

National Convention of the Prohibition Party.

THE seventh National Convention of the Prohibition Party was called to order in Pittsburg, May 27, 1896, in the Exposition Hall. There was quite a large attendance, abundantly significant of the growth of the party since its inception in 1869, when it cast barely seven thousand votes, down to the last Presidential campaign, when the total vote cast was nearly 280,000.

H. L. Castle, chairman of the Committee on Reception, delivered an address of welcome. Samuel Dickie, of Michigan, chairman of the National Committee, the gentleman who, with the utmost suavity and courtesy, let down a little avalanche of proxies upon his "broad gauge" or free silver opponents, thereby securing the temporary organization of the Convention, responded to the address of welcome.

At the opening of the formal proceedings, when Mr. Dickie presented the name of A. A. Stevens, of Tyrone, Pa., as temporary chairman, the rebellion of the free silver minority broke out.

Chauncey W. Dunn, of California, nominated

Edward J. Wheeler as the temporary chairman in place of Stevens. Mr. Dickie ruled the motion out of order, and ordered Mr. Dunn to take his seat. Mr. Dunn refused to do so for some time, and a scene of uproar ensued.

Mr. Dunn appealed from the decision of the Chair, and Mr. Dickie refused to entertain the appeal.

Mr. Dickie repeated his ruling that the nomination of Mr. Wheeler was out of order, and again refused to entertain an appeal from this decision, whereupon Mr. Dunn declared that all parliamentary precedent had been violated, and former Governor St. John, of Kansas, took up the discussion with no better result. He was followed by Mr. Woodbey, a colored delegate from Nebraska, and confusion continued.

Chairman Stevens ordered the colored man to be seated.

"I shall not sit down," shouted Woodbey.

"Then," said Mr. Stevens, "I shall order you to be removed from the Convention."

Mr. Woodbey continued his rebellion by standing on his chair and shouting at the top of his voice, and Mr. McWhirter, of Indiana, came to the rescue of the Chair by asserting that Mr. Woodbey was not even entitled to the floor as a delegate.

Then the band was called upon to drown the

uproar and to give the chairman time to recover his composure, considerably disturbed. Meanwhile, half the Convention was walking the floor, and a squad of policemen were ushered into the hall to keep order.

Mr. Wheeler, of New York, the gentleman named in the minority report as temporary chairman, rose, and, for the sake of harmony, withdrew his name, although protesting against what he called an arbitrary and unjust rule.

Then, at last, Temporary Chairman Stevens was permitted to deliver his opening address, at the close of which a recess was taken.

A caucus of three hundred "narrow gauge" delegates, who favored confining the action of the Convention to taking a stand upon prohibition alone, was held during the recess. The caucus adopted a resolution, declining to support any issue which could not command a three-fourths vote of the Convention. The New York State delegates in caucus decided by a vote of 79 against 15 to stand for "narrow gauge," which meant "prohibition" simply.

At a caucus of the "broad gaugers" a call of the roll of delegates present showed their strength to be but 355 votes, about one-third of the total vote of the Convention. The "broad gauge" leaders heretofore claimed that they would count upward of 700 votes.

Broad Gaugers Win.

When the Convention re-assembled in the afternoon the Committee on Credentials reported 810 delegates present. A resolution pledging the Convention not to abate its relentless war on the licensed rum power was ordered telegraphed to various religious bodies then in conference; also to Congress, and to Miss Frances Willard and Lady Somerset, in England.

Mrs. Helen Gougar, chairman of the Committee on Permanent Organization, reported the name of Oliver W. Stewart, of Illinois, one of the broad gaugers, as permanent chairman.

Mr. Ferguson, of New York, presented a minority report on behalf of the narrow gauge men, recommending the continuance of Mr. A. A. Stevens in the chair as the permanent chairman. A tangle over a point of order threw the Convention into a scene of confusion, which lasted for more than half an hour.

Much ill feeling developed, and Chairman Stevens himself was for a long time refused a hearing, but when at last he gained the attention of the disturbing elements, he said that though he believed he had been put forward as a representative of the element in the Convention which believed in prohibition and non-divisive issues, and though he believed, on a call of the States, he would be sus-

tained, he desired to withdraw his name. This announcement was received with cheers, and the majority report of the committee was then adopted, and Mr. Stewart was escorted to the chair.

A motion made by Mrs. Gougar to hold a mass meeting at night, in lieu of a business session, was carried, after considerable opposition, and the Convention adjourned until next morning at nine o'clock.

The second was the most exciting day of the Prohibitionists' Convention, and a split in the party resulted. The test of strength on the first day made the "broad gauge," or free silver men, believe they had a good working majority. On the adoption of a free silver plank, however, they were defeated by a vote of 427 to 388.

This victorious showing meant the nomination of Joshua Levering, a millionaire tea importer, of Baltimore, for President. When the Convention nominated him the Western delegates bolted. They went to another hall, where they held a convention of their own. This did not scare the "narrow gaugers," who remained in their seats and proceeded with the nomination of a candidate for Vice-President. The Convention hall was the scene of bitter strife from the time the Committee on Resolutions reported until the silver men and women bolted. After the platform had been read ex-Governor St. John, of Kansas, offered a minor-

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ity report. It declared for free silver at a ratio of 16 to 1.

When a motion was made to add it to the majority report there was a rumble that shook the rafters of the Exposition Building. It was the most excited gathering ever held in Pittsburg, and the police were powerless to preserve order. Men and women stood on chairs and hurled vindictive comments at the head of the chairman, who was pounding vigorously for order. Finally one delegate was recognized and moved to table the report. Then the silverites broke out, and their voices drowned the yells of the Eastern men. When the chairman declared the motion to table had carried, the excitement became worse. Delegates rushed frantically from one end of the hall to the other, and there was much confusion. A division was demanded, and the roll was called. It was then found that the "narrowes" had thirty-nine majority, and the Convention was on record against silver. The Western men did not give up, and carried the fight into the last ditch.

They went back to the hall in the evening and started in to defeat the nomination of Levering. In this they were unsuccessful. When they saw the Convention would have nothing to do with free silver they rallied and left the hall in disgust.

This is the platform adopted:—

"The Prohibition party in National Convention

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assembled declares its firm convictions that the manufacture, exportation, importation and sale of alcoholic beverages, has produced such social, commercial, industrial, political wrongs, and is now so threatening the perpetuity of all our social and political institutions, that the suppression of the same by a national party, organized therefor, is the greatest object to be accomplished by the voters of our country; is of such importance that it, of right, ought to control the political action of all our patriotic citizens, until such suppression is accomplished. The urgency of this cause demands the union without further delay of all citizens who desire the prohibition of the liquor traffic. Therefore be it

"*Resolved*, That we favor the legal prohibition by State and national legislation of the manufacture, importation, exportation, interstate transportation and sale of alcoholic beverages.

"That we declare our purpose to organize and unite all the friends of prohibition into our party, and in order to accomplish this end we deem it but right to leave every prohibitionist the freedom of his own convictions upon all other political questions, and trust our representatives to take such action upon other political questions as the changes occasioned by prohibition and the welfare of the whole people shall demand."

The Convention closed in such an outburst of

enthusiasm as has never been seen in a Prohibition Party Convention. Nearly a thousand delegates threw up their hats and yelled themselves hoarse over the platform, and the candidates of the convention, Hon. Joshua Levering, of Maryland, and Hale Johnson, of Illinois. The platform was of such breadth that there was abundant room for every enemy of the saloon to stand upon it, but for nobody else. There was room enough for the delegates to jump up and down, and they did it. Sore-throat medicine was in great demand, and jubilant delegates who were not obliged to leave on night trains were holding love-feasts in the corridors of the various hotels.

It was after 10 o'clock at night when the famous resident of Baltimore was declared the unanimous choice of the Convention for President of the United States. A scene of the wildest enthusiasm prevailed: hats went up in the air, handkerchiefs waved, and the great shout amounted to an uproar. One excited delegate seized a big silk flag and made his way to the Maryland delegation. Responding to the general clamor, Chairman Dickie and Samuel D. Hastings made their way through the dense throng and escorted Mr. Levering to the platform.

When Permanent Chairman Stewart formally introduced the candidate to the Convention, he was given such an ovation that it was several

minutes before any one could be heard. When order was restored, Mr. Levering said in substance:

"I would be less than human if my heart did not beat quick, and every nerve pulsate with deep emotion as I stand before you as the candidate against the legalized liquor traffic of this country, When an honor comes as a sacrifice for humanity such as this is, it is an honor worth wearing. I feel my own unfitness for it, and would shrink from its acceptance but for one reason, and that is that the secular press have come to realize that we are in earnest in our purpose, and do us justice in saying that we are honest. Therefore I feel that I would waive my private interest and yield to your wishes. I am tempted to cry out, as did the servant of the Almighty, when he was called to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt—'Who am I that I should be called to lead the children out of the wilderness?'

"Friends, trusting in the God of battles, and trusting in you and those you represent, I am prepared to stand here and accept this sacred trust, and to the extent of my ability I assure you that wherever the fight is the thickest, the white flag of Prohibition will be planted. We may not succeed in planting our flag in the White House, but I think we will come near it; but if we do the government shall not be run in the interest of any trust or individual. I want to remind you that

this great responsibility is yours, and the success of the campaign is not on the standard-bearers so much as on the rank and file. Let us have the faith to believe that right is might. God and humanity expect every Prohibitionist to do his duty."

Another ovation scarcely less enthusiastic than the other greeted Mr. Levering at the close of his address.

The selection of Hale Johnson, Illinois's brilliant son, required but a little time. E. W. Chafin, of Wisconsin, presented the name of Captain J. M. Cleghorn, of his State; but the captain at once withdrew his name, as he had the mishap to be born in Canada.

The name of John Hipp, the gallant Prohibition leader of Colorado, was proposed amid great enthusiasm; but Hipp counseled that this action be not taken under the circumstances.

Gov. T. C. Hughes, of Arizona, was presented, but it was not certain that he would accept a second place, which prevented him being strongly supported.

Massachusetts presented the name of Edward Kendall, of Cambridge, and A. A. Stevens nominated Homer L. Castle, in behalf of Pennsylvania; but Castle proposed in his stead R. H. Patton, of Illinois.

Chairman Dickie, in a neat speech, nominated

Hon. Hale Johnson, of Illinois, who had become a general favorite on account of his great harmony speech in the debate on the money plank. Johnson made an attempt to withdraw, but it didn't go. The ballot resulted in his selection by a vote of 309 to 132 in favor of Hughes, and a motion to make it unanimous went through with a rush and a shout.

The ovation extended to Johnson was scarcely equaled by that extended to Mr. Levering. The crowd were hoarser and couldn't yell as loud if they tried. Mr. Johnson was promptly escorted to the platform and made one of his characteristic vigorous speeches. He counseled the delegates to keep up their courage and keep up the good work.