



Things are quiet in the Union Station at Washington, D.C., which was built by the railroads at their own expense. Meanwhile, the city's airport (right) bustles. . . .



So You Don't Ride the Trains Any More?

By HAROLD H. MARTIN

A Post editor reveals why the nation's railroads feel Uncle Sam has stacked the cards against them in the struggle to stay in business.

To woo the wayfarer back to the rails, the roads have sunk millions into glass-domed cars like these on the Western Pacific's California Zephyr.



Washington's up-to-date air terminal, built at taxpayers' expense, handled over three and a half million passengers in 1955, and business continues to boom.

On balmy summer evenings the citizens of Altoona, Pennsylvania, drive out to a little hill overlooking the city reservoir, there to witness a scene which sets their pulses pounding. For four hours, from dusk until nearly midnight, the Pennsylvania Railroad's westbound fleet streams by, deep horns blowing, lights gleaming on the dark water as the long trains, laden with passengers, loop like red-and-silver snakes around a famous hairpin turn known as the Horseshoe Curve.

To anyone who likes railroads it is a memorable spectacle—and one which in a few more

years may be seen only in memory. All over the United States great trains still are blowing in the gulf of night, in the late Thomas Wolfe's resonant phrase, and people still are riding them. But every year their numbers dwindle, and many a railroad man will privately admit that in another generation or two the hoarse squall of the passenger diesel's horn may have joined the steam locomotive's mellow whistle in the limbo of America's forgotten sounds.

To the commuter scrambling for a seat on the crowded 8:18 or the citizen seeking passage on some of the famous "name" trains that make the long cross-country runs, the railroads' assertion that their passenger business is starving for lack of patronage may seem like gross exaggeration. The figures, however, tell a different story.

In 1953, the railroads lost \$705,000,000 on their passenger business. In 1954, they lost \$669,000,000. In 1955, by cutting off losing trains and using many a reduced-rate gimmick, such as ladies' days and family plans to lure new riders aboard, the deficit was trimmed to \$643,000,000.

These colossal losses are, in a sense, paper deficits only. They derive from a system of bookkeeping required by the Interstate Commerce Commission, a procedure known to railroaders as the "ICC formula." Under the formula, the passenger train is charged not only with its direct costs of operation but with a proportionate share of the over-all expenses incurred in operating both freight and passenger service. Many a student of railroad economics has blasted this method of accounting. It cre-

ates, they say, a phantom deficit, and gives an unrealistic picture of the railroad's plight. If every passenger train on every road in the United States were taken off the rails, they point out, the industry would not save \$700,000,000, nor \$600,000,000, nor \$500,000,000. It would save merely the out-of-pocket costs of operating its trains—a figure which ranges, in estimate, from a high of \$100,000,000 down to \$38,000,000.

However the figures are juggled, though, a whopping deficit, that eats deeply into freight profits, does exist, (Continued on Page 62)



Bargain sleeper: For coach fare plus \$7.50, a passenger on the Zephyr from Chicago to Denver gets a private room.



Double-decker cars boost the seating capacity of this commuter line from Chicago to Aurora, Illinois.

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So You Don't Ride the Trains Any More?

(Continued from Page 21)

and every railroad president and passenger-traffic manager in the country is lying awake at night trying to figure out what to do about it. Being ruggedly individualistic men, their solutions are as varied as the regions their railroads serve. To two great Eastern roads, the Pennsylvania and the New York Central, the answer is to raise first-class fares by 45 per cent and coach fares by 5 per cent—an increase, they say, which would bring revenue in line with costs. To some of the Western roads, this suggestion is evidence that their Eastern associates have taken leave of their senses. Such a boost in first-class fares, they argue, would drive every Pullman rider, no matter how timorous, straight into the arms of the airlines.

The Western roads, which have always had a soft spot in their hearts for passengers, believe the answer lies in providing finer, smoother-riding, more luxurious trains, running on more acceptable schedules, at fares only a fraction higher than they are today. To the Eastern railroad men, this solution sounds like madness. When you put \$250,000 into a modern Pullman car, they say, you are, in effect, providing a palatial rolling hotel for a handful of passengers. Such trains could not make money, they argue, if they ran fully loaded on every trip. Lightweight, low-slung trains, cheap to build and operate, running on fast and frequent schedules on short-haul runs, may be a solution, they admit. But, in the East, they believe, the long-haul luxury train will never again pay its way.

However East and West may differ in their views on how to solve the passenger problem, they agree wholeheartedly on one thing—that the railroads today are the stepchildren of the transportation business, forced to struggle along under an antiquated set of regulations that give all the breaks to their competitors.

"The railroads," said one spokesman morosely, "are like an old heavyweight champion who has to defend his title in a battle royal against a ringful of opponents, all of them wearing brass knucks. He has to fight by the rules, but they are permitted to butt, gouge, rabbit-punch and knee him in the groin. And every time he backs one into a corner and gets set to knock his brains out, the referee hollers 'Foul!'"

This somewhat strained analogy becomes more credible when railroad men sit down to talk about their troubles. The main reason for the passenger deficit, of course, lies in the fact that people just don't ride trains any more as they used to.

"The rich folks fly, the poor folks ride the buses, and everybody else goes by automobile," one railroad man said sadly. But the railroad men insist there are still enough people who love trains and like to ride them to make passenger hauling a profitable or at least a break-even business, if it weren't for the multibillion-dollar burden of costs and taxes which the rails have to bear and which, they claim, their strongest competitors escape. The railroads, they point out, spent \$23,000,000 to build the Union Station at Washington, D.C., and the station property pays taxes of about \$1800 a day. The Washington Airport cost \$32,000,000, but it was built with public funds and pays no taxes at all. The railroads spend millions of dollars a year maintaining their signal system, and pay taxes on it in addition, as part of their capital investment. The competing airplanes fly from city to city under a control system that is paid for and operated by the Federal Government. The railroads spend mil-

lions to build and maintain their rights of way, and pay taxes to every community through which they pass. Their competitors—the truck lines and the buses—travel on highways built by public funds.

Neither the fees the airlines pay for the use of airports, nor the taxes the trucks and buses pay on gas and oil and tires, cover their share of the costs of the facilities provided, the railroads contend. The barges, of course, ply the Government-supported waterways free.

This, they argue, is gross discrimination, repugnant to the American ideal of fair play. The American transportation system, they point out, is one great interlocking network, made up of various types of carriers—the railroads, the highway carriers, the airlines, the pipelines and the waterways.

Each has certain inherent advantages, which it should be allowed to develop to the fullest in free competition with the others—the speed of the airplane, the mobility of the motor carriers, the barge and pipeline's capacity for transporting certain commodities cheaply, the railroad's over-all ability to haul anything, in any volume, anywhere, any time.

None are infant industries any longer, the railroads argue, and none deserve to be petted and coddled. If the airlines are to receive vast subsidies in the form of fields and terminals and signal systems built and operated with public funds, the railroads feel they should be granted a subsidy in the form of tax relief on their terminals. If the trucks and buses and barge lines are granted the use of the public highways and waterways in return for token payments, or no payments at all, the railroads feel it only fair they should not be required to pay taxes on their rights of way.

It would be better still, and more in keeping with the spirit of free enterprise, the railroads contend, if all subsidies, both hidden and overt, were eliminated. Then every carrier's freight rates and passenger fares would have to reflect the true cost of doing business—which would put the railroads, which can haul a ton of freight a mile for a penny and a half, back in the competitive battle.

Despite last year's huge passenger deficit of more than \$600,000,000, the railroads, which earned \$8,500,000,000 hauling freight, ended up with a net income of \$925,000,000, the highest in their history. This naturally brought howls of protest from the shippers. To make up the great passenger losses, the shippers argued, the railroads were charging exorbitant rates for hauling freight. The railroads blandly admit that rates on many commodities are higher than they should be. That situation, too, they point out, is a result of the ICC's paternalistic concern for the health of their competitors. The ICC maintains that such reductions would "affect adversely the maintenance of competitive motor-carrier transportation."

This, say the railroads, is, in effect, a usurpation of the functions of railroad management. And, according to Mr. W. T. Faricy, president of the Association of American Railroads, it is not in the public interest.

"If one carrier can move a given commodity between two points at a lower rate than a competing carrier," Mr. Faricy says, "and can do so at a profit, without discriminating against other shippers, why shouldn't the low-cost carrier have the business and the public have the savings?"

The current battle between carriers stems from rate-making policies laid

down in the old predatory days when the rails had a monopoly, and stern regulations were needed to protect the shippers and the public from the railroads, and the railroads from one another. In the beginning, it was the general practice to haul bulk products—ores and timber and products of the farm—at a relatively low cost. Higher rates were charged on finished goods, though it might cost the railroads no more to haul a trainload of plumbing fixtures than it did to haul a trainload of iron ore. It was this high-rate traffic which the brash young trucking industry snatched away.

The result is, the truck lines today get between five and six cents for hauling a ton of freight a mile. The railroads average 1.4 cents and are hungrily eyeing the higher-rate traffic, much of which they would be happy to handle below truck rates if the ICC would permit.

Eventually, they may get the chance. Recent developments, vastly encouraging

Though cheered by the prospect of freer competition, the railroads have many other complaints which they like to pour into any listening ear. Not only the ICC but other agencies of Government, they claim, have been dealing the railroads deuces from the bottom of the deck.

The Federal transportation tax, for example, which adds 10 per cent to passenger fares, whether travel is by rail, airplane or bus, was put on during the war to discourage people from traveling. It is still in effect, though the railroads are starving for passengers. The effect of the tax, the rails argue, is to drive travelers from the public carriers to the private automobile, which already hauls 85 per cent of the intercity traffic in the United States.

The Congress has also dealt the rails—and the licensed truckers too—a blow below the belt, the railroads claim. Under present laws, unlicensed truckers can haul farm products at whatever rate they choose to charge—the idea behind the

"The hell of it is," one railroad man said angrily, "we have to keep equipment ready on a stand-by basis, to take over if the other forms of transportation fail. If the planes can't fly, we have to be ready to load on the mail and the passengers, and carry them through. If there's ice in the mountains and the trucks can't run or low water on the rivers that cause the barges to tie up, we have to carry the load."

The railroads complain bitterly that many state public-service commissions have been unsympathetic with their problems; in many instances the commissions have refused to let them take off trains which have been losing money for years for lack of riders. At one hearing in Kansas, fifty-one citizens came from all up and down the railroad to protest the removal of a train. They all arrived in automobiles. Some communities have forced the railroads to spend large sums to widen underpasses, so bigger trucks could get through.

Unless the Government's and the general public's present attitude of "the railroads be damned" changes drastically, there can be but one result, the more pessimistic of the railroaders claim. Eventually the Government will take over the railroads. If that happens, they say—if the country's biggest high-volume, low-cost transport system becomes a branch of a Federal bureaucracy—the nation's capacity to support a booming economy in time of peace and to defend itself in time of war will be greatly weakened.

The Government ran the trains in World War I, the railroad men point out, at a loss of \$2,000,000 a day, which the taxpayers had to absorb. The railroads did the job themselves in World War II, handling twice the traffic of World War I with a third less equipment and manpower. They netted \$3,402,000,000 for themselves, while pouring \$6,025,000,000 taxes into the treasury.

The railroad men recall with pride the job the railroads did during the fevered war years, when, by calling back every old brakeman who could swing a lantern and every old locomotive that could turn a wheel, they hauled 97 per cent of all the organized troop movements, and 90 per cent of all the military equipment and supplies that moved within the United States. And they could do it again if they had to, they argue, if given a chance to earn the money for the renovating, rebuilding and re-equipping they want to do.

"The trouble is," one railroader explained, "with the restrictions we must work under, we don't share as we should in the nation's progress. To keep in good health financially we should earn six per cent on our investment. We are in a period of prosperity without profit; we are caught by an inflation whose benefits we don't share."

From the foregoing, it would appear that the railroads are doing nothing but wring their hands and cry that nobody loves them. This, however, is not the case. Every top railroad man, once he has delivered himself of his diatribe against taxes, and competition, which, he claims, enjoys the happy status of teacher's pet, ends his discourse on a note of buoyant optimism. The country's economy is expanding, he points out, and come what may, the railroads are determined to expand with it.

This determination has been reflected in a willingness to spend money for improvements. Since the war, the railroads have spent nearly \$11,000,000,000—most of it borrowed—for improved services and equipment, and have eagerly tried any new thing that promised to keep passengers happier and move freight faster. A great evolution in public transport has



Closed-circuit television will speed up purchase of reservations in the new electronic ticket agency at New York's Pennsylvania Station.

to the railroads, indicate that sometime in the future the ICC may relent and allow freer competition between carriers. In 1955, an advisory committee made up largely of the members of President Eisenhower's Cabinet brought out a report urging a drastic revision of the Federal Government's transportation policy. The application of regulations designed to control a monopoly, in a field where a monopoly no longer exists, has resulted in a freight-rate structure which costs the consuming public billions of dollars a year, the advisory committee said. Their report recommended that the ICC stop attempting to allocate traffic between the different types of carriers, and let free competition determine which carrier gets the business. The ICC, of course, would continue to see that rates were neither unreasonably high nor unreasonably low, and that they did not unjustly prefer or discriminate against any persons, community or region.

The railroads greeted this suggestion with the blowing of whistles and the ringing of bells. The truck lines and the barge operators viewed it sourly. It would, they claimed, throw the nation's transportation system back into the throat-cutting competition that existed sixty-nine years ago, when the original act to regulate interstate commerce was passed. The railroads argue it would do no such thing. It would merely enable each carrier to give full force and effect to whatever competitive advantages it might possess.

regulation being that at harvesttime crops should move to market as fast and as cheaply as possible. The rails have no quarrel with this concept. They do protest strongly, however, that unlicensed "gypsy" truckers, after hauling a farm product across country, can haul whatever commodity they please on the return journey, at rates with which the railroads cannot compete because they are made in secret, and the rails and the licensed truckers have no means of knowing what they are. From legislators, prodded by the mail-order houses, also has come the suggestion that weight and size limitations be taken off packages shipped by the federally subsidized parcel post, which operates at a deficit. This would put parcel post in even greater competition with the rail-owned Railway Express.

The railroads also feel that the Defense Department hit them with a rabbit punch. For a while after the war the Air Force rented hundreds of surplus airplanes to nonscheduled operators, who fueled them with Government gas at reduced rates, and flew thousands of military personnel back and forth across the country on a low-fare charter basis.

The Post Office Department has also struck a low blow, the railroads claim, by withdrawing mail contracts from local trains and turning the mail-hauling job over to trucks. The Post Office's transfer of three-cent mail to the airlines, when the planes had space available, has also hurt.



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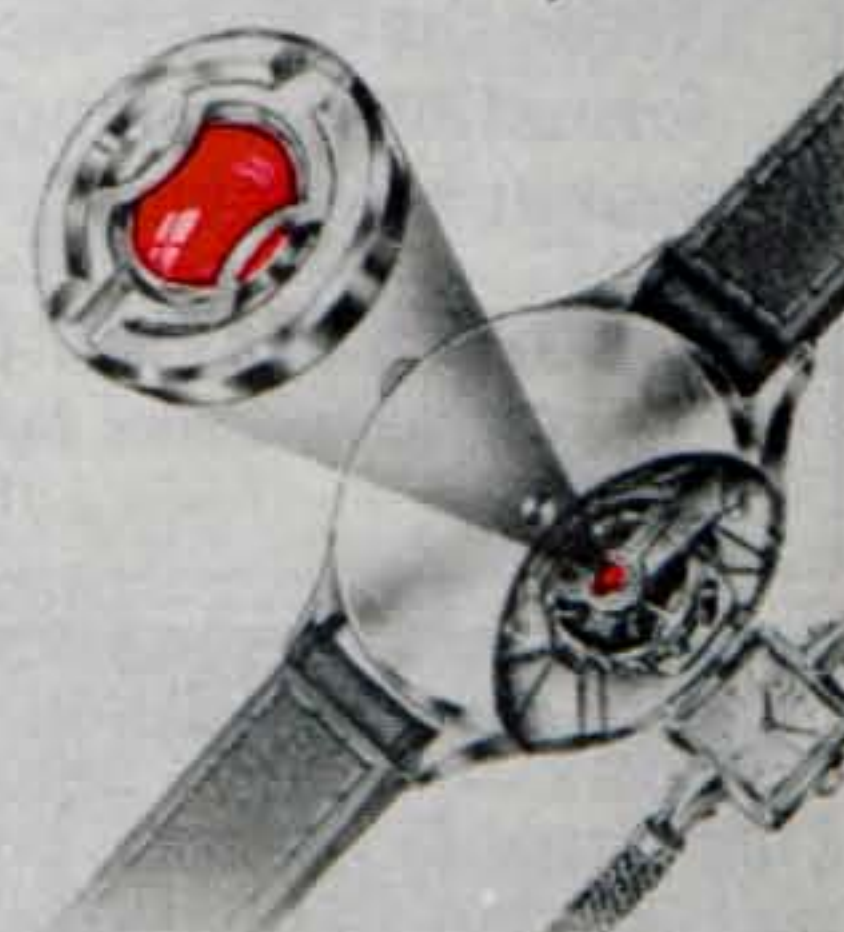
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been going on, the railroad men claim, without the public's being aware of it.

In the passenger field it has been reflected in the establishment of electronic ticket agencies in the bigger travel centers, making it a much quicker and simpler matter to buy space on a train, and in the purchase of new, experimental trains, which the railroad men hope will lure the traveler out of his automobile.

"We don't worry about the airlines. We know we can't compete with them in speed," one passenger man explained. "We don't worry too much about the buses. The man we'd like to get back on the train is the fellow who jumps into his car to drive four hundred miles. We want to convince him it makes more sense to ride a train, and then rent a car when he gets there."

In its efforts to woo the wayfarer back to the rails, the roads, from 1946 to 1954, spent more than \$750,000,000 on new passenger cars. These cars had wide windows and glass penthouses on top, so travelers could view the scenery; radio communication and television, so that they could keep in touch with the outside world while going a journey; and more comfortable seats and sleeping quarters.

It soon became obvious, however, that these new cars were not the answer. In the first place, they cost far more than the first streamliners, which briefly captured the public fancy in the '30's. In 1954, therefore, the roads turned to a new solution—low-slung, high-speed, "articulated" trains which weigh half as much as standard cars, cost half as much to build, and require far less pulling power than the old streamliners.

These new trains—the Talgo, a Spanish design built by American Car and Foundry; GM's Aerotrain; Pullman-Standard's Xplorer; and Budd's tubular Keystone—already are being tried in regular passenger service. None, railroad men will admit, provides the final answer yet. Safe and swift, they are noisy at high speeds, and on rough track they tend to toss the passengers about. Out of them, however, is expected to come the "train of tomorrow," which Mr. Robert Young, of the New York Central, has been talking about for ten years.

Some critics of the railroads feel that in concentrating on the search for a low-cost train that can be operated at a profit, the industry has forgotten that the passenger, basically, does not care about the railroads' financial troubles. He is more interested in a fast, smooth, quiet, comfortable ride than he is in a cheaper operation that can be reflected in lower fares, for nine times out of ten, as a first-class passenger, he is traveling on an expense account. Too great a concentration on low cost, without equal attention to comfort, according to Mr. David Morgan, editor of an excellent magazine called *Trains*, may cause the roads to defeat their main purpose. There's not much point, Mr. Morgan says, in one railroad president's being able to boast that he can operate his new-type empty trains cheaper than another road can operate its new-type empty trains.

One Western road, in fact, is concentrating on a supercolossal car that makes one of the new lightweight underslung coaches look like a roller skate. On its fast all-coach El Capitan, running between Chicago and Los Angeles, the Santa Fe is using two-story cars that tower fifteen feet six and a half inches above the tracks and weigh nearly eighty tons. The passengers ride and dine upstairs, getting a sweeping view of the countryside, and rest rooms, kitchens and baggage compartments are on the lower deck.

All the long-haul roads are convinced that selling scenery will help them sell

passenger travel. The B. & O., for example, puts searchlights on its night trains running through the Alleghenies, so that passengers, peering from their berths, may view the snow-clad hills and occasionally spot a deer standing in a leafy glade.

Another road which has not lost its faith in the heavy, high-cost but smooth-riding standard car is the Burlington, which, on its famous Zephyrs, running from Chicago to Denver, Colorado Springs and San Francisco, uses new glass-topped cars which enable the passengers to peer at the snow-capped peaks while an Indian guide recites the lore and legends of the country. The Zephyrs also offer a newly designed car in which the passenger, for coach fares plus \$7.50, gets a small private room, complete with bed, wash basin and toilet—the first break the coach passenger has got in a generation, Burlington claims.

While the long- and short-haul train rider can expect to be wooed, in the future, with all sorts of new devices designed to insure his safety, comfort and all-around happiness, there is, so far, little relief in sight for the harassed commuter riding into New York from the hinterlands or catching the Paoli local into Philadelphia.

The reason for this, the railroad men explain, is simply one of economics. No genius has yet come up with an idea that gives any promise of putting the commuter business in the black, so long as the cars, engines and train crews that haul commuters must remain idle twenty-one hours out of the twenty-four. Of the 432,000,000 persons who rode trains last year, more than half were commuters, but they contributed less than 13 per cent to the total passenger revenue, and nearly all the commuter lines lost money.

"It all boils down to this," the railroads explain: "Miles of track, thousands of employees and millions of dollars' worth of equipment have to be maintained to handle just two peak loads a day, five days a week, for the benefit of a rider who travels less than twenty miles at a substandard fare."

The roads are responding to the commuter problem in various ways—some by cutting off losing commuter trains altogether, others by raising fares, others by going to cheaper, lighter trains, and others by trying to keep trains running during off-peak hours by offering special shoppers' rates to housewives who might be persuaded to ride into town by train instead of going by car.

This helps, but not enough, and all the commuter lines hope that the cities will someday recognize that the commuter

train is part of the over-all traffic pattern of a metropolitan area and treat it as such. It would be far cheaper, they argue, for New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago or San Francisco to grant them some relief from heavy taxes on stations, terminals and rights of way, thus allowing them to develop better commuter service, than it is to build the expressways, overpasses, clover leaves and parking facilities necessary to handle the automobiles that clog the downtown streets.

The cities have been slow to grasp this idea, and a number of railroads, in their effort to rid themselves of an onerous tax burden, have put their passenger stations and other real estate on the block. On the New York Central's 10,700 miles of track there are more than 500 passenger stations. Of these, 406, including three multimillion-dollar terminals at Toledo, Buffalo and Detroit, are now up for sale to anybody who can make use of them, the railroad retaining the right to lease whatever office space its dwindling passenger business requires.

Many railroad men deplore these cutbacks, just as they deplore taking off local trains until every effort has been made, by changing schedules and improving service, to make them pay their way. Selling stations and cutting off trains, they say, reveals a defeatist attitude. It is negative thinking, brought on by the ICC's deceptive reports about passenger losses.

"You are losing faith," one Western railroader told a despondent confrere.

"Losing faith, hell," said the other railroad president; "I'm losing money."

However this may be, there is no evidence that in the freight end of the business the railroads are losing either faith or money. Though the railroads publicize the improvements made in their passenger-hauling techniques, on the sound theory that freight business always follows passenger traffic, the greatest technological advances have been made in the unglamorous activity of transporting commodities. By running longer trains with heavier loads, and running them faster, the average freight train of 1955—sixty-six cars traveling at 18.6 miles per hour, with an average load per car of forty-two tons—turned out three times the ton-miles of work that the freight trains of a quarter century ago could produce.

This increase in the freight trains' operating efficiency is due to many technical advances which the railroads have made since World War II. The biggest improvement, of course, came when the roads switched over from steam to diesel



power. The old steam locomotive with its clanging bell, its musical whistle and its great plume of smoke, had romance and glamour, but it was far more costly to operate than the more prosaic diesel. Huge machines that lay rails, replace ties, drive spikes and smooth roadbeds, now do the work of the old pick-and-shovel gangs of the past. Car handling in the yards now is becoming, in many regions, an almost automatic process. Great push-button yards using television, radar, radio and a variety of electronic braking devices, permit one man in a tower, pulling levers and pushing buttons, to break up trains and reassemble them faster than dozens of brakemen and a fleet of switch engines could do it a few years ago. The railroads have been among the first industries to test the virtues of automation. On 25,000 miles of track today, trains meet and pass under the remote control of a handful of experts who throw switches by watching illuminated maps on which trains automatically report their positions.

Under the old theory of "If you can't lick 'em, jine 'em," the railroads have made use of the truck to speed their operations. Freight trains now "piggyback" truck trailers over long hauls at rates profitable to both them and the truckers. One bustling railroad, the Rock Island, has modified the piggyback idea so that it is no longer necessary to haul the heavy dead weight of the trailer's running gear and tires. It has developed boxlike containers for all sorts of freight which can be loaded at the shipper's factory, hauled to the siding by truck, loaded on a specially built flat car, trundled a thousand miles by rail, and off-loaded onto another truck. Several railroads operate their own trucks, and one, the Southern Pacific, which considers it the business of a railroad to haul freight by whatever means is best and cheapest, operates pipe lines as well as a huge truck line.

The stubborn individuality of the railroad man has cost the railroads dearly in the past because of his unwillingness to

standardize equipment. Every steam locomotive was a custom job, tailored to satisfy the whim of whatever superintendent of motive power ordered it built, and boxcars still are a multitude of sizes and shapes, reflecting the ideas of the various roads. Today there is an increasing trend toward standardization of rolling stock, and the boxcar of the future may be a production-line job, made of standardized roof, side and floor panels that can be repaired or replaced at any railroad shop anywhere in the United States.

Last year the freight trains earned eighty-two cents out of every dollar the railroads received. They carried more than half of all the goods that moved between cities—the equivalent of hauling a ton of freight 3400 miles for every man, woman and child in the country. The roads are determined to hold onto at least this much business, and to increase their share if they can.

It will be a battle, however. In the next thirteen years, at a cost of \$33,000,000,000, the country plans to build 41,000 miles of new superhighways. During the construction period, the railroads will profit greatly, for they expect to haul the sand and gravel, cement and steel, that go into the roads and bridges. Once the roads are open to traffic, however, the prospects darken. For the new turnpikes are engineered not only for motorist but for the railroads' chief competitors, the mammoth long-haul trucks of the future.

Before that time, however, the railroads hope that the Government and the public will have recognized their plight, and will have granted them the freedom to compete that will let them stay in business. They believe this happy day will eventually arrive. For most of them, in thinking of railroading and its future, still share the views of Diamond Jim Brady, famous boxcar salesman, playboy, gourmand and boundless optimist: "Just remember," said Diamond Jim, shortly before he died in 1917, "there ain't nothing wrong that ain't only temporary."

The Last Days of a Cop (Continued from Page 19)

was in the clear when I showed him the badge, and nobody would have known if it was a real one or a phony. I'm glad it happened; he learned a couple of things about being a cop: Don't get nasty with a civilian, and, most important, you do what you're getting paid to do, and you don't argue with yourself about it."

No one looked less like a scholar than Eddie Palmer, or acted less like one, but he was a learned man. I was late for a luncheon date with him one day, and when I came into the restaurant he was sitting alone, a thick handful of filing cards spread out before him. They were covered with Chinese ideographs. He was teaching himself Chinese. In time he read, wrote and spoke classical Chinese, one of the world's hardest languages.

By the time he was forty Eddie Palmer had a bachelor-of-arts degree, most of the credits for a master's degree, and a start in law school—all of this study done in the time he could spare from an exacting job. His written examinations for patrolman, lieutenant and captain were the highest recorded for each test. He became an expert in inks, paper, printing, forgery. He was an expert in the use of the polygraph—the lie detector. During the war, with Naval Intelligence in China, he had done things supposed to be impossible for a non-Asiatic: flawless forgeries of Chinese documents, passes, identification

papers and the like. He entered the service a chief yeoman and came out a lieutenant. He went back to the Navy during the Korean war to do a police job involving dope peddling and homosexuality. He helped to "put away" 700-odd men. He had a personal commendation for that, and he was proud enough to frame it. He hung it on the inside of a closet door in his bedroom.

Eddie was full of contradictions, but they were all explicable in the realities of a policeman's business. There was about him an aura of gentleness and serenity that was almost tangible, and I have seen a shy five-year-old girl, meeting him for the first time, walk up to him and climb trustingly into his lap. Still, he could be tough.

One time I called Eddie at a precinct in upper Manhattan. He sneezed three or four times, and I asked if he had a cold.

"No," he said. "The plaster keeps drifting down from the ceiling. Gets in my nose."

"Are they finally tearing that dump down for firewood?" I asked.

Eddie laughed. "No," he said. "A couple of the boys have a guy upstairs and they keep asking him the same question."

"To understand a thing like that," Eddie would say, "I guess you have to see a cop take some hood into the back room to shake him down, and then see the cop five minutes later needing thirty-two



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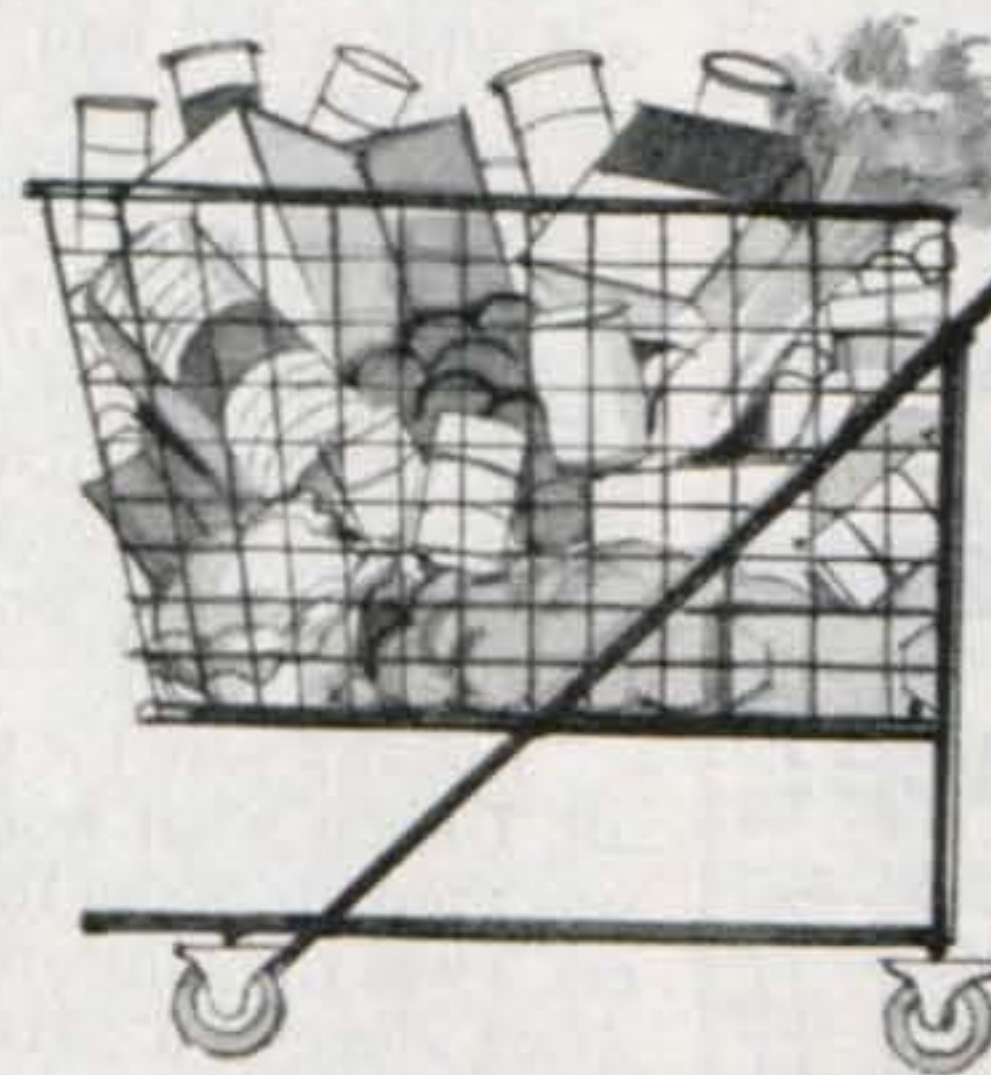
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