

The Future of the Railroads

*An Interview With Sir Henry W. Thornton,
President and Chairman of the Board,
Canadian National Railways*

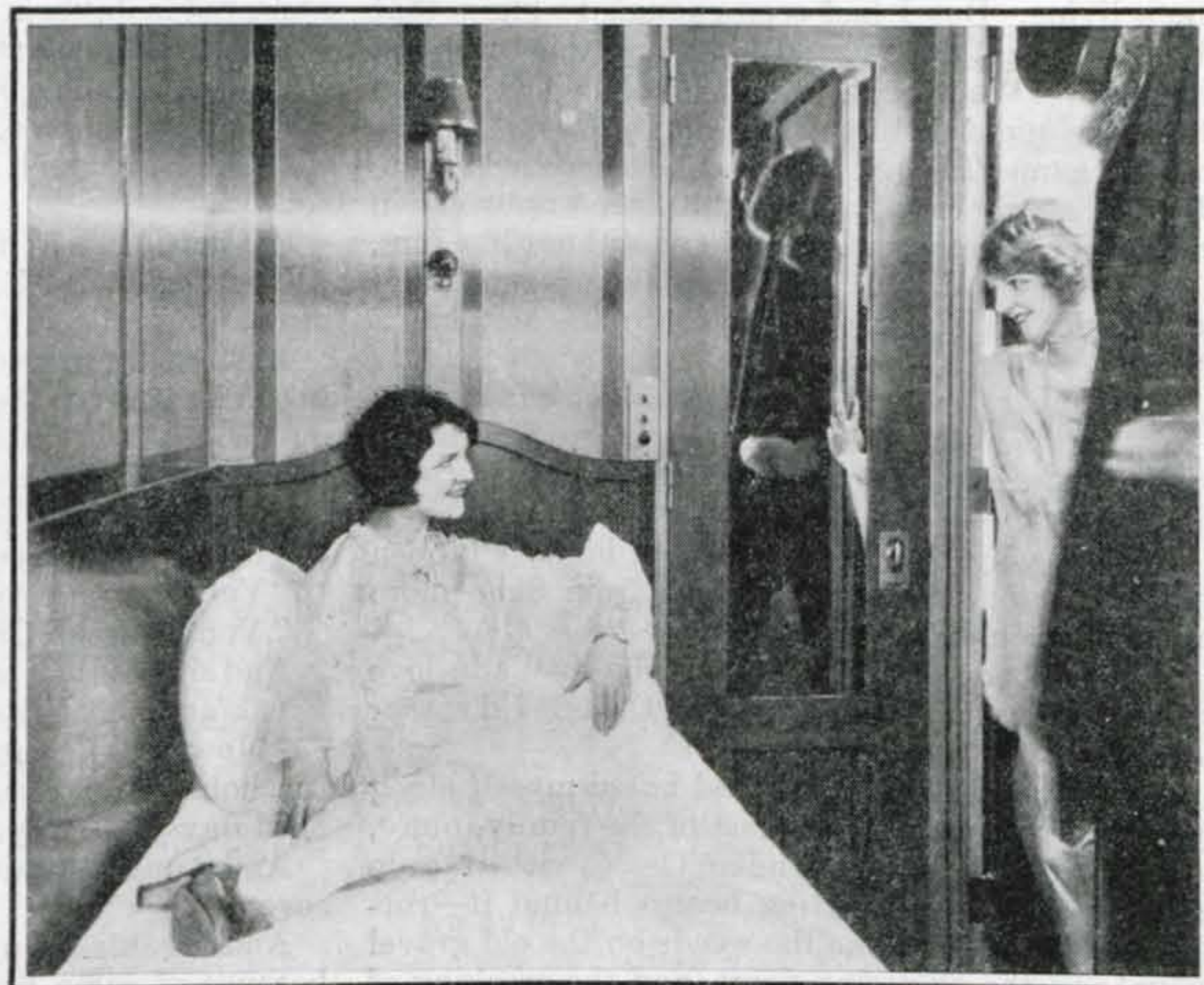
By Courtney Ryley Cooper

EVERYBODY, these days, is hanging crape on the railroads. This, after all, may be a hopeful sign that America's transportation arteries will not be allowed to lapse into complete sclerosis. When a patient as corporeal as this is in danger, somebody would better do something about it. That includes the patient itself, its friends—and its enemies.

All this may be ambiguous; I shall amplify it. The United States, for instance, is not worrying much about its grocery stores, or its fruit stands or corner delicatessens, even though these deal in fundamentals of life. Everyone knows that if the corner store fails, another will grow in its place. But what would happen to America if the railroads should fail?

Trucks could not fill the gap, nor airplanes, nor canals. It is in the swift, comprehensive and thoroughly coördinated movement of great masses of commodities that the life of a nation lies, and it is the job of a railroad to provide these facilities. The average person looks at a railway solely from a passenger standpoint until an emergency arises; then thought goes further, to the tremendous energy necessary to the movement of crops, the heavy trains pouring across the country from one coast to the other with refrigerated fruit, the output of

*The Chambrette, or
Private Bedroom, is
a Long Step Forward
in Overnight Trans-
portation*



factories which must be expedited from maker to consumer in order to become money. On one Western railroad in the United States, under ordinary conditions, there is a freight train every fifteen minutes, engaged in the haulage of heavy traffic from coast to coast. Remember that this is only one tiny part of the daily job of many railroads, and try to consider how many wagons, automobiles, trucks, airplanes and other conveyances would be necessary to form a substitute.

If I give the impression that this is a plaint for the railroads, viewed solely from the angle of a railroad man, I hasten to correct that viewpoint. The railroads are in trouble; no one denies that. A part of the difficulty lies in the depression. Another cause is the widespread, illy regulated and often irresponsible mushrooming of truck and highway competition. A third factor has been the aggravated apathy of the public, unalike to the vital knowledge that a railroad's troubles are a nation's troubles. All these are tremendous obstacles to recuperation. However, I would not be honest if I did not add that an equally devitalizing influence is the railroads themselves. A good doctor usually asks a patient what mistakes in living he has made to bring about an illness. The same sort of diagnosis must be entered into if one is frankly to discuss the health of rail transportation.

The Circle of Circulation

IN THIS discussion, I earnestly hope that my views will not be considered unmannerly or presumptuous. In extenuation, may I say that while it is true that I speak from across a boundary, it is a friendly one and, after all, largely geographic? Besides, what views I may express are not transboundary viewpoints but come from what experience and observation I may have gained from having spent most of my working life as a railroader in widely separated parts of the world, including a long and appreciated period of service in the United States.

To give a better picture of the importance of the patient, I must repeat some figures I gathered for a recent speech. The magnitude and efficiency of United States railroads naturally make it the proper place in which to conduct an inquiry, since it is greatest in these integrals. But if misery loves company, may there be solace in the fact that railroad problems are world-wide, with much of the same cause and effect applicable in all countries.

More than \$26,000,000,000 is a huge figure—that is the total invested in United States railways. The gross revenues in 1929 were about \$6,300,000,000. The number of actual employes and officers was nearly 1,700,000 individuals, receiving a total remuneration of \$2,940,000,000 annually. Each one of these employes contributed to the well-being of a number of other individuals—members of the family first and, after that, tradesmen, in an interlocking chain which ran back to the factories and producers who, in the main, had furnished the railroad revenue, thus completing the circle.

The farmer, for instance, who pays a railroad money for transporting his beef, should remember that a railroad employe or a member of his family is refunding a part of those freight charges by eating that beef. The railroad, as it exists today, enters directly or indirectly into the life of almost every person in the nation.

Will Railroad Relief Come?

A FULLER realization of that, plus other things necessary to rehabilitation, will do much to effect a cure. There is at present an urgent need for constructive legislation. Will it come? That depends largely upon the persons directly and indirectly affected by the railroads, plus an attitude on the part of the beneficiaries that will show them continuously deserving of it.

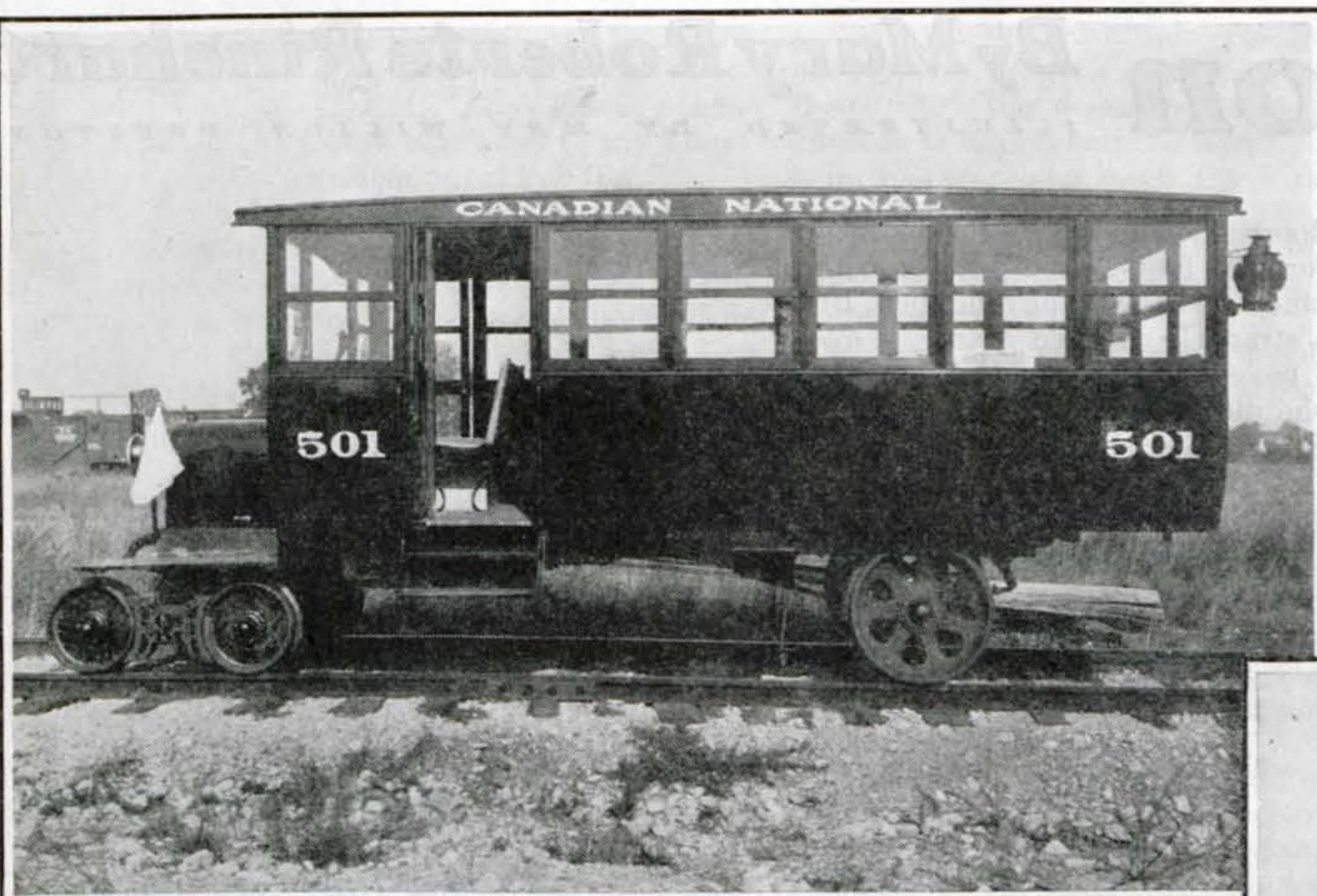
It is a very nice and pretty thought to believe that legislators sit up nights picking inspirations out of thin air for the benefit of the populace. The truth is that a good congressman or senator is a good interpreter; he answers the needs of his people as expressed by themselves. When it becomes apparent—and it should be apparent—that it will mean money in the pocket of the average citizen to straighten out this tangle, then and no sooner will there be the right and proper legislation. Public apathy often results from a lack of public understanding. Let me see if I can vignette the situation.

For one thing, trucks and busses are running willy-nilly over our highways in what they earnestly believe is honest competition with the railways. The truth is, in a number of cases, that they are doing nothing more than making private monetary contributions to the distress of national transportation. Railroads have been spending money—or at least, they were good fellows while they had it—in desperate efforts at what they thought was competition with those trucks, when it was only competition among



PHOTOS, COURTESY CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

*A Station Crowd Gathered to Welcome the First Train on the
Central Vermont After the Floods of 1927*



At Left—A Construction Outfit Mounts Any Old Kind of Automobile Body on Flanged Wheels—and Achieves Surprising Results

Below—Sir Henry W. Thornton on an Inspection Trip



derive revenue from these cities. Immediately they place an order for bigger motive power, better lounging cars, more speed and service. Thus, a three-cornered fight starts for something which the bus isn't even selling. One doesn't get on a bus for lounging room, or extreme comfort, or high speed; what the bus is really selling is mobility. If you miss one bus you can get another. If you miss a train, you may have to wait until tomorrow.

The same is true of freight traffic. Bigger and better power is all right in its way. So are the special efforts that are being put forth on a number of lines to speed up traffic; there are freight trains now which run on schedules equally as fast as many passenger trains. But that is only part of the remedy. The truck sells shipper-to-consignee delivery without intermediate handling, and until the railroad can do that also, it will be at a disadvantage.

It is not impossible to beat that. A helpful symptom right now in the railroad sick room is the degree of the patient's temperature—never in the history of railways has there been more of a fever for something new. Inventors have turned back to the railroad as a lucrative field for the first time since automatic coupling meant riches. Something will come out of it that will eliminate the costs and delays of handling less-than-carload freight in depots and freight sheds. Nobody wishes for that day more devoutly than a railroad man. The freight shed, with its truckers and handlers, is inevitably a first-aid station for the claim department. It is possible that the railways, once free of tradition, will soon be asking the automobile manufacturers to revise their ideas, and work on plans for a machine that can run both on the street and the rail. So far it is only an idea, but at least it is that.

Putting Busses on Rails

EQUALLY important is the fact that there is constantly stronger interest in the use of the passenger rail bus, running with the frequency of the highway bus, but wider, higher, safer and swifter. A bus must meet highway and street traffic on an equal basis. A rail bus would have no such delays or inconveniences. At this moment, France is considering the establishment of such a bus on all its branch railroad lines. American and Canadian railroads have not progressed beyond an occasional experiment. But we have had a practical demonstration of the possibilities.

For instance, when a railroad construction job is under way, one of the first things to be done is to mount the motor and body of any old kind of automobile on flanged wheels and put it on the rails as a sort of jack of all trades.

(Continued on Page 85)

themselves. Railroads haven't been fighting rubber-tired competitors; they have been fighting one another. Now I find that even these two statements need amplification.

John Jones saves \$1000. He looks about him for a business opportunity. There's a chance in the trucking field; Bill Smith has just quit. So John Jones buys his truck and joins a volunteer army of thousands in the great battle to put the railroads out of business.

When the Taxpayer Pays the Freight

ONE way to get traffic is to cut prices. Since there is no interstate regulation of highway tariffs and comparatively few intrastate ones, John Jones makes his rates according to the necessities that arise. They are usually spur-of-the-moment affairs, computed without regard for depreciation, accident, overhead, personal service, taxes, insurance, interest charges and the score of other essentials which must be considered for success. John Jones is a volunteer and he sees with a volunteer's eyes. He is making twelve dollars a day on an investment of \$1000 plus his time and efforts. After a while, in some strange way that he cannot fathom, he goes broke, just as Bill Smith went broke before him. Whereupon more volunteers arise to take his place, and the waste continues.

We'll go farther and grant that this is only a part of highway transportation. Bigger companies do transport more quickly in some instances than railroads, and more cheaply. But it is being done by a system of invisible contribution in which everyone in a community pays for the fact that the corner grocer is getting his goods hauled for less. Motor-transportation taxes today are by no means commensurate with its costs to the public. Most highway costs and repairs can be traced to trucks and busses which do not even begin to pay taxes or license fees to balance the charges. But somebody foots the bill—the taxpayer.

Perhaps this sounds like a tirade against the automobile. Not at all; the railroad man who would fight the motor car is deaf,

dumb and blind. In the first place, too much traffic comes to railroads from Detroit, South Bend and other places which manufacture automobiles; they're shipped mainly by railroad. Secondly, and more important, I believe that the ideal transportation of the future will be a motor-plus-rail affair in which each will play its vital part. The truck and bus have smashed tradition; railroads must do the same.

Now for the railroad picture: We'll say that bus service has interfered with traffic between two cities. What happens? A railroad spends thousands of dollars, even millions, to put a new train between those cities, with a new kind of furniture in the lounging cars, new speed, new equipment. There are two other railroads which



This "Train" is Powered by Nothing More Than an Automobile Engine

PHOTOS, COURTESY CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

(Continued from Page 81)

"She's all right," Frank said hopefully.

"She's all right, but what about me?" He turned on Frank. "She looks at me like I was a cannibal. In two weeks I haven't had a mouthful that didn't choke me. It's a miracle I haven't got something worse than nervous indigestion, with her looking at my food like that."

"You could eat in the bedroom," Eloise said coldly.

Ed probably never heard her. He picked up his dish and thrust it at Ruth. "Here!" he snarled. "Go ahead and eat it! Stuff it right down! Swallow it whole! Go ahead!"

"Please, Ed," Ruth begged him. "I'm sorry."

He snapped the dish back on the table and got up. "I come home feeling fine," he explained loudly, pacing up and down. "I'm all set for a nice dinner and a good time. I'm going to forget I haven't eaten a bite of food in comfort in two weeks. What happens? Even once she can't just sit and eat that—that!"—he waved helplessly at Ruth's plate—"that mess of hers there, and leave my chop alone." He shook a finger at Eloise. "That's exactly what I've been trying to tell you—women can't stand a thing—not a thing! Eat, eat, eat, all the time—plenty of nourishment for a giant, but no, that isn't enough! She's got to make me feel bad because I'm eating a pork chop!"

"You could eat on the roof," Eloise said.

"You could take it on the floor under the table," Frank suggested. "Then she couldn't see you."

Ruth began to cry softly.

"Now, look!" Ed shouted.

"Oh, have a heart, Ed," Eloise said. "It's no fun for her, you know, having to live on that stuff, to say nothing of you yapping around like an idiot."

"Oh, I see! I'm an idiot now!"

"Come, come, Eloise," Frank objected calmly. "He's not an idiot exactly."

"Well, he acts like one."

Ed studied her a minute. Then: "Very well," he said with dignity. "I won't embarrass you with an idiot's presence," and he walked out.

Frank said he didn't see him again that evening. He and Eloise stuck around and comforted Ruth the best they could, and now and then they could hear Ed slamming a door or dropping something with a thud in the bedroom, but he didn't come out again, even to say good night. Frank telephoned and told me about it the next morning.

"I don't know whether he's recovered enough to go out to Forest Hills this afternoon or not," he said. "We can go anyway. And Ruth, if she wants to. Ed's just nuts. When Eloise went on that diet, I didn't have any trouble at all. I just went up to Montreal for two weeks."

It was a sizzler, that day. One of the hottest I've ever seen. I felt sorry for those tennis players. I called Ruth around eleven and she wanted to go, but she couldn't tell about Ed. He'd got up early, before she had, and had gone out without breakfast. Probably got it on the way down town. She said I should meet with Frank and Eloise at her place, and if she heard from Ed by then, and he wanted to go, O. K. If not, O. K. anyway. I didn't like that. I wished they'd get together.

"When are you off this diet?" I asked.

"Two more days."

"Why don't you ditch it now? Two days won't matter."

"Not a chance," she replied grimly. "I may not bear it without a whimper, but he'll never be able to say I gave up."

I got my lunch early. We planned to get away around one-thirty or two, using Frank's car, which was open. He and Eloise were already there when I reached Ruth's, but nary a word from Ed. We waited until 2:15 and then gave up. Ruth wrote a note and we went downstairs. We were climbing into the car when Ed arrived.

"We waited —" I began.

"I had a lot to do," he said. "Mind if I run upstairs?"

"We do," Frank said. "We're late getting started now. That bridge is brutal on Saturdays. Hop in. You look all right."

He looked uncertain, but he got in and sat in the back seat between Ruth and Eloise. Frank drove and I sat up with him. We went up Park and turned at Fifty-ninth. He was right—the traffic was terrible—the regular Saturday Long Island crowds as well as the tennis matches. We stalled along and edged up and nearly roasted.

"Did you get breakfast?" Ruth asked Ed.

"I got some coffee," he said, looking straight ahead.

It took us nearly a half hour over Queensboro Bridge, going in second all the way. When we got into Queens Boulevard it wasn't much better. Just as we came to a stop light I heard Ed say something.

"What's that?" I asked.

"I say, I didn't get any lunch," he repeated, looking solemn.

"What of it?" Frank said. "Did the monks?"

Ed didn't answer. Just looked at the back of Frank's neck as if he were wondering whether he really cared for Frank or not. The car shot forward and Frank and I got to talking about Doeg. I listened once or twice, but Ed wasn't saying anything. We stopped again.

"This is terrible," Eloise said.

"I wouldn't mind," Ed said in a funny voice, "if I was feeling myself."

I looked back at him. He did look a little shaky.

"What ails you?" I asked.

"I haven't been well."

Frank said if this kept up we'd probably miss the first set. He was shooting the car in and out of holes and making the other drivers sore, but he didn't care. Then the engine coughed, and Frank began swearing to himself. We'd got off the Boulevard, on a detour, and were going through some little town.

"Y o u would!" Eloise said.

"Gas low?"

I guessed.

He didn't

reply, but

twisted off the

road into a gas

station and

stopped by a

pump. "Make

it snappy, will

you?" he said

to the fellow.

"We're trying

to make Forest

Hills." He

stepped out

and lighted a

cigarette, and

I turned around to say something to Ruth, but the sight of Ed shocked me. He was the dismalest sight I ever saw. His eyes were big and staring, the corners of his mouth were down, and his face was white tinged with green.

"What the deuce —"

He suddenly leaned forward, groped for the back of the front seat and pulled himself up, and fumblingly opened the door. "Think I'll walk around," he mumbled. We all stared at him. Something was wrong. No doubt of it. The fellow stopped pumping.

Frank dropped his cigarette and hurried around the car just in time. After one or two shuffling steps, Ed staggered, put a hand to his head, and started to curl up. Frank caught him under the arms, and he was like a sack of meal—just dead weight. He'd fainted.

Ruth scrambled over the door, her eyes frightened. "Oh, Ed darling, what is it?"

"Take it easy!" Frank said, and to the pump fellow: "Open that door quick!" With Ruth on the other side, he half dragged Ed into the little house that was both an office and a roadside lunch wagon.

I ran across the street where there was a doctor's sign on the house, and was lucky enough to find him at home, getting ready for a nap. I snapped him out of it and he was tagging me across the street without his coat or hat. They had Ed in a chair, his clothes opened around his throat.

We all stood around nervously while the medico went into his routine—pulse, watch, forehead, grunts. Then he took the glass of whisky the pump man had produced and, lifting Ed's head, poured some of it in his mouth. Ed choked, strangled, pushed it away, and sat up, looking around dully. He rubbed his eyes weakly, and then he began to sniff. He sniffed two or three times and looked around slowly.

"Is—is that soup?" he asked thickly.

Frank's eyes opened wide and looked slowly at Eloise.

"Want some soup?" the pump man asked.

"Get a cup of it," the doctor said, and stood up. "Nothing wrong," he said. "When'd he eat last?"

"He missed his lunch," Frank replied blandly. "That was probably it, wasn't it?"

"Oh, part of it," the doctor said, taking one of Frank's cigarettes. "Pretty hot sun, too, you know. Seems a bit run down anyway. He'll be O. K. presently. Nothing serious."

We watched Ed eat the soup. If you can wolf soup, that's what he was doing. He paid no attention to us. Just went at that soup.

Ruth stood up and drew a deep breath.

"I'll take

some of that

soup too," she

said firmly.

"Let's all

have some

soup," Frank

suggested.

"How about

you, doctor?"

"Thanks,"

replied the

doctor, "I be-

lieve I will."

"Five soups

coming up,"

the pump man

said.

"Make it six," Ed said. "I want another."

It was a rough kind of vegetable soup, but it was pretty good—well seasoned.

The doctor, sitting on a window sill, got to watching Ruth at hers. She gobbled it down in about a minute, and ordered another. He looked at her curiously.

"I beg your pardon," he ventured then, "but are you starving too?"

"For eighteen days," she said briefly.

"Diet," Frank explained. "Four pounds overweight."

The doctor looked at her keenly, in a professional way. "Your doctor prescribe it?" he asked.

"She got it out of the Daily Tabloid," Frank said.

"Well, if I were you I wouldn't do such a thing again," he said to Ruth. "It's dangerous. In the first place, that diet is rubbish. In the second, you ought always see your own doctor about a thing like that." He stood up and gave his cup back to the pump man. "You don't want to get into a condition like that," he said, indicating Ed, "do you?"

Ed's spoon stopped halfway to his mouth. He looked as if he were going to say something, but he didn't. He didn't even look up. He kept at the soup.

"Pretty dangerous thing for a man to miss his lunch, isn't it, doctor?" Frank asked suavely, but loud enough, as he went outside to pay him five bucks. "A lot of people say that hunger is nine-tenths imagination —"

The door slammed shut.

Ed sat in the front seat with Frank the rest of the way. I sat in the back with the girls, but not between them. They seemed to have a lot of talking and giggling to do. Frank was trying to make up time, and Ed said nothing. Just sat up very erect and stared straight ahead.

"There's one thing I'd like to say," he said stiffly as we went into the stadium. "It was a complication of things, not just missing lunch. I haven't been well, for one thing. And the doctor himself said it was a pretty hot sun. Besides, all I had for breakfast was one cup of coffee, and you saw what kind of dinner I had last night. To say that it was just because I missed lunch is foolish—utterly foolish."

"Sure!" we all said, and made room for one another to pat him on the back understandingly. "It was the sun."

"But you did miss lunch too," Frank added fairly.

We had missed part of the first set, but it didn't matter. We got plenty of good tennis. But I doubt that Ed saw it. He sat staring at the court without any expression on his face, never said a word the whole afternoon. But beyond me, the two girls behaved disgracefully. They'd get to giggling and laughing and snatching glances at the side of Ed's face, and then his face would get crimson. The only time he dared glance about, Frank caught his eye, gave him a wide, happy smile, and saluted with his cigar like a comedian. Ed never smiled. Just looked at him coldly. The girls snickered.

It was after 6:30 when we got back to town. Frank drew the car up at the curb in front of Ruth and Ed's apartment and shut off the engine. We all just sat there, a little uncertain. Frank lit a cigarette.

"Now, you take monks —" he began, as though continuing an argument.

"Hold it a minute, will you?" I interrupted. "What I'd like," I said, "I'd

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And cannot pay, be bright and
sunny

And let him borrow more and more
To pay you what he owed before.
Oh, never let base fear betray you!
Unless you lend, how can he pay
you?

But if you always lend and lend
Prosperity will never end.
Because the more you lend a debtor
And help to make his credit better,
The better he can borrow, which
Is wherefore we are all so rich.

—Arthur Guiterman.

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thousand items, for no other reason than that precedent has ruled in some cases and individualism in others. Standardization would not only wipe out confusion, it would slash costs; the manufacturer could produce more cheaply and the railroad wouldn't pay as much, especially if cooperative buying were entered into.

As for terminal facilities, consider the city and harbor of New York. Several railways serve that district, each with separate and expensive terminal facilities, lighterage and other floating services. The saving of co-operation is self-evident.

The Romance of Railroading

Beyond this, there are today often as many as four and five trains of different roads running between terminal points which in their total do not carry sufficient passengers to make up one comfortably filled movement. This is waste. If one train can carry efficiently and expeditiously a certain number of persons, why should the job be given to five trains? With such a revolutionary change as this, the cry would immediately arise that competition was being stifled. Of course it would require careful regulation, but regulation and justice can be synonymous. I do not agree with those who feel resentment against the Interstate Commerce Commission. The railroads, just as every other form of industry, went gayly into an unregulated field and ultimately indulged in practices believed to be against public interest. The result was the commission. Why not include that commission in a general scheme of earnest and amiable coöperation? After all, the best friend anyone can have is a well-meaning, benevolent policeman.

Perhaps I should return to my first statement that everybody is mourning over the railroads. If there had always been that interest, the transportation business would not be in its present fix. There would be no asinine recapture clause, for instance, to prevent railroads from storing up reserves for rainy days, and to promote extravagance and, in some cases, certain forms of dishonesty.

You cannot ask a man or a business to be content with a pittance so that some less efficient man or business can have the fruits of another's brains and labor. Regulation is all right; humanity really cannot be trusted to regulate itself—it's too human. But when you take a birth-right from a man or a business, that's different. I fully believe that the recapture clause and other stifling legislation was put into effect, not as a carefully conceived measure but as a concrete example of the public's dislike and distrust of the railroads. And I am sorry to say that, at the time, the dislike was, to a degree, justified.

Why is it that railroads have been so unpopular? Certainly they start in the lives of their prospective patrons with an advantage enjoyed by no other business in the world. We don't find small boys dreaming of becoming grocerymen or tailors, but we do see hundreds who would like to grow up to be engineers. The whole set-up of the railroad business spells romance to youth—the rush and roar of trains speeding into the sunset, the lure of far places, the mystery of traveling giants, the color and artistry as an engine plunges through the night, fire box open and the red glare flooding upward against the billow of low-lying smoke. Yet, in the transition from youth to manhood,

something happens. And the boy who wanted to be an engineer lives to become a man and cuss the railroads.

Certainly it cannot be the boy's fault. I wonder if it comes about through the rubbing off of illusions, the gradual discovery that this vibrant thing of rushing life and mystery has turned out to be a technically perfect mass of mechanism—without a soul. I hope and believe that the recapture clause and other legislation of its type will be repealed. I believe that the public sense of fairness, now that first impulses have been served, desires to see repeal. If so, the railroads should justify that action, and guard against further excesses of the sort by doing everything possible to prove that they can be as human as the people who ride upon them.

Technically the railway industry has kept pace with the times. But now we have reached the point where we must go beyond that. We must break into a totally new and ingenious field. We've got to make friends. I maintain that a railroad passing through a community and serving that community should be the most popular thing in that community, instead of the most unpopular, as is frequently the case. The railroads must sell themselves, in a broader sense, to the public, and out of that should grow a benevolent relationship in which the community served by the railway should regard the road as its best friend, and the railway regard the community as a valued client. The railway of the future will be polite; it must be polite. It will regard its every patron in the same light as a hotel regards its guests. Many railroad ills have been due, plainly speaking, to bad manners.

When the Bond to Home is Broken

It is not enough for a railway to provide transportation. That is what it is supposed to do. The best of railroading lies beyond that. Of all the things in the world, nothing impinges so universally on human activities as the railway. People travel on it; it enters into everyday existence in a peculiarly personal way; in life and in death, the railroad is every man's bond to home; even the last journey, homeward bound to rest beside those beloved who have gone before, is usually on a railroad. It offers a field to the investor; it buys from the manufacturer every conceivable thing; it employs all kinds of brains and talents; it contributes to recreational pursuits; more than anything else, it touches the universal activities of the people in private and public life. Why should not the relationship be amiable? To a great degree it has not been, but it can be made so.

Queerly enough, I have the belief that the public is ready to accede, provided certainty is here that a new status of relationship has sprung up, and once that public realizes the railroad's true importance. I viewed a dramatic instance of such an occurrence.

Until 1927, the Central Vermont Railway was just like any other line in the minds of the people in its territory. It had been there for years; nobody paid much attention to it; it was like the trees, the fields and the weather. But in November, 1927, there came a terrific flood. The railway was torn to pieces by a rush of water for more than 250 miles. Sixty lives were lost. The ninety-five miles between Essex and White River Junction in Vermont were practically wiped out and a whole district was without transportation.

In the three months which followed before rush construction could restore the line, a queer, psychological change came over that district. People came to realize just what that road had meant in their lives. The hampering of relief work by its destruction had been brought home to them, plus a certain sense of loneliness. No longer they heard the two long blasts and two choppy ones of a familiar engine approaching a grade crossing. There was only silence and unfrequented right-of-way; the thought permeated that a friend had been taken away. Then at last service was restored.

Putting Salesmanship to Work

I was on that first train, and it was a thrilling ride. There was something gripping about the way people ran from their farmhouses at the sight of the train, children crying out, men shouting, women waving their aprons or beating on tin pans; more than one was weeping as the engine screamed its greetings. School children massed at the stations, singing hymns. Flags waved. Bands played. A stricken, torn friend had pulled itself back to life; the railroad was operating once more; there could be communication again, companionship, protection. That is the position every railroad should have, not merely in the minds of the people but in their hearts.

It can be had. I never hear of a praiseworthy deed by an employe of the Canadian National Railways that I do not lay other things aside to write a personal letter of commendation as president of the company. My gratitude is real, for the simple reason that I know that all the rules, all the ideas, all the work in the world is useless unless everybody on the road is selling that road to the public.

Why shouldn't a railroad be sold? Why shouldn't there be salesmanship, to the same degree of excellence that pertains in the best department stores? The good store today stands behind its product; we should do the same. The sale of a ticket should not end, but begin, a railroad's effort to please. A grocery store can sell all the products in the world, but it fails if those products are badly delivered or if they do not look well on the table. The railroad's problem is exactly the same. Heretofore, there has been too much precedent.

A passenger with proper commercial-credit rating should have an equal credit rating with a railroad. There is no reason why the buying of a railroad ticket in such instances should mean more effort than to reach for the telephone, receive the ticket fifteen minutes later from a courteous, uniformed railway messenger, and pay by bill and check according to the usual uses of commerce. There is no reason why travel should not be a matter of the utmost courtesy, with every employe doing his best to assure a passenger that this business is appreciated. For many years the railroads did the public a favor by letting them ride trains. Happily, of late there has been a breaking away from that viewpoint. The railroads need the business, and the more they let the public know that they appreciate it, the more the public will respond. That applies not only to our friends but our enemies. Right now is the best time in the world to persuade critics and those opposed to railroads that there can be a heart in machinery and a soul in business. I try never to let a man go out of my

(Continued on Page 88)

Man-



No woman would stand for it!

If women had to shave, they'd have demanded a better way years ago—a quicker, kinder way. Women wouldn't stand for "rub-ins"; they value their skin too much!

And you, sir? Will you break away from prejudice, from out-of-date habits? Will you accept the new Frostilla Brushless Shave?

A modern cream, a new formula—it upsets time-worn shaving notions. Swifter, smoother than anything you ever knew before. Better for your skin. And simpler! No brush; no soap-lather; no rub in. Instead, just wet your face; then a swift spread-on—a speedy shave-off—and you're done! Once over, leaves your face like velvet—so soft, soothed, refreshed. Ingredients never used before make afterlotions and talc needless!

Don't let prejudice or habit stop you. This perfect cream makes shaving a joy. You might as well meet this new way now—and rejoice, as thousands are doing!

TRY IT... "YOU CAN'T LOSE"

- 1 Use the coupon for FREE tube—a generous trial.
- 2 If you like it (and you will!) you'll never want your brush again. Send it to us and we'll send you, free, a large-sized tube in exchange.
- 3 Buy a tube of Frostilla Brushless Shave. Your money back if you don't get the best shaves of your life! 35c, 50c; all druggists. Or if inconvenient, by mail from the Frostilla Co.



FROSTILLA BRUSHLESS SHAVE

This offer expires Jan. 1933

The Frostilla Co., Elmira, N.Y. (Dept. P 1-23)
(In Canada, address: 296 Richmond St., W., Toronto)
I'm modern minded. Send me, free, a week or more of better shaves in your trial-size tube.

Name _____

Address _____

City and State _____

Sales Reps.: Harold F. Ritchie & Co., Inc., N. Y. C. & Toronto

(Continued from Page 86)

office mad. Long experience has taught me that friends usually stay friends. But an enemy often will not remain that way if there are fair and just overtures.

Incidentally, one of the possibilities of further amiability lies within the province of the railroads themselves. I believe that, conservatively estimated, there are more than 6,000,000 persons directly dependent upon the railroads—the officers, employes and their immediate families. That means one-twentieth of the entire population of the nation, and forms a tremendous factor in the totals of present-day unemployment.

There are few trains today that do not have two engineers in the cab instead of one. The fireman is laid off, owing to the rules of Brotherhood seniority which demand that when business slackens for the running trades, the fire boy must step out to allow a demoted engineer to take his place.

The same law pertains also to conductors and brakemen; most trains now run with every employe aboard eligible to take command. My greatest sadness in this depression is that men I have come to know as friends and partners in this vastly intricate job of running a railroad are out of a job.

There is no reason why the workmen of a road cannot be partners in the business of making that road a success, except the fact that unions and Brotherhoods began in a time of strife and dissension, and that some of these factors have been allowed to live on through the years. That viewpoint is fair from neither side. The unions are here to stay, and justifiably so. They can

be an aid or a detriment, according to the viewpoint. Here are nearly 1,700,000 men, each of whom should be vitally concerned about this road. Certainly, from 1,700,000 minds, heretofore largely inarticulate, should come some good, once fields were made fallow and a common bond and basis in interest established. It is a tragedy when a railroad man loses his job. Once he is out of service he rarely can turn anywhere else; as a rule, he has devoted his life to the rush and clatter of the yards, the swirl of steam from swift-working piston cocks and the bark of the stack as the trains head out over the terminal ladders of frogs and clicking switch points to the freedom of the main line. He loves it; he wants nothing else; he risks his life for it. Why should he not be able to help with the necessary ideas and planning to keep it alive?

I wonder if he has been consulted enough, made to feel that he has a job because he is a highly necessary part of a living, romantic thing, and not merely a cog in a big piece of machinery.

On the other hand, I wonder if the railroader looks on the private car of a superintendent as a traveling office where an overworked man needs room to fulfill his manifold duties, or merely as the gilded chariot of a brass hat out on the division for the avowed purpose of an indiscriminate distribution of demerit marks. Somewhere there must be a common ground of mutual thought, effort and enthusiasm—the successful railroad of the future will find it.

What will that future be? Just what the public wants it to be, reflected by the attitude therein engendered by the railroads. As a burnt offering, plus the things I have mentioned, there can be

the promise of smoother and swifter transportation, more use of roller bearings, even 100-mile-an-hour speed, as grade crossings are eliminated.

Plus this, I am frank to say, as regards passenger service: That service cannot be called wholly civilized until the passenger has, plus politeness and eagerness to serve, the additional recompenses of absolute privacy, proper temperatures and cleanliness.

I hope that in the passenger car of the future there will be no longer that unfulfilled life's ambition to be able to open a window. If dreams work out, there will be no need for it; the air will be cleaned and fresh, the car will be properly warm in winter without being stuffy, and cool in summer, with road-bed dirt and engine dust eliminated. Beyond this, may I state confidentially that the present-day Pullman berth is not really a diabolical joke on the public? It has been the best we could do; the man who invents the perfect sleeping car will need a police guard to hold off the railroad presidents desirous of weeping for joy on his shoulder. The chambrette, or private sleeping room, is a long step forward. But there must and will be further improvements. Overnight service will not be complete until every passenger possesses at a reasonable cost the privacy and comfort of some type of compartment.

Perhaps it all sums up to the fact that there are three forms of transportation—land, water and air. Each has its respective sphere and respective use. Our job is twofold: To keep each one in its proper element and confined to its proper uses, and then to develop the proper degree of human, mechanical and friendly efficiency, each component complementary and necessary, one to the other.

PANDORA'S CHATTERBOX

(Continued from Page 11)

You not only saw him move; you heard him talk; you could even hear the squeak of his shoes. Maybe it was the machinery squeaking, but it sounded like shoes, anyway. It was all just too marvelous.

The producers, beginning to hear these reports, smiled benignly at the old workers in the dumb vineyard, and remarked that, although they guessed sound had come to stay, it would always have a more or less limited application, and would never, never, never supplant the silent picture. "Sound pictures"—I heard a producer make this remark only three years ago—"are the cake of the industry. Silents will always be the bread and butter."

It is curious, also, that the industry at this time was more concerned with color than with sound. Many of the biggest budgets called for all color, or a series of color sequences. The commercial laboratories buzzed with color experiments, and the leading color plant doubled, tripled in size. Not until the summer of 1928 did the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences—that Delphic body which deliberates classically in the groves of Hollywood—decide that, in the issue between sound and color, sound should come first. With amazing unanimity, the last skeptics everywhere were convinced, and the trek to the new gold fields was on in a truly golden fury.

As we have said, sound had been very largely in the hands of the trick-shot men, the official experimentalists, the studio scientists. In off-side experimental buildings they had rigged

up stuffy little ice-box stages, with steel-and-cement floors, padded walls and roofs, and refrigerator doors. Their shots were sacred ceremonies, with even the distant carpenters kept from sawing, and the irritated bosses themselves barred out by hard-boiled guards until the "take" was over. Usually the take had to be retaken ten or a dozen times, for the records had crickets and birds in them, and mixing—that real present-day science of perfectly blended *tutti*—had scarcely been heard of. Never heard of, in fact, until its creation from the very difficulties and necessities of these pioneers.

Now, down came the airy, flimsy, comfortable old silent stages by the score. Up went vast mausoleums with moss-stuffed walls and concrete-and-steel monitor rooms and ramp approaches and special noiseless scene-shifting machinery. In the East they remodeled many of the studio buildings—due to climate and restricted space they were of much more durable construction than the Western stages, usually built in separate units—and, in their monitor rooms and mechanical and electrical compartments, soon learned the tragic lesson of haste. For much of this remodeling refused to check up with the rapid advance of sound recording, and its reinforced masonry had to be taken out by acetylene blasts through weeks of labor. Now all types of monitor rooms seem bound for the discard, being replaced by portable booths on the set floors.

In Hollywood, any one of the new noise castles cost as much to build as

the earlier edifices of a whole lot. Fireproof, of course, but as the first one built had soundproof walls, so had they all. And moss, as they were to discover, was just a little mite inflammable. In Paramount's first supersound stage four complete companies could work at one time. It cost half a million dollars, and caught fire—probably from a roof-welder's gasoline torch reaching the moss insulation—the very afternoon it was completed. Its high red flames and pillars of jet-black smoke defied nineteen engine companies through the night, and only a singular shift of the constant California breeze to a quarter from which it seldom, if ever, blew, saved the rest of the vast studio, and perhaps all that section of Hollywood, from destruction.

Nevertheless, rebuilding had to commence at once if Paramount was not to be left behind in the race for sound supremacy. Before noon next day they were blasting out the half-melted foundations. They had learned that their prize sound stage was obsolete even before it was finished, and they remedied those faults in the new, even more expensive, and this time really fireproof structure. So well did they build that today it is up-to-date and adequate for all the new scientific demands. But working three shifts, twenty-four hours a day, seven days in the week, it took three months to rear those walls again. Meantime other people had sound stages which, just by good luck, hadn't caught fire, and in them they were making sound pictures as fast as possible. There was nothing for it but to use