



VOCATIONAL ESSAY

By Robert Sullivan

A person engaged in a transportation business has many duties. The type of transportation I am interested in is contract carrier. This type of carrier does not hold himself out to the public but carries certain articles every day for a certain price. Examples of goods carried are milk, bread, newspapers, pastry, etc., all goods that have a time value and have to be kept fresh in order to sell. In most of these contracts all carrying is done by motor truck usually making the same trip each day. This type of transportation has much to do with the health and general welfare of the community. These type of goods have to be kept fresh in order to keep the public supplied. Without this type of transportation the people would have to pay more for goods produced in their own community because of the small scale.

There is a large group employed in this type of work in Springfield. At present there are only one or two engaged in this type of work in Palmer. In general, it is one of our largest industries in the country. Motor trucks are growing in number rapidly, and the variety of goods they haul is increasing. Motor trucks are much cheaper and as fast as rail and provide door to door delivery instead of station to station.

In some of these businesses there are large amounts of capital invested. A large truck and semi-trailer costs upward of nine thousand dollars. However, many hauling jobs can be met by trucks costing nine hundred dollars upward. Acquiring the capital is usually easier than in other businesses because a truck will usually pay for itself out of earned profits in a year or two.

The qualities demanded in this business are good management and efficiency. By engaging in this vocation I will accomplish my aim of being an employer instead of an employee. Each contract will require a truck, a driver, and possibly a helper. The drivers need no special training except good knowledge of motors, dependability and alertness. The best drivers are usually around thirty years of age. Drivers have to be dependable because they are entrusted with around ten thousand dollars worth of equipment and have to be alert in order to keep this equipment under control.

In preparing for this vocation one needs knowledge of business management and control of workers. It is a business that does not require large payments of money out of surplus because all equipment should pay for itself, and with careful planning profit can be made right from the start. The only vocational education necessary would be general knowledge of motors, etc. There are no apprenticeships in this type of business. You make as much from the start as you do later, but first you must pay for the equipment. It is a business where you are independent of employers and other officials above you. In this business you are your own boss.

This vocation pays very good wages when large hauling contracts are acquired. With careful planning and efficient operation of trucks, there are large profits. The costs incurred are the purchase of trucks, drivers' wages, upkeep of trucks, and headquarters, usually housing a repair shop and storage facilities for trucks. The wages

received in the vocation are very large in comparison to the experience required. The only experience of employees is much driving experience.

This business provides year round work. The contracts usually call for hauling goods regularly, a certain number of times a week, usually once a day. In this way there is no loafing or quiet seasons. Payments are usually made at a certain rate per mile, usually 15 cents up, 15 cents for small trucks and running up to 25 to 30 cents per mile for large trucks. Most runs vary from 80 to 200 miles. Some contracts such as milk and morning newspapers require starting work at three or four o'clock in the morning. Some drivers work seven days a week while others on long runs work five or six days a week. The part the owner plays in this is that of general manager, supervising the men and dispatching trucks.

Workers in this vocation usually enjoy good health. They are in warm, dry cabs in winter and airy cabs in summer. The only laborious work is in the loading and unloading of trucks. The contents are usually in small units, thus facilitating easy handling. The only dangers involved are the risks of accidents on the road. The owner of this type of business works in good surroundings, an office where bookkeeping is done and records are kept.

Workers in this vocation have a good social standing because they work moderate hours and receive good pay. Workers usually have time for recreation because they do have good hours and are not exhausted at the end of a day's work. Workers can usually enjoy the convenience of an automobile.

This type of business will do much to help the welfare of the people. Trucks use large amounts of fuel and oil and many tires, accessories, etc., thus helping local business. By employing local drivers it provides more jobs in the community.

The opportunities for this type of work are somewhat limited in Palmer but offer an unlimited field in Springfield. Springfield offers much opportunity because of its central position in Massachusetts. Springfield is a terminal with routes running in all directions. In general, transportation is one vocation that is growing with the times and is now one of the country's largest industries.