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CHICAGO, MILWAUKEE, ST. PAUL AND PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY

Please hold for release on
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The Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad Company will phase out its remaining electrified operations in Montana, Idaho and Washington in favor of fully-dieselized service throughout the railroad system, according to an announcement by William J. Quinn, chairman of the board, and Worthington L. Smith, president.

The decision came after exhaustive studies carried out by the company over the past several years.

The executives explained that the announcement does not signal immediate discontinuance of all electrified operations, but the start of a program which will require a period of time to complete.

"From a dollars and cents point of view, the railroad had no alternative, but for other reasons it was a difficult decision to reach", they said. "Even though electrified operation has actually been in an unofficial phase out stage in recent years, the fact remains that it has been an important part of the Milwaukee Road image, and there is a tremendous amount of sentimental interest in it.

"When first installed, the Milwaukee's electrified system was vastly superior to steam operation, and even to the diesel power of several years ago. It served us extremely well. Given 1973 facts, however, with highly efficient and versatile diesel

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locomotives available for both main line and branch line service, compared with the aging electric locomotives confined to main line only, the decision was inevitable."

The Milwaukee Road has 656 miles of electrified main line, the longest in the United States. It is divided into two sections - 440 miles on the Rocky Mountain Division between Harlowton, Mont. and Avery, Ida., which began service in 1917; and 216 miles on the Coast Division between Othello and Seattle/ Tacoma, Wash., which went into operation in 1920. The latter section has been operated entirely by diesel power for more than a year, although the catenary and substation facilities are still in place.

Between the two sections is a 212-mile segment of main line which for a variety of reasons was never electrified. The "gap", as it is known, has been operated by conventional power, a fact which severely limited the versatility and efficiency of the over-all electrified system.

Messrs. Quinn and Smith observed that continuing electrified operation indefinitely would mean not only electrifying the gap but also replacing the entire complex with a modern, high-voltage system and purchasing new electric locomotives.

"In effect", they said, "it would be like electrifying from scratch, and our studies indicated that such an undertaking would be unwise."

The railroad's use of electric locomotives has been decreasing over the years and is now confined largely to secondary trains and helper service in conjunction with diesels for long

trains moving over the heavier mountain grades. The faster time freights have been powered primarily by diesels for a number of years.

At present, about 19 per cent of the "locomotive miles" operated on the Rocky Mountain Division, and only 3 per cent of those operated throughout the Milwaukee Road's 10,500-mile system, are run with electric units.

"Because of the extent to which electrified operations have already been cut back, the decision to phase out the system completely over a period of time is of negligible significance from the environmental point of view and will have relatively little impact on the company's system-wide diesel fuel requirements", the officers stated.

Employees now working in electric power substations or engaged in the maintenance of electric locomotives and the overhead power supply system have been notified of the phase out decision. A task force will meet with affected employees within the next 30 days to explain the move and the adjustments that will be required. The task force will also make the remaining decisions with respect to maintenance and operation, locomotive requirements, disposal of electric facilities and related matters.

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