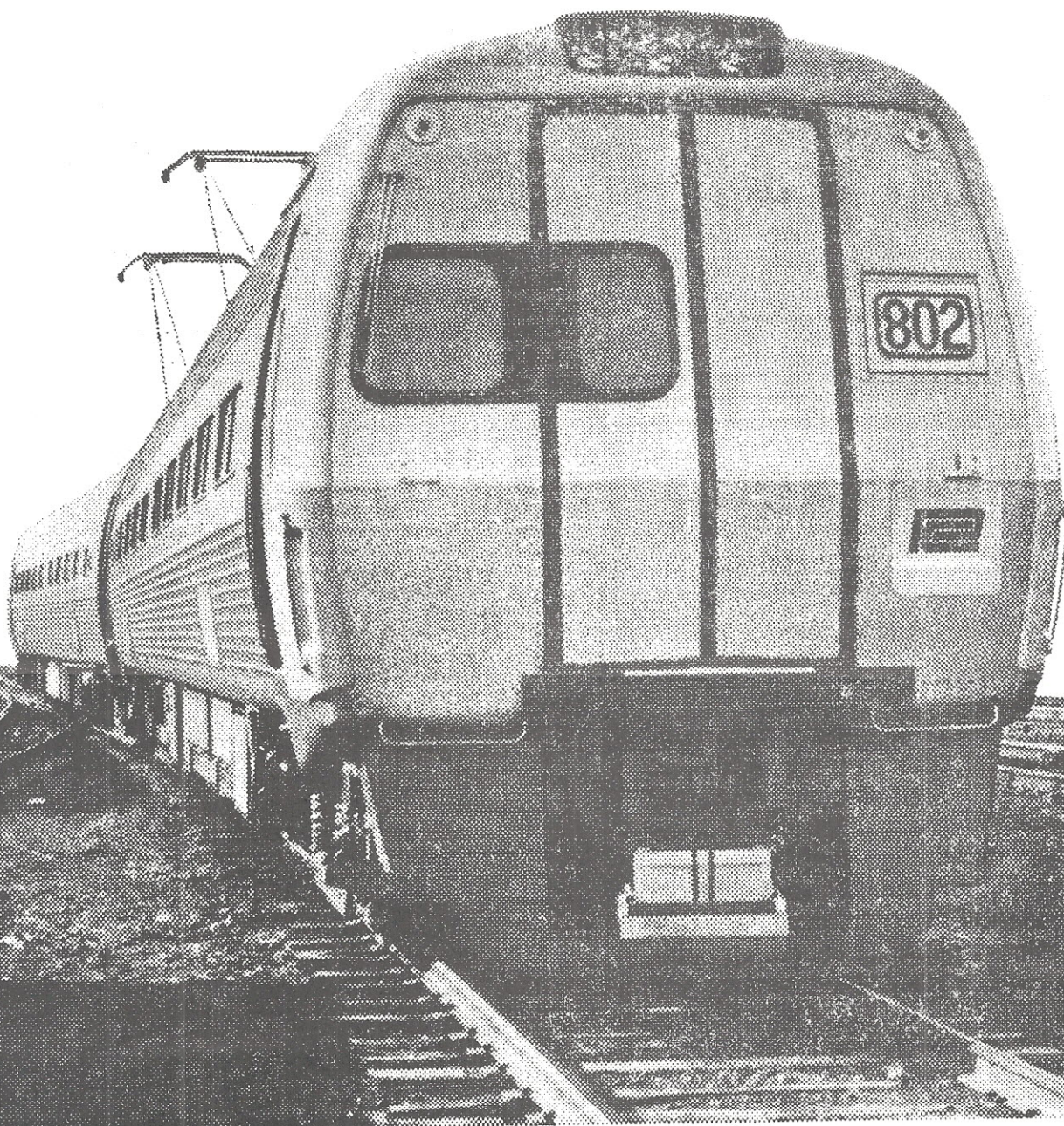


Transport Central



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COLUMN ONE

LOOKING AHEAD -- II

Last January, the editor picked these things as probably happening in 1969: (a) the solid success of the Airport Rapid in Cleveland; (b) a definite commitment for the extension of CTA's Kennedy Rapid line westward to O'Hare International Airport; (c) initial steps toward creation of a transit authority for the Fox River Valley (Elgin-Aurora); (d) the same steps toward a similar agency for Milwaukee; and (e) the unveiling of a new major rapid transit project for a Midwest area. Now, as promised, the results of those predictions:

(a) Although Chicago's American said otherwise in a rather gloomy article, I'll stand by the reports of the Institute for Rapid Transit and ATA's Passenger Transport on this one. Although the line did not open until mid-November (as contrasted to the much-earlier date quoted a year ago), it now boasts a 5 minute headway and quite a few regular riders. Not a howling success, but showing solid gains.

(b) The city has committed itself on this one (the CTA itself is somewhat less than enthusiastic about the extension's prospects) and if City Hall's promises are matched by action (as seems likely, judging by past such proposals) Chicago will soon enter the jet age of airline ground transportation.

(c) Though both municipal systems in Elgin and Aurora are publicly-owned, a private carrier links the two cities, and such an authority is only in the talking stages (if even that far). A strikeout for the crystal ball.

(d) No go here either. Although the Transport Company has fallen on evil times, any such agency would still have to fall into what one of our more articulate readers calls the "theoretical authority" category. This will take more time to be brought to fruition.

(e) A plethora of possibilities: Toledo, Louisville, Chicago (centered around the Illinois Central's suburban service, and that of the North Western); even IC's mini-corridor might qualify. This one was easy; translating the proposals into reality might not be.

Well, 3 out of 5 isn't bad. Looking at 1969, I'd say these events will probably occur:

(1) A way will be found to speed up construction of the subways to replace Chicago's Loop "L", and completion will be promised for at least a year in advance of the present target date.

(2) Riding will be so heavy on the two expressway median strip rapid transit routes that a Skokie Swift-style beefing up of service will be required.

(3) Electrification of the North Western's suburban lines will once again be talked of actively.

(4) Seattle's trolley coaches will finally disappear, as will those in Boston and Fort William/Port Arthur.

(5) The South Shore's passenger service just might disappear, amid a huge outcry from Chicago and Indiana.

RICHARD R. KUNZ

PENN CEN PREMIERE -- Just 14½ months after they were scheduled to go into service, the trouble-plagued MetroLiners finally took to Penn Central rails on a regular basis. On January 15, a press preview train, in a leisurely whistle-stop-punctuated six-hour trip spanned the main line between Washington and New York; the following day the first regular train went into service, arriving in Washington only six minutes over a scheduled time of 2:59. Six cars made up the premiere train, in both parlor car and coach configuration, and the 110 mph speed was easily attained. Passengers on the sleek new Budd-built equipment (see cover photo) pay \$19.90 for a parlor car seat, and \$12.75 to ride in a snack bar-coach. Parlor car riders will be served low-cost meals at their seats, while coach passengers must hoof it to the center of the car for soup and sandwiches. All riders can originate and receive telephone calls from a booth aboard the train; just \$1.00 pays for a three minute conversation to any on-line city.

Although this represents the start of actual passenger service with the new cars (which have undergone an almost incredible series of mishaps, false starts, mechanical troubles, suits, counter-suits and just plain delays), the actual two-year DOT demonstration project will not begin until PC has at least 20 straight coaches and eight snack bar coaches in service. The 20 coaches, powered by Westinghouse, have not as yet been accepted by the railway because of unexplained electrical difficulties in the motors that cause such a power drain on wayside substations that the subs are knocked out of service. Hopefully, according to DOT, these problems will be licked in time for a June inaugural of full service. By way of comparison, according to the Wall Street Journal, a representative of the Japanese National Railways, deputy director Takashi Shima (on board for the inaugural run) took issue with PC Chairman Saunders' claim that the MetroLiners provide the best rail service in the world. He said the Tokaido Line, completed in 1965 as a new system in its entirety at a cost of \$1 billion offers a smoother, faster and cheaper service. The Tokaido line runs the more than 300 miles between Tokyo and Osaka in 3 hours and 10 minutes, with 160 daily trains hauling more than 200,000 passengers each weekday.

Summing up, we might offer again the eloquent comment by Colorado Senator Gordon Allott when told that foreign high-speed rail equipment is inferior to ours, which is vastly more sophisticated, "As a layman, I am not prepared to debate the merits of such a proposition, but I do make this observation—theirs run and ours do not." It remains to be seen whether or not the MetroLiners, now that they are actually in service, will live up to their promise.

THE END OF THE LINE -- The New Year begins with a flurry of train-off petitions. First, the train TC has given up for dead twice, Louisville & Nashville's Hummingbird (6-7, Cincinnati-New Orleans) officially expired in mid-route (in Birmingham) January 9 when the latest in a series of injunctions expired without renewal. The 14 passengers aboard were shunted to a waiting chartered bus to complete their trips....The same group protesting the Bird's demise also gave up their fight to keep the C&E's Georgian running....New Haven (now PC) has appealed ICC's decision to hold hearings on their train-off case, claiming undue burden....SCL dropped the Dixie Flyer (95-96, Jacksonville-Atlanta) January 9 and 33-34 (the Silver Comet), Atlanta-Birmingham effective January 18....KCS has entirely withdrawn its petition to drop its last passenger service, 1-2 (the Southern Belle), Kansas City-New Orleans; however, ICC's order to retain sleepers remains in effect until January 26; want to bet that the

coach-only Belle is petitioned on January 27?...CB&Q 42-43 (Omaha - Billings) was allowed to discontinue January 13; actual demise is being held up by an injunction....Southern has dropped the Carolina Special, 27-28 Oakdale (Tenn)-Columbia (S.C.) January 6, and has also closed the main passenger station at Asheville, leaving the Biltmore suburban station as the terminal for the last passenger service....Penn Central has dropped 302-305 Chicago-Indianapolis (January 10), and has petitioned 400, Baltimore-Philadelphia.

THE BIG ONE -- On January 1, 1969, the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company passed out of existence after nearly 100 years and became the 9th operating division of the Penn Central Railroad, the largest passenger-carrying railroad in the nation. As you might expect, PC officials are not too proud of this honor and will undoubtedly attempt to do something about the situation. ICC Bureau of Economics statistics are decidedly in agreement with PC's private opinions as the 1967 figures show: the highest passenger mile revenues in history, 3.19¢, were insufficient to equal any previous year since 1940 simply because there were so few trains running, equalling just 67,902 passenger route miles.

STRIKE REPORT -- If Mayor John V. Lindsay of New York does not repeat in office next term, he might consider a position as a railway management labor negotiator. Similar surroundings exist in both types of negotiations....That Emergency Board which told the railroads and the BRT to resume collective bargaining over train crew sizes again pointed out the weakness of compulsory arbitration—the former will never work with the latter hanging over their heads—as BRT walked off the job at L&N and may soon do the same on IC and BRC. Currently, only Presidential intervention has prevented nationwide strikes by the BLF&E and the Signalmen.

MISCELLANY -- Little Ahnapee & Western has received an ICC Examiner's recommendation to be allowed to discontinue 18½ miles of line from Algoma Wye to Sturgeon Bay because future revenues will not be sufficient to warrant repairing an unsafe bridge that has embargoed the line since last August 8....President Johnson made a final pitch for increased transportation user taxes; Governor Volpe's Transportation Department budget is to rise to \$7 billion from \$6 billion. Mass transportation outlays are to rise to \$173 million; included is a planned \$20 million "urban corridor" demonstration program, designed to help improve commuter travel. The incoming Nixon Administration is not expected to make drastic changes in this area of the proposed FY-1969 budget....Just 12 north- and south-west Indiana counties are to be included in the Central time zone from here on out, as opposed to about half the state in previous years....The CAB favors a "modest" hike in air fares....South Shore has had to use IC suburban cars this past week; its own equipment is laid up....United begins non-stop Chicago-Hawaii service March 5....Penn Central has been ordered to upgrade commuter service in New York by the NYPSC; PC can also hike monthly commuter fares....That Japan Air Lines DC-8 that almost made it to San Francisco International Airport (but landed in the Bay instead) has been declared OK and will return to service....Olympic (Onassis) Airways, has asked for a Europe-Chicago route by way of Montreal.

LAST WORDS --Chicago Helicopter Airways will resume scheduled service between O'Hare-Meigs-Midway (all legs of the triangle) by May 1, at \$10 per passenger per line; the line suspended operations in December 1965....Illinois Governor Ogilvie has pledged state aid to the CTA and the other Illinois transit properties, probably through additional taxes....DOT has granted \$4 million to enable Kansas City's 10 area bus companies to be combined into a single authority....Fargo's Northern Transit will cease all service soon; the city has advertised for a new bus operator.