
Meeting to Perfect Federation

by Eugene V. Debs

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On June 3rd [1889], the first Monday in the month, a meeting will be held in the city of Chicago for the purpose of perfecting a federative compact between the Brotherhoods of Railway Brakemen, the Switchmen's Mutual Aid Association, and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, in accordance with the directions of the last conventions of these Orders. Each Order will be represented by its three chief Grand Officers, to whom full power has been delegated to formulate the principles upon which the compact shall be established and put into practical operation. Since the date of the conventions of the Orders, conferring authority upon their Grand Officers to establish federation, the subject has been widely and pretty thoroughly discussed, and while much has been said in favor of federation, not one rational objection to the contemplated alliance has been urged from any quarter whatever.

This silence is easily explained. No objection can be urged against federation, while a thousand convincing reasons can be assigned in its favor. Federation contemplates no wrong. It is simply a compact between Orders having certain interests in common, for the purpose of repressing wrongs and of maintaining the right — a compact, the influence of which extends far beyond the parties immediately concerned, and which touches society at large. Indeed, it would not be difficult to prove that federation contemplates, in a preeminent degree, the prosperity of the railroad enterprises of the country. So high an authority as Charles Francis Adams sees in the frequent disturbances between railroad companies and their employees the great necessity for doing away with all unnecessary frictions so that strikes may be avoided. Federation, it is believed, will prove "the prevention" for which Mr. Adams has industriously sought. It will bring about

arbitration — regarded by all thinking men as a panacea for strikes. In this spirit the Grand Officers of the Orders we have named will meet in Chicago on the first Monday in June to establish federation, and that success will attend the effort, we feel a degree of confidence amounting to assurance.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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