

= Timetoget =

Timetoget Bratsbergbanen AS , trading as Timetoget (" the Hourly Train ") , is a defunct railway company that tried to start operating passenger trains on the Bratsberg Line in Norway . The concept was launched in 1998 , and in 1999 an agreement was made with the incumbent , Norwegian State Railways (NSB) , to start operation in 2000 . The founders were Gjermund Jamtveit and Halvor Grene , while NSB owned a third of the company . The company bought three used Y1 railcars from Sweden .

NSB soon bought all the shares of the company , and also made an agreement that operations on the Arendal Line would be taken over by Timetoget . However , the new company tried to take a short @-@ cut in giving engineers only a six @-@ week training program , instead of the usual 18 months . This made NSB want to discontinue operations . They bought out the rest of the shareholders , and liquidated the company . Timetoget never ran anything but trials on the Bratsberg Line .

= = Establishment = =

The company was owned by NSB (34 %) , two individuals from Notodden , Gjermund Jamtveit and Halvor Grene (51 %) , Telemark County Municipality and some municipalities (15 %) . The trains would operate with a one @-@ hour headway , twenty @-@ four hours a day . It was the first private company allowed to operate passenger trains since the amalgamation of operations into the Norwegian State Railways . The concept was based on TIMEkspressen , an hourly coach service between Notodden and Oslo , that was operated by the Jamtveit and Grene @-@ owned Øst @-@ Telemark Automobilselskap . The company bought three used Y1 diesel railcars from SJ of Sweden , despite that the Bratsberg Line is electrified . The trains cost NOK 6 million each , and have a capacity of 70 passengers .

Initial plans called for operations to commence on 1 January 2000 , but this soon proved difficult . In November , NSB paid out the other major shareholders , and were left with an 89 % ownership of the company . The company needed dispensation from the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority to allow temporary employments of engineers . When the company had announced the positions , only one engineer had applied for the twelve jobs . Instead an agreement was made with NSB to rent personnel , thus delaying the start until 3 September . But because the engineers needed to be recertified , the start was delayed again , to 5 November . In the end , Timetoget was forced to recruit and train new drivers . It received criticism for not having as extensive training as NSB , but the company stated that this would not affect safety . The labor union recommended its members not to apply for jobs with Timetoget , since they did not provide a pension agreement , collective bargaining or guarantees to return to NSB , should the concept fail .

In August , twelve engineers were hired on contract with Baneservice , at the time a subsidiary of the Norwegian National Rail Administration . The engineers were subsequently re @-@ certified for the Y1 class , as well as being given a service course . While other engineers in the country are required to take an 18 @-@ month course , Timetoget felt it could meet sufficient safety standards with a six @-@ week course . Arne Wam , chief executive officer of NSB , stated that he could not permit that a subsidiary ignore safety in such a way , and announced he would stop operations .

In August 2000 , Timetoget offered Telemark County Municipality to take over the transport of school children between Drangedal Station and Nordagutu Station . In September , the company also started negotiations with NSB to take over services on the Arendal Line , but it was stated that this was not excepted by NSB .

= = Disestablishment = =

The first trial with the Y1 railcars was performed on 1 August 2000 . The one unit was not able to complete the route due to technical problems , but the other train was able to . Terje Bulling , the CEO of Timetoget , stated that he was aiming for 140 @,@ 000 passengers in 2001 , but was

worried because NSB , due to lack of engineers , was driving passengers with by taxi between Notodden Station and Nordagutu . On 5 October , Vidar Østreng , vice president in NSB and chairman of Timetoget , announced that NSB , due to lack of engineers , would have to reduce the production of train services . He indicated that the least profitable routes , including the Bratsberg Line , would be closed . At the same time , NSB said one possibility could be that they sold their 89 % stake in the company , thereby bypassing NSB 's rules for engineer training . Five days later , the engineers in NSB stated that they would not operate trains between Larvik Station and Skien , and Kongsberg Station and Bø Station , if Timetoget was allowed to operate . These sections of the Vestfold Line and Sørlandet Line , respectively , are shared with the Bratsberg Line . The engineers considered lack of sufficient training such a safety risk that it would not be secure to operate on the lines . At the same time , NSB announced that they would stop operating trains on the Bratsberg Line from 20 October .

Timetoget started negotiations with the Swedish company BK Tåg to try to establish a cooperation that would allow Swedish engineers to be used . At the same time , the minority shareholders , who owned 11 % of the company , demanded that they could take over NSB 's shares without compensation , and that all debt to NSB be deleted . Arne Wam responded by stating that NSB wanted to liquidate the company . NSB therefore offered to purchase all shares in the company at par value , despite the company not having any net assets .

By 2 November , all owners , except the two environmental organizations the Norwegian Society for the Conservation of Nature and Nature and Youth , had sold their shares to NSB . The two environmental organizations owned 7 of 40 @,@ 000 shares of the company . At the general meeting the same day , the company was liquidated , even though the two organizations opposed . Prior to the meeting , the other minority owners had held a tactics meeting to discuss what to do . Several municipalities were concerned that they would lose even more money if they did not sell . The other minority owners agreed to cover the costs of the two environmental organizations , and let them make the principal stand to oppose the liquidation .

= = Aftermath = =

By 14 November , the concept had been approved by the Norwegian Railway Inspectorate . Following the announcement , Wam stated that NSB would continue to operate the service , and use the Timetoget concept . An internal document the newspaper Varden received access to showed that NSB needed to calm down the heated discussions with the labor unions , and that their negativity to Timetoget was a tactical move to satisfy the labor unions . Minister of Transport , Terje Moe Gustavsen from the Labour Party , stated in a meeting with two parliamentarians from Telemark , that he would allow a new private company , without NSB ownership , to operate the line .

In January 2001 , Connex Norge offered to purchase Timetoget from NSB , and start operations . However , by February , Connex had changed their mind , and no longer wanted to purchase the company . Terje Bulling admitted that Timetoget had a very good agreement for operating the Arendal Line , and that a fourth Y1 railcar had been bought from Sweden for this route . However , when NSB had tried to sell Timetoget , this agreement was not part of the estate . By April , NSB estimated that they had lost NOK 10 million on their engagement in Timetoget . However , they had three Y1 trains , and would be able to start using them on the Bratsberg Line and the Arendal Line .