

Convention Notes

Chicago, Ill., Sept. 21st, 1913.

The first measure considered yesterday, the 20th, was the Press.

Ben Williams of "Solidarity" brought up the fact that that paper was running \$200 a month in debt. He explained the condition and equipment of their plant in Cleveland. He also disclosed the shameful fact that a very, very small minority of the membership were subscribers to the paper. He strongly urged the imperative necessity of providing a Press Fund, if the papers are to thrive.

In this connection, a resolution was introduced, providing fifty cents of the initiation fee to be sunk in a Press Fund. It was amended to 25 cents and then the matter was referred to the constitution committee.

During the debate, many delegates from the East, who show a strong desire to make the I. W. W. a labor union, merely, favored one official press. Many small papers were severely criticized. THE VOICE got favorable mention.

The constitution committee reported a concurrence to abolish the G. E. B. This proposition was debated for six hours. There is no doubt that the G. E. B. will be retained, though the West is almost solidly for its abolition, including strong Eastern districts, like New York and Pittsburg. The grand "Mutt" from Philadelphia with 42 votes, is lined up with the administration's forces, which closes the decentralizers out.

Saint John closed the debate. He outlined what the present system of organization was. He struck off a new phrase: "Make the organization fit the Constitution."

After his speech, the previous motion was moved. It comes up for a vote Monday morning.

SOLTIS.

Sept. 22nd, 1913.

After a bad day's rest, the Convention convened again Monday, Sept. 21st. The heavy mental strain, to which the delegates were subjected for the past week, told terribly on them. Their alertness waned and enthusiasm died. Four of the delegates had left for their homes Saturday. Many visitors are attending the Convention, including the anarchist Ben Reitman, and he of some fame in the S. P., Frank Bohn. Mary and Leslie Marcy of the "Socialist Review" were also in attendance. Many professors of Chicago Universities are studying the Convention of the I. W. W.

To-day's session of the Convention transacted more business than any previous session. The debates that flourished last week were not in evidence to-day. The first thing before the Convention was the report of the Press Committee. Resolution No. 39, asking for a monthly bulletin of the organization was referred to the Ways and Means Committee. A resolution from Los Angeles, urging the I. W. W. press to devote more space to the Mexican revolution, was carried.

Resolution No. 51, drafted by Ben Williams, of "Solidarity," to the effect that all I. W. W. papers be consolidated, and that only one official organ of the I. W. W. be maintained, and that a press fund be established, the basis of which will be the sinking of part of the initiation fee, was carried by a vote of 25 to 7. This measure was bitterly contested. Delegate Nilsson of Portland, who said: "One paper cannot meet the views of the entire membership. For instance: THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE is much preferable to the Western membership than is 'Solidarity.' There is good reason to have more than one paper." Kottegen, G. E. B. member was in favor of this proposition, stating bluntly that: "One 8 page paper is better than 3 papers."

Van Fleet of Spokane, was out spoken against the resolution. He stated his views as follows: "We cannot say what the membership shall read." In the West the "Industrial Worker" is the real revolutionary pa-

per, and "Solidarity," a newspaper merely. Why should you take from us "The Worker" when we have built it? Has not Ben Williams, himself, stated that it is the West, that is the support of "Solidarity." Let the membership control the papers and we will support all of them."

At this point, McEvoy of Omaha, moved that the resolution be submitted to the membership. Kottegen arose to a point of order, stating that he understood the resolution to be final with the Convention. Ben Williams was given the floor and explained that it was his idea that the Convention should be final on this measure, as the I. W. W. was developed to a point where things must be put in a positive form." St. John moved an amendment, that it be submitted to a referendum, which carried.

Sauter of Los Angeles, declared that the "rank and file will have its papers." O'Brien of Stockton declared that "no organ of the East can serve the West." G. E. B. member Ettor arose in a rather heated pulse and inferred, that "According to the Western delegates, there ought to be one kind of Industrial Unionism for the West and quite another kind for East." He was heard and soul for the One State Press.

Douglas of Seattle stated, "That if the organization gives the 'Industrial Worker' to the West, they will maintain it themselves, without outside support."

"The question of Sabotaging the 'Worker,' during the lively discussion, received a good deal of comment. Many of the delegates expressed themselves to the effect that, whether it was one press or more it had no bearing on the fact, that the membership shall always have the right to Sabotage it, if it fails to represent the views of the rank and file.

The G. E. B. shall remain.

On roll call the vote stood as follows: To retain, 71 votes. To abolish, 45 1-2 votes. Or a majority of 25 1-2 votes in favor of retaining the G. E. B., of which the G. E. B. itself and the General Officers cast 7 votes, while delegate D. R. Gordon of the Southern District cast in favor of retaining the entire vote of the Western District of the N. I. U. of F. L. W. Natl. Ind. Union M. T. W. James E. Murphy, 42 votes. No vote (?). Nine delegates were absent on roll call and three were recorded as not voting. Many locals were not represented, notably the fine local at Edmonton, Canada, with 14 votes.

The Pacific Coast voted solidly to abolish, with the exception of San Francisco, No. 173, whose 4 votes went to the retainers.

SOLTIS.

("Solidarity" of Sept. 27th, reports the vote to abolish G. E. B. as standing 76 to 44.—C. H.)

September 23rd, 1913.

A monster demonstration meeting has been arranged by the Convention for the benefit of striking stogie workers of Pittsburg, Pa., at the Hull House on Wednesday, Sept. 24th.

The resolution of G. E. B. member Little to the effect that, where 20 members of any mixed local were engaged in the same industry that they form a branch of their industry, came up to-day. The Western delegates opposed this resolution on the ground that if such was to be the case, it would make the Western locals impossible of existence, owing to the migratory nature of the work in the West. General Organizer Speed rapped the mixed local a terrific blow. G. E. B. member Kottegen, declared in an elevated tone that "What we want is job control." This is a petty phrase of his. Motion carried 20 to 9.

The Grievance Committee reported in a resolution introduced by delegate O'Mally of Toledo, who every now and then evokes a generous ripple of laughter from the delegates by moving the "previous question," "The resolution asked for the official control of the I. W. W. label.

It developed that "Justice," a radi-

cal sheet of Pittsburg, was using the label to exploit the sentiment that exists in that town for the I. W. W. This paper has been condemned all along in the Convention. The charge is that its shop is scabbing on the A. F. of L., under the universal label. The matter was referred to the G. E. B. It was moved that the label be only used on official I. W. W. literature. Carried.

Special Committee reported on G. E. B. member resolution, F. Little, which is, "that the free speech fights of the I. W. W. be not abandoned, but that the tactics relative to same, be altered." He advocated Sabotage in the shops, where the right of free speech is denied. A warm debate ensued. McDermott of San Francisco took the floor, and decried against agitators hurling their spleen at the police, church, etc. McEvoy of Omaha, asked him if he ever participated in one; he answered, no.

J. W. Kelly of St. Louis, evidently was fired at the remarks of delegate McDermott. He took the floor and declared that the police did not molest the I. W. W. because of certain agitators not controlling their tongues, but because they advocated the abolition of capitalism: "Whose tongue slipped in San Diego; whose tongue slipped in Spokane; whose tongue slipped in Akron?" He asked in a pitch of dramatic fervor, "To hell with the police!" he concluded.

G. E. B. Kottegen, in a fine strain of respectability, emitted a few gentle, well cultured remarks, relative to the futility of attacking the sacred police. The matter was referred to the G. E. B.

SOLTIS.

September 24th, 1913.

There is hardly any enthusiasm left in the delegates. Many left for their homes last night. The long, monotonous session, has sapped their energies.

Tom Mann, the great English labor leader, graced the hall for a few moments this morning by his presence.

The attire of some local celebrities, contrasted with that of many delegates and I. W. W. agitators attending, is vivid. All kinds and colors of Windsor ties are worn. Jack Whyte has a long flowing immaculate tie; Rietman a rainbow color; while others range from green to purple. If the Revolution was dependent upon the lavish display of a Windsor tie, Jack Whyte alone would precipitate it.

A resolution to prohibit any officer of the I. W. W. to hold office more than two years was lost, 16 to 1. A lively debate marked its defeat.

A letter from New York locals, nominating delegate Flynn for General Secretary-Treasurer was cause for some vitriolic discussion. This document had the seal of two locals, but the signatures appended to it were all typewritten. Jos. J. Ettor, G. E. B. member, made it appear during the wrangle that Flynn of New York, was the man who caused its formation. Flynn flatly denied this. After two hours debate, the Convention voted to consider the letter a farce and fraud, over the vehement protest of many decentralizers. The vote was 18 to 10.

The Constitution Committee reported a measure to abolish the Convention favorably. This measure seemed to arouse all the delegates present.

McEvoy of Omaha proposed a motion that this measure be left to a referendum. Ettor, G. E. B. member, raised a point of order, explaining that only measures passed by this Convention could be referred to the membership. He was upheld by the chair. The report of the committee was rejected.

A proposition was reported upon, that editors be elected by the rank and file, and also be directly responsible to them. Ettor, G. E. B., opposed this on the ground, that it takes over three months to get a referendum vote, and, since the editor controls the medium of information, he could make that vote suit himself. Thereupon, O'Brien, of Stockton, Cal., asked him a question, to this effect: "How long did it take the members to act on the 'Worker' Case?" Ettor

replied, that that action was wrong. The report was tabled.

SOLTIS.

September 25th, 1913.

Miss Iva Shuster is taking down the official notes of the Convention. She it is said, is the world's fastest stenographer; she is a member of the I. W. W., belonging to Local 173, San Francisco. It happened that she was attending the Chicago Business Show, held a week prior to the Convention, and thus became available to the I. W. W.

\$6.75 was collected last night, at the meeting held in Hull House, for the striking stogie workers of Pittsburg. Speed, Ettor, and Whyte were the speakers. Another meeting under the auspices of the General Convention has been arranged for the defense fund of Fellow-Workers Morgan and Murphy.

The Convention got busy this morning, with the reports of the Press Committee. A resolution, that all locals that have asked for a complete stenographic report, pay \$5.00 toward its publicity, was carried 13 to 9.

At the outset of the Convention, a plan for the establishment of a press bureau, was read from Justus Ebert. It provides for a central news bureau, which shall collaborate all news and facts pertaining to the I. W. W.; also to tabulate data on Economics. The Press Committee reported favorably on this plan. It was adopted 17 to 2.

The Constitution Committee reported on the resolution which provided for the erasure of Art. 2, Section 8, from the Constitution. It was defeated after a lengthy argument.

Resolution No. 34, introduced by Local Vancouver, that the General Secretary-Treasurer, Organizer and Members of G. E. B., be allowed a voice in the Convention, but no vote, was a text for heated debate.

Nilsson, of Portland, cited the practice of the C. G. T. of France, and the revolutionary union of Sweden, in support of his contention, that the General Officers represented no one, outside of themselves. McEvoy, of Omaha, said, "I am in favor of 1 delegate, 1 vote." Kottegen, G. E. B. member, who always has one eye to the "business" of the organization, declared that "such a proposition would make out of the Convention, a great mass meeting." Ettor, G. E. B. supported him, stating that "the best talker would control the Convention." Clinton, of Bisbee, Ariz., called it a "political move." It was defeated 20 to 12.

A resolution that the Constitution be changed relative to the eligibility of persons to membership from wage slaves to workers, was defeated.

A resolution that the General Secretary and the General Organizer, be nominated by the rank and file was lost.

SOLTIS.

September 26th, 1913.

The session opened with the reading of a communication from Lawyer Fred Moore. It pertained to the legal phrase of fellowworkers. Bocchini and Legere. He outlined two legal courses, which may be pursued to the end of winning freedom for the above mentioned fellowworkers: First, to appeal the cases; second, to ask the Governor for a pardon. It was filed.

The Committee on Constitution reported.

A resolution to the effect, that the initiation fee not exceed \$1.00 and the dues 50 cents, was lost by a vote of 9 to 3.

Resolution 62, that the universal label shall not be used on any commodity made and sold for profit by the capitalist class was lost by a vote of 13 to 11.

Resolution No. 20, that the next Convention be held at Detroit, Mich., tabled.

Resolution No. 23, to abolish pledge of officers, evoked considerable comment. Sautter, of Los Angeles, said, "I see no reason for a pledge." Powell, of Sacramento, Cal., declared that "It is a part of capitalistic ethics." Kottegen, G. E. B. member, commented, "Any man who has any principle, will pledge his faith." Nilsson, of Portland, "It is a joke." McEvoy, of

Omaha, "It is like making a pledge to a priest." It was defeated.

Resolution No. 44, wherever a strike involves the handling of finances, the Central Committee of the strike locality will name the finance committee. Lost 17 to 4.

Resolution No. 10, to hold Convention on 10th day of December. Tabled.

Resolution No. 38, any local may elect an auditing committee to audit the books of any I. W. W. institution. Tabled.

Resolution No. 38B, that organizers shall receive more compensation than strikers. Lost 21 to 1.

Resolution to change the figure 3 to 2, in Art. 2, Section 2, of Constitution. Lost.

Resolution to make the word "Business Manager" to read after the word editor, in Art. 3, Section 9, of Constitution.

Speed, General Organizer, stated, "I hold that the membership is absolutely incapable to nominate any officers. The men on the floor of the Convention are the best judges."

Douglas, of Seattle, "I am opposed to electing any officers here. If there is any fizzle, it is here, and not with the rank and file." The resolution was lost 14 to 10.

The Special Committee reported on the subject of long strikes: "It is the sense of this committee that no general rules can be laid down regarding strikes, however, where the industries are not basic, the strike should be short." Adopted.

At this point, Jos. J. Ettor, G. E. B. member, arose to ask if Delegate Tom Flynn, of New York, had placed his charges against him? It happened that, when the question of whether the G. E. B. was to remain an organic part of the I. W. W. was on the floor, Delegate Tom Flynn, of New York, in the course of his remarks against the retention of the G. E. B., alluded to Ettor as organizer of the Boss Barbers of New York. Ettor resented this remark and immediately demanded a retraction. Flynn, for parliamentary reasons, withdrew it. However, ever since Ettor has been worried over it, and has boisterously insisted on an apology. After St. John explained that the record would show that Flynn withdrew the statement, the affair was dropped.

A resolution condemning the locals that threatened to withdraw their support from General Headquarters, over the action of the G. E. B., relative to the "Worker" controversy, was lost. A motion by Ettor, that this vote be not construed as endorsing their action, was carried.

An animated discussion took place. Kottegen, G. E. B. member, declared: "That kind of action on the part of locals, is traitorous."

The Smith-Heselwood affair came up for debate, on a resolution that both Smith and Heselwood be fired. Ettor moved to divide the question, and won. A motion to accept the resignation of Heselwood, carried. A motion to discharge Smith, called for a heated flow of language. Nilsson of Portland, McEvoy of Omaha, Sautter of Los Angeles, Van Fleet of Spokane, O'Brien of Stockton, fiercely contended that the motion was adding insult to injury, as Smith was innocent of any charge. The motion to fire Smith passed, however.

September 27th, 1913.

When the Convention adjourned last night it was thought that the Smith-Heselwood affair was settled. However, this morning it came up again. A motion to condemn the action of the G. E. B., in firing Smith, was debated for several hours. During the debate Delegate Nilsson received a letter from Spokane, which contained a statement from Walker C. Smith. It was read, and caused no little friction. Ettor, G. E. B. member, moved that the entire report of the G. E. B., on the Smith-Heselwood controversy be made a part of the stenographic record. It was carried.

This makes the possibility of a printed Convention report, very doubtful, as the report of the G. E. B., alone, is so voluminous.

The Western delegation insisted that the discharge of Smith was unfounded. In reply Foss, Ettor and