

**BIENNIAL REPORT OF THE
RAILROAD
COMMISSIONER OF THE
STATE OF WISCONSIN**

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Biennial Report of the Railroad Commissioner of the State of Wisconsin by Duncan J. Mckenzie & Charles A. Coon & William A. Owens

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DUNCAN J. MCKENZIE & CHARLES A. COON & WILLIAM A. OWENS

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RAILROAD
COMMISSIONER OF THE
STATE OF WISCONSIN**

John W. Smith

BIENNIAL REPORT

OF THE

Railroad Commissioner

OF THE

STATE OF WISCONSIN

For the Fiscal Years ending June 30, 1897 and 1898.



MADISON, WISCONSIN:

DEMOCRAT PRINTING COMPANY, STATE PRINTER.

1899.

PERSONNEL OF OFFICE.

DUNCAN J. McKENZIE,	•	•	•	•	•	COMMISSIONER.
CHARLES A. COON,	•	•	•	•	•	DEPUTY COMMISSIONER.
WILLIAM A OWENS,	•	•	•	•	•	MESSENGER.

Completed
GRAND JURY
Railroad Commission
WISCONSIN

EIGHTH BIENNIAL REPORT
OF THE
RAILROAD COMMISSIONER.

STATE OF WISCONSIN,
Office of the Railroad Commissioner,
Madison, Wisconsin, December, 1898.

HON. EDWARD SCOFIELD,
Governor of Wisconsin:

The Railroad Commissioner herewith submits his biennial report for the years ending June 30, 1897, and June 30, 1898, being the eighth biennial report of this department. The several railroads of the state have filed their reports and the same have been tabulated by this department in such a way as was thought would best subserve the interests of the public. To one, however, who is a seeker after facts, the reports and tabulations will afford meager satisfaction, as many items are omitted and others are made by estimate. Estimates are made in two ways, i. e., arbitrary or on a mileage basis, and neither is satisfactory to one who seeks the truth.

MILEAGE.

There has been a healthy increase in railway mileage in the State during the last two years, as will be seen from the following:

No. of miles in operation June 30, 1896	6,063.31
No. of miles in operation, June 30, 1898.....	6,284.16
Increase in two years	190.85

General Report.

This increase is made up as follows:

Mileage of new roads.....	60.80
Mileage of old roads, increase.....	137.04
Total.....	197.84
Decrease in mileage, old roads.....	6.99
Total net increase, since June 30, 1896.....	190.85

NEW ROADS

Reporting since the last biennial report are:

Chicago and Lake Superior.
 Dunbar and Wausaukee.
 Hazelhurst and Southeastern.
 Marinette, Tomahawk and Western.
 West Range.
 Whitcomb and Morris.

CHANGES

Have been made in roads reported June 30, 1896, as follows:

The Milwaukee, Bay View and Chicago is now the Chicago, Lake Shore and Eastern.

The Duluth and Winnipeg is now the Duluth, Superior and Western.

The Chicago, Fairchild and Eau Claire River is now the Fairchild and Northeastern.

The Green Bay, Winona and St. Paul is now the Green Bay and Western.

The Port Edwards, Centralia and Northern is now the Marshfield and Southeastern.

The Wisconsin and Chippewa road reported in 1896, has become a part of the new road known as the Marinette, Tomahawk and Western.

EARNINGS, EXPENSES AND DIVIDENDS.

Dividends declared in Wisconsin for the year ending June 30, 1898.....	\$2,901,242 82
Gross earnings in Wisconsin for the year ending June 30, 1898.....	34,578,349 16
Gross expenses in Wisconsin for the year ending June 30, 1898.....	21,394,683 20
Income from operation.....	13,183,665 96

General Report.

Comparing with the report of June 30, 1896, we find the following:

Increase in dividends, '98 over '96.....	\$235,091 22
Increase in earnings, '98 over '96.....	1,002,378 19
Increase in expenses, '98 over '96.....	1,404,073 21
Decrease in net earnings, '98 under '96.....	401,695 02

DEATHS AND INJURIES.

The following is a summary of deaths and injuries from railway accidents during the biennial period just closed:

		1897.	
Employees.....	Killed, 34	Injured, 211	
Passengers.....	3	25	
Others.....	93	84	
Total.....	130	320	
		1898.	
Employees.....	Killed, 55	Injured, 265	
Passengers.....	3	13	
Others.....	123	93	
Total.....	181	371	
Total for Period.			
Employees.....	Killed, 89	Injured, 476	
Passengers.....	6	38	
Others.....	216	177	
Total.....	311	691	

Total killed or injured during the biennial period, 1,002.

A comparison of these items with the same items for the year ending June 30, 1896, shows an increase of deaths of 55, and an increase in the number of injured of 90. The increase in deaths is in the column known as "Others" and

General Report.

is an increase of 57, as there is a decrease in the death column of the two classes "Employees" and "Passengers" of 2.

The injury columns, however, do not show as well, the increase of '98 over '96 being as follows:

Employees.....	58
Passengers.....	16
Others.....	16
Total.....	90

Ninety of the deaths and injuries reported, occurred at railway crossings. There is a movement in some of the states to change the present method of grade crossings by either elevating the tracks or depressing the road way. There is no doubt but what this would be a great convenience, not only to the public but also to the railway lines.

COMPILATION OF LAWS.

Nearly every day requests come to this office for a pamphlet compilation of the railroad laws of the state. No such pamphlet has been printed since 1889. The insurance laws, the election laws, the laws of assessment and collection of taxes, are all gotten out in a proper form and distributed gratis to the public. None of these are of more importance to the people in general than the railroad laws, and some provision should be made for their publication in pamphlet form.

CAR FERRIES.

I wish to call attention to what I believe is an important matter to the people of the state. There has grown up within the last two years a system of freight carriage known as car ferries. These car ferries are operated from Milwaukee, Manitowoc, Kewaunee and Peshtigo to points in Michigan and Illinois, and so far as I am able to ascertain

General Report.

each system is owned and controlled by a corporation foreign to Wisconsin, and they contribute nothing whatever in the way of a license or tax to this state. I am informed that these car ferries handle during the year more than one million tons of freight. Taking the minimum distance traveled this means the transportation of 40,000,000 tons of freight for one mile. The constitution of the state places the boundary line of Wisconsin in the center of Lake Michigan. If this freight was not handled by boats it would necessarily have to go over the iron roads either north by the "Soo" or south into the state of Illinois. I believe there is a question here of importance to the people.

REPORT OF RAILROADS.

The northern part of this state has many railroads known as logging roads. The most of these roads were in the first place built with the intention of using them wholly as private roads for the hauling in of logs for manufacturing purposes. Gradually they drift away from the intention of the original builder and become common carriers. Under the present law it is almost impossible to detect them. Several have come to the surface during the last two years, their discovery being entirely accidental. I believe it would be to the best interests of the people if a law was enacted compelling every railroad, public or private, to make a report to the Railroad Commissioner. He will then be able to determine whether or not they come under the head of common carriers. And in order that this department might have a fair start I would suggest that a law be enacted requiring the assessor in each assessing district in the state of Wisconsin to report, on blanks to be furnished him by the Secretary of State, the name and location of each railroad, whether public or private, in his district. This would enable the Railroad Commissioner to keep a check upon the roads and see that none escape.