

Dispatcher

Issue #5

Railway Historical Society of San Diego, California

April 12, 1956

LET'S TALK SHOP!

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Let's talk shop! Let's talk about RHOofSD activities, and let's talk about the Dispatcher.

Saturday, April 7 was a big day for RHOofSD. On that day Ed Shedaker, Jack Stodelle, F. L. Ticknor and Doug Duncan reported at the Del Mar Exposition grounds for the first "work day." One side of coach #050 was repainted. Duncan reported that "the job itself and the accompanying conversation made for an afternoon of fun."

Under Ed Shedaker's leadership members will journey to Del Mar again on Saturday, April 21. Check in at 9 a.m. Phone Ed Shedaker at JU 2-1726. Check with him as to equipment needs. #050's other side is to be painted. The car will be relattered. The locomotive will be hosed off and then retouched with paint where necessary. Work may also be done on the interior of the coach.

RHOofSD members! Much must be done. Let's not leave the work to the few. Please check in with Ed and plan to be in Del Mar on April 21. That goes for the editor too.

RHOofSD MEETS MAY 6

Save the date of May 6. That's a Sunday. Plans for the dedication and for the staffing of the Del Mar exhibit will be made. Probable meeting place will be at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Shedaker, 4559 Mataro Drive, San Diego.

YOUR EDITOR SUGGESTS

Support Jack Stodelle, president, and your new officers by pledging your support to help serve as a host and guide at the RHOofSD exhibit. It is doubtful that the exhibit will be open all hours. But the choice visiting hours should be covered. Readers and friends of the Dispatcher and RHOofSD are invited to help. Plans call for the distribution of a club brochure and for the sale of the special edition of the Dispatcher.

YOUR SECRETARY REPORTS

Major decisions arising from the March 24 meeting included:

a). A luncheon to be held in conjunction with the dedication of our exhibit at the Southern California Exposition and County Fair, June 29-July 8, 1956 at Del Mar. The luncheon will be for the benefit of members and railroad officials only.

b). The installation of the connecting-rods on locomotive 104 by Hazard Construction Company. \$100 has been allocated for this purpose. The rods are currently bolted to the top of 104's tender, having been shipped that way from San Francisco.

c). The decision that all future Society meetings be held on Sundays.

d). The Society's proposal to attempt the lettering job on the Spreckels car, but if unsuccessful, to hire a professional.

Dick Pennick

RHOofSD Secretary

AND THE DISPATCHER!

The Dispatcher staff is taking it easy this issue---and the paper is in the black. Subscriptions to date provide only for a "break-even" four page issue. Revenue provides for mailing of copies to subscribers and to railroad officials, railfan clubs and railfan publications.

Only with additional subscriptions can the Dispatcher regularly go beyond four pages. Copy is usually available for six to ten page editions, however.

Send in your subscription, if you haven't done so, to the Dispatcher, 7861 Normal Avenue, La Mesa. \$1 for 10 issues.

The Dispatcher staff is preparing a special issue which will be sold at cost to Del Mar exhibit visitors. The first two pages will be multilithed complete with pictures. Other pages will be mimeographed as usual. Readers are invited to submit brief items for publication in this special edition. Regular subscribers will receive the issue. It is a "special" only in that it will represent our most ambitious issue to date. Be seeing you!

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ALONG THE LINES

by Douglas Ian Duncan

A few jottings from here and there: Ever notice the power pole in the center dividing island of Mission Blvd. and San Fernando Place (at the southend of the Mission Beach Amusement Center) which still shows weathered words "Car Stop" in blue letters on a white background? Or--the siding which still crosses the sidewalk on Electric Avenue in Bird Rock--a reminder of the fast La Jolla line? Or--perhaps the last trace of the old Los Angeles and San Diego Beach right of way along the side of Highway 101 just south of Bay Park Village area?--or the sub-station that is still in use at the old SDER station at Mission Beach?--or the new shield on the front of SDTS motor coaches which reads "Safe, Courteous, Service" instead of the National City Lines usual "Safety, Courtesy, and Service"--(still like the "Ride and Relax" which was never found on anything but trolley cars--SDER busses knew better!)--or--the old original grade of the AT&SF on the south slope of Del Mar (just north of the city limits) or--the SDER listing still found in the Telephone Directory? More of these next issue.

The old packing house at El Cajon is in the process of removal and the Sunkist plant at Lemon Grove is closed and citrus packing equipment has been removed. The section houses in La Mesa were burned by the City of La Mesa on the last three days of March and the lumber company in La Mesa is moving to a new site just north of University Avenue and on the east side of the tracks. New rail is being laid in the Campo area on the SD&AE mainline--110 pound!

AT&SF will have a new overcrossing above the new four-lane Balboa Avenue extension in Pacific Beach. This new bridge will replace a steel plate girder which has served for more than thirty-five years--was in use over the original paved highway from San Diego to Los Angeles. Work began in early April and will cost \$61,900. Shoo-fly is now in use. Job will be completed in July.

The local outbound SD&AE El Cajon extra was held up 50 minutes a few weeks back when some joker parked and locked his car on the track at 31st and Commercial. Police issued a violation of r of w ticket and sent for a tow car.--A two block section on Commercial has been paved and limited track work was done before paving.--Switching service is provided daily by SD&AE as far as 32nd Street.

Judd reported that "Pick Pak Pickles" recently received a shipment by SD&AE--two barrels per car. Employee was observed examining cars and wondering how the pickles were to be removed.

Union Oil is moving from La Mesa to El Cajon. No siding at El Cajon as yet!

NEWS JOTTINGS FROM SANTA FE

reported by Phil Middlebrook

The Budd cars are reported to be still in the round house at Redondo Junction and no attempt has been made to repair them. It is understood that the Budd Co. had placed a bid of \$85,000 for the repair job.

The freight business has increased to such an extent that it has been necessary to import two more switch engines to handle it. Two 1000 h.p. high top Alco's were sent down, 2318 and 2321, making a total of six yard engines here. 2300, 2301, 2302, 2318, 2321, 2366.

Bennie Sanchez and his all Indian welding gang have been working the past two weeks building up the rail ends on the main line.

Alco locomotive 51-51A-51C has been rebuilt with EMD 567 engines and is now known as "Christine."

SD&AE DROPS OPERATING RIGHTS ON EL CENTRO-CALEXICO SP TRACKAGE

The San Diego Union reported earlier this year that the San Diego & Arizona Eastern had relinquished operating rights on SP's El Centro to Callexico trackage.

ALL GUMMED UP

By Richard V. Dodge

Back in 1939, the Western Pacific Railroad Company had 140 oil-burning steam locomotives. Today it owns just five and none is in regular service.

So, when an excursion, from San Francisco to Oroville with Mikado number 334 on the head end of a special train out of Oakland Pier, was announced by the California-Nevada Railway Historical Society, here was presented what may well be the last opportunity to ride behind steam power on that railroad.

On the morning of Sunday, March 18, 1956, a crowd assembled at the Pier at the appointed time but there was no train. Some delay in switching operations was the reason. Finally a 14 car train was shoved in the train shed. Well, anyway, part of it was. Then #334, all resplendent in new paint and trim, backed down and coupled on.

In the consist were two lounge cars, two diners, a baggage car with doors open and wooden rails across the openings and a motley array of old Western Pacific and Southern Pacific coaches. In overdue time, the train pulled out, running slowly to the station at Third and Washington Streets in Oakland. There a couple more carloads of fans got on. There were over 500 altogether.

Leaving Oakland, it was noted that the train was moving very slowly and finally stopped. After a few minutes we were off again and made a stop at Hayward. The latter was much too long just to pick up a few more passengers.

Eventually the train reached Fremont, which is the new name for the station at Niles, 26 miles from Oakland Pier. It was an unusually good spot for a "photo stop" but it was an unusually long stop. Then it developed that the fuel line from the oil tank in the tender was so clogged up that not enough oil could flow to the burner in the firebox to keep the steam pressure up. When engines stand around for long periods of time, asphaltic compounds settle out of the oil and form a sort of pavement on the bottom of the tank.

As it would be impossible for #334 to drag the train up the Altamont grade under these conditions, there was nothing to do but wait until an east-bound freight train pulled into the siding. Then its Geep was out-off, switched over and was coupled on ahead of #334 as a helper, all the way to

Oroville. These delays upset the schedules, expected photo stops were eliminated and Oroville was reached at 4:23 pm, over one hour late.

There the Geep and #334 were out-off, the baggage car was switched to the other end of the train and a two unit passenger Diesel-Electric was coupled on.

A fast run was made on the return trip, arriving at Oakland at 9:58 p.m., just 28 minutes behind the schedule.

But what a disappointment to the ardent railfans! A fine steam locomotive was discredited, though the fault was not due to a mechanical failure, and disgraced by having to have a Diesel Road Switcher as the lead engine, silencing its sonorous bell and melodious whistle and destroying the resonant symphony of its staccatoed exhausts.

AEROTRAIN CAME TO SAN DIEGO

General Motors "Aerotrain" operated as planned on all Santa Fe runs listed in the February Dispatcher except Train 81 on March 6. Operational changes required by the experimental train included the turning of the single-ended train at the National City "Y" and the addition of a helper both northbound and southbound on the Torrey Pines hill.

In approximately one year General Motors engineers shepherded the Aerotrain from blueprints to pilot models. Still to be overcome are side sway, roughness and excessive noise.

Economy of operation is most evident.

In appearance the "Aerotrain" is dwarfed by traditional equipment. Coaches are small but interior decoration is attractive. Leg room and space above seats is limited. Seats are comfortable. Sliding vestibule doors are air-activated by passengers as they pass from one car to another.

Because of lack of play in couplers between cars the train operates as a solid unit. This, however, is a distinct disadvantage when a helper engine is coupled on.

DISPATCHER! COMING UP!

In June: copy and pictures of SD&AE and the Del Mar exhibit.

Soon: Dodge's "Palliating the Attenuated Earth," "The Cuyamaca Line," "Traction By Foss."

Send in your copy.

News Briefs

According to Railway Age, TRAIN X is in final stages of construction at Pullman-Standard's Chicago plant. Delivery to New York Central is set for late this month. Another delivery will be made late in the year to the New Haven. Of aluminum construction the train is the lightest of the lightweights. New York Central will use one locomotive. New Haven will use one at each end and will equip them for third rail operation into the Grand Central Station. Locomotives are 1200 h.p. Baldwin-Lima-Hamilton hydraulic Diesel locomotives. Coaches seat 48.

KEY SYSTEM TRANSIT LINES is resisting reconstruction of track. Abandonment of all rail service is planned. State Bridge Authority is considering rail service on the bridge as a shuttle operation....SAN FRANCISCO MUNICIPAL may substitute Routes B and C-will keep Routes J, K, L, M and N. Added PCC equipment may be leased. SAN DIEGO TRANSIT SYSTEM'S eight PCC cars are still at Imperial bus yards. METROPOLITAN COACH LINE's insignia is appearing on rail cars. However, old P.E. color scheme remains unchanged. Most 5050 cars are being scrapped at Terminal Island. A few remain for service on the Watts local. PACIFIC ELECTRIC business car #1299 is stored at San Bernardino. Some LOS ANGELES TRANSIT LINES surplus equipment is going to Korea. Heavy PCC service on the P (Pico) line will face a drop in traffic if and when Santa Monica Municipal Bus Lines receive permission to operate through to downtown Los Angeles. SMMBL passengers presently transfer to P cars for ride downtown.

WESTERN PACIFIC has ordered a new freight car single-ended ferry to replace tug and barge service now being operated on San Francisco bay. Ferry will be known as the "Feather River." Capacity will be 26 to 28 cars on four tracks. Loaded displacement is 3,500 tons. The "Feather River" replaces the two steam-powered tugs, the "Humaconna," and the "Hercules" and the two wooden barges. Cost of new vessel is estimated at \$1,060,000. SOUTHERN PACIFIC's ferryboat the "Sacramento," which was replaced by the "San Leandro," has safely completed a trip to Long Beach where it will be converted into a combination pleasure ship and fishing barge for the Redondo Sport Fishing Co. RICHMOND-SAN RAFAEL TRANSPORTATION COMPANY'S four ferries go out of service next fall. MARGO-PACIFIC LINES' "Mazatlan" and ATLANTIC-CARIBBEAN CO'S. "TRADEWIND" have been sold to Japanese concerns for scrapping. Steel furnaces at Muroran, Japan, will benefit. A conflicting story states that one of the vessels will see inter-island service in Japan. Margo-Pacific used the "Mazatlan" on their one and only excursion to Mazatlan and Acapulco from San Diego. The "Tradewind" was to have operated on one or more Mexican cruises out of San Diego.

Experimental monorail service was first conducted Feb. 18 in Houston when Monorail Inc. operated first demonstration on the 970 feet pilot test line. Speeds were held to 10 to 20 m.p.h. because all braking equipment had not been installed. Engineers reported two 300 h.p. engines can propel the cars at 100 m.p.h.

I.C.C. reported that big car windows may have been a factor in tragedy caused by the derailment and overturning of SANTA FE'S two car RDC train. Almost all windows on the left side were broken. No structural defects were reported and the bodies of the cars essentially were not broken open. Cars slid 500 feet. Cars overturned immediately but remained coupled. Indicated speed was 68 or 69 m.p.h. Unresolved were different opinions about application of brakes. I.C.C. said brakes apparently were functioning properly.

IN BRIEF. 1955 Annual Report of D. & R. G.W. stated that passenger train revenues from operation of the Silverton Branch produced an increase of 60.6% over 1954. There are 314.11 miles of operated narrow gauge track remaining including 29.93 miles of three rail track. Four narrow gauge steam locomotives were retired in 1955, leaving 22 available for service, all Mikados. 204 SOUTHERN PACIFIC steam locomotives were retired from service in 1955. At the end of the year there were 498 steam and other than Diesel locomotives operated. Vans hauled by SP piggyback totaled 3,800 in 1953, 50,000 in 1955. (NOTE: See June issue for news jottings from Santa Fe's annual report and from SP Pacific Lines Bulletin.)