

# Train Talks

---

*Informal discussions by the Pennsylvania Railroad with its patrons on matters of mutual interest and concern.*

---

JULY, 1942

---

## Railroads at War

### Planned Far Ahead to Do Their Part

**F**OUR main strands compose this country's life-line in the sea of world-wide war. They are the Government, the armed forces, the war industries and transportation. The last ties the three others together and makes it possible for all to function.



Not merely "thousands and hundreds of thousands, but millions" of soldiers have been moved by the American railroads, and "with the greatest of smoothness".—Lieut. General Brehon B. Somervell, Commander, Service of Supply, U. S. Army.

Because of great changes occurring in transportation, the railroads of the United States have taken on unique and outstanding importance to the destiny and future of the American people. The contribution they are making to the war effort is due, more than anything else, to the fact that they prepared in advance, so that when the time came they had the "know how" to do the war job.

At the outbreak of the present conflict, the nation had at its disposal—ready to serve all public and private

needs—its railroads, its highway vehicles, its coastwise shipping and its airways. The combined capacity of these four major transportation systems was far more than ample to meet all demands for service. War has made that serene picture unrecognizable.

First, it has brought practically to a full stop ocean shipping between American ports. The ships have been diverted to war service in other parts of the world.

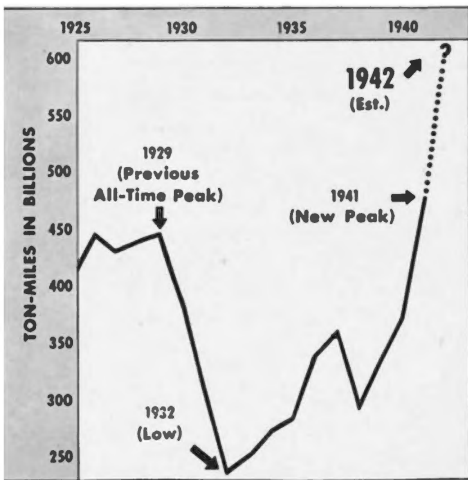
Second, motor transportation, both private and public, is rapidly shrinking for lack of rubber and gasoline, and because of the ban on automobile building.

Third, the airways are assigning most of their capacity to purely military and governmental travel, with less and less available for other uses, no matter how important.

All this has greatly increased, and will continue to increase, the responsibilities of the railroads. They are taking up the burdens of other agencies of transportation service, and at the

same time are handling the heavily increased, and increasing, traffic that naturally comes to them from the war industrial production program and the mobilization of a great Army.

Today the demands for transportation within the United States far exceed those of any previous era in its history. The railroads are meeting an overwhelming proportion of these demands. At the present time, railroad passenger business may be roughly estimated as 80% greater than in 1939, and freight business about 85% greater. The



Rail freight traffic, measured in tons hauled one mile, reached a new "high" in 1941, and this year will go much higher still.

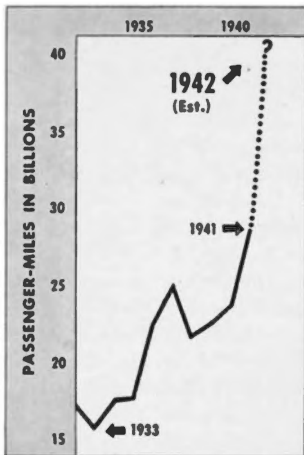
latter has passed all previous records. Traffic is still mounting, and the end cannot be foretold.

So far, this enormous rail movement of freight and passengers has been handled successfully and efficiently. There have been minor delays and minor inconveniences, which the public has accepted in a spirit of helpfulness, forbearance and patriotism. The co-operation, understanding and response of Americans everywhere in the country have been almost unanimous.

The railroads have surveyed the future and have made their plans for meeting it. They are confident that they will continue to play their part as successfully as they have up to now—if it is possible to carry these plans substantially into effect.

This does not mean that there will not be some sacrifices in the less essential things. For example, not all forms of passenger service can be fully maintained. Some have already had to be curtailed and doubtless more will be. Coaches which are not yet air-conditioned are being used, and will continue to be used, this summer. Sleeping car accommodations will not always be available of the type, or at the exact time, preferred. Vacation plans may have to be different from other years.

On some of the busiest rail routes, especially in the East, some passengers have already had to stand on intercity and commuting rides, and it is inevitable that this will continue. The railroads regret this, but since the war began it has been impossible to build more than a relatively few new passenger cars, and



**Rail passenger business—passengers carried one mile—is scoring the sharpest rise in history.**

**"Without transportation we could not fight at all. In these days there is nothing which enters into war, from troops to bullets, which is not dependent absolutely on transportation. Everyone must concede that they (the railroads) have done an outstanding piece of work."**

**HON. JOSEPH B. EASTMAN, Director,  
Office of Defense Transportation.**

while the war lasts none at all may now be permitted, under the Government's program of steel priorities.

Troop movements have the first call on the use of the passenger equipment of all railroads, and these movements have far exceeded in size and extent anything experienced in the First World War. It is certain that they will be larger still as the nation's war effort further expands.

The fact that the passenger equipment of the American railroads is interchangeable over all lines has been enormously important in making these movements possible with precision and speed, and over unprecedented distances; but cars, of course, are taken out of civilian use. Some of the coaches of this railroad, for example, have gone 3,000 miles away from home with soldier passengers, and have been in service on other lines for weeks at a time. Great numbers of Pullman cars must be taken out of regular service to handle long distance troop movements.

All railroads on which war traffic is heavy are meeting extraordinary demands for dining car service. It is estimated that the Pennsylvania Railroad this year will serve 7,000,000 meals in its dining cars, or nearly double the number served in 1941, and much more than double the volume of a few years ago. No more dining cars can be built for the duration of the war. Every one the Pennsylvania Railroad has is in service.

Definite facts and figures as to what the railroads are doing in moving the nation's war freight are in the realm of military secrets. The volume, however, is much in excess of the heaviest movements of the First World War, and is being handled smoothly and uninterruptedly. This is because arrangements set

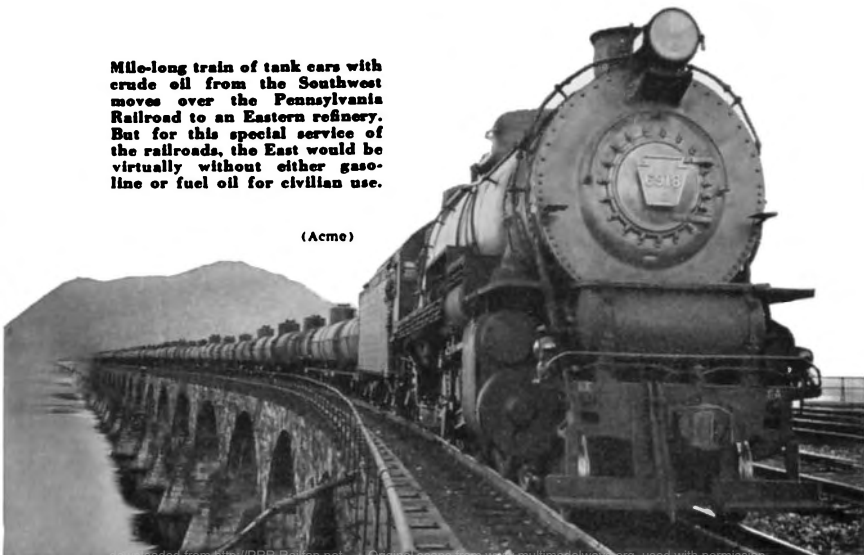
up between the railroads, the Army, the Navy and the industries assure that no freight is loaded into a car until it is known that it can be unloaded at destination, while at the same time there are no confusing and conflicting "priorities" in the movement of freight such as occurred in World War I. The congestion of transportation during part of that conflict was not due to a breakdown of the railroads, but to the improper use of railroad freight cars as storage houses. This error, which was beyond railroad control in the last war, is now being successfully avoided, and war shipments move freely to destination.

Meantime, orderly civilian life must be maintained. Modern war strategy recognizes this as a basic necessity, because the successful conduct of warfare today depends upon industrial production, which will break down if the processes of civil life break down. It is doubtful whether even now the public appreciates what the railroads have done, and are doing, to prevent the possibility of such a disaster.

Along the strategic Atlantic Seaboard, which contains so many

**Mile-long train of tank cars with crude oil from the Southwest moves over the Pennsylvania Railroad to an Eastern refinery. But for this special service of the railroads, the East would be virtually without either gasoline or fuel oil for civilian use.**

(Acme)



**SINCE THE FALL OF 1939, THE RAILROADS HAVE ADDED 232,095 FREIGHT CARS AVAILABLE FOR SERVICE. THESE WOULD MAKE A SINGLE TRAIN STRETCH**

*SALT LAKE CITY*



*DENVER*



*ST. LOUIS*



*CHICAGO*



war industries, there is a shortage of gasoline, but its effect on motor vehicle users has been limited to a degree of inconvenience. That the shortage has not been far worse is due to the railroads. They put into operation practically a brand new service to provide gasoline for eastern consumers.

For many years the East had been receiving the crude petroleum, from which the greater part of its gasoline was made, by tank steamers. The railroads had long been almost entirely out of the business of transporting liquid fuels, because tanker ships and pipe lines had taken over the traffic practically in its entirety. The railroads' tank cars became useless and were disposed of.

Last summer, the end of tanker transportation of crude oil to the Eastern refineries was in sight. Unless something could take its place in sufficiently adequate degree, that would mean practically the end of gasoline for civilian use in the East, at least for a long period. The threat to the Eastern war industries and their employees was a most serious one.

Could the railroads take up enough of the load to save the day? Outside of railroad circles, there was much more skepticism than hope, but a pleasant surprise was in store. Pressing into service the tank cars which were in the hands of private com-

EIGHT CARS AND 3,686 LOCOMOTIVES TO THEIR EQUIPMENT  
CHING APPROXIMATELY FROM NEW YORK TO SALT LAKE CITY.

PITTSBURGH



PHILADELPHIA



NEW YORK

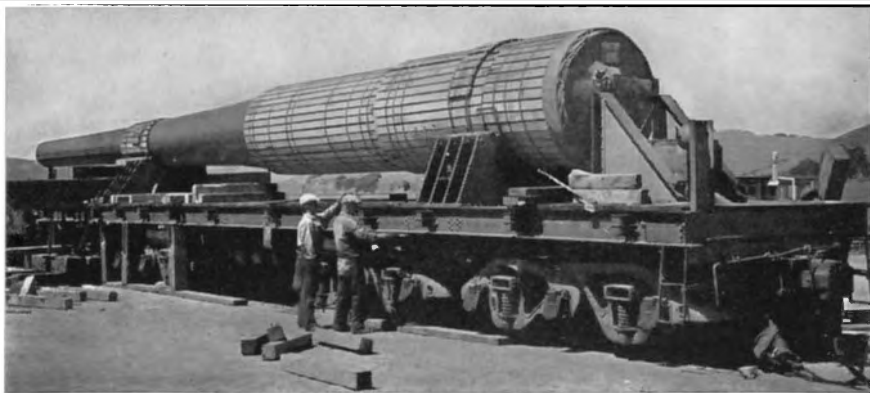


panies, and many of which were standing idle, the railroads at once initiated a steady flow of crude oil to the Eastern refining points—and at greatly reduced rates. From an average of less than 100,000 barrels a day in January, this flow, which in addition to crude oil also includes some refined gasoline, has now been built up to more than 700,000 barrels a day.

This is only a single example of what the railroads are doing, but it is one that comes squarely home to millions of people, and vitally affects their everyday lives and welfare.

In the long depression of the 30's, there was widespread belief that the railroads had permanently sunk to a minor place in the nation's life; that they were an outmoded form of transport; that they had become a "poor relation" among American institutions, and maybe had not very long to live.

Fortunately, railroad men had faith in themselves and in their industry. Advantage was taken of the years when traffic was extremely small and discouraging, to study the possibilities of the future, to improve and refine facilities and operating methods, to increase the power of locomotives and the capacity of cars and trains to move traffic—in general, to continue the great forward steps in railroad transportation which were



**This big caliber gun travels promptly and safely to its destination, riding on a heavy-duty railroad flat-car.**

initiated following the close of the First World War, but which many people, fortunately in error, thought were ended forever by the dark days which followed 1929.

During this period, also, the rail carriers formed their great central organization, the Association of American Railroads, through which they act cooperatively and as a unit, in their relations with the Government, with the general public and among themselves.

From the outbreak of the war, this central organization has proved of inestimable value in facilitating the handling of the war traffic, in close collaboration with the Army, Navy and other governmental bodies. In even greater degree has this been true since the formation of the Office of Defense Transportation, established by the President of the United States to coordinate all the transportation activities of the country under the guidance of Hon. Joseph B. Eastman, long-experienced member of the Interstate Commerce Commission, and outstanding authority on transport questions.

The existence of the Association also has made it possible to reap the maximum benefit from the splendid cooperation accorded by shippers everywhere in utilizing the facilities of the railroads to best advantage, particularly in the prompt loading



and unloading of freight cars and in loading cars to capacity. It is largely as a result of this cooperation that the railroads in the first four months of 1942 performed the remarkable feat of rendering 40% more freight service than a year ago, with the loading of only 11% more cars.

Another most important railroad achievement has been in the field of labor relations. Railroad labor and railroad management met repeatedly face to face, in a franker and more helpful atmosphere than ever before. These discussions were continued into the present war period, and with minor exceptions, have settled the many problems that war has brought, so that today, railroad labor relations are an outstanding example in that field.

In the last twelve years—1930 to 1941, inclusive—the railroads of the United States have spent approximately \$4,200,000,000 in the improvement and extension of their facilities—a truly

**Shipment by rail will save many miles of wear on the tires of this Army truck, and get it there more quickly, too.**





Photo by U. S. Army Signal Corps

**Just off the assembly line, a trainload of armored tanks starts for the military unit to which they have been assigned.**

stupendous achievement for an industry which neither receives nor asks Government subsidy, which stands entirely upon its own feet, which pays its own way in full out of earnings from service rendered, and which yields heavy taxes to the support of Government.

With the first threats of war in Europe, the railroads, foreseeing the probable effect on American industrial production, and the inevitable adoption by this country of a National Defense Program, began to make comprehensive plans to meet the situation. Each peak of traffic was anticipated far in advance and was adequately met year by year. Between September, 1939, and the beginning of the second quarter of 1942, the railroads increased the number of freight cars available for service by 232,095 and the locomotives by 3,686.

The railroads have prepared a further carefully considered program for new equipment, designed to meet the increased demands for service under the nation's war program, so far

ahead as can be anticipated. As stated in a recent address by M. W. Clement, President of the Pennsylvania Railroad:

"Whether railroad transportation in the future will continue to move on will depend on how much more war traffic the railroads are called on to carry, and the restrictions that are placed on the railroads.

"The building of cars has been practically stopped.

"The acquisition of engines is being limited.

"The building of the facilities is slowing down under priorities.

"Such are the fortunes of war.

"Without too many restrictions, the railroads can go on handling the load that is placed upon them to the end of the War, just as they have since its beginning.

"Rationing of transportation will come only as a result of restrictions placed upon the railroads which prevent expansion of their facilities and their capacity.

**Workers in one of the great war industries leaving a Pennsylvania Railroad city terminal for an outlying plant.**



"The railroads of the United States are today doing the most phenomenal job in their history. To all those men who have contributed to this almost miraculous result, I pay my tribute."

HON. CLYDE M. REED, of Kansas, Member of  
the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce.

"The railroads are handling wartime transportation, and handling it successfully and efficiently on the basis of their own resources. This is worth emphasizing because, today, when the thought is everywhere in the air that everything should be done by the Government, we have here an outstanding illustration and proof of what private industry can accomplish.

"The railroads are moving every ton of freight and all the passengers, including hundreds of thousands of soldiers, that have to be moved in the war effort. There has been no breakdown and no failure, and in the light of the actual experience there is nothing whatever to suggest that any better job would be done, or that as good a job could be done, if the task were entrusted to any other agency than the American railroads themselves."

## GROWTH IN THE MOVEMENT OF OIL BY RAIL

**JANUARY  
DAILY  
AVERAGE**

LESS  
THAN  
100,000  
BARRELS

**JUNE  
DAILY  
AVERAGE**

**OVER 700,000 BARRELS**

Railroad Deliveries of Oil by Tank Car to the Eastern Seaboard Increased  
Over 700% in Daily Average Volume from January to June, 1942