

pages of nothing that the railroad people said was true at all—that the ICC was right.

Mr. THOMPSON. I trust on the tariffs and other regulatory functions of the agency you have found there has been better cooperation?

Mr. BROOKS. Somewhat. We haven't really finished with them yet. We are just getting started.

Mr. THOMPSON. Those are all my questions.

Mr. BROOKS. Mrs. Heckler.

Mrs. HECKLER. I have some general questions, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BROOKS. You go right ahead. For the committee's interest, we will ask the chairman to have the heads of his various programs give us a synopsis of those. I think timewise we can keep that in mind, but other than that now would be a good time for you to discuss your questions with the chairman.

Mrs. HECKLER. I must say, Mr. Tierney, my questions initially are prompted by having attended a convention of one of the nationwide motor carriers. I eavesdropped a little on their conversations and learned some of their complaints. I would like to mention a few of them to you.

The ICC supervises the rates charged by railroads, motor carriers and water carriers. Have you given any consideration to reducing the paperwork and the time required in handling the rate changes? Many of the complaints and criticisms that I heard involved what they considered excessive paperwork which seems to be generally multiplying. Have you considered perhaps establishing a block rate whereby carriers could have some discretion within a given range without having to file a rate change with the ICC?

Mr. TIERNEY. We have not to my knowledge, Mrs. Heckler. Without giving it some thought in depth, conceivably so many factors enter into our consideration as to whether or not a rate is reasonable or not, it would be very difficult to arrive at some sort of a block rate of reasonableness.

As we administer the act now, there is this area of reasonableness. We don't have a situation where a rate is automatically too high at this level or too low at this level. There is this great level of reasonableness on the high side and on the low side to permit competition within the area. But we have not considered a block rate.

The law as administered requires the filing of rates with the Commission. This, as far as rates are concerned, is where the paperwork is involved. The reason for that law is, of course, to avoid the problems that occurred way back in the 1880's which prompted regulation, that they be open published, and available for everyone to examine.

I might say there is much thought being given now, and I am sure we will make a lot of progress, to the simplification of rates.

One of our problems is that we have, I forget how many, trillions of rates on file, many of which are not being used by the carriers at all.

Eventually we hope—and this will take time, cooperation, and money not only in the rate bureaus of the carriers but the industries themselves—to cancel some of these rates that are not being used.

Mrs. HECKLER. Are you in the process of making changes in this direction now, or is this in the realm of conversation and speculation?

Mr. TIERNEY. This is in the realm of preliminary studies in this area.

Mrs. HECKLER. Is your Commission conducting studies now?