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EDITORIAL

“LIVEWOOD” AGAINST “DEADWOOD.”

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THE action of the Erie Railroad in demanding the resignation of the employes in its clerical force more than 35 years of age is but an instance of what is being put into practice with increasing frequency. Nor is the act whimsical or superficial. It is the overt manifestation of conditions whose roots shoot deep, aided by other surrounding evils.

It is not for naught that the latest census shows a marked increase of mortality in most occupations. Work has become so intense that the consumption of life-tissue is enormous. It is doubtful whether such a reduction of vitality during a day's toil could be sufficiently recouped, even by the best hygienic food, housing and clothing. Very doubtful it is that a body, whose vitality is pushed to the low level of the worker's vitality after a day's toil, is at all able to benefit by treatment. But there is no need of theorizing upon that. The earnings of the worker are too low to attempt positive recoupment with. His vitality sapped from day to day, he reaches at an early age a stage when he no longer can be of service. The move, heard of with increasing frequency, of employing and keeping only young men has this set of facts for its roots.

Other facts come in to add swing to the move. Due to a thousand and one causes, born of capitalist misrule, the competitive struggle for existence becomes ever intenser. Driven by this veritable prairie fire, first the sexes are pitted against one another, and then the ages. It calls the younger forces “livewood,” it induces these to contemn the older forces as “deadwood,” and the former trample down the latter, too eager for a crumb to stop and reflect that within shortly they themselves will be “deadwood,” in its turn trampled on by the new “livewood” that will be crowding forward.

Capitalism is burning the candle of the race at both ends. There is no “race

suicide,” there is “race murder” by capitalism. The age limit of the “livewood” is being pushed back and back, that of the “deadwood” is spreading forward and forward. Fortunately in the midst of this devastation that acorn of Socialism has grown to a lusty sapling oak, the promise of salvation.

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