ADDRESS

OF

W. F. TYE

PRESIDENT

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PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

BY W. F. TYE

GENTLEMEN :—

In rising to comply with the time honored custom of reading the President's address, I beg to thank you for the high honor you have conferred on me in electing me to the Presidency of our National Society.

Owing to my residence in Toronto, and to my absence in Europe during the first part of the year, I was unable to attend many of the Council meetings. The affairs of the Society were, however, so well looked after by the Council and our efficient Secretary, that I am sure the absence of the President was not felt.

I have great pleasure in congratulating the Society on its continued growth. Our Membership now amounts in all to over 3,000, and includes almost every engineer in the country. The expansion of the Society is a thing of which we must all feel justly proud. We have grown so rapidly that our old home has become too small for us, and we were very fortunate in being able to dispose of it on such advantageous terms at the very moment when a change had become necessary.

Our thanks are due to the Building Committee for the efficient and expeditious manner in which they have prepared a new residence for us; and I must congratulate the Society on the result of their efforts.

During the year the Council suffered a severe loss in the death of their friend and colleague, Mr. James N. Shanly. Mr. Shanly was a capable, conscientious engineer, and a favorite with all with whom he came in contact. He took a keen and intelligent interest in the Society's affairs. He was Chairman of the Finance and Building Committees, and much of the success of our new home is due to his untiring efforts.

When looking around for a subject on which to address you, my thoughts turn naturally to Railway Location, on which a great part of my professional career has been spent.

Transportation is one of Canada's greatest problems: our country is of vast area, the distances are great, the population sparse, and the traffic light; making the mileage and cost of railways high per head of population. On the other hand the growth of the country is and will continue to be rapid. A great problem is thus presented: how to build our railways that they may not be too expensive for our present requirements, and yet be capable of improvement to fit our future needs. Economics of Railway Location is, therefore, of even more than usual importance to Canada.

The subject is so vast that it is only possible in such an address to touch its outer fringe; but it is so important to us all that even a few rudimentary remarks may be interesting.

While railways are built to serve the traffic requirements of the country, the immediate object of the promoters and builders is to make a profit, either on the construction or operation. This is undoubtedly true when built by private parties. When built by a Government, it is with the end in view that the people may make money either directly through the operation of the railway, or indirectly by the reduction of rates. It is, therefore, of prime importance that the engineer, whether he be working for private parties or for a Government, locate and construct the most economic road. The most economic road is not necessarily either the cheapest or most expensive, neither is it necessarily the one which may be operated at the least cost—it is in reality the one which is the most effective commercially or the one which will enable its owners to transport the largest amount of traffic at the lowest cost.

In order to ascertain that a railroad is most effective commercially, the features which underlie its commercial effectiveness should be understood. These are:—Gross Earnings, Operating Expenses, and Fixed Charges; and are of importance in the order named. Gross Earnings, which depend on the amount of traffic handled, is undoubtedly first. It is never advisable to build a railway unless there is or will be sufficient traffic to pay the Operating Eapenses and the Fixed Charges, no matter how cheaply or how well it can be built.

In new countries, such as most Canadian railways are built through, there is rarely sufficient traffic in sight to justify the construction of a road, so the promoters—whether they be a Government or private parties—must have faith in the project and must be able to justify to themselves, and to the investing public, the possibilities of paying dividends.

Engineers are sometimes, though rarely, consulted in the early stages of the project to report on the traffic possibilities of the route. The usual way is for the promoters to decide for themselves that a road between certain terminals is commercially desirable, and that there is or will be sufficient traffic on such a route to justify its construction. Engineers are then employed to survey and construct the road. The question should at once arise with the engineer—how the railway can be so located as to make it the most effective commercially, or how to get for the promoters the most profitable traffic. No matter how this problem is stated, it finally resolves itself into this:—if the promoters be private parties, how can the road be so located and built that the most interest can be earned on the money invested—or if a government, to transport the most traffic at the least cost? The answer in either case would be the same, for, if it is so located that it may handle the most traffic at the least cost, it will, if properly managed, make the most interest on the money invested.

The first problem the engineer has thus to face is how he can so locate the road between the given terminals as to get the most profitable traffic.

The route which takes in the greatest number of towns, or which goes through the best land, if the country be unsettled, should be the first examined. A mistake frequently made is to locate the road within a mile or two of an important town in order to decrease distance or avoid expense. The cost of handling traffic is the total cost from the door of the consignor to the door of the consignee, and rates on that basis must be equal. The added charge for cartage is at times so large as to wholly destroy the business of the badly placed line and give it to a competitor more favorably situated, or if it be not wholly destroyed, the additional cartage and delivery charges eat up the profits.

Where traffic is light, and train loads less than the rated capacity of the locomotive, the cost of handling additional traffic is much less than is the ordinary train mile cost. It should be figured in equating the value of a change in location which increases traffic at 50% of the usual train mile cost. In this respect it should be remembered that deviations from the direct route do not always materially add to the length of the line.

In order to locate a railway so that it may be commercially effective it is first necessary to know what the volume of traffic is likely to be, whether it is immediately available, and at what rate it is likely to grow. The best way to ascertain this is by comparison with roads through the same or a similar country. A road through a country most nearly approximating that to be traversed should be selected for examination, and its traffic for previous years studied. If, for any reason business is likely to be materially greater or less than on the road under examination, due allowance should be made.

All railways are now required to make yearly reports to the government, and such statistics should be examined as well as those published in the Railway Companies' Annual Reports. The average train load and the ruling grade should be studied, and finally the average number of trains per day should be ascertained. It must be remembered that though the traffic is rarely balanced, that is, that there is seldom as much tonnage moving one way as the other, the number of trains each way must within narrow limits be the same. It is not always easy for an outsider to ascertain the number of trains over any given railway, as railway statistics are not published in this form, but every effort should be made to arrive at it as closely as possible.

Having obtained this information, and having determined how the traffic on the proposed road will compare with that on the road under examination, some approximation of the ruling grades on the road in view should be arrived at. If different from those on the route with which comparison is being made, the number of trains per day each way on the proposed road should be increased or diminished accordingly.

While this method of ascertaining the number of trains per day is only approximate, it is certainly much more accurate than to attempt to make an independent estimate of the gross tonnage on the new road. The rate of growth of traffic should be similarly ascertained, as a railroad should be built not only to take care of the present traffic but also that of the road in the reasonably near future.

Cost per train mile is the basis of all economic comparison, as the effect of the number of trains on the cost of operation is much more direct than is the actual tonnage handled. The cost per train mile should thus be ascertained with reasonable accuracy. The Annual Reports published by the Railway Companies usually give these figures; if not, the reports of the Inter-State Commerce Commission give this information for every railroad in the United States. From this mass of statistics the train mile cost of the most nearly similar road should be taken and assumed as the train mile cost of the proposed road. It must also be remembered that these costs are increasing rapidly, the average for the whole United States for the year ending June 30th, 1896, being 95 cents, while for the year ending June 30th, 1910, it had increased to $1.49.

Equipped with this information as to the sources of traffic, the estimated average number of trains per day, and the probable cost per train mile, the engineer is ready to make a reconnaissance of the country to be traversed. The reconnaissance should always be of an area rather than a line. An area wide enough to take in any possible line should be examined. All combinations of probable lines should be studied. As the reconnaissance proceeds a map of the country should be made showing the details of the topography by contours ten to fifty feet apart; the elevations of controlling points should be shown with the greatest attainable accuracy. From such a map carefully prepared all lines and combinations of lines can be studied. Approximate condensed profiles can be drawn, and distances, grades and costs can be approximately asscertained. With such information, the choice of routes can usually be narrowed down to one or two, or in rare instances to three lines over which it is necessary to run surveys.

The value of a proper reconnaissance cannot be too strongly insisted upon. It is owing to the lack of it that the graver errors of location are usually due, such as the selection of an improper route or ruling grade, passing of traffic centres, &c. There is no way in which money can be so profitably spent. Great pains should be taken to secure the most expert engineer for this class of work. In engineering and economic importance reconnaissance far outranks location or construction. It is not an exaggeration to say that for every dollar which an engineer can save on construction, he can save five on location, and ten on reconnaissance.

The really essential factor in a location made for freight traffic is the ruling grade. The maximum is not always the ruling or limiting grade, as it might be operated by the aid of a helper engine, in which case it may not limit traffic. A very long grade of a lower rate may, by taxing the boiler capacity, become the ruling grade instead of a shorter steeper one. To ascertain the economic value of any change in grade, or to compare two different grades, the number of round trips per day required to handle the given or estimated traffic should be ascertained. The difference will be the saving in trains each way per day. This multiplied by the ascercertained cost per train mile, by twice the length of the Division in miles and the number of days in the year, will give the annual saving. Capitalizing at the proper interest rate will give the capitalized value of the better grade. If the additional cost is not greater than the capitalized value when properly equated for distance, rise and fall, curvature, etc., then the lighter grade is an economic one, and should be adopted.

As many items of expense will not be affected by changes in the number of trains, the saving per train mile for a train eliminated is not as great as the cost per train mile for the entire traffic. The saving is in reality in the neighborhood of 50%, and this percentage of the ascertained total train mile cost should be used in estimating the economy due to a difference in ruling grade.

In figuring on the economics of a grade reduction on an old road where the traffic and the average number of trains per day are known, it is essential that the actual loads hauled by each locomotive be determined and compared with their rated capacities. This difference is due to the inability of the operating officials to get perfect results. This "personal equation" must be taken into consideration in figuring the number of trains per day with the new grades, as they will no more be able to get the best results under the new conditions than they were with the old. In making a reduction from a high rate to a low, for instance, from a 1% to a 0.3% or 0.4%, it must not be forgotten that the proportion of the actual loads to the theoretical rating will be lower on the low grades than on the high. Time is an essential factor. On a 1% grade in good weather, the actual loading may usually be made 90% of the theoretical, while on 0.3% it is unlikely that more than 75% of the rating can be hauled if time is to be made.

The proportionate amount of ruling grade on the Division has also an important bearing on the loading of trains, the greater the proportion its length bears to the length of the Division the lighter the actual train loads must be, and this too must be taken into consideration in determining the average number of trains per day required to handle the traffic on the proposed new grade.

Serious error would undoubtedly arise if the theoretical number of trains required to handle the traffic on the proposed new grade were compared with the actual trains on the present one.

While Fixed Charges—which are largely determined by the "Cost of Construction"—are of lesser consideration than Operating Expenses, they are still of prime importance. No road can pay dividends to stock holders, or afford to reduce freight rates until its Fixed Charges are met. So it is of the greatest importance that the engineer introduce no features that will increase the cost of construction without reducing the Operating Expenses by at least as great an amount as the interest on the added cost. The cost of moving a given tonnage being the sum of the Operating Expenses and the Fixed Charges—it follows that a reduction in the cost which does not increase the Operating Expenses is only of less importance than one which reduces the Operating Expenses without increasing the cost. Such a reduction in cost is a practical improvement to the standard of the road, as it increases the margin between receipts and expenditures, and so permits of an increase in dividends, or has a tendency to permit of a reduction in freight rates, if that be the object aimed at.

In Canada most of the new construction is through districts which at the time of completion furnish but little traffic: much railway has been built on which the traffic did not justify even one daily freight train per day each way. It is a safe statement that 80% of the mileage constructed in Canada would not furnish at the date of completion traffic sufficient for two freight trains each way per day. Under such conditions, the receipts are low and the Operating Expenses high, and it is of the utmost importance that the construction cost be kept low. On the other hand, the country is growing fast, and traffic is increasing rapidly. It is thus necessary that the engineer keep always in view the almost certain necessity of a good road in the future. He should, therefore, so locate and construct his line that the first cost be low, and that the standard may be raised, when necessary, without unduly increasing the total expenditure. In order to get the very best results, the line giving best grades, alignment, etc., should always be first located. From this, as a standard, the engineer should work to the final or economic location. Working from a poor to a better is apt to lead to grave errors.

Where low construction costs are necessary, and it is probable that a high standard will be required in the future, it is much more effective and advisable to use short sections of temporary line with steep grades, sharp curves, etc., on the heavy or difficult sections, maintaining the higher standard for the light or easy portions of line, than it is to adopt a generally lower standard for the whole route. The first cost of the former will probably be less; it may be operated with helper engines as the traffic increases, and may be improved when advisable, while the cost of improving a generally poor road is frequently prohibitive.

The use of sharp curves with short tangents is often a very effective means of reducing cost without materially increasing the Operating Expenses.

The effect of moderately sharp curvature is essentially different from steep grades, inasmuch as it is not limiting in its effect. The use of one sharp curve does not justify the use of another just as sharp—whereas the use of one ruling grade on a division does justify another as steep.

The use of curves up to 14 degrees does not increase the maintenance or operating expenses. A mile of road in which there are 100 degrees of 10 degree curve, the balance being tangent, does not cost any more to maintain and operate than the same length of road with 100 degrees of 2 degree curve—in fact, if there is any difference, it is in favor of the sharper curvature.

Unless the curvature is so sharp as to be limiting in its effect, there is no serious objection even on the best class of road to a few sharp curves where the amount saved by their use is sufficient to justify their introduction. The conditions which cause curves to be limiting are when they are so sharp as to prevent the use of the higher grades of modern equipment, and when they limit the haulage capacity of the locomotives, or their speed.

Modern equipment is so constructed as to traverse safely 14 degree curves, and much sharper with guard and hold up rails. The standard compensation for curvature on grades is 0.04 foot per degree. A 10 degree curve is thus equivalent, as far as resistance is concerned, to a 0.4% grade; and a 15 degree curve to a 0.6% grade. On a 0.4% it is only necessary that the grade on a 10 degree curve be made level in order that the resistance be not increased. The same thing applies to a 15 degree curve on a 0.6% grade. It is, therefore, evident that on a road whose ruling grades are 0.4% 10 degree curves are not limiting to the haulage capacity of the locomotives, nor are 15 degree curves on a 0.6% grade.

The easy riding speed is dependent on the amount of the allowable elevation of the outer rail. If the maximum be set at six inches, this speed per hour would be :—

on a	3	degree curve	60	miles per hour
"	4	"	50	"
"	6	"	40	"
"	8	"	35	"
"	10	"	30	"

The safe or allowable speeds would be 10 miles per hour greater.

With the track properly elevated, equiped with tie plates kept in good line and surface, and curves provided with proper easements, 10 degree curves are no more disagreeable to ride over at speed of 30 miles per hour than are 3 degree curves at 60 miles per hour.

The reduction in speed for one mile from 50 to 30 miles per hour only means the loss of 0.8 minutes. To take an extreme case—the Twentieth Century Limited runs from New York to Chicago, 980 miles in 20 hours, or at an average of 49 miles per hour. The introduction of one hundred 10 degree curves each one of which required a slacking of speed to 30 miles per hour for a distance of one mile would increase the running time of such a train by one hour and twenty minutes. Such an increase on a road 1,000 miles long would in nine cases out of ten have no ill effect. A 10 degree curve so long as to require the reduction of speed to an average of 30 miles per hour for a mile would in practice be a very rare occurrence.

It is evident the use of curves as sharp as 10 degrees does not prohibit the employment of modern equipment or limit the haulage capacity of the locomotives. It has no effect on the speed of freight trains, or on passenger trains where the average speed including stops is not greater than 30 miles per hour. A few such curves only slightly affect the running time where speeds are high.

It is thus clear that a few curves not sharper than 10 degrees are not objectionable on the very best roads where their use results in large savings. As they are not limiting, the use of one such curve is no justification for a second. The introduction of many of them preventing the employment of high speeds for long distances would certainly be objectionable, but an occasional one where large savings result is justifiable on even the highest class of road.

Wooden trestles to replace heavy rock borrow embankments should be used. Such trestles may be designed to safely carry the heaviest class of equipment. When protected by the installation of the best available water supply they are quite safe, and are good for ten years. Such temporary construction also gives time to ascertain the correct requirements for water ways in new countries where there is frequently a dearth of information as to rainfall, flow of streams, &c., and where unless unduly large water ways are left there is danger of washouts. This danger may be even greater than the danger from fire to wooden trestles. Their use instead of heavy rock borrow embankments is of great importance from an economic point of view. One dollar at 5% compound interest amounts in ten years to $1.63. If rock borrow costs on the original construction say $1.75 per cubic yard it will in ten years time have amounted with interest to $2.85. While, under anything like ordinary conditions train hauled earth embankments on an operated road, made when the trestles require replacement, do not cost over 30 cents per cubic yard, or less than one-ninth of the total cost of a permanent rock embankment made during construction.

Momentum grades are a great source of saving in cost without increasing the operating expenses. The use of momentum in overcoming short stretches steeper than the ordinary ruling grade is almost always justifiable. The exception is where the traffic is so congested that the possibility of a delay due to the failure of an occasional train to surmount the grade is more important than the undoubted saving in interest charges which they insure. It will probably be many years before conditions prohibiting their use prevail on any portion of our Canadian railways.

The foregoing are a few of the more important considerations which the locating engineer should keep in view. He should always remember that railways are commercial enterprises, are built for profit, and that the investors are looking for and are entitled to satisfactory interest on their money; and so far as the returns on their investments depend on location they will for a given traffic be the greatest when the sum of the operating expenses and fixed charges is the least amount.