

Transport Central

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Interurban

CONGRESSIONAL ROUNDUP -- By denying House Commerce Committee Chairman Harley Staggers (D-W Va) a quorum, House members opposed to a bill aimed at making it more difficult for railroads to discontinue passenger trains were able without a vote to table the measure. Although it has not been made public, Staggers agreed not to bring up the bill again unless Congress does not adjourn by the time of the Democratic National Convention in late August. So, despite intensive lobbying from organized labor, an effective job by the Chicago-based National Association of Railroad Passengers, and widespread interest in such an approach, the matter is, for all practical purposes, dead.

One factor which contributed to this not unexpected turn of events was the testimony of A. Scheffer Lang, Federal Railroad Administrator from the Department of Transportation. One Congressman remarked that Lang's speech sounded as if it had been written in the inner offices of the Association of American Railroads. Lang's main point was that Congress should not require railroads to operate unprofitable passenger services because their financial position does not warrant it. Lang, a former railroad official, may have sounded the theme of the Administration, but he was not echoing the views of a majority of his party, and many Members are plainly unhappy about his stand.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES -- Two and three car long haul trains such as the Varsity and Sioux (Milwaukee Road), Twin Zephyr (Burlington), Blue Bird (N&W), Fort Pitt (Penn Central) and Pere Marquettes (C&O) are commonplace today. No agent is on duty in the Pennsylvania Station in Pittsburgh on weekends, and the trains of the MoPac-T&P have no baggage service whatsoever....The latest item of sadness is the current state of affairs at the Cleveland Union Terminal (CUT). One of our readers reports the following from the permanent (?) memorial to the Van Sweringens: (1) Only three of the station's 21 tracks are in use; (2) only 9 trains (seven on weekends and holidays) enter and leave the station each day; (3) Penn Central trains 315-316 (Cleveland-Indianapolis) do not use CUT, but operate from an outlying freight yard (a free bus shuttles passengers to and from CUT); and (4) a Penn Central official was quoted as saying all PC trains will be removed from the Terminal in 18 months (leaving Erie-Lackawanna's Youngstown commuter run as the survivor).

PETITION PAUSE -- While there were no new train-off petitions during July, the Interstate Commerce Commission's backlog of investigations were reduced by three when the Santa Fe received permission to discontinue #66/77/75-76/78/65, the California Special (Clovis-Fort Worth/Houston), following completion of runs on July 20; and Western Pacific's California Zephyr (Salt Lake City-Oakland) and Southern Pacific's City of San Francisco (Ogden-Oakland) were both ordered to run an additional year, although the ICC allowed them to petition to combine operations in such a way as to provide a single daily service (as the present City of Miami/South Wind trains are operated)....The Norfolk & Western must run the Blue Bird (Chicago-St. Louis) until at least November 26 pending investigation.... Penn Central discontinued #354 (Detroit-Buffalo) July 14....Santa Fe dropped #115-116, the Texas Chief Gainesville-Dallas section, July 20....The Illinois Commerce Commission has granted the Chicago & North Western Railway a 25% fare increase for service between Chicago and Clinton, Iowa. Commuter service east of Geneva is not affected....And "siderodromophobia" is the clinical term for the fear of trains; at the rate things are going, the "disease" soon will be obsolete.

TERMINAL TANGLE -- The decision by the newly-formed Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) to operate strictly "by the book" in enforcing minimum mileage separations for arriving and departing planes as a means toward obtaining better working conditions and safer operations is apparently having its effects on airline operations. At Chicago's O'Hare Field, for example, in- and out-bound flights were as much as two hours behind schedule Wednesday, and at times were lined up 19 deep awaiting takeoff clearance. In order to alleviate the situation, steps were being taken on several fronts to assist in eliminating the factors causing the extreme terminal congestion, which was repeated at many major fields across the country. The Senate is being urged to take immediate action on a bill to appropriate \$919.6 million for the Federal Aviation Administration, which would provide funds for the hiring of 3,627 additional flight controllers and the installation of new air control facilities and equipment. At the same time, there were indications that major carriers will soon make a number of schedule changes aimed at levelling off the traffic peaks and filling out the valleys in order to minimize the concentration of arrivals and departures at major airports. It is this concentration which PATCO members have condemned and are refusing to handle. The lines themselves are also up against the problem of excessive flight time accumulation by crew members; pilots are generally permitted a maximum of 85 hours on board a craft each month (including time spent on the ground) and these hours are rapidly being exhausted, posing the necessity for flight cancellation due to lack of qualified crew members.

AIR ANGLES -- U. S. Representative Roman Pucinski (D-Ill) has asked for a study of the feasibility of constructing a floating airport ten miles out from Chicago in Lake Michigan, rather than the fixed base field suggested for five miles out. He said that a pri-

vate engineering firm advised him that a floating airport could be constructed faster and at less cost than the "polder" or dike-surrounded lake bottom field now under study by the city....An FAA study has pinpointed areas of excessive noise to be caused by the lake-bottom field. Most are over the lake, but several penetrate inland (largely through ghetto areas) as far west as the Dan Ryan Expressway. Some high-rises along the lake might have to have sound-proofed apartments in order to attract and keep residents is the forecast proves correct....Passenger traffic on the scheduled domestic air lines was 17% greater in the first six months of 1968 than in the comparable 1967 period....There's scarcely a spot you can't get to by air these days. Joining the cities to which one-plane service from Chicago is now available are Ann Arbor, Cape Girardeau, Corpus Christi, Hayward (Wis.), Jefferson City (Mo.) and Land O'Lakes, Wis. If it makes any difference, you can now get a one-seat ride from the Windy City to 196 U. S., Canadian and Mexican cities.

Urban

BETTER BUSES -- The improvement of bus transportation is the subject of a year-long study just completed by the National Academy of Engineering of Washington with the aid of a \$150,000 HUD grant. The report outlines criteria developed by NAE to provide the basis for further studies leading to the design, manufacturing and testing of prototype transit vehicles. A contract stipulation was that the criteria must be attainable with the then current (1967) technology. NAE studied and considered the suggestions and opinions of those who must use, operate and maintain transit vehicles in developing the criteria, and the observations and conclusions reached in the report include the following:

- +When equipped with accessories and features, vehicles now available from manufacturers can meet over 80% of the criteria developed.
- +New designs will be needed, such as changes in the height of entry steps, operation of doors, and fare collection methods.
- +Delays in service improvements and in the substitution of new high-performance vehicles for older, inadequate vehicles are due more to economic than to technological considerations. Extensive financial analysis is needed.
- +To compete with the psychological advantage of commuting in a private car, vehicle interiors should offer amenities not presently found in current bus designs.
- +Although modern buses are vastly improved over earlier models, existing technology could produce vehicles better designed to meet the preferences of transit riders.

THE WASHINGTON WHIRL -- The Senate Appropriations Committee reported its long-awaited transportation bill to the Senate this week; action is expected on the measure next week. The bill contained \$200 million for urban mass transit, \$30 million below what the Administration requested. Transportation Appropriations Committee Members made it clear at a public hearing attended by DOT Secretary Alan S. Boyd July 15 that they were unhappy about the urban transit program. Influential Democratic Senator John Pastore of Rhode Island described the Urban Mass Transit Administration's capital grants program as "trying to empty out the sea with a teaspoon". Ranking GOP Senator Norris Cotton of New Hampshire hit hard at transit study programs, declaring that each city is different and, for transit research to mean anything the conditions in each city would have to be taken into account, which, said Cotton, is impossible. Chairman John Stennis (D-Miss) said he personally just doesn't believe there should be a capital grant program, and so the hearing went.

Also contained in the transportation bill is strong language directing the Urban Mass Transit Administration to assume its full authority in the urban transportation field and requiring HUD to divest itself of most urban transit projects. The Urban Transit Administration was transferred from HUD to DOT effective July 1, whereupon in typically bureaucratic fashion HUD opened an office of transportation of its own and retained 54 projects which UTA had been working on. Many of these projects had very little if anything to do with urban matters and the Senators were most disturbed on learning of this development. In their transportation bill, they made it very clear that they were unhappy with a "fractionizing" of urban transit efforts, and they admonished DOT and HUD to rectify the problem; time alone will tell if the irresistible Congressional force will be able to budge the immovable bureaucratic object.

ONCE OVER QUICKLY -- Rep. William Natcher (D-Ky) reported out a bill from his D. C. Appropriations Committee to the full House with NO funds for Washington's proposed subway. Natcher said his committee will approve no money until the controversial questions involving the tie-up of D. C. freeway construction are resolved; saying his committee believes in the simultaneous development of freeways and rapid transit....A House (Illinois) committee has killed the bill requiring CTA to charge uniform fares throughout its system.... A timetable has been set for the razing of the Loop "L"; demolition will begin in 1972.... Contracts for six Kennedy Expressway rapid transit line stations were awarded last week.... Continental Air Transport's O'Hare-Waukegan service has gotten a clean bill of health, after complaints from area residents prompted a Commerce Commission investigation....Niagara Falls will get fifteen new buses this fall....St. Petersburg will also get new equipment—five buses and 200 bus stop benches....More new coaches are in store for Oklahoma City and Hamilton, Ohio....Houston's Rapid Transit Lines, Inc. has taken over operations of the Acres Home Transit Company. The Acres line, in financial difficulties, had served a black community of 35,000 north of Houston....That strike in Hull, Quebec is over. Drivers went back to work July 4 after being off since April 25. Fares were increased and service decreased as a result of financial concessions made to the drivers in the new contract.

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