

RAIL RIDDLE

Passengers are angry

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RAILWAY passengers were angered and mystified this week by conflicting reports over whether or not one of the two entrances to Christchurch station had been closed.

While the stationmaster, Mr. H. L. Kellow, stoutly maintained that the north "up-line" entrance was open, a British Rail spokesman at Waterloo proclaimed that it had been closed.

And a large white notice, newly-erected at the northern entrance to the station in Fairmile, directed passengers to use the entrance in Stour-road. That meant a trek over Fairmile Bridge and down Stour-road.

Passengers wanting to use the up-platform would then have to cross the footbridge inside the station.

One regular passenger who was told that the entrance was being closed last Monday was Mr. Roland Bruning, of Clarendon-road, Christchurch.

He wrote to central ward council representative Ald. Kenneth Smith, that he understood the directive was in the interests of "barrier

control."

Mr. Bruning went on: "Is the closure really necessary? It seems to me that this glib piece of jargon 'barrier control' merely disguises the railway's intention to deprive the public of an amenity that has existed for many, many years

"Many travellers, including school children on bicycles and holiday visitors find the existing entrances and exits a great convenience."

RISKING HAZARDS

Mr. Bruning added: "It now means that we will all have to risk the hazards of Barrack-road crossroads traffic of Fairmile-Bargates traffic.

Now I shall have an extra 20 minutes' walk daily in addition to the appalling delays of the trains in recent months."

Ald. Smith has written to the stationmaster saying: "I have received a number of protests from residents and travellers in the Clarendon-road and Fairmile-road area regarding the proposed closing of the entrance to the up-platform at station."

He wanted to know if the rumour was correct and, if it was, why BR had taken the step.

A BR spokesman at Waterloo said on Monday: "This is general policy over the whole of the region. We are closing public facilities and gates and that enables us to release a number of staff and also avoid unnecessary maintenance of fittings,"

He said no decision had been taken at Christchurch. When it was the public would be notified

Later another spokesman phoned the Christchurch Herald to say "This thing has been brought to a head this morning because we haven't any staff or any chance of getting any staff for Christchurch station."