

The Dalles Daily Chronicle.

The only Republican Daily Newspaper on Wasco County.

EASTERN OFFICE—230 to 234 Temple Court, N. Y. City. E. KATZ, Agent.

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SATURDAY - DECEMBER 11, 1897

A DEMAND OF HUMANITY.

The interstate commerce committee, in the face of strong protest from labor organizations in various quarters, has decided to extend for a period of two years the time in which railroads must place automatic coupling appliances upon all of their cars. The act of congress of March 2, 1893, commonly known as the safety appliance act, decreed that all the cars of all the railway companies should be thus equipped by 1898, a period of full five years being allowed in which to complete the change. This was deemed ample at the time, and it doubtless would have proved ample had not the railway companies believed, with good reason, that extension of time could be secured. Be this as it may, the limit has nearly expired, the railway companies have not met the conditions imposed by the act, and the time has been extended.

Railway employes, who may be said literally to have vital interests at stake, demur, or are supposed to demur through the protest of labor organizations, against this extension as placing the humanities in the scale against the cost of the equipment ordered. It is asserted that the companies have had ample time to equip their cars with these life and limb-saving devices, and that the plea that they cannot afford the expense at this time is one that should have no weight against the fact that every year's delay costs the lives of hundreds of trainmen and causes the injury, more or less serious, of thousands. It is believed that the automatic couplers, when universally used, will greatly reduce the number of these deaths and disasters. It is certain that a vast number of brakemen have been killed or maimed in the use of the old system of hand-coupling, and the substitution of the automatic coupler is urged as a matter of humanity, in the shortest possible space of time.

Recognizing the vast outlay incident to this substitution, and taking into consideration the fact that the cars of the different railway systems are, in fulfillment of the demands of interstate commerce, widely scattered, and that business constantly presses, a period supposed to be ample for making the change was allowed. This the railroad companies maintain, under all the circumstances, was not long enough, while the representatives of the trainmen's interests assert the contrary and charge dilatory tactics, backed by their supposed influence upon legislation to secure an extension of time, upon the railroad companies.

Statistics showing the killed and injured among trainmen in charge of freight trains during the past years are cited as showing an urgency for the equipment of freight cars with automatic couplers that brook no delay. On the railroads operated in the state of Pennsylvania alone last year no fewer than 500 men were killed, and 10,591 injured in the freight service, while the figures representing the grand total of lives destroyed and injuries suffered among this class of employes are truly appalling. The belief that these casualties will be decimated by the general use of the automatic coupler is widespread and well founded. Human life is the most important consideration in this matter. It is perhaps useless to inquire how whether the committee has needlessly sacrificed safety of life and limb to

the solicitations of the companies. But it is certain another extension should not be allowed. When the two years are up, the penalties should be enforced.—Oregonian.

To the Traveling Public.

We wish to say that the new and centrally located house, formerly known as the Red Front hotel, has recently changed hands, and will hereafter be known as the Central Hotel, located at the corner of Second and Jefferson streets, one block from the O. R. & N. depot, Mrs. E. CAMPBELL, Mrs. M. McARTHUR, Propes.

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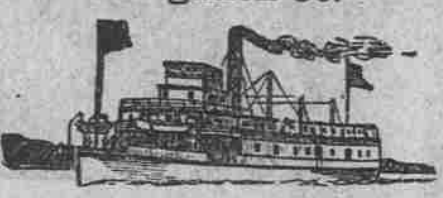


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