

INSURGENTS GAINING ON A. F. L. MACHINE

**Seceding Electrical Workers Successful In Effort to Secure
a Hearing on Convention Floor—Controversy
being Thoroughly Investigated**

TORONTO, Ontario, Canada, November 16.—The first week of an American Federation of Labor convention is usually given up to listening to long speeches, fraternal addresses, and all that sort of thing. Committees are appointed and committee hearings had, and it is not until the beginning of the second week that real business gets under way. By that time the committees begin handing in their reports and work gets under good headway.

Of course the unionists of Lincoln and vicinity are interested in the case of the Electrical Workers, and I will undertake to tell how things have progressed so far.

When we reached Toronto it was easy to see that the machine had made every preparation to squeel the seceding electricians, and the scheme would have worked to perfection if it had not been for one or two things. President Gompers opened the machine throttle promptly on time and ruled out a lot of delegates from city central bodies and from two state federations on the ground that their charters had been revoked. These revocations were based on the ground that they had admitted delegates from seceding or dual bodies. But there happened to be a few delegates from bodies that did not have seceders among the delegates of local unions—at least not when the delegates to the Toronto convention were elected—and from these delegates came protests loud and deep against this unjust discrimination against loyal union men. As a result these protests and appeals were forced upon the attention of the machine's managers, and the laws committee had to take notice. When the laws committee met it was easily seen that in order to get at the facts the whole controversy between the warring factions of the electrical workers would have to be gone into. And despite the efforts of the McNulty-Collins faction to prevent this, the laws committee opened things wide and the fight was on. McNulty-Collins and others of that faction tried to be very diplomatic, and while evading the issues as much as possible, left no stone unturned to curry favor with the committee. The Reid-Murphy adherents offered to submit books, court records, rosters—anything that would enlighten the committee, and they proved beyond a doubt that the first violation of the Denver agreement was by Peter W. Collins, who violated it before the ink on the agreement was dry, and got Frank Morrison to endorse it. For three days and nights the committee threshed this over with the electrical workers themselves. McNulty trusted wholly to winning favor by playing on the sentiments of the committee, but Collins tried to frame up evidence that would count.

Don't make the mistake of thinking that Peter W. Collins is a fool. He is a man of splendid ability. Educated for the priesthood, he has learned the art of public speaking; widely informed on the topics of the day he is able to hold his own in a public discussion, and deeply interested in holding on to his job, he naturally puts his heart into this fight. As a matter of fact Collins made the only pretense of a fight that was made by his side. The rest put their faith in the machine, which in this particular case is managed by M. Grant Hamilton.

On the Reid-Murphy side the fight was a beauty. It is hard to tell which one of the bunch performed the best, but in my humble judgment Chairman Potter of the executive board and Vice-President Fitzgerald made the most effective pleas.

But due regard for the real facts demands that A. L. Urick, president of the Iowa state federation, be given full credit for having made the finest impression of them all. The Iowa state federation's charter was the first one revoked in this fight, and Urick, representing the Des Moines central body, also without charter, made the plea for the restoration of the Iowa charter. And in making it he made the fight for the Reid-Murphy faction. For forty minutes Urick held the closest attention of the committee and the hundred interested men in the room, and there is no discounting the statement that he made a greater impression than all the rest put together. Urick has been president of the Iowa state federation for seven years, and if the men of labor in Iowa are wise they will keep him there for years to come. There are few stronger men in the labor movement than this modest, unassuming, but brilliant cigarmaker from Des Moines. It has been a long time since I met with a man who has impressed me so deeply.

The committee finished its hearing on the case of the electrical workers and the deposed delegates Saturday night. Monday morning the fight was transferred to the floor of the convention. This letter must be mailed before the fight is fairly started, but there is safety in this prediction:

The McNulty-Collins faction will not have everything its own way, and the chances are that the convention will insist upon the warring factions trying once more to get together. Pending this I believe the revoked charters will be restored.

If this is not done, I look to see a breach in the labor ranks that will take years to heal. Those charters were revoked in the

face of appeal, thus putting the executive council in the attitude of endorsing itself in the same kind of an action that brought from it such severe denunciation of Judge Wright and other District of Columbia judges. If appeal does not act as a stay of proceedings in a case where a loyal central body is interested, why should it act as a stay in a court proceeding? A lot of us would like to have the executive council of the American Federation of Labor answer that question.

Saturday morning I heard the delegate from Porto Rico—I can not spell his name—make his plea for justice for his fellow countrymen. It was a terrific arraignment of the imperial policy of our republic, and he made a splendid impression. The resolution he asked for was adopted without a dissenting voice.

Friday afternoon Mrs. Raymond Robins, president of the International Trades Union League, and the fraternal delegate from that organization, addressed the convention. Lincoln workers know how eloquent and forceful her distinguished husband is in voicing the aspirations and hopes of organized labor. Well, I wish they could hear the wife! She spoke for three-quarters of an hour amidst silence only broken now and then by great applause. Time and again scores of strong men in that splendid audience were seen wiping tears from their eyes as Mrs. Robins pictured the woes of the women and child workers of the world and made a plea for help from the American Federation of Labor to the end that they might be protected from greed and avarice. I do not wish to detract one iota from the ability of Raymond Robins himself, but if he expects to hold up his end in the championing of the cause of labor he will have to keep going if he remains on even terms with Mrs. Raymond Robins. The first thing I am going to work for after I get back to Lincoln is to have this wonderful woman speak from a Lincoln platform to the men and women of our splendid city.

I haven't had much opportunity to watch convention proceedings as I have been compelled to act as a sort of "whip" for the protestants in this electrical worker squabble. And it has been a pleasant and exciting job, too.

There was a big temperance meeting at Massey hall Sunday afternoon, at which time Rev. Charles Stelze, John B. Lennon, John Mitchell, Tom Lewis, John C. Harding and others spoke. It was not a prohibition meeting. Neither was it a county option meeting. It was a temperance meeting in all that the term implies, and I wouldn't ask to hear better addresses or more fervent appeals for clean living, decent living and right living. These men appeared, not as representatives of the American Federation of Labor, but as individual workers trying to frame policies that would benefit the whole group of toil. It was an inspiring sight. Massey hall, a beautiful auditorium, will seat 2,700 people, and it was crowded to the doors. Such meetings are an inspiration, and here's hoping that many more of the same kind will be held.

Jere Sullivan, the secretary of the International Bartenders' Union, is one of the live ones of the convention. Jere is everywhere, and whenever he lights there is something doing. The joke he played on "Uncle Sam" Gompers is a good one. When Uncle Sam started on his foreign tour Jere hove in sight, and just as the "old man" was stepping on the gang plank Jere handed him a bottle, saying: "It's good thirty-year-old rye, and I want you to take it and use it as medicine." Uncle Sam thanked the donor. A day or so later, when out on the rolling sea, Uncle Sam opened the bottle to take a little something for the stomach's sake. With mouth watering in anticipation he pulled the cork, tipped the bottle and took a couple of big swallows of—coco-cola! Wish I could tell you what Uncle Sam said. And I wish I could tell you how the label on the bottle read. But you'll have to ask Jere about that label.

We had our picture taken Saturday noon. We stood in front of the city hall and looked pleasant while the photographer shot us. I am going to get one of the pictures and present it to the Lincoln Central Labor Union. When you see it you will find me located in the midst of a bunch of labor editors who look like they were having a good time.

Saturday night I took in the first social event I have had time to handle—the "smoker" tendered the printer delegates and visitors by Toronto Typographical Union No. 91. We had a bully time, and heard the presidents of four of the allied trades—printers, bookbinders, stero-typers and photo-engravers. We quit promptly at midnight in deference to the Toronto Sunday law, and just as the clock struck twelve we stood up, and while our Canadian friends sang "God save the king" we American fellows sang "America."

Perhaps a word or two about the Toronto Labor Temple will be of interest to Wageworker readers at this time. The Temple is more than self-sustaining. It pays seven per cent on the investment, and has besides a neat little surplus. The billiard room contains seventeen tables. The library is well supplied with good books, and there are seven or eight good halls, including a dancing hall, or assembly hall, that is sixty feet square and has a gallery on all four sides. The gymnasium is a beauty and the bath-rooms are models of their kind. I am told that the Temple is the greatest social center imaginable for the unionists of this tightly organized town. It is conducted by a board of control, and every unionist in Toronto is proud of it. The more I see of the Toronto Labor Temple the more eager I am to see Lincoln unionists secure a similar property for themselves.

There are no Sunday newspapers in this city. Nor are the Sunday newspapers from the states allowed in on the Lord's day. The Toronto World issues an edition at 11 o'clock Saturday night and

calls it the "Sunday World," but that it the nearest thing the city has to a Sunday newspaper. Everything is shut down save the restaurants and the drug stores. Only half the usual number of street cars are run, and from appearances on Sunday about everybody goes to church. Talk about Lincoln being a "moral town!" Toronto, with 350,000 people has got Lincoln skinned a mile. No Sunday newspapers, the bars closed from Saturday at 7 p. m., until 7 a. m., Monday, no Sunday theaters, no Sunday excursions, no Sunday concerts—nothing—but to go to church or stick around home. And the funny part of it is that it seems to suit everybody. I haven't heard anybody kicking about the workingmen having no place to go on Sunday. Maybe that is due to the fact that the Saturday half-holiday is a fixed institution here.

Say, the coffee they hand out to a fellow up in this country is something fierce. I am coming back here some day and open up a school of instruction for the purpose of teaching our Canadian friends how to make coffee. But I am told that they furnish the most generous slugs of whisky imaginable. My information is that a five cent piece will buy more whisky in Toronto than it will beer in Omaha—and that is going some.

Toronto is, I believe, the best governed city on the North American continent. It is a city without slums, a city without graft, a city without any extremely poor; and I am told by those in a position to know that in proportion to population it has the largest percentage of home owning workingmen of any city in the world. I can not vouch for the truth of this, but the city and its people look the part.

About the only thing that I don't like in Toronto is the coffee!

Samuel Gompers is getting old. There is no discounting this fact. And the terrific legal struggle he has just gone through has not taken any wrinkles out of his strong and kindly face. But the American Federation of Labor should begin right now to think about his successor. And when that successor is elected the workingmen of America—all America—owe Samuel Gompers a pension that will keep him in comfort as long as he shall live. That is his due for the splendid service he has rendered to the cause of organized labor.

There are a thousand delegates and visitors at this convention. To date I have not seen a single one who was under the influence of liquor. This fact confirms me in my declaration that the organized labor movement is doing more to promote the cause of temperance than any other agency.

I am sorry that I can not give Wageworker readers the result of the big fight in this week's issue, but I am confident that the good sense of this splendid body of men will find some satisfactory way out of the unfortunate muddle into which this electrical worker fight has put us. But whatever that result may be, The Wage-worker is going to stand loyally by the electrical workers of Nebraska, for a more gingery lot of real unionists would be hard to find.

The convention will hardly adjourn before Saturday evening—and maybe it will hold over until Monday. There is a lot of important business to transact, and it takes the convention several days to get down to real business.

WILL M. MAUPIN.

A. F. of L. CONVENTION.

I.—The Character of the Delegates.

Each year seems to raise the standard of the men who come to the convention of the A. F. of L. Those who have been coming regularly, year after year, naturally become more efficient because they are more highly trained in the things which make for better leadership. They are more tolerant of others' mistakes and short comings. They are steeled against mere pettiness. They are more optimistic as to the possibilities for the workingmen and workingwomen of America and of the world. Their grasp of the bigger problems in the industrial world is larger, because their outlook is broader.

Coming into contact with this type of leadership, the younger and more inexperienced delegate catches something of their spirit. It is a real education to him. He goes back to his own central body and to his local with a vision of better things. He has for the time being gotten away from the narrowness of comparatively little things, and he returns with the feeling that this labor problem is a much bigger thing than he ever dreamed. Needless to say, it pays to send a delegate to the convention of the American Federation of Labor—pays the man who goes and the body that sends him.

All of the above applies with peculiar force to the convention now in session in Toronto. Here are come together the picked men in the world of labor. They have risen from the ranks by sheer force of native ability. They have come up through storm and shock. They have been shown no favor merely because of social position, wealth, or family prestige—the things which govern in the selection of other groups. Every man has earned the place which he now occupies.

To such men may safely be entrusted the destinies of the toilers of America, not that every man is a paragon of excellence, nor that they never make mistakes. But the good sense of the entire body usually prevails and errors are soon rectified.

Marvelous is the patience of the delegates as they listen to long-drawn-out discussions which nobody seems willing to cut off, because of the keen desire to give every fellow a square deal. And always does the right side win, provided, of course, that it can prove its case. Sometimes, for the moment, technicalities appear to crowd out justice, but everybody recognizes the fact that these men will see that wrongs shall be righted, ultimately, even though the law demands arbitrary action in a particular case.

Organized labor need not be ashamed of the men who compose this convention. They would measure up with the men in any other deliberative body.

"EXPERIENCED MOLDERS."

In a recent announcement the Gray & Dudley Hardware company, of Nashville, Tenn., says:

"We have recently made arrangements to greatly increase our stove and range department, and put on 200 additional experienced molders. The enormous plant will be operated to its fullest capacity and gives us one of the largest and most complete foundry plants in America. We want live dealers in every community to handle our line. We offer you inducements that no other stove and range manufacturer can. Please write us today and secure the agency for 'Washington' stoves and ranges."

It appears that the 200 additional experienced molders are 199 convicts. The concern has been placed on the unfair list.