

# Nationwide Rail Strike Is Averted By Accord; Mail May Be Crippled

WASHINGTON, July 18.—(AP)—Negotiators for the nation's railroads and the Brotherhood of Railway Clerks reached tentative agreement on a new three-year contract Friday, averting a threatened nationwide strike.

However, the possibility of a second crippling strike remained alive as negotiations between the Postal Service and unions representing 600,000 workers continued. The contract between those two sides expires at midnight Sunday and two of the unions are under a "no contract, no work" mandate from their memberships.

The Postal Service completed a contingency plan Friday which included use of federal troops to help move the mails in the event of a strike, but a top postal union leader said chances of a nationwide walkout have dropped to less than 10 per cent.

"I would expect that by Sunday night we'd come close enough to an agreement to extend for a week or so," said Francis J. ... president of the 250,000-member ... Postal Workers Union, largest ... involved in the talks.

The rail agreement basically is ... approved earlier by seven ... unions providing wage and ... of 41 per cent over 3 ... the new pact includes ... interest to the clerks' ... additional cost of living ... a satisfactory meth ... "C. L. Dennis, ...

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for about a week while details of a new pact are settled.

"Today for the first time things started moving at the bargaining table," Filbey said, referring to an economic offer made by the Postal Service. "We were unhappy with their offer and we put our economic package on the bargaining table."

Filbey commented after meeting with the national executive board of his union. Meanwhile, negotiations between the Postal Service and the four unions continued with the help of federal mediators.

"The military has been alerted," said Asst. Postmaster General James Byrne. He said this was part of the precautions taken to deal with either a nationwide walkout or scattered wildcat strikes Monday.

Unions representing letter carriers and

postal clerks are under a "no-contract, no-work" mandate from their memberships. And union locals in several major cities, including New York, Philadelphia and Chicago, reportedly have threatened slow-downs this weekend and wildcat strikes Monday unless a tentative settlement is concluded.

Postal officials have taken a number of steps to prepare for a walkout in addition to alerting the military. Major mailers have been told what to do in event of a strike. A spokesman said regulations would be waived so that private firms could handle first-class mail.

The Postal Service handles about 300 million pieces of mail each day, more than half of which is first-class. Postal workers are prohibited by law from striking, but there was a wildcat walkout by some workers in 1970 which brought no disciplinary action.

## 'Slurry Wall' Study On Park Tunnel OK'd

By MORRIS CUNNINGHAM  
From The Commercial Appeal  
Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON, July 18. — Tennessee and federal highway officials agreed here Friday to push forward with a study of the feasibility of using the slurry wall method of building a cut-and-cover tunnel to carry Interstate 40 under Overton Park in Memphis.

The study, to begin by Aug. 1, is to be completed within 10 weeks, William Goodwin, deputy Tennessee commissioner of transportation, said after a meeting with U.S. Transportation Secretary William T. Coleman Jr.

The Federal Highway Administration, an agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), will pay for the

study and will employ a private consulting firm to do the work.

"We will cooperate in every way we can," Goodwin said, on behalf of the state department.

If the study results indicate soil conditions are favorable and that the slurry wall method is feasible, the state will then begin preparing plans and specifications, an undertaking a DOT spokesman said probably would take about a year to complete.

Coleman, in proposing a cut-and-cover tunnel for the stalled I-40 park project last April 21, recommended engineers consider the slurry wall construction technique to minimize the disturbance within the park.

He also urged that the tunnel be held to 80 feet in width — 60 feet if possible — but said if this proves unfeasible he will consider a width of as much as 120 feet. The preliminary study will explore the question of width, along with other factors.

Robert Odle, developmental engineer, of the Tennessee Department of Transportation, said a 60-foot width, with northbound and southbound roadways stacked on top of the other, would allow for three lanes each way but would not permit shoulders of the width usually provided on interstate highways.

J. Alan Hanover, a Memphis attorney who has represented the state in the prolonged litigation over the park project, also attended the meeting.

DOT officials, including Dr. Lloyd J. Money and Russell K. McFarland of the Office of Systems Engineering, had anticipated the state would take the initiative on the slurry wall feasibility study following Coleman's April 21 statement. But the results of Friday's meeting suggested the state thought DOT should arrange for the study and also pay for it.

Goodwin said that simultaneously with the DOT study, the state will update its studies of conventional cut-and-cover construction methods.

The slurry wall method, which Money and McFarland hope can hold the cost of a tunnel to around \$80 million, calls for construction of the two main outside walls by digging trenches and filling them with concrete and steel. The process, more common in Europe than in the United States, severely minimizes the necessary width of the construction cut.

Goodwin and Odle said there was no discussion of an elevated structure to carry I-40 along North Parkway, an idea put forward recently by Mayor Wyeth Chandler and Squire William Farris. They said the idea was being examined "internally" within the state department, although it had been considered several years ago and rejected because of esthetic, noise, and air pollution considerations.