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### RAILROAD ACCIDENTS

Within the last two or three years railroad accidents in the United States have increased in gravity to a marked degree, and the casualties of travel in this country have never been more serious than in the opening weeks of 1907. Under a law of congress, passed six years ago, it is the duty of the proper officers of railroads to make, under oath, to the interstate commerce commission a monthly report of collisions of trains, derailments and all accidents to passengers or employes on duty, with the causes and other details. These facts are published quarterly in a government bulletin, and contain a great deal of explicit information that could not be obtained but for this legal requirement. It is certainly disquieting to know that over 4,000 passengers and employes are killed annually on the railroads of the United States. The latest quarterly bulletin covers the months of July, August and September, 1906. During the period of three months named, 1,182 passengers and employes were killed from all causes, an average of nearly 13 every day. The fatalities for the quarter included 52 passengers killed in train accidents, and 58 from other causes, while 215 employes were killed in train accidents and 81 in coupling. For the preceding quarter, 933 passengers and employes were killed, and for the corresponding quarter a year ago the number was 1,053.

The total number of collisions and derailments in the three months ending September 30 last was 3,672, of which 470 affected passenger trains. There were 1,891 collisions and 1,781 derailments, causing a damage to railroad property of \$2,932,760. In the statement of causes are predominant mistakes, neglect or recklessness. The most destructive accident, a head-on collision between a passenger train and a freight, had a casualty list of 17 killed, 56 injured. It was the result of a misunderstanding between the night operator and the day operator, who had just gone on duty. The latter shouted through a window, without waiting for the final approval, and sent the train to destruction. This man had been in the company's employ four years. A collision that killed 7 and injured 12 was due to the excessive speed of a freight train running under a permissive signal. Another collision was caused by an engineman who forgetfully pocketed an order without reading it. He had been on duty over thirty-nine hours. An operator unaccountably wrote the name of a wrong station and caused a fatal collision. A derailment, responsible for a list of 9 killed, 43 injured, was the result of a misplaced switch, the switch light having been extinguished by the wind, and the train approaching at sixty miles an hour.

Here is one of the causes of collisions as set forth: "Signalman disconnected interlocking so that signals could be set clear for both roads at the same time and went out for a social evening. While he was gone yardmen disobeyed his verbal instructions not to enter upon the crossing." In other cases the block signal operator became confused and gave a false signal; a flagman mistook a go-out signal; operator handed conductor the wrong order; dispatcher forgot two extra trains and sent meeting orders to neither; conductor, engineman and flagman forgot meeting order; and the conductor was asleep in the caboose when the collision occurred; train stalled 35 minutes failed to flag; switch tender forgot one of his switches; section foreman failed to go out promptly in storm. In nearly all this long array of collisions and derailments there was carelessness, oversights and frequently overwork. At least 90 per cent of the accidents would have been prevented by competent, alert service. It is in this respect evidently that railroad managers must apply correctives.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

### STATE AND NATION

There are, as Mr. Bryan shows, two serious objections to the transfer to the national capital of the business now transacted at the state capitals. The first is that congress could not do the work. And the second is that congress could not have the knowledge necessary to legislate wisely. It is strange that this demand for increasing the central power should have come at the very time when there is a movement on foot to relieve the British parliament of some of its burdens. Mr. Bryan suggests one thought, tho he does not amplify it, which seems to us important, and of which little has been made. And that is that it is not for the federal government to assume new power, but for the state governments, if they see fit, to bestow it. All the powers that the central government has were given to it by the people or by the states. What were not given were reserved, and they belong to the people and the states. As Mr. Bryan says, if new powers are to be granted it must be by constitutional amendment ratified by the people.

We have a right to consider another tendency that has developed with our demand for a stronger government, and that is the one in the direction of the exalting of the power of the executive. Even congress, which ought to be jealous of its power, has grown careless and indifferent. It turns over the whole canal question to the president, permits itself to be overruled by him, and only the other day passed a law empowering him to exclude immigrants when he should think it proper to do so! If we are going to have a "strong" government, we might as well make up our minds to a weak congress, a controlled judiciary, and an all-powerful president. This may be a strong government, but it is not popular government. — Indianapolis News.

### HE DRANK THE LIBRETTO

A student of human nature who is also a lover of music and had been attending all the performances of the grand opera had been getting considerable entertainment out of the audiences, says the Philadelphia Record. The other evening he says he observed a fashionable-looking woman accompanied by a man who might have been her country cousin; and as he sat very close to them he heard some of their conversation. When the curtain fell at the end of the first act the woman turned to her companion and said: "Wouldn't you have time to go out and get a libretto?"

The man looked puzzled for a moment, but finally the light seemed to break, and smiling in a gratified way he said:

"Oh, yes."  
Then he went out.

"Where is the libretto?" asked the woman when he returned.  
"Oh, did you want one, too?" he said, looking puzzled once more.  
"No, of course not," was the reply; "yours will do for both of us. Where is it?"  
"Why," stammered the man, "I drank mine at the bar."

### BISMARCK'S LOVE OF AUTHORITY

At 9 p. m. we took tea with the King. I was seated opposite him, when a footman came and whispered in my ear that Bismarck desired to see me. Great embarrassment! Puckler having told me I might leave the table, I did so. The King inquired what was the matter, and permitted me to go. Bismarck had nothing of particular importance to tell me, and I suspect that he only wanted to show that he had the right to send for his employees even when they were with the King. —From the Hatzfeldt Letters.

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