

General News Department

The freight house of the Erie Railroad at Paterson, N. J., was partly destroyed by fire on the night of December 7, together with two freight cars. Estimated total loss, \$25,000.

The dining cars of the Pennsylvania Lines west of Pittsburgh now serve coffee (and also other drinks) in vacuum pots which keep the liquids hot throughout a meal, or even for several hours.

The shops of the Missouri, Kansas & Texas at Sedalia, Mo., have been ordered to run seven days in the week; nine hours a day on week days and eight hours on Sundays. A similar announcement was made last week by the Huntingdon & Broad Top Mountain Railroad.

Tests of the operation of electric locomotives on the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul electrified line in Montana were held on December 8, when officers and directors of the road and officers of the General Electric Company made an inspection trip over the line in a test train consisting of three special cars and one of the new electric locomotives. The test included travel at various speeds up to 70 miles an hour and with various tonnages.

Harry E. Duey, a brakeman of the Pennsylvania Railroad has been awarded a medal by the Interstate Commerce Commission for saving the life of a small child which was playing on the track a short distance ahead of the train in which Duey was riding. He climbed out of the cab of the locomotive to the front end and succeeded in pushing the child off the track. His feat was noticed in the *Railway Age Gazette* September 3, page 430. The medal was accompanied by a commendation letter from President Wilson.

The report of the Chicago Association of Commerce committee on smoke abatement and electrification, declaring the electrification of the railroads in Chicago to be financially impracticable, was presented to the Chicago city council at its meeting on Monday evening, and was referred without comment to the railway terminals committee. The council then adopted unanimously by a viva voce vote an order directing the committee on railway terminals to "take up for immediate consideration the subject of electrification of steam railways within the city of Chicago, and to report to the council at an early date such ordinance or ordinances as in its judgment may be necessary to bring about the adoption of electricity as a transportation power where steam power is now employed." This action was also taken practically without discussion.

A Remarkable Improvement in Train Loading

In an editorial in last week's issue attention was called to the large increases in freight train loading in 1915 as compared with 1914, shown by nearly all of the roads whose annual reports we had received. We have since received the report of the Chicago, Terre Haute & Southeastern, which has increased its average number of tons of freight per train mile from 558.81 in 1913 and 669.01 in 1914 to 739.54 in 1915.

Land Valuation

Thomas W. Hulme, general secretary of the Presidents' Conference Committee for the federal valuation of the railroads, has sent a circular to the carriers suggesting that where the rights of way or other operating property of two or more carriers are so located or are of such character that their values are necessarily related, such carriers can well co-operate in securing information as to the value of this property, in this way avoiding duplications, decreasing the cost of making the valuation and securing values which are in harmony and which the carriers will be able to sustain.

It has also been arranged that territorial meetings be held at various points, attended by representatives of the carriers to discuss the progress made in securing land cost data and other problems which are arising from time to time.

American International Corporation

Frank A. Vanderlip, president of the National City Bank, New York City, announces that this concern has been formed for the purpose of establishing trade relations with foreign countries. The corporation has 20 directors, representing all lines of business. Included in the list are William E. Corey, James J. Hill, Otto H. Kahn, Robert S. Lovett (chairman of the executive committee of the Union Pacific), Charles A. Stone, and Edwin S. Webster. Mr. Vanderlip says that the corporation is not a mere money-making enterprise; it will stand for the development of America along international lines, and will endeavor to assist in financing the rehabilitation of industries in foreign countries.

J. G. White Co. in Brazil

The Latin-American Public Works Corporation is a concern which has been organized in the interests of the J. G. White Management Corporation, New York, for operations in foreign countries; and it is announced that negotiations are going on which are expected to result in a contract under which the Brazilian State Railways will be operated by the J. G. White interests. Reports indicate that negotiations are well on the way to completion; but the principal holders of the bonds of these Brazilian roads are in England and France, and to get their approval is likely to require several months.

The new project does not call for ownership by American interests of the Brazilian railway system. That ownership will remain with the Brazilian Government. The Government has leased its railways to English and French capitalists for a period of years, and it is understood that the Latin-American Public Works Corporation merely plans to take over the lease for the unexpired term. The project, however, will carry with it the necessity of financing for new equipment and possibly for new construction. This financing may call for the sale of South American securities in the New York market.

Recommendation on Change in Fiscal Year

At the last meeting of the National Association of Railway Commissioners in San Francisco the committee on statistics and accounts, of which B. H. Meyer of the Interstate Commerce Commission was chairman presented the following recommendation:

"In connection with the matter of annual reports required of carriers, representation has recently been made by the Association of American Railway Accounting Officers that the reporting year should be changed to the calendar year. The reasons urged for the change seem to have much merit. One obstacle in the way of change lies in the fact that several state statutes definitely fix June 30 for the close of the reporting year. The federal law gives to the Interstate Commerce Commission the option of changing this by a general rule to December 31, so far as reports to that commission are concerned. It is recommended by this committee that the various state commissions seek to procure corresponding amendment of state laws so as to give the state commissions the option of changing, if after a full and careful consideration of the matter they shall conclude that such change of date is desirable."

National Foreign Trade Convention

The National Trade Council has announced the preliminary program for the third national foreign trade convention to be held at New Orleans, La., on January 27, 28 and 29, by the council in co-operation with the New Orleans Association of Commerce. The convention has been called to enable American business men constructively to discuss the necessary national policy for extending foreign trade, and the council will lay before the convention results of investigations of the most pressing problems in connection with foreign trade. The time of the convention will be largely reserved for general discussion and there will be group sessions in which all delegates will have an

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