



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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(No. 4 was mailed April 26)

RETURN REQUESTED

HEARINGS START NOW!

As early as June 27, public hearings on Secretary Adams' plan to "rationalize" Amtrak will commence. The ICC's Rail Services Planning Office is holding the hearings and preparing an evaluation of the Adams plan which must be delivered to the Secretary by the end of September.

While RSPO will accept written testimony until August 1, it is important that attendance at the public hearings be heavy, and that some good testimony in support of rail passenger service be presented at all of them. (One of the things which drew Rep. Gore into the fight to save Amtrak last year was the fact that he was very favorably impressed by the testimony of some NARP members at one of Amtrak's "Floridian" hearings and by the size of the turnout at the hearings.)

Testimony should generally be limited to 10 minutes, although exceptions sought in advance may be granted, and the hearing officer may be flexible where the schedule is not crowded. Witnesses are encouraged to submit written statements when they appear, the length of which are not limited; obviously, however, the more concise the document the more effective it will be.

If you need a copy of the DOT report/plan quickly, call or write to the NARP office, and we will put it in the mail (1st class) the day we get your request. We have also arranged for a special mailing to bring the hearings to the attention of NARP members who live near the locations of June hearings.

Hearings will run 9 AM-noon, 1:30-5 PM, and 7-9:30 PM. However a session will not be held if no one has signed up in advance for it. Assuming that a session is held, someone who has not signed up in advance could still testify. In some cities, if the number of witnesses scheduled in advance requires, RSPO will be able to continue the hearings for a second day. To confirm the tentative dates listed below, and the exact locations, and to be scheduled as a witness, call the RSPO in Washington (202/254-6550) or the local ICC office (numbers listed below):

June 27: Washington, DC; Martinsburg, WV; Richmond, VA (782-2541); Atlanta (881-4371); Montgomery (B'ham 254-1286); Louisville (582-5167); Lincoln, NE (471-5088);

June 29: New York, NY (264-1072); Parkersburg, WV (Charleston 343-6181 X354); Jacksonville (791-2551); Nashville (749-5391); McCook, NE (Omaha 221-4644); New Orleans (589-6101);

June 30: Bluefield, WV (Charleston 343-6181 X354);
July 6: Boston (223-2372); Cincinnati (684-2975); Chicago (353-6124); Milwaukee (224-3183); Bismarck, ND (Fargo 237-5771, X5285); Little Rock (378-5821); Boise, ID (384-1503); Portland, OR (221-3102); Denver (837-3162);

July 10: Buffalo (842-2008); Tampa (Miami 350-5551); Minneapolis (725-2326); Dallas (749-3691); St. Louis (425-4103); Butte, MT (Billings 657-6261); Spokane (Seattle 442-5421); Reno (Carson City 882-2085); Salt Lake City (524-5680);

July 11: Dayton (Cincinnati 684-2975);
July 12: Philadelphia (597-4449); Miami (350-5551); Detroit (226-4966); Fargo, ND (237-5771 X5285); San Antonio (229-6120); Des Moines (284-4416); Havre, MT (Billings 657-6261); Seattle (442-5241); Sacramento (San Francisco 556-5515); Cheyenne, WY (Casper 265-5550);

July 13: Indianapolis (269-7701);

July 14: Minot, ND (Fargo 237-5771 X5285); Los Angeles (688-4006);

July 24: Washington, DC.

Additional hearings may be scheduled if the complaints are loud enough. Note that RSPO ignored some areas (Arizona, New Mexico, Kansas) which fared well in the Adams plan. NARP has told RSPO that, if the Final Plan removes some of those services, people served by them may miss the opportunity to be heard.

The new Office of Rail Public Counsel (1030 15th St., NW, Washington 20005, 202/632-5233) has announced a "unique 'outreach' program to assist communities and passengers affected by proposed cuts in Amtrak services". The office was established by Congress to promote public and community participation in government proceedings concerning railroad transportation issues. Its director, Howard A. Heffron, says he "will be sending outreach attorneys into areas in which Amtrak services would be eliminated or severely reduced under the DOT plan. . . . Our intent is to make sure that people who are interested may participate as effectively as possible in the ICC hearings."

Not The Way To Go

Editorial

While acknowledging that Brock Adams is the first Transportation Secretary since John Volpe to publicly defend the concept of a nationwide rail passenger network and to make specific recommendations about where service should and should not be provided; and that his report contains much useful data, in a usable format, **we conclude that adoption of the report's recommendations would not be in the national interest and would lay the groundwork for Amtrak's demise.**

NARP agrees with California DOT that "a basic national rail passenger system is necessary to provide mobility options and to prepare for future rail travel demands resulting from escalating environmental, congestion and resource constraints."

That Adams' recommendations were drafted in isolation from energy policy considerations is suggested by the report itself: "A projected passenger-mile increase of 3% between 1977 and 1984 is due entirely to population growth and is expected to neither increase nor decrease the deficit. In the financial projections,

(continued on p. 3)

DOT PUSHES CUTBACKS

Secretary of Transportation Brock Adams, in a report released May 8, advocated massive cutbacks in Amtrak service. **None of these cutbacks are expected to take place before the summer of 1979, and—if a big enough counterattack is mounted—perhaps they will never be implemented.**

Aside from the route discontinuances widely reported in the media, Adams proposed drastic reductions in service frequency on other routes. Florida would suffer dramatically with discontinuance of both the "Silver Star" (NY-Miami/St. Petersburg) and the "Floridian" (Chicago-Miami/St. Petersburg): Jacksonville-Miami/St. Petersburg service would drop from three daily round-trips to one; through service between Miami and Orlando would end, as would service between Columbia/Raleigh and Miami.

Amtrak recently built up the Washington-Richmond, Va., corridor to six daily round-trips, with the result that ridership in Richmond was 83.1% higher in the first quarter of 1978 than in the same period of 1976. Adams' recommendation would cut this service back to three trips but virtually destroy its usefulness for "corridor-type" travel.

Adams would also eliminate one Seattle-Portland trip, leaving only two daily round-trips on that run, and eliminate one round-trip each Chicago-Minneapolis and Chicago-Milwaukee. This would leave the Twin Cities served only by the transcontinental train, which cannot provide reliable eastbound service, and it would deprive the Duluth train of its Chicago connection. Chicago-Milwaukee passengers would have four instead of six departures daily.

The "Broadway" (NY-Chicago) and "National Ltd." (NY-St. Louis-Kansas City) would be combined as one train between New York and Pittsburgh, and both trains would lose their through cars to and from Washington and Baltimore.

The following routes would be discontinued under Adams' plan (segments in parentheses would continue to be served):

- "San Francisco Zephyr": Chicago-Omaha-Denver-Cheyenne-Ogden-(Sacramento-Oakland);
- "Pioneer": Salt Lake City-Ogden-Boise-(Portland-Seattle);
- "Floridian": Chicago-Louisville-Nashville-Florida;
- "Inter-American": (Chicago-St. Louis)-Little Rock-Dallas-Austin-San Antonio-Laredo;
- The Dallas section of the Chicago-Houston "Lone Star";
- "Empire Builder" or "North Coast Hiawatha": Chicago-Minneapolis-Montana-Spokane-Seattle;

We regret the departure of Assistant Director Tom Crikelair, who for the past two years effectively and enthusiastically represented railroad passengers in Washington. Tom will be doing carpentry and renovating work, and breathing clean air in the Adirondacks during the summer, and says he may decide to return to full-time transportation work sometime in the future. Meanwhile, he is closely observing traffic on D&H's North Creek branch, and promises to alert us if passenger business or the potential for same develops there.

- "Pacific International": Seattle-Vancouver;
- "Colonial": (Boston-Washington-Richmond)-Newport News;
- "Shenandoah" and "Blue Ridge": Washington-Martinsburg-Cincinnati;
- "Hilltopper": (Boston-Washington-Richmond)-Lynchburg-Roanoke-Ashland, Ky.

The following services would be added: Portland section for the Chicago-Seattle run, cars to be switched at Spokane; Denver and Oakland sections would be added to the existing Chicago-Kansas City-Albuquerque-Los Angeles "Southwest Limited". The Denver section would be switched at La Junta, Col., and run through Pueblo and Colorado Springs; the Oakland leg would be switched at Barstow, Cal., and would run via Bakersfield and the existing route of the "San Joaquin". (No rail service now exists between Barstow and Bakersfield.); the current tri-weekly services of the New Orleans-Los Angeles "Sunset" and the "Southern Crescent" between Atlanta and New Orleans would be upgraded to daily; and the LA-Seattle "Coast Starlight" would serve Sacramento.

The report did not specify which routes would be used

between the following cities, and suggested that testimony at the RSPD hearings would help guide final decisions on these questions:

- Minneapolis-Fargo-Spokane-Seattle; Spokane-Portland;
- Chicago-Milwaukee; Chicago-Cincinnati; Columbus-Indianapolis;
- Atlanta-New Orleans; Savannah-Jacksonville;
- Ft. Worth-Houston (An FRA official said at the May 8 news conference that routing via Dallas was possible, but capital costs, and the fact that the Dallas routing was specified in the more extensive "Scenario E" rejected by Adams, makes the possibility seem unlikely.)

The report does not directly address state-subsidized Amtrak trains except to advocate that the Twin Cities—Duluth service and two of the three state-supported Los Angeles-San Diego trains should become part of the basic system and be 100% Federally

"We appreciate the U.S. DOT's interest and support of the San Diegans but we are frankly concerned that if we were to relinquish any more control over the marketing of the San Diegans to a Federal agency, the success we have seen on that route could evaporate. . . . We are currently in the midst of a very large ridership expansion as a result of new marketing programs instituted by Amtrak at our insistence. As a result of our latest program, which features airline-type discounts of up to 45% Monday through Wednesday and 20% Thursday and Friday, ridership in the first week of May jumped by 38% over last year (by 102.9% for the Monday through Wednesday period and on Thursday and Friday, by 43.8%)."

—Adriana Gianturco, Director,
California DOT (May 11 statement)

funded. The report does contain this somewhat ominous observation: "The Department believes that the current 403(b) funding mechanism requires review to ensure that the decision to commit Federal resources to services which are primarily of local interest is made in an appropriate manner." (p. 6-3)

DOT started from the following assumptions in examining the present Amtrak system, and many other routes, and in developing and costing out five alternative systems, two of which provided more service than the one Adams endorsed: "The base year cost and revenue estimates for the base case existing system (and other systems) are not actual 1977 statistics but are estimates of 1977 performance if the new bilevel cars already on order had been in place and no unusual problems had plagued operations (such as the slow orders imposed by the SDP-40 locomotive and the train annulments resulting from the severe winter weather)." However, "although the introduction of new equipment can be expected to have some positive impact on ridership, no ridership increases were assumed because "it was not possible to substantiate the extent of such an increase based on experience to date." DOT also assumed "existing Amtrak operating and pricing practices" and "reliable on-time performance".

Adams specifically states that he expects "to make changes in the recommendations as public comment is received. . ." He also said that "Amtrak's corporate structure and relationships with the Federal Government, particularly with regard to budgetary control" need to be reexamined, and that his final route structure recommendation would be accompanied by recommendations on this. He is expected to advocate reducing the autonomy of the Amtrak Board.

Walter Cronkite's CBS-TV Evening News coverage of the Adams report on May 8 included part of an interview with NARP's Ross Capon.

The New York Times, Washington Post, and Chicago Sun-Times supported Adams' approach. But the Milwaukee Journal called it "a step in the wrong direction". The Miami News said: "A future almost certainly filled with oil shortages and high oil prices should serve as advance warning that the nation needs an efficient, modern rail passenger service. Instead, the emphasis in Washington is on cutting routes to save money, under the pretext of efficiency, and there are no plans to meet future needs."

Boyd to Head Amtrak

Alan S. Boyd, the first U.S. Secretary of Transportation and former president of the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad, was elected president and chief executive officer of Amtrak on April 25. He took office June 1.

Boyd succeeds Paul H. Reistrup who has been Amtrak's president since March 1, 1975, and who had said he would not be a candidate for reappointment when his current term expired. Boyd automatically becomes an ex-officio member of Amtrak's Board of Directors. Reistrup came to Amtrak from the ICG where he was senior vice president.

Boyd, 55, became Secretary of Transportation in January, 1967, after having been Under-Secretary of Commerce for Transportation since 1965, and before that a member of the Civil Aeronautics Board. He was chairman of the CAB from 1961 until 1965.

After leaving the Cabinet in 1969, Boyd became president and chief executive officer of the Illinois Central Railroad, later the merged ICG. In 1976, he left the Railroad after serving briefly as vice chairman.

Most recently he has been Special Representative (with rank of ambassador) on the U.S. delegation for U.S.-U.K. Air Service Agreements.

Boyd also is a former member of the Florida Public Utilities Commission. He was appointed to it in 1955 and elected to a full



Allentown, PA, now has rail passenger service—the result of a drive spearheaded by the Keystone Association of Railroad Passengers and its Lehigh Valley chapter president, NARP Director William Hubbard, II, and strongly supported by Rep. Fred B. Rooney (D-PA). From June 5, one daily Philadelphia-Bethlehem round-trip was extended 4.7 miles to Allentown (population 110,000); three more will be added July 5.

On May 30, to celebrate the start of service, Hubbard and local dignitaries—plus NARP's Joe Zucker—enjoyed a ride into Allentown on the new Budd SPV-2000 self-propelled car, with Rooney at the throttle.

term in 1956, serving as chairman in 1957 and 1958. Earlier he had served as chairman of a civilian committee for the development of aviation in Florida and as general counsel for the Florida State Turnpike Authority.

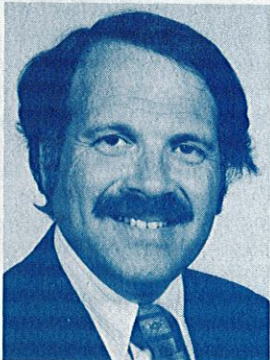
A lawyer, Boyd attended the University of Florida and received his law degree from the University of Virginia in 1948.

NARP's Orren Beaty has written to Boyd requesting the opportunity to meet with him and noting that NARP believes that "more daily trains, not fewer, are needed both to provide a service the nation needs and to make it possible for Amtrak, operating efficiently, to have a chance to succeed."

Joseph Zucker Joins NARP Staff

Joseph Zucker has joined the staff of the National Association of Railroad Passengers as assistant director.

Mr. Zucker, who was Public and Government Affairs Director for the American Freedom Train Foundation, is a native of Chicago. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in transportation geography from the University of Illinois (Urbana) in 1957, and a Master of Arts degree in political science from Roosevelt University (Chicago) in 1972. He worked during the summers of his undergraduate years in the passenger departments of the IC, Santa Fe, and Burlington railroads.



From 1957 through 1968 he worked for Lufthansa German Airlines in Chicago, and was named Public Relations Manager, Midwest Region, for the airline in 1961. Subsequent work has included account executive at Chicago's WFMT; transportation research specialist for the Chicago Urban League, which included preparing and publishing a study on reverse commuting for disadvantaged people in the inner city to job opportunities in Chicago's suburbs; public relations work for the Chicago Transit Authority; consultant to the Illinois DOT's Office of Mass Transit; and, at U.S. Railway Association, Special Representative in the Public and Governmental Affairs department. Zucker was also an active participant in the South Shore Recreation project last summer. South Shore Recreation promotes use of the South Shore Line's Chicago-South Bend passenger service for recreational travel along the route.

Not the Way To Go (cont. from p. 1)

therefore, neither costs nor revenues were adjusted to reflect ridership growth. All revenue increases reflect only increased yield due to fare increases."

Adams would remove service from such cities as Dallas, Louisville, Birmingham or Montgomery, Salt Lake City, Nashville, Omaha/Lincoln, Austin, Little Rock, Newport News, and possibly Dayton; end all service to Arkansas, Nebraska, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming; and end it to all but tiny corners of Idaho and Iowa. Such a system cannot be said to serve "all regions of the country" as Adams claims, and it is not adequate.

This is the wrong time to propose major cutbacks in long-distance service. So far, all long-distance trains have been operated either with unreliable old equipment or with new cars not designed for long-distance comfort. Now, Amtrak's new Superliners are set to begin revenue service in about six months in the West, and a program has been developed to start converting older cars continuing in service on other trains to reliable electric heat and air-conditioning. The "fair test" which NARP has sought for more than a decade may be closer at hand than ever before.

The report itself contains strong arguments against major cutbacks. One is the indication, based on a survey in May-June, 1976, that "rail passenger service appeals to many segments of the public and is not patronized predominantly by any single identifiable group . . . the survey indicates that Amtrak's passengers are drawn from a broad cross section of the American

"Preliminary travel estimates for those city pairs served by Amtrak indicate . . . that where Amtrak does operate it competes well, capturing in FY 1977 approximately 4% of the total intercity passengers and passenger-miles, and 14.4% of the passenger-miles and 22.5% of the passengers carried by common carriers alone."

—DOT's Preliminary Amtrak Report

public; only 14% were upper income (over \$25,000 annual income), while 46% were below average income (under \$12,000); 26% were engaged in professional, technical or managerial occupations; 50% were married; 39% were 45 or older; 62% were traveling for vacation or recreation; and 46% had ridden Amtrak previously." (p. 7-13)

The report shows that Adams' proposed 43% reduction in route miles and 32% reduction in train-miles would produce only a 22% reduction in the deficit. More importantly, it estimates that a system 39% larger than Adams' choice would be more efficient (have a lower deficit per passenger mile) than would his choice, while costing only 26% more (only 3½% more than the present system).

This larger system, "Scenario E", is perhaps the best part of the report. It supports the longstanding argument of NARP and others, such as the states of California, Pennsylvania, and Florida, that service *increases*, not reductions, help the system to become more efficient. It is approximately the size of the present Amtrak system, but the routes are more carefully chosen. They include, in addition to those recommended by the Secretary: Chicago-Omaha-Denver-Oakland; Los Angeles-Salt Lake City-Portland; the second Chicago-Montana-Seattle route; Richmond-Newport

News; Vancouver-Seattle; Flint-Battle Creek; Detroit-Toledo; Cleveland-Pittsburgh-Cumberland-Washington; Chicago-Florida; Buffalo-Toronto; Galesburg-Quincy; and Albany-Montreal.

You need add only four more links—St. Louis-Little Rock-Laredo, New Orleans-Jacksonville; New Orleans-Mobile-Montgomery-Birmingham-Nashville; and Cleveland-Cincinnati—to get a system that would win the unqualified endorsement of NARP for immediate implementation. "Scenario E plus" merits wide praise.

NARP has noted that every big-city station required for the network of services proposed for the "Penn Central region" by the U.S. Railway Association is already in existence. The costs of these stations are in several cases (Indianapolis, Dayton, Columbus, Toledo, and Cleveland) borne by a single pair of trains. How much more efficient Amtrak would be if those station costs could be shared by other trains, as USRA recommended.

Not only did the Secretary turn his back on this possibility, he advocated reductions in service frequency on routes he proposes to continue. For example, the cost of operating every Florida station except Jacksonville, a total of 19 manned stations, would be "socked" to a single pair of trains instead of the current two or

"Major stations with few trains are not economical. Trains with market potential must be added to reduce the per passenger cost of existing services."

—E.L. Tennyson, Pennsylvania Deputy Secy. for Local and Area Transportation

three pairs.

While his advocacy of daily instead of tri-weekly service Atlanta-Los Angeles is encouraging, the service frequency reductions make no sense, given the fact that system efficiency improves when fixed facility costs can be shared among more trains.

One unfortunate contradiction in the report is the inconsistency between all the rhetorical kowtowing to the bus industry (and the possibility of its being hurt by Amtrak) and the absence of any factual information to support this rhetoric. A chart shows that the decline of regular route bus revenue passenger miles (RPM's) predates Amtrak; such RPM's declined in every year from 1967 to 1976, except in the energy crisis years 1973-4. In 1971, Amtrak began operating on May 1, at which time half of the nation's passenger trains were discontinued, and the result was that "intercity rail traffic fell off by approximately 2 billion passenger miles". If there was in fact a sizable overlap between the rail and bus markets, an "increase (in bus RPM's) might have been expected to materialize", but the report shows instead that bus RPM's declined by 100 million from 1970 to 1971.

The report states: "Clearly, the intercity bus industry might expect to benefit from a total cessation of intercity rail passenger service, particularly in the highly competitive Northeast Corridor. However, it appears that any short-term gains realized by the industry would do little to stem the steady erosion of the intercity bus market share or the decline of regular route traffic. **The evidence available to the Department does not support the contention that Amtrak has been the principal causal factor in the decline of the intercity bus industry, given Amtrak's current market and usage patterns.**" (emphasis added)

Of course the bus companies are saying they don't want to put Amtrak out of business—they just want Amtrak to raise its fares. Secretary Adams' references to fares in his May 8 news conference on his Amtrak report left one with the impression that Amtrak's fares have remained basically unchanged for seven years. Thus, a May 26 *National Review* editorial alleged that "Amtrak fares have been nearly constant since 1971."

Most Western corridor fares rose over 90% and long-distance fares also rose substantially, from November 1971 through June 1978. Examples: Los Angeles-New Orleans fares up 52%; Chicago-Seattle up 47% (as service quality steadily deteriorated); Chicago-Los Angeles up 39%.

The Secretary is concerned that the yield from revenues has not kept pace with the increase in costs. This growing gap, however, is mostly the result of the operation of an inadequate system, where many obvious routes are missing and others have one round-trip

or less per day, and partly the result of inadequate capital investment and consequent operation of antiquated equipment.

Improvements can be made in Amtrak's fare structure, but, in general, as the report shows, "Amtrak yields have been increasing at a comparable rate to airline yields" (yield = transportation

GOOD NEWS ON FARES: On May 31 the Amtrak Board voted to eliminate previously approved summer peak surcharges of \$10 to \$40 for sleeping accommodations, although a June 15-to-Sept. 5 basic fare surcharge of \$1 to \$5 will go into effect.

Amtrak has a new Family U.S.A. Rail Pass, for sale May 16-Sept. 5. When the head of a household pays the full pass price for unlimited travel on Amtrak and SR this summer, the spouse and children 12 and over pay only half price and children 2 to 11 pay only \$50 each. Prices for the pass for the head of household are \$250 (14 days), \$315 (21 days), and \$385 (30 days)—14% below last summer.

revenue per passenger-mile), and NARP is convinced the answer is to develop a healthy, modern rail system, not to increase the rate at which fares rise.

Why should rail passengers be forced to pay, in exorbitant fare increases, for the above failures in public policy? The report shows that bus yields are rising faster than those of air and rail, and this must be related to the continuing decline in bus ridership. Rather than force Amtrak to emulate that hopeless pattern, the government should be taking forceful action to moderate increases in bus fares. Without such action, fixed route bus service may eventually disappear, regardless of what happens to Amtrak.

Four Amtrak routes deserve special attention here. The "Inter-American" (St. Louis-Little Rock-Dallas-Laredo) enjoys a speeded up schedule implemented only last April 30. No capital costs are necessary to give this route a fair test, only the recognition by DOT that a new factor not included in its own studies should be given a chance.

The "Pioneer" (Salt Lake City-Ogden-Boise-Portland) only began operation on June 7, 1977, which means it ran for less than one-third of the fiscal year on which DOT's studies were based. Despite the fact that ridership takes time to build up on a new route, and despite the poor performance of the connecting "San Francisco Zephyr" (Chicago-Ogden), the "Pioneer" turned in a lower deficit per passenger mile than some routes which DOT proposes to continue.

The "San Francisco Zephyr" itself (Chicago-Omaha-Denver-Ogden-Reno-Sacramento-Oakland) produced 127 passenger miles per train-mile, according to DOT, which is well over the 100 threshold established by DOT. Furthermore, the concept of providing Chicago-Denver and Chicago-Oakland service via sections of the "Southwest Ltd." is operationally impractical, inevitably reducing the reliability of the services, and forcing a reduction in available capacity on services which already run "sold-out" many days of the year.

Finally, DOT ruled out the Chicago-Florida "Floridian" because of track-repair costs which would be necessary to route the train

Finally, DOT ruled out the Chicago-Florida "Floridian" because of track-repair costs which would be necessary to route the train through Atlanta. This is a classic case of DOT putting on blinders and refusing to look at the whole situation, specifically, at the fact that these track improvements are needed anyway to bring the rail freight network up to acceptable standards.

Secretary Adams cautions us that if the total amount of subsidy for Amtrak is not reduced as he recommends, the system may "snap like a rubber band . . . and be gone entirely". At the same time, he warns that "these budget concerns will not end even if the recommended system is adopted," and leaves the door open for subsequently advocating further cutbacks.

We wish that the Secretary would concentrate more on productivity instead of total subsidy. And that he would acknowledge that *his* leadership could make a big difference when it comes to that rubber band snapping. Amtrak has survived as a nationwide system because of strong public and Congressional support and with the addition of Administration support for an adequate system, both survival and improved productivity would be assured for Amtrak.