

THE BREAKDOWN GANG

Quick and Hard Work When a Railroad Smashup Comes.

THE ROUGH AND READY CREW.

They Board the Wreck Special and Are Speeded to the Scene of the Accident—The Rush, the Peril and the Difficulty of the Work They Do.

Had you ever heard of the minutemen of the breakdown gang—the fellows who are the rough and ready of the line? In the roundhouse or repair shop you see them hammering, riveting, perhaps running the drill press or plate cutter. Then in rushes the call boy. Not stopping to get out of jumpers and overalls, but grabbing their caps, off they run to the wrecker.

A bowlder fell on the track. The switch handle was turned the wrong way. A loose spike may have misplaced the rail. But it is not for them to stop and learn how it happened. The shapeless mass of torn and twisted framework, which a few hours before bore the train, must be attacked with chain and rope, bar and ax—burned, if need be—to open the way, for until they have performed their duty the line is blocked, and the wheels of perhaps a thousand cars cease to turn. So away goes the breakdown gang at breakneck speed. Orders have gone ahead for a clear track, and even the limited and fast mail must take the siding until the minutemen have passed on the way to the rescue.

You don't hear much about them unless you are a railroader, but the superintendent, the manager, perhaps some of the directors, know them. Selected from the veterans in the shops, they are all round mechanics, but brains as well as fingers are needed, and a man has to be quick witted to get into this gang.

In the fifteen or twenty which make up the average crew you can generally find two or three little men; for there are tight places in a wreck where they can do considerable work in propping up or loosening a part, crawling into holes which no one else could reach. The boss wrecker tries to get two or three left handers also, as their services are valuable in hammering away in corners where a right handed man would be useless. Some of the best wrecking crews in the country include a number of sailors. The half hitches and other knots that only the seamen can make are of great service in securely fastening lines to portions of the wreck and to the crane or locomotive used in pulling it away. The old salts are familiar with the assistance that a combination of pulleys will give, for they have been taught it on shipboard, while usually they are very strong and wiry. Consequently a man of this kind who is out of a job at any time can frequently go with the wrecking crew.

Their limited is not much for looks. Like the men, it is also rough and ready. Down by the division roundhouse or repair shop it stands on a siding where it can take the line at a minute's notice. There is nothing unusual in its appearance except the crane car, which carries the heavy artillery of this little army of rescue. Two or three flat cars, a box car or so and at the end a passenger coach or caboose make up the train, but every article it carries, from the extra truck wheels to the coupling pins, has been loaded with such care that every man knows where to put his hands on what he wants. Usually the running gear gets the worst of it in a wreck, so one of the flat cars contains extra trucks and wheels to be substituted for the broken ones. Next to this car is placed the big steel crane, which yanks masses of wood and metal about as though they weighed pounds instead of tons, and is capable of lifting a fifty-ton engine.

Enter the box car and you see a miniature lumber yard—square pieces of timber all the way from an inch to a foot through. They are wanted for propping up the wreckage, which may be holding down the living as well as the dead. These props may aid in saving life, but they also are handy to hold up coaches when the crew are putting wheels or other parts in place. In one corner are coils of rope an inch or more thick. Boxes of bolts and nuts and screws lie side by side on the floor. On the walls hang hooks, pulleys, saws and axes. Heavy steel crowbars are piled in another corner. In short, this is a repair shop and storehouse on wheels.

Any old coach will do for the crew, provided its wheels and axles are sound. Taking out some of the seats gives room for a table where the men can eat and play cards if they don't want to get a nap on the way, but if they have time for a little sleep half a dozen wooden bunks round the sides give them a chance. Sometimes an end is partitioned off into a galley where they can make a pot of coffee or fry a steak while en route.

Such is the usual makeup of the "wreck special," as the railroader terms it. When called into service, a big driver engine backs down to it and couples on. There is no need of any speed orders. Those are understood in advance. On the straight track the man in the cab opens his throttle to the last notch, and the telegraph poles at the side of the line fit by so fast that they seem only a dozen feet apart. Only on the shorter curves and on the down grades and bridges is the throttle again moved and the air put on until the heap of ruins, from which too often arise flames and smoke, come into view.

The first thing to find out is if any-

thing human is underneath. Whether dead or alive it must come out, and the gang need no urging at the task, even if they hear no moan or cry to hasten their rescue. Then the next job is to clear the tracks. Holding up trains for even five or six hours means a big loss to the company, and they don't stop to save anything that takes too long. Beams, wheels and rods, perhaps entire cars, are thrown down embankments if necessary to open the right of way. When a car has merely been derailed it is of course an easy matter to replace it; then it is run to the nearest siding, but it is the unexpected that happens in railroad accidents.

A locomotive may turn bottom up on the track, with the driving wheels in the air. Then it must be turned over and pulled to one side of the railroad until there is time between the passing of trains to right it—if it can be righted. Cars may be swung directly across the track, lying on their sides or ends, possibly ground into a mere mass of splintered timbers, or literally reduced to kindling wood, their contents scattered a hundred yards about.

The wrecker who has been in the business for any length of time can tell in a moment the most difficult task before him and, if possible, goes at that first. If a loaded freight car prevents him from reaching the party demolished engine, he sets it afire. One of the greatest delays, however, is caused by the track being torn up, for new ties have to be put in position and perhaps a dozen rails weighing a ton apiece cut and straightened in order to form a foundation on which to move.

Everything goes with a rush from the first news of the accident. Once the wreckers get busy there is no stopping for rest or refreshment, although a man may have to work all night or all day. With the broken and twisted mass of steel and wood piled on one side of the roadbed, however, there comes a breathing spell, and the superintendent or other officials look over the debris to see what is worth saving. Going from pile to pile, they soon decide what to pull out and block up, and then the wreckers get to work on this. If there is an engine, it is generally secured first. Perhaps it was imbedded in two or three feet of mud or ten or twelve feet down an embankment. Here the little men come in handy. Working themselves under the boiler, they scrape holes beneath, so that the steel tendons of the crane can be passed round it.

Now the crane goes into action. If the embankment is sloping the usual plan is to drag the locomotive along, allowing the earth and ballast to assist in supporting it until the top is reached. But there are places where it has to be lifted clear of the ground, then swung over on the track.

Machinery has done much to aid the breakdown gang in recent years. But away back in the early days of the way of steel they were called to many a disaster, for then, as now, trains sometimes butted into each other on the same track. To clear the road the locomotive of the wreck train could sometimes be pressed into service, but many a derailed car or engine was pulled back on the rails merely by human muscle. Here again the sailor man came in very handy, as he knew so well how to arrange the ropes and pulleys and to make lines fast around the car or engine that had to be moved.

One of the curious methods of employing the locomotive of the wreck train was to make it move a car forward by starting the locomotive backward. Fastening a tackle securely round the car, it would be passed through a pulley fastened to a tree or post in front of it, and the rope then led back to the locomotive. Reversing his lever, the engineer of course pulled the rope around the pulley on the tree, thus forcing the car ahead. By this novel plan, which is still used occasionally, much of the debris in front of the wreck train could be cleared away.

There are times, though, when even the most careful riggers make a mistake. They have not realized the strain which the tackle must stand when things begin to move. Then, like the crack of a rifle, snap goes the line. More than once a loose end has caught some poor fellow round the legs, breaking the bones like pipestems. Many a man on the railroad's payroll who is fit only to wave the signal flag at the street crossing was among the wreckers until the day the rope broke.—Day Allen Willey in Denver Times.

You can get at Cummings Nurseries spray pumps with nozzles that won't clog. Rubber hose. Sprays made fresh and guaranteed full strength at as near cost as can be handled. Harry Cummings.

If you are hunting Vacant Government land, J. T. Williamson, La Grande, Oregon makes maps of any township in the La Grande Land District showing the condition of the township at the date made for \$1 each, as shown by the records of the land office. Land office practice a specialty. June 7-11.

A recognized authority—The Weekly Oregonian.

Department of the Interior, United States Land Office.

La Grande, Oregon, July 8, 1907.

To Whom It May Concern, Notice is hereby given that the State of Oregon, made application, on the 8th day of July, 1907, for the following described lands, as indemnity for the designated losses sustained by its grant of public lands for common schools, made by the act of Congress of Aug 14, 1848, and acts supplemental and amendatory thereto, and agrees to accept the same in full satisfaction of the losses assigned, to-wit: SE 1/4 SW 1/4 Sec 23 Tp 3 S. R. 29 E. W. M.

Any and all persons claiming adversely the above described lands are requested to file their claims in this office during the period of publication.

E. W. DAVIS, Register.

Redemption Notice.

Holders of Northwest Timber Co. Bonds are hereby notified that interest ceased upon said bonds July 9, 1907. All bonds held by parties whose patents have been recorded in the country, in which their entries were made will be redeemed at par with interest added, by sending said bonds either direct or through local bankers to the Traders National Bank, Spokane, Wash.

DAVID WILSON, President, Northwest Timber Co.

July 18-Aug 1.

Notice for Publication.

Department of the Interior, Land Office at The Dalles, Oregon, June 20, 1907.

Notice is hereby given that James L. Kirk, of Heppner, Oregon, has filed notice of his intention to make final five-year proof in support of his claim, viz: Homestead entry No. 9,000, made February 13, 1901, for the SW 1/4, SE 1/4 of Section 23, T. 3 S., R. 29 E., W. M., and the SW 1/4, NE 1/4 of Section 4, Township 4 S., Range 29 E., W. M., and that said proof will be made before J. P. Williams, U. S. Commissioner, at his office in Heppner, Oregon, on August 17th, 1907.

He names the following witnesses to prove his continuous residence upon and cultivation of the land, viz: Jeff Jones, Henry Scherzinger, John Sprowles, George Smith, all of Heppner, Oregon, July 4-Aug. 8. C. W. MOORE, Register.

4-347.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION.

Department of the Interior, Land Office at La Grande, Oregon, June 7, 1907.

Notice is hereby given that Mahlon Haworth, of Heppner, Oregon, has filed notice of his intention to make final five-year proof in support of his claim, viz: Homestead Entry No. 10,423, made July 9, 1901, for the Lots 3 and 4, Sec. 7, T. 3 S., R. 29 E., W. M., and that said proof will be made before J. P. Williams, U. S. Commissioner, at his office in Heppner, Oregon, on July 29, 1907. He names the following witnesses to prove his continuous residence upon and cultivation of said land, viz: Paul Haler, Ad Moore, Vesta Carr and William Williams, all of Heppner, Oregon. E. W. DAVIS, Register.

CONTEST NOTICE.

Department of the Interior, U. S. Land Office, La Grande, Oregon, June 20, 1907.

A sufficient contest affidavit having been filed in this office by Joseph Doherty, contestant, against homestead entry No. 11,488, made May 31, 1902, for W 1/4 NW 1/4, SW 1/4 NW 1/4, Section 8, Township 2 S. R. 29 E. W. M., by Charles Fortune, Contestee, in which it is alleged that Charles Fortune has wholly abandoned said tract; that he has changed his residence therefrom for more than six months since making said entry; that said tract is not settled upon and cultivated by said party as required by law; that he has never resided upon said land, and that said alleged absence from said land was not due to his employment in the army, navy or marine corps of the United States.

Said parties are hereby notified to appear, respond and offer evidence touching said allegation at 10 o'clock a. m. on July 29, 1907, before J. P. Williams, U. S. Commissioner, at his office at Heppner, Oregon, and that final hearing will be held at 10 o'clock a. m. on August 3, 1907, before the Register and Receiver at the United States Land Office in La Grande, Oregon.

The said contestant having, in a proper affidavit, filed May 4, 1907, set forth facts which show that after due diligence personal service of this notice can not be made, it is hereby ordered and directed that such notice be given by due and proper publication. E. W. DAVIS, Register. A. A. ROBERTS, Receiver. June 27-July 25.

Notice of Sheriff's Sale.

By virtue of an order of sale duly issued by the clerk of the Circuit Court of the State of Oregon, for Morrow County, dated the 14th day of June, 1907, in a certain action in the Circuit Court for said State and County, wherein L. P. Davidson and Ella Davidson plaintiffs, recovered decree against Mary E. Davidson, Jessie M. Davidson, Gertrude L. Davidson, Bessie E. Davidson, Lettie E. Davidson, Violet Davidson, and Lewis E. Davidson, minors, and Harry E. Davidson as the general guardian of the said minors, defendants, on the 29th day of May, 1907. Notice is hereby given that I will on the 3rd day of August 1907, at two o'clock P. M. of said day at the front door of the Court House in Heppner, Morrow County, Oregon, sell at public auction to the highest bidder for cash in hand, the following described real property to-wit: The southwest quarter of the southeast quarter of section 25, the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter of section one, the south half of section 25, the southeast quarter of the northeast quarter, the east half of the southeast quarter, the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter, the northeast quarter of the southeast quarter, the east half of the southeast quarter and the east half of the southwest quarter and the northeast quarter of the southwest quarter of section 25, the southeast quarter of section 26, all in township 3 south of range 23 East of the Willamette Meridian, also the west half of section 7, all in township 3 south of range 23 East of the Willamette Meridian, also southwest quarter of section 11, township 4 south of range 29 East of the Willamette Meridian. East half of the southwest quarter of section 27, and the east half of the northwest quarter of section 27, and the southeast quarter of section 27, all in township 3 south of range 23 East of Willamette Meridian, also

The following described real property situated in the town of Ione, Morrow County, State of Oregon, to-wit: All of lot numbered 4 in Block numbered fifteen in Will's addition to the town of Ione according to the maps and plats thereon filed and of record in the office of the Clerk of Morrow County, Oregon, excepting and reserving a strip of ground on, and being the north end of said lot, each strip being forty feet long and twenty feet wide, also.

Twenty five feet front in Park Block and beginning at the West side of the Odd Fellow's lot, and bounded on the north by the Oregon Railroad and Navigation Company's right of way on the south side of Main street, on the east by the Odd Fellow's lot and twenty five feet on the west.

Also the following described real property situated in the County of Gilliam, State of Oregon, to-wit: Lots one and two, the south half of the northeast quarter, and the southeast quarter of section one, east half of section 12, east half of section 13, the northeast quarter of section four, lots three and four, the north half of the northwest quarter, and the southwest quarter of section one, lots three and four and the northeast quarter of the northwest quarter and the southeast quarter of section three, lots two, three and four, the southwest quarter of the northeast quarter, the south half of the northwest quarter, the north half of the southwest quarter of section four, lots one and two, and the southeast quarter of section four, the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter of section five, the northeast quarter of the northwest quarter, and the northwest quarter of section ten, all of section eleven, west half of section twelve, the northwest quarter of section thirteen, the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter of section 14, the northeast quarter of the east half of the northeast quarter of section twenty-seven, the southwest quarter of the northeast quarter, the north half of the southeast quarter, the southwest quarter and the southwest quarter of the southeast quarter of section twenty-six, the southwest quarter of the northeast quarter, the northwest quarter of the southeast quarter and the north half of the northeast quarter of section thirty-six, the northwest quarter of the northwest quarter, the east half of the northeast quarter, the northeast quarter, and the southeast quarter of section thirty-five, all in township four south of range 23 East of Willamette Meridian.

Also the following described real property situated in the City of Condon, in Gilliam County, State of Oregon, to-wit: Lots three and four in block seventy seven in Lancaster's addition to the City of Condon. Taken and levied upon as the property of the said plaintiffs and the defendants, Mary E. Davidson and Jessie M. Davidson, Lettie E. Davidson, Violet Davidson and Lewis E. Davidson, minors, and Harry E. Davidson, as the general guardian of the said minors, to satisfy the said decree in favor of L. P. Davidson and Ella Davidson, and against said defendants, together with all costs and disbursements that have or may accrue. E. M. SHUTT, Sheriff of Morrow County. By A. M. Mallory, Deputy, June 27-July 25.

4-347.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION.

Department of the Interior, Land Office at The Dalles, Oregon, June 5, 1907.

Notice is hereby given that Marion A. Bates, of Heppner, Oregon, has filed notice of his intention to make final five-year proof in support of his claim, viz: Homestead Entry No. 9,914, made Nov. 4, 1901, for the NW 1/4, SE 1/4, SW 1/4 of Section 26, T. 3 S., R. 29 East and 1/4 of Section 30, Township 4 South, Range 29 E., W. M., and that said proof will be made before J. P. Williams, U. S. Commissioner, at his office in Heppner, Or., on July 19, 1907.

He names the following witnesses to prove his continuous residence upon, and cultivation of the land, viz: Hiram Tash, Dan Rice, John P. Hadley and Grand Owen all of Heppner, Oregon, July 13-July 18. C. W. MOORE, Register.

Heppner Gazette—Weekly Oregonian.

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Seed wheat, Oats, Rye and Barley or sale by Phill Cohn, at Heppner Warehouse.

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A good 4-year-old horse, 1250 pounds. Apply to this office.

FOR SALE.

FINE BUNCH GRASS STOCK RANCH on middle fork of the John Day river in Grant county. For descriptions and prices write to T. F. Hall, Long Creek, Oregon.

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