

# Railroads

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dire predictions of the railroad men who addressed the group.

Penn Central's J. R. Sullivan said that unless the Penn Central gets government money by October 1, they will begin to shut down by October 31. "The last road train will travel Pennsy lines on November 15," Sullivan said. "By December 1, we will have to drop 73,000 people from the payroll. And by January 1, our work force will have been reduced to 2500 custodial workers."

Sullivan lay much of the blame for the railroads' troubles at the feet of the government. "Since World War II, the government has poured over \$300 billion worth of tax revenues into competing modes of transportation. They've built the interstate highway system, they've built airports, they've dredged the St. Lawrence Seaway and other bodies of water, but they haven't helped the railroads at all.

"By subsidizing competing modes, they've eliminated a lot of the business that made railroads

profitable," Sullivan continued. "And when they took away that business, they made it impossible for us to support unprofitable business, such as passenger runs and service to marginal branch lines."

According to Sullivan, four steps need to be taken in order to save rail transport in the Northeast. They are:

1. Allow the railroads to eliminate money-losing lines. The Penn Central operates 20,000 miles of lines, but 80 percent of the revenues come from 11,000 of those miles. The company has applied to the ICC for permission to discontinue service on 3500 miles of lines, and been granted approval to abandon 1400 miles.

2. The railroads need to get full compensation for money-losing passenger service. Pennsy passenger runs result in a \$54 million annual loss.

3. Reduce the size of train crews. Penn Central would like to see freight crews reduced to one conductor, a brakeman and an engineer.

4. Help the railroads develop an increasing volume of business.

C. P. O'Rourke said his com-

pany, the Lehigh Valley Railroad, is losing money to the tune of \$800,000 a month, and it can't keep up for very long. The company is now operating in bankruptcy, and like the Penn Central, has asked the courts for permission to cease operations sometime after October 1.

Richard H. George spoke for the one railroad represented which is not operating under bankruptcy laws, the Delaware and Hudson. "We have endured because of competition," George told the group. "We go after your business. We fight for it. Competition has been a catalyst that has helped our company stay alive."

But even George said that D&H branch lines may be abandoned unless something is done to aid the Northeast rail system. Many feed dealers, if not most of them, are located along branch lines in rural areas. Shutting down branches would mean dealers would have to move operations to main line locations, or else have all their feed ingredients trucked in.

One interesting point brought up at the meeting was that a locomotive can generate 212 ton-miles per gallon of fuel, while a truck gets only 65 ton-miles per gallon. One ton-mile is the ability to move one ton of freight over a distance of one mile.

M. E. Forst, representing the Commonwealth, said that one complicating aspect of the railroads' problems was that the companies' creditors had to be protected at the same time that the public's best interests had to be observed. In bankruptcy proceedings, the creditors' interests take precedence over everything else.

In summing up the meeting, chairman Smith pointed out that the railroads' problems weren't just the problems of the rail companies. The feed industry, and all of agriculture, has a vital stake in the future of rail transport, he commented, and the only way to fight for a strong rail

# Trends

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this year, with what turns out to be an added bonus - low moisture grain. With moisture levels for harvested grain running at 7 to 8 percent, the need for drying was greatly reduced. There were some earlier fears there wouldn't be enough fuel for drying, which could have meant a lot of spoiled grain. Maybe they can save that fuel for the corn and soybeans. Both crops are expected to be up over last year. In Pennsylvania, small grain harvests are predicted up 9 percent over 1972.

## Phase 4 Fiasco

Hardly anyone is pleased with the administration's attempts to control the economy. Prices for farm products are at historic highs, and there is some speculation that present conditions could lead to a series of boom-or-bust cycles that would hurt a lot of farmers and farm businesses. One thing working against this is the increasing world-wide demand for food, and increasing incomes overseas which will let people buy more American food. Even so, some experts are predicting a recession by the middle of 1974. Consumers are notably disaffected with Washington's attempts to control food prices. One consumer group has called for a one-day boycott of all food products, to "teach the government a lesson". Maybe they could tape their stomach rumbles.

## Maybe Air Conditioned Barns?

"A lot of Lancaster County barns are going to get painted this year," we were told by one farmer. "This is the first year in a long while that a lot of us will be able to afford paint." If farm prices keep going up, we may see barns with steel siding, shake roofs and patios before too long.

## Farm Calendar

**Saturday, July 28**  
6:15 p.m. - Garden Spot Young Farmers Summer Picnic, Blue Ball Elementary School. Lancaster County Farmers Association Picnic, Lampeter Fairgrounds.

**Sunday, July 29**  
12:30 p.m. - Ephrata Young

system in the Northeast is to let the people in Washington know that the plight of the railroads is a matter of concern to industry and the public at large.

Farmer Picnic, Ephrata Community Park.  
**Monday, July 30**  
Goshen Country Fair, West Chester, July 30 - August 4.  
**Tuesday, July 31**  
Lancaster County FFA Hog Show and Sale, Lancaster Stock Yards; 8 a.m., Show, 1:30 p.m., Sale.  
9:30 - 11:30 a.m. - Food Preservation meeting, Canning, Chester County Housing Authority, 222 N. Church St., West Chester.  
**Wednesday, August 1**  
7:30 p.m. - Lancaster County Conservation District meeting, Farm and Home Center.  
Berks County FFA Swine Show and Sale, Leesport Market and Auction.  
**Thursday, August 2**  
Allentown Fair, August 2 - 11.  
**Friday, August 3**  
Yorkshire Show and Sale, Farm Show Building, Harrisburg; 1 p.m. - Show, 6:30 p.m. - Sale.  
**Saturday, August 4**  
Twin Valley FFA Barbecue, Kurtz' Fishing Lakes.



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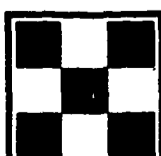
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