

6157 N. Lawrence Street
Philadelphia, Penna.
September 2nd, 1937.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
New York City, N.Y.

Dear Miss Tarbell;

My quarry is the Pennsylvania Railroad, and you made such a clean sweep in the matter of Standard Oil that I am hopeful you may feel as I do, when you know how completely powerless are P.R.R. employees to protect their lives while working with defective equipment, and the utter brutality of P.R.R. management toward survivors of men killed in the service.

The situation I would bring to your attention merits a sweeping investigation, the court of Public Opinion is the only one in which so powerful a corporation can be successfully challenged.

While I have but one thing to gain, the truth as to how my husband met his death, the benefits to living employees and the survivors of those who may be killed in the future, are beyond computing, should it be possible to compel P.R.R. to properly safeguard the lives of its employees and to adhere to the law in the matter of men killed in the service. If an individual killed another and asked a coroner to issue a death certificate on his say-so without any investigation whatsoever, he would stand a slim chance of getting away with it, yet P.R.R. clears away every evidence of the mishap, including all the witnesses, an official hands over the body and a story to suit the Company's purpose, and the law is satisfied.

I believe the circumstances of my husband's death, with the material available to prove the report to the I.C.C. false, make this about as perfect a case as could be desired for investigation. In the almost two years which have elapsed I have found it impossible to get an investigation. I made settlement with the Company at its own figure and asked, as a matter of common humanity, for the details as to my husband's death. I am told, by both the P.R.R. officials and by the attorney I most unwisely employed to attend to the necessary legal formalities, that I have no right whatever either to ask or know how my husband died.

Neither Washington nor Harrisburg has any authority in the matter, so I am told. Is the Pennsylvania Railroad America's supreme power.?

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The I.C.C. has claimed to be short of sufficient inspectors and to have no authority to investigate the accident. Mr. Hagerty, secretary to Mr. Eastman, co-ordinator of railroads, had no authority and his department was about to be done away with-this was early last year. Everywhere the story was the same.

On this next Saturday the expiration of two years after my husband's death will end my right to sue in the state of N.Y. While the chances of success are slim, to ask for the settlement already made to be set aside on the grounds of fraud, I would like if possible to keep this avenue open, in the hope that this might be made a test case.

No report was made to the Bureau of Engine Inspection. Mr. Conway simply went out well and strong and was sent home dead and unrecognisable, tagged with a bill for the cost of removing his body from the Company's tracks. There was no wreck, as far as is known. Everything was covered and his fellow-employees muzzled.

It is a long story of trickery, frame-up and fraud, of wasted valuable human lives and large sums of money, loss to wives and children, to stockholders who lose not only skilled employees but the money which goes a small part in compensation to survivors, a vast sum to claims-agents and attorneys. New legislation to force proper safeguarding of human life and thoro investigation in every death in the service is a goal worth striving for and is desperately needed.

I see my husband as he told me of refusing responsibility for a defective engine offered him to make the trip over the main track from Enola, Pa. to New York (Jersey City) and as he said, "It is as much as a man's life is worth to take one of these engines over the road". This was but a few weeks before his death.

The Pennsylvania Railroad's monthly report of accidents and fatalities is an added incentive to action. It is a terrible thing to contemplate.

Yours very sincerely,


(Mrs. Bernard Conway.)

This week has been spent mostly in hospital with a young son operated on Monday last, hence the delay in answering your note. He is home again now, so Mother is back on the War! Path!