

Transport Central

NEWSFRONT

25 APRIL 1969

- * A QUEEN IS LAUNCHED
- * THE BERING BRIDGE
- * A METROLINER GO-AHEAD
- * SUPER C GETS A CONTRACT

JET JOTTINGS -- Britain's Queen Elizabeth last week opened Europe's biggest air terminal, constructed at a cost of \$26.4 million, at London's Heathrow Airport. The new building complex will serve Continental and international flights....Earlier this week, an American Airlines test crew flew the McDonnell-Douglas 941 STOL (short takeoff and landing) into Midway Airport on Chicago's south side from St. Louis. The craft is in the Windy City for an eight-week, 75-hour testing program. American is cooperating with the FAA and three producers of navigation equipment in a program to mix STOL traffic with jets and propeller planes at three Chicago area fields, as well as Mitchell Field in Milwaukee....Air Canada machinists have shut down the publicly-owned carrier for the second time in less than 3 years....Equipment Notes: Braniff will buy eight Boeing 727 jets and lease three additional similar units. The new craft will enable the LTV subsidiary to phase out its last turboprop units....American has ordered another six Boeing 747s, for a total of 16. The 747s will go into service late next year....That United holding company will engage largely in support activities, i.e., hotels, food service and similar lines. The CAB will not contest such corporate reorganizations....Fortune magazine reports that National's two 747s will be equipped with flight decks identical to those used by Pan Am—the better to lease such aircraft to the latter line during National's off-season. Similarly, Eastern and TWA are cooperating on maintenance of their jumbo jets. Eastern will maintain both carriers' Concorde, while TWA will do the same for both lines' Boeing 747s.

LONG HAULS -- Senator Gordon Allott (R-Colo) has reported that the Northeast Corridor MetroLiner demonstration program funded by DOT should begin early this summer. (The Penn Central is currently operating the equipment as non-subsidized additional service). The Senator said Secretary Volpe has informed him that the 20 Westinghouse coaches necessary for the demonstration project to begin could be delivered by the end of May. The Secretary also has announced that the necessary substation modifications to permit high-speed operation of the MetroLiner equipment should be completed by June 15....At long last, the Queen Elizabeth II is ready for service. After many delays, the liner was accepted by Cunard and packed off for a preview cruise to the Canary Islands and Lisbon. Many problems with the sophisticated turbine equipment had stalled the QE2's debut, and cost Cunard some \$7.2 million in lost revenue....A prominent engineer from the University of California at Berkeley has proposed a land bridge costing over \$2 billion to cross the Bering Straits between the U.S.S.R. and Alaska. Dr. T. Y. Lin has incorporated a not-for-profit corporation to undertake the bridging of the 50-mile-wide Straits, which he hopes to see completed by 1980. The doctor foresees such a bridge becoming a major artery for highway traffic between the U.S., the U.S.S.R. and Europe. Piers would be sunk at 1,000 foot intervals and then linked by a network of spans built elsewhere and floated up to the Arctic.

RAIL RAMBLINGS -- The Post Office Department has announced an experimental mail service between Chicago and Los Angeles using Santa Fe's Super C high-speed piggyback and container train; the service is expected to save 48 hours over present bulk mail handling....SP has asked the California PUC for permission to substitute buses for its San Joaquin Daylight Lathrop-Sacramento connections (#53-54)....Southern has discontinued part of the Pelican (#41-42) between Bristol and Chattanooga following Tennessee Public Service Commission permission; a petition in Alabama is expected....An Interstate Commerce Commission examiner has recommended that Missouri Pacific be given permission to discontinue its remaining St. Louis-Kansas City passenger service (#14-15-16-17), stating that patronage, sole revenue source on the trains, is insufficient to support the operation.

MORE OF THE SAME -- The Milwaukee Road received ICC permission to discontinue the final remnant of the Olympian Hiawatha effective April 8; the trains (#15-16, Minneapolis-Aberdeen) were the last passenger runs operating in South Dakota....Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac has asked for permission to discontinue #33-34, the Silver Comet, between Washington and Richmond; the train is operated through to Atlanta by SCL....The Baltimore & Ohio must continue operating the West Virginian, #31-32, Cumberland-Parkersburg, to August 24 pending ICC hearings....Penn Central's appeal of the ICC's decision to hold hearings on trains #3-30, New York-St. Louis, was denied....The same carrier has announced that a fully-automatic computerized reservation-ticketing system for its Metro-Liner trains will be operational by midsummer....The Illinois Central is going into the real estate business. Parent Illinois Central Industries has purchased 81% of Chicago real-estate firm Seay & Thomas. ICI has real estate interests with a development value of more than \$300 million, largely in air rights over its properties in the downtown area.

METROPOLITAN REPORT -- The Seattle City Council has voted 6-3 to request the Seattle Transit System to buy spare parts for its aging fleet of trolley coaches on special order from manufacturers, as well as to look into the possibility of the purchase of new coaches. The council's action is more or less advisory only....Cogent Comments: "The captive rider (in a survey taken of bus passengers in Peoria and Decatur) was clearly the female. It is perhaps interesting to reflect that the sex of the rider and therefore the potential difference in marketing operation has been something of a matter of indifference in many transit operations. Perhaps the industry has been afflicted by having too many men in decision-making positions" (From the final report on the Peoria-Decatur premium-service demonstration project)....The City Club of Chicago, author of a score of reports on ways to better the quality of urban life down through the years, has proposed a "super transportation authority" as the solution to the city's mass transit ills....A reader reports that the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority has contracted to purchase four sample streetcars from Germany's DuWag; a double-end car, a single-end car, an articulated unit and an unspecified car are reportedly among the equipment to be purchased. MBTA has committed itself to renewal of the city's aging streetcar fleet.

LAST WORDS -- CTA's senior citizens' reduced rate "brought out thousands" in its first weekend of use....Toronto's Transit Commission is being urged to adopt similar tariffs, for people 70 and older....Cleveland's downtown shuttle bus service is being expanded again. CTS Loop buses now operate from the Public Square out Euclid all the way to East 36th....Des Moines Transit has begun the operation of a shuttle line from a parking lot at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium to downtown....