

*Railway Act*

Lethbridge, Alberta (Calgary connection) and thence easterly to Medicine Hat where connection is made with the C.P.R. main line.

Through the years, a daily passenger train has been operated in both directions between Vancouver and Medicine Hat over this route with dining, sleeping car, express and mail service included.

The advent of improved highways brought through bus service and encouraged privately-owned automobile travel. Air service was introduced between Vancouver and Cranbrook with stops at Penticton and Castlegar. The railway in an effort to meet the growing competition and develop new business, experimented with rearranged train schedules and local trains to and from the larger centres were added. However, the results obtained did not prove sufficiently productive to justify the heavy expenditure and the local trains were removed.

The construction of the Hope-Princeton highway opened November 1, 1949, effected an approximate 145 road mileage reduction between Vancouver and Penticton and made all of the Kootenay area readily accessible to Vancouver. Fast and frequent service over this new highway made serious inroads on rail traffic and the railways were again forced to seek ways and means to reduce operating deficits.

A study of the economics of the service was undertaken by the company's department of research, as a result of which it was decided to replace the convention equipment (handled by steam powered trains) with rail diesel equipment as soon as the latter could be acquired from the manufacturers.

It was felt that this proposal would make possible a reduction of the running time between Medicine Hat and Vancouver by several hours and provide connection at Medicine Hat, Alberta, with the fast main line service recently inaugurated by the Canadian. This new schedule require a night operation between Penticton and Nelson and removal of sleeping car, dining car, express and mail services. Express service would be provided by highway trucks. Coincidental with this change, steam operated trains between Medicine Hat and Lethbridge would be withdrawn and the rail diesel equipment operated in this area on essentially the same schedule as the trains to be withdrawn.

Advice of the company's intention to make the above change, was given to this department of the board in June, 1957, and confirmed in August of that year, along with advice that the change would be made effective on October 27, 1957. Advice to the public, in accordance with the board's requirements, was to be given at least 20 days prior to the change.

In anticipation of public disapproval of the company's proposal, the board's field inspector was directed on August 22, 1957, to travel on the trains then in operation and report on the traffic handled and express his views on the public reaction to the company's proposal, so that the board would be in a position to assess the situation and deal with complaints if any, when received. A check was also made of the patronage attracted to the new service immediately following its introduction on October 27.

The changeover was effective October 27, without public disapproval. The first complaint to reach the board was on November 15, 1957 and dealt with the lack of express service for the carriage of livestock on the company's express trucks. This and other complaints of a similar nature were received and dealt with and a solution satisfactory to the shippers arranged. The next complaint which was of a general nature, was received from Mr. Herridge, M.P. on January 30 and reply provided on February 14.

[Mr. Hees.]

Copies of the letters above referred to are attached. I continue:

Incidentally, it might be of interest to note here that Mr. Herridge, in a telephone conversation with the writer early in January, commented favourably on the improved through service provided by the company to this area, after introduction of the rail diesel service, which provided connection at Medicine Hat with the "Canadian".

On January 15, 1958, a passenger train was derailed as a result of the track being bombed out near Fife, B.C. (76.9 miles west of Nelson, B.C.). This incident combined with other bombings and the use of contact mines on the company's trackage in the Kootenay area, moved the attorney general of the province of British Columbia, after consultation with company and railway labour organization officers, to recommend that the company suspend all night rail operation through the area between Nelson and Penticton.

As a result, arrangements were made to operate during daylight hours when regular maintenance of way forces were available to provide track patrols and since these employees work a five-day week, it resulted in a Monday to Friday passenger train operation between Nelson and Penticton on the following schedule:

Lv. Nelson ..... 7.30 a.m.

Monday & Thursday

Ar. Penticton ..... 5.00 p.m.  
Lv. Penticton ..... 7.30 a.m.

Tuesday & Friday

Ar. Nelson ..... 4.45 p.m.

The above service was made effective at 12.01 a.m. February 5, 1958.

Effective with change of time April 27, 1958, the above schedules were changed as follows and are still in effect:

Lv. Nelson ..... 7.00 a.m.

Monday & Thursday

Ar. Penticton ..... 3.20 p.m.  
Lv. Penticton ..... 8.00 a.m.

Tuesday & Friday

Ar. Nelson ..... 4.15 p.m.

It will be noted that prior to this change, no complaints reached the board other than those above mentioned in respect of handling express traffic. However, immediately the above change was placed in effect, complaints were received and the board's district inspector was instructed to visit the area, meet all interested parties at pre-arranged places, on certain dates and times and report on the situation. The inspector's report was placed before the board on March 21, last.

The board's investigation disclosed that since the company was obliged to operate through the trouble area during daylight hours, the through connection between Medicine Hat and Vancouver would have to be broken at Nelson and Penticton. It was further evident that any increase in this service would also have to be an interrupted one, thus discouraging public patronage. It was also hoped that this condition would be of a temporary nature, since we were advised that the attorney general of British Columbia was continuing a thorough investigation and it was sincerely hoped that a solution would be reached before long.

The summary is as follows:

1. The service inaugurated on October 27, 1957, appeared to be working out satisfactorily.
2. The action of the lawless element prohibited the company from using its property for the purpose for which it was constructed.