

Notes and News.

Mexican railways are equipping their cars with automatic couplings as rapidly as possible. The Mexican International has all its cars equipped, the Mexican National and Mexican Central are about half equipped and other roads are in various stages of progression.

At a hearing of the committee of the Texas Senate, which has in charge the double-header question, Col. L. J. Polk, general manager of the Gulf Colorado & Santa Fe, appeared to oppose the reopening of the question, which was settled last year by reference to the railroad commission. The commission's decision was adverse to action against double-heading. Colonel Polk concluded his statement as follows: "If, in the opinion of your committee, the bare findings of the railroad commission are not sufficient to convince you that they were based on sound reasoning, and that the honorable gentlemen composing that body are incompetent to intelligently pass on such important questions as this, which the wisdom of the Twenty-sixth Legislature properly decided should be referred to them for final disposition, I respectfully ask that you summon them before you that they may be given an opportunity to defend themselves against the imputation of incompetence, which the introduction of this bill in this Legislature implies."

Track elevation in Montreal has received a set-back in the refusal of the Grand Trunk to elevate from Bonaventure station to Saint Henri, unless the city will pay \$1,000,000, or one-half the estimated cost. The city offered to stand good for \$500,000, and probably will not undertake more.

Only 7 miles of single track, this between Rotterdam and Mechanicsville, N. Y., remains on the main line of the Fitchburg division of the Boston & Maine, and the double tracking will be completed early in the spring. About 3½ miles of 85-pound steel in 45-foot lengths has been laid in the Hoosac tunnel. To ventilate the tunnel more satisfactorily the fan at the central shaft is to be operated hereafter 19 hours a day instead of five hours, as heretofore. The enlargement of the freight yard of the Worcester Nashua & Portland division at Ayer, Mass., has been finished.

The M. C. B. committee on "Triple Valves" has recently completed tests of a new form of triple valve submitted by Mr. R. Fitzgerald, general superintendent, Chicago Junction Railway. The tests were made upon the association rack in the laboratory of Purdue University. They were conducted by Messrs. G. W. Rhodes, W. S. Morris and William McIntosh, representing the M. C. B. committee. The committee was assisted by Mr. A. J. Cota, air brake instructor of the Burlington system; Mr. W. P. Huntley, Jr., air brake instructor of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad, and also by members of the instructional corps and by students of Purdue University. The owner of the valves was represented by Messrs. Harvey S. Park and M. W. Hibbard.

The attorney-general of Ohio has instituted in the Circuit Court of Franklin County proceedings in quo warranto to oust the Pennsylvania Railroad Company from continuing its relief department. The State claims that the company, in violation of law and in abuse of its corporate powers, is engaged in the business of transacting life and death accident insurance.

The sale of the properties of the Chicago Terminal Transfer Company, including the Grand Central station, 91 miles of lines in and about the city and over 700 acres of adjacent land, much of it in the heart of the city, with an extended river frontage, to the Harriman syndicate, is an event of great local importance. It is rumored to mean that the commodious station building now occupied only by the Baltimore & Ohio and Chicago Great Western roads, will also have as tenants the Chicago & Alton and Wisconsin Central, with possibilities for establishing vast terminal facilities, freight and passenger, in which still other companies may participate.

Mr. Godfrey W. Rhodes, assistant general superintendent of the Burlington & Missouri River Railroad, delivered on January 24 an address before the engineering students of Purdue University. His subject was "The Burlington Brake Tests." He first described the various changes which step by step have led from the hand brake to the present high speed brake and briefly discussed their significance. After referring to the extent and character of the Burlington tests, he emphasized the fact that every brake which on that occasion was subjected to test had been pronounced unsatisfactory by the committee and that all have since completely disappeared from service. It was worthy of note, he said, that no one had complained or had found fault with the committee because of its conclusions. Those whose apparatus had given most promise found in the results facts which served to give new ideals and to lift their practice to higher planes. The Burlington tests proved the impracticability of the buffer brakes and disclosed serious defects in the automatic air brake, which at that time was in its early stages of development. The work, he said, had profited by the association of a large number of persons who were concerned

in planning its details and in the final execution of the tests, the credit for the results being shared by from 30 to 50 people. The modesty with which the speaker referred to the difficulties encountered, and to the far-reaching effect of the results obtained, aroused but slight suspicion in the minds of the student audience that he was the leader in the great work he described.

The joint committee of the Trunk Line and Central Passenger Association, in session in New York last week, agreed to recommend the following rates to Buffalo during the Pan-American Exposition: New York to Buffalo and return, good during the season, standard, \$17; differential, \$16; limited tickets to be sold only on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the month of May, standard, \$13.75; differential, \$12. New York to Buffalo and return, good only on "coach excursions" and limited to five days, \$9.60. Chicago to Buffalo and return, good during the season, standard, \$21.60; differential, \$19.20. Chicago to Buffalo and return, good for 15 days only, standard, \$18; differential, \$16. Chicago to Buffalo and return, good for five days only, standard, \$14.50; differential, \$13. The committee also recommended the establishment of a three-day excursion rate, from territory hereafter to be determined, to Buffalo, of about 1 cent a mile.

The Mississippi Railroad Commission has decided that logging roads are not subject to the payment of the privilege license required of railroads, because they are not public carriers. But logging roads are very common carriers in that and various other States.

The regular meeting of the junior section of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers will be held at the society rooms in New York on the evening of February 5. A paper will be read by Mr. John C. Wait on "The Relation of Specifications to Other Parts of the Contract for Construction Work." At the November meeting the same author presented a paper which discussed the law of contracts in general as applied to construction work. The present paper will discuss the relation to the owner, contractor, engineer or architect, of the bid, contract obligation, specification, bond and plans, and of the procedure in the event of conflict of various parts of the contract in the performance and completion of construction work.

The attorney-general of Texas has filed suit against the Texas Midland Railroad Company for penalties aggregating \$180,000 for offenses alleged to have been committed by that company in violation of the railroad commission's compress rules, in hauling cotton flat out of Terrell and away from the compress at that place to Greenville for compression. The rules of the commission require that cotton shall be compressed at point of origin.

The color line question has reached Missouri by the introduction of a bill in the Senate requiring all railroad companies or persons in the public transportation business to furnish separate cars or coaches for white and for black persons. Each car shall be provided with a partition, containing a door, to constitute a separate coach. Doors must be marked. In case of the failure of passengers to abide by the conditions of the law, the train officials are vested with the power to refuse to carry them, not being liable for damages. Railroad employes are exempt from the provisions of the law, hence Pullman porters will not have to change their color in going through Missouri.

The new governor of New Hampshire, in his inaugural, protested against the law requiring the railways to pay the salaries of the State railroad commissioners. It does look rather odd. Out West the way is to tax the railways enough to pay the railroad commissions and all the other expenses of State government, also.

The Northern Pacific, says that veracious writer called Eli Perkins, has won the name of being the cleanest and most picturesque road on the continent. When General Miles commanded at Miles City he said to Charles S. Fee, who has always been the general passenger agent of the Northern Pacific: "Mr. Fee, is your road so very clean?" "Clean, general! Clean! Why, general, a sweet bride and handsome groom got on our train at Seattle with their nine beautiful bridesmaids, all dressed up in white satin dresses and white kids, and when they got off at Saint Paul they were cleaner'n when they got on! Clean, general? G'wan!"

In Stockholm, Sweden, a cablegram says, the street railway administration has ordered that every suburban train at night must be provided with a separate car for intoxicated persons only. This is even harder on the roads than the Jim Crow car laws in the South. For a conductor can tell a black man from a white, but how can he tell when a man is intoxicated, if the man denies it, or what degree of booziness entitles a gentleman to ride in the private car.

The Burlington road, also, has interfered with the scalpers in behalf of the travelers by posting notices in its station buildings stating that the company will redeem at full face value any part of an unused ticket reading over any line of the road.