

The Monkey Wrench Trail

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN A RIDGWAY SERVICE MAN
AND ONE OF HIS BENEFICIARIES

"PULL UP A CHAIR, JACK,—no use standin' there waitin' for the rain to let up. This fire is right comfortable—sit down—that train to Ridgway doesn't pull in here much 'fore 5:30. Little late usually."

"Yep, I guess—might as well. Mighty nice little power plant you have here. Quite a spell since you first set foot in these parts, isn't it?"

"Well, it's nigh thirty years—started work June 17, 1902,—about the time the little Ridgway slide-valve engine was installed. That was a good old unit. Still turnin' over. And them two new 200-kw. engine units—you wouldn't know they were runnin' most of the time if 'tweren't for the fact the boilers need a little coal and water."

"That certainly was a dumb trick for those electricians to pull—leavin' those cables unsoldered in the terminals next to the board. Well, you know, when I got those generators on the bus—the load gradually came on—that voltage dropped down to practically nuthin'—and there I was gettin' hell from the 'super'. About that time I began cussin' everything in sight and out of sight—Elliott Company included. Two brand new engine units—both of them layin' down on the job right off the bat. In two jerks of a lamb's tail I had your service manager on the phone. Ha! Ha! Then you come down here to find those gen-

AS REPORTED BY

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SCENE: Operating engineer's office, adjacent to coal mine power plant. Enter engineer and Jack, Ridgway service man.



... wouldn't know they were runnin'!

Service men bump into some funny situations. Many times troubles are due to such simple causes that the fixing is laughable. We think you'll appreciate some of the tales told here.

erator cables just stuck in the lugs at the board. I reckon you have a lot of cases like that popping up all over the country."

"Well, ya know, if all these fellows that call up the service manager would only cool off a bit and look somewhere else for their trouble occasionally, instead of blam-

ing it on the power unit, there would be fewer gray hairs.

Down the line here a little way they had been having trouble with parallel operation of our compensated generator with another unit. Both machines seemed to carry the load O.K. separately, but you couldn't make 'em pull together worth a damn. Acted like a couple of mother-in-laws. So I smells a rat—'cause I know that that machine of ours would parallel. Well, I started looking over the equalizer bus and connections, and what do you suppose they had done—why they had one of the equalizer connections all insulated from the equalizer bus with a couple of fiber washers. Inside two minutes I had a smile as broad as a barn door on that operating engineer. Had another case pretty much like that a couple of months ago in a coal mine substation. Drove down in a car right in the middle of winter—cold enough to make an Eskimo feel at home. I no more than set my foot inside the door when I happened to notice that the equalizer contactor on the single-pole breaker wasn't making contact. Well, to make it short—with two blows of a hammer they went on mining coal for the rest of the winter, contented as Coolidge on his Vermont farm."

"It seems you service men get to have a sixth sense. Just the other day I heard about one of your fellows pullin' a pretty slick