
ORC Overwhelmingly Endorses Protection

by Eugene V. Debs

Published as "The ORC Convention: Protection Adopted by an Overwhelming Majority"
in *Locomotive Firemen's Magazine*, vol. 14, no. 6 (June 1890), pg. 534.

We have for several days held back going to press for the sole purpose of obtaining the latest possible reliable information relating to the action of the convention of the Order of Railway Conductors in session at Rochester, upon what is termed the "strike clause" of its constitution, as also to learn the name of the fortunate member who had won the position of Grand Chief. The wires have amply rewarded our patience and we are able to announce to our readers that the ORC in the matter of seeking redress for wrongs done its members, is now in line with all the great orders of railroad employees. The ORC has been in existence 22 years, but in the matter of protection started out upon an error; never did an order seek more assiduously to secure justice to its members by a mistaken conception of obligation and duty. It sought to conciliate corporations by yielding to their demands and though ceaselessly refused, it still held on to the old methods, its officers did not comprehend that new ideas and new forces had come to the front, and that a new dispensation had dawned. It was because of this fact that the Brotherhood of Railway Conductors, under the leadership of Grand Chief G.W. Howard, came into existence and now has thoroughly organized more than 60 lodges, and though in its very infancy, has been instrumental in winning a number of notable victories for its members, which have given it a national reputation. The splendid triumphs of the B of RC, we doubt not, exerted a beneficial influence upon the members of the ORC, but the rapid growth of the B of RC indicates that in the ranks of the conductors of the country there was deep seated unrest, and a determination to redeem the calling from accumulating stigmas; as a consequence they enlisted under the banner of the B of RC, an organization that has demonstrated its comprehension of the needs of railroad employees, and re-

alizing that in these times of colossal corporate power simple organization would not answer the demand, at the earliest practical day came into line under the laws of the federated orders. While we most heartily felicitate the ORC upon its emancipation from a mistake embedded in its Constitution, and wish it a successful career in demonstrating to the world the wisdom of its action and most cordially give it the right hand of fellowship, as an organization that in the future will *strike* when all other means of redress fail, we shall not abate in the least our zeal in promoting the success of the B of RC. It started right and with chivalric courage has upheld the right. It comprehended the necessity for an order of railway conductors in full accord with other orders of railway employees, and the organization now commands universal respect.

At this writing we are not advised as to the course the reconstructed ORC will pursue in regard to federation, but whatever may be its action, we do not hesitate to say that it has done a glorious work and having taken a wise step we do not doubt others will follow in the same direction. There are now two orders of railway conductors in existence. It will be for them to determine their future relations, and it may lie possible that in the not distant future, consolidation will occur. We have faith in the wisdom of the great body of railway employees demonstration follows demonstration in such rapid succession that a man must be steeped in misanthropy to doubt the triumph of the right. Where there is a will there is a way. and we are satisfied the conductors will find it.

We take this occasion to congratulate E.E. Clark, Esq., late Grand Senior Conductor upon his elevation to the chief executive office of his order. His advancement has been rapid, showing that his brother conductors have faith in his abilities to manage affairs, and to say that we wish him success in the performance of his arduous duties, but feebly expresses our felicitations.

We cannot afford to close this hasty resumé of topics suggested by the action of the conductors' convention, without wishing Bro. Wheaton, in his retirement, the peace and serenity which should come to all after years of hard work. There is still a demand for active, energetic men out of office, and should Bro. Wheaton desire to continue in the battle and in the storm, we shall hope his equipments may be such as to win victories, or, at any rate, to hold his own.