

THE ALERTER

For one man operation, Santa Fe switch engines, and some freight engines are equipped with an electronic device called (it says on the black box in the cab) "Alerter, the dead man control," instead of a dead man pedal.

Made by a big railway supply company, rumor has it that it was thought up by a brilliant young Santa Fe air brake supervisor. Regardless of its origin, in operation it puts the engineer in an electronic harness. His every move is sensed. Unless the engine is standing with the brake set, the engineer must touch, or, if touching, un-touch, some part of the controls every fifteen seconds. Otherwise the alerter starts beeping and a red light flashes. Any move previously mentioned will then annul the alarm, as will touching a button provided for that purpose.

If no response to the alarm is made in twelve seconds, the automatic brake will apply. Unless this in turn is not stopped by pressing another, or reset button, it will completely deplete the brake pipe bringing the engine or train to a stop.

If the device sounds complicated, in practice it is soon gotten used to and is less tiring than holding down a dead man pedal. Normal moves in switching operations keep the alerter happy. If it does beep, any slight move will quiet it. Oh, yes, a friendly type Big Brother is watching.

THE LIBRARY

It may surprise the readers to know that the main branch of the San Diego Public Library has a large collection of railroad books. The writer has been taking two or three out every other week for some time. And having gone through most of the lot, is willing to share them with others. The best thing about the books is that they are all quite old, as such things go, and, perhaps, the more interesting for that, and have many steam pictures.

R E P O R T

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ALL THURSDAY NIGHT

WORK PARTIES

7³⁰
pm

4880 BEAUMONT DR.
LA MESA

7³⁰
pm