

THE NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY CONVENTION.

The late railway convention at St. Louis appointed a committee to report upon the "peculiar merits and advantages of the narrow gauge railway system." From the report of that committee we extract some facts showing the conclusion arrived at by some of the most experienced and practical railway men in the country. We are forced to abbreviate and give their conclusions in the fewest possible words.

First, the conclusion is reached that in rough and mountainous countries where heavy ores such as gold, silver, lead and copper are to be transported, and where it is not necessary to run time or fast trains, the construction of railways of three-foot gauge costs no more per mile than one-fifth such roads as the Erie, the Pennsylvania Central, and Baltimore and Ohio.

Second. That in such rolling country as exists where most railways are constructed, narrow gauge roads cost no more than half as much as the ordinary broad gauge.

Third. In the prairie country, where the land is level or only slightly undulating, the three-foot gauge costs no more than three fifths as much as the ordinary roads.

The committee also refer to the fact that narrow gauge enterprises are much more easily set on foot than the construction of broad gauge roads on account of the lower cost of building them.

On the comparative cost of operating the two kinds of roads the following tables are furnished:

PASSENGER CARS.			
	Broad Gauge.	Narrow Gauge.	Difference.
Weight of cars in lbs.....	38,000	12,000	26,000
No. of passengers full load.....	56	33	20
Pounds dead weight per passenger.....	678	333	345

Pounds dead weight carried on roads in Massachusetts and New York in 1870.

Massachusetts.....	1,250
New York.....	2,784

In this case the narrow gauge coach, weight 12,000 pounds, carries, when full, 36 passengers, with a dead weight of 12,000 pounds, or 333 pounds per passenger; while the broad gauge coach, capacity 56 passengers, weighs an average of 19 tons, giving a dead weight of 38,000, or 678 pounds, a difference of 345 pounds per head in favor of the narrow gauge.

PASSENGER TRAFFIC.			
	Broad Gauge.	Narrow Gauge.	Difference.
Number of passengers per car.....	13	13	—
Weight of cars in lbs.....	38,000	12,000	26,000
Total paying load in lbs.....	1,950	1,950	—
Dead Weight per passenger in pounds.....	2,923	923	2,000
Gross loads in pounds.....	39,950	13,950	26,000

A difference of 26,000 pounds, or 13 tons, in favor of the narrow gauge, or 2,000 pounds per head for each passenger.

Assuming the weight of the broad gauge car to be only 15 tons, or 30,000 pounds, the difference in favor of the narrow gauge car will still be 18,000 pounds, or 1,384 pounds per head for each passenger, as against 923 pounds per head by the narrow gauge. Of course the travelling public pays for this excess of unnecessary dead weight, amounting to many millions of dollars per annum.

FREIGHT CARS.			
	Broad Gauge.	Narrow Gauge.	Difference.
Weight of box cars in pounds.....	18,500	8,000	10,500
Capacity of box cars in pounds.....	20,000	16,000	4,000

The average pounds of dead weight to one ton paying freight carried on railways in Massachusetts and New York in 1870, was:

Massachusetts.....	3,136
New York.....	3,191

The average weight of modern broad gauge cars is 20,000 pounds; capacity, 20,000 pounds.

The average weight of southern broad gauge cars may be put down at 18,500 pounds; capacity 16,000 pounds. In the table we have taken the lowest dead weight, and the highest capacity as we prefer to over estimate the capacity, of the broad gauge rather than to underestimate it.

The report of the committee embodies further tables giving a vast amount of information concerning the comparative advantages of the two systems. It closes by announcing that the

members of the committee will gather all possible further information by corresponding with all persons having in charge narrow gauge railway enterprises, and will furnish the result of their labors to all persons or corporations who may desire it.—Ex.

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