

Rail Heads Balk Efforts at Solidarity

By WILLIAM E. POSTER,
Editor, The Labor Herald

The general calibre of the men to be found at the head of some of our labor organizations, as well as how little attention they pay to convention instructions, is well exemplified by the farcical amalgamation negotiations carried on between the presidents of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen and of the Switchmen's Union of North America.

At the 1922, Toronto Convention, of the B. of R. T., a resolution was adopted calling for the amalgamation of the B. of R. T. and the S. U. It specifically stated, "Inasmuch as the yardmen of this country are organized into two separate orders, which in the past has had a harmful effect, and their interests would be better served by uniting into a single and stronger organization, this Convention is in favor of making an offer to the Switchmen's Union looking to the merger of the two orders.

Shortly afterward President Lee, "merely for your information," sent this resolution to President Cashen. The latter wrote demanding further information. To this Lee said, "I am unable to give you any additional information other than contained in the resolution. . . The only argument I remember presented to the convention by those supporting the resolution, was that in the interest of trainmen and yardmen, one organization only should be arranged for."

Taking his cue from Lee's deliberate sabotage of the amalgamation resolution, Cashen backed away from the proposition altogether, saying, "In the absence of a definite understanding as to the intent of this resolution, the Board finds itself in the position where it is unable to take action. It is our opinion that the intent of the resolution has for its end the absorption of the Switchmen's Union by the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen. This apparent intent is totally at variance with the fundamental principle on which the Switchmen's Union of North America is based." He then plumps for craft unionism complete. With such reactionary leadership, how can railroad men make any progress?