

EDITORIAL

## THE WAGES OF PROSPERITY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**he 'longshoremen of New London, Conn., had a habit of throwing away their envelopes when they received their week's pay. Several of these were picked up, and from the amounts marked on them we can draw conclusions relative to the way prosperity affects a class of men which makes prosperity possible for a great many industries.

The envelopes are many, and the amounts vary, but there is never any tendency to reach the larger figures. The greatest amount received is \$6.90, the smallest is \$1.10. The men were employed, or supposed to have been employed, during at least one week. There are four envelopes from one man: These represent just a month's work. The first has \$5.30, the second \$4.70, the third \$2.00, and the fourth \$4.80. The man received in all the staggering sum of \$16.80. It is no wonder that he, in common with his fellow workingmen, is putting money in the bank at the rate of \$200 a year. Supposing him to average the above sum every week, and have work without intermission, he would have \$13.20 on which to bring up a family after he had provided for a "rainy day."

There are other items on these envelopes which tell the wonderful story of how the American workingmen can save. One man received in two weeks the sum of \$3.50; another did better, and received \$3.60 in the same time. The rate seems uniform, and the standard horribly low. The men may not work a very great number of hours, but when they are through very few of them are in a physical or mental condition to fill a pulpit, or to do landscape painting.

There is also another interesting incident connected with those envelopes. When the dock masters learned that the Socialists were collecting evidence, they issued an order that all pay envelopes should be destroyed. If there was any cause to suppose the amount contained in them would ever be large, the masters would be only too pleased to have them spread broadcast.

It must not be supposed that all the men earn such small sums. Many of them may find as much as \$7 on some nights, but out of many envelopes we have been

unable to discover one that did. Perhaps there may even be a man who has more than that coming to him, but when half a hundred envelopes, collected in a few weeks in a small town, can tell such a story of low wages for hard, killing work, it is reasonable to suppose that the man who does receive that amount stands in danger of having his wages cut.

That New London record can be duplicated by almost any other port. The DAILY PEOPLE recently had an article on the condition of the dock workers here in New York. It was objected to as overdrawn. Read the evidences of those envelopes, compare it with what we have previously said, and then raise once more the “prosperity” howl. The prosperity of the dock workers is the hell of low wages and abuse.

**Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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