

The A. F. S. C. and M. E. Convention

by HARRIET E. MATTHEW

AT THE recent convention of our national union, The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, through which the Wisconsin State Employees Association is affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, our local was represented by eight delegates: H. C. Thayer, Department of Vocational Education, President of our association; William Shoard, Tax Commission; William Frazier, Wisconsin General Hospital; Irene Jennings, College of Agriculture; Roy E. Kubista, former managing editor of THE WISCONSIN PUBLIC EMPLOYEE magazine; Matthew Felber, Bureau of Engineering, and Arnold S. Zander, former executive secretary of the Wisconsin State Employees Association and now President of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, the A.F.S.C. and M.E.

The convention was held in Detroit, Michigan, September 17-19 at the Book-Cadillac Hotel. Ninety delegates and three alternates were present representing a total of ninety-three local organizations: ten groups of state employees, sixty-one groups of county employees (including fifty-four organizations of relief workers), and twenty-two groups of municipal employees. Of the fourteen states represented three were from the Far West, Washington, California, and Colorado; five from the Middle West, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan; three from the South, Texas, Georgia, and Virginia; and three from the East, Pennsylvania, New York, and Maryland.

The work of the convention consisted mainly of redrafting and amending the constitution and by-laws under which the new national union will operate. The provisional constitution, drafted by delegates to the constitutional convention held in Chicago, December 9-11, 1935, was adopted with some changes.

The Executive Board of the A.F. S.C. and M.E. was given the authority to move the national headquarters from Madison if at any time it should serve the best interests of the federation to do so. The question of race prejudice was answered by inserting in the constitution the clause that "all persons without regard to race, creed, or color employed by any state, county, or municipal government . . . shall be eligible to membership in this organization." Annual instead of biennial conventions were authorized. Resolutions or proposed constitutional changes were recommended to be sent in duplicate to the secretary-treasurer at least ten days prior to the opening of the convention. Locals were allocated votes in the national convention as follows: "25 members or fewer shall have one vote; locals with more than 25 members, one vote for each 25 or major fraction thereof." Authority to ap-

point representatives to American Federation of Labor conventions was given to the Executive Board.

Resolutions passed by the assembled delegates included:

A resolution favoring the extension of the merit system introduced by H. C. Thayer, President of the Wisconsin State Employees Association, who also sponsored a resolution urging development of employee training programs on a broad basis.

Three resolutions introduced by William Frazier, President of the Wisconsin General Hospital chapter were passed: (1) a resolution authorizing the national union immediately to begin education of the public in regard to the need for an efficient public service and to acquaint the public with the working conditions now prevailing in public employment; (2) a resolution condemning the un-American activities of William Randolph Hearst; and (3) a resolution condemning legislation forcing teachers to take loyalty oaths and offering every assistance to those seeking to secure the repeal of such legislation.

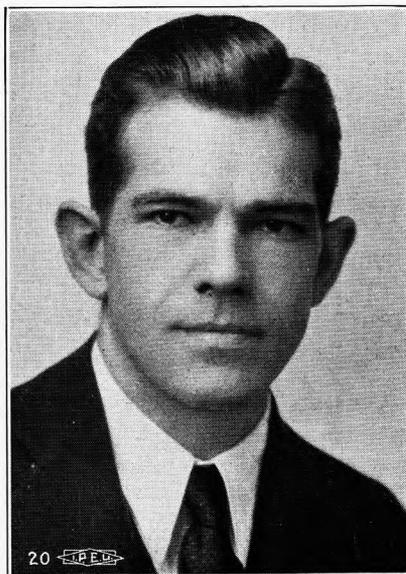
A resolution was introduced by William Shoard, Tax Commission, directing the national union to investigate retirement systems, draft model bills, and make every effort to push adequate retirement legislation in jurisdictions where it does not exist. Mr. Shoard also sponsored the resolution passed by the convention advocating public works on an expanded scale to absorb unemployed workers.

Harold Spring, Mendota Chapter, introduced the resolution passed in favor of annual paid vacation for employees of state and local governments throughout the United States, and sponsored the resolution authorizing assistance to the promotion of a constitutional amendment giving Congress the power to regulate minimum wages for women and children.

A resolution condemning general sales taxes and urging that taxes be levied on the principle of ability to pay was introduced by Irene Jennings, President of the U. W. Clerks and Stenographers Chapter.

Matthew Felber, Bureau of Engineering, introduced the resolution passed placing the convention on record in favor of the right of labor to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of its own choosing. Mr. Felber also sponsored a resolution advocating the establishment of a maximum work day of six hours and a maximum week of five days for public employees.

The A.F.S.C. and M. E. wholeheartedly endorsed the resolution introduced by the Wisconsin State Employees Association relating to privileges accorded public employees in the classified service. The resolution follows: (please turn to page 12)



ARNOLD S. ZANDER

AFSC and ME--

(continued from page 7)

WHEREAS, many public employees in the classified service holding key positions are more familiar with the technical features of the department's work than their elected or appointed superiors; and

WHEREAS, some elected or appointed department heads have taken it upon themselves to criticize or censor the published statements of people under them even though such persons are thoroughly familiar with their own work and are considered authorities in their chosen fields; and

WHEREAS, persons in the classified service are seldom permitted the same privileges in attending conventions and professional gatherings as are granted to elected or appointed officers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that in the matter of attending learned professional and technical gatherings or so-called conventions, public employees in the classified service be accorded the same status and privileges granted appointive or elective officials; and

FURTHER, that public employees be accorded the freedom of the press and speech in the matter of publishing articles in professional journals, or reading papers at conferences, the main object being the interchanging of ideas or contributing to the common fund of knowledge on technical aspects of the employee's work or profession; and

FURTHER, that such efforts expended by public employees qualified to speak with authority in his or her chosen field should be recognized as a public service, and considered a part of the employee's work, and that such employee be permitted to attend at least one such conference annually, without being required to do so on his own vacation time.

The officers elected for the coming year are: Arnold S. Zander, Madison, Wis., president; David Kaner, Philadelphia, Pa., secretary-treasurer; Executive Board: James Clancy, St. Paul, Minn.; Abram Flaxer, New York City; William Gauden, New York City; C. B. Noxon, Denver, Colo.; C. T. Mason, Chicago, Ill.; Frank C. Snyder, Toledo, Ohio; Fred K. Stephens, Atlanta, Ga.; Russ Stephens, New York City; and George L. Turner, Richmond, Va. Mr. Zander of our association was reelected president without opposition.

Milwaukee was chosen as the convention city for 1937.