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# The ORC and the B of RC

by Eugene V. Debs

Unsigned article in published in *Locomotive Firemen's Magazine*,  
vol. 15, no. 5 (May 1891), pg. 439.

The Order of Railway Conductors as originally organized, was by its constitution non-protective, or in more common parlance, was a *non*-striking order. But in the march of events, and under circumstances which forced the thoughts of the membership into new channels, the order, in convention at Rochester, NY, May 1890, eliminated the non-protective or anti-strike law from its constitution, which, without further action, left the order in a somewhat anomalous condition. There was no law opposed to strikes nor was there any law which under any conditions authorized strikes, and it is presumed, that at the annual convention of the order which meets in the city of St. Louis on the 12th of May [1891], the subject will receive special consideration, and that a definite policy will be adopted.

Prior to the Rochester convention of the ORC, another order of railway conductors was organized known as the Brotherhood of Railway Conductors. This new order was brought into existence by virtue of the fact that the ORC did not, and under its laws could not, protect its members when they were the victims of flagrant injustice, and throughout the entire history of railroading, no one class of employees have been subjected to greater wrongs than have been inflicted upon railway conductors.

The B of RC has sought during its brief career to remedy the wrongs complained of, and the victories it has won and the good it has accomplished bear eloquent testimony to the fact that there was a pressing demand for it.

The B of RC has had a phenomenal growth, and is regarded as one of the most aggressive and progressive orders of railway employees.

But the action of the ORC in convention at Rochester leads to the conclusion that at the St. Louis Convention the order will be made *protective*, in which case the two orders of railway conductors would be in harmony in policy and purposes.

Should the action of the ORC be such as we have intimated, the question arises, why have two orders? Why not consolidate? Why remain apart?

The Magazine is unable to suggest a reason why there should be two orders of railway conductors, having practically the same policy, any more than it could frame an argument in favor of two orders of locomotive firemen — and with the same policy and purposes guiding than animating them, we doubt if a rational objection to their consolidation could be formulated.

The ORC, in electing a Grand Chief in sympathy with protection, and whose administration of the affairs of the order evinces a clear comprehension of protection, leads naturally to the conclusion that the action of the order at St. Louis will be such as to emphasize the wisdom of having but one order of railway conductors in the country.

The legislation required to bring about the unification of the two organizations is simple and if the spirit of compromise should prevail and be permitted to exert its power, we shall look forward to the early consolidation of the two orders, a consummation which we do not doubt would be fruitful of lasting benefits.

*Edited by Tim Davenport*

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