

## Office Efficiency Notes.

Seventy-two members attended the second regular meeting of the Frisco Office Efficiency Association, Assembly Rooms, Frisco Building, Springfield, Mo., February 19.

Upon motion duly seconded, it was decided that the reports of the committees would not be read in their regular order, but instead that the order would be changed so that the heavier reports would be handled at the morning sessions and the lighter reports in the afternoon.

The line-up agreed to was, first: Executive Committee's Report, which was read by the chairman of that committee. In this report particular stress was laid on the item relating to chief clerks going over reports with a view to cutting out some of them, or at least copies of the report.

Action was taken on the following subjects as per the report of the committees:

### REPORTS COMMITTEE.

Elimination 325-A Report. It was found this could not be done, but the number of copies issued was largely cut down, showing considerable saving, and the subject was passed as read.

Monthly Inspectors' Interchange Report, showing number of defect cards issued, etc. Recommendation of the committee was that this report should not be discontinued, and upon motion, the committee's recommendation was accepted.

Daily Overtime Report, Form 935. Investigation indicated this report to be very important, and recommendation of the committee was that it be not discontinued. The subject was passed as read.

Report of Surplus Turntables on Hand. Committee had already secured authority from Chief Engineer to discontinue, and the subject was passed as read.

Sending in tissue copy of Engineers' and Firemen's pay rolls to General Su-

perintendent Motive Power. Mr. Hancock having agreed to discontinuance of this unless especially asked for, the subject was, upon motion, passed as per recommendation of committee.

Standard sheet for distribution M. of W. and B7B material. Recommendation of the committee was that this be referred to the different Chief Clerks to determine and advise their requirements and views. Upon motion, this subject was passed.

Form 712 Daily Report of Mileage made by Engines in Switch and Work Service. The committee's recommendation was that upon handling with the Car Accountant, the report could not be discontinued, and it was therefore, upon motion, decided that the subject be passed.

### FORMS COMMITTEE.

Suggested new form for distribution of labor and material to replace Form MP 2. As the committee had already referred the matter to Messrs. Nixon and Hancock, and had their approval for new form, the recommendation of the committee was adopted as read.

Change in Form 909 Local. Changes having been approved by Mr. Hancock, and printing of the changed form authorized, upon motion, the subject was passed.

Reduction in size of Form MP 120 Standard, committee reported the matter had been referred to Mr. Hancock, who approved the change, making a saving in printing of \$35.00 yearly, and, upon motion, the subject was passed.

Suggested reduction in size of Form 2101 Local. Committee reported the matter had been handled through Mr. Frank Anderson, who, having approved the change, with a saving in printing of \$5.00 per annum, the question was, upon motion, passed.

Reduction in size of Form MW 16 Standard. The committee having recommended change be made with saving in printing of \$21.60 per annum, upon motion, the committee's recommendation was accepted.

Abolishment of Form MP 36 Local. Coach Cleaning Report. As this was in use only at Kansas City, and the matter has been handled by Mr. Hancock, who advised its use could be

discontinued at that point, the subject was, upon motion, passed.

Abolishment of Form MP 105 B Standard, Daily Report of Locomotives. Committee having handled with General Superintendent of Motive Power, who had stated Form could be abolished, upon motion, the subject was passed as read.

Change in wording on bottom of Form P-16. Auditor of Disbursements having approved the change and the committee recommending its adoption, the subject was, upon motion, passed.

Change in Form MW-94 Local. Daily report new rail laid. Recommendation of committee was that form be abolished when present stock was used, which recommendation had been approved by the General Manager, and thereafter form to be mimeographed. Upon motion, the subject was passed as read.

Reducing size of Form CT 84 Standard. Committee having secured the approval of General Superintendents to the suggestion, the subject was, upon motion, adopted as read.

#### CORRESPONDENCE AND FILES COMMITTEE.

Suggestions that in handling calls where a number of parties have been addressed on a given subject, instead of matching up the file and sending it over as replies come in, it be held until all replies received. The committee recommended against this, but did recommend that all correspondence be handled over the Chief Clerk's desks except as to acknowledgement of circulars. Upon motion, it was resolved that where a Chief Clerk has four or five parties dictating that the practice of all correspondence passing over the Chief Clerk's desk be discontinued, and that acknowledgement of circulars be handled the same as any other correspondence.

Waste of stationery in double spacing letters. In connection with this there was read a letter from Mr. F. C. Pearson of the General Manager's office, suggesting the use of short sheets of paper where letters comprise not more than twelve lines. This subject was thoroughly discussed, and upon motion, it was resolved that instructions be issued by the General Manager to all concerned that letters that could conveniently be written on half sheets

be so handled, Stationer agreeing to furnish half sheets on requisition.

Suggestion that Car Accountant address Agents direct about mis-reporting car numbers and initials on wheel reports. Committee recommended that Superintendent write each Agent at point where train terminates that these reports must be mailed the same date. Upon motion, the subject was disposed of as recommended by the Committee.

Agents giving equal attention to Western Union Telegraph business as to Railroad Company business. Committee having concurred in recommendation that Superintendent so instruct agents, upon motion, the subject was adopted as read.

Monthly Statement of Charges to Additions and Betterments. Committee recommended against elimination of this statement for reasons stated, and upon motion, recommendation was accepted.

Paying expense accounts by Agents. Committee recommended no change in the present form of expense voucher, and upon motion, their recommendation was accepted.

General Offices in issuing instructions to all Agents, furnish sufficient number of copies of their General Circular to handle with all parties interested. Committee strongly recommended this, and upon motion, their recommendation was accepted.

Car Accountant to prepare mimeograph forms in writing conductors for information as to wheel reports. Committee had already handled with the car Accountant, who agreed to put the scheme in effect, and upon motion, the subject was passed.

Matter of arriving at number of cars handled as reported on 504 report. Committee recommended that General Superintendents re-issue instructions bearing on preparation of 2680 report, and upon motion the Committee's recommendation was accepted.

Using check sheet in keeping line on Station Agents' requisitions. This considered in connection with the Correspondence and Files Committee report. Considerable discussion was provoked and motion was made that all divisions use the Check System. Amendment was proposed and seconded that General Superintendents issue in-

structions outlining the plan and putting it into effect at once. Upon motion, the amendment was accepted and upon motion made and properly seconded, the motion as amended was adopted.

Inauguration of loose leaf book in each office containing instructions to clerks. Committee's recommendation that each clerk be required to prepare a detailed statement showing work performed on his desk, and that when new instructions are issued, copies be given to each clerk, was adopted.

Suggestion that better understanding be had between Chief Clerks and subordinates. Subject was adopted as read.

Use of dictaphones in division offices. Considerable discussion was had on this subject, all concerned being of the opinion that economy could be had both in time and possibly in money, and upon motion, it was resolved that the Association request Vice-President Greig for authority to secure machines for test purposes in two or three division offices. This was amended by leaving the matter to Chairman Van Valkenburg to handle with Mr. Greig.

Adoption of mail box at division points where train, enginemen and others may leave mail without addressing envelopes. Recommendation of the committee being that many offices were already doing this and that it be adopted in each division office. Upon motion the recommendation was adopted.

Use of larger blotters between leaves in pay roll impression book. Committee recommended that this be adopted. Upon motion, the subject was passed.

Suggestion as to increasing the size of pay roll impression book, loose tissues and copying cloths. Mr. Lorimer having stated that this had already been taken care of by furnishing larger cloths and the book slightly increased, upon motion, the subject was passed.

Suggesting that check of pay rolls in division offices be performed by some clerk other than the one writing the roll. Committee recommended, and

upon motion, their recommendation was accepted.

Preparation of list of Clerks in each office showing position, term of service, experience, salary, etc. Committee recommended this be done and submitted sample of form and upon motion, recommendation adopted.

Issuance of instructions as to watch deduction orders. Committee recommended that cases differing in some particular, no rule could be laid down, but the Timekeeper use best judgment. Upon motion, the recommendation was adopted.

Vacations for Clerks. Committee recommended each case be handled on its own merits, and upon motion, their recommendation was adopted.

Numbering of requisitions on Storekeeper. Committee recommended that the requisitions from any one division be assigned not to exceed three series and upon motion their recommendation was adopted.

Method of prevention of overlooking bills for detouring. There is a rule now in effect that the Chief Dispatcher furnish the necessary information to the Accountant as well as to the C. T. Timekeeper, and upon motion, it was resolved that the General Superintendent reissue the instructions that Chief Dispatcher so handle.

Method of notifying Auditor of all bills that should be made, discussion developing that there was no particular trouble along this line except in the office of the Car Accountant. It was, upon motion, moved that the Car Accountant thresh out this trouble himself with the Auditor.

Bad Order Report. Committee's final recommendation was that the system recently inaugurated by Mr. Doggrell of sending out these reports twice each week, and then issuing a letter at the end of each two weeks, giving comparison. Upon motion, their recommendation was adopted as read.

Filing and handling of O. S. & D. claims. The committee's recommendation outlined fully a method for filing and upon motion the scheme as outlined therein was adopted.

## Some More Reasons Why Railways are Unpopular.

The railways of the United States are more popular than a few years ago. They are so because they have set out to make themselves so. They have tried to popularize themselves by correcting things that are wrong and remediable in their service and rates, and by explaining things that merely seem wrong or are not remediable. But the roads are not nearly so popular as they want to be, and ought to be for their own good and the public's. This is largely because there still exist conditions that need to be changed. More people come in contact with railways as passengers than in all other ways. The way passengers are served, will, therefore, make a road more "boosters" or critics than anything else. And the way passengers are still treated by the roads and their employes in many instances makes thousands of critics.

This paper published a few years ago (Railway Age Gazette, November 19, 1909) an article entitled "Some Reasons Why Railways are Unpopular," in which were given specific examples of the sort of shortcomings of the railways or their employes we now have in mind. Recently many roads have conducted campaigns among their employes on the subject of consideration for and courtesy to passengers. In many passenger cars and stations, placards are tacked up stating that the managements desire their patrons to be given every reasonable consideration and attention, and asking patrons to report to headquarters all cases of incivility, etc. These things have had a wholesome effect. But it is still true that a large part of the employes who deal with passengers are not as civil as they ought

to be and that many are careless or incompetent.

Furthermore, there are serious defects in the passenger service of numerous roads which the managements alone can correct. This is especially true on branch lines. One of the most serious shortcomings is the glaring disproportion between the amount of attention given and money devoted to providing through passenger service and local passenger service. When we observe the kind of local service given on most branch lines and on many main lines we do not wonder that public sentiment in communities outside the cities often becomes hostile to the railways or that the people of these outside communities often encourage the development of electric interurban lines and flock to them when they are opened.

Take, for example, the difficulty that people at towns and small cities often meet in getting proper sleeping car accommodations. Our experience has been that in most cases when the agent at a country station is asked to wire reserving a lower berth he fails to do so, and the passenger has to take an upper berth, or gets none. The passenger in that case criticises the railway management. Why shouldn't he? The agent represents the management; and the management is properly held responsible for his faults of omission and commission. Here is a specific instance which illustrates what often happens: A traveler going from a good-sized city to a small town had to change trains at 3:30 o'clock a. m. He asked the ticket agent at the point of origin to

telegraph for a lower berth for him on the train to which he was to change. When this train came in he hurried, carrying two heavy pieces of baggage, toward the rear where the sleeping cars were. None of the doors of the sleeping cars were open; and he had to carry his baggage back to the chair car and go through the train back to the sleeping cars. He finally found a porter who was awake, but who knew nothing about his reservation. The ticket agent should have wired for the reservation, but apparently did not. And the doors of at least one of the sleeping cars should have been opened, anyway; for the rules require this at every station where a stop is made. In this case complaint was entered, and both the railway management and the Pullman Company took prompt action.

Here is another experience of the same traveler: Desiring to leave New York for Chicago he telephoned for a drawing room on a through sleeping car operating over two lines connecting at Buffalo. When the ticket was delivered it was not for a drawing room, but a section, and it was returned. Then the ticket agent said that the drawing room could not be reserved until the next morning, one hour before the time for the train's departure. Repeated inquiries as to why at last elicited the information that the agent was preparing to sell the passenger a drawing room on a car that went to St. Louis, in consequence of which, without previous warning to him, he would have had to change cars at Buffalo. Naturally, he got angry and went by another route. And if he had gone the way he originally planned and had found he had to change at Buffalo, he naturally would have been indignant. Think of such things happening in connection

with transportation between two such points as New York and Chicago.

Recently an eastern business man who was traveling from one end of the continent to the other reserved a drawing room from one of the large interior terminals to the Pacific Coast. When he got on the train he found the same drawing room had been sold to other persons who were in possession of it and refused to give it up. He stood on his rights, insisted on having a drawing room, and the railway had to put an extra sleeping car on the train and haul it 2,400 miles. That was pretty expensive for the railway. But who ought to bear the expense and annoyance caused by the carelessness or incompetency of railway employes?

The dining car service of the railways of the United States is the best in the world. But things occasionally happen in dining cars that are enough to try the soul of patience. There is a certain railway president who has a disconcerting way of turning up in unexpected places. He turned up for breakfast at 7:30 o'clock one morning recently in a dining car on one of his own trains. He found the car cold and unclean, the cooking poor and almost every feature of the service unsatisfactory. When he finished breakfast he called the dining car conductor and told him to hand in his resignation at the end of his run. The astonished conductor asked for an explanation. The president replied that if that morning's service was a sample of what was being given on that car, and the conductor did not know why he should resign, that was a conclusive argument for discharging him. The result was that the conductor was not discharged, but that he became a chastened and a more efficient employe.