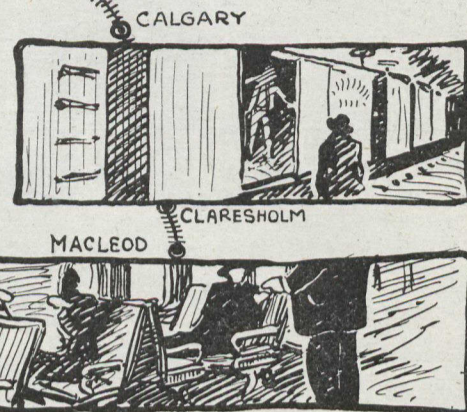
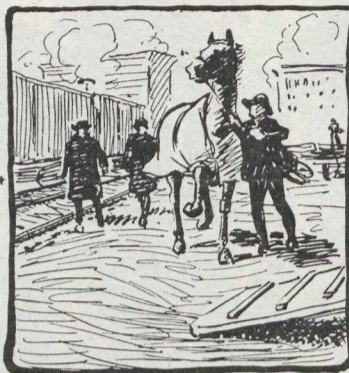


How I Travelled 9000 Miles for 70 cents



By H. S. ABBOTT

Illustrated by Fergus Kyle

I HAVE read many stories of freight-train artists who travelled across a continent for next to nothing. I know something about the polite globe-trotter who girdles the world for less than the price of a square meal at Delmonico's. I have even taken some stock in the travel yarns of Jules Verne, who could transport a fabulous crew through incredible distances at a gait so marvelous that nobody had time to count the cost of the trip.

But none of these stories have ever quite satisfied my understanding of the real art of travelling; which is to go as far as possible, under your own name, using the ordinary conveyances of commercial transit and keeping the price as low as you can consistent with honesty, a fair amount of hard work, some cunning, and no desire to exploit yourself as a legendary hero. And it was not until I had myself accomplished the journey from Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, to Macleod, in the cow hills of Alberta, Canada—which by odometer is 9,000 miles—for the amazing sum of seventy cents. The pictures at the head of this true narrative give a faint outline of this itinerary, which was accomplished in the year 1911. Many men have travelled as great and even greater distances, but not always with such accuracy. For instance, a sailor will sign on for a trip with a vessel at the port of London to Cape Town, South Africa, and return. He may be anxious to get to Cape Town only, but under the conditions of his contract with the shipping company he is obliged to return to the Port of London. He may be dishonourable and "jump" his trip at Cape Town, thus fulfilling his desire, but committing a crime against shipping law. This is not playing the game fair. It is far more difficult to "sign on" for a single trip to foreign waters than for a return voyage, as British ship-owners are responsible for their employees in foreign ports, hence shipping companies are very particular, especially in Australia, as to whom they ship as assistants or as "passage workers" on their vessels.

IN the early part of 1911 I was anxious to reach Macleod, Alberta. I was in Sydney, Australia. The fare, roughly speaking, including meals and stop-over expenses, would have cost, say, about fifty-five pounds, at the least. At that time I did not have five pounds, but I was determined to see how far it would go. I was informed by a friend of mine who was in the employ of the Union Steamship Company, with steamers running out of Sydney to Vancouver, that I might be able to obtain a position as a "passage worker" on one of their boats. The next boat leaving Sydney was the S. S. "Makura," so I went down to the docks to try and see the chief steward. The first morning I was unsuccessful, as he was very busy and there must have been at least fifty other men trying to get similar positions. Next morning I was down at the steamer again and was amongst the first to see him. He was a very nice fellow and told me he thought he could find a place for me in the pantry. He took my name and told me to be on board at six o'clock the following morning. I was on deck punctually and found an empty bunk in the "Glory-Hole," the part of the vessel where the stewards have their quarters; put all my luggage into the bunk, made my way to the First Class Salon pantry and reported myself to the head pantry man, who happened to be a man from the same suburb of London as myself. He explained the outline of my work and showed me around the pantry. The first day there was not very much to do, as the passengers had not quite settled down in their new quarters. We had a full first-class passenger list, as it was the time of year that people were going over to England to see the Coronation of King George V. My work in the pantry consisted mostly of carrying foodstuffs from the galley to the pantry to be served to the table steward; also serving tea, coffee and cocoa to the stewards, who would come to a wicket and shout which they wanted; also carrying ice-cream and other cold-storage articles from the

refrigerator and keeping the various ice-boxes supplied with ice, opening tins of fruit and meat and dressing the fruit dishes with fresh fruit at each meal.

The voyage was all that could be wished for, as far as the weather was concerned. We had only two really bad days, and those after we had left Brisbane for Suva, in the Fiji Islands. At Suva we went ashore for a short while and had a good look around the town. It is not a very large city and did not take us long to see it all. It is very interesting to watch the native boys diving for pieces of money which are thrown in the harbour by visitors, and which the boys invariably manage to bring to the surface with them. Although the harbour is infested with sharks, these plucky youngsters do not seem to pay the slightest attention to them. The Fijians are a very fine race of men, and they look very quaint with their hair worn straight up on end like a soldier's busby. We did not stay very long at Suva, and by night-fall we were on our way to Honolulu, which town we reached in less than a week after leaving Suva.

HONOLULU, unfortunately, was quarantined for cholera. We were not permitted to land. From the harbour the town looks a very pretty place, lying as it does at the foot of a big mountain. Honolulu is a great American winter resort. Whilst lying in the harbour some of the crew caught an eight-foot "grey nurse" shark. This harbour also is infested with sharks, which surround the steamers as soon as they are anchored, for any refuse that is thrown over-board. Leaving Honolulu, the weather was turning gradually colder until we reached Victoria. The Rocky Mountains looked very majestic, with their winter coats of snow. We left Victoria in the afternoon and reached Vancouver that same night.

At Vancouver I signed off the "Makura" and received the sum of two shillings for my services during the voyage. However, I was very well pleased, as it was the voyage I wanted and not the pay. I might mention that the usual run from Sydney to Vancouver takes twenty-one days, but the "Makura" on this trip accomplished the voyage in seventeen days.

At Vancouver I obtained a position as an axe-man with a survey party that was going north of Vancouver to survey some timber lands, and with this outfit I stayed all summer, till the outfit returned to Vancouver.

But my destination was Macleod, Alberta, a distance of about one thousand miles inland. I made enquiries at the C. P. R. station and was told the fare to Macleod was twenty-five dollars.

Next morning whilst having a shave in a barber shop near the hotel I was staying at I overheard two horse-dealers talking about sending a prize stallion to Calgary. One of them mentioned that he would have to try and find a man to take the horse for him. I immediately jumped out of the barber's chair and told him that I was experienced with horses and would take the horse. They waited until the barber had finished with me and we settled the matter right there. I was to receive thirty-five dollars if I delivered the horse safely to the consignee at Calgary. I accordingly made arrangements with the railway company for a horse-car and procured hay and oats and food for myself for the trip.

That night the horse, "Pride of Erin," and myself, slept in the same car and on the same straw. The trip to Calgary took us five days, and it was bitterly cold all the way. A horse-car is about one of the coldest vehicles I know of to travel in. The only difficulty I had was obtaining water for my charge, and the trouble with tramps, who would persist in trying to get into my car in order to reach another town farther down the line.

I delivered "Pride of Erin" safely to the consignee at Calgary and received the thirty-five dollars for my services. Here I must mention that on the same train, coming from Vancouver, was another horse-car, which was occupied by a contractor with his horses, who was returning to his home at Claresholm, some fifty miles south of Calgary, after having spent the summer working with his teams on railroad construction in British Columbia. During the trip from Vancouver I became very friendly with this gentleman and used to spend quite a lot of time in his

car, "en route." On arriving at Calgary he invited me to go as far as Claresholm in his car, which was only 30 miles north of Macleod, my destination. This I did. That same night I bought a ticket for Macleod, which cost me seventy cents. The first for nearly 9,000 miles.

Wilson Marching On

PRESIDENT WILSON'S bill, to repeal the exemption of coastwise vessels from tolls in the Panama Canal, passed the House of Representatives on March 31st, by a vote of 247 to 161. It went through against the influence of Champ Clark, the Democratic leader. It went through because the Professor from Princeton was the power behind the bill. The passing of this bill in vindication of the principle that United States coast trade vessels are not to be allowed free use of the Panama Canal, is the direct result of a broader view by Congress of its obligations to international comity and good-will. It will also be a Wilson victory. The President's policy of stand-pat on the Mexican situation has been criticized. His domestic policy as outlined by the measures for which he has been the personal sponsor on a national rather than a party basis is a continuous proof that a man of intellect and political principle may do much to nationalize the work of party government.

As the head of a party returning to government after sixteen years in opposition, he has had a hard road to travel. To put his party in the ascendant, some compelling and attractive statement was necessary. This was forthcoming in the single word "prosperity." The promise of prosperity coupled with the attractive picture of freedom is a wonderful election-winner, but to ensure the acknowledgment that Mr. Wilson is making good—as well from foe as from friend—the promised prosperity and the painted freedom must become realized facts. There are those who say that Mr. Wilson's conceptions of prosperity and freedom will turn out to be entirely the opposite, and that the result of his reformings will be that the latter state is worse than the first.

But for one year's achievement his is a great record. His Tariff Bill reached the Statute Book, and it is recognized by many Republicans, by some Progressives, and by all the Democrats that the Tariff Revision Measure is a step in the right direction. But it is like Mr. Lloyd George's Insurance Act: it will be some time before it becomes entirely successful and popular. However, the mere fact that the President succeeded in passing the bill for the reduction of tariff rates is a notable achievement.

More difficult was the task of making the Banking Reform Bill a law of the land. To reform a banking and currency system which affects 7,509 institutions, with an accompanying combined capital and surplus of \$1,727,000,000 was a task faced by several and awkward obstacles.

The proposed "Anti-Trust" legislation was regarded as the President's promise most difficult of fulfilment. Whether the President will be able to overcome the hysterical opposition of Congress, or whether Congress will be able to so mutilate the Anti-Trust Bill that it bears little resemblance to its first form, still remains to be seen. It is by no means certain that the passage of these various measures will mean greater prosperity for the mass of American citizens; indeed, this is another case where the latter state may be worse than the first. It would seem a probability that the President will see the wisdom of some modifications in his anti-trust legislation, for Mr. Wilson, while pre-eminently a people's man, is far-seeing enough to recognize that a good many things which are urged against the trusts are merely the effusions of biased minds. Mr. Wilson has already shown that the railroads and the big business men have claims just as important as has the man-in-the-street.