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The U.S. Department of Transportation Broadcast News Service for Thursday, November 15, has an actuality on the Northeastern rail testimony, and another actuality on AMTRAK passenger capacity. First the rail testimony. . .

In testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee today, Secretary of Transportation Claude Brinegar commented on provisions in the House Northeast Rail bill which he finds objectionable as too costly; stock transfers which could result in federal payments to stockholders, and Secretary Brinegar had this to say about the bill's labor agreements.

"We have recognized from the start the need to provide adequate job-protection for those rail employees who lose their jobs, or who are required to move, or who are forced to take lesser-paying positions.

"But our main problem is with the 'open-endedness' of the protection provisions. All rail employees with five or more years of service under terms of this bill are to be protected at present (and escalating) salary levels -- up to a maximum of \$30,000 a year -- until they are 65. And they are to get this protection at taxpayer expense."

Federal Rail Administrator John Ingram commented on Rail passenger transport in light of the fuel shortage at a Houston press conference this week.

"At present there's plenty of excess capacity in railroad trains that AMTRAK is operating and I believe that you could just about double the passenger load that the railroads are presently carrying without any additional equipment or locomotives. That's certainly not true on some routes. The Northeast Corridor Route, for instance, from Washington to New York is well over-crowded; additional capacity would be necessary in that particular route if substantial additional passenger traffic is to be handled. But on most of the lines that AMTRAK serves, you could handle a considerable increase in passenger volume without any additional equipment."

This has been the Transportation News Report.

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