

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 8, NO. 169.

NEW YORK, MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1907.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

WHY THEY DO IT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ALL hail the Chicago Telephone Co.! It is out as the latest exponent of a “new departure” in the way of treating its wage workers. To make sure that it does not hide the light of its philanthropy under the bushel of non-publicity, it has issued a neat little booklet telling of its humanitarian “departure,” and illustrated with shimmering photographs making clear the beauties of the scheme as worked out in its seventeen Chicago exchanges.

It has “established lunch rooms and rest rooms” for its female employes; in these rest rooms “beautiful pictures adorn the walls, many of these being prizes offered by the company for efficiency”; at outlying exchanges “garden spots are seen which are tastily kept, and in which a large variety of flowers are grown, preference being given to the perennials”; for the exchange now building at Larrabee street “a roof garden is planned”; in short, the Chicago Telephone Co. is disposed “to impress upon the employe that he is not considered merely as a part of the machinery, but is looked upon as a sentient being,” etc., etc.

Is this “impressing” done in the brotherly attempt to lighten the woes of wage slavery for its unfortunate victims? Is it the endeavor of an unfortunate person to bear the burdens of his companions in toil, or even the sincere effort of a more fortunately placed lover of his fellow men in behalf of those not so well placed? Does it in any way look toward lessening or removing the yoke of wage slavery by which these overworked telephone girls and men are harnessed to the car of private exploitation? Does it even remotely contemplate the emancipation of these workers from their merchandise condition in the labor market, and making of them free men and women?

None of these! It is but a scheme to keep the workers docile in the traces, and suck out of them an ever larger percentage of the wealth they create. Listen to the

statement of the tender-hearted company itself:

“The Chicago Telephone Co. makes no claims to philanthropy for what it has done by way of furnishing good working conditions for its female employes. With us it is merely a matter of business. Experience and careful study of the industrial problem have shown us that the best results from a business man’s standpoint are obtained where proper and sanitary and healthy conditions are observed.”

Often has *The People* been the cause of tooth-grinding rage to the owners and superintendents of capitalist profit-mills because of its exposes of what really lay behind “welfare work,” “employes’ relief,” “railroad Y.M.C.A.s” and kindred schemes of “doping” the workers into intenser labor as six-day bicycle riders are kept with morphine and other “dope” up to the terrific strain of the nerve-racking race. These same superintendents and factory owners should now turn their enraged attention to the Chicago Telephone Co., for it has at last officially given away the secret of why they do it.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded November 2009

slpns@slp.org