

CHAPTER 3

Australian Labor Party, New South Wales Branch Annual Conference, 7 - 17 June 1919

Report in Labor News; The Australian Worker

Factional politics in the NSW Labor Party reached one of its major crises at this Conference. At the Annual Conference of 1916 control of the State Executive had been won by the so-called 'Industrial Section', a grouping of trade unions dominated by the AWU. At the beginning of 1918 the faction's name changed to 'The Industrial Vigilance Council', but already there was a struggle for internal control of the faction itself between the 'extremists' led by Albert Willis of the Mining Federation and Sam Rosa, a radical socialist ideologue, against the 'moderates'. Led by the AWU, the moderates made a clean sweep of positions on the Executive. This imposition of a winner-take-all principle produced the predictable result – the Conference came to an abrupt end after nine days when the extremists walked out in a body to stage their own meeting which eventually led to the formation of a new Socialist Party to the left of the ALP. This left the AWU in complete control of the factional machinery controlling the official Labor Party.

The issues dividing the two fractions (internal factions within one faction) were on display at the Conference. One was the desired relationship between the ALP and the 'One Big Union' (OBU) movement sponsored by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). These movements were based on a syndicalist ideology that saw socialist transformation of society achievable only through militant trade unionism, amalgamating into one massive organisation to bring capitalist society to a halt through a strategic general strike. Devotees of the OBU and IWW had only contempt for the ALP strategy of incremental reform through parliamentary representation of the workers. Obviously, the great majority of Labor MPs were not sympathetic to the OBU. Neither was the AWU, which wanted other unions to amalgamate with it, and which supported parliamentary activity, especially when the AWU held control of the extra-parliamentary machinery. The other issue of the day was the war, which had only just ended. Virtually all members of the ALP supported the vision of a completely new world order, envisaged in

President Wilson's Fourteen Points, but the moderates were not about to abolish any capacity for Australia's future defence, which they feared was one of the aims of the extremists.

On the floor of Conference the agenda item causing most friction was the proposal of the 'extremists' to change the rules for the election of the State Executive so that branch rank and file members (rather than the AWU-controlled Conference) would elect the Executive by a popular plebiscite. Rather more complicated was the issue of the socialist objective: the 'extremists' pushed hard for the use of an OBU version of a preamble to the Platform. MPs, led by John Storey, were aghast at the idea of having to contest an election with that liability; the 'moderates' of the AWU were torn between their suspicion of Willis, Garden and Rosa and their contempt for the politicians. The AWU's maverick Arthur Rae, for example, did favour the socialist objective. There were, in effect, three factions – moderates, extremists and MPs – busy organising clagues and voting blocks on the floor.

The account of the Conference used here is from the new organ of the ALP, *Labor News*, which reproduced the report from *The Australian Worker* in its entirety. Although both journals were ultimately under the control of the AWU, the account is reasonably unbiased. I have preferred to use the *Labor News* version merely because the quality of paper and print made it easier to reproduce.

The Conference was held during the main impact of the 'Spanish flu' epidemic, although the most severe public health precautions were not yet in place. If they had been, the Conference would not have been held at all. Party President, JH Lambert, contracted the flu during the last few days of the Conference (which led to an argument about who should occupy the chair in his place which sparked the walkout of the extremists). Lambert recovered to take the chair in 1920, but, at the end of the first week of this Conference, Lawrence O'Hara, the Labor candidate who had just won a by-election for the seat of Paddington, died of influenza at the age of 30 without ever taking his seat in Parliament.

At the end of this chapter I have added the "Official Manifesto by the New South Wales Central Executive to the Members of ALP Branches and Affiliated Unions", which is an account of the split in Conference and Executive from the perspective of the AWU. For another contemporary account of the factional warfare in the party during 1919, read the *Third and Last Annual Report and Balance Sheet of the Industrial Vigilance Council, with official report of disbandment, 1919*, which is reproduced in the next chapter. Official histories, of course, are written by winners, not losers.



Executive Report of ALP, NSW Branch, for 1918

(Mitchell Library Manuscripts, 329.3106/3)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 28th Annual Report and Balance Sheet of the Political Labor Movement of New South Wales is herewith submitted for your consideration.

Conferences

State

Like the Annual Conference of 1917, that of 1918 did not assemble until June, the delay being caused by the unsettled state of the political situation.

A considerable amount of uncertainty and distrust was caused throughout the unions by the action of Mr Beeby and his colleagues in their amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Act (1918), wherein for absolutely no purpose whatever, except that of seeking party advantage, Mr Beeby used his powers to disturb and disrupt the political status of trade unions. In order that this may be at once demonstrated or proved, why should it be illegal for a trade union to vote money to its political party, even though done with the consent of every member of the union, while the directors of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, the Australian Gaslight Company, or any other monopolistic institution, is permitted to vote money from its funds to assist the National Party without even consulting its shareholders, many of whom might be Labor supporters? The Employers' Federation levies tribute without question upon its members and supporters, and yet the Employers' Federation is nothing except a political organisation designed and upkept for the purpose of securing political power, just the same as the Australian Labor Party's Executive is an organisation designed and upkept for the purpose of securing Labor representation in Parliament; yet the Employers' Federation is free and untrammled while the Labor Party's financial supply is absolutely prohibited. This, apparently, is the Nationalist idea of even-handed justice.

The resolutions carried at the Conference, together with the work of the Committee, will be found embodied in the 1918 edition of the Rule Book.

Interstate

The Seventh Interstate Labor Conference met in Perth (West Australia) in June, and was fully represented from this State, the delegates being Messrs Catts, Mutch, MLA, Power, Rae, Sutherland and Willis.

The greater part of the sittings was given to the consideration of war and peace and the attitude of the Party to the problems arising therefrom. The now celebrated peace proposals adopted by the NSW 1917 State Conference, and subsequently endorsed by practically all the State organisations, were unanimously reaffirmed without alteration, and eventually the following proposals were approved, and sent to a ballot of the whole membership of the Movement throughout Australia:

Further participation in recruiting shall be subject to the following conditions:

- (a) That a clear and authoritative statement be made on behalf of the Allies, asserting their readiness to enter into peace negotiations, upon a basis of no annexations and no penal indemnities;
- (b) That Australia's requirements in manpower be ascertained and met with respect to:
 - (1) Home defence;
 - (2) Industrial requirements.

An immediate inquiry, upon which the Australian Labor Party shall be adequately and officially represented, shall be held, and its decisions immediately given effect to.

It is perhaps to be regretted that the Perth Conference did not decide to take the responsibility of defining the attitude of the Movement towards the war and recruiting. Much may be said and written in support of the attitude taken, but still the bald fact remains that the delegates representing the high court of the Movement were assembled for the purpose of debating and declaring its attitude on all questions submitted to them. Undoubtedly the referendum is democratic, but its use for the purpose of avoiding personal responsibility on such vital questions could only result in a sharp division of opinion being expressed.

Another matter of the utmost importance dealt with was the future relationship between the State and the Commonwealth. A policy of unification was definitely decided, leaving the details for future determination.

Strong resolutions were also carried in opposition to Imperial Federation in any shape or form.

The policy in regard to defence was drastically changed from that now on the Statute book. Boy-conscription was sought to be abolished, and the whole Defence Act to be so democratised that the now discredited Minister for Defence (Senator Pearce) was aghast at the proposals.

The matter of dealing with war loans and other financial problems was relegated to a committee for report.

Finally it was decided to recommend a Special Interstate Conference, to be held in Sydney in June 1919, to deal with this and other post-war problems.

The War

The cessation of hostilities of the world-war is something to be thankful for. The madness that has been rife since 1914 is abated, and civilisation faces 1919 with the hope that out of the travail of horrors the world will emerge free from the dread scourge of war for the future. Be that as it may, we know that the conditions of life and its maintenance in Middle Europe had become so strenuous that the peoples of the Central Empires refused to further fight, and the decision of the workers of Germany and Austria, no doubt actuated by the developments in Russia, to cease fighting, has saved civilisation. The pursuit of the war to the "bitter-end" was a madness that could have no other effect but the destruction of the people engaged in it.

November 11, 1918, will be one of the most memorable days in history, commemorating the signing of the great armistice. The enormous loss of life will never perhaps be fully realised. The Australian casualties will serve as a small indication of what the white man has been called upon to endure. Out of a population of something like 5,000,000; situated some 12,000 miles from the theatres at war, Australia has subscribed to 31/12/18 as officially advised:

	<i>Officers</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Totals</i>
Embarked (including Rabaul)	8067	321,615	329,682
Number returned (less returns to duty)	3361	76,438	79,795
Number abroad	8203	152,759	160,962
Number dead	2780	55,079	57,855
Number wounded	7080	159,132	166,212
Number sick	3816	77,270	81,086
Number missing	22	183	205
Number unspecified	65	154	219

In addition, there are approximately at sea 30,000 troops returning to Australia.

The British Elections

As a war measure, the life of the British Parliament, in order to secure the coordination of the nation's effort, was extended, but quite recently an election was decided upon. There is a distinct feeling in Australia that the elections were rushed in order that full advantage might be taken of the bewildered state of the public mind. It remains to be seen whether the taking of such advantage of the abnormal conditions of the people after the enormous sacrifices they had made, and the fulsome promises that had been given them, will not bear its own fruit. The cabled utterances of the Prime Minister, Mr Lloyd George, "May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, etc.", if correct, is indicative of an hysterical disquietude that does not bode well for the future.

Peace Conference

Up to the time of writing the Peace Conference, which is to sit at Versailles, had not been called together. The world will watch with intense interest the fate of the famous "Fourteen Points" enunciated by President Wilson, and to which Germany agrees:-

Terms stated in address to Congress on January 8, 1918:

"I. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.

"II. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international covenants.

"III. The removal, as far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.

"IV. Adequate guarantee given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.

"V. A free, open-minded and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.

"VI. The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest cooperation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their good will, of their comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy.

“VII. Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they themselves set and determined for the government of their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of international law is forever impaired.

“VIII. All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.

“IX. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognised lines of nationality.

“X. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.

“XI. Roumania, Servia, and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Servia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan States to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan States should be entered into.

“XII. The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to ships and commerce of all nations, under international guarantees.

“XIII. An Independent Polish State should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

“XIV. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small States alike.

The workers of the world will be much influenced by the manner in which these points are adhered to, observed, or treated. There is no doubt that if the Conference displays an honest and genuine desire to arrange the future conduct of the nations in the interest of all, much will be achieved towards the establishment of stable Government. That there can be no misinterpretation of the real or spiritual meaning of President Wilson's "Fourteen Points" is assured by his comprehensive amplification on three different occasions, as follows:-

"Principles enumerated in address before Congress, February 11, 1918:

"First. That each part of the final settlement must be based upon the essential justice of that particular case and upon such adjustments as are most likely to bring a peace that will be permanent.

"Second. That peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were mere chattels and pawns in a game, even the great game, now forever discredited, of the balance of power; but that,

"Third. Every territorial settlement involved in this war must be made in the interest and for the benefit of the population concerned and not as a part of any mere adjustment or compromise of claims amongst rival States; and

"Fourth. That all well-defined national aspirations shall be accorded the utmost satisfaction that can be accorded them without introducing new or perpetuating old elements of discord and antagonism that would be likely in time to break the peace of Europe and consequently of the world."

On July 4, 1918, in an address at Mount Vernon: "These are the ends for which the associated peoples of the world are fighting and which must be conceded them before there can be peace:

"I. The destruction of every arbitrary power anywhere that can separately, secretly, and of its own single choice disturb the peace of the world; or, if it cannot be presently destroyed, at the least its reduction to virtual impotence.

"II. The settlement of every question, whether of territory, of sovereignty, of economic arrangement, or of political relationship, upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of material interest or advantage of any other nation or people which may desire a different settlement for the sake of its own exterior influence or mastery.

"III. The consent of all nations to be governed in their conduct towards each other by the same principles of honor and of respect for the common law of civilised society that governs the individual citizens of all modern States in their relations with one another, to the end that all promises and covenants may be sacredly observed, no private plots or conspiracies hatched, no selfish injuries wrought with impunity, and a mutual trust established upon the handsome foundation of a mutual respect for right.

"IV. The establishment of an organisation of peace which shall make it certain that the combined power of free nations will check every invasion of right and serve to make peace and justice the more secure by affording a definite tribunal of opinion to which all must submit and by which every international readjustment that cannot be amicably agreed upon by the people directly concerned shall be sanctioned."

On September 27, in Liberty Loan address in New York:

"These, then, are some of the particulars, and I state them with the greater confidence because I can state them authoritatively as representing this Government's interpretation of its own duty with regard to peace:

"First. The impartial justice meted out must involve no discrimination between those to whom we wish to be just and those to whom we do not wish to be just. It must be a justice that plays no favorites and knows no standard but the equal rights of the several peoples concerned.

"Second. No special or separate interest of any single nation or any group of nations can be made the basis of any part of the settlement which is not consistent with the common interests of all.

"Third. There can be no leagues or alliances or special covenants and understandings within the general and common family of the League of Nations.

"Fourth. And, more specifically, there can be no special, selfish, economic boycott or exclusion except as the power of economic penalty by exclusion from the markets of the world may be vested in the League of Nations itself as a means of discipline and control.

"Fifth. All international agreements and treaties of every kind must be made known in their entirety to the rest of the world."

Labor Peace Proposals Vindicated

Our records show the formulation and adoption of the now famous Peace proposals in June, 1917. The amount of wild talk and obloquy heaped upon the heads of Labor; the wild charge of disloyalty and treason to the Empire is too well known. Now, however, we find in the December issue of no less a journal than the arch-Imperialistic champion, *The Round Table*, that "THERE CAN BE, IN FACT, NO GREAT OBJECTION URGED AGAINST THE ACTUAL TERMS OF THE PEACE PROGRAMME OF THE AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY". The journal goes on to show that our proposals are almost identical with those of the Allied statesmen. It is interesting to record that no recognised proposals were enunciated by Allied statesmen until some seven months after the world-wide publication of this great tribute to the genius of Australian Labor.

Russia

The workers of Australia have done well in refusing to accept the Northcliffe-moulded bourgeois judgment in connection with the portentous happenings in Russia. Australia's daily press appears to overlook the weight of the axiom "That things which are equal to the same thing are equal to one another". The great personality of the Australian, which has made him famous throughout the world, still stands between him and the acceptance of the silly and contradictory statements which are from day to day published concerning events in Russia.

In the near future an extension of the citizen-governed area, perhaps embracing the whole of Europe, may be looked for. Time alone will tell. One thing, however, is certain, and that is, that the Australian workers

are utterly disgusted with the slanderous attacks and vilification of the Bolsheviki movement in Russia.

The sympathy of all fair-minded peoples must go out to the Russians in their struggle to throw off the inhuman yoke of Capitalism.

Federal Party

War Precautions Act

The Nationalist Party, under Mr Watt, has not in any way improved its position in the estimation of the people. On the contrary, its almost every act but serves to make its record more unworthy. Extremities of measures and actions appear to be the watchword it has adopted.

A few weeks after the declaration of war the Government, at short notice, asked Parliament for extensive powers, ostensibly for dealing with enemy subjects, and for the protection of wharves, docks, etc. Unfortunately, the members of Parliament lent too willing an ear to the tale of the Cabinet, and as a result the War Precautions Act, embodying far-reaching powers, was incautiously granted. It was not long before it was made perfectly clear that the powers conferred on the Government for the purposes of protecting the citizens from the operations of enemy subjects were also to be used for the repression of all Australians who dared to criticise or raise their voice against the Government. Some hundreds of regulations were issued under this Act, and government was, in effect, transferred from Parliament to the Ministers comprising the Cabinet. Prosecutions were rife, and every effort was made to prevent effective criticism of the Government. The summary arrest and internment, without charge or trial, of several prominent Australians, notably Mr JM Scott, will serve as an everlasting illustration of the danger and unwisdom of placing autocratic powers in the hands of any party.

Australia on two occasions absolutely and definitely refused to countenance militarism, yet in face of this mandate, twice repeated, the military power was exercised with an arbitrary force that will fully justify a most exhaustive inquiry concerning its administration. Here it might well be asked what would have been the social and industrial conditions of the people had the electors been misguided enough to have accepted the militaristic proposals of the National Party?

The Censor

Australia, in addition to suffering the restraints imposed by the misuse of the War Precautions Act, is still under the heel of the censor. Innumerable instances are on record of the base political purposes to which this office has been subverted, but, notwithstanding the many protestations, party political use is mainly the service it performs. If any really searching inquiry is instituted concerning administrative misdoings

during the currency of the war, no such inquiry would be complete unless it included the censor and his office.

Wireless

The public is regarding with cynical amusement the neurotic action of the Government in so hastily dumping its erstwhile colleague, the Minister for Customs, consequent upon adverse criticism contained in the report of the Naval Commission, especially that part dealing with the acquisition of the extensive wireless works, engineering shops and plant, covering a large area at Randwick.

In considering this question, the fact should not be lost sight of that the acquisition of the works, material, and plant, in full working order, was secured at a period in the world's history when all the purchasing power of money would not have availed to instal if the material had had to be purchased in the open markets of the world. As an instance of the fallacy of the valuation considered by the Commission, a steel tower, 250 feet high, was put in at £250, or at the rate of £1 per foot, when £10 would have been nearer the mark. In other words, the Government secured for £250 what cost, in labor and material, some £2500 at pre-war prices. If other valuations are in similar ratio, the hysterical act of the Government can only be regarded as "acute dementia".

The circumstances which led to the resignation of Senator Long, though they may have justified his action, bring into clear relief the hypocrisy of the Nationalists as a party, State and Federal, and show without question the existence of the class and party bias which influences all their actions. The vacancy in the Senate was a Labor vacancy, and all honest persons will at once concede that a Labor Senator should have been appointed, but in Tasmania the Nationalists were in power, and that power was used to further the party ends, without any consideration of the moral claims of justice and equity, as instanced by the selection of a member of their own party.

Repatriation

Generous support was given by the Labor Party to the proposals submitted by the Government for the reinstatement into civil life of returned men. All money asked for was freely voted. A special Minister was appointed to attend to this work. A Central Committee, sitting in Melbourne, with large committees and almost innumerable sub-committees in each State, has been created to attend to the wants of returned soldiers. Great care is exercised by the Minister and his committees to avoid interference in the slightest degree with vested interests. In most cases such high prices have been paid for land that it is doubtful if the returned men can make good be they never so industrious. Grave dissatisfaction is rampant at the delay in securing returned men suitable

positions. What will happen when the boys are returned as it is expected they will be during 1919, at the rate of 20,000 per month?

An important section of the work of repatriation is that provided for under the War Service Homes Act. Under this measure a Commissioner, with extensive powers, is to be appointed. He may purchase existing houses, pay off existing mortgages, or erect new houses on land already owned by the soldier, or he may purchase small or large areas of land and erect new houses thereon, as may be determined. The total advance to any one person is not to exceed £700. It is purely a business proposition, and provision is made whereby the land, together with the house thereon, may become the freehold property of the returned man by payment in instalments extending over a period of some 37 years. The Labor Party made every effort to provide that in no case should the area of a returned soldier's home be less than 32 perches or five homes to an acre; but this the Government opposed, both for homes to be acquired or built either on lands supplied by the State or on Commonwealth lands at Canberra or the Northern Territory.

Electoral Amendment

During the last election campaign fears were frequently expressed that the return of a National Government would mean interfering with the Electoral Law. Following upon the election of the Labor nominee for Swan this fear was realised by the Government introducing the bill providing for the introduction of preferential voting for the election of members to the House of Representatives, the abolition of absentee voting, and the reintroduction of the postal vote.

No serious objection was taken to the enactment of the preferential system of voting, but our long experience of the postal vote and the many facilities offered for irregular, if not criminal, practices, made it necessary to oppose it at every stage. The Government, however, were easily able to carry this objectionable provision. While it remains on the Statute Book, Labor must endeavor to utilise the method where necessary. Absentee voting has been repealed.

Pensions

Repeated efforts were made to induce the Government to increase the Invalid and Old-Age Pensions, but without success. As a contrast, and also to show to what lengths capitalistic-controlled Governments are prepared to go, the case of Chief Justice Griffith deserves recording:-

The judgments of Chief Justice Griffith are alone responsible for the restrictions of the Federal Constitution. The late Hon. BR Wise was never tired of stating that not 4 per cent of the constitutional authorities throughout Britain and her self-governing Dominions agreed with the findings of Chief Justice Griffith in regard to the Federal Constitution.

Capitalism has great cause to be grateful to Chief Justice Griffith, and, notwithstanding that the high salary paid to him was for the express purpose of obviating the payment of pensions, this reactionary and upright Judge, together with the Nationalist Government, treats as a scrap of paper the understanding that the emolument covered. The press, the Judge, and the Government constantly call upon the common people to economise, while, in silence from the press, the Government gives and the Judge takes £1750 per year of the people's money. To give some show of right to this questionable dealing, the Government introduced a bill and used the majority given to it to "win the war" to push it through. The claims of the old and the invalid, in view of the necessity to economise, could not be considered. Of such is the Kingdom of Capitalism.

War Loans

Due to the persistent advocacy of a number of members of the Party, and to the consequent development of public opinion, the Government decided that the interest payable on the last war loan floated, and a subsequent issue be liable to payment of income tax; but, in order that the welfare of the money-lenders be not seriously affected by the alteration, the rate of interest was increased from 4½ per cent, to 5 per cent.

National Taxation

The methods of the British Government to raise national revenue continue to be followed by that of Australia.

It was found that there would be a gap of £6,000,000 in the 1918-19 accounts, and, instead of boldly insisting that the wartime profits, the big incomes, and large landed estates should pay, it was decided to only levy, comparatively speaking, nominal amounts in these directions, and to secure the balance by taxing 3d and 6d picture show tickets, etc., and imposing ½d war stamp tax on letters. These are the taxes that fall most heavily on the poorer section of the community; but the people of Australia returned a National Government to office, therefore such inhuman discrimination is to be expected.

There is a strenuous time ahead. The Federal Government, constituted as it is, cannot tap any of the great hoards of wealth. Its obligations are colossal, but it will endeavor to discharge one by the invasion of another. Only a few short years ago (1909) Mr Deakin, in his efforts to serve capitalistic masters, strained every nerve and ruined himself physically and politically in the endeavor to place the 25/- per capita provision of the State share of the customs revenue in the Constitution, and so give it permanency. In this he had the whole daily press of Australia behind him. The Labor Party, realising the stupid and underlying dishonesty of the proposal, prevented it, and, coming to office in its turn, placed a 10 years' proviso by Act of Parliament in its place. The grim

satire of the Nationalists being the first to take advantage of Labor's wisdom, with the unanimous approval of that same capitalist press, is surely worthy of pride of place in the archives of Tophet.

Ten years ago, according to the great dailies, the financial future of the States must be assured, therefore it must go in the Constitution. Today these ultra-Imperialists who are shocked and soul-harrowed at the idea of pledges being broken by anyone but themselves are vociferously applauding Mr Watt's "fine" decision to curtail and finally "cease payment".

Verily the scrap of paper stunt is in danger of being over-worked in Australia.

The Phantom Ministry

It is very disquieting to report that Messrs Hughes and Cook are still in Great Britain. It is also authoritatively announced that Senator Pearce is to join his colleagues at the other side of the world. The presence of three Ministers of the Federal Ministry in Great Britain will permit of Executive meetings being held, regulations being passed, and, in effect, may mean the transferring of the seat of Government from Australia to London.

To such a pass have these Nationalist "Win-the-War" Imperialistic Federation fanatics brought Australia. Subject as they no doubt will be to insidious Imperial influence, it is no exaggerated picture to say that the future is fraught with the gravest possibilities. That three political adventurers, such as Hughes, Cook, and Pearce undoubtedly are, have been allowed to leave this continent with the comprehensive and dangerous powers of being able to legislate at some 12,000 miles distant is, perhaps, without parallel in the history of the world.

State Party

The records of the year just concluded show clearly that the Labor Party had a particularly busy time in opposing measures introduced by the National Government. At the beginning of the year the Government pretended to despise the Opposition because of its numerical weakness.

The Party consists of thirty-two members all told; but of these two, Messrs Dunn and G Cann, were on active service, and a couple of others, including the late C Fern, were prevented from participating in the Parliamentary conflicts by virtue of ill-health. One can readily understand that in a House constituted of 90 members, it is somewhat difficult for a fighting force of some twenty-eight members to make its presence felt, nevertheless it became apparent before the close of the session that the Government found it necessary to respect in no small degree the band of enthusiastic Laborites who constitute the Opposition. Many instances to prove this can be quoted. It was undoubtedly mainly due to the splendid fight put up by the Labor Party that the Government delayed the final passage of the notorious Anti-Sedition Bill. In the final

days of the session the caustic criticism of members of the Opposition undoubtedly had the effect of compelling the Government to withdraw the Public Service Bill, which provided for the displacement, without trial, of the three Public Service Commissioners.

Arbitration

The amending Arbitration Bill, introduced early in the year, provoked considerable debate. Many of its clauses were particularly obnoxious to the Labor Movement as a whole. The provision in the Bill making it impossible for unions to impose a levy for political purposes was unquestionably aimed at the financial basis of the ALP Movement. This was strongly opposed by every member of the Labor Party, but, unfortunately, the overwhelming majority that the Government commands prevailed, and as a result additional difficulties now confront the Executive of the Movement in the task of conducting a successful campaign.

IWW Commission

Probably nothing has created greater public interest during the past few months than the inquiry into the police methods in their conduct of the now notorious IWW cases. Although holding nothing in common politically with the IWW men who had been sentenced, a strong feeling existed in the ranks of the Labor Party that the convictions had been made on evidence of an unsatisfactory character, and there was a unanimous feeling that in the interests of justice and in order to allay the public unrest, a searching inquiry should be instituted into the whole case. The limitation of the scope of the inquiry had the effect of producing a report that will be generally considered unsatisfactory. However, it redounds to the credit of the Party that, although politically opposed to the men concerned, they did everything possible to secure for them fuller provision of justice than had been meted out to them originally.

The Anti-Sedition Bill

This remarkable project was launched by the National Government ostensibly with the object of disfranchising disloyal subjects. The Bill received severe criticism at the hands of everybody. It was obviously an attempt on the part of the Government to remove from their path dangerous political opponents who could easily have been convicted under the War Precautions Act for making statements alleged to be prejudicial to the interests of the country, when, as a matter of fact, the statements would have been substantially true. So strong was the opposition to this measure in the House that, after being mutilated and withdrawn on several occasions, the National Party eventually decided to permit it to remain in the Upper House without bringing it to completion.

Amending Electoral Bill

Acting under the pressure of various outside organisations, the Government, after much internal wrangling, came down with a Bill to alter the whole of our long-established method of election procedure. Single electorates have been abolished and large areas substituted, returning five members for the city and three members for country divisions. The principle of proportional representation has been included in the Bill, and thus minorities will have the right for the first time to political representation. This measure is likely to have far-reaching effects. The principle itself is sound, but it is likely to be found harassing and confusing to the electors generally. The opposition of the Labor Party to the Bill was confined to the impracticability of the system in such a huge State as New South Wales, and additionally because it is generally felt that there has been no mandate from the people for an electoral change of this character. It is obvious that a considerable amount of instruction will need to be given to the voting public in order to avoid an undue proportion of informal votes. The outstanding feature of the introduction of this Bill is the fact that it was only presented to the Assembly during the last few days of the session, and although generally admitted to be of considerable importance and very contentious in character, the Government forced the provisions of the Bill through the House by the frequent use of the gag in the small hours of the morning after a very limited discussion. It would appear to be the last despairing effort of a Government in an attempt to evade an inevitable defeat.

Land for Soldiers

A feature of the year's legislation has been the acquisition of a considerable number of estates for the settlement of returned soldiers. The principle of this was not, of course, combated by the Labor Party, but grave doubts exist in the minds of members of the Opposition whether such resumptions have been made at equitable prices and on a basis that will permit the settler to earn a living. These doubts become accentuated by the many reports from various country districts questioning the bargains that have been made by the Government of the day, and it would appear that it will be absolutely impossible to provide anything like sufficient land for the returned applicants at the high prices now ruling. This fact further emphasises the virtue of the Labor Party's policy of non-alienation of land from the Crown, and it is deplorable to realise that in order to settle a handful of men on suitable country in this huge State that the Government is compelled to go cap in hand to the private landowner and to pay him exorbitant prices for land, the value of which has in many instances been created by Government public works.

Public Service Commission

The concluding two days of the session were responsible for a remarkable and unprecedented action on the part of the National Government. Following on the report of a Commissioner who had been appointed to inquire into the Public Service, the Government came down with a Bill providing for the displacement of the three present Public Service Commissioners. They had the cool audacity to request the House to suspend the Standing Orders in order that the Bill might be taken through all its stages in one sitting. The Bill itself provided for power to be given to the Ministry to appoint a new Board at increased rates of salary. Naturally, the Opposition strongly objected to any such proceeding, and the members of the Public Service Board requested that they might be represented at the bar of the House by Counsel. This request was very reluctantly acceded to by the Ministry. So strong was the objection to the methods of the Government in this matter that after some discussion the Government withdrew the Bill.

By-Elections

During the year three vacancies were created in the House, one by the resignation of Mr Abbott, of the Upper Hunter, and two by the deaths of two esteemed Laborites, C Fern, of Cobar, and GTC Miller of Monaro. The Government recognised the futility of contesting the Cobar seat, and Mr MA Davidson was elected unopposed to succeed Mr Fern. In the two contests that ensued Labor emerged with flying colors. At the last general election Mr Abbott had been elected to support the National Government with a majority of nearly 800. In the by-election contest, although the Government retained the seat, Captain Toombs, the Labor candidate, was defeated by less than 300 votes, showing a substantial increase in the Labor vote in the district. The election at Monaro to fill the vacancy created by Mr Miller's death, resulted in Mr J Bailey, the Labor candidate, securing an even larger majority than had Mr Miller at the general election. In view of the fact that the electorate was absolutely flooded by Ministers of the Crown, members of the National Party, and literature in abundance, this increased vote in a rural constituency is intensely gratifying to the Labor Movement.

Municipal

The Municipal Council Party's work for the term just ended has been of much advantage to the workers. It is true that only 10 of a Council of 26 were pledged Labor men. Nevertheless, by the presentation of a solid and determined front, the party was largely responsible for much beneficial legislation. The election of practically a Labor majority of the Council on December 2 was the recognition by the citizens of the necessity for an intelligent and progressive government of the city's

affairs. The first test of strength was decided by the election of the Lord Mayor, which resulted in the election of the nominee of the Labor Municipal Caucus.

Notwithstanding the prejudiced utterances of both Federal and State Governments and the further misrepresentation by the press, the Council adhered to the principle of preference to unionists, and during 1918 the bulk of the Council's work was done by day labor. This was made possible largely by the unsatisfactory nature of work performed under the contract system.

This victory of Labor opens a wide field for useful work in the interests of the citizens. Too long has the Council represented the vested interests of property. With monopolistic corporations threatening the very vitals of the city, the Council majority may well be used to not only secure cheap and pure food, but also should be able to clip the wings of the profiteers operating in the supply of all necessary services.

Mr Justice Street's Commission on Police Methods

After much agitation and the exercise of public opinion, the Holman-Fuller Government was at last shamed into granting an inquiry into the alleged bribery of the police in the cases of the IWW men now imprisoned, but well did they realise the thinness of the ice over which they were invited to skate. The more that this case is probed the worse indeed does it appear.

We have heard much concerning the dignity of the Bench and the probity of the Judges, but perhaps since the public have had the spectacle of Mr Justice Street, a Judge of the Supreme Court Bench, so lost to that self-respect which should be without exception one of the most jealously guarded attributes of the judiciary, accepting from the Government the direction of the course of the commission he undertook, the less said about these "great qualities" the better.

The reservations and guarded report of Mr Justice Street will serve as an everlasting monument to the servility for which even Judges can be remarkable, though the result of such servility involves the liberty and perhaps the very lives of fellow citizens.

No unbiased person could read the evidence and the report of Mr Justice Street without being more than assured of the necessity for a full and complete inquiry into the cases of the unfortunate IWW men.

List of Branches Endorsed During the Year

<i>Branch</i>	<i>State Electorate</i>	<i>Federal Electorate</i>
Adaminaby	Monaro	Eden-Monaro
Albury	Albury	Hume
Ardlethan	Murrumbidgee	Riverina
Ballina •	Byron	Richmond

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Balldale	Corowa	Hume
Blandford	Upper Hunter	Robertson
Barellan	Murrumbidgee	Riverina
Bowraville	Hast.-Macleay	Cowper
Branxton	Singleton	Robertson
Bronte	Waverley	Wentworth
Brooklyn	Ryde	Parramatta
Burruga	Lyndhurst	Macquarie
Canbelego	Cobar	Darling
Camberwell	Singleton	Robertson
Coolabah	Cobar	Darling
Coolac	Cootamundra	Hume
Coonabarabran	Liv. Plains	Gwydir
Dalgety	Monaro	Eden-Monaro
Dorrigo	Raleigh	Cowper
Elong Elong	Liv. Plains	Darling
Finley	Corowa	Riverina
Forest Reefs	Orange	Macquarie
Gladesville	Ryde	Parramatta
Glendos	Singleton	Robertson
Hermidale	Cobar	Darling
Hillston	Murrumbidgee	Riverina
Humula	Albury	Hume
Kandos	Mudgee	Robertson
King Ward, Broken Hill	Willyama	Barrier
Kurri Kurri	Cessnock	Hunter
Maclean	The Clarence	Cowper
Macksville	Hast.-Macleay	Cowper
Mangoplah	Wagga	Hume
Merrygoen	Liv. Plains	Robertson
Michelago	Monaro	Eden-Monaro
Mt Victoria	Hartley	Macquarie
Mudgee	Mudgee	Robertson
Narrabri	Namoi	Gwydir
Narrandera	Murrumbidgee	Riverina
Nelson's Bay	Waverley	Wentworth
North Dorrigo	Raleigh	Cowper
Owen's Gap	Upper Hunter	Robertson
Phillip	Phillip	West Sydney
Reefton	Lachlan	Riverina
Sandy Creek	Liv. Plains	Darling
Suspension Bridge	Willoughby	North Sydney
Tara	Murrumbidgee	Riverina
The Oaks	Camden	Werriwa
Tottenham	Lachlan	Darling

Tullamore	Lachlan	Calare
Walgett	Namoi	Gwydir
Wee Waa	Namoi	Gwydir
Warialda (Women)	Gwydir	Gwydir
Wallsend	Wallsend	Newcastle
West Narrabri	Namoi	Gwydir
Werris Creek	Tamworth	New England
West End, Armidale	Armidale	New England
Willow Tree	Upper Hunter	New England
Wills Ward, Broken Hill	Willyama	Barrier
Wingham	Gloucester	Cowper
Yerranderie	Wollondilly	Werriwa

Sunday Night Lectures

Owing to the exceedingly hot weather, which was considered to be militating against the attendances, your Executive decided to postpone the Sunday evening lectures until further notice. The following were the lectures delivered:-

	<i>Lecturer</i>
Jan. 13 – “The Merits and Demerits of Direct Legislation.”	CH Currey
20 – “Strike and Its Results.”	AC Willis
27 – “Policy of the British Labor Movement in War Time.”	Gordon Childe
Feb. 3 – “Australian National Sentiment.”	SA Rosa
10 – “Living Wage, Its Origin and Effects.”	TP Holloway
17 – “Guilty, or Not Guilty.”	HE Boote
24 – “The Rights of Labor.”	AARutherford
Mar. 3 – “National Insurance, a Necessary Provision for the Workers.”	JP Osborne, MLA
10 – “Orators and Oratory.”	RW Cruickshank
17 – “The Industrial Outlook.”	– Bland, WEA
24 – “Disease (Bodily and Social) v. Health.”	Dr CS Thompson
31 – “Proportional Representation.”	AG Huie
April 7 – “The War of the Classes.”	AA Rutherford
14 – “Man in Relation to the Universe.”	Chas E Pumfrey
21 – “The Anzac Abroad.”	Corporal Murphy
28 – “The Religion of Tom Paine.”	F Cotton
May 5 – “Disease (Bodily and Social) v. Health.” (Concl).	Dr GS Thompson
12 – “The Theatre and Labor.”	Montgomery Stuart
19 – “Criticism of the Present Day Jail System.”	Vance Marshall

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26 –	“Some Aspects of the French Revolution.”	W Davies, MLA
<i>June</i> 2 –	“High Cost of Living.”	R Kleinsmith
9 –	General Welcome to Delegates.	Various Speakers
16 –	“Dangers of Imperialism.”	SA Rosa (interrupted by police and soldiers)
23 –	“Man in relation to the Universe.”	Chas E Pumfrey
30 –	“The Menace of the Red Plague.”	A Blakeley, MHR
<i>July</i> 7 –	“A Thousand Years of Labor History.”	Frank Cotton
14 –	“Workmen’s Compensation.”	E Ryan
21 –	“Interstate Conference.”	JH Catts, MHR
28 –	“The Certainty of Imperial Federation in some Form or Degree, and Its Inevitable Disastrous Effects – Political, Social, and Economic – upon Australia Immediately, and upon the Empire Ultimately.”	WJ Miles
<i>Aug.</i> 4 –	“Interstate Conference.” (Concluded)	JH Catts, MHR
11 –	“Some Aspects of the IWW Cases.”	TD Mutch, MLA
18 –	“Holman’s Proposed Anti-Sedition Bill.”	Capt. S Toombs
25 –	“The Hopes, Fears, and Economics of the One Big Union.”	AA Rutherford
<i>Sept.</i> 1 –	“The Land Question from Labor’s Standpoint.”	Frank Cotton
8 –	“Freedom of Speech.”	VG Childe
15 –	“Reaction Against the State.”	Prof. RP Irvine
22 –	“The Church and the Labor Movement.”	FT Walker
29 –	“National Guilds.”	AC Willis
<i>Oct.</i> 5 –	“Empire Wreckers – Round Table Secrets.”	WJ Miles
13 –	“The War and Education.”	CH Murphy
20 –	“The Right to Work – Its Necessity and Value.”	SA Rosa
27 –	“Law, Love, Lies, and the One Big Union.”	AA Rutherford
<i>Nov.</i> 3 –	Conscription in Operation – The World’s Need for Disarmament.”	Stanley F Allen
10 –	“The Catholic Church and Labor.”	Rev. PF Tighe, SJ
17 –	“Some Aspects of the Guild System.”	Rev. Portus
24 –	“A League of Nations.” CH Currey	
<i>Dec.</i> 1 –	“Houses Must be Found for the	Senator Grant

	Workers."	
8—	"Cooperation."	W Davies, MLA
15—	"The Jerry Building Trinity."	RA McAuley
22—	"The Class Struggle and the Prince of Peace."	Rev. FT Walker "Men's Own."

Finance

Including the sum of £1361 1s 2d brought forward from 1917, the total receipts from all sources for the year ending December 31, 1918, were

	£5727 18 6
The total expenditure for the same period being	<u>5259 6 2</u>
Leaving a balance at bankers of	£ 468 12 4

Against this, however, there are accounts payable, amounting in all to some £674 13s 2d; but there is also a considerable sum outstanding re fees etc. from unions and branches, approximating £1322 12s 11d.

As previously stated, the unwarrantable interference by the Government with the financial affairs of the unions has created a position of some difficulty, which sooner or later will have to be faced in a determined manner.

The establishment of the *Labor News* also marks a great departure, and the initiation has, of course, been more or less a drain upon our funds. It is hoped, however, that the New Year will see this venture on a self-supporting basis.

Executive Attendances

As the period covering the election of the Executive only dates from June, a report of the attendances of the various members will be compiled and submitted to the Conference, together with other matters of detail.

WH Lambert, Secretary.
PC Evans, General Secretary.
Macdonell House, Pitt Street, Sydney.
31st December, 1918.



Annual Conference of ALP, NSW Branch, 1919

*(The Australian Worker, 12 & 19 June 1919;
Labor News, 14 & 21 June 1919)*

Day 1, Saturday, 7 June 1919

NSW Labor Conference. Trials of strength between opposing sections. Proposals for new objective and to alter mode of electing Executive defeated.

Nearly two hundred delegates were present when the President of the NSW Branch of the Australian Labor Party, Alderman WH Lambert, opened the Annual Conference at the Trades Hall last Saturday afternoon (June 7). Gradually, as the afternoon wore on the number of delegates increased. By the time the evening session was well in progress the hall was crowded beyond comfort. Included in the gathering were many prominent members of the Movement, along with State and Federal Labor politicians.

There was an air of expectancy about the Conference, and it was obvious to all that the great part of the first session would be devoted to estimating the strength of the various sections bidding for control – the organising of which had been taking place during the week prior to the opening of the Conference. Feeling ran high, and several times there were exciting verbal duels between the several parties. Progress votes cast by the parties were received with thunderous applause when they showed an advance on earlier figures.

Prior to the official opening of Conference, the President referred briefly to the Freeman case, and a motion of protest – which is included elsewhere in this issue – was carried unanimously.

The election of the several committees took up most of the afternoon session. For the Credentials Committee Messrs Arthur, Bramston, McGrath, Sutherland, and Treflé were elected. It was clearly a victory for the moderate wing of the Conference, as was also the election of the Agenda Committee, to which Messrs Toombs, Willis, Carey, Farrell, and Miss Cashman were elected. Miss Matthews was elected Minute Secretary; Mr Fitzgerald Timekeeper; and Messrs Weston and Carney were appointed Doorkeepers.

President's Address

In addressing the Conference, the President detailed the happenings of the Movement since the close of the previous year's Conference. He said: "Since the Conference of the Movement some twelve months back I am glad to say that it has successfully weathered all storms, and has made rapid progress, particularly in the direction of extending and solidifying its organisation, and from that point of view the Movement is in a better position today than at any time in its history hitherto. New Branches have been established in practically every part of the State where none existed previously, and old ones resuscitated.

Beeby's Coercion Bill

"I regret to say, however, that the Holman Government's Amended Industrial Arbitration Act of recent date (now commonly known as Beeby's Coercion Bill) has caused the Movement a good deal of concern as regards the matter of the affiliation of the trade unions, and, as a corollary, as regards finance.

"Delegates are doubtless aware that the bill referred to absolutely debar the trade unions from financially assisting the Political Labor Movement from their funds. Prior to the passing of this bill, trade unions were at liberty to assist the organisation financially, and pay their affiliation fees from their funds; but now, under this Act, they are unable to do so. A big percentage of the funds of the Labor Movement was obtained from the trade union movement previously, but under the present conditions not half the amount of revenue is obtainable from those sources as hitherto.

"The Industrial Arbitration Act, as it stands, is about the most class-biased piece of legislation on the statute books of any country in the world, and is certainly a disgrace to this State and to Australia. It is a direct blow at the Political Labor Movement of the State, and a blow at the liberty of the people and an insult to their intelligence. It should certainly be wiped off the statute book on the first opportunity.

"The so-called Nationalist Government have not passed any legislation to prohibit the capitalists and their organisations of employers donating funds and financing the National Political Party and their electioneering campaigns. Why should there be legislation interfering with the rights of organised labor in this direction, especially when such legislation was passed by our political opponents for political advantages and purposes? Notwithstanding the disabilities placed on, and the injustice done to, the trade unions and the Political Labor Movement on the lines indicated, it is satisfactory and gratifying to know that there are still more unions affiliated with the ALP than previously, and practically every union in the State is anxious to affiliate, and will do so on the first opportunity.

Bogus National Government

"It is gratifying to know that the people generally now realise to a greater extent than ever before the bogus nature of the so-called National Government in this State and in the Commonwealth Parliament. Their class-biased legislation and utter inability to fairly and competently administer the affairs of the State and Commonwealth has disgusted every fair-minded man and woman, while their failure to deal with, or even attempt to deal with the shameless and rapacious profiteers and exploiters of the people has aroused deep resentment and dissatisfaction among the masses.

"Under the regime of the present State Government and a similar Government in the Commonwealth Parliament, the industries of the country have been paralysed. Practically the whole of the metalliferous mining industries have been knocked on the head. Almost all the public works, railway construction, etc., have been brought to a standstill, and many thousands of men suddenly thrown out of employment and left to starve with their families or to fare as best they can. Many other essential industries are in the same position, creating widespread unemployment and poverty among the people. No attempt whatever has been made to keep the mines or factories going, nor to establish essential industries in this country. The Government is 50 years behind the times and utterly incapable of properly governing the country. It is following out an old-time suicidal policy of producing raw material and exporting, and re-importing the goods when made up by foreign countries.

Wheat Bungle

"The Government is deserving of the severest condemnation for its absolute failure to properly handle the farmers' wheat. As a result of their inaction and stupidity in this matter, thousands of tons of wheat have been ruined at a great cost to the country; a great part of the wheat on hand at present is not fit for pig food.

"Farmers have not obtained anyway near the price they should have obtained for their grain as a result of the Government's incompetency and want of regard for the farmers' interests. Regarded from all points of view, it is a public scandal, and one of the greatest bungles that has ever taken place in the history of the country.

Victimisation

"Right on since August, 1917, the year of the big strike, the present State Government, in conjunction with the shipping combine and coal owners, have been mercilessly and venomously persecuting and victimising the Sydney wharf laborers and coal lumpers and coal miners. Practically

every member of the Coal Lumpers' Union has been ruthlessly victimised and prevented from obtaining employment. The same thing applies to the Sydney wharf laborers.

"The big bulk of these men have families depending on them, and great numbers of them have been hard up against it for close on two years, and their families at the point of starvation, and, in many cases, their homes broken up. I feel confident in saying that if the people throughout this State even only half realised the disgracefully vindictive and tyrannical treatment meted out to those good citizens by the National Government such a combination would stand but a very small chance indeed of finding themselves in control of the machinery of government after the next election. The people of Australia will not stand for the starvation and humiliation of women and little children, nor for the victimisation of their breadwinners merely to gratify the vengeful feelings of a class-biased Government and of a gang of profiteers.

Putting the Boot into the Workers

"The energies of the Government referred to, led by Holman, Beeby, and Fuller in this State, and by Watt, Hughes, and Cook in the Federal Parliament, have been devoted principally to putting the boot into the workers, and making the working conditions as bad as possible, with the result that there have been far more strikes, unemployment, and poverty than under any other Government in the history of the country.

Misrepresentation of Labor Movement

"During the year the same old abuse and vile misrepresentation of the Labor Movement and its objects has been carried out with greater vigor than ever by the capitalist Governments and politicians. All sorts of misleading statements have been made by them and the press in order to mislead the people for the purpose of securing a further lease of power in the interest of the class they represent. The Executive of the Movement and all those administering its affairs have been designated as propagators of everything that is foul and unjust. They have been branded as traitors, advocates of free love and rapine, and murder, etc., etc., disloyalists, enemies of the Empire, and many other things. Notwithstanding all this, the people realise that the great Labor Movement still stands for what it has always stood for, namely, liberty and justice for the people, and securing for the workers (producers) the full results of their labor. On the other hand, it is against profiteering and exploitation of the people, starvation wages, and rotten working conditions, and slums, and all other evils. It is against persecution and victimisation of the workers and the starvation of their wives and families, and the bad state of

society, industrially and socially, as we find it today under the existing Governments and their system of Capitalism.

A New But Empty Slogan

"As a result of the great Russian revolution, the Holman National Government, and all other Governments of a similar kind in Australia, have seized upon the word 'Bolshevism', and have endeavored to fasten it on the Labor Movement as an electioneering slogan. Directly a Labor man opens his mouth to advocate the policy and principles of the Labor Movement, the press and Tory politicians raise the cry in unison of 'Bolshevism' in an endeavor to stampede and mislead the people. The word 'Bolshevism', it is understood, is the Russian word for majority.

"Notwithstanding this, now that the IWW gag is played out, the reactionary Tory politicians, finding themselves in need of a new war cry, commenced a campaign of abuse and misrepresentation of Labor, using Bolshevism as the most promising shibboleth, until it has now become as stale as the IWW bogey, and cuts no ice.

"According to Holman and his followers, immediately a representative of the Movement, or members of trade unions seek to improve the conditions of the workers, they are Bolsheviks. Immediately a Labor man criticises the bad administration of the Government and their biased legislation, he is a Bolshevik. He also is a Bolshevik directly he raises his voice against the profiteers and the plundering of the people by the exploiters.

"If the word "Bolshevism" is to be interpreted to mean what the Tory politicians say it means, then there are certainly no Bolsheviks in the Labor Movement. They are all on the other side amongst the profiteers, sweaters, and exploiters, slum owners, starvers of women and children, and ruthless persecutors and victimisers of the workers, such as the Holman Government and his followers, who can truly be termed capitalistic Bolsheviks, while, on the other hand, the Labor Movement, being the movement of the people, stands for liberty, equality, and justice, progress and prosperity, as embodied in its platform.

Termination of the War and Peace

"Since this Conference last met the great war has terminated, an armistice having been signed in November last on the lines of the Labor Movement's peace proposals of 1917, which are practically the same as President Wilson's fourteen points.

"From the cables in the press it seems as if the Conference now sitting in Paris has ignored a number of these points, particularly as regards no annexation and no indemnities, and it also seems that a number of the nations represented there are out to annex all the territory

they can lay their hands on. As a result of this, instead of making peace on a just and lasting basis, they are sowing the seeds of future wars and unduly penalising the workers and women and children of other lands.

“In this regard I feel sure that Conference will agree with me in condemnation. I am also confident that Conference will be with me in my wish that the terms of settlement will be on the basis of the peace proposals of the Labor Movement and President Wilson’s fourteen points, thus securing a just and lasting peace and better conditions and prosperity for mankind throughout the civilised world.

By-Elections

“At the recent by-elections for Petersham, Monaro, and Paddington, I am glad to say that Labor won by an overwhelming majority at Paddington and Monaro, Mr Jack Bailey having been returned for Monaro and Mr Larry O’Hara for Paddington by largely increased majorities in comparison with the figures of the last general elections, while, on the other hand, the Holman Government candidate only received 900 votes at Paddington and about 1600 in Monaro. At Petersham, Mr Olde, the Labor candidate, was defeated by a very narrow margin, decreasing the Liberal majority of last election by over 2000 votes.

Repatriation

“The Federal Government, with the acquiescence and endorsement of the Holman State Government, are simply tinkering with the question of repatriation of Australian soldiers, and the whole of their efforts to date in this matter have been a ghastly failure and an abominable sham. From the tactics they have pursued, it is evident that their main purpose has been to endeavor to put the returned soldiers against the citizens, instead of making an honest attempt to properly repatriate the men by creating the necessary developmental works throughout Australia to absorb every man returning, and to place on the land all those desirous of settling thereon under sane and reasonable conditions. The policy of discharging one type of worker and throwing him on the scrapheap to starve, and putting another man into his job is neither wise nor humane, and, instead of accomplishing the repatriation of the men as it should be carried out, it is merely playing to a false sentiment.

“The sacking of a few workers and putting a few returned men in their place is not the kind of repatriation that the Australian people want, nor is it what the men to be repatriated are entitled to. They are entitled to be repatriated in a much better manner than on the lines indicated. There is only one hope for the soldiers to get a square deal, and that is from the Labor Party when returned to power.

Labor in the City Council

"It should be satisfactory to know that Labor now has an equal number of members in the City Council with the Nationalists and so-called Independents combined, but is one vote in the minority on account of the Mayor having two votes. One of the first things that the Labor Party did after the Council elections was to lay down a minimum rate of pay of £3/12/- per week, regardless of the so-called minimum living wage laid down some time previously by the Board of Trade. The Party also reduced the working hours from eight to six per day of some of the men working in the power house ash filling.

"These men are working under abominable conditions, and should have had the hours reduced long ago. The reduction of hours was bitterly opposed by the Tories in the Council, and opinions expressed by them that the wages should also be reduced. Labor has in hand schemes for insurance of the Council's own property and workmen, and purchasing its own metal quarries and coal mines, together with schemes of food control and marketing and distribution, and can be relied upon to do the best it can to give effect to the platform.

"Legislation is required to enable the Council to give effect to a number of its proposals, particularly in the case of marketing and distribution of fish and food generally. This legislation was recommended some time back by a Royal Commission. The present Government have been approached on a number of occasions to legislate in the direction indicated, but have persistently refused.

Labor Wants Money

"In the near future we shall have to fight two elections, State and Federal, and as our legitimate sources of revenue have been largely interfered with and curtailed by Beeby's Coercion Act, supporters of the Movement require to rally to the call and see that sufficient money is subscribed to carry the campaigns on in an effective way. It will require a great deal of money to carry through those two campaigns, and I appeal to all supporters of the Movement to forward their donations to the General Secretary, ALP, at an early date from now on.

A Message of Hope

"As a result of the trials and tribulations of the working classes through over four years of Armageddon, the future augurs well for democracy, especially so as the people have benefited by the hard experience of autocratic rule, by a heartless plutocratic bureaucracy, who are misgoverning this country.

"I would exhort the people to join up with the great Australian Labor Movement, and thus secure the return of a Labor majority at the next Federal and State elections.

Immediately the President resumed his seat, Mr J Howie, President of the Labor Council of New South Wales, rose and said he desired to ask the President of the Conference if it was a fact that there had been a consultation with any other party, or parties, with a view of consolidating the Labor Movement in readiness for the coming elections. He was heard to instance (amidst uproar) the names of Carmichael and Griffith.

The President immediately jumped to his feet, and, banging the table heavily with his fist, said: "That question is a damned insult to the Movement. If you wish to insinuate that there has been a conference with any of Labor's enemies, then I tell you it is an insult to the Chair."

Protest Against Profiteering

After calm had been restored Mr G Saunders (Milk and Ice Carters) moved the following motion, which was carried without debate:

"That this Conference, believing it to be the first duty to all in the community (excepting the wealthy class), herein expresses its indignation at the exploitation and profiteering that, unhampered, importers, manufacturers, and wholesale distributors are at present indulging and which has continued very substantially and without justification for the past four years under the cloak of war conditions.

"That this Conference, fully realising that it is humanly impossible for the vast majority of the general public to obtain the ordinary necessities of life owing to such profiteering, in all sincerity urges the Federal Government to at once introduce legislation providing for the limitation of prices of all goods, leaving only a fair margin of profit for persons now indulging in profiteering, while, at the same time, making it an indictable offence on the part of the wholesaler or retailer to oversell or undersell.

"That these resolutions be forwarded at once to the Acting Federal Prime Minister with a request that he give them immediate and special attention, or that otherwise he and his colleagues should definitely decline to so act."

Just prior to closing the afternoon session, the President extended an invitation to delegates to be present at a reception to be accorded them on the following (Sunday) evening. Immediately this announcement was made Mr Denford, on behalf of a section of the delegates, jumped up and asked all present to attend a counter demonstration and social gathering to be given at the Trades Hall at the same time.

On Conference re-assembling after tea on Saturday evening the President referred to the question asked by Mr Howie earlier in the

evening, as to whether a conference had been held with the leader of any other party or any other political opponent. He gave the statement an emphatic denial. He had heard during the adjournment that a report had been spread that he, in company with Mr John Storey, had had a conference with Messrs Carmichael and Griffith – for what purpose he did not know. He desired to give it an emphatic denial. The report had been spread for unscrupulous reasons. (Uproar and applause.)

There was some discussion regarding the hours of sitting, country delegates being of the opinion that there should be day sittings in order to save time and expense. It was, however, decided to revert to the usual custom of evening sittings.

Intervention in Russia

Mr A Rae moved the following discussion, which was carried unanimously, without debate: "This Conference emphatically protests against the action of the Allied Governments in sending armed forces to Russia for the purpose of suppressing democracy in the interests of Capitalism. We look upon such action with disgust and abhorrence, and further, we consider the Russian people should be allowed to work out their own destiny".

A question was raised as to whether a delegate could sit on Conference representing a league the district of which he was not a resident. The President ruled that league membership carried full rights, including eligibility to be a delegate. There was some dissent, but after an explanation by Mr AC Willis (Vice-Chairman) the Chairman's ruling was upheld by 102 to 51.

Mr J Burns then raised the question of the eligibility of the Railway and Tramway Employees' Union being represented at Conference without the full fees being paid. This was the signal for uproar between the rival factions at Conference, during which Mr C Thompson jumped to his feet and made a heated reply, protesting at the manner in which his union was being singled out for these insinuations.

The President announced the presence of Senator Gardiner (Senate leader) and Mr J Storey, MLA (State Labor leader), and they were invited to address the Conference.

Senator Gardiner Addresses Conference

Senator Gardiner, who was cheered on rising, complimented the Conference as expressing Labor shown to its best advantage. He deprecated that there should be any sections in the Movement. They should get together and, instead of fighting amongst themselves, present a united front to their one political enemy. It was the earnestness of the rank and file, rather than that of the leaders, that made the Labor

Movement what it was. They were on the eve of a real fight, but how could they fight it if they were divided amongst themselves? The Movement wanted no direction from men who arranged things beforehand. If they moved with one heart and one soul they could have the biggest victory Labor had ever known. (Applause.) They would have a revolution, but it would be a bloodless one and without violence. It all depended on themselves. He made special reference to the Freeman case, and how it had stirred the people against the Government, which was responsible, but he also pointed out that other men had been held against their will, even after they had paid their sentences in full, and deported [departed?] to foreign lands. The greatest danger to liberty was the growth of a system that would allow the Government to keep men in jail without trial. If Labor organised its forces there was that force of public opinion behind it which they could lead in maintaining, not only British, but Australian justice. (Applause.) He implored the various parties to sink their sectional differences and present a united front to the one political enemy in the coming fight.

“Labor Can Win”, Says Mr Storey

Mr J Storey, MLA, (State Labor leader), said that the Conference was the best answer to their opponents that the brains had left the Movement. He hoped that at the end of the Conference the results of their labor would be of such a nature as to compel Holman to retire from the political horizon. He was opposed to factions and sections within the Movement, and thought they could come to some reasonable agreement amongst themselves. The task of removing the Nationalists from the State political arena was a difficult task, and it was by no means impossible if they got together and worked with a will in perfect harmony.

Referring to the Freeman case, Mr Storey stated that when it was a question of trying to get this unfortunate man his liberty, Holman pleaded that he could do nothing as it was a Federal matter. “But what did he do”, said Mr Storey, “when the coal miners got an increase in wages? It was also a Federal matter, but he did not hesitate to intrude to see whether the miners were entitled to the increases they received. Holman was ever ready to interfere in Federal matters when it suited him.”

“Backed up by you”, said Mr Storey, in conclusion, “and the public outside, we will be able to present such a solid front that after the next elections we will be governing the destinies of New South Wales.” (Applause.)

Real Business Started

There was an air of expectancy when Mr AC Willis (Illawarra Colliery Employees' Association) rose to move the following motion: "The Executive shall consist of a President, two Vice-Presidents, and 28 members, to be elected by a ballot of the whole of the members of leagues and affiliated unions in New South Wales, together with one member each to be elected by the State and Federal Parties respectively. The required number of officers and members receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected, and shall take office from the next following Annual Conference."

Mr Willis said the idea the motion was to eliminate sections and cliques. Three years ago they formed a section to rid the Movement of certain undesirables, but instead of the section automatically wiping itself out, it existed today in a more subtle and cunning form. He said the time had come when the Movement should say there would be no more backing and filling. They could not afford to go to the country with their opponents saying the Movement was honeycombed by factions and cliques. At the present time it appeared to be a case of diamond cut diamond. The proposed motion would cut out all intriguing, and allow the whole of the Movement to say who would be their officers. There could be no talk of "secret junta" then by their opponents.

A Split Predicted

Amidst considerable interruption Mr Willis went on to say that three years ago would-be politicians set about ridding the Conference of control by the politicians, but they were not prepared to do the same today. He said that if this matter was defeated, then the Movement was liable to split into factions. (Cries of "Never")

Mr Willis: "Oh, well, you can say 'never' as long as you like, but you've already seen what exists today. I want to be quite frank with you. I am a member of a section which is out to fight another section because that section is, in our opinion, out to do the Movement harm. I want a basis where we can all work together for the greater solidarity of the Movement. My section, right now, is quite prepared to attend out and say to Conference, 'Elect the best men and we will stand behind you'. But let me tell you that if another section goes on intriguing, publishing malicious statements (uproar), then we are out to fight it. There are people in this Movement today who are sowing dissension which would cripple it."

Mr Willis then went on to make a spirited attack against the issue of a leaflet, entitled "The Pommie Takes Command - A Warning to Australian Workers". It was one of the vilest things he had ever read. "I challenge anybody here", said Mr Willis, amidst considerable

interruption, "to prove anything against my character, and if they can I shall walk out of this Movement at once".

Mr Catts Opposes the Motion

The Conference was in a highly excited state as Mr Catts, MHR, rose to reply. There was considerable interruption from the back of the hall, where a number of visitors were congregated. Matters became so bad that several times the President threatened to adjourn the Conference. Mr Catts said that the proposal would mean that the present Executive would control the Movement for the next twelve months. He was opposed to that.

Mr Willis: "It won't. You can elect your officers with a ballot within three months."

Mr Catts: "Nothing of the kind. A referendum would take at least 12 months. The scheme is a proposal to allow this Executive to control the Movement for the next twelve months. Every man who is decrying the politician is breaking his neck to get his seat or some other seat. Name me some of the prominent men and I'll give you their history and what they have done to get into politics. I attended a meeting of a section which decided to adjourn until after the Conference. I voted for that decision because I wanted to see an open Conference." At this there was a prolonged interruption, which Mr Catts denounced as being "prearranged".

Mr Catts: "Yes, you can go on, but you all know the tactics that are taking place. When one section found the other organizing, it immediately set about to organize itself."

The OBU and the IWW

The interruption grew more noisy and was intermixed with hoots and groans as Mr Catts went on to refer to "the OBU" adopting the IWW preamble. By adopting that preamble they fastened onto this Movement the criminal history of the IWW. (Uproar, hoots and groans and a couple of free fights commenced in the audience at the back of the hall.)

The President repeatedly clanged his gong and stated that, if order was not restored the Conference would be adjourned.

Mr Peate: "What right has Catts to brand Labor men as criminals?"

Mr Rosa, on a point of order, asked if Mr Catts was in order in dealing with the OBU and the IWW? The President allowed Mr Catts to proceed.

Mr Catts: "Not much has been done so far, but we will be foolish if we fasten the history of the IWW on to the Labor Movement, and have to apologise for it afterwards. Since last January there have been statements

that a definite move would be made to capture the Labor Movement. There have been no denials".

Mr Rosa: "Oh, yes, Mr Garden denied it."

Mr Garden: "That's all right. I'll answer him later on."

"You Can't Capture the Movement!"

Mr Catts: "We are determined to meet these attacks on the Labor Movement by the OBU. And let me tell you that after 12 months' organising you have failed to capture the Movement. You cannot capture it now - and you know it."

Mr G Burns made an interjection, to which Mr Catts replied: "Oh, you know all about it. And you know, too, that if the OBU preamble is tacked on to the Movement, you cannot win the Illawarra seat". Mr Catts concluded by stating that the motion was impracticable; and he hoped Conference would turn it down.

Mr F Lagerlow (Municipal Employees) thought Conference should elect its own officers as in the past. Surely Conference had enough intelligence to do that. He opposed the motion.

Mr Rosa: "If Mr Catts' statements are allowed to go unchallenged it would appear that there is some conspiracy to capture the Movement and turn it into a branch of the OBU".

A Voice: "Garden said he would do it".

Mr Rosa Against Cliques

Mr Rosa: "I and others are fighting against the cliquism of unscrupulous men - (laughter) - and to rid the Movement of Tammanyism". There was a great uproar as he proceeded to deal with criminal libels on prominent men, which bore false signatures, contained false statements and false addresses, and had been circulated prior to Conference meeting. If the curs put their names to them they would have to stand in a criminal dock, and they knew it.

The President called Mr Rosa to order saying he would not allow any reflections to be made. If he had a definite charge to lay he would be allowed that privilege. There was a few moments' interchange of heated words between the President and Mr Rosa. Proceeding, Mr Rosa said there was plenty of evidence that what was done in Tammany Hall in New York was now being done in the Movement. He made some remark about a new organisation coming into operation for the purpose of ridding the Movement of Tammanyism. He believed in the present motion, he said, and would like to see it carried. He was not pleased, personally, with the present Executive, but if necessary it could stay in power. Or, if they liked, let them elect a temporary Executive at the

present Conference until the new Executive was elected by a ballot of the rank and file.

Mr Storey Predicts Election in December

Mr Storey, MLA, asked the Conference to turn the proposition down. The motion did not do credit to the organisation which sent it along. The Conference consisted of persons elected by the very people to whom the matter would have to be referred. It seemed to him to be unnecessary. Why couldn't delegates select the Executive officers of the Movement? Such a cumbersome proposition was not in the best interests of the Movement. He deplored that there had been a lot of argument wide of the mark. He was heart and soul in the Labor Movement, and anybody who attempted to weaken it would have him to fight, even if he stood alone. He predicted an election in December next, and wanted to have an Executive in office then. If they carried the motion there might be chaos at a time when they should be prepared for the election. If they turned the proposition down now he would be prepared to support it after the elections.

"What Are You Afraid Of?"

Mr Blakeley, MHR, was subjected to much interruption as he proceeded to refer to a motion on the agenda paper to tack the OBU preamble on to the Labor Movement. He was opposed to the scheme, as being too costly and cumbersome.

A Voice: "Doesn't the AWU take a full vote for Executive officers every year?"

Mr Blakeley said Conference should take the responsibility of electing its officials. "What are you afraid of?" he asked.

Voices: "What are you afraid of?"

Mr Blakeley: "I'm not afraid to take responsibility for my actions. I believe the election of the Executive should be in the hands of this Conference. It was about time they threw all their cards on the table. It was evident that the section did not trust one another."

Conference in Uproar

Mr Garden referred to statements made by Mr Catts. He stated that Mr Catts played a very prominent part at the first conference of the OBU as a representative of the AWU. "Why", said Mr Garden, "Mr Catts produced a preamble of his own. We call it the James Catts preamble" (Laughter.)

Mr Catts, "And it was made in Australia, and not in America". (Cheers.)

Mr Garden went on to refer to what took place at the first Congress of the OBU, and the refusal of the press to publish denials by the OBU Executive. The hall was in complete uproar, and it was impossible to hear what was being said.

When the uproar was at its highest a point of order was raised and Conference adjourned till Monday morning.

Day 2, Monday, 9 June 1919

Apparently Conference wasn't in the mood for serious business on Monday morning, for it was well on to dinner-time adjournment before anything of a practical nature was done. A lengthy discussion centred around the question of admitting the public, and eventually it was decided to grant them admission. Both the President and Vice-President took the opportunity of warning the public that any interruption from them would lead to their being denied admittance.

It was suggested that a larger hall should be secured, in view of the crowded state of the Conference. Several halls were suggested, it being eventually decided to leave the matter of securing better accommodation in the hands of the General Secretary. The reading of correspondence to the Conference then occupied some time. Arising out of the correspondence a motion was carried allowing Mr Huie to give a demonstration of the proportional voting system to Conference – the date to be arranged by the Agenda Committee. It was moved that the Conference recommend to the Eight-Hour Committee that May Day be the annual Labor holiday. On Mr Stanbridge (Printing Trades) pointing out that there was a distinct motion on the agenda paper dealing with the matter, it was withdrawn. A proposal to take a motion picture of the Conference, put forward by a cinematograph company, was accepted – next Saturday afternoon in Hyde Park at 2 pm being fixed as the date and place.

Commission on Foundered Colliers

Arising out of a letter from Vance Marshall, of the Social Democratic League, it was decided, after a lengthy debate to take up a collection in the hall to help defray the costs of an impending Court Case.

Mr TJ Smith, MLA, moved: "That this Conference views with grave dissatisfaction the constitution of the proposed Royal Commission to inquire into the foundering of the colliers *Undola*, *Myola* and *Tuggerah*, with the loss of 21 lives, and demands in the public interest a commission of three thoroughly competent representatives of the seamen, ship-owners and the Government to inquire fully into the matter". The motion was carried unanimously.

Mr AE O'Brien (Musicians' Union) moved a motion: "That Conference instructs the President to request Mr Theodore, Acting Premier of Queensland, to give further and fairer consideration to the needs of musicians and theatrical employees who are out of employment in Brisbane, owing to their places of employment being closed by the Government. The motion was carried with debate.

The afternoon session opened with a debate regarding the admittance of delegates whose league or union affiliation fees had not been paid. An overwhelming vote granted admission to the delegates of the Broken Hill District Assembly, while another motion was carried that other like cases be dealt with on their merits.

Mr Garden Justifies OBU

It was about three o'clock when the Conference livened up - resumption of Saturday night's adjourned business being entered upon. Mr Garden was first to address the Conference, and reverting to the OBU question at the outset said that even if he had accepted the IWW preamble nothing derogatory could be found to it. "All this talk about it being an American importation", said Mr Garden, "is nothing to us. We want the best, and we believe we have got it. We challenge our opponents to come before the public and debate the matter with us. But they are not game."

He referred to the anonymous circulars about "Pommie" delegates that had been distributed among delegates, and said that no man was responsible for his birth. Referring to the resolution under discussion he said that he saw no objection to the rank and file deciding who their officials should be. He could not understand those who opposed such a democratic action.

Messrs Lazzarini and C Johnston, MsLA, spoke in opposition to the motion - the latter speaker stating that while no fault could be found in men who came to this country and took a prominent part in the Labor Movement there was every reason why they should strongly object to their coming here and doing something which he considered was derogatory to the Movement. While Mr Garden approved of the motion, never was he found advocating that the officials of the Labor Council should be elected in the same way.

Mr LJ O'Hara, MLA, favored the motion, claiming that it would go far towards breaking down the sections and cliques that had sprung up within the Movement. No opposition could be brought against it as a democratic measure, because it would make the Executive responsible to the rank and file and not to cliques.

“What Is Wrong With the Motion?”

Mr C Pattinson (Northern Miners), in the course of a long speech, moved a slight alteration of the motion, so as to get over the difficulty of electing the current year's Executive. He was at a loss to understand why such a democratic measure should be opposed, because while it was true that they could intrigue at Conferences, there could be no intriguing with the rank and file. “Is there anything wrong with a scheme that gives the rank and file the right to say who their bosses will be? Here you have a chance to aim a death-blow at cliques”, he said. “It was rot to say that a referendum could not be taken. Did not the two largest unions in the State – the AWU and the Miners, elect their officials by a vote of the rank and file, and they never saw anything wrong in it? It would solidify the Movement if this right was given to the rank and file.”

Senator Grant said that while he sympathised with the motion in theory, he did not think it would work out as they thought it would. Why not go further and submit the agenda paper to the rank and file every year? The unions and leagues selected their delegates to attend Conference, yet here was a proposal to send back to them something that they selected delegates to deal with on their behalf.

Mrs Greville moved as an amendment No.40 on the agenda paper which set out that certain of the officials should be elected by Conference and others by a plebiscite of the various Federal Electorate Councils. She claimed that this was a happy medium by which all friction in the Movement could be healed.

Scheme Too Costly

Mr Cecil Last said he deprecated the introduction of irrelevant matter into the debate. He was against the motion, claiming that it was too costly and cumbersome. He claimed that Conference could cast an intelligent vote for the election of the Executive. Referring to the anonymous literature, all he had to say was that a delegate, whom he named, could not be trusted in the Movement.

Mr Shirley: “You should be made to prove your remarks”.

Mr Last said he was prepared to do so. After some wordy discussion between the President and the speaker, the matter was dropped. Speaking on the motion Mr Last said it would be too costly to take a vote of the rank and file – the money could be put to better use fighting the coming elections. There were some people who didn't care for political action, but he wanted to see Labor win the elections and give the people sympathetic legislation and administration. There was a section which was prepared to organise a permanent split in the Movement if defeated on the floor of Conference.

After further discussion the various amendments and motion were defeated – the latter on a division of 113 to 109. There was wild cheering when the result was announced.

A Noisy Session

Last Monday night's session was easily the noisiest since the Conference opened – it being the real test of strength between what have been referred to as the "Moderate" and "Extremist" sections of the Conference over a motion to alter the objective of the Party.

The debate livened up when a motion standing in the name of the Lithgow Branch of the ALP, having for its purpose the elimination of that portion of the objective referring to monopolies and the placing therein the Queensland objective. viz.: "The collective ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange" after the words, "the securing of the full results of their industry to all producers". As there were quite a number of resolutions before Conference dealing with the objective, it was suggested that a committee should be appointed to draft an objective.

Motion to Change Party Objective

Great excitement prevailed when Mr Willis, on behalf of the Wollongong ALP, moved the following motion:

"New Plank –

- (a) That the object of the party be the establishment of a State of social democracy, in which the entire means of wealth production shall be owned and controlled by the community of workers industrially organised.
- (b) That this be the sole issue of future elections in order that a clear and definite mandate may be given by the electors, thus enabling the Party's representatives, if elected, to give it legislative effect.

"That as many of the planks of the existing platform imply support of a continuance of the capitalistic system of production for profit, Conference elect a revisory committee who shall be empowered to eliminate everything incompatible with the foregoing objective, and to draft the essential component of a scheme of socialistic administration.

"That the scheme as drafted, together with an explanatory preamble, be submitted not later than one month from the expiration of Conference to the affiliated leagues and unions for their endorsement or otherwise by ballot.

“That, in the event of the foregoing series of resolutions being carried by Conference, a campaign of propaganda be commenced with the object of acquainting the general public with the changed economic circumstances engendered by the war, and which make a peaceful revolution of the social system urgent and imperative if the working classes are to escape degradation of their standard of living and a condition of servitude culminating probably in a war even more devastating than the one from which we have just emerged.”

Mr Willis, in explaining the motion, said that roughly it was that the Labor Movement should adopt as its definite objective the Socialistic objective. He had met very few Labor Parliamentarians who did not acknowledge their belief in Socialism, while the rank and file had expressed the same sentiment, and were, in fact, only looking for Conference to give them a clear lead in the matter. If the motion was adopted by Conference it would have to be submitted to the leagues and unions, who would have the final say in the matter. Nobody could object to that. He thought it was high time that the objective was adopted to keep pace with the ideals of those whom they desired to follow them.

Senator Gardiner in Opposition

Senator Gardiner, who was subjected to a great deal of interruption, said that although the league for which he was a delegate to Conference wanted an alteration to the objective, he had to admit that he was opposed to the views of his league on the matter. For instance, his league wanted the elimination of the word “Australian” and the substitution of the word “international”. He was opposed to that as he considered that Australia was good enough for all present at the Conference. It didn’t matter where they came from, Australia had a national sentiment to foster. Was anybody opposed to that? He claimed that the present objective had stood the test of time, and was wide enough and broad enough for their needs. At any rate, it was good enough to lead the Party to victory again.

Mr A Rae (AWU) favored the motion. It had been said that with the present objective the Labor Movement would go as far as they desired. Take, for instance, the question of collective ownership of monopolies – what progress had they made in that direction since Federation?

Voices: “But will the new objective do any better?”

Mr Rae Favors Socialistic Objective

Mr Rae: “We are going for democratic industrial control, so that we will own and control works, and see that they are run in a democratic way. If a man is a militant Laborite he wants to be able to tell at a glance the

Labor platform from the Liberal platform, and that without a microscope. At the present time he had to be pretty well educated to see where the main difference is." Mr Rae went on to say that he favored the straight-out socialistic objective 30 years ago, when the Movement was first formed. The only salvation for the workers was the courageous advocacy of the socialistic doctrine. It was no use depending on the politicians - some of them had no more sense than a wet hen.

Mr Storey's Opposition

Mr John Storey, MLA, opposed the motion, and was subjected to continued interruption from a section of the Conference and the public at the back of the hall. At times it was impossible to hear what was being said. He said that it was all very well for Mr Rae to complain that the Labor Party had not given effect to the socialistic doctrine; but it had to be remembered that Mr Rae was one of the first Labor members elected to the State Parliament and one of the first to be booted out again. (Uproar, and cries of "He won't be the last.") Mr Rae had denounced militarism in order to gain the applause of the anti-militarists, but why not be straight on the matter? When he contested the last Senate elections he allowed it to go forth that he had sons at the war. "I am sick and tired of the hypocrisy of men", said Mr Storey, "who pose as the only honest champions of the people, yet secretly trim for any wind that might prove advantageous to them. It was all very well for people to come along and tell them what was happening in other parts of the world as a reason for stimulating them into further action. As a matter of fact, no country was as far advanced as Australia was at the present time."

"You Were Premier Once"

Mr Storey went on to say that it had been charged that they had not done all they might have done as representatives in the Parliament of the workers - (cries of "That's true") - but those loudest in their accusations seemed to forget that he had never had an opportunity as an administrator. (Uproar.)

A Voice: "You were Premier once". (Laughter.)

Mr Storey: "Yes, for about five minutes".

The Conference by this time was in a state of uproar, interjections being fired at Mr Storey from all parts of the hall. All appeals by the President seemed to be in vain, though he several times threatened to close the Conference unless order was restored.

Mr Storey said they should adhere to the present objective. It would be utterly futile for the next quarter of a century to do anything of value to relieve the position as it presented itself today in regard to the capitalist class - (cries of "God help us" and groans and hoots). Mr Rae

and others talked about the overthrow of the capitalist system, but up to date they had not shown him how it was to be done.

Empty Platitudes of No Use

In answer to an interjection Mr Storey said: "My political life is an open book. I am only conservative in my desire to preserve the Labor Movement, which has stood the test for 25 years. We can work out our own destiny in this country if we realise the obligation that is upon us by a gradual process of evolution. Mere empty platitudes can be talked by anyone. Let them show me how the social system can be improved right away and I will join in the fight heartily." (Cheers.)

Mr Toombs was on his feet in an instant shouting, "I'll take you up, Mr Storey". (Uproar and cries of "Sit down.")

Mr Storey, answering Mr Toombs, stated that he (Mr Toombs) had sat in Parliament for three years, and did not make any effort to push forward the view he pretended to have so much at heart at the present time. "Let me tell this gathering", continued Mr. Storey, "that whenever Holman wanted a speaker to make a speech of a particular brand he selected Toombs to do the job. When the conscription issue was first raised Mr Toombs was loud-mouthed in professing his loyalty and in suggesting that eligible Parliamentarians should put their names in a hat to see who should enlist. "He said, 'By God, I'll be the first to enlist'. Friends, he has been enlisting ever since". (Uproar and applause.)

Concluding his speech Mr Storey appealed to Conference to reject the motion, and stick to the old objective. They should not be misled by platitudes, but should exercise that commonsense and judgment that would help them to regain political power, when they could sympathetically, honestly and democratically administer affairs in the interests of the workers. (Applause.)

Uproar Increases

Mr Davies, MLA, in a short speech supported the motion.

Mr Blakeley, MHR, met with an exceedingly stormy reception as he attacked those who did not believe in political action. "Every man and woman who attempts to fasten some cranky scheme upon the Movement is against political action", said Mr Blakeley. Hoots, groans, hisses and counter applause prevented his being heard for some time. Eventually he was able to continue his speech. He said that the politicians were charged with treachery - a term that had been bandied from side to side during the Conference. On what side were the honest people? The extremists declared for a policy of revolution as against political action, yet they were present at a Labor Conference, The very fact that they were present showed that they were treacherous to their own principles. (Uproar.)

You don't want to put people into Parliament," added Mr Blakeley, "you want to put them out, and you are on the right track by moving resolutions such as these". (Uproar.)

A New Movement Is Coming In

In replying, the mover of the motion, (Mr Willis) stated that the carrying of the motion would pave the way for collective ownership with the people controlling the industries in which they worked. "You have either to justify yourselves", said Mr Willis, "or else the new movement is coming in to take your place, whether you like it or not. You cannot crush the aspirations of the working classes." Mr Willis was cheered loudly as he resumed his seat.

Amidst great excitement the vote was taken, and the motion moved by Mr Willis was defeated by 127 to 112. With the defeat of this resolution (the Lithgow motion now having been withdrawn), the whole of the suggested alterations to the objective went overboard, including the one from the Cessnock Electoral Council that the OBU preamble be the objective of the Party. When the vote was announced there was a great outburst of cheering from the moderates, and the singing of "The Red Flag" by the extremists. Finally, disorder brought the session to a close.

Day 3, Tuesday, 10 June 1919

NSW Labor Conference. A new Fighting Platform. Compulsory clauses of Defence Act. Motion for repeal carried by overwhelming majority.

When Conference assembled on Tuesday evening (June 10) it was anticipated that some progress would be made. It soon became apparent, however, that serious business was out of the question. Formal matters took up the time of the Conference until about half-past nine, when pandemonium broke loose and for a time it looked as if there would be serious trouble. However, oil was poured on the troubled waters and the anger of delegates subsided.

Conference extended a welcome to Mr JP Teefey (General President Clerks' Association of Australia) and Mr Doyle (Secretary, Ipswich Branch of the same organisation) who were returning to Queensland from a conference in Melbourne. Mr Teefey addressed Conference for a few minutes, and his reference to our "democratic State of Queensland" evoked cheers from the delegates. Welcomes were also extended to Mr T Walsh (General Secretary, Seamen's Union) and Mrs Walsh, Mr C Von Hagen, and Mr Monty Miller.

Monty Miller was wildly cheered as he delivered a moving speech in which he spoke of the Labor Movement in Australia receiving its birth in the blood and carnage of the Eureka Stockade over half a century ago. He was sorry to say, however, that although the eight-hour day was granted sixty years ago, not one hour had been chopped off it since. He said that whatever their differences might be, he felt sure that they were united in attaining the one common ideal, the complete and full emancipation of the working classes from the capitalistic system.

Delegates Threaten To Leave

A letter was read from Mr C Thompson (General Secretary of the Amalgamated Railway and Tramway Service Association) objecting to the nomination of a delegate as an Executive officer of the Movement on the grounds of being a Labor "rat". Immediately the letter was read there was uproar, which increased as Mr Thompson addressed the Conference on the subject.

Mr Willis rose and in an angry voice protested against the time of the Conference being wasted on a squabble between two unions. It was a shame to so waste the time of Conference and should be stopped.

Uproar was manifested in various parts of the Conference hall, particularly in the back, where the public were congregated. Delegates were on their feet threatening each other and an exchange of blows seemed inevitable.

Mr Rae appealed to Conference to calm itself. He considered they were not in a fit state to deal with the question and suggested that a committee should be appointed to inquire into the allegation and report back to Conference.

Mr Rosa: "The time is being shockingly wasted, Mr President".

Mr Thompson was still on his feet, and was heard to remark that the delegate he had accused was a Labor "rat".

Mr Willis: "That is not true. (Uproar.) I am not going to stand here and allow you to condemn this man by force of numbers". Raising his voice he continued: "It has now come to the point when this kind of business has to stop. If it doesn't ...". The rest of his remarks were drowned in the uproar. A large section of the delegates were on their feet, gathering up coats, hats, and papers. There were cries of "One out, all out", and a move was made to leave the hall. But better counsel prevailed, and after a little time calm was restored. The President made reference to the manner in which delegates in the back of the hall had kept order, and a few sarcastic rejoinders were hurled back in reply. Eventually the matter was smoothed over by deciding to refer the matter to a committee on which both sections would have representation.

The rest of the evening was devoted to a demonstration of the working of the proportional representation system by Mr AG Huie.

Day 4, Wednesday, 11 June 1919

New Fighting Platform

On Wednesday evening, June 11, as soon as formal business was out of the way, the report of the Platform Condensation Committee, endorsed by the Executive, was brought up by Mr J Farrell, who moved its adoption. The report recommended the following:

Constitutional Reform

1. (a) Abolition of the Legislative Council and the substitution therefor (stet) of the Initiative, Referendum, and Recall.
(b) Abolition of the office of State Governor.
(c) Full citizen rights for women.
2. The right to work and equitable industrial laws, including an adequate living wage for all.
3. Adequate provision for returned soldiers and dependents.
4. Reduction of cost of commodities and of rent.
5. Effective land settlement and reforestation.
6. Transference of all banking to Commonwealth ownership.
7. Establishment of the iron and steel industry by State or Commonwealth Governments.
8. Mining Law Reform.
9. Complete secular educational facilities on a democratic basis free to all.
10. Nationalisation of health.
11. Law Reform.
12. System of light railways for isolated districts.

Senator Grant said he supported the proposal that the State platform should be confined to a dozen planks. The present platform was far too unwieldy. Anyhow elections nowadays were very often fought on one or two planks, sometimes on no planks at all.

Mr JH Catts suggested that the principle be affirmed and the planks then debated one by one. This suggestion was carried. The proposals contained in Plank No.1 were agreed to after a brief discussion, no opposition being offered.

The Right to Work

Mr Rosa moved the adoption of Plank No.2. He wanted to see society reorganised on a more equitable basis. He would like to see the means of

production and distribution controlled by the workers through organisations or guilds. He realised, however, that that could not be accomplished at once. There should have been laws long ago giving men the right to work at standard wages. Some time ago such a measure was introduced into the House of Commons by Ramsay Macdonald. If a measure of that kind could be introduced into the English Parliament and even secure votes from the opponents of Labor it was time that we in Australia did something along the same lines until society was organised on a cooperative basis. It should be a fundamental law that no man should be denied work. Unemployment was the workers' one great fear.

Mr W Mahoney: "I'm in favor of it."

Mr Rosa: "Well if you are, the lamentable thing is that you haven't made a move to put it into operation". (Laughter.)

Mr Stuart-Robertson said he didn't think anybody could reasonably oppose the measure. Still, he wanted to know what affect the adoption of the planks would have upon the existing Platform of the Party. Would it go by the board? There were many vital things in the existing platform which were not in the new platform.

Senator Grant replied that the main reason why the new planks were drawn up was to have a shorter platform. He hoped that the old platform would go and that the new one would take its place.

What is a "Living" Wage?

Mr Barry took exception to the word "living". It was wrong of Labor to speak of a "living" wage. The Nationalist Government was prepared to give them a "living" wage. As the plank read it seemed that they would be content with a wage sufficient to live upon.

Mr A Rae moved as an amendment the striking out of the words "including an adequate living wage for all" and the substitution of the words "by the total abolition of the wage system". He wanted the question tested even though Socialism, according to Mr Storey, might, be 25 years away.

Mr Lazzarini said that while the ultimate emancipation of the workers was by the abolition of the wage system, he favored getting as much as they could under the present system while waiting for the other to come along. They had to adopt a plank that would benefit the present generation.

Mr J Storey said he did not think that Mr Rae's amendment would relieve the immediate future. In the meantime what were they going to do for the men and women who would be walking the streets within the next year or two? He, too, agreed with the abolition of the wage system if it could be carried out immediately. But because he knew it was impossible, what was the use wasting time talking about it? There must be some modified proposal to be carried into practical effect ready for

use. Only the other evening the Conference had turned down the motion aiming at an alteration of the objective which included the abolition of the wage system. What was the use, then, in wasting further time about it? He was opposed to the amendment.

A Fair Compromise

Mr Willis at this stage suggested that the difficulty might be met by Mr Rae altering his amendment to read "ensuring an adequate standard of living for all". Mr Rae did not accept the suggestion, but Mr Rosa said he would accept it as part of the original motion.

Senator Gardiner objected to Mr Rae putting forward an extreme principle on the ground that "there was a little limelight in it". He thought Mr Willis's suggestion a fair compromise.

Mr Hackett supported Mr Rae's amendment. It was far better for the Labor Movement to die an honorable death than be carried on in disgrace and correction. They should abolish the system under which workers had to grovel for jobs. It was a scandalous thing that in a country capable of sustaining 100,000,000 people, but which held only 5,000,000, people were hungry and starving that very night. "While we are talking here little children are on the streets selling newspapers and tomorrow morning they will be up before daybreak. The fathers and mothers who bring children into this world have no right to say that because they slaved when they were young their offspring should be made to do the same. They have to be protected, and you can only do that by seeing that they get the full product of their labor."

Mr Rae's amendment was defeated by a large majority, and the plank as altered by Mr Willis's amendment was adopted in this form: "The right to work, and equitable industrial laws ensuring an adequate standard of living for all".

Disabled Soldiers and Workers

After a lively few minutes' debate on the question of allowing a couple of alternate delegates to take their seats, discussion was resumed on Plank No.3. This was moved by Mr W Martin (Glebe), who said that everybody must be shocked at the treatment handed out to the returned soldiers. It was a degradation that today the mothers and widows of soldiers were receiving a mere pittance, while military upstarts treated them as though they were the worst paupers in the country. He protested against imported soldiery coming to this country whose one ambition was to secure food for cannons.

Mr A Rae moved as an amendment the omission of the word "returned" and to substitute "adequate provision for disabled soldiers, industrial and military and their dependents". He considered there

should be provision for those wounded in the industrial armies as well as those in the military armies. The wrecks in the industrial army worked for a frugal wage without getting any limelight, still they were entitled to consideration just the same.

Corporal Murphy opposed the motion, while Mr Nulty stated that when the soldiers went away to fight, definite promises were made to them, and they should make a clear-cut statement that they were prepared to carry out those promises.

Industrial Wrecks Must Be Considered

Mr Brookfield said he favored the amendment. The industrial wrecks deserved as much consideration as the wounded from the battlefield. The industrial battle raged all the time, but there was no limelight attached to it. He considered the original clause was only window-dressing for the purposes of pandering to the sentiments of the people. They had to be careful not to put all their goods in the shop window, and have none left inside the shop. He dwelt on the number of persons wrecked in the mining districts, especially at Broken Hill, and said that the Labor Movement could not afford to overlook this aspect of the question.

Mr John Storey, MLA, said he supported the amendment. (Applause.) The provisions made for returned soldiers and their dependents were always recognised as inadequate, especially when contrasted with the elaborate promises that were made when the men went away. While adequate provision should be made for them, they had to remember that attention should be paid to those disabled on the industrial field. It was true that they had a Workmen's Compensation Act, but it was only partially effective.

Mr Martin (mover of the motion) said he would accept the amendment as part of the motion.

Mr Willis on War Loans

Mr Willis moved as an addition: "And that until such provision is made no interest shall be paid on the War Loan to any person owning over £100 in the loan". He was against a penny interest being paid to any person who held more than £100 in the War Loan. It was a monstrous thing for men to be called upon to make sacrifices of their lives when others only loaned their money at 5 per cent. They should say to the other side: "Until you fulfil your obligations to those who fought to protect your property you shall not be allowed to collect a single penny interest on your blood money". The Labor Party had to see to it that it did not accept the liability incurred as a result of the war. They had no right to accept those liabilities.

The President ruled Mr Willis's amendment out of order on the ground that it was Commonwealth business. Mr Willis challenged his ruling, but lost when a division was taken. The motion was then carried on the voices.

Day 5, Thursday, 12 June 1919

Leasehold Tenure Adhered To

Consideration of the Party platform was continued on Thursday evening, June 12. Mr A Buckley moved: "Plank No.4: Reduction of the cost of commodities and of rent", which after a short discussion was carried on the voices.

Plank No.1 moved by Mr Loughlin, MLA, - "Effective land settlement and reforestation" - came in for some discussion. Alderman Farrell (Darlinghurst) said that the people did not appreciate the asset they had in timber. At the present time oregon was being imported, while ironbark, the best timber that could be obtained, was being grown locally. He suggested that an embargo should be placed on timber.

Mr Arthur Rae moved as an amendment that the principle of leasehold tenure be incorporated in the plank. Mr Storey, MLA, asked that Conference should carry the plank as submitted by the platform committee. If that were done and Labor was elected to power next year, Conference could depend on the plank being rigidly adhered to.

For some time discussion centred around the possibility of amending the platform under discussion and its relation to other platforms. It was explained by the Chairman and then by Miss Matthews that the platform before the Conference, if adopted, would become the definite fighting platform of the Labor Party, and all other platforms would go overboard. An attempt was made to introduce a short concise platform; one that could be easily intelligible. It could now be amended by Conference. Many speakers were of the opinion that there were many items in the old platform which they could not drop overboard and which were not included in the new platform.

The question of leasehold v. freehold was discussed but eventually the motion was carried on the voices in the following form: "Effective land settlement and reforestation on the leasehold tenure".

The discussion on the Party platform was adjourned till the following evening.

Peter Simonoff's Case

Mr Hutton (Northern Miners) moved "That this Conference expresses its indignation at the action of the Federal Government in imprisoning Peter Simonoff (the Russian Consul in Australia), and requests that if he is not immediately released he be treated as a political prisoner". It was pointed out that Simonoff, notwithstanding his official standing, was being treated as an ordinary prisoner, and had been removed to Maitland Jail. Fears were expressed that an attempt would be made to deport Simonoff from Australia unless some effective protest was made. The motion was carried on the voices.

Another Trial for IWW Men Demanded

Another motion, moved by Mr J Cullinan, demanded that a further inquiry be made into the case of the 12 imprisoned IWW men. This motion was also carried on the voices.

Day 6, Friday, 13 June 1919

Trial Demanded For Interned Russians

After the completion of formal business last Friday evening, June 13, Captain Toombs moved the following motion, which was carried without discussion – "That this Conference views with alarm the deaths of seamen so near to port and safety, and is of the opinion that Section 231 of the Australian Navigation Act of 1912 should be amended to provide for compulsory wireless installation in all Australian ships, and that the Act so amended be given effect to at once by proclamation as provided, so that the Australian seamen shall receive the protection and benefits conferred by the Act, and given to them by the Parliament of their country".

Another motion was moved asking the Federal Government to give the Russians interned in Darlinghurst Detention Barracks for deportation, a trial in open court. Mr Rosa, supporting this motion, held that it was not only wrong to deport men without a trial, but very wrong to deport them at all. Australia should take a leaf out of England's book in her best days, and make this free country an asylum for oppressed people. Regarding the Russian people there was not even the guarantee that they were being sent to a place of safety. They might be landed in some part of Russia where reactionaries were in control, and be executed or otherwise murdered as soon as they landed.

Sentences on Soldiers

Mr W Gibbs (Returned Soldiers) moved – “That in view of the cessation of hostilities, and the near approach of peace, the Commonwealth Government should immediately review all sentences passed by court martial on Australian soldiers serving in the AIF, and that all soldiers sentenced for disciplinary offences should be immediately released; further, that the Interstate Conference should be requested to appoint a deputation to wait upon the Federal Government to have the foregoing carried into effect”.

Mr Rosa drew attention to the fact that Australian soldiers were being recruited in England to fight in Russia. He characterized that as a scandalous piece of business and thought that a specific motion of protest should be carried by Conference. The President (Mr Lambert) pointed out that at the opening of the Conference a general motion was carried regarding Russia, which he thought covered the whole position.

Discussion of the Party’s Fighting Platform was then continued.

Federal Control of Banking

Mr JH Catts moved Plank No.6 – “Transference of all banking to Commonwealth ownership”. Mr Catts pointed out that the plank had been wrongly worded, it being impossible to deal with private banking within the State, as that was already governed by the Commonwealth Constitution, while the State Government banking business could only be transferred to the Commonwealth by consent. Under the circumstances he moved the plank in the following amended form – “Transfer of all State Savings Bank business to the Commonwealth upon an equitable arrangement guaranteeing reasonable credits to the States for public purposes”. The object of the plank, it was explained, was to abolish the private banking system.

Mr Catts stated that if the State Parliament was composed entirely of Labor men, and it desired to transfer private banking to the Commonwealth, it would not be able to do so, since it had not the power. The only banks within the power of the State Government were the Savings Banks. He deprecated the wasteful system of two sets of Savings Banks in almost every town and village, competing against each other for business – the cost of which had to be borne by the taxpayers. One bank was enough for all, and all useless overlapping should be done away with. While he would like to see all private banks abolished he recognized that it could not be done. Under the circumstances they should aim at getting as much as possible through the State.

Rural Credits

Mr Nulty (Murrumbidgee) suggested that Conference should appoint a committee of three to deal with the matter and report back to Conference. Delegates, he said, did not know too much about banking, which was a matter for experts. He did not think the original motion would cover the matter fully. People on leasehold land should be assured that they would get financial aid. Under the leasehold system, although a man might put a thousand pounds worth of improvement on his land he was unable to get an advance through the banks, whereas if the land was freehold he would be able to get anything up to, perhaps, 75 per cent of the value advanced for further improvements. That was very hard on the people.

Mr John Storey, MLA, said it was impossible to outline what would be done when affirming a principle. While they could not interfere with the private banks, they could more effectively use the State banks by establishing rural credits throughout the State to help the workers. They wanted to be able to help settlers whether their land was freehold or leasehold. He had, on behalf of the Party, already outlined what they intended to do under this heading.

Mr C Johnson, MLA, thought they should have something definite in the platform. He moved to include the words "for rural credits" after the word "State", in order to assist agriculturists and others engaged in rural pursuits whose lands were held on the leasehold principle. The suggestion was accepted by Mr Catts, as also was a suggestion to include the words "housing loans". The motion then read as follows - "Transference of all Savings Bank business to the Commonwealth upon an equitable arrangement, and guaranteeing a reasonable credit to the State for rural credits, housing loans, and for all other purposes". The motion was carried on the voices.

Iron and Steel Industry

Alderman R Bramston moved Plank No.7 - "Establishment of the iron and steel industry by State or Commonwealth". He instanced the fact that although the Commonwealth paid out its bonus for Australian production, it did not keep the price of Australian iron and steel down to a fair figure - on the other hand, the price was raised to that of the imported article. He considered there was a big opening for a State-owned steel and iron industry. As a matter of expediency the people should adopt nationalisation and later on talk about cooperation.

Mr C Pattinson (Northern Miners) moved that the clause be deleted and the following substituted: "Reduction of hours of labor to forty per week for outside workers, and thirty hours per week for mine workers".

He claimed that the question of hours was of far more importance to workers than the establishment of steel and iron works.

Mr Storey, MLA: "If we hadn't any works, we wouldn't be able to govern hours for the workers at all".

The President ruled Mr Pattinson's motion out of order, but gave him an assurance that the question of hours for mine workers would be discussed under Plank 5, while the forty-hour week could be discussed under a recommital of Plank 2.

Senator Gardiner's "Fighting" Proposal

Senator Gardiner also moved for the deletion of the motion and the substitution of the following: "The total prohibition of the manufacture, importation, and sale of all alcoholic or intoxicating liquors". (Laughter and cries of "Oh") He said he had no wish to underestimate the importance of the plank which he wished to see deleted, but he considered they wanted something that would make the Labor Party the target of vested interests from one end of the Commonwealth to the other. A fighting party should have a fighting platform, and he considered that if they adopted his motion they would have plenty of fight.

The President ruled Senator Gardiner's proposal out of order. Another delegate then moved an amendment having for its purpose the giving to the workers control of the iron and steel industry.

"Nationalisation a Farce"

Mr Willis supported the amendment, and said that nationalisation was a farce. To simply nationalise an industry was playing the fool with the people, and experience had shown that it did not advance the workers one bit. He wanted to see employees in particular industries controlling those industries.

Mr Storey, MLA, opposed the amendment. If nationalisation had been a failure in the past it was due to unsympathetic administration. He referred to the railways, and said that if Labor was elected at the general elections it was proposed to appoint a Railway Commissioner elected by the workers in the industry (applause), and the principle would be applied to every other large industry in the State. Notwithstanding the alleged evils of nationalisation, railway employees displayed no desire to leave the service. (Cries of "They're leaving every day".) Parliamentarians were kept busy every day getting men into the Government service and restoring others who had left.

Conference Should Be Practical

Mr Storey asked Conference to be practical in its suggestions, and do things which were within the realms of possibility. He was amazed at suggestions that the workers should control and manage industries while the State should be asked to find the money to finance them. If, in the past nationalisation had not been favored, it was because a majority of the people did not desire it. Whenever 51 out of every 100 electors wished for nationalisation they would find expression on the statute books of the country. He was sorry to say that a former Conference had agreed to the Broken Hill Company establishing a steel and iron industry at Newcastle, which, while it didn't return much money to the Treasury, returned plenty to shareholders, many of whom resided in other parts of the world. The amendment was childish and impracticable.

Mr Storey was subjected to considerable interruption during the course of his speech.

Mr Roels, in a heated speech, accused Mr Storey of misleading the workers. (Uproar). It was all very well to speak of sympathetic administration, but during the lifetime of the McGowen Government there was a strike at the gas works and the Government advertised for "scab" workers to fill the place of strikers. (Uproar).

Mr Storey: "That is not true".

Mr Roels went on to make personal references to Mr Storey, at which Mr Storey appealed to the President for protection from the "insulting" references of the speaker, who was then heard to say, "You are not worthy of discussion".

Mr Storey replied: "I will give you an opportunity of proving that, if you are not careful". There was considerable uproar in the back of the hall, and many personal questions were hurled at Mr Storey.

After further debate the motion, as originally moved, was carried on the voices.

Day 7, Saturday, 14 June 1919

The "Labor News"

Very little business was done at the Labor Conference last Saturday (June 14), either at the afternoon or the evening session. There was open hostility between the two sections which interfered with the progress of business to no little extent. Both sessions ended in something approaching wild disorder - the afternoon session being closed down in uproar, while the close of the evening session saw blows exchanged between a couple of delegates.

The President (Mr WH Lambert) was absent through illness, and his place was taken by Mr AC Willis (Vice-President), Mr AE O'Brien being voted to the vice-chair. Mr Willis, in opening the proceedings, referred to the untimely death of Mr LJ O'Hara, MLA. Everybody present, he said, regretted the death of Mr O'Hara, one of the most sincere workers in the ranks of the Labor Movement. After other delegates had referred to the popularity of Mr O'Hara a resolution of sympathy was carried. Conference then adjourned for five minutes as a mark of respect.

Mr Dan Clyne secured the suspension of the Standing Orders in order to discuss a proposal for raising funds for the *Labor News*. The proposal was: "That Branch membership in the ALP be increased, in the case of males from 2/- to 4/-, and females, from 1/- to 2/- per annum. The extra money to be credited to the *Labor News* account, and each member to receive the official organ posted to his or her home address for one quarter, with the option of continuing the subscription for a longer period at the usual rate."

The proposal, if adopted, he said, would tremendously accelerate the success of the *Labor News* - in fact, it was hoped that it would permanently establish it beyond question, and so carry Labor's message to every nook and corner of the State. It was desirous that, as the State and Federal elections were approaching, immediate consideration should be given to the proposal. During the last twelve months activities had been considerably hampered owing to lack of funds. The Executive wanted to place the paper on a footing whereby it could finance itself. If the League members were prepared to put their money into the scheme, the circulation would increase.

Opposition to Proposal

One delegate opposed the scheme on the ground that it was hard enough to get members to join leagues at the present low rate, without asking them to pay an extra couple of shillings. If they increased the league membership rates they would drive prospective members away. Other delegates also opposed any increase of the branch membership fees.

Miss Matthews said it was necessary to get money to fight the elections. The *Labor News* also required money. If it was secured, League members would get back the money invested a hundredfold. Mr P Adler asked delegates if they seriously thought that advertisers would fall over themselves to advertise in a paper that used such a proposition to secure finances as this. If they did, then they had a great deal more faith than he had. The *Labor News* could not be put on a sound basis in the way that was advocated. If they wanted to make the paper a success, let them organise the Movement properly and then something might be done.

Mr J Howie caused some excitement by asking some questions about the management of the paper.

The motion was defeated by a large majority.

Seamen Congratulated

Mr Brookfield secured the suspension of the Standing Orders to move the following notion: "That Conference congratulate the seamen of Australia on the militant stand they had taken to improve conditions of toil and wages, and urged the Labor Movement to give the seamen their wholehearted support". The motion was carried.

Mr Rosa moved the suspension of the Standing Orders to discuss the report of the *Labor News*. He wanted to have some daylight thrown on the matter. While the vote was being taken, some delegates were seen to enter the hall from outside. This was the signal for hoots and yells from the extreme section of the delegates. An altercation took place between two delegates, and for a few moments things looked serious. The Chairman vainly appealed for order, but as this was impossible, he promptly adjourned the Conference till the evening.

[Labor News]

After the tea adjournment, Mr D Clyne read the report and balance-sheet of the *Labor News*, during which it was disclosed that there was a deficit of £975 on the operations of the journal up to date. The report stated that the paper had been published under adverse circumstances before preparations had been made to adequately launch it, while the subscriptions from Branches had not been up to expectations.

An acrimonious debate followed between delegates as to the conduct of the journal, after which a motion was carried receiving the report with the addendum that before any article appeared in the paper a majority of the management should decide the question of publication.

Mining Law Reform

Discussion on the fighting platform was then continued. Mr Brookfield, MLA, moved Plank No.2, Mining Law Reform - details of which have already been published in *The Worker*. He said they wanted to bring about a better and more peaceful method of working the mines. It was intended not only to nationalise the mines, but to give the workers some say in the conditions under which they had to work. He stated that at the present time the mines were worked in the interests of the capitalists rather than in the interests of the community, and often at the expense of the lives of the workers. The mines should be worked in the interests of the people, with due regard to the lives of those engaged in the industry. Piecework and contract work should be done away with - at best these wore only speeding-up devices which threw hundreds of workers on the scrapheap as industrial wrecks.

Mr D Hutton (Northern Miners) said that they should have better conditions in the mines. He said it would come as a surprise to Sydney people to learn that while the miners were mining coal for as low as 1d per cwt the people were charged 2/- per cwt for the same coal. They should make some efforts to discover who got the other 1/11. He deprecated the action of the first Labor Government in granting leases to wealthy coal capitalists on the Maitland coalfield, where the best coal was, instead of using it for State purposes. The Labor Party, in his opinion, should have had mines of its own long ago.

Mr Lynch (Railway Workers) said there should be some provision for inspection of quarries, shafts, tunnels, etc. Many men were killed owing to the absence of such inspection. They had tried to get inspectors appointed in the past, but without avail.

After Mr Brookfield gave an assurance that this would be attended to in the new plank, it was carried on the voices.

Simpler Form of Law

Mr C Johnston, MLA, moved Plank No.11 - Law Reform - details of which have already been published. He instanced the methods of law at the present time which very often precluded poor people from getting that justice to which they were entitled.

Mr A Rutherford (Saddlers) moved an amendment that in order that the people should have confidence in judges, they should be elected by the people, and subject to the recall. He instanced what had been done in Russia by the Soviet Government, with the result that the workers got cleaner justice. He claimed that under the present system it was almost impossible for radicals to get a fair deal owing to the natural bias of judges, and the fact that jurymen were appointed only on property qualifications.

The amendment was defeated, and the original plank carried on the voices.

In place of Plank 9 (Education), Miss Matthews moved the introduction of the plank in the old platform - Complete educational facilities: (a) Free education - secondary, technical, and university; (b) free school materials. The motion was agreed to without discussion.

Mr S Hickey moved Plank No.10 - Nationalisation of Health. He said they intended to put a stop to the present system of charity cadging on the streets in order to raise money for the hospitals, and see that they were financed by taxation. It was also intended that the hospitals would be open to all. There would also be provision for a taxing authority in order to protect patients from exploiting physicians and surgeons.

The Conference adjourned at 10 o'clock till Monday evening.

Day 8, Monday, 16 June 1919

Compulsory Clauses of Defence Act

Owing to some misunderstanding as to the place of meeting, it was well on towards eight o'clock when the Labor Conference resumed on Monday evening.

Mr Ivey (Broken Hill) secured the suspension of the Standing Orders, and moved: "That all planks of the old platform which are not included and are not inconsistent with the new platform be made binding upon members of Parliament". Senator Gardiner opposed, maintaining that as Conference had ruled that the platform should be composed of 13 planks the motion was improper. His objection was overruled by the Chairman (Mr AC Willis), whereupon Senator Gardiner dissented. On a vote, the Chairman's ruling was upheld by 78 votes to 70. Mr Ivey's motion was then agreed to on the voices.

Mr Brookfield secured the suspension of the Standing Orders, and moved the following motion: "That it be an instruction to the delegates to the Interstate Conference to fight and work for the repeal of the compulsory clauses of the Defence Act". There was considerable cheering when Mr Brookfield announced his motion. Senator Grant sought to move an amendment that delegates to the Interstate Conference be given a free hand in the matter, but it was resented by the Conference and lapsed.

Mr AC Rutherford seconded the resolution and said that a fundamental principle was involved. If they were democrats then they could have no objection to a motion that aimed at cutting out a cancer of militarism. The late war was supposed to be the war to end war - the jingoes said so anyhow. It was for Labor to keep the jingoes up to their war-time expressions by seeing to it that there was nothing that would make for war.

Australia in Peril

Senator Gardiner, in a vigorous speech, opposed the motion. He said there were two sides to the question of Australian defence. It was as well that they recognised that Australia's existence as a white nation was threatened. The South Pacific today was the goal of Japanese ambitions and they could not shut their eyes to that fact. The Japanese press was openly advocating the extension of Japanese interests in the Pacific. If they wished to keep Australia free of the colored menace they would have to fight for it, and how could they do that if they did not have an adequate defence force? Senator Gardiner was subjected to much interruption, interspersed with hoots, groans, etc. The Chairman prevailed upon the public in the gallery to keep order.

Senator Gardiner went on to say that they might organise on their grand scheme of international brotherhood, but that did not get away from the fact that colored labor was prepared to work for a shilling a day. When the censorship was lifted they would learn something regarding Britain's ally in the East that would surprise them. He concluded by stating that if he was selected as a delegate to the Interstate Conference he would not act upon the instruction embodied in the motion, but would interpret the view of the Labor Movement for himself upon the matter.

NSW Must Not Lag Behind

Mr Denford, in support of the motion, said that the Labor Conferences of Victoria, South Australia and Queensland had instructed their Interstate delegates to work for the repeal of the compulsory clauses of the Defence Act, and it was up to the Labor Movement of New South Wales, which recorded such a magnificent vote against conscription, to show that they did not lag behind the other States in the campaign against militarism. He deprecated the idea that Japan had her eyes on Australia, and said that all the talk of a colored invasion was only a bogey used by the capitalists to keep the workers of Australia in fear. With a revolution sweeping the world, there was no fear of any outside nation interfering in Australia. When the capitalists and the Governments made this country worth fighting for the people would fight for it - but not before. (Applause).

Mr JH Catts, MHR, said that Australia had to be defended in some way. (Groans and hoots.) Would anybody say that if we had no defence, Australia would be safe?

A voice in the gallery. "A mad Chow might come along". (Laughter.) Mr Catts went on to say that some kind of defence was absolutely necessary, He asked those opposed to the present Defence Act what kind of defence they wanted. He for one did not wish to see Australia dependent on England, nor did he want to see a professional soldiery springing up in the land. While there was much in the administration of the present Defence Act that was irritating, that was no reason why the whole scheme should go overboard. Every Socialist country in the world believed in a citizen defence force as against a professional soldiery. It was idiotic to say that Australia did not require a defence force.

Turning Men into Human Butchers

Mr Brookfield, replying to the motion, instanced the fact that none of the speakers opposed to the motion had anything to say about the damning influence of militarism on the boys of Australia. He objected to the lads' minds being warped by military thugs. If it was a question of choosing between conscripting men or boys he would say conscript men every

time. (Cheers.) It had been suggested that without the compulsory clauses in the Defence Act somebody might run away with Australia. Well, prior to the war there was no conscription in England and nobody tried to run away with that country. To him it was a damnable thing to think that Labor men were prepared to stand for compulsory military service. (Cheers.) He was opposed to a system that turned men into human butchers. The people of Australia had already twice defeated conscription, consequently how much longer were they going to stand for the compulsory clauses in the Defence Act? He traced how Prussian militarism grew from the simple citizen force that was instituted in Germany over a hundred years ago. Did they want such a damnable cancer to take root in Australia? It should be their aim to root out militarism once and for all time. (Great cheering.)

The motion was carried, amidst great enthusiasm, by 110 votes to 18.

The resumption of the debate on the fighting platform was then entered upon. Mr R Bramston moved Plank 12 – system of light railways for isolated districts. The motion was carried on the voices without discussion.

Mr D Clyne moved the report of the Redistribution Committee, appointed by the Executive some time ago – details of which appear elsewhere in this issue. After a lengthy debate the report was adopted, with an addendum by Mr Rosa that whatever system of voting and counting is adopted by Parliament, that particular system be adopted in deciding the selection of candidates for the Labor Party.

Conference then adjourned till the following night (Tuesday).

Election of New Executive. Win for Moderate Section

The election for the 1919-20 New South Wales Labor Executive resulted in a complete victory for the Moderate section of the Annual Conference – every position being captured by a “moderate delegate”. The result of the voting was as follows:

President: Ald WH Lambert, 143 (re-elected), A Rae, 92.

Vice-President (2): WT Burgess, 132; RD Bramston, 128 (elected1); AC Willis, 114; SA Rosa 96.

Secretary: PC Evans (elected unopposed).

Executive (30): Miss EM O’Sullivan, 141; G. Sutherland, 141; DF Dwyer, 140; J Farrell, 138; J Andrews, 137; Miss Cashman, 136; V Molesworth, 136; T Arthur, 134; W Carey, 134; CH Murphy, 133; AE O’Brien, 133; Mrs M Henson, 132; W O’Connor, 132; JF Higgins, 130; Mrs EM Seery, 130; Mrs M Lalor, 129; DF Ryan, 128; J White, 127; TS Bartle, 126; C Last, 125; N McPhee, 125; W Brotherson, 124; Mrs B Singleton, 124; TJ Tyrrell, 124; HJ Mitchell, 123; TJ Swiney, 123; TJ Shiels, 122; AB Berry, 122; BW Shields, 122; W Martin, 118.

Alternative Executive Members (30): C Beckett, EM Thomas, W Berryman, E Landon, Mrs Bodkin, Mrs J Grant, D McClelland, Mrs Devitt, AB Hannon, J Phillips, AC Wallace, Mrs Maincke, G Brooks, A McTiernan, C Phillips, G Rowlands, C Thompson, Mrs Stone, J Humphries, AH Moate, J Mostyn, AG Paul, Mrs M Garnham, EC Magrath, Mrs J Kirwin, F Lagerlow, G McGrath, P Ridge, T Hynes, and Mrs Kelly.

Members of Interstate Executive (2): J Farrell, 132, G Sutherland, 123 (elected). AC Willis, 114; A Rutherford, 95.

Delegates to Interstate Conference (4). J Storey, MLA, 141; J. Farrell, 135; Senator Gardiner, 131; V Molesworth, 128; G Sutherland, 126; Mrs EM Seery, 125; (elected). The defeated candidates were Messrs AC Willis, 112; JM Power, 108; A Rae, 103; A Rutherford, 96; JS Garden, 95; and SA Rosa, 93.

The returning officer's report was signed by the following scrutineers, as testifying to the correctness of the ballot. Senator Grant and Mr AE Roberts (for the Moderates). Messrs C McMahon and J Devlin (for the Extremists).

Day 9, Tuesday, 17 June 1919

An Abrupt Ending. NSW Labor Conference. Militants Leave Conference Hall

There was a dramatic development in connection with the proceedings of the NSW Annual Labor Conference on Tuesday night last.

When Conference assembled at the Protestant Hall, Sydney, Mr R Bramston, one of the newly-elected Vice-Presidents, took the chair in the absence of the President (Mr WH Lambert), and proceeded to declare the Conference open for business. There were angry protests from a section of the delegates, it being contended that as the returning officers' announcement of the new Executive had not been officially made to Conference, Mr Willis should be permitted to act as chairman as he had been doing in Mr Lambert's absence. Mr Bramston, however, refused to submit. Then disorder broke loose, and for some time there were hoots and groans, mingled with cheers and shouts.

Protests were shouted from all parts of the hall, and the climax was reached when the militants, gathering up their coats hats, and papers, left the hall in a body. The greatest excitement prevailed at the time.

Conference Out of Control

As they were leaving, Mr Catts, MHR, moved that the returning officer's report be adopted, this being carried on the voices. Mrs EM Seery then moved: "That when the Conference had dealt with the motions relating

to the platform of the Party, the Conference should adjourn, and that all remaining business be dealt with by the new Executive". This was agreed to.

Mr O'Brien managed to get a motion passed aiming at the appointment of a board for the direction of amusement, with full power of controlling any arrangements in the best interests of the public and employees in the industry, it being carried unanimously. The Conference was now hopelessly out of control, the public in the gallery keeping up a running fire of interjections, which prevented delegates being heard. Seeing that progress was impossible, Mr JH Catts moved that the Conference conclude its sittings. This was carried by 88 votes to nil.

Split Deprecated

The moderates then dispersed, and journeyed to Macdonell House, where a meeting of the new Executive was held, and the newly-created position was discussed. Speeches were delivered by Messrs JH Catts, MHR, Senator Gardiner, C Johnston, MLA, AE O'Brien and others in which the hopes were expressed that, though a temporary split had occurred, the confidence of former adherents would be regained.

Interstate delegates, who were present by invitation, deprecated the split, and hoped that steps would be taken to heal the breach, in view of the early approach of the elections. Mr A Stewart, General Secretary of the Australian Executive and the ALP, thought that the matter should not be taken seriously, and advised delegates to set about consolidating the Movement in order to present a united front to the Nationalists at the two elections looming in the distance.

Militants at the Trades Hall

After leaving the Conference, the militants and their supporters journeyed to the Trades Hall, where the position from their point of view was discussed. Mr SA Rosa, in the course of a lengthy address, dwelt with the discontent that had evidenced itself at Conference. He stated that the tactics adopted by those in control of the Movement today savored too much of Tammanyism, and would have to be stamped out if Labor was to again become a live force in the country. He added that the militants were opposed to such tactics, and intended to fight those responsible for underground engineering and wire-pulling. It was possible to bring about a better condition of affairs, and to make the Movement more wholesome and radical, and something approaching what it was in the old days.

“A New Party”

Mr AC Willis moved the following motion, which was carried: “This Conference recommends the unions and leagues to consider the advisability of forming a party prepared to work and fight for the establishment of a state of social democracy, and that a conference be called of the unions and leagues to consider this question on a date to be fixed”.

A committee was appointed to draw up a manifesto, and to take such action as deemed necessary to bring about a congress of unions and leagues.

Despite the breach that had been created, there is reason to believe that a truce will be effected in a short time, though what may happen in the event of a Congress dealing with the matter is hard to say. There is talk of the militants instituting a propaganda campaign throughout the State in order to vindicate their action at the Conference. The next few days should decide what further action, if any, will be taken by the militants, or whether the moderates themselves will take any steps to bring about a reconciliation of the two rival factions.



Australian Labor Party

Official Manifesto by the New South Wales Central Executive

To the Members of ALP Branches and Affiliated Unions.

Your Central Executive deems it necessary to issue a word of warning against enemies within our gates whose propaganda aims at weakening the discipline, breaking the solidarity, and destroying the authority of the great Movement built after many years of patient effort by to workers of Australia.

The chairman of the Employers' Federation recently stated that he had means of immediate knowledge of the doings and arrangements of our organisation from the inside.

Similarly it is known that the agents of the Nationalist Government, provided with ample funds, are at work sowing the seeds of dissension amongst us. The industrial and political history of some of the leading plotters against the Movement is very unsatisfactory.

Genuine Laborites should be very careful with whom they associate. Under various guises and pretexts – by means of many-sided tactics –

through a number of so-called propaganda agencies, the enemies of Labor operate.

False Doctrines of the IWW

The Employers' Federation, the Nationalist Government, and the capitalist press have for some time past spared no effort to fasten upon the Australian Labor Movement every unworthy excrescence and parasite growth which has battered on Labor in foreign lands. And while the press have held up to odium and contempt these undesirable offshoots of movements oversea, some among us, out of mere bravado, and with no sense of responsibility for the welfare of the Movement, proclaim themselves Bolsheviks and IWW-ites, and thus assist our enemies to sidetrack the public mind from the true aims and objects of the Australian Labor Party.

The fact that Labor demands a fair trial for industrial and political offenders such as the IWW men and the Secretary of the Social Democratic Party, must not be confounded with the attitude of the Movement to the propaganda and methods of these bodies which are anti-ALP.

A certain definite percentage of temperamental anarchists or revolutionaries are born into the world. The freedom and opportunities of Australia have attracted some of these from Britain, Russia, and America. Unfortunately a few are natives of the soil. To these the recklessness and destructiveness of the IWW appeal as a centre of attraction. Concede what they demand today and tomorrow they would denounce it. They have no rational aim.

In a manifesto recently issued by the Queensland Central Executive of the Australian Labor Party the IWW is thus described:

"There is no suitable name for this propaganda. It uses the term 'Industrial Unionism' as a shibboleth, and yet there is probably no one among its members who can explain exactly what he means by this term. It is a propaganda that, by reason of its detractive tendencies, might be known by the name of Nihilism, were it not that this term carries with it certain heroic associations which are wholly out of place in connection with the new school. It becomes more and more clear to everyone that it is not a doctrine, not a programme, not a movement, not even a definite tendency. It is simply a turbulent and a factious state of mind. It has no consistency of belief, and no uniformity of method. It carps and cavils and denounces, and where possible, it disrupts."

The "White Ant" Policy

During the conscription campaigns the Labor Movement was the recognised force against the compulsory transportation of Australian soldiers overseas, and appealed to all shades of political thought to join in the great campaign. This was the opportunity for the IWW to get a leg in.

Disbanded under the "Unlawful Associations Act", the IWW conceived the idea of operating its destructivism against and through the Australian Labor Party. Few in numbers, loud of voice, violently aggressive, maintaining their cohesiveness through organised factions and under several aliases, the IWW-ites set about "white anting" the Labor Movement.

The disbanded "Industrial Workers of the World" (IWW) reformed under the name of the "Workers of the World Industrial Union" (WWIU), adopting the IWW constitution. The results of their work were first seen by the adoption by the Trade Union Congress, 1918, of the IWW preamble as the objective of the One Big Union (OBU).

Acting through the OBU, anarchy and destructiveness attacked the industrial unions by propaganda designed to destroy the authority of these organisations and bring about revolt amongst the membership.

The OBU created a black list of members of Parliament and union officials who dared oppose their disruptive tactics.

The IWW, alias OBU, then set out to capture the Industrial Section of the Australian Labor Party. It soon succeeded in fastening the foreign IWW preamble upon that section, and immediately commenced operations upon the Australian Labor Party itself.

It is this organised conspiracy to disrupt and destroy the ALP which has been so decisively defeated at the Annual Conference.

How It All Happened

The IWW, alias the WWIU, alias the OBU, after initial successes became arrogant, brutal, boastful. It would quickly finalise its policy of disruption! It openly avowed through its Secretary that it would "white ant" the unions by "boring from within" and "capture" the Labor Conference. This announcement appeared in the press on January 26 and March 17.

In the statement, in March it was publicly asserted:

(1) "That a propaganda committee of 70 men would leave no stone unturned to secure the election to the Conference of men and women sympathetically inclined to the OBU (IWW) preamble.

(2) "That the OBU attack would be made in Conference on a motion to be submitted from Wollongong."

About this time, the tactics above described being common talk in Labor circles several members of the Parliamentary Labor Parties, representatives of unions and prominent Labor Leaguites, found themselves voicing the opinion that those opposed to the destructive tendencies of the IWW, alias OBU, should consult together regarding the impending danger to the Movement.

A little investigation proved that the press statements were not idle boasts, and at the eleventh hour it was resolved to accept the challenge of the revolutionary IWW brigade.

The Conference

As indicated months before, "the attack on Conference was made on a motion from Wollongong". This Wollongong motion, No.17 on the business paper, should be carefully examined. It provided:

- (1) That a state of social democracy industrially organised (not politically organised), should be the "sole issue of future elections".
- (2) That all ameliorative legislation should be jettisoned.
- (3) That a scheme for the above, with "an explanatory preamble" should be prepared by a committee. (As the mover of the motion was the President of the OBU, no doubt the IWW preamble, for which the propaganda committee of 70 had been striving, was intended as the coping stone to the scheme.)

The motion aimed at destroying the means of constitutional reform through Parliament, upon which the ALP is based. By ignoring the immediate issues which concern the public mind at successive elections it would have destroyed Labor representation in Parliament. Thus Labor would have been left howling in the wilderness on a propaganda for the Elysian fields of Mesopotamia, while the workers would have suffered in the "slough of despond" for as long as any practical mind could see into the future. But the motion was defeated. The attempt to smash the Australian Labor Party as a political entity failed.

Running an Executive Ticket

The tacticians urging the IWW preamble and methods, through their inexperience of the Australian workers, sadly blundered all along the line. The mover of the motion from Wollongong in his opening speech announced that the delegates supporting "us" had determined to "caucus" on Conference business. It was found that this included running a caucus ticket for the ALP Executive. Like begets like, with the result that delegates opposed to the IWW preamble resolved to counter the block vote of the disruptionists for the Executive, but in no case was this applied to any item on the business paper. Beaten at their own game, the wreckers make night and day hideous with their yells of rage and disappointment.

From the first "test" in Conference the IWW protagonists sustained successive defeats, which, by the time the election of the new Executive took place, resulted in their attempt to gain the Presidency being defeated by 143 votes to 92; and of 70 positions to be filled, not one of their "ticket" succeeded.

After ten days' sittings of the Conference, through the influenza epidemic playing havoc with the life and health of delegates, it was resolved that several urgent matters should be dealt with, unfinished business referred to the new Executive for attention, and that the

Conference should adjourn. The voting strength of Conference at this last session (Tuesday, June 17) was about fifty disruptionist sympathisers and one hundred solidarity Laborites. The report of the returning officer, and two scrutineers from each side, announcing a fair ballot, showed the disruptionists to have been routed from every position. Repudiated by the Annual Parliament of Labor and by the composition of Conference, having no power for further mischief the enraged and defeated disruptionists withdrew from the Conference and proceeded to the Trades Hall to form a new party. A number of good party men and women, who had been previously misled, now had their eyes opened to the real spirit and intention of the would-be wreckers of the Movement.

The Culminating Point Of Disruption

The mover of "the motion from Wollongong" hired the room at the Trades Hall, and moved the resolution to form a new party. This same gentleman is President of the OBU.

A representative of *The Worker* was in attendance at the now party's initial meeting. Mr Boote, editor of *The Worker*, would not allow *The Worker* report to create a false impression. *The Worker* report of this meeting contains the heading, "A New Party," and quotes the motion carried which recommends unions and leagues to form a party prepared to fight for the establishment of a state of social democracy - compare with the wording of the Wollongong resolution again. The disruptionists must have their way. The solidarity of the Movement is quite a secondary matter!

These tactics follow precisely those of Hughes and Holman. Hughes walked out of the party room and formed a new party. Hughes said he was more Labor than the Labor Movement. So do the disruptionists in the present instance. One of them brazenly declares he is out to fight Tammanyism. This, if you please, is the man from Chicago! Another, "the mover of the motion from Wollongong", declares that he will only support Labor simply because he could not swallow Nationalism", and the "the Labor Party is not worth the support of any worker unless it is prepared to work for an Industrial Commonwealth", as set forth in "the motion from Wollongong".

The disruptionists have no substantial following. No one need be disturbed by their antics. But the Movement must know them for what they are. By seeking to divide us they do the work of the Employers' Federation better than the capitalists could do it for themselves.

Labor's Policy

The Australian Labor Party is a Socialist party; it believes in the Socialistic or Cooperative Commonwealth. It declares its aim to secure

the full results of their industry to all producers. That is the high watermark of economic justice. While striving towards the Social or Cooperative Commonwealth it renders aid today to the mangled victims of the capitalist system.

It deals with the practical problems of the present, and seeks, by continuous and constructive effort, to evolve the new social order. Its methods are constitutional, not revolutionary.

It welcomes every honest recruit. It invites the submission of every scheme and idea.

It desires the abolition of the system of wage slavery, and the reconstruction of society upon the truly social basis in the quickest possible time and by the best conceivable methods.

It has no time for loud mouthed platitudes, meaningless shibboleths, and the ravings of wild-eyed demagogues that accomplish no practical result.

To all those who honestly wish to join in the great work of the social reorganisation of society, regardless of variations of view on minor matters, the Australian Labor Party offers the glad hand of welcome.

To the enemy without, to the foes of the working mass, we throw down the gage of battle. The emissaries of the capitalists, the spies and tools of autocracy, who do the work of Labor's mortal enemies from within our ranks, will be treated as traitors are treated the world over. And, at this critical time, we call upon every well-wisher of the Movement to close up the ranks, give no heed to those who seek to destroy our solidarity and fighting spirit, but prepare for the grand assault which we shall soon be called upon to make upon the historic enemies of our class in both Federal and State arenas.

On behalf of the Executive,
WH Lambert, President
PC Evans, General Secretary
Sydney, June 23, 1919

(The Australian Worker, 26 June 1919)