



## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS

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# UNITED STATES V. SOUTHERN PACIFIC

Armed with an impressive array of witnesses and documents, lawyers from the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and Amtrak spent the week of Feb. 4-8 in U.S. District Court, District of Columbia, seeking an injunction against the Southern Pacific Railroad for allegedly giving priority to its freight trains rather than to Amtrak's New Orleans-Los Angeles "Sunset Limited." Under the Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970 (as amended), which created Amtrak, railroads are required to give passenger trains the priority use of track, except in emergencies. But after the "Sunset" failed to complete a single trip on time July through November 1979, DOJ, at Amtrak's request, filed suit against SP on December 20, seeking injunctive relief. (See December 1979 News)

The government's motion for an injunction was argued before Judge John Garrett Penn, who in December issued a consent order requiring SP to give Amtrak trains priority until arguments for an injunction could be heard. Amtrak and DOJ argued that SP has been deliberately violating the law, but SP claimed that extreme freight train congestion between Houston and New Orleans delayed the "Sunset." SP noted that elsewhere SP has a good on-time performance record for Amtrak. SP argued that increased freight traffic has so overwhelmed its mostly-single track Houston-New Orleans line that its own freight trains are seriously delayed, and said that the railroad therefore plans to concentrate its capital spending in this region to increase track capacity.

But Amtrak and DOJ presented evidence, largely gathered firsthand by Amtrak investigators, indicating SP employees were deliberately delaying the "Sunset."

Last summer, Amtrak President Alan S. Boyd created a six-man task force headed by James L. Larson, Assistant Vice President—Contracts, to investigate the atrocious performance of the "Sunset." In September and October, the task force examined SP

dispatchers' records, spoke with conductors and engineers, and rode aboard the "Sunset's" locomotives.

The task force reported to Boyd that SP was deliberately favoring freight trains over the "Sunset."

After the consent order took effect December 21, the task force returned to Louisiana and discovered that the "Sunset" con-

**Region III meeting Mar. 29 in Princeton. RSVP requested on Region IV meeting Mar. 15 in Silver Spring. See page 3.**

tinued to experience needless delays. One Amtrak source observed: "SP didn't dare 'clean up its act' too quickly, for to do so would have proven its guilt. In addition, SP never thought Amtrak would really pursue this lawsuit."

Amtrak President Boyd, the government's first witness, testified

(continued on page 2)

### SENATOR PELL MEETS R.I. ARP

On Jan. 12, about 25 members of the Rhode Island Association of Railroad Passengers met at Melville and boarded the Old Colony and Newport Railroad cars for a run along the bay to Newport. NARP Director Roy G. Poulsen, of Kingston, writes: "At Newport, Sen. Claiborne Pell (D-RI) arrived by bicycle natively attired in skating cap, red corduroy trousers and yellow leg clips. He spent the whole afternoon with us and was most interested in our concerns."

"Around the coal-fired pot belly stove in the passenger car, we all enjoyed a picnic lunch before proceeding south again about 4 miles, where we stopped on a curve on the line with the blue waters of the bay as a backdrop for our business meeting. A most remarkable setting for a meeting! "Senator Pell agreed to be listed as an honorary co-chairman."

## NEW HAMPSHIRE TRAINS; OHIO STUDIES

Regular Boston-Concord, NH, service (Dec. News) commenced on Jan. 28 after a VIP inaugural on the 25th that included U.S. Secretary of Transportation Neil Goldschmidt and New Hampshire Governor Hugh Gallen among the passengers.

Said the Manchester Union Leader, in its Jan. 26 edition: "Throughout his campaign to bring back passenger rail service Gallen told Washington he didn't want money 'for another study. We've been studied to death,' but wanted the real thing." On the same day, the Nashua Telegraph quoted Nashua Mayor Maurice Arel as applauding the governor for his "idea of running trains rather than spending money on a paper study."

**"There is a great deal of interest in (passenger train service). My office has received more mail with respect to trains than on any other subject."**

—New Hampshire Gov. Hugh Gallen,  
quoted in the Jan. 26 Manchester Union Leader

Service consists of two daily rush-hour round-trips Monday through Friday—the latest of which leaves Concord at 5:57 AM!—and single round-trips on Saturdays and Sundays at more reasonable hours. The running time is about 2:10 for an average speed just under 34 mph, although the schedule is projected to be shortened by about 20 minutes after trackwork is completed in the spring. The fares are high: Boston-Concord and New York-Speonk (on the Long Island's Montauk line) are both 73 miles, but one-way fares are \$6 and \$4.90, respectively (Speonk also has a special Sunday round trip for \$4.90), and monthly tickets are \$125 and \$86.10, respectively.

In spite of these obstacles, the line carried 1,892 during its first seven days of operation—an average of 79 per train—and this rose to over 2,100 trips in the second week.

This is not an Amtrak service; it is operated in conjunction with the MBTA under a 100% Federal grant.

Meanwhile, in a series of full-page newspaper ads across the state, the Ohio Rail Transportation Authority described three plans for developing service on these routes: Cleveland-

Mansfield-Columbus-Springfield-Dayton-Middletown-Cincinnati; Detroit-Toledo-Columbus; Toledo-Cleveland-Akron-Youngstown-Pittsburgh. Plan A would provide 150 mph electric multiple-unit service on all lines at a capital cost of \$6-7 Billion;" Plan B would cost \$3.5-4.5 Billion because speed limits outside Cleveland-Cincinnati would be only 110 mph; and Plan C would be an all-diesel 110 mph operation costing \$2-3 Billion. ORTA projects no subsidy requirement for Plans A and B. Where was Plan D for 79 or 90 mph trains on existing tracks upgraded? No one can deny the sex appeal of the bullet trains: ORTA performed a valuable service in 1978 by getting many Ohio U.S. Representatives into a room in the U.S. Capitol to watch a movie about bullet-type passenger trains.

But, due to the hard realities of politics (and perhaps a bit of wisdom) (continued on page 4)

### TRAVELERS ADVISORY

Caltrans did not implement "dramatically improved LA-Bakersfield and Stockton-Sacramento bus connections." Disregard paragraphs 2-4 of "Service Changes" (Dec. News, p. 3), and the corresponding entries in Amtrak's Feb. 3 timetables. The slower Greyhound connections shown in Amtrak's Oct. 28 timetables for the original "San Joaquin" remain in effect. For connections to the newly added pair of trains, passengers must arrange their own transfers between rail and bus stations. Caltrans is exploring with the bus companies what improvements might be possible without subsidy. Trailways—which uses Los Angeles Union Terminal—now honors Amtrak tickets; Greyhound continues to honor Amtrak tickets.

The northbound "Chesapeake" leaves Washington at 4:45 PM, not 4:30 as shown in Amtrak's Feb. 3 timetables.

The Adirondack Railway is operating passenger service over ex-New York Central tracks between Utica and Lake Placid, NY. Information and reservations: 315/369-3000.

# The Allentown Service

By W. H. Hubbard

*(President of the Lehigh Valley Chapter of the Keystone Association of Railroad Passengers and member of the NARP Board)*

**"A noble experiment which should have succeeded but didn't."**

—Allentown (PA) Morning Call

Extension of existing rail passenger service from Philadelphia to Bethlehem (pop. 72,776) by 4.7 miles to Allentown (pop. 105,609) was first proposed Sept. 17, 1977, at a public meeting sponsored by the Keystone Association of Railroad Passengers (KARP), Lawrence T. Joyce, Chairman, and held in the Bethlehem Town Hall.

Among those attending were former Rep. Fred B. Rooney, then Chairman of the House Commerce Subcommittee on Transportation and Commerce, State Senator Jeannette Reibman, and State Rep. Frank Meluskey. Edson L. Tennyson, then PennDOT's Deputy Secretary for Local and Area Transportation, was the principal speaker.

The meeting led to formation of KARP's Lehigh Valley Chapter in Nov., 1977. The chapter soon learned that no extension of service was under consideration and in fact plans were well advanced for abandoning existing service into Bethlehem. This service was provided by Conrail under contract with SEPTA, but Lehigh and Northampton Counties are outside the five-county SEPTA Metropolitan Area (SMA). The commissioners of the counties had refused to provide any financial subsidy, and the service had only been retained because Tennyson had required the Lehigh and Northampton Transportation Authority (LANTA), which operates the local buses, to formally request that the rail service be continued—or lose the state subsidy for local buses.

PennDOT was to provide the counties' share of the subsidy. But SEPTA claimed that—since no separate and additional funds were paid by PennDOT through LANTA to SEPTA—the service was really being financed out of SEPTA's state subsidy for the five-county SMA.

Arrangements had already been made for substitute bus service which actually commenced in February, 1978. A fare increase of over 50% in the most commonly used 10-trip strip ticket was proposed which would have effectively driven most of the remaining passengers away from the train. Low ridership and the existence of alternate public transportation could then have been cited in abandonment procedures.

With the invaluable help of Rep. Meluskey, KARP successfully fought the fare increase and preserved the Bethlehem service.

Concurrently, with the help of the Chairman of the Transportation Committee of the Allentown Chamber of Commerce and an Allentown contractor who had plans for developing the site of the former Lehigh Valley station, KARP persuaded the Mayor of Allentown, a County Commissioner, and a City Councilman to write Rep. Rooney in support of extending service into Allentown.

I personally delivered their letters to Rooney on May 3, 1978. Rooney persuaded Conrail to extend the service and he took the controls of the Budd SPV-2000 for the inaugural run from Bethlehem to Allentown on May 30, 1978.

Regular service started one week later with one round trip a day which was increased to four at the end of July, 1978.

A year later, Conrail unilaterally discontinued the service claiming they hadn't been paid. After less than two weeks' advance notice, the last train left Allentown Aug. 19, 1979.

What happened? How could train service between a city of over 100,000 and a city of over 3,000,000 only 60 miles away possibly fail?

One could recite a dreary litany of reasons ranging from no shelter, no lights, no public phone, bad station location, through unreliable performance, unnecessarily slow schedules, and old, often dirty, failure-prone equipment ad nauseam.

## MORE FROM NEW ENGLAND

**Our report on New England service improvements neglected to mention that NARP Director Eugene K. Skorowski, in his role as MBTA Chief Railroad Services Officer, is closely involved with all of the North Station service improvements, and that NARP Member Cleveland S. White, of West Falmouth, MA, has been for many years a driving force behind the effort that culminated in Gov. King's commitment to returning passenger trains to Cape Cod.**

On Nov. 5, 1979, passenger service ended temporarily on the ex-New Haven RR mainline between Back Bay and Readville (2 miles north of Route 128) to permit a five-year construction project that will see the railroad embankment torn down and three railroad tracks along with MBTA's relocated Orange Line to Forest Hills placed in a "cut." The Needham commuter service was discontinued and suburban and Amtrak Shore Line trains were rerouted on the upgraded Dorchester line. MBTA-sponsored shuttle trains operate between Back Bay and South Station. Framingham commuter trains continue on the normal route, stopping at Back Bay, but Amtrak's "Lake Shore" does not stop there, to avoid confusing passengers since there will be only a platform and no station services.

But those are only the symptoms of the problem which is political and institutional in nature.

Politically, the service was forced onto a reluctant Conrail which was at the time seeking \$1.2 billion of additional subsidies through Rep. Rooney's committee. Instituting a 4.7-mile service for what they could assure would be a temporary period was a small price to pay. Once Rooney was defeated, there was no incentive for Conrail to continue the service.

Institutionally, none of the organizations directly responsible for the service had any incentive to see it succeed.

Conrail's only incentive with respect to any passenger train service is to extract the maximum amount of money for providing it while expending the minimum amount of money doing so. SEPTA's only incentive is to get the service cut back to within the SMA and not spend one cent outside it. LANTA is the one organization which, from its name at least, might be thought to have some interest in seeing the service succeed. The "T" in LANTA does stand for "Transportation," not "Transit" or "Bus." And its predecessor, the Lehigh Valley Transit Co., did run an interurban train from Allentown to Philadelphia prior to 1952. However, LANTA's operating deficits were increasing, and the Lehigh-Northampton Airport Authority was not generating the promised funds to service its bonded indebtedness which was guaranteed by the counties, so the county commissioners did not want LANTA to become involved in any service which might require county funding.

PennDOT, which sponsored the service and was supposed to furnish the subsidy, did not have the human or financial resources to oversee its implementation properly. Therefore, when a new administration came into power, and Tennyson left, his successor did not fight Conrail's discontinuance as Tennyson would have done.

The experience with the Allentown service offers both good and bad news. The good news is that in a responsive political climate service can be instituted. The bad news is that it can fail when left to organizations which do not have an incentive to see it succeed.

I see only one existing organization with any built-in incentive to make passenger train service succeed. That is Amtrak, and it will be Amtrak which will eventually provide service from the Lehigh Valley both to Philadelphia and New York, Harrisburg, and Scranton-Binghamton-Syracuse. Sooner or later—like it or not—energy and inflation will combine to force this to happen. The only question is when and how much it will cost. The longer it is delayed the more it will cost.

## United States v. Southern Pacific (cont'd. from p. 7)

that he had asked the Justice Department to sue SP only after communications between Amtrak and SP "at all levels" had failed to resolve the problem.

Amtrak's Larson was the government's star witness. He discussed 10 specific instances of avoidable delay to the "Sunset" which he or his fellow investigators had witnessed first-hand while riding the train. The 10 included two instances of delay caused by freight trains operating immediately ahead of the "Sunset," two instances of train meets in which the "Sunset" was held on a siding for a freight to pass, two instances of freight trains parked on the mainline, two instances of delay caused by freight yard operations, one instance in which the "Sunset" was forced to wait for a freight to pick up 20 empty cars from an industrial siding, and one instance of delay caused by a dispatcher's failure to cancel an old train order. Larson explained each of the 10 delays in detail with the help of track diagrams showing train positions, mainline and side tracks, etc.

**DOJ Counsel Robert Patterson:** "Mr. Larson, is it your opinion that the 'Sunset's' delays on the Lafayette Division are the result of poor dispatching or conscious management decisions?"

**Larson:** "It appears to me to be a conscious effort to preference freight trains over passenger trains. SP persistently fails to accord priority to the 'Sunset,' and I'm led to believe SP management tacitly approves, if not encourages, this."

**Patterson:** "Why do you say that?"

**Larson:** "It is the responsibility of management to take corrective action in cases like this. In my experience, dispatchers would have been disciplined or fired—but this hasn't been the

**"I don't give a good God damn about your passenger trains!"**

—C.T. Babers, Southern Pacific Assistant General Manager, in an April, 1979, meeting with Amtrak to discuss a rerouting proposal, quoted by Amtrak's James L. Larson (Assistant Vice President—Contracts) in testimony before U.S. District Court Judge William Penn, February, 1980.

case on Southern Pacific."

Larson went on to say that he had found a hostile attitude toward passenger trains at SP. "Radio comments I heard while riding in the engine are indicative of this attitude," said Larson, who explained that on October 15, he overheard two voices over the train's radio. First Voice: "Prepare to line up switches for #1 ('Sunset')." Second Voice: "Oh come on, you know better than that!"

Three "Sunset" conductors were next on the witness stand:

Roland Guidry, Robert Poole, and Dassas Provost, Jr.

**Patterson:** "What was it like when you first began working in Southern Pacific passenger service?"

**Guidry:** "When I started in passenger service in the early '60s, passenger trains were a pleasure to work on. Southern Pacific demanded good work from us. Passenger trains had priority, and we were strictly accountable to the superintendent if we delayed the trains."

**Patterson:** "What is it like now?"

**Guidry:** "Things have changed. Now the passenger trains run late, sometimes very late, and we have a terrible problem trying to soothe angry passenger. I've learned to use psychology with the passengers—I talk with them about my son (New York Yankees' pitcher Ron Guidry) and baseball!"

**Patterson:** "When did you notice a change in preference on the Southern Pacific toward passenger trains?"

**Provost:** "About April 1979, (SP freights) began to get positive meets with Amtrak." (Amtrak trains waited while freights proceeded. Ed.)

**Patterson:** "What happened when Judge Penn issued the consent order (in December) giving priority to the 'Sunset'?"

**Provost:** "The men in the Lafayette (SP) office just laughed and said, 'it won't last!'"

Next, Dennis Vorbau, Amtrak's Customer Relations Manager, testified that the single biggest complaint from Amtrak patrons is poor on-time train performance. Vorbau stated that, in 1979, the "Sunset" received more complaints per 10,000 passengers than any other Amtrak train. During Aug.-Dec. '79, when Amtrak's long-distance trains averaged four complaints per 10,000 passengers, the "Sunset" itself averaged 45!

Southern Pacific's first witness was John D. Ramsey, who as SP's General Manager-Assist. V.P.-Operations, had managed the Houston-New Orleans region from February 1 through December 1, 1979. Ramsey testified that the situation on the Houston-New Orleans line had been "critical" during 1979 due to a large increase in freight traffic. He asserted that freight congestion, had made it impossible to operate **anything** on schedule, but that SP always had given priority to Amtrak. Ramsey added that, while the "Sunset" sometimes ran six hours late, SP freights often ran 30-50 hours late, and that during 1979 SP was forced to reroute over 60 of its own freight trains onto other railroads because its own line was so "saturated." He acknowledged that two of the 10 delays documented by Larson were avoidable, but insisted the others were not, though he admitted having no first-hand knowledge of any of the delays.

Ramsey's responses were lengthy and evasive and sometimes self-contradictory. Once, when Ramsey said the siding at Beaumont might have been empty, Patterson reminded him that he had already testified a day earlier that the siding was occupied by a train. Later, Ramsey claimed that giving the "Sunset" absolute priority would "bog down the railroad." After Patterson reminded the court that the "Sunset" only operates three times per week, the following exchange occurred:

**Patterson:** "Mr. Ramsey, does Southern Pacific give absolute priority to any passenger trains?"

**Ramsey:** "We try to give all passenger trains absolute priority. . . . I think Southern Pacific has, and does, accord absolute priority to the 'Sunset'." Then, several minutes later:

**Patterson:** "Does the 'Sunset Limited' have absolute priority on the Lafayette Division?"

**Ramsey:** "No, not 'absolute'. . . ; it is accorded a high priority, however."

Ramsey testified that freight congestion in 1979 was heaviest during September-October, when Amtrak's task force was investigating. But Larson denied the railroad was congested then, and DOJ submitted as evidence an SP document indicating September-October were the **lightest** months of the year for freight traffic between Houston-New Orleans. Lawrence Brophy, a rail consultant, testified that he inspected Lafayette and Houston Division train yards during September-October and found instances of freight trains parked on mainline tracks, while tracks in adjacent freight yards sat empty!

Robert Krebs, SP's Vice President-Transportation, also testified. Krebs was sent to Houston from SP's San Francisco headquarters on December 1, 1979, to replace Ramsey. A reliable source told NARP that SP knew of the impending lawsuit by December 1.

**SP Counsel:** "Mr. Krebs, has the Lafayette Division been operating satisfactorily?"

**Krebs:** "No, not satisfactorily. This is due to serious congestion." Krebs explained that in order to remedy this problem, the railroad plans to spend \$30 million of its total \$40 million 1980 capital budget "east of El Paso."

**SP Counsel:** "If Amtrak decided to terminate Trains 1 & 2 ('Sunset'), what would your reaction be?"

**Krebs:** "We'd be happy! Southern Pacific loses money on Amtrak." (Krebs estimated SP lost \$6 million operating Amtrak trains in 1979.) "But as long as (SP) is required by law to operate Amtrak trains, we will do so to the best of our ability. . . . If it is possible to operate **any** train on time between New Orleans and Houston, it will be #1 & #2."

**Patterson:** "Is there an unfavorable attitude toward the operation of passenger trains within the Southern Pacific?"

**Krebs:** (pause) "Yes."

Judge Penn is expected to rule on the government's injunction

request by early March. Meanwhile, there are hopeful signs that other railroads have begun to take Amtrak on-time performance more seriously. Soon after the suit was filed, top management of at least three major railroads issued strict directives to all operating personnel warning that Amtrak trains are not to be delayed.

Amtrak's systemwide on-time performance was 71.2% in December, better than any month since October, 1977, and up from 64.1% in December, 1978. Preliminary reports indicate January was better still. While operations have been aided by a mild winter and, in some areas, decreased freight traffic, there is some basis for hoping that Amtrak is winning its campaign to get the total commitment of the operating railroad companies to do their share towards keeping the passenger trains on time.

## Transport 2000 Canada

Our sister organization in Canada, Transport 2000 Canada, has achieved remarkable visibility and credibility, particularly when one considers that it only has 700 members.

They received a \$3,000 grant from the Ashburn Charitable Corporation which funded a widely reported study of high-speed rail service in the Windsor-Quebec corridor released in September as "INTER-CITY RAILWAY PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION in Central Canada over the Next Ten Years: A PUBLIC INTEREST APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT."

The report states that "on a seat-km basis, a new 6-car LRC train on electrified lines would consume only 15% of the energy used by a standard intercity bus, and less than 5% of the energy required by a STOL (DASH 7) aircraft." If, by 1990, rail links between major Ontario and Quebec cities were electrified, with double-track capable of 150 km/h (93 mph), the potential would exist to save \$250 million in operating costs per year as a result of diversion of air and auto traffic and the greater efficiency of electric as opposed to diesel rail operation. (To get the report, send \$6 to Transport 2000 Ontario, Box 248, Station M, Toronto, Ont. M6S 4T3, Canada.)

Transport 2000 Canada played a major role in the fight, so far successful, to retain daily (6-days/week) service on the CN line between Winnipeg and Capreol (near Sudbury, Ont.) formerly used by the "Super Continental." As a result, the group has received a \$2,900 grant from the Ontario government to study needs for all modes of passenger transport along this route.

The studies are done by private consultants reporting to T2000's research committee.

Another mark of the respect accorded T2000 is the fact that officials of VIA Rail Canada (counterpart to Amtrak) frequently consult with the consumer organization's officials while policy options are still open to get a feel for how T2000 and the general public might react to possible decisions. In 1977, there was a joint meeting with VIA and the Minister of Transport on planning for new equipment and changes in train consists; in 1978 a joint meeting with VIA and the Consumers' Association of Canada on fare revisions; and in 1979 there was extensive consultation with John Pearce, T2000's Maritime representative, before VIA implemented major changes in its Atlantic region services.

(to be continued next issue)

## More On Regional Meetings

Here are more details on NARP regional meetings and some more candidates for election to our Board.

**II. Sat., Mar. 15, 2 PM, World Trade Center, South Tower, Room 5480, New York City.** H. Rex Holland, Amtrak's Assistant Vice-President, On Board Services, will be the featured speaker.

Jeffrey D. English, 286 3rd Ave., Troy, NY 12182; Theodore Scull, 445 E. 86th St., #15-A, New York, NY 10028.

**III. Sat., Mar. 29, 1:30 PM, Princeton University School of Engineering, Engineering Quadrangle, Convocation Room, Princeton, NJ.** Speaker: Rima Parkhurst, Amtrak's Assistant Vice-President—Station Services. 10:50 AM and 1:50 PM trains will be met (Princeton, not Princeton Jct.).

Phillip A. Alotta, 29 Trudy Dr., Lodi, NJ 07644; Arthur Malestein, 406 Magnolia Ave., Croydon, PA 19020; Anthony Perl, 9 Whitman St., West Orange, NJ 07052.

**IV. Sat., March 15, 10 AM** at the home of Lorena Lemons, 14653 Tynwick Terrace, Silver Spring. Thomas F. Ferrara, Chief, Div. of Planning and Analysis, Northeast Corridor Project, will speak on the status of the NEC and the results of the emerging corridors study. Y-8 Metrobus leaves Silver Spring Metrorail station 15 and 45 minutes after the hour; ride about 27 minutes to Bel Pre Rd. (& Ga. Ave.), walk ¼ mile E to Bel Pre/Tynwick Drive. Further 4 hrs. from NARP office. About \$4 cab ride (flat rate for up to about 4 people in same party) from Metrorail. Lunch will be served afterwards; contributions of food welcome. If you plan to attend, please call NARP office by Mon., Mar. 10.

**VI. David Marshall, 2435 Ridgeway Rd., Oakwood, OH 45419.**

**XI. Your mailed vote with your name and address must be received by Fri., Mar. 28** at NARP Directors Election, c/o Rail Passenger Assn. of the Southwest, PO Box 29038, Phoenix, AZ 85038.

Charles Montooth, Tallesin West, Scottsdale, AZ 85258; Ronald C. Sheck, 1840 Regal Ridge, Las Cruces, NM 88001. (Robert H. Bohannan is not a candidate.)

## Trains and Studies (cont'd. from p. 1)

dom?), all of the world's super-train services to date have essentially been incremental improvements in corridors already well-served by and heavily dependent on good intercity passenger trains, while Ohio has virtually no rail passenger service today.

### PRESIDENT SEEKS MORE NORTHEAST CORRIDOR FUNDING

**On Dec. 7, the Carter administration asked Congress for an additional \$750 million for Boston-Washington improvements, bringing the total Northeast Corridor investment to \$2.5 billion. The administration also indicated that the project goals would be achieved in 1984, three years later than originally planned.**

Ohioans should ponder this letter from NARP Director M.D. Monaghan published in the Feb. 2 *Dallas Times Herald*: "The proposals for Japanese type 'bullet' trains in Texas are commendable if it is realized that they apply to the distant future. At the same time, however, these proposals constitute a threat to more immediate transportation needs if they divert attention from planning that will be needed to solve growing problems in the interim. . . . It should be recalled that, for a 30-year period beginning in 1936, Dallas and Houston enjoyed twice-daily service requiring only four hours using the Burlington-Rock Island Railroad via Corsicana and Teague, a distance of 250 miles. Every inch of this track is still there, although not as well maintained as it once was. The published speed limit for trains operating on these four-hour schedules was 90 mph although they were often observed running over 100 mph and this was accomplished while maintaining a superb safety record. . . . With reasonable rehabilitation and upgrading, these tracks could again offer similar service at a small fraction of the cost of the futuristic bullet trains and work could be completed in a matter of months. With some additional sophistication of signaling and track work, the time could likely be cut to 3½ hours. The line could also be electrified, which would save petroleum not only in hauling passengers but freight as well. "The public is rapidly being squeezed by the prospects of \$2-a-

**Rising oil prices are having a particularly severe impact on the fuel-intensive air industry. In 1978, 20% of airline operating costs were fuel-related, according to FAA's Office of Environment. In 1979, that figure rose to 26%. By comparison, Amtrak says fuel accounted for 5.9% of its operating cost in Fiscal Year 1978, and 6.9% in FY 1979. (Amtrak figures include diesel fuel, power generation for Northeast electric trains, and heating fuel for facilities.)**

**"We don't want to fight a war for a full tank of gas."**

—Rep. Patricia Schroeder (D-CO)

gallon gasoline, worn-out automobiles, unaffordable new automobiles and stratospheric air fares. They have only the rails to turn to if they are to enjoy comfortable transportation at an affordable price while conserving energy. Best we address these more immediate needs and implement the solutions to serve Texas tomorrow while day-after-tomorrow's bullet trains are being planned and built."

NARP Director J. Howard Harding, of Akron, OH, sent a similar message in a column, "The aim: Get Ohio on track," published Nov. 24, 1979, in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*.

A 1969 study for Penn Central supported the feasibility of establishing a sub-100 mph Midwest network of corridors and contained detailed ridership estimates and schedule proposals. The foreword to this study included some prophetic words: "The accelerating level of concern at top state and national governmental levels regarding the growing crises in various transportation modes has created an atmosphere for industry/government cooperation that definitely awaits more positive planning and suggestion. The price of neglect of establishment of an organized forward-planning effort by the railroad could well become some sort of involuntary action forced upon the company if pressures for solution of land transportation problems are not adequately responded to before public opinion becomes too aroused. Not only does Penn Central now carry about one-third of the nation's remaining rail riders but it also is the probable possessor of more than half the nation's future intercity rail passenger potential." Penn Central executives considered this, in their wisdom, threw the study in the waste-basket, applied to discontinue all passenger trains west of Harrisburg and Buffalo, and thereby set in motion the train of events that led to the creation of Amtrak.

Ohioans should urge their state to follow the example of New York: get trains moving now and gradually improve the service. Maybe step one should be to find that Penn Central study and dust it off.

### NARP RAIL GUIDES PROJECT UNDER WAY

**Apparently a lot of NARP members think the time is right for car-free travel guides that tell in detail how to travel America by rail. Hundreds of you have responded to the call for help in creating the NARP RAIL TRAVEL GUIDES.**

**If you've sent in your questionnaire and haven't received a response from Editor Jim Feeney, don't feel neglected. It will take months to catalog all your replies and respond in turn. He's following through as quickly as possible. He'll be in touch.**

## Resolutions of the NARP Board

At its meeting in Denver on Oct. 20, the NARP Board of Directors approved resolutions urging—

- Amtrak—in light of management's promise to improve service on routes that were not discontinued—"to provide as soon as possible the following year-round minimum levels of service: on all lines, once-daily service in each direction; on segments passing through populous regions, two daily round-trips, at least one train in each direction serving major stations between 7 AM and 11 PM; and, on populous and heavily-travelled corridors, three daily round-trips between 7 AM and 11 PM";
- Amtrak to step up orders of equipment to assure delivery of at least 100 new single-level long-distance cars and at least 100 new short-distance cars each year;
- Amtrak to make sufficient "overhauls of existing 'deadlined' equipment to keep the necessary level of equipment reliably and comfortably in service";
- Amtrak to "bring into use, retain, and improve stations in or near urban centers, with good public transportation connections wherever possible and to consider stations in populous suburban areas to minimize access time to the Amtrak system" and "not to use mere operating convenience or cost reduction to justify relocation away from the downtown area which the station would purportedly serve";
- Amtrak "to give serious consideration to employment of all on-train personnel by itself and operation over the freight railroads under trackage rights agreements wherever possible"; and
- Amtrak "to make a maximum effort through negotiating, legal, political, and public relations channels to: obtain necessary capital funding . . . ; secure the full cooperation of the operating railroads" and "revise and/or modernize labor work rules through direct negotiations to achieve optimal utilization of labor in the provision of Amtrak services" and "to initiate no new routes unless and until it is assured that they will be cost-effective, energy-efficient, and competitively attractive, and that if after a reasonable time it is apparent that service on an existing route cannot or will not be made cost-effective, these conditions cannot be met, "Amtrak discontinue service on such route." (The Board supports efforts to get service restored promptly on the routes dropped last year, and "new routes" as defined above does not include the discontinued routes.)

**Rep. Harley O. Staggers (D-WV), Chairman of the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, announced he would retire at the end of 1980. Staggers was first elected to the House in 1948. Rep. John D. Dingell (D-MI) is in line to be the next Chairman.**

In other resolutions, the NARP Board urged—

- Congress "to pass legislation holding all abandoned rail rights-of-way in the public domain so as to allow future restoration of the right-of-way and service;"

- Congress and state legislatures to reduce "present truck weight and size restrictions . . . to levels conducive to highway safety, and to reduce the cost of highway construction and maintenance," and to oppose "all efforts to legalize increased truck weight and size restrictions and the operation of 'double bottoms' or tandem trailers." The Board noted that "the overdevelopment of freight carriage by large trucks is harmful to the more energy-efficient railroads, leading to worsening track conditions and slower, less reliable passenger service;"

- Congress to repeal the "Congressional Route Criteria" which "discriminate against long-distance routes and are unrealistic;" and

- Chicagoans to preserve North Western Station "as much intact as possible" instead of allowing Tishman Corporation to go ahead with plans "to demolish a significant part of" the station "in order to erect another office building like that above Union Station." (To help in the fight, write: **Friends of the North Western Station, 7549 N. Oakley, Chicago, IL 60645.**)

By unanimous vote, the Board approved this resolution: "Whereas Amtrak President Alan Boyd and his staff played a key role in Congressional approval this year of an unprecedented capital investment budget for Amtrak, and his actions helped save certain key routes including the Washington-New Orleans "Crescent" and Chicago-Los Angeles "Southwest Limited," therefore be it resolved that the NARP Board recognizes and appreciates the positive accomplishments of Amtrak management."

By a vote of 22 to 8, the Board passed this resolution: "Whereas there is no longer a realistic possibility that Congress will freeze the Amtrak route structure, resolved, that NARP discontinue efforts aimed at freezing the Amtrak system and get on with the job of building a better Amtrak." When the Board approved this resolution, the amount of capital funding Amtrak was to get was still in doubt. By contrast, it seemed unlikely that the Senate would even vote again on the "freeze" question. (It did not.) The Board chose to focus staff action on helping with the capital funding issue where there was a real opportunity to make gains.

The Board also voted to "establish a committee of directors to study the feasibility and desirability of forming a NARP political action committee," and to move Indiana from Region VII to Region VI.