

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAILROAD CLUB

P. O. BOX 2391

DENVER, COLORADO 80201

June, 1964

Newsletter No. 58

The June, 1964, meeting of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club will be held on Wednesday, June 10th, at 8:00 p.m. in the basement meeting room of the Western Federal Savings and Loan Association skyscraper building, 718 - 17th Street, Denver. A program of sound color movies, this month featuring the railroads of Canada, is being arranged by Vice-President Herb O'Hanlon.

First of the two reels is a Canadian National release entitled "Railroad Builders of the North." This film features the stories of a number of new branch lines built in recent years in the provinces of New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and British Columbia.

The second reel, entitled "Railroaders", is a release of the National Film Board of Canada, and relates the story, with some exciting scenes, of railroad snow fighting in the Canadian Rockies during the rugged winters which batter the far north. With the absence of such weather in these parts during the past few years, these scenes will serve to refresh our memories of what wintertime in Colorado occasionally can be.

All members of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, and their friends, are invited.

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Last month's program, as announced, was also a presentation of 16mm sound movies, but somehow or other, two of the three reels which were expected didn't quite make it. With hasty, last-minute substitutions, however, it was possible to present to our audience two reels owned by the Club -- one, an oldtime AAR film with lots of steam, produced in 1939. The second was Rio Grande's celebrated "Journey to Yesterday", the original version of the Silverton, when it operated as a twice-a-week mixed train with three coaches and the glass-top "Silver Vista."

Rayonier, Incorporated's excellent "End of an Era" -- a masterful tribute to the part played by steam railroading in the logging industry of the northwest -- brought to a close a highly entertaining evening's program, well received by the large audience in attendance.

In connection with the latter, and quoting from Rayonier's material which accompanied the film, "End of an Era" was filmed to capture and preserve some of the color and greatness of railroad logging as it was in days gone by -- to reflect the sentiment attached to these fine old steam locomotives that still bring a gleam to the eyes of oldtime loggers and to show the change, known as progress, in transportation from the old to the new.

To this viewer, sound fidelity and photography of the film were superb. For Club members residing away from Denver and who might be interested in seeing this outstanding movie, group showing of the film can be arranged by contacting

Rayonier Incorporated
Northwest Timber Division
8th and Levee Streets
Hoquiam, Washington

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Also at the May meeting, the first press-run sheets of "Colorado Midland," newest railroad history to be published by the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, were presented for inspection by the audience by Publications Committee Chairman R. H. Kindig. We are glad to advise that the last oil painting prepared especially for this new book by Club member Phil Ronfor has been received and is now in the hands of the engraver for

preparation of the color plates which will be used for the announcement brochure. Even though it has been a long time since this project was first announced, we hope the result will serve to justify the patience and understanding of so many faithful members and friends of the Club.

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Another project being handled by the Publications Committee has just been released by the printer: the 1964 edition of the Annual Membership Roster of the Rocky Mountain Railroad Club, now being prepared for mailing by our steadfast postmaster, Bert Fullman. (This faithful oldtimer is a Committee all by himself!) Being sent to each member by a separate mailing, this largest membership list ever should be in your hands before receipt of this issue of the newsletter. If your roster does not arrive soon please advise Club Secretary Fay McKee.

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It is a happy occasion, indeed, to report that old Rio Grande narrow-gauge C-16 Class Consolidation engine 268 (whose amusing antics in starting a heavy coal train out of Crested Butte were so vividly pictured in the masterful 16mm movie by charter member Otto C. Perry) has at last been relocated and given a new coat of black paint.

Originally donated by the Railroad to the Gunnison County Pioneer and Historical Society at the time the line over Marshall Pass was abandoned, the little engine has seen some difficult times during its brief life as an exhibit in Gunnison. Moved several times from its original location in the City Park, and subjected to the usual vandalism and deterioration, the 268 was moved finally last fall to a new five-acre exhibition site deeded to the Society. The area is adjacent to Highway 50 just east of and adjoining the City's old golf course. On Saturday, May 9, 12 members of Western State College's Theta Chi fraternity, aided and directed by members of the Historical Society, gave this old mechanical version of the "Rocky Mountain Canary" its first coat of black paint in many years.

Protective fencing around the new ground is now about complete, and plans are afoot for construction of a museum building on the grounds. With adequate safeguards now assured, it is planned to reinstall the engine bell and other parts which were removed several years ago for safekeeping. Engine 268 will soon again be a source of pride and reminder of the railroad pioneers who operated her. Our congratulations to the members of Theta Chi and the Gunnison County Pioneer and Historical Society for helping preserve this venerable old engine for the benefit of future generations.

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Direct damage to the government-owned Alaska Railroad as a result of the March 27th earthquake is now very conservatively estimated at \$20 million. It may go somewhat higher. In addition, the carrier anticipates claims for at least \$2 million because of the total destruction of 50 loaded freight cars.

Most of the damage, according to E. M. Fitch, assistant to the general manager, resulted from tidal waves or fires which followed the quake, rather than from the quake itself. Most of the damage was concentrated at Seward and Whittier, and on the rail line adjacent to Turnagain Arm, a branch of Cook Inlet near Anchorage.

At Seward, the "whole blooming railroad" virtually disappeared -- including a relatively new two-berth dock, some recently installed cranes valued at \$250,000, and yards and trackage. Much of the damage, especially that to yard and track, resulted from the burning of burst oil storage tanks. At Whittier, the ARR lost the slip by which cars are transferred between its own rails and Canadian National car barges.

Rolling stock losses, in addition to the 50 loaded cars, included some empty cars and two locomotive units. Casualties among railway personnel were limited to one man, at Seward, whose death is attributed to a heart attack.

On the favorable side, the railroad's headquarters and shop buildings at Anchorage were not seriously damaged. First task in restoring full normal operation was to "get a port." Hence, reconstruction immediately was concentrated on Whittier and Seward. The former, it was expected, would be quickly restored, but work at Seward was calculated to take up to six weeks. With help from military earthmoving equipment, damage to track along Turnagain Arm and at some other locations also was scheduled for early repair.

There was no interruption of operations on the north end of the line, between Fairbanks and Healy (112 miles). Resumption of all (though not necessarily normal) service over the 244 miles between Anchorage and Healy was expected to take about three weeks.
(from Railway Age)

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As St. Louis prepares to observe its 200th anniversary this year, the Missouri Pacific, first railroad west of the Mississippi River, has taken a look at its own historical records extending back to the ground-breaking ceremony of its predecessor, the Pacific Railroad, almost 113 years ago. Tucked away in one ledger is a listing of items bought by the Commissary, which fed the track building gangs as the road pushed westward from St. Louis. Entries included coffee at 20¢ per pound; pork shoulders, 8¢ per pound; lanterns, 14¢ each; pickles, \$1.25 a gallon; whiskey, 22¢ per gallon (which contrasts with New Orleans molasses at 31½¢ per gallon); potatoes, \$2.75 a barrel, and crackers, one cent a pound.

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Pullman Company's once-great fleet of heavyweight sleeping cars is fast fading away -- so much so now that Pullman has asked railroads to check on availability of the equipment before contracting for large volume movements. And add a nostalgic footnote to the decline of the heavyweights -- as they go, so go (with a very few exceptions) the old open-section Pullman accommodations. The lightweight cars that have taken over the business are predominantly private room units.

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The old stub switch may be making a comeback! Although today's split switch replaced the stub switch years ago, a new design of the old arrangement is being considered as a replacement for split switches in yard use. The first switch of the new type was installed last winter on the Minnesota Transfer, a terminal line at St. Paul, Minnesota.

Main objection to the old stub design was that the running rails on each side of it crept under traffic and crowded the switch rails against the fixed rails so that the switch was sometimes rendered inoperable. Another objection was that the switch rails were not always lined up properly with the fixed rails, and wheels with sharp flanges had a tendency to climb the rails.

Since, in periods of heavy snowfall and blizzard conditions considerable delay is encountered in keeping split switches free of snow and ice, the Minnesota Transfer has revised the basic form of stub switch, mounting it on a pre-stressed concrete foundation instead of on switch ties, to solve the problems of creeping and keeping switches clear of obstruction in winter. The two switch rails are each welded to a 3/4-inch thick base plate, which extends the full length of the 21-foot concrete foundation and is anchored securely to the foundation. A 1/4-inch thick rubber pad is installed between each base plate and the foundation.

Another touch of modernity is operation by switch machine, with track circuitry designed so the track-fouling circuit will actuate the switch mechanism to properly align the switch for a trailing movement over the switch, to avoid derailments. The Minnesota Transfer reports that the new yard stub switch has performed satisfactorily so far without the need for sweeping snow from it!

This new installation could be interpreted as one more bit of evidence that the old narrowgauge railroaders weren't so far behind the times after all!

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The Denver Posse of the Westerners, prominent for their interests in western history, annually publish the well known "Brand Book." and also issue a monthly pamphlet called the "Roundup." The April, 1964, issue of the latter is devoted to an interesting story of the Railroads of the Crystal River Valley, detailing the results of research into the subject by Rocky Mountain Railroad Club member Francis B. Rizzari. Francis is also a posse member, as well as Registrar of Marks and Brands for the Westerners' Denver Posse.

Francis advises that a few extra copies of this issue of the Roundup were printed and that these are available to interested persons at a cost of 50 cents per copy, postpaid. Copies are limited to one per person, and can be obtained by sending fifty cents to:

George R. Eichler, Roundup Foreman		Francis B. Rizzari
Post Office Box 5786	or	1716 View Point Road
Denver, Colorado 80217		Denver, Colorado 80216

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At this writing, final arrangements for the Club's annual three-day Memorial Day weekend excursion over the narrow gauge from Alamosa to Durango and Silverton have been completed, and passengers are looking forward to the trip with great anticipation. In a subsequent newsletter we will give you a review of this colorful event.

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"A man cannot be too careful in the choice of his enemies." -- Oscar Wilde, as quoted in Useful Precepts and Maxims for 1964, printed for Club Member Charles S. Ryland's Clear Creek Steam Packet Line by the Smoking Stack Press of Golden, Colorado

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