

WILL LABOR BREAK WITH SAM INSULL?

Streator Convention to Test Officials

By ARNE SWABECK.

The exposure of the slush fund in the Illinois primaries as brought out by the senatorial committee of investigation has proven at least one thing conclusively, namely, that the selection of candidates on the capitalist tickets is completely in the control of those who can put up the cash. After such proof has been furnished, the support given by labor representatives to candidates thus selected becomes nothing short of treason to the labor movement.

That the money power controls the present congressional and senatorial election machinery, that it controls the two old parties and their selection of candidates, we knew before; but to the labor movement it becomes disturbing in this situation to note that a complete political alliance exists between such selected candidates, the politicians of the capitalist parties, and officials of the Illinois trade union movement.

Plays Both Sides Against Labor.

Samuel Insull, the head of the big utility corporation, the traction magnate, the one who fights determinedly

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any demands made for improved conditions of the workers employed by his corporation, supplies thousands of dollars to put over Frank L. Smith for United States senator in the republican primaries. He also donates money to the democratic primaries to be on the safe side.

Other utility magnates donated money to the Smith campaign. Frank L. Smith is chairman of the Illinois commerce commission and the slush fund investigation brought out the additional fact that these utility corporations had applications pending before the commerce commission relative to traction rates and other benefits sought for their corporations.

Open Shop Crowe Machine.

The Crowe-Barrett political machine, headed by State's Attorney Crowe, who has attempted to break strikes, who put trade unionists thru third degree methods and tried to smash the unions, supports Frank L. Smith, the Insull candidate. The Chicago Tribune selected Smith as its candidate. The Illinois labor officials gave him official endorsement and put it over in a number of unions.

Whether or not this is deliberate, the political alliance has become extended and made complete. From Samuel Insull of the utility corporation thru the Illinois corrupt capitalist politicians to these officials of the trade unions.

Non-Partisan Bunk.

This is the inevitable result of the so-called non-partisan policy. Its consequence in all cases has become one of complete partisanship to the candidates selected by the money powers of the capitalist tickets. These candidates pledge loyalty to none but capitalism, they carry out their wishes and naturally in any situation of conflict between capital and labor, they take their place unreservedly on the side of capital against labor.

One striking example has already been furnished in this instance. In the case of Frank L. Smith and the fare rate hearing of the Chicago Street Railway Lines before the Illinois Commerce Commission. The result of this hearing has been printed in an official statement issued by the Chicago Street Carmen's Union, from which we quote in part:

Smith Plainly Anti-Union.

"During the extended fare rate hearing affecting the street railway lines of Chicago before the Illinois Commerce Commission in 1921 and 1922, a hearing was prompted solely by political motives costing many thousands of dollars of the tax payers' money. Frank L. Smith, as chairman of the commission, by his attitude assisted in every way the political representatives that were demanding a reduction of street car fares by reducing the wages of the employes, increasing their hours of labor and demoralizing the conditions they had established thru their union after a struggle for many years.

"The whole burden of this demand for fare reduction was placed upon the employes and their families, and thruout it all the attitude of Frank L. Smith was against the employes and with the political forces that were using the situation to perpetuate themselves in power."

Must Come Clean.

After this slush fund exposure, will the officials of the Illinois trade union movement who are responsible for the political alliance with capital, have the courage to repudiate their endorsed candidate, to repudiate their alliance and at least on this point square themselves with the labor movement? This should be the important question before the Illinois state federation of labor convention now in session at Streator, Illinois.

The welfare of the trade unions is involved in this question. Their future existence as independent organizations of the workers at liberty to conduct their rightful struggles for better conditions of their members is at stake. If the officials do not repudiate their alliance, further developments will compel the rank and file members to take action.

For a United Labor Ticket.

Undoubtedly the present situation offers a splendid opportunity to the labor movement to give an appropriate reply to the corrupt capitalist politics, exposed at the slush fund hearings. A further alliance with politicians of the old parties and with their supporters, the big corporations, will not only increase corruption, but prevent the trade unions in their efforts to gain better conditions for the workers; and if carried to its logical consequence, even lead to the break-up of the unions.

The proper reply has been given by the progressive trade unionists in their demand that a united labor ticket be put up against the candidates of the big corporations. That reply should be carried into action.