

OIL LAMPS ARE DOOMED.

The Postal Authorities Want Them Abolished.

Effort to Do Away With Railway Horrors in the Future—Compressed Gas Recommended.

Postal officials are agitating the question of removing, if possible, oil lamps from postal cars used in the operations of the railway mail service.

Postmaster-General Wilson was seen at his residence on Q street, and cheerfully complied with the suggestion of the "Post" representative that he should give his views on this important subject.

"Ever since I assumed control of the Postoffice Department," he remarked, "I have aimed to do everything in my power to make the postal clerks engaged in the railway mail service as comfortable as possible.

No one recognizes more than I do the hazardous nature of their profession, and we cannot take too many precautions to insure their safety and protection against accidents.

"Whenever a project of any sort in relation to the illumination of railway mail cars is submitted to the Postoffice Department, it has been my invariable plan to turn the matter over to Second Assistant Postmaster-General Nelson and Captain White, General Superintendent of the railway mail service.

"That reminds me," continued the Postmaster-General, "that I have urged the necessity for making provision for the families of postal employees who may be killed in the service.

"While I have not direct supervision over the lighting or heating of railway mail cars," remarked Hon. Frank Jones, First Assistant Postmaster-General, "still, in a general way, the subject frequently comes before me in conference with chiefs of division.

"All Postoffice cars should be of such style and character as required by the Postmaster-General. They should be constructed, fitted up with the necessary furniture and fixtures for the proper handling and distribution of mail, maintained, heated and lighted by gas or electricity at the expense of the railroad companies.

"Attention has been particularly called to the construction and equipment of postal cars, demonstrating clearly the advisability of the department taking some active steps in the supervision of the construction of the general equipment of cars intended for the service.

ment taking some active steps in the supervision of the construction of the general equipment of cars intended for the service. Furthermore, the department has insisted upon the improved methods of lighting and heating, and doing away with oil lamps wherever it is possible to do so, and will continue its efforts to introduce the most reliable and best adapted methods of lighting and heating.

"It strikes me there should be no question as to the advisability of super-seeding oil lamps with compressed gas or electricity," said Fourth Assistant Postmaster Maxwell, "and if I had my way in the matter there would be no delay about making the change.

"While I am not prepared to say just what system should be adopted for lighting the cars," said General Superintendent White of the railway mail service, "yet I must confess a leaning to compressed gas or electricity. There is no question about some of the roads being well equipped in the matter of lighting and heating, particularly in the trunk lines, but it must be confessed that only a minority of the three thousand and odd cars used in the postal service are thus equipped.

"Increased business received by the companies demand for more rapid transit made by the business public, express companies and the patrons of the Postoffice Department has resulted in increased train service and quicker schedules, both of which tend to add to the hazard inseparable from railroad operations.

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"The department appreciates its responsibility in this respect, and during the past four or five years, has labored zealously to secure greater freedom from the direful results of accidents. Careful consideration has been given car construction; plans and specifications for the building of cars under the control of the department have been formulated, and it has required railway companies to furnish railway Post-offices with such modern safety appliances as have been meritorious.

"Experience has shown that the managers of the great railway systems of this country, realizing that in the matter of car construction, safe and powerful lights, abundant and well-regulated heat, and in most other respects the interest of their companies and of the department are identical, and as a rule they have equipped the cars of the railway mail service with as good, and in many cases better, lighting and heating facilities than they have placed in the palace coaches of their best and fastest trains.

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all trunk lines are double-tracked throughout their length. It is among the probabilities that lines of this class will find it to their interest to still further quicken their schedules, and nothing is more certain than that their business will demand additional trains. Pending the additional trackage facilities mentioned, it is a logical conclusion that the number of wrecks will increase. Hence the energies and experience of the department and the companies must be devoted to the further consideration of such precautionary measures as will tend to lessen the destructive character of accidents.

In a biographical sketch of her father, the poet, Longfellow, in the "Cambridge Magazine," Miss Alice Longfellow says that an unpaid bill weighed on him like a nightmare. He was so reserved and talked so little about himself that sometimes a volume of his verses would appear in print without his family ever knowing that it was in course of preparation.

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