

I don't know that you have that information. Maybe we ought to get somebody from the Post Office Department up here to testify about it. I thought I would ask you what you happen to know about it.

Mr. TIERNEY. First of all, Mr. Kornegay, I don't think I am in a position really to give an answer to that question. In some areas, as I understand it, the Post Office Department has changed their method of operation. This has contributed to the removal of many of the RPO cars. That is a business decision, and the Commission isn't disputing a decision on that basis.

I don't want to create the impression that we are being critical of the Post Office in these instances. We don't have full information as to which came first; namely, whether the train discontinuances have forced the Post Office Department to other areas for transportation, or whether the removal of the mail contracts has caused the discontinuances. I think it is just a combination of both.

Mr. KORNEGAY. In some instances trains were discontinued as a result of the discontinuance of the mail service on the trains, and then the reverse situation has also taken place.

Mr. TIERNEY. Yes, sir. I think so.

Mr. KORNEGAY. I am no expert, either. We have Members who serve on that committee who can talk about this far more intelligently than I can. But judging by the mail from my constituents, there seems to be a feeling that the mail service has deteriorated since they discontinued the use of a lot of the RPO's.

In other words, there is much slower delivery now than there was when mail was worked on the train and transported by the train. That is a question I should address to another witness, and not you. But I did want the opportunity to get by without mentioning it.

What do you see in the future, and you are an expert in this area, for rail passenger transportation in this country? Is it a thing that is past now?

Mr. TIERNEY. As far as the long-distance transcontinental trains are concerned, I think the future is quite bleak. We will probably move to an era of the shorter, intercity trains.

There has not been the public support or use of those longer transcontinental trains which would justify them economically. Major inroads have been made by the automobile and the airplane. There are some people who may differ with me, but that is my opinion.

Mr. KORNEGAY. But you do have some degree of confidence that there is some future for short-haul trains?

Mr. TIERNEY. Absolutely, and I think we should have them. In future years, we will have to have this type of essential passenger service.

Mr. KORNEGAY. I quite agree with you. I have been preaching that for some time now; that we are missing the boat by not updating and upgrading rail service in the country. I think on shorter hauls the people would support it if they would get the service that they feel they are entitled to.

Thank you very much.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. KORNEGAY. Yes, I will be happy to yield.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Having been a member of the Post Office Committee now for 12 years, I have been fighting this battle to keep the RPO's on, because there is absolutely, in my opinion and in the opinion of many experts, no substitute for en route distribution of