

Amalgamation Victorious in Ohio

By Earl R. Browder

OHIO has joined the ranks of the State Federations standing for industrial unionism through amalgamation. With eleven such bodies on record as this is written, all within the past four months, amalgamation continues to sweep forward.

The fight of the month occurred in the Ohio State Federation of Labor Convention. Not alone because this organization has heretofore been rock-ribbed conservative, was the battle important, but also because Ohio is one of the greatest industrial states in the country. When the 39th annual convention opened in Canton, October 9, very few people, radical or conservative, expected the startling developments which came out of the meeting.

The convention hall was an immense auditorium, capable of seating thousands. The stupendous intellects at the head of the Federation provided this hall for a few hundred delegates. In the immense room the voices of the delegates were almost lost, producing a reverberation making it very hard to understand the speakers. A large oil painting of the late Mr. McKinley overlooked the assembly. In these surroundings the delegates sat for four weary days, listening to stupid speeches by politicians, all about what a nice fellow the trade unionist is, how much the politicians love him, and what they will do for him bye and bye. It was a typical lifeless, conservative gathering on the surface.

For four days' proceedings, there were but two items which aroused any interest or discussion. One of these was a talk by a representative of the Workers' Health Bureau on occupational diseases, which was very valuable and was appreciated. The other was the question of light wines and beer—this immediately roused the convention, which passed the wet resolution by an overwhelming majority.

Then Resolution No. 27 was reported by the Committee on Organization, recommending non-concurrence. This timidly progressive document merely asked the State Federation to go on record in favor of uniting the railroad crafts so that unity of action may be attained instead of scab-

bing upon one another. A couple of rank and file delegates arose to defend it with some diffidence and lack of confidence. One of them asked: "If you will not accept Resolution No. 27, what will happen to Resolution No. 57?" He was condescendingly told that they expected to do the same thing to both No. 27 and No. 57. Immediately the house began to boil with excitement.

For Resolution No. 57 was the famous "Chicago" resolution for industrial unionism through amalgamation. It had been introduced with the signatures of 21 of the most solid rank and file delegates in the convention. When this was threatened with the same action as Resolution No. 27, the latter became the point for the battle. Scores of delegates were immediately demanding the floor—and every one of them talked for the amalgamation resolution except the president of the convention. The machine was thrown into a panic. They fought for delay, and finally secured adjournment until next day.

Frantic efforts were made during the night to muster their forces to block the amalgamation movement. The big guns were mobilized to take the floor against it. When the convention opened on Friday morning, the one to lead off for the reactionaries was Adolph Kummer, president of the Cincinnati central body, and one of the "inside men" in the State Federation. But his attack, consisting of a rehash of Gomper's twaddle, fell upon deaf ears. The delegates of the miners, printers, and machinists, together with many of the railroaders, demonstrated such an enthusiastic solidarity for amalgamation that the other pull-backs decided that discretion was the better part of valor. The resolution was adopted with a cheer which drowned out the few plaintive "noes." When the Resolution No. 57 came up the fight was over; one of the machine men was forced to take the floor against it, to "keep the record straight," but he was obviously fearful of his duty. His remarks were received as humor, and conservative Ohio joined the ranks of progress in the A. F. of L. The rank and file are getting on their toes, when amalgamation is mentioned, and getting set, all ready to go.

Maintenance Men Rout Reactionaries

MORE than 1,500 delegates, assembled in the convention of the United Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees and Railway Shop Laborers at the Woodward Auditorium, Detroit, Michigan, beginning on October

2nd, delivered a death blow to the reactionary machine and definitely took the lead of the amalgamation movement on the railroads. Time after time they reiterated their stand, in answer to the repeated attempts of the reactionaries to tangle