

# Editorial COMMENT

## A Change in the Requisites, Definitions and Regulations

DURING the recent convention of the Signal Section, A.A.R., Committee X presented a revised set of requisites, including those on centralized traffic control, the chairman explaining that these requisites had been revised to bring them in conformity with the requirements of the Rules, Standards and Instructions of the I.C.C., and to eliminate items not mentioned in the I.C.C. regulations. As presented in the Advance Notice, Item 9 of the C.T.C. requisites read as follows: "Means shall be provided to insure that after a signal has been cleared it cannot be restored manually to Stop by the operation of any lever other than its controlling lever." During the discussion, A. L. Essman (C.B.&Q.) stated that this requisite, as worded, if applied to a coded control installation, might cause congestion of the code line on a busy territory and thus limit the length of the installation to the maximum number of codes that could be handled on the line. To make this point clear, let us assume that the signal is clear and the switch is normal. If the route is to be reversed, a code would have to be sent out to set the signal at Stop, then a second code to control the switch to its opposite position and clear the signal for the new route. If permitted to put the signal to Stop by operating the switch, then the signal would clear automatically when the switch is over and locked, thus saving one indication and one control code. Mr. Essman suggested that Item 9 be revised to read, "Means shall be provided to insure that after a signal has been cleared, *and the locking is effective*, it cannot be restored manually to Stop by operation of any lever other than its controlling lever." This suggestion was adopted by the committee, and the requisites as revised were approved for submission to letter ballot for inclusion in the Manual. The requisite, as worded prior to the revision, was identical with Rule 412 in the I.C.C. Rules, Standards and Instructions. The point of importance at this time, therefore, is that, although the Signal Section requisite is being revised, the I.C.C. Rule 412 applies with reference to existing as well as proposed installations. An analysis of the wording indicates that this requisite was prepared originally by the Signal Section with the thought that an operator might inadvertently move a lever, other than the signal lever involved, and in so doing cause the aspect of the signal to change to Stop in the face of an

approaching train. This would result in an unnecessary and perhaps an emergency train stop, and the requisite was designed to avoid such a contingency. Using "hind-sight," some persons are of the opinion that this requisite might well have been omitted from the original set prepared several years ago by the Signal Section, because the I.C.C., in preparing its regulations, included these requisites as worded previously by the Signal Section.

Assuming that the revision will be adopted by letter ballot and that all concerned approve of the revision of the requisite as a means of permitting the railroads to utilize code control systems with maximum efficiency, and at the same time accomplishing the original purpose of this requisite, the problem now is to get I.C.C. Rule 412 revised.

The law provides that "the Commission may on its own motion upon good cause shown, revise, amend, or modify the rules, standards and instructions." Whether the Commission will modify Rule 412, without cause being shown, remains to be seen. In any event, one effective means of securing action quickly is for some railroad to make an application to the Commission for a revision of Rule 412 to correspond with the revision adopted by the Signal Section. Perhaps this matter might be handled by the Signal Section, A.A.R., for the common good of all the railroads. A point is that the application should have reference to a specific installation, either one that is in service or one that is proposed.

In this connection, it is noted that the A.A.R. standard code definitions of "interlocking" and "block" have been revised and now differ from the definitions contained in the I.C.C. Rules, Standards and Instructions. The I.C.C. definition of "interlocking" reads as follows: "An arrangement of signal appliances so interconnected that their movements must succeed each other in a predetermined order. It may be operated manually or automatically." The new A.A.R. definition reads, "An arrangement of signals and signal appliances so interconnected that their movements must succeed each other in proper sequence and for which interlocking rules are in effect. It may be operated manually or automatically." The I.C.C. definition of "block" reads as follows: "A length of track of defined limits, the use of which by trains is governed by block signals, cab signals or automatic train control." The new A.A.R. definition reads, "A length of track of defined limits, the use of which by trains is governed by block signals, cab signals or both." In the interest of uniformity, steps as suggested above should be taken to bring about a corresponding revision of the I.C.C. definitions.