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RETURN REQUESTED

CONGRESS LISTENED TO YOU!

Amtrak's Short-Haul Nice, But Long-Haul Vital

"The conferees would encourage Amtrak to place importance on maintaining its long distance routes. Such routes are an integral part of the nation's transportation network and remain an important alternative which serves the transportation and energy needs of the country. . . ."

"It is the intent of the conferees that Amtrak should make every effort to adjust or modify service so that routes will meet the criteria. The conferees also intend to ensure that Amtrak pursue all available alternatives with respect to all the routes in the

system, including the Cardinal, the Inter-American, and the Pioneer, in order that the maximum level of service be maintained. . . ."

—Explanatory Statement of the House and Senate Conferees With Respect to (Rail Portions) of the Omnibus Reconciliation Bill (HR 3982), Congressional Record, Aug. 1 (Senate Proceedings of July 31), pages S 9070-1

Economics and politics both favored the long-distance trains this year, but Congress had to cut through a swamp of corridor cliches in order to arrive at sound conclusions. Your letters and the work of local chambers of commerce, which NARP members in many cases helped stimulate, were crucial.

"WE'RE SHREWDLY BURNING OUR BRIDGES BEFORE US"



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Management Should Favor Long-distance Trains

• These trains are more efficient than non-Northeast Corridor (NEC) short-distance trains. Figures presented by the Reagan administration indicate that the subsidy-per-passenger-mile in both FY 1979 and 1980—the only years cited—was lower for long-distance trains than for non-NEC short-distance trains. (Feb. 12 letter from James T. McQueen, Director, Office of Intercity Planning, Federal Railroad Administration, to NARP Member Roscoe C. Migliore of Collinsville, OK.)

• In the near future, the long-distance trains' margin of economic superiority will increase as those trains benefit from the less costly modified dining service and the planned October introduction of Amtrak's high-capacity information/reservation computer. (Since long-distance trains require reservations and short-distance trains do not, long-distance trains are more adversely affected by the limited capacity of the existing computer.)

• As Amtrak's telephone information people, ticket agents, and would-be customers know too well, there is tremendous unmet demand for Amtrak's existing long-distance services which requires only that capacity be increased—both on the trains and, as noted above, in the reservation/information system.

• On the other hand, existing short-distance trains generally handle existing demand with room to spare; major track

(continued on page 4)

TRAVELERS' ADVISORY

Dedicated bus service commenced July 1, providing guaranteed connections between Los Angeles and Bakersfield for all Bakersfield-Oakland "San Joaquin" trains, and between Davis and Sacramento for north- and southbound passengers to/from the Los Angeles-Davis-Seattle "Coast Starlight." The bus service is partly funded by California DOT (Caltrans).

The Plot To Kill Rail Transit

"What's good for General Motors is good for the country."
—Charles Wilson, 1953

When Charlie Wilson was toiling in the General Motors executive suite, earning his future Cabinet appointment as secretary of defense, GM, along with some of the oil companies, was steering the country toward its current energy predicament. Few remember it, but before the automobile companies became predominant, the country relied on centrally generated electricity for city transportation. It was relatively clean and energy-efficient. There were streetcars and off-street railways. There were also trackless trolleys—electric buses powered by overhead wires and able to maneuver through traffic.

Without realizing it, much less debating the consequences, the country turned its transportation policy over to GM and its automotive allies. What followed was the destruction of mass transit; the country became almost totally reliant on the private automobile, with its necessary consumption of foreign oil. Of course, most people would consider it unfair to blame the demise of mass transit on several big corporations. They just manufactured the car and the bus—to the delight of millions.

But it wasn't that simple. When GM and a few other big companies created a transportation oligopoly for the internal-combustion engine—so convenient until the cheap gasoline ran out—they did not rely just on the obvious sales pitch. They conspired. They broke the law. This was all proved at a little-remembered trial in a federal court in Chicago, in 1949. After more than a month of sworn testimony, a jury convicted the corporations and several executives of criminal antitrust violations for their part in the demise of mass transit. The convictions were upheld on appeal.

In many places, mass transit didn't just die—it was murdered. No doubt the mass availability of the automobile inevitably would have changed travel habits to a great degree, but it will never be known to what extent electrified transport would have died on its own. The big conspirator companies were unwilling to entrust their fates to the market. Instead, they methodically removed the competition. In knowing violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act, they used their economic power to take over a small bus company and, through it, acquired and dismantled one electrified mass-transit system after another, replacing them with buses. The buses, besides being built and supplied by GM and the oil companies, never had the same appeal for riders that the electrified transit systems did, and merely added to the allure of the private car. Then the big companies that orchestrated the demise of the trolley tried to cover over their own tracks as surely as they covered over the tracks of many a rail line. The GM conspiracy case is a fine example of what can happen when important matters of public policy are abandoned by government to the self-interest of corporations—something that is occurring right now in the realm of energy.

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The preceding is an excerpt from Jonathan Kwitny's "The Great Transportation Conspiracy," a startling account of the corporate conspiracy which led to the virtual extermination of urban rail transit in the United States. "The Great Transportation Conspiracy" appears in full in the Feb. 1981 issue of *Harper's* magazine.

Kwitny's article is based on the actual transcript of the 1949 Chicago trial in which General Motors, Firestone Tire & Rubber, Phillips Petroleum, Mack Manufacturing (the truck builder), and Standard Oil of California were convicted of violating federal

SECOND GENERATION AMFLEET

The first of 150 new Amfleet II cars (125 coaches, 25 food cars) should be delivered to Amtrak by Budd in late August, with the balance of cars to be delivered over the next year and a half. Ordered in March 1980, the long-distance, single-level cars will be assigned to some of Amtrak's eastern routes. The new cars will debut on the New York-Florida "Silver Star" later this year, where they will run in conjunction with Heritage sleepers and diners.

antitrust laws. Greyhound Bus Lines was also deeply involved in the plot to destroy rail transit, although it escaped indictment.

The transcript reveals that GM and its fellow highway/oil conspirators were anxious to get Americans out of electric trolleys and streetcars—and into oil-consuming cars and buses. Finding that cities were unwilling to give up their rail systems voluntarily, the corporations schemed to buy the systems, junk them, and replace them with GM and Mack buses—in some cases, almost overnight. GM and its accom-



New Orleans' St. Charles Avenue Streetcar, one of the few survivors of the transit conspiracy.

plishes did not engage in this activity openly; rather they set up a "front" called National City Lines to buy and dismantle the rail lines and operate the replacement buses.

Congress unwittingly aided the scheme when in 1935 it enacted a law requiring electric utilities to divest themselves of such ancillary businesses as trolley operations. This forced most of the country's rail transit systems to be put up for sale just as National City Lines was getting started.

National City Lines publicly proclaimed the "virtues" of bus service, but it was all a sham. NCL had no sincere commitment to buses; its ultimate goal was simply to break people of their "rail habit," and then offer them GM automobiles with Firestone tires and fuel tanks filled with Standard or Phillips gasoline.

The conspirators were remarkably successful in their efforts to create a transportation oligopoly; only seven original streetcar/trolley systems have survived into the present day, in Philadelphia, Boston, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Newark, New Orleans, and San Francisco. ■

AMTRAK'S MAIL & EXPRESS GROWTH

Last year, Amtrak earned \$10.7 million transporting mail, up from \$1.2 million in its first year of existence, 1971.

Amtrak's Rail Express cargo revenues came to \$3.4 million last year, up from \$120,000 in 1973 when the service was first introduced.

Amtrak Seeks Additional Income Sources

During a recent speech at the National Press Club, Amtrak President Alan Boyd announced that Amtrak plans to reduce its need for federal subsidy by initiating new profit-making ventures to diversify its revenue base. New ventures to be actively pursued include: real estate development at Amtrak-owned stations, development of a commercial fiber-optics communications system along the Amtrak-owned Northeast Corridor, and the introduction of vocational training and commercial rail car repair/maintenance work at the company's Beech Grove, Indiana, shops.

Amtrak is presently negotiating commercial developments at its stations in seven Northeast cities. A 22-story office building is now under construction above the south tracks at Chicago Union Station. It is expected to yield over \$1 million in annual income by 1983. Last year, real estate income to the company totalled \$12 million, but that figure is expected to exceed \$20 million by 1982.

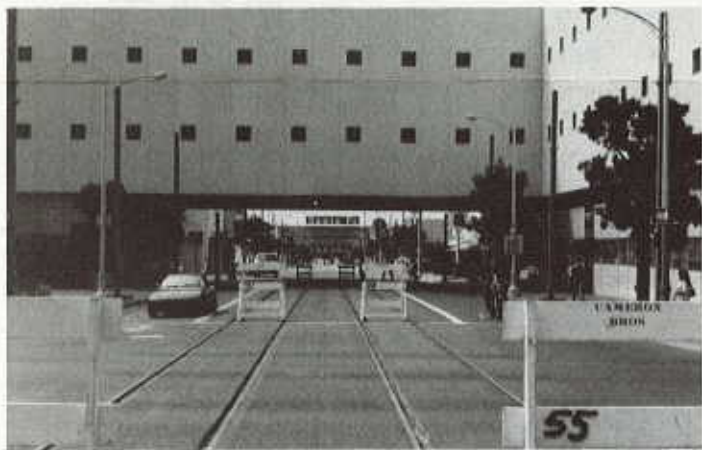
Reportedly, Amtrak is close to signing a contract with a transit authority for car repairs at Beech Grove. ■

Trolleys Return To San Diego

Decades after its original street car system was dismantled, the City of San Diego has built a new trolley system—on schedule, under budget, and without a penny from the federal government. It is the first trolley system built in the U.S. in a generation, and the country's cheapest mass transit system, in terms of dollars per mile, to be built since World War II.

The new 16-mile light rail transit line, nicknamed the "Tia Juana Trolley," opened on schedule July 26, linking downtown San Diego with the Mexican border at San Ysidro-Tijuana. Total cost of construction was \$86 million, or slightly more than \$5 million per mile—as compared with \$34 million per mile for San Francisco's BART system, and \$70 million per mile for Washington's Metrorail. The project, completed in less than two years' time and \$1.5 million under budget, was financed entirely by revenues from the state gasoline tax and a local sales tax.

The trolley's northern terminus is the Amtrak station in downtown San Diego. From there, the trolley line heads east and then south for two miles in city streets, until it reaches the right-of-way



Tracks and catenary poles were in place, but overhead wires had yet to be installed in this March 1981 photo of "C" Street, San Diego, looking west toward Amtrak/Santa Fe station, the Tia Juana Trolley's downtown terminus.

of the old San Diego & Arizona Eastern Railway (SD&AE). At that point, the trolley proceeds south on rehabilitated SD&AE tracks for the remaining 14 miles to the Mexican border.

Because so much of the transit line utilizes an already existing railroad with its own separate (off-street) right-of-way, construction costs were kept to a bare minimum and fast train speeds (50 mph maximum) are safely attainable.

Oddly enough, a 1976 tropical storm helped bring about San Diego's trolley revival. The storm caused so much damage to the 109-mile SD&AE that its owner, the Southern Pacific Railroad, decided to abandon it. San Diego officials, concerned over the loss of freight service and increasingly conscious of the line's transit potential, offered to purchase the single-track line for \$18 million if Southern Pacific would repair all storm damage. SP agreed, and San Diego got itself a railroad. San Diego's Metro-



Two of San Diego's trolley cars, purchased for \$800,000 a piece. In this March 1981 photo, catenary wires were not yet strung, and cars' power pantographs were in lowered position.

politan Transit Development Board (MTDB) took control of the property and set out to convert the San Diego-San Ysidro segment into a dual-purpose transit/freight line, and to restore regular freight service over the remainder of the railroad.

The original plan called for some double-track and some single-track-with-passing-sidings between San Diego and San Ysidro, but after the \$86 million project was already underway, MTDB authorized an additional, Phase 2, expenditure of \$30 million to completely double-track the segment and to order 10 additional cars. Phase 2 double-tracking should be completed by July 1982.

The "Tia Juana Trolley" employs articulated light rail cars built in Germany by Siemens du Wag. The fourteen cars originally ordered have already been delivered; ten more are on order. The cars, which draw power from overhead wires, can each accommodate up to 210 patrons sitting and standing. Two-car trains operate every 15 minutes from 5:30 AM to 8:30 PM. Running time, including 18 station-stops, is 40 minutes; the city bus requires 77 minutes. The basic fare is \$1, although trips completely within downtown San Diego are only 25¢. Multi-ride tickets provide a 25% discount. The trolley is projected to carry 30,000 riders per day by 1990.

At the dedication ceremony, NARP Director George Falcon of Los Angeles presented MTDB officials with The Golden Spike Award, to salute the return of rail transit to San Diego. The award makes special mention of James R. Mills, California state senator and Amtrak Board Chairman, who played a key role in the creation of the "Tia Juana Trolley."

Most large American cities have under-utilized freight railroad tracks which would make ideal light rail transit lines. All that's needed are innovative leaders like Sen. Mills, and, perhaps, some well-aimed tropical storms!

Portland, OR, is preparing to build a 14-mile light rail line with funds freed up by the cancellation of a highway project. A number of other cities, including Detroit, New York City, Sacramento, Denver, and San Jose, are now proposing or seriously considering light rail projects.

"Broadway Ltd." To Be Rerouted

Work is proceeding on schedule for the Oct. 1 rerouting of the Washington section of the Washington/New York-Chicago "Broadway Limited." Earlier this year, Amtrak's Board of Directors approved \$2.3 million in track and station work to permit rerouting the train from its present circuitous route via Philadelphia onto a direct route via Cumberland, MD. The rerouting should cut at least 2 hours off the train's present Washington-Pittsburgh running time and will mean continued Amtrak service to Cumberland, which otherwise would have lost all service with the



Oct. 1 discontinuance of the Washington-Cincinnati "Shenandoah."

The new route, over Baltimore & Ohio's Washington-Pittsburgh mainline (route of old "Capitol Ltd.") is 189 miles shorter than the present Conrail/Northeast Corridor route through Philadelphia. With the route change, the New York and Washington sections will combine/separate in Pittsburgh rather than in Philadelphia. The New York section will remain on its present route.

The \$2.3 million capital costs include construction of a track connection between Conrail and B&O in Pittsburgh, station work at Connellsville and McKeesport, PA, and track clearance widening work at nine locations in the mountains between Cumberland and Pittsburgh.

Amtrak expects the rerouting to net \$9 million in additional revenues annually.

Management Should Favor. • (continued from page 1)

improvements will be needed in order to produce dramatic increases in short-distance traffic, which is time-sensitive. The funding is not in sight today, and such investments may be hard to justify where cities lack good local rail transit. Even the super-train-oriented Ohio Rail Transportation Authority, in its superb film on foreign high-speed passenger trains, acknowledges that Japan's bullet trains rely heavily on a dense network of connecting local and conventional intercity rail services. In addition, Consultant Arthur B. Shenefelt notes that careful planning in Japan has integrated suburban bullet-train stations with "shopping mall/entertainment terminal complexes" and beltway rail transit stations. (Please tell us if you know of any suburban malls that are or could be linked to an Amtrak station.)

● Maintenance of the existing long-distance network should facilitate, and may be a prerequisite for, future corridor development. The long-distance trains are preserving rail passenger terminal facilities at good locations in many key cities felt to have corridor potential and preserving Amtrak's right to use many rail lines linking such cities.

Passengers Favor Long-distance Trains

● Except in a few big markets, long-distance air fares have become much less competitive. Many key points served by the long-distance trains have experienced dramatic air fare increases and/or service reductions. These trends spawned by airline deregulation and fuel price increases are likely to be intensified by the long-term impact of the air controllers' strike. While the long-distance trains are benefitting from less effective air competition, aggressive new cut-rate airlines are stealing some of Amtrak's corridor business.

● The high cost of replacing automobiles and of gasoline, plus the trend towards smaller, less comfortable cars, has made Americans increasingly reluctant to undertake long car trips. The AAA reports a "dramatic decline" in cross-country routings (UPI story in *The Washington Post*, May 31). Especially where local mass transit is poor, the process of getting to and from the Amtrak station represents a lower percentage of trip time and thus a less significant obstacle to using the train for long trips than for short ones.

● Virtually no Americans will make a long-distance bus trip if they can afford an alternative, but a much larger public accepts the bus for shorter trips. Knowing this, Greyhound limited its attack on Amtrak fares (ICC proceeding 37285, decision expected Oct. 23) to short-distance routes.

Thanks also go out to these NARP members—and to any other members whose names we've omitted—for their help in the recent leaflet campaign (May News, p. 4).

Alabama: Floyd Tayloe Jr. **Georgia:** Jim Grant, W. O. Jones, Robert Pee Jr., Alan Yorker. **Illinois:** Dave Randall, Henry Stephens. **Indiana:** Paul Arden, Jack Hawkins, Dan Pilipow, Dennis Winters. **North Carolina:** Dave Mickey.

This is probably familiar stuff to you if you have spent any time talking to passengers on board the long-distance trains. Here is the report of NARP Member Frank Barry of Ithaca, NY, who traveled extensively on Amtrak this spring and talked to about 2,000 fellow passengers—"virtually every passenger" on board his three round trips on the Boston/NY-Chicago "Lake Shore Limited" and various corridor trips in New York, Michigan, and Wisconsin. His findings inspired our headline. They appeared first in the Aug./Sept. issue of the Empire State Passengers Association, Inc., newsletter, *The ESPA Express*.

"I was surprised at the depth of feeling the Reagan proposals brought forth in people. As I told passengers 'their' train would be discontinued along with all other trains outside the Northeast, most listened intently, then reacted with incredulity, shock, and in some cases outrage. . . . However, the degree of support I encountered in the corridors was noticeably less than on the 'Lake Shore.' This stemmed, in part I think, from the reasons people gave for riding the train.

"There were, predictably, some who simply liked trains and others who did not like to fly, but these were few. Two themes were more common: many people, particularly families, were riding the train because they could no longer afford to fly; for others, the family auto was no longer reliable enough for a long trip.

"The second theme did not emerge immediately. People seemed embarrassed to admit it. Several told me their cars had over 100,000 miles, but they couldn't afford to replace the cars. For these people, air travel was out of the question. They tended to react particularly strongly to the information I gave them; it was as if the President and Congress were taking away their last opportunity for travel. Since many were traveling to visit relatives, Stockman's knife was particularly cruel. . . . Perhaps the most striking thing about those who didn't trust their cars was that nearly all appeared to have middle class jobs and incomes. . . .

"The corridor runs, in contrast, carried many businessmen for whom alternatives were available (and for whom) withdrawal of service was not as unthinkable as for 'Lake Shore' passengers.

"These findings suggest that those who would terminate long distance trains in favor of 'corridors' may be way off base politically.

"Two other findings surprised me. On every train, I encountered at least two or three foreign visitors. I also found that the other passengers represented far more states than the train served directly. On both the 'Lake Shore' and the corridor trains, a surprising number were traveling to or from points to the west or south, changing in Chicago or New York. A significant number were from the West Coast, in fact.

"Few I spoke with seemed sorry about leaving their cars at home or giving up the plane. People seemed to find traveling by train agreeable, especially on the 'Lake Shore.'"

Certainly NARP's fundamental goal remains an integrated public transportation network that provides maximum "car-free" mobility, with the various transport modes and development patterns strengthening each other. This lengthy discourse on the virtues of the long-distance train was necessary because of the many attacks long-distance trains have suffered at the hands of Washington "experts," but we certainly do not intend to discourage efforts (including our own!) to bring about the conditions under which good corridor services also will thrive. Among those conditions are city governments with progressive, San Diego-like attitudes towards mass transit! ■

Superliner Order Completed

More than two years behind schedule, the Superliner car order was finally completed in July when the 284th, the final, car was delivered to Amtrak by Pullman-Standard. Amtrak and Pullman observed the occasion with a special ceremony in Chicago July 30. Present at the ceremony was the final Superliner, a sleeper, appropriately named "George M. Pullman" in honor of the 19th Century industrialist whose sleeping car invention led to the development of a vast rail passenger car industry in the U.S.

Considering the stormy history of the Superliner order, it's almost a miracle the entire order was ever completed.

Recognizing the need for new equipment on its western routes, the Amtrak Board of Directors in March 1975 ordered 235 bilevel cars from Pullman. In July of that year, the Board expanded the order to 249 cars, and in November increased it further, to 284. The cars were scheduled to be delivered between late 1977 and early 1979, but numerous design modifications and a lengthy steel workers strike caused agonizing delays. In 1979, then-DOT Secretary Brock Adams proposed cutting the Superliner order back to only 197 cars, but Amtrak President Alan Boyd insisted on the full order and ultimately prevailed. Still, the full order remained in doubt through 1980, due to serious financial problems and managerial shake-ups at Pullman. At one point, Pullman sued Amtrak, claiming it had no contractual obligation to build the last 35 cars ordered, including all 25 lounge cars. The suit was resolved with Amtrak agreeing to pay for additional "escalation" costs, and Pullman agreeing to complete the 35 cars. The takeover of Pullman Inc. by Wheelabrator-Frye in mid-1980 resulted in the restoration of financial and administrative stability at Pullman's passenger division, which led to expeditious handling of the remaining Superliner order.

The 284 cars (102 coaches, 48 baggage/coaches, 39 diners, 70 sleepers, and 25 lounges) cost \$315 million, considerably above the original estimate of \$208 million.

Superliners are now assigned to all long-distance trains operating west of the Mississippi River. ■