

EDITORIAL

## IMPERIUM IN IMPERIO.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A**RE the figures, published in the current number of the *Locomotive Firemen's Magazine*, on "The Progress of American Railways" intentionally given the leading place in which they are found? or is that merely a matter of accident? Be that as it may, they tell in their dumb eloquence a tale of no slight, aye, of deep political and social import. They show that an Empire has been slowly rising within the Empire of the United States, and that to-day the new and privately owned Empire, virtually overshadows the Nation, and holds it by the throat.

Let's take just a few of these figures, they'll tell the tale quite plastically.

Eight years ago the earnings of the American railroads were \$826,599,690; to-day they are \$1,542,725,832. Should not these figures, in and of themselves, tell the tale in full the following additional ones must.

The revenues of the United States Government in 1902 were \$918,295,141; the increase alone of the earnings of our railways since 1894 was, accordingly, \$716,126,142, or barely \$200,000,000 less than the total present revenues of the Government. In other words, the Railroad Empire that has been rising under the shadow of the National Empire gained upon this during the last eight years, and to-day overshadows it with a weight of purse \$624,430,691 larger than that of the Nation itself.

Nor is that all. The track of empire is ever marked by two accompanying phenomena: they are the two poles of the same battery:—

- 1° A decreasing number of rulers; and
- 2° An increasing number of ruled and dependents.

On these points also the tables referred to throw light.

In 1895 there were 5,407 "General Officers," that is to say, leading stockholders

who have control. In 1891 the figure of these had shrunk to 4,780. “Consolidations”—the industrial euphonic name for conquests—had wiped out 627 railroad princelets and kinglets. Nor did the survivors, within their own circle, fail to draw the immediate benefit. Notwithstanding there were fewer of them, their salaries increased: in 1895, these aggregated \$12,234,686, in 1901 they aggregated \$13,141,428,—exclusive, of course, of the increased dividends.

While this process was going on at one pole, at the other, the phenomena that theory leads one to expect are found in fact. The number of employes increased all along the line, and in point of earnings the figures tell the tale, crushingly in some lines, humorously in others. Telegraph operators and despatchers (the high-salaried privileged ones included)—of whom there were 20,984 in 1894, earning a total of \$13,615,311, or less than \$654 apiece—came down with a thud. In 1902 their force had risen to 26,606 with an aggregate wage of \$17,152,034, or not quite \$645,—a drop of \$9. On the other hand, while the salaries, to say nothing of the dividends, of the “General Officers” mount up by the thousands, \$2.63 more a year is the TREMENDOUS INCREASE registered by the workers, a tremendousness of increase that is mainly due to a number of privileged and highly salaried persons being lumped in with the regulation wage earner. A ludicrous tremendousness!

The National Government—the Empire we are said to be living under—is thus dwarfed by an Empire that has grown within it and that now lashes its subjects with rods of scorpions, and that is a private Empire, at that! And yet there are those—the Crown and Nobility in this upstart Empire—who cry out anathema against the Socialist, as a “traitor to the Government,” when he, as he is doing, drills the forces of the land to overthrow the upstart privateer!

As Lincoln said of old of a house divided against itself that it could not stand, so the Socialist says to-day that an “Empire within an Empire” cannot continue. As in the instance of Lincoln, the tramp of the approaching armies, that were to establish harmony in the then divided house and up-root chattel slavery, could be heard when he uttered the words; so to-day, the tramp of the multitudes is distinctly upon the air, approaching to put an end to the present monstrosity, and rear the Socialist Republic.

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