

# Transport Central

12 JULY 1968

## Interurban

NOW LEAVING FOR MIAMI (AND POSSIBLY HAVANA) -- "Skyjacking" Miami-bound planes and "diverting" them to Havana is becoming almost routine these days. In fact, Northwest Airlines pilots are now instructed on landing procedures at Jose Martí Airport as a part of their routine briefings. The seventh plane so kidnaped this year (thus far) was a NWAL Boeing 727, bound from Chicago to Miami on July 2. The plane and its passengers (less the gun-toting hijacker, who was accorded a "conquering hero" greeting by Castro lieutenants upon arrival in Havana) returned safely to Miami, but separately, the passengers having been required to spend a night on hard benches and four hours on a tortuous bus trip to a provincial airport some 90 miles from Havana in order to board a "return" flight. Cuban Air Ministry officials claimed this was necessary because a fully-loaded 727 could not take off from Jose Martí (although larger 707's have frequently used the field's runways). The 707 skyjacking came on the heels of a similar diversion of a Southeast Airlines DC-3 bound for Key West; in that bit of piracy the pilot, a Cuban refugee living in Miami, was held by Cuban authorities for "escaping" the island paradise. In the very same week, a chartered Seaboard World Airlines DC-8, with some 214 U. S. servicemen on board apparently strayed off course and was escorted by Russian MiG jet fighters to a landing in the Kuril islands. The plane and crew were later released and allowed to fly on to their original Japanese destination.

ROUTE REPORT -- BOAC, where pilots returned to work July 4 after a fortnight's strike, is now offering same-plane through service between New York and Tel Aviv....Air France has added five additional weekly non-stop flights between Chicago and Paris....Irish International has added two flights from Chicago's O'Hare Field to Shannon and Dublin; five such weekly runs are now offered....Varig Airlines of Brazil inaugurated a new jet service from Los Angeles to Tokyo via Honolulu June 27. This marks the first South American flag carrier to offer jet service to the Orient; Boeing 707's are to be used....The Civil Aeronautics Board July 3 denied the bids of Northwest, Continental, TWA and Delta for immediate but temporary new routes in the Pacific. The CAB is preparing its decision in the important transPacific route case for early submission to President Johnson....Regular commercial air service between New York and Moscow will begin July 15 under an agreement just signed by the U. S. and U. S. S. R. A joint venture between Aeroflot, the Soviet flag carrier, and Pan American World Airways, representing the U. S. will service the new route. A \$730 economy round trip fare will prevail. ....Mohawk Airlines has petitioned the CAB for a Chicago-Boston route, stopping at the same intermediate points currently served on its Boston-Detroit run....United will begin direct service August 20 between Chicago and San Jose....Delta has cautioned the CAB against putting too much competition into routes that have not yet developed their potential. At issue were bids by other carriers for routes competing with Delta's across the southern states.

PLANE FACTS -- Although we don't generally report on military aircraft matters, it is definitely worthwhile here to mention that the world's largest plane, the C-5 Galaxy, made its first flight July 1. The giant craft, a "flying laboratory" whose successful testing will result in many advances in the civilian aircraft industry, weighed 497,000 pounds at takeoff but is designed to lift off at 700,000 pounds maximum....On a related matter, it was revealed that the wings of the F-111A tactical jet fighter have broken off in static testing; three of the planes have already crashed in service in Vietnam. The Boeing SST will have a similar arrangement wherein the wings can be swept back for high speed flight and extended for landings....On July 1, a Northwest Boeing 720 (with Mayor Ivan Allen of Atlanta on board) circled O'Hare for more than two hours while the crew struggled to lower a mysteriously frozen landing gear. Just as mysteriously, the stuck gear released after a time and the craft landed safely. ....On an unfortunate note, a U. S. Navy A-4 Skyhawk crashed July 7 just southeast of the Naval Air Station in Glenview, Illinois, demolishing a \$75,000 house and killing a 13 year old girl. Although this was the first civilian fatality in the long history of the facility, the expected outcry directed toward closing the base quickly materialized, with U. S. Representative Roman Pucinski leading the vocal demonstration and suggesting that operations be moved to the abandoned Bong Air Force Base near Kenosha. The Station is in the Illinois Democrat's district....The Douglas DC-9 series 40 recently received FAA certification; the first craft went to SAS....British United Airways has ordered five BAC 111-500's for May 1969 delivery....Trans-Texas Airways recently received its seventh DC-9....United has received CAB approval to buy 5 DC-8's from Pan American....Ethiopian Airlines has purchased its second Boeing 707-320C. ....Transoturi Arene Romane (the Rumanian flag carrier) has taken delivery of 6 BAC 111-400s. ....APSA Peruvian Airlines has purchased a third Convair 990A....SAS has ordered two more Douglas jets; to come are a DC-8-62 and a DC-8-63....The Boeing 727-200 series has been certified by the FAA for automatic approaches and landings under Category II conditions (ceilings of 100 feet and forward runway visibility of 1200 feet). The 707-120B was also certified; leaving only the 737 models to be approved.

WRAPPING IT UP -- Chicago's Midway Airport is gradually making a comeback; seven commercial airlines are now using the field. Busy days see an average of 950 takeoffs and landings (only about 80 involving commercial carriers)....Midway's neighbor to the north, O'Hare Field, handled 208 operations between 5 and 6 PM on a recent Friday afternoon, equivalent to a takeoff or landing every 17 seconds....About \$4 million damage was done by a severe windstorm which struck the Greater Rockford airport June 29; some Commuter Airlines planes were damaged.

R. I. P. -- Any Interstate Commerce Commissioner will tell you that when it comes to passenger train discontinuances, members of Congress have the loudest of voices in demanding immediate action. Yet, when it comes right down to it, when the Commission recommends the action the members have been screaming about, Congress takes a walk. Such is the case in the House of Representatives regarding the ICC's latest proposals to make it more difficult for the railroads to discontinue passenger trains. It would appear at this writing, according to House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee members, that the Committee will decline to recommend the ICC approach (or any of the others which are pending before it) to the full House when it meets next week. Since the deadline for new action in the House has been set by the leadership for next week also, it further would appear that the chance for any action to curtail rail passenger discontinuances is nearly dead.

The Senate, on the other hand, took immediate action following the ICC's report. The Surface Transportation Subcommittee of the Commerce Committee met the day after the ICC issued its statement and sent most of the Commission recommendations on to the full Commerce Committee. Also voted on to the full Committee were certain parts of the Allott study approach and the Moss moratorium approach. Neither Senators Gordon Allott (R-Colo) nor Frank E. Moss (D-Utah) are members of the Commerce Subcommittee, so neither could defend his own proposals in the executive mark-up session. Senators Hugh Scott (R-Penna) and Howard Cannon (D-Nev) are Subcommittee members and co-sponsors of the Allott resolution, and it is reported that they argued that the full committee should have a chance to work its will on the bills of the two non-member western Senators.

Meanwhile, back in the House, it is considered a sure bet that if the House Committee fails to act on the bills before it, the Senate will not report out any bills either so as not to be a part of an exercise in futility. So, while dozens of members of the House had glowing words of praise for the ICC's passenger train report, none of these members had enough political persuasion to provoke action on the part of one of their own Committees. Labor unions want the bills, and even the railroads are not objecting too strongly. But the White House, for reasons best known only to it, does not favor action, and in this Congress that alone is enough to stop anything.

TURNING ON THE POWER -- The Muskingum Electric Railroad, which is being built by a coal producing subsidiary of the American Electric Power System to link a major surface mining operation in southern Ohio with the Muskingum River generating station of Ohio Power will be delayed by at least six months, AEP officials have confirmed. The 15 mile line had been scheduled to open in "mid-1968". Now the earliest possible starting date is December of this year and most observers believe that it will be well into next year before the 25,000 volt AC line actually begins to operate. Two GE 5500 HP E44 type locomotives have been completed, however, and are being delivered. One of these locomotives was on display recently at a meeting of the Edison Electric Institute in Philadelphia. The Institute, by the way, which has been working on an electrification study for the former New York Central (now the Penn Central) Railroad is also considerably behind schedule in publishing its findings. Proponents of electrification may benefit from the delay because the Central-Pennsy merger produced additional traffic on the New York-Cleveland main line, which should help justify stringing the wires.

QUITTERS -- As listed in our train-off list #4 (TC, July 1968), Southern #1-2, Cincinnati-Oakdale, and #41-42 (the Pelican), York, Ala.-New Orleans are off....MoPac #7-8, Longview-San Antonio, is off, but #3-4, St. Louis-Fort Worth, must run until November 10 pending ICC hearings....The joint Illinois Central/Central of Georgia/Seaboard Coast Line Seminole, petitioned south of Carbondale, Ill. will run until November 15 during ICC investigation....N&W #211-214, St. Louis-Council Bluffs, is off....The same for E-L #17, the Hoboken-Binghamton Saturday-only train....and Senate Bill 1175, an amendment to Section 13a to require railroads to give 60 days notice instead of the present 30, was favorably passed from the Senate Surface Transportation Subcommittee to the full Commerce Committee (see above R. I. P. story).

MERGER MATTERS -- The Justice Department has filed its objections to the Northern Lines merger in a brief with a special three-judge federal court; the brief primarily challenges the competitive factors of the merger, which Justice accuses the ICC of considering too briefly and contrary to its 1966 decision....L&N has filed an application to purchase 218 miles of the recently abandoned Tennessee Central's 295 mile route; only the Hopkinsville-Edgerton and Clarks-ville-Ashland City segments and some branch line mileage would be left without service....Delaware & Hudson Company, former owner of the D&H, has been renamed Champlain National Corporation and is looking into new investments with the several million dollars from the sale of the line.

## Urban

HEADLINE HOPPING -- The North Western is to take delivery of 20 new bi-level commuter coaches this week....The Chicago Transit Authority lost 10% of its riders as a result of last November's fare increase....Chicago Helicopter Airways expects to resume Midway-O'Hare-Meigs service in the fall....The Milwaukee Road has been granted a 5-10% commuter fare hike....A flood has seriously hampered operations on the international streetcar line linking El Paso and the Mexican city of Juarez....General Motors will build those 70 new buses for Seattle....Salt Lake City Lines is to be purchased by the Union Street Railway of New Bedford, Mass., and subsidized by the city....Port Authority Transit of Pittsburgh is the latest property to adopt the exact-fare-only policy for after-dark operations....St. Louis and Altoona are to get new equipment.

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