

EQUIPMENT ARRIVALS

Last June, Norman and Barbara Holmes visited their daughter and grandson in Anchorage, Alaska. Being interested in railroads (surprise), Norm visited the Alaska Railroad and found some surplus equipment for sale. One item Norm long wanted for our museum was a World War II troop sleeper car. Alaska Railroad had recently brought three such cars back from Denali Park where they had been used as a youth hostel for sleeping quarters and office. The two cars that were used for sleeping were complete as they were when in Army service. Norm selected one and negotiated a price with the railroad.

Also in the surplus track was a heater/power car. This car was converted from an Union Pacific E-9B unit by Amtrak and later sold to Alaska for the same use. A reasonable price was quoted, an inquiry made with Alaska Hydro-Train for movement to Seattle and Norm & Barbara returned home.

The proposition to purchase the power car was placed before our Board of Directors, Norm would buy the sleeper and donate it to the museum. Transportation would be extra. The Board OK'd the plan. Union Pacific was contacted regarding free transportation from Seattle to Portola. They suggested we try Burlington Northern to bring the cars from Seattle to Bieber, then UP would have a short haul to Portola. If UP hauled them from Seattle to Portola they would have to go via Salt Lake City making a very long trip.

To our surprise BN agreed to move the cars without cost to Bieber and UP agreed to haul them free from Bieber to Portola. This left Alaska Railroad and Hydro-Train. Hydro-Train would not move them free, but they have a reduced rate from Whittier to Seattle (set up mainly for summer tourist cars returning) which would save a considerable amount over the Anchorage-Seattle joint rate. After some soul-searching Alaska agreed to move the cars the 62 miles to Whittier without cost. Thanks to Alaska, Burlington Northern and Union Pacific Railroads, the only cost in transportation was \$3,444 paid to Hydro-Train.

The cars were placed on a barge at Whittier Nov. 25, and arrived Seattle Nov. 27. They left Seattle Nov. 30 and arrived Portola Dec. 5. No trouble or damage enroute except for two broken windows in the sleeper. Hobos apparently rode the car part way finding "first class accommodations." We were particularly concerned by the sleepers trucks. They are Allied Full-Cushion and are outlawed for interchange, however

a one time move to "HOME SHOP" is allowed.

The troop sleeper, besides being an interesting exhibit for anyone who rode these cars during WW II, will provide our museum volunteers with a place to sleep besides in a caboose. Locating a WW II car as complete as this one was a rare find. A number of railroads bought these cars after the war and converted them to MW service, usually receiving extensive modifications. Often the trucks were replaced with more modern roller bearing units. Although not a high priority, we would like to repaint the car back to its original Pullman green color. A quick sanding job revealed the car's original number - 8300.

Exactly what we will do with the power car, P-7, has yet to be determined. B units, either E's or F's are rare as most saved E's and F's are A units. The E9B story will appear in the next Train Sheet.

EQUIPMENT DEPARTURE

Almost as soon as the two cars arrived from Alaska, the final Alaska unit owned by Mountain Diesel Corp. was being prepared for a trip to Colorado. In November, 1986, MDC purchased six F7 units from Alaska Railroad and arranged to have them transported to Portola for storage and display. Included with the six unit deal was a power car converted from a troop kitchen car. MDC donated this car to FRRS.

MDC's original intent was merely to save the units from scrap (Alaska was stripping F units and selling the shells to a scrap dealer). However, an opportunity to lease three units to a short line railroad was found and after being repainted in our shop, two FP7A's and a F7B departed in December, 1987. The two F7A's remained for another year then they left for a lease deal in Idaho. While in Portola one F7A, 1506, was used for some of our train service and for railfan day. Not long after arriving in Idaho, the 1506 was involved in a runaway and wrecked. The final Alaska unit, a derelict F7B, stripped of its outside sheet metal remained at Portola until December, 1989, when it was placed on UP tracks for a move to Colorado.

At one time we had more F units at our museum than anyone else, and they were a welcome attraction to visitors. We now have a F7A, FP7A, FA-2 and E9B, still a good representation of the "covered wagon" era.