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On Sept. 12, despite government threats of sanctions, railway engineers employed by the state-owned Ferrocarriles Argentinos (FA) commenced a 48-hour work stoppage to demand salary hikes. The strike was organized by the engineers' union, La Fraternidad. The railway traffic control employees' union, the Argentine Association of Railway Signalpersons (Asociacion de Senaleros Ferroviarios Argentinos-ASFA) carried out partial work stoppages on Sept. 14-15. On Sept. 14, Labor Minister Jorge Triaca said he had requested that the Justice Ministry withdraw the ASFA's legal status. Vice President Eduardo Duhalde told reporters that it was "possible" the FA would dismiss members of the ASFA. Negotiations between the two unions and the government began Sept. 18. On the same day, both unions announced partial work stoppages for Sept. 20-21. Labor Minister Triaca told reporters that he had agreed to meet with representatives of the engineers' union, but not the ASFA. The railway workers are demanding reopening of salary negotiations in an effort to bring real wages to second quarter levels. According to a study by an Argentine business school (Universidad Argentina de la Empresa-UADE), cited by the railroad employee unions, average real wages dropped 28% in August. The study said that an average 120% increase would be necessary to bring Argentine workers' wages up to last year's average in real terms. (Basic data from Notimex, 09/14/89, 09/18/89, 09/20/89)

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