

*Water Terminals.* Part III of the Report of the Commissioner of Corporations on *Transportation by Water in the United States.* (Washington: Government Printing Office. 1910. Pp. xxi, 436.)

The Commissioner of Corporations names Mr. Burr J. Ramage, one of his assistants, as "especially contributing" to this report on Water Terminals. The volume is chiefly given over to descriptions of the physical, legal and economic characteristics of the principal American ports. The mass of detailed information here collected should prove of great value, if properly utilized by municipal officers and by business men's associations throughout the country in improving their local conditions. The terminals of New Orleans and of San Francisco are praised for their "high degree of public ownership, control, efficiency and equipment"; while serious faults in most of the other ports, especially on the Atlantic Coast, are pointed out. The data presented are used as the basis for five general conclusions which are worth restating and considering.

First, that terminals are as important in an efficient transportation system as channels. Obvious though this statement may seem, its truth seems to be appreciated by surprisingly few people. Witness, for instance, the millions lost by the efforts of the Wabash management to force an entrance into Pittsburg, only to find that without proper terminals it was impossible to secure Pittsburg traffic. Again, the Interstate Commerce Commission in all its work since 1887 has almost ignored switching rates and practices of great importance. The whole subject of terminal facilities and charges, on railroads as well as on water lines, calls for careful investigation and thought.

Second, that harbors should be better organized, especially by a separation of commercial, or through, from industrial, or local, traffic. Many practical applications are pointed out as, for instance, that several cities have outer harbors which should be utilized for commercial traffic, leaving the frontage of the inner harbors free for industrial traffic. Other harbors, including New York, are defective in that they do not possess adequate transshipping equipment.

The third conclusion is that great influence (by implication, undue influence) over water terminals is exercised by railroad companies. This influence results in part from direct ownership or lease of terminal real estate; in part from ownership of elevators, lighters, belt lines and other essential terminal facilities; in part from rights of way along water frontage which interfere with its development. The fourth conclusion, closely related to the third, is to the effect that rail and water systems, instead of being "linked up" are operated at cross purposes. The inference that the railroads have throttled water transportation is scarcely justified. Water transportation, except of bulk freight, is generally cumbersome and expensive as compared with rail transportation. Railroad officials should not be blamed for the decline of water traffic in ordinary merchandise; nor can shippers reasonably be blamed, even by the fervent advocates of waterways, for preferring to send their freight by quicker, more convenient and cheaper routes.

The fifth conclusion is that there is striking lack of coöperation between federal and local authorities in harbor development. The federal government provides channels; the state or city government provides terminals. In some cases there appears to be no connection whatever between the two lines of development.

This volume is an excellent example of a pains-taking governmental investigation which brings to light important and significant facts. There is a touch of railroad-baiting here and there; but, as a whole, the report is impartial and illuminating.

WILLIAM H. LOUGH.

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