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EDITORIAL

A JOB FOR THE HIGH-PRIESTS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

A W. McLIMONT, electrical engineer and witness for the Public Service Commission, should be hanged, drawn and quartered as an enemy of the capitalist goddesses, Rights of Property and Scattered Responsibility.

The goddesses to whom McLimont has dared offer his sacrilege are not waning deities, towards whom some laxity of worship might be pardoned. On the contrary. The goddess Scattered Responsibility but lately received a new patch of gilt paint from Justice Kellogg, who instructed the jury on the Woodlawn disaster to acquit Vice-President and General Manager Smith, of the New York Central, because the responsibility for running the trains was shared by so many persons that none of it should be fastened upon him. The Goddess Rights of Property was more recently refurbished and furnished with a new halo by Judge Hough of the U.S. Circuit Court, who declared the 80-cent gas law unconstitutional on the ground that it was confiscatory and in violation of the rights of property.

In the face, then, of these two still puissant and adored goddesses has engineer McLimont dared to fly with his report to the Public Service Commission on the condition of the rolling stock of the New York City surface lines. In his report McLimont gives details of the shameful and dangerous condition of the street cars as follows:

At the 146th street car barns Car 1,096, the first car inspected, was found in the following condition: The truck frame was cracked and sagging, the coat guard rail was broken, the curtain cords were broken, two ventilator glasses had been broken, the running board was weak, some of the grab handles were loose, the glass in the headlight was broken, one lamp guard was missing and the others bent, the truck rattled, the rain gutters were bent, and some of the stanchions were broken.

At the same car barn closed car 1,842 was found to have no vestibule front, the circuit breaker box was broken, the gear case was worn through, the axle bearing was shifted, one hand hole cover was gone, the empty switch cover was gone, the lamp circuit switch cover was gone, the brake handles rattled, the journal box was broken, and the truck frame was broken.

And summing up, he says:

The responsibility for the present objectionable operating conditions, also for the present deteriorated state of the installation, must be traced to the higher responsible heads rather than to incapable employes.

In the latter statement the daring engineer does nothing less than offer a hideous act of irreverence to Scattered Responsibility. In the whole purpose of his report, which is to compel proper and adequate repairs to be made, he equally heinously attacks the sacred majesty of Rights of Property—for would not the cost of these repairs be “confiscatory and in violation of property rights”? The highpriests of these outraged goddesses should straightway get hot the iron pincers, grind the knife, and erect the gibbet for McLimont. He is a dangerous heretic.

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

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