

THAT THE RAILROAD COMMISSION MAY SIT IN NEW ORLEANS.

The Louisiana State Railroad Commission was intended to be an extremely important factor in the public administration and economy of the state. It was modeled generally upon the plan of the United States Interstate Commerce Commission, being charged with much the same duties as the national commission, with the difference that the functions of one are wholly confined to the settlement of controversies between railroads and complainants strictly within the state, while the other's jurisdiction extends to interstate, and national relations of the railroads with parties concerned with them.

Article 283 of the State Constitution, which creates the Railroad Commission, provides that the said body shall have its office and domicile at Baton Rouge, but "may meet and hold regular or special hearings at such other places, as they may find necessary," and it would seem to be entirely within the right and duty of the State commission to emulate the example of the national body, which holds such hearings in various cities of the Union.

To this end there has been submitted to the Legislature now in session a concurrent resolution, setting forth that whereas regular hearings or sessions of said Railroad Commission in said City of New Orleans would be of great benefit to the city and port of New Orleans and the state at large, it is the sense of the Legislature of the State of Louisiana that the Railroad Commission of Louisiana be requested to hold regular hearings or sessions in the City of New Orleans four times each year, said sessions to begin on the first Monday in January, April, July and October, and to continue until all matters brought before said commission are disposed of.

As the City of New Orleans does not wish, even if it were possible, to monopolize the services of the commission, it is entirely willing that the resolution proposed should embrace Shreveport and such other cities of the state as might really need the presence of this important body to have hearings there, but it must be remembered that the commission is a constitutional body and is subject to no statutory control in this matter, but is allowed to exercise its discretion in holding such local hearings.

But the Picayune believes that the members of the commission are wholly devoted to promoting the public welfare in the discharge of their duties and that they would find it to their own advantage as well as that of the state in holding such sessions and hearings. For instance, in such a hearing, it often is the case that witnesses must testify and records be examined, and it is far from convenient to have them all on hand at Baton Rouge when some of them may be required here in the performance of their regular functions.

There is no question that the national commission finds its work greatly facilitated in holding sessions at the localities where controversies have arisen, and doubtless so would our state commission.

It is, therefore, of great importance that the Legislature should give an expression on the subject without undertaking the serious action of providing for an amendment of the Constitution, and confidence is warranted in believing that the commission would recognize the general desire so expressed.