

TESTS FOR TRAINMEN

How the Railroads Pick Their Prospective Employees.

Men in the Least Degree Defective Are Turned Away—Eyesight, Hearing, and Physical Fitness Are All Carefully Tried by a Variety of Tests.

"A man has to pass almost as stiff a physical examination nowadays to get a job in train service on the big railroads as he does to enlist in the regular army," said an old railroad man. He had been out of work almost the entire summer, and now, when the overcoat is crowding out the "alpaca," he has been hustling about the railroad yards for employment. He has just come from a physical examination by the surgeon of the Chicago Burlington and Quincy railway (which he could not pass) and his story is he told it shows the care the latter-day railroad managers exercise in the selection of their employees.

This man had credentials signed by men of high standing in the railroad world, but unless he could get through that well-nigh impossible barrier to one who has passed life's meridian, the surgeon's office, his "application" is thrown out. The conditions of employment in Chicago are about the same as in other large railroad centers; employers everywhere insist upon a high standard of physical and mental development and absolutely perfect eyesight.

The man looking for work on a railroad, no matter to whom he may be by chance apply, is always referred to the head of the particular department in which he wishes employment. In my case it was yard work, and I applied to the general yardmaster. The Chicago Burlington and Quincy, on which he was employed, was hiring men almost every day, and I thought my chance was good. I was given the usual "application" to fill out, in which I am supposed to give my entire railroad career. Tell every railroad I ever worked for, and the reason of my leaving their employ. I must give age, height, weight, color of hair and eyes, and if I have ever sustained any injury, it must be described in full. In addition to this I must attach "clearances" covering the last five years, from the railroads I may have worked for during that time. It is useless to attempt to lie in any of the statements made in these applications, as it is traced out by correspondence and any untruth means discharge.

"I filled out the paper in my case satisfactorily, and, not knowing that a standard color-blind examination had been adopted by the road since I had worked for it last, was figuratively patting myself on the back over my good luck when the G. Y. M. said: 'Now, Mr. —, you just go down and see Dr. Denney, our chief surgeon, and bring your color-blind certificate to me and I'll put you at work at noon.'

"I thought then I could see my finish, for I can't read fine print without glasses.

"However, I decided to make a bluff at it and presented myself at the surgeon's office for examination. First came the tests with colors. A great bunch of worsted yarns in skeins, over 100 of them, were landed me, and I was told to select all the shades of red, then all of blue, and finally all of green—the principal colors in railroad-signaling. This test, I passed successfully, and I began to again have hopes of employment. Following this

was a simple test to the average railroad in naming the colors of miniature semaphore and signal lights as they were exposed, and finally came the flags—red, green, blue, and white—such as are in actual use every day in the actual course of business on the road. Then came the test for visual acuteness, and I dropped over 20 per cent.

"In the test for visual acuteness the applicant is harnesses into a pair of tight-fitting goggles, with no glass in either side. One eye is tested at a time, and the other is blinded by a metal disk placed in the frame of the goggles. The first trial is in reading print. A card is handed out on which are a dozen lines of print varying from a type with a quarter-inch face down to what I expect is the finest print that could be found. I could not read over half way down that card with either eye, and my percentage began to shrink.

"Then came the same test almost on distance. Seated thirty or forty feet from a large card hanging on the wall I was asked to read down. I got about half way and then had to give it up. I could see that the old surgeon was sorry for me, as he marked my rating in his record book. He had attended me once through a rather severe accident and I had not passed entirely out of his memory.

"The last trial, and the one in which I failed totally, is called the test for visual angle. The examiner stands squarely in front of the applicant, so close that his face almost touches that of the victim. Then he extends his arms tells you to keep your eyes on his eyes, and in a second more says:

"My right hand, how many fingers?"

"I tried to fudge a little and glanced aside, but his stern 'Keep your eyes on mine,' brought me back to law, and had to finally acknowledge that I couldn't see a finger.

"Um! Well, that's bad. I'm afraid I'll be obliged to refuse your application. Let's try that again." Once more he tried and although I felt that he gave me an inch or more space I again failed and the examination was over.

"While I was yet in the office another man from another division came in for a trial. He was young; not more than 22, and he finally wriggled through the eye tests and was led into the rear office for the physical examination, which I was permitted to witness.

"He was apparently an almost perfect man when stripped, and he was reaping a harvest of '20's,' the perfect mark, until the doctor picked up a stethoscope. Only a second blasted that young man's hopes of getting a job on that railroad. The old surgeon laid down the instrument, and, looking him in the eye, said:

"I'm very sorry, but I can't pass you. You have heart trouble, and if you were perfect in every other way I would be obliged to refuse you on that ground alone."

"While the young man was dressing I talked with the surgeon in the office. He said about one in four failed to pass his tests, and one thinks for a moment of the great number that are turned down by the yardmaster because of palpable unfitness or on account of previous bad record, you can see about how hard it is to get a job breaking or switching.

"Hardly a railroad in the country will hire you if you have even a finger gone, and on most of the roads the age limit for new employees is 30 years. 'I have never been in a railroad office applying for work where absolute fairness in examination was not used. In fact, almost any surgeon is willing to give an applicant the benefit of a little doubt, but, then, on some things there must be no doubt, and eye sight and a stout heart are the chief, for on

the perfect work on these organs often hangs the safety of hundreds of human lives and thousands of dollars' worth of property."

"The Pennsylvania lines, B. and O., and C. & D. and Lake Shore and Michigan Southern roads are the most critical in their examinations of new men, and the most careful in their treatment of old employees. They have almost perfect hospital and relief arrangements, and on two of these the old employees, who have become, through age or physical infirmity, unable to work, are pensioned.

"The Illinois Central, C. and N. W., and M. and St. P., and, in fact, all of the railroads entering Chicago, have rigid color-blind tests, but some have not as yet adopted the strict physical examination that renders the train service on the older roads so nearly perfect."

LIMIT OF SPEED BY STEAM.

The Nerve of the Engineer Will Fix the Boundary Line.

An old locomotive engineer, in reply to the statement that 150 miles an hour was one of the possibilities of future travel, says that they may build the engines for a 150-mile gait, but they can't build the engineers. The strain on the nerves at very high speeds is something terrific, and anything over fifty miles an hour is a pace which jars every nerve in the body. The average locomotive man is apt to break down under the influence of many spurts at even sixty-five miles an hour. After such an ordeal he is completely unhinged, jumping when he hears unexpected noises, like a hysterical woman. By those who have passed through this experience it is believed the strain comes mainly through the sight. The engineer has to look straight ahead, but at the same time, as it has been expressed, "he sees things whizzing past on both sides out of the tail of his eye, and it is as if something had hold of the optic nerve and was pulling it out as a rubber band." Shadows are the terror of a locomotive engineer. A bird may fly across the headlight and throw a shadow down the track as big as a box car. Of course, it is gone in an instant, but in just that heartbeat the nerves of the engineer have been given a shock that they may not recover from in a week. The new electric headlights are said to be the worst kind of spook producers. They cast such sharp shadows that a bug moving over the glass will give the engineer the impression of a cow lying just in front of the pilot. At very high speeds such an experience conjures up sudden death and gives a sledge-hammer blow to every nerve center in the body of the engineer. Old engineers say that the speed of 100 miles an hour is beyond the sustained endurance of the man at the lever, and with a speed of 150 miles an hour the human machine would go mad in a week.

YOU MAKE A MISTAKE

If you think that the more you eat the fatter and stronger you become. If you think the more hours a child studies at school the faster he will learn.

In concluding that exercise being healthful, the more violent or exhausting it is the more good it will do. In imagining that every hour taken from sleep is an hour gained.

In thinking that the smallest room in the house is large enough to sleep in. In advising another to take a remedy which you have tried on yourself, without special inquiry whether all the conditions are alike.

In eating without any appetite, or continuing to eat after it has been satisfied, merely to gratify the taste.

THERE IS MUCH LITIGATION

Circuit Court to Meet Monday Next.

DOCKET OF SIXTY-NINE CASES

Awaits the Consideration of Judge R. P. Boise—Who the Litigants Are.

At 9 o'clock next Monday morning, the 30th inst., Circuit Judge R. P. Boise will convene the regular October term of department No. 2, of the Marion county circuit court. A docket of sixty-nine cases awaits disposition at this term.

The docket is as follows: E. M. Eberhard, insolvent; A. O. Condit, assignee; assignment. M. M. Ellis, vs. T. J. Ford, action for money.

Schuyler Rue, insolvent; J. F. T. B. Brentano, assignee; assignment. Dorrance Lumber Company, insolvent; Francis Feller, assignee; assignment.

David Scott, insolvent; Alfred Bardsley, assignee; assignment. Freeman Arnold, insolvent; F. J. Bolter, assignee; assignment. Mary Strong, vs. George Herren, foreclosure.

Leo Willis, insolvent; M. L. Chambrlin, assignee; assignment. Salem Flouring Mills Company, vs. W. P. Lord, et al.,

R. B. Gesner, insolvent; Jay Bowerman, assignee; assignment. Oregon Land Company, vs. Charles Scott, assignment.

E. F. Neff, insolvent; C. P. Bishop, assignee; assignment. James McRea, vs. Nell McRea, equity.

Mary A. Plamondon, et al., vs. F. B. Pentland, et al., partition. Mary A. Ramp, executrix, vs. F. X. Gobin, et al., confirmation and objections.

W. J. Jean, vs. Emma L. Watson, et al., injunction. Robert Schulze, vs. Ernest E. Ryan, et al., injunction.

J. F. Drake, vs. L. V. Hickey, injunction. J. F. Ross, vs. Chas. Rogers, injunction.

A. L. Rankin, vs. Ambrose Strong, injunction. H. T. Rankin, vs. Neil Williamson, injunction.

H. A. Malcolm, vs. Elizabeth A. Weeks, injunction. T. T. Geer, governor, et al., vs. John G. Wright, et al., confirmation.

H. Trinwith, vs. Don A. Smith, to quiet title. Samuel T. Munkers, et al., vs. Benj. F. Munkers, et al., partition.

H. H. Mattison, vs. P. F. Castleman, confirmation. T. H. Burkhardt, vs. Ambrose Strong, et al., injunction.

M. B. Rankin, vs. Frank D. Scott, injunction. C. G. L. Benson, vs. Hattie A. Benson, divorce.

Mattie E. Eldridge, vs. John Eberhard, et al., partition. T. T. Geer, governor, et al., vs. T. H. Wilson, et al., motion for confirmation.

George Collins, vs. Harvey S. Jordan, et al., motion for confirmation. Miami Swift, vs. Harry Swift, divorce.

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J. L. Shorey, vs. Ellen G. Shorey, divorce. George W. Edgar, vs. David W. Edgar, et al., equity. John Hoefler, et al., vs. A. Choquette, et al., foreclosure. Pacific States Savings, Loan & Building Company, vs. Jos. Witmer, et al., confirmation. S. E. Young, vs. John Hughes, administrator, et al., equity. Frank Daberce, vs. Lottie W. Daberce, divorce. John Newsom, vs. John G. Moore, et al., confirmation. G. A. Webb, et al., vs. L. H. Wesley, equity. L. O. Bower, vs. Elizabeth Bower, application for allowance. In the matter of the estate of W. J. Heren, deceased; appeal from county court. Frank J. Nicklot, vs. M. H. Murphy, writ of review. Elizabeth Simms, vs. Louis H. Pederson, et al., foreclosure. S. B. Catterlin, vs. J. M. Gross, et al., equity. N. E. Bayha, vs. L. R. Bayha, divorce. J. F. T. B. Brentano, vs. C. F. Brentano, equity. W. E. Baker, vs. W. T. Jenks, writ of review. J. F. Markley, vs. Elizabeth Newby, equity. Alice A. Miles, et al., vs. Evelyn P. Miles, et al., partition. Clara Corum, vs. Herbert Corum, divorce. W. J. Feller, vs. Angèle L. Feller, divorce. J. Q. Wilson, vs. Myrtle J. and W. T. Vaughn, foreclosure. Laura Ann Smith, vs. W. R. Smith, divorce. S. F. Northcutt, vs. J. L. Thompson, et al., foreclosure. W. W. Ullery, vs. E. S. Ullery, divorce. Ida H. Giesy, et al., vs. B. B. Gesner, et al., foreclosure. Mary J. Shaw, vs. Wm. Comfort, et al., equity. Margaret Simpson, vs. Allen Simpson, divorce. In the matter of the guardianship of John S. Hawkins, insane; appeal from county court. John Morley, vs. L. A. Smith, et al., foreclosure. John Morley, vs. W. R. Smith, et al., foreclosure.

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In Conclusion

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HE CAME AND SHE'S HAPPY.

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