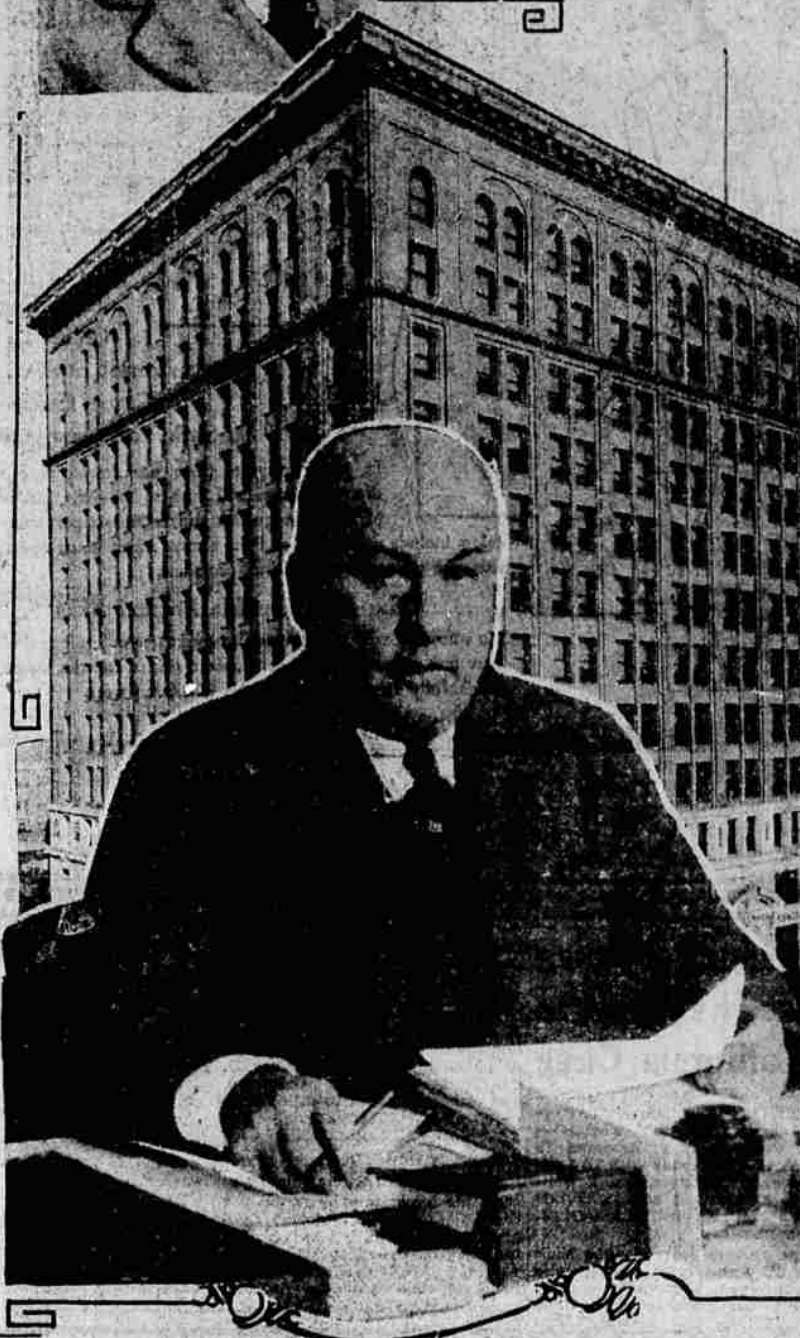


# Bill Jeffers of the U. P.

## Vice-President of Great Railroad System Knows the Boys by Their First Names from Track Laborers on Up, for He's Just One of 'Em; Began Career Thirty-eight Years Ago as Messenger Boy in Telegraph Office and as Call Boy for Train Crews



Bill Jeffers as a boy.

By J. L. Hays

"Bill Jeffers of the U. P." is living the great American adventure, he had the advantage of being born poor and having to do a man's work at fourteen. Now he's in charge of all the operating side of a great railroad system.

The U. P. Trail of pioneer days was the westerling path of the pony express, the covered wagon, and the Union Pacific railroad. It followed the Platte river to civilization's edge beyond which lay the great Northwest Empire. On that trail was born William Martin Jeffers who is an outstanding figure on the U. P. Trail of today—the trail of advancement and achievement with the Union Pacific system which is still a pioneering road of the west.

Was of the Pacific Northwest should know "Bill Jeffers of the U. P." He knows us. As vice president of the U. P. system he is intensely interested in the O. W. R. R. & N. unit and will pay us frequent visits. Daily we are before him on his often consulted desk map; and by glancing at his watch he can tell you the exact position of scores of freight trains which are in transit, bearing our lumber, our fruit, our grain, cattle and other products to market. And Bill Jeffers probably knows more "Hink," "Jacks," and "Joos"

along the right of way of the U. P. lines whose operation he is trusted with, than any man railroading today.

"I can't recall when I was really a boy," Mr. Jeffers recently told an interviewer. "It seems to me that I have always been working. But I've always liked my work and I've yet to find a day too long."

William Martin Jeffers was born at North Platte, Neb., Jan. 2, 1876 in a little home not far from the tracks. The tool of whistles, the clamor of bells and the puffing of switch engines was often his lullaby. His father was earning \$55.00 a month as a mechanic in the U. P. shops—not a low wage for that day. But then, there were nine children. So, with one year of high school to his credit, young Bill went to work with the Union Pacific as messenger boy in the telegraph office and call boy for train crews. That was in 1890. He was fourteen years old. He worked twelve hours a day, seven days a week, and got \$20.00 a month!

Mastered Telegraphy

The old time telegraphers liked "the kid" who never found work too hard. They taught him telegraphy and in two years he could handle his key with the rest of them. In 1892 he was rewarded with the job of night operator for the railroad at Hillsdale, Wyo., a few

miles east of the wild old cowpuncher town, Cheyenne.

Nights alone there—winter nights on the crest of Wyoming's rocky divide when the cowboy's horses were stabled and the wind was the only rider—nights when the little station rattled and the stove burned hot and the tick-tick, tick-tick, tick-tick of the big wear-faced clock went on and on forever keeping a count on eternity—those nights will never fade before the "inward eye" of the railroader whose jurisdiction now extended over every mile of track on the Union Pacific system.

Young Jeffers next became a clerk for the railroad at North Platte, handling time rolls and there developed a capacity for detail work. He stepped from that to timekeeper and extra foreman on a steel gang—a two-fisted job where his robust physique—the great

to be a 200-pound, six-footer) stood him in good stead. He got acquainted with bunk car life, with frying his own bacon and eggs, with open air railroading. And then, before he was nineteen, they made him train dispatcher.

He had started up with the U. P. Somehow, when a hard job needed to be done, they just naturally thought of young Bill Jeffers. It wasn't that he had more ability than others, but he developed his latent ability. He was always 100 per cent at work.

In 1899 he married a home town girl, the daughter of a Union Pacific head blacksmith. It looks as if you could turn every page in this fellow's life and find "Union Pacific" written on them all. The Union Pacific is his life; and men of his kind are the life of the Union Pacific.

A year passed and the road gave him a bigger responsibility—the job of chief dispatcher with territory extending from North Platte to Cheyenne and with six train dispatchers under him. Then in 1905, they made him trainmaster at Green River on the Wyoming division with jurisdiction over operations on the road as well as in the office. He was twenty-nine, full of the joy of living, happy in having a lot of work that "had to be done, riant."

"Jeff was a big, aggressive fellow, who had no time for the man who wasn't ready to take orders and do his job well," said an old-time friend of that period. "They soon got to know that when he said a thing he meant business, and no man who did the right thing ever found a fellow more willing to help him along when he needed it."

Promotions Come Fast

It's an old saying that getting kisses from a pretty girl is like getting olives out of a bottle. The similarity isn't in the flavor but in the fact that you have to struggle for the first one and the rest aren't so hard to get. Promotions are that way, too. When a company starts promoting a man and he "promotes the goods" on each new job, bigger promotions follow in rapid succession.

It was that way with young Bill Jeffers. From Green River he went to Denver as trainmaster in 1908, and in 1908 became assistant superintendent at Green River. The next year

he was promoted to become superintendent of the division from Rawlins to Ogden. In 1912 he was made superintendent of the consolidated division from Ogden to Cheyenne. On Washington's birthday, 1915, he came to Omaha as superintendent of the Nebraska division. November 1, 1915, he became general superintendent, and June 3, 1916, was made general manager.

Last Oct. 31 William M. Jeffers became vice president in charge of operation of the entire Union Pacific system. He succeeded E. E. Calvin, veteran operating head, who retired on that date.

"On Time" and "Safety First"

When a Washington fruit grower consigns his car of fruit to an eastern point via the Union Pacific today he knows it will reach its destination undamaged and on time. He knows that 10,000 fruit trains, eastbound, have arrived in Omaha on schedule without a single train being late since 1925. He may not know, however, that no one is more proud of this record than W. M. Jeffers, who has had great faith in the ability of his fellow employes to achieve it. The record is vigilantly guarded. The U. P.'s telegraph wires would "burn up" with orders if there was a possibility that the shipper's fruit car was going to arrive late.

You have read the news that Union Pacific employes have again won national awards for safety work. The road continues to rank foremost in furthering the cause of "Safety First." "Bill" Jeffers devotes his best efforts to safety work. With him it is a case, not of diminishing but eliminating accidents. He won't be satisfied until accidents cease to happen.

Perhaps that's his formula for success. Nothing is "good enough"—there is always a goal ahead. And then, too, there is the matter of this man's self forgetfulness. He lives his work. He loves it. Back in 1899 when he was married he took 10 days off. Three years ago he was ill for a period of three weeks. Last year he took four weeks for a trip across the water. So, roughly speaking, you can say he has had two months of vacation this century!

That has all the earmarks of real railroading.

### First Snake Of Season Reported At Summerville

By Mrs. C. M. Hale (Observer-Contributor)

IMBLER, Ore. (Special)—Another sign of spring was encountered last Friday when Alames Woodell and A. Page found a snake at the Summerville cemetery. It is very unusual for the snakes to come out from their winter quarters so early in the spring, but Mr. Page says that this one could travel with as much speed over the snow banks as over the bare ground.

A shower was given Mrs. Chris Hunt last Friday afternoon at the home of Mrs. Dan Westenskow. There were about 23 grown people and 19 children in attendance. During the afternoon a program was given consisting of several musical numbers by Mrs. Bernice Westenskow, piano, and Mrs. Bessie Westenskow, violin. Mrs. Lucy Westenskow gave a reading entitled "Lucy's Baby." Mrs. Hunt received many beautiful and useful gifts. Mrs. Charles Homes, Mrs. Otis Buchanan, Mrs. Alvin Westenskow and Mrs. P. H. Westenskow acted as hostesses and served refreshments during the afternoon.

Miss Merle Prizzell, of Pleasant Grove, came over Sunday and visited at the Frank McKeon home. Mrs. Rattie Hudson and children,

Reta, Gordon and Colleen, of Joseph, motored over Friday, spending the weekend with Mrs. Hudson's parents.

Mrs. Alvin Westenskow, Mrs. Dan Westenskow, Mrs. Harvey Crowder and Mrs. Otis Buchanan were shopping in La Grande last Saturday. While in town they stopped at the Grande Ronde hospital, calling on their friends, Mrs. William Furman, Mrs. Thomas, Mrs. Len Perry, Mrs. Pat Rollins and Halbert Rollins, all of whom are patients at the hospital.

Mrs. Len Perry was brought home from the hospital Sunday. While convalescing, she will be at the home of her mother, Mrs. Rose Gann.

Funeral services of the infant son of Mr. and Mrs. M. H. Fox

were held last Sunday at the Methodist church. The baby was christened David Elmer. Mr. Fox filled the pulpit here Sunday morning in his father's place. He is pastor at Jordan Valley.

In honor of her daughter Donna's tenth birthday anniversary, Mrs. Watson entertained for her with a surprise party, inviting the members of the fourth grade and their teacher, Miss Audrey DeLap, as guests. Refreshments of ice cream and cake were served.

K. C. Johnston, of Summerville, is seriously ill at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Vesta Prizzell. Mr. Johnston is a pioneer of the valley.

Mrs. Josie Day, of La Grande, was visiting friends here last Thursday. She expects soon to go

to Los Angeles for a visit with her daughter.

Glen Ledbetter, who is home from Willamette university, for the spring vacation, was calling on friends in Imbler Monday.

Les Greymbill and family are moving to Imbler. Mr. Greymbill will work on the section. He is also a minister and expects to conduct services at the Union church. Mr. Greymbill is a brother of Mrs. R. M. McCoy and Mrs. Charles McFall.

Miss Portha Westenskow who is teaching at Muddy Creek, spent the weekend here with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. William Westenskow.

The Woman's club of Imbler met last Wednesday at the home of Mrs. Irvin Westenskow. Mrs. Wilfred Westenskow had charge of the program which was "Reading

### Liberty Sunday School Re-Opened

By Mrs. Charles Spencer (Observer-Contributor)

GRANDE HALL (Special)—Liberty Sunday school, which was discontinued during the early part of the winter because of weather conditions, was resumed the first Sunday in March. Ernest DeLong is superintendent of the organization. Miss Dorothy Smith, student at the state normal school at Mount Hood, is expected home to spend

the spring vacation.

Ed Dunn has accepted a position at the C. L. Beale farm. Carl and Walter Sellers, of Weiser, Ida., arrived Sunday evening and will spend a few days at the homes of their sisters, Mrs. Willis Smith and Mrs. Thomas McComb.

The Liberty parent-teacher meeting will be held next Friday evening at the school house. Mrs. Bert Groat, the president, announces that E. A. Sayre, county school superintendent, and Wray Lawrence, acting county agent, will be present.

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Redhead, and son, Robert, of La Grande, were visitors Sunday at the home of Mrs. Redhead's mother, Mrs. Edith Gekeler.

Roy Gekeler, who has been in

### COVE PEOPLE RETURN FROM DENVER TRIP

By Mrs. A. G. Conklin (Special)—Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Lawson who left here by automobile Feb. 28 to visit in Denver, traveled as far as Boise, Idaho, but found the highways impassable and left their car, going from there by train. Mr. Lawson's father, C. E. Lawson Sr., who went with them, went on to Nephaska to visit a son. Mr. and Mrs. Lawson returned to their home here a few days ago.

The Rev. and Mrs. P. F. Sturges and Mrs. R. L. Barker attended the tea at the home of Mrs. H. N. Ashby in La Grande Saturday afternoon.

James Ogilvie, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. N. Ogilvie is employed on the ranch of A. A. Anderson, near La Grande.

The son born to Mr. and Mrs. T. C. Hefly at the Grande Ronde hospital Mar. 15 has been named Donald Raymond and weighs six and one-half pounds. Both mother and baby are doing nicely. Charles Edward, the four-year-old boy and parent of the Hefly family, is said to be very much pleased with his baby brother.

Mrs. A. G. Conklin was hostess at an informal breakfast Sunday morning. Covers were laid for eight. Beside the hostess there were, the Rev. and Mrs. P. F. Sturges, Prof. and Mrs. C. O. Springer, Mr. and Mrs. T. H. Conklin and Albert Conklin.

Mrs. L. J. Chadwick entertained the "Fun and Joy" bridge club at her home north of town Saturday afternoon. Spring flowers were used in decoration. Three tables were set up. Mrs. Stewart French won high honors. Lunch was served after the games.

The Rev. A. E. Hall who is conducting a revival here at the Baptist church was called to his home in Helix Friday owing to illness in the family. He returned last Saturday. The revival was carried on by the Rev. Mr. Dowie who is a guest at the home of the Rev. and Mrs. W. Platt.

Mrs. Cora Ilboom came home Sunday after spending two days with her daughter, Mrs. Don Galey, of Union.

Yamhill county for the last month on orange official work, is expected home this week.

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