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INSPECTION
APR. 1945

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INSPECTION TOUR CALABRIA
APR. 1945

TRANSPORTATION SUB-COMMISSION, A.C.

(RAIL DIVISION)

C/o. Transportation Increment

C.M.F.

21st April 1945

TO : Lieut-Col. O.H. LINDBERG,
Chief of Rail Division.

SUBJECT : Inspection tour in Calabria,
Sicily and Puglia. April 4-10 inclusive, 1945.

1. A joint M.R.S. and Tn. Sub-Commission party consisting of Lieut-Col. W.L. Topham, A.D.Tn.3 (M.) of M.R.S., Lieut-Col. J.W. Baker, A.Q.M.G. (Mov.) and Major S.L. Baister, Rail (M.) of Tn. Sub-Commission, accompanied by Prof. Corbellini, Chief of the Traction Section of I.S.R., left Rome by Rail Car on 4 April 1945 and visited Railway Establishments and other plants engaged on railway work at Paola, Reggio, Messina, Catania, Palermo, Catanzaro M., Crotone, Taranto, Bari, Foggia, and Naples, returning to Rome on 10 April.

2. Between Battipaglia and Paola a considerable number of war-damaged wagons still await recovery and arrangements were put in hand by Capo Compartimento, Reggio for systematic recovery to be undertaken.

3. Conditions and work at Paola deposito were satisfactory. It was noted that there were 3 heater cars on hand requiring only safety valves to make them serviceable. An excess stock of bronze ingots is held at this place, and will be transferred to central depot for Compartimento.

The cripple siding for wagons can only undertake very light repairs particularly in regard to wood work, and I.S.R. will send a hand-saw to this point enabling more of this class of work to be undertaken.

Burnt out wagons in otherwise good condition are being used for transport of timber.

4. Conditions at Reggio Locomotive Shop are not satisfactory in as much as it is considered that facilities admit of a greater repair output. Additional skilled labour is not however obtainable in the district. The same remarks refer also to the wagon repair shop, but here it has been found possible to double-shift wood working machines.

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The question of ways and means for increasing the output of repairs in Calabria was discussed with Prof. Corbellini of I.S.R. who undertook to examine the possibility of introducing generally some system of payment by results which would produce more output, while at the same time putting more money into the pockets of the workmen who consider that they are underpaid.

The Compartimento stores were inspected and shortages noted. The timber situation was satisfactory, and is being maintained by local purchase.

A considerable stock of nails had been obtained, and I.S.R. stores should know the source of these.

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5. Petrace bridge was visited, and it was found that work is proceeding satisfactorily. The south shore masonry arch is complete and the south girder span well in hand. All material is on the site or in transit for this and the centre span. The north span remained in position, and work is in hand to strengthen this.

The estimated date for completion is 30 June '45

6. At Messina the locomotive deposito and shop, and the wagon repair shop were visited. Good progress has been made in the rehabilitation of these shops, and commendable enterprise and energy has been shown. Complaint was made of shortage of timber for wagon repairs, and it was pointed out that I.S.R. can purchase it in Calabria.

7. Catania loco shed and wagon repair shop are well on the way to rehabilitation and the progress made reflects credit on the I.S.R. administration.

Shortage of timber was raised here also.

In the wagon shop stores are 1,800 rolls of wagon roofing material, "Paramoid" brand of U.S. origin. Other repair shops should be able to draw on this stock.

8. Palermo locomotive shed and shed repair shop were inspected and here it was felt that less effort was being made than at other places visited in Sicily. Probably the tendency is to rely too much on the nearly heavy repair shop at the Cantiere Navale Yard, now a U.S. naval repair base.

As a result of the visit it is hoped that more may be done in the future.

9. U.S. Naval repair depot was visited and contact made with Commander Koonce, U.S. Navy, the ship repair officer who is in charge of the yard, Lieut. Connelly, U.S.N.R., who is in general charge of locomotive repairs, and Lieut. Bontros, U.S.N.R., in immediate charge of the loco work.

As a private company the Cantiere Navale contracted with I.S.R. for the repair of locomotives in Sicily, and it is the policy of the U.S. Navy to carry on this work so far as naval repair needs permit.

Excellent work has been done, and it is hoped that even more may be accomplished. The boiler shop capacity exceeds that of the engine repair shop, and arrangements were concluded whereby I.S.R. will send in additional boilers and themselves carry out the engine repair on the locomotives so dealt with in their own shop.

The question of materials needed by the U.S. Navy for locomotive work were fully discussed and every effort will be made to supply shortages through A.C. channels, but where this is not possible, Col Topham will try to obtain from military sources.

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The yard has a well equipped iron foundry and a good brass foundry, also an excellent pattern shop. It is hoped to make greater use of these facilities for the service of M.R.S. and I.S.R.

The officers of the U.S. Navy at this yard are willing and eager to do all in their power to help with locomotive work in which they show great interest, and the importance of which they fully realize.

Lieut. Bontros, in immediate charge of the work, is a young officer of great keenness, intelligence and resource. His efforts have been well backed up by Lieut. Connelley.

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There is doubt in the minds of the Naval Yard officers as to the proper financial procedure for dealing with the cost of work carried out on I.S.R. locomotives and this was discussed with A.F. H.Q. instruction A.G.315/051 G.E.G.-O. dated 19 Jan. 1945 as a basis.

It is considered that this matter should be brought to the notice of the Allied Railway Board with a view to suitable instructions being issued to U.S. Navy, N.O.B. Palermo through appropriate U.S. Naval channels. Lt.Col. Topham has agreed to bring this up at the next Board meeting.

10. Catanzaro Marina locomotive shed and repair shop were inspected, and disappointment expressed at the lack of initiative apparent there. Shop facilities are reasonably good, and much work remains to be done not only in the direction of expediting light repairs to locomotives, but also in the recovery and repair of spare parts etc. from locomotives which are badly damaged, and cannot be repaired within a measurable period of time. Prof. Corbellini will initiate suitable action to effect improvement.

11. At Crotone it was noted that a supply of good water for locomotive purposes has now been laid on in substitution of the previous very hard water supply.

Questions concerning the Calabro-Lucane Railway and the Val di Neto light Rly. at Crotone are the subject of a separate joint report by M.R.S. and Tn. Sub-Comm. representatives (Tn.A.3 (M) 98 dated 13 April 1945)

9 C.R.E. at Crotone indicated the boundaries of the Italian timber zone in Calabria, which are :
Ref. Italy road map 1 : 200.000 - sheets 23 and 24, all land south of grid line 6 and west of grid line 2.

It has been pointed out to I.S.R. officials concerned that this free timber zone exists, but it is evident that this fact was known to them since timber has been purchased locally for the Reggio Compartmento.

It was observed that, at Crotone, as at Paola, burnt out wagons were in use for the transport of timber.

12. At Taranto the loco shed was visited and also the carriage and wagon shop and the locomotive repair shop of Nuova Italia. Good progress has been made, and the outlook is satisfactory.

13. Bari loco deposito and wagon light repair tracks were visited. Special efforts recently made by M.R.S. have resulted in improvement of the position in respect of wagons out of service awaiting light repair.

Contact was made with the management of the Calabro-Lucane narrow gauge railway, Bari Division, and the locomotive and rolling

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Contact was made with the management of the Calabro-Lucane narrow gauge railway, Bari Division, and the locomotive and rolling stock position in this Division, which is separated from the rest of the Calabro-Lucane system, were fully discussed.

It was found that 2 locomotives and 74 wagons recently received from Eritrea have not yet been put into service, because of lack of brake equipment. Otherwise the number of wagons awaiting repair is small, but most of them require springs and arrangements were made with I.S.R. to supply springs recovered from demolished wagons which can be broken down and re-made for narrow gauge stock.

The possibility of sending suitable wagons for body repairs

to Crotone or Soverato was discussed.

Work can be started on Lauria viaduct on receipt of cement.

14. Poggia was visited, and the loco shed, loco repair shop, wagon repair shop, and wagon light repair shop inspected.

Only a small detachment of 163 Rly workshop Coy R.E. now remains at the loco repair shop, and they will be further reduced in number shortly. I.S.R. personnel are now doing the greater part of the work here, but there has been a slight falling off in the numbers employed. All concerned are, however, alive to the necessity of maintaining the present excellent output of repairs at their shop, and close touch will be kept.

The former carriage shop has been in part re-habilitated to serve as a heavy repair shop for wagons. Good progress has been made with the structural work involved, and several machine tools principally for wood working are now in operation, enabling work on repairs to proceed. It was noted that the class of repairs now being undertaken was unduly heavy for present facilities, and it is open to doubt whether the management at present in control is the best obtainable for the job. M.R.S. will keep this problem in view, and act in conjunction with I.S.R.

The wagon light repair shop ~~position~~ appeared to be quite satisfactory.

15. Throughout the tour note was taken of urgent cases of shortage of material, and efforts are being made to supply.

16. Every assistance was given in the course of this tour by Chief Transportation Officers of A.C. Tn. Sub-Commission, by officers of M.R.S. and Movements, and by officials of the I.S.R.

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