

Head of the Rock Island System

Henry U. Mudge Has Been a Practical Railroad Man All His Life

HENRY U. MUDGE, president of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad Company, is one of the best known and most conspicuous figures among practical railroad men in the country. For forty years, ever since he was 16 years old, he has been continuously in the employ of two railroads—the Atchison and the Rock Island. There is no kink or wrinkle in the railroad business that he does not understand. He began as water boy on a construction job, and between this responsible task and that of being president of one of the largest and most important and prosperous railroads in the United States he has held down successively nearly every position that the profession of railroading has to offer.

He has never had any help except his own application, industry and a natural aptitude for this line of work. The railroad business is second nature to him now, and he thinks in terms of ties and switches, box cars and compound locomotive boilers. He is as straight and true as the steel rails of his own favorite road. He runs his daily life on a schedule which makes no allowance for wrecks and collisions; he has never been sidetracked in his course, but has come undeviatingly forward, head-on, from his first boyish adventure in the business to his present commanding position.

Mr. Mudge was born at Minden, Mich., June 9, 1856. His father was a Canadian farmer, who crossed over into Michigan and settled there with his family; he sent his children to school at Minden whenever he could spare them from the farm, but young Henry had ambitions, and at the first opportunity he studied telegraphy, a science which was then in its infancy, and which attracted many young men because good operators were scarce and could command pretty fair pay.

In 1873 he obtained employment on the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railroad as a telegrapher; they stationed him first at Sterling, Kan., and then moved him about to other places. His record was good and after a time the company put him on train service as brakeman; then he became in succession freight conductor, train dispatcher, roadmaster, trainmaster, division superintendent and finally, in 1893, he was made general superintendent of the road. This office he held with marked success for seven years until 1900, when

he was made general manager of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railroad; and it is not difficult to imagine that this was a very happy moment in his life, for nothing does a man more good than to feel that he has earned the promotion he has got and got the promotion he has earned.

From Atchison to Rock Island

This was the last position he held with the Atchison road; he had become known by that time to other roads, and in 1905, after some thirty-two years of continuous and faithful service, he was offered the office of

subsidiary roads, and is establishing it each year on a firmer and more profitable basis. One of the improvements recently introduced is a fine passenger train between Chicago and Los Angeles, which makes the run in a shorter time than any other road between those points, although the distance is greater. Another exceptionally fine passenger run is that between Omaha and Denver, which is being widely advertised and patronized.

Bringing to bear his remarkably clear and logical reasoning powers, Mr. Mudge sees in the state of Ne-

braska a future so far surpassing the present magnificent showing that he has taken a particular personal interest in providing terminal facilities and improvements in the city of Omaha in order to handle the business of the Rock Island Railroad in a manner so thorough as to give this road many advantages over its competitors. Within the next few months actual building operations will have been started for an enormous freight terminal in the city of Omaha. This road is the great outlet from Omaha and South Omaha to the southwest—Kansas, Texas and Oklahoma—and its importance in this respect will be enormously increased after the opening of the Panama Canal, for it runs straight down to Galveston and New Orleans, the principal gulf ports, being little doubt that there will be a big increase of business as soon as Nebraska corn and beef can find their way by a short, easy and cheap route to Pacific ports.

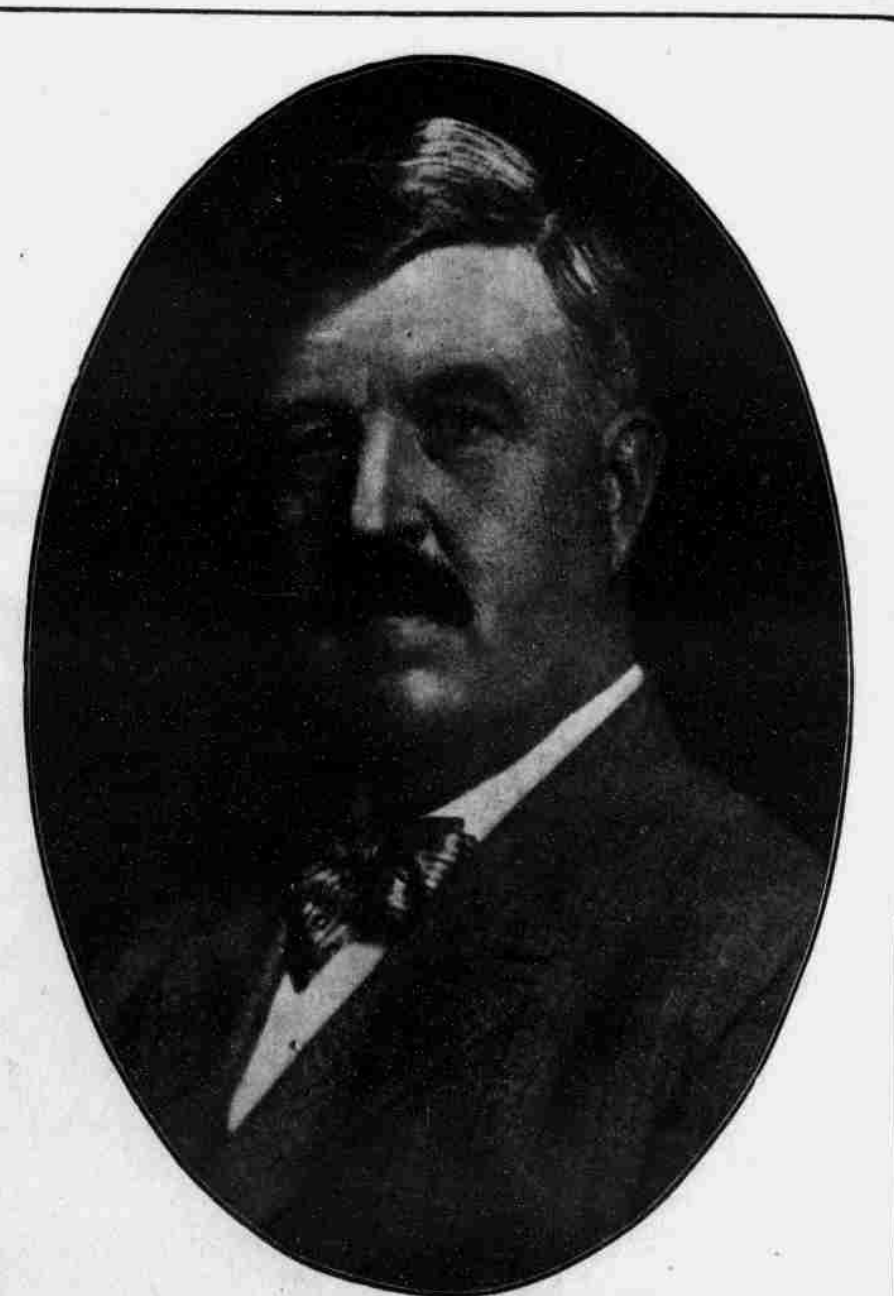
Progress and expansion has been the keynote of Mr. Mudge's administration. That this policy has been a successful one is apparent to the most unenlightened layman. It is easily seen what rare forethought has been exercised by Mr. Mudge and his assistants in preparing to handle a large proportion of the great bulk of these shipments.

It is but a few years since enormous terminals in New Orleans built by the Frisco System, which is closely allied to the Rock Island, were completed, and it is quite within the range of probability that the great freight facilities of these roads in Omaha and New Orleans will be of assistance to each other.

No railroad president has the material interest of Nebraska at heart more than Mr. Mudge. He is prepared to go to any reasonable length to improve conditions and offer her people all the assistance that lies in his power.

Mr. Mudge is an excellent speaker, and his great familiarity with all the phases of railroad life makes him much in demand on public occasions. One of his speeches, delivered before the Commercial club of Topeka, Kan., on April 11, 1911, entitled "Half Slave and Half Free," and dealing with rate regulation, has been widely copied and quoted. Speaking, near the close, of his own road, he says:

"This company was the first to reach and bridge the Mississippi river. There was much opposition on the part of the river shipping interests, who sought to prevent. Abraham Lincoln, at that time a Rock Island attorney, in his argument said: 'It is not at all improbable that the traffic crossing this bridge may, at some future time, be even greater than that passing up and down the river.' How correctly he prophesied you will see when I tell you that the average number of freight and passenger cars now passing over this bridge is about 1,400 per day."



HENRY U. MUDGE,
President of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway

second vice president of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific railroad, which he accepted, thus terminating his connection with the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe.

On January 1, 1910, he was elected president of the Rock Island road, an office which he still holds. He is applying his splendid training and thorough mastery of the railroad business to building up and strengthening this line, both main branch and

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