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TRANSPORTATION VULNERABILITY LOW: - Surface transportation, either rail or highway, is less vulnerable to attack from an enemy than is industry, the Office of Defense Mobilization estimates.

"Surface transportation," says the ODM, "as a whole, including the railroads and the highways connecting cities, is of relatively low vulnerability to attack. Motive power, freight cars and highway vehicles tend to be more dispersed than most industrial target systems; hence, transportation capacity is not likely to be lost as rapidly as the industrial capacity which generates traffic," in the event of an attack by an enemy.

RAILROADS ASK ICC TO DETERMINE POLICY OF PER CENT RETURN ON THEIR INVESTMENT: - The railroad industry feels that the time has come for the Interstate Commerce Commission to say whether, as a matter of policy, the average railroad rate of return will be held to around four per cent, or whether they will be allowed the opportunity under increased rates to earn six per cent on their investments. In recent hearings before the Commission, an industry plea for six per cent has been voiced.

RATE HEARINGS UNDERWAY: - The Interstate Commerce Commission has begun hearings of oral arguments on the application of Western and Eastern Railroads for a general freight rate increase of 22 per cent and the Southern Railroads for a general increase of 15 per cent. Recently the Westerners and Southerners received authority for a five per cent increase and the Easterners a seven per cent hike.

SHIPPERS WANT END TO EXCISE TAX: - The Central Western Shippers Advisory Board adopted a resolution asking for abolition of the three per cent tax on passenger traffic and the 10 per cent tax on freight, pointing out that the tax has "long since served its purpose."

RAILWAYS TAKE A LOOK AT AUTOMATION: - At present, the railroad's investment in automation is estimated by industry executives at \$3.745 billion, for the 10-year period 1946-56. This does not include the immense dieselization of the roads that took place in the same years. In a breakdown, gross capital expenditures for this period amounted to \$12 billion. This included \$8.3 billion for rolling stock and \$3.8 billion for roadway and structures. Industry officials estimate that \$75 million went into communications systems, \$470 million for signaling and \$1.2 billion into yard improvements. Another \$2 billion went for roadway and structure modernization. Rail officials estimate that the almost \$4 billion current automation investment is just a fraction of what it will become, according to present plans.

MOVING CARS OUT FAST: - Steel Magazine, in a recent issue, says freight cars are being ordered at an increasing rate with approximately twice as many orders placed in the first four months of '57 as compared to the same period in '56.

NOT CONFINED TO WYOMING: - The Laramie, Wyoming, Boomerang is complaining about the fact that citizens of that state are having to contribute taxes toward development of the inland waterways systems to "boom barge traffic."

"We are not against the barge lines," the Boomerang declares, "we are only against their phony effort to take credit for creating a boom when in fact all they have done is create a government-subsidized industry."

Citizens of other states will sympathize with Wyoming since their taxes also go to make it possible for the barge lines to operate free over publicly maintained highways.

FRISCO PERSONNEL: - The following change in Frisco personnel has been announced:

R. L. Akins, supervisor of freight loss and damage prevention, headquarters, Springfield, effective June 1.

FRISCO LOADINGS: - For period May 25 to May 31, 1957, inclusive, Frisko revenue freight loaded on-line and received from connections totaled 14,205, compared with 15,029 for the previous 7-day period and a total of 15,101 for the corresponding period last year.

REVENUE FREIGHT: - Loading of revenue freight for the week ended May 25, 1957, totaled 722,903 cars, the Association of American Railroads announced today. This was a decrease of 65,351 cars or 8.3 per cent below the corresponding week in 1956, and a decrease of 62,686 cars or 8 per cent below the corresponding week in 1955.

Loadings in the week ended May 25 were 382 cars or one-tenth of one per cent above the preceding week.

Coal loading amounted to 132,423 cars, a decrease of 7,696 cars below the corresponding week a year ago, and a decrease of 292 cars below the preceding week this year. Grain and grain products loadings totaled 47,953 cars, a decrease of 3,073 cars below the corresponding week in 1956, but an increase of 39 cars above the preceding week this year. Livestock loading amounted to 5,150 cars, a decrease of 988 cars below the corresponding week in 1956, and a decrease of 493 cars below the preceding week this year. Forest products loadings totaled 40,367 cars, a decrease of 7,853 cars below a year ago, but an increase of 617 cars above a week ago. Ore loading amounted to 87,849 cars, an increase of 3,574 cars above last year, and an increase of 7,279 cars above last week. Coke loading amounted to 11,023 cars, a decrease of 2,008 cars below a year ago, and a decrease of 91 cars below a week ago.

Loading of merchandise less than carload freight totaled 55,084 cars, a decrease of 5,093 cars below the corresponding week in 1956, but an increase of 224 cars above a week ago.

COACH TRAFFIC UP: - Passenger coach revenue took a jump in January and February of this year, according to the ICC, amounting to \$66,340,592 or a 4.3 per cent increase over the same period of 1956.

Parlor and sleeping car revenue was down 5.3 per cent however, totaling \$38,573,861.

ICC CHAIRMAN APPOINTED MEMBER OF PAN-AM COMMISSION: - Chairman Clarke took his oath on May 28 as a member of the United States National Commission in the Pan American Railway Congress Association. He succeeds Commissioner Arpaia.

BRIEFS: - From 1940 to 1956 the level of wages in the railroad industry increased 187 per cent and the level of prices which railroads pay for fuel, materials and supplies increased 155 per cent. Despite the heavy increases in operating costs, the average revenue received by the railroads for carrying a ton of freight one mile increased only 46 per cent and the average revenue for performing one passenger mile of service increased only 38 per cent.

..... One measure of railway efficiency is the number of ton-miles performed by the average freight train in an hour. In the 10-year period 1946-1956, net ton-miles per freight-train-hour increased from 17,173 to 26,119, a gain of 52.1 per cent. The average freight train consists of 66 cars, not including the caboose, and carries nearly 1,400 tons of freight.

..... During 1956 Diesel-electric locomotives handled 89 per cent of the freight traffic of the railroads; steam locomotives handled 9 per cent; and electric locomotives handled 2 per cent.

..... Each freight car on the railroads of the United States travels an average of 17,000 miles a year. During the 10-year period ended December 31, 1956, the total number of freight cars owned by Class I railroads decreased from 1,743,000 to 1,707,000, a reduction of 2.1 per cent. However, the capacity of the average freight car increased from 51.3 tons to 54.1 tons, and the aggregate capacity of the freight car fleet increased from 89,391,000 tons to 92,349,000 tons, a gain of 3.3 per cent.
