

### Death of Gompers Launches Struggle for Labor Control

#### Executive Council Must Elect Successor to Serve Until Convention Next Fall.

Washington, Dec. 13.—One of the stiffest and perhaps the bitterest, internal fights in history faced the American Federation of Labor today in selecting a successor to Samuel Gompers.

Under the constitution of the federation, Frank Morrison, secretary, automatically succeeded to the presidency, but he must call a meeting of the executive council within six days to select a successor who shall serve until the next convention, to be held in Atlantic City, next fall.

The council must meet as soon as possible after Morrison's call. Gompers had been president of the American Federation of Labor almost continuously since its founding. Of late years, his power was so great that no serious attempts were ever made to oust him. The last fight on him for the presidency was at the Denver convention of the federation four years ago.

#### Rode All Storms.

Several reasons have been assigned why Gompers, despite his failing health of late, successfully rode the numerous gathering storms that have arisen at recent conventions to remove him. First and foremost is that the older members of the federation felt that because of Gompers' long and faithful service he should be allowed to retain the helm until death, even though he might have become so incapacitated physically that he could no longer do active work.

This certainly was the cause that so far was made on the veteran leader at the recent El Paso convention. There was at El Paso a strong minority that felt a younger and stronger man should be given the post. In this group the proposal even was advanced that Gompers should be made either president emeritus, or a new post of assistant to the president should be created in order to relieve Gompers of much of the routine of office. This never reached the convention floor because the older members intervened and pleaded that nothing be done to embarrass the "chief," as he was known to associates.

#### Barriers Down.

With Gompers' death, the barriers are now all down. Literally, the woods are full of candidates to succeed him.

Every member of the executive council and every president of an international union admitted is in the field. Each will command strong support, a strength that may be difficult to divide or unite with other resources in determining upon two or even three candidates. The result, therefore, may lead to the most bitter of clashes.

In the executive council itself the fight may prove less acrimonious than if the contest were immediately to come before the convention of the federation. These members are of the so-called "Gompers machine" or administration.

No one man in the council was closer to Gompers than Matthew Woll, a vice president and chief of the photo engravers' union. For the last two years, at least, Woll regarded in federation circles as "spokesman of the chief." It was Woll, rather than Gompers, to whom persons having business with the federation were referred.

#### Friendship Handicap.

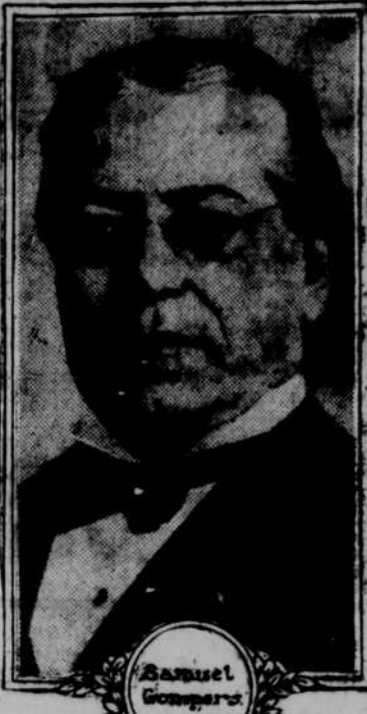
But being so close to Gompers, Woll unquestionably will begin with a certain handicap, the men who opposed Gompers' policies may unite against him.

Frank Morrison, veteran secretary, also has a strong following, as have Daniel Tobin, treasurer; William Green, secretary-treasurer of the United Mine Workers, and James Duncan, first vice president.

Outside of the council, should the council decide to name a leader not in its membership, John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers, and George Berry, president of the Printing Pressmen's union seem as candidates with a great potential following.

But even Lewis faces certain handicaps, first, he was beaten once by the Gompers' administration. Again, well defined rumors have it that

### Death Claims President of Federation of Labor



Lewis may get the labor post in the Coolidge cabinet after March 4.

#### List Incomplete.

This list of presidential possibilities is by no means exhaustive. Anything may happen, and federation leaders predicted today that almost everything will happen, once that the federation realizes it is without the restraint of the hand which has guided it so long.

But the selection of a new president is not the only question over which a war is looming within the federation; even though immediate, it is perhaps not the most important problem.

There is the question of future policy. If a "Gompers man" is selected president, the policies may be expected to remain unchanged materially for the present. Should a so-called "anti-administration" leader be named, a radical departure from existing policies may follow.

#### Bailiff's Daughter in Omaha on Way to New York

Beth Stone, daughter of Frank Stone, bailiff in Judge Leslie's court, is visiting her parents before returning to her home at New York.

Miss Stone, who is known on the stage as the Stone of Stone and Lambert, a singing and dancing act, has just completed a circuit on the Pacific coast. She and her partner, Carl Lambert, will leave for the east Saturday.

### Gompers Fair and Fearless

#### T. W. McCullough of The Omaha Bee Knew Labor Leader Many Years.

By T. W. McCULLOUGH.

(T. W. McCullough, chief editorial writer for The Omaha Bee, was a close personal friend of Samuel Gompers and only recently returned from the American Federation of Labor convention at El Paso.)

My personal acquaintance with Samuel Gompers began far back in the past, when he was yet working as a journeyman cigarmaker and I was active as a journeyman printer. It was a friendship from the start, that deepened as years went on. When I last saw him, only a few days ago at El Paso, we both felt the sadness of what developed into a final parting.

Mr. Gompers was then a sick man. He had given the last ounce of his physical strength to the convention, which had honored him with unanimous re-election as president of the American Federation of Labor. He had been advised to abandon the trip to the City of Mexico. To me he said he felt he must go. Even if he knew it would be his end, yet would he take the journey.

That was the outstanding characteristic of the man. He thought of himself last of all. No effort was too much if it were in the line of what he conceived to be his duty. He had gathered about him in the long course of his life many devoted friends. None of these more sincerely attached to him than Miss R. E. Lee Guard, who was more than a private secretary or guardian.

Others, Giles, Roberts, Wright, served as secretaries, factotums, agents, stenographers. But it was Miss Guard who looked after details not only of his business, but his personal comfort. To get to Gompers, one had to get by Guard. The highest proof of his friendship was given me when he told Miss Guard that at any time I called, no matter what the circumstances, I was to be admitted.

#### Without Fear.

Sitting in 18 conventions of the American Federation of Labor as a delegate from the International Typographical union, serving as chairman or secretary of its great policy committee, the committee on executive council's report, gave me ample opportunity to study the man and his methods. He was without fear and without guile. Once only did I try to get a line on his personal views. He told me flatly he wanted an expression from me to the convention, regardless of how it affected him. He got it. On two occasions I was called upon to oppose an amendment to the committee report, offered by Delegate

Gompers, and on both I carried my point, much to his delight.

Frequently we consulted, exchanging views as to matters that were pending, and seldom found material difference in our ideas. One of the most accomplished of parliamentarians, he was absolutely fair. Often a delegate, smarting under defeat or disappointment at the outcome of a vote, questioned the acts of the chair. Never did one try to twist.

At the Denver convention in 1908, when Gompers, Mitchell and Morrison were under sentence to jail by Judge Wright, in the Buck stove and range case, President Gompers asked unanimous consent to make a statement to the convention. There was objection, and the statement was not made. The interesting fact is that the objection came from a representative of the Metal Polishers union, on account of whose organization Gompers and the others were about to be punished. That was the most discourteous act I ever saw in a convention of the American Federation of Labor.

#### Always "Kept his Head."

Storm often swept over the body of the delegates. Discussions were not and then became intense, but President Gompers never was known to lose his head or control of the gathering. Obstreperous delegates now and then had to be sharply called to order, occasionally reminded of what was due from them to one another and to the chair, but such rebukes were delivered with patience and fairness, and never in passion.

Once, at the Philadelphia convention in 1914, I turned my back on a delegate who sought to heckle me while I was making the committee's report. Gompers told me it was the most superb gesture of contempt he had ever noted. The record shows that that report was adopted without amendment, although it took me the greater part of two days to get it in, and it was the subject of earnest debate.

Mahlon Barnes of the cigarmakers' delegation was a socialist, and bitterly opposed to Gompers. Yet, at the Rochester convention in 1922, when "Big Bill" Hayward assaulted Barnes in front of the convention hall, it was Gompers who sprang to the rescue, although it was Jim Holland of New York who knocked Hayward down and turned him over to the police. Hayward gave the inquiring reporter a story from the police station while Gompers and his gang had tried to assassinate him.

Withal, Gompers was modest. For many years he was the busiest man in America. None of his friends but marveled at his seeming indifference to physical fatigue, his capacity for work, and his willingness to respond to very demand made upon him. His capacity for social enjoyment was as great. How he ever found time to sleep I do not know. He met the greatest, and he met the humblest, and did not cringe before the one nor

patronize the other. His character was many-sided, but crystal clear.

A great gap, has been left by his going, one for which there is no man ready. "Jim" Duncan, first vice president of the American Federation of Labor, would be the logical man for the succession, were it not for the fact that he, too, is a veteran and near to the age when he will feel like laying down the burdens he has borne so long.

Matthew Woll, sixth vice president, a young man of great attainments, has been looked upon by some as the man who might step into the shoes of Sam Gompers. Outside of the successor is John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers.

Lewis has both capacity and experience. "Bill" Hutchison of the carpenters may also figure, should a special convention be called to name the chief. Remember, though, that since 1881 only one other man ever held the office of president of the American Federation of Labor, and he for only one year, and that was 30 years ago. Then you can understand how much it was Samuel Gompers' personality that sustained the organization and brought it to its high development. It will not die because he has gone, but his firm hand at the wheel will be sorely missed.

### GOMPERS SERVICE IN OMAHA PLANNED

A committee to draft resolutions on the death of Samuel Gompers, late president of the American Federation of Labor, was appointed at a meeting of the Omaha Central Labor union executive committee Saturday.

Services in memory of the veteran labor leader will not be discussed before the regular meeting Friday, according to Tom Wilson, vice president of the State Federation of Labor.

"The Omaha labor organization probably will wait for the announcement of the national program in honor of Gompers," declared Wilson. "I believe there will be ceremonies in his honor here."

#### Poincare Ill.

Paris, Dec. 13.—Raymond Poincare, former premier of France, is suffering from grippe, physicians announced today. His condition is not serious.

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### Labor Chieftain Begins Last Trip

#### Body of Samuel Gompers to Lie in State at National Capitol.

(Continued From Page One)

The federation who are not here and to Mrs. Gompers at Washington.

Gompers went to Mexico City with a delegation of representatives of the American Federation of Labor following his re-election as president of the federation at the convention in El Paso, Tex.

He attended the inauguration of President Calles of Mexico and insisted on attending a bull fight afterwards, though he was experiencing trouble with his breathing in the rarified altitude of the Mexican capital and was so weak he had to be supported by friends as he left the arena. He lay ill for three days in hotel room before the homeward trip was undertaken. During this time, he was re-elected president of the Pan-American labor unions.

Gompers' personal physicians coun-

seled against his making the trip by train, advising that he wait until arrangements could be made for an airplane trip to the United States and the lower altitude which it was hoped would relieve his condition.

But he insisted and was carried on a stretcher aboard the Laredo express Wednesday night. After reaching the lower altitude near the border, he gained in strength and his attendants were hopeful of his recovery when he was brought to San Antonio and taken to a hotel yesterday afternoon.

It had been hoped that after a few days' rest he could continue the trip to his home in New York.

Samuel Gompers was born in England, January 27, 1850. He was a cigar maker by trade, and a pioneer advocate of the rights of organized labor, becoming interested in the trades union idea when he was but 14.

He was one of the founders of the American Federation of Labor in 1886 and served continuously as its president except for one term, that in 1895.

He helped develop the Cigar Makers' International union in 1887 and served continuously as an officer of that organization. He was editor of the American Federationist and author of several pamphlets on labor

questions and the trades union movement.

His unceasing activity as a labor champion brought him national and international repute. He was a member of the advisory committee of the council of national defense in the war years and representative of the A. F. of L. at the peace conference in Paris in 1918 and 1919. At the peace congress he was elected president of the international commission on labor legislation.

He also served on several national industrial commissions during the administrations of President Wilson, President Harding and President Coolidge.

Washington, Dec. 13.—President Coolidge sent the following message today to Mrs. Samuel Gompers:

"It is with great regret that I have heard of your bereavement and I want to express to you my deep sympathy in your sorrow. Mr. Gompers, whose life was devoted to the interests of organized labor, until his name had become almost synonymous with the cause which he represented. As the founder and head of a great organization, no man has had a wider influence in the shaping of the policy of the wage earners of the nation and his loss will long be felt by his associates, not only at home but abroad."

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