

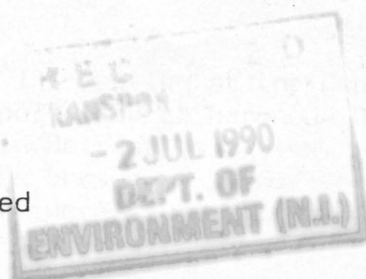


DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR NORTHERN IRELAND
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R 3/89 vol 2

Mr Roy Beattie
Chief Executive
Northern Ireland Railways Limited
Central Station
East Bridge Street
BELFAST



29 June 1990

Dear Roy

I do hope you do not think that it is insensitive of me to pass on a complaint about your Belfast to Dublin arrangements at a time when you are experiencing further disruption. However the complaint has been made and I think you should know about it.

The problem appears to have taken place on Friday 15 June when you were subjected to a bomb scare. Apparently your passengers were taken by bus to Portadown and the complaint is that the buses were red buses which were slow and uncomfortable. These connected with an NIR train at Portadown. It seems that train had no first class carriage or any restaurant or refreshment facility (apparently this all took place fairly early in the morning).

The complaint also focuses on the return journey from Dublin in the evening when passengers were transferred at Portadown to 2 red buses with hard vandal-proof seats. The allegation is also made to me that some passengers were left behind at Portadown because there was not sufficient room on these buses.

Needless to say I have been asked about the special coaches which you have at your disposal for such emergencies. I would be grateful for your comments to enable me to respond to all this.

Yours sincerely

TP

TREVOR PEARSON

h.c. m. Loughran
m. Mackenzie
m. McElroy

Miss G. Hall
Please B/P
23 May 5.7

Mr. Farman 5.7
Please B/P for reply
Rel 4/7/90

Mr Mackenzie

NORTHERN IRELAND RAILWAYS

Last Friday I attended an IFI meeting at the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin and took the opportunity to harangue Dermot Gallagher and Anna Anderson on the Dublin/Belfast rail link. I did so out of a sense of duty rather than conviction because my experiences of the rail journey to Dublin last Friday did not increase my confidence in NIR's ability to run a first class service on this route.

There was a bomb scare last Friday and we were taken by bus to Portadown. By red bus, not coach. The journey was slow and uncomfortable since City Bus vehicles are hardly designed for longer trips of this kind.

At Portadown we were met by an NIR train sans first class carriage, restaurant or any type of refreshment facility. I personally do not breakfast on the train but many passengers on the 8 o'clock service depend on such facilities for their morning meal. At least the train was half empty, so I was able to choose a seat which was not dirty and/or damaged.

I returned in the afternoon train which was CIE. Restaurant service was available although the small and overcrowded carriage was of "vintage" quality and nothing like the standard presently available for other routes in the Republic.

At Portadown we were transferred to two red buses. This time the seats were of vandal-proof quality so we had a hard and extremely slow journey back to Belfast. However, we were among the more fortunate passengers since a number had to be left behind at Portadown because there was not sufficient room on the buses. This is despite the fact that passengers were "counted on" at Dublin. Among the people left behind at Portadown were four cyclists - where do you do you put bicycles on a red bus, or for that matter where do you put suitcases?

NIR is not responsible for the bomb scares (or the delay, which did not personally inconvenience me) but the Company should have enough experience of these incidents to be able to provide alternative arrangements which are passenger friendly. In any case I have had enough of old, dirty, overheated/underheated, overcrowded, so called first class service to Dublin. I will not be travelling by NIR again.

G LOUGHRAN

21 June 1990

Mr. Pepper

Why are red buses
being used? Were special
buses not bought with money
many for this use? Whether

fixed
series?
26/6/90

