

Feds to crack down on deteriorating rails

By the Associated Press

A recent rash of serious derailments and other train incidents has prompted federal inspectors to take a harder line toward railroads that have allowed their track to deteriorate.

Defective track has become the most rapidly growing cause of train accidents in the past decade. In some of the accidents, tank cars broke open and deadly gas spread through trackside neighborhoods.

Latest federal statistics show that defective or missing cross-ties, worn or poorly aligned rails and other track-related problems account for 43 percent of train mishaps.

John Sullivan, head of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), told the Senate recently that his agency has increasingly found it must use orders and other legal tools to get railroads to repair tracks.

"Among many railroads, compliance with the regulations is poor," Sullivan said.

Derailments this year in Waverly, Tenn., and Youngstown, Fla., in which 20 persons were killed, have drawn attention to the deterioration of the nation's 200,000 miles of track. And last month, the mayor of Selma, Ala., barred train traffic through his town, claiming rail conditions presented a deadly hazard to his citizens.

Interviews with federal track inspectors reveal an apparent crackdown on prosperous, mostly well-maintained western railroads, as well as bankrupt, deteriorating lines in the Midwest and Northeast.

Railroad spokesmen say they are voluntarily spending hundreds of millions of dollars on repairs, ordering trains to slow down on hazardous stretches, or closing badly deteriorated lines. Some of the voluntary steps are at the insistence of federal inspectors, however.

In recent weeks, FRA inspectors have notified the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad that due to track conditions, the government intends to shut down 70 miles of

track carrying potentially hazardous freight between Springfield, Ill., and Indianapolis.

On April 27, the FRA issued an order banning hazardous cargo on all northern New Jersey lines of the bankrupt New York, Susquehanna & Western Railroad Co. The FRA had found the railroad had done nothing to maintain the tracks since it was declared bankrupt in 1976.

Harold Keeler, an FRA regional track engineer who inspects 49,000 miles of track in California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah and Colorado, says the Southern Pacific Railroad recently agreed to lower speed limits from 60 to 45 mph between Oakland, Calif., and Ogden, Utah, and between Oakland and Seattle.

Philadelphia's regional track inspector, Joe Zebrowski, says Conrail has voluntarily agreed to post a 10-mph "go-slow" order on a 6½-mile stretch between Camden and Woodbury, N.J., because of "a variety of defects."

Just north of Philadelphia, an 11-mile run of the Amtrak metroliner passenger service has a 10-mph limit. And Amtrak, which is spending \$1.75 billion to upgrade its northeast passenger service, has lowered the speed limit from 105 to 60 mph in the

vicinity of Odenton, Md., due to track conditions.

Bob Johnson, head of the FRA regional office for Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, New Mexico and Arkansas, says the approximately 30,000 miles of track in his area generally are in good condition compared with other parts of the country.

But Johnson says his office is getting more complaints from local officials worried about hazardous track passing through their towns, and he says his inspections are "getting stricter."

The railroads in Johnson's region and in the West, generally are more prosperous and in better repair than those in the East and Midwest. Western railroads also have an economic edge over eastern lines because longer freight hauls are more profitable than the short hauls typical in the East.

But that hasn't necessarily meant eastern trains are more hazardous than western ones. Rail experts say poorer track conditions in the East mean slower runs. Thus, while accidents tend to be more frequent in the East and Midwest, they also tend to be less serious than in the West and South where accidents often occur at higher speeds.

Forest Service says spraying not required in NW this summer

It might not be necessary to spray some 65,000 acres of forest lands in North-Central Washington and Eastern Oregon with "chemical treatment" this fall, according to Dick Worthington, regional forester for the Pacific Northwest.

The U.S. Forest Service, in a recent environmental statement filed with the Environmental Protection Agency, maintains the Western-Spruce Budworm infestation has declined. Therefore, "chemical treatment" will be deferred for the summer.

"I'm surprised they're not spraying," says Ted Paulsen of the Timber Management Office, but Worthington says the budworm population will be carefully monitored this summer.

Then in the fall, the Forest Service will perform an intensive egg-mass survey to determine if spray-

ing should be resumed in 1979.

"We used Malathion in '76 and did a small test with Sevin-4 oil. Last year we sprayed with Sevin-4 oil exclusively because Malathion wasn't doing the job," explains Paul Buffham, director of Forest Insect and Disease management for the Northwest Region.

Buffham says increased "natural mortality" among the budworm population and the 1976-77 control program have contributed to the decline of budworm egg masses.

Budworm larvae feed on new buds and needles (spruce and firs), turning normally green foliage to rusty brown or red.

The Willamette Valley has little concern regarding budworm infestation. According to Buffham, the climate, terrain and type of foliage found in the area, are not conducive to budworm growth.

Senior in physics, math wins President's Award

Malcolm Adams, a senior physics and mathematics major from Corvallis, has received the University's first annual President's Award for academic performance.

The award is given to a senior member of the University Honors College for outstanding scholastic achievement and a distinguished senior thesis.

The award was presented to Adams recently (Saturday, May 19) by University Pres. William Boyd at a brunch sponsored by the Eugene-Springfield chapter of the University Mother's Club.

Adams' senior thesis was a review of "hidden variable theories in quantum mechanics," according to his thesis adviser, University mathematics professor Richard Cook. Quantum mechanics is the field of study dealing with the physics of extremely small particles, Cook said.

In addition to the President's Award, Adams recently was selected by the National Science Foundation (NSF) as one of 50 undergraduate mathematics majors in the U.S. to receive an NSF fellowship for study toward a doctoral degree in mathematics. He will use the fellowship to study next year at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge.

Adams is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Holyoke Adams of Corvallis.

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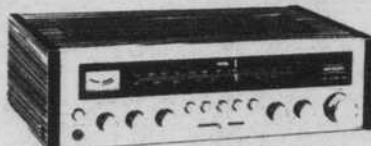
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