

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 5, NO. 202.

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 1905.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

LABOR UNDER A SPELL.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE charge is often made against Labor agitators that they are more picturesque than truthful, more rhetorical than accurate. When the labor agitator declares that the mills, the yards, the roads on which the workingman is occupied are veritable shambles, in which workingmen are slaughtered. "Pooh-pooh!" laughs many a comfortably seated reader in his arm-chair, "What an exaggeration, and violent figure of speech!" And the pooh-pooher may be sincere. He probably is one of that large majority with whom the press, the paper they read, is not a source of, but a bar to information. Few terms are as truthful and accurate as that of "shambles" applied to the fields of Labor's toil. This month's *Railroad Trainmen's Journal* furnishes a grewsome proof.

Beneficiary assessment notice No. 308, issued to the Lodges of the Brotherhood, of the claims due next month, contains a tabulated list of 110 names together with the ground of the claim. Of the total of 110 members who died of disease, were killed or disabled for life, 73 are among the dead and 27 among the disabled. Again, of the total of 110 men, at least 57 were killed or disabled at work. The number probably is larger, but in this enumeration we have left out all those whose cause of death might have been other than so-called "accident". We have computed only the number of those the cause of whose death or disablement clearly points to "accidents" while at work. The list in the column of "Cause" reads like the report of an army hospital near a battle field—"Crushed between passenger coaches", "killed in a wreck", "arm crushed coupling, hand and wrist ankylosed", "right foot crushed, partly amputated", "fell from train, run over", "killed in collision, burned to death", "head crushed", "run over by cars", "crushed by runaway car", "thrown from car by damaged brake, run over", "struck by bridge", "uncoupling cars, slipped and fell, run over", "thrown from car and crushed", "right arm crushed, amputated", "knocked

down by engine, left hand run over, amputated”, “foot caught in frog, amputated”, “foot crushed, amputated”, “crushed between pole and car”, “left leg run over”, “killed by explosion of engine”, etc., etc., etc!

Our trains shower dividends on one side into the pockets of the stock holder, and fragments of workingmen’s limbs—feet, hands, legs, arms—if not workingmen’s corpses on the other into the homes of the workers. A rather unequal division. It is a fact that, relative to the number of trainmen along our roads, the numbers of them that fall daily is larger than that of those that fell under Nogi or Stoessel at any one of the encounters around Port Arthur. Infinitely larger is the number of the victims when all the industries are considered. Men must be under a spell to submit to such outrage. Who will not seize and wield the wand to break the spell!

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded October 2007

slpns@slp.org