

THE WORKMAN IN POLITICS

PROPOSING TO FORM AN INDEPENDENT PARTY.

THE CONVENTION LAST NIGHT ONLY GETTING AS FAR AS ORGANIZATION AND EXPRESSING ITS IDEAS.

The second conference of trades unions, called by the Central Labor Union to decide what to do in city politics this Fall, brought together at Clarendon Hall last evening 508 delegates, representing 115 trade organizations. The basis of representation was one delegate for every 100 members. While the delegates were getting together there was a good deal of informal talk about the course of action to be taken, in which very strong feeling for independent political action was manifested. It was 9 o'clock before the Chairman's gavel fell.

The meeting went on smoothly through the election of W. O. Cloyes, an eccentric engineer, as Chairman of the temporary organization, and so drifted on to a motion for a Committee on Permanent Organization. This led to a lot of fireworks. James P. Archibald, Secretary of the meetings, started the oratory. He said the convention ought to be careful about this step. Never in labor history had there been such an opportunity as the present one for dickering and dealing. It had been said by one man, so the speaker had heard, that he was willing to spend enough money to win, no matter how much might be needed, if he could get the nomination for Mayor. There were, no doubt, men in the convention who were watching for a chance to make a deal. An office seeker such as the one mentioned and such men must be avoided. Labor ought to be represented in a matter of this importance by men who are above suspicion, by men who never dealt in politics, and who were in no danger of seeking or taking political patronage or preferment. Professionals ought to be shunned, and by a professional he meant any man who had ever dealt in politics beyond casting an honest vote.

Mr. Archibald said he spoke in this way because dealing and dickering had been going on since the last meeting; secret conclaves had been held; the action of this convention had been mapped out and anticipated by persons who had no right to speak except for themselves. "We are not here," the speaker went on, encouraged by the applause and cheers of his audience, "to prepare men to grow fat on us. We want men to whom this work will involve personal sacrifice. It must be a labor for love, not for lucre. Should we enter a campaign it must be conducted in a way to convince those who are not connected with labor matters that we manage our affairs honestly. In that way only can we retain our own respect or command the respect of all parties."

Other speeches on this subject followed and promised to go on indefinitely when John Moran, of the Excelsior Labor Club, said this eloquence was very thrilling, but the speakers had evidently prepared themselves for some other occasion than this, as it was now proposed only to put the Convention in shape for immediate action, and not to do anything that would bear on proceedings beyond the session of the Convention. Whether Mr. Moran was right or not the Chairman would not decide, but it was plain that the delegates had been well roused by the speeches, and that whatever else might happen the motives of the majority of the delegates would be guided in the line indicated.

When nominations were declared in order it seemed as if everybody wanted to put some friend's name before the convention. About 20 names were at last announced, each of which received a special ballot. Then the seven men receiving the highest votes were declared to be the committee, as follows: Messrs. Doody, bookkeeper; Silverbrand, cook; Ford, brass worker; Bohm, bookkeeper; Emerick, piano works; Farrel, (colored,) engineer; Bealin, brass founder.

While the committee was at work Mr. Archibald was called to account by a busy delegate for a letter he wrote lately to Typographical Union No. 6 in regard to the refusal of that body to follow his marshalship in the parade of Sept. 6 because he was said not to be a trade unionist. Nothing more fortunate could have happened to the Secretary, for when he read the letter at the command of the convention he was cheered to the echo and the sentiments of the letter—in which he declared himself a trades union man and a Knight of Labor, both to the backbone—were indorsed by a vociferous vote. Then Edward King entertained the delegates for a while with a speech on the political duty of laboring men, in which he advised them not to waste any big men in a local fight. They were so few that they ought to be saved for a struggle in a wider field.

Secretary Archibald followed in Mr. King's vein. He went further than Mr. King and mentioned a favorite name, that of Henry George, which was received with loud cheers. If Mr. George were nominated for Mayor and should be defeated the party that proposed his name would be helping him to his ruin. The whole world would hear of it, and it might react on the party. In England his defeat would be greeted with a cheer of derision equal to that which would follow the defeat of Parnell. Mr. Archibald reverted to his plea for a clean campaign, which he advocated with much earnestness.

It was now 11:30 o'clock, and the Committee on Permanent Organization returned. It reported a set of resolutions in favor of a new organization to be known as the Independent Labor Party of New-York and vicinity. Then the report went on to declare a platform of principles—which the committee had not been appointed to frame—in which free-soil ideas were advocated; a demand was made for a share for the laborer of the products of labor. Among the other things demanded were strict labor laws forbidding the employment of children under 14 years of age; the enforcement of the eight-hour law, the abolition of the convict labor system; equal pay for equal work for both sexes; the repeal of the conspiracy and tramp laws; to make it a criminal act to speculate in food products; to abolish the property qualification for jurors, and to abolish tenement house cigarmaking. The committee nominated John McMackin for permanent Chairman and James P. Archibald for Secretary. There was a little rumpus after the report, when the temporary Chairman said the committee had exceeded its powers in concocting a platform. A good deal was said pro and con, and the report was finally laid over for the action of a Committee on Platform, to be appointed, and to report to the next convention. The debate disclosed a general sentiment in favor of the platforms, which will doubtless be adopted the next time, probably with sundry amendments, among them, as appeared from the debate, a clause calling for the abolition of tenement house labor in all trades. The officers nominated as permanent officers were then elected, and the Committee on Permanent Organization was made the Committee on Platform. The convention adjourned at 12:15 o'clock this morning to meet again next Thursday night.