

# SHERRY THEATRE Today

Wm. Fox Presents  
**THEDA BARA**  
Again the Sirenic Vampire  
in  
**"The Serpent"**

Written and Directed by R. A. WALSH

# THE FORUM

### "Fair And Just"

Cleveland, Ohio April 1—(To the Editor)—A statement has been frequently made by the railroads that the present demands of the railway train service employees are not really for an eight-hour day, but are intended to secure increased wages.

This is not true as the employees composing the four brotherhoods want shorter hours. They want their working day to be as near eight hours as it can be made.

To any reasonable person it will be apparent that it will be useless to secure an eight-hour day unless there is some penalty attached for overtime. In all the trades where the eight-hour day obtains, there is an extra charge for overtime; otherwise, there would be no eight-hour day, the work would go on at the same rate per hour just as long as the employer cared to work the men.

It has been amply demonstrated that eight hours' hard work is enough for any man and any hours he works more than eight, simply draw on his reserve energy and vitality, shortening his life and his available working years. It has also been proven that a man working eight hours is more efficient, does better work, and is in every way a better citizen than a man working longer hours.

The railroad train service employees in asking the railroad companies for an eight hour day, also ask for time and one-half overtime, but this extra rate is merely a "penalty" upon the railroads and is considered an effective method for preventing overtime. "Overtime" is commonly called "blood money", and saps the very life out of the employee. We trust that the public will consider the fact that it is the "overtime" and exposure that is "wearing out" the employees and prompts many employers to set their employees' age limit at 21 to 35. In other vocations a man can work at least 30 years—note the difference in railroad work. Considered in this way employees could, in exact justice, ask for twice their present rate of pay, but the employees are not seeking the "enormous increase," but desire better living conditions.

The physical and mental strain on train service employees, compelled to work long hours, is beyond comprehension by the average mind. Virtually all the accident and old-line insurance companies classify railroading as extra hazardous, many of them refusing to insure railway employees on account of the great risk of loss, and where these employees are injured, there is a definite limit set on the amount of the risk, and an extra charge is made to the insured.

In reality, the railway employee receives a less hourly rate of compensation than almost any other trade. A hod-carrier receives \$4.50 for eight hours or about 56 cents an hour. The highest paid train conductor receives 55 cents an hour. If the hod-carrier worked as many hours as the railway conductor he would draw a larger salary and could then be named by the railway as the "aristocrat of the labor world."

If the railroads complain that time-and-a-half means in some instances a decrease, let them avoid the increase by avoiding the overtime, for that is the desire and purpose of the employees.

The railroads claim there was an increase in wages to the men, of between 30 and 42 per cent from 1903 to 1914. This is partly true, but the price of living and the additional work required of the employees has more than offset it. Also, the said wage increase came mostly to the employees having regular assignments and established hours for service, but the very great majority of the employees, who work in the irregular freight service and are allowed to work the day if sufficient freight shipments come to hand, but who lose the day's work if the business does not come—these "irregular freight service" employees gained almost nothing, but were crowded back to an hourly compensation, instead of mileage basis, by excessively long trains; or, in other words, the railways, to recover the 1903 to 1914 wage increase gave each of their irregular freight

crews two trains to handle instead of one, and this not only deprived other crews of a train and their day's work, but kept the "double train" drugging along the railway until it has, in many places, become the practice of the railways to work the employee the 16 hours and merely allow them the eight hours rest, anywhere,

and then continue on with their "freight drag" as it is called by both officials and employees.

So the net result of this is really a decrease in the earnings of the great majority of employees, since they are forced from fast miles at so much per mile, to slow, long hours at the same rate per hour and handle two, and often three, trains where before they handled one, and many other duties added.

Some railways require the full 16 hours' work at all times, from their employees, and it seems that the only reasonable and humane solution for this practice must be the present movement. The railways declare that the employees are demanding a \$100,000,000 increase, but admit that upon many lines and in many places there will be but little change. There may be some considerable increase, but nothing like what the officials claim, and in the light of past experience the employees easily can predict from what source the railways will quickly recoup themselves; additional duties for employees is always a fertile field for retrenchment. But if the employees win what they ask for, the public will soon find them an improved class of workers and citizens, and along with this, the public will also secure an improved railway service and prompt freight movement.

The railroads are circulating printed statements showing names of train service employees who are being paid large wages, and they are doing this to lead the public to believe that, because a few men are earning large salaries, it is an example of what the average train service man is getting. Invariably the men whose names appear upon the lists as examples of large salaries being paid to railway train employees are men engaged in fast passenger runs and are exceptional cases. They should not be used as examples of what the average train service employee gets, because in the present demand for an eight-hour day the passenger service is not in-

The public who do not always understand railway conditions and railway workers hear only the railway side of the story. In the railway talk of moving terminals there is but little to heed. The railways can expedite their freight service and continue with their present terminals if they really wish to do so. In some

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few cases there may be a couple of hours overtime.

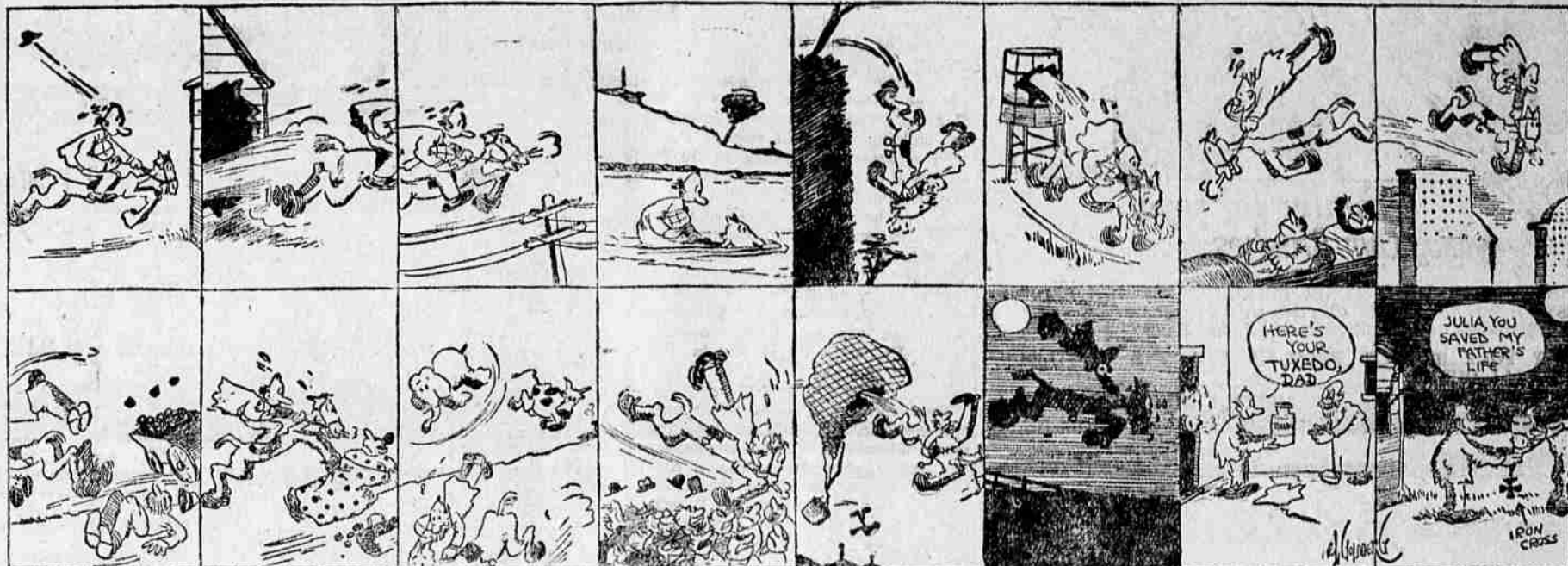
When an engineer has drawn a check for \$263 and a conductor a check for \$247 for a month's work, the railway may call attention to this, but neglect to say that these men worked 15 hours and 25 minutes a day for every day in the month and secured most of their sleep in a box

car "caboose" out along the line. Later, when these men lay off to recuperate, their big check must, of course, dwindle, and soon these men are broken down and are dumped on the "scrap heap" with the other old machinery, and may be taken in by some kindly relative or perhaps find room in some distant "home" maintained by the employees organizations. Thus

they conclude their days—these soldiers of the great transportation army these men who have safely transported countless numbers of passengers and endless trains of freight. Though the engines and cars become larger and yet larger, and though the trains become even longer, and though the

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