

**RAILROAD ACCIDENTS,
THEIR CAUSE AND
PREVENTION; PP. 1-109**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649439577

Railroad Accidents, Their Cause and Prevention; pp. 1-109 by R. C. Richards

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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R. C. RICHARDS

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Respectfully BY
R. C. RICHARDS



Published by
THE ASSOCIATION OF RAILWAY CLAIM AGENTS

1906

Transport.

02-21-46 1.0.1

Introduction

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Railroad Accidents

Their Cause and Prevention

Much has been said and written during recent years about the increasing number of railroad accidents in this country—their cause and what action should be taken by the government, the railroads and the employees to reduce them and the consequent loss of life and limb resulting therefrom. Believing that if the cause of our many accidents were properly understood more care would be taken by the corporations, employees and persons at fault to reduce the number, I shall try to point out in the following pages what investigation has shown me to be the cause of many accidents and how their reoccurrence could, I think, be prevented.

In the transaction of the business of a railroad its first and highest duty is to the passengers, to carry them safely and speedily; next, to take care of the property entrusted to it for transportation, and for which it is practically an insurer against everything but the act of God or the public enemy, and deliver it with reasonable dispatch to the consignee in practically the same condition as that in which it is received.

It is a self-evident proposition that the nearer the railroads come to performing this duty, the fewer losses and claims for damages they will have to pay, and, as a matter of course, the more money there will be left with which to pay wages, interest, dividends, and make improvements. So it behooves all, who are working for those wages, to do everything they can to help carry on the business properly and correctly in order that the interest of the companies hiring them, as well as their individual interest, will be subserved, and for the more important reason of causing as little suffering, pain, and sorrow to those who by accident may be maimed or killed, which always brings trouble and sorrow to the victim as well as to his family, and frequently results in untold suffering and privation to the widows and children.

The report of the Interstate Commerce Commission shows that for the year ending June 30, 1904, there were

441 passengers killed.
3,632 employees killed.
839 not trespassers killed.
5,105 trespassers killed.
9,111 passengers injured.
67,067 employees injured.
2,499 not trespassers injured.
5,194 trespassers injured.

Making 10,017 killed and 83,871 injured, or a total of killed and injured of 93,888, many times over the casualties of our last war, and all the roads seem to have done their share of this havoc.

We should strive to see if in the coming year we

cannot reduce the number, so that the casualties reported, and consequent loss to the companies, will be reduced, considering the number of employees, mileage, earnings, number of trains run, persons and property transported, and the territory traversed, and for the purpose of bringing this matter before you in a proper light I will call attention to a few of the many accidents which have recently occurred, which, with proper care and the use of good judgment, would have been avoided and fewer persons left to go through life crippled, fewer homes made desolate and fatherless, and sometimes motherless, and at the same time the money which has been necessarily paid out to settle the claims saved to the companies, and, consequently, just so much more money left in the treasury to pay for wages, interest, dividends, and betterments.

Taking into consideration the safety appliances installed by the railroads since 1898, the improvement in track and equipment, and the increase in wages paid, with even the same degree of care on the part of employees, the number of accidents should have decreased, but on the contrary they show an actual percentage of increase higher than that of earnings, and if the employees are onto their jobs they ought to and must find a way to reduce the number of such cases and consequent expense to the companies.

For the purpose of showing that the employees are the persons most vitally interested in this matter, as upon them falls the major part of the fatalities and injuries resulting from such accidents and upon themselves and families the suffering and pain which