

Transport Central



Exit: A Symbol of the Past

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column one

Some random thoughts on public transportation in Canada, gleaned from a quick weekend journey to Toronto ten days ago:

Reasoning that four hours on board a comfortable train were preferable to a trip of at least that long on the monotonous MacDonald-Cartier Freeway (401), I parked at CN's Walkerville station in Windsor and boarded CN's TEMPO service for Toronto. Although the Hawker-Siddeley cars do indeed have a cheap, albeit modern appearance, the ride was comfortable and the train left and arrived on time. In addition, snack service featuring respectable food at reasonable prices is available on the TEMPO; Amtrak might do well to take note.

One other aspect of Canadian railroading that never ceases to amaze this reporter is the seemingly-constant crush of people in major railway stations like Toronto Union. There were a respectable number of souls lurking about at ten in the evening on Saturday, and the scene in late afternoon on Sunday resembled the rush hour on a weekday at North Western or Union in Chicago.

In and around the major metropolitan centers of Canada (and in the Montreal-Toronto-Windsor corridor as well) riding appears to be holding up well, and one wonders why a comparable condition does not exist in the U.S. as well. Evidently, in their headlong rush to exit the passenger business completely, U.S. roads acted impartially and discouraged the potentially-profitable short-haul trade as well as the money-losing long-distance runs. Then, too, Canadian officials have always been more enlightened than their U.S. counterparts and began subsidizing mass transport services long ago as vitally necessary to national economic life.

That last point is also evident in urban transport services as well. To a man, U.S. transit company executives cite the Toronto Transit Commission as administering the best transit system in all of North America and, despite a certain stodginess, it is.

This reporter has spent many hours (and days) in Canada's premier city, the most recent trip to inspect the prototype production model Western Flyer trolley coach. Once again, I was impressed with the efficiency of the system in moving hordes of people quickly all over the metropolitan area, and by the Torontonians' acceptance of the system's worth by high patronage (better than all but two cities in North America) even on Sundays.

Why is Toronto's transit system such an excellent one? A study of the reasons might make a far more worthwhile UMTA project than the endless overviews of U.S. transit methodology currently in vogue. The basic reason, I suspect, is that the city fathers of Toronto (and of other Canadian municipalities as well) have long recognized that urban mobility is a prime concern of all citizens, not merely those unable or unwilling to own a car, and that by approaching the problem on a regional basis, with proportionate spending of public funds, it is indeed feasible to provide an effective local transit system to benefit everyone. We might well take many lessons from our neighbor to the north.



airline action

CAPITALISM--SOVIET STYLE

¶ Pan American World Airways, reports the NEW YORK TIMES, has accused the Soviet airline, Aeroflot, of having illegally siphoned away Moscow to New York passengers. Aeroflot was charged with a variety of violations of intergovernmental or international agreements. Aeroflot, in turn, has accused U.S. consular officials in Moscow of having steered passengers to Pan Am.

The rules covering sales of airline tickets at both ends of the New York-Moscow route were laid down in the USSR-US agreement of November 4, 1966, that opened the way for resumption of air service between the two countries. Service began on a once-a-week basis July 15, 1968, and is now up to three round-trip flights weekly for each airline. The rules state that each airline will serve as the other's ticketing agent in its home country.

A principal complaint of Pan Am is that Aeroflot ticket agents in Moscow habitually tell Soviet citizens who have made Pan American reservations that they must fly with Aeroflot. Even transit passengers are not allowed to buy tickets for rubles unless the tickets are on Aeroflot, according to Pan Am executives. The carrier also complained that representatives of Intourist, the Soviet travel agency, have incorrectly advised foreigners that no space was available on Pan American flights, thereby steering them to Aeroflot. In New York, the Soviet flag carrier is charged with having violated agreements on standard fares for certain routes and on commissions to be paid travel agents.

For its part, Aeroflot said that American officials had required Soviet citizens applying for U.S. visas to agree to fly Pan Am. The officials were also said to have timed the issuance of visas to coincide with the departure dates of Pan American rather than Aeroflot flights; Pan Am denied the charges.

The generally-accepted explanation for Aeroflot's alleged tactics to get passengers is that the airline not only likes to do a lot of business, but that it is also adhering to the Soviet government policy of increasing acquisition of dollars.

Some of Aeroflot's comments about the charges were aired in a recent LOS ANGELES TIMES article. The airline says it is merely engaging in a bit of capitalistic competition with the U.S. carrier in securing passengers...."The accusation that the 'spirit and the letter' of the air agreement have been violated sounds strange, to say the least," Aeroflot says.

"For the U.S. company is a confirmed advocate of free competition, and is acting accordingly. Aeroflot naturally enough also makes use of its right to advertise its planes and recommend them to prospective air travelers." Aeroflot hinted that the complaints may be because of the "serious financial difficulties" of Pan Am and other U.S. airlines and have really "nothing to do" with airline relations.

Responding to Aeroflot's comments, Pan Am's director for the U.S.S.R., Erastus Corning said, "If you take a guy into the back room and look him in the eyes and 'recommend' that he fly Aeroflot, well, I guess you could call that advertising. It certainly is different from our definition of advertising." Pan Am says the USSR's intransigence over ending the questionable practices is hampering expansion of the service to add Leningrad as a terminal and increase the number of flights.

RATE REPORT

¶ In a major move to compete against the non-scheduled, supplemental air carriers, the British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) has announced plans to get into the charter business itself on a broader scale unless the International Air Transport Association (IATA) agrees to significantly lower transatlantic fares. BOAC said it had formed a subsidiary called British Overseas Air Charters, Ltd, and that the carrier was in a position to apply to the British air transport licensing board and the CAB for formal permits to operate charters.

At the same time BOAC chairman Keith Granville said the carrier plans to submit a new schedule of lower transatlantic fares to the IATA fare conference in Miami next September. A major feature of the proposal will be an early-bird fare, offered on scheduled services to passengers prepared to pay, on a non-refundable basis, the full fare four months in advance. BOAC proposes round-trip fares between New York and London of \$180 (off-peak) to \$235.20 (peak); the lowest current off-peak tariff over the same route is \$300, for a 14-28 day excursion.

BOAC made similar early-bird proposals to IATA last year without success, and Mr. Granville said that if IATA did not cooperate in setting lower fares for scheduled services, his airline would move wholeheartedly into the charter business. Conversely, the more successful BOAC is with its early-bird fares, the more the airline would scale down its charter operations.

Regular readers of this publication may recall that a similar revolt against the high cost of transatlantic air transportation was staged last year by Alitalia, which threatened to impose a much lower tariff in order to gain additional business for itself, as the Italian-flag carrier was falling on hard times financially. Needless to say, the erring IATA member was quickly brought into line by its fellow carriers at a stormy conference, and fares went up, rather than down. Only Loftleidir (the Icelandic-flag carrier) has continued to buck the IATA cartel and offer cheap transportation across the Atlantic.

¶ U.S. carriers have all filed for the full passenger fare increase for domestic trips that the CAB has said it will permit. The new fare levels, which will become effective May 7, are 6% higher than those in effect last October 15. Because the formula set by the board called for subtracting recent fare boosts in selective congested markets, or rolling back the biggest ones to a 9% level, the average increase over current fares will be less than 6%.

¶ On the other hand, fare reductions designed to get the vacationing family out of their car and into an airplane this summer are being sought by Eastern. From June 1 thru September 15, a round-trip ticket for a family of four between Chicago and Miami, for example, might be reduced in cost from \$578.50 to \$319, if the CAB approves. The cheaper fares would be effective Monday thru Thursday, all day Saturday and on Friday and Sunday mornings.

¶ One of the most interesting fare proposals ever to come along has been approved for the month of May by Continental Airlines. For just a total of \$9.26, anyone can purchase a round-trip ticket between 25 Continental points, as long as he returns on the same day. Needless to say, there are some hitches. The plan is ostensibly geared to introduce non-flyers to Continental services, but in theory anyone can take advantage of the new tariff. He or she must arrange for the trip no earlier than the day before the flight, and his request is subject to availability of seats on that particular run.

Not all of Continental's cities are terminal points for the new tariff; the eligible locations are generally in the South and Southwest. (The closest point to Chicago at which the plan is effective is Wichita). Although the plan involves a positive reservation, rather than standby, such reservations, as noted, can be made only on certain flights (which apparently will vary from day to day) and on a one-day-in-advance only basis. The return trip must involve no more than a 4-hour layover in the terminal city, but the passenger, in that time, is free to do what he might in that time. There are abuses of the system possible, it is true, but the limited applicability and the short time it will be in effect will tend to hold down such abuses.

ROUTE REPORT

¶ Add Pan Am to the growing list of carriers ready, willing and able to serve the People's Republic of China when and if the Peking government approves (as well as the CAB and the President). Pan Am served a number of mainland China points until the Mao government took over in 1949 with its famed China Clippers.

¶ A request by two U.S. airlines for landing rights in Dublin and the ending of feeder service April 19 between Dublin and Shannon are to be discussed soon by the U.S. Ambassador and the Irish government. Irish International (Aer Lingus), which says it is losing \$240,000 on the service between the two airports, said that Pan Am and TWA, the two U.S.-flag carriers that fly into Shannon, had provided an average of only 10 passengers a flight for the service. U.S. officials report that the two carriers have sold 7,000 tickets in 1971 to American tourists on the understanding that they would be able to take the Irish flight from Shannon to Dublin.

The U.S. has been trying for years to obtain landing rights in Dublin for at least one American airline. Aer Lingus contends that even if only Pan Am or TWA were permitted to land there, the Irish carrier would lose half of its net profit. The Irish tourist industry, however, favors the U.S. bid. If the Dublin government yields, Aer Lingus is expected in return to demand rights to fly from Dublin to either San Francisco or Los Angeles.

¶ Air Mid America, the only scheduled operator of heavy transport aircraft as an all-Illinois airline, has begun Phase II of its passenger service by instituting two daily round trips between Chicago's Midway airport and East St. Louis, whose airport is but 15 minutes from downtown St. Louis across the Mississippi. AMA's first operations began in mid-March with service from Midway to Champaign, and the new extensions were just authorized by the Illinois Commerce Commission and the FAA. All AMA flights are in 26-passenger Douglas Super DC-3 twin-engine craft. The line's current route authority permits it to provide passenger service between Chicago and East St. Louis, and Springfield, Peoria and East St. Louis. At present, AMA may not offer local service between Chicago and Springfield or Peoria.

¶ New York Airways brought scheduled helicopter service back to Manhattan May 3, via the Wall Street heliport, after a lapse of 18 months, using a fourth Sikorsky S-61 30-passenger helicopter NYA just added to its fleet. At the same time, NYA began a new service, to Wall Street and the three major airports from Morristown Airport in Morris county, New Jersey.

¶ National has petitioned for Tampa-Mexico City route authority, as well as promotional fares for the service. Pan Am is the only carrier on the route, with a stop at Merida, operating 12 times monthly....BOAC will provide London-Budapest

daily air service under an agreement just signed with the Hungarian government... Aerolineas Peruanas has suspended all service due to financial difficulties. The Peruvian-flag carrier has had two of its jet airliners seized in the U.S. by American creditors.... Allegheny has asked the CAB for authority to suspend service on a temporary basis to Muncie-Anderson-New Castle, Indiana.

¶ As noted here several weeks ago, the German Democratic Republic is busily promoting the use of East Berlin's Schönefeld Airport by foreign-flag carriers. KLM has begun "irregular, unpublicized, on demand" service between Amsterdam and the East Berlin field this month; if passengers are waiting in East Berlin or Amsterdam they will be put aboard KLM's Amsterdam-Moscow flight, which will land at the Schönefeld terminal. SAS, Alitalia and Swissair are also indicating interest in using the GDR field; three carriers (Pan Am, BOAC and Air France) have a monopoly in serving the West Berlin fields.

¶ Mohawk begins serving Chicago's Midway Airport May 9.... To further clarify an item two weeks ago, two other foreign-flag carriers offer "local service" on the North American continent, in addition to Czechoslovak Airlines (New York-Montreal on Mondays). Qantas offers a round trip between Vancouver and San Francisco (as a leg of service to the South Pacific), also on Mondays; and Air France offers a daily service between Chicago and Montreal (continuing on to Paris).

EQUIPMENT REGISTER

¶ The Soviet Union will develop a 300-passenger airbus in the next five years, according to Tass.... The Fairchild Hiller Corporation has launched a detailed study of the proposed supersonic transport plane, especially the feasibility of financing development without federal subsidies. The study is being done without cost to the government, but with DOT and White House approval.... Two DC10 customers, American and National, have decided against exercising some options for the \$15,-000,000 trijet. American will now order 25, with options for 15 more, while National will retrench to the 11 it has on order, dropping options for three more. Cathay Pacific has purchased a third 707-320B for April 1972 delivery.

JETPORT JOTTINGS

¶ O'Hare International Airport's new \$5,000,000 air traffic control tower complex was dedicated and placed in service May 4. The new tower is 199 feet tall--114 feet taller than the old, 1945-vintage tower it replaces (which will now become a training center). The old tower had 18 air traffic controller positions--the new one has 33. Nine radar consoles in the old tower are being replaced by 15 in the new tower, which (unlike the old) commands a bird's eye view of virtually every square foot of the field's 10 square miles.... The new West Terminal at Greater Buffalo International Airport, serving Mohawk, Eastern and Allegheny, has opened for business.... New York Governor Rockefeller has asked the legislature for funds to proceed on the expansion of Stewart Airport (65 miles north of Manhattan) into the New York metropolitan area's fourth major jetport.

AIRWAY ADDENDA

Merger memoranda: Delta and Northeast have reached an agreement in principle to merge; Northeast's long-sought marriage with Northwest was denied recently by a

combination of CAB intransigence in handing over the lucrative Miami-Los Angeles run to the surviving carrier and Northwest's petulance in pulling out when the grant was withheld....Pan Am and TWA are once again seriously wooing each other...Pan Am, by the way, has closed its books on moon reservations; 90,000 potential lunar passengers signed up between 1964 and March 3, 1971....The National Transportation Safety Board has called for stricter seat-belt discipline on flights of the 747; the action was taken in the wake of turbulence injuries that sent several passengers and a stewardess to the hospital late last year....A regulation penalizing airlines and ticket agents for confirming a seat before the ticket has been issued and delivered has been proposed by the CAB....George Keck, deposed president of United, is still on the UAL payroll as a \$100,000-a-year consultant.



metro memo

GETTING MAN TO WORK

¶ Jobs in the suburbs are increasingly denied to blacks and members of other minority groups because it takes too much time and costs too much money to get to the job, a study just concluded by the Chicago Urban League concludes. The CUL recommends immediate steps (none of them involving a new mass transit system) to move black residents of the inner city to suburban jobs. Such programs as employers providing bus or car transportation for employees, or giving new employees bus tokens are suggested as possible means of opening suburban jobs to blacks.

Conceding there is excellent rail and bus service between the suburbs and downtown Chicago, the researchers found this service does not facilitate traveling to suburban job locations. "These systems primarily operate to bring suburban residents into downtown Chicago in the morning and carry them back to the suburbs in the evening," the report states. "The reverse commuter must, in the overwhelming majority of the cases, travel by automobile, for the nature of the suburban sprawl prohibits the operation of an intensively-developed bus and taxi distribution system such as is found on every street in downtown Chicago."

"This lack of a distribution system between suburban rail stations and job sites makes virtually the entire suburban rail and bus system useless to the potential commuter-employee. This is true even in the many instances where jobs are available in plants that may be within a mile or two of suburban rail stations."

According to the report, a trip to and from work should meet these criteria:

1. *It should not be excessively time-consuming, preferably no more than one hour each way.*
2. *The round-trip cost, except for those in high-salaried positions, should be under \$1.50, and preferably under \$1.00.*
3. *It should be reasonably simple, avoiding numerous transfers.*
4. *It should be attractive in terms of personal comfort and convenience.*

The report cited the CTA #40 O'HAREXpress as proof that improved public transportation can aid blacks in finding jobs. Forty per cent of the commuters on the run (from the Jefferson Park rapid terminal to O'Hare) were new employees who have been hired since the inception of the service (in February 1970). Fifty per cent of the new employees came from 27 census tracts in the city that normally have the highest unemployment; two-thirds would not be working at O'Hare at all if it had not been for the bus service.

Motormen Fight Higher Fares

Fares on San Francisco streetcars and coaches could go up again only if the voter approve, under a plan being promoted by a group of Municipal Railway operators. The group, the MUNI Drivers Association, is circulating petitions for a city charter amendment that would require a voter referendum on all future fare changes. At present MUNI fares, as well as routes and services, are under the jurisdiction of the city Public Utilities Commission, an appointive body.

The drivers' group hopes to collect the necessary 30,000 signatures by August 1. If they are successful, the issue will appear as a "proposition" on the November ballot.

The group has turned to the citizen-initiative method after unsuccessfully opposing two previous fare jumps.

A spokesman outlined the reasoning behind the fare initiative to a TC correspondent. The city, he explained, has committed itself to heavy investment in new investment in streetcars, trolley- and diesel-buses to modernize the fleet. The property will also operate a subway, now under construction, paralleling the BART line beneath Market Street. The bill for rolling stock alone tops \$50 million. "And what good," he asks "will all these millions do if the fare goes up and people stop riding?"

Despite the two recent fare hikes, the MUNI rate is low by North American standards, at 25 cents with free transfers and a 30-cent charge on express services. And, the MUNI had not, until recently, experienced significant losses of riders.

Lately, though, as the drivers' association observes, the two fare increases have not met revenue predictions. More serious, for an operation that has excess capacity during non-rush hours, the increases have produced a drop in riding, not during the peaks, but during non-peak periods--the very time when the utility presumably would want to attract more, not fewer patrons to its buses and streetcars.

The association also sees a successful charter amendment as a way to give MUNI riders some "sense of control" over the policies of the city-owned utility.

Cable Car Cuts

Service on one of San Francisco's famed cable car routes will be cut back on evenings and weekends as part of a Municipal Railway money-saving program. The route, running along part of California Street, will cease operation at 7 p.m. weekdays and at 5:30 on weekends instead of the present 11 p.m. closing. MUNI officials estimate that ending service earlier in the day on the two-man, nine-mile-per-hour vehicles will save \$154,000 a year.

The California Street cable is the most lightly patronized of three MUNI cable car routes. The other two lines, which operate along Powell Street, have their service unaffected by the change. Continued daily service, if not hours of operation, is protected by city charter.

The cable routes operate with wooden cars built mostly before the turn of the century, and are an acknowledged tourist attraction. Vehicle schedules on both Powell Street routes, unlike those typical on city transit lines, provide for more service during the day than during morning rush periods and more frequent operation during summer months.

The change in the California Street cable service was approved by the city Public Utilities Commission, despite vocal citizen opposition. However, the commission also agreed to study the institution of owl service to portions of the city currently without it over a new route and the creation of a feeder line between the Diamond Heights district and the future BART Station at Glen Park.

-Charles Rozema

THE COVER: CTA's Isabella rapid transit station (Evanston), the last of a vanishing breed in Chicago, due to be closed "imminently" for lack of ridership (RRK)