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EDITORIAL

PROSPERITY? SURE!

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE meaning of “prosperity” to the working class is reflected in the abstract of railroad statistics for the year ending June 30, 1902, just issued by the Interstate {Commerce} Commission.

According to this abstract, the net earnings of all the roads in the United States aggregated \$610,131,520,—an increase of \$52,002,735, as compared with the previous twelve months. Into whose lap did this prosperity fall? Let the official abstract itself answer the question.

In point of employes, the abstract shows that the number was 1,189,315,—an increase of 118,146; and their compensation was \$676,028,592,—an increase of \$65,314,891, and this increase is being conspicuously held up in the papers for the obvious purpose of making it appear as though “prosperity” had bestowed more millions on the employes than it had done on the stockholders. A little arithmetic dispels the illusion.

If the increase in the number of employes for 1902—118,146—is deducted from the figures of 1902, it will be found that there were 1,071,169 railroad employes in 1901. If the increase in wages paid for 1902—\$65,314,891—is deducted from the figures of 1902, it will be found that these 1,071,169 employes received \$676,028,592 in wages, or an average of \$570.01. Now, if the number of employes for 1902—1,189,315—is divided into the total amount of wages received—\$676,028,592—the average is found to be \$568.26—a DECREASE of \$1.75 a year.

Considering the immense sum that goes to the already wealthy stockholders, considering the immense strain daily imposed in an ever-increasing degree on the railroad employes of the country, these official figures give the official definition of

“prosperity” as INCREASED RICHES for the capitalist class and INCREASED LABOR with DECREASED WAGES for the working class.

All of which is commended to the attention of the Lynn, Mass., *Item*, and all other videttes of capitalism—Messrs. Gompers, Clark, Mitchell, etc., of course, included—who are seeking to earn their wages in the Malaproprian task of trying to keep back the Ocean of Socialism with the mop of capitalist false pretenses of prosperity.

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