

THE COUPLER

Official Bulletin of the Northeastern Region of the National Model Railroad Association

CONVENTION NEWS

REGISTRATION, beginning 11 a.m. Saturday, April 28 at Gov. Clinton Hotel.

FAN TRIP, beginning from club's own siding at 1:30 p.m.--to be donated by New York Central System; diesel, coach, 2 cabooses; over freight-only branch (U & D) to Kingston Point on river, then back to club siding--about 4 p.m.

DIRECTOR'S MEETING, anytime between 4 and 7 p.m.-- delegates on own time for supper.

4 CLINICS, at hotel beginning at 7 p.m. until 9 p.m. --on Club Management, Operations, Scenery, Electrical

CLUB ACTIVITIES, from 9 p.m. until ? at Kingston Model Railroad Club -- operations and plenty of spare room to have bull sessions -- also plan light refreshments here

SUNDAY

MODEL CONTEST, entry deadline is 10 a.m. Plan 10 prizes--1st and 2nd (and Honorable mention) in five classes regardless of gauge--locomotives, freight cars, passenger cars, structures, miscellaneous.

BUSINESS MEETING, at hotel starting at 10 a.m.

BANQUET, at hotel starting at 1:30 p.m. with speaker furnished by the New York Central System--also literature.

DOOR PRIZES--it is planned to have 5 door prizes with Thomas 2-8-0 0 gauge locomotive kit as the grand prize.

COST OF CONVENTION: Looks like \$3.50 will get you through this one--plus your sleeping accommodations.

REMEMBER! This is in Kingston, New York, on April 28 and 29. We will see you there!

OLD TIMER DISCONTINUED

Sea Board Air Line Railroad is going to do away with No. 13, its oldest passenger train.

Although records are not available, it is generally believed in Seaboard circles that No. 13 and its predecessors date back to the road's beginning in 1834.

No. 13 is the morning local between PORTSMOUTH, VA. and NORLINA, N.C. The road says it can't find any record of any time it didn't operate the 116-mile morning local, nor can any of its employees, active or retired, recall when the train wasn't in operation.

Seaboard officials said their decision to end the run was prompted by declining revenue.

HIS FAVORITE '51 CAR...



GRANTS, LOANS WERE NOT GIFTS TO RAILS

Some people are under the impression that the railroads received extensive landgrants and loans from the Federal Government without repayment or reimbursement of any sort, and that such grants and loans were no different from the federal subsidies which are so lavishly bestowed for the benefit of commercial users of highways, airways and waterways at tremendous cost to the taxpayers.

Nothing could be further from the truth. In their 120 years of history the railroads have entered into many transactions of a major category with the government and in each case the government has not only received its money back but a substantial profit. By substantial, we differentiate from the three or four per cent the railroads are able to earn today.

SEE YOU IN KINGSTON!



NER COUPLER

OFFICIAL BULLETIN OF THE NORTHEAST REGION OF THE NMRA

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PRAIRIE TRAIN WHISTLES

Train whistles are one of the links that help to hold together the vast sprawling regions of a great nation. On the wide upland prairies of the West, families in the lonely farm houses listen for the plaintive, drawn-out whistles of the long flyers and the speeding freight trains.

In the sandy-soiled pine-lands of the South the echo of the whistle reaches through the woodlands to humble cabins. In the level Midwest farm boys wait at the end of corn rows to wave to engineers who lift a hand in grave salute. Among the hills and valleys across the country the whistles bring their message to quiet, elm-shaded villages where white spires reach like exclamation points into the sky.

Each day train whistles blow at thousands of crossings. Men working on the farms look at their watches and think, "Old 67 is five minutes late today, but she'll make it up on the straight run into Centerville."

And in the farm homes across the land young lads lie awake in their beds in the evening and listen to the poignant high-pitched "whooo-whooo-who" as the night train rushes along on man's business. More than one boy has resolved that some day he will be on a train riding away to life's adventures. -Oskaloosa (Iowa) Daily Herald.

SEE YOU IN
KINGSTON
N.E.R. 1951 SPRING MEETING
APRIL 28TH & 29TH
GOVERNOR CLINTON HOTEL
IN KINGSTON, N.Y.



A CHUCKLE OR TWO

They arranged the chess board and set the pieces in their proper places. For a full 17 minutes "White", who always moves first, stared at the board. "Black" began to fidget. After several more minutes "Black" remarked, "It's your move, if it's any news to you." Instantly "White" upset the board, scattering the pieces over the floor. "If there's anything I can't stand while playing chess," he barked, "it's a chat-terbox!"

"Quick Mr. Agent, give me a round-trip ticket!"

"Where to?"

"Why back here, you fool!"

In case you missed this one, we're going to toss it your way again: One night, as the brakeman was signalling the head end, the lantern slipped from his grasp and fell towards the ground. As it happened, the switchman caught it and threw it back up to the man riding the top of the cars. A few moments later the engineer ran up and said, "Do that again!" "Do what again," said the brakeman. "Jump down from the top and back up again," exclaimed the amazed hogger!



This one's for Jack Wilson - Ed.

THANKS FOR THE HELP

Despite some very popular conceptions of an editor, anyone who tries to imitate such a character will soon find himself a little over his head. The Coupler doesn't just happen, though it sometimes has an amazing resemblance to little Topsy that "just grewed". It took the cooperation of a few people to get this issue out. I will admit it should have been in the mail a little sooner, but a slight case of the flu hit the editor between the eyes raising the boiler temperature to 102. This required a job of backshopping that took a couple of days, upsetting all kinds of work schedules and delaying work on the Coupler.

Many thanks to Bill Livingston for his excellent cartoons and the terrific scale drawing on page five that was quite a job to figure out. Watty House kept his very active finger in the pie by rounding up a cartoon or two (or more). And there were lots more. I had help with the typing and mailing and many of the details. To everyone, thanks!

THE RAILROAD HEART

--- A BIG ONE

Many of the services a railroad goes out of its way to perform are not reported to newspapers or over the air, but they will be long remembered by those for which they were done. Take, for instance, the Boy Scout troop in a New Jersey town which had looked for months for a meeting place and a club house. Its problems were solved when a railroad donated an abandoned station for both a meeting place and a club house.

In another instance recently, a little girl whose pet cat had been killed by a locomotive was made happy when a crack passenger train stopped in a small Louisiana town and a veteran engineer climbed down from his cab to present her with a new black Persian cat.

In the severe winter last year when a supreme effort was necessary to keep the tracks open and many errands of mercy had to be run, the railroads didn't forget the finer touches. For to what child would it not be a tragedy to be on a train and miss seeing either a Christmas tree or Santa Claus on Christmas Eve? The railroads took care of this, and on many trains Santa made his traditional appearance with a bag of gifts for children.

Birthdays, too, become special occasions on trains sometimes. A Chicago businessman was buying tickets to Florida for his wife and young daughter. When the date of the trip was mentioned, the little girl informed her father that the journey would be made on her birthday. The ticket seller engaged the girl in conversation, learned her name, and several days later, many miles out of Chicago, the waiters in the diner suddenly began singing "Happy Birthday". From the kitchen came a waiter carrying a cake with the name of the little girl on top in frosted letters.

A similar birthday party was held last year for a blind secretary who had commuted for seven and a half years between Stamford and Bridgeport, Conn., when the train crew presented her with a cake with "Happy Birthday" written in Braille on the top.

Railroad locomotive engineers are accustomed to seeing hundreds of children waving to them as they make their runs. But not so long ago, one engineer saw a sight which brought a lump to his throat. It was at a crossing at Lovejoy, Georgia, about 25 miles out of Atlanta that the engineer on a streamlined diesel locomotive leaned out of his cab to wave to a group of children.

Says Engineer Henry R. Lee: "I noticed a little baby girl about two, among them. She waved again, but I still couldn't believe my eyes. I couldn't see any hands."

The engineer soon learned that the girl was Grace Purcell -- that she was born without arms below the elbows. And soon the story of little Grace was spread throughout the length of the railroad system which passes through her home town. At first, crews of passing trains tossed her fruit, candy and chewing gum. Then for two years they collected money to give her at Christmas.

Interest in the little girl who so enthusiastically greeted passing trains continued to spread and two days before Christmas last year the train made an unscheduled stop at Grace's home.



"WELL, DARLING, HERE WE ARE IN OUR OWN LITTLE...
HOT DOG! A 2-8-0!!"

Down from the cab came engineer Lee with a trust fund of more than 4,000 dollars which had been donated by many persons. For Grace Purcell, this meant artificial arms, which she is now learning to use. And in the future, the gift meant an assurance of a good education.

THE BRITISH REGION

The British Region tries to send out to every member with his regular copy of the **ROUNDHOUSE** a leaflet, bulletin, catalog, etc. from the U.S. It may have to do with model railroads or real railroads.

To quote Ken Brennan: "Anything goes, from travel leaflets upwards. We have 200-plus members, but even small batches help, as I can save them until I have enough of a mixed batch to cover everyone."

If any reader of the Coupler gets his hands on any such material, even in a quantity of 10 or 25, would you please send it to Ken. Brennan, 10, Gainsborough Court, Nether Street, No. Finchley - London N., 12.

CLUB REORGANIZATION

This is to inform you that the "Long Island Model Railroad Association" has been reorganized and is now known as the "Long Island Model Railroad Club". It operates O gauge exclusively with power distribution by outside third rail, A.C. with D.C. reverse and the layout is the Long Island Terminal R.R.

The address is the same, 23-68 Steinway Street, Astoria, Long Island. Meeting nights are Wednesday at 8 p.m. Visitors are welcome.

John G. Beck, club member

MORE FUEL FOR THE FIRE

To the editor of the Coupler:

As far as O gauge is concerned, it seems to me that the problem of operation is much more dependent upon couplers than upon trackwork. Certainly with dummy couplers the question of putting the car back on the track after each coupling is a serious drawback. If you want to be impressed by the significance of this element of operation, visit the Lynn club and see the smooth operation they carry on using Baker couplers. (I have seen the North Shore club in Lynn operate on several occasions and they do very well. -Ed.)

The Keystone Canyon with some 700 ft. of trackage has experimented with time table operation, running 24 trains in an hour's time (actual clock time) and the chief difficulty was with the coupling and uncoupling. The trains were varied as to consist; passenger trains were run, sometimes in one section, and other times in two; freights were made up in one yard and broken up in another; engines were dead-headed, etc. There are three diamond crossings, two of which have curved track on one leg. These two were also built to accommodate both scale and tinsplate (I was told and I read that it couldn't be done.) (All the more power to you for accomplishing it. -Ed.) With all the rolling stock, some 80 cars and ten locomotives, entirely scale now, the crossings give no trouble, albeit they clatter considerably in a realistic manner. During the past year all dummy type couplers have been removed and replaced by Baker couplers. You have no idea how this improved operation. There never has been any particular difficulty with the trackwork; derailments are almost non-existent.

I may be wrong but I do believe that any prototype working scale coupler is going to give the facility and certainty of coupling and uncoupling, and staying coupled when you so desire, as a non-prototype; for example, Baker, Mantua, or Watty House. As far as the appearance goes, no one but a detail hound (and I'll doubtless hear from them) will ever notice the difference in appearance when the train is made up, in motion or not. I believe if more O gaugers knew about the ease with which trains can be made up with non-prototype working couplers, they would use them. I certainly agree that the subject of couplers should be carefully considered by the NMRA.

Phil Bridgess



"Upper or Lower?"



"Honey... check the steam gauge on the pressure cooker, will you?"

Well, Phil, you have a good point there, but there are at least a dozen sides to the question. First of all there have been a great many model railroaders who have been not so quietly hollering themselves hoarse for prototype couplers. Apparently, there are quite a few of them, since the companies making scale prototypes had a bad time of it trying to keep up with back orders. As for anyone noticing what type of coupler is mounted, I have had many uninitiates ask me what was that wire thing on the end of the car while pointing out a certain popular type of coupler. If these people noticed it, I would venture to say that it was noticeable.

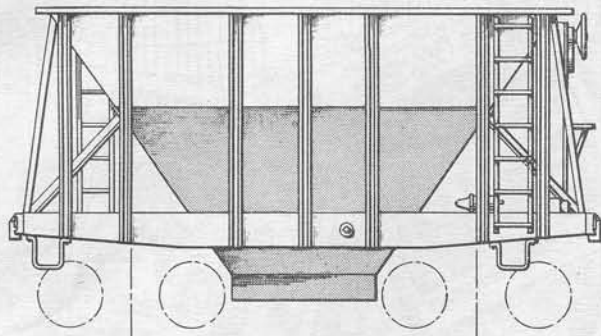
There have been many voices from out a wilderness of couplers, Phil, all asking the NMRA to standardize on this coupler or that coupler, or any coupler. I am not speaking for the planning committee when I say this, but I don't feel that any discussion of the coupler question would lead anywhere but to a selection that would be the closest compromise with the prototype section. The NMRA has recommended a standard section, and I rather doubt that it will go any further.

Upon close inspection, the reasons should be obvious to anyone. If some non-prototype coupler were to be selected through competitive inspection, it would be to the design, and the NMRA would be in the position of boosting a vested interest. In addition, it would probably come to pass that someone would come out with some new non-prototype coupler that would surpass the accepted one. Chances are pretty good that each new design would couple with only particular modifications of existing couplers, and would lose some of their desirable qualities in doing so. You'd soon be right back where we are now.

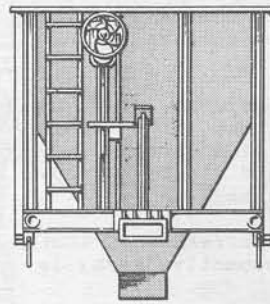
If the standard outline is agreed upon, and each new coupler must conform to that outline, regardless of its method of coupling, we at least have a coupler that will latch with every other coupler on the rolling stock.

To say that prototype couplers will never reach the degree of excellence in coupling and uncoupling that is evident in some of the couplers you mentioned, is to admit defeat or to admit of the same attitude as existed when the term "flea gauger" was tossed about in modelling circles. Dunno if you've ever noticed, but Lionel tinsplate has a good imitation of positive coupling in a device with prototype section. It is not impossible to do this in any gauge.

"IMAGINEERING" ON THE GORRE & DAPHETID

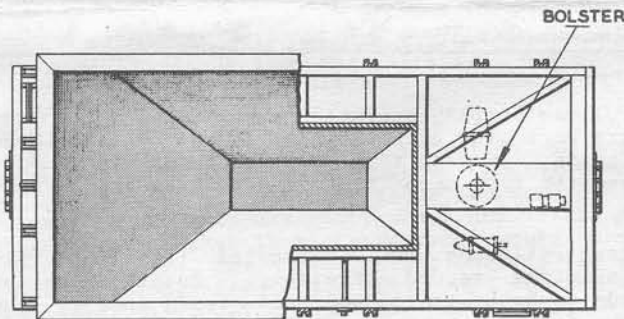


FOX PATENT PRESSED
STEEL OR SIMILAR TRUCKS

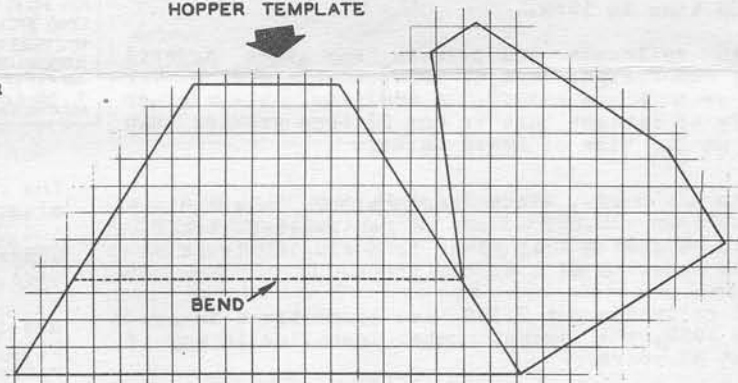


HOPPER TEMPLATE

GORRE & DAPHETID R.R.
"BUTLER MINES"
ORE HOPPER CAR
AS BUILT BY JOHN ALLEN



TOP
HOPPER BROKEN AWAY TO SHOW UNDERFRAME



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
SCALE FEET

W.A.L. '51

PROTOTYPE

The Coupler came into possession of a letter from Howard C. Doolittle through Watty House. Since it bears rather directly on what we had to say last issue about using one's imagination, some of it is to be quoted here.

"...You may have read about our new car called the Unicel. The October 23 "Newsweek"...gave us a good story on the car. I can claim to have built the first HO gauge Unicel car, but it isn't fair to the hobbyists. I had a two-year head start..."

In reference to the discussion on derailments and cures for same...

"...This argument and others concerning couplers, signalling, lighting, control, etc., has a special significance for me. It means that the hobbyist is attempting to copy prototype exactly to scale, at great sacrifice to operation, with resulting lack of progress. Model railroading is not prototype. I believe model railroading should be designed to give the best possible results even if such design is not in accordance with prototype practice...Let's be original and make our hobby give the best satisfaction.

"Through the NMRA and the various regions a development program could be started to determine the best size of track, wheel franges, car weights, turnout design, couplers, etc., which program would finally

"IMAGINEERING"

arrive at the best design for model railroad operation.

"When we designed our Unicel car we did not follow any of the past design practices. Model railroaders can do the same thing. Design the product for the use that it is intended and not copy the big boys.

"The answer as to whether a change is necessary to go out of scale could be verified by determining the scale mileage of operating track to the number of cars and locomotives built...or the number of cars and locomotives gathering dust. Actually, a poll is not required since we are all familiar with the shortcomings of operation.

"...Of course you can see by all this that I'm an operation hound. But, most of us are, and even the prototype's prime purpose is to operate.

"A few facts about the Unicel car: It has no center sill or underframe. The entire body takes the impact. Because of the special draft gear, a maximum of 3,000 pounds per square inch is distributed through the car. The steel car is designed for 50,000 pounds per square inch. (This, of course is the stress on the underframe only since the upper structure does not assume the longitudinal stress as in the Unicel. -Ed.) After repeated impacts between

CONTINUED ON PAGE SEVEN

BITS ABOUT THE RAILROADS

In case anyone doubts the health of the American Railroads, figures show that expenditures of the Class 1 railroads exceeded 7 billion dollars in 1950 and 1949.

Due to more efficient methods of handling, return on the American Railroads during 1950 than in any other year for the past 27 years. The list is top-heavy with diesels with only 24 steam and electric locomotives as opposed to over 2,000 diesels.

A factor to be considered in the increase is that the pulling power of the average locomotive today is 50% greater than it was in 1923.

The average load of freight per train was approximately 1,211 tons in 1950, the highest on record and an increase of 6.3 per cent compared with an average of 1,139 tons in 1949.

American railroads and private car lines ordered 156,481 new freight cars in 1950, the largest number in any year since 1922. In addition, the average capacity of freight cars is now $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons greater than it was at the time of Pearl Harbor.

American Railroads, since Pearl Harbor, have installed more than 10,000 miles of centralized traffic control, a system that gives to a single track almost the capacity of a double track.

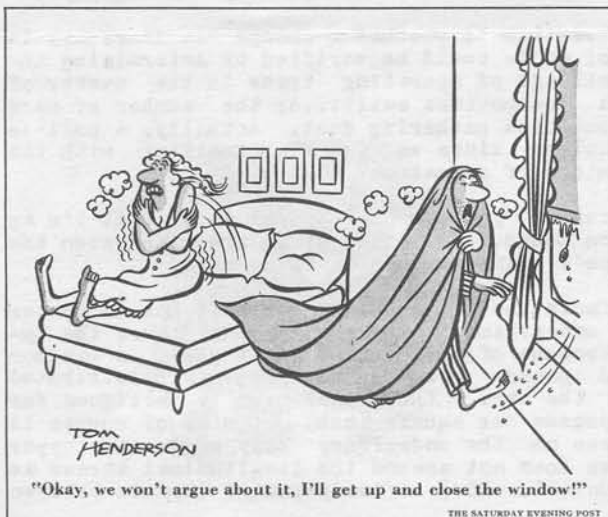
Class I railroads put 2,396 new locomotives in service in 1950, the largest number installed in any of the past 27 years.

Fewer employees lost their lives as a result of rail road accidents in 1950 than in any time since these reports have been filed in 1888.

The average revenue received by the railroads for hauling a ton of freight one mile is now only 1 and $\frac{1}{3}$ cents.

More than 43% of freight traffic and 60% of switching service on the American railroads is now performed by diesel-electric locomotives.

Did you know that there are 2,997 crossties in the average mile of track?



The Pullman Company operates approximately 400 commissary cars over 35 railroads in the United States and Canada, ranging from restaurant cars to lounge-observation type cars featuring only beverage service.

American railroads in 1950 handled freight traffic with all-time record efficiency. Establishing new records in both trainloads and train speeds, the average freight train achieved a record transportation output equivalent to moving more than 20,000 tons of freight one mile in one hour. This is 14% above the peak output of World War II and almost three times as much as thirty years ago.

The Union Pacific has ordered ten of the new gas-turbine 4500 HP electric locomotives from the General Electric Co. after an 80,000 mile road test of 5,000 hours. The engines will be the same size as a 1200 HP diesel. This engine will be put in freight service and will have a speed of 65 mph.

Approximately 60 tons of steel are required for the construction of a pullman car except those whose car bodies are made from aluminum.

Approximately 397,500 miles of track, including main track, yard track and sidings are operated by the railroads of this country.

YOU ALWAYS HAVE A CHOICE

If you don't like the fighting and feuding that goes with our American brand of democracy, there are two places you can go to find unanimity and peace. One of them is a land where everybody agrees on everything everytime - or else. Where there is no candidate but the official candidate; no opinion except official opinion; no policy, philosophy, or religion that is not prescribed for you. You are told what to think on government and world affairs, on art, music, literature, and science. And nobody ever grumbles or disagrees out loud - twice. That's Russia. The other place where there is eternal peace and quiet and harmony is the local cemetery. The editor is in no hurry to go to either.



Hudson Street. 1855, FIRST "FARE BOX" HORSE CAR.

Copyright by J. Ernest Brierly.

OLD TIME TROLLEY (TWO HORSEPOWER)

In 1855 the horsecar shown above ran through Canal and Hudson Sts., and Eighth Ave. to Central Park. It was a great improvement over its predecessors. Inside at the front end was a fare-box where people dropped their money. At the northern end of the line, the body of the car was swung around on the wheelbase and after hitching up the horses again, the driver climbed up to his old seat, now facing south and was ready for the return trip.

"LITTLE JOE" IS NO MORE

The Varney Dockside no longer has a prototype. Gone from Pratt Street in Baltimore is the sight at night of the four-wheeled, fire-spitting tank engine of the B & O. Yes, the diesel has taken over, #97 and #98 are on their way to the scrap heap. There are but few who have not watched the operation of the city belt line and the part played by the engine which Varney made famous as "Little Joe". Long may he run on your pike! -from B.S.M.E. "Switcher"

PROTOTYPE "IMAGINEERING"

the Unicel and a steel car, both fully loaded, at a speed of 12½ miles per hour, the dreadnaught end of the steel car bowed out 1½ inches while the Unicel remained unchanged. Deflection at center of door with full load of 65 tons was .09 inches. Average deflection of 40 foot steel cars with 50 ton loads was .38 inches."

And there you have it. This is an example of a full sized imagineering project. A car was needed to fulfill certain specifications, and it was built, as Howard says, without following previous practices. If you ever build a car or locomotive free lance and have anyone tell you that it isn't prototype, go tell him to chew on an old armature. You had a reason to build that car or locomotive or else it would not have been built. Your reason is as valid an excuse for the existence of that car as is necessary.

One word of warning, though. Don't make it an engineering nightmare. You'll get razzed regardless of what reason you had for building it. On the other hand, maybe the master maniac was just that...

LA PLATA ROAD DAMAGE

The road tests which have been in progress since late June, 1950, at La Plata, Md., to determine the effect of loaded trucks on a reinforced concrete highway terminated December 23, except for some special stress studies to be made with government equipment. The Highway Research Board, which has been in charge of the tests, now plans to analyze carefully all the pertinent data and will make a report later.

In conducting these tests, variously-loaded trucks have been operating over a 1.1-mile section of concrete road on U. S. Route 301, approximately nine miles south of La Plata, Md. Two types of trucks

have been used, one type loaded to 18,000 and 22,400 pounds on single axles and the other type loaded to 36,000 and 44,800 pounds on tandem axles. Four test sections have been used, one lane being subjected to each type of load.

The 18,000 pound load on a single axle and the 36,000 pound load on tandem axles are loads that have been considered proper for highways of standard construction. The other loads represent an overload of about 25%. After some 175,000 passes, the 18,000 pound single axle load had caused only one-fifth the damage caused by the overload truck. Forty per cent of the slabs were damaged by the overload truck.

After some 92,000 truck passes, the 32,000 tandem-axle load had caused only one-quarter the damage by the overload truck. The overload truck had damaged 96% of the concrete slabs.

All of which boils down to the fact that the taxpayer will have to foot the bill for heavier roads or limit the weights to sensible totals.



"At just what bookstore did you buy your engineering supplies?"

HE'S STILL NUMBER 1



THE YOUNGSTERS' FAVORITE