

## THE CINCINNATI CONVENTION

### American Workingmen Confer on Matters of Common Concern.

The late convention of the American Federation of Labor at Cincinnati was one of the most harmonious and business-like of recent years, and for all believers in letting well enough alone, probably, the most satisfactory. No new policies were inaugurated; no declarations were put forth looking to the agitation of more radical reforms; but the best attention of the convention was divided between plans for more thorough organization and for more effective work in behalf of such moderate measures as the eight-hour propaganda and label agitation.

The discussions took a wide range. Cuba, free silver, immigration, the supreme court, to say nothing of a hundred and one more or less technical matters bearing on trade disputes, occupied the attention of the delegates and drew forth from ambitious or devoted orators frequent animated bursts of eloquence.

The first and one of the most exciting discussions grew out of the Pomeroy incident. That Pomeroy was a "fakir" and that he was "crooked" there was testimony in abundance. But the convention was embarrassed by his non-appearance in his own behalf, and the fact that many of the charges were of a personal character not essentially within its jurisdiction. Finally all counts were practically abandoned except the one that he had attached his official signature as a Federation organizer to a partisan document. Here was a capital offense. The time had come when labor "fakes" should be made an example of. His credentials were rejected by a vote of 1976 to 196, only 16 out of the 121 delegates present voting against his rejection, and al-

most without exception there were so cast, as many delegates explained, from technical considerations.

Another sensational incident was the charges against President Gompers. There had been a misunderstanding between the president and Secretary McCraith; the latter had, undoubtedly, at one time, seriously doubted the good faith of the president in relation to matters on which there was a decided difference of opinion. It is equally evident, however, that the secretary had nothing to do with spreading the rumors that led to the investigation. Mutual enemies had obtained knowledge of some of their difficulties, and presuming on the difference of temperament and lack of congeniality existing between the two gentlemen, had magnified the mole hill into a mountain. Succeeding events had cleared away the secretary's suspicion, but the external influences, which were generally supposed to emanate from the unseated delegates, referred to in the preceding paragraph, had made them public property; hence the investigation. There may be many trades unionists dissatisfied with Mr. Gompers' conservatism. There is no doubt, however, that he enjoys the personal confidence of the membership of the American Federation to a degree unequalled by any leader in the history of the labor movement. The investigation resulted in the adoption of the following resolution:

Resolved, That the delegates to the sixteenth annual convention of the American Federation of Labor do hereby declare, in the most unqualified language, their fullest confidence in President Samuel Gompers as a man worthy of the cause he has espoused and for which he has sacrificed his time, health and ability."

The question of higher dues came up for a strong endorse-

ment. It was shown that high dues always made strong unions. As a starter in that direction it was enacted that all attached locals should change their laws so as to make their dues not less than 50 cents per month, and preferably 25 cents per week, and that steps be taken to provide for reasonable, but at first, low benefits. Six months was given such unions to comply with this requirement.

The committee on the eight-hour movement recommended that the executive council lend its assistance to the defense of the constitutionality of Utah's eight-hour law; that an advisory board be formed, composed of one member from each union affiliated at the city where the Federation has its headquarters (Washington); that this board meet monthly; that a series of mass meetings be held simultaneously during the coming year in all the labor centers of the country on Feb. 22, May 1, July 4, Sept. 6, Nov. 24; that public speakers, newspapers and the labor press be enlisted as much as possible in the agitation; that circulars be printed and distributed and committees appointed to wait upon employers; that data bearing upon the question be collected and distributed in preparation for a general movement for the reduction of the hours of labor, and especially during the spring of 1897. A committee of two to wait upon congress was provided for and an assessment of 1 cent per capita ordered on the membership of the affiliated organizations to defray the necessary expenses.

#### EIGHT HOUR REPORT.

The report of the committee concluded.

In submitting these recommendations your committee will be false to their duty should they fail to call your attention to the