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EDITORIAL

AMENDMENT IV.

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THE amendment here to be considered is numbered the 12th in the Second Bulletin of *The Industrial Worker*. The amendment provides for a “true and complete stenographic report of the proceedings of all general conventions, and of the meetings of the General Executive Board.” This amendment takes its place abreast of the leading ones adopted by the convention.

Whether conventions or legislative bodies are “necessary evils,” or absolute good things, the fact remains that they are the result of mass-constituencies. Even 1,000 men could hardly meet deliberatively: the number is too large. When the number of a constituency runs up into the scores of thousands and millions, even their meeting together is an impossibility. Representative government and conventions become a necessity. The necessity brings its own dangers with it. The inability of the masses to legislate directly exposes them to be left in the dark upon what their representatives do; this danger brings along the further danger of betrayal. How are the two dangers to be avoided? The first step in this direction is to reduce to a minimum the darkness in which the constituent masses are in through the physical inability of their all being present. The second step is to reserve the last word to the masses themselves. The second step implies the referendum. The amendments adopted by the convention with a view to provide for a referendum will be taken up next week. It is obvious, however, that no referendum can be really intelligent without the fullest possible information is in the possession of the constituent mass as to what happened at the deliberations of their representatives. For this reason Amendment IV. is here taken up first.

In order to reach an intelligent decision the voter must be informed upon what he is voting on. This holds good even in a convention. The delegate who does not listen to the proceedings can not act intelligently. If such is the case even with the

man who is bodily at a convention, how much more so must not this be the case in the instance of masses that can not be present, and yet should have a voice. This fact renders compulsory the furnishing of information to the absent masses. The minutes of a convention will not fill the bill—they are too skeleton-like. A condensed report of what was done and of the arguments upon which motions were carried or defeated would be somewhat better, but not yet enough. Nothing short of a full, literal and detailed report will fill the bill. Such a report can only be the stenographic rendition of the transactions. Only a stenographic report can preserve enough of the facts and color of the events in convention to convey to the absent masses a picture of a convention and of its actions. Without a stenographic report the referendum is a farce, and the masses are wholly at the mercy of their representatives. For these reasons the revolutionary element in the convention decided to have, and at last succeeded in securing, a stenographic report of the transactions of the General Executive Board; for these reasons the success of the revolutionary element in securing such a stenographic report for the late convention, and of embodying the requirement of such a report in the constitution of the I.W.W., was reached only after a protracted struggle with the reactionary element, who, this year, just as at last year's convention, did all in their power to block the measure.

Superfluous as it may seem, a few illustrations will help to prove the point of the utter necessity of a stenographic report, lest the absent masses be kept in the dark, and, thereby, be made the sport of designing people.

First. This year's stenographic report will prove, for instance, that the ex-President Sherman presided at the sessions of the convention and recognized it as such, he having himself called it to order as "the second annual convention of the I.W.W."—The stenographic report on this head turns the light upon the affidavit made in Court by the same Sherman denying that any such convention had been called.

Second. This year's stenographic report will prove that C.E. Mahoney, one of the reactionary members of the G.E.B., being cross-questioned on the floor regarding the pays that he pocketed, admitted that he received double salary when at work on the G.E.B., his salary as acting President of the Western Federation of

Miners and pay as a member of G.E.B.—The stenographic report on this head turns the light upon the statement subsequently made by the same Mahoney in the *Miners' Magazine* of the 25th of this month claiming he did not duplicate his wages.

Third. This year's stenographic report will contain the thrilling speech of Albert Ryan, one of the revolutionary Miners' delegates, in favor of paying the \$1.50 a day that was asked in behalf of those delegates who were not paid officers and whose Unions could not afford to pay their expenses.—The stenographic report on that debate will turn the light upon the editorial utterances of the *Miners' Magazine*, which impute the success of that motion to “scab” delegates.

And so forth and so on.

The reactionary delegates succeeded in keeping off the stenographic report until the convention rose from committee of the whole, and went into regular convention. Thus the transactions of more than one week will not appear in the stenographic report. They failed after that, and the rest of the transactions of the convention were rescued from misrepresentation—rescued also are the future conventions, and thereby the ability of the rank and file to take part in the deliberations of their conventions, by being furnished the full information needed for the exercise of the referendum privilege, free from the bias of falsifiers.

Amendment IV. is essential to intelligent democratic rule.

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