

# GATEWAY TO THE PACIFIC

A Photo Story  
by DONALD SIMS and  
RICHARD STEINHEIMER

*As Vital Today As It Ever Was  
The Ogden-Salt Lake Area  
Presents A Fascinating Pic-  
ture of Railroad Activity, Both  
Steam and Diesel Powered*

**A** GATEWAY is an opening for passage through a barrier, or so says the dictionary. That's a pretty fair description of the railroad transportation pattern of the western U. S.—a few natural gateways across the backbone of mountains that dominate the topography of the western states.

Most rail lines in the west are east-west carriers; there are not very many north-south routes, or very much traffic available. From the Pacific Coast inland to Ogden, Utah there isn't a single north-south route at all. The distance between these points is over 500 miles, and the population is extremely sparse.

Earliest line to the west, was the famed Central Pacific-Union Pacific Overland Route which passed through the mountains by way of Southern Wyoming and Utah. Occupying the central position in

the west, this route was the obvious selection for the first transcontinental railroad. Other roads soon followed the westward trail, the Oregon Short Line by way of Pocatello, Idaho; the Northern Pacific through Butte, Montana; and the Great Northern skirting what is now the southern boundary of Glacier National Park. You have to go south of Salt Lake City for over 400 miles before you will find another transcontinental carrier, this being the Santa Fe's main line across northern Arizona. Farthest south of the trunk-line railroads to the Pacific Coast is the Southern Pacific, threading across the southwest within hailing distance of the Mexican border.

Northern Utah sits astride the Overland Route, which today still remains the principal gateway between east and west. Ogden is the largest railroad terminal in



cific, and the Rio Grande. The latter is the smallest user of the station's facilities, scheduling only the *Prospector* both ways through Ogden. Nevertheless Trains 7 and 8 are a distinctive sight, for they are composed of the only dome cars to be seen in the station. The *Prospector* has another distinction also, for in a station which ordinarily handles fifteen-car transcontinental trains the sight of 7 and 8, usually about five cars, seems out of place. Salt Lake City, however, is the main terminal for the D&RGW and this is where the *Prospector* picks up the bulk of its consist, along with a third diesel unit.

Union Pacific schedules the greatest number of trains through the station sheds, powering the long strings of yellow cars with a mixture of steam and diesel. Most of these are of the transcontinental variety. Included in the array are the plush, extra-fare *City of San Francisco* and its southern running mate, the *City of Los Angeles*. There are a number of other trains including the *San Francisco Overland* and the *Los Angeles Limited*, favorites of those travelers who aren't in need of that extra speed and luxury generated by the hurrying *Cities*.

Don't expect to find rows of spotless steel cars rolling through this depot. Ogden is a gateway for traffic, not an originator. It's a good 1000 miles to Omaha where the Chicago & North Western meets the UP; over 800 to Los Angeles; just a little bit less than 800 miles to San Francisco via the Espee, and Denver is over six hundred miles away either by the UP or the Rio Grande. The elements take their toll and by the time a train reaches Ogden it needs a good bath. The passengers reflect this condition. Put aside are the ties and suits that marked the journey's start and instead rolled up shirt sleeves mark the traveler who strides the platform at Ogden while his train is being serviced, at least in hot weather.

Not one of the ten or fifteen minutes that every through train spends in the station is wasted. Crews are changed, fresh linen comes aboard, a tractor rolls alongside the cars washing windows with a pow-

ered brush, and car inspectors thread their way among the platform crowd. In some cases there are engines to be changed, couplings made, a car switched out, all in the allotted time, under the watchful eye of the stationmaster.

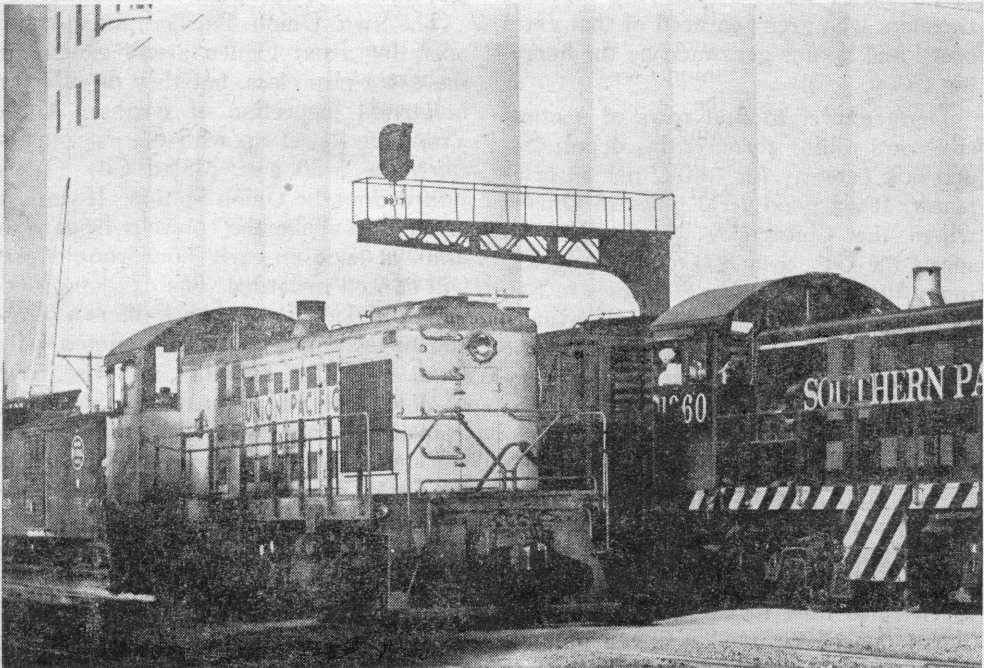
Heaviest traffic occurs in the early morning hours around 8 o'clock and in the early evening. Traffic during these two periods is about evenly divided between east and westbound trains. Trains moving via the Union Pacific are handled by switch engines. Westbound passenger trains enter the station under their own power, then are pulled out by a switcher to the wye south of the depot where the Wyoming and Utah Divisions join rails. From here they head for Salt Lake City and Los Angeles under their own power once again. The reverse of this procedure takes place for eastbound UP trains. They are pulled in tail first and leave without assistance. Trains moving via Espee to and from the coast don't make use of switch engines; they come in with the engine of one road and leave with the engine of the other.

The two Union Pacific mixed trains operating from Ogden aren't exactly in the extra fare class, but they do offer an unhurried inspection of northern Utah. You have to get up with the chickens to catch the 5:30 a.m. Malad City (Ida.) mixed from the Union Station. If you can manage to shake the cobwebs from your brain at such an early hour your efforts will be well rewarded. The day-long journey to Malad City and back offers a pleasant opportunity to get acquainted with Utah. Park City, 68 miles, rail-wise, from Ogden, is the goal of the other mixed. This train offers a run eastward over the double-tracked Wyoming Division to Echo where the Park City branch heads off in a southerly direction.

Situated in the eastern foothills of the Wasatch Range, Park City is a mining town perched on the side of a hill. Located about a block from the precipitous main street the UP station has that personal touch you won't find on the coldly efficient main line. A few flowers growing in boxes that hang from the large bay windows, the



**DOWNTOWN OGDEN.** Union Station is at the far end of this typical American main street. Though settled by members of Latter Day Saints sect, Ogden is considered more of a railroad town than a Mormon center, especially by Salt Lakers



**ON THE LADDER.** UP and SP switchers work the lead of the joint yard at Ogden. Terminals at Ogden, Salt Lake, Provo together make northern Utah biggest railroad center in the intermountain region

musty interior of the depot, an operator who isn't too busy to stop and chat for a half hour—all mark that little bit of individualism that is a branchline trademark.

Mine tipples dominate the Park City scene, but unlike the coal mining towns of Carbon County to the south, silver is king here. Despite the difference in ore, however, Park City doesn't look any different than any other western mining town where dirt-covered buildings dominate the picture.

A keen-eyed observer will notice a weather-beaten yellow building near the UP depot. On closer inspection he will find the words Rio Grande still visible on its side. This is no trick of the imagination, for at one time the D&RGW served Park City, but the rails were torn up several years ago, leaving the Union Pacific to lord it over the scene.

Either one of the mixed trains gets back to Ogden in mid afternoon, allowing time for a look-see around the freight terminal located just west of the union station.

At the north end of the yard the Southern Pacific holds forth with a shop and servicing facilities for motive power off the Salt Lake Division. Union Pacific's roundhouse is located at the south end where the Utah and Wyoming Divisions meet. The large roundhouse plays host to a large variety of motive power, including steam, diesel and the gas turbines known to the operating crews as "big blows." Espee power is mostly diesel with a few steamers still hanging on.

The gas turbines make quite a racket and if you aren't used to them you will probably look skyward for a flight of jet planes before realizing the noise is coming from that "strange looking diesel" down the track. Turbines are used between Ogden and Green River, Wyoming on the Wyoming Division.

Pacific Fruit Express also has an interest in the yard, maintaining a large icing plant in its center. Long, dusty strings of yellow reefers just in from the Nevada desert stop here to have their bunkers refilled before heading eastward over UP steel. Keeping them company are the prod-

ucts of Pacific Coast forests and factories in a never ending flow of commerce.

Ogden's yard presents a continuous picture of railroad pageantry: Espee black and silver diesels mingling with their yellow-sided UP counterparts; the crew of a westbound drag acknowledging the friendly wave of a fireman aboard a 4-6-6-4 with UP markings; a Rio Grande switch engine making a delivery from the small yard to the north that marks the westernmost extension of the Denver road; or a trim *Mountain* type highballing for Salt Lake City with a trainload of Union Pacific stockcars from the Ogden yards, largest stock shipping point west of Denver.

Not to be overlooked is the famous Lucin Cutoff, completed in 1904 to shorten the rail distance to the coast by 40 miles. Beginning a few miles west of Ogden, and bridging the Great Salt Lake, this structure is patrolled by rail and motorboat. Cars loaded with boulders stand ready at all times to replace those washed away by storms.

AT ONE time Ogden, too, was the center of considerable interurban activity. There was a local streetcar line and two interurban railroads. One of these, the Utah-Idaho Central ran north to Preston, Idaho while the Bamberger Railroad ran south to Salt Lake City. Of these lines only the Bamberger remains in operation, having abandoned electric freight and passenger operations in mid-1952. Freight operations are still carried on with diesels as motive power.

From Ogden south to Salt Lake City the UP operates a double-tracked line which is predominantly steam insofar as freight is concerned. Quite a variety of motive power is used, including 2-8-8-0, 4-8-2, 4-10-2, and 2-10-2 wheel arrangements. Passenger operations are all diesel except for a couple of local trains.

Denver & Rio Grande Western rails run west of the Union Pacific right-of-way, while the Bamberger line is located to the east. For most of the distance between Ogden and Salt Lake City the three roads are within sight of the inland sea.

At North Salt Lake the three lines run together for a short distance. It is possible to see a Rio Grande, a UP, and a Bamberger train running neck-and-neck within a hundred feet of each other.

North Salt Lake is the site of the Bamberger shops, now a graveyard of once proud interurbans and juice jacks that have been replaced by orange colored diesels and busses.

Currently a large diesel shop is being built in the Union Pacific yard located at the north end of Salt Lake City. It will occupy the site of the old roundhouse which has been torn down except for two stalls. The combination of the large turntable, which is still used, and the two-stall roundhouse is rather comical. By the time the diesel shop is completed even the two remaining stalls will have gone the way of the motive power that once was quartered here.

Although the shop is intended for heavy repairs, at present only routine servicing is given to diesel and steam power. There are a large number of growlers here, for Salt Lake City marks the northern end of UP's all-diesel operation to Southern California. The steam power serviced at Salt Lake City is used on the Ogden run, and also on coal drags that come up from Provo.

Salt Lake City is Utah in the minds of many Americans. True, it is the state's largest population center, but it must take a back seat to Ogden when it comes to volume of railroad activity. Although there is just as much color and variety in Salt Lake, it does not present the compact railroad picture found in the northern terminus.

Two passenger stations serve Salt Lake, the Rio Grande-Western Pacific depot, and the Union Pacific station.

Overland Route patrons are treated to a sharp contrast in architecture. From the outside the UP station would fit in a movie scene depicting the Gay 90s, while the station interior would be more suited to a 20th Century melodrama of neon lights and smooth-talking passenger agents.

Two blocks south of the UP station is

the joint WP-D&RGW depot. Although not as busy as its rival, it is fully as large, housing Rio Grande offices and the Salt Lake Division dispatcher on the second floor. The station plays host to the *California Zephyr* and the *Prospector*, both of which carry dome cars the like of which are not seen in the station up the street. On alternate days the Western Pacific's pioneering Budd car comes to town with a coat of dust and memories of a long desert journey.

There is still some steam power on the Salt Lake Division of the Rio Grande, and maintenance is provided at the shops located a couple of blocks from that road's passenger station.

Steam comes into its own during the winter months when coal from the Carbon County mines is forthcoming in large quantities. As a result the majority of steamers are overhauled during the summer, but by the time the snow starts falling the last freshly painted 4-6-6-4 has long since departed.

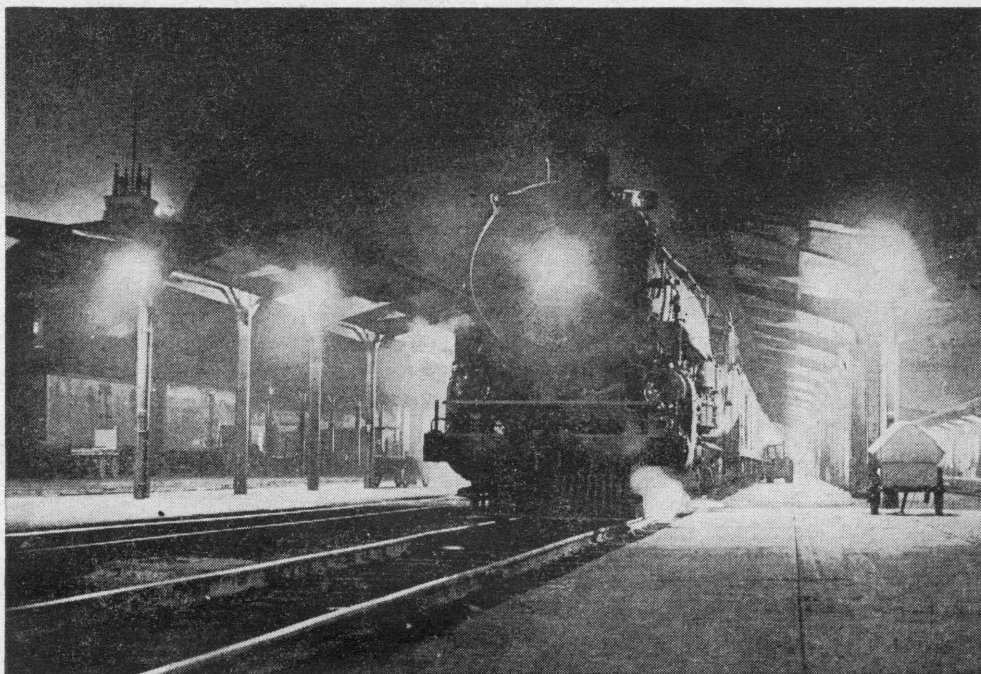
Freightwise the Rio Grande and Western Pacific operate out of Roper Yard, a joint facility located in south Salt Lake City. WP power is all diesel, while the Rio Grande operates a mixture of steam and diesel. The latter road uses steam power mostly in yard and local service. Sometimes a 4-6-6-4 finds its way onto the head of a redball extra, the Rio Grande name for a hotshot, but usually the *Challengers* are reserved for the slower freights and coal drags.

The WP-D&RGW route is a busy one and Roper Yard switch crews are kept going around the clock. Long strings of reefers and boxcars are shunted back and forth constantly under the watchful gaze of the yardmaster, who surveys every move from his new tower located in the center of the yard.

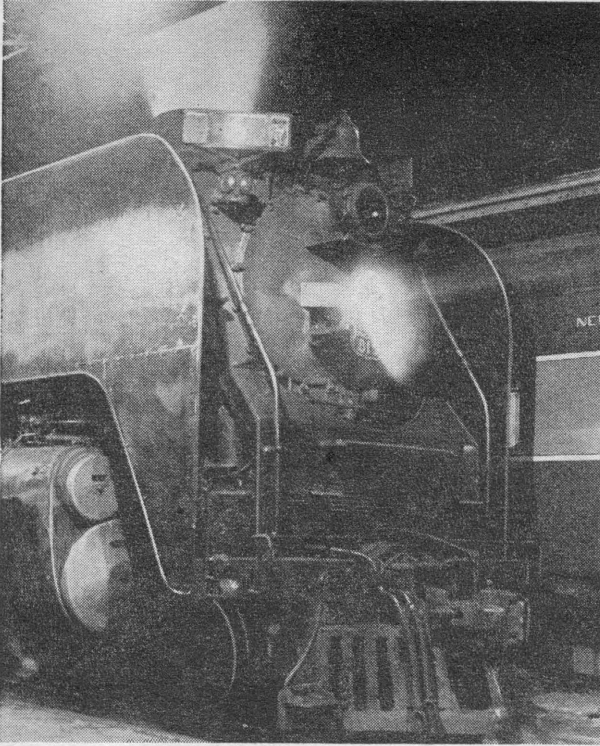
Salt Lake City also has a couple of strictly local railroad products. The Bamberger does quite a bit of industrial switching, as does the Salt Lake, Garfield & Western. Like the Bamberger, the latter is an ex-interurban outfit gone diesel in the postwar period. It goes the Ogden-Salt Lake City



**BLUE FLAG** hangs on cab side of UP diesel No. 904, indicating that inspection and servicing crews are still at work. In the background a switcher awaits its next assignment. Diesel goats are used at Ogden Union Station to pull in and pull out certain trains

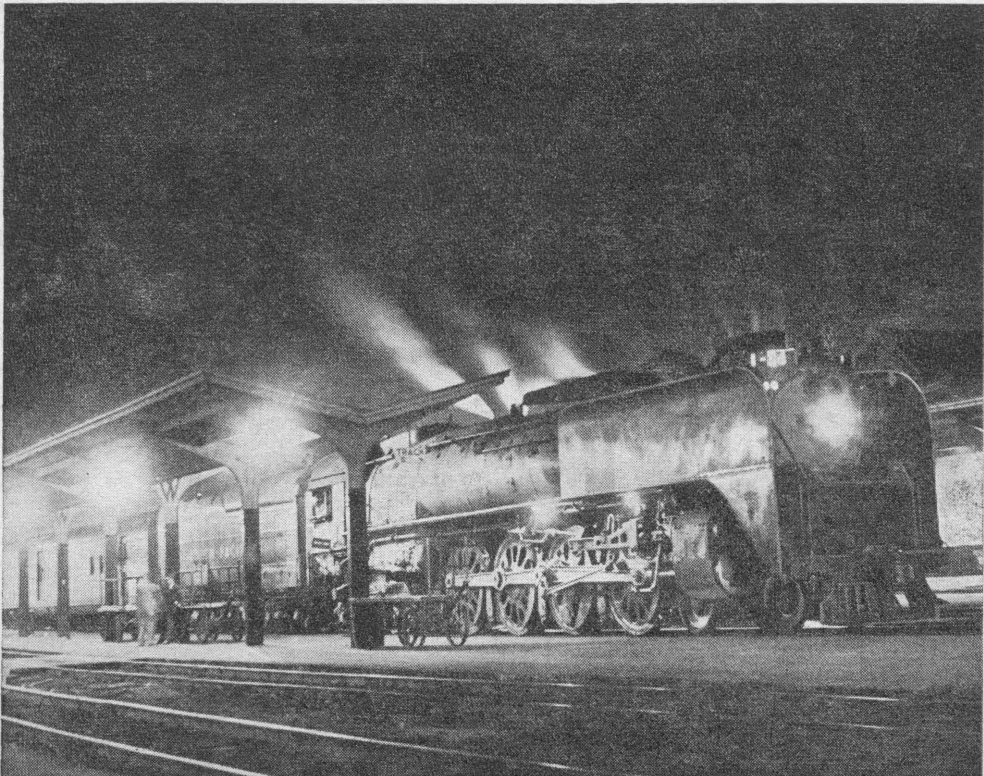


**DEPARTURE TIME.** Union Pacific Train 6 stands in the station at Salt Lake City, ready for the run to Ogden. From there it's a long long haul to Omaha (991 miles) and no sleepers and no diner on the train



**ELEPHANT EARS.** Front end of UP *Northern* type is made distinctive by smoke deflectors. No. 815 stands in the Ogden, Utah station awaiting a highball to head eastward for Green River, Cheyenne, North Platte and Omaha with mail and express

**CANYONS TO CONQUER.** Before *Northern* type 828 casts her headlight over the plateaus of southern Wyoming, she will have to battle some stiff grades, notably those in Echo and Weber Canyons. Series 800 4-8-4s are standard power on secondary UP trains eastward out of Ogden





one better by still engaging in summertime passenger service. Passengers to the Salt-air amusement center ride in a gas car or behind trolley-less interurban cars towed by a diesel switcher.

**T**HERE IS one railroad sight in Salt Lake City that shouldn't be missed. It concerns the Union Pacific and its route just south of the passenger station. For about two miles this line runs right smack down the middle of a busy boulevard. The sight of the plush *City of Los Angeles* pushing its way down the street amid a maze of scattering automobiles is a rare one.

Provo is Utah's third largest city, and the smallest of the three rail centers which make up the gateway. It is connected to Salt Lake City by two routes, the Rio Grande main line and a Union Pacific branch that actually serves as a secondary main for freight traffic to the southwestern states.

The city itself lies at the base of Provo Peak, an 11,000-foot member of the Wasatch Range. Like the other Mormon towns of northern Utah, Provo has a system of wide streets laid out in the four cardinal compass directions.

As an industrial city Provo is dependent upon steel rails for the raw materials to feed the furnaces of the smelters that dominate the scene. Coal from Carbon County via the Rio Grande and the Utah Railway, iron ore from the south by way of UP's Lynndyl Branch for the nearby Geneva Steel Mill provide heavy traffic for the railroads, in addition to the transcontinental traffic that moves through the area.

One early predecessor of the Rio Grande started out of Provo with the intent of hauling coal from Scofield. The line reached its goal all right, but not before it had the moniker "Calico Road" pinned to it. It seems that the road's builder, Milan Packer, owned a hardware store and paid off his workers in general merchandise, most of which was calico cloth. The road was completed to Provo in 1878 and sold to the predecessor of the

present Rio Grande in 1881, giving Provo its first trunkline service.

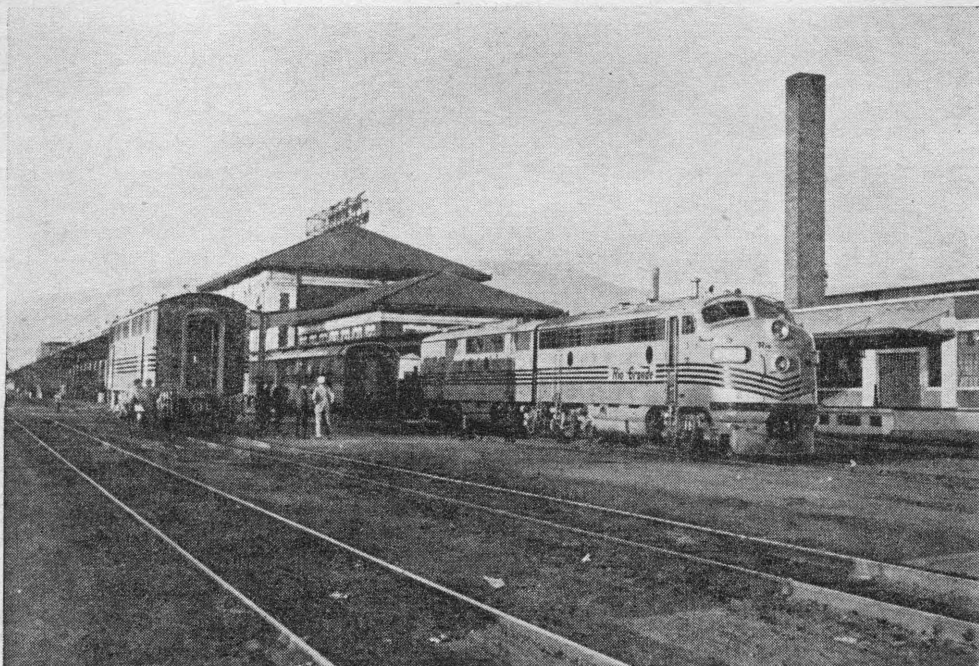
Today the UP and the Utah Railway operate a joint terminal in Provo, a facility which was built in 1917 and has been operated jointly ever since. Besides this the two roads together own about 2000 modern steel coal cars. The Utah Coal Route, as it is known, hands over its coal traffic to the Union Pacific at Provo. Most of this tonnage is bound for the Salt Lake City area and is hauled by UP 2-8-8-0s and 4-10-2s, often with helpers. Most of this business occurs during the winter months when the demand for coal reaches its peak.

A few miles east of Provo the Rio Grande and Utah railways operate a joint double-track line over Soldier Summit. Although not strictly part of the railroad pattern of the gateway, this stretch of track is the most spectacular piece of scenery in Utah. Helpers have to be used on both sides of the summit. On the west side Rio Grande trains pick up the helper at Thistle while Utah Railway trains run double-headed all the way from Provo. Helper, Utah, appropriately named, is the east side terminus where freights get that extra push needed to conquer the Wasatch Mountains.

Known in Rio Grande parlance as Sub-division No. 6 of the Salt Lake Division, this stretch of track is a fine example of the mountain railroading that captures the imagination of railroaders and railfans alike.

Northern Utah was and is founded upon an economic base of natural transportation routes combined with the exploitation of mineral resources. Today the gateway has developed into a modern, efficient network of railroad lines, an area that not only services the needs of transcontinental traffic but generates a respectable number of local movements besides.

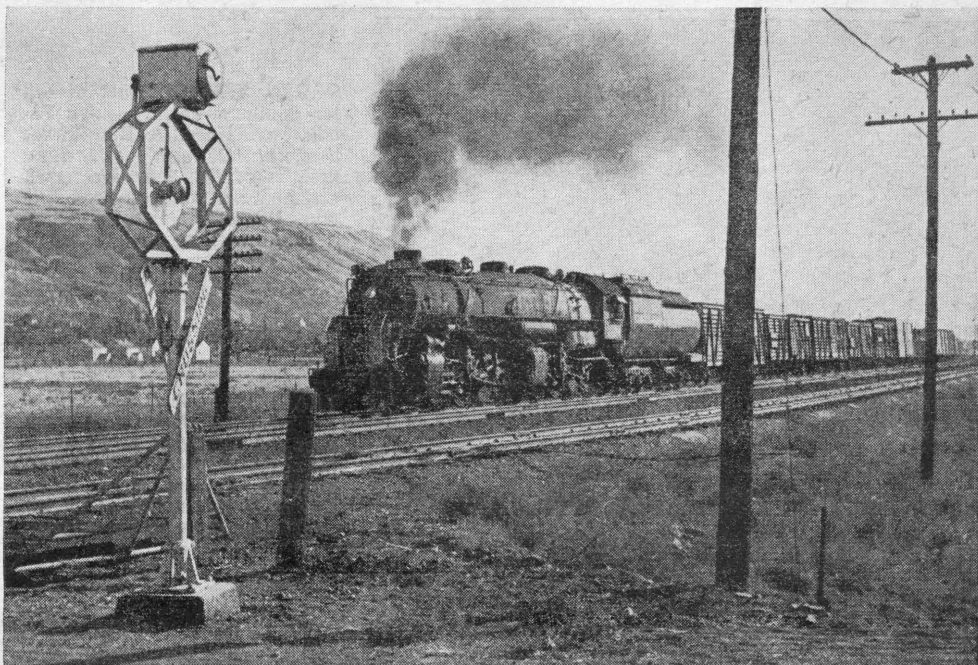
Within this rail gateway will be found a variety of railroads and motive power that serve up a dish to satisfy the most critical. Be it steam, diesel, or turbine you can find it in northern Utah, the railroad gateway to the Pacific Coast.



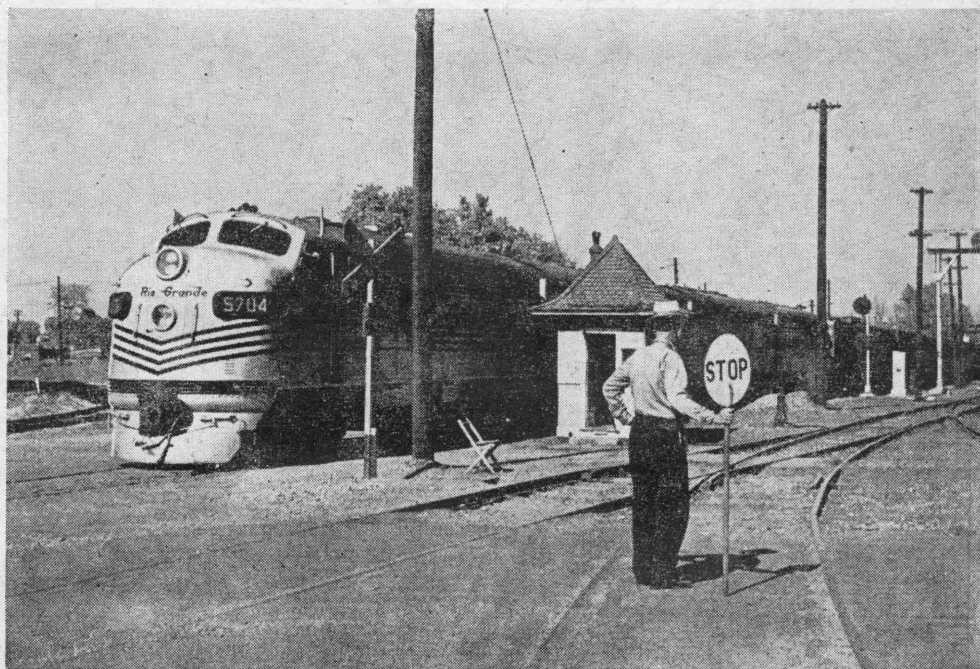
**THE PROSPECTOR.** On its way east D&RGW's Train 8 picks up an extra diesel unit for the Moffat Tunnel climb, also a few extra cars, at Salt Lake City, above. Rio Grande has its own station in Salt Lake. UP station is two blocks away



**RAILROAD AERIE.** Denver & Rio Grande roundhouse, above, is backdropped by city of Salt Lake and surrounding hills. Shops are nearby, also the passenger station



**SHEEP SPECIAL.** At North Salt Lake, above, large numbers of sheep are shipped each year. Short fast stock extras make the run from Ogden to Salt Lake in practically nothing flat, for connection with southbound specials. This line also gets traffic from Utah Railway, at Provo

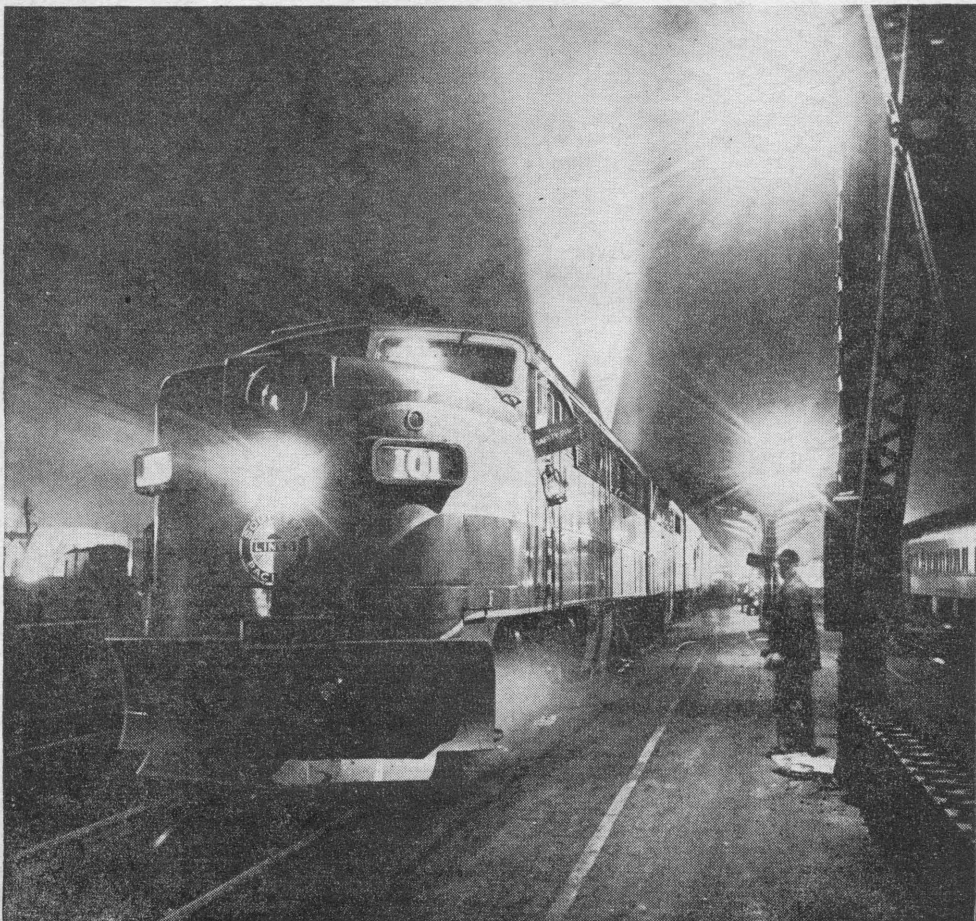


**MOTORIST'S NIGHTMARE.** In one short block between the Union Pacific and Rio Grande stations at Salt Lake, roadway crosses 2 railroad tracks. Here a Rio Grande freight inches along as it comes in from Ogden and SP connection

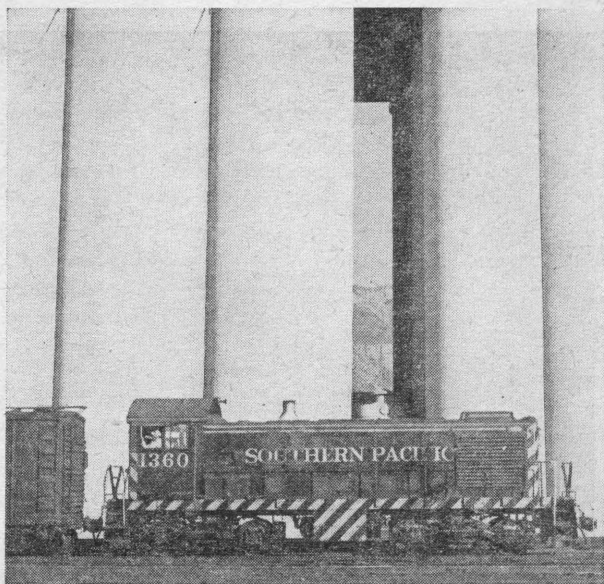


**OGDEN STATION**, port of call for Southern Pacific, Union Pacific and Denver & Rio Grande Western. D&RGW is smallest user, scheduling only *Prospector*, east and west through here. Big user, UP, schedules many transcontinentals through Ogden

**TRAIN 101**, below, SP's *City of San Francisco*, loads up with supplies and passengers before beginning overnight dash across three states to Oakland Mole. Before *City of SF* leaves, *City of LA* will pull in en route to Los Angeles

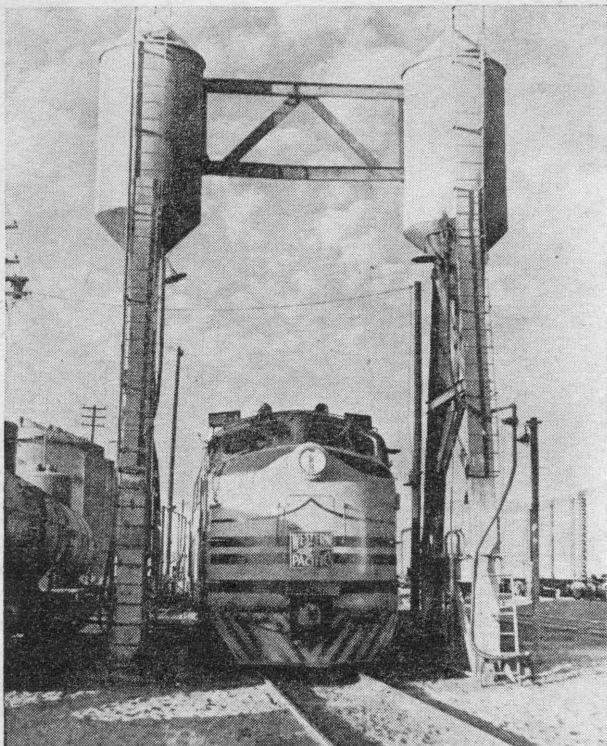


**JOINT YARD** at Ogden is worked by SP Alco switcher, right. Elevators in background, one of city's landmarks, belong to the large Sperry products plant of General Mills



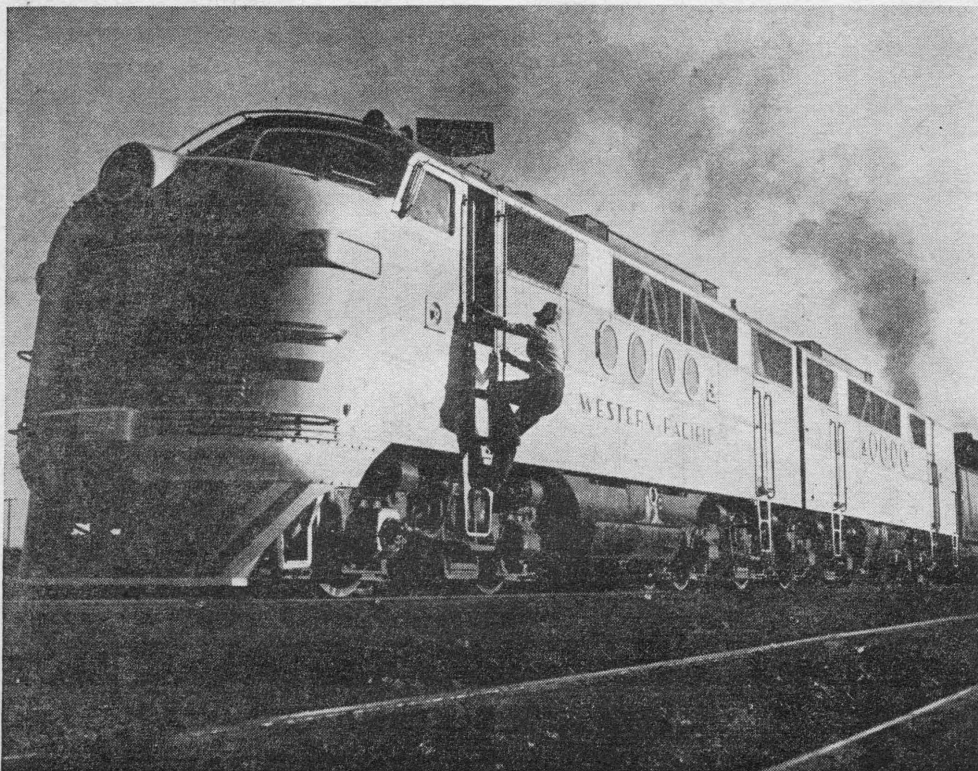
**FRUIT BLOCK.** Ogden Terminal Co. employe gives UP manifest freight the come ahead as it leaves yard for Green River. Challenger helper is cut in near crummy



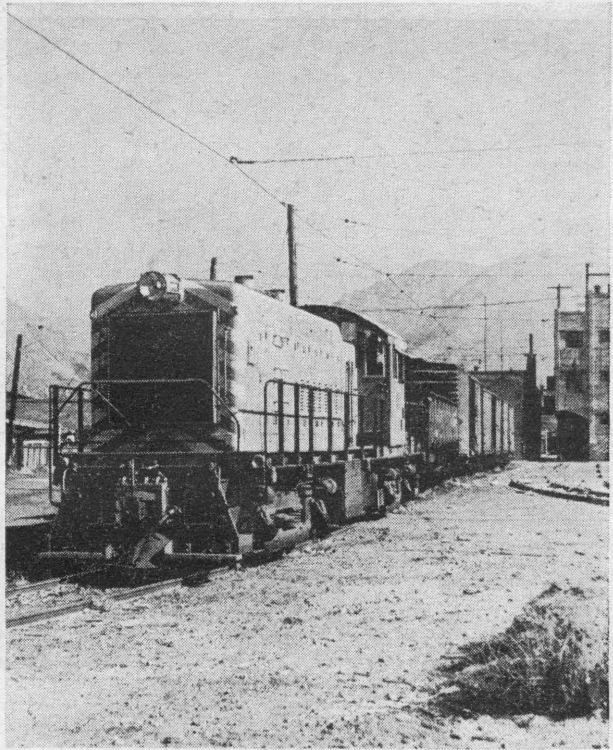


**FRAMED** by a pair of sand towers, a Western Pacific diesel stands in Roper Yard near Salt Lake City. WP doesn't make Ogden, and Salt Lake is as far east as its tracks go

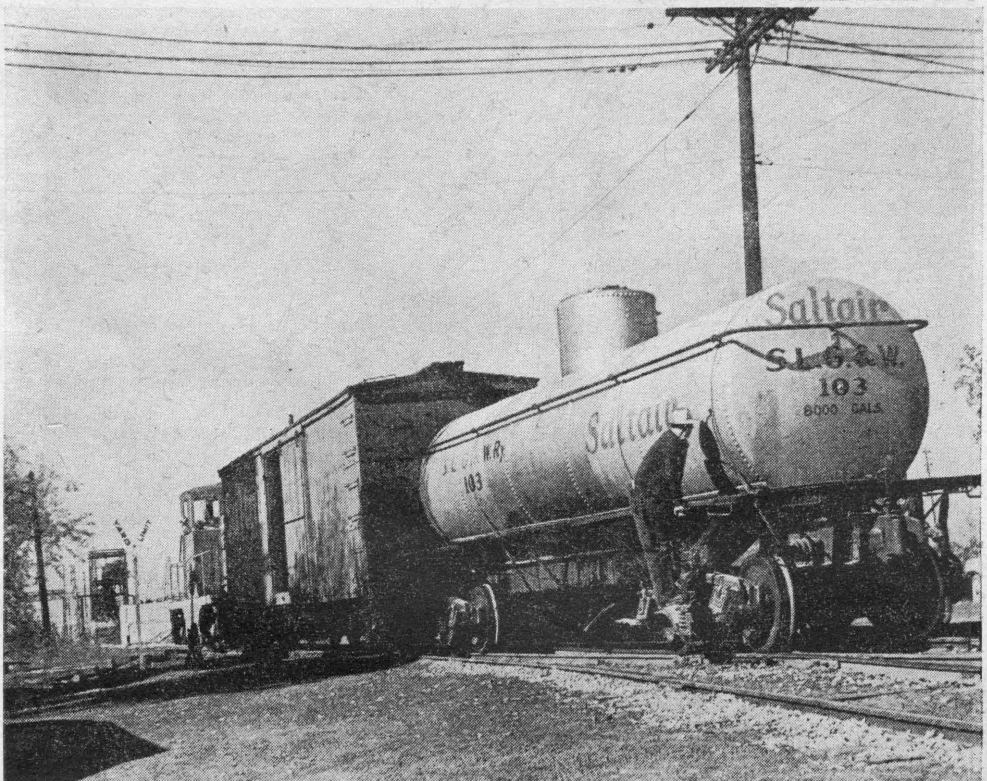
**READY TRACK.** The hostler boards a WP engine in Roper Yard, Salt Lake, to put it on the head end of a westbound extra. WP does little more than leave and pick up trains in the yard; Rio Grande does switching and blocking of trains

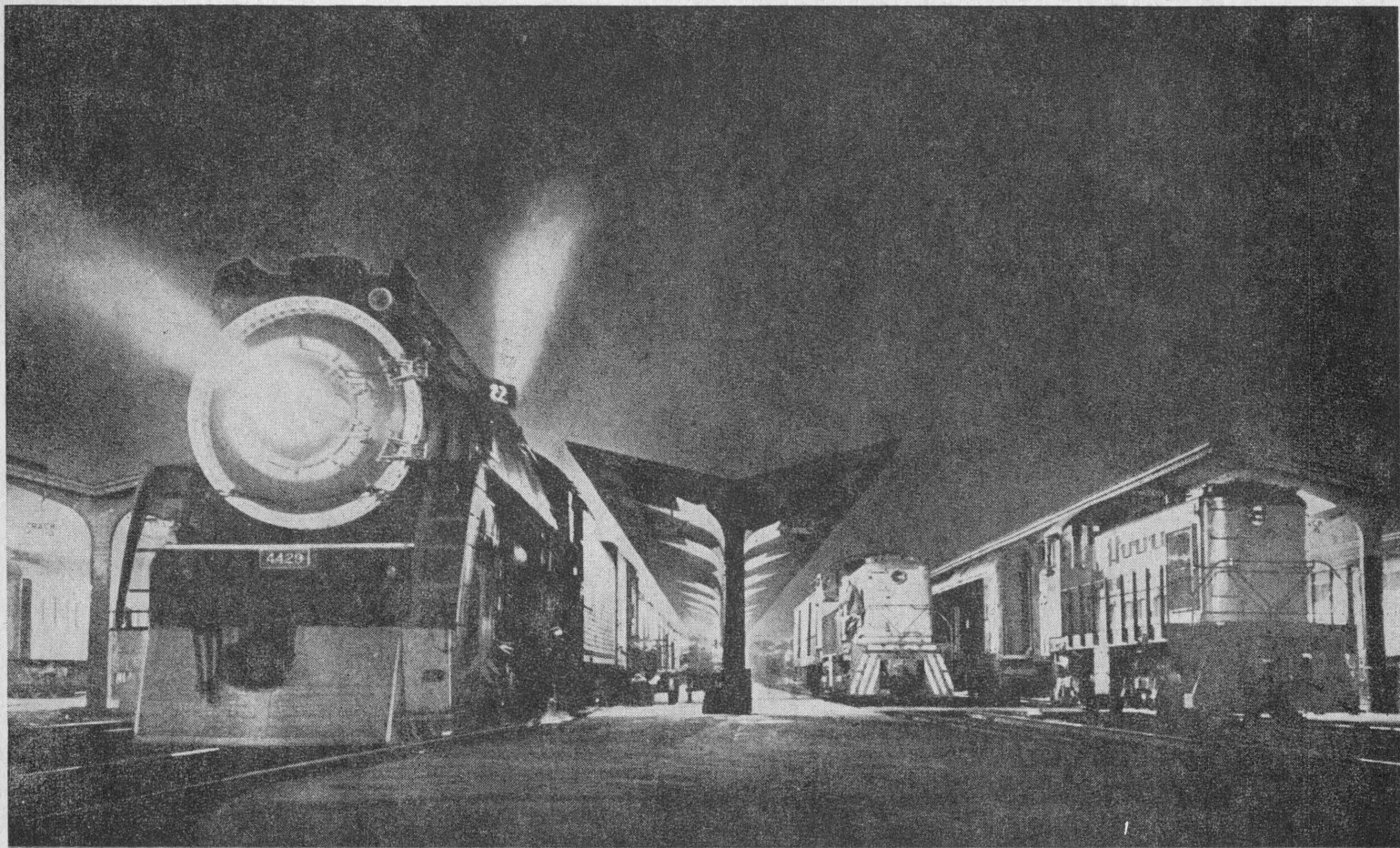


**OLD INTERURBAN.** The Bamberger Railroad's No. 570 does some switching chores at Ogden, little pike's northern terminus. Bamberger no longer carries passengers except on buses



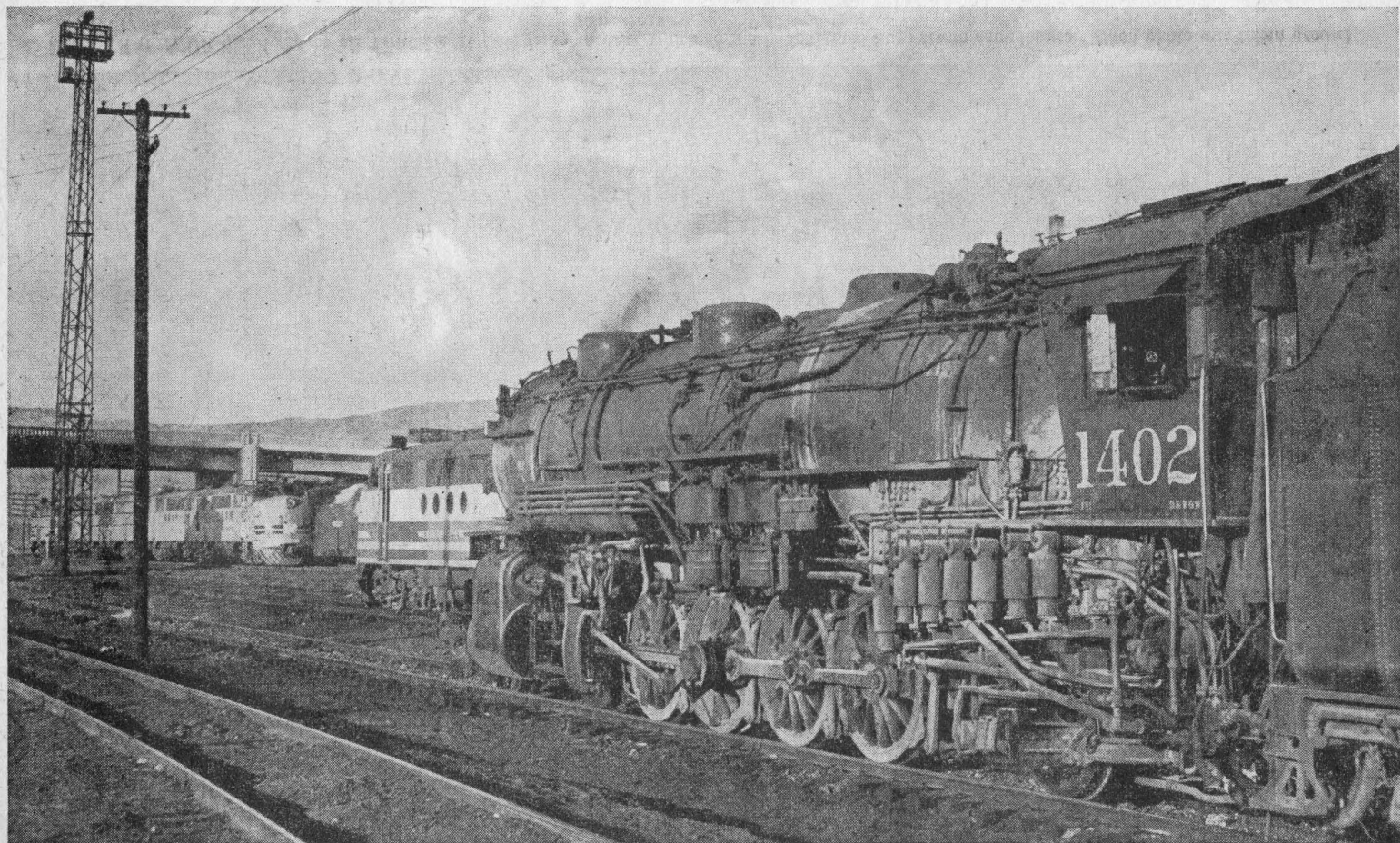
**BATHERS RAILROAD.** Salt Lake, Garfield & Western schedules frequent daily train service for passengers to Saltair Beach from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Pike, which used to be juiceline, is now dieselized, handles freight the year round



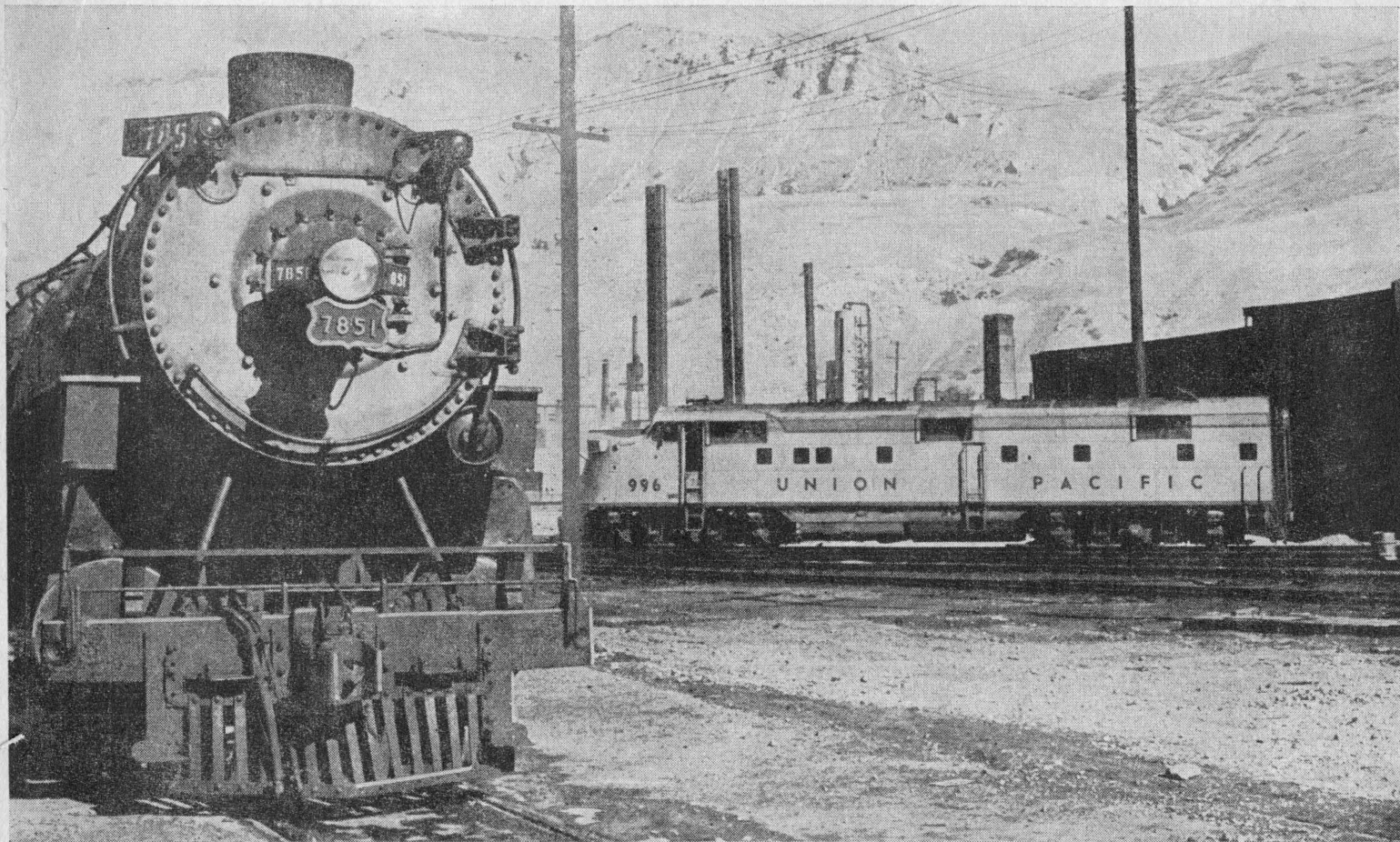


SP FAST MAIL has just pulled into Ogden for a change of engines. Most of its cars will go east in a few hours as UP's No. 6. UP switchers are shuffling cars to be added to incoming trains

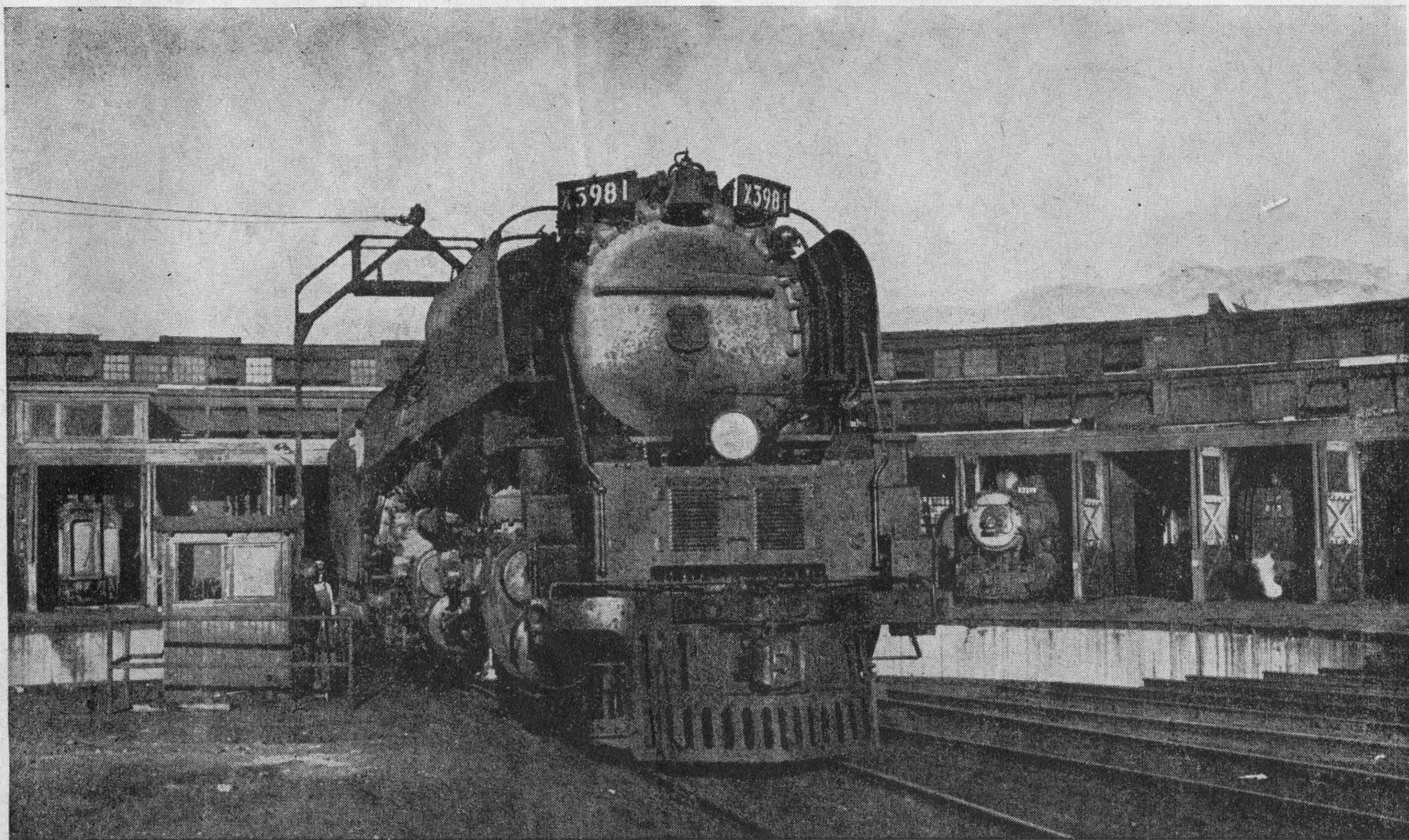




ROPER YARD, a D&RGW 2-10-2 and a couple of WP diesels. Rio Grande uses some steam north of Salt Lake, mainly diesels south toward Provo



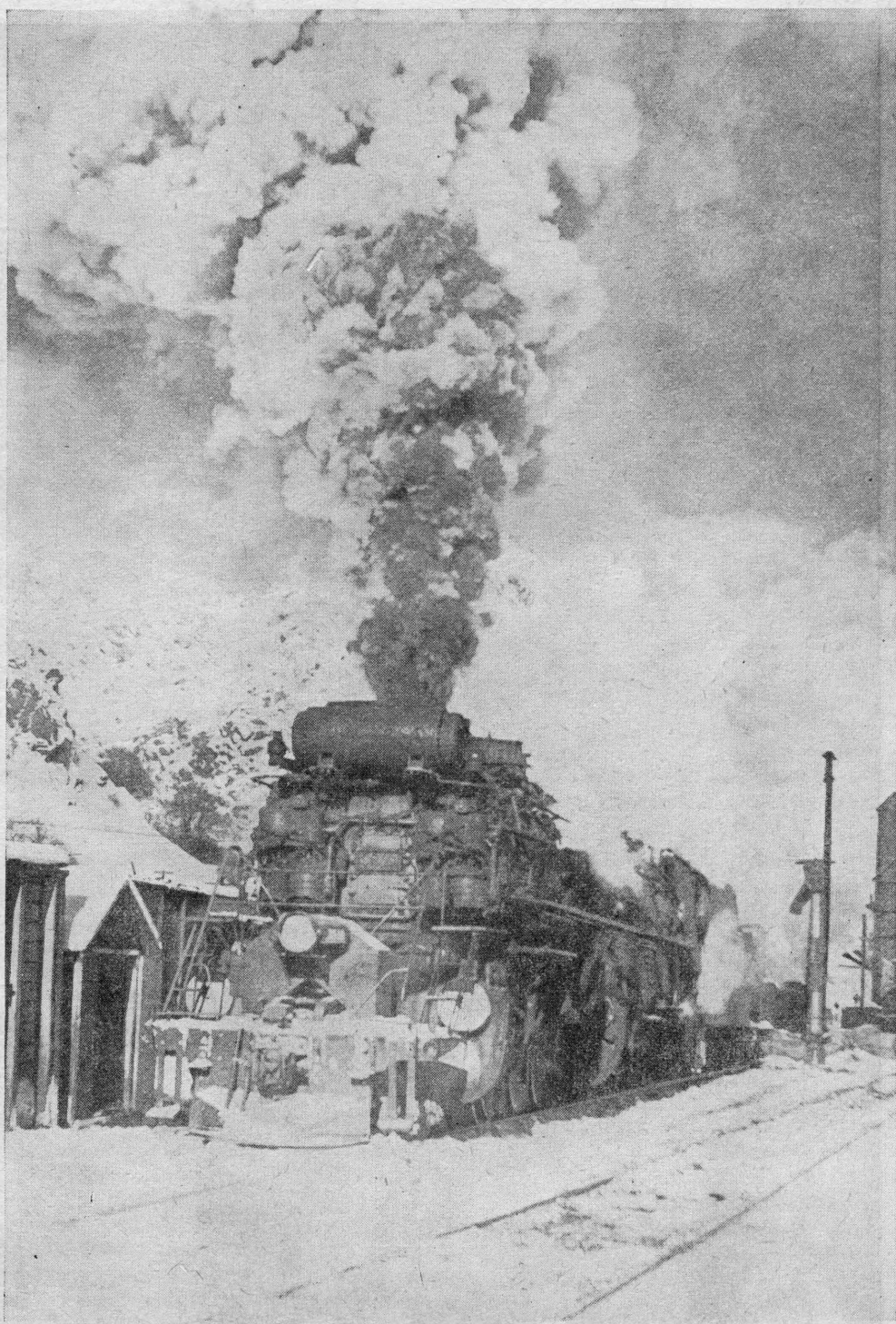
NEW ERA. A UP diesel moves off turntable at Salt Lake in area which formerly contained huge steam roundhouse. When photo was taken ground was being readied for big diesel shop



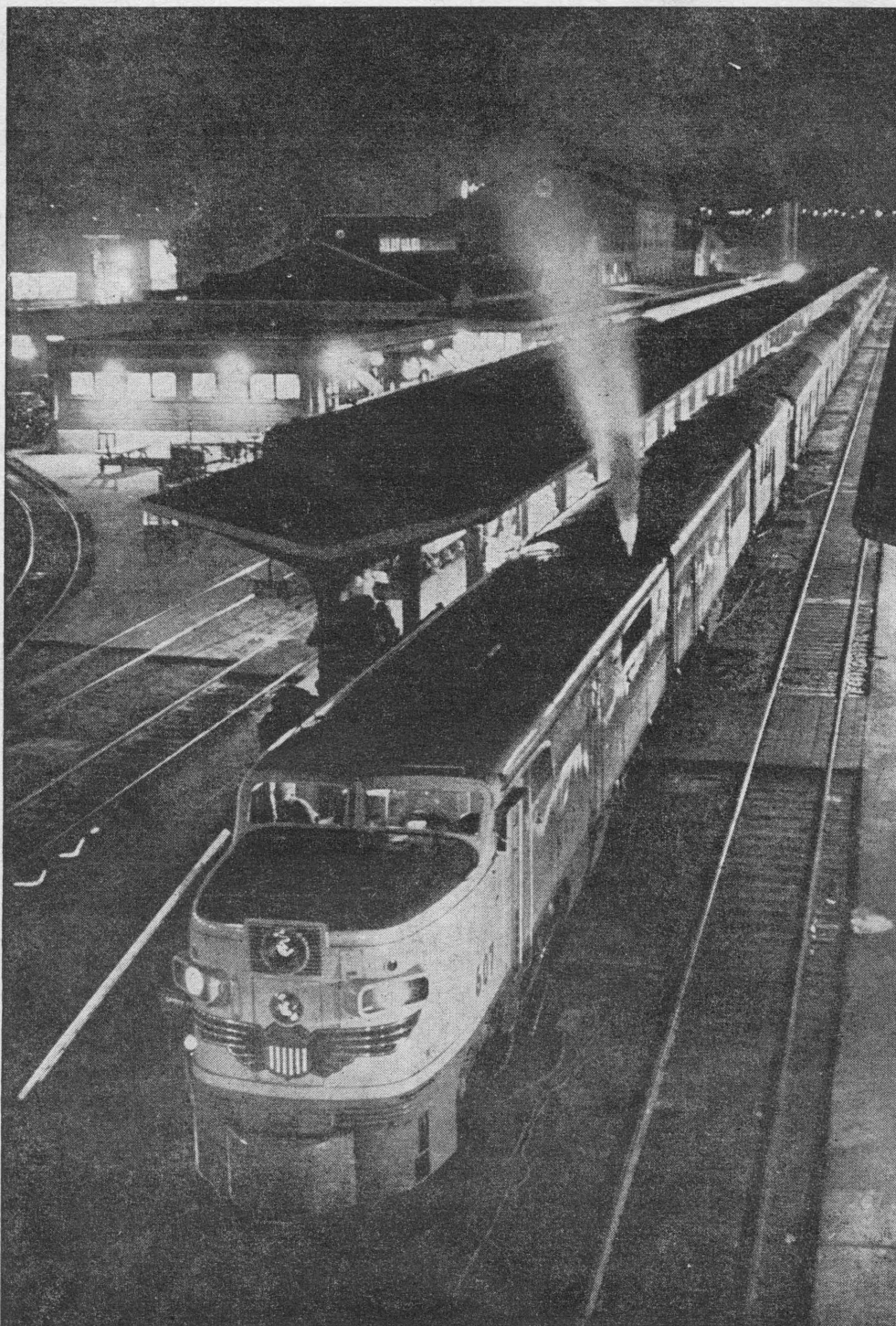
*CHALLENGER* type rolls off turntable at Ogden. Diesels and UP's pioneering turbine locomotives are also serviced here



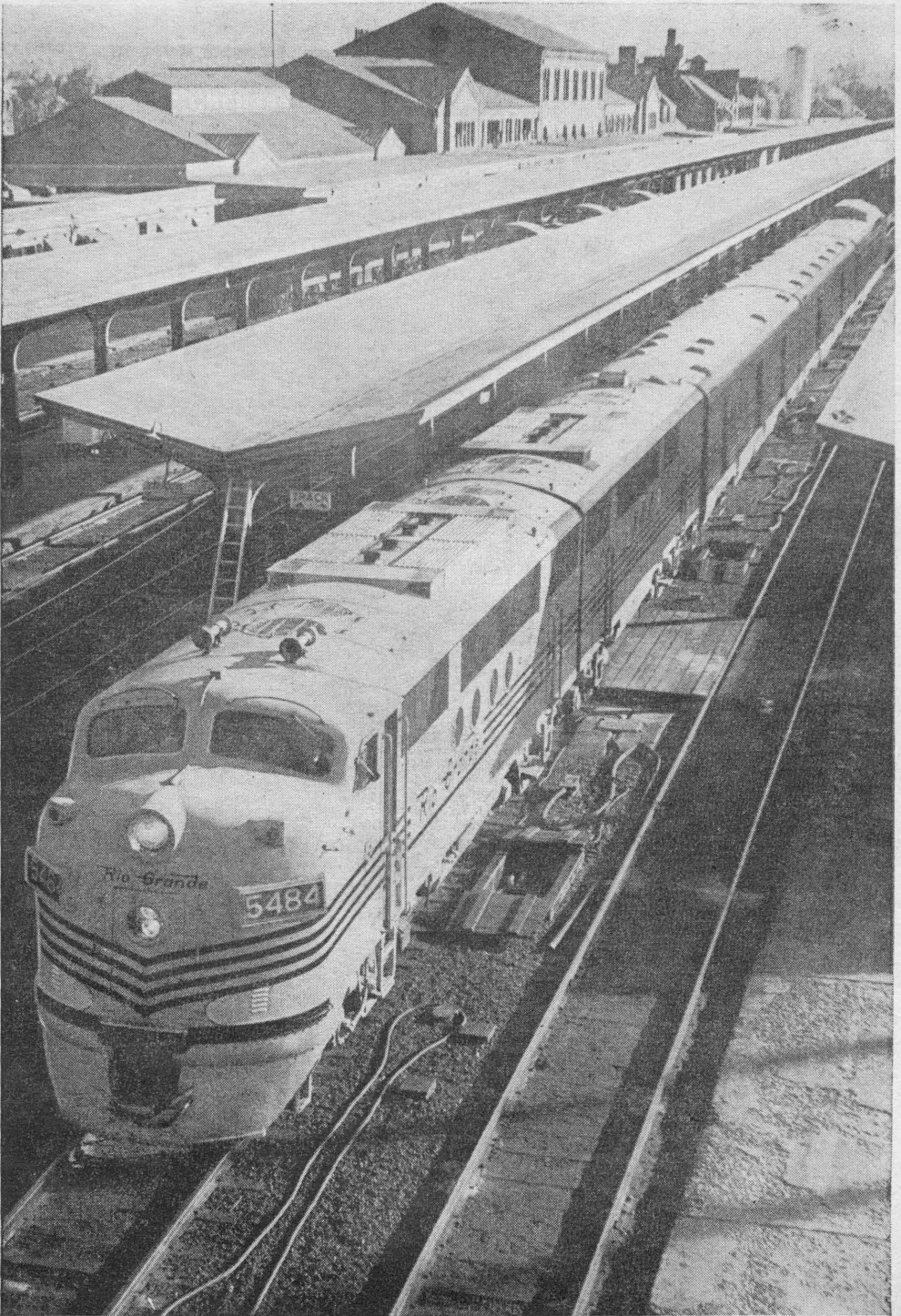
DRAG FREIGHT leaves Ogden for North Salt Lake behind 2-8-8-0, one of several still in use around Salt Lake-Ogden-Provo getaway



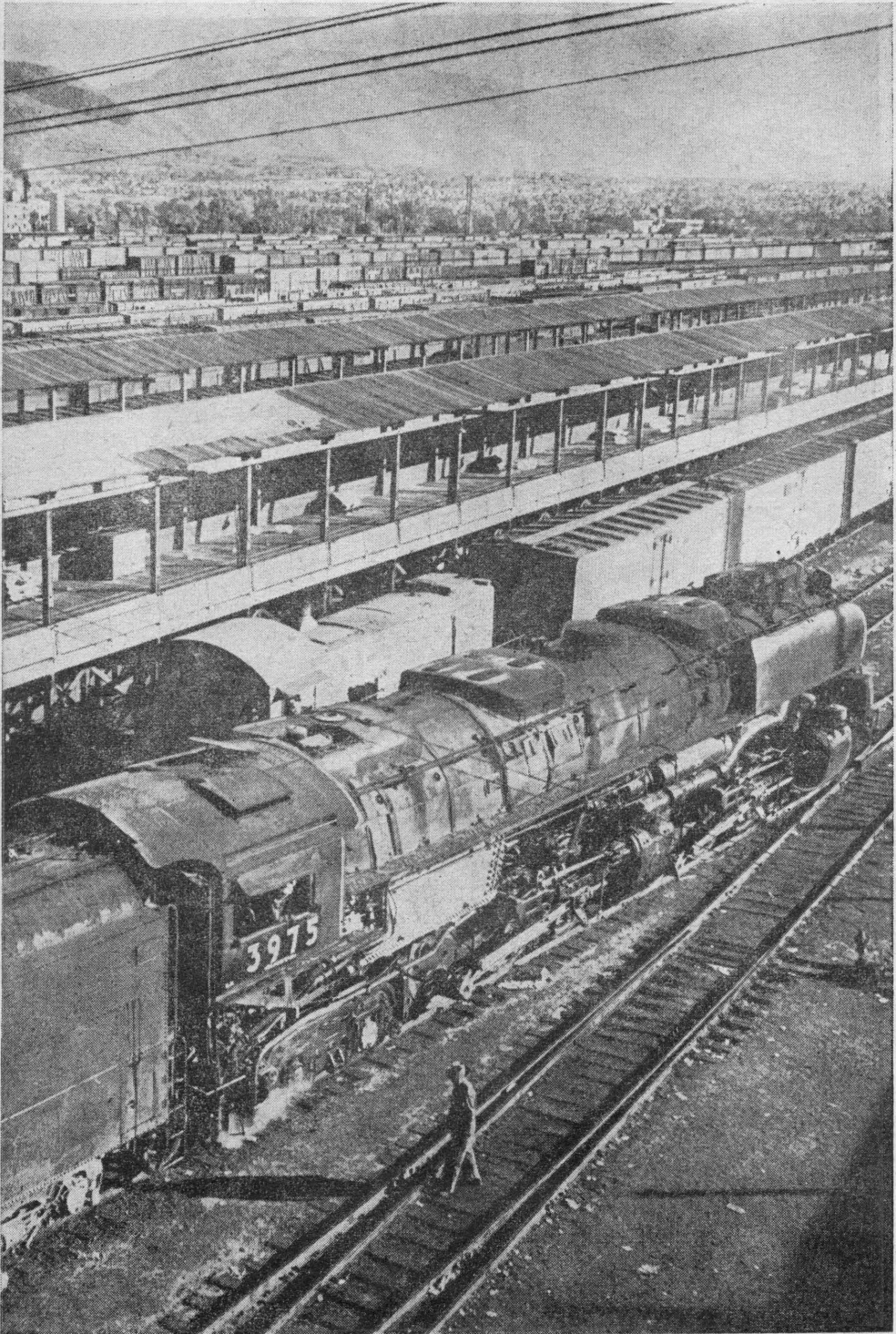
**HARNESSED VOLCANO.** At Thistle, Utah, a 2-8-2 awaiting helper assignment on Rio Grande's Salt Lake Division. When photo was taken thermometer registered 10 below



*CITY OF ST. LOUIS* at Ogden for car cleaning and engine change during 30-minute stop. By early afternoon of the next day it will be pulling into Los Angeles

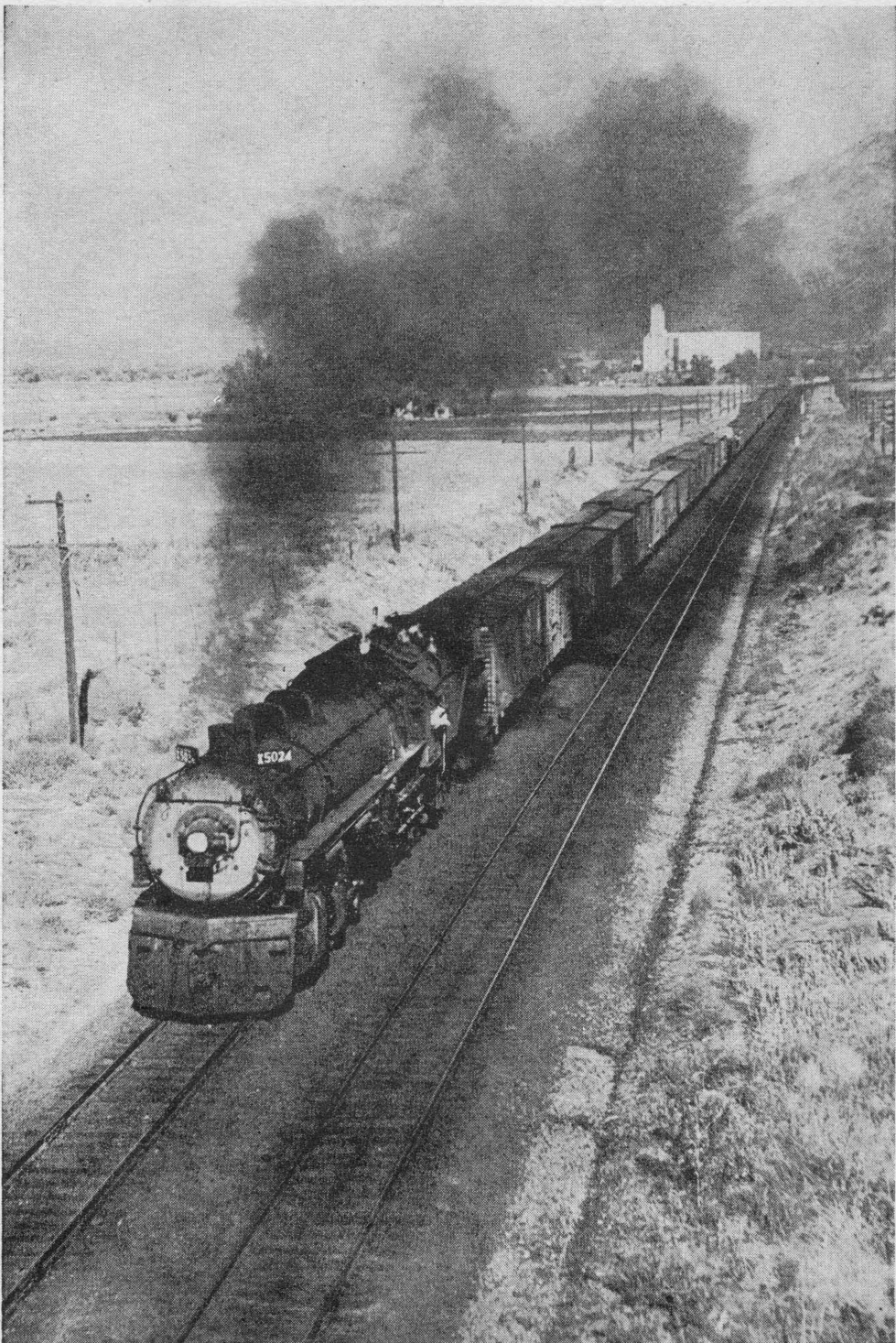


**PROSPECTOR** of the D&RGW departs Ogden for Salt Lake where it will pick up more cars and a third diesel unit for mountainous climb to Denver

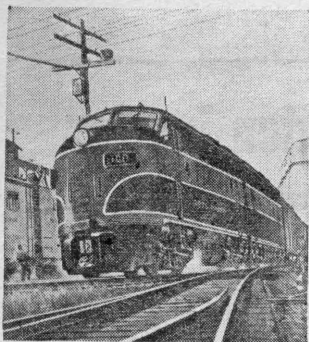


WASATCH MOUNTAINS loom over yards at Ogden. In foreground a *Challenger* backs toward a fruit block headed for Green River. Notch in mountains is Weber Canyon





**GETTING A WHEEL** on the tonnage out of Ogden is UP's No. 5024, a 2-10-2. Steam types most common between Ogden and Salt Lake are 2-10-2s, 4-10-2s and 2-8-8-0s



# RAILROAD

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# RAILROAD

JULY

MAGAZINE

35 CENTS



IN THIS  
ISSUE

**MICHIGAN'S LUMBER PIKES**

AN ALBUM OF WOLVERINE  
STATE LOGGING ROADS