

due to general business conditions. Many of these trespassers are good citizens who are going from one community to another seeking employment.

People as a whole do not see the railroad trespass situation from the standpoint that those of us who are interested in safety do. They see no harm in a man getting a ride on a freight train from one point to another, feeling that the railroad has lost nothing through such conduct. They do not seem to realize that the railroads' principal thought in eliminating the trespasser is from a safety standpoint, and I believe that this condition is not only prevalent among the public who are non-railroaders, but it is quite prevalent among the rank and file of railroad employees. There is also a malicious hazard, however, as we know from experience.

The average illegal train rider is not familiar with railroad safety devices, and he places himself in jeopardy continually when he is on a train. We have had many injuries to trespassers, some of them fatal, due solely to the fact that they do not know what is a safe practice and what is not a safe practice around the freight train. They ride on top of box cars, are injured by coming in contact with overhead structures, and they attempt to get on and off trains when they are moving too fast.

The adult is much harder to reach in matters of this sort than the juvenile. I believe that we have had some success on the Baltimore and Ohio, as far as the juvenile is concerned. The opportunity to reach him is somewhat different. It is our policy when a child is found on our right of way to secure his name and address and the name or number of the school that he attends. If the child lives within a reasonable distance of the railroad, the officer is instructed to take him home and to advise his parents that he has been found on railroad property and the danger of such trespassing. The visit of the officer to the home is followed up by a letter from the Division Head to the parents, and this letter not only gives the facts about the trespassing, but explains in some detail the danger which the child has incurred by being among the tracks on the right-of-way. The letter also asks for the co-operation of the parents in keeping the child off of railroad property, and encloses to the parents some literature that will help to impress upon the mind of the boy what might happen to him on busy railroad property. Another communication is addressed to the principal of the school which the child attends, advising the principal of the fact that the child has been found trespassing on railroad property and requesting his cooperation also, in explaining to the child the danger of such practice.

We find that communications addressed to the principals of schools are acted upon very favorably. The principal calls the child who offends to his office and endeavors to impress upon him the danger that he places himself in when playing around the railroad. Quite frequently, also, the parents of children are pleased to hear from us and so express themselves. We have had many letters from such parents in which they thanked us sincerely for our efforts to keep the boy out of danger and have described their home methods of discipline and instruction.

Uniformity in Defining and Reporting Accidents

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The speaker said in part: We have a book of rules for reporting steam railway accidents which has been in force since 1922, and, generally speaking, we have a uniform observance of those rules among all railways.

The only question is as to the degree of variation in applying the rules in certain details to the officers of the various reporting companies. As to fatalities, I think we have practically complete uniformity and reliability. The Claims Department may handle more death claims than the number of fatalities reported to the Interstate Commerce Commission, but when account is taken of the number of persons dying

after 24 hours following injury, these being reported to us separately as "subsequent fatalities," and of the cases not arising from the operation of a railway and hence not reportable, it probably will be found that we are getting complete reports of fatal railway accidents on a uniform basis from railways in the United States.

But it is not so clear in the matter of injuries. The interpretation of the three-day rule is not uniform. It is true, we have issued instructions regarding the precise way in which the counting of the 3-days shall begin and end. That is not where the primary difficulty lies. It is in the variation in practice in getting people back to work promptly and in the interpretation of the phrase "sufficient to incapacitate him from performing his ordinary duties for more than three days."

In our interpretation of doubtful cases, we have regarded some instances as not reportable where the victim was able to follow his regular occupation within three days but with the assignment of somewhat lighter duties. Possibly we should make it clearer that we mean that the employee should be able to go through the same kind of motions that were performed prior to the accident by that particular employee. This would take some flexibility out of the rule and lead to greater uniformity. Where a man's assignment on his return to work is changed for other reasons than his physical condition, the determination of reportability would, of course, depend on the doctor's opinion as to whether he could reasonably have been assigned to the previous activity.

It is true, if all railways are doing this to an equal degree, there would be a lack of uniformity not among roads, but merely as between the totals for present and past years. But probably this incentive to restrict reports to a minimum has not affected all roads to an equal degree because some managements are doubtless more enthusiastic about safety contests than others. This disturbing factor in our statistics will in the end prove beneficial in leading to more exact study of what should be a reportable accident. The lack of comparability in the annual totals for various years will be temporary and will come to an end when all roads have gone as far as they can or want to go in getting people back to work promptly.

I do not wish to be misunderstood in inferring that the marked reduction in injuries shown by the statistics in recent years is all a fiction. On the contrary, there has been a striking improvement, as shown by the fatal accident rate which I consider accurate. The number of employees killed per million man-hours in the prosperous year 1923 was 384 compared with 308 in the most recent prosperous year, 1929. In 1931 the figure was down to 212. Apparently the industrial depression has reduced accidents more than in proportion to the decline in employment, for the reduction from 308 to 212 can hardly all be due to safety efforts in two years.

Other factors to consider in interpreting the decline in the ratio of injured to killed are, (1) that better surgical care tends to prevent trivial injuries from becoming serious enough to be reported, and (2) that in recent years the intensive work on safety in shops, where fatalities are relatively few, would tend to reduce injuries more than fatalities in the grand total for all employees. From 1888 to 1924 there was a tendency for the ratio of injuries to fatalities to increase. It was approximately 10 to 1 in 1888, 16 in 1900, 28 in 1910, 58 in 1920, and 81 in 1924. The 3-day rule was not changed in that period. Possibly the explanation is that the preponderant safety effort to prevent casualties in connection with train and car movements reduced the deaths more than the injuries in the grand total for all employees, since injuries are relatively fewer in such accidents. Also, injuries may have been incompletely reported before 1915.

Whatever the relative importance of these various factors may be in affecting the comparability of the total casualty rate in railway accident statistics from year to year, I think we are getting more nearly accurate reports than ever before because of the close attention that is given to what is a reportable accident. I know that safety officials are earnestly seeking the facts and I think they will accept the responsibility of putting uniformity and reliability of the reports above suspicion.