

delegates. Which proves conclusively that the so-called "majority report" was no majority report at all, and that it was adopted by trick and chicanery—nearly one-half of those voting for it not being for it at all and voting for it merely as the result of a temporary unholy alliance brought about by the machinations of politicians to create an apparent majority where there was none.

It may be added here that the character of the "arguments" used in piloting the "majority" report through the convention was in thorough keeping with the character of the report itself and of the combination which was chiefly responsible for its adoption.

Of the other work of the convention little good can be said, with one notable exception: *the repeal of the famous Section Six.*

In his opening address as temporary chairman of the convention, Hillquit said, in contrasting conditions in 1912 and to-day:

"At no time has a national council of our party met under more critical conditions or faced a more serious task and test than we do here to-day.

"When the chairman's gavel fell upon our last convention, on May 18, 1912, our organization was at the zenith of its youthful vigor. Our movement was alive with the spirit of buoyant enthusiasm and the men and women in it were alive with the joy of struggle and confidence of conquest.

"Within a few years we had increased our membership to over 125,000, represented by about 5,000 live and active locals. We had increased our press to about 300 organs. We were flushed with our first great electoral victories in a number of cities and in legislative bodies, and we had just opened the doors of the National Congress to the first Representative of our party. Socialism seemed to be in the air. The Socialist movement was militant and triumphed. We saw nothing but growth and victory ahead of us.

" . . . Comrades, it will serve no good purpose to close our eyes to the fact that our party and our movement have gone backward since 1912. We have lost members. We have lost several organs of publicity. We have lost votes in the last election. And, worst of all, we have lost some of that buoyant, enthusiastic, militant spirit which is so very essential, so very vital for the success of a movement like ours." (Applause.)

If the delegates paid any attention at all to the speaker they could not help thinking, when listening to these words, that the

downward march of the movement in this country dates precisely from the time "when the chairman's gavel fell upon our last national convention on May 18, 1912;" and that the speaker and his friends who controlled that convention were in no small degree responsible for the disorganization and decay which set in upon its close. The epitome and symbol of that unfortunate convention was Section Six. Within one year after its adoption fully one-third of the 125,000 members of the party left in disgust, and despondency took the place of the buoyancy and enthusiasm which reigned before. It took some years before this came to be acknowledged. But acknowledged it was at last, and Section Six went, unsung and unlamented.

The other work of the convention was of a decidedly different character than the repeal of Section Six. The repeal of Section Six was a frank, if belated, acknowledgment of a mistake once made. Almost every other action was a new mistake made. The most important of these are the abolition of the National Committee and the adoption of a new platform. It must be said, however, in extenuation of these sins of the convention, that they were committed in ignorance rather than in wickedness.

The National Committee has long been a thorn in the side of our party bureaucracy. They therefore sabotaged it, and sabotaged it so successfully that it has been unable to do any positive work; and then they came before the convention and claimed that it was useless. This contention was untrue, because the National Committee still performs an important supervising function, with all the monkey wrenches that are thrown into its machinery. But the convention was too tired after the great excitement incident to the war debate, and not in a condition either physically or mentally to listen to a discussion of this subject on the merits. So it just took a guess, and guessed the wrong way. Let us hope that the membership will consider the matter more judiciously and vote down the change.

As to the platform—it is sufficient to say that it was adopted at the last session—when half of the delegates were gone and the rest were going—*without any debate whatever*, although there were two reports; and it is safe to say that most of those who voted did not know what they were voting for. It should be