



# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

Vol. 11, No. 8

August, 1977

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(No. 7 was mailed August 24)

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## FIGHT FOR SUPPLEMENTAL

### EDITORIAL

NARP is working in several ways to reverse Amtrak service cuts already implemented, to prevent further announced cuts (see separate story) from taking place, and to provide increased service.

The first key step was to try to get Amtrak itself to stop its self-destruct efforts and to support the idea of a supplemental appropriation. NARP officials met September 2 with Amtrak President Paul Reistrup to urge him to become more aggressive. As NARP Director Lorena Lemons observed, "If Amtrak's President won't lead, who will?"

Reistrup felt he could not push for a supplemental without the support of his Board, and noted that both Chairman Donald Jacobs and the Board's Finance Committee Chairman, Robert Dunlop, were opposed.

The meeting may have had an effect, however, because shortly afterwards we learned that the question of a supplemental had been added to the agenda of the Amtrak Board's special September 19 meeting which had originally been intended only for consideration of the new Five-Year Plan.

Before that meeting, NARP wrote to all of the Board members urging their support for putting the Board on record in favor of a supplemental appropriation bringing Amtrak's FY 1978 budget to the \$545 million operating figure authorized in Public Law 94-555

#### LATE FLASH!

**On September 19, the Amtrak Board of Directors voted to ask Congress for a \$56.5 million supplemental appropriation for operations, to bring its FY 1978 operating budget to \$545 million, the full authorized amount. The lone dissenting vote was cast by Deputy Federal Railroad Administrator Robert E. Gallamore, representing Secretary Adams. Gallamore said that he would also have had to oppose a somewhat lower figure.**

The Board deferred until its regular September 28 meeting consideration of a supplemental appropriation for capital funds. The capital budget presented included investments in the Philadelphia-Harrisburg and New Haven-Springfield lines, and there was a strong feeling that Amtrak should try to divest itself of these lines. Charles Bertrand, Vice President and General Manager of the Northeast Corridor, presented charts showing that, on a car-mile basis, Amtrak movements represented only 12.3% of all movements on the Harrisburg line and 10.2% on the Springfield line.

and the \$316.8 million capital budget included in Amtrak's last Five-Year Plan.

On September 16, NARP officials met with Rep. John J. McFall (D-CA), chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, and leading advocate of the \$11.5 million cut which Congress made from President Carter's \$500 million

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Amtrak has been largely focusing its limited resources on examining the wrong problem: how to live within the FY '78 Congressional budget by reducing services to the public. Apparently, Amtrak is attempting to follow literally the instructions in the FY '78 appropriations bill, blithely ignoring the following facts:

(1.) Congress's fundamental attitude is no more receptive to service cuts now than it has been in the past. Although the appropriations bill directs Amtrak to make cuts, *using the route and service criteria*, the public (and Congress) was never told what cuts would result, and therefore never had a chance to react to the cuts Amtrak has now announced with little advance notice.

(2.) Congress itself was misled by Amtrak testimony last March, which minimized the significance of a \$500 million operating figure. (Congress probably viewed its further \$11.5 million cut as of little import.) Of course, rail passenger supporters generally were not taking DOT's penny-pinching testimony seriously, believing that the new Administration would become reasonable after key Coleman "holdovers" were replaced. Today, however, Amtrak President Reistrup and his advisers must adjust to the present reality: the Administration has not yet changed its position, which forces service cuts; neither has the public, which does not want such cuts.

(3.) The FY '78 authorization (Public Law 94-555) has enough money to maintain for the full year all services Amtrak was operating before September 8. The existence of this authorization will facilitate efforts to get a supplemental appropriation.

(4.) A serious and growing energy crisis is building up. Secretary Adams, who believes that \$1/gallon gasoline will have a

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#### PEACE WITH MISSOURI PACIFIC

Starting January 1, Amtrak trains on Missouri Pacific tracks will have higher speed limits.

	Current	1978
St. Louis-Poplar Bluff (not a main freight route)	50 mph	60 mph
Poplar Bluff—Fort Worth	60	75
Taylor-San Antonio	50	70
San Antonio-Laredo (unsignalled)	49	55
St. Louis-Jefferson City	60	75
Jefferson City-Kansas City	60	70

Under the agreement, Amtrak will not seek higher speed limits for at least five years, and will recommend to the Department of Justice that proceedings against MoPac for its "past sins" against Amtrak be dropped. Also, the first "incentive" contract between Amtrak and MoPac becomes effective Nov. 1, 1977.



## More Cuts; A Few Reprieves

On August 31, Amtrak announced a new, larger list of service reductions to become effective October 30. However, some of the cuts reported here last month have been changed, and the New York-Savannah "Palmetto" was reduced to "quad-weekly" south of Washington effective September 11.

Amtrak previously announced that the New York-St. Petersburg "Champion" would be discontinued from Sept. 8 until Dec. 14. Now, plans are to inaugurate a St. Petersburg section of the "Silver Meteor" effective October 30, and to leave this in place through the heavy winter season, running the train in two sections when patronage merits (the threshold is about 200 passengers). Thus the "Champion" as such, and the second schedule it provided for Columbia and Raleigh, is dead.

The Oakland-Bakersfield, CA "San Joaquin" remained daily and did not become "quad-weekly" on Sept. 8 as previously announced. California agreed to pay Amtrak the amount it thought it would have saved by making the cutback. Fortunately, the Chicago-Oakland "San Francisco Zephyr" will not be reduced to tri-weekly west of Denver, having been saved primarily by its \$1.3 million mail contract. (Amtrak lost a \$300,000 mail contract by cutting the St. Louis-Laredo "Inter-American" back to tri-weekly.)

California turned thumbs down on the previously announced Oct. 30 startup of a new Oakland-Sacramento train because the schedule Amtrak presented (east in the AM; west in the PM) would only be accepted by Caltrans as part of a through overnight San Diego-Sacramento service, which Caltrans is interested in subsidizing and Amtrak is now investigating.

The big list of October 30 cutbacks announced on August 31:

- one Chicago-Milwaukee round-trip;
- eight trips between New York and Philadelphia, including some heavily used by commuters, who would either be stranded or left to jam up (and slow down) through Corridor trains;
- 3½ round trips between New Haven and Springfield, effectively gutting the already pathetic service which earlier this year had lost one of its two through Amfleet trains;
- 2 Boston-New York round trips;
- the New Haven-Providence "Clamdigger" local;
- the New York-Harrisburg "Valley Forge";
- the only Metroliner which ran east of New York City;
- several weekend services on the above routes (plus eight weekend NY-Washington Metroliner trips and two Amfleet trips);
- reduction to four times per week on the Washington-Cincinnati "Shenandoah" and the Washington-Catlettsburg, KY, "Hilltopper". Amtrak, incidentally, chose to run this train on the round-about routing through Richmond. It then selected a schedule almost duplicating existing Washington-Richmond services. (See discussion on back page of the April News.)

**EDITORIAL** (continued from page 1)

"real impact" on motorists, predicted that "we'll be awfully close to that (price) very soon. The price at the pump already is around 70¢ in many places. The wellhead tax will add between 4 and 7¢/gallon. The federal gasoline tax that's being proposed will tack on another 4 to 6 cents. And if the OPEC oil producers should hike prices next year—something we can't prevent—fuel prices could be around the 90-cents-to-\$1 level." (Interview in *U.S. News and World Report*, August 15)

(5.) Most of Amtrak's proposed cutbacks make no economic sense except as a prelude to dismantling Amtrak (see our editorial of last month).

(6.) Making, implementing, defending, and reversing (where pressure requires) cutback decisions are absorbing management energies, destroying the morale of those staff members who are not laid off, and making Amtrak look ridiculous in the eyes of the public—and the public still writes letters to Congress and the press. Thus we read Rep. Edward P. Beard (D-RI) commenting that Amtrak is trying to "commit public suicide" by cutting back rail service. The Bristol (CT) Press editorialized: "If Amtrak has a budget problem it should fight Congress for more money, not foist the whole ball of wax off on the innocent public. But since Amtrak refuses to live up to its responsibility to the public, we

must take it upon ourselves to exhort our elected representatives to fight for us. We simply must not allow our rail service to deteriorate more than it already has."

Amtrak, in alienating itself from the public, has only made it slightly over halfway towards living within its budget—total service cuts announced thus far are tentatively estimated to save \$28 million, while Amtrak states the "projected budgetary squeeze" is set at \$50 million.

Amtrak's present course—to try to live within the appropriation—might be good strategy for an agency like the Defense Department, which is large enough to absorb minor percentage cuts in its budget relatively painlessly, and which does not provide the types of services whose discontinuance are immediately identifiable and ridiculed by the public.

This strategy is pure disaster for Amtrak. It is leading Amtrak's President to lose his credibility. After speaking around the country on the inadequacy of less-than-twice-daily service, Paul Reistrup found himself at the August 31 Board meeting arguing against two railroad executives (Milwaukee's Quinn and Penn Central's Langdon) in defending a reduction in St. Louis-Laredo "Inter-American" service to thrice weekly. Reistrup reminded

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**"The cost of saving of tri-weekly service compared with daily service is not in proportion to the train miles saved, resulting in a counter-productive effect of increasing Amtrak's deficit per passenger mile."**

—Amtrak President Reistrup  
before the budget crisis

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the Board that its most successful train, the New Orleans-Los Angeles "Sunset" was also-tri-weekly, and denied that the "Sunset" would do better on a daily schedule.

He also commented that the market for the "Inter-American" isn't there in the fall, a statement which was surprising in light of the fact that only now is Amtrak's first opportunity to really test the market at hand. Only since mid-August has the train been provided with new, reliable equipment, and Missouri Pacific been providing reliable on-time operations. On October 30, its East Coast connection (via the "National" at St. Louis) will be restored, and on January 1 new faster speed limits will become effective.

Amtrak must stop making enemies out of its friends, reverse most of the cutbacks, and devote all of its energies to doing the best possible job of delivering service. Then, adequate support for a supplemental will be found. Any other course of action would be suicidal.

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### CHICAGO-SEATTLE WOES

We announced previously that the "Empire Builder" was being reduced to quad-weekly effective Sept. 8, and the "North Coast Hiawatha" went to tri-weekly, as it normally does except during the winter holidays and the summer. What has not been reported, however, is that Amtrak now plans no restoration of daily service on the "Hiawatha"—neither during the winter holidays nor during next summer.

In addition, Amtrak is inflicting some drastic schedule changes. When it went tri-weekly, the "Hiawatha" schedules were altered by more than four hours in both directions so that its Chicago-Minneapolis times would be identical to those of the "Empire Builder".

On October 30, the "Hiawatha" will suffer an even more drastic schedule change as it and the "Empire Builder" are flipped to overnight Chicago-Minneapolis.

This is all in the name of saving equipment and preserving Chicago connections (yes, another drastic schedule change for the "Broadway" is coming; Pittsburgh goes back to middle-of-the-night although the daylight-in-Pittsburgh "Broadway" schedule was never seriously promoted).

It will eliminate connections in Seattle to and from the Vancouver trains, and eliminate the possibility of restoring connections with the "Coast Starlight" or other Portland-and-south trains. It will also place key Montana cities (and Glacier Park) at night.

Meanwhile, Chicago-Minneapolis running times are cut to as low as 8 hours 50 minutes, effective October 30.

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# NARP Director Testifies Before NTPSC

Dr. Alfred Runte, Region XII Director from Goleta, California, testified before the National Transportation Policy Study Commission at an August 8 hearing in Los Angeles. Dr. Runte cautioned the Commission not to prejudge "the present and future viability of rail passenger service in the United States on the basis of its most recent setbacks alone." He suggested that a "fair test" for the passenger train has not been possible under Amtrak's present structure.

Dr. Runte, who holds a Ph.D. in American Environmental History from the University of California at Santa Barbara, proceeded to point to the all too familiar problems with the "landlord railroads". Yet, he did not neglect certain weak points in Amtrak management, specifically, the failure to initiate a program for conversion of older rolling stock to head-end power and the lack of substantial advertising of Amtrak's access to the national parks.

Runte also attacked the currently fashionable notion that rail passenger service is only suitable in high density corridor areas. He noted that Amtrak's Coast Starlight, "not only an 'old train,' but a long haul", was responsible for nearly 2-1/2% of Amtrak ridership in 1976, carrying 440,000 passengers between Seattle and Los Angeles. But he did concede that it is unrealistic to expect a favorable economic performance from long haul trains as long as there is only one round trip per day on the route; "the once-a-day option is self-defeating and only contributes to the cost spiral."

Summing up his testimony, Dr. Runte reaffirmed the basic NARP position: "With a 'fair test' for Amtrak, we are confident of the nation's continuing endorsement of the legitimacy of rail passenger travel."

The NTPSC is a congressionally-created hybrid commission, comprised of six members from each house of Congress and seven members from the private sector, approved by the President and representing the various transportation interests. Established under the Federal Aid to Highways Act of 1976, the Commission is mandated to make recommendations to the President and the Congress by December 31, 1978, on policies that should be implemented to meet the transportation needs of the country through the year 2000. Representative Bud Shuster (R-Pa) serves as chairman.

The Los Angeles hearing was one of a second series of public hearings called by the Commission to receive public input on the issues within the scope of its inquiry. Encouraging public participation in the hearing process, Chairman Shuster stated that the Commission was "extremely anxious to receive direct information from the public in all parts of the nation regarding their views of major transportation policy issues."

It is clear that the Commission was originally created for the purpose of attempting the formulation of a unified national transportation policy. Normally, one would expect that this task would fall under the purview of the United States Department of Transportation. However, during the years of Republican Administrations and Democratic Congresses, the Congress developed an increasing tendency to attempt to make national policy through legislation. In addition, the existence of the Commission reflects Congress' perhaps justified suspicion of the DOT's ability to actually perform one of its major responsibilities. NARP, however, is not optimistic about the Commission's chances for success because of its bipartisan nature and because of the traditionally conflicting interests represented. Indeed, one of the non-congressional members once voiced the view in private that there would likely be several minority reports.

Dr. Runte reported that the Commissioners attending the Los Angeles hearing appeared to be anti-rail and pro-bus, surely a curious position to take when one is charged with developing a unified transportation policy. These included Chairman Shuster, Rep. Dale Milford (D-TX), and Rep. Glenn Anderson (D-CA).

Let us hope that they were just playing devil's advocate, but even if that is not the case, it appears likely that rail passenger service will have its source of support. We note the presence on the Commission of Representative Fred Rooney (D-PA) and

Senator Russell Long (D-LA), both chairmen of subcommittees handling Amtrak matters. Also a member is Senator Harrison A. Williams (D-N.J.), who has always been a staunch supporter of improved rail passenger service.

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION POLICY STUDY COMMISSION (offices at 1750 K St., NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20006; 202/254-7453)  
Rep. Bud Shuster (R-PA), Chairman  
Sen. Mike Gravel (D-AK), Vice Chairman  
Rep. Glenn Anderson (D-CA) Sen. John Chafee (R-RI)  
Rep. James Howard (D-NJ) Sen. Russell Long (D-LA)  
Rep. Dale Milford (D-TX) Sen. James Pearson (R-KS)  
Rep. Fred B. Rooney (D-PA) Sen. John G. Tower (R-TX)  
Rep. Gene Snyder (R-KY) Sen. Harrison A. Williams (D-NJ)  
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William F. Cellini (IL), Executive Director, Illinois Asphalt Pavement Association  
Richard L. Herman (NB), Chairman and Treasurer, Herman Brothers (a trucking company)  
James C. McConnon (PA), Chairman of the Board, Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA)  
James D. Pitcock (TX), President, Williams Brothers Construction Company  
(One public vacancy)

## FIGHT FOR SUPPLEMENTAL (cont'd. from p. 1)

recommendation for operations. McFall indicated a real openness to the possibility of a supplemental appropriation. He also reiterated a complaint NARP has heard before on Capitol Hill this year: he has had trouble getting adequate information from Amtrak on which to base decisions. He was expecting, however, that Amtrak would provide such information after its Sept. 19 meeting; his committee will review this. He has asked Secretary Adams to provide some recommendations and urged that NARP also examine the data and offer its views.

NARP officials were scheduled to meet with Secretary of Transportation Brock Adams on September 21 to discuss Amtrak's present and future. In an advance letter to the Secretary, NARP asked him to carefully review the testimony given to Rep. McFall's subcommittee last March 7 by then Deputy Federal Railroad Administrator Bruce M. Flohr: "The \$500 million request (for Amtrak operations) is proposed as a constant level appropriation for the budget year and about four years beyond, by which time we expect the Federal subsidy to be matched by passenger revenues." That, combined with Flohr's opposition to a reasonable capital budget, is a blueprint for the gradual dismantling of Amtrak.

Widespread media attention to the Amtrak crisis has given NARP new opportunities. NARP Director James M.S. Ullman, of Meriden, CT, had alerted *New York Times* columnist Tom Wicker to the impending Amtrak crisis. Wicker's research people went into action, calling the NARP Washington office among others, and Wicker was ready to hit promptly when Amtrak announced its second and larger batch of cutbacks. (The Amtrak press release was dated August 31; Wicker's column appeared on the morning of September 2.)

That column led to an excellent *Times* editorial, which in turn led to a call to NARP from the director of editorials at New York's big WCBS radio station; she wanted to know what individuals could do to fight the cutbacks. Also, on September 13 and 14, letters to the editor from NARP President Orren Beaty were published in the *Times* and the *Washington Post*, respectively, expanding on those papers' earlier editorials.

The volume of news media calls to the NARP office has increased. On one day in September, we heard from the Tucson-based *Arizona Daily Star*, a radio station in Casper, Wyoming, the CBS radio stations in New York City and Washington, and the *Washington Star*.

We hope Washington officials will note well the fact that the two calls from the West dealt with the possibilities for expanding rail passenger service!



## Amtrak Holds Hearings on "Floridian"

Amtrak's public hearings on its Chicago-Florida service will commence at 7 PM on the days and at the places listed below:

- Miami, Oct. 11, Dupont Plaza, 300 Biscayne Blvd. Way.
- St. Petersburg, Oct. 12, Ramada Inn South, 3600 34th St., S.
- Jacksonville, Oct. 13, Hilton Hotel, 565 Main St.
- Thomasville, Oct. 14, Superior Court Room, Thomas County Court House.
- Atlanta, Oct. 17, First National Bank of Atlanta, 2 Peachtree St.
- Montgomery, Oct. 18, Ramada Inn, I-95 at South Boulevard.
- Birmingham, Oct. 19, Holiday Inn-Civic Center, 2230 10th Ave., N.
- Chattanooga, Oct. 20, Read House (Chester Room), Broad St.
- Nashville, Oct. 24, Nashville Hall of Fame Motor Inn, Division St.
- Louisville, Oct. 25, Exec. Inn West, Watterson Expwy. at Fairgrounds.
- Indianapolis, Oct. 26, Indiana Convention Center, Room 123, 100 S. Capitol.
- Chicago, Oct. 27, Watertown Hyatt, 800 N. Michigan Ave.

Amtrak solicits comments on its five proposals (see July News), "or others."

Amtrak will assign time for testimony by individuals or representatives of groups on the basis of written requests received at least one week prior to the hearing date for each city. Persons without assigned time will be able to testify at the close of each hearing as time permits. Address requests to: Floridian Project Hearing Officer, Amtrak, 955 L'Enfant Plaza North, SW, Washington, D.C. 20024.

NARP urges its members to participate (see articles in our last two newsletters). Because testimony is limited to five minutes for individuals, and ten minutes for representatives of groups, those with more detailed information should bring with them written exhibits for inclusion in the record.

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**Dayton, Ohio, will have passenger train service at least until November 1, as Conrail has again postponed its plan to abandon/downgrade the Indianapolis-Dayton mainline. (See last News) Senator John Glenn (D-OH) is trying to secure legislation permitting the line to remain open for another year and getting the Indianapolis-Cincinnati direct line rebuilt in that time.**

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NARP Directors John R. Martin of Atlanta and Charles A. Dunn of Miami will testify on behalf of NARP at the Atlanta hearing, and James Herron of Tampa will represent NARP at the St. Petersburg hearing. John Martin asks anyone interested in discussing NARP testimony or in coordinating individual testimony to call him (home 404/355-1766; office 404/897-2102).

Meanwhile, the "Floridian" will continue on its present schedule at least through January 8. The schedule will be slowed up slightly October 30 because Amtrak is shifting its F40 locomotives to Chicago-Seattle to protect faster schedules and the subsequent introduction of superliners requiring headend electric power for heating and air-conditioning. This will result in the assignment to the "Floridian" of SDP-40F locomotives — with speed restrictions on some curves — and thus slower schedules.

Earlier plans to "flip" the schedule to 2-nights-1-day, restoring Chicago connections, were postponed because Amtrak felt it was inappropriate to change the schedule significantly during the review process, and its Marketing department did not want such a change so close to the winter holidays. This is ironic, since most of the comments we have seen complain about the present schedule, and the new slower timings will make the present pattern even less appropriate.

## RED CAPS TO STAY

On Sept. 13, Amtrak announced a reversal of its week-old decision to eliminate red cap service from all Northeast Corridor stations. The news release began: "Amtrak President Paul H. Reistrup intervened personally today directing that Red Cap service or its equivalent be available for all passengers who need it in the Northeast Corridor." The release concluded: "The action... is permanent irrespective of the outcome of legal action by the Interstate Commerce commission which sought to order Amtrak to restore the service."

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### NO MORE PETS

**Amtrak, which had previously banished all pets to the baggage car ("Amtrak Chickens Out", Jan., 1976, News), no longer will carry pets (except seeing-eye dogs). The move, effective Sept. 19 except for passengers who had purchased tickets earlier, was in response to new standards established by the Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, acting under the Federal Animal Welfare Act of 1966 as amended last year. Amtrak says it would have had to spend \$13.8 million on heating and air-conditioning for baggage cars and special animal shelters at railroad stations.**

**Amtrak says it unsuccessfully sought exemption from the standards, which include requirements for adequate ventilation and a temperature range limited to 45°-85° (up to 95° is allowable for brief periods).**

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This release was issued one week after notices were posted to the effect that the jobs would be eliminated, and one day after U.S. District Judge John Lewis Smith, Jr., issued a temporary restraining order enjoining Amtrak from "taking any action which will result in the termination of red cap service at any of the passenger terminals in the Northeast Corridor."

In an informal, but official, statement issued on Sept. 7, the day after notices to employees were posted, Amtrak had confirmed that it was eliminating 180 positions on the Corridor in order to reduce costs by \$3.3 million. Included were the 80 full-time red cap positions, which were to have saved \$1.4 million. Other personnel affected were ticket clerks, baggage handlers, station cleaners, ushers, station supervisors and district managers.

Amtrak did note in the Sept. 7 statement that it planned "to provide emergency baggage handling assistance to passengers using supervisory and other station personnel on a part-time basis." The catch was that one would have to telephone ahead to make special arrangements, which has been the traditional procedure for the handicapped.

The Sept. 7 decision seemed ironic in light of the fact that, at the August 31 Board meeting, Reistrup had personally lead arguments resulting in approval of funds for installing an elevator in New York's Penn Station, not only to aid the handicapped, but also "to provide an efficient and safe means for red caps to move baggage to and from the taxi platform area."

In his Sept. 13 memo to Charles E. Bertrand, Vice President and General Manager for the Northeast Corridor, Reistrup directed that corridor officials "provide, by Red Cap or other station personnel, sufficient special assistance and luggage handling service... at times when there is demand as dictated by train schedules—to insure that we do not let down on service to the passengers." This does not mean that all 80 positions will be retained, and indications were that red cap service would in fact be harder to get.

The Sept. 13 news release noted that Reistrup's directive will give managers "enough leeway to substitute other personnel for Red Cap service in some stations or at some times when full-time Red Caps are not needed."

The temporary restraining order was signed in Washington at 9 PM on Sept. 12, three hours before the job reductions were to become effective. It was issued in response to action brought by the Justice Department and the Interstate Commerce Commission.