

REPORT OF DELEGATE  
TO THE  
Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention  
OF THE  
American Federation of Labor  
HELD AT  
PHILADELPHIA, PA.  
November 9 to 21, 1914

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# REPORT OF DELEGATE

TO THE

## THIRTY-FOURTH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR.

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To Affiliated Unions:

Greeting—As your delegate to the thirty-fourth annual convention of the American Federation of Labor, I herewith take pleasure in submitting my report:

The convention was called to order at 10 a. m. Monday, Nov. 9, in Horticultural Hall, Philadelphia, Pa. Several of the usual addresses of "welcome" were made.

Mayor Rudolph Blankenburg extended to the delegates a hearty welcome to the "City of Brotherly Love." Philadelphia was honored, he said, by being chosen the convention city and had shown its appreciation by appropriating \$25,000 in the erection of a court of honor, beautifully illuminated. The city hall would also be lighted during the stay of the convention, and the mayor remarked: "We don't do this for everybody." Mayor Blankenburg laid great stress upon organization, which, he said, was absolutely necessary in order to accomplish improvements, and that without organization scarcely any progress could be made. The mayor also called attention to the fact that it was in Philadelphia where real liberty was given birth, and it was there where the constitution was adopted and which with a few changes stands today as a model for the world.

President Gompers in reply thanked the mayor for his cordial welcome and the kind expressions. This was the third time that the American Federation of Labor convention was held in Philadelphia, remarked President Gompers, and since Mayor Blankenburg had alluded to the Declaration of Independence, President Gompers took occasion to say that these declarations in themselves do not bring either liberty or happiness, but to translate these declarations into the lives of our people, that was the mission of the American Federation of Labor.

The committee on credentials reported having examined the credentials of 377 delegates, representing 95 international and national unions, 22 state branches, 74 central bodies, 20 local trade and federal labor unions, and seven fraternal delegates, and recommended that they be seated. After a brief debate upon the request of the insurgent faction of the United Garment Workers to present their case to the convention, the report of the committee was adopted.

Owing to the war in Europe there were no fraternal delegates from Great Britain. The fraternal delegates were R. A. Rigg, from the Canadian Trades and Labor Congress; Miss Annie Fitzgerald, from the Woman's International Union Label League; Mrs. Raymond Robbins, from the Women's National Trade Union League of America; Rev. Peter E. Dietz, and Mr. Walter George Smith, representing the American Federation of Catholic Societies, and the Rev. Charles S. MacFarland, and Rev. Samuel Zane Batten, representing the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ of America.

An exhaustive report upon the year's work, as prepared by the Executive Council, was distributed to the delegates at the first day's session. Only a synopsis of the very lengthy report was read to the convention by Vice-President Duncan, who performed the remarkable feat of reading, in a voice which was audible in every section of the large hall, from 2:35 p. m. to 5:10 p. m.

The convention was slower than usual in getting down to business—hardly any of the committees being ready to report on the matters referred to them during the first six days. The greater part of the first week was therefore taken up in hearing

the fraternal delegates and other representative speakers, men and women interested in various ways in the general betterment and uplift of humanity.

The fraternal delegate from the Canadian Trades and Labor Congress told all about the hopes and ambitions of the workers of Canada and of the mutual bond between that country and the country south of it. He was satisfied that in the bond of fraternal associations through the labor movements, the people of Canada and the United States were really united, though ostensibly divided by a boundary line.

Dr. Tolman, a director of the American Museum of Safety, and who has given years to the study of occupational diseases, delivered a very instructive address, as did also Colonel Bryant, Commissioner of Labor of New Jersey, who gave an illustrated lecture on industrial diseases. Colonel Bryant said that out of a normal industrial army of 36,000,000 workers 3,000,000 were incapacitated for full service and that of this 3,000,000 one-third are from absolutely preventable causes, and about one-third more, through causes probably controllable. By showing on the canvas the conditions that exist in shops and factories, he made the lecture interesting as well as instructive.

Among the many who appeared before the convention, perhaps none evoked a more hearty response than Mother Jones, the champion and martyr of the miners. Mother Jones, with her splendid voice and rare command of language, told of her work among the miners of Virginia and in Colorado, where she had so recently suffered many indignities at the hands of the authorities. After listening to Mother Jones it is not difficult to understand why she is hated by the coal barons and beloved by the men who toil in the mines. In closing her address, Mother Jones made an eloquent plea for harmony and co-operation on the part of the workers. She deplored internal strife, jurisdiction disputes and secession in the ranks of the organizations. She urged all organizations to remain loyal to the American Federation of Labor, and regretted that dual organizations had sprung up in any part of the country.

Frank P. Walsh, Chairman of the Federal Commission on Industrial Relations, and William B. Wilson, Secretary of the Department of Labor, both delivered inspiring addresses. These speeches are printed in full in the proceedings and while too lengthy for reproduction in this report, are well worthy of perusal.

Mr. John P. Eshleman, Lieutenant Governor-elect of California, who happened to be in Philadelphia on business, was also called upon to address the convention and did so in a short but well worded speech which was in the nature of a message from California.

On Friday evening of the first week Philadelphia witnessed a record breaking parade. Approximately 75,000 union men and women marched for miles and miles on the famous Broad street of Philadelphia. The parade was viewed at the grandstand in front of the Horticultural Hall by Mayor Blankenburg and 75 other mayors, who held a conference in Philadelphia at that time, by President Gompers and the members of the Executive Council. It required nearly three hours for the parade to pass a given point. Altogether it was really a grand performance—an event in which the organized workers of Philadelphia did honor to themselves and to the labor movement.

With the beginning of the second week, the convention settled down to business and measure after measure was passed with or without debate. In fact, so much business was before the convention that it was found necessary to hold two night sessions in order to complete the work.

Practically all propositions before the convention were adopted or rejected by an aye and nay vote. It was only occasionally that a division was called for, and the roll call was resorted to only twice during the convention.

### **Jurisdiction Disputes.**

As usual, much of the time of the convention was taken up with the jurisdiction disputes. There is real life and vitality in those struggles over jurisdiction. As a result certain organized workers in this country seem to be in a worse position than the Belgians in the European war. At any rate two or more powerful national or international unions will sometimes carry on bitter warfare for years over the possession of a few workers on the boundary line. The thought has often been expressed—and I merely repeat it—that the same amount of energy now wasted in jurisdiction disputes would easily bring double or treble the number of unorganized workers into the respective unions.

Vice-President O'Connell proposed a new method of settling jurisdictional disputes. In brief, his plan provided for the establishment of a permanent committee on jurisdiction which would make recommendations, and attempt to settle all jurisdictional disputes as they arise; or at least to investigate them and in co-operation with the executive council to pave the way for a more thorough understanding by the conventions. This proposition was debated at length and finally referred to the executive council for consideration.

Fortunately, it seems to be certain that there are less disputes of this kind

now than formerly, and that there is a tendency among crafts in one industry to join forces. This contention is borne out by a few concrete examples. During the year the Stogie Makers and the Cigar Makers arrived at an agreement to amalgamate. During the session of the convention a telegram was received stating that the amalgamation of the two national unions—Steam Shovel and Dredgemen—had finally been completed. And, lastly, this convention was officially advised of the long pending amalgamation of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners and the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners.

Among the jurisdiction disputes that took up the time of the convention, but were not finally disposed of, are the following:

**Carpenters—Sheet Metal Workers:** The committee appointed during the convention to adjust the differences between the carpenters and sheet metal workers were unable to reach a settlement but reported in favor of continuing conferences, which shall consist, in the future, of the president of the A. F. of L., president of the Building Trades Department and the presidents of the interested organizations.

**Jurisdiction over Mailers:** After much debate the dispute between the International Typographical Union and the Bookbinders' organization over the control of mailers who are employed in "single wrapping" was referred to the executive council for adjustment.

**Machinists—Elevator Constructors:** The adjustment committee recommended, as it has done at several conventions, that there should be an amalgamation of the elevator constructors and machinists and that steps be taken to secure this amalgamation within a given time. The convention, however, by a roll call vote (11,590 to 8,048) overturned the report of the committee and adopted a substitute offered from the floor to the effect that the organization of elevator constructors be left just as it is, the executive council to call the necessary conferences looking to conciliatory and peaceful amalgamation.

**Theatrical Stage Employees—Electrical Workers:** The convention reaffirmed the jurisdiction of Theatrical Stage Employees over moving picture operators and the Electrical Workers were instructed to turn over to that organization any unions of moving picture operators within its fold, and to desist from organizing any unions of that character in the future.

**Teamsters, Brewers, Bakers, Laundry Workers:** It was reported that jurisdiction conceded to the Brotherhood of Teamsters had not been complied with in the matter of bakery wagon drivers, and laundry wagon drivers. The jurisdiction was reaffirmed, and it was ordered that a circular be sent to all central bodies and State federations giving notice that local unions having within their membership teamsters coming under the jurisdiction of the Brotherhood of Teamsters shall not be seated in those bodies. The old contest between the brewers and the teamsters was not brought upon the floor, it being postponed by mutual agreement.

**Cement Workers—Hod Carriers, and Building Laborers:** The adjustment committee brought in a recommendation to the effect that the cement workers must give over to the hod carriers and building laborers a certain number of laborers affiliated with the cement workers. This applied to the organizations in California. A motion to the effect that conferences be called to adjust the proposition was finally agreed to by the convention.

**Plumbers—Gas and Water Workers:** A resolution introduced by Gas and Water Workers' Union No. 9840 of San Francisco complained that Plumbers No. 442 of San Francisco were interfering with work previously assigned to gas and water workers. The Adjustment Committee, in reporting, recommended that the executive council take steps to secure obedience to former decisions, and that if necessary conferences be called of the parties in interest so that if possible there may be a settlement of the differences between these two unions.

**New Name of Tailors' Union Disapproved:** With reference to the change of name of the International Journeymen Tailors' Union of North America to Tailors' Industrial Union of North America, it should be noted that the tailors' delegates were seated under the union's old name. A resolution aiming to secure for that union the right to change its name and to have a charter issued to it as Tailors' Industrial Union was non-concurred in. The tailors were further instructed to resume their old title and not to extend their jurisdiction. The executive council was instructed, however, to take steps to bring together the representatives of the unions in the needle industry, so that a better understanding and closer relationship might be established between them.

**Carriage and Wagon Workers:** Carriage and wagon workers were ordered to discontinue the use of the words "automobile workers," and to refrain from admitting into their organization workmen in automobile factories, properly coming under the jurisdiction of other organizations; the right to organize automobile workers was specifically forbidden to carriage and wagon workers.

**Longshoremen—Engineers:** An investigation will be made of the charge that the International Longshoremen's Association is organizing engineers and using said engineers to fill the places of the members of the regular engineers' organization, and if it be found that the longshoremen have in their membership or are accepting engineers properly belonging to International Union of Steam Engineers, "they shall be transferred from the longshoremen's organization to the engineers' at the earliest possible date."

**House Movers—Pile Drivers:** On the subject of permitting house movers to become a part of the International Brotherhood of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers, claims for such jurisdiction were heard from hod carriers, building and common laborers, from boiler makers and others; in view of the fact that there is more than one union to be transferred, if transference is permitted, it was decided to call a conference of interested parties.

### **The Eight-Hour Workday.**

What is generally conceded to have been the one real fight of the convention took place over the question of securing for the male workers of this country an Eight-Hour workday by legal enactment as well as by trade union activity.

This matter was brought before the convention in a report made by the Committee on Resolutions upon two propositions introduced by Western delegates. Following is the resolution introduced by your delegate:

Resolution No. 144, introduced by Delegate Paul Scharrenberg, representing California State Federation of Labor:

"Whereas, The Seattle convention of the American Federation of Labor urged upon all State branches to work for the enactment of laws limiting the working hours of women and children to eight per day, and (where such laws already exist) to begin an agitation for the enactment of a general eight-hour law; and

"Whereas, During the year President Gompers publicly declared that the American Federation of Labor does not favor a legal limitation of the workday for the adult male workers; and

"Whereas, Said statement of President Gompers was very effectively used by the opponents of the shorter workday in defeating the eight-hour initiative which was before the people of California, Oregon and Washington at the recent general election; therefore, be it

"Resolved, By the thirty-fourth annual convention of the American Federation of Labor, that we reaffirm the declaration of the Seattle convention upon the shorter workday as enunciated in the report of the committee on shorter workday."

The committee offered the following as a substitute for the resolution:

"The American Federation of Labor, as in the past, again declares that the question of the regulation of wages and the hours of labor should be undertaken through trade-union activity, and not to be made subjects of laws through legislative enactment, excepting in so far as such regulations affect or govern the employment of women and minors, health and morals; and employment by Federal, State or municipal government."

A lengthy discussion then ensued with President Gompers, Delegates Duncan and Frey, Chairman and Secretary respectively, of the Committee on Resolutions, leading the debate for the committee's report. Some very strong and inconsistent arguments were presented by those who claimed to uphold the "time honored" policy of the American Federation of Labor. I will not attempt, however, to compile even a summary of the points made in that forensic battle. Those who seek further light regarding the A. F. of L. attitude upon this question need but consult the published proceedings which contain a transcript of the stenographer's notes taken during this discussion.

An effort to have the convention adopt a substitute for the committee's report failed by a vote of 64 in the affirmative to 115 in the negative. A roll call was then demanded upon the adoption of the committee's report. This roll call vote is of more than passing interest. It is worthy of very careful inspection and analysis, (First) because several self-styled political class conscious delegates will be found lined up with those who voted against more political activity by the workers, (Second) because the national delegates representing the California unions most active in the fight for the Eight-Hour Initiative, voted fairly unanimously against the wishes of their Western constituents.

Here is the record:

**Roll Call on Substitute Recommended by Committee.**

(A vote for the committee's report is a vote against the legal enactment of an eight-hour workday.)

	Aye.	Nay.	Absent.
Bakery and Confectionery Workers (split).....	53	104	
Asbestos Workers .....	...	...	10
Barbers (split) .....	274	69	
Bill Posters and Billers.....	14		
Blacksmiths (split) .....	32	32	32
Boiler Makers and Iron Shipbuilders.....	...	167	
Bookbinders .....	94		
Boot and Shoe Workers.....	381		
Brewery Workmen .....	...	520	
Brick, Tile and Terra Cotta Workers.....	32		
Bridge and Structural Iron Workers.....	102		
Broom and Whisk Makers.....	7		
Carpenters and Joiners of America.....	2,128		
Carriage, Wagon and Automobile Workers.....	...	...	35
Cement Workers .....	...	...	73
Cigar Makers (split).....	240	160	
Clerks, Retail .....	150		
Cloth Hat and Cap Makers.....	...	36	
Commercial Telegraphers .....	10		
Compressed Air and Foundation Workers.....	...	...	10
Coopers .....	...	...	45
Diamond Workers .....	...	...	3
Electrical Workers .....	308		
Elevator Constructors .....	27		
Engineers, Steam and Operating.....	203		
Firemen, Stationary (split).....	120	40	
Fur Workers .....	...	...	8
Garment Workers of America, United.....	607		
Garment Workers, Ladies'.....	...	699	
Glass Bottle Blowers.....	100		
Glass Workers, Amalgamated.....	12		
Glass Workers, American Flint.....	...	99	
Glove Workers .....	...	11	
Granite Cutters .....	135		
Hatters of North America, United.....	85		
Hod Carriers, Building and Common Laborers.....	256		
Horseshoers .....	...	57	
Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders.....	590		
Iron, Steel and Tin Workers (split).....	32	32	
Lace Operatives, Amalgamated.....	...	...	12
Lathers .....	55		
Laundry Workers .....	...	28	
Leatherworkers on Horse Goods.....	18		
Longshoremen .....	...	250	
Machinists .....	...	754	
Marble Workers .....	41		
Maintenance of Way Employees.....	65		
Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen (split).....	31	...	31
Metal Polishers, Buffers, Platers.....	100		
Metal Workers, Amalgamated Sheet.....	178		
Miners, Western Federation of.....	...	369	
Mine Workers, United.....	...	3,345	
Molders (split) .....	400	100	
Musicians .....	600		
Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers (split).....	620	124	
Paper Makers .....	...	44	
Pattern Makers .....	67		
Pavers, Rammermen, etc.....	...	...	16
Paving Cutters .....	35		
Photo Engravers .....	...	...	47
Plasterers (split) .....	90	90	
Plate Printers .....	13		
Plumbers and Steam Fitters.....	297		
Post Office Clerks .....	...	...	28
Potters, Operative .....	77		

	Aye.	Nay.	Absent.
Print Cutters .....	...	...	4
Printing Pressmen (split).....	145	48	
Quarry Workers .....	...	40	
Railroad Telegraphers .....	...	250	
Railway Carmen .....	...	287	
Railway Clerks .....	...	...	50
Railway Employees, Street.....	545	...	
Roofers .....	...	...	12
Seamen's Union of America.....	160	...	
Signalmen of America.....	...	...	7
Slate and Tile Roofers.....	6	...	
Slate Workers .....	...	3	
Spinners' International Union.....	22	...	
Stage Employees .....	150	...	
Stereotypers and Electrotypers (split).....	23	22	
Stone Cutters .....	60	...	
Stove Mounters .....	11	...	
Switchmen's Union (split).....	32	64	
Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Stablemen.....	511	...	
Textile Workers (split).....	30	90	
Tailors .....	...	120	
Tile Layers and Helpers.....	30	...	
Tobacco Workers .....	37	...	
Tunnel and Subway Constructors.....	...	...	17
Typographical Union .....	594	...	
Upholsterers .....	...	...	35
White Rats Actors' Union.....	110	...	
State Federations voting for the Recommendation: Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Porto Rico, Tennessee, Texas, 1 vote for each....	11	...	
State Federations voting against the Recommendation: California, Florida, Michigan, Montana, Washington, 1 vote each....	...	5	
Central Bodies, 1 vote each, voting for the Recommendation: Atlanta, Baltimore, Bronx, Chicago, Cleveland, Hamilton, Hudson Co., N. Y., Niagara Falls, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Providence, St. Louis, Somerville, Mass., Springfield, Ill., Toronto, Washington, D. C., Yonkers, N. Y., Zanesville.....	18	...	
Central Bodies voting against the Recommendation: Allentown, Pa., Charleroy, Fitchburg, Granite City, Ill., Hamilton, O., Hartford, Conn., Houston, Huntington, W. Va., Milwaukee, Newark, N. J., New York, N. Y., Rock Island, San Francisco, Sharon, Pa. ....	...	14	
Unions directly affiliated with A. F. of L., voting for, 3 unions with .....	3	...	
Unions directly affiliated with A. F. of L., voting against, 2 unions with .....	...	7	
State Federations, Central Bodies and Local Unions not voting, entitled to cast the following votes.....	...	...	149
Totals .....	11,237	8,107	607

#### Labor's Attitude on War.

In order to acquaint the general public with Labor's attitude on war, that portion of the Executive Council's report under the caption, "International War and Peace," was ordered published in pamphlet form for general distribution, and I earnestly commend a careful perusal of this pamphlet.

The convention pledged its support to any plan "which has for its purpose the bringing about of the disarmament of all nations to the furthest extent consistent with the preservation of law and order throughout the world."

Fraternal greetings and sympathy were extended the labor movements of Europe, and hope was expressed for the early cessation of terrible war. It was also voted that "the convention of the American Federation of Labor, in view of the general peace congress which will no doubt be held at the close of the war, for the purpose of adjusting claims and differences, hold itself in readiness and authorize the executive council to call a meeting of representatives of organized labor of the different nations to meet at the same time and place, to the end that suggestions may be made and such action taken as shall be helpful in restoring fraternal relations, protecting the interests of the toilers and thereby assisting in laying foundations for a more lasting peace."

Discussing the question of war, the convention declared: "Let us not forget

that sordid greed which profits by lack of proper safeguards, sanitation, low wages, etc., here as elsewhere on the industrial field and in transportation, takes more human lives, maims more human beings, causes more sickness, want and privation than have resulted from any previous war or may result from this war. The trade union movement stands for honorable peace between nations, and is the greatest force for the protection and the advancement of the best interests in the economic field of endeavor, and must not be subordinated, neglected or forgotten. We stand for honorable peace on the economic field, but we demand justice as the fundamental condition for all progress. If denied, we hold ourselves in readiness to fight for justice. When justice is established, peace will follow."

Acting upon a resolution introduced by your delegate it was agreed that all patent rights for arms, munitions and other equipment to be used for war purposes should be acquired by the government, and all such equipment should be manufactured in government establishments.

#### **Anti-Injunction Legislation, Etc.**

The Executive Council reported that the greatest legislative victory secured by Labor during the past year was the enactment of the labor sections of the Clayton Anti-Trust Act, securing to the workers of America those fundamental principles of industrial liberty which were among the chief features of the Bill of Grievances and were the objectives of the political policy which the American Federation of Labor inaugurated in 1906.

In addition the State of Massachusetts has during the past year placed upon its statute books a law securing to the working people—the masses of the people—the legal right to activities necessary for promoting their industrial welfare. This legal right carries with it a greater degree of industrial freedom—a freedom that vitally concerns the lives and the welfare of the people. This law in a very direct and positive manner guarantees to laborers the right to organize, the right to exercise the normal activities of organization in order to better economic conditions, and forbids the misuse of the injunctive process to deny workers the right to legitimate activities in industrial disputes. The law is founded upon the bill drafted and supported by the American Federation of Labor for federal enactment. (The "Pearre Bill," and later the "Wilson Bill.")

It is recommended by the convention that all State federations and central bodies make every effort to secure the passage by their respective State Legislatures of a law such as now exists in Massachusetts.

#### **Municipal Ownership.**

The convention thanked W. D. Mahon and L. D. Bland for their report on "Labor Conditions on European Municipally Owned Railroads," and unanimously adopted this report of its committee:

"While not expressing any new or additional thought in connection with the present policy of the American Federation of Labor relative to municipal ownership, your committee cannot overlook the statements contained in this report which indicate that, whether under private or public ownership, the only real improvement in the conditions of labor for street railway employees has been accomplished through trade union activity. Your committee recommends that wherever municipal ownership of public utilities is attempted, the trade union movement emphatically insists that there shall be incorporated in the law creating the municipally owned utility an adequate provision guaranteeing the right of the workers to organize upon trade union lines, and their right to a voice in the regulation and determination of the wages, hours of labor and working conditions."

#### **Affiliation of Local Unions With State Branches and City Central Councils.**

The subject of non-affiliation of local unions with city centrals and State federations was brought before the convention by more than one committee's report. The report of the Committee on State Organization, which was adopted, is likely to bring some results. The committee recommended:

First—That each international convention be visited by a representative of the American Federation of Labor with a specific request that said convention legislate to insist upon affiliation of locals with State federations, city centrals and building trades councils.

Second—That the Executive Council be instructed to secure, for the information of the next convention, the names of all locals in States and cities not in affiliation.

Third—That this information is to be submitted in printed form to the next convention. A special committee is to be appointed to inquire of international officers (during the convention) why their locals are not affiliated, and the reasons therefor.

Data upon this subject is rather scarce at present because the American Federation of Labor has never made it a part of its business to compile same. With the foregoing recommendations carried into effect, we will at least be in a position to



place our hands on the weak spots in the American Labor movement and know definitely who are the "leaders" in "evading duty."

#### **Unaffiliated National Organizations.**

The convention refused to sanction a declaration of war against national or international unions not yet affiliated to the A. F. of L. In the discussion upon the resolution it was made plain that the American Federation of Labor is a purely voluntary organization and that the only force sanctioned by it in the past has been moral force. All officers and members were asked, however, to join in the effort to show non-affiliated organizations their duty.

The convention said: "We hold that it is morally wrong for a wage earner to remain outside of the fold of the union of his trade or calling; that it is morally wrong for a local union of the trade or calling to remain isolated from the international or national union thereof, and it can be but morally wrong for such a national or international union to remain unaffiliated to the A. F. of L."

The convention was divided upon this matter, as many were in favor of declaring war on what they termed rival organizers. On the other hand, it was made evident that a better feeling existed between the unaffiliated organizations and the American Federation of Labor, and that a closer association and co-operation had developed in the political field which, it was claimed, had been the means of passing labor legislation at Washington. It was the opinion of many delegates that there is a steady growth of sentiment among the rank and file of these large organizations in favor of joining the American Federation of Labor, and that it will only be a question of time when they will come of their own free will.

#### **New Laws for Directly Affiliated Local Unions.**

The convention adopted the following new laws to govern local and Federal labor unions directly affiliated with the American Federation of Labor:

First—That the initiation fee of such unions shall not be less than \$1, nor more than \$5.

Second—That they shall accept traveling cards from each other without reserve.

Third—They are prohibited from assessing their membership or appropriating their funds for any purpose other than union or American Federation of Labor purposes.

Fourth—They must forward a monthly statement of funds received and disbursed to the A. F. of L.

Another change in the law governing local and Federal unions was made so that in case of lockout, or a victimization of members, the Executive Council shall have power to pay benefits if, upon investigation, it is found that the local unions whose members are involved did not, by their actions or demands, provoke the lockout.

A proposed change in the law to the effect that a central council could not request a union to go on strike was defeated.

#### **Gag Rules for Civil Service Employees.**

Three separate resolutions protested against the interpretation of Federal Civil Service rules with reference to the political rights of Government employees. One of these resolutions, introduced by your delegate, dealt with the trials of civil service employees at the Mare Island Navy Yard.

The Committee on Resolutions offered the following recommendation as a substitute for all three resolutions:

"Since Congress has recently adopted legislation to protect and safeguard the political rights of all citizens employed under civil service examinations, your committee recommends that the resolutions be referred to the Executive Council with instructions to further additional legislation of this character if it should be found necessary."

The committee's report was adopted.

#### **Exploding the "Room at the Top" Theory.**

The convention took notice of the glowing affirmations of so-called captains of industries, who declare: "There is plenty of room at the top; save your money and become capitalists," and charge the trade unions with hindering such elevation. The convention's attitude upon this subject is forcibly expressed in the following declaration: "It is a self-evident fact that if we could all get to the top as it is now known, and we declare that all such platitudes have no social value; that they are not fundamentally correct; that they are valueless and really meaningless; and that they are a snare and a delusion, calculated to catch the unwary and to deceive the non-unionist. . . . We declare against so-called castes in the labor field, and denounce the false assertion that there is plenty of room at the top as a subterfuge set up to mislead, befog and dissuade wage earners from joining trade unions."

#### **"Safety First" and Workmen's Compensation.**

Officers of the A. F. of L. were instructed to give all possible aid to legislation for safety appliances and inspectors of same. The convention assumed the same

position on the question of a bureau of labor safety, to be maintained by the Federal government.

Efforts will be continued to pass a law providing for the collection and publication of data on mortality and disability by accident and occupational diseases in the various industries.

State and central bodies will be urged to favor a rate of not less than 66 2/3 per cent. of the wages paid to those who are to receive awards under compensation laws. Widows should receive compensation during their widowhood, and additional rates for children under eighteen years of age are favored. Compensation laws should be administered by State commissions. It was further voted: "That upon the death by accident or through the result of an accident, an estate shall be automatically in existence to which, in case no heirs are found, the compensation due on account of the death shall revert after two years to the general funds of the State, or nation in case of Federal compensation."

In order to safeguard the welfare and rights of the unemployed, Federal legislation, now pending, and which is intended to serve as a model for the various States, was approved.

### Summary of Convention's Decisions.

A synopsis of the convention's action upon the more important resolutions, recommendations of the Executive Council and Reports of Committees, not yet referred to, is given herewith:

The convention affirmed its faith in conciliation, mediation and arbitration, but raised a warning note against the Esch-Townsend bill, the adoption of which would be a long step toward compulsory arbitration.

Officers were instructed to continue their efforts to establish a legal department in connection with the A. F. of L.

Pledges of support to striking members were given, and the convention agreed with the Executive Council that "the copper strike was not lost." In proof of this assertion, reference was made to the establishment of an eight-hour day and wage increases. Support was also pledged to the striking glovemakers in Gloversville, N. Y., and the Atlanta textile workers.

The convention instructed the Executive Council to request the United States Attorney General to place a construction upon the Federal Eight-Hour law, which has been made ineffective in some instances because of a decision by a former Attorney General, who ruled that material does not come under the law. If the decision is adverse, the Executive Council is further instructed to urge an amendment to the law, which will provide "that all work done for the government shall be on an eight-hour basis."

The convention declared that unemployment was partly due to our system of land tenure, and favored a policy whereby the land may be "restored to the people and made available without paying unjust tribute to land owners."

It was again decided "that we give continued attention to the organization of the unskilled in every field of labor."

An emphatic request was made for the passage of the three unfilled demands of Labor's Bill of Grievances, presented in 1906 to the President of the United States and the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives. These demands are the Seamen's, the Immigration and the Convict labor bills.

Hearty indorsement was given the Executive Council in its efforts to carry out previous instructions to "extend its good offices in the establishment of the federation agreement between all unions in a given industry."

The convention indorsed the Executive Council's recommendations on social insurance. The subject of mutual insurance by workers was treated at length by the officers, who favor the plan, and who were instructed to continue their investigations.

Acting upon several resolutions relating to Asiatics and demanding the exclusion of all races native of Asia, the convention re-indorsed the attitude of the Seattle convention upon the Immigration problem. This action includes among other things, a clear cut demand for an extension of the Chinese exclusion act, so as to cover Japanese, Hindoos, etc.

The Executive Council was authorized to purchase or cause to be erected an office building suitable for the American Federation of Labor and its departments. The Executive Council was also empowered to use funds available for this purpose and raise such other funds as may be necessary.

With regard to furthering the establishment of State employment bureaus the convention by a vote of 97 to 31 referred the subject-matter to the Executive Council with instructions to investigate further and report to the next convention, it

being evident that the convention was not altogether of one mind on the desirability of these bureaus, nor ready to give them full approval.

A resolution was adopted favoring the purchase by the Federal government of Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington, and Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson, near Charlottesville, Va.

If a world's congress to consider the subject of unemployment will be held at San Francisco during the Exposition, the Executive Council is authorized to appoint a representative of the A. F. of L. to attend.

Protest was made against the enactment of the Moon bill (12473), intended to weaken the present law, which assures postal employees a weekly day of rest. The Palmer-Lewis bill, intended to reduce the working hours of night postoffice employees, was indorsed.

The United States government was asked to pass a law that will serve as a model for the various States in bringing about a system of loans of money for municipal and private ownership of sanitary houses.

All affiliated bodies are urged to agitate for more rigid inspection of housing conditions and for more sanitary work shops as part of the war against tuberculosis. In this connection it should be noted that the publicity and educational activities of the National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis was indorsed. Efforts will also be made to have mail equipment disinfected and cleansed, and to supplant all filthy, dusty and germ-laden equipment, which is a factor in the development of tuberculosis.

After investigating the question of private detectives, by a committee appointed by the president, the Executive Council was directed to have prepared legislation to be presented to Congress and the State Legislatures which will prevent the granting of a license to any private agency whose members can be secured for strike-breaking purposes.

A six-hour-a-day resolution was not favored because the convention believed the eight-hour plan should first become more generally accepted. Hearty support, however, was promised any union that desired to begin agitating for a workday less than eight hours. Women's and children's eight-hour days were favored, and the Executive Council was instructed to do all in its power to carry these principles into effect.

Strong resolutions against child labor, presented by the Executive Council, were adopted. The convention agreed that "any one who profits by the toil of children at all, or by the labor of other minors required to toil more than eight hours a day, is unfair and unworthy of the patronage of true patriots and those who desire human welfare."

The Executive Council was empowered to take such further action as will cause the greatest benefit to labor in the development of industrial education, vocational and trade training. Reference was made to the Lever bill, which was signed by the President May 8, 1914, and which contains many educational features that will benefit agricultural and urban labor.

In referring to the United States Commission on Industrial Relations, whose work has been approved by the Executive Council, the convention declares: "We favor the widest publicity being given the testimony of President Gompers before the commissions, and recommend that the attention of the wage workers be called to the existence of a pamphlet in print containing an abstract of this testimony."

Every effort will be made by the A. F. of L. and its affiliated unions to advance both the adoption of free text-books and the organization of school teachers.

The question regarding the establishment of an A. F. of L. library was referred to the Executive Council for further consideration and report.

It was stated in a resolution introduced by the Longshoremen's delegates, that harbor boat owners in the vicinity of New York will not employ a captain unless his wife and children live on the boat. It was decided to attempt to secure laws stopping women from living on these boats because of insanitary surroundings, and compel children to go to school.

A "Sunday rest" movement, to be urged by the "International Lord's Day Congress," was approved, the convention favoring the Executive Council's view that "we are convinced that to co-operate with all other agencies having this object in view will be productive of good results, not only to the labor movement but to our citizenship in general."

The question of organizing workers in Cuba was referred to the Executive Council to be carried into effect at the most opportune time.

The organizing campaign carried on among women workers during the past year was given hearty indorsement, and the Executive Council was instructed to

continue this work and, if necessary, levy a one-cent assessment during the coming year.

The convention concurred with the Executive Council that a series of lectures should be delivered by President Gompers on the trade union movement, and that same be published in pamphlet form and sold at the lowest possible price.

A campaign of organization among employees of the State-controlled institutions was agreed on.

Resolutions calling for the organization of lastmakers, elevator operators, porters, janitors, stenographers, typewriters, bookkeepers and assistants, school teachers and domestics were adopted. The organization of women's union label leagues was also approved.

Unionists associated with philanthropic, civic, social and industrial reform organizations are urged to make "earnest and persistent efforts to unionize the offices" of said organizations.

To provide sufficient funds to meet the expenses in the long pending Danbury Hatters' case, now before the United States Supreme Court, the convention ordered that a one-cent assessment be levied on the membership. All remaining funds will be turned over to the fund for organizing women workers.

Because of the fact that the registration laws have been so altered as to permit foreign vessels to come under the American flag and to sail for two years without inspection, and for seven years with officers not citizens of the United States, the convention urged Congress to change the law so that vessels will be compelled to carry citizens as licensed officers. The law as it now stands permits vessels so admitted to sail with no inspection, to the danger of human life and property. This was also disapproved.

A resolution to form "an independent labor party" was non-concurred in and the established A. F. of L. political policy reaffirmed.

President Wilson was requested to issue an order restraining the Marine Band at Washington from entering the competitive field against civilian musicians in the District of Columbia.

Affiliated organizations were asked to join in a demand that Congress pass the Casey bill, or legislation of similar import, acceptable to the organized farmers. This bill provides for the establishment of a commission to demonstrate that farm denatured alcohol distilling is practical. This, it is claimed, "would curtail, if not destroy, the monopoly of the liquid fuel supply by the packers, and of alcohol as a solvent in many industries by the industrial alcohol and wood alcohol trusts."

A protest was made against certain working conditions in the Canal zone, and the Executive Council was instructed to insist on working conditions existing prior to April 4, 1914. On the theory that "the first duty of the American government is the welfare of its own citizens," the convention asked that the many positions now held in the Canal zone by skilled aliens, be filled by American citizens.

Efforts of the Executive Council to assist the organized farmers in securing a credit bill were approved. This legislation provides for the loaning of money on farm mortgages by the government. In referring to this subject, the Executive Council said: "The interests of the workers in industry and agriculture are closely allied, and it is a pleasure as well as it is the duty for us to co-operate with and receive the co-operation of the men engaged in agriculture."

Approval was given the Executive Committee in its efforts to strengthen the Federal hours of service (16-hour) act by providing a minimum fine for violations. The Executive Council reported that "the way in which many of the courts have trifled with this exceptionally important law has been shameful."

The present contract system of handling mails was disapproved. It was urged that future contracts provide for eight hours and the prevailing wage rates of the various localities, to be paid teamsters and chauffeurs.

The convention congratulated the Executive Committee "upon the progress which has been made during the last year in uncovering the evils attendant upon the so-called Taylor system of scientific management, and recommends that the Executive Committee continue its efforts to have a measure enacted which will prevent the operation of any system of shop management which includes the use of stop watches in connection with workingmen's labor, or the application of any system of payment of wages adopted for the purpose of speeding up workingmen, and the elimination of such system wherever it exists."

Unfair and arbitrary use of physical examination of employees in government arsenals and navy yards was disapproved.

Continued efforts are to be made by the Executive Council to have the government build and repair more naval vessels in its navy yards.

Numerous bills providing for old age pensions for civil service employees have

been introduced in Congress, and the Executive Council reported that "there is a wide divergence of opinion" among government employees as to the best legislation. It was agreed that a general campaign of education on the subject is necessary.

The Executive Council was authorized to make an investigation of the so-called Dick Military law.

The formation of local label trades departments, under the jurisdiction of the Union Label Trades department of the A. F. of L., was urged.

Because of the different solutions of the convict labor evil now urged in the several States, the Executive Council was instructed to make suggestions to the next convention that will be satisfactory to the workers in the various States.

Over the protest of President Gompers, his salary was raised from \$5,000 to \$7,500 per annum, and the salary of Secretary Frank Morrison from \$4,000 to \$5,000.

Instructions were given to the Executive Council to attempt to have the Lincoln Memorial, at Washington, D. C., erected by union men and in accordance with the Federal eight-hour law.

Saturday half holidays the entire year for employees in navy yards and arsenals were favored and the efforts of the Executive Council to secure weekly rest day and Saturday half-holiday legislation were indorsed.

State branches and city central bodies are to be notified that the use of the seal of the American Federation of Labor or any of its departments, by privately owned labor papers, is forbidden; because these seals are often used for the solicitation of advertisements, etc., and are abused in other ways.

Organizations directly interested were requested to co-operate with the officers of the A. F. of L. to secure passage of satisfactory boiler inspection law.

Changes were made in the laws governing A. F. of L. departments, which will henceforth act in all cases in conformity with the laws and precedents of the A. F. of L. This refers especially to affiliation which is to be entirely voluntary on the part of the national and international unions in the future.

Secretary of Commerce Redfield was requested to investigate the United States steamboat inspection service, which was charged with a failure to provide safeguards to life and property in the navigation of steam vessels.

Efforts of government employees to secure old-age retirement laws were approved. A. F. of L. officers were instructed to confer with affiliated bodies of Federal civil service employees to aid in the passage of a suitable measure.

#### **Growth of Membership and Finances.**

According to Secretary Morrison's report, the total number of charters issued during the past year (exclusive of charters issued by the affiliated international) was 225, which include two internationals, one State Federation, 44 city central bodies, 50 Federal unions (mixed) and 128 local trade unions having no internationals. The total income at A. F. of L. headquarters amounted to \$263,166; disbursements, \$265,737; balance on hand, \$102,492. The affiliated internationals issued 2,578 charters to new local unions, while 1,351 charters were surrendered. The net increase in membership was 62,882. The total number of strikes in which the unions were involved was 957, of which number 543 were won, 118 compromised, 60 lost and 236 are pending. The strikes cost \$4,280,000, the contests of the miners totaling nearly \$3,000,000. Besides the strike benefits, the internationals paid out \$2,214,000 in death benefits, \$1,031,000 in sick benefits, \$54,000 as traveling benefits, \$99,000 unemployed benefits and \$3,000 for tool insurance. These sums, it should be noted, do not include the many thousands of dollars paid out of local benefit funds.

The average paid-up and reported membership for the year was 2,020,671, an increase of 24,667 members over the previous year. National and international organizations are required to pay only the per capita tax upon their full paid-up membership, and therefore the membership reported does not include the large numbers of members involved in strikes during the fiscal year, for whom tax was not received.

#### **Election of Officers and Convention City.**

The election of officers took place with very little excitement. All of the old officers and former Executive Board members were re-elected without opposition. A few delegates voiced a protest against the re-election of Gompers as president, but they seemed to represent a small minority, so small that it was impossible for them to induce any delegate to allow his name to be placed in nomination against Gompers.

The only change made in the personnel of the Executive Council was the election of William Green, of the United Mine Workers, for the vacancy created by the retirement of John P. White. Green is recognized as a man possessed of

a very keen mind and one who has made a close study of industrial conditions. He has been very active in the past in securing beneficial legislation for the toilers, more especially for the miners, and is the author of the Ohio workmen's compensation bill, the mine-run bill, the women's nine-hour law and other legislation beneficial to labor.

San Francisco was chosen for the 1915 convention, by unanimous vote.

### Conclusion.

In conclusion I should like to make it plain that this report, lengthy though it may seem, gives only a summary of the convention's work. Five hundred and twelve pages of convention proceedings cannot be dealt with in a very comprehensive manner when brevity is essential. I would, therefore, urge all who seek more light and information upon the "Whys" and "Wherefores" of our country's labor movement, to send for a copy of the proceedings. The price per copy is only twenty-five cents, and there are but few books that give more value for such investment.

As usual there has been a great deal of oral and verbal criticism of the convention's action upon certain "burning" issues. I have fully shared in such criticism—yet, I am conscious of the fact that fault-finding and mere carping will never bring the desired changes. If any California unions think they have a grievance against the American Federation of Labor, because of its attitude upon the Eight-Hour Initiative, let me suggest that they do not waste their energy in berating that body or its officers. I made a similar suggestion in previous reports and herewith repeat the assertion that the American Federation of Labor "is responsive to the will and wishes of the rank and file." We should not forget, however, that the great rank and file is a sluggish, slow-moving body, and without any evidence to the contrary, "it must be assumed that the delegates to the A. F. of L. conventions fairly represent the will and wishes of a majority of their constituents. If they do not it is because the average trade-unionist fails to take sufficient interest in his union's affairs. Hence it is foolish to complain about standpatters, steam rollers and other things animate and inanimate alleged to have control of the A. F. of L. conventions. The A. F. of L. conventions are dominated by delegates representing national and international unions. Therefore, if we don't like the decisions of the A. F. of L. conventions we should immediately begin to assume a little individual responsibility and investigate how the delegates from our own national or international unions lined up on vital issues."

The American Federation of Labor conventions will be just as progressive and just as radical as is indicated by the expressed wishes of the 2,000,000 working men and women who compose the membership. If any radical change is desired in the laws, policies or principles of the American Federation of Labor, the demand will have to come "from the bottom up"; besides, it will have to be an emphatic and persistent demand—decidedly different from the flash-in-the-pan variety of I. W. W. fame. Patience is a very desirable asset, generally speaking. But waiting for changes from "the top down" is very much like leaving everything to a kind and merciful Providence.

Lest I be misunderstood (after indulging in the foregoing pessimistic reflections) I want to say with all the emphasis in my command, that I still have every faith in the American trade-union movement. No matter how regularly I shall find myself in disagreement with the decisions of the American Federation of Labor conventions, or, what is of more importance, no matter how often the California State Federation of Labor may find itself in the minority at those conventions, it is a certainty that there is positively nothing to be gained by imitating those would-be saviors who split in two factions every time they cannot agree.

The American Federation of Labor is just what we have helped to make it. It is not perfect—but it has a record of achievements far and away ahead of any so-called radical or class-conscious movement on this continent. So let us beware of those who "consider much and perform little," and let us ever bear in mind that our unions and our federations, no matter how far from the ideal they may be, do represent the average degree of our own perfection.

Respectfully submitted,

PAUL SCHARRENBERG.

San Francisco, Cal., Jan. 9, 1915.

