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CARRIERS' RATES.

Several interesting decisions have recently been rendered in the United States courts to the effect that the State or Railway Commission has no right to force railroad carriers to move traffic at non-paying rates. The latest decision is that given recently by the Circuit Court, condemning the rates fixed by the Railroad Commission of the State of North Dakota. The facts were briefly these: Laws passed in 1897 empowered the Railroad Commissioners of that state to fix schedules of maximum freight rates which the roads were required to adopt, under certain severe penalties for refusal. The commissioners sought to put a schedule of that kind in effect on July 1st of that year. The Great Northern Railway, the Northern Pacific and the Milwaukee & St. Paul, finding that such rates were unreasonable and unremunerative, secured a temporary injunction against the Commission. The case then came up for hearing before the above-mentioned court. Much of the argument on behalf of the commissioners was devoted to an attempt to show that under existing rates, the roads are earning from their entire business, both interstate and local, a high rate of income upon a grossly excessive capitalization of their property. But even conceding this to be true, the court says, it would be wholly immaterial. Excessive income derived from interstate traffic can be reduced by Congress alone. It was shown that the schedules, fixed by the Commission, are not only lower than the distance tariff in force in Minnesota, a state having more than six times the population of North Dakota, but are likewise lower than any of the specially low terminal tariffs, with the exception of that on grain and mill stuffs. Computations reveal that on the basis of the Commission's schedules, the Great Northern would, for the four years ending June, 1897, have lost \$1.19 for every \$100 of business done, and the Northern Pacific for the same period would have lost \$13.25 on every \$100 received for its services. In the face of such a showing, of course, the court had no alternative but to issue a decree in accordance with the prayer of the bill of complaint.

THE death last week of Mr. James Baylis, Montreal, removes one of the commercial landmarks of that city, in which he had lived for nearly seventy years, being aged 80 at the time of his death. While yet quite a young man he was a member of the old dry goods firm of Robert Campbell & Co. In 1859 he went into the carpet business himself, under the name of James Baylis & Co., and in 1896 the business of the firm was wound up. Mr. Baylis was a prominent member of the Board of Trade, and took a prominent part in the agitation against the business tax imposed a few years ago by the Quebec Government, which resulted in its modification and final repeal. He was a strong advocate of teetotalism, prominent in the Y.M.C.A., and a hard worker in religious and philanthropic circles.

JOHN MACKAY
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