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RETURN REQUESTED

BETRAYED BY THE BUDGET?

The U.S. Senate has voted in effect to kill Amtrak's capital improvement program and make new route cutbacks which would take effect Oct. 1 this year. The May 5 vote was on the first budget resolution which earmarked $19.8 billion in budget authority for transportation ("category 400"), $3.6 billion less than requested by President Carter in his March budget revision (reduction), and $3 billion less than the House voted.

The Senate figure was based on Amtrak getting $760 million in budget authority—the same amount Secretary Adams proposed for FY 1980 to accompany his 43% route reduction. Even President Carter's figure would force sizeable cuts in the capital and Northeast Corridor programs. The House figure falls in between, so the likely outcome of a House-Senate conference—a figure somewhere between House and Senate figures—could still wipe out the capital program.

This is all part of a game called "let's fool the public into thinking we're balancing the budget." The game is a sham for at least three reasons: (1.) it does not reflect the costs of the recession—about $20 billion for every 1% increase in unemployment; (2.) strong Congressional pressures may kill two elements of the Congressional balanced budget: government withholding of income taxes on savings and dividends ($3.4 billion) and the oil import fee ($10 billion); and (3.) the process forces government agencies to waste money by researching—and lobbying against—huge budget cuts which almost certainly will not be implemented.

Besides transportation, the budget process has hit public service jobs, food stamps, and housing subsidies particularly hard and the chairmen of the affected authorizing and appropriating committees don't like this. When NARP's Ross Capon testified Apr. 17 before Birch Bayh (D-IN), chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, he welcomed and supported NARP's opposition to the low Budget Committee figure. He commented on how senseless it was to hit the American public with a new 10¢/gallon gasoline tax while further reducing public transportation, and he expressed hope that NARP members

(continued on page 4)

TRAVELER'S ADVISORY: WRITE, WRITE, WRITE!

Although the first budget resolution was to be completed by May 15, the debate will rage on through the summer at least until the second—usually final—budget resolution is due. (That date is Sept. 15 under current law, but the Senate just voted to move it up to Aug. 28 so legislators would have more time to campaign before the November elections.) As the recession deepens, prospects should improve for restoring some of the Senate's worst cuts—including Amtrak and mass transit, IF YOU WRITE TO YOUR SENATORS!

In your letters, emphasize that it is not "fiscal responsibility" to cut Amtrak's capital budget, forcing extra years of operating losses swollen by continued use of trains with obsolete heating and air-conditioning. If your state would benefit from train improvements outlined in our lead article, be sure to tell your Senators.

Remind your Senators that last October's discontinuance of full trains—in clear defiance of public opinion—was balanced by the promise that Amtrak would henceforth be given adequate resources to run and improve the surviving system; that there would be no more route discontinuances for at least two years; and that Amtrak management was to be allowed to focus on multi-year, orderly planning instead of continuing to participate in 11th hour debates on funding cuts.

The Senate voted to break all of those promises and—since this would require Amtrak to violate its authorization law—force Congress to name the trains to be killed this year.

Remind your Senators that Amtrak helps fight inflation by reducing our oil imports; that dollars spent on Amtrak stay in the U.S. economy providing jobs instead of going into bank accounts of foreign governments.

Tell your Senators that, as a consumer, you are incensed that Congress would follow up the May 15 10¢/gallon gasoline tax increase with further cuts in public transportation.

Ask your Senators why, when our need for public transportation is greatest, is the Senate suddenly supporting much less money for Amtrak than its old enemy the Department of Transportation?

Senate Budget Committee members will be particularly influential in the continuing debate. They are Acting Chairman Ernest F. Hollings (SC), Warren G. Magnuson (WA), Lawton Chiles (FL), Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (DE), J. Bennett Johnston (LA), Jim Sasser (TN), Gary Hart (CO), Howard M. Metzenbaum (OH), Donald W. Riegel, Jr. (MI), Daniel Patrick Moynihan (NY), and J. James Exon (NE) from the Democratic side, and Republicans Henry Bellmon (OK), Pete V. Domenici (NM), Bob Packwood (OR), William L. Armstrong (CO), who told the Senate that Amtrak "is serving no real need" (May 5 Congressional Record, p. S4538), Nancy L. Kassebaum (KS), Rudy Boschwitz (MN), Orrin G. Hatch (UT), and Larry Pressler (SD).

But PLEASE WRITE TO BOTH OF YOUR SENATORS WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE ON THE BUDGET COMMITTEE, since any successful resolution of this crisis would probably come through a floor vote involving all Senators.

FLORIO, UDALL, MURRAY MEET NARP BOARD

Rep. James J. Florio (D-NJ), Chairman of the House Commerce Subcommittee on Transportation and Commerce, and Harold F. Murray, Vice-President of VIA West based in Winnipeg, were the featured speakers at the meeting of the NARP Board of Directors in Washington April 24-26. There were also a panel discussion chaired by R.L. Banks, transportation consultant, with representatives from various aspects of the railroad industry, and presentations by two Amtrak executives.

Rep. Morris K. Udall (D-AZ), Chairman of the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, came to accept the George Falcon Golden Spike Award on behalf of Arizona Gov. Bruce Babbitt. NARP Director George Falcon of Los Angeles presents the award to thank public officials for activities on behalf of rail passenger service, in this case the provision of emergency commuter rail service from Feb. 25 to Mar. 7 when highway bridges were knocked out by the swollen Salt River.

Falcon designated Amtrak and Southern Pacific as co-winners of the award, and Amtrak Public Affairs Vice-President Carole A. Foryst was also on hand for the presentation.

Rep. Udall, who was a major candidate in the 1976 Democratic Presidential primary, announced as he entered the room, "Hi! I'm Ronald Reagan, and I'm going to carry all 13 states!"

Rep. James J. Florio

Rep. Florio gave the Board an update on the corridors legislation. He made clear his own belief that the Rock Island Railroad labor protection bill could not have passed the House standing alone. Therefore, he assembled Rock Island provisions, Northeast Corridor funding, and emerging corridors into one bill, HR 6837, to generate broad support. It passed overwhelmingly on a voice vote Mar. 31.

Florio noted that some Carter Administration officials had been making "ill-advised statements threatening a veto" if the emerging corridor provisions were enacted by Congress. He theorized that someone was not reading the bill carefully; references to "a billion dollars" in attacks on the bill ignored the fact that, although the bill stakes out a claim on $850 million for track construction, it does not authorize those funds.

The Subcommittee Chairman noted there were strong pressures within the Commerce Committee for *more* work, not less.

On Apr. 22, Rep. Florio met with Sen. Howard W. Cannon (D-NV), Chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, and received a commitment that the Senate would go to conference on the entire House bill. Earlier reports had suggested Sen. Cannon would not even name conferees until the House agreed to take up only the Rock Island provisions. Rep. Florio pointed out that it was not as easy as some people seemed to think for him to break up the House bill; such a move would have required the "unanimous consent" of the House.

(To illustrate why the Rock Island bill by itself could get through the Senate but not the House, consider Illinois. The RI issue was important enough to win full Illinois support in the Senate—i.e., the votes of both Senators—while, in the House, there would be many downstate representatives with no interest in the matter. Also, widespread interest in emerging corridors did not develop in the Senate until after the Rock Island bill was passed, so there was never any "horse-trading" between legislators interested in the RI and those interested in emerging corridors.)

Harold F. Murray

Harold F. Murray, whose responsibilities for VIA Rail Canada, Inc., (Canadian counterpart to Amtrak), extend from Thunder Bay, Ont., west to the Pacific Coast, briefly recounted the history of rail passenger service in Canada and then outlined VIA's recent accomplishments and its plans.

On April 1, 1979, VIA assumed responsibility for all aspects of rail passenger service in Canada although, "to this point, we still do not have a station agreement with either of the two railroads, and this has been somewhat of a deterrent and frustration in progressing our objectives."

Life is simpler for VIA than for Amtrak in some important respects: VIA has "to deal with only two railroads, Canadian National and CP Rail," and "these two carriers offered us some of the best trackage in North America. Both railways are continuing to spend significant sums of money each year on mainline track improvements."

Other points of particular interest:

"In the short term we want to greatly improve the load factor on all services. From a current load factor of approximately 40%, we are aiming for something in the order of 60%;"

—VIA has a mandate to develop new intercity services as needed;

—For some time it appeared that the Regina, Saskatchewan, passenger station would be removed from the downtown area and Transport 2000 Canada, Canadian counterpart to NARP, played a major role in fighting this plan. Murray reported success—VIA will stay downtown;

—The "experience has been good" at St. John, New Brunswick, where separate CN and CP stations on the outskirts have been replaced through restoration of a downtown location in conjunc-

LATE FLASH!—GOOD NEWS ON CORRIDORS!

House and Senate Commerce Conferees reached agreement May 14 on a bill authorizing: $38 million for emerging corridors (market studies/engineering/operations feasibility studies); the full $750 million Carter request for the Northeast Corridor; $200,000 to facilitate private sector development of the Atlantic City-Phila. line; and $25 million in FY '82 for corridor rollingstock acquisition. The conference report mentions the "$850 million reservation" (for track construction), and permits Amtrak to do final design work for LA-San Diego. 100%-Amtrak-funded commuter trains are extended from April 1, 1981, to Oct. 1, 1981 (no new money for the purpose). (On May 8, the Senate had approved Northeast Corridor funding and a request that the General Accounting Office do a $5 million study of emerging corridors.) The conference report is expected to pass the full House and Senate.

Next question: will any of the new money get through the appropriations committees, given the tight limit on total transportation spending likely in the budget resolutions?

AMTRAK TO DOWNTOWN CINCINNATI, MIAMI???

The developers who are converting vacant Cincinnati Union Terminal into a shopping mall have asked Amtrak to move back into CUT. In an April 9 letter to Amtrak Vice President Larry Gilson, Developer Steve Skilken wrote: "There presently is one track servicing the building, and we, the developers, would be more than happy for you to activate this track for passengers. The terminal opens as a shopping and restaurant complex this August 1. We have made provisions in our plans to accommodate an Amtrak station and rail service." Skilken added that CUT enjoys frequent city bus service.

Amtrak vacated CUT in October 1972 upon completion of a new station (the company's first) on River Road, in a junkyard district several miles west of downtown. River Rd. Station is not served by city transit.

Meanwhile, NARP has obtained an inter-office memo from the City of Miami which recommends that Amtrak be moved into a new, intermodal station in or near Miami's central business district (CBD). Currently, Amtrak serves Miami through a station in suburban Hialeah, 4 miles from the CBD. The memo goes on to say: "If the construction of a new Amtrak station near the Miami CBD is not possible, the City should demand the construction of an interchange between Amtrak and the (Dade County) rail rapid transit system." As it now stands, the transit system's proposed Hialeah line will miss Amtrak's station by about 5 blocks.

"We are placing very strong emphasis on intermodality and have already identified a number of key locations across the system where our present stations will in time become multi-modal transportation centres. We have some very exciting possibilities already advanced. We hope to be in a position very shortly that will allow us to develop a new station facility in Calgary, Alberta. . . .

"We have developed a new reservation and ticket system integrated with Air Canada's system—one of the world's best. This system is called RESERVIA. . . .

"This system, which went into operation on March 1st of this year . . . is at the heart of Canada's transportation requirements of the future—an intermodal transportation network which combines bus, rail, ferry, and air to achieve maximum purpose and efficiency.

"When RESERVIA is fully operational, travellers will be able to make all necessary travel arrangements in a single transaction—in a single phone call—train, plane, ferry, hotel/motel, rent-a-car, and hopefully, bus service."

—Harold F. Murray

tion with extension of the ex-CP Montreal-Maine-St. John "Atlantic" through to Halifax;

—He indicated that VIA is working towards overcoming the obstacles blocking Calgary trains from entering downtown Edmonton (they now stop at South Edmonton); and

—VIA did not recommend and does not enjoy shuffling cars between the two transcontinental trains at Winnipeg in the winter, and may go to a four-night transcontinental schedule in order to avoid forcing some westbound passengers to change cars at Winnipeg in the middle of the night when the train is late.

"When we implement our summer schedules in early June, we will introduce a totally new on-board position on our transcontinental trains—that of Train Service Manager. . . .

"We must take a long and hard look at our present overall on-board operations, particularly as they relate to staffing. On-board authority continues to be a problem area both for our staff and passengers. . . .

"We are well aware that on today's long distance train, there is considerable non-productive time, and this is perhaps best illustrated in the duties of the sleeping car porter. This non-productive time could be better utilized in other areas such as at the take-out counter—or perhaps in using one porter for two cars. The traditional dining car is very labor intensive.

"In transcontinental service, our on-board personnel must endure excessively long runs—Toronto/Montreal to Winnipeg, and Winnipeg to Vancouver. Home terminal layovers are as high as nine days. This is not a healthy situation and is one that we will have to look at a little more closely in the not too distant future."

—Harold F. Murray

The NARP Board greatly appreciated the extensive practical knowledge Mr. Murray brought to the meeting, amply illustrated by the fact that "I had spent more than 35 years as a career passenger man with Canadian National Railways at system headquarters in Montreal" before joining VIA.

"We are well into a program to upgrade our transcontinental and intercity equipment to make it acceptable and suitable for the next few years. We are placing emphasis on the former CP Rail stainless steel equipment and we already have in service, a large number of refurbished coaches, sleepers, and dining cars.

"Over the next few years, our 100 self-propelled rail diesel cars will be completely re-equipped and refurbished. In time, VIA passengers will be able to ride in more attractive and more technically sound cars than ever before. So, for a fairly modest investment, we will soon have a substantial fleet of modern short-haul equipment.

"Meanwhile, our mid-range plans are well advanced. We have purchased ten complete new trains, which are now being built. They are LRC's (light, rapid and comfortable), Canadian designed, Canadian built to specifications laid down by VIA.

"The LRC can travel at speeds up to 125 miles per hour on existing trackage in all climatic conditions. The LRC has been designed to move Canadians economically, conveniently, and comfortably between major centres of 500 miles, or less apart."

—Harold F. Murray

AMTRAK's LRC'S: WHERE WILL THEY RUN?

In addition to the 10 LRC trainsets VIA is buying, two will be leased to Amtrak by the manufacturers, a consortium of Alcan Canada Products Ltd.; Dominion Foundries and Steel, Ltd. (Dofasco); and Bombardier, Inc. Amtrak's lease will run for two years with an option to buy. Each set consists of 1 diesel and 5 coaches and the first set is expected in the U.S. by early June.

When they were ordered, it was expected that Amtrak's units would be used between Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver. This idea was shelved after Burlington Northern refused to allow any increase in speed limits unless Amtrak would assume full liability for all accidents regardless of cause—even though the main advantage of the LRC is its ability to negotiate curves up to 40% faster than trains with conventional suspension.

More recently, Amtrak has been considering Boston-New York as a possibility, and will initially run tests between Boston and New Haven. Boston-New York service would require switching to and from electric locomotives in New Haven, but the LRC's are designed to run at 125 mph and, as a result of Northeast Corridor Project work already completed, there is high speed track east of New Haven, some of it capable of supporting 120 mph service.

The Federal Railroad Administration is taking a keen interest in the question, however, and it is not clear whether FRA will agree to use of the trains in Boston-New York revenue service.

The Panel

NARP Director John Heffner, of Washington, conceived the panel to increase NARP's awareness of broader issues facing the railroad industry. The panel included, besides moderator R.L. Banks: William Druhan, Secretary to the National Conference of State Railway Officials; Clifford Elkins, then consultant to Secretary Goldschmidt and, from May 12, Washington representative of the Delaware and Hudson Railway Company; James W. McClellan, Director of Corporate Development, Southern Railway; and Michael Marsh, Associate Editor, Labor (from its masthead: "a national paper owned by 14 unions with membership in the railroads, airlines and related transport fields"), who retired Apr. 30 after 27 years on the staff.

McClellan served Amtrak from December, 1970, six months before Amtrak took over the trains, until mid-1972, first as assistant to Chairman of the Incorporators and later as Director of Schedules, Consists, and Pricing. He outlined what he expects will be the major developments of the next decade in the railroad industry:

—mergers will reduce the number of carriers hauling 80% of rail freight tonmiles from ten today to five by 1985;

—route mileage will drop dramatically: about 10,000 miles of railroad were liquidated in the past two months (Milwaukee & Rock Island); there will be 30 to 40,000 miles of railroad up for abandonment in the next five years, mostly in the Midwest and East, probably including shrinkage of the Illinois Central Gulf from 16,000 to 9,000 miles;

—deregulation is assured due to ICC policy regardless of what Congress does, although there may be "re-regulation" in five years;

—there will be limited Federal money for rail freight operations because of tight Federal budgets, because so many other industries will be in equally dire straits (steel, automobiles, air, utilities), and because freight operations have less public appeal than do passenger trains;

—"You're going to have to scramble for every dollar you get for Amtrak;"

—the basic incompatibility between rail freight and passenger operations is growing with the removal of superelevation (banking) from curves and the energy-conservation-inspired freight train speed limits of 45 to 55 mph: the challenge to Amtrak is to find equipment which can run on the flattened curves, and "tilting" trains like the Canadian LRC may be the answer;

—while the energy crisis may increase the railroads' share of U.S. freight traffic, it will also lead to shipper efforts to minimize the need for transportation whenever possible;

—there is less talk today about nationalizing the rail rights-of-way than there was five years ago, due largely to increased concern about balancing the Federal budget. (This same point was made earlier by Rep. Florio.)

Druhan was somewhat more optimistic about prospects for getting Federal money into the rail freight business. He agreed the dollars would not come easily, but he feels they *will* come because the nation needs the railroads whereas it does not need, for example, particular automobile companies.

He does not foresee something called "nationalization" happening on a given day; it will come gradually "by osmosis."

Banks responded to McClellan's comment about superelevation by suggesting that if the railroads were told forcefully to run passenger trains well, they would do so; so long as they think they can escape, they will come up with one excuse after another—if you solve superelevation, they'll find some other obstacle.

Rima Z. Parkhurst

Amtrak's new Vice-President, Passenger Services, briefly outlined her hopes and plans, emphasizing that improvements would be accomplished as rapidly as possible. One improvement that was imminent: Amtrak is now washing its dirty linen on location rather than shipping it all to New York City, the standard practice until this month.

She hopes to improve dramatically the quality of food offered on board the trains, giving the long-distance trains individual identities through the menus. In response to a complaint that a particular club car departed with 13 passengers and only 3 dinners, she stated: "That will not happen any more. . . ." (NARP members: tell us if it does!) She also indicated that dining car hours of service will soon appear—on signs screwed into the walls, not on cards easily removed.

Bruce Horowitz, Acting Manager of Schedule and Service Planning in the Corporate Planning Dept., presented Amtrak's program for converting the entire long-distance network to all-electric climate control. The schedule is in our lead story to encourage you to report it to your legislators who are trying to balance the budget by killing this program.

(The next News will report actions taken by the NARP Board.)

Betrayed by the Budget *(continued from page 1)*

would contact Senate Budget Committee members who, he noted, were not as familiar with the transportation needs of the country as was his committee.

Sen. Howard W. Cannon (D-NV), chairman of the Commerce Committee, made a floor speech on May 5 warning his colleagues that the transportation figure of the Budget Committee would prevent implementation of the 1979 Amtrak authorization act (see box).

If we are able to keep Amtrak's budget together, here is what Amtrak management will implement (HEP = headend power, meaning older cars improved with electric heating/air-conditioning powered by a generator in the locomotive; FY = fiscal year, the 12 months ending on Sept. 30 of the year named):

—Year-round daily Chicago-Seattle "Empire Builder" service starting June 15;

—Ogden-Los Angeles "Desert Wind" to get Superliner coaches June 30 and sleeper Aug. 3;

—NY-New Orleans "Crescent" converted to HEP beginning with two trainsets in Sept., complete in Nov.;

—Chicago-Oakland "San Francisco Zephyr" to get Superliners starting with two trainsets in Sept.;

—NY-Florida service to be completely converted to electric heating/air-conditioning with combination of HEP cars and new low-level equipment in FY '82;

—NY-Columbia, SC-St. Petersburg "Champion" to be restored in FY '83;

—NY/Washington-Chicago "Broadway Ltd." to operate year-round with separate NY and Washington sections all the way to Chicago starting in FY '84;

—in each of two years (FY '84 and FY '86) introduction of a new long-distance train on a route at least 1,500 miles long, either added service on an existing route or new service on a route currently without service.

CHAIRMAN CANNON ON AMTRAK AND THE BUDGET

"Some transportation programs, of course, can and will have to be cut back or deferred, but the results of those cutbacks or deferrals will be contrary, in some instances, to previously formulated congressional policy. At this time, I only want to alert the Senate as to one such example. Last year, the Congress, after long debate, authorized Amtrak a level of funding of $984.9 million in fiscal year 1981 to run a mandated route structure and for other purposes. Now, I am the first to recognize that there is room to economize in most budgets, and with Amtrak's system-wide revenue-to-cost ratio of about 43%, there is ample room to raise fares and achieve some cost economies. However, what I want to make clear today is that the Senate Budget Committee's assumed level of $770.2 million in budget authority for fiscal year 1981 is a proposed cut of 25%—should funds be appropriated at that level—which could of necessity require many route and service reductions on the Amtrak system which the Congress last year mandated be continued. Consequently, final funding at the $770 million level could reverse that mandate, and if the Senate and the Congress do not want to have that mandate reversed with routes discontinued and services reduced, then to be realistic function 400 should be adjusted, if not now, then in conference to allow for a more reasonable, yet still fiscally responsible, level of funding for this and other transportation programs."

—May 5 Congressional Record, p. S4543

CHAIRMAN CANNON ON TRANSPORTATION BUDGET PRIORITIES

"DOT and the Administration have recently called for severe budget cuts in programs which aid a broad spectrum of worthwhile goals and needy recipients. Two examples are the cuts in aid to fixed-rail mass transit and the food stamp programs. Clearly many of these cuts have to be made in order to balance the Federal budget. However, DOT and the Administration have, at the same time, continued to oppose the Senate's program to remove the Federal funding eligibility for the largest 72 airports—all of which are capable of self-finance, all of which can replace lost grant revenue by increasing user fees, and all of which are monopoly landlords that control the airlines' access to annual markets worth $100 million or more (some much more). I don't understand this inconsistency in setting our priorities for budget cutting."

—From a May 1 letter to Thomas G. Allison, nominated to be DOT General Counsel

(Note: At about the time this was written, the House Public Works and Transportation Committee approved HR 6721, the Airway and Airport Improvement Act of 1980, which would make each of those 72 airports eligible for a grant of up to $5 million for an approved development project.)