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MASTER MECHANICS' ASSOCIATION.

Address of President H. H. Vaughan.

At the annual meeting of the American Railway Master Mechanics' Association, at Atlantic City, N.J., recently, the President, H. H. Vaughan, Assistant to the Vice President C.P.R., read the following address:—

In 1868 six master mechanics attending the Master Car Builders' convention at Dayton, decided to call a general meeting at Cleveland to organize an association of the master mechanics of the U.S. and Canada. At that meeting, which was held later on in the same year, 50 were present, representing many of the most important lines of railways in the country, and a constitution was adopted with the following preamble: "We, the undersigned railway master mechanics, believe that the interests of the companies by whom we are employed may be advanced by the organization of an association which shall enable us to exchange information upon the many important questions connected with our business." These words outlined the object with which the new society began its career, adopting as its purpose the discussion of the best methods of construction and operation of the locomotive at a time when it had just emerged from the experimental stage and was assuming a permanent and fairly uniform design. It has already taken its place in the world as the most powerful and economical engine of transportation, but few even who were connected with it in those days could have foreseen the development it was to undergo, or to the extent to which it would render possible the cheapening and extension of the transportation facilities of the world, the chief factor in the wonderful change that has taken place in the relation of nations, the distribution of food supplies and the growth of manufactures, cities and continents. The association so quietly started was well founded. It had chosen for its aim a work that was needed, and as the railways of the country grew, it grew with them, until now, 41 years later, we have a membership of 961, representing every railway in the U.S. and Canada, and a large number of those in foreign countries. It has been unique in its devotion to the locomotive and its problems alone, but its object has proved worthy of its attention, and we are to-day confronted with problems just as im-

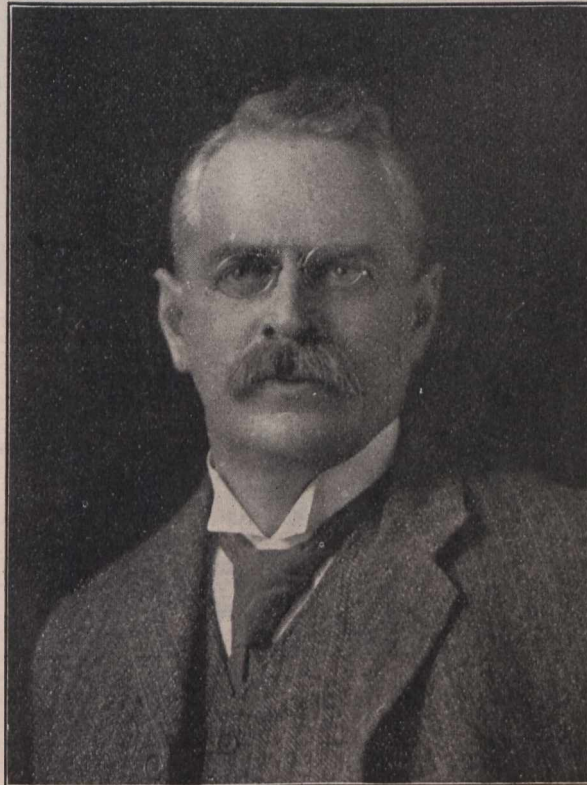
portant as those which our predecessors considered, none the less vital to us because they are broader in scope and because financial considerations are now more closely connected with those which are purely technical.

I have always been deeply interested in the history of this association; I have been a great admirer of the work that it has done, and I am going to take this opportunity to speak to you of the success it has obtained, the methods it has

value, either in whole or in part. While this classification is to a certain extent a matter of opinion, it shows most decidedly the general excellence of the work which this association has done. It has investigated almost every conceivable subject connected with the locomotive, its construction, operation and maintenance, developing, criticising and discussing it as it progressed from the little 16-in. eight-wheeler of the sixties to the magnificent freight and passen-

ger equipment of the present day. To say that the wonderful development that has taken place is entirely owing to the work of our associations would be an exaggeration. Apart, however, from the facts determined in our report, the improvements they have suggested, and the practice they have introduced, our meetings have, year by year, been attended by the men engaged in carrying on and advancing this work. They have presented their own views in our discussions, they have heard the views of others, and, whether speakers or listeners, have returned home from our conventions with their opinions modified, new ideas conceived and their experience broadened. With that renewed energy and interest in their work which invariably results from communication with other workers in the same field, they have put into practice suggestions which have been advanced and by their daily work have together built up that mass of knowledge and experience that has resulted in the production of the American locomotive of to-day. In such ways, as well as by the exchange of information, our association has succeeded in its object in being of benefit to the railways by whom our members are employed.

Our work has not been limited, however, to the exchange of information, but from the very beginning our committees have done far more than obtain and report existing facts or give the opinion they have formed as a result of their inquiries. This has been an important and valuable portion of their work, and our history shows that in the large majority of cases it has been done well. The answers received to the letters of inquiry have frequently indicated a great divergence of opinion or a lack of proper knowledge, while our later experience has justified the committee's decision. Their reports have presented carefully thought out and correct conclusions, which have, through investigation and the standing of the members of the committees, been widely accepted and of valuable assist-



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used, and the opportunities that lie before it for the future. It is impossible to review in detail the work which has been accomplished; the mass of information contained in our proceedings is too great for individual reference. To even touch on the more important subjects would necessarily result in a mere catalogue. Figures are but a poor way of illustrating results, but in the 41 years of our proceedings, 351 reports of committees, 60 individual papers and 115 topical subjects have been presented and discussed. Of these reports and discussions it may be stated that 126 contain information of special interest at the present time, while 283 are of specific