The HEADLIGHT

December, 1941

NEW DIESEL SWITCHERS

By P. L. WYCHE

The last-minute flash in the November HEADLIGHT, hinting at more new Diesel power for the Western Pacific, became a reality November 10 when the court formally authorized the purchase of eight additional Diesel-electric switch engines. These engines are now under construction at the American Locomotive Works and delivery is planned for February and March of next year. The new engines are of the same size as our present E. M. Co. switchers, being rated at 660 h.p., and weighing 198,500 pounds.

While the engines will work at various terminals along the entire line, assignments during the heavy season will probably be two each at Portola, Stockton and Oakland, with one each at Oroville and Sacramento.

Experience with the E. M. Co. switchers has shown them to be well-adapted to yard work and also more economical than the regulation steam "goat." The greatest element of saving displayed by the Diesel switcher over its steam brother is in fuel cost. Following in order of importance are the other sources of savings: repairs, water, engine house expense and supplies. Enginemen's wages are the same, while lubricants show a slight increase. The net result is a reduction in hourly operating cost of $1.42, in favor of the Diesel.

Fortunately, the Diesel is vested with a high degree of availability, permitting it to work continuously over relatively long periods. Thus, while the initial cost is high ($485,000 for the eight locomotives) the hourly saving can be translated into a substantial daily saving, because of its ability to average 20 to 22 hours of service daily against 10 to 12 for the corresponding steam switcher.

Of course, the Diesel has some disadvantages. Probably the most noticeable is the rapid decline in tractive power as the speed increases. While the Diesel at the outset has nearly twice the pulling power of its steam companion (60,000 pounds vs. 32,000), by the time 5 m.p.h is reached the steam and Diesel are on a parity and above that speed the steam is definitely superior. A Diesel cannot run at 10 to 25 m.p.h. with as heavy a cut as can a steam switcher.

This is no disadvantage in ordinary switching work where high acceleration and low speeds are desirable, but when heavy transfer cuts are to be moved over comparatively long distances, or the yard is on a grade, the Diesel is inferior to the corresponding steam switcher.

For the character of work in the locations contemplated, the eight new Diesels are eminently better suited to care for the switching than the steam engines they will displace. Their acquisition will also permit the release for road services of several consolidation locomotives which have been forced into yard service because of the small number of switching type locomotives owned.

Thus the acquirement of these new Diesel switchers will serve the dual purpose of raising the efficiency of yard operation and at the same time contribute a welcome addition to our quota of available road power.

SAFETY ALERT — CONTACT LENSES

Two recent incidents in the Army have revealed a previously unknown but extremely serious safety hazard. An electrical worker threw an electrical switch into the closed position which produced a very quick sparking. An employee at another company flipped open the colored lens of his welding goggles to better position the welding rod. He inadvertently struck the metal to be welded producing an arc. Both workers were wearing contact lenses. When they got home from work each person removed the lenses. In both instances, the cornea of the eye was removed along with the contact lenses. Both workers are now permanently blind. The electric arc generates microwaves that instantly dry up the fluid between the eye and the lens causing the cornea to become bonded to the lens. The trauma is painless and the operator never knows he/she has been injured unless he/she removes the lens. If you are a contact lens wearer, please check with your eye care specialist about this issue.

E. M. T.

Electro-Motive Tech Dave McClain a Diesel Update

Back in April Ski and I made another trip to Salt Lake City to get more parts for 2001 and our "new" GP-7 707. We spent two days working sun-up to sun-down getting enough glass, bells, engine and electrical parts, and horn apparatus to fill the back of my truck.

Next we went to Derbano Metals in Ogden to discuss the availability of electrical and engine parts. Ski and I departed with four more WP whistles and the numberboards from WP 2008 which was next in line for the torch. Derbano gave us access to practically anything that we could haul away; turbos, power assemblies, and electrical parts.

Rumor via Ski says that the dozen or so WP units in SLC are coming up for bid and Derbano has expressed interest in all of them. We need parts for the GP-7s and GP-20s--nice to have a source.

On coming home my attention turned to the 2001. I replaced the horn piping and charged the batteries. The engine fired up but refused to move. The next work weekend in April Howard Wise, THE electrician, and Randy Leber from Castro Point Railway arrived to help with the electricals. After extensive testing Howard and Randy found the console control, fuel pump, and generator field switches to be defective. They were replaced and at last the complete control system energized. These two guys then proceeded to get all of the lights, gauges, and other accessories working--well above the call of duty.

Unfortunately a check of the engine uncovered a case of emulsified oil. The next day Howard and Randy filled the cooling system and pressurized it. Water was leaking out of the O ring seals at the head. All water connection bolts between the heads and the block were the culprits.

Ski located a special set of tools to remove the crab nuts which were torqued at 1700 ft-lbs. Then Steve Milward and I used a 12 ft cheater bar to remove half of the 16 crabs.

Larry Hanlon talked to EMD and Glen M. (who owns the E-3). about O rings. Within one week Larry sent the complete O ring kit to Portola. Thanks Larry--quick work!

While Norm ran the passenger trains for July operations Matt Parker and I tackled the rest of the crabs, hoping for a Sunday afternoon fire-up and passenger train call. We worked the entire day and in the rain to get them all replaced. Matt and I had very tired arms.

Sunday morning we pumped new oil into the engine but had no usable filters. Up provided an answer in the form of our new GP30 #849 with good filters. Doug Jensen and Matt helped hook the 2001 to the 608 for a jump start. Tricky because the 608 was between passenger runs and we

only had ten minutes to complete the task. Steve Habeck watched the oil pressure, I was on the layshaft, and Doug cranked on the start button. In about 20 seconds she fired, what a sound!

For the first time the isolation switch was turned to run without activating alarm bells. Using very nervous and sweaty hands I opened the throttle to run 1. At last, 300 amps to the ground. After a few switching moves the 2001 was MUed with the 921 for passenger train duties. All systems were go. Steve Habeck, the conductor, was notified that our brand new power was ready for work. The 608 was removed from passenger train work and put back in the yard. The 921/2001 was backed up to the passenger cars. A brake test was successfully completed and then a hi-ball was given. Away we went. This was the first time at FRRS that two units were MUed with each under it's own power.

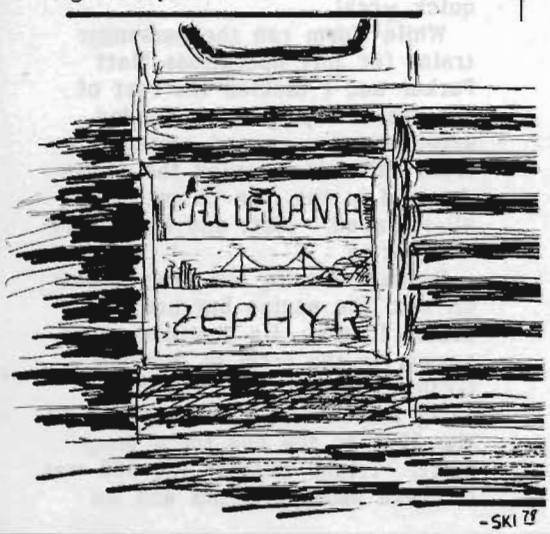
After passenger train operations were finished everyone got a well-deserved hand at the throttle during switching chores.

With a little bit of cleaning and a fresh coat of paint 2001 will be complete. The important tack is done though, to have her operational for Railroad Days.

Our next task is our new GP30. It looks like she is relatively complete, including lube oil and fuel, thanks to the UP.

All my thanks go to Steve Milward, Steve Habeck, Ski, Howard Wise, Randy Leber, Jim Ley, Norm Holmes, and Matt Parker for helping with the most difficult task of 2001. We really do have a good crew.

Also special thanks goes to our new member Pam Hodson. She spent numerous occasions photographing and cheering us on during some of the worst engine repairs.



WESTERN PACIFIC
Mileposts
SEPTEMBER, 1956

"The Red Light Was a Fake"

A story of the Deep Creek train robbery, as told by Percy T. Hewitt, fireman on the train

"On October 16, 1917, in the early morning, I was called to fire for Engineer Bill Veasey on the Gold Hill run of the Deep Creek Railroad.

"I believe this was Bill's last trip before getting reinstated on the Southern Pacific to work out of Ogden. However, we left Wendover at 2:45 a. m. and followed the Utah-Nevada line south for 17 miles.

"As we approached a siding called Salt Springs, where we had to cross over into the state of Nevada, we noticed a red light on the track. Upon stopping, we found a push car with a hayburner lantern on it, covered with a lady's red sweater. Not knowing what it was all about, we thought some duck hunters were having a little joke on us because we had been giving them water and coal off our engine.

"In the meantime, the rear brakeman came up to find out why we had stopped and went to take a look at the red light. Suddenly someone shot out the brakeman's light and called out for us to keep quiet and we wouldn't get hurt. The brakeman ducked under the tender and came out on my side, wanting to know wotinell was going on, but I didn't know the answer.

"It was then that I saw outlined against the sky, the figures of four men, two of them running toward the combination coach. A few minutes later one of the men against the engine fired a gun. The whine of the bullet was pretty close to us in the cab. However, it may have been a signal for the other two to return. One of them shouted in a feminine voice, 'Back up, and keep on backing up,' then fired three shots.

"We backed all the way into Wendover, where we found that one of the passengers had been shot in the lower part of the leg, tearing away the flesh and heel bone. The Western Pacific ran a caboose hop into Salt Lake City with the injured man.

Conductor Bucky Rogers, Engineer Hewitt and son, Fireman F. R. Hewitt, ready for last run.

"All the passengers had been backed up into the baggage compartment. Conductor Bill Turner had some valuables in a pouch which he pushed into his pants front. While he stood there shaking, with his hands up, the package began to slip down his pants leg. When he lowered his hands to pull up the pouch, the robber fired a shot. Old Bill carried a star as a deputy sheriff, but his badge was found among the baggage and mail sacks, and we kidded him a lot about throwing away his badge.

"What the robbers were after was a payroll of several thousand dollars which was being taken up to Gold Hill for the miners' pay day. The man who usually went for the money from a Salt Lake bank was ill, so the bandits didn't know which man carried the money. They took a first-class mail pouch, cut it open, and stole money and jewelry.

"When we got back to Wendover a posse was formed who went out to Salt Springs where they found diamond tire-tread marks in the sand. Following the trail into Ely, Nevada, they came upon the bandits lined up at a bar. They were put under arrest and later sentenced to 25 years in jail.

"It was discovered that the man who had a feminine voice had been a fireman on this run and had made several trips also as a brakeman and was familiar with what was carried in the coach. I recognized his voice, told the sheriff who I thought he was, and it was found to be correct.

"Brother Veasey was reinstated after this incident, and I ran the engine until the road was abandoned in August, 1939. The last year of operation I was made manager."