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INTERFACE

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cover photo

A Cleveland RTA Breda car pauses on a railroad bridge on the West Side Rapid enroute Hopkins Airport on a special inspection trip. 48 articulated light rail vehicles, liveried in white with bright orange and red trim are currently being delivered to the RTA's Shaker Heights division to replace the aging PCC fleet. **Transport Camera photo.**

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Demise of A Giant

The recent shutdown and subsequent move toward bankruptcy of Braniff Airways signalled the end of one of the original trunk carriers in this country. While not nearly as large as the real biggies such as United, Eastern and Pan Am, Braniff was nonetheless a major carrier with many employes, a large fleet and far-flung routes. In the wake of this corporate collapse one must ask "why", in the hopes that the answer might help to avert other such economic disasters.

This writer believes that there existed three distinct but partially interrelated factors in Braniff's demise. These were 1) the actions of Harding Lawrence, former CEO of the airline; 2) the deregulation of air carriers under President Carter; and 3) the economic picture that developed under his successor, Ronald Reagan.

Harding Lawrence is an older gentleman who has been around for a long time. He promoted and welcomed deregulation, as did many others. But one has to wonder if one reason which motivated his later actions was nothing more than a personal drive to build Braniff to a size which would match or eclipse the major carriers. This would not so much explain his approval and support of deregulation as his breathtaking expansion of Braniff's route structure once the new law took effect.

When Braniff suddenly began expanding, it did so in an economic climate which was already showing very definite and specific signs of serious weakening. The combination of sudden added expenditures and high interest rates should have almost immediately been a danger signal to Braniff's board. To make matters worse, Lawrence attempted to expand into markets where Braniff was a total stranger. Thus, there was no ready market identification available. To develop such identification takes both time and money—Braniff had neither.

Under Lawrence, Braniff obligated itself to large debts in order to expand its fleet to serve the new markets. Then it spent more money to introduce the airline into new markets. And finally, Braniff began to lose money quickly when the new markets did not develop, and the company's planes were flying almost empty to the new destinations.

Deregulation further hampered—rather than helped—Braniff, because both established and upstart companies made inroads into Braniff's formerly well-established routes. In order to survive, the company began to sell the very planes it had just purchased—in effect tantamount to an animal eating itself in order to stay alive.

But it was too late. Tight money and high interest rates, combined with the quality of management, convinced the consortium of

A NOTE FROM THE STAFF: Once again, we approach the summer doldrums (the "silly season" in the news business), when little of major consequence is planned to occur (excepting that which is intended to be slid by a public whose attentions are focused elsewhere); hence our customary abbreviated issues and decreased frequency. Given the backlog of material accumulated through recent delays in publication of this journal necessitated by the Editor's hospitalization and pressures on TC's corporate parent, a summer publication schedule has not yet been worked out; it will most likely depend upon what of news significance occurs between now and Labor Day. Panic not, dear readers, TC will continue to appear on your doorstep during the summer, irregularly perhaps but faithfully nonetheless: 15 years breeds a good deal of tenacity and perseverance.

banks which served Braniff that they could not risk any further loans. Braniff's cash flow was so poor that, long-range debts aside, the company could not meet its operating expenses.

Even with the handwriting on the wall Braniff's management took some highly questionable actions—how else to explain the fact that the company hired a new president in late January (John Casey), permitted him to resign in order to join Pan Am in mid-March—and gave him a severance check for $210,000 when he did so!

In retrospect, it appears that circumstances and management decreed Braniff's eventual collapse at least two years ago. Nostalgia aside, it is a tragedy to see an employer of so many fail—and it need not have happened at all.

—CLAUDE G. LUISADA

Amtrak: Subsidizing Nostalgia

[Editor's Note: We try to present all points of view in our editorial columns. This essay, by reporter Stephen Chapman, appeared recently in the Chicago Tribune. *While he takes a position contrary to that of this publication, Mr. Chapman nonetheless eloquently pleads his cause in a piece worth perusing.]*

In an era of fiscal austerity, it's hard to find funds for food stamps or new bombers. But Congress can always find money to subsidize nostalgia. No, Washington is not (so far as I know) buying up old rumble seats or Buddy Holly records. This year, however, it will spend three-quarters of a billion dollars on Amtrak, the federal government's own passenger railroad.

Alan Boyd, the outgoing president of Amtrak, gloated the other day at its success in evading the Reagan Administration's budget cuts, and took a parting shot at its critics. "Baiting Amtrak has always been a bipartisan affair," he sniffed. To accusations that his railroad serves only a tiny minority of Americans, Boyd replies: "I say, 'so what'. The fact is, the American taxpayer says 'we want rail passenger service', and they're the ones who are paying for it."

This supposed popularity may illustrate, as H. L. Mencken said, that our system assumes the common people know what they want, and deserve to get it good and hard. But American taxpayers might not be so eager to pay for Amtrak if they knew how much it costs, or how little it provides. In the spirit of bipartisanship mentioned by Mr. Boyd, I shall explain.

Amtrak is the nation's last surviving passenger railroad. Its record is a reminder of why its predecessors failed. When it was inaugurated in 1971, Amtrak was supposed to make money, not lose it. At the time, Transportation Secretary John Volpe said, "This nation is on the threshold of rail passenger service that may someday become a standard for the world." It's a big threshold that takes this long to cross.

Anyone waiting for the day when Amtrak turns a profit has a long wait ahead. It has lost hundreds of millions of dollars every year since its creation. It has never had a single route which covered so much as its operating costs—the expense of merely rolling the train down the track, leaving out the cost of the train and the track.

On some routes, the losses are spectacular. The administration noted last year that "it would be cheaper for the government to *give* someone a round trip airline ticket from Washington, D.C. to Cincinnati than to subsidize a one-way ticket" on Amtrak over the same route. On another route, Washington was paying $192 *per passenger.*

In 1977 Sen. Russell Long (D/LA) asked incredulously, "Can you imagine for a passenger to travel between Chicago and Milwaukee, competing with the bus, this government is compelled to lose $32 to keep somebody from buying a $5.50 bus ticket?"

Last year, Congress decided that henceforth, Amtrak will have to pay half of its operating costs. That, I hasten to note, would be an improvement. Even so, Washington could actually save money by putting all those trains to the torch instead of running them.

Amtrak's supporters retort that trains deserve help because other types of transportation get subsidies. What they don't mention is that the other types get smaller ones, or else pay a greater share of them back (through gasoline taxes, airline ticket taxes and the like).

On a typical trip, a bus passenger gets a federal subsidy of about 11 cents; an airline passenger gets 75 cents. An Amtrak passenger gets about 37 *dollars.* It costs the government 236 times as much to move someone a given distance by train as by car.

Given its failure to live up to the promise of making a profit for the government, Amtrak has needed new rationales. One is that it relieves highway congestion. Well, not so you'd notice: it accounts for less than 1 per cent of all intercity travel.

Another is that it saves energy, a defense concocted during the 1979 gasoline shortage. In fact, Amtrak trains average only about 48 passenger-miles for the equivalent of a gallon of gasoline. Intercity buses get 141 passenger-miles per gallon. And the gas-guzzling automobile, which averages 45 passenger-miles per gallon on intercity trips, nearly matches Amtrak's performance.

Oh, and then there's the air pollution defense. Trains are supposed to be a clean form of transportation. *Supposed* to be: actually they outpollute all of their competitors.

The last-ditch argument is that other Western nations have national passenger train systems, so we should too. What this overlooks is that trains aren't suited to thinly populated areas. They make considerably more sense in a country with 642 people per square mile (like West Germany) than one with 57 (like the U.S.). Maintaining a national train system in this country is roughly akin to putting a subway in Amarillo.

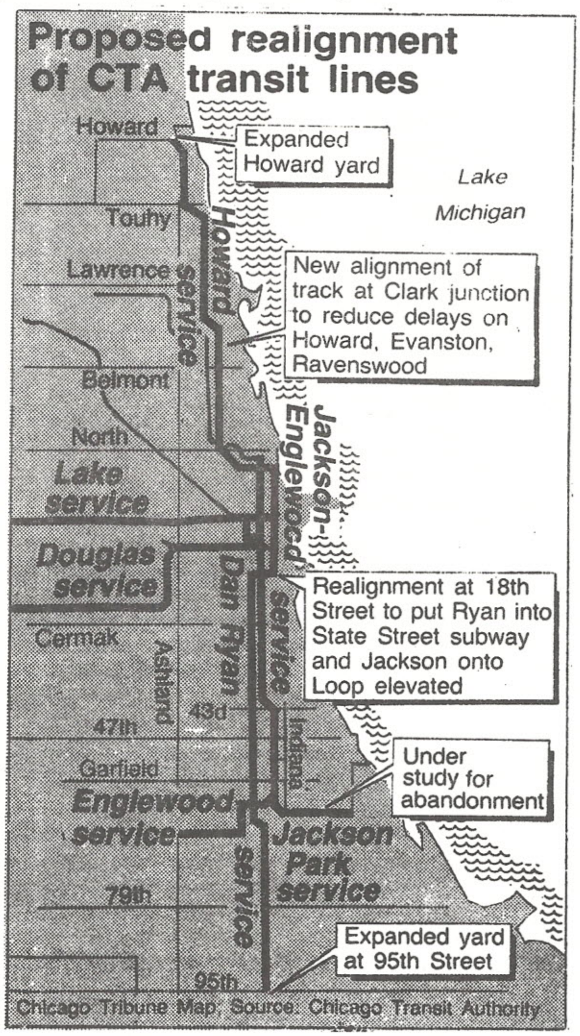
Amtrak survives not in spite of its obvious obsolescence, but because of it. Our government train system is the latest, and probably the last, chapter of the nation's long love affair with trains. The passenger railroad is a charming relic, a reminder of times past when life was simpler and happier—times when we still could afford pointless government extravagances.

—STEPHEN CHAPMAN

transit

The Chicago Connection:
Rapid Restructuring

The Urban Mass Transportation Administration has removed a major roadblock to the restructuring of the Chicago Transit Authority's rapid transit system by determining that the realignment of the



Chicago Tribune Map; Source: Chicago Transit Authority

North-South and West-South lines would have no adverse environmental impact. Engineering and design work can now begin, with construction set to start in 1984 on the $130,000,000 project. The realignment program includes:

- Rerouting the Ryan line into the State Street subway at 18th Street (by means of a "cross-country" subway tying into the existing tubes just south of Roosevelt) to connect with the route to Howard Street. (The Ryan line now operates via the Wabash and Lake Street legs of the Loop elevated.)
- Rerouting the South Side 'L' (Englewood branch—and the Jackson Park leg if it remains in service (see story below)) via the Loop 'L' to connect with the Lake Street line. (The South Side 'L' now operates via the State Street subway through to Howard Street.)
- Rebuilding the junction on the North Side 'L' just north of Belmont to permit Ravenswood trains to "fly over" the main line, eliminating conflicting movements at that location.
- Expanding yards at Howard and at 95th to handle additional cars. An upgrading and rearrangement of the Howard facility has long been proposed to ease congection at that location, with the turnback loop for main line trains to bridge the Skokie Swift route adjacent to a realigned Chicago Avenue.
- Rehabilitating the existing 18th Street elevated structure currently used by Ryan trains to reach the Loop for a connection between the Loop and the new Southwest Side rapid transit line currently on the drawing boards.
- Replacement of the existing Addison Street station on the North Side 'L' with a center-platform structure that would permit main line trains to remain on the center pair of tracks from Armitage to Howard, eliminating an interlocking plant at Wilson Avenue and the need for towermen at that location.

The realignment program, in effect exchanging the outer ends of the two through routes, has been in the works since the rapid growth in traffic on the Ryan route quickly outpaced riding on the Lake Street segment, resulting in a severe imbalance in traffic on the route. A similar imbalance currently exists on the North-South line; riding on the Howard segment is almost double that of the combined Jackson Park-Englewood legs. The exchange of outer segments would more nearly balance riding and would better utilize the existing 1100-car fleet.

The reconstruction of the North-South line between Belmont and Addison would eliminate a bottleneck responsible for many service delays down through the years. Currently, from the subway portal south of Armitage to Belmont, North-South main line trains use the center pair of tracks, while Ravenswood and Evanston runs use the outside set. Northbound Ravenswood trains must cross three sets of rails just north of Belmont at grade in order to reach the branch; complicating the traffic pattern, all main line trains scheduled to stop at Addison Street must switch to and from the outer tracks, as that station is the only main line stop with outside platforms. These trains must then repeat the switching maneuver at Wilson Avenue; north of that point all North-South stations are located between the center pair of tracks. A reconstructed Addison station as a center-platform stop would eliminate these conflicting movements.

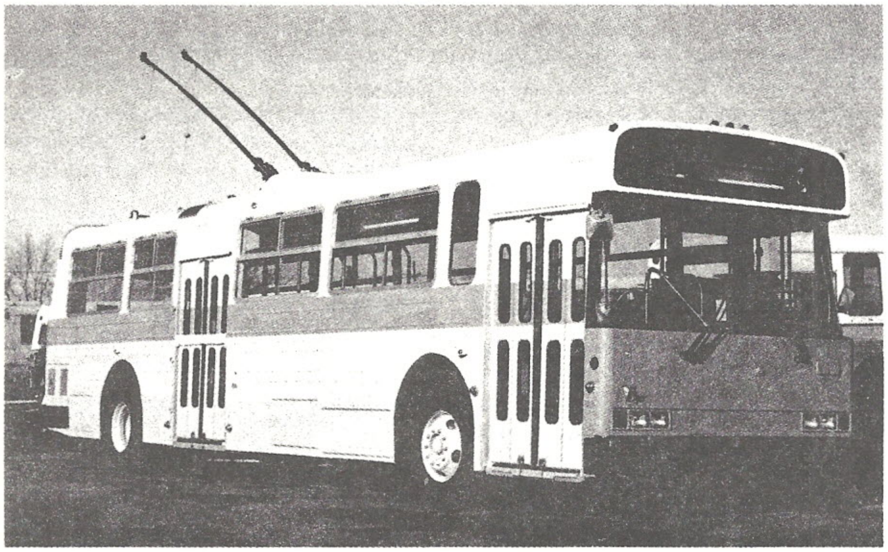
The city hopes to obtain a $7,500,000 grant from UMTA by the end of the fiscal year September 30 to pay for design work and land acquisition for the realignment project. Next month, a draft environmental impact statement for the Southwest Side rapid transit line to Midway Airport is expected to be submitted; hearings could be held before the end of the year.

Chicago Comment:
Dorchester Dilemma

A consultant hired by the city has determined that deterioration of the Dorchester bridge that formerly carried CTA Jackson Park 'L' trains over the Illinois Central at 63rd Street is so serious that service cannot be restored without substantial rehabilitation of the structure. Envirodyne Engineers has recommended to the city Department of Public Works that the bridge be completely replaced if trains are to be returned to the line, which was shut down March 4 after inspectors determined that the bridge was in an unsafe condition. Of the three options (minimum rehabilitation, major rehabilitation, or complete replacement), only replacement at a cost of $3,500,000 was judged to be viable by the consultant. Should the bridge ultimately be replaced, however, the 'L' structure leading to it must also be completely rebuilt; it dates from 1893 and is also seriously deteriorated. The total cost of bridge and structure replacement from 63rd and Calumet to Stony Island is conservatively estimated at $37,000,000; most observers suggest $50,000,000 to be a more accurate figure — a sum well out of the reach of the area's transit budget at this time. Alternatives to the closing have been bandied about for some weeks; no consensus has been reached but the best guess is that the present temporary terminal of the Jackson Park branch at 61st Street will be in service for some time to come.

The contraflow bus lanes on four east-west Loop streets placed in service in 1980 and 1981 may be phased out because of an increasing number of accidents involving pedestrians walking into the path of CTA vehicles. While the flow of bus traffic has been speeded by the reverse lanes, the price of achieving the speedup, according to one Chicago alderman (who himself narrowly missed being hit by a bus operating in one of the lanes), is "too high". Alderman Bernard Stone indicated that he will introduce a resolution in the City Council later this month to return the lanes to the formerly prevailing traffic pattern. In the face of mounting pressure against the system (coupled with a recent crackdown on illegal parking in the Loop that had markedly contributed to congestion) the possibility exists that the four lanes may soon disappear.

Fleet Facts:
A Flurry of Flyers



Vancouver has placed the first of a new breed of trolley coach in service – Flyer's E901. A total of 200 new coaches will soon be operating on Vancouver's twin-wire routes, joining earlier Flyer units from the Winnipeg works.

The E901 differs from earlier Flyer units in its replacement of the old cam control system with a completely electronic chopper control system that has no moving parts. The new chopper system is infinitely variable in applying power to the traction motor, offering a much smoother ride. It is programmable to customer specifications for acceleration and deceleration rates (and can be reprogrammed on site). The new E901 also offers an optional automatically rechargeable battery package that enables the coach to run off-line for five or ten minutes at reduced speed, providing a way to minimize service delays.

A lengthy Wall Street Journal article on the problems plaguing GMC's new RTS buses has detailed customer difficulties with the new vehicle (GMC's first new line in 19 years). Detroit, for example, notes that routine maintenance costs about $9,000 annually for each RTS, as opposed to one-third that figure for a conventional "Fishbowl". The customary air-conditioning faults are cited, along with often-defective lifts and kneeling features. Some cities have disconnected the latter; San Antonio moved the problem-plagued air-conditioning system from its location next to the radiator back to the roof — at a cost of $2,000,000. The same system also spent almost as much getting the doors on its RTS fleet to operate properly.

General Motors blames most of the problems (not, of course, limited to the RTS — Grumman's 870 had its share of difficulties) on poor maintenance; the transit companies counter that the vehicle is inordinately complex, making servicing difficult at best, noting that the high rates of pay offered competent diesel mechanics in private industry compound their maintenance problems by making it hard to hire—and keep—skilled servicemen. The New York City Transit Authority, for one, says it is seriously considering the purchase of foreign-made units in place of the domestic version; thus far, however, the TA has not been terribly pleased by what it has been offered from overseas manufacturers.

On June 5, streetcars returned to Seattle after a 42-year absence. Three completely refurbished ex-Melbourne (Australia) cars are now serving a 1.6 mile line along Seattle's waterfront between the Pioneer Square Historic District and Myrtle Edwards Park.

Seattle Metro Transit operates and maintains the waterfront streetcar line for the city, which purchased the cars for $25,000 each and coordinated the design and construction of the project. The line, which uses two of the Melbourne W-2 class cars at any one time, functions as a regular part of the Metro network; cash fares, transfers and passes are honored. Each car seats 52 and stands 93 — and has two wheelchair tiedowns.

The line operates on leased Burlington Northern track along Alaskan Way, all rehabilitated for the service from the base up. The single-track route has a passing siding midway; each stop boasts a specially constructed shelter on a raised platform. A carbarn at the north end of the line is currently under construction to house the four-car fleet (the fourth car was bought to provide a source of parts).

Budd Bid Battle:
Complaint and Counter-Offer

As expected, Budd filed a formal complaint with the federal government over the New York City Transit Authority's plan to buy 825 subway cars from Bombardier of Canada. Budd, itself foreign-owned, specifically objected to the Canadian government's offer to subsidize the financing of 85% of the $663,000,000 contract, and asked the Commerce Department to impose countervailing duties on the cars.

In awarding the job to Bombardier, the TA acknowledged that the

Canadian firm won the pact in part because of an offer by Canada's Export Development Corporation to provide $563,000,000 in financing at 9.7%; U.S. officials contend that this violates a recent international agreement setting a minimum rate of 11.25% for such loans. Budd had offered a $635,000,000 total price for the cars, about $28,000,000 less than Bombardier. But the West German-owned firm was only able to arrange for $111,000,000 in financing; the TA would have had to come up with the rest, giving the Canadian offer a $230,000,000 subsidy advantage.

Following the filing of the complaint, Budd also sued the TA in federal court, charging unfair trade practices. Among other things, the Troy (MI)-based Thyssen AG subsidiary claimed that its offer was, apart from financing, superior to Bombardier's. In addition to a lower overall price, Budd promised an October 1986 completion date, as opposed to Bombardier's May 1987 target. Budd also promised that 80% of the labor to build the subway cars would be U.S.; Bombardier's estimate is 40%. The Troy firm also noted that it did not need a licensing agreement for car design and engineering, while Bombardier did.

After the suit was filed, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, acting as the TA's parent, signed a contract with Bombardier to build the 825 cars. Budd immediately asked a federal judge in New York to enjoin the contract, then withdrew its request for a temporary injunction in the wake of an agreement under which it will have until July 15 to arrange for similarly attractive financing with the U.S. Export-Import Bank.

The MTA, however, agreed only to consider the Budd proposal if the company makes arrangements with the Ex-Im Bank. Further, the MTA has publicly stated its preference to do business with Bombardier in view of the manufacturer's proven track record, and the Canadian firm remains the favorite even if Budd gets a loan.

Metro Memo:
Notes From All Over

A Portuguese tram (Oporto 252) managed to make its way by ship (despite the Falklands/Malvinas hostilities) to Buenos Aires to join sister 252 on the tourist trolley line. These cars are identical to the two currently in excursion service on the electric freight line in Yakima . . . A new trolley bus system has opened in Ribeirao Preto, Brazil (200 miles northwest of Sao Paulo), a city which never had any electric transit service before. The new operation, using Brazilian-made coaches, joins Sao Paulo, Santos, Araraquara and Recife in Brazil and Bogota, Montevideo, Valparaiso and Rosario and Mendoza (both Argentina) in the ranks of South American twin-wire systems . . . The Texas ERA's "Short Circuit Bulletin" reports that planning is well along on a light rail line for Dallas to be partially funded by private interests.

San Francisco Muni's 5-year plan calls for the extension of the California Street cable line from its present terminal at Market Street along that thoroughfare to a point near the Ferry Building . . . Cable car fares, by the way, have gone up to $1.00 — but a Muni 'Fast Pass' (base fare is 60¢, on which the monthly pass rate is based) will also be accepted as full fare; transfers from buses and trolleys will require an additional 40¢ for a trip aboard the cables.

The Cincinnati Transit Historical Association is actively proceeding with plans to preserve two Marmon-Herrington trolley coaches from the Dayton RTA fleet (some are secondhand from the Queen City) upon their retirement in the near future . . . Staffer Bill Thoms postcards from Norway that the Conservative government has turned down a Labor Party plan to phase out Oslo trolleys and has ordered new LRVs for the suburban #9 line . . . In case earlier reports did not make it clear, there will be a total of 44 new interurban cars in service by the end of 1983 on the South Shore Line. The original tender was for 44, but fiscal constraints reduced this figure to 36. Accumulated interest income from investments recently has enabled the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District to increase the order back to 44. One car is already on the property for acceptance testing; eight more are to arrive in September . . . Cleveland's RTA has also been hit hard by the economic crunch, and has been forced to resort to service frequency reductions and layoffs to stem the flow of red ink. The GCRTA has also ordered 77 new RTS-04s — without air-conditioning and with openable windows.

Two researchers, writing in the "Journal of Contemporary Studies", suggest that U.S. transit companies return to a system of graduated fares based on distance to minimize their financial problems. Noting that the industry posted deficits of $4,000,000,000 in 1980, and that federal operating subsidies are being phased out by 1985, Robert Cervero and Martin Wachs, professors at the University of California in Berkeley, suggest that "one way out of this dilemma would be to abandon the now almost universal but increasingly outdated and inequitable flat fares." The authors based their conclusions on field studies undertaken in Los Angeles, San Diego and Oakland, noting that the technology is available to permit on-board graduated fare collection without any increase in related labor costs.

The California Supreme Court has held that a tax for transit approved by the voters of Los Angeles County was not subject to limitations imposed on taxing bodies by Proposition 13. The decision will allow the start of a rail rapid transit system for the area, as well as improvements in the existing bus network. Some officials favor a subway in the "Wilshire Corridor" between downtown Los Angeles and the west, at a cost of some $2,000,000,000, while others prefer a light-rail line along the old Pacific Electric right-of-way to Long Beach, tabbed at $257,000,000.

Subways are for Sleeping
Home on the Rails

More than 1200 homeless people are living in New York's subways, according to city officials. A special TA team has searched the system's 837 miles of track to find the homeless, ten percent of whom are women.

The team does not arrest the persons it finds living in the subways, but turns them over to the city's Human Resources Administration, which offers them shelter at a city center. About 90 percent of the homeless found in the system, most derelicts, accepted the offer of shelter.

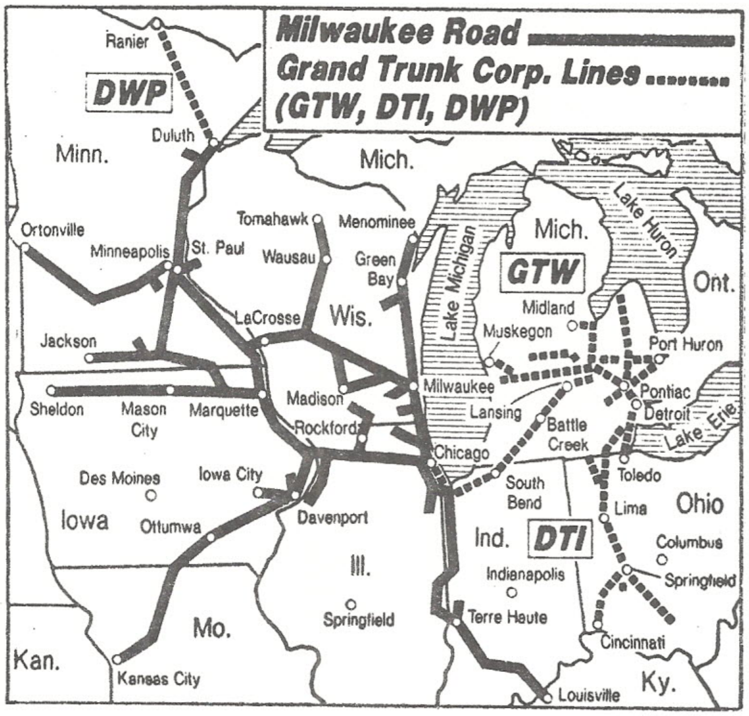
rail

Railway Report:
Another Merger, A New Chief Executive

Canadian National's U.S. subsidiary, the Grand Trunk Corporation, has reached agreement in principle to acquire the stock of the reorganized Milwaukee Road by assuming about $250,000,000 of debts and obligations of the bankrupt carrier's estate. As a part of the complex deal, the Milwaukee will attempt to dispose of its commuter operations in the Chicago area, probably to the Regional Transportation Authority; should the railroad and the RTA be unable to come to an agreement on acquisition of the money-losing service, the carrier will petition for its abandonment.

The Grand Trunk, owned by the Canadian goverment as a portion of the CN system, first announced its interest in acquiring the remains of the once-large Midwestern railroad late last year, and the Detroit-based company has been studying the project ever since. If the merger passes the customary hurdles, the resulting carrier will be a 5,000-mile entity nearly encircling the Great Lakes.

The Milwaukee is currently in bankruptcy, and has signed a letter of intent to be acquired by GT. The letter calls for a definite agreement by July 1; 90 days later its trustee, Richard Ogilvie (a former Illinois governor) would file a new reorganization plan with the Interstate Commerce Commission including the GT acquisition.



The Milwaukee Road was once a 10,000 mile carrier reaching from Indiana to the Pacific Coast; in recent years it has fallen on evil times and shrunk to a "lean" 2900-mile railroad reaching from Louisville to Minnesota. Currently, it provides commuter service on two lines to the west and northwest of Chicago, and contracts with Amtrak for passenger operations between Chicago and Minneapolis.

The Grand Trunk Corporation is a holding company for the Grand Trunk Western, Detroit Toledo & Ironton, Duluth Winnipeg & Pacific and Central Vermont railways. It provides commuter service for the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority from Detroit to Pontiac and the Battle Creek to Port Huron portion of Amtrak's *Blue Water* Chicago-Port Huron train. The acquisition of the Milwaukee would link the Duluth-Fort Frances DW&P line with the remainder of the Grand Trunk system via the Milwaukee Road.

➡ As expected, W. Graham Claytor, former president of the Southern Railway and one-time Navy Secretary, has been chosen to succeed Alan Boyd as Amtrak's president. Claytor is expected to continue Boyd's aggressive policies as head of the embattled national rail passenger system; he is a passenger-train devotee and turned Southern's *Crescent* into a showpiece among varnish runs.

Amtrak and six unions have signed new labor contracts that will hold down labor costs and permit the Corporation to decrease its dependence on federal subsidies. The pacts include average wage increases of as much as 18.7% over 39 months, considerably less than the 30% hike agreed to by freight rails last year.

Amtrak said the contracts also contain some work-rule changes that will help it operate more efficiently, including assigning starting times for many workers to dovetail more closely with train schedules, splitting some eight-hour turns and allowing workers to perform some tasks that formerly could only be done by certain specified employees. The new contract applies to nonoperating unions.

➡ The Budd Company, under a $40,000 contract from Milwaukee County, the federal government and private interests, will study the feasibility of building a high-technology, 250-mph passenger train system between Milwaukee and O'Hare International Airport. The proposed service would consume only 20 minutes in shuttling passengers between downtown Milwaukee and the airport. The Budd study would determine viable routes for a magnetic levitation train system similar to one exhibited in Hamburg in 1979 and which will undergo tests in Germany later this year.

➡ Britain and France have again delayed a decision on building a rail tunnel under the English Channel between their two countries. The two governments, both of which are again beginning to cool on the project, are setting up a new study group to look into financial and legal arrangements for the "Chunnel". An earlier technical study group had endorsed the concept of a twin tunnel providing both a through rail passenger service and a vehicle shuttle.

➡ Amtrak's version of the experimental LRC train has been pulled from service and is now back in Canada, apparently never to return (VIA Rail Canada, however, has ordered a number of trainsets, primarily for Quebec-Windsor corridor service) . . . Timothy Mellon and his Guilford Transportation Industries have won ICC approval to acquire the Boston & Maine. Guilford now has an application pending to acquire the Delaware & Hudson, completing his New England "super railroad" (the firm presently controls the Maine Central) . . . Amtrak is taking a hard look at the RoadRailer, envisioning the rail-highway van as a way of bringing Florida produce to New York . . . The *Orient Express* gets a step closer to the Orient: Two American and one Turkish engineering firms are studying the feasibility of a railway crossing of the Bosporus at Istanbul; the study will investigate the engineering, economic and financial feasibility of a crossing between Europe and Asia for through passenger, suburban and freight service. A crossing of the straits would make possible through train service from all points on the continent (and, via the Channel ferries, England and Scotland) to Iran (including a train ferry crossing of Lake Van in eastern Turkey). No rail cars presently cross the Bosporus, affording a lesser class of service on the Asian side (as recounted vividly in Paul Theroux's "The Great Railway Bazaar).

air

"I have $162.50 round trip over here. Do I hear $150?"

Airline Action:
A Historic Landing

➡ Boeing's new 767 jet, dressed in United livery, made its maiden landing at O'Hare last week—and history as well. The jet, seventh off the Seattle 767 line, made the first wholly automatic landing in the history of the field. Boeing test pilot Thomas Edmonds did not take controls until he turned off the runway. The 767 steered itself onto and down the runway.

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