

pledge themselves to work and vote for a comprehensive State-wide civil service law, and an adequate corrupt practices act, and to pledge themselves to work and vote for an amendment to the Constitution providing for the Initiative and Referendum, to the end that such proposed amendment may be submitted to people of the State for discussion, consideration and decision; (4) to hold meetings and conferences throughout the State to further these purposes.

Successful meetings have already been held in Springfield, Bloomington and Galesburg, and plans for other meetings are already complete. In the present critical and chaotic conditions now existing in Illinois politics—many members of the brazen gang that has brought disgrace to the State are with insolent effrontery seeking re-election—there is much need for the active work of such a committee as that appointed at Peoria. The present aroused sentiment of the State should not only bring about a cleaning out of the discredited self-seeking members of the legislature, but result in a legislature responsive to public demands. For many years legislatures have either ignored or temporized with the great issues confronting the State. The scope of the Committee of Seven will be largely determined by the amount of money it can raise. The Committee of Seven turns to you and asks that you contribute, as liberally as you can and as generously as the great needs of the situation demand. Checks may be sent to Mr. George E. Cole, Treasurer, 86 Dearborn street, Chicago.

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The Coal Miners' Strike in Illinois.

At the special convention of the United Mine Workers of America at Indianapolis, the first formal proceeding of importance after the 13th (p. 781) was the reference on the 18th, on motion of John Mitchell, of the Illinois dispute to a special committee of twenty-three appointed by President Lewis. This committee reported on the 20th. Its report indorsed the Illinois strike as well as existing strikes in all other districts, but criticized district officials for calling out engineers and firemen without the advice and consent of the International executive board, and recommended that the convention instruct all district officials to immediately order striking engineers and pumpmen to return to work and protect the property of the mine owners. On the question of financing the strikes the report recommended the levying of an assessment of \$1 a week on all miners at work, to be paid into the International treasury and distributed proportionately in all districts. To this report a delegate from the Ohio district, William Green, offered a substitute, which without reference to other strikes indorsed the Illinois strike specifically, ordered that the referendum vote of Illinois be counted immediately, and directed the withdrawal of International organizers from all strike districts. As reported by the Chicago Tribune of the 21st, "the principal point of difference between the committee report and the substitute was that in the latter

it was provided that district officials, as in Illinois, should be given full authority to negotiate contracts with the operators, without interference by the International officers," and that there was no indorsement of President Lewis in the substitute. On the question of finance the Green substitute left the entire matter in the hands of the International executive board. President Lewis ruled the substitute out of order, as in conflict with the convention call, as dealing with constitutional subjects at a special meeting, and as shifting responsibility for levying assessments from the convention to the executive board; and upon an appeal from this ruling the strength of the opposing factions was for the first time disclosed. On sustaining the ruling the roll call vote stood at 927 for, and 1,201 against—an adverse majority of 274. After adopting the substitute, thereby sustaining the Illinois contention and overriding the action of the Lewis administration with reference to the Illinois strike, the convention adjourned.

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Somewhat of the factional temper of the convention was exhibited on the 17th, when, after a conciliatory speech by John Mitchell the ex-President, his immediate successor President Lewis said, in evident allusion to Mitchell:

I do not meet in fancy clubs to discuss the labor movement.

To which Duncan MacDonald of Illinois retorted:

I don't know whether you call the blue room of the Claypool Hotel a fancy club or not, but you met the Illinois operators there and you met them alone. Then you called this special convention. I don't know whether they told you to call it or not, but they announced through the press that it would be called before any of the other miners' officers or members knew about it.

Verbal encounters in this spirit were loudly cheered on each side.

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In attendance at the convention as official guests were Charles H. Moyer (vol. x, p. 974; vol. xii, p. 86), president of the Western Miners' Union, and Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, to membership (p. 444) in which latter organization the former is now an applicant.

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Margaret Dreier Robins and Women's Work.

The following New York dispatch in the news columns of the Chicago Daily Journal of the 17th, bears so directly upon certain news and editorial matter (pp. 772, 773, 777, 780, 786, 788) of last week's issue of The Public, as to be of special interest to our readers:

"The condition of the Chicago working girl is much better than that of her New York sister. She

is stronger, she hasn't got the hungry, ragged look of the shop girls of New York, and she is better fitted to cope with the struggle of life." So said Mrs. Raymond Robins, President of the National Women's Trade Union League, who has an intimate knowledge of the subject of which she speaks through her long study of industrial problems and a broad sympathy for the less fortunate sisters.

It was Mrs. Robins who spoke in the street outside Sherry's, from the rung of a stepladder, while a fashionable throng hurried to and fro. She was speaking in the interest of girl workers. She had come on here to organize the girls who had gone out on strike from the corset-making establishments, and who went back to work after they had lost their battle.

Mrs. Robins was seen at the old Dreier mansion, 6 Montague street, Brooklyn. Before her marriage she was Miss Margaret Dreier, eldest daughter of the late Theodore Dreier, who was a millionaire. Mrs. Robins was the first woman of wealth in the country to ally herself with labor unions. She became interested in Settlement work, and while she was engaged in it she met Mr. Robins, who was a worker in the Northwestern University Settlement and Superintendent of the Municipal Lodging House in Chicago. Mrs. Robins explained why she thought the Chicago shopgirl, although the conditions under which she earns her bread are by no means ideal, is better off than the working girl of New York. "Few of the girls in the West start to work at the ages of 12 and 13 years, as they do here," she said. "We have our child labor problems, but none like you have. The girl workers of your city belong to the second and third generation—a generation of which the mothers have been ground down by machine labor. In Chicago the sapping process has not got beyond the first generation. In consequence the women workers of Chicago have more vitality. "If emigration to this country should be shut off suddenly," she continued, "it would be only a very short time before we should feel our great physical loss. The strong peasant woman comes over here and transmits her strength to her children, and that is why our girl workers have more vitality than yours, for it is in the West that the peasantry of Europe settles. But I believe we are at the turn of the tide. I think that better times are coming for our women workers. The question is whether the intelligent women of our country will join with us to make the tide rise higher and hurry on that better day."

Mrs. Robins said that one reason why she spoke in Fifth avenue was that she wanted to get the ear of the wealthy women who trade in the shops there and who do not understand conditions as they are. "They are stupid," she said. "I don't mean naturally stupid. They are surrounded by a high wall over which they can not look and to the top of which they can not climb. It is these women we want to teach. It isn't that they have a lack of sympathy or that they wouldn't help if they knew, for I think they would."

Mrs. Robins said that in Chicago, while there is much room for improvement, the lot of the garment workers is not so hard as in this city. "Take the case of the corsetmakers," she explained. "The young women have been obliged to pay for the

thread with which they sew other persons' garments, and even for the needles. The purchase of the thread meant an expenditure of \$2.50 a week. As their wages were small this meant a great deal to them. The average wage of the woman worker is \$270 a year, and you must remember that average means below as well as above. In the textile industry something like two-thirds of the workers are getting \$6 a week. Deduct room rent and the price of meals from \$6 a week and what have you left?"

"Is it not very difficult for a girl to lead an honest life under such conditions?" Mrs. Robins was asked.

"Yes, and the marvel is that so many thousands of them are good women, as I know they are," replied Mrs. Robins. "Why, I have known girls to live on nothing but rye bread and olive oil in order to scrape together enough money to buy a new hat or a new dress. And, as many girls have starved themselves in that way in Chicago, I suppose that thousands are doing it in New York."

"What is the remedy for such a condition of affairs?"

"One remedy is trades unionism. Organize the women and teach them to think and act. Another is the ballot. I am an ardent suffragist. Everybody is who ever has tried to do anything for women workers. I believe in equal wages and equal opportunities for women as well as men. In this country the trouble has been that thousands are searching for every job instead of the job searching for some one to take it."

Mrs. Robins said she first became interested in the problems which now demand her attention when she was thinking of becoming a trained nurse in Brooklyn. She saw so much sickness and so much infant mortality that she set about finding out where the trouble lay. Since then she has devoted herself to the work of ameliorating the conditions of girl workers.

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War Ended in Nicaragua.

Insurgency in Nicaragua (p. 662) has won out, according to the reports of the last week. President Madriz fled from Managua, the capital, to Corinto on Sunday night, after turning the Presidency over to José Dolores Estrada, a brother of General Juan J. Estrada, the leader of the revolution. José Estrada immediately issued a proclamation declaring that he would turn the office over to his brother. General Mena's insurgent army entered Managua on the 22nd, and the insurgent faction took charge of the government. The Chicago Tribune thus summarizes the history of this little civil war: "The uprising in Nicaragua began in October, 1909. It was at first confined to the Atlantic coast points from Cape Gracias on the north to Bluefields on the south. The latter point became the headquarters for the revolutionary element under command of General Estrada. His first campaign resulted in the defeat of Zelaya's army at Rama. Later their attempt to advance toward the Pacific was repulsed and they were driven back to Bluefields. After a season of inactivity they