

AS PRICES RISE HIGH COST OF LIVING HITS THE RAILROADS

Service Will Be Crippled Unless Relief Comes Soon.

EXPENSES UP, RATES DOWN

Wasteful and Conflicting Regulations Hamper Railroad Credit. While Advance in Labor and Materials Outstrips Revenues, Chairman Kruttschnitt Tells Congress Committee. Unified Federal Control Will Improve Conditions.

Washington, April 2.—The condition in which the railroads find themselves as a result of constant increases in wages, prices of material, taxes and other expenses, while their revenues are restricted by legislation, was strikingly described by Julius Kruttschnitt, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Southern Pacific Company, in his testimony during the past few days before the Joint Congressional Committee on Interstate Commerce, which is making a study of the question of railroad regulation. Mr. Kruttschnitt urged the committee to recommend a plan of regulation which will center responsibility for regulation and its results in the federal government, so that conditions affecting both expenses and revenues may be made subject to a uniform policy instead of the wasteful and often conflicting policies involved in the system of combined state and federal regulation.

Why Roads Need More Money.
Mr. Kruttschnitt's testimony also had a bearing on the reasons for the application of the roads to the Interstate Commerce Commission for a general advance in freight rates. He showed that while the price of transportation has declined in recent years, the cost of producing transportation, like the cost of almost everything else, has rapidly advanced. This he illustrated by showing that if freight and passenger rates had increased during the past twenty years in the same proportion as average commodity prices the railroads of the United States would have received \$1,654,000,000 more for transportation in 1915 than they did receive. This saving to the public was effected, in spite of an increase of 93 per cent in the cost of operation of trains, by a reduction in the average passenger rate per mile from 2.04 cents in 1895 to 1.38 cents in 1915, a decrease of 3 per cent, and by a reduction in the average freight rate per ton mile from 8.33 mills in 1895 to 7.3 mills in 1915, or 12 per cent. During the same period the cost of operation per train mile rose from 92 cents to \$1.78, almost doubling. At the same time the average price of 344 commodities enumerated in a bulletin of the Department of Agriculture increased 115 per cent. Transportation is practically the only commodity in general use that has not increased tremendously in price during the past twenty years, freight and passenger charges being lower than they were twenty years ago.

Big Saving to Public.
If rates had risen proportionately to the increase in the cost of other articles of ordinary use, Mr. Kruttschnitt told the committee, the average passenger rate in 1915 would have been 2.95 cents a mile, or 50 per cent higher than it was, and the average freight rate would have been 1.21 cents, or 65 per cent higher than it was. The saving to the public in the difference was \$314,000,000 and in freight rates \$1,240,000,000. Universal railroad bankruptcy under this reduction in rates and increased cost of operation, he said, was avoided only by heavy expenditures to obtain increased efficiency in train movement, making it possible to haul more tons of freight per locomotive. This had reduced the average cost of hauling a ton of freight, but the decline in the average freight rate had reduced the net revenue of the roads from each ton hauled. If the operating costs of the railroads, including the prices of coal, labor and material, continue to advance at the present rate a lot of railroads will be in the hands of receivers by 1918 unless some relief is afforded. Mr. Kruttschnitt told the committee.

Public's Chief Interest.
"The public's greatest interest is in adequate transportation facilities and not so much in low rates. As to most commodities freight rates form a very small proportion of their cost. Excluding low grade commodities, the percentage of the freight rate to the

cost is so slight as to offer no justification for any substantial increase in prices to the consumer. It may be stated with little fear of contradiction that the consumer seldom, if ever, profits from a lowering of freight rates. "Extortionate charges are a thing of the past, and under the attempt to cut rates to their lowest possible figure the interest of the whole public in the character and standard of transportation is subordinated to the interest of that part of the public only that profits by lower rates. That is to say, the shipper and their agents and not the general public, the ultimate consumer."

THOMAS CREEK JOTTINGS

Easter Showers bring May flowers. We will surely have a few bouquets.

Mr and Mrs Henry Bilyeau and son Roy of Lebanon spent a part of last week at the home of Mrs Bilyeu's mother, Mrs F B Frost.

Mrs Geo Cree returned last week to her home at Falls City.

Mrs Geo Ray and daughter spent Sunday at the home of her brother, Jas Burton.

Mr and Mrs S B Cole spent Saturday with their daughter, Mrs R C Pepperling.

Mrs C Rodgers spent Tuesday with Mrs Harvey Shelton at Jordan.

Mr and Mrs S B Cole ate Easter dinner at the Z J Clark home. Mr Cole held church services at the school house in the afternoon.

Mr James Burton went to Albany Monday to attend the funeral of his brother-in-law, Henry Boyls, who died Sunday night in northern Montana where he had gone only a short time ago to acquire some land.

Mr and Mrs Roy Wirth spent Easter at the Burton home.

Geo Grimes and family of Stayton ate Easter eggs with Mrs Grimes' mother, grandma Flemings.

Miss Lola Westenhause spent the week end at home and assisted her mother in cooking for some of the men employed on the wood drive, as the camp had to be moved to Gilkey.

Miss Rose Weidman who has been employed at the J W Miller home of Shelburn for the past year spent a few weeks with her parents, Mr and Mrs Jake Weidman. She returned to Shelburn Saturday. Some talk of wedding bells soon.

Chatter Box.

A Poor Robin Almanac.
One of the scarcest and most amusing of the early English almanacs is entitled "Poor Robin, an Almanack of the Old and New Fashion" containing a two-fold Calendar—viz, the Julian, English or Old Account, and the Roundheads, Fanatics, paper-scul'd or Maggotheaded New Account," etc. It is a pamphlet of sixteen pages and is dated London, 1699.

The dedication is "to the world" and in it Poor Robin says: "With Pipers, Ballad-singers and Fiddlers it is a merry World; with Prisoners, Sick-people and Money-less persons it is a sad World; with a Soldier it is a hard World; with a Divine a wicked World; with a Lawyer a contentious World; with a Courtier a slippery World; with most men a mad World, and with all men a bad World."

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