



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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417 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003
202-546-1550

Orren Beatty, President
Ross Capon, Executive Director

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RETURN REQUESTED

Some Railroads "Derailing" Amtrak

Key railroad managements are playing in the anti-Amtrak orchestra which Secretary of Transportation William T. Coleman, Jr. has been conducting. The verses vary from one of these railroads to the next, but the refrain does not: "Prevent Amtrak from providing the best service possible."

The most long-lasting and distinguished solo playing has come from Missouri Pacific which has, from Amtrak's inception May 1, 1971, steadfastly refused to allow passenger trains to run at the maximum safe speeds possible on its well-maintained tracks. Said one Amtrak official quoted in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*: MoPac is "utterly uninterested in handling passenger trains. Of all the lines we deal with in this country, that railroad is dead last."

The *Post-Dispatch* also quoted the following testimony of Larry Camp, an ICC inspector, at the ICC Adequacy of Service hearing last May 15: "Following a review of records on the operation of trains between Fort Worth and Texarkana, I told him (H.E. Handley, assistant general manager of MoPac in Fort Worth) that I had noticed there was some dead time built into the schedule, because the train kept making up time, as much as an hour and 10 minutes at some points. I asked him if he had noticed this. He indicated he had and I asked him if he had made attempts to get the schedule changed to be more realistic. He indicated he had not."

"I asked him why. He said it would not be to our advantage—to MoPac's advantage."

Camp also said that the "majority" of Amtrak train delays on MoPac caused by freight train interference were avoidable; the article indicates 74 such delays last October; Amtrak reports 31 and 53 in January and February, 1976, respectively.

When Amtrak began, MoPac cut the top St. Louis-Poplar Bluff,

The 1974 St. Louis terminals study identified general merchandise moving 300 to 800 km (185 to 500 miles) as by far the largest untapped market for rail. Examination of the (280-mile) St. Louis-Kansas City route showed 1,000 semi-trailers a day on the road compared to 20 piggyback trailers carried by Missouri Pacific, hardly surprising when the rail transit took 40 to 60 hours for a trip that one lorry driver covers in a single shift.

—Railway Gazette International, February, 1976

Mo, speed from 60 to 50 mph, although a railroad official testified at the same May 15 ICC hearing that the speed was the same under MoPac as it is now for Amtrak. Also when Amtrak began, MoPac cut the top St. Louis-Kansas City speed from 79 mph to 65, and subsequently reduced it to 60.

Last month we noted the refusal of Santa Fe to operate Los Angeles County's planned "403(b) train" (cost shared equally by Amtrak and the local agency). Although the railroad officially bases its refusal on a contention that Amtrak cannot legally

operate commuter trains, Santa Fe's real reason appears to be the fear that the train might prove so popular that additional trains would have to be added — or that, if the Amtrak subsidy ended, Santa Fe would be under pressure to continue the service at its own expense.

Such reasoning is both understandable—and unforgivable. There may be legitimate arguments against public ownership of the tracks, but it is absolutely intolerable for a private company to withhold those tracks from performing a needed social function when the agency sponsoring that function is offering the company a legally acceptable compensation.

We hope that Santa Fe will reconsider its unfortunate departure from its traditional role as a friend of the railroad passenger.

Recent developments not only reinforce the view that Chessie

(continued on page 2)

Amtrak: A "Loss", A Win, And A Wait

Amtrak has been ordered to make available to *Washington Star* reporter Stephen M. Aug "all policy decisions of its Board of Directors" and "the final Board vote on all such resolutions, including the names of Directors voting against an adopted resolution." Aug had requested such information under the Freedom of Information Act, and NARP Executive Director Ross Capon filed an affidavit in support of the request.

Amtrak does not plan to appeal the decision, which stems from a case begun in 1973 after then President and Chairman Roger Lewis refused to provide such information.

As anticipated in the March News, Amtrak now owns the Boston-Washington mainline. However, they also acquired the Philadelphia-Harrisburg and New Haven-Springfield "branches".

According to Traffic World, Amtrak acquisition of the Corridor properties came "after DOT had assumed it won the lobby fight to keep the Corridor under ConRail" and "has angered DOT".

An unexpected twist developed regarding the segments needed for passenger but not freight service outside the Corridor. These properties were transferred to ConRail, which will "preserve" them (with the active segments, such as in Michigan, continuing to be operated) until October 1. If Amtrak does not purchase them by October 1, it will be in "default", and the lawyers are still trying to figure out what that means.

The key to Amtrak's ability to buy these segments lies with Rep. John McFall (Cal.), Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation. Thus far, he has been reluctant to see Amtrak own the properties, and without his approval Amtrak will probably not get the money. Members who write to him should send copies to their own Congressman.

SUPPORT NARP — Bring In A New Member

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“Derailing” Amtrak *(continued from page one)*

and Burlington Northern are hostile to Amtrak, but also call into question the competence with which these companies are managed. We acknowledge two facts: Chessie has announced for 1976 what is apparently a record level of spending on maintenance of roadway and freight rolling stock; and the February on-time performance for the southern Chicago-Seattle route was 100%, although this is less impressive when one notes the current eastbound schedule is 75 minutes slower between Seattle and Minneapolis than was BN's 1970 schedule which had the same number of stops and a route 74 miles longer.

Accounts from passengers on the “James Whitcomb Riley” suggest very bad track conditions; so rough was the ride that one

PEOPLE WILL RIDE GOOD TRAINS!

We replaced two conventional trains with three of our French-built turboliners. Almost immediately, we noticed something spectacular happening. At an increase in our operational costs of only 32 per cent, ridership gained 72 per cent and revenue passenger miles gained 68 per cent over the similar months one year earlier.

—Amtrak President Paul H. Reistrup, describing Chicago-Detroit success to luncheon at Chicago Union League Club

passenger thought his train had actually derailed in the vicinity of Ronceverte, W.Va. Chessie effectively banned Amtrak's SDP40F diesel locomotives from its railroad, although investigators examining the derailment which precipitated the ban reportedly agreed that the track was at fault.

Amtrak was required to win a legal battle in order to continue operations over the Chessie through Indiana until such time as ConRail's Chicago-Cincinnati line is adequately restored. And it appears that Chessie was at least partly to blame for the termination of the “Riley/Mountaineer” (Washington/Newport News/Norfolk—Chicago) in Peru, Indiana.

On April 1, when ConRail began operations, the former Erie-Lackawanna mainline was withdrawn from service west of Marion, Ohio, including a small portion near Hammond, Ind., over which Chessie had trackage rights for direct access to Chicago. According to the *Wall Street Journal* of April 5, “Amtrak says the Chessie told it that Chessie would file notice with the Interstate Commerce Commission that it intended to continue to run trains over the Erie tracks. But at the last moment, Amtrak says, the Chessie changed its mind and told the commission it was dropping service instead. Chessie officials couldn't be reached to explain the decision.”

Since April 1, passengers have been bussed between Chicago and Peru; at presstime it was uncertain when the two-week old inconvenience might end.

One essential ingredient for a successful company is high morale; Penn Central is the classic example of the lack thereof. But Burlington Northern, which has billed itself in a massive publicity campaign as the “merger that worked,” also appears to be lacking in both morale and money.

BN suspended J.C. “Jack” McDonald, a conductor on the “North Coast Hiawatha,” for 30 days without pay. Tired of passenger complaints about bad track between Butte and Garrison, Montana, McDonald had given a critical interview to a local newspaper, *The Missoulian*, on board the Amtrak train.

After the suspension was announced, a *Missoulian* editorial indicated that, although McDonald “had some salty things to say about railroad management,” he mostly “talked with genuine concern about Amtrak service, making it pay, making it attractive, making it work. Some of his remarks would offend management, but an enlightened management interested in service would

“What you are doing is high-handed and morally wrong, and it will be legally wrong as soon as appropriate legislation is passed. Amtrak is a public corporation which has been both milked and sabotaged by railroad management since its formation. . .

“McDonald does not in actuality work for BN. He works for Amtrak. . . The remarks for which you are punishing him show complete loyalty to Amtrak and the American people. . .

“It seems that the time has come for not only federal legislation regarding Amtrak, but also for a new look at the special favored treatment BN has received from the Montana legislature.”

—Montana State Sen. Robert D. Watt (Missoula), in letter to BN public relations official, commenting on 30-day suspension of conductor who gave critical interview to reporter

understand that this 31-year railroading veteran was talking for the public interest and, in the end, for better railroads. Better railroads,” concluded the *Missoulian*, “until now, could be presumed to be one of the things Burlington Northern desired.”

Meanwhile, at the top of BN's corporate ladder, shivers have also been sent up and down the spines of the officers, who received a letter from Chairman Lewis W. Menk ordering them not to discuss company business with any outsiders, under threat of **immediate dismissal.**

The financial performance of the railroad, as distinct from the entire conglomerate, is hardly impressive, as the figures below suggest (millions of dollars):

Year	'70	'71	'72	'73	'74	'75
Net rwy op'ing income	38.4	48.7	48.2	43.5	71.8	54.8
Total fixed charges	38.9	40.4	45.1	47.1	51.1	55.6
Net rwy income	- 0.5	8.3	3.1	- 3.6	20.7	- 0.8

The 1974 figures overstate the railroad's good fortunes, as San Francisco Zephyr passengers suspected, because coal unit trains causing deteriorated track conditions did not bring in enough revenue to compensate BN for the resulting track wear.

Amtrak **must** make vigorous use of its Section 402 authority to operate trains anywhere at reasonable speeds and with priority over freight trains. Also Amtrak should move to employ its own train crews, even in areas where it operates few trains. Then personnel would be subject only to the discipline of their real employer, Amtrak. Then, also, it should be possible to solve the problem of an employee with a greater ability and desire to work with the traveling public being unable to do so because a less enthusiastic person with greater seniority has taken the job.

The railroads discussed above seem to ignore what Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Warren Magnuson called “the important public relations aspect of rail passenger service for the entire industry.” (January News) Hopefully, the exposure provided by NARP and by Senator Watt and his counterparts around the country will encourage the companies to deal with passenger service more constructively.

FARES AND SERVICES

INTERCITY: Daylight New York-Charleston-Savannah service with new Amcoaches and Amclubs (parlor cars) will run southbound June 15 through September 7, northbound June 16-September 8. The "Palmetto" will depart NY at 8 AM, arrive Savannah at 11:50 PM and, northbound, will leave Savannah at 6:50 AM and arrive NY at 11 PM. The train will serve two new Amtrak stops in South Carolina, Dillon and Kingstree. It will also help test Amtrak President Reistrup's theory that Amtrak should move generally to emphasize long daylight runs, a la Illinois Central's Chicago-New Orleans "City of New Orleans".

Unfortunately, effective April 25, the "Champion" and "Silver Meteor" will be consolidated again, and 1976 will be the first

6 AIR PASSENGERS — 100% FEDERAL SUBSIDY

Secretary of Transportation William T. Coleman, Jr., a well-known opponent of most Amtrak subsidies, has proposed the first subsidization of commuter airlines. Even routes with only six passengers per day would be supported entirely by the Federal government, which would also pay HALF the costs of routes with FIVE or fewer passengers per day.

I would respectfully disagree with (DOT), but I would disagree with anything that DOT said, and not so respectfully sometimes.

—ICC Commissioner Alfred T. MacFarland, before the House Subcommittee on Transportation and Commerce

summer during which NY-Florida service consisted of but two daily round-trips. Also, the Chicago-Florida "Floridian" will lose its St. Petersburg sleepers, and will be split in Auburndale rather than Jacksonville, running between those two points via Orlando.

This will deprive patrons from certain northern Florida points, notably Waldo, serving the University of Florida at nearby Gainesville, of the opportunity to make one-day round-trips to Miami. Amtrak is calling the move a temporary consolidation and is studying the entire route of the "Floridian", as well as the possibility of shifting to the more popular, traditional 2-day-1-night pattern.

Also April 25, the NY/Washington-Chicago "Broadway Ltd." will begin serving Valparaiso, Indiana; the Chicago-New Orleans "Panama Limited" will get a slower, "realistic" schedule, losing its northbound connection with the "North Coast Hiawatha" (but better track is coming — see page 4); and all Boston-New York schedules except the "Night Owl" will be slowed an average of 15 minutes due to track upgrading work. There will be a small improvement in the Boston-Albany section of the "Lake Shore", with speedups of 20 to 40 minutes for the westbound and eastbound trains, respectively. Other anticipated speedups in east-west routes on ConRail lines await further

ConRail plans to begin its revitalization unspectacularly at the bottom — replacing 4.1 million rotted ties and 727 miles of damaged track in this year alone.

—The Christian Science Monitor

negotiations.

In early March, NARP filed with the House and Senate subcommittees overseeing Amtrak statements which included brief analyses of the seven economically weakest Amtrak routes, as identified by the Trailways/Eastern Airlines study (February News). Comments on the Oakland-Bakersfield "San Joaquin" included the observation that "a 1 hour 45 minute layover in

Bakersfield" (between the arrival of the bus from Los Angeles, and the departure of the train) discourages patronage. On April 25, Amtrak will correct this problem by advancing the schedule of the northbound train 90 minutes, which will also permit a much more attractive 6 PM arrival in Oakland (6:30 in San Francisco via bus connection).

New "Amfleet" cars will go into service soon on the Los Angeles-San Diego line. A special transcontinental train of the new cars was run the last week in April, with the cars opened to the press at Pittsburgh, Kansas City, and Albuquerque. On May 1, the cars will be on public display in Los Angeles and Chicago.

Weekly Los Angeles-Las Vegas service starts May 21, northbound Fridays, southbound Sundays, partly subsidized by the State of Nevada.

The motorbus industry apparently drew blood in Minnesota, where the state legislature adjourned without approving continued subsidy for the Minneapolis-Superior "Arrowhead". Although the House passed the measure by an overwhelming 105-19 vote, the opposition of Senate Finance Committee Chairman Norbert Arnold prevented a vote in the Senate.

At presstime, there was hope that the Governor's Emergency Fund could be tapped to keep the train running.

In response to a telegram from NARP President Orren Beaty urging against precipitous action to remove the train when the contract expired March 31, Amtrak President Paul Reistrup wrote that, "since Amtrak did not give what I feel sufficient notice to the public, we will continue to operate the train through April 25." (If no further subsidy is forthcoming, the last trip would be

LATE FLASH! "Arrowhead" saved by favorable vote of the legislative panel which oversees the emergency fund.

"...the Amtrak law...has made government subsidies to one form of transportation a matter of precise public record, distinct from other parts of the passenger transportation industry that enjoy massive government subsidies in indirect payments that are difficult to account for."

—Thomas A. Beaumont, in a letter published by the Minneapolis Star

southbound on April 26.)

The **domestic** U.S.A. RAIL Pass (February News) will be offered through the summer peak travel season, though at higher rates and with tighter restrictions on first-class reservations. Prices effective May 16: \$250 for 14 days; \$325, 21 days; and \$400, 30 days. After May 15, upgrading to first class will only be permitted on a space available basis on board trains or not less than 30 minutes before departure time.

As before, travel must begin within 15 days of purchase, Southern Railway is included, and no reservations may be made in advance of purchase. One could ride on the lower present rates through June 28 by purchasing the pass on May 15, and waiting until May 30 to use it.

Al Michaud, Amtrak's Vice President—Marketing, reports that Amtrak is pleased with the current level of sales of the passes, about 450 per day, and is considering lower off-season rates for the Fall.

Starting May 1, 30-day round-trip coach excursion fares will be offered on these segments of the Amtrak network: Memphis-New Orleans, New Orleans-Los Angeles, and Chicago-Dubuque, Iowa; also for travel on the San Francisco Zephyr between Truckee, Cal., Reno or Sparks, Nev., and Oakland, Sacramento, Denver, or Ogden, Utah. Discounts are 25% off the regular round-trip fare, except that the Zephyr discounts range up to 31%.

The Friday and Sunday restriction against use of Amtrak's Boston-Washington Bicentennial coach fares (May-June News)

has been changed to trips scheduled to begin between noon and 6 PM (instead of 1-8 PM), effective April 15, and is therefore consistent with the restriction on 25% discount round-trip tickets between most Northeast Corridor points introduced February 15.

Problems with the availability of rental cars have forced Amtrak to make its Florida and Texas "Week of Wheels" programs subject to advance confirmation of car availability.

Two years of work towards additional Los Angeles-San Diego service has been jeopardized by a 3-2 vote of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors against instituting the "three-county" train. This will at least postpone the tentative startup date of June 15 which we reported last month.

The vote appears to be the result of animosity between certain local politicians, as well as the opposition of "heavy rapid transit" advocates to incremental improvements of existing facilities. There is some hope for a reversal.

COMMUTER: Under the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976, unsubsidized commuter services may continue without local subsidy until April 1, 1977. The law specifically requires ConRail to operate the services for six months (until October 1), and provides for reimbursement to ConRail. It appears that, if an appropriate public agency will sign

“. . . per passenger-mile pollutant emissions from (three Chicago diesel commuter operations) are, overall, less damaging by a factor of 5.5 than the per passenger-mile emissions from autos. The author feels that travel on these. . . trains is less costly to society than auto travel (1972 suburban-based autos), whether one compares the train trip alone to an auto trip or the home-to-suburban-station-then-by-train-to-a-downtown-terminal trip to an auto trip.”

—U.S. DOT Abstract of "Per Passenger-Mile Energy Consumption and Costs for Suburban Commuter Service Diesel Trains", an UMTA-funded study by Prof. Edward W. Walbridge, Dept. of Systems Engineering, U. of Illinois at Chicago Circle

an agreement, a 100% Federal subsidy would also be provided for the balance of "ConRail Year One".

Last year, in several testimonies, NARP pointed out that efforts to involve local agencies in subsidizing trains, when those agencies have avoided such involvement thus far, would be time-consuming because some officials would doubtless be opposed at first, and time would be needed to deal with their objections.

The good news for South Jersey residents is that following earlier uncertainty, the trains to Atlantic City and Cape May are now among those "saved", although it is questionable whether the state will sign the contract to permit operation after October 1 unless advocates of the service are successful in reversing the decision which led to ending the state subsidy on January 31.

Other unsubsidized trains are: Chicago-Valparaiso, Ind.; Cleveland-Youngstown, O.; Boston-Providence, R.I.; Boston-Stoughton, Mass.; Philadelphia to Bethlehem, and Pottsville-Reading, Pa.; to Newark, N.J. via Bound Brook; and to Wilmington and Newark, Del.; and Washington-Bowie-Baltimore.

The lone surviving Boston-Newburyport, Mass., run ended April 1, following into history services from Boston to Worcester and Ayer which ended last year. In addition, the Haverhill run has been jeopardized by the withdrawal of Andover, a major intermediate stop, from the subsidy program. (Communities outside the MBTA district are free to contract for rail service or not, as they wish.)

During its first 13 days of revenue operation, Washington's subway averaged 23,476 riders per day (pre-opening estimates were 8,500/day), and the most recent count was the second highest, 27,298. The line makes life easier for downtown workers who use Union Station commuter trains, and a *Washington Star* story featured interviews with NARP Director Lorena Lemons, and former Director David Spokely, both active in the Alliance for Rail Commuter Progress.

Better Track is Coming!

The federal district court in Indianapolis recently required Penn Central to upgrade the north-south mainlines formerly used by Amtrak in Indiana, and required Chessie to permit continued use of its Chicago-Richmond-Cincinnati line until the ex-PC tracks are ready for use.

The ruling, affirming earlier decisions by an arbitration panel in Washington, was unique in two ways.

First, unlike the earlier judgment Amtrak won against Illinois Central Gulf, the decision against PC makes clear that, once the track is upgraded to the "May 1, 1971, level of utility" specified in the railroad/Amtrak contracts, the railroad must *continue* to maintain the tracks to that standard at its sole expense.

For the Indiana work, the restoration money is to come from the Penn Central estate, not from ConRail, the new owner of the lines. The order directs the PC trustees to submit by May 3 a plan for upgrading the lines within two years.

Amtrak is working to ensure that such a plan will be submitted and the work accomplished within the specified time-frames. Amtrak filed a petition in the bankruptcy court overseeing the PC estate asking the court to direct the trustees to restore the tracks forthwith.

Although the trustees consented to the Indianapolis court order, and will not appeal it to the circuit court in Chicago, they are taking the position that the bankruptcy court can review the order in light of the Railroad Revitalization and Regulatory Reform Act of 1976, and relieve them of the requirement to do the work.

The Indianapolis decision gives added strength to Amtrak's longstanding claim that all railroads with which it deals must continue to maintain their tracks to the "May 1, 1971, level of utility". Amtrak has already filed for arbitration to require the PC trustees to restore all other ex-PC lines used by Amtrak on May 1, 1971, to the condition they were in on that day.

The fact that Chessie is not only appealing the judgment against itself but is also attempting to appeal the judgment against PC (which even PC is not appealing) reinforces the view that the decision is a major victory for Amtrak.

The former Penn Central lines involved are: Kankakee-Indianapolis-Cincinnati and Indianapolis-Louisville. The Chicago-Kankakee segment is part of the Illinois Central Gulf mainline which was involved in the earlier lawsuit. ICG, in compliance with the judgment in that case, is proceeding with a \$33 million program to upgrade the line, and completion is expected this year.

Alert Your Canadian Friends!

NARP member Harvey Dust (P.O. Box 698, St. Marys, Ontario, Canada NOM 2VO) is forming an Association of Canadian Train Travellers.

Since the Canadian railroads recover only 80% of their inter-city passenger losses from the government, there is considerable pressure for the government to set long-range policy and provide 100% subsidies.

The Canadian Transport Commission is holding hearings on transcontinental services. Those remaining: Winnipeg, May 3; Regina, 10; Saskatoon, 17; Edmonton, 31; Calgary, June 7; Vancouver, 14; Ottawa, 28. Written comments should be sent to: Secretary, Railway Transport Committee, 275 Slater St., Ottawa, Canada K1A 0N9.

CTC will issue a Summary of Findings, Preferred Plan, and, after further public comment, Final Plan. Continued transcontinental service seems likely, since CN learned the average passenger trip length on "Super Continental" is much longer than previously believed (900 or 1,500 miles, depending on definitions).

CTC will hold another series of hearings dealing with regional services.