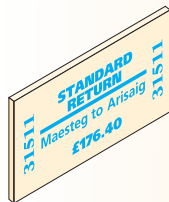


THE RAILWAYS BILL Privatisation – the key issues

Government rail privatisation depends on 25 franchisees introducing private money to renew track, infrastructure and rolling stock – but with only six months to go before full privatisation critics claim the plans will make things worse for passengers



Will fares go up?

All the evidence is that they will. 'Tapering' (the longer the journey, the lower the price per mile) is unlikely to survive. Fares are expected to rise by 5-10 per cent as operators demand a higher share of revenue. **Amendments to the Railways Bill would strengthen existing powers and duties to control fares**

Will operators issue 'through' tickets?

Through ticket availability will be restricted with only 400 stations selling the full range of tickets. The other 2,100 stations will sell tickets for operators using the station and perhaps a limited range of through tickets. **Amendments would maintain through tickets and ensure operators accept each others' tickets**

Will lines close?

Rural and non-profitable lines are expected to suffer from reduced grants.

Amendments to consider environmental and social costs of closures. 6 months notice of closure required – rather than 12 weeks as proposed in Government plan

Will freight be forced on to roads?

Privatisation plans do not link rail policy with wider transport policy issues such as congestion and pollution from growing road traffic.

Amendments planned to ensure freight stays on the railways and is not transferred to road directly freight franchises are sold

What will happen to BR's 2,500 stations?

Top stations such as London's terminals, Birmingham New Street, Manchester Piccadilly and Edinburgh Waverley to be auctioned off to property developers and management companies. **Cost cuts at smaller stations will result in fewer being staffed during off-peak periods, evenings and weekends**

What will happen to BR?

BR's existing 130,000 staff will be cut to a few thousand – many workers finding jobs with private operators. **A new quango – Railtrack – will handle track and signalling**

