

THE EIGHT-HOUR MOVEMENT.

Discussed in President Gompers's Report to the American Federation of Labor.

NASHVILLE, Dec. 13.—President Samuel Gompers, in his report to-day at the opening of the convention of the American Federation of Labor, speaking about the eight-hour movement, said:

“The last convention decided that a renewed effort should be made for the general enforcement of the eight-hour workday May 1, 1898. Every opportunity has been taken advantage of and frequently created for the purpose of presenting this subject in as concise and comprehensive form as possible to the attention of our fellow-workers and the public generally.

“Nothing remains now but for the final decision of this convention as to the ways and means by which the project shall be carried into effect, or whether the judgment of the convention is that the time stated is, in view of industrial conditions, a practical one, or whether it would be advisable to await the full flood tide of an industrial revival for its general and simultaneous enforcement. This question must of necessity receive your careful consideration. Nothing, perhaps, would be more hurtful than an unwise decision.

“Of course, we do not anticipate that at one given moment the general eight-hour day will be achieved, but there can be no doubt but what a concentration of thought and effort to attain this end and the designation of a particular day to endeavor to secure it will largely attract the attention of all and succeed in accomplishing much.

“If the judgment of this convention is that May 1, 1898, is the day upon which the bugle call for labor shall be sounded, none will enter it with greater enthusiasm and undaunted spirit than we. Yet, if the deliberate conclusion of this convention is that the simultaneous effort should be deferred until a more opportune time, say the postponement of it for one year, that should prevail.

“I recommend that the appointment of a special committee be authorized for the purpose of taking this matter under consideration and to advise the further plan of action.”

Reference is made in Mr. Gompers's report to his recent interview with the President in the interest of labor, in which the President expressed himself in favor of labor organizations, and equally so in favor of legislation in the interest of labor.

“It was suggested,” Mr. Gompers says, “to the President that he might use his great office to recommend this legislation to Congress. He expressed regret that his first annual message would contain so much important and pressing matters as would preclude the probability of his being able to touch upon labor's interest, but if it was omitted in his first message, it would be made a subject of a special message to Congress.”

President Gompers's report is an extremely long document, in which pretty nearly every phase of the various labor questions is touched upon.