

2nd March 2001

Rail Industry Structure Must be Made to Work, Says Morton

Making the existing structure work, and the role of Railtrack in this, were two key themes of SRA Chairman Sir Alastair Morton's address to the annual lunch of the Railway Division of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in London today.

Referring to this week's accident at Selby, he expressed sympathy in particular for the families, relatives and friends of the railway employees "who died at their posts". He saw it as a "relatively common highway mishap" that had imported "death, injury and damage onto the railway".

Looking forward from the series of extraordinary events in recent months, Sir Alastair asserted that the railway industry did not want to "start all over again. We have to make the structure we have work properly. I think we can."

He sees Railtrack's core business as operator and controller of the network having "retaken what I call intellectual control of the crucially important wheel/rail interface."

Then there is Railtrack's second task, which has grown with demand since privatisation. The task is to grow the network to carry today's and tomorrow's demand - a task bigger and more costly than Railtrack can afford. So it has to be done in partnership with the state-funded SRA.

Note to Editors

1. Copies of Sir Alastair's speech are available from the SRA Press Office on the numbers below.

**For further details contact the Department for Transport Rail Press desk:
020 7944 3108**