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TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

AMENDMENTS I. AND II.

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THE first, in the order of importance, of the amendments to the constitution adopted by the recent convention of the I.W.W., are two—one changing the minimum number of members for the establishment of an Industrial Department; the other providing for the establishment of direct contact between the G.E.B. and all the locals, even where these are included in Departments. These two amendments are of deep import. Like almost all the other changes, these two were dictated by experience, and are moves toward placing the I.W.W. upon the practical revolutionary tracks laid out by the Manifesto of January, 1905.

The actual unit of organization in the I.W.W. is the Industrial Union—the national Industrial Union. A concrete illustration of the national Industrial Union will serve the purpose better than a general definition. The organization known as the Western Federation of Miners, for instance, is a national Industrial Union. Wherever ore is mined a local Industrial Union of ore mining is on foot. In and to that Union belong the smelters, millers, drivers and whatever other subdivisions there may be in the ore-mining industry. These subdivisions are not dependencies upon some central body of men, directly engaged at ore mining. The philosophy of the I.W.W. recognizes, no “dependencies” in production or among the Working Class; it sees in them all but direct co-laborers in production, divided only by the nature of their specific industry. Accordingly, the I.W.W. sees in all the men, at work in their several capacities in and around the ore mine, but direct co-laborers in ONE industry—the production of ore, divided only in the subdivisions that the nature of their specific occupations dictates. The assemblage of all such local Industrial Unions constitutes the national Industrial Union of ore mining. A general definition of the Industrial Union will be clear by the light of the above exposition. The national Industrial Union is the aggregate of the local Industrial

Unions centered around a leading product of labor—the national Industrial Union of ore mining centers around the production of ore; the national Industrial Union of boot and shoe workers centers around the production of foot-wear; the national Industrial Union of railroaders, centers around the production of inter-urban transportation; the national Industrial Union of printers, centers around the mechanical production of literature; the national Industrial Union of coal mining centers around the production of coal; the national Industrial Union of steamboat workers centers around the production of transportation over the waterways; and so forth.

The local Industrial Union of any one industry holds, in the organic scheme of the Socialist Republic, the place that the geographic division of the County to-day holds in the organic scheme of capitalist Government; the assemblage of such local Industrial Unions, that is, the national Industrial Union of any one industry, in turn, holds in the organic scheme of the Socialist Republic the place now held by the purely arbitrary geographic division of the State. As, to-day, the County, in its sphere, and the State, in its sphere, so must the national Industrial Union, together with its component local Industrial Unions, enjoy complete autonomy within the province of its own internal concerns. As the aggregate of States forms, to-day, the Nation, and is the constituency of the capitalist Government, with controlling power over all in their common relations, national Industrial Unions will form the body and will be the constituency of the administration of the Socialist Republic, or Co-operative Commonwealth, with likewise controlling power over the collective whole in the relations that are common to all its parts. It follows that the future Parliament of Labor will be composed—not, as the Parliament of Capitalism is, of members chosen from geographical demarkations, but—of Representatives chosen from the national Industrial Unions. This fact, which the heaving Movement carries in its folds, and which, consciously and unconsciously, the delegates to last year's convention, and more pronouncedly so the delegates to the convention of this year, divided in promoting or opposing, explains the line of cleavage between "Revolutionists" and "Reactionists." More important to the subject directly in hand—the two amendments in question—is the bearing of the office or function of the national Industrial Union upon the "Departments."

The Departmental division was a make-shift that circumstances compelled last year's convention to adopt, and that for some time to come will remain necessary. A parliament is a deliberative body. In order fitly to perform its function it needs numbers—not too many, lest it choke itself; not too few lest it fail to be representative. Hence a parliament can neither execute nor administer. The executive or administrative office is the function of a small body—capitalism has organized that body into, and has given it the name of a “Cabinet”; the American revolutionary Labor Movement, in I.W.W. convention assembled, has organized the precursor of the executive or administrative body of the Socialist Republic into, and has given it the name of a “General Executive Board.” How was that General Executive Board to be chosen? How the triumphant, industrially organized Proletariat of the land will eventually choose the G.E.B. of its Parliament may be a subject of conjecture. A G.E.B., however, has to be chosen now. Last year's convention, guided by the knowledge that an executive body must consist of a limited number, hit upon the plan of lumping national Industrial Unions, that were most closely connected, into a smaller number of groups. Thus rose the “Department,” and that is the excuse or justification for its existence.

Obviously the “Department” is a make-shift, a temporary shell. Whether the make-shift is at all necessary; whether it does not more harm than good; or whether the better way should be to elect the whole G.E.B. at large, from the floor of the convention, as the G.E.B. is now in part elected,—these are matters that will undoubtedly occupy the attention of I.W.W. conventions in the immediate future, when riper experience will be at command. This year's convention realized certain injuries that the Departmental system had wrought, due to the abuses that it invited. The abuses that crept in proceeded from the circumstance that not a single Department, of the three that were recognized when this year's convention met, consisted of more than one national Industrial Union. One national Industrial Union with Departmental functions, accordingly, with its own officers acting also as Departmental officers, opened the doors for a repetition upon the industrial field of the State Rights exclusiveness, to the injury of the Nation as a whole, that this country had to struggle against in its infancy. As many a State presumed to arrogate to itself autonomy, not in its own internal concerns merely, but also in

matters affecting the welfare of the whole Nation, in defiance of Congress, so now were these Departmental officers found, in several instances, blocking the way to the legitimate functions of the G.E.B. over the whole organization. The malfeasances of this nature committed by the Departmental officers of the Department of Metal and Machinery Workers, and of the Transportation Department were the most glaring. For all this, the convention was not ready to adopt the drastic method of abolishing the Departmental system altogether. The course taken by the convention was to meet the evil with two amendments:

The first of these amendments merely checks the evil. Seeing that the most harmful abuses had proceeded from Departments of small membership, the convention raised the number of members needed from 3,000 to 10,000, relying upon the expectation that, by the time 10,000 members were gathered legitimately within one Department, these members would not all be of ONE, but would probably be of at LEAST TWO national Industrial Unions. Departmental officers made up of more than ONE national Industrial Union will not be so liable to incur the harmful "State's Right" selfish exclusiveness to which Departmental officers from ONE national Industrial Union would be prone.

The second amendment is a long step towards curing the evil. It consists in specific instructions to the General Secretary-Treasurer, in addition to those previously enumerated under Art. II., Sec. 4, to the effect that "he shall furnish a copy of all proceedings to each affiliated local Union, REGARDLESS OF THEIR AFFILIATION, IF ANY, WITH ANY OF THE DEPARTMENTS." This amendment brings, in a practical manner, every unit of the I.W.W. in direct touch with the central administration, the central administration with all its units, and all with each.

The two amendments make for progress, and for the fitting of the organization for the fulfillment of its mission.

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