DIFFICULTY OF DEADHEADING METROLINER INTO WASHINGTON

Two metroliner cars were brought to Union Station, Washington, February 8 and were open to the public for inspection. Special invitations were also sent to Members of Congress. The cars were not operated on their own power as they had not been tested and were there for display purposes only.

AT WHAT SPEEDS SHOULD HIGH-SPEED TRAINS HAVE SEAT BELTS?

The nature of train operation is such that violent decelerations are extremely rare. It is practically impossible to brake a train at more than 0.2g and with automatic train controls the probability of collision is very low. Grade crossing collisions seldom result in injury on board the train.

This matter has been discussed with personnel of the National Highway Safety Bureau. The present plans for new bus safety standards calls for no passenger seat belts, although a seat belt for the driver may be required.

The high seat backs in the demonstration cars and the resilient plastic backs will prevent the passenger from being thrown against sharp objects.

In the specifications for the demonstration cars, the question of seat belts was considered. The decision not to include them was based upon the estimate of the probability of accidents in which seat belts could prevent injury.

EASILY ACCESSIBLE EMERGENCY EXITS ON PASSENGER CARS

A recent comment on passenger train emergency exits is in the report of the National Transportation Safety Board which was released on March 7, 1968. It concerned a Boston & Maine passenger car which collided with a fuel oil truck at an Everett, Mass., grade crossing. The collision resulted in the death of 11 of the 28 passengers and two of the three crewmen.

Smoke and heat from the burning interior of the forward coach section caused the passengers to seek escape through the doorway at the rear end of the train. The doorway was jammed with passengers which prevented the door from opening inward.

The sealed double-pane windows could not be broken and by the time help arrived most of the people had been overcome by heat and smoke inhalation.

Authority for the design of passenger cars does not fall within the province of our regulations. This, however, would change if the railroad safety bill of 1968, H.R. 16980, were passed.

FIRE RETARDATION ON METROLINERS

Re fire resistance of interior construction and furnishings, "Metroliners."

(*a*) The wall panels are similar to those used in Budd built MU cars recently put in service on Penn Central and Reading. The material is known as Melamine, which actually melts rather than burn, when subjected to intense heat.

(*b*) The specs for the cars (section S3.10) states as follows:

(1) Seat and back cushions shall be of foam material having a fire resistance equal or superior to that in class I synthetic foam materials as described in military specification MIL–R–20092–E.

(2) Seat covering shall have a fire retarding treatment.

Mr. THOMPSON. Is your Department in any way involved in rapid transit planning?

Mr. LANG. No, sir; not directly.

Mr. THOMPSON. Strictly high-speed rail between major cities?

Mr. LANG. Intercity service.

Secretary BOYD. We will be taking over the urban mass transit functions, which now are lying in HUD, on the 1st of July. We have no organization at the present time to deal with that. The reorganization plan provides for the establishment of an Administrator for Urban Mass Transit, who will work on a horizontal coordination with Mr. Lang.

Mr. BROOKS. Thank you very much.

E. PROGRAM CATEGORY 5—ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Mr. Secretary, could we hear from the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation on exhibit O?

(Exhibit O follows:)