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# The Coming Convention

by E.V. Debs

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As this number of our Magazine is the last one that can reach our readers before the Seventh Annual Convention, it is but fit and proper that we should address a few thoughts to the lodges of the Brotherhood, calling the attention of the brethren to some points we feel to be of vital importance, effecting the prosperity and permanent growth and success of our Order. Each year brings with it a rich experience, and by a close observation of the working of the different subordinate lodges, we can learn much that will be of great benefit in governing and guiding us in our future labors for the welfare of our organization. In some instances slight modifications of the laws now in force would result in great good, and not involve the expenditure of a dollar, or add an hour's labor to the members. A simple changing of methods, and the whole work of transacting the business of the lodge might be lightened. Just what these changes should be, and just whose duty it is to suggest them, is not very clear to us; but we doubt not each working, thinking brother, who sincerely wishes to do something for the benefit of his dearly loved lodge, has lain awake when he ought to have been sleeping and resting, revolving over and over in his perplexed mind, what could be done to increase the capabilities of our Order to render prosperous and happy every anxious toiling brother of our fraternity.

We have, no doubt, many honest, earnest, zealous, great-hearted men among us, who desire to do all that man can do to advance the cause, and render the Brotherhood eminently useful. No object lies nearer their hearts than the highest success of the B of LF, and they contribute largely of their time and money

to build up in the ranks of the firemen of our land, an institution that shall be as enduring as the needs of those who call for the aid of organized, united efforts, in bettering the condition of this particular branch of worthy toilers in the busy world.

First, we would suggest, as a means to be used for mental improvement, that each lodge room should have as a prominent feature, as many books and first class magazines placed within the reach of the members, as means and circumstances can afford. If possible, have the room accessible during the hours of leisure the members may have at command, and let each one so disposed, have an opportunity to read good histories, biographies, travels, or if possible, good standard works on mechanical subjects, engine building, etc. Let the subject of a library or reading-room in connection with the lodge have earnest thought and be thoroughly discussed, and if possible let some plan be devised that will bring about a system of culture for our brethren, that can be enjoyed by all if they are so disposed.

Upon the subject, of financial improvement there can be much said, but the particular bearing on the subject in one particular direction, is all we shall touch upon, and that is in regard to the assessment and collection of a fund to pay our death claims.

We have long been of the opinion that there should be a radical change in the method of assessing and paying the "death claim." In our experience, the present system is such as to delay too long, and by the delay almost to defeat the object of the assessment, to wit: "A speedy and sure relief to those who, by sudden and unexpected loss of the provider, are left wholly unprovided for." As a general rule, under the present system, 60, 90, even 120 days will elapse before the fund is all received at the office of the Grand Treasurer, and in the meantime the family are left in a dependent, and in many instances a suffering, condition.

We believe it would be proper to have a date set, at which each lodge should be called upon to pay in to their Financial Secretary two advance payments on death claims, from each member in good standing, in their respective lodges. This

amount should be forwarded to the Grand Treasurer to be by him safely kept as a separate fund, upon which to draw for the payment of a claim as soon as the necessary legal evidence is presented of the validity of the claim. Of course, no doubtful claim would be paid from this fund. Every claim filed, where there is the slightest doubt, should be submitted to the Annual Convention.

Having no voice in convention, save through the pages of our Magazine, we would earnestly ask that a revision of the present system of assessing and paying our insurance assessments be had at an early day, and that it be so changed as to make the relief to needy ones more speedy, and consequently more useful to them. If we do this we shall only have performed what we consider to be our bounded duty, and shall be entitled to and receive blessings from the grateful hearts of many a sad and suffering widow and orphan.

*Edited by Tim Davenport*

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