

DAILY PEOPLE

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NEW YORK, MONDAY, MARCH 11, 1907.

ONE CENT.

CORRESPONDENCE

AS TO JAMES CONNOLLY'S REPORT.

EDITOR *Daily People*:—
To the Comrades of New Jersey:

Comrades, certain statements of mine at the recent New Jersey State Convention having been called in question, and the matter, against all correct procedure, being referred to the Editor of *The People*, instead of to the National Secretary—the proper official, I claim the right to place before you the true facts in the case, and the exact wording of the resolution in dispute.

On the matter of the Transvaal letter I moved:

“That the N.E.C. considers that the N.E.C. and its Sub-Committee have the right to insert official matter in *The People*.”

I worded the resolution in this manner in order to uphold the contention I was maintaining then, and maintaining now, viz., that in the absence of the N.E.C. the Sub-Committee ought to exercise all its powers and functions, subject only to the recall and over-ruling vote of the N.E.C., as the latter is subject to the over-ruling vote of the party membership. For this purpose it was necessary to include the two bodies which I accordingly did in their proper order.

When this resolution was accepted as in order to be discussed I made a copy of it and handed that copy to the secretary; the *original is lying beside me as I am writing this letter*.

This was in conformity with the practice I followed all during the N.E.C.; of every resolution I offered I made two copies, one for the secretary and one for myself. A fact all my fellow-members can testify to.

To further illustrate the credibility of my report permit me to place a few facts before you. After the meeting of the N.E.C., and one month before the New Jersey State Convention I moved in the Sub-Committee, and was instrumental in having passed, a recommendation that the minutes of the N.E.C. be sent to the State Committees. Is it conceivable then that with the knowledge that, due to my own initiative in the matter, these minutes would soon be in the hands of the men I was addressing I would be such a fool as to seriously misquote a resolution that would be in these very minutes.

But why all this heat? Let us have the minutes!

Fraternally,

James Connolly.

(152 Hawthorne ave., {Newark,} New Jersey.)

[First. Connolly starts his statement with a slip from “the true facts in the case” which he promises to give. He says that his statements at the recent New Jersey convention were “referred to the Editor of *The People*.” This does not square with the facts, and these facts are not open to discussion. They are found black upon white in the *Daily People* of last February 28, under the signatures of the New Jersey comrades who did the alleged “referring.” Connolly, in his report to the New Jersey convention had conveyed the impression that the Editor of *The People* had been instrumental in causing the N.E.C. to relinquish all its rights of supervision over the contents of *The People*. The comrades who wrote, though puzzled, evidently believed that some such act was committed by the N.E.C. As the National Secretary is not the custodian of the actions of the Editor of *The People*, and as no reference had been made to the National Secretary, it was in keeping with “all correct procedure” to do what the comrades did—demand from the Editor of *The People* an explanation of the conduct imputed to him. The S.L.P. holds every member personally responsible, and demands direct, not vicarious, explanations.

Second. Connolly talks as though the issue were whether the motion, which at the New Jersey Convention he reported to have made at the N.E.C., tallies with the “original lying beside him.” That is not the issue. It matters not, how many originals may lie beside a mover of a motion. The issue is whether the action of the N.E.C., in which action the Editor of *The People* was reported to have been instrumental, justified the interpretation that Connolly put upon it in his report to the New Jersey convention, to the effect that the N.E.C. had relinquished its rights of supervision over the contents of *The People*. In determining the correctness or incorrectness of such an interpretation, the first thing to consider is, no doubt, the motion that the N.E.C. voted down. But in the determining of such correctness or incorrectness, the “original lying beside the mover” is by no means conclusive. Such original may be disputed to have been the motion actually acted upon by the majority of the body, a body, the majority of whom do not see a motion and must carry it in their minds, may understand a substantially different motion from the “original lying beside a mover.” Motions are not always read with perfect distinctness. When dispute arises over a motion, the body is not left dependent upon

originals that may be lying beside the movers. A body is not left dependent even upon the minutes of the secretary, before the minutes have been read and approved by the same body. In cases of dispute, where motions are not furnished in writing to all the members of a body, and, therefore, can not be carefully conned by each, the RECOLLECTION OF THE MAJORITY OF THOSE WHO ACTED UPON THE MOTION IS THE DETERMINING FACTOR, with the business that actually lay before them as the subsidiary factor to assist their memories. Connolly makes an effort to prove the relevancy of that portion of the motion that lies beside him which virtually legislates upon the functions of the N.E.C. He fails. Seeing that the issue was not and could not be the rights of the N.E.C.; seeing that the issue was exclusively the rights of the Sub-Committee;—seeing all that, the words “THE N.E.C. AND,” in the passage “the N.E.C. and its Sub-Committee have the right,” etc., was mere surplusage. So far from it having been “necessary to include the two bodies” in the motion, their inclusion could have only the effect of confusing. The impression left upon my mind by the motion, as I heard it read by him, was that it dealt with the Sub-Committee of the N.E.C., or the N.E.C.’s Sub-Committee only. But MY memory in the matter is not a determining factor. I am not a member of the N.E.C. and could not vote on the subject. The determining factor will have to be the memory of the members of the N.E.C.—What is the motion they heard read by Connolly, and voted upon? Already one member of the N.E.C., Jacobson of the State of New York, in the presence of Connolly himself disagreed with Connolly’s version. At the meeting of the Sub-Committee, of which both Jacobson and Connolly are members, held on Sunday the 24th of last February, I presented myself with the request that—in view of my pending long tour in the West and in view of the many matters of importance that remained pending in the Editorial room, and which matters I detailed at length—we, the Sub-Committee and myself, confer upon those important matters, to the end that, by an exchange of views between the Sub-Committee and myself, held right there with my substitute, Justus Ebert, present, the danger of possible friction between the two Departments be avoided, and thus the burden that remains on Ebert’s shoulders be relieved. Connolly thereupon made a motion to the effect that the Sub-Committee accept my statements, but decline to enter into the exchange of views which I requested, there being no emergency to

warrant the Sub-Committee to act under the ruling of the N.E.C. In the course of this argument in support of that motion Connolly stated the motion that he made before the N.E.C., as quoted by him above, and which the N.E.C. voted down. Thereupon Teichlauf, another member of the Sub-Committee volunteered the information that he happened to be present when the N.E.C. acted upon Connolly's motion, that the motion did not allude to the N.E.C.'s functions, and that it was "all about the Sub-Committee"; and Jacobson confirmed Teichlauf on the spot. Connolly, in reply, having stated that both Teichlauf and Jacobson had said their memories were faint upon the subject, both Jacobson and Teichlauf declared their memories were not faint but distinct. The matter will have to rest with the N.E.C.

Third. Connolly asks whether it is conceivable that, with the knowledge that, due to his own initiative in the matter, the minutes would soon be in the hands of the men he was addressing at the New Jersey State Convention, he would be such a fool as to seriously misquote a resolution that would be in those very minutes. I don't know what is conceivable. I've long quitted speculating upon "the conceivable." What I do know is—

a—that minutes are not minutes until approved by the body whose transaction they purport to report. Minutes are often incorrect. For that reason they must be first submitted to the body itself; their amendment is an everyday occurrence. Even Bohn, or myself, much more familiar with the pen than Olpp, the esteemed comrade and member of the Sub-Committee who officiated as the secretary of the N.E.C., is liable to err in writing up the minutes. These do not become MINUTES, with the force that Connolly would clothe them with, until "read and approved" by the body itself. I do not know whether Connolly's motion to send the minutes to the State Committees embodied the necessary addition of first submitting them to the members of the N.E.C. who were present, without which precaution what would be sent would not be MINUTES;

b—that the resolution, as quoted by Connolly, may, for all I know, be found literally in the proposed minutes, and yet his report to the men he was addressing at the New Jersey convention was vitally misleading in that he forgot to state the facts that preceded his motion and the tenor of the discussion that followed it, and thus forgot to put them on their guard against the unwarrantable interpretation

that he put upon the defeat of the motion that was actually voted upon.

By all means let's have the MINUTES.

—ED. THE PEOPLE.

St. Louis, March 6, 1907.]

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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