

# SUPPLEMENT.

## Coast Mail.

MARSHFIELD, OREGON

### RAILROAD SPOTTERS.

#### THE SECRET SERVICE THAT ONE BIG SYSTEM MAINTAINS.

Members of It in Every Department From Yardmen Up—Curious Complications When Spotters Unknown to One Another Cross Lines.

"Probably the most perfect spotter system achieved by any private corporation," says R. H. Adams in Alameda, "is that of one of the big eastern railroads, which is to some extent modeled on the secret service system of some of the eastern governments, though by no means so complex.

"So far-reaching and so direct, however, are its lines of communication that the president of the organization is himself kept constantly informed of the trend of affairs and the changes of sentiment among the employees of every division and subdivision of the whole railway system, and that without the knowledge of any other persons but his own special corps of clerks and secretaries.

"Nobody but himself knows the entire personnel of the wonderful service that he has perfected. His agents are drawn from every branch of the road's operating staff. They are engineers, freight brakemen, passenger trainmen, conductors, signalmen, yardmen, station agents, truck walkers and even division officials. Should that road have a strike—and strikes are far less likely to occur than they were before the present system was put into operation—the president will have detailed warnings of it from all the storm centers long before the first mutterings find cautious utterance in the newspapers.

"While it also acts as a defense against thefts by employees, this system is intended primarily to prepare, so to speak, a diary of the disposition, character, working efficiency and sentiments toward the road of the men who constitute the vast human machinery of the corporation. The feeling which culminates in a general strike is not the result of one act alone, but a slow growth made up of many grievances, real or fancied.

"To keep track of the shifting mental attitude of his employees is the aim of this railroad president. If a certain division superintendent has made himself unpopular with his subordinates, information to that effect comes by underground wire to the central office, and the matter is taken under advisement. If the newest fireman on the road attempts to stir up discontent by inflammatory talk, his views soon reach the official ear. Every leading spirit in the employees' organization is known to the president, who also knows whether, in case of trouble, the man is to be reckoned upon as a conservative or a radical.

"Sometimes this works out the man's career in a manner quite incomprehensible to him. For instance, Night Watchman Brown is shifted without cause that he can fathom from one division to another. How should he know that rumors of trouble in that division have reached the presidential ear and that he himself, being down in the president's little book as a speaker of weight and a counselor of conservative methods, has been shifted over to act as unconscious agent in checking a dangerous tendency?

"Some of the admiring coworkers of the head of this system declare that in two minutes' reference to his collected funds of information he can unroll the family history of the woman who washes the windows of car No. 41144X and tell whether, in her estimation, he himself is an oppressor of the downtrodden or a perfect gentleman.

"Where so many invisible lines radiate from the same office it is inevitable that some of them should cross. Curious complications result from contact between spotters as unknown to each other as they are to those whom they watch.

"Several years ago at a time of general labor troubles a certain railroad got no less than five reports from its confidential men informing them that an employee who was several degrees higher in the secret service of the road than any of them, had they but known

it, had been making incendiary speeches.

"This was true. Matters had so shaped themselves that the man accused had to appear as a radical in order to gain admittance to inner councils where the important questions would be finally decided. To the chagrin of the authorities they were obliged to transfer him. Had they not done so the suspicions of the men who make the reports would have been aroused. That spotters should know each other as such is held to be highly undesirable. There is always the chance that they might work in conjunction instead of acting as checks on each other."

### METHODS OF SUICIDE.

#### How Desperate Persons Adopt Prevailing Styles of Destruction.

"The remarkable methods several suicides have adopted in this city recently call attention to the fact that methods of self destruction are largely matters of suggestion," said a doctor. "When a man gets in that condition where he wants to die, he has little inventive ability and adopts the method that has been brought to his mind. You will notice that after one person kills himself with acid there follows a long list of acid suicides. It is the same with any unusual method. One person gets up an original way, and that inspires the next one to try his hand until we have a whole series of such grewsome novelties.

"I have proved this theory. Several years ago I was discussing this feature of suicide with several friends, including the coroner. They ridiculed my theory. I offered to prove it. It happened that shooting and hanging were popular just then. I wrote an article for a newspaper on the horrors of strangulation and pistol wounds and explained the case with which one could kill himself with prussic acid. Death from prussic acid, you know, is absolutely instantaneous and, many believe, painless. There had not been a suicide with this acid for more than a year, but within a week after the article was published there were four, and one of the unfortunates had clippings of my article in his pocket.

"Of course I was accused of killing these four by suggestion, but I was never arrested and do not feel sorry, for when once a person has decided to kill himself the method is a slight matter. No person in his right mind will commit suicide. We all know in our sane moments of easy ways to end life, but when in the suicidal frame of mind nature seems to rob us of our reason in this direction, as if in a desperate hope of preventing the sacrifice."—New York Mail and Express.

### HOUSES ON "MADE" GROUND

#### The Reason They Term With Malaria and Noxious Gases.

Good gravel has so largely come into request that many suburban lands with that valuable substratum are quarried to a considerable depth before being sold or building leases. But it is essential to restore a level surface, as even the most speculative builder would hesitate to run up "neat villa residences" in deep holes. The owner frequently gets over this difficulty by allowing urban refuse to be shot into the excavation; in many cases he even exacts a small sum for every load tilted on his ground. The surface being thus leveled, a year or two are allowed for the soil to sink and become compact. Occasionally grass is sown to give a natural appearance to the spot.

All is now in readiness for the builder, who proceeds to lay the foundation for his "terraces," "avenues" and "gardens," which he subsequently advertises as "on gravel soil." So they are, but between their ground floors and the gravel lies a thick stratum of partially decomposed rubbish, teeming with malaria, and not for many years will the deposits cease to give off noxious gases.

But the tenant, coming from a different locality, knows nothing of the "making" process to which the plot has been subjected. When, therefore, ill health dogs his family, he puts it down to defective drainage or some other structural deficiency and spends money freely on remedial measures without the least benefit. All this misery might be prevented if it were legally prohibited to build human habitations on decomposed refuse until the soil had acquired a wholesome character.—London Globe.

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