

## APPENDIX.

### THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR—ITS HISTORY AND AIMS.

By P. J. McGUIRE.

The National Labor Union—Various national labor conventions, from 1866 to 1876—Industrial panic of 1873 to 1878—Sovereigns of Industry—Patrons of Husbandry—Industrial Brotherhood—Junior Sons of '76—International Labor Union—Amalgamated Labor Union—The Pittsburgh Convention of 1881—Formation of the Federation of Trades—Legislation secured in Congress—Negotiations with the Knights of Labor—The general eight-hour movement in May, 1886—Differences with the Knights of Labor—Birth of the American Federation of Labor—its component parts and objects.

Early in the year 1866 the trades' assemblies of New York City and Baltimore issued a call for a National Labor Congress, and, in accordance with that appeal, one hundred delegates, representing sixty open and secret labor organizations of all kinds, and covering an area of territory extending from Portland, Me., to San Francisco, met in Baltimore, Md., on August 20. A number of the labor organizations there represented were merely local unions, but a great many were national and international bodies, such as ship carpenters, railroad men, miners, painters, carriers, window-glass blowers, stone masons, marble cutters and iron moulders.

At that convention committees were appointed to look into the expediency of introducing the eight-hour system, of taking political action, and forming a permanent national organization. The questions of public domain, the national debt, co-operative associations, strikes, and convict labor were fully discussed, and measures were adopted for the organization of sewing women—a movement which at this day is occupying the attention of labor circles in New York City. Among the many resolutions passed was one favoring the speedy restoration of agriculture in the South, and the upbuilding of that section upon a new basis of industrial advancement.

In the following year the second annual congress of the National Labor Union was held in Chicago, attended by over two hundred delegates, representing trades' unions in all the Northern States and in six Southern States. President Z. C. Whaley, in his report, urged that State organizations be formed, and this idea, together with the demand that the public domain should be reserved for actual settlers, has since been adopted bodily by the Knights of Labor. As may be seen, the National Labor Union was formed in imitation of the Trades' Union Congress of England, in which local bodies, not allowed to discuss politics in their meetings, could send delegates to the central body, and there deal with questions

of a political nature and thus influence national legislation in favor of the working classes. But the political portion of the work was the smaller portion, for matters of a social and industrial character were dealt with to a greater extent.

Two conventions of the National Labor Union were held in 1868, one in May and the other in September. The first convened in Pittsburgh, and the principal act of that session was an alliance to co-operate with the Patrons of Husbandry and the Grangers. The September session was held in New York City, to take action regarding the general movement which was then going on in favor of the establishment of the eight-hour rule. In his address the chairman pointed out the need of closer coherence than had yet been attained between the different trades and callings, and recommended that a central head be established, to which all the trades' and labor unions should be subordinate. This idea was not strictly carried out, however, and the mistake in disregarding it was subsequently made plain. The annual convention of 1869 was held in Chicago; that of 1870 in Boston; that of 1871 in Philadelphia, and that of 1872, which was the last, wound up in Columbus, O. There it was decided to nominate a ticket for President of the United States, and David Davis, of Illinois, was chosen as the standard-bearer.

This drifting into political action provoked so much dissension that one local organization after another—believing that the National Labor Union had entered a field of operations for which it was not intended—withdrew its support, and interest was lost in the central body.

In the next year, 1873, the great panic swept upon the country and demolished the trades' unions. Most of them were built on a basis of very low dues and had no beneficial feature that would hold the members together when trades' questions failed to interest them, and, consequently, both the local unions and the national organization went down in the crash. The