

## Important Changes in Handling Less Than Carload Freight.

Plans which will be put in effect shortly will effect a complete change in the methods of receiving, loading and forwarding less than carload freight, of all descriptions, upon all portions of the Pennsylvania Rd., east of Pittsburgh. The new arrangements will constitute probably the most far reaching improvement that has ever been attempted, on a large scale, in freight transportation practices. The present custom of receiving less than carload freight indiscriminately, at all stations, at any time of the day, for all destinations, which has been followed since the early days of railroading, will be abolished. In its place there will be substituted a carefully devised plan whereby the acceptance and loading of freight, in less than carload lots, will be conducted according to a regularly established system, and such freight will be automatically concentrated into full loads at the point of shipment.

The two most important features of the new plan for handling less than carload freight are: 1. The inauguration of shipping days, or substantially "sailing dates," on which cars will depart from various points of origin to specified destinations. Freight will be accepted on the proper shipping days only, and the cars will "sail" as specified. 2. The designation of particular stations at which freight will be exclusively received for specified destinations; freight for such points will be accepted at the stations named only. The new plan represents the results of prolonged investigation, conducted by the Pennsylvania Rd. officers, for the purpose of determining the best practical means of obtaining increased efficiency and dispatch in the handling of less than carload freight. The primary purposes for the adoption of the new method are four fold: 1. Elimination of delay incident to rehandling of freight under the present methods of consolidating small shipments into full carloads at transfer stations. This will give the shipper quicker service than is possible under the old method. 2. Conservation of car supply by effecting better average loading than is possible under the transfer system. This will increase the cars available for commercial freight, as well as government supplies. 3. Reduction in number of car and train movements required to transport a given volume of freight. This will increase the capacity of the whole railway's plant, and will release trackage and locomotives for the movement of troops, government supplies and commercial freight. 4. Improvement in the regularity of freight service by systematizing and simplifying operation. This will result from the elimination of a large proportion of the complicated rehandling of freight, which is now unavoidable, with the attendant liability to damage. It is the belief of the management of the railway that the proposed change will increase the efficiency, promptness and regularity of the freight service, and therefore will commend itself to shippers as facilitating the conduct of their business.

Under the present method of handling less than carload freight, a shipper having a small consignment to transport from city A to city B can take his goods to any freight station in city A at any time during the ordinary working hours. In the course of the day, or perhaps the next two or three days, the freight will be loaded into a car and run out to a trans-

fer station, which may be a few miles, or more than 100 miles, distant. There it will be unloaded and trucked into another car, in which numerous small shipments, from many other points, for city B are being consolidated in the effort to make up a full car. Under the proposed plan, there will be certain days on which less than carload freight for city B will be accepted at one or more specified stations in city A, and such freight will be accepted only on the days, and at the particular station, or stations, named. On the days specified a car for city B will leave the originating station or stations. The service will be daily, tri-weekly, semi-weekly or weekly, according to the average volume of traffic, and freight for city B will be taken only in such cars. Under this method there will be no subsequent transferring or rehandling of the freight, and the car will move straight through to city B without breaking bulk.

In large cities, where a number of freight stations are maintained, traffic to the various principal destinations will be apportioned between the stations. For example, where conditions permit, very large shipping centres will be subdivided into zones, each embracing several freight stations. From each zone service will be given on specified days to a number of destinations. In such cases cars for various points will be alternated between the stations in a given zone. If, for instance, a certain zone, containing several freight stations, is to have three cars a week to a certain destination, the car may leave station A on Monday, station B on Wednesday, and station C on Saturday. This will equalize drayage distance between shippers in various portions of the zone.

To eliminate the congestion of trucks and teams occurring at nearly all large freight stations in the afternoon, the "sailing hours" of cars for certain destinations will be made earlier than the general closing time of the station. To illustrate—at a station from which several regular cars are operated daily, to sundry destinations, the "sailing time" for the cars to city B and city C may be fixed at noon and for city D and city E at 1 p.m., while freight for other points may be accepted up to the closing hour. This will require the delivery of a considerable quantity of freight in the morning hours of the "sailing day." The result will be to distribute the receipts throughout the day, extend the capacity of the station and facilitate the movement of traffic. Shippers will be benefited, as their teams and wagons will not be forced to stand idle for several hours before being able to get to the platform, as is often the case under the present conditions.

The application of the plan at smaller stations—those at which less than carload freight would not accumulate into carloads with sufficient frequency to operate through cars to any given point—will be limited to the establishment of shipping days. It is the intention to continue sufficient local "pick-up" freight service to meet the requirements for that form of service. One important result which the plan is expected to bring about will be a reduction in loss and damage to freight, owing to the greater promptness with which it will be loaded and dispatched. The simplification of railway operation, as well as the elimination of rehandling of less than carload freight at transfer stations, will also diminish the amount of freight going astray.

The proposed plan is being worked out on scientific lines. A most careful and elaborate study has been made of the movement of less than carload freight to and from all points on the entire Pennsylvania Rd. and its connections, and the nature and frequency of service to be afforded at each station will be based upon that study. Future changes in the current of traffic will be taken care of promptly as they become evident. A conservative estimate shows that the adoption of the proposed plan will result in the saving of at least 1,000 box cars a day in the handling of less than carload freight on the lines east of Pittsburgh and Erie. The new plan will be put into effect first in the Philadelphia district, where it will become operative in the near future. As soon thereafter as possible it will be applied at New York, Baltimore, Pittsburgh and Buffalo, following which it will be inaugurated at all stations. When making the new plan effective in any locality it will be explained, as to its purpose and method of operation, to the local board of trade, chamber of commerce and other trade bodies. This duty will be performed personally by the various division freight agents. The working out of details for the various stations will be completed, on each grand division, under the joint direction of the Superintendent of Stations and Transfers and the division freight agent, representing respectively, the transportation and traffic departments. They will be assisted in this work by the division superintendents' staffs.

Last winter some of the principal Canadian railways adopted the principle of consolidating carload freight, but have not extended it to the same extent as is being done by the Pennsylvania. The matter was discussed at a meeting in Toronto early in July, and committees were appointed to work out details for an extension of the system.

**C.P.R. Stations in Ottawa and Hull.**—The Board of Railway Commissioners has granted the company permission to handle its Hull passengers at Beemer station, Que., instead of the city station used heretofore. The commissioners heard the objections against the closing of Broad St. station, Ottawa. E. P. Flintoff the company's solicitor, stated that while the company had not been petitioned or asked to close the Broad St. station, it had been under the impression for several years that such a change would be welcomed by the greater majority of those in Ottawa who were frequent travellers. An order in the matter will be issued in due course. It is said that all passenger trains will be operated into the central station, Ottawa, and that freight trains will be operated into Broad St. Considerable work will be necessary at the G.T.R. central station before the C.P.R.'s Ottawa passenger business can be centralized there, and it is not yet known how soon it can be done. The closing of the present Hull station will then be necessary. Beemer station is also in Hull, being on the main line, within a short distance of Hull station, and when the change takes place all the Hull business will be handled there. Its location, both as to the city of Hull and the electric railway lines, is much more convenient for the travelling public than the present Hull station.