



## Busy Career of a Western Railroad President

**F**ORTY-SEVEN years of practical experience in all the details of railroad operation and twenty-nine of these devoted to the service of one line is the record of President Marvin Hughitt of the Northwestern system. With nearly 8,000 miles of trackage, \$40,000,000 of property and an army of employes under his supervision, a stranger might be inclined to wonder that the farmer boy of fifty years ago grew unaided into it. But a moment in the presence of the quick, alert, tactful, considerate man gives the keynote of his success to one who has the gift of reading men.

Out of the self-possession of the man comes the assurance of his powers, until one believes the assertions of the railway world that he is probably one of the oldest and ablest railroad managers on the continent. With his square jaw, firm mouth and the nose which Napoleon always insisted upon for ability, President Hughitt has a figure in keeping. Yet with all of it, are a sensitiveness and diffidence that are hard to reconcile.

Marvin Hughitt was born in Genoa, Cayuga county, New York, in 1838. His father owned a farm near the village and the boy's early life was passed there. He experienced the common, humdrum existence of the farm boy. He went to school when the work on the farm did not interfere. He had some instruction, even in a school that was dignified with the name of seminary. Farm work, and above all the monotony of farm life, palled on the boy. It was an insufficient outlet for his activities. About that time Prof. Morse was making the influence of the electric telegraph felt in the world. It appealed to young Hughitt as it

had done to scores of others. He went to Auburn, where he secured a place at a key and sounder.

### Comes to the West.

At his inquisitive age he learned quickly. He was a capable operator in an unusually short time and within a year was classed among the experts. Then the west appealed to him and at the age of 17 he came to Chicago. The Illinois and Mississippi Telegraph company had headquarters in Chicago and Judge J. D. Catlin was president of it. In 1854 young Hughitt applied at the office for the position of operator and was taken on the force.

It was not long until the young man from New York was remarked in the office. From the complimentary gossip of the clerks he came to the notice of the officials of the company, and when a vacancy occurred he was made superintendent of the office.

The railroad systems of the west were in their infancy at that time. There had not been either time or opportunity to educate men to the business. The fact that a telegraph company had a good superintendent soon spread and the St. Louis & Chicago railroad—now the Chicago & Alton—offered young Hughitt the position of superintendent of telegraph for the line. This position embraced the work of train dispatcher, and it was in this that Mr. Hughitt got his first inkling of railroading. He took to his new duties with all his native enthusiasm. When the road finally was absorbed by the Chicago & Alton system he went over to the service of the Illinois Central road, acting as trainmaster for the southern division, with headquarters at Centralia, Ill. It was at Centralia that Mr. Hughitt

found opportunity for a piece of work that attracted widespread attention.

War was on. A large force of troops with arms, ammunition, artillery and supplies was to be moved as speedily as possible from St. Louis to Cairo. The government made a requisition on the Illinois Central to do the work. Trainmaster Hughitt was instructed to see that the task was carried out as quickly as possible and with as little loss to regular traffic as might be possible.

Hughitt took the train dispatcher's table at headquarters, realizing the task before him, but unwilling to even divide responsibility with anyone else. For thirty-six hours he sat at the table, and when he relinquished the key, the last troop train was safely in Cairo. Scarcely had the trainmaster rested from this long shift when another order came for him to see to moving the same troops from Cairo to Virginia, so far as the Illinois Central lines extended. Then, for another stretch of thirty-six hours he sat at the dispatcher's key, moving trains without a hitch. When he was done not a train in the regular service had been delayed or abandoned. A few days later Hughitt received an order to report at the general office in Chicago as assistant superintendent of the Illinois Central road.

In 1861 Mr. Hughitt was made general superintendent of the system, a position which he retained while John M. Douglas was president. When President Long resigned Mr. Hughitt was made superintendent of the Pullman Car company, but soon resigned to become assistant general manager of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul road. February 1, 1872, he was appointed gen-

eral superintendent of the Chicago & Northwestern railroad. Colonel James H. Howe was manager, and because of his lack of practical knowledge he asked for the assistance of Mr. Hughitt. Virtually this made Hughitt manager of the road and when H. H. Porter had succeeded Howe and retired in 1876, Hughitt was appointed manager in fact.

By this time his ability and value to the road had been recognized. In 1880 the directors elected him second vice president. In 1882 he was chosen president of the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha line. In 1884 he was elected president of the Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley railroad, another dependency of the system, and he filled that position for three years. Then, in 1887, when President Albert Keep was made chairman of the board of directors—an office now to the management—Hughitt was unanimously elected to the presidency of the Chicago & Northwestern system.

### His Methods as President.

Fourteen years as the president of a great railway company have left few marks upon the man. His hair is an iron gray, with a trace of silver in his beard, but his color is unimpeachable and his eyes dispute the fact that he is nearly 61 years of age. As a railroad president, his familiarity with every detail of railroad work gives him tremendous prestige as a great executive force in the machine. He can handle an engine, throw a switch, or relieve a train dispatcher at a moment's notice. The crew of the train which pulls "the old man's" car knows that not a detail of stopping, starting, slowing down or making time is lost upon him.

There is a suggestion of militarism in

the man. But behind the firm face is a depth of eye that robs it of its aggressiveness. He exacts of all men their duty, giving his own service as an example and holding out to them that in working for the good of the system they are working for the good of themselves.

At no time in his career has he engaged in any business outside the duties of the position he has filled on the various roads with which he has been connected. Giving his entire time, thought and energies to the interests he represented, he has shunned connection with any and all schemes, no matter how equitable or just or probably profitable. He has always believed it to be unwise for a person occupying high positions of trust to allow one's mind to be distracted by outside ventures and has never been a speculator in lands, town lots, construction companies, grain, stocks or bonds, although his position has offered him many superior openings. What wealth he has accumulated has been made legitimately. If a piece of land was bought it was paid for in cash and was purchased simply as an investment.

Mr. Hughitt's recreations are few. He prefers a trip to the woods of the northwest to the excitement of the eastern watering resorts. He is a splendid billiard player and has a fine billiard room in his Prairie avenue residence. For politics he never evinced any taste. He was a great admirer of Stephen A. Douglas, but after the death of the "Little Giant," he allied himself with the republican party, with which body he has since affiliated. He served one term as president of the Chicago Commercial club, all that is permitted, this being the only office filled by him since he went into the service of the Northwestern road.

## Episodes and Incidents That Enliven Court Proceedings

**N**URRAH for a court that knows something about a boy and is willing to do him justice. At Fort Scott a 15-year-old lad was summoned into the probate court on the complaint of his father to show cause why he should not be sent to the boys' reformatory. The father took the stand and told that on several occasions when the boy ought to be out in the sun hoeing corn he ran away to the creek and went fishing. "Was he bad other ways?" queried the judge. "No-o-o," reluctantly admitted the father. "Case dismissed; costs attached to the complaining witness," sharply said the judge.

Sir Harry Poland, a British magistrate noted for his brilliancy, is careless in his dress. Once his family persuaded him to go to Poole and order a fashionably-cut suit. To the chagrin of the household Sir Henry looked more outlandish in the new clothes than in his old ones. His brother-in-law went to see Poole about it. "It is not my fault, sir," the tailor assured him. "Every care was taken, but how could we fit a gentleman who would insist upon being measured sitting down?" And the only satisfaction that could be obtained from Sir Harry Poland himself later on was the dry comment: "Well, it's my business and not yours. I like to be comfortable. I spend three parts of my life sitting down and I preferred to be measured so."

Jim Webster was being tried for bribing a colored witness, Sam Johnson, to testify falsely, relates the Detroit Free Press.

"You say the defendant offered you \$50 to testify in his behalf?" said the lawyer to Sam.

"Yes, sah."

"Now, repeat what he said, using his exact words."

"He said he would give me \$50 if I—"

"He didn't speak in the third person did he?"

"No, sah, he tuck good care dat dar

were no third pussion 'round dar was only two—us two."

"I know that, but he spoke to you in the first person, didn't he?"

"I was de fust pussion myself, sah?"

"You don't understand me. When I was talking to you did he say 'I will pay you \$50?'"

"No, sah, he didn't say nothing 'bout you payin' me \$50. Your name wasn't mentioned 'ceptin' he told me ef ober I got

into a scrape you was the best lawyer in San Antonio to fool de judge and de jury—in fact you was de best in town to cover up reskidity."

For a brief, breathless moment the trial was suspended.

A complaint, which a correspondent of Case and Comment says was filed in an Idaho court, runs as follows:

"I. That at all times hereinafter men-

tioned plaintiffs, . . . . . were associated together as a musical organization under the name and style of the Grangeville Brass Band.

"II. That the defendants, . . . . . are, and at times hereinafter mentioned were, associated together and doing business at the county and state of Idaho under the name and style of the Democratic Executive Committee of Idaho county, Idaho, and that the said defendants constituted the head

push of what is commonly known and styled as the Unterrified or Great Unwashed, and are and were organized and existing for the purpose of knocking the stuffing out of the G. O. P., and then and thereby drawing public pay and growing fat and sleek therefrom.

"III. That during the months of September, October and November, 1900, at the county and state of Idaho, the defendants then and there being desirous of rallying the Unterrified to listen to the shooting of anvils, cannon and other big guns and forcing and compelling the G. O. P. to dance to the music of defendants, employed plaintiffs to furnish music for the entertainment and inspiration of the Great Unwashed and for the terror and intimidation of the G. O. P.

"IV. That defendants have failed and refused to pay the said sum or any part thereof, although they are now enjoying the fat and lucrative offices much coveted by the G. O. P., and the paper commonly called 'hayseeds.'

"V. That plaintiffs have demanded in writing payment thereof and there is now due and owing from defendants the said sum of \$60, together with \$5 attorney's fees, as provided by law.

"Wherefore, plaintiffs demand judgment against defendants for the sum of \$60, together with \$5 attorney's fees and costs of this action."

### Shuffle

Detroit Journal. Perceiving now that the block was inevitable, the noble prisoner, both thought him of suicide.

"Shall I shuffle off this mortal coil?" asked he.

But the executioner, being a man of some wit without divined his thought.

"You shuffle after I cut!" quoth this functionary, briefly.

The duke was silent at this. It was not his grace's wont to landy words with one from the commonalty.



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