

FAIRFAX HARRISON AND JOSEPH H. YOUNG BOOMERS FOR THE STATE

These Two Railroad Presidents Potent Factors in Carolina Development—Impressing Every Force For Country in Which Their Lines Lie

(BION H. BUTLER.)

At the dinner given by the Raleigh Chamber of Commerce a couple of weeks ago it was my good fortune to be located in a bunch of railroad men. My next neighbor on one side was Fairfax Harrison, president of the Southern Railway, and beyond him was J. H. Young, of the Norfolk Southern. On the other side I touched elbows with M. V. Richards, one of the greatest boomers of the South ever turned loose and adjoining him was John T. West, a Seaboard business getter.

That Raleigh appreciates these men was manifest by the fact that they were assembled by the Chamber of Commerce to discuss railroad affairs with the leading men of the city. Yet I am bold enough to say that in neither city, state or nation, are they appreciated as they should be. Had I been arranging the order of the addresses I would have started with Mr. West, who spoke more generally of the railroad, saying a deserved word for the Seaboard. Then I would have followed with Mr. Spruill because he introduced a specific possibility in a new road which, with little effort, would bring the Coast Line into Raleigh. From him I would go to Mr. Young, who brought in the part the Norfolk Southern is laying out for itself in the State. Next on my schedule would come Mr. Richards, that old major-general of the new army of invasion, for he spreads over a globe in his campaign, and I would cap the affair with Mr. Harrison, a giant in the work of Southern industrial life and development.

It was the first time I had ever seen Mr. Harrison. But it did not take five minutes to realize that I was talking with one of the big men of the country. In that five minutes we had put in about four minutes and say fifty seconds talking shop, talking about the great Southern railroad system, an instrument that holds in its care much of the future of that portion of the country below the Potomac and the Ohio rivers.

A Dinner That Fascinated.

That Raleigh dinner was a fascinating romance to me. I was captured at the first sight of the genial railroad man next me, and his thoroughly democratic style and the enormous power that he wields in the most unassuming manner, gave me a suggestion as to the marvel of the human character. In a way we grew chummy over the ambition of this man to make the Southern a greater factor in the world's work, and he excited my sympathy with his plans until the Southern will be a wholly different thing from now on. It will be a character in a big romance in which I will be a partisan on the side of the hero, which will be the great railroad itself. From now on I will watch from day to day the unfolding of the plans for the expansion of this system, partly because it is the dream and the ambition of my friend of a couple of hours, and partly because the plan itself is compelling when once it is made to live by the explanation of a man who has it laid out as the creation of his ambition.

What a gigantic task this man has imposed on himself. He figures on making the Southern a double track road from Washington to Atlanta. Five years he gives himself to do the work. Perhaps you do not realize what this man is planning for all of us. He is planning for the Southern Railway first of all, or he thinks he is. But he is not. He is planning for the pleasure of Fairfax Harrison, just as any big man who does any big thing is planning for the unmeasurable satisfaction that comes from achievement. Mr. Harrison finds a joy in achievement. Otherwise he could not do what he has outlined for himself. He is planning for himself, not for his financial gain, but for the infinite reward that comes from doing. He is planning for the Southern and more than all, although he may not confess it, he is planning for North Carolina, for the whole South, for the whole United States, for the whole civilized world. Oh, yes, I was impressed with Mr. Harrison.

Double-Tracking Railroad.

Let us see. His proposition is to double-track the Southern from Washington to Atlanta. I am not a railroad man, but it seems to me that a double track railroad will handle more than twice the traffic possible with a single track road, for on a double track cars can move each way without interruption. On a single track road nearly every train is held back more or less by the delay in passing. But, whether absolutely correct or not in theory, suppose we assume that a double track road will handle twice the business a single track road will handle. Then in five years Mr. Harrison hopes to add to the Southern an efficiency as great as it has attained in the entire life time of the systems of which it has been created. In other words he is working to make the Southern road just about twice as much in its service

to the country as it has become in all of its existence.

We will understand the absolute necessity of transportation facilities. The constant need is for greater ability on the part of the railroads to move the products of the country. If a double track road can move twice as much as a single track road, it is apparent that building a double track is the same as building a new railroad. Probably it is better, for it gives a better organized service at less cost. Building a new road means building all the new stations, hiring all the new force, doubling all the items of cost, and serving in a crude form. Double tracking means getting away from crude methods, taking advantage of bigger units of operation, and attaining a greater efficiency.

Double-tracking from Atlanta to Washington is an expression. It means the outlay of a lot of millions of dollars. As we talked about the railroad Mr. Harrison told me that before the financial sky clouded he had been fortunate enough to borrow twenty million dollars for improvements. Twenty millions looks like a big hatful of money, but here is a man whose concern earns something like that amount every four months. Over a million dollars a week we are paying Mr. Harrison's road to haul things for us, and mighty glad that he is equipped to haul what that amount is earning represents.

Buying on a Low Market.

Borrowing twenty millions made it possible for him to have easy money in the treasury, and he is using it now to buy new cars when cars are cheaper than they will be later on, and to buy new engines when engines are cheaper than they will be later on, and to keep shops running at a time when it is good for the country that shops may run. He secured the big sum of money in time to keep work moving on the double track job at a time when it is good to have work going on.

Part of the road between Charlotte and Greensboro is already double track. On the rest of the line to Washington the dirt will fly for a year or two. On the Atlanta end things will be busy in the next four or five years. Plans are worked out for much work on the lines that go west into Tennessee from Greensboro and Salisbury and Charlotte.

While other sections are complaining of business dullness the territory of the main line of the Southern will be full of the life that follows new construction. Shops that sell cars will be running on the orders from the Southern. Locomotive works will be earning the money of the Southern. Instead of stopping activity the line of the Southern will be increasing it, of the Southern will be increasing it, and will be turning out money every pay day. So much for the immediate results.

Beyond that is a vastly greater influence. Since Columbus first set foot on the shores of the United States the transportation facilities of the new world have been inadequate. At the present time the railroads of the United States employ an army of a million and three-quarters of men, and pay that army a hundred million dollars a month for moving the traffic. The enormous traffic that is carried on the railroads of the United States, taking the average for a year, amounts to nearly a hundred and fifty thousand passengers for every mile of road, and a million tons of freight for every mile of road. Probably no living man except the people who have to keep track of railroad business have any idea of the vastness of the railroad work in the country. If you stake off a mile of railroad, and stand people up side by side so elbows touch, you will have about thirty rows of people there in the mile if you include the number carried on the average mile of railroad in the year. And if the people had with them the freight carried by the roads every fellow would have close to seven tons. That is what the railroads are doing.

The Biggest Industrial Event.

I presume the double tracking of the Southern railroad is the most important event that is outlined for the South. You talk about war, but forget war and just for a minute think what would happen if the railroads of this country were to stop business. In the blizzard of 1888 in New York and Pennsylvania traffic was interrupted for about a week, and in that time famine almost got some of the towns. The railroads of this country must deliver about five million tons of freight every day or the business of the country will be hopelessly tangled up.

Fairfax Harrison is playing the game. You may think he is figuring to make money for his company. Incidentally he is, but he is figuring to make money for this reason. If the Southern earns enough money to pay its operating charges, its taxes, its maintenance, the interest charges and dividends, and has a little left to pay

its debts, it can borrow money. No, the dividend is not a big item on a railroad. It is the smallest factor. The railroads are earning now something like three thousand million dollars a year. If the stockholders who own the vast railroad property of the country can get out of that enormous earning one dollar in ten they are very glad to let the other nine go to paying the operating and other expenses.

The thousands of millions that the railroads earn do not go to pay the dividends on the stocks, but to pay the men who work on the roads, and who build the equipment and furnish the supplies, and so on down through a long line of helpers of one sort or another all over the whole country.

Fairfax Harrison is after dividends for his stockholders, of course, but he knows that before he gets any money for them he must get ten times as much for other expenses. He must keep up the credit of his road so he can borrow money and be able to pay the debt at maturity and interest meanwhile.

A Tussel With Growing South.

He borrows money to increase the capacity of the railroad. He buys more cars, more engines, more equipment of all sorts, and double tracks his road because he wants to see in the next five years a railroad system that can handle the swiftly growing traffic of the South. This man is putting his administrative skill in a big play against the expansive forces of the South. He is going to play a neck and neck game, and if he wins he loses, for he cannot build a road that will be big enough to turn his back on. If he gets the double track finished by the end of the five years the mere building of that double track will fill his hands fuller by the end of that time. Increased facilities for doing business will encourage business along the line of the Southern, and the increasing business will crowd the two tracks just as it has been crowding the single track in the past.

Fairfax Harrison is doing far more than trying to earn for his stockholders a dividend on their investment. He is earning for his army of employees money to pay their wages. He is figuring that they shall live in that little town called Prosperity next year as well as this year. He is pounding away that millions of dollars shall be scattered all over the South in the days ahead of us in the transaction of the business that is created by the operation of his big enterprise.

But all this is merely incidental alongside of the prize motive which he is struggling to keep up with.

Fairfax Harrison knows that if he does not crowd ahead with his road in three years it will be antiquated. There is not a railroad in the United States that will answer the requirements of its territory unless every nerve is constantly strained to expand the facilities of that road. The bigger the road the bigger the requirements. The roads of the South have imposed on them bigger tasks than most roads, for the South is developing faster than most parts of the country. On the Southern, which is the biggest road of the South, is the biggest burden in the South, for it must measure up to the requirements of a bigger business.

What Harrison Is After.

What the president of the Southern Railroad is working at is to bring his road up to the needs of the day as fast as the new day unfolds, and he knows what he must accomplish. I was attracted to this man by two forces. One is his winsome personality. The other his intelligent attitude toward the big job he has on his hands. That job did not appeal to me as one having the stockholders in the principal point of view. Rather I looked on him as the agent who undertakes to make it possible for the Southern States to keep up their expansion in the days that are ahead as they have been doing in the immediate past.

North Carolina is ceasing to be a single track State. The Seaboard and the Coast Line have also discovered the necessities, and both these roads have planned for big work in double-tracking, and both have their plans worked out, and both have double track work going on. This is the next move that must be made in North Carolina. The big roads can not handle the traffic of the territory on one track any longer. They will not have double track ready a minute before it is absolutely imperative, and if the experience of railroad building in the past is any criterion they will not be ready by the time they ought to be, for a railroad must all the time keep away ahead of the game in order to be up with it when the demands are made.

Fairfax Harrison at the Raleigh dinner declared his purpose to keep his road moving toward the point which it must hold in order to care for the business of the South, a condition that is imperative if the South is to grow and prosper as it is figuring now on doing. This declaration says two things. That the railroad sees the continuation of the marvelous advancement of the South, and that it will be ready for that advancement.

There is no better witness on earth than a railroad. It will never admit a coming prosperity unless that coming is certain, for to admit such a thing is to spend money preparing for it. If a railroad goes on record as forecasting prosperity you may be sure it sees that prosperity clearly, for it is backward about making se-

rious mistakes. Because of its conservatism it will not go far unless it is pushed.

Double Tracks Necessary.

It looks now as if within the next five years the three big roads of the South Atlantic States will have double track through North Carolina. They will have double tracks because by that time double tracks will be a physical necessity. They are building double tracks because they realize what is ahead of the State, and because to encourage the development of the State is the best possible business policy. I think it is a safe proposition to assert that North Carolina may with reason expect the Southern, the Seaboard and the Coast Line to do more in the next five years toward the upbuilding of the State than any other influence in it. This work will also include the Norfolk Southern, for while it is more of a local road it will be a most vigorous factor in bringing its territory into public notice.

I came away from that meeting with a new line on the men who are running the railroads that traverse North Carolina. I could see that while they are incidentally working for their stockholders they are primarily in the employ of the general public. Fairfax Harrison and J. H. Young, the two railroad presidents who were there, are two men who are engaging every force for the service of the country their lines lie in, and by the force of necessity they are going to the limit to provide everything essential to the business of their entire territory.

When Mr. Harrison borrows twenty million dollars to improve the Southern Railway he is doing what the township or the county does when it borrows money to make a better road, except that on the county road we must provide our own vehicles and handle our own traffic. On the railroad the traffic is carried on vehicles provided for the purpose by men employed to do the work, and it is done at less cost than we can do it on the wagon road.

Do you see it? Fairfax Harrison and Joseph H. Young are two of the biggest boomers North Carolina ever had, and they could not be anything else if they wanted to, which they do not.

THE PARIS BABIES.

How They Are Being Taken Care Of In Time of War.

Paris correspondence New York Evening Post.

While the fathers are off on the frontier and the mothers are looking for work, the problem of taking care of the babies grows. So new nurseries and creches have been started. The Geographical Society in Paris has given the use of its handsome building on the Boulevard St. Germain for this purpose. Women have volunteered their services, and 22 children, of from 2 to 10 years, are being put up there.

A little room which used to serve as cloakroom for the servants has been transformed into a dining room. The great hall, where Amundsen and Peary have recounted their voyages, where Jules Lamaitre has talked on Rousseau and Donnay on Moliere, is serving as a play room while the bad times last. Under the severe gaze of Bougainville and La Perouse, who guard the entrance gate, the children play ball.

An immense geological map of France startles the youngsters with its loud colors. Another big map has flagpins stuck in it to show the position of the armies. Thus these innocent eyes learn to recognize the buried towns and the valleys filled with corpses. The heroism of those who fall is the first lesson taught the children.

The sleeping room is one flight up. Twenty-two little white beds, near each a chair, towel drying on the back of the chair, a tiny outfit of clothing, a pair of small shoes under the bed. Two large windows open on the boulevard.

On one wall is a statue intended to represent geography. She holds a globe in one hand, and there are rays of light on her brow. The youngsters naturally enough, mistake her for the Holy Virgin, and ask her to send their prayers up to God. One hour they pray like this:

"Dear God, take care of our papas and let us see them again soon. Hear the prayer of your little ones who love You and beseech You with all their hearts. And make it so."

Then a particularly small one, whose bed is under the imposing bed relief of Mont Blanc, protests indignantly:

"And my uncle, isn't anybody going to pray for him?"

They admit the justice of that demand and add to their prayers all relations of every sort.

Hard to Explain.

New York Times. Cummings and Weisner were business rivals. One day at the club they fell to talking.

"Do you carry any life insurance?" queried Cummings.

"Yes," was the answer, "I have \$10,000."

"Made payable to your wife?" asked Cummings.

"Yes," said Weisner.

"Well," asked Cummings, "what kind of an excuse do you pull off to your wife for living?"

Montana and Idaho have a nine-hour day for working women.