

I. The effect of the passing of Proposition 17 in the last election (what was Prop. 17, you ask!) was not long in appearing and many skilled workmen in the form of Locomotive Firemen are now looking for jobs (if any of you have use for any first class Locomotive Firemen, please contact the writer). A few were given "comparable" jobs, mostly switching, but how many such are there in an industry that is reducing its forces all the time due to automation and other efficient practices?

Most took severance pay, fairly generous, but small compensation to men who wanted to railroad because they loved the job and most of whom were fulfilling a boyhood ambition of working up to Locomotive Engineer.

A man must love railroading to stick with it as there is little attraction in the hours, time away from home, lack of real family life, and considerable hazards; any workman who loves his job is a better workman than one who is just putting in his time until payday.

The writer, one of the lucky ones who did achieve his ambition and stuck with it in spite of the drawbacks above plus six years of being furloughed during the depression, feels deeply for these men, many of whom he has worked with, and their innocent part in the present day "American Tragedy,"

II. Engine watchers have noticed that the San Diegans are mostly powered by single "Alcos" for trains up to eight cars. As, from Monday through Thursday, most of the trains have only six cars, it is no trouble to make the time, even making up ten to twelve minutes under favorable running conditions. Eight cars takes all the breaks to bring in on time, but in a way is an easier job for the engineer as there are only two positions used for the throttle, closed and wide open.

Most of the enginemen prefer EMD power as it is quieter and much more responsive, but one has to respect the Alcos; they smoke and cough and are as responsive as a span of oxen, but they will move a train. Also, they ride much better (six wheel trucks) and we like that long nose out in front of us just in case someone disputes the right of way with us. However, the company doesn't consult the enginemen as to what power to buy or use on the trains, so we take what's there and take of into the smoggy yonder.

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