

Kicking Against Competition.

THE great American railway companies are doing all they can to rid themselves of the competition of the Canadian lines. In order that our readers may know the influences at work, which may some day work out important effects upon railway legislation in the republic, the following, from the *Railway World* of a recent issue, is given: Our references in last weeks issue to the anomalous position of American railways in being the only national interest of importance requiring governmental protection that failed to receive it, did not embrace mention of the crowning act of injustice. It arises from workings of the Inter-State Commerce Law, which practically extend important aid and comfort to rival Canadian Trunk lines in their efforts to secure traffic that legitimately belongs to the roads of this country. The United States occupy a unique position among nations in both respects, and the prevailing standard of "free trade" with reference to railway labors is more radical than that ever adopted by any other country in reference to any other subject. Not only are the Grand Trunk and Canadian Pacific permitted to compete for the business of moving freight between American cities and traffic centres, but they are substantially allowed to conduct such movements under more favorable conditions than rival American lines, or exempted from hampering restrictions to which the latter are subjected. An approximate parallel would be presented by a failure to impose any duty whatever on an important class of American products, such as manufactures of iron and steel, or textile fabrics, accompanied with a provision that subjected the competing American manufactures affected with an onerous form of taxation, or complicated and onerous restrictions, to which their foreign rivals are not subjected.

We are glad to notice that reformatory measures are now receiving some consideration at Washington. On Friday last the senate committee on inter-state commerce gave an attentive hearing to James H. Wilson, who clearly pointed out the gross injustice to which American roads are subjected, and suggested some remedies. An abstract of his remarks embraces the following statements: He suggested that section 6 (of the Inter-State Commerce Act) be amended by striking out all the second paragraph, the purpose aimed at being to make it unlawful for any common carriers to receive freight, but not passengers, at any point in the United States, and carry the same through any foreign country to another place in the United States in bond or without paying duty on the same at the port or place of re-entry. Owing, however, to the permissive effect of existing law, and the regulation of the treasury department, by which the Canadian railroads are permitted to take goods from various places in the United States, and carry them in bond and sealed cars through Canada, and bring them back into the United States without paying duty thereon, he would strongly urge the amendment of the Inter-State Commerce Law by substituting for the second paragraph of section 6 the following:

And nothing in this act shall be construed to allow any common carrier to receive any freight in the United States to be carried in sealed cars or in bond by railroad through a foreign country to any other place in the United States free of duty, and all laws and regulations thereunder which have been construed to permit such practices are hereby repealed.

This, he said, was a radical measure, but he hoped to convince the committee that it was called for and justified by our paramount and permanent national interests.

Free Passes Can't Recover.

CHARLES F. ULRICH was on the train that was wrecked near Spuyten Duyvil, N. Y., when Senator Wagner was killed. Mr. Ulrich was injured among others. He rode on a free pass, but had paid \$1 for a drawing-room seat. He brought action in the New York Common Pleas Court to recover \$10,000 damages. The first trial resulted in a dismissal of the complaint. Judge Van Hoesen revised the dismissal, and granted a new trial. This was before Judge J. F. Daly, and resulted in \$1,000 for personal injuries, \$100 for medicines and delicacies and \$300 for doctor's bills. The general term denied the railroad company's motion for a trial. The court of appeals reverses this judgment and sends the case back for a new trial, but the opinion of the court precludes any recovery by Ulrich.

Judge Ruger writes the opinion, and recites that Ulrich had a free pass, subject to the conditions printed on the back to release the company from all responsibility in case of injury. The fact that he purchased a drawing-room seat did not make him a passenger for hire. The agreement on the pass was in full force, and he was being taken over the route between the points indicated on it when the accident happened. He was competent to make a contract, and did make one when he accepted the pass, and inasmuch as he used the pass to make the transit he accepted the provisions of this contract.—*Railway Gazette*.

Inter-State Commission Report.

THE *Railroad Gazette* says: The full report of the Inter-State Commerce Commission has just been issued by the government. Besides the report itself, which has been already noticed, the volume before us contains a series of appendices giving a summary of the work done by the commission. It appears from this that the commissioners received 58 petitions for relief under the fourth (short-haul) section, from 95 different companies, and that they made 20 temporary orders, relieving 43 carriers. Under the thirteenth section, 103 complaints were preferred before the 3rd of December last. Of these 30 were heard and decided, 5 heard but not decided, 11 the hearing was incomplete, 14 were withdrawn and settled by parties, 6 suspended by request of parties, 9 were at issue and assigned for hearing, 11 not yet assigned, 17 not at issue. A number of letters are given, bearing

upon points which were not presented in actual complaints. It is interesting, as showing how much the commission has done in settling disputed questions, to find that all but one of these letters were written before the end of June. Not the least interesting part of the appendices is that which gives a summary of answers to inquiries concerning long and short-haul tariffs. Nearly 300 roads reply distinctly that they do not make tariffs in violation of the letter of the fourth section. Those roads which continue to make higher rates on inter-state traffic for intermediate points, in almost all cases give detailed reasons for the exceptions to the law. The letters giving these reasons are published in full. We are much surprised to find how few these exceptions are, and how generally the officials express a purpose of doing away with them as soon as possible.

Boy Employees.

NOBODY can travel upon American railroads without being struck by the number of persons, who are really only boys, employed as brakemen, switchmen, telegraph operators, and in other responsible positions, and wondering how they meet an emergency. Occasionally something happens which casts some light upon this question. Not long ago a train ran off the track at Pownal, Vt., and two cars were tipped over, sixteen persons being injured, two of them seriously. An investigation by the railroad commissioners showed that the disaster arose from the fact that the switch had been improperly set. It also showed that the setting of this switch was part of the business of the night telegraph operator employed by the railroad company, and that this operator was a boy only seventeen years old, who had been employed in this capacity for the six months. Aside from the duty of looking after switches, the business of telegraph operators on a railroad line constantly involves the safety and lives of many people, and should never be entrusted to a youngster only half way through his teens. The state does not consider a man fit to cast a ballot until he is twenty-one years old, and a railroad corporation has no business to commit human lives to boyish carelessness. The short-sighted economy of the average railroad corporation is a constant surprise. We suppose there is no doubt that the only reason why boys are employed is because they can be hired for lower wages than men, since a man is of course for every reason to be preferred to a boy. This particular boy had been employed by the company for half a year, and it had thus saved perhaps \$10 or \$15 a month—at the outside, probably not over \$100 in all. The damages which the people whom his carelessness injured should recover will cost the company many \$100. But the employment of cheap boy labor is only one phase of short-sighted railroad economy. The saving of the wages that would be required for a thorough inspection of all the dangerous points on a line is every little while being rendered contemptible by the great outgoes for a disaster which such inspection might have prevented.—*Electric Age*.