

Letters to the Editor

MECHANICAL LOCKING

TO THE EDITOR:

It has always impressed me that mechanical locking is a department of signaling which has not received the deserved attention from either writers on the subject of signaling, or from the men in the field. A large number of real signalmen have the impression that anyone who can passably handle a hack-saw, file and hammer can do locking work. They can if they can handle these tools well enough, but it is getting so that first-class mechanics of this kind are becoming scarce on most of the railroads. The work of this kind has been left to men who have spent practically all of their lives on mechanical interlocking; these men can do good work, but, as before said, they are getting scarce. There no doubt is a great number of special tools and good ideas among these pioneers of the signal game, which would surely be of great benefit to the younger class of signalmen that have not had the opportunity to specialize on the mechanical end of signal work. Why should not these men utilize your columns, giving the readers their ideas as to tools necessary for work on different types of locking, covering not only those tools that can be purchased, but also those of special design?

R. C. BINGHAM.

Memphis, Tenn.

PROPER CARE OF MOTOR CARS

TO THE EDITOR:

The motor car, like other equipment, should receive proper attention and care if good results are to be obtained and safety in operation observed. I have found that the three fundamental items in the care of a motor car are cleanliness, keeping the parts well oiled and seeing that all nuts, screws and rivets are tight. It is advisable to have a certain day or part of a day once a week to be devoted to the general inspection and care of the car. Some signalmen make it a practice to look over the car every time that it is used. This is generally accomplished in a very short time, and some parts are naturally neglected.

When cleaning a car it is advisable to use an old pail or wash basin to wash off the cylinders, hubs and wheels with gasoline, as this will cut off all the gummed oil and grit that cannot be rubbed off with waste or cloth. It is also advisable to remove the wheels and wash the shafts in the same way. If there are any flaws these can likely be seen. If it appears necessary to order repairs, this matter should receive immediate attention. A man, after he has become acquainted with his car, will know the weak points about it, and it is advisable that he have duplicate parts on hand for any emergency repairs. Gasoline tanks should be cleaned out at least once a month to remove the sediment and other foreign matter which will accumulate and cause trouble sooner or later. Another source of trouble is caused by leaky fittings on the gasoline supply pipe. These leaks are sometimes caused by the pipe vibrating and gradually loosening unions and soldered joints. This can be overcome to a certain extent if some kind of brace is fastened from the frame of the car in such a manner as to hold the pipe rigid. The fuel must be clean and free from water. The tank should be tight and well protected, and when filling it the gasoline should be strained

through a chamois-skin strainer, as this will remove the dirt and water. Spark plugs should be cleaned often during cold weather, and it is also a good policy to clean them immediately after a long run, as this will many times save delay on an emergency call. In case of an accident in which parts of the car may be bent such parts should not be straightened in the field by hammering, as by being straightened cold flaws are likely to appear which will cause an accident at a future date.

Chicago, Ill.

SAFETY FIRST.

ENGINEERS—ATTENTION PLEASE!

TO THE EDITOR:

Ding-ling-ling! Dong-dong-dong Dinkety, dinkety, dink—biff bang boo! This is not an alarm for gas masks, but ear muffs, if that member of the human anatomy is unaccustomed to the ensuing charge by the enraged towerman, who is vehemently denouncing (in language not used in polite society) those harmless little telephones on each wall of the tower which insist on ringing simultaneously at a time when steen freights—umpty ump passengers and two goats are trying to get over the same track at the same time. Is it not provoking and is it not reducing the efficiency of the towerman and rail traffic? Our modern switching and signaling apparatus has been designed for the greatest efficiency in the handling of traffic, yet no consideration has been paid to the smallest, yet one of the most essential features of the plant, the telephone. Such apparatus should be assembled conveniently to the towerman so that he could receive and answer and make calls without doing a marathon around the tower every minute or so.

Could not some method of mounting a jack box, desk set stand equipped with head receiver cord and plug, generator and other apparatus necessary in the operation of the telephone service at each tower, be devised whereby such apparatus could be placed on a carrier immediately over the levers and which could be adjusted along the levers to the point the towerman desires? "Sure Mike"—then why not get busy, engineers, and remove this unnecessary evil, make the tower 100 per cent efficient and calm the harsh words of our fellow worker, the towerman.

J. C. M.

Chicago, Ill.

THE SIGNAL LIGHT

BY G. L. BAGGERMAN

You may talk about your sunlight from perfect summer sky,
When the world's ablaze with glory and your harvest hopes are high;
You may revel in its glamour on the mountain, by the sea;
But the light of the signal is the light that's leading me.

You may linger in the mellow light of the moonbeams as they play
In your garden full of roses when the night is sweet with May;
You may drink with merry wood nymphs while the lily's cup is damp,
But the light that lures my fancy is the old signal lamp.

You may boast about your searchlights on the battleships at sea
And the part they play in warfare—in achieving victory.
You may laud them for the slaughter when the fortresses are bared,
But the triumph of the signal light is when human life is spared.