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Merger of the Great Northern Railroad and the Northern Pacific Railroad

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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Senate

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1964

RECOMMENDATION BY ICC EXAMINER OF CONSOLIDATION OF FIVE MAJOR RAILROADS IN THE NORTHWEST

Mr. MANSFIELD. Mr. President, on September 2, 1964, I addressed a letter to Hon. Abe McGregor Goff, Chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission, with reference to the recommendation by one of the Commission's examiners of the merger of the Great Northern Railway and the Northern Pacific Railroad. If this merger shall be effectuated, it will result in a monopolistic condition as well as reduced service in Montana.

I ask unanimous consent that my letter and the letter I received from Mr. Howard Freas, Acting Chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission, in which he states that all parties will be heard before the merger is consummated—I hope it will not be consummated—may be printed at this point in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the correspondence was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

SEPTEMBER 2, 1964.

Mr. ABE MCGREGOR GOFF,
Chairman, Interstate Commerce Commission,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR Mr. CHAIRMAN: The recent recommendation issued by ICC examiner, Robert H. Murphy, supporting the consolidation of five major railroads in the Northwest was a major blow to the State of Montana and its residents. This merger which would involve 25,000 miles of railroad line including the Great Northern and Northern Pacific Railroads will in my estimation, contribute to a monopolistic condition, as well as to a reduced service to these areas.

I wish to urge as strongly as possible that the Commission review the examiner's recommendation with great care and deliberation. I realize that this recommendation is preliminary in nature, and it is important that all interested parties be given an opportunity to refute the plan as proposed by the examiner. One of the most difficult problems that confront States like Montana is a tendency on the part of public transportation to reduce rather than to develop and improve adequate transportation facilities. I am well aware of conditions such as sparse population and long distances.

As stated on previous occasions, I deplore the tendency on the part of a segment of our transportation industry to retreat rather than to advance and develop services for the

public. I have seen nothing to indicate that these particular railroads are in any serious financial plight. Recently when the Milwaukee Railroad was granted permission to discontinue passenger train service through Montana, it was a matter of great concern and inconvenience. Should this merger be approved, it would again place the Milwaukee Railroad in an undesirable competitive position.

In conclusion, I ask that the Commission review this situation carefully keeping in mind precedents that would be established by such a merger and the great inconvenience it will create for the public it is supposed to serve.

With best personal wishes, I am,
Sincerely yours,

MIKE MANSFIELD.

INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION,
Washington, D.C., September 4, 1964.

HON. MIKE MANSFIELD,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR SENATOR MANSFIELD: In the absence of Chairman Goff, I am replying to your letter of September 2, 1964, regarding the report and recommended order of Examiner Robert H. Murphy, in which he recommended approval, subject to various conditions, of the transactions in Finance Docket No. 21478, Great Northern Pacific & Burlington Lines, Inc., Merger, Etc.—Great Northern Railway Co., et al. You strongly urge that the Commission review the examiner's recommendation with great care and deliberation before a decision in the matter is reached. You state that while the examiner's recommendation is preliminary in nature, it is of the utmost importance that all interested parties be given an opportunity to reject the plan as proposed by the examiner.

As you know, any party to the proceeding may file exceptions to the examiner's report within 30 days from the date of service of that report. While exceptions are due on September 23, 1964, it is likely that interested parties will request an extension of time in which to file such exceptions. In disposing of such requests, if made, the Commission will consider the magnitude of the proceeding. Upon the filing of such exceptions, the parties will then have an opportunity to file replies thereto. Since these applications are of tremendous importance to the transportation industry, and particularly, to the public served by these carriers, the entire Commission may hear the parties to the proceeding in oral argument at sometime after all the pleadings have been filed.

You may be assured that the Commission will, with the utmost care, consider the con-

tentions of all parties to the proceeding before a decision in this matter is reached.

Sincerely yours,

HOWARD FREAS,
Acting Chairman.