

Amtrak Seeks \$4.5 Million From 'Washington Six'

Amtrak is continuing its "tough" policy by filing suit against six railroads and Washington Terminal Company for damages of \$4.5 million. In September, Amtrak sued 12 railroads in connection with mail service at Kansas City.

Now, Amtrak charges the "Washington six" and the terminal company conspired to prevent Amtrak from winning mail revenues, of deliberately making passenger trains late and of discriminating in the charges assessed for use of facilities at Washington's Union Station.

Amtrak said these actions constituted violations of the nation's antitrust laws and asked for triple damages of \$4.5 million.

As a result of alleged conspiracies and monopolization since May 1, 1971, said Amtrak, it has suffered damages actually exceeding \$1.5 million.

Named by Amtrak in its suit were the bankrupt Penn Central; the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad Co.; Southern Railway; the Chesapeake & Ohio and Baltimore & Ohio railroads, both units of the Chessie System, Inc.; the Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington Railroad, a unit of the Penn Central system; and Washington Terminal Co., owner and manager of Union Station and related facilities and entrance tracks.

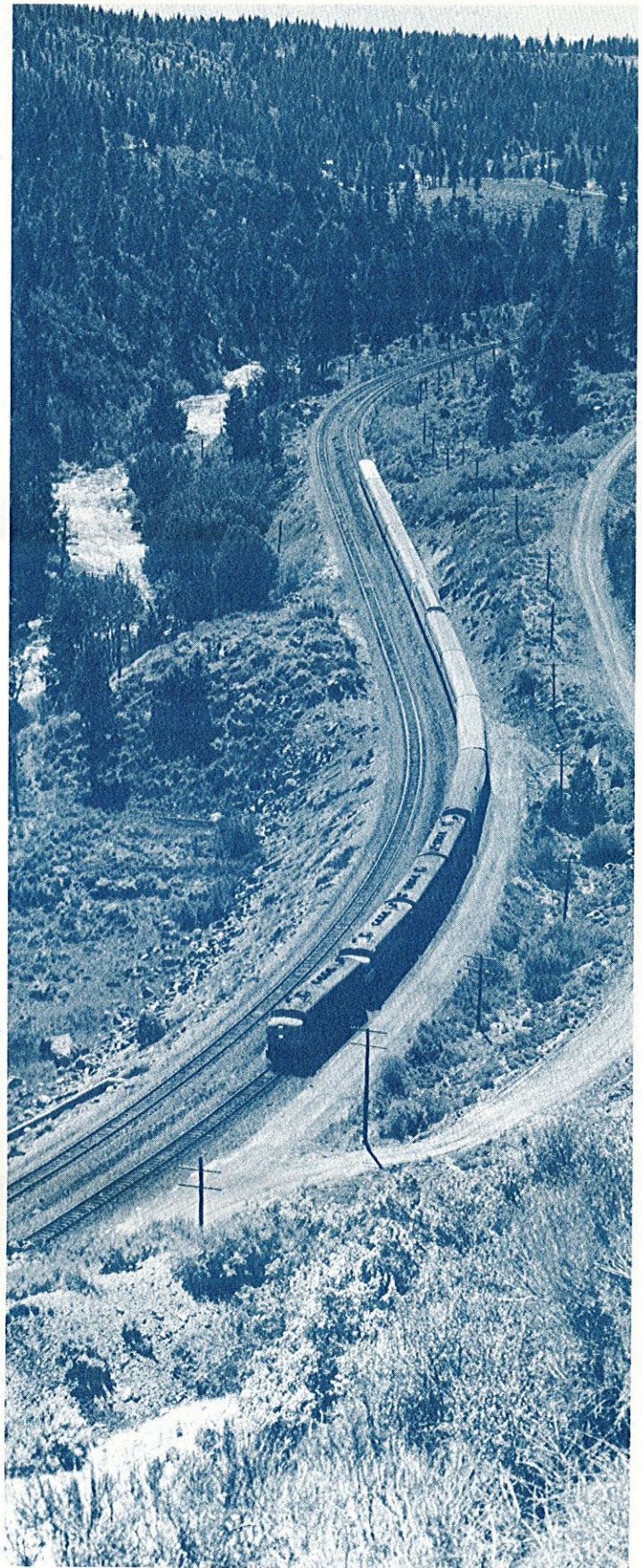
Washington Terminal Co., in turn, is owned by the Chessie's B&O subsidiary and the Pennsy.

In the heyday of passenger and mail transportation by rail, the suit asserted, defendants reaped "enormous benefits from the Union Station complex."

When overall burdens of the station began outweighing benefits, however, "they searched anxiously for a means to shed those burdens," Amtrak continued. "Amtrak, with its financial backing from the U.S. taxpayer, was perceived by the defendants to be the perfect victim," the suit alleged.

Placing a burden on Amtrak and off the accounts of the railroads, Amtrak charged, was accomplished by secret negotiations among all the railroads involved, during which a new Washington Terminal contract was written that represented a radical depart-

(Continued on Page 4)



Amtrak's San Francisco Zephyr offers some of America's most dramatic mountain scenery. Here it snakes through the canyon of the Truckee River, east of Donner Pass toward Reno.



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF RAILROAD PASSENGERS**

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NEW DIRECTORS SOON FOR AMTRAK BOARD?

"Quite a few" names have been submitted to the White House by the Department of Transportation, for appointment to the new board of directors of Amtrak.

The new directors will be appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, according to the 1973 Amtrak Improvement Act.

The act increased the Amtrak board from 15 to 17, consisting of the Secretary of Transportation, three elected by the railroads as common stockholders, four elected by preferred stockholders (however no preferred stock has been issued) and nine appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. The directors named by the President are to be on a bi-partisan basis, and three of them are to be "consumer representatives", also bi-partisan.

The present directors who were appointed by the President will serve until successors have been named, up to 150 days.

IS AMTRAK READY TO HANDLE THE RUSH?

"We could conserve oil by taking trucks, buses and commuter cars off the roads, building up our neglected railroad system, and constructing new urban transport systems." —

— Clare Boothe Luce

New 'Coach Yard' Is First Since 50's

Washington Terminal Company recently opened a new, \$8 million passenger train maintenance and servicing facility, the first "Coach Yard" built in the United States since the early 1950's.

Amtrak will be the main beneficiary of the new service facility since 50% of all trains operated out of Union Station and 85% of all passenger cars are owned by Amtrak.

According to C. W. Shaw, Jr., Manager of Washington Terminal Company, "The new Coach Yard is the first step in what will be the rail passenger industry's most massive construction undertaking in the last fifty years—rebuilding Washington, D.C.'s Union Station."

Its main building will be "home base" for 300 Terminal Company employees (cleaning crew, electricians, mechanics, and carmen). Approximately 90% of the \$8 million cost of the Coach Yard is in tracks and utilities.

The new modernized Coach Yard will mean more efficient repair and maintenance of passenger cars. Utilities (air, steam, water and electricity) are placed every 80 feet throughout the new yard enabling repairs to be made on every track and platform. In the old service facility, utilities were located only in three locations and cars had to be switched to the Ivy City Car Shop for repairs.

Amtrak has withdrawn its request to the ICC for discontinuance of Trains Number 98 and 99 between Norfolk/Newport News and Richmond, Virginia.

'Auto-Train' Is Service Mark For Auto-Train Corporation

In the October-November issue of NARP NEWS, we stated that "Several Amtrak auto-trains" routes are in the planning stages."

However, the Amtrak Improvement Act of 1973 authorizes Amtrak to start "auto-ferry service" and most members of NARP know "auto-train" to be a service of Auto-Train Corporation.

Consequently, in order to avoid confusion, NARP NEWS will refer to "auto-train" only in the case of the Auto-Train Corporation's service. Any service inaugurated by Amtrak will be called "auto-ferry service" or by a designation provided by Amtrak.

PEOPLE TRAINS AND THINGS IN BLUEGRASS by Lucas and Harmon Brothers is available on an LP stereo recording for \$5.25 pp or 8 track stereo \$6.25 pp. The album sports a color cover of the Turbo Train. Songs include: Turbo Train, People Trains, Amtrak, Auto-Train, Asheville Special, the Southern Crescent and 6 other compositions. Write to: PASSENGER TRAIN MUSIC, 2920 Oakwood Drive, West Columbia, S.C. 29169.

Congressman Stewart B. McKinney (R., Conn.) has called upon Postmaster General E. T. Klassen to restore the Railway Post Office system in the interests of energy conservation.

For years, NARP has been telling Congress that America should have good rail passenger service, for many reasons including the fact that rail service consumes relatively little energy per passenger.

Suddenly, America is faced with an energy crisis, and people are turning to Amtrak to solve their travel problems. But, because of Amtrak's lateness in getting underway, it may not be ready to fill the need, as America's passenger railroads did during World War II.

The long years of decline have left the railroads ill-equipped to meet the upsurge.

Amtrak says calls to its reservations centers are running 47 to 145 percent above last year's volume.

Amtrak trains expect to carry about 17.5 million passengers in 1973, at least 1 million more than 1972.

Many commuter lines in the East and Midwest also report traffic increases, some are nine percent over a year ago.

Amtrak says the increase is caused by the cutback in airline traffic, the Trans World Airlines strike, the normal increase in holiday traffic and probably the energy crisis in general.

At the computerized Bensalem, N.J., reservations center which handles reservations for the Northeast, calls are running five years ahead of Amtrak projections. The center now process-

Support NARP — Bring In A New Member

Yes, I want to aid the cause of better rail passenger service. I understand I will receive a membership card and a monthly newsletter to keep me informed of developments.

Enclosed is my remittance for the category checked. I understand that part of this amount is for a one-year subscription to the newsletter.

Contributing \$10
 Participating \$25

Sponsoring \$50
 Sustaining \$100
 Life, \$500 or more

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(NARP members should not use this form to renew. It would be helpful if members wait until they receive the coded renewal reminder.)

es 20,000 calls a day, compared with 14,000 a day last summer.

An Amtrak spokesman said an all-time high was reached on November 25, when 28,000 coach seats were added to Amtrak trains, to almost double its normal 29,900. In the Northwest Corridor, 20 extra cars (60 seats per car) were added on Sunday, December 9. While calls to ask all reservation centers during the summer "rush" season averaged 44,000 per day, they rose to 59,400 on the Monday before Thanksgiving, and then dropped back to an average of 44,000 per day.

Amtrak's greatest worry now is passenger cars. When Amtrak took over most passenger service on May 1, 1971, it bought only the best of the approximately 3800 passenger cars left in the country, and the rest were largely scrapped, sold to Canada or Mexico, or converted to other railroad use. Some were put in storage.

The Amtrak fleet now consists of about 1900 cars, but on any given day 300 are out for repairs and up to 200 are awaiting refurbishing.

Amtrak has a team scouring the country for passenger cars.

Orders are also expected to go out within the next two or three months for additional passenger cars but delivery is up to two years away.

MODERN RESERVATION SYSTEM DEVELOPED

The young people at the keyboards in the photo below are not railroad telegraph operators or the sports department of a big news service. They are the staff of one of Amtrak's five new reservations centers, located at Bensalem, Pennsylvania. When Amtrak first went into operation, reservations were one of its most critical problems.

In Chicago there were six different numbers to call depending on which railroad had formerly operated the particular train the passenger wished to take. Nationally Amtrak inherited 13 different manual systems designed in the 30's.

While other transportation companies have developed modern reservation techniques, no system existed that could serve Amtrak's more complicated requirements. Amtrak's multiplicity of stops, fares and accommodations required a totally new system if rail passengers were to be served efficiently and quickly. Amtrak found it necessary to have schedule and fare information for 12,750 origin-destination cities with up to 30 different fares available between cities for 13 different accommodations and a variety of special fares. This adds up to over 360,000 different fare possibilities which the computer can read out. All these factors were responsible for the development of ARTS (Ad-



vanced Reservation and Ticketing System).

"The only modern system we could build on was the Ticketron system the Department of Transportation put in for the Metroliners between Washington and New York" said Robert J. Dooley, director of Data Processing. "I don't think it is unreasonable to say we had to start from scratch," Dooley added.

The ARTS system revolves around two Control Data 3500 computers located at Amtrak headquarters in Washington, D.C. Five centralized reservation offices at Bensalem, Pa.; Jacksonville; New York City; Chicago and Los Angeles will be tied to the computer.

The first of these centers went into operation April 15 at Bensalem serving the Northeast from Virginia to Canada. The first day of operations the agents at the new center handled 3,000 calls and lost not a single caller. Each phone was answered within an average of six seconds — a far cry from the old days when a determined caller might have to hang on to a ringing phone for five minutes or more before it was answered.

With its 275 employees, whose average age is estimated to be 27 years old, Bensalem today is handling as many as 20,000 calls a day. The center's percentage of calls handled never falls below 95 percent and frequently hovers at the 99 to 100 percent mark.

When a passenger makes a toll-free call to inquire about reservations, his call is answered by an agent at one of the five cen-

ters. While the caller waits, the agent types the request into a visual display unit which looks considerably like a television screen. The information is transmitted via high-speed telephone lines to the computers.

At very high speed, the computers scan their millions of memory cells, find the right one, and send the information back to the agent where it appears on the console screen. The computer can make the reservation if that is what the passenger wishes, or if he requires information only, the computer feeds back information on all trains for a particular destination on a particular date including the necessary fare information. If a reservation is made the computer can automatically send an advisory report to the station where the ticket will be picked up.

The Bensalem center is equipped with a sophisticated monitoring system. A flashing digital box reads out exactly what is going on at the center at all times. It shows how many agents are on duty, how many incoming calls are waiting, how long the oldest call has been waiting, how many agents are in conversation with customers, how many customers are on hold while the agent seeks additional information from another source by phone and how many agents are making call backs or working on follow-up duties.

Similar equipment is to be placed at the other four reservation bureaus with a centralized monitor planned for Amtrak headquarters in Washington. This will enable calls to be switched from a heavy workload area to another center which is less busy.

'Secret' Fare Increases

Go Into Effect at Amtrak

Amtrak's very efficient public relations department is usually "fast on the draw", i.e., it announces most moves by the National Rail Passenger Corporation before they can become inaccurate stories in the newspapers, fed by inaccurate rumors.

However, certain fare increases recently inaugurated by Amtrak were never announced, and, according to the *WASHINGTON STAR*, Amtrak's public relations department was ordered not to announce the increases.

Amtrak fares are not subject to regulatory agency approval. The day before Amtrak's relatively modest increases went into effect, the Southern Railway System put in effect a 20 percent increase without objection from the Interstate Commerce Commission.

The changes in Amtrak's fare structure include:

1. Raising from \$7 to \$20 the minimum price of a one-way coach ticket that must apply before family plan discounts may be used.
2. Although the New York-Washington Metroliner fare remains the same, tickets between certain intermediate points are up from 25 cents to \$1.50. The Capitol Beltway-New York fare went up 50 cents to \$19, the same price as Washington-New York.
3. Boston-Washington fare was increased to \$24 from \$21.15.
4. Amtrak eliminated a special "ladies day" New York-Washington one-day round trip, good on Wednesdays and Thursdays, and raised the two-day weekend New York-Washington excursion fare to \$19.50 from \$17.50 on conventional trains.
5. Washington-Montreal went to \$30.50 from \$28.
6. Washington-Florida fares were raised about 10 percent, as were fares between intermediate points along the New York-Chicago line.

Amtrak Files Suit Against 'Washington Six'

(Continued from Page 1)

ture from historic methods of allocating terminal use costs.

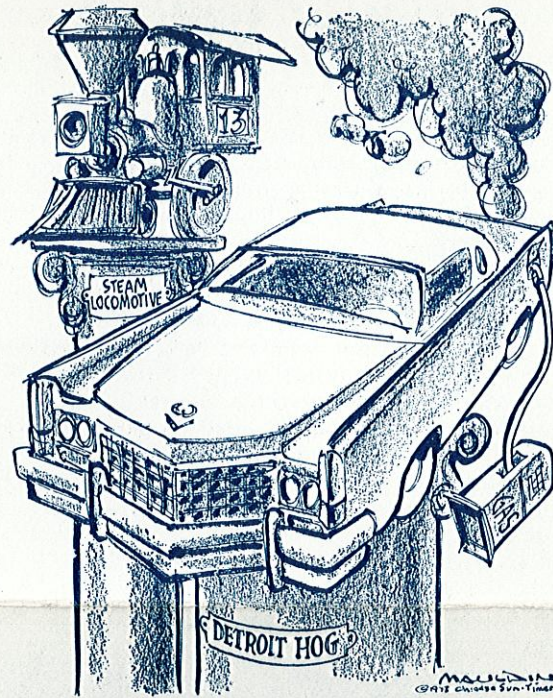
As a result, Amtrak said, Southern Railway was able to reduce its share of allocated expenses vis-a-vis the major Amtrak railroad, the Penn Central, by a new method of counting locomotive and car arrivals and departures.

The Pennsy was not hurt by this, however, because it was able to pass along the increased allocation to Amtrak, according to the suit.

In another change — which overturned a policy dating back to 1907 — railroad traffic through the Washington "getaway" no longer had to be counted for purposes of allocating expenses, as long as it was through traffic bypassing this area.

"This change benefitted the defendant railroads, whose mail and express cars . . . could take the bypass around Washington Terminal Co.'s property," Amtrak said.

Amtrak's trains between Spokane, and Seattle via Wenatchee uses the 7.79-mile Cascade Tunnel, longest in the Western Hemisphere.



Relics

Courtesy of Chicago Sun-Times

'The Way To Go' — New Rail Passenger Book Features Section On NARP

"The Way To Go," a new book by Thomas G. Southerland, Jr. and William McCleery (Published by Simon and Schuster) is billed as "a very different book that gives Americans realistic hope that a new day may be dawning for rail passenger service."

The book states that "In the recent past American rail passenger service has had few friends in high places and zero political clout (but) that situation is now beginning to change."

The book covers recent developments affecting service, what it is like in other countries, and how we can overcome problems that have been holding-up improvements in the U.S.A.

Considerable attention is given to the history of the National Association of Railroad Passengers and the part it played in the battle to create Amtrak.

In a short introduction, U.S. Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island, the "father of the Metroliner," states that the authors

have called "eloquent attention to the benefits which the attainment of this goal (good passenger trains) can provide."

Author Southerland became a railroad advocate after intensive study of the automobile's effects on the ecology. Author McCleery has been a railroad buff since he first rode trains as a youth on his way to New York.

After a trip of 1,323 miles, the North Coast Hiawatha arrived at Milwaukee's Union Station as advertised. . . Other chapters in the Amtrak story besides punctuality could be titled comfort, convenience and cooperation. . . Time passed too swiftly. — Charles D. Collins in The Milwaukee Sentinel

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