

Why
Southern Pacific
finds it
necessary
to
discontinue
The Del Monte

We are about to petition the California Public Utilities Commission for permission to discontinue the DEL MONTE, Southern Pacific's oldest name train. We think the people who live in the territory it serves should know why: *the train is practically empty.*

The DEL MONTE has been a very special train to Southern Pacific ever since it began running down to the Monterey Peninsula. (The records which tell when it began were lost in the great fire, but we figure it was about 1889.) The first Del Monte Inn had been built about ten years before, and Southern Pacific advertisements were telling the country of the miracle that was vacation time on the Monterey Peninsula.

The vacationers are still coming, as a look at the Peninsula today will verify. But they no longer come by the DEL MONTE. Today, the bustling freeways and the motor hotels that surround you offer incontestable evidence as to the mode of transportation your visitors prefer to use.

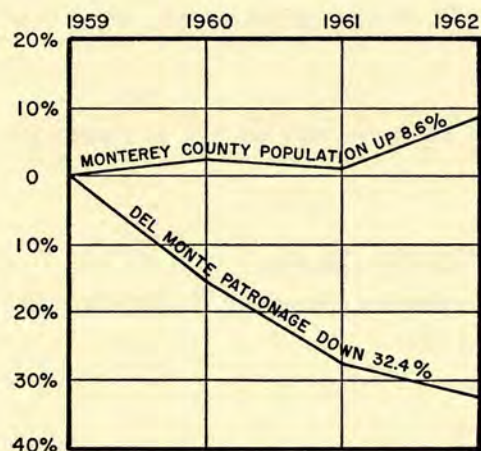
Then there were the residents. The people of Carmel, of Watsonville, of Monterey and Pacific Grove once made their excursions to San Francisco on the DEL MONTE. They would take the train up in the morning, sitting in the parlor car and watching the scenery roll by their windows. A generation of children grew up to whom the DEL MONTE was a way of life, and to whom Oliver Millet, the parlor car attendant was a family friend. (The present parlor car, incidentally, was named for Oliver when he retired, and a large part of the men, women and children who had ridden with him so long were on hand to wish him well. He died a short time ago.)

But there wasn't another generation for the DEL MONTE. The children of the next generation have grown up with the automobile, and it is the automobile they use to visit the City. The airplane, now also puts Monterey and Carmel but a short time from Union Square.

Our rail traffic has steadily dwindled. In 1959, the train was down to an average load of about 63 people. The next year it was 53. The next it was 42. The first half of this year it was about 38. All this time the Peninsula's population was exploding, but not toward the DEL MONTE.

Southern Pacific was not about to give up on its favorite train without a fight. We replaced the chair cars on the train with streamlined equipment—but *the patronage kept falling.* We refurbished the fine old parlor car — *but the patronage still kept falling.* We spent thousands of dollars advertising the train locally in recent years—but *the patronage still kept falling.*

Finally, we came to the people of the Peninsula and said to you: "What can we do to get you to ride the DEL MONTE?" The consensus of your opinion was that the schedule should be changed—that you'd use the DEL MONTE more if you could spend a little longer time in the city: finish a ball game, perhaps attend a theatre matinee, or take more time for shopping.



This chart shows the comparison between the rise of population in Monterey County and the decline in use of the DEL MONTE. During this same period, the number of annual visitors increased steadily — reaching more than 2½ million persons in 1960, according to the Monterey County Planning Commission. Population figures are based on annual July 1 estimates by the California State Department of Finance. DEL MONTE patronage figures are also based on the number of passengers carried daily during the month of July each year at the peak of the heavy summer travel season.

In a survey that the press of the Peninsula carried out for us, 800 voted for a revised schedule, which we promptly put into effect. *But the patronage still kept falling*—in fact, after the change in schedule we lost nearly one-third of the passengers who previously rode the train.

Finally, as the annual loss on the train steadily increased, SP combined it with a commute train, between San Jose and San Francisco, hoping that the savings in operational cost could save the old train a while longer. It hasn't worked.

There isn't anything more that we can do. The DEL MONTE has been a great part of the Monterey Peninsula. But it's a part of the past, and not the present—just as was the old Del Monte Hotel and other famous old landmarks. The train had a lot to do with helping people discover the Peninsula—perhaps it did it too well for its own good—as increasingly heavy auto traffic on the improved Monterey Peninsula freeways testifies so very well.

We're asking the California Public Utilities Commission for permission to discontinue the train. We feel badly to see it go. But the mourners for this train are not those of this generation, for they don't know it. Its mourners will be the old-timers who loved it a generation ago.

The DEL MONTE's passengers are gone, and we feel it should go with them.

R. M. GILMORE

General Passenger Traffic Manager