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HANDLING ENGINES

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162 The desirability of pooling engines in place of operating them by regularly assigned crews depends, in the writer's opinion, on whether the engines are engaged in passenger or freight-service, and in the latter case, on the conditions which exist.

PASSENGER SERVICE

163 Where traffic conditions admit of the engine making greater mileage than can properly be run by one crew, two crews assigned to one engine, or three crews to two engines, will enable the engine to make as great a mileage as is desirable. On account of the comparatively short time occupied from terminal to terminal, the crews can usually make a round trip without holding the engine longer than is required to handle it and prepare it for the return trip or to await its train. By using more than one crew to the engine, it is theoretically available on its return just as soon as though it were pooled. In practice, unless pooling is carried to the extent of sending out any engine on any train, certain engines are regularly used on certain trains or groups of trains, and it is comparatively easy to arrange the crews and engines so that a reasonable time may be allowed for repairs and yet ample service be obtained from the engine. When working with assigned crews it is of course usual to employ some extra passenger men to take the place of the regular men, who are also available in case an extra trip is required from an engine on account of specials or extra sections of regular trains. Where regular scheduled trains have to be provided for, this system is as flexible and convenient

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as pooling and has the additional advantage in passenger service that the men run certain trains regularly, and will consequently give better service than when handling a number of trains indiscriminately.

164 Pooling in passenger service probably does not require much discussion. The system is not in extensive use and will presumably have few advocates. The writer would, however, state as a result of his experience with both pooled and assigned engines in passenger service, that he is most strongly opposed to pooling in this service and considers that far better results can be obtained from assigned crews.

FREIGHT SERVICE

165 Here conditions are very different. The time is slow and a long time is occupied from terminal to terminal, so that crews may require a full allowance of rest on arrival, or may even have to be relieved on the road. Few, if any, of the trains run at regular hours, and in place of following a defined schedule, the demand for engines varies with the traffic. When business is heavy, engines are wanted as soon as they are repaired and ready for service, making it difficult, if not impossible, to select the engines in any particular order. By pooling, such difficulties may be more easily met, especially at large terminals. When engines are assigned the practice usually required by the agreement with the men is that engines shall be prepared and despatched in the order in which they arrive, but if the engine is ready its use may be retarded by the time required by the crew for rest. In pooling, both these objectionable conditions vanish. An engine may be turned at once if fit for service and thus rendered immediately available, and the movement of the men being entirely independent of that of the engines, the detention of engines at a terminal can be regulated by simply increasing or decreasing the number in the pool.

166 Under such conditions, if pooling is not carried on in name, it will be in fact, simply because business can not be handled unless engines are used without reference to the order of their arrival. Granted therefore that pooling is advantageous under these conditions, it should be done properly. All the features necessary to a successful pooling system must be employed, such as thorough terminal inspection independent of the engine crews, and arrangements for handling tools and engine supplies, and caring for headlights, oil cups, etc. If pooling is resorted to when business is especially heavy, or

when traffic is disturbed by storms or by other causes, without proper arrangements being made, the results are most objectionable. Under these circumstances, the condition of the power will depreciate rapidly and the service rendered will be exceedingly inefficient. The maxim is frequently stated, "If you pool, pool," and its wisdom has been demonstrated by experience. The real question about pooling is therefore whether there are conditions under which it is preferable to adopt the alternative practice, that of running engines with assigned crews. This depends on the results obtained from the two systems, which are in the writer's experience as follows:

167 *Mileage.* It is possible to obtain a somewhat greater average mileage per engine under the pooling system, but the increase does not exceed ten per cent when traffic is being handled smoothly and without excessive congestion and delays.

168 *Repairs.* When running successfully, under the assigned engine system, repairs are less than when similar conditions exist with pooled engines. A man running an engine regularly keeps up the smaller details and knows what work is required at once, and what must be looked after in due time. His inspection reports are more reliable than those of a man who has had an engine for one trip only. As he has to run the engine next trip as well, he will handle it with greater care and avoid any action that will cause him trouble in the future. Men who have been accustomed to running pooled engines will not do all this at once, but they most certainly will if assigned to an engine for any length of time, and the difference is noticeable in engine-houses where some engines are assigned and some are pooled.

169 Engines are sometimes taken care of by the headquarter station system, the work required to maintain the engine in proper condition being done at the terminal designated as the home station, while at the other terminal the only work done is that necessary for the return trip. With this arrangement, even with pooled engines, the same crew will, if possible, make the round trip; but when they are changed, practically as much work is required at the away station as at the home station. The result is a considerable increase in the cost of repairs, for there is not as a rule very much difference in the cost at the home station.

170 When the assigned engine system proves inadequate for traffic demands, the results change. Men will endeavor to book enough work against the engine to hold it until they have rested, and on the other hand engines are liable to be wanted before repairs that are actually required are completed. Under these conditions engines may be bet-

ter and more cheaply maintained when pooled; but under normal conditions the writer's experience would show that with assigned crews the cost of running repairs may be reduced five to ten per cent and better mileage obtained from the engines between shoppings.

171 *Fuel.* It is almost impossible to determine the fuel consumed by an engine on an individual trip, and consequently difficult when pooling to keep any record of the amount of coal used by different men. A record may be kept by engines, but it is then impossible to locate the responsibility for any excessive consumption. The practical result is that on pooled engines, individual fuel records are of comparatively little use. With assigned engines, while trip records may not be individually accurate, the average of several consecutive trips soon becomes so, as the variation of the amount of coal left on the tender, while important on one, is of comparatively small importance on a number of trips. There is no doubt in the writer's mind that individual coal records, whether by trip or by period, are an important factor in obtaining economical results in fuel consumption, both from men and from engines, and he ascribes the good results that have been obtained on the Canadian Pacific Railway largely to the careful way in which the records have been watched.

172 Apart from the records, the familiarity of the men with the engines has an important bearing on fuel consumption. Most engines vary slightly in the way they burn the coal, in the nature and intensity of the draft, and in the best position for the throttle and reversing lever. Crews knowing an engine thoroughly learn about these peculiarities, while they do not when running a different engine each trip. One crew will obtain from an engine results that are impossible for another crew, and thus the result with assigned crews is a tendency to higher efficiency than when every engine has to be drafted and adapted to do the work with the poorest crew on the division. It is only necessary to watch the difference in the way an engine is handled by a regular crew and by a pooled crew, to realize the advantage of the former, and important results have been clearly shown with the same men and engines, on divisions where the two systems have been in effect.

173 *Service.* The remarks that have been made in connection with repairs and fuel apply with almost equal force to the class of service obtained from the engines, with reference to failures, breakdowns and ability to make the time required. A crew that knows the engine will get more out of it than one that does not. They will notice any difference in its working and will take more interest in getting

any defect rectified. They will keep their equipment in better condition and will pay more attention to bearings which show signs of heating, etc. All these conditions lead to better and more efficient service.

174 *Engine-House Expenses.* Inspection, the care of tools, the filling of lubricators, headlights and cab lamps, are commonly looked after on assigned engines by the crews. When engines are pooled this work has to be done by the engine-house force. At a large terminal this expense is not large, but when the number of engines handled is small, it is difficult to arrange the duties of the men doing this work to prevent its becoming a serious item. Conditions vary on different roads in this respect, but the fact remains that this work is not in any way burdensome to men having a regular engine, while it is burdensome if they are required to prepare a different engine each trip, and consequently they object to it very strongly. In the majority of cases this work constitutes an additional charge on engines that are pooled.

CONCLUSION

175 In conclusion, the writer considers that in passenger service pooling is objectionable under any conditions and should be avoided if possible.

176 In freight service, pooling is advisable if conditions are such that engines cannot be run with assigned crews, and probably on divisions where business is so heavy that sixty engines per day or over are despatched from the terminal; but the writer's experience is that where assigned crews can be used on engines, the cost of repairs, the amount of fuel consumed, and the class of service obtained, will all be more satisfactory.

177 He therefore regards pooling as a practice that may be necessary under certain conditions, but that is certainly not desirable if the alternative system can be satisfactorily carried out.