

IOWA STATE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION IN 46TH ANNUAL CONVENTION AT DES MOINES



Unique Special Train-- Most Comfortable

Down in the wilds of central Tennessee there travels in a leisurely manner hither and thither a special train which is at once probably the most inexpensive and most comfortable railroad domicile in existence. About twenty persons live in it. They enjoy most of the luxuries of the city life, in the midst of stretches of mountain wilderness. Cool and airy bedrooms, in sharp distinction to the stuffy boxes that serve as sleeping apartments in the ordinary special car, a large kitchen, a pleasant dining room, a parlor and library, and bathrooms with running water, hot and cold, make up a model house, or rather, set of apartments, on wheels. And these apartments are nothing more or less than condemned freight cars. Their occupants are down there building a railroad.

Originally the idea of this house on wheels was a scheme for self-preservation, contrived by Mr. George Weston, general manager for the Chicago contracting firm that is building the railroad. When he went down to look the ground over he found hotels few and far between. After his first night at one of these hostleries he wouldn't have cared if they had been fewer and further. Arising in the middle of the night, he took his clothes outside, shook them violently, had a bath in an adjacent stream, and walked around till morning. Then he sent back for a tent. But tent life in that region of furious storms is an uncertain mode of existence. Sometimes the tent would be there when Mr. Weston got back; sometimes his servant would be struggling to disengage it

from the top of a tree whither the wind had carried it. Once or twice it departed precipitately in the night-time, leaving the tenants to shiver in the rain. Mr. Weston decided that different arrangements would have to be made. He didn't propose to be eaten alive in the local inns, or blown about a mountainside by the boisterous winds. So, as soon as the railroad got fairly under construction, and other representatives of the firm arrived, he had five condemned freight cars sent down there, and proceeded to make a living place of them.

Simplicity the Keynote.

At the outset simplicity was the keynote. Decrs were cut in the ends of the cars and connecting platforms put in. Windows were also cut. When the weather became uncomfortably warm a false roof with two feet of air space was put on the cars, which made them cool and comfortable. All that part of the country is rich in springs and small streams. An ingenious member of the party put in a detachable pipe system to tap whatever water source happened to be nearest. Folding bathtubs followed and next the luxurious dwellers in the wilderness decided that they must have hot water as well as cold, so a big boiler was connected with the kitchen range and another pipe line supplied the other cars. As the officials took constantly more interest in their temporary home, they sent back to civilization for furniture and ornaments. Finally their pride in the home on wheels reached such a point that they must have visitors there to admit it. Somebody sug-

gested that they invite their wives down there for a holiday. The single men amended to the effect that there should also be some unmarried visitors. Within a fortnight the railroad home had blossomed and bloomed under the transforming touch of women's fingers and sundry hard-working railroad men were frantically telegraphing for white collars and scouring the country for places where they could get laundry work done.

Before they had been there a week the women had devised extensive improvements. They had assigned one car for kitchen purposes alone and another as a dining room. Files annoyed them, so they had screen doors put in; also window screens. They had been accustomed to having porches to sit on, therefore a temporary porch was contrived for each car. The connecting platforms were improved, the pipe lines were so arranged as not to force themselves upon the notice; yet with all this the whole house train could be put into shape for removal in half an hour's time. One day there arrived a consignment of table linen and a set of silver tableware, and the dining room took on the aspects of the higher civilization. Next smoking was banned in the car which had been used by the men as a lounging room, and delicate curtains and draperies went up to justify the new law. Presently there arrived a piano and that car became a drawing room car in very truth. Books and magazines arrived and there was a library in one end. Having gone thus far, the wives and daughters and sisters of the officials announced that, as they preferred their movable home in the wilderness to the stationary variety back at the center of civilization, they guessed they'd stay. And they did. The five parts of the House Migratory became: First, drawing room; second, married quarters; third, bachelor

quarters; fourth, dining room; fifth, kitchen.

Moving Day Had No Terrors.

Moving day had no terrors for their kind of housekeeping. This was fortunate, as they moved every ten days or fortnight. All that was to be done was to collect the hammocks and chairs from outside, haul in the detachable porches and platforms, order up a locomotive and proceed. Always they made it a point to stop within pipe reach of good water. Sometimes they shot squirrels from the roof of the house or bagged an occasional partridge from the parlor window, and it was seldom that they couldn't get trout and bass within walking distance. Vegetable supply was not quite so simple a matter, and the most ordinary groceries often meant miles of travel. But there was generally a locomotive within call, and whoever happened to be running the household affairs at the time could send for the engineer and give orders for the day.

"John, please take the dining room up to Gridgeville and try to get a barrel of potatoes and some onions. And be sure to bring it back in time for dinner."

Daily existence under such circumstances was a sort of picnic, but if any special picnic was on hand they took the home right along. Instead of having to leave home to reach the scene of the festivities. The population of the home on wheels varied greatly during the time of its occupancy. At one time there were nearly forty occupants, including guests. At present the family is a small one, but one more big gathering will probably be held before the railroad is finished, and the House Migratory is resolved into its original elements, consisting of five condemned freight cars.

Example of Law's Delay

One of the finest modern instances of the law's delays and the general crassness of officialdom is furnished in the case of one Matthew Hutchings, which came up before the court of probate in London, the other day. In the year 1806 the British man-of-war *Husky* foundered with all hands on board while on a voyage from Halifax to the West Indies. Among the crew was the acting-master, Matthew Hutchings. At the date of the disaster a sum of £135 was standing to his credit with the admiralty, and so it might have stood forever had not his next of kin discovered the fact exactly eighty years after the disaster. Still, it was no simple matter to get the money. A correspondence with the admiralty followed, which lasted thirteen years—from 1888 to 1899. At length the admiralty thought that they saw their way to pay out the money. But here the court of probate intervened. True, the man must by this time have been about 140; but there was the leading case of *Methuselah*, and evidence of his death must be procured. This has just been done to the satisfaction of the judge, and there is now some prospect of the heirs getting their money—in a year or two.

Explaining Things

Indianapolis Press: "What is this here diplomacy?" asked the grocery loafer. "It is like this here," said the grocer. "Fer instance, if I wanted to call you a liar I'd jst do so right out, but if I wanted to be diplomacy I'd go at it sorter round-about an' jls' say to the surroundin' air that while I was'n namin' no names, I reely did believe that a certain red-nosed, squint-eyed cuss that had et at least ten pound of my best cheese without payin' a cent was not so keerful with the truth as he orter be. See?"



FIRST SCHOOL HOUSE ERRECTED IN IOWA, NEAR KEOKUK, 1830