the wheels of the provisional government proved no better oiled than that of its British predecessor in delivering fast, effective and decisive government. It made £100,000 available for relief of distress principally along the west coast of Ireland and, of this amount, £12,000 was allotted to Donegal. The county council approved a number of schemes such as road making and new road construction to turf bogs but, when it met in July 1922 to ratify the schemes, the members learned that the Minister of Economic Affairs, although approving some of the schemes, had refused three major schemes because of the fear that new initiatives might incur ongoing expenditure through maintenance in future years and would become a heavy accumulating burden on the rates, an action which would render impossible the repayment of government loans. The blueprint would have to go back to the provisional government for further sanction and the desperate would have to wait. James F. O'Donnell, the Rosses representative, was beside himself with rage on hearing these decisions. 'We are free of England now and have home rule and we should be able to deal the money as we think best but there seems to be more red tape now than ever before'.⁴⁵

The new post-Treaty state's inclination for law, legality and correct procedures in an effort to legitimise its existence was a feature that led to more bureaucracy in the 1920s than had ever been the case during British rule despite the goodwill and benevolent intentions on offer. In such

⁴³ *DJ*, 15 Feb. 1922, p. 2.

⁴⁴ *DJ*, 9 June 1922, p. 6.

⁴⁵ *DJ*, 19 July 1922, p. 2.

circumstances, hunger-grants had to be correctly and properly processed irrespective of the suffering of the needy.⁴⁶

As if these problems were not sufficient demoralization for the residents of the northwest, the news that the Burtonport train had been stopped and boarded by armed men at Newtowncunningham, close to the Derry border, in early April 1922 and that Henry Hunt, the general manager and Mr Napier of the L&LSR had been locked in an office while Belfast papers were burned, was the first indication that new trouble was brewing.⁴⁷ In the course of the next few weeks, the new war was brought home to the people of northwest Donegal. Parties of the IRA, armed with rifles began appearing on all roads leading to northwest Donegal and they searched vehicles just as the police had done. Motor vehicles belonging to Derry firms were seized throughout the northwest along with their contents. A motor lorry belonging to Mr S Cochrane, Waterside, Derry, while proceeding to Gortahork for eggs, was held up and the driver compelled to take the armed party to another part of the county.⁴⁸

Lorries had become very popular and plentiful due to a glut of vehicles in Britain after the war and they replaced the train because of its lack of service during the War of Independence. Now they were being seized and driven away throughout the county. Parties of IRA men, supporting the establishment of a republic and generally called Irregulars, armed with rifles appeared on all the roads around the towns of Donegal and captured cars and lorries which they drove away into hiding. Letterkenny was the location of a very active unit of car thieves.⁴⁹ During the first half of April it was impossible to travel through without being searched a number of times. Motor

⁴⁶ For a developed insight into the provisional government's attitude and philosophy regarding its Home Affairs programmes and dealings with local authorities, see Tom Garvin, *1922 the birth of Irish democracy* (Dublin, 1996) chapter 6.

⁴⁷ *DJ*, 3 Apr. 1922, p. 3.

⁴⁸ *DJ*, 3 Apr. 1922, p. 3.

⁴⁹ *DJ*, 24 Apr. 1922, p. 2.

vehicles, along with their contents, continued to be seized, leaving the shops without the meagre supplies that the poor needed thereby depleting their diet further.⁵⁰ On 3 April the Burtonport train from Derry was held up by armed men at Foxhall station. The intruders seized a bale of bacon, a bag of sugar and a hamper of bread bound for northwest Donegal. Then they burned the Derry newspapers on the platform before issuing receipts, 'Taken by IRA' and signed 'OC, Foxhall'.⁵¹

On the following day, a lady dressed in a grey costume and wearing a felt hat cycled into Letterkenny Railway Station and held up the Burtonport train when it arrived. She kept the guard in his van with a revolver and ordered him to throw out all the morning newspapers which she set alight. When they were almost destroyed she calmly cycled off again. She then went to Glenmacquin station on the Letterkenny to Strabane line and did likewise there.⁵² On Saturday 8 April, four armed men took a hamper of bread off the train at Foxhall. They wrote 'supplies must be obtained for the troops'. The newspapers were taken off various trains at Dungloe, Creeslough and Dunfanaghy and set ablaze during this period also.⁵³ By the end of April 1922 it was unwise to bring a lorry or car into Donegal because it would almost certainly be seized by these armed men, many of whom were from Cork and Kerry.

These Volunteers from the 1st Southern Division, led by Sean Lehane and Charlie Daly had remained in Donegal after the War of Independence and throughout the Truce period, committed to what they thought was still a common policy against the north. There were also IRA units from the west of the Six Counties who had crossed into Donegal to avoid being rounded up.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *DJ*, 5 Apr. 1922, p. 3.

⁵² NAI, BMH, WS 750, Eithne Coyle (O'Donnell) She admits that she was the person involved. She was later to become president of Cumann na mBan; *DJ*, 7 April 1922, p. 5.

⁵³ *DJ*, 10 Apr. 1922, p. 3.

Figure 47 Army and Irregular Strongholds in Donegal, 1922



source: Miriam Mollatt

It was not until the attack on the Four Courts occurred on 28 June 1922 that these men became very confused with the direction of war. Their leader, Charlie Daly, declared 'we don't know where we stand at present and, so far as we in Donegal are concerned, I don't see that we have any business being there any longer'.⁵⁴ It was no longer the north only for these southern idealists. The struggle now began for control of the political situation in Donegal in what was later to degenerate into the Civil War.

These men became the Donegal IRA and they were quickly into the field before the national army had been trained, armed, attired and dispersed to their posts. In the northern half of Donegal the Irregulars established three important strategic posts in the east of the county at Convoy, Raphoe, and Burnfoot and one in the northwest at Bunbeg which they soon abandoned for the more isolated but secure Glenveigh Castle, once the home of John George and Cornelia Adair, now both deceased.⁵⁵ The pro-Treaty forces concentrated their efforts on the south of Donegal and took control of Finner Camp in Bundoran, and Ballyshannon as well as Bunrana in the extreme north of the county thereby hemming the Daly-led Republicans in the centre of the county.⁵⁶ Joe Sweeney, Division Commandant of pro-Treaty forces in Donegal, was reluctant to enter confrontation with former colleagues but, despite meetings between the parties, no resolution was possible because of the ideals and principles of either side.⁵⁷ Civil war was a reality in Donegal even before the attack on the Four Courts ended on 30 June. Sweeney and the Pro-Treaty forces had all their supplies from the government but the four IRA camps had to be sustained through their own initiatives and the railways were

⁵⁴ Michael Hopkinson, *Green against green – the Irish Civil War* (Dublin, 1988) p. 161.

⁵⁵ NAI, BMH, WS 750, Eithne Coyle details these episodes.

⁵⁶ *DJ*, 8 May 1922, p. 2.

⁵⁷ Hopkinson, p. 161.

targeted from the beginning as the best resource for the provisions needed for their sustenance in these abodes.

Though the Belfast boycott of goods had been officially ended it started to be enforced with more vigour than before in Donegal in April 1922. but it was the IRA in the northern half of Donegal that had taken it on themselves to police the operation for which their strongholds at the Burnfoot and Bridgend railway stations on the border and Glenveigh's proximity to Churchill station were aptly suitable. The continuing bad press reports of discrimination against the Catholic population during the months of February, March and April would appear to be a major cause of this reopening of the campaign.⁵⁸ With ever increasing Catholic distress in Northern Ireland, the justification for the boycott was easily explained, although it often provided excusable cover for the seizing of goods for consumption by the rebels themselves.⁵⁹

Mr Hunt, general manager of the L&LRS, in a written reply to the Provisional Government in July 1922 gave a report of stoppages, looting, burning and hold-ups on the Burtonport train. During a four-week period up to 27 April 1922 there were more than twenty-seven attacks on the trains to and from Burtonport. The drivers, firemen and guards were often held at the point of a gun while the raiders took over the train. Mails were searched and often taken away. Belfast goods were destroyed or confiscated and Belfast newspapers were normally burned on the platforms. The *Londonderry Sentinel* and *Irish Daily Telegraph* were particularly singled out for burning. However, in many instances, goods going from Derry firms to shopkeepers in various parts of Donegal were confiscated also. Creeslough, Churchill and Foxhall stations were the most commonly targeted for these attacks. When the trains were not attacked the stores at the stations were often broken into

⁵⁸ *DJ*, 13 Feb. 1922; 31 Mar. 1922; Pogroms: actions by the B Specials and violence were regularly reported in the *Derry Journal* during February and March 1922.

⁵⁹ NAI, BMH, WS 750, Eithne Coyle.

during the night and the goods taken. By the end of the four- week period few goods were reaching their destination if they originated in Northern Ireland.⁶⁰

A *Daily Mail* correspondent who witnessed one of the exhibitions of newspaper burning on the Burtonport Railway gives the following story of his experience:

‘Just about half an hour late’. I made the mental note and replaced my watch.

The little narrow gauge train rattled and swayed along the uneven track which wound its serpentine way through one of the wild mountain districts of Donegal.

We had just been ‘held up’ by some armed men who had removed various sacks and bales from the train.

Such occurrences are common and no one in my carriage inquired why it had been done or by whose authority, for silence is golden just at present in Ireland.

Settling myself as comfortably in my corner as the jolting of the train would permit, I lit my pipe and strove to regain the trend of the story which I had been reading.

Presently, we drew up at a little ‘one- platform’ station in the heart of the mountains. My eyes wandered over the snow-capped peaks bathed in sunshine. The musical tinkling of a tiny stream charmed my ears as it floated through the open window of the carriage.

‘This door is locked, porter’.

It was the voice of a girl – a nice, refined voice, furthermore.

Feelings of gallantry prompted me to put my head out of the window. There was plenty of room in my compartment. Why should this lady distress herself because one compartment happened to be locked? The invitation was never proffered.

A few yards from my carriage, revolver in hand, stood a slim, neatly dressed girl of about 30 years – possibly less. A bewildered porter was eyeing her with ill-conceived nervousness. The guard hurried up.

No questions were asked. The doors of the van were simply thrown open.

‘These things are in my way’, she said.

The cool decided tones and the slight flourish of the revolver made the guard and porter hasten to obey.

⁶⁰ Henry Hunt, L&LSR railway to provisional government, July 1922. (Military Archives, Cathal Brugha Barracks, Civil War – Railways file, A08836 – 28/16 – A10.

A few large boxes were dragged out and laid on the platform. The girl stepped into the van and, in a few minutes, emerged with a large bundle of newspapers in her arms.

'You may put these boxes back now and proceed', she said.

Laying her revolver on the ground within easy reach, she began stacking the newspapers in a neat easy pile; then, producing a box of matches from her pocket, she proceeded to set them on fire, and, as the train steamed out, the bonfire was blazing merrily.

To have been 'held up' twice on the same journey, and above all, to have been 'held up' by a slip of a girl could have happened only in Ireland – or 'Movie – land.'⁶¹

It is difficult to apply fair analysis to the above list without arriving at the conclusion that much of the raiding and looting pertained more to the pursuit of personal satisfaction than to the achievement of an idealistic republic. But Henry Hunt had to live in the real world. After reviewing the above log for the month of April he issued a statement to all connected with the railway giving notice that

in consequence of the conditions prevailing in the country the L&LSR will not be responsible for any loss or expense in the running of trains to their scheduled destination nor will they be responsible for the loss of any goods by passengers etc. caused by riot or civil commotion or by persons not under the control of the company.⁶²

If the chaotic situation being wrought by the Irregulars on the Burtonport Railway was not sufficient to break Hunt, the actions of his own workers continued to accelerate the pressure being applied to him. There had been many causes of disaffection on all the L&LSR lines since the end of the

⁶¹ *LS*, 18 Apr. 1922, p. 4. Article copied from *Daily Mail*: NAI, BMH, WS 750, Eithne Coyle (O'Donnell) admits that she was the person involved and she confirmed that the gun she carried had no trigger.

⁶² *DP*, 22 Apr. 1922.

World War and, by 1922, relations between management and men were generally strained. The discrimination issue, the 1922 annual general meeting call by Mullin for reductions and changes, John McFarland's outburst for £1 per week reduction in wages, together with the problems faced in running a train service in the theatre of war, had all created an air of hostility between management and men. But the 1914–18 war had unionised most of the workers and, whatever the attempts of management to alter the conditions of service, they soon learned that it was not now as easy as in the old days. The unionised workers objected to their hard won terms being altered in any way and when they were not being listened to, the Burtonport railwaymen convened an all-day meeting in Falcarragh on Sunday, 30 April 1922. Many grievances of individual members were discussed and analysed throughout the day. Finally, it was proposed 'that direct action was the only means by which justice could be obtained'.⁶³ It was agreed that communication by writing or otherwise with the management of the railway was useless. A deputation was selected to meet the management with a view of clearing up the grievances complained of by the men.⁶⁴ But the L&LSR management continued to force the changes and one month later, no progress had been made in the resolution of grievances. A strike or partial strike on L&LSR lines was announced 'due to the manager insisting on changes in conditions of service'. However, the L&LSR learned that it was not just an issue anymore between themselves and their workers. The John McFarland principles were outmoded if not dead. Within a few days the Irish Railway Commissioners announced that they would be investigating the case.⁶⁵

The strike only lasted for a few days before the L&LSR announced that a NUR official would join Henry Hunt in a joint venture to settle the

⁶³ *DJ*, 5 May 1922, p. 8.

⁶⁴ *DJ*, 5 May 1922, p. 8.

⁶⁵ *DJ*, 31 May 1922, p. 2.

grievances complained of. The L&LSR were also forced to issue a further statement guaranteeing that the positions held by the workers would not be changed in any way.⁶⁶ John McFarland must have felt like weeping.

But it was not just the L&LSR railways but the position of all Irish railways that was under scrutiny during these months. In January 1922, the Provisional Government had managed to ward off a general railway strike by promising a full review of the whole railway system.⁶⁷ In May 1922, Lord Justice James O'Connor was appointed president of a commission to inquire into the working, salaries, wages, conditions of service, etc. on Southern Irish railways.⁶⁸ An effort had been made by the Dublin government to have a joint commission with Northern Ireland but this was rejected in Belfast which then set up its own commission to inquire into the northern scene. Still, O'Connor took evidence of railway working in the north.

In June, Henry Hunt told the Northern Railway Commission that out of 100 miles of railway and thirty-three stations in the L&LSR hands only two miles and two stations were in Northern Ireland. His directors had told him that no recommendation for amalgamation, unification, or other matter should be made in relation to the L&LSR railways at that time. Moving from narrow to broad gauge would be very expensive and would only benefit the part of the line between Derry and Buncrana. The present problems were due to increased costs and wages, the limited traffic produced by the districts served and motor competition especially in the areas within a thirty-mile radius of Derry. Hunt said that he thought all Irish narrow gauge railways should be subject to one centralized administration and the government should have a direct interest in the working of smaller lines.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ *DJ*, 2 June 1922, p. 5.

⁶⁷ *LS*, 11 Feb. 1922, p. 6.

⁶⁸ *DJ*, 16 June 1922, p. 7.

⁶⁹ *DJ*, 16 June 1922, p. 2.

The O'Connor Commission⁷⁰ was intent on looking at future policy rather than past complaints which latter course had been the traditional system of previous enquiries and commissions. O'Connor's analysis of all former enquiries showed that some change was necessary in railway administration. There were forty-six lines in Ireland of which twenty-eight were separately or directly worked and these twenty-eight railways operated the other eighteen lines just as the L&LSR worked the Letterkenny Railway, Carndonagh Railway and the Burtonport Railway. The capital of these concerns which ranked for interest payments or dividends amounted to £47,875,000. In Ireland, the connection between the railways and government was very much closer than that which existed in Britain due mainly to the traditional growth in that country of private railways to service the coal, steel, wool, cotton and highly industrialized centres following the industrial revolution. The many witnesses before the O'Connor Commission advocated different solutions. Some were for nationalisation. Some favoured groupings of railway lines and others wanted a combination of both. Henry Hunt's ideas would have fitted in quite easily among the great majority of these witnesses. The Irish Railway Stockholders Protection Association suggested to the commission that the whole of the Irish lines should be operated as one complete unit under a railway board which would represent stockholders, railway users and government. The proprietors would receive, in exchange for their stock and debentures, a uniform Irish railway stock which would be in the nature of a state security. What nobody wanted was a continuation of the situation prevailing after the war, and especially the chaos thrown upon the railway companies after the disengagement of the government from the railways. O'Connor must have been well-satisfied with the uniformity of the options put before him and the desire for change. He himself remarked: 'my opinion is

⁷⁰ Commission on Irish Railways 1922. *Report and minutes of Evidence*, R. 2/1, R. 2/2.

that nationalisation must follow state subsidy as the night follows the day'. By July, the commission had concluded its public sittings and it must have seen the first moves taking place in the amalgamation of railways within the industry itself when the Great Southern and Western Railway announced that it was to take over the Cork, Bandon and South Coast Railway.⁷¹ When the O'Connor Commission went into private session there was little doubt among the Irish railway fraternity but that nationalisation would be the proffered solution.

Their findings were issued in mid-August. The three majority members Justice O'Connor, Tom Johnson and Mr MacLysaght recommended the state purchase of all the railways. They noted a number of points. Railways had not been badly managed if viewed as mere private concerns. Pre-war dividends were largely the result of underpaid labour. Management for the objective of private gain had won out over public concern. There was a grave danger of immediate conflict between railway labour and the railway companies. Complaints that the railways were hampering industrial growth were made again and again.⁷²

They recommended that a railway council should be constituted with absolute powers of management and the nation should finance the entire undertaking. But under this state purchase scheme the management should not be directly under a state minister. State subsidy was ruled out without control. One sitting member of the commission, Mr O'Dea, issued a minority report, not specifically because of railway matters, but because state control of railways was too much like the 'workers republic' or soviet and conflicted with traditional principles.⁷³ However, the majority report formed the blueprint for the later nationalisation of the Irish railway system.

⁷¹ *DJ*, 31 July 1922, p. 4.

⁷² *LS*, 28 Oct. 1922, p. 2.

⁷³ *DJ*, 18 Aug. 1922, p. 8.

While the future of Irish railways was being sorted out in Dublin and in Belfast, the efforts of keeping a viable railway system operational in Donegal were proving difficult. Throughout the months of May and June 1922 the Irregular army continued its build-up of forces in east Donegal strongholds with reinforcements coming in regularly from Munster and from Northern Ireland. They continued to hold up the trains, take away the blacklisted merchandise and burn the Unionist newspapers or papers that had offended their own stand. However, when the National Army marched into their territory in May following a bank raid by the Irregulars in Buncrana, a bloody encounter ensued in the village of Newtowncunningham which resulted in three National Army soldiers being killed and another few wounded, one of whom died some days later.⁷⁴ News of this encounter shocked Donegal. The people had grown accustomed to raids, train stoppages, road trenching and general disorder, but unlike the South and West of Ireland, the ferocity of war had not touched the county until then.⁷⁵

However, it was in Derry city and among the Unionist community in the north that nervousness of the events on the border with Donegal was worst. They feared that the Irregulars who appeared to be out of control would soon attack Derry 'and reduce the city to ruin' and then attack the northern state which they presumed was their reason for massing on the border.⁷⁶ The boycott being enforced by these rebels was seen as an initial softening up of the city and the Six County state before the armed offensive. Suddenly, without rumour or prior notice an order was issued on 4 June by Lieutenant Colonel Moore-Irvine, County Commandant of the Special Constabulary for Derry, 'prohibiting until further notice, the export to Donegal

⁷⁴ *LS*, 6 May 1922, p. 3; *LS*, 18 May 1922, p. 3; *DJ*, 8 May 1922, p. 3.

⁷⁵ NAI, BMH, WS 750, Eithne Coyle tells of the shock of the Newtowncunningham attacks and its aftermath.

⁷⁶ *LS*, 30 May 1922, p. 3; *DJ*, 31 May 1922, p. 3.

from Derry by road, rail, sea or river of food, foodstuffs, livestock, coal, fuel, petrol, oil and merchandise of every kind'.⁷⁷

The Special Constabulary was mobilized in great numbers to enforce the order and all cars, lorries and vehicles carrying merchandise from Derry to Donegal were stopped and the goods taken from the occupants. Many who had businesses in Derry had to abandon vehicles at the county boundary and walk to the city while others were not let through at all.⁷⁸ To the ordinary people this seemed like an increased effort at starving the Donegal people into submission as had been attempted in the northwest earlier during the War of Independence. The L&LSR soon abandoned its goods trains and the wagons on passenger's trains were empty. Derry trade was severely hit immediately and, within a few days, there was an outcry from the city's merchants at the attack on their livelihood. Deputations went to Belfast and very soon the Moore-Irvine order was withdrawn because of the sustained Derry trader pressure.⁷⁹ It seems Moore-Irvine was 'premature' in issuing the order as it was only a statement of intent by Belfast traders which would come into effect if Donegal did not cooperate and withdraw its boycott of Belfast and Unionist firms.⁸⁰

However, before any rejoicing took place at the news that the blockade had been lifted, the Irregulars in east Donegal imposed a double blockade on Derry city and the north. No goods were to be sent in to the city and no goods were to be brought out. Donegal motor lorries had to leave Derry empty after being warned by the Irregulars not to carry any goods from Derry. They held up the trains at Burnfoot and Bridgend and removed the merchandise. The

⁷⁷ *LS*, 6 June 1922, p. 2.

⁷⁸ *DJ*, 5 June 1922, p. 3.

⁷⁹ *LS*, 8 June 1922, p. 4.

⁸⁰ *DJ*, 7 June 1922, p. 3.

L&LSR had to send out special trains from the city to collect the removed goods at Bridgend and Burnfoot and return them to the consignors in Derry.⁸¹

In the following days the amusing spectacle took place regularly of deputations of Derry merchants going to Drumboe Castle to plead with Joe Sweeney and the Dáil Forces to intervene to have the boycott on Derry goods lifted and later going to the Irregulars' Headquarters at Skeog, near Burnfoot on similar missions.⁸² The *Londonderry Sentinel* of June 8, stated: 'The hope is entertained that the boycott will be taken off. Difficulty however is experienced in exercising control over Republican "braves" from Londonderry now operating in Donegal'.⁸³ In the following days heavy troop reinforcements were brought into Derry in case the city came under severe pressure, maybe even attack from the Irregulars on the Donegal border.⁸⁴ The *Londonderry Sentinel* of Saturday, 10 June 1922, hinted that some days later British troops might invade Donegal and establish a neutral zone there especially in the Inch, St Johnston and Burnfoot areas adjacent to the border.⁸⁵

Eighteen trains were held up at Burnfoot on 15 June alone. Invoices were scrutinized, wagons were entered and contents examined. Scores of goods from boycotted firms were removed from the trains and stacked on the platform. It was reported that the searching was being done 'with great thoroughness and each takes 20-30 minutes'. Passengers were not searched.⁸⁶

With empty trains running and no produce or merchandise coming into the county, the sea was once more looked to for salvation. Prominent traders from the hinterland of the L&LSR formed committees and delegations were sent to Glasgow to charter boats and organize for goods to be shipped from

⁸¹ *DJ*, 9 June 1922, p. 5.

⁸² *DJ*, 9 June 1922, p. 5.

⁸³ *LS*, 8 June 1922.

⁸⁴ *DJ*, 9 June 1922, p. 5.

⁸⁵ *LS*, 10 June 1922.

⁸⁶ *DJ*, 16 June 1922, p. 5.

that city to the various parts of Donegal.⁸⁷ These traders had learned from the experience of northwest Donegal merchants during the previous two years that alternatives were needed rather than dependency on Derry merchants or the Burtonport Extension which had proved to be a dangerous policy. As a consequence of that action, Messrs Paul Bros, Birkinhead, were direct shippers of flour to Killybegs and Burtonport where they had stores and they kept the stocks there at a high level. As soon as the boycott was announced they quickly delivered more flour to these places.⁸⁸ With such attacks from all sides, it seemed that the railway could not win and to make matters worse during this time, Michael Flood of Donegal Town took permanent advertising windows on the front pages of newspapers circulating in Donegal to advertise his Ford motor stock at the reduced prices which came into being in 1922 with the slogan 'orders are coming in fast'.⁸⁹

Then, suddenly, the mist began to lift and people like Henry Hunt could see the sun again. On 3 July 1922 the Irregular garrison holding the Four Courts in Dublin surrendered to the National Army. This led to greatly increased activity on the Donegal border for a few days with all trains being raided. On the day of the action at the Four Courts it was known that the six Dáil Deputies for Donegal had split on the Treaty. Joe Sweeney, P. J. Ward, Dr Joseph P. McGinley and Sean McGoldrick had supported the Treaty with the two east Donegal representative, Sam O'Flaherty and Joseph Doherty, a native of Derry city, opposing.⁹⁰ Three days after the Four Courts fell, the Irregulars in Raphoe and Skeog evacuated their strongholds and moved to Glenveagh Castle in the middle of the Derryveagh Mountains and to Inch Island Fort on the banks of Lough Swilly.⁹¹ A *Derry Journal* report stated:

⁸⁷ *DJ*, 6 June 1922, p. 5.

⁸⁸ *DJ*, 9 June 1922, p. 5.

⁸⁹ *DJ*, 12 June 1922, p. 1. Tractors were £205; one ton truck £220; touring car £195; delivery van £180.

⁹⁰ *DJ*, 3 July 1922, p. 7.

⁹¹ NAI, BMH, WS 750, Eithne Coyle; *DJ*, 5 July 1922, p. 3.

Glenveigh is now fortified with land mines, sniping and machine gun posts cover the approaches. A wireless apparatus is installed and several southerners are among the occupants. During the past few days over fifty Irregulars from Crolly, Gweedore and Kincasslagh have travelled to Churchill by railway and gone to Glenveigh. They handed in vouchers to the [Burtonport] railway company .i. chits – an authorization to travel signed by the ‘Republican Intelligence Officer’ and ‘Chief of Police’ on paper taken from a British Wireless Station [Bunbeg].⁹²

Forty-one IRA men were overpowered and forced to surrender at Skeog and Burnfoot on 8 July, though they were reported as having smashed their rifles before being captured. They were taken away to Letterkenny courthouse where they wrecked the building even burning and destroying the Carnegie library there.⁹³ However, they had enough active members still free in the Donegal hills whose activities did not cease against the railway for they formed flying columns which took to attacking the trains with rifle fire and then disappearing. Passengers on trains at Burnfoot and Bridgend had to lie on the floor going through or near Skeog. It was stated that no one had ever seen the L&LSR trains going so fast as on Friday 7 July around Bridgend when under fire by the IRA. These raids continued for another week or two before the Skeog garrison gave up completely.⁹⁴ Hunt could now close his log of hold-ups for the previous four months

On 14 July 1922 he sent a cover letter with his report to J. Ingram, Dublin, who represented the Provisional Government and it shows the despair of a good railwayman:

⁹² *DJ*, 5 July 1922, p. 3.

⁹³ *DJ*, 10 July 1922, p. 2.

⁹⁴ *DJ*, 10 July 1922, p. 2.

In reply to your circular letter under reference P 71 dated 12th instant I send you herewith two statements – one showing the raids etc. on this company's line from 1st. January to 28th. June inclusive and the other from 28th. June to the present time. I can only say that the events of the last month have practically killed the whole of the goods traffic on this line, and have prevented any developments of passenger traffic and its effect may be more clearly seen when I tell you that during the month of June the working expenses of this line amounted to £7,760, whilst the receipts from all sources were only £4,592, giving a loss on working of £3,168 for the month as against net receipts for the same period in 1913 of £1,318.

The difficulties have become so acute that my Directors are having a special meeting within a week to decide as to whether, under the circumstances now existing, it is possible for this company to maintain its services. In an especial manner this company has been subjected to raids, damage, and loss of traffic practically speaking for the whole period of two years until we are now almost, if not altogether, at breaking point.⁹⁵

Joe Sweeney and the National Army moved in to east Donegal and soon had taken general control of that part of the county though there were many skirmishes and some deaths in the battles between the warring factions. But the IRA strength was broken on the border and the merchants of Derry and the Unionists within the Six-County border could feel safe and free to pursue their own agenda in consolidating the Unionist state especially with the National Army fully engaged in conquering its own rebels.⁹⁶

The centre of operations moved into the Derryveagh Mountains in July 1922 where Eithne Coyle had already established Cumann na mBan headquarters and set up a hospital there.⁹⁷ Most of the IRA operated out of Glenveigh Castle in flying columns and engaged in activities against the National Army. In order to sustain this large group of men the railway station

⁹⁵ Provisional Government query to railway managers, Londonderry & Lough Swilly questionnaire, July 1922, (Military Archives, Rathmines, Donegal Command-Operations, A07774 – 22/16-A8).

⁹⁶ *DJ*, 17 July 1922, p. 3.

⁹⁷ NAI, BMH, WS 750, Eithne Coyle (O'Donnell), p. 18.

at Churchill became the focal point for raids on the Burtonport trains once more. But then, in the last days of July, Glenveigh Castle was captured. 'The Nationalist troops under Divisional Adjutant Glennon led the charge. A Derry girl was found there who had been identified with recent Irregular activity. Also captured was the plant for the publication of the *Tirconaill War Bulletin*. Taken prisoner also was Mr Donovan who was a Local Government Inspector for the county and was now acting as Chief of Intelligence. The Nationalist troops approached the Castle from four different points and entered the building at 2 a.m. on Friday morning 28 July. There were eight in the garrison and they offered no resistance'.⁹⁸

It appears that most of the local dissenters had just gone off home and resumed normal life when they became aware that their resistance was crumbling in face of the National Army and the general opposition of the population.⁹⁹ The murder of two National soldiers at the Glen in Glenties in July 1922 marked the major turning point among the population in their disgust against the activities of these roaming bands. It was not the murder of the two young men as much as the leader of the Irregulars dressing up as a priest and, on meeting the National Army, telling them that there was no danger or activity in the area. While they stood talking, a group opened fire from behind the walls. The 'priest' pulled a Webley revolver and shot one of the soldiers dead.¹⁰⁰

This episode received so much negative publicity in the local press that it demoralized an already faltering campaign. Indeed, throughout the Irregular operation in Donegal the press was firmly on the side of the Provisional Government and its agents. Every attack and operation by the Irregulars was

⁹⁸ *LS*, 29 July 1922, p. 5; *DJ*, 31 July 1922, p. 2. The *Sentinel* records that 24 were captured but eight seems to be the number accepted locally.

⁹⁹ *DJ*, 21 July 1922, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ *LS*, 29 July 1922; *DJ*, 28 July 1922, p. 5.

presented in a somewhat disparaging manner to illustrate the depravity of these men such as their alleged kidnapping of a dozen young women in the Churchill area to do domestic service for them in Glenveigh Castle¹⁰¹ or their reported kidnapping of two gangs of Burtonport Railway permanent way men to carry out operations for them in the Churchill area, or their raiding of ordinary shops or railway stores for luxurious goods and drink.¹⁰² Eithne Coyle admitted that 'many of the IRA came from Tyrone and Derry and parts of Donegal. They carried out discreditable operations which lowered the tone and morale of the movement'. She then gave examples of non-essential goods being taken.¹⁰³

Whether the press gave accurate accounts of these episodes or not was not as important as the impression given by the reporting of such stories and the terminology used in such coverage. Another factor of great influence was that the National Army under Joe Sweeney controlled a much firmer and friendlier publicity machine, with calmer and more factual statements of confrontations in contrast the more outrageous claims of the Irregular press office. By June 1922 the publicity battle seemed won by the government side when it announced that 134 young men joined the National Army at Dungloe Summer's Fair on 4 June. By August the newspapers were carrying headlines about 'The Demoralized Irregulars – the game is up in Donegal' and carried lists of the prominent men who surrendered or were caught, no doubt helped from information provided by the new recruits and a public tired of war and bands of men living off an already impoverished population.¹⁰⁴

These Republican forces were in an impossible position in Donegal. In the 1922 campaign most of those involved were strangers who were

¹⁰¹ *LS*, 22 July 1922, p. 3. Questions were asked in the British parliament about this episode. Winston Churchill was the minister responding which led to some mirth in the chamber.

¹⁰² *DJ*, 21 July 1922, p. 5.

¹⁰³ *NAI*, *BMH*, *WS* 750, Eithne Coyle (O'Donnell), pp 16-17.

¹⁰⁴ *DJ*, 2 Aug. 1922, p. 2.

unfamiliar with the countryside and quite alien to the people and their ways. The intensity, ferocity and idealism that had been inculcated in them during their native Munster campaigns found no mirror images in Donegal. The Six County participants, full of bitterness, bigotry, religious distinction and fear of exclusion from their bosom state found themselves among a people with few ideals, lack of passion and an inherent ennui. These fighting rebels were hopelessly outnumbered and were short of arms but it was the fight against hunger that demoralized them more than anything else. In one of his reports, Charlie Daly wrote in relation to Donegal:

The country is so assuredly poor that we could hardly get enough to eat. We were often glad when we could get potatoes and salt, or a bit of bread and a drop of tea. No matter what side their sympathies were with they [the people] were always hospitable. We held back from taking life as long as we could although we got plenty of provocation.¹⁰⁵

On another occasion Daly showed his frustration and bitterness about the Donegal situation.

We had something over 100 men at the start but most of them were very poor stuff ... Some of them were spies and traitors In the course of a few weeks we were left with only thirty men and nearly all of them were strangers to the county.¹⁰⁶

Another southerner, Sean Lehane confessed to Daly: 'I believe our work here is impossible. We have to steal about here like criminals at night and it gets on one's nerves'. Lehane was very critical of the poor support they were getting from the locals. 'They want money and ease', he commented.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ Hopkinson, *Green against green*, p. 162.

¹⁰⁶ UCD Archives, O'Malley notebooks, p. 117B/113.

¹⁰⁷ UCD Archives, O'Malley notebooks, p. 117B/113.

The decision for all Republican columns to evacuate Donegal was postponed for as long as possible but, at the end of July 1922, Ernie O'Malley informed Liam Lynch about the situation in Donegal. 'I understand the men are starving and are very much in need of money. I have sent some'.¹⁰⁸

The summer months reflected the changing atmosphere in Donegal with the population emerging from its torpor to socialise once again. Sunday 16 July witnessed record crowds at Bunrana, Letterkenny and Doon Well. Over 3,000 people travelled to these venues by rail alone and the L&LSR resources were taxed to the limit. The GAA sport's day in Letterkenny on 9 July was a great success. Close on 1,000 passengers travelled from Derry under the leadership of the GAA and 700 came from Burtonport, Gweedore and Dunfanaghy regions.¹⁰⁹ About 1,200 travelled from Derry to Bunrana under the auspices of the Sarsfield GAA football club and were accompanied by the Sarsfield band. Enough to fill three trains turned up at the stations but the L&LSR could only supply two trains. Not to be the losers of such an available markets, however, and without the watchful eye of Allely or the Board of Works to worry about, the L&LSR reverted to the habits of former days by packing the excess passengers into wagons and conveying them to their destinations.¹¹⁰ The Aranmore regatta was held on 15 August. The Burtonport Railway laid on a special train with return tickets at single fares from Letterkenny and all intermediate stations, leaving Letterkenny at 9.05 a.m. and departing from Burtonport at 8 p.m. Massive crowds travelled.¹¹¹

The Emerald Harps Gaelic Athletic Football Club from Derry were to visit Dungloe on Sunday 10 September accompanied by the Friar Hegarty Pipers Band. Two trains were expected to travel. However, the straggling

¹⁰⁸ UCD Archives, O'Malley notebooks, p.117B/113.

¹⁰⁹ *DJ*, 14 July 1922, p. 6.

¹¹⁰ *DJ*, 21 July 1922, p. 8.

¹¹¹ *DJ*, 14 Aug. 1922, p. 2.

bands of Irregulars still at large decided that this occasion was one too many and, consequently, tore up a part of the railway near Creeslough, leaving the massive crowd of travellers stranded in the wilderness for most of the day. Such actions did not endear themselves nor their cause to the local population deprived of a day's celebration.¹¹²

The train brought scores of National Teachers and secondary school students to learn Irish at new college centres in Rann na Feirsde and Gweedore and Archbishop O'Donnell forgot old sores when he came from Armagh to address the National Teachers in Cloughaneely Irish college and spent a few days in their midst.¹¹³

Charlie Daly, however, was not willing to give up the fight against the provisional government and the National Army so the Burtonport Extension became a very central objective of operations though the reason for this action is difficult to fathom other than the fact that it was an easy target. On the morning of 10 September, a party tore up the railway line at Loughagher between Creeslough and Dunfanaghy. Ganger McGeehan was threatened and told not to repair the line but it was repaired and trains were soon running again.¹¹⁴ The railway wires were cut between Creeslough and Dunfanaghy on the night of 9-10 September. The changed scene in northwest Donegal in favour of the Dublin Government and national troops was soon apparent because scouts operating in this area got the names of the five men who cut the wires and orders were issued for their arrest. Their names were published in the *Londonderry Sentinel* as Mick Gallagher, William Gallagher, Mick Curran, of Carnmaddy and Ned McGee and Joe McFadden, Feymore, Creeslough.¹¹⁵ On the night of 21 September the railway line near Gweedore

¹¹² *LS*, 12 Sept. 1922, p. 5; *DJ*, 8 Sept. 1922, p. 6.

¹¹³ *DJ*, 22 Sept. 1922, p. 6.

¹¹⁴ *LS*, 17 Sept. 1922.

¹¹⁵ *LS*, 17 Sept. 1922.

station was blocked with large boulders and again near the same place on the night of 26 September. On 24 September, O'Malley reported on Donegal: 'No organization worth speaking of'. Eventually, in early November Lehane was ordered by O'Malley to abandon Donegal as there were only five or six men active in a flying column there.¹¹⁶

The rebel leader in West Donegal, Cork native Charlie Daly, did not make it that far. He, along with his men, had been captured in Dunlewey, underneath Errigle Mountain, on 2 November 1922 and they were taken into custody in Drumboe Castle.¹¹⁷ Captured with him on that night were two Kerry rebels, two from Derry and two from Donegal.¹¹⁸ On the night of 3 November 1922 Kilmacrenan Railway goods store was raided by a column of the IRA, nine in number. The following morning troops from Falcarragh raided four suspected houses in the district but no trace of Irregulars could be found. 'On 7 November 1922 a column of the IRA, armed with rifles, was seen at Cashelnagor Station. Troops from Falcarragh went out to search for them and they captured two active 'Reds', Edward Gallagher, Meencarrick and Barney Gallagher, Meencarrick. 'Troops raided the house of Miss A. Coyle, Killult¹¹⁹ who was then a prisoner in Buncrana Barracks but nothing was found in it'. The National Army tightened its grip bit by bit with constant arrests and harassment of IRA until many of them were on the run. Slowly the county was being won for the government.

On the 9 September the national troops started leaving Letterkenny to be replaced by fifty Civic Guards who ventured to northwest Donegal in the following weeks. New conventions were being established with the first foundations of the new state.¹²⁰ The *Londonderry Sentinel* reported that 'good

¹¹⁶ Hopkinson, p. 162.

¹¹⁷ Drumboe Castle was the former home of Lord Lifford and is situated outside Ballybofey.

¹¹⁸ Military Archives, Dublin, Donegal reports, 2 Nov. 1922; *LS*, 4 Nov. 1922, p. 8.

¹¹⁹ Miss A. Coyle was in fact Eithne Coyle who had been holding up the trains with a revolver.

¹²⁰ *DJ*, 9 Sept. 1922, p. 5.

sense' was being shown throughout the county through the establishment of the court system.¹²¹ District courts were held at Malin, Buncrana, Burnfoot, Rathmullan, Churchill, Ramelton, Milford by District Justices Walsh and Johnson and tributes were paid to the Civic Guards. Justice Louis Walsh sat at Dungloe Court on Wednesday 20 December. Protracted disputes between Keadue neighbours took up the full day. The Civic Guards then brought some cases at which fines were imposed.¹²² Ann Bonner, an old women in the Keadue dispute, gave her evidence in Irish. Solicitor Kelly protested at this 'dodge' stating that she was capable of speaking English and insisted that the language of the court be English but Justice Louis Walsh said she was entitled to give her evidence in Irish and informed the court that he was well able to understand her. Others then gave evidence in Irish also.¹²³ This created a very favourable impression on the local populace. Similar courts were held in Gweedore and Falcarragh although the remnants of the Irregulars in Gweedore were determined to make a last stand against the symbols of the new state. Armed men partly wrecked the old RIC barracks at Middletown, Gweedore which had been occupied by the Civic Guards. The guard was told to leave as it was intended to burn the building. Four bicycles belonging to the guards were taken. On the same day the commodious building at Bunbeg owned by Major Irwin and used by the district justices at their first sitting in the locality was completely destroyed.¹²⁴ Clearly the new state still had some hurdles to overcome.

Likewise, the champion of the Rosses, James F. O'Donnell was fighting his own private war but found the new state a difficult entity to cope with. He had been highlighting the cause of famine, hunger and distress in the county

¹²¹ *LS*, 9 Nov. 1922, p. 6.

¹²² *DJ*, 27 Dec. 1922, p. 3.

¹²³ *DJ*, 27 Dec. 1922, p. 7.

¹²⁴ *DJ*, 27 Dec. 1922, p. 6.

council for almost a year and despite promises from government, red tape and officialdom had prevented any money or relief reaching the needy. When he attended the August meeting of the county council in Lifford he thought that success had finally been achieved when it was announced that the grants had been agreed by the government. A £20,000 relief grant had been allocated to Tirconaill for relief of distress. It was apportioned among the rural district councils as follows: Dunfanaghy £4,000; Inishowen, £2,000; Letterkenny £1,000; Milford £3,000; Ballyshannon £1,000; Donegal £1,000; Glenties £7,000; Stranorlar £1,000. The sum of £5,000 of this grant would be placed in the hands of the treasurer without delay. However, many conditions were attached regarding the supervision of the rural district councils, the records, wages payments, etc. All were to be centralized and controlled from Lifford because the department told the county council that they were not satisfied that there was proper supervision over road expenditure.¹²⁵ O'Donnell had to return home unsure of the progress of the bureaucrats and, by the end of September, there were still no roads' programme or relief measures in northwest Donegal as officialdom became bogged down in mountains of paper in order to ensure the new state that there were no traces of corruption.¹²⁶ Obviously the situation had not improved a couple of months later because a letter appeared in the *Derry Journal* in December stating that 'a hateful bureaucracy is asserting itself, officialdom is tightening its grip in the saddle and instead of the hard-pressed ratepayers obtaining relief and destitute and sick poor being catered for, the whole thing has descended into a scramble among a multiplicity of job-hunters on expenditure in Tirconaill'.¹²⁷

With the roads programme in disarray it was no wonder that the car, and lorry and bus owners in County Donegal came together in September 1922

¹²⁵ *DJ*, 23 Aug. 1922, p. 2.

¹²⁶ *DJ*, 27 Sept. 1922, p. 4.

¹²⁷ *DJ*, 1 Dec. 1922, p. 8.

and formed the Donegal Motor Owners Association to agitate, as a body, against the government's intention to impose £12 road tax on each hackney car, £20 on private cars and £100 on lorries. Their anger was especially strong in the northwest where the roads, by the end of 1922, were almost impassable, having suffered from lack of maintenance, cutbacks in money allocation and the depredations of three years of trenching and bridge destruction by those intent on building the new Ireland. It was good to have the Burtonport train running in such circumstances.¹²⁸

While human effort had conspired against the Burtonport Railway for many months, nature now lent a hand in furthering its misfortune. A train left Derry on Christmas morning 1922 and made its way through a storm towards Burtonport. Nearing Dunfanaghy Road station where the line crossed an embankment, the coach next the engine was lifted completely off the tracks by the wind and the couplings snapped. The coach toppled over and crashed down the steep embankment. The only occupant was a boy who was able to crawl out of the wreckage. The second coach which contained five or six passengers was toppled over also but was held from tumbling down the embankment by a wall. Luckily, none of the passengers was injured. However, the incident struck more fear into an already sceptical public and did little for the confidence of the railway management or its passengers.¹²⁹

But worse was to follow. On 7 February 1923, the 8.30 a.m train was making its way from Burtonport and near the 68½ mile post at Cruckakeehan, between Kincasslagh Road and Crolly, as it was about to enter the cutting beside Owen Sharkey's house, a gust of wind lifted two carriages and a bogey wagon off the line and dropped them sideways down the bank. Only the engine, driven by James Deeney, and the third brake van were left on the line,

¹²⁸ *LS.*, 23 Sept. 1922, p. 6.

¹²⁹ *LS.*, 28 Dec. 1922, p. 2; *DJ.*, 27 Dec. 1922, p. 5.

separated by the gap where the other carriages had been. The frightened passengers gathered together in the brake van before being taken into Sharkey's house where they were comforted and given tea. Deeney took the engine and travelled to Crolly for help. When he returned with help the brake van was also off the line. In the weeks that followed the wreckage was set on fire and destroyed.¹³⁰

Despite these travails the Burtonport Extension employees had their minds firmly set on their own livelihoods throughout the winter months of 1922–3. Articles had appeared in the press demanding that National Union of Railwaymen headquarters should be transferred from Derry to Donegal because 'if the coterie in Derry of liegemen of the capitalist government in Belfast think they can support partition and, at the same time, pull the strings in Tirconnaill, they are mistaken. If they want partition let them have their fill of it and, if they will not agree to transfer, let new branches be formed without delay'.¹³¹ However, the railwaymen stuck together. The NUR met in Dublin and announced resolutely that there would be no return to the pre-war situation. They further demanded that the government should take the railways under its control immediately. All sections of the L&LSR NUR met in Derry and passed a resolution confirming their 'emphatic protest against the humiliating conditions which they [railway companies] propose to inflict'. They passed a further resolution demanding that they be brought up to the same standard as their brother railwaymen on all Irish railways. Despite their own precarious position they were totally against any concessions whatsoever.¹³²

By the end of December, the Dublin government was having talks with the railway unions but without much success. The government was reluctant

¹³⁰ *LS*, 9 Feb. 1923.

¹³¹ *DJ*, 13 Dec 1922, p. 6.

¹³² *DJ*, 15 Dec. 1922, p. 3

to get over-involved because of the magnitude of the problem. The most that the Joseph McGrath, Minister for Labour,¹³³ would concede was, 'if they [government] were committed to anything it was unification rather than nationalisation'. The unions replied that such a policy would make the settlement of wages and working conditions much more difficult. When queries were raised about the boundary question which was a very real issue for many railways operating within Northern Ireland as well as the Free State, McGrath refused to answer. The Dáil feared that it might be saddled with an impossible burden if it took the railways under its wing without, firstly, having compelled the railway companies and the workers to agree to suitable terms and settle their differences.¹³⁴

In the first days of January, a national rail strike was averted by the government conceding that the problem would be discussed fully when the Dail met on 5 January 1923. At that sitting, Joseph McGrath split hairs by being in favour of taking the railways under government control but, again, he ruled out nationalisation. His only concession was that the control over the railways would be exercised on a 'week by week' basis until a more definite solution was found.¹³⁵

A meeting of railwaymen in Derry gave much support for one central body to control all railways north and south. Meetings in Letterkenny for CDRJC, and at Creeslough for the Burtonport Extension men, discussed these problems as well as their grievances which were recorded.¹³⁶ The Letterkenny & Burtonport NUR branch railwaymen held a meeting in the Town Hall, Letterkenny on Sunday 14 January and there was a large attendance from all

¹³³ McGrath was Minister for labour and Minister for Industry and Commerce.

¹³⁴ *LS*, 21 Dec. 1922, p. 7.

¹³⁵ *DJ*, 1 Jan. 1923, p. 5 ; *DJ*, 5 Jan. 1923, p. 7.

¹³⁶ *DJ*, 15 Jan. 1923, p. 8.

grades. The secretary, John Delap, told the meeting that the NUR branch had 100 strong members and no laggards. Motions passed were:

1. Thanks to Tom Johnson TD for the able manner by which he vindicated their cause before the Railway Commission and in the Dáil. That we render him moral and financial support in the cause of Labour.
2. That the nefarious grouping system be abolished where men on the light railways were receiving ten per cent less wages than men on broad gauge lines.
3. Demand for nationalization of Irish railways: 'That we consider unification but a change of name to enable the old capitalistic gang to carry on gambling in stocks and shares with impunity'.¹³⁷

It was in these conditions that Trew Colquhoun, the new chairman of the L&LSR, prepared to face the shareholders on the last day of February 1923. The county was reasonably quiet with the Civic Guards settled in almost every barracks in the county and the court system working well. The threat from the remnant bands of Irregulars had diminished against the railway to such an extent that trains could run normally. Admittedly, there were unsavoury incidents such as the murder in his own home of John Gallagher, Gweedore, because of political conflict.¹³⁸

Tirconail County Council discussed rumours that executions were to take place at Drumboe Castle but Mr Farrell, local government inspector, said no such thing was going to happen. The councillors were happy to hear that there was no truth in it. Likewise, Dunfanaghy RDC heard the rumour and was perturbed.¹³⁹ Inisboffin Island in Cloughaneely and Carrigart were suffering from severe distress and meetings were being held about the

¹³⁷ *DJ*, 19 Jan. 1923, p. 8.

¹³⁸ *DJ*, 22 Jan. 1923, p. 3.

¹³⁹ *DJ*, 21 Feb. 1923, p. 5.

inadequacy of the government's relief schemes.¹⁴⁰ Meetings were also taking place complaining about Tirconaill County Council spending money 'like drunken sailors' with accusations that there were too many road overseers and too many rate collectors who were wasting taxes, most of which were paid by farmers who disapproved of the county council raising salaries and incurring other reckless expenditure.¹⁴¹ The Boundary Commission had still to sit and determine which side of the divide Derry City and its hinterland would fall upon and consequently, the fate of the L&LSR system with it as well as the custom barriers which would be erected between the Free State and Northern Ireland and which would cause major problems for the L&LSR. As Colquhoun would have pondered all of these issues he would also have been aware that once again, Sir John McFarland and the Derry Workers Council were at loggerheads because of Sir John's demand that wages be drastically cut and the working day substantially lengthened, much to the disgust of the council who accused him of 'trying to smash their wages down to a miserable pittance'. It seems as if some things never changed.¹⁴²

However, Colquhoun had to tell his shareholders about much change from the old days. The year 1922 had been, from a financial point of view, the worst year the company has ever experienced. Gross revenue was actually short of meeting the gross expenses for the year by no less a sum than £22,637. Gross receipts had increased 35.5 per cent since 1913 but expenses had gone up by 72.65 per cent. The wages problem was such that, economically, the company could not earn them so long as the trade and conditions of the country remained in their present unfavourable condition.¹⁴³ He continued that, in the first six months of 1922, the L&LSR was terribly

¹⁴⁰ *DJ*, 7 Feb. 1923, p. 3; 21 Feb 1923, p. 2.

¹⁴¹ *DJ*, 21 Jan. 1923, p. 3.

¹⁴² *DJ*, 22 Jan. 1923, p. 4.

¹⁴³ *LS*, 1 Mar. 1923, p. 5.

harassed by continued direct and indirect stoppages of traffic and other matters, all of which resulted in considerable expense or further loss of traffic while, at the same time, the general expenses of the company could not be curtailed. Two fires at the headquarters in Derry during the year – how they originated could not be found out - plus two serious derailments within six weeks at Crolly and Dunfanaghy incurred serious financial loss. £26,000 had been transferred from the government compensation account to meet deficiencies in working and the payment of fixed interest and a modest dividend. He told the shareholders that all the L&LSR lines must close down if this continued because the trade of County Donegal was not such, at the present time, as to yield a revenue to the company in keeping with the present cost of working. Again he stressed that the present wages were more than the company's present earnings could stand. When he looked around for opportunities, he found none. 'The fishing industry all around the Donegal coast served by your railway has during the past year been a complete failure'.¹⁴⁴

Nor did he have much hope for the long-term future either.

The future position of railways is today an unknown quantity – they are, as it were, in the melting pot and how they will emerge from it is not for me to say. Serious effects are bound to accrue to the traders of Derry because of the customs barriers. The business of the company as a carrying concern is likely to be very much disturbed and it may well be that we shall be put to considerable expense and inconvenience by the erection of customs barriers. Where it may end I dare not, at present, prophecy.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ *LS*, 1 Mar. 1923, p. 5.

The dividend was again reduced with 5 per cent paid on preference shares and 3½ per cent on ordinary shares. Sir John McFarland told the meeting that he was appalled at the results and then had his usual rant about high wages and short hours.¹⁴⁶

A stockholder wrote in the *Derry Journal* some days later about the future for the L&LSR railways. 'Trade won't be got back in these depressing times so government intervention is the only cure. The L&LSR own only twelve miles of railway and the other seventy-eight are owned by the Irish Free State now. Whereas Derry is dependent on Donegal, the latter is not dependent on Derry'.¹⁴⁷

But this dependency was now being severely questioned when the Dublin government announced that customs would be established on the county frontier between Donegal and Derry for operation on 1 April 1923 because the Boundary Commission had not yet established the final border.¹⁴⁸ Some days later, Sir James Craig, the Northern Ireland Prime Minister, stated that no action on custom's barriers would be taken at that time and asked for a conference between London, Belfast and Dublin to decide the issue. At this time, Unionists in Northern Ireland were predicting the early bankruptcy of the Irish Free State because of 'their ill-advised action'.¹⁴⁹ Despite a delegation to William T. Cosgrave from the chambers of commerce of the Irish Free State against the customs barriers the Dublin government were not to be moved on the issue.¹⁵⁰

On 20 March, the Irish Commissioners of Inland Revenue announced that from midnight on 31 March manufactured motor cars and bicycles imported into the Irish Free State would be subject to 33 1/3 per cent ad

¹⁴⁶ *LS*, 1 Mar. 1923, p. 5.

¹⁴⁷ *DJ*, 12 Mar. 1923, p. 7.

¹⁴⁸ *DJ*, 2 Mar. 1923, p. 5.

¹⁴⁹ *DJ*, 7 Mar. 1923, p. 7.

¹⁵⁰ *DJ*, 16 Mar. 1923, p. 2.

valorem duty.¹⁵¹ During the week prior to 1 April heavy consignments of motorcars were landed at Derry and rushed over to Donegal.¹⁵² The whole customs operation passed surprisingly smoothly from the very first day and the merchandise coming across the border from Derry was so heavy that the L&LSR had to put on extra trains.¹⁵³

However, the implications of the new arrangements were not immediately apparent to everyone. One Derrymen went for his habitual stroll across the border to Muff with his camera which was examined by an Irish customs officer who remarked that the lens was a good one and would be liable to £3 duty. The shocked man told the official that he was just out for his usual walk and did not intend to stay the night. He was allowed to pass.¹⁵⁴

But the customs frontier signalled the end of the road for a once intrepid businessman in Burtonport. O'Donnell's Hotel which had been constructed to avail of the traffic and business provided by the railway at Burtonport in 1903 was put up for auction by James F. O'Donnell on 4 April. O'Donnell had seen the good times but, in latter years, had also witnessed the return of poverty and distress with the collapse of business, tourism, fishing and remitted earnings. With the customs barriers being erected he obviously felt that the hotel business had little future for he did not even advertise its future as a hotel. The advertisement read: 'In view of the fact that customs barriers are now about to be set up betwixt the Free State and the Six Counties, this hotel and premises would be admirably suited either as a wholesale depot or distributing centre for West Donegal, a matter that will be urgently needed on account of the foregoing change'.¹⁵⁵ Unless there were sudden changes the

¹⁵¹ *DJ*, 23 Mar. 1923, p. 5.

¹⁵² *DJ*, 2 Apr. 1923, p. 4.

¹⁵³ *DJ*, 2 Apr. 1923, p. 4.

¹⁵⁴ *DJ*, 2 Apr. 1923, p. 4.

¹⁵⁵ *DJ*, 4 Apr. 1923, p. 1.

railway would be bringing few visitors or businessmen to Burtonport anymore.

Change on other railway lines had been slow also. The period fixed by the Free State for the railway-grouping scheme expired on Saturday 31 March 1923. Only four lines with headquarters in Cork made arrangements to group. These were the Cork & Bandon, the Cork & Macroom, the Cork, Blackrock & Passage Railway and the Cork & Muskerry Railway which arranged to merge into one group as the Great Southern & Western Railway.¹⁵⁶ Fears were being expressed in the papers that the Midland Great Western Railway was going to group with Great Northern Railway, with the consequence that traffic, especially livestock, might be diverted from Dublin to Northern Ireland. There was also talk of the Clare Railways merging with Great Southern and Western Railway.¹⁵⁷ However, despite many rumours, there was no sign of courtship between the L&LSR and the CDJRC. That would have to wait for a better time.

Such a better future might have been expected when, on 27 April, a unilateral ceasefire was declared by the IRA and a couple of days later, De Valera ordered the suspension of hostile attacks. Despite some unsavoury incidents in Donegal during March when Sergeant Cannon of the Free State army was murdered in Creeslough and four Republican prisoners, Charlie Daly, Firies, Co. Cork, Tim O'Sullivan and Dan Enright, both from Listowel Co. Kerry and Sean Larkin from Derry were shot on 14 March 1923 by the Free State in retaliation, the county was reasonably calm.¹⁵⁸ The *Derry Journal* stated that 'They [the shot prisoners in Drumboe Castle] had been sent forth from their native Kerry to boost resistance at a time when even some of the pro-Treaty cabinet agreed that Collins' policy of assisting the IRA in the

¹⁵⁶ *DJ*, 2 Apr. 1923, p. 4.

¹⁵⁷ *LS*, 15 Mar. 1923, p. 8; *DJ*, 4 Apr. 1923, p. 7.

¹⁵⁸ *LS*, 15 Mar. 1923, p. 4; *DJ*, 16 Mar. 1923, p. 8.

north was the right one'.¹⁵⁹ The *Derry Journal* reported in an editorial in late April about Donegal that, 'in no part of the Free State has the return to peace been so rapid'.¹⁶⁰

The people had moved away from war. Other problems and different interests attracted their attention by the time of the ceasefire. Meetings were taking place throughout the county complaining about the rates. There were letters in the papers calling for the abolition of Tirconnaill County Council because of its spendthrift ways and its 'jobs for the boys' mentality. Bishop O'Donnell had been replaced by Dr William McNeely, a man who had spent two years as a British army chaplain in France.¹⁶¹ Great days were easily forgotten when the last kick was administered to the dignity of the departed great prelate O'Donnell by the burning of his ancestral home at Kilraine, Glenties because of his failure to intervene on behalf of Charlie Daly and his three Republican friends who were shot at Drumboe.¹⁶² And among the ordinary people, the reports of distress and suffering continued to make headlines though some relief might have been in sight when emigration started to proceed at pace again. The new Civic Guards were in the barracks and, as well as keeping the peace, they were making a reputation for themselves by providing skill and muscle for the new GAA teams entering the Donegal championship in late 1922 and 1923 and Maghera, Dungloe from the northwest, were unlucky not to proceed further than the semi-finals of the county championship in March 1923.¹⁶³ Letters continued to appear in the papers about the future of the Irish language but one had the feeling that the subject was already becoming tiresome. Some people might have wondered about the 'Boundary Commission in the fog' and Nationalists might have

¹⁵⁹ Nollaig Ó Gadhra, *Civil War in Connacht* (Cork, 1999), p. 76.

¹⁶⁰ *DJ*, 20 Apr. 1923, p. 5.

¹⁶¹ *DJ*, 24 May 1923, p. 4.

¹⁶² *LS*, 23 Mar. 1923, p. 7.

¹⁶³ *DJ*, 26 Feb 1923, p. 8.

fretted about the delays in its working. It seemed as if the new Ireland was settling down to a certain mundanity.

In this atmosphere, the L&LSR would have to find its new niche. It still struggled with its split personality when it applied for a bill in the British parliament in April 1923 much to the annoyance of Sean Milroy who raised the issue in the Dáil asking Blythe was he aware that the L&LSR were introducing a bill in the English parliament authorising them to borrow money while only having two miles of railway in the Six Counties. The wily northerner, Blythe, ran from the subject as quickly as possible.¹⁶⁴ Perhaps this was a signal of the treatment to be meted out by the Dáil to the Burtonport Extension in the new Ireland during the coming years. Having just about survived the wars the question was what would the peace bring?

¹⁶⁴ *LS*, 2 Mar. 1923, p. 6.

CHAPTER 10

FIRST YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

The first great effusive celebration of the new peace within the county now generally named Tirchonaill was organized around the G. A. A. football match between Tirchonaill and Derry on Sunday, 17 June 1923. This event was the platform for presenting the new order to the people of the county. Special trains were laid on by the L&LSR from Derry, Bunrana and Burtonport and from the east and south of the county the CDRJC arranged specials to the Letterkenny venue. The Civic Guards and the Free State army were conspicuous throughout the town in their new uniforms and General Eoin O'Duffy, accompanied by General Hogan, cut important poses as they were congratulated by well-wishers and admirers during their walkabout. As the hour for kick-off neared the four Pro-Treaty Teachta Dála, Joe Sweeney, Dr J. P. McGinley, P. J. McGoldrick and P. J. Ward, were prominent in the 6,000 strong crowd.¹

The trends of the future were obvious also in that the streets of Letterkenny found difficulty in providing parking for more than 200 motorcars 'of every class'. General O'Duffy addressed both teams in Irish in the middle of the playing field and got ready to throw in the ball to start the game.² However, such an auspicious occasion had not counted on the foibles of the Burtonport train.

The crowded carriages required two engines to pull the long train on its way from Burtonport to Letterkenny but, after having slowed down to cross the Owencarrow Viaduct, the train was unable to gather sufficient momentum

¹ *DD*, 22 June 1923.

² *Ibid.*

to negotiate the gradient at Barnes Gap. After several efforts the journey was abandoned and the train reversed back to Creeslough station. The carriages were divided in two and an engine allocated to each half. The first section headed for Letterkenny and the supporters reached the park in time for the match. They informed the G.A.A. officials of the train difficulties and the match was delayed for a period but had to eventually start when there was no sign of the second part of the Burtonport train.³ When it eventually arrived, the disgruntled fans discovered that the match was over and Derry had won by a point despite many accusations that their team was mostly composed of full-time soccer players with no loyalty to the G.A.A. During the following month, the Inishowen delegates who had transferred from the Derry County G.A.A. board to Tirchonaill G.A.A. board found themselves having a crisis of conscience about their heritage and argued that Inishowen had never been historically part of Tirchonaill and advocated that the county name be changed back to Donegal. The change was eventually agreed by the GAA.⁴

During these same weeks following the end of the civil war, the campaigns for the general election were making headlines. At a Republican meeting held in Donegal Town Maude Gonne McBride addressed the very large crowd from the platform. Sam O'Flaherty, the Republican fighter, Joseph O'Doherty who was in the USA at the time, Edward Gallen who was imprisoned in Newbridge, Peadar O'Donnell who was a prisoner in Mountjoy and Brian Monaghan, a prisoner in Finner Camp, were selected to stand for election.⁵ This concentration on men who were imprisoned or who had fought for the cause ensured a strong emotional content for the Republican side. The Republican organization had grown phenomenally during 1923 while the

³ *DD*, 22 June 1923 and 29 June 1923.

⁴ *DD*, 17 Aug. 1923.

⁵ *DD*, 24 Aug. 1923.

Fig. 48 First count in Donegal General Election 1923.

Candidate	Party	First count votes
Major Myles	Independent	6,954
P J Ward	Treaty	5,513
Eugene Doherty	Treaty	5,261
P J McGoldrick	Treaty	3,743
Barry Monaghan	Anti Treaty	3,678
John White	Farmers	3,673
Peadar O'Donnell	Anti Treaty	3,621
P. McFadden	Treaty	3,492
Joseph Doherty	Anti Treaty	3,213
Denis Houston	Official Labour	2,456
Hugh Law	Farmers	1,718
Sam O'Flaherty	Anti Treaty	1,647
H J Kelly	Treaty	1,489
M McNelis	Ratepayers	1,432
Neil Faulkner	Farmers	1,209
A Lowry	Farmers	1,127
Dan McMenamin	Independent	927
E Gallen	Anti Treaty	908
Henry McGowan	Independent Labour	669

Source: Donegal Democrat, 22 August 1923 and 31 Aug. 1923.

newly formed Cumann na nGaedheal party organization in Donegal was one of the weakest in the country.⁶ Cumann na nGaedheal took big advertisements in the papers and asked for support from 'all who stand by the government party; all who want order, stability, progress and democracy; all who want the boundary question, financial relations and other questions settled to our

⁶ John M. Regan, *The Irish counter revolution 1921 – 1936* (Dublin, 1999) p. 158.

satisfaction'.⁷ The quota was 5,859 and only Major Myles was elected on the first count with a strong Protestant/Unionist vote. Others elected on later counts in the following order were P. J. Ward (Treaty), Eugene Doherty (Treaty), John White (Farmers), P. McFadden (Treaty), P. J. McGoldrick (Treaty), Peadar O'Donnell (Republican) and Joseph Doherty (Republican), these latter two without reaching the quota. There was a heavy pattern of cross voting with a Treatyite getting number 1 and a Republican getting number 2 and vice versa. Labour got votes from all sides.⁸ Cumann na nGaedheal with four deputies elected must have been disappointed that they only achieved 37 per cent of the vote. By the end of 1924, the £300 debt incurred by them in this election was still outstanding.⁹

One of the features of the 1923 election in Donegal was the almost complete avoidance of local issues during the campaign. The stability of government and relations with Britain dominated on the Pro-Treaty side while the oath, political prisoners, and the Northern Ireland government occupied much of the Republican rhetoric.¹⁰ Despite the many severe problems affecting Tirchonail society at that particular time, none received the attention of the parties except in the most general terms within broad party policy outlines. And the problems of Tirchonail were many.

There was little improvement in prospects for the seasonal migrants with the continuing depression in England and Scotland. Those who went and found jobs were stretched to earn enough for their own keep and their missing wages were sorely felt back in northwest Donegal. The young men suffered most from the Scottish recession for they were unable to find employment in public works and often had to return home. Consequently, the demand turned

⁷ *DD*, 17 Aug. 1923.

⁸ *DD*, 31 Aug. 1923.

⁹ Regan, *The Irish counter revolution 1921 – 1936*, p. 205.

¹⁰ *DD*, 24 Aug. 1923.

to the children who left in gangs on the Burtonport Extension for the Derry boat for the 'tattie-hokin' season in Lowland and Border Scotland. It became a normal feature of life that one parent, normally the father but quite often the mother, took four or five of the eldest children, aged from eight years upwards and went to the potato picking with them leaving the other parent to work the land at home and mind the younger children, often with the help of grandparents or kin. This became regular practice in the poorer families in Gweedore and the Rosses, especially on Aranmore Island.¹¹ The hiring fairs continued to attract large numbers of children during these first years of independence as well.

The herring had deserted the inshore waters of the Donegal coast due principally to the intense fishing by large English, Scottish and French trawlers which scooped up the large shoals of herring in the deep, uninterrupted by any Free State patrol boats, much to chagrin of the local population.¹² These boats didn't bother landing the catches at local ports anymore but steamed to the larger ports of Scotland where they were assured of efficient transport and good prices which could no longer be guaranteed in northwest Donegal. 1923 was one of the poorest years for salmon as well. There were seven large motor trawlers at Bunbeg quayside, each costing £2,000 but the fish had deserted the home waters and the two greatest markets, Russia and Germany, were destroyed after the war. An import duty of ten shillings a barrel on herring going into the USA proved to be a further serious handicap.¹³

The carpet factories in Annagry and Crolly remained closed and despite many rumours of their reopening the news that Mortons were to terminate the

¹¹ Grace Sweeney, Bunaman Annagry. Recorded by the author from her on 20 October 2003. She named all the members from neighbouring houses who went to the 'tatties' every year. James Ward, Kerrytown, in the Rosses was just one father who took four or more of his children annually with him to Scotland.

¹² *Dail Debates*, 10 Oct. 1923. Deputy Whyte, Donegal.

¹³ *DD*, 1 June 1923.

carpet manufacture completely dashed hopes in early October 1923. The *Donegal Democrat* spoke of 'a hard winter ahead' with the only option being emigration.¹⁴ The first crops of potatoes were poor due to the heavy rains during the year and before the winter months were very old there were reports of death from hunger in Gweedore and whole families being removed to the County Home in Stranorlar.¹⁵

The Irish hierarchy devoted their 1924 Lenten pastorals to the perceived evils prevalent in modern Irish society with Cardinal Logue leading his fellow bishops about the scandal of women's dress and most objectionable dances and the bishop of Clogher, Dr McKenna denouncing foreign dances, unclean pictures and filthy literature. However, Bishop McNeely of Raphoe was forced to break ranks and devote his pastoral letter to distress, the necessity of employment, and the condemnation of licensed traders and poiteen.¹⁶ His message to the government was clear:

And here let it be noted that any measures of public economy, however wise in some aspect, that react harshly on those already reduced to want, whether young or old, will be like opening a vein in the Gaeltacht to let the life blood ebb away. A people inured to hard toil does not want wholesale eleemosynary relief; it wants remunerative employment. Yet, we must not insist on nice distinctions at a time when children so dear to Christ go cold and hungry.¹⁷

Again in 1925, with the Donegal situation no better, Bishop McNeely felt obliged to break from his fellow bishops by removing the obligation to fast or abstain except on Ash Wednesday, the three Ember days and on the Fridays of Lent before speaking passionately about 'emigration in Donegal due to panic'.¹⁸

¹⁴ *DD*, 5 Oct. 1923.

¹⁵ *DD*, 28 Dec. 1923.

¹⁶ *DJ*, 3 Mar. 1924, p. 5.

¹⁷ *DD*, 7 Mar. 1924.

¹⁸ *DJ*, 23 Feb. 1925, p. 7.

Permanent emigration became a principal feature of society. Grace Sweeney remembers that during the twenties it was the custom for groups to depart for America on a weekly basis and the neighbours all knew the names of the White Star Line boats, such as the *Cameronia* and *Transylvania* and the conditions pertaining to each. Canon McCafferty, Raphoe diocesan chancellor and leader of the AOH in Donegal, spoke in 1927 about the emigration flood stating that 'There is not a priest in Tirchonail who is not deluged with applications from the young people of his parish for certificates of character when on their way to Dublin for passports to proceed to America'. He did not think that, in the memory of the people, there was a greater exodus from Donegal than during the twelve months of 1927. He stated that the government could not escape entire responsibility for that state of affairs because the county was neglected.¹⁹

It was in this depressed environment that the Burtonport Extension continued to struggle in an effort to recapture the great days before the war. If the management had any thoughts that life in a peaceful Free State under native parliament in Dublin would be easier and more productive they were soon disabused as they learned that friends within the new political environment were few and many were willing to criticize. Further, they discovered that they could no longer get their workers to dance enthusiastically to the tunes of the old ways any more.

There was a lightning strike called in September 1923 by the Railway Clerks Association over the dismissal of two clerks on the line, Elliot and Blain, both having been employed by the railway company for a number of years at their offices in Pennyburn. The general feeling in the hinterland of the railway was that the L&LSR did little to resolve the strike and were

¹⁹ DD, 9 Apr. 1927.

reverting to old ways in trying to teach the men a lesson.²⁰ A meeting of Tírchonáill Workers Council in Letterkenny passed a motion,

that this council view with alarm the great inconvenience and possible suffering to the people served by the Letterkenny & Burtonport Extension Railway which the closing down of the line for any length of time would involve; further that the Minister for Commerce and Transport have the service [Burtonport Extension] worked by the Strabane & Letterkenny Railway which has a transfer siding at Letterkenny and they could easily utilise same in running a direct service between Letterkenny and Burtonport.²¹

The *Donegal Democrat* was scathing in an editorial about the Burtonport Extension.

Surely the patience of the people of Tírchonáill is being sorely tried by the spasmodic working of their railway system. After three years of irregular train service, closing and reopening portions of the line for which the railway management could not be blamed, one would expect those concerned in the transport system to put their shoulders to the wheel in common endeavour to restore our former prosperity. Instead, there appears to be some serious discontent among the employees, which every little while reaches a stage of ebullition. Only seven weeks ago, on the eve of the General Holiday, a strike was declared and thousands of holiday makers were disappointed and, as from last night, the whole line has been closed down again The weather has robbed us in a large measure of the hope felt for the crops. It is common enough at the moment to see the corn floating about in waterlogged fields. The fishing was to start along the coast about now and concerted efforts were being made to affect a good season's fishing and several itinerant fish-buyers have arrived at Burtonport and Downings already and as the fishing had miserably failed for the last two years their advent was warmly welcomed. Without the trains the fishing will be a financial loss to everyone. All the produce is destined for distant English and Irish markets and if the transport system is abandoned the work of the fishers is hopeless.²²

²⁰ *DD*, 29 Sept. 1923.

²¹ *DD*, 29 Sept. 1923.

²² *DD*, 28 Sept. 1923.

A meeting of merchants took place at Burtonport on Friday night, 21 September when great astonishment and regret was expressed at the harsh action of closing the railway because of the strike. Telegrams of protest were dispatched, one to the railway company.²³

However, Tom Johnson, leader of the Irish Labour Party, gave a further insight into the railway problem when he told the Dáil that the two clerks of long service had been sacked in August because, it was stated that there was no work for them. But these two and the stationmasters on the line were being deprived of their annual holiday leave because of staff shortages. 79 per cent of the stationmasters and 40 per cent of the clerks had not even then obtained their annual holidays for the year as late as 3 September. He accused Mr Hunt, along with his son, of running the railway without supervision and without responsibility. Johnson concluded:

It seems the manager is endeavouring to force the hand of the state to do something for the company to save it and save him. In a rather academic notice the L&LSR management declared that the Railway Clerks Association disputed the right of the [L&LSR] company to dismiss these men adding that no suitable work could be found for them at any part of the line'.²⁴

The L&LSR management said it hoped to provide a limited service on the Burtonport line but stated that it depended on how the staff would respond to this wish from a sense of public duty. Senator J. T. Farrell, secretary of the Railway Clerks Association, tried hard to negotiate with the L&LSR but he announced that they refused to meet him, and that Henry Hunt had avoided him throughout.²⁵

²³ *DD*, 28 Sept. 1923.

²⁴ *Dail Debates*, vol. 5, 91, 25 Sept. 1923. Tom Johnson, leader of the Labour Party.

²⁵ *DD*, 28 Sept. 1923.

Deputy William Davin (Laois/Offaly), Labour spokesman on transport affairs, spoke in the Dáil on 25 September 1923 about the L&LSR:

It appeared to me that the management of the [L&LSR] company then responsible had the idea at a certain time that the Free State would not function and that it was therefore their duty to do everything they could, holding the views they held, to encourage and support those who would be responsible for the bursting up of the Free State. I am reliably informed that any officials of the company who at certain stages of the early portion of last year were known to be favourable to the Free State and other supporters of the Treaty were interfered with in a manner that they would not be interfered with by the management of any other railway company. If a member of the staff who was a supporter of the Free State, made himself any way vocal in regard to his support of the present government, he was immediately transferred to Derry city where he was put under the control of those running the Belfast Parliament.²⁶

Afraid that the burden would fall upon itself, Tírchonail County Council wrote to Joe McGrath, the Minister for Industry and Commerce, raising many of the old sores about the Burtonport Extension and asking that it should be worked directly by the Board of Works. In the Minister's reply it was stated that the functions of the Board of Works in connection with the railway had been transferred to his Ministry. His letter then listed the reasons why it would not be expedient for any government department to work the line:

1. The line is being worked by the L&LSR under a perpetual agreement and, without legislation, it is considered that this agreement cannot be cancelled so long as the working company comply with the terms thereof.
2. It has been found impracticable to confine the rolling stock supplied for the Letterkenny & Burtonport Extension solely on the line. It is

²⁶ *Dail Debates*, vol. 5, 98-103, 25 Sept. 1923. William Davin.

necessary that the engines, coaches and wagons should run through to Londonderry and other stations outside the Burtonport Extension so that, in effect, the rolling stock of the L&LSR and of the Burtonport Extension are interchangeable.

3. There is no repair shop on the Burtonport Extension. There is a running shed but all repairs are effected by the L&LSR at their shops at Pennyburn. [Derry city].
4. To work the Burtonport Extension as a separate entity would entail the appointment of officials, arrangement of through rates and through timetables and it is considered such would be considered expensive and uneconomic.

The letter added that the Minister did not consider it practicable to adopt the suggestion of the county council. The Ministry was exercising a close oversight on the working of the Burtonport line, within the terms of the agreement referred to, and everything possible would be done to ensure satisfactory working. The whole question of worked lines would naturally be dealt with in the impending legislation affecting the railways of the Free State.²⁷

The radicalism of the railway employees in northwest Donegal was apparent at a mass meeting of Letterkenny & Burtonport National Union of Railwaymen held in Letterkenny on Sunday 6 January 1924, where six resolutions were passed.²⁸

1. That we resist pay reduction and alteration of service.

²⁷ *DD*, 16 Nov. 1923.

²⁸ *DD*, 18 Jan. 1924.

2. That we express thanks to Tom Johnston for introducing a measure in the Dáil for the nationalization of railways. Although beaten at the first attempt we solicit him to try again.
3. That we urge upon the Ministers of the Dáil to formulate their temporary unification measures [of Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State] as soon as possible.
4. That in view of increased cost of living which has advanced 2.45 points over November 1923, we press the Irish Council and Executive Committee of the NUR to take steps so that the terms of agreement shall be strictly observed and that wages will be proportionately increased.
5. That we pledge loyalty to all our members irrespective of class or creed. We do not recognise an official boundary in Ireland. We cherish our members, whether resident in Sandy Row, Pennyburn or the Rosses of Tirchonail.
6. That the housing problem of the workers be immediately considered and the TDs of Tirchonail be asked to give their assistance so that the workers of Ireland shall have houses suitable for the needs of human beings.

A local NUR official and Burtonport Extension railwaymen, John Delap, made a rousing speech about housing conditions in Ireland stating that the houses of the workers were inferior to the 'wigwams of the Indians'. He called for agitation to begin and invited the clergy and medical profession to join with it. 'Our agitation is not revolutionary. It is based on laws moral and divine. We will continue to agitate until every workingman in Ireland shall be the possessor of a sanitary house with perfect bathroom therein'.²⁹

²⁹ DD, 18 Jan. 1924.

In the opening months of 1924 the L&LSR had to sort out its diminishing finances and mounting debts. It owed the Free State government £8,590 in respect of the Burtonport, Carndonagh and Letterkenny railways, all of which had been worked since decontrol at a serious loss so that the company was unable to pay. The Irish Railways (Settlement of Claims) Act 1921 set down that the L&LSR was required to pay to the Board of Works in respect of these lines the same figure that it paid in 1913. In 1913 the L&LSR got £3 10s. a mile for operating the Letterkenny & Burtonport Extension Railway and the difference between that amount and gross receipts, after payment of interest on county guaranteed stock, was to be equally divided between the L&LSR and the Board of Works. With the ratification of the Treaty the Irish Free State took over the functions of the Board of Works and insisted that the L&LSR should pay in respect of the three lines the sum of £4,894 as had been payable in 1913. The amounts due at the end of June 1922 were paid but by the first months of 1924 there was £8,594 outstanding.³⁰

The L&LSR sought relief from the Irish Free State Government, not only in respect of the amount of £8,594 which was owed, but relief from any future payments which would fall due on the three lines under these same conditions. They stated that if payment was insisted upon they, having come to the end of their tether financially, might be compelled to cease operating the lines. The L&LSR requested a modification of the agreements in regard to the Burtonport and Carndonagh lines in the matter of working costs from the date in 1921 when control ceased and also demanded that the terms of an agreement entered into in 1917, but never put into force, whereby the L&LSR was to receive the actual cost of working the Letterkenny line instead of the fixed amount of £3 10s. be given effect. The L&LSR estimated that, in 1922,

³⁰ *DJ*, 11 Feb. 1924.

the loss on the three lines amounted to £18,753 although, in 1923, losses on the three sections had been considerably reduced.³¹

A few days later, the L&LSR were in crisis again when its chairman Brice Mullin resigned stating: 'I cannot any longer endorse the policy of the board.' It seems that his resignation had much to do with the fact that the L&LSR paid Sir John McFarland £7,000 for his old boats plying between Fahan and Rathmullan on Lough Swilly and from which a profit was derived on only nine occasions during twenty-nine years³² and, secondly, that the North of Ireland Shipbuilding Company got £11,000 from the L&LSR for six acres of land in Derry. Both deals appeared to contain elements of dubious propriety. Mullin had also refused to use the continuous threat to close all the lines if relief from the Free State government was not received.³³

One press report of the annual general meeting in March 1924 was titled 'PLIGHT OF A RAILWAY'.³⁴ Income for the year to 31 December 1923 was £60,417. Expenditure was £74,898 compared with £82,374 in 1922; £19,000 was received under the Irish Railways (Settlement of Claims) Act 1921. After paying mortgages, interest and debentures only £2,211 remained. The new chairman, Trew Colquhoun, told the shareholders that there was practically no fishing at all taking place. The Burtonport line, one half of the whole system, was built for the fishing industry but it was impossible for that line to pay for itself when working costs were 164 per cent higher than what they were ten years before that. Yet, while there was no fishing they still had to keep the line open. He pointed out that all the other ordinary sources of revenue for the district had failed. The recent failure of the potato crop, the lack of employment in Scotland, the general unemployment in the district and

³¹ *DJ*, 11 Feb 1924, p. 5.

³² Patterson, p. 91.

³³ *DJ*, 15 Feb. 1924, p. 8.

³⁴ *DJ*, 3 Mar. 1924, p. 3.

the closing down of local industries were all to blame. The financial position of the district was such that the people had no money to spend on either goods which should be carried by the railway or for the conveyance of themselves over the railway. The working expenses for the whole L&LSR during the previous year were 124 per cent of the receipts. On the Burtonport line the working costs were 153 per cent of receipts and on the Carndonagh line 167 per cent. The company was unable to pay any dividend on either the preference shares or the ordinary shares though they were compelled to pay a dividend on the debenture stock.³⁵

Colquhoun then told the meeting that the financial position of the company became so acute two or three weeks before the a. g. m. that the question of closing the lines became almost imperative because they were in danger of not being able to pay the wages accruing. But John McFarland and certain of the directors came to the rescue because the company itself could not guarantee the overdraft at the bank. Without the lines there was no hope of any prosperity developing in those areas. But he warned the shareholders that the company would not be able to keep going without a substantial increase in the traffic of the district and so long as the rates of wages and the conditions of service of the men remained as they were at present, there was little hope. The company held the view that every man in its employ was entitled to a reasonable wage and to every comfort and consideration that the company could give to him but when it was remembered that the increase in the cost of the wages bill during the last ten years had gone up from £15,531 to £52,139, a matter of 236 per cent while the gross revenue of the company has gone up from £45,276 to £60,418 a matter of 33 per cent it was impossible to continue. He hoped the trade unions would see the problem and help the L&LSR. He then spoke of the negative influence which road transport and

³⁵ *DJ*, 3 Mar. 1924, p. 3.

customs' arrangements had on the business of the railway.³⁶ In all, it was a depressing presentation.

John McFarland said that there were only two remedies. Get the wages down and get the working hours up. It was impossible for railways to be worked on eight-hour days. The journey to and from Burtonport could not be made in that time and the men who did it had to be paid time and a quarter for anything exceeding eight hours. It meant that a 'fine' must be paid by the company of 25 per cent, additional to wages, on any hours they worked over eight each day. The journey to and from Burtonport involved nine hours at the very least. But they could not go to and return from Burtonport immediately so the men remained at Burtonport half a working day doing nothing. It was impossible to carry on the working of the line with such conditions.³⁷

Mr Swan, a director, put forward his two remedies. The first was amalgamation but, if the bigger companies were not willing to amalgamate, nothing could be done. The other option was state aid. He advised the board to go to the Free State Government and make a case. The merits of such a case would be overwhelming. He asked how could Derry City and Donegal carry on without the railway? He warned that no native government could remain unresponsive to the appeal. After further discussion, the motion to appeal for aid to the Free State Government was carried unanimously. Trew Colquhoun then appealed to the traders, manufacturers and consumers of the district to help the railway and give it all the trade possible.³⁸

But many traders in northwest Donegal had different plans which did not include the Burtonport railway. Paddy the Cope Gallagher, still full of bitterness at the actions of military authorities in June 1921 to starve out the

³⁶ *DJ*, 3 Mar. 1924, p. 3.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *DJ*, 3 Mar. 1924, p. 3.

people of northwest Donegal during the War of Independence³⁹, had a new pier built at Dungloe with funds from the Irish White Cross and declared that he 'intended to dispense with the services of Derry altogether' by direct trading with British ports.⁴⁰ His chartered boats brought large cargoes into Dungloe on high tide despite the scepticism of many locals that such a feat could be done because of the shallow draught of water in Dungloe Bay.⁴¹ A few miles further north Thomas J. McBride of Gweedore had steamers arriving with cargo on a regular basis.⁴² The *Donegal Democrat* reported that 'he could sell flour in Bunbeg as cheaply as Derry wholesalers sold it to their own retailers in the city'. There was a clear saving on railway charges which normally had to be paid by the shopkeepers receiving the goods, and these were very high. The freight from Liverpool to Bunbeg was less than the railway charges from Derry to Gweedore and the passage only took thirty-six hours. Business was so good that, within a short time, McBride's area of distribution extended from Burtonport to Creeslough. The article continued that he would start the importation of timber because Derry prices were out of all reason. One Derry trader was quoted as saying 'this direct trading stunt is another bubble which will burst in due course'. The article further stated that McBride intended putting lorries on the road should the railway fail to operate to his satisfaction.⁴³ By late 1924 McBride had cargoes of 150 tons of groceries, including dried fruit and tinned fruit arriving at Bunbeg almost weekly and further cargoes of meal, flour and bran. It was stated that 'this is a new departure in direct shipments since the boycott of 1922'. The *Derry Journal* stated that 'Derry merchants are in a frenzy'.⁴⁴ A Liverpool firm opened a depot in Burtonport where they stored meal and flour directly

³⁹ See volume II, page 97.

⁴⁰ *DD*, 25 May 1923.

⁴¹ *DJ*, 1 Feb. 1926, p. 5.

⁴² *DJ*, 23 May 1924, p. 8.

⁴³ *DD*, 1 June 1923.

⁴⁴ *DJ*, 12 Dec. 1924, p.7.

shipped in and McBride of Bunbeg was so successful with his direct trading that, in late 1925, he opened another branch in Ballyshannon which soon grew into a flourishing wholesale business.⁴⁵

With the direct trading and the clerks' strike having further dissipated the Burtonport Extension's income substantially, there was little option for the L&LSR but to approach the Free State Government for aid. During the months after the March 1924 annual general meeting, prolonged negotiations took place with the Dublin government. However, during this period the future amalgamation of all Irish railways was being considered and in April 1924, the Irish Rail Merger Bill was introduced in the Dail. The bill was in seven parts: the first dealt with the unification of the railway system of the Saorstát. Part two dealt with the establishment of a railway tribunal, 'a body of judicial tenure presided over by a judge or a barrister of twelve years standing'. The five other parts dealt with wages, finance, charges, conditions of service and the position of the baronial guarantee. The amalgamation would embrace all the major railways in the Free State with the exception of the Great Northern Railway which was left out until 'the northern boundary has been established'⁴⁶ and, for the same reason, both Donegal railways, the L&LSR and the CDRJC were excluded. When questioned about their omission in the Dáil, the Minister replied that 'the reason for leaving out some lines was on the grounds of economy and an appreciation of the trouble of adjusting the portions of the split portions of the railways and readjusting them again after fixing the boundary'. He added that most of the Great Northern Railway was under the control of the Council of Ireland but the Northern Ireland government had decided that, for five years, the British government should exercise the Council of Ireland's function with regard to Northern

⁴⁵ *DJ*, 23 Oct. 1925, p.5.

⁴⁶ *DJ*, 7 Apr. 1924, p. 6.

Ireland. The Minister's attitude was that railways operating in both parts of the country would be a matter for agreement between the British and Free State governments after the boundary question was fixed. Mr McGilligan said that, while the Dublin government had control over the railways operating in the Free State, they did not have control over the owners. They could nationalize a railway but not the individuals. He concluded that, in the event of a boundary commission, he would produce a railway bill.⁴⁷

Shortly after the amalgamation debates the subvention for the L&LSR came before the Dáil. The Minister, Paddy McGilligan proposed a grant of £5,430 as an advance to work the three lines to Letterkenny, Carndonagh and Burtonport. The money was simply an advance and there was no further commitment.⁴⁸ However, the L&LSR must have been surprised by the vehement attack made on it by Deputy P. J. McGoldrick (Cumann na nGaedheal), from Donegal. He told the Dáil that the L&LSR should be called upon to subsidise itself from the money it had accumulated in the past. The establishment of a central station by the company in Derry city would mean that it would be managed, directed and controlled through an agency in Northern Ireland. The L&LSR had tried every means to secure concessions from the Free State government, means that were questionable. He stated that there were arguments on both sides as to whether the L&LSR were active in the revival of the stability of the Free State. McGoldrick concluded by stating that the interests of Tirconaill would not suffer one bit by the withholding of the grant from the L&LSR.⁴⁹

A few days later Deputy McGoldrick attacked the L&LSR again. He stated that the profits from the government subsidised lines (Carndonagh, Letterkenny and Burtonport) found their way on to the parent line (Derry to

⁴⁷ *DJ*, 30 May 1924, p. 3.

⁴⁸ *DJ*, 11 July 1924, p. 3.

⁴⁹ *DJ*, 11 July 1924, p. 8.

Buncrana railway, twelve miles long and owned completely by the L&LSR) and then into the pockets of the L&LSR shareholders. Now they claimed to be losing money on lines which had provided huge profits for them in the past. Whether this was a deliberate policy by the L&LSR or not, he did not know, but the fact remained that there had been no regularly maintained service. The L&LSR had a bill in the British parliament to erect their new station in Derry. He concluded that the L&LSR 'want to stay the other side of the barrier – they are with Belfast'. He objected to them getting one penny from the Free State government.⁵⁰ However, the subsidy was given.

During the rest of 1924 the amalgamation of the Free State railways was finalized in an entity named the Great Southern Railway of Ireland which would come into being on 1 January 1925. The two Donegal Railway systems, the Great Northern Railway [GNR], the Lartigue in north Kerry, which in reality had been closed for a few months and the Blessington and Lucan Tramways were the only lines excluded. This resolution of a long-term problem did not however resolve the points of conflict within all railways on the island. There was a strong demand for reduction in wages and variation in conditions of service by the railway companies, which demands were equally forcefully resisted by the unions. Despite many meetings there was little agreement or middle ground found and the problems within the railway industry continued to fester for many years.⁵¹

As if these problems were not enough for the Burtonport Railway the daily problems of crossing the border in fear of customs inspection had to be coped with. Smuggling became a way of life but it was the ordinary people who feared the eagle eye of customs' officers most. Many migrant workers bringing home items of clothing, groceries or drink were severely harassed

⁵⁰ *DJ*, 16 July 1924, p. 7.

⁵¹ *DJ*, 15 Oct. 1924, p. 2.

and had their goods taken from them at the custom posts. However, as time passed they learned that if they washed the newly purchased clothes and carried them wet across the border the customs' officers were reluctant to confiscate them. Before the departure of the Burtonport train it was not unusual to see many travellers dipping their newly purchased clothing in the horse-troughs or fountains of Derry city.⁵²

But the following case shows how small problems could get out of hand. At Burnfoot District court in 1925 before District Justice Louis J. Walsh, a man named John Feeney of Gweedore was summoned for attempting to smuggle a bottle of whiskey across the border while a passenger on the Burtonport train. The customs officer, Mr Curtis, said he would have released him on payment of the value of the goods and duty but Mr Feeney would agree to do nothing and gave a lot of trouble. In consequence of his conduct the train had been held up for more than an hour.

In answer to the Justice, defendant said 'Níl mórán Béarla agam'. (I haven't got much English.)

The Justice replied: 'Bhal, inis do scéal as Gaeilge agus béidh mé i bhfad níos sásta'. (Tell your story in Irish and I will be far happier.)

'Maith thú', (Good man) replied Feeney.

'Then with the manner of a man who had unexpectedly met an old neighbour in a knighted land, Feeney told his story in Gaelic to a sympathetic Justice, relating how he had been working in Glasgow for some months, that he was going home for the fair holiday,⁵³ that he had 'braon beag ólta' (had taken a little drink) and that he did not fully comprehend what the officials were saying. When he had finished a long statement the justice asked Mr Curtis if he wished to cross-examine the man on his statement'.⁵⁴

⁵² Grace Sweeney, Bunaman, Annagry.

⁵³ Fair holiday refers to the July holidays in Scotland which to this present day is called the 'Glasgow Fair.'

⁵⁴ DP, 24 July 1925.

Officer: No. I don't understand Irish.

Justice: That is just the trouble. This man does not understand English well and he is expected to wrestle with the difficulties of a foreign medium. What is the amount of the duty?

Officer: Eight shillings and a penny.

Justice: Bhfuil tú sásta sin a dhíol? (Are you willing to pay that?).

Feeney: Cinnte. Agus tá mé fíor-bhuíoch duit. (Certainly and I'm very grateful to you.)

Justice: Bhal, deán sin agus thig leat dul saor. (Well, do that and you can go free).

In response to another question Feeney said he was going to Gweedore. The sergeant said that the last train had now gone.

The justice said the man had been detained so long, he himself would be glad to give him a lift in his car as far as Letterkenny.

Feeney: Och, go gcuiridh Dia an droch uair tharat. (O, may God put the bad hour past you.)

Justice: Táim buíoch duit. (I thank you.)

'The Justice and the newly acquitted prisoner drove off together in the same motor car carrying on an animated conversation in the ancestral tongue'.⁵⁵

While wrestling with these many problems Henry Hunt must have hoped for better news than that which came his way on a windswept night of 30 January 1925. The train left Derry at 5.15 p.m. heading for Burtonport. Because of the time of year the number of passengers were few and many disembarked at Letterkenny. As the train headed west out of Kilmacrenan station with fourteen passengers on board the night was displaying its most unpleasant winter rage. They reached the Owencarrow Viaduct about 8 p.m., as one witness described with 'a roaring, raging gale, shaking the train causing

⁵⁵ *DP*, 24 July 1925.

the carriages to sway'. There was a dance in a small hall in nearby Rooskey on that same night and the music could not be heard because of the howling of the wind.⁵⁶ The driver, Bob McGuinness slowed down to ten or twelve miles per hour, for the maximum allowed was thirteen m.p.h. and the train which was composed of the engine, a wagon, a third class coach, a composite coach and the guard's van was within a couple of dozen yards of completing the crossing when

there was an awful crash; the carriage was flung against the parapet. It was crawling at about ten miles an hour when a terrific blast of wind swept over the mountain defile, the composite coach catching its full force, with the result that the coach was derailed and blown against the parapet, which was partly broken. The other coach was dragged along with it and turned a complete somersault. The roof of the coach was smashed almost to matchwood and the occupants were literally emptied into the valley forty feet below.⁵⁷

'The screams and moans of the injured, mingling with the noise of the gale as it whistled through the valley, was terrifying', said one of the train crew. It was quickly realised that three persons were dead and that little hope could be entertained for the recovery of others.⁵⁸

John Hannigan, the fireman on the train, stumbled and staggered against the storm, along the line in pitch darkness for two miles to Creeslough station where he alerted the stationmaster, Jimmy Gallagher, and the tragic news was telegraphed to the L&LSR's headquarters in Derry. He then made a rush to Sharkey's Hotel as they had the only car in the area. But the driver had gone home. A lad of eleven years volunteered to drive the car and he brought help

⁵⁶ George Hay, Creeslough, as told to the author on 25 October 1999.

⁵⁷ *DP*, 7 Feb. 1925.

⁵⁸ *DP*, 7 Feb. 1925.

to the scene of the disaster and then drove the injured to Letterkenny hospital.⁵⁹

Prompt measures were also taken in Derry city to equip a relief train, which left at 11 o'clock for the scene of the disaster. In the train were Mr Hunt, general manager of the line, Mr Napier, locomotive superintendent, Mr Newell, permanent way engineer, Mr Holman, assistant locomotive engineer, other officials of the company, doctors and nurses, and a breakdown gang with planking and lights. The breakdown train reached the Letterkenny end of the viaduct at 2.30 a.m. on Saturday morning but a fierce gale was still raging and it was considered injudicious for the light engine to attempt to cross the viaduct. Mr Hunt and the party, however, laboriously crawled over on all fours. The general manager at once took charge of operations.⁶⁰

Three of the passengers were apparently killed outright in the first awful smash. These were Philip Boyle, Úna Mulligan and Neil Doogan. Philip Boyle's wife, Sarah, was so seriously injured that it was apparent immediately that she would not last long and she died on arrival at Letterkenny hospital.⁶¹

The *Derry People* reported that

the other injured persons included Mrs Brennan, Dungloe, severe injuries; Mrs McFadden (her sister-in-law) shock; Bella McFadden, Gweedore, shock; Edward McFadden, Magheraroarty, shock and wound in the head; Denis McFadden, Cashel, Creeslough, severe concussion and Michael Boyle (Philip and Sarah's son), shock.⁶²

As in most disasters there emerges the story of the lucky one. Mary Campbell of Meenbanad in the Rosses

⁵⁹ George Hay, Creeslough, as told to the author on 25 October 1999.

⁶⁰ *DP*, 7 February 1925.

⁶¹ *DP*, 7 Feb. 1925.

⁶² *DP*, 7 Feb. 1925.

had an extraordinary experience. She was falling from the overturned carriage and she struck something which had the effect of making her fall some distance from the viaduct into boggy soil. She sank into it knee deep and, in struggling to get free, left her shoes embedded in the soil. She escaped without a mark and walked a couple of miles in the teeth of the gale before reaching a house where she got shoes and dry clothing.⁶³

Another lucky escapee was Kathleen McGinley who was a teacher in Temple Douglas. She usually travelled by train to her parents home at Creeslough every Friday but, on this particular Friday, while on her way to the station, she met an old man who advised her against travelling for he said he feared that a serious accident would take place on the viaduct. Kathleen took his advice and returned to her boarding house.⁶⁴

The event also had its heroes, none more so than James McFadden of Kilfad who climbed into one of the suspended coaches where he rescued two women and brought them out to safety.⁶⁵

Thomas Batchen, a Board of Works engineer, carried out an official investigation into the accident and concluded that

the majority of narrow gauge railways in the Irish Free State are constructed with sharp curves and steep gradients and, to a considerable extent, alongside public roads, consequently they do not include heavy engineering works. The Burtonport Extension differs entirely from these. It runs through a mountainous district and its formation necessitated the construction of deep cuttings, high embankments and numerous viaducts and bridges. The portion of the railway west of Kilmacrenan is particularly exposed and some means must be taken to prevent a recurrence of derailments of this nature.⁶⁶

⁶³ *DP*, 7 Feb. 1925.

⁶⁴ Sarah McCaffrey, Creeslough, as told to the author on 25 October 1999.

⁶⁵ *DP*, 7 Feb. 1925.

⁶⁶ *DP*, 28 Feb. 1925.

He disagreed with the inquest jury's verdict that large protective railings should be constructed on each side of the viaduct because he considered that the existing structure was not capable of carrying such a weight. Instead he recommended that 'two anemometers of the Dines type which records not only the wind velocity but also the velocity in gusts should be erected at selected sites west of Kilmacrenan'.⁶⁷

The spectre of Owencarrow hung over the railway for many years afterwards. It was often remarked that the chatter in the carriages became hushed when someone mentioned that they were soon to cross the viaduct. The Doon Well pilgrims were often seen to tightly finger their rosaries during the crossing.⁶⁸

There were stories of ghost trains and silent trains and strange lights on the viaduct for years after. Eleven years later the *Derry People* reported:

A phantom motor-car is reported to be travelling the main road at Barnes Gap. With its lights on and engine roaring it is to be heard approaching but suddenly disappears. Many locals feel it is the echo of the Owencarrow tragedy but John Gorman, a mail car driver, believes it is the fog prevalent in those parts which is to blame as well as the practice of many drivers to switch off lights going through the deserted glen in order to conserve batteries.⁶⁹

Despite Gorman's scientific analysis the locals were having none of it. Owencarrow was a lonely place and the ghosts of the past were filling its valleys. The ways of the phantoms were easier to understand than the vagaries of cars, batteries or new fangled technologies.

Claims for compensation soon issued on behalf of those involved in the Owencarrow accident. Luckily for the L&LSR Mr Batchen, the investigating

⁶⁷ *DP*, 28 Feb. 1925.

⁶⁸ Bernard J. Byrne, *Annagry*.

⁶⁹ *DP*, 18 Jan. 1936.

inspector, found that no blame attached to the company or to any of its servants, a finding which facilitated the settlement of the cases outside of the courts in an amicable manner without the L&LSR admitting any liability.⁷⁰

However, the Owencarrow accident had a demoralising effect on the Burtonport Extension because of the lack of confidence which had been created among the public. Rumours abounded that the whole L&LSR system was to close down completely owing to the company's finances which were blamed for lack of investment to make the railway safe. Prominent community leaders, such as James F. O'Donnell, told Tirchonail County Council that 'men like himself were now travelling by motor rather than use the railway since the disaster at Owencarrow'. He told his fellow councillors, while demanding a public enquiry into the Burtonport Railway, that the people were afraid to travel on the line until assurances were given that it was safe.⁷¹

But the aftermath of Owencarrow was only one problem which the L&LSR had to deal with. Negotiations with the unions for wage reductions and extended working hours had produced nothing and the grants negotiated with the Irish Free State government were too small to cope with the mounting losses. The Boundary Commission was a deterrent to all parties from committing themselves to the L&LSR in any way in case of the findings which might later issue from that body. The 1925 annual general meeting after the Owencarrow disaster was a depressing affair. A year of cutbacks and retrenchment still left nothing in hand for the upkeep of the permanent way and there were no dividend payments. Because of the poor summer and slow harvest trade the railway was in a more depressed state than before. There was need for further help and a decision was taken to approach the Northern

⁷⁰ *LS*, 27 Feb. 1926, p.5.

⁷¹ *DJ*, 25 Feb. 1925, p. 4.

Ireland Government for aid because, without it, the railway would close. And the shroud of Owencarrow hung over everything.⁷²

But the northwest Donegal public were in unforgiving mood. A strong campaign was waged against the L&LSR at every opportunity. Objections were made to the L&LSR's newly found interest in Donegal after years of neglect and dereliction. One letter writer to the *Derry Journal* in 1925 begged the Irish Free State government not to provide any funds to the L&LSR because 'two of its directors are Unionists and are associated with those endeavouring to have portions of Donegal under Belfast jurisdiction'. Again the demand was common that control of the L&LSR and the Burtonport Extension in particular should be transferred to the CDRJC thereby 'putting an end to the hugger-mugger that goes on at Pennyburn'.⁷³ Another writer stated that 'never was a company dependent more on propaganda than the L&LSR'.⁷⁴ Objections were also made about the Irish Free State giving grants of £7,000 annually while the people from the Burtonport Extension environment had to motor to Fintown 'as they are afraid to travel since the [Owencarrow] accident on the Burtonport line'. Further objections were made regarding John McFarland receiving part of this grant 'as he is already a millionaire'.⁷⁵

In April 1925, four L&LSR board members, including the chairman, Trew Colquhoun and manager, Henry Hunt went to Belfast to meet Prime Minister Craig and the Minister for Finance. It was believed that they based their case for aid on the damage that would befall trade in Derry city if the L&LSR system were to close down. They argued that trade would then be diverted to Strabane and the beneficiaries would be the ports of Belfast,

⁷² *DJ*, 23 Feb. 1925, p. 6.

⁷³ *DJ*, 9 Mar. 1925, p. 3.

⁷⁴ *DJ*, 23 Mar. 1925, p. 3.

⁷⁵ *DJ*, 24 Apr. 1925, p. 4.

Dublin and Greenore rather than Derry. The Belfast visit proved fruitful when, some weeks later, the Northern Ireland government matched the £7,000 subvention of the Free State Minister for Industry and Commerce.⁷⁶

These grants, especially those from the Dublin government, astonished many in northwest Donegal. Since independence there had been calls to that same Dublin government for help in relieving the distress and poverty which was affecting so many of the poorer people along the Donegal coast. During the winter of 1923 - 4, parish committees had been set up to organise relief when the failure of the potato crop, depleted fishing and poor Scottish earnings forced shopkeepers to withdraw credit facilities from many families.⁷⁷ The demand for rent arrears, annuities, and the payment of shop debts put extensive pressure on many homes, not to mention the burden of funeral offerings which came unexpectedly and from which there was no escape.⁷⁸ But despite pleas to the Dublin government, there was no sense of urgency. Paddy Burke, Minister for Local Government, sent an inspector to Donegal to investigate the possibility of relief road schemes in 1924. The answer was that everything would be looked into but there was no immediate relief.⁷⁹ When Donegal's Deputy White raised the distress question in the Dail in January 1924, Mr Burke replied that, 'unfortunately, distress prevailed throughout the country owing, to a great extent, to the activities against the government during the last eighteen months. Hunger was written on the faces of many people. It was all part of the price they had to pay for the expensive luxury of a civil war'. When he came to deal with congested districts in Donegal Burke's words might have been ghostly echoes of those spoken by A. J. F. Balfour more than thirty years earlier. 'The only way to deal with the

⁷⁶ *DJ*, 17 Apr. 1925, p. 5.

⁷⁷ *DJ*, 16 Jan. 1924, p. 3.

⁷⁸ Susan Ward, Keadue tells of waiting for the hens to lay so that the eggs could be brought to the shop to get the shilling for the funeral offering before her mother could go to the wake house. That was in 1924.

⁷⁹ *DJ*, 21 Jan. 1924, p. 3.

problem in Tirchonail was to get a sufficient number of people out of the county and thereby, leave a sufficient number of holdings for the remainder'. Then he stated that, at that moment, he was not prepared to outline any scheme of relief.⁸⁰

Mr Lynch, Minister for Fisheries, was soon on his feet to tell the Dáil that 'there was a good deal of argument and a good deal of dope about the distress question. A good deal of it was stunt'. He continued to state that there was a lack of energy among the fishing crews of Gweedore. Reports showed that their boats, fitted with engines, had become waterlogged and these boats which had been purchased through government loans were not being used.⁸¹ A few weeks later, Mr Lynch again castigated the northwest fishermen when he stated 'the Ministry possesses upward of ten first class motor-boats and several sail boats which are at present hauled up on the beach at Mulroy Bay'. He told how valuable motorboats were acquired at a cost of thousands of pounds by the state and were now laid up at Bunbeg and Killybegs as well. 'It is not a lack of facilities that has our fishing in so depressed a state' he concluded.⁸²

While the distress lobbies harried and hassled the government and the various agencies of government as well as the county council over the distress problem during the first five years of the new state, oral evidence in the northwest provides a more complex picture of life. Grace Sweeney remembers that during those years, there was an acceptable level of hunger in many homes while many others lived fairly comfortably but there was a certain stratum in dire need. It very much depended on the earning capacity within each family, the drinking practices of the father and the credit rating given to each household by the shopkeeper. She remembers coming back

⁸⁰ *DJ*, 25 Jan. 1924, p. 5.

⁸¹ *DJ*, 25 Jan. 1924, p. 5.

⁸² *DJ*, 7 Apr. 1924, p. 5.

from hire in November 1924 and asking her mother if they had got the bag of meal and bag of flour. When her mother confirmed that they had there was relief that they would survive through the winter. The staple food of a large number of people was Indian meal or yellow meal. It cost about 12s. 6d. a cwt. but there was little money to buy it.⁸³ While there was a plentiful supply of herring, both cured and fresh, at reasonable prices available in the Rosses and Indian meal was plentiful at a good price as well, the lack of money was a constant problem. Bishop McNeely once said that 'the family purse in thousands of households in Donegal was filled from a number of tiny sources'.⁸⁴ Most families had a father in Scotland, a few children hired and older girls at the gutting throughout England and Scotland. As stated above many parents took their offspring to the 'tattie-hokin'. Knitting, butter, carrigeen and egg sales provided other sources of income and, for some, remittances from America relieved the burden considerably. But there were some families in very poor circumstances where the father was in poor health, a bad earner or a drinker and the children were not at earning age. Grace Sweeney and other elderly people could point out families who were regarded as very respectable but the mother had to go begging from door to door to find sufficient food for the children during the 1920s.⁸⁵ The biggest problem was the lack of earning power for young men. Public works in Scotland were very depressed and there was little employment for men in any part of northwest Donegal during the 1920s.

In February 1925 the teachers of Meenacross national school in the Rosses wrote to the Emergency Relief Committee in Dublin stating that there were over 100 children, boys and girls, on the rolls. 'The parents of the

⁸³ *DJ*, 27 Jan. 1928, p. 3.

⁸⁴ *DJ*, 4 Nov. 1931, p. 5.

⁸⁵ I discussed this question of distress during the 1920s with Grace Sweeney, Bunaman, Annagry in 2003. She was born in 1910. I also discussed it with Susan Ward, Keadue aged 86 and her husband, Michael Ward, aged 87 and Maggie Roarty, Gweedore aged, 87.

majority are unable to provide food, much less clothing or boots. Very many come to school without lunch after a scanty breakfast of dry bread and tea. It is pathetic to see the poor pinched faces watching the few fortunate children who have lunch – fresh bread without butter or jam'.⁸⁶

People could point to some positive developments during these years. Hugh McBride set up a factory in Gweedore which employed 150 girls producing knitted costumes, jumpers, cardigans, caps, etc. This handmade work was described as 'particularly beautiful.' The chief markets were London, Glasgow and Manchester with agencies also in South Africa, USA, Canada and France. 'The machines used in the making of these garments were of the latest model'.⁸⁷ However, by 1927, only thirty of these girls were employed on a part-time basis. In nearby Dungloe, Paddy the Cope Gallagher was operating a mill and woollen factory as well as the co-operative stores. A dynamo connected with the factory lit the streets of Dungloe free of charge. At the pier Gallagher imported maize, tea, sugar and meal and sent out the woollen goods on the boat. The turnover for the Cope⁸⁸ during 1922 was £96,000 and they had close to 200 workers, all co-operators.⁸⁹ As a result of the Cope's increase business developments it is interesting to note that between 1911 and 1926 the town of Dungloe increased its population from 354 to 577 (63 per cent) and the population in the Dungloe hinterland increased from 1360 to 1526 (12.2 per cent) during the same period while the rest of the northwest witnessed a steady fall in population for the first time.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ *DJ*, 11 Feb. 1925, p. 8.

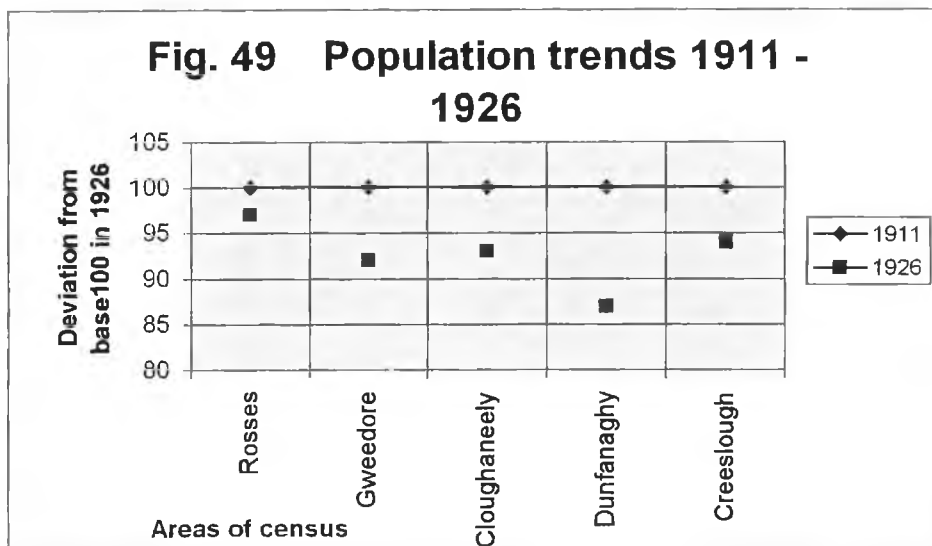
⁸⁷ *DD*, 1 June 1923.

⁸⁸ Cope: local terminology for co-operative.

⁸⁹ *DD*, 25 May 1923.

⁹⁰ 1911 and 1926 census of population, County Donegal, Glenties.

In the winter of 1925 the *Derry Journal* reported that the ‘exodus of young people from west and south Donegal to the United States and to other parts of the world is going on in very large numbers’.⁹¹ By 1925 Fr



Source: Census of population, Co. Donegal, 1911 and 1926.

MacDonnell and some other priests in the Raphoe diocese were arranging parties of emigrants for Canada, much as James Hack Tuke had done fifty years earlier under British administration. It was stated that ‘he [McDonnell] is more stringent now than before. All emigrants are expected to accept farm work and to cheerfully carry on although the work may be rougher than in Ireland. Only by actual Canadian experience the migrants can qualify for a farm of their own’.⁹²

By 1925 the Free State quota for entry into the United States was 28,567 while Great Britain and Northern Ireland combined had a quota of 34,007. 10 per cent of each quota was allowed to enter each month. Up to 31 January 1925 the Irish Free State sent 14,410 and Northern Ireland 18,659.⁹³ However, many Donegal applicants who failed to gain entry from Ireland

⁹¹ *DJ*, 18 Feb. 1925, p. 8.

⁹² *DJ*, 1 Apr. 1925, p. 4.

⁹³ *DJ*, 15 Apr. 1925, p. 7.

went to Glasgow where they found conditions easier in gaining entry to the United States and it became a matter of banter among the emigrants that certain individuals were less than bright 'for didn't they have to leave by Glasgow'.⁹⁴ An article in the *British Board of Trade Journal* spoke about the exodus from the Irish Free State and the big numbers going to the USA in the last quarter of 1924 totalling 5,607 as compared with 1,731 in 1923. One survey of 6,330 emigrants arriving in America found that 2,248 departed via Liverpool, 1,274 via London, 1,279 via Derry and 1,083 via Belfast. Nearly all of them went second or third class.⁹⁵

Life was forlorn for many of those left behind. The cries about distress seemed to issue forth in the northwest during these first years of the Free State from the merchants and business classes in the main just as the County Inspector had stated more than ten years earlier. The fishing had contracted substantially into what was, in reality, a local market excluding the business dealers who had made big profits during the good years. The lack of employment for men and the wholesale trend of permanent emigration destabilized the role of many shopkeepers within society as well. The development of the co-operative movement, especially the Templecrone Cooperative and Agricultural Society in Dungloe with its extensive branch network and McBride's expanding business in Bunbeg was a further destabilising influence on many of the long established shopkeepers who had traditionally formed a tight shopocracy and power base in earlier years. Furthermore, the expanding lorry trade into County Donegal brought new goods and varying prices and made it easier for new shops to open to challenge old business.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Susan Ward, Keadue, Burtonport.

⁹⁵ *DJ*, 1 May 1925, p. 6.

⁹⁶ *DJ*, 7 Nov. 1924, p. 5.

Relief schemes had always tended to favour the business and merchant classes and their cry during the years of the new state was an effort to draw much water to their own mills. Frank Doherty of Cruit Island in the Rosses wrote a letter to the *Derry Journal* in December 1924 about the problems of distress and distributing relief or 'national benefit' as it was called. He told of the many abuses in his own district where relief was being given to able-bodied, strong men and women who had houses, land and cattle and, in other instances, had money lodged in the Post Office Saving Bank. 'The people in many of these instances are much better off than their neighbours who have to support this clique of idlers'. He believed that some would not work and others had three or four members of the family in Scotland.⁹⁷

When the distress lobbies witnessed the government's tardiness in granting the merest measures of relief to the poorest areas over a number of years, their annoyance with the facile manner in which grants were made to the L&LSR, year after year, despite its poor record and disregard for the welfare of Donegal over so long a period, made their ire almost boundless. They accused the L&LSR of 'playing up' Donegal's dependence on the railway now that it suited them. They questioned how could a Dublin government subsidise a railway with its headquarters in Derry?⁹⁸ And yet the requests for road grants, relief schemes, employment programmes, fishing subsidies, action against the destruction of roads by motor lorries and reductions in rates, rent and annuities were almost ignored by the Free State government. It was no wonder that there were questions about the annual grants to the L&LSR.⁹⁹

But the grants and subsidies were of little use when a general strike paralysed Britain in May 1926 with the immediate effect on railways being

⁹⁷ *DJ*, 19 Dec. 1924, p. 4.

⁹⁸ *DJ*, 23 Feb. 1925, p. 6.

⁹⁹ *DJ*, 20 Jan. 1926, p. 5.

shortage of coal. The L&LSR immediately announced a further restriction on its already limited train services pleading that only three week's coal supply was available at most.¹⁰⁰ This announcement coincided with circulars issued to all of the L&LSR staff that reductions in wages would apply from 1 June to all grades except salaried staff and enginemen. Men employed in Derry and elsewhere would receive 2s. less per week from 1 June and, from the first pay period in September, their pay would be further reduced by 1s. 4d. and men at other stations would get 2s. 1d. less per week. From 1 January 1927 a 5 per cent reduction would apply to the wages of all porters but cleaners of twenty-five years of age and upwards would get a rise of 2s. 8d. per week which would bring their rate up to 40s. 6d. per week. The Derry NUR immediately rejected the award.¹⁰¹ When the coal crisis showed no sign of breakthrough after three further weeks, the L&LSR sent a circular to all its workers giving them a fortnight's notice.¹⁰² Tirchonail County Council was loud in its demands that the Burtonport train and the other L&LSR trains be put back on full service immediately because of the grants they had got from the Free State government.¹⁰³

But as the railways in northwest Donegal went quiet, the old L&LSR enemy, the CDJRC stunned the county with a stroke of ingenuity. They had also been paralysed by the strike but a railway bogey was fitted with a Ford motor engine and a coach body and this contrivance, to which the papers could not give a name, ran daily between Stranorlar and Glenties carrying parcels, passengers and mail. Forbes had again won the day.¹⁰⁴ By October 1926, Forbes had improved the rail motor service by importing three rail-buses from England to run on the branch lines in partial substitution for steam.

¹⁰⁰ *DJ*, 5 May 1926, p. 5.

¹⁰¹ *DJ*, 1 May 1926, p. 3.

¹⁰² *LS*, 25 May 1926, p. 5.

¹⁰³ *LS*, 29 May 1926, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ *LS*, 19 June 1926, p. 2.

Each motor was fitted with a Ford engine and fitments, and 'Supraphord gearboxes which provided four gears'. They could carry twenty-two passengers and mails, newspapers and parcels. They ran at speeds up to 36 miles per hour and petrol consumption was 18 miles per gallon. These rail cars were willing to stop at any suitable places along the line as well as at stations so that platforms were no longer a necessity.¹⁰⁵ This development signalled the beginning of the end for railways as they had been traditionally known. The diesel or petrol motor engine would henceforth be king whether on rail or on road.

However, the problem in northwest Donegal was that the L&LSR investigated the rail car possibility but took it no further probably because the Burtonport railway was too far removed from the centres of population which would make railcars successful. They would not run the trains or did so only spasmodically. But any thought of converting to road transport was impossible because the roads were in such poor condition. Daniel Coll, a prominent businessman in Gweedore wrote to the *Derry Journal* in June 1926 stating that 'the roads are simply a disgrace. A steam crusher or roller has never been seen in Gweedore'. He witnessed only large boulders strewn everywhere on the roads which were so narrow in many places that two vehicles could not pass.¹⁰⁶ Because of defaulting annuity payment a £30,000 grant to Tirchonail was withheld by the government in early 1926¹⁰⁷ and, after persistent campaigns by the farmers and business community over a number of years, the rates in county Donegal were reduced from 10s. in the pound to 8s. 6d. on land and from 13s. 6d. to 12s. 2d. on other chargeable assets. This ensured that less money than normal was available for repairs and upgrading of roads. The consistent solution proposed by the councillors of

¹⁰⁵ *DJ*, 8 Oct. 1926, p. 8; *LS*, 7 Oct. 1926, p. 5.

¹⁰⁶ *DJ*, 23 June 1926, p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ *LS*, 2 Feb. 1926, p. 8.

Tirchonail County Council was an attempt to ban the lorries from the roads because of the damage they were doing. They wanted to put the goods back on the railways if such as the Burtonport Extension could be made work. The large petrol lorries from the Six Counties were accused of destroying the roads and putting the railways out of business while paying not a penny in taxation in the county. It was said that both Donegal railway systems would be white elephants unless a stop was put to this traffic. Fear of the effects any initiative might have on the Boundary Commission deterred the county council from action in late 1925¹⁰⁸ but as rumours circulated throughout the county in November 1925 that parts of Donegal were to be ceded to the Six Counties, tempers became frayed with cries of 'not a sod, not a slate' echoing back to Craig's 'not an inch'.¹⁰⁹ With the county council between £50,000 and £70,000 in debt in early 1926 reductions of 15 per cent were imposed on previously agreed road contracts which were severely resisted amid much ill-will.¹¹⁰ The Rosses, Gweedore and parts of Cloughaneely, being the most remote areas in the county suffered most from the cutbacks in road programmes. For these areas the Letterkenny & Burtonport Extension Railway was the only viable option for the supply of goods on land and the carriage of passengers. Despite many pleas there was little money forthcoming from central government to initiate a road programme.

However, the government did enter many other facets of society. A feature of the Free State government during the 1920s was its involvement in the lives of so many ordinary people. This was particularly visible in northwest Donegal though relief from hunger was the only consistent demand being made. Government initiatives on land annuities, potatoes, dog licences, stallion and bull licensing, sheep dipping, fishing licences, boat registration,

¹⁰⁸ *DJ*, 28 Oct. 1925, p. 6.

¹⁰⁹ *DJ*, 30 Nov. 1925, p. 5.

¹¹⁰ *DJ*, 28 May 1926, p. 3.

old age pensions, school attendance, poiteen, dirty eggs, clean butter, motor-cars, buses, the licensed trade, inoculation and various other aspects brought so many people before the courts that local court days became as popular as the most festive occasions when one could be certain of witnessing many neighbours being brought to justice.¹¹¹ Justice Louis Walsh was astonished when a man appeared before him charged with burning heather on his own lands without a permit between 1 April and 14 July. When the defendant's solicitor pleaded that the man did not know it was an offence, Justice Walsh conceded that he was not aware himself that the action was illegal. Then he told the court: 'This was one of the ramifications of modern government which pried into everyone's affairs and which would go so far that one day they would have to obtain special permits to take our egg at breakfast in the morning'.¹¹²

However, it was a government initiative in 1926 that caused more panic in many homes in northwest Donegal than any other problem or initiative which had beset this turbulent society over many decades. This was the School Attendance Act which came into law on 2 October 1926. All children between the ages of six years and fourteen years would have to be in attendance at school every day with the only excuse for absence being serious illness which had to be backed by a medical certificate. The Civic Guards would be the enforcing authority with normal fines being £2. Parents would have to notify the school principal or a teacher, in writing, within three days of an absence having occurred. Until 1936 farmers would be entitled to keep their children at home to work on their own farms for ten days between 17 March and 15 May and for a further ten days between 1 August and 15 October but any person who employed a child under fourteen years and thus

¹¹¹ Grace Sweeney, Bunaman, Annagry.

¹¹² *DD*, 22 May 1931, p. 7.

prevented that child from attending school would be guilty of an offence and a fine not exceeding £2 would be imposed. A second offence would incur a fine of £5.¹¹³

The correspondent for the 'Northwest Notes' in the *Derry Journal* was wary of the effects of the Act.

The undue enforcement of the measure will, however, deprive the great majority of parents and guardians of the sorely needed 'trifle' which their children hitherto earned by the hire system and which materially assisted to augment the household's slender resources. Unless some modification of the Bill is effected to counteract the hardship that must necessarily result in this connection the lot of many families will be fraught with much privation.¹¹⁴

A father wrote to the same paper,

The Act must be modified to meet the special needs or conditions in the Gaeltacht. It will be the means of depriving many a poor household of anything from £3 to £15 this year and every succeeding year as well. The Government should have enabled parents in the congested areas - who are not able to do without the money which the hiring of their children brought them - to hire the children during the autumn and Summer until something would be done to find employment for the fathers all the year or at least most of it. It is all very well to make parents keep children at school now, but when winter comes, with all its hardships they will need boots and warm clothing - not to mention payment of the shopkeepers' bills. What is going to be done then? The few pounds brought home by the migratory labourers will not be sufficient to meet the requirements of a family of parents and seven or eight children, aged from one to twelve, thirteen or fourteen years. The whole business resembles very much Cromwell's 'to hell or to Connacht' policy for certainly the Government knew about the conditions in the Gaeltacht when they were passing the

¹¹³ *DD*, 2 Oct. 1926.

¹¹⁴ *DJ*, 4 Feb. 1927, p. 3.

Act in question. I know it is not with pride that parents take their children away from school. Sheer necessity compels them to do so and nothing else'.¹¹⁵

Gweedore court was just one scene where pathetic pleas over school attendance were witnessed. Sarah O'Brien of Meenacladdy said she could not live if she didn't hire her children in the Laggan. Justice O'Hanrahan asked, 'what does your husband do'? She told him, 'He is away in Scotland or England or some place'. When asked if she was going to send her children to school she said, 'I don't think so. They are all the help I have for to work for me'. The justice then told her that he might be obliged to take the children from her and send them to an industrial school. She replied that he would have to do the same with many more families. She said, 'I will not send them to school for any man, unless I go myself'.¹¹⁶

The change brought about by the act was apparent at the Letterkenny Hiring Fair in May 1927. The *Derry Journal* reported that 'the fair was not as large as in previous years and a noticeable feature was the absence of young boys and young girls who, in former years, were engaged for herding purposes. This is in no doubt due to the new compulsory Education Act'.¹¹⁷ If the communities of northwest Donegal needed conviction that compulsory school attendance was with them to stay and, in a most serious manner at that, they got their answer in Dungloe court in May 1928 when three boys belonging to Mrs Mary Duffy, Sheskinarone, near Dungloe were sent to Killybegs Industrial School and her two daughters were sent to St Laurence Industrial School, Sligo. Mrs Duffy had not paid fines imposed on her in respect of offences under the Schools Attendance Act during the previous year. Judge O'Hanrahan said that he had warned the mother on several

¹¹⁵ *DJ*, 2 May 1927, p. 3.

¹¹⁶ *DJ*, 20 May 1927, p. 3.

¹¹⁷ *DJ*, 16 May 1927, p. 3.

occasions that he would take the children from her. He then sentenced the mother to Sligo Jail and made an order committing the children until they reached the age of sixteen years.¹¹⁸ The days of child labour as a major key component of society in Donegal were, at last, being brought to an end.

As mentioned previously, 1926 witnessed the general strike in Britain which paralysed the country. But its most telling effect on Ireland was felt in the homes of the migrants who returned a couple of months earlier than usual owing to dearth of employment. A long letter in the *Derry Journal* from an Aranmore islander lamented the plight of the Donegal harvester in Scotland. 'Now due to the coal strike there is no hope at all'.¹¹⁹ It seemed that all avenues of income were being choked off, one by one. Emigration was the only alternative. During July and August 1926, 756 individuals left northwest Donegal for the United States. It was stated that 'within the next few months a still larger quota intends to follow in their footsteps'.¹²⁰ 'During the past week large numbers of the youth of these districts have left for the various points of the United States'.¹²¹ The coal strike also quickened the rush to road transport with buses and lorries becoming more plentiful by the day.

It was out of this period of recession that the AOH and clergy combined, once again in Donegal, to initiate a great movement. By December 1926 the report of the Gaeltacht Commission which had been set up to investigate many aspects of Gaeltacht life such as employment, Irish language, education etc., still lay with the government without any action being taken or without any sign of its implementation. Mass meetings were organised at venues throughout the county, many in areas far removed from the Gaeltacht or its culture. The *Derry Journal* reported:

¹¹⁸ *DD*, 19 May 1928, p. 3.

¹¹⁹ *DJ*, 21 June, 1926, p. 3.

¹²⁰ *DJ*, 15 Oct. 1926, p. 9.

¹²¹ *DJ*, 24 Sept. 1926, p. 9.

Tirchonail is being stirred as it has been by no movement for a long time by the agitation for the implementation of the Gaeltacht Report. Bishop, priests and people are determined that something must be done and done quickly to stop the tide of emigration that is sweeping out of the county every week.¹²²

When Bishop McNeely could not attend he sent a letter to be read at the meetings and its tone was normally critical of the government's lack of action with regard to Donegal. In the Butt Hall in Ballbofey in 1925 his letter stated: 'One of those issues and a fundamental one, is the principle that it is the duty of the state to endeavour to relieve, in an effective and durable way, widespread poverty'.¹²³ Fr McCafferty, chancellor of the Raphoe diocese and a powerful AOH figure in the county addressed many public meetings and AOH meetings and spoke of 'Free State ministers galavantiing in knee breeches and court dress in London, delegations to Geneva, etc'.¹²⁴

When news arrived that a general election would be held in June 1927 there was little hope for the government in Donegal. The *Derry Journal* wrote that 'the government candidates in Donegal are likely to have a bad time at the election; there is grave dissatisfaction among the people with the government in general and, most particularly, in questions affecting the Gaeltacht and the border'.¹²⁵ The Hibernians were quite disaffected by the government's performance and gave their backing to Dan McMenamin of the National League. The disaffected Gaeltacht agitators and the unhappy publicans who feared that their licences and businesses were to be curtailed made life difficult for the government party which only proffered more of the same.¹²⁶

¹²² *DJ*, 20 Dec. 1926, p. 5.

¹²³ *DJ*, 7 Jan. 1925, p. 5.

¹²⁴ *DJ*, 3 Jan. 1927, p. 7.

¹²⁵ *DJ*, 21 Jan. 1927, p. 8.

¹²⁶ *DJ*, 22 Apr. 1927, p. 4.

During the campaigns in Donegal De Valera was careful to begin his speeches in Irish and took the precaution to have a priest from Fermanagh with him to speak from the platform when possible and generally had other local priests in his campaign.¹²⁷

Fig 50 Comparison of votes between 1923 and 1927 general elections, Co. Donegal

Candidate	Party in 1923	First count 1923	Party in 1927	First count 1927
Major Myles	Independent	6,954	Independent	7,557 E
P. J. Ward	Treaty	5,513	***	
Eugene Doherty	Treaty	5,261	C. na nG.	4,005 E
P.J. McGoldrick	Treaty	3,743	C. na nG	2,750
Barry Monaghan	Anti-Treaty	3,678	***	
John White	Farmers	3,673	Farmers	5,031 E
Peadar O'Donnell	Anti-Treaty	3,621	***	
P. McFadden	Treaty	3,492	C. na nG.	1,975
Joseph Doherty	Anti-Treaty	3,213	Fianna Fail	1,714
Denis Houston	Official Labour	2,456	Official labour	2,005
Hugh Law	Farmers	1,718	C. na nG.	3,596 E
Sam O'Flaherty	Anti-Treaty	1,647	***	
H.J. Kelly	Treaty	1,489	***	
M. McNelis	Ratepayers	1,432	***	
Neil Faulkner	Farmers	1,209	***	
A Lowry	Farmers	1,127	***	
Dan McMenamin	Independent	927		5,828 E
E. Gallen	Anti-Treaty	908	***	
Henry McGowan	Ind. Labour	669	***	
Neil Blaney	***		Fianna Fail	5,681 E
MI Og McFadden	***		C. na nG.	3,105 E
Peadar Carney	***		Fianna Fail	3,070 E
Seamus Monaghan	***		Fianna Fail	2,899
A. J. Cassidy	***		Labour	2,491

*** = Did not run; E = elected; C na nG = Cumann na nGaedheal. Sources: DJ 15 June 1927, p. 5

¹²⁷ DJ, 22 Apr. 1927.

The frustration and confusion of the electorate were apparent in the Donegal election result. In order of election those returned were Myles (Independent); McMennamin (National League); White (Farmers); Blaney (Fianna Fail); Carney (Fianna Fail); Doherty (Cumann na nGaedheal); Law, (Cumann na nGaedheal) and Michael Óg McFadden (Cumann na nGaedheal). The government party lost one seat which went to the National League. In the last election in 1923, the Republican candidates were elected without reaching the quota but this was the fate of the three government candidates on this occasion. P. McFadden and P. J. McGoldrick, outgoing government deputies, lost their seats. Doherty and Law profited greatly from Major Myles surplus.¹²⁸

However, away from the misery of the accounts and the looming threats of closure of the Burtonport line life went on regardless. And no one could accuse its day-to-day activities of being dull or monotonous. On 26 November 1924, the goods store at Crolly Station was broken into and a case of snuff and a quantity of leather, valued at about £20, was stolen during the night. Two young men were charged with the offence. One of them averred that he had been to a wake on the night of the offence and had not left it. He had six witnesses to confirm his story. The other young man admitted that he had been to a shebeen¹²⁹ in Gweedore during the evening and had five glasses of poiteen. He then went to Crolly with an accomplice where they broke the window in the store and removed the goods. They then came over the railway line and hid the spoil in a cave and covered it up with stones.¹³⁰ The case was first dealt with at the District Court in Dungloe but was returned to Lifford

¹²⁸ *DJ*, 15 June 1927, p. 5.

¹²⁹ Shebeen: illegal, unlicensed place where poiteen is sold.

¹³⁰ *DP*, 16 Jan. 1925.

Circuit Court where this latter mentioned young man was sentenced to nine months hard labour.¹³¹

A malicious derailment of the 11.15 a.m. Derry to Burtonport train took place on 14 September 1925 at the 68 ¼ mile post at Cruckakeehan, almost halfway between Crolly station and Kincasslagh Road Station. Serious damage was averted by the fact that the engine was one of the heaviest and biggest used on the line. Richard Quinn, the driver, examined the train and found that portion of the engine had been damaged and one of the carriages had been derailed and suffered severe damage. He went back along the track and found two large boulders as well as several smaller ones placed between and on top of the rails. One of the boulders weighed about fifteen stone. In a court claim, the L&LSR received £35 damages for this event and witnesses were paid £4 expenses. There has always been local controversy about the perpetrators of this derailment. Enquiries by the Civic Guards elicited no information as everyone was keeping a closed mouth. Whether it was the activity of some bored and unthinking youngsters to while away the dullness of the evening or, the more commonly held belief locally, that it was the action of disaffected Irregulars still engaged in belated civil war disruption, as a revenge measure, is unclear.¹³²

At Dungloe District court before Justice Sean O'Hanrahan, Anthony Gallagher, Meendernasloe, Annagry sued the L&LSR for £8 – 10s. for the loss of a bullock which was killed on the railway line near Crolly station on 20 August 1926. Gallagher said he saw the bullock going through a wide-open gate leading to the railway line. The bullock was struck by the train and killed. He said that the bolt on the gate was defective and he had often seen the gate opened by a gust of wind.

¹³¹ *DP*, 3 Apr. 1925.

¹³² *DJ*, 16 Sept. 1925, p. 5.

His Worship: 'I heard of the wind that shakes the barley but I never heard of the wind that opens a gate'. (Laughter)

Witness said that he had tried to sell the beast to local butchers but could not get any of them to take it.

The Justice went with the plaintiff on the day before the February court in Dungloe and inspected the lands and the gate. The plaintiff rather dramatically established a case for himself by taking the gate in his hand while the socket was in position as far as it could be put and, by shaking the gate, he opened it without drawing the bolt. The conclusion he (Justice) came to was that if this could be done by the mere shaking of the gate it would be very much easier for the wind or for cattle rubbing against it especially if the bolt was only half way in which was the normal position. He went further and examined other railway gates on the railway line in the vicinity and found another that was quite easily opened by shaking the gate without touching the bolt. He gave a decree for £7 with 7s. 6d. expenses.¹³³

However, the L&LSR appealed the case to Letterkenny Circuit Court where it was heard in March 1927. After hearing that Justice Hanrahan had inspected the gate in question Justice Devitt confirmed the decision of the District Court.¹³⁴

In March 1927, there was a major departure from long-held philosophies when Paddy McGilligan introduced the Railways (Road Motor Services) Bill in the Dail which gave railway companies the authority to run buses on the road systems.¹³⁵ In reality, it was no more than recognition that motor transport in private hands was denuding many railways of much needed revenue. In Donegal private bus business was flourishing since the 1926 general strike and, by 1927, there were big advertisements appearing in the

¹³³ *DP*, 19 Feb. 1927.

¹³⁴ *DP*, 26 Mar. 1927.

¹³⁵ *DJ*, 28 Mar. 1927, p. 6.

local papers for Doherty's buses which covered most of the Inishowen peninsula, Catherwoods' buses which ran through most of east Donegal and the Ward brothers from Kerrykeel who had regular services from Downings, Carrigart, Cranford, Milford, Ramelton, Letterkenny to Derry with returns and a second service from Kerrykeel, Milford, Kilmacrenan, Coolboy, Letterkenny and Derry and return on the same route.¹³⁶ However, northwest Donegal had been unaffected until July 1927 when the *Derry Journal* carried an item of news that a new bus service was to be inaugurated by Sam Burns of Kilmacrenan between Gortahork and Derry and would start on 19 July 1927. It commented that 'a long felt want has been supplied in these coastal areas. The new service, which links up all villages en route, is greatly appreciated'.¹³⁷ The timetable was as follows:

Town	Depart	Depart
Gortahork	7.50 a.m.	5 p.m.
Falcarragh	8.00	5.05
Dunfanaghy	8.20	5.25
Portnablagh	8.25	5.30
Creelough	8.45	5.50
Kilmacrenan	9.15	6.20
Letterkenny	9.45	6.45
Derry	11.00	8.10

For the return service two buses left Derry to return to Gortahork at 8.35 a.m and 4.35 p.m.¹³⁸ This service went through the heartland of the Burtonport Extension but had the added advantage that it serviced the towns and areas of population. In May 1928, the Ward Brothers from Kerrykeel also started a bus

¹³⁶ *DJ*, 3 June 1926, p. 6.

¹³⁷ *DJ*, 8 July 1927, p. 8.

¹³⁸ *DJ*, 18 July 1927, p. 4.

service from Gortahork to Derry.¹³⁹ The success of these ventures was evident in the following year with Sam Burns and the Ward Bros. often appearing in court for exceeding the number of passengers allowed on their buses.¹⁴⁰ The roads further west of Gortahork were too bad for buses to run there but with the number of hackney cars available in the Rosses and Gweedore, Gortahork bus terminus became a dominant arrival and departure centre for the area.

With the buses taking so much passenger traffic from the railway the L&LSR decided to make further cutbacks in May 1928. Ten staff employees were given notices of dismissal on the grounds of economy. But the NUR and the Railway Clerks Association took exception to the measure and demanded that the dismissal notices be withdrawn immediately.¹⁴¹ There were threats of a closedown but the L&LSR held firm and insisted that the cuts had to be made on the grounds of economy. The crisis continued for some weeks.¹⁴² The Railway Clerks Association in Dublin strongly protested against the 'provocative and unprecedented' action of the L&LSR in issuing dismissal notices to one sixth of its salaried staff.¹⁴³ Senator J. T. Farrell condemned the L&LSR stating:

The people on the Burtonport section who attended the Feis in Letterkenny on 29 June are not likely to forget their experience on the journey, nor to travel by rail again on such an occasion if they can help it. As it was, many of those who travelled from stations adjacent to Letterkenny, made the return journey by bus rather than submit to the tortures of another 'joy-ride' on the Lough Swilly Railway although they held return railway tickets. Was it any wonder that in those amazing circumstances the line was not thriving and that experienced railwaymen who could be usefully employed were being relegated to the 'workless army' without even unemployment benefit as the company were allowed exemption from the

¹³⁹ *DJ*, 16 May 1928, p. 4.

¹⁴⁰ *DJ*, 21 Sept. 1928, p. 5.

¹⁴¹ *DJ*, 30 May 1928, p. 5.

¹⁴² *DJ*, 1 June 1928, p. 5.

¹⁴³ *DJ*, 18 June 1928, p. 4.

Unemployment Insurance Acts on their own certificate to the effect that ordinary railway employees were 'reasonably permanent' and that there was no reason to expect that they would require unemployment benefit.¹⁴⁴

However, the reaction of the employees on the ground in Donegal and Derry was much more tepid than that of headquarters. The *Derry Journal* stated that 'the general body of employees would not endanger their positions by precipitate action, the consequences of which they could not foresee'.¹⁴⁵ Patrick McGilligan, the Minister for Industry and Commerce, intervened in the dispute some weeks later and secured the retention of the stationmasters but had to concede to some dismissals.¹⁴⁶ All of this unpleasantness was taking place throughout the herring fishing and during the holiday and tourist season when the railway transport was badly needed.

The application for a further subsidy was discussed in the Northern Ireland Parliament in October 1928. In his discussions with the L&LSR the Minister had informed them that the subsidies could not continue indefinitely. Their object was to tide the undertaking over a difficult period. Mr Kyle (Labour) moved for a reduction in the vote stating that, before the Free State authorities gave any grant, an assurance was asked that men employed on the railway would be retained. However, employees of many years had been discharged recently. The administration of the railway was a by-word – some of the directors supplied the company with coal. There was no contract and no tenders were asked for. 'Of course,' said Mr Kyle, 'this is all part of the grand capitalist game that friends of the government branches have been playing for the past few years to bolster up a system crumbling away before their eyes.' Mr McMullin (Labour) said that it might be more advantageous to

¹⁴⁴ *DJ*, 18 July 1928, p. 8.

¹⁴⁵ *DJ*, 20 July 1928, p. 3.

¹⁴⁶ *DJ*, 23 July 1928, p. 4.

the men that all its traffic should go by road transport. Eventually the vote was passed.¹⁴⁷

But no sooner was the question of dismissal sorted and the grants secured than the L&LSR introduced further cutbacks on most of its lines. Advertisements appeared in the Derry and Donegal papers that train alterations would commence on Monday 5 November 1928. The 11.25 a.m Derry to Burtonport daily train was altered to run Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays only. The 11.15 a.m. Burtonport to Derry daily train was altered to run Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays only.¹⁴⁸

Some weeks later the L&LSR withdrew from the Railway Wages Board stating that railways were under no statutory obligation to accept the ruling of such a body. It argued that it was open to the railway companies to introduce a revised scale of pay for the employees and to reduce drastically the numbers employed and further, to close down and decline to carry on until an agreement was reached. The L&LSR were not exceptional in this action as many larger railways were in difficulties as well. But relations between the railway and employees were now at a very critical stage.¹⁴⁹

At the L&LSR annual general meeting in February 1929 the chairman announced that receipts for 1928 were £53,115, down £1,367; expenditure was £61,521, a decrease of £4,243. The Northern Ireland government had given a grant of £5,250 compared with £7,750 for 1927, and the Free State government gave £5,167. From 1924 to 1929 the Irish Free State government has given the L&LSR £31,407 in subventions. The loss on working had been reduced from £15,238 in 1923 to £8,406 in 1928.¹⁵⁰ The chairman, Trew Colquhoun, then continued:

¹⁴⁷ *DJ*, 12 Oct. 1928, p. 3.

¹⁴⁸ *DJ*, 2 Nov. 1928, p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ *DJ*, 4 Feb 1929, p. 3.

¹⁵⁰ *DJ*, 1 Mar. 1929, p. 11.

We are simply desirous that North-West Donegal, with which we are closely connected, should continue to receive a railway service in keeping with its importance as well as its interests. Why did GNR not need grants? The GNR got receipts of £2,787 per mile in 1927 whereas the L&LSR only got £550. That was due to the fact that half the system, which comprised of the L&BER, served some parts of the northwest which were sparsely populated and with but few industries.¹⁵¹

Dr Henderson, one of the directors, asked for a 'Joint Board' or a commission on which all parties concerned could be represented to evolve some plan or scheme for the regulation or coordination of the traffic which would afford the maximum facilities and advantages to the public while showing fair play to the railways and motorists.

Then Mr Swan, a senior member of the board spoke and introduced the 'new departure' for the L&LSR. He set out how the GNR had believed it struck oil in putting buses on the road after following the lead of the Great Southern Railway in doing the same. He thought the L&LSR might take a leaf out of the Great Northern Railway's book and, in a much smaller way, of course, do what that company had done. It had struck him forcibly that if the company or company's agents employed buses or lorries to act as feeders it would be a most desirable step to take. It was along these lines that the greatest measure of salvation and recovery was to be found for that railway. These were the lines that looked to give the best salvation to the L&LSR.¹⁵² The meeting concluded with the firm intention of starting a bus and lorry service as soon as possible, initially as a feeder auxiliary to the trains. But the implications of the 1929 decisions were clear. The future signified change.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *DJ*, 1 Mar. 1929, p. 11.

The L&LSR were moving into road transport. Railway domination in northwest Donegal was over.¹⁵³

The failure of the railway to thrive in the turbulent twenties reflected in many ways the failure of society to prosper, especially in Donegal, during the first years of independence. Those who reflected on the purist ideals of the revolution must have been sorely disappointed with the outturn pervading society at the end of the decade.

In northwest Donegal the decade had been dominated by distress, unemployment, failed fishing, panic emigration, suffering, depression and starvation. The security of the Congested Districts Board had been removed immediately by the Free State government in 1923 with promises to institute a better replacement. But despite pleas, commissions, political agitation, press reports, ministerial visits, investigating inspectors, memorials, clerical agitation and even loss of life due to starvation which gained headlines, the Cumann na nGaedheal government were unbending in its orthodoxy. The Donegal distress interests looked on enviously at the favourable treatment of distress in western Scotland by the government thrown out of Ireland.¹⁵⁴

Nor did native government and independent parliament bring peace among the factions involved in the Civil War. Gweedore society became polarised because of the bitter political chasm that developed between the Republican side and the AOH in particular. A cow in Cloughaneely had her tongue cut out and the IRA stopped dances in Drimaraw by burning the roof of a barn full of hay within because proper respect was not given to political prisoners.¹⁵⁵

About 200 AOH members travelling on the train going to Letterkenny from the Rosses and Gweedore in May 1925 had a lucky escape when the

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ *DJ*, 14 Mar. 1923, p. 5.

¹⁵⁵ *DJ*, 27 June 1924, p. 6

points were diverted into a ballast siding on the Letterkenny side of Gweedore. They were fortunately discovered by a milesman before the arrival of the packed train. Two miles further along the line a large heap of stones had been placed across the rails. Guards were on duty along the line for the return of the train in the evening.¹⁵⁶

On a Sunday morning in May 1925 the new barracks nearing completion at Bunbeg was burned down. A man named Hugh Gallagher was arrested. The old barracks was formerly used by the RIC and was also burned down.¹⁵⁷ In Bunbeg court Gallagher said 'I will allow no foreign flag to fly in Bunbeg'.¹⁵⁸

Boulders were placed on the railway at Cruckakeehan near Annagry and one of the coaches was derailed in 1925.¹⁵⁹ It was believed that this incident occurred as a result of the L&LSR receiving a grant from the Free State government and, thereby, becoming a tool of the new state.

However, the most serious incident of all happened in March 1927 when two young men were burned to death while attempting to burn down the AOH hall in Gweedore. After lighting the fire inside the hall it is believed that the door slammed shut thereby trapping them inside.¹⁶⁰ In 1928 a new AOH hall being constructed at Annagry was partially demolished by Republicans.¹⁶¹

On 9 August 1931 a small party of detectives were on duty about 2.30 a.m. when they came upon a group of about ten men trying to block the railway line at Dore in Gweedore with large boulders. As the detectives approached some of the men opened fire to which the detectives promptly replied. There was an exciting chase over the mountains with the detectives

¹⁵⁶ *DJ*, 22 May 1925, p. 5.

¹⁵⁷ *DJ*, 27 May 1925, p. 8.

¹⁵⁸ *DJ*, 15 June 1925, p. 7.

¹⁵⁹ *DJ*, 16 Sept. 1925, p. 5.

¹⁶⁰ *DJ*, 7 Mar. 1927, p. 8 and *DJ*, 9 Mar. 1927, p. 5.

¹⁶¹ *DJ*, 28 Sept. 1928, p. 11.

using their revolvers but the men went off in different directions and the detectives had to give up the chase. The spot selected was around an acute bend and at the top of a steep incline. The morning train which was next due was to carry large numbers of pilgrims to Doon Well although there was a big contingent on board for the Garda Sports in Letterkenny. Wires to Letterkenny were cut at Pluck near Letterkenny and the Ballybofey to Letterkenny road was trenched on that night also.¹⁶²

However, a feature that lasted long after the independence struggle and the Civil War was that of the poiteen trade which continued to be rampant throughout the county especially in the northwest and in Inishowen. At Bunbeg court in 1924, District Justice Sean O'Hanrahan wished Innisherrir island would be 'blown up' because of its poiteen making.¹⁶³ In 1929, General O'Duffy, Chief Commissioner of the Civic Guards, declared war on poiteen making in Donegal, which in 1927 was the worst county in Ireland with the number of seizures then being 168 as compared with the next worst, Galway which had 100. Inishowen was the worst of all. In 1928 116 detections were made in Donegal and 97 of these were in Inishowen.¹⁶⁴

However, the apparent moral decay within the new state was not just confined to poiteen. 'Gael', the GAA correspondent for the *Derry Journal* spoke about the

slump in Tirchonaiill Gaelic fields but plenty of jazz. The GAA is in a slipshod manner; interest has waned due to long intervals between the games. The GAA is not in a healthy condition in Donegal. Athletic prowess nowadays takes second place to the 'grace' with which the 'Charleston' or some other equally hideous abortion is executed. In Letterkenny, a well-known football team is being disbanded and its place is being taken by a jazz band of the same name. Their latest enterprise

¹⁶² *DJ*, 10 Aug. 1931, p. 5.

¹⁶³ *DD*, 1 Aug. 1824.

¹⁶⁴ *LS*, 5 Feb. 1929, p. 3.

launched under imposing circumstances is the lawn tennis club [in Letterkenny].
Go bhfóire Dia orainn.¹⁶⁵

A month later he again wrote:

It is a strange commentary on the much-boasted patriotism of the Gaeltacht districts that the only outdoor pastime which is patronised by the young men there is soccer. When one reads of the matches being played every Sunday in the Rosses, one cannot withhold the feeling that there 'is something rotten in the state of Denmark'. The [soccer] game has even permeated to such strongholds of Irish tradition as the islands of Aranmore, Cruit, Rutland and Gola. Gweedore, Dungloe and Burtonport are also affected. Until something practical is done to combat this slavish aping their cross channel standards in sport, the Donegal Gaeltacht should hang its head in shame.¹⁶⁶

At the Donegal GAA county convention in 1930, the president said 'football in the county had proved a fiasco'. He continued that they had now come to the end of another year in the history of the GAA in Donegal but, as they had nothing to be particularly proud of in the records of the last twelve months, he would call 'quits' on that point.¹⁶⁷

Nor did the Irish language prosper in Donegal. The Gaeltacht Commission issued its report in 1926 with plans for the regeneration of industry, revitalised fishing programmes, free secondary education for all as well as ambitious language development. But the Cosgrave government did nothing. Demands were made, year after year, for the implementation of the programme without success. Within the Gaeltacht itself the founding of Irish colleges in Ranafast and Gweedore brought much needed income into these areas during the summer seasons. The Gaelic enthusiasts met regularly and discussed Gaelic topics in Gaelic but the Gaeltacht continued to shrink and the

¹⁶⁵ *DJ*, 11 July 1927, p. 6.

¹⁶⁶ *DJ*, 12 Aug. 1927, p. 5.

¹⁶⁷ *DJ*, 8 Jan. 1930, p. 2.

towns turned away from the language with Falcarragh declaring that Irish was for the 'mountainy people'.¹⁶⁸ Irish was even beginning to affect the animals. One of the finest working horses in Irish speaking Magheraroarty was sold to a Dunfanaghy farmer in 1932. However, after his move to the English speaking district, the horse proved next to useless on the farm and the purchaser sued the vendor for recovery of his outlay. However, Justice Walsh decreed that it was purely a question of language – the horse had no English and it would be unfair to expect him to be capable of operating in a few languages. Consequently, he dismissed the case.¹⁶⁹ Obviously the Irish burden was becoming heavier to carry!

By 1926 northwest Donegal had also succumbed to the evils of the outside world. There was a jazz craze in the Gaeltacht. An editorial in the *Derry Journal* warned that

national and moral loss must inevitably ensue; - moral loss in the case of an emotional and fiery people, indulging in the licentious and suggestive gyrations of this product of pagan minds called jazz, is certainly assured. Only recently in Glenfin where all the speakers were Irish, and some spoke Irish only, this foreign filth supplanted almost entirely the grand dances of the Gael'.¹⁷⁰

By Lent of 1928, Bishop McNeely eventually abandoned distress for the greater issue of modesty. His pastoral stated: 'For the past ten years or so the immodest dresses of women have been a grave scandal. The Modest Dress and Department Crusade was inaugurated some months ago and already has swelled to 1,200 members. Women cannot be children of Mary and daughters of Hecate at the same time'.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ *DJ*, 22 June 1931, p. 6.

¹⁶⁹ *DP*, 15 Oct. 1932, p. 4.

¹⁷⁰ *DJ*, 11 Oct. 1926, p. 3.

¹⁷¹ *DD*, 25 Feb. 1928.

And despite the cries of hunger and starvation issuing forth from northwest Donegal during the decade, there was an almost fanatical enthusiasm in embracing the ways of the better classes. Golf clubs were formed in Falcarragh, Gweedore and Dungloe during the twenties. 'The Rosses golf club has been very well-patronised during the past months also. In the past this game was confined to the few as many persons failed or refused to recognise its worth. But this season many new members were added to the club. The course is in splendid condition'. Tennis tournaments were commonplace in Dunfanaghy and Portnablagh.¹⁷² Dungloe opened tennis and badminton courts. Saturday evening greyhound racing became a regular feature in Dunfanaghy. Dungloe became noted for 'its progressiveness and modernity'.¹⁷³ All this and foreign dances too! No wonder Bishop McNeely was moved to state in 1927 'it will always be a problem for some minds to understand how it came about that a generation fired with patriotism allowed itself to become victim of the most vulgar and degrading of foreign influence'.¹⁷⁴ Yet he seemed oblivious to the discrepancies within his own church for, perhaps, the greatest sign that *petite* gentrification had entered this modern world of the northwest was the allocation of special seats in the Catholic churches to the quality, almost exclusively members of the shopocracy who had made good, just as the departed gentry had demanded in other parts of Ireland for many years before their fall.¹⁷⁵ It seemed that, in the new Irish Ireland, the chasm between rich and poor was more pronounced in northwest Donegal than it had ever been under British rule.

On the railway the struggle for survival continued. The dissatisfaction of railwaymen throughout the country with their threatened employment could

¹⁷² *DJ*, 4 Aug, 1931, p. 10.

¹⁷³ *DJ*, 4 Dec. 1931, p. 8.

¹⁷⁴ *LS*, 1 Mar. 1927, p. 3.

¹⁷⁵ Morgan Dunleavy, Calhame, Annagry, County Donegal.

be tempered with the fact that there was business to be done and loads to be carried in the areas of population. However, in northwest Donegal this was not the case. The trains carried the youth of the district as far as the Derry boat but few were carried back again. Despite the awful conditions in America they still continued to go. On one Friday alone in August 1929, more than forty young people left Gweedore for Brooklyn and New York.¹⁷⁶ The

Fig. 51 Receipts and expenses plus government grants in 1920s

YEAR	Receipts of all L&LSR lines	Expenses for all L&LSR lines	Free State grant	Northern Ireland Grant
1923	£60,417	£74,898		
1924	£65,165	£73,471	£6,033	
1925	£63,210	£72,469	£7,000	
1926	£56,591	£71,577	£5,000	£5,000
1927	£55,314	£65,764	£5,833	£5,750
1928	£53,475	£61,521	£5,167	£5,150
1929	£46,143	£56,441	£5,120	£3,500

Source: Taken from a. g. m. reports in *LS* annually for the years mentioned.

prospects for the railway were no less forlorn. The end of the 1920s saw the L&LSR directors begging for subsidies in both Dublin and Belfast, to keep the railway in operation. £3,750 came from each government but it was made plain that change would have to be brought about without much delay.

At the end of a turbulent decade the Burtonport Extension faced into an uncertain future. It had barely survived the last ten years. There was little hope that it would still be operating after another decade.

¹⁷⁶ *DJ*, 9 Aug. 1929, p. 8.

Next to Safety
Punctual Running
of Trains is
Most Important.

LONDONDERRY AND LOUGH SWILLY RAILWAY CO.

TRAIN SERVICE

(From 2nd OCTOBER, 1922, and until further Notice)

Burtonport and Letterkenny to Londonderry.

UP TRAINS.

Mls.	Clis.	STATIONS.	No. 24		No. 25		*No. 26		No. 27	
			Passenger. Week Days.	Passenger. Week Days.	Passenger. Week Days.	Passenger. Week Days.	Goods. (Alternate days to No. 22 as per advice).		Passenger. Week Days.	Passenger. Week Days.
arr.	dep.	arr.	dep.	arr.	dep.	arr.	dep.	arr.	dep.	
		BURTONPORT	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
1	48	Dungloe	8 55	8 36	1 7	11 25	3 26	4 24	5 20	6 46
2	76	Kincasslagh	8 40	8 41	1 22	9 40	8 51	4 24	5 20	6 46
8	87	Croly	8 57	8 58	1 30	8 47	3 44	4 24	5 20	6 46
11	50	GWEEDORE	8 8		1 40	8 58		4 8		
17	58	Cashelagore	9 30	9 31	2 15	4 23	4 24	4 24		
20	73	Falcarragh	9 39	9 40	2 25	4 32	4 33	4 24		
27	70	Dunfanaghy	10 3	10 5	2 50	4 55	4 56	4 24		
29	4	CREESLOUGH	10 10		3 59	5 3		5 5		
			Cross No. 20			3 5		5 5		
			10 20							
87	24	KILMACREHAN	10 48		3 30	5 33		5 33		
			10 48			3 35		5 38		
40	78	Churchill	10 57	10 58	3 47	5 46	6 40			
44	83	Foxhall	11 8	11 9	3 59	5 58	6 57			
45	87	New Mills	11 13	11 14	4 3	6 1	6 2			
46	78	Oldtown	11 21	11 23	4 17	6 9	6 11			
49	56	LETTERKENNY	11 28		4 40	6 14		6 14		
			7 30		11 38	4 40		6 23		
59	71	Pluck	7 32	7 33	11 48	11 49	Pass	6 40	6 41	
65	72	Manor	7 39	7 41	11 55	11 56	Pass	6 47	6 48	
67	50	Sallybrook	7 47	7 48	12 2	12 3	Pass	6 54	6 55	
61	49	NEWTON	8 1		12 16	5 20		7 8		
			Cross No. 20		12 23	5 30		7 12		
			8 20							
65	14	Carrowen	8 32	8 33	12 32	12 33	Pass	7 21	7 22	
68	16	TOOBAN JUNCTION	8 39		12 40	5 50	Pass	7 29		
			8 49		12 40	6 20				
69	22	Burnfoot	8 52	8 53	12 49	12 41	Pass	7 32	7 33	
70	68	Bridge End	8 58	8 59	12 47	12 50	Pass	7 36	7 39	
72	84	Gallagh Road	9 5	9 9	12 53	12 56	Pass	7 44	7 45	
		Bunmylan	9 11	9 11	1 1	1 1	Pass	7 50	7 50	
74	86	LONDONDERRY	9 15	1 2	6 41	7 51				

* Advice will be sent if this Train is to run.

Next to Safety
Punctual Running
of Trains is
Most Important.

LONDONDERRY AND LOUGH SWILLY RAILWAY CO.

TRAIN SERVICE

(From 2nd OCTOBER, 1922, and until further Notice).

Londonderry to Letterkenny and Burtonport.

DOWN TRAINS.

Mls.	Clis.	STATIONS.	No. 20		No. 21		*No. 22		No. 23	
			Passenger. Week Days.	Passenger. Week Days.	Passenger. Week Days.	Passenger. Week Days.	Goods. (Alternate days to No. 20 as per advice).		Passenger. Week Days.	Passenger. Week Days.
arr.	dep.	arr.	dep.	arr.	dep.	arr.	dep.	arr.	dep.	
		LONDONDERRY	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
1	78	Gallagh Road	7 36	7 37	11 36	11 37	no required	4 51	4 52	4 58
3	68	Bridge End	7 42	7 43	11 42	11 43	no required	4 57	4 58	5 2.
5	14	Burnfoot	7 48	7 47	11 48	11 47	Pass	5 1	5 2.	
8	20	TOOBAN JUNCTION	Pass		Pass		Pass	5 5		
9	22	Carrowen	7 58	7 59	12 0	12 1		5 10	5 14	
12	73	NEWTON	8 8		12 10		2 40	5 23		
			Cross No. 21		Cross No. 22					
			8 12		12 20			5 27		
18	57	Sallybrook	8 27	8 28	12 35	12 30	no required	5 42	5 43	
18	44	Manor	8 33	8 33	12 41	12 42	no required	5 46	5 47	
20	45	Pluck	8 40	8 42	12 48	12 50	no required	5 55	5 57	
94	60	LETTERKENNY	8 53		1 1		3 30	6 8		
			9 3				4 10	6 20		
26	40	Oldtown	9 8	9 7			4 15	6 24	6 24	
28	49	New Mills	9 15	9 16			4 27	6 33	6 33	
30	1	Foxhall	9 21	9 25			4 32	6 41	6 43	
33	48	Churchill	9 34	9 35			4 54	6 51	6 55	
87	12	KILMACREHAN	9 47				5 20	7 7		
			9 50				5 40	7 12		
46	32	CREESLOUGH	10 12				6 5	7 35		
			Cross No. 25							
			10 19							
46	46	Dunfanaghy	10 23	10 23			6 25	7 48	7 45	
58	37	Falcarragh	10 40	10 51			7 0	8 11	8 13	
50	59	Cashelagore	11 2	11 4			7 15	8 24	8 26	
62	66	GWEEDORE	11 19		11 29		7 40	8 41	8 46	
65	79	Croly	11 37	11 39			8 10	8 54	8 55	
71	40	Kincasslagh Road	11 55	11 57			8 10	9 11	9 12	
72	78	Dungloe	12 0	12 4			8 16	9 15	9 16	
74	86	BURTONPORT	12 8				8 20	9 20		

* Advice will be sent if this Train is to run.

Fig. 53 Special trains for Dr McNeely's consecration

BOICAR IÁRAINN DOIRE AGUS LOC SUÍG.

COISREACAN

EASBUIC ÚIR RÁDHOITA AIS LEICIF CEANAINN
DIA DOINNIAIS, 22^o LÁ IÚL, 1923.

BEIR TICEÍOÍ SAORA AGUS TRÁENCAÍ SPEISIALTA AR AN LÁ SEO
TUAS.

8.30 a.m. Aite an Coptáin go dtí Leirip Ceannainn 8.15 a.m. Saoc'Uodair go dtí Leirip Ceannainn.

MARON TICEOÍ DOIBALCA		MARON TICEOÍ DOIBALCA	
0		0	
AITE AN COPTÁIN	8.30	SAOC'UODAIR	8.15 2/9
AN CLOCAN LIAC	8.26	CAISEAL NA SOR	8.33 2/7
CEANN CASLAIS	8.31	AN FAL CARRAC	8.45 2/5
CRUICSLIGE	8.41	DUN FIONNACLAIS	9.7 2/3

8.45 a.m. Craoislóc go dtí Leirip Ceannainn. 9.0 a.m. Doire go dtí Leirip Ceannainn

MARON TICEOÍ DOIBALCA		MARON TICEOÍ DOIBALCA	
0		0	
CRAOSLÓC	8.45 2/3	DOIRE	9.0 2/-
CILL MAC NEANIN	9.10 1/6	Urrann Mionacáim	9.12 1/9
MIN AN LABAIN	9.20 1/-	Daire róp na Abainn	9.16
FOSCHALL	9.30 -/9	CARR EÓGÁINN	9.27
AN MINEANN ÚR	9.35 -/6	Daire nua an Dúic	9.38 1/6
		SALLIBHÉIC	9.53 1/-
		AN MACARNE MÓR	9.59 -/9
		PLUC	10.6 -/6

TRÁENCAÍ DOIBALCA

Tráencaí	Tréimh
Go dtí Craoislóc, Ceann Caslais, An Clochan Liac agus Aite an Coptáin	6.30
Go dtí Dun Fionnclaís, An Fal Carrac, Caiseal na Sor 7 Saoc'Uodair	7.0
Go dtí An Mineann Úr, Foschall, Min an Labain, Cill mac Neainn agus Craoislóc	7.30
Go dtí Pluc, An Macarne Mór, Daire róp na Abainn agus Doire	6.30

11 Íf péirip na Doire a ceannas ag SAC ríáiripín ar líne óir an Coptáin Dia Saic, 21.00 IÚL agus íf péirip óiripín a Daire arca an 11 íf róp agus Dia Doinnias 22.00 IÚL te a-l dóir. Íf péirip óiripín ar 11 íf Dia Iúil 13.00 IÚL. Na ticeítoí saora a Uirpe agus ó na ríáiripín ríóiripíní, na íf péirip óiripín a Daire arca aic arcaín ar Dia Doinnias 22.00 IÚL 1923.

15 é áin saíthiáir an C.Áin Seo Tuas.
SEMOIS SASCA — TICEÍOÍ SAORA
H. HUNT, Dairipéirip.

Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway Company.

CONSECRATION

—OF THE—

BISHOP-ELECT OF RAPHOE

At Letterkenny, on Sunday, 22nd July, 1923

In connection with above Cheap Excursion Tickets will be issued and Special Trains run as under:—

8.20 a.m. Barrowport to Letterkenny			8.15 a.m. Gweedore to Letterkenny		
From	a.m.	Return Fare	From	a.m.	Return Fare
BURTONPORT	8-20	3/-	GWEDDORE	8-15	2/9
DUBLIN	8-20		CASHLAGORE	8-22	2/7
KINCASLASH	8-31		FALCARRACH	8-45	2/5
CROLY	8-48	2/11	DUNFANAGHY	9-7	2/3

9.45 a.m. Coleraine to Letterkenny			8-0 a.m. Londonderry to Letterkenny		
From	a.m.	Return Fare	From	a.m.	Return Fare
CRESLAGH	9-45	2/3	LONDONDERRY	8-0	2/-
KILMACREHAN	9-10	1/6	BRIDGE END	8-12	1/9
CHURCHILL	9-20	1/-	RUBFOOT	8-18	1/6
FOXHALL	9-30	-/9	CARROWN	8-27	1/6
NEWBILLS	9-35	-/6	NEWTON C.	8-33	1/-
			SALLYBROOK	8-53	-/8
			MANOR C.	9-59	-/8
			PLUCK	10-8	-/8

RETURN TRAINS

For Croly, Kincaslach, Douglas and Barrowport, leaves OLDTOWN at 6-30
For Cushmaghy, Falcarragh, Cashlagore and Gweedore, leaves L'KENNY at 7-0
For Foxhall, Churchhill, Kilmacrehan and Cresslough, leaves L'KENNY at 7-30
For Pluck, Manor C., Sallybrook, etc. and Londonderry, leaves L'KENNY at 6-30

Tickets may be purchased at Barrowport Line Station on SATURDAY, 21st JULY, and will be available for travelling on that day as well as on SUNDAY, 22nd JULY. Passengers may also return from Letterkenny on Monday, 23rd July or Monday, 25th July, 1923. Tickets at the above reduced fares issued at Londonderry and Letterkenny. Stations will be available only on Sunday, 22nd July, 1923.

TIME SHOWN ABOVE IS SUMMER TIME.

QUICK SERVICE — CHEAP FARES.

H. HUNT, GENERAL MANAGER.

CHAPTER 11

SLOW DECLINE AND IMMINENT DEMISE

The Wall Street crash in 1929 had a disastrous effect on the Irish emigrants in America during the 1930s and denuded the homes in northwest Donegal of expected earnings which would help pay many bills and keep families on the right side of the poverty line. Grace Sweeney remembers working in a priest's house in Phillipsburg, New Jersey, from 1929 to 1939 and dealing with the constant stream of unemployed Irish looking for food and money during the early 1930s. She remembers how they spent their nights riding the circular subway trains trying to get warmth and sleep until, finally, many managed to get the fare to return home.¹

By May 1930 the *Derry Journal* reported that large contingents of American exiles were arriving 'back in these parts'. The writer learned from them that economic conditions in the States were the worst in history, especially in Boston, New York and Philadelphia. Tens of thousands of people in these cities were walking the streets and could not procure even casual employment. 'Out of works are glad to snatch any employment which will give them three meals a day'.²

And yet the desperation grew at home for an outlet. The *Derry Journal* reported in September 1930 that despite the fearful conditions then prevailing throughout America in regard to unemployment the exodus from northwest Donegal continued with a never failing regularity'.³ Even the migratory labourers going to Scotland experienced a new outbreak of discrimination in 1929 and 1930 when members of the Scottish Presbyterian Church started a campaign against the numbers of Irish

¹ Grace Sweeney, Bunaman, Annagry.

² *DJ*, 23 May 1930, p. 9.

³ *DJ*, 9 Sept. 1930, p. 9.

Catholics invading their country. The anti-Irish agitation was particularly virulent in the towns. On each boat going to Scotland stewards with notebooks took down details of the migrants including their numbers, destination, work and even the sex and age of their children.⁴ This activity added greatly to the stress on men who were destined to go on long distance tramp, walking the roads from farm to farm and job to job, sleeping in hay barns and stealing raw vegetables for survival. The problems gained so much publicity and bitterness in Scotland that discussions were held in the British parliament about repatriating unemployed Irishmen from Scotland.⁵ When M.P.s wondered why there should be such concern about the Irish coming into Scotland, the Scottish M.P. MacQuistan told them: 'The objection to the Irish coming into Scotland is what is known in currency matters as Gresham's Law, namely that bad money drives out good money'.⁶ It was stated that promises from the Irish Free State government were made to deal with the problem amicably or else the British parliament would legislate to return to southern Ireland 'any Irishman who becomes a burden on the rates of this country'.⁷ The duchess of Atholl asked for the numbers entering and leaving Scotland from and to Irish Free State ports but these figures proved very inconclusive because most Donegal people went from Derry and Cavan and Monaghan emigrants normally travelled from Belfast.⁸

With the poverty in northwest Donegal at its worst in 1929 and 1930, even the School Attendance Act could not prevent increased exploitation of child labour for now, the children went in crowds before the summer holidays to the 'tattie-hokin' and returned in October to resume school in the hope that they would have avoided prosecution.⁹ In such an uneconomic backwater there was little hope of the Letterkenny &

⁴ *DJ*, 5 Sept. 1928, p. 5.

⁵ *Hansard* 5 (Commons), ccxxx, 1081 (23 July 1929).

⁶ *Hansard* 5 (Commons) ccxxxii, 260 (18 Nov. 1929).

⁷ *DJ*, 27 May 1929, p. 5.

⁸ *Hansard* 5 (Commons), ccxxxiii, 2131-3 (18 Nov. 1929).

⁹ Maggie Roarty, Knockastolar, Gweedore.

Burtonport Extension Railway exploiting new markets that would retrieve its declining finances.

Immediately after the change of policy announced at its annual general meeting of 1929 the L&LSR quickly made the first move to switch to road transport. They took over Barr's buses in Inishowen and Sam Burn's buses in northwest Donegal and by 1930 they were running regular twice-daily services between Derry and Gortahork via Letterkenny, Kilmacrenan, Termon, Creeslough, Portnablagh, Dunfanaghy and Falcarragh. Deputy Neil Blaney (Fianna Fail) was unhappy, however, that a railway company was trying to get a monopoly of the road transport and he did not think that was fair. He warned that 'fares would go up and freights would go up'.¹⁰

But only two months later, the bus services were in trouble. The L&LSR bus drivers and conductors stopped work in August 1930 because of the dismissal of one driver. Henry Hunt said he did not know what the strike was about because the company had not been notified. Buncrana was badly hit.¹¹ Hours and wages now became a big issue and very soon, the ATGWU¹² became central to the whole dispute even though they had not been involved with the L&LSR previously. The union quickly established that the bus employees were not receiving union wages and their conditions of work were unsatisfactory. But, in accordance with their long history of antipathy towards unions, the L&LSR steadfastly refused to have anything to do with the ATGWU.¹³ The men complained that they had to work from 7.30 a.m. to 12 midnight, seven days a week. No allowances were made for meals and no overtime was paid except 2s. 6d. for turning out to meet the Derry boat at 4 a.m. ATGWU confirmed that the men had become members of the union. It was feared that the trouble

¹⁰ *DJ*, 28 May 1930, p. 3.

¹¹ *DJ*, 4 Aug. 1930, p. 5.

¹² ATGWU: Associated Transport & General Workers Union.

¹³ *DJ*, 6 Aug. 1930, p. 5.

might spread to other parts.¹⁴ The strike ended within a week after the intervention of the Northern Ireland Ministry for Labour. The L&LSR and ATGWU were brought together and it was agreed that the dismissed driver would be reinstated and negotiations would open on conditions of work and wages. In fact, this meant that the L&LSR would in future recognise the ATGWU. Over thirty men were involved.¹⁵ Once more the L&LSR had to bow to union pressure.

In late February 1931 the L&LSR annual general meeting was scheduled for Derry. The chairman, Trew Colquhoun informed the shareholders that receipts were £39,996 (£43,993) and expenditure for 1930 was £49,668 (£54,818). Receipts from bus services were £12,416 and the actual working expenses of the buses amounted to £10,157. Without further discussion he then adjourned the meeting until Thursday 30 April. The immediate reaction throughout Derry and north Donegal was that the whole L&LSR railway system was to close.¹⁶

The reason for this sudden termination was that the Free State government had refused to commit itself to further subsidies until it first knew what the action of the Northern Ireland government was going to be. The Dublin administration feared that, in the event of the Belfast government pulling out of the existing arrangement, it would be left fully responsible for keeping the railway system working and would become underwriter for its debts. After the adjourned meeting senior members of the Derry Chamber of Commerce and the Derry Harbour Board arranged a meeting with Viscount Craigavon in Belfast where they accompanied the L&LSR directors to fight for their cause. Craigavon was prevailed upon to withdraw the decision made in July 1930 that no further grants would be made by the Belfast government. However, the conditions now imposed were very severe. The grant was conditional on the Dublin government

¹⁴ *DJ*, 8 Aug. 1930, p. 5.

¹⁵ *DJ*, 11 Aug. 1930, p. 5.

¹⁶ *LS*, 28 Feb. 1931, p. 2.

giving a similar amount. The subvention was to be exclusively used for the carrying of goods while passenger services were to be limited to special occasions. Henceforth, the subsidy would be paid on a monthly remittance basis. A further grant would be made in the following year but 'this represents absolute finality from the Northern Ireland government'. The grant was given 'on condition that no portion of the above sum be utilized in any way in connection with the provision of or running of bus services'.¹⁷

An editorial in the *Derry People* stated:

whether the Northern government withheld the grants so that their magnanimity at the latter end might be duly appreciated, or whether the increase in the numbers of the unemployed which would inevitably follow the closing of the line was an unwelcome prospect does not greatly matter, but during the next two years the railway will be on probation and, at the end of that period, we sincerely hope that further outside assistance will be found unnecessary.¹⁸

In the Dail, Paddy McGilligan, Minister for Industry and Commerce, in a reply to Deputy Cassidy, (Labour) Donegal, stated that a limited service to the extent of the carriage of goods was to be provided between Letterkenny and Burtonport.¹⁹ The Free State and Northern governments would each contribute £3,500 in the current year by way of subsidy towards the expenses of working the line or roughly that which was contributed in the previous year. He conceded that the services of some members of staff would have to be dispensed with. Beyond that McGilligan made no further commitment to the railway nor did he make any further demands especially in relation to the passenger traffic.²⁰

Once the grants had been secured the L&LSR set about immediately to reorganise their whole system and 'terminated the services of many men

¹⁷ *LS*, 28 Mar. 1931, p. 7.

¹⁸ *DP*, 4 Apr. 1931. Editorial

¹⁹ *Dáil Debates*, Vol. xxxvii, 2317 (27 Mar. 1931).

²⁰ *Ibid.*; Also *DP* 4 April 1931.

who I [Trew Colquhoun] know have served the company long and faithfully'.²¹ One hundred men, sixty in Donegal and forty in Derry, were to be paid off immediately in the first half of 1931. The NUR met in Derry and protested at the dismissals but, other than referring the matter to their Dublin office, they more or less admitted that there was no alternative. For once the L&LSR could have its way. The trains to Burtonport were rescheduled and only goods were carried on one service daily which created many problems for the Rosses and Gweedore where there was no bus transport.²²

On Sunday, 29 March 1931, a representative meeting of ratepayers and others was convened at Gweedore for the purpose of considering what representations should be made to L&LSR regarding the restoration of the passenger service on the line to Burtonport. Mr J. O'Brien who presided said the action of the directors of the L&LSR in cutting off a vital service was calculated to adversely affect the average dweller in those parts inasmuch as the alternative facilities afforded to the travelling public by the inauguration of an unsatisfactory bus service were inconvenient and obsolete, not to mention the increase in fares which were likely to accrue in connection with the adoption of this mode of transport.²³

Donegal County Council members were highly agitated when their monthly meeting took place at the end of April 1931. They believed that the Northern Ireland government had secured the goods service between Derry and the different parts of Donegal because it was in their own vital interest to do so. The county council now demanded that the Free State government make it a condition of their subsidy that a sufficient passenger service between Letterkenny and Burtonport be put in place and that, if necessary to achieve this end, the Burtonport Extension be transferred to CDRJC. The county councillor from Dungloe, Kenny J. Brennan, spoke of

²¹ *LS*, 11 Apr. 1931, p. 9.

²² *DP*, 4 Apr. 1931.

²³ *DP*, 4 April 1931.

his fears when he said that 'in that part of the railway from which the passenger services have been cut off, the roads have never been intended for the excessive bus traffic which the railway company now intends running on them. In a very short time, unless a very heavy expenditure is made on them, they will become useless for all ordinary purposes'. Brennan continued that there was only one train service a day for goods. There was no concession as far as the labourers who emigrated from the northwest of the country were concerned. It would be impossible for these people to get away from Aranmore Island to the potato digging and harvest work in Scotland. If a passenger service was not established immediately he urged the county council to ask the government to take the railway out of the hands of the L&LSR railway company. Daniel E. O'Boyle, Kincasslagh said that 300-400 girls from his district had been notified to leave on 1 May for fishing stations along the east coast of England and Scotland. These people had no means of travelling. The fishing season was to start on 1 May at home also and a good deal of the material had to go by railway. Brennan wanted Donegal County Council to press the government to insist that one passenger train would leave Burtonport at noon or 1 p.m. in order that the migratory labourers and girls for the fishing would be in time for the cross channel steamers. Michael Doogan, Gweedore complained that the people of the area could not attend the hiring fairs in Strabane and Derry. As tempers became frayed and demands for the take-over of the Burtonport Railway by the CDRJC became voluminous, the run of the meeting was abruptly halted when a letter from the Department of Industry and Commerce to Donegal County Council was read out. It was a reply to earlier demands by the county council for an inquiry into the whole L&LSR and a request that the CDRJC take over the L&LSR lines, particularly the Burtonport Extension. It was pointed out in the letter that, by the order of 1898, provision was made for the appointment of committees of management by the Donegal County Council

to take over the maintenance and working of the Burtonport and Carndonagh lines in the event of the L&LSR failing to maintain and work them in accordance with the 1898 agreement. The department referred to the statements in the council's letter and pointedly made the suggestion that this was a most opportune occasion for the council itself to assume the management of the Burtonport Extension. This shocked the councillors. They hurriedly agreed to delete the clauses relating to the transfer of the Burtonport Railway to the CDRJC and then dropped the call for an enquiry 'as they might stultify themselves by such a suggestion'.²⁴

Then, towards the end of April 1931, James Winters who already owned a fleet of buses in Donegal bought out three of the largest companies operating buses in the county, Doherty of Inishowen, Roberts of Derry and Ward of Kerrykeel and renamed the new entity the County Donegal Motor Service.²⁵

A week after James Winters had taken over the bus services there was further shock when it was learned that the L&LSR had purchased all of Winters' buses in Donegal. These services covered Derry to Moville and Greencastle and the main areas of Inishowen and Derry to Letterkenny, Milford and Gortahork via most of the towns and centres of population in between. James Winters became operating superintendent of the new service with Thomas Ward from Kerrykeel who was bought out by Winters a week previously, as his assistant. The L&LSR now owned a fleet of twenty-eight buses.²⁶

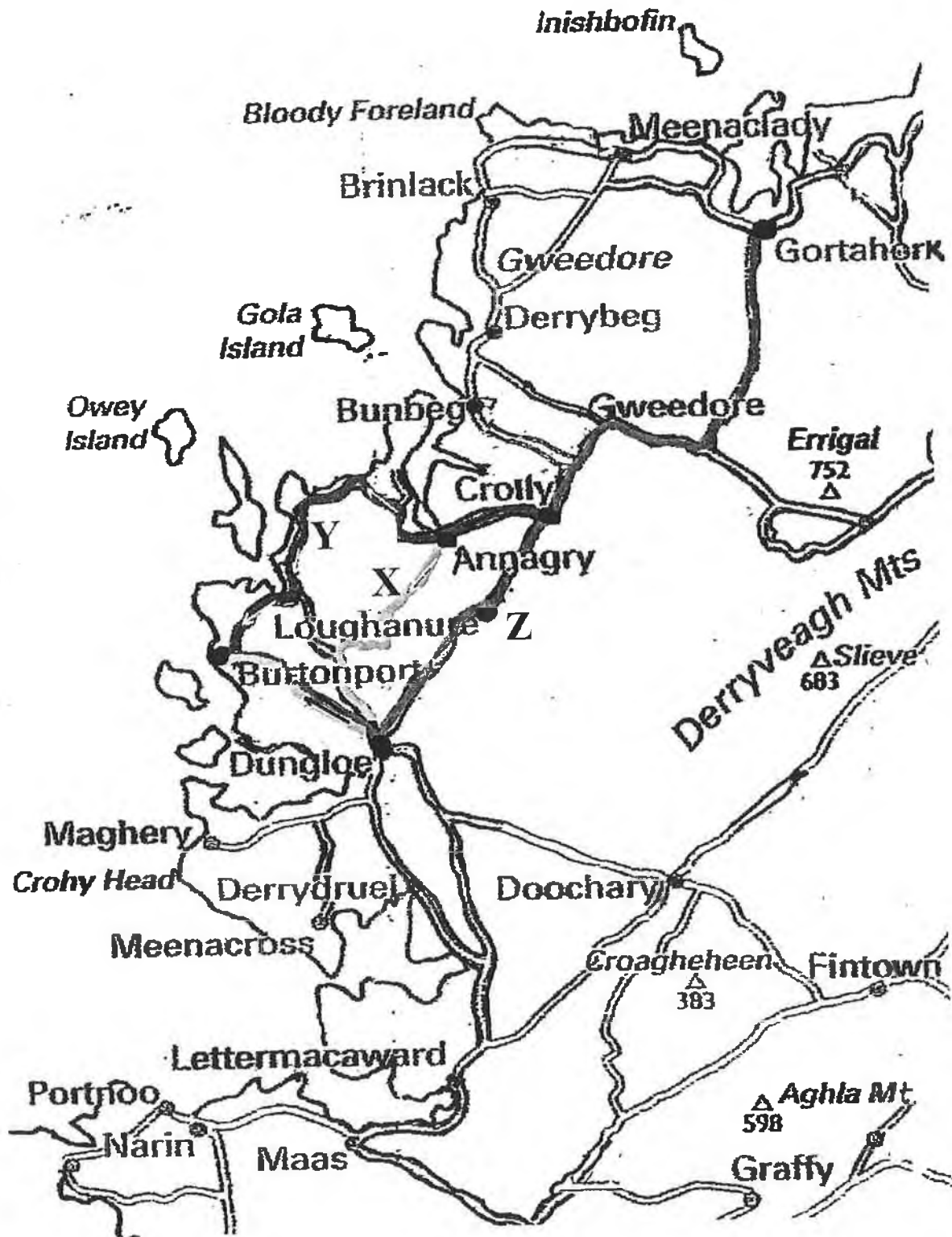
The L&LSR were more than anxious to get road transport as far as Burtonport which initiative would consequently open the way for them to take the Burtonport Extension out of operation altogether. In May 1931 they opened a new bus route from Gortahork via Crolly, Meenaleck, Annagry, Drimnacart, Kerrytown and Meenbanad to Dungloe and

²⁴ *LS*, 30 Apr. 1931, p. 7.

²⁵ *LS*, 25 Apr. 1931, p. 7.

²⁶ *LS*, 5 May 1931, p. 5.

Fig. 54 Bus routes in the Rosses 1931



Burtonport. (X in fig. 54). The travel over these roads was slow, difficult and hazardous and, with the exception of Annagry there were few people along the new route.²⁷ But the road going through the bog could not support a seven-ton bus. After a few days no vehicular traffic of any kind could use the route. To make it passable after the withdrawal of the buses, a hundred tons of stone had to be quarried and the holes made by the buses filled in.²⁸

Daniel E. O'Boyle, a Cumann na nGaedheal county councillor with business interests in Kincasslagh, had objected strongly to these new bus routes, arguing that they avoided the populated areas along the coast where the people and the businesses were located. To his delight, the Kincasslagh coastal road to Burtonport and Dungloe was then chosen. This third class county road from Kincasslagh to Dungloe (Y in fig. 54) was in fair order and quite suitable for the traffic of the neighbourhood before the advent of the buses.²⁹ From the very first trip on this route there were problems. The bridge over the tidal estuary in Calhame near Annagry was not built at the time so the bus had to go around the inlet and then climb a steep hill. A large boulder overhanging the road caught the side of the bus a few times and caused much damage. The next difficulty was at Keadue. The existing bridge which now runs beside the football field was not built then so the bus had to make a half-circle around the hillside and negotiate Johnndy's Brae, a task that proved almost impossible. The only alternative was to cross the strand but tidal conditions were seldom suitable. Teams of men with horses, ponies and donkeys were on constant stand-by getting the bus from point to point. After four days of frustration the route through Kincasslagh was abandoned.³⁰

Mr Caffrey, the county surveyor, reported that, after the withdrawal of the buses from this route, the road 'had the appearance of a recently

²⁷ Manus O'Donnell, Dungloe.

²⁸ *DJ*, 27 May 1931, p. 5.

²⁹ *DJ*, 27 May 1931, p. 5.

³⁰ Manus O'Donnell, Dungloe.

ploughed field'. He complained to the Department of Industry and Commerce but was told that the Ministry had approved of the route from Gortahork to Burtonport via Gweedore and Dungloe as one upon which the L&LSR could run twenty seater buses and thirty-two-seaters buses on special occasions such as fairs.³¹ A letter in the *Derry Journal* stated:

The bus traffic occasioned by the stoppage of passenger trains on the Swilly line has resulted in making one road altogether unpassable (sic) and another very nearly so. To go by car direct from Dungloe to Gweedore is not to be thought of if you value your car or your life and to go via Kincasslagh is a nerve-racking experience. Soon this road too will be impassable. One contractor who started [road repairs] in March has used up his quota for this and the next few years in trying to repair the damage done. In spite of him and with the help of the buses, the roads are going down. The buses are daily going down'.³²

Next to be tried was the Crolly to Dungloe road via Loughanure (Z in fig. 54) but the first bus on that road sank to its middle in the Seascán Dearg at Griall, three miles outside Dungloe and, with fear gripping the rescuers that the vehicle would disappear entirely under the bog, it was decided conclusively that there was no further merit in attempting to run a bus through to Burtonport or Dungloe.³³ It was decided that the buses would only travel to Bunbeg in Gweedore only until the Rosses' roads were in condition to carry buses.

After the experiment it was admitted that 'with regard to the Rosses district it has been found that owing to the boggy nature of some of the roads and to the existence of boulders, the wear and tear on buses is very great, with the result that the maintenance of a service presents exceptional difficulties. The directors are alive to the situation and it is understood that,

³¹ *DJ*, 25 July 1931, p. 5.

³² *DJ*, 25 May 1931, p. 6.

³³ Manus O'Donnell, told to the author on 18 May 1999.

eventually, a rail motor service will be inaugurated in the districts in which the roads are unsuitable for bus traffic'.³⁴

However, this was far from the end of the experiment as far as Donegal County Council was concerned. The members were in a rage at the damage done to their roads and they decided to seek damages for the destruction done by the buses because its contingency fund was being continuously raided to repair the roads.³⁵ Senior Counsel was employed and asked to provide advice on the procedure to be adopted. In October a delegation from Donegal County Council was to meet L&LSR directors to discuss the claim for the road damage in the Rosses. However, a hitch occurred at the last minute and neither side would enter the room.³⁶ After three weeks of negotiations about the holding of the meeting, Donegal County Council agreed to meet the L&LSR 'on condition that in the event of the conference not being successful, anything transpiring would be without prejudice to any action taken by the council, either now or subsequently'.³⁷

A month later the meeting took place. The county council's claim was for damage to roads in Dungloe, Kincasslagh, Annagry and Crolly by L&LSR buses and was divided in two parts. For one road the L&LSR agreed to pay £100 with £20 towards the council's costs but with regard to the second claim the conference decided to send a joint delegation to the Ministry for Industry and Commerce to see if they would give a free grant. The railway company agreed to consider if they were to run buses on this road in future.³⁸ After the refusal of the grant by the Ministry, the L&LSR conceded that they would pay £120 and costs to Donegal County Council

³⁴ *DP*, 9 May 1931.

³⁵ *DJ*, 1 July 1931, p.7.

³⁶ *DJ*, 5 Oct. 1931, p. 5.

³⁷ *DJ*, 28 Oct. 1931, p. 5.

³⁸ *DJ*, 25 Nov. 1931, p. 5.

and further agreed that they would not run any buses on the council's roads without prior permission.³⁹

On 14 April 1931 the Minister for Industry and Commerce modified the agreement of 1898 and subsequent amendments to that agreement regarding the number of trains to run on the Burtonport Railway.⁴⁰ This now conferred on the L&LSR a new licence to restructure its transport as it saw fit and set it free from the 1898 and other agreements which had so often shackled it and led to court challenges.

It was learned a few days later that Henry Hunt had departed from the L&LSR. His performance and conduct had been under consideration by the board for some time and he was given the opportunity of resigning and receiving a gratuity or the alternative option of dismissal. In the new situation prevailing in the L&LSR there was no future for a true, professional railwayman. He had spent his last working weeks in local Donegal courts defending prosecutions for overcrowding on his L&LSR buses and taking abuse about the L&LSR performance on the railways. It was an unpalatable function for a professional railwayman, overseeing the demise of his railways. For such a high-ranking personality whose name was in the local papers almost weekly for fifteen years, his departure barely occasioned a mention. The new world beckoned and Hunt was not part of it.⁴¹ James Whyte, a long-term director of the L&LSR and a local man who came from Fahan in County Donegal stepped into Hunt's shoes. He was an energetic character who was looked upon as having the ability to deal with the task of reorganisation and would be capable of dealing with the locals. At the 1932 annual general meeting Whyte took all the plaudits for the change and advancement of the L&LSR. The only mention of Hunt was that he had resigned.⁴²

³⁹ *DJ*, 1 July 1931, p. 3.

⁴⁰ *DJ*, 5 June 1931, p. 12.

⁴¹ *DP*, 23 May 1931. Patterson, *The Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway*, p. 94.

⁴² *DP*, 23 May 1931.

The new bus service which was again restricted to Gortahork by the L&LSR after the failure in the Rosses was only in operation for six weeks when fares began to rise. 'An Fear Faire' wrote in the *Derry People* that a 'bus was engaged for a journey extending over forty miles and the charge was £4 10s. For practically the same distance a charge of £8 was made during the last few days. The first mentioned sum was made by a bus proprietor who is in competition: the second by a company [L&LSR] that has a monopoly. What a blessing competition is sometimes!'⁴³

The buses ran to Gortahork and the hackney car owners in the Rosses developed a feeder service for the passenger traffic. However, the railway carried most of the heavy loads despite a survey which revealed alarming neglect of the permanent way which was revealed to the *Derry Journal*.

By an Order of 1898 the line was vested in Donegal [County] Council and by said Order the council was empowered to take over the working and maintenance of the line in the event of the L&LSR failing to maintain and work it in a satisfactory manner. Since the company went on the dole no money has been spent on the permanent way. A census of the broken sleepers on the Burtonport line taken by the gangers showed that 25,000 sleepers are rotten on the line over which trains run daily. Fishplates are without bolts and spikes supposed to keep the line in gauge can be pulled out of the rotten sleepers by a man's finger and thumb. Such conditions would not be tolerated in Soviet Russia. Yet there were no tours of inspections at all now, unlike the days of the Board of Works.⁴⁴

Traffic receipts fell for the financial year 1932 by only 1 per cent on L&LSR lines compared with a fall of 20 per cent on other Irish railway companies. But when this new situation was in the process of stabilizing a strike within the GNR system brought the L&LSR to a practical standstill.

⁴³ *DP*, 25 July 1931.

⁴⁴ *DJ*, 8 May 1931, p. 10.

The railway companies in Ireland, after prolonged negotiations with the trade unions which proved abortive, made a joint application to the Irish Railways Wages Board for a reduction in salaries and wages. On 25 November 1932, the Irish Railways Wages Board gave their findings that rates of wages and salaries as paid prior to 9 May 1931 should be reduced by 10 per cent below the rates pertaining on that date. The unions rejected this. On 6 December 1932 the new Irish government under De Valera made a recommendation that the reduction should be postponed until 30 April 1933. In one of the most astonishing proposals ever made by any Irish government, the De Valera administration promised that the government would pay the amount equivalent to the reduction in wages to employees of the railways whose headquarters were in the Free State. This solved the position in the Free State but then the problem shifted to the north where no such generosity was forthcoming from the Belfast government. The strike in the Northern Ireland began at midnight on 30 January 1933 and, very soon, extreme pressure was put on the L&LSR men although the Dublin government had conceded that these latter in the south would have their reductions made up to them by the Dublin government. L&LSR men considered the 10 per cent wages cut and voted to resist it but significantly, they also voted that the headquarters of L&LSR should be established in the Free State.⁴⁵ When the L&LSR sent out a train load of timber from Derry to Carndonagh the train was derailed owing to fishplates being loosened on the line. Many similar acts became commonplace in Northern Ireland and on the CDRJC lines in Donegal in a strike that displayed a new level of ferocity, intimidation and violence which was sometimes deemed to be approaching some of the events which had occurred during the War of Independence or the Civil War. Mr Whyte, the L&LSR manager, made allegations of intimidation of his staff.⁴⁶ A few days later, a section of rails

⁴⁵ *DP*, 28 Jan. 1933, p. 9.

⁴⁶ *DP*, 18 Feb. 1933, p. 4.

on the L&LSR lines leaving Derry city were lifted so there was no alternative but to concede to the strikers.⁴⁷

Trew Colquhoun was very unhappy that the L&LSR men in Donegal associated themselves with their northern brethren in the strike. About three-quarters of all of the L&LSR men were working in the Free State and were unaffected by the strike, yet they closed the L&LSR lines and put its future in further danger. In 1932 the L&LSR staff received in wages fifteen shillings out of every pound taken in railway receipts. Although they were not involved in the strike the clerical staff and stationmasters were given a fortnight's notice terminating their services as there was no work for them and no money to pay them.⁴⁸ Mr Swan said that the L&LSR shares were worthless at that time.⁴⁹

The strike continued from 31 January to 10 May 1933 which was the busiest time of Spring when manures, seed potatoes, seed oats, farm implements and machinery were carried and the spring fishing on the Donegal coast was at its height. A skeleton service of goods trains operated irregularly within northwest Donegal but private carriers took much of the L&LSR business away in their lorries. A passive assistance was offered to the striking railwaymen by other branches of organised labour.⁵⁰

Goods on the whole L&LSR system fell from 46,906 tons in 1932 to 27,234 tons in 1933 and minerals carried fell from 7,871 tons in 1932 as against 4,951 tons for 1933. There was a very considerable decline in cross border traffic in both directions 'the trade to which this company [L&LSR] virtually owed its existence'.⁵¹ This stoppage only continued the rush to private transport as more and more lorries availed of the opportunity to make a quick profit at the railway's expense.⁵²

⁴⁷ *DP*, 25 Feb. 1933, p. 3.

⁴⁸ *DP*, 4 Feb. 1933, p. 5.

⁴⁹ *LS*, 2 Mar. 1933, p. 7.

⁵⁰ *DP*, 18 Feb. 1933, p. 1.

⁵¹ *LS*, 1 Mar. 1934, p. 4.

⁵² *DP*, 18 Feb. 1933, p. 1.

After the strike ended the revenge of the L&LSR management on the strikers was severe. First, in October they withdrew from the Irish Railway Wages Board. As a result, the guaranteed week of forty-eight hours was abolished on the L&LSR and many of the striking railwaymen were re-employed only part-time to whatever positions chosen by the company.⁵³ Consequently numbers employed were reduced substantially. Back in 1931, when the L&LSR was restricting the service on the Burtonport line, the Minister for Industry and Commerce intervened and it was agreed that there should be two trains each way daily but since the rail strike, the L&LSR cut the Burtonport services again and 'there had only been one train going each way each day at a time nobody knew'.⁵⁴

One of the few journeys taken by the train during the strike almost led to disaster however. A locomotive, three wagons and a coach of passengers at the rear were travelling from Letterkenny to Burtonport on Wednesday 8 March 1933. The guard was sitting in the rear carriage reading the paper. After negotiating a hill near Creeslough a coupling broke and the carriage went into reverse and careered backwards. It was only the rocking of the carriage when it gathered speed that made the guard look out the window. He immediately applied the vacuum brake but the passenger carriage travelled backwards at high speed for more than a mile before it could be brought to a halt without anyone suffering injuries.⁵⁵

The Free State Road Transport Act 1933 gave railway companies the power to reorganise their transport services in such a manner as to place these on an economic and self-supporting basis. This action provided the L&LSR with the legal basis of substituting road transport for the existing rail services because the company could not indefinitely continue incurring losses on the railways. Gross railway receipts were £24,747 for 1934 and expenditure was £29,138. The staff had to be asked to accept a temporary

⁵³ Patterson, *The Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway*, p. 95.

⁵⁴ *DP*, 3 June 1933, p. 3.

⁵⁵ *DP*, 1 Mar. 1933, p. 9.

reduction in pay, once more, as wages accounted for 73 per cent of total railway expenditure. Under the terms of the new act the directors took steps during the latter half of 1935 to acquire the transport services of the competing haulage carriers in the L&LSR area of Donegal and they eventually acquired fifty-four road operators.⁵⁶

Considerable difficulty was experienced in raising the necessary capital for this purpose but this was ultimately done through the medium of a subsidiary company known as Transport Holdings (Ireland) Ltd., the registered office of which was in Dublin and a loan of £20,000 was negotiated on satisfactory terms, guaranteed by the Irish Free State government.⁵⁷ While the L&LSR held the nominal capital of Transport Holdings (Ireland) Ltd., the latter owned the road vehicles. When the Northern Ireland government passed the Road and Rail Transport Act (Northern Ireland), the Transport Board was formed in Northern Ireland. The L&LSR, as a company, were not within the scope of the act but under certain sections contained within the Transport Board mandate, 'we are enabled to operate our ordinary road services in and out of Derry as formerly'.⁵⁸ With this legal authorisation now in place the L&LSR could concentrate on the road services, through extending the lorry and bus traffic throughout its operating area.

But away from the hard negotiations in the boardroom other diversions occupied the management. One night in October 1934 the Burtonport train was derailed beside Cashelnagor Station. It was obviously a malicious act. A plank was jammed into the points and derailed the 7.20 p.m. train from Letterkenny to Burtonport. There were eight passengers in the carriage next the engine. On hitting the plank the engine left the rails and travelled about twenty yards. Then it overturned just after the driver and fireman jumped clear. The first carriage went off the rails also but did

⁵⁶ *LS*, 2 Mar. 1935, p. 3.

⁵⁷ *Dáil Debates*, vol. liv, 1065 to 1076 (12 Dec. 1934).

⁵⁸ *LS*, 29 Feb. 1936, p. 5.

not overturn because the coupling broke. A fortnight earlier a bogey had been placed on the line near the same spot but was spotted by a neighbour. Many similar incidents had taken place over the autumn months.⁵⁹ As a result of these incidents an infamous case took place in late 1934 and during much of 1935 which attracted widespread attention in the press.

On Tuesday 5 February 1935, John, aged 12 ½ years and Alexander Hettrick, his younger brother, sons of the stationmaster at Cashelnagor, appeared before Justice Moonan at the Donegal Criminal Sessions in Letterkenny, charged with being responsible for attempts at blocking the railway line and derailling the train at Cashelnagor. Before the case was tried, there was a long discussion about an article in the *Garda Review* which was scathing in its criticism of the culprits and their actions. As a result, the editor had to come to Letterkenny and apologise before Judge Moonan before his contempt was purged. When the case finally began, 'John Hettrick was charged with having on the 8 March 1934 placed a block of wood on the railway with intent to obstruct, injure or destroy a railway engine and carriages; with having, on the 16 October 1934 placed a pair of bogey wheels on the rails with the same intent; with having on 19 October 1934 in or on the points of the railway; with having on the same date endangered the safety of Hedley Connell, Patrick Clifford and John McCole'. John and Andrew were charged with having on 1 November put a stone on the railway line with intention to obstruct the engine and carriages using the railway.⁶⁰ Garda Toban said that on the night of 1 November he was along with Detective Officer Downey to the Hettrick's house and a stone was produced. John denied all knowledge of it but the other boy began to cry.⁶¹

The father, John Hettrick said that on the night of 1 November, he heard a loud knocking on the door of his house as if someone was kicking

⁵⁹ *DP*, 27 Oct. 1934, p. 10.

⁶⁰ *DJ*, 6 Feb. 1935.

⁶¹ *DJ*, 19 Nov. 1934, p. 3.

it. When he opened the door, Detective Downey burst in and said, 'I have got all you bastard Hettricks tonight. You will all be going to jail'. He produced a stone and both his sons denied having put it on the line. Downey then said, 'This damn nonsense has been carried on too long'. He seemed to be 'raving mad' and behaved like a drunken man. He said the parents could not attend the barracks with the children after their arrest and alleged that the Gardai were all in a conspiracy against him since the problems started at the Cashelnagor station⁶²

Hettrick is still remembered as a fervent Unionist who had little regard for the 'Fenians' in the neighbourhood where he lived. However, he had to send his children to the Catholic school in the area and they had to leave class each day during religious instruction. Classmates remember that this set them apart in a community that had very few Protestants in the 1930s.⁶³ Hettrick said that, prior to these occurrences, he had had trouble with some people in the locality. When he first went to Cashelnagor in December 1931, crowds of young women and men usually came to the station in the evening. Their conduct was pretty rough. When the train arrived they ran through the compartments and created trouble and he had difficulty collecting the fares. It was just the same at Crolly where he had previously been stationmaster. Between a fortnight and three weeks after arriving in Cashelnagor, they broke the door of the lavatory and he had to close the station door to keep them outside it. Some of them came in at other points and ran up the rails but most of them remained outside. On the subsequent night the gates were tied and stones were thrown at him. When he was at Crolly it was as bad but Dungloe Road was not as bad. He said that since these occurrences, dirty expressions had been written on the walls of the station and in other places. Mr O'Connor, solicitor for the defendants, said that 'those expressions were perfectly horrible. They were

⁶² *DJ*, 6 Feb. 1935, p. 6

⁶³ James O'Donnell, Fanaboy, Gortahork. He was a classmate of the Hettrick boys.

scurrilous and infamous' and he did not propose to read them in open court but would hand them in. Mr Hettrick then stated that because of his sons' arrests he had first been dismissed by the L&LSR and later sacked. He thought that the derailment of the train was a campaign of hostility against him.⁶⁴

The evidence continued for days but the jury failed to reach a verdict and both boys were put back for retrial during the following month. There were two further court cases without resolution until eventually the state decided not to pursue the matter further. By that time the Hettrick family had long departed from Cashelnagor and the Burtonport Extension.

In July 1934 the government appointed the Donegal Transport Commission to examine all aspects of transport arrangements in the county and make suggestions to the government. Evidence was taken from many prominent people, business interests and local politicians throughout the county. Strong arguments were presented by people living on the seaboard for a deep-water port which would act as a hub to service the west and northwest of the county. Much self-interest was evident through the submissions although nearly all contributors agreed that the Burtonport Extension was badly run and all the old arguments were put forward again.⁶⁵

In the middle of these hearings Justice O'Hanrahan gained massive publicity when he threatened to close down his Gweedore court if the road between Gweedore and Dungloe was not repaired. He refused 'to endanger my life and destroy my car on that road any longer'. He then said that he would dismiss any future charges of road tax on the grounds that there were no roads on which to drive the cars.⁶⁶

An order was obtained from the Saorstát Ministry of Industry and Commerce to close the Buncrana-Carndonagh Railway in November 1935.

⁶⁴ *DJ*, 6 Feb. 1935, p. 6, 7, and 8.

⁶⁵ *DP*, 21 July 1934, p. 9.

⁶⁶ *DP*, 15 Sept. 1934, p. 5.

Under the Road Traffic Act, 1933 specific authority to close any section of the railway was conditional on the railway company providing adequate alternative road services for both passengers and goods but the traffic on this section around the Carndonagh area had dwindled to almost negligible proportions. One part-time bus and one or two lorries over and above the road services which had previously been in existence in that area for many years sufficed to fill the void left by the railway. But Inishowen had been involved in road transport business for much longer than the northwest Donegal region because of its proximity to Derry and the historical cross-border trade which had long existed between the peninsula and the city.

The closure was good news for the Burtonport Extension because a large quantity of sleepers and rails were salvaged from the Carndonagh railway to carry out repairs on the Burtonport Extension at a very reduced cost so that the loss on railway working was considerably lighter. It was generally expected that the Burtonport Extension would close at this time also as Trew Colquhoun told his directors that 'the Burtonport line is difficult to maintain at the best and its advancing age tends to increase the difficulties. However, the question of the ultimate future of the line is a matter which is constantly in the minds of your directors ... it is difficult to see how we can continue to work that section of the line indefinitely at any substantial loss such as arises from this section of your undertaking at the present time'.⁶⁷ The fact that the L&LSR could not fulfil the terms of the 1933 Act with regard to 'adequate alternative road services' saved the Extension for another while.

In April 1935 the Donegal Transport Commission presented its report. They found that there was no case for a deep-sea port to be developed along the Donegal seaboard. Improvement grants for existing harbours should suffice. In its examination of the railways it reported that the CDRJC involved a financial loss on the parent company, the GNR.

⁶⁷ *LS*, 26 Feb. 1938, p. 2.

With regard to the L&LSR the commission could not see it keeping open for traffic much longer without the support of subsidies. They found that the major portion of its passenger traffic had been transferred from rail to road but its services to the public were not sufficiently valuable to warrant a subsidy of the amount required to enable it to function satisfactorily. The commission was forced 'to the conclusion that its days as a railway were numbered'. It was not impressed by statements that closing the line would be a serious blow to the internal trade of Donegal 'seeing that the principal witnesses who made them were only using the railways where they found it more convenient to do so than to operate their own lorries'. Traffic available was not sufficient to support rail and road. One or the other would have to go. The commission felt that if the roads were improved, particularly in the Burtonport Extension area, the trading public would suffer neither loss nor inconvenience by the transfer. They recommended that £75,000 should be made available 'where railway services are either not available or are in danger of ceasing'.⁶⁸

This report enabled the L&LSR to concentrate on monopolising the road transport. A number of road haulage concerns were bought up immediately and negotiations proceeded with others which could be acquired compulsorily before the deadline of 3 June if terms could not be agreed upon in the meantime because some owners were not satisfied with the L&LSR's offer. The largest sums paid were to J. McLoughlin, Carndonagh and J. Doherty, Moville each of whom received £1,100. In each case the agreement provided for the taking over of two lorries and four men. Among the other carriers with whom terms had been agreed were:

F. Carr, Gortahork	1 lorry, 1 man,	£180
J. O'Neill, Dunfanaghy	1 lorry, 1 man,	£180
J. Cavanagh, Greencastle	1 lorry 2 men,	£460

⁶⁸ *DP*, 13 April 1935, p. 3.

Mr Stewart, Legnahurry	1 lorry, 2 men,	£470
D. Kearney, Carndonagh	2 lorries, 4 men,	£1000.

There were altogether fifty-three services, comprising 168 vehicles, taken over at an estimated cost of £20,000. However, the taking over of the employees of the various companies caused anxiety among the railwaymen who feared that it would lead to a big redundancy with consequent loss of employment for most of them because their hopes were strongly based on securing work on the lorries when the railway closed.⁶⁹

But the company were confronted with a big difficulty in regard to the Letterkenny–Burtonport line because they could not switch to road transport because of the condition of the roads. In June 1935, the *Derry People* stated that, ‘some of the worst roads in the county are to be found in this area [Rosses] and it is considered that considerable time must elapse before they can be put into such a state of repair as to be able to bear the greatly increased traffic which will result from the closing of the line’.⁷⁰

Again, there were dissenting voices being raised at the actions of the L&LSR. ‘Donegal transport monopoly a disgrace’, said one Letterkenny councillor. Letterkenny Urban Council became quite exercised about the transport development. They sent a motion to the government demanding that the L&LSR be forced to make its headquarters in Donegal, preferably Letterkenny. They felt aggrieved that all the heavy engineering, mechanical repairs and painting work for the L&LSR was being carried on in Derry. ‘It is a disgrace that a Six County crowd should get a monopoly of services in the Free State’, said Councillor McGranaghan.⁷¹

A dark November evening brought the Burtonport Railway into further controversy when one of the great tragedies of the Donegal coast occurred. A contingent of ‘tattie-hokers’ from Aranmore Island arrived in Derry on Saturday morning, 9 November 1935 after travelling all night on

⁶⁹ *DP*, 8 June 1935, p. 10.

⁷⁰ *DP*, 8 June 1935, p. 10.

⁷¹ *DP*, 7 Sept. 1935, p. 10.

the Derry boat from Glasgow, having completed the season's work picking the potato crops throughout Lowland Scotland. They had a hurried breakfast in Derry before rushing to the station to catch the 10 a.m. train. However, one young lad among the party wanted to go into a shop to buy sweets and four others waited for him. When these five arrived at the station the train had already departed for Burtonport.⁷² They would now have to wait until the evening train and spend the night in Burtonport because there would be able to go to the island at such a late hour.

As the rest of the travelling party entered the Rosses, people along the course of the line noticed their singing, shouting and exhilaration.⁷³ As usual, the train was more than an hour late and it only reached Burtonport as darkness was falling near 5 p.m. after a seven-hour journey. Fourteen of the migrants were welcomed by six islanders who had come out to meet them and all twenty departed from Burtonport about 5.45 p.m. to make their way to Aphort on the south of Aranmore Island in an open sailing boat through heavy seas at high tide in bleak darkness. But the boat never arrived. On Sunday morning, the upturned vessel was found with the only survivor from the twenty. Paddy Gallagher was alive but seven members of his family, including his father, had been lost. Gallagher later told how the boat struck an unseen rock and all were thrown into the sea. In the consequent search for scapegoats the Burtonport Extension took its share of blame for its late arrival which forced the boat with its unfortunate occupants to travel to its doom in the darkness.⁷⁴ The five who missed the train in Derry had reason to be thankful.

That such emigration was still an integral part of northwest society by the mid-1930s is evidenced by the numbers receiving unemployment assistance in the Labour Exchanges at Dunfanaghy and Dungloe, as

⁷² *DJ*, 13 Nov. 1935, p. 8.

⁷³ John Sharkey, Butterfield Drive, Rathfarnham, Dublin, remembers seeing the group singing and shouting out the windows as the train passed his home in Meenbanad.

⁷⁴ *DJ*, 13 Nov. 1935, p. 8.

indicated below:⁷⁵ An examination of the school roll books for northwest Donegal would also show a large increase in enrolments between late November and May each year which indicated that, despite the school attendance act, hiring was still an important part of society.

The spread of unemployment throughout the county is indicated below in fig. 55 and it is well to consider the large numbers who had emigrated permanently.

Fig. 55 Persons paid unemployment assistance

Area	5/11/1934	3/12/1934	7/1/1935	4/2/1935
Letterkenny	930	1131	1233	1422
Ballybofey	431	503	543	736
Buncrana	390	425	510	1114
Donegal	361	368	369	471
Dunfanaghy	782	901	1024	1519
Dungloe	870	1828	1976	2485
Killybegs	838	878	912	1337

Source: *Dail Debates*, Vol. 56, 20, 1 May 1935.

Fig. 56 Unemployment trends 1934-1935, County Donegal.

Recipients of unemployment benefits at			Labour Exchanges County Donegal.			
Area	5/11/1934	3/12/1934	7/1/1935	4/2/1935	4/3/1935	1/4/35
Letterkenny	930	1131	1233	1422	1547	1512
Ballybofey	431	503	543	736	784	800
Buncrana	390	425	510	1114	1225	1337
Donegal	361	368	369	471	549	589
Dunfanaghy	782	901	1024	1519	1604	1668
Dungloe	870	1828	1976	2485	3040	2923
Killybegs	838	878	912	1337	1550	1482
Totals	4602	6034	6557	9084	10299	10311
% of total in Dunfanaghy & Dungloe.	36%	45%	46%	44%	45%	45%

⁷⁵ *Dail Debates*, Vol. liv, 14, 14 Nov. 1934 and Vol. liv, 1793, 13 Feb. 1935.

From the above table can be seen the serious unemployment situation in northwest Donegal during the winter months when the migratory workers had returned home. The below table of the Dungloe and Dunfanaghy districts during the summer months presents a very different number of recipients.

Fig. 57 Unemployment recipients in northwest, 1934 and 1935

Recipients of unemployment benefit at Dungloe and Dunfanaghy July 1934 to January 1935. ⁷⁶		
Date	Number of recipients at Dungloe	Number of recipients at Dunfanaghy
2 July 1934	90	124
7 August 1934	331	246
3 September 1934	350	324
1 October 1934	538	542
5 November 1934	870	782
3 December 1934	1828	901
7 January 1935	1976	1024

Source: *Dail Debates*, vol. 54, 14, 14 Nov. 1934 and vol. 56, 20, 1 May 1935.

Despite the severe depression which existed throughout Britain, seasonal migration was followed slavishly year after year, though the sufferings and hardships endured by many on the 'tramp' were pitiful. Fr McAteer, P.P., Burtonport, addressed Donegal County Council in September 1932 and pleaded for more money for the Rosses. The fishing had failed during the year and American remittances had dried up and, worst of all, the migratory labour to Scotland had virtually ceased to exist and ceased to be a source of income at home. There would be about 2,000 people in Annagry depending on relief at that time of winter. Half of those who

⁷⁶ *Dail Debates*, Vol. 54, 14, 14 Nov. 1934 and Vol. 56, 20, 1 May 1935.

emigrated were tramping through Scotland looking for work or waiting for money from home to take them back to Donegal. James F. O'Donnell said there were 3,000 registered as unemployed at Dungloe Labour Exchange.⁷⁷

The Cumann na nGaedheal government had left too many bad memories for northwest Donegal and it was no wonder that the *Derry People* reported in early 1933 that there was increasing support in all districts of Donegal for Fianna Fail.⁷⁸

The advent of the De Valera government to power in 1932, with his consolidation in 1933⁷⁹ at least added principle to the prevailing frugality in the northwest. It also added a softer government profile to the weaker sections of society with the immediate introduction of many relief schemes and the release of money for the building of schools to facilitate the growth in numbers as a result of the 1926 compulsory attendance act, the sewage and water schemes in Dungloe and Falcarragh and other towns in the northwest, and the employment of large numbers of men in quarrying stones for road repairs. Over 200 men were quarrying in Dunfanaghy and a similar number in Gweedore in March 1933.⁸⁰ A large number of men in the Dungloe area, drawn mostly from a list of those who were about to receive unemployment benefit under the new act, were engaged on a turf cutting scheme at Meenmore promoted by the government.⁸¹ Similar schemes were introduced in other areas. The introduction of the Unemployment Assistance Act in 1933 was one of the most welcome measures in providing much needed cash in society there. The National Health Insurance Act of 1933 enabled all members of society to draw on it irrespective of their own contributions. Pensions for widows and orphans were introduced in 1935 and the Conditions of Employment Act 1936 was designed to improve working conditions. All of these measures which,

⁷⁷ *DP*, 3 Sept. 1932, p. 10.

⁷⁸ *DP*, 21 Mar. 1933, p. 5.

⁷⁹ The result of the 1933 election in Donegal was Fianna Fail 4 seats: Cumann na nGaedheal 2 seats and 2 Independents.

⁸⁰ *DP*, 18 Mar. 1933, p. 1 and 1 July 1933, p. 1.

⁸¹ *DP*, 26 May 1934, p. 1.

allied to the old age pension, income from egg sales and knitting as well as what came in from migratory earnings, helped to spread the income balance a little better. 3,496 children in the Donegal Gaeltacht received the £2 grant for the speaking of Irish for the school year ended 30 June 1934. This affected 1,788 homes.⁸² Joe Lee stated in *Ireland 1912-1985* that 'among de Valera's attractions for the people of the west, not least of the Gaeltacht, were the increase in state handouts from the apostle of frugal self-sufficiency'.⁸³ These measures made a certain and positive contribution to ordinary life in northwest Donegal and enabled the people to live in 'frugal sufficiency'.⁸⁴

The tariffs on wheat and bread introduced on 27 February 1933 immediately added twenty-eight jobs to Dungloe with the establishment of a bakery in the town and a new Milford Bakery, as well as other smaller bakeries, created employment also. In the winter of 1934 Dunfanaghy got £2,345 for relief schemes and Glenties got £4,480.⁸⁵ One of the fondest remembered schemes was that of the free or cheap beef scheme which was introduced in December 1934 because of the tariff war with Britain when sales of animals were quite impossible at home. In that first week, in the Gweedore area of Donegal hundreds of persons received supplies of meat ranging from four to nine pounds.⁸⁶ The *Derry People* reported in December 1934 that 'butchers cannot keep up with voucher demands for free beef because there were not enough butchers in the area. Most of the people had to return home with nothing'.⁸⁷ When the Dungloe butcher, McGrotty, decided to withdraw from the scheme in April 1935 through 'exhaustion' he had supplied 105,752 pounds or 48 tons of free beef since the initiation of the scheme at 4d. a pound. There was also the provision of cocoa and buns for schoolchildren.

⁸² *Dail Debates*, vol. 54, 898, 12 Dec. 1934.

⁸³ J. Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 186.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *DP*, 1 Dec. 1934, p. 3.

⁸⁶ *DP*, 1 Dec. 1934, p. 4.

⁸⁷ *DP*, 8 Dec. 1934, p. 1.

The Gaelic language colleges at Cloughaneely, Gweedore and Ranafast availed of scholarships and government subsidies to bring more than a thousand students to the northwest each summer and inject much needed cash into the economy. The Irish colleges are remembered for the steady income they provided to ordinary people and also because they introduced new standards of respectability such as internal house organisation in matters such as dress, décor, cookery, cleanliness, sleeping arrangements and behaviour.⁸⁸ The large numbers attending the Irish colleges – 300 in Ranafast alone in July 1933 and a further 300 in August - were responsible for the urgency in having water schemes introduced into those areas many years before they might have been, a factor which further increased cleanliness and led to better health.⁸⁹ The return of American visitors also continued to improve the standards.

However, De Valera's advent to power also introduced a polarization and bitterness into local Donegal society where party politics entered into the menial chores of life. There were many accusations of political discrimination. Allegations were made at Dungloe court in March 1933 that only members of a certain political party (Fianna Fáil) found work on the relief schemes.⁹⁰ A year later at Falcarragh court allegations were made that men were not employed on roads because they were 'Blueshirts'. Political differences led to many fights at dances in Gortahork and elsewhere.⁹¹ As well as the growth of Fianna Fail cumainn in the area there was a lively resurgence of what the organisers called 'Pre-Truce IRA' who saw themselves as more principled and purer Republicans than those who joined after the Truce. Regular meetings were being held in Dungloe throughout 1933 and 1934 and it was claimed that twenty companies of the old formation were represented at the meetings and that membership had

⁸⁸ Donnchadh Devenney, Ranafast, Annagry.

⁸⁹ *DP*, 25 May 1934, p. 9.

⁹⁰ *DP*, 18 Mar. 1933, p. 10.

⁹¹ *DP*, 31 Mar. 1934, p. 10.

increased by 130 per cent. By January 1935, it was claimed that the strength of Pre-Truce IRA in northwest Donegal was over 500.⁹²

But the GAA at last found its strength and vitality during De Valera's reign. The growing support for Fianna Fail and its forceful Republican ideals plus the identification of soccer with the Northern Ireland state was probably one of the main factors for the growth and spread of the Gaelic game into the northwest. By the middle 1930s there was a club in almost every village in the northwest with Gweedore which only became an affiliated club in 1931–32, going on to win a number of Donegal county championships during the 1930s. Not only that, but camogie clubs sprang up throughout the northwest during these years also. While soccer did not disappear, it now had to fight against this new intruder full of vitality.⁹³

However, the Irish language and its associated activities did not prosper. 'The orgy of all night dances' continued unabated.⁹⁴ The issue of dancing licences occupied much of the district court proceedings during the middle years of the decade and a Jesuit priest, Fr Devane, produced a chart which showed that Donegal topped the table with more than 200 halls.⁹⁵ By 1937, the Lenten pastoral by Bishop McNeely attacked the rash of foreign influences leading the young people astray. After dancing, he listed the 'popular fronts' – press, radio, cinema, novel and drama - all 'spreading the unholy gospel of class welfare and militant atheism'. He also dealt with gambling and horse betting which have 'seized upon large sections of our towns who can ill afford to risk a share of their slender earning'.⁹⁶ And it does seem as if the outside world was closing in quickly. The Gweedore and Dungloe halls were passed for cinema shows in time for the winter of

⁹² *DP*, 1 Dec. 1934, p. 4 and 26 Jan. 1935, p. 1.

⁹³ *DP*, 24 Feb. 1934, p. 10; *DP*, 31 Mar. 1934, p. 1; *DP*, 28 Apr. 1934, p. 1.

⁹⁴ *DP*, 3 Nov. 1934, p. 4. Comments by Justice Walsh.

⁹⁵ *DP*, 15 Jan. 1938, p. 4. Further investigation later confirmed that Donegal ranked seventh on the dance hall list.

⁹⁶ *DP*, 13 Dec. 1937, p. 9.

1937.⁹⁷ That Bishop McNeely was losing the battle was evident when, in 1938, he devoted his pastoral to an appeal for traditional ceildhe while condemning the ‘unhealthy craze for night dances’.⁹⁸

The L&LSR attempted to play its part in the connection of the northwest with the outside world also when the passenger bus routes were expanded to penetrate further west from Gortahork into Gweedore, servicing Derrybeg and Bunbeg. Some months later, the buses travelled from Bunbeg via Crolly as far as Meenaleck at the northern tip of the Rosses but there was no possibility of further penetration because of lack of bridges and poor roads. The bus services were extended as far as Rathmullan during the year also and the lorries bought from the various carriers enabled goods and merchandise to be carried to the areas where the buses travelled. But many of the vehicles acquired during the year were of many different types and sizes, and many of them were small and in poor condition. The stock would have to be brought up to date. The arrival of the buses had a serious effect on the railway as only £77 was received during the year 1936 from first class passengers and £507 for third class passengers.⁹⁹

The best earnings boost for the L&LSR during these times came from excursion traffic. Tours to the Donegal Highlands from various centres, outings to the seaside resorts, excursions to Doon Well, special trains to Letterkenny Feis, big football matches and visits by De Valera to the county enabled the L&LSR to reduce the deficit on rail operations. But there was no hope for the survival of the Burtonport Railway in the long term. Mr Swan, a L&LSR director who had a soft spot for the errant railway, said in 1936 that ‘the Burtonport line is only sick but, thank heaven, it is still alive’. The Burtonport line was doing a very decent goods

⁹⁷ *DP*, 16 Oct. 1937, p. 1.

⁹⁸ *DP*, 5 Mar. 1938, p. 9.

⁹⁹ *LS*, 29 Feb. 1936, p. 5.

service still. He knew the district very well and the distances were very long and the roads left a great deal to be desired.¹⁰⁰

The photographer, H. C. Casserley took a trip on the Burtonport Railway in early 1937 which he recorded as follows:

A short account of a trip to Burtonport may prove of interest to any member who contemplates taking the trip over this line while the opportunity exists. And to those who have not thought of doing so, it is in my opinion well worth while, albeit it is not a journey to be undertaken light-heartedly and without due consideration.

In company with a friend we duly arrived at Letterkenny shortly after 5 p.m. one sunny evening from Strabane; this is necessary to avoid having to travel by bus between Letterkenny and Londonderry, owing to there being only one through train on the Lough Swilly line.

It should be mentioned that except on certain fair days it is not possible to do the return trip from Letterkenny to Burtonport in a single day; there are only two trains each way and the second one back leaves before the arrival of the first one outwards.

Knowing little of Burtonport except that it seemed a very small place and completely off the beaten track we were somewhat dubious about arranging to spend the night there. However, we had been assured there was a hotel of sorts, so we decided to risk it.

We found our train consisting of one coach and several vans waiting at Letterkenny and a brief inspection of the accommodation amply confirmed my resolved intention of travelling first class and I cannot too strongly urge anyone else to do likewise. The return first class fare from Letterkenny to Burtonport is only 9s 5d. about 3/= more than third, and considering that one is going to spend at least seven hours on the journey, it is most emphatically worth the difference.

The first class is nicely upholstered and quite comfortable but the third is without any covering to the seats of wood, the difference making what would be a distinctly uncomfortable and tedious journey into a pleasant one, apart from the extra privacy which adds to the opportunities of taking photographs and enjoying the scenery.

¹⁰⁰ *LS*, 29 Feb. 1936, p. 5.

4-6-0T no. 3 [the locomotive] was down at the shed, ready to take our train. And 4-6-2T no. 10 was inside. In due course we started off. [It was] a fine sunny evening, and were soon climbing towards the hills. The scenery over the route is very wild and fine, something after the style of the Farther North of the Highland Railway. In places one does not see a cottage or sign of human habitation for miles.

There is very little passenger traffic, but quite a fair amount of goods, which took some time to unload at each station; this added to various shunting to various vans etc. caused us to be half an hour late arriving at Burtonport, the time being then 9.30 p.m.

We noticed there was a second engine in the shed but were too concerned to find where we were to spend the night to bother about it then. We were the only passengers to alight, and there was no one to meet the train and not a house in sight. Things did not look too rosy but we found the "High Street" (see photo) and enquired about an hotel, which we discovered was quite a respectable place after all, at the far end of the village.

Visitors being but few and far between at this veritable "back of beyond" our arrival caused some little upheaval (there were no other residents) but they did us very well and the place was very comfortable. It would be well to book in advance on another occasion and in case any adventurous member wished to do this the name is 'Sweeny's Hotel, Burtonport'.

We had to be up betimes the following morning to catch the 8.30 a.m. train back and we were surprised and gratified to find that the second engine referred to above was to take the train; it was no other than the 4-8-0- tender engine no. 12. She proved to be a very good engine indeed, a fine puller and an excellent steamer, judging by the number of times the safety valves kept blowing off. It seems strange that the sister engine no. 11 has been scrapped.

The return journey was as interesting and enjoyable as the outward; we continued right through to Londonderry, the 4-8-0 working throughout. Much time was lost shunting at intermediate stations and picking up vans and we did not get into Londonderry until 2.15 p.m. nearly six hours journey. (Another word of advice: bring some food and plenty of tobacco.)

We arrived with a tremendous train, two passenger coaches and about 20 vans of various sorts, but the engine seemed to have no difficulty in handling it. 4-6-2T no. 14 was at Letterkenny waiting to take the midday train to Burtonport.

At Tooban Junction two more 4-6-2T's were shunting but we were unable to get out to take any photographs owing to the solicitous guard having locked us in to prevent unauthorised gate-crashers, still one cannot have all ways.

In spite of rumours to the contrary there was no indication that the line will be closed at present, indeed the railway appears to be the only practical means of communication to Burtonport, such roads as there are being extremely poor.¹⁰¹

But the chief difficulty in this respect was the maintenance of the Burtonport Extension. The closure of other railways had enabled the Burtonport Railway to survive on their spare parts. In April 1932, 150 tons of second hand rails were purchased for £624 and in November 1933, 200 tons came from the Silent Valley Reservoir in County Down at a price of £3 7s. 6d. a ton. In August 1935, 4,000 sleepers were purchased from J. W. Ward Ltd., the firm dismantling the Keady – Castleblaney section of the GNR. The closure of the Galway to Clifton railway in 1936 provided more sleepers and the defunct equipment of the Carndonagh line kept the Burtonport permanent way operating for a while longer.¹⁰²

In 1936 Trew Colquhoun told his shareholders that the line operated through a very difficult country and was now getting old and was becoming increasingly difficult and costly to maintain.

We are however, taking every precaution to operate the limited service on that section with safety to the public. I am afraid the time is approaching when the question of the curtailment or withdrawal of services, or alternatively, a very heavy expenditure on renewals on this section will have to be faced, but in the meantime, we are doing everything possible to use the available plant to the best advantage and give the public the best service we can.¹⁰³

Mr Swan said there was a sort of haunting fear in the county that the Burtonport Extension would close. He always hoped that it would be at

¹⁰¹ *Irish Railway Society Bulletin*, 34.15, April 1936 – 37.

¹⁰² Patterson, *The Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway*, p. 95.

¹⁰³ *LS*, 27 Feb. 1937, p. 5.

least open for goods. It would injure the turf scheme, the pet scheme of the government. The closing of the line would cancel the cheap rates for the carriage of manure and potatoes and would do no good to the lobster, herring and salmon fishing. He stated that more progress had been made in the last thirty years in the Donegal Gaeltacht than in any other part of Ireland and he thought the company could claim no small share of the credit.¹⁰⁴

At the annual general meeting in March 1939 it was announced that railway receipts for 1938 were £21,224 (£22,498) of which passenger traffic accounted for only £3,478 (£4,021). Bad weather during the summer was the cause of the fall. There was a big decline of harvesters and fish-workers going to Scotland from west Donegal. Trew Colquhoun said that there was a tendency now for batches of travellers in remote places to employ hackney cars or use the buses when available. Rail expenditure was £25,297 (£25,773) and the loss on railways was £4,073 (£3,275).¹⁰⁵ But road transport was doing well. Passenger services took in £44,898 (£43,993) and goods £20,114 (£20,816) making an overall total of £65,012 (£64,809). Expenditure was £62,401 (£62,348). Scotch traffic had been great but the bad summer affected the rail excursions.¹⁰⁶

Colquhoun then spoke of the economic disputes between the British and Irish governments which were settled on 1 April 1938. It had retarded border business and there were now hopes for the future.¹⁰⁷ But pirate carriers and the illicit public transport business affected the L&LSR road traffic. Some of these carriers were formerly engaged in public transport business but they were bought out by the L&LSR at considerable cost but they still contrived to operate lorries for reward. He had hopes that the Transport Tribunal which had recently been set up by the government would deal with the problem. One new thirty-six seat all metal body

¹⁰⁴ *LS*, 27 Feb 1937, p. 5.

¹⁰⁵ *LS*, 2 Mar. 1939, p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ *LS*, 2 Mar. 1939, p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ *LS*, 2 Mar. 1939, p. 3.

omnibus, six lorries and two mail vans were put into service during the year and a garage was opened by the L&LSR in Letterkenny for servicing the vehicles. Then he spoke of the Burtonport railway. The closing down seemed inevitable. There had been a great falling off in traffic in recent years, and 'the public preference for road transport suggests that the public are not greatly concerned whether the section of the line continues to function or not'.¹⁰⁸ But yet the vital closing down was not announced.

Trew Colquhoun told his shareholders that

One of our major problems is the loss on railway working which arises chiefly on the Burtonport line. Despite the present emergency conditions it is inevitable that the closing down of this section cannot much longer be deferred. The difficulty experienced in its maintenance for many years past has of late been intensified and there is little hope of any appreciable improvement in the volume of traffic. The problem is engaging the active attention of your directors at the present time. Due notice will be given to the public if, and when any reversion from rail to road is decided upon.

As the Donegal public would have expected from one of the owners of the L&LSR, the chairman announced that 'Captain Basil McFarland had gone off to fight in the war'.¹⁰⁹

One of the benefits deriving from the outbreak of war was eventually found in the mineral wealth of Donegal. With the German invasion of the Low Countries, Pilkington Glass in St Helen's, Lancashire could no longer avail of their supply of silica sand from Belgium for their manufacture of glass. Consequently, the silica sand deposits in Muckish Mountain were developed as a supply base for the company in 1940. On the bare slopes of Muckish Mountain conditions were as brutal as could be imagined when men climbed the mountain face in the teeth of the Atlantic storms and supplied their own shovels and wheel-barrows to work throughout each day, irrespective of the weather conditions, to fill the weekly quota for

¹⁰⁸ *LS*, 2 Mar. 1939, p. 3.

¹⁰⁹ *LS*, 2 Mar. 1939, p. 3.

loading the boat that would sail from Ards harbour in Mulroy Bay. One day each week, the workmen were carried in a lorry to spend the day loading the boat with the gleaming sand before returning to the harsh conditions on the bleak mountainside. The severity of the working conditions became part of Donegal folklore for the sixteen years of its working life. The original development of such resources was one of the reasons put forward for the construction of the Burtonport Extension but when the Muckish sand was developed the railway had already become an anachronism and played no part in the development of the resource. The Muckish mines continued production until 1954 when the exercise was abandoned as being too costly and too difficult to maintain.¹¹⁰

There was a further gleam of hope when it was announced in 1939 that Paddy the Cope Gallagher had departed for the West of Ireland to purchase machinery to open the red granite quarries at Crickamore outside Dungloe. A few attempts were made to work the granite but it never became a viable industry and was eventually abandoned.¹¹¹

However, the De Valera government had initiated so many road schemes from the mid-thirties onward that there were complaints in northwest Donegal that not enough unskilled men could be found. £30,625 was granted in January 1937 'under the Transport Commission's recommendations for road improvements in the Rosses and similar amounts were granted to Gweedore. Special works included two road diversions at Annagry and Keadue, reconstruction of four bridges easing bends and improving drainage'.¹¹² Over 200 men from the Gweedore and Cloughaneely parishes were also out on roadworks and it was estimated that over ninety per cent of the men in the northwest were out on relief schemes in February 1937.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Bill McStay, *Sunday Miscellany*, RTE, 23 November 2003.

¹¹¹ *DP*, 25 Feb. 1939, p. 1.

¹¹² *DP*, 30 Jan. 1937, p. 10.

¹¹³ *DP*, 13 Feb. 1937, p. 1.

In that month over 170 road contracts were dealt with at the triennial road sessions in Dungloe. Competition for each road was very keen but the lowest tender was ruled out in many cases as the amount set out would not ensure a proper upkeep of a particular road.¹¹⁴ These provisions of grants and relief schemes continued throughout 1938 and, in the opening months of 1939, all the available manpower in northwest Donegal had been absorbed in road making, water projects or relief schemes.¹¹⁵ It was stated in April 1939 that 'never before was there so much employment in the Annagry area. Fifteen gangs are now at work on road construction schemes'.¹¹⁶

As well as the road schemes Templecrone Cope employed large numbers of men cutting and saving turf which was sent regularly in large consignments on the Burtonport train from Dungloe Road station to Dundalk and Dublin.¹¹⁷ The Irish colleges in Cloughaneely, Gweedore and Ranafast had massive numbers of students during these years also with many houses deriving substantial incomes from keeping students.¹¹⁸ As well as all of this, the *Derry People* wrote that 'never before has knitting been so plentiful in Annagry'. There was a severe shortage of knitting needles due to the demand.¹¹⁹

When the *Derry People* reported in October 1938 that Derry to Letterkenny buses were carrying large numbers of Donegal people returning from Scotland for fear of war and that many labourers had returned from Glasgow and Dundee areas to avoid being resident in Britain should war break out and that 'many hundreds of women and children landed in the district from Scotland and England during the week with three bus loads landing in Annagry on Sunday evening', there was no panic

¹¹⁴ *DP*, 27 Feb. 1937, p. 1.

¹¹⁵ *DP*, 14 Jan. 1939, p. 1 and p. 5.

¹¹⁶ *DP*, 15 Apr. 1939, p. 1.

¹¹⁷ *DP*, 3 Oct. 1937, p. 1.

¹¹⁸ *DP*, 9 Jul. 1938, p. 5.

¹¹⁹ *DP*, 25 Nov. 1939, p. 1.

because there were sufficient strands of income available to carry the burden.¹²⁰

However, war did not break out until a year later and the northwest witnessed a mass influx from Scotland and England as the *Derry People* reported in September 1939:

War is afoot. From Friday morning last men have been pouring in to Donegal from Scotland and England. They hastily returned home when the crisis grew in gravity. Between Friday morning and Saturday night 1,500 people arrived from Scotland alone and Sunday, Monday and Tuesday saw vast numbers arrive in Derry. Over 3,000 men alone have returned. They said [they came] to avoid military service in the British army. The Irish government had warned them that unless they possessed Irish passports they were liable to conscription in Britain. Many of them have abandoned good positions in the shipyards of Greenock and the Clyde. One Gweedore man said that as the boat departed from Glasgow on Saturday night a large crowd gathered on the quayside and jeered and booed. Stones were thrown and the language used towards the Irish was unprintable. The passengers felt the hostility on the boat itself. L&LSR had to run many special buses and maintained a round the clock schedule. When the Belfast train arrived in Derry it was full of Donegal people from England.¹²¹

World War II affected the L&LSR in a peculiar way for the bulk of the railway mileage, 88.75 miles of track, was in the neutral Irish Free State. In Britain, government control of railways was imposed immediately war began but Northern Ireland did not formally follow suit and in the Free State, the situation did not arise at all. The border had created price differences and the L&LSR could now source materials from either side depending on availability and price. However, the seventy-five-mile run from Derry to Burtonport posed serious difficulties for the railway company especially in the light of what happened with regard to fuel

¹²⁰ *DP*, 1 Oct. 1938, p. 4.

¹²¹ *DP*, 9 Sept. 1939, p. 5.

during the 1914-18 war. Therefore, the transfer to road transport became imperative.

With the roads programme in the northwest almost complete, the L&LSR felt confident that the long awaited bus and lorry service could soon begin. Bus services in the Rosses and northwest commenced on Monday, 29 May 1939 from Letterkenny via Gweedore, Crolly, Annagry, Mullaghduff, Kincasslagh, Keadue, Burtonport to the terminus at Dungloe but it would take the best part of a year to have the passenger and goods service co-ordinated so the trains continued to run as well. The plan was that 'a constant service will be provided all the year round and, if the venture prospers, it will cater for more services than ever the railway has'.¹²²

Steps were taken through the provision of a Government Statutory Order to end the remaining railway services on 3 June 1940 to close down the entire Letterkenny & Burtonport Extension Railway and, further, to withdraw the Letterkenny to Derry passenger service. The occasional goods train worked through to Burtonport until the closing date but, in August 1940, the firm of George Cohen & Co. began the task of removing the rails and sleepers from the permanent way starting at Burtonport.¹²³

Although the Burtonport Railway had been on its deathbed for many years the actuality of closing down the line embarrassed the Fianna Fail party in Donegal. They did not want to carry the accusation that De Valera and his party closed the line that Balfour had given to help the people. Small pressure groups of objectors were formed and they mounted a serious campaign and made many calls to ministers for action. At a large meeting in Letterkenny the Fianna Fail organisation passed a motion 'that the men who have been affected by the Employment Period Order in Donegal [should be now employed] by setting them to renovate and repair

¹²² *DP*, 23 Mar. 1940, p. 4.

¹²³ Patterson, *The Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway*, p. 97.

the permanent way along the Letterkenny – Burtonport Extension and that the Extension, if necessary, be handed over to the Strabane and Letterkenny Railway to operate it'. They were alarmed at the closing down of the railway and the chairman of the meeting said he did not see why the L&LSR should have the final say in closing down the railway just because they had a monopoly and favoured road transport. In a keen spirit of republican isolation they also wanted to close the line from Tooban to Derry because they had two splendid ports in Donegal at Bunrana and Letterkenny 'thereby ending the uneconomic importing through Derry'.¹²⁴

The haste with which the rails were being lifted caused a storm of protest with meetings being organised throughout the Rosses and Gweedore. The local Fianna Fail Dail Deputy, Cormac Breslin, spoke at an after-mass meeting in Annagry on 10 November stating 'I also condemn the action taken by those engaged in lifting the line, who did not find the six days of the week sufficient for work but had their workmen breaking the Sabbath, on a job that could be finished easily by adhering to the six weekdays'.¹²⁵

A large crowd, upwards of 100 men, went on to the railway at Crolly on Monday 18 November to hold up a train carrying rails and sleepers on its way from Burtonport and prevent the operations by force. Somebody mentioned that they should have a red flag waving to alert the driver in good time that the line was blocked. The next question was where to find the red cloth. Luckily, a young boy wearing a pair of bright red trousers was standing nearby. He was quickly undressed and the trousers wrapped round a furze branch to warn the approaching train of the protest while the boy was left standing in the November cold in his nakedness.¹²⁶ A nasty situation might have developed but for the Garda Superintendent, the gardai and Cormac Breslin, TD. The crowd closed the station gates and the

¹²⁴ *DP*, 13 Apr. 1940, p. 5.

¹²⁵ *DP*, 16 Nov. 1940, p. 3.

¹²⁶ John Doogan, Crolly.

train could not move. Breslin and Paddy Óg Gallagher addressed the crowd. When they asked the people to await the ruling from the Department of Industry and Commerce the crowd said that they were not going to be fooled by departmental red tape as a decision would be of little use once the rails were lifted. The crowd stated that the important thing was to stop all operations on behalf of the company meantime. When this attitude was communicated to the Department and to the [L&LSR] company all operations in connection with lifting the rails were suspended 'pending departmental or legal decision'.¹²⁷

On 10 October 1940, Donegal County Council discussed the closing of the railway. The question was raised as to the L&LSR's right to lift the rails and a further query was raised of the actual ownership of the rails, sleepers and stock. The building of the railway out of government funds and the contract which only entitled the L&LSR to operate the line, was discussed. The conclusion reached was that the Burtonport Extension was public property and the government should be contacted and asked to stop the lifting of the rails.¹²⁸

Mickey O'Donnell from Kerrytown, Paddy Sharkey from Drimnacart in the Rosses and Hugh Duggan and Charles Boyle from Dore in Gweedore led the agitation as they fought to retain the railway to Burtonport. At a meeting at the railway bridge in Kerrytown Mickey advised the crowd that, 'there is a wheel within a wheel and it's the inner wheel that counts'. This phrase was applied many times in later years in the locality as a final comment on any perplexing situation.¹²⁹ On 26 November 1940 it was announced that the government had approved the lifting of the rails.¹³⁰

A loading bank was set up beside the line and the men employed for the task lifted sixty-six lengths of rail each day as well as the sleepers. A train came along each evening and took the load away and then a new

¹²⁷ *DP*, 23 Nov. 1940, p. 2.

¹²⁸ *DP*, 4 May 1940, p. 3.

¹²⁹ Manus O'Donnell, as related to author 23 Sept. 1999.

¹³⁰ Patterson, *The Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway*, p. 97.

loading bank was set up for the next day. The rails continued to be lifted at high speed. One of the reasons for this was that there were fears that locals would steal the sleepers or rail sections and bury them in the bogs as had happened on a number of occasions previously.¹³¹ The payment per day for lifting the tracks was 15s. per man, six times the amount paid to men building the railway in 1901.¹³²

By this time, the wartime restriction on petrol, oil and diesel resulted in the rationing of these products on both sides of the border and the severe curtailment of road transport. Consequently, members of the L&LSR had misgivings about the decision to close down the Burtonport Extension. One day, when the demolition squad had reached Gweedore Station ready to remove the rails, Anthony Delap, the stationmaster, received a telegraph telling the men to stop and lift no further rails.¹³³ Authority was sought from the Dublin government to re-open the railway between Letterkenny and Gweedore but it was discovered that the government had no power to revoke the Statutory Order made for closure. Reopening could only take place by the L&LSR's own volition and on their own financial responsibility. Since a decrepit railway was better than nothing at all, the railway was re-opened again for goods traffic as far as Gweedore on 3 February 1941, 'a public spirited act much appreciated by Donegal folk'.¹³⁴

With the rails only laid as far as Gweedore Station two goods trains ran there daily. The 8.30 a.m. from Letterkenny reached Gweedore at 11 a.m. It was followed by the 10.10 a.m. from Derry which left Letterkenny at 1.30 p. m. and reached Gweedore at 4 p.m. Departures from Gweedore were timed at 8.30 a.m. and 1.30 p.m., with the former continuing to Derry. A passenger coach or two was attached to the goods trains for the conveyance of passengers as demand required.¹³⁵ However, in times of

¹³¹ John Doogan, Crolly.

¹³² John Russell, Cruckakeehan, Annagry. His father worked on the railway lifting the rails.

¹³³ Sean Delap, Bunbeg.

¹³⁴ Patterson, p. 97.

¹³⁵ Patterson, p. 128.

necessity they were not reluctant to revert to old ways in order to get the passengers to their destinations.

As the contractions of war became more severe in Derry city with coal becoming continuously more difficult to obtain the attraction of northwest Donegal's most plentiful natural resource was looked to solve the problem. At each station from Gweedore to Creeslough the carts daily dumped loads of turf on the railway sidings awaiting the turf trains. 'So keen were the people to get their turf sold that when a train was seen approaching Gaoth Dobhair [Gweedore] station quite often a man would

Fig. 59 Exports of turf from northwest Donegal.

YEAR	DEPARTURE POINT	AMOUNT TONS CWT. QR.	COST		
			£	S	D
1942	Gweedore	979 - 6 - 0	£1,296	- 5 -	0
1943	Gweedore	331 - 17 - 0	£ 529	- 4 -	8
	Creeslough	18 - 14 - 0	£ 31	- 5 -	1
	Creeslough (wood)	71 - 9 - 0	£ 113	- 8 -	9
1944	Gweedore	728 - 8 - 0	£1,275	-14 -	3.
	Creeslough	55 - 4 - 0	£ 90	- 12 -	1
	Creeslough (wood)	24 - 12 - 0	£ 41	- 9 -	4
1945	Gweedore	550 - 2 - 0	£ 970	- 4 -	10.
	Creeslough	11 - 12 - 0	£ 19	- 1 -	0
1946	Gweedore	76 - 0 - 0	£ 119	- 16 -	1

Source: E.M. Patterson, *The Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway*, p. 100.

run out to throw an armful of turf into a wagon, thus booking it for himself; when the train reached the platform cartloads of turf were emptied into it'.¹³⁶ Between 1935 and 1940, the L&LSR spent about £3,750 annually on locomotive coal. By 1944 this amount had risen to £13,000 which was, to some extent, the result of increased mileage but mainly due to the higher cost of coal. But the cost was one of the least worries. At times of acute

¹³⁶ Niall Mac Fhionnghaile, *Dr McGinley and his times* (Letterkenny, 1985), p. 203.

shortage a substitute had to be found and, as oil was out of the question, peat was the only available solution. Though peat was quite unsuitable for engine fireboxes because of the way it could be lifted off the bars by the draught, it provided a welcome substitute for the L&LSR during the war years and, indeed, afterwards until coal became plentiful on the market again. In 1943 and 1944 the L&LSR took to burning wood in the engines though the resulting torrent of sparks from the chimney more than once set fire to wagon covers. For one week there was no coal at all so the substitutes had to be used.¹³⁷

At first most of the turf was bought by the L&LSR from local contractors near Bunrana and Gweedore but, as time went on, they decided that money could be saved by utilising the resources close at hand. Consequently, they set teams of permanent way staff cutting turf on the L&LSR lands adjoining the track. Of course, they continued to purchase from local suppliers as well as the above table shows.¹³⁸

The carrying of turf to Derry city and the conveyance of passengers, many of whom were American soldiers, between Derry and Bunrana led to the L&LSR enjoying good profits on the railway again and for the first time in twenty years, 1942 saw the payment of a dividend again, although it was only one per cent.¹³⁹

The following story told by John Boyle of Annagry illustrates how little some things had progressed on the railway as well as depicting how slowly the life of the migrant labourer had changed either.

In June or July 1942 I was a young lad going to the 'tattie-hokin' in Scotland for the first time. A big crowd of us gathered in Annagry to catch the early bus for Derry and the bus was packed for there were gangs going off that day from nearly every townland. We came to the station in Gweedore and there were crowds there, all of the tattie-hokin' gangs. There were only two buses there so

¹³⁷ Patterson, p. 99.

¹³⁸ Patterson, p. 100.

¹³⁹ Patterson, p. 99.

Anthony Delap who was the stationmaster of the trains and over the buses too, couldn't send the lot of us out to Derry on the buses. So he got an old wagon out from the back of the station and all us young fellows had to pull it out and it was all wet and all covered in mould and falling to pieces. Anyway, he got us to pull it out and hitch it up to the turf train which was leaving for Derry with loads of turf. Then he called all the young men out, that was anyone under twenty years of age and he packed us all into this awful van or whatever you would call it. They were short of coal at the time and the train was running on turf and, every few miles, it would have to stop and they would stoke up to get up the hills. That was the way we went, stopped more often than going. Anyway it was five hours later or even more when we got to Derry and the Belfast train was gone. So we had to wait in Derry till the next train to Belfast and then when we got that train we arrived in Belfast and were late for the Glasgow boat there.

There was nothing for it but wander the streets all night for the most money anyone had was a pound leaving home. Anyway we met this man and he took us to a hostel across the city. We paid nine old pence there and then we went up the stairs but when we went in the door upstairs we got the fright of our lives. There were winos and dossers and fellows with beards down to their waists there. Our gaffer, who was only about eighteen years himself, said to us in Irish that this was a dangerous place and that we would pretend we were going to the toilet and then we would run for it. That's what we did and we got away.

We wandered the streets of Belfast all night and a man told us that there were watchmen on the streets who had fires because of the war and they would let us warm ourselves. We put in the night and the next day until it was boat time.

When we started getting ready for the boat one of our gang, a Meendernasloe lad, was missing and we looked everywhere for him and the police were looking too. We decided to get on the boat hoping he might be there but he wasn't. We carried on anyway. We arrived at the Broomielaw [in Glasgow] next morning and two lorries were waiting for us there and we got into the back of them. They drove off to the farm somewhere in Wigtownshire but we had no idea where we were going

We were each given a number of bags sewn together and a small bag. We went out to the straw-barn and filled the big bag which was our mattress and

then filled the small bag which was our pillow. Then we each got two army blankets and we were put in to the cow byre because all the cows had been put out to the fields. I slept well that day and night. We were working from early in the morning, about 4 a.m. till about the middle of the next day at the tatties [potatoes] then and the only food we ate were tatties that a women left the field and came in early to cook for us.

The fellow we lost in Belfast arrived home in Meendemasloe three weeks later. When anyone asked him where he had been he always answered that he didn't know – that he was just lost.¹⁴⁰

Goods trains continued to work to Gweedore throughout the 'emergency'. Although a little re-sleepering was done, no rails were replaced after 1943 and minor derailments became increasingly common, especially in dips where the track was on a curve and 'the unbraked wagons got a rug as the couplings tightened on the ascent'. In 1945, the management sent a circular to the engine crews to be aware of these problems but there was little they could do.¹⁴¹

In 1946 an adventurous tourist recorded his journey to Gweedore on the train.

We set off with the regulator set at the second port and cut-off about 75 per cent which was increased as the gradient stiffened, after the preliminary run down into Dunfanaghy Road. This formidable bank is three and a half miles long at an average of 1 in 50 and engines of no. 2's class are only allowed to take 100 tons over it. Here the elements can make life distinctly unpleasant for the engine crew but his time they are kind to us and the ascent was made in grand style, steam never falling below 130 lbs. under the beetling shadow of Muckish....The telephone wires have been removed from Falcarragh and the line is worked now by either 'bush telegraph' or, more probably, on the understanding that one engine only is allowed on the line.

Glorious glimpses of Tory Island on our right and the Derryveagh Mountains on the fireman's side were ours as we proceeded towards Errigal, but Driver Clifford had more to do than admire the view! His chief trouble was stray

¹⁴⁰ John Boyle, *Annagry West*, recorded by the author in 1999.

¹⁴¹ Patterson, p. 100.

sheep and he scared most of them off with the drain cocks and the whistle. Usually this only had the effect of herding them into the 'three foot' just a bare length ahead of the engine and quite spoilt what might have been a grand descent into Gweedore now only half a mile away....At Gweedore the now familiar procedure of pulling up well short of the station, uncoupling the locomotive and using her for advance shunting duties was adopted. When these were completed, the screw brake in the van is eased and the train runs down into the platform as the guard says, 'It's useful having all your stations in the dip!'...¹⁴²

By mid-1946, after six years of operation under stress of wartime conditions, and eight years after it had been condemned, the condition of the Letterkenny-Gweedore section was so bad that the L&LSR requested the government in Dublin to send their railway inspecting officer, Mr T. C. Courtney, later chairman of C.I.E., to inspect the line. A quick examination in the company of Mr Whyte, manager of the L&LSR, served to convince him that that the line was dangerously dilapidated. He hastened back to Dublin and reported that it should be put out of business immediately. Consequently, the regular goods service from Letterkenny to Gweedore was withdrawn on 6 January 1947. It took some time to establish the alternative lorry services and during the period certain special trains had to run but the section was finally closed in June 1947, although there continued to be protests.¹⁴³

John McIntyre of the *Donegal People's Press* published the following account of the last train to travel on the Burtonport line.

The last train to carry goods to Gweedore (the terminus for over six years) pulled out from Letterkenny at 2 p.m. on Saturday 10 January 1947.

Something of an historic happening, marking as it did another phase in the gradual close of rail transport before its rubber-shod rival on the roads; it passed off simply and indeed pathetically uneventfully. There was no big turn-out of

¹⁴² K. Longbottom, 'By goods train to Gweedore' in *Railway Magazine*, 1949, pp 353-356.

¹⁴³ Patterson, p. 101.

people to wave a last farewell; no scenes of emotion; no voice of protest, regret or satisfaction – nothing indeed to distinguish this break with a long and cherished tradition from any of the countless similar departures of the train and its crew. Members of the train staff left their desks for a few minutes, good humouredly to wave a farewell to the driver and fireman and guard.

I could not but feel, however, that the station-master himself, the ever genial and accommodating John O'Neill, an old railwayman of long and varied experience, had a real pang of regret as he watched the last wisp of smoke from the engine, as it rattled its merchandise cargo around the bend towards Oldtown. Indeed, he told me as much, while conceding that as matters stand, rail-transport on this section must necessarily end.

Condy McNelis who has manned the guard's van daily for close on ten years, was his usual serene buoyant self as he trucked the last bag into the covered wagon and signalled all ready to get under way. With an 'all-in-the-days-work' attitude Condy admitted to no lump in his throat at the closing of the line. Still, I wondered if he was not trying hard to conceal his feelings. Driver Hughie Boyle and fireman Jimmy McNelis (Condy's brother) went about their accustomed routines on the footplate as the train slowly clanked out from the platform, and neither seemed to relish the idea of being 'in the news' or of having their pictures taken.

And what of the future? Nothing definite could be learned. Five new trucks resplendent in their slate coloured paint and gleaming radiators were drawn up in the Station Square [Letterkenny] as the train puffed its final adieu and several more are due this week. These will do duty for the cancelled trains... There was similar agreement that despite all complaints, reasonable and otherwise, this line has rendered a valuable public service since its first train set out for Burtonport in the early days of far off 1903.¹⁴⁴

Longbottom, the writer who travelled in 1946 to Gweedore returned to witness the last action on the Burtonport Railway.

As a sad but interesting sequel to the journey to Gweedore in 1946, I was privileged to travel with the demolition train when it crossed Owencarrow

¹⁴⁴ *Donegal People's Press*, Jan. 1947, John McIntyre.

viaduct for the last time. On Tuesday July 19 1949 I joined driver Hannigan (who had been our fireman in 1946) on the footplate of no. 12... and by 11 o'clock we had drawn out of Letterkenny with a train consisting of a wagon, four flats (actually the frames of passenger carriages) and a brake composite coach. Grass growing on the track made the running far from easy and only frequent use of the sanders enabled us to breast the 1 in 50 gradients between Letterkenny and Kilmacrenan. After some shunting at Kilmacrenan the engine propelled the train.

Near the foot of the ascent to Barnes Gap, we stopped again to take water from a small river, through a petrol-driven pump carried in the van. This procedure was necessary because the track had already been removed at Creeslough, the nearest station with a water tank. No. 12 climbed to Barnes Gap in fine style and then we made a cautious run over the serpentine descent to the viaduct. A short distance beyond the viaduct the track ended abruptly and only a bare path of ballast extended across the bog to Creeslough.

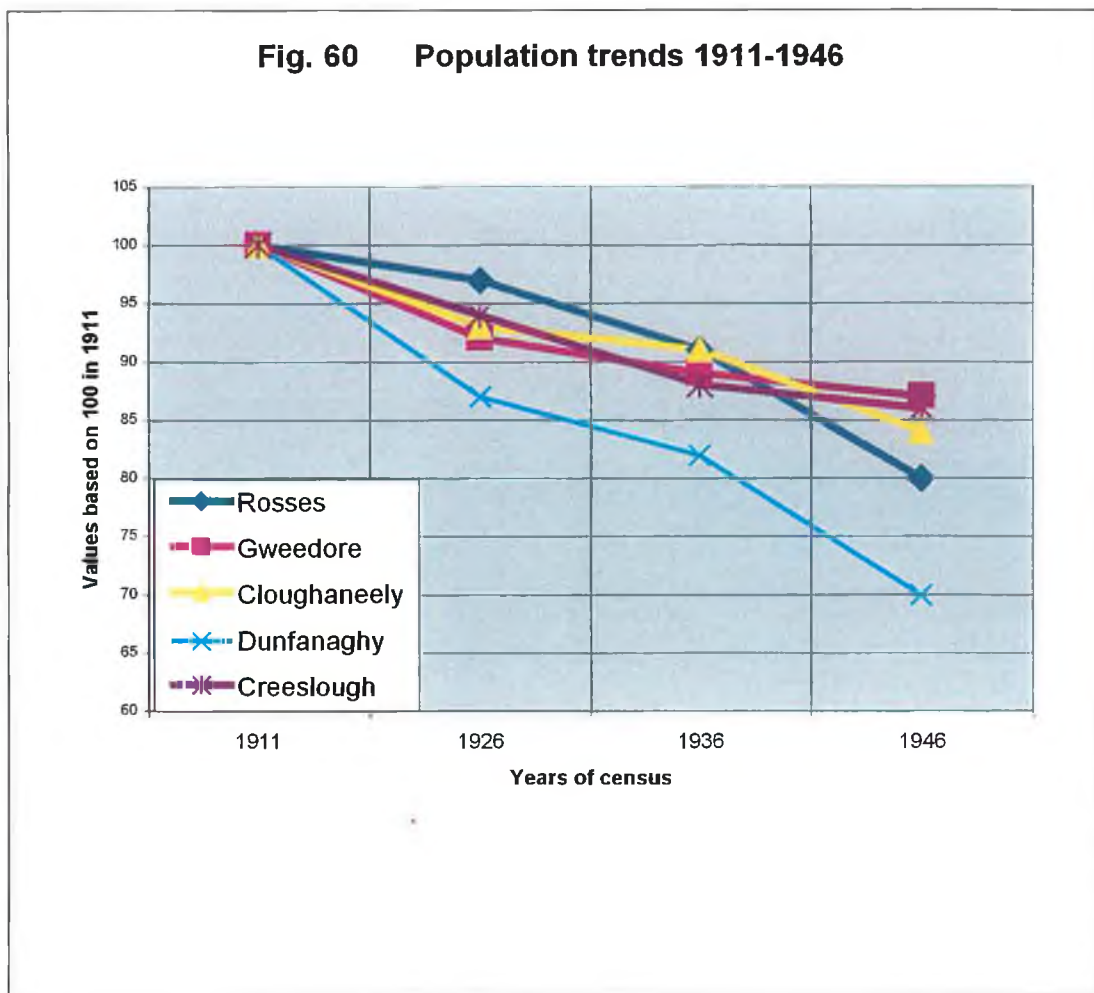
Men were soon at work loading the train and by 12.30 p.m. the last train ever to cross Owencarrow Viaduct began its return journey, with a full load of rails and sleepers.¹⁴⁵

The L&LSR stripped the assets of the Burtonport Extension in the following years. Gatehouses were sold to occupants and many sections of land bordering the permanent way were sold in lots for £5, £10 or whatever could be got. Freight traffic continued on the Derry to Buncrana and Derry to Letterkenny railways until July 1953 when L&LSR rail services finally ceased. No one ever came forward to offer the L&LSR the scrap value of a typical Burtonport engine when all of them were being maintained in remarkably good condition during these late years. 'At the time, unfortunately, there was no Transport Museum in Belfast; use on the neighbouring Donegal line was never seriously contemplated. Eventually the engines were cut up for scrap'.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Longbottom, *Railway Magazine*, 1949, p. 353. The last trip on the railway.

¹⁴⁶ Patterson, *The Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway*, p. 101.

This lack of interest can hardly be blamed on the northwest population in 1947. As Fig. 60 shows the population of northwest Donegal was in decline. The rush to build Britain after the war lured the young men away in crowds and they could no longer afford to come back after a season or six months. Consequently, the women went with them and found employment in the factories and hotels. These people married in Scotland and England and set up home there. Their only connection with Donegal now would be the clearances during the Summer



So

Source: Census of population, County Donegal 1911, 1926, 1936 and 1946.

holidays when thousands of children vacated the cities to spend the holidays with grandparents in Donegal. The newly named Lough Swilly buses carried them from the port at Derry to the far regions of the northern half of Donegal. From time to time they might hear of the Londonderry &

Lough Swilly Railway but few would hear of the 'old sinner' called by its proper title, the Letterkenny & Burtonport Extension Railway. In the changing world after the war, people had many pressing obligations to occupy their world and their thoughts. Fading deep into the memory by then was the story of the Letterkenny & Burtonport Extension Railway.

With the disappearance of the last train forever on the Letterkenny & Burtonport Extension Railway the questions arise as to its worth and contribution to the communities of northwest Donegal during its existence. What were the measures of its success or failure or did it make a difference at all?

The initial hopes of the contributors who gave evidence at the investigating commissions foresaw a bright future with immediate employment during the building phase, the widespread development of local natural resources, the location of new industries and the general betterment of society, all of which would create sustainable employment at home and put end to the repeating periods of distress and the trail of migration to the Laggan, to Scotland and to America.

The reality was somewhat different. The building phase certainly lifted many families to a level of comfort that they had not experienced before and there is much oral testimony in the northwest which dates the well-being of families to the coming of the railway. This was especially true of blacksmiths, masons, sub-contractors, owners of horses and families where a number of men got employment. Oral tradition also relates that the experience gained by these men during the building of the railway, especially in rock blasting and earthmoving, paved the way for them in Scotland in later years when Donegal men dominated the major water, road and electricity schemes and building programmes.¹⁴⁷

The fishing industry was the biggest beneficiary from the arrival of the railway. It would not have been possible for the Congested Districts Board to develop the fishing industry without the line to Burtonport and despite the many lapses and weaknesses of the railway it made a substantial contribution to the fishing and created a number of strata from ordinary fishermen, carters, traders, dealers and agents who benefited to various degrees. The fact that the fishing industry has survived in Donegal as a major industry for more than a hundred years is testimony that the initial years of success were

¹⁴⁷ Morgan Dunleavy, Calhame and Sean Delap, Gweedore.

reasonably well-founded. Perhaps, if the Board of Works had listened to Fr James McFadden of Gweedore when he advocated in 1890 that a railway into the northwest should be linked with a deep-water port in Gweedore which could export directly, then the returns from fishing might have produced greater benefits among a wider sector of the community.

But the hopes of priests and advocates that local industries would flourish and new industries would be established in the region after the arrival of the railway never materialised. David Turnock sets out the conditions and the impact which railway development had on various communities in Scotland, Wales, England and Ireland.¹⁴⁸ He shows that where railways were constructed for specific purposes, such as the development of coal, iron and steel in England and in the Rift Valley of Scotland they were extremely successful. Likewise, the development of fishing in all the countries, of slate quarries in Wales, of the distillation plants in northeast Scotland, and the cattle and sheep trade led to great progress in all of these areas. The reason was that all of these were indigenous to the regions, even if undeveloped, before the railways came. They improved and developed with the railways to become major industries. For example, there was a massive increase in distilleries in northeast Scotland between 1869 and 1929 which can be traced to the construction of the railways. However, the foundations of the industry were well established before the railways came and there is no belief that such a flourishing industry would ever have happened as a result of the railways alone.¹⁴⁹ But Turnock concluded that 'if there was no compelling resource to attract investment, the railway's influence could be felt only through increased mobility, facilitating the migration to the towns and colonies of redundant labourers'.¹⁵⁰

Most of Ireland had railway communication long before northwest Donegal. Mayo was well supplied by railways with Ballyhaunis being connected in 1861, Claremorris and Castlebar in 1862, Westport in 1866,

¹⁴⁸ David Turnock, *An historical geography of railways in Great Britain and Ireland* (Aldershot, Hants, 1998), part ii, pp 149-296.

¹⁴⁹ Turnock, *An historical geography of railways in Great Britain and Ireland*, p. 270.

¹⁵⁰ Turnock, *An historical geography of railways in Great Britain and Ireland*, p. 293.

Foxford in 1868 and Ballina in 1873. Yet, there was little general industry established as a result of the railways nor did society benefit to any great degree as is witnessed by the agrarian troubles in the county, the large migration patterns, poverty, emigration and the founding of the Land League to right the perceived wrongs of society. Railways carried truck loads of animals and carriage loads of people to the east but made little change within local society and this during the half century before the outbreak of the First World War, which Joseph Lee has described as the 'golden age of Irish railways'.¹⁵¹

The Burtonport Railway only enjoyed eleven years of this golden age before 1914. In those years significant progress was made in many aspects of local life and the railway was a major contributor. The manures carried in by the railway relieved the distress caused by poor potato crops because of lack of fertilizer. Seed potatoes, potatoes from the Laggan region and loads of oats and Indian meal became easily available with the coming of the railway. There was a great improvement in housing standards. The grip of the gombeen merchants on the ordinary people was broken by the goods coming in on the railway because any person could set up shop and negotiate their merchandise through the railway company. The successful foundation and spread of the co-operative movement was facilitated by the railway. The vast increase in the varieties of food available added to the diet. Stallholders brought goods, clothing and materials to the fairs at reasonable prices. The railway brought jobbers who were willing to pay decent prices for animals. Tourism was developed and new hotels gave added employment. Most of all, the social life of the ordinary people was greatly enhanced by the ability to travel third-class and have days out on the train, to travel to Letterkenny and Derry and to visit the hospitals and dentists. The trains also carried many a lonesome,

¹⁵¹ Joseph Lee, 'The golden age of Irish railways' in Kevin B. Nowland (ed.) *Travel and Transport in Ireland* (reprint, Dublin, 1993), p.110.

pregnant young woman away to the oblivion of Scotland where she might have her child adopted and return later to her home without the stain of disgrace. The train made it possible for the children of migrants to Scotland to abandon their tenement homes and return to grandparents in Donegal for the duration of the summer holidays each year. The train carried vast numbers to the port of Derry for the ships of White Star Line that would take them to America where their remitted earnings would help sustain the home and its occupants. Not so many made the return journey. For ordinary people, the railway opened many new vistas especially for women who were much more confined in travel than the men. With the railway the facilities of the large towns and the city of Derry were within their achievable reach. The railway enriched local society with its days out at the AOH, UIL, Temperance Movement, Feis Thirconail, Crann Eithne as well as musical, political and sporting meetings. It promoted the Doon Well shrine into a place of regular pilgrimage where thousands of pilgrims worshipped annually. In all, the enclosed world of the northwest was opened up to many new and varied influences.

The railway facilitated a better supply of information. Daily newspapers, letters, the arrival of politicians, commercial travellers, stallholders, engineers, jobbers, tourists and many others among the travelling public opened the outside world and brought it into enclosed communities. In northwest Donegal the arrival of the Irish colleges – again illustrating the utilization of an indigenous natural resource – brought immense economic benefit and social change.

Seasonality provided many headaches for railway managers in the northwest. Long period of inactivity in the fishing industry were followed by weeks of high intensity when wagons were demanded immediately to cope with the catches. Fairs were good between March and September in northwest Donegal but were only held on five days per month. The egg trade lasted from May to November and was non-existent during the

remaining months. These highs and lows created problems with rolling stock.

However, an examination of the stations between Letterkenny and Burtonport provides one amazing statistic which reflects the limitations of railway influence and power. Not one warehouse, factory, shop, forge or industrial development was ever built beside any of the stations on the Burtonport railway. The only attempts at developing industries through the railway were the factories built at Crolly and Annagry. Their lifespan was short – only eight years- before being eclipsed by World War 1. The attempts to develop the sand, granite, marble, silver, iron ore or other local resources were all complete failures. As Joseph Lee stated in *Ireland 1912-1995*¹⁵²

the first modern technological innovation to be widely and rapidly defused in Ireland, the railway, found the commercial promoters floundering in the face of the engineering dimension....The railway failed to fully realise the ambitious hope that it would act as the engine to pull the economy in its train.

The Burtonport railway failed this test just as all the others had done because Irish society ‘remained technologically under-developed in the century after 1850, despite the early, extensive and rapid diffusion of the railway’.¹⁵³

The demise of the Burtonport railway was inevitable. With the exception of fishing little else provided regular transport loads in the 1920s and 1930s because the northwest was a consumer society rather than a productive one and it did not have the purchasing power to bring large quantities of materials or products into the area. Poverty was widespread and the population was diminishing severely which helped to exacerbate the problem. The growth of motor transport which was quite unregulated for many years while the railways were over- regulated, could service the towns at competitive rates and drop merchandise at the shop doors without

¹⁵² Josph Lee, *Ireland 1912 – 1985* (Cambridge, 1989), pp 638-9.

¹⁵³ *Ibid*, p. 639.

the extra expense of the cartage system. Only for the lack of roads along the northwest seaboard the railway would have closed down in 1931.

The question remains: did the Burtonport railway make a difference or was its existence irrelevant? I would put the case that it did make a difference. When it was granted in 1897 there was no other option for northwest Donegal. During its time it provided access to the outer world for many ordinary people and improved their standard of living. It brought speedy travel to the masses. The roads of the area were incapable of providing the facilities that the railway did until the late 1930s. It was inconceivable that northwest Donegal would have remained outside the age of steam between 1903 and 1930 when it would have remained with the cartage system until the internal combustion engine was capable of traversing the roads of the region.

But the railway could never deliver the expected industrial development. It never had the finance to do so nor was it part of railway philosophy that it should do so. Like most other railways it failed to halt the flight from the land. But we should not condemn it for what it was never capable of doing. David Turnock echoes this same problem elsewhere: 'The mere presence of a railway – even the east coast main line to Scotland – was not enough to prevent depopulation'.¹⁵⁴ It made a contribution to life in northwest Donegal during its time and for that we should remember it for, at least, it enabled that remote outpost to participate in some of the romance of the steam age. People might argue that all of the benefits derived from the railway would come anyway. But when would they come? Hardly during the years of the Great War. Hardly during the War of Independence or the Civil War. Surely not during the dismal years of native government during the 1920s and early 1930s. I believe that the, admittedly, limited achievements of the railway should be recognised for their value at the time. What might have happened can only be speculation.

¹⁵⁴ Turnock, *An historical geography of railways in Great Britain and Ireland*, p. 293.

EPILOGUE

I went to Ardcrone National School in the Rosses as a four-year-old in 1945. Before long, the crowds of children in the classrooms and in the playground began dwindling as the war refugees returned to their homes in Scotland and England. Most of our fathers also went. We grew used to the sight of seeing the men with their suitcases heading off in the mornings to catch the Lough Swilly buses to bring them to Derry. We knew they would return for a fortnight in the summer and for another fortnight at Christmas. As the years passed, we hardly knew them as our own fathers.

Gradually we saw the houses close down, one by one as the young people went away permanently. Our teacher, Miss Doherty, would say a prayer for the departing family and wish that they would soon come back again but we knew that they were gone for good. Houses that had ten, twelve or fourteen children in them once now only had the old parents as occupants. We learned to survive in a society where only children and old people dominated.

Around the maps in the classroom we knew little of Ireland. Dublin seemed a far and remote place of little relevance to us. We were unaware of the other towns or cities, their football teams or their claims to fame. Our eyes lit up when we did Scottish geography though. Glasgow where Celtic and Rangers battled; Edinburgh where Hearts and Hibernians were enemies; Rannoch Moor, Pitlochry, Invergordon, Inverary, Inverness, Invermorrison and Loch Awe were names we all knew well for some child in the class had a father in one of these places working on water schemes or hydroelectric dams. We talked on our way home from school of the snow and severe winters in Scotland. When we learned to read, we yearned for the *Sunday Post* which was the only paper in most houses.¹⁵⁵ It seemed that Balfour's wish had permeated society completely at home.

¹⁵⁵ The *Sunday Post* was a Scottish paper.

We witnessed throughout the 1950s children of twelve and thirteen years leaving school without saying a word to anyone and going off to Scotland on the 'tattie-hokin' gangs. In June 1957, sixteen-year old Jimmy Green from Ranafast accompanied his father and two younger brothers, Michael, aged 14 years, and Charlie, aged 11 years, to the potato picking in Wigtownshire. When they arrived at the farm on the back of a lorry after 14 hours on the Derry boat they filled their bags with straw and slept in the cow byre. Jimmy remembers his brothers playing with the cow's chain before going to sleep. They got up at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning to dig the potatoes for the Glasgow and Edinburgh markets. And six of the forty-member gang were children, aged eight years.¹⁵⁶ Not much had changed with the coming and going of the railway!

At home we heard our parents and grandparents debating with neighbours about going to Glasgow to see a specialist, to get a set of teeth or a pair of glasses. People could talk as easily of various places in Scotland as they could of the neighbouring parish. The neighbours laughed loudly at a blow-in who averred that there were medical specialists in Dublin every bit as good as Glasgow. Did he think they were idiots to listen to stories like that? In reality, Glasgow was our capital.

We watched the houses around us close as the old people died or emigrated with their younger children. Some did not even lock the doors when they were departing and we often walked into the empty house and looked at the dressers filled with delft, the beds covered in blankets, the turf by the fireside, the Aladdin and Tilley lamps hanging by the windows. They were ready for the return of the migrants. And some did come back but it was only for short periods in the summer. Many never came to set foot in the place again. It seemed that Balfour's spirit had stolen them away.

¹⁵⁶ Jimmy Green, Ranafast as told to the author in January 2004.

Male religious orders never set up secondary schools for boys in the diocese of Raphoe where St Eunan's College in Letterkenny was the only outlet in the diocese because of the belief that other schools for boys might damage the vocations for priesthood in St Eunan's College. As a result the only educational outlet was a two-year spell in the local technical school learning woodwork. Then they went off to the tunnels or the building sites of Scotland or England.

My memories of those years are of a certain sadness creeping over our society. Bands and football teams were decimated because there were no young men about. Whatever joy there was when people came home it was short lived for they had to leave again within a fortnight. There were always so many tears at parting.

On the way to school we watched the empty and deserted trackbed of the railway stretching away through the hills and we knew it was going to Derry where all our neighbours got the boat. We heard stories of the train, the derailments, the fights with the soldiers where 'hundreds' were killed. Many a night we heard of the trips of long ago to the hiring fairs, to Doon Well or to the Feis in Letterkenny. It was on a trip to the Feis on the Burtonport train that my aunt, Maggie, met her future husband for the first time. But there was no mention of the granite, the marble, the silver, the soapstone, the iron oxide or any of the other great minerals that were to make the northwest the industrial leader in Ireland. None of these ever developed. Whatever dream had been created by Balfour and those who believed in the railway ended in failure.

Or was it failure? The train and later the buses took the people out of the place and settled them in Britain. They worked and earned good money there and though they held on to their customs and beliefs they generally adhered to the British way of life. Their children and grandchildren became indistinguishable from the 'happy English child'. Maybe Balfour's philosophy had been right after all.

It was 1964 when my own family put up the shutters and departed for Newcastle upon Tyne. My grandmother was ninety years old at the time and spending her last years away from relatives and neighbours was not easy for her anymore. She was a great storyteller and she was the one that awakened my interest for the first time in the Letterkenny & Burtonport Extension Railway. Having written this thesis I now comprehend much better how she and her generation understood their world and rationalized its changes. But emigration for a woman of her years was surely the nadir of political and social organisation under our own government.

Change did come in an unlikely form. Though the switching on of electricity in 1958 in northwest Donegal improved living conditions it was not the principal agent of change. The coming of the milk lorry with cartons and bottles being laid at the end of the laneway each day initiated the change to a new era. No longer did the women and children have to toil in the fields in order to keep a cow or two for milk supply. Soon the cows disappeared and the fields that had been won from a harsh nature returned to their natural moorland status again.

Only the great gaps, the hand cut stone bridges, abandoned viaducts and great rock cuttings of the Burtonport Extension remain undisturbed to this day. They remind us of the hopes for betterment that such massive effort brought in 1903. For a little while the dream prospered. After a long illness came a painful death. From a distance it is difficult to become animated by the achievements and success of the venture and yet, there is still a residual tenderness and affection in many an old heart for 'the old sinner' or the 'Burtonport Express' or 'the Swilly Railway' as it is variously named though nobody I met knew that its proper title was the Letterkenny & Burtonport Extension Railway.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A PRIMARY SOURCES.

Primary sources : 1 Manuscripts

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND, BELFAST:

Documents relating to the Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway and Letterkenny & Burtonport Extension Railway.

D/2683, BB/B/1: Receipts of income and expenditure and fully itemized account for 1913.

D/2683/BB/B/1: Circular from Brice Mullin, Chairman of L&LSR, re. Railway Companies Association, dated 12 Dec. 1918 plus general correspondence.

D/2683/EM/F/1: Drivers and staff-discipline.

CJ/C: General.

CK/1: correspondence between L&LSR and Board of Works in 1900. List of accidents 1903 to 1938. Report of works by James F. O'Donnell.

D/3241/ER/1: Half year ended 31/12/1903. Passengers, freight and livestock carried.

D/3703, The McFarland papers.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES, DUBLIN:

Board of Trade, Green series.

5737 Letterkenny and Dunfanaghy Coast Light Railway

5737.1 Book of Reference.

5737 2-15. Portfolio containing plans, sections and annotated OS map of proposed line.

5738 Letterkenny and Gweedore Light Railway (H739)

5738.1 *Dublin Gazette* containing notice of application.

5738.2 Book of Reference

5738.3-13 Portfolio containing plans sections and annotated O.S. map of proposed line.

3692 North West Donegal Light Railway. (H746) Letterkenny to Rawross Point.

Lines: Letterkenny to Creeslough

3692.1 Book of Reference.

3692.2-14 Portfolio containing plans sections and annotated 1" OS maps of proposed line.1883

4099 Letterkenny to Dunfanaghy Tramway (H348)

Lines: Letterkenny to Creeslough

Creeslough to Falcarragh

Creeslough to Rawross

4091.1 Book of References

4091 2-14 portfolio containing plans sections and annotated OS map of proposed line.

5302 North West Donegal Light Railway (H9029) Incomplete)

Lines Milford Branch.

5302.1-2 Plan and sections of the line through the parishes of Kilmacrennan and Tullyferm. 1889.

5297 Donegal Central Railway Lines

Stranorlar to Glenties and Gweedore (H22)

5297.1 Annotated map of county Donegal (Index to the townland survey showing proposed lines 1890.

5297.2 Plan and section of line through the parishes of Templecrone and Tullaghobegley 1890. 1890.

5297.3 Cross-sections 1890.

5297.4 Annotated map of county Donegal (Index to the townland survey showing proposed lines 1890.

5297.5 Plan and section of line through the parishes of Templecrone and Tullaghobegley 1890. 1890.

5297.6 Cross-sections 1890.

Lines: Letterkenny to Creeslough

Creeslough to Falcarragh

5303 North west Donegal Light Railway (H9029) Incomplete.

5304

Office of Public Works, (OPW)

Lough Swilly Railway, Letterkenny Railway and Letterkenny & Burtonport Extension Railway.

	Ref. Number	Document title	Information thereon
1	OPW 268 - 02	Letterkenny Railway	Letters concerning plans for line.
2	OPW 12877 - 5	Letterkenny Railway	Fares structure
3	OPW 13090 - 15	Carndonagh & Burtonport Railways	Comment
4	OPW 13090 - 15	Carndonagh & Burtonport Railways	Comment
5	OPW 11537 - 18	Burtonport & Carndonagh Railways 1904-1919.	Holidays & leave for Allely and insight to his life.
6	OPW 11680 - 18	Burtonport Railway 1915-19.	Accounts and audits those days.
7	OPW 10555 - 15	Burtonport & Carndonagh Railway 1916-22.	Problems of TT and fish traffic & connections with other trains.
8	OPW 6106 - 21	Burtonport & Carndonagh Railway 1914 - 22.	Appointment of Locomotive coal charges.

9	OPW 999 - 97	Burtonport Extension Railway 1897.	Concerning engineers plans.
10	OPW 15583 - 05	Burtonport Extension Railway 1905	Inquiry by Derry into construction and working of line.
11	OPW 2009 - 15.	Burtonport Extension Railway 1911 - 15.	Condition and Working of locomotives.
12	OPW 1946 - 15.	Burtonport Extension Railway 1904 - 15.	Report of excessive speed of trains on Owencarrow Viaduct and other bridges
13	OPW 5223 - 15	Burtonport Extension Railway 1912 - 15.	New works at Kilmacrenan and Meenbanad.
14	OPW 3306 - 16	Burtonport Extension Railway 1911 - 16.	Concerning through bookings.
15	OPW 2920 - 17	Burtonport Extension Railway 1917	Parliament questions relating to mismanagement of line by L. & LSR.
16	OPW 1929 - 18.	Burtonport Extension Railway. 1916 - 18.	Complaints from public about the working of the line.
17	OPW -5933 - 19	Burtonport Extension Railway 1914 - 19.	Unauthorised use of locomotives and carriages by L & LSR.
18	OPW 13749 - 19.	Burtonport Extension Railway 1917 - 19	Reports (including Tatlovs) of the working of the line.
19	OPW 16430 - 20	Burtonport Extension Railway 1918 - 21.	Conveyance of land by L & LSR to Mr. Philip Carroll.
20	OPW 5928 - 23	Burtonport Extension Railway. 1917-23.	Extension of Privy Counsel Order.
21	OPW 12773 - 25.	Burtonport Extension Railway 1925.	Request for L. & LSR to complete plans for Burtonport line.
22	OPW 11108 - 08	Letterkenny & Burtonport Railway 1908 - 10	Repair and strengthening of viaducts after Owencarrow accident.
23	OPW 13660 - 01	Letterkenny Railway	Complaints concerning maintenance and working of the line and proposal for Board of Trade enquiry.
24	OPW 3205 - 16	Letterkenny Railway 1915-16.	Revaluation.
25	OPW 8303 - 16	Letterkenny Railway 1915-16	Negotiations re costs of relaying the lines.
26	OPW 510 - 17	Letterkenny Railway 1910-17	Renewal of working agreement.
27	OPW 7033 - 17	Letterkenny Railway 1913 - 17	Relaying and strength of bridges.
28	OPW 5188 - 19	Letterkenny Railway 1910 - 19	Periodical Inspections
29	OPW 5873 - 19	Letterkenny Railway 1907 - 19	Complaints re. the working of railway.
30	OPW 11430 20	Letterkenny Railway. 1920.	Repairs of two bridges.
31	OPW 6093 - 23	Letterkenny Railway 1917 - 23.	Strengthening bridge over River Swilly.
32	OPW 23796 - 23	Letterkenny Railway 1913 - 22	Supply of ballast and purchase of land for quarrying.
33	OPW 11766 - 18	Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway 1911 - 1919.	Application for exemption from rates on Burtonport line.
34	OPW 5875 - 19	L. & LSR 1906 - 19.	Appointment and resignations at L & LSR.
35	OPW 2835 - 20	L & LSR	Carriage of freight between Burtonport and Derry.
36	OPW 14895 - 00	Burtonport and Carndonagh Light Railway.	General
37	OPW 14350 - 14	Burtonport and Carndonagh Light Railway.	General
38	OPW 7187 - 05	Burtonport and Carndonagh Light Railway.	General
39	OPW 8242 - 115	Burtonport Railway	General
40	OPW 1603 - 17	Burtonport Letterkenny and Carndonagh Railway.	General

Privy Council Papers

1. Letterkenny & Burtonport railway – 3/764, 3/764-73.
2. Railway files Box nos. 37-38.
3. Letterkenny-Burtonport Railway – 3/760 – 762. viB – 3 - 16, no. 30

MILITARY ARCHIVES, CATHAL BRUGHA BARRACKS, DUBLIN

Railways and troop trains:	A05731 – 66/16-B10
Railways-use of military transport:	A06863 – 70/16-B12
Activities of Mr. McCormack:	A06949 – 5/16-A2
Civil administration in Donegal:	A071118 – 7/16-A3.
Railways:	A07120 – 69/16-A3.
Military courts in Donegal:	A07697 - 17/16-A6.
Arrest of J. G. Kelly:	A07774 – 18/16-A6.
Donegal Command-operations file:	A07774 – 22/16-A8.
Arrest of Alex Brown:	A08083 – 23/16-A8.
Occupation of Sheephaven Coastguard station:	A08636 – 26/16-A9
Railways:	A08838 – 28/16-A10.
Burtonport:	A08836 – 28/16 – A10.
Prisoner J. O'Donnell:	A08861 – 28/16 – A10.
Prisoners:	A08889 – 28/16 – A10.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, (PRO) KEW, LONDON.

MT 6/2595 – 59374:

1. 1917: Petitions and signatories from Templecrone, Kincasslagh, Gweedore, Cloughaneely, Dunfanaghy, Clondahorky, Downings and Carrigart.
2. Letters of Fr P. D. McCaul, St Eunan's College, Letterkenny to President, Board of Trade, to Minister for Munitions plus various others.
3. Correspondence from Donegal County Council and Mallet Bros, Downings regarding L&BER.
4. Joseph Tatlow's report, 7 May 1917.
5. Agreement for construction and working of the Letterkenny & Burtonport Extension Railway.
6. Parliamentary questions from Donegal MPs Hugh Law and A. J. Kelly with replies and comments 1917.
7. Orders from Privy Council, Dublin in 1919 concerning management of railway being handed over to Joseph Tatlow and Henry Hunt.

PRO, C.O. 904/103, 904/104, 904/105:RIC County Inspector's monthly reports, Donegal 1917-1921.

WO/22395/10. Attacks and incidents on L&BER, 1910-21

Primary sources: II Contemporary Newspapers

Derry Journal

Derry People & Donegal News

Donegal People's Press

Donegal Independent

Freeman's Journal

Irish Independent

Irish Times

Londonderry Sentinel

Londonderry Standard

Primary sources: III Published works of contemporaries

- | | |
|--|---|
| 'ac Fhionnlaoch, Seán
Blythe, E. | <i>O Rabharta go mallmhuir</i> (Dublin, 1975)
'Organising the IRB in Donegal' in <i>Donegal Annual</i> , no. 1,
1966. |
| Gallagher, Patrick
Gwynn, Stephen | <i>My story -Paddy the Cope</i> (Tralee, 1979, reprint)
<i>Highways and bye ways of Donegal and Antrim</i> (London,
1899) |
| Longbottom, K. | 'By goods train to Gweedore' in <i>Railway magazine</i> no. 584,
Nov. and Dec. 1949, vol. 95 |
| Mac Cumhaill, Fionn | <i>Na Rosa go bráth</i> (Dublin, 1939) |
| Mac Gabhann, Mici
Mac Gill Fhinnéin, Gordon | <i>Rotha mór an tsaoil</i> (Indreabhan, Gaillimh, 1958)
'A contribution to the social and linguistic history of Ranafast'
in <i>Donegal Annual</i> , no. 36, 1984, p.30 |
| McCarron, Edward | <i>Reminiscences of a lighthouse keeper: life in Donegal 1850-
1900</i> (Cork, 1981) |
| McFadden, Fr James | <i>The past and the present of the agrarian struggle in Gweedore</i>
(Derry, 1889) |
| Micks, William L. | <i>History of the Congested Districts Board</i> (Dublin, 1925) |
| Ua Cnáimhsí, Pádraig
O Domhnaill, E.
Ó Dónaill, Niall
O'Donnell, Peadar | <i>Róise rua</i> , (Baile Atha Cliath, 1888)
<i>Scéal Hiúdaí Sheainín</i> (Dublin 1940)
<i>Na glúnta Rosannacha</i> (Dublin, 1952)
<i>Islanders</i> , (London, 1928) |
| Ó Grianna, Séamus | <i>Saol corrach</i> (Cork, 1981, reprint) |
| Ó Grianna, Séamus | <i>Nuair a bhí mé óg</i> (Cork, 1979, reprint) |
| Sweeney, Joseph A | 'Donegal and the War of Independence' in <i>Capuchin Annual</i>
1970. |

Tatlow, Joseph	<i>Fifty years of railway life</i> (Westminster, 1920)
Tuke, James Hack	<i>A visit to Donegal and Connaught.</i> (London 1880)
Tuke, James Hack	<i>Irish distress and its remedies</i> (London, 1880)
Tuke, James Hack	<i>The condition of Donegal</i> (London, 1889)
	<i>The new way,</i> (Trade Union Railway Journal, March 1917 – October 1919)

Primary sources: IV Local Oral sources

CONTRIBUTERS FROM LOCAL ORAL SOURCES

NAME	YEAR RECORDED	ADDRESS
Baird, John	2004	Port Road, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
Boyle, Edward	1999	Bunaman, Annagry, Co. Donegal
Boyle, James	1999	Port, Burtonport, Co. Donegal
Byrne, Bernard J	1997-8	Glen Road, Annagry, Co. Donegal
Byrne, Catherine	1997-8	Annagry, Co. Donegal
Delap, Rory	1997	Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
Delap, Rory Jr.	1997	Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
Delap, Sean	1999	Bunbeg, Gweedore, Co. Donegal
Doogan, James	1999	Crolly, Co. Donegal
Duffy, John	2000	Annagry, Co. Donegal
Dunleavy, Morgan	2002	Calhame, Annagry, Co. Donegal
Dunlop, Archie	2002	Crolly, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal
Gallagher, James	2000	Station House, Falcarragh, Co. Donegal
Gallagher, John	2000	Station House, Falcarragh, Co. Donegal
Gillespie, Colm	2000	Loughnandearan, Annagry, Co. Donegal
Hay, George	1999	Creeslough, Co. Donegal
Mac Aodh, Seamus	2000, 2004	Fanabhui, Gortahork, Co. Donegal
Mac Gairbhith, Padraig	2000	Loughanure, Annagry, Co. Donegal
McBride, James	1999	Meendernasloe, Annagry, Co. Donegal
McBride, Timmy	1999	Meenbanad, Kincasslagh, Co. Donegal
McCafferty, Sarah	1999	Creeslough, Co. Donegal
McDaid, James	1997	Doon, Termon, Co. Donegal.
McDaid, Mary	1999	Meenbanad, Kincasslagh, Co. Donegal.
McDevitt, Dom	2001	Annagry, Co. Donegal
McGarvey, Dan	2000	Kincasslagh, Co. Donegal
O'Donnell,	2004	Fanaboy, Gortahork, Co. Donegal

James		
O'Donnell, Manus	1997-98	Fairhill, Dungloe, Co. Donegal
O Maonaigh, Proinnsias	2001	Cois Claidigh, Bun Beag, Co. Donegal
Roarty, Maggie	1997, 1999	Knockastolar, Bunbeg, Co. Donegal
Sharkey, John	2001, 2004	Rathfarnham, Dublin, Co. Donegal
Sweeney, Eileen	2000	Rathfarnham, Dublin, Co. Donegal
Sweeney, Grace	1997-2004	Bunaman, Annagry, Co. Donegal
Sweeney, Pa	2000	Milltown, Burtonport, Co. Donegal
Sweeney, Paddy	1998	Toryglen, Glasgow, Scotland
Ward, Michael	1999-2002	Keadue, Burtonport, Co. Donegal
Ward, Susan	1999-2002	Keadue, Burtonport, Co. Donegal

Primary sources: V Official Publications

BRITISH OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

Report and tables relating to migratory agricultural labourers for the year 1880, H.C. 1881 (C2809) xciii,

Congested Districts Board, Baseline reports, Dublin 1892-98)

Annual Reports for the Congested Districts Board for Ireland, 1893-1921.

Evicted Tenants Commission 1893, C 6985 H 1893-4.

The Agricultural Labourer (Scotland), vol. iii, H.C. 1893-4 (C6894) xxxvii.

Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the estates of evicted tenants in Ireland, HC 1893-94 (C69350) xxxi.

Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland: *Final Report of the Commissioners* [Cd 4097] HC 1908, xlii.729.

Appendix to second report on congestion in Ireland, HC1906-7. 3319 xxv.

Minutes of evidence Vice Regal Commission on Irish Railways, 1907, 1907 (Cd 3632) xxxvii.

Report on recruiting in Ireland, H.C. 1914-16 (Cd 8168),xxxix.

IRISH OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

Department of Industry and Commerce, *Census of Population of Ireland, 1926.*

Department of industry and Commerce, *Census of Population of Ireland, 1936.*

Central Statistics Office, *Census of Population of Ireland, 1946.*

Report on Sea Fisheries, December 1921, R.10/5.

Statistical tables for Sea and Inland Fisheries of Ireland, 1922, G 2/3

Report of Commission on Irish Railways 1922 plus minutes of evidence, R. 2/1, R. 2/2

Gaeltacht Commission, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Preservation of the Gaeltacht, 1926*, R23/1 - 27.

The Railway Tribunal report for 1925, I. 5/3 – 5/6.

The Railway Tribunal, second annual report 1925, I 17/2 – 17/4

The Great southern Railways amalgamation Scheme 1925, 1/25 – 8/25

Report of the Commission for the Relief of Destitute Sick and Poor 1925, R 27/1, R27/2.

The Great Southern Railway amalgamation scheme 1925, 1/25, 4/25 – 8/25.

Coimisiún na Gaeltachta: Statements of Evidence Furnished by Persons Who were Not Examined Before the Commission, 1926, R23/1-28

Returns of Railway companies 1928, I 5/7 – 5/9

Department of Agriculture, Sea and Inland Fisheries and Gaeltacht Services Report, 1929 & 1930, G 10/3

Returns of Railway companies for 1931-32, 1933, I 5/7 – 5/9.

Railway Tribunal. Eighth Annual report, 1931, '32 and '33, I 17/8 – 17/10

Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Seasonal Migration to Great Britain, 1937-8, 1938, P. 3403.

Report of County Donegal Transport Committee 1935, R 53/1.

Report of the Commission on Emigration and Other Population Problems, 1948-54, 1955, Pr. 2541 (1956).

Report of the Commission on Emigration and other Population Problems, 1948-54, Reports, 1955, Pr 2541

RAILWAY ACTS and OTHER RELEVANT ACTS PASSED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT

NAME OF ACT	REFERENCE NUMBER
Lough Swilly Railway Act 1853	16 & 17 Vict., c.54
Lough Swilly (deviation) Act 1859	22 & 23 Vict.,c. 50
Letterkenny Railway Act 1860	23 & 24 Vict., c.99
Lough Swilly Railway (Buncrana Extension) Act 1861	24 & 25 Vict., c. 161
Letterkenny Railway Act 1871	34 & 35 Vict., c. 148
Letterkenny Railway (Extension of Time)Act 1874	37 & 38 Vict., c. 148

Letterkenny Railway Act 1876	39 & 40 Vict.,c.110
Letterkenny Railway Act 1878	41 & 42 Vict., c. 192
Letterkenny Railway Act 1880	43 & 44 Vict., c.23
Lough Swilly Railway (Further Powers)Act 1882	45 & 46 Vict., c. 79
Tramways and Public Companies Act 1883	46 & 47 Vict., c. 43
Public Works Loans Tramways (Ireland) Act 1886	49 & 50 Vict., c. 46
Light Railways (Ireland) Act 1889	52 & 53 Vict., c. 66.
Light Railways (Ireland) Act 1893	56 & 57 Vict., c. 50
Tramways (Ireland) Act 1895	58 & 59 Vict., c. 20
Railways (Ireland) Act 1896	59 & 60 Vict., c. 34.
Tramways Order in Council (Ireland) Londonderry & Lough Swilly (Letterkenny to Burtonport Extension) Railway, confirmation Act 1898	61 & 62 Vict., c. 101
Amalgamation of Finn Valley and West Donegal companies	45 & 46 Vict., c. 156
Extension to Strabane; change of gauge. Donegal	56 & 57 Vict., c. 55
Extensions to Londonderry & Ballyshannon	59 & 60 Vict., c. 222
Strabane to Stranorlar construction	34 & 35 Vict. c. 125
Amalgamation of West Donegal Company to form Donegal Company.	55 & 56 Vict., c. 161
Construction of Stranorlar to Donegal railway	42 & 43 Vict., c. 174
Construction of Letterkenny Railway	23 & 24 Vict. c. 99 26 & 27 Vict., c. 115.1
Agreement with L&LSR	43 & 44 Vict., c. 23
Extension to Buncrana (L&LSR)	22 & 23 Vict. c. 1 24 & 25 Vict., c. 161 27 & 28 Vict., c. 228
Tramways (Ireland) Act 1900	63 & 64 Vict., c. 66.
Irish Railways (Settlement of Claims) Act 1921	11 & 12 George V, c. 50
Irish Railways (Confirmation of Agreement) Act 1919	9 & 10 George V., c. 78
Government of Ireland Act 1920	10 & 11 George V., c.67.
Irish Free State (Consequential Provisions) Act 1922	13 George V., c. 2

ACTS PASSED BY IRISH GOVERNMENT

Act,	Reference number of publication
School Attendance Act 1926	17/26
Railway Act 1935	43/45
Road Transport Act 1935	23/35

School Attendance Act 1936
Slaughter of Cattle and Sheep Act 1936

5/36
33/36

Primary Sources: VI Other

Redemptorist Order, Eskir, Athenry, Co. Galway,
Mission chronicle, Domestic archives, County Donegal.

An Chúirt Hotel, Gweedore, Co. Donegal.(Previously Gweedore Hotel)
Visitors' Book 1882-86.

B SECONDARY SOURCES

Author	Title
	<i>Tulach Beaglaoidh inné agus inniu</i> (Dublin, 1993)
'ac Fhionnlaoich, Seán	<i>Scéal Ghaoth Dobhair</i> (Dublin, 1983)
Aalen, F. H. and Brody H.	<i>The life and last days of an island community</i> (Cork, 1969)
Bagwell, Philip J.	<i>The railwaymen: the history of the National union of Railwaymen</i> (London, 1963).
Baker, Michael H. C.	<i>The Irish narrow gauge railways</i> (Surrey, 1999)
Baker, Michael	<i>Irish railways since 1916</i> (London, 1972)
Barber, Sarah	<i>Saothar 8</i> , 1982.
Barrie, D. S.M.	<i>The Dundalk, Newry & Greenore Railway and the Holyhead – Greenore steamship service</i> (Lingfield, Surrey, 1957)
Bell, David and Flanders, Steve	<i>The Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway</i> (Donegal, undated)
Beaumont, Jonathon	<i>Rails to Achill – a West of Ireland branch line</i> (Dublin, 2002)
Bell, Jonathan	The growth and decline of fishing around Dunfanaghy and Portnablagh in <i>Donegal Annual</i> , 1984, no. 36, p. 75
Bolger, Patrick	<i>The Irish Cooperative Movement: its history and development</i> (Dublin, 1977)
Boyd, J I C	<i>The Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway</i> (Truro, Cornwall, 1981)
Boyle, J W	A marginal figure: The Irish rural labourer in S. Clarke & J. S. Donnelly (eds) <i>Irish Peasants: Violence and political unrest, 1790-1914</i> (Manchester 1983).
Byrne, Bernard J	<i>The strumpet of Glenaree</i> (Dublin, 1997).
Canning, Bernard J.	'Donegal priests in Scotland 1829-1979' in <i>Donegal Annual</i> , no. 35, 1983, p. 43.
Carse, S. J. and Murray, D.	'The Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway' in <i>Journal of the Irish Railway Record Society</i> , 1957, 4, 247.

- Casserley, H. C. *Outline of Irish railway history* (Newton Abbot, 1974)
- Casserley, H. C. 'Closure of the Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway' in *Railway magazine*, 1953, 99, 701.
- Celkin, C A 'History of public transport in Donegal' in *Donegal Annual*, 1952, p. 406
- Chisholm, A. J. 'The Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway' in *Railway Magazine*, 5, 1899, 46.
- Chisholm, A. J. 'The Letterkenny & Burtonport Railway' in *Railway Magazine*, 13, 1903, 120.
- Chisholm, A. J. 'Ten wheeled locomotive for the Letterkenny & Burtonport Railway' in *Engineering* (24 April 1903).
- Cumann staire 's seanchais
Chloich Cheann Fhaola *Toraigh/Cloich Cheann Fhaola/Cnoc Fola; turas oidhreachtá thart ar iarthair Thir Chonaill* (An Falcarrach, 1992)
- Coleman, Terry *The railway navvies – a history of the men who made the railways* (London, 1965)
- Comer, Michael *The Burma road: Claremorris to Collooney Railway* (Swinford Historical Society, 1996)
- Conroy, John Charles *A history of railways in Ireland* (London, 1928)
- Coogan, Tim Pat *Michael Collins* (London, 1990).
- Curtis, L. P., Jr. *Coercion and conciliation in Ireland 1880-1892* (London, 1963).
- Daly, Miriam 'The return to the roads' in Kevin B. Nowlan (ed.) *Travel and transport in Ireland* (reprint, Dublin, 1993).
- Dawson, Francis G 'The role of railways in the socio-economic life of the west of Ireland', MA thesis NUIG, Galway, 1993.
- Devenney, Donnchadh *Footprints through the Rosses* (Dublin, 1993)
- Dolan, Liam *Land, war and eviction in Derryveagh* (Dundalk, 1980)
- Dooley, Terence *The land for the people* (Dublin, 2004)
- Egremont, Max *Balfour – a life of Arthur James Balfour* (London, 1980)
- Farry, Michael *Sligo 1914-1921 – a chronicle of conflict* (Trim, Co. Meath, 1992).
- Ferris, Tom *The Irish Narrow Gauge – a pictorial history* (Belfast, 1993)
- Ferry, Dr. Paddy *The Keadue Band* (Ballyshannon, 1988)
- Fitzpatrick, David *Irish Emigration 1801-1921* (Dundalk, 1984)
- Flanders, Steve *Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway – an Irish railway pictorial* (Leicester, 1997)
- Foyle, Patrick *The West Clare Railway* (Brighton, 1994)
- Gibbon, Peter & Higgins, M. D. 'The Irish gombeenman: reincarnation or rehabilitation' in *Economic and social review*, viii, no. 4 (July, 1977) See also the same authors in *Economic and social review* vi, no.1, (October, 1974)
- Greacen, Robert 'Taking the Derry boat: Patrick McGill' in *Eire – Ireland*, vol. 16, (St Paul, Minnesota, Irish American Cultural Institute, 1981)
- Hajducki, S. Maxwell *A railway atlas of Ireland* (Newton Abbot, 1974).
- Hancock, Neilson Information as to migratory labourers from Mayo to England in *Statistical and Social Enquiry Society of Ireland Journal* (April, 1880)
- Hart, Peter *The I.R.A. & its enemies* (Oxford, 1998)
- Herity, Michael (ed) *Ordnance survey letters of Donegal* (Dublin, 2000)
- Hill, Lord George *Facts from Gweedore* (Dublin, 1845)
- Hill, Lord George *Useful hints to Donegal tourists* (Dublin, 1847)

- Holland, Denis *The landlord in Donegal: pictures from the wild* (Belfast, 1863)
- Horn, Pamela *Rural Life in England in the First World war* (New York, 1984)
- Horn, Pamela *Irish Historical Studies*, xvii, March 1971.
- Jackson, Noel 'Replacing a railway-the Londonderry & Lough Swilly system' in *Railway Magazine*, no. 347.May 1936.
- Kelly, James William Burton Conyngham and the northwest fishery of the eighteenth century in *JRSAI*. 115 (1985) 64-85.
- Kerr, B. Irish seasonal migration to Britain, 1800-1838 in *Irish Historical Studies*,3, (1943)
- Lee, Joseph *The modernization of Irish society* (Dublin, 1973)
- Lee, Joseph 'The golden age of Irish railways' in Kevin B. Nowlan (ed.) *Travel and transport in Ireland* (reprint, Dublin, 1993).
- Leebody, H. A. 'Long ago on an Irish railway' in *Railway Magazine*,1939, 84, 335.
- Lenihan, Edmund *In the tracks of the West Clare Railway* (Mercier, 1990)
- Lewis, S *A topographical dictionary of Ireland* (London, 1837)
- Livesey, R. M. 'Rolling stock on the principal Irish narrow-gauge railways' in *Proceedings of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers*, 1912, 559 and in *Engineering* (2 Aug. 1912)
- Longbottom, K 'By goods train to Gweedore' in *Railway Magazine*, 1949, 95, 353.
- Mac an Ghoill, Pádraig 'One hundred years of GAA in Donegal' in *Donegal Annual*, 1984, no. 36,p. 89
- Mac Cnáimhsi, Breandán 'North West Donegal after the Great Famine' in *Donegal Annual*, vol. 9, no. 2, 1970, p.178
- Mac Fhionnghaile, Niall *Dr McGinley and his times* (Letterkenny, 1985)
- Mac Fhionnghaile, Niall *Donegal – their native soil* (Letterkenny, 1989)
- Mac Giolla Chomhail, Anraí 'Eachtra an ID &SL' in *An tUltach*, 73 (9), pp 110-12.
- Mac Haffie, Frazer G Facilities for transport and the Congested Districts Board and steamship services' in *Irish Geography*, 28 (2), 1995, pp 91-104.
- Mac Suibhne, Breandán 'Agrarian improvement and social unrest: Lord George Hill and the Gaoth Dobhair sheep war' in William Nolan, Mairead Dunlevy and Liam Ronayne (eds) *Donegal History and Society* (Dublin, 1995)
- Mac Suibhne, Breandán 'Soggarth aroon and gombeen priest: Canon James McFadden (1842-1917)' in Gerard Moran (ed.) *Radical Irish priests 1660-1970* (Dublin 2002) (London, 1875)
- MacFadden, Bartley *Coming safely home* (Dublin, 2000)
- Mackay, Ruddock F. *Balfour – intellectual statesman* (Oxford, 1985)
- Maguire, Canon Edward *A history of the Diocese of Raphoe* (Dublin, 1920)
- Mac Cnáimhsi, Breandán 'Northwest Donegal after the Great Famine' in *Donegal Annual*, 9, 2, 1970.
- McFadden, Cormac Recording on Ulster Folk and Transport Museum tape. R 79.35
- McGeady, Paul *A short history of Gweedore*, (Donegal, undated)
- McGill, P. J. 'Patrick Pearse in Donegal' in *Donegal Annual*, vol. vii, no. 1, 1966.
- McHugh, Mick Tape in Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Tape R 81.115.

- McKay, Enda 'The housing of the rural labourer, 1883-1916' in *Saothar*, 13
- Maher, Albert *Signalman's memories – railway life in rural Ireland* (Thurles, 1998)
- Meehan, Helen 'The Temperance Movement in South Donegal' in *Donegal Annual*, 1999, no. 51, p. 110
- Middlemass, Thomas *An encyclopaedia of narrow gauge railways of Great Britain and Ireland* (Somerset, 1991)
- Mulligan, Fergus *One hundred and fifty years of Irish railways* (Belfast, 1983).
- Murphy, T. Desmond 'The land war in Donegal 1879-1891' in *Donegal Annual*, no. 32, 1980, p.476
- Murphy, T. Desmond *Derry, Donegal and modern Ulster 1790 - 1921* (Londonderry, 1981).
- Nic Giolla Bhríde, Cáit *Stairsheanchas Ghaoth Dobhair* (Dublin, 1996)
- Nolan, William, Ronayne, Liam and Dunlevy, Mairead *Donegal History & Society* (Dublin, 1995)
- (eds)
- Ó Baoill, Pádraig *Oglach na Rosann* (Dublin, 1994)
- O'Callaghan, Very Rev. Canon 'A tribute to Joe Sweeney' in *Donegal Annual*, no. 33, 1981, p. 60
- Ó Coilm, Eoghan *Toraigh na dTonn* (Indreabhan, Galway, 1971)
- O'Connor, Kevin *Ironing the land* (Dublin, 1999).
- O Cuimin, Pádraig *The baronial lines of the Midland Great Western Railway: the Loughrea and Attymon Light Railway; The Ballinrobe and Claremorris Light Railway* (Dublin, 1972)
- O Gadhra, Nollaig *Civil War in Connacht* (Cork, 1999).
- Ó Gallachobhair, Proinnsias *History of landlordism in Donegal* (Ballyshannon, 1962)
- Ó Gallchoir, an tAth. Seán 'Gaoth Dobhair' in *Raphoe Directory*, 1994.
- Ó Gallchóir, Noel 'Faoi scáth na hEargala' in *Donegal Annual*, no. 48, 1996.
- Ó Gráda, C 'Seasonal migration and post famine adjustment in the west of Ireland' in *Studio Hibernica*, 13, (1971) p.61
- Ó Grianna, Séamus *Caisleáin Oir* (Cork, 1976, reprint)
- Ó Grianna, Séamus *Rann na Feirste* (Dublin, 1942)
- O'Donnell, Ben *The story of the Rosses* (Lifford, 1999)
- O'Donnell, Martina 'The role of the CDB in estate purchase and improvement in Donegal 1891-1923' in *Donegal Annual*, 1998, no. 50, p. 113
- O'Dowd, A 'Rabbles and runaways, church gates and street corners, temporary workers and how they found work' in A. Bailey and D. Ó hÓgain (eds) *Gold under the furze: studies in folk tradition*. (Dublin, n.d.)
- Ó Néill, Séamus & Ó Dubhthaigh, Bearnard (eds.) *Coláiste Uladh: Iubhaile leathchéad bliain* (Gortahork, 1956)
- Ó Searcaigh, Cathal *Tulach Beaglaoidh, inné agus inniu* (Fálcarrach, 1993)
- Patterson, Edward M. *The County Donegal Railways, Part 1*. (London, 1962)
- Patterson, Edward M. *A history of the narrow gauge railways of north west Ireland*, (London, 1964)
- Patterson, Edward M. *The Lough Swilly Railway* (London, 1964)

- Rankin, Mary Dr William Smyth: heroic Donegal Doctor' in *Donegal Annual*, vol. xi, 1975-6, nos 2-3, p. 126.
- Rowlands, David *The Dingle train* (Brighton, 1996)
- Russell, Mary Dr William Smyth' in *Donegal Annual*, vol xi, 1975-6, nos 2-3, p. 129.
- Ryan, Gregg *A guide to Ireland's railway heritage* (Dublin, 2002)
- Shanklin, Eugenia 'Sure what did we ever do but knit' in *Donegal Annual*, no. 40, 1998,p.41.
- Shanklin, Eugenia *Donegal's changing traditions* (New York, 1985)
- Sinclair, W. J. *Irish peasant proprietors: Facts and misrepresentations: a reply to the statement of Mr Tuke* (London, 1880).
- Swan, Henry Percival *Highlights of the Donegal Highlands* (Belfast, 1955)
- Sweeney, Joseph 'Donegal and the War of Independence' in *Capuchin Annual* 1966.
- Sweeney, Frank *The murder of Connell Boyle* (Dublin, 2001)
- Taylor, Laurence J. *Occasions of faith; an anthropology of Irish Catholics* (Philadelphia, 1995)
- Turnock, David *An historical geography of railways in Great Britain and Ireland* (Aldershot, Hants, 1998).
- Ua Cnáimhsi, Pádraig *Idir an dá ghaoth* (Dublin, 1997)
- Ua Cnáimhsi, Pádraig 'Cuairt Bhalfour ar Thír Chonaill 1890' in *an tUltach*, 73 (9), 1996, pp 6-9.
- Ua Cnáimhsi, Pádraig 'An saol atá thart ins na Rosaibh' in *Donegal Annual*, vol 3, no. 3, 1957, pp 17-22.
- Ua Cnáimhsi, Pádraig 'Sean traen Loch Súilí' in *Glór Ghaoth Dobhair*, 1985, pp. 22.
- Uí Ghallchóir, Tina (ed.) *Dobhar ár n-oidhreacht* (Gweedore, 1990)
- W. Nolan, Mairead Dunlevy and Liam Ronayne (eds) *Donegal History & Society* (Dublin, 1995)
- Wall, Maureen 'County Donegal in 1845' in *Donegal Annual*, 1970, vol. ix, no. 2.
- Wallace, M G *Journal of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland* (Dublin 1905)
- Whitehouse, P B *Narrow gauge album* (London, 1957)

APPENDIX 1

Mileposts, Gatehouses and stations between Derry and Burtonport

Below are the distances from the base point at Graving Dock, Derry for the line to Burtonport.

Milepost	Distance in miles & chains	Place	Opened
0	0	Graving Dock, Derry	1863
24 ³ / ₄	24:60	Letterkenny	1883
24 ³ / ₄		No. 1 Gates	1903
25 ¹ / ₂	25:40	Old Town	1903
28 ¹ / ₂	28:49	New Mills	1903
30	30:01	Foxhall	1903
30 ¹ / ₂		No. 2 Gates	1903
31 ³ / ₄		No. 3 Gates	1903
33 ¹ / ₂		Churchill Station Gates	1903
33 ¹ / ₂	33:43	Churchill Station	1903
35 ¹ / ₄		No. 4 Gates	1903
36		No. 5 Gates	1903
37	37:12	Kilmacrenan Station	1903
38		No. 6 Gates	1903
38 ¹ / ₂		No. 7 Gates	1903
39 ³ / ₄		No. 8 Gates	1903
39 ³ / ₄	39:50	Barnes Halt	1927
41		Barnes Gap Viaduct	1903
42 ¹ / ₂		Owencarrow Viaduct	1903
44 ¹ / ₄		No. 9 Gates	1903
44 ¹ / ₂		No. 10 Gates	1903
45 ¹ / ₂	45:32	Creeslough Station	1903
46 ¹ / ₂		Faymore Viaduct	1903
46 ¹ / ₂	46:46	Dunfanaghy Rd. Station	1903
47 ¹ / ₄		No. 11 Gates	1903
48 ¹ / ₄		No. 12 Gates	1903
51 ¹ / ₂		No. 13 Gates	1903
53 ¹ / ₂	53:37	Falcarragh Station	1903
53 ¹ / ₂		Falcarragh Station Gates	1903
55		No. 14 Gates	1903
56 ³ / ₄	56:59	Cashelnagore Station	1903
59		No. 15 Gates	1903
60		No. 16 Gates	1903
63 ³ / ₄	63:66	Gweedore Station	1903
64		No. 17 Gates	1903
64 ¹ / ₂		No. 18 Gates	1903
66	65:79	Crolley Station	1903

66 ½		No. 19 Gates	1903
70		No. 20 Gates	1903
71 ½	71:40	Kincasslagh Road	1913
71 ½		No. 21 Gates	1903
72 ¼		No. 22 Gates	1903
73	72:73	Dungloe Rd. Station also named Lough Meela and finally Dungloe.	1903
73 ½		No. 23 Gates	1903
74		No. 24 Gates	1903
74 ½	74:36	Burtonport Station	1903
		Burtonport Quay	1903

APPENDIX 2

Accident log of Burtonport Extension, 1919-1935

Date and place	Details of accident	Result
3/7/1919 Crolly	Piston rod broke	
Between Kilmacrenan and Creeslough	At 44 mph two leading wheels of tender engine no 12 became derailed.	
2to save them.4/9/1919. 38 ¼ milepost	5 p.m. train ex Derry ran over and killed two lambs. Owing to darkness driver did not observe the lambs until too late	
17/10/1919 At 39 ¼ milepost on Burtonport line.	Stone placed on line and struck by engine of 5 p.m. train ex Derry.	Lifeguard of engine bent and bogey spring broken.
19/2/1920 48 ¼ mile post	Two stones weighing 4 stone 10 lbs and 2 stone 7 lbs placed on line and struck by train 5 p.m. ex Derry.	Engine derailed. One joint and sleepers broken.
19/2/1920 Between Dunfanaghy station and Falcarragh	3 stones weighing 5 stone 4 lbs placed on line	No damage done to train or works.
21 Feb/1920 48 ¾ mile post between Dunfanaghy and Falcarragh	Stone weighing 53 lbs placed on line and struck by engine of 5 p.m. train ex Derry	Brake rod of engine slightly bent
18/2/1920 43 ¾ mile post between Kilmacrenan and Creeslough	3 stones placed on line and struck by engine of 12.30 p.m. goods ex Burtonport. Stones weighing 66 lbs.	No damage to train or works.
21/1/1920 Falcarragh	Child loading eggs. Finger got caught by clasp of case	Neil Boyle. Lacerated finger . Septic poisoning set in.
7/2/1923 At 69 ½ milepost between Crolly and Kincasslagh	8.30 a.m. passenger train ex Burtonport blown off track by force of storm.	Woodwork of two passenger coaches and bogey wagon badly smashed and some of the ironwork bent or twisted.
25/12/1922 At 65 ½ mile post Dunfanaghy Rd.	Two passenger coaches derailed owing to heavy gale of wind.	Two coaches; glass broken; door fittings damaged; telegraph pole knocked down; parapet of viaduct slightly damaged.

16/7/1924 61 ½ mile post between Cashelnagor and Gweedore	Failure in slide bar bolt resulting in fractured motion plate and damage to other motion parts. 9 p.m. train	
8/8/1924 41 mile post between Kilmacrenan and Creelough 10.30 p. m train	Failure of small end of connecting rod resulting in broken cylinder.	
19/11/1924 Letterkenny yard	During shunting operations while standing on top step of footplate of engine he swung out and a passing wagon came in contact with his back also causing injuries to his knee.	Injured was George Stanett, a porter but did not go off duty.
30/1/1925 Owencarrow Viaduct 1925 8.05 p.m.	5.15 train ex Derry to Burtonport blown off rails by sudden heavy gale. One third class coach overturned and wrecked. One composite overturned and considerably damaged. One combined van and covered wagon derailed and damaged.	Philip Boyle and Mrs Nora Boyle and Una Mulligan and Neil Doogan killed. Mrs Brennan bruised back and hip. The jury found that 1. the deaths were caused by the injuries tendered in the medical evidence. 2. We are unanimously of opinion that if a proper protecting rail were carried along the whole length of the viaduct that no lives would have been lost. 3. We are of opinion that the driver, fireman and guard are in no way to blame. 4. We recommend to government and railway company to relieve as far as possible the distress and loss caused to relatives of deceased and injured by this calamity. [ref: page 89]
14/9/1925 68 ¼ mile post midway between Crolly and Kincasslagh Rd station.	11.25 a.m. train Derry to Burtonport ran into boulders placed on track Front bogey of leading carriage was derailed.	Frame of leading bogey of engine number 5 bent and portion of brake gear broken. Bogey and brake gear of carriage damaged and track torn up for about 50 yards and several sleepers broken. Boulders placed on track maliciously.
21/4/1926 Gweedore Station	At 12.20 p.m. whilst standing with one foot in wagon and one in cart unloading manure from wagon to cart, horse moved forward and he [Francis Mooney] fell to the ground and two bags of manure fell on top of him. Hip knee and ankle of left leg injured due to fall and	

	two bags falling on him. He is a porter and was over 4 hours working when accident occurred.	
8/10/1926 Burtonport station	At 2.30 p.m. while examining motion of engine got finger injured. Patrick Tierney's first finger of right hand badly crushed. A driver for the company and had been working 8 hours then.	
13/10/1926 Gweedore station	At 9.40 p.m. Daniel Gallagher, a porter at station, whilst returning from crossing gates after opening same for passage of 5.15 p. m. ex Derry to make road signals ready in cabin he slipped on point rods. Ankle badly sprained.	
29/4/1927 59 mile post between Cashelnagor and Gweedore station	11.25 a.m. train ex Derry ran over and killed a sheep which had strayed on the line.	
14 /12/1928 Letterkenny station	At 2.40 p.m. William Sweeney: during shunting operations this man's foot caught in V of crossing and he was unable to extricate himself in time before engine passed over his ankle. Right foot torn off at ankle by engine rail guard and wheel. He was a signalman.	
23/1/1929 60 ¾ mile post on Burtonport Extension	Covered wagon no 46 of 8. 05 train Derry to Burtonport derailed on running line and dragged about 370 yards. 8 sleepers and 40/50 fastenings of wagon broken.	
6/7/1929 25 2/4 mile post Burtonport Extn.	Drawbar of wagon 99 on 11.25 train Derry to Burtonport broke while train was travelling over an upgrade	
2/7/1929 At Burtonport station	At 11 a.m. Patrick Conaghan while uncoupling carriage from engine had his hand caught in safety chain. Two fingers of left hand crushed. He was a loco fireman.	

4/4/1930 Near Falcarragh station at 53 mile post	10 loaded wagons forming part of the 11.25 a.m train ex Derry to Burtonport and van at end of train became derailed	4 covered wagons badly damaged 6 other wagons and van sustained minor damages. And about 100 yards of track damaged. The accident is understood to be due to the breaking of a buffer hook pin but this is subject to confirmation when the debris is cleared up.
24/2/1931 54 ½ mile post on Burtonport line	3.50 train ex Derry struck and killed 6 sheep which had strayed on to line. Weather very foggy.	
2/6 /1932 60 ¼ mile post	Two leading wheels of wagon derailed owing to track buckling with excessive heat. Straight piece of track grade 1 in 81. On occasion of accident train ascending. Wagon at rear of train.	This is a case of buckling during a spell of intense heat.
15/6/1932 32 ½ mile post	Covered wagon containing 4 ¾ tons of meal was derailed on a 1 in 15 falling gradient. The train travelled 370 yards after derailment of wagon but no damage was done beyond the breakage of a few sleepers	
21/6/1932 44 ½ mile post	Covered wagon containing 5 tons 1 cwt. meal and flour was derailed on a 1 in 50 falling gradient. The train travelled 640 yards after derailment of wagon but no damage was done beyond the marking of a number of sleepers.	
1/6/1932 51 ½ mile post	5.50 p. m. train Burtonport ex Letterkenny ran over and killed one sheep and one lamb.	
16/11/1934 55 ¼ mile post between Falcarragh and Cashelnagor station	The 4.15 train ex Burtonport to Letterkenny ran down and fatally injured John Gallagher, Clonbara, Falcarragh about 5.30 p.m. Train was on a down grade about 1 in 50 and it was practically dark at the time. It is stated the man was deaf. Misadventure due to negligence	

	of deceased man.	
19/10/1934 Cashelnagor station	Engine and bogey derailed at Crossing approaching siding. Engine thrown on to its side. And two wheels of leading carriage derailed. Caused by sleeper maliciously placed on rail at V of crossing.	Front bogey of engine badly broken. Water tank damaged and punctured. Drawbar broken. Carriage bodywork damaged due to colliding with engine. And other minor damage to both the vehicles. Two boys, John and Alexander Hettrick, sons of the halt attendant at Cashelnagor, have been charged by civic guard in connection with this.
21/11/1935 39 mile post	When 8.30 am train ex Burtonport was approaching this point surfaceman James McDaid in an effort to remove a hammer from the rail in front of the approaching train got struck by the engine and was injured about the head and face.	

Source: P.R.O.N.I., Lough Swilly Railway, D/2683/EM/ D/1.

APPENDIX 3

Goods carried in 1913 on all L&LSR lines and estimated on L&BER.

Material carried on railways	All of L&LSR lines.	Estimated on Burtonport Extension.
	Tons	Tons
Coal, coke and patent fuel	5,931	1,898
Other minerals	8,550	2,736
Grain	22,241	7,171
Building materials	4,873	1,559
Groceries	8,099	2,592
Farm produce	3,451	1,104
Manures	2,012	644
Cured herrings	633	203
Railway materials	3,716	1,189
Coal	4,663	1,492
Bricks	764	244
Ore	583	186
Total	65,516	21,018
Animals	Number	Number on Burtonport line
Horses	265	68
Cattle	20,390	6,525
Calves	1,629	521
Sheep	9,792	3,133
Pigs	1,323	423
Miscellaneous	19	6
Total animals	33,418	10,676

Source: P.R.O.N.I. D/2683 BB/B/1, Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway.

APPENDIX 4

Merchandise carried during 1921 on all L&LSR railways

Tonnage of the principal classes of minerals and merchandise carried by mixed trains.

Ale and porter including empties = 644 tons
Bacon & hams butter & eggs = 796 tons
Brewer's grains = 30 tons
Bricks (common) = 96 tons
Cured herrings = 248 tons
Coal, coke & patent fuel = 5501 tons
Flour 7 bran, sharps, and other flour mill offal = 3802 tons
Grain = 6711 tons
Groceries including bacon ham and butter = 652 tons
Hay, straw and seeds = 1095 tons
Hardware, Machinery etc. = 2591 tons
Manure = 3226 tons
Oil Cake and cattle foods = 1336 tons
Potatoes = 920 tons
Stone for road making purposes = 3905 tons
Timber = 918 tons
Turf, ore etc. = 403 tons
Total = 32,874
In 1920 the total was 47,650 tons

Numbers of livestock carried by mixed trains:

Horses = 84 (213)
Cattle = 12936 (19200)
Calves = 615 (619)
Sheep = 3656 (4653)
Pigs = 64 (568)
Total 17,355 (25,253)

Passengers:

1st. class = 2038 (2488)
2nd. Class = 10,074 (12,576)
3rd. class 253,791 (262036)
Total = 265903 (277,100)

Source: P.R.O.N.I. D/2683 BB/B/1, Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway.

APPENDIX 5

Passengers carried on all four L&LSR lines and on Burtonport Railway ¹						
Month / year	First class passengers on all L&LSR lines	Second class passengers on all L&LSR lines	Third class passengers on all L&LSR lines	First class passengers on Burtonport Extension	Second class passengers on Burtonport Extension	Third class passengers on Burtonport Extension
July 1903	290	630	15537	93	202	4972
Aug. 1903	299	607	12337	96	194	3948
Sept.1903	225	576	6699	72	184	2144
Oct. 1903	112	350	5968	36	112	1910
Nov. 1903	55	174	6502	18	56	2081
Dec. 1903	81	271	4708	26	87	1507
Jan. 1904	61	191	3828	20	61	1225
Feb. 1904	68	240	4031	22	77	1290
Mar. 1904	61	255	4902	20	82	1569
Apr. 1904	66	351	4803	21	112	1537
May. 1904	66	374	7852	21	120	2513
Jun. 1904	209	575	11284	67	184	3611
Jul. 1904	188	630	10067	60	202	3221
Aug. 1904	434	780	12284	139	250	3931
Sept.1904	319	653	7437	102	209	2380
Oct. 1904	114	374	6407	36	120	2050
Nov. 1904	92	311	7710	29	100	2467
Dec. 1904	27	335	5415	9	107	1733
Jan. 1905	83	278	5388	27	89	1724
Feb. 1905	40	256	4099	13	82	1312
Mar. 1905	80	276	5590	26	88	1789
Apr. 1905	98	461	5555	31	148	1778
May. 1905	207	523	9333	66	167	2987
Jun. 1905	215	569	8826	69	182	2824
Jul. 1905	289	714	12832	92	228	4106
Aug. 1905	384	882	10608	123	282	3395
Sept.1905	344	831	11550	110	266	3696
Oct. 1905	127	416	6339	41	133	2028
Nov. 1905	58	280	6398	19	90	2047
Dec. 1905	35	324	4672	11	104	1495
Jan. 1906	50	281	3572	16	90	1143
Feb. 1906	36	278	3722	12	89	1191
Mar. 1906	30	253	4600	10	81	1472

Source: P.R.O.N. I., Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway, D/3241/ER/1. The numbers given in columns 2, 3 and 4 are actual but those given for the Burtonport railway in columns 5,6 and 7 are estimated by me on the basis of 32 per cent of total numbers because the Burtonport Railway generated an average of 32 per cent of total L&LSR income.

Apr. 1906	104	506	5299	33	162	1696
May. 1906	120	502	7557	38	161	2418
Jun. 1906	211	605	8585	68	194	2747
Jul. 1906	298	800	13743	95	256	4398
Aug. 1906	343	881	15605	110	282	4994
Sept. 1906	274	609	8795	88	195	2814
Oct. 1906	238	652	6220	76	209	1990
Nov. 1906	60	367	6811	19	117	2180
Dec. 1906	52	179	4809	17	57	1539
Jan. 1907	73	283	4247	23	91	1359
Feb. 1907	45	224	4363	14	72	1396
Mar. 1907	128	349	5763	41	112	1844
Apr. 1907	74	337	5379	24	108	1721
May. 1907	125	397	8584	40	127	2747
Jun. 1907	169	519	7937	54	166	2540
Jul. 1907	205	553	9902	66	177	3169
Aug. 1907	289	690	12089	92	221	3868
Sept. 1907	224	539	8874	72	172	2840
Oct. 1907	148	358	5600	47	115	1792
Nov. 1907	72	307	6884	23	98	2203
Dec. 1907	78	417	5462	25	133	1748
Jan. 1908	76	357	4825	24	114	1544
Feb. 1908	76	342	4495	24	109	1438
Mar. 1908	72	356	4768	23	114	1526
Apr. 1908	87	327	3791	28	105	1213
May. 1908	99	388	7764	32	124	2484
Jun. 1908	164	619	10566	52	198	3381
Jul. 1908	226	723	7858	72	231	2515
Aug. 1908	305	806	10662	98	258	3412
Sept. 1908	214	662	6004	68	212	1921
Oct. 1908	118	558	5975	38	179	1912
Nov. 1908	88	394	6775	28	126	2168
Dec. 1908	85	367	5638	27	117	1804
Jan. 1909	102	372	4988	33	119	1596
Feb. 1909	59	320	4529	19	102	1449
Mar. 1909	69	343	5788	22	110	1852
Apr. 1909	96	408	4840	31	131	1549
May. 1909	173	464	7876	55	148	2520
Jun. 1909	174	690	10670	56	221	3414
Jul. 1909	219	681	7282	70	218	2330
Aug. 1909	260	683	11327	83	219	3625
Sept. 1909	319	774	7060	102	248	2259
Oct. 1909	116	532	6587	37	170	2108
Nov. 1909	76	379	7000	24	121	2240
Dec. 1909	104	393	5269	33	126	1686
Jan. 1910	57	395	4935	18	126	1579
Feb. 1910	39	391	4040	12	125	1293

Mar. 1910	76	530	5072	24	170	1623
Apr. 1910	100	82	5310	32	26	1699
May. 1910	170	634	7450	54	203	2384
Jun. 1910	230	772	12254	74	247	3921
Jul. 1910	191	611	8337	61	196	2668
Aug. 1910	359	852	14223	115	273	4551
Sept. 1910	277	610	10978	89	195	3513
Oct. 1910	84	483	7330	27	155	2346
Nov. 1910	86	426	7147	28	136	2287
Dec. 1910	88	345	5991	28	110	1917
Jan. 1911	90	387	5000	29	124	1600
Feb. 1911	50	256	5163	16	82	1652
Mar. 1911	56	422	5786	18	135	1852
Apr. 1911	136	474	5758	44	152	1843
May. 1911	99	522	7378	32	167	2361
Jun. 1911	195	576	8723	62	184	2791
Jul. 1911	207	723	9767	66	231	3125
Aug. 1911	324	856	13062	104	274	4180
Sept. 1911	245	718	10676	78	230	3416
Oct. 1911	141	534	6218	45	171	1990
Nov. 1911	59	401	6710	19	128	2147
Dec. 1911	84	415	6532	27	133	2090
Jan. 1912	90	397	6582	29	127	2106
Feb. 1912	39	335	5607	12	107	1794
Mar. 1912	61	290	4391	20	93	1405
Apr. 1912	101	429	5186	32	137	1660
May. 1912	353	540	8426	113	173	2696
Jun. 1912	167	467	8605	53	149	2754
Jul. 1912	222	689	8454	71	220	2705
Aug. 1912	306	925	12794	98	296	4094
Sept. 1912	275	683	9949	88	219	3184
Oct. 1912	87	477	5667	28	153	1813
Nov. 1912	77	406	6978	25	130	2233
Dec. 1912	58	429	4508	19	137	1443
Jan. 1913	55	391	5207	18	125	1666
Feb. 1913	38	322	4681	12	103	1498
Mar. 1913	70	448	6106	22	143	1954
Apr. 1913	80	441	5623	26	141	1799
May. 1913	163	515	7839	52	165	2508
Jun. 1913	131	359	8288	42	115	2652
Jul. 1913	240	693	12892	77	222	4125
Aug. 1913	215	823	14940	69	263	4781
Sept. 1913	217	665	9504	69	213	3041
Oct. 1913	109	403	6793	35	129	2174
Nov. 1913	84	276	7774	27	88	2488
Dec. 1913	54	381	6065	17	122	1941
Jan. 1914	75	327	5547	24	105	1775

Feb. 1914	70	258	4911	22	83	1572
Mar. 1914	67	340	5499	21	109	1760
Apr. 1914	77	421	5557	25	135	1778
May. 1914	82	434	7907	26	139	2530
Jun. 1914	140	612	12081	45	196	3866
Jul. 1914	133	564	11027	43	180	3529
Aug. 1914	117	496	11892	37	159	3805
Sept. 1914	100	497	7481	32	159	2394
Oct. 1914	39	384	6740	12	123	2157
Nov. 1914	35	321	7811	11	103	2500
Dec. 1914	52	335	5547	17	107	1775
Jan. 1915	73	267	5497	23	85	1759
Feb. 1915	46	298	4940	15	95	1581
Mar. 1915	79	328	5562	25	105	1780
Apr. 1915	85	401	5484	27	128	1755
May. 1915	71	317	7813	23	101	2500
Jun. 1915	90	500	9050	29	160	2896
Jul. 1915	87	507	11380	28	162	3642
Aug. 1915	190	628	14905	61	201	4770
Sept. 1915	91	542	11080	29	173	3546
Oct. 1915	55	332	7464	18	106	2388
Nov. 1915	64	327	8396	20	105	2687
Dec. 1915	57	261	5709	18	84	1827
Jan. 1916	60	274	5394	19	88	1726
Feb. 1916	36	336	5267	12	108	1685
Mar. 1916	66	281	5429	21	90	1737
Apr. 1916	54	412	5328	17	132	1705
May. 1916	84	356	8306	27	114	2658
Jun. 1916	77	337	8569	25	108	2742
Jul. 1916	79	576	10299	25	184	3296
Aug. 1916	153	782	13770	49	250	4406
Sept. 1916	138	509	11377	44	163	3641
Oct. 1916	78	300	7155	25	96	2290
Nov. 1916	62	262	7611	20	84	2436
Dec. 1916	31	245	5911	10	78	1892

Source: P.R.O.N.I., Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway, D23241/ER1.

APPENDIX 6

ITEMISED COSTINGS OF THE LETTERKENNY & BURTONPORT
EXTENSION RAILWAY

EARTHWORKS	COST	TOTALS
255,170 cubic yards excavation in rock @ 3s	£38,275 – 10 – 0	
720,840 cubic yards excavation in clay @ 1s	£39,045 – 10 – 0	
7,980 embankment in road approach; form railway cutting @6d	£ 109 – 10 – 0	
4,650 cubic yards excavation in road approach @ 1s.	£ 232 – 10 – 0	
5,210 cubic yards metalling of road @ 4s. 6d.	£ 1,172 – 5 – 0	
35 no, public road level crossings @ £50	£ 1,750 – 0 – 0	
5 ½ miles formation in bog @ £440 per mile	£ 2,420 – 0 – 0	
Earthworks total		£83,095 – 5 – 0
FENCING		
177,400 yards ditch and mound and rivers @ 1s. 8d.	£14,783 – 6 – 8.	
Total fencing		£14,783 – 6 – 8.

BRIDGES		
Public road bridges, 8 no. @ £350	£ 2,800 - 0 - 0	
Subways	£ 5,200 - 0 - 0	
Accommodation works	£ 5,460 - 0 - 0	
Viaducts and river bridges	£ 12,150 - 0 - 0	
Culverts and drains	£ 8,555 - 0 - 0	
Gatekeepers' houses at level crossings. 31 no. @ £120	£ 3,720 - 0 - 0.	
TOTAL		£37,885 - 0 - 0
PERMANENT WAY (cost per mile)		
Rails: 50lbs. Per yard. 78 tons @ £7 - 10	£549 - 10 - 0	
Fishplates and fastenings	£118 - 0 - 0	
Sleepers. 2,180 @ 2s 4d	£254 - 6 - 8	
Laying way 1,760 yards @ 1s 3d	£110 - 0 - 0	
Ballasting and boxing. 2200 cubic feet @ 3s	£330 - 0 - 0	
49 ml. - 5f - 3ch - 3yds of above @ £1,361 - 16 -	£67,615 - 2 - 11.	

8 per mile		
TOTALS	£67,615 - 2 - 11.	£67,615-2- 11.
SIDINGS		
Sidings - 2 ½ miles	£ 3,404 - 11 - 8.	£ 3,404 -11- 8.
STATIONS AND SIGNALS	£14,700 - 0 - 0	£14,700 - 0 - 0
PURCHASE OF LAND		
390 acres @£50	£ 19,500 - 0 - 0	£19,500 - 0 - 0
TELEGRAPH MILE POSTS AND GRADIENT BOARDS		
49 miles @ £57	£ 2,793 - 0 - 0	£ 2,793 - 0 - 0
ROLLING STOCK		
6 locomotives @ £1,800 each	£ 10,800 - 0 - 0	
6 passenger carriages @ £440 each	£ 2,640 - 0 - 0	
14 passenger carriages @ £380 each	£ 5,320 - 0 - 0	
4 combined brake vans	£ 1,520 - 0 - 0	

@ £380 each		
2 horse boxes @ £350	£ 700 - 0 - 0	
4 timber and carriage trucks	£ 300 - 0 - 0	
80 goods wagons @ £90	£ 7,200 - 0 - 0	
Totals	£28,130 - 0 - 0	£28,130 - 0 - 0
ENGINEERING AND OTHER EXPENSES		
Previous to work in council - engineering	£ 5,880	
Additional to completion of line engineering costs	£ 9,800	
Law costs	£ 7,350 - 0 - 0	
TOTALS	£ 23,030 - 0 - 0	£23,030 - 0 - 0
CONTINGENCIES		
@ 10% on £220,433	£22,045 - 0 - 0	£22,045 - 0 - 0
Total estimate of expenses	£316,981 - 6 - 3	£316,981 - 6 - 3

Appendix 7

Account of Frank D, Annagry 1888 in Duffy's shop						
No. 12						
Month	Date	Transaction	Amount			Author's comment
			£	s	d	
Jan.	4	To amount forward from 1887	12	6	1	
	4	Forward from red book		7	7	
Feb	22	2 oz tea & 1/2 llb sugar			5 1/2	
		1 oz tobacco			3	
		Short			1 1/2	Short of money
Mar	4	1 lb sugar			3	
		4 oz tea			8	
		1 lb soap			3	
		biscuits			1 1/2	Brewster's biscuits from Derry sold at 1/2 d each
		herring			1	
Mar	17	2 oz tea & 1/2 llb sugar			5 1/2	
		1 tobacco & biscuits			4 1/2	
	16	Goods			7	
		1/2 qr. tobacco			1 1/2	
Apr	4	4 oz tea & 1 lb sugar			10 1/2	
		1 spade		1	9	
		1/2 tobacco			5 1/2	
		herring & biscuits			5	
		2 M Sharkey			4	Probably a loan for a wake offering for M Sharkey.
	8	Tobacco			2	
	10	2 oz tea & 1 oz tobacco			7	
	14	Cash lent		1		
	18	2 oz tea, 1/2 lb sugar, biscuits			7	
	19	2 oz tea, 1 lb sugar			6 1/2	
	19	5 stone corn		5		
	20	1/2 cwt. Brown flour		7	6	
	21	goods			11	

	29	Goods		1	1 1/2	
May	7	2 stone bran		2	4	
	9	goods		1	6 1/2	
	21	1/2 cwt. Best flour		7	6	
	21	2 stone Indian meal		2		Indian meal was used for baking scones and for making porridge
	28	Goods		2	4	
	4	4 oz tea & baking soda			8	
June	23	Passage		15		Loan for passage to Scotland for the harvest.
	16	2 stone flour		4		
		1 stone Indian meal		1		
	18	1/2 lb tea, 1/2 tobacco		1	8 1/2	
	22	4 oz tea, 1/2 tobacco		1	1	
		1 lb. Soap			2 1/2	
	26	1/2 tobacco			5 1/2	
		1/2 lb. Sugar			1 1/2	
	30	2 oz tea & 1 lb sugar			7	
		1/2 tobacco			5 1/2	
		Biscuits			4	
July	5	2 oz tea & 1 lb sugar			5 1/2	
	31	2 stone Indian meal		2	2	
Aug	11	4 oz tea & 1/2 lb sugar			9	
	11	1/2 tobacco biscuits and fish			10	
	16	4 oz tea, 1 lb sugar, 1/2 tobacco		1	2	
	20	1/2 qr tobacco			5 1/2	
		2 oz tea & 1/2 lb sugar			5 1/2	
	26	2 oz tea, 1/2 lb sugar, 1/2 qr tobacco			11	
	28	4 oz tea & 1/2 lb sugar			9	
		1/2 qr tobacco			5 1/2	
		blue thread			2	
		biscuits & baking soda			2 1/2	
		protectors			1	Toe-caps for boots.
		Total		16	9	2 1/2

		Total	16	5	8 1/2	
		Credit	3	1	0	
Jan	4	By amount forward	3	1	0	
Mar	30	1 day building ditch		1	0	Ditch in Donegal is a wall. From Lowland Scots.
Apr	2	threshing		1	3	
	6	drawing potatoes		1	3	
	10	4 eggs			2	
	10	2 duck eggs			1	
	14	10 duck eggs			7	
	17	1 day sowing corn		1	3	
	19	1 doz duck eggs			7	
	21	eggs			6 1/2	
	29	eggs			11	
May	8	cash payment		1	1 1/2	
	14	Cutting turf		1	6	
	28	by cash		1	6 1/2	
June	26	by cash		3	1	
		Total	3	15	9 1/2	
		Amount	16	5	8 1/2	
		Forward off	3	15	9 1/2	
		Balance	12	13	5	
Sept	7	4 oz tea & 1/2 lb sugar			9	
		1/2 qr. Tobacco & biscuits			7 1/2	
	16	2 oz tea & 1/2 lb sugar			5 1/2	
		1/2 qr. Tobacco & biscuits			6 1/2	
	21	1/2 qr tobacco			5 1/2	
		Total	12	16	8 1/2	
Nov	9	Interest on old account		12	0	Interest seems to have been charged on amount outstanding at end of previous year.
		New total	13	8	8 1/2	

		Credit				
Aug	22	Cash payment	2	0	0	Money from Scotland
Sept	28	Cash payment	1	0	0	Money from Scotland
Nov	9	Cash payment	2	0	0	Money possibly from the hiring in the Lagan.
		Total	5	0	0	
		New total	13	8	8 1/2	
		Less	5	0	0	
		New balance	8	8	8 1/2	
Nov	13	4 oz tea			7 1/2	
		1/2 qr tobacco			6	
		1 lb sugar			3	
		Biscuits			2	
	22	goods		1	3	
		4 oz tea, 1 lb sugar, 1/2 qr. Tobacco		1	4	
		Fish			1 1/2	
Dec	7	2 oz tea & 1/2 lb sugar			5 1/2	
		1 oz tobacco			3	
		Loaf			4	
		1/2 stone flour		1	0	
		1/2 qr. Tobacco			5 1/2	
	6	1 lb sugar			3	
		biscuits			5	
		loaf			4	
		fish			2	
		Goods			9	
		Total		8	8 1/2	
Dec	12	Less cash		8	8 1/2	
		Goods				
	18	4 oz tea, 1 lb sugar			10 1/2	
		1/2 qr tobacco and 1 loaf			8	
Dec.	21	4 oz tea & 1 lb sugar			10 1/2	
		goods		3	5	

		Total	8	14	3	
		New Balance January 1889	8	14	3	

Barney B, Annagry No. 19

Duffy's shop.

		1888				
Month	Date	Transaction	Amount			Author's comment
			£	s	d	
Jan	4	Amount forward		15	11 1/2	
		7 4 oz tea			9	
		1 lb sugar			3	
		biscuits			2	
		9 1/2 qr tobacco			6	
	14	1 oz tea (2d) biscuits (3d)			5	
		1 oz tobacco			3	
	16	Biscuits			1	
		Short in sugar			1	Short of cash .
	19	2 oz tea, short in sugar			5	
		short in 1/2 cwt meal			6	
		Herring			1 1/2	
		Cash lent			3 1/2	--
	28	2 oz tea, 1 lb sugar			7	
		1 oz tobacco (3d) herring (3d)			6	
Feb	6	Jar of oil			5 1/2	
		14 2 oz tea, 1/2 lb sugar			6	
		Biscuits			1	
	14	herring			2	
		17 2 oz tea			4 1/2	
		1 lb sugar			3	
		1 1/2 oz tobacco			4 1/2	
		Biscuits			2	
	19	1 stone oat meal		1	4	
		20 4 oz tea			9	
		1 lb sugar			3	

		Biscuits			2	
		candles			1	
		Total	1	5	8	
		Credit				
Jan	4	by amount forward			8	
	14	1/2 doz eggs			4 1/2	
Feb	6	1/2 doz eggs			3 1/2	
		Total		1	4	
		Balance	1	5	8 1/2	
		Credit		1	4	
		Balance	1	4	4 1/2	
Feb	21	Biscuits		4	0	The below list is for a wake in the house.
		3 dozen pipes		1	0	Pipes and tobacco were handed out to visitors.
		1/4 stone sugar			10 1/2	
		4 candles			8	
		2 lb candles		1	4	
		3 1/2 lbs tobacco		12	10	
		1 lb tea		2	6	Bowls of tea were given to visitors.
	22	Cash lent		2	0	The family were expected to make a big wake offering. It is likely that this money is for that purpose.
		1 lb tea		2	6	
		2 lb sugar			6	
		2 lb tobacco		7	8	
		2 dozen pipes			10	
		6 loaves		2	0	
		delph			10 1/2	
	12	1/2 qr tobacco			6	
		5/4 oz tea, 1 lb sugar			11	
		1/2 qr tobacco			7 1/2	

Jan	29	2 oz tea, 1/2 lb sugar			5 1/2	
		Total	3	6	5	
March	6	Cash lent		10	0	Probably a passage or child going to hiring fair.
	9	biscuits			2	
		Total	3	10	10	
	9	By cash	2	0	0	
		Balance	1	16	10	
	9	4 oz tea			8	
		1 lb sugar			3	
		Biscuits			4	
		Short in Indian meal			3	
		Short			1	Short of money.
		Short			1	
		herring		2	1	
April	7	1 stone oat meal		1	0	
	16	4 oz tea, 1 lb sugar			11	
	13	2 oz tea, 1 lb sugar			7	
		herring			7	
	21	4 oz tea, 1 oz tobacco			11	
		Biscuits			1 1/2	
	23	1/2 cwt brown flour		7	6	
		1 oz tobacco				
		newspaper			5d	Bought to see if dead person gets a mention.
		2 oz tea			4	
		1/2 lb baking soda			1 1/2	
		2 stone Indian meal		2	2	
		2 oz tea, 1 oz tobacco			7	
April	12	2 oz tea, 1/2 qr tobacco			10	
		pipe			1	
		Total	2	16	1	
		off 5 eggs			2 1/2	
May	19	By cash	1	0	0	
		Balance	1	15	10 1/2	
	18	10 lbs best flour		18	9	
	20	1/2 lb tea, 2 lb sugar				

		carway (1d) tobacco (1/=)		1	1
		oil			1
		Biscuits		1	0
		1 st. Indian meal, 4 oz tea, B soda		1	8
		Fish			5
		Cash lent for stamp			1
June	1	4 oz tea			7 1/2
		1 lb sugar			3
		1 oz tobacco			3
		2 1/2 stone Indian meal			6 1/2
		1 oz tea			2
		4 2 oz tea, 1 lb sugar			7
		1 oz tobacco			3
		7 1 qr tobacco			6
		15 2 stone Indian meal		2	2
		tea, 1 oz tobacco			9 1/2
		1/2 lb sugar			1 1/2
		18 2 oz tea, 1/2 lb sugar			5 1/2
		22 2 oz tea, 4 biscuits@1d			8
		24 1/2 cwt. Best flour		7	6
		30 1/2 lb sugar			1 1/2
		Baking soda			1/2d.
July	10	2 stone Indian meal		2	2
		14 4 oz tea			8
		1 lb sugar			3
		15 treacle			2
		17 1/2 stone flour			11
		18 1 barrel		1	0
		19 1 oz tobacco			3
		21 short in tea			1/2d.
		26 biscuits, 1/2 lb sugar			2
		29 1/2 stone Indian meal			4 1/2
		31 1/2 cwt. Flour		6	6
		1/2 cwt. Meal		4	6
Aug	1	Cash lent			1 1/2
		16 2 stone meal		2	2
Sept.	13	Bread			2

	15	Biscuits			2	
Oct	4	Cash lent			2	
Nov	21	stone flour		2	0	
		1 stone meal		1	1	
		Total	4	19	7 1/2	
		Credit				
Apr	26	5 eggs			2 1/2	
June	1	1 doz eggs			5	
	17	By cash			1 1/2	
		Total			8 1/2	
		Total	4	19	7 1/2	
		Deduct			8 1/2	
		New balance	4	18	11	
Nov	12	By cash	3	0	0	Lagan or Scotch earnings
		New balance	1	18	11	
		Peggy Boyle's account	2	0	0	
	27	2 oz tea, 1 lb sugar			7	
Dec	2	2 oz tea, 1 lb sugar			7	
		biscuits			6	
	14	2 oz tea, 1 lb sugar			7	
	24	2 lb sugar			5	
Jan	7	Short in basin			2	
		1/2 lb. Baking soda			1 1/2	
		snuff			1/2d.	
	12	2 oz tea, soap			5	
	18	1/2 qr. Tobacco			6	
		2 oz tea			4	
		1 lb sugar			3	
	30	1 1/2 oz tea			3	
		1/2 lb sugar			1 1/2	
		1 oz tobacco			3	
Feb	4	1/2 lb sugar			1 1/2	
		Cash lent		2	6	
	12	2 oz tea			4	
Mar	7	Bucket			4 1/2	
	8	2 cwt. Indian meal		16	0	

	12	1 oz tobacco			3
	20	1 cwt. Bran		9	0
		1/2 lb. Tea		1	3
		fish			4
April	3	1 cwt. Best flour		16	0
May	2	2 cwt. Indian meal		14	6
June	13	2 cwt. Indian meal		14	6
	14	4 oz tea			7 1/2
		1 lb sugar			3 1/2
		1 oz tobacco			3
		salt			1/2d.
	15	1/2 lb tea		1	3
		1 lb sugar			3
		1/2 cwt. flour		8	0
July	10	1/2 cwt. Flour		8	0
	17	short			1
	29	spool			1
		Oil			2
Aug	6	Cash lent			1
	16	1/2 lb tea		1	3
		1 lb sugar			
	22	Meal & snuff			9 1/2
	30	1/4 stone flour			6
Sept	8	1/2 cwt. flour		7	0
		Total	9	8	1
		Credit			
Dec	14	4 eggs			3 1/2
	24	2 eggs and cash			2
		3 eggs			2
Jan	18	2 eggs and cash			1
	30	By cash		1	0
Feb	21	3 eggs			1
Mar	12	1/2 doz eggs			2 1/2
June	11	1/2 doz eggs			2 1/2
Jul-10	15	By cash	1	0	0
Aug	6	By cash	1	0	0
Sept	8	By cash		2	4

		Total	2	4	7 1/2	
		Old Balance	9	8	1	
		Deduct	2	4	7 1/2	
		New Balance	7	3	5 1/2	
Oct.	4	Interest		6	0	
		New Balance	7	9	5 1/2	
	8	By cash	2	0	0	Lagan or Scotch earnings
		New Balance	5	9	5 1/2	
	8	goods			11	
		Balance	5	10	4 1/2	
Nov	15	By cash	3	0	0	Lagan or Scotch earnings
		New Balance	2	10	4 1/2	



