

southwest corner

by John Hathaway

SANTA FE is now utilizing uniformed armed special agents to maintain peace on certain runs of its Los Angeles-San Diego San Diegans. The reason for the extra security is a minority of the dozens of teen-aged beach lovers who commute between Los Angeles communities and the beachside city of San Clemente. This minority has been disturbing regular passengers and leaving the railroad's cars in shambles.

After the problem appeared earlier this summer, Santa Fe announced plans to cease making stops at San Clemente on the morning southbound and the afternoon northbound San Diegans. This announced cutback in the service brought a raft of complaints to the railroad, so Santa Fe decided to maintain the original schedule, segregate the beach crowd, and utilize the uniformed special agents to maintain peace. The plan is evidently working.



The summer San Diegans are their usual resplendent selves, with trains of 22 to 24 cars on the weekends. On Saturdays and Sundays the trains are too long for the San Diego depot and a yard switcher has to pull three or four cars up to the MCRD siding where they are hooked on to the rest of the train after it leaves the depot. These cars are reserved for the San Clemente beach-goers, and leave San Diego empty.

SANTA FE is following the nationwide trend among railroads in opting for less powerful, and less complex, units in recent new motive power acquisitions. The horsepower rating race of the 60s is slowing down as the railroads are now replacing many of their first generation diesels serving branch line and other marginal runs. These areas do not call for the more powerful, and expensive to operate, turbocharged units.

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As a typical example, Santa Fe has ordered 61 of EMD's GP38s (SF 3500-3560) and 49 GE U23Bs (SF 6300-6348). Both of these are four-axled jobs, with the GPs rated at 2000 hp and the U-boats rated at 2250 hp. Santa Fe is also investing in six-axled moderates with orders for twenty SD39s from EMD (SF 4000-4019) and 20 U23Cs from GE (SF 7500-7519). The SDs are rated at 2300 hp and the U23Cs maintain 2250 hp.

However, for mainline motive power, a new trend is disappearing. A couple of years ago Santa Fe innovated the "cowled" body styling on its orders of EMD FP45s and F45s and GE U30CGs. This styling, which harkened back to the early days of dieseldom, resembled the covered wagon F-units. There are no exterior walkways on the F45s as the entire engine behind the cab is covered with body paneling.

However, Santa Fe has reordered the conventional SD45, which features the standard road unit body configurations, instead of increasing its stable of the F45s. So apparently the love affair with the "cows" has at least temporarily been jilted.

UNION PACIFIC apparently isn't aware of the movement to smaller locomotives. Among its latest acquisitions (which are occasionally sighted in the Southwest Corner) are 40 U50Cs from GE (UP 5000-5039) which deliver 5,000 hp via twin engines within one shell; and 44 DDA-40Xs, the "Centinneeal Locomotives" from EMD purported to be the biggest diesel electrics in the world with a rating of 6600 hp (UP 6900-6947). The units, built to UP specifications, utilize the same "cowled" body styling found on the Santa Fe F45s.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC has its three orphaned diesel-hydraulics from ALCo in storage at Roseville and Sacramento, and these will apparently be retired. The direct linkage between the diesel engine and running gear, eliminating the traction motors, was an experiment undertaken by SP a few years ago with the importation of a number of diesel-hydraulics from the Krauss-Maffei works of Germany. Also on hand were the three units from ALCo (SF 9800-9802). The light German engines, with their high running speeds, just couldn't adjust to the heavy American railroading, but the ALCo locomotives, with their standard diesel engines, seemed to be doing alright. But with the demise of ALCo itself last year the units have been orphaned, and spare parts were beginning to become a problem.

The Denver and Rio Grande Western also purchased the diesel-hydraulics from Krauss-Maffei, but they immediately ran into breathing problems in the long tunnels of the D&RGW. They were sold to SP, who also reordered from K-M. All the foreign diesel-hydraulics have since been retired, and now the ALCos join them.