

HISTORY AND PURPOSES OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WHEN on Monday, Dec 13th, President Samuel Gompers calls the seventeenth annual conven-tion of the American Federation of Labor to order in the hall of rep-

resentatives in the state capitol at Nashville, Tenn., there will be gathered in that hall working men and women from every state and territory in the United States, several delegates representing the British trades union congresses of Great Britain, and it is expected that Canada and Japan will also be represented. It will mark an epoch in the history of the American Federation of Labor, the greatest and strongest alliance of bone, sinew and skill the world has ever known.

The object of the American Federation of Labor is "to render employ-ment and the means of subsistence less predations by securing to the tollers an equitable share of the finits of their As a means to this end it pro-1011." poses:

A free federation of all trade and labor unions in America; the establishment of self-governing union wage-workers in every trade and legit-imate occupation; the formation of public opinion by the agencies of the platform, press and legislation, and the furtherance of civilization by securing to the tellers a reduction by se-duly hours of laber; encourage the formation of local trade and labor unions, and the closer televities unions, and the closer referation of such societies through the organiza-tion of central trade and labor unions in every city, and the further com-bination of such bodies into state, territorial and provincial organizations, to secure legislation in the interest of the working classes; the establishment of national and international trade unions, based upon a strict recognition of the autonomy of each trade, and the promotion and ad-vancement of such bodies, to aid and encourage the labor press of America; and an American federation of all na-tional and international trade unloss to aid and assist each other, and for-thermore, to secure national state and municipal legislation in the interest of the working people, and influence pub-lic opinion, by perceful and legal methods, in favor of organized labor. The Federation of Labor endeavors to unite all classes of wage-workers under one head, through their several organizations, to the end that class. rase, oreed, political and trade pre-judices may be abolished; that sup-port, moral and financial, may be given to each other. It gives to any organization joining its ranks recogni-tion in the field of labor in all its phases. It secures in cases of boy-cotts, strikes, lockouts, attentive hear ing before all affiliated bodies and ren ders financial stid to the extent of its ability. If allows each organization to control its own funds, to establish and expend its own beneats without let or hindrance. It aims to allow -in the light of experience-the utmost liberty to each organization in the conduct of its own affairs consistent with the generally understood principles of It has established intercom labor. munication, created agitation, and is in direct correspondence with a corps of representative organizers through-out the country. It watches the inter-ests of the workers in the national congress; it indicases and protests in the name of labor, and has secured vast relief from burdensome laws and povernment officials. It is in commun eation with refermers and sympathizers in almost all classes, giving luformation and cubiting their co-oper-ation. It asks the co-operation of all wage-workers who believe in the prin-ciple of unity, and that there is situations builts in the firm bone simething better in life than long hours, low wages, lack of employ-ment, and all that these intoly. Its existence is based upon economic luw. CONSERVATIVE AND INFLUEN-TLAL.

other organizations, that at times have held a more prominent place in the public eye, have either declined in numbers and nower or gone to ticces altogether. Today the American Federation of Labor is composed of sixty national and international trade unions cleven state branches, eighty-one city central bodies, 458 local unions and has in round numbers a combined member-ship of 600,000 wage-earning men and women marching under its broad banner. Fifteen years ago there were but fourteen national and international trades anions in the United States and

Canada. Now there are seventy-eight, three having been formed in the past The American Federation of Labor does what all federations of labor unions do-attempts to give solidarity to the labor movement by getting the various sections of the labor army into touch with each other. It refuses to admit that occupation can be a barfer to the community of interest running through the wage-earning masses. From its inception it has taken the stand that, while unlong of miners sailors, shoemakers, cigarmakers and printers must each and all be left entirely free to govern themselves within their own borders, yet that between the members of all these unions there should be a bond as great as that be-tween the members of the same union.

The great aim and object of the feder atlog is to strengthen that bond, and its method is by organization, education and inculcation, to place the latter movement upon a higher and more effective plane ANTECEDENTS.

In 1865 twelve men met in Louisville, Ky,, took the first step beyond trade lines in the organization of labor in America by issuing a call to all organized bodies of workingmen to meet the following year in Baltimore, Md., where on Aug. 20, 1866, representatives from sixty labor organizations met and founded the National Labor union. The old National Labor union issued but few charters, and the only one now n existence, signed by William H. Sylvis, for a local union in the town of Black River Falls, Wis., has since been presented to President Compets of the Federation of Labor as a souvenir. The next convention of this body was held in Chicago in 1867, where Z. C. Whaley, the president, advanced the ideas of a central head, all subordinate

unions to be auxiliary to it, and to pay quarterly dues for its maintenance Subsequent conventions were held in Phitsburg, 7868; New York city, 1868; Chicago, 1869; Boston, 1870; Philadelphia, 1871; and Columbus, Ohio, 1872. This last convention put a presidential ticket in the field, and rapid disinte-gration at once ensued. The great financial crisis of 1873 following, the re-

No further stops were taken to form Md., Dec. 13, 1887. This convention repa national body until Aug. 2 and 3, reserted 2.421 unions or branches, and a 1881, when there assembled at Terre total membership of 600.340 members strong grounds against the use by na-Haute, Ind., a number of gentlemen in good standing, as against 316,469 of representing several national and in- the year previous, thus vindicating the ternational trades unions and the cenvision of the change adopted at Co trai labor bodies in the larger citles of turnbus the United States, and a call for a The eighth convention, held in St Louis, Dec. 11, 1888, is memorable for mass meeting was ordered printed and scattered broadcast. The gentlemen the unanimity and enthusiasme with named in the circular as speakers were which the delegates fixed the date for Senator Voorhees, of Indiana: P. J. Mcthe general inauguration of the eight-Guire, of St. Louis; Richard Powers, hour workday for May 1, 1890. To seof Chicago; L. A. Brant, of Detroit; Mark L. Crawford, of Chicago, and cure more efficient agitation it was resolved to call simultaneous mass meet-Sam Leffingwell, of Indianapolis, Ind. ings all over the country on four great A call was here issued for a meeting of representatives of all trade and national holidays, viz.: Washington's birthday, Feb. 22, 1889; July 4, 1889; labor unions to meet in Pittsburg Nov. Labor Day, 1889; Washington's birthday, 1890. As illustrative of the inter-15, 1881. One hundred and seven delegates, representing a quarter of a est taken in this action by the tolleys it is a noticeable fact that the first million wageworkers, responded to this call, and did not separate until they had established the "Federation of Orseries of these meetings embraced 240 cities and towns, the second 311, the ganized Trades and Labor Unions of third 420, and the fourth 526. the United States and Canada." The meeting was called to order by L. A. Labor Day of the European workingmen was adopted at the suggestion of Brant, of Detroit, representing the Inthis convention of the American Fedternational Typographical Union, and John Jarrett, president of the Amalgaeration of Labor. Steps for an international congress mated Association of Iron and Steel vere taken at the ninth convention, held in Boston, Dec. 10, 1889. An invi-tation was extended to the labor or-Workers of the United States and Canda, was elected chairman. The first egislative committee was appointed ganizations of the world to attend an was composed of Samuel Gompers. international labor congress in Chicago during the world's fair. A resolution Cigarmakers' International union. New York; William H. Foster, Internationof thanks to European workingmen for al Typographical union, Cincinnati; cordial indorsement of the proposed in-auguration of the eight-hour workday Alexander Rankin, Iron Molders' union. Pittsburg: Richard Powers, Lake Seawas adopted and steps were taken to men's union, Chicago, and Charles further such co-operation. Other reso-lutions indersed the Australian ballot Burgman, Tailors' union, San Francisco. This committee presented sev-eral measures to congress. One of Imsystem and favoring an employers' llability law. A resolution looking to "the formation of a political labor party" sortance creating a national bureau of abor statistics was passed in 1883. was defeated. At this convention the The secretaries were Mark L. Craw- executive council was empowered and viously loaned to organizations engagford, representing the Chicago Trade selected the United Brotherhood of

Some Information Apropos of the Ap. explains in good part why the federa-tion, has been steadily gaining in strength, stability and influence, while proaching for considered was that of politivention of That Organization.

P. J. MAAS, in the Times-Herald.

benefit

and Labor assembly; H. H. Bengough, Pittsburg, Printers' assembly, No. 1,-630, K. of L. and W. C. Pollner, Cleveland, Ohio, Trade and Labor assembly, who was also secretary of the Terre men of that trade; in many others also Haute meeting.

The second convention of the federation was held in Cleveland, Ohio, November 21, 1882. At this meeting a manifesto was issued guaranteeing the industrial autonomy of each union, and while deprecating antagonism to other labor organizations, made the qualities of a man as a worker the only test of fitness and set up no political or religious test of membership. The most netable feature of the third

onvention, held in New York city on Aug. 21, 1883, was a declaration favoring arbitration as preferable to strikes, and the logislative committee was instructed to present a bill to congress reating a national department of "hor. Steps were also taken to comwith the Knights of Labor that the ough unification and consolidation might be had. This proposition was

rejected by the Knights. At the fourth canvention held in Chl-caro Oct. 7, 1884, steps were taken for active propaganda, for the eight-hour day, and May 1, 1886, fixed for its general inauguration. The turbulent nes of the first week of that month in Chicago, and the terrible conse quences of the memorable and fatal seting on the Haymarket, where a tomb was thrown from behind the red flag of anarchy, created a violent reaction in the public mind. However,

number of unions were successful in securing the eight-hour system. Washington was the scene of th fifth convention, held Dec. 8, 1885. Besides preparing for the eight-hou struggle important measures were tak on to check the abuses of the boycott so often levied upon trivial protexts.

UNDER THE NEW NAME. At the sixth convention, held in Co

nmbus, Ohio, Dec. 3, 1886, the eld fed eration was dissolved, a more perfect plan of organization was adopted, and the name-American Federation of La bor-was chosen. The next conventior of the American Federation of Labor the suspension of work decreased their gathering of delegates from trade and abor unions, was held in Baltimore.

Carpenters and Joiners on which to vention also authorized the publication concentrate all efforts to secure the adoption of the eight-hour day on May of a magazine to defend the interests of labor. Its name is the American Federationist. 1, 1890. The movement was successful in 137 citles, and benefited 46,197 work-

The great railroad strike was the chief topic of discussion at the four-teenth convention, held in Denver, Dec. the impetus thus given secured like 10, 1894, and resolutions of sympathy The tenth convention was held in for the imprisoned leaders, denouncing Detroit, Dec. 8, 1890. There were presthe manner of their imprisonment ent 103 delegates, representing eightywithout a jury trial, were adopted, and three organizations. The national and international trade unions reported having established 913 locals during national commission of industrial inthe year; also reported having had 1, 163 strikes, of which 989 were successful, 76 lost, and 98 compromised, All but one reported increase of wages from 7 to 25 per cent. The miners were selected as the next trade to move adopted; bills to secure relief for seatoward securing the eight-hour day. Most interest, for the time being, was provoked by action defining the attio urge their adoption; legal attempts tude of the American Federation of Labor toward political parties seeking affiliation. This was the cause of the refusal of a charter of affiliation to the Central Labor Federation of New York city, because to that body the American section of the socialist labor party was attached. After protracted de bate the action of the officers in refus

cal action and platform, in which it was proposed to commit the federation to state socialism; this movement was defeated. The headquarters of the federation were ordered removed from New York city to Indianapolis, Ind. The fifteenth convention met in Madison Square Garden, New York city, Dec. 9, 1895. As general trade was just recovering from the long-continued industrial depression, no general movement looking to renewed ef-forts on behalf of the eight-hour day was inaugurated. Compulsory arbitration was again denounced and political party action was again discussed. and a constitutional law was adopted

tories achieved during the year. cinnati, Dec. 14, 1896; 117 delegates were present. The officers' reports showed that affiliated unions had 100,by the federation during 1896, against were made against President Gompternal delegates from the British recommended that affiliated unions

make their dues 50 cents per month as a minimum. The delegates presented the British delegate, Samuel Woods, with a diamond set charm, and John Mallinson with a gold watch, as tokens of good fellowship and brotherly love existing between the two great federations of labor. The Erdman arbitration bill before congress was disapproved. The headquarters of the federation were changed from Indianapolis, Ind., to Washington, D. C. Resolutions were passed recognizing the union label as the mainstay of trades unions and the most far-reaching and carnest way of educating the people to nutual benefits, and forming a national label league, approving the suggesion that the head of the government labor department be made a cabinet officer: forbidding officers of the federation to use their official positions for political purposes; indorsing the stand of the Christian Endeavorers against Sunday work. A new rule declared that any union refusing to comply with orders of the federation within sixty days should be suspended

NASHVILLE PROGRAMME.

Among the principal subjects for con-sideration will be: The eight-hour workday: methods for more thorough organization, the immigration question, government by injunction, defining more clearly the attitude of the trade unions in regard to political parties and political action, higher dues, the creation of a defense fund, the appointment of special organizers to assist unions already affiliated in a more thorough organization of their various crafts, act as arbiters in disputes with employers, organize new unions, advance the trades union movement generally. preach the benefits of thorough organization, and boom the labels of the various unions; establishing postal savings banks by the government of Among other matters approved were the United States, the formation of new national unions from the scattered locals. A fight for supremacy will elso be made between the machinists' and printers' unions for the control by the

against it by an overwhelming vote. The domand for the initiative and refrendum in the political field was reaffirmed. The executive council reported many disagreements between employer and employe settled and vic-The sixteenth convention met in Cin-

interference by congress demanded, A | 600 more members than the previous bill then before congress, to appoint a year and 267 charters had been issued quiry, was approved; free coinage at 141 the previous year. A referendum a ratio of 16 to 1 indorsed, while a vote of affiliated unions ordered on in-declaration in favor of free land, on discriminate immigration. Sympathy an occupancy and use title, as well as for the Cuban insurgents was exigainst the patent monopoly, were pressed; charges of political intrigue nen against unjust laws were approved ers, but not sustained, and a vote of and a committee sent to Washington confidence unanimously tendered him. at compulsory arbitration were de- the inauguration of an eight-hour day. nounced and protests made against which was set for May 1, 1808, and a blacklisting by railways and the issuance of bonds without the consent of unions was ordered for the purpose of the house of representatives. Two fra- agitating the short-hour day. It was former of the linotype machine tend-

Five Minutes for Fun.

Said a wee girl: "Mamma, Fido, likes [meekly responded: ""Tain't de fo'th | magistrate steraly askel one of the dam-ne, "chose he facted me and wagged his [commandment, bress de Lawd."-Ex-] aget swells. "May it please your lordship," he annil."--Chicago IntersOcean, change.

Moderninged-"Our elergyman forget Have you read "The Choir Invisible"?" "No: what I want to learn about is The Choir Insediate," -- Chicago Record, 1.0.1

Eigenstelly Sh-Hausser-"Why do you ill that hen 'Macdum'" Granger-"He-nue I want her to 'hy on." "-Chleaga di that hen 'Macdun?' inve

against all convict labor that competed with free labor was entered, and the abolition of child labor demanded, as nimals of the frigid zone." Tommywell as other legislation in the interest roit Free Press. 10.00 A Tale of Two Cities,-"She has a moalle countenance, don't you think?

RECENT HISTORY.

ing the charter of affiliation was in-

For the first time in the history of

onventious was held in the south, the

acene being, Birmingham, Ala. Its in

fluence was of vast benefit to the or

ganization in that section of the coun-

ry. At this convention it was resolved

to test the constitutionality of the con-

spiracy laws and the rights of the

ourts to issue injunctions on wage

vorkers charged with no offens

against the law, but engaged in a con-

test with outployers. An investigation

of the sweating system was asked at

the handr of congress; a protest

of the toller

the general labor movement one of Ha

forsad by a large majority.

An unusual interest is attached to lis Journal. the twelfth convention by reason of the fact that it met at Philadelphin n Independence hall. It was the first time any labor organization had been permitted to hold its convention in that historic building. The convention took tional and state authorities of the milias demonstrat.

himself this morning." "What did he do"" "ife asked the congregation to sing that good old hymn 'From Klon-ülke's Icy Mountains,' "-Chicago Record, Forced to Forgery.-"What's the charge against the prisoner?" asked the judge. "Forgery, your honor," replied the Up in the Subject.-Teacher-"Name six

Yonkers Statesman. "Yes, and a Chicago foot."-Indianapo-

....

"Well, prisoner," said the judge, "If you have anything to say, the court will Bizzley-"You must dislike Newcomb very much." Grizzly-"I hate him as hear you." "I'd rather be excused, your flercely as a burber lates a bald-headed man with a full beard."-Truth. honor," replied the prisoner. "If I said what I'd like to say, I'd be committed for The Wife-"What a sweet smile there is on the baby's face. John!" The Husband --"Yes; he's probably dreaming that have

outers ?

Free Press.

Inleago Tribune.

have charge of our wedding Miss Bliss-"Why?"

....

"Do you mean to say," asked the visi-tor, in horror, "that the gentleman was

shot for simply rising and making a mo-

on during a meeting of your debating

come of them, and the professor explain-ed that, as they had made a good deal of noise, he had put them to bed without waiting for her or calling a malo. "I hope they gave you no trouble," she said. "No." replied the professor, "with the exception of the one in the cot here. He objected a good deal to my undressing him and putting bim to bed.

-Washington Post.

his books.

8 = 0.4

York has a wife and family, but, pro-

One evening his wife, who had been out

for some hours, returned to find the house

remarkably quiet. She had left the chil-

dren pleying about, but now they were nowhere to be seen.

She demanded to be told what had be-

certain learned professor in New

sor-like, his thoughts are always with

The wife went to inspect the cot, "Why," she exclaimed, "that's little Johnny Green, from next door."-Pitis-burg Dispatch.

That the American Federation of Lafor is an organization of growing power and influence is due to the fact that its officers in the main have tried to be guided by reason and wise judgment in endeavoring to better the condition of the tollers whom they represent. This



ad in Homestend, Buffalo and Coem D'Alene. It declared that "the powers

designed to rest with the people as exprossed in the United States constitution, for the protection of life and property and guaranteeing the rights and liberties of the people have been liverted from the purposes of the! authors and that the powers have bee isurped by corporations." The con ention demanded the creation of loard of commissioners to be electe by the people, the commissioners, it conjunction with the governors, to have sole power to call out the militie declared against the Pinkertons, an for the enactment of laws prohibiting nonresidents from serving as peace of ficers in any community, advised, un-til these measures should be enacted The into laws, unionists should not enter the militia or national guard. The thirteenth convention was held

n the council chamber, Chicago, Dec 11, 1893. In the midst of the industria depression. Notwithstanding this fact there were ninety-five delegates present, representing as large a member Harlem Life. ship as at any time in the history o the federation. Among the resolutions approved were those favoring government ownership of telegraphs and telephones, institution of postal savings banks, better food and quarters for seamen, abolition of the "sweating" system and subcellars for bakers; ju dicial decisions inimical to labor were denounced, and a congressional investigation demanded; a "political programme" was referred to affiliated organizations: large sums of money preed in distutes were donated. This con-

keeping me av ake."-Tid-Bits

Hawkins-"When Tompkins marri-1 Miss Bronson the notice of the wedding "I hear you are going to move, old "Going to nove! Whoever told you began: 'Suddenly on the 10th inst.' "-Harlem Life.

hat rubbish "Your handlord""

"I have half a mind to get married," "I have half a mind to get married," idd the Lonely Man. "It takes," said the Savage Bacheler, jest about that amount of mind to think i such a thing "--Cincinnati Enquirer.

"Vesterday," said Jahson, "I rotused a applicant woman a request for a small um of money, and in consequence of my I passed a sleepless night. The topos er vales were ringing in my cars the hole time."

"Your softness of heart does you will," said Mahson, "Who was the wa-

My wife "-Detroit Free Press.

1.0.0.0 Joke Explained .- Porter feeturning in a Needing the Faith -"Has my hoy been hurry)-"Her pardon, shi but I was a makin' a mistake when I says your train a Little Defender and been kind to dumb mimals today" "Yes, grandma. I let cur canary out of the cage, and when starts from No. 6 platform. I 'ave has cortained that it 'as previously started from No. 5. In other words, siv, you 'ave y cat caught it, I set Towser on her." iost it."-Tid-Bits. 10.000 1.1.1.1 The Tackle and the Fly.-The Loulor

Injustice.-"I always believe in giving the devil his dues," sold the young man who attents odd methods of thought. 'Yea," posied his tailor, "but I don't, hink you have any business discriminat-ing against your other creditors in his heaver." Washington Star. police radied the Regent Club, at all night dancing and gambling establish-ment, not long ago. The text morning ment, not only deep. The set is at the damaged weeks and faded beauties, who had been arrested were brought up before the pelice magistrate, who sharp-ing interrogated now one, now another. "What is your occupation." his longhip favor."-Washington Star.

1.11.11.11.11

What She Broke .- Thud Stevens on a had a colored servant in Washington named Matilda, who one morning smasued a large dish at the buffet. "What swered, "Than fly adding tackle maker have you broken now, you door block by trade." "And what is your occupation?" the

A Chever "Bobby."-The Loudon Academy tells the following story of Tolsion-During his recent visit to Moscow he observed a polleeman taking a drunken man to the station with some vigor. The count

stopped bim and said:-"Can you read?" "Yes," was the reply.

And have you read the Gospel?" Yes, sir. Then you ought to know that we

hould not offend our neighbor." The constable looked the count up and "Suttinly," said the colonel, "but you nust remembah, sab, that the motion he down, noticing his shubby appearance.

and asked:-"Can you read"" tion of his hippocket, sah."-Detroit

"Yes, ' said Tolstot. "And have you read the instructions to Wasting Time .- Philanthropic Caller (at the police)

attee "My friend, have you any religious convictions?" Avery Baddon—"Well, I reckon that's what you might call 'em, 1 was sent here fur robbin' a church."— "No." Very well, then, so and read them first and then come back and talk to me agulu."

100.000

The street car struck the rear wheel of the bicycle. The bicyclist described a parabola and tell upon a pile of brick The blevelist raised on one clock, reach-1 The only case raised on the cost of the back an arm toward a tear pocket of the kulcherhockers, and collapsed, insensible, A sergeatd of polles fell in the nocket art drew out a silver costant fluxs labelled. "J. J. Jones, 100 Benton avenue."

"Go to be Bonton avenue, said the sergeant to a police offlicer, "and tell Mrs. Jones that Mr. Jones has..." The sergeant bauned and drew a hand

drear from the other rear pucket of the

kuiskerho-kers. "-Tell Mr. Jones that Mrs. Jones has-The druggest who was assisting dekied the bicyclist's lip with a teather he was rying to learn under the nostrik. The asked one of the failed nearties aforesaid, try "If you please, your fordship," she art-swered, "The a fly adding tackle maker lie trying to burn under the nostril evelist sould and mornared; "War-

"Tell Mr. and Mrs. Jones that Misa Jones has met with in accident."-Life,

1,000 ROLLS OF CARPETS. Do You Realize What This Means? 50,000 YARDS, OR CARPETS FOR 2,000 ROO

We had an opportunity of buying, for spot cash, from three of the largest carpet mills, all they had made up from free wool; including all the new Spring patterns. We will offer you these goods, as long as they last, at the price other dealers will have to pay for them. With these Carpets are 500 Wool Smyrna Carpet Rugs, 9x12 and smaller sizes.

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