

THE PASSENGER CRUSADE ISN'T FINISHED

(Editorial)

The great energy crisis has focused public attention on both the need for rail passenger service and the potential of this transportation mode.

Hardly a day passes without a television broadcast, a major news story or editorial or a magazine article devoted to the virtues of travel by train.

Even the office of Management and Budget, long an opponent of Federal spending on Amtrak, is reportedly supporting a large increase in Amtrak funding in the upcoming budget.

As a result, many persons believe "the battle is won" and the great debate about saving passenger trains is over.

Nothing could be more wrong.

Although many Amtrak employees work long and hard to provide good passenger service, high-level decisions (some taken two years ago), lack of equipment, and other problems result in poor performance by Amtrak. In fact, on some lines, performance is wretched.

The railroad industry remains utterly opposed to passenger

The Greyhound ad campaign, which indicates that diesel buses are more efficient (consume less per capita energy) than any other mode, may backfire. For example, if the computations used in the ads are based on old ridership figures, the corporation could be liable to the charge of false advertising. (A train carrying only a few passengers would have much higher energy consumption than, for instance, a January, 1974, train loaded with thousands of energy-conscious passengers).

service, whether performed by Amtrak, by commuter service organizations or by the railroads themselves.

Railroad track and roadbed throughout the country is in far too many instances badly deteriorated. This means Amtrak cannot use them to provide fast, dependable and comfortable passenger service.

Consequently, those who want America to have good railroad passenger service must continue the battle — in every arena and on every level.

Specifically, NARP urges the following objectives:

1. A new president for Amtrak, supported by a new board of directors, both with a sincere commitment to Amtrak's mission.
2. Amtrak's complete independence of the railroad companies, including removal of the railroad directors from the Amtrak board.

DOT Proposes New Railroad Revitalization Plan To Congress

A new railroad revitalization plan has been proposed to Congress by the Department of Transportation. The "Transportation Improvement Act of 1974", according to Secretary of Transportation Claude S. Brinegar, is a major move "to avoid a replay of the Northeast rail crisis elsewhere in the country."

The Act would:

- Establish Federal loan guarantees of \$2 billion to spur investment in rail plant and equipment.
- Remove, by amending the Interstate Commerce Act, regulatory constraints that adversely affect the economic performance of the rail industry.
- Initiate a \$35 million research effort to materially improve freight car utilization by means of a national rolling stock scheduling and control system.

"The condition of the rail industry in the Northeast — where seven large railroads are in bankruptcy — is by no means typical

3. Removal of maintenance and control of track and roadbed from control of the railroad companies (or their conglomerate masters).

In order to operate efficiently, passenger trains must have track which is maintained for fast, smooth and safe operation. This availability must be at reasonable cost, for use on desirable schedules and service frequencies. And it must be free from interference by freight trains (but not necessarily allocated to exclusive passenger train use).

NARP suggests that all railroad track should be taken over by a neutral public agency, provided with substantial funding to rehabilitate and rebuild track and roadbed. Subsequently, continuing maintenance should be financed from "user" charges imposed on passenger and freight carriers using the track.

Holiday rushes, bad weather and bad luck can never be totally overcome, but incompetence, poor service and broken-down equipment can be eliminated.

America's effort to restore rail passenger service must be strengthened and redoubled, for now, more than ever, Americans need a reliable, comfortable alternative to the Detroit monster and the airplane.

Perhaps the President should emulate the goal once set by President Kennedy, that is, to place Americans on the moon "within this decade."

It would cost much less, and do far more for America, to set a goal of restoring fast, comfortable, reliable and safe railroad passenger service within this decade.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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Amtrak has announced a new, free Red Cap service at major stations, abolishing former charges of 35 or 50 cents for each item of luggage. As with Sky Caps at airports, tips are neither recommended nor prohibited and may be given or not according to service rendered and feelings of individual passengers. Hand baggage carts still will be available for those who prefer to handle their own luggage.

of the industry at large," Secretary Brinegar said. "But the causes of that illness could spread to other sections of the country unless we move quickly. Rail industry's total profits are so low — the return on capital averages only about three percent — that there is little room for slippage."

"Fortunately," the Secretary said, "the root problems can be corrected and that, of course, is the intent of this bill. Rail freight offers many advantages to the Nation — low costs to shippers, efficient energy usage, and protection of the environment. We must move now to ensure that the Nation can receive the full benefits of these advantages."

The Secretary noted that he was releasing the proposed legislation today in order to permit the necessary Congressional staff work to get underway and to obtain comments from various interested groups. These comments will enable him to prepare the final bill that he will ask President Nixon to submit to Congress when the new session convenes.

ICC Issues Regulations To Improve Passenger Service

Now that Congress and the President have indicated America really does need passenger train service, the Interstate Commerce Commission has jumped into the fray, by issuing the nation's first set of regulations designed to improve intercity rail passenger service.

The rules apply to Amtrak and the railroads that run its trains, three unaffiliated railroads that also operate passenger trains, and Auto-Train Corp.

They mandate a nationwide, toll-free telephone reservations and information system; enough seating space to meet "normal demands" of customers seeking reservations; minimum levels for train-on-time performance, baggage delivery, train connections and station hours, and a range of other standards for food, temperature control, sleeping cars, rest rooms and drinking fountains.

The regulations take effect April 1. ICC Chairman George M. Stafford said they are designed "to improve the overall quality of America's passenger train service and thereby make rail travel attractive, especially during the current energy crisis."

The rules have been long in the making, after the commission was directed by the Railroad Passenger Service Act of 1970 to draw them up.

As for Amtrak, the ICC rules both will impose new requirements on the semipublic passenger-train corporation and give it a strong weapon in its battle to prod railroads to provide better service.

The ICC said travelers who don't like the service they get should file complaints with the commission, and it drafted a form for doing so. The commission prescribed some "remedies" that the carriers must provide when the basic required service isn't provided, and said the carriers could also offer remedies of their own. For instance, if a customer's baggage isn't made avail-

length. But this standard is regularly violated; only 41% of long-haul trains and 72% of short-haul trains were on time in November.

- Passenger-train priority over freight trains, except for emergencies. The Amtrak contracts give the same priority, but Amtrak has said its trains are frequently sidetracked by railroads to allow freight trains to roar by.

- "Reasonable" connections, including a layover that isn't longer than four hours during the day and through-car service for train connections between midnight and 6 a.m.

- Manned stations before train departure and after train arrival, and checked baggage facilities at stations.

- Food and beverages on any train running two hours or more, and full dining service for trips of 12 hours or more; operable heating and air conditioning that keeps the temperature between 60 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit, and sufficient sleeping cars, coaches and lounge space for "normal demand."

Supreme Court Refuses NARP Permission To Sue Amtrak

Now that the I.C.C. has "got religion" and seems to be in favor of better passenger train service, the United States Supreme Court is taking-over the commission's old role — or at least it seems that way in view of the high court's recent ruling against NARP.

The court refused to permit NARP to sue Amtrak in connection with the old "Nancy Hanks" train of the Central of Georgia, a subsidiary of the Southern Railroad.

In a seven-to-one decision, the court said that the Amtrak Act of 1970 gave permission only to the U.S. attorney general to sue to prevent discontinuance of passenger trains.

To allow private actions would create the potential for a "barage of lawsuits" that would "completely undercut" congressionally established procedures for paring unprofitable passenger service, Justice Potter Stewart wrote in the majority opinion.

In the lone dissent, Justice William O. Douglas said, "The Attorney General is a busy person; and it is not credible to believe that a grant of power to him to sue precludes the standing of passengers who are the prime casualties when passenger service is discontinued."

Under the Amtrak Act, a railroad can't discontinue any intercity, rail-passenger service before Jan. 1, 1975, unless it contracts with Amtrak "to relieve the railroad... of its entire responsibility for the provision of intercity rail-passenger service." Although Central of Georgia did contract with Amtrak, the passenger association said the discontinuance would violate the law because Amtrak didn't contract with the parent Southern Railway.

In May 1971, a federal district court here dismissed the suit, saying the passenger association didn't have standing to sue under the Amtrak Act. The act empowers federal district courts to restrain any Amtrak Act violations in cases brought by the Attorney General or in labor agreement cases brought by an affected employee. In January 1973, the federal appeals court here overturned the district court, saying the act intended only to "authorize" suits by the Attorney General, not foreclose private suits.

In overturning the appeals court decision, the Supreme Court relied mainly on the act's legislative background. It concluded that the law gave the Attorney General the "exclusive" remedy for challenging passenger-train discontinuances and that "no additional private cause of action to enforce compliance with the act's provisions can properly be inferred."

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able within an hour of train arrival, the carrier at its expense must forward it to wherever he says. If the remedy offered for poor service isn't acceptable to the customer and the ICC, the \$500 penalty may be levied, the commission said.

The regulations will require:

- A nationwide reservations system, and the providing of the type of accommodation reserved and paid for. If it can't be provided, the carrier must give compensatory service, such as better accommodations or food and shelter till the next train. Customers must be told within an hour of their call if their reservation request can be honored, and reservations usually must be held until 30 minutes before train departure.

- Train arrival within five minutes of the scheduled time for each 100 miles, with a 30-minute maximum late arrival. Currently, Amtrak's standard of on-time performance calls for arrival within five minutes of the scheduled time, regardless of trip

Amtrak Scheduled To Obtain Northeast Corridor In Two Years

Rebirth of the passenger train is not a sudden thing, nor even a recent one. It has been going on quietly for years. Passenger-train cars worth close to \$175 million were delivered in 1973; the backlog of new cars on order Jan. 1 was worth around \$700 million; some \$400 million in orders will be placed in 1974; and another \$1.9 billion in orders that will be placed in the next five years.

The passenger-train car, for so long the ugly duckling in the railway marketplace, is suddenly beginning to look like Cinderella at the ball.

—Luther S. Miller, Editor
RAILWAY AGE

MoPac President Says Amtrak Equipment Unfit For Service

In a letter addressed to Roger Lewis, president of Amtrak, and George Stafford, chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission, J.H. Lloyd, president of the Missouri Pacific Railroad, made sharp accusations against Amtrak, and claimed that MoPac is being unfairly blamed for Amtrak failures.

At deadline, Amtrak was investigating the case. Responses to Mr. Lloyd's letter from Amtrak, NARP and others will be presented in the next issue of NARP NEWS.

The text of the letter follows:

Gentlemen:

The delay of an Amtrak train on the Missouri Pacific on January 1, which received national media coverage, emphasizes the necessity of advising both of you of the poor mechanical condition of locomotives and cars now operating in Amtrak Trains Nos. 30 and 31 between St. Louis and Kansas City.

Even though Amtrak operates as a separate entity, with full responsibility for the equipment in its trains and for its maintenance, the Missouri Pacific has received considerable unfair and bad publicity by radio, television and newspapers as a result of Amtrak's policy and instructions that all news resulting from train failures be made by Amtrak officers.

The diesels and other equipment assigned to Trains Nos. 30 and 31 are not being maintained to MoPac's passenger train standards. With steam leaks and other mechanical deficiencies, they are failing on line, resulting in delays to passenger trains and disrupting our other operations.

For some reason, Amtrak issued instructions to the Kansas City Terminal that it would not authorize the fueling of locomotives, and up until a short time ago, they were not being fueled at Jefferson City. As a result of that policy, two units ran out of fuel enroute. As a result of the wide-spread adverse publicity and its detrimental effects on our public image, we have instructed our people to fuel all locomotives at Jefferson City, for movements in both directions. And we have additionally given instructions that Trains Nos. 30 and 31 are not to leave either terminal with less than one steam generator working in both units.

In addition to these immediate steps, three other conditions must be corrected immediately:

1. An operating contract of some type must be resolved with the Kansas City Terminal.
2. An operating contract must be reached with the Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis.
3. The operating contract with the Missouri Pacific must be updated.

(continued on page 4)

The Northeast Railroad Act, which became law on January 2, has important benefits for rail passenger service.

The new law, which creates a government corporation to take over the bankrupt Northeast railroads, including the Penn Central, also includes the Northeast Corridor Project.

Specifically, the new law directs that no less than \$500 million — of a total of \$1.5 billion obligational authority provided for restructuring railroads in the northeast region—be earmarked for passenger improvements in the Northeast Corridor. If this is not enough, Amtrak is directed to come back to Congress for an additional \$200 million, which may be provided by joint resolution of the two Houses.

When the new Consolidated Rail Corporation comes into being in about two years, the Northeast Corridor passenger lines are to be turned over to Amtrak, through sale or lease. But the Department of Transportation is specifically directed not to wait that long to get Corridor improvements under way. Engineering studies are to begin immediately and modernization of the line and its equipment is to get priority.

"We have assurances from the Department of Transportation that they are going to move immediately to upgrade the Corridor," Senator Vance Hartke (D-Ind.) asserted during Senate debate on the measure. And he specified what Congress wanted the money spent for: "Improvements will include the complete installation of welded rail, signal improvements, increased banking on curves, a complete fencing of the right-of-way, modernized electrification from Washington to Boston and new rolling stock."

In a long statement on the Senate floor, Hartke described the thinking behind the costly Northeast Corridor directive:

"The Corridor is the most densely populated section of the

About the only good thing that has come out of the energy crisis, in my opinion, is an opportunity for Amtrak to expand and upgrade its passenger train service, not only in Montana but throughout the Nation.

—U.S. Senator Mike Mansfield,
Senate Majority Leader

country, containing 20% of the total population. The demand for passenger transportation is extremely high, and the increasing density of population in this area will cause much more severe transportation congestion problems in the future without the institution of a balanced transportation policy.

"At the present time all but approximately 10% of the intercity trips made within the corridor are by the highway or air mode. Recently, both of these means of transportation have been showing signs of growing congestion, causing a deterioration of travel speed, and reliability for intercity trips along the corridor spine. If appropriate action is not taken, this situation will worsen considerably; the Federal Highway Administration forecasts that intercity highway travel will increase by a minimum of 65% between 1970 and 1985. As conditions worsen, the severity of highway congestion will significantly affect auto travel. Present and projected air travel within the Corridor has even more serious problems than those affecting highway travel. For example, the total hours of passenger delay at LaGuardia and Washington National Airports increased from 630,000 hours in 1966 to 1,750,000 hours in 1970.

"With congestion already occurring in the highway and air modes within the Corridor, and with total travel expected to grow at 3% per year for the indefinite future, it becomes evident that steps must be taken to insure that satisfactory transportation is available for those seeking to make inner-city trips as well as local and extra Corridor trips in the future. The Northeast Corridor provisions of the Regional Rail Reorganization Act of 1973 will provide this transportation capacity in a very energy-conserving manner, without the use of additional land, and at little environmental cost."

MoPac President Hits Amtrak

(continued from page 3)

Just a few years ago when the Missouri Pacific handled its own passenger trains, we spent more than \$1 million for a very modern passenger train coach facility. It was switched by the TRRA in St. Louis, and car and locomotive failures were almost unheard of. Yet this facility lies idle, adjacent to Union Station and Amtrak is attempting to have the Illinois Central Gulf maintain the power and the cars in the St. Louis area on short depot tracks within the Union Station Train Shed, where neither the facilities or working conditions are adequate to insure proper maintenance.

We realize the problems of increased traffic to Amtrak resulting from the energy crisis, but the detrimental effect on passenger train schedules and the shipping public and essential freight as a result of mechanical failures on Amtrak trains causes serious freight traffic tie-ups between St. Louis and Kansas City. It is almost impossible to properly schedule our train movements when failures such as that described in the attached occur.

Attached is a complete log of the miserable performance of Train 30 after leaving Kansas City Union Station 6 minutes late, at 9:46 a.m., January 1, until its arrival in St. Louis at 8:15 a.m., January 2. This performance is the direct result of Amtrak's handing over to MoPac a passenger train mechanically unfit for service.

It is this poor performance, and not the first time, for which Missouri Pacific has been highly criticized despite the fact that provisions for adequate maintenance have not been made by Amtrak and we have no responsibility for that servicing.

The Missouri Pacific is ready, willing and anxious to assist Amtrak in straightening these matters out and in providing the kind of passenger service the public wants. But somebody must start taking a direct interest in this objective other than in making critical statements about the industry's poor performance and in seeking to penalize the railroads for late arrivals and departures. I.C.C. Ex Parte 277, Sub. 1 penalizing the railroads must be given further consideration as I do not see how any railroad can assume such obligations when they have little or no authority over the maintenance policies issued by Amtrak.

That positive effort would be to recognize the deficiencies that exist in the equipment, to make a serious effort to take the sound operating steps required to provide for continuous and quality maintenance of locomotives and cars, and to exert a cooperative effort in finding answers to the problems that plague Amtrak service.

J.H. Lloyd, President

FRIENDS OF THE RAILROAD PASSENGER

Congressman Samuel H. Young

To promote use of public mass transit facilities, Congressman Samuel H. Young of Illinois has introduced a bill to provide for a Federal income tax deduction for commuters.

Congressman Young's bill would permit a taxpayer, when he computes his Federal income tax, to deduct from his gross income the full public mass transit fares he pays to ride to and from work. No similar deduction would be allowed for a commuter who drives.

"This bill will encourage people to leave their cars at home and use mass transit systems, which in turn will cut down on the consumption of gasoline by motorists and will relieve the energy crisis," Congressman Young said.

"In addition, this bill will spur local and metropolitan areas to begin or expand mass transportation systems to accommodate what would be expected to be an increase in the number of passengers wanting to use these systems."

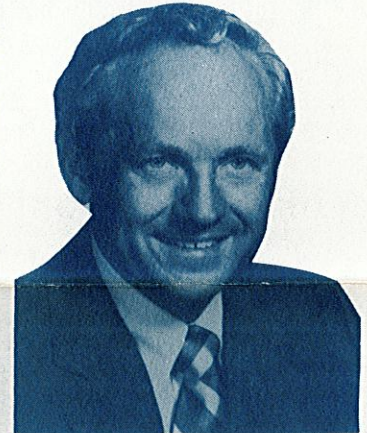
The proposal, Congressman Young said, "would be especially helpful to lower- and middle-income taxpayers, who seem always to have the heaviest burden under our tax policies."

Congressman Young noted that, according to Department of Transportation statistics, nearly 35.5 million Americans in urbanized areas go to work in private automobiles, most of them alone or with only one passenger. Only 6.2 million take buses, subways, and elevated and commuter trains.

Congressman Young, who lives in Glenview, Illinois, is serving his first term in Congress. He is a member of the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee.

Cong. Young is an attorney and a graduate of the University of Illinois. He was active in the movement to retain the "Floridian" last year, and, when the decision was made to keep it, he was given the honor of making the official announcement on the House floor.

He also has been a leader in the movement to establish a regional transportation authority in the Chicago area.



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