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THE FORUM

BROTHERHOODS ISSUE STATEMENT... Cleveland, Ohio, July 1, 1916. In an effort to make their position clear to the public, the Transportation Brotherhoods have issued the following statement relative to the conference between the Employee's Committee and the Railway Managers, recently held in New York City. The Employee's Committee met this...

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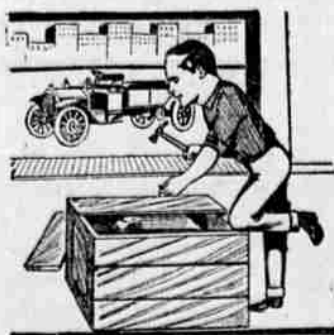
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Railway Managers Committee and presented their demands for an eight-hour work day with a penalty for overtime, of time and a half pay.

The Managers Committee refused to grant these demands and did not submit any definite counter-proposition to the employees.

The Managers did discuss what they termed a "tentative proposal," which did not take into consideration the plain fact that freight train crews are piece workers and they are paid to perform a certain definite service of moving a train from one end of a division to the other and when they have performed this piece work, they have done what they were paid to do, regardless of whether it was done in less than eight hours.

What the men want, is a chance to perform this piece work in all cases, in eight hours or less.

Having no penalty for the use of overtime, the railroad companies now use the men continuously from 12 to 20 hours.

The Interstate Commerce Commission has no authority under the law to regulate wages of employees any more than it has to regulate the price of steel rails and other supplies purchased by the railroad companies. Therefore, any investigation made by the Interstate Commerce into the subject of wages would come to naught, for the reason that the Commission has no power to settle the matter.

Under the Newlands Arbitration Law, it is distinctly provided that arbitration can be set in operation "when a strike is threatened."

No man has a right to say that a "strike is threatened," until the result of the strike vote, now being taken, is ascertained. The will of the employees must be known before a strike can be threatened.

If the Interstate Commerce Commission would assume the responsibility of agreeing that the demands of the men should be met, it would clearly be up to the commission to provide the means of meeting any increased cost of operation.

The railways of course, would like to put the Interstate Commerce Commission under this obligation to grant increased freight rates.

If it is right and proper for the freight train employees to go into an arbitration as to whether they shall be worked excessive hours and as to what they shall sell their labor for, then it would only be consistent for the railway car and engine builders and railway supply dealers to agree to arbitrate with the railroads as to the price the railroads should pay for these things.

The principle objection, however, of the employees to arbitration, would be on the ground of the inability to secure impartial arbitrators who were sufficiently acquainted with the technicalities of a problem of this kind.

In a previous arbitration between the employees and the companies, the man who was acting as neutral arbitrator was a corporation lawyer representing large vested interests, owners of railroad securities and who had appeared in numerous cases at Attorney of Record for the Standard Oil Company.

Some Things To Remember Mr. Farmers and Mr. Merchant: Do you realize that from eighty to ninety per cent of the engineers and trainmen employed on the railways of the United States are the sons of farmers, and that they are dependent upon the producers for their sustenance? These same employees, engineers, firemen, conductors, brakemen and yardmen, are citizens of your cities, own homes, pay taxes, and in all other ways help to support the communities in which they live.

Railway train-service employees are not paid a monthly salary, but are paid by the mile—they are piece-workers, and their earning capacity is based upon the number of miles they are able to make. For the time they are required to lay away from home at the other end of their runs they receive nothing. Completing a 100-mile run away from home, they are required to wait for a train to make the return trip, sometimes from 12 to 22 hours, which costs them money for meals and living, while the upkeep of the home goes on just the same.

Twelve and one-half miles per hour would get your freight over a 100-mile division in eight hours, and even that, in comparison with transportation such as automobiles and auto trucks, is not very fast service.

Freight cars have grown in length from 28 to 40 and 50 feet in the past twenty years, and where formerly it took 24 loads to make a train, it now requires from 50 to 100. One crew is now doing the work that formerly was done by three or four crews, and this one crew does not receive pay commensurate with the increased work.

There are no regular hours for freight train crews. They work when they are needed. They must remain within calling distance even when off duty, and just when they will be called to go out it is difficult to determine.

Seventy-eight per cent of the freight mileage in the Western territory is now operated on the 123 miles per hour speed basis, according to the railroads' own figures. If the shorter work day becomes operative on all the roads it will make no more difference to any of them than it has to the roads that have already adopted it by agreement or operation.

Three Hundred and Fifty Thousand Men—Railroad Engineers, Firemen, Conductors, Brakemen, Yardmen, and Engine Hostlers, with approximately one million three hundred thousand women and children to support, ask for an eight hour day. Compelled to work long hours under a terrific strain, their lives are shortened, their health shattered.

Give this great army of industry a square deal—eight hours' work—eight hours' sleep—eight hours' relaxation. It will make better citizens.

Hon. Frank B. Willis, governor of Ohio, says: "The man who toils will do more work and better work in eight hours than in fourteen; it will mean greater ability, greater energy and greater enthusiasm for his work."

Let us not forget the men whose hands are on the throttle, and those who have actual charge of the trains hurrying through the night to their several destinations."

Hon. William C. Redfield, secretary of commerce, says: "The cry for shorter hours of labor is a normal protest against the fatigue that destroys."

"Do not hesitate to say, that hours that overstrain the nerves and muscles of our people, injure us all, and that a sufficient rest is as much a reasonable right, as is a living wage."—The New Industrial Day. THE UNITED BROTHERHOODS.

Strange Disease Attacks Soldiers

London, June 20.—(By Mail)—Men with their mouths crammed with cotton to keep their cheeks from touching their teeth or their tongues are becoming more or less familiar sights in the military hospitals in Europe.

A new unnamed disease has made its appearance and, though cures for it have been established, its nature is not fully understood. It exists among the Germans as well as among the allies. German prisoners say that the German medical men also are mystified by this latest human ailment. It is believed the trench rats carry the unknown germ, which has not yet been isolated.

Major Dr. Sidney McCallin, formerly of Chicago, but recently attached to the British R. A. M. C. has studied the new disease in the laboratory of the Chicago medical unit. The first symptom is the growth of a white lining in the mouth and throat. This resembles diphtheria. The inside of the mouth becomes painfully sensitive and at the climax of the attack the entire mouth is padded with cotton. After the climax, recovery is rapid.

"Trench mouth" is the popular name of the ailment but the British Tommies call it the "foot and mouth disease," or sometimes "lumpy jaw."

Some Nightingale!

London, June 20.—(By Mail)—Mrs. Louis George's Indiana farm chickens which associated with sparrows so consistently that they learned to hop instead of walk, have created discussion in a London newspaper as to the curious traits of animal life.

Printing the Indiana chicken story, the London Star cites another strange freak which occurred in London, concerning a fish, a plaice, a flat fish peculiar to the salt water of the North Sea.

"The plaice was placed in a tank of salt water in a cool place. Its guardian extracted a spoonful of salt water each day and replaced a spoonful of fresh water. Eventually, the water became all fresh and the plaice didn't notice it.

"Then the guardian extracted the fresh water a spoonful each day until the fish became a dry-land fish. Then he put the fish in a birdcage and it began to sing."

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