

# Work the City Ticket Agent Does to Make the Passengers Happy



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**N**EXT to the German army perhaps, it is doubtful if in the world there can be found more system than in the operation of a railroad. There are other fields of human endeavor where the business is well organized and where each has certain duties to perform, and certain responsibilities to assume. But it is also singularly true that in the other fields there is always some one or ones who are willing to assume the care and responsibilities of the entire establishment. They may divide the work, the drudgery, but they wear the anxieties of the departments nevertheless. The railroad is an exception. Every department is systematized. It is system, system, system. From the section gang along the tracks to the chairman of the board of directors, it is system. Every part of the work is divided into departments and every department has a head. That head is responsible for what happens in his own department, but he doesn't have to worry about any other department. He lets the other man worry about that. The average person who has occasion to use the cars knows only one official besides the conductor. This is the ticket agent. There are scores of other officials connected with a railroad, but the general public is not familiar with them. They seem to have a hazy conception that the other officials are employed by the railroads to dress well and draw their salaries because the company does not know what else to do with its money. They know the passenger and ticket agent, however, because he is the person with whom they come in contact. While they have a vague idea that he has something to do with running the trains, they know that he sells the tickets and handles their cash and they are satisfied that his authority is bounded only by the limits of his conscience and good nature. They believe that he makes the rates too and that he can give away all the passes he wants to.

had enjoyed one of the most refreshing sleeps in years. "That's the way we have to handle them," remarks the passenger man with a smile after the stranger had gone out. "He was no circumstance to what we get sometimes. Yesterday a man came in to have me look up a trunk that has been mislaid or lost. He went in the air when I told him I didn't know where the trunk was, but that I would try to have it located. He wanted me to go out and look it up. The trunk will turn up all right, but it may be a week before we get track of it. Everything depends upon the cause of the delay. Or course when a complaint of this kind comes to us we leave no stone unturned until the baggage is recovered. In spite of the precautions we put around such things they will occasionally go astray."

**Man the Most Troublesome.**  
"With whom do you experience the most trouble, men or women?"  
"Men. A woman is usually satisfied if you have a good, plausible explanation. She may not grasp the technical part of the explanation, but she goes away satisfied. She is more persistent. If anything goes wrong she will follow it up from day to day until the matter is straightened out. A man explodes and after he has spoken his piece he goes out with a chip on each shoulder and awaits developments."  
"What class of people give the most trouble when selling tickets?"  
"People who do not travel much. People who use the cars considerably know what they want and how to get it. They

study the time tables, find out the shortest way to get there and come in and buy their ticket. People who do not travel very much will go from office to office in the endeavor to get a ticket for less than the price you quote. Some of them eventually wind up in some cut-rate office. Foreigners are great for this, especially the lower classes. They will pay board and wait over a week and come around day after day in the hope of getting a reduction. They are, of course, not familiar with the passenger association laws which govern these rates.  
"In the old days it was no unusual thing to cut under a rival line if we saw a chance to get a big and profitable haul. The passenger association is made up of a general agent from each office. If a road wants a rate for some special reason in a territory reached by the other lines it makes its wishes known and the association takes it up. If the rate is ratified by the association it goes into effect. Sometimes a road simply announces that it intends to put a rate into effect upon a certain date and the other roads have to fall in line, or let the rival get the business. Such a move, independent of the Western Passenger Association, was taken here only a short time ago."

**No More Commissions.**  
"The business isn't what it used to be. I can remember when the passenger agent made all sorts of coin. They used to pay the passenger agent a commission for routing through passes over some particular line. Once in a while they got into a scrap and the roads would bid for the business. One road would offer a certain sum to have people routed over its line. The traveling agent of the other road would

come in and raise the commission in order to get the business. Perhaps a third and a fourth passenger agent would drop in and raise the bid of the others. The commissions were wiped out about three years ago when the railroad presidents got together and decided not to pay them any more. It shows what they can do if they want to and all agree to work together.  
"In those days there used to be a bigger fight on the part of the traveling passenger agents to get business. They had considerable leeway and if they learned of a large movement of people they would find out the leader and call upon him one after the other. Each traveling agent impressed upon the prospective patron the importance of taking no definite action until he had seen him again. He would cut under those who were ahead of him and get the party to route over the lines he was interested in. The passenger agent and the traveling passenger agent frequently worked together for perquisites. Nowadays they give us no leeway, and all we can do is to impress upon the patron the superiority of our line and the scenery along the way. If we don't happen to have any scenery we are up against it, as the expression is."  
**Two Classes of Travelers.**  
"There are two distinct types of humanity with which we have to combat. One is the suspicious man; the other is the one who believes we are not quoting him the lowest fare for which a ticket can be bought. The latter thinks the question of price is a matter left with the ticket agent, and that he can cut the rate if he wants to. This man will present all sorts of arguments to convince the agent that he ought to get a ticket for less than the regular

price, and he believes the agent can cut over under if he wants to. I have had them talk to me by the hour and then go away mad as hornets, satisfied that my reason for not giving a better rate was simply a display of contrariness on my part and that I could have done it with a scratch of the pen had I been courteous enough to accommodate the customer.  
"The suspicious man as may be imagined does not ride very often. He comes in satisfied that he is going to be done if we can get the best of him. He comes in with the air of a man who takes it for granted that we are professional swindlers and that he is 'on to our game', but is willing to listen to what we have to say. He goes from office to office and if he comes back at all it is with the conviction that all the passenger agents in the city are in league to do him. He finally goes to a scalper and buys his ticket.  
"One of these men came in the other day and had the nerve to ask me if the ticket he had purchased was all right. He had spent two days going from place to place and finally bought one of the brokers. I asked him if it was his ticket. 'Certainly,' he replied. I then asked him to duplicate the signature on the coupon. He wrote his name and I easily convinced him that the signatures were not the same; that they were written by different persons. I showed him also that the ticket was made out for a person much younger, and that he in no way agreed with the description.  
"Then he began to fidget. He still insisted that he was the party for whom the ticket was made out, but he wanted me to fix it so that he would have no trouble

on the train. Finally he broke down entirely, admitted it was a broker's ticket and offered me \$5 to square the thing up and endorse the ticket so that he could get through all right. He agreed to raise it to \$10, but I told him that the only way to fix it was to take his chances with the conductor or buy a new ticket. He finally took it back to the broker and bought a straight ticket."  
"Do you experience much trouble with scalpers' tickets?"  
"Not much here. If we catch a scalper's ticket it is usually on the train. We have more time to examine tickets of this kind, but they rarely come in here. Occasionally they get timid and want us to look it over and see that it is all right."  
**Women Good Bluffers.**  
"Are women easier to detect than the men?"  
"No. Women usually have their lesson well learned. They are good bluffers. A mild mannered woman with a winsome face will look you straight in the eye and lie to the last. A man, on the contrary, begins to sweat and fidget as soon as he is under suspicion. When we have him cornered he throws up his hands and tries to leave. A woman will slick it out to the last. After she is bluffed out she will go out with her head in the air and a chip on her shoulder. A man sort of backs out and tries to lose himself in the crowd."  
**What He Has to Know.**  
"A good many people have an idea that the hardest work the passenger agent has to do is to dress well, spend money and carry a map of the world in his head so that he will be able to describe with the

minutes detail the smallest place in the most obscure corner of the earth, and tell precisely how to get there offhand, and precisely what minute the train will arrive.  
"We have to carry a great deal of this knowledge, but there is much more that people expect us to know, particularly with regard to the running of trains on other roads and the points reached by other lines. The passenger agent has to make out daily and monthly an account giving the minutest details of every transaction, so that it can be referred to with dispatch years from now if any question arises; he has to account for every ticket in his possession, see that the train service is what it should be, report any facts and complaints, report any claims for damages entered against the passenger department, and, in fact, look after the details of the business. If faults arise which come within his jurisdiction they must be corrected. If the problems are beyond his control they are reported to the officials next higher up to whom he reports. This would be the general passenger agent. We also try to get our share of the business that is moving back and forth."  
**Getting the Business.**  
"We use the mails and the newspapers a great deal in getting business. If there is any large movement of people in any one direction, as for instance to a convention, we get in touch with the head men, the leaders of the movement and try to interest them in our line. Often we go to the individuals themselves and persuade them to go over our lines, if we can. We can't offer the inducements we could once, when we cut under the other fellow, but it is a poor passenger agent who can't convince a person that his road is the best one to travel over, that his service is the best, that his trains are the speediest, that the route is the most picturesque, that his trains are more certain to reach their destination on time and that there are points of interest along his line which cannot be enjoyed in traveling over any other road. In fact our line is always the 'onliest.' It's 'the line and the others are merely imitators. We have all that's coming to a passenger and a little more. We don't know about the other lines. We are in the business to crack up our own road. If the other line has any advantages we haven't got we don't know it and we take care that the passenger doesn't find it out. In a nutshell we are here to sell tickets. When a person comes in and we see by his actions that he means business, we try by all the arts and artifices in our power to sell him a ticket before he leaves the place. The chances are ten to one that we won't have another chance for if we let him get away and he goes to another office it is very likely that the other man will sell him a ticket."  
"In the old days the traveling passenger agent used to drum up most of the business. He turns in all he can now. Today there is no object in looking out for the routing after a passenger leaves our road, but the traveling agent looks after this part of the business. He calls upon the agents of the other lines and sees to it that the connecting lines have his tickets and that they route a fair share of the business over his line."

## What the Passenger Agent Does.

This is the public idea of it. In a measure the public conception of the passenger agent is correct. He has considerable authority and he sells tickets. The passenger agent is in a sense the link which connects the interests of the public and the railroad company, but he is more than that. He is the human bumper, the cushion, if you please, that receives the complaints, the criticisms of the public and softens the shock of the officials over him. He keeps an eye on the service, looks after the passengers and protects the interests of the railroad company so far as his authority extends.  
Everything good, bad and indifferent affecting the welfare of the passenger that comes to the passenger agent as a rule, there is a kick coming, he gets it first. If there is a claim for damage he usually has the first whack at currying the passenger's lacerated feelings. If there is a word of commendation, which isn't particularly often, he, by some means, gets it first. He is the first to see and it is he who speaks for the corporation and conveys the thanks and good wishes of the company with renewed assurances of its esteem. No person has to make a closer study of human nature. No person knows better what an unreasoning entity the "dear public" really is.

## Fish Eaters Versus Beef Eaters in Manchuria

(Copyrighted, 1904, by Frank G. Carpenter.)

**W**ASHINGTON, Dec. 29.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—I saw this morning a specimen of the emergency rations furnished the Japanese army. It looked like a pickled banana of the largest size, and when I picked it up it made me think of a whetstone. I tried to scratch it with my finger nail, but could not dent the surface. I smelled it and perceived hardly an odor. Nevertheless it was all fish, compressed into a gigantic tabloid of brain and nerve food. It is in such shape that it can be packed in bags or boxes and carried on the backs of mules or carried in their haversacks, and a few chunks with rice would form a meal for a company. The Russians are bringing their meat over the Transiberian route. They have to have enormous quantities to feed the army, and the cars are taxed to their utmost capacity. The Japanese ship their food in boats. It consists largely of rice and this fish, although other foods of different kinds are supplied. Indeed, the fate of the war may yet rest upon fish, and the fight is largely one of the fish eater and beef eater.

"Where are the chief Japanese fisheries, Dr. Smith?"  
"They are found everywhere along the coast. Japan consists of many hundreds of volcanic islands, some large and some very small. The water is very deep a short distance from the coast, and you have all kinds of fishing and almost all kinds of fish. There is scarcely any part of the empire where fresh fish may not be had daily. Everyone eats fish, and dried fish are stored away and shipped to China, Korea and other parts of the far east.  
"The government does more to foster the fisheries of Japan than it does in the United States. We devote ourselves to propagating fish in order to increase the fish supply. In Japan the fisheries are controlled by the government. They are regulated and advanced in every way possible. In addition to the imperial government, the various states have fishing departments connected with them, and altogether the industry receives large government aid."

"Does Japan have about the same fish that we have?"  
"It has many similar to ours, such as mackerel, halibut, herring and others. I did not find the shark. The favorite fish caught in the bay, somewhat similar to our red snapper, about \$2,500,000 worth of it is consumed yearly.  
"As to the herring," continued Dr. Smith, "that is one of the most valuable of the Japanese fishes. It runs in schools just as off the coast of northern Europe. It is caught in seines and the product sells for about \$4,000,000 annually. The herring are also dried and pickled for export."  
"How about eating fish raw, doctor. I understand that is common in Japan?"  
"It is, and I assure you that raw fish are not so bad when properly served. Take a fresh fish and slice it thin. Bring it cold to the table and eat it with chop-sauce, and you will find it delicious. The Japanese, however, usually eat their fish cooked. They have fried fish, baked fish, fish soup and fish relishes of various kinds. They are good cooks, and are especially skilled in the preparation of fish."  
"The Japanese have many water products in addition to fish," said Dr. Smith. "They raise seaweed and water vegetables. Indeed, some of the bays are far more valuable for farming than the lands adjoining them. The Bay of Tokyo is so valuable that it is held by the government and leased out by the acre to farmers. Some parts of that bay produce as much as 300 per acre every year in water vegetables. The farmers cut brush, tie it up in bundles and stick it down into the sand so that it is almost covered at high tide. The seaweed and water vegetables themselves to these bushes and grow, being fed by the water which rises and falls with the tide. From time to time during the year the plants are picked off and carried to the market for sale. They are used for flavoring soups and as a condiment. Several hundred thousand dollars' worth of such vegetables are annually taken from Tokyo bay."

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## Japan's Big Fishing Industry.

The Japanese are among the most skilled fishers of the world. They farm the water as we do the land, and their annual fish production runs high into the millions. It was at the National Bureau of Fisheries that I saw the fish I have described, and there I talked with Dr. H. M. Smith, who was sent by the United States government a little over a year ago to Japan to examine into its fisheries for the people of the United States. Dr. Smith's coming was announced to the Japanese government, and during his stay in the country he had with him experts from the imperial fish commission and also the local fish officers of various states. He traveled more than 5,000 miles through the country, visiting the fisheries, and as a result has brought back much information of value.  
Dr. Smith thinks the Japanese are the leading fishing nation of the world. Said he:  
"The Japanese have more than 1,000 varieties of fish, and they eat them all in one shape or another. Their water products annually amount to \$30,000,000, and they have altogether about 600,000 fishing vessels and boats. They have many ships which devote themselves entirely to fishing, and more than 100,000 of their boats are above eighteen feet long. There are, I should say, almost 1,000,000 professional fishermen, and more than that who devote themselves to farming and fishing com-

## Biggest Nets in the World.

"How is it caught?"  
"Chiefly in huge nets. Some of the largest nets in the world are used in Japan for catching bonito. I saw one there which was about 1,000 feet long and 200 feet wide, with wings 200 feet long extending out at each end. It took thirty boats to manage that net. The fish were first driven in between the wings, finding their way from them into the great bag-like net at the end. Then the men fastened the net and gradually drew it up out of the water. They caught an enormous quantity of fish. Indeed, as many as 3,000 yellow-tails have been caught at one time in such a net. The yellow-tail are large fish of somewhat the same character as the bonito. Those 20,000 are said to have averaged twenty pounds apiece, making a total catch of about 600,000 pounds.  
"How is the fishing carried on, Dr. Smith, by individuals or by trusts?"  
"It is largely by individuals, although there are companies of fishermen which club together. The large nets to which I have referred often belong to one village and are owned in common by the fishermen of that village. Indeed, such a net often raises a town from poverty to affluence. I knew one village which had been poor, but had grown rich through co-operative fishing by means of one net. The catch brought in about \$50,000 a year, which is a large income for a small Japanese town."

## Red Herring of Japan.

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## They Want Saghain.

"Are there good fisheries in northern Japan, Dr. Smith?"  
"Yes, very rich ones. There are many cod along the islands of Yezo, and the fisheries still farther north are valuable. This is especially so about Saghain, the island which the Russians took from Japan. I understand that the Japanese will demand its return, if they are successful in the present war. If they get it it will be worth \$15,000,000 a year to their fishing product."  
"How do the Chinese fishermen compare with those of Japan?"  
"I have not been in China," said Dr. Smith. "Indeed, but little is known about the water wealth of the country, except that its fish product is enormous. It is said that it has more than 1,000 different varieties of fish, and that in Macao, near Canton, one may have a different kind of fish every morning of the year round. The Chinese must have much the same fish as Japan. They have mackerel, herring, shark and carp. They have shell fish, oysters and prawns, shrimps and crabs. The people use cormorants for fishing. They have a vast boat population and there must be fishermen everywhere."  
"Is there any cormorant fishing in Japan?"  
"Yes, I have brought back excellent photographs showing how cormorant fishing is done," said Dr. Smith. "I do not know that the custom originated with the Japanese, but it is mentioned in Japanese literature as far back as 700 A. D. The people go out with the cormorants, some-

## Japanese Fish Canneries.

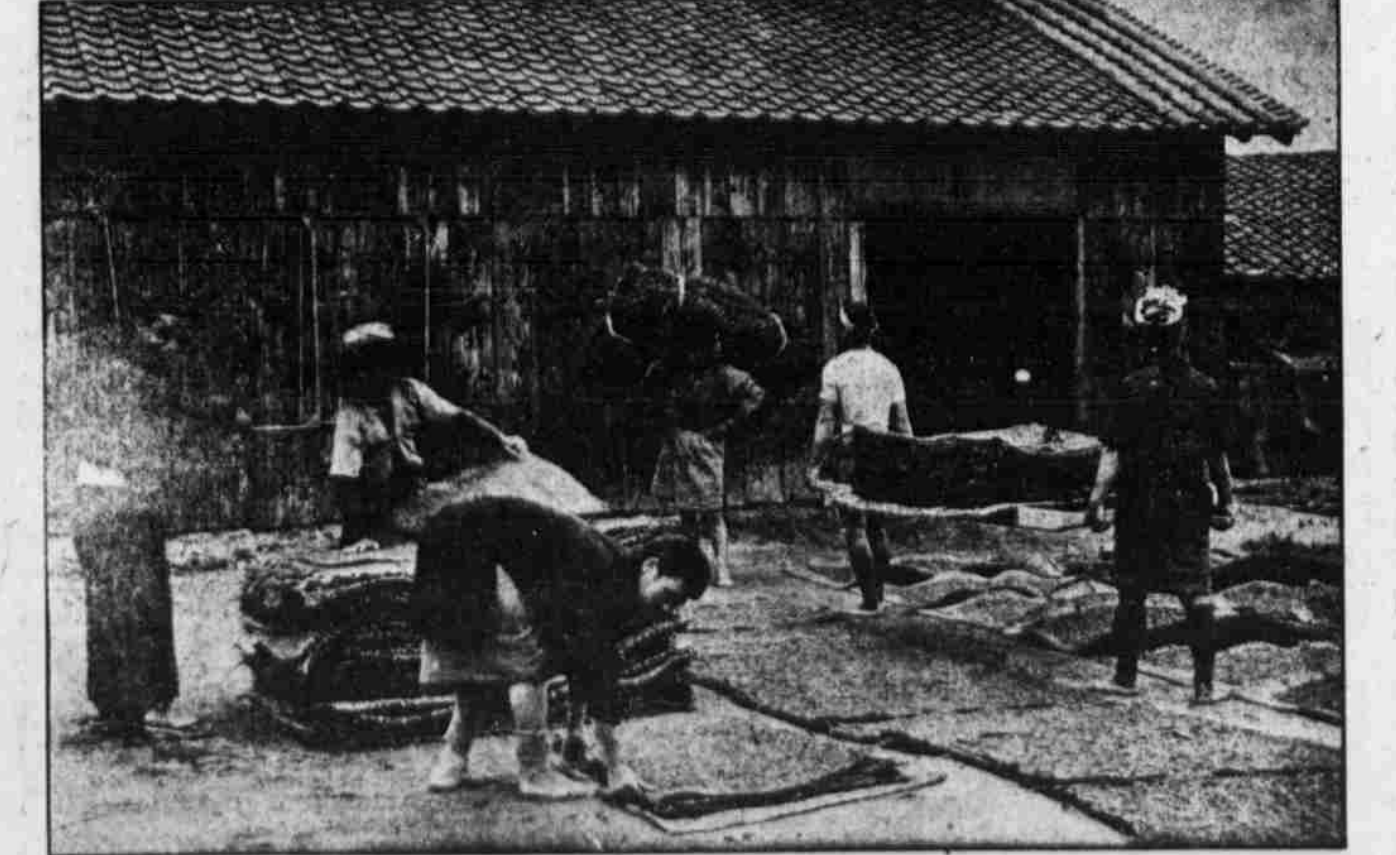
"The Japanese are developing their fisheries from a commercial standpoint," Dr. Smith continued. "They have canning and pickling establishments, and are putting up all sorts of things for export. Here is a copy of the catalogue of their St. Louis fish exhibit. It treats of everything from sardines to whales, and shows what they are doing along various lines. The annual catch of sardines is now more than 25,000,000 pounds, and sardines are sold fresh, dried and salted. At the experimental fish station of Aichi-ken they have been salting down fresh sardines into barrels as an experiment, and if there is a demand for them a million barrels may be easily cured in that way in one year. In the past many sardines have been pressed into guano and sold for fertilizers. They are now being put up in oil. A great deal of the herring catch is used for guano, and this is so with other fish."  
"You spoke of whale fishing. Do they have whales near Japan?"  
"The whale hunt is chiefly in the Korean waters," said the fish expert. "There is a whole oil company which has three factories in Japan and many stations on the coast of Korea. It annually produces 1,000,000 gallons of whale oil. The Japanese are also making cod liver oil for medicinal purposes. They make all they need themselves and export a considerable quantity. They make a fine clock oil from the dolphin, and they have recently begun to make herring oil, sardine oil and shark oil. Indeed, they are quite up-to-date in the use of all their fish products."  
FRANK G. CARPENTER.

## Difference in Agents.

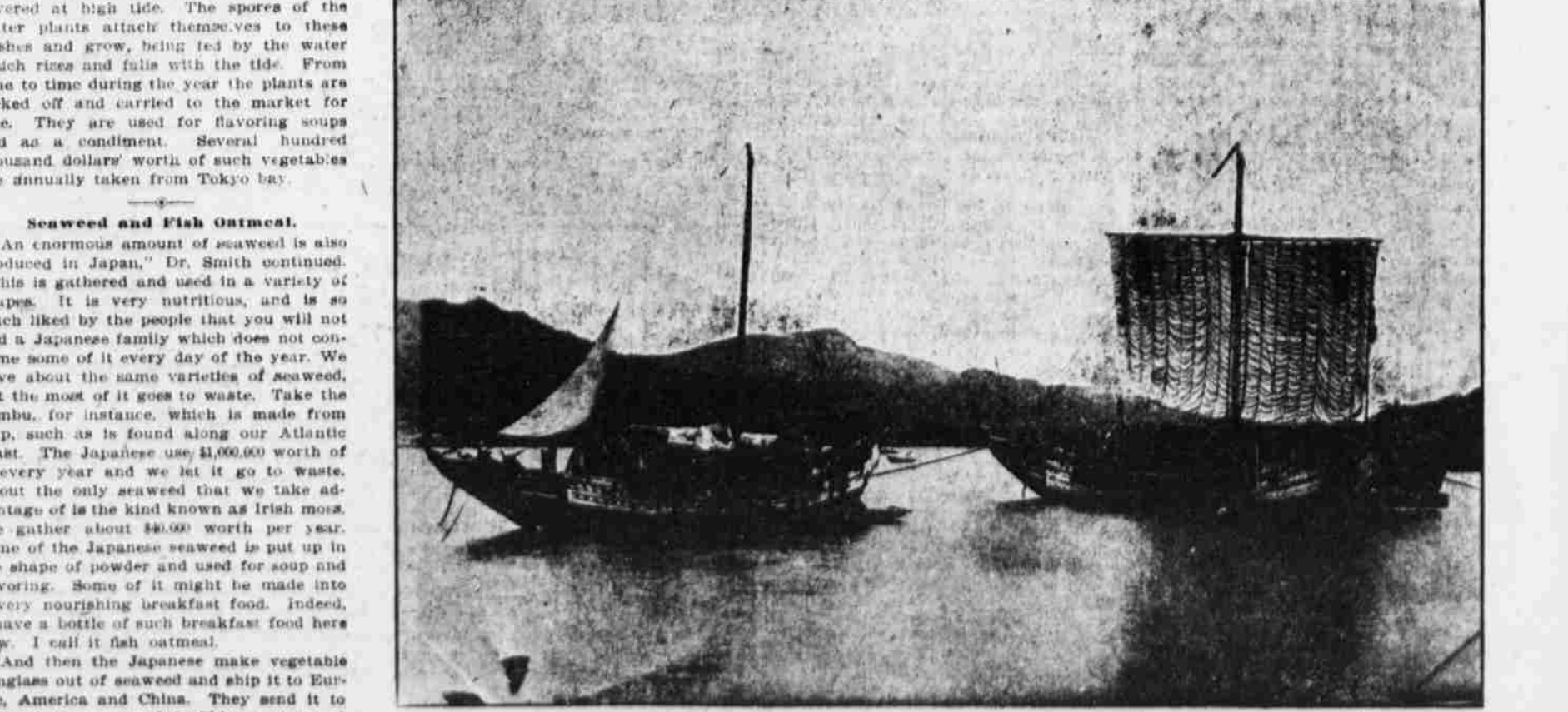
"What is the difference between a district and a division passenger agent?"  
"Well, in a few words, one looks after the business in a certain territory, whether his line reaches that territory or not. The division agent looks after the business reached by his road for a certain distance, according to where the limits of his division go."  
"People make some funny breaks once in a while," said a ticket agent. "A man rushed into the office the other day. He was out of breath and evidently he was in a big hurry to get somewhere. 'Say,' he said between breaths, 'I want to go to Kansas City the worst way.' I couldn't resist the temptation to say that the worst way I knew of was to be trundled down there in a wheelbarrow. He saw the point, laughed good naturedly and explained that he was anxious to get there by the shortest and quickest route. We sold him a ticket."  
George F. West of the Northwestern enjoys the distinction of being the oldest of the city passenger men in point of continuous service for one company, and R. R. Rose of the Illinois Central, who recently succeeded Cass L. Mills, is the youngest.

## Senweed and Fish Oilmeal.

"An enormous amount of seaweed is also produced in Japan," Dr. Smith continued. "This is gathered and used in a variety of shapes. It is very nutritious, and is so much liked by the people that you will not find a Japanese family which does not consume some of it every day of the year. We have about the same varieties of seaweed, but the most of it goes to waste. Take the kombu, for instance, which is made from kelp, such as is found along our Atlantic coast. The Japanese use \$1,000,000 worth of it every year and we let it go to waste. About the only use we have for it is to make a sort of the kind known as Irish moss. We gather about \$40,000 worth per year. Some of the Japanese seaweed is put up in the shape of powder and used for soup and flavoring. Some of it might be made into a very nourishing breakfast food. Indeed, I have a bottle of such breakfast food here now. I call it fish oatmeal."  
"And then the Japanese make vegetable tinsalms out of seaweed and ship it to Europe, America and China. They send it to Holland for soup and to China to be used as a piece of bird's nest soup. It is very



DRYING AND STORING SEAWEED—A JAPANESE INDUSTRY.



SAMPLES OF THE HALF MILLION JAPANESE FISHING BOATS.