REPORT

OF THE PACIFIC SOUTHWEST RAILWAY MUSEUM ASSOCIATION, INC.

WELCOME ABOARD THIS SPECIAL PACIFIC SOUTHWEST RAILWAY MUSEUM ASSOCIATION excursion train. Enjoy your ride on the northern half of the Ferrocarril Sonora-Baja California (Sonora-Baja California Railroad). This is the route of the "Mexicali," a train which departs nightly from Mexicali for a run to Puerto Peñasco, Benjamin Hill, Hermosillo, Empalme (Guaymas), Ciudad Obregón, Mazatlán and Guadalajara. Cars on today's train will probably be FSBC's own cars purchased new some years ago from a German car-builder. Most of the cars used on the "Mexicali," however, were purchased second hand from U.S. railroads. FSBC and the cooperating Ferrocarril del Pacifico share equipment. FdelP is the successor company to the Southern Pacific of Mexico R.R. so many cars have that SP look.

THE MEXICALI ISN'T EXACTLY A ZEPHYR OR A SUPER CHIEF, but it is a daily cross country train carrying as many if not more passengers than many better known North American name trains. FSBC's trains, the "Mexicali" and a daily except Sunday freight, are important to the economy of Mexico's northwest corner. Thousands of passengers and tons of freight are transported yearly both ways between Baja California and the Mexican mainland. The railroad is responsible in part for the growth of what has been Mexico's frontier country.

THE MEXICALI'S CONSIST GENERALLY INCLUDES two Pullmans, two or three first class air-conditioned coaches, many second and special first class coaches, and the usual head-end cars. One Pullman is scheduled between Mexicali and Guadalajara; the second is routed from Mexicali to Mexico City. Between Guadalajara and Mexico City this car is included in the consist of a connecting National Railways of Mexico train. A dining car is added to the consist at Benjamin Hill. Americans in increasing numbers are riding the "Mexicali." Here is an opportunity for an American to ride a foreign train. Between Mexicali and Benjamin Hill (the southeast terminus of the FSBC, 325 miles distant), the "Mexicali" makes overnight runs each way over the Ferrocarril Sonora-Baja California. From Benjamin Hill to Guadalajara, Jal., 1300 plus miles from Mexicali, the train operates over the rails of the Ferrocarril del Pacifico (Pacific Railroad). The FdelP has one other passenger train, "El Yaqui," which operates from Nogales through Benjamin Hill to Guadalajara.

THE FERROCARRIL SONORA-BAJA CALIFORNIA, which had its beginnings in 1923 as the 10½ mile Ferrocarril Mexicali e Golfo extending from Pascualitos to KP 9.70, was completed in 1947 and was then as now under Mexican Government ownership, specifically the "Secretaria de Comunicaciones y Transportes." Service between Mexicali and Puerto Peñasco began in 1940. Through passenger trains (Mexicali to Benjamin Hill) began operating on April 7, 1948. Various kinds of connecting service was offered by FdelP at that point but usually a layover for as long as 21 hours was involved. About 1959 the FdelP began scheduling an extra train for a direct connection. Then in 1960 both railroads joined forces and the "Mexicali" was born. If you'd like to know more about the Sonora-Baja California Railroad then purchase (for 25¢) a copy of Issue 31 of the Dispatcher. In Issue 37, "A Private Car Comes to Town," you'll find brief but reasonably complete stories of the Ferrocarril del Pacifico and the Chihuahua al Pacifico. The latter railroad is the continent's newest transcontinental railroad. Wally Duthie, who operates many tours for PSRMA, can tell you all about these railroads. Issues 31 and 37 as well as other back issues of the Dispatcher are available from the car attendent or from a self service container in mid-train.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING. On an excursion train with the many stops and varied operations it is important that passengers be safety conscious. Here are some reminders: 1. Operation of the train is the responsibility of railroad personnel. PSRMA members will assist with loading or unloading. No other person has any responsibility.