Letters to the Editor

Train Control Not in Experimental Stage

TO THE EDITOR:

American railway students are inclined to assume that American railroads are superior to the British, and that nothing can be learned from British experiences in rail transportation; and the American railway economist finds a considerable satisfaction in a comparison of the relative costs of producing transportation in the two countries. There is no more convincing language in which to express general superiority of our American railroad art than in the relative costs of the ton-mile. Certainly the American public, served by our railroads, might be in a worse economic position. Every American railway man may well be proud of the American railroad machine, of which he is a cog. But this does not in the least justify any cessation of vigilance concerning the expenditures of any department of this transportation system of which we are so proud. We really have much to learn and there is no economy in ignoring the experience of our European friends. Even some recent improvements in our steam locomotives have been employed a long time in Europe.

Take the case of automatic train control: In America there has been too much speculation concerning the effect on railroad economics, and on train operation in particular, and not enough attention to fact. Most of us were young when the Great Western of England installed the electro-mechanical ramp type of automatic train control. It has been many years since members of the train control board of our Interstate Commerce Commission went to England, where they saw this system in operation. Recently the Great Western signal department, the engine drivers, and other employees who were interviewed by the writer spoke enthusiastically about the control. Naturally the drivers disliked the word "automatic stop" and dwelt more on the facility with which trains could be run even when semaphores were obscured by bad weather. The signal department claims that the device, installed on 99 locomotives, is giving very satisfactory service, and, had the war not interfered, they say that most of their main line would have been equipped by this time. They emphasize the necessity for simplicity if satisfactory operation and maintenance are to be had.

It appeared to the writer that the bristling array of semaphores on posts at the side of the right-of-way might be so confusing to drivers that the train control would be peculiarly helpful; for, of course, only the signal for the one track is repeated in the locomotive from the ramps. Even with three-position semaphores or light signals the American engineman seems to have plenty of trouble sometimes in finding which of the many signals applies to him. The British are watching with interest the three-position signals of American manufacture now in use at Victoria station, and some of their signal engineers expect to adopt three-position semaphores eventually.

The American railway man who "sees America" first, last and all the time, will find that here in our own country a road with comparable experience with automatic train control has the same favorable report to offer. There is no need to speculate; the facts are at hand. A simple train control is a good investment.

Chicago. P. X. R.

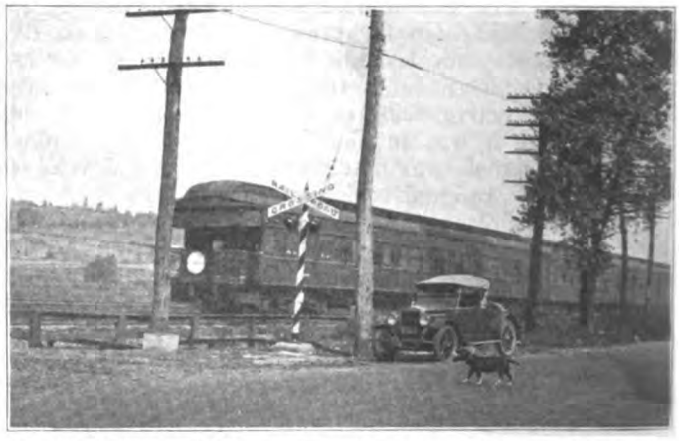
General Railway Signal Company and Federal Signal Company Consolidated

ACCORDING to newspaper reports received as *Railway Signaling* is going to press the General Railway Signal Company has acquired control of the Federal Signal Company. It is reported that the board of directors of the General Railway Signal Company held a meeting on September 28, after which it was announced that a consolidation of this company with the Federal Signal Company of Albany, N. Y., had been effected, through which the General Railway Signal Company acquires all of the properties and effects of the Federal Signal Company.

A. H. Renshaw, president of the Federal Signal Company, will become a director and a vice-president of the General Railway Signal Company; Paul Renshaw, vice-president and general manager of the Federal Signal Company, will assume the position of sales manager of the General Railway Signal Company, and Frederick Pruyn, of Albany, will become a director of the General Railway Signal Company.

The Federal Railway Signal Company was organized in 1905 by the owners of the former Standard Railroad Signal Company. The company was reorganized in 1908 as the Federal Signal Company. The capitalization of the present company consists of $275,000 of first preferred stock; $600,000 of second preferred stock; $1,400,000 of common stock. The plant of the Federal Signal Company is located on the New York Central Lines at Albany, N. Y.

The General Railway Signal Company was incorporated in the state of New York on June 13, 1904, to manufacture and install railway safety devices. This company acquired the plant and properties of the Taylor Signal Company of Buffalo and the Pneumatic Signal Company of Rochester. Subsequently the Buffalo plant was disposed of and the manufacturing business concentrated in Rochester where the main offices and plant are now located. This company maintains agencies at New York, Chicago, Montreal, Que., London, England and Melbourne, Australia. Its authorized capitalization includes $6,000,000 of common stock and $4,000,000 of 6 per cent cumulative preferred stock, of which there is outstanding $3,000,000 of common stock and $2,000,000 of preferred stock. The total assets of the General Railway Signal Company on Dec. 31, 1922, were $9,247,128.



Flashlight Type Highway Crossing Signal Placed in Service on September 8, Near Lansdowne, Md., on the B. & O. The Capital Limited Is Shown Passing. Picture Furnished by N. C. McLeod.