Try Flashing Light For Crossing Safety

The Maintenance of Way Department is experimenting with a light mounted on the top of a track car that flashes an amber light beam when turned on, approaching highway crossings.

State laws require motorists to stop before crossing railroad tracks, but if you ask the men who ride the rails regularly they'll tell you that few drivers do.

The crossing safety problem grows steadily worse with the rapidly increasing number of motor vehicles in use. One

of the major objectives of the Railroads' Association American Sound Transportation Review Organization program is a requirement that states devote a part of federal highway trust funds to grade crossing protective devices.

The Interstate Commerce Commission has previously found that the responsibility for providing protective devices at crossings now lies primarily with the highway for it is the motor vehicle and not the train that creates the hazard.

Lends Assistance

The following is from a letter received by Agent A. C. Carlson concerning a passenger's very heartening experience with a GM&O employee in the Springfield, Illinois Station. We think you will find it rewarding reading and no comment is necessary except to say that the signor's name has been omitted because of the personal nature of the experience.

"On the evening of February 12, 1971 my wife was boarding a train for St. Louis, Missouri when I discovered I had left my money at home in my other wallet and she did not have money for the ticket. At this time Ticket Clerk Charles George overheard us discussing our dilemma, and asked if he could be of assistance.

"I told Mr. George that I was a City Policeman and what had happened. Mr. George asked how much money we need. Mr. George went into his pocket and trusted me for this sum of money. I returned from home just as the train was starting to leave and in time to give Mr. George his money and wish my wife a good trip."

"Certainly in these crucial times a man with such regard, human interest, trustfulness in man, and warmheartedness is rare in our society where it is now do it to others before they do it to you; instead do unto others as you would have them do unto you. His respect for a Policeman, my loving wife will certainly never forget."

"Learning of the unique manner in which the customer's predicament was handled, President Glen Brock wrote in part to Ticket Clerk George - who incidentally is 33 years of age and has been with the Railroad not quite two years - "I commend and encourage you and thank you for the most pleasant thoughtfulness found in any paper that has flowed across my desk in the last several weeks."

Stuckey Promoted

Gerald C. Stuckey, Assistant to Vice-President - Traffic, has been promoted to Assistant Vice-President. His appointment comes almost two years after he was transferred to Traffic headquarters in Mobile from Chicago where he headed the Traffic office.

The new Assistant Vice-President has had wide experience in his field. He was a Traffic Representative at Atchison, Missouri; Commercial Agent at Bloomington and Division Freight Traffic Manager at Springfield before going to Chicago as Freight Traffic Manager.

Prior to his traffic experience he held various positions at Meridian, Montgomery and Columbus, Mississippi working closely with train movements. A native of Meridian, his entire career has been with the Company and his first job was in that city almost 27 years ago.

Operating Promotions

Three promotions were announced recently by the Operating Department. They are:

R. E. Foehr, Road Foreman of Engines, Eastern Division with headquarters at Bloomington to General Road Foreman of Engines, Northeast Region, including East St. Louis, with headquarters at Bloomington.

L. M. Burns, Road Foreman of Engines, Northern Division with headquarters at Jackson, Tennessee to General Road Foreman of Engines, Northwest Region, with same headquarters.

H. G. Wood, Engineer, Tennessee Division, with headquarters at Jackson, to Assistant Road Foreman of Engines with headquarters at Murphysboro.

Foehr came with the Company in 1958 as a Fireman, was made an Engineer in 1953 and Assistant Road Foreman of Engines in 1961.

Burns first job was also as a Fireman, in 1912. He became an Engineer in 1910 and Assistant Road Foreman of Engines in 1966.

Wood started as a Brakeman in 1958, was made a Conductor in 1956, a Fireman in 1957, an Engineer in 1967 and then Assistant Road Foreman of Engines.

New Diesels and Cars

Twelve new 2,000 horsepower diesel locomotives have just been added to GM&O's power fleet and another 15 have been ordered for later delivery.

Also bolstering our equipment fleet will be a consignment of 600 50-ton box cars which will be going into service during May and June as they come off of the production line.
Engineer Retires
With Perfect Safety Record

This is the story of a dedicated railroader, a man who fired and ran a locomotive for almost 60 years and retired recently with a PERFECT PERSONAL RECORD — no accidents or injuries, no black marks of any description to mar it and with 29 commendations inscribed thereon for exceptional performance within and beyond the call of duty.

Mild-mannered and unassuming, but with strong convictions in his beliefs, Engineer Remer Blackwood sees nothing unusual in his remarkable career. "I feel that I have been justly rewarded for my efforts, but I look back over the years with great pleasure and sincere memory of the untiring cooperation of those with whom I have worked," is the way he sums it up.

It all began in 1917 when he climbed aboard No. 42 of the New Orleans, Mobile and Ohio (an early predecessor line of the GM&O) on Ackerman Hill. His "affiliation with railroading" had begun as a boy, and with relatives working for the Company, he had already gained some experience. But had been unable to land a real job.

A SMILE AND A BAG

CHINUAPINS

Armed with a friendly smile and a bag of chinuapins for the crew, he took the scoop and fired all the way to New Orleans, logging the general manager in this time and accompanied by the engineer to whom he had proven himself, he was hired.

On his first day he unloaded two cars of coal into an elevated fueling chute well ahead of the end of the 12-hour work day. Reporting back to the foreman for further duties he was asked, "What's wrong, boy, have you quit?" When informed that the job had been finished, the boss laughingly remarked that no one had ever unloaded so much coal so quickly before.

This same sense of job responsibility constantly prodded Remer Blackwood to exceptional efforts throughout his entire service. Like the time in 1939 when he was commandeered for cranking into a still hot ash pan to connect a grade which had failed. And in 1944, when the head prostration he prevented an untimely engine failure. Again, in 1947, when in addition to his own initiative, he hurried to Unionville to make temporary repairs to Engine 333 so it could handle Train No. 2 to its destination without waiting for substitute power.

Many of these unusual jobs that he volun-

tarily performed were made possible by a corresponding concern in air brakes and locomotive management which he evinced while working as a fireman. With this background of knowledge, he recalls, "my job became more interest-

ing, some of my hardest tasks netted me a great deal of pleasure."

Less than five years after becoming a cen- tral man, the year 1925, Blackwood made approximately 18,700 miles at the throttle without a single engine failure. This feat, too, became a part of his personal record at headquarters.

NEVER A CROSSING ACCIDENT

In all his years in the cab he never struck or killed anyone at a grade crossing or had a crew member injured by his train. Twice he prevented would-be suicides from diving beneath the wheels of his engine. Their presence and unusual actions caused him to become suspicious and to take precautionary measures just in time.

Quick thinking and a thorough knowledge of his job prevented an accident in what the engineer terms his closest call. Here's the way he relives it:

"Approaching the curve at mile post 313 at 60 mph, I saw an unusual light reflection on the rail, and though I had a meet at Bere with No. 32 a mile and a half away, I did not think it was his light unless he was overrunning the meet. By the time I began settling the brake, the engineer was on the curve, where only seven-tenths of a mile away there was a burning bridge. The engine was equipped with a decelerator that automatically governed the stopping rate. The service rate was one and a half miles per hour per second and would consume forty-two seconds. The emergency rate was three mph per second and would consume twenty-one seconds. It was fortunate that I chose the quick way (emergency braking) as the bridge was two-thirds destroyed.

A BIT OF AN ACTOR

But within the make-up of the machine-minded man there also lurks a bit of the ham actor. In the steam days, due to his proficiency at the throttle and the efficiency of his personally tuned engine, he made unbelievably long runs without stopping for coal or water. His feats soon became legendary as they were repeated along the line, and sometimes he liked to make it appear that he actually was doing it.

On one occasion he led his conductor and flagman to believe that he had run from Jackson, Tennessee to Louisville on one tank of water. At the last point where they expected him to stop, he ran on by. Then at New Albany Relay Yard while they were busy elsewhere, he stopped back and filled his engine tank from a trailing supply tank without their knowledge.

Another use he used to avoid having to report a delay for taking water he tells this way:

"I seldom took coal or water at Gray as I controlled my coal consumption and really enjoyed seeing the attendants at the coal chute dance and threw their hats up when they heard me coal the whistle that Mr. Brock had permitted me to tune to my liking. When the train crew thought this would be one time I would stop. I continued to sail. However, when I stopped for the C. & G. crossing at Madison, I oiled around and took enough water to make Louisville, thereby avoiding any reportable delay taking water.

These were during the crucial times when President Brock, as General Manager, was conducting the General's center's to cut costs and get the trains over the road faster. Rivalry was high and the competition was all in good fun.

During the almost six years that Blackwood was Road Foreman, his responsibilities were broadened and on every occasion he conducted himself with distinction. It was his belief that a road foreman should have an answer for every problem.

He remembers particularly an assignment that took him to the American Locomotive factory to follow one of our first diesels through the assembly line and to sign the final papers for its delivery.

However, as interesting a job as this was, when an unusual circumstance arose in which he felt he could not conscientiously perform his assigned duties in the light of his previous affiliations, he resigned and returned to the cab of the train.

He continued to find better ways to do the job and to lend a helping hand in time of need, and his new position as division superintendent was heartily accepted.

While Remer Blackwood is no longer with us, he was for 48 years a credit to the railroad and a credit to the community. His devotion to duty and perfect service record will always stand high as an example for others.

Miss Peel Honored

Mary Edna Peel, daughter of Conductor and Mrs. T. L. Peel of Slater, was honored by being accepted for inclusion in the 1970-71 edition of Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges.

A Missouri Valley College senior, Miss Peel is in the one-half percent of all the country's college students singled out for this honor. Selection is on the basis of outstanding scholastic standing, service to the community, leadership in extra-curricular activities and future potential. She will graduate in May with a Bachelor of Science degree.
SAFETY is perhaps the most widely used word in the railroad language. SAFETY is written, spoken, heard, seen and thought of almost every minute of the day and night. The dictionary defines SAFETY as—exception from hurt, injury or loss. But the real concept of SAFETY is in the mind and hands of the individual, who interprets its significance in each day’s performance.

T. S. (Tom) Merrick is an experienced and careful switchman in the Blooming-ton yard. He is 54 years of age and beginning his 31st year of service. He has a perfect SAFETY record.

We asked Tom Merrick if he would mind giving us some of his SAFETY thoughts for the GM&O News, and he graciously agreed. Here is what he says.

"With regard to Safety First we should know the rules and work accordingly, plan your work in advance, be familiar with all special instructions, be sure that all safety equipment is in proper working order, be aware of weather conditions and also the area in which you are performing service as changes in foot and track conditions differ from day to day. Be extra cautious after dark.

"If we have any doubt whatsoever regarding what course of action to take, the only thing to do is to stop and ask the boss. If you can't get a man's attention, find another man who will help and make sure that all concerned know and understand the orders and instructions before proceeding with your assignment.

"The best advice that I can give is: Don't gamble with Safety, because when you do you are only betting your life, but also, the lives of all who are depending on you to do a safe job."

Tom Merrick is married and has two married daughters. His father was a railroad man, too, working for the old Alton. He's secretary of UTU Lodge 234 and football and baseball are his hobbies.

Every acre of timber the paper mills own puts out 4,000 tons of pure oxygen every 24 hours.

Comments on News of the Day

(An excerpt from an article by William D. Grampp in the Wall Street Journal)

The Rail Passenger Service Act, which established Railpax, makes it clear that the government, in sustaining rail passengers service, intends to use the very methods that the railroads themselves have been denied by the Interstate Commerce Commission.

This week the National Railway Passenger Corp., as Railpax is officially known, announced the routes and schedules it will begin operating in May. The number of trains will be cut to 155 from 365 currently operating. Railpax has decreed it will travel 21 routes serving 114 cities. It will announce its fares later. Neither fares nor service are subject to regulation by the ICC or any other agency. That is monopoly power, as any tyro in economics knows.

The railroads, of course, do not have this power. The ICC regulates their fares and has authority over the amount of service. If a railroad wishes to remove a train from its schedule, the ICC can delay discontinuance for up to a year. The state agencies also can delay it.

Railpax is exempt from these restraints; the Secretary of Transportation was authorized to specify the routes and service. He was required to hear the views of the ICC, railway unions, state governments and other interested groups, but he was not required to comply with them. He did, in fact, add five routes to the sixteen he at first wanted. His decision is not subject to change by Congress or review by a court.

The 21 routes must be operated until 1973, after which any reduction is subject to delay by the ICC. Railpax on its own authority may add to the system and remove what it has added. This feature of the law probably has made the basic system smaller than it would have been had Railpax been given the power to reduce as well as to increase service.

The law suggests an obvious question: Why couldn't the railroads have been given the power Railpax was given? Why was a new corporation needed to do what the railroads themselves have wanted to do? Of course such power is inconsistent with the Interstate Commerce Act and the antitrust laws. But Congress has exempted Railpax from them and could have exempted the railroads.

The postal service and the telephone systems are two of the most widely used means of communication today.

The cost of communicating between two cities such as Chicago and Los Angeles by first class mail has risen 300% since 1932, and the possibility exists rates may be raised again to be an ounce.

Telephone costs, in contrast, have dropped dramatically over the same period, and today the cost of a three-minute daytime call between these cities is about one-fourth the cost in 1932.

The postal service was one of the first and most important functions of the Federal Government when the republic was founded.

Telephone service, on the other hand, has been left in the hands of private enterprise.

One can only wonder what would have happened if our founding fathers had telephones and had decided that only the government could make them work.

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*3-mile a day time rate between Chicago and Los Angeles
**First class surface mail.

(From Cross Ties)

Discussing the need for a greater understanding of the railroads' problems by the public in the farm belt, Columnist Phil Murphy of Progressive Railroading had the following to say about car shortages. "In the Farm Belt a man knows that he cannot afford to buy a very expensive combine to use for one week or so a year in harvesting his grain and then have it set idle the rest of the year. He can therefore, readily understand, if told, why a railroad cannot keep empty boxcars standing on the siding just to have them available for a few weeks or months of rush grain service. It should be explained to him that just as the government provides highways and airports for his use, it should also provide stand-by service on cars to move his grain, but with the difference that such a service would not cost him a cent as the cars would be purchased on trust certificates and eventually would pay for themselves, etc., which cannot be said for either highways or airports."

The St. Lawrence Seaway, built more than ten years ago and envisioned by its sponsors as a badly needed waterway between the Atlantic Ocean and The Great Lakes that would pay its own way from ship tolls, can't even generate enough revenue to pay interest on its debt to the U.S. Treasury.

The overall debt stands at about $156 million and now legislation has been proposed that would not only wipe out past and future interest charges, but would even cancel the entire debt.
How would you like to do 40% of the work for only 14% of the pay?

Last year the railroads hauled more freight than all of the trucks and barges and airlines combined.
This adds up to 1,476,500,000 tons of not only coal and iron ore and chemicals, but oranges, canned peas and round steak. The public too often thinks of railroads carrying only heavy bulk commodities, and not relating everyday staples to rail transportation.
"But we must remember," the Secretary of Transportation said recently, "that those goods are shipped in bulk at vital stages of their manufacture or processing, and that without the mass movement capabilities of our railroad system... shopping bags could soon be empty!"

Of the overwhelming number of products that are delivered finally by truck, rails play an indispensable role in their earlier movement and distribution.
The very fact that last year 3,487,998 trailers travelled piggyback on rail cars attests to the tremendous importance of a smooth, integrated, intermodal system of transportation.
For doing their 41.1% part in meeting our transportation needs, the railroads received 14.1% of the pay. But the fact that we pay far less to ship by rail than by other modes is not the problem. The railroads are proud to provide a dramatically economical way to ship. The problem is they lack the freedom to apply these economies intelligently to changing needs and situations.
The rules governing one part of our transportation system differ in concept and application from rules governing another.
Today's railroads are forced to operate under a concept of restraints that dates back to the 1870s. These cumbersome and complex federal regulations are further complicated by overlapping state regulations.
There is no freedom for railroads to raise rates where rising costs have made it necessary.
There is no freedom for railroads to lower rates where possible.
There is no freedom for experimentation to streamline the rail system to operate efficiently within our modern day competitive economy, for its own health and that of our economy.
But there is a railroad crisis.
And it is a crisis that burdens every consumer with high cost and inefficient transportation.
It is a crisis perpetuated by laws that treat the railroads as a 19th century monopoly, rather than part of a 20th century intermodal transportation system.
The President himself has stated in his Economic Report to Congress that these laws are no longer justified.
It is time to end the crisis.