

Conclusions of Congress.

That automatic signalling properly designed and installed be recognised as a suitable means of protecting train and switching movements. The Congress notes that there has been much improvement and extension of the automatic signalling since the last Congress, and that those railways which have used it have found it effective for their purpose. The Congress is not prepared to recommend automatic block signalling for general adoption to supersede existing systems, but considers there are cases where this system may present special advantages.

Note.

The automatic block system has made but little progress in Europe, where a comparatively small mileage of track is so equipped, and there is a reluctance to extend the system. In America the system has made and is making rapid progress, ten thousand miles of track being now operated. The signals are placed from a mile to a mile and a half apart, according to the grades. With this system the capacity of certain lines for carrying traffic has been largely increased, an important factor on American railways, where the business is so heavy.

11. BAGGAGE, AND EXPRESS PARCELS.

Baggage; handling and protection of baggage; methods for avoiding detention; losses and diversions in transporting.

Reporters.—All countries—Mr. G. H. Daniels, General Passenger Agent, New York Central and Hudson River Railroad; Mr. J. H. Bradley, General Traffic Manager, American Express Company, New York.

Conclusions of Congress.

After hearing a large number of reports on methods pursued in America, Europe, and other countries throughout the world, for the transportation and protection of baggage and express parcels, it is the opinion of the Congress that the arrangements at present adopted by the different countries meet their requirements, and there are no grounds for recommending any particular system.

Notes.

The discussion was limited to the discussion of luggage. Sir Charles J. Owens, General Manager of the London and South Western Railway, would not admit the superiority of the American system. He thought it might be necessary in a country like America, where cabs are expensive and labour costly, but he does not think it advantageous for passengers. He advocated the use of the English system, which was the most convenient for the traveller, who got his luggage immediately on the arrival of the train. He objected to checking of any kind.

In America the general practice is for a passenger to take one small bag or case in the car, the balance of his luggage being taken charge of by a baggage or express delivery company, who deliver to any required address. This, however, by no means insures prompt delivery, and in many instances baggage which one may need urgently is not received until several hours after the arrival of the train. Many of the delegates had unpleasant experiences of this nature. Functions could not be attended for lack of the clothes in the hands of the express companies. I had a similar experience myself. It can, therefore, be readily understood why so many delegates denounced the American system.

The safest way to deal with your luggage is to take it to the station yourself half an hour before the starting-time of the train, check it, taking one small bag which will readily fit under the seat in the car. When you arrive at your destination, present your checks and take your luggage by cab to your hotel. I found this the most satisfactory system. Sending through baggage companies is costly, and, as already stated, the delivery is not prompt.

The entire absence of porters to carry your luggage is an unpleasant feature at some of the American railway-stations. Passengers are supposed to carry their one bag, known as a "grip," heavy luggage being found in the baggage-rooms.

Outside of Great Britain and Ireland the checking system in some form may be considered general. In America no charge is made for checking. In Hungary, where no baggage is carried free, checking is exclusively used. On the Central South African lines, where the people are familiar with the English system, it has been necessary to guard against fraud, owing to the fact that the passenger, after obtaining possession of his luggage, may later deny having received it. It therefore was considered necessary to employ a checking system. This, as a matter of course, involves the checking of all luggage carried in the luggage-van. In New Zealand checking is optional for the passenger, but failure to check on his part relieves the Railway Department of all responsibility. This system is much preferable to compulsory checking.

12. SUBURBAN TRAFFIC.

Arrangements for suburban passenger traffic.

Reporters.—America—Mr. A. W. Sullivan, Assistant Second Vice-President, Illinois Central Railroad, America; England—Mr. N. G. Drury, Superintendent of the Lines, Great Eastern Railway, England.

Conclusions of Congress.

To be in the highest degree remunerative the traffic must be handled rapidly, by simple inexpensive methods, and with the minimum working organization necessary for the purpose. The type of car is the essential factor. New lines to be constructed should be adapted to the best types of cars. On old lines, in order to utilise to the utmost the space between trucks, the curves should be compensated to provide the same clearances as up to the tangents. The locomotives should be sufficiently powerful