

**CONSERVATION OF MEN:
ADDRESS TO THE OPERATING
MEN OF THE CHICAGO & NORTH
WESTERN RAILWAY ON THE
PREVENTION OF ACCIDENTS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649424641

Conservation of Men: Address to the Operating Men of the Chicago & North Western Railway
on the Prevention of Accidents by Ralph C. Richards

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Cover @ 2017

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RALPH C. RICHARDS

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Conservation of Men

ADDRESS

To The Operating Men Of The Chicago & North
Western Railway On The Prevention
Of Accidents

BY

RALPH C. RICHARDS

UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

1910

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By Ralph C. Richards

TO ALL
ABOUT THE

**Remember, It Is Better to Cause a
Delay Than to Cause an Accident**

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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

CONSERVATION OF MEN

We who are here today are a small part of the great army of men working for the North Western Railroad. We forty-thousand men working for the North Western are a small part of the great army of men who are working on all the railroads of the United States. The North Western Railroad like almost all great enterprises, started in a small way, with a handful of men and about one hundred and ninety miles of track. That was fifty-one years ago. Today we have forty or fifty-thousand men, eight thousand miles of track, fifteen hundred engines and I will not attempt to say how many thousand cars. The business of the company has increased every year with a few exceptions during this fifty years, the force of men employed has increased nearly every year, but the thing that has increased out of all proportion to the business and to the number of men employed, are the accidents and the personal injuries. This is not only true of our road which we claim to be the best road, where we claim to have the best men, but it is true of all the other railroads in the country.

Now, it is because of this enormous increase in the loss of life occasioned by these railroad accidents, because of the enormous increase in personal injuries which do not result in death, because every fifty minutes there is some man killed on the railroads in the United States, and thirty per cent of

them are you men, and while I am talking here to-day there may be a man killed on our road; because every five minutes there is some one injured on the railroads in the United States, and eighty per cent of them are you people; because every fifty minutes some one is injured on the North Western Railroad and eighty per cent of them are you people; because every twenty-four hours in every day of the three hundred and sixty-five days of the past year, except twelve, some one was killed on the North Western Railroad; because during the last twelve months the number of fatalities to employes, not passengers, not outsiders, but employes, increased thirty-five per cent; because the number of personal injuries which did not result fatally increased twenty-eight per cent last year over the year before; because we people on the North Western Railroad, during the last ten or fifteen years have been going around patting ourselves on the back and saying we were the whole show and that we could transact our business better and safer than anybody else, whereas we were going down to the foot of the column. Because of all these things the management of the company have asked me to come here and tell you about it, to tell you this story which is being acted every day.

Think of it! Every third day some employe is killed on the North Western Railroad, and every fifty minutes one of you men are injured, not passengers, not outsiders, but you employes. Now isn't it high time that you men who are paying this awful toll, remember it isn't the company, it isn't the officers, it isn't the passengers or the people who

are crossing our tracks that are paying this toll, it is you people, you employes of the road. It is not a question of dollars and cents, it is just a question of saving human life, the most valuable thing in the world, and when once it is gone can never be brought back. It is trying to save men from losing their legs or their arms that can never be put back, trying to save making widows and orphans, trying to save destitution and misery. The officers can't do this, the laws can not do it, there is no one to do it but just you, and if you will, you can do it by turning over your hand.

To me these awful figures of death and calamity put together are appalling. Even I, who have been in this business all my life, didn't realize how bad it was, and all of these bad things come to me you know, and have been coming to me for the last quarter of a century.

The figures are made up by the Interstate Commerce Commission down in Washington from reports given them by every railroad in the country. We are required by law to report all personal injuries, and all accidents, and you can depend upon it that no personal injuries or accidents are reported to the Interstate Commerce Commission that do not occur. None of us care to make our record worse than it is, and God knows it is bad enough.

Now in regard to these figures. I wish I could carry them in my head because I hate to read anything, but these figures are so appalling that I want to be accurate, and so I am going to read them to you. During the ten years that the railroads have been making these reports to the Interstate

Commerce Commission, there were eight hundred and sixty-eight thousand and three people, not eight thousand, not eighty-six thousand, but eight hundred and sixty-eight thousand and three people killed and injured in the United States during this time when we have the sign of "safety" over our door. Of this number, during the ten year period, there were ninety-four thousand, three hundred and ninety killed; more men than were killed on our side in all of the battles of that terrible war thirty-five or forty years ago between the north and the south, more than were killed in the war when we went out to kill each other. During ten years, in the pursuit of a peaceful industry we have killed more people than were killed in a five-years' war, and thirty-two thousand nine hundred and thirty-six of them, not hundreds, but thousands, were you people, were railroad employes like you and I.

There were seven hundred and seventy-seven thousand, six hundred and thirteen people injured in the ten years and six hundred and eight thousand three hundred and twenty-five were railroad men; they were not passengers, they were not people trespassing on the tracks, they were not people crossing the tracks, but just you people. During this period the North Western Railroad which we claim is the best road and has the best men, has done its share of the havoc. In ten years we killed twenty-six hundred and fifty-five people, equal to three regiments of soldiers, and seven hundred and thirty-five of them were you people, were your brothers, your sons and your fathers, your next-door neighbors. In ten years we North West-