

Mountain Dispatcher

I recall one night, after a derailment, when trains were held up at each end of the district and turned loose when the track was clear. A new dispatcher, unfamiliar with the district, moved his trains in too close. By the time I came on at midnight and the passenger trains started from each end, I had a train in every siding from Bloomer to Belden, inclusive—except Camp Rodgers, which I managed to hold open to meet Numbers 39 and 40—and there were three trains between those points which had no siding to get into!

Well, it was necessary to move out the two westbound freights by giving them meets with the passenger trains, the east-bound running out of the jam unassisted. The other trains, some headed east, some west, were so interlocked that I couldn't get a single train rolling until the passenger trains ran—and it looked as if they were going to be a long time running.

Every siding being full, there was no place where I could put Number 12 for a meet with Number 39. "No room here,"

was all I heard from every siding in the vicinity of where they should meet. At length a conductor discovered and reported there was enough space on the house track at Pulga for 12 to get in—and that's where it went, to the tune of about fifty minutes delay.

Since I first tackled this job, a year or so ago, I have had ten times the dispatching experience as was my lot on flatland districts during the years I worked them. Maybe it sounds silly to Easterners, but here on The Mountain you sometimes sense Nature's moods prior to the time anything happens—a sort of premonition. Whenever this uneasiness overtakes me, no matter how closely I watch and try to forestall disruption, I never succeed. It goes completely to the bow-wows all at once, as if a deliberate attack had been planned by a master mind and executed in perfect co-ordination by his forces.

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MILEPOSTS

How We're Doing

WP's first piggy-back load from the East arrived in San Francisco October 10, routed DL&W, NKP, CB&Q, D&RGW and WP from New Jersey.

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The *California Zephyr* average load for 12 months ending August, 1957, averaged 73.02 per cent of capacity, compared with a 74.55 per cent of capacity for the same period the year before. For the month of September, 1957, the load capacity averaged 77.7 per cent of capacity compared with 88.1 per cent of capacity for September, 1956.

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Sacramento Northern, on September 20, asked the Interstate Commerce Commission for permission to reroute its train service in Sutter and Yuba counties because of proposal to abandon 10 miles of track between Pearson and East Nicolaus. Also requested about 23 miles of trackage rights over WP between Sankey and Cleveland since bridges over Bear River and Plumas Lake on its own lines require rebuilding and the expense is not warranted.

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Following recent discontinuance by Pennsylvania of handling *California Zephyr* through-Pullman-car service between Chicago and New York, similar service by New York Central now discontinued since traffic would not justify purchase of additional sleeper required.

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