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I am a 10 year Conductor at BNSF Vancouver WA. I listened to the hearings intently and now that the dust has settled I feel obligated to report what I am finding post hearings.

Trip optimizer and Throttle notch restrictions continue on the Fallbridge sub division single main track Pasco to Vancouver. On May 6th I brought a mixed freight train home from Pasco, we had 4 locomotives, power restrictions called for 1 unit online and throttle Notch 7. The traffic was light but despite this our trip took 10 hours, our max speed achieved was limited 40 mph with a track speed of 55 mph possible so we were running 15 mph below possible speed. $10 \text{ hours} \times 15 = 150 \text{ miles}$ so we could have been home in 6 hrs and back on the home board 4 hours earlier. This is terrible for the customer and terrible crew management. Trip Optimizer is integrated with Trip Planner which is an automated Dispatching system, since it's advent we have seen out trip time and dog catches increase dramatically. We used to make the trip in around 7 to 9 hrs now it is nearly always 12 hrs and dog catches have also increased alongside. The Railroad will tell you that they have removed restrictions on grain and coal but that is smoke and mirrors because they continue to run them behind trains with restrictions and never let them pass the slower trains, so unless ALL trains have the restrictions removed on single track mainline, it is a pointless exercise. Matt Garland, when pressed on this issue, used a facetious analogy by saying what is the point of running fast up to a red signal then waiting, the point is that if trains in both directions were running faster then the meeting point would be at a different place which would be more expeditious, we know because we used to do it. Remedy, temporarily suspend Trip Optimizer and Trip Planner and let the Engineers and Train Dispatchers do their job, they are very good at it. These 2 new pieces of technology are designed to do one thing only and that is lower the operating ratio by using less fuel. I maintain that this technology can be reprogrammed with an algorithm that improves main track velocity but only if power restrictions are lifted.

Another example of terrible manpower utilisation is the amount of time we spend in the hotel, often 24 hrs or more and most of the time the boards at the home terminal are skeletal while the away terminal boards are fat. The remedy is greater use of deadheads home, automatic deadheads at 16 hrs would be a better use of manpower, there is absolutely no point in having people in the hotel for 24 hrs when they are desperately needed at home.

Locomotive shortages continue. On May 7th a yard crew was instructed to move an empty Oil train, which was ready to begin it's journey back to the oilfields, from Willbridge yard in Portland to a siding off the main and then I was told to strip the power off it for another train, this empty sat for 48hrs before getting power. On top of that this practice artificially improves the railroads Dwell time figures because it shows departed, this is why 1st mile last mile is Crucial.

In his testimony Garland told two absolute bare faced whoppers. Firstly that 90% of train crews have more than 24 hrs off between trips. I'm sure that the board realizes the absurdity of this

claim, logic dictates that if this were true then BNSF would not have a man power problem because all of these so called 24 hrs off crews would be available for work at 10 hrs from off duty time but they are not being called until 24 hrs?

Secondly he stated that only 300 people had resigned since Hi Viz, this is a preposterous statement and to use his own words "Rhetoric". You are in possession of the accurate figures supplied to you by the Unions.

Finally I would like to briefly address recruiting and man power retention because these go hand in hand. After training new hires are NOT proficient railroaders and have the minimum skeletal knowledge of how to do this job. Railroading is a craft and the FRA once stated that it considers it to take 4 years to become a proficient railroader. When they graduate they learn the craft from those of us who have attained this proficiency. Which follows on to my next point, BNSF is bleeding these mid career railroaders at a record and alarming rate, I must inform you that almost every Engineer I work with under 40 yrs of age has multiple job applications in.

BNSF has done zero triage to address this problem. Remedy, in conjunction with Labor reexamine the draconian Hi Viz attendance policy and come up with something both sides can live with. After 2.5 years without a pay raise the company should make it an immediate and urgent priority to give it's employees a pay raise that at the minimum keeps up with inflation.

Lastly the carriers labor relations policies are from the last century, the carriers have used the Railway Labor Act as a shield to unilaterally behave in a dictatorial manner that has created the most toxic work atmosphere I have ever encountered and I'm 67 yrs old so I have a little bit if experience to make that judgement.

These 3 things would go a long way to stem the flow of resignations.

Finally, Mr. Oberman told the railroads that they need to pivot. They need to shift from putting the shareholders as their number one priority and shift priorities to their customers and employees even if this means they take a temporary financial hit.

Mr. Oberman also told them that he believed that they possessed the skills to make this happen, unfortunately I disagree. Few in this generation of railroad management have ever been boots on the ground, they have no experience of managing in a competitive environment and because of their monopoly the railroad makes profit despite what management do

Please be careful in your future considerations. Heed my warning that these people are not honest brokers. They will play the smoke and mirrors game with their required reports to you. They fear regulation because it will impact their record profit and sell their souls to avoid it.

Regards

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