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SECOND EDITORIAL

THE RAILROADS AND THE WORKERS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE magazines are printing articles on the wholesale slaughter of life on the railroads. *The World's Work* especially, contains one on "Railroads and Death" in which this language appears:

"In 1898 about five hundred soldiers were killed in Cuba and about twenty-five hundred died in hospitals. There was an outburst of public wrath over the unnecessary deaths from disease that shook the whole United States, and that will be remembered as long as the Spanish-American War. In 1903 almost ten thousand persons were killed and more than seventy-five thousand were injured by the railroads of this country. If there is any public wrath about these deaths every man of the public is keeping it close within himself.

"War becomes mild when compared with the human havoc wrought by our railroads. After wars there come treaties when the killing ends; but the killing and maiming on our railroads goes on year after year, every year's death record usually surpassing its predecessor."

This same article shows that the railroad employes figure more largely in this "human havoc" than do the passengers. In the year 1902, for instance, 6,988 passengers were killed and injured as compared with 63,493 employes. This 10 times greater proportion of killed and injured among employes as compared with passengers, has emphasized the great risks and dangers to which railroad workers are exposed, and has caused discussion on this matter to revolve largely around them and their conditions.

Coincident with these magazine articles appear others in the newspapers. These have two objects: first to show that the blame rests with the employes; second that the railroads are doing much to ameliorate their conditions. The articles of this kind in *The Sun* are especially noteworthy. Yesterday it published one called "Aid For Railroad Workers". "Millions Are Spent in Pension and Relief Funds"—assert

the headlines. A perusal of the article shows that it is misnamed, as most of the millions come from the railroaders themselves, in the form of assessments. The article is also defective in that it fails to show the millions saved to the railroad companies from damage suits, owing to the operation of these “pension and relief” schemes. Nor does it make known that the men are insured by the companies for more than is paid to their heirs at death. Had these facts been brought out as they deserve to be, none but the interested could fail to perceive that the article should have been entitled, “Aid To Railroaders From Employes”. But waiving all these considerations, for the time being, one can not see how, assuming that the article is a counterblast to the damaging magazine articles—how “pensions and relief” will overcome railroad slaughter; in fact, one can only see that death and injury increase as the payments made on their account increase. Nor can one see how, with accidents growing in number and size, railroaders will reach the ripe old age of 70, in order to “enjoy” the pensions, to any great extent. In short, *The Sun*, as usual, is urging amelioration where cure is essential. Nothing will mitigate railroad slaughter excepting the uprooting of its cause—the profit making system of Capitalism. With use instead of dividends the guiding principle of human activity, this “human havoc” will end.

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