

Pullman Cars in Britain



Photo]

[D. C. Duncan

Down "Brighton Belle" electric Pullman train near Haywards Heath, on the non-stop 60-min. run between Victoria and Brighton

THE offer by the British Transport Commission to purchase the whole of the ordinary share capital of the Pullman Car Co. Ltd. (to which reference was made in the June issue) has been accepted by over 95 per cent. of the shareholders. The contract with the B.T.C. was due to expire in 1962, and there was no chance of an extension. There also was no prospect of any major increase in revenue to offset rising costs, which would have prejudiced the building of new cars. In the circumstances, the offer of the B.T.C. was not unfavourable. The Commission has stated categorically that it intends no alteration in the control and operation of the Pullman cars, and that it intends "to give consideration to the extension of this popular facility on other lines throughout the country."

The change in ownership comes 80 years after the inauguration of the first Pullman service over a British railway; on June 1, 1874, by agreement between the Midland Railway Company and George Mortimer Pullman, who had started building his cars in the U.S.A. some 10 years before, a complete Pullman train

began regular operation between St. Pancras and Bradford. So popular was the new facility that by the end of the year the Midland had 36 Pullman cars, in operation, including 11 sleeping cars, and, in 1876, Pullman services were extended to Edinburgh and Glasgow. The first restaurant car to be put into service in Britain was the *Prince of Wales*, a Pullman car introduced on the Great Northern Railway between London and Leeds on November 1, 1879. The seating plan and even the types of chairs used were very similar to those still in use in Pullmans in this country.

Pullman cars first appeared in the south, where they have since provided so many services, in 1875, when three cars were transferred from the Midland Railway and were run on the Brighton services of the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway. In December, 1881, the first all-Pullman train to run in Great Britain was introduced by the L.B.S.C.R., the first train in this country to be fitted throughout with electric light. In 1887, the L.B.S.C.R. entered into a contract with Pullman, and this was followed in 1891 by a contract with the London,

Chatham & Dover Railway. In 1882 the Pullman Co. Ltd. was registered in England, and continued in existence for the next 25 years. In 1907, Mr. Davidson Dalziel, later Lord Dalziel of Wooler, purchased the company, and eight years later, in 1915, the present Pullman Car Co. Ltd., was formed to acquire Mr. Dalziel's interests. At that time the company owned 74 cars and also had others under construction in this country. The contracts with the railways mentioned above were followed by those with

Scots" on the L.N.E.R. between Kings Cross and Harrogate, Edinburgh and Glasgow. The service is still operated with two all-Pullman trains, one up and one down each weekday. The next year saw the inauguration of the "Golden Arrow" between London and Paris, with the Pullman services on the French side provided by the Cie. Internationale des Wagons-Lits. This continues, with some modifications, today, and the British train undoubtedly contributes to creating an excellent impression on the



Photo]

[A. R. Carpenter

Up "Golden Arrow" leaving Dover Marine on April 4, headed by "Merchant Navy" class Pacific No. 35028, "Clan Line"

the South Eastern, Metropolitan, Great Western, and Great Eastern Railways and the Great Southern Railway of Ireland. Not all of the services over these railways or their successors have survived; for instance, those over the Metropolitan, the G.W.R. and the G.S.R. in Ireland no longer exist. In some instances the cars have been taken over by the railway administration concerned and converted as restaurant/buffet cars.

There have been many developments in recent years. The first all-steel train was introduced by the Pullman Car Co. Ltd., in May, 1928, in the "Queen of

mind of the visitor to this country of British standards of workmanship and service. The "Golden Arrow" is foremost of the many Pullman services in the Southern Region as successor to the Southern Railway, which include, besides Continental boat trains, and ocean liner expresses to and from Southampton, the electric services between London and the South Coast.

After the end of the second world war, besides entering on an energetic programme of rehabilitation of its cars the Pullman Car Company, with British

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Railways, inaugurated new services and added improvements to existing ones. The Transport Act of 1947 did not affect the company as a contractor to the Southern and London & North Eastern Railways, though nationalisation introduced new factors to the direction and operation of the company. In many respects functional control of British Railways moved to the Railway Executive and, notably in the catering policy, contact had to be maintained with the Hotels Executive through the British Transport Commission.

In the more technical sphere of passenger carriage design and equipment, the company has been a pioneer. One of the most important improvements introduced and patented by the company was the enclosed vestibule and what is now known as buckeye interlocking coupling, adopted as standard by British Railways. Pullman cars were the first to provide large windows and these also have been

adopted in all main-line coaching stock. In 1881 the first experiments in electric lighting were introduced by the company, and in 1908, gas was introduced for cooking in Pullman dining cars. This technical efficiency and readiness to adopt innovations is an essential part of the efficient organisation with its traditions of good service now to be placed at the service of an even greater number of travellers on British Railways.