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A Lifetime of Service



A L I F E T I M E O F S E R V I C E

Wayne Johnston

and the

Illinois Central Railroad

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Foreword

IT WAS MY GOOD FORTUNE to be assistant to the president throughout the twenty-one years that Wayne Johnston was president of the Illinois Central. My main responsibility was our public relations, an undertaking in which the chief executive is the key figure in any company, and Wayne Johnston relished the role. It was a rare privilege to be so closely associated with him.

When it was announced upon his retirement that the board of directors had decided to have his lifetime of service memorialized, I was greatly pleased to be invited to prepare the text. In addition to drawing upon my own rich store of recollections of our years together and consulting company records, I have had the valued counsel and assistance of many of our Illinois Central associates, to whom I acknowledge indebtedness.

George M. Crowson

Chicago, March 1968.

Chosen President at 47

IT WAS LATE EVENING January 3, 1945. John Lansing Beven, president of the Illinois Central Railroad, had spent a busy day at Springfield, Illinois. His office car had been moved to Clinton, Illinois, headquarters of the Springfield division, and he was preparing to retire about 10 o'clock when he admitted to not feeling well. His secretary summoned the Illinois Central district surgeon, who hastened to the car and after a brief examination recommended hospitalization for observation and treatment. While preparing to leave the car for the local hospital Mr. Beven collapsed in his bedroom and was pronounced dead of coronary thrombosis.

The president was a vigorous 57, in the seventh year of his presidency, and no move had been made to designate a second in command or possible successor. Following the funeral service on January 6 there was a brief meeting of the executive committee of the Illinois Central board, and it was announced that Vice-President Robert E. Connolly would be in charge of the railroad pending the selection of a president to succeed Mr. Beven.

How his successor was chosen was revealed years later—at the National Newcomen Dinner in New York on February 8, 1951, honoring the Illinois Central Railroad on the eve of the 100th anniversary of the granting of its charter by the general assembly of the state of Illinois. On that

occasion Eugene W. Stetson, chairman of the Illinois Central executive committee, told this story:

“The board of directors delegated to me the responsibility of finding and suggesting Jack Beven’s successor. Promptly I met with the six top men in the organization—four vice-presidents, the chief engineer and the general counsel. At this meeting we all agreed: first, we would not go outside to seek a successor until we had exhausted all possibilities in the organization; second, we would play no favorites; third, we would play no politics; fourth, we would take sufficient time to make our choice.

“I then saw each of these key men privately and said: ‘I know you would like to be president of this railroad, but if you are not chosen whom would you recommend?’ Each man, not knowing that the others had been approached, answered: ‘Wayne Johnston.’ I hardly knew Wayne, who had only recently been promoted to the position of general manager. He was then 47 years of age. I studied his record. He had served in the accounting, transportation, operating and traffic departments. His record was excellent. I had several talks with him, and I suggested to several of the directors that they meet Wayne Johnston. Then I invited the six key men to meet with me again. I reminded them that they were all years older than Wayne and that they could make his regime a success or failure according to their loyal support of a man much younger than they. All pledged their loyal support. They recommended, I nominated, and the board elected Wayne Johnston president of the Illinois Central Railroad.”

And so it came about that Wayne Andrew Johnston, who had not yet reached the position of vice-president, was chosen to be the fifteenth president of the railroad to which as a young man fresh out of college he had dedicated his

lifetime of service. He was the youngest man ever to be called to the presidency of the Illinois Central Railroad, and he became the youngest president of any major railroad in America.

How It All Began

WAYNE JOHNSTON WAS THE FIRST native son of Illinois to become president of its namesake railroad. He was born at Philo, in Champaign County, on November 19, 1897, the second of three sons of Harry W. and DeEtta (Boomer) Johnston. His father was a farmer who also operated a grain elevator; his mother had been a school teacher. The father died when Wayne was two years old, two months before the youngest son was born. To support her fatherless family the mother returned to teaching school, first at Philo and moving later to Champaign to give her sons the advantages of the University of Illinois, of which she was a graduate. Wayne Johnston attended grade school at Philo and high school at Champaign. Following high school, urged on by his college-trained mother, he entered the College of Commerce and Business Administration at the University of Illinois, where he studied railway business administration with courses in economics, accounting and transportation.

During his high school years Wayne Johnston contributed to the family income by delivering newspapers, and he and his brothers and another partner took over the local agency for the Saturday Evening Post, delivering several thousand copies every week. Later Wayne Johnston earned his way through the university by waiting on tables, washing dishes, caring for the athletic grounds, and serving as

janitor for a sorority house. During summer vacations he worked as switchman and yard clerk for the Peoria and Eastern Railroad, and one summer he was employed as a guide in Yellowstone National Park. For two school years he was student assistant in the office of Thomas Arkle Clark, dean of men. Dean Clark became one of his treasured counselors; another was Dean Charles M. Thompson of the College of Commerce and Business Administration, who also was his Sunday school teacher in Champaign. Both remained lifelong friends.

Upon finishing his course at the University of Illinois, in 1918, and being disqualified for military service following an operation for tuberculoma of the sternum, Wayne Johnston began his lifetime of service on the Illinois Central Railroad, starting as an accountant in the office of the division superintendent at Champaign. Among his fellow employes in the division office was an attractive young lady who was destined to play an important role in his life. Her name was Blanche Lawson.

Within two years, in 1920, Wayne Johnston moved up to the position of chief clerk to the superintendent, and the following year, in 1921, another move upward took him to the Chicago headquarters of the railroad to be assistant chief clerk to the general superintendent of northern lines. It was while he was on this tour of duty—after having saved up all of \$400, as he relished telling it years later—that he and Blanche Lawson were married. Then in 1925 he drew an appointment in the office of vice-president and general manager. There he held the somewhat misleading designation of correspondence clerk—misleading because his work really gave him an in-depth exposure to all phases of the operation of the railroad. He was on his way.

In 1934 Wayne Johnston transferred to the traffic depart-

ment, where he served first as general agent, next as office manager to the vice-president, then as general agent in charge of mail, baggage, express and merchandise traffic. During his tour of duty in the traffic department he had a key role in establishing, developing, staffing and administering a pioneer research project with in-depth studies of both freight and passenger traffic. Many valuable findings were made in this research project, including new sources of traffic and new services and price concepts better to meet the needs of the railroad and its customers.

Then in 1938 Wayne Johnston returned to the operating department in the key post of assistant to the vice-president and general manager. While on this position he drew the valuable assignment in 1940 of operating the important Kentucky division with office at Paducah during the illness of its superintendent. Returning to Chicago the following year, in 1941, he was promoted to assistant general manager in 1942, to assistant vice-president in April 1944 and to general manager in November 1944.

During World War II more than 10,000 employes of the Illinois Central Railroad—approximately one-fourth of the railroad’s entire work force—entered the armed services. The manpower shortage on the railroad became so acute that the management adopted the practice of employing and training boys who were too young for the draft. This program was initiated and carried on under the personal direction of Assistant General Manager Johnston, with four transportation schools—at Carbondale, Memphis, Chicago (Markham Yard) and Louisville. So successful were these schools that during twenty-eight months more than 4,000 students—many of them sons and younger brothers of Illinois Central men in uniform—were graduated and started on railroad careers. Thus Wayne Johnston’s “teen-age pro-

gram” brought into the Illinois Central ranks large numbers of alert, energetic youngsters, many of whom continued with the Illinois Central after the war emergency was over. During World War II the Illinois Central moved thousands of carloads of diverted traffic. On one occasion a record 110 trainloads moved through Memphis in twenty-four hours, many of them with boys of 16 and 17 serving as firemen and brakemen.

While serving as general manager Wayne Johnston headed the operating department, reporting directly to the president, in the absence of the operating vice-president, who was on sick leave, and it was from this position that he was called to the presidency.

Thus for twenty-seven years the future president had a varied and often intensive exposure to the workings of the railroad. During his years on the management team in the traffic and operating departments he had averaged 200 days a year out on the railroad—“among the box cars,” in the picturesque language of railroading. He had covered every mile of the 6,500-mile railroad by train or motor car, and most of four divisions had been covered on foot. And he had developed a phenomenal acquaintance not only with the property but also with the personnel of the railroad, in all departments, and with literally thousands of key people all along the line. No man was ever summoned to the presidency of a major railroad more thoroughly grounded in the affairs and people involved than was Wayne Johnston. No man ever assumed a major business responsibility with greater hopes and expectations.

It so happened—and it was pure coincidence—that on the very day he was elected president of the Illinois Central Railroad General Manager Wayne Johnston was elected to honorary membership in Beta Gamma Sigma, national hon-

orary society for students of commerce. Thus it came about that his remarks at the banquet at which he was initiated into the fraternity became his first public address since assuming the presidency of the railroad. On that occasion he closed with these ringing words, which—repeated on other occasions—became the theme of his presidential administration:

“I give you a formula for the railroads of the future. It is a formula to which I believe a virile industry and its workers can and will give ready assent. We must have railroads in and for America—solvent railroads, strong railroads, manned by alert and respected workmen, directed by progressive management, modernized to fit the needs of post-war America, operating under sound policies of government, and commanding the confidence of the American people.”

Facing the Challenge

PRIOR TO WAYNE JOHNSTON the longest tenure of any president of the Illinois Central Railroad was that of Stuyvesant Fish, who was president from May 1887 to November 1906, a period of nineteen years. This record was eclipsed by that of Wayne Johnston's 21-year presidency from February 1945 to February 1966. During these twenty-one years Wayne Johnston succeeded in putting the print of his increasingly powerful personality on the railroad to which he devoted a working lifetime of dedicated service.

World War II was at its height when Wayne Johnston moved upstairs into the big corner office on the eighth floor at Central Station, with its dramatic view of the famous Chicago skyline and overlooking the Illinois Central tracks leading to the south bank of the Chicago River. Shortly later the center of war interest shifted from the European to the Pacific theater. As redeployment of troops progressed, the currents of traffic changed, and throughout this period the demands upon the strategic Illinois Central continued in record volume. So well were these demands met that at the close of the conflict it could truthfully be said that never at any time throughout the war had any movement of troops and supplies or war materiel been delayed even for an hour on the Illinois Central for want of motive or man power. Finally came the sensational atom-

bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, followed by the Japanese surrender. The war was over.

In an August 1945 message which he shared with the entire Illinois Central organization, President Johnston gave this ringing declaration:

“The dawn of peace means a new dedication to the tasks that lie ahead. The Illinois Central family has never flinched or faltered in any undertaking. We will meet the new ones with confidence and determination to succeed and serve and prosper.”

Following this message the 47-year-old president outlined the postwar undertakings that he saw confronting the Illinois Central, including research, new developments, continuing improvements in road and equipment, better tools with which to work, increased efficiency in every department, improved relations with and service to the public, increasingly cordial relations within the Illinois Central family, continued reduction of debt.

Under the dynamic leadership of its youthful president and with the firm support of his knowledgeable and devoted board of directors and the enthusiastic response of the management team of the railroad, the Illinois Central entered upon a program which in his twenty-one years entailed the expenditure of many millions for improvements and at the same time involved further substantial reduction in the debt of the railroad.

Back in October 1931, for the first time in nearly three-quarters of a century, the Illinois Central, plumbing the depths of the great depression which put so much of the railway mileage of the country into bankruptcy, failed to declare payment of dividends on its common and preferred stock. As the fortunes of the railroad improved during and following World War II there was insistent and increasing

pressure for the resumption of dividend payments. This pressure was firmly resisted by the president and board of directors until the debt of the railroad could be reduced to manageable proportions and 33 separate bond issues under 27 different mortgages could be consolidated into one manageable mortgage. This new mortgage was created under date of November 1, 1949. In the preceding year, 1948, dividends to the owners of preferred shares were resumed. In January 1950 the directors declared dividends payable in July for the first two quarters of that year, and dividends have been paid on the common shares quarterly without interruption since then.

In an address at the dedication of the Eugene W. Stetson Memorial Library at Mercer University, Macon, Ga., on October 21, 1965, President Johnston paid eloquent tribute to Mr. Stetson, chairman of the Illinois Central executive committee, for this notable financial achievement. Mr. Stetson served the Illinois Central as a director from 1932 until his death in 1959. Wayne Johnston succeeded Mr. Stetson as chairman of the executive committee.

President Johnston in his Mercer address gave Chairman Stetson full credit for debt reduction and recovery from the troublesome financial problems posed by the great depression of the thirties, but Mr. Stetson in turn often shared the credit with President Johnston and the able board of directors to which they were both responsible.

Throughout its more than one hundred years the Illinois Central has been exceedingly fortunate in the high caliber and sterling reputation of the men who have served on its directorate. The board which accepted Chairman Stetson's recommendation and chose Wayne Johnston for president, in addition to Mr. Stetson, was composed of: Robert E. Connolly, George Adams Ellis, Vernon W. Foster, General

Clifford W. Gaylord, Illinois Governor Dwight H. Green *ex officio*, Oscar G. Johnson, William R. King, James Norris, John W. Rath, Thomas E. Wilson, and General Robert E. Wood. Coming on the board in the Johnston presidential years were: Stephen Y. Hord, Wayne A. Johnston, and Solon B. Turman, in 1945; Edwin S. S. Sunderland, in 1946; Louis Ware, in 1948; James R. Leavell and Illinois Governor Adlai E. Stevenson *ex officio*, in 1949; Donald B. Lourie, in 1950; Hugh M. Comer, in 1951; Howard H. Rath and Edwin J. Spiegel, in 1952; Dwight P. Robinson, Jr., and Illinois Governor William G. Stratton *ex officio*, in 1953; C. Harvey Bradley, in 1957; Porter M. Jarvis, in 1959; Harmon S. Eberhard, Illinois Governor Otto Kerner *ex officio*, and Frank E. Martin, in 1961; Herbert Humphreys and Otto H. Zimmerman, in 1962; Albert L. Church, Joseph B. Lanterman, and J. Craig Smith, in 1963; Albert B. Huttig, in 1965.

With all these men, leaders in their respective fields, most of them drawn from the grass roots of the territory in which the Illinois Central is a main reliance for transportation, Wayne Johnston enjoyed confidence and support, and they in turn contributed significantly to the record amassed by their vigorous president.

The Presidential Years

IF WAYNE JOHNSTON COULD NAME one thing that was his greatest concern throughout his presidential years, this writer believes it would be his concern for the organization of the railroad—for the Illinois Central Family, to use the name he so often delighted to use. Management, he often said, is not one man; it is a team effort. He loved to tell a story that is ascribed to George Eastman. Returning from photographing wild animals in their native Africa, Eastman was showing motion pictures of the animals charging until their great bulk shadowed the lens of his camera. His friends remonstrated his exposure to such danger, but Eastman explained that he always had a man at his side with a rifle for protection. Friends still remonstrated—what if the man became flustered, failed to shoot in time—what if the bullet missed the mark—to which Eastman is said to have replied: “You’ve got to depend on your organization.”

Recruitment of promising employes and their training through all levels of supervision were Wayne Johnston’s constant concern. He initiated the practice of refunding tuition for employes taking courses for their betterment while at work. He led in the selection of young officers with promising futures for summer courses in management at Northwestern University and the University of Illinois. He sponsored a succession of seminars for the management

team of the railroad, bringing together on occasion as many as 800 men for intensive programs of study and lectures. He instituted a plan of selecting and training able young men to become operating officers. He arranged for a course in human relations offered by the University of Illinois Extension Service to be made available for some 2600 officers and supervisors. He introduced annual comprehensive health audits for members of the management team. He never let up in his emphasis on the workings of the employes suggestion system, which he had a hand in initiating before he became president and which he regarded as both educational and stimulating for the suggesting employes and for the officers and other supervisors who handle their suggestions. He carried on a program of summer fellowships for selected professors from colleges and universities who were interested in transportation, believing their presence on the railroad and their close contact with officers in all departments not only contributed to education but also were stimulating to the organization.

The safety record of the Illinois Central was his constant concern. Every year Wayne Johnston made a personal presentation of the President's Safety Trophy to the operating division that had the best employe safety record in the divisional competition. He rejoiced when the Illinois Central as early in his administration as 1946 led all the railroads in the United States in employe safety, and he regarded it as a great triumph when the Illinois Central received the Edward H. Harriman Gold Medal Award for its industry-leading safety performance in 1965.

No less intense was the concern which President Johnston devoted to the improvement and strengthening of the properties of the railroad. During the Johnston presidential years of 1945-66 expenditures on capital improvements

reached totals of \$194 million on fixed property and \$339 million on equipment—\$533 million for what in railroad terms goes under the name of additions and betterments.

The substitution of diesel for steam power on the Illinois Central had been a somewhat reluctant development because of the major dependence of the Illinois Central on its highly important coal traffic, but it was well under way before Wayne Johnston became president. The advantages and the economies of the diesel were so overwhelming that the change was carried forward steadily in the Johnston administration until it could be announced in 1959 that the transformation was complete—that steam power was no longer used in passenger or freight or switching service anywhere on the railroad—that the remaining steam locomotives were being reduced to scrap.

Tremendous track changes too were carried forward relentlessly . . . heavier rail in the track . . . welding in quarter-mile lengths to reduce wear at rail joints and to make for smoother riding . . . centralized traffic control, or CTC for short . . . new and improved color light signals . . . the rebuilding and strengthening of bridges, including the great bridge over the Ohio River at Cairo, linking North and South . . . all during the Johnston years.

It would require a volume all to itself to detail the great changes in freight cars that occurred in the Johnston presidential years . . . covered hoppers . . . mechanical refrigeration . . . cushioned underframes . . . roller bearings . . . improved lubrication . . . multi-rack cars to win back to the railroads the traffic in new automobiles that had been all but lost to over-the-highway carriers . . . larger and specialized cars of many kinds . . . and the picturesque and rapidly popular piggy-back equipment that speedily revolutionized the handling of merchandise traffic.

Great changes in the design and equipment of freight yards were carried forward during the Johnston administration . . . completion of Mays Yard at New Orleans, taking the place of a number of individual outgrown yards . . . the rebuilding of the great Nonconnah Yard at Memphis, renaming it by local demand as Johnston Yard . . . the improvement of Markham Yard at Chicago . . . and the complete rebuilding of the important Illinois Central yard at East St. Louis. At Johnston, Markham and East St. Louis yards electronic retarders are now operated by push button to control the movement of cars into classification tracks, with radio communication between ground and tower stations. Radio also came rapidly to be used in other switching operations, on trains between locomotive and train crews, and between trains and wayside check points.

The development of new sources of traffic, which had been a concern of the pioneer research program in his traffic department tour of duty, received the unflagging interest of Wayne Johnston as president. In the first year of his presidency—in 1945—two traffic officers were assigned to make a four-month tour of South America in the interest of developing increased traffic via New Orleans and the Illinois Central. During the years that Wayne Johnston reported annually to the shareholders on the affairs of the railroad, he invariably emphasized the number of new and expanded industries which the Illinois Central assisted in establishing along its lines. Agricultural and forestry development, in which the Illinois Central long has been a leader among the railroads, likewise received unflagging attention in these annual reports, with particular emphasis on the great contribution to forest resources resulting from the use of tree planters, patterned after one which had been designed and developed in the Illinois Central shops

at McComb, Miss.—a development of particular importance to the Illinois Central because of the great growth in mills consuming trainloads of pulpwood in the manufacture of paper and kindred products which were springing up and expanding operations along the southern lines of the Illinois Central.

Reference is made elsewhere to the gigantic program of debt reduction that was well under way when Wayne Johnston took over the presidential reins at the Illinois Central. In a tribute to Wayne Johnston his successor reported that during the Johnston years the debt of the company had been reduced from \$286 million to \$180 million.

Fighting the ravages of Nature is a constant challenge in railroading, and the Illinois Central met and mastered its full share of these ravages during the Johnston presidential years—floods, windstorms, snow and ice. The fight to save the Illinois Central crossing of the Mississippi River at Dubuque in the devastating flood of 1965, when other trans-Mississippi rail lines had been disrupted, is one of the dramatic stories in the annals of the Illinois Central.

Good housekeeping was one of the main concerns of the Johnston years. Railroads had traditionally been untidy places—unpleasant to the eyes of patrons and employes, and hazardous to the safety of workers. The good housekeeping program which received Wayne Johnston's ever-enthusiastic support called for a place for everything and everything in its place. This program came to be one of the main concerns in developing the pride in the organization which Wayne Johnston ever emphasized, and it was no small factor in the safety records and the economies that were achieved in the Johnston years.

When the American railroads decided to embark in 1959 upon a campaign to bring about needed reforms in the long-

outdated work rules of the industry, Wayne Johnston entered into the campaign with his characteristic zeal. At a time when other railroads were reluctant to come out individually for the proposed changes Wayne Johnston was using the Illinois Central's traditional advertising in all the newspapers along the railroad to present the issues in plain terms and win public support. It was a long-drawn-out battle, with strikes and threats of strikes, and at times it seemed doomed, but it was carried relentlessly to the end. In the face of a threatened strike that would tie up all the railroads of the country Wayne Johnston represented the railroads in a 1964 White House conference that resulted in calling off the strike, and the Illinois Central president appeared on national television with the President of the United States to announce that the issues had been settled and the strike ended.

One of the special events of the Johnston presidential years was the Chicago Railroad Fair of 1948, repeated in 1949, in which the Illinois Central was one of thirty-seven participating railroads and which occupied a mile of the Chicago lakefront alongside the Illinois Central tracks. One of the most popular exhibits of the fair was the Illinois Central entry, consisting of a replica of a New Orleans courtyard with numerous resting places for foot-weary fairgoers.

Because of its location on the downtown Chicago lakefront, which the Illinois Central had been compelled by city authority to accept for shoreline protection when the railroad entered Chicago in the 1850's, the growth of the city and the increased demand for downtown locations for business, residential and other development made the air rights over the Illinois Central tracks a resource of great potential value. With the ownership of about 80 acres between Randolph Street and the Chicago River, of which 47 acres

would remain after provision for streets and other access, and some 167 acres south of Roosevelt Road, the Illinois Central air rights offered great possibilities under an orderly program of development. Confirmed by court decisions during the Johnston years, the development of this great resource was on its way. First came the sale of air rights for the erection of the great Prudential building, followed by the location of the towering Outer Drive East apartment building to the east of Prudential, and the progress of plans for other structures north of Randolph Street. Also, plans were announced for erection of a hotel complex opposite the great McCormick Place convention center at Twenty-third Street.

Then came the creation of Illinois Central Industries in 1963 to inaugurate a program of diversification beginning with the Illinois Central Railroad as the nucleus. The Chandeysson Electric Company was the next step, with further developments and acquisitions in the offing.

And still the story of the Johnston presidential years is untold. Other developments include the building of the magnificent Union Passenger Terminal at New Orleans, in which the Illinois Central played the leading role . . . the introduction of the City of New Orleans as a daytime coach streamliner between Chicago and New Orleans . . . the beginning of electronic data processing on the Illinois Central to revolutionize the once-laborious and time-consuming work of accounting . . . the introduction of unit trains to save money for shippers and make money for the railroad . . . the prudent management of money, looking at both sides of every nickel before spending it . . . all these and more were part of the Johnston years.

The Illinois Central Centennial

THE ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROAD is a child of the state whose name it bears. It was created by charter granted by the general assembly of the state of Illinois on February 10, 1851. As the 100th anniversary of that eventful date approached plans were put under way under the direction of President Johnston for a fitting celebration of the centennial. Wayne Johnston insisted that it should be a year-long celebration involving all the people of the railroad and reaching into every community along the 6,500 miles of railroad in fourteen states. The anniversary year was ushered in with publication and widespread distribution of a centennial history of the railroad of which historian Carlton J. Corliss was the author.

Reference is made elsewhere to the National Newcomen Dinner in New York on February 8, 1951, at which Chairman Stetson told his story of the selection of Wayne Johnston at the age of 47 to be president of the railroad and introduced the centennial president for a brilliant Newcomen address. This was the first of numerous centennial events which had been programmed under the guidance of the president, including the flying of centennial banners from all flagstaffs over the railroad, the dedication of impressive centennial markers at some 160 key points over the railroad, and the presentation of a dramatic revue en-

titled "The Song of Mid-America" depicting the 100-year development of the railroad, presented to a capacity audience of a thousand dinner guests in the Grand Ballroom of the Palmer House in Chicago and later made into a color motion picture for television release and for showing to school children and others throughout the territory of the Illinois Central and beyond.

The closing words of Wayne Johnston's Newcomen address eloquently sum up the dedication of the railroad's centennial president. Wayne Johnston said, in closing:

"In a few hours the Illinois Central will enter upon its second century of service to the American people. Deeply conscious of our heritage from the past and of our obligation to the future, we are united in a determination to keep in the vanguard of progress and to seek in every way to justify the right of the Illinois Central Railroad to be called the Main Line of Mid-America."

This descriptive name for the Illinois Central had been adopted in the early years of the Johnston presidency, and throughout the remaining years of his leadership Wayne Johnston never tired of using it whenever the occasion offered. It was his resolute determination, and he never lost sight of it, that the Illinois Central should ever continue to deserve the name of Main Line of Mid-America.

And Other Services

THE STORY OF Wayne Johnston's lifetime of service would not be complete without some account of his many varied and valued contributions to a multitude of undertakings beyond the company where his lifework lay.

Throughout his entire adult life Wayne Johnston was a dedicated Christian layman. He often said that his mother took her sons to church every Sunday during their years in Philo. Then when they moved to Champaign Wayne Johnston became a member of the University Place Christian Church, whose minister—Stephen Fisher—became his devoted lifetime friend. After coming to Chicago and his marriage to Blanche Lawson, the Johnstons settled in Avalon Park, a residential community within the city along the line of the Illinois Central, and Wayne Johnston took an active part in the organization of the Avalon Park Community Church, where he served as superintendent of the Sunday school and as chairman of the governing board. When the Johnstons moved to suburban Flossmoor in the early 1940's they transferred their memberships to the fast-growing Flossmoor Community Church, where Wayne Johnston served on the governing board, in the development of an expanded benevolence program, and as the leader in building a magnificent new church structure. Later he returned to the fellowship that had been drawn

into the United Church of Christ and took a leading part in establishing and building a new church for Flossmoor which took the name of Church of the Master.

In his Avalon Park days Wayne Johnston served as an officer of the Chicago Congregational Union, and for years before his death he was a trustee of the Chicago Sunday Evening Club, on occasion participating in its Sunday evening services in Orchestra Hall in downtown Chicago. Not only here but on occasions elsewhere Wayne Johnston responded to invitations to speak from the pulpits of churches throughout Mid-America. On such occasions he never accepted the services of a ghost writer; every phrase, every word, was drawn from his own heart.

Throughout his life Wayne Johnston cultivated and rejoiced in the friendship of numerous clergymen who crossed his path. Stephen Fisher is mentioned above. Another longtime devoted friend was Preston Bradley of Chicago. Among the clergymen who were closest to him in his later years was Norman Vincent Peale of New York. His tribute to Norman Peale at the dinner in the Hotel Astor of New York celebrating the 100th anniversary of Marble Collegiate Church on Fifth Avenue was a high point of that occasion. The program was studded with notables, but it was a railroad man from the prairies of Illinois who delivered the tribute that most stirred that distinguished gathering.

For a full half century, beginning as an assistant scoutmaster while he was a student in the University of Illinois, Wayne Johnston devoted himself enthusiastically to the Boy Scouts of America. After coming to Chicago he became involved in the Chicago, regional and national organizations of Scouting, heading both the Chicago Council and the regional organization, and serving from 1956 on the

national executive board. Among the multitude of addresses he delivered during his lifetime of service to the Illinois Central Railroad are scores of addresses about Scouting and to Scouting audiences. Through the years he received every award of adult Scouters—the Silver Beaver in 1939, the Silver Antelope in 1959, the Silver Buffalo in 1962, and the Good Scout Award in 1965 upon completion of fifty years in Scouting.

Wayne Johnston's associations with the University of Illinois were many and varied. He served on the board of trustees of the University YMCA, on the board of the University of Illinois Foundation and Advisory Council, and on the all-important board of trustees of the University itself, whose members are elected by the voters of Illinois and to which he was elected for three successive six-year terms, leading his ticket on each occasion, in 1950, 1956 and 1962. He was a leader in the selection of David D. Henry to be president of the University, in whose administration he took unbounded pride. Also as a leader in the affairs of the University he played a key role in the establishment of the great Chicago Circle Campus. He was serving as president of the University board of trustees at the time of his death.

Not alone the great university of which he was a graduate, but other schools too received his interest and attention. He was a frequent speaker at college commencements and on other occasions, and in addition to the University of Illinois he served on the boards of DePauw University, Eden Theological Seminary, and McKendree College. Three times he was honored with the degree of doctor of laws—by Middlebury College in 1951, by Louisiana State University in 1960, and by Mercer University in 1965.

Among other awards which Wayne Johnston received

during his busy lifetime was one that he prized for having received it at the hands of his friend Norman Vincent Peale. That was the Horatio Alger Award of the American Schools and Colleges Association in 1963.

A final award, and one which touched him deeply because it came after he left the presidency of the Illinois Central, was the Distinguished Public Service Award of the Union League Club of Chicago which he received in 1967.

Wayne Johnston naturally served on the boards of the numerous companies that were subsidiaries of the Illinois Central and in which the Illinois Central had an ownership interest, including the Terminal Railroad Association of St. Louis, the Illinois Terminal Railroad, the Peoria and Pekin Union Railroad, and the Railway Express Agency, which became REA Express. Also he was throughout his presidency of the Illinois Central a member of the twenty-man board of the Association of American Railroads, for many years being the senior member of the board. Outside the railroad industry he served on the board of the Harris Trust and Savings Bank of Chicago and the board of the Allis Chalmers Manufacturing Company of Milwaukee.

One of Wayne Johnston's prime concerns throughout his presidential years at the Illinois Central was the Old Peoples Home of Chicago, which he served for many years as trustee and president. Another was the Child Care Society, of which he was a trustee. His longtime involvement in the affairs of the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago included years of service on the board of managers and as a trustee. And he was a director of the Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry as well as a valued consultant in the affairs of the Illinois State Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Commerce of the United States.

These and his many other outside involvements did not detract from Wayne Johnston's dedication to the Illinois Central Railroad. Indeed it was his conviction that being concerned beyond the railroad only served to increase his devotion to the Illinois Central. He constantly urged his Illinois Central associates to be active in their churches, their communities, their professional societies, and other concerns. The example he set was reflected in the services of many associates in a great host of worthy undertakings.

Selecting a Successor

THE ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROAD has one of the oldest retirement and pension programs of any railroad, indeed of any company, in America. Adopted in 1901, it provided for the retirement of employes upon reaching age 70 and the payment of lifetime pensions calculated on years of service and compensation in the years before retirement. When the Railroad Retirement Act was enacted in 1937, taking over the pension programs of the individual railroads that had such plans for employes, the Illinois Central plan was revised and continued as a supplemental program for the officers and other members of the management team of the railroad.

With Wayne Johnston facing retirement at the end of 1967, the month in which he would reach the retirement age, the board of directors forehandedly began consideration of his replacement. As the senior member of the board of directors of the railroad-owned Railway Express Agency, Wayne Johnston was well acquainted with its dynamic president, who had made a phenomenal record in the revitalization and development of the express business, leading it successfully into the development of express services by air and over the road in addition to by rail, and establishing a new image for the express business under the name of REA Express. That man was still in his forties, as Wayne

Johnston had been when chosen to be president of the Illinois Central Railroad. His name was William B. Johnson.

A thorough study of William B. Johnson's record and character led the Illinois Central board of directors to conclude that here was the very man to succeed Wayne Johnston. At the meeting of the Illinois Central board on February 18, 1966, William B. Johnson was elected president and chief executive officer of the Illinois Central properties—Industries and Railroad—and Wayne Johnston was named chairman of the board. For the remainder of Wayne Johnston's lifetime of service to the Illinois Central he worked as a member of the Johnson team.

With the approach of Wayne Johnston's retirement as chairman of the board and the completion of his Illinois Central service, the board of directors invited a host of friends and associates, admirers all, to attend a gala retirement dinner on November 30, 1967, at the Chicago Club. It was a notable gathering of railroad and business and professional life. The invocation was given by Wayne Johnston's longtime friend, Preston Bradley . . . Thomas H. Coulter, chief executive officer of the Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry, presided . . . an eloquent, moving tribute was delivered by David D. Henry, president of the University of Illinois . . . Mayor Richard J. Daley presented the Chicago Medal of Merit . . . Governor Otto Kerner announced his proclamation issued that day making November 30, 1967, Wayne Johnston Day throughout the state . . . President William B. Johnson paid a glowing tribute to his predecessor and announced that the board of directors was establishing a series of Wayne Johnston scholarships at the University of Illinois and had commissioned a biographical tribute to his predecessor's lifetime of service to the Illinois Central.

The following day Wayne Johnston moved out of the big office he had occupied for more than twenty-one years into a modest office on the floor below, where he had served in the operating department of the railroad. He was to continue as a member of the board of directors and of its executive committee, in addition to which his numerous other connections and concerns called for his continued services.

Then on December 4, after finishing a busy day in his new office, he went to his home in suburban Flossmoor, gathered up his mail, and sat down in an easy chair in his bedroom to look over the mail. The next morning his housekeeper, going to call him for breakfast, found him dead in his chair.

Memorial services were held at the Church of the Master, conducted by his minister and friend, Richard E. Simonson, followed by interment at the side of the grave of his wife, who had preceded him in death.

And in Conclusion

WHEN IT CAME HIS TURN to acknowledge the glowing tributes he received at his gala retirement dinner, Wayne Johnston—as he had so often done before—spoke with deep feeling and affection of the two women who had meant so much to him over the years. “I owe everything,” he said, “to two women—my mother and my wife.” His mother lived to age 70 and saw her son well launched on his lifetime of service to his chosen railroad. The death of Blanche Johnston in June 1965 after a lingering and wasting illness was a loss that only those who knew him intimately could adequately appreciate.

Wayne Johnston was one who truly deserved the name of “family man.” His children and his grandchildren were his pride and joy. His son and daughter were born while the Johnstons made their home in Avalon Park and made the move to suburban Flossmoor with their parents. The son Wayne Junior followed his father through the University of Illinois and to the Illinois Central, where he rose in the organization to the position of assistant vice-president. The daughter Bette attended DePauw University, where her father’s interest in her education was reflected in his membership on the board of trustees. Her husband, Bryce C. Boothby, was well launched on a promising career in banking when he was drafted by the Illinois Central for the

position of assistant treasurer. At the time of Wayne Johnston's retirement his successor chose Boothby to be executive assistant to the president.

Most men who achieve fame in their lifetime are frequently called upon for advice and counsel by aspiring young people, and in the personal papers of Wayne Johnston are hundreds of letters from boys and young men—and young women too—seeking his guidance on education, habits, careers and many of the other subjects with which young people are concerned. Wayne Johnston welcomed such inquiries, and every one received his thoughtful attention. His recurrent advice was to get all the education possible, to be unfailingly reverent, to develop habits of thrift and industry. One sentence appears over and over in his letters to young people: "The best men I have ever known are those who tackle every job they have to do with a determination to do it better than it was ever done before." No one sentence could better describe the application that Wayne Johnston devoted throughout his lifetime of service not only to the railroad but to the many other worthy undertakings that he encountered along the way.

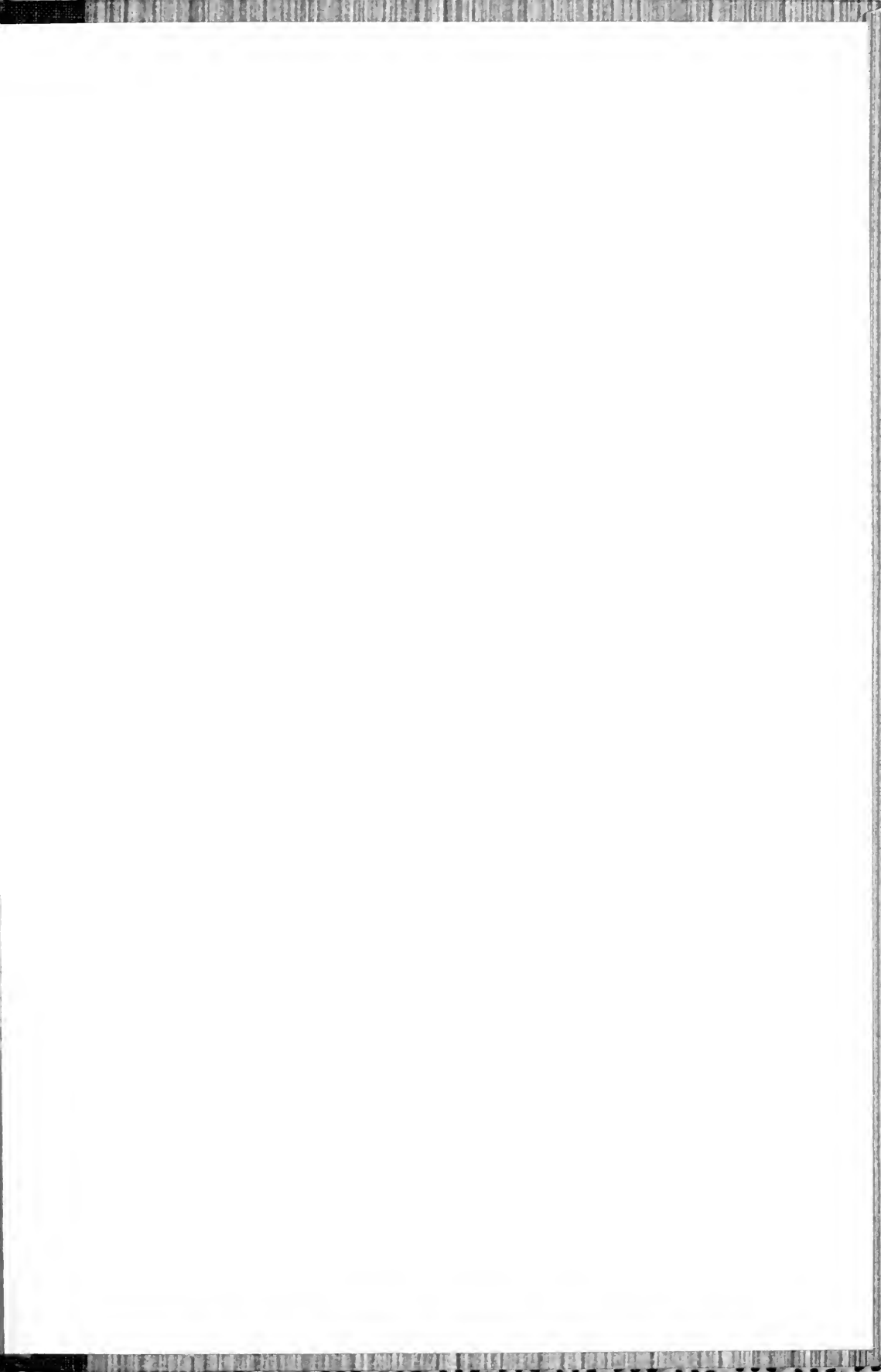
Wayne Johnston was a man of truly spartan habits. He was a teetotaler. He did not use tobacco. He had a weight problem, which he fought manfully. He kept better than office hours, arriving at his desk a full half hour or more before office hours began. He never failed to give up his seat if anyone was standing on the suburban trains he used daily to and from the office. He answered his own telephone and insisted that all other officers do the same.

Another key trait was his great talent for devoting undivided attention to every problem presented to him. Anyone entering his office for counsel or decision might find him busily occupied with other and possibly more impor-

tant matters; yet he never failed to give the caller his concentrated and uninterrupted attention. This ability to put aside all other problems while he dealt with one was not only a mark of innate courtesy; even more significant, it was a source of great strength. It goes a long way toward explaining his ability to get so much work done each day. It was truly a unique capacity.

Nowhere was his philosophy of a working lifetime better expressed than in an interview which he gave for publication in the Illinois Central Magazine as he faced retirement, and which appeared as a tribute to him following his death. "You've got to put back as much or more than you take out," he said to his interviewer.

Wayne Johnston "put back" far more in his lifetime of service.



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