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Railroad trainmen's journal.

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made a change of base in federation tactics since leaving Denver. The suggestion is as unjust to us as it is unworthy of Editor Corbin. The truth is, that in the federation meetings in Denver we vigorously opposed the ideas of those who believed in the theories which oppose the plans adopted by the Council. The *Employes' Magazine*, in its reply to the *Firemen's Magazine*, refers to the fact that William F. Hynes was chairman of the committee which drafted the original scheme of federation and speaks of him as a man whose name is honorably known wherever the B. L. F. has a lodge. We have the honor of numbering that gentleman and scholar among our personal friends, and if we have ever grasped the hand of a truer, manlier man we are not aware of it. But we honestly and sincerely differ from Mr. Hynes on one point in federation, and the editor of the *Employes' Magazine*, who represented the Knights of Labor in those federation meetings, surely remembers it, for it led to heated discussions, in which he participated.

That one point of difference, which forms the basis of the original criticism in the *Employes' Magazine*, is the question of where the supreme power shall rest; with the Supreme Council or with the employes of a certain railway system. The firemen, trainmen, and yardmen of the United States and Canada are federated in one vast body, whose united power may be thrown in one direction for a common cause. If any branch of either of these organizations has a grievance the moral force of which makes it of mutual concern, the entire strength of this giant federation may be used to sustain that branch in its efforts to right the wrong. Now the question arises, Who shall direct the use and application of this supreme power? We

unhesitatingly assert that the authority should rest only in a council composed of an equal representation from each of the organizations forming the federation. But the opposing idea, if we understand its advocates, is that when trouble occurs on any one system the employes of that system shall possess the power to direct the movement of the national force. On the ground that the local committees would best understand the situation it is proposed to invest them with the supreme authority. This is most certainly democracy to the limit, but we do not believe it would ever work in practice. We can conceive of no government by the people that does not have one fixed center. To allow it to shift from one point to another as occasion demands, would, in our opinion, give rise to many difficulties; and to have a dozen local tribunals where supreme power may rest, would certainly give birth to never-ending trouble.

But that we may not by any possibility misrepresent the views which prompt criticism of the Supreme Council, we invite the *U. P. Employes' Magazine* to set them forth in full. If it has a better scheme of federation than the one which proposes a strong central government it ought to give it to the public. Too much discussion on this very important subject there can not be. Let the *Magazine* set forth its arguments. The *JOURNAL's* twenty thousand readers will gladly give it an audience. Let it step into the arena with the sword of logic, and may the weakest theory perish.

#### A Cold-Blooded Document.

A friend recently mailed us a copy of a remarkable document. It not only contains some cold blooded statements but it sets them forth with the business-like manner of a butcher grinding his knife, and solil-

quizing as he glances at the sheep: "Sorry for you. This knife's rather old and dull, but you'll have to make the best of it. Can't afford a good one." In order that no injustice may be done we publish the entire circular verbatim:

ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROAD Co.,  
OFFICE OF ACTING GEN'L. MANAGER,  
CHICAGO, Sept. 24, 1889.

All employes of this Company, and all entering its service, are required to take notice that in the service of the Company, they are liable to meet and to be called upon to work with and to couple double buffer cars; the cars of the Union, of the National, and of the Empire lines, and other cars similarly constructed; and cars with bumpers at variable distances each side of the draw bar; cars with the Miller Coupler to be coupled by link and pin with the common drawheads and with each other; cars with stationary links and pins in their drawheads; cars which when brought together in a train, will be of unequal height, and the drawheads of which will be liable to override each other; cars unprovided with ladders on the ends and sides; cars unprovided with any arrangements on the ends to hold on to in coupling or uncoupling; cars, the ladder-rungs and brake-rods on which are liable by wear and use to become loose, and to draw out in using them; cars so loaded that the load will project over the ends, and therefore be especially hazardous in coupling or uncoupling; engine-tenders unequipped with a platform or step along the side or at the rear thereof; engine-tenders unequipped with any appliance to hold on to on the side or in the rear; engine-tenders equipped with dead-woods of iron or other material on each side of the drawhead or drawplate at variable distances; and all other kinds and descriptions of cars, engines, machinery and appliances usually used or to be found on railroads in the United States, including the coupling of pilot drawbars with cars or tenders. And all such persons are further required to take notice that in the service of this Company they may be required to work on mixed trains made up of freight and passenger cars; also on trains made up of passenger cars unequipped with other than the ordinary hand brakes; also on freight and passenger cars equipped with inside brake, and with wheels very close to the end of the cars; that in the service of the company flying switches are made; and that the staking out of cars and the coupling of Miller Couplers to ordinary freight

cars and cars unequipped with the Miller Platform, is sometimes necessary; and that sometimes defective cars and engines are drawn in the Company's trains in order to get them to stations where they can be repaired; all of which necessarily exposes persons in the employ of the Company to great danger of personal injury. That falls used in the Company's tracks, and especially in its side track, often become worn and splintered and rough, exposing employes to great danger and requiring the highest degree of care.

All such persons are further required to take notice that they are hired and retained in the employ of the Company on the understanding that if they work for the Company they must assume all risks run by them in working with the engines, tenders, cars, machinery and appliances and track hereinbefore particularly mentioned, and in addition assume all other risks usually incident to the position in which they may be placed in the Company's service.

It is further understood, that employes entering or remaining in the Company's service, will, as Agents of the Company and for their personal safety, before they attempt to make couplings or to uncouple while in its employ, examine and see that the cars or engines to be uncoupled or coupled, the pins, links, drawheads, and other appliances connected therewith, the ties, rails, track and road bed, are in a good, safe condition, and that the cars are so loaded that such work may be safely done, and that they will diligently examine all cars, engines, machinery, and appliances with which they may be called upon to work, and promptly report to the proper officer all defects therein, and not work on or about the same till such defects are remedied, except in moving defective cars or engines as before mentioned, and if they do so, it shall be at their own risk exclusively.

Employes are forbidden to get on the front of engines or cars which are approaching them; a misstep or fall must result in personal injury. All employes, when coupling engines or cars must notice the speed at which they are moving, and if moving at a dangerous speed, no attempt must be made to couple them. It is dangerous to uncouple or attempt to place links or pins in drawbars while cars are in motion, and this is strictly forbidden.

In all cases sufficient time must be taken to avoid accident or personal injury. In coupling or uncoupling there is a liability to get the foot caught in switch frogs and lead and guard rails which are un-filled, and under break heads or beams

when hung to the bodies of cars or under the wheels, and it is dangerous to stand on the inner side of a curve to couple cars, one or both of which is equipped with the Miller Platform.

The attention of employees is also specially called to the necessity for care on account of the icy and slippery condition of ground where couplings are to be made; of the inequalities of surface between and at the ends of ties and arising from deposits of cinder, coal or other material on the ground.

Employees of the Company are forbidden from riding on the ladders on sides of cars, owing to the great danger in doing so.

This Company makes this statement to its employees to call their attention as definitely as possible to the risks of the service in which they are engaged, so that if they are not willing to serve, taking the risks exclusively on themselves, they may, by no misunderstanding, enter into or remain in the Company's employ. And employees will further bear in mind that no one in the service of the Company, except the General or Division Superintendents, the Master Mechanic, or Train Master of the section, has any authority to order another to work with any engine, car machinery, or appliance which is in a defective or dangerous condition, except in moving defective or dangerous cars or engines as mentioned, and that all employees must refuse to obey any such unauthorized order, and if they act on any such unauthorized order, it will be at their own risk exclusively, and in no event will the Company be liable for the consequences thereof. The Company desire to protect its employees from injury, and is compelled to rely on their care and diligence to accomplish that purpose, and must insist on the observance of the stipulations and directions herein contained, and all other rules hereafter made for the conduct of the Company's business.

To evidence the understanding herein expressed, an agreement has been prepared which is hereto annexed, and which employees will be required to sign.

C. A. BECK,  
Acting General Manager.

I, the undersigned, being employed as.....  
by the ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROAD COMPANY, hereby acknowledge that I have been made acquainted with the contents of the foregoing statement signed by C. A. Beck, Acting General Manager of said Company, and understand the same, and have

received a copy thereof, and the risks and dangers incident to my employment have been fully explained to me, and in consideration of my employment by said Company, I hereby agree to assume all the risks of the service of said Company, and to obey all the rules to which my attention is called in the foregoing notice, as well as all other rules now in force or that may be made by said Company for the government of its employees, and that I will save said Company harmless from all liability for injury that may come to me because of any such risks, whether the same arise in whole or part, from acts or omissions of my co-employees in same branch of the service, or employees who are in a different branch of the service, or from those not so employed, or in consequence of any failure or neglect on my part to obey the directions contained in said notice, or any of the rules now or hereafter made by the Company for the government of its employees as aforesaid:

My age on my last birthday was.....  
Years.....

We have a double purpose in publishing this document. In the first place it is excellent information for the public which but vaguely comprehends the actual hazard of a trainman's vocation. The reader may search in vain for a more vivid description of the perils which the knights of the rail hourly encounter. In the second place it is a striking illustration of the undeniable fact that railroad men must have a powerful protective and defensive organization, and that if they do not have it there is apparently no point where the greed for gain may be called to reason, and nothing to prevent the life of a workman being reckoned an almost worthless thing.

If a corporation can make certain that the death of a trainman cannot by any possibility cost a cent, does anyone suppose that it will spend money for safe rolling stock, when a much cheaper car or engine will do the same work? And if the corporation can force the employe to carry the risk, is it reasonable to suppose it will pay as indemnity what it refused to pay as a precaution? And since plenty of workmen are to be

had, is it not evident that if the corporations can force employes into this contract the value of human life will fall below the value of safety equipment? There is no use of attempting to disguise the truth. The Company in this case coolly and deliberately proposes to use cheap and dangerous rolling stock at the expense of human life; and knowing that such a course must cause a tremendous slaughter, it endeavors to force the employe to sign an antemortum obligation that will prevent his widow and orphans holding the company responsible for his death. The company coolly admits that it is using death-trap equipments. It acknowledges that its engine tenders are unequipped with platform or step along the side or rear; that they are likewise devoid of any appliance on side or rear to hold on to; that the deadwoods on tenders are at variable distances; that some of their cars have no ladders on side or end, and those they do have are liable to be in bad condition; that its frogs are unblocked and spaces between guard rails unfiled. Why does not the company keep its property in good repair? Because it requires a larger fund for operating expenses, while the death and disability of employes it evidently believes will hereafter cost it nothing.

But it may be said in reply that the circular instructs its employes to avoid danger; which is very much like instructing a soldier to be careful and not get shot in battle.

"In all cases sufficient time must be taken to avoid accident or personal injury," says the company. This may sound well to the public, but the practical railroad man knows that such advice is but an empty phrase. If a car in bad condition is in the train the brakeman must pass over it though the running-board is in splinters and the brake-beam rotten. The company knows perfectly well that the trainman has no opportunity to inspect the condition of things—that it is the rule and not the exception that he must think, decide, and act instantaneously. He positively must get on and off cars in motion or his train will require too much time in getting over the road, and his place will be promptly filled by a man who can do better. The company admits that he is expected to make "flying switches," a contrivance for saving time. The officer who wrote the circular knew perfectly well when he was writing "cars, the ladder-rungs on which are liable, by wear and use, to become loose," that the brakeman must grasp those rungs as a car passed him, and that he would not have the slightest chance to inspect its true condition before trusting his life to its strength.

Take time, indeed! Why doesn't the company take time to mend its ladders and block its frogs? Because it would also take money. Because it would reduce the dividends. Because it costs several dollars to repair a car, and it don't cost a cent to kill a brakeman! If it is not criminal neglect to use a car that is unequipped with every possible device for safety, then of what does criminal neglect consist? If a corporation can make money after furnishing every known safety device, but proposes to make more money by using rolling stock that causes a greater slaughter, what is the difference between that and slaying for gain? Isn't there chance enough for death to the trainman when the best equipments are used? Isn't it enough that he is exposed to the dangers of collision and ordinary derailment; to low bridges; to dangling waterpouts; to obstructions on the track; to interior roadbeds; to mistaken signals; to wash outs and landslides; to ice and sleet and windstorm? Isn't this enough without adding rotten ladders and