

- [54] RAILROAD BOARD GAME
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- [52] U.S. Cl. **273/134 G; 273/134 D; 273/134 GB**
- [51] Int. Cl. **A63f 3/00**
- [58] Field of Search..... **273/131, 134, 136**

[56] **References Cited**

UNITED STATES PATENTS			
1,338,502	4/1920	Gay	273/134 C
2,268,433	12/1941	Smith	273/134 AC
2,977,713	4/1961	Alelyunas	273/134 G
3,658,337	4/1972	Peters et al.	273/134 AC

FOREIGN PATENTS OR APPLICATIONS			
910,594	2/1946	France	273/134 D

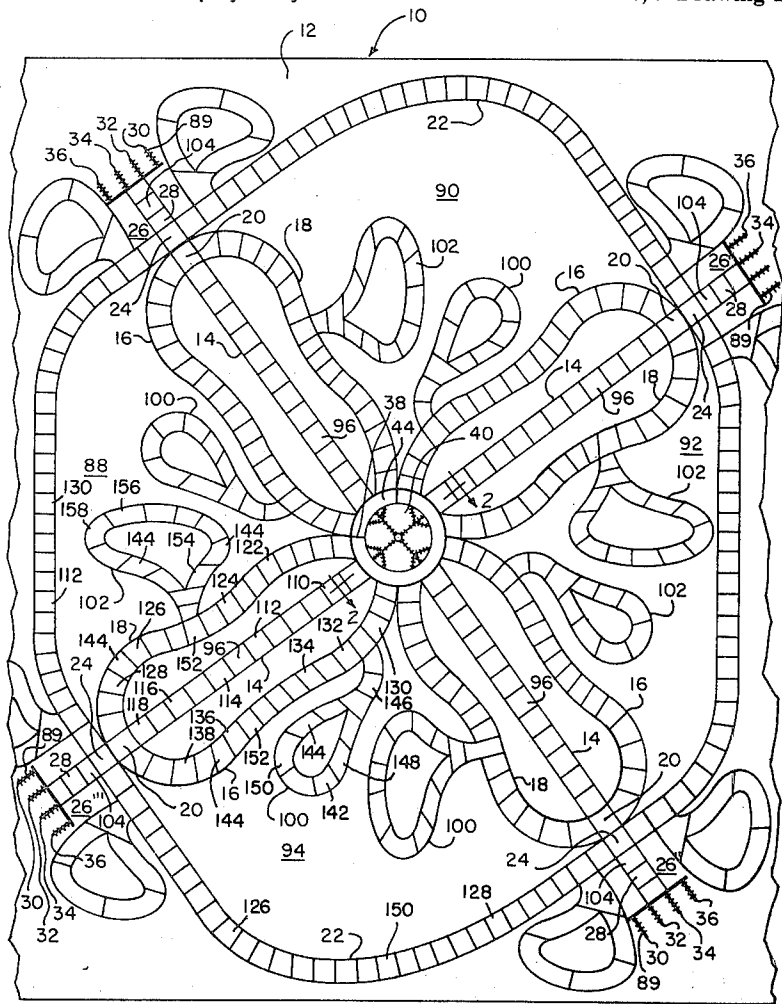
Primary Examiner—Delbert B. Lowe
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Weiser, Stapler & Spivak

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A railroad board game suitable to be played by four

players and incorporating a game board which is generally subdivided into four playing areas, each playing area including lengths of simulated railroad tracks. Each simulated railroad track area comprises a direct route which includes the greatest number of hazards, a left outside track and a right outside track. The direct route and both outside tracks interconnect between the respective player headquarters and a centrally positioned roundhouse and shop area. A player may choose to traverse the distance between his own headquarters and the central shop area to gain access to an opponent's track area by traveling down the direct route, which contains various hazards to movement along the tracks, or alternately he may elect to traverse a longer, neutral track which has fewer hazards. Additionally, each outside track and the neutral track are provided with a spur track which may be utilized to avoid collisions. The shop area is elevated relative to the board and is in stationary relationship thereto. The roundhouse rotates about the shop area and is provided about three-quarters of its periphery with recesses which align with the plurality of direct tracks and right and left outside tracks to permit a player to move his playing piece from one track to another.

11 Claims, 9 Drawing Figures



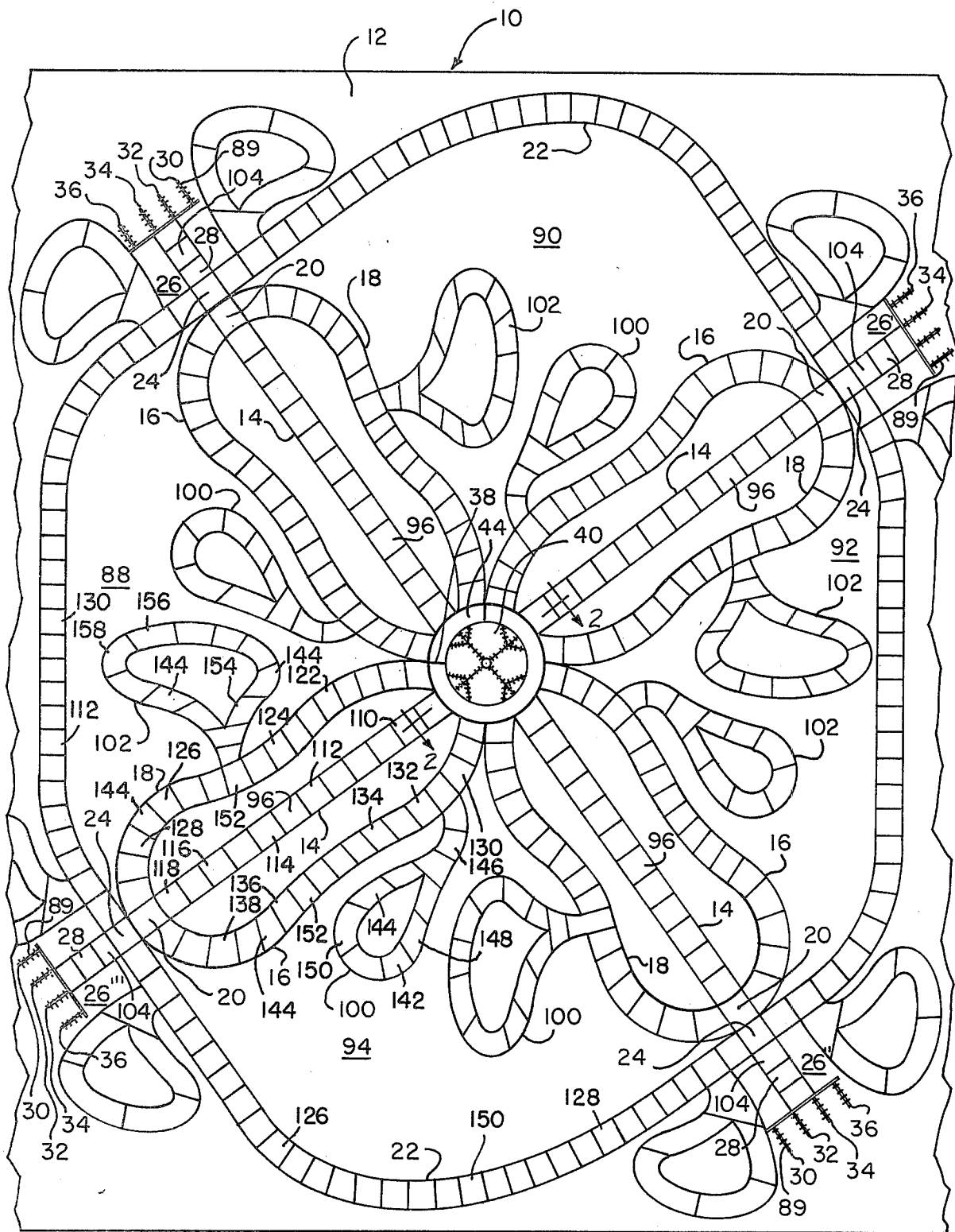


FIG. 1

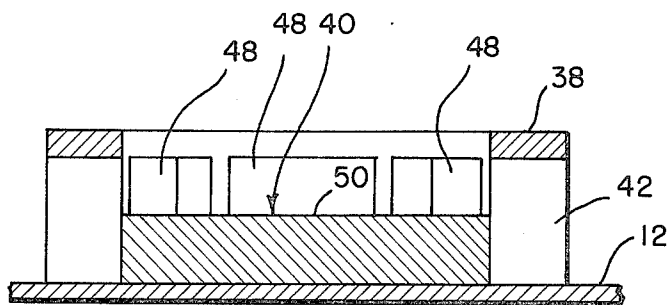


FIG. 2

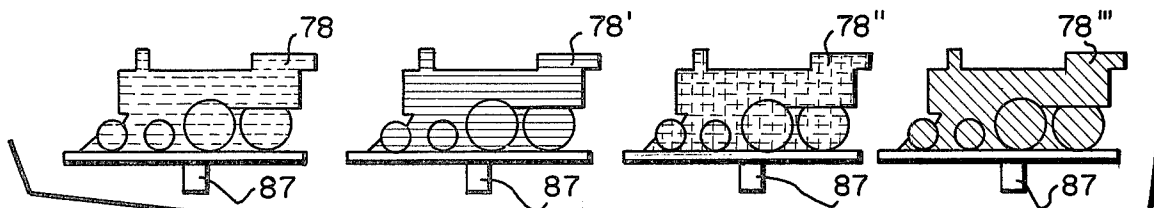


FIG. 5

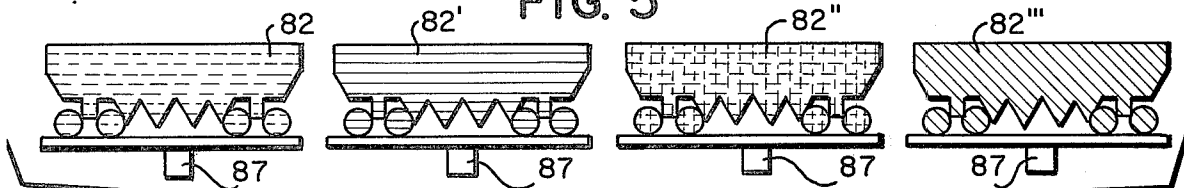


FIG. 6

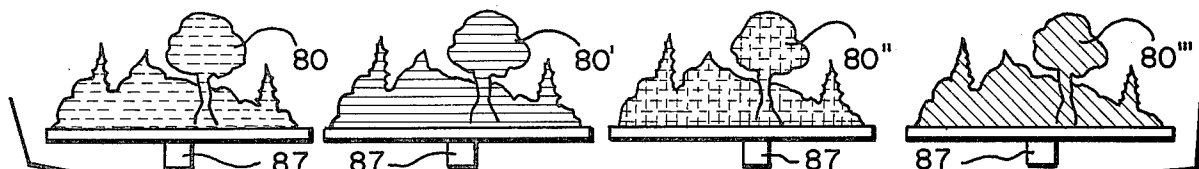


FIG. 7

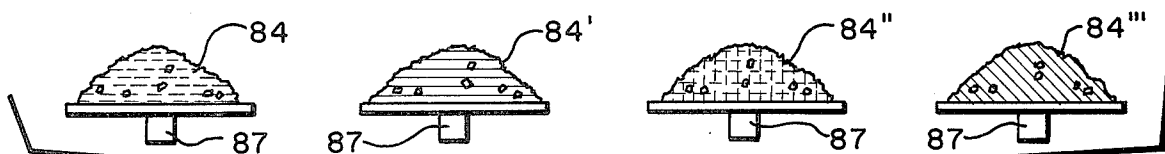


FIG. 8

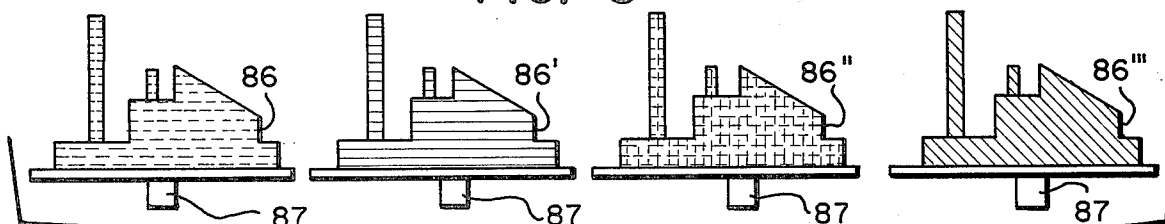


FIG. 9

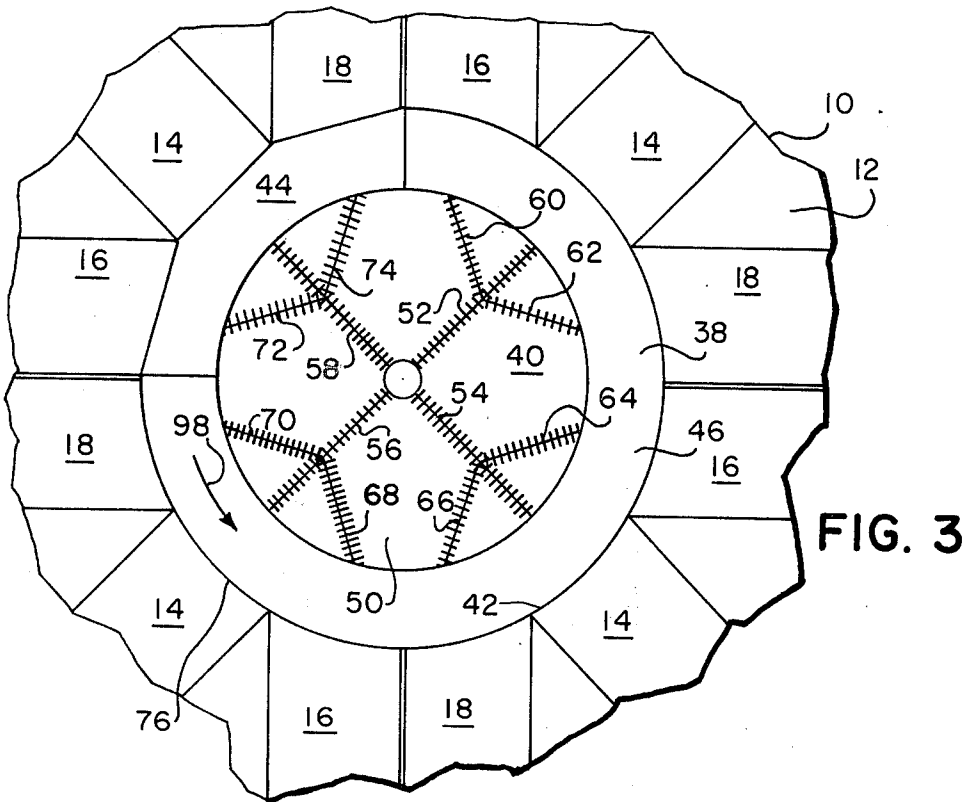


FIG. 3

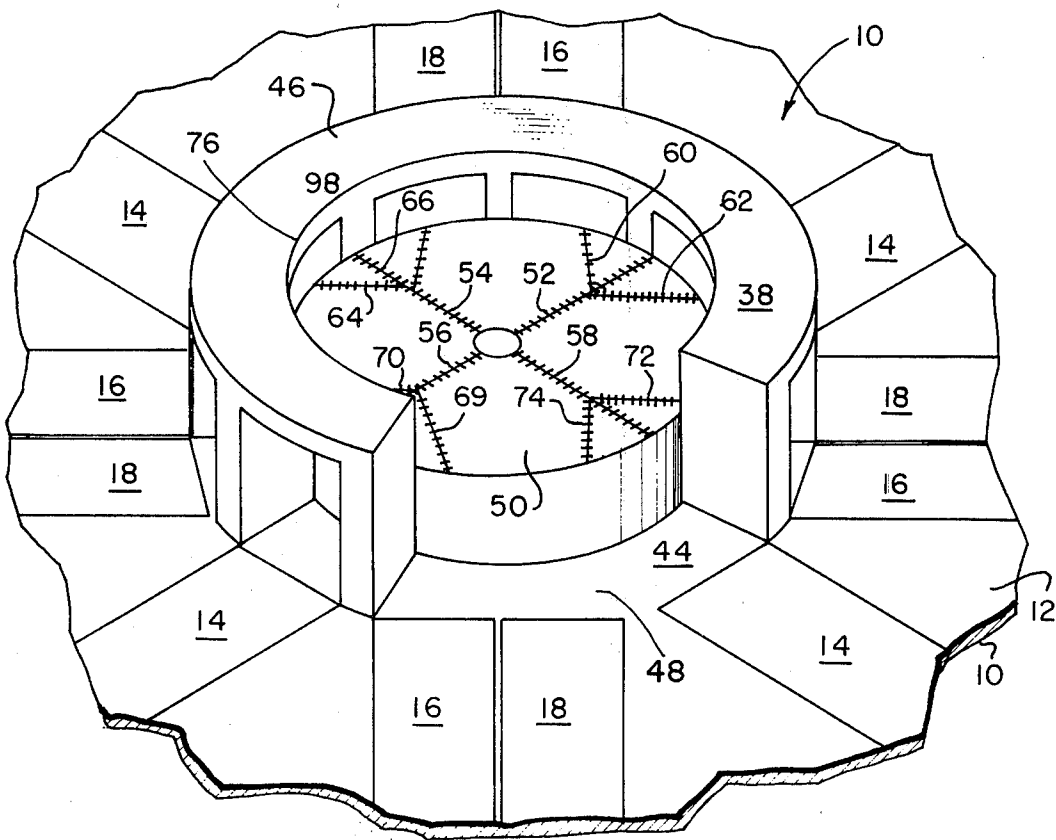


FIG. 4

RAILROAD BOARD GAME

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to the field of games, and more particularly is directed to a board type game having means to simulate railroad bankruptcy decisions.

Prior workers in the field have previously developed board games to simulate railroad activities, some of which include simulated tracks which are placed upon the board. For example, U.S. Pat. No. 1,338,502 discloses a railroad board game having a plurality of tracks inscribed upon a board and showing the tracks converging upon a centrally positioned home space. U.S. Pat. Nos. 3,658,337 and 3,394,936 are also exemplary of prior art railroad type board games.

In view of the fact that a great number of large railroads are currently either facing bankruptcy or have actually declared bankruptcy, a railroad board type game directed to railroad bankruptcy problems is considered most timely at this moment.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to a board game, and more particularly, is directed to a railroad type of game relating to bankruptcy problems.

In general, the game is played by four players and the board is roughly divided into four quadrants. Each player begins the play in his own headquarters base with a fixed number of assets which only he holds. The assets can be divided into simulated actual assets such as railroad equipment, real estate, natural resources, diversified subsidiaries, etc.

At the beginning of the game, each player holds only one type of asset. In order to progress in the game, a player must move his locomotive (playing piece) onto an adjoining track to acquire other specified assets in a specified mix to bring his railroad out of bankruptcy.

Each player begins the game with a specified amount of cash in addition to the fixed number of assets and it is the purpose of the game to realign the assets to acquire a certain ratio as specified in the rules. The first player to achieve the required ratio of assets and still have a certain minimum amount of cash left while returning his locomotive (playing piece) to his home base headquarters is considered to be the winner of the game.

The playing board is subdivided into four general track areas containing specified indicia having a variety of hazards built in, including the possibility of collisions which would send a locomotive back to the shop for repairs. The possibility of collision will also hamper obtaining assets that may be required to obtain the various winning ratios. At the start of the game, each of the four railroads is considered in bankruptcy and in order for a player to get out of bankruptcy, it is necessary to obtain or acquire the proper ratio or mix of assets such as land, diversified subsidiaries, resources and equipment. Because of the bankruptcy situation, there will be little cash credit to play with in the game.

A central roundhouse having means to receive and to rotate locomotives is positioned in the center of the board in a manner to permit a locomotive on any track in any quadrant to be revolved to another track area upon specified playing conditions. In order to reach the roundhouse, the playing piece must traverse simulated tracks having numerous hazards which serve to delay

or inhibit a player's access to the tracks of another quadrant.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide an improved board game of the type set forth.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a novel board type playing game suitable for playing by four players and suitable to simulate railroad systems under bankruptcy conditions.

It is another object of the invention to provide a novel railroad type game including a board having track areas delineated thereon, each track area being peripherally interconnected with an extended track system having relatively few hazards thereon, and being centrally interconnected by means of a rotatable roundhouse.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a novel board type playing game including a plurality of simulated railroad track systems, each track system including a direct route and right and left alternate routes, the direct and alternate routes all terminating medially in a central shop area.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a novel railroad board game including a playing board having delineated thereon a plurality of simulated railroad track systems, each of which terminates medially in a shop area, the shop area having a rotatable roundhouse associated therewith for movement of the playing pieces relative to the said delineated track systems.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a novel railroad board game that is inexpensive in manufacture, simple in construction and highly entertaining when in use.

Other objects and a fuller understanding of the invention will be had by referring to the following description and claims of a preferred embodiment thereof, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein like reference characters refer to similar parts throughout the several views and in which:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a top plan view of a playing board constructed in accordance with the teachings of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view taken along line 2—2 of FIG. 1, looking in the direction of the arrows.

FIG. 3 is an enlarged top plan view of the central roundhouse and shop area.

FIG. 4 is an enlarged perspective view of the central shop and roundhouse areas.

FIG. 5 is a side elevational view of the playing pieces.

FIG. 6 is a side elevational view of one of the game resources, namely equipment.

FIG. 7 is a side elevational view of another of the game resources, namely land.

FIG. 8 is a side elevational view of another of the game resources, namely natural resources.

FIG. 9 is a side elevational view of another of the game resources, namely diversified subsidiaries.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT OF THE INVENTION

Although specific terms are used in the following description for the sake of clarity, these terms are intended to refer only to the particular structure of our invention selected for illustration in the drawings, and

are not intended to define or limit the scope of the invention.

Referring now the drawings, we show in FIG. 1 a railroad board game comprising a playing board 10 having an indicia imprinted top surface 12 which is generally divided into four quadrants. Each quadrant includes a direct track 14, a right track 16 and a left track 18. The direct track 14 and the right and left tracks 16, 18 merge outwardly at the junction block 20 which in turn communicates with the outside neutral track 22 at the junction block 24. Each player's headquarters area 26 includes a headquarters track 28 which communicates with the junction block 24 and additionally, encompasses the asset storage tracks 30, 32, 34, 36.

Each direct track 14, right track 16 and left track 18 terminates inwardly at the medially positioned, rotative roundhouse 38. The roundhouse surrounds the elevated repair shop 40 and is rotatable thereabout to move a player's locomotive from one track area to another.

Referring now to FIGS. 2, 3 and 4, we show the elevated repair shop area 40 in stationary relationship upon the top surface 12 of the playing board 10 and generally medially positioned thereupon. The direct track 14 and right and left tracks 16, 18 of the four quadrants 88, 90, 92, 94, all converge upon the roundhouse 38 in a manner to completely surround the periphery 42 of the roundhouse. The roundhouse itself is generally annular in configuration and substantially surrounds approximately three-quarters of the periphery of the repair shop 40 leaving an opening 44 which is equal to the width of three contiguous tracks. The solid continuous portion 46 of the roundhouse 38 is outwardly provided with a plurality of peripherally spaced recessed areas 48 which are positioned to align with the tracks 14, 16, 18. Thus, nine recessed areas 48 will be provided in the roundhouse in alignment with nine of the tracks.

The top surface 50 of the shop area 40 is inscribed with four shop tracks 52, 54, 56, 58 which are respectively positioned at ninety degrees from each other. Each of the shop tracks outwardly branch into additional spur tracks 60, 62, 64, 66, 68, 70, 72 and 74 which angle outwardly at approximately 45° to thereby provide 12 track areas in peripherally spaced relationship at the outer periphery 76 of the shop 40. As best seen in FIG. 3, the twelve tracks provided on the surface of the shop area 40 longitudinally align with each direct track 14 and the right and left tracks 16, 18 of the four quadrants 88, 90, 92, 94 for game playing purposes as hereinafter more fully set forth.

As seen in FIG. 5, each player is provided with a three-dimensional playing piece which preferably is in the form of a locomotive 78, 78', 78'', 78'''.

In FIG. 7, we show the playing representation of one of the assets required to play the game, namely, land, which may be represented by small rectangular three-dimensional blocks 80, 80', 80'', 80'''. In FIG. 6, we show the representation of equipment necessary to play the game in the configuration of three-dimensional railroad cars 82, 82', 82'', 82'''. In FIG. 8, we show the playing representation of a third asset, namely natural resources, which may be in the form of a mound of nuggets of iron or coal 84, 84', 84'', 84'''. In FIG. 9 we show the last resource, namely diversified subsidiaries, which, for illustrative purposes, can be in the form of small factory buildings 86, 86', 86'', 86'''. In a preferred

embodiment, each resource 80, 82, 84, 86 may be provided with a bottom peg 87 of a size to fit into the spaced holes 89 which are punched into the playing board 10 at the asset storage tracks 30, 32, 34, 36 to facilitate asset storage when assets have been acquired during the play of the game.

In order to play the game, it is contemplated that each player is the president of a respective railroad and that each railroad is in bankruptcy. Each of the four railroad quadrants 88, 90, 92, 94 initially possessed a single resource, such as land 80, equipment 82, coal 84 or diversified subsidiaries 86, which is important to a successful financial reorganization to pull the railroad out of bankruptcy. At the start of the game, each player will possess all of the playing pieces representing 16 units of one particular asset in addition to cash (not shown) in an amount, for example, of one million dollars. During the course of the play, the resources may be traded or sold to the other railroads for the purpose of securing a balanced set of resources as required to successfully reorganize the railroad. The movement of the respective locomotives 78 is controlled by the rolling of dice (not shown) and each player starts at his respective headquarters area 26, 26', 26'', 26'''. All of the assets 80, 82, 84, or 86 with which a player starts the game are initially stored in his headquarters area on the asset storage tracks 30, 32, 34, 36.

In order to acquire other assets, it is necessary for a player to traverse from his own quadrant 88, 90, 92 or 94 to one of the adjacent railroad quadrants. In this respect, a locomotive 78 may be directed either down the player's direct track 14 toward the roundhouse 38 or about the periphery of the board along the outside neutral track 22. It will be noted that the direct route 14 is the shortest route between a headquarters area 26 and the roundhouse 38 in order to reach an adjacent railroad quadrant area for asset acquisition by trade or purchase. The route about the outside neutral track 22 is longer and therefore requires more time to traverse between respectively adjacent railroad quadrant areas. However, it will be noted there are relatively few hazards along the route 22 and, therefore, a player may elect this path as the best course to follow should he so desire.

Should a player elect the direct route 14 in lieu of the outside neutral track 22, he must proceed directly along the direct route 14 and cannot employ either the right or left track 16 or 18. If the direct route is selected, this will move the player's locomotive 78 to the roundhouse 38 in accordance with counts thrown on the dice (not shown). Each spaced segment 96 is equal to one count of the dice. Upon arrival of a player's locomotive 78 at the roundhouse 38, the locomotive will be positioned within one of the recessed areas 48 (FIG. 4) and the remaining counts of the dice are used to rotate the roundhouse in a counter-clockwise direction, as indicated by the arrow 98. For example, if a locomotive had been positioned four spaces from the roundhouse 38 and the player rolls a seven on the dice, he will advance his locomotive 78 into the roundhouse recessed area 48 in line with the direct track 14 and then rotate the roundhouse through three additional spaces to complete the count of seven. The rotation of the roundhouse will then align the playing piece 78 with a different track. The player may elect to proceed down the adjacent track which is positioned in front of the new rotated location of the recessed area 48 or, option-

ally, can elect to additionally rotate the roundhouse in accordance with the count on the next roll of his dice.

In the event a player's locomotive 78 is located on a track which is not aligned with an unoccupied recessed area 48 or which is aligned with the opening 44 in the roundhouse 38, the playing piece may only proceed up to the roundhouse, but no further. Unused counts of the dice would not again be available to the player. On his next turn, the player could proceed normally onto the roundhouse 38 assuming that an unoccupied recessed area 48 had become aligned with his particular track during the interim as caused by the activities of another player. In the event that a recessed area 48 has not been aligned as a result of other players rotating the roundhouse 38, the first player may then reverse his locomotive 78 and proceed in the opposite direction along the track or may buy his way onto the roundhouse by paying a special fee. If the player buys his way on to the roundhouse, the playing piece is positioned within one of the unoccupied recessed areas 48. Optionally, he could elect also to relinquish his turn to the next player in turn.

By moving a playing piece 78 onto one of the other railroad quadrant areas the player may buy, trade or otherwise acquire other assets necessary for a successful reorganization. Upon movement onto another railroad track area by way of the outside neutral track the player's locomotive 78 may proceed either along the direct track 14 or optionally may proceed along one of the right and left tracks 16, 18. However, the player must announce a decision as to which track he will traverse prior to rolling the dice. Right and left spur tracks 100,102 respectively connect to the right track 16 and left track 18 in a manner to permit a player's locomotive 78 to proceed directly along a right or a left track 16,18 or to move via the spur track 100 or 102. The player must announce his decision to enter a spur track prior to the rolling of the dice. Upon leaving the spur track 100,102, the player may choose the direction his locomotive will take along the associated track 16,18, that is, towards the roundhouse 38 or toward the headquarters area 26. The spur tracks 100,102 can prove useful in avoiding collision or in other game purposes.

When a player's locomotive 78 lands on a square marked "report to shop," or when he is involved in a hazard (for example, collision, derailment, washout, etc.) which requires that he report to the shop, he will move his piece to one of the four shop tracks 52,54,56,58. He may select any one of the shop tracks that is unoccupied. A player may leave the shop area 40 at the time of his next turn provided there is an unoccupied recessed area 48 in the roundhouse 38 at the end of the selected shop track 52,54,56,58 or at the end of one of the shop outlet spurs 60,62,64,66,68,70,72 or 74, depending upon on which track the locomotive is positioned. A move consists of moving the player's locomotive 78 into the unoccupied recessed area 48 of the roundhouse. On the player's next turn, he rolls the dice to proceed down the track adjacent to his recess. If the shop track is not aligned with an unoccupied recessed area 48, he may buy his way out of the repair shop 40 or he may simply relinquish his turn until such time as a recessed area 48 becomes available. If the player buys his way out of the repair shop 40, he places his locomotive 78 into one of the unoccupied recessed areas 48 of the roundhouse 38.

When a player's locomotive 78 passes another locomotive on the same track or lands on the same space as another locomotive, a collision occurs. A head-on collision requires that both locomotives 78 proceed to the shop, the victim of the collision choosing his shop track first prior to the offending locomotive. A rear end collision requires only that the offending locomotive 78 proceed to the shop, the victim choosing the shop track upon which the offending locomotive will be placed.

When a player has acquired the necessary assets for a successful reorganization, namely, the prior mix of the land 80, equipment 82, natural resources 84, or diversified subsidiaries 86, and cash (not shown), and has returned his locomotive 78 to one of his home base squares 104 of the headquarters track 28, he will have won the game.

In playing the game, in order to add interest, each railroad quadrant 88, 90, 92, 94 will be designated a different color, will be given a name corresponding to the color and initially will start the game with one of the resources. Similarly, a locomotive 78, 78', 78'', 78''' will be colored to correspond to the quadrant color. The following table is set forth by way of example.

RAILROAD NAME	COLOR	STARTING RESOURCE
Silver Line	Silver	Land
Blue Line	Blue	Equipment
Gold Line	Gold	Natural Resources
Emerald Line	Green	Diversified Subsidiaries

The most common method of procuring assets will be by directing one's locomotive 78 along the right and left tracks of an opponent's railroad quadrant. There will be a variety of designated squares to allow exchanging assets, exchanging cash and assets, open ended agreements between players, exchanges of equal or unequal values and voluntary and involuntary exchanges as hereinafter more fully set forth. An opponent's locomotive 78 traversing the player's own side tracks 16,18 will also involve the players in the process of exchange.

It is contemplated that each player will begin the game with 16 assets of his own natural assets 80,82,84, or 86 and one million dollars in credits. To align his company successfully during the course of the game, a player must obtain the following balance of cash and assets.

four units of his natural assets

four units of the assets of the player opposite him

two units of the player to the right of him

two units of the assets of the player to the left of him

two hundred thousand dollars in cash

Certain of the spaced segments 96 on the direct track 14, the right track 16, the left track 18 and the outside neutral track 22 could be imprinted to indicate railroad hazards to enhance the interest in playing the game. The following table lists suggested type hazards by way of example only, and it will be appreciated that more or fewer hazards or different hazards could be readily substituted and still fall within the intent and scope of this invention.

TYPE OF HAZARD	NUMERAL
Equipment repairs — report to shop	110
Bridge out — turn back	112
Missed connections — lose turn	114
Trackwork — turn back	116
Signals down — lost turn	118
Trackwork — lose turn	120
Washout — turn back	122
Locomotive breakdown — report to shop	124
Derailement — turn back	126
Labor dispute — lose turn	128
Wreck ahead — turn back	130
Maintenance due — report to shop	132
Diversion — turn back	134
Snow storm — lose turn	136
Labor walkout — lose turn	138

Additionally, also by way of example, the right and left tracks 16, 18, the right and left spur tracks 100, 102, and the outside neutral track could be imprinted with indicia to designate various moves relating to money transactions, moves or to trade of resources as follows:

DESCRIPTION	NUMERAL
Mutual Exchange (1 for 1)	140
Buy asset for \$300,000.	142
Required Exchange (2 for 1)	144
Buy supplies — pay \$15,000	146
Exit to Roundhouse	148
Fuel Bill — pay \$5000	150
Required exchange (1 for 1)	152
Freight car repairs — pay \$15,000	154
Exit to outside track	156
Bridgework — pay \$20,000	158

On any turn, a player can convert an asset in his possession to cash. An asset obtained from an opponent may be sold for \$100,000. A natural asset, that is an asset in the player's possession at the beginning of the game may be sold for \$200,000. Cash may be converted into assets only when a player lands on a segment 96 which specifically allows such an exchange. Opponent's assets are purchased for \$300,000 per unit. However, should it become necessary to repurchase one's own natural asset, the cost will be \$400,000. When a player has acquired the necessary assets for a successful reorganization and has returned his locomotive 78 to his own home base headquarters 26, 26', 26'', 26''' he will be considered as discharged from bankruptcy and will have won the game.

Although we have discribed the present invention with reference to the particular embodiment herein set forth, it is understood that the present disclosure has been made only by way of example and that numerous changes in the details of construction may be resorted to without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Thus, the scope of the invention should not be limited by the foregoing specification, but rather only by the scope of the claims appended hereto.

We claim:

1. In a game, including movable playing pieces, the combination of

A. a flat playing board having a top surface,

1. said board being marked with indicia to generally divide the top surface into distinct, similar playing areas,

2. each playing area being marked with indicia to define a headquarters area and a plurality of segmented tracks;

B. a shop area carried upon the top surface and having a peripheral boundary,

1. said shop area being medially positioned relative to the playing areas,

2. said shop area being in stationary relationship to the playing board,

3. said shop area being of cylindrical configuration, a. said shop area being positioned on the top surface and rising upwardly therefrom,

4. said shop area being provided with at least one track extension;

C. a roundhouse positioned upon the top surface,

1. said roundhouse surrounding at least a portion of the peripheral boundary of the shop area,

2. said roundhouse being rotatable about the shop area,

3. some of said segmented tracks defining paths to the roundhouse,

4. said roundhouse including means to move playing pieces from one track to another, and

5. said roundhouse including means to permit the passage of playing pieces into the shop area.

2. The invention of claim 1 wherein the roundhouse comprises an annular segment, said segment surrounding approximately three-quarters of the peripheral boundary of the shop area, said segment comprising a contiguous solid portion which terminates in two ends, the said ends defining an opening therebetween, the said means to move playing pieces being formed in the contiguous solid portion and the said opening providing the means to permit passage of the playing pieces into the shop area.

3. The invention of claim 2 wherein each of the plurality of tracks terminates inwardly at the roundhouse, the inward track termini being arranged in side by side juxtaposition in a manner to completely peripherally surround the roundhouse, some of said tracks terminating at the contiguous solid portion and fewer of said tracks terminating at the said opening defined between the ends.

4. The invention of claim 3 wherein the solid portion of the roundhouse is provided with a plurality of recessed areas, said recessed areas each aligning with a track when the roundhouse is moved to any rotative position, said playing pieces being movable along a track into an aligned recesses area.

5. The invention of claim 4 wherein one recessed area is provided for each track termini which is contiguous with the solid portion.

6. The invention of claim 5 wherein approximately one quarter of the track termini terminate in alignment with the opening in the roundhouse.

7. The invention of claim 5 wherein the shop area is provided with indicia to delineate a plurality of shop tracks each said shop track respectively longitudinally aligning with one of the said segmented tracks.

8. The invention of claim 5 wherein a plurality of said shop tracks terminate at the periphery of the shop area in alignment with one of the said recessed areas.

9. The invention of claim 1 wherein each headquarters area is provided with a plurality of holes, the said holes being spaced apart, the said holes optionally receiving and supporting some of said playing pieces.

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10. The invention of claim 3 wherein some of said playing pieces are playing blocks which represent the assets required to play the game, said playing blocks being positioned in a headquarters area to indicate the progress of the game.

11. The invention of claim 4 wherein each playing

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block is equipped with a peg, the pegs being fabricated to size to snugly fit within one said hole to position the playing blocks upon the board, the said holes being formed in the playing board and arranged in the order of asset storage tracks.

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