

HOUSTON POST
Tuesday, February 15, 1938
Section 1, Page 5, Column 1

JOHN L. LEWIS MAY COME HERE IN JUNE, SAYS FREMMING

By Roy Grimes

John L. Lewis, chairman of the Committee for Industrial Organization, may attend the convention of the International Association of Oil Field, Gas Well and Refinery Workers when it opens in Houston on June 6.

Harvey C. Fremming, president of the oil workers international union, disclosed this plan with other arrangements for the convention when he arrived in Houston Sunday.

With Mr. Fremming was E. C. Conarty, international secretary-treasurer. They came here Sunday afternoon from Beaumont, in the course of a nation-wide visiting tour to districts of their organization.

"We are urging strongly the attendance of at least one of the national C.I.O. leaders," said Mr. Fremming, whose union is one of the strongest of the C.I.O.'s affiliates. "We believe Mr. Lewis may find it possible to take part in our convention.

MURRAY MAY COME.

If Mr. Lewis is unable to be here, the oil workers leader said, the union has been assured that Philip Murray, vice-chairman of the C.I.O., or some other executive will attend.

The executive board and officials of the union will gather in Houston a week before the opening of the convention. More than 350 delegates are expected to convene.

Mr. Fremming said that his present trip, with Mr. Conarty, is being made in an effort to "consolidate and coordinate the gains we have made during the past years or so. Our membership is now in the neighborhood of 100,000, and has increased about 50 percent during the past 18 months.

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REFINERIES SHUT DOWN.

"We are face to face with a so-called recession," the labor leader stated, "that today has all the earmarks of a depression. It certainly is being felt by our organization. Eighteen refineries in East Texas have been shut down recently, and 42 have closed in Oklahoma. There is more oil on top of the ground right now than ever before. Still, workers in this section haven't felt the recession like those in the heavy industrial localities."

Mr. Fremming characterized the action last week by the executive council of the American Federation of Labor, in expelling three C.I.O. unions, as a step that "they have been trying to get up the nerve to take for a long time."

"What surprised me," he said, "was that they didn't expel our union while they were at it. Don't ask me why they didn't, because I can't tell you. Our union was one of the first to take the lead in forming the C.I.O., and we have been out in front ever since."

Unions expelled were the United Mine Workers, of which Mr. Lewis is chairman; the Federation of Flat Glass Workers and the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers.

On whether this would be taken as a signal for increased agrievance on the part of the C.I.O., Mr. Fremming commented that "we are going to continue to exist and forward our plan of industrial organization, just as we have done from the first."

Referring to the forthcoming election by the International Typographical Union, of which Charles P. Howard, secretary of the C.I.O., is now president, Mr. Fremming foresaw Howard's election.

"A good many smaller locals selected Mr. Howard's opponent in the recent nominations," Mr. Fremming said. "But Mr. Howard will get strong support in the election from New York, Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, Boston, Cleveland, San Francisco and other large centers."

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HERE THROUGH WEDNESDAY.

"I notice Governor Allred, the other day in Washington, had a talk with the C.I.O. and promised an investigation of the pecan shellers' troubles over at San Antonio," the executive commented. "It looks like Jimmy may be trying to make his peace with us."

C.I.O. workers complained concerning the activities of city police in their efforts to organize pecan shellers in San Antonio, and asked for Texas rangers. Two rangers were sent.

Mr. Fremming and Mr. Conarty will remain in Houston through Wednesday. Closed meetings will be held with Sinclair Local No. 227 and Shell Local No. 367 of their organization. A public meeting for employees of the Humble Oil and Refining Company will be held in Baytown Tuesday night.

The union leaders will leave here Thursday morning for Fort Worth and West Texas, after which they will continue their tour to California returning East through the Northwest and Middlewest.

Mr. Fremming visited Houston last in February, 1937, when his union increased its efforts to organize the oil industry.

