

AMTRAK WITHDRAWS SERVICE CUT PLANS



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

Vol. 7, No. 9 September 1973

HOUSE PASSES AMTRAK BILL BY VOTE OF 357 TO 37

The Amtrak Bill, H.R. 8351, was passed by the House of Representatives by a vote of 357 to 37, with 40 representatives not voting.

Since the bill is not the same as the Senate bill, it now goes to a House-Senate conference committee, where the two bills will be harmonized. Then, after passage by both houses of Congress, the bill will go to President Nixon for approval.

A copy of the roll call vote, indicating which congressmen voted for the bill and those who voted against it or did not vote, will be sent to NARP members on request. Write to Linda Sturgill, executive secretary of NARP.

'Super Chief' To Stay 'Super' Will Keep First Class Diner

The famous "Super Chief" between Los Angeles and Chicago was scheduled to lose its first-class dining car in a cost-cutting program by the National Rail Passenger Corporation, but personal intervention by a railroad president has — at least temporarily — saved the day.

Amtrak, faced with a limited budget, is looking for ways to save money. One way to do so would have been to downgrade its best passenger train, the Super Chief. Some cost-cutting has already taken place.

When Amtrak decided to eliminate the first class diner, however, John Reed, president of the Santa Fe Railroad, went into action. (The Super Chief had been turned-over intact by the Santa Fe when Amtrak went into operation.) Mr. Reed appealed directly to Roger Lewis, president of Amtrak, and the order to eliminate the first class diner was countermanded.

While NARP rejoices with passengers everywhere to see the Super Chief continue as an excellent train, the Association feels that sensible economies should be made during the off season. The train now carries four "non-revenue" cars. NARP believes that this number could be reduced to two and one-half without materially downgrading service quality, by: A. Substitution of a bedroom-lounge car for the full first-class lounge car; B. removing the coach diner, and C. expanding the capacity of the coffee shop-lounge to provide sandwich service and other "carry-out" food orders. Under this system, coach passengers who wish to do so would be able to patronize the first-class diner, where the menu would be restricted to full meals.

Meanwhile, Richard R. Wilhelm, 2240 Donax Ave., San Diego, Cal., a NARP member, has appealed to the Interstate Commerce Commission under the theory that Amtrak has illegally discontinued either the El Captain or the Super Chief when it combined the two trains.

Mr. Wilhelm contends that only one train exists where there had been two previously, that cars have been removed, that advertising is false, and that Amtrak plans even more cuts. "I urge you (the I.C.C.) to immediately enjoin Amtrak from making these reductions," Mr. Wilhelm concludes.

The "heat" was intense, ridership trends were up and Amtrak didn't expect to receive any bouquets at the upcoming Interstate Commerce Commission hearings—so the Floridian and the National Limited will not be discontinued.

But, as the National Association of Railroad Passengers suggested early this year, Amtrak will conduct "analysis of ridership trends and investigation of alternate service patterns."

One experienced Amtrak watcher said the National Rail Passenger Corporation never really intended to discontinue the two trains, but wanted to show both Congress and the Department of Transportation that the trains were both politically necessary and growing more popular every day.

Amtrak says however, it will still move to discontinue one segment of its Washington-Cincinnati-Chicago service, a connecting train between Newport News and Charlottesville.

The company, in an announcement, said that, system-wide, passenger traffic has soared, with passenger counts during the April-June period up 10 to 13 percent—and up even more on some long-distance routes.

Amtrak said passenger travel on the National Limited during the first five months of this year was up 66 percent above the same period last year, and travel on the Floridian was up 25 percent.

June traffic was up 55 percent on the National and 70 percent on the Floridian.

One reason for the increase the announcement said, was widespread concern over gasoline shortages.

Amtrak was under considerable congressional pressure to continue both runs. Bills pending in Congress would authorize \$3.2 million over the next year specifically for the National and the Floridian. The losses on the trains, however are in the range of \$5 million, an Amtrak official said.

Amtrak Sues 12 Railroads in Dispute Over Mail Service at Kansas City

Amtrak has filed suit against 12 railroads and the Kansas City terminal for allegedly charging Amtrak with handling costs of freight train-carried mail.

In an antitrust suit seeking \$15 million in treble damages, Amtrak said that paying for this service harms it competitively by subsidizing low fees for the freight-train competitors. Moreover, Amtrak said the terminal isn't even crediting it with the revenues for mail it does carry.

The suit says the company charged Amtrak for 70% of the costs of handling "rail mail," even though that classification covers only mail hauled in "piggyback" containers on the flatcars. Amtrak doesn't participate in that freight-car business.

Between May 1, 1971, when Amtrak took over passenger trains, and Dec. 31, 1972, Amtrak said it was billed for and paid under protest \$3.8 million to the terminal company. Of that total, \$2.3 million purportedly represented Amtrak's share of the company's expenses in handling the rail mail, even though Amtrak doesn't carry it and gains none of its "substantial revenues," Amtrak said. The share had risen to \$3 million by June 30, Amtrak added.

Finally, Amtrak said it hasn't been credited with "any portion" of the revenues the terminal company receives from the Postal Service for handling mail to be transported by Amtrak trains. These revenues have been credited to the 12 railroads instead, Amtrak said.

The 12 railroads named in the suit are the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe; Missouri Pacific; Burlington Northern; Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific; Chicago & North Western; Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific; Illinois Central Gulf; Kansas City Southern; Norfolk & Western; Missouri-Kansas-Texas; St. Louis & San Francisco, and Union Pacific.

New Push On For Washington Area Trains

Support NARP — Bring In A New Member

Yes, I want to aid the cause of better rail passenger service. I understand I will receive a membership card and a monthly newsletter to keep me informed of developments.

Enclosed is my remittance for the category checked. I understand that part of this amount is for a one-year subscription to the newsletter.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributing \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsoring \$50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Participating \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining \$100 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Life, \$500 or more |

(Please Print)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

(NARP members should not use this form to renew. It would be helpful if members wait until they receive the coded renewal reminder.)

New Travel Guide

"USA Train Travel Guide", a 255-page, pocket-sized paperback, is now on sale at bookstores throughout the country at \$3.95. It can be ordered from Rail-Europe, P.O. Box 3255, Alexandria, Va.

Robert G. Baxter, the publisher and editor, emphasizes Amtrak train service, but he also tells about Canadian and Mexican and non-Amtrak U.S. trains connecting with the Amtrak system. He also describes some essential air and bus services and locates them in relationship to rail stations.

'EMPEROR OF THE NORTH?'

(Following are excerpts from a letter to U.S. Senator John Tunney from a NARP member who recently rode the COAST STARLIGHT).

On my last four trips on the COAST STARLIGHT originating in Los Angeles I have observed a surly, rude brakeman by the name of (-----). He orders people around as though the train is a prison bus. On my latest trip from Los Angeles to Oakland, June 22nd, I once again found this individual working on the train with the same foul, arrogant, overly authoritative disposition. If you will check with the Amtrak on board passenger representative you will find that before departing L.A. the temperature throughout the coaches was extremely hot. The air-conditioning was not operating. I was assigned to car 1412 which was oversold. Thus all seats were taken before I entered the car so I attempted to move to another car.

I was confronted by this Southern Pacific creation, Mr. (-----), who barked: "go back to your car!" After observing his attitude on other trips I was now convinced he was not acting this animalistic way due to a bad mood of the day. I located an AMTRAK SUPERVISOR. I told him that there is an S.P. brakeman working on this train that is a hindrance to Amtraks' progress. His response, which was response from AMTRAK which can be traced right up the line to Roger Lewis, was and I quote: "The brakemen work for Southern Pacific so we have no control over them. But, if he gives you a bad time then TELL HIM TO GO TO HELL."

I want AMTRAK to succeed. But, it is Southern Pacific employees such as this brakeman that tend to destroy all the progress the dedicated people of Amtrak have achieved to date.

Steve Lannes
Oakland, Cal. 94611

The Metropolitan Washington Coalition for Clean Air has announced a revised version of the Washington Metropolitan Area Commuter Rail Plan, which was first introduced in May 1971 and strongly supported by NARP.

The plan, like the earlier version, is based on a feasibility study by transportation consultant Carl R. Englund Jr. for the Urban Mass Transportation Administration.

The major elements of the regional commuter rail system proposed in the Englund Study were: Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) Railroad from Union Station to Martinsburg, West Virginia; the Penn Central Railroad from Union Station to Baltimore via Bowie; and the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad from Union Station to Quantico, Virginia via Woodbridge.

The following major modifications and/or additions to the "Englund Study" are recommended by the Clean Air group:

1. Three additions to the regional commuter rail network: The Southern Railway from Alexandria 40 miles south through Manassas to Catlett, Virginia, the B&O from Union Station to Baltimore, Maryland via Laurel and certain passenger stops on the previously-revealed plan.

2. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority should administer the regional commuter rail system;

3. A minimum of three morning rush-hour trains, three evening rush-hour trains, and one later evening train should be provided weekdays on each of the five legs of the commuter rail network;

4. One train each morning and each afternoon should be provided on each leg of the network on Saturdays.

Charlotte Harrington (962-2861) and Jack Winder (785-2444) are cochairmen of the project.

Meanwhile, Virginia commuters to Washington, D.C. have also organized to seek rail passenger service from Quantico through Woodbridge and Alexandria to Washington via the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad. To contact "The Angry Friends of the Railroad", write to Charles W. Maris, 4732 Kirkdale Dr., Woodbridge, Va. 22191.

NARP Supports Train Connection in Texas

A proposal to temporarily link San Antonio and Austin to the "Texas Chief" by means of a bus which would intercept at Temple has been endorsed by NARP.

The Texas Committee for Public Transportation and the Texas Association of Railroad Passengers devised the plan, whereby Amtrak would provide a daily direct bus connection complete with thru-ticketing and checked baggage service. Alfred E. Elm, acting chairman of the Texas Association, announced the plan.

"Our support of this bus service is conditioned on the expectation that it will not be used to delay acceptable train service between the Midwest, Southwest Texas and Mexico," said Anthony Haswell, chairman of NARP, in a letter to Roger Lewis, president of Amtrak. "By the same token, we ask that initiation of this bus service not be delayed because of possible future additions to train service," he added.

Mr. Elm, who presented a comprehensive plan for the bus link, said there exists a considerable demand for direct daily passenger train service from San Antonio and Austin north to the Midwest.

I.C.C. hearings on the Newport News-Richmond discontinuances will be held at 9:30 a.m. Sept. 24-25 at Newport News, and at the same time Sept. 26 at Richmond.

Europe Planning 185 m.p.h. Trains

While Amtrak is upgrading by purchasing French turbos capable of speeds up to 125 miles per hour (if American tracks can be upgraded to handle such speeds), Europe has already started a program of linking its major cities with 185 miles per hour trains.

France's new super train—five cars powered by turbines generating 5,000-horsepower—is the "third generation" of a series of turbos already immensely popular.

Known as the T.G.V.-001 (meaning tres grande vitesse, or very high speed), it is the prototype of super turbos that the French National Railroad expects to operate on a new 262-mile line scheduled for construction between Paris and Lyons.

French and West German rail technicians say that 186-mile-an-hour service is economically feasible with conventional, although very advanced, equipment and tracks.

The equipment now being tested—France's T.G.V.-001 and West Germany's ET-403 electric locomotive, for example—can use today's central city station and tracks that will connect to the new high-speed lines outside the city.

That will mean the tremendous cost of building new lines through tightly built-up city areas can be avoided.

The Japanese, in building their celebrated "New Tokaido Line" had to construct an entirely new standard-gauge railroad through the heart of Tokyo and other cities because the old track was narrow gauge.

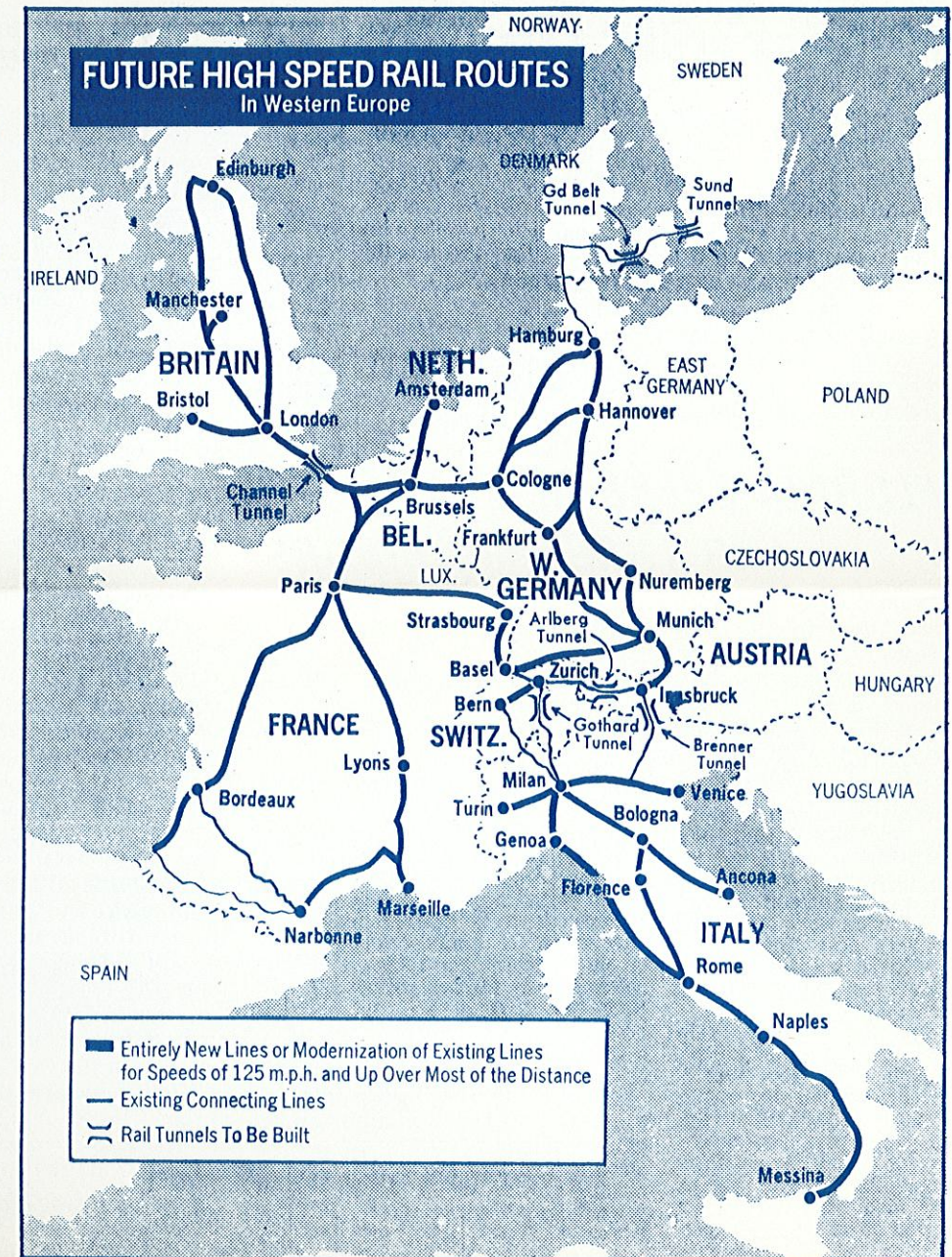
What are the chances that these immensely expensive high-speed projects will be more than pipe dreams? The financing problems vary from country to country but the following other factors are common to all west Europe:

1. There are numerous high-density population concentrations and corridors ideally suited to high-speed train service and where the jam of automobile traffic is increasingly severe.

2. The intercity passenger train, with luxury accommodations, is still extremely popular in Europe. There is no question of reviving a failing institution as is the case in the United States. Rather it would be following the Japanese example and improving an existing, major service.

3. The Common Market is pulling the countries more closely together leading to demands for high-speed transportation links.

Possibly spurred by the fact that Japan is already building an even longer rail, undersea tunnel between Honshu and Hokkaido, the British and French are expected to announce a decision about con-



Courtesy of New York Times

structing the English Channel tunnel within a few weeks.

The Channel tunnel has been projected as a high-speed rail link. A go-ahead on the tunnel would stimulate construction of high-speed track across Western Europe already envisaged by the national railroads.

With all this in mind and convinced that the fast passenger train is not only viable but absolutely necessary, the International Union of Railways, representing all of the Europe railways, called on them to produce their construction plans.

The railroads of France, Britain, Belgium, Holland, West Germany, Switzerland and Italy then submitted their master plans. They intend, they said, to build 3,150 miles of completely new double-track superspeed rail routes. Nearly 1,700 miles of this trackage, linking up most of west Europe's big cities, would be com-

pleted before 1985. The high-speed lines would be augmented by new rail tunnels through the Alps and between Denmark and Sweden.

It seems to me that Southern Railway should utilize the Amtrak station at Birmingham. The Amtrak station is closer to downtown restaurants and hotels, etc. and could easily accommodate Southern's passengers. On several occasions I have seen Southern's station so crowded there was standing room only, and it is an added expense and trouble changing stations in Birmingham when changing trains.

Thomas A. Jackson
NARP member

Metroliner Permits Cigars Again Thanks to Sen. Scott

Congress may be having difficulty gaining ascendancy over the Executive Branch but Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, the Senate minority leader, has bested Chief Justice Warren E. Burger in the "Court of Amtrak."

The ban on cigars was imposed last December by Amtrak after the chief justice wrote that he was bothered by cigar smoke while on the Metroliner. Senator Scott got involved by writing to Amtrak that he would find it difficult to endure the ride from Washington to Philadelphia without his pipe.

Amtrak will now treat cigar and pipe smokers the same as they treat cigarette smokers. Cars will be divided into smoking and no smoking sections.

FLORIDA SEEKS AMTRAK FOR THREE CORRIDORS

Officials of the Florida Department of Transportation have been meeting with Amtrak officials to seek the new French TurboTrain services for three intrastate corridors: Orlando-Miami, Jacksonville-Orlando-Tampa, and Jacksonville-Tallahassee-Pensacola.

Walter L. Revell, Florida secretary of transportation, said existing Amtrak service is inadequate for future needs because it does not offer frequent, dependable service or modern equipment.

Secretary Revell feels that projections of population and tourism growth indicate Florida can support intercity service if modern high-speed equipment is offered on a frequent and dependable schedule.

He said Amtrak officials have indicated they recognize the Florida potential and will consider it after results are available from the Chicago testing runs of the French turbos.

NARP Member William R. Osgood writes that Coastline Cab Service, Washington, D.C., 462-7300, will get passengers to outgoing trains at Washington Union Station "on time if given a stipulated advance notice."

NEWS from NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

417 New Jersey Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003

Published monthly except during November by the National Association of Railroad Passengers. Phone 202-546-1550.

Vol. 7, No. 9

September 1973

Anthony Haswell, Chairman
Robert J. Casey, Executive Director
Linda Sturgill, Executive Secretary

Subscription is through payment of a membership fee to NARP, \$3.00 of which applies to a one-year subscription to this publication.

(Any material appearing herein may be reproduced without permission. Credit to the source is requested.)

FRIENDS OF THE RAILROAD PASSENGER

U.S. Senator Robert Taft

A comprehensive plan to link major Ohio cities by rail has been proposed by U.S. Senator Robert Taft, who has a long record of service to improve railroad passenger service.

The senator suggested such a loop would serve a high population corridor similar to Amtrak's successful Northeast corridor that runs from Washington, D.C., to Boston via New York City and other high population points.

He said the loop could be tied into a national rail system with a line he proposes to run from Chicago to Toledo to Detroit.

"This would tie all major Ohio centers into a national rail system and would provide important intercity connections in Ohio that could reduce automobile and air traffic materially.

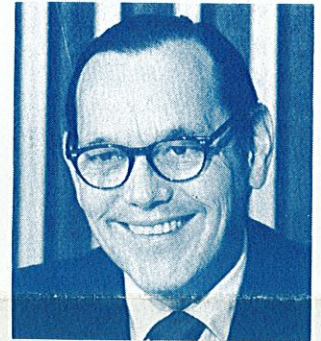
"There has been a great deal of consideration recently given to the energy crisis. The consumption of fuel by automobiles and jet aircraft certainly is a prime consideration in discussing this problem. Many statistics have been furnished regarding the impact that these modes of transportation have on the availability of energy to the country.

"One aspect, however, that has not been considered in depth is the effect that rail transportation has on the consumption of energy. For instance, the average passenger miles per gallon of fuel for a jet plane is between 21 and 22. For an automobile it is approximately 32, as compared to 80 for cross-country passenger train service and 200 for suburban train, two-deck, service. These figures, I think, are significant and certainly point to the advantages of utilizing rail passenger service in this country to a greater extent."

Senator Taft was first elected to Congress as a representative at large from Ohio in 1963. He later represented the first district of Ohio in the House, and in 1971, he was elected to the Senate.

He is a member of the Committees on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, and Labor and Public Welfare.

The senator served with the United States Navy in both the Atlantic and Pacific during World War II.



Second Class Postage Paid
At Washington, D.C.

RETURN REQUESTED