

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE
PLANTATIONS. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
RAILROAD COMMISSIONER,
FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1904,
MADE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS
JANUARY SESSION, 1905**

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State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. Annual Report of the Railroad
Commissioner, for the Year Ending December 31, 1904, Made to the General Assembly at Its
January Session, 1905 by Railroad Commissioners Rhode Island

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RAILROAD COMMISSIONERS RHODE ISLAND

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STAMPED



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MAXIMUM CAPACITY, 24,000 HORSE POWER.

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

RAILROAD COMMISSIONER,

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31,

1904,

MADE TO THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AT ITS

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1905.

REPORT.

To the Honorable the General Assembly of Rhode Island.

GENTLEMEN:—As required by the provisions of section six, chapter one hundred and eighty-seven, of the General Laws, I herewith present my annual report upon the condition and proceedings of the several railroad corporations chartered or doing business in the State, together with such suggestions and recommendations in regard thereto, as seem to me to be of importance to the welfare of the public.

The annual returns of the several steam and electric railroads organized under the laws of this State, or doing business or operating railroads within its territory, will be found in full in the appendix, with tables compiled therefrom giving the more important statistics of their operation. These returns, as required by law, are made up to June 31, 1904.

My general report, however, is for the calendar year from January 1, 1904, to December 31, 1904.

The total mileage of the steam railroads of the United States, according to the best information I could obtain, is 213,907 miles, an increase during the year of 3,832 miles. This is the smallest increase in railroad mileage that has been reported since the year 1898, when it was 3,265 miles; for 1903 the increase was 5,723 miles. The increase in mileage is largely confined to the western and north-western States.

The returns made to the United States Interstate Commerce Commission from roads operating 209,002 miles of line show that the gross earnings for the year ending June 30, 1904, amount to \$1,966,633,821, made up of passenger earnings of \$539,428,374,

freight earnings of \$1,377,684,976, and miscellaneous earnings of \$49,520,471. The average of gross earnings per mile was \$9,410, an increase over the previous year of \$152 per mile, and the largest ever reported to the Commission. For the same time the operating expenses of these roads amounted to \$1,332,382,948, or \$6,375 per mile of line, an increase over the previous year of \$250 per mile.

The net earnings for the year 1904 were \$634,250,873, or \$6,393,215 less than for the preceding year. The amount of dividends declared was \$184,450,446, an increase over the preceding year of \$23,594,139. The surplus, however, was reduced from \$99,227,469 to \$52,078,947, a net loss in surplus of \$47,148,522.

There has been a great increase in the matter of accidents on the railroads of the country, in the number of passengers killed and injured, as well as in the number of employees killed and injured. For the year ending June 30, 1904, there were 321 passengers killed and 8,077 injured in train accidents. There were ten unusually disastrous accidents, eight of them collision of trains, which furnished about 23 per cent. of the number killed. There were reported to the Interstate Commerce Commission over 6,000 collisions and 4,800 derailments of trains.

During the same time 3,367 employees were killed and 43,266 injured. This shows a large increase over the previous year, which was unexpected, as it was supposed that with the use of the automatic coupling, air brakes and other safety appliances the dangers to railroad employees would be greatly lessened.

Among the reasons given for the increase in accidents are defective air brakes, defective coupling arrangements, laxity of discipline, long hours of labor, employment of inexperienced men, etc., etc.

It is a disgrace to the enterprise, intelligence, and business ability of the railroad managers of the United States to be obliged to admit that there is no country in the world where it is so dangerous for persons to ride upon the cars or to be employed in the operations of railroads as in the United States.

One of the most important features of modern railway progress is the establishment of relief departments for railroad employees, to which both the railroads and the employees contribute. Perhaps the most successful of these enterprises is that of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company. This was established in 1880, and consists of three features, viz.: relief, savings, and pensions. The extent of the operations in these several departments is something quite wonderful when it is remembered that they embrace only the employees of one railroad company.

In the relief department the receipts for the year ending June 30, 1903, were \$917,725.22 including \$10,000 given by the railroad company. The disbursements were for death benefits, accident, \$211,000; death benefits, natural, \$188,647; disablement benefits, accident, \$150,059.29; disablement benefits, sickness, \$203,589.79; surgical expenses, \$20,156.14; contributions returned to members, \$11,679.19; advances to the members for the purchase of artificial limbs, \$2,620.55; operating expenses, \$73,139.12; making total disbursement of \$860,791.08.

In the savings department the total assets are \$2,957,686.30; of this \$2,872,912.22 is due depositors. The amount loaned to employees on first mortgage of real estate is \$1,389,026.04. This amount has been expended in building 1,602 houses, buying 2,174 homesteads, improving 473 homesteads, and releasing liens on 1,227 properties.

A dividend of one and one-half per cent. was paid to depositors in the savings feature having accounts drawing interest at the close of the fiscal year June 30th, 1904, making, with the interest guaranteed by the railroad company, five and one-half per cent. for the year.

In the pension department the receipts for the year, including \$75,000 contributed by the railroad company, were \$190,249.79; the disbursements were \$66,697.83; the surplus in hands of treasurer, \$298,595.46. There are 354 pensioners on the roll; the whole number pensioned since the organization of the department is 830.

Such organizations, fostered and aided by the railroad corporations, are a potent factor in promoting that harmony and unity of action between employers and employees which are so essential to the success of any enterprise, but doubly so in the case of railroad corporations.

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS.

The number of steam railroad corporations incorporated under the laws of this State or doing business therein remains the same as last year, viz.: fourteen. Of these corporations, ten are operated by the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad Company, either by ownership of stock or upon long leases. The four remaining corporations, viz.: The Narragansett Pier Railroad, the Wood River Branch Railroad, the Moshassuck Valley Railroad, and the Newport and Wickford Railroad and Steamboat Company, are still operated under their own charters.

The railroads in this State have suffered in the general railroad depression of the past year, every road showing a decrease in the number of passengers carried with the exception of the Narragansett, Pier railroad, which reports an increase of 48,160. The total decrease in the number of passengers carried is nearly five hundred and fifty thousand. Every road also shows a decrease in tons of merchandise carried with the exception of the Moshassuck Valley Railroad Company and the Newport and Wickford Railroad and Steamboat Company, which report gains, respectively, of 21,462 tons and 166 tons. The total decrease in tons of merchandise carried is over seven hundred thousand tons.

That the railroads in this State have been managed with carefulness and efficiency is shown by the fact that, while they have carried over sixty-three million passengers, not one has been killed during the year, and only seven were injured; and in none of these cases does there appear to have been any one at fault except the parties themselves.

PROPERTY.

The paid up capital stock of the several steam railroad corporations is \$132,150,850.00; miles of road owned and operated, 2,515+; miles of road in this State, 209+; miles of track in this State, including sidings, turnouts and second tracks, 443+. The number of locomotives owned, 1,062; passenger train cars, 2,077; freight cars, 17,752.

As compared with last year's report, these figures show an increase in capital stock of \$1,649,420; an increase in miles of road owned and operated, 20+, wholly without this State; an increase of about three miles in single track in this State; an increase in number of locomotives of 72; an increase in passenger train cars, 128; increase in freight cars, 3,391.

The total property and assets of these corporations is reported as \$242,551,202.42, which is \$28,563,938.57 over and above the total amount of their capital stock and funded and floating indebtedness. This report shows an increase in property and assets of \$33,861,623.65.

INDEBTEDNESS.

The funded debt of these corporations is \$61,435,317.77; the floating debt is \$20,401,096.08; total indebtedness, \$81,836,413.85. As compared with last year's report, these figures show an increase in funded debt of \$9,199,700.00; an increase in floating debt of \$11,418,477.93; an increase in total indebtedness of \$20,618,177.93.

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES.

The total receipts from all sources were \$53,387,596.69; total expenditures, \$44,160,250.73; net earnings, \$9,227,345.96. As compared with report of last year these figures show an increase in receipts of \$1,351,214.82; a decrease in the expenditures of \$919,874.92; and an increase in net earnings of \$2,271,089.74. The receipts of the roads were derived from the following sources, viz.: from passenger departments, \$23,517,433.37; from freight depart-