

What Does B&M Have In Mind?

11

By J. B. RAMIREZ

CONCORD, Jan. 19 — The question most people were asking Boston & Maine Railroad officials about four brand new diesel locomotives dedicated at the freight yards here this week was how often they'd be used in New Hampshire.

"Oh, they'll be up here quite often," said a smiling B & M President Paul Cherington as he helped organize champagne-smashing ceremonies for the benefit of railroad officials, legislators, railroad buffs and businessmen who rely on the rails for shipping.

Cherington and B & M Trustee Benjamin Lacy were answering a lot of questions during the luncheon and information session and the ceremonies at the freight yards.

Is the Boston & Maine going to abandon any more lines in New Hampshire? Will long-neglected tracks be upgraded? Is the B & M going to survive at all or is it going to be incorporated into a conglomerate of both solvent and bankrupt railroads?

Railroad officials said they hope to reorganize themselves and maintain the Boston & Maine as an independent, New England-based railroad. Lacy said the 12 new engines, 700 new boxcars, and repair work on 354,276 ties and 470 miles of track represent a high investment in the railroad's future in New Hampshire.

"Our maintenance-of-track budget for New Hampshire has risen from \$1,038,000 in 1969 — the last year of the old management — to \$1,844,000 in 1973, a substantial increase even allowing for inflation," said Lacy. "The 1974 budget for major maintenance is \$1,550,000."

LOST LINES?

Concord-Lincoln line. "We have no plans to abandon any other lines in the state, with the possible exception of the stub-end from Hampton to the Massachusetts line."

Cherington and Lacy were putting their most optimistic feet forward during the day. And the four gleaming diesel engines did much to dispell the despair that has enveloped many a railroad supporter during the B & M's bankruptcy and the years that have followed.

"It's about time," said one legislator as he and a dozen or so of his peers clambered aboard one of the bright blue engines. "If they'd been doing this right along and keeping the tracks in shape they wouldn't have gotten into such a mess."

STATE NAMES

B & M scored a public relations coup by naming the four locomotives in honor of New Hampshire patriots.

The "Styles Bridges" honors the state's former governor and longtime Senator, who rose from a humble birth in West Pembroke, Maine, to become governor at 37 and serve five consecutive terms in the Senate. Executive Councilor John Bridges, the senator's son, was on hand to break a bottle of champagne (domestic) across the front of the engine.

The "Hannah Duston" commemorates Mrs. Thomas Duston, a mother of 13 children who was captured by Indians in Haverhill, Mass., in 1697. Hannah and 12 other captives were being taken up the

Page 22



FAMILY NAME of Indian-fighter Hannah Duston lives on — in the form of a gigantic locomotive. Hannah's descendant,

17-year-old Carol Dustin, waves from the cab.

(Photos by John Harrigan)



OLD CABOOSE has ridden behind steam engines and diesels and got a fresh coat of paint and a thorough cleaning by the

B&M for the dedication ceremonies. Yardman Ray Fosse stands by to board.



— in the form of a gigantic locomotive. Hannah's descendant,

(Photos by John Harrigan)



"NICE SHOT" says E&M President Paul Cherington (center) as Gov. Meldrim Thomson christens the "Daniel Webster."

Looking on is railroad trustee Benjamin Lacy. The engine at rear is the "Styles Bridges."

\$1,000,000.

LOST LINES?

And as for abandonment of lines:

"On certain lines, where our customers have almost entirely abandoned us and hence we would like to abandon the lines, we propose removing the rail and ties to put on other branches in New Hampshire which need upgrading.

"Thus we have proposed abandonment of the line from Winchendon to Keene; the sub-end from Bennington to Hillsborough; the sub-end from Tilton to Franklia Falls; the Greenville branch; the line from East Manchester to Raymond; and the line from Mount Whittier through Madison.

"The line from Madison to North Conway will be sold to Carroll Reed for a scenic passenger operation. On the line from Keene to Walpole, we have discontinued service, but will leave the rail in place temporarily. The same treatment is proposed for the line from Raymond to Epping. We have agreed to sell off any of these rights of way to the state."

Lacy said no settlement has been reached on the Meredith-Lincoln line, but he said the Profile Paper Company might buy that line or the entire



LEGISLATORS on the special committee to study state's railroads were on hand for inspection of new engines. State Sen. Thomas

Claveau (left) chatted with committee members John Hear (center) and Anthony Stevens.





NEW LOCOMOTIVES attracted a good crowd as the Boston & Maine held formal dedication ceremonies at the

Concord freight yard. At left is the "Hannah Duston" and at right is the "Franklin Pierce."