

VETERAN CONDUCTOR WINS PRIZE

Samuel J. Snyder of Greenwood Lake Division Turns In Best Essay
on How Conductors Can Best Please the Public

LORD Chesterfield once wrote: "I really think that next to consciousness of doing a good action, that of doing a civil one is the most pleasing and the epithet which I should covet—would be that of 'well-bred'".

It is around this theme of courtesy I would build my plea for a better relationship with the public.

A conductor must regard himself as a servant of the traveling public, proud of his road, proud of his position and proud of his chevrons, but imbued with a deep desire to serve the traveller well in a safe and pleasant journey to his destination.

Each day in the dispatch of his daily duties, a conductor comes into close contact with patrons—new and old. For them the personality of the road is reflected in the conductor and this impression may lose or win a friend for the company. To sell the road is to sell your personality to the

traveller. One trades with John the grocer because he is more friendly than Tom, and in railroading it is not an uncommon thing for passengers to go out of their way in making their travel plans so they might ride with Joe Smith on No. 3. Constant, cordial geniality really counts!

When making regular runs, the conductor meets the same people often and many friendships result. Here is an opportunity to show an interest in people which always fosters good will. Having fifty years of service to my credit, I have enjoyed rare privileges of serving three generations in a single family and a greeting from some youngster, "Hello Mr. ———, I'm Jimmy Johnson and my Dad and Grandfather rode the trains with you" is one of the great thrills in my job.

Like the electricity at your command in a switch—never missed until it is gone, so with the tiny details which make comfortable travel. Care about car temperature, tidiness of car, as-

sisting passengers in raising or lowering windows and adjusting shades help a great deal. On rainy days such a little courtesy as wiping the wet hand rails to keep them clean has elicited praise.



Samuel J. Snyder

Ladies comprise a goodly portion of the road's clientele and a deference to them is most desirable. Here, more than in any other situation, "the customer is always right" and anything short of "Bringing the Limited in a half hour late" is permissible. Little courtesies mean much—offer to assist milady in boarding the train (and unconsciously she is impressed by a clean smart uniform and the gold stars or bars on the sleeve)—help with baggage or bundles—but be careful you don't get left with a baby in your arms.

Because of the nature of his work, the conductor has a unique opportunity to build good will with the public.

With the cardinal principle of safety always in mind, a program of conscientious service to the needs of the public can do more to foster good will than anything else.

Conductor Snyder who was judged the winner on the basis of the foregoing essay, is quite a remarkable old-timer and in good physical condition. He is 78, having been born on Feb. 28, 1860. He began with the Erie as a brakeman in 1876, and has therefore seen 62 years service. He became a fireman in 1880, a freight conductor the following year and was moved up to passenger conductor in 1886. With the exception of the period from 1904 to 1911 when he served as stationmaster at Jersey City, Conductor Snyder's entire service has been passed on the Greenwood Lake division. He has passed a perfect physical examination every three months since 1934. He lives at 83 Mountain Avenue, North Caldwell, N. J.

The contest excited (Continued on page 36)

Veteran Wins Prize

(Continued from page 9)

lively interest and discussion up and down the railroad. The prize was \$25 to the passenger conductor who sent in the best article of not more than 500 words on the subject, How Conductors Can Best Please The Public. Only passenger conductors in service were eligible and responses were received from 50 per cent of them. The judges were R. E. Woodruff, operating vice president; C. C. Howard, passenger traffic manager and F. M. America, magazine editor.

It was felt that Conductor J. R. Austin of the Rochester division deserved honorable mention for his splendid paper, the theme of which was that the conductor was the public's host. Mr. Austin wrote: It has been wisely said, "A soft answer turneth away wrath". So a conductor makes and keeps friends, not only by displaying courtesy to the pleasant passenger, but also by giving "a soft answer" to the wrathful passenger, whether his grievance be real or fancied.

Courtesy is the keynote of a conductor's success in pleasing the public. While on duty a conductor is the public's host, and to the extent that he is tactful, agreeable, considerate and efficient, he is a good conductor and a successful host.
