

W. Z. Foster On Witness Stand Explains T. U. E. L. Program

ST. JOSEPH, MICH., March 29.—not really strong, and the rank and

file will desert it as soon as they are given realistic and competent leadership. The incompetence of the present leadership of the trade unions was cited in the late railroad strike, where nine unions stayed at work while seven were on strike. The stupidity and futility of such craft division tactics was only equalled by that displayed in the current story of the glaziers' union, which, so the story ran, created work for its members by breaking windows. In this connection was cited the Irishman who, when it was proposed to buy the business agent a bicycle instead of an automobile, asked how a man could throw bricks from a bicycle.

In the place of the futility of the past, the League was offering the labor movement a program of industrial unionism through amalgamation, to build up a powerful industrial movement, and a Labor Party to unite all its political forces into a powerful political movement. This program of the League had been endorsed by more than a million and a half organized workers, and this was proof that the American trade unionists were ready for a forward movement, that they are not naturally reactionary, and the strangle hold of Gompers upon the American unions can be broken.

Foster said that he had urged the communists to join the League and become active workers in it. When questioned by Walsh as to his visit to Russia, Foster said that he had attended the first congress of the Red International, that when that congress adopted the same program for America which he had advocated for a long time, that he approved of that plan.

When he returned to America he had met once with the C. E. C. of the Communist Party, had urged them to adopt the policy laid down by the Red International of Labor Unions, and had stated to them that he, Foster, approved of the Red International policy and believed that it would have great success in America.

The spectators and court seemed much interested in Foster's testimony and his quiet, clear voice as he answered the questions of Attorney Walsh penetrates the entire court room. When he answers the questions addressed to him he seems to forget the entire surroundings and becomes entirely immersed in the subject on which he is speaking. All his listeners seem to become similarly interested.

Wm. Z. Foster took the witness stand this morning and began his testimony. In a calm and precise manner he told at length about his much discussed speech at Bridgeman, and how he came to be there. He said that he is not a member of any political party, nor is the Trade Union Educational League affiliated to any party. The league is an autonomous body, comprising trade unionists of all parties and of no party. When asked what the relation of the communists to the League was, he stated that the communists supported the League and its program, and constituted about 10 per cent of its membership. Asked when he first learned of the Bridgeman convention, he said that the first he heard of it was a day or two before it started from Earl Browder. Later, on Friday morning, while convention was meeting, Wm. Dunne came to his house and invited him to attend and deliver a talk. He went with Dunne and arrived in Bridgeman Friday night. On Saturday he made his talk of about an hour. He had begun by saying that he had seen the adjustment committee report regarding the trade union problem and was glad to see that the communists realized the prime importance of this question. Previous efforts to build a party of the workers, such as the Socialist Party, had collapsed just because of failure to understand that any workers' party to live and grow must be based upon and find its strength in the trade unions. Then he showed how the radical and progressive workers in the past had failed because of the policy of withdrawing from the unions and criticising them from the outside. Opposed to this old policy, he said, the radicals must get into the unions, abandon the idea of merely talking, and instead, go to work doing the every day tasks of the labor struggle. Only in this way can they win, through long and earnest struggle. Only in this way can they win, through long and earnest participation, the respect of the masses, which will finally give the radicals the leadership, politically and industrially, of the working class.

Then he showed how the power of the Gompers' machine, the trade union bureaucracy, was merely a reflex of the weakness and lack of organization of the progressive and radical forces. The bureaucracy is