

In the campaign for better passenger train service in the Southern Region, the Illinois Central Railroad in July again led all other lines, bettering its fine June record by putting 98.5 per cent of all its trains into final terminals on time despite delays for any cause, including slow connections. During the month 6,611 trains were operated by this road, and 6,520 of them reached their terminals on time, while 6,557, or 98.7 per cent, maintained schedule or made up time. These percentages compare, respectively, with 96.6 and 96.8 in June.

The general average for all railroads during the month did not equal the high records set in May and June, although it continued to be good in comparison with earlier records. There were 53,256 passenger trains operated by the twenty-nine roads. Of that number 49,248, or 92.5 per cent, maintained schedule or made up time, while 47,774, or 89.7 per cent, arrived on time at final terminals.

Among the larger roads, the Southern, operating 15,875 trains, stood near the top of the list with 14,508 or 91.4 per cent reaching final terminals on time, and 14,964, or 94.3 per cent, maintaining schedule or making up time.

BETTER RAILROAD SERVICE.

Demobilization of the army, which practically will be completed in a few weeks, will release railroad passenger equipment in part from the tremendous strain put upon it since the United States went to war. Many hundred of coaches and sleeping cars now employed in troop movements will be freed for ordinary service, thus enabling the railroads to provide more adequately for the comfort and convenience of the heavy general passenger travel which is taxing their limited facilities to the utmost.

Throughout the war and during the months that followed the armistice, large numbers of coaches and sleepers have been constantly in army service. Cessation of hostilities in Europe did not mean that war work was over for American railroads. The home-coming of the army and demobilization furnished a task almost as great and exacting as the war itself. July, the latest month for which figures are available, 949,660 soldiers were moved on the railroads within the United States, including men returning from overseas, men discharged and men moving between camps. Eleven hundred and seventy three troop trains were operated, carrying an average of 421 men each and traveling an average distance of 603 miles.

In addition to the strain of troop movements, there was heavy commercial travel during the war in connection with military activities, and families and friends of soldiers moved about freely going to and from the camps. This kept cars constantly in use, and made it imperative that the railroads bring out every available piece of equipment. Lines which before the war had almost reached the ideal of modern all-steel cars, were obliged to put into general service old and worn equipment usually used only to meet the demand of excursions and other special occasions.

The difficulty has been enhanced by the inability of the railroads to obtain needed new equipment during the war. For two years few new cars have been built, because the demand for labor and materials were too great, and even where labor and material were available, the cost of producing new equipment was almost prohibitive.

In the past few weeks, passenger as well as freight equipment has shown the effects of lack of attention during the railroad shopmen's illegal strike. While the strike actually was in progress, the patience of the traveler was put to an extreme test. In addition to running without inspection or repairs, coaches and sleepers frequently were not even cleaned and many were operated without water or ice, because workers not connected with the shop crafts left their jobs.

Time is required to undo the harm done by the period of idleness. All the railroads are striving to overcome the difficulty as expeditiously as possible.



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