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NORTHERN IRELAND RAILWAYS COMPANY LIMITED

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See below
2/7/90

InterCity

R3/89 VOL 2 (c)

Our Ref: DG/JT/IC

16 July 1990

Mr T Pearson
Assistant Secretary
DoE NI
Northlands House
3 Fredrick Street
BELFAST
BT1 2NS

DOE (NI)
17 JUL 1990
294
TRANSPORT H.Q.

Dear Mr Pearson

**RE: Bomb Incident at Lurgan -
Disruption to Belfast-Dublin Services - 15/6/90**

Your letter of 29 June has been passed to me for comment by Mr Roy Beattie.

The bomb incident initially occurred during the night when all our mainline rolling stock with first-class accommodation and catering facilities was located in Belfast. We had, therefore, no option but to use some of the trains which were based overnight at Portadown to operate between Portadown and Dublin while the line remained closed. This rolling stock has standard-class accommodation only, and does not have catering vehicles, as it is normally only used for Suburban services. As many services as possible between Dublin and Portadown, however, were operated by the Dublin-based Irish Rail Enterprise train. A catering trolley service was provided on most Portadown-Dublin connecting services, subject to the availability of catering staff and trolleys.

The location of the bomb incident at Lurgan, and the timing of this incident on Friday with peak weekend long-distance traffic coinciding with Suburban peak periods, necessitated the use of up to 16 buses to convey passengers around the affected section of line. All 5 of the InterCity coaches (which are normally adequate to cover bomb incidents affecting the Londonderry or Dublin routes only) were in full use on the day in question. It was, however, necessary to supplement these vehicles with whatever further buses could be obtained from Ulsterbus or Citybus. These vehicles included a small number of Citybus vehicles, a couple of which (contrary to information received from the Bus Company) contained a number of plastic seats.

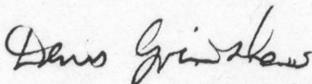
As far as possible long distance passengers (eg to and from Dublin) were carried in the InterCity coaches, but because of the scale and complexity of the bus operation it was simply not possible to cover all Belfast-Dublin services with these vehicles.

In the planning of the bus substitution reasonable assumptions were made about the running time of buses to various points, such as between Belfast and Portadown so that economic use could be made of the buses in operation. There were, however, a couple of instances whereby incoming vehicles at Portadown arrived later than anticipated due to road traffic congestion, which caused some further delay to passengers waiting for these vehicles to arrive, and in one particular instance a small number of passengers had to be held back for a short time until further incoming buses arrived.

In emergency situations such as these, every possible effort is made to cater for the needs of the passengers affected, using all our resources in the most effective and efficient manner possible. It must be remembered, however that passenger numbers on a particular train can vary greatly from day to day and that road traffic conditions can be subject to the same degree of variation. Additionally there are no diversionary railway routes in Northern Ireland and if a particular section of railway is closed there is no means of relocating rolling stock to the other side of such an obstruction, even though there may be a surplus of trains in one location and a serious shortage of trains in another location.

All this simply demonstrates some of the difficulties which have to be faced in trying to run an intensive service on a small railway network, where unscheduled and unplanned closures can occur on a random basis, with long and frustrating delays in obtaining security clearance to reopen the lines concerned. It is very obvious that the most efficient and comfortable journeys for the passengers concerned are provided by normal direct and uninterrupted rail services, which is obviously the basic purpose of the terrorist disruption in the first place.

Yours sincerely



DENIS GRIMSHAW
GENERAL MANAGER (INTERCITY)