

"Electricity. Transportation of Future," Declares Edison



CHICAGO.—"The white coal" age is at hand. This is the statement made by Thomas Alva Edison after inspecting the giant electric locomotive of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul railroad which has just completed a three-month tour of thirty-nine American cities.

"This is the transportation of the future," the Wizard of Menlo Park declared as he patted the side of the modern colossus of the rails. "It is an indication of what is being done, and what can be done with the marvel of white coal. Some day not only railroad trains but every automotive vehicle—trucks and passenger cars, too—will be propelled by electricity. Its powers and uses are still but little known."

Mr. Edison was one of the 400,000 enthusiastic visitors who were shown through and initiated into the mysteries of the electric locomotive on its demonstration tour. Four expert technicians were stationed at different locations inside its huge body, and the only question which baffled them was the query of a small boy, who demanded to know the exact number of nuts and bolts used in its construction.

The locomotive chosen for the tour was one which already had seen 300,000 miles of mountain running in the Cascade Range. Only once during the tour did it move under its own power after leaving its own lines, and it had to submit to the ignominy of being towed by steam locomotives, any of which it could easily vanquish in a tug-of-war. At Erie, Pa., the electric train was given opportunity to prove its strength in just such a test. Here the East Erie Commercial railroad mainline an electrical test track, and to this stretch a powerful steam locomotive was brought, puffing and fretting at the challenge. But

the result was as always: the "Milwaukee's" white coal-eater pulled the steam mogul backward.

"What does a fireman do on one of these locomotives?" This, according to the experts, was probably the most frequent question. It was pointed out that his job has become much simpler—a little oiling now and then, with most of his attention directed toward the oil burners which heat the water and steam for the comfort of passengers.

Speeds of 60 to 65 miles an hour are not unusual, it was explained. One of its greatest feats is the drawing of a 4,000-ton train up a 2 per cent grade at a speed of 25 miles an hour, whereas with steam power, the expert said, the same grade requires two locomotives in summer and three in winter, at a maximum speed one in such conditions of 15 miles an hour.

The average electric locomotive costs \$250,000, and requires between 19 and 21 months to design and build, but with quantity production officials said, this time could be cut down to 15 days. Fifty years' service is not too much to expect from an electric locomotive, although, it was said, nobody knows just how long one will last. The oldest one in service belongs to the General Electric Company, which built it thirty years ago.

Mountain waterfalls in the West supply the power which generates the electricity. One interesting fact brought out was the system of electrical braking. Going down-grade through mountain country, the "Milwaukee's" locomotive uses little or no power at all, but on the contrary a unique regenerative system creates new power and supplies it to the line. The final effect is that two electrical trains going down hill generate enough power to pull one train up hill.

The Phantom Fog-Horn

By CHART PITT

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PETE KETTLESON, keeper of the Muk-muk lighthouse, heaved a sigh of relief as he settled down in his easy chair. He lifted his fat hand and scratched his bald head thoughtfully. He had feasted upon his favorite dish—and Dogfish Dan Swanson was dead at last.

Ten years ago Dan had wrecked his scow in a fog. The Vampire had piled upon the rocks right in front of the lighthouse—wrecked within pistol-shot of the silent fog-signal—and Dan had blamed Keeper Kettleison for it all.

But Dogfish Dan was dead now, and Pete still clung to his government job over at the lighthouse. Some uncanny impulse had compelled Kettleison to go to the funeral of the man whom he so hated, and he had hated so long and bitterly. But now when it was over he wished he had stayed at home. For Danny Swanson, the old man's son, had glared at him from across the corner, and the boy had grown to look like his father—too much like his father to suit Pete.

One by one the lights of the town went out, and the lighthouse began to feel sleepy there in his easy chair. The clock ticked off its minutes upon the wall. It, too, was getting drowsy, and its voice seemed farther and farther away to the nodding man. Midnight came; the easy hum of a dream-world hung over the lighthouse where Pete Kettleison sat in the depths of his easy chair, sleeping on his watch—with his educated ear close to the open crack of the window, so he could be sure to wake up if the boat began phantoming for fog.

The faithless lightkeeper slept peacefully on, and out in the night the neglected light blinked on—with none to watch it except the eyes of the Almighty.

Then Pete Kettleison sprang from his chair, with the echoes of a fog-horn still ringing in his ears. The haze of sleep was in his eyes as he bolted for the engine room and started the fog signal. When the machinery was in motion, Pete went outside. There was a bit curious to know if there were any ships close to the rocks—and whether Muk-muk light was due for another investigation.

Then he swore. Above him the midnight stars were burning—bright and clear. He looked out to sea, but there was no trace of fog.

He hurried in and stopped the signal, and returned to his quarters. He poked up his fire, then settled down in his chair again, with his educated ear close to the crack in the window.

Once more he was sleeping, as he had slept for twenty years—on his watch. The clock upon the wall ticked off the minutes. Deeper and deeper the bald-headed lightkeeper sank into the black haze of Morpheus. But that wily old ear of his was at the window, listening, listening for some alien sound in the night.

Then once more Pete Kettleison sprang to his feet. The whistles were blowing again. Almost automatically he staggered inside, and started the engine. For twenty years he had tended the lights, and his hands had grown used to doing the work with little aid from his sleepy brain. But at the first blast of the signal he remembered something—and darted outside.

The lightkeeper became alarmed. For a score of years he had slept on his watch, trusting his sharp ears to awaken him if the boats began blowing for fog—now his ears were beginning to play him false. To keep awake nights, as lightkeepers were supposed to do, was out of the question. That habit of taking cat-naps was too firmly fixed to be broken.

For an hour Pete Kettleison tramped back and forth across the lighthouse grounds. He was afraid to go to sleep again, and it was almost impossible for him to keep awake.

Then he heard it—a fog-whistle out of the night. He wheeled toward the signal—then he stopped. It came again—louder—a whistle such as never blew on land or sea—the whistle of the phantom fleet that steer their eternal courses across the ocean of the damned.

For a moment the guilty lightkeeper stood there with his wide eyes staring out into the black night. Then he remembered about Dogfish Dan—who was dead.

It was ten years since the old fisherman had spoken to him—but those last words rang like a banshee's cry in his fear-sharpened ears.

"Too slept on your watch, Pete Kettleison—and I lost my ship because of you—and if I had gone down with the Vampire—I would have come back and haunted you!"

Now Dogfish Dan was dead—and the phantom horns were blowing out there on the reefs of the Muk-muk—where the bones of the Vampire lay.

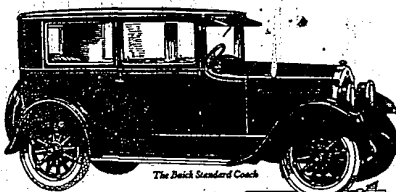
He rushed into his quarters and bolted the door: a fear-haunted man who knew retribution had found him at last. Back and forth across the floor he walked, while out in the murk of the lonely night the phantom horns kept blowing—the voice of lost ships cursing him from the graveyards of the sea.

In the gray gloom of the dawn, a canoe came creeping in from the reefs of Muk-muk. Danny Swanson smiled softly to himself as he hid his boat among the weeds. Then he stole away toward the cabin on the hill—with a basket of assorted, coach-shell whistles under his arm.

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