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Notes on Labor Conference.

The most tragic episode of the conference to me was when on Mr. Gompers, together with Woll, Morrison, Shepherd and Mahor, asked to meet with the Public Group in order to explain their reason for insisting that the resolution on Collective Bargaining should read simply "Trades and Labor Unions". It had been believed by the Public Group that the Russell-Elliott resolution was elastic enough to cover all forms of workers organizations, shop councils, etc. As C. Feiss remarked the day the resolution was presented, Saturday the 18th the Committee of Fifteen was in session all day. In the morning Morrison in the discussion let it be known to the group that he did not think that shop councils were permissable under the resolution. When Miss Wald came home she said Morrison had "spilt the beans." There was a tussel all day to get something on which they could agree and finally the minute the Employers Group came in, so Miss Wald tole me, when she came home, had exactly the same resolution that they had started with.. Everybody was insenced. Endicott came to me Sunday morning to write his letter and he told me he never had been so insulted in his life. He considered that they were trying to trick him.

There was a meeting again Sunday afternoon of the Committee of Fifteen, but they got nowhere. That evening Miss Wold and I dined with Morganthau, Barruch and Chadwick and a meeting of our group was called at the Shoreham at 9 o'clock. As tthere was a difference between all the groups on the resolution at this moment and as we were most anxious to get something the Labor Group could agree to, Secy. Wilson was called in and also Secy. Lane. We made

clear to them that it was impossible for us to go on with the Labor resolution now that they themselves in the Committee had insisted that the interpretation was really a limitation of the right to organize; that it recognized but one method of organization. Secy. Wilson finally suggested a new form,, that we insert the words "associations of their own choosing." He said to us that this was Gompers' ~~explanation~~ proposal for the International Labor Conference and was in the Labor clause they passed and it seemed to us that that would cover the whole thing and we accepted this as the resolution which we would present.

Miss Wold and I left them still debating at midnight. The _ came the next morning. (See reports) It was after the three different resolutions were voted down that Gompers met with us with the hope of getting us to go back to their resolution, I think. We were in the corner room of the P.A. Building. The tragic moment for me was when he said that the A.F.L.L. had never supported shop councils. He turned to Woll and said : "Is not that true, Mr. Woll?" Woll said "Yes". Morrison said "Yes", Shepherd gulped and said "Yes". I sat where I could see poor Mahon. He looked more like a fish than ever; a man trying to be honest and having to lie. They all did it. Shepherd later rose and said that of course when he said there had never been any opposition to shop councils he meant in the Brotherhood. We all knew of course, of the Atlantic City resolutions (see notes). That was my first experience with the kind of thing which has won for Gompers the title of "the old grey fox".

The reading of the President's letter..

The extraordinary episode was Spargo's appeal, very noble

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and eloquent and exceedingly cunning, which put Gompers in a hole. Spargo told me that he was very angry when he went out. One of Spargo's moves in this conference which makes me feel that perhaps he has been playing a double game. I can't quite make up my mind-- certain that he had an idea of breaking it up. James told me how in one of the struggles, unnoticed in the group, he haeard him keep muttering under his breath: "I have got them" - "I'll break up this conference".

Friday morning when the Committee of Five met in Mr. Rockefeller's room at the Willard I put in my plea for continuation, outlining what I thought we might do. I saw he was unwilling to continue or note the President's report. Mr. Rockefeller sitting by. They displeased Miss Barnum and Russell very much. They contended that it was unfriendly to labor. Certain changes were made. Spargo appeared much affected by this change and reviewed his own labor record. Certain he has been trying to do possibly two things:- to keep Labor's confidence in him as its friend, as frequently goes back over his own history and Trades Union relations; he also has been working with various members of the Commission who have been thoroughly impressed with his almost diabolical cleverness. His knowledge of parliamentary law is uncanny. He speaks with great calm, distinctness and always logical. These honest, blundering ineffressive men admire this tremendously. I think he has been making converts to Socialism; can't quite make out what his game is Feel very much ashamed that I think it a game.

One of the pernicious things in this whole business has been just what I feel coming in my own find- suspicion of other men. It has broken out again and again. Loree, arising on the

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floor and saying that this was a political conference; five men having political aspirations. Then telling me he meant Barruch, Chadburn, Loree, & Secy. Wilson, possibly the President, don't know,' Miss Barnum rising yesterday morning in our group and accusing it of having been always opposed to Labor. Most unfair. Quoting Feiss and me as saying that Gompers had tricked us, and her attitude seems to have been that because he was a Labor man therefore we should not have called it a trick. As a matter of fact, I prevented Feiss, who is meticulous, from getting before our Group the report of the Atlantice City Conference in which the A.F. of L. had come out against shop councils. The proof, of course, that Gompers had lied. The day that we returned to consider the "without discrimination resolution" when we first met Loree sent in to Mr. Feiss the copy of the Atlantic City Conference with the shop council resolution marked. We had just been called to order and I saw Feiss was goinggto get the floor and got it myself before him and said that I did not think that ~~resolution~~ matter was pertinent. That we had a perfectly straight declaration of the principle before us; that if anybody read ~~any~~ discrimination into it it they were reading it into it because of some past experience with the men who had framed it and words ~~meant~~ ought to mean what they said and that it was not just or reasonable to attempt to change that interpretation from it. But I never got any credit for this from Sister Barnum. Nor

Very nice result of long hard struggles for the sake of the oppressed; none of the reasonable ness and wisdom of either Agnes Nestor or Mary Anderson, though it is true I have never seen

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them in like position. I do not believe that either of them would have put the construction on our group action that she did.

One of the most tragic episodes in the group was the day after Labor had retired; we met in the morning the Employers and the Public Group. Mr. Lane read the President's letter dismissing the employers and turned things over to us. We met at once. Everybody a little stunned and scared, but at that moment I think there was a pretty general feeling that we go ahead. I rather think it was Dr. Elliott who spilled the beans this time. After we went in he said to Dennison and me -"we ought to have a new chairman". We both said "that is impossible!" After that we were called to order Chadburn went over and whispered to Barruch. Dr. Elliott was at once on his feet and, in the terribly cold and autocratic tone of which he is capable, protested against these whisperings as insulting to the group. Also against taking anything that Tumulty had said about what the President expected us to do, That Tumulty was nothing but a messenger. Secretary Lane's interpretation was the only one we had a right to consider as he was of the Official family. It was a killing rebuke to Chadburn and Baruch and I think it was from that moment that the thing was doomed. It hurt both of them deeply. They have brought something like a distinguished courtesy to Dr. Elliott and to have such a remark come from him before us all was more than they could stand. I rather think it had something to do with Charburn's outburst Thursday afternoon when we met at four o'clock. Secy. Lane came to tell us what he thought the thing meant. This was after our long meeting following the direction of the President for the Public Group to go ahead. Lane put it up to us hard; said it was

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a question whether we were going to desert or we were going to act like thoroughbreds and go ahead. ~~The motion was or what we ought to~~ do. As I took it his remarks were directed to the whole group and not to anyone being. Later, Chadburn arose and protested vigorously against the accusation which he said the Secretary had made against him. The poor fellow's nerves were so worn, he was so distressed by this charge that he was personal. In fact, everybody began to get horribly and disgustingly personal. Miss Barnum quoting Feiss and me. The dreadful speech of Endicott on the floor rebuking the Employers Group. He told how insulted he had been by the reading of the resolution on Saturday. Said that they were nothing but errand boys. (Think this is all in the minutes, if not, dictate.)

a friend of his, a man with whom he gambled, and he said "I am very particular about whom I gamble with", and his quite indefensable reference to Hutchinson, whom he declared had, ~~wandered~~ been sent off and ~~told~~ told ~~how~~ he had said to him

"I went away because I found I was unpopular with my fellows".

All of these things showed the followed the ~~stream.~~ [illegible]

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