

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR CONVENTION

May 18, 1942

Hagerstown

ON the occasion of this 37th Annual Convention of the Maryland—District of Columbia Federation of Labor, its members throughout this area and, indeed, all the members of organized labor throughout America, have every reason to be pleased with the achievements of labor during these past critical months and with the position which labor now holds as a result of its splendid performance.

Thinking in terms of labor's contribution to the war effort, I was struck very forcibly by a new phrase which someone has coined to apply to the men on the vital production lines of our Country in this war. "Production Soldier" is the term referred to. Certainly I can think of nothing that sums up more neatly the place the man in industry holds in today's war effort. Truly he is a soldier, fighting shoulder to shoulder with the men in the field and on the oceans and in the air, the world-wide battle for the preservation of Democracy. Without the all-out effort of the Production Soldier, Democracy's cause would be doomed, indeed.

All of you are familiar, undoubtedly, with the report made by Federation President William Green last week on the part labor has played in the National war effort to date. It was a gratifying record, indeed; one that we here in Maryland have been able to observe at first hand, and with the utmost satisfaction. Labor not only in the Maryland Area, but throughout the length and breadth of the land is to be congratulated deeply upon its all-out production policy in the furtherance of the war effort and the speed with which it is accomplishing its goal of complete utilization of production facilities to achieve the astounding production totals which are needed to conquer the Axis powers.

Leadership, of course, has played a most important part in the accomplishments today, and labor has been fortunate in its leadership. But, above and beyond any question of leadership is the patriotic spirit displayed by the rank and file of the working people of America. Maryland is particularly fortunate in having patriotic, competent, experienced and well-trained labor leaders. Their guidance and the following of such leadership have resulted in steady production in Maryland.

In view of the fact that our State has enormous amounts of war contracts and is playing such an important role in providing necessary war equipment, the entire State, all its people, as well as those who are enrolled under the banners of labor, may well be proud of the record achieved.

Mention must be made at this point of the excellent spirit shown by labor in pressing home the idea of a Labor Victory Board. It was a source of gra-