



The Train Sheet

Preserving "The Feather River Route"

NOVEMBER DECEMBER

ISSUE No. 28

\$1.50



OUR ALCO RS-3 DOING WHAT AN ALCO DOES BEST....MAKING SMOKE.....



Feather River Rail Society

Preserving "The Feather River Route"

The FRRS, a tax exempt public benefit California Corporation, is the HISTORICAL SOCIETY for the WESTERN PACIFIC RAILROAD and operates the PORTOLA RAILROAD MUSEUM in Portola, Calif.

Formed in February, 1983 with the purpose of preserving railroad history in general and Western Pacific Railroad history in particular. With 22 locomotives, 7 cabooses and over 45 different types of equipment at the Portola Museum the FRRS is a outstanding society. Steam service is provided by the Feather River Short Line Railroad.

The WP LIVES in Portola.....

Single membership dues are \$15.00 per calendar year, and Life memberships are \$300.00

Our Mailing address is.....

FRRS POST OFFICE BOX 8 PORTOLA CALIF 96122

Our information phone number is.....

916-832-4131 or call 916-832-4737

"THE TRAIN SHEET" is edited by John J Ryczkowski and assisted by Mary S Ryczkowski.

Articles/Info please write, The TRAIN SHEET

Post Office Box 1663, Sparks, Nevada 89432

The Feather River Rail Society is not supported by, nor affiliated in any way, with the Western Pacific Railroad.....

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

by Norm Holmes

1987 has been a very good year for the Portola Railroad Museum and our Rail Society. We have acquired four cars and a caboose and have two more cabooses (caboose?) on lease. The Silver Lady 805A has returned, Alco FA 604, and Milwaukee GE U25B arrived and WP's first diesel was donated. We bought a 20 ton mobile crane and lots of smaller items to repair and restore our collection. Feather River Short Line brought the former Clover Valley steamer back to life after 25 years of inactivity. A considerable amount of track construction was completed and several diesel locomotives were made operational. Most importantly, all work and operations were done safely.

Next year we will proceed with our painting program, hopefully start construction on our WP depot and complete the rip track storage yard. There are many exciting things happening in Portola, hope you will stick with us and help in any way you can.

May you all have a safe and happy Holiday Season.

MEMBERSHIP

It's that time of year again for all members to renew. We would like to have all of you with us this time next year.....

Some changes in membership are starting in 1988 the first is types of memberships.....

- Associate @ \$15
- Active @ \$25
- Family @ \$30
- Life @ \$300



member



Tourist Railway Association INC.

Board of Directors

President.....Norman Holmes

Secretary.....Wayne Monger

Treasurer.....John Marvin

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Jim Ley

THE TRAIN SHEET

Volume No. 5 No. 6 Issue No. 28

1000 issues printed

And the second is we are dropping the calendar-year system.

**PLEASE RENEW TODAY
SEE YOU IN PORTOLA**

From the Membership Officer-

The Board of Directors has decided to install a periodic membership renewal system in place of the calendar-year system now in use. Implementation of the new system may raise some questions, and I'll try to anticipate and answer them in this description of the new arrangement, which was effective beginning with renewals due in October of 1987.

We've set up a bi-monthly renewal schedule which will coincide roughly with issues of The Train Sheet. Members who originally joined the Society in January and February will be assigned a renewal month

of February. Members who joined in March and April will renew in April of succeeding years, and so on. In a few cases, the membership card file does not indicate the month of original membership, and these members will renew in December. Renewal notices will be sent at the beginning of the two-month period in which they're due, and memberships will lapse if renewals are not paid within four months after the renewal month. People who originally joined in July and August, then, will have a renewal month of August, will get a renewal notice in July, and will be dropped at the end of December.

Some people will be a little surprised. One person, for instance, originally joined in November of 1984, and was carried as a member starting in 1985. Due to a mixup in renewal notices and maybe a little procrastination, this person paid his 1987 dues in September of '87. In accordance with the way we've set up the renewal system, he will be assigned a renewal month of December, is paid through 1987, and was sent a renewal notice in November, only 2 months after he paid last time. The net result, however, will be that he will have gotten a full year's membership for a year's dues over the long run.

Your mailing label will show the month and year your membership expires, except for dual memberships where both the husband and the wife belong. For economy, we do not send a separate Train Sheet to the second member.

I'll be happy to respond to anyone who still has questions about the new system. I'd also like to ask everyone to check the mailing label on this Train Sheet for errors or omissions. Thank you.

Joe Way

AT THE MUSEUM

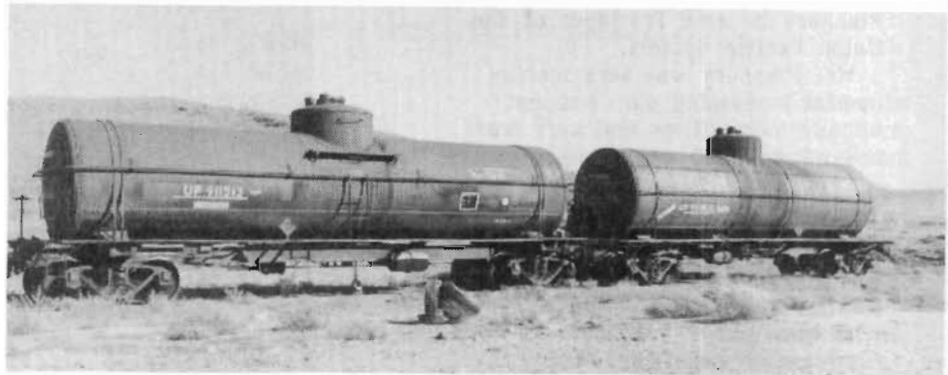
A belated thanks is due Gordon Beatie and Tenco Tractor Co. in Grass Valley for the generous donation of the use of his truck to haul a set of batteries from Richmond and to transport our fork lift truck from Sacramento to our museum. Doug Jensen, who drove the truck, reminded us of the oversight.

Every once in awhile someone will show up at the museum looking for something to work on around the museum. Frank Beavers was interested in helping sort through our accumulation of paper items stored in a box car. He sorted and boxed books and assort-

ed items for two days. Dan Roberts made several visits to the museum recently helping with various projects. Bruce Cooper installed spacers on the restroom dividers to allow more space in the stalls. Other "regulars" participated in many other small projects of which there is no shortage. Thanks to everyone.

For a last minute Christmas gift idea, a membership in the FRRS for one of your friends who likes trains would be nice.

On December 19, we will operate our second annual Santa Train. Santa will be on the train from 12 to 2 pm with free rides for everyone.



EQUIPMENT ACQUISITIONS

Union Pacific donated two 12,000 gal. tank cars to the Chilcoot Volunteer Fire Dept. for water storage. The Fire Dept. had no need for the trucks or the frames so we made a deal: We would lift the tanks from the frames with our Little Giant crane in exchange for the frames and trucks. When they prepare a permanent location for them, we will lift them in place. This arrangement helps them and we gain some useable items.

On Nov. 10 Jim Ley drove the crane the 20 miles to Chilcoot and Norm Holmes brought the rigging in his pick up. Dean Hill, Hap Manitt, and Hank Stiles helped in the work. The tanks were set on the ground, one end at a time because of their weight and bulk.

This was the first real test of our mobile crane and it performed admirably. The tank cars are UP 909600 and 911513, both built in 1937.

SALES DEPARTMENT

by Chris Skow

Our new 1988 catalog of merchandise was sent out to all museum members in November. If you have not received it by now, or would like an extra one to pass along to someone else please let us know.

Members will receive a 5% discount upon request when ordering from the catalog. As you can see from our catalog, most all the merchandise is already marked at discount. You can really save by buying from us.

I want to thank everyone that has helped out in 1987 at the gift shop, the many railroad trade shows, catalog work, and any projects within the sales department. Without your help this year many of these things would not have been accomplished.

1987 has been the best year yet for sales. Let's make 1988 another banner year.

A new item in the Gift Shop....
FRRS Museum post cards in color.
6946 and Business 105
6946 and 921 side by side
608, SN caboose and train on balloon.
They are 20¢ each or 6 for a \$1.00

MR. FLANNERY RETIRES

Union Pacific President R.G. "Mike" Flannery retired October 1, 1987. Mr. Flannery's railroad career began with the New York Central in 1947, starting in the engineering department. He advanced to Trainmaster, Superintendent, General Manager, and Vice-President, Systems Development. From 1968 to 1971 he was Vice-President, Systems Development, and Vice-President, Operations for Penn-Central.

In 1971 he became Executive Vice-President of Western Pacific, then moved into the position of President and Chief Executive Officer until 1982. From 1982 to 1983 he was President and Chief Executive Officer of Missouri Pacific. After the merger of MP and UP and acquisition of WP, Mr. Flannery became President of the Union Pacific System.

Mr. Flannery was very instrumental in helping our museum acquire locomotives and cars from the WP and UP; we are very grateful for his assistance. Mr. and

Mrs. Flannery have property in the Portola area and are frequent visitors to our museum. We congratulate him on his retirement and wish him many happy years.

Mike Flannery with Hap Manitt on the rear step of the "Feather River" on his last trip thru Portola.....



MEMBERS GO TO SO. AMERICA

In August and September I ran a three week railroad tour of Argentina, Chile, and Paraguay which included many miles onboard trains and four of our own charter steam trains. From a group of some 27 persons we ended up with eight members, including myself, on the trip.

We traveled some 700 miles on the charter trains, and had four different steam locomotives on two gauges burning all three modes of fuel; coal, oil, and wood. Everyone had plenty of time in the locomotive cab and even some in the fireman's seat. We ended up running 19 photo run-bys.

The members that were on the tour were: Dave Mitchell, Ken Harrison, Dale Barney, Marty Banks, Pat Duffy, Bill Garner, Julio Pastine, and Chris Skow.

Five tours are scheduled for 1988 and you are all welcome to join in on the fun.

by Chris Skow

WIN A FREE TRIP

As a fund-raising drive for the Depot/Visitors center I am giving away a free trip on my steam railroad tour to Guatemala taking place the second week of December, 1988.

Raffle tickets cost \$2 each or 6 for \$10 and the drawing will be held on September 15, 1988. The winner will receive FREE: Round trip airfare from any point in the United States to Guatemala City, all hotels, all charter steam trains, and all charter bus service between Dec. 8 and 14, 1988.

Charter trains will be pulled with three foot gauge Baldwins with plenty of photo run-bys and cab rides over four spectacular mountain passes on a grade better than 3%.

Please help us out by buying our raffle tickets, who knows, you might be the winner.

FRRS T & SWEAT SHIRTS

With this issue of the Sheet, I've added "Hanes" Sweat shirts to our line of FRRS items. They are in Royal Blue with the FRRS logo on the front and the feathers are in Silver.....In sizes L, XL, and XXL for now, if you would like them in other sizes please advise. If the demand is there I can get any size.

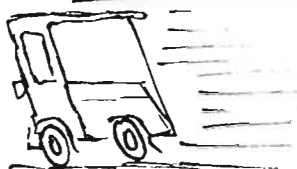
These shirts are a great buy at \$20.00 with \$1.50 for postage.....

Please find an order blank enclosed for your use.....

PROTOTYPE EXCHANGE

Member David Garon, of Montreal Canada would like to exchange photos and data of WP and UP roads along with their connecting roads. An HO modeler he would return data and photos of CP rail, CN and other Eastern Canadian Railway equipment. His address is...

David Garon
2219 Prud'homme Ave Apt 11
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
H4A 3H3



1987 WORLD SPEEDER RACES

August 1st 1987 was the date for the 4th Annual World Motor-Car Races, sponsored by our Society.

As always the first weekend of August motor-car operators head to Portola for "speeder" races.

Motor cars arrived as early as Friday morning and by that night an impressive group of nine cars made night runs at the museum.

This year there were three classes of cars racing over the 300 meter course. Included were single cylinder, dual cylinder, and unlimited for four or more cylinder cars.

As with any sporting event there were favorites and upsets, (not to mention scratches). As expected first place winner in single cylinder was Bob Mahan of Ventura, CA and his Fairmont ST-2. Bobs time was 31.1 seconds. Ron Butler was second with his M-19 and Steve Milward of Portola, was third. Steve pointed out each year he races he keeps getting a lower placing. In 1985 he won the single cylinder class and was second in 1986. Steve said in 1988 He'll just run the 300 meters on foot.

In the dual cylinder cars first place went to Dave Rangel and his MT-19 with a 31.1 time. Second place went to first time entrant Bill Kaminsky of Riverside, CA and his ex CB&Q M-19AA. Bill told us he found his car at a swap meet and spent over a year dickering on the price. Third place went to Steve Santos and his MT-19. This years races featured more twin cylinder cars than ever before plus a ban on using Jet Fuel as contestant Dave Rangel had done. After the racing a Bar-B-Q was held as ribbons and plaques were awarded.

In 1988 the World Motor Car Races will be held again, the first weekend in August and will be renamed The Galatic Motor Car Races to avoid conflict with a Georgia group.

See you in Portola...

Dave Rangel
Race Chairman

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Join the MCAA by writing:

MCCA
Mark Mayfield, Editor
5 Bay View Hills
Wever, Iowa 52658
\$8 per year



CPC #1 along side the Stockton Diesel Shop awaiting wheel work before it's trip to Portola.....

Little chugger finds home in rail museum

The Stockton Record

A Stockton train that cost too much to keep running has found a new home — in a railroad museum.

For four years, the switch engine diesel-electric locomotive at Corn Products, 1021 Industrial Drive, has chugged along the plant grounds, hauling corn and corn syrup.

Today, however, the unique 1939 Electro Motive Corp. locomotive will be hauled, by train naturally, to a railroad museum in Portola, 50 miles north of Truckee.

CHICKEN DINNER A TRUE TALE OF THE RAILS

To speed train movements WP, and now UP, will sometimes provide a free lunch to the train and engine crew instead of stopping the train for an hour or more while the crew goes to "beans". On the 5th sub, between Portola and Winnemucca, one can eat at Doyle, 41 miles from Portola or Gerlach, 117 miles. At Gerlach (pronounced Ger-lack) Bruno's was the favorite eatery. Bruno also provided a selection of lunches when ordered.

Several years ago Bruno's restaurant burned leaving only a small Mexican Restaurant as the only place to eat in Gerlach. An east-

The rare train is being donated by Corn Products to the Feather River Rail Society, one of the largest railroad museums in the West.

"It got to the point where it was too expensive to maintain," said Richard M. Vandervoort, general manager for Corn Products. "We knew it had some historical value when we purchased it four years ago, so we decided to donate it so many people could enjoy it."

When built by Western Pacific in Elko, Nev., the 600-horsepower switch engine was state-of-the-art railroad technology. It was the first diesel-powered locomotive, rendering steam-powered locomotives obsolete. One of only three models ever built, it could pull 3,500 tons, said William Stiles of the Feather River society.

"We're going to miss it," said Vandervoort. "That locomotive had a lot of charm to it."

bound train crew was on duty long enough to qualify for the right to go eat and when the dispatcher was notified of the request, he asked the crew if they would take lunches. They said yes and the order was taken. One brakeman ordered fried chicken. When the crew arrived at the restaurant to pick up the lunches the chicken lunch was not with the order. The chef said he had some chicken but it would take a little while, the brakeman said he'd wait. Three hours later the lunch was ready. What the chef didn't say was that he had to go out behind the restaurant, catch, kill, pick, and clean the chicken before cooking it. So much for no train delay.

by Norm Holmes

The honor of being the oldest piece of equipment at the Portola Railroad Museum goes to Feather River Short Lines's No. 8. This prime example of Baldwin's line of logging locomotives celebrated her 80th birthday this month, having been built in Philadelphia, PA in November, 1907.

Railroads were used in California logging as early as 1854, with custom designed locomotives built to the special needs of the operator. Geared locomotives (Shay, Heisler, and Climax) first appeared in the west in 1889. The geared locomotives were best suited for the primitive track and steep grades, sometimes as much

as 10%, found on most logging lines. The disadvantage of geared locomotives was their slow speed.

Baldwin was building engines for the logging industry as far back as 1884, and, as was the norm for the time, each locomotive was custom designed for the job. In 1894, Baldwin designed a "standard" engine for the logging industry. The locomotive would be capable of a faster track speed and still be able to operate over rough, poorly-engineered track. The 2-6-6 wheel arrangement was selected which gave the locomotive flexibility in running both forward and backward (using the leading and trailing wheels as

Sequoia name has become associated with logging locomotives of this type.

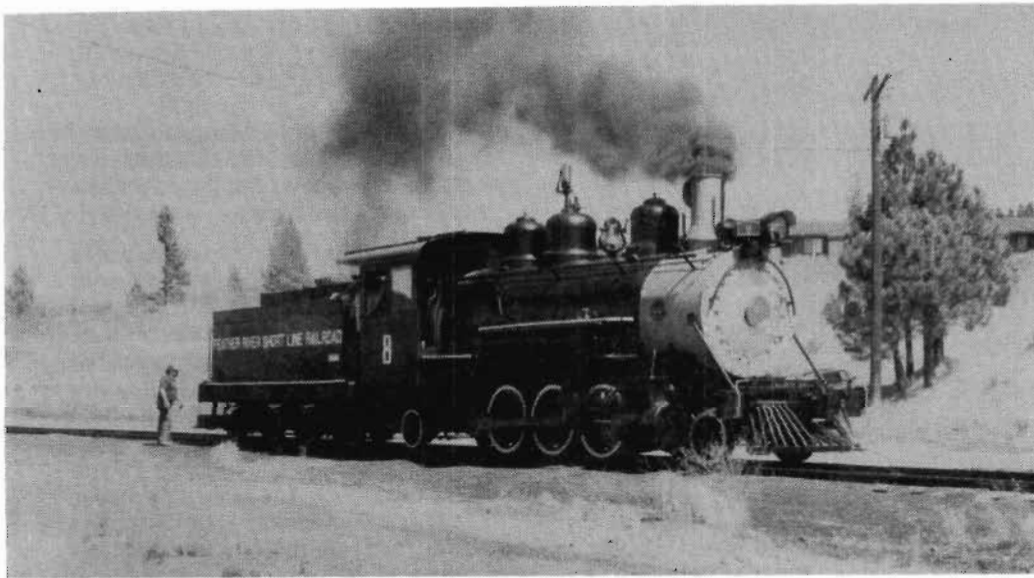
Of the 64 Baldwin 2-6-2's built between 1898 and 1928, a dozen or so survive today. A few are still in operation in railroad museums and tourist lines, a tribute to Baldwin's engineering ability.

Feather River Short Line's No. 8 was constructed for Sierra Nevada Wood & Lumber Co. for service at Hobart Mills. For 30 years No. 8 hauled forest products six and one-half miles to the SP interchange at Truckee. Originally built to burn wood, she was converted to oil while at Hobart Mills. When the mill closed in 1938, No. 8 was sold to the Clover Valley Lumber Co., just over the hill at Loyaltan. Her work assignment for the next 20 years was to be the woods switcher in the Clover Valley area north of Beckwourth.

Clover Valley Lumber Co. was bought by Feather River Lumber Co. in 1956, but No. 8 was never lettered for the new owner. It was at this time that the logging railroad was abandoned and all equipment was scheduled to be scrapped. Two locomotives escaped the scrappers torch; No. 4 and No. 8. No. 4, a Baldwin 2-6-6-2 tank engine was sold to Tahoe Timber Co., at Verdi, Nevada and subsequently donated to Pacific Locomotive Association, moved to Richmond, Ca. and restored to operating condition. In March, 1958 No. 8 was donated to a small group of railroad enthusiasts who formed the Feather River Short Line. The locomotive was moved under its own power over the WP to Quincy Jct., and then on to the Quincy Railroad to Quincy. A former WP caboose, a WW I Army Ordinance Dept. fire control car and two log cars were also donated to the group.

No. 8 was operated over the Quincy Railroad for several years, then in June, 1963 she was placed on display in the Plumas County fairgrounds at Quincy along with the caboose and Army car. In this location the FRSL equipment slowly deteriorated due to weather and vandalism.

After the FRRS was formed and a lease for the site of the Portola Museum was signed, the FRSL was invited to relocate the equipment from Quincy to Portola. No. 8 followed the caboose and Army car, arriving on June 13, 1984. For the next three years members of FRSL and FRRS worked to restore the locomotive to operating condition. Surprisingly, the 21 years of inactivity and exposure had not seriously damaged the locomotive,



The Far Side/by Gary Larson



Runaway trains

guides). A powerful boiler with a large firebox was used which allowed the use of green wood slabs for fuel.

The first engine of this type was sold to McCloud River Railroad in 1898. Since wood would be used for fuel, a deep narrow firebox was placed down between the frame rails. The entire cab rode low on the back head (as in No. 8). This design proved sound and thus a standardized 2-6-2 logging locomotive was born. Over the next thirty years more than sixty locomotives of this type were built. Buyers still had options such as driver diameter, but basically the 2-6-2 was standardized.

Steam engine builders seldom built demonstrator locomotives, however for the Lewis & Clark Exposition in Portland in 1905, Baldwin built a 2-6-2 logging locomotive, named it Sequoia, and lettered it for Baldwin Locomotive Works. It was later sold to Dolbeer & Carson Lumber Co. The

however a great deal of work was needed to clean old paint and grime, to replace wooded cab parts and to fabricate a new boiler jacket.

On April 25, 1987 No. 8 again moved under its own power. Retired WP engineer Jim Boynton was the last person to run No. 8 under steam on May 19, 1962 and was the first person to run the locomotive almost 25 years later. Since April restoration work has continued and the locomotive has run on several occasions during the summer. No. 8 is in our diesel shop building, perhaps the first time she has been under a roof for any length of time. The locomotive will be steamed up and operated on special occasions. With care we can look to many more years of operation for this octogenarian.



A FAINT clicking sound, followed by the words, "Dispatcher, Oroville," broke into a train order I had just begun to issue. The scene was a Western Pacific dispatchers' room and the man on the other end of the wire was undoubtedly Jones, our somewhat excitable operator at Oroville, Calif.

Thinking that he wished to sign up a 31 order I had put out for second 78, I replied, "Dispatcher." His next words tumbled out like a waterfall in Feather River Canyon:

"First 78 was by here at 11:37 p.m.!"

I answered calmly: "Yes, that's right."

"But First 78 was by here at 11:37 p.m.!" he repeated, almost screaming.

"Sure, Oroville. The sheet shows that. Has Second 78 shown up yet?"

"No," broke in the op at Oroville yard, who was listening. "He's still here—I'm looking right at his markers."

"Then what was that went by here when the main was here?" said Jones.

"Has an eastbound train passed you since midnight?" I inquired quickly.

"Some train went by here through the siding while the main was here taking ice and water," he stammered. "They asked

me what I had on the board; and I asked them who they were, and they said, 'First 78'; so I gave them a clearance and they left. I didn't notice that First 78 was by here before midnight. I—

"Break!" I stopped the op, reaching for the Berry Creek selector key and twisting it violently.

Something froze up inside me as I realized what had happened. The man at Oroville yard was not sitting there look-

OLD WP ARTICLES

For your enjoyment I am going to reprint several very old articles on the Western Pacific written in 1944, 45, 46, 47, and 54 in RAILROAD MAGAZINE by WP dispatcher, Peter Josserand.....

Putting Western Pacific Traffic Through the Rugged Feather River Canyon Is No Job for the Flatland Delayer

ing at Second 78's markers, for they were by Oroville—and without the restricting order which changed their meeting point with Extra 252 West from Berry Creek to Bidwell, creating a lap of authority.

There wasn't one chance in a thousand of catching Extra 252 West at Berry Creek, for he was already due by there; and even if he wasn't actually by, the operator would not be in the office, for I had sent him up to the east switch to keep Extra 252 West from heading in. Those two Mallets would hit on the one-percent grade, just about halfway between Berry Creek and Bloomer—there are no block signals on that crooked track. They wouldn't have a chance.

BEFORE going further, let me tell you something of the district I work.

Had it been daylight so that I could have seen Feather River Canyon as I came through on my way to Sacramento, where I had a job waiting as dispatcher on the Western Pacific, I would have enjoyed the scenery. It's a beautiful country, wild and bold. But had I glimpsed the landscape beforehand, I might not have screwed up my courage to tackle "The Mountain," or Third Subdivision, which extends 118 miles between Oroville yard and Portola.

This mileage will probably bring a smile to the lips of flatland dispatchers, for it is a relatively short district. However, if my attempt to paint a word-picture of operating conditions on this stretch of railroad is successful, perhaps the smile will fade. Having worked districts hundreds of miles longer, with comparative ease, I have spent much time trying to analyze the reasons for this piece of track being the toughest and most aggravating stretch I have known.

Of course, it is not always so. Some days The Mountain behaves like Santa Claus. But more often it goes on a rampage, when nothing is right—not just in one section, but from end to end. And it switches from one state to the other without warning. The subdivision extends

Mountain Dispatcher

By PETER JOSSERAND
Western Pacific Dispatcher

Railroad Magazine

April 1944

through territory so rugged that only here and there you can reach the right-of-way in any manner except by train or motorcar traveling on the rails. A highway runs through the canyon, but you can't get onto the track from the highway, even afoot, except at scattered points. Men who handle trains in Feather River Canyon are a tough lot—hardy, like pioneers. They have to be if they stay there. Scarcely a veteran in the canyon but can show you the scars of wrecks—pile-ups which they would not have survived except for a "sixth sense" which elevates them above the run-of-the-mill train and engine men. They are a breed that thrives on long hours, hardship and danger.

I had worked this district several months before I ever saw it, and even then I came back with a mild case of jitters. Beginning at Oroville yard, the grade is somewhat less than one percent up to Bloomer. From there it climbs to Portola, never more than one percent compensated for curvature, and rarely so much as a fraction of a degree less. There are no humps. A boxcar turned loose at Portola would roll all the way to Oroville yard if it took the curves—and there is precious little tangent track. Spots where two trains could see each other in time to stop without hitting are practically non-existent—because of the curves and tunnels, of which there are thirty-three, ranging up to more than a mile in length—and with no block signals, the DS knows his work must be right, or they bump.

One interesting feature is "the loop" between Spring Garden and Massack. The engineers, determined to hold the grade to one percent, came to a spot where this was impossible; so they remedied the situation by constructing a circular piece of track which, without exceeding one per-

cent, gains sufficient elevation to do the job, the track crossing over itself.

An engine is given what tonnage she can handle on the one percent, eliminating helper districts and greatly simplifying operating procedure. You might think of it as "allegre same flatland district," but don't be deceived.

A common practice is to run drags uphill with two small locomotives; then each engine brings down a tonnage train. About all you need in the descent is some means of charging the brake pipe and controlling the brakes. The smallest engine can ease down the car limit in loads. Mallets, when not needed elsewhere, run down light for faster movement to protect symbol trains uphill. Of late, the huge trainloads of Government shipments westward toward the Pacific war theater has upset normal routine and most of the Mallets have to bring down trains, since westbound traffic is heavier than eastbound, the reverse of normal conditions.

Small engines cannot back up here. If they inadvertently make a move downhill in error, or if the dispatcher maneuvers them into certain spots—it's just too bad, as I shall presently show. Even the Mallets frequently cannot back up their trains, for they have more tonnage than the engine will handle uphill, plus the fact that retainers are set up on the train.

If two trains moving downhill go to the same siding for another freight, or passenger train, they must be fixed up. At least, the leading train must go to the next siding against opposing trains; otherwise, the railroad is sewed up. If he can't back up for a "saw" and can't go ahead, then he's simply on the main stem blocking everything.

THE TRACK which hangs to the canyon sides like a great lazy snake stretched out to sun, is at varying heights above Feather River. This man-made ledge is so narrow at most points that a derailment results in cars taking a river bath far below. The remains of some can still be seen in the foaming waters. This mountain stream falls in such a torrent that a continuous roar is set up in the canyon, drowning out other sounds to the point where you cannot hear an approaching train.

There is no place I know of where good operators are needed so badly as in the Feather River Canyon, and few places where they are so hard to get and keep. Sooner or later most of them get what the boys call "cabin fever." There are no towns—just the houses in which they live, most of them batching. Since they are thus isolated from the world, except for their contact with trains and each other, it is not unusual for them to be affected strangely. The rhythms of Mother Nature are magnified in such localities.

One op described his reaction as claustrophobia. He had the feeling that the canyon walls were closing in on him and he simply had to get out for a while. Another told me of two fellows who would not even look at each other, much less

speak, if they could help it. The first-trick man would make a transfer. Then he'd stand in a corner with his back to his relief, glancing surreptitiously over his shoulder to see when the transfer had been signed. One man, because of a minor disagreement, gathered up all his brother op's clothing in the dead of night and hid them in a snowbank. Another mental case shot a brakeman. And a chief dispatcher off the D&RGW told me of having two brass pounders at the same station in the Rockies go stark mad the same day.

Most of these boys will get drunk periodically to break the spell. Some walk off the job in a complete daze. A dispatcher never knows whether an op will do what he is told. The guy might fly off the handle and give him a good "cussing." But if they stay on the job and can take it, the lightning slingers of Feather River Canyon eventually become the best of train-order men.

Since the operators cannot see or hear a train approaching until it is right on them, the dispatcher has to work from his last "OS", hoping the said train has not been delayed. By the time he knows where the train is, it's too late to issue a clearance. This is indeed strange to the flatland DS who has been accustomed to putting out orders after the ops inform him a train is showing.

Here, the DS must call his men and have them keep trains cleared in advance of the time they may show; otherwise, they get stopped. For instance, at Belden, eastbound trains come through a tunnel about thirty car-lengths from the office, while westbound trains pop around a curve about the same distance away. If the op doesn't have his orders ready, he misses them.

NOW we get back to the impending head-on collision with which I opened this article. Second 78 had been called to leave Oroville yard and go to Oroville itself, a distance of two miles, for a troop train. The mainliner had to be iced and watered at Oroville, a procedure requiring twenty to thirty minutes.

When I went on duty at midnight, Second 78 had been cleared at Oroville yard with, among other orders, a meet with Extra 252 West at Berry Creek. I kept asking the brass pounder at Oroville if Second 78 was showing there, to which he replied in the negative. And the op at Oroville yard confirmed this fact, saying he could see the markers on Second 78 and would let me know the moment they left there.

When it was perfectly apparent that Second 78, not having moved, could not leave the yard for the "main," I issued a 31 order to Second 78 at Oroville and a 19 order to Extra 252 West at Berry

Creek, changing the meet from Berry Creek to Bidwell.

Now the east switch at Berry Creek is just a few car-lengths east of the office and, as we often do under such circumstances to keep a train from going through the siding, I cleared Extra 252 West. Then I instructed the op, an old-timer by the name of Kemmerer, to take the "fimsy" up to the east switch and deliver it, keeping the extra on the main track.

As the selector slowly worked the Berry Creek combination, I had little hope of even getting in touch with Kemmerer, much less contacting him in time to stop the Extra, which was then overdue. If he had gone to the east switch, the river's roar would drown out the sound of the telephone bell, even if the train had not arrived; and he would wait there until the train came. It seemed that I was doomed to go through the torture most dreaded by dispatchers—sit and wait helplessly for two trains to hit.

No sooner had the bell quit ringing than I twisted the key a second time. If Jones, the operator at Oroville, had only mentioned to me that a train was there, or had OS'd it by; or if the man at Oroville yard hadn't been so sure he saw Second 78's markers, I might have uncovered the truth in time to avert the catastrophe.

Before the bell rang the second time, a gruff voice announced, "Berry Creek."

"Is Extra 252 West by there?" I asked.

It must be by, otherwise Kemmerer would be at the east switch waiting for them, for he had told me he was leaving to go there.

"No," Berry Creek replied, "but they're coming close and I've got to run."

"Hell, no! Wait a minute!"

I must have shouted, for fear he would snatch off the heat set and run.

"Are you there?" I went on, reaching for the selector key, just in case.

"Sure, I'm here," he said. "What's up?"

"Second 78 got by Oroville without that 31," I explained, with a sigh of relief. "Let Extra 252 West head in and copy one."

I annulled the superseding order, thus removing the hazard. Two factors conspired to ward off death and destruction: One, that Extra 252 West was delayed between Pulga and Berry Creek; the other, a pot of coffee. I've always suspected that no big road could run without Java, but I had not suggested the real power of the beverage.

Just as Kemmerer was leaving the office to go to the east switch, his pot of coffee, brewing on the stove, noisily boiled over; so he went back into the room and poured himself a cup. The phone rang just a second before Extra 252 West

whistled for town. If it hadn't, he might have ignored the phone and made a dash for the switch to keep the train on the main track. That's whittling down your margin too fine.

THERE was no investigation. I never knew exactly how Second 78 got by Oroville without the 31 order, nor what the op at Oroville yard saw which he mistook for Second 78's markers. One thing I do know—I lived a long time that night.

Even then I wasn't yet through with hair-raising experiences for that trick. An extra west, which was being handled by a Mallet, took siding at Belden on a meet order with an eastbound drag. Number 12, a string of varnished cars, was right on time, so the extra west did not have time to go to the next station, Camp Rodgers, for it. But no sooner was the east-bound train cleared than they started rolling.

Operator Holbrook was right on the job. "Does this extra west have anything on Number 12?" he asked.

"No," I replied. "Twelve's on time."

"He's leaving here," Holbrook told me.

I checked Number 12's time to be sure of my calculations. The train was due out of Camp Rodgers in one minute.

"Maybe he's just pulling down to the end of the siding, for some reason."

"No, sir!" Holbrook was emphatic. "He's leaving town."

"Stop him if you can!"

Holbrook grabbed a fusee, lighted it and dashed frantically from the office. But the head end didn't look back. It was only after the caboose had come around the curve that the conductor saw the fusee, pulled the air and stopped the train. The conductor, of course, thought the head end had received time on 12, and was on the step waiting for his orders and clearance when the caboose hove in sight, to find Holbrook giving washouts with a fusee.

The op then rushed back into the office, grabbed the Army phone, which was hooked up there, and rang the soldier who was guarding the tunnel west of Belden, telling him what had happened. The boy in khaki promptly took to his heels down the right-of-way and flagged Number 12. Thus a second catastrophe was averted.

But, as I have said before, our downhill tonnage can't be backed. There was much confusion and delay before the hog-head succeeded, with Twelve's help, in

BELOW: Number 11, the Feather River Express, takes a drink at Berry Creek



backing up that portion which he had pulled out on the main track, so as to be able to "saw" Number 12 out. Meanwhile, other minor troubles developed all over the railroad. The Mountain was on a rampage that night.

Operators can roughly be divided into two categories, sheep and goats. The old-timers, like Holbrook, are invariably on the job; but some of the boomers that hit this pike—and there seems to be an endless migration of them—are worth writing about.

It is permissible here, if an operator is able to take up clearance cards previously issued to a train and destroy them, to restrict the said train still further with a 31 order. All restricting orders, regardless of where issued, must be on 31 form, except where a middle order can be issued, in which case it is permissible to restrict a train on form 19. Presently I will show what this leads to, but first we get back to the clearance-card business.

One night at Quincy Junction, Number 62 was unexpectedly delayed in picking up cars for which a lot of switching had to be done. Upon learning that the train was behind schedule, I sent the op for the clearances. Later he told me that he had them. Accordingly, I issued an order giving 62 a meet with a train called out of Portola at Blairsden.

This was only a few nights after the foregoing and I was still a bit on edge. Therefore I kept inquiring of the boomer about 62. The op's reply was sarcastic.

"Hell, yes, I've got him. He's still switching. Hasn't come in to get his orders yet—he can't get out of town."

But I was uneasy. It didn't make sense that the train would be held up so long.

RAILWAY AGE

September 17, 1932



A Western Pacific 2-8-8-2 Type Locomotive Hauling 72 Loaded Cars up the Feather River Canyon Grade

NEW WESTERN PACIFIC POWER SAVES TIME AND EARNS MONEY

Eastbound tonnage on the Western Pacific consists largely of fresh fruits and vegetables, which are moved on fast schedules. The hardest pull is from Oroville to Portola, California, in the Feather River Canyon, where there are 118 miles of ascending grade, much of it one per cent.

FORMERLY—

"Fruit blocks" of 60-70 cars, weighing about 3100 tons, were handled by one 2-6-6-2 type Mallet compound, with either a Mallet, Mikado or Consolidation type helper, according to requirements.

At least three, and often four, stops were made for water, additional time being lost while spotting each locomotive under the spout.

The fuel consumption per 1000 gross ton-

miles averaged 16.28 gallons of oil, and each helper, returning light down hill, burned about 700 gallons additional.

NOW—

Baldwin single expansion 2-8-8-2 type locomotives are used, each engine handling from 3400 to 3500 tons.

The run can be made with only two water stops.

The fuel consumption per 1000 gross ton-miles is 14.01 gallons—a saving of about 22 barrels of oil per trip up the grade; and there are no helper engines to burn oil while returning light.

Maintenance costs have been materially reduced.

All of which is added proof that—

It takes Modern Locomotives to make money these days!

THE BALDWIN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS
PHILADELPHIA

On the other hand, there is nothing at Quincy Junction except the station; and the op certainly should know whether or not the train was still there, as there are only a few tracks. I calmed my fears and went to work at something else, deciding to put the finishing touches to Number 62 when its conductor came in to sign up. He didn't come. The next thing I knew, the operator at Spring Garden broke in.

"Coming east, Spring Garden."

I rang Quincy Junction, asking about 62.

"They're still switching," he responded. "He can't get out of here—I have his orders."

"You must be hearing things."

"I am not. His headlight just flashed around the corner."

"Well, it's not 62." Quincy Junction broke in. "I tell you he's here."

Since an eastward train, just after passing Spring Garden station, enters a tunnel more than a mile in length, through which it has to work steam all the way, we try never to stop a tonnage train uphill at that point. The engine crew almost suffocate before they can get through the tunnel from a standing start. Firing valves must be kept open, and the gas from a Mallet climbing the grade is terrific when confined to a tunnel. But this was something different.

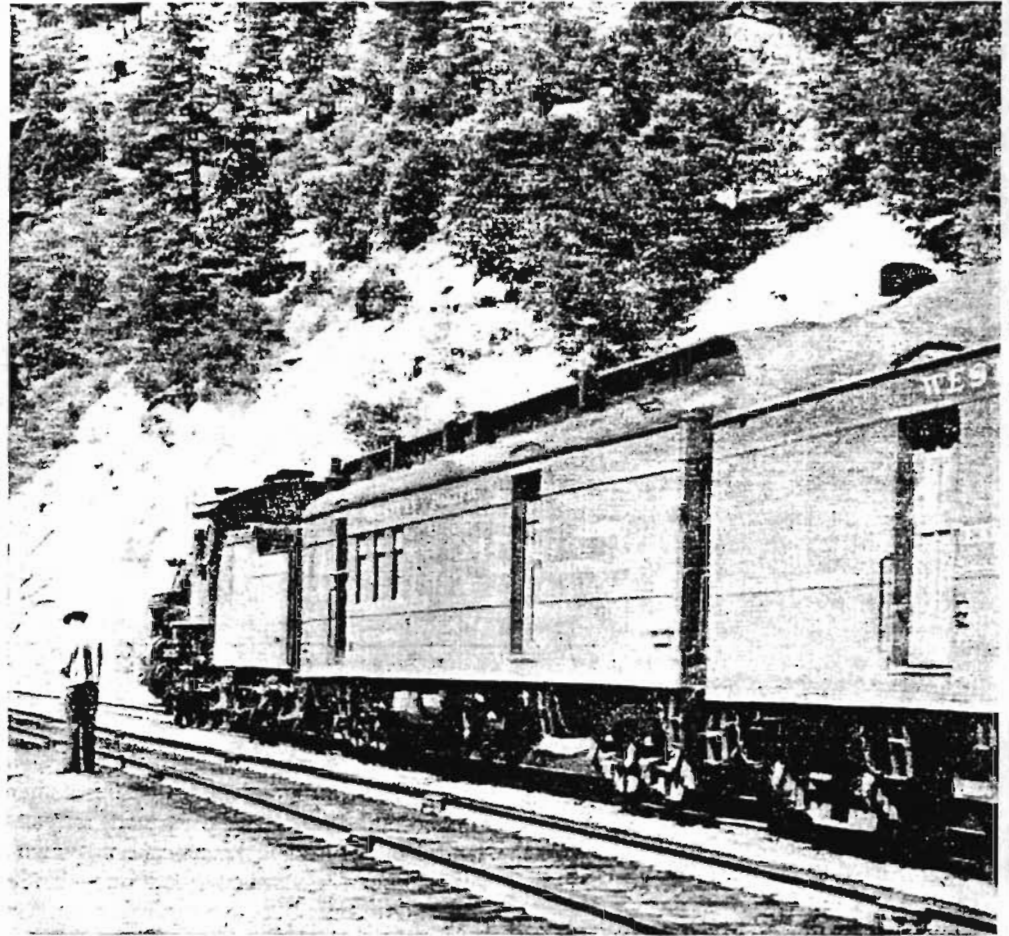
"Must be a ghost train," I kidded Spring Garden. "Hold your board on them and let's find out what a ghost train looks like."

It wasn't a ghost train. It was Number 62. The op at Quincy Junction, probably out of stupidity or laziness, had not complied with my instructions to take up the clearance cards. So I re-issued the orders to the train at Spring Garden, thankful that I had a telegraph office between Quincy Junction and the meeting point with the extra west.

As for the boomer at the Junction—well, he is gone, just like scores of other floaters who drift in, make a pay-day or two and are off, usually after messing up the works.

THE MANAGEMENT admits its inability, to get good operators these days, and tells us to do the best we can with what we have to work with. They hire applicants with little regard to age,

etc., sometimes not even requiring a physical exam. Since a dispatcher's work can be—and often is—hampered by inefficient operators, maybe you think we don't rejoice when a good man bids in,



IT'S NOT UNUSUAL to find a conductor calling the DS from a blind siding, for things happen so fast in the canyon that the smartest maneuvering won't always keep the varnished cars rolling

And now about 31 orders. I didn't know the system was still in use anywhere until I came to the WP. Every restricting order, except where a train is to be restricted at an open telegraph office and a middle order can be placed there, must be on a form 31, although there are a few loopholes in this rule.

Naturally, no dispatcher wants to stop a train he is trying to highball over the road, and when certain practices permit him to get around the 31 he is tempted to use them. Thus he may issue single orders, as well as follow certain other practices which I believe are hazardous.

We will assume that a train is called at Portola, Extra 258 West, which we wish to meet Number 54 at Clio. A 31 order stopping 54 is in order—perhaps. Let's see. If we make the meet at Blairsdén, an open telegraph office, it can be done on 19 orders, so we will issue the following:

Order No. 1

19 BA Opr
19 RT No. 54
19 KI Extra 258 West
No. 54 Eng 902 meet Extra 258 West at Blairsdén

Order No. 2

31 KI Extra 258 West
19 BA No. 54
Extra 258 West meet No. 54 Eng 902 at Clio instead of Blairsdén.

Thus we have restricted Number 54 at a blind siding without giving him a 31, the latter having been issued to Extra 258 West at a terminal where no delay will be caused by his signing. After the first order has been issued, Extra 258 West is superior to Number 54 at Clio by "right," so everything is in good form and comparatively safe.

But, suppose conditions were a bit changed. Suppose 54 left Oroville yard holding an order to meet Extra 258 West at Merlin, and later it looked as if the meet should be Cresta. Not wishing to delay a tonnage uphill train with a 31 order, let's juggle a bit more and see what can be done.

Order No. 3

19 BG Opr
19 BK No. 54
No. 54 Eng 902 meet Extra 258 West at Pulga instead of Merlin.

Mountain Dispatcher

This order is not given to Extra 258 West. The two trains are now kept a couple of stations apart, one holding a Merlin meet, the other a Pulga meet. Let's hope the wires do not suddenly go out before we can correct this matter.

Order No. 4

19 BG No. 54
19 BN Extra 258 West
No. 54 Eng 902 meet Extra 258 West at Cresta
(BG add) instead of Pulga
(BN add) instead of Merlin

Again we have dodged the delaying order. Now, inasmuch as Number 54 cannot leave Pulga without the fourth order, if we have another 31 out down the line which we do not wish train 54 to sign, we simply transfer it into Order 4 and annul the original order to train Number 54.

Such juggling is safe only so long as the DS is thinking straight. The moment he becomes forgetful, a hazard arises. I could tell you of a recent case in which a dispatcher—a damned good one—hailed off and annulled the wrong order, and two extras smacked together. This man was about the worst order juggler I ever saw, but he really moved trains—until the unlucky day when he was sick, and slipped.

TAKE one more example. Number 40, the *Exposition Flyer*, is delayed unexpectedly at Oroville and, of course, every freight train on the road will get the same amount of delay, unless we do give them a "run late" order. Forty's schedule is so tight that if they are stopped, they will simply go in that much later. Still, twenty minutes delay to each of twelve or fourteen freight trains is too much; so let's see what can be done.

Order No. 5

19 BG Opr
19 BK No. 40
No. 40 Eng 326 meet Extra 22 West at Pulga

Now we have the *Exposition Flyer* hooked up so that they cannot pass Pulga without meeting a train (which for safety, should not even be on the road) or getting the order annulled. Again, let's hope the wires do not fail.

Order No. 6

19 BG No. 40
19 (Various) (All inferior trains)
No. 40 Eng 326 run Twenty 20 Mins late Pulga to Portola
(BG add) Order No. 5 is annulled.

And so the famous train has been duly put on a "run late" without being stopped. But, in fact, we have defeated the safety features of the 31 order system. We are restricting trains on form 19 without the added precautions of the out-and-out 19 system,

which forbids transferring part of one order to another and which demands that each train shall have exact copies of all "flimsies" instead of acting on orders under different numbers, the contents of which are not the same. In my opinion, Mother Nature provides enough hazard on The Mountain without exposing a crew to unnecessary danger such as depending too much on the whim of a train dispatcher for their safety.

And speaking of natural hazards, when the winter rains soften the canyon, down rush the rocks, slides, decomposed granite and what have you. Despite rock fences which hoist stop signals to all trains in the event of a slide, and track walkers who patrol the tracks, The Mountain gets in its dirty work. If, in addition to heavy rainfall, there is a high wind, Heaven only knows what may be brought down by uprooted trees. On such a night, when an op reports a train out of his station, the DS mentally kisses it good-bye. The said train may, or may not, show up at the next office; and not even a crystal ball could reveal how much time the crew may need to roll rocks off the track or chop up trees and remove them.

At one point decomposed granite washes down so fast that a ditcher has to be kept in continuous operation to prevent the main track, as well as the siding, from being buried. At another point an enormous, slow-working slide covered a sid-



Photo from D. O. McKallups

THIS LITTLE COMMUNITY, built at a point where the valley widens at a bar, bears the Spanish name Pulga, meaning "flea"

ing for weeks, moving in inch by inch—but even that was faster than it could be removed.

On such occasions we all use extreme caution, and serious accidents seldom occur. Good-weather slides are the ones that wreak havoc. They sometimes come where there hasn't been a slide for years, or maybe never was one since the road was built.

These are the real hazards, for they possess the element of surprise.

I had not been long on my present job when a 200-ton rock fell on the track in front of a Mallet. Twenty-some-odd cars sailed down into Feather River as the train buckled in the middle, but nobody was injured.

TWICE within a week last spring, Engineer Stapp, a fast runner on whom the boys had tacked the name "Seabiscuit," hit small slides while pulling Number 12, the engine turning partially over each time; yet there were no casualties.

On the first occasion the old girl plowed clear through the rubble, was ditched and headed toward the river. Men were afraid to uncouple the cars from the engine until she had been snubbed down, lest she topple into the drink. The following day, after the situation had been cleared up, Number 12's cars were taken by another engine and continued their trip. But the delayed train had run less than fifteen miles when she again met trouble—a boul-

der bounded down the mountain, hitting the locomotive and tender and putting them out of commission. The hogger had seen the rock coming but was unable to stop in time to keep from getting hit. A work train engine was taken to complete the run.

Only a few weeks ago an immense slide fell in McLean Cut and a Mallet bumped into it. This was one of those good-weather slides at an unexpected point. "Val" Dycus was pulling the train. He had been making a swell run. In fact, I commented on it to Bill Wheeler, second-trick chief dispatcher. From that our conversation turned to The Mountain in general. Bill remarked that, everything considered, we'd had very little trouble of recent date. The words were scarcely uttered when something hit the wires.

"I hope," I told him jokingly, "that wasn't Dycus going into the ditch."

But it was. And the road was tied up for more than a week before the slide could be removed, the obstruction being

some eighty feet high and hundreds of feet in length. One bank of the cut had to be gouged out to permit the bulldozers and other machines to get at the debris. Huge rocks had to be blown to bits before any machine could budge them.

The Mallet climbed the slide until her front end was seven or eight feet off the rails and pulling her down. This, in itself, was a considerable task. Two cars of hogs parked themselves on top of the articulated engine, but only two cars went into the river.

Dycus, his fireman and his head brakeman all got down in front of the boilerhead and rode the Mallet right into the slide; and no one was injured, except for minor scratches. The shack simply climbed out of the mess and right on up over the slide, heading down the main track to flag Number 12. Then he called me on the disabled phone, which was working feebly as far as the accident, and broke the news to me.

No, there is nothing monotonous about The Mountain. I'm amazed, though, at how those fellows can take it.

Freights coming down hill with retainers set up—which keep a constant pressure of brake-shoes—have wheels so hot that they glow at night, and sometimes break.

A conductor recently discovered a broken wheel in his train east of Virgilia. However, knowing what might occur if he pulled the air, he decided to take a chance on the car not derailing before it roared through a tunnel they were approaching. Can you imagine what went on in that fellow's mind as he waited before applying the air, wondering whether or not he'd live

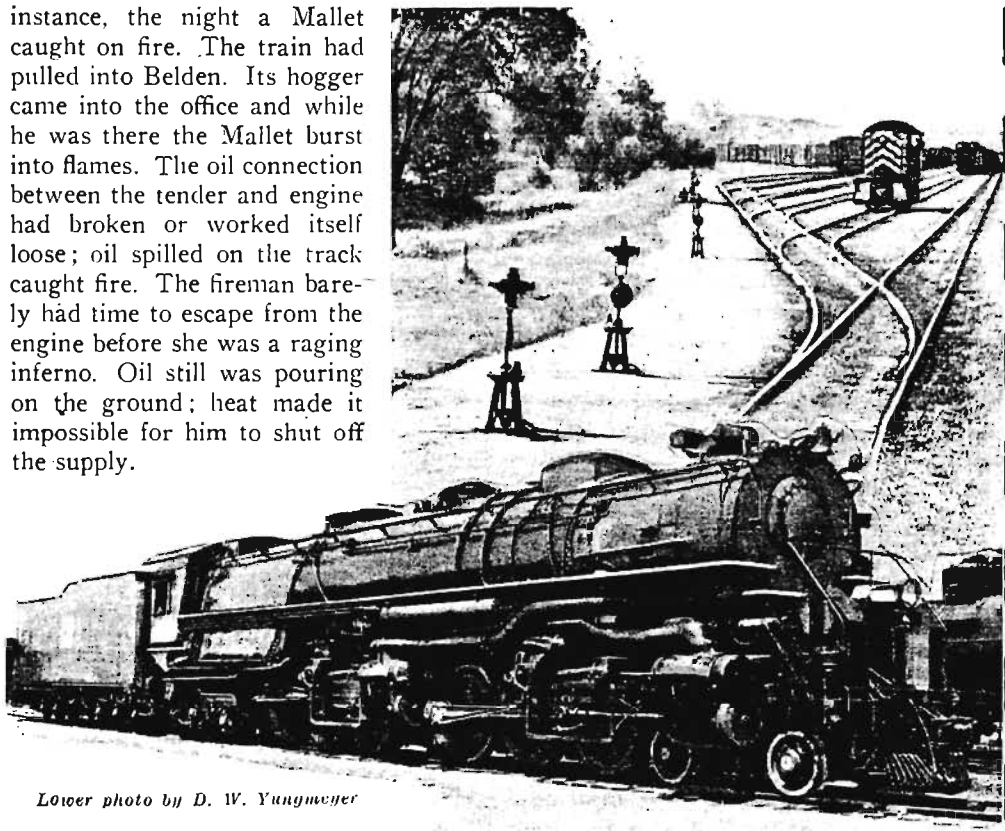
to see the light of day at the end of the tunnel?

Well, he did. Not only that, but he stopped the train between siding switches at Virgilia where, although derailed, it could be left until the wrecker arrived without causing more delay than was occasioned by trains having to use the siding at Virgilia as a main track.

There are many freak occurrences—for instance, the night a Mallet caught on fire. The train had pulled into Belden. Its hogger came into the office and while he was there the Mallet burst into flames. The oil connection between the tender and engine had broken or worked itself loose; oil spilled on the track caught fire. The fireman barely had time to escape from the engine before she was a raging inferno. Oil still was pouring on the ground; heat made it impossible for him to shut off the supply.

Mountain Dispatcher

Railroad Magazine



OROVILLE YARD, where giant 2-8-8-2s and newer 4-6-6-4s begin their steady climb across the Sierra Nevadas

That night, being dubious of this particular train making scheduled time, I had hooped up a note to the conductor of an extra west that had a meet with it at Rich Bar, asking him to call me on the phone so I could advance him to Belden in the event the eastbound train did not appear. He called just about the time the op informed me of the fire, and it was feasible to have him leave his train in the siding at Rich Bar and dash over to Belden with his engine, putting out the fire with steam—but not before everything burnable was gone from the Mallet and much damage done.

He then put the uphill train in the siding and left the Mallet on a spur track pending such time as she could be examined by mechanical experts and arrangements made to take her to the shops. In the meantime, all trains had to be held back until the situation cleared; so the rest of the night was spent trying to untangle them and get traffic moving normally again.

ONE of the headaches a DS has on this district is that of keeping freights from heading passenger trains through sidings. It is customary for the eastbound, or uphill, trains to hold the main stem, regardless of their relative importance. If a dispatcher inadvertently orders a meet between two freights and the uphill train can't make siding for a passenger train, they will hold the main track, regardless of whether the train to be met is there or not.

Sidings, like the main track, are so crooked that there is not only the possibility, but a great probability, of a head-end collision if a train tries to take siding without authority to do so. This is diffi-

cult to imagine unless you have actually seen the railroad. Just the same, there are many places where two trains could get within fifty feet before seeing each other.

Mountain Dispatcher

I recall one night, after a derailment, when trains were held up at each end of the district and turned loose when the track was clear. A new dispatcher, unfamiliar with the district, moved his trains in too close. By the time I came on at midnight and the passenger trains started from each end, I had a train in every siding from Bloomer to Belden, inclusive—except Camp Rodgers, which I managed to hold open to meet Numbers 39 and 40—and there were three trains between those points which had no siding to get into!

Well, it was necessary to move out the two westbound freights by giving them meets with the passenger trains, the east-bound running out of the jam unassisted. The other trains, some headed east, some west, were so interlocked that I couldn't get a single train rolling until the passenger trains ran—and it looked as if they were going to be a long time running.

Every siding being full, there was no place where I could put Number 12 for a meet with Number 39. "No room here,"

was all I heard from every siding in the vicinity of where they should meet. At length a conductor discovered and reported there was enough space on the house track at Pulga for 12 to get in—and that's where it went, to the tune of about fifty minutes delay.

Since I first tackled this job, a year or so ago, I have had ten times the dispatching experience as was my lot on flatland districts during the years I worked them. Maybe it sounds silly to Easterners, but here on The Mountain you sometimes sense Nature's moods prior to the time anything happens—a sort of premonition. Whenever this uneasiness overtakes me, no matter how closely I watch and try to forestall disruption, I never succeed. It goes completely to the bow-wows all at once, as if a deliberate attack had been planned by a master mind and executed in perfect co-ordination by his forces.

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MILEPOSTS

How We're Doing

WP's first piggy-back load from the East arrived in San Francisco October 10, routed DL&W, NKP, CB&Q, D&RGW and WP from New Jersey.

• • •

The *California Zephyr* average load for 12 months ending August, 1957, averaged 73.02 per cent of capacity, compared with a 74.55 per cent of capacity for the same period the year before. For the month of September, 1957, the load capacity averaged 77.7 per cent of capacity compared with 88.1 per cent of capacity for September, 1956.

• • •

Sacramento Northern, on September 20, asked the Interstate Commerce Commission for permission to reroute its train service in Sutter and Yuba counties because of proposal to abandon 10 miles of track between Pearson and East Nicolaus. Also requested about 23 miles of trackage rights over WP between Sankey and Cleveland since bridges over Bear River and Plumas Lake on its own lines require rebuilding and the expense is not warranted.

• • •

Following recent discontinuance by Pennsylvania of handling *California Zephyr* through-Pullman-car service between Chicago and New York, similar service by New York Central now discontinued since traffic would not justify purchase of additional sleeper required.

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THE TRAIN SHEET

