

31/10/77

Editor of Mercury;

Recently I returned from several months in USA. I made frequent use of Chicago and Northwestern Railway. The suburban service on Wisconsin division extends 32 miles to Barrington. On weekdays there are 25 trains each way. Some have eleven coaches. Most do the run in less than an hour including several stops.

The trains and stations are clean and comfortable. The personnel is courteous, clean and nicely attired. Tickets are rather expensive but far less than private transport. This railway has no shares on public market and no bonds outstanding. The only current obligations are to equipment trusts for new rolling stock. It is a large system having many thousand employees, over three thousand miles of track, hundred of locomotives and thousands of cars both freight and passenger. All stations and new rolling stock have a fine emblem which proudly proclaims "Northwestern - Employee Owned." Over past decade the employees have dug in to their pockets and gradually bought up the railway. Apparently, pride of ownership does wonders for any enterprise from a small cottage to a vast empire.

Perhaps the best long term solution for TGR is to have employees buy the operation and gradually get control. They should be able to run it better than bankers and politicians. Also their job security will depend on their own efforts.

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