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Writings of Ida M. Tarbell

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Manuscript Page: Nationalizing of Business. The Revolt against the Railroad

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The Revolt against the Railroad: III

By 1880 it was in full tide. The committee on commerce declared itself 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 ^{was sure to have been} startled by the vastness of the subject with conflicting interests, ^{the difficulty of deciding the building of a} railroads built at such different costs, ^{21/2% at least at least,} running at different rates of expense, varying to the topography of the country and the amount of freight. ^{How could it decide} ~~It would be to the~~ ^{What was due}

shippers what was due to the railroads, what was due to the water transportation, rivers and canals. ^{They agreed that a} ~~The system of~~ transportation ^{could be} must be developed without pillaging the country ^{but could they prevent that and not?} ~~on one hand or destroying the railroads themselves, on the other.~~

In 1880 the question of ^a 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

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