



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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WE NEED MORE TRAINS!

"A dramatic new emphasis on public transportation" was called for by NARP's Ross Capon at the opening ICC hearing on Secretary Adams' preliminary report on Amtrak. ICC Chairman Daniel O'Neal chaired the session, which took place in Washington on June 26.

"The U.S. must begin to build a viable alternative to the automobile system." Capon said that improvements should be made to urban transit, intercity bus services, and intermodal connections but that, because of past spending patterns, the biggest push must be made on intercity rail passenger service.

Rail is the only energy-efficient alternative mode which can be made attractive to all segments of the population. Good coordination between rail and bus will attract to buses some people who would not consider using them otherwise. "Rail service should therefore be provided in more markets, at faster speeds, and at increased levels of frequency," said Capon.

"We advocate spending far greater amounts of money on intercity rail passenger service than Amtrak has received to date — especially for capital improvements — and the resulting benefits would likewise be great:

- lives would be saved as more people would be diverted from the dangerous automobile. (There were 46,880 highway deaths in 1977, up by 1,357 from 1976, according to a May 13 National Transportation Safety Board release.)

- energy consumption in the U.S. would be reduced, in turn reducing oil import levels which now have serious negative effects on the economy, both domestic and international;

- rail freight service would improve as a result of necessary track improvements;

- highway maintenance costs would go down and highway safety would improve as a result of diversion of truck and automobile traffic to the rails;

- environmental problems, notably air pollution and wasteful land use (from highways, parking, and highway-related developments), would be eased; and

- city centers and urban transit would benefit since intercity rail and bus are oriented towards serving downtown areas directly.

As public transportation improves generally, life would become fuller and more pleasant for people who do not have automobiles, and it would become practical for people to voluntarily live without automobiles (as opposed to doing without as a result of economic or physical limitations). The ability of the U.S. to adapt to the less energy-intensive lifestyle required in the future would be enhanced as automobile-dependent developments (i.e. suburban shopping malls) would be discouraged."

Capon said that the existing Amtrak system does not indicate the potential of modern rail passenger service because today's network is hampered by: old or inappropriate cars operated on

NARP played a major role in convincing RSPO to hold a hearing in Pittsburgh, PA, on the DOT Amtrak report. We regret the decision was not made before the June News was printed. The hearing is July 17, Federal Building, Rm. 2214, 1000 Liberty Ave.

Omitted from our list of service frequency reductions (May News) proposed in the DOT preliminary plan was one daily round-trip NY-Albany, leaving a total of seven on the line (including the "Lake Shore" and one state-subsidized service).

DOT is proposing the elimination of one NY-Florida train but would like to leave the choice of which one up to Amtrak's management. The "train-miles" entry for NY-Florida on page 5-5 of the preliminary report was based on the assumption that "Silver Star" would be discontinued, but, according to John Hart, chief of FRA's Rail Passenger Programs Division, those train-miles are not cast in concrete. He says Amtrak could elect instead to combine the NY-Charleston-Miami "Silver Meteor" and the NY-Raleigh-St. Petersburg "Champion" between NY and Jacksonville. This would reduce capacity and eliminate one of the services through the Carolinas (presumably the Raleigh one if the "Star" continued via Raleigh), but it would preserve twice-daily service between the Northeast Corridor and most Florida points.

Consequently DOT is looking for public comment (from those willing to consider service reductions) as to what the NY-Florida pattern should look like given the need to cut the service by at least one NY-Jacksonville round-trip or its equivalent. (The NY-Savannah "Palmetto" would continue under any option.)

Written comments can be sent until August 1 to the ICC Rail Services Planning Office, 1900 L St., NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20036.

all long-distance trains; bad tracks causing slow and poorly routed service; inadequate service frequency outside the Northeast Corridor; no service on many essential routes; and poorly located stations in certain cities.

He covered most of the points in the May News editorial, adding direct Chicago-El Paso-Tucson-Phoenix service as one of the essential routes not included in DOT's generally desirable Scenario E.

With regard to the Newport News-Washington "Colonial" and the Seattle-Vancouver "Pacific International", he said once-daily service on short-distance routes cannot be successful. He noted that the "Colonial" would be speeded up when signals were installed that would allow Amtrak to get the benefit of its \$1

(continued on page 4)

Joseph V. MacDonald

"JOSEPH V. MacDONALD, the principal proponent of restored rail passenger service from Washington to Montreal, a former member of the Amtrak Board of Directors, and, most importantly, a very gentle and genial man, died in a hospital near his Farmingdale, Long Island, home on Saturday, June 17, 1978.

"Joe was the son of an engineer on the Central Vermont Railroad, and the product of a family in which working for the Railroad was a way of life. (In 1971) Joe prepared a detailed proposal on the feasibility of a restored 'Montrealer' and submitted it to a number of sources including Burlington Free Press. From there, the story was given to the wire services and was subsequently published in several New England newspapers, (one which I read). My first conversation with this engrossing man was indeed exciting and informative. . . . I invited him to our next Inland Route meeting at Springfield, MA. Joe did come and so captivated the group that all of us become dedicated converts to the cause of restoring the Montrealer. . . .

"With Joe as the driving force and with invaluable help from Carl (NARP Director C.N. Monaghan, a St. Albans attorney and former railroad engineer), a campaign to revive the Montrealer was launched. During that 18 month period, culminating in the restoration of the train in September, 1972, Joe built an insurmountable case. . . . Despite the doubts, so characteristic of the negative thinkers in government, Joe by logic and factual material overcame every adverse comment. When government officials claimed the Vermont track would not hold a passenger train, Joe, through Carl, produced affidavits of Central Vermont engineers attesting that it would; when others claimed the train always had low patronage north of Springfield, Joe went to ICC records to show the patronage was in 1966, the year of abandonment, much higher than Amtrak's projections, at levels that justified restoration.

"Joe also initiated the idea to restore the Lake Shore Ltd. I urged him to compose a document suggesting that Cleveland's only hope for ever seeing a passenger train again was to aim for service to Boston, Joe prepared a masterful analysis suggesting Chicago-Cleveland-Boston train service. This was sent to Sen. Robert Taft (R-OH) who began the successful campaign.

"I visited Joe in the hospital a week before he died. His mind was, as usual, alert and his interest in rail passenger service pervading. He was deeply concerned about inaccurate figures in the recent DOT report on Amtrak's route structure. (He believed the correct passenger miles/train-mile figure for the "Montrealer", based on the DOT's operating cost estimating methodology in Appendix C, was 215, not 99 as DOT claimed.)

"Knowing Joe and working with Joe was an honor. We shall never again see the likes of him."

—James M.S. Ullman of Meriden, CT,
NARP Director

Dear Paul (Reistrup, former Amtrak President),

I want to convey our appreciation for the progress achieved at Amtrak under your leadership.

I know it was not easy to play an advocacy role as head of Amtrak when there was nothing but hostility from the Administration. Though we were sometimes critical of you for not pressing harder for adequate funding of Amtrak, we appreciate fully the number of times when you did speak as forcefully as a consumer advocate.

There is also no doubt that Amtrak as an organization was in better shape when you left than it was the day you joined Amtrak.

Finally, thank you for keeping open the lines of communication between Amtrak and NARP even at times when Secretary Coleman would have preferred to isolate and destroy Amtrak.

Best wishes for success in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

Orren Beaty,
President of NARP

Rail Passenger Week Observed



The NARP Executive Committee designated April 17-23 as National Rail Passenger Week. In spite of the late time at which this action was taken and reported (in a News mailed Feb. 10), several public officials made the declaration in response to requests from NARP members. These included: the Governors of Arizona, Missouri, and Vermont; the Ohio House of Representatives, in Resolution HR 616; the supervisors of St. Louis (MO) and Kern and Santa Clara (CA) counties; and the Mayors of Flagstaff, AZ, Grand Rapids, MI, and St. Louis, MO.

The pictures show, left to right, (above) W.A. Ordway, director of Arizona DOT; State Sen. Sue Dye, president of the Rail Passenger Association of the Southwest; Gov. Bruce Babbitt, who proclaimed Rail Passenger Week in Arizona; and NARP Director Charles Montooth; (below) NARP Director F. Travers Burgess; St. Louis Mayor Jim Conway with his proclamation; and Ralph H. Mangum, Amtrak's district sales manager in St. Louis.



NARP Director John D. Heffner, a Washington attorney, has donated countless hours to the Association as its counsel in the ICC's "Southern Crescent" proceedings. This included three full days of hearings in Washington and two in New Orleans. Director John R. Martin of Atlanta, also an attorney, made a lengthy appearance as a public witness at the Anniston, AL, hearing, impressing SR officials with the extent of his knowledge of SR's operations. Many other NARP members helped mount an effective case.

NARP's basic argument was that ICC should not permit a gap in service to occur since it appears that Amtrak will take over the train at some point. ICC must render its decision by August 6. SR and Amtrak have resumed negotiations.

Don't Be Bashful!

Editorial

NARP is seeking more trains as the Administration, recently joined by the National Taxpayers Union, fights for service cutbacks. So this is a good time to review our nation's massive discrimination against rail services, for the edification of those who find our goals unreasonable.

Most statistics used to justify shrinking Amtrak are based on operation of Amtrak's present equipment over today's track and have no relevance to what *modern* passenger trains can do.

The fundamental reason why Amtrak's operating statistics are vulnerable to attack is that rail passenger service—and many rail rights of way—have been starved of capital investment for several decades while all levels of government have lavished money on highways, airports, aircraft control systems, and waterways. The main public involvement with the railroads until recently was to collect taxes from them. (Even Amtrak pays taxes. In FY '77, it paid \$81.6 million in taxes, an amount equal to 15% of its net loss.)

Through FY 1975, direct Federal aid totaled \$89 billion for highways, \$26 billion for air, \$15 billion for domestic water, and \$1.8 billion for railroads. Figures for FY '75 were \$5.3 billion, \$2.5 billion, \$717 million, and \$549 million. (p. III-25, DOT Study of Federal Aid to Rail Transportation, January 1977, available from Natl. Technical Information Service, 5285 Port Royal Rd., Springfield, VA 22161. Specify rept. PB 267215; send \$9.50 for 4th class mail delivery, add \$2 for 1st class.)

The bias against rail is even more pronounced when one considers that much of the Federal aid to rail is for operating subsidies for Amtrak, Penn Central, and Conrail, instead of crucial capital improvements; and when one adds in state aid: 77% of the \$458 billion spent on highways from 1921 to 1976 came from state and local governments while 79% of the \$21 billion spent on airports through 1976 also came from state and local governments.

Waterway operators pay no user fees. This has hurt competing railroads, such as the ICG over which Amtrak provides slow, unreliable service between Chicago and Dubuque, St. Louis, and Memphis/New Orleans.

Highway and air supporters claim that most of the public funds spent on these modes are not really subsidies because they come from trust funds to which the users of those modes contribute.

The biggest subsidy of all, however, was the act of establishing the trust fund mechanism for highway and air but not for rail. If a

The trust fund arrangement when applied to certain modes and not to others forces many people to contribute unwillingly. How many times have you taken a trip by road or air when you would have used a modern train had it been available? You contributed to trust funds on each of those trips. Yet when you ask for good trains, you are told highways pay for themselves so why can't the railroads!!

rail trust fund had been established earlier in the century, *while the railroads were generally healthy*, the railroads might still be in good shape.

Conversely, if we had never set up the other trust funds, public policy might be more responsive to changing needs. Trust funds

"The Stockholm metropolitan area measures roughly 50 to 70 miles and public-transit passengers equipped with a pass that costs the equivalent of \$17 a month can ride any public conveyance in the area for any distance and for an unlimited number of journeys. The monthly fare card consists of a coupon affixed to a pass that carries a photograph of the bearer. New coupons are pasted over the old. Single tickets cost about 20¢ each and are good for travel within one zone; they are generally bought in rolls of 18, which brings down the unit cost to about 16¢. Practically the entire population buys the monthly pass, which accounts for about 70% of total farebox receipts.

which are limited to specific functions generate huge self-perpetuating power structures both inside and outside of government. This concentration of power blocks the logical next steps: raising highway user charges first to a level where they will fully cover the direct costs of highways, later to where they will

All the general tax and trust fund dollars poured into the highway system are not enough to keep it going. The Federal Highway Administration has stated that highways are wearing out 50% faster than they are being repaired and, most damaging to the railroads, big trucks don't pay their fair share of the costs. The Bureau of Public Roads (now FHA) found that trucks paid \$219.1 million (24%) less than their allocated responsibility in 1969, while semi-trailers and full trailers paid only 56% of their responsibility.

also cover indirect costs (30% of city police costs; health and accident costs, air and noise pollution and energy waste; loss of excessive amounts of land from taxable use), revenues to be used to restore more efficient rail services at whose expense the highways have been built up; and adjusting the mechanism so that big trucks contribute their fair share of total payments to the trust fund.

The user charge approach when applied selectively gives an advantage to the affected modes by permitting "the conversion of fixed costs into user charges. . . . During slack business periods their right-of-way user payments fall off; in good periods, their payments rise. Railroads and pipelines are not permitted that luxury, however. Amortization of right-of-way investments for these carriers requires fixed annual payments to finance systems that must be built to handle peak traffic loads; these charges have to be met in bad business years as well as in prosperous years. The risk of interest default is thus much higher for rails and pipelines — barges, motor carriers and airlines are spared this debt burden." (DOT Study, p. IV-13)

Furthermore, substantial portions of the public funds invested in highway and air facilities did *not* come from trust funds. The Association of American Railroads, based on Federal Highway Administration reports, asserts that of \$458 billion spent on highways by all levels of government from 1921 to 1976, \$155 billion was not recovered in user charges.

As for the air system, the DOT Study states that "airport and airway development costs incurred prior to the assessment of user charges in 1971 have been treated as sunk costs, none of which have been or will be paid for by air carriers and other system users. These sunk costs total \$15.8 billion." (page IV-12)

Land grants. It is sometimes argued that land grants to the railroads adequately balances the ledger. Yet over 92% of railroad mileage today had nothing to do with land grants. Furthermore, the 1850 land grant law included the obligation to haul government personnel and freight at a 50% discount, and mail at a 20% discount. For competitive reasons, these discounts were also offered by some non-land railroads. They remained in effect until October 1, 1946, by which time the railroads had contributed \$1.25 billion worth of discounts to the government. (This estimate, by the railroads, was based on extrapolating the figure in the 1945 report of the Congressional committee handling the legislation repealing the discount: "It is probable that the railroads have contributed over \$900 million in payment of the lands which were transferred to them.") Former ICC Commissioner J.B. Eastman estimated the lands were worth \$126 million at the time they were granted.

—Ross Capon

"A further incentive to use public transit is offered by a tax write-off. The cost of the monthly ticket—about \$200 a year—can be claimed as a deductible expense by all taxpayers who live more than two kilometers (1.2 miles) from their place of work. Car owners, on the other hand, cannot claim any expense for driving to work unless they can prove they are able to save more than 90 minutes a day by using their own vehicle."

—George G. Wynne, Dir. of Communications, Council for International Urban Liaison, letter to Washington Post, published June 21, 1978

Washington Union Station

The most dramatic improvement in rail-bus coordination yet—and one of the most dramatic possible—has won the support of Senator Russell Long (D-LA), chairman of the Finance Committee and the Commerce Subcommittee on Surface Transportation.

Consolidation of Greyhound and Trailways into a completed transportation complex at Washington Union Station, already used by the new subway system, city buses, and commuter and intercity passenger trains, is also supported by the two bus companies and NARP.

This would be a key victory in the fight for better public

One of incoming Amtrak President Alan Boyd's first decisions was to approve the promotion of On-Board Services Director H. Rex Holland to Assistant Vice-President, the first Amtrak head of OBS to achieve this distinction.

At his first Board meeting, June 28, Boyd sought and received permission from the Board to resume negotiations with Southern on takeover of the "Southern Crescent", and to resume fact-finding on the rerouting of Chicago-Florida service via Atlanta. Woodruff Price, representing Secy. Adams on the Board, did not object to either action.

transportation since Washington is the 8th largest metropolitan area in the nation and one of the fastest growing, and, as the nation's capital, it is visited by officials from all over the U.S.—many of whom are likely to return home inspired enough to work for intermodal terminals in their own communities.

In March, 1968, a law was enacted under which Union Station was to be converted into a National Visitor Center and operated by the National Park Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Interior. The scheme was inspired by the desire to save Daniel Burnham's magnificent architecture in the face of dwindling rail passenger traffic. In fact, the passengers were to be banished to a small, new station just north of Union Station. The original scheme was not going to cost the government a cent.

By 1976, however, the owners (Chessie & Penn Central—Amtrak) had spent \$16 million, the government \$30 million, the Visitor Center was opened July 4, the small station was opened, and a 1200-car parking garage and access ramps to it were not completed. Funds ran out late that year and construction was stopped.

During that decade, it had become apparent that rail passenger service was not going to die, and that the small new rail station (the ground floor of the parking garage) was inadequate even for existing traffic levels. The Park Service and its friends in Congress ignored these developments, intent upon completing the original 1968 concept.

The Carter Administration took office with funds for the project exhausted, the project incomplete, and access to the passenger trains severely impaired by the whole mess. In February, 1978, Secretary Adams and Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus presented a \$52 million plan (\$23 million to come from money already authorized for the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project) to reduce the size of the Visitor Center, return most of Union Station to rail passenger use, eliminate the new station, and relay the upper-level tracks south to the station.

Secy. Adams claimed the plan would not prevent later addition of intercity buses to the complex, but he opposed that addition now because he said it would add \$30 to \$50 million to the cost and the bus companies were not willing to commit any funds to it.

Like most big projects, however, the National Visitor Center had its supporters, both within Interior (notwithstanding the position of Secy. Andrus) and on Capitol Hill. After Rep. Norman Mineta (D-CA), chairman of the Public Works Subcommittee on Public Buildings and Grounds, finished hearings on the matter he worked out a compromise which retained the essentials of the Administration proposal but slightly reduced the amount of space the Visitor Center would have to give up.

This compromise fell apart when the Park Service representative refused to support it, presumably violating the mandate of his boss, Secy. Andrus. Supporters of the 1968 concept decided to

Before the House voted 204-89 in favor of a \$600 million Amtrak authorization June 23, it rejected by a much narrower margin (119-186) an amendment by Rep. Edward Madigan (R-IL) which would have forced discontinuance of NY-Florida, Chicago-Oakland, and current Chicago-Florida service, but would not have prevented Amtrak from initiating new service using some segments of discontinued routes.

Madigan's amendment was aimed at trains which, over a 12-month period, had an average public subsidy of more than \$100 per passenger. Subsidy per passenger basically measures the average trip length of a train's passengers, and not the economic viability of a service. Commerce Committee Chairman Harley Staggers (D-WV) led the fight against the amendment, noting that his own district would not be affected but routes other than the three named were on the borderline and would soon be forced off. (Los Angeles-New Orleans and Chicago-Havre-Seattle both had FY '77 deficits per passenger exceeding \$90.) Subcommittee Chairman Fred B. Rooney (D-PA) complained that Madigan's criteria had not been considered in subcommittee and that passing it at this point in the route study process already established was unreasonable.

The House did accept an amendment by Rep. Madigan, supported by Secy. Adams, requiring Amtrak budget requests to be submitted to OMB under the same procedures applicable to other Federal departments and agencies; and one by Joe Skubitz (R-KS) requiring Amtrak to attract and service the bulk mail needs of the Postal Service, replacing language deleted in committee that put the burden on the Postal Service.

The cut from \$613 million to \$600 million for operations was an amendment by Skubitz offered as a substitute for a \$575 million amendment by Samuel Devine (R-OH). It was approved by voice vote.

hold firm. Chairman Harold T. (Bizz) Johnson (D-CA)—who voted against Amtrak on all three roll calls last November 30—and his committee ignored the needs of the rail passenger and voted \$36 million to complete the National Visitor Center as originally designed in 1968.

Enter the Senate. The Committee on Environment and Public Works held a hearing chaired by Daniel P. Moynihan (D-NY). The Commerce Committee, which could also claim jurisdiction because of Amtrak involvement, also held a hearing, and the intermodal plan caught Senator Long's fancy. FRA now says that a ground-level 35-bus terminal would cost \$15 to \$20 million and require a lengthy environmental impact study, while a two-level facility for 53 buses would cost \$20 to \$25 million and would not require the environmental statement.

It appears possible that Senate interest will result in funding of the bus terminal. The House committee action, however, has endangered the rail improvements. NARP members are urged to write Sen. Long thanking him for his support of intermodalism at Washington Union Station, but urging him to support also the Administration-endorsed rail improvements.

More Trains *(continued from page 1)*

million investment in a Richmond track connection built specifically for this train, and that relocation of the Newport News station would both speed up the service further and make it more accessible to the public.

He said DOT should analyze the Vancouver train as part of the "Coast Starlight" since it was scheduled to connect with that train and not to maximize ridership on the Seattle-Vancouver segment. Such analysis would put the combined Los Angeles-Vancouver service at 211 PM/TM, more than twice the DOT's threshold.

Capon argued for restoration of daily service on both Chicago-Seattle routes "because the experience to date has been characterized by frequent schedule changes, and extended periods of operation on schedules either badly designed, too slow due to track and engine problems, not adhered to reliably, or a combination of" the above.