

Editorial Comment

Single Instead of Double Track Alongside Yards

In sections of double track main through yard territory, several roads have expedited train movements, reduced track maintenance expenses, and made one more track available for yard use, by converting to single-track main line operation with modern signaling. These changes apply in most instance where freight trains enter and depart from the two ends of the yard, so that only passenger trains use the main line in the section alongside the yard. Accordingly, it is practicable, in most cases, to confine the operation of these passenger trains to one main track, if modern signaling such as centralized traffic control is applied.

Includes Sidings Also

In some instances the single-track main line operation with C.T.C. is extended a mile or more in each direction beyond the ends of the yard, thus permitting the use of the previous second main as sidings in these two sections. These sidings are a great benefit in operations by providing a place to: (1) hold arriving trains that cannot be accepted at once by the yard or (2) advance departing trains out of the yard to these sidings to wait until the main line is ready to accept them. This clears the yard sooner and places trains where they can move promptly on signal indication.

Thus without installing additional track, train operations into and out of yards is being improved and an additional yard track is made available. This is another example of using modern signaling to accomplish benefits which are equivalent to a high percentage on the investment.

Ringling or Calling

Within recent years the development and adaptations of loud-speakers has introduced several variations from the long established use of conventional telephones, and especially with reference to the ringing of a bell to call a party to answer his telephone. Most of these new practices are a benefit, but others may be subject to objections, while a few are definitely nuisances that hamper proper utilization of the communications system involved.

Calls on Loud-speakers

As compared with ringing, the use of a speaker unit as a calling device expedites answering. However, in installations where too many stations are involved,

and all calls are reproduced in all speakers, the constant calling and conversations are objectionable. Under such circumstances, a selective calling system seems to be desirable. Such selective calling is inherent in a system with separate circuits from a central office to each station. In some types of railroad communications projects, however, the stations are so widely scattered that a "party" line is more practicable. Selective calling has been used for many years on some forms of railroad communications such as telephone train dispatching circuits, and perhaps some such equipment could be introduced into some of the "party line" projects where loud-speakers are used for calling and conversations are now objectionable.

In the operating room of a recently completed interlocking there are four loud-speakers on independent incoming circuits from: a yardmaster's office; two dispatcher's circuits; and one circuit to phone boxes at remote locations on the interlocking. In some instances calls come in simultaneously on two or more of these speakers, but the leverman seemed to be able to handle the calls without interfering with his operation of the interlocking. With more circuits perhaps some other arrangement would be needed. For example at a different interlocking placed in service recently there are 21 incoming telephone circuits which are connected into a panel board with indicating lamps and keys by means of which the leverman can connect his set to any circuit that is calling, or he can initiate a call on any circuit. This arrangement of selective answering obviates confusion.

Selective Calling In Radio

In several extensive installations of radio for communication between the yardmaster's office and 12 to 15 locomotives used in yard and transfer service, all the equipment operates on the same frequency, so that all the calls and conversations are reproduced in the loud-speakers in all the locomotives. On some occasions, this operation may be an advantage because all crews may thereby learn of the moves to be made by other crews. On the other hand, if calls are numerous and they come in too loud, the constant operation of the loud-speaker may be distracting to men who work in the cabs of the locomotives. As a result, in some instances, rags are stuffed into the loud-speakers, or the volume is cut down so that, beyond certain distances, calls are not heeded, if heard. If this is the natural reaction of the men, in an effort to avoid the noise of the constant operation of the loud-speakers, perhaps a system of selective calling between the yardmaster's office and the locomotives would bring about more satisfactory results.