

Editorial Comment

The Convention in Retrospect

The annual convention of the Signal Section, A.A.R., which was held in Chicago on March 11 and 12, was in many ways an outstanding success and marked the closing of a year of association work that has been of direct benefit to the railroads. The meeting was attended by 341 members, as compared with 315 members last year. The committees were well represented, of a total of 183 active members in the 11 committees, about 142 were on hand when their respective committee reports were presented. This increase in attendance was due in part to improvement in railroad conditions and in part to an increased interest in association activities, especially concerning new standards and matters of policy.

In years gone by, the Signal Section held two meetings a year, and much of the detailed discussion and preparation of specifications occurred on the convention floor. However, in more recent years, prompted by the necessity for reducing expenses, only one convention has been held annually. As a result, the work has been so organized that the committees have settled more details in their meetings, and have presented reports and specifications in finished form, so that the association need consider, in convention, only those matters relating to policy and standards of practice.

At the recent meeting all of the 11 committees presented reports which, in both length and content, evidence the fact that much serious work had been done by the members individually as well as in the committee meetings. Much of this work was done under adverse conditions. Because of reductions in forces on all of the railroads, the committee members were forced to do much of their association work on their own time at home. Furthermore, it has been difficult for them to get away from their regular duties to attend committee meetings. Partly on account of these difficulties, the work has been concentrated on matters of immediate and vital importance in the signaling field. The pressure of time forced quick thinking and adherence to essentials.

Incidentally, the officers of the association, the Committee of Direction, and especially the Committees Committee are to be complimented for so directing the work of the committees as to concentrate their activities on the important problems in the field. This result is supplemented by the efficiency of the secretary in handling these reports and issuing them in printed form at least six weeks prior to the convention, so that the members have adequate time to study the contents, and be prepared to offer constructive discussion based on extended thinking, rather than wasting valuable time on the convention floor with impromptu remarks. These circumstances did not discourage comments by members, but, in fact, added to the constructive discussion. It is estimated that about half of the time during each session was taken up by important discussion.

Chairman Morgan in his opening address urged the members to follow the standards approved by the Signal

Section. In line with this thought a noticeable feature of the convention was the intensive discussions leading up to the adoption or rejection of certain specifications and standards such as for example those on pole line construction and arms for mounting flashing-light units for crossing signals.

Highway-Railroad Crossing Signals Installed at Federal Expense

TWENTY STATES are actively engaged in the installation of highway-railroad crossing signals as a part of the federal highway improvement program, the costs of materials and labor being taken from the states' allotments of federal funds. An explanation of the legislation and rulings authorizing this procedure was given in an editorial on page 605 of the December issue of *Railway Signaling*, and a table listing the programs in the various states is shown herewith.

Excellent progress has been made on these programs in several states. Four installations are in service in Florida and about a dozen have been completed in

Current Programs of Crossing Protection Being Installed or Under Negotiations in 20 States at Federal Expense

State	Approx. Amount	Approx. No. Crossings
Alabama		16
Florida		39
Georgia		12
Illinois: Signals	\$475,000	297
Reflector signs	25,000	354
Michigan		28
Minnesota	30,000	12
Mississippi		6
Montana		2
Nebraska	1,650	1
New Jersey		274
New Mexico		1
North Carolina	250,000	90
Oklahoma		2
Oregon	16,000	8
Pennsylvania	6,500	4
South Carolina	50,000	*16
Utah		8
Virginia	35,000	*11
Washington	14,000	7
Wisconsin	100,000	*35
*Approximate.		1,223

North Carolina. In view of the wide-spread interest at this time, in the installation of crossing signals with public funds, three brief articles describing the methods of construction and the negotiations between state highway officers and representatives of the railroads in Florida and North Carolina have been prepared especially for this issue of *Railway Signaling* and are published elsewhere in these pages.