

## Service Key To Coop's Program

The true measure of Agway's size is the scope of services it provides to individual farmers through its many retail and production facilities across the Northeast.

This evaluation of the cooperative was made by its board chairman, George Steele, Pocopson, Pa., dairyman, at the opening session of the Agway

Annual Meeting last Thursday in Onondaga County War Memorial, Syracuse, N. Y.

Steele commented that Agway's size is a "recognizable asset," and having outlets in hundreds of rural communities works to the advantage of farmers.

As an example, he cited Agway's participation in the

Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service's emergency livestock feed program following the poor growing and harvesting season of 1972.

Steele noted that Agway processed or distributed more than one-third of all the ASCS grain allotted to northeastern farmers under the program.

"This amounted to better than 260,000 tons of feed," Steele said, "and saved farmers an estimated \$11 million on their feed costs."

"Without the network of Agway stores and facilities and an efficient distribution system, we would not have been able to get that feed to the farmers who needed it," he added.

"Statistically, Agway is a large business organization, but it is the sum of local stores, plants, petroleum, feed, fertilizer, and service that make the whole of Agway," Steele continued. "Without those vital parts, the organization would be nothing."

Elaborating on the meeting's theme, "Large Enough to care, Small Enough to Serve," Steele pointed out that activities on the local level enable farmers to influence the operation of retail stores and contribute ideas to the 18-farmer board of directors that guides Agway.

"I cannot speak too highly of the Agway committee system," Steele stated. "Members doing business at a retail point elect their fellow farmers to serve on a store committee which develops sound local policies."

The chairman of each committee, in turn, is a member of the Agway Council, a body that meets annually to advise Agway directors, he explained.



## ED ESHLEMAN'S WASHINGTON REPORT

Most people have not been a railroad passenger for many years. Maybe that fact helps explain why the public has not gotten very excited about the prospect that the Penn Central could be shutting down in the near future unless government action is taken to keep the trains running.

The general attitude seems to be that if you don't ride the trains regularly, you really don't have to be concerned about the Penn Central problem.

However, a railroad shutdown would disrupt far more than passenger service. It would have an immediate and adverse effect on us all.

For example, you may not be aware of how much our electrical power is dependent on railway transportation. The great majority of electric generating stations are powered by coal, and that coal is shipped in by railroad.

The only alternative available to power companies if the Penn Central goes under would be to ship the needed coal by truck. But that is really not a reasonable alternative. The number of trucks needed to haul coal equal to that now brought in by rail would literally clog our highways. One company estimates that on a road directly in to a power plant, one truck would have to pass every two and a half minutes for twenty-four hours a day seven days a week. Of course, the roads and bridges couldn't withstand that kind of abuse, let alone the inconvenience to people living along the roads.

Ant that's just one industry we're talking about. Another area hard hit would be

agriculture and the result would be dwindling food supplies.

Obviously, the huge quantities of grain and livestock transported by rail could not be adequately replaced by truck convoys. Therefore, perishable agricultural supplies soon would be bottled up in warehouses, storage bins, and feeding lots, and grocery stores would quickly feel the pinch.

Therefore, we can't permit any major rail line like the Penn Central to close down even for a matter of weeks. The results would be disastrous.

But, the problem is that Congress and the President are having trouble getting together on a plan to keep the trains running. The Administration favors a solution that would encourage private enterprise to invest in shaky railroad situations without any use of Federal funds. The major bill under consideration in the House of Representatives would establish a National Railway Corporation that could eliminate



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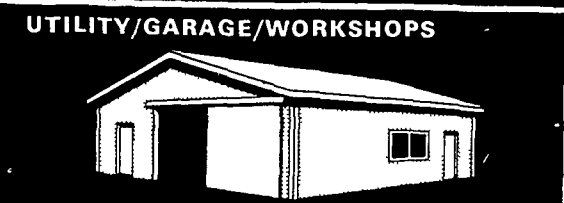
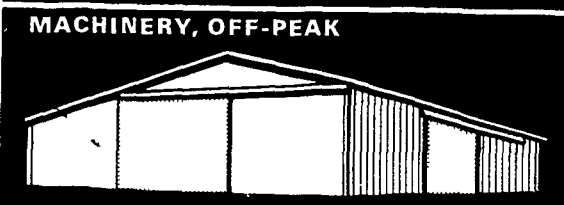
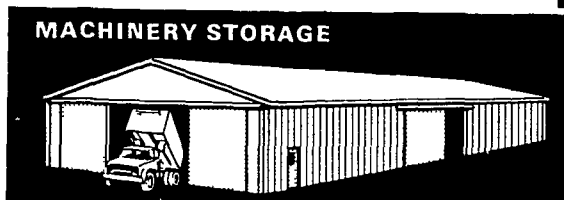
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