The Revolt against the Railroad:

By 1880 it was in full tide. The committee declared the commerce to be absolutely burdened with petitions from every section of the country upon the subject of interstate commerce. They wanted the railroads regulated. And the committee, startled by the vastness of the subject with conflicting interests, railroads built at such different times, running at different rates of expense, varying in the topography of the country and the amount of freight. It would be to the shippers what was due to the railroads, what was due to the water transportation, rivers and canals. The system of transportation must be developed without pillaging the country on one hand or destroying the railroads themselves on the other.

In 1880 the question of the commission was debated. There was an agreement from the best men in the house that something must be done.*

A lively debate took place about the make up of the committee. It was doubtful to many of them whether the railroads could be controlled and whether there should be any attempt. There was a pretty strong feeling as Mr. Davis of West Virginia put it that it was best to allow the states and the railroads to control their own affairs and that the Congress ought to have very little to do with them.

The next year a bill to establish a board of

* Appletons' Annual, 1880. Page 184