

During immediate pre-war years, the operating personnel had been reduced to a minimum so that the railways of Canada faced the wartime emergency with greatly reduced staffs of skilled employees. The tremendous up-surge of passenger and freight traffic made it absolutely essential that the most rigid inspection of road-beds and railway equipment be maintained to ensure the maximum of safety. The personnel required to patrol, examine and maintain the right-of-way had to be increased to meet the heavier wartime demands and to ensure against sabotage activities. Day and night shifts had to be put into operation in the roundhouses, motive-power and car shops to give the particular care to locomotives and cars which were required to haul greater loads and operate for longer hours at a stretch. Office staffs likewise were expanded to deal with the additional work created by increased war operations.

The railway manpower situation has, therefore, been a difficult one, yet the number of employees has increased by only 33 p.c. since 1938 while traffic has more than doubled. At the same time 40,716 or 20 p.c. of the trained railway personnel had enlisted in the Armed Forces by the close of 1944, many of them with the First Canadian Army Railway Operating Group which distinguished itself in maintaining the lines of supply on the fighting fronts. In addition, many technical men with experience in specialized and administrative work have been lent by the railways to the Government to assist in the operation of special regulatory bodies necessary to the successful prosecution of the War.

To achieve the results noted, railway employees have been retained after reaching retirement age, key men who had already retired have been recalled, women have replaced men where possible, and unskilled labour has been employed under the supervision of experienced men. Women have taken up the strenuous duties connected with railway work, with its long hours and arduous labour, without flinching in order to release men for war duties. The car-cleaning departments are now almost exclusively handled by women. In addition they are engaged in engine cleaning, station snow-clearance, track work, yard checking, telegraph-messenger work and in some cases are employed as assistant agents, traffic officers, ticket clerks, crew clerks, pumpmen, gardeners, janitors and even baggage porters.

According to Dominion Bureau of Statistics records (see Table 16, p. 664), there has been no noticeable increase in the number of railway accidents or the number of railway passengers killed during the war years as compared with the immediately preceding period although the volume of traffic is heavier, equipment is being used for longer and heavier hauls, and the operating staffs in many cases are not as experienced. The number of passengers injured in train accidents in 1943 was 417 as compared with an average of 500 a year during the period 1926-30. On the other hand, in times of national urgency trainmen are subjected to greater hazards than other civilian employees and the number of railroad employees killed in train accidents shows an increase. Trainmen are working a greater number of hours than in pre-war years but even on a man-hour basis the four-year period of 1940-43 records an increase of only 23 p.c. killed and 38 p.c. injured over the preceding four-year period.

The Canadian National Railways have been authorized by the Government to undertake the development of certain oil fields at Vermilion, Alberta, with a view to providing their western lines with a local supply of fuel oil for operational purposes. This has been made necessary to replace supplies previously imported, the volume of which has been curtailed by wartime conditions. This railway has likewise been