



Irish Railway Factsheet: Northern Counties Committee



LMS NCC crest

The **Northern Counties Committee (NCC)** had operated profitably during the war, due to large-scale troop movements and additional local traffic, but with the ending of hostilities passenger and goods traffic began to decline rapidly as fuel for road transport became available. Despite the company's worsening financial state, a number of developments were undertaken in an attempt to improve the railway's competitive position.

In the late summer of 1946 and during 1947, the first ten WT Class 2-6-4 tank locomotives entered service. These locomotives, modified versions of the standard LMS 4P Class suitably altered to suit Irish conditions, were built at Derby and erected in Belfast. To replace rolling stock damaged or destroyed during the war, the LMS supplied seven second-hand passenger coaches from its British lines, these being refurbished in Belfast and fitted with salvaged 5' 3" gauge bogies, while approximately 150 freight wagons were rebuilt, some by the GNR(I) and the GSR. The company's hotels, which were closed during the war years, had reopened to the public by mid-1947. A start was made on the rehabilitation of the permanent way, air-raid damage at York Road station was repaired and services were improved, although they never again reached their pre-war peak.

The nationalisation of the railways in Great Britain had seen the LMS, together with the NCC, become part of the British Transport Commission on 1st January, 1948. By this time the Stormont Government was actively pursuing its plans to amalgamate all public transport services in Northern Ireland into a single company, the UTA coming into existence on 1st April 1948. The operation of Northern Ireland's railway system by two state owned concerns was not to last long. The Belfast Government purchased the NCC from the British Transport Commission for £2,668,000 and incorporated it with the **Ulster Transport Authority** on 1st April 1949.



NCC WT steam locomotive No. 5 at York Road, Belfast, circa 1947. (Photo John Macartney Robbins © IRRS Archive)



NCC 3ft gauge steam locomotive No. 43 at Ballymoney, circa 1945. (Photo © John Macartney Robbins)