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Unnecessary Railway Correspondence.

One of our subscribers, a thoroughly practical man, writes us as follows over the signature "Anti-Red Tape." What he has to say is without doubt worthy of most careful consideration:—

"I am holding a small position on a large railway in Canada. I would like to draw the attention of the higher officials, such as general superintendents, managers, etc., to a growing abuse—unnecessary correspondence. Take the following example: In conversation with a chief despatcher the other day, he told me that regarding the train service over-time tickets, the routine was as follows: 1st—He made an explanation of the over-time with each trip ticket. 2nd—He received a letter about each individual train that went into detention, & explained that. 3rd—The master mechanic sent in engineer's detention tickets & he explained again. 4th—He received from the general superintendent at the end of each month a statement of the over-time paid conductors & brakemen, & explained that. 5th—He received from the general superintendent a statement of the detention time paid engineers and firemen, & explained that. 6th He made up a statement from his train sheets monthly, showing the over-time. That is, he made six explanations of the same thing, where one should be sufficient. Can any sensible man defend such a system?"

"Another case recently came under my notice: A latch was required on a coal chute. The locomotive foreman wrote the superintendent that a latch was required; the superintendent wrote the divisional engineer asking what it would cost; the divisional engineer sent papers to his building foreman for report; the building foreman returned them, saying 50c.; the divisional engineer forwarded them to the superintendent, who forwarded them to the general superintendent, asking if he would put it on; the general superintendent said to do so; & the correspondence followed the course around again. Meantime it had cost 75c. to pick the coal up which had been wasted.

"All this correspondence has followed the advent of cheap stenography & the typewriter, & is the result of an ambition on the part of the higher officers to keep well posted on details, which can only be done to the exclusion of more important matters, & results in making minor officials wooden-heads, whereas if they were given some scope & held for results, it would make men of them & better results would follow. Another cause is that some of the officials are of the opinion that the more mail they handle the better service they render, whereas, so far as the shareholders & public are concerned, all they ask is results, & some men with their hands in

their pockets, smoking a cigar, & apparently doing nothing, are accomplishing more by thinking than the other fellow will in a lifetime with his nose ground down to the desk all day."

Commercial Travelers' Baggage.

"A Commercial Traveler" writes us: The question of convenience, time & profit, in relation to the commercial travelers & the railways, suggests a few ideas which might be considered by both interests. The railways & their employes are, as a rule, ever ready to

for being carried, & formulate a price that would be known to everyone—say, 100 lbs. of baggage 100 miles for 10c.? This sum may be too low or too high, but no doubt their mathematicians could give a price that would pay the railways. Were this system introduced, it would save the railways the cost of excess tickets & prepaid certificates. It would save the baggagemen no end of trouble just when a train was leaving. It would end the question of a commercial traveler handing any baggage to a companion going light. The idea being still further followed out would be facilitated by books of coupon tickets, which could be issued by the railways for any mileage or weight of baggage, & interchangeable on any line of railway or boat.

So far this may read as if it was all well studied out for the railways' benefit, but an idea to be of enough value for adoption between two people must be of value to both. Were this idea adopted, the commercial travelers could have their baggage all settled for by their firms before leaving for their trips. When leaving a station, the time lost in having to be there long before train time to have excess made out or prepaid certificate attended to, is well known to mostly every man on the road. Under this idea, commercial baggage could be checked as any ordinary traveler's trunks. On arrival at its destination it could be settled for by the commercial traveler. If he travelled 50 miles he would simply give up 50 miles in coupons. Every firm knows to a pound or two what their travelers are carrying, & how long a trip they will have, so the matter could easily be calculated, & it is much satisfaction to know your baggage is all settled for. By this idea the commercial traveler has the very last moment in the town he is leaving for business, just saving enough time to pack & get to the station. Under the present system he must be there from at least a quarter of an hour before train time. Then, a commercial traveler has more time when he arrives, to look after the railway's requirements.

These books of coupons would have the commercial traveler's name & certificate number & firm's name. Each coupon being numbered, belonging to a series, would easily be checked by the railways. Should a commercial traveler send part of his baggage back to his firm before he has completed his trip, it is easy to compute the number of coupons to pay on the balance. Should a commercial traveler not use his entire book, the balance could be used on a later trip, or used as part payment on a new book.

The amount of money saved to the railways by this method would very likely permit a reduction of the rate per mile on commercial travellers' passenger transportation, possibly bringing it to 2c. a mile, & if this were so,



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facilitate this part of their traffic, & it is no small part either. The commercial travelers have rarely appreciated the trouble the railways have in the handling, checking, & all the other etc., of this immense traffic. There are probably 10,000 commercial travelers, carrying, in the year, say, nearly 5,000 tons of baggage, on which the railways collect nothing direct. When this is considered, with the cost of the excess cards, prepaid certificates, & baggagemen, it is easily seen that the balance of baggage that pays its way must also pay for that which is nominally free.

Why not make all commercial baggage pay