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# The Brotherhood of Railway Conductors and the Supreme Council of Federation

by Eugene V. Debs

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Federation is gaining strength continuously. From the start, there has never appeared in print a logical objection to the federation of the various organizations of railroad employees. There has never appeared anything, having the semblance of an argument, showing why federation should not be adopted by such organizations. The facts, the logic, the rationale, the wherefore and the reason why, have all been in favor of federation. As a result, the more federation has been discussed, the more firmly has the conclusion been established that federation is the *one thing* needful, the *one thing* desired to solve the vexatious problems forever confronting railroad employees.

In saying this, we are not unmindful of the fact that, here and there, have appeared objections relating to details — minutiae — but never an argument, nor anything approximating an argument, in opposition to federation. Under such circumstances it is not surprising that federation, once begun, not only held its own, but has moved forward in conquering power.

In this connection, and in demonstration of what we have said, we introduce the following circular notice of the International Brotherhood of Railway Conductors:

The Grand Division of the International  
Brotherhood of Railway Conductors,  
Office of the Grand Chief,  
Terre Haute, Ind, March 25, 1890.

To all Subordinate Lodges:  
Sirs and Brothers:—

You are hereby officially notified that in pursuance of the action taken by our First Annual Convention, the Brotherhood of Railway Conductors, through its proper representatives, made application to the Supreme Council of the Federated Orders of Railway Employees, and it gives me pleasure to announce that the said Brotherhood of Railway Conductors has been regularly admitted to said federated body, and now constitutes an important part of said organization, which embraces the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, and the Switchmen's Mutual Aid Association, as well as our own Brotherhood. Official announcement of the foregoing will be made in the official journals of the several organizations. The Brotherhood of Railway Conductors is now in perfect alliance with the best organizations of the times and its success is no longer and open question: all that is required is for each member throughout our jurisdiction to enter vigorously into the campaign that is now going forward and which will end only when the banner of the Brotherhood of Railway Conductors floats in triumph over every railroad system in the land.

Fraternally yours,

Attest: **G.W. Howard**, G.C.C.

**D.J. Carr**, G.S.&T.

The federated Brotherhoods now stand as follows:

**The Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen.**

**The Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen.**

**The Switchmen's Mutual Aid Association.**

**The International Brotherhood of Railway Conductors.**

These four Brotherhoods now constitute the *Supreme Council* of the federated orders, which is animated by the *supreme* desire to remove, as far as possible, every obstruction to progress and prosperity in the pathway of the organizations of railway employees.

The International Brotherhood of Railway Conductors, under the leadership of the gallant and far-seeing Col. G.W. Howard, saw that Railway Conductors needed *protection*, something they had never secured, and as a result, the Order has made the most flattering progress. The organization responded to a crying demand and its growth has been equal to the most sanguine expectations of its friends. From the initial movement, to the present, the Brotherhood of Railway

Conductors has displayed pluck and courage. Opposition has made it the more aggressive, developing staying qualities of the highest order.

Everything possible to be done by the older orders in the federated compact to help the Brotherhood of Railway Conductors should be done with a hearty good will, and we are satisfied will be done. The Lodges of all the federated orders should lend a helping hand to build it up and extend its beneficent sway. In this way, this helping one another, this watchful solicitude for each other's welfare, means, when the trials come, victory for the right.

All correspondence should be addressed to G.W. Howard, Grand Chief, B of RC, 121 South 13th Street, Terre Haute, Indiana.

*Edited by Tim Davenport*

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