

STORIES of New Jersey



The freight yards spread below the Palisades at Weehawken.

overhead wires which stretched to Philadelphia and beyond. The Pennsylvania's overhead wiring system now supplies the power for freight and passenger trains running between New York and Washington and to the suburbs of various cities along the way. For this the railroad, with the assistance of the Public Works Administration, spent approximately \$265,000,000.

The Lackawanna has also electrified its lines in the commuter area. Completed in 1931 at a cost of \$18,000,000, the D.L. & W.'s electric wires connect Hoboken, where passengers from New York arrive by ferry, and towns as far west as Dover in Morris County and Gladstone in Somerset County.

The heavy cost of installing and maintaining the power stations and electric wires is paid for by a reduction in the cost of operation for each train. Enough trains must use the system so that the total amount saved will be sufficient to cover the additional investment. Each electric locomotive costs more than a steam engine, but fewer of them are needed for the same amount of work. Electricity has also made it possible to use tunnels where before the soot and smoke of coal-burning locomotives would have made it impractical. Train passengers might still be taking the slower ferry trip across the Hudson if electrification had not permitted building the Tubes.

The System Today

Today all railroads crossing state lines are regulated by the Interstate Commerce Commission which is appointed by the President. To eliminate harmful competition and provide economical operation of the railroads, the Commission in 1932 formulated a plan for consolidating all eastern lines, except those in New England, into four great systems. While this plan has proved unworkable in many details and was never adopted, it still affords the most understandable outline for discussing the complicated railroad situation in New Jersey. The four systems provided for in the Commission's plan are the Pennsylvania, the Chesapeake and Ohio-Nickel Plate, the New York Central and the Baltimore and Ohio. Each system was to be made up of one or more trunk lines. A trunk line in turn is composed of smaller railroad companies which are controlled by or leased to the larger company. Often one trunk line pays rent to another for the use of tracks in a certain area. These arrangements are commonly known as "trackage rights."