

Eleven States Demand Amalgamation.

What are You Going to do About It, Mr. Gompers?

By Earl R. Browder

A GREAT call for the solidarity of Labor has gone out from the State Federations. Taking the form of a demand for industrial unionism through amalgamation, this call has swept through the Federations like a whirlwind, gathering victories at every turn. Many of the State bodies meet in the late Summer and early Fall, and in 13 of them the issue was raised. In 11 instances, the demand for amalgamation was adopted by an overwhelming majority, in many cases with only a scattered vote or two in opposition. It has been a veritable upheaval of sentiment for solidarity.

The wide sweep of the demand for amalgamation is shown by the map (see frontespiece, page 2), on which the States which adopted the proposition in the last few months are shaded. They spread from the Pacific Coast in the West, to Ohio in the East, a distance of 2,500 miles. From the point farthest north to that farthest south, touched by these States, is a stretch of 865 miles. The population of the amalgamation States is about 23,000,000, or more than 21% of the total for the United States, while the area in square miles is over 758,000, or more than 25% of the total for the entire country. This tabulation does not include States which have endorsed industrial unionism in the past, such as Montana, Pennsylvania, etc., but simply those that have declared themselves in the big amalgamation drive of the Trade Union Educational League from June to October, 1922.

In this tremendous range of territory, all sections of the labor movement, all crafts and industries, joined in the demand for industrial unionism through amalgamation. What little opposition that showed itself was scattered and negligible. Railroaders, miners, building tradesmen, printing tradesmen, clothing workers, metal workers,— in fact all branches of the labor movement without exception, supported the amalgamation demand with enthusiasm. Never before has the American labor movement seen a similar demonstration.

The rank and file of Labor are ready for industrial unionism right now. Wherever the issue has been raised they have adopted the principle of amalgamation overwhelmingly. In the two States where the proposition was defeated through the efforts of a small group of officials, even the reactionaries admit that it was by the

most narrow squeak, that the rank and file are for amalgamation, and that it will surely be adopted when these Federations meet again. The response to the program of amalgamation, carried to the membership of Organized Labor by the militant unionists in the Trade Union Educational League, has been so immediate, and so nearly unanimous, as to clearly prove that Labor is ready for this step forward. The membership wants solidarity, and they now know that the way to get it has been shown to them by the League.

State Federations are delegate bodies from the rank and file. They respond most readily to the desires of the workers, and give voice to their awakening demands. When eleven State Federations call upon the officers of the American Federation of Labor to call conferences for working out plans to amalgamate all craft unions until there shall remain but one union for each industry, that means that back of the demand there is a great body of determined workers. In addition to the State organizations, scores of city central bodies, thousands of local unions, and several great Internationals, have joined in the demand during the same short period. The urge for solidarity is manifesting itself in every branch of the labor movement.

Over a million workers, Mr. Gompers, have called upon you and your associates in the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor, to take action to amalgamate the divided craft unions into a series of powerful industrial unions.

They are weary of having a dozen or two organizations in a single industry and are tired of being licked because they cannot present a united front. They demand solidarity.

It has been one of your boasts, that you keep your ear to the ground. Have you heard these eleven earthquakes in the State Federations?

You have said time and again, that you go as far as the rank and file will let you. Now the rank and file want to go as far as industrial unionism. Are you going with them, or are you going to block progress in your time-honored manner?

What are you going to do about it, Mr. Gompers?