

AMERICAN AND ENGLISH GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF RAILWAYS

AMERICAN.

By virtue of a proclamation of the President under an act of Congress passed in August, 1916, Secretary McAdoo as Director General of the Railroads took possession and assumed control of the railways of the country at midnight, December 31. It is proposed that the Government pay the stockholders dividends based on the average net operative income for the last three years.

The Director General's first act was to direct that all officers and employees of the transportation system taken over continue their duties as usual and that the railways should be operated as a national system of transportation, the national needs being held in all instances paramount to supposed corporate advantages. All the railway property and facilities are to be fully utilized without regard to ownership, and the designation of routes by shippers and traffic agreements between carriers are to be disregarded when interfering with the expedition of traffic; through routes are established. Existing rate schedules and outstanding orders of the Interstate Commerce Commission are to be observed until annulled.

The Director General called upon all railroad officials to take up vigorously and immediately the matter of the common use of terminals and parallel lines, wiping out all competitive prohibitions and waiving competitive control or solicitation of traffic. The terminal facilities in the large cities are to be treated as a unit when necessary. An immediate study and investigation of railway and especially terminal conditions were directed.

In some sections of the country an embargo was placed on any consignee not releasing freight promptly upon arrival; certain passenger trains were annulled; and all over the country the demurrage charges on unloading cars were increased.

The Director General appealed to the people of the United States to observe the week beginning January 14 as "Freight Moving Week," urging the people at large as well as the railroad forces to make a supreme effort to unload all freight cars and remove the freight from railroad stations and clear the deck for a more expeditious moving of freight.

The Director General says that every railroad officer and employee is now, in effect, in the services of the United States, and each as important a factor in winning the war as a man in the trenches.

Secretary McAdoo asked for the co-operation of the railways, the railway

officials and employees, and the people at large. The response was immediate and strong, and Government control in the United States has become a public, national effort participated in by the whole people.

ENGLISH.

The experience of the English Government in railway control is of prime interest to Americans at this juncture. The following summary of the railway control by the English Government is taken from a speech delivered in the Senate January 4 by Senator Henry F. Hollis, of New Jersey:

"The English Government took entire control of all railways in Great Britain on August 14, 1914, agreeing to pay the stockholders the same earnings as they received in the year 1913.

"As traffic demands increased while facilities decreased, due to wear and tear and the enlistment of thousands of railway workers, recourse was had to reduction of service and the employment of women and men not capable of bearing arms, the number of women employed increased in three years from 15,000 to 100,000. Freight cars were pooled without regard to ownership, and the loading and unloading of cars were expedited under heavy penalties, fines, and imprisonment; it was made a criminal offense to fail to load or unload in accordance with the rules. Passenger trains were annulled, reservation of seats abolished, traffic diverted, and passenger rates advanced 50 per cent, not so much to increase revenue as to discourage travel.

"The Government control in England was exercised through a railway executive committee of 10 appointed by the Government from the general managers of certain important roads, this board having as its official chairman a member of the cabinet, the president of the board of trade. The staff of each railway remained undisturbed.

"Wages, hours of work, and other labor questions have been settled by conciliation and arbitration, and it is stated that both the management and the workers have worked in harmony, realizing that whatever concessions or sacrifices were made accrued to the benefit of the nation and not to private interests."

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Income-tax returns must be filed with the collector of internal revenue in the district in which the taxpayer lives on or before March 1.

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