

whose duty it was to book all orders from the various branches of the corps in a traffic order book. At a certain time each night he would phone central control at army L.R.H.Q., and communicate to the officer in charge the traffic orders that had been booked for the following day. Central control would then tabulate all these orders, review the car and power situation, previously ascertained from company commanders, and decide which orders could be taken. Accepted orders, each of which was given a number, would be transmitted to the corps L.R. officers and company commanders in district controls. The former would phone all interested parties, and arrange to have fatigue parties ready at appointed times the following day to load or unload the cars, and the latter would study the orders for the following day, and in due course order cars, power, and crews to fulfil them. A sample of one such order may prove of some interest:

"Order 52.—Place 33 empty D class cars at road crossing near Station X, Mar. 10, 1917, at 20 o'clock, to move working party of 20 officers and 1,000 other ranks to end of steel on C13 line. Order power for 20.15 K. Returning movement leave end of steel 3 a.m., Mar. 11, 1917. Repeat."

As each order was completed, central control was informed, and the order would be marked off its books. Orders of every conceivable kind were fulfilled, from supplying an inspection car and tractor for some staff officer, to moving thousands of tons of ammunition forward. The amount of traffic moved during the war by the British light railway system would run into astounding figures, my limited knowledge being that the weekly average for one company was about 10,000 tons and for an army, 40,000 to 50,000 tons.

Operation—Trains were operated on the block to block system, by telephone dispatch. Traffic passing between armies was controlled by the super control, between districts by central controls and locally by district controls, viz.: traffic originating in a district and being delivered within the same district was handled through that particular district control. Traffic originating in one district for delivery in another was handled by central control and so on.

District controls had naturally the most work, and required a competent staff of dispatchers working 8 hour tricks under a chief dispatcher. Dispatchers had the rank of sergeant, so that their orders would be carried out by train crews, etc., from a military as well as a railway standpoint, and the chief dispatcher was in charge of all traffic on the district with the rank of regimental sergeant major.

In addition to controlling the traffic, district controls kept all records, and prepared all the daily, weekly and monthly statistics required by central control. All the various movements were recorded on train boards, by the British operating companies, and on dispatchers' sheets by most of the colonial companies, according to their home practices. The yardmaster would report to district control when trains were ready for the road and their consists would be recorded on locomotive slips. District control would telephone the first station out, get the right of way from the operator and dispatch the train on its way. Stations would phone ahead to each other in the same manner, and the train would be handled block to block to its destination, only stopping for meets, or to take water, district control being advised by stations of the passing time of trains so that the sheet could be kept up to date.

Locomotive slips were kept filled up for each movement of a locomotive from the time it left the running shed until it returned to the shed to be tied up. These slips showed all the information necessary to allow the statistical clerk to keep his records, the running sheet only being used to control the traffic.

Stations were installed wherever required along the line, and consisted of dugouts, shacks dug into the ground, or any old building suitable for the purpose. They were manned by two men, one for day shift and the other for night, equipped with watches, lamps, flags and train register books. At each village or main station, there would be a larger staff, some of these having as many as 20 men, including yard staffs, telephone men, switch locomotive crews, etc. All stations were connected on the block to block telephone wire and main stations, in addition, on the through wire. Stations were called by a system of rings, viz.: intermediate stations between D.C., and the first main station, were called direct from D.C. on the block to block wire, by using

and cars, which had to make as many as two or three trips daily on short lines or during rush periods.

To keep the traffic moving, wrecking gangs were always on hand, housed in boarding cars, and their task was a heavy one, as derailments were frequent in some localities where the track was bad, or where it had been destroyed by shell fire. Travelling inspectors, with the rank of sergeant major, were also employed to pilot trains to their correct destinations. These men were required to know every inch of the track, and the location of every battery. They had to walk the track at night and know that it was passable, and emergency track gangs had to be called out to repair damage created by shells and bombs, as no cars could be left in the forward area during the hours of observation. Their tour of duty was over only when every train destined for their section of the track had been delivered and the empties returned before daylight, and their work was of such a nerve racking character that they were allowed one day off in every three.



Some of the Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers no. 2 Section, Skilled Railway Employees.

This illustration, from a photograph taken at Guy St. Barracks, Montreal, April 2, 1917, while the company was training there, shows the following, from left to right:—Acting Lieut. J. Swaile, who went overseas as Company Sergeant Major; Lieut. W. W. Webster, formerly Foreman, Steel Car Shop, C.P.R., Winnipeg, now Night Foreman, Erecting Shop, there; Capt. Robt. McKillopp, Officer Commanding, formerly Superintendent, Laurentian Division, Quebec District, C.P.R., Montreal; Lieut. J. S. Hall, Adjutant; Sergt. Major Oxley, who left the unit for evacuation to England about May, 1918; Sergt. Major W. R. Spencer, formerly Agent, National Transcontinental Ry., Cochrane, Ont., and son of George Spencer, Chief Operating Officer, Board of Railway Commissioners, Ottawa.

2, 3, 4 or 5 rings as required; main stations were called in a similar manner on the through wire, and intermediate stations beyond the first main station were called on the block to block line by main stations, the normal position of lever in station telephone boxes being "through"; district control in this manner could speak to any station on the district and keep in touch with the traffic.

As the traffic was intense on the single tracks, every care had to be taken to avoid congestion, tieups or accidents. No lights of any kind were allowed at night in the forward areas, and it was no easy task to keep the wheels moving in the pitch dark, sometimes through a gassed, shelled or bombed area. Locomotives were generally doubleheaded, to reduce the number of trains to the minimum and run in convoy with pusher locomotives on the grades. Destination stations were advised of the probable arrival time of trains, so that unloading parties would be on hand to unload the trains immediately on arrival, thus releasing power

Water for the locomotives was secured by pumping into overhead or underground tanks, pumps manufactured by the Merryweather Co. of England, being generally used. The source of supply was wells, streams, rivers, canals and shell holes, and each locomotive was equipped with a suction hose. Where water was scarce, tank cars were filled by pumps at any available supply and set out along the line where required. Steam engines were used in daytime up to the point of enemy observation and to any point on the line at night, tractors being used at all other times and places.

The 13th Light Railway Operating Company's Work.

To resume the record of work performed by the 13th C.L.R.O. Co. Orders were ultimately received to proceed by road from Dunkirk to Cooxide on the Belgian coast, and the unit arrived there on June 21, 1917, locating camp in the sand dunes and immediately commenced unloading equipment from the Belgian railways. At that time the French were