

June, 1946 - Number 9

REPORTING MARKS

Being avid train watchers, we see a great many freight cars from foreign lines pass by on a single train, and thus grow accustomed to spotting owning companies from the name or the initials emblazoned on the sides of the cars. Often the names are not used on the cars, only the initials and number being placed there on for purposes of identification. Through an evolutionary process, it has come about that these initials are more than just a shortening of the road's name; they have come to be known as "reporting marks". This term signifies that they are to be used universally for reporting the cars on car checkers' sheets all over the United States and Canada, and for that matter, Mexico and Cuba also, as the railway systems in these countries interchange cars with the American roads quite freely. The reporting marks as they stand to-day have been assigned to each Class 1 carrier by the Operating-Transportation Department of the Association of American Railroads in order to effect universal usage, and quite a number of roads do not have reporting marks that are actually the initials of its name. A good example of this is the Nickel Plate. When it was deemed too cumbersome to use the old "NYC & StL" reporting marks derived from the common name were considered. However, "NP" would not do, as this would conflict with the Northern Pacific; thus a "K" was inserted between, and the Nickel Plate's new reporting marks became "NKP".

A more recent decree of the AAR has limited reporting marks to four characters in order to accelerate the job of car checking. Thus the Santa Fe had to drop its "&" sign, and its boxcars now bear the four characters "ATSF." Instead of simply dropping the "&" sign from "CRI&P", the Rock Island resorted to using two letters, "RI". Now four characters or less are used to identify freight cars everywhere on the continent.

Many of the reporting marks are well known to everyone, railroad fan or other; "NYC" conveys only one thought when one sees it emblazoned on the side of a boxcar. Yet, there are many others of these that are a little more tricky, and not as well known.

We present herewith a quiz on these reporting marks — some are very simple, others may require a bit more thought. Nevertheless, anyone who is a faithful boxcar watcher should have no trouble with any of them.

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| 1. MILW | 6. M&StL | 11. T&NO | 16. VGN |
| 2. N de M | 7. BAR | 12. NWP | 17. WAB |
| 3. C&I | 8. LS&I | 13. MEC | 18. SOO |
| 4. DAR | 9. SSW | 14. NAR | 19. GM&O |
| 5. SP&S | 10. TEM | 15. P&WV | 20. AC |

To give members a fair time to think these over, we will print the names of these roads in full in the July issue.

- SIW.

BUFFALO EXCURSION

June 23rd, 1946

(As told to the Editors by Ray Corley)

On the bright and sunny morning on June 23, 1946, TH&B train 721 carried one extra coach, containing approximately 25 railfans. Three clubs were represented in this group, viz., our society, as well as the Model Railroad Club of Toronto and the Toronto Model Trainmen's Club. At Hamilton the numbers were swelled by about 15 more representing model clubs in Hamilton and Kitchener. To delight the railfans, an unusual operation was encountered in climbing the Niagara cuesta. Seven NYC coaches were deadheading home from Hamilton, and the TH&B switcher 51 acted as a pusher at the rear of the train, as far as Vinemount.

The train arrived in the Terrace Station in Buffalo about 15 minutes behind schedule. Mr. Shapley, of the Buffalo Chapter of the NRHS, was on hand with a small welcoming committee. The group was immediately packaged into a Mack Bus of ancient & questionable vintage, which "seated 55" on seats for 30. We visited in succession the Nickel Plate and Erie roundhouses. At the former, the Road Foreman of Engine's and a representative of the Westinghouse Company conducted the group around the roundhouse. At the latter, after signing our lives away on release forms, we moved about quite unchaperoned. Here a reporter from the Buffalo Courier Express took a picture of the five representative officials of the clubs. Pere Marquette and Buffalo Creek locomotives were also to be seen here.

Next followed the eats at the Lackawanna YMCA, after which we excursionists went over to the DL&W roundhouse, where the resplendent freight Diesels 601 & 602 were spotted for our inspection. The majority of the group then proceeded by bus back to the centre of the town to view the Buffalo Model railroad club in operation. The layout was O gauge featuring a narrow gauge system and an interurban line. About 15 members had been left behind at the Lackawanna premises, but somehow they reappeared already on the train at 6:27 p.m. as it grunted into the Terrace Station hauled by our same faithful Pacific of the morning, TH&B 16. Also in evidence was our "private coach", TH&B # 71, unfortunately loaded with conventional passengers, not railfans, whereupon the group were profanely indignant.

Nevertheless we managed to find accommodation in the regular consist for the return trip. We arrived back in Toronto about 9:40 p.m. to disperse homewards.

The general opinion of the trip was that it was interesting and successful, giving evidence of international goodwill between railfans. We wish to register our sincere appreciation for the work of Messrs. Olver and Randall in planning the trip, and to Mr. Shapley for acting as our host to so many.

Let this be the herald of many interesting post-war railroad excursions!

HAMILTON STREET RAILWAY SOLD.

At time of writing, the HSR has just been sold to three private individuals, one of whom is the president of the Canada Coach Lines. They acquired the railway for \$1,400,000. when the Ontario Hydro Electric Power Commission's tenders closed on July 8. The Hydro has operated the line since 1930, but of recent years has tried to sell the property to other interests. Will this acquisition save the street cars from a fate similar to other former Hydro lines, or will it be their salvation? Only time will tell!