

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE  
RAILROAD COMMISSIONER, OF  
MINNESOTA, FOR THE FISCAL  
YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 1878**

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Annual Report of the Railroad Commissioner, of Minnesota, for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1878 by Various

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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Railroad Commissioner,

OF MINNESOTA.

FOR THE YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 1878.

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# REPORT.

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OFFICE OF STATE RAILROAD COMMISSIONER, }  
SAINT PAUL, Dec. 31, 1878. }

*Honorable John S. Pillsbury, Governor:*

STR:—I have the honor to submit the eighth annual report from this office concerning the railroads of the State, embracing the company reports for the year ending June 30th, 1878, and information respecting sales of railroad lands and railroad construction, substantially to the close of the year 1878.

The year has been remarkable for the extent of new roads constructed, 375 miles, being more than ever before in one year in the State, except 1871, (when 458 miles were built.) Minnesota has the distinction of having opened, in 1878, more miles of new road than any other State in the Union,—her construction being one-eighth of all the new roads built, during the year, in the United States. The number of miles of railroad in operation in the State, is now 2,608; seventeen years ago there was not one mile.

It is noteworthy, that the standard guage railroad constructed in the State, the past year, was wholly the extension or completion of old lines, or of branches. Although many of these were under the organization of new companies, yet they were under the patronage of, or identical in the interest with, the older companies.

The past year has witnessed the opening of the first narrow gauge—three feet—railroad in the State, the Midland, from Wabasha to Zumbrota, 60 miles. This road was partly constructed in 1877, but not completed and opened for business until June, 1878. It is now operated by the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Company, and will doubtless become a part of that great system.

The record of our railroad construction during the last five years is instructive. In 1874 we built no road; (unless the opening of the Central Railroad, 40 miles, from Mankato to Wells, be an exception, which virtually it is not, for the road had been graded and

iron contracted for in previous years.) In 1875 no road was built. In 1876 29½ miles were constructed from Worthington to Luverne. This was the first new road in any of the Northwestern States, after the suspension of railroad construction which followed the so called granger legislature of 1874.

In 1877, 212 miles were constructed and in 1878, as above, 375 miles. Among the chief causes of this rapidly increased construction is the greatly reduced cost of construction. Railroad iron, which in 1872 was as high as \$90 per ton, is now sold at about one third of that price. Another cause, undoubtedly, is the fact that Minnesota was the first to repeal the legislation that was regarded as hostile or threatening to capital invested in railroads. As she was the first state to reassure capital seeking investment in railroads, so she was the first to resume construction, and has lead all the other northwestern states in the extent of construction.

It is manifestly wise policy to do nothing to disturb the feeling of security and encouragement that the act of 1875 gave to capital. The multiplication of railroads is the certain means of cheapening rates of transportation, as well as of bringing the facilities of transportation to those districts now remote from roads. Wherever there are competing roads, rates are lower.

Minnesota has, as reported, but one mile of railroad to about 38 square miles of territory. Massachusetts has one to four; Illinois about one to eight. If the northern one-third of Minnesota, yet uninhabited, be excluded from the estimate, the proportion would be about one mile of railroad to twenty-five of area, only one-sixth of the proportion of Massachusetts and one-third that of Illinois.

The operations of the roads during the year reported, shows a large increase of business over the preceding year. This had two causes. (1.) The large wheat crop of 1877, which was moved almost entirely in the last half of 1877, and first half of 1878—the year embraced in company reports. (2.) The crops of 1877 stimulated emigration to the new lands in the western part of the State. These lands, both government and railroad, were taken up at an unprecedented rate. This movement of population greatly increased the traffic of the roads. The light crop of wheat in 1878 will cause a heavy falling off in business for the year embraced in next report, which will hardly be compensated for by immigration and the development of the newer parts of the State. The fluctuations of the business of the roads in the last five years is shown in the following table:



TABLE SHOWING COMPARATIVE BUSINESS FOR ALL THE RAILROADS FOR FIVE YEARS TO JUNE 30, 1878, WITH INCREASE OR DECREASE OVER NEXT PRECEDING YEARS.

	Gross earnings.	Increase.	Decrease.	Earnings over op. expenses.	Increase.	Decrease.	Passengers carried.	Tons freight.	State revenue derived from the railroads.
	Dollars.	Dollars.	Dollars.	Dollars.	Dollars.	Dollars.			Dollars.
1874.....	6,194,689			1,894,800			1,012,506	1,434,913	108,825
1875.....	4,962,152		1,232,517	1,026,830		867,070	996,218	1,350,177	131,569
1876.....	8,000,967	1,048,815		1,798,424	771,594		1,189,072	2,079,563	145,369
1877.....	5,408,039		961,928	1,542,536		354,888	1,230,423	1,717,923	*156,075
1878.....	7,431,199	2,023,160		2,958,871	1,415,335		1,560,648	2,496,559	*180,000

\*The railroad taxes for 1877 were about \$165,000, the difference being accounted for by credit given the St. Paul & Duluth R. R. for stampage that had in past years gone into state treasury.

† Estimated—returns not yet received for whole year.

For the first four years above the length of road was substantially the same. In the last half of the last year the number of miles was increased about 10 per cent., equal to increase for the whole year of about 5 per cent. Allowance should be made for this in the comparison of business.

The State revenue from the railroads shows a very satisfactory increase. That for 1878 will doubtless reach \$180,000, making the total taxes paid by the railroads, to Jan. 1, 1879, \$1,142,000. The annual income of the State from this source is about equal to the ordinary expenses of the State government for its legislative, executive and judicial departments, and for the interest on the recognized State debt (all expenses except those of the State institutions and unusual appropriations.)

The sales of railroad lands in 1878, were unprecedentedly large, as shown in the following table compared with three preceding years:

	Acres.	Receipts.
1875.....	179,250	\$1,317,779
1876.....	308,266	2,155,224
1877.....	242,487	1,309,874
1878 (to December).....	435,629	1,514,900

Total sold to Dec. 1, 1878, 2,144,215 acres.

Total receipts to Dec. 1, 1878, \$9,762,258.

There was no serious railroad accident on any of the roads during the year. Indeed Minnesota railroads have had a remarkable exemption from railroad disasters. The Brainerd bridge accident by which five lives were lost, in 1875, being the only serious one in the history of the State.

WM. R. MARSHALL,  
Railroad Commissioner.

ST. PAUL, Dec. 31, 1878.

RAILROAD COMPANIES ORGANIZED UNDER THE GENERAL LAWS,  
THAT HAVE FILED ARTICLES IN THE OFFICE OF  
THE SECRETARY OF STATE IN 1878.

(For older organizations see R. R. Commissioner's Report for former years.)

PRINCETON AND ANOKA R. R. CO.

*Articles Filed.*—November 4, 1877.

*Object of Corporation.*—To construct, build, equip and operate a narrow gauge railway from Princeton, in Mille Lacs County, by the way of Spencer Brook, in Isanta County, and the village of St. Francis, in Anoka County, to Anoka, in Anoka County.

*Capital Stock.*—\$300,000.00.

*Place of Business.*—Princeton and Anoka.

*Corporators.*—E. C. Giles, J. F. Sadley, I. S. Mudgett, H. B. Cowles, C. H. Rines, all of Mille Lacs County; C. H. Chadbourne, of Sherburne County; and Dwight Woodbury, H. S. Ticknor, James McCann, Weston Hammons, C. S. Guderian, and C. T. Woodbury, all of Anoka County.

PLAINVIEW R. R. CO.

*Articles Filed.*—December 18, 1877.

*Object of Corporation.*—To build a railroad from a point within the corporate limits of the village of Plainview, in Wabasha County, to a junction with the Winona & St. Peter Railroad, in the County of Olmsted.

*Capital.*—\$200,000.00.

*Place of Business.*—Plainview.

*Corporators.*—Geo. W. Van Dusen, Charles H. Chadbourne, Charles H. Bliss, all of Rochester; Geo. Bryant, of Elgin; and Hugh P. Wilson, of Plainview.

SOUTHERN MINNESOTA RAILWAY EXTENSION CO.

*Articles filed.*—January 21, 1878.

*Object of corporation.*—To build and operate a railway from Winnebago City in the County of Fairbault, running in a westerly direction to some point of terminus within said State.

*Capital.*—\$150,000.00.

*Place of business.*—Lanesboro.

*Corporators.*—Jason C. Easton, of Chatfield; Minnesota; Charles L. Colman, Mons Anderson, Charles Michel, William C. Van Horne and John K. Brown, of La Crosse, Wisconsin.

DUBUQUE AND MINNESOTA R. R. CO.

*Articles filed.*—January 22, 1878.

*Object of corporation.*—To purchase, and after such purchase to own and equip, use, operate or lease the property and franchises of the Chicago, Dubuque and

Minnesota R. R. Company from the Trustees, John A. Burnham and James A. Blake, under the mortgage of the date of June 1, 1877, including all the property, franchises and rights of said Chicago, Dubuque and Minnesota Railroad Company, embraced in said mortgage, to consolidate the same according to law when purchased, with the property and franchises, now or formerly, of the Chicago, Clinton and Dubuque R. R. Company, and under said consolidation to form a new company, to be called the Chicago, Clinton, Dubuque and Minnesota R. R. Company, to lease said property, when consolidated, to another R. R. Company or Companies, to repair said Roads, before or after consolidation, to complete the unfinished portions thereof, to extend the same by building, purchasing or leasing extensions thereof, already made or to be made, and to do every other act required by law to accomplish the objects of this Corporation.

*Capital.*—\$4,425,000.00.

*Place of Business.*—Dubuque.

*Corporators.*—Sidney Bartlett, Nathaniel Thayer, John C. Burnham, H. Hollis Hunnewell, John W. Brooks, John N. Denison, Alpheus Hardy, all of Boston, Mass.; J. Rotch, of New Bedford, Mass., and James F. Joy, of Detroit, Mich.

#### MINNEAPOLIS & NORTHWESTERN R. R. CO.

*Articles filed.*—February 5, 1878.

*Object of Corporation.*—To build and operate a railroad with one or more tracks or lines of road from Minneapolis to Fergus Falls, in Otter Tail county, and from Minneapolis to Hutchinson, in McLeod county.

*Capital.*—\$500,000.

*Place of Business.*—Minneapolis.

*Corporators.*—Samuel C. Gale, R. P. Russell, J. B. Bassett, E. B. Langdon, and George B. Wright, all of Minneapolis.

#### MINNESOTA NORTHERN R. R. CO.

*Articles filed.*—February 5, 1878.

*Object of Corporation.*—To build and operate a railroad from Fergus Falls, in Otter Tail county, to a connection with the Northern Pacific R. R., and also to a connection with the St. Paul and Pacific railroad, by such route as may be determined by said Minnesota Northern R. R. Co.

*Capital.*—\$500,000.

*Place of Business.*—Fergus Falls.

*Corporators.*—James Compton and Walter C. Bacon, of Fergus Falls; R. L. Frazee, of Frazee City, Becker county; George B. Wright and James A. Griffin, of Minneapolis.

#### DULUTH AND WINNEPEG R. R. CO.

*Articles filed.*—February 11th, 1878.

*Object of corporation.*—To construct and own a railway with one or more tracks or lines of road from Duluth, and running in a general northwesterly direction to some point on the northern boundary line of the State of Minnesota, between the Red River of the North and the Lake of the Woods.

*Capital.*—\$4,000,000.

*Place of Business.*—Duluth.

*Corporators.*—William W. Spalding, Andreas M. Miller, John C. Hunter, Andrew J. Sawyer, R. C. Mitchell, Hamilton M. Peyton, all of Duluth, and James Bardon, of Superior, Wis.

#### YOUNG AMERICA R. W. CO.

*Articles filed.*—May 8, 1878.

*Object of Corporation.*—To build and operate a railroad from a point on the Hastings and Dakota Railroad in the county of Carver to and into the village and town site of Young America in Carver County.