

# Inside Story of Gompers's Victory for Presidency of Pan-American Federation

By Linn A. E. Gale.

Mexico City, Jan. 17 (By Mail). — Samuel Gompers today won his last victory in the Pan-American Federation of Labor.

It took almost superhuman efforts to reelect him President of the Federation. Next year it will be an impossibility. It was almost impossible today.

The Latin-American delegates, who outnumbered the Americans, were determined not to have Gompers head the Pan-American organization again. Luis N. Morones, the brilliant young leader of the Mexican Federation of Labor and an avowed Socialist, was their choice, and for a time it appeared that Morones would be almost unanimously elected. The prize was in the hollow of his hand. Gompers, seeing the overwhelming sentiment against him, declared he would not accept a reelection. James Lord, President of the Mining Department of the A. F. of L. and an ex-Socialist, who was looked on with favor by some Latin-American delegates, and John Frey, editor of "The Moulders' Journal," had declined nominations. Morones had stated that with his duties in the Mexican Federation and as head of the government munitions plant which employs 9,600 men, he feared he could not do justice to the leadership of the Pan-American Federation, but had not withdrawn and Delegate Carrasco of Guatemala, who nominated him, had refused to take back the nomination.

Gompers called on Secretary Canuto A. Vargas to read the name of the one candidate, Morones. In a moment more Morones would have been elected by acclamation. Dan Tobin, Chester M. Wright, Frey and Lord sat with jaws shut tight. They knew they were helpless and that the representatives of the rising rebel movement of Mexico and Central South America could do what they wanted.

Convinced that the battle was over and that he must take his medicine as gracefully as he could, Gompers delivered his farewell speech. He told the delegates that he would be freer to serve Pan-American labor as a private in the ranks than as official head. He reminded Secretary Vargas that he has declined the nomination when made some time previous and that Morones was, therefore, the only nominee left in the field.

On the very threshold of the second when his name would have been accepted by a viva voce vote, Morones arose. Twice before he had said that he left the matter in the hands of the Guatemala delegate who, of course, would not withdraw his name. But now he said that he had already explained that he was unable to give the position the time it should receive, and that since Delegate Carrasco had not withdrawn the nomination, he must decline to run. He added that he had just received a message from President Obregon asking him to come to the National Palace at once and would have to leave the convention. "I ask you to excuse me for the afternoon," he said, "and also ask the secretary in my absence to record me as voting for Samuel Gompers."

Morones left the room and the tide had turned. Carrasco was non-plussed. He had been on his feet several times insisting that the delegates did not want Gompers again and that Morones was the man of the hour. There was no other Latin-American delegate of sufficient reputation and ability to propose. He had made a stiff fight and he knew that two-thirds were with him, but what could he do?

Delegate Gracidas of Mexico again suggested James Lord but Lord again refused and then nominated Gompers a second time.

Santiago Iglesias, head of the Porto Rico Federation, in Spanish addressed the Spanish-speaking delegates and made a fervent appeal for Gompers. "The most correct and able man," "our grand leader" and other bouquets were thrown at Gompers by the Porto Rico delegate, and he wound up by saying that it would be "a great misfortune" if another President were chosen, especially if such a result came about thru the action of the Latin-American delegates.

Then Mother Jones came to the rescue of Gompers with a fiery speech calling on the congress to name him again and make the election unanimous. The convention, admiring the 81-year old rebel who has fought the battles of the strikers of the United States so many times, forgot its detestation of Gompers in its enthusiasm for "the mother of the miners."

Lord spoke briefly referring to "the peculiar power and influence that he (Gompers) brings into this convention."

Gompers, seeing that he was saved, wasted no time in further declinations and seized the opportunity without delay.

"Are there any other nominations?" he asked, and without waiting for an answer, he started to put a motion to make the election unanimous.

Carrasco of Guatemala, gritty and determined not to give up, was waving his hand for another chance. Somebody had suggested to him that since Morones had left the hall, it would be possible to stampede the convention for Morones and prevent the machine stampeding it for Gompers, and he wanted to try it, but Gompers' heavy voice and the thumping of the gavel drowned out the persistent little Central American.

"All those in favour of making the election unanimous, raise their hand," shouted Gompers, and 9 hands went up. "Opposed, the same," and 5 hands were raised, among them that of Carrasco and that of Castro from San Salvador, who had previously declared that the Pan-American Federation must have a "complete renovation" and "new leaders." About a half of the delegates did not vote.

Even after the vote had been taken Carrasco protested that the convention had disregarded his previous request to have a secret ballot taken so that nobody might be afraid to vote against Gompers, but the Guatemala man was shut off. The machine had triumphed and was in no mood to hear rebels any longer.

The rest of the officers were elected by acclamation and in short order. Canuto A. Vargas, Spanish-language secretary, was re-named amid general applause. Chester N. Wright was reelected without opposition as English language secretary and James Lord as treasurer.

"Foghorn" Tobin then rose to suggest Guatemala City as the place of meeting for the convention of next year and the proposal was unanimously accepted.

Gompers and the A. F. of L. machine had won again but by the skin of their teeth. The Spanish-speaking delegates were openly sulky and sore, with a few exceptions such as Iglesias, always Gompers' faithful supporter; Knuharit of Santo Domingo, and Enrique Martinez, secretary of the Mexican Federation of Labor, who altho frankly a Radical, acquiesced in Morones' decision to let Gompers be reelected again "for international reasons."

Why did it happen? Why did delegates like Albarracin from Colombia, who also represents the Socialist Party of his country, and delegates like Martinez, Trevino, Gracidas and Juarez of Mexico, all openly Radicals, let Gompers have another term? Why did Mo-

(Continued on page 2.)

## INSIDE STORY OF GOMPERS' 'VICTORY' FOR PRESIDENCY OF PAN-AMERICAN FEDERATION.

(Continued from page 1.)

movement of all Latin-America, relinquish the honor that lay in his grasp? Morones, the ablest man in the labor movement. Why, indeed?

The answer is simple and plain.

Mexico is forever in danger of intervention. Always the Damocles' sword of American invasion hangs over the head of her people. The Mexican workers do not want war. They want to keep

their country for themselves and they know that if they can save it from being swallowed up in the northern empire of finance-capital, they can eventually work out their own salvation and take over the industries. They know that intervention would cost thousands of lives and rivers of blood. They know that they would find themselves serfs in another India lacerated and strangled by that newest and worst Jugger-naut, American capitalism.

In their hearts they despise the reactionary leadership of the American

Federation of Labor. Their contempt has cropped out all thru the convention. But they believe that the aid of the American Federation of Labor is indispensable if intervention is to be stayed off. And they believe that to turn down Gompers at this time would be to lose the cooperation of the A. F. of L.

This is why Morones, confronted with the opportunity to accept the post that would make him the leading figure in the organized labor of the entire continent, chose to refuse.

By sufferance, thru belief that such a policy is necessary to save Mexico, Gompers still heads the Pan-American Federation of Labor.

It is the last time.

Intervention or no intervention, come what may, organized labor of Latin-America will neither accept Gompers nor any other conservative leader again.

Unemployment is a disease. Just as we need a doctor when we are sick, so does society need a doctor when it is sick. There is no unemployment in So-