

# WINTER DEVASTATES

## Railroad and Telephone Companies Make Preparation

## SYSTEMS GET OVERHAULING

## Storms and Wind Cause Transportation and Communication Companies Much Trouble and Expense—Large Crews of Men Kept in Touch for Emergency.

Boston, November 23, 1907.—Now is the time when, all over the country, the transportation lines and communicating systems are "tautening things up" for the winter. The season of menace for them is at hand. Before another month wind and snow and sleet and ice will have put an embargo on the work of the track layers and line builders, and the emergency men will be on duty. Each year our North American winters cost the railroads and the telephone and telegraph companies hundreds of thousands of dollars, and when we have a season of the "good old-fashioned kind" the damage runs up into the millions. If it were not for remarkable organization and ingenuity the annual loss, not alone to those who operate public service but to those who depend upon it hourly in business and personal life, would greatly exceed even these enormous figures.

So late every autumn while the last of the season's construction work is being hurried through before frost comes, there is a general overhauling. Busy gangs are set to work rebuilding the snow sheds along the railways, tightening bolts and braces on the bridges, renewing whatever shows signs of wear which might prove disastrous in stress of storm. And the construction men of the telephone companies, in one place finishing up new lines to give communication to some corner of the world hitherto inaccessible by wire, or to increase the already thick-clustering wires are, in another place, resetting poles, tightening guys, renewing cable, restringing circuits, or what-not, to resist so far as human ingenuity can the strain of the hard months to come.

Since the days of the pioneers there has been no more picturesque life, perhaps, than that of the telephone line builders. It is a curious mixture of gypsy wandering and the most exacting sort of practical work with such ingenious and perfect tools as few industries employ. Hardy, rough-and-ready fellows, these—"diggers," who prepare the holes into which poles are to be set; the "gainers" who strip the big timbers of their bark and fit the cross-arms to their places; the "pole setters" who swing the big tapering sticks into upright position; the "bankers" who press the earth closely about the base of the pole until it stands firm and true; and the "wire stringers" who, with their strange looking reel wagons pull the strands of hard drawn copper over the cross arms where the linemen attach them skillfully to the insulators. There is a small army of them—several thousand in all—constantly moving about the country, living here in hotels and boarding houses, there in tents, and yonder in trains of cars that tumble obligingly across the open country, careless of roadbed, rails or locomotives even of the highways ordinary wheel-traffic seeks.

Naturally, it is in the great expenses of the West—especially of the Northwest and Southwest—that the telephone construction car has come into use. For miles and miles there the communicating lines are carried through prairie and desert where there is scarcely a habitation and almost never a fit hostelry. The horses required for the heavier construction work also give motive power for the crew's living quarters. There are sleeping cars, with double bunks on either side and railway lamps swinging above the aisles between; dining cars, with a cook's galley in one end and in the others a long table that serves for feasting, and, in the evening hours, for the gatherings of good fellowship; and tool cars—all low set, broad-tired vehicles, heavy but not too hard of draught.

To meet emergencies promptly and efficiently the Bell system has an organization little known but remarkable in completeness and mobility. It would be neither economical nor otherwise feasible to keep a large number of big emergency crews in waiting, for there is never any telling where "trouble" is going to strike next. But in its regular forces—something more than half of the 97,000 employees are men—the Bell system has ready at all hours expert workers who can be hurried anywhere there is need to augment the local "trouble men" in time of an unusual demand. The American Telephone and Telegraph Company, which operates the national long dis-

service, and therefore has plants all over the United States, maintains store houses in about fifty of the largest cities, and these serve as emergency headquarters, in addition to the provisors, and all other accessories for repair to take care of its own territory.

In storerooms and yards are supplies of poles, cable, wire, cross arms, insulators, and all other accessories for repair work. Close at hand are kept trucks and horses ready to "rush" whatever is called for to the nearest railroad station at any hour of day or night. Frequently special trains are chartered for transporting materials over long distances. And when the "trouble shooters" have been brought as close to their work as the railroad can take them they find in waiting teams to carry them the rest of the way.

Preparedness is the motto of the Bell engineers. The whole country is mapped out in districts, each district studied carefully for every detail of transportation, of housing men and animals, of providing rations and minor supplies. It is not unusual in special emergencies to bring re-enforcements from considerable distances. In the case of a blizzard devastating a large area in the West, for instance, emergency crews have been brought from east of the Alleghenies, while floods and wind storms in the East have more than once been the cause of the calling of assistance from as far away as Chicago.

Arrived in strange territory, the chief of the emergency gang is not wholly without knowledge of local conditions. Sitting in his hastily improvised headquarters he spreads before him a map that gives the location of every pole and wire in the field of operations and draws from his pocket a book that informs him where among the townsmen or farmers of the neighborhood teams can be secured, food and lodging for the men engaged, extra laborers hired, if they are needed, and many other details. All the necessary appliances are at hand and the work of reconstructing the circuits proceeds with amazing rapidity yet without the slightest confusion. It may be months before the plant can be restored to its original perfection, but it is a question of only hours, unless in extraordinary cases, before communication is resumed, and generally within two or three days all ill effects have been removed so far as the subscribers' service shows.

It is an effective organization, this. Instances could be multiplied almost indefinitely. When a cyclone nearly swept out of existence the thriving Mississippi city of Meridian it left the public service wires there in a confused tangle. Half the telephone lines were in trouble. It was up to the Cumberland Telephone Company to put its system in order again as soon as possible, and over the few circuits which still connected Meridian with the outside world assistance was summoned from other points in the Mississippi Valley. Within forty-eight hours after the storm the local service was entirely rehabilitated and rapid progress was being made in getting all the long distance lines into working condition again. Last summer, when fire destroyed more than half of the famous vacation resort at Old Orchard Beach, in Maine, with the certainty that there would be extensive demands upon the local service men from the offices of the New England Telephone and Telegraph Company in the neighboring cities of Portland and Biddeford were rushed to the scene of trouble and with very little help from farther away put the damaged telephone plant into serviceable shape before the night was past.

Just as the subway in New York City was nearly completed a fire occurred in one of the downtown subway stations which reached the telephone conduits and entirely cut off from everything the "Cortlandt" exchange, one of the biggest and most important central offices in the world. The damage was very considerable, but such are the resources of the New York Telephone Company for coping with mishaps that all repairs were made and complete connections restored within twenty-four hours. Again, at the time of the Kansas City flood of half a dozen years ago the Missouri and Kansas Company's service was not only altogether disabled, but it was restored to effectiveness mainly by the local forces in surprisingly short time. The San Francisco earthquake demolished much of the property of the Pacific States Company, as it was then called, in the metropolis at the Golden Gate, but really marvelous work was done in restoring service in the days immediately following the calamity, and the rush in which a brand new switchboard was put together for the principal exchange of the stricken city is still well remembered by experts of the Western Electric plant in Chicago, who had the job in hand.

### BUSINESS RIVALRY.

Steel Magnate Strikes New Keynote in This Respect.

NEW YORK, Nov. 23.—E. H. Gary, chairman of the directorate of the U. S. Steel Corporation, has struck a new and

# A Prize Puzzle

Do You Know Our National Songs? Find the Hidden Lady and you'll be Well Rewarded.

Alice and Susie are drinking tea; the young man is waiting for Mary to play the piano; where is she?



Find the Third Lady in This Picture and Secure a Prize.

DIRECTIONS—Trace outlines with heavy lead pencil.

To every person sending correct solution of this puzzle, we will give, absolutely free of charge, a Music Book, nicely bound, containing fifty of the old favorite national songs—only one copy to each person—with the words and music; also many other valuable prizes FREE. Send now, as this announcement may not appear again.

Winners will be notified by mail. Cut this out, place in an envelope, enclose stamp for reply, and mail to main store.

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remarkable keynote in respect to business was reviewing the speech he made here recently to representative steel and iron men, Mr. Gary is quoted as saying:

"Too many men have learned too late that the friendship of the public and the confidence of one's competitors are the most desirable elements in business.

"I want to see how competitors succeed. It is the policy of the steel corporation not to crush competition by fair or foul means. The steel trust controls about 60 per cent of the steel and iron business of the United States, and there is no intention of enlarging that control. We believe conditions will be better with healthy rivalry.

"It is clear that the U. S. Steel Corporation with its extensive resources could use its giant strength, like other corporations to crush competition. But in the end would the game be worth the candle? The corporation would become an object of attack. In my judgment such a policy would be the undoing of our corporation in which billions of dollars are invested."

### MAXWELL STILL IN JAIL.

NEW YORK, Nov. 22.—Howard Maxwell, the indicted former president of the Borough Bank of Brooklyn, unable

to secure bondmen as security for him in the sum of \$30,000, and he was compelled to remain today in jail.

### Baptist.

Sunday school, 10 a. m.; sermon, 11; Christian culture choir, 6:16 in the evening. No sermon in the evening.



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