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EDITORIAL

## TRUTHFUL FOR ONCE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**he report of the **Interstate Commerce Commission** for the year ending June 30, 1900, just published, is certainly a DOCUMENT.

For years, there has been on the statute books an order to the railroad companies to provide the cars with automatic couplers and train-brakes, together with a sufficiency of hand-holds or grab-irons and other contrivances for the protection of the employees. This law was enacted because of the slaughter of the railroaders, due to the improper equipment of the cars, and because “something had to be done.” That “something”—the enactment of a law, whose enforcement meant reduced profits to the railroad magnates—having been “done,” that was the end of it. Year after year, the Interstate Commerce Commission granted an “extension of time.” This year’s report was anxiously looked forward to, in order to ascertain whether any further extension of time was to be granted to the railroad companies in which to slaughter their employees. The DOCUMENT gives answer, emphatically too.

Hitherto, the admission was yearly made that the law was not complied with, but the hope was held out that it would be. This year’s report says as clearly as language, backed by figures, can, that the Commission proposes to shut its eyes henceforward and forever, allow the railroads to do as they like,—and that it don’t care. No other construction can be put upon the presentation of the case by this DOCUMENT; nor does its verbiage really conceal the fact.

A body whose duty it is to see that a law is enforced, is bound to know whether the law is so enforced or not. The Commission disclaims accurate knowledge; it speaks about “approximate compliance;” it disclaims all intention to decide upon the most important points; and, finally, after giving the figures of killed and maimed employees during the year—37,133 out of a total of 928,924 employees,—it dismisses the question nonchalantly with the words:

“The Commission points out that a large number of the accidents to

employees can only be attributed to carelessness.”

That settles it!

When it is considered that of the total of 928,924 employees, the occupation of a large number is such that they are not affected by the presence or absence of these provisions for safety; when it is further remembered that a very large percentage of the killed is never reported;—when all this is taken into consideration, this year’s DOCUMENT, issued by the Interstate Commerce Commission, may well be considered an epoch-maker. It is an early century official declaration by Capital that it considers the life of the workingman not worthy of consideration, and proposes to act up to its opinion.

For once, the Capitalist Class has made officially a frank confession.

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