

TRAIN DISPATCHING.

The head-on collision which occurred on the 15th of October near North Bay, Ont., in which the Imperial Limited, west bound, crashed into a stock train, brings to the attention of the Maintenance Department and of the Signal Engineers the question of train dispatching.

This one disaster considered by itself, or one or two similar accidents considered with it, might not be a matter for such serious consideration, but when we consider that almost a third of the killed and injured on railways, both passengers and employees, is caused by collisions, it is quite apparent that there is some serious difficulty in our present method of train dispatching.

It is very true that it is impossible to entirely eliminate the personal element from train dispatching; in fact, we do not think that it is desirable. The inherent defect of our present train dispatching systems is that each train crew is left to operate its train without check or knowledge of the train preceding or following. The train crew must depend entirely and follow blindly the order paper handed them at the last station. If all crews obey the train orders things may or may not be well. One thing is quite certain, that the crew which obeys is at the mercy of the careless, disobedient crew.

Supplementary to our present dispatching a block signal system that would give visible and audible information of the position of approaching or following trains would be of material assistance to the crews and an additional safety precaution to the travelling public.

Improvement of the rules and regulations would be desirable, but changing of regulations and retaining the present system will not make much improvement unless the capacity of the men in the service for obedience to rules improves.

In addition to the framing of orders that will govern the situation, the men must be educated and disciplined to the extent of being able to comprehend these orders.

Canada is just now passing through that period where her railways have too much traffic for single tracks and not enough for double tracks, and during this transition the signal engineer and the superintendent must make full use of the block system.

EDITORIAL NOTE.

Elsewhere in this issue will be found a paper on "Stream Measurements," which gives in brief form some of the more general interesting statements contained in a report by P. M. Sauder, C.E., Chief Hydrographer to the Minister of the Department of Interior. It is gratifying to know that at last the Parliament has seen fit to appropriate annually a sum of money large enough to make the compiling of the data as to stream flow in the West possible in the matter of pure water supply, sewage disposal, irrigation and power plant. It is very necessary to know much more about the streams than can be secured in the brief time at the disposal of the consulting engineer when he is called upon to prepare the engineering report. This work, which must be spread over a number of years and carried on at all seasons, can only be done by the Government, and a perusal of the report for 1909 will convince one that at last this work has been carefully and systematically carried out in an energetic manner.

CANADIAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS.

The nominating committee of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers have forwarded the following list of names as their selection for the council for 1911:—

For President—C. H. Rust, city engineer, Toronto, Ont.

For Vice-presidents—H. Holgate, C.E., Montreal, Que.; C. E. W. Dodwell, C.E., Halifax, N.S.; J. E. Switzer, Winnipeg, Man.

For Councillors—District No. 1—H. G. Kelley, L. A. Herdt, Phelps Johnson, R. J. Durley, J. G. Sullivan, H. H. Vaughan.

District No. 2—R. McColl, F. W. W. Doane, P. S. Archibald.

District No. 3—A. E. Doucet, P. E. Parent, J. T. Morkill.

District No. 4—D. MacPherson, C. R. Coutlee, W. J. Stewart.

District No. 5—A. F. Stewart, H. E. T. Haultain, R. B. Rogers.

District No. 6—J. G. Legrand, J. A. Hesketh, E. E. Brydone-Jack.

District No. 7—F. F. Busted, J. S. Dennis, J. C. Kennedy.

This is just the proper number to make the council complete.

This year the council consisted of:—

President—H. N. Ruttan.

Vice-presidents—R. W. Leonard, C. H. Rust, W. F. Tye.

Councillors—J. A. Bell, H. J. Cambie, A. W. Campbell, C. R. Coutlee, C. E. W. Dodwell, A. E. Doucet, R. J. Durley, J. M. R. Fairbairn, W. J. Francis, J. E. Hardman, H. E. T. Haultain, L. A. Herdt, P. Johnson, H. G. Kelley, R. S. Kelsch, D. MacPherson, C. N. Monsarrat, J. M. Shanly, J. G. Sullivan, H. H. Vaughan.

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS, TORONTO BRANCH.

At the first regular meeting of the Toronto Section of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers on October 21st, 1910, the choice of officers for the coming year was announced. They are Mr. E. Richards, chairman; Mr. A. L. Mudge, vice-chairman; and Mr. W. H. Eisenbeis, secretary. Executive committee members are Messrs. A. L. Mudge, F. A. Gaby, H. A. Moore, J. G. Jackson, A. C. Hebbner.

Papers have been arranged of interest at the present time, and meetings will be held, it is expected, upon every second Friday of the month.

As now planned the next paper will be one on "The Storage Battery," by Mr. H. Morrell, of the Tate Accumulator Company of Canada, Limited.

"The 110,000 Volt Toronto Substation of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario," was the title of an interesting and instructive paper, given before the Toronto Section of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, by Mr. P. W. Sothman, chief engineer of the Commission. The paper was given in the rooms of the Engineers' Club, at 96 King Street West, on Friday last. To say that the opportunity of hearing Mr. Sothman upon this subject was eagerly seized by a large number of electrical enthusiasts would be putting it far too mildly. The assembly room was full to overflowing with those interested in this, at present, most popular subject, not only in but outside of the immediate sphere of the electrical engineer. Mr. Sothman made clear his description, not merely by confining it to the Toronto plant, but he amplified it by giving a survey, as it were, of the whole