

The Work of Canadian Railway Association for National Defence.

Return of Cars from United States.

The association has asked the Dominion Government to back it up in its efforts to get back from the United States the 22,000 freight cars overdue from U.S. roads. While the association's efforts have been successful in increasing the daily returns of Canadian freight cars, the numbers held in the U. S. continue to increase. The Minister of Railways has been asked to bring direct pressure upon Secretary McAdoo in his capacity as Director-General of U.S. railroads.

Exemptions from Military Service.

A number of men in train, yard and shop service in Canadian railways secured exemption under the Military Service Act, due to the fact that they were required in the interests of the country to help to move the traffic and the association having learned that a number of these men are not working regularly, the railways have been instructed to keep a record of the days worked by men who secured exemption and report the same to the association. It is the intention to advise the government of any such men who do not work regularly so that they may be conscripted.

Better Coal for Railways.

The association has asked the Dominion Government's co-operation in regard to the fuel situation as affecting the railways by requesting the Dominion Fuel Controller to take steps to ensure the U. S. mines supplying a better quality. Not only have the prices on coal for Canadian railways risen enormously, but the number of heat units per ton has dropped. The coal bill of Canadian railways, which was, in 1907, \$15,137,504, was more than doubled in 1917, although the volume of traffic handled had not increased at nearly so high a rate.

Proposed Closing of Outside Ticket Offices.

Early in January it was stated in daily press reports that as the result of action by the association the various railways would close their city and town outside ticket offices and that all tickets would have to be bought at station ticket offices. So far nothing has developed in regard to this. Enquiry of the Eastern Canadian Passenger Association has elicited the information that the matter has not been finally disposed of and passenger officials of several roads have informed Canadian Railway and Marine World either that no decision has been arrived at, or that they have no intention of closing their outside offices. In view of the unusual situation prevailing in Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver, where city ticket offices are maintained, western railway officials do not consider it practical to eliminate them. In most cases the ticket offices are located in the same place with freight traffic officials, and either telegraph or express offices, or both, thereby reducing the expense to a minimum. In the majority of cases, the city ticket office staff is not larger than it would be necessary to increase the station office staff to, if city ticket offices were abolished. In some cases railways own the office buildings and in such cases the question of rental does not enter into the proposition and in other cases the office premises are used for joint departmental purposes and are held on a lease. The stations of some of the interested lines are so located as to make it absolutely

necessary to maintain city ticket offices to meet competition and satisfactorily protect and accommodate traffic. At certain points, U.S. lines maintain an organization for the purpose of securing passenger traffic as against Canadian lines. A comparison of expense of city ticket offices as against earnings would indicate that they are operated at considerably less than 5% of earnings. The elimination of city ticket offices would mean the transfer of expense from city to station offices and would not it is said represent a saving of 5%.

Proposal to Take Up Railway Tracks.

A Montreal press dispatch of Jan. 8 stated that the association had decided to petition the Dominion Government to order the taking up of from 1,500 to 2,000 miles of railway track, from lines that were not considered of vital importance, so that the rails might be used for relaying on other lines. No official information is available in regard to this, but it is said that the proposal was to lift the rails on the Canadian Northern, from Toronto to Sudbury and from Edmonton to Vancouver; on the Hudson Bay Ry., from Pas, north to the end of track; and on the National Transcontinental from La Tuque, Que., to Cochrane, Ont. It appears that some of the members of the administrative committee were not present when the decision was arrived at, and that when it came before members of the Government at Ottawa for consideration, at least one of the roads which would be affected protested very strongly. In fact, it is said that the discussion before the ministers was a pretty heated one and that no final decision was arrived at, the matter being still status quo ante bellum.

Niagara Frontier Traffic.

F. F. Backus, General Manager, Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Ry., has been appointed by the association to control traffic at the Niagara Frontier, by supervising and expediting the movement of coal and other traffic, so that the freight is divided up each day among the various Canadian railways, irrespective of how it may have been routed. This is a precautionary step, to make absolutely certain that the Canadian roads be used to their full capacity, so as to prevent any possible congestion. He has been given full power to act for the best general good, and since early in January has been routing freight by the most available routes for prompt movement, irrespective of how it was consigned. Coal and coke are being given preference over anything else, but Mr. Backus does not undertake to trace freight or to give special movement to one lot of coal, etc., as against another.

Hay Shipments to United States.

Instructions existing on Jan. 5 calling upon railways to give preference to hay in highly compressed bales in the furnishing of cars for shipments of hay destined to the U. S. have been cancelled, and cars may be furnished for shipments of hay in loose bales for U. S. points. As U. S. railways have 22,219 Canadian cars in excess of the number of U. S. owned cars in Canada and there being a serious shortage of cars for the movement of freight between Canadian points, U. S. owned cars only are to be supplied at points on railways operating in Canada for shipments of hay destined for points in the U. S., other than such points as may be located on Canadian railways.

Interline Billing of Freight.

The association's committee on tariff and statistics considers that the amount of delay to freight and cars involved in the existing arrangement for rebilling of shipments at junction points between railways, the clerical man power engaged in the work resulting from this arrangement, and the expense it brings upon the railways are defects in the general freight handling scheme which it is felt can be remedied by the adoption on all member lines of the practice of interline billing of freight. The committee's discussion on the subject indicates that so far as the freight traffic departments of the railways are concerned, general interline billing should be adopted, that as a result of its adoption car efficiency would be considerably increased and that heavy expenditure of labor and money now involved in rebilling at junction points would be eliminated. The junction reports at present required by the majority of railways on the movement of through traffic received full consideration. The opinion was expressed that arrangements might be made by the respective lines whereby these reports might be eliminated and that information, if actually necessary be obtained in some other manner. After considerable discussion the following resolution was adopted: "That this committee is in favor of general through interline waybilling with audit office settlements where there are through rates. Where rates are a combination of locals, or of a local and interline rate, shipments should be billed through, showing the rate factors, settlement to be made through the audit office. The audit offices should arrange so that intermediate carriers will be protected in the matter of undercharges, etc." It was also resolved: "That where rates now divided on arbitrary basis the same be simplified, where possible, by converting into a percentage basis." The various railways have been asked to submit reasons, if any, why the suggestions embodied in these resolutions should not be adopted and whether they are prepared to make arrangements so that any delay to cars and freight at present incidental to the taking of passing or junction records will be avoided."

Incomplete Billing of Freight Cars.

It has come to the association's attention that at many points it is the practice for loaded cars to be forwarded without proper and complete billing, thereby rendering liable delays to such cars before delivery can be effected, and improper handling, through absence of complete routing instructions and other necessary information. The demand for maximum car efficiency is so great that the above practice should be discontinued, and with this end in view it is directed that all member lines place instructions in effect at once, that hereafter no loaded cars are to be started from originating point until properly made out bill of lading has been furnished by shipper and complete railway revenue waybill is available to accompany car.

Stop Off Privileges for Freight.

The demands at present made on Canadian railways in the handling of an abnormal volume of traffic call for the minimizing or elimination of arrangements which may have been made at a time when conditions warranted them, but which now have the effect of reducing car efficiency and retarding the gen-