

in the direction of greater uniformity, and have also in general, it is believed, been concessions to business interests.

The tendency of rates has been downward, and they have seldom been permanently advanced except when excessive competition had reduced them to points at which they could not well be maintained. No destructive rate wars have occurred, but increased stability in rates has tended in the direction of stability in general business. There is still, however, great mischief resulting from frequent changes in freight rates on the part of some companies; changes that in some cases it is difficult to suggest excuse for.

The general results of the law have been in important ways favourable to both the roads and the public; while the comparatively few complaints that have been heard of its results are either made with imperfect knowledge of the facts, or spring from the remembrance of practices which the law was deliberately framed to put an end to.

XIII.—AMENDMENTS OF THE LAW.

The Commission has not seen occasion for recommending any very considerable changes in the Act under which its work is performed. It has seemed to its members that the law for the regulation of inter-State commerce should be permitted to have a growth, and that it would most surely as well as most safely attain a high degree of efficiency and usefulness in that way. The general features of the Act are grounded in principles that will stand the test of time and experience, and only time and experience can determine whether all the provisions made for their enforcement are safe, sound, and workable. When they prove not to be, experience will be a safe guide in legislation to perfect them.

Incidentally in this report some need of amendment has been pointed out. Especially ought the law, as we think, to indicate in plain terms whether the express business and all other transportation by the carriers named in the Act shall be governed by its provisions. The provision against the sudden raising of rates ought to be clearly made applicable to joint rates as well as to others. The Commission ought also to have the authority and the means to bring about something like uniformity in the method of publishing rates, which is now in great confusion, and to carefully examine, collect, and supervise the schedules, contracts, &c., required by the law to be filed, as well as properly to handle the mass of statistical information called for by the 20th section. For all these purposes, as well as for others imperfectly provided for, a considerable addition to the force employed with the Commission will be indispensable. Other matters, and particularly whether transportation by water shall be made subject to the Act, are submitted to the wisdom of Congress without recommendation.

All which is respectfully submitted.

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Hon. Lucius Q. C. Lamar, Secretary of the Interior.

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