

NEW ERA FOR BROTHERHOODS

President W. G. Lee Asserts That a New Era is Dawning in the Relations of Brotherhoods and Carriers.

CLEVELAND, O., Oct. 27.—Method of settling wage and working agreements between the "Big Four" transportation brotherhoods and the railroad has entered a new era, and if the present course of negotiations is continued the country, for several years, at least, will not be threatened with a complete stoppage of railroad transportation through a concerted strike of these brotherhoods on all the lines of the nation. W. G. Lee, president of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, said recently.

The situation which developed in 1915, as a result of the eight-hour fight and again last fall, when the trainmen, conductors, engineers and firemen's brotherhoods sent out nationwide strike orders, probably will not again occur.

Decentralization of all wages, rules and working negotiations and a return to the system prevailing for twenty years prior to the time when the four train service brotherhoods were forced by the "eight-hour fight" to pool their strength into what has since become famous as the "Big Four" railroad brotherhoods, has already set in, in the view of Mr. Lee.

A New Alignment.

The new alignment of the transportation brotherhoods probably will find the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen and the Order of Railway Conductors in one group and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, Brotherhood of Firemen and Engineers and the Switchmen's Union of North America in the other.

"I feel that I am able to handle my organization to a better advantage, to get more for my men and to work more effectively all around if the trainmen and conductors go it alone, so far as wages and working rules are concerned," Mr. Lee said.

"This whole business, with all railroad labor unions on one side, and all railroad labor on the other, with the railroad labor board in between, got too big for any one man or a few men to handle. It was loaded with dynamite for the country as well as for ourselves and the executives. No sane government would permit any faction or class to paralyze the transportation business of the country and thereby punish the innocent, who are always in the majority. The only way out was to separate."

No Longer Exists.

So far as strikes, wages and working rules and negotiations are concerned, the "Big Four" no longer exists. The brotherhoods will continue to work together on legislation, nonpartisan political and purely organization matters.

Mr. Lee pointed out today that the trainmen and conductors dealing individually with railroads in the eastern regional district and by regional conferences for the western and southeastern regions, have just completed contracts with virtually all railroads in the United States, continuing present wages and working rules for a period of a year and continuously thereafter except on thirty days' notice from either party.

These agreements were obtained without consulting or working with the engineers' or firemen's brotherhoods.

Asked a few days ago if the switchmen's union joining the engineers and firemen in negotiations with the New York Central meant an intention to work with the switchmen hereafter, Warren S. Stone, president of the engineers, said, "No. It means only that since the trainmen and conductors already have settled, the switchmen, firemen and ourselves are all that is left."

With negotiations carried on with individual roads, or at most with regional groups, the consequence of a railroad strike will be much less dangerous. A strike on one road would probably not lead to governmental interference, it was pointed out.

Not Now Possible.

"A nationwide railroad strike is not possible today," Mr. Lee said. "It costs the railroads and the unions which indulge in it more than they can afford to lose. The shopmen's strike proved that. When a strike gets so big that it can't be controlled, then the government will step in and control it. This results generally in legislation detrimental to all concerned. The present situation is the first ray of light I have seen for ten years."

Trainmen and conductors are going to handle their business hereafter in the different regional groups, for which the machinery is already provided," Mr. Lee continued.

"They will handle their wage matters alone in the future, at least as long as I am president. I sincerely hope that all such matters will be settled in conference and without the need of using the strike power."

Decentralization of railroad labor organizations and a return to the "normalcy" which obtained before the eight-hour fight and the period of government control are in part the following of a drift which began early this year, but are also direct results of the shopmen's strikes. That strike cleared the air, taught

both unions and railroad managers that strikes and government interference in strikes were costly, Mr. Lee explained, and brought to both sides the question: "We got along for a good many years, always finding some way out of our difficulties; why can't we do it again?"

"Sympathetic Magic."

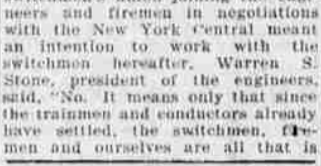
The idea of "sympathetic magic," many centuries ago, made one of its appearances in the form of a jewel or charm. The beetle was the symbol of immortality and must not be harmed. But some genius conceived the idea of wearing a beetle out of stone and wearing it, which would then give him a hold over the sacred beetle and a claim to its protection.

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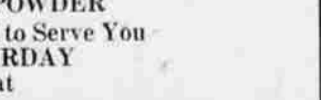
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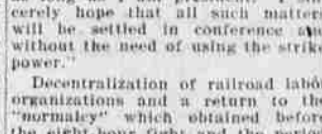
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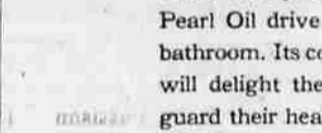
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