



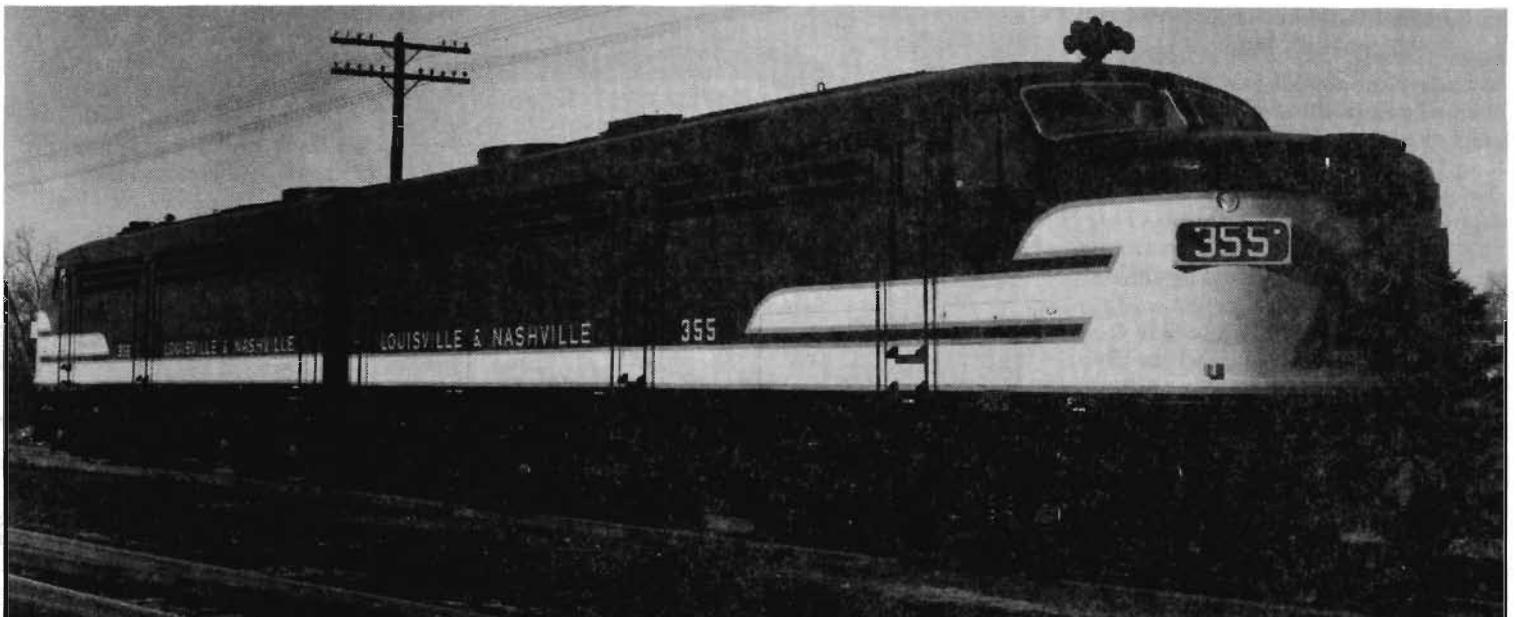
LONG ISLAND FA-2

During WW II the nations's railroads realized the operational advantage of diesel locomotives. General Motors was the only manufacturer allowed to build diesel road power by order of the War Production Board. Alco and Baldwin built only diesel switchers. (Alco, Baldwin, and Lima built steam locomotives also during this period.) With the hostilities over both Also and Baldwin embarked on development of road power. Alco introduced the PA and FA passenger and freight units in 1946. The railroads were eager to replace steam power and were buying diesels as fast as the manu-

facturers could build them. As was inevitable, the PA's and FA's served their time and were replaced by newer, more reliable, higher horsepower units. The PA's and FA's were traded in or scrapped. Three PA's escaped the scrappers torch and are now in Mexico, wrecked and awaiting their fate. Eighteen FA's were bought by the Long Island RR to be used as power control cars. (Power control cars were placed on the opposite end of push-pull passenger trains from the powering unit to provide a control position for the engineer and to provide a power plant for train heating and air conditioning.) Long Island is now starting to retire the FA units. Four former

L&N units were put up for sale to be sold to the highest bidder.

When the Western Pacific and BN started pooling power between Stockton and the Pacific Northwest a number of former Spokane, Portland, and Seattle FA's found their way over the high line and through the Canyon. Several of the FA's purchased by Long Island are former SP&S units. They are still in service, although retirement is not too far away. Since the FA's are so rare and there would be no guarantee that we could obtain a former SP&S unit when they are retired it was decided to place a low bid on the first four--just in case. All four were bid on, with the intention of purchasing only one. We



were high bid on three of the four and were awarded #604 at a cost of \$2480.

The unit was shipped from Long Island to East St. Louis, Ill. on Conrail without a charge. It was then transferred to UP for movement to Portola, again at no charge. It arrived on July 5th. The transportation costs, if charged to us, would have been many times the cost of the unit. It is indeed fortunate both Conrail and UP are willing to help in the preservation of railroad equipment. Even though

the unit was moved through some high vandalism areas no damage occurred enroute.

Our Alco FA has the original diesel prime mover appearing to be in usable condition, but the generator has been changed, the traction motors removed, and some electrical equipment is missing. It would be possible to restore the unit to operation, but it would be an expensive, time consuming job. Incidentally our Alco RS-3's possess identical mechanical and electrical components.

It has not been decided how to paint the exterior of the unit. SP&S units in tan and dark green operated over the WP which would look nice. Another good paint scheme would be Great Northern's empire builder orange and green. UP also operated FA's however none ventured onto the WP. It might look great in Armor yellow with the blue wings . . . The 604 will remain in its blue and white Long Island paint for awhile. At least we have an FA!

Mileposts

WESTERN PACIFIC

AUGUST, 1957

A ROYAL welcome was accorded Western Pacific's new train ferry, *Las Plumas*, when she officially arrived in San Francisco Bay at noon on July 11.

Believed to be the first train ferry to operate on the Pacific Ocean, she came down from Portland, Oregon, under her own power with officers and crew living in sleeping and dining cars aboard. Actually, she arrived in San Francisco Bay about twelve hours

ahead of schedule, having maintained faster speeds than anticipated. She passed under the Golden Gate Bridge about 11 p. m. on July 10 and dropped anchor off the Marina shore. The following morning she weighed anchor and maneuvered into position just inside the Golden Gate to await her official welcome. The huge streamlined ferry was soon greeted by geyser-spraying fireboats, the "great golden fleet" of Bay pleasure boats, whistle blasts from the various ships in the harbor, Belt Railroad locomotives, and

other fanfare. Right on schedule for her noontime docking at Pier 18, she acknowledged the "12-o'clock" siren atop the Ferry Building with three long blasts from her whistle. Among the craft going out to meet the self-propelled diesel ferry was the venerable Western Pacific tug *Humaconna*, whose job will be absorbed by the new arrival.

The *Las Plumas* differs widely from other ferries that have plied the Bay, being of streamlined design and embodying many new features, perhaps the outstanding one being a bow propeller operable at any angle to the keel for easy maneuverability. She was designed by L. C. Norgaard, San Francisco naval architect, and built by the Albina Engine and Machinery Works at Portland.

The control bridge and crew's quarters are located in a single-span bridge amidship. The ship is fully equipped with radio and radar. A novel feature is the method of taking on fuel, which will be accomplished by rolling tank cars aboard the vessel and filling by gravity from the cars through manholes in the deck.

The 2,255-gross ton ferry, which cost about \$1,300,000 to build, is powered



"Las Plumas" Makes Her Debut

by direct diesel propulsion of three main screws at the stern—her three 700-h.p. Enterprise diesel engines and one 225-h.p. Murray & Tregurtha engine will provide a speed of 12 knots. Over-all length is 375 feet. Her beam is 59 feet, and depth from deck to keel is 16 feet. The all-steel vessel will carry 28 loaded freight cars and has a displacement of 3,500 tons.



From her deck the vessel's single-span bridge amidship makes an impressive sight. She can handle 28 freight cars on her 375-foot deck.