Pres. Brock Addresses Shipper Organization

Citing the financial plight of the rail industry, GM&O President Glen Brock told members of the Southeastern Shippers Advisory Board that "meaningful reform" is necessary and "far preferable to the consequences of nationalization."

He pointed out that as of June 30, 1970, a total of 40 of the 71 Class I railroads had a deficit in net working capital. For the industry as a whole the deficit, or red figure, was $322 million as compared with a $636 million black figure 4½ years ago.

"The basic problems are in the relationship of the industry to Federal and State governments, the relationship to organized labor, and the challenge of obtaining urgently needed capital for modernization and technological improvements, with a history of poor earnings in terms of rate on investment."

"We have been saying for 50 years that we were not a monopoly, that we were competitive and from the results nobody has heard us. If they have, they were really not listening. We have been saying we are competing against our own tax dollars, since the taxpayers' financing of other transportation facilities has exceeded $15 billion annually for at least the last 15 years, and virtually none for the railroads." President Brock declared.

He urged support of "reform" that could correct these inequities. He called for special backing for legislation to create a National Freight Car Corporation to lease or rent ordinary box cars to the railroads.

He said this type of car provided a necessary two-way haul for the railroads and that their number had been badly depleted through the development of the single purpose or specialty car that usually returned empty.

Girl Reporter Rides Mobile "Switcher" Writes It Plays Vital Economic Role

Reporter Rhoe Odum covers news in neighboring Prichard, Alabama for The Mobile Press Register. Impressed and sometimes irked by a GM&O train that seemed to be constantly running back and forth through town, she decided to find where it was going and what it was doing. After spending the day in the cab of our "Switcher," the following is a condensation of the article she wrote entitled "GM&O Switcher Plays Vital Economic Role."

Several times a day, six days a week, the Gulf Mobile & Ohio switch engine comes through Prichard. Traffic bottlenecks as the red signal light at the crossings shows out the warning of an oncoming freight.

To those who must wait for its passing, it usually means aggravation and delay. There are probably few in the area who have not had to wait for the "switcher" to pass.

Ever stopped to think where that train came from, where it is going, and why?

It comes out of the GM&O railroad yard on Beacon Road every morning around 9 o'clock and makes its way as far as Moffatt Road in Crichton, stopping time and again along its scheduled route dropping off loaded cars and picking up empty ones at various businesses and industries throughout Prichard, Whittier and Chrichton. (Cont'd. on Page 2, Col. 1)
Traffic Officials Honor Karcher

Seldom does the opportunity arise to get so many of our top traffic men together at one time. They are busy far and wide pricing the thousands upon thousands of commodities handled and sold by our sales through 37 district offices located all over the United States.


SWITCHER

(Cont’d from Page 1, Col. 1) During this day long process, the switcher is busy serving the public as it delivers such commodities as lumber, grain, oil and brick, to name a few.

PLAYS IMPORTANT ROLE

It plays an important and necessary part in the growth of the area as it brings these raw materials to the many industries and later picks up the finished products to be loaded into freight cars for delivery to markets all over the United States.

The switcher and its crew work back and forth constantly, but unlike the "through trains" to Chicago, it never leaves the environs of Mobile.

The crew which includes an engineer, a foreman and the switchmen, are the backdoor salesmen for the railroad as they deliver and then pick up cars for their customers.

They service 147 industries east of Moffatt Road even though their load may include only two cars one day and 38 or more the next.

SOUND WHISTLE

As the switcher and crew approach any public road, the engineer is required by law to sound the whistle with two long, one short, and another long deafening blast, to warn automobiles and pedestrians to wait, although many daredevils ignore the signals in order to "beat the train."

By the time the switch engine makes its way to Crichton, lunch is near, so C. E. Shoppier, the engineer, prepares his midday meal of deer steak taken from his freezer, by wrapping it in foil and placing it on the railroad yard. Number 1115 and the crew are through for the day.

The next day the same pick-up and deliver process begins all over again.

GREW ABOUND DEPOT

The City of Prichard grew around the once lonely train depot and was incorporated in 1833. As the city grew, so did the job of the switcher which has been serving this northern community for over 100 years.

There was probably such an engine at work in the Prichard area after the first 12 miles. It ran both from Crichton to Prichard and arrives piping hot and ready to eat. The rest of the crew are resigned to eat in the nearest restaurant.

After lunch, it’s back on track to deliver more cars and pick up more empty ones, until the switcher winds up late in the afternoon back at the Beauregard railroad yard. Number 1115 and the crew are through for the day.

Voice of Traveler

Chicagoan F. H. Vaughn was so enthused about a trip he made on one of our passenger trains that he wrote the Chicago Tribune about it, prominently displayed in a regular Tribune column — Voice of The Traveler follows:

"My wife and I recently discovered an unusual railroad and it operates out of Chicago. The way it is run would seem to indicate the management is out of touch with the times for they still like passengers. It is the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio Railroad.

"We made a round trip to Springfield. Much to our amazement the train left Chicago right on time and, still more amazing, we reached Springfield on time. The return trip was even early in arriving at Union Station.

"The equipment was spick and span clean. Air conditioning operated in each car. Drinking water was readily available and they even supplied the paper cups. Washrooms were well maintained and clean as a whistle.

President Replies

Dear Mr. Vaughn:

I want to thank you for your expression of confidence in the railroad and the trains upon which you rode on a round trip from Chicago to Springfield.

We will see that all of those concerns have a copy of your letter placed in their efficiency record file.

You were indeed extremely thoughtful and kind and all of us on the GM&O appreciate it very much.

Sincerely,

G. P. Broch
President

“The diner appealed to a person in more ways than one. Real tablecloths and napkins, not the paper variety. A menu that offered a wide selection of food at prices a traveler could afford. Quality and quantity equal to any we have ever enjoyed on a train. And coffee that tasted like coffee. "The crews—they just had to be something else. Courteous at all times, helpful in every way. A sense of humor that would brighten even the darkest day. They made one feel that they were welcome aboard by their actions. "Travel by rail is still the best—when the management wants your business—for safety, comfort and enjoyment. Even more important it helps to reduce air pollution caused by automobiles. "Next time you go to St. Louis, or points in between, why not take the train? It can give you a new outlook on life when you travel relaxed."

Train Accidents Down

The number of train accidents during the first six months of the year declined 5.9 percent under the same period a year ago. Total injuries also showed a marked reduction—down 6.4 percent. The Department of Transportation reported. There were fewer grade crossing accident injuries, too, by 8.3 percent.
New Style Station

When the over-sized and out-dated station at Okolona, Mississippi burned recently and an immediate replacement was needed, a mobile home manufacturer tailored one of his trailers to our requirements and quickly delivered it.

On one side is an efficiently designed office where the agency work is carried on. New supply and distribution methods have long since displaced the large warehouse that was as much a part of the old-style depot as the bay window with its two-way view of the tracks.

G. R. Kelly Dies

The railroad lost a valuable and loyal employee in the death of G. R. Kelly, Superintendent at Jackson, Tennessee. An aggressive railroader who liked to be close to the trains and who was among the very first to arrive when an emergency developed, died on the Line while enroute from Murphysboro, Illinois, where he also maintained an office.

Born at New Albany, Mississippi, he joined the company in 1922 as a Brakeman and held many positions in the Operating Department. He served as Trainmaster at Murphysboro and Corinth before coming to Jackson in 1947 in that position. He had been Superintendent for the past eleven years.

Survivors include: his widow Mrs. Frances M. Kelly; a daughter, Mrs. Bobby Joe Osborne of Lexington; a son, George R. Kelly of San Francisco, Calif.; a brother, William Kelly of Indianapolis, Ind.; and a sister, Mrs. Joe Martin of Montgomery, Ala.

Astro Program Vital To Railroads

You’ll be hearing a lot about Astro—America’s Sound Transportation Review Organization. After a study which took just last fall, the body called in its report for a comprehensive program of “creative federal involvement” to help cure the railroad industry’s ills. Fairness not favoritism ... and more freedom ... for an industry the nation needs sorely — and needs in good health — is the basic aim of the program.

Among specific Astro recommendations are:

—That railroads be exempt from state and local property taxes on railroad rights-of-way.
—That a single transportation fund be established, to be used by all agencies in furthering a balanced transportation system.
—That funds already available be used to eliminate highway-railway grade crossing hazards.
—That loan guarantees be made for rail improvements and equipment.

"Fail Safe"

The familiar grade crossing warnings, with their flashing red lights and clanging alarm bells, are designed and engineered so that there should be a failure in their operation it will be on the safe side. Signals and Communications Supervisor Cortez Fowler points out that in the event of a power failure standby batteries take over so that on the approach of a train the red lights will continue to flash and the bells to ring.

Also, any break in the electrical circuit of the system, such as a severed wire or a broken rail, will automatically cause the crossing signal to go into action with its light and bells, regardless of whether or not a train is approaching. The purpose is to “fail safe”.

Of course, a cautious and alert driver will always be the best approach to crossing safety.

Honorary Gavel

Retiring as President of the American Railway Development Association, T. T. Martin (right) Vice President, Industrial Development, receives an honorary gavel from the incoming President of the association, N. A. Kirchoff, who leads the Industrial Department of the Frisco Railroad.

The GM&O executive has been closely associated with the national association for a number of years and has held all offices. The organization of some 300 members includes railroad personnel representing industrial relations, real estate, agriculture, natural resources and marketing divisions.

Manly Boys

Exhibiting outstanding judgment and presence of mind, four Wilmington, Illinois, youths stopped No. 97 when they saw a box car on fire from a hot box.

For their very helpful efforts the Railroad is deeply grateful to Robert Bush, Curt Malcolm, James Snucks and Donnie Tucker. Waving their arms and screaming "fire" the boys, between 11 and 13 years of age, attracted the attention of Conductor Selburg. The train was stopped at a siding and the Wilmington Fire Department extinguished the blaze.

A warning from a hot box detector ten miles ahead might have come too late. Knowing that we have friends like these youths who care is most encouraging. Also gratifying, in the editorial words of the Wilmington Advocate, is the demonstration "once again that youngsters can be a credit to their family and community."

Railroaders became actors in Memphis recently when the Women’s Traffic Club held its annual party. The GM&O was very much in evidence with Division Freight Traffic Manager C. J. McMillan (left) in the cast and Kate Leonard, GM&O Secretary, as Chairman.
SERVICE MILESTONES

Gen. Ind. Agt. J. R. Glynn and Mrs. Glynn are all smiles over the silver pitcher and the inscription acknowledging fifty years of service, which was presented by fellow railroad associates recently. From left to right are Ch. Ck. E. L. Naylor; Exce. VP and Gen. Mgr. B. V. Bodie; VP and Comp. Y. D. Lott; Senior VP R. E. Stevenson; VP, Ind. Dev. T. T. Martin; VP and Gen. Counsel J. N. Ogden; Ch. Eng. S. A. Cooper; VP F. J. Lott; Sec. Linda Estes; Mgr. Resources and Ind. Dev. Larry Hickman and VP Traffic E. B. de Villiers.

E. J. Brignac smiles as VP and Comp. Y. D. Lott presents him with a special watch from associates and puns that the retiring Asst. Auditor of Revenue will now have time on his hands after 44 years on the job. With the popular retiring officer and Mrs. Brignac at the office ceremony were their daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. T. W. Franco. Mr. Franco is a Spec. Rep. in the Traffic Department at Mobile.

J. W. Denmark (third from left) and J. B. Platt (far right) were honored on the occasion of their recent retirements from duties in the Freight Claim Department. It was an especially noteworthy day for Mr. Denmark for it marked his fiftieth year with the Company, a milestone also reached by his father, Milton Denmark, (second from right) who retired in 1959 and will be 90 years old in December. Mr. Platt ends 47 years which began with the old M&O E. Mason Brown, Gen. Frt. Claim Agt. (far left) and Senior VP R. E. Stevenson expressed the Company’s appreciation for their services during a noontime gathering in the office.

A husband and wife team that has been working side by side in the same office for the past 20 years retired recently ending a total of 70 years combined service with the Company. Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Andrews — he was Office Manager and she a Steno-Clerk in the Mechanical Department — plan to enjoy a waterside home near Mobile. And the portable radio with a marine listening band should come in handy. Mr. Andrews first job was at New Albany 47 years ago. From left to right: Office Manager Earl Ray; Asst. To Ch. Mech. Officer T. C. Salmon; Asst. Chief. Mech. Officer G. D. Brown; Sten. Clerk, Miss Cathy Rob; Asst. Office Mgr. Miss Lois Wiggins; Exce. VP and Gen. Mgr. B. V. Bodie; Asst. to Chief Mech. Officer C. G. Bahlman and Gen. Master Mech. W. C. Gray.


These three members of the Accounting Department retired recently. Honored by their office associates were from the left, Frank L. Chapels (30 years' service), Mrs. Caroline Kusander (48 years' service) and Robert A. McClivery (46 years' service). Mr. McClivery, who had been in ill health for some time, passed away unexpectedly shortly after his retirement. During his lifetime he had given unstintingly of his talents to entertain shut-ins and will long be remembered by all who knew him. Mrs. Kusander plans to visit her son and his family in England and Mr. Chapels to spend much time at a summer home on the water.