

Back the Invasion—Buy Extra War Bonds



# The North Coaster



Vol. XV Number 5

NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY—Main Street of the Northwest

September, 1944

## Seattle Firm Buys Alaska SS Company; Baker Vice President

Skinner and Eddy Corporation  
Acquires Control—H. N. Peterson  
Stays as PTM.

Acquisition of the Alaska Steamship Company by the Skinner and Eddy Corporation of Seattle and appointment of L. W. Baker, general manager, as vice president, was announced recently by C. W. Skinner, head of the corporation and new president of Alaska Steam. Mr. Baker is well known by railroad passenger men throughout America, as is H. N. Peterson, passenger traffic manager of the company, who will be retained in that capacity.

The steamship company was purchased from the Kennecott Copper Company. Mr. Baker expressed himself as pleased that Alaska Steam had become a "locally-owned, locally-operated property for the first time". Mr. Baker will continue as general manager.

Definite announcement as to post-war Alaska service obviously is not possible now, Mr. Baker said, but he added that the new owners and President Skinner will keep pace with the transportation needs and demands of the Territory.

Ships in the Alaska service, like railroad rolling stock, have taken a beating in war-time traffic and it is a foregone conclusion that Alaska Steam will require additional ships to handle peace-time traffic.

## National Apple Week Oct. 28-Nov. 4; Crop is Large and Quality High

National Apple Week will be observed Oct. 28 to Nov. 4 and National Apple Day Oct. 31 (Hallowe'en), according to Samuel Fraser, secretary, International Apple Association.

Washington State, including the Yakima valley, served by Northern Pacific, will harvest a crop estimated at 29,304,000 bushels, which is substantially above 1943 and 2,600,000 bushels above the 1934-42 average. This year's crop not only is large, but high in quality. About 25 per cent will be withdrawn from the civilian market for military use.

## First Boeing Flying Fortress Took Off 9 Years Ago July 28

Friday, July 28, marked the anniversary of a significant event in aviation and in the history of Seattle—the first takeoff of the first Boeing Flying Fortress.

On July 28, 1935, model 299, forerunner of the heavy four-motored Forts which are now wreaking destruction on the Axis, first took the air from Boeing Field, Seattle.

## RUSSIANS SHOWER SOUVENIRS ON N. P. CONVOY



Star from Uniform of General Killed at Stalingrad Among Gifts Bestowed on Barney Cleff, Who Learned Some Russian and Taught Sailors English En Route on Train

The sizeable army of American railroad traffic men who, since Pearl Harbor, have spent most of their time conveying troop trains doubtless restrain themselves with difficulty when someone remarks: "Railroad work must be very

interesting—you get to travel so much."

In the Army vernacular, conveying military trains is rugged work, but occasionally the convoys meet up with personnel so interesting that the job becomes a pleasure.

## Heavy Cruiser Bremerton Named for Puget Sound City

The heavy cruiser Bremerton was launched recently at the Camden, N. J., yards of the New York Shipbuilding corporation.

Named for Bremerton, Wash., site of the Puget Sound Navy Yard, the warship was christened by Miss Elizabeth Kathryn McGowan, an employee of the yard. Mrs. Juanita Keyes, also of Bremerton, was matron of honor.

As the result of winning a bond-buying contest with the Mare Island Navy Yard, employees of the Puget Sound Navy Yard won the right to name the cruiser and select its sponsor.

## Rocky Mountain Ranches Do Good Business Despite War

Despite war-time travel restrictions, Rocky Mountain Dude Ranches have experienced a reasonably successful summer season, according to word received by the Northern Pacific.

Numerous ranches have discontinued the dude business for the duration, but most of those which continue to cater to guests are being well patronized. Some had a capacity business in July and August. Lack of competent help is the principal problem of the guest ranches.

Take the experience of B. O. (Barney) Cleff, formerly in the Northern Pacific traffic offices in St. Louis and Cleveland and now traveling freight and passenger agent at Tacoma. Recently Barney was assigned to convoy a trainload of young Russian seamen across the country. With the exception of the Russian government official in charge, none of the men could speak or understand English—that is, before Barney met up with them. All had Russian-English dictionaries and a consuming desire to learn something of the language of the country they were experiencing for the first time.

Barney, sensing the opportunity to be a good-will envoy as well as a convoy and not being averse to acquiring a smattering of the Russian language, took over with a vengeance and before the party had been long on its way, they were all buddies. Barney learned to say "Good Morning" and "Good Night" in Russian and the Russian names for numerous foods and in turn, the seamen were turning out whole sentences in English and learning about American customs and about the country through which they were passing.

The Russians were so grateful for the interest Barney took in them that they began bestowing gifts of various kinds on their new-found friend. Some of them are shown on the plaque which Barney

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## The North Coaster

Published by the Passenger Traffic Department  
NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY, ST. PAUL, MINN.

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## A. W. Thomson With N. P. 50 Years and Still Going Strong

### Alec, Native of Scotland, Has Been Superintendent of Dining Cars Since 1924

A. W. (Alec) Thomson, superintendent of Northern Pacific dining cars and restaurants for the past 20 years, observed on July 23 his fiftieth anniversary as an employee of the N. P.

Mr. Thomson, superintendent of dining cars and station restaurants since 1924, began work for the N. P. July 23, 1894, in the general storekeeper's office in St. Paul. Two years later he took a brief turn as fireman on the Idaho division, but that was too far from St. Paul, home of a girl who later became Mrs. Thomson, so he returned to the general office in 1900, entering the dining car department as storekeeper. In 1918, he was promoted to chief clerk in the St. Paul commissary; three years later was made assistant superintendent of dining cars and, January 1, 1924, was elevated to the position he now holds.

Born in Dumfries, Scotland, Sept. 11, 1878, Mr. Thomson came alone to America at the age of 15 and joined an elder brother who had come to St. Paul three years previously. Mr. Thomson, who will be 66 this month, has no thought of retiring soon. In fact, due to the tremendous burden put on his department by heavy war-time travel, he is working harder now than ever. He's at his desk at the commissary in St. Paul by not later than 6 am. each day, including most Sundays, because the commissary staff literally has "to get up before breakfast" to line up dining car service for early morning trains.

When Mr. Thomson became superintendent, which job he has held longer than any predecessor, there were 340 employees in the department. Now there are more than 700 and according to him, "we could use another hundred if we could find them".

Northern Pacific dining cars and restaurants served 2,650,000 meals in Mr. Thomson's first year as superintendent; in 1943, just short of 5 millions and this year the figure is expected to reach 5½ millions.

Commissary statisticians estimate that in the 20-year period, Northern Pacific has served 11,294,000 pounds of "Great Big" Baked Potatoes from Washington's Yakima valley and nearly a million individual lemon meringue pies, another delicacy which has helped make N. P.

## N. P. Steno-Clerk is Elected First President of Newly Formed Oakland Women's Traffic Club

Bobbie Silvey, 22 years old, is Honor Graduate of Two-Year Course in Traffic Management and University Scholarship Winner.

Presenting The North Coaster's candidate for "Pin-Up Girl" of the Army Transportation Corps: Bobbie Silvey, stenographer-clerk in Northern Pacific's Oakland, Calif., traffic office.

Since joining the N. P. in March, this attractive young woman graduated with honors from the two-year traffic management course sponsored by the Oakland Traffic club and the city board of education. She was one of four Oakland girls to win a freshman alumni scholarship at the University of California, in a contest open to all California high school students. She has been active in Mu Delta Epsilon sorority, of which she is treasurer and is a member of Phrateres National college society.

Getting back to traffic, Bobbie is a member of the Women's Traffic club of San Francisco and chief instigator of the newly organized Women's Traffic club of Oakland, of which she was elected the first president by acclamation.

Before coming to the N. P., Bobbie worked in the Montgomery Ward mail order traffic department, where she handled claims, and later as manifest clerk for the Rock Island in San Francisco.

Bobbie is 22 years old. Full name is



**BOBBIE SILVEY**  
Army Transportation "Pin-Up Girl"?

Roberta Hyde Silvey. She's married to Sgt. Clyde Silvey, U. S. Army, department of intelligence.

(Editor's note: After looking at Bobbie's picture, we'd say that the Sergeant was assigned to the Intelligence branch quite properly.)



**A. W. THOMSON**  
Starts on the Second "50"

dining car service outstanding. The big baked potatoes are a war casualty but will be back on the menu when peace comes, Mr. Thomson said.

War-time food restrictions and shortage of competent help, as well as shortage of cars, have placed a heavy burden on railroad dining car service, Mr. Thomson said, but what distresses him most is that N. P. service, which has an international reputation, is not up to

standard at a time when thousands of patrons are making their first train trips.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomson's two sons are in the Northern Pacific operating department. Douglas is assistant superintendent of the Yellowstone Division at Billings and Malcom is a roadmaster on the Rocky Mountain division at Missoula.

### RUSSIANS SHOWER

(Continued from Page 1)

is holding in the accompanying picture. The volume is a book of Russian poems, autographed by the Navy lieutenant in command of the party. The star at the top, bearing the sickle and hammer, the national emblem of the Soviet Union, is a seamen's cap emblem. The other emblem at the top was the proud possession of one of the younger seamen—a high school athletic achievement medal—which the owner, with much ceremony, pinned on Barney because he was a "good sport", a term the boy had figured out from his dictionary. The other items on the card are seamen's uniform buttons, a set of which was contributed by the group.

But the prize exhibit, which Barney wears on his coat lapel, is a star from the uniform of a Russian general killed at the Battle of Stalingrad and given to Barney by the general's son.

Barney counts his trip one of the most interesting experiences of his life and anyone who thinks the Russians aren't everything to be desired as Allies can get a whale of an argument out of Barney Cleff.

## MURALS BEING PAINTED IN HELENA TAVERN PORTRAY HISTORY OF MONTANA



On the walls of The Mint, Helena, Mont., tavern, a pictorial history of the Treasure State is being portrayed in murals by Jack Beauchamp, 38-year-old Helena artist.



Jack Beauchamp

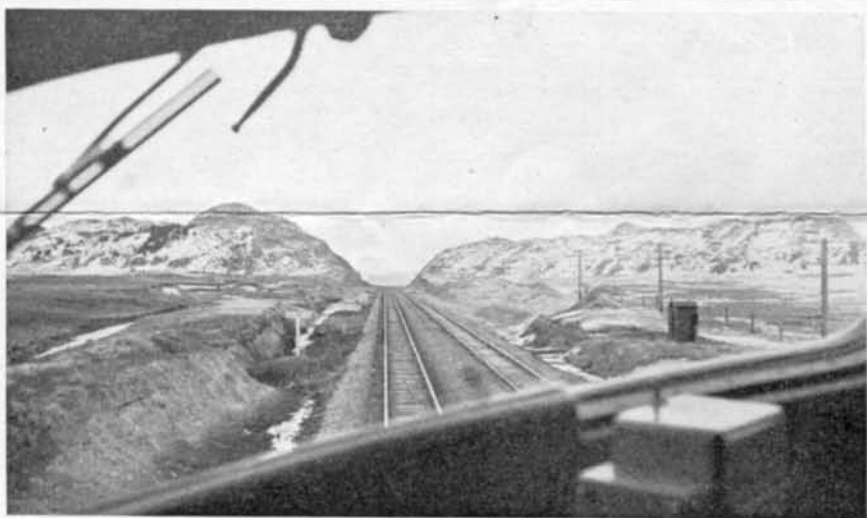
Some of the early episodes are shown in the reproductions above. The central figure in the upper mural represents Father DeSmet, early missionary to the Indians, in front of the little church at Stevensville, one of the first in Montana. The lower panel depicts some of the lusty pioneer life of a frontier saloon and the days of the road agent and the Vigilantes.

Beauchamp's artistry has been widely acclaimed, according to the Helena Independent-Record. The paper quotes Robert Barnett, New York art connoisseur, as follows:

"The thing which impressed me most about the murals at the Mint was their freshness and spirit . . . Beauchamp has realism and drama to a high degree, as well as very pleasing color . . . I am sure that were these murals shown in New York they would receive widespread and favorable comment."

Approximately 40 per cent of the present record volume of passenger traffic on the American railroads consists of organized movements of military forces.

## DIESEL ENGINEERS HAVE UNOBSTRUCTED VISION



This photo, made from the cab of one of Northern Pacific's new 5400 horsepower Diesel road locomotives, demonstrates the unobstructed vision which the engineer has of the full right-of-way ahead.

There also is a clear view of approaches over a wide arc on either side of the right-of-way.

The front window is kept clear in all kinds of weather by an automatic windshield wiper and an automatic defroster, similar to those in the modern passenger

automobile. Sun visors are conveniently placed.

The control cab is heated by engine water in winter and cooled in summer by "no draft" side windows. Track and engine noises are absorbed by sound proofing material on the ceiling of the cab. Engineer and fireman can converse from their padded swivel arm chairs some six feet apart, in a tone not much louder than that needed in an ordinary conversation on a busy city street.

## News Writer Says Ticket Men Qualify As Real Diplomats

### They Aren't Fooled by Subterfuge Used by Travelers to Get Train Space

The following article appeared in a recent issue of the Spokane Daily Chronicle.

Count among the casualties of this war the "great, white shining truth" as it is violated in requests for Pullman berth reservations and railroad tickets.

Count among the inspiring examples of public service, the courtesy, patience and forbearance of the men who sell tickets for the city's five railroads.

They are good listeners to old and threadbare tales based on subterfuge and to masters of "poker face," gay or doleful as the occasion demands.

Often the woman is pulchritudinous, but she simply can not climb what the porter calls "them golden stairs" to an upper berth. It must be a lower.

She pulls her Sunday punch when courteously advised there are none. She bites her lip, becomes woebegone and manages anything from a trickle to a flood of tears—because she's on her way to the funeral of a dear friend or relative.

The boy who sells tickets is soothing, consoling, even gallant. In especially difficult cases he may manage a tear himself. In cases of complete collapse he helps the lady to a seat and turns to the next customer. She recovers quickly in most cases.

"Of course transportation is difficult," said a veteran ticket agent today. "I feel sorry for people who have to travel. There is a certain class of patrons who seem to develop something akin to travel hysteria and women are not the worst offenders. Sometimes men are worse. There are more people on the way to funerals than I have ever known. There just can't be that many funerals.

"More people than ever before must travel, but more people than ever before are traveling who don't need to travel. It's tough on the public, and it isn't easy to take right here. When this war is over, the men who serve the public in transportation will be qualified as first-class diplomats."

# FACT OR FICTION?

A 47-SECOND  
TEST ON  
**ODD  
JOBS**  
IN THE  
STATE OF  
WASHINGTON



**Q. "COW HANDS" riding herd on dummy cows, made of paper, have helped guard Washington war industry. Fact or fiction?**

**A. Fact.** Camouflage at one fabulous war plant, served by N. P., includes fake cows, slyly moved from time to time.



**Q. TENDERNESS-TESTER in pea cannery feeds sample peas from each field to mechanical "bite-tester." Fact or fiction?**

**A. Fact.** An error-proof machine checks the tenderness of each batch. Immense pea crops go to market via N. P.



**Q. DITCH RIDERS travel on horseback to guard priceless water that makes Yakima Valley bloom. Fact or fiction?**

**A. Fact.** A few do, tho' most irrigation-patrol men use trucks. Verdant Yakima Valley is served by Northern Pacific.



**Q. STRIPPER in pulp mill uses world's most powerful "shower bath" to blast bark from giant logs. Fact or fiction?**

**A. Fact.** He does it with super-powerful water jets that tear away toughest bark. N. P. is largest log-hauler among U. S. railroads.



**Q. CHECKERS, who scan every mile of N. P. tracks from motor cars, are hunting lost articles. Fact or fiction?**

**A. Fiction.** Day in, day out, they guard the perfect condition of rails and roadbed along the "Main Street of the Northwest."



# NORTHERN PACIFIC

Main Street of the Northwest