

CORRIDOR FUNDING, CONTROL UNCERTAIN



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

Vol. 9, No. 10 December, 1975

"If the public testimony in these hearings, by individuals and State agencies alike, is a true indication of national needs and expectations, a national, modern rail passenger system should now be planned — and built. But at the very least, the time at last has come to face this important problem squarely, objectively, and honestly."

—ICC Administrative Law Judge Robert M. Glennon,
from Initial Decision, Adequacy of Rail Passenger
Service (1975 investigation)

Despite Gains, Amtrak Faces Difficult Times

It is the Christmas season, and we have warm and friendly wishes toward all. But —

It also must be the winter of Amtrak's discontent, because for all its gains in new equipment, leadership and experience, difficulties cloud its future.

First, there is an acute cash shortage brought on by the combination of ridership (revenues) below what was estimated when the current budget was prepared and a lower appropriation than was authorized.

This has Amtrak management involved in a serious exercise looking for economies, some of which (elimination of some trains) NARP believes would be ill-advised and counter productive. Evidence of this was the recent announcement of fare increases (See details on page 2 under "Fares and Service.") in which Amtrak President Paul H. Reistrup said the alternative to raising fares was cutting off some service.

Since Congress has frozen routes as they now exist, no route can be eliminated soon, but service on routes with more than one daily train could be trimmed. NARP believes (and the Chicago-Detroit service with three daily Turbo trains each way serving steadily increasing numbers, supports our view) that increased frequency is the key to vastly increased ridership; that reduced frequency would be an undesirable retreat.

Second, Amtrak faces budget cutters within the Administration who have no vision of the nation's transportation needs and how best to meet them. This is leading to "go slow" or "stand still" planning on some logical service extensions, such as multiple daily service between Washington and Richmond, Va., with perhaps service during the Bicentennial period to historic Williamsburg. The service Richmond gets from the Northeast-Florida trains is inadequate and does not serve the needs of business men and government travel.

Third, in attempting to improve the Washington-New

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Supporters of improved rail passenger service were rightly holding their breath as Congress, moving toward a Christmas recess or adjournment, strove to compromise different versions of the Rail Service Act of 1975.

The Senate bill (S. 2718), better from the passenger service standpoint in NARP's view, was passed in early December. H.R. 10979, due for House action as we go to press, was more acceptable to the Administration, which threatened a veto of the Senate bill.

Both measures were aimed primarily at making changes in the law needed for restructuring of the bankrupt railroads of the Northeast and Midwest and to permit the new Consolidated Rail Corporation (ConRail) to begin operations in late February.

They also provide some regulatory reform designed to give freight-hauling railroads more flexibility in rate making and in making service changes. There also is provision for aiding railroads outside the bankrupt region.

Passenger service is involved principally in provisions governing ownership and control of the Washington-New York-Boston corridor and in a plan to upgrade the "by then former" Penn Central mainlines generally.

Differences — aside from the fact that the Senate bill is almost \$2 billion larger — include: S. 2718 would give ownership and control of the Corridor to a fully-owned subsidiary of Amtrak; the House bill provides \$200 million for passenger-related track and roadbed improvement outside the Northeast-Midwest area.

Both bills provide some breathing time to long commuter lines and the light density branch lines not included in the Final System Plan — both of which would otherwise face quick discontinuance after ConRail begins operations.

The Senate bill authorizes nearly a billion dollars more for ConRail, and \$3 billion for improvement of the Northeast passenger corridor, while the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce reduced the amount by \$300 million below the bare minimum \$1.2 billion the Administration originally was willing to accept. Both bills killed Administration plans for state matching, leaving Corridor improvements a fully federal responsibility.

Senate debate was relatively calm. But as committee action reached final stages in the House, DOT and White House lobbyists swarmed in seeking to reduce authorizations, modify provisions on ConRail's financial arrangements to repay stock and bond holders of the bankrupts, and to eliminate some of the railroad's rate-making arrangements.

A belated attempt was made in House committee to give control of the Corridor to Amtrak, but the amendment, poorly explained, was easily defeated after Subcommittee Chairman Fred B. Rooney (D-Pa.) opposed it. Subcommittee members normally support the bill they have reported to the full committee, and Rooney was following that custom.

Brock Adams (D-Wash.) had no such compunction, offering amendments to drastically slash the amounts of money to be authorized both for a nationwide "Rail Transportation Fund" and for Northeast Corridor upgrading, below subcommittee totals.

Rooney was able to muster sufficient votes to turn back the Adams' thrusts, and with the help of most of the new Democrats on the committee and senior member Torbert Macdonald won approval of compromises offered by Paul Rogers (D-Fla.) which restored some of the cuts proposed by Adams.

Generally credited with being one of the more knowledgeable members on transportation matters, Adams seemed to have lost much of his influence on the Committee. (He has been heavily occupied as chairman of the House Budget Committee.) Both in subcommittee mark-up and in the full committee, many Adams' amendments were defeated.

In seeking to work out differences, leaders in both Houses expressed hope the job could be finished by Christmas.



SEASON'S GREETINGS

FROM THE STAFF OF NARP

ORREN BEATY, ROSS CAPON, AND LINDA STURGILL

NARP Membership Meetings To Be Held In 12 Regions

The first election by all NARP members of their Board of Directors will be conducted next month during meetings in each of NARP's 12 regions. One regional meeting (VI.—Ohio, Michigan and Western Pennsylvania) will be held February 7, but all the rest are in January.

There will be a standard meeting agenda with regional modifications permitted. In addition to election of directors (one for each 100 members in the region), it will include ideas for more emphasis on state, bi-state and regional ARP activities in a way to strengthen NARP, re-examination of dues structure, and state and national legislative priorities.

Some arrangements were not complete at press time, but local contacts are listed below to enable members to get the necessary details. We hope all members will be able to participate, but knowing that some will not, proxy voting has been provided.

Details for the meetings, by region, follow:

I. All New England. Five directors.

Jan. 17, 1 p.m., at Back Bay Station, 145 Dartmouth Street, Boston. Special attraction, talk by David L. Gunn, director of operations, MBTA, outlining local rail planning and its overlap with Amtrak.

Contact persons: Directors Eugene K. Skoropowski, 24 Pine Street, Melrose, Mass. 02176, tel. 617/423-2030; James M.S. Ullman, 95 E. Main St., Meriden, CT. 06450, tel. 203/237-8888, or Samuel E. Stokes, Jr., Alstead, N.H. 03602, tel. 603/835-6556. (Other present directors: Austin L. Adams, Washington, CT; Thomas C. Mendenhall, Vinyard Haven RFD, Mass., and Barbara Hollerith, 14 Cove Ridge Lane, Old Greenwich, CT.)

II. New York State. Five directors.

January 10, 11 a.m., at Century Club (Ask for NARP meeting.), 7 West 43rd St., near Grand Central Station, New York.

Contact persons: Directors Oliver Jensen, "American Heritage," 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York 10020, tel. 212/997-6901; or Lettie Gay Carson, Carson Road, Millerton, N.Y. 12545, tel. 914/789-3353. (Other present directors: Henry Luce III, Time & Life Building, New York, N.Y. 10020, and Barry C. Phelps, 48 Palmerston Road, Rochester, New York.)

III. New Jersey, Delaware, E. Pennsylvania. Five directors.

Jan. 22, 8 p.m., Room N-107, Architecture Building, Princeton University, N.J.

Contact persons: Directors Dorothy D. Spivack, Cornerhouse, Far Hills, N.J. 07931, tel. 201/234-0194; or Thomas C. Southerland, 282 Western Way, Princeton, N.J. 08540, tel. 609/452-3742 or (h) 924-5258. (Other directors: Edmund K. Faltermayer, Westfield, N.J. 07090; James F. Farny, 12 Squirrel Lane, Newark, Del. 19711, and Henry F. Harris, 575 East Evergreen Avenue, Philadelphia 19118.)

IV. Maryland, Virginia, District of Columbia and West Virginia. Five directors.

Washington, place and time to be determined.

Contact persons: Director Joseph F. Horning, Jr., tel. 202/659-9630, or NARP office, 202/546-1550. (Other directors: Peter B. Bell, 1913 23rd Street, N.W., Washington 20008; Lorena F. Lemons, 1900 Snow Drop Lane, Silver Spring, Md. 20906; David G. Spokely, P.O. Box 247, Kensington, Md. 20795; E. Neel Edwards, 4102 David Lane, Alexandria, Va. 22311.)

V. N.C., S.C., Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Eastern Louisiana. Four directors.

Jan. 17, lunch at 12 noon at San Jose Country Club, Jacksonville, Fla. (Those who can attend should so notify Director Lee E. McIlvaine of 900 Brookwood, Jacksonville, 32207, tel. 904/396-4443 or (o) 396-4444, a week early.), with meeting at McIlvaine residence to start at 3 p.m.

(Other contacts: Directors Elmer E. Jones, Jr., 615 Ocean Drive Key Biscayne, Fla. 33149, tel. 305/443-8835; John R.

Martin, P. O. Drawer 1734, Atlanta, Ga. 30301, tel. 404/897-2102, or Edwin P. Patton, 841 Cherokee Blvd., S.W., Knoxville, Tenn. 37919, tel. 615/584-8316 or (o) 974-5311.)

VI. Ohio, Western Pa., and Michigan. Five directors.

Feb. 7, Commodore Perry Hotel, Toledo, Ohio. Meeting will be held in conjunction with joint meeting of Michigan and Ohio Associations of Railroad Passengers which will start at 10:30 a.m. Regional meeting to start at 1:30 p.m.

Contact persons: David S. Marshall, 1024-A Courtney Drive, Dayton, Ohio 4531, tel. 513/252-0481 or (o) 222-1215, or John DeLora, Box 6901, Grosse Point, Michigan 48236.

(Other directors: Dean E. Denlinger, 390 Talbott Tower, Dayton 45402; Robert H. Horwitz, Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio 43022; James B. Stevenson, RD 1 Box 229C, Youngsville, Pa. 16371, and Richard M. Scaife, P.O. Box 1138, Pittsburgh, Pa.

VII. Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin. Six directors.

Jan. 10, 10 a.m., Midland Hotel, 172 West Adams, Chicago.

Contact persons: Directors Edward H. Bennett, Jr., 332 South Michigan Ave., Chicago, 60604, tel. 312/CE4-0404 or (o) 922-6444, or William H. Bryan, 1901 Seminary, Alton, Ill. 62002, tel. 618/465-1324 or (o) 463-6000. (Other Directors: William Butterworth, 1827 7th Street, Moline, Ill. 61265; Dr. George E. McCallum, St. Norbert College, West DePere, Wisc. 54115; D.W. Downey, 130 N. Wells, Chicago 60606, and Robert G. Moorhead, P.O. Box 1652, Indianapolis, Ind. 46206.)

VIII. Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, N. & S. Dakota. Two directors.

Place and time to be determined.

Contact person: Charles McKee, RR No. 3, Box 140, Des Moines 50321, tel. 515/285-2272. (Directors: J. Ford Bell, 10501 Wayzata Blvd., Hopkins, Minn. 55343, and Lawrence Poston of Lincoln, Neb., temporarily in Tulsa, Okla.)

IX. Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri and Western La. Three directors.

Jan. 17, 1:30 p.m., English Room of Baker Hotel, Dallas.

Contact persons: Directors James R. Gough, 3025 Glen Haven Blvd., Houston, Tex. 77205, tel. 713/667-3047, or Raymond E. Hannon, Box 6228, Dallas, tel. 214/637-5181. (Other director, H. Lang Rogers, Joplin Globe, Joplin, Mo. 64801.)

X. Colorado, Wyoming, Utah. One director.

Jan. 17, 10 a.m., University of Denver Speech and Hearing Center, 2450 S. Vine St., Denver, Colo.

Contact: Director, Dr. Jerome G. Alpiner, 6962 S. Jackson Way, Littleton, Colo. 80122, tel. 303/771-3634.

XI. N. California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Alaska, Hawaii, and N. Nevada. Four directors.

January 10, 10 a.m., Heritage Room of Marines' Memorial Club, 615 Sutter, San Francisco, Calif. (No host lunch at end of meeting.)

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PROXY FORM

Any member of NARP whose dues are current is eligible to vote in the election of members of NARP's Board of Directors during the January regional meetings. If you cannot attend the meeting in your region, you should mail to your contact person (listed in accompanying article) a letter which gives your name, address and expiration date of your membership, and states that you want to vote absentee. Then list the persons for whom you wish to vote.

Proxy votes must reach the contact person by the time of the scheduled meeting in order to be counted. Voting will close when the meeting ends.

ROGER LEWIS LEAVES BOARD

Roger Lewis, Amtrak's first president and a member of the board of directors since it was first appointed, has resigned from the board. After giving up the chairmanship earlier this year, he continued to serve as a member until mid-December. His term had several months to run.

NARP Membership Meetings

(continued from page two)

Contact persons: Directors, Helen R. Nelson, 13897 Trinity Avenue, Saratoga, Calif. 95070, tel. 405/867-3218, or 415/392-2384, and Arthur L. Lloyd, 20 Arapahoe Court, Portola Valley, Calif. 94025, tel. 415/851-0998 or (o) 556-1412.

XII. So. California, So. Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico. Three directors.

Jan. 10, 3 p.m., Colonial Room, Ambassador Hotel, 3400 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif.

Contact persons: Directors, Charles Montooth, Taliesin West, Scottsdale, Ariz. 85252, tel. 602/948-6400; Philip K. Reiner-Deutsch, 161 S. St. Andrews Place No. 302, Los Angeles 90004, or Alfred Runte, 109 Dearborn Place No. 74, Goleta, Calif. 93017.

Plans for starting service on the Washington-Denver train next May 1 apparently have run into trouble. Amtrak reportedly is considering a November 1, 1976 date now.

Amtrak Faces Difficult Times

(continued from page one)

York-Boston corridor with high speed passenger trains, Amtrak continues to bump against an unsympathetic Administration.

Transportation Secretary William T. Coleman, during the high-pressure lobbying the Administration conducted as the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce worked on details of the rail bill, told some members that the Department does not favor giving Amtrak control and management of the Corridor. U.S. Railway Association's Final System Plan recommended Amtrak control, and Amtrak has had a large group of planners and executives at work for months preparing for the take over.

Evidence of the Administration attitude also was provided by two other earlier Coleman statements, in one of which he was quoted as asking after some Senate testimony, "What normal person would take a train between Washington and Boston?" Earlier, interviewed by a reporter in New York City, he said that developing a major high-speed route for Amtrak would be "so expensive that a ban on airport-clogging shuttle flights on the same route would be needed to justify it."

So, this is what Reistrup and his chief aides face in trying to move Amtrak rapidly ahead. It is a tough job.

New Locomotives: Things Looking Up

Amtrak has finally accepted two of the new GE electric locomotives, following FRA approval of their operation at 85 mph, the official limit for the old GG-1s now in service. At press time, a total of 12 of the 26 ordered electric locomotives were "on the property", 10 awaiting testing. In addition, tests were to begin shortly at the 120 mph speeds specified by Amtrak in its original order.

By mid-1976, Amtrak will be testing a Swedish electric locomotive built by ASEA, to be leased for six months which could be extended to a year. The locomotive is capable of 120 mph, and the fact that its weight — 180,000 pounds — is about half that of comparable U.S. locomotives may lead to important operating economies.

16 new GE diesels have been accepted and are running out of Chicago and Washington with electrically heated coaches.

On A Slow Train In MoPac

The Clearance Card, publication of the Southwest Railroad Historical Society, reports in its December issue that:

The Missouri Pacific's president, John H. Lloyd, is quoted: "Rail transportation offers the best solution to a trio of public concerns — pollution, land usage, and dwindling energy resources (Sweet music, and just what we've been saying!). . . One double track railroad can accommodate truck traffic of a 20-lane super highway." (Right again, so why are some railroads eliminating their double tracks?)

NARP's question: With this enlightened outlook on the advantages of railroad transportation and with generally well-maintained trackage, why does MoPac hold Amtrak trains to a piddling 60 mph maximum, when they could and should be running at 79?

Elsewhere in *The Clearance Card*, our Texas friends note that Amtrak's timetable for the "Inter-American" near Laredo has 20 minutes added for a 3.5-mile stretch, suggesting that, in spite of specific preference for passenger trains in the 1973 Amtrak Improvement Act, the lengthened timetable is to accommodate a MoPac freight.

NARP wishes MoPac well, continuing profitable operation and all that, but we also wish Amtrak would invoke provisions in the law to get faster operations on MoPac's lines.

FARES AND SERVICES

INTERCITY: Amtrak has announced unexpected fare increases, part of what it calls "an effort to absorb a portion of inflation related cost increases without reducing. . . services." December 15, most coach fares for trips confined to the so-called corridors (throughout the country) will rise 5 or 10 per cent. The exceptions are in the Northeast, where fares under \$5 will not change, those \$5 and up will be increased 50 cents, and those \$10 and up will rise by \$1. Increases will be computed separately north and south of New York (e.g., Boston-Washington rises from \$29 to \$31.50), but will not exceed 10 per cent. In addition, all first-class fares on conventional Northeast Corridor trains will go up 10 per cent. Metroliner fares unchanged.

(Not earlier reported, and apparently not promoted by Amtrak, is the one-way version of the Boston-Washington "Bicentennial colonial corridor" fare: \$25, including a limited number of stopovers at intermediate points, and not good for trips scheduled to commence between 1 and 9 PM on Fridays and Sundays.)

On February 1, both coach and first-class fares on the "Montrealer" (Washington-Montreal) and "Adirondack" (NY-Montreal via Albany) will rise 10 per cent. Five per cent increases will be applied to many long distance fares: coach fares on the Los Angeles-Seattle "Coast Starlight", and on all other Western long distance trains, except for through travel between end-point cities or between Chicago and any Texas points; coach and first class fares on the Chicago-New Orleans "Panama Limited" and most trips involving intermediate points on Eastern long-distance trains excluding the new Cleveland trains, "Lake Shore Limited". (Exceptions are through travel Chicago-Florida, between Florida and Washington-points north, and between NY-Philadelphia/Washington and Chicago/St. Louis-Kansas City.)

A diner was added to the Chicago-Port Huron "Blue Water" on December 13 and, the next day, new "Amclub" cars began service on eight Northeast Corridor trains. Thirty "Amclub" cars are either on order or received.

COMMUTER: New Jersey fares rose between 15 and 50 per cent December 1, amid threats by the State DOT that more fare increases and service cuts would result if more money was not appropriated, and charges by some state legislators that the DOT was not using all the appropriate funds already available. In response to a legal challenge by two counties, a state Supreme Court justice ordered that passengers be given receipts so that the increases could be refunded if a subsequent court decision reversed them.

ICC Makes Recommendations on Adequacy of Passenger Service

"Few people using the trains seem to know that when service failures occur they have actual rights spelled out in specific ICC rules. . . The ICC should require Amtrak to furnish passengers a summary statement of the Adequacy of Service Regulations."

This is one of the findings and recommendations in the "initial decision" of ICC Administrative Law Judge Robert M. Glennon, based on 24 days of public hearings held around the nation earlier this year. (NARP testimony summarized in August-September *NARP News*.)

The general investigation was ordered last December by the Commission to determine "whether the Commission should prescribe additional rules" or recommend additional legislation.

Noting that "Amtrak would prefer that ICC regulation take the form of advisory standards, rather than mandatory rules," Judge Glennon nevertheless concluded from the hearings that "mandatory regulations are necessary to guide management and service personnel alike."

Other proposed changes in regulations (upon which the public would be given time to comment before their implementation) would prohibit smoking in any diner or on-train area where food is sold "unless the train consist has alternative smoking and nonsmoking cars offering such food services"; tighten loopholes relating to treatment of passengers when carriers fail to provide required services; and require carriers to provide annually a plan for eliminating barriers to use of trains by the elderly and handicapped. Amtrak is directed to submit by early January a proposed regulation regarding methods for informing passengers of smoking regulations.

But Glennon's report goes far beyond the "horror stories" which grabbed the headlines during the hearings, reflecting the testimony received as well as his own sensitivity to the need to insure that public input to the Amtrak planning/decision-making process not be "merely a perfunctory, meaningless ritual".

Noting the frustration of many witnesses regarding their efforts to influence Amtrak policies, and recognizing that Amtrak's work, however competent, will always include "assumptions and biases in selection and analysis of factual data", Glennon recommended that the ICC schedule periodic public hearings not only to hear passenger complaints and suggestions, but also to serve as a public information forum on Amtrak's plans, projections and problems, and as a "formal vehicle for effective State and regional participation in the decision-making process."

Glennon noted the importance of having Amtrak represented

at future hearings "by a responsible, upper level management official. . . as distinguished from its legal counsel", and said that the value of the present investigation was "diminished substantially" by the absence of such an official, and the fact that Amtrak officials who testified at the conclusion of the hearings "had not familiarized themselves with the. . . testimony of the public witnesses."

Further, he suggested that a new federal office, independent of Amtrak and DOT, be created to assist regional, state, and local interests in "the forthcoming planning/decision-making process". Such an office would have a role similar to that played in the reorganization of bankrupt Northeast railroads by the ICC Rail Services Planning Office.

Finally, he urged the ICC to recommend legislation providing that at least one Amtrak director "be appointed as a representative of states participating in Section 403(b) state subsidy programs."

The 114-page report is the most comprehensive and candid official document on the subject, including Glennon's own thoughtful analysis of the situation, as well as concise summaries of testimony given by state agencies, a selection of individuals and associations (including NARP and several state affiliates), and Amtrak. The dispassionate summaries of selected "horror stories" should be required reading for all Amtrak employees.

(In requesting copies from the Secretary, ICC, Washington, D.C. 20423 reference should be made to the Initial Decision in Ex Parte No. 277 (Sub-No. 3), Service Date: December 10, 1975.)

Amtrak officials have been upset over the hearings in particular and ICC jurisdiction over service quality in general. NARP hopes that Amtrak will respond positively to the constructive nature of Glennon's report, recognizing that ICC jurisdiction is here to stay and can be a positive force in the fight for good rail passenger service.

The full Commission will consider next steps in light of comments it receives on the Initial Decision. Although official deadlines are January 9 for filing exceptions and January 29 for responses to exceptions, it is recommended that anyone wishing to comment either pro or con act as quickly as possible, in addition — if they wish — to responding subsequently to exceptions which they disagree with. The Commission may wish to act rather quickly because its annual report must be given to Congress by March 15.

NEWS from NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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Ross Capon, Assistant Director
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