

# highlights

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EMERGENCY ORDER III ISSUED. . . Emergency Order Number 3 was issued this week to lay down conditions under which Class A explosives may be transported. These conditions include a requirement that all brake shoes on a car must be of the same type, and that each car must contain a continuous steel sub-floor or metal spark shields located on each side of the center sill. The E.O. also calls for increased inspection, particularly of those car components which can cause excessive heat. The Order was issued in accordance with an NTSB recommendation that FRA issue temporary regulations requiring "Increased inspection and surveillance of the car selection, loading and transportation of military explosives of a type involved in the Tobar, Roseville, and the Benson explosions."

COMMUTER OPERATION HEARING HELD. . . A unique public hearing was convened July 28 to hear statements concerning the safety of Penn Central rail commuter operations on its Harlem, Hudson and New Haven lines in New York and Connecticut. The hearing conducted in White Plains, New York, was attended by Congressmen representing the area, MTA Chairman Dr. William Ronan, and others concerned with the seriousness of safety problems involved in the commuter operations. Testimony focused on concern over safety of the new MU equipment going into operation; evacuation procedures in case of accident; and a demand that FRA play a much broader role in regulating safety for commuter operations.

FRENCH TURBOS ARRIVE. . . Two French Turbo trains, leased by AMTRAK for service in the Chicago area, arrived by ship in Elizabethport, New Jersey August 6. OS personnel are giving the trains a thorough inspection in order to determine compliance with FRA regulations, and will also ride the trains when they are moved to Chicago to check on their safety performance for use in the U.S. Each Turbo consists of two power cars and three intermediate cars. The trainsets have two gas turbine engines and a passenger capacity of 280 seats. Maximum speed for the trains is 125 mph but AMTRAK would need special permission from FRA to run them at capacity. The trains have been leased with options to buy.

BARNUM SWORN IN. . . Former DOT General Counsel, John W. Barnum, has been sworn in as the Department's Under Secretary. A native of New York City, the new Under Secretary is a graduate of Yale University and Yale Law School. Prior to joining the Department, he was a partner in the New York law firm of Cravath, Swaine & Moore, with which he was associated from 1957 until he joined the Department in 1971.

HIGHLINERS NOT IN COMPLIANCE. . . Extensive investigation of the Illinois Central Gulf Highliner cars following a commuter train collision in Chicago last October has uncovered several areas of non-compliance with FRA regulations. These are: (1) The collision post is not attached to the top of the underframe; (2) All of the reinforcements do not have full shear value for a distance of 18" up from the underframe connection; and (3) The underframe attachment is insufficient to develop the full shear value of the member. The ICG is currently working on plans for bringing the Highliner cars into compliance.

EN MEMORIUM. . . Walter B. Bobkoski, Regional Supervisor S&TC, Region 5, died July 21, and services were held July 23. He has been buried at Rosehill Cemetary in Fort Worth, Texas. Sympathy cards may be sent to Mrs. Bobkoski at 1553 Lynnhaven Road, Fort Worth 76103.

AGNES FUNDS APPROVED. . . Administrator Ingram has approved some \$27 million in loans to pay for damages incurred in last summer's tropical storm Agnes. Four railroads in the Northeast applied for loans, which were approved as follows: Penn Central, \$17,283,504; Lehigh Valley, \$4,235,714; Erie-Lackawanna, \$3,978,000; and the Reading, \$1,557,735. The funds have been made available under the Emergency Rail Facilities Restoration Act of 1972.

MOTOR-VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS UP. . . The Federal Highway Administration reports that motor-vehicle registrations were over 118 million in calendar year 1972, which is 5,629,963 higher than the 1971 figure. The 1972 registration total includes 96,948,813 automobiles, 407,706 buses and 21,261,643 trucks. The percentage increases over 1971 are 4.5 for automobiles, 2.6 for buses, and 7.2 for trucks.

BID FOR ARR RECEIVED. . . As we all know, the Government has expressed interest in selling the Alaska Railroad. The response has been something less than overwhelming, but the Railroad did receive a nibble recently. It reads as follows: "I would like to put in my bid for the Alaskan Railroad. My bid consists of four good holstein heifers."