

# Britain's railway network

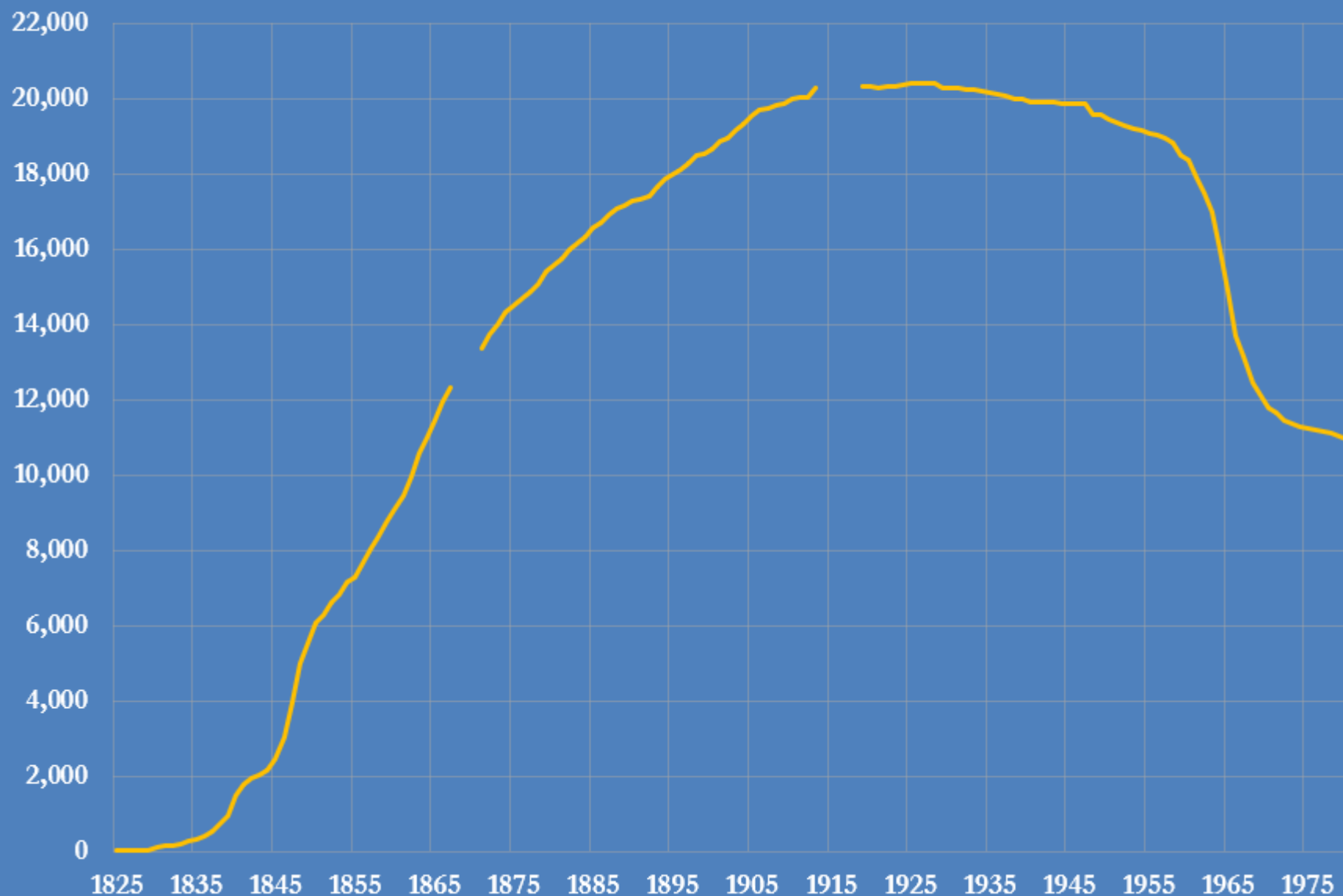
## Selected indicators

**JOHN KEMP**  
**REUTERS**

15 November 2019

## Railway lines in Great Britain, 1825-1980

length in miles (includes a small number of miles in Ireland pre-1848)

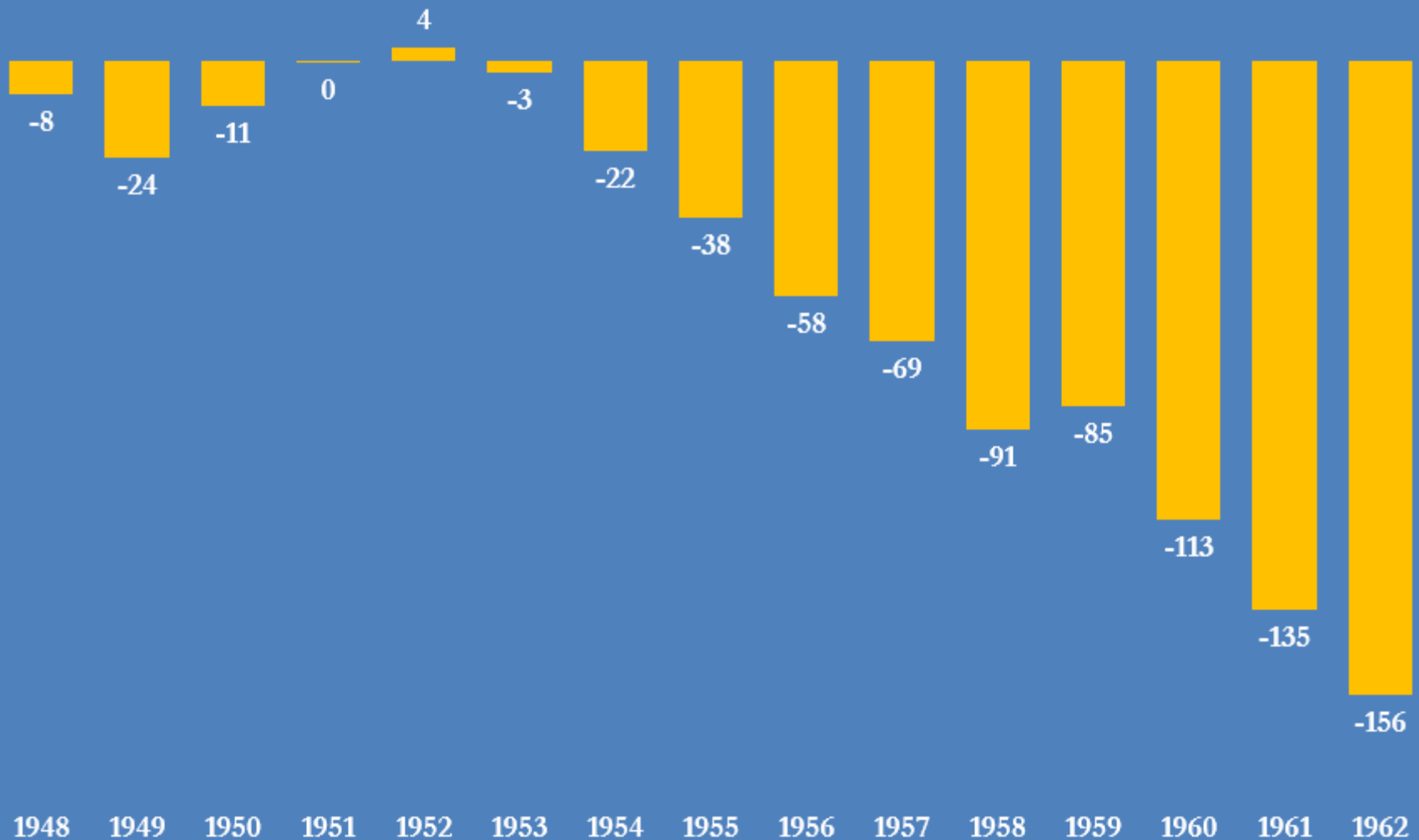


Source: British Historical Statistics (Mitchell, 2011)

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## British railways' financial returns, 1948-1962

£ million

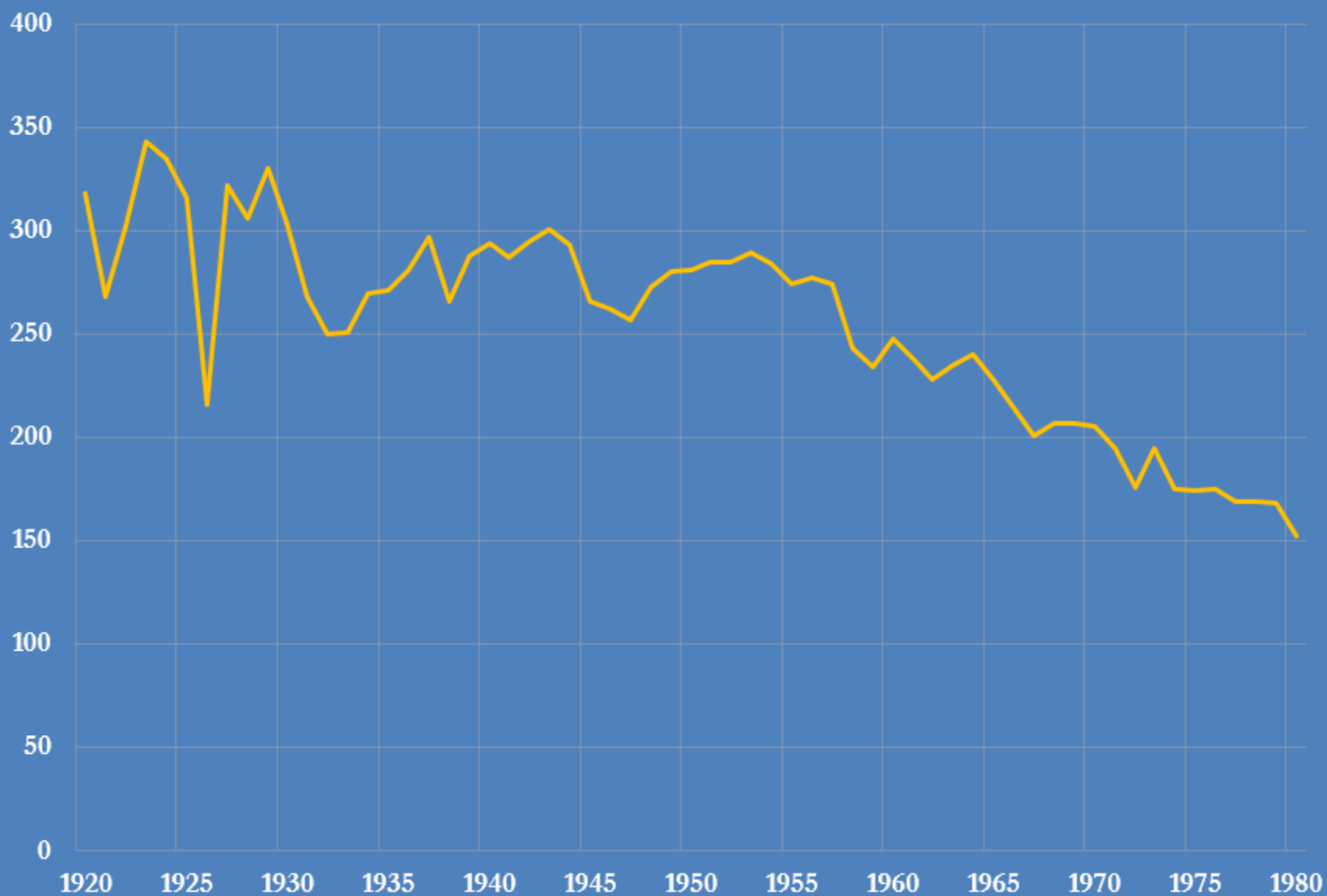


Source: British Transport Commission Annual Reports and Accounts, cited in *The Transport Revolution from 1770* (Bagwell, 1974)

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## Britain's rail freight, 1920-1980

millions of tons loaded

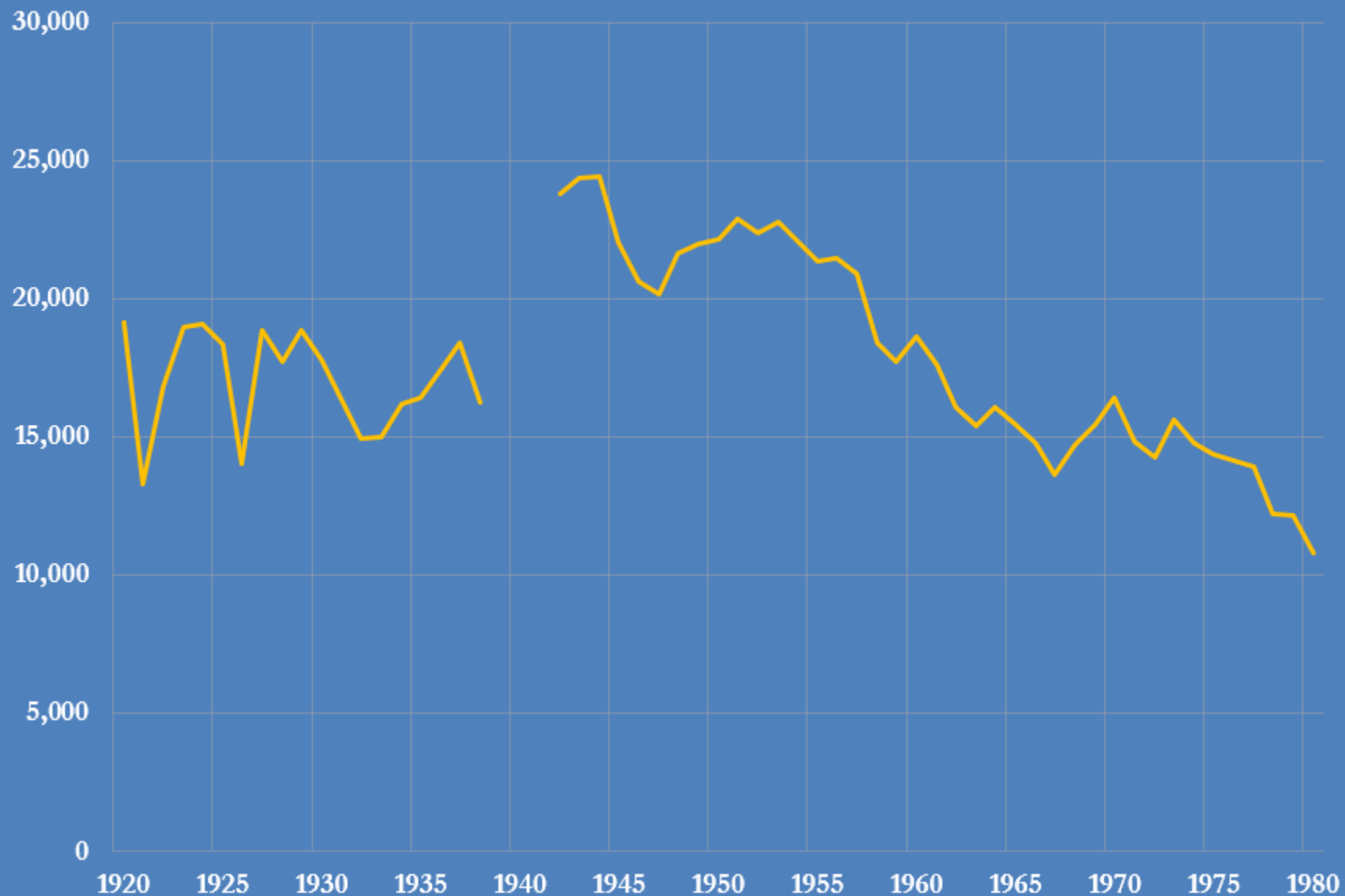


Source: British Historical Statistics (Mitchell, 2011)

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## Britain's rail freight, 1920-1980

million ton-miles



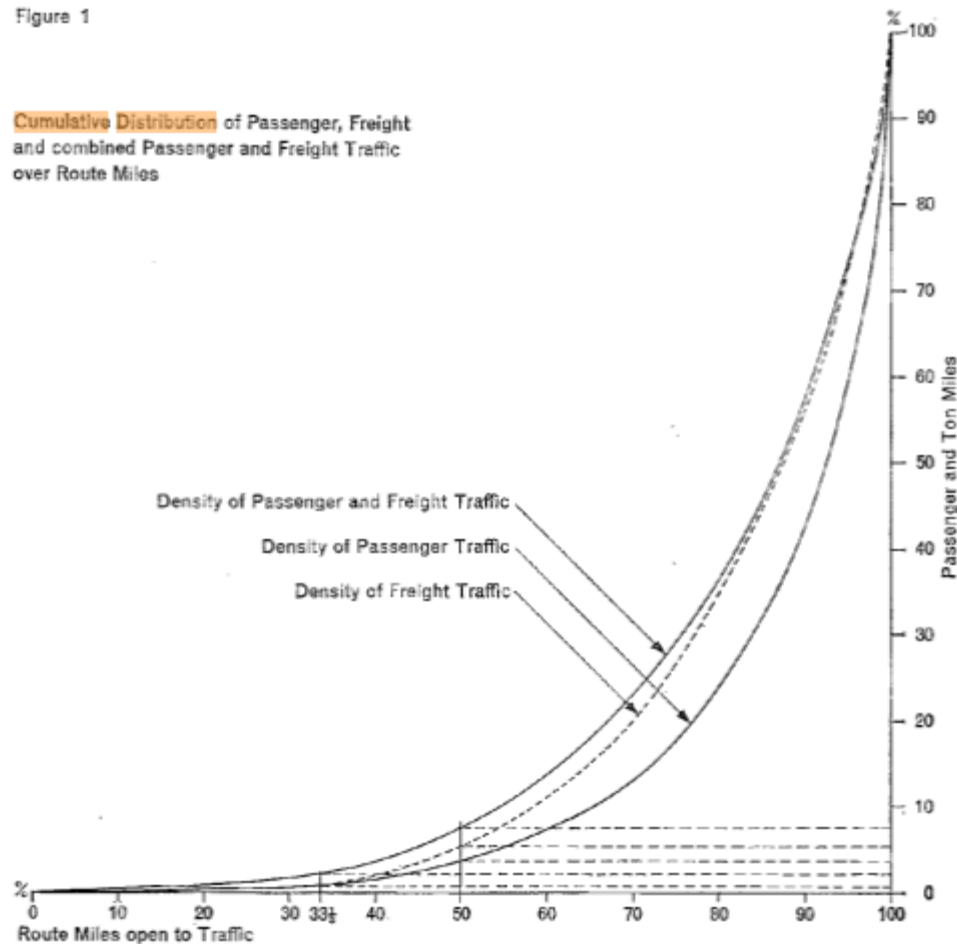
Source: British Historical Statistics (Mitchell, 2011)

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The **distribution** of traffic between the least used and most used parts of the system is also illustrated by Figure No. 1.

Figure 1

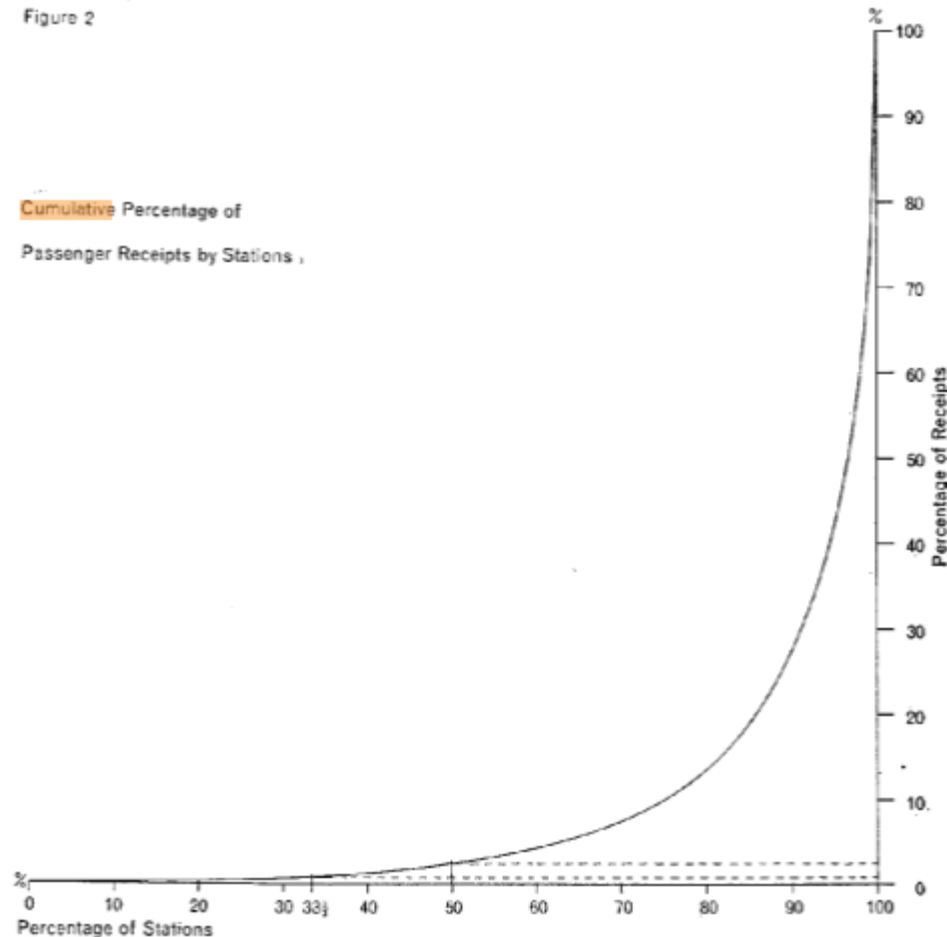
**Cumulative Distribution** of Passenger, Freight and combined Passenger and Freight Traffic over Route Miles



It will be seen that one-third of the route mileage carries only 1 per cent. of the total passenger miles. Similarly, one-third of the mileage carries only 1 per cent. of the total freight ton miles, and the corresponding figures for the least used half are 4 per cent. and 5 per cent. of passengers and freight respectively. It will also be seen that one-third of the route mileage carries only  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the total passenger and freight traffic, combined by adding passenger miles and ton miles as equal units, and half the route mileage carries only  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of the total traffic.

It will be seen, from Figure No. 2 which follows, that one third of the stations contributed only 1 per cent. to passenger revenue, and that half of the total number contributed only 2 per cent.

Figure 2



The geographical **distribution** of the stations throughout the country, together with an indication of the contribution each makes to passenger revenue, is shown in Map No. 3. It will be seen that the smaller stations are not necessarily confined to areas and lines of low density, although, as would be expected, it is in such localities that they predominate.