

CMO Report

by Hank Stiles

Once again the operating season is just about upon us. The Mechanical Department has been busy preparing our locomotives for the job that is ahead of them. We have the WP 707, WP 608, FR&W 1857 and WP 512 in service at this time. I hope to add the WP 921-A and the SP 2873 later this spring. The WP 921-A has had a new (to it) voltage regulator installed and we are working on replacing one of the wires that lead from the slip rings to the alternator coils through the center of the armature shaft in the main generator. This is a big job because the air compressor coupling must be disconnected to get at the wire that needs replacing. I hope that the air compressor will not have to be moved. The air compressor is mounted on the opposite end of the main generator from the prime mover. If the air compressor should have to be moved this will add a lot of work. With no AC current the traction motor blowers do not work and the engine will not load without traction motor blowers. This is another one of those big jobs that we must do if we are to keep these old units working for us. After fifty years of service things like this just happen.

The SP 2873 had a problem with the controller. As I reported in the last issue we have another controller for parts. Jay Sarno with the help of Ed Powell took the old and the "new" and made one good one out of the parts. After the rebuild, the new controller was installed and it was time to test the unit. It started up just fine, but one of the relay valves in the brake system would not seat and blew so much air that we could not build up the main reservoir pressure. We also discovered a problem with the engine not loading. This is a mystery and I could not find the problem. Fortunately Peter Lyman from Pasadena Ca. traveled to Portola to help out. If there is a problem he can't figure out it's not been invented yet. This problem, time permitting, is as good as solved.

WP 2001. This engine has been a real problem. As you may recall this locomotive is the one that we took to RailFair last summer. Myself with the help of many others did an awful lot of work on this locomotive. It was a big hit at RailFair, with many people touring through the cab throughout RailFair's run. We used it to do switching for the Sacramento Southern in preparation for RailFair and it performed well. During RailFair it gave us some trouble not loading, but we were always able to get it to load. Then after RailFair when it came time to leave it would not load. We finally had to submit to being towed back to Woodland into the arms of the Yolo Shortline, there it sat while people such as myself and others tried to find the problem.

As spring approached it became time for action. I called Peter Lyman and asked for help. He was good-hearted enough to come to our aid. On April 29 Peter

and myself went to work. By the end of the day, after checking many things in the bowels of the electrical cabinet, we found that the BKTP-2 contactor was not picking up all the way. It turns out that one of the interlocking switches on that contactor was dirty and not making contact. After a cleaning it worked just fine. We also found that the 50-OHM resistor wired in series with the switch was open. Both of these things added up to a real problem. Those are now history thanks to some hard work.

Peter is a pleasure to work with and I learned a lot. I want to thank him and his lovely bride Eve for taking the time to come up from Pasadena and get us out of a tight spot. The end result is that when I get the part and install it the engine will again be running, as it should. We will be using it on the Yolo Shortline, in freight and excursion service, so get out your cameras.

Once again I want to ask for your help. Myself and a handful of hardworking volunteers do the Mechanical Department work. We don't have time to do all that I would like to get done. We must put our efforts into the things that must get done. Sometimes we pass up rentals and the money they generate because we can't get the work done, that must be done, on time. The problem that we have is not lack of money, it is lack of volunteers in the mechanical department. It is easier to attract people to be a conductor or an engineer and run the job or the engine than it is to attract people to work on the equipment so the conductor and the engineer can run it. I don't want you to think that I don't appreciate the people who come up to help out in train and engine service. I have been in train service for 29 years for the Western Pacific and the Union Pacific and I know it is not all smiles and highballs, but there is more to a railroad or a museum than running trains.

I would ask each and every one of you who can, to take the time to help out at one of the most rewarding places that you can spend your time. We have a Locomotive Maintenance Clinic the first full weekend of each month, April through October, (if the 1st. falls on Sunday, it's the next weekend). This is a good time to come up and help out. We have almost 1100 members. About 50 help out on a regular basis and 50 more help out when they can. I know that all of you can't help, some physically can't get to the museum, some have no other interest in the museum other than reading about it. This leaves about 1000 that don't help out at all. If just 1% of that 1000 could help out, you can see what that would do to help the museum. What I would like to see is that 1% that can help, you are the ones that can make a real impact at the museum. Please think about it and help where and when you can.

This is your Society. Make it prosper by participating in the various activities each month.