

# Union Pacific Educational Bureau Only One of Its Kind



TRAINING MEN IN STATION WORK

OMAHA has the only railroad college in the world, which has been in operation for the last fifteen months. If there is a similar institution anywhere in this country or Europe no one knows of it. The Omaha Railroad college is known as "The Educational Bureau of the Union Pacific Railroad." It occupies the whole third floor of the Pacific Express building, and is achieving a success that is developing more widely with every passing month. Dexter C. Buell, an operating expert, is in charge. In fact, Mr. Buell originated the school, put it into practical operation and is the governing spirit in its conduct.

"One of the greatest problems that the railroad executive has had to contend with in the past few years has been the maintaining of a satisfactory operating ratio," said Mr. Buell in a recent address; and to the establishment of such a satisfactory ratio the school work of this unique institution is directed. Operation of railroad properties more economically has been the great desideratum engaging the solicited attention of managers and superintendents for several years past. Mr. Buell asserts, without much fear of contradiction, that the general increased cost of living, increase of wages of employes, shorter hours of labor, higher prices of materials and supplies for maintenance and operation, and stationary or reduced freight rates, has made it necessary to give careful consideration to every plan which may seem to offer a means of operating a railroad more economically. The conditions leading to this need, set out above, are beyond the control of the railroad executives at this time; and out of their need grew the Union Pacific school.



DEXTER C. BUELL - HEAD OF SCHOOL

existing correspondence schools were carefully weighed; the strong points were strengthened and the weak ones eliminated wherever possible. It was

decided to have a system of text books and lesson papers particularly suited to the needs of the work, and these had to be considered and prepared with



great care, as nothing was found in the market that would serve. Complete courses are being written on such subjects as there is the greatest demand for. Other subjects or special lines of work, on which information is desired by only a few of the employes, are being covered by special instructions; or, possibly, by transferring the employe to a department or position where he can gain the information desired through practical work, with the co-operation of the bureau.

A list of the courses offered to employes at the present time comprises block signal maintenance and operation, interlocking, signaling, elementary electricity, electric light and power, telegraphy, telephony, railroad operation, train operation, station work, railroad accounting, freight traffic, passenger

traffic, analysis of statistics, track work in English, track work in Japanese, surveying and mapping, railway civil engineering, railway mechanical engineering, locomotive course, air brake course, gas engines, motor cars and motor car operation, mechanical drawing, sheet metal pattern drafting, boiler construction and repairs, machine design, refrigeration, car building, car repairing, shop practice and plumbing and pipe fitting.

### Efficient Advisory Board.

In order to make sure that the bureau's work was being done according to Union Pacific practices, an advisory board, consisting of the head of, or a representative of the head of, each department, was organized. The board met with the chief of the bureau each week to plan the work, outline the courses and direct the policy of the bureau. When the course outlines were prepared and divided into subject headings, each subject was assigned to the employe or official on the system who was considered best qualified to write authoritatively on it, and he was requested to prepare on that subject a paper to be submitted to the chief of the bureau. When a series of papers was completed the various men who had written these papers were called in to the bureau headquarters, thus forming a committee before whom the papers were read, discussed and criticized. Following this general discussion the papers were returned to the writers for such revision and correction as were suggested and finally sent to the bureau.

Such papers usually contained all the objectionable facts relating to the subject treated of, the bureau's work being to arrange these facts in such order that they would be suitable for instructional purposes, to get pictures to illustrate them, to edit them and to issue them. In keeping with these duties, day by day at the bureau headquarters the unwritten laws and practices of railroading are being gathered and put into text books; existing rules are being systematically compiled, condensed, explained and illustrated; departmental work is being taken up from the simpler beginnings, and being explained through the various steps to such limits as may seem desirable.

### Care in Preparing Lessons.

It was decided that no instruction papers should be issued unless approved by the head of the department interested, and that all educational matter issued by the bureau should deal with Union Pacific practices and methods, thus assuring the student that what he studied and learned through his educational course could be put into practice immediately.

An important part of the training of all employes is to familiarize them with the property for which they are working. With this end in view, a series of papers has been prepared, embracing the history of the Union Pacific, general information regarding its organization, and the scope of the organization of the various departments and a geography of each of the states in which its principal mileage is located.

To take care of the 800 or 900 Japanese employed, and issued to these men, nearly 25 per cent of all Japanese employes on the pay roll being students of the bureau, in good standing.

Men who desire to engage in another line of railroad work than that in which they are employed are, under certain conditions, assisted in making transfer from one department to another, although this transfer must be made with the approval of the heads of both departments interested. In order to take further advantage of the good which the bureau may do, the operating department has arranged that, in certain cases where men are selected for promotion, they will be given special training at the company's expense to fit them to enter upon the duties of their new position. This is done before the promotion is announced. For example: A trainmaster, selected for promotion to the position of assistant superintendent, has been given a year's training at the expense of the company, and has been paid during this training period the salary he was drawing when selected for promotion. This man came from the ranks, served as brakeman and conductor, and was in station service before being promoted to trainmaster.

### Possibilities for Economy.

"In only three or four directions is it now possible to make appreciably large economies," says Mr. Buell. "The executive must endeavor to reduce operating expenses through fuel economies, tonnage economies, reduction of accidents and claims, increasing the efficiency of officials and employes."

These things the railroad college is attempting and is apparently in a fair way to accomplish in time. The education afforded through its courses would appear to be directly in line with the thought of Lawyer Brandeis of Boston, when he asserted there is altogether too much waste allowed because of inefficiency in operating American railroad properties.

"Now, it should be noted," says Buell, "that the realization of the first and third conditions named among possible economies depends on the accomplishment of the fourth, and that, aside from the consideration of capital expenditures for heavier power or grade reductions, economies under the second head also depend on the fourth. In other words, the opportunities for realizing more efficient and economical railroad operation depend today largely on the railroad manager's ability to increase the efficiency of his officials and employes. Realizing these truths, the Union Pacific looked this problem square in the face a year and a half ago and set itself the task of accomplishing results along the line of increasing the efficiency of its workers, high and low."

The essential idea on which the work is planned and carried forward is that the school can teach every employe something; can help him in some way. Not a man on the system but is free to take up the courses, and these comprise instruction in every line of railroad work. While Mr. Buell devotes his personal attention to the school work in the Omaha office, the assistant chief of the institution, G. W. Sevier, spends about all of his time on the road. The bulk of the work is done by correspondence, and Mr. Sevier visits with those taking the various courses. He suggests, criticizes and helps the students in every way possible. Thus practical application is made, where necessary, of the lessons in hand.

### All Classes of Employees Assisted.

The stated objects of this school which are always kept in mind are to assist employes to assume greater responsibilities, to increase knowledge and efficiency and to prepare prospective employes to enter the service. Dealings with those taking the courses are along purely educational lines. The men taking the courses are from every department of the railroad's activities, but no man is compelled to take this school work. He must have the ambition to advance; the spirit to improve his mind and broaden his information; the desire to know his work and all its possibilities. This applies to the cleverest office man as well as the newest freeman, engine wiper, switchman, engineer, brakeman or conductor.

Station men are trained in the Omaha office, which is equipped with every detail necessary to make the instruction thorough and the practice right up to the minute. In the school room are telegraph instruments, telephones, desks, a model ticket office, a railroad yard in miniature, with switches, side tracks, cars bearing numbers, express compartment. Nothing is overlooked that a station agent must know or deal with in the daily round of his duties. In this branch of the work the number of students varies from half a dozen, at times, to two or three score.

At the outset the strong and weak points of

## Kindly Comment on Optimists by a Pessimist

HERE is a story of an ex-Christian Scientist, who, when asked why he had relapsed, or backslid, or become unchristian-unscientific, confessed to having tired of being "so darned happy all the time." Evidently that man needed an occasional dash of pessimism to make his life interesting after the monotony of persistent, unvarying optimism. The hopelessly incurable optimist revels, yes, wallows, in cheerfulness; his object in life is the pursuit of happiness, and, like the infant, creeping toward a cake of soap, he won't be happy till he gets it, says Frank M. Bicknell, in *Lippincott's*.

Epigrammatic comparisons of optimist and pessimist drop often from the lips of would-be wits: "The optimist sees the rose, the pessimist feels the thorn." "Of two evils, the optimist chooses the lesser, the pessimist both." It is as easy to cover the pessimist with obloquy as if he deserved it.

If there were no pessimists to ballast the too buoyant optimists, how long would the human race

last? The optimist sits upon the deck of a crowded steamer, serene, smiling, blissfully content. The pessimist, sitting beside him, smells smoke and begins to fidget. The optimist says it is his imagination and advises him not to worry, for all will come right in the end. Nevertheless, the pessimist gets up and "nooses round" till he discovers fire, which is then quickly subdued. But when on his return he tells the optimist of it, the optimist exclaims triumphantly: "Didn't I say all would come right in the end?" And the exasperating part of it is, the optimist's confidence, is justified—thanks to the pessimist.

Is it not an obvious deduction that a world made up wholly of optimists would be as impracticable as one containing only mendicant friars? The pessimist may be over-cautious, but the optimist is over-credulous. The optimist trusts in providence, the pessimist distrusts everybody and everything. The man who didn't know the gun was loaded is an optimist—he's dead; the one who feared it might go off whether it was loaded or not is a pessimist—he's still alive. The gentleman whose head was severed from his body so

neatly that he could not be convinced of the disconnection till they had given him snuff and made him sneeze must have been an optimist; seemingly he had not the brains not to be. The optimist doesn't know enough to go in when it rains—or at least he will start out on a cloudy morning without an umbrella, because he thinks he can borrow one from the pessimist if he needs be and he usually can. The optimist saunters gayly through life, wearing that fatuous smile that won't come off, secure in the knowledge that drunken men, fools, and optimists get looked after somehow. Left to his own devices, the optimist is an irresponsible baby, dependent for his very existence upon the pessimist. The optimist is a butterfly, the pessimist a grub; without the grub there could be no butterfly. Doubtless the optimist has his place in the world; so, too, have the amiable lunatic and other irresponsibles. But the pessimist is the safer and more useful member of society, and it is to be regretted that his services to mankind get so little credit.

Here's to the pessimist; may he live long and (cause the optimist to) prosper.

## New Building on University of Omaha Campus

THE laying of the corner stone of the gymnasium of the University of Omaha was the beginning of the first building erected on the campus of that institution and marked an event in the history of educational institutions in Omaha. The public schools have been for years an institution of which Omaha was especially proud, and it has not failed properly to appreciate the great work that has been done by the colleges and secondary schools that have flourished here.

But the University of Omaha, because of its name, its ideals, and because it is the youngest and most ambitious of these secondary schools, is receiving an unusual amount of attention.

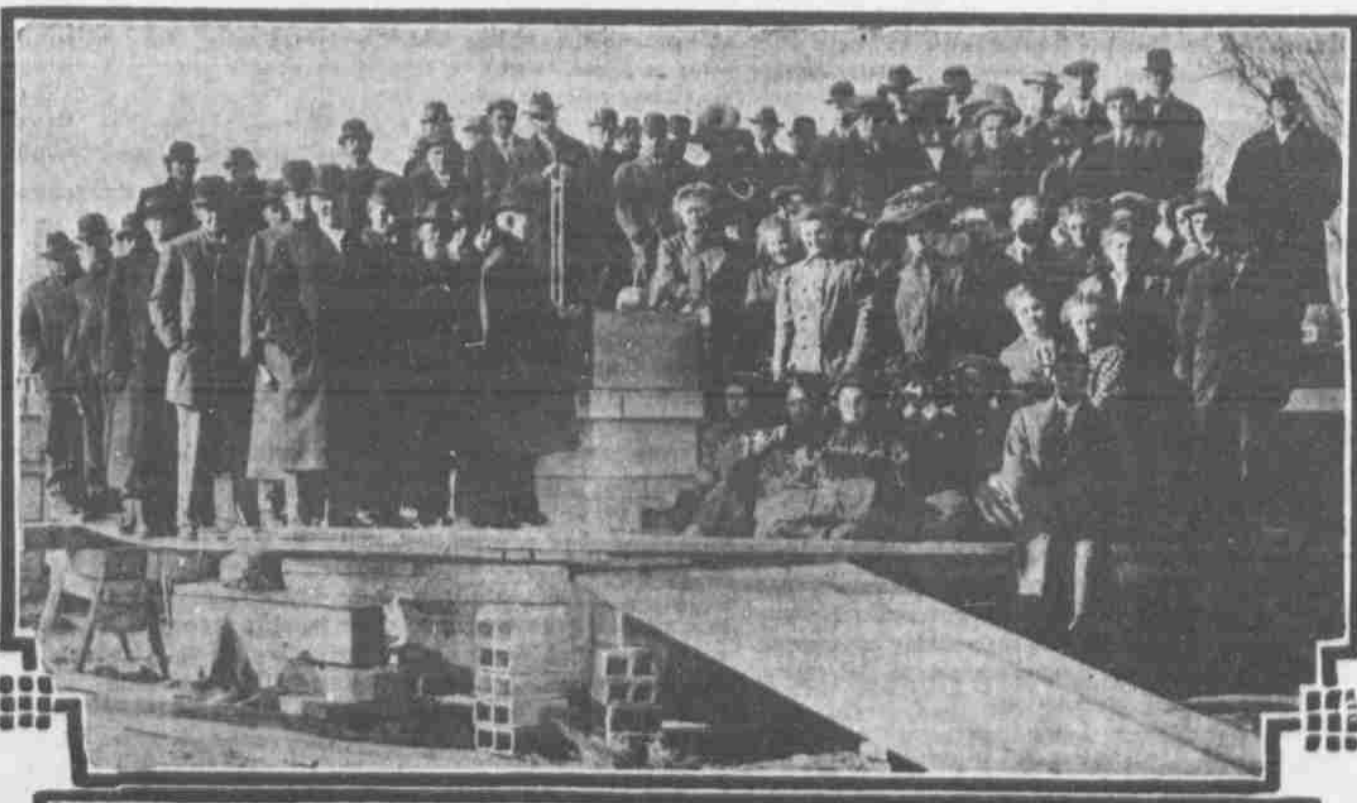
The new gymnasium building will be a handsome and well equipped structure and will take its place as a center for the social and athletic life of the university campus.

The other building that has been used as an administration and class building is the old Redick homestead, and its broad lines and spacious interior make it a fit place for beginning the work.

The program at the cornerstone laying of the gymnasium consisted of an invocation by Rev. J. S. Ebersole, the placing of a box of mementoes by W. T. Graham of the board of trustees, the laying of the stone by Dr. H. H. Maynard, vice president of the university; dedication prayer by Rev. F. T. Rouse and addresses by Judge Howard Kennedy, Isaac Car-

pentor and Rev. Julius S. Schwartz. The box that was placed under the stone contained copies of Omaha newspapers of the date, November

30; copies of the university publications, the *Boomerang* and the *University Reporter*, and lists of the students, faculties and board of trustees.



LAYING CORNER STONE OF GYMNASIUM, UNIVERSITY OF OMAHA