

A HEAD-ON COLLISION WITH THE BOTTLE

How the Railroads Have Banished Drinkers From Their Train Crews



Where Sober Brains are Needed

A HEAD-ON collision has occurred between the whisky bottle and the railroads of the country.

Railroad men, casting critical glances over the thousands of miles of tracks, are unanimous in declaring that the roads are in very much better condition than they were before the collision happened.

It's more than a mere figure of speech, this head-on collision. When the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad "went dry" on New Year's Day, what is believed to have been the greatest swear-off in history took effect, 25,000 employees of that big system becoming total abstainers.

Then, a few weeks later, a smash-up of the bottle occurred on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Third Vice President Potter, head of the operating department, issued an order prohibiting all employes having anything to do with the direction or running of trains from using intoxicants at any time, when on or off duty. Thousands of men on that immense system were affected.

All over the land railroads are frowning more and more upon the use of intoxicating liquors by their employes. A new chapter is being written in the history of the remarkable prohibition wave that is sweeping the country.

IT IS MERELY that the railroads appear to have taken a recent lead in insisting upon either total abstinence or the most temperate kind of living on the part of all employes.

In fact, their fight against alcohol goes back many years; but now, with a victory, after repeated defeats, that is amazing in its thoroughness, they find themselves indorsed by other enterprises and other classes of men to an extent amazing even to the most ardent opponents of the drink habit.

It seems as though a wide wave of abstinence from liquor, impelled by the tremendous local agitations that have swept counties and states for the last year, is flooding the country, gathering up men of various callings not only singly, but in groups of thousands. And the callings are as diverse as have been the tastes of humanity for its forms of alcoholic stimulation.

So the railroads are far from being alone in the triumph of their collision with the bottle. Yet so complete and imposing has been that victory that its magnitude makes it overshadow all the others. Charles R. Jones, chairman of the National Prohibition Committee, has put the situation most tersely:

"There are a million railroad men in the United States under what amounts to a practical rule of total abstinence.

"Our statistics show that the following roads, other than those mentioned in recent news items, have stringent rules against the use of intoxicants by employes, and all provide severe penalties: Duluth, South Shore and Atlantic, Grand Trunk, Central Vermont, Maine Central, Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo, International of Canada and others."

For over a month preparations had been made for the great swear-off among the Chicago and Northwestern employes; all along the lines the pledge had been circulated. It is believed now that in time every man employed, no matter in what capacity, from end to end of the 7000 miles of road, will become a total abstainer.

In Omaha the effect of the movement was pronounced, and may, perhaps, be cited as typical of the changed conditions in other railroad centers affected. At least 2000 railroad men who reside there, or reach there on runs, are now among the abstainers.

OLD PLACE LOSES PRESTIGE

"Roehrig's Place," known for years by every trainman west of Chicago, and particularly to those running in and out of Omaha, as the railroad man's retreat, is a thing of the past," says a dispatch from that city. "Famous for a generation as the 'catch-as-catch-can' for the hungry brake twister and the grizzled engineer and fireman, where they might get a whole meal and a glass of beer for a nickel, it has lost its prestige."

"Andy Roehrig's famous hot soup and wienies and cold lunch, held out as an inducement to the thirsty, have been supplanted by steaks, chops and 'ham and end.' They have gone on the water wagon, every mother's son of them," he declared. "There is only one thing left for me, and that is to serve them plenty of Missouri river water. I am going out of the saloon business next month."

"Roehrig's experience is not unlike that of many other saloonkeepers who in a great measure have depended on the patronage of railroad men in Omaha, and in towns along the lines of railroads entering the city. While this swear-off started with the trainmen on the Chicago and Northwestern, it has spread in a most remarkable manner to other trainmen in Omaha until, as Roehrig puts it, they are all on the water wagon."

"John Stuten, yard foreman for the Chicago and Northwestern, is given credit for having originated the abstinence movement. Whether or not this is true, it is certain that, once the movement was started, its growth was spontaneous, and many thousands of dollars which, up to January 1, were being spent in saloons are now going into other channels of trade."

"No railroad has ever operated without an iron-clad rule against the use of intoxicating liquors, but many

railroad men have considered it an indication of mental and physical weakness to admit that a temperance pledge was a requisite to total abstinence. "In the case of the Chicago and Northwestern men, it is not doubted that the world-wide reform spirit actuated them to a great degree in their swearing off; perhaps a bigger factor was an ultimatum from the officials of the road that with the annual reduction of forces temperate men would be retained in preference to those known to indulge their appetite for intoxicating beverages."

That this reformation was in a great measure due to the influence of Frank Walters, general manager of the Northwestern lines, there can be little doubt. Speaking of the swear-off, the general manager said:

SAFE AND SANE

"We are trying to operate a railroad safely and sanely, that's all. I was in Washington, January 1, and read the news of the 'swear-off' first in an eastern paper. Of course, I was pleased, but I must admit that I had nothing to do with the circulation of pledges, and I presume it was simply a unanimous decision to join the increasing throng of teetotalers."

"Our line, like others, reduces forces about January 1, when business is slack. We always give preference to non-drinkers, other things being equal. Just at this time men with jobs are doing their best to hold them. I hope the action of our men will enable the road to boast of an army of employes in the train service who are total abstainers."

Operation of great railway systems has kept abreast of the times, and comparatively young men,

educated to modern methods and familiar with the requirements of the cynical traveling public, have replaced many officials of the old school who heeded only matters which had to do with the paying of dividends.

Anxious to bring the service up to the highest standard of efficiency, these younger officials have realized that inebriates in the train service formed the worst menace not only to the safety of the traveling public, but to economics in freight traffic as well.

The Chicago and Northwestern issued periodical bulletins threatening employes found indulging in intoxicating liquors. These bulletins became more and more drastic, until summary discharge was threatened for any employe caught entering or loitering around a saloon or known to keep intoxicants in his home.

Toward the close of the year the officials gave out the announcement that, with the annual reduction of the force, temperate men would be retained in preference to those known as indulgent of their appetite for intoxicating beverages.

A reduction of the force occurs annually, and the announcement of the company's preference for sober men has long been a regular feature of the year's close. But this year men with employment have felt a peculiar unwillingness to run the risk of losing it.

Just then the Omaha Y. M. C. A. made a fervent campaign for new members—the local manifestation of the remarkable work which the association has been doing for the improvement of the morale of railway employes of all classes. It was a sign of the times that the new membership secured numbered between 800 and 900 men.

It was then that John Stuten, yard foreman, thought of an effective method of keeping together, safe from discharge, the crew of men he was accustomed to work with and liked too well to see any member suffer in a wage cut.

"Boys," he told them, "let's all swear off—a genuine, all-wool, yard-wide swear-off that will put every one of us in the strict T. A. B. class and, I hope, keep every one of us on the payroll."

He had no need to argue or persuade. They saw it so quickly that it was all over except the swearing. When they happened to mention their good resolution to other trainmen, the enthusiasm for temperance amounted almost to a mania. Everybody swore off. The Chicago and Northwestern example set going the men of other roads, until finally the modest John Stuten movement grew into the greatest New Year resolution on record.

A COMMERCIAL ASPECT

There is a commercial aspect to the phenomenon that is singularly enlightening when its bearings upon the railroad liquor trade are considered in their nation-wide ramifications and in the light of the statement of Chairman Jones, of the prohibition committee:

"Those 2000 men who have quit spending their money in Omaha saloons are conservatively estimated to have spent \$1000 a day for liquors. With the railroad man, every day is work day, and the total in a year, for Omaha alone, amounts to \$365,000 saved by the men for food, clothing and bank accounts. "Equally significant of the amount of cash that"

went over bars for alcohol from railroad men a class is the fact that when it came to purchasing licenses along the Northwestern line a number of saloonkeepers this year concluded that their business would not be sufficiently profitable to engage longer."

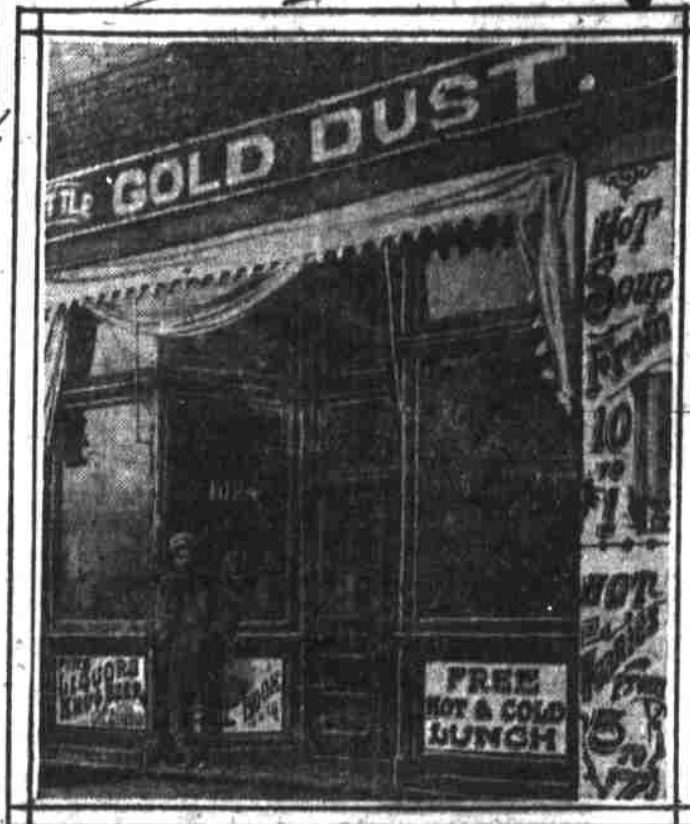
Only a few weeks elapsed before an occurrence followed which was as startling as the Northwestern movement. George L. Potter, third vice president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, promulgated the rule:

Employees of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad having anything to do with the direction or running of trains will not be permitted to use intoxicants at any time hereafter—either on or off duty—and no person who such beverage will be employed. Under no circumstances will exceptions be made.

And, when universal curiosity demanded his reasons for an order more drastic than any ever applied to an organization, he explained:

"It is believed by the management of the road that this is an important step in the effort to reduce accidents to the minimum and to raise the efficiency of service and the safety of patrons in travel to the highest standard."

The order applies to dispatchers, trainmasters,



Omaha Saloon that Went out of Business Because of the Swear-off



Yard Crew of the Northwestern that Began the Great Swear-off

School Children Who Have Saved Millions.

"EMMA LAWRENCE!"

"Yes'm."
"How much for the bank this week?"
"Five cents."

"Why, Emma! That makes your bank account \$5. You will get interest on your savings from today on."

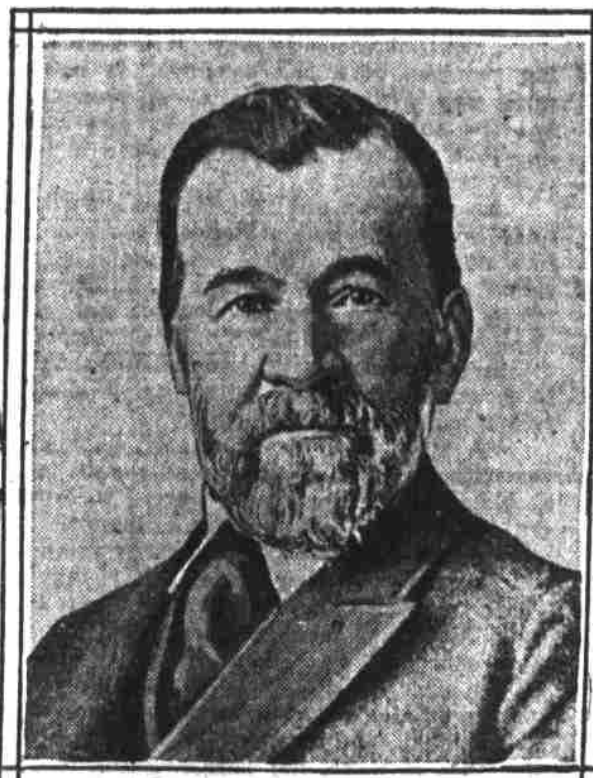
In more than a thousand schoolhouses, in more than a hundred cities, in more than a score of states, dialogues of this kind go on every Monday morning between the teachers and nearly 200,000 scholars who are the thrifty owners of accounts in the School Savings Banks, amounting to nearly a million dollars.

Within a generation, children by the hundreds of thousands have been launched from the public schools into the world of hard reality with the priceless habit of regular saving instilled into their minds. And an old gentleman—a very kindly old gentleman—who is still living and laboring for the advancement of this simple and wonderfully efficient training of American youth in the principles of economy, is responsible for it all.

His name is J. H. Thiry, and his home is in Long Island City, Long Island, where, twenty-two years ago—on March 16, 1885—he succeeded in establishing in the city schools the first School Savings Bank in the United States.

It is the most interesting development of the savings bank idea since, in the first grapple with the incubus of poverty that weighed down upon England and the Continent, Mrs. Priscilla Wakefield, of Tottenham High Cross, in Middlesex, inaugurated, in 1801, her epochal "Friendly Society for the Benefit of Women and Children."

Mr. Thiry, who is verging now upon fourscore



J. H. Thiry, Founder of the School Savings Banks in America

be ten—whatever sum has been saved during the week. When the pupil's savings amount to \$1, a bank book is given.

Except in cases of sickness or of removal from the city, deposits cannot be withdrawn until the amount reaches \$3, and then only on the second Monday of every month. Deposits of \$5 or more bear regular interest.

Withdrawal of money from an account can be effected when it is indorsed by the presence of the child's father or mother, and the signature of the school principal. During the summer vacation, the cashier of the funding bank is empowered to receive or pay moneys in accordance with the rules, requiring identification where the child depositor is not personally known to

him, precisely as he does with the "grown-ups." First enthusiasts have waned at times, and frequently where success was most signal, the rivalries of local banks have brought about the discontinuance of the system in a whole city.

But the report compiled by Mr. Thiry when the system was twenty-two years old—in 1907—showed that pupils of 1098 schools in 113 cities in twenty-two states have saved a total since the introduction of the system of \$5,485,514.48, of which \$4,675,897.26 has been withdrawn, leaving a balance of \$509,617.22 owned by 177,972 little depositors.

These have succeeded to the lesson of economy taught the long processions of children now developing into prudent men and women. The high proportion of depositors is apparent when their number, 177,972, is compared with the total number of children in attendance at the 1098 schools—500,727.

All parts of the North share in the benefit, and the idea seems to have spread nearly straightly westward, with some moderate expansion on the sides of the movement.

In Long Island City, where it was begun, there were 2200 depositors when Mr. Thiry compiled his figures, with \$37,312.80 to their credit.

ARRESTING POVERTY

At Le Roy in Minnesota, thirty out of the 156 pupils in a school that opened its bank in 1907 started with a fund of \$62. The 265 stations of the New York fund, founded in 1883, with 61,114 children out of 150,000 engaged in saving, had \$110,950.05 in their books, with a history of \$3,002,382.26 of total deposits, and \$2,322,323.54 withdrawn.

These are crude, although not meaningless, figures. The best interpretation can come only from the man whose disinterested patriotism has made them the imposing realities they are. So here is Mr. Thiry's enlightening comment:

"The rapidly with which extreme poverty multiplies its victims is one of the startling facts in social science. The public schools, acting upon every child, must be the great public agency for the arrest of the evil. If every child could be trained to save, as well as give the knowledge and habits which assure him earning power, much would be done toward saving the very poor from temptation and suffering."

"School Savings Banks have already yielded excellent results and, at the same time, have helped to check and prevent pauperism, crime, prodigality and various vices, and lead children to the road of thrift and frugality."

"The united effect of the practical lessons of thrift and economy is a clearing out of the intellectual avenues which open upon the moral faculties. By the ennobling power of truth revealed to the children and by good surroundings, some uplift is given to their thoughts and purposes toward that life of honest industry and rational enjoyment which makes him live a satisfaction to himself and a blessing to society."