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# 5,000 jobs to go

**B**R announced on Thursday, November 19 that 5,000 jobs are to be shed over the next four months. The job losses are

a direct result of the recession which has hit all businesses of BR.

The announcement has rocked the rail unions, one of which said it was a complete surprise. However, a look at the financial performance of BR in the depths of the recession shows how much revenue has been lost and the job losses are, regrettably, a follow-on. The surprise is that the announcement has been made in one go. All businesses of BR

will see jobs go. The losses will also include headquarters staff and not just those jobs directly associated with the running of the trains.

The BRB told *RAIL* that there were only two areas where jobs were not affected. These were in the Signal & Telecommunications Dept where resources have been stretched for many months in trying to complete various resignalling schemes and where the aftermath of the Clapham crash (Hidden Report recommendations) are now being implemented, the result of which is that S&T staff are fully employed for a long time ahead with projects.

Train crew staff are generally not affected by Thursday's decision. This may seem surprising, but BR is endeavouring to transfer staff, although it is known that some traincrew staff have facing redundancy, i.e. at Worksop. In some areas, particularly, Network SouthEast, there has been a problem in recruiting sufficient staff. A

The axe falls on trains and staff as BR is forced to respond to the recession. The problem for BR is recovering from the devastating blow in later, better times. NSE is already adopting to the downturn in passenger levels by thinning out services. Less trains, less staff. Photo. Allan Mott.



losses. Therefore, when the pit closure plan was announced, few people outside the rail industry realised how many thousands of jobs were affected in the rail industry.

November 19's announcement is the result of the serious downfall in business. Staff in many BR offices around the country are being asked for voluntary redundancy - these range from control offices to workshop grades.

## Short-term expediency

Because BR is mandated to run as a business and not as a service, it has no option but to 'cut its cloth' if times are bad. However, the long term

repercussions are more serious. A prime example concerns the redundant Trainload Freight locomotives. If these are either stored, scrapped or sold, what happens when the economy turns up? BR has experienced serious difficulty in the past restoring stored locomotives to running order (remember the Class 46s stored at Swindon?) and each new locomotive takes well over a year to build and that is only after many months seeking government approval and tendering procedures. Thus BR - its various businesses - will face considerably difficulties in the future when the state of the nation improves. Staff can be re-employed or new staff taken on, but hardware cannot be obtained overnight. Clearly, lessons of the past have not been learned and Black Thursday's announcement is another example where BR (its loyal staff and equipment) is both the short and long-term loser.●

## What will it mean to passengers?

Network SouthEast, InterCity and Regional Railways are constantly looking at the state of their businesses and adopting resources to match. NSE has already thinned services and InterCity is looking at certain services with a view to providing coaching stock to match rather than running empty coaches.

The end result of adopting to market forces is less coaches, wagons and locomotives to run. In turn this means less to maintain.

The workshop position is more grave. Because of the recession, aided by the coal pit closure announcement, there will be huge reduction in the number of locomotives requiring overhaul. This, inevitably, will mean a reduction in jobs. Then there is the component supply industry is affected - with more resultant job