

Editorial Comment

Think Safety

As a result of the hurry to handle war-time work with reduced forces, there has been increased laxity, on the part of some railroad men, in the prevention of personal injuries to themselves and their fellow workers. As discussed by a division superintendent at a recent safety meeting, safety is a good habit; we must think safety, and develop the habit of working safely if we are to avoid physical suffering due to avoidable accidents. He pointed out the folly of sacrificing safety by taking chances in a hurry to get work done, because, if haste results in an accident, you may not work for a long time. He agreed that safety is an old story, but an old one only to those who have developed the habit of working safely; many other men who did not think what they were doing are gone from our midst, or are short perhaps a hand or a foot which they lost with considerable physical suffering. Therefore, safety is ever a subject of importance.

When discussing signal maintainers and others who have their headquarters away from terminals so that they cannot attend safety meetings, this superintendent suggested that the signal supervisor adopt the practice of discussing safety with these men. A letter to the editor concerning some of these practices and written by a signal supervisor was published in the March issue of *Railway Signaling*. This letter dealt primarily with the need for teaching new employees the basic elements of safety first. Mention was made also of improving the safety habits of older signalmen who may become careless. For these reasons, all of us must think safety, and act safely, to prevent personal injuries.

Teaching The Meaning of Signal Aspects

UNTIL the rush of war-time traffic arrived, it was generally assumed, correctly or incorrectly, that the old heads who were then running trains were thoroughly familiar with signal aspects. In the last few years, I.C.C. accident reports have shown that new employees and in some cases old employees do not always understand clearly what all the signal indications mean. To overcome this a widespread campaign of education has been embarked upon by the operating departments of many railways and this campaign is one which, of course, deserves the complete support and co-operation of all signaling officers. Examples of this are numerous and several such educational devices have recently come to our attention. For example,

the Pere Marquette has developed a series of colored films which are shown to all train and engine employees and switchmen on the railroad. These films portray various signal aspects quite clearly and they have the advantage of not being general studies but photographs of actual signals on the district over which the employees are running every day. A trainmaster supervises the showing of these films and answers any questions that may arise.

On the Missouri Pacific, a somewhat similar film has been developed covering the proper operation of switches. Switch targets, of course, play a considerable part in this film and the Missouri Pacific plans the issuance of a further series of films covering other operations which will feature signals of all sorts. These films will eventually be shown to every operating department employee on the Missouri Pacific.

The Western Maryland has recently fitted out the most completely equipped instruction car in the country, and one of the features of this car is a display of miniature movable signal replicas in color for the purpose of educating new employees as to signal indications.

Many other railways use these and other means for educating new employees concerning signals. These various systems of promoting proper operation and safety deserve the complete support of all signal engineers.

The Leverman's Viewpoint

A VIEWPOINT was expressed recently by a signal engineer to the effect that many interlocking and signaling layouts may have been planned carefully to meet the requirements laid down by operating officers, with reference to train operation, but that further advantages in reducing train delays might have been accomplished by close studies of local conditions in the field by the signal engineer or his representative.

For example, when planning a certain interlocking, a signal inspector spent several days and nights in the offices of operators and in towers with levermen to secure information from these men which should be available to them concerning the approach and passage of trains, in order that the interlocking could be operated most effectively in preventing train stops and delays. A result was that special controls and equipment were provided so that the leverman would be informed automatically of the route to be lined up for an approaching train.

In another instance, in order to save line wire when installing a certain interlocking, a combined circuit was used to indicate the approach of trains on two different routes, in combination with an indication of a signal aspect. After the project was in service for a time, the leverman reported improper operation of the annunciators, such that he operated the plant in a manner that caused a train delay.

Although it may be granted that, as a general rule, many operators and levermen like to find fault with signal and interlocking facilities, nevertheless, some of their ideas are worthwhile, and if their suggestions and opinions are solicited while projects are being planned, some slight changes or additions may be made at small cost which will prove a big advantage in future operations of trains.