

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND  
PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS; SIXTH  
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PUBLIC  
UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE  
OF RHODE ISLAND FOR THE YEAR  
ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1917**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649510344

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations; Sixth Annual Report of the Public Utilities  
Commission of the State of Rhode Island for the Year Ending December 31, 1917 by Various

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**VARIOUS**

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND  
PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS; SIXTH  
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PUBLIC  
UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE  
OF RHODE ISLAND FOR THE YEAR  
ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1917**



Rhode Island Dept. of Business & Administration

g

**State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.**

---

---

SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

OF THE

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1917

MADE TO

HIS EXCELLENCY R. LIVINGSTON BEECKMAN

GOVERNOR

OF THE

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

---

PAWTUCKET:

PAWTUCKET LINOTYPING CO., PRINTERS

1918

cf

0

## REPORT

---

*To His Excellency R. LIVINGSTON BEECKMAN, Governor of the State of Rhode Island.*

SIR:—Complying with the provisions of Section 9 of Chapter 795 of the Public Laws of Rhode Island, the Public Utilities Commission presents its sixth annual report.

### RECOMMENDATIONS.

The Commission each year has suggested certain amendments to the Public Utilities Act in order that the public might be assured of the benefits which the Act as originally drawn contemplated, and these amendments are again recommended.

There now has been ample opportunity for the Commission to ascertain that, under the present law, any public utility can establish rates and practices which will become effective even while steps are being taken to determine their reasonableness.

This is particularly true as to rates as the law provides, in effect, that any rate upon which thirty days' notice is given to the public and the Commission becomes a lawful rate unless otherwise ordered by the Commission after a full hearing.

The length of time required by the Act in which to issue notices of investigation and hearing and to hold such full hearing, particularly in rate making matters, is palpably too brief for a determination of the matter before the expiration of the thirty days and in consequence there arises the complex condition of a rate becoming effective while the question of its reasonableness is in process of adjudication.

Without additional legislation the Commission is without power to prevent such a complication, even though it has taken the initiative in an investigation, and it is therefore recommended that the Public Utilities Act be amended so that the Commission, without hearing, upon the filing of a complaint or upon notice of investigation on its own motion, may order the suspension of any rate or practice by any utility for a period of not exceeding ninety days, with additional authority for a further suspension of a like period if the matter has not been finally adjudicated within such period.

The railroad and railway companies, owning or operating lines within the State, have continued to furnish reports as heretofore at the request of the Commission but there is no provision of law requiring such reports and delays in filing have resulted owing to the fact that no definite date is fixed by statute.

As was stated in the last report of the Commission, the reporting year of all common carriers subject to the Act to regulate commerce was changed from the thirtieth day of June to the thirty-first day of December by the Interstate Commerce Commission and this Commission, together with practically all State Commissions, made a similar change, in order that all reports might be for a uniform period.

The Commission therefore recommends that an amendment to the law be enacted requiring all railroad and railway companies to file with the Commission on or before the thirty-first day of March in each year a report in such form as may be prescribed by the Commission for the year ending on the thirty-first day of December next preceding.

The Commission further recommends that a change be made in the law relative to the date upon which its report shall be presented to the Governor.

This law now requires that such report shall be presented to the Governor on the fifteenth day of January and it is obvious that under the existing provision the statistical tables cannot be for the

preceding calendar year, but must, of necessity be a year old.

By fixing by law the thirty-first of March as the time for filing reports by the railroads and railways as heretofore suggested, the Commission, by insisting upon a strict compliance with the law, would be able to prepare a report containing statistics of the preceding calendar year which could be presented to the Governor previous to the adjournment of the Legislature.

It is therefore recommended that the provision of the Act relative to the presentation of the Commission's report to the Governor be amended so that such report may be presented at any time prior to the adjournment of the Legislature.

#### COMPLAINTS.

The Commission, on its own motion, instituted summary investigations in two instances of the reasonableness of proposed rates, one of such being against the Bay State Street Railway Company and the other against the Providence Gas Company.

In the Bay State Street Railway Company case the matter was heard and determined and in the proceedings against the Providence Gas Company the matter was heard in part and is still pending.

The Commission also heard in part the complaint of James J. Walsh et al against the Bristol and Warren Water Works Company.

#### INFORMAL COMPLAINTS.

Complaints of an informal nature and covering a wide range of subjects having to do with all the public utilities have been handled direct with them, either by letter or a personal investigation between the complainants and public utilities, by the Agent of the Commission.

These complaints reach the Commission in different forms, sometimes a letter is received from one or more complainants, occasion-



ally they are received over the telephone and many times the complainants call at the office of the Commission in person. The complaints are investigated at once and adjusted as promptly as possible.

In addition to matters of that kind, there has been a close watch kept on grade crossings of both the steam and electric railways and steps taken in several instances for the safety of the public in the installation of electric warning signals and in other cases where the view of the tracks was obscured by brush trees, they have been cut down, so that the crossings have been made more safe.

#### NARRAGANSETT PIER DIVISION.

In October, 1917 our Agent reported after a tour of inspection of this division, that the tracks below Kingston Station were in bad condition, many rotten ties were found and in several instances spikes had worked loose and did not hold. The ties on bridge over Chepuxet Brook were rotten and the same condition as to spikes was found. This matter was taken up immediately by letter with The Rhode Island Company and they at once issued instructions which were carried out as soon as possible to renew ties and generally correct the situation.

On October 8, there was a head-on collision at Peace Dale, R. I., between a passenger and freight train. A preliminary investigation into the cause of this wreck was held that night in the Train Despatcher's office at Peace Dale and on October 11 a thorough investigation was held at the office of Division Superintendent at Wakefield. It was found that the Company had no definite set of rules governing the running of extra trains, and the investigation also brought out the fact that there was a general looseness in the operation of trains on that Division. The result of the investigation was that the Commission instructed the officials of the Company to put in force an up to date set of rules govern-

ing train orders, signals, etc. These rules were made up and became a part of the working time table Number 152, effective November 25, 1917 and will remain in force hereafter. It is expected that accidents of that nature will not occur in the future, providing these rules are lived up to.

### STATISTICS.

The reporting year of the railroads and railways having been changed to correspond with the calendar year, the statistical tables herein contained are for the year ending December 31, 1916, the Commission following the plan adopted by the Interstate Commerce Commission and having returns made for the entire calendar year of 1916.

The statistics having been previously compiled for the year ending on the thirtieth day of June, the latest statistics necessarily contain a half year which had been previously reported.

The comparisons which have been made are with the statistics for the last fiscal year reported.

### RAILROAD RETURNS.

For the year ending December 31, 1916, annual returns were received from the following railroad corporations, viz.: The New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company, Boston and Providence Railroad Corporation, Old Colony Railroad Company, Providence and Worcester Rail Road Company, Providence, Warren & Bristol Railroad Company, Narragansett Pier R. R. Co., Moshassuck Valley Railroad Company, and Wood River Branch Railroad Company.

There were no changes in the list of operating companies: The New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company, Moshassuck Valley Railroad Company, and Wood River Branch Railroad Company being the only operating companies, the last two operating their own lines only, and the first named operating, in addition to

its own line, the Boston and Providence Railroad Corporation, Old Colony Railroad Company, Providence, Warren & Bristol Railroad Company and Providence and Worcester Rail Road Company.

The Narragansett Pier R. R. Co. is operated by The Rhode Island Company, and the operating statistics again, as in the past, are included in the statistics of street railways.

#### CAPITAL STOCK.

The total par value of authorized capital stock of the railroads owning or operating lines within the State is \$211,379,400.00, the amount being the same as previously reported and the amount of capital stock outstanding is \$188,226,300.00, the same as the amount reported for the year ending June 30, 1916.

The companies reporting outstanding capital stock in excess of \$1,000,000.00 are The New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company, with a total of \$157,117,900.00; Boston and Providence Railroad Corporation, \$3,996,000.00; Old Colony Railroad Company, \$22,294,000.00; Providence & Worcester Rail Road Company, \$3,500,000.00, all of the amounts being the same as previously reported.

#### DIVIDENDS.

The dividends paid amounted to \$2,368,008.00, the total being the same as reported for the previous year. This is accounted for by the fact that, as in the preceding year, none of the operating companies paid dividends and that the amounts paid are sums guaranteed to the non-operating by the operating companies.

#### ASSETS.

The total assets reported amount to \$522,985,760.69, comprising the following items; road and equipment, \$254,514,746.45; all other investments, \$235,142,485.90; current assets, \$29,200,832.67 deferred assets, \$185,370.56; unadjusted debits, \$3,942,325.11.