

Dispatcher

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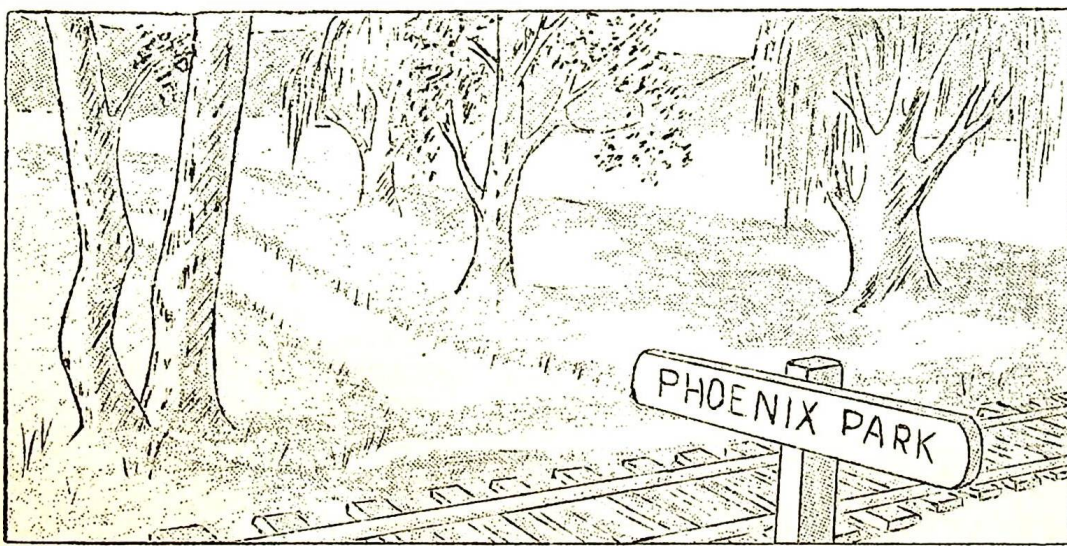
SAN DIEGO'S PAPER RAILROADS II

BILLY HAD A PLAN FOR THE SAN DIEGO & PHOENIX

by SPENCER MENZEL

"San Diego has bay'n climate'n the
greatest of these is Carlson."^A

"Our Billy Carlson" was mayor of San Diego. Like all persons of prominence in town, he, too, built railroads, only more spectacularly. Among his early ventures was the San Diego and Eastern Terminal railway; a line which served the wharves of the town. Even though this railroad used two old engines from the Vermont Central which "were of an antiquated type," it had its share of the spotlight. The enterprise ended by being torn up by the Pacific Coast Steamship Company, loaded



on vessels, and taken north without Billy's consent.^{BC}

But Carlson had bigger ideas for his railroads. He promised the people of San Diego a transcontinental railway connection via the San Diego and Phoenix Railway, and they elected him mayor.^A

This company, incorporated in 1893, began soon after his election as mayor to secure rights-of-way. On April 25, the National City trustees granted a franchise giving the railroad the right to "build along and upon" streets in National City via the intersection of the shoreline and Division Street, Sixth Avenue, Twelfth Street, Ninth Avenue, Twenty-ninth Street, and Eighth Avenue to the south boundary of National City. The franchise was for a standard gauge steam freight and passenger railway equipped with 56 pound rails. Work on the railway was to begin within six months and the whole line to San Diego to be finished within one year. The franchise was revokable if the company did not complete at least twenty-five

miles from National City in one year and to some point on the Colorado River within two years. Three months later, the county granted a right-of-way over National Avenue, a continuation of Eighth Avenue, in Chula Vista to the company.^C

Surveys began from the east at Phoenix in May. Here a preliminary survey contract was awarded to Fred King who was to run the line in Arizona. The line from Phoenix ran to Gila Bend and Agua Fria from whence it followed in a southwesterly direction to Yuma. Construction there was expected to begin in July.^A

As the work on the west end of the line developed in close coordination with the Coronado Belt Line, owned by E. S. Babcock who was also interested in the new road, many skeptics argued that this was really another Babcock railroad. The National City Record said "this looks like warmed over porridge. . . .a part of the Coronado Belt Line -- Peninsular Railroad scheme." Too, the equipment which Carlson used on the line had operated on the Belt Line. So, many scoffed and belittled his efforts.^C

Nevertheless, the work forged ahead. A force of twenty men began clearing brush to get ready for the graders. This was at Phoenix Junction, where National Avenue enters Otay Valley. By June 9, at least one mile of grade was complete. By the end of June, the Belt Line had extended its tracks east from the Coronado pumping plant 1200 feet in order to aid in the transporting of materials. From here on into Otay Valley ran the line. About two miles of grade and half a mile of track were finished in June.^{AB}

The proposed route followed the so-called "Tom Scott" route east. From Otay the line passed through Daneri, Jamul Valley, Dulzura, and Campo on its way to Yuma.^A This proposed route, however, was changed later in favor of a more southerly one in Mexico.

The United States government was building the Zuniga jetty at this time, and Mr. Babcock and others were building a dam some miles up the Otay River.

"Therefore, (said the Record), the San Diego and Phoenix Railroad are obtaining money under false pretenses, and the public's dollars are going into a sidetrack from the Coronado pumping plant in the Otay.

"This sidetrack has no connection with the San Diego and Phoenix proper.

"It is being built simply to facilitate the construction of a dam for a water company controlled by Mr. Babcock and associates and to give the Coronado Beach Company the inside track in bidding for rock for the Zuniga shoals jetty. Only this and nothing more. . . .

"The enterprise of extending the Coronado Belt Line up the valley is a good one. . . ."^C

On July 11 the San Diego Land and Town Company filed suit in Superior Court and secured an injunction stopping work on the railroad where they were making a cut on some property of the Land and Town Company. Evidently this was an effort on the part of the land company, which owned the National City and Otay Railroad and a rock quarry, and thus were the competitors in bidding for the Zuniga rock proposition, to prevent the Coronado Railroad and Beach Company from securing the contract with the government, for as soon as the N. C. and O. secured the contract the injunction was withdrawn.

The Land and Town Company interests continuously opposed the carrying out of the San Diego and Phoenix plans, although at times they feigned cooperation.^X

From the time of the injunction, work slowed down considerably. So much so that the papers declared that the railroad was defunct. But, Mr. Carlson said, "No." He took over the presidency from D. C. Reed in September and declared that the work would be resumed.^X Carlson's statement was correct. By the end of October the Union reported that the graders were then working in the Denari vineyard, and that a completed line stretched fully five miles from Phoenix Junction. In December the graders were approaching the Otay Rancho through which the San Diego Land and Town Company refused to grant a right-of-way.^{AB}

This refusal came unexpectedly. Mr. Dwight Braman, president of the Land and Town Company, in the middle of November had arrived in San Diego on a tour of inspection. During his visit he talked with Billy Carlson, and promised that his company would do all in its power to help the Phoenix project, now that he understood the proposition. The seeming opposition to granting a right-of-way sprang

From a desire of the stockholders not to cut up their land. Instead of opposing the railroad, insisted Mr. Braman, the time was now ripe for a direct line to Yuma; the Land and Town Company was eager to do its part in helping this worthy project. Whereupon Carlson broached the subject of the use of the National City and Otay tracks from Otay to San Diego. To this Braman was agreeable, even to the point of offering to Carlson the use of the line's equipment at reduced rates. The visitor expressed the opinion that Carlson's idea of raising money for the road by building the road with small subscriptions was entirely new, but that he could see no reason why it would not work. Most surprising to Mr. Braman was the possession of the papers on the old Tom Scott route to Yuma, which Carlson followed, and stated that this was the most feasible route.

All this talk, the backers hoped, indicated a change in attitude of the antagonistic Land and Town Company toward the Phoenix road. Especially did they hope that the talk was real enough to get a right-of-way through the Otay grant.

Nonetheless, Mr. Braman left immediately for San Francisco to organize an extension for the National City and Otay Railroad to Yuma. His plans for this new road and his refusal to give rights-of-way through the Land company's holdings, suggested that Mr. Braman was merely talking.^A

Billy's plan of raising money in small subscriptions called forth all his best showmanship. Bands, entertainments, barbecues, and horse races all had their place on the program for raising money. A typical meeting, held at the Fisher's Opera House on December 7, 1893, raised \$5,000 in subscriptions ranging in amounts from \$2 to \$100. This meeting attracted a capacity crowd. In accordance "with a habit acquired several years ago by Mr. Carlson," a band was engaged and a big parade was held before the meeting. Then, in the opera house, Carlson described his proposition after the colored band had contributed to the festivities. Mr. Carlson explained the object of the meeting by stating, "San Diego needs salvation as much as a sinner's soul needs it. It's a groundhog case. If you don't help yourself, the Lord won't help you." What he wished to see was \$30,000 raised in the next few days so that he could take his proposed trip to New York with the first ten miles in operation. "If the sum is raised," said Carlson, "the ties and rails will be shipped to this city in twenty-four hours, and the first ten miles will be completed within thirty days."^A It was this initial ten miles and thirty thousand dollars that never ceased to occupy Carlson's attention.

Almost immediately after the meeting, Carlson left town presumably for New York. Then on December 27 came a telegram from Mexico City telling of success in obtaining a concession from that government for a railroad across the peninsula of Lower California.

Upon his arrival at home, the details of the contract were made public. While on the trip he contacted the president of the country, Porfirio Diaz, and the Secretary of Public Works, General Manuel Cosio. The contract, signed on December 28, was a "liberal concession." As an inducement for building the railroad across the peninsula from San Diego to Yuma, with a branch to Ensenada, the government gave a strip of land twenty miles wide (ten miles on each side of a 230 foot right-of-way) across the territory including all the coal deposits that might be found on the land. Provision was made for a telegraph line along the right-of-way. A further inducement was included in the freedom from all local and national taxes for thirty years and customs-free importation of all materials needed for construction.

In return for the above concessions, Mr. Carlson agreed to complete the preliminary surveys for the Yuma railway and its Ensenada branch within six months. Line was required to be completed within eight years. A final obligation rested upon the builder to settle 1,000 families upon the land in eight years.

The right to build the railway to Yuma through Mexican territory and the

grant of land were considered by Carlson to be of primary importance. The building of a branch line to Ensenada he considered secondary, but justified because the capital of the territory should have rail connections. The requirement of colonization he considered of little importance, since that could be easily accomplished.^X

The local news reporters stated that "it is safe to presume" that the San Diego and Phoenix Railroad would exercise its concession immediately. The proposed line from the completed portion in the Otay Valley leading into Mexico and across the mountains and desert to Yuma was "as practical as the old survey of the Texas and Pacific," which Carlson had been following until then. This new route was not expected to present serious obstacles to early progress on the road. Supporters rejoiced that the "absolute refusal" of the Land and Town Company was now effectively disposed of.^D

Mr. Carlson told of his trip. "At El Paso," said he, "I received congratulatory telegrams from New York capitalists interested in the San Diego and Phoenix railroad enterprise, and stating that they stood ready to furnish the money to complete the balance in ten mile sections." Of course this was contingent upon the first ten miles being completed and turned over without any indebtedness. "I now will go ahead with all my might to get this first ten miles through."^B

The mayor then outlined his plans for the future. First, he would push work to raise the \$30,000. When that was accomplished, San Francisco people would send rails and ties immediately to San Diego and the first section would be finished within thirty days. That done, the Metropolitan Trust Company of New York, controlled by C. P. Huntington, would issue and sell \$200,000 of 6% bonds. This would realize \$160,000 cash to build the next ten miles. Work on the rest of the line would follow this same general pattern; as each section of ten miles was finished, the Phoenix Company would receive its cash from the sale of bonds. Therefore, suggested Carlson, let everyone subscribe liberally and the road to Yuma would be built "in first-class style."^{AB}

Immediately a change in route and new surveys had to be made to accommodate the new conditions. Carlson and the secretary of the company, Mr. Dixon, visited the end of the line, which was in the Denari vineyard in the Otay Valley. The new road branched up a canyon (which of three not yet decided) southward into the Otay Mesa, a climb of a mile or so. Then for seven or eight miles on the mesa the line was "level as water," according to Dixon. The entrance into Mexico would be at a point about six miles east of Tia Juana. Here the builders hoped to found a new town. The route east just below the border had not been surveyed, but they hoped that it was satisfactory.^{AB}

Washington's Birthday, 1894, witnessed one of Carlson's entertaining spectacles. Trains left San Diego hourly for Phoenix Park, a group of willows and sycamores near the end of the line, via Coronado and National City. Company B of the National Guards pitched camp there and put on a skirmish drill. Music for dancing was furnished by the City Guard and Phoenix Railroad bands. Indians danced for the entertainment of the crowds. Horseraces in the Spanish and Mexican style occupied the roads nearby. But most important of all was the big clam-bake and mussel roast presided over by "Our Billy." Of course all who wished to help the enterprise which they were viewing should contribute to the new railroad.^B

The same week another meeting in the Opera House found Carlson speaking again. "I am here to speak of San Diego's back country," said he. "Arizona is our legitimate back country." When the road becomes a reality, suggested the speaker, San Diego will have a population of 100,000! After the speech, ex-president D. C. Reed offered the company a check for \$1,000. Many other backers contributed lesser amounts.^B

Then, that silence which usually indicated difficulties suddenly descended.

(Continued page 6, column 1)

Gulf of California where it met the Southern Pacific at Guaymas. The grade of the ore was such that it ceased to be profitable to ship. The only way to do it now would be by train. It is approximately 600 kilometers or 400 miles. However, the engineers are reported to have said that the terrain on the eastern slopes is much easier for railway construction than on the western side.

So the plan is, unofficially at least, to run the line from Mexicali down to San Felipe and then down the coast to Santa Rosalia. On the west coast of Baja California is the important agricultural growing area of San Quintin. North of that, about 75 miles, is the important grape-growing and winery town of Santa Tomas. San Quintin has good water from the Santa Domingo River.

East of San Quintin is the Arroyo Santa Maria pass which pierces the Sierra de San Pedro Martir at a low level approximately the same as the Feather River Canyon of the Western Pacific. So the plan is to take off from the east shore near San Felipe, cut across to San Quintin, come north to Santo Tomas and then to Ensenada.

As they say, it's a long road that has no turning and the longest way around is the shortest way home.

Construction is supposed to start in a couple of years.

COMING UP - SOMETIME

John Gorby in the preceding article speculates about the future of Baja California. Dick Dodge is currently preparing an article about Baja California's railroads of the past.

Subscribe to the Dispatcher by joining the Railway Historical Society of San Diego or by sending in your dollar for the next ten issues.

BILLY HAS A PLAN (Continued)

For almost three months the two leading papers of the city failed to mention the project. In May, 1894, came the report of "work progressing favorably." But the outsiders would not take hold until the first ten miles were completed and in operation. "The future of San Diego is in the people's own hands," said Carlson.^B

Finally, eight years later, like a forgotten voice, came the report that "Ex-Mayor Carlson of San Diego, is still intent on building his Yuma road which is to have extensive side tracks, shops, etc.

THE DISPATCHER

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Published four to eight times a year as the official publication of the Railway Historical Society of San Diego.

Society officers are: Corky Thomson, president; Jack Stodelle, first vice pres. Tommy Mann, second vice pres.; Roy Miller, third vice pres.; Tom Latson, rec. secy.; Barbara Thomson, corr. secy.; Fred Finke, treas.; L.W. McCleary, excu.dir.; Eric Sanders, hist-lib.

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in this city (National City).^C

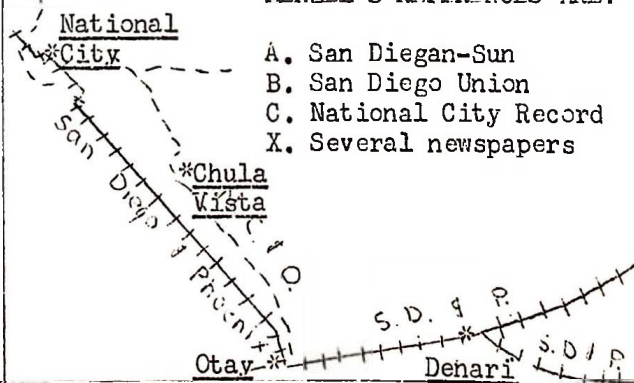
Meanwhile, San Diegans had fallen for a new scheme called "The Railroad Men's Railroad," and Mr. Braman pushed his National City and Otay extension.

YOU MAY VISIT THE SAN DIEGO AND PHOENIX ROADBED IN THE OTAY VALLEY

Spencer Menzel has supplied the Dispatcher with a sketch map of the remaining portions of abandoned roadbeds in the South Bay area. Included is the Denari Vineyard area roadbed--or so it appears. Your editor has also visited the area and observed what appeared to be the right-of-way. The remains of the winery can still be seen. Spencer Menzel has offered to conduct the Society on a guided tour over abandoned South Bay roadbed. His sketch will be "run" when space permits.

MENZEL'S REFERENCES ARE:

- A. San Diegan-Sun
- B. San Diego Union
- C. National City Record
- X. Several newspapers



WEST OF THE WEST COAST OF MEXICO

by RICHARD V. DODGE

7

On Mr. Cortes' sea, better known as the Gulf of California, some 460 miles south of Tijuana, there lies the small mining town of Santa Rosalia, in Baja California, Territorio Sur.

And way down there is an isolated three foot gauge railroad on which a venerable steam locomotive operates.

Hardy motorists from the States can reach it by bumping and swaying over rough, dusty roads, an arduous task. But there is an easier way to get there. Trans-Mar de Cortes, S. A. operates a DC-3 plane from Tijuana scheduled three days a week. It follows, so the promotional folder reveals, "the routes opened by the Missionaries three centuries ago."

The plane operates via Ensenada, then down the Pacific Coast, for a hundred or so miles, then crosses over the mountain ranges to the Gulf Coast and lands at Santa Rosalia airport on Mesa Sur or south tableland.

Santa Rosalia is strictly a mining town with a large smelter for the reduction of copper or other ores, a small man-made harbor, housing and other related facilities. Formerly, the mines were scattered and a railroad was built to haul the ore from the mines to the smelter and to distribute supplies. At one time, according to reports, there was a total of about 21 miles of track.

The project was started by French capitalists in 1885 after a paisano or local peasant had discovered high grade balls of copper ore, which were called "boleos." The organization was named Compagnie du Boleo in French with Compania del Boleo its Mexican counterpart.

About 1945 liquidation began and the Boleo Company went out of existence in 1953. A Mexican corporation, Compania Minera Santa Rosalia, now operates the holdings on a limited scale, and the railway has been cut back to terminal service over about two miles of track.

One steam locomotive is serviceable and runs around six days a week, yanking and bumping diminutive four-wheeled French model cars here or there. It is a saddle tank engine with 0-6-0 wheel arrangement and was built by Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1899. It is equipped with a cross-head type water pump, electric lights and has been converted to an oil burner. In the "taller" (shop) are three similar engines in various stages of decomposition, one of which is being reconditioned.

As the Port of La Paz is only about 260 miles south of Santa Rosalia, a round trip ticket had been purchased to that city, "famous the world over for its pearls, fishing, boating and hunting." If you do not care about diving for pearls, fishing, etc. there is little of attraction for a railroad fan.

The day after arrival you go to the Trans-Mar de Cortes office. This was on a Friday and you ask for a reservation on Saturday's plane to Tijuana. No space. How about Monday's? No space. That would mean at least five days to wait there.

So you ask for and get a refund and purchase a ticket for Saturday on the Aeronaves de Mexico plane to Mazatlan, on the mainland. So you trans-Mar de Cortes.

Arriving in Mazatlan about 4 p.m. and recalling the late performance of the former Southern Pacific de Mexico "El Rapido" train, you taxi to the station, hoping that you might still be able to catch Saturday's train. But it was reported out on time and Sunday's train was due to leave at 6:35 a.m. It left at 6:35 a.m.

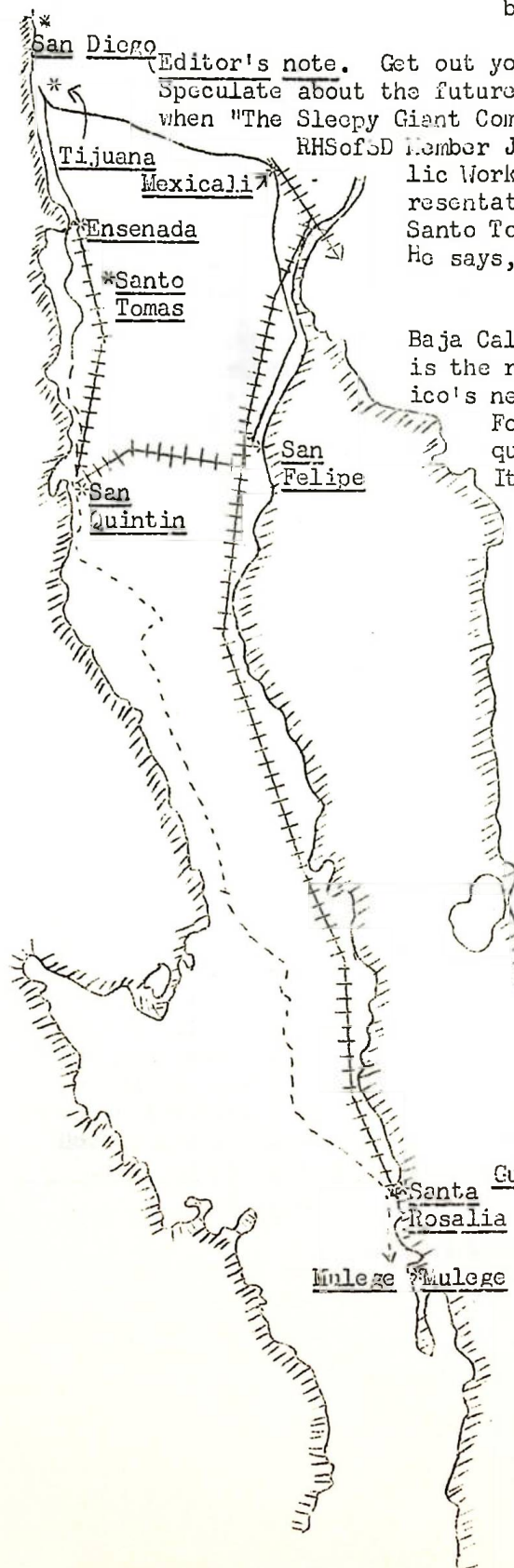
To anyone who has experienced a ride over the rough track of the SPdeli and the arrivals in Guadalajara on the advertised but just 24 hours late, the improvements on the present Ferrocarril del Pacifico are startling revelations.

Most of the track is excellent, with 112 lb. rail, rock ballasted. The reconstruction is not yet complete.

The train turned in an on-time performance. Much faster running time can be made. Now you have electric lights and air conditioning all the time. You used to have them at the start but it was a question of which would fail first, the ice or the batteries. The train was first class, not mixed. Steam is still lacking so there is no hot water.

A SLEEPY GIANT MAY COME TO LIFE

by JOHN GORBY



Editor's note. Get out your Lower California map---if you have one! Speculate about the future. One thing is sure---the day will come when "The Sleepy Giant Comes to Life." Is this day now at hand?

RHSofSD Member John Gorby talked with a Department of Public Works (Mexico) official and with owners or representatives of industries of Mexicali, Santa Rosalia, Santo Tomas and San Quintin. John's story follows. He says, "Take it for what it is worth!"

A sleepy giant, that is the Northern District of Baja California, may soon come to life. At least, that is the rumor which has businessmen and investors in Mexico's newest state enthusiastic with the possibilities.

For many months now, Mexicali has been the headquarters of a secretive group of German engineers. It so happens that they are railway engineers.

While they will not talk officially about their project, it is common gossip around our border city to the east that these engineers are well-financed and are surveying possible railway routes to tap the mineral and agricultural riches of Baja California.

Anyone who has traveled south of Ensenada knows that roads simply do not exist. They are mere tracks. One of the biggest problems is that of transportation. The rock-ing-chair engineer can sit back and say that it's easy to run a railroad right down the coast from Tijuana to Ensenada. However, the German engineers state that such a railroad would be extremely costly to build, almost comparable to going over the Sierra Nevadas.

Take a look at your map of Baja California, especially the Northern District. It runs like a long finger down into the Pacific Ocean. The center of the state is a rocky backbone of rugged mountains. The Sierra de Juarez are the mountains directly below Jacumba and Campo. These mountains blend into the Sierra de San

Pedro Martir. These latter mountains are every bit as rugged as the high Sierras of California. There are many peaks over 10,000 feet and

some are perpetually covered with snow. They are so remote and impossible of access except by plane or burro that few people know about them.

The prime objective of the German engineers is the mining district just below the boundary of the Northern District centering around Santa Rosalia. In the nearby towns of Magdalena and Mulege are hundreds of millions of tons of low grade copper and iron ore. Up to a few years ago it was exported by ship across the

(Continued page 6, column 1)

Since the timetables available locally did not mention a diner, you were resigned to subsist on the foods the natives bring down at station stops. Imagine your amazement and delight, when you find a combination lounge and diner in the consist. It was an old heavy weight air conditioned sleeper which had recently been rebuilt and fitted with modernistic furnishings.

It was a most enjoyable ride from Mazatlan to Nogales. Filet mignon for 9 pesos (72 cents), comfortable Pullmans, vestibule doors open and access would be had to the rear platform for picture taking and the fare, including a lower berth, was less than \$15.00 for the 737 miles in 24 hours and 25 minutes.

In this infernal combustion era, what more could a rail fan want?

All went well, until you crossed the line into Nogales, Arizona. There the Inspector demanded to see your vaccination certificate. You had one but the three year term had expired just 10 days previous. So you had to submit to re-vaccination on the spot. But it was for free.

R. V. D. 3-22-58

Editorial

San Diego and Coronado Ferry Company's future is now more secure. Coronado voters on April 8 turned down the proposal for a vehicular crossing by the vote FOR 1470 and AGAINST 2052.

Statements by company officials indicate that the San Diego and Coronado Ferry Company is anxious to stay in business. Apparently Coronadans as of now also wish the ferries to remain. But for how long?

Why cannot the ferry service be made even more attractive than it is? Why can't San Diego take pride in its ferries as San Francisco takes pleasure in its cable cars?

Even now the San Diego-Coronado ferry line is the only major service of this type now in operation in the state. Here is a tourist attraction of the first order.

Let the company consider selling multi-ride tickets to those who just want to take a ride. For the price of one ticket let the tourist enjoy several rides. Open a snack bar and a photography stand. Might even employ a hostess. Let's publicize the ferry line. Perhaps the service can be tied in with the Fiesta del Pacifico activity.

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And how about a summer time moonlight cruise on the ferry?

The Coronado ferry and the Star & Crescent Boat Co. excursion steamer (perhaps offering a Coronado Island cruise as well as the harbor cruise) are an unbeatable combination for the tourist. Here is an attraction which will show San Diego at its best.

Or, so the Editor thinks!

Shop Talk

There are more corrections to the Holton Inter-Urban roster. Professor S. R. Wood of Stillwater, Oklahoma reports that there was a #5 4-6-0 and a #7 2-6-0. Joe Strapac and Roy Miller are also coming up with data. Does a reader have pictures of HI equipment and right-of-way. Perhaps we can do a picture issue.

Thanks again to Joe Stone, Evening Tribune reporter, who handled that very fine car 54 story. A real nice and understanding story....

Associate Editor Doug Duncan states that 54 is an electric car—not a cable car. Actually about 50% of the car is constructed from parts of cable cars. Doug believes that portions of the roof and a major portion of the sides date back to cable car days. Seating and floors do not.

And the other Associate Editor, Richard Dodge, adds a footnote to his "West Of the West Coast of Mexico" story. He states that locomotive #2 is in the shops, #4 needs many parts, #5 needs new flues, and #7 is in service.

Dodge also reminds the Dispatcher that when "Carriso Gorge-the Magnificent" was filmed there just wasn't any curved wooden trestle.

And the Editor was in error. Dodge's data about 54 really read: 30" wheels with Brill 27G trucks. 36 pass. OK!?

That roadbed half way up the hill on the north side of the Sorrento slough is original California Southern roadbed, abandoned in 1914 or 1916. There is also another roadbed, abandoned more recently, down in the flats.

Dick Dodge's "History of the SDIERY" will be published as a special issue of the Pacific Railway Journal. Roster, and car line records are completed. Negatives are now being prepared.

Roy Miller is planning a RHSofSD picnic in Travel Town for September.... Thomsons, McClearys, Dave DeVol and Kay Troutman (wrong order, sorry!) attended a Mt. Rubidoux PRS Chapter meeting to inquire about plans for the Southern California Railway Museum....Corky Thomson and Lyle Judd told the RHSofSD story to members of the Horseless Carriage Club. Included were talks and movies of 528 and 54.....Many RHSofSD members attended the Pacific Beach Model Railroad Club 9th Annual Banquet.

And RHSofSD will soon be 10 years old.

The San Diego County Board of Supervisors has authorized the storing in a year's time of Car 54 in back of the old Whaley House.

MORE ABOUT THAT SAN DIEGO RAIL MUSEUM

A railroad museum in San Diego is a distinct possibility. Mr. James Reading, president of the San Diego Historical Shrine Foundation, joined with Corky Thomson, Tommy Mann and Jack Stodelle in a search for a suitable museum site. Possible locations included two on the AT&SF and two on the SD&AE.

Mr. Reading indicated his organization's interest in the creation of a transportation museum as part of a contemplated Old Town reconstruction project. A request for financial aid has been submitted to the Ford Foundation.

President Corky Thomson has written both San Diego area railroads requesting consideration of donation of equipment to the museum. SD&AE has already placed a hold order on one of the cars scheduled for scrapping at Calxico. Society of officers had hoped to save "03," last of the three cafe-parlor-observation cars.

RHSofSD NEWSLETTER AGAIN BEING PUBLISHED

The RHSofSD Newsletter has come to life again. With the exception of one issue published last year, the Newsletter has been dormant since the inception of the Dispatcher. Indeed the Dispatcher was an outgrowth of the Newsletter.

Newsletter #8 appeared in early April as the official bulletin of the Board of Directors. Under the sponsorship of Barbara and Corky Thomson and Tom Matson the Newsletter carried the announcement of the April meeting, the latest in Society news, and some personal chit-chat.

Dispatcher in the future will limit its RHSofSD coverage to brief summaries of Society activity except when activity is of general interest.

Join the Society and receive both publications.

EXCURSION NEWS

Excursion Director L. W. McCleary has announced plans for an excursion on regularly-scheduled trains to San Bernardino. An inspection of shop facilities at that point is planned. July 27 is the date.

McCleary also stated that the Plaster City excursion has been indefinitely postponed because of track and trestle reconstruction which is being carried out during daylight hours. Train movements are now scheduled at night.

CLUB NOTES

Orange Empire Traction has built a permanent-type elevated ramp, capable of handling both standard and low bed truck loads of standard and 3'6" gauge equipment.

LATL 9614 and SDTS 508 have been delivered. On 508, wax has been applied to the exterior and oil has been applied to the seats. LATL 1201 and BBER 1225 have been purchased. (OET Newsletter)

Southern California Railway Museum is located off a Perris spur (on the old California Southern roadbed) in the vicinity of 11th, Mountain and MacPherson Sts.

Bay Area Electric Railroad Association member Norman B. Newcomb purchased Pacific Electric business car #1299. The car, now at San Bernardino, will be stored temporarily at the Fairgrounds in Pomona. (BAERA Review & John Gorby)

Ed Leahy (former San Diego man) is now Public Relations head for PE.

Metropolitan Transit Authority of Los Angeles began operating Metro-Asbury and LATL at 7:42 a.m. March 3, 1958. First rail line to go will be Bellflower-and that when the necessary bus equipment is available. (Strapac)

The Los Angeles Mirror-News outlined the developments during the first month of operation. They are:

- a. Raised some fares (including six tokens for \$1, up from seven.).
- b. Placed 90 new buses (of order of 110) on many interurban routes.
- c. Cut 29 round trips.
- d. Added 4 round trips.
- e. Saved \$540,000 in taxes by using "E" licenses.
- f. Printed seven new route timetables.
- g. Formed a Planning Dept. under former LATL President Cone T. Brass, now MTA General Manager. Route unifications will be recommended at the April 17 meeting.
- h. Renumbered Asbury #12 (Los Angeles-San Fernando) as Route 24.
- i. Adopted two-toned green color scheme (ICL's color scheme)
- j. Moved into former LATL building at 1060 South Broadway.

SC-ERA on April 5 planned a trip on the first LATL PCC car (probably 3075) to be painted new colors. (SC-ERA)

AND IN SAN DIEGO----

Lauren Clapp, editor of SDTS' Transit Topics, stated that former SDER-SDTS-MCL McNally has been appointed Assistant General Manager for the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority. Other ex-SDTS men, working for MCL, have moved to LAMTA for a one year period. Dale Harlan is one of the group.

Clapp states that 12 of the new SDTS buses have arrived.

On April 20 they'll go into service on Routes R and O. Total order of 20 will be numbered 531-550.

Mr. McNally's son was killed in the Capitol Airlines crash.

Mr. Clapp stated that he had no information about a change in color scheme for SDTS. The color scheme, also used by MCL, has been adopted by LAMTA.

Assemblyman Frank Luckel will head Interim Subcommittee studying the proposed San Diego Transit Authority.

Main Line

SD&AE's El Cajon branch freight consist was 16 cars and the caboose when spotted at 47th St. by Doug Duncan.

Three SD&AE MW cars went to Callexico for scrapping. Included were 03, the last of the three former cafe-parlor-observation cars, and two wooden combines. A hold has been placed on one of the cars so that SP may have time to consider a donation of a car.

A photograph of the former SD&AE La Mesa station building now relocated on Mrs. Florence Beadle's farm just north-east of downtown Lakeside was forwarded the Dispatcher by Phillip S. Rush, publisher of the Southern California Rancher.

Motor train passenger service on the AT&SF Topeka-Atchison segment was dropped March 15. Freight continues. (LATimes)

National City AT&SF freight consist now includes a caboose rather than 1203. Surviving AT&SF steam locomotives are:

2-6-2 1010

4-8-4 2900, 2925, 2927-2929,
3752-3753, 3765-3784

2-10-4 5001-5035

87 in all - all stored. (Dodge)

Southern Pacific had 116 steam locomotives stored at close of 1957. Numbers later courtesy of Dodge.

Southern Pacific's plan to build the Palmdale cutoff has been shelved for the time being. (Strapac)

Union Pacific, which now operates the only ticket office in the business area, is doing much advertising. Listen to KBIG and look even in the weekly newspapers such as the La Mesa Scout.

Key System's rail lines may go on or before April 20.

British Columbia Electric's last line, Steveston-Marpole is out.

FLASH ITEM

Mr. Grosdidier, just reported that the three cars sent to Callexico for scrapping are: MW 1176 which was 03; MW 1178 which was wooden combine 177; and MW 1179 which was combine 178.

Mr. Carl Eichenlaub has placed a hold on "03." The other two cars have been or will be scrapped.

RAILWAY TO OPEN VIRGIN TERRITORY

By JOHN ABNEY
Staff Correspondent, The Copley News Service
and The San Diego Union

11.

MEXICO CITY, Jan. 16. An army of four thousand men equipped with bulldozers and dynamite is blasting its way through the last mountain to complete a rail link from Chihuahua to the Pacific port of Topolobampo, Sinaloa.

This Chihuahua-Pacific route is one of the major projects in President Ruiz Cortines' "March To The Sea" program and is expected to go into operation early this year.

The building of the 155-mile link, which spans some of the most rugged mountains and chasms on the continent, has taken three years and an estimated 25 million dollars.

Nearly five miles of tunnels were cut through mountains, the last one over a mile long, and fifteen bridges totaling nearly two miles in length were built across deep canyons.

But the new railway will provide a vital outlet to the sea for Chihuahua state's scarcely tapped wealth in timber, minerals and cattle. Most of the region's lumber and mining riches have remained undeveloped because of poor transporta-

tion facilities.

Mining engineers report that wilderness engulfing the vast Sierra Madre Mountains holds incalculable deposits of gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc and tin.

The 9,000-foot-high mountains, over which the slender rail line passes, are described as an endless tract of timber. The upper slopes of the big range are snow-covered during much of the winter months.

And from the floors of the deep valleys---the tropical country---spring dense forests of valuable hardwoods.

The army of workmen live in camps, reminiscent of the days when railroads were stretched across the western part of the United States, from the gentle plains of central Chihuahua to the frigid, windy pass the track crosses before starting down to the tropics of the Pacific coast.

Near the border of Chihuahua and Sinaloa states, the new line slithers past Copper Canyon (Barranca del Cobre) which is reported to be as big and breathtaking as the Grand Canyon of Arizona.

This section is in the region known as the "Wonderland of Minerals," the zone that mining engineers say holds fabulous lodes the Mexican government hopes to begin exploiting in the near future.

(Permission to reproduce the article given by Malcolm Donnelley, Assistant to the Manager. The Copley News Service.)

