

**THIRTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL
REPORT OF THE RAILROAD
COMMISSIONERS OF THE STATE
OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, 1881**

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Thirty-Seventh Annual Report of the Railroad Commissioners of the State of New Hampshire,
1881 by Railroad Commissioners

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RAILROAD COMMISSIONERS

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RAILROAD COMMISSIONERS' REPORT.

OFFICE BOARD RAILROAD COMMISSIONERS, }
Concord, June 1, 1881. }

To the Legislature of the State of New Hampshire.

The thirty-seventh annual report of the Railroad Commissioners is herewith submitted for your consideration, for the year ending March 31, 1881, together with the returns to this office from the several railway companies doing business in the State.

In the report of 1880, that has been brought to your notice in the absence of any session of the legislature last year, we discussed to considerable extent some of the leading questions connected with the railway problem in this State, and therefore it does not seem necessary to devote much space to any extended notice of those topics at this time.

Some of these matters may be briefly reviewed in this report, and we desire especially, in its proper place, to call your attention to the time of making returns, both by the roads and the commission; for, with the change that has been adopted in the meeting of the legislature, from the annual to the biennial plan, it would seem to be an unnecessary trouble and expense to oblige the roads to make returns, and the commissioners to compile and publish a report to that body, except when it was to assemble. Then, with sufficient time to compile a report, the returns of the roads for two years could be brought out and compared,

facts and deductions in regard to the several lines could be fully tabulated in such a manner as to be apparent to any business man, and instead of a hastily prepared report, that must of necessity be inaccurate in many important matters, a correct and impartial compilation of statistics could be made, that would be of practical advantage to the roads, and furnish important information to the public.

MILEAGE AND CONSTRUCTION.

Since our last report, a branch of the Profile and Franconia Notch Railroad has been projected and placed under contract, to be constructed and ready for operation by the first of July of this year. This branch is to be about three and one-half miles in length, extending from a point on the present line near the station in Bethlehem to the Sinclair House on Bethlehem street. Like the main line, it is designed principally to facilitate summer travel, and thereby add to the comfort of those who visit the State for health or recreation. The providing for this class of people during the summer months has become so large an interest to the State, and one of so much importance to the material wealth and prosperity of a large portion of the inhabitants of our mountainous district, that any new project for incorporations should be investigated carefully, and anything of a doubtful character, or having the possible effect to deface our natural scenery or depreciate in value the improvements that have been made, should be excluded.

On business principles it is a matter for serious consideration by the State, in its general protection of home industry and the enterprise of our inhabitants, to inquire if it is not already time that some measures were taken to preserve the natural attractiveness of the northern portion of our commonwealth, so that it may remain substantially as it now is; for, with its development into a place of summer resort, it has proved to be the only district outside of

our large cities to increase in wealth and population, and the fact that it has become the resort of those residing in distant sections furnishes employment to a large class of our citizens, in supplying the necessities of a transient population during the summer months.

The Concord Horse Railroad, the organization of which was reported last year, has been completed, and, although not open for business at the time the return was made, has since commenced operations, and is meeting with much greater success than its projectors anticipated. Its report will be found in its proper place.

The Manchester and Keene Railroad, which was in the hands of the court at the time of our last report, remains in substantially the same condition, except that a part of the year it has been operated by the Connecticut River Railroad, that makes a monthly report of earnings and expenses to the trustees. The road has been placed in good condition for business, and it is to be hoped that it will eventually prove of considerable value, for its construction was, for a period, a source of financial annoyance to the contractors, and the inhabitants of the towns along the line. The trustees' report will be found with the returns of the other lines.

We are not aware of any other new lines being organized during the year, although surveys have been reported in different sections of the State, and in some instances considerable excitement has been manifested over these preliminary locations; therefore the mileage of railroads remains the same as at the time of the last report, except that sidings and some extension of double track have been made to accommodate the increasing business of our trunk lines.

The material prosperity of our roads, that was reported last year, we are happy to say has continued, and bids fair, with a continued increase of the business operations throughout the country, to become more definitely placed

upon a permanent basis than ever before. Yet the intimate relations of business prosperity between the common carrier and the manufacturing and productive interests of the country are such that railroads must always, to a certain degree, be dependent upon some well defined policy of government and taxation; for, like other business interests, their success depends materially upon their having a steady demand for transportation, rather than to be subjected to the fluctuations of a market inflated by a mania for speculation, or depressed by uncertain measures of financial policy. The public and the stockholder will generally regard with satisfaction a management that secures economy and fair dividends, while a doubtful course, the returns from which may be large but are always involved in uncertainty, will be looked upon with apprehension, and in the end will provoke distrust and dissensions.

TAXATION.

The question of taxation of our railroads was discussed and reported upon at considerable length last year, as will be observed in the preceding report, and it is unnecessary for us to add more at this time than to remark that an act was passed during the past winter by the legislature of the State of Maine, many features of which were similar to those presented in our report. It is simple in construction, must of necessity be direct in its operation, and of its interpretation there can be no doubt, for its language is plain, and it defines each step in the assessment and collection of the tax so distinctly that the making up of the tax after the returns are made becomes a clerical rather than a judicial duty. In order that its merits may be fully understood and criticised, we reprint the act from the official records.

STATE OF MAINE.

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED
AND EIGHTY-ONE.

An Act Relating to the Taxation of Railroads.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives,
in Legislature assembled, as follows:—*

SECTION 1. The buildings of every railroad corporation or association, whether within or without the located right of way, and its lands and fixtures outside of its located right of way, shall be subject to taxation by the several cities and towns in which such buildings, land, and fixtures may be situated, as other property is taxed therein.

SECT. 2. Every corporation, person, or association operating any railroad in this State, shall pay to the state treasurer, for the use of the State, an annual excise tax, for the privilege of exercising its franchises in this State, which, with the tax provided for in section one, shall be in lieu of all taxes upon such railroad, its property and stock. There shall be apportioned and paid by the State from the taxes received under the provisions of this act, to the several cities and towns, in which on the first day of April, in each year, is held railroad stock hereby exempted from other taxation, an amount equal to one per centum on the value of such stock on that day, as determined by the governor and council; *provided, however*, that the total amount thus apportioned on account of any railroad shall not exceed the sum received by the State as tax on account of such railroad.

SECT. 3. The amount of such tax shall be ascertained as follows: The amount of the gross transportation receipts as returned to the railroad commissioners for the year ending on the thirtieth day of September next preceding the levying of such tax, shall be divided by the number of miles of railroad operated to ascertain the average gross receipts per mile; when such average receipts per mile