

ing executives now assembled; that whatever is accomplished by pooling probably will be much more costly than normal operation—as far as the use of equipment and mechanical facilities is concerned; that our expectations for relieving the congestion and for the decrease of car shortage should not be distorted; that government operation cannot be more than a costly and roundabout attempt to accomplish results by means of the railroad executives who are *already at work*; that there is rough sledding ahead for the railroads even after the war; and that not all of the way will be made smooth by the raising of rates.

For our friends who argue that the railroads do not need an increase in rates on account of the many savings that will be realized from a united and concentrated railroad operation, we may add that they should consider how far these various physical and mechanical difficulties will offset the advantages of rerouting, redistribution and other benefits of co-operative pooling. And for the attention of our lawmakers and commissioners; let them become substitute when they speak of "taking over the railroads." Have they anything constructive to suggest in meeting the very practical difficulties mentioned above? "Anyone can tear down a house, but it takes a carpenter to build one." May we not warn, that the house cleaning which they suggest will but resolve itself into a "stir-up" for a protracted period which, if it does not break up some of the furniture, will only result in putting the bed where the bureau was, and in changing the railroads from the credit to the debit side of the ledger; and then we would proceed along as before, in having some bureau-agent of the government ask our railroads' experts to go ahead and do the best they can.

What particular results and what practical remedies have these same advocates in mind when they say that the President will have to operate the railroads as a military necessity? Let us answer quickly, that the military necessity of the country today is to keep the many thousands of mines and manufacturing plants running to capacity and to get their product on the boats. There is no one in America today who knows as well how to do this as the expert operating and traffic officials of the railroads; and let us venture to suggest that, with the supervision of their own War Board and with a few general necessities indicated by the governmental departments, it might even be left to the judgment of our railroad experts, who are in daily contact with the industrial world, to use discrimination as to which plant was the most important. Our priority troubles might then melt away and no longer be a hindrance to transportation. It might be well for the country if we could "let our railroad officers in on" this managing of the war business. We greatly need this army of expert help, and at its highest efficiency.

Is *pool operation* the misleading element in all this confusion of generalities? If it is, let us not be deceived in thinking that all we have to do is for the Congress to cancel some of their anti-pooling mistakes and then throw the railroads together for one grand "clean up" under bureaucratic operation. Pooling has its bad points as well as its good ones, and a few of the former are cited above in *only one department* of the railroad business. Our railroad officers and committees will understand best how to get the most out of pool co-operation during the war, both as to physical and financial results. Enforced pooling into undesirable channels would be a catastrophe, and might result, with reference to car equipment, in our finding on our hands a surprisingly increased proportion of it out of service for repairs at a time when it was most needed. This enforced pooling is probably what many have in mind when they think of government control and a country wide transportation system.

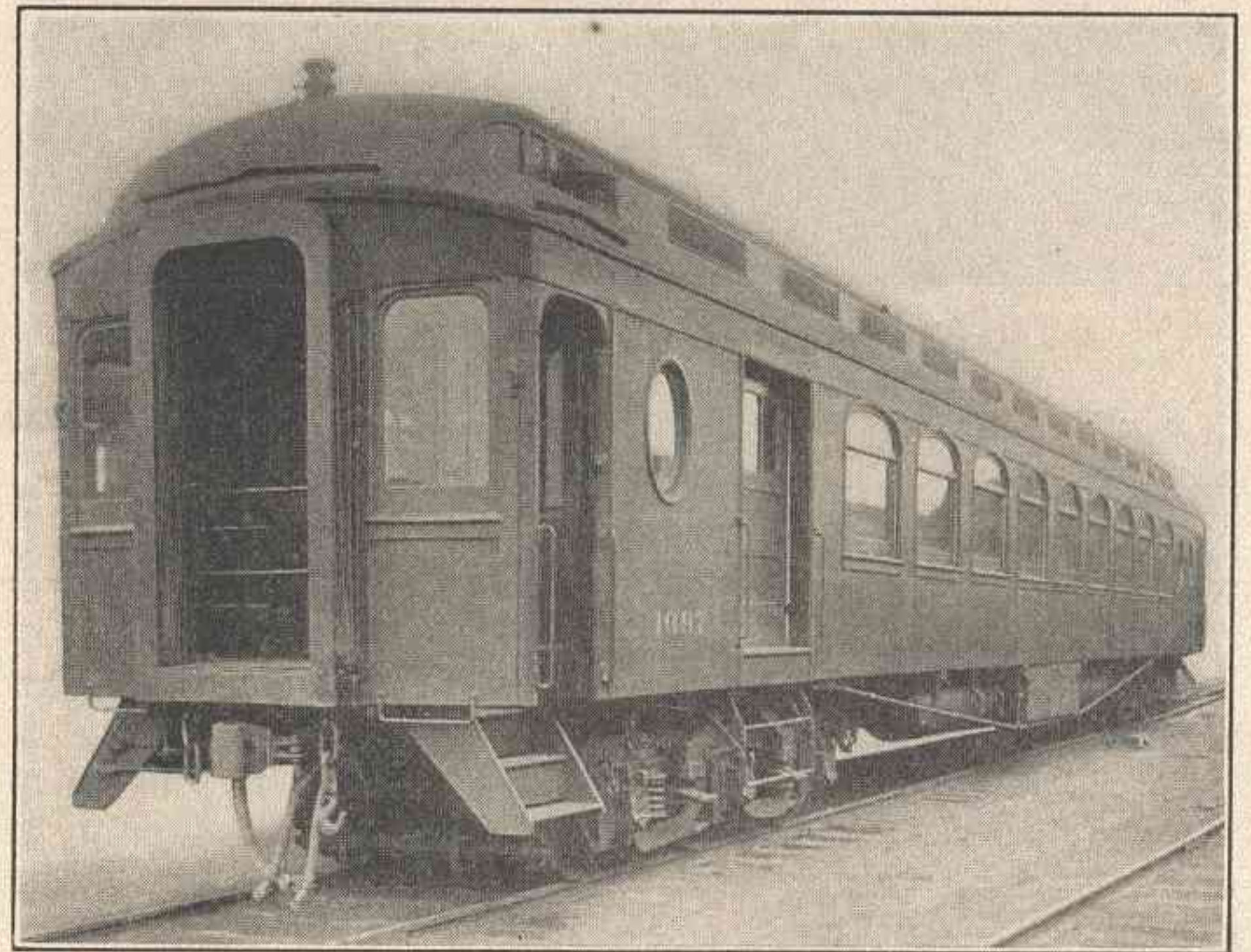
We dare not "swap horses in the middle of the stream"; and—except for a temporary and reasonable relaxation of

restriction on co-operation—we cannot, by annulling or by making laws, expect to create new methods and new conditions to help the railroad during the war which would not at the same time be just as efficient and just as profitable after the war. For the present emergency, the railroads could agree among themselves to share their terminals and routes, and perhaps some of their earnings, if laws are adjusted accordingly; but that is about as far as it should go; and in going this far, let us bear in mind that the railroad executives should be allowed to use their own pooling methods.

Co-operative competition with less regulation among privately owned railroads, should be our plan now and for the future. A little perusal of some of the troublesome and practical details of railroading may sober the judgment of those who are advancing large general theories for the revolution of the transportation business of our country. Let us discard the pet phrases: "Take over the railroads," "Government Ownership," "Unity of Railroads," "Country-Wide Pool"; and let us think more about co-operation under a plan which will not transform the railroads into absolute utilities but rather will allow them for the present and in the future to remain partially in the field of private business under reasonable business competition and co-operation. Our railroad executives are anxious to pool for war service their terminals and their various other facilities in which they have an advantage over their competitors; but after the war, they should have the exclusive benefit of these facilities to be used in reasonable business competition, if our railroad systems are to be developed and are to keep step with the needs of the country. Some people cannot understand how we could have competition and co-operation at the same time; but if they were willing to get a little closer to the greatest business men which the country has produced and many of whom are now donating much of their time to the Government for service and for consultation, they would soon learn that this joining of hands of competition and co-operation is the principle which will have to be relied upon to work out the salvation of our railroads.

HOSPITAL CAR FOR THE ERIE

To meet the demands of the Government for appropriate cars in which to transport sick or wounded soldiers, the Erie has remodeled a 70-ft. steel underframe parlor car, as



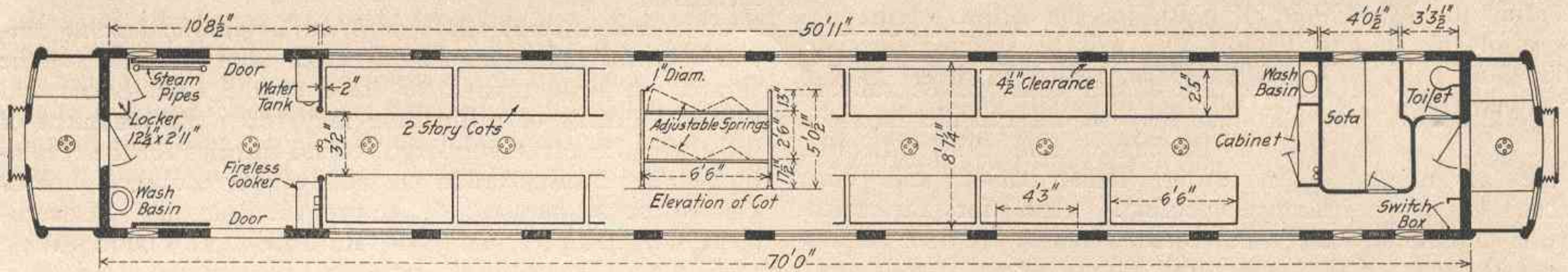
Erie Hospital Car

shown in the illustrations, providing it with 28 adjustable cots placed in two tiers. The car is provided with a receiving and supply room 10 ft. 8½ in. long, with a sliding door

at each side, at one end of the car. At the other end is a small rest room for the nurses, provided with a sofa and lavatory. The main portion of the car is about 50 ft. 6 in. long and contains seven two-story cots on each side.

The two-story cots are of a new design furnished by Frank A. Hall & Sons, New York. The springs of these cots are adjustable to any desired position for a patient's back or legs. This is clearly shown by a sketch on the floor plan of the car. The cots are finished in white enamel.

The supply room contains a fireless cooker, drinking water



Floor Plan of Erie Hospital Car

tank, wash basin and supply locker. The annunciator on which calls from any part of the car are indicated is also located here. It is separated from the main compartment by heavy rubber curtains.

The car is equipped with electric lights, the lighting fix-



Interior View of the Erie Hospital Car

tures being located on the side decks. Emergency lights are provided by Pintsch gas lamps located in the center of the upper deck. The interior finish of the car is a light gray, which is easy to the eyes.

TWENTY MEN IN GAS MASKS IN AIR-TIGHT CAR.—An abandoned freight car was recently used as a gas house at Camp Meade, Md., and twenty chaps of the 27th Engineers for two hours battled against the deadly fumes similar to those which the Huns unloose on the troops overseas. The car had been prepared for several days for the test and had been hermetically sealed. The men were cautioned to adjust the masks before they ventured into the danger zone, and the moment the car door was slammed the gas was turned on full force; every man came out apparently without a single handicap other than the weight of his mask.

WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C., December 11, 1917.

FOOD, FUEL AND MILITARY SUPPLIES GIVEN PRIORITY

A general priority order to the railroads to give preference in car supply and movement to fuel, food and military supplies was issued by Judge R. S. Lovett, priority director, on December 7. The question of what such an order should provide had been the subject of numerous conferences with railroad and government officers for several days. Both the

food and the fuel administrations had asked for general orders but the railroads had opposed the idea of too sweeping an order unless some plan were put into effect which would provide for a co-ordination of the requirements of the government. The Railroads' War Board expressed approval of the form in which the order was issued but urged that its success would depend upon the co-ordination of the traffic management of government business and relations with the railroads. The order provides for preference in the following order:

- First—Steam railroad fuel for current use.
- Second—Live stock, perishable freight, food and feed.
- Third—(a) Shipments of military supplies when consigned direct to the United States government or the authorized officers of the United States army, navy or shipping board, or to the Allies or the proper representatives thereof, destined to any cantonment, post or encampment, to any point of export for movement thence to Europe, to any arsenal or navy yard, or material to any shipbuilding plant under contract to the United States shipping board for the sole purpose of constructing vessels for that board.
- (b) Other shipments for the United States government, as the same may be authorized from time to time as necessary in particular cases, but only upon request of the United States army, United States navy and United States shipping board, through a designated officer or representative of the respective departments, located in Washington.

Fourth—Coal to and for by-product coking plants, and not subject to reconsignment.

Fifth—Preference and priority in movement only to coal for current use, but not for storage, consigned direct (and not subject to reconsignment) to hospitals, schools and other public institutions, retailers of coal for use in supplying domestic consumers only; and to coal, coke and raw materials for current use, but not for storage, consigned direct (and not subject to reconsignment) to blast furnaces, foundries, iron and steel mills, smelters, manufacturers engaged in work for the United States government or its Allies, public utilities (including street and interurban railways, electric power and lighting plants, gas plants, water and sewer works), flour mills, sugar factories, fertilizer factories and shipbuilders; also shipments of paper, petroleum and petroleum products.

ROUTING EXPORTS VIA SOUTHERN PORTS

The desirability of routing as much as possible of the export freight via Gulf and South Atlantic ports instead of North Atlantic ports, in order to keep it out of the congested