

unload the car were Norn Holmes, Hap Manit, MelMoore, Ken Roller, John Ryczkowski, and 3 of our workfare workers. Jan 16th the car was placed on trucks for the first time in years.

SAN JOSE TURN, JANUARY 1977

by DAVE McCLAIN

It's a cool, foggy day in Stockton and the Western Pacific is busy with the task of moving heavy trains while being starved of power.

Getting a yard pass and permission to take a trip on a WP freight wasn't easy, but with the help of Mr Carl Yund in San Francisco I had my wish. With the remaining F-7's as power I had a ride of a lifetime ahead of me.



913 had just blown a main generator and was out of service. That left us with the other three, 917, 918 and 921. No other power was to be had in the yard. Our train was called out of Stockton west at 12:01, so this gave me a chance to tour the facility. Around noon our three venerable ladies pulled up next to the yard office for boarding. We had 918 on the point, 921 was in middle with 917 trailing. Of course I love the sound of laboring 567Bs and with a 65 car freight their work was cut out for them.

Our train was out of Stockton heading to San Jose at 1:00 with 4000 tons. We barreled through Tracy at about 40+ MPH getting a run for Altamont. After all the grade crossings had been passed I was allowed to walk back through 918 and listen and record it working.

Not one spot on the floor was clear of oil, water, grease, etc. the years of WP maintenance and hard running showed terribly somehow while still running you could sense they were screaming for replacement. They just wouldn't die. Finally over the top, at 11MPH and gaining, transition being manually shifted, they were home free for awhile. Down the Livermore Valley, a red signal stopped us for awhile until getting clearance from the dispatcher to proceed at 10MPH. Now was the chance to try out the dynamics, 918 was the only unit with operating brakes, so

brake shoes were on order here. 921 and 917 both had bad brake grids, as we all know. Since we didn't have any traffic for San Jose, we turned at Milpitas. This gave us time to eat dinner and take our time.

Returning to the yard, seeing our tired units waiting for out boarding convinced me that there was still an exciting return trip to Stockton.

Charging the air took 15 min, so the train had to be a long one. Ninety seven cars and a heavy grade ahead. Pulling out of Milpitas to Nile Jct was at best just 16-17MPH. At Niles I went back to the 2nd unit so that I could have sound on both sides of my microphones. 567B's in run 8 at 15 MPH through tunnels and canyons made for good sound! Across the Livermore valley we gained some speed for the hill. We were going too fast to record the exhaust from the outside, but the hill was another story.

Slowing down to 10MPH made it slow enough to stick my sound equipment out the window and upon the roof for some great recordings. From the west end of the hill to the pass took a good 20 minutes. All units overloaded and barely clearing the summit at 7MPH, impressed even the most skeptical of trainmen, as they turned in much better performance than GE's 22 years their junior. After cresting the hill, engines finally brought back down to idle, I returned from 921 to the head end. The engines were hot, some leaking water and oil at all times, but still running as if they had been built yesterday.

We crossed the valley through Tracy and arrived Stockton around 11:00 PM.

Another day in the life of WP's Fs, some how I wished that it would not end, but all good times must end. Even better, is that we have a



representative of this magnificent fleet that so many people have come to remember the WP for.

I'll be glad to provide anyone a copy of my tape as long as I am re-imbursed for the tape, tape price only. I can dupe it most readily in cassette form, the sound of the WP F's LIVES...