Final Train Control Order Issued by I. C. C.

Tentative Order of January 10, Including 49 Roads, Made Permanent Without Important Change

THE Interstate Commerce Commission on June 15 made public an order, dated June 13, that the tentative order of January 10 directing the 49 railroads named therein to install automatic train stop or train control devices upon designated portions of their roads, should be entered, and that the installations prescribed should be completed by January 1, 1925. The list of railroads and, with two exceptions, the portions of road designated are the same as published in connection with the tentative order in the *Railway Signal Engineer,* January issue, page 924. The points between which the Cincinnati, New Orleans & Texas Pacific is required to make the installation have been changed to Cincinnati and Chattanooga instead of Cincinnati and Knoxville; and in the case of the St. Louis-San Francisco Springfield, Mo., and Tulsa, Okla., are substituted for St. Louis and Springfield. The railroads are those having annual gross revenues of $25,000,000 or over. It is required that the train control device be operated in connection with all road engines running on or over at least one full passenger locomotive division between the points designated.

The roads are required to submit to the Commission complete and detailed plans and specifications for the installation of the devices prior to the installation, and each installation when completed will be subject to inspection by and the approval of the commission or any division thereof to which the matter may be referred.

The date for the completion of the installation is set six months beyond that named in the tentative order; and the time within which the roads are required to furnish plans of their block signal systems and lists showing the number and types of their locomotives is extended six months, or until January 1, 1923. The roads are directed to proceed without unnecessary delay to select and install the devices, and to file with the Commission, on or before January 1, 1923, and on the first day of each month thereafter, full and complete reports of progress. However, the Pennsylvania and its controlled lines, and the Norfolk & Western, for good cause shown, are allowed until July 1, 1923. The Pennsylvania, however, will be required to file plans and reports beginning July 1, 1922, for the installation (now being made) upon its Lewistown division between Lewistown and Sunbury, Pa.

The specifications and requirements for the installation of automatic train stop or train control devices adopted by the Commission and prescribed in its order are the same as those in the tentative order, omitting the permissive feature which was in the specifications of the A. R. A. committee. The order itself is substantially in the form of the tentative order, to which the roads were given an opportunity to show cause at the hearings (in March) why it should not be put into effect.

For the benefit of systems including two or more of the roads specified the report says that those which may desire to adopt a device as standard on each of their roads may test the device on one road and during such test will not be expected to make the additional installations.

An abstract of the commission's report follows:

Report of the Commission

This is a proceeding under Section 26 of the interstate commerce act which authorizes us, after investigation, to prescribe the installation of automatic train-stop or train-control devices or other safety devices, upon the whole or any part of the railroad of any carrier by railroad subject to the act.

On January 10, 1922, we entered an order under which certain specified carriers, were given an opportunity to show cause, if any, why an order should not be entered requiring the installation of automatic train-stop or train-control devices upon designated portions of their lines. Hearings have been had at which all respondents, except nine, were represented by a general committee (C. E. Denney, chairman), and at which carriers individually presented data and arguments.

Respondents represented by the committee opposed generally the entry of an order at this time upon the grounds—First, that there has not been any automatic train-stop or train-control device developed to an extent which would justify the issuance of an order. Second, that the carriers have not had opportunity to make adequate service tests of devices which differ fundamentally in their principles of operation from those now installed and in operation under service conditions, which were referred to in our report. Third, that every reasonable effort is being made by the carriers to co-operate with the commission for the purpose of testing and developing devices which will best meet operating requirements. Fourth, that the order requires a much greater number of and more extensive installations than are warrented, in view of the present state of the art. Fifth, the costs of installation and maintenance of automatic train-stop or train-control devices are high and not within the present financial abilities of the roads. In connection with this objection it is contended that it should first be determined whether automatic train-stop or train-control devices will provide equal or greater additional safety for a specified expenditure than a like expenditure for automatic block signals, double track extensions, interlocking plants, additional steel equipment, under crossing and grade separation; most of which, it is urged, not only increase safety but increase the capacity of a railroad and produce economies in operation.

Supplementing the general objections special objections were raised by many carriers to the entry of an order requiring installations upon their respective lines. Proprietors and manufacturers of automatic train-control devices were also heard.

(Here follows a history of what the commission has done in this field since 1906, concluding with the opinions formed by the Block Signal and Train Control Board and the Bureau of Safety). The conclusions reached as a result of the investigations conducted from 1906 to 1920 were that automatic control of trains is practicable; that the use of such devices is desirable as a means of increasing safety, and that the development of devices had reached a stage warranting the installation and use of such devices on a more extended scale. The results of these investigations, which had been reported by us year by year to the Congress, and the recognized need for some such device resulted in the inclusion in the Transportation Act, 1920, of a section which places upon us the duty after investigation, of ordering the carriers or any of them to install upon the whole or any part of their lines automatic train-stop or train-control devices or other safety devices, which comply with specifications and requirements prescribed by us.

Following the enactment of that section we were urged to order the installation of various automatic train-control devices. * * * In order to carry out the provisions of Section 26 in the most effective and expeditious manner, we invited the co-operation of the American Railway Associa-