

may also of his own motion rescind or vary the action of the Board, but the power to rescind or vary usually consists in referring to the Board for reconsideration. From its inception until Dec. 31, 1939, the Board gave formal hearing to 10,618 cases. Its decision was appealed in 123 cases, and 6 cases were referred for the opinion of the Supreme Court of Canada, 79 of these, including the above references, being to the Supreme Court of Canada and 50 to the Governor General in Council. Of the appeals, 13 of those carried to the Supreme Court and 3 of those to the Governor General in Council were allowed.

## PART II.—RAILWAYS

The treatment of rail transportation is divided into three sections dealing, respectively, with steam railways, electric railways and express companies.

### Section 1.—Steam Railways\*

The steam railway is still the most important transportation agency from the standpoint of investment and of traffic handled. The statistical field is more completely covered for this form of transportation than for any other, since there are fairly complete figures dealing with steam railway mileage, equipment, finances and traffic.

**Historical.**—A brief historical sketch of the development of steam railways in Canada is given at pp. 635-638 of the 1940 Year Book. Further details are given at pp. 616-623 of the 1922-23 Year Book, at pp. 601-603 of the 1926 Year Book and at pp. 694-698 of the 1934-35 Year Book.

#### Subsection 1.—Mileage and Equipment of Steam Railways

Although construction was begun in 1835 on the first railway in Canada—the short link of 16 miles between Laprairie and St. Johns, Que.—by 1850 there were only 66 miles of railway in operation in Canada. The first great period of construction (as shown in Table 1) was in the 1850's when the Grand Trunk and Great Western railways, as well as numerous smaller lines, were built. During the 1860's when there were political and commercial disturbances in both America and Europe, many of the railways operating in Canada encountered financial difficulties and there was comparatively little new construction. The building of the Intercolonial and the Canadian Pacific Railways contributed to another period of rapid expansion in the 1870's and 1880's. In the last great period of railway building from 1900 to 1917 the Grand Trunk Pacific, National Transcontinental and Canadian Northern were constructed.

\* Revised and checked by G. S. Wrong, B.Sc., Chief of the Transportation and Public Utilities Branch of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. This Branch publishes an "Annual Report on Steam Railways", as well as numerous other reports, a list of which is given in Chapter XXVIII of this volume. Certain of the financial statistics of steam railways are compiled with the co-operation of officers of the Department of Transport.