

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 7, NO. 134.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1906.

TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

AMENDMENT VI.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ANOTHER of the amendments made by the convention of the I.W.W. and which merits special consideration is numbered 14th in the Second Bulletin of *The Industrial Worker*. The amendment provides for the procedure in the matter of submitting future amendments.

It is a feature of men who have a limited horizon of experience, to look at one thing regardless of all others. Such men could keep any convention in perpetual session for 12 months at a stretch considering the improvements that they would like to make. There is no document imaginable, turned out by the hand of man, that is perfect. Room for improvements there always is. The question, however, is not, Can such a document be improved? The question is, What improvements are so vital that they should be made, and what time is there at the disposal of a convention to give proper consideration to such proposed changes, and to their effect upon the body of the constitution? It is with a view to put an end to a danger that is growing in volume that the amendment under consideration was enacted. As things have been hitherto any one, let alone half a dozen constitution geniuses{,} could actually clog the whole work of a convention. They would dump a bushel of undigested matter upon the Committee on Constitution; the committee would proceed to digest that; at the next meeting of the convention another batch of proposed amendments would come in; these new propositions frequently have the effect of materially affecting the previous actions of the committee; the committee would then have to go over the previous ground and re-digest the whole; the next day a fresh batch would come in and the committee would again have to go over the whole field previously covered. Nor is this all. In the meantime the committee is making reports to the convention; these reports are acted upon; the action of the convention has then virtually to be reconsidered every time a new set of proposed

amendments comes in. There was a third feature to the old method. One man does not know what amendments another proposes; both propose often substantially the identical thing; if either knew what the other proposed he might abstain; not knowing, in comes his proposition also. The total result of the old procedure was to make the work of the Committee on Constitution so irksome, voluminous and involved that it could not be done properly. All these evils are prevented by the amendment.

The amendment provides in effect that no amendments shall be considered by the convention but such as shall have been published in *The Industrial Worker* at least two months before the meeting of the convention. In this way, everyone who has an amendment to propose has the opportunity to do so provided his amendment is sent in in time for publication within the requisite period; secondly, no one will send in amendments on subjects that he sees are covered by previous propositions; thirdly, the membership knows in advance what amendments are to be proposed at the convention, and can discuss these and give directions to their delegates; finally, and not least, a limit being thus put to the volume of proposed amendments, and to the time within which these amendments are to be offered, the work of the Committee on Constitution of the convention will be so materially simplified that better results are bound to flow. By this provision whatever proposed amendment is considered of much importance could be amply debated in the columns of *The Industrial Worker*. Such a debate can not choose but redound to the clarification of the membership, and also to the spread of and interest in the official organ. When this year's convention was approaching the Editor of *The Industrial Worker* issued to several contributors a request for articles on the work before the convention. The response to the request was articles of general interest; none could deal with any concrete proposition; there was none such to be dealt with "before the house."

Amendment VI. is of broad and vast educational value.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded May 2009

slpns@slp.org