

# Miner's Strike!

By Bob Hanna

A miner's strike has left the B&O with a glut of hopper cars and nowhere to put them. A string of them showed up at Van Doren and are causing pain on the Mountain Branch. Of course the mainline trains are still going fast and furious though town by just moving over one track, taking the Mountain Branch track. But that takes away the run around track for the Van Doren switcher. It affects the yard lead too, bringing it down to



about nothing. Then to add insult to injury, the Mountain Branch trains cannot use their usual track and now have to go through the yard. So if they have any cars to drop off at Van Doren, the train has to pull up until it's caboose is under the coaling tower, clearing the yard switches. Then the yard switcher gets to pull the cars off the end on the Mountain Branch train. With the reduced yard lead, they also get to wait until the fast freight on the mainline clears to steal track and time until the next westbound mainline freight arrives. This makes it a very tight operation and slows things up considerably.

And the Van Doren switcher still needs to switch the power house. Oh, the



switch to the power house is still open, but switching the power house gets to be very stressful! (As if it wasn't before, but it can be done.) The Van Doren switcher has to be on it's toes to keep clear of the mainline trains. Again it has to take track and time, in between the eastbound mainline trains. And it has to be backed clear into the siding

before then next eastbound mainline train rumbles through.

For now though, the strike is over and the hoppers have moved back to the mines, so you don't have to deal with the added problems at Van Doren. Still, I thought you would like to know about them. But the Miners are not too happy and may strike again.