THE BURGLAR: "That's good! While the row goes on at the front, I can rob the house from the back quite easily."
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CHAPTER 1
Lang and his Inner Group

During the 1920s factional warfare threatened to destroy the NSW Labor Party, yet still the party was elected to government in 1920-22 and again in 1925-27. The electorate was able to look beyond the corrupt machine politics to find what it wanted in the parliamentary party. By the end of the 1920s, however, the Lang machine had imposed on all sections of the party an unshakeable control that was intolerant of all dissent and led to disastrous splits in the party at all levels. Lang won election again in 1930, holding office till his dismissal in 1932, but thereafter NSW Labor was unelectable until Lang was replaced.

Lang’s support base had been created early in the 1920s when he allied himself with a number of industrial unions which were hostile to the previously dominant AWU. His main support initially was the Miners’ Federation, led by Albert Willis, which also delivered to Lang control over the new Labor Daily newspaper that was to be central to reinforcing Lang’s authority. Willis continued as Lang’s enforcer in the party during the 1920s, with the help of supporters in the State Executive such as Edward Magrath (Printing Industry Employees’ Union), Jim Tyrrell (Municipal Employees’ Union) and JJ Graves (Stovemakers’ Union).

A fundamental change took place in 1931 when Lang, apparently wary of the dominance of Willis in the party, persuaded him to accept the position of NSW Agent-General in London. This effectively lost Lang the assured support of the Miners’ Federation which, within a year or two, joined his enemies on the left (although Jack Baddeley, MLA, and PJ Keller, both with a Miners’ Federation allegiance, remained part of the Inner Group supporting Lang). Taking Willis’ place was another strong man, Jock Garden, an ex-Communist and long-term Secretary (1918-34) of the Labor Council who was accepted back into the ALP in 1929 after repudiating his Communist membership. To balance the loss of the Miners’ Federation support, Garden’s presence initially strengthened Lang’s support in the Labor Council. Garden brought with him into Lang’s cheer squad other effective organisers from the trade union movement – John Beasley (Electrical Trades Union, and MHR for West Sydney since 1928) and Ossie Schreiber (Furniture Trade Union). Other members of the Inner Group in the 1930s were the Organising Secretary of the party, JB Martin (Clerks’ Union), and Lang’s speechwriter, Harold Macauley. For the time being Jim Tyrrell was able to continue to deliver
Labor Daily support and patronage in local government, while JJ Graves managed the State Executive. The Inner Group was ruthless in suppressing revolts in local branches and controlling preselection, so that there could be no effective challenge to Lang from that section of the party which had always been Lang’s firmest base. For his part, Lang was ruthless in pushing aside supporters (like Willis and Garden) whose personal power might be seen as rivalling his own.

**Role of Conference**

It was already clear in the 1920s that the role of State Conference in policy making and setting priorities for a Labor Government had largely evaporated. This became even more obvious in the 1930s when the Inner Group took control. The structure of Conference had changed with the new rules introduced in 1927, so that much of the general discussion of such issues was diverted to the Country and Metropolitan Conferences which were held in the month or two before the Easter Conference. The State Conference merely confirmed the resolutions from these two bodies that were acceptable to the Inner Group. Typically, meetings of Conference that had tended to last for three weeks in the first two decades of the century were completed in a weekend. The most important function of State Conference was to provide a triumphant platform for Lang himself, delivering his annual address to his fawning supporters. Critics were still present at Conference, but with control of the numbers in Conference and Executive, Lang’s supporters could easily sweep any criticism aside. Nevertheless, reports of Conference were (and are) valuable because this was almost the only public forum available to Lang’s critics inside the party.

**Challenges to Lang**

By the 1930s Lang was thoroughly detested by virtually the whole of non-Labor society – the press, the conservative parties, and church leaders. The level of concern, even of fear, can be gauged by the history of groups like the New Guard and the All for Australia League which arose very largely to confront Langism, and dissolved quickly once it was clear that he was no longer a threat. To a certain extent Lang gloried in this kind of opposition, which gave him the excuse to rail against ‘money power’ and call for solidarity among the workers to oppose it. However, rather than solidarity on his own side, Lang fomented division and party splits.

In 1927, while Premier, Lang had split the party between his supporters and opponents. Then he had successfully manoeuvred a Federal intervention to confirm his authority in the party so that, although he lost the election in that year, he returned to power easily in 1930. The success
of that tactic provided a precedent that informed Lang’s political decisions throughout the 1930s.

In 1930, in a dispute over economic management in the Depression, Lang split the NSW party from the Federal ALP, with his Lang Labor colleagues bringing down the Federal Labor Government of Prime Minister JH Scullin. This split between State and Federal Labor in NSW continued to poison the Labor movement until after the 1935 State election when peace was restored, as in 1927, largely on Lang’s terms. Only when virtually all of Lang’s support in the trade union movement had collapsed (and former allies like Willis and Garden had become enemies) could Federal intervention in August 1939 eventually bring some sanity into the NSW party by restoring to Caucus the right to elect its leader. By then another split had appeared - from the left, and strongly influenced by Communists – that was to provide a longer term threat to the party.

The Red Rules
Since the foundation of the NSW Labor Party in the 1890s there had been constant argument over who could be delegates to Conference and who should be eligible for membership of the State Executive. By the 1920s there was almost universal agreement within the party that some change in party rules on these matters was needed. Conference had become almost completely unworkable. The main problem was that Conference typically lasted two or three weeks, while about three hundred delegates would be accredited which made for very unwieldy meetings. Then, after the first week, attendance fell off rapidly so that only a few dozen turned up in the final days, leaving Conference without a quorum to make changes to rules. There had also been an endemic demand from trade unionists that they should have greater influence in party decisions, relative to members of party branches. The existing rules provided delegates to Conference from trade unions according to their size and membership. Since the AWU was the largest union in the State, this gave it an enormous advantage over rival unions inside the Labor Party. The other constant complaint was from rural delegates that Conference timetabling was arranged for the convenience of city delegates, making genuine rural involvement very difficult. In the early 1920s there was widespread support, not just from the AWU and country delegates, for a decentralization of Conference and the establishment of regional Conferences with direct input to State Conference. With regard to the Executive the main problem was factional domination, with great discontent among members of the various ‘out’ groups in the party, who often wanted some form of proportional election of the Executive by unions and branches, rather than by factionally controlled votes in Conference. There was also a variation on the rural complaints about
Conference; it was almost impossible for country members of the party (other than MPs) to take a role in the Executive since it would involve numerous trips to Sydney for general and committee meetings – with little hope of funding for accommodation, travel, or lost wages – despite frustrating attempts to achieve that kind of support.

Given the agreement that some changes in rules were due, the decision of Conference in 1926 to establish a committee to recommend new rules was not controversial. The committee elected was chaired by Albert Willis who made sure that his committee was both factionally stacked, yet had strong representation from rural sections of the party. The resulting recommendations (immediately dubbed the ‘Red Rules’) were a clever compromise that embraced the calls for decentralization of the party machinery that had been one of the AWU demands, yet effectively prevented the AWU from taking advantage of its huge membership to dominate the party. The new rules affected both Conference and Executive membership, but the control of the Executive was paramount. Jim Hagan has explained the mechanism used:

In 1927 it [Conference] passed the so-called ‘Red rules’, a series of amendments to the rules governing the executive’s composition, which provided that in an executive of 26, country electorate councils would be allocated six places, metropolitan electorate councils four, and trade unions a total of 16, subdivided by industry groups. The principal effect and intention of these amendments was to prevent the AWU from being able to dominate the executive. (Radi & Spearritt, Jack Lang, p.43)

The real sting in the rules was in the composition of the industry groups, used to allocate trade union delegates to Conference as well as elect members of the Executive. The AWU was merely one of eleven groups who could nominate members of the Executive. According to the rules adopted at the 1927 Easter Conference (and accepted without amendment at the Unity Conference later in the same year), these trade union groups were: “AWU, miners, metals, buildings, food, manufacturing, public utilities, printing/non-manual/miscellaneous, transport (water), transport (land), wood”. This meant that the AWU was limited to a maximum of three nominations (out of the 16 elected seats available), while the other union members of the Executive would be nominated by unions overwhelmingly hostile to the AWU and generally sympathetic to the Miners and to the Lang faction. Unions allied to the AWU, such as the Timberworkers, were similarly disadvantaged. Since Executive membership was lifted to 30 with the direct election of the President, Secretary, and two Vice-Presidents by Conference, this would mean that Willis-Lang factional control could be maintained against any threat from the AWU.

If the new rules effectively sidelined the AWU, did they give undue influence to Communists in the NSW Labor Party? As the Herald’s commentator expressed it: “The new rules have been described as Red
because, virtually, they place the political Labour party under the domination of the unions, which, in turn, are dominated by the Reds”.

(SMH, 20 April 1927). Members of the Willis committee who drafted the rules included militants sympathetic to Communism such as J Kilburn (Bricklayers) and Willis’ secretary ER Voigt, but these were balanced by two rural members, M Griffin (Bathurst), and WM Webster (Murrumbidgee) unlikely to sympathetic to the Reds. The other members of the seven-man committee (Willis himself, EC Magrath and Alderman Mostyn) were firm factional supporters of Lang. Communist supporters at the 1927 Easter Conference clearly supported the new rules, which were passed overwhelmingly by 276 to 4 votes. However, that same Conference voted to exclude Communists from membership of the ALP “by 10 to 1”, a figure that gives some indication of Communist and fellow-traveller presence in Conference, and which made nonsense of the Herald claim of Red domination. The new rules were not Red. They were anti-AWU, favourable to the Miners’ Federation, and imposed a winner-taker-all support for the Lang faction in future Executives and Conferences.

The Socialisation Units

The Socialisation Committee of the NSW Labor Party was established by the 1930 Conference, with the full support of the Inner Group, who saw it as a lightning rod to draw off some of the energies of Lang’s critics on the left of the party. In 1930 Lang still had considerable credibility within much of the left because of his radical approach to the Depression, but few of the more militant trade unions gave more than a grudging and temporary support to the then Premier. The Socialisation Committee was set up to “devise ways and means to propagate the first and principal platform, the Socialisation of Industry”. It was given a propaganda role in the party, especially at the branch level where the Committee was empowered to set up ‘Socialisation Units’ to inform local members about the party’s Objective. The first annual report of the Committee can be found below, reproduced as part of the official Executive Report for 1930-31.

When Lang was forced into Opposition, losing elections in 1932 and again in 1935, the Socialisation Committee provided a forum for critics of Lang within the industrial movement and in the branches who were alienated by the Inner Group’s total control over party affairs. By the time of the 1938 election it represented probably a majority of unions influential in the Labor Council. A coalition of these unions, now called the Socialisation Units, with the leading opponents of Lang in Caucus (notably RJ Hefron, EM Horsington, MA Davidson and CC Lazzarini) formed the ‘Industrial Labor Party’ which represented a complete split of the Labor Council from Lang’s party. The Labor Council was able to assert its control over the Labor Daily and radio station 2KY, losses which
were to be of fundamental importance to Lang and his Inner Group. Once again the Lang party completely outpolled its Labor challengers in the 1938 election, although this was the final wasted election that gave the excuse for Federal intervention in 1939 bringing the era of Lang domination to an end.

Despite the strong influence of Communists in this protest, very little of the motive came from policy or ideology. It was a revolt against control. This becomes clear when the parliamentary candidates for the Industrial Labor Party are examined. Davidson (Cobar) and Horsington (Sturt) represented mining electorates where traditional trade union values, not Marxism, were paramount. Heffron (Botany) had been radical in his youth in the early 1920s, but by 1938 he was ideologically on the centre-left of the party, soon fitted comfortably as a Minister in the McKell Government in 1941, and went on to become a conservative Premier from 1959-64. Much the same could be said of candidates like Clarrie Martin and Clive Evatt, and supporters like Reg Downing and JJ Moloney. Even more significant was Dr Horace Foley, resolutely anti-Communist Catholic boss of the Glebe Labor municipal machine, who had been a Lang devotee in the early 1930s (and would return to be so in the 1940s), but who stood against Lang in 1938 as a protest against the Inner Group’s attempts to take over his ward machine. Fundamentally, the Industrial Labor Party was a collection of members of the party united only by their detestation of what Lang was doing to the party.

**A Communist Challenge**

The years of the Depression saw great advances made by Communists in the industrial movement. Partly this was because the Depression greatly weakened the trade union movement, which had many more calls on its resources than were available from union fees. Moreover, even militant unions found that they had almost no industrial leverage with employers when jobs were so scarce. While most union leaders accepted their impotence and waited for the good economic times to return, Communist leaders promised militancy and used an aggressive rhetoric that was attractive to many workers, especially the unemployed who had virtually no other support in the society. As Robert Murray explained in *The Split* (p. 14):

> Many right wing union leaders had been unable to cope with the unprecedented difficulties of the depression years; others, under no serious challenge for many years, were simply lazy and incompetent. The communists partly built up and partly rode a wave of militant unionism, which made spectacular advances in the late 1930s and early 1940s as workers gave expression to their bitterness or allowed the communists to exploit their apathy about union affairs.
Communists asserted themselves in unions like the Miners’ Federation, where previously their presence had been moderated by Langite leaders, while the Waterside Workers’ Federation and the Federated Ironworkers’ Association were easily converted into Communist strongholds in the late 1930s. The Communist threat was intensified by the official policy of the party at the time to permeate, and to form a ‘united front’ with, the Labor Party. This development, along with the subsequent rise of a countervailing force of anti-Communist organisation (the Catholic ‘Movement’, and the ALP Industrial Groups of the 1940s) was to set the stage for the next great split in the Labor Party in the 1950s.

The Socialisation Units in 1938 were strongly infiltrated by Communists, and their domination of the Labor Council enabled Communists and fellow travellers to capture the State Executive of the ALP under Vice President J Hughes (Clerks’ Union) and Secretary W Evans in 1939, even though commentators at the time (SMH, 29 August 1939) had regarded the Executive as being taken over merely by the Heffron faction. This precipitated another Federal intervention in August 1940 which substituted more moderate leadership of the Executive to support the new leadership of Caucus by W McKell, and restored to Conference its election of the Executive.

During the 1930s the Communists had also been building up strength in inner-city local communities that had long been the undisputed preserve of Lang and the Inner Group. They were able to lift their profile as community leaders through fronts such as the Unemployed Workers’ Movement which became the best known organisation taking direct action to protect inner-city tenants from eviction. Communists were never able to translate this community recognition into significant votes at elections (although they did gain control of at least one local government shire in the Hunter River coalfields), yet their activity certainly resulted in diminished support for the local Labor machine politics that had been Lang’s strength.

**Party Constitutional Issues**

Throughout the 1930s there was bitter dispute within the party about which level – State or Federal – was supreme in the Labor Party. Although the national party had been formed as a federal organisation based on State branches, most interpretations of ALP rules would support the opponents of Lang in asserting that his State ALP had no constitutional right to call itself the Labor Party. That was a minor concern in the 1930s because Lang was able to demonstrate time and again in the political arena that the Federal ALP could not challenge him in New South Wales and could never hope to return to power in Canberra until the split was healed. The Inner Group plainly asserted the autonomy of the State branch, even while occasionally welcoming the
intervention of the Federal Executive when it could give support to the Lang cause. Here is the State Executive response at the 1928 Conference to an assertion of Federal superiority:

In reply the executive stated that the executive of the ALP (NSW) was the creation of the rank and file in conference, and in all domestic matters recognised only the authority of the rank and file of the ALP, State of New South Wales, as expressed in conference or by plebiscite. It was contrary to the democratic principles of the Australian Trade Union and Labour movement and to the working class movement in all civilised countries that a small group of officials such as the Federal executive and conference should have the extraordinary power to override the expressed will of the rank and file, to whom they owed their existence. Therefore, the executive of the ALP, State of New South Wales, would maintain the right of autonomy in all domestic matters which the rank and file of the party in New South Wales, in conjunction with the parties in all other States, had enjoyed since the inception of the Australian Labour party, and the executive would repudiate any ruling or dictum of Federal officials on any domestic matter which had not first received the approval of the rank and file of the party in New South Wales.

Yet there is a sense in which Lang himself contributed to a transfer of power within the party from State to Federal structures. There had been very clear confrontations between State and Federal sections of the party in the first two decades of the new Century. Probably the most important saw the NSW Labor Government and the Federal Labor Government publicly disputing Federal policy over economic and industrial management before and after the 1910 elections. The NSW ALP, under Attorney General W Holman, successfully ignored Federal policy. Yet the first Federal intervention in a State branch came only just before the start of the Lang regime in 1923, and then after considerable hesitation. Thereafter followed interventions in 1927, 1931, 1936, 1939, and 1940. After that there could be no question that if State branches did not voluntarily adhere to Federal policy or organisational demands they could be forced to do so.

Local Community Politics

Although, as in previous decades, much of the internal politics of the NSW Labor Party involved disputes within the trade union movement about dominance in the party, yet there is a sense in which the 1930s saw a transfer of power from the industrial wing to what might be called the municipal wing of the party. For Lang himself, even though his support within the trade union movement collapsed almost to nothing in the late 1930s, he could always rely upon local branches and the ordinary suburban voters to remain in charge. To a certain extent Lang did have a claim to the allegiance of – to use a term beloved of the Inner Group and cynically exploited by them – the ‘rank and file’ of the party. Even many
members of trade unions that were unequivocally hostile to Lang, such as the AWU, remained part of Lang’s rank and file.

This reliance on local branch members made possible the great advances in Labor municipal politics achieved during the Lang era. Lang himself had served a political apprenticeship in local government as alderman and mayor of Auburn. During his period as parliamentary leader the gradual takeover of inner city municipalities by Labor was put in place, along with strong performances in outer suburban and many country districts. The Executive Report for 1934-35 provides a list of all elected Labor councillors that provides a remarkable contrast with the paltry achievements of only ten or fifteen years before. Municipal and local ward politics tended to become corrupt, and contributed to part of the reputation of the Lang party, yet it engaged with the everyday life of many residents, especially during the Depression, in a way that the trade union movement could not. There is no doubt that it contributed to a high profile of Labor in very many local districts that was a firm base for Labor electoral performance well into the second half of the 20th Century.

Readers of the annual Executive Reports during the 1930s will be struck by the attention given to promotion of the ALP Debating Competition, the ALP Tennis Association, the ALP Golf Club, the Younger Set, with its competitions in football (rugby league), tennis and vigoro, and Labor’s Annual Ball, with the competition for ‘Miss ALP’. A great deal of time and effort was put into such activities which may seem rather quaint to a modern reader. However, these were an essential part of Lang’s vision of sinking the roots of the Labor Party deep into the local communities, instead of having to rely upon an industrial movement that was too often the enemy of the party. The modern reader might well wonder what the Labor Party does to connect with local communities in the 21st Century.
CHAPTER 2
Australian Labor Party,
New South Wales Branch
Annual Conference, 2 – 15 April 1926

Report in The Sydney Morning Herald

Although the Executive Report prepared for this Conference covered the activity of the two previous years, it was never discussed at Conference. There had been no Conference at all in 1925, while the 1926 Conference adjourned before any item on the business paper (including the Executive Report and balance sheet) could be discussed. Although sittings were held over 11 days (or evenings) virtually all business was concerned with factional struggles for supremacy in the Labor Party. In this respect there had been little advance since 1925. The supposed business of Conference – the articulation of party policy – had been abandoned for the time being.

According to the account in the Herald, which is probably accurate enough, there were three voting blocks in the Conference. The first was that of the incumbent Executive – the Magrath-Tyrrell faction as it was named – which had its origins in the Trades Hall coalition centred on the Miners’ Federation. This Willis group was strongly supportive of Premier Lang. It was opposed by two factions: on the right was the AWU, and on the left was the group of militant and pro-Communist delegates led by J Beasley. The AWU and militants combined in early votes of the Conference to deny Executive control of the meeting. It would seem that the Executive had by 1926 become almost as unpopular among ordinary branch and union members as had that of Bailey’s AWU in 1923. The main symbolic victory of the anti-Executive forces was to have both president Magrath and vice-president Tyrrell deposed from their Executive and chair roles because they were members of the Upper House. However, on the most important matter discussed – the election of a new Executive – the AWU combined with the moderates to exclude the militants, as had been the recommendation of Premier Lang. This altered the power balance in the Executive, with Lang’s supporters commanding the presidency but with the AWU holding a significant minority, which soon became a majority, of Executive positions. On the Conference floor, the new Executive could not even control the Agenda Committee. The
dangers of this situation were made very clear when new chairman W Seale closed the Conference on 13 April – only for the AWU to reopen a rump Conference on 14 April. The new Executive would become completely unworkable, leading to a Special Conference in November 1926 and a serious split, with two rival Executives in the NSW ALP during 1927.

Meanwhile, of course, Lang was the Premier of New South Wales, and involved in an ongoing contest with the Upper House which was determined to block almost all Labor’s reform agenda. Factional divisions were obvious inside Caucus, threatening Lang’s survival. Although significant reforms were pushed through (as detailed in the Executive Report) it was clear that Lang had almost no room for political manoeuvring. In that situation his instincts were to confront, rather than compromise. He still had strong support in local metropolitan branches and in the wider city electorate, so his strategy was to become more and more populist – pitting his support among the ‘rank and file’ and ordinary workers against his enemies in the press, the conservative political parties, and the factions opposing him inside his party.

Executive Report of NSW ALP for 1924 and 1925

(Mitchell Library Manuscripts, 329.3106/3)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 35th Annual Report and Balance Sheet of the Australian Labor Party, State of New South Wales, is hereby submitted for your consideration.

Since the presentation of the last Report no less than 98 new branches have been established throughout the State. This is a record never previously achieved in the history of the Movement, and is a clear index of the popularity and virility of the Movement. As opportunity offers we intend making a visit of inspection to every Branch in the State, with view to consolidating and extending present activities. While our organisation has never previously achieved such a high degree of efficiency, there is still room for improvement, and much can be accomplished in this direction during the ensuing year.

Following are the new branches formed:
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<td>West Wallsend</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

It is pleasing to report that 98 unions are now affiliated. New affiliations under Rule 19 and 6 are as follows:-

- Bedstead Makers
- Fire Brigade Employees
- Loco. Enginedrivers and Firemen
- Federated Gas Employees

Radio Telegraphists.
Furnishing Trades
(Newcastle).
Executive Meetings

The Executive have held since last Conference 62 meetings, at which the attendances have been as follows:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anderson, JG</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>(R) Lynch, J</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baines, C</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Magrath, EC</td>
<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>(R) Burke, F</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(R) Melville, Mrs A</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Butler, WJ</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>(R) McGarry, J</td>
<td>54</td>
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<tr>
<td>(A) Buckland, G</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>(R) McLelland, D</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Beashel, R</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>(R) Miller, FE</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(A) Bodkin, Mrs G</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mills, WJ</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbines, W</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>(A) McGrath, G</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conran, J</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>O’Reilly, JF</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connell, J</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Padgen, WT</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conroy, F</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Potter, H</td>
<td>60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clyne, D</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Rees, D</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culbert, J</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Roberts, F</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doyle, T</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Seale, WH</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(AR) Dwyer, Mrs K</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sinclair, RH</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>(AR) Davoren, JM</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(R) Smith, G</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fowler, Mrs L</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Stapleton, Mrs S</td>
<td>57</td>
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<td>(A) Falkingham, J</td>
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<td>(A) Graves, J</td>
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<td>Tyrrell, J</td>
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<td>(A) Golding, Miss A</td>
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<td>(R) Thompson, WH</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>Johnston, Miss S</td>
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<td>(R) Willis, AC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kaine, J</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sixty-two Meetings were held from 9/6/’24 till 19/2/’26.
(A) – Denotes: Alternate. (R) – Denotes: Resigned.
(AR) – Denotes: Alternate Resigned.

In Memoriam

The Labor Movement sustained a great loss in the death of Senator Allan McDougall, and again in the death of Senator JM Power, who had been elected to fill Senator McDougall’s place. The loss of two such Labor stalwarts was deplored by all. Their record of achievement will long be remembered.

A Senate Appointment

Mr WA Gibbs, Assistant Secretary of the ALP, was selected to contest the vacancy, and was successful in defeating ex-Senator J Thomas and Colonel Abbott at the joint sitting of both Houses of the State Parliament held to select Senator Power’s successor.

Selection Ballot Regulations

Immediately after the 1924 Conference concluded the Executive appointed a Committee, consisting of Messrs Magrath, Tyrrell, O’Reilly, Conroy and Smith, to consider the Rules relating to selection ballots, and to draft Regulations to govern such ballots to prevent, as far as possible,
manipulation in connection therewith. The Committee’s recommendations were adopted, and issued to Branches. The result was a very substantial improvement in the many selection ballots, which were conducted in connection with the elections for the State and Federal Parliaments, these being markedly free from many of the irregular practices which had aroused resentment on earlier occasions.

**Municipal Elections**

The Sydney Municipal Elections were held in December, 1924, and resulted in a great victory for the Labor Party, the final result being: Labor 15, Nationalists 11.

Unusual vigor was displayed by the Reform Party prior to and during the election period, and every effort had to be made to combat the intensive organising work which was conducted through an army of paid canvassers. Our candidates entered the contest with confidence, and despite many handicaps succeeded in commanding a satisfactory majority. The Party’s work since attaining office has entrenched it in the public favor.

The election of Lord Mayor for 1925 resulted in a win for Alderman PV Stokes, and this success was repeated for 1926.

**State Elections**

The State elections were held on 30th May, 1925, and the Party achieved a notable success, effectively routing the Fuller-Nationalist Government. When the elections were precipitated Labor held 36 seats out of 90, and returned from the polls with 46 seats. This splendid result was attributable to the awakened enthusiasm of the Movement to the unqualified adherence to the platform, to effective organising, and to the strongest of disclaimers that Labor had anything in common with the methods of the Communist Party. The reactionary opposition proved unequal to the contest, despite the assistance of the Press, money, canvassers, and, on election date, an unlimited number of cars and other vehicles in which they brought the voter to the polls. The unity of Labor’s organisation, led spiritedly by Mr Lang, evoked general commendation, and more than anything else showed that despite the storms and stress of past years there was a revival of interest and service within the Movement comparable with that of other days.

Since attaining office in June last the Labor Government and the Lang Ministry have resolutely attempted to realise a full measure of Labor’s policy. Probably no half-year in our political life has been so crowded with Legislative achievement as that ending with the year 1925, and it affords your Executive added pleasure to state that the measures proceeded with were in many cases of first rank importance. The criticism levelled at the Government by the Opposition and the daily Press
has been markedly intolerant, but that, we think, is the surest indication of the genuineness of the legislation from a Labor viewpoint. As the measures dealt with are enumerated elsewhere, and will be mentioned at the Annual Conference, it is unnecessary to comment more at this juncture.

**Legislative Council**

But this reference to the activities of the State Labor Party would be incomplete without mention of the steps taken in an attempt to abolish the Legislative Council. Action was initiated when the Government was but a few months old, owing to the Council emasculating a number of important measures, for which it claimed the Government had no mandate. Among these was the Arbitration Bill, Electoral Bill, Juvenile Migrants Bill, Waterloo Municipality Absorption Bill, and several others.

Acquiescence in the destruction of important principles in these measures would largely have negatived the Party’s programme, and made it impossible to express Labor ideals in any contemplated legislation. Protracted negotiations with the Governor ensued, with the object of strengthening the Party’s representation in the Council, and after much outcry by the Opposition concluded in the appointment on the 21st December of 25 members of the Movement, selected by the Parliamentary Party from members endorsed by the Executive. The result was a triumph for the determination of Mr Lang and his advisers. Upon the session being resumed in January a Bill to abolish the Council passed the first reading stage on a vote of 46 to 44, and was in the second reading stage when the session ended. Several Labor members had ‘paired’ with Opposition members, and for this reason were unable in that Session to record an affirmative vote. A new session was entered upon on the 9th February, and on the 23rd February the Abolition Bill was again submitted to the Council, but its re-entry was refused by 47 votes to 41.

No emphasis need be given in this report to the necessity for the steps taken to fulfil this important plank of the platform. Second Chambers have always been the citadels of Conservatism, and are an anachronism in any country where self-government purports to be the expression of the people’s will. In past years our Annual Conferences have urged Labor Governments to do what has now been vigorously attempted, and what has won for this Government the unstinted applause of the Movement.

**Presidential Changes**

Following the success of the State Labor Party, Mr AC Willis, President, was invited to join the Lang Ministry. He was appointed a member of the Legislative Council, and Vice-President of the Executive Council. Acceptance of the latter office induced him to resign the Presidency of the ALP on the 17th June, 1925, whereupon your Executive was pleased
to record its appreciation of his services. Mr EC Magrath succeeds him, and Mr F Conroy was elected Vice-President.

**Legislative Council Appointments**

Messrs EC Magrath, President and JJ Tyrrell, Vice-President, were appointed to the Legislative Council on the 31st July, 1925, and a further batch of 25 pledged Labor supporters on the 21st December, 1925.

**Federal Elections**

Unfortunately, our success in the State Election was not repeated at the Federal Election, held in November last. With Labor in power in five States of the Commonwealth, there was justification for looking with confidence to the result of an appeal to the people in the wider political sphere. But the worst happened. Undoubtedly the principal causes of our defeat were the British Seamen’s Strike and the sinister influence of the Communists, who, while doing everything in their power to destroy the ALP, sought to attach themselves to the coat-tails of the Party. The strike arose from no local grievance, and affected each State of the Commonwealth. The maritime services of Australia were dislocated. In some States disturbances occurred which the daily Press seized upon and used to the prejudice of the Party. A settlement was possible only with the consent of parties overseas, and as a consequence the struggle, which had commenced prior to the election campaign, continued over the whole period of the campaign, and aroused so much resentment as to substantially contribute to our defeat.

The anti-Labor forces also made the most of the existence of the Communist Party and its revolutionary theories, and sought to show that it was an integral part of the Australian Labor Movement. The past efforts of the Communists to effect affiliation with us, although in every case futile, helped our opponents materially, and these, coupled with printed and spoken utterances of ‘Red’ leaders, provided the agents of the Nationalist Party with a volume of matter so foreign to Australian ideals as to divorce support in a more effective manner than any other matter or criticism could, which the Nationalists had available.

There has been comment that our machinery or organisation was defective, but this was the same as brought success in the State Elections. The fact that the numbers of the Federal Party were reduced from 28 to 23 show that the causes of the defeat were common to all the States. In New South Wales we lost the Barton and Gwydir Electorates. The first was always a doubtful Labor seat, and was won for the first time in 1922. Gwydir was won in 1922 by about 27 votes. In Victoria the Wannon electorate was lost; in South Australia, Angas; in Tasmania, Denison; whilst in Queensland Mr Theodore was defeated for Herbert, for which his return was regarded as certain. It has also to be remembered that every
seat held in the Senate throughout Australia was lost, no less popular a member than Senator Gardiner being defeated.

There are lessons to be drawn from the defeat which it behoves the Movement to take into early and serious consideration if the Federal Party is to go forward to victory. There is no occasion for pessimism. If the facts are faced in a spirit of understanding and with a determination to do the right thing this temporary setback may even prove a blessing in disguise.

**Postponement of Conference**

Because of pending State elections, and a probably early Federal election, the Executive deemed it advisable to postpone, and later annul, the 1925 Conference.

Circumstances necessitating this action were unique, and very probably will never occur again. The State elections were held on 30th May, and had the Conference been called at Easter a number of candidates for Parliament, and many officers of Councils and Branches would have had their organising work, then in full swing, interrupted. The finances of many country Branches would also have been depleted, as the cost of sending delegates to the city is heavy. The Executive felt that it could, with benefit to the Movement, postpone the date of Conference until June, but this month proved wholly unsuitable owing to the results of the State Elections not being finalised until the month was nearly out. The second half of 1925 was full of political uncertainty by reason of a dispute between the Federal Country Party, lead by Mr Stewart, and the Nationalists. An election threatened early in August, but was averted after some weeks of finessing.

As the life of the Federal Parliament was nearly run it was known that an election was not far distant, and that the Nationalist Party were frantically seeking a favorable opening. This came through the shipping strike. An election campaign was immediately precipitated and the election took place on 14th November. The Christmas and New Year holidays were deemed unsuitable for many reasons.

The Executive takes this opportunity of refuting the contention that it had something to gain by not calling a Conference. Indeed, the fact that under its guidance the City Council Election and the State Election had been won should have induced it to want to meet delegates. That which was best in the interest of the Movement was done, as consideration of all the facts, and the present position of the Movement, will show.

**Special Conference Requisitioned**

Shortly after the 1924 Annual Conference had disbanded an agitation was started by some Unions for a Special Conference, to be held to consider the abolition of selection ballots, and the Executive decided to hold
a Conference on the 30th August, 1924. After further consideration it was resolved not to proceed with the holding of such Conference.

Your Executive decided to ascertain the authority of the Unions which had petitioned it, and after waiting some time received replies from 21 Unions. Of this number eight were satisfactory and thirteen quite unsatisfactory. In view of this condition, and also because of the fact that only one of the 25 Electorate Councils whose province it is to conduct selection ballots had supported the petition, it was apparent that there was no urgent or bona-fide need for a Conference.

Federal Conference

The Tenth Commonwealth Conference opened in Melbourne on 27th October, 1924, and continued sitting for several days. Each State was represented by six delegates. Messrs Willis, Blakeley, Magrath, O’Reilly, Tyrrell, and Lonergan, representing New South Wales. Matters arising from the Ballot Box disclosures occupied a large part of the time of Conference and in a vote of 19 to 17 resulted satisfactorily to NSW. Later in the Conference it was agreed to afford Messrs Bailey, Bramston, Buckley and Sutherland an opportunity to appeal to a tribunal consisting of three Labor Premiers, or, failing acceptance by three, then one Premier. Mr Theodore accepted.

After an exhaustive inquiry Mr Theodore endorsed the expulsion findings of the State Ballot Box Committee in regard to Messrs Bailey, Buckley and Bramston, but found that the evidence did not warrant the conviction of Mr GH Sutherland, and ordered his reinstatement into the Labor Movement.

Communist Affiliation

The Communist question was discussed by the Federal Conference, and the following Rules were adopted:

1. Neither the Communist Party nor a Branch thereof may be or become affiliated with the ALP.
2. No member of the Communist Party may be or become a member of the Australian Labor Party.

These Rules were referred to State Branches to be observed. Other important matters dealt with by the Federal Conference covered Childhood Endowment, Country Policy, Fighting Platform, Finance, and Taxation Reform, and Defence Policy.

Conclusion

In concluding this report it is pleasing to state that at no time during the past five years has there been a more satisfactory condition of affairs within the Movement than that now existing. The renewal of confidence in the orderly administration of the Movement’s affairs has resulted in
the restoration of public goodwill. Nothing is more marked than the absence of internal disorder – so fruitful a source of comment and criticism in the past – and such successes as have been realised, are in a large part due to this. There is, and probably always will be, divided opinion as to what policy and procedure should be adopted from time to time, but free discussion on controversial matters can readily be distinguished from acrimonious disputes and discord, and when conducted within the limits set out by our Rules is a source of strength.

It is appropriate to add a word of approval of the work done for the Movement by the Labor Daily. Its consistent advocacy of our policy and activities has done much to dispel the misrepresentation of the anti-Labor Press, and better inform our members on current topics, than was possible by any other medium.

I desire to sincerely thank all Branch Secretaries and officials for their hearty cooperation in the cause we all have at heart. There is no gainsaying the fact that our successes could never have been achieved without the whole-hearted support and sympathy of the Branch officials and the untiring energy and zeal of the Head Office staff.

W Carey, General Secretary. EC Magrath, President. February, 1926.

**Report of the Parliamentary Labor Party**

It is with pleasure that I submit for the consideration of Conference the report of the activities of the Parliamentary Labor Party since the assembling of the last Conference.

Prior to the Elections of May, 1925, the Parliamentary Party strained every effort to defeat, on the floor of the House, measures brought in by the then Nationalist Government, which were thought to be inimical to the interests of the workers. Fortunately, as a result of the splendid victory achieved by the Party at the polls, we changed from the Opposition to the Government benches. Since then I think it can honestly be said that the utmost diligence and expedition have been displayed in attending to the work we were returned to perform.

Mr Lang, as the Premier, is in the happy position of having a united and loyal party behind him. His aptitude for hard and constant work has had an inspiring effect on all Members of the Party, with the result that a great amount of work has been done.

The practice of having the sittings of the House take place in the daytime was put into operation, and has worked very satisfactorily.
Measures Passed During 1925 Session

Forty-Four Hours’ Week Bill

Upon the legislative side of the Government’s activities many Bills were passed. As promised by Mr Lang in his Policy Speech, the Forty-Four Hours’ Week Bill was made the law of the State. The Government can take credit for the expedition with which this Bill was brought about, the small amount of expense to which the Unions were put to obtain the shorter week – in the great majority of case no expense at all was caused to the Unions – and the fact that the law was generally applied and not restricted to any particular industries.

This measure gives effect to the Government’s policy to reduce the standard of ordinary working hours in industry to 44 per week. The Act extends to all industries, other than coal-mining, to which the Industrial Arbitration Act applies, and has been operative as from the 4th January 1926. It restricts the ordinary working hours to not exceeding:

- 8 in 24 hours.
- 44 per week.
- 88 per fortnight.
- 132 in three weeks.
- 176 in four weeks.

And it ensures that the ordinary working time in excess of eight hour a day shall be worked only in such cases as an award or agreement allows the change as part of a working period during which the hours above prescribed are not exceeded. The limitation of ordinary working hours so prescribed must be observed by the Court in making awards, and by parties in making industrial agreements, while current awards and agreements are deemed to incorporate the relevant limitation. Existing weekly rates must not be reduced by reason only of the prescribed reduction of hours, and where wages are fixed on an hourly or daily basis, and such hours are reduced under the Act, wages will without any Court’s order or variation of award or agreement be so increased as to provide to employees working full time the same amounts they received in respect of working in full the hours previously prescribed. Where employment has been fixed by an award before the Act at, say, a weekly working period, the hours may not be extended to a fortnightly period except by award or an agreement made by consent. A six-day working week is assured except in continuous processes, but even then an employee may not be required to work more than 11 days in a fortnight, which in practice will mean an observance of a short and long break in shift work. Meal or crib time, which, by award, agreement, or well-established practice at the commencement of the Act has been included in the hours of labor, will count as ordinary working time under the Act. The Act permits overtime at rates fixed by award or agreement, but the working
of overtime may be restricted or prohibited in order to distribute the work available in an industry so as to relieve unemployment.

Special provision is made for those employees whose working conditions are regulated by a Federal Award or Industrial Agreement. Where the ordinary hours so fixed exceed forty-four the employee shall be paid, in addition to the minimum wages fixed by such award or agreement, further wages according to the scale prescribed in respect of hours worked in excess of forty-four per week.

**Government Railways (Amendment) Act – (1917 Loyalists Bill)**

The difficult problem for the Government to solve was that of giving justice to the Railway and Tramway men who suffered as a result of the 1917 upheaval. Less than two months after the Government took charge the Premier instructed the Railway Commissioners to restore the 1917 men to the positions of seniority they would have occupied if the strike had not taken place, also to regress the loyalists to the positions they would have held under similar circumstances. The Commissioners were preparing the new lists when the Nationalists put a case through the Courts, and the decision, on technical grounds, was given against the Government. Within three hours of the decision being known the Premier introduced a Bill into the Assembly giving the Government the powers which the Court said it did not possess. The measure, however, was defeated in the Upper House, and it was not until the Government had made a number of new appointments to the Legislative Council that the Government’s intentions became law.

**Widow’s Pensions Bill**

During the Election the Premier made a special feature of a proposal to give pensions to widows. This promise was carried into effect.

**Income Tax (Amendment) and Income Tax (Management) Amendment Bills**

It has been the usual custom for our critics to say that Labor Governments in power only means increased taxation, but in his first Budget speech the Premier reduced taxation – at least so far as it concerns those who are least able to pay taxation. In addition to this, provision has been made to collect taxes from the wealthy American Moving Picture Combine, which has hitherto been able to avoid paying its fair share to the Taxation Department of this State.

**Returned Soldiers’ Settlement (Amendment) Bill and Farm Produce Agents’ Bill**

In country matters we were able to pass two Bills, which should give great relief to the man on the land. The Returned Soldiers’ Settlement
(Amendment) Bill solves the problem of the many settlers who took up land under the conditions of the Act. It enables the Government to write down the settler’s indebtedness to the Crown to a point where he can hope to make his farm a payable proposition. Through no fault of his own, the settler was saddled with a load of debt which was due to the bungling of previous administrations, and it was not equitable that he should be charged for Governmental mistakes. The other measure which should assist farmers was that which regulates the conditions under which their produce is handled by City agents. Under this Act the agent must keep a trust account; he must make more prompt returns and record such details of his transactions as will make it possible to quickly debit any attempt on the agent’s part to rob the farmer.

**Constitution (Amendment) Bill**

The Bill which allows women to be appointed to the Upper House gives an impetus to the movement for the recognition of women’s equality. The old Council was very averse to admitting women to the Upper House, and it was not until the Labor twenty-five were appointed that the Bill was passed.

**Coal Mines Regulation (Amendment) Bill,**

which was assented to on the 28th September, 1925, repealed the Coal Mines Regulation (Amendment) Act, 1917. It provides:

That no person shall work as a coalgetter or shalegetter in the face of the workings of a mine unless:

(a) He has been employed or has worked for two years in or about the face of the workings of a mine as a coalgetter or shale-getter; or

(b) He works in company with a person who has been employed or has worked for two years in or about the face of the workings of a mine as a coalgetter or a shalegetter.

**Mines Rescue Bill**

This Bill was also assented to on the 28th September, and came into operation on the 31st December. It relates to the carrying out of rescue operations in coal and shale mines, and provision is made for:

(a) The establishment, equipment, maintenance, and control of rescue stations and rescue corps;

(b) The establishment of certain mines of rescue brigades;

(c) The provision at mines of breathing apparatus and accessories and the training of men in the use thereof.

Central Rescue Stations are to be established in each of the coalmining districts. The control, maintenance and upkeep of these stations is vested
in a District Committee, consisting of the Check Inspector of the District and four persons nominated by the owners of mines in the district. The boundaries of the districts to be served by these stations have been proclaimed in accordance with the provisions of the Act, and are known as the South Maitland, Newcastle, Western, and Southern Rescue Station Districts. It is proposed to erect central stations within these districts, at Abermain, Cockle Creek, Lithgow and Bulli. The owners of the mines within the district are required to contribute to a fund, which will be under the control of the District Committee, and utilised by them for the purpose of the establishment of the stations and their maintenance, upkeep, etc.

The Regulations necessary to give effect to the provisions of the Act were published in the Government Gazette on the 11th December, 1925. A small publication, giving the salient points of the Mines Rescue Act, has been issued by the Department, and will prove of great assistance to persons interested in rescue operations at coal and shale mines.

This Act is possibly one of the most comprehensive of its kind. It is exemplification of the trend of modern thought in providing for the safety and welfare of those engaged in hazardous occupations, and the knowledge that trained men, suitably equipped, will be available in the event of accident or disaster, will undoubtedly remove a load of anxiety from the minds of miners and their dependents, and create a greater sense of security. The passage of this piece of legislation from another point of view represents a marked advance in the industrial scale of the persons employed in the coalmining industry.

A special officer has been appointed to ensure that the provisions the Mines Rescue Act are complied with, and that all appliances, apparatus, material, etc., are maintained in good order and condition. This officer will also devote portion of his time to the preparation of bulletins, pamphlets, etc., and in the delivery of lectures in an endeavor to inculcate the principles of 'Safety First', thus minimising the risk of accident.

**Fair Rents (Amendment) Act 1926**

This Act is primarily designed give security of tenure to occupant of premises coming within the scope of the Fair Rents Law. The principal Act has been extended to include shops leased at a rental of not more than £6 a week. Subject to certain exceptions, expressed in Clause 3, every such shop and every dwelling let at not more than £3 a week, irrespective of the period of the lease in either case, are now within the jurisdiction of the Court. Provision is made to restrict the right of a landlord to possession, and the Act will prevent the eviction of a tenant who pays his rent and otherwise observes the terms of his lease, unless for certain clearly defined reasons. Landlords are also debarred, unless they can show reasonable cause, from determining a lease during the period for which the fair rent of the premises has been fixed.
The Imperial Distress for Rent Act, which was passed in 1737, has been amended. In that Statute any person proved to the Court to have removed his goods in contravention of its provisions was ordered to pay double the value of the goods removed. The Amendment provides that the offender shall be liable to such sum not exceeding double the rent owing as the Court thinks reasonable.

**Juvenile Migrants’ Bill**

The Juvenile Migrants’ Apprenticeship Act, passed in 1923, is now being repealed. That Act not only had very objectionable features, but experience showed that proper administration of it had practically become impossible. It provided for the apprenticeship of migrant lads, who could only come out on an undertaking to enter into apprenticeship to be arranged for them, but experience showed that the lads resented being bound by indentures to employers, of whom they had no previous knowledge, and with whom they might not be prepared to continue in employment, and as the result they absconded, and evaded contracts.

The Bill abandons the system of indentured apprenticeship of these lads. In its place the Bill provides for those juveniles who, with their parents, so desire an assurance that the Minister will stand in the relation of legal guardian to the juvenile. Juveniles desiring to migrate to this State for rural or domestic employment will be able, with the consent of their parents or guardians, either in England or upon arrival here, to sign a statement that they wish to be placed under the care or control of the Minister for Labor and Industry. In effect, the Bill will provide that a juvenile may be a ward of the Minister, and may have recourse to him in any circumstances that may arise.

Rural employment will be found for each lad who, upon arrival, may be sent for experience to a Government Training Farm, where he will be taught farm training under local conditions. After completion of training, employment will be found for him with a suitable employer. As the Minister’s guardianship will exist only where it is desired, the Minister may act, if necessary, in recovering wages for any juvenile who asks him to do so.

The juvenile will be entirely free as to future employment, but before he is dismissed or transfers to another employer notice must be given to the Minister.

The Minister’s responsibilities under his guardianship will be protected by a provision that any third party who interferes between an employer and a juvenile without authority of the Minister, such as inducing the juvenile to leave the employment or by removing him from his employer, or preventing him from returning to his employer, will be liable to a penalty. But this provision is not to be deemed to prevent a juvenile from terminating his employment, but in that event he is to notify the Minister of the fact.
Gas (Amendment) Bill, 1926

Two important amendments are included in this Bill. In the first place it corrects an ambiguity in the Gas Act, 1912, by providing clearly that the Minister, as well as the Auditor-General, may cause an audit and examination of the books of any Gas Company. Because of the interpretation which had been placed on the original Section the Minister had no power to appoint an accountant or an officer of the Public Service to examine the accounts of Gas Companies, and consequently he had no means of securing a second opinion causing an inquiry to be undertaken to inquire into the selling price of gas. The new provision will enable the necessary information to be secured for purposes of such inquiries and remedy the insufficiency of evidence which has been experienced in the past.

A further amendment will enable the Minister, in the interest of consumers of gas, to exempt Gas Companies, whose selling price is controlled under the Act, from the illuminating power provisions, and to substitute a standard of heating power which may be found upon inquiry by the Board, which the Bill proposes to constitute, to be most advantageous to the consumers.

The standards heretofore fixed in relation to gas under the Act of 1912 includes an illuminating standard which had to be preserved in the manufacture of gas. The illuminating standard, consequent upon improvements in the form of burners, is now regarded as being obsolete, and of little value in safeguarding the interests of consumers. Experience has shown that, with the abolition of this standard, the cost of production of gas can be cheapened, whilst the interests of consumers are fully protected.

The Board of Inquiry, which the Bill proposes to constitute, will consist of three Members, one each to be nominated by the Minister and the Gas Company concerned, and the third, the Chairman, to be a person agreed upon between the Minister and the Companies. The Board will have the necessary powers of a Royal Commission to enable it to function.

The Bill will further enable the Gas Company, after inquiry by the Board – held by the Board at the expense of the Company – to carry on operations and supply gas outside the area which its franchise covers. This will enable any district which may wish to be supplied with gas, and which the Gas Companies are now unable to supply owing to the limitations imposed upon them by very old Acts, to have their needs satisfied upon conditions which will be fixed by the Board.

Rural Workers’ Accommodation Bill

This Bill will repeal the Shearers’ Accommodation Act of 1901. The Act of 1901 was limited to requiring certain accommodation to be provided for shearers only, and, as to those, it did not apply to sheds where less than six shearers were employed. The Bill will require the new and improved
standard of accommodation which the Bill prescribes to be provided for rural workers generally, a rural worker being defined as “a person employed for any period exceeding 24 hours in an agricultural or pastoral occupation”.

Apart from its limited scope, the 1901 Act did not, except in a few directions, prescribe specifically what should be provided to ensure the comfort and well-being of the workers whom it was intended to protect. The question as to what constituted accommodation which was proper and sufficient for the comfort and health of shearers was left in the ultimate for the determination of a Court of Petty Sessions. The provisions of the Bill have been framed with due regard to the advance in the standard of living conditions which has evolved during the past 24 years. The improved accommodation requirements prescribed by the Bill include, in the case where not less than five rural workers are employed:

(a) Increasing the air space for each worker in any sleeping compartment from 240 to 480 cubic feet;
(b) Restricting sleeping compartments to not more than two workers;
(c) Prohibiting the use of upper bunks in any sleeping compartment.
(d) Separate accommodation for dining and cooking;
(e) Improved hygienic sanitary arrangements;
(f) Sufficient light, including artificial illumination;
(g) Cleaning and disinfecting of accommodation used by workers;
(h) Proper cooking, drinking and washing utensils and flyproof safe for each kitchen and dining-room;
(i) Supply of good drinking water and baths, and adequate supply of water for bathing purposes where available;
(j) Where twenty or more workers are accommodated in one group, a hut-keeper to be provided by employer to maintain cleanliness of accommodation;
(k) Notice to be given by employer of intention to commence work upon which it is proposed to employ workers not regularly and continuously employed.

In the case of employment where less than five workers are employed, the Bill will provide the accommodation to be provided for them to be good and sufficient, and provision will be made for the appointment of inspectors to ensure the carrying out of this requirement. Regulations may be made under the Bill providing for the separate accommodation for persons of Asiatic race. Provision will be made for the temporary accommodation of canecutters, while power will be given to the Minister to grant exemption from the Act.
Workers’ Compensation Bill 1926

Realising the need for an up-to-date measure of compensation to workers this Bill has been drafted on the line of legislation in operation in Great Britain and the United States of America, and will bring this State’s law into conformity with the most modern compensation laws in other parts of the world. Most of the improvement made by the laws of Great Britain, United States, the Australian States, and New Zealand, have been incorporated, with necessary modifications, to meet local conditions, in the new Bill.

The Bill represents the most comprehensive measure which could be enacted, and among its seventy clauses the following are the main provisions:

Under it will be constituted a Workers’ Compensation Commission of three members who, having the powers of a Commission under the Royal Commissions Act, will have exclusive jurisdiction to determine all questions arising under the Act. Its decisions will be final, and not liable to be challenged in any Court so far as compensation determinations are concerned.

The Commission may summon a medical referee to sit with it as assessor or, in connection with its consideration of any case, may refer any matter to a medical referee or medical board for a report.

The Commission is required to furnish workers and employers with information as to their rights and liabilities under the Act, and make reasonable efforts to conciliate and bring parties to agreements when disputes have arisen.

The expenses of the Commission will be met from a fund which will be contributed to upon a percent basis by each insurer under the Act.

The Bill provides additional payments to total dependants and permanently and totally disabled workmen. In the case of death the payment to total dependants is four years’ earnings, but not less than £400 nor more than £800. Weekly payments and lump sums paid before death of the worker may be deducted, but upon death £200 is to be paid irrespective of deductions, also £25 for each child under 16. Where a worker leaves no dependants burial expenses up to £30 are provided.

In the case of incapacity the rate of compensation payment has been increased, providing payment of 66\(\frac{2}{3}\) per cent of earnings during the previous twelve months, up to £3 per week (the adult minimum being £2 per week), and, in addition, in the case of a married worker, of £1 per week for wife and 8/6 for each child totally or mainly dependant upon him, with a limit of the average weekly earnings of the worker, or £5 per week, whichever is the smaller.

The total liability of an employer is increased from £750 to £1000, except in the case of a worker who is permanently and totally disabled, in which case he will be entitled to the weekly payment indefinitely.
Medical benefits up to £50 are provided for incapacitated workers. Such benefits are limited to a period of three months, but the Commission may extend either the payment or the period.

Where a partially incapacitated worker is unable to obtain employment his incapacity for a period may be treated as total incapacity for purposes of compensation.

Redemption of weekly payments by a lump sum has to be determined by the Commission, having regard to the injury, age and occupation of the worker at the time of the occurrence of the injury.

The Bill provides for specified lump-sum payments for various injuries, ranging from £675, in the case of loss of either arm or the greater part of either arm, to £75 in respect of the loss of a joint or a toe.

The Bill requires, under penalty, compulsory insurance of employers against their liability under it to their workers. The form of the policy will be prescribed by regulations, and will provide that the insurer shall be directly liable to the worker or his dependants under the policy.

Licenses will be issued to carry on workmen’s compensation insurance business, which may be suspended or terminated if the insurer is unable to meet his liability or fails to comply with the material provisions of the Act or is persistently acting in breach of the Bill.

To avoid the risk of an insurer with whom an employer may be insured avoiding his liability owing to financial circumstances, insurers are required to lodge deposits with the Colonial Treasurer of £6000, or £10,000, according to their annual income.

Contracting out of the benefits of the Act is prohibited, and employers must not deduct any money from wages of a worker in respect of any liability order the Act.

Employers are required to keep posted at their place of employment a summary of the requirements of the Act regarding the giving of notice of injuries and the making of claims.

The Commission is empowered to provide money from its funds for the vocational re-education and rehabilitation of disabled workers. Government Departments are to render assistance to the Commission in this respect.

The statement below shows the comparative benefits under the Act of 1916 and the new Bill.

Payment of compensation under the new measure is due three days after incapacity, instead of one week as previously.

The compensation which the Bill provides is payable for physical injury contracted by a workman at the place of employment to which the employment was a contributing factor. This will include all industrial diseases as being compensatable.
### Comparative Table of Compensation Payments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Workmen’s Compensation Act, 1916</th>
<th>Workers’ Compensation Bill, 1925</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DEATH:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Dependants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earnings</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>4 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>£300</td>
<td>£400.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>£500</td>
<td>£800.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deductions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly payments and lump sums paid during incapacity</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>Not to be reduced below £200.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children under 16 yrs.</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>£25.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partial dependants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sums not exceeding above; reasonable and proportion to the injury sustained.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minor leaving no dependants</strong></td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>£200.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No dependants</strong></td>
<td>£20 for medical and</td>
<td>£30 for burial expenses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INCAPACITY:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average weekly earnings</td>
<td>66 ⅔ p.c.</td>
<td>66 ⅔ p.c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult minimum</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>£2 a week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>£3 a week</td>
<td>£3 a week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum (married worker)</td>
<td>£3 a week</td>
<td>Average weekly earning of £5. 1 a week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child under 14</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>8/6 a week:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit of liability</td>
<td>£750</td>
<td>£1,000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total and permanent disablement</td>
<td>£750</td>
<td>Unlimited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minors</td>
<td>100 p.c. to 15/- a week</td>
<td>100 p.c. to 30/- a week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEDICAL BENEFITS:</strong></td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>To £50, or for 3 mths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Commission may increase.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LUMP SUMS:</strong></td>
<td>nil except by agreement</td>
<td>Commission may order to see table.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Industrial Arbitration (Amendment) Bill

One of the main purposes of this Bill is to set up an Industrial Commission with conciliation committees for each industry before which the persons who are more particularly concerned with the working conditions in industry will regulate their difficulties instead of having to go to the Court as at present. Court procedure involving litigation of industrial differences invariably results in dissatisfaction for one side or the other, if not for both. Ill feelings are inseparable from all classes of litigation. The opportunities for legal arguments in the Court of Industrial Arbitration overbear the real matter presented for discussion, and serve to defeat the purpose for which the Court was created. Far more satisfactory results will be achieved by providing that the representatives of employers and employees in the industry shall, in the first place, meet among themselves, and by mutual discussions rather than by formal proceedings and litigation dispose of their difficulties. The conciliation committees to be established under the Act will provide these means.

The Industrial Commission will supervise and coordinate the work of these committees. It will consist of a Commissioner and an equal number of employer and employee members directly representing the particular interests involved from time to time. The Commission will also deal with questions which are wider than the limits of any one industry, as, for instance, in a group of industries such as the Iron Trades, the Printing or Building Trades Groups. Such wider questions will also include the declaration of the living wage basis for all industries, and, generally speaking the Commission will exercise the present powers of the Board of Trade, other than apprenticeship. Apprenticeship will be controlled by the conciliation committee for the industry concerned.

The Commission may also deal with disputes that simultaneously affect a number of industries.

The members sitting with the Commission will be chosen from nominations made by the parties concerned in the particular matter to be determined, and will change as the interest in the subject matter before the Commission changes. In this way, the parties directly concerned will always have a voice and a vote in a decision.

The Commission will hear appeals from the committee for an industry, in which case the Commission will include the members of the committee other than the chairman. The members of the Commission and of committees will not receive any remuneration, but the Commissioner and the Chairman of Committees will be remunerated by the State. The agreements or decisions arrived at by the committees will have binding effect as an award for the industry. The legal fraternity will be excluded from proceedings to regulate employment in an industry, except by consent of the Commission or committee, as the case may be, and all the parties.
The Bill makes clear the intention to include under it all employees of the Government, whether they are directly employed by the Crown or indirectly by an authority created by the Crown for carrying out functions of the Government. The benefits of the Act are being restored to Public Servants.

Awards for Government employees may not fix rates of wages less than those paid to employees outside the Service doing substantially the same class of work.

The definition of “industrial matter” has been extended to include any industrial dispute in a shop, in a factory, or in a shaft, or any matter which may be a contributory cause of such dispute. As a committee will thus have cognisance of any industrial matter it may of itself take up any dispute that causes a strike or dislocation and bring the parties together for discussion of the difficulty.

A committee may consider a claim for equal pay for the sexes on the lines of the Queensland Act.

The Bill removes the present limitation as to awarding wages or salary above £10 per week, or £525 per annum, and an award may now be made for persons occupying managerial positions. Rural workers have recourse to the tribunals provided for by the Bill to an extent greater than that which they previously enjoyed, as they may now secure an award. The Bill prescribes that absolute preference of employment shall be given to members of unions, and it requires that employees shall become members of unions concerned in the industry in which they are engaged. A schedule is annexed to the Act containing the names of the unions deemed to be the only industrial unions of employees registered under the Act. The causes for which it is unlawful for an employer to dismiss an employee are enlarged. The Act at present makes it unlawful to dismiss an employee because he is a member of a union, but an employer sometimes dismisses an employee because he is an officer or a delegate of a union, and these two causes have been added. So also dismissal is prohibited where the employee has been a witness in an industrial proceeding or because he claims some benefit of an award to which he is entitled. An employer is also liable to a penalty for injuring an employee in his employment or for altering his position to his prejudice.

The Bill also makes provision to permit an officer of an industrial union, authorised by the President and Secretary, to enter premises for the purpose of interviewing employees. The strike sections and penalties for strikers are repealed. The only penalty possible on a union for strike is deprivation of access to the Court, and cancellation of registration of an industrial union may only be ordered when the union has ceased to exist. A trade union (not being an industrial union) may no longer enter into industrial agreements. The present cumbersome procedure of applying to the Court to vary awards consequent upon alteration in the living wage and the carrying out of extensive service is removed, and a simpler
method is prescribed. Power is given to a conciliation committee to review the conditions of an industry on application for a new award notwithstanding any previous inquiry.

**Administrative Acts of the Government**

A less spectacular, but equally important phase of the Government’s work is its administrative activity. This Government has been as active on its administrative side as it has been on the legislative side.

The first task it faced was to straighten out the finances during the few days that remained between the day of assuming office and the close of the financial year. The Premier and Treasurer set himself up to the task, and at the end of the year he was able to show that Sir George Fuller’s supposed surplus of millions was in fact a deficit. This discovery is of immense value to the Party.

Absolute preference to Australian goods was another creditable administrative act. In addition to a large quantity of Australian goods which this policy has caused to be used by the Government, its effect as an example to the people to buy Australian made goods has been tremendous, and has resulted in larger and new factories giving employment to more workers, and increasing the home markets for the primary producers.

Another early administrative act was the abolition of High School fees, making good Labor’s claim that it stands for free education from the Kindergarten to the University.

The Government found the Civil Service very discontented over many matters, particularly concerning preference to Ministerial favorites which the Fuller Government had introduced. The two most notable cases under this heading were that of Mr Stevens, at the Treasury, and Mr McDougall, who was Comptroller of Prisons. Mr McDougall was removed from his new position and Mr Stevens resigned rather than carry out the instructions of the first Labor Treasurer under whom he had worked. The positions were awarded to men who by their merit and seniority were entitled to them.

Another problem which faced the Ministry early in its career was the shipping dispute, particularly with the Commonwealth Line. Largely due to the Government’s efforts, that trouble was settled, not in favor of the company – as strikes settled by Governments usually are – but with most of the points advanced by the men conceded to them, and there has been no trouble with those ships since.

The soldier settlers on the Irrigation Area were severely handicapped by the unsympathetic administration of the Fuller Government. To overcome these difficulties certain promises were made by the Premier, and every one of these promises has been given effect to.

Unfortunately, the attitude of the Upper House delayed the Act which made preference to unionists the law of the land, but the policy of
preference to unionists was insisted on in Government Departments immediately Labor took control.

We have been able to clear the waterfront of all loyalist unions that existed as an aftermath of the 1917 upheaval. In restoring the seniority in the Railway Service and wiping out these waterside unions we have done an invaluable service to unionism.

An important decision made by the Government was to hold aloof from the Loan Council.

**Prison Reform**

Among the prison reforms effected in New South Wales since June, 1925, are the following:

*Inebriates*: Extension of temporary leave on parole and earlier release on license. Formerly the orders had the effect of indeterminate sentence. Under new conditions the inebriates, conditionally upon good conduct in the institution, are granted parole and release on license after three month detention. The idea is by exercise to stimulate weakened self control. Applications for extension of orders are made only where the circumstances are exceptional, and the orders are allowed to lapse where the inebriates afford satisfactory proof of their exercise of self-control.

*Transfer of Long-Sentence Prisoners to Tuncurry*: Formerly prisoner sent to the Afforestation Camp at Tuncurry were first offenders, with no more than 12 months to serve. It was considered that prisoners serving longer terms would benefit physically and mentally, and would conform to the rules if given the opportunity. It was arranged that a number of suitable long-sentence prisoners should themselves select several for temporary transfer to Tuncurry. This arrangement has proved in every respect very satisfactory.

*Educational*: Prisoners serving sentences of two years and upwards are now permitted to have writing materials in their cells, and are supplied with text books on any subject in which they desire to pursue a course of study. The prisoners have extensive library privileges, with a selection of the best works of fiction, magazines etc., a wide range of literature having been provided for. The concessions have been eagerly availed of, and the prisoners are now devoting their evenings to study of an educational and technical nature. Many of the prisoners are taking up courses of study in such subjects as shorthand, bookkeeping, mathematics, history, languages, surveying, draughtsmanship, and general education.

*Young Prisoners*: Under a progressive study system young prisoners at Goulburn Gaol attend evening lectures at the gaol, delivered by several members of the local High School. Inspirational teaching is a feature of the scheme, the aim being to stimulate mental curiosity with a view to building up a wide range of interests. It considered that the educational facilities will exercise a genuinely reformative influence. As
these prisoners pass through the educational course they are transferred to Emu Plains Prison Farm.

Industries: Machinery is being introduced as financial considerations permit, and industries are being concentrated under competent instructors. Apart from the ordinary gaol trades of carpentry, bootmaking, tailoring, tinsmithing, etc., revenue is being obtained from matmaking, bread-baking, tomato pulp, pig raising, etc. An extensive poultry-farming scheme is also being introduced at Emu Plains.

Training of Officers: A training school for officers is being established, where recruits will be instructed in the technical and practical aspects of their duties. A publication, affording information gathered from all parts of the world on the subject of penology, will be issued to all officers.

Conclusion
In addition to the foregoing, many Bills of minor character and many administrative acts fraught with advantage to the Labor Movement generally, have been performed, and the Government is looking forward to the remainder of the life of this Parliament to crystallise into definite shape the ideals and aspirations of the Labor Movement.

Robt. E. O’Halloran, Secretary Parliamentary Labor Party,
23rd Feb., 1926

Report of Federal Parliamentary Labor Party
The concluding Session of the last Parliament did not commence until 10th June, 1925. The Government realised that whilst in recess they were safe, not only from the Labor Party, but from certain members in the so-called Country Party, who were dissatisfied with the manner in which the Nationalists were gradually swallowing them. The main reason for the Government calling Parliament together even so late as June was that the granting of supply was essential.

The Government programme enunciated by the Governor-General contained no proposals which would help to develop this country, so we decided not to waste time in discussing matters which would come up for consideration at a later date in the form of legislation. After a short speech Mr Charlton twitted the Government with failing to meet the House since 10th October, 1924, and stressed the necessity for carrying on with the affairs of the country.

The people and the House were then faced with the spectacle of the Prime Minister and his followers standing in their places and discussing everything possible in order to give the Government an opportunity of preparing Bills which were not ready for presentation to the House, although there had been a recess of eight months. The Prime Minister (Mr Bruce) begged the Opposition to say something about Uniform
Gauge, Tariff, Immigration, Defence, Finance, or any other subject, so long as he was given breathing space; but we declined, and illustrated how the business of this country was being conducted.

Before Parliament met the Government had contracted for the building of two cruisers overseas, whilst thousands of our unemployed were walking the streets. Disregarding his promise made in the House on 27th June, 1924, that “No decision will be arrived at in regard to the second cruiser until the whole of the facts and circumstances have been again placed before the House, and the House has had an opportunity of expressing its views upon them”, Mr Bruce allowed the construction of the two vessels to be done in Britain, the explanation being that £800,000 was saved thereby.

Labor took the first opportunity of bringing this matter forward, and on the 12th June, 1925, Mr Charlton launched the following censure motion:

“That the Government is deserving of the severest censure for its flagrant breach of faith in failing to honor the definite promise of the Prime Minister to consult the House before determining where the second cruiser should be built, and for its anti-Australian action in sending millions of pounds out of the country for the construction of both cruisers abroad”.

He gave the history of the cruiser contracts, and quoted Mr Bruce’s promises to the people, especially his last words on the subject, that: “I most certainly give the assurance that the fullest opportunity will be given to the House to discuss the question of where the second cruiser shall be built”.

It was pointed out by members of the Party that had the cruisers been built in Australia the money expended on their construction would have been kept in the country, and employment found for our own people. Moreover, by virtue of the construction being carried out here we would have made a definite forward move in the vital business of protection.

The Government side-tracked the serious charges made against them, and when the vote was taken on the 16th of June only the Independent candidate for Fremantle supported us.

On the 25th June, 1925, Mr Bruce brought forward his notable Immigration Bill, which had caused so much controversy throughout Australia. The first portion aimed at the regulation and control of the immigration of aliens into Australia, but the sting was in the tail.

The concluding clauses, as is now well known, provided for the deportation, after the case had been heard by a Government-appointed Board, of any person not born in Australia who interfered with trade or commerce, and other matters incidental thereto.

Realising that this Bill was a direct blow to Trades Unionism, and recognising the gross injustice of the measure, we fought strenuously to defeat it, and it was not until 16th July, after an all-night sitting, that the
Government, with their majority, were able to get the Bill passed through all stages.

The subsequent appointment of the Board and the appeal to the High Court and its decision against the Government are so well known that I do not propose to deal at length with these matters. The whole farce cost the people of Australia over £5000.

Continuing to do his best to give effect to the wishes of those whom he represents the Prime Minister on 28th August introduced a Bill for the establishment of a Commonwealth Police Force, the members to be designated ‘Peace Officers’. We again strongly protested, using every available means of blocking the measure; but, being in a minority, we were unsuccessful. Up to date this force has cost the taxpayers £4226.

In his protest against the appointment of this police force in opposition to the State police, on 28/8/’25 Mr Charlton challenged the Prime Minister to go to the country to see if the people approved of such legislation. This challenge was not accepted, but three weeks later, 18/9/’25, owing to trouble amongst certain Country Party members, an election was decided upon.

During the intervening period many bills, including the Tariff, Canadian Preference, Loan Bill, Commonwealth Bank (Rural Credits) Bill, Main Roads Development, War Service Homes, Customs, Australian War Memorial, Northern Territory Representation, Electoral, Old-Age Pensions, were discussed and passed.

In connection with the Pensions Bill I might mention that Labor members throughout the whole of last Parliament endeavored by moving amendments to secure £1 per week for old-age and invalid pensions, but without success. It was only on the eve of the elections that the Nationalists decided to render further assistance to those deserving people.

One does not need to elaborate on the strenuous election campaign which followed. The bogies and misrepresentations which the Movement had to battle against, together with the unsettled industrial conditions prevailing at the time, were to a large extent responsible for our defeat.

The Capitalist Press, with its bitter criticism, influenced many who had never before exercised their vote, or given serious consideration to the politics of their country.

But now that the battle is over and the storm has subsided we can calmly consider the figures, and feel proud of the fact that, although defeated, over one and a quarter million people believed in our ideals, and voted for the purpose of placing the destinies of Australia in our hands.

What are the facts as disclosed by the electoral returns just to hand? For the House of Representatives we secured 1,313,949 votes, whilst all anti-Labor candidates polled 1,593,535 votes, a difference of 279,586 votes. Labor obtained 23 seats, whilst 52 anti-Labor seats were returned.
In other words, anti-Labor members secured 29 additional seats, with the extra vote of 279,586, whilst Labor had to receive 1,313,949 votes for its 23 members.

In the Senate, Labor polled 1,262,992 primary votes, the anti-Labor candidates getting 1,542,090, a difference of 279,098. To correctly represent the voice of the people, as indicated by the vote, Labor was entitled to 10 of the 22 seats, but, as is well known, not one single seat did we get.

Both in the Senate and the House of Representatives the difference between Labor and the combined anti Labor forces was only 279,000 votes, so that by our united efforts in the future we must educate another 140,000 people in the whole of Australia up to our ideals to give us a majority of votes over all parties. This is the task which all true Laborites must undertake to effect before the next election.

The Labor Movement must go on. Setbacks such as we have just received must not affect the enthusiasm of our splendid and unselfish workers. The figures give us great hope for the future. I am sure that our star will soon shine again in all its splendor, and the day must soon come when the people will realise that they have been misled by those who do not represent their interests.

Solidarity against our opponents and for those ideals which have for their object the improvement of conditions is essential for the future welfare of our great humanitarian Labor Movement.

The Party, though depleted in numbers, will continue to guard the interests of the masses.

Arthur Blakeley, Secretary, Federal Parliamentary Labor Party.

**Sydney Municipal Labor Party, Annual Report**

Since last report the Municipal Labor Party in the Sydney City Council has settled down to administer the services in the interests of the citizens and ratepayers as a whole, and during the 12 months under review much satisfactory work has been performed.

Prior to the defeat of the discredited Nationalist State Government, an attempt was made to wrest the Electricity Supply Undertaking from the control of the City Council and place same under a Commission dominated by the Railway Commissioners.

To aid the then Minister for Railways (Mr Ball) in this scheme a conference of local governing bodies drawing electrical energy from the City Council was convened, but when the correct facts were placed before the conference it was decided that the results were much more satisfactory than could be expected under a Commission.

Early in January, 1925, Council gave 5 years’ notice of the termination of agreement with the Railway Commissioners, and further decided to construct an up-to-date power station on the shores of Botany
Bay. The Bunnerong Power Station will, when completed, be the second largest of its kind in the world. The site, which has been acquired on lease from the Government, is recognised as being an ideal one, and already a considerable amount of reclamation work has been carried out. A section of the station will be completed in ample time to take over the supply at present drawn from the Railway Commissioners.

A 44-hour week, worked in 5 days, was introduced by the Party immediately upon taking office, provision being made to ensure that the public would not be inconvenienced in the transaction of business on Saturday mornings. Later, when the 44-Hour Bill became law, the whole service participated in this concession except the Cleansing Department, in which Department certain necessary work had to be performed on Saturday mornings.

To ensure that the intention of this concession should not be defeated, instructions were given that overtime should only be worked in exceptional cases, and where such overtime was worked employees should be recouped in the form of additional annual holiday leave.

Notwithstanding an outcry in the Press as to increased cost of production consequent upon the introduction of the 44-hour week the following figures prove the fallacy of that prediction:

Number of units produced during 1924, when 48-hour week was in existence and lower wage: Units 221,210,418; amount, £1,554,229/6/5.

In 1925, when 44 hours given by Labor and a generous increase in pay: Units, 253,358,170; amount, £1,685,300.

Wages of Employees

Consideration was given to the wages of all employees, and increases given where deemed justified, thereby rectifying the wrong perpetrated on employees by the Civic Reform Party in reducing wages as on reprisal.

Charge for Electricity

Bearing in mind the Party’s decision not to amass huge profits on Electricity Supply Department, to ensure that consumers should not be called upon to pay more than absolutely essential a more equitable method of charging was introduced, the principal features being that in the case of church, factory or commercial premises electricity is charged at the same rate, no matter for what purpose it is used. In the case of residences the basis of charge is the measurement of the premises.

Under this system of charging the consumer is given a share in the profits in regard to a commodity of which he is a user.

Electricity Sales

Realising that it was necessary to stimulate the growth of the use of electricity, the Council decided to appoint an Electricity Sales Superintendent,
who will be placed in charge of a Sales Branch, established for the purpose of selling electric cooking and domestic appliances to consumers, so that the workers could have within their reach all electrical appliances, thus doing away with the home drudgery of washing, ironing, washing-up and cleaning, which can be performed by electrical appliances at a very low cost.

**Coal Supplies**

To ensure that the Council will not be hampered in regard to regular supplies of coal of approved quality, it has been decided to consider the acquisition of a coal property: A number of properties submitted in response to advertisement will be reported upon by experts appointed for that purpose.

**City Improvements**

The Council has been very active in this direction, amongst the works finished being Martin Place Extension and Park Street, Frog Hollow and Riley Street, while desirable improvements will be carried out by extension of Elizabeth Street to Bent Street, Goulburn Street Extension, area for extension of vegetable markets, etc.

**Health Matters**

Steps have been taken to ensure that the health of the citizens shall be paramount, and insanitary dwellings have been demolished, while a more rigid inspection of butchers’ shops, barbers’ shops and lodging houses has been undertaken with satisfactory results.

The City Surveyor’s Department was subdivided into two sections – City Surveyor’s Department and City Cleansing Engineers’ Department, and this has led to much more efficient administration under the new management.

A City Building Constructors’ Department was also created, and results have justified the step.

**Office Accommodation**

Additional office accommodation is being provided at the rear of the Town Hall, a large building in course of construction being the forerunner of a definite move to solve this problem.

**Building Act**

Under Council’s direction this will be brought up-to-date, and be so amended as to meet all contingencies arising as a result of modern method of building. Many other desirable improvements were effected during the years.
The Trades Union Secretaries whose members are working in the Service are to be congratulated upon the spirit of cooperation evinced by them in the interests of their members, the service and the general public.

The foregoing is sufficient to show that the Municipal Labor Party is efficiently administering the City in the interests of the citizens as a whole and not any sections.

W Clapham, Hon. Secretary, Municipal Labor Party.

**Annual Report, Women’s Central Organising Committee**

During 1925 the WCOC, like other sections of the Labor Movement, found the activities circumscribed by financial stringency.

This was more trying than usual owing to the fact that State, Federal and Municipal Elections following bewilderingly on each others heels, left little time for special effort to be made to relieve the position.

Members mostly devoted themselves to organising in support of candidates in their own particular electorates, and this in itself militated against good attendance at meetings, and of central systematic action to aid the Party.

Seeing the weakness of their position the Secretary inaugurated a card financial scheme, which was responded to, owing to the causes previously stated, only in a limited degree. Hopes are, however, entertained of its better success in 1926.

The year was a notable one to women, having witnessed the winning of three selection ballots by individual delegates – Mrs Dwyer in Balmain, Mrs Melville in Eastern Suburbs, and Mrs Ewers in Cumberland. In each case a splendid fight was put up by the candidates, beneficial without doubt in maintaining any alert interests in the campaign, but barren of success individually.

The year also witnessed a gratifying recognition of the work of ardent Labor women workers, the Government having appointed members of the Organising Committee to public positions, Mrs Maincke to the Board of Health, and Mrs Greville as official visitor to Mental Institutions. Messages of appreciation and congratulation were sent to the Minister, Mr Cann, and a reception held, at which Ms Maincke was the guest of honor as the first woman appointed to the Board of Health. All matters pertaining to health being regarded as particularly a province of women, who are naturally guardians of race, and consequently of national interests.

Mrs Greville’s appointment was also recognised by the presentation of a bag and purse of coins, and a letter of appreciation sent by the Minister. Both members hope in their particular way to be of service to the Movement.

During the year, at the request of the Premier, a Women’s Policy was drawn up, based on resolutions carried at last year’s Conference, organised
by our members. We are gratified to find features it embodied in legislation enacted by the Lang Government. As women we are anxious to have Motherhood Endowment included, but, doubtless finance barred its path to fruition.

Educative and propagandist addresses were organised and given during the year on the part taken by “Women in the British Working Class movement”, on a “Clean Milk Supply” (with a view to the extension of future Municipal functions for that purpose), "Women’s Future in the Labor Movement”, on “Industrial Conditions in the Orient”, and “The Case of Labor”, stated and upheld in a controversy with a National opponent under the auspices of the Young Women’s Christian Association.

Deputations were appointed and received from time to time on various phases of industrial and social life, mostly having a bearing upon the status and wellbeing of women and children.

The Committee hoped to see some of its members appointed to the Upper House, but in any case are warmly congratulatory of the Government’s firm attitude in regard to its abolition, trusting that our nominees there will honorably observe their pledges.

They also felt it incumbent upon them to express their appreciation of the intention expressed by the Minister for Justice to favor reformatory instead of primitive methods.

A large number of our organisation are earnestly working for a successful Labor Daily bazaar, recognising the splendid work done by our only paper in the various campaigns.

The WCOC freely offered their services in the Federal Campaign, but they were not officially availed of.

Concentration in their own Electorates followed, but we feel that our defeat in the Federal arena is in a considerable measure due to a complete lack of effort to organise the women’s vote.

Industrially, many of our members have been active as delegates, advocating reforms on the Trades and Labor Council and individually in their own unions.

Collectively we do not feel inclined to fling bouquets at ourselves for the sum total of the past year’s work, but:

“Tis lashing discontent that goads.
Without their whip we go not far.
Tis it that builds the upward roads,
By which man travels to his star.”

And women, too! So let us “hitch our waggon to a star”.

(Signed) H Greville, Hon. Secretary WCOC

[Balance Sheet of NSW ALP not reproduced here]
Annual Conference of NSW ALP, 1926

(Sydney Morning Herald, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 April 1926)

Day 1, Friday, 2 April 1926

State Labor Conference Opens. Stormy Proceedings. Sydney Electorate Dispute

Stormy scenes marked the opening sessions of the annual Conference of the Australian Labour Party, which commenced its sittings at the Trades Hall yesterday.

The only vote taken for the election of an officer during the day resulted in a defeat for the Magrath-Tyrrell faction, which has had control of the machine for the last two years.

An acrimonious debate upon the representation of the Sydney electorate at the Conference occupied the greater part of the day’s proceedings.

The Attendance

About 300 delegates representative of all parts of the State were present. Mr EC Magrath, president of the ALP, occupied the chair. Although the starting time was fixed at 10 am, the Conference was not opened until after half-past 11. The delay was due largely to the inability of many delegates to secure their credentials.

The principal business transacted during the morning session was the adoption of the standing orders. The only important amendment made to the orders read as follows: The nominations of officers and executive committee shall be received until 9 pm on Monday, April 5. Ballot papers to be issued at 7 pm on Wednesday, April 7, and ballot to close at 10 pm on Thursday, April 8.

It was also decided to admit representatives of the press who were financial members of the Australian Journalists’ Association. The pressmen were, however, required to present association badges before they were allowed admission.

Proceedings during the morning were interrupted by a large crowd who assembled outside the building and, banging loudly on the iron doors at the rear of the hall, demanded admission. The public were
allowed to stand at the rear of the hall during the afternoon session. The visitors included Messrs Cann, Minister for Health, Dooley (Speaker), Lazzarini (Chief Secretary), Cahill, Goodin, G Kelly, K Hoad, MsLA, A Blakeley, MP.

Among the delegates were-the Lord Mayor (Alderman PV Stokes), representing Sydney electorate council; Mr AC Willis, MLC, Vice-President of the Legislative Council, representing the Miners’ Federation; Senator Grant (Stonemasons), and Mr Fitzgerald, Minister for Local Government (Timber Workers).

**Afternoon Session**

The first business during the afternoon session was the appointment of a timekeeper. The following nominations were received for the position: Messrs H Sinclair (Taxi Drivers) and LM Ryan, MLA, (AWU). On a vote being taken Mr Ryan defeated Mr Sinclair by 146 votes to 126. The election constituted a victory for the AWU faction at the expense of the Magrath-Tyrrell section. The announcement of the result elicited rounds of applause from the anti-Executive supporters. MP Comans (Botany) was elected minute secretary. There were three nominations for the position, but two of the nominees were not present.

**Late Mr Hordern**

At an early stage in the afternoon session a vote of condolence with the widow and relatives of Mr P Hordern, MLC, was passed.

**Delegates’ Credentials**

There was an animated discussion regarding the position of from 20 to 30 delegates whose credentials had been held up, and who were in consequence unable to take their seats: The matter was raised by Mr J McGarry (Furnishing Trades), who moved that the existing credentials committee, appointed by the ALP Executive, should act as credentials committee during the Conference.

Mr Beasley, however, moved the suspension of standing orders to hear a report from the credentials committee. Mr Beasley stated that it was important to know whether it was the intention of the committee to allow disfranchised delegates to take their seats. “If you, Mr Chairman”, shouted Mr Beasley, “refuse to allow the point to be determined at this stage then I say it is a deliberate plot on your part!” (Uproar.) “If there is any justice in the Labour movement we should at least have a report on the subject”, he concluded.

Mr Colbourne (Western Suburbs), in seconding the resolution, appealed to the Conference to stand by the constitution of the party. It
was a scandalous shame that certain unions and leagues should be deprived of taking part in the Conference.

Mr GA Bell (Murray) opposed the motion. He pointed out that at the Conference before last he and another delegate had been held up for two or three days. He thought it was a mistake to delay the business of Conference in the way suggested by Mr Beasley.

Mr Beasley’s motion was carried on the voices by an overwhelming majority.

**Credential Committee’s Report**

The chairman of the credentials committee (Mr W Seale) reported that the list of delegates properly credentialled had been completed, except in cases where protests had been lodged. The protest regarding the Brick, Tile, and Pottery Union, arising out of a complaint that it was not entitled to a lady delegate, had been investigated, and the committee decided to admit the lady delegate. Another complaint was against the New South Wales branch of the Commonwealth Telephone Officers’ Association, the Association having intimated that the New South Wales branch, as it appeared on the credentials form, had ceased to pay its affiliation fee to the federation, and that in effect it was bogus. After inquiry, the committee came to the conclusion that the protest was only evidence of an internal dispute, and could not affect the rights of the delegates to take their seats. With regard to the Eastern Suburbs Electoral Council, owing to the statements made the credentials committee exercised its right to investigate persons nominated to represent branches of the movement. This involved an inquiry regarding Mrs Fahey, and the committee came to the conclusion that Mrs Fahey was entitled to take her seat. So far as the Sydney Electorate Council was concerned, the credentials committee could not do otherwise than accept the decision of the Executive in the matter. (Dissent.) As all were aware, the Executive decided that the first meeting of the council was unconstitutional, and ordered a further meeting for the purpose of determining the method of election of delegates to the Conference. The credentials committee had been meeting for a number of nights.

Voices: At the Barley Mow. (Laughter.)

Mr Seale: I challenge you to prove that statement. Proceeding, he said the committee endorsed the names that were selected. Today a protest had been handed to him but, the proceedings of the committee could not continue indefinitely. Consequently it was proposed to take no notice of the protest. To set such a precedent would mean that Labour Conferences would become chaotic. No decision had been reached regarding North Sydney. So far as the Actors’ Federation was concerned, the committee had decided to issue badges to Messrs Baker and Dunn, with instructions not to hand their badges to the alternate delegates, Mr
Tom Thick and Mrs Fowler, until Mr Thick had proved that he was an actor and Mrs Fowler had shown that she was an actress. It was their duty to consider the eligibility of delegates. Consideration had been given to the position of the Tramway Employees’ Union which had sent in credentials based on its affiliation under rule six. It had been found that the fees due under rule six had not been paid, the money paid entitling them to representation under rule 19. The union had not followed the procedure of withdrawing affiliation under rule six and reaffiliating under rule 19. The committee upheld the decision of the Executive. It was not done merely to keep the delegates out, but to ensure that the movement was conducted on constitutional lines.

Sydney Electorate

The action of the committee in endorsing the decision of the ALP Executive in regard to the election of delegates from the Sydney electorate was criticized by many speakers. It was claimed that the delegates from the Sydney electorate (which included the Lord Mayor (Alderman Stokes) had been elected by unconstitutional means.

Mr G Rowlands (Farriers) in a long address attacked members of the committee and the ruling faction of the Executive. He pointed out that the old electorate council was defeated in the annual elections held recently. The Executive, however, refused to recognise the delegates to the Conference on the ground that the annual elections were null and void, because three leagues were over-represented at the meeting where the elections took place. The old electorate council, at the direction of the chairman, Mr Magrath, then held another meeting and elected a fresh set of delegates who were allowed to attend the Conference. That meeting, Mr Rowland contended, was unconstitutionally conducted. Mr Rowland stated that the president of the ALP was usurping the duties of the disputes committee in directing that the second meeting should be held. As an ex-president of the Surry Hills League he (Mr Rowland) would give his word of honour that the Surry Hills League, which was one of the disfranchised branches, was financial. “I appeal to the Conference to eject the delegates appointed by the unconstitutional rabble”, concluded Mr Rowland.

A motion was then submitted that the report of the credentials committee relating to the Sydney electorate be adopted.

Mr W Gibb (Clothing Trades) moved as an amendment that the Conference direct the Sydney Electorate Council to hold a special meeting this afternoon (Saturday) to elect a fresh set of officials, and that pending the outcome of the meeting, the present delegates from the Sydney Electorate Council be asked to withdraw. “It is a scandal if the Labour movement stands for the action of the Executive”, said Mr Gibb. “I ask you to stand for justice, fairplay, and freedom of speech”.

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Mr T Holloway, seconding the amendment, stated that the delegates should be elected according to the constitution; and not in accordance with the desires of the ruling section of the Executive.

It was impossible for the Conference to say, after hearing the evidence, that Ald Stokes and the other delegates had any right to be present. The desire of the Conference should be to have the movement faithfully represented. They could not allow delegates who had been elected by reprehensible means to be present. (Uproar.)

Mr Potter (Chairman of the old Sydney Electorate Council), referring to the first meeting of the Electorate Council, said that certain delegates had assured him that the necessary fees had been paid, and they were financial. Next day he discovered that the Darlinghurst, Paddington and Surry Hills branches had not paid their capitation fees to the ALP.

Consequently steps were taken to have the business transacted in accordance with the rules. A cheque was handed to the secretary, reputedly from the Paddington branch, for sustentation fees, and it was returned marked “no account”.

A delegate interjected that the Paddington [branch] had an account known as the “PLL”, and that it had been confused with “ALP”.

Mr Stratton (secretary of the old Sydney Electorate Council) said he wished to deny some of the false and misleading statements made regarding the first meeting. The protest was entered because the participation in the proceedings by unfinancial branches would have made it impossible for delegates to secure admission to the Conference. Subsequently the delegates were elected by the only financial branches connected with the council.

In reply to the chairman, Mr W Gibbs, assistant secretary of the ALP, gave particulars regarding the financial position of the leagues in the Sydney electorate. Mr Gibbs showed that when the first meeting of the electorate council was held, out of the seven leagues in the electorate the following were unfinancial upon that occasion – Paddington, Darlinghurst, and Surry Hills.

Mr Magrath then explained that in consequence of the facts given by Mr Gibb he ruled that the first meeting was unconstitutionally held, and he ordered that another meeting should be held. His action was subsequently endorsed by the Executive.

Mr Bates, former secretary of the Paddington branch, referred at length to the allegation that the cheque forwarded to the ALP headquarters by the Paddington league had been dishonoured by the Paddington branch of the ES & A Bank. He explained that the branch’s account was an old one. It was opened in the name of the “Political Labour Party”. That was before the name of the movement was changed to the “Australian Labour Party”. The name in which the account stood had never been altered. He claimed that the branch was financial. If there was something wrong through some informality, was it not the proper
thing to communicate with the branch secretary?” asked Mr Bates amidst applause. “I am an honourable man, and my reputation has been assailed by a gang of crooks”.

The debate on the subject had not concluded when the session was closed at half-past 5.

Alderman Stokes said he would not have spoken if it had not been for the fact that his right to be present had been challenged. He wanted it to be clearly understood that he was not present at other meetings. He merely sent along his consent to be nominated. He was not afraid of any clique or AWU man. He had done more for the Labour movement in 12 months than Mr Holloway had done in 10 years. So far as Messrs Bates, Rowlands, and Gibbs were concerned, they had submitted themselves to the electors and had been rejected. During his campaign in the Goulburn electorate he had had to fight the underhand work of AWU organizers.

Mr G Buckland (AWU) reminded Alderman Stokes that he (Alderman Stokes) had said in the presence of other members of the Executive that he stood to win by any means from “chicken stealing to manslaughter”. (Laughter and dissent.) The trouble regarding the Sydney Electorate Council commenced with gatherings preliminary to the meetings of the council. There was a determination to thwart at all costs the will of the people. The first move was the impounding of the Paddington books, and they were deliberately held up for an unnecessarily long time. He agreed that the first meeting was unconstitutional, but this did not excuse the autocratic manner in which Mr Magrath ordered a fresh election. They had the spectacle of the dastardly attack upon Mr Bates regarding the cheque. The Executive were prepared to go down to the deepest depths to gain their despicable ends. The result would bring discredit on the movement.

Alderman Mostyn foreshadowed a further amendment that a select committee be appointed by Conference to investigate the whole of the matters connected with the election of the Sydney Electorate Council’s delegates. They should consider the movement and pay less attention to the fighting of the factions.

After Mr W Mills (Waterside Workers) and other speakers had spoken, a motion that the question be put was carried.

Mr W Seale, who moved the adoption of the credentials committee’s report, made a spirited reply to the criticisms leveled at the report. It was essential, he said, that the rank and file should be protected and the rules observed. The alternative was chaos.

Disorderly Scenes

The amendment of Mr Gibb was defeated on a show of hands by 149 votes to 146. A division was then called for, and the amendment was carried by 168 votes to 153. The amendment then became the motion.
Alderman Mostyn’s further amendment that a select committee be appointed was submitted and carried by 168 to 151.

A division was called for, and the vote resulted in the amendment being carried by 167 votes to 149.

The decision means that the credentials of the following delegates from the Sydney Electorate Council will be under review by the select committee: Aldermen P Stokes, Lord Mayor, W Clapham, and E Glasgow of City Council, Messrs W White and WH Stratton. The following women delegates are also affected by the decision: Nurse Francis and Mrs R Stapleton.

There was a boisterous scene when the question of the personnel of the committee was considered.

When Mr Willis was about to speak to the matter, Mr Roels (Engine Drivers) took a point of order. Mr Magrath disallowed the point on the ground that the same point was raised in discussion.

The chairman ordered Mr Roels to resume his seat, but amidst scenes of disorder Mr Roels refused to comply with the request.

Mr Magrath then ordered that Mr Roels be excluded. Mr Roels then resumed his seat but did not leave the hall as requested.

During the incident the shouting and cat-calls of the delegates made it impossible to hear the chairman speaking. Mr Magrath had extreme difficulty maintaining order.

Mr P Connolly (Newcastle) urged that country delegates should be appointed to the committee. He stated that the factions should be kept out of the matter. “The factions have tried to settle the matter, and have failed miserably”, Mr Connolly said. “The proceedings during the discussion have been a disgrace to the movement”.

A motion was eventually carried on the voices that the committee should be non-factional.

The following committee was elected: Messrs T Mostyn (Electrical Trades), P Connolly (Newcastle Iron Workers), J McDonald (Ships Painters and Dockers), D Clyne (Storemen and Packers), and E O’Dea (Shop Assistants). The voting was: Mostyn 228, Connolly, 219, J McDonald 148, Clyne, 145, O’Dea, 145, S Bird, 81, T Burke, 116, D McClelland, 51, T Moroney, 90, W Quantrill, 146, J Wilson, 123.

The Conference adjourned at 10.30 o’clock until 10 o’clock this morning.
Day 2, Saturday, 3 April 1926

Scenes at Labour Conference. Sitting Dramatically Adjourned.
Alleged Faked Ballot at North Sydney.
Downfall of Executive Likely.

A series of disorderly scenes was the principal feature of the annual Conference of the ALP, which was continued on Saturday. The noise became so incessant during the night session that the chairman, Mr KC Magrath, adjourned the Conference in dramatic circumstances.

During the day, particularly after disputes regarding the credentials of certain delegates had been determined, the Magrath-Tyrrell faction was again defeated on several important votes. The combined forces of the AWU and the Industrialists – the latter led by Mr Beasley, representing the Trades and Labour Council, which is dominated by Communists – have so far succeeded in outvoting the supporters of the existing Executive, whose downfall is likely.

Credentials Trouble

The action of the credentials committee appointed by the ALP Executive, in holding up the credentials of many delegates, who were in consequence unable to participate in the proceedings, was again under review by the Conference when it resumed its sittings in the morning. When the Conference assembled Mr A Williams (Eastern Suburbs) attempted to move the suspension of standing orders to permit of the consideration of certain credentials.

The president of the ALP, Mr EC Magrath, who was in the chair, refused to accept the motion, on the ground that the suspension of standing orders had already been granted to consider the report of the credentials committee.

Mr Magrath then explained that the report of the credentials committee had shown that the Tramways Union was unfinancial. The union, he said, was affiliated under rule 6 of the constitution, but they had only paid as though they were affiliated under rule 19. In consequence they were unfinancial, and were not entitled to be represented until they had rectified matters. The recommendation of the committee was that the union must make itself financial before it could be represented.

Mr C Last (AWU) moved that the delegation from the Tramway Union should be allowed to take part in the Conference, although they had not paid under rule 6. Mr Last said it was a remarkable thing that the report of the credentials committee had been supported by the president.

The Chairman: I will not allow anybody to impute motives.
Mr Last: It is a remarkable thing that you did not restrain the Lord Mayor yesterday.
Mr Falkingham (Boilermakers), seconding the motion, said his experience on the Executive had been that whenever anything was brought forward on the Executive there was generally a motive behind it. Members generally had an “axe to grind”.

The chairman said that as far as the Executive was concerned it had given no direction to the credentials committee on the matter under consideration. He then gave a ruling upholding the report of the credentials committee which placed the motion, he said, out of order.

Mr J Kelly (AWU): Will you allow the president of the Tramway Union to address the Conference?

The president: I cannot allow any representative of an unfinancial union to take part in the proceedings.

Mr J O’Reilly (Hairdressers) moved a motion that the Tramway Union should be asked to pay the full sustentation fees by the afternoon session on Tuesday; in the meantime, providing an assurance that this would be done was given, the delegates from the union be allowed to participate.

The chairman ruled the motion out of order, and then, amidst much uproar, he called for a vote on the motion for the adoption of the report. Amidst the din cries of “Gag” and “Shame” were heard.

There was uproar when representatives of the Tramways Union appeared in the public portion of the hall and shouted for a hearing.

The president, after unsuccessfully attempting to call the Conference to order, shouted that he would adjourn the session unless the turmoil at the rear of the building ceased.

After some minutes had elapsed the delegates resumed their seats.

Mr W Seale, chairman of the credentials committee, attempted to reply to certain criticism of the committee’s actions, but further interruption took place.

Mrs Melville (Eastern Suburbs) directed the attention of the president to a delegate in the front of the hall who, she said, had attempted to associate certain delegates with “Long Bay”.

The chairman then warned the delegate in question, who heatedly denied the charge, that if he interrupted further he would be suspended from the Conference.

Mr Seale said that he had not been influenced by anybody or any faction.

Mr Last made an interjection, and the president, naming him three times, in accordance with the standing orders, suspended him for the remainder of the proceedings, and ordered him to leave the building.

Mr Last refused to leave, and in the course of a personal explanation said that he had merely called Mr Seale a “paragon of purity”, and if Mr Seale desired him to withdraw the remark he would do so. (Laughter.)

Mr Seale: I will not take offence at that.
**Sydney Electorate Council**

Mr P Connolly, on behalf of the select committee, reported it had decided unanimously to make the following recommendation:

“That as the whole of the leagues affiliated with the Sydney Electorate Council were financial, and had submitted lists of members prior to the holding of the meeting on March 24, this select committee appointed by Conference finds that the meeting of the Sydney Electorate Council held on March 24 was unconstitutional, and recommends that a special meeting of the council be held on Sunday, April 4, at 7.30 pm at the Paddington Town Hall, for the purpose of electing delegates; that the chairman of the select committee take charge of the meeting; that the other four members of the select committee act as scrutineers, and that the delegates elected on March 24 remain on the Conference until the delegates are appointed by the special meeting to be held”.

Mr Connolly said they had examined all the ALP and Sydney Council books and papers relevant to the matter, particularly regarding the refusal to allow certain leagues to vote, and they found that an important list had been sent only to the secretary of the Sydney Council and not to the leagues. At 4 pm on March 24 the Paddington, Darlinghurst, and Surry Hills leagues had paid their fees and supplied the requisite lists of members, whereas a list compiled the previous day and circulated showed that those leagues were unfinancial.

The reading of the report was greeted with cheers and counter cheers, and it was some time before the uproar subsided. Mr Magrath proceeded to question Mr Connolly regarding the circulars, but Mr Connolly heatedly objected, declaring that the chairman was introducing extraneous matters.

After numerous questions had been asked and points of order decided, the portion of the report of the committee concerning the Sydney Council was adopted almost unanimously.

**Mr Bates’ Position**

Proceeding with his report, Mr Connolly said that as far as the cheque forwarded by Mr Bates and returned by the bank marked “no account” was concerned this was fully investigated. The bank manager endorsed the view of the committee that the whole trouble had occurred because it had not been indicated against which account the cheque was to be debited. They had questioned Mr Carey as to why Mr Bates had not been informed that the cheque had been dishonoured. It was then stated that Mr Magrath had taken possession of the cheque. (Uproar.) The committee wanted the Conference completely to exonerate Mr Bates. (Cheers.)

The second portion of the report also was adopted.
Mr Magrath said that late in the week Mr Carey mentioned the matter, and owing to the proximity of Conference he told Mr Carey to place the cheque in the safe. (Uproar.)

The Conference carried a motion exonerating Mr Bates from blame, as he had merely committed a technical error, and declaring that he should be allowed to complete the signature on the cheque.

**Country Delegates**

Mr R James (Northern Miners) said the country delegates were thoroughly disgusted with the conduct of the Conference, but they were determined to hang on until they got a “fair go”. Unless matters altered considerably, the country leagues would have to consider seriously the advisability of withdrawing from the ALP. They knew the metropolitan leagues dominated the Conference, but they had listened with disgust to the bickering and to accounts of the corruption and dirty work that had been going on.

A meeting of the country delegates was held during the adjournment. Mr Griffin (Goulburn) occupied the chair. Mr CE Martin (Cootamundra) asked the delegates to support a motion which he would bring before the Conference for the suspension of standing orders in order to secure the appointment of a select committee to inquire into matters relating to the better conduct of future election campaigns. It was decided unanimously to support it. Messrs Bell and Quilty, of Murray, and Mr Ryan, MLC (AWU), dealt with the necessity for outlining a country programme to place en bloc before the Conference.

**North Sydney Delegation**

The facts connected with the election of the North Sydney delegation were referred to the chairman of the credentials committee who said that at one stage, while they had plenty of protests before them, there was nothing to show that any delegates had been elected. Both factions had been examined by the committee, and certain matters were divulged which would occupy a week’s investigation. Several allegations were made, one being that before the count was complete the ballot papers were placed, unsealed, by the returning officer in his pocket and taken away. (Uproar.) Of the 30 persons present at the meeting only 12 were eligible to vote, and there were 25 candidates. (Laughter.) During the count, which was according to the preferential system, it was discovered that an informal paper had been counted five or six times. (Laughter.) Two candidates appeared to tie for fifth place, and they “tossed” for it. When the ballot papers were brought back on a subsequent date one of the candidates, who had been fifth, had dropped back to ninth place. (Loud laughter.) Furthermore, several leagues claimed that owing to the
inadequate notice given they had been disfranchised. The credentials committee had decided, with the consent of the president and the secretary of the council, who were in different camps, that a fresh election should be held that (Saturday) night, and that the North Sydney delegates previously elected should not be admitted to the Conference. The freshly-elected delegates could attend on Monday.

Several delegates wanted to know why the North Sydney delegates were to be excluded when the Sydney delegates had been admitted pending the fresh election under similar circumstances. This provoked an acrimonious discussion, and an amendment favouring the admission of the delegates was moved.

Mrs Melville said that the Sydney ballot was not quite fair (laughter) but it could not be compared with that of North Sydney, where they sat till 1 o’clock in the morning, and could not complete the counting of ten papers. (Laughter.) If they had a spark of honour left, they should discontinue such practices.

Mr Kilburn (Bricklayers) said they should play a man’s game and cease their plotting and intriguing. If Sydney delegates were to be admitted a similar privilege should be extended to North Sydney.

Mr Seale, in reply, said any reasonable body of men would have to come to the conclusion that the whole ballot was corrupt. A great wrong had been done to the movement. It had to be put right. He had too much confidence in the intelligence of the delegates to believe that they would countenance such corrupt practices by admitting the North Sydney delegates.

The amendment that the delegates be allowed to attend the Conference until the fresh election was held was carried by 160 to 118.

The report as amended was adopted.

Night Session

When the Conference resumed Mr O’Gorman (Clerks) moved the suspension of the standing orders to deal with the meeting of the North Sydney Electorate Council that night. The motion was carried on the voices, and Mr O’Gorman proceeded to explain that on March 9 nominations were called for the position of delegates to the Conference. At the meeting it was decided to take a ballot on the Senate system. The council that night had departed from the decision in taking a ballot by a show of hands. He moved that the elections should be held again on the Senate system. At this stage the newly-elected delegates from North Sydney entered the hall, and were loudly cheered. When Mr Lestrange (Clerks) attempted to express his views on the meeting Mr T Liston, one of the delegates from North Sydney, challenged the right of Mr Lestrange to be present at the Conference. Mr Liston claimed that Mr Lestrange was an unfinancial member of the St Leonards branch, and was therefore not
entitled to attend. Mr Lestrange explained that he was representing the Clerks’ Union, of which he was a financial member. He was not representing the St Leonards branch. During the debate the Conference got out of control on several occasions. After unsuccessfully attempting to restore order the chairman had to threaten to close the session before the uproar subsided. Mr Magrath was only enabled to make himself heard by shouting at the top of his voice. Mr Magrath explained that if Mr Liston persisted in his objection it would be necessary for him to lodge a protest with the credentials committee. The motion of Mr O’Gorman was lost on the voices.

**Chairman Challenged**

At this stage Mr J Beasley (Electrical Trades and president of the Labour Council), said he wished to take a point of order on the eligibility of Mr Magrath to occupy the chair. Mr Magrath said that he could not allow Mr Beasley to proceed, because they were in the middle of the report of the credentials committee. When the report was disposed of it would be competent for the subject to be considered.

Mr Beasley disagreed with the ruling on the ground that he was challenging the constitutionality of the whole proceedings. In consequence it called for a decision immediately. He would have raised the matter before if many of the delegates who were then present had not been disfranchised.

Mr Magrath: I rule Mr Beasley out of order. He can take one of two courses. He can move a dissent from my ruling, or that the report of the credentials committee be not proceeded with.

Mr Beasley: I am challenging the right of Mr Seale to proceed under your presidency.

At this point the proceedings were interrupted by a delegate who heatedly directed the attention of the Conference, to the presence of Mr Howie, a well-known Communist. Mr Howie was standing on a chair in the public portion of the hall. “Mr Howie is directing Mr Beasley from the back of the hall”, said the delegate.

The chairman then asked Mr Howie to take his stand on the floor of the hall with the other visitors.

Mr Beasley said that he would not press his point of order until the report of the credentials committee had been completed.

Mr Seale then gave details of the inquiries of the committee regarding the credentials of the delegates from Wammerawa, the Ironworkers’ Association, and the Actors’ Federation. Mr Seale stated that in this case of the Actors’ Federation trouble had occurred over the credentials because Mrs Fowler and Mr T Thick had been elected alternate delegates from the organisation. The committee was of the opinion that
as Mrs Fowler was not an actress nor Mr Thick an actor, they were ineligible to represent the Federation.

Mrs Fowler: I am a member of the Actors’ Federation, and a financial one at that!

Mr Seale then moved the adoption of the report which was seconded by Mr Burke (Eastern Suburbs).

**Disorderly Scene**

It was while Mr Burke was speaking that the uproar (which led to the adjournment of the Conference) occurred. There were shouts and cries of “Sit down” when Mr Burke rose to his feet, and when he commenced to question Mrs Fowler’s claim that she was a member of the Actors’ Federation the noise increased. Mr Burke, however, continued his remarks about Mrs Fowler, and refused to be seated. Two women delegates who were seated near Mrs Fowler rushed across the floor of the conference hall and amidst screams of laughter and applause menacingly shook papers in Mr Burke’s face.

Mr Magrath banged the gong for several minutes, but the shouting continued without abatement. The noise was not confined to the delegates. Among the visitors was a crowd of Communists and hooligans who engaged in intermittent cross-firing with the delegates. Mr Magrath endeavoured to restore order, but the noise became worse. When the tumult was at its height a motion for the adjournment of Conference was shouted by a delegate from the body of the hall. Another member seconded the resolution, which the chairman subsequently declared carried. Refusing to grant a division, Mr Magrath said that the delegates had exhausted his patience and then left the building. When the chairman had descended from the platform Mr Roels (Engine-Divers) mounted a table, and with his coat off, shouted to the delegates to remain in their seats as the Conference could be constitutionally carried on if there were 100 present.

Mr T Falkingham (Boilermakers) said that the president was not eligible to carry on the business. The Conference, he said, would have decided that only for the “Donnybrook”. Mr G Buckland (AWU) said that the Conference had been unconstitutionally closed by the president. Mr Buckland alleged that the president deliberately closed the Conference because he knew the numbers were against him. “It would be folly to carry on now”, advised Mr Buckland. “You will get your opportunity of dealing with the president on Monday.”

Mr J Beasley (Electrical Trades) told the delegates to assemble at 9 am on Monday for the purpose of continuing the Conference. The delegates then left the hall, a section remaining to sing “Solidarity for Ever”.

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Sydney Electorate. Result of Fresh Ballot

The new ballot for the election of delegates from the Sydney Council to the Labour Conference was held last night. It had been ordered by the Conference that the ballot should take place in the Paddington Town Hall, but yesterday afternoon Alderman Falvey (Mayor of Paddington) was, it is stated, informed that, under the State Entertainments Act, the hall could not be let on Sunday. It was then decided that the ballot should be taken at Addison Hall, Surry Hills.

It is stated that, of the 43 electors present, only 23 agreed to go to Surry Hills, and that, among the dissenters, were the Lord Mayor (Alderman Stokes), E Glasgow, Alderman W Clapham, and W Stratton, all of whom were candidates:

The ballot resulted in the election of Reg Bates, Alderman Falvey, Harold Devitt, W Donnelly; S Douglas, Miss Perry, and Mrs Johnston. The smallest vote cast for any of the candidates was 21.

Day 3, Monday, 5 April 1926


A trial of strength which took place yesterday at the State Conference of the Australian Labour Party resulted in still another decisive defeat for the Magrath-Tyrrell faction.

The Conference decided by 175 votes to 130 that members of the Upper House were not eligible to hold executive offices in the movement.

In consequence of this decision Mr EC Magrath was obliged to vacate the chair and take his seat in the body of the hall. Other prominent officers affected by the decision are Mr JJ Tyrrell, MLC, senior vice-president of the Executive, and Mr W Carey, MLC, general secretary.

Conference Resumed

There was a full attendance of delegates when the Conference was resumed at the Trades Hall yesterday morning.

After the dramatic adjournment of the Conference on Saturday night by the president, Mr EC Magrath, delegates were in a state of high expectancy as to what course Mr Magrath would adopt if the disorderly scenes of the two opening days were continued. Although the starting time was fixed for 10 o’clock, the Conference did not open until half-past 10.

Mr Magrath announced that the nominations for the appointment of a new Executive would close at 9 o’clock, last night.
The two following nominations were received for the position of returning officer: Messrs P Connolly (Ironworkers, Newcastle) and W Gibbs (assistant-secretary of the ALP).

The vote was taken by a show of hands and resulted in a win for Mr Connolly by 176 votes to 120.

The result constituted another win for the anti-Executive forces. The announcement of the result was received with much cheering and applause by the supporters of the successful candidate.

The following scrutineers were appointed: Messrs J Ward (Ironworkers, Lithgow), A O'Keefe (N. Sydney), TJ Maroney (Municipal Employees), and H Walker (Sydney electorate).

**Mr Beasley's Challenge**

When Mr Beasley rose to his feet to proceed with his motion to challenge the rights of members of the Legislative Council to sit on the Executive there was an ominous rumbling which appeared to be the prelude to another stormy scene. This inspired the President to appeal to delegates to refrain from interrupting the speakers, and from hurling offensive remarks across the hall.

Mr J Beasley prefaced his remarks by saying although the Sydney Council, in accordance with the wishes of Conference, had elected fresh delegates, they had the spectacle of the original delegates still sitting in Conference. Rule 34 definitely stated that members of Parliament were not eligible to become members of the Executive. This meant also that Mr Magrath had no right to preside ever the Conference. (Applause and dissent.) Mr Willis appreciated the position when he was appointed to the Legislative Council and resigned from the Executive. His contention was strengthened when the vital influence the Legislative Council exercised on the legislative programme of Mr Lang, behind whom the industrial movement stood four square, was realised. He moved, “That rule 34 definitely precludes members of the Legislative Council from occupying positions on the Executive“.

Mr T Falkingham (Boilermakers) said that the members of the Executive knew the rules from “A to Z”, but they had slept on them. How Mr Magrath had the temerity to preside was beyond the speaker’s comprehension. If the Executive tore the constitution to shreds how could they expect the rank and file to keep in step with the movement?

Mr Falkingham added that Mr Magrath and Mr Tyrrell had been appointed without the knowledge of the Executive, although the rules provided that the Executive should approve appointments before they were made.

Mr W Mills (Waterside Workers), opposing the motion, said that the abolition of the Upper House was a plank of the platform, and should
take precedence over the rules. The object of appointing Mr Magrath and the other Upper House appointees was to abolish the Upper Chamber.

Mr Lestrange (Clerks’ Union) asked the president whether he would take his place on the floor of the Conference, and allow the vice-president to preside until the matter was settled.

Mr Magrath: No, I am in charge of Conference until deposed.

Mr Lestrange, proceeding, said that as a constitutional issue had been raised it had been brought forward improperly. Constitutional issues, incidentally, had to be decided by a two-thirds majority. The only way to dethrone a president was by the holding of the usual elections.

Mr Buckland said it was not desired to dethrone anybody. They wanted to see that the constitution of the ALP was carried out. He desired to take advantage of the opportunity to deny on behalf of the AWU and many leagues scattered throughout New South Wales, the insidious rumours that they were out to gain control of the movement.

(Loud laughter.)

A voice: With the help of the Communists. (Uproar.)

Mr Buckland: I give that a flat denial.

Mr Magrath’s Speech

Mr Magrath said he wished to speak to the motion, and to make sure that Conference fully realised the effect the motion would have if carried. It would mean that members of the Legislative Council would be deprived of the right to sit on the Executive as long as the Legislative Council existed. He had no objection to the form in which the matter had been presented except that it had been suggested that he had knowingly defied the decisions of Conference. If this were made unwittingly he passed it over, but if the suggestion had been made wilfully he resented it. Their rules were in a condition of muddle. They were conflicting when read together. It had been said that he expressed the opinion that a member of the Legislative Council was a member of Parliament. He desired to say unhesitatingly that no other view was tenable. He had held this opinion for years, although in existing circumstances it might operate to the detriment of people who occupied the position of Legislative Councillor. Reference had been made to the actions of Mr Willis, but he understood that the reason why Mr Willis vacated the position of president of the organisation on account of his appointment to the Legislative Council was because he had been made a Cabinet Minister and became a member of the Government. Therefore his position was different from that of other Councillors.

Continuing, Mr Magrath said that he resented the suggestion that he had held office improperly. If persons appointed to the Legislative Council were not to hold their seats on the Executive, then persons nominated for appointment were also ineligible. When Mr Lambert was
president of the ALP the movement was invited to submit nominations for the Upper House. There were about 300 nominations. Every person on the Executive with the exception of himself the speaker nominated, but not one person vacated his seat or was asked to vacate his seat. On the present occasion there were 280 nominations. A large number of members of the Executive nominated, and, consistent with the custom observed to that time, not one member vacated his seat. The Legislative Council might have gone out of existence a month or two ago. When Parliament reassembled it was beyond the shadow of doubt that, in view of the determination of the Premier, the Council would be destroyed, and he (Mr Magrath) would lose his position.

Mr Willis’ Views

Mr Willis, Vice-President of the Legislative Council, said that he knew the whole history of the matter. In 1915 or 1916 the reason why a member of Parliament was debarred from a seat on the Executive was because it was then said that the Parliamentarians exercised a dominant influence on the Executive, which was not in the interests of the movement. It should be remembered that it was also decided that candidates for Parliamentary positions should also vacate their seats on the Executive. Attempts were made to sabotage the section relating to candidates by persons who were adopting a different attitude that day. Two or three years ago he was asked whether a member of the Legislative Council was a Parliamentarian, and he replied in the affirmative. He could not say otherwise. He had not ruled that way, but had merely expressed an opinion. The caucus elected him through the Ministry to a Cabinet position, and he resigned his position as president of the ALP because he could not have carried out the duties of that office, and it would not have been consistent for him to have done it. The Conference had to take a common sense view of the question. If the Conference was as sincere about the abolition of the Upper House as Mr Lang was they would give him the facilities to abolish it. He would not say that in the event of the abolition of the Upper House another safeguard for democracy was not necessary. A free hand should be given to those responsible in order to enable them to bring about the abolition. He would, therefore, vote against Mr Beasley’s motion.

Mr Carey, general secretary of the ALP, announced to the meeting that if the motion was carried it was his intention to resign from the Legislative Council.

Mr Beasley, replying to the debate, said the only question for decision was the eligibility of members of the Legislative Council. Mr Magrath had endeavoured to cloud the issue. So far as the Legislative Council was concerned, if inside stories were related no doubt they would hear of glaring gerrymandering and manoeuvring which had
taken place to secure the appointment of men who had not spent an hour working for the movement.

The Division

So highly pitched was the excitement that delegates were unable to restrain themselves, and the president had to strike his gong repeatedly and threaten to adjourn the Conference before even a semblance of order was restored. There was another scene of disorder when the Conference proceeded to divide on the motion. Owing to the manner in which they were seated, it became necessary for a large majority to change from one side of the hall to the other. There were several heated exchanges, and the shouts and appeals of the president could not be heard above the din. When the president rose to announce the result of the division quietness prevailed, and when he stated that the motion was carried by 176 to 130 there was cheering. Contrary to expectations, there was no real demonstration of enthusiasm.

In reply to questions, the president said the interpretation would apply to officials of the movement, and persons who in the future nominated for appointment to the Upper House. It would not, however, have a retrospective application regarding nominees.

Afternoon Session

When the Conference resumed Mr Magrath vacated the chair in accordance with the decision reached during the morning. Mr J Tyrrell, MLC, senior vice-president, was debarred from presiding on the same grounds as those which prevented Mr Magrath from continuing in the position. Mr F Conroy, the remaining vice-president, consequently occupied the chair. Mr Conroy called for nominations for the position of two vice-presidents to assist him during the Conference. The following were nominated: Messrs J Beasley, G Buckland, and JF O’Reilly. The vote, which was taken by a show of hands, resulted in the return of Messrs J Beasley, 220, and J O’Reilly, 151, Mr Buckland secured 129 votes.

Mr T Holloway (AWU) pointed out that one of the State representatives at the Federal Labour Conference was the Lord Mayor, Alderman PV Stokes, who, Mr Holloway said, was a member of Parliament. In view of the decision reached this morning, Mr Holloway wanted to know whether the Lord Mayor was eligible to sit at the Federal Conference.

The chairman, Mr Conroy, said that there was nothing in the rules to prohibit a member of Parliament from attending the Federal Conference.
Vote of Appreciation

At this stage a vote of appreciation of the services rendered by Mr Magrath to the movement was carried. In moving the resolution Mr J O’Reilly said that Mr Magrath had acted as a “sport”, and had taken his defeat in a sportsmanlike manner.

Miss M Matthews (Darlinghurst) seconded the motion, which was supported by Mr AC Willis.

Mr Magrath, in responding, said that, although defeated, he was not downhearted. He regarded his defeat as one of the turns in the wheels of political fortune.

Sydney Council Delegates

A report regarding the meeting of the Sydney Electorate Council on Sunday night, held at the Addison Hall, was read by the chairman of the select committee (Mr P Connolly). He reported that protests had been received against the election, on the grounds that the place of meeting had been changed.

Mr Clyne, a member of the select committee, informed a delegate that the Sydney Electorate Council comprised 43 delegates, 26 of whom were present at the meeting on Sunday night.

Night Session

At the night session the country delegates urged that the Conference should adopt day sessions instead of night sessions for the remainder of the week, but the proposal was defeated.

Mr Griffin (Bathurst) moved the suspension of standing orders to discuss the position of the general secretary.

The motion was carried, and Mr Griffin then moved the amendment of rule 32 of the constitution to exclude the general secretary from being classified as an executive officer. If the amendment was adopted, he said, it would mean that Mr Carey could retain his dual post as general secretary of the ALP and member of the Legislative Council.

Mr Roels (Engine Drivers) took a point of order on the ground that rule 68 required that any amendments to the constitution must be announced three months prior to the Conference.

Mr Conroy (chairman) upheld the ruling. A motion of dissent from the ruling by Mr Holloway (AWU) was defeated.

Mr W Seale, chairman of the credentials committee, reported that the committee was of the opinion that Mr Lestrange (Clerks) should not be allowed to continue as a delegate on the ground that Mr Lestrange was not a financial member of the St Leonards branch.
The report was the subject of a heated debate, during which the bona fides of a number of delegates were questioned. Ultimately the report was adopted by a large majority. It was resolved that the preferential system should be applied to the election of president and secretary, and that the election of the remainder of the officers should be on the principle of first past the post.

**Election of Officers**

It is stated that Messrs J Beasley, G Buckland and JF O’Reilly are candidates for the presidency, and that the general secretary (Mr Carey) will be opposed by Mr Peece, a former official of the Miners’ Federation, OSchmude, C Albury, and JB Dooley.

**Day 4, Tuesday, 6 April 1926**

**The Militants. Success at ALP Conference.**

**State Ministerialists Perturbed.**

The principal feature of the ALP Conference up to the present has been the success achieved by the militants led by Mr J Beasley, president of the Trades and Labour Council. Aided by the AWU section the militants have so far succeeded in enforcing their policy upon the Conference.

Fears are already being entertained by the supporters of the Magrath-Tyrrell party, which has been consistently defeated on all important issues, that the militants will succeed in capturing the Conference, which will mean that they will control the Executive during the forthcoming 12 months. This, they argue, would have far-reaching effects upon the Labour movement. The existence of an Executive dominated by the militants would imperil the life of the Labour Government.

In a manifesto issued to its supporters the leaders of the Magrath-Tyrrell party state that the supporters of the AWU and the militants have entered into a powerful combination for the purpose of foisting “Baileyism” and “Communism” on the Labour movement. The Conference, it is stated, might be won by the anti-Executive forces unless the delegates appreciated the dangers of the situation.

“The delegates to this Conference must not be blind followers of designing leaders”, the manifesto concludes. “To them is entrusted the responsibility to guide the movement free from the political shoals and quicksands upon which Labour can wreck its ideals and reduce itself to a condition of impotency in public estimation. At all costs this must be avoided”.

The leaders of the Magrath-Tyrrell faction contend that the militants are under the domination of the Communists, and point out that, if they win,
attempts will be made to bring the Communists under the wing of the movement.

Leaders of the militant faction contend, however, that they have a definite policy of their own which is quite distinct from that held by any other section at the Conference. In consequence they do not desire to enter into a pact with any other faction for the purpose of capturing the machine. They claim that their objective is to secure an influential minority upon the ALP Executive. From such a solid foundation they hope to consolidate their position and perhaps at next Conference acquire complete control of the machine.

The militants contend that they have given solid support to the AWU faction up to the present because the policy of the militants and the AWU on all issues so far settled has been identical. The militants are undoubtedly in a strong strategical position, and it is not unlikely that the personnel of the new Executive will disclose that Mr Beasley’s followers will hold the balance of power.

Mr Beasley himself has nominated for the presidency, and appears to be the strongest competitor in the field.

Ministerialists and members of the State Cabinet are very perturbed, and fear that the Industrialists and the Trades Hall Labour Council will capture the majority of the seats on the incoming ALP Executive.

One Ministerialist expressed the view yesterday that if the Labour Council controlled the new Executive it was probable the Government’s position would become so intolerable that it would be forced to resign before the full term of the present Parliament had run its course. This would undoubtedly mean the return of a Nationalist Government.

**Premier Addresses Conference. Appeal for Labour Unity. Abolition of Legislative Council. Five Expulsions Desired.**

The State Conference of the Australian Labour Party was last night addressed by the Premier, Mr Lang. Mr Lang, who was given a flattering reception, outlined the programme of the Government particularly in regard to the abolition of the Legislative Council.

He reiterated his determination to abolish the Upper House, and appealed to the Conference to expel from the movement the five pledged Labour men who absented themselves from the division in the Council on the Abolition Bill.

"I intend to carry on the fight for the abolition of the nominee House. I do not recognise the right of an imported Governor, who is here today and away tomorrow, to interfere with the functions of Parliament, and I do not recognise the right of a non-representative nominee Chamber to censor and destroy Labour legislation.” This declaration was made by the Premier during the course of his speech.
Mr Lang said: “Every constitutional means at the disposal of the Government will be exhausted to make the people’s Chamber paramount, and I rely upon the incoming Executive, however constituted, and the movement as a whole, to give me the support and assistance which I have so much appreciated in the past and will need in the future. My hand is on the plough, and I am not going to turn back.

“With your assistance victory is assured. It is no part of the Parliamentary leader’s duty to attempt to dictate to Conference. He has his mandate in the platform of the party, and when he feels that he cannot accept that mandate it is his duty to get out and make way for someone who can.

“As members at this Conference are aware”, added Mr Lang, “the five pledged members of the Labour Party absented themselves from the division on the Abolition Bill. If it is the desire of this Conference that the Nominee Chamber should be abolished, I must ask you to assist me in securing reliable support in the Nominee Chamber itself, and I invite you to expel from the movement the five pledged Labour men who were not present at the most critical period in the history of our movement in this State. Once a traitor, always a traitor; once a man has broken faith with you, it has been remarked by a wiser man than I, never trust him again. Some of the strongest public men in the Commonwealth have been expelled from our movement for lesser offences than that committed by the five Councillors referred to (Messrs Akhurst, Lyons, Murray, DM Smith, and Kelly), and still the Labour movement flourishes and is in office in five States of the Commonwealth. I leave the matter in your hands, delegates, and am confident that you will assist me by the expulsion of these defaulters. The only way to cleanse the movement is to get rid of its scum.”

Appeal for Unity

Mr Lang said it was the first Conference of the State Labour party that it had been his privilege to attend as the Labour Premier of New South Wales, and he was pleased to observe that delegates had lost none of their old fire and energy. Energy and enthusiasm were very fine assets, but delegates must take care that their exuberance was not misspent. The last general election was not won without careful preparation of public opinion, and no political party could hope to remain in office longer than it commanded public confidence. The Labour Party won nine months ago because the forces behind them were united, and because their appeal was on broad humanitarian and economic grounds. When delegates contemplated what failure would mean to the mass of the toiling population they must realise how grave the situation was, and do
nothing calculated to make the task of the Government more difficult. Their enemies were prepared to use any weapon, no matter how dirty, to regain possession of the Treasury benches. They knew how two members of the Nominee House mysteriously crossed the House just on the eve of the vote on the Abolition Bill, and how one was spirited away in the night to some unknown retreat in the country. If their enemies thought that similar tactics could break the solidarity of the party in the Assembly, they were quite prepared to resort to them. He had not spared himself in the cause of the party. But he could not fight this battle single-handed. He must have the loyal cooperation of this Conference, and of all the elements that made the great Labour movement the glorious and vital force it was today.

**Labour’s Opponents**

“I have never knuckled down or truckled to our opponents”, added Mr Lang. “Socially and politically I have regarded them, and treated them, as the implacable enemies of the wage-earners and producers, and today I am the target of more calumny and slander and abuse than has been the lot of any previous Labour Premier. I don’t mind that; in fact I regard it as a sign that I am doing my duty to the men and women who placed me where I am. The Labour politician is but a means to an end. He is the servant (not the master) of the movement. But he isn’t much use outside Parliament. He must be inside and he must be in a majority. It is here that Conference can render valuable assistance. We have our platform, and I think that our worst enemy will admit that I have done my best to carry it through, both in the spirit and letter. I intend to go on as I have begun, unalteringly and unflinchingly, to place the Labour platform on the Statute book of this country. I appeal to Conference not to embarrass the Government. I don’t ask you to curb criticism, but I do ask you to place the control of the movement in the hands of well-tried, earnest, and reliable men and women. Remember, the Government is labouring under extreme difficulties. It has the narrowest of majorities, although I must say that no leader ever had a more compact and sterling body of supporters. Delegates must not forget that our opponents have control of enormous funds, and are not above using them, as Nationalists have done before, for the corruption of politicians and the pollution of our public life.

“They want to get back to power at any price. They want to repeal the Widows’ Pension Bill, the Workers’ Compensation Bill, Preference to Unionists, the Forty-Four Hour Bill, and all other progressive measures passed by Labour. And they want to make the Nominee House a permanent and unalterable barrier to economic and social reform.

“It was the business of this Conference”, proceeded Mr Lang, “to assist him and his colleagues to prevent those things being done, and to
encourage them to continue the good work they had begun. They should get rid of their bickerings and personalities and get down to the solid work of the movement. Tens of thousands of earnest supporters of Labour were watching the proceedings of this Conference. They expected that it would reflect the intelligence and unselfishness which had marked Labour’s progress for the last twenty years. He had always recognized the paramountcy of Conference. Up to the present it had guided the destinies of the Labour movement with sound judgement and a true appreciation of the peoples’ needs. The platform bore witness to the thought and knowledge and sympathy of the delegates, who had met here and elsewhere to plan for the uplifting of their fellows. Let this Conference be worthy of their great traditions, and add another glorious chapter to the record of Labour achievement. He trusted that when this Conference was over, and their differences determined by the majority, they would close their ranks and present the old united front to the enemy.”

**Intentions of the Government**

In the natural course of events the Government had over two years of office to run, concluded Mr Lang. It was his intention to make them brimful of useful legislation, so that when they asked for a fresh mandate from the people it would be given in the most decisive manner in their history. He did not believe in approaching great questions timorously. If a thing was worth doing, it was worth doing well. Hostile criticism from the press or the Employers’ Federation had no effect on him. He welcomed it, and despised it. As the leader of the Labour movement in this State he stood for the people, and for the people only.

**Enthusiastic Scenes**

The speech was frequently interrupted by outbursts of enthusiasm from the large gathering. Mr Lang’s censure of the defaulting Labour members in regard to the abolition of the Legislative Council was loudly acclaimed amidst cries of “shame”, “traitors”, and “we will deal with them”. At the conclusion of the address Mr Lang was enthusiastically cheered for some minutes.

**The Attendance**

Mr F Conroy, vice-president, was in the chair, and there was a full attendance of delegates. Visitors to the Conference during the evening were the Premier, Mr Lang, the Chief-Secretary, Mr Lazzarini, the Minister for Lands, Mr Loughlin, the Minister for Justice, Mr McKell, Minister for Health, Mr Cann, Minister for Mines, Mr Baddeley, Messrs D Murray,
The arrival of the Premier shortly after the Conference resumed was the signal for an outburst of enthusiasm, which lasted for some seconds. Mr Lang took a seat on the platform, and followed the proceeding with interest.

Vote of Condolence

A vote of condolence with the Lord Mayor (Alderman Stokes) on the loss of his mother was carried, at the instance of Mr W Pagden.

Election of Officers

Mr F Connolly, returning officer, read a list of the nominations for the ALP Executive and other official positions. On the suggestion of the returning officer, the Conference decided that the ballot should be held tomorrow, between the hours of 10 am and 10 pm. An amendment that the hours should be from 2 pm to 10 pm was defeated.

A Delegate: Would you give the country delegates a list of the tickets that are being run for the various positions? (Laughter.)

Mr C Last (AWU) objected to what he described as a misleading statement from the chair in regard to the delegates from the State to the Interstate ALP Executive and Interstate Conference. In previous years, Mr Last said, delegates were elected annually, although the Interstate Conferences were only held triennially. He asked that nominations should be handed to the returning officer from those who desired to go to the Conference.

The Chairman: I did not make any statement. I merely read from certain correspondence. I will give you an opportunity of discussing the matter at a later stage.

Alderman Bates, of Paddington, then addressed the Conference in support of the relatives of the late Mr Jack Power.

Mr Griffin (Bexley Branch) desired to move a motion supporting the election of the executive officers of the party by a ballot of the whole of the members of leagues and affiliated unions in New South Wales. The chairman, however, ruled the motion out of order.

At this stage, a motion was passed unanimously that the business of the session should be suspended to hear an address by Mr Lang. Mr W Webster (Murrumbidgee) speaking to the motion, described Mr Lang as the finest stalwart we have ever had in the Labour movement. Mr Lang then addressed the Conference, as reported above.

A vote of thanks to Mr Lang was moved by Mrs K Dwyer, and seconded by Mr J Beasley, president of the Labour Council. Mr Beasley
said that the trade union movement would stand solidly behind Mr Lang. The motion was carried unanimously.

Mr T Thick (AWU) suggested to Mr Lang that he request the Prime Minister, Mr Bruce, to dispatch a naval vessel to search for the missing crew of the steamer Dorrigo.

**Interstate Conference**

On the motion of Mr Last (AWU), seconded by Mr T Bartle (AWU), it was decided by a large majority to instruct the returning officer to receive nominations up to noon today, at the ALP rooms, for six delegates to the Interstate Conference, and two delegates to the Interstate Executive.

**Application for Readmission**

Mr W Dunks (Waterloo) appealed for his readmission to the movement. Mr Dunks explained that he contested a selection ballot for a municipal election. When he was defeated, he resigned from the party, and contested the election as an independent, but was defeated.

The application was refused.

**Day 5, Wednesday, 7 April 1926**

**Labour Party. New Scheme. Provincial Councils. Discussed by Conference.**

A comprehensive scheme for the decentralisation of the Australian Labour Party was outlined by the country section at the annual State Conference, which was continued at the Trades Hall last night.

The Conference also wholeheartedly endorsed Mr Lang’s proposal for holding a conference of primary producers. The ballot for the election of the State Executive closed at 10 o’clock last night.

The Conference devoted the major portion of the evening to matters of interest to country delegates. Mr Griffin (Bathurst), the chairman of the country section of the ALP, moved:

“That in the opinion of this Conference the Premier has earned the whole-hearted confidence of the Labour movement, and that his proposal to call a conference of primary producers to ascertain the cause of the disparity between the low prices received by the producers and the high prices paid by the consumers, and to receive suggestions for the improvement of the lot of the man on the land, has the hearty endorsement of this Conference of the whole movement. We believe that the conference of producers should be thoroughly representative of all primary interests, and that it offers a bright ray of hope to thousands of men and women who are struggling to
play their part in the building of the nation’s wealth and prosperity. This Conference endorses the proposal of the Premier, and wishes the forthcoming producers’ and consumers’ conference every success.”

Mr Griffin said that the action of the Lang Government in convening the conference was one of the finest things the Government had done. The interests of the rural workers should not be overlooked. If the industrial movement was the backbone of the party, the country section was the very lungs of it. There was no doubt that the Lang Ministry was giving material benefit to the primary producers and not promises. Up to the present no Government had seriously tackled the question of the men on the land.

Referring to the criticism levelled by Mr Bavin at Mr Lang, Mr Griffin said that when Mr Hill, MLA, hurled “vituperations at the widows of the State” in opposing the Widows’ Pensions Act he was supported by the Nationalist party. Mr Griffin added that he felt certain that if Mr Bavin were returned to power the Widows’ Pensions Act would be repealed.

Mr Martin (Cootamundra), seconding the resolution, said that preparations for the producers’ conference had been conducted since the Lang Government came into power.

Mr Quilty (Murray) said that Mr Lang’s scheme had gone out to us a gleam of hope to the men on the land. At the present time the primary producer could not make his own markets – they were made for him. The primary producer was not receiving an adequate return for his labour and expense. The activities of the middlemen prevented it.

McNulty (Yanco) related that owing to overhead charges he had recently lost 18/- on the sale of 24 cases of lemons. The producers had to accept the word of their agents who were not always honest, that their produce had brought the prices they had quoted.

Mr James (Northern Miners) said that no real benefits would be realised unless they determined to help themselves by working on co-operative lines, and cutting out the middleman. The cooperative movement would act as distributors of their commodities, thus ensuring a reasonable return to the producer and a fair deal to the consumer.

Mr Last (AWU) admitted that the cooperative movement could eliminate the middleman, but it would achieve no real good unless it had some control over the cost of producing the commodity. He mentioned that it was possible to have butter back from London and sell it for less than the ruling price in the markets. There was no doubt that they were being robbed so far as butter and potatoes were concerned. There was no doubt that the rural worker was a slave. He received the lowest wages and worked under the worst conditions. They should welcome the stand taken by the Labour Government, but the Government would be up against the money bags of the world.

Mr Griffin said that the popular slogan in the State was “Lang has said it; Lang will do it”.

The motion was carried unanimously.
Decentralisation

Mr Bell (Albury) moved:- “For the purpose of electing future Executives, the State be divided into four parts, to be known as provincial districts, based on the 24 State electorates, viz. nine electorates with five members, 15 electorates with three members; districts to be as follows: No.1, city district, the nine electorates of city and Newcastle; No.2, northern district, comprising five State electorates; No.3, central district, comprising five state electorates; No.4, southern district, comprising five State electorates. Each provincial district to have a provincial conference meeting annually, also an Executive. The State electorates would consist of Newcastle and Metropolitan electorates, viz., Balmain, Botany, Eastern Suburbs, North Shore, Ryde, St George, Western Suburbs, Newcastle and Sydney; No.2 north, Byron, Northern Tablelands, Namoi, Oxley and Maitland; No.3 central, Wammerawa, Bathurst, Wollondilly, Cumberland, and Parramatta; No.4, southern, Goulburn, Cootamundra, Murrumbidgee, Sturt, and Murray. Upon the reversion to single electorates, the boundaries as submitted above to be followed as near as practicable. The State Conference would consist of 108 delegates, viz., 86 delegates from No.1 city, 12 delegates from No.2 northern, 12 delegates from No.3 central, 12 delegates from No.4 southern, 86 delegates from affiliated unions. The State Executive would comprise nine members: three representing No.1 city, three representing, affiliated unions, one representing No.1 northern, one representing No.3 central, and one representing No.4 southern. The Executive members representing city and country districts to be elected by each provincial conference, and to remain under the control of, and be subject to recall by, each provincial executive. The provincial conference to comprise 80 delegates, viz., four delegates from each electorate council in each electorate, making a total of 20, and 10 delegates from affiliated unions, resident within the provincial district. To be optional to conference to double or treble its representation, similar to rule 11. Each provincial executive to consist of five members to be elected annually by the provincial conference, such representation may be doubled or trebled as the conference concerned so desires. Electorate councils to consist of delegates elected by sub-councils on the basis of rule 11. Where no sub-council exists, the branches may elect delegates to electorate councils. Each electorate council to be subdivided into sub-electorate divisions, as geographical or other considerations may determine. Each sub-council to elect delegates to electorate councils. The representation on such sub-councils to be on the basis of rule 11.”

Mr Bell said the move for decentralization had been made so that the rank and file would have more control of the party. Under existing conditions it was difficult for a country man to obtain a seat on the Executive which invariably was constituted by city men. It was felt that this made it possible for members doing honourable favours for one
another and from honourable favours going a good deal further. It was felt in effect that if the conduct of the affairs of the movement were removed from a place where the Executive met regularly, there would be less danger of corruption. Few men in the country could name even two members of the Executive.

Mr Quilty (Murray) said if the proposal of country delegates were adopted they would render impossible a continuation of the conditions which prevailed at the Conferences as at present constituted. Delegates came down to these Conferences at a great expense, and went back to their districts disheartened and chagrined at the thought that they had learnt nothing.

Mr Willis (Miners) foreshadowed an amendment that the Conference should endorse the principles embodied in the scheme, and that a committee of five should be appointed for the purpose of going into and revising the rules and constitution of the New South Wales branch of the ALP, and report to the next Conference, so that their report could be dealt with at the earliest possible moment. He said the scheme would be defeated in its present form as it would have to be altered materially, although they believed in decentralisation. The present system of governing the movement must break down eventually owing to the way it had grown. The proceedings of the present Conference had been a disgrace to the movement. Instead of the Conference electing an Executive, the president of the Conference ought to be in a position to read out the names of the new Executive. The present system made it possible for one or two organisations, by intrigue or organising, to secure control of the movement.

Mr Last (AWU) said they had to realize that the Trade Union Movement was the basis on which the superstructure of the ALP rested, and that it would be dangerous to carry the proposition in its present form. The proposed representation of the industrial section was much too small.

Mr Griffin said the country section was prepared to accept Mr Willis’s amendment, provided that the personnel of the committee was favourable to country interests.

Mr Webster (Murrumbidgee) said that the present system was beyond the control of the rank and file.

Mr Cohen (St. George), who was subject to considerable interruption, moved that it be an instruction from Conference to the incoming Executive that a conference be summoned to be held not later than January 1, 1927, for the purpose of dealing with remodelling the constitution, such conference to consist of one representative from each of the unions and the leagues. His object was to take the matter out of the hands of a few, and give the rank and file a voice in the discussion.
Mr Willis, in reply to Mr Bell, said he would be prepared to grant the country section two representatives on the committee if it consisted of seven members.

Mr Kilburn (Bricklayers) said he wanted to know what assurance they had that any Conference would be held next year. (Laughter.)

The president ruled the amendment out of order, and Mr Willis’s amendment, which became the motion, was carried unanimously.

It was decided that seven delegates should constitute the committee, two of whom would represent country districts.

**Mr Considine Readmitted**

Mr Considine, a former Labour member of the Federal Parliament, who had ceased to be a member of the movement, was given permission to address the Conference regarding his readmission. He said that his refusal to assist in the political assassination of the late Mr Brookfield had resulted in certain forces becoming active. During his absence from Broken Hill a forged telegram with his name attached was sent to the people of Broken Hill, urging them to vote against Brookfield. His refutation of the telegram was published on the day of the elections, and Mr Brookfield was elected. The Executive called upon him to show cause why he should not be expelled from the movement, and the only apparent reason given was that he was a supporter of the OBU.

“I may be accused of being a ‘Red’”, Mr Considine continued, “and I will not deny it. My only crime is that I opposed an official Labour man, and my only regret is that I did not do the working class a service by beating him”. (Applause.)

Mr Dessaix (North Sydney) moved the readmission of Mr Considine with full continuity of membership. Mr G Burns (St George) seconded the resolution.

Mr Coulburn (Western Suburbs) said that if they decided to readmit Mr Considine they should be consistent and readmit Mr Dunks.

A delegate asked Mr Considine if, in the future, the OBU ran candidates, would he support them in preference to the ALP?

Mr Considine: Wherever the occasion arises I will support whatever party stands in the interests of my class. (Applause.)

The motion for Mr Considine’s readmission was carried by a large majority, and he was enthusiastically cheered.

The Conference adjourned at 10.30 o’clock till today.
Day 6, Thursday, 8 April 1926

ALP President Elected. Mr W Seale. Combined Faction Wins

The ballot for the election of State officers of the Australian Labour Party resulted in a victory for the supporters of the fusion between the Magrath-Tyrrell faction and the AWU. This combination will control the machine by a slender majority.

Leaders of the AWU, however, are confident that, with the assistance of the alternates and one or two anticipated defections from the ranks of the governing body, they will be able to dominate the Executive before next Conference takes place.

The militants, who ran a full ticket for all offices, were completely routed. Not one of their 30 nominees for appointment to the new Executive was successful.

Counting of the ballot was commenced at 10 pm on Thursday, and did not conclude until 2 pm yesterday. Mr P Connolly, returning officer, and his staff worked throughout the night without a break.

Mr W Seale, secretary of the Waterside Workers’ Federation, and a supporter of the Tyrrell-Magrath section, defeated Mr G Buckland, secretary of the AWU, for the presidency by 78 votes.

The combined ticket run by the Tyrrell-Magrath party and the AWU was most successful, every nominee with two exceptions being returned. Members of the Magrath-Tyrrell section are staunch supporters of the State Government. In consequence the Government will be free from the embarrassment which inevitably would have followed had the militants or the AWU acquired control. Members of the old Executive were jubilant yesterday at their success.

Officials of the AWU professed to be well satisfied. They said that the elections proved to be a victory for them. In the first place, their leaders contended, the AWU campaign was directed towards removing Mr EC Magrath, MLC, from the presidency, and also towards removing Mr J Tyrrell and the other MsLC from their seats on the Executive. In these matters they had the support of the militants, with the result that this powerful combination succeeded in removing the leaders of the Tyrrell-Magrath faction from Executive positions. At the last Conference only one AWU supporter, Mrs K Dwyer, was elected to the Executive. Now, however, the AWU has a powerful minority section which threatens to vie with the ruling section for the control of the movement. It is not unlikely that the AWU may win support from other sections of the Executive, and thus assume command as in 1919.

That the militants were in strong force at the Conference was indicated by the vote of Mr J Beasley, their nominee for the presidency, who secured no fewer than 114 votes, which was only 9 behind the AWU nominee and 87 behind the successful candidate.
The vote indicated that the merger of the anti-militant factions was absolutely necessary to prevent the Communists from obtaining domination of the political Labour movement. It now transpires that during the Conference the leaders of the merging factions were advised that it was the desire of the State Government that they should present a common front against the militant elements.

Supporters of the Trades Hall section, led by Mr J O’Reilly, also fared badly in the elections. All their nominees were unsuccessful, with the exception of Mr O’Reilly, who secured appointment to the Executive.

**Mr T Walsh Readmitted**

The State Conference of the Australian Labour Party was resumed at the Trades Hall last night.

Mr Thomas Walsh appealed to the Conference to grant him continuity of membership in the movement. He said that his only sin was that in 1918 he stood as anti-conscription candidate against Mr Frank Burke for Newtown.

It was decided to readmit Mr Walsh to the movement with full continuity of membership.

**Decentralisation**

The following delegates were appointed to the committee which is to inquire into the reconstitution of the rules to provide for the decentralization of the party: Messrs AC Willis, MLC, M Griffin (Bathurst), WM Webster (Murrumbidgee), J Kilburn, EC Magrath, MLC, ER Voigt, and Alderman Mostyn.

**Election of Officers**

Mr P Connolly (returning officer) announced that the election of officers had resulted as follows:-

- **President**: Mr W Seale, 203 (elected); Mr J Beasley, 126.
- **Secretary**: Mr W Carey, 241 (elected); Mr MA Teece, 53; Mr O Schmude.
- **Vice-presidents**: Mr F Conroy, 155; Mr T Holloway, 137 (both elected).
- **Delegates for Federal Executive**: Mr EC Magrath, MLC, 155; Alderman PV Stokes (Lord Mayor), 125.
- **Delegates to Interstate Conference**: Messrs W Seale, 147; J Kilburn, 128; Mrs K Dwyer, 125; Messrs G Smith (Clerks), 125; T Falkingham (Boiler-makers), 123; J O’Reilly (Hairdressers), 120.
- **Central Executive**: Messrs D Rees (Miners), 238; S Bird (Miners), 234; W Padgen (Engineers), 200; G Smith (Clerks), 195; W Harrop (Theatrical
Employees), 188; Miss Johnstone (Western Suburbs), 180; Messrs W Mills (Waterside Workers), 178; R Sinclair (Cabmen), 173; J Coman (Botany), 173; J McGarry (Furnishing Trades), 170; Mrs Russell (St George), 166; Messrs R Beashel (Darling Harbour), 165; T Leslie (Miners), 162; S Taylor (Ryde), 159; G Rowlands (Farriers), 158; J Kaine (Municipal Employees), 156; Mrs Dorrington (Stanmore), 154; Messrs AC Roberts, 153; W Terry (Timber Workers), 151; G Anderson (Ryde), 149; L O'Neill (Western Suburbs), 148; L Devitt (Sydney), 146; F Parker (Brick, Tile, & Pottery Employees), 138; Mrs Stapleton (Surry Hills), 135; Messrs JF O'Reilly (Hairdressers), 134; G Sutherland (AWU), 133; Mrs Benson (AWU), 127; Messrs H Potter (Liquor Trades), 125; T Liston (North Sydney), 124.

Conduct of Ballot

The manner in which the ballot was conducted was heatedly debated by the delegates. Mr O’Reilly, who was frequently interrupted, said that although the returning officer had endeavoured to see that the ballot was conducted fairly he had failed. Mr O’Reilly said that a practice followed in America had been adopted in some instances. Certain prominent members had entered the booth in pairs. A pretence was made at marking the papers and they were taken outside to the headquarters of the faction concerned.

Mr O’Reilly endeavoured to continue his charges, but he was refused a hearing, and was howled down.

When Mr Seale, the newly elected President, took the chair he was given a mixed reception, and he was greeted with cries of “Barley Mow”. He assured the Conference that every matter that came before him would receive fair treatment.

Mr Beasley said he was proud of the number of primary votes he had received. Everybody was aware of the arrangement, which had had such an important effect on the ballot, but he did not propose to squeal. It was the game of politics. It was his desire to serve the movement to the best of his ability. (Applause.)

Mr Buckland said a majority of the Conference had elected Mr Seale president, and it was his intention to give him loyal support. (Laughter and applause.)

Alternate Delegates

The following alternate delegates to the central Executive were elected: Messrs J Bodkin (AWU), 113; E Voigt (North Sydney), 109; Mrs Melville (Eastern Suburbs), 108; J Millard (Builders Labourers), 107; JJ Graves (Stovemakers), 107; WJ Gibb (Clothing Trades), 105; J Hastie (Engine Drivers), 75; A Sherwin (Restaurant Employees), 74; W Wolstenholme (Engineers), 74; S Rawlins (Gas Employees), 73; Bennett (Coachmakers), 72;
Mrs McGowen (Cumberland), 72; J Stewart (Electrical Trades), 70; F Gill (Sugar Workers), 69; Miss O’Sullivan (Western Suburbs), 69; Mrs K Dwyer (AWU), 98; J McDonald (Ship Painters & Dockers), 95; J Flanagan (Coach-makers), 91; A McPherson (Letter Carriers), 89; F Roels (Engine Drivers), 88; AH Moate (Stewards), 88; F Briggs (Carpenters), 85; J Rutherford (Saddlers), 83; F Hales (Coal Lumpers), 81; Mrs Houghton (Clothing Trades), 76; J Edwards (Shipwrights), 69; WJ Miller 68; Dessaix (North Sydney), 68; J Murrell (Timber Workers), 67; Burke (Eastern Suburbs), 65.

Over 76 per cent of the alternative delegates were supporters of the Militant section led by Mr Beasley.

The Conference adjourned at 10.30 o’clock until today.

Mr Garden’s Comments

Commenting upon the ALP elections, Mr JS Garden, secretary of the Labour Council, said that the Industrialists, led by Mr Beasley, were pleased with the result of the ballot. Mr Garden added that at the next Conference he thought the Industrialists would be paramount. Although defeated it could not be said that they were disgraced. Mr Garden added that the only solid section behind Mr Lang was the Industrialists.

Day 7, Friday, 9 April 1926

[There was no report of Conference activities on Friday.]

Day 8, Saturday, 10 April 1916

Labour Party. Members Expelled. Five MsLC.

Annual Conference.

The State annual Conference of the Australian Labour Party was continued at the Trades hall on Saturday afternoon. The attendance was not so large as at the previous session.

Mr EC Magrath, MLC, sprang a surprise on the Conference by reviving the notorious ballot box scandal. He moved the suspension of standing orders to discuss a resolution to prevent the incoming Executive from readmitting to the movement those who had been expelled for complicity in the ballot box scandals.

Mr Magrath explained that a certain amount of speculation had taken place in the press concerning the possibility of certain re-admissions to the Movement. If the Conference determined the matter it would strike a note of confidence among members and would stifle the press criticism.
Mr Sherwin (Restaurant Employees), amidst scenes of disorder, said that if the Conference discussed Mr Magrath’s matter they should also discuss the position of MsLC in the party who had failed to vote for the Abolition Bill.

Mr Buckland (AWU) opposed the motion on the ground that rule 33 of the constitution gave the Executive plenary powers between Conferences.

The motion for the suspension of standing orders was carried.

Mr Magrath moved: “That it be an instruction to the incoming Executive that any person expelled from the ALP for complicity in the ballot box scandals shall not be admitted without the consent of an annual Conference”.

Mr Magrath said that it would be improper for the Conference to leave the position so that any application to the Executive would have the consideration of the Executive and probably secure the restoration of those people to the movement.

Mr J O’Reilly supporting the resolution, said that an attempt was to be made to re-instate the principals in the ballot box scandals.

Mr A Williams (Eastern Suburbs) stated that he had written the reports of the ballot box scandals for the official Labour paper, and had been instructed to write them in opposition to Mr ’Jack’ Bailey. He knew that Mr Bailey did not intend to apply for re-admission. When Mr Bailey was expelled the cards were “stacked” against him.

Mr Kelly (AWU) said that those who were now crying for blood had led a party in opposition to the official Labour party.

Mr Magrath, in reply, stated that it was only where the Conference failed to instruct the Executive on any particular subject that it was competent for the Executive to decide matters before it.

A voice: What negotiations did Mr Magrath enter into with Mr Bailey regarding the pact?

Mr Magrath: I refused to see Mr Bailey.

The motion was carried by 163 votes to 71.

**Upper House**

The Conference then considered the cases of the five Labour MsLC who failed to vote for the Abolition Bill in the Legislative Council. Those concerned were Messrs Ackurst, Lyons, Smith, Murray, and Kelly. All the MsLC in question failed to put in an appearance.

The chairman said that with the exception of Mr Lyons none of the MsLC had replied to the letters sent by the Conference advising them that their cases would be considered by the Conference.

Mr Beasley suggested that the five members concerned should be given an opportunity of being in attendance at the night session. It was pointed out that one or two had attended on Friday night – the date originally fixed for the hearing of their cases.
Mr Magrath urged that action should be taken immediately.
A motion in favour of the matter being dealt with immediately was carried.
Mr Magrath moved that for failing to record their votes for the abolition of the Legislative Council in the recent session this Conference expels Messrs Lyons, Ackhurst, Smith, Kelly, and Murray.
Mr Magrath said that no excuse could suffice to absolve the five members for their negligence. Second Houses, he said, were the stronghold of Conservatism. The abolition of the Upper House was the first plank of the party’s platform. It must not be impeded by the action of pledged supporters.
Mr T Falkinkham (Boilermakers) said that if the members concerned had any Labour principles they would resign from the Upper House.
Mr G Buckland, opposing the resolution, said that action should be taken against those who had been responsible for the appointment of the defaulting members.
Mr Buckland then accused Mr Magrath of having been absent from the House when the vote on the 44-Hours Bill was taken. Mr Buckland suggested that a committee should be appointed to investigate the appointments to the Upper House.
Mr P Connolly (Northern Miners) caused a stir by stating that if Mr Buckland would move another resolution for the expulsion of Mr Magrath and Mr Grayndler and other MsLC, who had not been present at all divisions, he would second the motion.
Mr Ryan, MLC, moved as an amendment that Messrs Smith, Lyons, and Murray should be expelled, and the cases of Messrs Kelly and Ackhurst should be given further consideration.
Mr R Bates suggested that a vote of censure should be moved against those responsible for the appointment of the defaulting members.
Mr McNulty, supporting Mr Buckland’s suggestion for the appointment of a special committee, said that some of the Upper House appointees were never Labour men.
Mr Magrath, in reply, explained that he had not been absent when the 44-Hours Bill was under consideration. He added that it the members in question were freed on this occasion there was no guarantee that they would vote with the Government on other issues.
The amendment was defeated on a show of hands, and the motion in favour of expulsion was carried by a large majority.

Night Session

Mr W Gibb (Clothing Trades) moved: “That a committee be appointed to inquire into the bona fides of the Women Workers’ Union and its relationship to the policy of the ALP”.
Mr Gibb said that the members of the Women Workers’ Union received a smaller rate of remuneration than members of the Clothing Trades Union, of which he was an organiser. In consequence the employers, Mr Gibb said, attempted to keep employees out of his union by persuading them to join the Women Workers’ Union, which was represented at the conference by Mrs K Dwyer and Miss A Golding.

Mr WD Jones (Clothing Trades) denied that the object of his union was to have Mrs Dwyer expelled from the ALP.

Miss A Golding said that the Minister for Labour and Industry had refused a request by Mr Gibb that the Women Workers’ Union should be struck off the list of unions registered under the State Arbitration Act. She challenged the representatives of the Clothing Trades Union to refer their request to the Industrial Commission, which would replace the State Arbitration Court.

The resolution was carried, and the following were appointed to the committee: Misses Cunningham, Graham, Mesdames Melville and Colborne, and Messrs G Buckland and J Flanagan.

**Senator Gardiner**

Senator Gardiner, in reply to words of welcome, said that the Labour party would govern Australia from end to end within his lifetime. The rank and file were never better organised than they were today.

Referring to the recent Federal elections Mr Gardiner said that the Nationalists had won by falsehood, fraud, and misrepresentation. He did not know where all the money used by the Nationalists had come from. He did know that “huge sums” had come from the other side of the world to help them in their fight.

Mr Gardiner said that the Nationalist party was attempting to enlist the State Governor as a member of their party to assist them in their fight against the abolition of the Upper House. “I have reason for believing”, concluded Mr Gardiner, “that the action of the Nationalists is causing much concern in quarters where they are least expected”.

A resolution placing on record the services rendered to the party by Senator Gardiner was carried by acclamation.

**Application for Re-Admission**

Mr PC Evans applied for readmission to the party. He said that he had been expelled because he was in the way of Mr Bailey and “his satellites”. The application was refused.

At 10 pm the Conference adjourned until 7 pm today.

Mr Lang’s Powers.

The right of the Parliamentary Labour caucus to make appointments to the Upper House was annulled by the ALP Conference last night. The Conference decided, in view of Mr Lang’s pledge to abolish the Legislative Council, that he, instead of the caucus, should be empowered to select future appointees from nominations submitted by the ALP Executive.

There was a noticeable falling off in the attendance at the Conference, which was continued at the Trades Hall last night. Mr W Seale, president, occupied the chair.

Mr W Nulty (Yanco) moved a resolution that the Conference should affirm the principle of “one man one job”, and recommended that the Conference should ask the Premier to see that such a policy was carried out in all public departments.

Mr R Struck (Yanco), in seconding the resolution, said that the Minister for Lands (Mr Dunn) had refused to put the principle into operation on the Murrumbidgee irrigation area.

The motion was carried.

Mr F Dorrington asked that the Conference should investigate certain allegations against a number of members of the ALP Executive. Mr Dorrington explained that he had made serious charges of irregular methods against certain prominent members of the Executive.

A voice: What are your charges?

Mr Dorrington: One of my charges is that certain Executive officers had drink at a polling booth for the purpose of influencing voters in a certain selection ballot.

Mr Dorrington stated that before he had an opportunity of substantiating his charges he was expelled. He asked that a select committee should be appointed to investigate his charges.

Mr AC Willis, MLC, drew the attention of delegates to the circulation at the Conference of a pamphlet marked “confidential to ALP members”. Mr Willis alleged that circulars were originally issued for the purpose of discrediting the ALP Executive in 1923, of which he was a member. He said that the circulars were full of charges of irregular methods, which were, he added, without foundation.

Mrs L Fowler alleged that Mr Willis had prevented Messrs Dorrington and Knight from giving evidence before the select committee appointed to investigate the conduct of selection ballots.

Mr Willis caused a stir, when replying to a delegate, by stating that he kept certain documents in his possession because he could not safely leave them in the ALP office.
**Disorderly Scenes**

At this stage a disorderly scene occurred. One delegate asked that Mr Garden, who was chairman of the select committee appointed some years ago to investigate selection ballots, should be given five minutes to place his views before the Conference. Mr Garden suddenly appeared at the main entrance door to the Conference and passed a remark which was not audible at the press table.

The Chairman: Mr Garden is attempting to intimidate the chairman. I ask that he leave the Conference hall.

Mr Garden declined to leave for some seconds, but when an attempt was made to close the doors he retired. A motion that Mr Garden should be allowed to attend the Conference was defeated on the voices.

Finally, a committee was appointed to investigate the charges of Mr Dorrington.

**Upper House Appointments**

Mr WM Webster (Wammerawa) then moved the following resolution: “That, in view of the unsatisfactory results of allowing the Parliamentary Caucus to decide the personnel of the appointments to the Legislative Council, and in consideration of the critical situation which confronts the Labour movement, this Conference directs that, in future, appointments to the Legislative Council should be left to the Lang Government, and that Mr Lang be given a free hand to choose his own appointees; also that Conference does not lay this down as a principle, but makes this distinction in favour of Mr Lang in recognition of his unswerving allegiance to Labour’s ideals, and his able leadership of Labour’s forces.”

The chairman disallowed Mr Webster from moving the resolution on the ground that a letter on the subject from the Miners’ Federation was already before the meeting.

A representative from the miners then moved a resolution on similar lines, which was seconded by Mr Webster.

Mr Davidson, MLA, addressed the Conference as the returning officer in charge of the Parliamentary ballot, when the recent appointments to the Upper House were made. Mr Davidson asked the Conference to accept his assurance that there was no corruption associated with the ballot. He did not want them to blame members of the Parliamentary party, but the system, for the appointment of delegates.

The chairman ruled that the resolution involved an alteration to the constitution, and in consequence would have to be carried by a two-third’s majority.

Mr Ryan, MLC, who passed the motion, asked: “Could Mr Lang do any better than the caucus?”

A voice: He could not do any worse. (Applause.)
Mr Lazzarini, Chief Secretary, said he hoped that the Conference would give this right to Mr Lang, because he (Mr Lazzarini) thought it would be in the interests of the movement to do it.

Mr Willis stated that unless one man was made responsible for future appointments there would be a repetition of what had taken place in the past.

Eventually the following motion, drafted by the chairman, was carried by an overwhelming majority: “That, owing to the action of some of the latest appointees on matters of vital importance to the movement, and seeing that the Premier has pledged his word to abolish the Legislative Council, all future appointments be left in the hands of the Premier, provided that all nominations be called for and endorsed in accordance with rule 64, and the Premier be given a free hand to make selections from such nominations”.

The decision means that the Premier, instead of the Parliamentary Labour caucus, will in future be allowed to select Upper House appointees from nominations submitted by the ALP Executive.

At 10.15 the Conference adjourned until 7 o’clock tonight.

**Day 10, Tuesday, 13 April 1926**

**Effort to Close ALP Conference Results in Scene of Disorder.**

**AWU Representatives Take Control.**

**Executive Supporters Leave Meeting.**

Wild scenes of disorder marked the closing of the ALP Conference last night. An attempt by a section to adjourn the gathering until next year caused strong opposition, which resulted in the Conference being taken out of the hands of the president, Mr W Seale.

**Remarkable Scenes**

The uproar occurred shortly before 10 o’clock, the usual closing time of the night session.

A report by a select committee appointed to investigate charges of irregular methods against prominent members of the Executive had been adopted, when a delegate from the Miners’ Federation suddenly sprang to his feet and moved the adjournment of the Conference *sine die*.

Immediately Mr T Liston (North Sydney) moved an amendment that the Conference should reassemble tonight.

Mr Seale put the motion and amendment to a vote and declared the motion carried on the voices.

Instantaneously a roar for a division arose along the body of the hall.
Contrary to expectations Mr Seale refused the request, and hastily picking up his papers moved from the platform towards the door leading from the hall.

Mr Liston jumped onto a chair and shouted that his amendment should be put to a division, but Mr Seale declined to alter his decision.

Amidst a deafening din some of the delegates surged towards the exit doors, causing a congestion which prevented Mr Seale from leaving the platform for some time.

Mr Seale, in consequence, was forced to face the angry shouts and roars of those who disagreed with his ruling. Eventually he succeeded in leaving the platform, and he then made his departure from the building.

As soon as he had left the meeting prominent members of the Executive jumped on to the platform and appealed to the delegates to resume their seats.

Order was eventually restored, and Mr T Holloway, vice-president, took control of the meeting, in which the AWU had the dominating influence.

After it had been ascertained that the attendance was sufficiently large to constitute a quorum, Mr Holloway, speaking quietly and deliberately, declared that the Conference could only be closed by the vote of the majority of delegates who comprised the Conference.

“As a reasonable officer of the party I am sorry for what has taken place”, said Mr Holloway. “I have had a long experience and I regret to say that this is not the first occasion on which a Conference has been unconstitutionally closed in this disorderly manner”.

Mr Holloway then took a motion that the Conference should be resumed tonight, at 7 o’clock.

The motion was carried by a large majority, about 117 delegates voting in favour of the proposal.

It was then decided that members of the newly-appointed Executive who were present should form a committee and wait on the president for the purpose of advising him that the delegates were desirous of continuing the Conference.

The delegates then dispersed quietly.

While the meeting was being held, most of the lights in the hall were extinguished, and fears were entertained that delegates would be unable to continue their deliberations.

The meeting, however, succeeded in getting through its business and dispersing quietly before the building was plunged into darkness.

Members of the committee marched in a body to the second floor of the Trades Hall, where the ALP office is situated, for the purpose of interviewing the president. On their arrival, however, they found all doors closed, and the office in darkness. They were in consequence compelled to adjourn their interview with the president until this morning.
The action of the president in refusing to take a division on the adjournment question was strongly criticized by the large groups of delegates who remained outside the Trades Hall.

The crowd discussed the incident long after the Conference had broken up. It was pointed out that the Magrath-Tyrrell faction, of which Mr Seale is a stanch supporter, had been decisively defeated on most of the votes taken during the evening.

The election of the agenda committee resulted in a rout for the Magrath-Tyrrell supporters, only one nominee out of the five persons appointed being a member of the Executive faction.

The consensus of opinion was that the ruling body, having captured the Executive again and transacted all the business desired, was determined to conclude the gathering at all costs.

Recent votes clearly indicated that the Magrath-Tyrrell section had lost considerable support, due in a measure to the departure of many country delegates for their homes.

Determined efforts will be made today to bring about the reassembling of the Conference tonight.

If the president refuses to convene the gathering this year’s Conference will be a unique one in that the delegates have not only failed to consider one item of the voluminous agenda paper, but have actually not adopted the annual balance-sheet and report of the outgoing ALP Executive. Such omissions, it was stated last night, would be unprecedented in the history of the party.

The principal business done at the Conference early in the evening was the election of an agenda committee.

The decision to appoint the committee constitutes the first serious attempt of the Conference to consider the agenda paper, which contains ever 400 resolutions.

The result of the elections was a victory for the anti-Executive forces, who secured a majority of members on the committee. As a result it is expected that the committee will prescribe a form of procedure which will best conform with the interests of the anti-Executive forces.

Mrs K Dwyer replied at length to recent criticism of the Women’s Workers’ Union which she represents at the Conference. Mrs Dwyer took particular objection to an attack upon her organisation by the delegates from the Federated Clothing Trades Union. She denied that her union was not bona fide, and contended that it complied with the rules of the ALP. Mrs Dwyer explained that she refused to give evidence before the select committee appointed by the Conference to investigate the bona fides of her union on the ground that she did not have an opportunity to get her witnesses. She said that if the new industrial commissioner, Mr Piddington, inquired into her case she would abide by his decision. Mrs Dwyer heatedly denied a charge that she had been responsible for labour “sweating”.

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A vote of sympathy with the families of the lost crew of the *Dorrigo* was passed. Mr Parke (Postal Electricians), in moving the resolution, stated that charges had been made that the *Dorrigo* had been overloaded, and he hoped a full inquiry would be held.

Mr Arthur Griffith applied for readmission to the party from which he was expelled during the conscription campaign in the late war. Mr Griffith explained that his offence had been to disobey an instruction of an ALP Conference, the effect of which was that any member advocating conscription should have his nomination for selection as a parliamentary candidate cancelled. “I did not violate any pledge”, said Mr Griffith. I have taken my gruel and have never squealed. I am sorry now for what I did. If you readmit me to the party I will bring you back the scalp of one of the most formidable Nationalist politicians after the next elections have taken place”.

Miss O’ Sullivan (Telephonists) moved that Mr Griffith should not be readmitted to the movement.

The chairman moved the motion out of order, and said that Mr Griffith’s application could not be considered until certain rules of the party had been amended.

At this stage much hilarity was caused by a delegate from the Butchers’ Union, who insisted upon expressing his views in defiance of the chairman’s instructions to the contrary. The delegate sauntered up the main aisle of the Conference hall, and flourishing his hands menacingly at the president, demanded that he should be allowed to speak. The request was eventually granted, but the uproar was so deafening when the delegate commenced to address the gathering that he was reluctantly compelled to resume his seat.

Mr W Mills (Waterside Workers) unsuccessfully attempted to move the suspension of standing orders to discuss a report that the State Navigation Department intended to abolish the flagstaff and semaphore station on Observatory Hill. The Conference decided on the voices not to consider the matter.

The standing orders were then suspended to permit of the appointment of an agenda committee. Delegates from country centres complained that although the Conference had been in session for a week and a half the agenda paper, containing over 400 resolutions, had not been touched. Ordinarily the agenda committee is appointed on the opening day of the Conference.

Much delay ensued while delegates were endeavouring to decide how the committee was to be appointed. Some favoured placing the names of nominees in the hat and drawing from them, while others insisted upon a ballot.

The chairman endeavoured to settle the point by taking a vote on the voices, but subsequently had to take a show of hands.
A division was then called for and resulted in the proposal for selecting the names out of a hat being defeated.

The following committee was then appointed: Messrs G Buckland (AWU), R Beashell (Miscellaneous Workers), AC Willis (Miners), A McPherson (Postal Workers), J Graves (Stovemakers).

Mr P Connolly submitted the report of the select committee appointed to investigate charges of irregular methods made by Messrs Dorrington and Knight against Messrs F Conroy and J McGarry, who are prominent members of the Executive.

Mr Connolly reported that the committee was of the opinion that, although the charges had been made in good faith, they had not been substantiated.

The committee recommended that Messrs Dorrington and Knight, who had been expelled, should be re-admitted to the movement with full continuity of membership.

A motion for the adoption of the report was carried.

Mr Griffith Explains

Mr Arthur Griffith, in explanation of his position, pointed out to one of our representatives at the close of the proceedings that he had been invited by the Conference to give an address, in anticipation of a motion which would be submitted on his behalf by the Liverpool League, and which would be reached at a later stage of the business paper, to amend the rules to readmit him to the movement.

Day 11, Wednesday, 14 April 1926

ALP Delegates Assemble. Vote of Censure on the President. Demand for Special Conference.

In defiance of the announcement by the president (Mr W Seale) that the ALP Conference had been closed, over 100 delegates reassembled at the Trades Hall last night at the usual meeting hour.

A vote of censure on the president was passed for his “unconstitutional act in closing the Conference”.

It was also decided to demand a special Conference, to be held at an early date for the purpose of considering the agenda paper, which had been left untouched by the Conference.

Orderly Meeting

A feature of the proceedings was the orderly manner in which the business was conducted. The meeting was in marked contrast to the
stormy scenes which characterised most of the sessions of the Conference. Care was taken to ensure that only credentialled delegates were allowed to participate in the discussion, and cast a vote.

Acting under instructions, the official staff of the party was absent. In consequence, delegates were compelled to elect doorkeepers, who examined the credentials of all members who were allowed to take seats in the main body of the hall.

There was a scene of enthusiasm when the junior vice-president, Mr T Holloway, (AWU) took the presidential chair in the absence of Mr Seale, and declared the “Conference open”.

As the officers who had acted as timekeeper and minute secretary were absent, nominations were called for both positions, which were filled by delegates from the body of the hall.

A delegate then pointed out that, in order to make certain that this gathering conformed with the constitution of the party, a count should be taken. He pointed out that 40 constituted a quorum, and 100 were required before the meeting could constitutionally alter the rules of the party.

Two tellers were appointed, and on taking a count, reported that 118 credentialled delegates were in attendance. The announcement was received with prolonged applause as all doubts regarding the constitutionality of the proceedings had apparently been dispelled.

Many members of the ALP Executive were present, and assisted the delegates to conduct their business along the lines followed by the Conference. Before being allowed to cast a vote, every delegate was required to display his badge, in accordance with the rules of the party. Mr Holloway said that the delegates had reassembled because the president had unconstitutionally disbanded the Conference. He said that Mr Seale’s desertion of the presidency was in defiance of the standing orders, and against the constitution of the party. Mr Seale, he said, was the servant of the Conference. On a majority vote he could be removed. There were over 400 policy matters sent in by branches from all parts of the State, and not one had been dealt with owing to the abandonment of the Conference.

Mr Webster (Murrumbidgee), who moved the resolution of confidence in the Premier during the early stages of the Conference, strongly criticised Mr Seale for his action in closing the Conference. Important business still remained to be done. The delegates would be recreants to their trust if they did not attempt to consider the agenda paper.

Mr Withers (Albury) stated that they had never seen such disgraceful scenes as had been enacted during the Conference. When he returned to his league he would have to report the “old story of nothing done”.

Mrs L Fowler complained that attempts had been made to exclude her from the opening sessions of the Conference, because she had laid charges of bribery and boodling against prominent members of the
Executive. Referring to the doings of the late Executive, Mrs Fowler said that efforts had been made to put through the nomination of a well-known hotelkeeper for appointment to the Upper House even though he did not have the necessary continuity. Mr Murphy, MLA, had made serious charges against a prominent member of the Executive. The Executive, however, never asked Mr Murphy to substantiate his charges or the accused official to disprove them.

Mr T Bartle (AWU) then moved a motion protesting against the fiction of Mr Seale unconstitutionally closing the Conference. Mr Bartle said that the present Conference was the first one at which the annual balance-sheet had not been adopted.

Mr J McPherson (Letter Carriers) said that the members of the Magrath-Tyrrell faction had supported the Government in the hope that they would improve their positions. "It has been reported", said Mr McPherson, "that one member of the faction is to be assistant industrial commissioner, and a number of his prominent supporters are to be the chairmen of the various committees appointed under the Industrial Arbitration Amendment Act. I am disgusted that the movement should be prostituted for the sake of place and pelf. 'Jack' Bailey is a saint compared with some of these people. The machine seems to have got into the hands of a gang of ruffians."

Mr Bennet (Coachmakers) moved as an amendment that the president should be censured for leaving the chair against the expressed wish of the majority of delegates.

Mr J Bodkin (AWU) said that the move to disband the Conference was done under the influence of the liquor interests. He pointed out that the ruling faction did not want the Conference to consider the agenda paper because it contained proposals concerning "tied houses" and also motions in opposition to the scheme to extend the closing hours of hotels to 11 pm.

Mr JR Janos (Carpenters and Joiners) suggested that Mr Seale should be removed from office.

Mr L Devitt (Sydney electorate) endorsed Mr Bodkin’s remarks concerning the association of the liquor interests with the closing of the Conference.

The amendment was carried by 114 to 4.

Mr J Graves (Stovemakers) then submitted a report by the agenda committee appointed the previous evening.

A motion to adopt the report was defeated, and the following amendment was carried by 53 to 50: “That it be an instruction to the incoming Executive to deal first with the business brought forward by the Conference”.

Mr T Falkingham (Boilermakers) then moved the following resolution: “That it be an instruction to the incoming Executive that, instead of adopting the report of the old Executive, they shall formulate a proper
report of the Executive’s doings during the past two years; also, that a select committee be appointed to inquire into the election a officers of the Annandale league as conducted by the old Executive”.

It was also decided to commence an agitation among the leagues throughout the State in favour of a special Conference for the purpose of considering the agenda paper.

A motion to adjourn the Conference *sine die* was carried, after which the gathering dispersed in good spirits.

**Mr Seale’s Statement**

Mr W Seale, president of the ALP, issued the following statement yesterday in regard to the closing session of the Conference: “The Conference has been definitively closed. A resolution to this effect was carried on the voices by a large majority on Tuesday night. The bulk of the opposition to the proposal came from the gallery, the occupants of which were not entitled to vote. There was so little doubt about the vote that I did not think a division was necessary. In any case, it would have been impossible for me to accept any amendment in favour of adjourning until 7 o’clock the following night, because a motion to this effect had been defeated twelve minutes before the Conference closed.”

**Militants’ Attitude**

Mr J Graves, one of the leaders of the militants, denied that there had been any understanding between his party and the AWU.

“It has been suggested”, said Mr Graves, “that we agreed to support the AWU and further undertook to vote in favour of the re-admission of Mr Bailey, the AWU in return to agree to the admission of Communists to the Party. I wish to give the lie direct to this suggestion. As a matter of fact, the militants voted in favour of Mr Magrath’s motion preventing the ALP Executive from readmitting the parties in the ballot box scandals. Our reason for voting in favour of a continuance of the Conference was because a number of important resolutions on the agenda paper required consideration, and we did not want the. Conference to disperse before considering them.”
Labour Party. Campaign Launched for Another Conference.

Following the decision of the delegates on Wednesday night at the Trades Hall a campaign has been launched to call a special conference of the Australian Labour party for not later than July 1.

Branches and unions are to be asked to carry resolutions immediately demanding that the Executive shall call a special Conference. Teams of speakers are being organised to address unions on the position.

A manifesto will also be issued setting out the reasons why the delegates should reassemble at an early date. The manifesto will contain the signatures of the leaders of most of the sections represented at the recent Conference.

Although previous Conferences have closed without completing the business paper, there is no record of a Labour Conference closing down immediately the agenda committee was elected, and without adopting the annual report and balance sheet of the party.

With the evenly divided state of the factions it is questionable whether Mr Seale could secure the majority of the Executive to endorse his action in closing down the Conference.

His action will be challenged as soon as the new Executive meets. It is considered certain that the Executive will grant a special Conference when the requisite number of leagues and unions have sent in their petition. Under rule 20 the Executive must grant a special Conference on the request of 20 electorate councils or unions.

Threat Ridiculed

The threat issued yesterday by Mr Seale to expel the malcontents is ridiculed in trade union circles. Almost half the Executive and nearly every electorate council and union in the State were represented at Wednesday night’s meeting. Any attempt to expel or discipline those who had taken a prominent part in protesting against Mr Seale’s action might lead to a serious split in the party. It is certain, however, that Mr Seale could not get sufficient support on the Executive for any drastic action. An interesting aspect of the present situation is the attitude of the militants, the majority of whom frankly admit that they would welcome expulsion from the movement by Mr Seale. Their leaders have challenged the president to put into execution his threat. They are confident that such a move would strengthen their position at the expense of Mr Seale’s party.
**Without Parallel**

Many Labour officials are of the opinion that the proceedings on Wednesday night were on a parallel with the developments at the 1919 Conference, when the minority section, led by Mr AC Willis, acted in defiance of the ruling faction, and were subsequently expelled *en masse* from the party.

By officially declaring that Wednesday night’s meeting was a constitutional sitting of the Conference in defiance of Mr Seale’s announcement to the contrary, the insurgents have clearly rendered themselves liable for expulsion on the grounds that they rebelled against the most responsible officer in the movement.

It is claimed that Mr Seale has authority to move in favour of their expulsion. Supporters of the anti-Executive forces are of the opinion that any action in that direction would lead to wholesale defections from the ranks of the ruling section, who would, in consequence, become the minority party, thus losing control of the machine.

**The Fusion**

An explanation of how the fusion was brought about between the Magrath-Tyrrell faction and the AWU, which resulted in the downfall of the militants at the Conference is contained in the current issue of the official organ of the Australian Workers’ Union.

The alliance, however, has been repudiated by both parties largely owing to the action of Mr Magrath in persuading the recent Conference to pass a resolution which definitely prohibited the Executive from readmitting to the movement any person who was implicated in the ballot box scandals. Another contributing factor to the breakdown of the reconciliation was the summary action of the president, Mr Seale, in refusing to grant the AWU supporters a division on the motion which closed the Conference.

The explanation reads as follows: “What took place was not an alliance of our enemies, but a new alignment of forces consequent on the crushing defeat of the Tyrrell-Magrath faction, an alignment which has given the AWU a powerful representation on the Executive for 1926, and rendered impossible a continuance of the scandalous proceedings which made the Tyrrell-Magrath regime notorious throughout the Labour movement.

“The new combination was brought about as the result of negotiations between Mr Grayndler, general secretary of the AWU, and Mr Peter Loughlin, deputy leader of the Parliamentary Labour party, and it was intimated to Mr Grayndler that the Premier, Mr Lang, was aware of what was being proposed, and approved of it.
“The leaders of the AWU have not changed their opinion of the Tyrrell-Magrath faction in the smallest degree; they have no agreement or understanding with it. Instead, they have dealt the faction a deadly blow, and have been instrumental in permanently excluding both Mr Tyrrell and Mr Magrath from the State executive of the ALP.

“The agitation carried on in the unions and leagues, and in the columns of *The Worker*, against the dictatorship to which the State movement had been subjected, was abundantly justified by the decisions of Conference, and the campaign of the AWU, which had for its object the ejectment of Messrs Tyrrell and Magrath from Executive positions, was decisively successful.”
The 1926 Annual Conference elected a State Executive which was split between the President and some other officers, who were supporters of the Willis faction based on the Labor Council and Premier JT Lang, and an effective majority of members who were supporters of the AWU. Changes to the rules for the election of the Executive and of delegates to Conference had been demanded by all factions for a number of years, and this Special Conference was called to present the new rules for endorsement. The new rules had been drafted by a committee chaired by Albert Willis and were clearly designed to disadvantage the AWU in the election of delegates to future Conferences and therefore election to future Executives. A majority of the Executive strongly opposed the new rules, and this Conference was convened under the old rules. Nevertheless, this meeting was clearly stacked with Lang supporters. It was arranged in cooperation with Lang and his supporters in Government and Caucus, as is clear from the dominant role taken by Lang himself in the Special Conference. Lang's message was that any new rules must provide the labour movement with a united leadership – which was code for preventing interference from the right and the left. That was not a message that the AWU wanted to hear. The new rules were presented by Willis' committee, but were not to take effect until reviewed by leagues and unions and then approved in a subsequent Conference.

Lang introduced another important matter to the Conference – who should decide the parliamentary leadership? He had been under threat from a powerful group of MPs in Caucus who disagreed both with his alliance with industrialists in the Labor Council and his rejection of the AWU. This Special Conference confirmed Lang as Leader and Premier for the life of the current Parliament – a decision which involved temporarily stripping Caucus of its role in deposing the Leader. Both the rules and the
leadership would become central issues to be resolved at the 1927 Conference.

One of the functions served by this Conference was to canonize Lang as the saviour of the labour movement so as to put his position beyond challenge. That also had to wait for the next annual Conference before it could be achieved. Meanwhile, Lang portrayed himself as the servant of the movement: “I am here tonight not to tell you what I would like you to do, but to learn from you what you would like the Government to do”. In one sense this was an outrageous statement, completely at odds with Lang’s own monomania. In another sense, however, many delegates would have had no difficulty believing it; Lang’s legislative and administrative record during his seventeen months in office had delivered or foreshadowed many of the reforms that the industrial wing of the movement (including the AWU) had been demanding for over fifteen years. In November 1926 his Government could justly claim to be an outstanding Labor Government that compared more than favourably with the McGowen-Holman administrations that had fought against the industrialists and split the party, and the Storey-Dooley administrations that had been crippled by the lack of a clear majority.

One of the questions arising from this Special Conference is how the minority officers of the Executive were able to arrange a Conference with “more than 300 delegates” that was so compliant. The previous Annual Conference of 1926 had seen the Executive lacking a clear majority on the conference floor against the votes of the AWU added to those of the more radical wing of the industrial movement. There were delegates from both groups at this meeting – Buckland and Holloway from the AWU and Beasley from the radicals in the Labor Council – but they were completely outnumbered by Lang supporters. The best explanation seems to be that the Willis and Lang group had complete control over the ordinary branch members elected from the SECs who supported the reforms being put in place by the Government. Throughout his political career Lang was almost unique among Labor leaders in being able to appeal successfully over the heads of party and union officials to the rank and file branch membership.
Special Conference of NSW ALP, November 1926

(Australian Worker, 17 November 1926)

Day 1, Friday, 12 November 1926

ALP Conference Meets. Mr Lang’s Speech. Strong Support.

The principal feature of the opening session of the special Conference of the Australian Labor party last night was a vigorous address by the Premier, Mr Lang. He said that if he continued to receive the confidence of the people of New South Wales he would not only remove the nominee House, but “imported Governors” would become a thing of the past.

More than 300 delegates from all parts of the State were present. There was also present the Premier (Mr Lang), the Lord Mayer, (Ald Stokes), the Chief Secretary (Mr Lazzarini), the Minister for Health, (Mr Cann), the Minister for Justice (Mr McKell), the Vice-President of the Legislative Council (Mr Willis), Mr J West, MP, Senator J Grant, Messrs W Ely, F Burke, J Tully, M Gosling, Horsington, Scully, Ms LA, Mr WH Seale, president of the ALP, occupied the chair. A large crowd waited outside the large social hall on the ground floor, where the Conference was held. Considerable impatience was displayed by a section of the crowd at the delay in starting. They manifested their disapproval by banging loudly on the iron doors of the hall. The rules were drafted by a committee elected at the last Conference consisting of Mr AC Willis, MLC, (chairman), E Voigt, EC Magrath, J Mostyn, M Webster, J Kilburn.

Shortly after the delegates had taken their seats Mr Lang entered the hall, and was given a rousing reception. The first business was the election of a timekeeper, the two following nominations being received: A Moate (Stewards) and WJ Butler (St George). Moate was elected to the position by 182 votes to 91. There were two nominees for the post of minute secretary: Messrs E Voigt (N Sydney) and J Comans (Botany), resulting in a win for Mr Voigt by 152 to 139. Mr J Bird (Miners) submitted the report of the credentials committee. He said that the Conference was a unique one, inasmuch as not one delegate had been debarred from taking his seat. Several protests had been received, but they were not upheld. After the report had been adopted Mr Bird admitted, in reply to a delegate, that certain delegates from the Bathurst district assembly had been excluded, and this caused an uproar. A motion was passed for the recommittal of the report, and Mr Bird then
explained that seven delegates had presented themselves for admission. Three were elected by the Bathurst electorate council, and four by the recently-formed Bathurst district assembly. Certain of them had been excluded.

Mr H Hamilton Knight (Lithgow) moved for the admission of the delegates who were excluded. Mr O'Reilly seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

It was decided that the Conference should sit all day Saturday, on Sunday, and the following days if necessary.

**President’s Address**

The president pointed out that the Conference had been convened to discuss the differences which had arisen respecting the report of the rules revision. Any differences of opinion should be sunk in the interests of the movement. The enemies of Labor were directing their attack against the trade unions. They were held up as a menace to the movement. This was a most cowardly thing, and should be ignored. It was designed to create discord in the movement, and to discredit it. There had been an attempt to establish a blind prejudice against the unions, and he resented it. There was never better feeling between the political and the industrial side of the movement than existed today. This feeling should be fostered so that Labor could be placed in an impregnable position. Personal differences should not be allowed to prejudice the movement or the present Government under any circumstances. Now was the time for them to prove that they were big men. Unless they acted in unison, the movement would not be a movement worth talking about.

**Mr Lang’s Speech**

The Premier, whose speech was punctuated with applause, said that although for the moment, they were “up against it” in this State, he assured delegates that if he continued to receive the confidence of the people of New South Wales, they would not only remove the nominee house, but imported Governors would become a thing of the past. Both belonged to a bygone age, and both were relics of a system utterly incompatible with democratic institutions. The fight was on, and it was going to be a fight to a finish. The abolition of the Legislative Council plank of the Labor platform had been left too long in abeyance, but he was convinced that it was much nearer realisation today than it had ever been.
The Leadership

“Now”, said Mr Lang, “I come to the delicate matter of the recent contest for the leadership, and I do so mainly to thank the unions and leagues for the splendid way in which they rallied round the man who led them to victory at the last election, and who has endeavoured, with the assistance of his colleagues and party, to keep his pledges to the country. Under the present rules any member of the caucus can contest the leadership at any pre-sessional meeting of the party, and no member can be charged with disloyalty to the movement merely because he has seen fit to aspire to leadership. At present the Parliamentary party presents a united front to the enemy, and, although there are differences on minor issues, I believe that commonsense will prevail. I am prepared to do my best in the interests of the great cause, which I feel we all have at heart. Disruption spells ruin, so I would urge all sections of the movement to pull together and sink their differences, but where treachery and disloyalty to the movement are clearly proven, to apply the axe without mercy.”

Shipping Industry

“Had the differences between the Commonwealth Shipping Board and the seamen not been adjusted last year by the government in conference with Sir William Clarkson and the union representatives”, continued Mr Lang, “the biggest industrial upheaval in the history of Australia would have taken place, hundreds of thousands of families would have been paralyzed, Federal and State revenues seriously affected, and at least £50,000,000 of industrial production lost to the Australian nation. It is authoritatively stated that the coal strike in England has cost that country about £500,000,000. A general strike throughout Australia, and that is what the shipping combine was aiming at in order to force down the wage standard of seamen, would have been a calamity of the first order. We prevented that by fixing up an agreement between the Commonwealth Shipping Board and the seamen; and the big shipping combine, stripped for battle in the background, found itself beaten by strategy, and compelled to fall into line with the Commonwealth Shipping Board. The men in that case were mainly in the right, but the adjustment was a compromise acceptable to both Sir William Clarkson and the seamen.”

The Government’s Record

“Since the Conference last met”, proceeded Mr Lang, “the Government has established a State Insurance Office, which we intend to develop into a monopoly in the interests of the community. Already the State office has been instrumental in substantially reducing the rates under the Workers’ Compensation Act, and we feel confident that still further
reductions will be made. We have also passed an amendment to the Local Government Act, giving substantial and effective preference to Australian manufacturers."

Deportation Board

Mr Lang said that the Deportation Court was declared unconstitutional by the High Court, and one of the most ridiculous, inefficient, and partisan tribunals ever created passed out amidst universal contempt and execration.

Producers' Conference

“I am here tonight”, said Mr Lang, “not to tell you what I would like you to do, but to learn from you what you would like the Government to do. A few weeks ago we convened a conference of consumers, producers, and wage-earners, to learn at first hand what the man on the land most required, and how his requirements could best be expressed in legislative and administrative performance. The fruits of that conference will be found in legislation now ready for Parliament, and in such administrative acts as the government deems wise and desirable. I understand that the conference had one marked effect – it brought the industrialists of the city and the man on the land into close association, and the effect was to make these delegates, representing many diverse interests, understand and respect each other’s point of view. I am told on excellent authority that two of the most popular men at the conference were the representatives of the Trades and Labor Council.”

Mr Lang's Position

Mr O Schrieber (Furnishing Trades) then moved the following resolution: “That this Conference has complete confidence in the leadership of John T Lang, Premier of New South Wales, and hereby confirms him in the leadership of the Parliamentary Labor party for the period of the present Parliament, and recognizing that unity is essential to the successful carrying out of the platform and policy of the Labor party, the Premier is hereby authorised in the event of circumstances arising, which in his opinion imperil the unity, to do all things and exercise such powers as he deems necessary in the interests of the movement”. He said they had come to the parting of the ways. They had to decide whether they would stand idly by and see treachery and intrigue get the upper hand. The Premier had made the boldest possible bid to translate the platform of the party to the Statute Book of the State.

Mr Rutherford (Saddlers) seconded the motion.
Mr Buckland (AWU) moved as an amendment: “That this Conference places the utmost confidence in Mr Lang, the Labor Government, and the members of the Labor party, and we confirm the right of the party to elect its own leader and officers in accordance with the by-laws and rules of the ALP”.

His organisation, he said, was behind the Labor Government and fully realised the good it had done. The leader had rendered yeoman service, but they should not forget that credit was due to other Ministers, and to the rank and file. If the resolution were carried they would be censuring the Labor party. He remembered the time when they had made gods of other Premiers in the past. Where was Holman? Where was Hughes? He did not suggest that Mr Lang would go the same way, but there was the possibility if they gave a man unlimited power.

Mr T Holloway (AWU), in seconding the amendment, said that if the motion was carried the control of the movement would be handed over to one man. “You will hamstring yourselves”, said Mr Holloway.

Mr J Beasley, president of the Labor Council, supported the resolution.

Mr McNulty said there was more progress and less unemployment today than there had ever been in the history of the State.

Mr Seale explained that the resolution placed a definite onus on Mr Lang. He would be answerable to the movement for any action he might take. It was not the object of the Conference to destroy the rights of the caucus. At the same time it should be remembered that the movement had the power to do so if it desired.

The amendment was lost and the motion carried almost unanimously, there being four dissentients only.

The Conference was adjourned until 10 am today.

Day 2, Saturday, 13 November 1926

ALP Conference Ends. Proposed Rules Remitted to Leagues

The special Conference of the ALP, which was concluded on Saturday, was regarded as one of the most orderly in the history of the movement. It resulted in a succession of wins for the supporters of Mr Lang.

After the adoption, by an overwhelming majority, of the resolution making Mr Lang Premier for the life of the present Government, the opponents of Mr Lang did not further attempt on the floor of the Conference hall to thwart any of his plans.

From the viewpoint of the new rules the Conference was regarded in many quarters as a failure. It was pointed out that the ALP Executive or the rules committee itself would have been quite competent to forward the rules to the various leagues and unions, and that there was no need
for the calling of a special Conference if it was only to undertake that task. Some delegates contend, however, that the action of the Conference in remitting the rules to the leagues was tantamount to an endorsement of the principle that a change in the constitution was necessary.

It was considered certain that if Mr Willis, as chairman of the rules committee, had attempted to have the rules adopted, he would have been defeated. It appears that shortly before the Conference a series of secret meetings were held between the political supporters of Mr Lang and the Industrialists. Two prominent Cabinet Ministers attended the meetings and strongly urged that no attempt should be made to have the rules adopted. The Conference is also regarded as having conclusively demonstrated that Mr Willis is still a big force to be reckoned with in ALP matters.

**Proposed New Rules**

The much discussed new rules for the Party were the principal subject for consideration on Saturday.

Among those on the platform when proceedings opened were the Premier, (Mr Lang), the Chief Secretary (Mr Lazzarini), the Attorney-General (Mr McTiernan), the Minister for Justice (Mr McKell), and the Minister for Labour and Industry (Mr Baddeley).

Mr Seale announced that Mr AC Willis, MLC, Vice-President of the Legislative Council, was the chairman of the rules committee, and would submit its report.

Mr Willis said he wished to call the attention of members at the outset to the fact that there had been a considerable amount of propaganda in the anti-Labor press concerning the rules. The impression was created that the committee had prepared some enormity which was going to create an injustice to certain sections of the movement. The committee had been appointed by the last Conference to work on the lines laid down by the Conference.

For several years, he continued, there had been an agitation for the revision of the rules. The decentralisation proposals had been drafted to the satisfaction of the country delegates on the committee. The representations of the Industrialists had also been considered by the committee. Year after year the business paper of the annual Conferences had never been discussed at those gatherings. All methods of intrigue, wire-pulling, and corruption practised by all sections in regard to the election of the Executive and the business of the movement had always been overlooked. The way to alter that state of affairs was to take the election of the Executive out of the hands of the annual Conference, and empower the component parts of the organisation to elect their proper quota of representation to the Executive.
**Admission of Communists**

"The enemy press has been insinuating that the rules are to be altered to admit Communists", said Mr Willis.

A voice: *The Worker* said it also.

Mr Willis: I do not care who said it. The Communist matter was never suggested in connection with the committee. We accepted the position that the question had been decided by the Federal Conference for the whole of the ALP movement. NSW cannot alter it if it wanted to, and still be loyal to the ALP. I want delegates to see that this particular canard was only brought forward to prejudice the judgment of delegates and help them to arrive at decisions based on bias. At present the rules provide that a two-thirds majority is required to alter the constitution.

The committee believed, said Mr Willis, that the two-third majority was not consistent with the movement if it was a democratic movement. The two-thirds majority was an old reactionary weapon typical of class legislation. If the alteration was made there would be no danger of a snap vote at future Conferences, because the new rules would provide that before a proposal was carried it would have to be adopted by the majority of the delegates credentialled to the Conference.

**Mr Willis' Proposal**

Mr Willis then moved the adoption of the report of the rules committee and further (1) that the proposed new rules be forwarded to the affiliated unions for their consideration, approval, or amendment; (2) that the existing rules continue to function until the proposed new rules are finalised; (3) that any amendment be submitted to the rules committee not less than six weeks before the next annual Conference, the league or union retaining the right to present such amendment to the annual Conference if it is not satisfied with the decision of the rules committee regarding the proposed amendments; further, that the next Executive be elected upon the basis of the new rules if adopted by the next annual Conference.

"Since this movement was initiated, you must remember the enormous growth of the industrial wing", said Mr Willis. "If you lose sight of the fact you will discover that the tail cannot wag the dog – there will be no dog for the tail to wag. If the Labor movement is to live it must attack the problems of the nation if it claims the right to govern the nation."

A delegate: It has been stated that the rules had been designed to whitewash a certain person who opposed a selected Labor candidate.

Mr Willis: The rules have not been designed to whitewash anyone. It does not affect any individual.
**Annual Conferences**

Mr Griffin (Bathurst), in seconding the resolution, explained that he belonged to no faction. The present numerical size of the annual Conferences made it humanly impossible for a chairman to control them. In the past thousands of pounds had been flagrantly wasted because the business for which the annual Conferences had been convened had not been dealt with. He disagreed with the proposals of Mr Willis regarding the two-thirds majority. Under the new scheme there would be 140 delegates at the annual Conferences. At the tail end of every Conference many delegates left, and the situation might arise in the future where a proposal adopted by 71 delegates – a bare majority – would be imposed on the movement. They would gradually drift back to the old undesirable state the annual Conferences were in today.

Alderman J Mostyn, a member of the committee, said that the aim of the committee was to clean up the movement.

**Influence of Politicians**

Mr J Kilburn (Bricklayers), a member of the rules committee; said that he was committed to every principle contained in the report, and, whether it was win, tie, wrangle, or lose, he intended to keep boxing on. Again and again the workers had been betrayed politically and industrially. The sacrifices made were made, not in Parliament, but in industry and in the life of every man, woman, and child. The workers were determined to dominate the industrial as well as the political movement. Conference after Conference had been packed by Parliamentarians, with the assistance of those who wanted to get into Parliament. He would sooner be a captain of a regiment of workers than a performer in the Parliamentary circus. Much had been said about being true to the constitution. This came well from the AWU oligarchy. There was an old saying, “Search your conscience”, but he suggested that the AWU should search for a conscience. The industrial section wanted to tighten up the rules, so that the workers would be the dominating factor.

In reply to a delegate, Mr Willis said that the new rules would not continue the life embargo placed on the advocates of conscription in 1917. They should not expect a democratic organisation to continue life sentences upon some of the men.

The motion was carried, there being only one dissentient.

**Federal Unions**

Mr D Clynes (Storemen and Packers) moved: “That this Conference of the ALP enters its emphatic protest against the attitude of the Federal Arbitration Court in refusing to exercise the discretionary power given to
them under Federal Arbitration Act by refusing to grant release to Federal unions whose awards had expired. We deem it not only a negation of the Act, but a deliberate attempt by the Court to exercise that control over unions that was so definitely refused by the people of the Commonwealth at the recent referendum, and we hereby call upon the Federal Executive and the Federal Parliamentary Labor party to use every means possible to have the matter dealt with by Parliament at the earliest possible moment by securing an amendment of the Act.”

The motion was carried unanimously.

**Proposed State Lottery**

Mr Walsh (Waterside Workers) submitted a motion that the Government should take steps to establish a State lottery for the purpose of assisting the hospitals.

Mr Lang strongly opposed the suggestion that the hospitals should be associated with the lottery, on the ground that the proceeds from the lottery would not meet the financial requirements of the hospitals, and also because the Government was preparing a scheme which would adequately cater for the needs of the hospitals.

The motion was then withdrawn, and at 5 o’clock the Conference was adjourned *sine die*. 
CHAPTER 4
Australian Labor Party,
New South Wales Branch
Annual Conference, 15 – 23 April 1927

Report in The Sydney Morning Herald

The State Executive elected at the Annual Conference of 1926 was a complete disaster. President WH Seale (Waterside Workers) continued the factional control of the Willis coalition of unions, even after Magrath and Tyrrell were pushed out of the Executive because they were members of the Upper House. At the same time the AWU had a strong representation on the Executive, (including the positions of secretary Carey and vice-president Conroy) and could normally marshall a majority of votes against president Seale and his supporters.

The two factions in the Executive could not even agree on the date for the 1927 Conference, with each group planning to hold its own. The Easter Conference of 1927 was an initiative of the minority Seale section and was generally boycotted by AWU supporters and rural MPs. After the Annual Conference of April 1926 and the Special Conference of November 1926 the Conroy opposition section issued a report condemning the ‘Red Rules’ that had been proposed in 1926. This pamphlet, “Reasons Why Red Rules Should Not Be Adopted”, can be found in the TD Mutch papers in Mitchell Library (MLMSS 426). The Conroy-AWU faction wanted the Conference postponed till after the Federal Conference, and were proposing a June date for the State Conference. In the event the June Conference was never convened, with the AWU confident (wrongly, as it transpired) that Federal intervention would favour their cause. The Easter Conference expelled the Conroy-AWU group in the “bogus” Executive. The rump Conroy Executive had already expelled Seale and his supporters from the party for convening the Easter Conference against a majority vote of the Executive.

By 1927 Lang was in trouble with his Caucus, especially with the revolt of a number of country MPs led by PF Loughlin (Cootamundra), VW Goodin (Murray) and RT Gillies (Byron) who were unhappy with his alliance with Trades Hall industrialists, the attempted infiltration of the party by ‘reds’, and his rejection of the AWU. In order to pacify the country MPs Lang had reluctantly agreed to a ‘Goodin-Gillies pact’ that...
was aimed at breaking the link between Lang and the radicals who supported him. This pact was one of the main items of business at this Conference. The pact ultimately was not acceptable to Lang as it would have left him defenceless against his enemies in the party. Soon after the Easter Conference, he resigned his Government in order to stack his new administration (his ‘Scabinet’, as his enemies called it) with his remaining supporters. The NSW party was split comprehensively at all levels.

The Easter Conference is notorious in Labor Party history for ratifying the ‘Red Rules’ that made future domination of the party by the AWU almost impossible. For the AWU and the daily press the new rules entrenched the power of ‘Reds’ in the party, but that was a beat-up; the 1926 Conference, with the full support of Lang and Willis, had denied access to the party for Communists, and this Easter Conference reaffirmed that strongly on the insistence of Lang. The other contentious decision of this 1927 Conference was to endorse taking the election of the parliamentary Leader (that is, Lang) away from Caucus and giving it to Conference, thus effectively to the Executive. Lang’s enemies labeled this as the ‘Lang dictatorship’. That term was justified, since it made Lang secure from challenge – even when members of Caucus opposed him – until the end of the 1930s.

Executive Report of NSW ALP for 1926

There does not seem to have been an official Executive Report for the year 1925-26. It is missing from the otherwise comprehensive collections for those years in the Mitchell and National Libraries. Its absence should not be surprising since the Executive was hopelessly split between the Conroy group defending the interests of the AWU which controlled a majority of the members of the Executive, and the Seale group which occupied the key position of President. The Unity Conference later in 1927 confirmed the Seale faction – supporting Lang – in power, leaving the majority Executive without legitimacy to produce a Report to the 1928 Conference.
Annual Conference of NSW ALP, 1927

(The Sydney Morning Herald, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25 April 1927)

Day 1, Friday, 15 April 1927

Labour Conference Opens. ALP Executive Attacked. Mr F Conroy and Mr W Carey Suspended.

The Conference of the Australian Labour Party convened by Mr WH Seale, opened at the Trades Hall yesterday morning.

Those present included the Lord Mayor (Alderman Mostyn), the vice-president of the Executive Council (Mr AC Willis), Mr Lazzarini, MP, and Messrs Stuart-Robertson, Horsington, Stokes, M Burke, F Burke, Lysaght, WJ Ratcliffe, MA Davidson, Gosling, and Tonge, MsLA.

It is estimated that about 300 delegates were present. There was a large attendance of visitors, the public portion of the hall being crowded.

Mr Seale, in his presidential address, criticised the members of the majority section of the ALP Executive for refusing to support him in convening the Conference for Easter. The Conference subsequently decided to suspend from office for three years Mr F Conroy, who was elected president by the ALP Executive, Mr W Carey, MLC, general secretary, the assistant secretary (Mr W Gibbs), and the other members of the majority section.

The Premier, Mr Lang, in an address to the Conference last night, declared that one of the principal planks of the government's platform at the next elections would be the abolition of the Legislative Council.

The militants captured most of the official positions.

The Conference also gave Mr Lang authority to reconstruct his Cabinet, and declared null and void the selection of Captain Conway for Warringah.

Mr ER Voigt was appointed minute secretary. Mr J Beasley, president of the Labour Council, was appointed senior vice-president of the Conference, and Mr J O'Reilly (Hairdressers) junior vice-president. Mr A Bennett (Coachmakers) was elected timekeeper. The election of the agenda committee resulted as follows: Messrs R Bates (Eastern Suburbs), C Treflé (Eastern Suburbs), J Graves (Stovemakers), F Roels (Engine-drivers), and R James (Northern Miners).

During the afternoon the Premier, Mr Lang, attended the Conference, and was given a rousing reception.

The afternoon session was devoted principally to the presidential address of Mr Seale, the text of which was as follows:
“Intrigue and Trickery!”

The annual Conference meets today under unique circumstances, owing to the refusal of a band of usurpers to deliver the office keys. The so-called dispute in the ranks of the Executive was forced upon the president and his supporters similarly to, and currently with, the dispute forced upon Mr Lang, the Labour Premier, by a section of the caucus. Both these factions, warring with the leaders in the Executive and political fields, are actuated by the same motives, have the same common understanding, and follow the same discreditable methods.

Their rank treachery to the movement that created them is self-apparent when their company is analysed. Not only have they the solid support of virulent anti-Labour organs, but they are also held in idolatrous respect by The Worker, which long since ceased to function as a Labour paper.

The evil factions within the two Executive bodies of the Labour movement have conducted squalid intrigues with expelled members of the PLP and the ALP Executive. It was by the treachery of some of these expelled persons that the Premier was double-crossed in his magnificent attempt to abolish the Upper House and all it stands for. But for that low-down treachery the Labour Government would have been enabled to serve the people in much greater measure than it has done, great as have been its performances and its efforts.

Internecine Strife

When Peter Loughlin exploded his midnight bomb, and started the Parliamentary disruption, the present majority faction of the ALP Executive endeavoured to block the special Conference being held. The Conroy-McGarry group could not conceal their ardent support for the treacherous Loughlin faction and all it stood for and implied. The same group worked gleefully hand in hand with the Loughlin-Goodin-Gillies malcontents, and were in no wise abashed when their friends brought about the defeat of the Labour Government on the floor of the Assembly on Bavin’s move for leave to launch a censure motion.

The Conroy-McGarry faction were active throughout the negotiations with the caucus traitors, whereby these were able to impose conditions that have never been revealed, and are supposed still to lie somewhere.

It was on December 17 last year that the Executive received a letter from Mr O’Halloran, secretary to the PLP, intimating an agreement with Gillies and Goodin, but setting out none of the conditions thereof.

The president was threatened with deposition for standing in the way of the plot to defeat the new rules drawn up by a committee appointed for that purpose by the last annual Conference. Mr Seale’s ruling that
the motion for a “rump” rules committee was not in order, was dissented from, and the president duly declared the committee so appointed bogus, in a statement to the Labor Daily.

This bogus rules committee, appointed to override the work of the duly appointed Conference committee, became the medium whereby a set of bogus rules were drawn up and printed at heavy expense to the ALP – a set of rules worthy of their creators, and designed to further crook work, the faction spirit, and corruption to an extent greater than the existing old rules.

**The Red Cry**

The excuse for all this was that the new rules expressly designed to obstruct crook work, are “red rules”. The new rules annoyed Jack Bailey and his henchmen – hence the scare-cry of “red” – a worn-out Nationalist shibboleth with the use of which alleged “Labour” men hoped to stampede the rank and file. Merely showing how much they are out of touch with the movement they desire to use for their personal ends.

The further amendment of the Electoral Act, made necessary to nullify Goodin and Gillies, was seized on as a pretext to postpone the Conference till June 4 – a prelude to never. By further specious pretexts, the gang of usurpers would have “guided” the destinies of our movement indefinitely. No Conference could have been held on June 4, even if the conspirators were willing, as the Executive holds no power to alter rule 21 without the annual Conference’s sanction. “This rule specifically provides that the new basis of representation under single seats must be fixed by Conference and incorporated in the form of a new rule. Therefore, no Executive, even if unanimous, could effect the change”.

Had Mr Seale not called this Conference, and the Conroy-McGarry faction been left in control, they would have allied themselves more closely than ever with the Loughlin faction, which still persists in caucus, despite the proven treachery of its ringleader. This would have meant the deposition of Mr Lang from the leadership, a “rump” factionist Ministry in control, and the men and women of the movement denied all rights of preselection. Mr Loughlin would have been graciously pardoned, and Mr Bailey granted absolution.

**The Junee Case**

Obviously, the “rump” Executive conspired to protect parliamentary malcontents and disruptionists against an annual Labour Conference. The treatment of the Junee branch is a case in point, and one which must be placed on record in protest against the disruptionists both in the Executive and Caucus. That branch was picked on because of its steadfast loyalty to the Lang Government, and a bogus branch started in
opposition, the object being to bolster a parliamentary tyro because of his intriguing value to the “rump”, and to the caucus malcontents.

The Conroy-McCarrick Executive fell down on its job when Prime Minister Bruce appointed Mr E Grayndler to an industrial delegation travelling to the United States. This alleged Labour Executive prevented the Grayndler business being discussed or any protest resolution being adopted. They suppressed the highest important matter carrying so much at stake where first principles are concerned.

In this they were merely carrying out their general policy of suppression where the interests of the movement are concerned. This Conference asks that our protest be placed on record concerning the high-handed action of these usurpers in suppressing the report of the genuine Conference rules committee and in spending a large sum of ALP money in circulating the bogus rules committee decision and in having printed scurrilous leaflets and pamphlets worthy of the infamous blue pamphlet, all aimed at the solidarity of the movement.

The Conference also draws the movement’s attention to the fact that the leading schismatics in the caucus and on the Executive have found neither time nor opportunity during the past-two years of attacking the Nationalists, all their energies being focussed on creating internecine disruption. Mr Loughlin has not said one harsh word against Nationalists for five years, and there are others equally inoffensive where the enemy is concerned.

Mr Seale criticised in strong terms the attitude adopted by the majority section of the ALP Executive, with regard to the attempt of Mr Loughlin to oust Mr Lang from the Premiership. He explained that when he objected to the pact reached with Messrs Goodin and Gillies, he was again threatened with deposition from the presidency.

Mr Seale described the opponents of the Easter Conference as traitors, and said that it was never their intention to hold a Conference. He said that there was something sinister in the move to postpone the date of the Conference – something which did not appear on the surface. The objective of the Conference was to deal with the question of reducing the possibilities of opportunists within the movement. The present constitution provided a fertile field for the schemes of opportunists and schemers. Mr Seale denied that the outcome of the Conference would be the formation of a new party. The Labour Government had been rendered impotent by its opponents in the Labour party, and the Conference should put an end to it. “I hope the Conference will put the people responsible for this state of affairs in their right place”, concluded Mr Seale amidst applause.

Mr Beasley submitted the following motion: “That this Conference affirms the decision of the last annual Conference respecting the date of the Conference, and congratulates the president upon his loyalty to the Conference, to the constitution, and to the rank and file, and further
endorses his action in receiving moneys from the branches, councils, and affiliated unions, and using them in financing this Conference, and for other purposes therewith.” Mr Beasley, in moving the motion, said that the party was entering on a new era.

The motion was seconded by Mrs Green, and carried unanimously.

On the motion of Mr J O’Reilly (Hairdressers), a vote of welcome to Mr Lang was carried.

**Suspension Motion**

An animated debate followed the submission by Mr T Falkingham (Boilermakers) of the following motion:

“The Conference debars Messrs F Conroy, W Carey, J McGarry, T Holloway, G Sutherland, L Devitt, L O’Neill, W Harrop, F Parker, S Taylor, J Jaine, T Liston, G Anderson, G Rowlands, R Beashell, J Comans, W Gibbs, W Terry, R Tatham, J Bodkin, Mrs Dorrington, and Mrs Benson from holding office within the Australian Labour Party for a period of three years, in view of their treacherous and unconstitutional action in persistently violating rule 20, 21, and 68 of the old rules, as well as the definite decision of the last annual Conference, and such suspension shall not be raised except by an annual Conference.”

Mr Falkingham said that if he were dealing individually with the people named he would not give them the consideration they received in the resolution. The resolution did not lop any heads off – it merely handcuffed the people so that they could not put their hands into the pockets of members any longer. Mr Thompson (Ashfield), seconding the motion, heatedly accused Mr Conroy of being “the greatest Judas in the Labour movement”. Mr Mills (Waterside Workers) said that the Conference would not be acting constitutionally if it did not give the persons named a hearing. “They should be summoned to the Conference, and if they refused to do so they should be penalised. If they were adjudged guilty they should be expelled.”

Mr G Smith appealed to the Conference for leniency in the case of Mr S Taylor, whom he said, had voted with the majority section of the Executive under a misapprehension and had since regretted his mistake. Mr T Leslie (Miners) suggested that the name of Mr W Gibbs, assistant secretary of the ALP, should be added to the list of suspended persons. “If you are going to string one, string the lot”, said Mr Leslie amid applause.

The Conference, however, did not add the name of Mr Gibbs, in view of the fact that Mr Gibbs was a paid servant of the Party and not an executive officer.

Mr Green (Eastern Suburbs) moved as amendment that the persons named should be expelled from membership for three years, and suspended from holding any office in the party for another three years.
Mr Taylor was then given leave to address the Conference. He stated that he had opposed the Easter Conference owing to a misunderstanding.

Mr Lang’s Address

When the evening session commenced at 7 o’clock, the Premier, Mr Lang, delivered his address, which was as follows:

“This great Conference is manifestly representative of the organised Labour party in this State, and I regret that a minority, however sincere and well meaning, should continue to take up an exclusive attitude towards the rank and file. Every Labour member and every official of our party owe their public existence to the men and women who have sent their delegates here today, and it is manifestly playing the ostrich to pretend that this Conference is not representative, or that it lacks authority.

Perhaps the most important question which this Conference will discuss will be the rules drafted by the committee appointed by the last Conference, and referred to the unions and leagues for suggestions. On this question I think the parliamentarians must give way to the rank and file, although it is clearly the duty of every sound Labourite to assist in making the rules of the movement an efficient instrument. It is recognised that for some years the serious business of the annual Conference has been gravely hampered by the clumsy machinery designed years ago, and now admitted to require drastic amendment. I hope that the outcome of free discussion will be a set of rules making for the better management of our internal affairs, and for the abolition of cliqueism and factions.

“One thing the delegates must make clear – that no member of the Nationalist or Communist party shall be allowed to appear as a representative of Labour on the Executive, or at our Conferences. Labour has its own platform, and welcomes recruits from all other parties, but no one should be allowed to masquerade as a representative Labourite unless his bona fides are assured. We should welcome every honest convert to our principles, but beware of treachery and duplicity. The Communists, in particular, do not believe in any of Labour’s methods of political or economic reform, and can find no place within the Labour movement.

Government’s Work

“I suppose many of you expected things from our last Session’s work which you have not received”, continued Mr Lang. “The Family Endowment Bill, for one thing, is far from what the Government want; but I would like the Conference and the public to know that it is
absolutely the best we could squeeze for the movement from the magnanimous patriots who control the destinies of this State from the security and peace of the most reactionary objectionable and indolent nominee House in the Empire. These honourable gentlemen have quite confidently taken upon themselves the right to turn Labour legislation into Nationalist legislation, and to dictate to the Government the laws which shall be passed, and the laws that shall not be passed.

“I think when you calmly review the position of the Government with its narrow majority and powerful enemies, you will admit that it has proved the best Labour Government this State has enjoyed. All the big industrial and land reforms I promised we have honestly attempted to carry out, and some of these successfully achieved place New South Wales in the van of progressive nations. Where we have failed to get what we wanted, the fault has lain either with defects in the constitution or in the obstructive tactics of the capitalist press, and the nominee Chamber.

**Legislative Council**

“Although the Government has had a very busy time attending to the work in Parliament and in the departments, finance has occupied a considerable amount of my time for months, because without sound State finance economic reforms are impossible.

“I think we have travelled the hardest part of the financial journey, and can look forward with confidence to the future. Our credit stands high in the money markets of the world and even Mr Bavin has been compelled to admit that the State’s finances are in a sound and healthy condition.

“The Cinderellas of the country are the wage-earners, the small farmers, and the small tradesmen who have to fight strenuously to make ends meet. Labour is not worrying about the millionaires or near millionaires. The job of the Labour movement is to see that the wealth earned by the community is distributed with reasonable fairness and justice.

“I should like to impress upon delegates that Labour can never hope to realise its highest ambitions while the nominee Council remains to censor, mutilate, and veto important legislation. One of the great fights before us is the abolition of that Chamber, standing as it does for privilege, vested interests, and big finance. It has lost all semblance of impartiality and independence, and become the veriest tool of capitalism.

“We must stake everything at the next elections on the abolition of the Legislative Council”, Mr Lang declared, amidst applause.
Reconstruction of Cabinet

Mr D Clyne (Storemen and Packers) moved the following motion, which was carried unanimously:

“In view of the unsatisfactory situation existing in the State Cabinet, and the disloyalty of members of that Cabinet to the Conference and to the Premier, the Conference confirms the decision of the previous Conference giving the Premier power *inter alia* to reconstruct his Cabinet, and instructs the Premier forthwith to proceed with a reconstruction of the Cabinet in the interests of the working class”.

Mr Clyne added that while the Conference appreciated the humane legislation passed by the Lang Government, better results would have been obtained if there had been unanimity in the Cabinet. The Labour movement was disappointed at the non-declaration of the basic wage, and at the child endowment scheme. Child endowment should be supplementary to the basic wage, not a substitute for it.

Criticising the Upper Chamber, Mr J Kilburn (Bricklayers’ Union) declared that there was danger of Australia becoming as decadent as the old country. The trouble with Parliament, he said, was that it did not really govern. “Mr Lang is captain of the team, but what a team”, he added, amidst laughter.

Mr A Bennett (Coachmakers’ Union) said that any man who placed his position before the movement had no right to be in the Labour party. To secure unanimity it was necessary to get rid of the cause of disruption, which was to be found among some of the members of the Labour party in Parliament. They should be kept from active participation in the party in future.

Executive Members Suspended

The debate on the question of the suspension of the members of the majority section of the ALP Executive was then continued.

Acknowledging that he had made a mistake, Mr Taylor (Ryde) made an explanation regarding the charges made against him. Several members spoke urging that leniency be extended to Mr Taylor, whose only crime, they said, was that he sat on the fence instead of “going over it” as the others did.

Mr F Parker (Brick, Tile & Pottery Union) said that he had no apologies to offer as he was satisfied he was doing the right thing when he voted in favour of the June Conference.

A further amendment was moved that the name of Mr Taylor should be deleted from the list of suspended persons, and that he should be censured for his action. Both amendments were lost, and the motion suspending the members was carried.
Election of Executive

The Conference agreed to the recommendation of the agenda committee that the nominations for the new Executive should close on Monday night, and that the ballot should close at 10 pm on Wednesday. Mr Martin (Clerks) was elected returning officer.

Warringah By-Election

Mr Norman (Manly) submitted the following motion: “That this Conference declares the selection of Captain Conway as the endorsed Labour candidate for Warringah by-election null and void, and instructs the new Executive to permit the leagues to select a candidate in accordance with the rules and regulations of the party”.

In seconding the resolution, Mr White (North Sydney) said that the leagues in the electorate had not been given an opportunity by the “rump” Executive to select a candidate. The resolution was carried.

The Loughlin Case

Mr A Rutherford (Saddlers) moved that, in view of their action in violating their pledges and fighting against the Labour Government, the Conference declined to accept the resignation of Mr Loughlin, and hereby expelled Messrs Loughlin, Goodin, and Gillies from the Labour party.

Mr Rutherford said that Messrs Goodin and Gillies were prepared at all costs to destroy the legislation of the Government. They had put themselves outside the ambit of the Executive.

Mr C Baines (Liquor Trades) opposed the motion, because, he said, if it was passed the Government would cease to function at a time when it had important legislation to put through.

Mr A Bennett (Coachmakers) stated that he would rather see the Government defeated than be obliged to submit to the proposals laid down by “renegades” like Messrs Loughlin, Goodin and Gillies. He declared that at the recent Bathurst conference Mr Loughlin went there, not in the interests of Mr Lang, but to consolidate his position with the Country Labour party.

Mr J O’Reilly (Hairdressers) warned the Conference not to become intoxicated with their new unity. The time to deal with Messrs Goodin and Gillies had been when they defected, and not the present when it meant that the Lang Government would go to the country with a big possibility of defeat. There was very vital legislation to be put through with the resumption of the session, and it would be very foolish to have an election forced at this juncture. The electorate would deal with Messrs Gillies and Goodin.

At this stage the debate was adjourned until this morning.
Day 2, Saturday, 17 April 1927


The Conference of the ALP which has been convened by Mr Seale on Saturday decided to expel Messrs Loughlin, Gillies and Goodin, MsLA, from the Labour Party. The voting was 184 in favour of expulsion and 31 against.

The agreement with the Labour Government recently entered into by Messrs Gillies and Goodin was declared bogus. The Conference also demanded the production forthwith of the terms of the pact.

The opinion expressed by many delegates was that in consequence of the expulsion the Ministry would lose its majority in the Legislative Assembly, and that an early election would follow.

The Conference

Mr Seale (State secretary of the Waterside Workers’ Union) again presided on Saturday when the Conference was resumed.

It was asserted at the Conference that the Premier had made the statement that he was prepared to go to the country at an early date.

Mr Voigt (private secretary to Mr Willis, Vice-President of the Executive Council) caused a sensation when he declared that the Goodin-Gillies pact with the Labour Government contained a provision that both Mr Willis and himself should be sacrificed.

Mr Stuart-Robertson, MLA, vigorously denied the allegation.

Mr Voigt also contended that the Government was in the control of two Labour “rats”. And further, that he personally had been victimised by the State Cabinet.

Amongst those seated on the platform were Mr Willis (Vice-President of the Executive Council), Messrs Stuart-Robertson, Davidson (Government Whip), and Lysaght, Tonge, and Keegan, MsLA.

Bout of Fisticuffs

The early proceedings of the night sitting were interrupted by a bout of fisticuffs between two men who had moved from the hall to the doorway.

When calm had been restored the chairman (Mr Seale) asserted that the interruption of the proceedings was due to the tactics of their opponents who desired to see the Conference a failure.

Later in the proceedings another fight occurred in the doorway.

Mr Bennett (a delegate) said that a complaint had been made to him that the enemy camp had conspired with one of the doorkeepers to break
up the Conference. In view of the repeated disturbances he asked that an inquiry should be held to ascertain whether there was any truth in the allegation:

The chairman: Produce the doorkeeper!

One of the doorkeepers, on being brought forward, was warned by the chairman that he was to refrain from creating any further trouble or disturbance.

Legal Proceedings Threatened

Mr Seale (chairman) said that the so-called ALP Executive had issued summonses upon secretaries of various branches of the ALP, including the Paddington and Darlinghurst branches.

The Conference decided that all branch secretaries of the ALP should be instructed not to hand over any branch books or papers to anyone other than Mr Seale (president of the Conference). Further, that Mr Seale should be directed to take any necessary steps or other means to protect the branch secretaries in regard to the retention of books and documents, and that the trustees of the Conference should act with the president.

Another delegate announced that the Leichhardt branch had also received a summons.

The secretary to the Darlinghurst branch said that he would never hand over the books to the bogus ALP Executive, even if he had to go to Long Bay gaol.

Mr Padgen (minority ALP Executive member) said that the Conference trust account was in credit to the extent of £1000.

Alleged Violation of Pledges

The Conference resumed the debate on the motion of Mr A Rutherford (Saddlers) that the Conference should decline to accept the resignation of Mr Loughlin, MLA, but should expel him from the Labour party, together with Messrs Goodin and Gillies, MsLA, in view of their “treasonable” action, in violating their solemn pledges and voting against the Labour Government.

Mr McNamara moved an amendment to the effect that the Conference should decline to accept the resignation of Mr Loughlin, but should expel him from the party, further, that Messrs Gillies and Goodin, MsLA, be instructed to withdraw the demands contained in the so-called pact, and in the event of their refusal to withdraw, the matter be left to the incoming Executive to expel them for a breach of their pledges and party discipline.

The mover said that his desire was to prevent the possibility of an early State general election. If an election were held immediately, it
would be disastrous to the movement in view of the present state of affairs.

Mr JP Byrne seconded the amendment.

Mr M Ryan (Storemen and Packers) contended that the Labour Government at the present time was impotent, and had been strangled. He supported the original motion.

Mr George Burn opposed the original motion. He said that there was something more important than the expulsion of Messrs Gillies and Goodin. One of the chief objectives of the Labour party was the abolition of the Upper House. If these two members walked across the floor of the House Mr Bavin would be sent for by the Governor and asked to form a Nationalist Government. Mr Bavin would then bring in a bill to bring about an elective Upper House. It would not be elected on an adult franchise, but by a property franchise, similar to the law in Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia.

**Mr Voigt’s Bombshell**

Mr Voigt (private secretary to the Vice-President of the Executive Council) said that one of the terms of the Gillies-Goodin pact was the victimisation of Mr Willis and himself. Would the Conference stand for that? “I say”, he added, “that the Government today is in the hands of two scabs. If you carry the amendment, you are going to confirm this principle”.

Mr Stuart-Robertson, MLA, said that it was a falsehood to suggest that the pact included a provision for the victimisation of Messrs Willis and Voigt. All the pact contained was that Parliament should be kept in session until certain legislation was carried. He had been in consultation that morning with the leader of the party, who had agreed with him that it was not desirable that the dispute should be brought to a stage at the present time that would force an election.

Mr Voigt asked whether Mr Stuart-Robertson was aware that Mr Goodin made a long statement in the press that as a result of the agreement with the Government Willis and Voigt would go? Was be also aware that he (Mr Voigt) had already been victimized? Was it a fact that there were three sealed envelopes containing the terms of the pact? Was one of these envelopes held by Mr Goodin?

Mr Stuart-Robertson replied that he was convinced that there was no provision in the pact for the victimisation of Messrs Willis and Voigt. He was not aware that Mr Voigt had been victimized. He did not believe, he said, that the three envelopes containing the agreement were in existence. However, he added, he intended to bring the matter forward at the next caucus meeting of the Labour party.

Mr Gibbs, continuing the debate after the dinner adjournment, said he desired to contradict the statement made by Mr Stuart-Robertson that
Mr Lang was opposed to the motion and against an early election. He would give that assertion an emphatic denial. Since lunchtime he had been able to find out that Mr Lang stood in the position of leader of the Labour party, and was prepared to do what the rank and file told him.

Mr Seale (chairman) said that some time ago he saw an alliance between a section of the ALP Executive and the Labour traitors in Parliament. The ambition of this faction was to gain control of the movement. If they defeated the motion before the Conference they would endorse the action of the traitors.

Mr Lang did not care for the votes of Messrs Gillies and Goodin.

Mr Willis’s Address

Mr Willis (Vice-President of the Executive Council), addressing the Conference, said that the matter of Messrs Gillies and Goodin was one that no Labour movement could condone and retain its self respect. There were a number of culprits who were worse than Messrs Goodin and Gillies, and who had not come sufficiently to the front to have their heads chopped off also. He did not know of any pact “to get rid of Willis and Voigt”, but he had heard of the move.

Voices: Why quote it?

Continuing, Mr Willis that he knew that part of the business was that he and Voigt had to go, but he believed that his colleagues in the Ministry would not agree to that scheme. For some reason or other a section of the Labour party developed an intense dislike for Mr Voigt. He preferred a Labour secretary to a Nationalist one, and if Mr Voigt went so would he go.

Premier’s Attitude

Mr Seale said that the Premier had assured him personally that he “did not care one jot about this thing”. His announcement immediately caused an uproar.

The statement was made in reply to a delegate who asked whether the Premier was prepared for an immediate election, and favoured the expulsion of Messrs Goodin and Gillies from the Labour caucus.

Mr Rutherford, in reply, said that the Government was powerless to put through urgent legislation in consequence of the attitude of the Upper House. He was prepared to state that the Early Closing Bill would never go through during the term of the present Parliament. Five of the members of the 25 Labour members appointed to the Legislative Council by the present Government had already “ratted”. For the next 12 months the Government would be hamstrung.

The motion to expel Messrs Loughlin, Gillies and Goodin was declared carried by 154 votes to 31.
The Pact

Mr Gibb (Clothing Trades) thereupon moved: “That the Conference repudiates and declares inoperative and bogus any pact made with Messrs Goodin and Gillies by any member or section of the ALP; further, that this Conference demands the production forthwith of the terms of the pact”.

Mr J Kilburn (Bricklayers’ Union) seconded the motion. He said he was certain that a pact had been entered into. Labour’s efforts in Parliament had been rendered futile, not by the Nationalist party, but by members of the Labour party. The caucus must forever stand indicted for the elevation of Imperialists to the Upper House.

Mr Connolly (Trolley and Draymen) moved an amendment to the effect that the Conference should expel all those members who were associated in the movement to oppose the leadership of Mr Lang.

The chairman (Mr Seale) ruled the amendment out of order on the ground that the Conference did not propose vindictively to cut off the heads of everybody.

Mr Willis said he did not believe that there existed sealed envelopes containing the pact as alleged. The question of a 44-hour week for rural workers had never been dealt with by the Labour caucus. He contended that the rural workers were entitled to a 44-hour week.

Mr J Beasley (president of the Labour Council) said that the control of the political Labour movement was now in the hands of the rank and file as the result of that Conference.

The motion was declared carried.

A committee consisting of Messrs McPherson, Gibb, Falkingham, Nicholls, and Mrs Dunn was appointed to give effect to the resolution.

The Resolutions to Go Before Cabinet

Very few members of the Parliamentary Labour party were in town over the weekend, but those who were seen were unanimous in their opinion that the ALP Conference had gone too far, that if the resolutions were given effect to greater friction than ever would result in the ranks of the Parliamentary party, and would possibly mean the deposition of the party from the Treasury benches. Two of the members of the party were emphatic when they stated that an election would mean the downfall of the Labour party.

Members were not inclined to dismiss the Conference resolution beyond saying that the Parliamentary party would have to deal with them before finality was reached. It was suggested that the Cabinet would be called together one day this week, when it was possible that a big majority would reject the proposals, and that in any event, it was not likely that the rank and file would adopt them.
Those members spoken to were bitter in their denunciation of the “Red” rules, and it was suggested that when the party meeting was held next week there would be some plain speaking.

Mr Goodin Speaks Out

“The bogus conference is a great, I might, say, a wonderful success for the Trades and Labour Council and the Willis 1919 breakaways”, said Mr V Goodin, MLA, last night.

“Every ‘Red’ of note is present at the Conference except those who are openly members of the Communist party. The latter are present in spirit, and have, as usual, done the organising and whipping up. Country Labour has practically boycotted the “Red” Conference. The few country delegates who did attend were mostly self-appointed. Not one of the large country unions representing over 100,000 unionists, such as the timberworkers, and the municipal and shire employees, is represented, whilst the city representation is almost limited to the Trades and Labour Council supporters, who owe allegiance to Comrades Garden and Co.”

“Now the Labour Movement is free from the tactics and presence of these disruptionists and destructionists, I look forward with confidence to the time when the great Labour party will have the respect due to the humanitarian and constructive principles it upholds. As for myself, I am extremely gratified that the bogus Conference saw fit to ‘Queen-of-Hearts’ me. Evidently my exposure of their plots some months ago has hurt their feelings and upset their plans. Further, they have supplied the public of New South Wales with the proof that I and the majority of organised Labour have nothing in common with them and, their cranky ideas.”

Mr Gillies’ Views

When questioned about his expulsion, Mr Gillies said he was neither surprised nor disturbed at the action of those controlling the “Red” Conference on Saturday in moving for the expulsion of Mr Goodin and himself. “But I am surprised”, said Mr Gillies, “that any honest Labour supporter could treat such an unconstitutional gathering with anything but contempt. As it was against the domination of the Labour movement by this same Willis-Garden-Voigt section and their infamous “Red” rules that Loughlin, Goodin and I struck immediately after the November Conference, it is only natural that this faction should bitterly resent the marshalling of the true Labour movement against their enemy tactics. It is difficult and pitiful to imagine the destiny of the Australian workers being controlled by the Russian head-chopping methods of Messrs Willis, Voigt, Garden, Bennett, etc., and as a member of the ALP I take the anxiety of this clique to expel me from their organisation as a high
compliment. The revised constitution formulated by the joint Executive and the parliamentary rules committee will provide the broad basis for the future of the Australian Labour Party, and not the “Red” rules scheme of these Communistic disruptionists.”

**Red Rules. ALP Conference. Control of Organisation**

At Saturday night’s session, the State Conference of the ALP, convened by Mr WH Seale, discussed the adoption of a series of suggested resolutions which are generally known as the “Red Rules”. These provide for the election of an Executive to control the organisation on the group system.

Rules 73 to 76 read as follows: “The Executive shall consist of a president and two vice-presidents, elected annually by the general Conference, and of members elected annually by a plebiscite of the groups concerned. Groups: Trade union groups – AWU, miners, metals, buildings, food, manufacturing, public utilities, printing, non-manual, miscellaneous, transport (water), transport (land), wood. Councils’ groups – Metropolitan and district electorate councils. Country groups – North division, west-central division, south division.

Representation is to be on the basis of four representatives from the metropolitan and district electorate councils, two representatives each from northern, west-central, and southern divisions. Trade union group representation is to be on the basis of one Executive member for every 7000 members or part thereof, with an additional Executive member for every additional 7000 members, with a maximum of three members for any trade union group.

The rules contemplate representation at the annual general Conference upon a group basis comprised of two groups, viz. the country group, and metropolitan and district group. Representatives to the annual general Conference shall be delegated by these groups.

All persons over 16 years of age, accepting the platform and constitution of the party shall be admitted to membership.

**Other Clauses**

It is provided in the rules that any member of an affiliated union who is a known member of any other political body running anti-Labour Parliamentary or municipal candidates shall not be entitled to the privileges of membership of the ALP.

Before the members of any union may take advantage of the rules in respect of a selection ballot, the union must have been financial for at least three months.

No member of the Executive shall be eligible for nomination for any preselection ballot or for appointment to any Parliamentary position.
during the life of the Executive to which he has been elected or appointed. Nor shall any member of the Executive accept any Ministerial appointment during his term of office, nor for twelve months after.

The Debate

Mr Willis, on behalf of the committee which revised the rules, said that the cry set up by opponents to the new rules had merely been raised because of desire to maintain the old vicious system. The new rules provided for decentralisation and establishment of district conferences, and conferences of particular interests, including the industrial and political sides. He moved the adoption of the report and the rules.

Mr Kilburn (a member of the committee) said that the fact of the “reptile” press attacking the rules was one of the chief reasons why they should be adopted by the Conference.

Mr Willis said that the Federal Conference had carried a resolution dealing with the position of the Communists, and this applied to the whole of the State. He was prepared to insert a similar provision in the new rules to govern the State organisation in regard to the Communists.

The Federal rules, it was stated, excluded the Communists from membership of the ALP.

Further consideration of the rules was adjourned till 10 am today.

ALP Dues

The following motion was also adopted: “That all branches and affiliated unions should be instructed to pay all their dues, obligations, and capitation fees to the secretary appointed by this Conference, and that the secretary appointed by the Conference take charge of the ALP official business and affairs.

Mr Minahan

The Conference instructed the Parliamentary Labour caucus to withdraw Mr PJ Minahan, MLA, as the Parliamentary Labour party’s representative on the directorship of the Labour Daily. Mr Minahan is to be summoned before the Conference tomorrow night to explain his position.

Mr Conroy’s Comment

Mr Conroy (president of the majority ALP Executive) said on Saturday that the bogus Labour Conference had proved a happy hunting ground for the Communists’ leaders, who immediately took charge by capturing the various positions.
Mr Garden’s hand, he added, was shown early in the circulation of Communist tickets for all positions. That these were successful was indicated by the election of Mr Garden’s colleagues on the Labour Council.

When the ALP Executive, in exercise of its constitutional authority, fixed the date of the annual Conference for June 4 it warned the leagues and unions that the Communist officials were planning to capture it. The Executive warning proved correct. Foiled in their plans to control the official Labour party last year, the Reds, in desperation, had captured the bogus Conference convened by Mr Seale. Practically every speaker at the Trades Hall gathering was a nominee upon the Communist ticket run by Messrs Garden and Voigt at the 1926 Conference, when not one was elected upon the ALP Executive. The question of the few Parliamentarians who had attended the bogus Conference would receive the consideration of the ALP Executive at its next meeting.

Mr Conroy added that he viewed with grave concern the action of the Red Conference, which had dared to openly flout the Federal Executive of the ALP, whose officers ruled during the recent crisis that the motion creating Mr Lang a dictator was unconstitutional and against the principles of the Labour movement. The Seale Conference had now reaffirmed Mr Lang’s dictatorship.

The ALP Executive constitutionally endorsed Captain Conway as ALP candidate for the Federal Warringah vacancy. The decision to run a Seale candidate against the ALP nominee indicated the extreme gravity of the actions of those who permitted themselves to be tied to the Red chariot of Mr Garden and his Communist friends. The work of convening the ALP Conference on June 4 next would continue, irrespective of the tactics of the Red wreckers.

Day 3, Monday, 19 April 1927


Amidst tremendous enthusiasm the Labour Conference yesterday adopted the Red rules by an overwhelming majority.

The new rules have been described as Red because, virtually, they place the political Labour party under the domination of the unions, which, in turn, are dominated by the Reds.

The new provisional Executive of twenty-six members will comprise sixteen representatives of trades unions, who will, consequently, control the organisation.

One clause in the rules provides that unions may elect whatever delegates they may desire to represent them at the Conferences, and
opponents of the Red rules point out that under the clause Communists would be eligible.

The Conference also decided to recommend that the selection of a Premier should be taken out of the hands of caucus, and that all Labour Parliamentarians must define their attitude towards the Conference, failing which their nominations at the next elections would not be endorsed.

**Conference Assembles**

The Conference assembled again yesterday morning. Mr WH Seale was in the chair, and there was a large attendance of delegates. Those present included the Lord Mayor (Alderman Mostyn) and Mr AC Willis (Vice President of the Executive Council).

When the morning session was opened the Conference instructed the returning officer, Mr Martin (Clerks), on a motion by Mr J Butler (St George), to take no further action in regard to the ballot papers for the election of an Executive until the rules are finally dealt with. The motion arose from a report from Mr Martin, who pointed out that under the new rules the Executive be elected on the group system.

The chairman of the credentials committee (Mr Padgen) reported that representatives were present from almost every affiliated union. The organisations that were not represented were the AWU, the timber workers, municipal workers, and the furnishing trades. He had been advised that the majority of members of the railway workers’ branch of the AWU were in favour of the Conference, although the officials were opposed to it. Sixteen electorate councils were not represented, including Byron, Maitland, Murray, Newcastle, Northern Tablelands, Oxley, and Wammerawa. Requests for representation had been received from almost every league which composed those councils. A resolution was carried authorising Mr Padgen to issue invitations to the various leagues and councils to send delegates to the Conference, and, further, that the railway workers’ branch of the AWU should be represented at the Conference, providing the branch was financial.

**New Rules**

The Conference then resumed its discussion of the new rules and the motion of Mr AC Willis for their adoption in their entirety.

The Lord Mayor (Alderman Mostyn), who is a member of the rules committee, said that the desire of the committee was to tighten up the laxity. The old rules allowed cliques to take away the control of the ALP from the rank and file.

Mr Seale said that the principles embodied in the new rules had already been endorsed and he therefore would allow no amendments
which conflicted with those principles. Amendments should have been forwarded to the rules committee for consideration, but in some cases were deliberately suppressed.

Mr Willis asked the Conference to accept the rules as a fair basis for the whole of the movement. The aim should be to make the rules a perfect set. He wished to make it clear that “if the rules were adopted for the government of the branch of the Labour party in New South Wales, they would still be subject to the Federal convention which reserved the right to deal with all subjects affecting matters of principle. We stand four-square for the Australian Labour movement”, said Mr Willis. “This is an attempt to lift the movement out of a rut into which it has fallen”.

The motion for the adoption of the new rules was carried amidst scenes of enthusiasm by 276 votes to 4. “I declare the new rules now to be the rules governing the New South Wales branch of the Australian Labour Party”, declared Mr Seale, amidst applause.

Mr J O’Reilly (Hairdressers) then moved that the rules committee should remain in existence until the next Conference, for the purpose of assisting the incoming Executive. The motion was carried.

Mr Butler (St George) submitted the following motion: That a provisional Executive should be appointed by this Conference for a period of three months, during which time the Executive shall arrange for the election of the permanent Executive for 1927-28, on the basis of rule 73; further, in the selection of the provisional Executive, this Conference directs that the groups to meet for the purpose of each group selecting their representatives on the provisional Executive and the basis of representation shall be affiliated unions 16, metropolitan councils 4, and the country 6, and the president and vice-president appointed by the Conference.

It was then decided that the positions of Messrs Magrath, Martin, and Griffin on the committee should be declared vacant, and a woman and delegates from the country should be appointed to fill the vacancies.

The motion was carried.

Afternoon Session

At the instance of the delegate from the Tramway Union, a resolution was carried providing for the election of alternate delegates to fill any vacancies on the provisional Executive. It was decided to instruct the various groups to nominate alternate delegates.

The suspension of standing orders was obtained by Mr James (Northern Miners) to discuss the action of members of the party who opposed the agitation for the Easter Conference.

Mr James then moved that Messrs P Connolly, EC Martin, and JJ O’Reilly be called upon to show cause why they should not be expelled for their alleged action in preventing the leagues in the Newcastle district
from attending the Conference. The chairman ruled the motion out of order, and a motion of dissent from the chairman’s ruling was defeated.

Mr A Teece (Northern Miners) then moved: “That all Executive officers who failed to comply with the request of leagues, and who have been instrumental in stopping representatives of leagues coming to this Conference, be requisitioned to appear before the Executive, to be dealt with in compliance with the constitution”.

Mr Teece explained that at Newcastle he knew two Executive members who were very active industrially and politically. He would like to see them given a chance to vindicate themselves.

Mr D Clyne (Storemen and Packers) opposed the motion, declaring that the rank and file at Newcastle were competent to deal with their own matters. The business of the new Executive was too important in forging machinery for it to embark on a glorified heresy hunt.

Mr Teece pointed out that of 14 leagues in the Newcastle district 12 had been disfranchised. Was it fair for one man to have the power to adopt such a “Mussolini” attitude?

The motion was carried, the voting being close.

Parliamentary Leadership

Miss Stuart-Robertson moved that it be recommended to the rules committee to allow rule 132 of the new constitution to read as follows: That the Conference shall select a member of the Parliamentary Labour party to be the leader of the Labour movement in New South Wales for the ensuing 12 months, and who shall be elected to the position of leader of the Parliamentary Labour party in the House.

Rule 132 of the new constitution provides that the leader of the Parliamentary party, who is Premier when a Labour Ministry is in office, shall be elected by the caucus for the life of the Parliament, provided that caucus may deprive him of the position by a three-fourths majority.

The motion was carried, and the question whether the proposed substitution should take place will be decided at the next Conference.

President’s Warning

A delegate suggested that a motion should be formulated preferring charges against members of the Parliamentary Labour party who had opposed the Easter Conference.

“I noticed in the press this morning”, Mr Seale said, “that Mr Conroy is described as making certain references to this Conference. This Conference will certainly have to take some action with regard to members of the movement of that character.

“It was also ascribed to Mr Conroy that his Executive is to meet. I wish to say that if any number of persons, particularly those members of
this movement who are suspended from holding office, get together and posture as Executive members of the Labour party, whatever happens to them will be their own fault. If it happens, the provisional Executive should get directions with respect to that matter from this Conference.”

Moved by Mr Treflé, Woollahra, the following resolution was passed: “That a uniform system of land valuation for all Federal, State, municipal, and shire purposes be enacted.”

**Greater Sydney**

Mr R Bates (Eastern Suburbs), introduced the following motion, which was carried: “That all ALP branches and members of affiliated bodies, within the municipalities stated in section e, clause 2, of the Greater Sydney Policy, shall at all times be pledged to support the amalgamation of the municipalities set out in such section and clause with the Municipal Council of Sydney, with the immediate objective of bringing into being the Metropolitan-Council as the first step towards the fulfilment of the party’s policy of a greater Sydney scheme.”

Mr R Heffron, secretary of the Stewards’ Union, read the report of the special committee appointed in connection with the Labour Daily newspaper. It was realised, he said, that the paper was working under difficulties in respect of the plant, which was inadequate for requirements. Additional capital of £50,000 was needed, and to that end a levy of 7/6 was being imposed. It was hoped that the time was not far distant when all unions would subscribe to the Labour Daily.

Mr AC Willis, chairman of directors, heatedly declared in reply to an interjection that every penny he possessed was wrapped up in the Labour Daily. His one ambition was to give the Labour movement a Labour paper.

The motion for the adoption of the report was carried.

Upon resumption in the evening two of the three vacancies on the rules committee were filled, Miss Johnstone (ALP Executive) and Mr Treflé (Eastern Suburbs) being appointed. The third position will be decided upon by country delegates today.

On the motion of Mr Arthur (Bathurst) the following motion was carried: “Amendment of State plank under heading land and agricultural cooperation to be added to Federal platform”. The mover stated that it was in the best interests of Australia to add the motion to the Federal platform, which was the proper sphere for such matters.

Mr Tannock (Ironworkers) moved: That this annual Conference of the ALP directs the Parliamentary Labour party to immediately pass the Railway Bill and give legislative effect to the demands placed before Labour’s Parliamentary representatives by the committee appointed by the combined conference of railway and tramway unions, acting on
behalf of the 60,000 workers employed in the Railway Commissioners’ service.

We further direct the Parliamentary Labour party to incorporate in the Railways Bill the following demands, as decided upon by the trade union delegates assembled at combined railway and tramway union conferences, and ratified by the Labour Council of New South Wales:

(1) The legal right to form workshop committees.
(2) The legal right to obtain leave from work to attend to trade union duties.
(3) The legal right to privilege and annual holiday passes.
(4) The legal right to an appeals board, presided over by an independent chairman, whose decision shall be final, to deal with (a) appeals against censure and punishment of any kind; (b) promotion appeals.
(5) That all labour necessary for the carrying on of the railway and tramway service be engaged by the Railway Commissioners through the trade unions.
(6) Full continuity of pension rights for all 1917 strike men, and payment out of the Consolidated Revenue for all contributions to the superannuation fund during the period the men were victimised.
(7) The legal right of any employee to publicly comment upon the Railway Act, or the administration of any department of the railway and tramway service.
(8) Provision to be made in the Railway Bill for one day’s leave to each employee for 52 days worked, or part thereof, sickness included.

Mr Tannock said it was hard to imagine that Parliamentary representatives could place the Liquor Bill before the Railways Bill. Railway and Tramway services could count on 100,000 votes, yet the requests from that quarter had been ignored.

Mr Banks (Railways) said it was time the Government did something for the 60,000 odd men in the railway and tramway services. Those employees demanded the right to criticise the service when it saw large sums of money being wasted in the administration and maintenance of the service.

The motion was carried.

The Conference carried a resolution, submitted by Mr Tully (Woolahra), re-affirming its land tenure policy of leasehold, and urging that its adoption be encouraged by a better system of financial assistance through the State and Federal banks. It was further decided to instruct the Parliamentarians to give the matter their earliest attention.
Parliamentarian's Attitude

Mr Webster (Murrumbidgee) submitted the following motion: That this Conference instruct the president to despatch telegrams or cablegrams to every Labour member of the Federal and State Parliaments, demanding their presence at the session on Wednesday night, for the purpose of obtaining a definite declaration of attitude towards the Conference, and in the event of such persons failing to attend or to declare by telegram or cablegram allegiance to the Conference, we hereby instruct the incoming Executive to refuse their nominations as candidates for selection as Parliamentary candidates of the ALP.

Suggestions were made that Labour members of the Legislative Council and the City Council should receive similar directions. Mr Webster stated that some of the Parliamentarians had intimated that they intended to treat the Conference with contempt.

The motion was carried.

Returning Officer's Report

Mr Martin, returning officer, reported that the chairman, Mr WH Seale, was the only person nominated for the position of president of the party. He would, therefore, occupy the post for the ensuing 12 months. The announcement was received with prolonged applause. Messrs J Kilburn (Bricklayers) and WM Webster (Murrumbidgee) were elected vice-presidents, and MCL Thompson (Stovemakers), organising secretary. The two following nominations have been received for the position of general secretary which will be decided by ballot: Messrs JS Beasley and S Bird.

The Conference was adjourned until seven o'clock tonight.

Effect of the Rules

It is expected that the adoption of the new rules will result in a split in Labour’s ranks similar to that of 1919. The Executive elected by the last Conference and now presided over by Mr J Conroy has made it plain that it intends to function as the governing body of the Australian Labour party irrespective of what Mr Seale’s Conference may do.

One of the principal features of the “Red” rules is the provision made for the election of the ALP Executive. While formerly the Executive was elected by ballot of delegates at the annual Conference the body is now to be composed of representatives from the unions, the metropolitan leagues, and the country, who will be appointed at meetings of the members of the party.

Another important change provided for in the new rules relates to the holding of the annual Conference. Under the old system the delegates
to the annual Conference were elected by the leagues and unions, and generally totaled about 300. The “Red” rules reduce the number of delegates by half; and further provide for a number of minor conferences, at which gathering the delegates to the annual Conferences will be elected.

Day 4, Tuesday, 19 April 1927

Grave Position in Cabinet. Seale Conference Denounced. Ministers Blame the Premier. Mr Willis Strongly Criticised.

The Premier (Mr Lang) at a meeting of the Cabinet yesterday repudiated the decisions of the Easter Conference, and asserted he had been misled by Mr Willis (Vice-President of the Executive Council). Mr Willis will probably be asked to hand in his portfolio as a member of the Cabinet in the course of the next few days. Should the Premier maintain the attitude adopted at the Cabinet meeting yesterday he will probably remain at the head of the Government. Mr Lang last night addressed the Labour Conference, which subsequently carried, on Mr Lang’s suggestion, a resolution prohibiting Communists from admission to the Labour Party.

[A report of discussions in Cabinet about developments in the Conference is not reproduced here. Relationships between Premier Lang and his Ministerial colleagues were obviously stretched to the limit at this time, and clearly the normal conventions of collective responsibility in the Government had collapsed. It is also highly unlikely that Lang “repudiated the decisions of the Easter Conference” or repudiated his ally, Albert Willis.]


The atmosphere was electrical when the Seale Conference met at the Trades Hall last night. While the Labour Conference, which had suspended the members of the majority section of the Executive continued its deliberations on the ground floor, the members of the suspended Executive held a meeting on the second floor. The Premier, Mr Lang, was among those to arrive early, and spent the time waiting for the Conference to start discussing the position with the delegates in the crowded passage ways. Much excitement was caused by the fact that the two opposing factions met under the one roof and actually brushed shoulders in the entrance hall.

Although the Conference was scheduled to commence at seven o’clock, it was nearly eight o’clock before a start was made. When Mr Lang entered the conference hall, shortly after eight o’clock, he was received with tremendous applause. Mr Lang occupied a seat on the
platform, other members of Parliament present being Messrs Ely, Stuart-Robertson, Gosling, and Davies, MsLA.

A notable absentee was Mr AC Willis, MLC, Vice-President of the Executive Council, who, up to last night, had not missed a session. Mr Voigt, who acts as minute secretary to the Conference, telegraphed his inability to attend on account of the weather.

It was announced that Mr Kenny, of Cootamundra, had been appointed by the country delegates to represent them on the rules committee.

**Mr Lang’s Request**

“I think my presence here this evening denotes where I am going”, said Mr Lang, who was granted permission to address the Conference. “You do not need any further indication; but I want to tell the delegates that all my life I have been a Labour man.

“What I have come here tonight for is to ask you to recommit your rules – (Applause.) – not for the purpose of altering what is in them, to clean up the Labour movement, because I think your rules will effectively do that that; but to state definitely, unmistakably, and without any equivocation, that the rules mean what they say. If they do we ought not to be afraid to express it in black and white, and I am going to ask Conference to re-submit the rules, and put into them, in black and white, that no Communist may become a member of the Labour Party. (Applause.) If you insert that you only make the rules say what they mean. If you want me to be the standard bearer – to fight for Labour and the men and women of the country – for goodness sake give me a fair chance, and don’t hobble me. Communism is only a bogey. When that bogey was tacked on to Mr Ramsay McDonald the people of Great Britain lost the chance of having a Labour Government to rule them. Because that bogey was tacked on to Mr Charlton and the Labour Party in Australia, Mr Bruce was in power; and the country was suffering from not having a Labour Government. I believe that no Communist should be allowed to become a member of the Labour Party. I have said that over and over again; but if it is not in the rules I will say to go out and say something that is not true, and you don’t want me to do that. (A voice: It is in the Federal rules.) If it is in the Federal rules, why hesitate to put it in black and white in your rules. I want you to understand and believe that when I go out and say I am not a Communist, that I do not believe in Communism, and that the Labour Party does not stand for it, let me go out and say it conscientiously.

“I know it is an extraordinary request to make”, concluded Mr Lang, “but it is a fight and it is a hard fight. I believe the Labour movement from now on is going to be better than ever. If you are going to have a good run let me have a straight run. I have been accused of being a
‘Prince of Promises’, but everything I promised I tried to perform. When I go out and tell the people of the country that this is a Labour movement and not a Nationalist movement, or an Employers’ Federation movement, or a movement bought by ‘Red’ gold, I must have it in my mind or I cannot say it. I ask the Conference to say that no member of the Communist party may join the Australian Labour Party branch of New South Wales.” (Applause.)

Mr Rutherford (Saddlers) moved the suspension of the standing orders to have the rules recommitted, in accordance with Mr Lang’s request. The motion was carried, and Mr Rutherford then moved: “That no member of the Communist party shall be a member of the Australian Labour Party”.

The desire of the Premier, Mr Rutherford said, was that the rules should make it clear that no Communists could be members of the Labour Party.

“The Premier has stuck to us”, said Mr Rutherford, amidst applause. “He has come to this Conference, as a man and not as a trickster. The tricksters have not shown their faces here, and that is why it is difficult to know where they stand. We should realize that Mr Lang possesses a degree of honesty which 90 per cent of our Parliamentarians do not possess. We must protect him and incidentally ourselves. If a crisis comes we must be in a position to face the country as a united force.”

Mr Webster (Murrumbidgee), seconding the motion, said that they were faced with one of the greatest crises in the history of the movement.

Mr W Mills (Waterside Workers) opposed the resolution, on the ground that if it was carried it would appear that it had been passed at the dictation of the Cabinet. They should ask what the underlying motive of Mr Lang’s request was. If the Cabinet was to blame they should take action against the Cabinet.

Mr Ryan (Storemen and Packers) stated that the Communists were members of the working class and should be allowed to be members of the Labour Party. Their only crime was that they were opposed to the capitalistic system which the Cabinet Ministers were eager to uphold.

Mr Leslie (Northern Miners), who opposed the proposal, said that a few individuals must have met and arrived at a certain decision, and forced Mr Lang to ask the Conference, like so many sheep, to accept their decision. Had they not yet got beyond the day of the Lord of the Manor, when they had to submit to a few individuals? If the rank and file were not to be allowed to make the rules of the movement, a few individuals could again meet and decide to ask the Conference to recommit something else. He would put the case for the Communists. The effective work that was done by any working class man in the ranks of the working class was determined by his hostility towards society, and the castigation received from those who were the rulers of society. If they had any spines they would turn the proposal down.
Mr Rutherford was granted permission to reconstruct his motion to read: “That notwithstanding anything contained in these rules, no member of the Communist party shall be a member of the New South Wales branch of the Australian Labour Party.”

Mr Lang explained that he was not present under pressure from his colleagues. He wanted it to be plainly understood, he said, that he was representing himself alone. He bound none of his colleagues. Every one of his Ministers was free, and was absolved from everything he had said. The action he had taken was his alone. Whatever the penalty, it was his. He was asking the Conference to do something he felt was right. (Applause.) He was the leader, and he should be able to judge. It was true, as stated, that the rules debarred Communists from joining the movement. He knew what the Federal rules said; but they had to search for it, and he would ask them to insert the words moved by Mr Rutherford so that “he who runs may read”. To say that a Communist could become a member of the Labour party was a lie, and he asked them to pick up the nail handed them by Mr Rutherford and nail the lie. (Applause.)

Mr Moate (Stewards), in supporting the motion, said that Conference was not being asked to amend the new rules, but to make it clear that members of the Communist party were not eligible to be members of the Australian Labour Party. They were asked to nail the lie in the propaganda of the capitalistic Press.

Mr Sutherland (Enginedrivers) contended that they should not use the time of the Conference in trying to kill every bogey raised by the anti-Labour press. Everyone was satisfied, he said, that the rules would not admit Communists. He hoped the delegates would allow their working class ideas to rise above those of the people who were attacking them.

Mr Butler (St George), who supported the resolution, said the desire was to place the meaning of the rules beyond doubt. They knew what the rules meant, but the great mass of the people read the anti-Labour press.

Mr Howe (North Sydney) said that the Conference was being asked to state its interpretation of the rules in plain English in keeping with the interpretation previously given.

Mr Rutherford, in reply, said that those individuals who were opposing the motion had voted the previous night for the very thing they were opposing. To be consistent they must support the motion.

On the motion being put it was declared carried on the voices. A show of hands was taken, and the chairman announced that it was carried by 10 to 1.

A small section, who voted against the resolution consisted mostly of northern miners’ delegates.
Mr Seale's Statement

Mr Seale said that there would be now no excuse for members to say that the new rules gave the Communists admission to the party. “If the Parliamentarians think the rules lack clarity, why have they not the decency to come to the Conference and express their views”, said Mr Seale. “We want the Cabinet Ministers to state whether they condone the actions of the rump Executive and the doings of Messrs Goodin and Gillies. If they do not do that, I, as president, will leave no stone unturned in an effort to see that every branch of this movement shall deal with them in the manner they deserve”.

The Conference was adjourned until seven o’clock to night.

June Conference. Executive Support.

Members of the majority section of the ALP Executive who have been suspended from office by Mr Seale’s Conference met at the Trades Hall last night and carried a resolution seeking the cooperation of the Parliamentary Labour party in their move to convene the June Conference.

It was also decided to fill the vacancies on the Executive created when Mr Seale and his supporters decided to ignore the deliberations of that body.

The motion carried was: “That in view of a number of Executive members having forfeited their seats upon the ALP Executive owing to non-attendance of Executive meetings, the following be appointed from the list of candidates who contested the last ballot: Messrs G Buckland, J Murrell, H Dessaix, JC Eldridge, J Potter, G McGrath, G Delahunty, and Mesdames Melville, Dwyer, Bodkin, and Miss Sullivan, in place of Messrs H Potter, W Padgen, G Smith, W Mills, S Bird, T Leslie, D Rees, JF O’Reilly Mesdames Green and Stapleton, and Miss Johnson.

The Executive also passed the following resolution: “That in view of the fact that Messrs Falkingham, Kilburn, O’Reilly, Seale, and Smith, who were elected by the last annual Conference to represent this State at the interstate Conference of the ALP, have attended the Conference convened by Mr Seale and have thereby forfeited their positions, this Executive hereby declares that they no longer be recognized as delegates to the Interstate Conference, and, further, that this Executive elect the following members to fill their positions rendered vacant: Messrs G Buckland G Bodkin, J Kaine, W Harrop, J Culbert, and Mrs Dwyer.”

The Executive furthermore decided that Alderman PV Stokes and Mr JF O’Reilly had forfeited their positions on the Federal Executive owing to their participation in the Seale Conference, and elected Messrs J McGarry and R Tatham to the vacancies. Alderman Stokes was invited to attend the next meeting to explain his position with regard to the Federal Executive.
The meeting resolved to notify the Federal Executive that any communication purporting to be from the Australian Labour Party, NSW branch, and not signed by Mr W Carey, general secretary, must be treated, as bogus.

Another resolution carried read: “That the Parliamentary Labour party be informed that in the opinion of the Executive there is no necessity for an appeal to the electors until the expiration of Parliament by time; further, that the party be informed that under no consideration must they recognise the unconstitutional Conference convened by Mr Seale now sitting at the Trades Hall.”

**Day 5, Wednesday, 20 April 1927**

**Seale Party, Conference Ignored. Parliamentarians’ Attitude. Mr Willis’ Speech.**

With a few exceptions, the Labour members of Parliament who were summoned to attend the Seale Conference, which met at the Trades Hall last night, failed to put in an appearance. The Conference decided not to take any action pending the outcome of the special committee’s inquiries regarding the terms of the pact between the Government and Messrs Goodin and Gillies.

The Conference carried a resolution declaring the June Conference convened by the ALP Executive bogus, and instructing branches to repudiate the gathering.

Mr WH Seale announced during the evening that he had received eminent legal opinion that the Easter Conference was a constitutional one.

**The Conference**

The Conference was continued at the Trades Hall under the chairmanship of Mr Seale. There was a notable falling-off in the attendance, half of the seats in the hall being unoccupied when the starting time – 7 o’clock – arrived. It was nearly 8 o’clock before sufficient delegates arrived to enable a start to be made.

Mr ER Voigt, minutes secretary, who with Mr AC Willis, MLC, was absent on the previous night, again attended with Mr Willis, who was given a rousing reception. Although the Conference had sent urgent telegrams to all Labour MsLA directing them to appear before the Conference and explain their attitude towards it, only Messrs Davidson and M Burke, MsLA, and Mr Keegan, MLC, attended. As their attendance at previous sessions indicated, they were in sympathy with the gathering,
their presence did not materially assist the Conference in ascertaining to what extent the Parliamentarians were prepared to give their support.

Mr Minahan's Case

The first business dealt with was the following motion, which was held over from Tuesday night: “That this Conference demands and instructs the Parliamentary Labour Caucus, immediately to withdraw Mr Minahan, MLA, as the Parliamentary representative on the board of directors of the Labour Daily, and that Mr Minahan should be summoned to appear before Conference on Tuesday evening, 19th inst., to give the reasons for his action in taking legal action against the Labour Daily.

Mr Campbell (Botany) suggested that Conference should reaffirm what it had done. Mr Minahan had treated the summons from Conference with absolute contempt, and it was for the delegates to say whether they were masters of the position or whether they were going to allow any individual to flout the will of the Conference.

Mr Campbell said that, in view of Mr Minahan's action, he was deserving of the severest condemnation by the delegates, and should be informed that, in the opinion of Conference, he was no longer a Labour representative in Parliament.

The chairman suggested that some delegate should move that, in view of Mr Minahan's action, the provisional Executive should be instructed to take the requisite action.

Mr Campbell agreed to move as suggested.

Mr North contended that their duty was to deny Mr Minahan the right of endorsement at the next election.

Mr J Beasley said the Labour Daily's articles of association provided for representation for the Parliamentary Labour party, the Executive, and the Labour Council, and nothing which the Conference could do could alter the situation. The only thing that could be done was to call a meeting of the shareholding unions and ask them to alter the articles so that the three bodies should not have representation on the directorate. He disapproved of Mr Minahan's action. He had had differences with the Labour Daily, but he believed the place to fight them out was within the movement and not in the court. He was a director and had agreed to the proposal that the three bodies mentioned should not have representation. The liability of the Parliamentary Labour party for interest on the overdraft was £700, and had not been met. The representation should be placed in the hands of the rank and file of shareholding unions.

Mr W Mills (Waterside Workers) moved as an amendment that the endorsement of Mr Minahan should be cancelled until he attended the Conference or a meeting of the provisional Executive.
Seconding the amendment, Mr Edward (Sydney Ironworkers) suggested that Mr Minahan should not be allowed to hold office in the party for three years.

The chairman ruled the amendment out of order, on the ground that a resolution had already been carried, directing that the provisional Executive should deal with Parliamentarians who failed to comply with the directions of the Conference.

The motion referring the matter to the Executive was then carried.

**The Pact Discussed**

At this stage permission was given to Mr MA Davidson, MLA, to address the Conference regarding the pact between the Government and Messrs Goodin and Gillies. Mr Davidson said that the alleged victimization of Messrs Willis and Voigt was “utter rot”. The results achieved by the agreement with Messrs Goodin and Gillies had justified the pact.

Mr Voigt said that Mr Stuart-Robertson had told them there was no pact. Mr Davidson told them there was a pact, that Mr Lang should repudiate the dictatorship, that the following session should be devoted to country matters and that a press committee should be formed. It was on those things that Messrs Goodin and Gillies actually crossed the floor in Parliament and voted with the Nationalists, just because they wanted such things. They must look upon delegates as children if they thought they would accept that.

Continuing, Mr Voigt asked why the Executive of the ALP should be asked to ratify the pact without the terms being disclosed. He did not know what was in the pact, but the Conference should leave no stone unturned to get the details. If the politicians were sufficiently out of touch with the Labour movement to refuse to pay their allegiance to the Conference, he did not think they would hesitate to form any sort of agreement with Messrs Goodin and Gillies, or to victimise anybody. (Applause.)

**Mr Willis’ Speech**

Mr Willis said that he did not believe there was any attempt to victimise Mr Voigt or himself. He did know that that was the proposal of Messrs Goodin and Gillies. He did not believe that one of his colleagues would agree to a condition of that kind. Mr Baddeley told him definitely at the time that nothing had been done to injure him. He had invited several members of Parliament to attend the Conference, but they had refused – they were too busy thinking of what to do with him. The bulk of the members of the Parliamentary Labour party believed they were acting in the best interests of the movement in avoiding an election at that time for the purpose of getting their legislation through. “I think if the Conference
decided upon any resolution chopping heads off in wholesale fashion it would be acting wrongfully, and not in the best interests of the movement", said Mr Willis. “If there are those who have flouted the wishes of the Conference they should be dealt with. I suggest that the branches represented at the Conference should be instructed to demand from their Parliamentary representatives an explanation of their failure to attend the Easter Conference”.

Mr McPherson (Letter Carriers) moved that further discussion should be deferred until the committee instructed by the Conference to seek details of the pact had carried out its instructions, and reported to the Conference on Thursday night.

The motion was carried on the voices.

**Legality of Conference**

In reply to a delegate the chairman said he had secured the opinion of Mr Claude Weston, a barrister, regarding the legality of the Conference. The answers to specific questions were as follows:

- Have the remaining members of the Executive power to postpone Conference till June? — No.
- Has the Executive power to alter the basis of representation at Conference as provided under rule 21? — No.
- Do the remaining members now claiming to act as the Executive legally constitute the Executive of the ALP? — No.
- Are the powers of the Executive under rule 83 subject to the decisions of Conference and of the existing rules? — Yes.
- Is the president acting legally in convening a Conference at Easter and in using moneys in so doing? — Yes.
- Will the Conference at Easter be the legally constituted Conference of the ALP? — Yes. (Applause.)
- Mr Nicholls (Botany) moved that the incoming Executive should be instructed to take any steps they may deem necessary to establish the legality of the Conference and its rights to the books and other property of the Australian Labour Party in the State of New South Wales. The motion was carried.

**Day 6, Thursday, 21 April 1927**


The election of officers of the Seale Conference resulted in an overwhelming victory for the “Reds”, who captured all the important positions. The candidates supported by the militants for the provisional
Executive were returned in sufficiently strong numbers to give them control of that body.

**Political Position**

When the ALP Conference opened last night Mr Webster (Murrumbidgee) said he was aware 12 months ago of a movement in the Parliamentary party to depose Mr Lang.

“At the Murrumbidgee conference”, he continued, “Mr Flannery gave us to understand that he favoured the Easter Conference. When I came here I heard that he was with the Cabinet Ministers to destroy and discredit the Conference.”

**Commonwealth Line**

“Nothing is of more importance to the people of Australia than the retention of the Commonwealth Government line of steamers”, said Mr A Moate, secretary of the Stewards’ Union.

“For a number of years we have experienced the underground methods of Mr Bruce and others in authority to discredit the line, and bring about its disposal. This has been for the purpose of creating an impression that the line is a bugbear, and should be disposed of. It was necessary to remove Sir Granville Ryrie to abolish the line. I say Australia is now open to a broadside attack from one of the most vicious combines in the world.”

Mr Moate then moved that this Conference demands, in the interests of Australia, of her exporters and importers who ship by vessels of the Australian Commonwealth line, and of the travelling public, that the Federal Nationalist Government shall not dispose of the vessels of the line. The motion was seconded by Mr Mills (Waterside Workers), and carried.

**Parliamentarians’ Attitude**

In reply to a delegate the chairman (Mr Seale) reported that the following Parliamentarians had recognised the Conference by attending the gathering: The Premier (Mr Lang), Mr AC Willis (Vice-President of the Executive Council), Messrs Lysaght, Keegan, Davidson, Stuart-Robertson, Gosling, Stokes, Ratcliffe, F Burke, M Bourke, Cahill, Tonge, Horsington, Quirk, Kelly, Booth, Davis, Ely, and Murray. Mr Seale said that the only Federal Parliamentarian who had attended was Mr H Lazzarini.
Election of Officers

Mr Martin (returning officer) reported that the ballot for the election of officers resulted as follows:

President, Mr WH Seale (unopposed); vice-presidents, Messrs J Kilburn, (Bricklayers) and WM Webster (Murrumbidgee); general secretary, S Bird (Miners); organising secretary, Mr CL Thompson (Stovemakers). Mr T Martin was appointed as returning officer to assist the provisional committee.

Provisional Executive—
Miners: (2) Mr R James, Mr T Leslie; alternates, Mr M Manion, Mr J Dorrington;
Metal Trades: (2) Mr JJ Graves (Stovemakers), Mr WT Padgen (AEU); alternates, Mr T Falkingham (Boilermakers), Mr J Stewart (Electrical Trades).

Building Trades: (2) Mr T Turner (Painters), Mr TF Morton (Carpenters); alternates: Mr GP Pickford (Plumbers), Mr J Griffin (Builders’ Labourers).
Food: (1) Mr A Sherwin (Hotel, Club, & Restaurant); alternate, Mr LF Gill (Sugar Workers). Manufacturing: (2) Mr DD Jones (Amalgamated Clothing Trades), Mrs Houghton (Amalgamated Clothing Trades); alternates, Mr C Lewis (Tanners), Mrs Stanley (Textile Workers).

Public Utilities: (1) Mr A McPherson (Postal Workers); alternate, Mr MJ Conaghan.

Printing, Non-manual, and Miscellaneous: (1) Mr JJ Bollard (PIEU); alternate, Mr JJ Wills (APT).

Transport (Water): (2) Mr B Mullins (Waterside Workers), Mr WT Swadling (Ship Painters and Dockers); alternates, Mr F Hales (Coal Lumpers), Mr W Findlan (Waterside Workers).

Transport. (Land): (3) Mr W Clementson (Tramway), Mr FE Miller (Transport Workers), Mr MP Ryan (Storemen and Packers). Alternates: Mr H Lockard (ARU), Mr A Bennett (Coachmakers), Mr P O’Sullivan (Loco. Engine).

Electorate Councils (Metropolitan): (4) Mr A North (St George), Mr RA King (East Suburbs), Mr AH Nicholls (Botany), Mrs Dunn (Balmain). Alternates: Nurse Francis (East Suburbs), Mrs Stapleton (Sydney), Mr H Potter (Sydney), Mr AH Norman (North Sydney).

Electorate Councils (Country): (6) Mr FW Yates (Goulburn), Mr AS Berry (Parramatta), Mr JH Stone (Cumberland), Mr A Baston (Bathurst), Miss Lee (Cootamundra) Mrs Webster (Murrumbidgee). Alternates: Mrs Smith (Wollondilly), Mr J Harris (Barrier), Mr J Ward (Bathurst), Mr E Meredith (Wollondilly), Mr H Chandler (Cumberland), Mrs C McGowan (Cumberland).
Delegates to Federal Executive: Messrs J Kilburn (Bricklayers) and T Falkingham (Boilermakers).

Delegates to the Interstate Conference: Messrs Rutherford (Saddlers), O'Reilly (Hairdressers), WJ Gibb (Clothing Trades), WT Padgen (Engineers), JJ Graves (Stovemakers), and A McPherson (Postal Workers).

The Pact Discussed

Mr W Gibb (Clothing Trades) submitted a report on behalf of the committee appointed to inquire into the pact between the Government and Messrs Goodin and Gillies. Mr Gibb stated that the committee had experienced many difficulties in their attempts to interview the Parliamentarians. The secretary of the Parliamentary party (Mr O'Halloran) told the committee he believed that there was an agreement in existence, but he did not sign it and did not know who had signed it. He did not have any authority to say anything until the caucus met on Tuesday. The Attorney-General (Mr McTiernan) admitted that he had signed the Agreement, and would accept full responsibility for doing so. “He told us, however”, said Mr Gibb, “that he did not know where the agreement was, nor what was in it”. (Laughter.) “I am convinced that there is an organised attempt by the politicians to give the one answer: ‘We don’t know where it is’.”

“Mr McTiernan made it specially clear”, said Mr T Falkingham (Boilermakers), “that the committee was acting in full accordance with the desires of the Labour party. The party had nominated a committee to go to Goodin and Gillies. We were satisfied that this committee was to get a settlement at all costs as long as the Government could be kept in power.”

“Mr McTiernan said he would not go back on his signed word”, declared Mr Nicholls (Botany). He added that he would be a cur if he went back on the pact and he would not do so. “We have established clearly that the pact exists. He admitted today that he signed the pact”.

A motion was passed confirming the receipt and adoption of the report.

A delegate asked whether the Committee which interviewed Mr McTiernan saw anything of the three sealed envelopes containing the pact.

“One of the strangest phases of the situation”, commented Mr Seale, “is that the Labour party has got into very strange waters. The secrecy surrounding this matter is something completely opposed to what the Labor movement stands for.”


Alleged Bogus Rules

Mr Roels (Enginedrivers) brought forward the following motion, which was carried: “That this Conference repudiates the rules drafted by the bogus committee comprising the Carey, Conroy, McGarry Executive factions, the State Parliamentary party, and the trade union secretaries, and further condemns the scurrilous manifesto issued against members of the rules committee appointed by the last annual Conference and re-elected by the two succeeding Conferences. This resolution to be forwarded to all unions and branches.”

Australian Timbers

Mr Chalker (Wollondilly) moved the following resolution: “That the Labour Government take immediate steps to inquire into the Australian timbers used by the Railway Commissioners, also in carpentering and timber manufacturing, and for the production and cultivation of our better class timbers”.

The motion was carried, and the Conference adjourned until this evening.

Day 7, Friday, 22 April 1927


There was a large attendance of delegates at the Seale Conference of the Australian Labour Party, which was continued at the Trades Hall last night.

Financial Position

Mr Bird (secretary), in outlining the financial position, said that the total of the receipts was £1017/5/9, made up of £171/19/5 from electoral councils and £845/6/4 from unions. The liabilities totaled £109/18/-, leaving a credit balance of £827/2/9. They had also to pay for the use of the hall and the doorkeepers.

Attitude Towards Conference

The chairman (Mr Seale) announced the receipt of replies from members of Parliament in response to messages asking what attitude they took up towards the Conference.

A telegram on behalf of Mr Watkins, MP, Newcastle, stated that Mr Watkins had left for South Australia last Tuesday.
A cable message from Messrs Baddeley (Minister for Mines) and McKell (Minister of Justice) was read as follows: “Unequivocally opposed repudiation agreement with Goodin and Gillies. With respect to Conference generally stand by majority party and the Cabinet.”

A voice: What does that mean?

The chairman: It is a true-blue politician’s reply. The message sent to Messrs Baddeley and McKell was as follows: “Easter Conference now sitting wants your attitude re same definitely defined”.

Continuing, Mr Seale said that Messrs Baddley and McKell were well aware before they left Australia that a fight was going on over the question of an Easter Conference. The two Ministers stated that they were opposed to the repudiation of the agreement with Goodin and Gillies, but the cable did not mention anything about the agreement. No doubt persons attended the Conference who acted as runners. It was apparent that those who were fighting in the dark had sent a message to Messrs Baddeley and McKell, and perhaps had misrepresented the position. No one had had greater respect in the past than he for Mr Baddeley. If the party was the party that Mr Baddeley always said it was he must stand by the Conference, but if he had now changed his mind and considered that the few people in Macquarie Street were the Australian Labour Party, then he had thrown a somersault. The reply meant nothing, and savoured of rail-sitting and of men who wanted to be with the majority, irrespective of whether it was right or wrong.

Mr EC Riley, junior, MP (Cook) replied that he regarded the Conference presided over by Mr Seale as a representative gathering, and although some might doubt its constitutionality from a movement point of view, its bona fides could not be questioned. He considered it his duty to support the Conference in session.

Mr Manion (Miners) said that if Mr Baddeley was “sitting on the fence”, the Miners’ Federation was done with him. Mr Voigt said that Mr Baddeley was not “sitting on the fence”. The cablegram showed that he had “come down off the fence”.

A delegate: You have an axe to grind.

Mr C Baines (Liquor Trades) moved that Messrs Baddeley and McKell be again communicated with, and asked whether they would confirm the cablegram repudiating the Conference and its decisions.

Mr James (Miners) said that the miners had got a shock. The miners were solidly behind the Easter Conference. The secretary of the miners would communicate with Mr Baddeley asking him whether he was prepared to stand behind the miners.

Mr Seale said that he was satisfied Messrs Baddeley and McKell knew what they were doing.

The motion was carried.
Public Servants

Mr Martin (Clerks) moved a motion protesting against the alleged non-payment of 1923 basic wage increases to the State Public servants on the lower scale: Mr Martin said that the Attorney-General, Mr McTiernan, had been responsible for withholding the increases. “Mr McTiernan was not game to go against the heads of the Public Service Board”, said Mr Martin.

The motion was carried.

Blind Workers

Serious charges regarding the conditions under which the blind work at the Industrial Blind Institution were made by Mr W Padgen (Engineers), who submitted a report on behalf of the committee appointed to inquire into the matter. Conditions, he said, were deplorable. The minimum wage for blind workers was 17/6 a week for single workers, as against £1/17/- in Queensland, where the blind were under Government control, and the minimum wage was £1/10/- for married men, as against £2/10/- in Queensland. In no instance had the committee found that after 44 hours’ work more than £3 could be earned by the blind each week. The committee did not blame the institution, because it existed on charity, but rather the industrial movement for allowing the conditions to continue.

The recommendations of the committee were as follows:

1. The nationalisation of the Industrial Blind Institution.
2. Adequate representation of the blind workers on any committee of management that might be appointed.
3. Payment of living wage to all adult blind employees.
4. Official recognition of the association for the blind.

Mr Miller (Moulders), in seconding the motion for the adoption of the report, said that the blind workers had had to remain at the institution until 7 o’clock at night to receive their wages.

The resolution was carried.

Position in China

Mr Porter (Broken Hill) moved: “That this Conference joins with the workers of the world in their united protest against armed intervention in China. It should be obvious to the Imperialists of Great Britain that the gunboat policy now being pursued in China must end in disastrous results, involving world war. Therefore this Conference protests against the pursuance of this policy, and calls upon all workers of Australia to prevent any troops or foodstuffs being sent from this country. We
congratulate the “Hands Off China” committee on the splendid work it is carrying on, and resolve to elect a delegate to assist the committee in its work.”

The motion was carried, and Mr MP Ryan was appointed the Conference delegate.

**Mr Willis’ Amazing Speech. Remarkable Revelations. Vicious Attack on Colleagues. Fight with the Gloves Off.**

Cablegrams have been received from Messrs Baddeley and McKell, which, in the opinion of members of the Ministry, clearly indicate that they are in favour of observing the Gillies-Goodin Pact.

Ministers, therefore, hold that they are supported in their demand for ousting Mr Willis from Ministerial position. Mr Lang, however, steadfastly supports his colleague.

Mr AC Willis, Vice-President of the Executive Council, addressing the Seale Conference at a late hour last night, delivered a bitter attack upon Cabinet Ministers who had opposed his actions regarding the Conference.

In the course of a heated defence Mr Willis described his opponents as “miserable intriguers, who would assassinate a colleague behind his back”.

A resolution was passed reaffirming the confidence of the Conference in Mr Lang, and stating that it would only recognise him as the leader of the Parliamentary party.

**Mr Willis’ Speech at the Seale Conference**

At the Seale Conference last night, Mrs Houghton (Clothing Workers), asked Mr Willis, MLC, if he would tell Conference the reasons for Cabinet demanding his expulsion from the Cabinet.

Mr Willis: That is a plain question, to which I will give a plain answer. Following the resolution carried by Conference respecting Messrs Goodin and Gillies, I understand that Cabinet, or a large portion of it, held a meeting. As a matter of fact it is well for Conference to know that last Saturday night, after Conference concluded, I rang Mr Lazzarini from the railway station asking him to arrange to send some blankets to those in the northern district who had been forced out of their homes by the floods. Mr Lazzarini burst out over the phone about the resolution that had been carrying authorising the Premier to reconstruct the Cabinet. He said: “That resolution will have to be rescinded, and, what is more, we will reconstruct the Cabinet, and say who will be in it”, I said: “I don’t want to talk about that over the phone, but he went on roaring over the phone. I have heard him roar before, and I turned to my colleague
and said: “Lazzarini is damned insulting; but it is at a safe distance over the phone”. The next I heard was that they had been holding meetings.

“They Want My Scalp”

“I went to the Treasury”, continued Mr Willis, “when Mr Lang, in his blunt way, said to the Cabinet Ministers who came in: ‘Here they are, Albert. These fellows want your scalp’. I said: ‘Is that all?’ Then they commenced to enumerate a number of sins of this Conference, for which I apparently have been held responsible. (Laughter.) Not one of them had the decency or courage to ask me for my resignation. They finally asked me whether I supported the resolution for the expulsion of Goodin and Gillies and I said: ‘Yes’, and they said, ‘That is enough’. McTiernan said: ‘The resolution will have to be rescinded. Are you prepared to vote for its rescission?’ I said: ‘No. If the matter comes before the Conference again I shall vote the same way’. They looked at me and left me.”

“Lang to Go, Too”

“They did not say then: ‘Willis, you must resign’. I did hear from another source, however. McTiernan had said that if he (meaning the speaker) had any intelligence he would have known that they wanted him to resign. (Laughter). This is not confidential Government business, otherwise I would not mention it here. It has gone past the stage when it is a matter of kid gloves. This is the exact position. They said: ‘Lang, if you stand by Willis you go with him’. I understand their intention is to have the caucus meeting on Tuesday. The principal business is the present proposition of executing AC Willis first, and if my chief, the Premier, agrees to stand by me, then he goes next. Mr Voigt has made a remark about Willis and himself being victimised. I do not believe that there would be any man who calls himself a Labour man who would have the indecency, and who would descend to the depth of victimising a colleague. This trouble dates back to the time of the ‘Unholy Alliance’. ‘Ted’ Magrath admitted to me at that time when the agreement was drawn up that I was to go.

“Then came the caucus matter, when it was decided again that Willis was to go. No reasons were given. Apparently Goodin and Gillies have something in the agreement to enable them to swing the lead over the heads of certain caucus members, and to make them say. ‘Willis and Voigt have to go’. So far as I am concerned, I have been brought up in the industrial movement. There is not a man in the movement who can point the finger at me, and say I have done anything wrong. (Applause.) I would leave a thousand times rather than be mixed up with [that] miserable crowd of curs and (the last word was drowned in the applause). They will not come to the Conference. They prefer to hold
their secret meetings. The same old gang is responsible for it all. On Tuesday next they will decide whether two men, Jack Lang and Albert Willis, against whom no man can point the finger of scorn, are to be executed, or two ‘scabs’.” (Applause and cheers.)

Mr Willis continued: “It was said ‘Willis led the breakaway in 1919’. The fight we put up in 1919 was against corruption in the movement. When I came back I continued to fight on to the ballot box scandals, and exposed the plotters, and we have worked consistently until we have brought in these rules to put the movement on a clean basis. Then they threaten and challenge us. Today we take up that challenge, and I am prepared to fight them throughout New South Wales. (Applause.) For years the cry has been about the controlling forces of the Labour movement of New South Wales. For years people have said they would like to come into the movement, but asked: ‘What have we to submit to to come in? The way the ballots are run, it would be like undertaking the task of walking through a sewer! Today there is a general desire to have a clean strong movement. The people of New South Wales will rally to the Labour movement in such numbers, if they see we are clean and straight, that the opposition will never have a chance. (Applause.) I would rather be outside fighting than be inside being strangled. I want to appeal to you. This Conference has given a good lead. Let us see to it that, in the interests of the movement to which we belong, we try to restore the old ideals of the Labour movement and when we get that going, and stand four square, those miserable intriguers who would assassinate colleagues behind their backs will, in a very short time, be relegated to the gutter from which they should never have sprung.” (Applause.)

Mr Bird (secretary) moved: “That this Conference reaffirms its confidence in Mr Lang, as expressed by the last annual and special Conferences, and further that this 1927 annual Conference will only recognise Mr Lang as leader of the Parliamentary Labour party of the State; also that we reaffirm all our previous decisions regarding Goodin and Gillies and the Parliamentary pact”. Mr Bird said that it was absolutely essential to clean the movement up. One of the reasons he had joined the movement was to clean it up and put it on a sound basis. Men were forming a pact because they were tied to another pact to force out of the movement men like Mr Willis, who had always fought for the movement.

Mr White seconded the motion, which was carried amidst loud applause.

Confused Situation

The political situation is now so confused that members of the Ministry, the Labour caucus, and of the two opposing factions are not able to foresee what the outcome will be.
The Premier (Mr Lang), according to his supporters, is in such a position that members of the Labour party will find it difficult to depose him even if they desired to do so. The caucus meeting has now been definitely fixed for Tuesday morning, Monday being a public holiday.

The followers of the Premier contend that should the caucus go to the extreme length of passing a motion of censure on him, or attempt to set up a new leader, Mr Lang could do either of two things. He could advise the Governor to grant a dissolution, or he could form a new Ministry composed of the faction that offers him support in the caucus, no matter whether the faction is in the majority or not. He could then carry on the Government without meeting Parliament till the end of September when the general elections would take place.

**Will Not Forsake Willis**

The Premier, it seems, is now determined not to forsake Mr Willis (Vice-President of the Executive Council), and he will probably make this announcement at the caucus meeting next week. The Premier has not yet defined his attitude towards the Gillies-Goodin pact, but it is expected that he will tell members of the party when they assemble, that he will honour the agreement. By doing so, he will probably gain the votes of many caucus members who fear an immediate dissolution.

Mr Willis is determined that he shall not be ejected from the Ministry. Should the caucus decide in favour of his expulsion from the Cabinet he will probably use all means in his power to bring about a dissolution of Parliament, or induce the Premier to reconstitute his Ministry from members of the caucus who support the Seale faction.

**Absent Ministers**

A meeting of Ministers was again held yesterday, but the Premier and Mr Willis were not present. It was alleged that a cable message had been received from Mr Baddeley (Minister for Labour) and Mr McKell (Minister for Justice), from overseas to the effect that they were totally opposed to the repudiation of the Gillies-Goodin pact as decided by the Seale Conference.

It was therefore claimed by the Ministers who are in revolt against Mr Willis and his private secretary (Mr Voigt) that both Mr McKell and Mr Baddeley were of the same mind as themselves in the present dispute.

Mr Baddeley was one of those who signed the pact together with Messrs McTiernan (Attorney-General), Mutch (Minister for Education), and Fitzgerald (Minister for Local Government). These Ministers are determined that the agreement shall be honoured to the letter during the term of the present Parliament.
It was stated at the meeting that Mr Baddeley had cabled that the agreement should be observed. The Ministers contended that Mr Voigt had further aggravated his offence by the attack he had launched at the "Red" Conference against the Minister for Labour during the Minister's absence abroad. Mr Voigt had alleged that Mr Baddeley had victimised him. Ministers asserted that strained relations had existed between Mr Willis and Mr Baddeley for some time prior to the latter's departure for England, in regard to a disagreement concerning Mr Voigt.

A number of Ministers also stated that they were in agreement with Mr McCormack (Premier of Queensland), who is alleged to have stated that Communists desired to get into the Labour movement merely to hasten revolution. The Communists regarded the Labour party as an obsolete organisation.

No Quarrel With Premier

Opponents to the Seale Conference, both in the Ministry and the Parliamentary Labour caucus, assert that they have no quarrel with the Premier; but the dispute they claim was with Mr Willis and Mr Voigt, for the part they had played in what they regard as the "Red" Conference. Another subject of remark was the difficulty experienced in inducing Mr Willis to meet the members of the Ministry in Cabinet, although Mr Willis seemed during the past few days to obtain numerous opportunities of conferring with the Premier alone. The Government, Ministers contend, must get rid of the influence of Messrs Willis, Voigt, and Garden (secretary of the New South Wales Labour Council).

Minister's Denial. Murrumbidgee Conference

Mr Flannery (Minister for Railways) stated yesterday that at the Seale Conference a statement was attributed to Mr Webster to the effect that "at the Murrumbidgee conference, Mr Flannery gave them to understand that he favoured the Easter Conference". This statement, said Mr Flannery, was entirely incorrect. He was not present at the Murrumbidgee Council meeting, as at that time he was confined to his bed, suffering from tonsillitis. He had intended being present, but informed the secretary that owing to his illness he was unable to attend.
Day 8, Saturday, 23 April 1917

Investigating committee.

The Labour Conference convened by Mr Seale was brought to a close on Saturday, the principal subject for discussion again being the pact between the Government and Messrs Goodin and Gillies, MsLA.

Mr Lysaght, MLA, said that he had never seen the document known as the pact, nor had Mr Lang. Mr Loughlin and his colleagues had been expelled, not because of the pact, but because they crossed the floor of the House and voted against the Government. He was not aware that there was a pact in existence. Mr Lysaght appealed to the Conference to give Mr Lang "a fighting chance". The Premier, he said, had had to fight a campaign of abuse and misrepresentation from one end of the country to the other. If the Conference gave him a free hand he would select his own time to go to the country. The electors would then deal with those men who had betrayed the Labour Government.

Mr McPherson (Postal Workers) moved that the question of the existence of the pact should be left in the hands of the investigation committee, with instructions to report to the Executive.

Mr Mills suggested that the committee should be allowed to be present at the caucus meeting on Tuesday, when the pact would be discussed.

The Vice-President of the Executive Council (Mr Willis) said that the Attorney-General (Mr McTiernan) had admitted that the document containing the pact was in existence. He did not wish to withdraw one word he had said, but he did not want to trade on the Premier or the Conference. He would be a cad if he did anything which would precipitate an election. No question of mere comradeship would force him to do anything harmful to Mr Lang or the party.

The motion was carried.

At the instance of Mr C Baines (Liquor Trades) a resolution was carried directing the Government that there should be no extension of hotel trading hours after 6 pm, and that, in the next session, legislation should be introduced repealing the Act giving certain hotels the right to sell liquor with meals after 6 pm.

Mr Padgen (Engineers) moved that the Conference should stand adjourned until next Easter, with a proviso that the Executive should be instructed to convene it at any time, should the occasion warrant it.

The motion was carried.

“Red” Domination. Mr F Conroy’s Statement.

“The Seale Conference has almost bluffed itself out of existence”, said Mr Conroy, president of the ALP on Saturday. “Desperate efforts are now
being made to keep up the numerical strength of the Conference by issuing badges to outsiders who have not been credentialled by any organisation. These outsiders are known as ‘floating’ members of the Communist party.”

“So far”, continued Mr Conroy, “the only contribution of the Conference to political history has been a series of bombastic resolutions, which have completely destroyed the ambitious hopes of the conveners. The resolutions were so obviously of Soviet conception and so repugnant to Australian sentiment that the State Labour Cabinet threw down the gauntlet by repudiating the whole of the decisions. And this great head-hunting gathering, which was going to expel more than half of the Parliamentary party, has been left with hardly enough courage to whistle openly ‘The Red Flag’.

“All that remains”, added Mr Conroy, “is its pretentious provisional Executive, elected under a set of rules that have already been repudiated by both the Parliamentary Labour party and the constitutionally elected ALP Executive. But the personnel of the so-called provisional Executive is interesting because it gives an example of how completely the Labour movement would have been dominated by the Communists under the group system provided for in the Red constitution.

“An examination of the Red ticket run at the last annual Labour Conference shows that a substantial majority of this new provisional Executive is composed of delegates who then frankly classified themselves as members of the Communist group.

“The Red rules I am convinced were specially devised to assist these wolves in sheep’s clothing to secure control of the machinery of the ALP. Those who know their past activities can only regard Mr Lang’s appeal to such a body to exclude Communists as the act of a political ‘Little Red Riding Hood’.

“The ALP Executive”, concluded Mr Conroy, “is not disposed unduly to penalise delegates to the Seale Conference who were misled by the misrepresentation of the conveners. The rapidly diminishing attendances of the original delegates indicate that many earnest Labour men and women quickly realised the trap into which they had been led, and dissociated themselves from the activities as soon as the Communist control became apparent.”
CHAPTER 5
Australian Labor Party,
New South Wales Branch
Special Unity Conference,
23-24 July 1927

Report in The Sydney Morning Herald

By mid-1927 the NSW Labor Party was hopelessly split at all levels. There were virtually two Executives, each regarding the other as bogus. The Easter Conference had been convened by party president, W Seale, but without the support of the majority of the Executive, controlled by F Conroy, who wanted a June Conference. Despite doubts about its validity, the Easter Conference was held, ratifying a change of rules that would make it very difficult for the AWU to dominate Conference or Executive in future years. As well as these so-called 'Red Rules', the Easter Conference had ratified Lang’s installation as leader of the parliamentary party for the rest of the term of the Parliament. This deprived Caucus of its right to elect or depose the leader and resulted immediately in a revolt. Led by rural Labor MPs suspicious of the Communist influence in the Easter Conference, Caucus called upon Lang to repudiate its decisions. That was quickly followed by a coup by the Premier who in May resigned his commission to the Governor in order to choose a completely new team of Ministers who would support him. Caucus met and elected Tom Mutch (Botany) as their new leader. Lang ignored Caucus and continued as leader and Premier to take the party to an election in October. Separate branches, supporting one or the other Executives, sprang up in electorates, where preselections were bitterly contested. Almost every unit in the party was bogus in the eyes of its opponents.

With the party in complete chaos, the June Conference was never held. Instead, AWU supporters and the party officers of the State Executive put their faith in intervention by the Federal Executive, where the AWU was traditionally strong. After considerable negotiation between the Federal Executive and the two NSW factions a special “unity” Conference was convened in July, organised and chaired by the Federal ALP. The Federal Party was unwilling to repudiate a Labor Premier who
was about to face an election, especially in the light of Labor Daily reports of Lang’s popularity in the wider party and electorate. Consequently, the AWU was to be disappointed when this Conference ratified the decisions of the 1927 Easter Conference, (including the ‘Red Rules’ that marginalized them) and confirmed Lang as leader of the Parliamentary Party indefinitely. Delegates at the unity Conference were overwhelmingly supportive of Lang and hostile to the AWU.

The Unity Conference achieved some measure of peace in the party – a ceasefire – that allowed Lang to lead a badly bruised party to defeat in the State election of October 1927. He would return to win the 1930 election. The AWU temporarily abandoned its attempts to dominate the party. However, it left Jack Lang and his allies in control of party machinery. That would mean more party splits in the future.

Special Unity Conference of NSW ALP, 1927
(The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 July 1927

Day 1, Saturday, 23 July 1927


The Unity Conference of the Australian Labour Party held at the Trades Hall during the week-end by a large majority endorsed all the decisions of the Easter Labour Conference, thus approving the “Red” rules, the dictatorship of the Premier (Mr Lang), the expulsions of Messrs Loughlin, Goodin, and Gillies, and, the suspension from office for three years of the Conroy Executive.

The Conference resulted in an overwhelming victory for the supporters of the Premier, the followers of the Conroy Executive being completely routed.

A feature of the proceedings was the hostility displayed towards Mr Mutch, who on the first day was refused a hearing, but was allowed 15 minutes in which to state his views shortly before the Conference concluded.

Significance is attached to an announcement by Mr Mutch that, although he disagreed with the new rules, he would abide loyally by the
decisions of the Conference. The majority of his followers, it is believed, will agree with the stand taken by Mr Mutch.

By endorsing the decisions of the Easter Conference, the Unity Conference has also recognised the constitutionality of Mr W Seale’s provisional Executive, which, with Mr S Bird as secretary, will now function as the official Executive.

**The Conference**

Remarkable interest was taken in the Conference which opened about noon on Saturday in the assembly room - the largest room in the Trades Hall. Throughout all the sessions the hall was crowded to the doors. A number of the delegates were unable to secure seats and were obliged to stand in the passageways. The public portion of the hall was also filled to overflowing each session.

Seated behind the chairman, Mr J Holloway, of Melbourne, on the opening day were the leader of the Federal Parliamentary Labour Party (Mr M Charlton), Mr M Gosling (Chief Secretary), Mr Stuart-Robertson (Minister for Health), Mr AC Willis, MLC, (Vice-President of the Executive Council), Mr M Davidson (Government Whip), Mr W Ratcliffe (Minister for Works), Mr Horsington (Minister for Lands), and Dr H Evatt, Messrs Cann, M Flannery, C Lazzarini, D Murray, H Connell, M Burke, W Scully, W Ely, G Cahill, P Burke, W Dunn, MsLA, and J West and Coleman, MsP.

Mr ER Voigt was appointed minute secretary unopposed, and Mr AE Bennett was elected timekeeper.

Objection was raised to the appointment by the Federal officers of ex-Senator JF Hannan as vice-chairman of the Conference. Mr W Padgen, who described Mr Hannan as “a distinct and bitter partisan”, moved that a vote for the election of a vice-chairman be taken at the Conference.

It was pointed out by the Federal secretary (Mr McNamara) that it was not until a few days ago that Mr JJ Daly, who was originally appointed vice-chairman, intimated that he would be unable to attend, and he (Mr McNamara) after consultation with the Federal Treasurer (Mr McDonald) decided to ask Mr Hannan to accept the position.

After considerable discussion, in which there were many warm interchanges between Mr Hannan and delegates, the chairman ruled that the only people who could change the vice-chairman were the members of the Federal Executive. The matter was then allowed to lapse.

**Credentials’ Committee’s Report**

The report of the credentials’ committee, submitted by Mr D McNamara, was then considered. Mr McNamara said that there were about 400 credentialed delegates to the Conference.
The Real Issues

The suspension of standing orders was obtained in order to consider the following resolution by Mr M Ryan: “That the next business of the Conference shall be the final determination of the issues between the contracting parties to the present Conference, and that no personal or extraneous matters from members of Parliament or any other persons be allowed to take up the time of Conference until the dispute is finalized”.

Mr G Buckland opposed the motion on the ground that in order to achieve unity there should be a full and free discussion of all the matters in dispute. They had to realise that the troubles were real, and that by covering them up at the present time and trying to forget them they would never eradicate them. Now was the time to bring them to light.

Mr A Macpherson: We have come here to carry out the agenda paper, and we will have to do it. Everybody is convinced that there is something radically wrong with the Labour movement in New South Wales, and that the form of government is absolutely rotten. The movement is being brought to the gutter. We should get right down to business and discuss the vital matters at issue. Mr Buckland and his friends will have an opportunity of talking later. We don’t want to be led astray by him. (Applause.) We have before us the report of the rules committee; appointed unanimously by the 1926 Conference, and we ask you to give it that serious discussion which will enable us to propound a system of government that will for all time serve to eradicate the corruption which has brought the Labour movement to its present level. (Applause.)

When Mr Mutch rose to his feet to speak he was greeted with a roar of catcalls and hoots. Some time elapsed before the chairman was able to quell the din. Mr McNamara then appealed to the delegates not to give way to their feelings. He then put a motion that Mr Mutch should be heard. On the declaration of the chairman the motion was defeated on the voices. A show of hands was called for.

About this time the Premier (Mr Lang) arrived, and was given a rousing reception. Many delegates stood on their seats and cheered wildly. Three rousing cheers were given for Mr Lang.

When order was restored tellers proceeded with the counting of the voting on the motion whether Mr Mutch should be heard. Amidst a renewed outburst of applause, it was announced that the motion had been defeated by 247 votes to 111 votes.

The Red Rules

Mr JA Beasley at this stage announced that the agenda committee had met and decided by a majority that the most important matter for consideration by the Conference was item 15, submitted by the Cessnock
Council, as follows: “That this Conference re-affirms the whole of the Easter Conference decisions, and that Conference adjourns till Easter 1928”.

Ex-Senator Gardiner, on a point of order, declared that the resolution was contrary to the resolutions carried at the Canberra conference, but the chairman ruled that the Canberra conference had no relation to what they might do that day. The Conference agreed to delete the words of the latter part of the item submitted by the Cessnock Council, providing for an adjournment of the Conference and Mr Brown (Cessnock), explained that the resolutions passed at the Easter Conference were perfectly in order and in accord with everything that was done. If the resolution was carried, he said, it did not mean that the resolutions agreed to by the Easter Conference would be passed over, but they would come before the Conference one by one to be debated.

The following amendment was submitted by Mr Tannock (Ironworkers’ Union): “That Conference adopt the whole of the decisions of the Easter Conference, with the exception of such portions of the rules adopted thereat, which interfere with the right of affiliated unions to be represented at Conferences by any duly-elected member”.

The chairman in reply to Mr Mills (Waterside Workers) said he thought the motion did not include the confirmation of the appointment of the officers elected at the Easter Conference.

Mr Mills then gave notice of a further amendment to add to the resolution the words: “That the officers appointed by the Easter Conference and the provisional Executive and the rules adopted by the Easter Conference be endorsed by this Conference”.

Ex-Senator Gardiner said that if they were to suspend the members of the Executive declared to be constitutional by the Federal Conference they would flout the Federal officials. Amidst uproar Mr Gardiner said that if they conferred dictatorial powers on Mr Lang they would create discord. To endorse the decisions of the Easter Conference would open the door to the Communists.

The first amendment was defeated by 252 votes to 80.

The further amendment was then carried and made a part of the motion, which was adopted amidst applause.

Mr Lang’s Speech

Mr Lang, who was accorded a rousing reception, said that in recent months the movement had been threatened by one of those tempestuous storms which had been inseparable from their existence as the people’s political party, but never before had a difference of opinion between the officials of the party so nearly wrecked the movement.

“In your deliberations let there be no vindictiveness. Every man and woman in Conference should come fully determined to allow only one
thing to dominate their minds, and their guiding motive should be –
‘What should I do that will be best for the Labour Party? The people who
form the great army of the Labour movement have no doubts as to where
they stand. They want to preserve the widows’ pensions, the 44-hour
week, the family endowment, the workers’ compensation, the reform in
the coal mining industry, the only Arbitration Act that has ever brought
peace to industry. Our members want the scheme of relief to soldier and
civilian settlers completed; they want the big estates that are land-locking
our inland towns broken up, and the many other things that we have
accomplished and those we intend to do. They want all these things, and
they know that the only way to get them is by keeping the Labour
Government in power. We will win the next elections handsomely, but
we will only do it because the rank and file of our movement is
determined to work as they have not done before for the election of our
party.” (Cheers.)

“When the Conroy section said the rules were ‘Red’, said Mr Lang, “I
invited Mr McTiernan and Mr Lazzarini to go through the rules word by
word and show me where they were ‘Red’. They were unable to do so.
The gentlemen, however, who said they were ‘Red’ tonight voted to
make them ‘Red’.” (Uproar.)

The Conference at 10.10 pm adjourned until 10 am on Sunday.

Day 2, Sunday, 24 July 1927

Yesterday’s Sessions. Officers Endorsed.

When the Conference resumed yesterday morning the question of the
handing over of the books and accounts of the old Executive to the provi-
sional Executive, now endorsed, was considered, and it was almost
unanimously agreed to instruct the officers of the old Executive to make
these available within a week at the Trades Hall, where it was decided
the headquarters of the new Executive should be established.

A recommendation submitted by Mr Pippin on behalf of the
Murrumbidgee Council providing for the conduct of all selection ballots
to be left to electorate councils was the subject of warm discussion. The
object of the recommendation, he explained, was to allow the rank and
file of the movement to have the right to select whom they considered
could best represent them.

Mr Macpherson secured a modification of this. He said that all
nominations already received by the Federal secretary should be
submitted to the Executive for the purpose of referring them to the
decisions of the rank and file at selection ballots duly constituted in
accordance with the rules, such ballots to be conducted on August 6.
Adding a proviso emanating from Mr AC Willis (Vice-President of the
Executive Council) that “Where it is found impracticable to carry them out on these lines selection ballots be conducted by the Executive at the request of the local leagues”, he put his suggestion in the form of a motion, and it was carried.

The chairman ruled that any member of a provisional Executive who desired to resign or who had resigned was eligible to stand for selection. This caused considerable disapproval, but was sustained after Mr J Beasley had been voted to the chair for the purpose of testing it.

**Rival Unions**

Mr WJ Mills (Waterside Workers’ Federation) at this stage was granted permission to bring before Conference a matter which, he said, affected the interests of all true unionists. He referred to the presence of “scab” unions, mentioning particularly the Casual and Permanent Wharf-Labourers’ Union, registered by the Deputy Registrar of the Arbitration Court last week. He moved: “That the Conference requests the New South Wales State Government to inquire immediately into the bona fides of ‘scab’ unions, particularly the Casual and Permanent Wharf-Labourers’ Union, with a view to having them deregistered; and, further, requests the Federal Parliamentary Labour Party to raise the question about the Deputy Registrar of the Federal Arbitration Court (Mr Wood) granting Federal registration to these bogus unions.”

Mr Barker (ARU), in seconding the motion, said the time had come for a cleanup of the “scab” unions.

Mr DJ Davies (Miners’ Federation) declared that a similar organisation, called the “Colliery and Mechanics Union” existed at Newcastle, and was trying to precipitate a general strike in the coal-mining industry.

The motion was carried.

**Readmissions to Party**

At the instance of the general secretary (Mr S Bird); a motion was carried, granting continuity of membership to Messrs A Rae, F Roels, and J Cullinan.

A heated discussion took place on the question whether Mr A Griffith, who was expelled for his attitude towards the conscription issue, should be readmitted. The motion for his readmission was rejected on a show of hands by 197 votes to 124. A motion was then carried for the readmission of Mr J Greville, who was expelled because he was a 1919 “breakaway”.
**Legal Expenses**

Mr J Hickey, who was given permission to address the Conference, pointed out that there were two legal suits pending as a result of the faction fight. The Conference decided that all legal proceedings between the parties to the dispute should be discontinued, and that the Conference should recognise no further expenses except those approved by the Executive.

It was decided that the provisional Executive should be empowered to deal with the question of giving effect to the decisions of the Conference in electorates where there were rival leagues.

On the motion of Mr J Webster, it was decided to repudiate recent statements by Mr Alam, MLC, regarding the control of the Labour Party by the “Reds”, and to direct the Executive to inquire into the circumstances of Mr Alam’s appointment to the Upper House.

**Mr Charlton’s Address**

Mr M Charlton, leader of the Federal Parliamentary Labour Party, moved a vote of thanks to the chairman and the Federal officials. The large attendance of delegates, he said, indicated that the rank and file were anxious for unity.

A voice: What about Warringah?

“Let me say, as Federal Leader”, Mr Charlton replied, “that when Mr Conway was declared to be the official candidate, I had to support him. Look up your rules and tell me whether I was right. No man or woman can say that I spoke one word detrimental to either Labour candidate in Warringah.”

A delegate: What about the referendum?

Mr Charlton: “I cannot discuss that in ten minutes. Let me say that I believe in years to come you will realize that uniform working conditions in the Commonwealth are desirable. It ill becomes anyone of you to stigmatise me when I have given all the years of my life to advance Labour interests.”

**Mr Mutch’s Speech**

The feature of the concluding session was an address by Mr Mutch, MLA, who in the face of much interruption, made a bitter attack on his opponents.

“I feel like a litigant who comes into the Court and is asked to give evidence after the verdict has been given”, said Mr Mutch. “When I endeavoured to speak before, it was not with the intention of discussing the agenda, but to ask you to hear some representatives of the 24
members of the Parliamentary Labour Party. You have denied them the right to be heard.”

A Voice: Your actions are enough.
Mr Mutch: The decision was reached before the Conference assembled. That must be perfectly patent.

A Delegate: That is wrong.

Mr Mutch: It is not the first time I had to speak with a minority,
A Voice: It will be the last. (Cheers and hoots.)

Mr Mutch then recapitulated his record as a member of the party, but when he suggested that Mr Lang had unfairly deprived him of his position, and accused him of being a “scab”, there was a rowdy scene, which lasted some minutes. Some delegates cheered while others hooted, and Mr Mutch was unable to make himself heard.

It was not till Mr AC Willis had appealed to the Conference to give Mr Mutch a hearing that he was able to continue his speech.

After referring to the recent dispute between the Premier and himself over the alleged maladministration of the Child Welfare Department, Mr Mutch heatedly shouted “I have been in the Labour movement 25 years, and I am too old to ‘rat’. The movement will find me fighting for the rest of my days. No one will hold me down. I will have my say some way or other. This Conference has given its decision. I will accept the decision of the Conference. (Cheers.) There is much work to be done. You do not want to drive anybody out. You have adopted the rules. There are hardly twenty men in the movement who have seen these rules. (Laughter.) We will work under them, but time will tell that they are not big enough for the Labour Party, and they will have to be altered. I will continue to give the best of my energy and ability. One thing I will not do – I will not try to rob another man of his place and position.” (Uproar.)

Mr Willis, in seconding the vote of thanks, said he was pleased to hear Mr Mutch say that he intended to adhere loyally to the decisions of the Easter Conference. “Some of Mr Mutch’s remarks were quite uncalled for”, said Mr Willis. “Naturally Mr Mutch feels sore. I sympathise with him”. Mr Willis concluded by flourishing his hands and heatedly shouting amidst applause: “We were in the minority in 1919. It has been an eight or nine years’ fight, but we have won.”

The vote of thanks was carried by acclamation, and it was then decided to adjourn the Conference until 10 am on Good Friday, 1928. The Conference concluded with cheers for the chairman (Mr Holloway) and the Premier (Mr Lang).

**AWU Attitude**

Supporters of the AWU stated last night that a report by the Conroy Executive at the unity Conference had been handed to the chairman (Mr Holloway) and to the Federal Secretary, but had been withheld from the
Conference. The report set out objections by the Conroy Executive to the adoption of the resolution endorsing the decisions of the Easter Conference on the ground that it was contrary to the basis of the Conference as agreed upon by the two opposing sections at the request of the Federal Executive. The report stated that in the circumstances the Conroy Executive would reserve to itself the right to consider what action it should take.

It was stated last night that a meeting of the Conroy Executive would be held today, when it would probably be decided whether it should disband, in view of the decisions of the Conference.

A move may be made to repudiate the decisions of the unity Conference and appeal to the Federal Executive for recognition as the constitutional Executive.
CHAPTER 6
Australian Labor Party,
New South Wales Branch
Annual Conference, 6 – 14 April 1928

Report in The Sydney Morning Herald

This was the first Conference convened under the new Rules approved by the 1927 Easter Conference and the subsequent Unity Conference of July 1927. The Executive Report contains a useful and detailed account from the Returning Officer of how the ballots were conducted for election of delegates to Conference and the election of members of the Executive. Any attempt to understand the political implications of the so-called Red Rules should start with that account.

The Red Rules had been designed largely to marginalise the AWU, easily the largest trade union in NSW, within the structures of the NSW ALP. Accordingly, the AWU effectively withdrew from the party and was not present at the 1928 Conference. Both the Executive Report and subsequent debate mention unsuccessful attempts to persuade the AWU to participate (and to continue contributing funds), although one could be sceptical about how eager Lang’s allies were to welcome back the AWU at this stage. One of the issues was a sum of £805 contributed to the State Executive in 1926, along with a smaller amount from another union sympathetic to the AWU. The AWU claimed that this was affiliation fees paid in advance, which they wanted back, while the new Executive was convinced that the money had been contributed entirely as fighting funds for the Conroy Executive against the Seale Executive.

All institutions of the party were affected by the defection of the AWU from the party, and the associated split. The report of the WCOC complained that the previous Secretary of the Women’s Committee, Mrs H Grenville, had refused to pass on the books and accounts to the new Secretary. Another casualty was the redoubtable Mrs Kate Dwyer, who had long been sympathetic to the AWU and was no longer welcome in the WCOC, although she continued as a member of her local branch in Annandale.

The issue of Communism was high on the agenda of the Conference. There were certainly a number of members, or at least fellow travellers of that party, present at Conference. Although Conference re-affirmed its
own policy that Communists could not be members of the ALP while continuing to be members of the CP, there was a strong resistance to agreeing to Federal Executive directions that attempted to push that ban into the area of policy identification between the two parties. Effectively, the 1928 NSW Conference declared autonomy from the Federal ALP on matters of policy affecting the State.

In the dispute with the Federal Executive (where the AWU influence was strong) emphatic use was made in debate over the role of the ‘rank and file’ of the party. This term had some currency in the party before this, (it figured strongly in the 1919 Conference as part of the rhetoric of the militant OBU faction) but 1928 marks the first time that the Lang forces made explicit use of the concept to defend their positions. It would become an important part of factional rhetoric from that time on.

Executive Report of NSW ALP for 1927-28

(Mitchell Library Manuscripts, 329.3106/3)

Australian Labor Party, State of New South Wales, Executive Report

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The 37th Annual Report and Balance Sheet of the Australian Labor Party, State of New South Wales, is hereby submitted for your consideration.

Since the presentation of the last report, many new Branches have been established throughout the State. This is a clear index of the popularity and virility of the Movement. The Organising Secretary, Mr AJ Macpherson, intends making a visit of inspection to every Branch in the State with a view to consolidating and extending present activities. The Executive have provided him with a motor car to carry out such propaganda.

While our organisation has never previously achieved such a high degree of efficiency, there is still room for improvement, and much can he accomplished in this direction during the ensuing year.

It is pleasing to report that 105 Unions are now affiliated, while our branches number in the vicinity of 500.
Provisional Executive and Meetings

President: WH Seale.
Vice-presidents: WM Webster and AJ Macpherson.
General Secretary: S Bird.
Organising Secretary: CL Thompson.

Executive Committee

AB Berry
J Bollard
WA Clemenston
M Conaghan
Mrs M Dunn
Mrs M Houghton
R James
WD Jones
RA King
Miss L Lee
T Leslie
FE Miller
TF Morton
B Mullins
H Potter
WT Padgen
MP Ryan
A Sherwin
Mrs Smith
Mrs Stapleton
JH Stone
WT Swadling
EW Turner
Mrs E Webster

At the Easter Conference, 1927, the above were elected as a Provisional Executive, and their election was reaffirmed at a Unity Conference held on 23rd July and following days, under the supervision of the Federal Executive Officers and Chairmanship of E Holloway, President Trades and Labor Council, Melbourne.

The Executive held 36 meetings from 25/7/27 till 31/1/28. During that period resignations were received from Messrs A Sherwin, FE Miller, and EW Turner. The vacancies were filled by the following: Mesdames Smith and Stapleton; Messrs Conaghan, Gill, Potter, Lockard, and Pickford.

Resignation of President

After rendering the Movement magnificent services in the capacity of President, a severe breakdown in health necessitated Mr WH Seale tendering his resignation from that position.

Mr AJ Macpherson, who had been acting President during Mr Seale’s illness, was now elected President of the Movement.

Organiser Resigns

The resignation of Mr CL Thompson as Organising Secretary was received. The Executive then appointed Mr AJ Macpherson to fill the vacancy.
WM Webster, President

On Mr AJ Macpherson resigning the Presidency to take up the Organising Secretaryship, Mr W Webster, Senior Vice-president, was elected President, and occupies that position in the Movement at present.

In Memoriam

The Labor Movement in this State sustained a great loss in the death of Mr W Carey, MLC. Mr Carey carried out his duties as State Secretary (which position he held for many years) in a very satisfactory manner, and Labor's loss of such a stalwart is deplored by all. His record of achievement will long be remembered.

New Rules

As from July when Unity Conference determined to adopt the New Rules, the Movement has been carried out in accordance with principles laid down therein.

Naturally a Movement of such magnitude, acting under a set of Rules for many years, would take some little time to become accustomed to the many changes demanded under the new system. As to be expected, it has been found necessary to make some alterations, not of vital principles, but for administrative purposes, and profiting by the experience gained, alterations will be suggested for Annual Conference approval. We feel sure, that when the necessary alterations are made and the members become thoroughly conversant with their operation, great good will accrue to the Movement and much of the prejudice connected with them will be removed.

The Executive were beset with troubles arising out of the preselection ballots as many of the branches were in a state of chaos owing to the faction fight which had, in many instances, been waged with considerable bitterness, and owing to the limited time at our disposal there was little chance of getting matters straightened out and in many centres the candidates themselves and officials of branches were not rendering assistance but continued their disruptive tactics and retarded the proper functioning of the new system, as provided in the Rules.

Unity Conference

What is now known as the Unity Conference opened at the Trades Hall on Saturday, July 23, and concluded on July 21 at 5.10 pm.

Mr EJ Holloway presided – the chairman agreed upon by both parties, the attendance being greater than any previous Conference held.

The decisions of Conference were far-reaching and arrived at by overwhelming majorities, the New Rules and Easter Conference decisions being endorsed.
Since Conference an endeavor has been made to adjust the financial matters pertaining to the Movement under the jurisdiction of the previous officers. For some considerable time your Executive were not able to get any of the books and necessary papers to enable an audit being made. After delay books and vouchers were produced but insufficient to allow of a full determination of our financial obligations being arrived at by our accountants which regrettably leaves many accounts rendered and claimed to be due, in a most unsatisfactory state.

Some Unions claimed to have advanced money to the previous Executive in order to allow them to carry on and are now asking to be given credit for such sums, the AWU being the largest claimant.

If we accept the evidence of moneys having been paid, the difficulty of determining, in the absence of vouchers showing how such moneys were expended, and whether they were legitimately expended in the Movement’s interest, is such that your Executive feel that they should seek the will of Conference upon.

An endeavor was made to adjust the matter relating to the claim of the AWU, a conference taking place between representatives of your Executive and delegates representing the Union, when matters reached a stage at which your representatives could not finalise matters till such time as an audit had been made, which we regret to report has not been made possible.

Up to the present time the Central Branch of the AWU has not had representation on the Executive, their nominee not being eligible to take his seat, being a person debarred by decision of the Unity Conference. The Railway Construction Branch of the AWU had representation up till the end of 1927 but has not sent a representative for 1928.

**State Elections**

The result of the State elections unfortunately placed Labor in the Opposition benches, having only a party of 40 members out of a House of 90, and whilst by far the strongest individual Party were unable to control owing to the other parties combining forces against them.

We regret to report that the bitterness caused by the split in the Party, “notwithstanding the success of the ‘Unity Conference’ and the professed allegiance to its decisions”, was carried to the polling booth, and two prominent members of the Party who had strongly professed allegiance to Conference decisions and signed the Party’s pledge, failing to receive selection, saw fit to contest Balmain and Botany in opposition to the selected and endorsed candidates, with the result that the Nationalists, seizing the opportunity of defeating the accredited Labor candidates, threw the weight of their organisation behind the renegades and with a sprinkling of disgruntled Labor voters succeeded in having them returned.
We regret the lack of coordination by the AWU officials and the uncompromising attitude of their official organ which, if not desirous of assisting, might have refrained from supplying propaganda for the enemy. The one bright feature being the fact that in very many instances it was made strikingly apparent that the members of that Union were not in accord with the tactics adopted, and contributed liberally to the fighting fund of the Movement; donations being received from the shearing sheds, railway jobs and road jobs throughout the State. Never in the history of the Movement had such a response been forthcoming as that which marked the appeal for funds, and whilst not particularising any one organisation or body we feel in duty bound to mention the Tramway men and employees in the Railway workshops, and regret that the sacrifices made by loyal members of the Movement was not rewarded by a return to power of a Government sympathetic to the aims and aspirations of the Movement.

Abolition of City Council
Immediately the Bavin Government became installed, pressure was brought to bear to take control of the City Council as Labor was well installed and under the extended franchise was sure to continue.

An Act was forced through Parliament to place the Municipal Government of the city under a Commission, thus robbing the citizens of their right to be governed as they so desire, proving conclusively that, it is the intention of Tory Governments to so curtail the rights of the community as to make it impossible for the voice of the people being heard.

Executive Elections
The first election of Executive under the new Rules has been held and resulted in a fully representative Executive being chosen, and to say that the first election under a new code of Rules, of which the members had not become fully conversant with, would be perfect, would be expecting almost the impossible, but the result goes to show that when the members become fully aware of the requirements under them, and some anomalies adjusted, it will be proved that as compared with the old system it is a great improvement and can be made fully representative. The result goes to show that the women representation has nothing to fear as the lady candidates topped the poll.

Country Provincial Conference
The first Country Provincial Conference ever held in the history of the Movement took place at the historic centre of Young, on January 26, and finished its deliberations at 5 pm on the 28th, having achieved a record of work.
As could be reasonably expected that coming so soon on the top of the strenuous election campaign, and taking into consideration the long distance many delegates had to travel, with their Branch funds depleted and unemployment rife, the attendance suffered, but as a 75 per cent attendance was recorded it is most gratifying and augurs well for the future. The conference created marked public attention and will result in giving the Movement a much-needed filip in that district, and it can be confidently predicted that the local branch will considerably add to its membership and will, at the next appeal, certainly return a pledged Labor candidate.

Metropolitan Provincial Conference

The Metropolitan Provincial Conference opened at the Trades Hall, Sydney, on February 11, and continued until February 15. It was attended by 193 delegates, presided over by the President, Mr WM Webster.

Many important resolutions were dealt with and recommended to Annual Conference for final decision.

In concluding this Report it is well for members to bear in mind that never has the Movement been through such a critical period and it is pleasing to know that it has emerged from the ordeal in a better state to render service as required to make it an effective means of giving effect to the aims and aspirations of its members, and if the opportunity which now presents itself is fully availed of, it can be made a wonderful power for good, as whilst allowing full and ample scope for differences of opinions it should not now be possible of being used for ulterior motives.

The wonderful amount of good work done by the Labor Daily should not be overlooked, as without its aid we would have not been able to achieve success. Its consistent advocacy of our cause was such as enabled your Executive to combat the misrepresentation of our enemies and made possible the collecting of funds to fight our cause.

I desire to thank all loyal officers of branches and secretaries of affiliated Unions for the whole-hearted support rendered during a most trying period.

The Office Staff are deserving of the best thanks of the Movement for the untiring energy and zeal in furthering its interests.

S Bird, General Secretary
W Webster, President.

State Parliamentary Party’s Report

The concluding term of the Labor Parliament was the most important in a Parliament which was remarkable for the placing of so many vital Labor principles upon the Statute Book of the State. The term under review
is regarded as so important as during that time the principle of Family Endowment was woven into the laws of the State.

For many years Family Endowment has been a plank in Labor’s Platform, but New South Wales is the first Labor Government that has given practical expression to the principle. The Act, as it finally emerged from Parliament is not as beneficial as the Government intended it to be, or as the Movement hoped it would be. The Upper House was responsible for the most important imperfections, chiefly for the clause which deprived the children of the skilled worker of the benefits of the Act. Although its original Bill was considerably altered, the Government felt that it was justified in making a few sacrifices if only it could get the principle acknowledged. This it did, and with Family Endowment now the law of the land, it will be much easier for future Labor Governments to improve it and make it the beneficial Act it was intended to be.

Most of the session was devoted to legislation benefitting the people engaged in rural industries. Following upon the adoption of the principle of collective marketing by the Bathurst Conference, many legislative Acts were necessary to give the farmer the machinery to give practical expression to that resolution. The full benefits of that legislation were not apparent to some of the farmers immediately, but each month a fuller realisation of what the legislation does is winning many country friends for Labor.

The Upper House was as destructive as it generally is when Labor is in office. Among the measures which did not come back from the Upper House was a Bill to break up the big estates which are land-locking our country towns and depriving our young farmers of land; also the Milk Bill which was intended to give expression to the decisions of the Bathurst Conference on the milk industry.

Unfortunately the life of the Labor Government was prematurely ended owing to the defection of three members who, elected at the 1925 elections as pledged Labor men, left the Party and deprived the Government of its majority.

The trouble which occurred within the Party during the 1926 session was accentuated during 1927. Labor has never found it practicable to govern on sound Labor lines unless it has enough pledged members to give it an absolute majority in Parliament. Being without a majority, the Premier handed his resignation to the Government and asked for a dissolution. This was granted.

The general election occurred in October, and the Party was defeated. Although we lost the right of Government the Labor vote was improved by almost 100,000 votes, which, considering the serious handicaps and the bitter opposition of erstwhile Labor members which we had to fight, was a wonderful result. The Party returned with 40 members, and is the largest Opposition Party that has been in Parliament.

W. Davies, Hon. Sec.
Report of Federal Parliamentary Labor Party

On behalf of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party, we have the honor to submit a brief review of our activities during the first session of the new Parliament.

The first measure vitally affecting the workers was the Crimes Bill, introduced by the Attorney-General on January 28, 1926. The main purpose was to replace those deportation clauses of the Immigration Act which the High Court had declared invalid. Clauses in the Crimes Bill give the Government power to imprison for one year, and afterwards to deport, anyone not born in Australia who takes part in a lock-out or strike. Those born in this country are liable, on conviction, to imprisonment for 12 months.

The Labor Party fought this measure for several days, vigorously protesting against the inclusion of breaches of industrial laws in a 'Crimes' Bill.

The Leader, Mr Charlton, placed on record authentic figures, proving that, notwithstanding the repeated statements to the contrary, less working days were lost in Australia owing to industrial troubles than were lost in most of the other countries. He moved that the obnoxious clauses referring to industrial disputes be eliminated, as such clauses associated with the Crimes Act, were an unwarranted affront to the great bodies of organised Labor.

Despite strenuous efforts, however, the amendment was defeated, and the Government majority passed the Bill into law.

On the Tariff Schedule, the Labor Party was solid for the protection of Australian industries against foreign imports. Country Party members bitterly fought every proposal designed to assist our manufacturing industries. On many occasions, but for the Labor Party, the Freetrade section of the Ministerialists would have succeeded in reducing many items, thereby causing industrial stagnation and increasing unemployment.

The tariff amendment, though beneficial, did not go far enough. Several industries must receive further protection if Australia is to make substantial progress.

Another measure introduced by the Government was the appointment of a board of four to deal with Development and Migration. This matter received the earnest consideration of the Party. We pointed out that the time had arrived when the question of immigration should be thoroughly investigated before expending millions of pounds in bringing immigrants to Australia without any definite scheme for their absorption.

In the course of the debate it was pointed out that, whilst immigration had been proceeding, many farmers’ sons in this country, with considerable experience, were unable to secure land. In addition, there
was still a large number of our own unemployed who were unable to obtain work.

The Party opposed the Bill, believing that the proposed Commission had little hope of success, hampered as it was by the fact that the Commonwealth Government had already entered into an immigration scheme with the Imperial authorities involving the expenditure of £34,000,000.

The outstanding legislation for the session was the proposal to amend the Constitution. This announcement came as a complete surprise, and the time allowed for consideration was totally inadequate. The Labor Party, believing in extended Federal powers, urged the Government to postpone action until the suggested Constitutional session was held, so that the electors might thoroughly understand the questions to be submitted for their approval.

The Government, however, determined to go on, and two Bills were introduced for the purpose of deciding two questions by Referenda.

As the first Bill, “Industry and Commerce”, contained proposals that had been placed before the people by the Fisher Government in 1911 and 1913, and as they were also steps forward towards the “unlimited powers” provided for in the Labor Platform, our Party agreed, with only two dissentients, to support the first Bill.

Conferences were held with the Federal Executive, at which Mr Charlton was requested to interview the Prime Minister with a view to having the Labor Party’s previous proposals for increased powers over corporations, trusts and combines included in the Bill. This request was approved by the Parliamentary Party, and Messrs Charlton and Brennan consulted with Mr Bruce and Mr Latham, with the result that the “Corporation” powers, identical with those submitted in 1913, were included.

Owing to instructions from State Executives, however, the Federal Executive delegates were equally divided, but, ultimately, by a majority, they decided to declare the Referendum “an open question”.

The Referendum campaign on this question affected, for the time at any rate, the solidarity of Labor. We, therefore, suggest that Conference should make it clear what attitude is to be taken by all members of the Movement on any future proposals that may be brought forward to amend the Constitution.

During the session important amendments were made to the Arbitration Act, and three judges appointed, clothed with powers to interpret and enforce their awards. The most notable decision of the newly-constituted court was the 44-hours decision. We compliment the Union representatives on the splendid case they presented, and congratulate them on the result.

The situation in China has on several occasions appeared serious, and, in order to make the views of Labor known, the following resolution was unanimously carried at our Party meeting on March 3. 1927: “That
this Party, believing in the principles of self-determination, and realising that the present turmoil in China is due to matters concerning their own domestic affairs, is against any intervention by outside powers. We believe that all nations should be entrusted to solve their own internal problems, and will strenuously oppose any action which may be taken to commit Australia to a foreign war.”

Parliament was closed from August 13, 1926, to March 2, 1927. Repeated protests had been made by the Labor Party against the prolonged recesses.

The withdrawal of the Per Capita payments from the States was unanimously opposed by Labor, and also by many Government supporters. Apart from the injustice to State Governments, this scheme would relieve companies and individuals with Interstate interests from land and income taxation. The revenue lost would be made up by increased taxes on smaller taxpayers.

The remission of Land Tax and the exemption of bonus shares from Income Tax were again stoutly opposed by our Party.

Every measure brought down received careful consideration, and we kept always in mind the Platform to which we are pledged and the welfare of the people as a whole.

We wish your Conference every success, and trust that the result of your deliberations will strengthen and advance the Labor Movement throughout Australia.

Yours fraternally,
Arthur Blakeley, Sec.
M Charlton, Leader

Report of Women’s Central Organising Committee

Fellow Delegates of the Women’s Central Organising Committee:

It has been the practice in the past for the Secretary to give a report of the activities of the Committee for the past year, but owing to a change of officers due to the dissension and chaotic state of the Party my term of office as Secretary only commenced on the 16th June, and as the books of the Committee were not restored by the previous officers my Report can only cover from that period.

During that time we have had deputations —
To the Minister for Health concerning the establishing of Maternity Hospitals throughout the State;
To the Minister for Local Government — the protection of dangerous waterholes owing to the increasing deaths of children at those places;
To the Minister for Education re the setting apart of 2nd September annually for the appreciation of Australian authors and literature;

To Mr AC Willis re more working class educational matter in the Women’s Page of the Labor Daily.

These matters were endorsed and promised every assistance by the Ministers.

Assisting in the agitation for the release of Sarah Boyd and Mrs Mort from Long Bay Gaol, which was successful in the case of the former.

Special nights were devoted to hearing addresses from the following:-

Father Lockington on “Women in National Life”; Mrs Spears on “Home Occupations and Domestic Training”; Miss Luty on “Conditions of Domestic Workers in Other Countries”, all of which were educative and informative.

A stirring appeal from the Blind Workers by Mr Robinson, asking the women’s assistance in helping them securing at least a basic wage, was met by an unanimous pledge to do everything in our power by propaganda and petition.

A women’s rally held in the Domain protesting against the basic wage was very successful.

Three women candidates were the selected candidates at the last election and contested their various electorates under great disabilities.

Our whole-hearted support was given to the Lang Government and the Seale Executive.

After agitation and two deputations to the Lord Mayor we regret our failure to secure time off for lunch, away from the environment of their occupation, for female attendants employed by the City Council, and the Women’s Committee consider it a gross reflection on such a powerful Union as the Municipal Employees in permitting same to continue.

The following subjects have been thoroughly discussed - and will be further reviewed at the forthcoming Interstate Women’s Convention to be held shortly.


Donations from the following towards the expenses of Interstate Convention were greatly appreciated, viz. Executive of the ALP, £15; Tramway Union, £10; Labor Choir, £9/2/1; Caterers’ Waitresses’ Union, £1/1/-; Mrs Green, £1/1/-.

A closer collaboration with the Executive, with mutual advice and help, is earnestly desired by the Women’s Committee, which will tend to that unity which is essential to the securing of the Treasury Benches –
both Federal and State – and to the Women’s Central Organising Committee. The vindictiveness of the Bavin Government will only act as a further stimulus to that objective.

Lena Lynch, Hon. Secretary.

**Organising Secretary’s Report**

I desire to submit the following report on my activities since my appointment as Organising Secretary, for the consideration of Annual General Conference.

I was appointed to the position of Organising Secretary in December, 1927.

When I took up duty, I felt that my first task was one of consolidating the Party in the electorates that had been the storm centres of the ‘Easter Conference’ struggle of 1927.

Immediately following the Unity Conference, the Provisional Executive instructed ‘rival’ branches to merge together, and the officers of the branches endorsed by the Provisional Executive should remain officers of the branches until the election of officers for 1928.

Consequently I visited Canowindra, Cowra, Young, Marengo, Junee, Harden, Gundagai. At Canowindra, Cowra, Young and Marengo the fortunes of our Party have been worsened by the machination of P Loughlin, ex-MLA, but since his conversion to the Nationalist Party – whose friends lavished upon him his reward for betraying the Labor Movement – the wool has been removed from their eyes. At Young and Marengo preparations are being made to render the greatest assistance possible to the selected candidate for the Hume Federal Electorate.

At Harden, Gundagai and Cootamundra, there exist strong branches of the Party. Junee was visited by me on two occasions. At my first visit members of both factions agreed that I should visit the branch at its first meeting in the New Year. Mr Crawford, the secretary, undertaking to call for nominations for all officers of the branch.

However, in compliance with the expressed wish of members of both factions I again visited Junee on 7th January. Believing that both factions were desirous of making common cause, I did not think it necessary to ask the Executive for special instructions.

Mr Kenny, President of the Branch, presided over a large open-air meeting, which was addressed by Ken Hoad, MLA, and myself. After the meeting had closed we adjourned to the branch meeting place for the purpose of issuing tickets to all bona-fide members of the Junee branch, and the election of officers. I soon found that the cleavage was as profound as ever and at the conclusion of the meeting a resolution was carried expressing the wish for special intervention by the Executive.

Subsequently I reported the proceedings to the Executive – suggesting that the election of officers of the Junee branch should be conducted
on the lists used at the last preselection ballot and that an Executive officer should be sent to Junee to supervise the election of officers.

My report was adopted by the Executive. The President, Mr WM Webster, was elected by the Executive to proceed to Junee to give effect to the decision of the Executive.

From Junee I proceeded to Blayney and Bathurst. At Bathurst the factions merged together and the election of officers was carried out without a hitch.

On January 14 I went into the Wollondilly Electorate in anticipation of the resignation of Sir George Fuller, accordingly I distributed 1500 enrolment forms at various centres of the Electorate – the work of enrolment being left to the voluntary service of supporters was not carried out effectively.

In Wollondilly the Party organisation was very weak, at the occasion of the by-election there existed only one branch; today, however, there are now nine branches. This was the direct outcome of my two visits to Wollondilly, the last occasion was during the by-election.

Since taking up the duties of Organising Secretary the following new branches have been endorsed: Marulan (Wollondilly), Galong (Cootamundra).

There are several applications for endorsement from new branches, but these have been withheld pending the receipt of reports from Electorate Councils as to the boundaries of branches constituting Electoral Councils.

The following Branches have been resuscitated in accordance with the rules: Bargo, Picton, Moss Vale.

The transcending importance of the next Federal Election is beyond question. In this connection I reported to the Executive at the first meeting of the year the necessity for early preparations and the holding of the preselection ballots for the entire 28 Federal Constituencies — including the Senate. I pointed out that early preselection would tend to eliminate the bitterness usually associated with preselections and that the most effective way to organise the electorates was around the selected candidates.

The Executive endorsed my report and instructed all Electorate Councils to have preselection ballots finalised by April 14, 1928. In this connection the entire machine has responded and every Federal Electorate Council will have made its selection of a candidate to contest the forthcoming Federal Elections.

On February 21 I submitted a report indicating the procedure to be adopted in the calling together of the Trade Union Groups and Electoral Groups to elect delegates to Annual General Conference. The report contained the dates and meeting places of the various groups.

Labor at last is recognising the significance of Federal politics and their relation to the workers of Australia. The Nationalist Party firmly
behind the Central Government is a growing menace to the people of Australia. The army of unemployed is growing apace. Immigrants of extremely diverse nationalities are being dumped on our shore regardless of proper provision being made to assimilate them in industry.

The Bruce-Page anti-Trade Union Bill strikes at the foundation of the Labor Movement. Recognising the extraordinary difficulties that at present tend to obscure our future, the lack of finance – of which the Nationalist Party have an abundance – tends to make the task of organisation a difficult one.

A meeting of representatives of all ALP Branches and Trade Unions is being called to consider the question of raising a substantial fighting fund. This meeting will be called at an early date, immediately following the formation of a Federal Campaign Election Committee.

Labor, however, looks calmly to the future. We possess the will and determination that has assisted us in the darkest hours of travail, that made possible the birth of the Australian Labor Party.

Yours fraternally,
AJ Macpherson,
Organising Secretary.

The Taking Over of the ALP Offices

Immediately following the Unity Conference, Messrs Graves, Bird and Macpherson met in Conference Messrs Buckland, Harrop, Tatham and Conroy. Mr Holloway, the Chairman of the Unity Conference, and Messrs McDonald and McNamara of the Federal Executive were also present.

The following matters were placed before the delegates representing both the Seale and Conroy factions.

The raising of the suspensions upon 17 members of the late Conroy Executive. The officers of the Federal Executive declared this decision of the Unity Conference ultra vires.

The payment of legal cost in connection with the cases then in Court.

The recognition of the £805 paid by the AWU (Central and Railway Industry Branches) and Water and Sewerage Board Emps.

Considerable discussion ensued when these matters were submitted by Mr McNamara. The representatives of the Executive submitted that the question of suspensions had been determined by the Annual General Conference and that it was not competent for the Executive or any other authority to challenge decisions of Annual Conference. With regard to No. 2, no objection was raised but your representatives felt it was a matter for the Executive.

Much discussion centred around proposal No. 3. It was pointed out that the money advanced was used for the purpose of carrying on an internecine struggle inside the party. Moreover, advances to the Conroy
Executive are shown as from April 13, 1927 till the assembling of the Unity Conference. The Executive felt that this was a question for determination by Annual General Conference.

The items I and 2 were the subject matter of a further conference between representatives of the Central Executive and the Federal Executive of the AWU.

Messrs Bird, Jones and Macpherson comprised the sub-committee appointed by the Executive to meet the Federal Executive of the AWU. This conference was called at the instigation of representatives of the AWU on the Federal Executive of the Australian Labor Party. Mr McNamara was authorised to get in touch with the Central Executive of the ALP of NSW and the Federal Executive of the AWU. The Executive awaits the reply of the Federal Executive with regard to the outcome of the conference.

On August 5, 1927, the credentials of PM Lynch of the RWIB of the AWU were accepted. Mr Lynch stated that his branch desired to be represented on the Central Executive of the ALP. Coincident with the submission of the credentials of PM Lynch, a credential was submitted on behalf of Gavin Sutherland. Mr Sutherland’s credential was obviously out of order, as he is among the 17 persons suspended by the Unity Conference.

On September 7, the Central Branch furnished the Executive with a credential for G Buckland. Mr Buckland’s credential, however, was held over pending a repudiation by Mr Buckland of the bitter attack against the Central Executive on the non-endorsement of Dr Evatt by the official organ of the AWU – the Sydney Worker.

In this connection Mr HE Boote was cited to appear before the Executive for actively associating with the Nationalist Party in his desire to see the Labor Government defeated.

Mr Boote defied the Executive, but was subsequently expelled by the Rose Bay Branch of the ALP, and the expulsion was confirmed by the Central Executive.

**Balmain Selection Ballot**

On the occasion of the second ballot for the selection of a candidate for Balmain, 300 AWU votes were cast on Dr Evatt’s behalf. The Executive tested the bona fides of these votes by a house to house canvass of the addresses on the ballot papers with “check slips” attached. It was found that there was not one valid vote.

**State Parliamentary Election and the AWU**

During the campaign several prominent officials of the AWU were conspicuous by their absence. Their deliberate refusal to support Lang and his party could have been passed by without notice but the treacherous
acts of these individuals in their open attack against Lang and the Central Executive during the period of an election crisis will be remembered by the thousands of unfortunate members of the Labor Movement who have keenly suffered through the wholesale unemployment that made itself apparent on the defeat of the Lang Government.

**General Returning Officer’s Report**

Mr King, the General Returning Officer for the State preselection ballots submitted his report on August 12. He commented strongly on the alleged irregularities made by some candidates. These allegations, after investigation were found to be groundless and frivolous.

On the completion of the ballot for the Election of the 1928 ALP Executive, the General Returning Officer, Mr JB Martin submitted the following report:

Returning Officer’s Report
To the President, ALP State of NSW
Dear Comrade,

I present the following report concerning the Executive elections conducted in conformity with the New Rules of the ALP for the State of New South Wales.

In the diagram submitted in book form a detailed statement of all primary votes and preference allocations is submitted.

The following are the representatives elected by the various Electorate Councils and Trades Union Groups:

*Metropolitan Representatives:*

Mrs Dunn, L Webster, ST Green, F Roels.

*Alternates:*

Nurse Francis, WA Bennett, GE Gibson, JW Coote.

The Metropolitan Group consists of 45 Electorate Councils of which 41 furnished returns. In this vote 2356 members participated in the ballot. As Returning Officer I afforded every facility for the members of the Metropolitan Branches to exercise their rights as members of the Movement as to who should be their representatives on the Executive of 1928. It would have been a pleasure to have reported that every member in the Metropolitan Area had availed themselves of the franchise. The full significance of the powers of the Branch members under the Rules in the selection of their Executive members has not yet been fully realised.

*Country Groups*

The Country is divided into three divisions, namely: Northern, West-Central and Southern.
Northern Representatives:
Mrs F Barrett, PJ Goeghan. Alternates: JV Hall, TW Roach.

West-Central Representatives:
Mrs WM Webster, F Finnan. Alternates: J Figg, W Beck.

Southern Representatives:
Miss Lee, H Stone. Alternates: AS Ticehurst, Mrs Smith.

1063 members of the three above divisions voted to select the six representatives. Whilst every effort was made to see that every section in the country had the privilege to cast their vote, I found that the period of the year that the vote was taken made it difficult for the country divisions to get the ballot papers and the machinery to carry out the vote in good working order. This was occasioned by the fact that the PMG's department was overcrowded with mail matter. It is realised that at the festive season of the year parcels are often delayed in the city for four or five days and in the country it can easily be conceived that there would be even a longer delay. For that reason I would suggest to the incoming Executive the necessity of finalising future ballots by the end of November, but the Executive to be declared on the 1st January.

Trade Union Groups
The following are the representatives selected by the various Union Groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Representatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AWU</td>
<td>No representatives so far submitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miners</td>
<td>Now finalising selection of representatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Utilities</td>
<td>C Anderson (Amal. Postal Workers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A O’Gorman (Gas Employees),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MJ Connaghan (Shop Assists).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport Water</td>
<td>W Fandlan (Waterside Workers).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport Land</td>
<td>WA Clementson (Tramway Union).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P O’Sullivan (Fed. Loco Enginemen).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MP Ryan (Storemen).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Trades Group</td>
<td>F Morris (Carpenters and Joiners)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G Pickford (Plumbers).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Group</td>
<td>LF Gill (Sugar Workers).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal Trades Group</td>
<td>J Stewart (Electrical Trades).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>J Hooke (Moulders).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing Group</td>
<td>W Jones (Clothing Trades).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing Non-Manual</td>
<td>JJ Bollard (PIEU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood Group</td>
<td>W Isley (Timber Workers).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
6155 Delegates, apart from the AWU and Miners, attended the various groups to cast their vote on behalf of their organisation. The basis of Union delegates was one delegate for every 1000 members. I personally conducted the ballot in each group apart from the AWU and Miners.

At several of the Group meetings the question arose that votes should be a plebiscite of the whole of the rank and file, but on every occasion that this was raised the delegates assembled voted against such a proposal. It was reasoned (1) that the cost would be excessive, (2) that the delegates assembled would have a better knowledge of the candidates submitting themselves for selection.

During the period of the ballot I was requested to submit ballot papers to the organisation in order that they may distribute same to their delegates; this I refused to do and the Group endorsed my action in this respect. I was quite willing to post a ballot paper to any delegate who was unable to attend, conditional that I was supplied with his name and address. Organisations who supplied me with the names and addresses of their members unable to attend, such persons were posted a ballot paper.

I endeavored to fearlessly carry out the duties assigned to me as Returning Officer, realising that it was imperative that in the first occasion of a ballot for the Executive, under the new Rules, should not be associated with anything of unclean nature.

Every group was satisfied that the ballot was carried out in accordance with the instructions of the Executive.

In conclusion I desire to recommend to the incoming Executive the necessity of making arrangements for a complete record of membership being compiled and kept at Head Office; this would obviate the great difficulty found in determining the number of ballot papers, etc., required for all ballots.

I desire to thank the Office Staff, the DRO’s and Scrutineers who ably assisted me to carry out my duties to a successful issue.

(Sgd.) JB Martin, Returning Officer.

Constitution of Groups Under Rules

In accordance with the provisions of Rule 73, the following report was submitted by the then President, A Macpherson, to constitute the Trade Union and Electoral Groups under the Rules.

(1) The affiliated Trade Unions should at once be formally notified of the Group to which they respectively belong.

(2) Each union should be informed by the General Secretary that one or more delegates, on the basis of one (1) delegate for each 100 affiliated members, should be appointed to a special Group meeting convened by the General Secretary.
(3) The business of the Group meeting should be the selection of representatives to the Executive. This selection should be by plebiscite of the delegates elected on the basis of one (1) per 100 by a preferential vote.

(4) The Organising Secretary of the Party should group the Electorate Councils in Groups of five, as provided under the Rules, and these primary groups should further be grouped into four divisions. i.e., Metropolitan, Northern, West-Central and Southern Divisions.

(5) A meeting of each Division should be convened by the General Secretary, and a plebiscite of individual league members undertaken to appoint representatives to the Executive.

(6) Each Primary Group shall be instructed by the Organising Secretary in the manner of election of delegates to the next Easter Conference.

(7) The Central Executive shall be responsible for convening and conducting the Divisional Group Meetings.

(8) That any person may nominate providing his nomination is signed by at least six persons and countersigned by Secretary of his Union or Branch.

**Organising Policy**

(1) The Organising Secretary should circulate constantly throughout the country and Metropolitan Electorates. His main work should be:

   (a) To organise new Branches where none exists.
   (b) To organise and strengthen existing Branches.
   (c) To collect for Head Office useful data and information re Branches, Councils and live workers in them.
   (d) To organise financial aid for the Branches, Councils and the General Party Funds.

(2) For this purpose the Organising Secretary should be provided with a motor van and, speech amplifier.

(3) The capital cost of this equipment could be covered by:

   (a) Donations from Unions, Branches and Members of Parliamentary Party and Members of the Municipal Party.

**The following is a list of attendances of the Executive:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Meetings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WH Scale (resigned)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WM Webster</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R James</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Leslie</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JJ Graves</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WT Padgett</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Dunn</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FW Yates</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Berry</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JH Stone</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Lee</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Webster</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annual Conference of NSW ALP, 1928

(The Sydney Morning Herald, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16 April 1928)

Day 1, Friday, 6 April 1928


The annual conference of the Australian Labour party opened in the Trades Hall yesterday, about 150 delegates being in attendance.

Voting for the officials disclosed that the followers of Mr JJ Garden were in complete control of the gathering.

During the night session allegations of corrupt practices with regard to the Albury group were made.

The conference decided that the Labour party, if returned to power at the next State elections, should introduce an Act making it obligatory for a Labour member to vacate his seat if he fails to carry out the directions of the party.

The Business

Mr WM Webster was in the chair, and those present on the platform were: Messrs JT Lang, J Baddeley, Ratcliffe, Lysaght, Olde, Horsington, M Davidson, F Butler, M Burke, J Cahill, M O'Sullivan, M Flannery, J McDicken, F Stanley, J Quirk, D Clyne, M'sLA; EG Theodore, J West, PE Coleman, H Lazzarini, E Riley, sen., Blakeley, M’sP; and JP Hannan, president of the Reid Federal Electorate Council.
Mr ER Voigt (Clerks) was elected minute secretary unopposed, and Mr A Bennett (Watchmakers) timekeeper. Messrs Ward, Pitt, Carlton, and Hill were appointed tellers for the conference.

A resolution was carried that representatives of all metropolitan newspapers be admitted to the conference, with the exception of the *Evening News* and *Smith's Newspapers*.

The following were appointed delegates of the agenda committee: Messrs JS Beasley (Electrical Trades), W Gibb (Clothing Trades), JJS Willis (Printing Trades), and Mrs J Dunn (Glebe). Mr C Gaylor (vice-president of the Toowoomba branch) was welcomed to the conference.

Mr JB Martin was appointed returning officer.

Mr CE Martin (Newcastle) moved on behalf of the Newcastle EC:

“That it be an instruction to the party when returned to office in the Legislative Assembly in New South Wales to bring in an Act to make it necessary for a member of the Legislative Assembly to resign his or her seat should he or she by any act secede or be expelled from the movement of which he or she was a member when last elected to the Legislative Assembly.”

The mover said that the movement should be able to get a rat and crush its life out. The position was that when a member went into Parliament he might secede from his platform and the rank and file had no control over him. The rank and file must have control over the member who “ratted” upon them. It was obvious that when any man opposed the platform on which he was elected there was no legitimate reason for him to remain in Parliament.

Mr Dan O'Connor (Newcastle) supporting the motion, said the movement had suffered greatly from men who had fastened themselves on the movement and fattened and ‘ratted’ upon it. They must stop these thieves, thugs and rats.

Mr F Rosevear (Leichhardt) opposed the motion. If such legislation became law the Independent-member would go scot free. If the conference favoured the recall, he said, it should move straight for it.

“I am doubtful if this is a Labour conference or a mixed Nationalist and Labour conference”, said Mr Thompson (Milk and Ice Carters’ Union). “We don’t want to expel the rats in the National party, we like to see them there. The Labour members of Parliament must be taught that they are the servants of the working class who elected them. When things cease to stink in our own home we may be able to right those in the National party”, he added.

Mr E O'Dea (Shop Assistants), moved as an amendment that it be an instruction to the party when returned to office in the Legislative Assembly to bring in an Act to make it necessary for a Labour member of the Assembly to resign his seat if he or she refused to support the policy of the party under which they were elected, and that their seats should be declared vacant. He said that if the Labour members of the last
Parliament had remained true to the principles of the party which had elected them, Mr Lang would have been Premier of New South Wales today.

Mr Evin Davies (Southern Miners), in seconding the amendment, said that it was the duty of the ALP executive to maintain control over the politicians. The amendment was defeated and the motion carried.

Official Reports

The annual report and balance sheet of the ALP executive disclosed that during the year many new branches had been established throughout the State. At the present time there were 105 unions affiliated, while the branches numbered about 500.

“Our organization has never previously achieved such a high degree of efficiency”, the report read. “We regret, however, the lack of coordination by the AWU officials and the uncompromising attitude of their official organ, which if not desirous of assisting, might have refrained from supplying propaganda for the enemy. The one bright feature was the fact that in very many instances it was made strikingly apparent that the members of that union were not in accord with the tactics adopted. They contributed liberally to the fighting funds of the movement.”

The report of the Federal Parliamentary Labour party contained a suggestion that in future the conference should make it clear what attitude should be taken by all members of the movement on any future proposal to amend the constitution. Reference was made to the split which occurred in the party with regard to the referendum campaign.

Mr JB Martin, returning officer, in a report concerning the last State elections, said that during the campaign several prominent officials were conspicuous by their absence. “Their deliberate refusal to support Mr Lang and his party”, said Mr Martin, “could have been passed by without notice, but, the treacherous acts of these individuals in their open attacks against Lang and the central executive during the period of the election crisis will be remembered by the thousands of unfortunate members of the Labour movement who have suffered keenly through the wholesale unemployment that made itself apparent on the defeat of the Lang Government.”

Delegate Excluded

Mr M Ryan (chairman of the Credentials committee) stated that Mr J Doyle (Ironworkers’ Federation) had been refused admission to the conference because he was a Communist, and had refused to sign the pledge.
Presidential Address

Mr WM Webster, in his presidential address, stated that it was the first conference to be held under the new rules and constitution adopted at the unity conference. Since that time the movement had passed through a trying experience. The functions of the conference were to review the decisions arising out of the two provincial conferences. The principal work which confronted the Labour movement in this and other States was the preparation for the federal elections which he believed would take place about March next year. The Labour party had to consider the most urgent problems of the Australian people, and first and foremost was unemployment. Unemployment, he said, was the natural corollary of capitalism. As the system under which they lived had produced the present chaotic state of unemployment, the first step towards remedying it was that those who were unable to secure work should be given the right of sustenance from the national resources of the country. Legislation, he considered, should be introduced along those lines. The present federal Government was aggravating unemployment by encouraging the flotsam and jetsam of Southern Europe and Asia Minor to come to our shores. By bringing them here in tens of thousands avenues of employment had been closed to Australian workers. The policy of the Federal Government was to flood the country with the unemployed to provide an army of cheap labour in order to reduce the wage standards of the country. If there was no Labour party there would have been no White Australia policy, without which the conditions of the Australian workers would have been intolerable. No Government would dare interfere with the White Australia policy, but the Bruce Government was watering down that policy. Misrepresentation had been in the past and would be in the future the greatest bar of the Labour party towards attaining power. Mr Bruce had declared that he was not able to prevent immigrants coming here because of possible international complications. Mr Bruce knew, however, that the League of Nations had decided that immigration and emigration were matters of domestic concern. When Mr Bruce returned from his visit to England he had a long interview with Mussolini, and that could be taken as in indication of what they could expect in the future. “We should also endeavour”, said Mr Webster, “to arrive at a true recognition of the importance of the development of Australian industries. Every day hundreds of thousands of pounds totalling millions in the year of manufactured goods are brought to Australia that should be made here. Only by the development to the fullest extent of Australian industry could avenues of employment be created for the rising generation. The Labour party had to advocate in the Federal Parliament a full development of Australian industry. Today the imports exceed the exports by £20,000,000 a year. We are going downhill in the industrial and financial spheres. General Monash has stated that if
Australia was attacked by an invader it could not defend itself for twenty-four hours. Australian industries, he said, were our first line of defence.” Referring to land monopolies, Mr Webster said that in the past there had been a marked apathy displayed by Labour parliamentarians on the question. In future they should see that their representatives understood thoroughly those problems. Mr Webster concluded with a condemnation of foreign borrowing, and an appeal for unity among Labour members.

**Lively Scene**

It was decided not to accept Mr A Davis as a delegate from the Carpenters’ Union for the reason that he was not a member of the league in the electorate in which he resided. There was a rowdy scene during Mr Davis’ address to the conference, and for a time the chairman failed to make himself heard or to secure order, when Mr Davis did not deny that he had assisted a candidate against the selected Labour candidates in Parramatta electorate four years ago. Mr A Edwards (Blacksmiths’ Union) was also refused admission as a delegate because he did not belong to a league.

Allegations that the ballot held in the Albury group of electorates was one of the most corrupt ever held, were made by Mr Kenny (Cootamundra) when opposing the admission of Mr Elphic as a delegate from the Tumut branch. Mr King (chairman of the appeals committee) said that a plebiscite of the members of the league was taken because of the laxity of the council.

A Voice: Because of the laxity of the executive.

It was decided to admit the Tumut delegate to the conference.

Nurse Francis moved that the blind workers’ industry should be nationalised. Mr Rosevear (Leichhardt) seconded the resolution which was carried.

At the instance of the Women’s Central Organising Committee motions were carried in favour of equal guardianship of children, female health inspectors for flats, the desirability of women presiding at children’s courts.

Mr D Chalker (South Coast) moved that the Crown lands of the State be scientifically divided into living areas, suitable for the various forms of agriculture, and made available to settlers on most reasonable terms. The motion was carried.

A motion from the Liverpool Electorate Council, moved by Mr J Stone, was, to the effect that the question of water conservation, irrigation, and the complete exploitation of all idle and partially idle land adjacent to pioneer railway lines be closely examined with a view to making the lines payable propositions.
Mr Stone said that at present the Commissioners built a railway into virgin country and promptly saddled the community with the expense of this unpaying addition to the State railways. The responsibility of the Government did not cease with the construction of the line. It should open up the land adjoining the new line. He was almost in favour of allowing the land to be handed over to the Commissioners for them to develop it, for the New South Wales railways were at present among the most efficient in the world.

Mr Thompson (Ice and Milk Carters' Union) said the Government must do something to develop the area of partially idle land along the route of new lines. The motion was carried.

Mr Martin, BEc, (Newcastle) moved that the Education Act should be amended to read: “The leaving age of school children be 16 years instead of 14 years”. Mr R King (Metal Trades), in seconding the motion, said that the age of children subsidised by the State should be raised to 16 years. The motion was carried.

At 10.30 pm the conference adjourned until half-past 9 this morning.

Day 2, Saturday, 7 April 1928

Communist Issue at ALP. Clash with Federal Executive. Right to advocate socialisation. Wild scenes of disorder.

The Communist issue was keenly debated at the ALP conference on Saturday. The executive, in its report, repudiated a ruling by the Federal executive that individual members of the ALP were prohibited from advocating the policy of the Communist party. It was pointed out by the executive that the socialisation of industry was common to the platform of both Communists and the Labour party, and that the Federal Executive’s decision would therefore prevent the State Labour party from advocating its own objective.

The Session

When the annual conference of the Australian Labour Party was continued on Saturday morning there was a large attendance of delegates. The president (Mr W Webster) presided.

Executive’s Report

In moving the adoption of the report of the executive, Mr Graves (senior vice-president) said the executive had not tried to please everyone in the movement, but had done its best in the interests of the movement as a whole. The dispute with the AWU had not as yet been settled. The
question of the amount of money advanced by the AWU to the ALP which the former body held was paid in advance, was still unsettled. The executive had also to consider the question of the powers of the Federal executive to issue rulings for the States. The executive contended that each State Labour party was a complete body elected by the rank and file, and should have the right to decide and settle all matters within its own State. If the Federal executive were allowed the power it claimed it would place the control of the whole Labour party in the hands of a small number of men only indirectly responsible to the rank and file through the State executives. It would be able to order anything it liked, and to violate the will of the whole of the party.

Mr F Roels (a member of the executive) referred to the ruling given by the Federal executive of the Party on the question of the non-admission of Communists to the party and said that the State executive did not agree with the wording of the third clause. That clause stated that “Individual members of the ALP are prohibited from advocating the policy of the Communist party”. They realised the danger of such a position. They saw in it the practical emasculation of the Labour party in New South Wales in any effective work on behalf of the movement, if they complied with the requirements of the Federal executive.

Mrs Webster said that the State executive’s reply to the ruling was not a unanimous report. She was one who had voted against it. Mr Graves said that the decision was a majority decision.

At the request of a delegate the ruling of the Federal executive and the reply of the State executive were read.

The ruling stated that neither the Communist party nor a branch of it might be or become affiliated with the ALP, and that no member of the Communist party might be or become a member of the ALP. Further, that individual members of the ALP were prohibited from advocating the policy of the Communist party.

Executive's Reply

In reply the executive stated that the executive of the ALP (NSW) was the creation of the rank and file in conference, and in all domestic matters recognised only the authority of the rank and file of the ALP, State of New South Wales, as expressed in conference or by plebiscite. It was contrary to the democratic principles of the Australian Trade Union and Labour movement and to the working class movement in all civilised countries that a small group of officials such as the Federal executive and conference should have the extraordinary power to override the expressed will of the rank and file, to whom they owed their existence. Therefore, the executive of the ALP, State of New South Wales, would maintain the right of autonomy in all domestic matters which the rank and file of the party in New South Wales, in conjunction with the parties
in all other States, had enjoyed since the inception of the Australian Labour party, and the executive would repudiate any ruling or dictum of Federal officials on any domestic matter which had not first received the approval of the rank and file of the party in New South Wales. The dangerous nature of permitting a few officials to abrogate to themselves absolute and final authority over the rank and file was brought into clear relief by the ill-considered third clause of the Federal officials’ dictum. In that arbitrary and impracticable clause the rank and file were prohibited from advocating the policy of the Communist party. Should, therefore, the Communist party adopt partially or wholly any Labour party policy or platform, under the Federal officials’ dictum the rank and file could be prohibited from supporting their own policy. Further, since the objective of the Communist party and the Australian Labour party was identical in regard to the socialisation of industry, the Federal officials’ dictum would prohibit the rank and file from ever realising, as a practical policy, its solemnly declared objective.

Mr Roels said that if the dictum of the Federal executive was accepted the State movement would be a subordinate body, and not the ruling body, as at present. He did not want the eyes of the delegates blindfolded by the Red bogey or by the Red flag. He wanted them to see correctly. There was a great difference between the constitutions of the various Labour parties in the different States, especially between those in New South Wales and Western Australia, and he could not see how the Federal executive could properly control the State movements, nor why it should have any say in the domestic affairs of the States. The Federal executive’s claim was “right over the fence”. The Federal executive should be told that the State executive respected its decisions, but would accept them if it favoured them, and would reject them if it did not.

Mr WT Morris (Dubbo) asked if it was correct that one of the objects of the Labour movement – the socialisation of industry – was identical with a plank in the platform of the Communist party? If that was so, he said, it was a disgraceful thing, especially as the Federal elections were approaching.

The chairman said that that particular plank only was identical.

Arising out of the balance-sheet, Mr Barker (ARU) asked if it was possible for the executive to supply a list of the amounts of election funds spent in each electorate. He said that in the Ryde electorate, which had been won from the Nationalists by a Labour man, they had received only £50 from the fighting funds, and it would be interesting for delegates to know how much had been spent in ‘safe’ Labour electorates.

The secretary (Mr Bird) replied that a list could be obtained from the books of the executive.

Mr D Chalker (Wollondilly) said that the report referred to certain moneys said to have been received on behalf of other unions, but he
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contended that as there was no evidence where the money was from, who received it, or where it went, claims for it should not be recognised.

Mr Bird said the executive was not accepting the liability for the money, because it had no record of it.

The president said that between March 1, and July 31, 1927, the AWU and its RWI branch between them had paid in advance approximately £1000 to the Conroy-McGarry Executive. Later on the AWU claimed that the money represented affiliation fees paid in advance. As there was no recommendation that the ALP recognised that the money was for fees paid in advance, any delegate would be within his rights in discussing the question at a later stage.

After the president had ruled that there was nothing in the report that could alter the rules or the constitution, the report was adopted.

Consideration of the reply to the Federal executive was deferred.

Cootamundra ballots

Mr Kenny (Cootamundra) said that he desired to make an explanation of his allegations regarding corrupt ballots at Cootamundra selection ballots. He had not alleged corrupt practices at the selection ballot held last month. He was quite satisfied that that ballot was above board, and Mr JB Martin, the returning officer, had done his work properly. The ‘corrupt-ballot’ was the one held in the Albury group last September.

Wild Scene. Delegates in Uproar

The ALP conference at the Trades Hall on Saturday afternoon was in uproar for half an hour when the question whether Mr Geo Avis (Weston) should be allowed to remain in the conference was discussed.

Mr McNamara (United Labourers) said he understood that one member had taken his seat in the conference, despite the fact that some of the miners who elected him were Communists. In addition he was not a member of a Labour league.

Mr Neilsen (Northern Miners) said that it was a contemptible narrow-minded point to take. It was almost impossible for many of the miners to belong to a league, because of the hours of their work, the lack of transport, and the scattered nature of the settlement. The miners were a solid body.

Mr King (chairman of the appeals committee) said the committee had gone carefully into the matter and found that there was a league within ten minutes of the home of the delegate.

The president ruled that as it had been recognised for years that a miners’ lodge was constituted as a league, Mr Avis was entitled to represent his district as a delegate.
Uproar followed, and voices of men and women all over the hall assailed the president, who could not be heard above the din.

Mr Bennett endeavoured to move a motion of dissent from the president’s ruling, but a chorus of yells assailed him.

“I am surprised that delegates cannot control themselves”, said the president.

Miners’ delegates in the past, he said, had always been given admission to the conference, because it was recognised that miners’ lodges were duly constituted branches of the ALP. He was not a miners’ delegate, and could only be guided by the miners’ delegates.

A voice: Where is the rule that says you can admit them?

The president: There is no rule that I know of in the new rules, but custom and usage say that we should admit them.

Mr King: If the miners in the lodges are all members of the ALP, where does the Communist rule come in? Can miners who are Communists come here and belong to the Labour movement when they are not allowed in city unions?

Mr Bainbridge (Northern Miners), amid more din, said that the miners had 14,000 financial members, and all of them, whether Labour, Nationalist, or Communist, had to subscribe the funds of the federation.

Mr Bennett (timekeeper) then moved his motion of dissent.

As Mr Graves (senior vice-president) put the motion of dissent the president called out: Read rule 28. Do you think I am a Mussolini?”

Voices: “Squib. Don’t squib it”.

Mrs Webster: “I am not squibbing it.”

The motion of dissent was defeated by 56 votes to 36, and amid the uproar following the decision, a man in the gallery jumping up and down, kept yelling: “You are a lot of squibs, squibs, squibs”.

General business. Mr Theodore explains.

Mr D O’Connor (Newcastle) moved a motion, submitted by the Newcastle Electorate Council, “That the delegates be instructed to request the conference to investigate the credentials of Mr Theodore, MP, in view of his being a director of the Celotex Coy.”

Mr Theodore, who was received with applause, said there was an implication that he was connected with a large American company making celotex. He was not a director of the Celotex Company, nor had he ever been a director or a shareholder. The implication apparently had its origin in the fact that those who formed the company approached him with a view to his taking a seat on the directorate of the company. If the conference decided to go into his credentials he would not object. His life was an open book.

Replying to delegates, Mr Theodore said he was a director of the Roma Oil Co., in which he held 100 shares, for which he had paid. It was
a prospecting concern, attempting to discover oil, and was not a profit-producing company.

Mr Morris (Newcastle) moved: “That this conference places its confidence in Mr Theodore”.

In reply to another delegate, Mr Theodore denied that he was interested in the Mt Isa mines.

Mr O’Connor asked Mr Theodore if he reduced the wages of workers in Queensland, but noise of the conference interrupted any reply.

An amendment that the conference accept Mr Theodore’s explanation was carried on the voices, but there was a pronounced ‘no’ vote.

**Petrol Pumps**

Mr W Long (Amalgamated Engineers) moved a motion condemning the failure of the Bruce Government to prevent the contemplated importation of petrol pumps. The motion was carried.

**Unemployed**

Mr JB Millar (President of the OBU of unemployed) in addressing conference, said there were 32,827 unemployed in New South Wales, 29,000 of whom were registered with his union.

Mr W Gibb (Clothing Trades) moved, “That this conference is of opinion that the unemployed should receive the basic wage”.

A motion in favour of unemployment insurance was carried.

**Appeals**

Mr AJ Cannon, of Young, was readmitted with full continuity of membership. Mr A Duffield, of Marrickville, was readmitted.

**Upper House Appointments**

The report of the committee appointed by the Unity Conference to inquire into the circumstances of the appointment of Mr Alam to the Upper House was presented by Mr Bollard. The conclusions of the committee, the report stated, were that Mr Alam obtained his appointment by a personal canvass of members of the party, and by the support accorded him by Mr W Dunn, MLA, who stated that had he known the public statements and speeches that Mr Alam would make attacking the Labour movement he would not have supported him. The system of appointment to the Upper House had been unsatisfactory to the Labour movement from every viewpoint. Of the 25 selected many had already left the movement by their hostility. If the present system of a nominee
Chamber was maintained, future appointments by Labour Governments should be governed by the length of service of the candidates nominated. The report was adopted.

**Election of Officers**

The election of officials, announced by the returning officer (Mr JB Martin) late on Saturday night, resulted as follows: President, JJ Graves (Stovemakers); senior vice-president, MP Ryan (Storemen and Packers); junior vice-president CE Martin (Teachers); organising secretary, AJ McPherson (Clerks); Federal Executive delegates, J Kilburn (Bricklayers) and T Falkingham (Boilermakers); Interstate delegates, J Kilburn, Mrs Dunn (Central group, electoral councils), WE Clemens (Tramways), WT Adams (Eastern Suburbs group, Waverley branch), AJ McPherson and F Roels (Enginedrivers).

**Senate Selection Ballot**

On the motion of Mr Tannock, it was decided that despite any ruling to the contrary, the Barrier District Assembly had the right to take the Senate selection ballot for the whole of their affiliated organisations, thus giving them the right to participate in the Senate preselection ballot.

**Day 3, Monday, 9 April 1928**

**Communists and the ALP. Identical Objectives. Decision of Labour Conference. Federal Executive Defied.**

The attitude of the Labour party towards the Communists was the principal subject of discussion at yesterday’s sittings of the State conference of the Australian Labour party.

An important decision was reached last night, when the conference approved the admission, contained in the reply of the State executive to the Federal body, that the objectives of the Labour party and the Communist party were identical in the matter of the socialisation of industry.

The decision means that the State Labour movement has flouted the direction of the Federal body, which prohibited individual members of the ALP from advocating the policy of the Communist party.

Earlier in the day the conference resolved that Communists should not be allowed to be appointed as delegates to the conference without first signing the ALP pledge.
**The Conference**

When the annual conference of the ALP was resumed yesterday there was a large attendance of delegates. The president (Mr W Webster) said that an insinuation had been made in a leading article in the *Herald* connecting Mr Voigt with Communism. It was based on the fact that Mr Voigt, as minute secretary of the conference, was asked to read to the conference a supplementary report which was presented by Mr Graves. Mr Voigt was not responsible for the report. The only statements made by Mr Voigt at the conference had reference to unemployment, and no man should be held responsible for any but his own statements.

**The Labour Daily**

Mr Kelly moved that the movement should unite to establish the *Labour Daily* as an effective organ of the movement. He said business people were averse from advertising in the paper because of its small circulation. They contended that it did not reach the rank and file. That was quite true. Of the 300,000 trade unionists in the State there were barely 18,000 who subscribed to the paper.

Seconding the motion, Mr Cook said that many of the unions had broken their promises to stand behind the paper. Only two or three unions had ever done anything to see that it prospered.

The motion was carried.

Mr Neilson (Northern Miners) moved that the resolution should be recommitted. The motion being lost, he moved that a committee should be appointed by the conference to inquire into the management and administration of the *Labour Daily*.

Mr Neilson said he was sorry to have to admit that the administration of the *Labour Daily* was smashing the miners’ organisation, particularly in the north. The men of the northern coalfields were opposed to the system that operated, and if they were not carefully handled the time would arrive when they would put the *Labour Daily* out of existence. They wanted a working man’s paper and would readily put their hands in their pockets to assist it, but as a body they were against the administration and management of the paper.

Mr J Beasley said that if the Labour movement was to progress the *Labour Daily* must remain in existence, but the matter should not be discussed in the open – a course which would supply capitalist journals with any material that might be used against the paper.

Mr DJ Davies (general secretary of the Miners’ Federation) said that before the northern miners attacked the *Labour Daily* they should realise the harm they would do. If there were any complaints they should be forwarded to the directors.

A delegate: And have them sabotaged when they get there.
Mr JJ Graves moved an amendment that the directors should be requested to convene a meeting of shareholding unions to consider ways and means of assisting the *Labour Daily*.

The amendment was carried by 74 votes to 23.

**Expenses of Delegates**

Mr CE Martin (Northern Group of Councils) moved the resolution that had been adopted by the Young Conference, and which recommended that the matter of expenses for country delegates on the executive should be discussed, with a view to relieving the financial strain upon individual branches that might have a member on the executive. He moved also that a definite instruction should be given to the executive to pay the expenses of executive members. He said that if country delegates had to bear the cost themselves one of the most important principles of trade unionism would break down. Individual areas could not carry the burden.

Mr Lyons (Storemen and Packers) moved as an amendment, that the matter should be considered by a committee, which should report back to the conference. The executive, he said, should know what it would cost.

Mr D Chalker (Wollondilly), in supporting the motion, said that at present country representatives were representatives simply because they were wealthy men. The best men very frequently could not be sent to represent the country districts, because they could not afford to come.

Mr Roels (a member of the executive) said the cost of country delegates attending meetings would amount to £50 a week, or £2500 per annum. In his opinion each group should pay the expenses of its own delegates.

Mr AC Willis, MLC (Northern Miners), supported the motion, and said that until the principle of paying the expenses of people coming long distances was adopted the new rules could not operate properly. If the burden was spread over the whole movement it would be very light.

**President’s Ruling Challenged**

When the president announced that the time for discussion had expired he came into conflict with Mr Bennett (timekeeper) and uproar followed.

Mr Bennett said that there were still three minutes to go.

The president, amidst further uproar, several times ordered Mr Bennett to resume his seat.

Mr Bennett remained firm, declaring that the conference had elected him timekeeper. The president then gave way.

When quiet had been restored, Mrs McNamara suggested that the difficulty could be overcome if country leagues and unions elected a unionist in Sydney to represent them.
Mr Martin, in reply, said that if the conference wanted the spirit of the new rules carried out they should pass the motion. Were Messrs King, Ryan, or Hook merely trying to find some excuse to keep country delegates from attending meetings of the executive? The party had been able to purchase a motor car and supply sums of money to assist politicians in a campaign. The income of the party for the past 12 months was greater than ever before, and some of the money could be adequately expended in putting the new rules into operation.

The amendment was declared carried on a show of hands by 55 votes to 53. A division was demanded, and the amendment was declared defeated by 56 votes to 52.

**Mr Willis’s Position**

Mr Hook (Iron Trades) objected to the presence of Mr AC Willis as a delegate, because of the rule that Parliamentarians were not eligible to hold positions in the Labour party, but the objection was overruled.

**Communist Issue**

Nearly an hour was spent by delegates in discussing whether they would deal with the following notice of motion: “That membership of the Australian Labour party be open to all members of industrial trade unions, provided they have not violated any working-class principles, and every union must have the unrestricted right to select its own delegates to the conference and to the controlling body of the Australian Labour party.

Eventually, after several rowdy scenes, the suspension of standing orders to permit the discussion of the motion was carried by 57 votes to 28.

Mr Hutt (Food Group), addressing the conference on the motion, said that certain militants had been allowed to enter the Labour party and usurp important positions. “There is no evidence”, said Mr Hutt, that Mr Alam, MLC, is a member of the Labour party”.

Mr Tannock, who submitted the motion, said that the impression had been created in the minds of delegates that there was a sinister purpose behind the resolution. He wanted to remove the impression that he desired the affiliation of Communists with the Labour party. The proposal that industrial trade unions should have the unrestricted right to send their delegates to the ALP conference had been affirmed by numerous industrial conferences – at the All-Australian Trade Union congresses held in Melbourne in October, 1921, the congress in 1922, the New South Wales congress in April, 1923, and the ALP conference in June, 1923.
Mr M Ryan (vice-president of the executive), in seconding the motion, said the movement would receive the criticism of the capitalist Press and the Nationalists whether it admitted men now outside the movement or not. Some of the members desired to pander to the middle-class people because of their votes. Such a policy would get the movement nowhere. The only people fighting properly against the Bruce Arbitration Amendment Bill were the Communists, Socialists, and some members of the ALP. We all – Communists, Socialists, and ALP – believe the present system should be overthrown, and the workers must take control of the whole of the industries in the country before they will get a fair deal”, he added. “Our methods, however, differ. If these men are good fellows outside the ALP, let them come in and help us”.

Mr Allpress (Furnishing Trades) moved the following amendment:

“That full membership of the ALP be open to all members providing they sign the pledge, and that every union shall have the unrestricted right to elect its own delegates”.

There was a sensation when the chairman announced he would rule the motion out of order, because three months’ notice had not been given to unions and branches, as was necessary in the case of any motion that involved an alteration of the rules.

Sections of the conference loudly protested against the procedure, but the chairman overruled all objections.

Motions expressing thanks to the returning officer (Mr JB Martin) and to the retiring president (Mr WM Webster) were carried.

Reply to Federal Executive

The reply of the State executive to the ruling of the president of the Federal executive (Mr J Kenneally), as contained in a supplementary report of the president, created a bitter debate.

The proposed reply with regard to the Federal executive’s ruling “that no member of the Communist party may be or become affiliated with the ALP, and individual members of the ALP are prohibited from advocating the policy of the Communist party”, stated that “in this arbitrary and impracticable clause the rank and file are prohibited from advocating the policy of the Communist party. Should, therefore, the Communist party adopt partially or wholly any Labour party policy or platform, then under this dictum the rank and file would be prohibited from supporting their own policy. Further, since the objective of the Communist party and the ALP are identical in the matter of the socialisation of industry, the ill-considered dictum of the Federal officials would prohibit the rank and file from ever realising as a practical policy its solemnly declared objective”.

Mr F Roels (Enginedrivers), in moving the adoption of the report, said that it was impossible to stop a member of the ALP speaking on a
certain phase of the objective of the party. If any coterie of officials tried to stifle that expression they must be stopped. The ruling of the Federal president was intolerable and absurd. There was no sinister object behind the reply, but there was a sinister object in the ruling of the Federal executive. If such Mussolini tactics were allowed the movement would end in disaster.

Mr AW Jones, a member of the executive, seconded the motion.

"Any member of the ALP who is not prepared to advocate Communism should be a member of the Nationalist party", said Mr J Kilburn, in moving the following amendment: "That while the policy and methods of the Communist party and the ALP are at variance, the objective of these parties are identical in the matter of the socialisation of industry".

The movement, he said, could not have the Federal executive watering down the ALP. Some of the politicians were afraid to face the platform of socialisation of industry, and they were endeavouring to hide that plank.

"Scheming and intriguing"

Mr RE King (Building Trades) said the scheming and intriguing of certain people had been devoted to sidetracking the plank of the socialisation of industry.

Mr Morris (Dubbo), in opposing both the motion and the amendment, said that if the motion was carried it would be goodbye to any chance of winning the Federal elections. "If you adopt this report it will influence great numbers of votes", he said.

Mr O'Dea (Shop Assistants) opposed the adoption of the reports, remarking that the Federal executive should be the supreme body.

Mr J Beasley, seconding the amendment, said that some of the members of Federal executive did not subscribe to the objective of the party, and were endeavouring to ‘water’ it down.

Uproar followed a statement by Mr T Brown (Coogee) that he did not want “to see the white flag of Labour replaced by a red one”.

Mr F Roels (Enginedrivers) said that there were delegates who would accept blindfolded the bogey of communism. Behind the Federal Executive was a wily move by “Bailey and Co.” to erase the brand placed upon them by the Labour party.

The amendment was carried by 82 votes to 19.

Appeal

Mr P Coleman, of Bankstown, was readmitted, with full continuity of membership, by 49 votes to 44.
The conference resolved to establish a permanent propaganda organisation.

Mr Hay Wilson was granted leave to appeal for the necessary continuity of membership in the Australian Labour party, to enable him to hold public office in the Labour interests. The appeal was dismissed and the conference adjourned until tonight.

**Day 4, Tuesday, 10 April 1928**

**Labour party. Mr Lang at the Conference. Delegates’ Questions**

The leader the State Opposition (Mr JT Lang) devoted his address at the ALP conference last night largely to an appeal for unity and an attack on the Government.

A considerable portion of the proceedings at the conference was occupied in personal explanations by Mr AC Willis, MLC, and Mr Neilsen (Miners’ Federation).

Mr Tannock (Ironworkers’ Assistants) asked Mr Lang why he showed preference to the Liquor Bill instead of the Railways Bill which affected 70,000 workers.

Mr Lang replied that the Railways Bill was ready for submission to Parliament when the last elections took place. If he were still in power they would have had the Railways Bill in operation today.

Another delegate asked why he did not put his unemployment insurance proposals into effect as promised in his policy speech at Lidcombe.

Mr Lang: If I had been in office three years I would have carried out the whole of my programme. (Applause.)

“Mr Lang says that there are two ways of achieving the Labour objective”, said a delegate. “Seeing that all great changes of society have been brought about by revolution is there any reason for believing that the next great change will not also be by means of revolution?”

“I do not believe in revolution”, said Mr Lang, “because I believe that you can get and hold more by evolution than revolution”.

Asked why he had made attacks on Bolshevik Russia, Mr Lang said he had made it plain everywhere that he was first and foremost an Australian, and there was no need for him to go out of Australia like some other people. He had no concern with foreign Governments.

Mr Lang, in appealing for support for the Labour Daily, referred to a report that the circulation was only 18,000. This was incorrect, the figure being 30,000 subscribers, in addition to papers sold over the counter. Sometimes the circulation was 120,000.

Mr AC Willis, MLC, gave a long explanation of his connection with the Labour Daily, and denied statements attributed to Mr Neilsen with
regard to a conference of miners’ delegates at West Maitland. One delegate asked Mr Willis would it not be better if the Labour Daily ceased its eternal bickering so far as the AWU was concerned.

Mr Willis: The Labour Daily is not going to lay down and be kicked. On several occasions we have written to the directors of the World to meet us in conference to unite the Labour movement. We have had a contemptuous refusal every time.

A voice: You will be kissing Jack Bailey next.

**Proposed Labour College**

A motion was carried, appointing a committee to formulate a policy of educating the workers regarding capitalistic society and the teaching of economic science. The committee was instructed to confer with the Labour Council, the Labour Daily, and broadcasting station 2KY to disseminate information for the establishment of a Labour college.

**Conference Resumed**

There was a marked falling off in the attendance of delegates when the annual conference of the Australian Labour Party was resumed at the Trades Hall last night. Mr JJ Graves, the newly-elected president, occupied the chair.

Mr Bird, general secretary, said that the conference having decided to pay the expenses of country delegates to attend meetings of the conference, it would be necessary to devise means of raising the necessary funds.

It was decided to appoint a committee of five to investigate the question, and report back to the conference.

Mrs McGowen (Balmain) moved that the conference should make a recommendation to members of the Federal and State Governments that Government Departments should be reorganized to provide relief for children of unemployed workers. The motion was carried unanimously.

**Man Ejected**

There was an unruly scene while Mrs McGowen (Balmain) was speaking on unemployment shortly after the conference opened. A man in the public portion of the hall, who had previously been warned by the chairman, made an interjection, whereupon one of the delegates was deputed to eject the interrupter. The man, however, resisted, and a scuffle took place. Both men fell to the floor, chairs were knocked over, and a free fight seemed likely when Mr JS Garden, who was in the public gallery, intervened. Under Mr Garden’s influence the man was persuaded to walk quietly from the hall, and peace was restored. It was
subsequently stated that the interjector had persistently interrupted the conference.

Mr Lang’s Speech

Addressing the conference, Mr Lang said:

“I must confess that when I review the events of the past few years, and note the actions of the men who sought to supplant me in the leadership, I say without hesitation that I am proud to have fought to keep our great party free from the grip of hypocrisy, treachery and charlatanism. All loyal and faithful men and women who love the cause of Labour and all it stands for will now remove their petty differences throughout Australia, and prepare to do justice to themselves and their children by striking such a blow as will not only imperil, but will absolutely shatter, Labour’s enemies. The Bavin Government will soon be ripe for destruction, and will crumble to its end. United Labour will once again come into its rightful heritage as the redeeming and regenerating force of Australian democracy. There is our ideal – your work is to be worthy of it and accomplish it. Never forget that you are the protectors of the poor, and that in all times and at all places the Labour movement requires of you that you shall be fearless in your championship of the cause of the downtrodden poor. When the citadel of unionism is assailed remember that it is one of your inalienable rights to resist in legitimate combination the crushing despotism of syndicates and monopolistic rings, even though they be backed and buttressed to the full by all the legal powers of Bavin, Boyce, and Bruce. Given a united party we can beat them all.

Need for Unity

“Two facts emerge from the political history of the past six months. To the casual observer they have no significance, but to him who looks beneath the surface they are fraught with danger to the industrial life of the workers. Observe firstly that, having laid the foundation for superseding Mr Piddington as Industrial Commissioner by a campaign against him which degraded our judicial system, the Bavin-Boyce Government then appointed two Judges with equal powers to sit beside Mr Justice Piddington to see that he made from the Bavin-Boyce point of view no more mistakes in favour of the workers. Observe secondly that the Federal Industrial Arbitration Bill now under discussion at Canberra is designed primarily to destroy unionism, both in its industrial and political functions. Now, why do I say these things to you? I can hear some of you say ‘Never mind our troubles, give us the solution of them’. I do not shrink from the burden, nor shirk the work, but I want your help, for without it I can do nothing. We want and must have unity. The
voice of the squealer and the disgruntled and the disappointed must be silenced. With that ideal as their standard to rally round in the greatest political fight that has ever been made in this country, to achieve and cherish a just and a lasting victory over every enemy and every rival, to the end that the people of our country will rejoice in the return to power in the Federal and State Parliaments of a Labour Government, which will preserve the rights and liberties of the people.

"The work of the Bavin Government in the coming session will be based on a financial shriek. As soon as Parliament meets you will hear it all, for it is essential to its purpose that it should put terror into the hearts of the people – terror of an impending financial debacle and disaster; deficits, necessity for drastic economy – the drying up of the springs of oversea finance. All these things and all the dangers which they connote will be dinned into our ears with tedious reiteration, to the end that the work of their masters may be accomplished even to the last farthing. All this at a time when the graziers have been paid fifty million sterling for their wool, and benignant skies pour out their wealth on to a fertile soil to give to the wheat grower, the pastoralist, and the dairymen a season unparalleled in its bounty and beneficence. Yesterday Randwick thundered with the roar of a hundred thousand people in their relaxation, and at Moore Park there is displayed a Show, the greatest in the whole world, and yet this croaking, cowardly Government will come to Parliament, and with its tales of woe and Press backing, create an atmosphere to delude and demoralize the spirit of the people.

"Labour's strength lies in its courage and common sense. It has dared to blaze the legislative track. Everything worth having on the Statute Book today is the product of Labour rule or Labour pressure. Concessions can only be secured in two ways from those in control of our economic system – by revolution and by legislation. Labour is pledged to constitutional action through Parliament, but that instrument of reform is worse than valueless unless you can control it. Our enemies know that, and make the most strenuous efforts to capture the political machine. For the moment they have been successful in this State, and in the Federal sphere. But I venture to say that their reign will now be brief."

A motion was carried that all the unions should be asked to make their organisers available at election time to assist in the campaign.

The conference decided that one of the first acts of the Labour party if returned should be to pass a bill providing for unemployed insurance.

The conference adjourned until 7 o'clock tonight.
Day 5, Wednesday, 11 April 1928

Miners’ scheme discussed.

Soon after the ALP conference met yesterday, Mr AC Willis submitted a motion to deal with the coal mining industry.

The motion proposed that in order to relieve the parlous conditions in the industry that the whole of the coal be pooled, and that private selling agencies should be abolished. It also suggested that a levy of one shilling per ton on all coal produced be paid into a fund to provide work for unemployed miners. The motion also protested against further leases being granted to private enterprise.

The chairman’s ruling that the motion was out of order was upheld, but it is probable that the question will be reopened at this evening’s session.

The Motion

Mr AC Willis (Miners) moved: Whilst recognising that the socialisation of the mining industry is the logical solution of the prevailing chaotic conditions, however, in order to alleviate the present parlous position of the workers in the industry, we recommend the following: (1) That no further leases be granted to private enterprise, any further development of the coal resources to be done by the State, in accordance with Labour’s objective, i.e. the socialisation of industry; (2) that the whole of the coal produced be pooled, private selling agencies to be abolished, and all coal sold through the pool; (3) that one shilling per ton on all coal produced be paid into a fund to provide work or the basic wage for the surplus workers in the industry; (4) that we strongly urge the Government immediately to take steps to establish works in order to obtain the various by-products contained in coal; (5) that the foregoing principles be adopted and applied also to the metaliferous industry.

Mr Willis said that motions dealing with the coal industry certainly did appear in the agenda, but they had not appeared at the instigation of the coal miners’ delegates. He repudiated them. “They were placed there”, he said, “out of kindness to the miners, or, more than probable, for some other reason”.

The chairman ruled that the motion could not be discussed, because the subject matter was already mentioned in the agenda paper.

The question excited the keen interest of delegates, and after a vote on the voices, and then a show of hands, a division was called, and the chairman’s ruling was upheld by 51 votes to 44.
Other Business

Mr CE Martin explained that he was not representing the Teachers’ Federation at the conference, but the northern group of unions.

Mr Sherringham (Storemen and Packers) moved that a city organiser should be appointed to organise thoroughly the metropolitan area. Mr E Morris (Auburn), commenting on the suggestion that union organisers should do the work, said that apparently they wanted the organisers to work 88 hours a week without overtime.

Mr J Kilburn (Bricklayers), opposing the motion, asked whether the ALP existed only for voting people into Parliament. The members of the party should be able to do all the organising work themselves.

Mr J Kilburn (Bricklayers) moved as an amendment, which was subsequently carried, that the organising secretary should call for bands of speakers to assist the leagues and unions in their organising work.

Executive Expenses

The special committee appointed to devise means of raising funds to defray travelling expenses of members of the ALP executive recommended that a levy of 3d a member on the entire membership should be struck, and that the money should be placed in a separate fund to defray fares, expenses, and lost time of country members. The committee recommended that the executive should consider the possibility of meeting fortnightly, in which case the levy could be reduced to -/1½.

In reply to delegates, Mr CE Martin, chairman of the committee, explained that the levy would be struck on the entire membership – 163,500 – of both leagues and affiliated unions.

Mr A Bennett (Coachmakers) moved as an amendment that a plebiscite should be taken among the leagues and unions with regard to the proposals.

Mr Martin said that if the leagues refused to agree to the proposals they should be put out of existence.

In reply to a delegate Mr Martin said that the cost in respect of the members of the executive resident in the country would be approximately £1770 a year.

Intense excitement prevailed when the vote on the motion was taken. Delegates were not satisfied with a show of hands, but insisted on two divisions. The motion was defeated on each occasion, the final voting being 49 against the motion and 45 in favour.

A motion for the recommittal of the committee’s report was submitted by Mr Mara (Western Miners).

A delegate then asked the chairman whether the matter did not involve an alteration of the rules. The chairman ruled that such was the
case, and that two-thirds majority was required for an alteration of the rule. The chairman’s ruling was dissented from, but upheld.

The voting on the motion for the recommittal was 42 all, and on division the motion was defeated by 45 to 41.

**The Teaching of History**

History as taught in the primary schools was severely condemned in the report submitted to the conference by the Labour Educational League.

“We find in them”, says the report, “much that is relatively unimportant to an understanding of historical development, much that is misleading, because of one-sided presentation a facts; a great deal that is immensely significant has been excluded, and, to a large extent, there is a lack of scientific method in exposition, and a failure to show adequately the inter-relationship of social changes and events. None of the books we have examined attempts to give a connected account of the series of profound and often tragical social changes which make up the history of the great bulk the English nation during the period between the Renaissance and the twentieth century; nor do they show at all how the brilliant and ruthless achievements of the ruling class of England have been interdependent with the changing status of the workers. The authors devote much of their limited space to describing in detail the achievements of traders, adventurers, manufacturers, and military leaders. Most of their accounts do no justice to the point of view of other peoples with whom these came in conflict. And the pupil is left with the impression that the welfare of this small and fortunate section of society is the welfare of her whole nations, and its enemies the enemies of the whole nation. This assumption underlies a great deal of present education, not only in the teaching of history, and it is an attitude against which the Labour movement must set its face like flint.”

The conference adjourned until tonight.

**Day 6, Thursday, 12 April 1928**

**Labour Party. Former Communist unanimously admitted.**

**Revision of school history.**

The State conference of Australian Labour party last night decided unanimously to readmit Mr TG Payne, who opposed Dr Evatt as a Communist candidate at Balmain in the 1925 State elections

Delegates were unanimous as to his readmission, and the only point at issue which excited keen discussion was whether Mr Payne should be granted full continuity of membership.
It was pointed out by delegates that Mr Payne’s only crime was that he was “in advance” of the ALP movement, and that he would be an asset to the party. “Mr Payne is just the type of man that the movement requires”, said his sponsor, Mr H Sutherland (Engine drivers). “His only offence is that he has propagated revolutionary ideas. “The future belongs to the men of the type of Mr Payne. The movement would be well advised to readmit him and not to fight against the inevitable”. Mr Payne, in his appeal, said he would always advocate working class ideals. The only sin he had committed was that he had been more militant than a number of ALP members would desire. Because of his views he took up an attitude in opposition to them.

Nearly half the delegates were absent when the conference was continued at the Trades Hall last night. Because of the poor attendance it was an hour after scheduled starting time that the conference was commenced.

The chairman (Mr JJ Graves) announced that there was just one delegate present more than the rules required.

An application by Mr Hay Wilson for three years continuity in the party was referred to the appeals committee.

Mr J Mooney was given permission to address the conference on behalf of the Labour Educational League. He asked that immediate recognition should be given to the league by the Labour party. The league considered that the education system should be more in conformity with the principles of the Labour party. He contended that a teachers’ appeals board should be established, the decisions of which would be irrevocable.

Mr J Bourke suggested that the propaganda committee should include representatives from the Labour Educational League. He also contended that the objectives of the propaganda committee be extended to include the objectives of the league.

Mr McNamara (North Sydney) moved that the present school curriculum and system be amended in the direction of eliminating imperialistic bias and the substitution of instruction that will give an adequate conception of the place and struggles of the working class in history and in the society of today. For this purpose the motion suggested the appointment of an educational advisory committee to watch the interests of Labour in the primary and secondary schools, and to keep the party advised as to undesirable books and methods of teaching and matter taught.

The motion was carried unanimously.

**Appeal for Re-admission**

Mr TG Payne was given leave to appeal for readmission to the Labour party. Mr Payne explained that he opposed Dr Evatt, the selected Labour
candidate three years ago for the Balmain seat. Mr Payne said he stood as a Communist candidate, but had not been a member of the Communist party for six years.

It was decided to re-admit Mr Payne to the Labour party without continuity of membership.

A motion, moved by Mr AC Willis (Miners), providing for the pooling of the whole of the output of the coal mines, was carried unanimously.

Day 7, Friday, 13 April 1928


The ALP Conference, which was continued at the Trades Hall last night devoted most of the time of the session in considering alterations to the rules.

There were several disorderly scenes and little business was transacted.

The chairman of the appeals committee said that after investigation into the part taken by Mr Hay Wilson during the strike in South Africa in 1922 the committee felt that he had not acted against the interests of the Labour movement. A motion that Mr Wilson be given permission to address the conference was negatived, and an amendment carried that inquiry into his credentials should be instituted, and the result submitted to the next conference.

A motion was carried that the conference, at its rising tomorrow night, should adjourn until Easter, 1929.

A Disorderly Scene

The president, Mr J Graves, introduced a new method of maintaining order. About an hour after the conference commenced the interruption and noise became so incessant that the chairman adjourned the conference for five minutes, but the experiment did not have the desired effect. When the gathering reassembled there was a scene of confusion consequent upon a number of delegates endeavouring to have their proposals on the agenda paper discussed. Delegates, in their excitement, simultaneously addressed the conference, duet fashion, and the chairman, in his efforts to restore order, indicated that he would have to ask some members to leave the room. The chairman said that delegates had occupied too much time in discussing personal matters, and to enable progress to be made he intended to refuse to accept all motions for the suspension of the standing orders until all items on the agendas paper had been dealt with. In conformity with this Mr Graves rejected a motion, moved by Mr Bainbridge (Northern Miners), that 5 per cent of the salaries of State and Federal members be deducted to defray the
expenses of country delegates attending conference. A motion dissenting from the chairman’s ruling was negatived.

**Rights of Unions**

Delegates discussed at length a proposal that the Australian Union of Locomotive Enginemen, the ARU, and the Cranedrivers should be allowed to conduct their own selection ballots. It was contended that the same privileges should be accorded to all affiliated unions as were given the Miners and the Tramwaymen, who were able to vote in the selection ballots at the pit head, and tram depots respectively. Opposition to the proposal was based on the ground that the scheme, if adopted would sever the industrial wing from the political Labour wing, and would lend itself to corruption.

Mr JB Martin, general returning officer, in reply to certain delegates, said that there were rumours in circulation as to the conduct of certain unions in the Senate selection ballot. “If there is any truth in these rumours I will rule those ballots out”. The chairman pointed out that the proposal involved an alteration of the rules, and to become operative would have to be carried by a majority of the credentialled delegates.

During the debate a collarless, unshaven man in the public gallery made several interjections. He refused to leave the room, and was finally carried outside.

An alternative suggestion to the proposal under discussion was that all affiliated unions should be allowed to conduct their own selection ballots.

The conference approved the proposal to allow a limited number of unions to conduct their own selection ballots, and to give all affiliated unions the same right. As, however, the motions in favour of the proposals were not carried by the requisite majorities the chairman ruled that neither could operate.

The adoption of Item 5, providing for the readmission to the Labour movement of Mr Arthur Griffith, who was expelled because of his advocacy of conscription, was rigorously opposed, and the recommendation was lost on the voices.

The conference adjourned until 2 pm today.

**Day 8, Saturday, 14 April 1928**

**ALP Conference. Socialistic Planks Weakening Condemned.**

A protest against the action of the Federal conference in watering down the plank relating to the socialisation of industry was carried at the final session of the ALP conference.
It was decided that the conference should take action to have the
decision of the Federal conference rescinded.

Mrs Barratt (Northern group) moved that the Federal rules should be
so altered that the plank of the party could only be altered by the
majority vote of the State conference. This was carried.

(The decision of the Federal conference objected to by the State
conference on the grounds that it watered down the objective was really
a ruling by the Federal president [Mr J Kenneally] that no member of the
ALP could advocate Communistic policy. The State conference conten
ded that the ruling of Mr Kenneally prevented Labour members from
advocating the socialisation of industry which was a plank of the Labour
party’s platform.)

The extremists at the conference sought to have a motion adopted
that the ALP should attend the procession and mass demonstration on
May 1. The chairman (Mr Graves) ruled the motion out of order, and his
ruling was upheld by 24 to 23.

That the application of the tuberculin test to all cattle the milk and
products from which are sold for human consumption should be
compulsory, was a motion submitted by the Wollongong branch, and
carried.

A resolution carried at the country provincial conference, and ap
proved by the conference, directed Labour Parliamentarians not to attend
any secret session of Parliament, and also to be ready to give a true
account of their stewardship.

At the instance of the Wollongong branch a motion was carried that a
market bureau should be established to study supply and demand, and
that the next Federal Government be instructed to establish a Federal egg
pool.

“That all Labour members be asked to come before their constituents
at least twice a year during their recess” was a proposal which evoked
much discussion. It was eventually carried.

The Wollongong branch submitted: That the Labour party, if
returned to power at the next elections, should amend the Fair Rent Act
to provide that a landlord must apply to the Court before he can increase
the rent. The motion was carried.

Mr McPhee (Engineers) moved that the abolition of footboards on
trams and the gradual substitution of the corridor type of car should be
made a fighting plank of Labour’s platform. Mr E Cook (Tramways)
seconded the motion, which was carried.

Mrs Barratt (Newcastle) moved that the Garnishee Act should be
amended to leave an amount equal to the basic wage. Nurse Francis
seconded the motion, which was carried.

“That the whole of the Crown lands in New, South Wales be sub
divided for the purpose of erection of workers’ homes, and the scheme in
operation at the Maitland coalfields be applicable where necessary”, was the motion submitted by the Newcastle electorate council. It was carried.

The following motions were also carried:

That a commissioner be appointed for the Homes Department of the Government Savings Bank, and that the legal fraternity be excluded and the whole of the business be solely done through the commissioner.

That in the case of a civil servant retiring on a pension, he or his wife be not debarred from drawing, in addition, the old-age pension, at least to the extent of the basic wage.

That, in order to procure more reliable Labour supporters for appointment to the Legislative Council and other appointments, this conference resolves that the names of all applicants for Council and other appointments shall be submitted to electorate councils and unions, the president and secretary of the councils, and unions be empowered to call a meeting of the whole of the members, precedence being given to the persons polling the highest number.

**Country Delegates**

Claiming that the ruling faction of the ALP were endeavouring to ‘sabotage’ the country representatives, a number of delegates from country leagues refused to attend the concluding session of the conference. They remained in the corridors adjoining the conference hall, and aired their grievances to groups of ready listeners. It appears that they presented a request to the president, Mr JJ Graves, that the conference should give a definite decision on the question whether the expenses of the country delegates to the ALP executive should be paid. When the matter was not placed before the conference they claimed that the conference was in the hands of the metropolitan unions, and a number of them withdrew.

The outstanding feature of the concluding sessions was the lack of interest displayed by delegates. Although there were about 150 representative present when the conference opened the previous week, only 47 delegates attended the final session on Saturday night. The attendance at the afternoon session was only five, and the session was abandoned.

A motion was carried that all uncompleted business should be referred to the ALP executive.

Mr Chris J Kelly, delegate from Oatley electoral group to the ALP conference, made a statement at Thursday’s conference regarding trades unionists and the *Labour Daily*. Mr Kelly was reported to have said that there were 300,000 trades unionists in New South Wales and 18,000 read the *Labour Daily*. Mr Kelly says that the number of trades unionists who read the *Labour Daily* is 80,000, not 18,000, as reported.
CHAPTER 7
Australian Labor Party,
New South Wales Branch
Annual Conference,
29 – 31 March 1929

Report in The Sydney Morning Herald

One can detect that the Lang machine was already in election mode at the 1929 Conference and confident of victory. Almost no business was conducted and the meeting took only three days (allowing delegates to go to the races on Easter Monday!). No sign of disunity was allowed to develop. Part of the rationale given by the Executive was that the two preliminary regional conferences had done their work so well that there was little for the State Conference to do. However, it was almost certainly true that the Rural and Metropolitan Conferences had been stage-managed as efficiently as the State Conference.

The one matter of controversy that surfaced was some dissatisfaction with instances of graft in preselection ballots, leading to suggestions that these ballots should be abolished – with all decisions presumably to be made by the Executive. That proposal (originating from the radical left as a veiled criticism of Inner Group meddling) was not taken up, although the Inner Group would not hesitate to interfere, officially or unofficially, in any preselections not already sewn up.
Executive Report of NSW ALP for 1928-29

(Australian Labor Party, State of New South Wales, Executive Report)

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The 38th Annual Report and Balance-sheet of the Australian Labor Party, State of New South Wales, is hereby submitted for your consideration.

Since the presentation of the last report many of the old Branches have been reconstituted, and the following new ones brought into being:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metropolitan</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Bankstown.</td>
<td>Yerong Creek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carlton</td>
<td>Grahamstown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopetown</td>
<td>Paxton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Hill</td>
<td>Condobolin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Punchbowl</td>
<td>Carrathool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ariah Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rankin Springs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Galong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wombat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pelaw Main</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lake Cargellico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Darlington Point</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ardlethan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Whitton</td>
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</table>

Showing a Branch membership of 24,361, and a Union membership of 146,670. Total, 171,031, which, allowing for the 40,000 membership claimed by the AWU, and not represented, would make the total considerably over the highest ever recorded.

Executive Members

Mr W Webster (President), JJ Graves (Vice-President), G Mullins (Vice-President), Mrs Dunn, L Webster, S Green, Mrs F Barrett, P Geoghan, Mrs Webster, F Finnan, Miss Lee, JH Stone, M Manion, R Yates, H Knight, C Anderson, A O’Gorman, M Connaghan, W Fandlan, W Clementson, P O’Sullivan, M Ryan, F Morris, G Pickford, L Gill, J Stewart, J Hooks, J Bollard, W Jones, W Isley.
At the Easter Conference Mr JJ Graves was elected President in the place of Mr WM Webster, and Mr CE Martin was elected Vice-President in lieu of Mr G Mullins.

During the year Mr Cooper resigned and was succeeded by Mr Hill. Mr Fandlan was replaced by Mr Rose; Mr Roach taking the place of Mr Geoghan. Mr Dundon took the place of A O'Gorman.

**Executive Attendance**

The Executive during the year held in all fifty (50) meetings – general and special – the attendance being as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C Anderson</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Barrett</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Clemenson</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Dunn</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Fandlan</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Green</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Isley</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Knight</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Morris</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A O'Gorman</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Pickford</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Roels</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Stewart</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L Webster</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jas J Graves</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Mullins</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Geoghan</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Rose</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Martin</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JJ Bollard</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Connaghan</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J W. Cooper</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Finnan</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gill</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Hooke</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Jones</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss L Lee</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Manion</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P O'Sullivan</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Roach</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs W. Webster</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Webster</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MJ Ryan</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS Yates</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE Hill</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Dundon</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Country Provincial Conference**

The Country Provincial Conference of this year was held at Orange, opening on 25th January, 1929, and was presided over by the General President, Jas J Graves, and, notwithstanding the disastrous drought existing in the country, and the consequent lack of employment and the general depression existing owing to the apathy of the Nationalist Governments, and a general curtailment of expenditure upon public works and schemes for the advancement of the rural districts, the Conference was a great success, and during its two days’ sitting succeeded in dealing with the whole of the Agenda.

The political side was very strongly represented, twenty-two members of Parliament being in attendance. The leader of the Party, Mr JT Lang, attended the Conference throughout, and rendered material assistance and advice. The social side was very efficiently catered for.
The Mayor of Orange extended the visitors and delegates an official welcome to the town. The local branch of the ALP provided an excellent smoko-social, which deserves special mention, and was greatly appreciated.

**Metropolitan Conference**

The Metropolitan Conference met in the Trades Hall, Sydney, on 9th February, 1929, and finished a very lengthy Agenda on the 14th February. The Conference, which was presided over by the President, Jas J Graves, consisted of 170 delegates, and proved to be one of the best conferences ever held by the Movement. The whole of the 129 items listed upon the Agenda Paper received attention and very careful consideration. The very many amendments of the rules received the most careful scrutiny, and where found to be acting harshly or causing friction were recommended to Annual Conference for alteration in order to permit of the Movement’s general expansion and smooth working.

**Federal Elections**

During the year the Federal Elections were held, and, whilst the Party were not successful in gaining the Treasury Benches, the wonderful success achieved proves conclusively that the trend of public opinion has so changed that the Movement can, with all confidence, look forward to holding the power of Government in both Federal and State at the next appeal to the electors. The wonderful vote received by our Senate candidates, who were all returned by overwhelming majorities, proves conclusively that the State as a whole is thoroughly disgusted with Nationalist rule, and, in spite of the opposition of the official AWU, the Movement continues to make progress. Thanks to the wonderful spirit of self-sacrifice made by the members of the Movement, who, by their donations and services made it possible to provide and distribute campaign literature on a scale never before attempted, and it can be truly said that the success achieved was due solely to the efficient organisation and hearty cooperation of the Branches and Unions comprising the Movement.

Our report would not be complete if it did not make reference to the attack which has been launched against the hours and conditions of the Timber Workers, which strikes a vital blow at our industrial and political aspirations, and must be resisted with all the force at our command. In order to popularise our Movement and raise funds for fighting purposes, a May Queen Competition has been inaugurated to culminate in a May Day Ball to be held in the Paddington Town Hall on the night of May 1, at which the ALP May Queen will be crowned.

Your Executive, realising the vital necessity of rendering all the assistance possible to ameliorate the distress which, of necessity, must exist in
the ranks of the unfortunate comrades rendered idle by the capitalistic attack ably assisted by its henchman Judge Lukin, have decided to allocate the funds derived from the Queen Competition of 1929 to be distributed amongst the Timber Workers and kindred Unions affected, and sincerely trust that, with the willing patronage of the members of the Movement, and its supporters, a substantial sum will be raised.

As a result of resolutions carried at the AWU convention held at Coolangatta this year the Federal Executive were requested to endeavor to adjust the differences as between the AWU and the ALP Movement, and the following were the three points held to be in dispute:

All amounts advanced to the Executive by way of fees to be recognised as part payment of any fees due to the ALP, State of NSW.

1. Lifting of suspensions on members of the old Executive.
2. Payment of Worker account.
3. The Federal Executive met in Sydney on 27th February, 1929, and decided that the points referred to, be submitted to the Executive, requesting them to confer with a view of settling the matters in dispute.

The Executive met on Friday, 1st March, when the President of the Federal Executive was present, and explained the position from the Federal Executive’s viewpoint. After hearing the President, your Executive decided that the question of the AWU joining up with the ALP was similar to other Unions; that is, that they should become financial, and place all matters in dispute before Conference, where their delegates would be present to put their case for consideration, as Conference, being the supreme body, alone could finally determine all such matters. Conference having imposed the suspensions, the lifting of same could only be done by the same body.

The third point was a new one not previously raised. In the general interest of all concerned, it is hoped that the AWU will recognise the wisdom of linking up and consolidating our forces to meet the enemy now marching in mass formation to attack the workers.

With the view of establishing a fund for propaganda and fighting purposes, attention has been given to the raising of funds by making the May Queen Competition an annual function, and, in addition, with the loyal assistance of the Women’s Central Organising Committee, in arranging social gatherings and collecting together with a profit from the annual picnic, it is confidently anticipated that a substantial sum will be raised.

In concluding this report the Executive desire to thank the staff and all loyal workers for their attentive and valuable services rendered to the Movement, which materially assisted to facilitate the large amount of work encountered and accomplished during a most strenuous term.
Organising Secretary's Report

The organisational work of the Party during the year ending 1928 may be divided into three categories:

(1) Preparation and conducting of the selection ballots for the House of Representatives and Senate.
(2) The construction of our organisation for the Federal elections.
(3) The conducting of the Federal campaign.

The foresight of the Executive in moving the machine for the early conducting of the ballots and the selecting of certain seats for intensive organisation has been clearly demonstrated by the wonderful results at the Federal general elections. Many of the candidates had been campaigning months prior to the dissolution of the Parliaments.

During the months of February, May, June, July, itineraries were carried out in the Hume, Riverina, Macquarie, Werriwa and Eden-Monaro electorates. On each occasion members of the State and Federal Parliamentary Parties, as well as the candidates, accompanied me.

During these visits, Branches of the Party were formed, and where the conditions did not permit of the formation of Branches, Committees were formed. This enabled the Executive to compile a comprehensive list of reliable supporters in every important centre.

The organisations established in Barton and Lang were responsible for considerable intensive work. In Barton three groups of lady members of the Party were formed in the following centres: Rockdale, Hurstville and Oatley. These groups raised a sum of £80 for the Barton campaign funds.

The Federal Campaign was entered upon with the appointment of Mr EG Theodore MHR, as Campaign Director on the 3rd August, 1928. The work entailed in the preparation of the campaign was rendered all the more difficult because of the lack of funds.

The preparation of the itineraries, country and metropolitan, were my particular charge. The manner in which the members of the State Parliamentary Labor Party assisted in the Federal Campaign has no parallel.

This was accomplished by the spirit of cooperation existing between the ALP Executive and the State Parliamentary Labor Party.

Mr Scullin, MHR, warmly congratulated me on the wonderful assistance rendered by the State Parliamentary Labor Party, and expressed his sincere thanks for the splendid demonstration of Labor's solidarity manifested throughout his itinerary in New South Wales. He stated that the Sydney Town Hall meeting was a fitting climax to his successful NSW campaign.

During the year three State by-elections and the Federal General Elections were conducted. These campaigns have at least shown the value of intensive organisation. Parramatta by-election is an excellent example, the Nationalist majority being reduced from 3653 to 821. To
achieve this high degree of organisation a substantial fighting fund must be established. There should be at least £10,000 in the fund on the eve of the dissolution of the Parliament for general election purposes.

During the next recess of the Parliaments, arrangements will be entered into with members of the Parliamentary Parties to visit all the important centres of the State. The object of these visits is primarily to establish Branches and Committees for our next State campaign.

This Movement has neither time nor place for the pessimist. Our recent political achievements have been truly wonderful and give the lie direct to the pessimist. When the tocsin sounds for the next State General Elections, Labor’s army of workers will be legion. By untiring and united efforts Labor will achieve a decisive victory which will give our Parliamentary Leader, JT Lang, untrammelled opportunities to give effect to Labor’s humanitarian policy.

J Macpherson, Organising Secretary.

Annual Report of Parliamentary Proceedings

Activities of Federal Parliamentary Labor Party for Year Ending February, 1929

The year has been crowded with events which indicate a strong revulsion of public feeling against the Bruce-Page administration. The pressing claims of the community for improved industrial and social legislation have been utterly disregarded. The broken promises respecting child endowment, unemployed insurance, homes for the people and protection of Australian industries, have had a marked effect upon those who have previously supported the Composite Government. The Bruce-Page Government’s record has been noted for its coercive industrial legislation and partisan administration. The amendments to the Arbitration Act and the regulations under the Transport Workers’ Act are striking examples of the class legislation of the Government. The efforts made by the Party to resist the Government’s iniquitous legislation are well known to those who have closely followed the doings in Parliament. Despite our strong opposition, however, members alone count when the division bells ring.

During the last twelve months legislation dealing with the following matters was introduced and passed by the Government: Amended Arbitration Act, Sale of Commonwealth Line of Steamers, Land Tax Assessment Bill, Transport Workers’ Act. Public attention was drawn by the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party to the notorious Abrahams’ case, also the Government’s purchase of radium abroad. An item of legislation that the Labor Opposition was able to effectively expose and have withdrawn was the British Empire Exhibition Bill. Concerning most of these subjects you have had previous report which dealt specially with
such matters. They were also included in the policy speech of Mr Scullin, and from a thousand platforms explained at the recent Federal elections.

That the policy of Labor met with approval from a large section of the people was evident by the increased strength of the Party as a result of the general elections. The Federal Parliamentary Labor party increased its strength in the House of Representatives from 23 to 31 members, and now constitutes the largest individual party. Herewith is set forth a statement showing the position of each political party as indicated by the votes recorded last November throughout the Commonwealth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Labor</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Nationalist</th>
<th>Ind.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>604,272</td>
<td>200,089</td>
<td>330,837</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1,135,198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>427,079</td>
<td>86,729</td>
<td>344,206</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>858,014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>147,351</td>
<td>238,293</td>
<td>11,226</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>396,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>134,731</td>
<td>4,749</td>
<td>102,886</td>
<td>23,020</td>
<td>265,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Australia</td>
<td>75,735</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>385,870</td>
<td>160,900</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>33,250</td>
<td>56,209</td>
<td>89,459</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2,905,833</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the Federal Parliament has only been in session for one month since this altered position of parties, which clearly indicated the disapproval of the Australian public to the anti-working-class policy legislated for and administered by the Bruce-Page Government, they have so early proved their disregard for the very clear mandate thus expressed by the people and by their motion to disallow the Public Service Arbitrator’s Award as to Postal Workers, a very clear indication of their hostility to the principle of Arbitration and determination to lower living standards can be proven. Introducing the Amended Transport Workers’ Bill within this early period shows how anxious the Government is to continue with its policy of coercion, even to the point of vindictiveness, and this class of legislation must only have one result, namely, to disturb the relations in industry and import chaos and disturbance into the affairs of the community.

Members representing coal-mining districts have brought under the notice of the Government the serious condition of affairs and the unfair attitude of the coal-owners in association with Mr Bavin, State Premier for New South Wales, who, in their desire to reduce the cost of coal production, insisted upon certain reductions in the amounts earned by the coal miners, although the present basis of living represented in their wage standards is at the very lowest point. A Royal Commission was demanded to enquire into all phases of the industry, including profits and capital. Mr Bruce, recognising the unanswerable case that had been presented, indicated his willingness to appoint a Royal Commission to
enquire into those matters that had been the subject of representation by
the Coal Miners’ Federation in conjunction with their Federal Labor
representatives.

In this annual report it is necessary to indicate that in March of last
year Mr Matthew Charlton, who had served the Party with such distin-
guished merit and sincerity of purpose, tendered his resignation as
leader, owing to ill-health, and later indicated that it was not his
intention to seek re-election in the Federal Parliament. Mr Charlton,
during the long term of association with the Federal Parliamentary Labor
Party, had won the entire respect and confidence of his colleagues. He
undertook the position of leadership during what possibly will prove to
be some of the most difficult years in Labor’s history. He never faltered,
always loyal and devoted in the cause of Labor, he gave of his best, and
we here record a very sincere tribute of appreciation for his wonderful
services to the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party, and his kindly relation
with each and every member. Upon the resignation of Mr Charlton, Mr
JH Scullin, who had acted as deputy-leader, was elected to the position
vacated by Mr Charlton. Mr Arthur Blakeley was elevated to the position
of deputy-leader. Upon the re-assembling of Parliament after the elec-
tions of November last, Mr JH Scullin was re-elected to the position of
leadership, and Mr EG Theodore raised to the position of deputy-leader.
The Federal Parliamentary Labor Party now enters upon its work in the
new Parliament with renewed hope and encouragement, believing that
the prospects of Labor were never brighter. We appeal to the Movement
generally to display such interest in the political questions of moment
and the organisation of our Party that, when the next appeal is made,
whether it be early or late, we will be amply prepared to meet the
position to return a Labor Government to the National Parliament that
will replace the tyrannical laws passed by the present Government with
just and humane measures to he administered impartially.

JH Scullin, Leader.
Norman Makin, Secretary.

Report of State Labor Party

During the past twelve months the work of the Labor Party in the State
Parliament has been most effective in embarrassing and confusing the
Government, and so delaying the passage of much of the harmful
legislation which the Nationalists propose to introduce.

Our retarding influence has been manifest in the legislative sphere
only, but much harm to the workers has been done by the Government in
its acts of administration.

The outstanding feature of the Parliament has been the unity
prevailing within the Party itself, and the close attention to duty on the
part of all its members.
Our leader’s scathing attack on the Premier regarding his extraordinary attitude towards his fishing friend, Arnot, who was involved in the civic scandal, was a feature of the Parliament. The case was admirably prepared and was a most damning indictment of the Premier, showing the partial manner in which justice is handed out by the Nationals. It shattered the atmosphere of smug complacency surrounding Bavin, and has gone a long way towards destroying the effect of the newspaper propaganda of uprightness and honesty which they have endeavored to apply to him.

In conjunction with the organising officers of the Movement, the Party is engaged in the preparation of plans for a campaign of organisation and propaganda. It is confidently expected that this cooperation within the Movement will result in Labor having at the next election a better organisation than ever it has had before.

At the Parramatta by-election held at the beginning of the year, the Party reduced the Nationalist majority by 3000 votes – a really splendid achievement. The Parramatta result demonstrated two things – the first is that the Bavin Government has lost the confidence of the people, and that if it went to an election tomorrow it could not be certain of winning more than 25 seats. The second lesson which it taught us is that when Labor is united and all its sections are working in harmony, and it is ably led, our Party is almost invincible. At that by-election all the Parliamentary Party and all the Union officials threw themselves whole-heartedly into the campaign. It is many years since such unity in the Labor Movement prevailed at an election, and the result demonstrated what a tremendous factor is such a condition.

The immediate future in the State Parliament is a dark one for the people of this State. So far, our Party has been able to curb the Government. Whether our efforts to prevent Bavin from taking away the 44-hour week, reducing the basic wage, stopping the payment of family endowment, and taking away the main benefits from the Workers’ Compensation Act will be as successful during the next 12 months as they have in the period under review, is very doubtful.

We managed to delay the Loyalist Bill during three sessions, but the Government has succeeded in making that measure law, although the Act is considerably modified to what it was when the Government introduced it.

The outside influences controlling the Bavin Government are becoming impatient for the legislation which they expect Bavin to pass for them, and the Premier himself is becoming more vicious at the delay which the Labor Party’s tactics have imposed upon him. We must expect, therefore, that the Government will be even more ruthless between this and election day than it has been in the past.

W Davies, Secretary, State Labor Party
Annual Conference of NSW ALP, 1929

(The Sydney Morning Herald, 30 March and 1 April 1929)

Day 1, Friday, 29 March 1929


At the annual conference of the Australian Labour party yesterday, allegations were made that graft had been practised by members of the party, and the executive was instructed to appoint a special committee of inquiry.

The senior vice-president of the conference (Mr M Ryan) declared that even under the new rules preselection ballots were ‘crook’ and should be abolished.

Most of the morning session was devoted to the appointment of committees. Mr JJ Graves (president) was in the chair.

Those on the platform were: Messrs Theodore (deputy leader of the Federal Parliamentary Labour party), J West and J Tully, MsP, JM Baddeley (deputy leader of the State Labour party), B Olde, C Lazzarini, McGirr, J Tully, Dunn, Butler, and W McKell, MsLA.

Mr ER Voigt was again appointed minute secretary and Mr Pitt timekeeper.

Mr Pickford presented a report of the credentials committee showing that there were 148 delegates. In two or three instances credentials were withheld because of alleged irregularities. The report was adopted.

Disorderly Scene

During the election of an agenda committee Mr Deane (municipal workers), said that tickets were being run for official positions. “Here is one of them”, shouted Mr Deane, flourishing a printed form in his hand.

The chairman: The only difference is that one section has printed its tickets, and the other section has not.

Uproar followed when Mr Neilson (Miners) pointed to Mr Deane and charged him with running a ticket.

“I did not run one. I exposed it”, excitedly declared Mr Deane.
“Yes, you did”, said Mr Neilson, “and my organisation will not stand for it. If there is going to be any of this ticket business Bill Neilson will get out of it”.

Mr Graves: I intend to preserve order at this conference. If order is not maintained I will appoint a committee, and instruct it to prepare the business for conference.

Mr Mills (Waterside Workers): Good old Mussolini.

Mr Graves: I will order anybody out if I find he has anything to do with the running of a ticket.

The following agenda committee was eventually appointed: Messrs W Gibb, Nurse Francis, C Anderson, R King, and W Neilson.

Those appointed members of the credentials committee were: Messrs AC Willis (Miners), Sutherland (Miners), J Kilburn (Bricklayers), Pickford (Carpenters), and Lyons (Storemen and Packers).

Annual Reports

The annual report or the ALP executive submitted to the conference disclosed that the membership of the party in New South Wales was 171,031, exclusive of the 40,000 in the Australian Workers’ Union.

In consequence of a dispute between the AWU and the ALP the affiliation of the former organisation is at present in suspension. The union membership of the party is 146,670 and the branch membership is 24,361.

“While the party was not successful in gaining the Treasury benches in the recent Federal elections”, the report read, “the wonderful success achieved proves conclusively that the trend of public opinion has so changed that the movement can, with all confidence, look forward to holding the power of government in both Federal and State at the next appeal to the electors. In the general interest of all concerned it is hoped that the AWU will recognise the wisdom of linking up and consolidating our forces to meet the enemy now marching in mass formation to attack the workers”.

Mr W Davies, secretary of the State Labour party, in his report criticised the legislation of the State Government. “During the past 12 months”, the report reads, “the work of the Labour party in the State Parliament has been most effective in embarrassing and confusing the Government and so delaying the passage of much of the harmful legislation which the Nationalists propose to introduce. Our retarding influence has been manifest in the legislative sphere only, but much harm to the workers has been done by the Government in its acts of administration.”

The reports will be debated at a later stage in the conference.
**Sunday Sitting**

Mr J Hook (Ironworkers’ Union) moved that the conference should sit on Sunday. This, he said, would enable delegates to enjoy Monday as a holiday. The conference might conclude its business by Sunday night.

Several country delegates opposed the motion. They said that many desired to attend church or visit friends on Sunday.

Mr Neilson (Northern Miners) said that the last time a Sunday sitting was held the conference was an absolute farce. He felt absolutely ashamed of it, and was against the proposal.

Mr Hook, in reply, contended that many delegates went to the races on Monday, and the conference suffered as the result.

The motion was carried by 65 votes to 32.

The chairman, during a discussion on a motion for the adoption of the standing orders, ruled that rule No 7, which provides “that any delegate may move the suspension of the standing orders to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance not included on the agenda paper”, was out of order.

Mr Falkingham (Boilermakers) dissented from the chairman’s ruling. He maintained that the conference was really the ALP, and it should not preclude business of urgent public importance coming before the conference.

The chairman, in reply, said that anything of such importance would be brought before the conference by the executive.

When the vote was taken the deputy chairman, Mr M Ryan, declared that the chairman’s ruling had been upheld by 55 votes to 51.

It was further decided that a quorum of conference should be 50 members.

**Presidential Address**

The president (Mr JJ Graves), in welcoming the delegates, said that under the new rules the ALP had made wonderful progress. During the year, two very successful conferences were held, and although one of these was not largely attended, a large amount of business was done, and the result was that there were less than 100 motions on the business paper instead of 400 or 500, as at previous conferences. The balance-sheet showed that the organisation was stable financially, and that amply emphasised the fact that there was no need of tactics resorted to previously by certain people. Because of the increased efficiency of the organisations, it was able to put up a very great fight in the Federal election. If other States had done as well as New South Wales there would have been a Federal Labour Government. It was particularly noticeable, he said, that where the influence of the AWU was weakest, Labour’s strength was greatest.
Referring to a circular issued over the name of Mr Buckland, the president said it was a tissue of misrepresentation, and showed the discreditable tactics of the AWU in attempting to disrupt the Labour movement, and attacking Labour officials. The 1927 Easter conference had expelled certain AWU officials, because they had not carried out the expressed opinion of the rank and file of the movement. Mr Buckland had announced that he was doing all in his power for peace and harmony. Many people, however had their own opinion of Mr Buckland’s idea of peace. Since the AWU had severed its connection with the party, there had been more peace than ever before. Nevertheless the AWU officials could still re-enter the party by paying their fees and abiding by its regulations. There would be no back-door entrance. It would not be allowed to do anything any other affiliated body would not be allowed to do.

It was resolved to admit representatives of all newspapers except the Evening News and the Daily Guardian.

It was decided that nominations for the positions of State and Federal officers should close at 9 pm last night, and the ballot would be taken on Sunday. Mr JB Martin was elected returning officer, and Messrs Southern and Thompson were appointed scrutineers.

**Glebe Bribery Charges**

Mr Barker (Ryde) asked the organising secretary (Mr AJ Macpherson) for an explanation of his action in regard to the charges of bribery and graft. Was it a fact, he asked, that the organising secretary had deliberately planned with three other individuals to trap an alderman of Glebe Council?

Mr MacPherson said that he was willing that any action he had taken should be investigated by a committee, and later when the matter had been properly probed he would vindicate his attitude and his action. He did not want to see the name of the movement dragged in the depths of calumny.

**Support For Strikers**

Resolutions pledging the delegates to support, both morally and financially, the miners in the event of the employers making an attack upon their wages and conditions, and the timber workers and allied unions in their present industrial trouble were carried. It was also decided to demand a public inquiry into the coal industry, from the point of production to the consumer. Labour members were instructed to do everything in their power to assist the miners in the event of a crisis.

Speaking to the motion, Mr Southern (Illawarra mines) said that during the past year he had received the sum of £116 as wages. That was
for 12 months’ work. The average amount earned by miners on both the northern and southern coal-mining districts was much less than the basic wage.

Mr P Keller (Southern Miners) stated that at Mount Kembla colliery, where he was employed, the average wage earned by the employees during the past year was £5/13/ per fortnight. The company which owned this particular mine was able to ship coal 2/ per ton cheaper than any other colliery on the coast, yet the price was not reduced. The proprietors of the coalmines were not desirous of giving the public cheap coal.

Mr E Voigt (Northern Suburbs) announced that the miners’ representatives, if they cared to do so, could put their case before the public, by means of the Trades Hall Broadcasting Station 2KY.

**Selection Ballots**

Mr M Ryan (senior vice-president of the ALP) aroused a storm of protests when he declared that even under the new rules some preselection ballots had been ‘crook’ or failed. He said that it was impossible to make preselection ballots clean.

“We have had dispute after dispute before us, and we thought everything was clean and above board, and we gave our decision, and later found that some of the ballots were as ‘crook’ as any ever ‘faked’”, declared Mr Ryan. “It is no use tampering with the rules regarding selection ballots, for while a certain class of man and his supporters are desirous of securing a position, no rules or bars will hold them. They are like burglars, and nothing will stop them. The only way to clean up preselection ballots is to abolish them.”

Mr DW Dwyer (Public Utilities) said that Mr Ryan had slandered the movement. If he knew that ballots were ‘faked’ he should have told the executive.

Mr Connaghan (Shop Assistants) declared that he was a member of the executive, but he had no evidence whatever of there being a ‘crook’ ballot.

The discussion arose out of a motion moved by the metropolitan provincial conference that a special committee of conference should be appointed to go thoroughly into the matter of the future selection of ALP candidates.

The motion was carried. Miss Cunningham, and Messrs JJ Hook, T Falkingham, PG Hannett, and J Kilburn were appointed as a committee.

It was announced by the country delegates that they had nominated Mr Lockhart Easton (Mudgee), who opposed Dr Earl Page at the last Federal elections, as vice-president of the ALP.
Graft Charges

“That an investigation committee be set up by the executive to inquire into all charges of graft made against members of the ALP. Any member being proved guilty shall be expelled”. This was another motion submitted by the metropolitan provincial conference.

Mr M Ryan (vice-president) urged that the ALP executive itself should investigate the charges of graft. He pointed out that if a permanent committee were appointed the people under suspicion could “nose around and if possible nobble the committee”. “They will probably try to get this grand jury and give its members a ‘rake-off’”, said Mr Ryan.

The motion was carried.

A motion which had the object of compelling candidates for Parliament or municipal and shire councils to have three years’ continuity of financial membership with an ALP branch, and also an affiliated union before the date of election, was moved by Mr Thompson (Milk and Ice Carters).

He said that under the present rules there was nothing to prevent a Nationalist, who was a member of an affiliated union, contesting a selection ballot.

Mr Moate (Stewards) pointed out that the motion, if carried, would penalise members of a Labour league who belonged to a trade union organisation covering his calling, which was not affiliated with the ALP. He instanced the case of league members who belonged to unaffiliated bodies such as the Teachers’ Federation, and who, although good league members, would be debarred from nominating as candidates.

“It’s too silly and absurd for words”, was how Mr AC Willis, MLC, described the motion.

The motion was subsequently amended, making it optional for intending candidates to belong for three years either to a Labour league or a bona-fide trade union organisation.

On a division, the motion and amendment were defeated. In consequence rule 102 still stands. It reads as follows:

“No person shall be nominated as a candidate who has not been a financial member of a branch or affiliated trade union, or other affiliated organisation for three years immediately prior to nomination”.

Mr JJ Graves re-elected President

The returning officer (Mr Martin) announced that Mr JJ Graves was the only candidate for the position of president, and he declared him elected. Nominations received for the positions of vice-presidents wore Messrs L Easton, WA Jones, and MP Ryan, and those for the Federal executive were Messrs TL Falkingham, Fitzgerald, J Kilburn, Nurse Francis, and Mrs Lynch.
A motion that the rules of the Federal organisation should be amended to provide that in the event of any affiliated union not taking a Senate preselection ballot their members should be allowed to vote through the branch in the district they are members of was carried.

The conference adjourned until this morning.

**Day 2/3, Saturday/Sunday, 30/31 March 1929**


Unlike previous gatherings, which have lasted three weeks, the ALP conference came to a sudden conclusion last night. All the business was completed in three days.

Extremists suffered a reverse when the senior vice-president (Mr M Ryan) failed to secure reappointment.

The leader of the Opposition (Mr Lang) delivered an attack on the Premier (Mr Bavin).

Dozens of resolutions dealing with every phase of Labour activity were carried.

**Prohibitive Tariffs**

The conference approved of a prohibitive tariff being placed on all overseas goods that could be manufactured in Australia. A similar resolution was carried at the Metropolitan Provincial Conference.

It was also decided that an export duty should be placed on all hides and skins for the purpose of having them treated in Australia.

**Country Campaign**

An extensive country campaign on behalf of the Australian Labour party in New South Wales was outlined by Mr AJ Macpherson on Saturday.

It was the intention of the executive, Mr Macpherson said, to place the party on a sound scientific basis. Complete harmony existed between the State Parliamentary party and the executive, who would conjointly conduct the campaign. Federal Labour members would also cooperate in the campaign of reorganisation in the country electorates.

Mr Macpherson’s remarks were made following the submission of two motions from the Metropolitan Provincial Conference, to the effect that members of Parliament should be required to work in conjunction with the organising secretary, addressing meetings and organising in the electorates during recess, and that they should be required to address their constituents at least twice yearly. The motions were carried.
Commonwealth Line Sale

A resolution expressing the indignation of the conference at the ‘base betrayal’ of the primary producers of Australia by the sacrifice of the Commonwealth line of ships to the international shipping combine was carried. The conference also unanimously passed a resolution “viewing with the greatest alarm the proposed increase of oversea freights, which, if imposed, will be an intolerable burden upon our already overburdened primary producers”.

More Liberal Pensions

The conference confirmed a recommendation from the Metropolitan Provincial Conference that the Federal Labour party should seek at the earliest opportunity a revision of the Invalid and Old Age Pensions Act, with a view to eliminating existing anomalies.

This question had been before the Federal Parliament on more than one occasion, said Mr Theodore, MP, who promised definite action in the next session. It was impossible to bring the matter before the last short session, he said, though Labour members were definitely of the opinion that the provisions of the Act should be liberalised.

A meeting of Opposition members had definitely formulated a policy in regard to these pension provisions before last session, said Mr Theodore.

The conference decided against Labour members of Parliament meeting political opponents in secret for the discussion of political or industrial matters. The conference also registered an emphatic protest against Parliamentarians pledging themselves to secrecy at such conferences.

Radio Monopoly

It was a most outstanding fact that wireless oversea transmission should be in the hands of a monopoly, said Mr E Voigt, who moved: “That beam and radio transmission be nationalised and operated wholly in the interests of the people of Australia by the Government, and a private monopoly be not permitted”. The motion was carried.

Liquor Trade Control

A resolution instructing “the next Labour Government” to give prominence to the nationalisation of the liquor trades, and that the provisions of the Early Closing Act should apply to all hotels was carried by a substantial majority.
Conference decided to instruct the next Labour Government to institute a tax on the public for the purpose of establishing hospitals and sanatoriums.

**Executive to Revise Bills**

The necessity for closer coordination between the executive and Ministers in charge of bills before Parliament was mentioned by Mr Falkingham (Iron Trades), who moved that the executive of the ALP appoint a committee to revise and harmonise bills after the second reading in Parliament, the sub-committee to be revisory and advisory only.

Mr Lang said that the motion as it stood would be harmful to a Labour Government. The business of Parliament would be delayed while a bill was being revised. It was then suggested that the motion should be altered to provide that the bills should be submitted to a committee as soon after drafting as possible. The motion was carried in its amended form. Mr A Griffith was refused readmission to the party, after a lively debate, during which there were several stormy scenes, resulting in the ejection of some delegates.

A motion in favour of the registration of barmaids was defeated after a spirited discussion in which several women delegates participated.

**Propaganda Fund**

A scheme for the establishment of a propaganda fund was submitted by Mr J Hook (Iron Trades). It provided that the objects of the fund would be to give financial assistance to members of the Parliamentary Labour parties and lay members of the party undertaking country itineraries as arranged by the executive.

It was proposed that the fund be raised by requiring each Labour member of Parliament to contribute half per cent of his salary. In addition all salaried officials of the unions were to be requested to subscribe half per cent of their salary, and the members of the unions would be exhorted to contribute to the fund.

An amendment moved by Mr Ward (Surry Hills) was to the effect that 10 per cent be levied on the salaries of all Labour members of Parliament and trade union officials in excess of £301 per annum. It also suggested the raising of the per capita fee from 4d to 6d.

The amendment was defeated, and the motion was carried by 63 votes to 30.

In reply to Mr Willis the president (Mr JJ Graves) said that the scheme was quite voluntary, and if members of Parliament and trade union officials refused to pay the levy the ALP could not compel them to do so.
This announcement was greeted by loud laughter, jeers, and shouts of “What’s the use of it?”

**Voted At Hotel**

Allegations that he had to record his vote outside an hotel at a recent State selection ballot were made by Mr Ward (Surry Hills).

Voices: Why did you go there?

Mr Ward: I had to chase the returning officer there.

The speaker said the movement could hardly talk about clean ballots when a tramway returning officer at a selection ballot could place the ballot papers in his pocket, and an elector had to follow him into hotels to get a ballot paper.

This statement followed the submission of a motion that all unionists should have the right to vote in the same manner as the miners and tramway men in the selection ballots. Mr Ward said it was far better to leave the ballot to the active members of a union than to hand it over to the union officials, who were potential politicians.

Mr Lang said that the motion, if carried, would be an important step towards abolishing the Labour leagues, which the movement in this State could not do without.

The further discussion was deferred until the committee appointed by conference to report on the question of selection ballots made its report.

“It is high time the Labour party became honest with itself. You say teach working class ethics, and this boils down to the socialisation of industry, and that is what we desire to teach the children”, said Mr H Cook (Canterbury Group) when it was moved that the ethics of trade unions and working class economics be taught in public schools.

The motion was carried.

**Weekly Basis For Awards**

A motion that the next Labour government should place all awards on a weekly basis was submitted by the Metropolitan Provincial Conference.

Delegates explained that in certain unions men discharged or put off during the week were paid only for the actual time they worked. Under a weekly hiring system such men would be paid for the remainder of the week. The motion was carried.

Delegates decided that ex-Government employees retired on pensions of £4 per week or more should not be allowed to accept employment to the detriment of the unemployed.
Rail and Tram Examinations

The conference resolved to direct the next Labour Government to introduce a measure providing for the abolition of periodical staff examinations of employees of the Government railways and tramways.

Child Slavery Alleged

“Shocking condition of child slavery exists in the milk industry”, said Mr Thompson (Milk and Ice Carters), when he moved that the principle of child labour be applied to all industries.

Under present conditions, he declared, hundreds of children rose at midnight, and worked till school time, and then went to school, where they slept part of the day. Some of them rarely washed, and in certain areas the milk was produced and distributed under dreadful conditions.

Mr M Ryan said that the most practical way to prevent child slavery was to increase the compulsory school age to 16 years, and to give child endowment for children up to that age.

Mr Lang counselled that great care should be exercised in making any proposal to increase the school age or the age for endowment. “First get your Labour Government”, he said.

The motion was carried.

Labour Colleges Advocated

The question of the establishment of a residential college to teach economics and political science was considered by delegates at the suggestion of Mr Saidy (Wollongong) who said the working class must be taught economics.

Mr McNamara (North Sydney group) moved that Labour colleges should be established to teach economics and other allied subjects, and that all school teachers with Labour principles be instructed by conference to teach on the basis of the class struggle. This was carried.

A further resolution that children be taught the details of the working and the election of State and Federal Parliaments and municipal councils was carried, but delegates unanimously voted against a motion to ask State school teachers not to have children in school before or after the specified hours.

Mr Lang’s Address

The usual address delivered at the conference by Mr Lang, leader of the Opposition, was characterised by a bitter personal attack upon the Premier (Mr Bavin), whom he alluded to as a “publicity hunting hypocrite”.

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Time had more than vindicated his forecast when he addressed the last conference, said Mr Lang. Then he had predicted a period of “strife and stress and hardships” in the industrial life of the people. The cause for this depression Mr Lang attributed to the fact that dominant power in both Federal and State political circles was in the hands of men aligned definitely against the Labour movement and the ideals upon which it was founded.

Mr Lang made special reference to the Workers’ Compensation Amendment Bill, a measure which, he said, “sucked the life blood of the injured and emaciated of our Industrial life”. It was a bill, said the leader of the Opposition, which had been instigated by inhuman greed, regardless of human agony. It was this bill, above all others, which made the Bavin Government “hateful in some respects, despicable in others, and meanly contemptible in all”.

Mr Bavin had purported to give the people something they already had, but took the rights of hundreds of children. The bill reeked with deception and imposture. If it ever again saw the light of day he would expose it in all its baseness, its brutality, is deception. For the present it was dead, but its memory, according to Mr Lang, stank in the nostrils of all decent people.

**Public Servants’ Rights**

The rights of the Federal and State public servants were discussed, and it was decided to add to the ALP rules and fighting platform planks providing that Federal public servants should have full rights under the Arbitration and Trade Union Acts, that they have the power to proceed against the departments for breaches of arbitration awards, and that both State and Federal public servants be allowed full rights to contest Parliamentary and Local Government elections, and that efforts be made to reduce the number of temporary and exempt employees.

**Mr MP Ryan Defeated**

The ballot for appointment of two vice presidents resulted: Messrs L Easton (Mudgee) 111, W Jones (Clothing Trades) 87, M Ryan (Storemen), 48. Messrs Easton and Jones were elected as senior vice-president and junior vice-president respectively.

Mr Ryan held the position of senior vice president last term, and his defeat constituted a severe reverse for the Communists, for whom he acted as spokesman.


Labour Daily

A move to have altered the representation of the various organisations on the board of directors of the Labour Daily to provide that unions should be allowed one director for the first £5000 or part thereof invested in the paper was defeated, as also was an effort to levy an affiliation fee of sixpence per unionist per quarter for the paper.

Educational Conference

The conference adopted a resolution that the Federal executive of the Australian Labour party should be asked to convene an All-Australian educational conference as soon as possible.

“We must capture the school children’s minds”, said Mr W McNamara, supporting the motion. “They are now being taught along lines of making them good Nationalist voters”. Because hotel proprietors were employers Mr Whelan (Liquor Trades) moved that no member of the United Licensed Victuallers’ Association should be eligible for membership of the ALP.

The motion was defeated.

On the question of immigration, the conference resolved, (a) that immigrants should be submitted to no dictation test other than in English, (b) that migrants should be subject to rigid health inspection at point of embarkation. The conference later agreed to a proposal to suspend all immigration schemes, Dreadnought scheme included, for a considerable period.

Another proposal accepted was that the Government should allocate suitable land and accommodation for the unemployed in the various electorates.

The conference concluded with cheers for the Labour party.
CHAPTER 8
Australian Labor Party,
New South Wales Branch
Annual Conference, 18 – 26 April 1930

Report in The Sydney Morning Herald

At the time of this Conference the Labor Party had been successful at the Federal election of October 1929, and was facing the prospect of a State election (October 1930) with great confidence. The confidence was justified by the Federal results, where Labor candidates had won a remarkable 20 of the 28 NSW seats available, and effectively assured the party of a strong majority in the 75-member House of Representatives. (This reliance on NSW had its obvious negative side when Lang helped to split the party; at the next election in December 1931 the combined total of Federal Labor and Lang Labor seats in NSW was only 7 out of the 28 seats. Labor could not hope to win Federal elections without a strong showing in NSW.)

Debate at this conference was more divisive, and more drawn out, than in 1929. There was disagreement about preselection ballots, the dismissal as Organising Secretary of AJ Macpherson who had fallen out with the Inner Group, and over the attitude to adopt with regard to persuading the AWU to rejoin the party. One of the differences from 1929 was that Jock Garden, who had been readmitted to the party in that year, was now at the centre of debate and control of the numbers for the Inner Group.

The alienation of the AWU clearly deprived the NSW Labor Party of considerable financial resources in an election year. The sticking point for many Conference delegates was the decision taken by Conference, and sponsored by the Inner Group, that the AWU would need to pay the three years of back fees since it had withdrawn from the party. A formal conciliation meeting between the Executive and the AWU during the Conference was unable to arrive at any compromise acceptable to both sides. Good will was lacking on both sides.

One sad event at Conference related to the decision firstly to readmit Arthur Griffith to membership of the party, and then later to reverse the decision. He was a foundation member of the Labor Party, was one of the outstanding Ministers in the McGowen and Holman Labor Governments between 1910 and 1916, and had been expelled for advocating conscription.
He had not joined Holman's Nationalists, although he had contested seats as an Independent Labor candidate. During the 1920s, unsuccessful applications from Griffith for readmission were almost an annual event at successive Conferences. In 1930 the Conference at first voted to accept him back, and then next day reversed the decision. Jock Garden voted with the majority on both occasions. Griffith was welcomed into the Federal Labor Party in 1931 and, not surprisingly, became a bitter enemy of Lang.

Executive Report of NSW ALP for 1929-30

(Mitchell Library Manuscripts, 329.3106/3)

Australian Labor Party, State of New South Wales
Executive Report, 1929-1930

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The 39th Annual Report and Balance Sheet of the Australian Labor Party, State of New South Wales, is hereby submitted for your consideration.

Since the presentation of the last report, the Movement has gone through a strenuous period, and notwithstanding the depression and appalling lack of employment, wonderful progress has been made and is indicated by the large number of new branches which have come into existence and herein set out:

Metropolitan

Park Town
Toongabbie
Burwood
Darlington
Blues Point
Sans Souci
Waverley West
Randwick North
Parramatta
Moorefield
Gordon
Yagoona
Blakehurst
St George
North Lidcombe

Hunter’s Hill
Eastwood
Rydalmere
South Hurstville
Edgecliff
Stanmore
North Marrickville
Enmore
Thornleigh
West Kogarah
South Campsie
Carramar
Pitt Row
Naremburn
Whilst the re-allocating of the boundaries, owing to the ninety electorate districts being brought under revision by the Commissioners appointed to carry out the work of redistribution, necessitated the formation and readjustment of many branches, the total number formed during the year is a striking example of the progress made by the Movement, particularly in the country area.

Owing to the redistribution, many changes have taken place in the naming of the electorates, and whilst the number of seats remain the same as heretofore, the country has benefitted at the expense of Newcastle and the Metropolitan area, and there is little doubt that the intention of the Party in power was to do their utmost to prejudice the chances of Labor; just how far they will meet with success will remain to be seen when the people are again called upon to make their choice of persons to represent them in the Legislative Hall of the State.
Executive Members

President, JJ Graves; General Secretary, S Bird; Organising Secretary, AJ Macpherson; Vice-Presidents, L Easton and WD Jones, C Anderson, Mrs F Barrett, F Bell, R Black, W Browne, F Briggs, J Carley, AE Charters, M Connaghan, D Cunningham, G Gibson, S Green, EA Hill, F Hutt, EA Knock, A Luchetti, Mrs J McGowan, H O'Regan, G Pickford, A Pitt, F Roels, F Saidy, F Simpson, J Smithenbecker, W Swadling, R Tucker, W Wolstenholme.

During the year Mr L Easton resigned the position as Vice-President, and Mr WD Jones was elected Senior Vice-President, and Mr J Smithenbecker as the second Vice-President. Mr F Roels was granted leave of absence and Mr G Sinclair acted in his place.

Executive Attendance

The Executive during the year held twenty-seven (27) general meetings and five (5) special meetings, the attendance being as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>JJ Graves</td>
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<td>S Bird, Gen Sec.</td>
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<td>AJ Macpherson, Org Sec.</td>
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<td>C Anderson</td>
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<td>F Briggs</td>
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<td>W Browne</td>
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<td>Mrs Barrett</td>
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<td>M Connaghan</td>
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<td>J Carley</td>
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<td>S Green</td>
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<td>G Gibson</td>
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<td>F Hutt</td>
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<td>EA Hill</td>
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<td>WD Jones</td>
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<td>EA Knock</td>
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<td>A Luchetti</td>
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<td>Mrs J McGowan</td>
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<td>H O'Regan</td>
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<td>G Pickford</td>
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<td>F Roels</td>
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<td>W Swadling</td>
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<td>J Smithenbecker</td>
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<td>(Sick Leave)</td>
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<td>R Tucker</td>
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<td>A Wolstenholme</td>
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<td>R Black</td>
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<td>F Saidy</td>
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<td>G Sinclair</td>
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The Bruce-Page Government having decided to go to the country on the 12th of October upon the question of Arbitration necessitated selections being made by the Executive for seats not contested at the General Election; no opposition being given to North Sydney, Richmond, Warringah and Wentworth. Unfortunately the candidate selected to oppose Earl Page for the Cowper seat neglected to lodge his nomination in time, which allowed Earl Page to be returned unopposed.
A Campaign Committee was formed with EC Theodore as Campaign Director, and the Organising Secretary, AJ Macpherson as assistant.

The fact of only having six weeks in which to make the necessary preparations necessitated a 'whirlwind' campaign, and with limited time at our disposal and vast areas to be covered it was impossible to reach all of the electors with speakers, so an intensive and expensive literature distribution was initiated, such as had never been attempted in the history of the Movement; the posters were most original and attractive, and literature, under the control of JB Martin was distributed by the ton to every nook and corner of the State, assistance being also given to the other States.

Valuable aid and monetary assistance was rendered by the industrial wing, a strong committee acting in the Trades Hall kept in constant contact with the electors by providing speakers and placing Union Organisers, together with their cars, at the disposal of the Movement. This committee, together with the Branch Officers and members, comprised a complete and scientific form of organisation, the like of which the Movement had never experienced, and was responsible for the wonderful success achieved, the figures showing remarkable results. Out of the twenty-eight seats in this State, we contested twenty-three and won twenty, whilst in the other three we polled an outstanding vote, as against the previous election, our candidates being just beaten by small majorities, which would have been reversed if a few more weeks campaigning had been possible, this State being responsible for the placing of a Labor Government in charge of the Federal sphere, where Nationalism had ruled for thirteen years.

It must be apparent to the most casual observer that a remarkable revulsion of feeling had taken place since the general election last year, giving a mandate to the Federal Government to uphold the principle of Federal Arbitration and to so amend the Act as to make it possible to have justice meted out to the workers, which we trust will be done.

Notwithstanding the fact the AWU is not affiliated, considerable and beneficial assistance was forthcoming from members of that organisation, and whilst the amount of money which would be available if they affiliated would be helpful, the Movement has managed to keep its head above water without it, but it must be patent to all that a united front must be shown to Labor's enemies if success is to be achieved.

The Timber Workers' splendid fight to maintain a decent standard of living must meet with the admiration of everyone who desires to see decent living conditions existing in Australia.

Special note is made regarding the splendid response by the Unionists and general public, which made it possible to hand over a considerable sum to the disputes committee of the Trades and Labor Council as per balance sheet.
On the top of the attack launched in the timber industry comes the spectacle of the lock-out of the Northern Miners by the owners of the wealthiest and greatest revenue producing mines in the Commonwealth, and the significant fact that the State Government is aiding and abetting to crush the spirit of one of the greatest fighting units in the State must appeal to workers and the community in general; that an organised attempt is being made to bring the Australian workman to the level of the Asiatic races.

“Hands off our living standard” must be the slogan of every workman, small business man and each and every person with Australia’s interest at heart; the appalling spectre of unemployed workmen stalking our land is the greatest tragedy ever enacted by a sinister and callous Government, who designedly or by sheer ignorance is rushing headlong to a financial crisis.

Country Conference
The Annual Provincial Conference was held at Orange, commencing on the 25th of January, 1929, at which an agenda paper consisting of 48 items relating to country interests was dealt with and forwarded for consideration of Annual General Conference.

The popularity and importance of the Country Conferences is becoming manifest by the interest shown in the business submitted and the manner in which the subject matters are handled and debated by men conversant with their subject, and are tending to create a keen interest in the Movement’s activities pertaining to matters affecting country interests.

Metropolitan Conference
The Metropolitan Conference opened at the Trades Hall, Sydney, on the 9th of February, 1929, and was largely attended, and an agenda paper comprising 129 items was submitted for discussion, and many important and far-reaching items were agreed upon in the interests of the industrial wing of the Movement, and the popularity and interest displayed by the delegates representing the Trade Union Movement augurs well for the prospects and prosperity of the Labor Movement.

The Education Branch of the Movement is catered for and receiving the earnest and intelligent attention of a Committee who are devoting their time and attention to improving the important subject of education, and have submitted many items of educational reform for the consideration of Annual Conference.

In furtherance of advancing the Movement’s Education Policy, speakers’ classes have been formed in almost every centre of the Metropolitan area under the able tutorage of Mr JC Eldridge, who has successfully contested the Martin seat in the Federal sphere, and the benefits to be
derived from such classes will be fully demonstrated in the near future by the pupils’ ability to put the case for Labor intelligently before the public from the Party’s platform.

In concluding the report mention must be made to the loyal and untiring efforts of the staff to carry on the work of the Movement which is ever increasing, and the faithful discharge of their onerous duties have earned the best thanks of the Movement, also the very many and too numerous to mention members of voluntary workers who each, year faithfully and earnestly assist in carrying on the noble work deserve the best thanks the Movement can bestow.

JJ Graves, President.
S Bird, General Secretary.

Organising Secretary’s Report

In submitting my report to Annual General Conference, it affords me pleasure to relate the manifold activities that engaged my attention during the past year.

During the month of February, in conjunction with Martin Flannery, MLA, the following centres were visited: Narrandera, Yenda, Griffith, Darlington Point.

It was during this itinerary that the Parramatta State Electorate became vacant by the death of the Hon Albert Bruntnell, MLA.

The General President recalled me by urgent wire to prepare the Party’s organisation for the by-election. Mr J Hook was the candidate and W Ely, MLA, was appointed Campaign Director. The wonderful support accorded by the Trade Unions’ Secretaries and Organisers, who systematically canvassed the electorate and unstinted services by a large army of voluntary canvassers is now a matter of history. The assistance available with regard to cars, door knockers, and at the polling places, astonished everybody. With all this extraordinary effort that had been made, it was anticipated that the organisation on the day of election would have been efficient and complete. To the utmost disgust of those who journeyed to Parramatta to give Labour a hand to win, it was found that there was an entire collapse of organisation.

In spite of these distressing circumstances, the candidate was defeated by little more than 800 votes.

Following hard upon the Parramatta by-election, my attention was directed to what may be regarded as the first attempts by the ALP in the organisation of relief on behalf of the working class engaged in a struggle against the wage reductions.

The Rozelle East Branch the ALP was responsible for the following resolution, moved by Mr AW Walker and seconded by Mr Chas. Westrup: “That this League appoint three delegates to seek the cooperation of Balmain Branch to assist raise funds for the Timberworkers”.

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Credit then, should be given to the members of the Rozelle East Branch of the ALP for the commencement of a work that helped materially not only to strengthen the morale of the picket lines, but also it gave the strike committee an opportunity to test the merits of industrial as against political action.

Strong efforts were made by Mr J Kavanagh, a prominent member of the Communist Party and other supporters of the Communist Party to place every obstacle in the way of the ALP Relief Committees. In spite of this opposition, depots were established in the following districts: Annandale, Auburn, Balmain-Rozelle, Botany, Bankstown, City, Concord, Drummoyne, Enmore and Districts. Five Dock, Glebe, Gladesville, Campsie, Kogarah, Lakemba, Mascot, North Leichhardt, Newtown, Newtown-Erskineville, North Sydney, Oatley, Pyrmont, Paddington, Parramatta, Redfern, Ryde, Rockdale, Randwick and Districts, South Annandale, Leichhardt, Granville.

The work of the depots was carried out by a comparatively handful of women with the assistance of a less number of men. In some centres the work ultimately fell upon two or three ladies possessing the stoutest hearts.

The regimen provided at the Randwick Depot for a man, wife and one child was as follows: Half bar common soap; 1 block bath soap (extra where baby, one); 6 packages soap powders; 1 doz. matches; 2 tins milk (1 Gold Medal); ½ lb. blue label tea; 1 lb. salt; 1 lb. sago, 1 lb. rice; 1 lb. oatmeal; 1 lb. barley; 2 lbs. flour; 1½ lbs. butter; 2 lbs. peas, 7 lbs. potatoes, 2 lbs. onions; 3 lbs. swedes, 3 lbs. pumpkin; 1½ lbs. carrots; 1½ lbs. parsnips; 1 large cabbage; 12 lbs. meat approx; 7 loaves bread, 1½ 1bs. jam. Extras such as malt food and groats supplied when required.

This serves to show the high degree of organisation reached by our depots. I have not the complete data to hand to estimate fully the total value in pounds sterling of relief distributed at our depots. The value of relief distributed at the ALP Relief Depot during the Timber Workers’ struggle is estimated at £20,000 to £30,000. The following reports of some of the committees will indicate the degree of gratitude this Party owes to those who assisted with the work of the ALP Relief Committees.

*Balmain Committee*
Mrs M Houghton, President; Mr B Tatham, Hon Sec., donations of goods and cash, £3,000.

*South Annandale-Leichhardt.*
Mrs M. Powell, President; Mrs A. Hudson, Secretary. This depot distributed food to the value of £1000.

*Glebe Depot*
Mrs Webb, President; Mrs Dunn, Sec. £800 worth in cash and groceries.
Enmore
Mrs Scott, President; Mrs SE Davies, JP, Hon. Sec. This depot received £451/11/6 worth of goods from friends and business people in the district. The committee also raised £564/14/9 by functions, making a total value of goods distributed, approximately £1017.

Lakemba
Mrs J Failey, President; Mrs VJ Ellis, Secretary. This depot distributed relief to the value of £900.

Auburn
J Webster, President; Cliff Brown, Hon Sec. This depot distributed £756 worth of food.

Gladesville
Mrs H Hubbard, President. The Gladesville depot distributed relief to the value of £502.

Before I leave the work of the Relief Committees, I desire to express my sincerest thanks to the members of the Relief Committees for the excellence of their services to Movement.

The May Queen Competition also came within the scope of my activities. This competition was designed to promote social activities in the Party as well as engendering keen rivalry between the various competitors to provide fighting funds. However, these funds were employed to provide assistance to the Timber Workers as well as the Miners. A sum approximating £1000 was raised. This sum was further augmented by another £1649 by dances, house parties, and collecting boxes, etc., thus enabling the Party to advance £1000 to the Timber Workers, and £383 to the Miners.

Orders for boots and shoes, clothing, lactogen, and financial assistance to the depots were given to the value of £1230.

My time was taken up exclusively in relief work from the beginning of March until the eve of the Federal General Elections. The executive accepted the entire responsibility of my determination to devote my time wholly to relief work.

A crisis in the Federal Parliament came, with an attempt by the Bruce-Page Government to jettison the Federal Arbitration Court.

The importance of this crisis to the workers of this country cannot be over estimated. Particularly, since it came when a collapse of the Timber Workers’ lockout seemed imminent.

The dissolution of the House of Representatives was hailed with acclamation. This gave the Australian Labor Party its first real opportunity to rally the masses round an issue, Arbitration, that was fundamentally their own creation.

On the eve of this crisis I had arranged a meeting of the Trades Union Secretaries’ Association, through its president, O Schrieber, to discuss ways and means to assist in the Ashfield by-election.
It was during these discussions the news came that Bruce had obtained a dissolution of the House of Representatives. Immediately the Trade Union Secretaries’ Association formed a campaign committee, coopting representatives of the Labor Council.

The Trade Union Secretaries’ Campaign Committee met daily in my office. This committee was divided into four sub-committees: (1) Eight Hours demonstration display. (2) Domain Rally. (3) Lunch Hour Meetings. (4) Finance.

Great credit, then, is due to this committee, so ably presided over by O Schrieber, President, and J Flanagan, Sec.

The assistance of the Trade Union Secretaries’ Campaign Committee gave a wonderful momentum to the General Campaign and helped materially in the results achieved.

The achievements of the General Campaign, which was ably directed by the Hon EG Theodore, MHR, Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Australia, were beyond the most sanguine expectations. The following seats, Gwydir, Parkes, Calare, Eden-Monaro, Martin, Parramatta, were won. The seats of Parkes, Martin, Eden-Monaro and Parramatta had never previously been held by Labor. Another 600 votes and Labor would have won Robertson.

The Executive appointed me as Deputy Campaign Director.

Immediately following the Federal General Elections, itineraries were conducted to the following centres: Yass, Galong, Booroowa, Binalong, Young, Grenfell, Cowra, Wattamondara, Wyangala Dam, Woodstock, Canowindra, Eugowra, Forbes, Parkes, Orange, Condobolin, West Wyalong, and a large number of smaller places. All these were visited from October 15th to December 15th. Messrs D Clyne, MLA, PE Coleman, and J Cusack, MsHR, were associated with me during these itineraries.

The return of a Federal Labor Government has affected a tremendous change in Country Electorates. This will help greatly the task of organisation for the coming Federal Referenda, as well as for the referendum on the Proposed Reformation of the Legislative Council. This measure Labor must strenuously oppose.

The work of the ALP Speakers’ class movement is fully reported upon by Mr JC Eldridge, MHR.

During the year many new Branches were formed. It has been a year of extraordinary activity with splendid results achieved.

AJ Macpherson, Organising Secretary.

Report of State Labour Party

The legislation passed during the past twelve months has been of a most calamitous nature.
Despite the pre-election promises of its Leader, the Bavin Government took the first step towards its objective of abolishing the basic wage altogether by depriving the rural workers of a basic wage and all awards of the State Arbitration Court. Those workers for whom the basic wage was retained had to take a reduction. The Court, which the Nationalist Government appointed originally, reduced the wage to £3/12/6 a week. The intensive fight put up by the Labor Party, together with the clamor from the general public, was too strong for the Government, and ultimately an Act was passed making the reduction less than that awarded by the Court.

Nothing so cruel has ever been perpetuated by any Government as Bavin’s amendment to the Widows’ Pension Act. It virtually destroyed the whole purpose of that measure which was to enable the widow to keep her family and children in their own home. Where Bavin’s amendment does not actually cancel the Widow’s Pension, it so reduces it that the widowed mother is compelled to break up her home and put her little children back on to the State.

Family endowment also was reduced with the result that the family income of those previously entitled to endowment has been reduced by 7/6 a week.

Serious curtailment of the benefits under the Workers’ Compensation Act has also been made. Most of the principal features of the Labor Party’s Act have been deleted.

On the administrative side, the outstanding outrage is the curtailment of rations to the workless in the State.

The number of unemployed is greater than ever it has been in New South Wales – even Ministers admit to 60,000 unemployed – yet the paltry rations issued to these needy people have been reduced by half, and in many cases, they have been refused altogether.

Other serious acts of administration have been the curtailment of the activities of the Rural Industries Board, which, under Labor Governments, has done so much to help necessitous farmers, and the substitution of a Bank Guarantee Board which is of no assistance to needy farmers. In bringing large numbers of railway employees from country towns to the big workshops in the city, the Government’s robbing those country towns of their population, and giving an impetus migration of former country dwellers to the city.

The by-election at Ashfield was fought during the twelve months under review. Mr JS Clancy was the selected candidate. Notwithstanding that most of the State Members were engaged on the Federal Elections, and the fight was left to the Leader and three or four Members, Labor reduced the 1927 Nationalist majority of over 3000 to one of 300.

The Parliamentary Party has set up an organising committee which is arranging organising tours of the country electorates in which all members of the Party take part.
A fund for the purpose has been created and is maintained by regular contributions by the Members.

**Report of Women’s Central Organising Committee for 1929**

Sydney, January, 1930. Fellow Delegates:

1929 proved a strenuous and successful year for the WCOC.

*Federal Executive.* During March, the first Women’s Federal Conference was held, deliberations taking four days. A Women’s Federal Executive was constituted, the following being its officers: Hon. Secretary, Miss M Heagney; President, Miss M Holman; Vice-Presidents, Mrs Lynch and Miss Hanretty.

*Federal Conference.* The New South Wales representatives to Conference were Mrs Dunn, Mrs Lynch and Nurse Francis. Conference adopted a programme for the year for State Committees’ consideration, which included such matters as: Civic Status, International Relations, Maternity and Infant Welfare, Child Hygiene and Education, Education of Women politically and industrially; also the organisation and coordination of the work of women in the Labor Party. It was resolved not to affiliate with non-Labour bodies.

*Appoint Labor Women only.* Arising from Conference representation has been made to the Labor Prime Minister that a full complement of women (Labor) delegates and observers be sent to Geneva; also to secure direct representation of Labor women on National and International Conferences and on all bodies within the Labour Movement. Representation has also been made to the Labor Federal Government to appoint only qualified Labor women to all Boards, institutions, and industrial bodies where female labor is involved.

*Exchange of Speakers.* It was resolved to endeavour to arrange an exchange of interstate speakers.

*Timber Dispute.* In the timber dispute the WCOC was able through its district relief depots to collect and distribute goods, and money to the value of approximately £2000, including the sale of the well-known slogan button “Not a minute on the day, not a penny off the pay”.

*Miners Lock-Out.* The committee to assist the miners’ dependents did Trojan work and is still functioning.

*Federal Election.* The part played by the committee in the Federal election as speakers, radio lecturers, canvassers, collectors and poll-workers, was in no small degree responsible for the wonderful victory of the Labor Party.

*Delegations.* Delegates were sent to the Education Advisory League, and the International Class War Prisoners’ Aid Society.

*Lectures.* Lectures were given by Miss Dulcie Deamer on Australian Writers and Literature; by Dr Cooper Booth, on Racial Hygiene.
Deputations. Deputations were fewer in number owing to members being so busy on more important activities.

State Conference Agenda. Motions were sent to State Conference Agenda Committee to vary Constitution of WCOC, also to secure direct delegation from WCOC to State Executive and Annual Conference.

Jubilee. The year culminating with the celebration of our Silver Jubilee at a banquet to which attended some 500 guests, including the Prime Minister, Mr Scullin, and State Party Leader, Mr Lang, who gave stirring speeches, also present were the President and Secretary, State Labor Party, Messrs Craves and Bird; and the President and Secretary of Trades and Labor Council, Messrs Hooke and Garden.

A very beautiful book was published to commemorate the Jubilee, which was edited by Mr BC Cassidy.

Appreciation. Our thanks is due to State Parliamentary Party, ALP Executive, Tramway Union and Caterers’ and Waitresses’ Union for donations to fund to send representatives to Federal Conference. Appreciation must be shown to Labor Daily for publicity during the Year, and especially during Jubilee celebrations.

Special thanks is due to Trades’ Hall Association for their courteous consideration and handsome donation Jubilee celebrations.

Attendance. Attendances increased 25 per cent during year.

Finances. Finances at beginning of year showed a deficit, but at the end of the year there was a surplus.

Lena Lynch,
Hon. Secretary
Annual Conference of NSW ALP, 1930

(The Sydney Morning Herald, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 28 April 1930)

Day 1, Friday, 18 April 1930

Labour Conference. Mr Macpherson’s Suspension. Bitter Faction Debate. Mr Garden and the Inner Group.

The annual conference of the Australian Labour party, which opened yesterday, was almost wholly devoted to a debate on the suspension of Mr AJ Macpherson from the position of organising secretary.

He was charged with having been rebellious to Mr Lang. He made counter-charges against Mr JS Garden and the inner group, and blamed the Communists for creating the trouble. Mr Garden said that he was proud to belong to the group.

The debate was adjourned.

The Attendance

About 150 delegates were present. The president of the ALP (Mr JJ Graves) occupied the chair. Among the delegates was the secretary of the Labour Council (Mr JS Garden), who, by virtue of his membership of the ALP, is again eligible to attend the conference. He will lead the Lang forces at the conference.

The first business dealt with was the consideration of the credentials committee regarding the representation of delegates to the conference.

A vote of condolence with the relatives of the late WM Seale, a former president of the ALP, was moved by the chairman and carried in silence, all delegates standing.

The conference then proceeded with the election of officers.

A number of Labour Parliamentarians were present at the opening session, including Messrs Lazzarini, Flannery, M Bourke, Horsington, Clyne, Olde, Quirk, Davidson, O’Sullivan, MsLA, HP Lazzarini, MP, and Senator Dunn.

Mr Garden’s Position

Mr W Jones (Clothing Trades) asked whether the fees of the Clerks’ Union had been paid. He suggested that they had not been paid out of the union fund.

Mr JS Garden, who represented the Clerks’ Union, asked Mr Jones what he meant.
Mr Graves said that he understood the secretary, Mr A Williams, had paid the dues himself.

The secretary of the ALP, Mr S Bird, said that he did not know who had paid the fees, but the money had been paid to the accountant, and a receipt given in the usual way.

Mr Garden said that propaganda had been going on to get the trustees not to sign the cheque for the fees because he was a delegate. Mr Williams had paid the fees because he was instructed to.

Mr R King: Why don’t they say straight out that the conference is faked, instead of these innuendoes?

**Officials Elected**

Messrs R King, J Fox, H O'Regan, and A Luchetti were elected tellers. Mr C Anderson was appointed minute secretary, and Mr J Lyons timekeeper.

The appeals committee appointed comprised Messrs W Brown, F Kelly, J Hooke, T Falkingham, and Mrs Bagnall.

Messrs P Kellaher, C Matthews, E Barker, AW Thompson, and Mrs McGowan were elected to the agenda committee.

Mr R King was elected returning officer, unopposed.

**Mr Lang Receives Ovation**

The Federal Treasurer, Mr EG Theodore, and Mr JT Lang, leader of the Opposition, were present at the afternoon session. The latter received an ovation.

**Charges and Counter Charges**

At the commencement of the afternoon session of the annual conference of the Australian Labour party which was opened at the Trades Hall yesterday morning Mr C Matthews moved the suspension of the standing orders to allow discussion of the suspension of the organising secretary Mr Macpherson. Certain charges had been made against the secretary, he said, and Mr Macpherson had made counter charges The matter should be cleared up. Mr Kellaher (Southern Miners) seconded the motion.

Mr Macpherson said that he desired to have the conference properly constituted. There are people in this conference who have no right to be here, he added.

Mr Graves replied that the conference had decided that morning that the delegates were properly credentialled.

Mr Macpherson: I desire to protest against that. (Uproar )

Mr Macpherson: The conference is stuffed.
A voice: Give him a fair go.

At this stage Mr Graves warned the public in the gallery that order would be maintained at all costs.


The chairman in giving his report of the meeting of the executive which suspended Mr Macpherson stated that Mr Macpherson had said in conversation with himself and others that Mr Lang was the biggest crook in the Labour movement and that he was out to unseat him. Mr Macpherson said that he had the goods on Mr Lang and intended to expose him. That brought matters to a head, said Mr Graves. I advised Mr Macpherson not to use that language. Mr Graves quoted other occasions on which Mr Macpherson was reported to have used the same language. Last night Mr Macpherson did not deny or confirm the charges, said Mr Graves. He said I was a craven cur, that I was to get the secretaryship, and become an MLC. His conduct last night was most disorderly. He threatened to punch two executive members at the outset of the meeting.

The meeting, he said, had decided to suspend Mr Macpherson and to recommend to the conference that Mr Macpherson be dismissed for reasons that he had carried out a campaign against Mr JT Lang with the object of deposing him and that in working against Mr Lang he was working against the decisions of conference.

**Chairman Challenged**

Mr Rosevear (Leichhardt ALP): When did the conversation take place?

Mr Graves: I don't propose to fix the time and day because Mr Macpherson did not deny the statements.

Mr Macpherson: I did not admit them either.

Mr Graves said the statements were made about three weeks ago. No statutory declarations were made to the executive because the statements had been made to a number of executive members as well as to persons outside. The executive had decided that it had sufficient corroborative evidence.

Mr Massey moved the adoption of the executive recommendation.

Mr J Stewart declared that the secretary was temperamentally unfitted for the position he held.

A voice: Rot! (Ironic laughter)

Mr Stewart: If you disagree with him he will call you everything. He is the man responsible for all this Press propaganda which has done so much to damage the movement.

Mr Macpherson: You are sore over Martin.

An attempt to have the whole matter referred to a committee which would report back to conference was made by Mr Falkingham
(Boilermakers). The secretary, he said, was unfitted for the position because an organising secretary needed the hide of an elephant.

Conference decided to deal with the question.

Mr Macpherson, jumping to his feet, appealed to the conference to place the senior vice president Mr Smithenbecker in the chair while the question was being dealt with.

If Mr Graves had any common decency he would get out of the chair, he declared.

Mr Graves: I have had the decency to consult my masters, the conference.

A vote was then taken upon the question whether the chairman should retire from the chair. The meeting was overwhelmingly in favour of Mr Graves retaining control of the meeting.

Mr Macpherson then alleged that a number of delegates present had no right to be in conference. These were Mrs Howard (Botany), Mr Lang (Timber Workers), Mr Isley, three members of the Building Trades Group, and one member of the Metal Trades Group.

The chairman said that the rules provided that these delegates should be allowed to vote until the appeals committee had decided whether they were delegates or not.

Mr Macpherson: I say the conference is packed. A couple of delegates present even now have admitted it is packed.

It was then decided that each member of the executive should make a statement with regard to the matter. Mr Macpherson should then reply and conference would discuss the question.

**Mr Macpherson and Mr Lang**

Mr Bird, secretary of the ALP, told the conference that the first rebellious statement he had heard from Mr Macpherson was when on returning from the country he had asked the organising secretary how things were. They are good in the country but we can never win with the loafer from Macquarie Street leading, Mr Macpherson told him. Who would you suggest as leader then? Mr Bird asked him. Mr Macpherson replied Martin Flannery is the only man any good in the country. Mr Graves rebuked him but later he made other insulting remarks about Mr Lang.

Mr Smithenbecker, vice president of the ALP, said that Mr Macpherson had told him that Mr Flannery would be the best leader of the Labour party and that in 12 months Lang’s name would stink in the nostrils of the people.

Messrs Pomfret, Denchfield, A Middleton, and Saidy, all members of the executive, corroborated the president’s charges against Mr Macpherson.
Mr T Devane declared that the whole thing was a terrible conspiracy against Mr Macpherson because he would not bow his knee to anyone. It should be treated as a family squabble.

Mr Cunningham described the secretary’s suspension as a diabolical heresy hunt. The executive had realised that the only way it could get Mr Macpherson was through Mr Lang and that was the method it adopted.

The whole of the charges are frivolous. It is the kind of thing one would expect in a kindergarten. No wonder poor hobnails never gets anywhere, said Mr Roels, another executive member. Certain people, he continued, were using Mr Lang as a lever to shift Mr Macpherson with. There was an inner group in the executive. Mr Graves was leader of it and Mr Garden his chief lieutenant. Other members of it were Messrs E Voigt, R King, J Stewart, F Roels, Hill, Brickfield, Fox, Denchfield, W Jones, Middleton, Pomfret, and Mrs McGowan. Macpherson was formerly a member. (Laughter)

Mrs McGowan, a member of the executive, made a bitter attack upon the suspended organising secretary. He had told her, she said, that Lang would sell the workers again and again if he so desired; that anything he had ever done was for his aggrandisement and not for the good of the workers. Why, at last night’s executive meeting he tried to punch Mr Graves and he called Mr Bird all the curs he could think of, she said.

Her repeated reference to the secretary of the ALP as “Old Mr Bird” brought peals of laughter from the delegates.

Mrs Barratt (Northern Group) declared that the trouble was really a fight for a job. (Applause.) “Your work is to fight the boss, not to quibble over paltry things like this”, she said, amid further applause.

Mr W Jones (executive) said that the genesis of the trouble was the defeat of Mr Martin by Mr Macpherson for the position of assistant campaign director at the last Federal election. Mr Garden had come to his office a short time ago, and told him that he was not bothering about the numbers in conference, as Mr Lang would attend, and his presence would create the psychology necessary for Macpherson’s defeat.

Mr Stewart: What are you going to get out of it?

Mr Jones: I’ll tell you what I was offered. I was to be elected vice-president of the ALP, with the imprimatur of the group in the executive, and when the Labour party got into power I was to be appointed president, and Mr Graves was to be secretary. Jock Garden offered me that (laughter and uproar), and I can tell you that what Jock says usually comes to pass.

Mr Graves denied that he had any designs on the position of secretary. He preferred to remain secretary of his union.
Mr Macpherson’s Defence

Mr Macpherson, who was greeted with great applause from the gallery, traced his history in the Labour movement. He had taken over the position of organising secretary when the movement was in a state of chaos, and had ruined his health in bringing it to order. He had stood for groups in the movement, but not for small coteries. The president was deliberately misleading when he said that he was unaware of any group. His own idea of groups was that they should embrace the movement from the leader to the rank and file. Since Communists had been excluded from the movement he had worked fervently for it. Mr Macpherson went on to assert that the Labour Daily had maintained “a persistent sabotage” of his activities. The group had first endeavoured to get Mr J Stewart (Electrical Trades) selected for Parkes, and later for Martin, in the Federal elections. Much of his own unpopularity was due to the opposition he raised to Mr Garden speaking at the Labour rally in the Domain before the Federal elections alongside the Prime Minister (Mr Scullin).

A voice: What about Mr McTiernan.

Mr Macpherson: I am glad you mentioned that. Mr Garden is a member of the inner group. I was a member of the group. My worthy friend the chairman is a member. We decided that Mr McTiernan should be nominated for the vacancy created by the death of Senator Grant. When the matter went to the other group Mr Garden, afraid of the comrades, “double-crossed” me.

Mr Macpherson said that he had criticised Mr Lang. “This movement will not stifle my mouth even to the extent of a job”, he said. “I will endeavour to obey the decisions of the movement. Mr Lang is indefatigable, and I give the lie direct to a statement that I accused him of being lazy”.

“I will play second fiddle to nobody in my allegiance to the Labour movement”, said Mr Macpherson. “I hope to be able to participate in the campaign that will result in the adoption of the Scullin Government’s referendum proposals, and later in a return of Mr Lang as Premier.

“After that is done this party can have my resignation, because I do not want to have anything further to do with it”. (Applause.)

Mr Garden’s Defence

Mr JS Garden then spoke in reply to Mr Macpherson. “A lot of what Mr Macpherson has said is only half truths”, said Mr Garden. He has complained that some of our Labour candidates were too Red. I told him that we should stand up to it. We have run away from the fight too much. Macpherson and Jones endeavoured to drag Mr Theodore into the fight as a side issue.”
Mr Garden said that the trouble started over the coal dispute. Mr Macpherson endeavoured to make Mr Lang pledge himself if he were returned as Premier to send every policeman to ‘Woop Woop’ who participated in the timber workers’ dispute. Mr Macpherson also stated in the country that Mr Lang was a political showman. Mr Garden stated there was no split between Mr Theodore and Mr Lang. The split had been manufactured by Mr Macpherson to shield himself. Mr Macpherson had endeavoured to have barristers, MA’s and BA’s, as Labour candidates. “I won’t stand for barristers”, said Mr Garden. “We have too many of them already. No barristers or any of those crooks for me. I have been accused of looking for preferment. I have been offered a position in the Upper House three times, and have turned the offers down. I am a member of the group, and am proud of it.”

Mr J Rosevear said that the discussion had been an education. After Mr Garden’s speech it was evident that the rank and file had very little say, and had been living in a fool’s paradise. The basis of the charges against Mr Macpherson was a lot of tittle tattle that one would expect from a number of gossiping fishermen’s wives. The group was endeavouring to use the name of Mr Lang to behead one of its colleagues.

The debate was adjourned, and at 10.30 pm the conference adjourned until 10 am today.

**Day 2, Saturday, 19 April 1930**


On the block vote of the Garden faction the annual conference of the Australian Labour party on Saturday morning, carried a motion, by 74 to 47, dismissing Mr AJ Macpherson from the position of organising secretary.

Mr Garden led the attack on Mr Macpherson, and was strongly supported by the Communists.

The conference upheld the charges drafted by Mr Garden’s “inner group”, that Mr Macpherson had been guilty of disloyalty to Mr Lang.

Importance was attached to the vote which indicated that the Garden faction had captured control of the conference.

Mr Theodore forecasted a Federal deficit of £3,000,000.

A motion was carried in favour of the abolition of piece-work and the bonus system.

A committee appointed in 1929 recommended the abolition of selection ballots, the duty of selection to be left to a committee.
Mr Lang, asked whether he would give a definite promise to abolish all loyalist organisations, said that if returned to power he would give absolute preference to unionists.

The conference decided that the AWU be invited to again participate in the affairs of the ALP, on the basis of payment of all fees in arrears. This, it was stated during the debate, would not be acceptable to the AWU.

The Dismissal Vote

The debate was resumed at the ALP conference on Saturday on the dismissal by the executive of Mr Macpherson, organising secretary, on the ground of his alleged disloyalty to Mr Lang.

Mr J Ward (Surry Hills) said that the best case against Mr Macpherson was put by himself. “The only Labour Premier we have ever had is Lang”, said Mr Ward.

An amendment was submitted by Mr J McNamara (North Sydney). It read “That this conference, whilst wholeheartedly condemning the statements alleged to have been made by Mr Macpherson in reference to our leader, Mr JT Lang, and others, is of the opinion that such statements, if made, were made in the heat of the moment, and privately, by one who has been an untiring and faithful servant of the party, whose state of health has contributed to the making of such statements, if made, therefore, we recommend that Mr Macpherson be given leave of absence after the next State elections, one month on full pay, the balance on half-pay, that a committee of seven non-executive members be appointed from this conference to sift the charges and counter charges, and to report back either to this conference or next conference.”

Seconding the amendment, Mr Kidd (Northern group) said that the conference had merely supplied propaganda to the ‘capitalistic Press’. “Mr Garden claims he has never run away from an issue”, said Mr Kidd.

“Time and again Mr Garden has run away from issues. Every time Garden has gone before the bosses’ judge, strange to say, he has got out of it.” (Uproar)

At this stage proceedings were interrupted by a commotion in the corridors outside, and there was an exodus from the conference hall. Some time elapsed before the debate was resumed.

“We have heard much about the vapourings of Garden”, said Mr Kidd. “In the timber workers’ dispute Garden introduced his all-in policy – all in gaol. When we find Mr Garden behind prison bars we discover that his fine is paid. I say that in dealing with the coal dispute Mr Garden again ran away from the issue. At Newcastle he was severely censured. Although there was much talk about the money Mr Garden was going to raise, we find that the trade unions in Sydney did not come up with the cash.”
At midday a resolution “that the question be now put” was carried on a show of hands by 64 to 47.

Amidst much excitement the vote was then taken. The amendment was defeated, securing only 15 votes, and the motion approving the dismissal of Mr Macpherson was carried on a division by 74 to 47.

**Woman Delegate’s Appeal**

The chairman of the appeals committee (Mr J Hooke) reported that the appeal against the attendance of a lady delegate from Botany, on the ground that she was not a financial member of her union, had been upheld.

Mr A Middleton (Printers) said that the delegate was a widow, and had not been in employment for 12 months. Her husband was a returned soldier. Mr Middleton alleged that an organiser of the Clothing Trades Union had visited the home of the delegate and told her she could not attend because she was un-financial. He suggested that the real objection to the delegate was that she was opposed to the Clothing Trades group.

Mrs Dunn (Botany) contended that the constitution should be upheld at all costs. She complained that certain people were out to crucify her, and that she had not secured justice from the appeals committee.

“Leave your mudslinging back in the laundries at Woolloomooloo”, said Mr T Falkingham.

**Ballot Box Inquiry**

The conference then discussed methods of raising funds to meet legal expenses amounting to £4000 which arose out of the Bailey ballot box libel case. It was announced that the Miners’ Federation had paid the money into court, and that the following individuals had indemnified the miners: Messrs AC Willis, £1000, J Tyrrell, £1000, JM Baddeley, £1000, JT Lang £1000, D Rees, £500, Q Spedding, £500, G Smith, £500, S Bird, £150, O Schreiber £150, JJ Graves, £150; SA Rosa, £150, JA Beasley, £250, JS Garden £250, W Ritchie, £150, FE Miller, £150, AC Warton, £150, J Pollard, £150, J Kilburn, £150, EC Magrath, £150, J Flanagan, £150, J Heffron, £150, McNamara, £100, J O’Reilly, £150, J Howie, £500, and G Sinclair, £150.

Mr R King (Labour Council) moved a motion that the conference should assume all liability arising out of legal actions taken against the ballot box committee, being of the opinion that the committee loyally carried out the duties imposed upon it by the conference. “In order to cover the damages and costs of the actions”, the motion continued, “the conference decides to strike a levy of 1/ per member on all ALP branch
members and recommends that all unions contribute on the basis of 1/
per member.”

“Surely a committee which is set up by the movement and which
returns a finding at variance with the libel law should be protected by
the movement”, said Mr King.

A voice: They have plenty of money. Why did they not pay it?
Another voice: Why did they bring in a crook finding?

Mr NW Burke (Postal Workers) moved an amendment that the con-
tribution should be sixpence per member. This would raise the money
necessary.

The amendment was defeated and the motion carried on the voices.

Mr T Falkingham (Metal Trades Group) then moved that the execu-
tive devise methods of collecting the levy, and this was carried.

Selection Ballot Scandals

The conference appointed a committee of five, three of whom were
country delegates to inquire into the selection ballot scandals at Monaro,
Young, Albury, and Wagga and report to the conference. Messrs JS
Garden, Tannock, Smithenbecker, Saidy and Webster were appointed as
a committee.

Railway Ballot

Mr Barker (ARU) said that Mr Cleary had issued a dictum to the effect
that all railway and tramway employees in the State should vote upon
the proposals put before them by the State Government. Unionists had
been issued with a ballot paper of one colour and non-unionists were
issued with a paper of another colour. No matter what the result of the
election, the persons who were not unionists were to receive priority of
employment.

He asked Mr Lang to use his influence to prevent this, and also asked
him to promise definitely that should the Labour party be returned to
power he would abolish loyalist organisations.

Mr Lang said that this was another attempt to stampede the workers.
He would say definitely that if returned to power he would give absolute
preference to unionists.

Mr Lang said that it could not be impressed too strongly upon the
members of the Labour movement that they must not underrate the
tremendous force behind the attack upon wages and industrial conditions
which would be made by the Press and the Bavin Government during the
next few months. What was proposed was the abolition of effective
arbitration, the smashing of the unions, and a return to the conditions
where a man received only those wages that he could individually bargain
for, and the removal of all legal restraint against increased working hours and other industrial conditions.

“At the 1928 conference”, Mr Lang said, “I expressed fears that workers’ compensation, family endowment, 44-hour week, and similar measures would be destroyed. Unfortunately, some of those fears have been realised, and before many weeks have passed all of them will have become actualities. Under the lead and guidance of the Bavin Government and the metropolitan Press, the employers have now decided upon a quicker method of reducing wages and a means of completely ignoring the Court. The new system of intermittency in all industries is called by Mr Stevens, the Treasurer, ‘rationing’. It consists of the employer standing off a percentage of his staff every week and asking the remainder to do the amount of work formerly carried out by the whole staff. The result is that the employer considerably reduces his wages bill, works his staff harder than before, and every worker receives considerably less than the amount awarded to him by the Court. When, by this means, the Government has succeeded in having the tasks of every worker in the community increased, his working week lengthened, and wages reduced, the passage of legislation legalising what actually exists would then be a matter of form.

“What I want the people of our movement to realise is that we are not only fighting for our basic wage, for our 44-hour week, but we are fighting for our very industrial existence. And the forces against us are powerful. Each day every newspaper and every Nationalist Minister inform the people that a grave financial crisis exists. The propaganda goes forward that extraordinary means must be taken to check the drift which they allege is taking place. Gradually it emerges that constitutional government is insufficient, and a dictatorship of an economic council must be set up. This economic council has been set up and has been governing this State for many weeks past. Among the gentlemen on that body are Mr Schwilke, of the Employers’ Federation, Messrs Corke and Myhill, whose names have been associated with industrial unrest on many occasions, Mr McMahon, of the Employers’ Federation is also a member. This is the body which is governing this State today, and which has laid down the policy which the Bavin Government is trying to give legislative effect to.

“To resist these powerful forces absolute solidarity in the movement is essential. We have a Nationalist Government in power for two years, and we have lost family endowment, widows’ pensions, and the 44-hour week; the basic wage has been reduced, and the whole system of industrial unionism is fighting for its life.”
**Question of AWU**

Mr Breen (Railway Workers’ Industry) asked the leader of the Opposition if he was in favour of the 45,000 bush workers in the AWU being affiliated with the ALP before the State elections.

Mr Lang said that some people said the party had lost the last State elections because the 45,000 people were not affiliated with the ALP. That did not affect him, but those people had lost the protection of the rural awards because Labour was not in power to protect them, and whether they liked it or not they would have to put Labour back into office to gain the protection again. There was nothing to prevent the AWU affiliating with the ALP so long as it paid its fees.

Mr Breen: The AWU is willing to pay its capitation fees.

The chairman said that the AWU could affiliate as soon as it complied with the conditions laid down by the conference.

In answer to another question, Mr Lang said that no one would be happier than he when a Federal Labour Government would carry the Federal Labour platform into effect.

**Federal Referendum**

The referendum proposals of the Federal Government were outlined by Mr Theodore, who said that thirty years’ experience of Federation had shown that the Commonwealth Parliament had very limited powers.

“We are almost helpless in attempting to translate the Labour platform into actuality”, he said. “We are hampered at every turn. It is because of this we are asking for increased powers. Three questions are being submitted, and the first, which, if carried, will give us the power to alter the Constitution, is the most important. The second proposal, if carried, will give the Government undisputed control in industrial matters, and the third will give it control in trade and Customs, so that we can prevent profiteering within a State.

“If these powers are given us the High Court will no longer be the ruler of Australia. The carriage of the referendum will not mean that State Governments would be relegated to the position of insignificant local governing bodies. The referendum proposals are vital to the Commonwealth, for the Federation is useless unless the constitutional powers of the Federal Government are extended”, he declared. (Applause.)

**Anticipated Federal Deficits**

Mr Theodore at the conclusion of his speech was assailed with questions from every part of the hall. To Mr C Thompson (Northern Miners), who asked him if the Federal Government would supply a
‘dole’ to unemployed persons if the Bavin Government withdrew it, the Treasurer said that the Federal Government could not do that. Such relief was the responsibility of the State Government, and if the Federal Government gave a dole in one area it would have to give it in all areas. This would mean an expenditure of £2,000,000 per annum. There was likely to be a deficit of £3,000,000 this year in the Federal finances, and a still greater deficit next year. The Government was, however, doing its utmost to make employment.

In reply to another question he said that it was not a fact that English financiers had refused to lend the Government money until wages were reduced and hours lengthened. “We would not put up with that kind of dictation”, he declared.

**High Court Vacancies**

Mr Theodore said that the Government had decided that there was no need at present to appoint two additional Judges to the High Court. These appointments meant the expenditure of £12,000 per annum. In addition, there was not sufficient work for even five able-bodied men in the High Court.

Mr Theodore also said he would not discuss publicly the intention of the Government in regard to Judges Lukin and Dethridge in the event of the referendum proposals being carried. The movement would have to trust the Government upon that point.

**Trips Abroad**

Asked whether he was in favour of about fourteen politicians going abroad at the public expense, Mr Theodore said that all who were going abroad were going on important missions. There would be no slashing about of money. When Mr Bruce went to the last Imperial Conference he took an entourage of 11 persons. Mr Scullin was taking only two, and they were important officials.

In answer to a further question, Mr Theodore said that the Government would not hesitate to make use of its power to create credit provided that the funds were used to increase productivity.

**Mr Macpherson Again**

The chairman read a letter from Mr AJ Macpherson, formerly organising secretary, asking that he be allowed to appoint a scrutineer to watch his interests at the ballot for organising secretary, for which position he had nominated.

Mr Graves said that it was one of the most cheeky letters he had ever received. He ruled that Mr Macpherson’s nomination was out of order,
because the executive had decided that it could not work in harmony with him.

A Voice: You ought to be dead.

Mr Ryan (Dubbo) asked under what rule had Mr Macpherson’s nomination been declared out of order.

A Voice: Rafferty’s rule.

When the returning officer, Mr R King, read the nominations Mr Ryan opposed the report of the returning officer because Mr Macpherson’s nomination had been declared out of order.

“Mr Macpherson has done magnificent work for the movement”, he declared. “I tell you country chaps that these city delegates are putting it right over you”.

Mr Fox (executive) moved dissent from the chairman’s ruling upon the question of Mr Macpherson’s nomination, but the ruling was sustained by 65 votes to 32.

**Brawl in Gallery**

The conference was interrupted for several minutes by a brawl in the gallery, when Mr Garden, chairman of the committee, appointed to inquire into the selection ballot scandals, attempted to read his report on the Young selection. There were catcalls, hoots, and yells, and a barking dog caused further disturbance.

When order was restored the recommendation was adopted. It was to the effect that all members in the Young electorate be allowed to vote, with the exception of those who made application for membership between September 14 to October 12, but all members who were nominated according to instructions were entitled to vote.

**Women at Conference**

In future ten women from the Women’s Central Organising Committee will be allowed to sit at the conference, and take part in discussions. They will not be allowed to vote.

Mr J Kilburn moved that a committee be set up to devise ways and means to propagate the principle of the socialisation of industry. Mr Donald Grant seconded the motion, which was carried.

**Mr Bird Re-Elected Secretary**

Cheers greeted the announcement of the returning officer that Mr Sid Bird had been re-elected secretary of the party unopposed for a further period of three years.
**Railway Crisis**

The Labour party is to be asked to pledge itself to regard the pay and conditions prevailing in the railway and tramway service prior to the attack upon them by the Bavin Government as the irreducible minimum, and to restore those conditions if returned to power. This was resolved by the conference upon the motion of Mr E Barker (ARU). He said that the attack on the railwaymen was one of a sequence of attacks upon unions.

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**Day 3, Sunday, 20 April 1930**

**Preselection Ballots**

At the outset of Sunday’s sitting Mr J Hooke secured the suspension of the standing orders to submit a report upon preselection ballots made by a committee consisting of Messrs Kilburn, Falkingham, Gill, Hooke, and Miss Cunningham, appointed by the 1929 conference to report upon preselection methods generally.

The report stated that no set of rules controlling selection ballots could ensure that ballots would be carried out without some malpractices, and it recommended that the present system of selection ballots be abolished, and that in the future a selection committee should make the selections, which would afterwards be submitted to the executive.

Mr Hooke moved that the report be received and circulated, so that delegates could consider it before discussion.

Mr Thompson (Milk and Ice Carters): The meat of that report is that the whole matter of selection is to be taken out of the hands of the rank and file.

Mr Kilburn (Brickmakers): I thought Mr Thompson had more sense.

Mr Thompson: I always speak my mind.

Mr Kilburn: Well, for goodness sake, get a mind. (Laughter.)

Mr Thompson (excitedly): I’m not on that list anyhow. (Waving a piece of paper.) “This is no good to me. I’m leaving”. He then rushed out of the hall, to return 15 minutes later.

**Importation of Political Literature**

Mr Bollard (Printing Industry) opposed a motion that the Customs Act be amended to provide that no literature be prohibited on the grounds of its political expression of opinion. He said that the printing industry should receive protection as well as any other industry.

The motion was carried.
Protest Against Sentence

Mr J Kellaher (Southern Miners) moved: “That the conference protests against the ruthless gaoling of certain members of the working class, who were trying to help their comrades on the northern coalfields”.

He said that when the Kurri Pipe Band played in the streets of Wollongong the members were each fined about 7/-, but the man responsible for the band going to Wollongong was fined £10.

The motion was carried.

Labour Propaganda

Mr J Warburton (Tramways) moved, and it was agreed, that the conference urge the necessity of educating people in country centres by periodical visits of speakers, and also by Labour propaganda in the local papers, and in leaflet form, so as to bring before the people outback the ideals and objective of the Labour movement.

It was decided that a committee be appointed to “devise ways and means to propagate that first and principal platform of the day, re-socialisation of industry”.

The following were elected to the committee: Messrs J Kilburn, W McNamara, Mrs L Lynch, Messrs D Grant, E Barker, E Cook, and FH Saidy.

Piecework System

Mr J Hooke (Metropolitan PC) moved: “That Labour, when returned to power in the State, that the Federal Government be instructed to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act to abolish all piece and bonus work systems”.

Mr Flanagan (Coachmakers) moved as an amendment the addition of the words “except where unions have asked for the piece or bonus system”. He declared that, because of the introduction of piece-work and the bonus system into the Government railway workshops, the rolling stock was getting into state which rendered it unfit for use. A big smash which occurred some years ago, when 22 lives were lost, was due, he said, to faulty drawbars made under the bonus system.

Mr J Kellaher (Southern Miners) considered that the contract system should be abolished.

The motion submitted by Mr Hooke was carried.
Monaro Selection Ballot

Mr Garden, chairman of the committee appointed by conference to conduct an inquiry into country preselection ballots, reported the committee’s recommendations regarding the Monaro selection.

The recommendations were that a fresh ballot be taken, that two of the candidates be eliminated, and that members enrolled between September 14 and October 14 be not allowed to participate.

It was further recommended that fresh ballot papers be prepared, and an executive officer be sent to supervise the ballot.

“We find that although a loose method of enrolment was practised, there was nothing of a ‘crook’ nature in the ballot. The candidates to be eliminated are Messrs Cusack and Leonard”, said Mr Garden.

The report was adopted unanimously.

Weekly Payments

Mr J McNamara (Fire Brigades) moved that the system of weekly payments be instituted in all industries.

Mr O’Dea (Food and Clothing Trades) moved the addition of the words, “and that such payment be made on some day of the week other than Thursday, Friday, or Saturday”. The motion was carried with the addition suggested by Mr O’Dea.

Preference Question

Mr Warburton (Tramways) moved: “That absolute preference to unionists be a plank of the Labour party, and that the next Government be instructed to enforce this plank”.

Mr O’Dea moved as an amendment that all industrial matters not yet dealt with be submitted to a committee of five to formulate a policy and report to the conference.

The amendment was agreed to, and the following committee appointed: Messrs O’Dea, J Flanagan, J Cahill, J Fox, and Mrs Lynch.

ALP and AWU

Mr C Tannock (Ironworkers) moved, after the standing orders had been suspended: “That this conference offers a most cordial welcome to the AWU to again participate in the affairs of the ALP. We regret that this union has allowed its contact with the ALP to become inactive, and urge the AWU to immediately pay all fees and arrears and thereby take its place with the rest of the political and industrial movement in combating the tremendous onslaught which is being made on the social and industrial conditions of the people at the present time.”
Mr AW Thompson (Milk and Ice Carters) moved as an amendment: “That the AWU be admitted as a new organisation, and that immediately on payment of affiliation fees its delegates be welcomed into conference”.

The amendment was seconded by Mr Breen. Mr S Bird (general secretary) said that he had asked the AWU to submit its bedrock proposals in writing, but that had not been done.

Replying to a delegate who asked the amount of fees involved, Mr Bird said that it meant the difference between the fees for four years and one year based, of course, on its membership strength.

Mr Barker (ARU) moved as a further amendment that the AWU be readmitted on entering into a bond with regard to its arrears and affiliation; and that AWU delegates be allowed to address the conference on the advisability of lifting such arrears either in whole or in part.

Mr Rosevear (Leichhardt) then moved as a further amendment that the AWU be readmitted on paying its fees for the year when it withdrew, and the present year.

Mr Kilburn urged the conference not to make one law for a big union and another for a small union. “A few pounds”, he said, “will put the AWU right and enable it to undo the wrong it did to the ALP 2½ years ago”.

Mr Thompson’s amendment was defeated by 77 votes to 38. The other amendments were also defeated. Mr Tannock’s motion was carried by 87 votes to 6.

**Result of Ballot**

The ballot for the election of officials resulted: President, JJ Graves, 80 (re-elected); WD Jones, 53. Federal Executive: J Kilburn, 119; T Falkingham, 87 (elected); W Lyons, 60. Organising Secretary: JB Martin, 76 (elected); J Nicholls, 33; E Dalley, 21; informal, 2. There was uproar at the rear of the hall when Mr Martin’s election was announced.

**Nationalisation of Transport**

Mr E Cook (Tramway Union) presented the report of the committee appointed by the metropolitan conference to consider the nationalisation of road transport. The report stated that under nationalisation the whole of the transport facilities of the State would be well ordered and scientifically controlled, resulting in the public receiving better treatment, greater convenience, and cheaper travelling, whilst the workers engaged in the industry would get better conditions and greater economic security. The committee was of opinion that complete control of all rail and road transport should be vested in a directorate representative of the Government and the employees engaged in the industry.

The report was adopted.

The conference will be resumed at 10 am to-day.
Day 4, Monday, 21 April 1930

Labour Conference. Proposed Appointment of Job Committees
To secure control of industry. Unification, with Abolition of
State Parliaments.

The ALP Conference yesterday, after listening to an address by the
general secretary of the ARU (Mr Chapman), carried unanimously a
motion to appoint job committees, and to work in other ways to get
control of industry for the workers.

The conference appointed a committee to discuss points of difference
with the AWU.

Resolutions were carried in favour of unification, involving the abol-
ition of State Parliaments and the creation of provincial councils.

The conference, when dealing with the committee’s recommen-
dations for the abolition of selection ballots, adopted an amendment by
Mr Garden that no member of the movement be allowed to participate in
a selection ballot unless he has signed the membership roll twelve
months before the ballot.

The AWU

A move to arrange a conference with the representatives of the AWU, to
discuss a reconciliation, was made by Mr JS Garden, when the conference
assembled yesterday. He suggested the suspension of standing orders to
discuss a proposal that five representatives of the conference should
meet five representatives of the AWU, to discuss the differences between
the two organisations, and to report back to the conference.

It was very necessary, he said, that the two organisations should
unite before the State elections. The conference should exploit every
avenue to bring about an agreement. During the debate on the matter the
previous night it seemed to him that those against reconciliation seemed
to fear that if an agreement was arrived at the AWU would come in and
‘burst’ the movement.

Mr AW Thompson (Milk and Ice Carters) said that the ALP should
show the hand of friendship to the AWU, which was a power in the
country. He was in favour of exploring any avenue to effect a recon-
ciliation.

“It is not the rank and file of the two organisations which are at
variance”, said Mr Kellaher (Southern Miners). “It is the officials; and if
we appoint five representatives they will not meet the rank and file of the
AWU; they will meet the officials of the AWU, and the conference would
be useless”.

“We are really going to the AWU on our hands and knees, crawling
to them to ask them to join us, despite all they have done to injure the
movement. We are saying please come and assist us”, declared Mr Swadling (Water Transport Group). He said he was surprised that Mr Garden should bring the matter forward after the definite decision arrived at by the conference the previous night as to the terms upon which the AWU would be admitted. He said that the AWU should take the initiative.

Mr Garden, in reply, said that despite the decision of the conference as to the terms upon which the AWU should be readmitted, a conference between the two organisations could do no harm, and would probably do good. It was not a case of the AWU putting something over the ALP or vice versa. They would get the feeling of the AWU.

The motion was carried almost unanimously. It was decided that the committee should consist of two country delegates and three from the city.

Those appointed were Messrs WM Webster and F Saidy (Country), and CK Tannock, J Kilburn, and JS Garden (City).

**Unification**

A series of resolutions were carried favouring the holding of a referendum by the Federal Government upon unification, the abolition of State Governments, and the granting of wide local governing powers to provincial councils.

Mr Stone (Southern Group) said that the abolition of State Parliaments had been a plank of the party for 30 years. The question was now whether this particular plank was eyewash or not.

Mr Donald Grant, who opposed the motions, said that if the State Parliaments were abolished and Mr Bruce or his party were in power, he could, if he desired, abolish all arbitration and introduce a Fascist system. “If I were Premier”, he continued, “but I will never be in that position while people are so stupid -- ” He was interrupted by the loud laughter of the delegates.

The chairman (Mr JJ Graves) ruled an amendment, “That the conference should support Mr Scullin’s referendum proposals” out of order on the ground that the conference did not know what Mr Scullin’s proposals actually were.

A motion that the executive should put the machinery into operation with a view to bringing about the abolition of State Parliaments met with strong opposition, but was finally carried.

**Candidates to Confer**

Mr Keast (Ashburnham) moved: “That all State Parliamentary candidates, before launching out another campaign, confer with Mr Lang”.

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“I take it that what is intended”, said Mr Lang, “is that all selected candidates will meet together and talk over the campaign before we get into full swing. It is not intended that they should come along to me individually. I won’t have that.” Replying to a question by a lady delegate – “Yes, all lady candidates will also be present”. (Laughter.)

An amendment by Mr Donald Grant, “That where practicable all candidates should confer with Mr Lang” was agreed to.

**Old Age Pensioners**

It was decided on the motion of the Country PC, “That the rules be altered to permit old-age or invalid pensioners to join branches of the ALP at a cost of 1/ per annum, and to allow those pensioners who retire from active work to renew their tickets without further payment at the discretion of the branch, applicants to have three years’ membership before making such application”.

**Selection Ballots**

On behalf of the committee appointed to inquire into selection ballots, Mr Garden said that a full investigation had been made into the Wagga selection, and it was decided to recommend that Mr Lavelle’s name should be included as one of the candidates for the ballot.

The report was adopted.

The committee recommended with regard to Albury that owing to a doubt whether Mr JF Hannan could have joined a union covering his calling, he be requested to join the Shop Assistants’ Union, and a fresh ballot be taken, all the candidates to be included.

Mr Garden explained that Mr Hannan had topped the poll in the selection ballot, but had been challenged on the ground that he should be a member of a union covering his calling. Mr Hannan had admitted that he was not a member of such a union.

Mr Thompson: Are you convinced that Mr Hannan did endeavour to join a union? He did apply, but not to a union which covered his calling. We now suggest that he should join the Shop Assistants’ Union.

Mr Thompson (Milk and Ice Carters) moved as an amendment that the ballot be allowed to stand, and Mr Hannan be the selected candidate.

Upon a show of hands the president declared the amendment lost by 39 to 37.

A division was then called for, and Mr O’Dea asked that the names of those voting for the amendment be recorded.

The president: Very well, any member has the right to demand that the names be taken.

The amendment was defeated on division by 45 to 43, and the committee’s report adopted on a show of hands by 60 votes to 16.
**Railways Position**

On the motion of Mr Donald Grant, the standing orders were suspended to permit Mr EA Chapman (general secretary of the ARU) to address the conference on the railways position.

“A conspiracy has been launched”, he said, “to ally the Chief Railway Commissioner and the State Government with scab unions. This conference should be prepared to express its attitude relative to this attack.

“We recognise that it will be difficult to organise sufficient economic resistance to prevent 48 hours coming into operation”, Mr Chapman went on. “If we could we would do it”.

(Applause.)

“We may not be able to resist Mr Cleary’s intentions. We don’t deny that he may be successful, but there is all the difference in the world between voluntarily handing a man in the street £5 and giving it to a man who presents a gun. In the present case Mr Cleary has the gun … We ask the conference to register its emphatic protest against this alliance with scab unions.”

Mr Holt (ARU) moved: “This conference declares that the rationing of work as introduced by Mr Cleary is but part of a scheme devised by the Nationalist Government and the employers to lower existing wage standards and working conditions, and therefore calls upon the workers generally to resist same by forming job committees as the essential preliminary method of creating an effective organisation to (1) safeguard existing conditions, (2) prevent victimisation, (3) assist in further education towards the workers’ control of industry.”

Mr WJ Carlton (ARU) seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

**“Frankenstein Monster”**

In moving the adoption of the report of the committee which inquired into the system of selecting candidates, the chairman, Mr Hooke, said that the principal recommendations were: (1) That the present method of selection of candidates be abolished: (2) that the executive of the party shall call for nominations from persons eligible within the ALP and its affiliated unions for the positions to be filled; (3) the executive shall have power to consider the nominations and to choose by vote amongst the executive members present one candidate for each position subsequently to be filled.

“It is apparent”, said Mr Hooke, “that the preselection system has created nothing more nor less than a Frankenstein monster. That is a very grave danger to the Labour movement”.

Mr Garden, while complimenting the committee on its report, said he did not think what it had suggested would quite meet the situation.
He moved, as an amendment, that no member of the movement be eligible to participate in a selection ballot unless he has signed the membership roll of a branch 12 months prior to the selection ballot; that all branches and unions be given clear and definite instructions; and that bylaws be drafted in accordance with the amendment.

Mr Holt: That is what we have been fighting for for years.

Replying to a question, Mr Garden said that his amendment would not do away with the taking of selection ballots at tramway depots, mines, and other places.

A delegate: Will those lists of union members have to be at the head office 12 months before the taking of a ballot?

Mr Garden: Yes.

Mr Garden’s amendment was carried by 14 votes to 20.

Mr J Smithenbecker was elected senior vice-president, and Mr F Saidy junior vice-president.

The following interstate conference delegates were elected: Messrs JJ Graves, J Hooke, J Kilburn, A Luchetti, F Saidy, and Mrs McGowan.

The conference will be resumed at 7 o’clock tonight.

Day 5, Tuesday, 22 April 1930


Federal Ministry Criticised.

During a discussion at the State Labour Conference last night concerning the widespread unemployment, the Federal Government was criticised by various speakers for its failure to extend credits, so that reproductive works could be undertaken.

Far-reaching proposals relating to the establishment of compulsory unionism were adopted. These sought to make it obligatory upon an employer in need of labour to engage only the men sent to him by the union.

Unemployment

Mr WM Webster (Parkes Group) moved that, in view of the widespread unemployment existing in Australia, the Federal Government should be requested to make credits available to all local governing bodies and public trusts, to enable these bodies to undertake reproductive or urgent public works, and that the New South Wales members of the Federal Parliament should be requested to support this matter in caucus.

Mr Webster declared that the Commonwealth was losing £40,000,000 a year of new wealth through the unemployment. If the Government made the credits available the municipal and shire councils could carry
out the work. In many centres water supply and sewerage schemes were urgently needed, and could be constructed out of these credits.

Mr Thompson (Milk and Ice Carters), who supported the motion, said that the present unemployment was one of the most tragic pages in the history of the Commonwealth.

“I do not think it is too much to pay the basic wage to all unemployed”, said Mr J Stewart (executive). “If our Federal Labour Government cannot relieve unemployment what is the good of our talking here?”

An attack on the Federal Government for its failure to create additional credits was made by Mr HP Lazzarini, MP, who spoke in support of the motion: “You should demand that there should be an immediate extension of credits”, he said. “We must lock horns with these financiers in order to arrive at a position where we can find employment for the 200,000 who cannot find work. Mr Theodore had said that he would extend unlimited credits for reproductive work, (Mr Lazzarini continued), yet when he was asked for money for a housing scheme he said the Government had no money. The building of homes for workers was reproductive, if anything was. It was creating wealth. The only credits the Federal Governments would extend were to industries that would produce goods for immediate export. In the vaults of the Commonwealth Bank 15,000 £1000 notes have been lying for years just as they came from the printer. This high protection, this tariff is all for the purpose of putting money in the maw of the financiers who dominate this country. They are demanding their pound of flesh. We are told to put our house in order by them, but their idea of order is to bring us down to the standard of coolie labour.”

The motion was carried unanimously.

**Equal Pay For Sexes**

Mr J Flanagan (Coachmakers), chairman of the industrial committee, moved the adoption of a clause in the Industrial Arbitration Act making it compulsory for wage-fixing tribunals to award the same rates to women workers as awarded to males, when they are doing the same class of work.

The motion was carried.

A recommendation by the committee that slow workers’ permits should be granted only by committees comprising equal representation of the unions and employers was adopted.

**Preference to Unionists**

The Industrial Committee recommended that on the election to office of a State or Federal Labour Government or a municipal Labour party, it
should give effect to a policy of absolute preference to unionists in all forms of employment. It was also recommended that the following clauses should be inserted in all awards and industrial agreements: (a) That it shall be a term of employment that all employees must be a financial member of the union of his or her calling; and (b) that employers, when requiring labour, shall give reasonable notice to the unions covering the calling to supply labour, and shall be obliged to employ the person credentialled by the union concerned.

Mr Flanagan, in moving the adoption of the recommendations, remarked that the committee had made a determined effort towards the establishment of compulsory unionism.

Mr Bollard (Printing Industry) moved an amendment to the effect that when employees of Government Departments refused to join the union of their calling, the Minister controlling that department should refuse to sign the gazetted notices of their promotion.

The amendment was defeated and the motion carried.

Loyalist Organisations

The committee also recommended the abolition of loyalist organisations, the disbanding of company industry boards, and company employees' associations, and the amendment of industrial legislation, which gives power to deregister an industrial union by reason of its having taken part in an industrial dispute. It suggested the reintroduction of the living wage on the basis of a man, wife, and three children. The recommendations were adopted.

It was unanimously resolved that all Government employees should rank equal in status to the salaried officers' staff, and be allowed three weeks' leave on full pay, also two weeks' sick leave on full pay, and that State and Federal Labour Governments should amend the Arbitration Acts to provide for annual leave on full pay to all workers in industry, in addition to all public holidays.

The committee recommended that married women, other than those who are on the actual breadline, should not be permitted to work in industry.

Mrs May Houghton said that wives of "slow" workers should be allowed to work to assist their husbands and families.

"This is the thin edge of the wedge to keep married women from entering Parliament", declared Mrs Riley (Ryde group), amid loud laughter. She said it would force women to become immoral. The policy of the party should be to encourage women to enter industry, not to keep them in drudgery as they had been for centuries. "We have been slaves to mere man long enough", she added.
Mr Saunders (Clerks) said it was all very well to say that a woman’s ambition was dashed to the ground when she married, but did not the same thing apply to a man when he married? (Loud laughter.)

Mrs Dunn: I maintain that when a woman gets married it is her funeral. (More laughter.)

After further discussion it was decided to refer the motion back to the committee for redrafting.

Selection Ballots

Mr JS Garden, chairman of the ballot committee, recommended that the 24 foundation members of the Randwick North League should be regarded as entitled to vote at the new preselection ballot which is to be taken in Waverley. All persons who had joined after the foundation should not be allowed to vote.

Mr Garden also reported that the committee recommended that a fresh ballot should be held at Wagga, with Mr Lavelle included among the candidates.

The recommendations were adopted.

The conference will be resumed at 7 o’clock tonight.

Selection ballots. Existing system with safeguards.

Labour selection ballots are to continue, but with safeguards against roll-stuffing. According to a statement made yesterday by Mr JS Garden, whose proposal was carried by the ALP Conference on Monday night, “The 1929 committee’s proposals were rejected in favour of his amendment, which means that the existing system will be continued, with safeguards”. “It is really a tightening-up”, he said. “In future, before anyone can participate in a selection ballot, there must be 12-months’ membership. Hitherto, people have been able to join up seven days prior to an election. That has been the cause of the trouble, and the conference took that view.”

Day 6, Wednesday, 23 April 1930

ALP Conference. Unemployment. Embargoes and Bounties. Mr Griffiths readmitted.

At the State conference of the ALP last night it was resolved to ask the Federal Government to place an embargo on the export of sheepskins, in order to relieve unemployment in the fellmongering industry.

Mr R Heffron (Marine Stewards) moved that, in view of the great amount of unemployment among wool and basil workers, the conference should call upon the Federal Government to prohibit the export of dry
sheep-skins, and to impose a substantial duty on imported wooltops. The motion also proposed that the Federal Government should not accede to requests from the Australian Overseas Transport Association for legislative assistance until justice and preference had been given to members of the waterside workers’ organisations in all Australian ports.

Mr Heffron said the fellmongering industry was in a parlous state, and many thousands of people were walking the streets because, instead of the skins and tops being prepared in Australia, as they were a few years ago, they were exported and prepared with cheap labour in other countries. At one time the union covering workers in these industries had nearly 4000 members. Now it had 350 members.

Mr Webster said that if the export of skins was prohibited immediately it would be a tremendous blow to the man on the land. He moved an amendment that a conference of graziers, union representatives, skin buyers, and representatives of the Government should be called to consider the position in connection with the fellmongering industry, and that the Scullin Government be called upon to offer a bounty on all leather prepared in Australia, and to place a progressive tariff on all imported leather. “If you have an embargo placed on the export of skins, they will pile up in millions”, he said.

“New Zealand prevents the export of skins and we should do it also”, said Mr JS Garden. “If we prevented Australian exports of hides, 3500 men in the fellmongering and textile industries would get employment immediately”.

According to Mr W Lyons, many dealers in skins had their store-rooms packed with sheepskins, and could not sell them. Italian skins were being imported into this country cheaper than the locally produced skins could be sold. Incidentally, the Italian skins made better chrome leather than the Australian skins. Mr FW Hughes, the biggest man in the industry, had stated that if the embargo was brought into being he would find a market for the leather.

The amendment was defeated, and the motion was carried.

Late Shopping Night

The industrial committee recommended that late shopping nights should be abolished throughout this State, that there should be a universal Saturday half-holiday, the closing hours to be 5.30 pm from Monday to Friday, and noon on Saturday; that the closing times for hairdressers and tobacconists should not be later than 6.30 pm on week-days and 1 pm on Saturdays; that the Early Closing Act should be amended in so far as appertaining to the trading hours of butchers’ shops, to provide that work should not be permitted before starting time or after finishing times, as set out in the award.

The recommendations were adopted.
The 44-Hour Week.

That a uniform week of not more than 44 hours be allowed to any trade or profession; that traffic workers in the State railways working 44 hours per week be worked five days; that in the case of shift workers in manufacturing not more than 40 hours per week be worked in five shifts; that the Industrial Arbitration Act be amended to limit the number of juniors to adult workers; that wage fixing tribunals when fixing wages shall award to juveniles rates of pay sufficiently high to ensure the position of the adult worker against displacement – these were other recommendations from the committee which were adopted.

It was decided to institute a vigorous campaign for union enrolment throughout the State.

Mr A Griffith Readmitted

When the question of appeals for readmission to the movement came before the conference, Mr Arthur Griffith was granted ten minutes in which to make his appeal.

He said that he had been placed outside the movement because he had voted for conscription. He was satisfied now that he had made a mistake in voting the way he did on that occasion.

At the conclusion of Mr Griffith’s address, Mr Rosvear (Leichhardt) moved that Mr Griffith should be readmitted to the movement.

Mr JS Garden, who seconded the resolution, declared that all men had made mistakes, but few had the courage to admit them, as Mr Griffith had.

Mr E Ward (Tramways) opposed the motion. He said that Mr Griffith had been a leader of the Labour movement, who misled his people.

“No man in the movement is in favour of perpetually punishing a man for a mistake; give him a fair go”, said Mr O’Dea (Shop Assistants). “Even union secretaries sat on the fence at the time of the conscription issue”.

Mrs Lynch, who supported the motion, said that if Labour people were against militarism they should prevent their children being educated in militarism in the uniforms of Scouts and Girl Guides.

(Applause.)

The chairman declared that the voting, according to the count of hands, was 52 in favour and 47 against. This announcement was greeted with applause and cheering.

A division was demanded and uproar followed.

The chairman finally announced that the motion had been carried by 50 votes to 44, and there was another burst of cheering.
**Other Applications for Readmission**

Mr Carlton (ARU) caused considerable uproar in the conference when he moved that Messrs R Bramston, G Burgess, EB Doolan, and T Thick should be readmitted. Mr Bramston was expelled over the ballot box scandals, Mr Burgess over the conscription issue, Mr Thick over the Conroy-Seale trouble, and Mr Doolan over a dispute in connection with the Canterbury municipal election.

When order was obtained, Mr Rosevear (Leichhardt) moved an amendment that the question of readmitting the four men should be considered separately.

The amendment was carried by 52 votes to 45.

Conference then adjourned until 7 pm today.

**Labour Factions. The AWU and ALP**

A further attempt will be made this afternoon to reconcile the leaders of the Australian Labour party and the Australian Workers’ Union.

Representatives of the two bodies will meet in conference at the ALP office in the Trades Hall at 2.30 o’clock to discuss a basis for settlement. The ALP conference, at present in session, has appointed a special committee to represent the party. Its members are Messrs JS Garden, F Saidy, WM Webster, J Kilburn, and C Tannock. Delegates from the AWU will be Senator J Dooley and Messrs J Lynch, J Courtney, J Bailey, and G Buckland.

**Day 7, Thursday, 24 April 1930**

**ALP Conference. Mr JS Garden Granted Continuity of Membership. Ex-Alderman Bramston Readmitted.**

The State ALP conference last night decided to grant Mr JS Garden full continuity of membership.

It was suggested at the conference that the move by supporters of Mr Garden was made so that he would become eligible to contest the forthcoming City Council elections as a Labour candidate.

When the conference was resumed at 7.30 o’clock a motion was submitted by Mr Pooley (Land Transport Group) that any attempt to give a monopoly to omnibus proprietors or payment of compensation to any bus proprietor whose services might be discontinued or varied should be resisted. The motion also urged that any move to reduce the amount of taxation paid in respect of motor buses or lower insurance cover as set out in the bill at present before the State Parliament should be opposed.
Mr Pooley said that his organisation feared that vital amendments would be moved in the Legislative Council, which might prove detrimental to the interests of the tramway employees.

Mr Miller (Water Transport Group) said that, while he did not oppose the motion, he could not understand why the Tramway Union should oppose compensation being paid if buses were taken off the roads.

The motion was carried.

Mr JS Garden, in making application for full continuity of membership, said that he had been previously a member of the executive and a member of the Communist party. Subsequently, owing to a decision of the conference, he was told he would either have to repudiate the Communist party or leave the Labour movement. He left the Labour party and opposed a selected Labour candidate as a Communist for the Sydney electorate five years ago. He was expelled and was stood down for four years. He rejoined the ALP last year.

Mr J Flanagan (Coachmakers) moved that Mr Garden should be granted continuity. Mr D Grant seconded the motion.

Miss Stuart Robertson opposed the motion on the ground that it was in conflict with the rules.

Mr Falkingham: Is Mr Garden prepared to stand up and say he is sorry for what he did, like Mr A Griffith did?

Mr Garden smiled broadly but did not reply.

Mr F Roels: Is it a fact that Mr Garden wants continuity because he wishes to stand as a candidate for the City Council?

Mr Garden again did not reply. The motion was carried.

Appeals

Mr Bramston, who had been expelled in consequence of the ballot-box scandal, applied for readmission to the party.

“Mr Bramston was only a tool”, said Mr T Falkingham (Boilermakers), in moving for his readmission. There are a lot in the movement who were not found out”.

Mr W Carlton said that Mr Bramston was unlucky, because he was found out.

The motion was carried.

In seeking readmission to the party, Mr G Burgess said that he had supported conscription and had later opposed a selected Labour candidate. “I made a mistake”, said Mr Burgess, referring to the conscription issue.

Mr Grant, in opposing a motion for the readmission of Mr Burgess said that unless action was taken the ALP would become a party of Imperialists.

The motion was defeated by an overwhelming majority.
“I thank you”, said Mr Burgess sarcastically. “I am, at least, an Australian”.

Mr EB Doolan, who was formerly a member of the Canterbury Municipal Council, and Mr T Thick, who was secretary of the Bailey defence committee, were readmitted to the party.

Mr A Griffith’s Case

Mr E Ward moved for the recommittal of the motion carried on the previous night granting Mr A Griffith readmission to the party. “The delegates were under a misapprehension”, said Mr Ward.

The chairman ruled the motion out of order, pointing out that the matter was not on the agenda paper, and required the suspension of standing orders.

There were several disorderly scenes when an attempt was made to move dissent from the chairman’s ruling. Mr Ward was debarred from submitting a motion of dissent on the ground that he did not have his badge. Another delegate thereupon sponsored the motion, but on a division it was defeated and the chairman’s ruling upheld by 49 votes to 45.

The chairman then announced that Mr WM Webster had given notice of motion for the recommittal of the matter, and that it would come on for hearing at the next session.

Reaffiliation of AWU

The chairman then reported that no settlement had been reached at the conference between the ALP committee and the AWU officials at which the proposed reaffiliation of the AWU was discussed

“The AWU delegation rejected the terms of the conference that the AWU should pay its arrears in contributions amounting to £5000”, said Mr Graves. “The AWU offered to pay affiliation fees for 1929 and 1930 on the basis of whatever membership was shown on the latest balance-sheet”.

Mr JS Garden said that one man in the AWU delegation was the stumbling block. “It was not Jack Bailey, either”, added Mr Garden. “Small unions have had to pay their arrears, why not the AWU?”

In reply to a question, Mr Garden said that the ALP committee had promised to give favourable consideration to the suggested compromise that the arrears of the AWU for the years 1926 and 1927 should be deleted in view of the claim of the AWU delegates that they had paid the subscriptions to the Conroy executive. The AWU delegation owing to division in its ranks was unable to reach an understanding on the compromise.

The committee was empowered to continue the negotiations and report back either to the conference or to the ALP executive.
On the recommendation of Mr JS Garden the conference directed that there should be a fresh selection ballot in the Barwon electorate.

Mr A Middleton (Painters’ Union) said that he wished to correct his previous statement that a woman delegate from Botany had not worked for 12 months. On inquiry he had found that the woman in question had been in constant employment.

The conference adjourned until 2 pm on Saturday.

**Day 8, Saturday, 26 April 1930**

**Labour Party. Mr Arthur Griffith. Readmission Revoked.**

When the ALP conference was resumed at the Trades Hall on Saturday Mr L Webster (Bread Carters) moved the suspension of standing orders to recommit the question of the readmission of Mr A Griffith to the Labour movement. Mr Griffith had been readmitted to the party at a sitting of the conference on Wednesday night, after a bitter debate.

Mr Webster said that on Wednesday the delegates voted under a misapprehension, and many others were absent, and therefore could not vote. The vote therefore did not represent the opinion of the conference.

“His readmission was brought about by people anxious to further their own interests”, said Mr M Connaghan (Shop Assistants).

The motion was carried.

The chairman read a statement from Mr A Griffith, reiterating that he was wrong in supporting conscription. “I have paid the penalty for my mistake without squealing”, the statement read. “Fourteen years’ exclusion from public life should be a sufficient penalty. I have no present intention of standing for Parliament.”

Mr L Webster then moved that the resolution readmitting Mr A Griffith should be rescinded and expunged from the records and that his appeal be dismissed. He said that the division in the ranks of the Labour movement during the conscription issue could be laid at the door of Mr A Griffith and others.

“We should deal with deserters in the same way as the agents of capitalism do”, said Mr Keller (Southern Miners), in seconding the motion.

Mrs McGowan said that the readmission of Mr Griffith would be the same as the readmission of the 1917 loyalists, or the Rothbury miners.

“These so-called militants are trying to defeat a resolution on a snap division”, said Mr Miller, opposing the motion. “Tick-tacking has been going on in this conference. All kinds of subterfuges have been resorted to. Lying, dirty statements have been circulated against Mr Griffith. It is the very opposite to justice.”
Mr JS Garden’s Attitude

The statement by Mr Donald Grant that Mr JS Garden had nothing to do with the recommittal was met with derisive laughter.

A voice: How did you know that?

“The precedent will be colossal”, said Mr Grant. “If Mr Griffith stands as a Labour candidate every Nationalist will vote for him”.

Mr J Stone said that the recommittal move was without precedent in the Labour movement. He accused Mrs McGowan, a delegate, of having changed her views. “She supported Mr Griffith formerly”, said Mr Stone. “Now she opposes him because she has got into a particular circle, and the bucket had to be dropped”.

Mrs J Lynch caused much hilarity by declaring that Mr D Grant had been talking ever since he came to this country, and had done nothing else. “When he arrived in this country I did not know whether he spoke English or the Morse code”, said Mrs Lynch, amidst laughter.

“I was one of the stupid goats who was driven to the war”, said Mr W Carlton, supporting the motion.

Mr JS Garden, in defining his position, said that Mr Griffith had admitted he was wrong. “He now says he only made a mistake thinking that conscription was right”.

On a division the motion was carried by 60 votes to 43.

Mr Garden, who voted on Wednesday night in favour of the readmission, this time voted against it. His change of front caused much comment.

Education

The educational committee’s report contained many drastic recommendations. They included: (1) free school material, (2) free midday meal, (3) school leaving age to be raised to 16 years, (4) more bursary allowances, (5) teacher trainees, (6) amendment of school curriculum in the direction of elementary Imperialistic bias, (7) Esperanto to be a compulsory subject.

The recommendations were adopted.

Preference to Unionists

The conference decided to make representations to the Federal Government for a guarantee that no industry would be subsidised or assisted until preference was given to unionists and the observance of union awards was assured.
Relief for Miners

There was a marked falling-off in the attendance of delegates when the conference was resumed yesterday afternoon.

Mr T Keller (Southern Miners) secured the suspension of the standing orders to discuss the following motion: “That the conference demands that the Federal Government should adequately maintain all miners and their families who are at present locked out on the northern fields.”

Mr J Stewart (Electrical Trades) said that the motion would afford them an opportunity of testing Mr Scullin’s statement in Melbourne that no unemployed would starve.

Mr JS Garden moved, as on amendment, “That this conference condemns the callousness of the Bavin Government in cutting out the sustenance of the unemployed on the northern coalfields. We therefore call on the Federal Government to come immediately to the aid of the mineworkers, who are suffering great privation and want in order to maintain the wages and conditions granted by an award.”

One delegate wanted to know from Mr Garden how he proposed to discipline the Federal members if they did not carry out the decisions of the conference. Mr Garden ignored the question. The motion was withdrawn in favour of the amendment, which was carried.

New Guinea Leases

A long discussion took place on the subject of the New Guinea mining leases. Mr J Stone (Liverpool) moved, and Mr F Saidy seconded, a motion that a committee should be appointed to guard the White Australia policy, and to make, add to, or amend the New Guinea mining sections, regulations, and ordinances. It was also suggested in the motion that shipments of gold by the company operating in the mandated and other territories under the administration of the Commonwealth to foreign countries should be illegal, “excepting through the Commonwealth Bank, with the object of stabilising our credit abroad and to lift Australia from the present widespread depression”. The motion was carried.

The committee will comprise two representatives from the conference, one from the Federal Parliamentary Labour party, one from the State Labour party, and one from the Working Miners’ Association. Messrs JJ Graves and F Saidy were appointed to represent the conference.

The Macpherson Case

At this stage Mr L Gill moved that the question of the dismissal of Mr Macpherson from the position of organising secretary should be re-committed.
The chairman ruled the motion out of order, and Mr Gill then moved dissent from his ruling. The ruling was upheld by 54 votes to 22.

At the instance of Mr JS Garden, a motion was carried, requesting that section 52 of the Industrial Arbitration Act should be amended in order that unions might utilise their funds for political purposes without having to make provision for a special fund for that purpose.

With the object of increasing interest in branch activities the conference agreed to a proposal that the ALP should organise a debating competition between the Labour branches and unions. “There is no need for the proposal”, said Mr Falkingham. “The political movement has already swallowed the erstwhile leader of the industrial movement”. (Laughter.) “We do not know now whether it is Mr JT Garden or Mr ‘Jock’ Lang”. (Renewed laughter.)

**Extension of Franchise**

The conference carried a resolution urging that the franchise should be granted at 18 years of age.

**Other Business**

The conference adopted a motion that the present Silicosis Act should be altered to cover persons suffering from the effects of silica dust, other than those provided for in the Cumberland and Broken Hill schemes.

It was also resolved that the bestowal of all honours should be abolished; that the proceedings of all Royal Commissions appointed by State or Federal Governments should be conducted in public.

By an overwhelming majority, a resolution was adopted that unemployment insurance should be instituted, the minimum rate to be the declared living wage.

Other resolutions demanded that all tubercular patients, while under treatment, should be paid a pension equal to the basic wage; that an extensive scheme of dredging the entrance of Newcastle Harbour, with a view to improving the shipping facilities, should be adopted; that country abattoirs and slaughterhouses should be established, with a view to the protection of consumers and improvement of the quality of meat for export; that locomotive engine-drivers, firemen, rail motor drivers, electric train drivers, and tramway traffic employees failing in vision, hearing, or blood pressure tests, should be found employment in the service at their current rate of pay; and that voting at municipal elections should be compulsory.
When this Conference was held JT Lang had been Premier for nearly six months since the sweeping victory at elections in October 1930. James Scullin was still the Labor Prime Minister, struggling to come to terms with the economic crisis of the Depression. He was not helped by absolute opposition from Lang, whose ‘Lang Plan’ was completely opposed to the acceptance of the Bank of England’s demands that the first step in recovery was for Australian governments to repay their debts to Britain. Lang insisted that there should be a moratorium on the payment of interest on such loans until the economy improved. (The Herald report reproduced here incorrectly, and maliciously, referred to the policy as ‘repudiation’, not ‘moratorium’.) Although the final break with the Federal Party (the decision of Lang Labor Federal MPs to bring down the Scullin Government in November 1931) was still in the future, a formal split already existed. Federal Conference had expelled the NSW party, and Lang’s ‘State Labor’ was already working to set up its own Federal Lang party. For its own part State Labor had expelled EG Theodore, who represented the NSW electorate of Dalley.

Defence of the Lang Plan was the main business of this Conference. Lang’s address was an eloquent explanation of his reasoning. In later years Lang’s rhetoric would make one suspect that he had only a tenuous grasp on economic and political reality, but in 1931 his arguments were strong and he was very persuasive. This is not to say that ‘Lang was right’, but that it is impossible to understand the importance of Lang in the early 1930s without appreciating the very large proportion of the labour movement which was convinced that he was right.

The AWU had rejoined the Labor Party in NSW, and had six delegates to Conference as well as representation on the Executive. However, it was still very sceptical about Lang and would soon abandon the party again. One of the significant debates in this Conference was a motion from the Socialisation Committee to commit the State Labor Party to a three-year plan for the nationalisation of all industry. Against the Inner
Group’s opposition the motion was narrowly passed – with the AWU cynically supporting the Communist fellow-travellers who had moved the motion. Garden and the Inner Group had the motion resubmitted next day, after extensive arm-twisting, and the motion was rescinded. Still, there was clearly a firm group of nearly a third of delegates who resisted the persuasion and supported the rapid introduction of socialism. More would be heard from them in the future.

Executive Report of NSW ALP for 1930-31

(Mitchell Library Manuscripts, 329.3106/3)

Australian Labor Party, State of New South Wales
Executive Report, 1930-1931

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The 40th Annual Report and Balance Sheet of the Australian Labor Party, State of New South, Wales, are hereby submitted for your consideration.

Since the presentation of the last report the Movement has been beset with difficulties unprecedented in the Movement’s history, brought about by a set of circumstances engineered by the financial controllers which placed thousands of our members on the unemployed list and caused untold misery and intense sufferings. Notwithstanding the difficulties encountered, our membership has continued to improve and new Branches have come into existence in both the Metropolitan and Country areas as herein set out:

Country
East Greta, Grong Grong, Barellan, Brayton, Matong, Muswellbrook, Ardlethan, Curlwaa, North Wollongong, Premier, Carrathool, Bungendore, Candelo, Canberra, West Cessnock, Springridge, Ingle-Mac-Glen, Moulamein, Loftus, Denman, Breeza, Lismore, Grafton, Mullumbimby, Quirindi, Peak Hill, Hillston, Port Macquarie, Ashford, Holbrook, Tenterfield, Hay, Greta, Martin’s Creek, Jerilderie, East Kempsey, South Kentucky, Blackhalls, Wauchope, Ben Lomond, Wingham, Ballina, Woonona, Bargo, Naradhan.

Metropolitan
Pitt Row, Naremburn, Homebush West, Forest Lodge, Dumbleton, East Croydon, Camdenville, Dundas West, Prospect, Harbord, Lauriston Park, Brookvale, North Ryde, Newtown East, Cronulla, Como, Rooty
Executive Attendance

During the term 38 meetings of the Executive were held, the attendance being:

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<tr>
<th>Executive</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
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<tr>
<td>JJ.Graves</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>WD Jones</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>A Macpherson</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>JB Martin</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>AH Anderson</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>Mrs M Bagna</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>Mrs CH Barrett</td>
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<td>M Connaghan</td>
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<td>W Denchfield</td>
<td>19</td>
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<td>WJ Dwyer</td>
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<td>AC Fox</td>
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<td>S Green</td>
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<td>EA Hill</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>C Jackson</td>
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<td>A Luchetti</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mrs J McGowan</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>CH Matthews</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>A Middleton</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>G Pickford</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>G Pomfret</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>H O’Regan</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>F Roels</td>
<td>36</td>
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The State Election, the first held under the new distribution of seats, took place on the 25th October, and notwithstanding the fact that it was manoeuvred to weaken our Party by giving the Country more representation at the expense of the Metropolitan and Newcastle Areas, the result proved that the whole of the State was definitely opposed to Nationalist control, which has brought about stagnation and starvation upon the masses whilst fortifying the position of the financiers. Out of the ninety seats, our Party contested 89, the only seat uncontested being Byron, and after waging an expensive and extensive campaign, our Party was returned to power, having succeeded in capturing 55 seats out of a possible ninety; many of the strongholds of Nationalism and their allies (the Country Party) turned to our policy for salvation, and it is fervently hoped by our Executive that under the leadership of JT Lang, our State
will recover from the deplorable condition brought about by the ineptitude and class-biased management of the Nationalist Party.

We would issue a warning note to the members of the movement not to expect miracles to be performed. It will take months of labor and untold sacrifice to restore our State to a decent standard, the whole of the conditions and awards which members had taken years to build up, having been sabotaged by our opponents and the financial position being left in such a deplorable condition, it will be humanly impossible to rehabilitate our resources, and your Executive would forcibly bring under the notice of members the fact that the old system has broken down, and it will require strong and earnest intelligent men at the head of affairs to evolve a new system to successfully cope with the situation, and it is hoped that the Federal Party will see the wisdom of adopting drastic measures to cope with a most serious situation, and all States where Labor Governments are in control will realise that unless they are prepared to recognise that a complete reorganisation of the system is essential and wholehearted, and united action is taken to protect the community they must be swept away, relegated to oblivion. This Labor Movement dare not stand still or hesitate to determinedly end the horrors existing where, in the midst of plenty, thousands are starving. Your Executive would be lacking in their duty if they do not point out to you and the party representing you in Parliaments of the Commonwealth the serious position facing them, and the absolute necessity for drastic remedies to be applied to a virulent disease.

Since submitting our last report a municipal election has taken place, the city being divided into five wards, which were entitled to elect three aldermen for each ward; candidates to represent Labor were chosen, and contested the respective wards; but we regret that some of the members of our movement were not loyal to their pledge, and considerable opposition was put forward to the endorsed candidates, which materially assisted the Civic Reform Party in defeating our candidates, with the result that we were only successful in obtaining six aldermen in a council of 15, who, notwithstanding the fact that they are in a minority, are exercising a considerable check upon the activities of the Civic Reform Members, preventing them from giving full scope to their desires to work in the interest of the forces opposed to our ideals.

Our provincial conference, held at Tamworth, proved to be a wonderful success in the face of the fact that owing to the distance delegates are called upon to travel in order to attend operates against a full attendance. The agenda paper was composed of resolutions of great importance, and our country policy, as adopted at the conference, was largely responsible for the greatly improved vote recorded our members, and materially assisted in the return of Labor candidates in seats hitherto opposed to Labor, and every consideration and credit must be given to the country conferences, where excellent work is performed by delegates
conversant with country requirements, and the high standard of intelligence displayed by the delegates, and the expediency with which the business sheet is disposed of is highly commendable and is of great benefit to the movement.

The metropolitan conferences are more largely attended and the industrial and social welfare of the movement is greatly advanced by the earnest manner in which the items on the agenda are dealt with.

During the year an important matter relating to the New Guinea gold leases was brought to finality by the committee appointed to deal with it, and a report is herewith attached, the final result being the appointment of an inspector with a special knowledge and power to attend to matters and see that the rights of the small man are protected against the machinations of the mining syndicates.

**Report of the New Guinea Inquiry**

The New Guinea Inquiry Committee set up by the Annual General Conference of 1930, consisting of Mr JJ Graves, president of the ALP; Mr FS Saidy, Vice-President, representing the Australian Labor Party, State of New South Wales; Mr JB Chifley, representing the Federal Government; Mr MA Davidson, MLA, representing the State Labor Party; and Mr T Keogh, representing the Morobe Miners’ Association; met at the ALP Headquarters on Monday and Tuesday afternoon, 23rd and 24th June respectively, commencing at 2.30 pm, and terminating 5 pm. All representatives were present throughout the inquiry.

Mr Keogh, in a lengthy statement, placed before the committee the whole of the facts in connection with the grievance under which the New Guinea miners were laboring, and suggested that measures should be taken to overcome the grievance complained of.

Mr Keogh very emphatically stated that the Working Miners’ Association, of which he was an officer, did not make any charge or even suggest a wrongdoing of any description of any Federal Minister or other politician, nor were they in any way responsible for the adverse criticism levelled at certain members of Parliament by the Press and others. Mr Keogh then submitted a number of typewritten documents and papers in support of his case.

Mr Chifley very ably presented to the committee the mining position in New Guinea. This information had been gathered from many sources by the Federal Government, who had made very exhaustive inquiries regarding the whole of the matter. Mr Chifley presented a number of papers on this matter, and informed Mr Keogh that they were not only prepared but very anxious to assist.

Mr Keogh expressed satisfaction at the very clear and concise statement of Mr Chifley and of his Government, because they were so well informed in these matters and to have their assurance that they would favorably consider the request of his organisation.
The committee then discussed the matter at a considerable length, and their findings are as hereunder:

We, the New Guinea Inquiry Committee, appointed by the Annual General ALP Conference, 1930, find, on the evidence before us, that there are very strong grounds for an investigation by the Federal Government on the mining position in New Guinea, particularly in connection with the Edie Creek Field.

1. We recommend to the Government that a competent man, with a wide knowledge of alluvial mining, dredging, and sluicing, be sent to New Guinea to make an investigation with full powers to conduct an exhaustive inquiry, including the calling and examining of witnesses.

2. The person appointed to inquire as to whether leases have been granted for land on which ground suitable for alluvial mining exists, and if so recommend as to what means should be taken to permit miners to peg claims.

3. To inquire and report as to whether there has been a granting of exemption from labor conditions on leases without justification.

4. To inquire and report upon a reasonable acreage that should be contained in special areas, and as to whether there is a necessity for a modification in labor conditions as existed prior to the gazettal of Ordinance 44a.

5. To inquire and report on the advisability of allocating portion of the royalties received from gold won in New Guinea for prospecling purposes. We recommend to the Minister:

   1. That any administration lands and/or abandoned claims be retained and/or abandoned claims be retained as Administration lands and made available for alluvial mining.

   2. To consider the fixing of a royalty on the basis of the exemption of gold won up to the value of £500 with a graduated scale on all gold won in excess to this value.

   3. Consideration be given to the advisability of all gold won in New Guinea being traded through the Commonwealth Bank.

   4. That no holder of miners’ rights shall be entitled to more than one claim.

The committee urge the Minister to give immediate consideration to the foregoing matters. On behalf of the committee,

I am,
Yours respectfully,
(Signed) Jas J Graves, Chairman of Committee
During the term the Socialisation Committee appointed have been most energetic in the fulfilment of the duty cast upon them and are deserving of the thanks of the movement in their efforts to educate the public mind in this important matter. Attached is a report of the committee submitted for your approval.

“The committee operating under the chairmanship of Mr Townsend have pleasure in submitting a report of their activities in connection with the conduct of the debating classes and the competition now in operation, which must materially improve the debating and speaking strength of our movement and should commend itself to the members, particularly the younger section, to whom it should be an immense benefit.

“Your executive finds that the Rules relating to Municipal Assemblies and Labor Aldermen are not sufficiently defined to make for success in the control of those bodies and recommends an alteration, and believes that it is essential for Labor aldermen to meet in conference at given periods in order to have unanimity of action brought about, and the policy of the party given effect to.”

During the term which has been the most strenuous and remarkable period in the movement’s history, it became necessary to have conferences with the Federal representatives with a view of having action taken to further the interests of members of the movement and the community generally, most important discussions, as the defining of a policy to overcome the deplorable condition of the coal industry, and an endeavor to force the hands of the Government to adopt a drastic and progressive policy to assist and protect the members of that industry, which has been most sadly neglected, and has drifted into a state of chaos for the want of thorough reorganisation and political attention.

Another most important and essential conference was that relating to the alteration of the basic wage and lowering of the standard of living of workers, and it must be here definitely stated that it is a sad commentary upon a Labor Government that it should have become necessary to enforce pressure to have the most vital interest of the people protected, and it must be made quite clear to our members that laxity in an endeavor to give effect to Labor’s policy cannot be tolerated.

We are passing through the most critical period, not only of this country’s existence, but of the whole world, and it is abundantly clear that the system has failed, and drastic steps must be taken to protect our people. We have the deplorable spectacle facing us that in the midst of plenty, want and starvation are rampant, and in the name of civilisation it cannot be allowed to continue. If our legislators are not prepared to formulate a policy to protect us they must be stood aside, and progressive members elected and compelled to act.

During the selection of candidates to contest the last State election, numerous protests had to be decided, and considerable work entailed. Amongst the number, and around which most controversy centred, were
Barwon, Monaro and Albury. The decision of conference ordering another ballot to be taken in Barwon was conveyed to the Council, who replied that owing to the financial strain they were unable to comply. The General Secretary visited the electorate, and having addressed the Council, the leading candidates, Messrs Cummins and Heffron, decided in the interest of harmony to withdraw, the Executive then called for nominations and submitted them to the Barwon Council, who selected Mr Ratcliffe, who eventually won the seat.

Monaro selection was also the subject of considerable controversy, and protests which were fully investigated, and finally Mr PV Stokes was elected to contest the seat, but we regret to report that he was not successful.

Albury was another storm centre, which necessitated an officer being sent to endeavor to affect a reconciliation. The General Secretary attended and addressed the Council, and whilst dissatisfaction still exists, and certain features are still under review, Mr Fitzgerald, the endorsed candidate, was successful in winning the seat.

Summing up the whole of the year’s activities, it will be readily seen that the amount of work and expense in conducting elections has been unprecedented and has completely drained our resources, our financial obligations being tremendous, with a very limited field to operate upon, owing to the abnormal amount of unemployment in the ranks of our affiliated unions and branches, and at the present time the outlook is far from bright, and it will necessitate a complete change of action by our political representatives if we are to restore the community to a decent state of prosperity, and we feel sure that responsible persons will recognise it, and utilise all means within their power to make for improvement in the general welfare of the movement.

A report would be most incomplete, which did not give credit to the loyal support accorded the movement by each and every member of the staff. In order to afford a better opportunity to have the increased work of the movement accelerated, a complete alteration of the offices was found necessary and put into operation, and whilst the work was being proceeded with, the staff were compelled to put up with immense disabilities at a time when they were endeavoring to cope with the busiest period ever experienced in the life of the movement, and great praise must be accorded each and every member who worked uncomplainingly and cheerfully from early morning till well on to midnight. The amount of work done was tremendous, and really needed extra assistance, but owing to the financial stress existing, it was found impossible to meet the actual requirements, and if the slightest inattention has been occasioned the members, we feel sure that if the facts were fully known, no condemnation would be forthcoming.

JJ Graves, President.
S Bird, General Secretary.
State Parliamentary Report

Since the previous Annual Report was made the General Election has been held, which resulted in the return of Premier Lang with a Party of 54 Labor members.

Your State Parliamentary Party took office at the most critical time in the history of the State. The Bavin Government had in many cases suspended Arbitration Awards, reduced wages, caused unprecedented unemployment and left the Treasury with a deficit in the Cash Account of £15,000,000.

On the day he was sworn in, the Premier had his first interview with the Governor for the purpose of arranging for the passage of the Upper House Abolition Bill, with a view of putting into operation the first plank of the Labor Party’s platform. This legislation was passed during the first month of Parliament, but it is now being contested in the Law Courts.

We also found that the Bavin Government had permitted the Railway Commissioners to join in the application before the Federal Arbitration Court for a reduction in the Basic Wage. Under the Government’s instruction, the New South Wales Railway Commissioners withdrew their appearance and saved the railway men from the 10 per cent reduction subsequently made by the Court.

The restoration of the 44-Hour Week was made by Parliament during its first month, and the rationing law which permitted the shopkeeper to work his staff for a couple of hours each day, was abolished also.

In addition, the Government decided as a matter of policy that no further application should be made of Bavin’s Wage Reducing Act.

Instructions have been issued that no Government contract is to be let to any firm that does not conform to the 44-Hour Week and other industrial laws laid down by the Government.

Our country legislation during our four months of office included the repeal of Bavin’s iniquitous Western Lands Amendment Act.

Through our Lands Department we have given much assistance to settlers, and since we took office over 2,000 farmers and land owners have secured relief in the way of having payment of their arrears deferred, and their current payments postponed for a number of years.

The wheat farmer was in a serious condition. The Government found that not only had most of the crop been harvested, but a good deal of it had been sold, and any question of pooling the crop was not practicable.

Every assistance through the Rural Industries Board has been given by the Government, and a measure of relief to necessitous farmers will be provided by the Flour Acquisition Bill.

The unemployed position was governed by the difficulty of finances. The Government found that while much money had been promised by our predecessors in unemployment works, the actual cash position in the Treasury was such that there was barely sufficient to pay the wages of
the ordinary services of Government, let alone embark upon schemes of unemployment relief.

Means were found, however, of creating further governmental works. Employment of an additional 5000 men weekly on Water Board work has been put in hand, a scheme to provide country employment is in contemplation and legislation along other lines will probably be passed before this Conference meets.

Realising that the solution of the financial problem will mean the solution of unemployment, the Government devoted much time to the condition of the Treasury, and came to the conclusion that the only hope of relief would come from the adoption of a scheme which is now known as the Lang Plan.

Shortly, this Plan provides that money which otherwise would be paid out as interest shall be, temporarily at least, diverted for the relief of unemployment.

One measure which of itself is almost sufficient to justify the existence of the Labor Party is the Moratorium Act.

This Measure has saved for the people their homes and for the farmer his farm. At the time it was introduced no other form of legislation was so urgently needed.

As all this has been accomplished almost within three months of taking office, Conference will realise that the State Labor Party is determined to govern in the interest of the people.

We believe that the work performed in the short space of time under review is an indication that when we have had twelve months of office, the people of our State will be well on the road to prosperity.

M O'Sullivan, Secretary Parliamentary Labor Party

**Organising Secretary's Report**

I have much pleasure in submitting to the Annual General Conference a report of my activities as organising secretary since my appointment, twelve months ago.

As a State election at some time of the year was certain, I immediately commenced to get the campaign machinery in order. Naturally, the electorates upon which I concentrated my attention were those where the prospects of winning were brightest.

I began with the Barwon electorate, and visited the following centres: Moree, Gravesend, Inverell, Warialda, and left all centres working in harmony. Today the Barwon is a Labor seat.

On the way to the Barwon electorate I visited supporters and branches at Cessnock, Singleton, Scone, Murrurundi, Muswellbrook, Quirindi, Gunnedah, Tamworth, Glen Innes, Armidale, and many small towns en route and set the work going for the approach of the elections.
An extended itinerary was then undertaken with a view of covering the electorates of Goulburn, Yass, Cootamundra, Temora, Wagga, Corowa, Albury and the Murray, a substantial increase in local activities being the result. Unfortunately, the tour was interrupted by the Lane Cove by-election, and I was recalled from Albury to assist in the campaign. Although we were not successful at this by-election, the hard work of the supporters and Trade Union officials, who offered their services and their cars, must not be overlooked, but special praise given to them.

After this election I returned to the south-western portion of the State and completed the work still to be done there. This included a fortnight’s tour of the Murray electorate, visiting Conargo, Carrathool, Gunbah, Hay, Booligal, Mossgiel, Clare, Balranald, Benanee, Euston, Coomealla, Poenacarie, Wentworth, Toolebuc, Swan Hill, Moulemein, Wakool, Barham, Wamboota, Moama, Mathoura and Deniliquin, in company with Mr J Donovan, who is now its State representative.

I next turned my attention to the Ashburnham electorate and organised Labor’s forces at all centres and with Mr W Keast, the present member for the Ashburnham electorate, addressed open-air meetings to large and appreciative audiences at Parkes, Forbes, Eugowra, and Canowindra. This seat was also added to the list of Labor gains. On the way I made contact with the Labor enthusiasts of Orange and Bathurst, where I addressed the branch.

Monaro was then organised, in company with the candidate, Mr PV Stokes. I visited and held meetings at the following places: Queanbeyan, Michelago, Bredbo, Cooma, Berridale, Aadminaby, Jindabyne, Dalgetty, Nimitabel, Bibbenluke, Holts Flat, Bombala and Delegate. By this time it was evident that the elections were to take place sooner than at first expected, consequently I returned to Sydney to organise the metropolitan seats, and see that the head office machinery, which is the pivot upon which the whole organisation swings, was in order. Contrary to the expectations of our opponents, the elections found us prepared. Campaign speakers were all organised from head office, thus assuring a fair distributions of speakers in all electorates, giving justifiable preference, of course, to those electorates that looked like possible gains.

The election was the most momentous that the State has ever faced. It is true there was a swing to Labor, and it is likely we would have polled well in any case, but it must not be forgotten that never was the power of our opponents used with such vigor and bitterness. It can be said, therefore, that the great victory which crowned Labor’s efforts, was due, in a very large measure, to the fact that an extensive organising campaign was begun early, and was persisted in to the end. I desire here to pay a tribute to the members of the staff for their untiring efforts at all time to assist me in my duties, particularly during the State campaign, when
very often they worked seven days a week and fourteen hours a day, but
with one aim in view – to achieve victory.

Besides the work of organising the electorates, other necessary work
fell to my lot. I had to keep in continuous and close contact with the
Trade Union officials, and owing to the vagaries of Federal politics, I had,
in company with the General Secretary, to make several trips to Can-
berra. The importance of keeping close contact between head office and
the Parliamentary Party cannot be overestimated.

Much has been done. There is still a great deal to do. The abnormal
times through which we are passing makes politics more than ever
uncertain. No Parliament can be sure of running its full three years. It is
imperative, therefore, that Labor must keep its machinery moving and
ready to be speeded up at a moment's notice. The work of organising
must not be slackened, and I hope, during the coming year, to see that
Labor is active in every centre of any size, both in the metropolis and the
country.

JB Martin, Organising Secretary.

ALP Socialisation Committee

First Annual Report — Easter 1930 to Easter 1931

(This is but a brief resume of the full report of the ALP Socialisation
Committee. This committee considers its report to be of sufficient im-
portance to the whole of the party to be dealt with fully in a separately prin-
ted report, which will be made available at conference to all delegates.)

The ALP Socialisation Committee was brought into existence by the
annual conference itself of 1930 to “devise ways and means to propagate
the first and principal platform, the Socialisation of Industry”.

Its task has been, and is, therefore, no less a one than that of bringing
the objective of the party, so long relegated to the background, right into
the realm of practical politics, and that as soon as possible.

With a due sense of its responsibility, the committee has set about
that task. Conference had scarcely completed its deliberations than the
committee held its first meeting. It has met practically once a week since
then, and has progressively continued to extend its influence, until today
it can fairly claim that it has, in conjunction with the economic circum-
stances, helped in no small measure to give a fighting lead to the party,
which otherwise might have continued (to a greater extent than it has), to
maunder round in the futile by-paths of mere Reformism and Capitalism.

How has the committee given this lead? Briefly (for details will be
given in our separately printed report) we will set out our activities.
I. — Propaganda within the party itself.

A. Socialisation Propaganda Units
The committee early realised the need for educating and ‘gingering-up’ party members themselves, many of whom had either forgotten, or did not even know, that the Socialisation objective was the first plank of the platform. Accordingly, it set out to establish Socialisation Propaganda Units in the ALP Branches and Unions. It has succeeded beyond its hopes. Already it has succeeded in gaining sympathetic responses from the majority of branches, of whom a large proportion have formed definite Socialisation Units.

Much has still to be done to bring all these units to the effective point, so that they will act as a leaven upon the mass of the party members, but a great deal of necessary groundwork has been accomplished.

B. Lectures to Branches.
Members and representative speakers from the committee have addressed a great many branches on questions connected with Socialisation.

C. Printed Propaganda.
Through its units and otherwise the committee has disseminated thousands of leaflets on Socialisation throughout branches and unions.

D. — Debates.
The committee has encouraged its units to undertake debates; it has seen to it that among the subjects for debate in the ALP Debating Competition are subjects that deal with Socialisation.

E. Study Circles.
Study circles, based on the definite study of some text-book on Socialist Economics and Theory have been formed and encouraged in many branches and units.

F. Parliamentary Representatives.
The committee can claim to have brought the need for Socialisation knowledge and activities very effectively in front of our Parliamentary representatives. Many have given both financial and other assistance, but, many have (up to the date of this report), done neither.

II. Propaganda Outside The Party

A. Public Meetings.
An important part of the Committee’s activities has been the park, street, and hall meetings open to the general public. The committee has held hundreds of these meetings with wonderful effect and increasing enlightenment of the masses.

B. Leaflet Distribution.
In addition to the thousands of leaflets distributed among party members, the committee has also distributed many thousands to the general public. This side of our activity — perhaps the most important — must be
multiplied a thousandfold before we can really claim to have done our
duty. Financial and other difficulties have to be surmounted, but with
adequate party support we see only success ahead.

III. General Propaganda
A. Newspaper and Educational Propaganda.
In addition to the above, the committee has continued directly, or
through some of its most active units, to obtain publicity for many excel-

lent articles on Socialisation in the Press, (city, suburban and country.)

The committee herewith places on record its deep debt of gratitude
to the Labor Daily for its splendid contribution of space in the Saturday
supplement of the Labor Daily, and for its unfailing willingness to give
space to our appeals for funds, notices of meetings, reports, etc.

B. Other Miscellaneous Propaganda.
The committee has endeavored as far as possible to keep its proposals
before Labor bodies - it has been instrumental in getting resolutions on to
the agenda of conference, has participated very prominently in great Labor
displays and functions such as the Eight-Hour display, State Election
procession, ALP picnic, and has been partly instrumental in opening what
it hopes to be merely the first of many other such clubs (based on Socialisa-
tion education), as the “Workmen’s Club” at Lane Cove.

Its influence has extended to all the other States, and in Queensland
and Victoria powerful influences are working to bring the Labor Parties
in those States into line with ours on the question of Socialisation.

The committee is of opinion that the conference of 1930, in creating
an instrument for the mobilisation of Labor opinion around the funda-
mental vital Socialisation objective of the party, actually took one of the
most important, far-reaching and hopeful steps in the history of its
activities to date, and now calls upon the conference of 1931 to justify the
faith of those Labor pioneers who have sacrificed themselves in the past
for something more than mere Reformism, by not only renewing the
committee’s mandate for a further term, but by considering ways and
means for office and other facilities for propaganda, specific financial
resources and increased powers.

Further details and recommendations will be submitted in the
separately printed report which the committee puts before conference as
one that is fraught with the greatest consequences – full of hope for the
long-deferred striking from the people of the chains of Capitalism and
the entering by them, freed at last, into the saner, freer, more truly
human Socialised Commonwealth.

For the ALP Socialisation Committee, (F Saidy, D Grant, E Cook, E
Barker, Mrs L Lynch),
J Kilburn (President).
W McNamara (Hon. Sec.)
Women’s Central Organising Committee

Fellow Delegates,

1930, the 26th year of the Women’s Central Organising Committee, was a year of strenuous fights. The State and City Municipal Elections, the revolt against deflation, and its reduced real wages and unemployment.

State Women’s Convention

The State Convention of Labor Women, held from 5th, to 10th April, was opened by the State President, Mr Graves, who, in a stirring address, stated: “That until women insisted on equality as a right, instead of asking for it as a privilege, they will never attain it.”

Papers were read and thoroughly discussed by Matron Angermundie: “Pre-natal Care”.
Mrs Green: “Mandated Territories”.
Mrs Houghton: “Married Women in industry”.
Mrs Browett: “Unemployment”.
Mrs Seery: “The Delinquent Girl”.
Mrs Shields: “Municipal Laundries and Kitchens”.
Mrs Connop: “Housing”.
Miss Nyhan: “Cause and Effect of Women in Industry”.
Mrs Wills: “Scattered Homes”.
Mrs Steel: “National Health”.
Mrs McNamara: “Banking and Finance”.
Mrs Fox and Mrs Taylor: “Cremation”.
Mrs Piddington: “Sex Training”.

Resolutions were passed, adopting all papers, excepting those on “Cremation” and “Married Women in Industry”, which were referred to The Women’s Inter-State Conference.

Colored Races

Included in Convention business was the resolution, “That we deplore that the ACTU turned down affiliation with colored races”, whilst Mr Scullin welcomed members of Rotary Club Convention from same colored races.

Interstate Women’s Conference

At Federal Conference held at Canberra this State was represented by Mrs Dunn, Mrs Francis and Mrs Lynch.

The Prime Minister opened the conference, supported by Mr Blakeley, Minister for Home Affairs.

The President also introduced a visitor, Mr Slater, Attorney-General in Victorian Labor Ministry.
Miss May Holman was re-elected president. Mrs Wallace was elected secretary.
Conference business was extensive and occupied four days.

Pan Pacific Conference
All the important Melbourne discussions were reaffirmed. Arising from conference, the Federal Government was approached on the matter of Labor women representation at Pan Pacific Conference.

Dame Janet Campbell’s Reports
Also giving effect to certain parts of the Dame Janet Campbell Report on “Maternal and Child Welfare”. The Prime Minister was in sympathy with both of these, but regretted no money was available for them.

Unemployment Insurance
Conference to urge Federal Government to give effect to the Labor policy of “Unemployment Insurance”.

Government Education Film Library
Also the formation of a Government Educational Film Library.

Moratorium
That the Governments be urged to legislate for a moratorium was also decided at conference. This has been done in New South Wales by Mr Lang.

State Election
The committee practically suspended operations during State Election Campaign to allow its members to devote their energies to the fight, which resulted in the triumphant return of Mr Lang and fifty-four supporters.

Civic Elections
The civic elections were nearly as strenuous in the city, but owing to an absurd system of balloting a Labor City Council did not materialise.

Deputations
Many deputations were made, including:
   To the Prime Minister re Victorian Barracks for unemployed.
   To Mr Beasley, assistant Minister for Industry re unemployment.
   To Mr Farrar, MLC, Chairman, Unemployment Relief Council, re earmarking portion of unemployment tax for women workers.
To Mr Gosling, Chief Secretary, re Consorting Act and Police matters.
To Mr Ely, Minister for Labor and Industry, re Labor Bureau method, with unemployed women.

Donations
Our thanks are due to the State Executive for a donation of £25 for expenses to Interstate Women’s Conference; also to Mr Beasley, MHR, Assistant Minister for Industry for his assistance.

Relief of Distress
Members of committee performed great work raising funds and generally helping to relieve acute distress caused by unemployment.

Representation
Following on resolutions from conferences that representations by Labor women be made on National and international Conference, Boards, Institutions and Industrial Bodies, has resulted so far in Miss May Holman securing the Australian delegation to Geneva, and Mrs Lena Lynch being appointed a member of the Film Censorship Board.

The committee regrets that, despite the amount of work put in by women as speakers, canvassers, collectors and workers generally, we are still without women representation in either State or Federal Parliaments.

Lena Lynch, Hon. Secretary.

Report of Progress of ALP Debating Competition
Under the control of the Organising Committee, ALP Executive, Messrs Green, Williams, Hackett, Douglas, and Townsend.

In order to promote an organised system for the formation of debating classes, representatives from each branch were invited to Head Office and the groups formed, group secretaries elected, and a group committee consisting of one representative from each branch set up and made practically autonomous in such matters as the draw of rounds of debates, dates and places, and the appointment of adjudicators, etc.

The following were the groups set up:

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<th>Strathfield Group</th>
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Enmore  
Lakemba  
Stanmore  
Belmore  
N’town-Ersk’ville  
Canterbury  
N Marrickville  
Croydon Park  
W Marrickville  
Ashbury  
Earlwood  
*Hurstville Group*  
Rockdale Group  
Hopetoun  
Arncliffe  
Penshurst  
Homedale  
Hurstville  
Langlea  
Hurstville AEU  
Moorefield  
West Kogarah  
Tempe Park  
Carlton  
Brighton  
*Leichhardt Group*  
N. Sydney Group  
Rozelle East  
Ryde  
Balmain  
North Sydney  
Dalley Speakers’ Class  
Blue’s Point  
Leichhardt  
Mosman  
Dulwich Hill  
Hornsby  
Petersham  
Brookvale  
Rozelle  
Balgowlah  
*Waverley Group*  
Randwick Group  
Paddington  
Randwick  
Bondi  
Randwick North  
Waverley  
Kensington  
Waverley West  
Maroubra Junct.  
Clovelly  
Coogee  
Coogee Younger Set  

**City Group**  
Glebe  
Redfern  
Pyrmont  
Botany  
King  
Redfern-Waterloo  
Surry Hills

With all difficulties disposed of, the committee then centred their attention on the Unions, but only four were prepared to take part – not enough to form a group. Whether the Union officials were too busy fighting their losing fight with unemployment, or for other reasons, has not been ascertained, but it is hoped that when prosperity again returns, members of unions will also delve into debate and correct English.

Matters now being adjusted and reasonable time having elapsed for teams to be tried out, the competition was nicely underweigh when the State elections burst upon us. The elections were the only things that
mattered; all debates were cancelled or allowed to stand in abeyance until after polling day.

After the elections, the matter was again taken up, and the debates launched in some groups, while in others previous debates were scrapped and a new start made. The City and Randwick and Waverley groups failed to continue, and no effort at resuscitation aroused any response. Possibly their labors in returning Messrs Landa, Clementson, Flanagan, and Heffron to the State Parliament left them incapable of further effort. All other groups are proceeding with the debates. Some delay has been caused by the annual election of branch officers, while another serious hitch will be caused by the financial crisis between the Federal and State Executives, for you will understand that matters of such importance as the above receive most of the time and attention in the branches – and rightly – so to the detriment of other things.

The spirit developed in the competition, both by its officers and among the competitors, is very fine, many teams entering with the object of gaining experience and not hoping to win a great many debates.

The competition was launched in a time of political and industrial trial and stress unprecedented in Australian history, a time of anxiety for the worker and the would-be worker, when he had much to occupy his mind besides debates. Notwithstanding that, the framework of a powerful and useful organisation has been set up. The debates are continuing, and will continue to a successful conclusion.

With the machinery set up and the experience gained, we hope in the near future to control the finest debating competition ever held in the metropolitan area, and from it produce a better class of public speaker with a better understanding of the aims and aspirations of the Labor Movement.

A list of subjects for debate is set out:

**ALP Debating Competition. Subjects for Debate.**

1. That the Labor Party should make its socialisation objective the basis of every appeal to the electors.
2. That socialisation can be achieved without civil war, through Parliamentary action.
3. That Russia has developed much more under the Communist Party Government than it would have done under any Capitalist Government.
4. That the NSW State school curriculum operates against the interests of the majority of the working class.
5. That sex knowledge should be imparted at school to all children.
6. That a Soviet form of government is preferable to any other.
7. That State monopoly of the liquor traffic is better than total prohibition.
8. That the Commonwealth Government can solve the present Australian unemployed problem by an expansion of credit.
9. That industrial unionism is a more practicable and superior form than craft unionism.
10. That the State should endeavor to give full instruction in birth control to all adults.
11. That all forms of gambling should be suppressed.
12. That the White Australia policy should be scrapped.
13. That the only alternatives before us are either a dictatorship of the working class or a dictatorship of the owning class.
14. That a censorship of literature, the theatre, and the cinema is desirable.
15. That the League of Nations is a real safeguard against war.
16. That the monarchy in England is obsolete and ought to be abolished.
17. That the Churches have been a barrier to progress.
18. That socialisation of industry would greatly reduce crime.
19. That direct action is as important to the working class as political action.
20. That the workers should have nothing to do with State or Federal Arbitration Courts.
21. That Australia should set an example to the world by adopting a policy of complete disarmament.
22. That if all members of Parliament and all union secretaries received no more than the basic wage, working-class interests would benefit much more than at present.
23. Is Arbitration of more benefit to the workers than direct action?
24. That the Customs Tariff of the Scullin Government is in the best interests of Australia.
25. That Capitalism can be transformed into Socialism by the workers forming and developing their own cooperatives.
26. That the workers should accept the results of the developments of machinery as an inevitable evolution of industry.

The thanks of the committee are extended to Mr W McNamara, of the Socialisation Committee, for advice and assistance, and to the Labor Daily for its generous treatment of our articles.

C Townsend,
Chairman, Organising Committee.
Annual Conference of NSW ALP, 1931

(The Sydney Morning Herald, 4, 6, 7 April 1931)

Day 1, Friday, 3 April 1931


The repudiation policy of the State Premier (Mr Lang) embodied in the scheme known as the Lang plan, was adopted by the State Easter Labour Conference last night by 122 votes to 1.

The conference also adopted the resolution of the metropolitan Labour conference, declaring that the Federal Treasurer, Mr Theodore, had placed himself outside the Labour movement.

The New South Wales ALP executive was instructed not to endorse for selection any member of the Labour party who did not recognise the authority of the State party. The executive will insist immediately that the fourteen Federal Labour members who supported Mr Theodore shall pledge allegiance to the State body.

The Premier (Mr Lang) caused a sensation by a straight out advocacy of the socialisation of industry as the solution of Australia’s difficulties. He declared that the Interest Reduction Bill was a ‘stepping stone’ towards the achievement of the objective.

Disorderly Scenes

Disorderly scenes marked the opening of the conference.

During a discussion on the balance-sheet and annual report the former organising secretary of the ALP (Mr AJ Macpherson) alleged that a ‘bash gang’ had been employed by the ALP to stifle interruptions, uproar followed the speech of Mr Macpherson, and a motion was unanimously carried that he should be no longer heard.

The total number of delegates was 128, of whom 45 were from the country.

Those present included the Chief Secretary (Mr Gosling), the Minister for Health (Mr McGirr), the Minister for Labour (Mr Baddeley), the Minister for Justice (Mr Larmor), the Attorney-General (Mr Lysaght), the Minister for Lands (Mr Tully), Messrs. Quirk, Olde, O’Sullivan, Cahill, Heffron, Byrne, MsLA, Senator Dunn, and Mr E Ward, MP.

Mr AJ Macpherson, assistant secretary and organiser of the Postal Workers’ Union, said that he wanted more particulars about the
secretary’s travelling expenses at the last conference, and he also wanted to know under what heading the wages of 30/ a day paid to the ‘basher gang’ employed at the conference last year appeared.

The president (Mr JJ Graves) said that at the last conference there was a disturbance at the back of the hall. He stated at the time that extra doorkeepers were required, and four of these were engaged at the same rate of pay as the other doorkeepers. One of these men had occasion to speak to Mr Macpherson.

“It is a deliberate lie that I was dealt with. You think you will get away with this at this conference, but there are other days coming”, declared Mr Macpherson. “The men you employed spent long periods in gaol as garrotters and thugs”.

The president: If these charges are to be made they must be made in a proper manner.

A voice: He should be made to withdraw.

“If they were thugs, as you say, the branch would have dealt with them”, replied Mr Graves. “One man did spend some time in gaol over the timber workers’ strike, and while he was in gaol the movement thought fit to keep his wife”.

“That was not the man I was referring to”, said Mr Macpherson.

Voices: Name them.

Mr Hutt (Meatworkers): He is trying to discredit this movement in New South Wales. I challenge him to name them. He is trying to besmirch the name of this conference.

“I do not know the name of the man”, said Mr Macpherson.

Uproarious scenes followed.

Mr Kelly (Botany) moved that Mr Macpherson be no longer heard, and this was carried.

Secretary resigns

The resignation of Mr S Bird as general secretary came as a bombshell at the opening of the afternoon session. The resignation was accepted with regret, and it was decided that the Labour party should devise means of recognising Mr Bird’s services.

The entry of the Premier (Mr Lang) was the signal for an enthusiastic outburst of applause, which lasted some minutes.

“Three cheers for Jack Lang”, a woman shouted, and they were given.

The chairman said that there was no need to appoint delegates to the Federal Labour party as the Labour movement had not yet “set up a Federal body”.
Presidential address

The chairman (Mr JJ Graves), delivering his presidential address, said that some of the members of the Federal Parliament seemed to believe that they stood in opposition to the State Parliament. This was shown when Mr Scullin had failed, although pressed, to congratulate Mr Lang upon his success at the election in October. “Within 24 hours of the time that Mr Lang said that he could not pay interest on oversea debts, Mr Scullin paid £700,000 to England. If this is what the members of this conference think they are behind these Labour representatives for, it were better they were expelled from such a body”, declared the president amid cheers. “If the Labour movement stands for anything it is for flesh and blood. (Cheers.) We are here to see that the weak are protected, hungry are fed, and the oppressed taken care of. We must decide whether we will purify the Labour movement or have a movement which merely serves as a background for political opportunity and ambition”.

“Since the conference adjourned last year events of tremendous importance to the Labour movement have occurred”, said Mr Graves. “The Federal Labour Government considers the interest of the bondholder paramount to that of unemployed Australians, and the Federal Parliamentarians are attempting to deprive the rank and file of its control of the movement. Wages have been reduced, unemployment is rampant, misery has touched homes never before affected. In fact, almost every phase of the life of the community is suffering from financial manipulation. One section alone remains untouched – the recipients of Interest Income. To deal with this pressing problem the State ALP executive and the State Labour party adopted a series of financial proposals known as the Lang plan. According to newspaper reports, this decision so angered the Federal Parliamentary Labour party that it caused a special meeting of the Federal Conference to be held, at which the Labour movement in New South Wales was expelled from the Federal Conference. The Federal Labour Ministry, which is supported by 15 Labour members from New South Wales, paid away in interest to oversea bondholders £700,000, which this State Government refused to find for the purpose.

“At different times our own unions, the Labour movement in this State, even the Federal Labour Conference, have asked the Federal Government, in fact pleaded with it, to make money available for the relief of unemployment. The reply has always been that it was impossible for the Government to find any extra money to relieve suffering in Australia. It is easy to take from the weak and suffering and give to the strong and wealthy. That has been going on since history began.
Labour Party’s Mission

“If Labour has any mission in politics, it is to see that the weak are protected, the hungry are fed, and the oppressed are raised up to a decent standard of comfort and security. The period we are going through is very similar to the conscription issue of 1916. Tests which were applied then are being applied now, and, unfortunately for the people of Australia, it seems that those tests are to have similar results.

“The second point relates to the principle of rank and file control. Your executive unhesitatingly adopted the attitude that it could not permit New South Wales delegates to take part in a conference which contravened decisions of our own annual general conference. After many years of fighting, we in 1927 adopted a constitution which gave the rank and file complete control over its Parliamentary members. We felt that in no circumstances could we surrender this fundamental principle, and for that reason it was decided that the New South Wales delegates should not attend the Federal Conference”

Mr Lang’s Speech

“The Labour movement in this State requires more solidarity than ever before”, said the Premier, Mr Lang. “We must press on to our objective and do it quickly. Your agenda paper at this conference is full of references to socialisation, but you, the members of the Labour movement, must do your work before we can do ours. You must get out among the people, you must point out to them the benefit of socialisation, you must make them ready to receive it. Nobody is keener on our objective than I am, but how can we do it in Parliament when the greatest obstruction is met within our own ranks?

“The plan which we have placed before the people is a step towards our objective. With a bill to reduce interest we merely touch on the fringe of the socialisation of credit, but look at the result. A nominee Upper House, a nominee Governor, nominee Courts, and a Federal Labour Government have all combined to defeat even that small step along the road to socialisation. In the Labour party’s platform and objective is to be found the true solution of Australia’s problems. But you men and women in the movement, who have a thorough understanding of what socialisation means, and have the ability to place that knowledge before the people in a way that they will understand it and appreciate it, must intensify your campaign among our own Labour people before a Labour Government will be able successfully to legislate for socialisation.

“Here in the plan which the movement has adopted is an important, practicable step towards our objective. If we can have it enacted in either the Federal or State Parliaments the benefits from it will be so quickly and fully appreciated by the people that our objective will be brought
nearer to achievement. This is a time for the Labour movement in New South Wales to use all its powers, whether persuasive or disciplinary, for legislation along the lines of the New South Wales plan, which is a step towards the objective of the movement.”

The Lang Plan

Mr Lang proceeded to recapitulate the principles of the Lang plan and the criticism levelled at it.

“We have come to the conclusion that Australia has been most unjustly dealt with by the oversea financial interests in regard to the annual tribute which is being taken from our country every year”, Mr Lang proceeded. “It is a burden that the country was barely able to carry even in prosperous times, and impossible for her to attempt to carry now. It is inevitable, if we attempted to maintain the payment of £36,000,000 a year overseas, that the starvation and misery among Australians must increase.

“To meet this situation Labour in New South Wales decided that the oversea financial interests should be called upon to give Australia similar treatment at least to that which England obtained from the United States, and that until an agreement along those lines was reached the £36,000,000 a year which hitherto was sent abroad should be retained in Australia and devoted to the relief of unemployment.

“The second point in our policy related to interest due from Australian Governments to the bondholders within our own shores. While price levels, wages, and almost every other factor in our economic life have fallen, interest rates remain untouched. While the Australian Governments have to find the money for these exorbitant interest payments they are being hampered in the task of relieving unemployment.

“It was decided that to bring the incomes from interest of bonds into harmony with other incomes, the interest rate to the Australian bondholder should be reduced to 3 per cent. Every newspaper and every political leader has been hammering into us for the past 12 months ‘costs of production must come down’, but insists that the saving should be made in the workers’ wages. The Labour party holds that the greatest and most unproductive item in the cost of production is interest, and if industry is relieved of a portion of the interest burden it is carrying, a revival in employment and production will follow. A bill to reduce interest to reasonable rates was passed through the Lower House and rejected by the Council.

Gold Standard

“The other proposal was that the gold standard of currency should be abandoned and a form of currency based on the wealth in production of
Australia should be introduced. So long as the gold standard continues as our currency it will always be subject to the manipulation of the financiers and these crises will return with added violence at every recurrence. This plan was put forward not as a complete cure of our industrial ills but as the only means to give speedy and effective relief in Australia. Its adoption would put our unemployed at work, remove the spectre of starvation from the homes of our people, and enable the Labour Governments both Federal and State to go ahead in earnest with the Labour platform in which the real cure for Australia’s troubles is to be found.

“Your Government in this State then proceeded to give legislative effect to those sections of the proposal which were applicable to a State Government alone”, said Mr Lang.

“The plan has been the chief item of controversy in Australian politics since it was announced and there is great rivalry between the Nationalist and the Labour Governments as to which shall be most clamant in their condemnation. The facts on which our case was built however were too strong for our critics and those who reluctantly admit the force of our arguments have but one form of criticism. They say there is a good deal in the Lang plan but we object to the way in which it has put to the bondholders. We have been accused of a lack of courtesy. It has been said that we should have tried to negotiate with the bondholders.

Sir Otto Niemeyer’s Visit

“In August of last year Sir Otto Niemeyer and Professor Gregory came to Australia on behalf of the financial interests. Their object was to compel Australia to abolish arbitration, reduce wages, cut pensions, and eliminate social services. Did Sir Otto attempt to negotiate with the Australian people? Not a bit of it. He walked into the Melbourne Conference and informed the Premiers that the City of London had decided that no more money would be available to Australia until she complied with the conditions laid down by the overseas financial interests. If Sir Otto Niemeyer and his crowd can say that to Australia why cannot Australia say to the financial interests: Not another penny piece in the payment of interest shall leave Australia until Sir Otto Niemeyer and his kind will give us the consideration they have given to almost every other nation in the world? That is the method which the money power adopts whenever it wants to get something done and surely the people of Australia, who have a far better case, should be permitted to adopt the same attitude. Those Federal members who think New South Wales Labour is lacking in courtesy are almost in the same breath defending the infamous Niemeyer Agreement, and in defending that they are defending Sir Otto Niemeyer and his methods.
“The next objection was to our bill to reduce interest. Our Federal critics said that mortgages and overdrafts were sacred contracts and should not be attacked directly. When Mr Bavin wanted to reduce wages, he brought in an Act of Parliament which ordered that after a certain date all wages should be reduced by 8½ per cent. Why then, cannot a Labour Government, when it wants to reduce interest, bring in an Act to say that after a certain date all interest shall be reduced by a certain amount?

Federal Government Criticised

“If the Niemeyer and the Bavin methods of procedure are wrong and our method of going about it is wrong, let us have a look at the system of the Federal Government and see if that is right”, continued Mr Lang.

“At Canberra the Federal Treasurer said ‘Mr Lang said that it may lead to the creation of a new currency. It need not necessarily mean that. It is to be hoped, for the sake of the disturbance it would cause, that it can be avoided, that it will not necessitate that’. Yet the Federal Government now has a bill before the House to create a new currency, not a complete reversal of our form of currency such as New South Wales proposed to the Canberra conference, nor that provided for in the Labour platform, but a kind of Mahomet’s coffin, beginning nowhere and ending nowhere. The amount of currency which it is proposed to create will give little more benefit than the distribution of unemployed money during Christmas week, but sufficient to cause that disturbance which Mr Theodore said he wished to avoid.

Reduction of Interest

“The other portion of the plan which the federal Government has adopted is reduction of interest”, said Mr Lang.

“Theirs is not a ruthless, discourteous method such as New South Wales adopted – they will not fix a date on which all interest will be automatically reduced. Their legislation proposes to set up a committee of five. The composition of that committee will be one from the Commonwealth Bank, probably Sir Robert Gibson, one from the trading banks, either Mr Trantor or Mr AC Davidson, one from the primary industries, probably Mr Drummond or Mr Trethowan or Sir Adrian Knox, Mr Heathershaw, Under-Secretary of the Federal Treasury, and an unspecified fifth. That is how the Federal Government proposes to reduce interest. It is going to ask Sir Robert Gibson, Mr AC Davidson, and Mr Drummond or Sir Adrian Knox to take up the case for the manufacturers and primary producers against the financial interests. Which of the two methods could the Labour movement support? That is
the substance of the criticism aimed at the proposals of the movement in this State.

“Our attempt to reduce interest in the private finance of this State has been prevented by the Legislative Council. Our efforts to avoid payment of overseas interest is about to be prevented by a combination of the Federal Labour Government, the Commonwealth Bank, and the High Court of Australia. This is the position which I want the people of Australia to understand. Time after time Governments have asked the Australian banks for accommodation to help them relieve unemployment and every time the banks have replied that they are unable to meet the Governments because they could only do so by calling up the overdrafts of the farming and business community. At the end of March the State Government in New South Wales had not the money with which to pay its interest.

“The Federal Government offered to arrange for the Commonwealth Bank to advance the money. Having in mind Sir Robert Gibson’s statement that the banks themselves were in a precarious position, and also the statement that credit for Governments could only be obtained by depriving commercial and primary industries of their advances, this Government refused to take the money for interest purposes. But the Federal Labour Government took it. Apparently it does not matter to them that industry is to be robbed of £700,000, that, according to Sir Robert Gibson, the banks themselves are in a precarious position. Interest must be found though everything is smashed. Perhaps the Federal Government believes, as we do, that the bankers are not speaking the truth when they say their banks are in a precarious position, and they cannot accommodate Governments. But, if they hold that belief, and they still want to pay the interest, why don’t they go to the bank and say, ‘Unless you advance us £2 for unemployed relief for every £1 you give us to pay interest we will not take the money, but default on our overseas payments?’ That is the only thing the financial institutions fear. It does not hurt them if our people are unemployed; it does not hurt them if misery is rampant in Australia; it does not hurt them if the crops rot on the ground, but if we default in our interest payments, it would be a vital wound that the financial interests would take all steps to avoid.”

Mr Beasley’s speech

Mr JA Beasley, MP, said that he and the others who had broken away at Canberra were behind the ‘Lang plan’, and they felt they would be successful.

He traced his movements since the Parkes by-election. There, he said, when all Australia was awaiting some definite policy from the Prime Minister, who had only recently returned from England, no financial policy was placed before the people, nor had there been one laid down
since Mr Scullin’s return, although it was the most important thing that Mr Scullin had gone abroad for. After his speech the whole meeting fell flat, and it was realised that some ginger would have to be put into the campaign to allow of Labour’s winning it. “Labour could not be expected to win the seat under such great difficulties”, said Mr Beasley. The East Sydney by-election, he said, was a great victory for Labour, although the influences against them and the means employed were the most despicable. Mr Scullin was a shuffler of the worst kind.

The Resolution

Mr J Hooke (Moulders) then moved the following motion: That annual general conference commends the executive for its resolute handling of the many matters of major importance which occurred in the recent months, particularly in regard to: (1) The conduct of the East Sydney by-election; (2) The adoption of the financial proposals known as the ‘Lang plan’; (3) Its decision to abstain from attendance at the Federal Labour conference while that conference arrogates to itself the right to encroach upon the declaration of local autonomy made by the 1928 annual general conference. (a) This conference adopts the resolution of the metropolitan provincial conference, 1931, whereby EC Theodore is declared to have placed himself outside the Labour movement. (b) That the executive shall not endorse the nomination for selection of any member of the movement who does not accept the declaration of local autonomy made by the 1928 conference. The executive shall take whatever steps it thinks fit to obtain this allegiance.

Mr J Hooke said that Mr Theodore was out of step with the movement. Mr Theodore and his party were political mountebanks and charlatans who had betrayed the most cherished ideals of the Labour movement. “Anyone with any vision could see long ago that this was coming”, said Mr Hooke. “Last year it was obvious that the Federal Labour Executive was dominated by the Federal politician, who was in turn dominated by the men behind them”.

Mr Beasley’s Position

Mr A McPherson (Postal Workers) created a sensation when he asked if it was not a fact that Mr Beasley was one of the most active wirepullers before the Parkes by-election, in endeavouring to get Mr Theodore re-elected to the Cabinet?

The chairman ruled that the question was not in order.

Mr Conway (AEU) submitted as an amendment that the executive should be instructed to withdraw the endorsement of Federal members in New South Wales who failed to carry out its instructions in the East
Sydney fight and that steps should be taken to select candidates for all Federal seats in New South Wales.

A conciliatory speech was made by Mr G Buckland (Australian Workers’ Union), who moved an amendment that a committee be appointed to negotiate in an endeavour to effect a reconciliation and report back to the conference by next Monday.

“We may not be satisfied with all the Federal Parliament has done”, he said amid derisive laughter. “I have been one of the Federal Government’s active critics. I am not a supporter of those members of the Federal Parliament who are absent nor would I be a supporter of theirs at the selection ballots. I am not concerned with Mr Theodore but with the future of the Labour movement. We are not going to smash the party just because a few people do not suit us. We must deal with larger matters before Labour is destroyed”.

The speaker added that the movement must have solidarity otherwise there could never be a Federal Labour Government. The differences between the two factions was not so great that they could not be bridged. (Derisive laughter)

The amendment was seconded by Mr Keller (Southern Miners) who said that if the quarrel went on, the Labour movement would be smashed.

**Bitter Debate**

Mr C Matthews (executive) opposed Mr Buckland’s amendment. He said he failed to understand a fellow executive member putting forward such a proposal in view of the definite stand that had been taken by New South Wales members.

“The action of the conference in dividing the movement will wreck the Federal and State Labour Governments”, declared Mr A McPherson (Postal Workers) in supporting the amendment. “We must not forget that it is far better to be under the worst Labour Government than under the best Nationalist Government”.

“The difference between the Lang plan and the Theodore plan is the difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee”, he added. There was a stir in the gathering when he read a letter from the president (Mr Graves) to Mr Theodore, dated October 18, 1930, which concluded as follows: “If I can judge the feelings of the executive I feel sure you will succeed in your action in again taking your place in the Federal House. With best wishes for your ultimate success.”

Mr J Kilburn (Bricklayers) said that the history of the Labour party showed a series of betrayals on the part of the Labour politicians. If the conference did not carry out the expulsions the executive would.

Alderman J Garden, who wore a large red dahlia in his coat, said there had been a plea for unity, but there was only one type of unity – the
unity of the working classes of Australia. “I cannot understand anyone who urges a unity which means an adoption of the Niemeyer Plan and the great capitalist concerns”. Facing the Water and Sewerage Board delegates, the speaker charged them with having issued an attack upon the Premier under the name of their secretary, which was drafted by Mr Theodore. "The statement is a lie, and Mr Theodore and Mr Macpherson know it", shouted Alderman Garden excitedly.

“Let us be united here and then go to the other States and tell them this is the voice of Labour in New South Wales, and they will follow us”, he concluded.

Mr C Tannock (Ironworkers) said it was the duty of the Federal executive to approach the State organisation if they desired unity. It was ridiculous to suggest that the State Labour movement should approach the people who had been deliberately ‘chopping off the heads’ of the executive. The door was open for the Federal people to approach the State if they desired unity.

Mr FE Miller (Transport Workers) said that the people who had expelled the State executive were doing their level best to smash the Labour party. “It makes one hang his head in shame when one thinks of what the Scullin Government has not done”, said Mr Miller. “We want to be a nation. We will not be subservient to the Shylocks from overseas”.

Mr Savage (Water and Sewerage Employees), referring to Alderman Garden’s allegations regarding the statement issued by the secretary of the union, said that employees of the Water and Sewerage Board were being crushed between Mr Lang and Mr Theodore. Fifteen hundred men had been discharged from the board, and the attitude of the union was that almost any means were justifiable in keeping its members in work. They were not going to apologise to Alderman Garden.

**Commonwealth Bank Attacked**

“That is not correct”, shouted Mr Savage, (assistant secretary of the Water and Sewerage Employees’ Union), when the Premier declared that when he made arrangements for 4000 men to be employed by the Water and Sewerage Board, representatives of Mr Savage’s union waited on his doorstep and demanded that they should be members of the Water and Sewerage Employees’ Union.

“Mr Baddeley, Mr Davidson, and yourself know it is correct”, retorted Mr Lang. “We will produce a letter from the Parliamentary Labour party to prove it. When Mr Cooper (president of the Water and Sewerage Board), endeavoured to arrange for £1,100,000 I suggested he should make it £1,500,000. The Commonwealth Bank replied that it would give the money if the Government would agree to forego £600,000 which the board has to pay to the Government before June 30. I, as head of the Government, said emphatically, ‘No, you can go smash if you like, but
the Commonwealth Bank will not dictate to the Government of New South Wales." (Applause.)

Mr Beasley, MP, in a personal explanation, said that Mr Theodore had been re-elected to the Cabinet because he put forward the Gibbons [Gibson?] plan. He had supported Mr Theodore because he brought forward that plan. He had withdrawn that support because the Federal Treasurer had let his supporters down, and had not put the plan before Parliament.

Mr Hooke, who moved the motion, said, in reply, that the Federal organisation obviously did not desire unity, for it had declined to send delegates to the State conference. “It has slammed the gate in our faces. All those who do not support the Lang plan must be brought into line, and let it be soon”, said Mr Hooke.

Both amendments were lost, and the motion was carried with only one dissentient – Mr A Macpherson. As he stood up alone when the division was taken he was boo-hooed by a section of the delegates.

The result of the ballot when announced as 122 votes to 1, was greeted with applause.

**Government Insurance**

A resolution on the agenda paper that employees have representation on conferences held by the heads of departments in the railways, tramways, and other public utilities was carried.

It was also decided to ask the Government to provide that no doctor acting for any insurance company be allowed to sit on any Workers’ Compensation Board, and that the whole of the insurance business in the State be made a Government monopoly.

**Why Mr Bird Resigned**

Mr S Bird has tendered his resignation as general secretary to take up a government position, details of which will be announced in a few days.

It is understood that the State president (Mr J Graves) will be appointed to the vacancy, and that Mr P Keller (Southern Miners) will take over the presidency of the Labour party.

**Boycott of AFA Employers. ALP Decision. Part of Labour Army Plan.**

The ALP State Conference has decided to organise battalions, divisions, and brigades of the Labour army, and to boycott all employers who support the All For Australia League or allow its employees to wear AFA badges.
The committee of the Australian Labour Army submitted to the Labour Conference last night a series of recommendations, which were read by Mr JM Martin, president of the army committee.

The recommendations were to the effect that a brigade be formed in each State electorate area and set up a headquarters, and that organisation of battalions be left in charge of each division. That all members of the working class be eligible for membership, and that a State council consisting of members to be appointed by the conference, and a representative from each division be set up in Sydney.

The committee further recommended that a boycott be immediately instituted upon all tradespeople and firms who are members of the AFA, and who allow their employees to wear the badge of any of the organisations declared bogus by the Metropolitan Provincial Conference whilst on duty; and that immediate steps be taken in every division to have a complete list furnished to each divisional headquarters for the purpose of effectively applying the boycott. That all trade union officials and Parliamentarians should be called upon to place themselves at the disposal of the Australian Labour Army Committee for the purpose of addressing meetings in furtherance of the objective.

A delegate caused some merriment by asking how many Lewis guns the membership fee of sixpence would purchase. The recommendations were adopted.

The following committee was elected to represent the conference on the State Council of the Labour Army: Messrs J Hooke, Burnett, JM Martin, F Hutt, and Nurse Francis.

Day 2, Saturday, 4 April 1931

Socialised State. Industries and Property. Three Years Plan
Adopted by ALP Conference. Party to Handle Nation’s Output.

The Easter Labour conference last night adopted a scheme based on the Soviet five year plan, for the socialisation of industry and specified property in New South Wales, within three years.

Followers of the Lang-Garden group voted against the scheme, but the socialisation committee, with the support of the delegates from the AWU, won the vital division by 57 votes to 44.

The action of AWU delegates in supporting the three year plan caused a sensation at the Trades Hall because of the decision of the AWU leaders in other States to fall behind the more moderate policy of the Federal Labour party.
The Proposals

Proposals for the complete socialisation of the industries of the State and specified property were placed before the conference in the report and recommendations of the socialisation committee, which was set up by the 1930 Easter conference.

The report was read by Mr W McNamara, secretary of the committee, who said that the socialisation committee had heard Mr Lang’s declaration regarding socialisation with great joy.

The principal recommendations of the committee were: That a plan, to be known as the Three Years Plan of Social Transition, be propagated to provide for government by regulations, such regulations to aim at the establishment in three years of a socialised State by the vesting in the people’s Government all rights, ownership, and control of all specified property; by the administration of specified industries, including banking, by national and industrial commissions and sub-commissions, with direct workers’ and producers’ control during the three-year period; by the establishment of compulsory pools for the handling of the nation’s entire production.

It was also recommended that the details of the plan be worked out with the ALP socialisation committee in conjunction with the executive, the Labour Council, and the Parliamentary Labour party.

The report, which was signed by the president (Mr J Kilburn), stated that the committee had done much to give a fighting lead to the party, which might have continued to moulder round in the futile bypaths of mere reformism and capitalism. It had established over 100 socialisation propaganda units in ALP branches, and others in unions, conducted lectures, debates, public meetings, secured newspaper propaganda, and distributed large quantities of leaflets. It had also brought the objects of the committee before Parliamentary representatives, and had extended its influence to Queensland and Victoria.

Mr McNamara moved that the policy for development of the socialisation of industry should include: The development by intensive and extensive socialisation propaganda at all times of an ideology favourable to socialisation, so that when the time was ripe, the political and economic change from capitalism to socialisation may be accomplished, and parts (executives, Parliamentary representatives, sub-committees, branches, affiliated unions, and individuals) to exert their energies towards the accomplishment of socialisation.

The encouragement through every political channel of the displacement of craft unionism by industrial unionism.

“We hope that Mr Lang will not be stampeded by adverse criticism and bitter attacks, or be side-tracked from his stand”, said Mr McNamara.

Referring to the leading article upon socialisation appearing in Saturday’s
"Sydney Morning Herald," he said the journal was trying to dictate to conference regarding the action it should take.

Discussion on the report was adjourned to permit of country matters being dealt with.

Subsequently the secretary of the socialisation committee moved a motion (which was adopted) that a committee of seven should be elected to carry on the work of socialisation for twelve months, with power to co-opt one member from each of the industrial and electoral groups not already represented on the conference, the endorsement of co-opted members to be submitted to the executive for approval.

Mr J Kilburn (chairman of the socialisation committee) said: “We want to get to the people in this and other States. The times are pregnant with great possibilities. Parliaments are losing their functions. I want to sound this note of warning. The capitalistic financial group has arrogated to itself complete powers in shaping the destinies of Parliament. As the Premier pointed out, Governments have become futile.”

Mr AJ Macpherson (Postal Workers) caused much uproar when he referred to “an oligarchy” in charge of the conference.

The chairman (Mr JJ Graves) warned Mr Macpherson that if he did not withdraw the remark he would overlook him as a delegate.

“I was only referring to an oligarchy of wire-pullers that is trying to side-track the socialisation committee”.

A woman delegate: “The only oligarchy you know anything about is the oligarchy of corruption”.

Mr Macpherson subsequently explained that he was not referring to the conference when he used the term oligarchy. “If the delegates take the view that I described the conference as an oligarchy I withdraw the remark”, he added.

The following committee was then elected: Messrs J Kilburn, JS Garden, JJ O’Reilly, W McNamara, D Grant, J Stewart, and E Barker. An application for a recount of the ballot by an unsuccessful candidate (Mr F Saidy) was rejected.

It was decided to allow one member from the Australian Labour Army and the socialisation committee to attend meetings of the ALP executive without the right to vote.

Mr W McNamara moved that the State objective be altered to read simply: “The socialisation of industry production, distribution, and exchange”. This was carried unanimously.

It was further decided, upon the motion of Mr McNamara, that the pledge signed by Federal, State Parliamentary, and municipal candidates should contain an undertaking to actively support and advocate the socialisation objective at all times, and to furnish a report in January and June of each year to the committee of the executive of their activities in this direction. It was also agreed that the membership ticket signed by
branch members should contain a specific pledge to the socialisation objective.

A motion from the Metropolitan Provincial Conference was: That in order to assist in achieving the policy of the party as regards socialisation of industry, the Government be asked to immediately institute an inquiry into all industrial undertakings and the potential productivity of the State with a view to ascertaining the following – The number of hours required to be worked by the working class population to produce sufficient commodities as could be purchased with that wage; the number of commodities necessary to be produced and the hours of labour required to be worked by the working-class population to meet interest payments administrative expenses, etc.; the number of hours that would be required to be worked by the whole of the population to produce as many commodities as can be purchased with the basic wage. This was carried.

**Three-Year Plan**

The discussion of the proposed three-year plan aroused intense interest. Alderman Garden opposed the adoption of such a plan, and submitted an amendment for its rejection. He had never heard of the like of such a scheme and if it were adopted it would be laughed at by every revolutionary organisation in the Commonwealth. A three-year plan was impossible. It was impossible to fix a time for any plan of socialisation.

Mr F Roels (Enginedrivers) said the adoption of such a plan would be foolish and the plan would fail.

“I think some of those opposed to the plan are suffering from a fear complex”, declared Mr J Kilburn (chairman of the socialisation committee). “Labour Governments have been in power for 40 years, and now the position of the worker is more difficult than ever. It is no use our telling the people things unless we have a definite plan. We must have a plan to take the place of capitalism, which is in its declining years. Capitalism has failed and socialism must have its trial. The necessity of change must be brought before the people.”

“Governments have fallen in the estimation of the public. Parliaments are stinking in the nostrils of electors and already the master classes are moving in the direction of Government by commission”, he said.

Mr Donald Grant said the introduction of the plan would be sheer nonsense. It was absurd and if passed would make the movement look stupid to every student of socialism. It would make the ALP a laughing stock.

“Socialism can never be brought about by the ALP”, declared Mr C Tannock (Ironworkers). “If it could it would be in operation immediately, for the 150,000 unemployed would be able to bring it about. The
Labour party is a constitutional party and it has no chance whatever of bringing about socialism. The most it can do is to nationalise certain State industries.

Mr McNamara said that the Labour party could not have been held up to more ridicule than it was now. “A critical situation has arisen”, Mr McNamara said. “A people’s Government must take over control”.

Alderman Garden’s motion was defeated after a division, by 50 votes to 49. When a division was taken upon the motion it was carried by 57 votes to 44. The chairman’s announcement to the effect was greeted with applause.

**AWU Tactics**

Unionists stated last night that AWU delegates voted for the three-year plan as a matter of tactics, the object being to bring ridicule upon the State ALP executive.

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**Day 3, Sunday, 5 April 1931**

**State ALP Conference. Increase in Unemployment Relief Announced by Premier. Mr Griffith Refused Admission.**

The Premier (Mr Lang), at the State Easter Labour Conference yesterday, announced that the Government had decided to increase the food relief allowance to unemployed by 25 per cent.

Referring to the financial position of the State, the Premier declared that New South Wales was in a stronger position than it had been in the past two years.

Mr Macpherson (Postal Workers) bitterly attacked the Premier. “We should call him Machiavellian Mr Lang”, he said.

**Conference Decisions**

The conference carried a number of motions dealing with Labour aldermen in municipal councils, and decided to instruct the central executive to devise ways and means of paying the expenses of country members attending executive meetings.

**Land Policy**

The Minister for Lands (Mr Tully) said that the Lang Government had done more for the farmer and settler than any previous Government. It had repealed the Western Lands Amendment Act which was so obnoxious to the mass of the farmers. It had prepared a bill providing for the
reclassification of the western lands, especially those in the eastern portion and adjacent to the rivers. This legislation would allow the settler who had less than a living area to build up his holding. The department had found that there were 2,000,000 acres of Crown land which had not been taken up because of the one-eighth resumption clause. It was hoped that a great deal of this land would be made available to settlers. Another bill was being prepared which provided for the subdivision of large estates and the promotion of agriculture. It was hoped this bill would also relieve land-locked country towns. In addition, the Prickly Pear Commission was being reorganised and placed under the control of a superintendent under the Minister. This would mean that a saving of £3000 per annum would be made. Apart from this the Government had helped the settler by sympathetic administration.

With regard to the adjustment of capital values on holdings the proposed Crown Lands (Amendment) Bill will meet the position as provision is therein made for extension of a further right of reappraisal to all settlers. With regard to annual payments of installments or rent to the Crown every deserving case has received generous and sympathetic consideration at the hands of the Government. Not one forfeiture has been declared by the Lang Government since taking office, except where holders have voluntarily abandoned their farms said Mr Tully.

An estimate of the monetary value of relief afforded can reliably be set down at more than £839,000. In about 60 cases soldier settlers were given very special concessions by means of the Crown foregoing entirely a large portion of the amounts in arrear. In a number of cases also additional areas were specially provided to enable soldier settlers to re-establish themselves. In addition, special consideration was given to soldier settlers on orchards on the Young Soldiers’ Settlements by provision of additional areas and further advances to certain settlers and by writing down indebtedness generally.

The Government’s policy in relation to concessions in respect of arrears of payments by settlers has generally taken the form of funding the amounts in arrear and spreading payments over long periods up to 20 years free of any penal interest charges whatever. In addition, numerous payments in respect of holdings under the Closer Settlement Act have been deferred for a number of years or postponed to the end of the terms of the purchases, added the Minister.

Concessions allowed by the Government were as follows, he continued: Payments on Crown lands carried over by the Government and spread over a number of years free of penal interest, £160,000; payments on closer settlement and soldier settlement areas postponed indefinitely, £27,000; deferred for definite periods, £373,000; interest and fines waived, £35,000; amounts written off advances to soldier settlers, £15,180;
deferred for definite periods, £158,440; penal interest forgone by the Government this year, £70,000.

The Government had also classified and made available for settlement a total of 185,000 acres; of this area 175,700 had been selected.

“It has been found that the private banks had not been playing the game with the small farmers. Many of these people have large mortgages and in addition owe money to the storekeeper and the Lands Department”, said Mr Tully. “When they receive payment for their wool and wheat the bank retains most of the money to liquidate the mortgage, and the shopkeeper and Lands Department receive little or nothing. It is up to the settler to see that the private bank is not always going to get all his money, and that the storekeeper and department receive a fair share. I would suggest that they transfer their accounts to the Rural Bank which would pay something off the mortgage and see that the storekeeper and the department receive a fair portion.”

He added that many of the people associated with the sedition and secession movements in the country districts had approached the Government for extraordinary concessions. The Government had taken no action against these people because such action would tend to make martyrs of them.

**Concessions to Settlers**

Mr Dunn, Minister for Agriculture, said that the Government had carried out nearly all its election promises with regard to agricultural matters.

The seepage question in the irrigation area had been dealt with, and a reappraisalment of the values of the holdings of ex-Broken Hill miners and TB men had taken place. A total of 146 cases had been reviewed, and a reduction of £170,000 in capital values had been made. The Government had also undertaken to purchase 1600 tons of peaches at £7 per ton and had assisted with guarantees various sections of producers to market their crops. It had further through the Rural Industries Board assisted settlers to the extent of £750,000, the greatest amount advanced by any Government in one year. Mr Dunn added that the Marketing Act was to be amended to provide that producers could establish a pool in any industry provided a simple majority of them was in favour. A bill for the abolition of PP boards was also to be introduced in the near future.

A motion asking that voting at municipal and shire elections be made compulsory was carried, but a move to secure payment of aldermen was defeated.

A further motion was agreed to that all persons employed in the manufacture and distribution of foodstuffs be medically examined periodically. In the event of any person found to be suffering from contagious disease losing his position, the Government to find him a suitable position or provide him with a pension.
Mr A Griffith’s Readmission

“I have been 16 years outside the Labour movement because of the conscription issue”, said Mr A Griffith in applying for re-admission to the Labour party.

Moving a motion for his readmission Mr A Thompson (Milk and Ice Carters) said that the Labour movement should not stand for vindictiveness. “If Mr Griffith should be outside the movement so should I”, he said. “I went over the other side and actually shot men for the capitalists”.

Opposing the motion, Mr P Keller (Southern Miners) said that the Labour movement had to deal ruthlessly with those who opposed it. There should be no sentiment.

“There should be no place in the Labour movement for those who stand for the conscription of life”, said Mr F Hutt (Meat Employees).

“The question is whether a life sentence should be handed out to a man who has made a mistake”, declared Mr J Rosevear (Leichhardt). “The Labour party still have in responsible positions men who support conscription of men by unemployment and starvation – a more contemptible form of conscription than Mr Griffith supported.

Mrs McGowan, a member of the ALP executive, stated that the Labour party did not want any arch traitors in its ranks.

“The Labour movement does not live on emotion”, said Mr F Roels (Engine-drivers), opposing the motion. “Mr Griffith should have taught you that. When the acid test was applied he failed you”.

Mr Simpson (Northern Miners) said he spoke for 12,000 miners when he supported Mr Griffith’s re-admission.

“Does Mrs McGowan know that Mr Jack Cusack, MP, was endorsed for Monaro without opposition and he supported conscription?” asked Mr Bollard (Printers) supporting the motion.

“It is camouflage when Mr Griffith says he does not believe in sending interest payments overseas”, said Mr C Tannock (Ironworkers). “He believed in sending human life overseas. Why not let Billy Hughes back?” Why not let Holman back? Let us go the whole way?”

Mr A Thompson, in reply, read a statement from Mr Griffith that as anti-conscription was a plank of the Labour platform, he would support it. “Why do you not expel people in the movement who opposed the Lang plan?” Mr. Thompson asked. “That is a far more critical matter”.

When the chairman announced, amidst excitement, that the motion for readmission had been defeated by 53 votes to 48, there were loud demands for a division. The division resulted 51 votes all. Amidst uproar, the chairman gave his vote against the motion for readmission, which was lost.

When the excitement had subsided, Mr Graves announced that Mr Rosevear, who, with Mr AJ Macpherson, was allowed to assist the teller, had complained that his vote had not been counted. Some delegates had
left the room, and it was impossible to have a recount. The matter was then dropped.

**Unemployment**

When the Premier (Mr Lang) attempted to give a report on behalf of the unemployment committee, Mr Macpherson claimed that as Mr Lang was not a member of the committee he was not entitled to give a report.

The chairman ruled against him.

Mr Lang then stated that up to date the amount collected by the Government from income taxation and the unemployed stamp duty was £2,312,405/5/4. “We have spent in relief and unemployment £2,651,051/12/5”, said Mr Lang. “We have expended in unemployment relief half a million more money than we collected in taxation. In charitable relief, that is, in food relief supplies, we have spent £959,154/18/10. From the Child Endowment Department we have spent £69,845/17/9. The total spent in food relief, rent relief, and similar charitable reliefs is £1,280,999. We have supplied work for 15,000 men. If we could devote the £1,000,000 spent on food relief in work we could give work to 30,000 of our men. This is a mere drop in the bucket. The unemployment problem is an extraordinary one. We have 100,000 unemployed. We have still a big leeway to make up. We must feed the people whatever happens. As this is a most pressing and urgent matter, the Government must do something more than it has done. With the cold winter months approaching we cannot continue along the lines we are going. We have agreed that from May 1 the present food relief will be increased by 25 per cent. (Applause.) We are not saying for a moment that this is sufficient. We hope to provide a great measure of relief by two measures. They are both ready for submission to Parliament. The first measure is the Transport Bill, which places all transportation, including railways, tramways, motors, and air, under the control of a Minister for Transport. (Applause.) Nobody can say we have not got a mandate. From every platform in the city and country I said that one of the central points of my policy was the granting of a transport monopoly. Another measure is the Greater Sydney Bill. That will enable the Government to have the assistance of a friendly instrumentality in finding work for our people. If the Upper House rejects these measures it will do it in defiance of my Cabinet, 55 members of Parliament, and in defiance of the people of New South Wales. (Applause.) We have a three years’ programme, but most of it will have been attempted before the completion of the first session. (Applause.) As Treasurer I can say that on March 31 the State was in a stronger position than it has been at any time during the last two years. (Applause.) I told the Governor that we would restore the endowment. We are ready to do it. We cannot move until the Arbitration Bill goes through. His Excellency must take his full share of
responsibility in allowing the Upper House to hold up the bill, because he does not agree with the details of it.

A voice: Give it to him, Jack.

Mr Lang: That bill has to go through as the Government wants it. (Applause.) If anything happens to your Government it will go down with its flag flying. We will go down fighting. We will not bend the knee to anybody (Cheers.)

Uproarious Scenes

Disorderly scenes were witnessed when Messrs AJ Macpherson (Postal-workers) and L Kirkwood (Water and Sewerage Employees) bitterly attacked Mr Lang. “The Government has not stood up to its duty”, said Mr Kirkwood. “The Government is out to smash union awards and conditions”.

When Mr Macpherson opened his attack a motion was submitted that he should no longer be heard, but it was lost. “Instead of calling him the Honourable JT Lang”, Mr Macpherson said, “we should call him Machiavellian Lang. (Uproar.) I will express my convictions.”

A voice: Mr Theodore’s.

Mr Macpherson: Unemployment is keener today and worse than when Mr Lang came into office. This great man is going to increase relief by a miserable 25 per cent. The unfortunate unemployed gets a pittance of 4/10½.

A delegate: What did Mr. Theodore give the miners?

Mr Macpherson: This generous, this kind hearted, this noble Mr Lang, will increase this miserable 4/10½ by 25 per cent. I heard this same man say when he was attacking the Scullin Government three weeks after he was elected that if he were Mr Scullin he would do things first and legislate afterwards. In other words, he was criticising Mr Scullin because he would not seize the mines. I would like to ask this same man whether he will seize the banks.

A delegate: He has taken their money.

Mr Macpherson: I have never listened to such cant and hypocrisy ...

At this stage Mr Macpherson’s time expired, and he resumed his seat.

Mr Lang, in his reply, said that the Government had done nothing without the full concurrence of the union secretaries and the ALP. Mr Scullin had neither legislated nor acted. “Why am I called the mad bull or dog of politics?” he asked. “Is it not because I have acted and legislated after I have spoken?” (Applause.) “It cuts me to the quick to think of the suffering and poverty. It is that suffering that makes me do some of the things for which I am attacked in the Press. I have done them and I am unrepentant”. (Cheers.)

The report submitted by Mr Lang was adopted.
Election of Officers

The annual election of officers resulted: President, Mr PJ Keller; secretary, Mr JJ Graves (for a period of three years); vice presidents, Messrs CH Matthews and J Howell.

At 10:30 pm the conference was adjourned until 10 am today.

Head-Hunters on Warpath. Mr JJ Kenneally’s Statement

“It is interesting to note that even some of those Labour leagues which profess to believe that the Easter Conference of the bogus breakaway New South Wales executive will settle all the difficulties of the present situation are by no means willing to wait for its decisions”, said Mr JJ Kenneally (president of the Federal executive of the ALP) yesterday. “Already the head-hunters are on the warpath, and in some electorates where the sitting Labour member has been faithful to the ALP and the Federal Labour executive policy and decisions, arrangements are already being made for nominations to be called so that the feast may be spread in sight of the political cannibals ready and anxious to devour their mates, whose only crime is that they have put loyalty to the Australian Labour movement before any suggestion of self-seeking or personal aggrandisement. Head-hunting is no new performance. It is always the front line of action of the renegade, who must justify himself by excessive bitterness against erstwhile comrades. The method is one in which the members of the breakaway executive of this State are specially qualified experts. It is, however, still true that, while it is quite easy to fool some of the people some of the time, and even all the people some of the time, it is quite another matter to fool all the people all the time.”

Mr Lang to Visit Other States

Elaborate plans to have the Lang repudiation policy adopted by the Labour movement throughout Australia have been arranged. In response to requests by militants from other States the Premier (Mr Lang) will address mass meetings in Melbourne and Adelaide next week. The organising secretary of the ALP (Mr JB Martin) and the secretary of the Labour Council (Mr JS Garden) will leave for Melbourne tonight to make arrangements for the Melbourne meeting. Two members of the State Parliamentary Labour party, Messrs J Byrne and W Clementson, will also leave Sydney today to prepare for Mr Lang’s visit to Adelaide. The two Parliamentarians will first visit Broken Hill and then proceed to Adelaide.
The Easter Labour Conference yesterday, by 65 votes to 35, revoked its decision reached the previous night, by which it adopted a three-year plan for the socialisation of industry and specified property in New South Wales.

Socialisation will still be retained as the main objective of the State Labour party, but the three-year plan was supplanted by a resolution, sponsored by the Lang-Garden group, watering down the programme of the socialisation committee and providing merely for the propagation of the aims and ideals of the committee.

Instead of being ordered to take immediate steps for the socialisation of industry and the control of all specified property, Labour Parliamentarians will be invited “to exert their energies for the accomplishment of socialisation”.

The decision to shelve the three-year plan represented a sweeping victory for the Garden-Lang group, who considered that the adoption of the plan would embarrass the Premier, Mr Lang, and would destroy all election prospects.

**Reasons For Rejection**

An important factor which inspired the Lang-Garden group to organise intensively for the rejection of the plan was the fear that its adoption would split the State Labour party and could strengthen the position of the followers of Mr Theodore, who are attempting to form a new Labour party in New South Wales. Members of the Lang-Garden faction bitterly criticised the action of the AWU delegates in joining hands with the socialisation section to have the plan carried the previous night.

One supporter of the Lang-Garden faction (Mr F Roels) told the conference yesterday that a number of delegates who supported the plan had voted against their principles to bring about the downfall of the Lang-Garden faction.

Intensive lobbying took place before the conference opened yesterday, and every delegate was canvassed for his vote. The supporters of the socialisation committee were also active and strenuously endeavoured to retain their majority. However, the division revealed that many who supported the committee the previous night were found on the opposition benches, and the Lang-Garden faction had a comfortable win – a majority of 30 votes.
Members of the Lang-Garden faction are now confident that they will have no difficulty in directing the future activities of the socialisation section along the lines they desire, since the majority of the members of the new socialisation committee are said to be followers of the controlling faction.

The AWU faction, which created a surprise at Sunday night’s session by voting for the three-year plan, failed to record a block vote. Three AWU delegates supported the three-year plan, but the other three delegates voted for its rejection.

The Debate

The atmosphere of the conference was electrical when Mr J Hooke (president of the Trades and Labour Council) secured the suspension of the standing orders in order to move for the recommittal of the motions carried at the previous session with regard to the socialisation of industry and the three-year plan. The voting resulted in 60 to 31 in favour of the recommittal.

In moving the rescission of the resolutions dealing with the adoption of the three-year plan of social transition, government by regulation, the vesting in the Government of the rights and control of specified property, and the administration of specified industries, including banking institutions, by commissions, Mr Hooke said the adoption of these aims would make the conference look ridiculous.

He also moved that the following additions be made to the policy for the development of the socialisation of industry:

“The encouragement through every political channel of the displacement of craft unionism by the organisation of the OBU.”

“That there should be development by intensive and extensive socialisation propaganda at all times of an ideology favourable to socialisation, so that when the time is ripe the political and economic change from capitalism to socialisation may be accomplished, and that this conference instruct the whole of its component parts to exert their energies towards the accomplishment of socialisation.”

“That the Socialisation Committee be instructed to draw up a plan of operation indicating the steps to be taken as the various stages of transition are reached, and that until socialisation of credit is achieved Labour Governments make provision for cooperative societies to engage in banking and insurance.”

Mr Hooke said that belief in utopian socialism was not compatible with material facts. The conference had fallen into the pitfall into which many politicians had fallen.
Would Provoke Civil War

“The bringing about of socialism in three years is impracticable”, declared Mr SA Rosa (North Sydney). “If an attempt were made to carry out the plan it would raise such opposition that the country would be plunged into civil war, in which there is no reason to believe we would be victorious.

“The committee should carry out its valuable propaganda work for three years, and then the time might be ripe for a three-year plan. The people have no revolutionary spirit at present.”

Mr C Tannock said the plan was a deliberate attempt to “pull the wool over the eyes of the workers”. Neither by political action nor by the action of the ALP could socialism be introduced.

Continuing the debate after the luncheon adjournment, Mr Tannock said that the conference, by adopting the plan, had done nothing more than provide ammunition for the capitalist Press.

Supporting Mr Hooke’s amendment, Mr J Stewart (Electrical Trades) said that although they might not agree with the three-year plan, the discussion had awakened the movement to a realisation of the necessity for socialisation.

“Some of Comrade Rosa’s statements are nonsensical in the extreme”, said Mr Stewart. “He is out of step with the movement. The workers are waiting for a change.”

A voice: The majority?

Mr Stewart: I am not talking about the majority. We have talked enough about socialisation. Sufficient propaganda work has not yet been prepared. We are not quite ready. We should not reach a hurried decision.

A Revolutionary Speech

“If the time arrives tomorrow I am ready”, said Mr Porter, of Gordon. “I will give my blood for the cause. I want to know whether the Labour party is a camouflaged National Association or a socialistic Labour movement. I want to know whether you are sincere. Your slogan should be Sinn Fein.” (Applause.)

Mr W McNamara, secretary of the socialisation committee, speaking in opposition to Mr Hooke’s amendment, said that the amendment simply drew cotton wool over the eyes of the workers. He agreed with the suggestion that they should cooperate with the Red International.

“That is all right”, he added. “We can do that. By a people’s Government we mean a worker’s Government. We have been asked whether we are sincere. We are sincere. We do not say we will have socialisation in three years. We say the Government must be by regulation, not by Constitutional rights. We want a Labour Government courageous
enough to rule by regulation with the support of an educated and organised working class.”

Mr E Barker (Land Transport) said that they were endeavouring to make the socialisation plan applicable to the workers in this country. “Some of the delegates want to wait until the time is ripe”, he declared. “We have waited long enough. The very people who are declaring now that you cannot do anything by Parliamentary action are the very people who in the very near future will be seeking Parliamentary honours.” (Applause.)

**Committee Brainless**

“Anyone who says the Labour party is a revolutionary party is misleading the workers”, said Mr F Roels (Enginedrivers). “The committee talks about a three-year plan. I say the committee has neither the brains, understanding, nor will to plan a social revolution. The moment a social revolution started what would happen?

A voice: The politicians would be shot. (Laughter.)

Mr Roels: I doubt whether you would be intelligent enough to shoot him before he shot you. (Uproar.)

Mr AJ Macpherson’s contribution to the debate was an allegation about “a little gang that was behind operating the scenes”. The chairman promptly called him to order, and he had to sit down amidst uproar.

**A Militant Speech**

A militant speech was delivered by Mr J Kilburn (Bricklayers). He disagreed with the policy of the Labour party in catering for the middle class vote. That was why they were frightened of the three-year plan. He wanted to mould the organisation in a way that would enable it to emancipate the workers.

“What is happening in Australia today?” he asked. “Unemployment cannot be solved under capitalism. There may be 500,000 unemployed before the winter is out. What are the unemployed going to do? They are going to break the system down. The time is ripe. The fruit is rotting on the ground. I am glad we have put the propaganda out. The politician swings behind the owning class every time. Our enemies are trying to fasten a business military dictatorship upon us. If we can establish a peaceful revolution so much the better. We do not want to shed any blood. I think the revolution will come in my time.”

**Mr D Grant’s Views**

“It does not matter whether we are sincere”, said Mr D Grant. “The question is, ‘Are we scientific?’ " He quoted Karl Marx and the Communist
manifesto to prove that the tactics of the socialisation committee were wrong. “If Mr McNamara is right, then Karl Marx is wrong”, he added. “Mr Lang does not represent the people’s Government. He represents his Majesty’s Government. The only way to get a people’s Government is by mass insurrection. If the three-year plan is adopted the great mass of weak-kneed Labour men will swing behind Mr Theodore and the Federal executive. You will simply defeat Mr Lang, who is the greatest menace to capitalism under the present system.”

When the closure was applied Mr F Saidy protested against his exclusion from the debate claiming that he was one of the drafters of the three-year plan.

Mr J Hooke, in reply, described Mr McNamara as ‘the Jolly Optimist’. He criticised personally all who had supported the plan. It was like Mr Barker’s impudence, he said, to quote an authority like Engels to bolster up the plan.

Keen interest was taken in the vote, which, on a division, resulted in the adoption of Mr Hooke’s amendment by 65 votes to 35.

**Intensive Canvassing by Faction Agents.**

Canvassing of the most amazing character was carried out during the day. Those who were working for the rescission of the report made desperate efforts to attain their ends.

Every known method of persuasion was used. Delegates were told that if the three-year plan were adopted the Premier, Mr Lang, would be ‘doomed’ and that the Labour party would go out of office for a generation. One member of the conference alleged last night that an army of agents of the Lang-Garden faction interviewed every delegate, and implored them to record their votes against the plan. As the voting was open it was not difficult for the canvassers to convince delegates that an adverse vote would be to their disadvantage. An extraordinary feature was that many of the delegates who voted for the three-year plan the previous night were found the following day in the ranks of the opposition. Those engaged in the lobbying paid particular attention to delegates from the country, many of whom were accosted at every turn by canvassers from the different factions.

Although the final vote resulted in a decisive defeat for the advocates of the three-year plan, followers of the Garden-Lang group are afraid that the socialisation group will be able to secure increased support from the leagues, and will manage to have the three-year plan adopted by those bodies, although the conference has decided against it.

The supporters of the socialisation committee have made it clear that they intend to assail every Labour parliamentarian in his own electorate and compel him to declare his position with regard to socialisation. If he decides against them, every known means will be employed to bring
about his defeat in the selection ballot; if he agrees to advocate socialisation he will be given instructions to take the public platform and preach its unconditional acceptance by the Australian public. The offensive launched by the socialisation committee has caused consternation among the Labour parliamentarians. Believing that the socialisation committee is a growing force in the Labour party, and will eventually assume control, Labour members are anxious to please the disciples of socialisation. At the same time, they admit, if socialisation is made a fighting issue, the Labour party will be annihilated at the next elections.

An extraordinary feature of the debate was the statements by some delegates who voted for the rejection of the three-year plan that the socialisation of industry could only be brought about by revolution and not by constitutional methods. The aim of the socialisation committee as announced to the conference was to bring about socialisation by legislative act. Consequently some extreme ‘left wingers’ voted against the plan on the ground that it was not ‘Red’ enough.

**Anti Empire Report Adopted. ALP Decision.**

“Abolish Empire Day”.

Protests against the continued observance of Empire Day and the flag saluting ceremony in the schools were contained in the report of the Advisory Educational Committee of the ALP submitted by the hon. secretary, Mr RV Cranfield, to the Easter Labour Conference yesterday.

The Minister for Education, Mr Davies, was instructed to revise the school syllabus, eliminating “Imperialistic bias” and providing for instruction that would give “an adequate conception of the struggles of the working class in history”.

**The Report**

“While we fight in the political field our enemies laugh up their sleeve, for they realise that they have the education of our children stacked against us”, the report read. “The capitalistic dope called “history” that is pumped into your children is so biased against the working class that it is a reflection on the collective intelligence of the Labour movement, to have been in existence for 40 years, and to have made no effective protest or attempt to have it altered. The movement has interested itself in the building of many fine schools, but has never concerned itself about what is taught in them. Your reactionary politicians of today are a product of this class-biased miseducation. Many proposals for reform in conformity with the new educational planks were placed before the Minister by a deputation from the committee, but practically all were met with the cry of “no money”. We fully realise that the present time is one of financial
stringency, but we do think that an effort should be made to supply the right mental food for our children, which should take second place only to bodily sustenance. The attitude of the Minister towards other matters that did not incur expense gives us reason to doubt his sincerity. He promised the deputation definitely that he would abolish the flag saluting and loyalty pledge in the schools. But he merely issued a minute making it voluntary. Bear in mind this does not mean voluntary for the child. It is left to the discretion of the headmaster, who usually takes his lead from the Parents and Citizens’ Association in these matters. The deputation also asked for the abolition of Empire Day celebrations in the schools. The Minister stated that although he was wholly in sympathy, he thought it was too big an order off his own bat, but he would only be too pleased to carry it into effect if conference favoured it. Then what do we find, a very short time after the deputation, the new arrangements for school holidays place Empire Day in vacation. What an opportunity to let it die a natural death, as no one would be at school to celebrate it. But our Minister who professes to be in sympathy with the abolition, issued a minute in these words, “In future, as Empire Day falls in vacation, the celebrations in schools shall be permanently observed on the first Wednesday in May”. We appeal to you, not only as members of conference, but as the mothers and fathers of the children, to let the Minister know definitely whether you wish Empire Day to stay in vacation, or whether you wish their time to be wasted by setting apart another day for this flag-wagging, militaristic propaganda. While dealing with this matter, we wish to enter an emphatic protest against the action of the Chief Secretary in assisting this kind of propaganda by publicly making the statement “That the Boy Scout movement is not militaristic”.

Other Proposals

The committee has also referred to the Minister No.4 of the education planks, which provides for the amendment of the University Senate Act, and which if given effect to would give the Labour movement 12 out of a total of 24 senators.

“We also claim that persons holding positions such as professors of faculties should not be eligible for the Senate, thereby becoming their own boss”, the report continued. “Another suggestion is that exhibitions be limited to those whose parents do not earn more than £750 per annum. At present there is no limit, and a millionaire’s child can win an exhibition and have his expenses paid by the State. Contrast this with the Bursary Endowment Act for the High Schools. Here the child of the worker is not eligible for a bursary if his parent earns more than £60 per member of the family per year. This for a worker’s family of five places a limit of £300.”

The report was adopted.
“We want Empire Day and the flag saluting ceremony abolished immediately”, said Mr A Thompson (Milk and Ice Carters). “We do not want any quibbling by the Minister. It is amazing to find a Labour Chief Secretary going along to a Boy Scout demonstration.”

Mr J Stewart submitted the following motion: “That the Minister be directed to accept the details of the revised syllabus as submitted by the educational committee, and that no amendments which conflict with plank 8 be accepted from any other source”. Clause 8 provides for the amendment of the present school curriculum and system with regard to “the elimination of Imperialistic bias”, and the substitution of “instruction that will give an adequate conception of the struggles of the working class in history and its place in society today”.

Mrs Dunn (Glebe) said that the homework in High Schools for the girls was too severe. “The children’s nerves are quite broken down with the strain of homework”, said Mrs Dunn.

Another motion carried was that the present bursary allowance should be increased by at least £25 per annum for students residing in city and country centres, and that the present allowance for text books should be continued.


Far-reaching Demands.

When the conference resumed its sitting yesterday morning, Mr Crook (Northern Miners) launched a bitter attack upon the committee set up by the conference to consider unemployment.

He said the committee, of which Alderman Garden was chairman, had met the Premier and various schemes had been discussed. It had then been agreed that Mr Lang should make a report to the conference. “In my opinion, Mr Lang’s report was not a report of the proceedings, and now I find that certain members of the committee tried last night to have the conference ended without the committee meeting again. I do not believe that some members of the committee or its chairman is sincere and I intend to disassociate myself from it”, said Mr Crook. “It seems that the only business this conference deals with is the business of finding good jobs for certain individuals”.

Alderman Garden said he could not understand the attitude of Mr Crook. The Premier had pointed out that there was ample work for everyone, but there was no cash. If Mr Crook put up any scheme for the relief of unemployment it would be considered carefully.

Mr C Tannock (Ironworkers) said a permanent committee representing the unions should be set up and recognised by the Government.

“The members of the committee are entirely sincere”, declared Mr J Kilburn (Bricklayers). “The committee must not pass with the conference. I am not prepared to tell the unemployed to be patient. I would rather
tell them to be mighty impatient. I would steal before I would see my children starve.”

The chairman (Mr JJ Graves) said that he understood the committee would not disband with the conclusion of the conference.

**The Demands**

A series of far-reaching demands upon the Government with regard to the relief for unemployed were contained in a report from the unemployment committee to the evening session of the conference. One of these was that the Government should arrange full social insurance, work or full maintenance against unemployment.

A series of demands, to be made immediately, were:— That the Government grant open orders on all shops providing for an increase in the scale of relief rations to include groceries, meat, bread, fruit, vegetables, and clothing; that there be no eviction of the workless, and that shelter be provided for unemployed; that the Government provide light and fuel for unemployed, as well as free rail and tram passes for unemployed workers called up for employment, and for workers going to country jobs. That free milk be provided for children and special foods for women before and after childbirth.

Other immediate demands were that a hostel be established for homeless unemployed women; that there be no eviction or foreclosures on small farmers; that unemployed females receive ‘dole’ tickets, and to have the same privileges as men; that the Government consider immediately the granting of relief to unemployed members of a family living with their parents; that the products of farmers which are present going to waste be used for the sustenance of the unemployed, and that full payment be made for these by the Government.

It was also decided to demand that no person with £50 cash in the bank or less be debarred from obtaining the dole, and that no wage tax be collected on £3 or less per week; and that a free tram or railway ticket be given to unemployed for one trip weekly.

Alderman Garden, in presenting the report, said that the committee felt itself fully entitled to make any of the requests outlined.

“This report looks nice on paper, but paper will not feed the unemployed”, said Mr W Carlton (ARU). “Will the committee be held responsible for seeing that they are put into effect and not be allowed to let them drop and be a mere sop to raise false hopes?” he asked.

Alderman Garden said that it would be the duty of the committee to see that everything possible was done to obtain the demands.

“For five months the workers have received nothing but promises from the Labour Government”, declared Mr Kirkwood (Water and Sewerage Board Employees). “These demands will very likely prove nothing but demands. Mr Garden has taken a lot of deputations of
unemployed to the Government but has achieved nothing. We have had to wait for three hours outside Mr Lang’s office while Mr Garden can walk in at any time.”

Mr W Mills (Waterside Workers) moved that the demand that no wage tax be collected on wages of less than £3 per week be amended to provide that the exception be raised to £4/2/ per week. He said it was unfair that intermittent and casual workers should have to pay wages tax. Those people who earned more than £4/2/ per week should be ‘slugged’. The amendment was defeated.

The whole of the demands were approved.

Other Decisions

Other resolutions were: “That the Government should develop the shale deposits of the State, and under no consideration hand them over to private enterprise; that 10 per cent preference be given to all sea and land transport vehicles (ship and motor cars) manufactured in Australia; that 10 per cent preference be given to Australian manufactured vehicles, land and sea, driven by Australian manufactured fuels (coal, oil, petrol, and electricity) and Australian manufactured lubricated oils; that the system of State lotteries be given effect to immediately; that the Federal Government be requested to amend the Act governing the activities of the Australian Copyright and Performing Rights Association with a view to lessening the charges made by that body; that the money collected from the graduated land tax be used for purchase, development of purchased estates to the extent of at least half the tax collected, the balance to be used as a basis of a provident fund for advances to necessitous farmers through the Rural Industries Board; that legislation be passed for the licensing of butchers’ shops, extension of country killing at suitable centres, the better inspection of meat for human consumption in country districts, and for a full inquiry into our meat industry in order to increase our export trade; further, that the Metropolitan Meat Board be empowered to take complete control of killing and distribution at the State abattoirs, and thus eliminate the selling brokers and carcase butchers.”

Talk of “Touting”

When the result of the election of officers was announced the unsuccessful candidate for the presidency, Mr F Saidy, made a bitter attack on the officials of the conference. He alleged that ‘touts’ had been on the door of the Trades Hall during the proceedings. When delegates from the country arrived they were canvassed. “When the movement descends to these tactics it is time there was a change”, said Mr Saidy. “When I was vice president I was never consulted, no responsibility was imposed on me. Consequently, I did not seek re-election to this position.”

At 10.30 pm the conference was adjourned sine die.
CHAPTER 10
Australian Labor Party,
New South Wales Branch
Annual Conference, 25 – 29 April 1932

Report in The Sydney Morning Herald

By April 1932 the Lang Government was in its last days, with the dismissal of the Premier by Governor Game only a few weeks later, on 13 May. In his speech to Conference Lang made it clear that his party and Government was in danger of defeat, but he appealed to the justice of his cause and proclaimed: “I am not only confident but I am certain that the Government cannot be interfered with constitutionally or in any other way”. Surely this was bluster designed to reassure the ‘rank and file’, because later events suggested that he could see no way out of the political crisis that did not involve his defeat.

The major issue at this Conference was the battle between the Inner Group and the so-called ‘militant minority’ about the attitude of the State Labor Party towards the various Communist front organisations such as the Unemployed Workers’ Movement. Many members of what was already being called the ‘socialisation faction’ argued strongly that Labor should ally itself with the grass roots organisations. The rhetoric of smashing capitalism and fighting the class war was very much in evidence in debate. Particularly emotive was the militants’ attack on Empire Day and the British contribution to the problem of unemployment.

All this may have an air of unreality to the modern reader, but in 1932 there were many people (on the right as well as the left) who believed that the economic and political system was on its last legs. At the end of 1931 nearly a third of NSW workers were unemployed, leaving many families destitute. Evictions made the situation worse, while tent cities and ‘happy valleys’ housed the homeless. There was certainly no consensus about how capitalism and democracy could be revived or maintained.

Although the Inner Group was able to win all important divisions, the militant minority had about a third of the delegates and caused considerable difficulty for the Lang group. At the end of the Conference they convened their own ‘Special Conference of Socialisation Militants’
to confront the Inner Group on its refusal to the Communists in presenting a united front to the economic crisis. This is reproduced at the end of the chapter. They claimed that they, not the Langites, were representing the rank and file of the Labor Party.

Executive Report of NSW ALP for 1931-32

[The State Executive did present an Annual Report and balance sheet to Conference, but it does not seem to have survived. It is missing from the collections of printed pamphlet versions collected by Mitchell Library and the National Library, and the only mention of its release is that from Labor Daily a couple of days before the beginning of conference. My suspicion is that delegates to Conference were given only a roneoed copy (if that), and that a pamphlet version was never produced. That would have been understandable because the early months of 1932 were taken up with inconclusive negotiations with the Federal ALP about restoring unity with the Lang party, and the Report would have been delayed until some result could have been reported. The brief mentions in the Labor Daily and the Canberra Times below give some of the flavour – even if few of the details – of the Annual Report. More details of Lang Government achievements over the previous year can be discovered in the Labor Daily Year Book, 1933, which can be found in the National Library and Fisher Library. If anyone knows of the whereabouts of a printed version of the Executive Report I would be delighted to discover it.]

Report in Labor Daily, 23 March 1932, p. 8

Along the Road of Progress. ALP’s Successful Year.

Annual Report.

In his annual report on the activities of the State ALP for the past 12 months, the president, Mr J Keller, gives a comprehensive review of the activities of the Party during a period crowned with success.

Not only has the Party in New South Wales been victorious in all its fights with the enemy, but it has continued to lead the masses along the road of progress.
“Much of the movement’s success during the past year”, Mr Keller states, “was due to the splendid and courageous stand of our leader, Mr JT Lang. He has carried out the dictates of the movement and placed its platform on the Statute Book of the country, while at the same time he has played a lone hand against the rest of the Premiers of the Common-wealth in preventing a reduction in the basic wage.

“We cannot over-estimate”, the report adds, “the tremendous advantage to the movement in having such a paper as the Labor Daily in supporting our policy and activity during the term under review.

“The Labor Daily has proved its influence, and is deserving, at all times, of the wholehearted cooperation and assistance of the members of the movement.”

In referring to the State Parliamentary activities, Mr Keller points out that what the New South Wales Labor Government has done for the farmers should bring a blush of shame to the so-called Country Party.

**Balance of Power**

“That Party”, he explained, “held the balance of power in the last Parlia-ment, and was in a position to dictate any legislation and administration it desired in the interest of the primary producer. Instead, it sacrificed the primary producers for the emoluments of office, and became the joint in the tail of the Nationalist Party.

“Even before the elections, when the farmers in all parts of the State were being threatened with dispossessio of their properties and appealed for the protection of a moratorium, this so-called Country Party joined with the Nationalists in turning a deaf ear to their entreaties.

“It was not until a Labor Government came into power that this very necessary protection was afforded.”

Mr Keller also emphasises that the Government has rendered further assistance to the farmers by the introduction of the Flour Tax, which has already provided much relief. The refusal of the Legislative Council to pass the original Interest Reduction Bill prevented the man on the land receiving additional relief which the Government desired to give.

The total value of relief afforded to farmers by the present Govern-ment by way of remissions, advances and loans exceeds £3,500,000.

Due to the facts that the Party was mulcted in heavy election exp-enses, and that unemployment prevented many of its supporters giving the assistance they had in previous years, the financial position is not so good as on other occasions. A deficit of £410 is disclosed in the balance sheet.
In its annual report, the Executive stated: “The Labour movement has been, and is going through very troublesome and distressing times. One of the most serious events in the term under review was the attempt to split our party by the Theodore-Bailey faction. This, we are pleased to say, was successfully combated, although it necessitated campaigning in other States in addition to our own. The Theodore-Bailey party is now almost non-existent.”

“The AWU was readmitted to the movement practically on its own terms, but it found that owing to the operation of the new rules, the rank and file control of the movement was of such a character that the coterie of officials dominating the AWU were not able to control the movement as they had done in 1927. This was not satisfactory to them, and they, therefore, planned to set up a separate organisation.”

“The base betrayal of the Labour movement by the ‘T-B Party’”, continued the report, “brought about the most crushing defeat Labour has yet experienced in the Federal Parliament. Despite the efforts of the T-B Party, the Australian Labour Party, State of New South Wales, remained intact as had been shown by the fact that none of our branches had gone out of existence.”

The report pointed out that much of the movement’s success during the past year had been due to the splendid and courageous stand of Mr Lang, who played a lone hand against the rest of the Premiers of the Commonwealth in preventing a reduction of the basic wage.

The report blamed the ‘T-B’ supporters of New South Wales for the December Federal elections, and absolved the Beasley faction from responsibility.

“The Federal Government”, the report stated, “had been defeated in the House previously, but had not resigned, and there was a reason unknown to the public that caused the resignation over the motion moved by Mr Beasley.”

**ALP Conference**

“It has been ascertained since, that in the Caucus room the whole question was discussed and the T-B supporters of New South Wales expressed a keen desire for a general election. They informed members from the other States that they had the supporters of the New South Wales Premier in such a position that they would be annihilated at the polls. The decision was arrived at at a meeting of the New South Wales members held in the Prime Minister’s room at the Commonwealth Bank, Sydney, at which Mr Theodore attended, prior to the discussion of the motion in the House of Representatives at Canberra.”

“Therefore”, continued the report, “it is now to be clearly understood that the T-B party planned for the election hoping to obtain certain
results to the disadvantage of the New South Wales Labour Party, but events had shown the very opposite result.”

The report reviewed the legislation of the Lang Government and said that the past year had been one of real achievement for the common good. The Lang Government, it stated, had saved the workers, farmers, and small business people from annihilation. It went on to attack the Bavin-Bayer controlled Legislative Council for holding up the Government legislation.

The report said that in the Federal sphere, Labour’s enemies were hitting at the people of New South Wales in the hope of destroying the Government which would not join them in maintaining the supremacy of the moneyed interests.

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Annual Conference of NSW ALP, 1932

(The Sydney Morning Herald, 26, 28, 29, 30, 1932)

Day 1, Friday, 25 March 1932


The Easter conference of the Australian Labour party began yesterday at the Trades Hall. Speeches were delivered advocating the abolition of the capitalist system.

The unemployment committee’s proposals included a capital levy, or, as an alternative, a steeply-graded income tax.

Fiery Speeches

The conference adopted the report of the committee, which set out that unemployment could not be solved under the present system of society.

Voting throughout the day indicated that the Garden-Graves group was in complete charge of the proceedings.

Mr W Carlton (ARU), submitting the report of the unemployment committee said that the problem could not be solved until socialisation had been achieved. Such calls had been made upon the proceeds from the unemployment tax that there was scarcely enough to provide food. The recommendations of the committee were: (1) Capital levy and/or
steeply graduated super tax on income. (2) A betterment tax on the
unimproved capital value of properties in areas adjacent to proposed
public works. (3) Advertising and hoarding tax similar to those obtaining
on the Continent. (4) Tax on petrol utilities. (5) A vigorous policy of loan
flotation by local government bodies and Crown cooperatives at an
interest rate conforming to the policy of the Government. (6) All classes
of insurance be controlled as a State monopoly, such as the proposed
system of workers’ compensation.

“There is nothing revolutionary in the proposals”, said Mr Carlton.
He then enumerated a number of public works which the Government
should be asked to proceed with immediately, including the completion
of the gardens section, the Quay station, the Eastern Suburbs railway,
and permanent structures, such as new municipal markets, incinerators,
roads, and swimming pools.

Another proposal submitted by Mr Carlton was the establishment
of an unemployed insurance fund. He also suggested an inquiry into the
administration of the Anti-Eviction Act.

“The credit created by the banks has caused our troubles today”, said
Mr AC Paddison “Set up a body to consult with the Premier regarding
our fight against the banks”.

Mr SA Rosa suggested the introduction of a ‘Right to Work Bill’. There
should be a law compelling every local governing body to provide
work for its unemployed, he said. Mr Rosa also recommended to the
Government the introduction of a system of State currency.

“There is no hope under the present system”, declared Mr Nicholson
(Northern Miners).

“Socialism will alone solve our troubles. We should insist upon no
evictions”. He moved that the unemployed should be allowed to
purchase any commodity, and that in extreme cases rent allowances be
made to the unemployed.

“You must smash the capitalist system”, said Mr Lawrence (St
George Council). “You must seize the political power of the country. A
spirit of reaction permeates this atmosphere”.

In a violent speech, Mr JS Garden declared that the committee’s
recommendations were identical with the suggestions of the militant
minority movement. “The Communists shout ‘overthrow the system and
Jack Lang!’”, Mr Garden said, amidst uproar. “The New Guard shout,
‘overthrow the system and Jack Lang!’ So here we have the rights and the
lefts joining hands and doing the work of capitalism in this country.”

**A Militant Speech**

In a speech which won for him loud applause from the public gallery, Mr
J Holt (ARU) said that the unemployed would soon have to take the
position into their own hands. “It is a disgrace to the Labour Government
that the unemployed should be starving”, he declared. “Mr Garden declared that the suggestions in the report were identical with those of the militant minority movement. Why is the militant minority movement outside the Labour party now? The ALP will soon have to recognise that it will make no headway without the militant minority movement.”

Supporting the report of the committee, Mr Maloney (Boot Trades) said he agreed that the present system should be overthrown and when an attempt was made he would participate in it. “At the same time, I am not prepared to have my head smashed for nothing”, he added “This is no time to organise for the overthrow of the system. Winter is coming on. There is not likely to be a revolution before winter, so let us find work for the unemployed.”

Cheers and Hoots

Cheers and hoots greeted Mr Baddeley as he moved to the front of the platform, “to clear up a few points”. “I am not shirking the question”, said Mr Baddeley. “I will take any medicine coming to me. This Government has done everything possible to help the people of the State. We have been confronted with great difficulties. I think I can say, however, that within the next six or 12 months we will be in a better position. If we cannot find work for our unemployed we will take other means of providing relief for them.”

It was subsequently agreed to embody in the report suggestions contained in Mr Nicholson’s amendment. The report was then carried.

Volunteer Wharf Labourers

Mr Kidd, of Newcastle, submitted a motion calling upon the Government to introduce legislation to exclude volunteer wharf labourers from the waterfront at Newcastle. Mr Kidd complained that many deputations to the Government had been unable to get any satisfaction. About 250 union wharf labourers had been sacrificed as a result. He alleged that the police had prevented the union from getting on to the wharves. “The waterside workers have found that the police batons, under a Labour Government, are just as hard as they are under a Nationalist Government”, said Mr Kidd.

Proceeding, he said that the Minister for Labour, Mr Baddeley, had informed them that it would be necessary to resume the land adjoining the wharves to meet the wishes of the waterside workers. “I believe that the Government should do this to give these men justice”, Mr Kidd concluded.

Mr Graves (secretary): What do you suggest?
Mr Kidd: Remove the police for a start. (Cheers)
A delegate from the Waterside Workers’ Union, seconding the motion, said that immediate action was necessary. It was up to the Government to do something, as the union had supported it in preference to the Scullin Government which had given the waterside workers some measure of support.

Mr Baddeley said that there were many difficulties in the way. Inquiries had shown that the matter was really a Federal one. “I am just as anxious as you are to remove the blacklegs from the waterfront or any other front”, he said.

The motion was carried.

At this stage a disturbance occurred in the public gallery, resulting in the forcible ejection from the hall of an interjector.

Submitting a report on the balance-sheet, the secretary (Mr J Graves, MLC) denied a report that he had been “joyriding in ALP limousines”. He stated that he had purchased a car on time-payment and had placed it at the disposal of the ALP.

**New Guard**

The chairman, in his presidential address, said that “the true Labour movement” was never more consolidated. He attributed this to the formation of the New Guard. As an Industrialist of 30 years’ standing, he knew the one desire of the Labour people was to live in peace and harmony – to elect Governments constitutionally, and to govern constitutionally. “If any mushroom organisation”, said Mr Keller, “be it the New Guard or any other guard, be it Messrs Bruce, Lyons, Latham, or Campbell, go outside the ambit of the law, then so far as we are concerned the gloves are off and they can have it out where and how they like.”

Referring to the De Groot incident at the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Mr Keller said that it was the act of a fanatic. “Only a man with a kindergarten mind would attempt such a thing”, he said. “If the position was reversed and a Nationalist Premier, in opening the bridge was interrupted by some foreign member of the working class he would be deported.

**Tram Stoppage**

Mr T Sheehan (Land Transport group) suggested a searching inquiry into the recent power-house failures in Sydney. “We are convinced there has been sabotage at the power-house, and that the New Guard is behind it”, he said. “We believe the whole scheme is to make the tramway service look ridiculous, particularly because there are so many visitors in the city. We say that the Minister for Transport should have an immediate investigation to see how many members of the New Guard are working at the power house.”
Disciplining Labour Members

An animated discussion took place on a recommendation from the country conference, asking the Government to introduce legislation to give effect to the plank of the Labour party’s platform, providing for the initiative referendum and recall. The recommendation was designed “to protect the Labour movement from a recurrence of the recent base betrayal by Federal politicians and to secure adherence to the pledges of the movement.”

Alternative suggestions made during the debate were that Labour candidates should place their undated resignations in the hands of the central executive, and that any Labour member breaking his pledge should be compelled to go back to the Labour movement for re-endorsement. The conference eventually decided to reject the proposals.

At the instance of Mr J Stewart, the conference decided to ask the Federal Government to restore the old-age pensions to the former rate of £1 a week.

Miscellaneous Motions

Other motions carried included:

- That the Government put into operation the party’s plank for the abolition of capital punishment;
- That general hospitals be nationalised;
- That the Mass Picketing Act be repealed;
- That the Local Government Act be amended to provide for the elimination of property votes in municipal and shire elections, and provide for compulsory voting, which shall be on the preferential system as used in the ALP;
- That section 8 (1) of the Moratorium Act be rescinded or amended so as to prevent the more rapacious and exacting class of mortgagees who anticipated the Act and took possession before its enactment, from selling the property of the mortgagor at less than its fair value, as this clause in its present form permits them to do;
- That the Aborigines Protection Act be amended to liberalise its administrative conditions;
- That the Minister for Labour and Industry (Mr Baddeley) be requested to instruct all storekeepers to display prominently the prices of all scheduled and alternate articles in connection with food relief;
- That the Forty-Four Hours Act be amended to apply to all industries on a weekly basis.
Days 2/3, Saturday/Sunday, 26/27 March 1932

ALP Conference. Empire Day to be Abolished. Flag Saluting Condemned. Socialisation to be Election issue. Only Labour Men For Public Positions.

Demands for the immediate abolition of the Empire Day celebrations in the schools of the flag-saluting ceremony and a bitter condemnation of recent Government appointments were features of the proceedings at the Easter Labour conference during the week-end.

The conference upheld the ruling of the president, after a bitter debate, that ALP members were prohibited from joining ‘auxiliary bodies’ such as the militant minority movement, on the ground that they were Communist bodies. Many delegates frankly admitted that they would not observe the decision.

A committee was appointed to re-draft the Federal constitution of the ALP, which, it is believed in some quarters, is intended as a move to jettison the unification plank of the Labour party’s platform in favour of straight-out secession.

The conference accepted a proposal from the socialisation committee that socialisation should be the issue at the next State elections, and conceded the socialisation committee the right to cooperate with the Government and the ALP executive in framing the policy at the next elections.

Government Appointments Condemned

A discussion arose on a motion from the metropolitan conference: “That in all appointments made by a Labour Government, either through the Public Service Board, the Executive Council, or by Ministerial authority, the persons appointed be selected through the union having jurisdiction over the position to be filled, such persons to be well-known workers in the Labour movement.”

Mr J Garvan (Clerks), moving the motion, stated that there was a classic example in the case of the director of the State Lottery (Mr Whiddon), who was 75 years of age. Mr Whiddon had passed the stage at which a man completed his active life. He was not a unionist, and many good men in the Labour movement had been passed over.

Mr Walsh (Bondi) said that only one member of the Labour movement had been appointed to the Transport Board. He considered that all members of the board should be Labour men. Mr Scott, president of the Meat Board, had never been a good Labour man.

“I have no time for Mr Whiddon”, said Mr JS Garden. “He will not be there long”.

A voice: Jock has spoken. (Laughter.)
“Mr Whiddon is no good to the Labour movement of this country”, said Mr Garden. “So far as the Premier is concerned, he is all right. As far as some of the other Ministers are concerned, they are no good. Some of them are not doing their jobs.”

Mr McKillop (Tramways) said that a lot was going on ‘under the lap’. He referred to the appointment of an Inspector of the toll collectors on the Sydney Harbour Bridge, who, he said, was a loyalist in the 1917 strike.

“Mr AD Kay has been white-anting and undermining the meat industry”, said Mr Smith (Meat Employees). “He opposed a selected Labour candidate some years ago. The Government has put men on the Milk Board who do not know milk from electricity. It has put men on the Gas Commission who do not know gas from the Sydney Harbour Bridge. It has appointed a Minister for Agriculture who does not know a pumpkin from a watermelon. I am not in the Labour movement for limelight. All I want is an honest KO.”

The motion was carried.

Quoting from Anatole France in support of his arguments, Mr Whit-taker, of the Tramway union, moved for the repeal of the Consorting Act. He declared that unemployment was responsible for much of the present crime.

“Until this great curse of unemployment has been disposed of, no law made by man will stop crime”, he said. “The majority of people affected by the Act have been forced by circumstances into those districts over which the police keep close surveillance”.

The conference agreed to the motion also.

**Revision of Wage Tax**

Mr Holt (ARU) moved that the 1/ in the £ tax should be lifted, to allow the basic wage to be exempt from tax, and that a steeply graduated tax should be placed on all wages above the basic wage.

Mr Lawrence (Canterbury), supporting the motion, said: “When a Labour Government is in power and attacks the wages of the working class it is time it got out and allowed the Nationalists to do their own dirty work”.

Mr Holt, replying to criticism of the motion, said that it should be passed to enable the movement to tell ‘the capitalistic Judges’ In the Arbitration Court that in New South Wales at any rate the basic wage was sacrosanct.

The motion was carried.

Another motion that all rural awards should be introduced by the Government was carried.
The suspension of standing orders was allowed so that Mr Nicholson (Northern Miners) could submit a motion requesting the Government to introduce a six-hour day in the mining industry.

“We must press for shorter hours”, said Mr Nicholson. “We must cut down productive capacity”. The motion was carried.

A Disorderly Scene

During a discussion on a motion from the Waverley League that the adult age should be reduced from 21 to 18 years of age, a disorderly scene took place.

A member of the audience in the public gallery persistently interrupted the speakers, and was eventually ejected by the doorkeeper. When order was restored, the conference rejected the motion by 50 votes to 41.

At this stage the conference adjourned so that delegates could attend the unveiling of the tablet erected in memory of Mrs Bertha McNamara.

University Labour Group

When the conference resumed, Mr NL Nelson made application on behalf of the University Labour group for recognition by the State Labour party. A committee, appointed by the conference recommended that a charter should be given, to allow two representatives to attend the conference, with full voting powers. It was specified, however, that each member must sign the pledge to work for the State ALP candidates, and join an ALP branch within three months. The committee suggested that the members of the group should not be allowed to participate in selection ballots. The recommendations of the committee were adopted.

Appeals Dismissed

Appeals by RG Wilson, of Randwick, and P Morris, of Surry Hills, for readmission into the Labour party were dismissed. The two members were expelled for opposing endorsed Labour candidates.

New Guard

A motion by Mr AW Thompson (Milk and Ice Carters) to arrest the leaders of the New Guard and to disband the organisation evoked a bitter debate at the conference.

Mr Thompson declared that the Chief Secretary should have arrested Mr Eric Campbell, whom he described as a tax-dodger. Mr Nurmoyle (a country delegate) stated that if the Government gave Mr Campbell enough rope he would hang himself. Mr Kelly (Land Transport) caused a
stir by alleging that the tramway system was being run by the New Guard. “Five employees on the Strathfield railway station are members of the New Guard”, he said. “The Endowment Department is honeycombed by members of the New Guard. The Government should organise a certain number to fight these curs and dingoes”. (Cheers.)

An amendment was moved by Mr JS Garden: “That whatever action is taken by the Federal Government or the New Guard, this conference pledges itself to take every method to protect the working class”. “Next week there may be clashes in the country”, said Mr Garden. “All the money may be taken from this State”.

Mr Bell (Lithgow) alleged that certain warders and police were in the New Guard. He could not understand why the ALP had disowned the United Front Against Fascism. “We will meet force with force if necessary”, said Mr Bell. The amendment was carried and the motion lost.

**Empire Day**

A bitter denunciation of the action of the Minister for Education (Mr Davies) in permitting patriotic speeches at Empire Day celebrations was contained in the report of the advisory educational committee submitted by Mr RV Cranfield. A resolution was carried demanding the abolition of Empire Day celebrations in schools and the flag saluting ceremony.

Violent speeches against the Empire were delivered by delegates in supporting the report, and slighting references were made to Queen Victoria. “We realise that the education of our children is controlled and designed by the capitalist State with the object of perpetuating the pernicious system with its individualism, selfishness, and class snobbery”, the committee’s report read. “An amended University Senate Act has been under consideration for twelve months, and is still in that stage, a special sub-committee drew up a number of proposals. Briefly they are that the University Senate should comprise twelve persons appointed by the Government of the day, and twelve appointed by the University. Professors not to be eligible for the Senate, but to have audience, professors being elected to Parliament to resign their chair. Exhibitions to be limited to children of parents whose income does not exceed £750 per annum.” Referring to Empire Day, the report added: It is hard to understand how the singing of Rule, Britannia and Kipling’s Recessional, with its reference to foreigners as “lesser breeds without the law”, is compatible with the Minister’s instructions that the day should be devoted to peace propaganda. Whatever were the Minister’s intentions, Imperialistic bureaucracy saw to it in the main that the old jingoistic procedure was adhered to. The committee has evidence of junior teachers being victimised and insulted by jingoistic headmasters because they exercised their right not to salute the flag. The *Herald* devoted a column of a leading article and descended to personal abuse, such terms
as “Moscow-controlled puppets” being used. But this Press refused to allow us one inch of space to reply, so much for the persistent clamour for impartial treatment of the subject. “Junior teachers have been humiliated by jingoistic headmasters”, said Mr Cranfield. “The conference should consider ways and means of compelling the Minister to observe the wishes of the conference. Unless we can enforce our decisions rank and file control is a fraud and a sham. We have been subjected to a tirade of abuse in the Press. Thanks to our efforts, the brass caps and military officers were absent from the Empire Day celebrations in the schools. The clergymen present, however, were more militaristic than the military in their jingoistic utterances. The jingoites took no more notice of the Minister’s instructions than the Minister has taken notice of the instructions of the conference.”

Mr AW Thompson (Milk and Ice Carters) commented on the absence of the Minister for Education (Mr Davies). “It was his duty to be here”, said Mr Thompson. “Physical incapacity could be his only excuse. Under this glorious Empire thousands of our girls are on the streets, and thousands of our manhood are starving. Empire Day celebrates the memory of our great Queen Victoria. It should be remembered that for every hour she sat on her throne thousands of tons of opium were poured into China, demoralising the people of another nation. Under this so-called glorious Empire the working class has been overwhelmed with debt. During the war capitalists made thousands of pounds in the manufacture of ammunition to shoot down members of the working class. The Empire Day celebrations should have no significance to the Labour party. They should be abolished. It is up to the Minister to do it. If he will not, then for God’s sake let us appoint somebody with courage to do it.” (Cheers.)

Mr Thompson then submitted the following addendum: “That in the opinion of the conference, the action of the Minister for Education in continuing the celebrations of Empire Day in the schools under the guise of a day of peace and goodwill has resulted in the flouting of the will of the Australian Labour party, and conference demands that Empire Day celebrations in the schools be abolished in any form whatsoever, also that the flag saluting ceremony be abolished.”

“The freedom of the individual under the Empire is the freedom to starve”, said Mr Lawrence (St George), seconding the addendum. “The Empire is just the same, perhaps a little worse, than any other Empire in the world today. The working class has never got any benefits out of the Empire. Our only privileges are to sleep in the Domain or live at Happy Valley, or the Lidcombe unemployed camp. De Valera is the one man who has refused to take the Oath of Allegiance. (Applause.) He has the courage of his convictions. Property in Ireland has been stolen from the Irish people.”
Uproar followed a question by a delegate to the chairman inviting him to explain why the party had declared bogus the League Against Imperialism and at the same time accepted an anti-imperialistic addendum. “Where do we get off”, he added.

“I will probably lose my head, but I am prepared to lose it”, said Mr Gould (Glebe), in suggesting the immediate restoration to the people of New South Wales of the benefits of the Hereford House examinations. He also recommended that the graduates of Hereford House should be given preference of employment.

Mr Smith (Meat Workers) caused much merriment by suggesting that the schools should be abolished, and the educational committee sent to a kindergarten. “Instead of educating our children we should feed them”, he said. “The child of the worker is born to be killed either in warfare or in industry”.

Mr Cranfield, in accepting the addendum and the suggestions of Mr Gould, said that 18 months ago the Minister for Education promised alterations to the curriculum, and had done nothing.

A delegate: He could not run a pie stall. The report of the committee was adopted.

The conference also decided that the boarding-out system for State children should be abolished, and the scattered homes system be brought into operation. It further agreed on the abolition of the vocational guidance bureaux on the ground that it was not functioning in the interests of the workers of the State.

**Federal Platform**

The conference granted the suspension of standing orders yesterday afternoon to Mr AC Paddison (Haberfield), to move “that it be an instruction from this conference to the ALP executive to appoint a committee to formulate a federal platform”. Mr Paddison said that the State was involved in a constitutional crisis, the outcome of which could not be foreseen. The other States were looking for a lead. “The present Federal platform is a thing of shreds and patches”, said Mr Paddison. “It was formulated by position-conscious politicians. Mr Bruce has deliberately attempted to foist a policy of unification on Australia, with the object of smashing the present standards of living. The people of Australia are not prepared to accept the milk and water policy of the Scullin-Theodore party.” The old arbitration policy of the Federal Labour party is something we should be ashamed of. Although New South Wales provides 42 per cent of the revenue, the Commonwealth had spent ten million pounds on Canberra, and eight million pounds on the Commonwealth Line. If we revised our Constitution, I think we will be the Federal ALP in twelve months.”
In seconding the motion, Mr Thompson (Milk and Ice Carters), said that an attempt was being made to set up New South Wales as the Cinderella of the Commonwealth. The motion was carried.

**Communist Bodies**

The atmosphere was electrical when majority and minority reports were presented from the special committee appointed by the metropolitan conference to report on the ruling of the president, Mr P Keller, that auxiliary bodies such as the militant minority movement, the unemployed workers’ movement, the League Against Imperialism, the Friends of the Soviet Union, the Workers’ International Relief, and the International Class War Prisoners’ Association were Communist organisations, and that no member of the Labour party should be allowed to join the bodies.

It was realised that the real question under discussion was whether Communists would be allowed openly to become members of the ALP.

Throughout the debate the Premier, Mr Lang, quietly sat at the rear of the platform, but did not express an opinion.

In submitting the majority report, Mr JS Stewart said that the majority of the members of the committee favoured upholding the president’s ruling. The committee believed, however, that some of the bodies came within the ambit of the constitution of the ALP, and members of the ALP should be allowed to continue their membership of them. If it was intended that the ALP should continue to function as a virile organisation the activities of the militant section should be utilised. The committee considered that the ALP should take immediate steps to cover the operations of the auxiliary bodies.

“Mr Keller’s ruling merely funks the issue”, said Mr Campbell (Glebe) in the course of a long report on behalf of the minority section of the committee. “The Communist party has made it clear that if the president’s ruling is upheld it will do more than anything else to further their activities. The miners, totalling 13,000 on the northern fields, have already decided to defy the ruling and to remain members of the Red International, the International Class War Prisoners’ Aid, and other bodies. What is to become of the ALP if the ruling is upheld? Is there anything wrong with the auxiliary bodies? Is there anything the ALP could set up in their place?

A voice: No.

“Senator Rae”, continued Mr Campbell, “is a permanent member of the League Against Imperialism. If you give a wrong decision you will take the first step towards the elimination of the ALP. (Cheers.) Among the foundation members of the International Class War Prisoners’ Association were Messrs Beasley and James, MSP, and Heffron, MLA. I believe that they are still members. Has any of these organisations acted
disparagingly towards the ALP? Individual members may have expressed opinions antagonistic to the ALP, but members of Labour leagues have also been similarly outspoken towards the auxiliary bodies. Many of the auxiliary bodies were formed in this very building. It is only because of the ineptitude of the ALP that they have drifted apart. At the last Easter conference you pledged yourself to set up the Labour Army. Members know too well that in 24 hours the Labour Army had resolved itself into a button-selling campaign. Some of its organisers have done well out of it. No record was taken of those prepared to subscribe to the Labour Army. When the United Front Against Fascism was formed the ALP and Labour Council cooperated. Three of the five members of its central committee were members of the ALP. The only outsiders were Professor Anderson and Mr Sharkey, of the Communist party. We were in a position to control that committee. I know nothing about any action by the ALP against the Sane Democracy League, the Constitutional Club, and the Millions Club. The attitude of the ALP has been ridiculous and hypocritical in the extreme.”

Mr Campbell challenged the right of Mr JS Stewart to deliver the majority report in view of the fact that he was chairman of the committee.

Mr Keller ruled in Mr Stewart’s favour.

Mr Holt (ARU) said that his organisation was affiliated with the Red International and the militant minority movement. “I recognise that I must be loyal to my industrial organisation”, he said. “If I supported the ALP in condemning the auxiliary bodies I would be disloyal to my union. The time has arrived from [to form?] a revolutionary policy.”

Opposing the majority report, Mr Kidd (Newcastle) said that there was no evidence before the conference to show that the auxiliary bodies were part of the Communist party. The Unemployed Workers’ Movement was formed because the Labour party was too apathetic towards the unemployed. (Applause.) The Unemployed Workers’ Movement might eventually swallow the Labour party. They had to watch the developments in Russia. The International Class War Prisoners’ Association did excellent work for the miners at Rothbury. The Labour party did nothing. If the party banned the League against Imperialism they endorsed the policy of Imperialism. They were either with Imperialism or against it. If they banned the United Front against Fascism they endorsed the policy of the New Guard. The Labour party formed the Labour Army. All that happened was that the colonel was emancipated, and the army became a rabble. If the president’s ruling is upheld the ARU delegates and the miners should leave the conference.

At this stage Mr Lang entered the hall, and was given a rousing reception by the crowded gathering.

“Since the Lyons Government took office the Unemployed Workers’ Movement has gone out of business”, said Mr Byrne (Auburn), in
supporting the majority report. “I am giving you hard facts. If these organisations are bona fide why do they change their name every fortnight, like our political enemies?”

“I was a member of the workers’ defence corps in the miners’ strike”, said Mr Nicholson (Northern Miners). “The auxiliary bodies have done good work. Our duty is to welcome them. The ALP is trying to smash these organisations.”

There was a stir at this stage when, in reply to a question, the chairman (Mr P Keller) said “I ruled these organisations are political and that they are anti-Lang”.

“I will not agree to any executive issuing a manifesto that is going to split the unemployed”, said Mr Crook (Miners)

“I am a member of the ALP, but I am also a member of the Workers’ International Relief and the Unemployed Workers’ Movement. Where do I get off? I cannot get out of the ALP, because my union is affiliated, and I have to accept majority rule. The UWM is the spearhead of the workers. The thing is ridiculous. If the auxiliary bodies are under the control of the Communist party it is because the Communist party is more virile than the Labour party. Senator Rae was the first president of the ICWPA. Other names associated with it were those of Mr R James, MP, and Mr JS Garden. If it was OK for them to join then why is it not OK now? If these bodies are excluded the ALP will be taking a reactionary step that will only kill the Labour party.”

Mr Pomfret (Orange) submitted the following amendment to the motion for the adoption of the majority report: This conference resolves that every member of the ALP has under the constitution freedom of the right to support Soviet Russia, the Revolutionary Industrial Labour Union, or any movement in any country having for its purpose the abolition of war or capitalism. Moreover, we support the ICWPA, or any combined move against Fascism, and instruct the executive to see that organised facilities are provided from time to time to cover these necessary functions.

The president ruled the amendment out of order, under rule 2 of the ALP, debarring members of the Communist party from being members of the ALP.

Supporting the majority report, Mr Conway (Amalgamated Engineering Union) declared that the leaders of the auxiliary bodies had described the ALP as a Fascist organisation, and Cabinet Ministers as Fascist Ministers. Even the socialisation committee was regarded as a Fascist organisation.

Replying to criticism of the majority report Mr JS Stewart said that the adoption of the report would mean the setting up of machinery to cover the work done by the auxiliary bodies.
The motion for the adoption of the majority report was carried on a show of hands by 76 votes to 42. Amidst much excitement a division then took place, with the result that the motion was carried by 73 to 42.

The crowded gallery roared at the delegates as they crossed the room for the division and the air was filled with threatening shouts. News of the result of the count was received with roars of applause and a counter chorus of hoots from the gallery.

**Mr Lang. Speech at Conference**

The Premier (Mr Lang), who was given a thunderous round of applause and cheers, accused the Prime Minister (Mr Lyons) of attempting to make Australia the cheapest country in the world.

Mr Lang declared that the Government of the Labour movement had “to fight more tenaciously and against greater odds than ever we have faced in our history”.

“Before many months have passed we will know whether the Labour movement in New South Wales has won out or been smashed, as it has been in every other part of the world”, he said.

“In the fight ahead of us, your Government has no misgivings, your executive is confident, your rank and file is enthusiastic and determined, and we will win because our cause is just and our determination to fight on unlimited. Anyone who has read the statements of Federal Ministers and Sydney newspapers must realise what we have to face within the next few months. We have the statement of the Prime Minister that his Government proposes to do unpopular things but in doing that he hopes to achieve the objective of making Australia the cheapest country in the world. He visualises the cost of production of our primary industries being brought so low that we can under-sell any other country, and he foresees the manufacturers’ costs brought so low that a tariff would be unnecessary, as we would be under-selling the world. What I want the attention of the Labour movement and the workers generally concentrated upon is what will be the position of the workers in a country that has become the cheapest country in the world? If you do not know, you will realise after the Premiers’ Conference is held in Melbourne next month, because at that conference the Commonwealth and a majority of the States will agree to the abolition of awards and the regulation of industrial conditions. To become the cheapest country in the world, your wages must be made lower than those of the manufacturing countries of Central Europe. To become the producer of the cheapest primary products your conditions must be less costly than the Argentine, and if the gipsy labourer of the Argentine and the gipsy farmer of the Argentine live in a mud hut, then the Australians must have something less than a mud hut. If the working week of the Continental factory worker is 56 hours, and his wages less than £2 a week, then the conditions of the
Australian worker, if Australia is to be a cheap country, must be less than that. Is there any man or woman who wants to see Australia reduced to that level, because that is what is ahead of you? It is not an idle forecast of an over-zealous Labour advocate, it is the considered statement of the Prime Minister in announcing the objective of his Government. The only way to avoid these conditions is the preservation of the New South Wales Government and the Labour movement of this State. Every other Government has gone down before the challenge of the financial interests – this State alone has put up the fight. They cannot drive the other States back any further until the conditions in New South Wales have been depressed. When at this conference to be held in Melbourne, New South Wales gives a decisive ‘no’ to the infamous proposals which will be made there, the other States may or may not support us. But if your Government were not in that conference to give a definite lead against the destruction of the workers’ conditions, the remainder of the Governments would go over like a row of ninepins. That is where your real fight is. It will be in the months following that conference.

This legislation which the Federal Government recently passed to take the States’ revenue is serious – it has its embarrassments – but the fight which we must make against that is a mere bagatelle compared with what we must do to resist the frontal attack upon the living conditions of the Australian people that is to be made next month. Every avenue of publicity will be used. The fallacious argument that it would be better to pay two men £2 each instead of one £4, will appear and reappear in all kind of guises. You may try to point out that America which has the lowest cost of production has a terrific army of unemployed, you may show that Central Europe, which has long hours and low wages, has relatively greater deficits and more unemployed than Australia, but you will get no publicity for those arguments. Every employer today has engaged as much labour as he can usefully employ. If you reduce the market of the things he manufactures by reducing the purchasing power of the workers you get far more men unemployed with wages at £2 a week than were unemployed when wages were £4 a week. Industry can employ no more men because there is no one to buy the additional production. The necessary extra employment must come from Governments, and it must come, in the first place, from those central Governments which have control of the nation’s credit. Every country in the world is discussing this problem. It was recently before the Senate in America. In that debate Senator Borah, one of the best known American statesmen made use of this phrase – “Tell me what authority there is for taking £100,000,000 from the Treasury to resuscitate frozen financial institutions, and I shall tell you what authority there is to take money from the Treasury to rescue suffering and dying children”.

“Almost simultaneously with that, we have Lord Beaverbrook discussing the position in the Sunday Express. He said: ‘A policy of wage
cutting is the very negation of statesmanship – we cannot starve our way to prosperity, and Australia can no more starve her way to prosperity than England can. We, the Labour movement of New South Wales, which is the workers’ movement of Australia, must meet this challenge to our standard of living with a demand that the Commonwealth Government which controls the credit resources of the nation must make them available to the nation. If you go down in this fight, it will be many, many, years before you will rise again. Up to this stage, the Labour movement in this State has fought wonderfully. The workers of Australia owe it much more than they realise, and in the fight ahead you must all be prepared to make available for the common good all your resources and energy to avert the disaster which threatens the workers of Australia.”

“Nobody can accuse me of ever having been asleep at my post”, said Mr Lang, in conclusion, amidst tumultuous applause.

“I have worked night and day on your behalf, and I still will.” (Renewed applause) “It is a hard fight for us, but I can assure you we have made it a hard fight for our enemies”. (Applause )

Mr Beasley, leader of the Lang group in the Federal Parliament, said that the last session had been spent in designing legislation to sabotage and destroy the New South Wales Government. Preparations for the coming Premiers’ Conference were in the hands of certain professors of economy, who had prepared the case for the Arbitration Court two years ago, when the 10 per cent reduction took place. If the Premier was not prepared to unmask the secret proceedings at the Premiers’ Conference, the rank and file would never know what went on behind the scenes.

“We will bring the Commonwealth Government to its knees before many months have passed”, said Mr Beasley, amidst applause.

A motion pledging the “financial, moral, political, and industrial support” of the party to Mr Lang and Mr Beasley was moved by the vice-president, Mr Matthews.

Mr JS Garden, seconding the motion, said that Mr Lang had done more to fight the international financiers from within the party than any leader of any other organisation. Capitalism had reached its last stage, he said. Mr Lang was the greatest Premier any country had ever produced.

The resolution was carried unanimously.

“I am not only confident but I am certain that the Government cannot be interfered with constitutionally or in any other way”, said Mr. Lang, in reply. “No man has had such loyal support in the Cabinet and the party as I have had. There is a large sum of money lying in the banks to purchase members of the State Labour party. I have told these people that there is not one member for sale.” (Applause.) “I am confident the Government will go on and many of the difficulties designed to overthrow us will disappear”. (Cheers.)

The conference adjourned until 10.30 am today.
Labour conference. Message to Mr de Valera. Reid Seat Dispute Leads to Disorderly Scenes.

The Labour Conference yesterday carried a resolution expressing full sympathy with the Irish people, and declaring that it will oppose any attempt at armed intervention in Ireland. It was decided to cable the resolution to Mr de Valera and Mr Ramsay MacDonald.

One speaker said: “The fight of the Irish people is our fight”. Another drew an analogy between Mr de Valera and Mr Lang “in challenging financial interests”.

There were many disorderly scenes during the conference. The chairman at one stage threatened to disband the conference. Bedlam prevailed when an unsuccessful attempt was made to carry a vote of no-confidence in the president (Mr P Keller).

The socialisation group bitterly assailed many of the decisions of the conference, and attempted, by numerous recommittal motions, to have them rescinded. On each occasion they were defeated on a block vote of the Garden-Graves group.

Yesterday’s early session came to an abrupt conclusion shortly after noon, when the chairman (Mr Keller) unexpectedly adjourned the gathering until 7.30 p.m.

Roars of protest came from all parts of the hall as Mr Keller, in a few seconds, accepted, put, and declared carried an adjournment motion. Uproarious scenes followed his action, and cries of “bushrangers”, “Ned Kelly”, and “we don’t want to go to the races” were heard in the din as he left the chair.

The mover of the motion explained that the adjournment would give country delegates an opportunity for an afternoon’s respite, but Mr Nurmoyle (Tamworth) heatedly retorted that they were sent to do serious business, and were prepared to carry on.

**Mr Tully's Speech**

The Minister for Lands (Mr Tully) declared that the Government had decided to attack the big estates first. Some of the holdings would provide up to 30 living areas.

“We will attack the tall poppies first”, said Mr Tully. “All the large estates, with the exception of the Western Division, have come under the operations of the Taxation of Large Estates Bill. Although the measure was carried by the Legislative Assembly it was relegated to a select committee by the Legislative Council. The Government is determined to deal with the really large estates before it makes any effort to subdivide estates which are not greatly in excess of the minimum living area.”
Mr de Valera Praised

The suspension of standing orders was granted to Mr CA Morgan to move the following motion: “That this conference of delegates representing the Labour movement of NSW is in full sympathy with the Irish people in their fight for self-determination, and recognise their right to work out their own destiny, and this movement deprecates any move to frustrate their wishes, and will oppose any attempt at armed intervention in Ireland”.

“Before long we may have to decide whether we are to take up arms”, said Mr Morgan. “The fight of the Irish people is our fight. We may have to fight on similar issues. If the Upper House is abolished we may have to contend with armed intervention.”

Seconding the motion, Mr Gould (Glebe) said that Mr de Valera, like Mr Lang, had thrown down the gauntlet to the financial institutions. “Both said: ‘If you want fight you can have it’,” Mr Gould stated. “Like Mr Lang, Mr de Valera has been big enough to accept the challenge of the financial interests. They are both guiding lights to the rest of the world.”

Mr A Thompson (Milk and Ice Carters) sought to move an addendum pledging the conference to resist any attempt to mobilise an armed force in NSW to fight the Irish. The conference refused to accept the addendum.

The motion was carried, and it was decided to convey the decision by cable to Mr de Valera and the British Prime Minister (Mr Ramsay MacDonald).

Communist Bodies

The vexed question of the right of ALP members to retain their membership in Communist auxiliary bodies banned by the ALP executive again arose during the session. Mr Nicholson (Miners) asked the chairman to rule whether the delegates from organisations affiliated with the auxiliary bodies could remain at the conference because of the decision of the previous evening excluding members of these bodies from the ALP.

Mr Keller replied that it was a matter for adjustment between the affiliated bodies and the ALP. It would be necessary for leagues and unions now affiliated with auxiliary bodies to review their position. Meanwhile, there was nothing to prevent delegates from the unions remaining at the conference. It was a matter for individual action.

Reid Dispute

There was an echo of the Reid selection ballot dispute, which resulted in the endorsement of Mr J Gander by the ALP executive instead of by the
local leagues when a former vice-president, Mr F Saidy, appealed for the right to take his position on the executive. Mr Saidy was prevented by the ALP executive from holding an official position in the ALP for having disobeyed the instructions of the executive. Mr JS Garden said the appeals committee had decided to uphold the decision of the executive. He wished to make it clear that Mr Saidy had not been expelled from the party and was still entitled to retain his membership.

Mr Garden then moved the adoption of the appeals committee’s report.

It was during a heated argument on the subject that the president (Mr P Keller) dramatically closed the conference, accepting, amidst uproarious scenes, a motion from the body of the hall for the adjournment. One delegate tried to take a point of order but Mr Keller had left the chair. Many delegates remained behind to voice their disapproval of the procedure adopted by the chairman, and it was some time before the hall was cleared.

Disorderly Scenes

When the conference was resumed, further consideration was given to the appeal of Mr Saidy. Circulars were distributed among the delegates by supporters of Mr Saidy refuting allegations that he had disobeyed instructions, and that he was not residentially qualified to be a member of the Bankstown branch, which meant loss of continuity. The circular was signed by Mr Saidy, and concluded as follows: “Mr Garden himself received his continuity for a definite offence, and also the right to nominate for municipal honours, months after the closure of nominations. It was an act of mercy on the part of the conference, and I find no fault with it, being always prepared to give mercy and justice. In this instance I am not asking for mercy, I merely ask for justice, having committed no offence either against the party or its principles and platform. I have always held sacred the basic principles of the movement. My activities are known far and wide in the movement, and I defy anyone to say that they have not been always clean and above board.”

“We have heard a lot about rank and file control”, said Mr Kidd (Newcastle), opposing the adoption of the appeals committee’s report. “It appears to me that the rank is controlling, and the file is outside. I will never be a party to an oligarchy controlling the movement. There has been too much aroma around selection ballots.” (Uproar.)

A voice: What are you squealing about?
Mr Kidd: I am squealing about Mr Saidy being “railroaded”.

Continuing, Mr Kidd said that he did not believe in giving the executive power to crucify any member.
There were disorderly scenes when a demand was made that Mr Saidy should be heard. Amid uproar, a division took place on a motion to hear Mr Saidy, resulting in the rejection of the motion by 50 to 44.

During the din the chairman reproved Mr Kidd for attempting to conduct the count.

“Sit down, Mr Kidd”, said Mr Keller. “There are tellers there. They can count.”

Mr JS Garden, replying to criticism of the motion for the adoption of the committee’s report, said that according to Mr Kidd the executive had no power to suspend. “If Mr Kidd is correct”, Mr Garden added, “all members in the Upper House who blacklegged on the State Labour party should still be in the leagues”.

Disorder followed this remark, during which Mr Kidd said: “Mr Garden is evading the point. He well knows that any member who crosses the floor of the House is automatically expelled.”

The motion for the adoption of the report was carried on a division by 53 votes to 45.

There was another disorderly scene when Mr Nurmoyle sought the suspension of Standing Orders to move a motion that the chairman no longer retained the confidence of this conference, and that his office should be declared vacant. The conference refused to grant the suspension.

An unsuccessful attempt was also made to recommit the motion carried the previous night, upholding the ruling of the chairman with regard to auxiliary bodies. At this stage the uproar reached such dimensions that the chairman warned delegates that if the business was further interfered with he would be compelled to adjourn the conference.

Delegate Warned

Mr Nurmoyle again rose, and, walking towards the platform, insisted that the conference should hear a motion he wished to move.

Mr Keller: Resume your seat. You have been given more consideration than any other delegate. If I have to speak to you again you will have to leave the hall.

Mr Nurmoyle: Under the present bush ranging conditions I would not mind if I did.

A delegate: We should really call him “Mr Turmoil”.(Laughter)

Bells clanged incessantly as the uproar was renewed. Members of the gallery joined in the disturbance, resulting in several ejections.

Transport Proposals

Mr W Carlton submitted the following recommendations on behalf of the transport committee: “That all owners of mechanically propelled vehicles
be compelled to take out a third-party risk insurance, and that the State Government must undertake all insurance through the State Insurance Office, and that the verdict of the successful party in any action for damages be a first charge on the insurance fund, and that these provisions be made retrospective to cover any cases in point.”

“That the Transport Board be urged to develop the tramway system to the greatest possible point, and where feeder buses are installed, they be owned by the Government.”

“That the whole of the loss incurred in connection with non-paying lines be made a charge on consolidated revenue, instead of railway revenue.”

The recommendations were adopted, and the conference adjourned until 7 pm today.

**Day 5, Tuesday, 29 March 1932**

**Meat Industry. Socialised Scheme.**

A scheme which, if carried out by the Government, would amount to the socialisation of the meat industry was adopted by the Easter Labour Conference last night. The proposals seek to give the Meat Board full control over all operations at Homebush Abattoirs, and to establish centralised abattoirs throughout the State.

The socialisation faction, with the assistance of country delegates, defeated the followers of the ruling faction on a motion to organise country unions throughout the State in conjunction with the ALP.

When the conference resumed, Mr W Carlton (ARU), continued his report on transport. He recommended the establishment of a committee to consider all complaints in regard to transport matters. The conference agreed to accept the recommendation. The members of the committee are Messrs Wyatt (Railways), McKillop (Tramway), and Sheehan (Locomotive Department).

The suspension of standing orders was granted to Mr J Pettingall (South Coast), to move the following motion: “That the Minister for Health be instructed to meet a deputation, representative of the industrially controlled hospitals on the South Coast to provide necessary attention in the way of medicine, and if necessary outside nursing attention in the homes of the unemployed.”

Seconding the motion, Mr Hickman (South Coast), said that the position of the unemployed on the South Coast was desperate.

Mr S Kidd (Newcastle) suggested that the proposal should apply to all unemployed throughout the State.
The motion was carried, with addendums, providing for a 25 per cent increase in the dietary scale for dole recipients, and that a demand be made on behalf of the unemployed of the State.

**Meat Industry**

Denying that the proposals would mean the socialisation of the meat industry, Mr F Pomfrett (Meat Employees) moved the following motion:

“In the interests of public health and uniform efficiency in the meat trade, the Meat Board Act be amended so as to provide (a) for control, inspection, manufacture of by-products, etc., by the Meat Board to be extended beyond the County of Cumberland to the whole of the State; (b) the control of all operations at Homebush Bay and the enlargements of the area to be supplied by Homebush Bay; (c) the establishment, either directly by the board, or in conjunction with local authorities, of centralised abattoirs throughout the State.

“With a view to full advantage being taken by growers of organised protection against intermediaries and so that systematic regulation may be arranged for the protection of the local and expert market, the Meat Board, in conjunction with the Minister for Health, shall arrange conferences with growers in given areas leading to a representative conference of the State so as to arrange: (a) a system of standard grading with a determined price for each grade; (b) a system of supply direct from producers to Homebush Abattoirs or other centralised abattoirs; (c) arrangements for adequate representations by producers so as to ensure full value; (d) a method of coordinating all requirements under uniform control, such as all country aspects and for the purpose of stimulating the export trade.”

“You can call it socialisation if you like, but the scheme should be given effect to”, said Mr A Luchetti (Lithgow), seconding the motion.

Mr Smith (Meat Employees) said that the chairman of the Meat Board (Mr Scott) and Mr AD Kay had ‘sold’ them out. If their report to lease the abattoirs had been accepted, it would have been the end of the meat industry. “They sent a man to London at £2500 a year to do nothing”, said Mr Smith. “The money should have been spent on the unemployed at the abattoirs”.

The motion was adopted, and Messrs Pomfrett, Luchetti and Pettigell were elected members of a committee to submit the proposals to the Cabinet and the Meat Board.

**Country Organisation**

“Organising unions in the country is unknown”, said Mr F Pomfrett (Meat Employees), in moving a motion that combined political and industrial councils should be set up in each State electorate, with one official credentialled in each electorate to represent all unions.
There were several exciting and disorderly scenes when a vote was taken on the motion. In reply to insistent demands a division was taken, resulting in an equal vote, 42 all. When Mr Keller declared the motion lost a chorus of disapproval came from the body of the hall.

Mr W McNamara jumped from his chair and complained that his vote had not been counted.

A noisy scene ensued, reaching a climax when allegations were made that two delegates had entered the hall after the division had been taken. When the doorkeeper admitted that this was so, the chairman then declared that the motion had been carried.

**Socialisation Committee**

The election of the new socialisation committee resulted in a victory for the Garden-Graves group. Members of the committee are Messrs J Kilburn, W McNamara, JS Garden, E Barker, M Hughes, D Grant, JS Stewart, WC Burnett, and A Thompson.

**Conference Concludes**

At a quarter to 11 a motion for the adjournment of the conference *sine die* was carried. Demands were made that the general secretary, Mr J Graves, MLC, should give an account of the work done by members of the Government for socialisation. “The politicians have again got away with it”, said a delegate as the conference disbanded without the matter being discussed.

Circulars were distributed at the conclusion of the conference announcing that “a special conference of the ALP” would take place on April 16, to discuss the action of the ALP conference in banning the Communist auxiliary bodies.
Special Conference of Socialisation  
Militants, 16 April 1932  

(The Sydney Morning Herald, 17 April 1932)


Despite a warning issued by the State ALP executive to its members, about 60 delegates were present at the special Labour Conference convened for Saturday by two members of the socialisation movement, Messrs T Payne and A Lewis.

It is expected that the conference will result in many expulsions from the Labour party by the ALP executive.

The conference was under the complete control of the militant sections of the Labour movement.

"The need for this rank and file conference", said Mr Payne, "arises out of the deliberations of the recent annual conference of the party, at which the ALP oligarchy, led by Messrs Garden and Graves, and speaking through its mouthpiece, Mr P Keller, definitely declared war on the rank and file members who dared to take a stand for real working class solidarity. The Easter conference, it was claimed, was more representative than previous conferences. It was more representative of the Garden-Graves coterie. It is doubtful if there was ever a conference more efficiently organised by any controlling faction on any previous occasion in the history of the ALP."

"The conference general, Mr JS Garden, is secretary of the Trades and Labour Council, affiliated with an organisation banned by the conference. The master of ceremonies at the conference, Mr Keller, whose ruling was upheld, was himself, a little over 12 months ago, a member of an organisation (the Militant Minority Movement) which he bans today. Almost as soon as the conference has given its decision, this same Mr Keller equivocates, and says that the position of unions affiliated with the banned organisations is one for negotiation. A few days after the close of the conference Mr Keller rules that these unions are not affected by the decisions of the conference – that it applies to individual members of the ALP only.

"Members, then, are asked to respect a conference not representative of the rank and file, controlled by a man who is an officer of a body affiliated with a banned organisation, to respect a decision which is not respected by the very man who laid the basis for such decision.

"What is this decision? Simply that ALP members shall not be members of certain working class organisations. Not that the workers shall not be members of the New Guard, Royal Empire Society, or the Women's Guild of Empire, but that members shall not belong to the Friends of the Soviet Union, League Against Imperialism, United Front
Against Fascism, International Class War, Prisoners’ Aid, Workers’ International Relief, Workers’ Defence Corps, Unemployed Workers’ Movement, and the Minority Movement.

Mr Payne then moved the following motion: “This conference of rank and file members of the ALP repudiates the motion passed at the recent annual conference of the party, banning certain working class organisations, and pledges itself to organise and fight for the freedom of all members of the ALP to belong to any working class organ of struggle. Recognising the necessity of such organisations in the struggle against capitalism, we members of the ALP declare that we will retain our membership in these organisations, and guarantee to recruit and do all in our power to mould them into mass organs of struggle. Finally, this conference calls for the formation of a united front of all workers, in order to defend their conditions against the threatened further attacks from the Premiers’ Conference now in session.”

Seconding the adoption of the report, Mr Ambrose (Randwick) alleged that the tellers at the recent Easter Conference were the nominees of the Garden-Graves coterie.

“The coterie ran tickets for all positions, and every ticket won”, said Mr Ambrose.

“The unemployed have received no reforms from the Labour party”, said Mr Monday, of Randwick. “We are going to suffer the batons of the police before very long. The present ALP executive does not understand the psychology of the workers. It stands for spoils for a few on the inside, and the boot for the majority on the outside.”

“We have to thank the Sydney Morning Herald for its fairness in publishing an interview with Mr WN Pharazyn, an accountant and company manager, the other day”, said Mr Watkins (Darlinghurst ALP). “The interview refuted many of the lying allegations concerning conditions in Russia”.

“We must fight against our enemies in the Labour movement”, said Mrs Russell, an ALP member of the Paddington Relief Association. “We must get rid of Messrs Garden and Graves”.

**Socialist Outlook**

“The auxiliary bodies have been expelled because their strength is feared by the ALP leaders”, said Mr R Murray, of the Balmain ALP. “They are afraid that they will lose their positions. Today the slaves have an idea that capitalism can continue. We must create a socialistic outlook among the workers.”

Mr Russell (Drummoyne Socialisation Unit) submitted the following addendum to Mr Payne’s motion: That this conference calls upon the executive and the rank and file of the socialisation movement to organise and fight the decision banning auxiliary bodies.
That the controlling group of the ALP was a band of self-seekers, anxious to emancipate themselves, was the opinion expressed by Mr Forrester, of the Hornsby ALP.

Mr McKenzie representing the Unemployed Workers’ Movement, stated that the movement was non-political, regardless of what had been said to the contrary. Messrs Garden and Graves were only opposed to the movement because they knew that it, being non-political, would oppose any Government, whether Labour or Nationalist, if it passed anti-working class legislation.

The motion submitted by Mr Payne was carried unanimously.

Another motion was moved by Mr A Hyams, of the Matraville ALP, expressing hostility to any attempt to declare illegal working class organisations. “We are of the opinion”, the motion continued, “that the banning of such organisations by the ALP will assist any move to destroy the legal status of these bodies. We, therefore appoint a committee of 20 to work in conjunction with representatives of the banned organisations to carry on a campaign of enlightenment as to the role of each of the banned organisations.” The motion was carried without discussion.

The conference adopted a recommendation for consideration by the committee, that a unity conference should be convened, with the object of readmitting members of the auxiliary bodies to the ALP.

It was also decided to forward to the ALP office a list of members of the ALP who declined to dissociate themselves from the auxiliary bodies.

“The AWU went to the right and killed itself”, said Mr Doyle (Boilermakers), in moving that the resolution should be forwarded to the ALP executive. “The Garden-Graves group is doing the same. We will make a challenge to the capitalistic class on May Day.”

Professing to have inside information on the Auckland riots, Mr Jenkins (Paddington ALP) said that the people would have control of Parliament House in a week. “The same thing will happen here”, said Mr Jenkins. “We will have to fight for the rights of our wives and families to live”.

A resolution was carried congratulating the Auckland rioters.

“Let us march on Parliament and pull it down”, said Mr M Paul, a member of the Postal Linesmen’s Union, in moving a motion for the release of class war prisoners. “I have left the Labour movement in disgust. The party is controlled by dirty opportunists, who pull wool over the eyes of the workers.” The motion was carried.

Another resolution adopted urged the immediate lifting of the ban on working class literature.

“My next move is to join the revolutionary party – the Communistic party”, said Mr T Payne.

The conference concluded with the singing of the “Red Flag”.
CHAPTER 11
Australian Labor Party,
New South Wales Branch
Annual Conference, 14 – 16 April 1933

Report in The Sydney Morning Herald

This is the occasion when Jock Garden made his famous comment that “Lang is greater than Lenin”. The Herald correspondent does not quote the exact words, but the meaning is clear, and the phrase has come down in Labor mythology. It was part of the Inner Group’s attempt to undermine the growing influence of the militants in the Socialisation Units, closely allied with the Communist Party. Garden, an ex-Communist himself, was trying to portray Lang as more effectively radical than his enemies on the left. “Our leader is ahead of the god they bow the knee to. Our report goes further than the policy advocated by Lenin. Mr Lang is the greatest leader the country has ever produced.” The militants do not seem to have been convinced by the argument.

The Conference was a rowdy affair, with the chairman gagging most debate except for Lang’s address. For his part, Lang did not appeal to Marx or Lenin, but rather to the newly elected American President, FD Roosevelt. He was on firm ground there as Roosevelt’s New Deal had some elements in common with the Lang Plan. However, the New Deal was probably closer to the policies put forward unsuccessfully by the former Federal Treasurer, Ted Theodore – an irony that Lang would certainly not have appreciated, since Theodore (a promoter of Federal Labor) was an even more immediate threat to Lang than the militants of the Socialisation Units.
Executive Report of NSW ALP for 1932-33

(Australian Labor Party, State of New South Wales, Annual Report 1932-1933)

The last annual report referred to the disruptive tactics of the Theodore-Bailey faction and how the Movement was successfully combating the attempts of the T-B faction to divide Labor’s forces. This T-B faction had the backing of that one-time powerful organisation, the AWU, supported by their daily paper, The World, and the cooperation of the anti-Labor organisations.

The cooperative efforts of these factors in the dispute resulted in almost wrecking the AWU, and completely smashing The World newspaper.

The ALP remains the greatest mass organisation of the Commonwealth.

These attacks will continue from time to time upon every successful working class movement.

During the period under review, 1932-33, a more subtle effort was made to destroy our movement. The people responsible for this later disruptive campaign, realising the futility of the methods adopted by the now defunct T-B faction, attempted to organise their forces within our movement. For this purpose they utilised the movement’s enthusiasm for the Party’s Objective, and assisted in the formation of Socialisation Groups to such an extent that these groups were fast becoming a separate organisation within the movement, and, because of the cunning way this organisation was being used, great difficulty was experienced in combating their subtlety.

This sectional disruptive element, through the channels of the Socialisation Units, engineered numerous resolutions through our branches of a harassing and disruptive character.

Their lecturers, under the guise of propagating the socialisation of industry, addressed many branches, but their lectures were mainly concerned in abusing all official organs of the party, ie, Executive, Labor Daily, and Parliamentary Party. This method was purposely designed to destroy the confidence in the leadership of the movement.

Because of the grip that these disruptionists had on the movement, it was necessary for the Executive to take drastic action in their branches at Glebe and Paddington, and it involved the expelling of a number of members of the Glebe Branch. The result has been that harmony now prevails in these branches, the members having again recovered the right to control their affairs.
The work of these disruptionists came to fruition at the Metropolitan Conference, when this small coterie capitalised the enthusiasm of the delegates on Socialisation, and endeavored to complete their work of splitting the Movement.

The investigation of your Executive proved conclusively that the Socialisation Units were dominated by Communistic influence, whose avowed purpose is to destroy the Australian Labor Party.

The Communist Party, unable to make any material advance with the Australian masses, seized the advantage opened up by Socialisation Units, and in a manifesto published in the official organ of the Communists, *Workers' Weekly*, on the 14th August, 1931, stated:

“The Communist Party must everywhere get the utmost contact with the ALP rank and file, must approach them for the purpose of drawing them into the various everyday struggles. Particular attention to be paid to the Socialisation Units and those bodies of workers to be won for the revolutionary policy of the Communist international.”

Advice contained in this statement was given effect to, as indicated by reports reaching Head Office of renewed activity in the Socialisation Movement. Investigations revealed that members of the Communist auxiliary bodies were joining in large numbers. It was also learned that, although such people were theoretically not entitled to vote, they overwhelmed many of the meetings with members and virtually took control. Suspicious change in organisation methods were noted, there was an atmosphere of exclusiveness; and the liaison between branches and Socialisation Units weakened, with units attempting to function as separate organisations; the result being friction and bitterness within branches.

The Socialisation Units, surrounded by a parrot cry of Socialisation, organised “voting ticket” running committees, with the object of capturing all official positions in the Movement. Regular secret meetings of delegates of Socialisation Units were held on Friday evenings in the Trades Hall. It was from these meetings that the inspired resolutions mentioned previously were engineered through the branches, and the “voting tickets” prepared.

Another disturbing factor throughout this long period was the continuous neglect of the Socialisation Section to provide the Movement with a financial statement. The numerous unsuccessful attempts made by your Executive to obtain such a statement, the unsatisfactory financial position resulting from the Socialisation Theatre, the apparent freedom of expenditure in certain quarters, and the inability of the *Labor Daily* to obtain payment of its accounts suggest to your Executive the need for investigation. The obvious amount of money now being spent by disruptionists since the Metropolitan Conference, and in the light of their alleged inability to reduce their account with the *Labor Daily*, appears to support this recommendation. The Socialisation Section is the only
section of our Movement who have neglected to provide annual audited financial statements, and so its financial resources remain hidden, its disbursements are still secret, and the Movement’s liabilities in this regard are unknown.

The unpleasant task of exposing motives for disruptive activities was forced upon your Central Executive, and they accepted the responsibility, and it remains for the Annual Conference to determine whether your Executive’s actions during the term are worthy of endorsement.

**Commonwealth Parliament**

During the past year the people of Australia have had full opportunity of realising the effects of the adverse vote which Labor received at their hands on the 19th December, 1931.

The result of the conflict between the anti-Labor Commonwealth Government and the New South Wales Labor Government of 1930-32 should have demonstrated to members of our Movement that we must concentrate our efforts upon gaining absolute control of the Commonwealth Parliament.

The year was marked by the passing of many class-biased legislative enactments. The Bruce-Lyons [sic] Government have certainly carried out the wishes of their masters, i.e., the financial interests; the only real opposition came from the small but energetic band of Labor representatives from this State.

Among the Acts mentioned was the Australian Broadcasting Commission Act, and the appointments made by the Government under the provisions of this Act were in keeping with the past practice of anti-Labor Governments of seeing that wherever possible avenues of publicity are controlled by men and women who are known to be distinctly biased against the viewpoint of the Labor Movement.

Amendments to the Immigration Act, the Crimes Act, and the Commonwealth Arbitration and Conciliation Act were carried in spite of the strenuous efforts of our members, and as these measures are definitely aimed at the right of assembly and free speech, the Labor Party, when given the opportunity, should unhesitatingly remove from this legislation all provisions that have for their purpose the penalising of organisations and persons for offences of a political or industrial character.

The Commonwealth Bank Act was amended to permit the Commonwealth Bank Board to “hold the note issue reserve in either gold or sterling”. Since the passing of the amendments to the Act great quantities of gold have been transferred overseas to meet pressing demands, without any difference being apparent to the public, thereby proving that “Lang was Right” when he said Australia would be compelled to go off the gold standard.
The attacks upon the old-age and invalid pensioners commenced by the last Scullin-Theodore Government were continued by the present Government. The basis of the Act has been altered and the pension ceases to be claimed as a right and is now given as a charitable grant. In assessing the income into the home of applicants for pensions, the State food relief is taken into account by the Federal Government, and the State Government, vice versa, counts the pension payments when determining applications for food relief. The pensioners are alive to the situation, and are organising for the next Federal elections so as to ensure the return of a real Labor Government, realising that this is the only way in which they may obtain justice.

An Old Age and Invalid Pensioners’ Association has been formed, and has extended its operations into other States. Labor’s five in the House of Representatives and their two representatives in the Senate have worked hard, but in vain, to prevent any further inroads being made upon the rights of this unfortunate section of our community.

Delegations were sent from Australia to the Conferences at Geneva and Lausanne, which discussed principally the questions of disarmament and war reparations. The results proved that our Federal representatives were right when they referred to these Conferences as futile gatherings of hypocrites and humbugs. The Labor Party can do most to prevent future wars by explaining to the masses of the workers the causes of wars and urging them not to allow themselves to be used to settle disputes of international financial interests.

Delegates were also sent to the much-discussed Ottawa Conference, which was dominated by the British diplomats, and which was designed for the purpose of organising the British Empire into an economic unit so that British Imperialism may be more favorably placed in its efforts to control and exploit world markets. Part of this scheme entails the sacrificing of Australia’s secondary industries. The decisions arrived at are tantamount to a declaration of economic warfare against the world, and failure to settle differences by negotiation must inevitably lead to armed conflict, and the Labor Party must use every endeavor to see that no more Australian workers are sacrificed in future Imperialistic wars.

Our representatives rendered signal service to the naval ratings in their fight for better conditions aboard ship, and hundreds of letters have been received thanking them and promising support to the party in its future efforts on behalf of the Australian workers.

The Commonwealth finances showed marked improvement as the result of the pensions grab, etc., and the Government, regardless of many and repeated promises to the pensioners, brought down a measure called the Financial Relief Bill, which disposed of the surplus revenue by making enormous financial gifts to its friends and supporters by way of remission of land tax, sales tax, etc.
The members of our party in the Commonwealth Parliament were particularly active during the year, assisting by addressing meetings in every corner of the State during the State election campaign, meetings arranged by the Old Age and Invalid Pensioners’ Association, and the Socialisation Committee and the Returned Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Labor Club, besides giving attention to the duties consequent upon a very strenuous parliamentary session.

State Parliament

The earlier months of the period under review witnessed the most momentous events that have occurred to a Parliamentary Labor Party in this State.

The attack upon the Labor Government, commenced the previous year, assumed its most ruthless aspect at the beginning of 1932. In January, when Messrs Bruce and Lyons set out upon the campaign which culminated in the Governor’s illegal dismissal of the Government, the Labor Government of N.S.Wales was still refusing to follow the other States in legislating away the rights of the people to social services and decent standards of living. It is still in the recollection of most people how every ruse and subterfuge was resorted to to bring the Labor Government under the bankers’ heels. When every other form of persuasion and intimidation, including offers of bribery, had failed, the abuse of the Governor’s prerogative brought about the downfall of the Government.

The loyalty of the 55 members of that historic party constitutes one of the brightest pages in Labor’s history. The party comprised men whose only means of livelihood was their parliamentary salary, men holding seats which they knew would be lost to them unless the phenomenal swing to Labor, evident in the 1930 election, was repeated. Many of these men knew that an election for them meant political and economic annihilation, but they were prepared to accept that fate rather than a Labor Government should betray the people who elected it or defame the reputation of the Movement which they served.

No Government in the history of the State has ever been called upon to govern in such adverse circumstances. Notwithstanding the hostility of the Federal Government, the Press, the bankers, and the Upper House, the Labor Government, during its short life, re-introduced the 44-hour week, preserved the basic wage, reduced interest, brought in a Moratorium, increased the food allowance to the unemployed, and widened its scope, remitted £3,000,000 of Government dues to the farming community, and achieved other legislative and administrative acts, any one of which, in normal times, would be considered a major advancement.

The manner in which the seats were gerrymandered by the Bavin Government was clearly demonstrated at the general elections last year, and the Labor Party had only 24 members elected in a House of 90, notwithstanding that it polled nearly half of the aggregate votes recorded.
In November, 1932, the death of our colleague, Mr BC Olde, was reported. Members lost a true friend, and the Movement a loyal and able worker in his death.

Life of JT Lang
The Movement is interested in a book entitled the Life of JT Lang by John HC Sleeman. This work not only deals with the life of our Leader from boyhood to the end of the second Lang administration, but the foreword traces the history of the Labor Movement over the last two thousand years.

Ever the quest of Labor has been the same. Ever the obstacle, the barricades erected to stop the advance of Labor, has been similar in design.

The book has our recommendation as one of the big biographical works of the world, and for Australians it carries the added significance of showing what position in the world the Great Australian Leader really occupies.

Municipal
During the year the Labor aldermen in the City Council, although in the minority, have assisted the workers engaged in municipal work.

The Civic Reform Party endeavored, during the year, to reduce the wages of the workers by 12/6 per week, as decided by the Commission. The Labor aldermen strenuously opposed such being accomplished, and because of their efforts municipal employees have not suffered that reduction.

The extension of Martin Place and the widening of Elizabeth Street was obtained by the Labor aldermen, with the assistance of three Civic Reform aldermen, in addition to the erection of a new incinerator.

The Labor aldermen were able to prevent contracts going overseas, especially the large electrical contract for transformers, which, after weeks of fighting, was obtained for a Sydney firm. These four big jobs will entail employment for our people, and the unity of the Labor aldermen alone was the factor which made it possible to gain this work.

The Stevens Government legislated against the holding of the city municipal elections last December. The Movement is now looking forward to the city municipal elections being held in December next, and anticipate a victory which will give Labor a majority in the City Council of Sydney.

Younger Sets
The Annual General Conference of 1932 instructed the Executive to, in its organisational work, pay particular attention to organising a Younger Set Movement.
The Executive have been very successful in their efforts in this direction, and approximately 100 Younger Sets are actively functioning in various portions of the State. The average membership of each set is now well over 100.

In furtherance of the organising of the Younger Sets your Executive have given particular attention to the setting up of sporting competitions, four of which were held during the year – cricket, tennis, swimming, and vigoro. A football competition is now being arranged.

**Cricket** – The cricket competition was played on Sunday mornings at Moore Park, 19 teams competing for a silver cup donated by Mr Sam Lands, which was won by the Surry Hills team. Though this branch of sport was arranged late in the season, the wonderful success attained in our initial efforts is an encouragement to go further afield, and it is proposed to continue these competitions on a greater scale next season.

The play in this competition attained a very high standard, there were many notable performances with the bat and the ball by individual players, the brilliant fielding of our players was applauded by the immense concourse of spectators who attended these matches each Sunday.

**Vigoro** – The Vigoro Association organised under the aegis of the Younger Sets has completed its first competition, which commenced on the 4th December last, seven districts taking part, and it proved very interesting to the crowds that watched the play every Sunday at Moore Park. The trophy was a silver cup presented by Mrs Louden to be competed for annually. The Vigoro Association is now arranging for its winter competition.

**Tennis** – The Tennis Association was formed in conjunction with the Younger Set Movement, and a competition was inaugurated in October last, and has just been completed. This was the first of its kind, and was known as a summer competition. A silver cup for the winning team was donated by Mrs Louden, and won by Mortdale No. 1. Three districts with a total of 18 teams competed. The Tennis Association are now arranging for the second competition, to be run during the winter months.

**Swimming** – The Younger Set have also carried on their activities in the aquatic section of sport, but were not able to commence operations until close upon the end of the swimming season, which ends in March of each year. The ALP Swimming Club is affiliated with the NSW Amateur Swimming Association. A successful swimming carnival was held at the Coogee Aquarium on Saturday evening, March 11, and an interesting programme was carried out. The principal event was for the challenge cup donated by the Hon JT Lang, to be competed for annually. In this carnival we had the wholehearted assistance and cooperation of the NSW Amateur Swimming Association, and secured the services of a number of their members to carry out official positions at the carnival, and we desire to extend our appreciation to the association and also to
the officials who so efficiently carried out their duties. We also extend our thanks to the Diving Troup, and particularly the Roberts Brothers for their very attractive display, and also the two polo teams for helping to make our programme a success.

Valuable trophies were also donated by Ald D Mulcahy, Mr T Trautwein, Mr S Currotta, and Mr F Kay for competition in the events for the past season, and the Movement gratefully appreciates the practical assistance rendered by these donors.

Football—Keen interest is being displayed in the coming football competition. At the initial meeting between 50 and 60 delegates were present. A committee was appointed, who have drafted a comprehensive constitution to govern the ALP Football Association and its competitions. The competition, commencing on Sunday, May 7, will play Rugby League football in A, B, and C grades. To date 42 teams have submitted entries for this competition.

Organisation

The organising work during the term is very satisfactory. Our Organising Secretary, Mr JB Martin, has at times been diverted from his organising work to attend to the very many other duties imposed upon him from time to time, and in his report he mentions that during election and by-election campaigns he has devoted the whole of his time to securing the return of Labor candidates. He mentions the coincidence in East Sydney of a by-election taking place at similar periods in 1931 and 1932, upon each occasion Mr EJ Ward was returned. The whole of the Organising Secretary’s time was occupied in both of these elections. Again, Mr Martin’s services had to be utilised in the “Lang is Right” campaign, in the throes of which the Movement was confronted with a general State election, caused by the dismissal of the Lang Government by an imported Governor, almost at the moment that our leader had achieved his objective.

The Organising Secretary, in addition to giving attention to metropolitan branches and addressing public meetings, has travelled over 30,000 miles in this State during the year, visiting and forming branches and Socialisation Units, addressing public meetings, and hearing unemployed deputations. On every tour as many as three meetings a day have been attended.

The list of new branches printed herein will give some indication of the areas visited in addition to Scarbororough, Grenfell, Cowra, Dubbo, Nepean Dam, Campbelltown, Griffith, Leeton, Temora, Ardlethan, Barellan, Narrandera, Wagga, Orange, Cargo, Millthorpe, Parkes, Molong, Werris Creek, Boggabri, Gunnedah, Muswellbrook, Scone, Taree, Wauchope, Port Macquarie, Kempsey, Lismore, Inverell, Glen Innes, Coffs Harbor, Wellington, Bargo, and Penrith.
In addition to visiting Queensland, he made extensive tours to Victoria and South Australia, travelling some 8500 miles, in which he organised and addressed many large gatherings, and at which he was enthusiastically received.

The objective and policy of the Party was on every occasion explained by him in our endeavors to make the objective a Commonwealth one.

The Organising Secretary, Mr JB Martin, extends his greatest appreciation for the valuable assistance received during his tours from branch officials and those members of the Party who accompanied him on his many tours.

New Branches

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Unemployment

The Organising Secretary devoted particular attention to unemployment relief, and the experience gained by him on his many tours was instrumental in having set up a number of Labor agencies at Tarcutta, Grafton, Jindabyne, Adaminaby, Berrima, Bega, Comboyne, Cobargo, Kelso, Merimbula, Mogo, Moruya, St Marys, Tuggerah Lakes, Boggabilla, where grievances can be properly and immediately attended to.

The loss of our Government has hampered his work in this regard. The cutting down of relief has resulted in very many distressing cases as outlined by him in his address to the Legislative Council on October 26.
last. This address caused concern to the Minister administering relief, and was the means of relieving some of the hardships imposed by the stringent relief conditions of the Stevens Government. Arising out of this matter, an Unemployment Conference was convened during the term, and the decisions of this conference were printed and circulated amongst our branches.

Almost the whole of our branches now have Unemployment Relief Committees effectively functioning, and are rendering material assistance in the way of food and clothing, and paying particular attention to eviction cases. A number of these committees have been in operation for the past three years,

During the term a Men’s Hostel was established at Redfern to supplement the valuable assistance rendered by the Women’s Hostel. Both these hostels are under the capable management of members of the WCOC.

The Men’s Hostel, under the direction of Mrs Caffrey, was originally established to provide a home for the men who were being evicted from the Sydney Domain. These men suffered all kinds of petty annoyances from the authorities in an endeavor to force them from their camping ground in the Domain, even to the destroying of their tents.

These campers, 75 in all, were provided, by means of this hostel, with reasonably comfortable quarters and a properly equipped dining room enabling them to obtain regular well-cooked meals.

The hygienic arrangements for this hostel include hot and cold baths which are keenly appreciated by those who are obliged to make use of the hostel.

Entertainment is provided in both hostels as far as their limited means will allow, the chief of which are a radio and gramophone. There are at present 130 men housed in the hostel and upward of 150 have been supplied with meals daily.

As with the Women’s Hostel, no deserving case in neglected.

These two hostels depend almost entirely upon donations received from sympathisers.

Parcels of clothing and groceries, gifts of tobacco, gramophone records, wood and coal, and similar donations will be gratefully appreciated at both these hostels.

The Movement gratefully appreciates the noble work of these women in supplementing the work of our Unemployed Committees by providing this very necessary assistance.

**Women's Central Organising Committee**

The WCOC has been a very active factor in our Movement for the past 27 years and its activities during the year ended Easter, 1932, were of material assistance to the Movement in the Federal, State, and Municipal Campaigns and in the by-election for East Sydney and again the
Leichhardt by-election, WCOC rendered valuable assistance in securing the return of Messrs E Ward and J Lamaro.

This Committee, in attending to matters affecting the welfare of the Movement, took part in many deputations to the Ministers, dealing particularly with Unemployed Relief, Evictions, and matters affecting the boarding out of State children.

The Committee also performed valuable work in raising funds and generally helping to relieve acute distress caused by unemployment, and has aided homeless women and girls by the establishment of their hostel. During the term, they took over from the ALP the Lang Hostel and amalgamated the functions of these two hostels in the one now being administered by them in Elizabeth Street near Hunter Street.

Many members of this Committee took part in the protest meeting that they organised against reduction in Old Age and Invalid and Widows Pensions, and also the curtailment of family endowment. These meetings were held in the Sydney Domain.

The WCOC held their triennial Conference at the latter end of 1932. Mrs Stapleton, President of the Committee, opened Conference with a stirring address, and welcomed the 250 delegates from the metropolitan and country branches. Mr Keller, general president of the ALP, addressed the assembled delegates and conveyed to them the Movement’s appreciation for the work they had performed. A number of interesting papers were submitted and discussed dealing with the following subjects:

- Socialisation.
- Influence of Capitalist Press.
- The March of the Machine.
- Conditions of the Blind Workers.
- Old Age and Invalid Pensions.
- Domestic Service legislation.
- Election of Women to Municipal and Shire Councils.
- The Harm of Communism in Home Life.
- Birth Control.
- Sex Training.
- Family Courts.
- Attack on Social Services.

Among the newer representation at Conference were delegates from Narremburn, Ashbury, Willoughby, Granville, Merrylands, Guildford, Punchbowl, Campsie, Canterbury, Hurlstone Park, and Hurstville.

Conference, before concluding, expressed their appreciation for the wonderful work performed by the Labor Daily.

It is regrettable that, despite the wonderful political work performed by women, they can only claim one representative in our legislative halls,
Hon Mrs Webster, MLC, and one Lady Alderman, Mrs Dunn, of the Glebe Municipal Council.

The WCOC extend their deepest sympathy to the relatives and friends of the late Harry Stewart and Mrs W Hazel in the sad loss occasioned by their death.

Executive

The Central Executive, which is elected each year by the plebiscite votes of members, is composed, with one or two exceptions, of people employed in industry who give almost the whole of their spare time for the work of the Movement. The Committee is subdivided into Disputes Committee, Organising Committee, and Finance Committee.

The meetings of the Central Executive and sub-committees are always well attended.

It is with regret we have to report that during the term Mr Martin Manion passed away. His death was a shock to the Movement. He has been the miners’ representative on the Executive and Conference for very many years and we express our heartfelt sympathy in the loss occasioned by his family and large circle of friends.

Most of the members of our Executive regularly attend the various Branch meetings in the metropolitan area and occasional meetings of our country Branches, and though, in this way a large number of Branches are visited by our Executive, it is impracticable for the whole of them to be visited.

Among the many rulings delivered by the Executive during the year, the following four are of particular importance.

Expiration of Tickets

Membership tickets expire on the 31st December each year, but hold good until the conclusion of the first meeting of the Branch subsequent to the 31st December. This was necessary to permit of a first meeting of the year being held in accordance with our Constitution.

Termination of Meetings

The Executive interpreted Standing Order Q to mean:

(a) That the aggregate time for extending meetings beyond 10 pm shall not exceed the total of 30 minutes.

(b) That such meetings shall be definitely closed not later than 10.30 pm, and all business transacted after that hour will be null and void.
Attendance at Branch Meetings
The only persons eligible to attend Branch meetings are members of Branches. Applicants for membership in Metropolitan Branches may attend the meeting only whilst their application is being submitted. Lecturers and persons proposing to address Branch meetings may be invited by resolution of the Branch, providing such persons are not members of any other political organisations.

Attendance at EC Meetings
The only persons having the right of attendance at Council meetings are:
(a) Delegates appointed by the constituent Branches and in their absence, alternate delegates.
(b) Members of Central Executive or their representatives.
(c) Persons invited by resolution of Council for a particular meeting, providing such persons are not members of any other political organisations.

The Central Executive is very grateful to the officials and members of the Movement who supported and assisted them during a very critical and trying period. The helpful cooperation of these officials and members was keenly appreciated by your Executive as it materially lightened their burden and made possible the many successes achieved by the Movement during the term.

The Labor Daily
The Movement has been fortunate in the cooperation and ready assistance received at all times through the year from the Labor Daily.

The year has been a strenuous one for the paper as it has for every other section of the Movement, but it will be conceded that the splendid fight put up by the Labor Daily during the election campaign was one of the most inspiring impulses given to the Movement for many years. And even when so many of our people, grossly intimidated and misled as they were, deserted the Party in the crisis, the Labor Daily maintained the splendid fighting spirit that rallied the Movement after its disappointing defeat.

The incessant attack and continued exposure that it has directed at both the Federal and State Governments have gone a long way to restrain those vindictive administrations from carrying their desperate policies to the lengths they had intended. It must also be mentioned that our splendid paper has so far conducted a magnificent fight against the monstrous Referendum proposals. Its timely exposure of the scrutineer scandal has put the Movement on its guard and, if the branches have followed the lead given by the paper, Labor will have a 100 per cent enrolment.
Another feature of the *Labor Daily*’s services that should be mentioned is the attention given to reporting branch activities and Executive meetings, while its columns have always been thrown open to us for any appeal we desired to make.

In its official organ the Movement has a weapon that is the envy of Labor in every other State of the Commonwealth and every effort should be exerted by the branches to make it the strongest paper in Australia. This can be done overnight if, by organisation, the business houses of the city were taught that they need not seek the business of the workers unless they seek it through their own paper.

Before leaving this matter conference should be reminded of the kind of loyalty the *Labor Daily* requires in the words used recently by our Leader: “When you fight the *Labor Daily* you fight me”.

**Labor Daily Year Book**

One of the most splendid innovations in the work of the Party during the year was the publication of the first volume of *The Labor Daily Year Book*.

This compact little handbook has already proved a valuable adjunct to our work in many ways, while its value for platform speakers and branch members is incalculable.

The management of the paper should be complimented on the enterprise they have displayed in such a depressed period, and all those concerned in the compilation of the volume congratulated upon the excellence of the matter contained. The instant success of the publication was a tribute to its worth.

We are informed that the *Labor Daily* proposes next year to considerably expand the Year Book, and the best way to encourage this endeavor is for the Movement to see that every member is provided with a copy. We would commend the volume to all affiliated unions and branches.

**2KY Broadcasting Station**

One of the most important adjuncts of our Movement is the 2KY Broadcasting Station, whose new and powerful station was recently opened by Hon JT Lang at French’s Forest.

This Station was established at the Trades Hall, Sydney, by the New South Wales Labor Council following upon the report of the Director of the Labor and Research Information Bureau, ER Voigt, on his return from USA in 1925.

The report dealt with the anti-Labor political and industrial uses to which broadcasting was being put in America, and urged the Labor Movement of New South Wales to secure a place on the air, before the air was closed for further broadcasting.

2KY first went on the air in November, 1925. It constituted the world’s first Labor Broadcasting Station, the first high-power D class
station and the first B Class Station to run a daily programme. Prior to its advent, B Class stations were experimental only, and were of low power from 50 to 100 watts.

2KY has always been closely associated with the Australian Labor Party, State of New South Wales. There is consequently a joint trusteeship of the Labor Council and the Australian Labor Party over 2KY. There is not one penny of outside capital in Labor’s Broadcasting Station. It belongs wholly and completely to the Labor Movement of New South Wales and the joint trusteeship is a guarantee that the control will always remain with the Labor Movement.

Every general election in recent years has emphasised the growing importance and influence of this Station. Labor’s campaign over the air is one of the most effective means of conveying Labor’s policy to the public, and at such times the Station is placed freely at the disposal of the Movement.

At times of industrial crisis, such as the Miners’, the Timber Workers’ lockouts, and the disputes of the Engine-drivers, Postal Workers, etc., 2KY Broadcasting Station is devoted to the cause of the workers, and is one of the most effective and rapid means of conveying to the public the working class side of all major industrial struggles.

When the anti-Labor press boycotted the last Lang Government it was 2KY which came to the rescue.

For the first time in broadcasting in any part of the world, the full sessions of all parliamentary debates and procedure were broadcast direct from the Legislative Chamber to the great listening-in public.

Our Station has always devoted a substantial portion of its time and energies to the assistance of the unemployed both by direct appeals and also through the organisation of community concerts, the whole proceeds of which are devoted to the relief of unemployment. Several thousand pounds have already been collected through these means for the unemployed in various districts of the Metropolitan area.

The new 2KY transmitting Station erected at French’s Forest, when fully tuned up, will be one of the most powerful broadcasting Stations in the Commonwealth and will constitute the greatest medium for carrying Labor’s message to the people of the Commonwealth.

**Finance**

We have had a number of motions forwarded by various Branches for inclusion on the Conference Agenda for a copy of a financial statement and balance sheet to be forwarded to all affiliated organisations. These matters were not placed on the Agenda because this is already provided for in the Rules, and copies of the Balance Sheet and Statement are forwarded as demanded by the Rules.

The financial statement and balance sheet as published in this report is for the 12 months ended 31st December last, and it is self explanatory.
Any further enlightenment required will be given at the Annual General Conference.

It will be seen by this statement that our Movement has severely felt the financial stringency, due to the big falling off in the revenue from our Branches and Unions caused by unemployment, but we appreciate the wonderful response that an appeal to the organisations always receives in our election campaigns. Without this financial backing Labor would never hope to govern in the Federal or State Parliaments.

A debt of gratitude is owing to the girls employed at Head Office for the very willing and efficient manner in which they have at all times assisted your officials, and for their patient courtesy in replying to the immense number of inquiries made to Head Office throughout the year.

Their duties are of an arduous and exacting nature, being of a most confidential character requiring the exercise of more than ordinary discretion and discernment.

For the very capable and cheerful way in which they have performed their duties the Movement congratulates them and proffers its grateful appreciation.

PJ Keller, President.
Jas. J Graves, Gen. Secretary.

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**Annual Conference of NSW ALP, 1933**

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, 15, 17 April 1933)*

*Day 1, Friday, 14 April 1933*

**Socialisation of Credit. Policy for Federal Elections. “Modelled on Lenin’s Doctrines”. Easter Conference Decisions.**

The Easter conference of the State Labour party, which opened at the Trades Hall yesterday, decided that unification and the socialisation of credit should be the foremost plank of the Labour party’s platform at the next Federal elections.

The decisions were reached after Alderman JS Garden had explained that the policy was in strict accordance with the teachings of Lenin, whom he quoted at length.
He dramatically declared that Mr JT Lang, in his recent financial
declarations, had gone even further than what had been advocated by
Lenin.

The inner group was in complete control of the conference, and the
nominees of the socialisation section were decisively defeated.

During the afternoon session the business was suspended for several
minutes while a free fight took place at the rear of the hall.

The Conference

There was a full attendance of delegates when the annual general con-
ference of the State Labour party opened at the Trades Hall yesterday
morning. Mr PJ Keller, president, occupied the chair and several Labour
Parliamentarians had seats on the platform.

The president, in opening the conference, said that the delegates
would be asked to decide what measure of support they were prepared
to give to Mr Lang, and whether that support would be commensurate
with the support they had always claimed they would give “a man who
was prepared to go out and espouse the cause of the workers”.

“As I have said, your mission is an important one”, continued Mr
Keller, “and I feel sure you will approach your task in the spirit of true
Labour members. It has been said that pigmies may destroy, but it takes
giants to build. Let us emerge from the conference leaving behind us a
record worthy of the great old pioneers who brought the movement into
being.”

The chairman of the disputes committee reported that disputes had
occurred with regard to the election of delegates from Ashfield, Ships
Painters and Dockers, and Glebe. The disputes were referred to the
appeals committee for consideration.

The first vote taken for the election of tellers resulted in an over-
whelming majority for the nominees of the inner group as forecasted in
the Herald. Delegates from the socialisation section were in a hopeless
minority, one socialisation candidate being defeated by 73 to 19.

The election of an agenda committee resulted: Messrs JS Garden, J
Cahill, GE Callin, EJ Harrison, E Cummins.

The following members were appointed to the appeals committee:
Messrs A McNamara, MLC, G Byrne, F Kelly, J Stewart, and J Kilmartin.
All the successful candidates were members of the inner group.

Presidential Address

In delivering his presidential address Mr Keller said that since the last
conference the Labour party had lost control of the Treasury Benches.
The Lang Government had gone out of office with its colours flying. If it
was prepared to sacrifice the interests of the basic wage earners and the
women and children it could have been in office today. He was glad that
the Lang Government was not prepared to accept the dictates of vested
interests. (Applause) In the two by-elections since the last general elec-
tions the Labour party had increased its majorities and he believed that if
there were a general election at the present the party would be returned
to the Treasury Benches.

A voice: If we had scrutineers.

“Some of our erstwhile friends chide us for what they term hero
worship”, said Mr Keller referring to the activities of the executive
during the year. “They say we support Lang too much, and that this is a
rank-and-file movement. We must give Lang 100 per cent support or no
support at all. If there is a little domestic trouble in the Labour movement
I believe the conference will adjust it. If, however, we are to have a
division in our ranks, then I declare that I am whole-heartedly behind Mr
Lang. (Applause) As long as he continues as he is doing I will continue
to support him.” (Applause)

The Referendum

Referring to the referendum Mr Keller suggested that the conference
should recommend to Labour leagues and unions that they should sus-
pend their usual business and concentrate on the campaign The Minister
for Education (Mr Drummond) had declared that if the referendum was
carried Langism would be strangled.

“Langism is an obsession of our opponents”, Mr Keller continued. “I
consider that Langism is synonymous with statesmanship. I do not think
the measure will be carried although there is a possibility that disciples
of Hitler will hand us ballot papers at the poll. If the referendum is to be
defeated it must be done by an overwhelming majority. There is a
possibility that if the Reform Bill becomes law there will be no Legislative
Assembly in a few years”.

Question of Recall

“It will give the party an opportunity for getting rid of opportunists”,
said Mr Hennessy (South Coast), moving a motion that an Act should be
placed on the Statute Book constituting the right of recall. “The recall is
vital if we are to give expression to the wishes of the rank and file”, he
said. “It tends to clean government. At present Labour members can tell
us to go to the devil. They have a ridiculous security of office. We are
their bosses and when we give them work to do they should do it”.

“Who is going to recall the members?”, asked Mr TV Ryan (Dubbo),
opposing the motion. “When we work for a candidate we do not want
him recalled. The right place to defeat undesirable members is in the
selection ballot.”
In his reply Mr Hennessy amid laughter referred to the system prevailing in Germany. The motion was defeated.

**Country Questions**

Eight notices of motion from the country provincial conference dealing with land and agricultural questions were adopted without discussion. One motion was designed to empower the responsible Minister to override any decision of the local land board where the question of home maintenance area was involved. Another motion urged that legislation should be passed to provide for adequate maintenance of the occupant fanner and his family and that the first call on property should be devoted to the education and payment of not less than the declared living wage to such farmer and his family.

Another proposal was that all arrears in instalments, interest, and Crown debts of land settlers should be added to the unpaid value of the land and called a consolidated debt, and made payable over the same period of years as the remaining instalments. The conference decided that the periods allowed for payments for improvements on lands due to the Crown under section 216 of the Crown Lands Act should be extended and that simple land tenures should be introduced in place of existing complicated Crown land tenures.

Other decisions were that reserves when not necessary for travelling stock should be made available for settlement by small holders or unemployed; that the direct marketing of fruit should be introduced to eliminate unnecessary waste; assure a permanent supply of fruit to the people and a better return for the producer; that a department of veterinary science should be established; to control stock reserves and watering places; and the slaughtering of meat in the State.

A motion was also carried favouring the appointment of a board to control the marketing of wheat “to prevent the exploitation of farmers and their employees”.

**Inner Group Attacked**

When the conference assembled delegates received copies of the *Socialisation Call*, which is the official organ of the central socialisation committee. There were several attacks in the issue on leaders of the inner group. One extract was – “This *Call* goes to press amid the din of recent party disputes and rumours of portending attempts to undermine the party’s socialisation objective and to muzzle the party’s splendid socialisation workers. It is even said somewhat sinisterly that there may be no more *Socialisation Call*”.

“We deeply regret that the annual executive report should be issued by the secretary Mr JJ Graves, containing most bitter and unjust
insinuations against members of the party who have apparently been guilty of carrying out previous conference decisions by actively supporting socialisation. An inaccurate and grossly exaggerated emphasis has been placed on a few comparatively isolated incidents inseparable from any live Labour movement."

**Beer Boycott**

Mr G Bass (Newcastle) moved the suspension of standing orders to discuss the beer boycott in Newcastle, and the ban imposed on the Newcastle and Hunter River Company because of the employment of non-members of the Waterside Workers’ Federation and the Seamen’s Union. Mr Bass said that most of the beer consumed in Newcastle was carried by the company’s vessels.

The chairman ruled the matter out of order.

Is this conference competent to deal with industrial matters? asked Mr JE Pullen (Amalgamated Printers).

The Chairman: Yes. The motion proposed by Mr Bass was premature.

Mr J McNamara: (Fire Brigades) Have there been any applications for readmission to the party?

The Chairman: Yes. They have been referred to the appeals committee.

**Socialisation Discussed**

The conference then discussed the report of the general secretary (Mr JJ Graves, MLC) in which he referred to the activities of certain socialisation leaders and their alleged domination by Communist influences.

The adoption of the report was moved by Mr HC Matthews (vice president).

At this stage Alderman JS Garden (chairman of the agenda committee) suggested the appointment of a committee of seven to submit a report on socialisation for the guidance of the Labour movement. The socialisation issue should be cleared up, he said. We do not want a Donnybrook as dished by the capitalistic Press. We have had a spirit of dissension following the metropolitan conference. We must have unity.

Mr E Cummins (Gwydir), supporting Alderman Garden, said that there should be room for all classes of thought in the Labour movement which should be as wide as the oceans and as high as the canopy of the heavens.

The secretary of the central socialisation committee, Mr W McNamara, should be allowed to submit a report, said Mr EA Barker (ARU) opposing the proposal of Alderman Garden.

Amid cheers Mr Lynch (Saddlers) said that certain delegates were under a cloud regarding statements that had been made in reference to
Mr McNamara, and he should be given in all fairness an opportunity of addressing the conference.

The Chairman: It is a matter for the conference to decide.

Mr Lynch: Then I am reluctantly compelled to move an amendment giving Mr McNamara the right to address the conference.

Mr Lang then entered the hall and was given a round of applause.

There was uproar when a delegate referred to alleged disloyal propaganda sent out by Mr McNamara and Mr J Kilburn, MLC.

Mr Keller: If the public wish to remain in the hall they will have to be silent. Champions of free speech cannot come in and disrupt this conference.

Mr Jones (Corowa) produced a circular, which he said asserted that followers of Mr Lang were leading the Labour movement out of existence. When he quoted a circular from the Communist party Mr EA Barker objected but the chairman allowed Mr Jones to continue. “The circular sent me by the socialisation committee was identical with the circular sent by the Communist party”, said Mr Jones.

Voices: Rubbish.

Alderman Garden in reply said that matters had been introduced which had nothing to do with the subject.

Mr Barker: Hear, hear.

Alderman Garden: You were the first to do it. (Laughter)

“You must get away from personalities”, Alderman Garden continued.

Amendments allowing Mr McNamara to address the conference and referring the question of socialisation to the central socialisation committee were rejected and Alderman Garden’s proposal for the appointment of a committee to report on socialisation was carried.

**A Parrot Cry**

The following members were appointed to the committee to report on socialisation: Alderman JS Garden and Messrs S Gould, J Stewart, F Kelly, G Bass, EJ Harrison, and F Hickman.

One socialisation candidate withdrew before the ballot was taken and another received only eight votes.

The debate was then continued on the secretary’s report. Mr Barker submitted an amendment deleting from the report references to the disruptive activities of certain socialisation leaders and substituting instead a vote of congratulation to members who had loyally can led out the work of propagating socialisation.

“We do not want vituperation”, said Mr Barker. “If there have been mistakes then all members of the central committee must take their blame. The same remarks are contained in the secretary’s report as were published in the *Labour Daily* and caused all the trouble. References were unjustly made to cliques at the metropolitan conference. The secretary
has placed a stigma on all members of the committee. There can be only one way to remedy the troubles of the workers.

A voice: Revolution.

Mr Barker: By the achievement of our objective – socialisation. Is it fair that the secretary should refer to socialisation as a ‘parrot cry’?

A Free Fight

Business was suspended at this stage while doorkeeper Kelly attempted to remove a member of the public who had demanded a seat. Put him out, shouted the president.

“Who will put me out?” the member in the public gallery retorted.

A free fight then ensued. Delegates jumped to their feet. Some rushed to the assistance of the doorkeeper who was attacked by several in the rear of the hall. Others congested the doorways. Women scurried for safety to the platform. The bells clanged incessantly and the president appealed vainly for order. The interrupter was finally ejected and after some minutes of wild disorder the doors were closed and the conference proceeded. Several delegates received blows and bruises.

The chairman then warned the public present that police assistance would be sought if there was a recurrence of the incident.

Disrupters

Alderman Garden, amid uproar, referred to disrupters in the Labour movement. The executive would not be worth its salt, he declared, if it did not attack those disrupters. He alleged that the Nationalists had given disrupters within the ranks of the Labour party the free use of the Procult Hall in Glebe. The best of the movement were almost crucified at the metropolitan conference.

Mr S Gould (Glebe) alleged that the ‘disrupters’ at Glebe had been given the free use of a hall known as the Procult Hall, which was owned by Mrs Voltaire Molesworth, wife of Mr Voltaire Molesworth, publicity officer to the Premier (Mr Stevens). For the past twelve months the Communist party had been propagating its principles from ALP platforms.

Mr Maloney (Boot Trades) said that the report was a condemnation of the socialisation work. It was not justified. ‘Comrade Gould’ had once been a bitter critic of Mr Kilburn at socialisation meetings.

Mr Gould: It is a lie.

Mr Maloney: There is a possibility of a selection ballot. That is why Mr Gould has changed his views. (Uproar)

“The strength of the dispute at Glebe”, he continued, “is that we had Comrade Campbell, the revolutionary; Comrade Gould, a semi revolutionary attempting to catch votes both ways; and Comrade Carlton, a reactionary, all after Comrade Keegan’s seat. (Uproar)
**Secretary’s Report Adopted**

Mr J Graves, MLC, quoted a decision reached at a conference of socialisation units from Lakemba to Newtown, refusing to participate in the referendum campaign because “it was a reformist measure”.

Mr Lynch caused a stir by asking whether the section of the report dealing with socialisation had been written by a former publicity officer to the ALP.

“The secretary and myself wrote the report”, the chairman replied.

“I have never contested a selection ballot, and never will”, said Mr Gould, in reply to a delegate.

“Can you furnish us with the name of the official who supplied a verbatim copy of the secretary’s report to the capitalistic Press?” one delegate asked.

Mr Graves: All secretaries of leagues have received copies. We do not know who supplied the information.

Mr Matthews, who moved the motion for the adoption of the secretary’s report, said that prominent Communists had addressed meetings of the socialisation units. Socialisation leaders were at variance with regard to the policy of the party concerning the socialisation of industry.

By 81 votes to 18 the amendment was defeated, and the motion approving the secretary’s report carried.

Eleven motions from the country conference were then adopted, urging, among other things, that the Government Insurance Office should have exclusive rights to the business on all crops held under lien to the rural industries branch; that the principal on all mortgages, including the Crown, should be substantially reduced; that the embargo should be replaced on Fiji bananas, tobacco, and all products that could be sufficiently produced in Australia; that the constitution of the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission should be altered to provide for effective decentralised administration; that Pastures Protection Boards should be abolished; that interest rates should be reduced; that third party insurance risks applying to motor vehicles should be made compulsory; that a fixed price for the local consumption of wheat should be guaranteed, conditional upon the restoration of rural awards, and after taking into consideration the cost of production.

**“Come on Hitler”**

Socialisation was again revived at the evening session. Mr T Ryan (Dubbo) moved the suspension of standing orders to allow Mr W McNamara, secretary of the socialisation committee, to address the conference.

“Vile charges have been made against Mr McNamara”, said Mr E Cummins (Gwydir), seconding the motion. “Do not let it be said that we will not let him put his case”. 389
“I oppose the motion because of the spectacle we witnessed this afternoon”, said Mr E Boland (Metal Trades), amidst murmurs of dissent from the public gallery.

Mr Capper (Hurstville) complained that the conference had heard only one side of the question.

The motion for the suspension was again defeated by 62 to 27.

“Come on Hitler”, shouted a member of the audience when Alderman JS Garden submitted his report on socialisation.

Alderman Garden said that the committee had decided to recommend that Mr W McNamara should be allowed to submit his report.

There was a storm of protest from the rear of the hall when Alderman Garden said that the Communists did not want a unified Labour party. One delegate attempted to speak in opposition to Alderman Garden, but was howled down. Alderman Garden recommended that the conference should elect a committee of nine to act as a socialisation committee during the year. The recommendations of Alderman Garden were adopted.

Mr W McNamara, secretary of the socialisation committee, was given a thundering reception when he entered the hall to submit his report.

Mr McNamara said that there had been various references to secret funds and secret meetings. Unless there was good evidence to substantiate such inferences they should never be made. It was a fact that some socialisation speakers had indulged in criticism of the party and its leaders. The central committee had warned such speakers that they would have to discontinue, otherwise they would not be allowed to represent the committee. It was a gross exaggeration to say that the socialisation units were under the domination of the Communist party. The work of the committee had been eulogised by the country members. He would not attack other sections of the party which had lacked vital interest in the socialisation campaign.

Mr McNamara then gave a long outline of the work done by the socialisation committee and units during the year, which, he said, was a record of constructive achievement.

Next Federal Elections

“Are you in favour of a ‘no’ vote in the referendum, and are you solidly behind our leader, Mr Lang?” one lady delegate asked Mr McNamara.

Mr McNamara replied in the affirmative. “I am behind the leader of our party as long as he carries out the decisions of this party”, he added.

Mr McNamara stated that he had received 100 resolutions supporting his view that the Labor Daily had done a grievous wrong in the way it had represented the decisions of the metropolitan conference.

The report of the socialisation committee appointed by the conference urged that at the next Federal elections the Labour party must
declare as its main issues the immediate socialisation of credit, together
with the necessary steps to achieve unification in Australia. “There has
emerged”, the report added, “a clear and definite demand that the plat-
form should be reconstructed to provide practical measures for enabling
the Labour party, through the exercise of power in the one Parliament
and the control of the credit resources of industry, to proceed with the
extension of social ownership. For this purpose the transference of the
control of public credit from private ownership to the people themselves
must become the immediate step in the achievement of our objective.”

**Lenin Quoted**

Alderman Garden said that revolutions in the past, including the French
and Italian revolutions, had failed because workers had failed to realise
that finance was the nerve centre of the system. They must attack the
financial institutions to be successful. Nationalisation of banking presen-
ted no difficulties. “These are not my views, but the views of Lenin”, said
Alderman Garden amidst uproar.

A voice: He will haunt you tonight.

Alderman Garden: Lenin made these statements five months before
the Russian revolution. He then proceeded to show that the report of the
committee regarding the control of finance was in accordance with
Lenin’s policy.

In reply to a lady delegate, Alderman Garden read more quotations
from a book by Lenin, showing that it was impossible to nationalise
banking without first taking steps towards the creation of State
monopolies.

“That does not go as far as socialisation”, he added, “Our leader is
ahead of the god they bow the knee to. Our report goes further than the
policy advocated by Lenin. Mr Lang is the greatest leader the country has
ever produced.”

A voice: What about the 1/ in the £?

Mr Sweeney (University Labour Club) said that if Lenin had realised
what a leader Alderman Garden was he would never have allowed
Alderman Garden to leave Russia. (Laughter.) What did the socialisation
of credit mean? If it was a specious attempt to gull the less intelligent
sections of the community it should be rejected.

**Religious Freedom**

Mr E Cummins (Gwydir) said that Lenin had warned the workers that
they must not be wrecked on the sands on the right or the rocks on the
left. Many delegates were already up to their ankles in the sands on the
right. He moved an addendum to the socialisation objective securing to
the people of complete religious and cultural freedom in accordance with
the ideals of the Australian people. “I am a socialist, but I will be attending church tomorrow”, said Mr T Ryan (Dubbo).

The addendum urging religious and social freedom was rejected and the report of the committee favouring unification and socialisation of credit was adopted.

Delegates rejected a proposal earlier in the session giving full autonomy to local bodies to control selection ballots instead of allowing the executive to conduct the ballots.

At 10.30 pm the conference adjourned until 10 am today.

Day 2, Saturday, 15 April 1933


The Easter conference of the State Labour party yesterday decided to present a petition for signature to ‘No’ voters at the booths on the referendum polling day.

The object of the petition, it was stated, was to provide a check on the official count of the ‘No’ vote cast by the electors. Mr Lang, in an address to the conference, made another attack on the banks and the Courts.

He said that the Upper House, if reformed, would become a permanent barrier that would bar the way to any constitutional attempt to legislate for the people against private finance.

“Should it be successful more brazen steps will be taken in other States and in the Commonwealth”, he said.

The conference also carried a motion for State aid for denominational schools.

The Conference

Mr S Gould (Glebe) secured the suspension of standing orders to move that the ALP of New South Wales stands for complete political, religious, industrial, and cultural freedom for the Australian people.

An amendment was submitted by Mr EA Barker (ARU) that the policy and tactics of the socialisation committee are not based on the doctrines of Lenin or any Communist party policy but on the peaceful and orderly realisation through Parliamentary procedure of social ownership and democratic control of production as already adopted by the party.

The chairman (Mr P Keller) ruled the amendment out of order because it had already been dealt with at the previous session. The ruling was dissented from but was upheld.
Mr Gould stated that Mr Barker was evidently concerned with what the Sydney Morning Herald was going to say. The conference should not be concerned at what the Herald said. The socialisation committee was fully alive to the question which definitely came under the heading of educational work. The motion was carried.

At this stage another fight occurred in the rear of the hall. “Keep your seats”, cried the chairman, as the combatants were pushed out of the door. There was a general exodus from the hall to the lane at the rear to witness the combat which lasted five minutes.

A heated debate took place on the application of a former organising secretary Mr AJ Macpherson for readmission to the party. The appeals committee recommended that the application should be rejected but several delegates urged that Mr Macpherson should be given a hearing.

“You are afraid”, shouted Mr Macpherson when Mr J Payne (Coogee) was speaking from the platform in opposition to the proposal that he should be given a hearing.

A stir was caused when Mr F Roels (Land Transport) alleged that one of the delegates was a former UAP candidate.

The conference refused to allow Mr Macpherson to address the delegates and his application for readmission was rejected.

“I know too much about your crook ballots”, said Mr Macpherson as he left the hall.

Because there were 150 dairy farmers and 300 poultry farmers in the district Mr W McCallion claimed that the Bankstown electorate should be regarded as a country electorate for purposes of representation at the country Labour conference. A motion excluding Bankstown from representation at the country conference was rejected.

Referendum Campaign

The suspension of standing orders was carried to discuss a motion instructing branches to suspend ordinary business and concentrate on the referendum campaign.

“The issue is unique”, said Mr J Payne (Coogee). “We are asked on May 13 to surrender voluntarily our rights for which our forefathers fought”.

Mr D Kilmarton said that there was no sinister or ulterior motive behind the motion. Whatever their differences regarding domestic affairs they should be united in the referendum campaign. They had the sorry spectacle of certain alleged members of the party refusing to participate in the campaign. Mr Barker (Public Service) said that any member of the party who refused to support the campaign was not a sincere Labour man.

“The resolution is based on hypocrisy and sham”, said Mr O’Keefe (Painters and Dockers). It is merely a limelighting motion.

The resolution was carried.
**Disruptive Tactics**

The conference decided that any member adjudged guilty of disruptive tactics towards the party might be suspended from office or membership, or expelled from the movement by the central executive or the branch.

Mr C Matthews (vice president) said that the object of the decision was to have less severe forms of punishment than expulsion. It had been found that in some cases the penalty of expulsion for failure to observe the discipline of the party was too drastic.

Mr M Conaghan (Clothing Trades) supporting the decision said that in the past members had had their heads chopped off because they did not see eye to eye with the executive.

“Who are the people who will decide the question of disruptive tactics?” asked one member.

“We do not go round the branches looking for disruption”, said Mr Matthews.

A long motion was submitted from the metropolitan conference urging the Government to foster rubber farming among other proposals by assisting farmers as private companies did in America by land grants sufficient to cultivate a living area, supplying plants for transplanting, loans for the first five years, erection of factories, and the establishment of experimental rubber tree farms on the coastal areas.

At the instance of miners’ delegates an addendum was accepted to the motion providing for Government support for establishing plant for the extraction of oil from shale and coal.

Mr Todd (Miners) said that something must be done to relieve the pitiful plight of the miners on the northern field. At present of 28,000 miners only 11,000 were working. Another delegate said that only a third of the miners on the South Coast were working and they were endeavouring to assist the two-thirds who were out of work.

The motion to foster rubber farming was carried.

That all citizens be eligible for the jury and that special jurors lists be abolished, was moved by Mr T Ryan (Dubbo). The motion was carried.

A motion lapsed that members of the ALP should refrain from allowing their children to join any Imperialistic junior organisation such as boy scouts, wolf cubs, girl guides, and Red Cross.

“You are providing opportunities for back-door methods”, said Mr O’Keefe (Painters and Dockers) opposing a motion to allow members to renew their membership tickets at special meetings. “We had the sorry spectacle in Balmain some years ago”, he added, “of tennis and cricket club members marching in mass formation to join the Labour league which had held a special meeting to meet the convenience of the new members”. The motion was carried.
**Marxian Economics**

By a large majority the conference carried a motion advocating the teaching of Marxian economics in the schools. Amidst roars of disapproval Mr Barker (ARU) declared that Alderman Garden the previous night had produced a book by Lenin for the guidance of the Labour movement. “I say it is quite true”, said Mr Barker. Alderman Garden quoted very extensively from Lenin on the nationalisation of banking. He went even further and said that the work that would be performed by the ALP would be even better than that done by Lenin.

Voices: No.

Mr Barker: Delegates have watered down our objective which has been in the rule book for years for something they know nothing about. There has been no speaker who could intelligently discuss the socialisation of credit. It is petty and narrow for certain delegates to suggest that they cannot learn anything from Marx.

A voice: Or Mr Stevens.

Mr Barker: Yes. If Mr Stevens was enunciating working-class principles I would support him.

An interjector: You are now.

Another delegate: A lot of the workers did.

Mr E Boland (Boilermakers) moved that Labour Governments should establish colleges for adult day students. The motion was carried. A deputation of seven was appointed to protest to the Government against the practice of subjecting widows to a medical examination. It was alleged that if the widows were found to be medically fit they were put on the dole.

Mr McGovern (ALP executive) opposed the proposal stating that they should put their trust in socialisation instead of going on their knees to Mr Stevens or any other capitalist. A resolution was carried that Labour Governments should subsidise denominational schools and institutions. Another decision was that all school children should receive instruction in first aid.

**Mr Lang’s Speech**

Mr Lang, who was given an enthusiastic reception, said that in the years to come members of the Labour movement and the people of Australia generally would regard this year as the most momentous in the history of the Labour party.

A voice: The same old story.

Mr Lang: “If anybody has come to this conference to interrupt I invite him to do so now and at once. (Cheers ) ”

“We are commencing a new period in which we are going to achieve for the people many of those things which the founders of our movement
foresaw would be necessary and which could only be achieved by a political party such as ours”, Mr Lang continued. “Up to 1925 the Labour party in politics was tolerated and often patronised by vested interests. There were others who feared that the very use of the word socialism would prevent the Labour party from winning an election and so render it incapable of helping the people of Australia in this great crisis.”

A voice: Nobody suggested it.
Mr Lang: There is nothing to be ashamed of about it.
Another voice: What price Ebenezer?
Mr Lang: If he were handy there would be no price you (Laughter) [sic]

Continuing, Mr Lang said: “Occurrences in Australia from 1929 onwards demonstrated to the people in a manner that all could understand that constitutional Government was in fact a sham (applause), the real Government being vested in those who control the private financial system. The three years following 1929 found the Labour movement throughout Australia and particularly in our State searching for the most effective method by which Government could be taken from the financial institutions and restored to the people. There were those who wanted the immediate and complete demolition of the existing order of society and an overnight substitution of socialism. The policy of our Governments was devoted always towards minimising the effects resulting from the privileged position occupied by vested interests, without any serious attempt to attack the root cause. The inevitable result was that, whenever Labour Governments attacked vested interests with the power of Parliament their efforts were nullified by the power of private finance which neither Parliament nor the people control.

A Settled Policy

“The conference this year announces to the people that the Labour movement has arrived at a settled policy (Hear, hear). It announces its determination to ask the people at the next Federal election to elect a Labour Government which is pledged to concentrate upon the problem of taking the control of the financial system out of private hands and test it in the people themselves and to achieve, within the life of one Parliament, socialisation of the public credit of Australia. The effect of Labour’s determination to attack this vital problem is to cause the political parties of the vested interests to reverse their former policy towards the Parliamentary institutions. They no longer preach lip service to democracy; they no longer patronisingly refer to the sanctity of adult franchise. Their most recent discovery is that checks and curbs must be placed upon the people’s Parliament. Since there is a determination among the people to use the Parliaments to attack private finance everything will be done to make it difficult, if not impossible, for
Parliament to be used in such a way. There is no better instance of this than in the referendum upon the Constitution of the Upper House. The Nationalist party has stated the case for the referendum. The principal points which emerge from the argument set out in their speeches and the leaders of the Sydney Morning Herald are these: 1. That whenever the next election is held, whether it be two months or two years hence, the Labour party is certain to be returned as a Government of New South Wales. (Hear, hear) 2. That the present Upper House, which now has 22 more Nationalist members than it had 12 months ago, would pass Labour legislation which 12 months ago it rejected. 3. Because of this £70,000 must be wasted on an immediate referendum which if carried would set up an Upper House that would prevent a Labour Government carrying out the mandate it would receive at the general election. These people know that a Labour party’s policy would be a request for a mandate for debt adjustment, a wages adjustment, an unemployment programme, and an improvement in social services.

**American President Quoted**

“Labour’s policy of debt adjustment, when it was announced two years ago, aroused the hostility of the financial power throughout the whole world. Since then we have the newly elected President of the United States of America declaring that a writing-down of public indebtedness, particularly as applied to the farming community and a 30-hour working week for all industries, is essential for the reconstruction of his country. The money powers know quite well that one of the principal mandates that Labour will ask for at the next elections is the power to write down private indebtedness particularly as it applies to farm mortgages. The bankers’ party knows quite well that when Labour asks the people for such a mandate it will be given, and their scheme is to create an Upper House which will prevent that mandate ever being given effect to. This Upper House, if it were ever assented to by the people, would become a permanent barrier which would bar the way to any constitutional attempt to legislate for the people against private finance. Another trick which forms part of the general constitutional deceit which is practised by the Nationalist party is the habit of loosely drafting their constitutional laws so that in almost every case the final decision rests with the Court.

**Attack on Courts**

“It has often been our experience that the Nationalists have drafted a law leaving Parliament and the people with an impression that it has a certain meaning. When Labour attempts to employ these laws it finds that the people who drafted them take them to the Court where an entirely opposite interpretation is given to the legislation. The bill relating to the
proposed Upper House contains many of these indefinite expressions which would result in many appeals to the Court. A country should derive its Constitution from its people – not from its Judges. (Hear, hear.) In no other way can democracy be served. These laws are not the result of any carelessness on the part of our political opponents; it is all done by design. An immovable Upper House buttressed by frequent appeals to the Court is sufficient obstruction to prevent any elected democratic government from carrying out the mandates which it has received from the people. It is not only in Australia that these things are manifesting themselves. All over the world private finance is marshalling all its forces to make a last stand against the onslaught of the people. For many years Australia enjoyed the proud position of being the most democratically governed country in the world. In recent years, however, she has received much eulogy for being the first to submit completely to the dictation of the power of private finance. That period too is approaching its end. There is a new spirit among the people right throughout the Continent; there is a determination to throw off this servility and suffering which it entails.

“The people of Australia are going to fight; they will fight behind the banner you have raised for them – the destruction of the power of private finance by the socialisation of the public credit.” (Applause.)

A Nation-Wide Question

“It is true that this is a nation-wide question; and it is true that to achieve it the constitutional machinery must be free of any barriers that would obstruct the legislation incorporating the will of the people. For these reasons a ‘No’ vote at the referendum is of tremendous importance to the whole of the people of Australia. It is the first direct attempt at asking the people to vote deliberately for the placing permanently of shackles upon themselves and their Parliament. Should it be successful, more brazen steps will be taken in other States and in the Commonwealth. The financial power can no longer rely upon its ability to hoodwink the people. These wealthy interests realise that the people are determined to fight for their rights and liberty, and at the first opportunity will use the Parliamentary institutions for this purpose. That is why there is such urgent haste on the part of the Nationalist Government to have these constitutional shackles placed upon the people. This conference has done good work for the Labour movement and for Australia. There is no better way to increase that good than by securing an overwhelming ‘No’ vote at the referendum next month. Labour is again about to take the definite leadership of Australia, and at the next elections our country will resume its former position – that is, the most democratic country in the world. Let our first achievement in this new dawn that is breaking for us be the complete routing of the political enemies of the people on May 13. (Applause.)
**Talk of Revolution**

“It is my belief and I do not care whom it offends”, said Mr Lang in conclusion, “that those who live by the sword shall perish by the sword. What you can gain by revolution you can only maintain so long as you remain in that position. The only good you can achieve is by constitutional methods. What sort of mad people are they who would close the doorway that would secure for you redress by constitutional means?” (Applause.)

**Mr Beasley’s speech**

Mr Beasley, MP, leader of the Lang group in the Federal Parliament, said that the elections in South Australia had been fought on issues that had been decided in New South Wales two years ago. It indicated how backward the other States were. Mr Scullin, who was leader of the Opposition, still boasted about his allegiance to the Premiers’ plan. Having decided their policy, it was necessary for them to get busy with the propaganda work. There was an immense amount of work to be done. The Federal Government had decided to take still further the control of the Commonwealth Bank out of the hands of the people because they feared the return of a Labour Government. They had also decided to restrict exports. Now that the people in Western Australia had decided in favour of secession it would be interesting to see whether they would take their next logical step in withdrawing their revenue from the Commonwealth, and whether the Federal Government would apply the Enforcement Act in the same way as it had been applied in New South Wales. He could not prophesy an early Federal election, because the Country party had shirked the issue.

On the motion of the vice-president, Mr C Matthews, seconded by Alderman JS Garden, a vote of confidence in Mr Lang and Mr Beasley was carried.

**Industrial Commission**

A motion was submitted urging that the Industrial Commission and the Industrial Arbitration Courts should be abolished. One delegate referred to ‘an individual’ receiving £40 or £50 a week deciding whether a family could live on £3/5/ or £3/10/. Mr J Payne (Coogee) claimed that the present Government used the Industrial Commission as a shield to evade their responsibilities to the public for reductions in the basic wage. The onus for such reductions, he contended, should be placed on the politicians. Contending that the abolition of the courts would only leave the alternative of direct action, Mr Greenup (Newtown) moved an amendment that the Industrial Commission should be reconstituted on the basis
laid down by the Lang Government, that the basic wage should be fixed by Parliament, and that labour-saving devices should be taken into consideration with regard to the readjustment of hours of labour. After a heated discussion the motion and amendment were rejected.

**Political Morality**

Some amusement was occasioned when the following motion was submitted for discussion: “That no member be eligible for any position whose political, moral, and industrial character is not clean”.

“I would like to know whether the detective force will be engaged to sit in judgment on members”, said Mr M Connaghan (Clothing Trades).

Mr J Payne (Coogee): The motion has been misquoted. It should read “political morality”.

Mr Connaghan: I would like to know what political morality means?
Mr Payne: I was not responsible for the motion.

The motion was then dropped, but was further discussed at the concluding session. Mr J Payne (Coogee) moved the motion, with the deletion of the word ‘morality’. “It does not concern me what a man’s morals are”, Mr Payne continued. “There is another sphere in which a man’s morals can be dealt with”.

Mr Maloney: I will support the deletion of the word ‘morality’. “We do not want our movement disrupted”. (Laughter.) The motion was then carried, reading as follows: “No member to be eligible for any position whose political and industrial character is not clean”.

**Blind Workers**

At the instance of Mr C Newsome (Croydon) a series of motions were carried seeking an improvement in the conditions of the blind workers. Proposals on the subject which were adopted included the abolition of rationing, the appointment of representatives from Labour bodies on the board of management of the Sydney Industrial Institution, the payment of the basic wage to blind workers, and the right of access by blind workers to the Arbitration Court.

**Factories Act**

In moving a motion that the Factories Act should be amended to provide that the minimum wages to be paid should not be less than the basic wage or the award wage for the industry, Mr Lynch (Saddlers) alleged that, under section 65 of the Act, employers were not under any obligation to pay even the basic wage in industries not covered by awards. The motion was carried.
With the expressed intention of discouraging private enterprise from accepting any offers for the purchase of the trams, a long resolution was moved by tramway delegates that it should be an instruction to the next Labour Government to cancel any agreements entered into by the present Government and private interests for the disposal of the trams. “We further demand”, the resolution added, “that on the return of a Labour Government to the Treasury benches, both Federal and State, that the terms of sale or lease of any State enterprise be reviewed”. The resolution was carried.

A number of motions were then carried urging, among other things, that public servants with two or more years’ service should be appointed to the permanent staff, that there should be uniform conditions and privileges among all employees of the Transport Commissioners, that temporary Government employees should be given their holiday pay in advance, that public servants should be allowed to contest Parliamentary and municipal seats without jeopardising their positions, that the employees’ representatives on all boards, commissions, etc., should be the nominees of the union covering the industry with the greatest number of members, and that all lost privileges and conditions should be restored to tramway and railway unionists.

At this stage a section of the delegates mostly from the country heatedly protested against what they described as “the unholy haste” with which attempts were being made to conclude the conference.

Mr Hittman declared that the conference had developed into a farce. The president promptly ended the discussion by adjourning the conference until Sunday morning.

**Day 3, Sunday, 16 April 1933**

**Sunday Session**

Mr G Bass (Newcastle) moved the suspension of standing orders to discuss the arrest of Noel Lyons in connection with the Tighe’s Hill eviction case. Mr Bass said that although Lyons was formerly a member of the IWW he was now a member of the Labour party.

Mr Cummins (Gwydir) seconded the motion and said that by certain decisions of the conference the broad working-class outlook of the movement was being endangered. He hoped that they would be unanimous on the question. Some delegates had travelled 500 miles to discuss working class problems, and had only listened to talk about splits and faction fights. He wished to protest against the ‘disgusting’ manner in which attempts were made to rush business through the previous session. “The conference developed into a sausage machine for turning out motions”, Mr Cummins added.
Mr J Cahill (Engineers) admitted that the gag had been applied during the conference, but he considered that rural questions had been fully discussed. The suspension was granted, and Mr Bass moved that the appeal issued in support of Mr Lyons by the Labour Council should be given the utmost support by the conference and every member of the party.

The motion was carried.

Mr Kinsella (George’s River) attempted to discuss a request from the Arncliffe leagues that Mr CL Thompson should be asked to appear before the disputes committee to answer charges regarding his activities on election day. The conference refused to discuss the matter.

**The Unemployed**

Unemployment problems were discussed at both the Saturday and Sunday sessions. On Saturday a long discussion took place on a motion from the metropolitan conference that the unemployed should be organised within the ALP movement along the lines adopted at the recent unemployment conference.

Mr Quinton said that the ALP had disorganised the unemployed within its ranks.

“Passiveness and inactivity have got you into the mess you are in today”, said Mr Cummins (Gwydir). “A number of leagues and unions have fallen down on the job”.

Mr Crowther (South Coast) said that if the Labour movement was big enough for Mr Lang, it was big enough for the unemployed.

The motion was carried with an addendum that quarterly reports on the activities of the unemployed should be supplied to the ALP.

On Sunday, the unemployment question was recommitted to enable Mr Crowther (Illawarra) to move that legislation should be enacted so that the payments received for child endowment should not be taken into consideration when determining the amount of food relief for those unemployed. “Mere words are useless”, said Mr Crowther. “We lost seats in the last elections because the unemployed were not organised. The ALP relief committees on the South Coast have even assisted Nationalists and won their support. We have dealt with 141 evictions and we have not had one family put on to the street. The police have offered cells as shelter for children of the unemployed. There is enough building materials not being used by the Government to house the unemployed throughout the State. We have broken the Communist auxiliary bodies. The very men who had advocated the burning of the dole questionnaires on the South Coast when searched in the police station, had in their possession their own dole questionnaires duly signed. The boycott is the only weapon to force business people to assist us. The Nationalist Relief Council on the South Coast has done great work.
“Nothing pleases me more than to extract money from the enemy to assist the unemployed”, said Mrs Croft (Wollongong). Nurse Francis said that certain questions on the questionnaire were a disgrace, and would have to be removed by the next Labour Government. “Steal for your children, if you cannot get the food any other way”, said Nurse Francis.

Alderman JS Garden said that every case placed before the Australian Gas Company had been favourably considered. “They have not assisted one case, but hundreds of cases”, he said. “I must give credit where credit is due. No unemployed who seeks assistance from the ALP is unable to get free legal assistance. It is a standing disgrace that people who are not married should be compelled to say so in the dole questionnaire for the benefit of young departmental clerks.”

Mr Garden gave the names of firms assisting the unemployed, and suggested that the Government should be asked to increase the dole allowance or decrease the unemployment tax.

Mr F Roels (Land Transport), who said that he was unemployed, caused a stir by declaring that when he attempted to organise the unemployed he was accused of being an agent of Alderman Garden. “My efforts have been sabotaged because I was associated with Alderman Garden”, he continued. “Evidently Alderman Garden is not popular with the unemployed ALP. Officialdom has sabotaged us. They told us: ‘Leave it to Jack, let Lang do it’. If the ALP cannot do better than put the unemployed on a vegetable diet and send them to Happy Valley, they had better leave the work to the unemployed.”

Mr JB Martin, MLC, said that there was nothing more effective than the boycott. The unemployed in the country should find it easy to organise the small shopkeepers on to their side.

Mr Capper (Hurstville) said that the party was not adopting the right tactics concerning the unemployed.

Mr Maloney (Boot Trades) said that they should remember that unemployment could not be solved under the present system. When they reached the stage when the basic wage was paid to unemployed then there would be no unemployed.

After further debate the conference adopted: (1) Mr Crowther’s motion, that child endowment payments should be disregarded in connection with food relief allowance; and (2) the decisions of the ALP unemployment conference held on November 6, which provided for the organisation of the unemployed into a body known as the Unemployed Labour Workers, members of which would be required to support the objective, policy, and platform of the ALP. The policy of the Unemployed Labour Workers provided that full work or sustenance should be given to every unemployed, including single men and women; the sustenance rates should be increased until the basic wage was paid to the unemployed; that the unemployed should be given an adequate supply of new boots, medical, dental, and optical attention; free transportation of the
sick; and that there should be a complete moratorium protecting tenants, mortgagors, and home purchasers against evictions.

**Conference Reports**

Amidst much excitement, Mr Todd (Northern Miners) sought the suspension of standing orders to discuss the attitude of the directors of the *Labour Daily* in failing to reply to the delegates of the Metropolitan Conference concerning published reports of the conference. “The *Labour Daily* attacked the delegation at the metropolitan conference”, Mr Todd said. The motion for the suspension was defeated by 54 votes to 28.

The suspension was then granted to discuss the following motion: “That this conference realises that a world war is a possibility in the near future, and we pledge ourselves not to take part in any capitalistic bloodbath, and refuse to be used as tools for murdering our fellow workers overseas”. An addendum was accepted that the scope of the motion should be enlarged to include cooperation with the national anti-war committee. Mr McSweeney (Clerks), who suggested the addendum, said that Senator Rae and Mr Ward, MP, were members of the committee. The addendum was struck out, and the motion carried.

**Election of Officers**

The following officials were re-elected unopposed: President, Mr PJ Keller; vice presidents, Mr J Howell and Mr CH Matthews; organising secretary, Mr JB Martin, MLC.

Derisive laughter greeted a report by the returning officer, Mr H O’Regan, showing that opponents of the inner group had been defeated for every position on the new central socialisation committee. Every successful candidate was a nominee of the ruling faction. The result of the election was: JS Garden 87, S Gould 83, A McNamara, MLC, 83, J Payne 82, AE Lewry 82, J Stewart 80, J Connaghan 79, J Burnett 78, EM Boland 78. Alternate delegates: Messrs JE Pullen 24, W McNamara, J Kilburn, MLC, AW Thomson, 20; EA Barker, 19; T Sheehan, 18; Nurse Francis, 14; JH Sydney, 14; J Maloney, 12.

**A Rowdy Scene**

There was a rowdy scene in the public gallery when a motion was under discussion to congratulate Mr J Kilburn, president, Mr W McNamara, secretary, and the members of the retiring central socialisation committee for the work they had done.

Mr Maloney (Boot Trades), moving the motion, said that nobody could point the finger of scorn at Messrs Kilburn and McNamara. They had done their work well.
A voice: Too well.

Mr Maloney: “They did not receive the support they should have received. If we have had disrupters it has been through no fault of Messrs Kilburn and McNamara. I believe that their methods were right and that the truth will out.”

Mr E Boland (Boilermakers), in protesting against the special mention of names in the motion, said that no finger of scorn could be pointed at Alderman Garden. (Uproar.)

Mr Keller: “If that happens again I will clear the gallery”.

Check on Voters

Mr CH Matthews, vice-president, moved that a petition should be drafted with the object of organising Labour supporters. He pointed out that the UAP was making a thorough canvass of electors in connection with the referendum, and that the Labour party should do likewise. Alderman JS Garden submitted as an amendment that each branch should have a ballot box at each booth, so that a record could be kept of electors who voted ‘No’. “If the New Guard get up to their tricks we will know about it”, said Alderman Garden.

A lady delegate, opposing the proposals, pointed out that petitions were used extensively in the ‘Lang Is Right’ campaign, but they were not a true reflex of the opinions of the electors. “Are we to be put to the same expense again?” she added.

Nurse Francis supported the proposal for a petition, declaring that UAP organisers were already in the field, and that the ALP would have to do something.

Mr F Kelly asked Alderman Garden to include a petition as well as a ballot box at the polling booths. “We will then have a check on Mr Stevens”, he added. “Heaven help us if we have no check. In America, it has been suggested, political parties are more concerned about who counts the votes than who votes. The same may happen here. Let us have the ballot box and the petition both. We cannot be too careful.”

Alderman Garden agreed to the inclusion of a petition in the amendment.

“I hope the amendment will be defeated”, said Mr Matthews in reply. “I am not prepared to support Alderman Garden’s proposals until I am sure that they are legal. Such proposals may react on us and bring about defeat, when victory is in sight.”

Alderman Garden and Mr Kelly agreed to drop the proposal regarding the ballot boxes.

The amendment providing for a petition at the polling booths was carried by 48 votes to 27.
Miscellaneous Motions

Other motions carried were:

- That the collection of rolls and the system of voting in future elections be such as to prevent double voting.
- That for the purposes of all elections, Federal, State, and municipal, the one roll be used.
- That a clause be inserted in future policy speeches that a Labour Government will enact retrospective law imposing confiscatory penalties on employers attempting to influence the votes of employees and that such employees should be compensated by the employers.
- That Local Government elections and ballots in the ALP be conducted on the proportional system.
- That magistrates be appointed by the Government in the same way as judges.
- That the Government should compensate any accused person who proves his innocence.
- That legislation should be introduced to compel newspapers to give the right of reply to persons attacked in their columns.
- That in the sales of all goods and merchandise to the public of New South Wales the cost prices of all such goods should be marked in plain English.

Shortly before the conference concluded Mr Maloney (Boot Trades) demanded that the conference should consider the report of Mr W McNamara on socialisation.

The chairman ruled that the matter had already been dealt with. “I have seen moves at this conference and have said nothing”, stated Mr Maloney, in moving dissent from the ruling. “We have done things in the interests of unity, but there is a limit to everything. With the chairman’s ruling we have reached that limit. The attacks on Mr McNamara have been ruthless and unwarranted.” By 60 votes to 23 the motion of dissent was defeated, and at 5.30 pm the conference adjourned sine die – the shortest Easter conference within the memory of Labour officials.
CHAPTER 12  
Australian Labor Party,  
New South Wales Branch  
Annual Conference,  
30 - 31 March 1934

Report in The Sydney Morning Herald

This Conference had been preceded by an interstate conference between the Federal Executive and the representatives of the Lang party (from Victoria and South Australia as well as NSW). The objective was to restore unity between the Federal ALP and Lang’s State Labor. It was a complete failure, due to the lack of negotiating good will on both sides. Considering the bitterness still permeating both parties after the decision of the Lang party to destroy the Scullin Labor Government, that was not surprising. Lang was still convinced that he could supplant the Federal ALP by creating a federation of State branches loyal to the principles of Langism.

At this Conference recriminations for the failure of negotiations were a major feature. The official line was explained by Lang himself: “After a number of preliminaries, this conference informed the Labour movement of New South Wales it had resolved, by a majority decision, that, if the New South Wales Labour movement would guarantee to restore certain jobs to personal friends of members of the conference composing the majority, it would allow the Labour movement of New South Wales to assume the title of Federal Labour party and so achieve unity”. For the Inner Group this was unacceptable, or so they claimed, because various members of the Federal Party (such as EG Theodore) had been expelled by the ‘rank and file’ of State Conference, and only State Conference could give such a guarantee. The spokesman for Federal Labor, Mr Coleman, pointed out that even if the Lang party had accepted this demand the Inner Group’s control over preselections would have rendered it meaningless, and that Jock Garden had led the NSW delegation with the purpose of dictating impossible terms to the Federal Party.

One of the local issues discussed by the Executive and Conference was the decision of Albert Willis, formerly Lang’s strongest ally, to contest a by-election for the seat of Bulli in June 1933. He was refused Labor
endorsement and stood against an official State Labor candidate. Willis was unsuccessful, but he received strong support from a number of members of the Socialisation Units who were expelled from the party along with Willis. In some ways this signalled the end of Lang, since it convinced many on the left of the party that there was little point in fighting the Inner Group within the party. Lang had already lost much of the party’s industrial right, especially the AWU, which was one of the pillars of the Federal Labor Party. Lang still had strong support in local safe Labor electorates, but that was never going to be sufficient to win an election.

Later in the year, in the Federal elections of September, Jock Garden won a seat as a Lang Labor candidate for the seat of Cook. This was effectively the end of his involvement with the Inner Group; the view from Canberra was very different to that from Macquarie Street. So, in 1934 Lang lost the support of both Willis and Garden, who had been his principal political enforcers up till then.

Executive Report of NSW ALP for 1933-34

[As in 1932 the conference was preceded by drawn-out meetings with the Federal ALP to achieve some unity with the Lang party, and a printed copy of the Executive Report does not seem to have survived. Most likely the Report was presented to the conference either in roneoed form or simply as a verbal report from the Secretary. There is a brief mention of some content in the Herald report of Conference discussion on the first morning. (See below) The Canberra Times has a similar brief mention of the Executive Report.]

Report in Canberra Times, 31 March 1934, p. 11.

Annual Report

A long and somewhat heated argument took place on the proposed adoption of the annual report and balance-sheet submitted by the secretary, Mr JJ Graves, MLC.

The report referred to “the campaign of disruption” last year. It pointed out that the campaign culminated in a serious division of opinion, resulting in members being divided on the question of selecting a candidate to contest the Bulli seat. “Our organisation”, the report continued, “on this occasion successfully withstood one of the greatest attacks made upon its solidarity since the conscription issue of 1916-17, and
resulted in the vindication of the attitude adopted by your leader and executive officers in their determination to give effect to the rules of the party in connection with the selection of a candidate for this electorate.”

Mr CH Matthews (vice-president) foreshadowed a motion to lift immediately the expulsions imposed on certain supporters of Mr AC Willis in the Bulli by-election. He said he did not believe in a heresy hunt.

A delegate: “You are beginning to see the light”.

The report was adopted.

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Annual Conference of NSW ALP, 1934

(The Sydney Morning Herald, 31 March, 2 April 1934)

Day 1, Friday, 30 March


About 130 delegates attended the annual Easter conference of the Lang Labour party, which opened at the Trades Hall yesterday morning. For the first time since the Garden-Graves group assumed control of the Labour movement in 1927 the public was excluded from the conference.

The president (Mr PJ Keller) predicted that, as Mr Lyons had announced that there would be no wheat bounty, the Country party would attempt to force a Federal election on the eve of the harvest in September.

Mr Lang, addressing the conference, said that the Labour party's plan of national reconstruction was the only hope of the youth of Australia. The plan provided for the social control of credit facilities, the regulation of the banking system, stabilisation of markets, reduction of interest, nationalisation of capital indebtedness, reduced hours and increased wages.

The conference rejected the proposals of the Federal Labour party for the restoration of unity in the Labour movement, and decided that the terms suggested by the Victorian Labour conference should be the only basis for unity.

It was also decided to lift expulsions imposed in connection with the Bulli by-election, providing the ex-members had not joined any other political party in the meantime. This decision excludes Mr AC Willis from membership in the Lang party.
The Conference

After committees had been elected, the president addressed the delegates. He said that this was the last occasion probably on which the delegates would meet in conference before a Federal election. Every delegate who had been watching the political situation knew that the Country party dared not postpone the elections until after the next harvest. The Prime Minister, at the Show banquet the other day, definitely told the wheat farmers that there would be no wheat bounty next year, so for this reason alone it was obvious that the Country party, which virtually held the balance of power, would cause an election on the eve of the harvest in September. If the Labour party lost the next Federal elections the chances were that it would never get another opportunity to elect a representative Government. They had seen what had happened in other parts of the world, and none of them wanted to see in Australia “the crucifixion of democracy” that had been witnessed in Germany, Austria and other countries.

The principal question before the movement was the need for unity. The time was short, yet the work of consolidation was essential if the movement was to undertake the big job ahead of it.

Mr Keller concluding expressed the hope that the delegates would not allow the conference to develop into a ‘Donnybrook’, to enable the capitalist Press to discredit the gathering.

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A delegate. You are beginning to see the light.

The report was adopted.
Bulli Expulsions

Mr CH Matthews then moved the following motion – “That this conference, which endorses the action of the executive in disciplining ex-members of the party because of their activity at the Bulli by-election, is of opinion that those who were expelled but who have not joined any other political party, should be treated with clemency and that the executives be therefore directed to arrange for the immediate readmission with full continuity of those ex-members who are covered by the foregoing.”

Mr Byrne (Auburn): Who is this sugar coated pill designed to affect?

Mr Matthews continuing said that the expelled men had served their sentence and had learnt their lesson.

Mrs Crofts (South Coast) seconded the motion.

Mr Byrne (Auburn) opposed the motion. No names had been submitted for readmission, he said. The motion was designed to pull wool over their eyes. It was designed to allow certain men back who should have known better.

Mr Lawson (Tramways) moved an amendment that those members disciplined by the executive for supporting Mr Willis in Bulli should be asked to submit their names to the conference for readmission by noon the following day. There are some I would not readmit, said Mr Lawson. I am against some of them getting full continuity. We must discipline some of them.

There was an uproarious scene when Mr W McNamara (Neutral Bay) submitted a further amendment that the executive should be instructed to readmit those other members who had joined the Federal Labour party if their exclusion should prove a bar to the future unity negotiations.

A delegate: This is not a circus.

Mr McNamara said he did not wish to see unity negotiations wrecked because of the refusal of the conference to go further than the motion.

Mr Matthews speaking in reply said that the disputes committee would be prepared to recommend the readmission of such former members as Messrs W Maddocks (Annandale), WJ Murray, J Kilburn (Bricklayers), J Frame (Dulwich Hill), Thomas (Hurlstone Park), JB Sweeney (University Labour Club), and H Melrose (Barton).

Mr A Rutherford (Hospital Employees) said that the conference should provide reasonable access to men who had made mistakes in the past. Both amendments were defeated, and Mr Matthews’s motion was carried by an overwhelming majority.

Relief Workers

Mr F Kelly (Storemen and Packers) secured the suspension of the standing orders to move for the appointment of a committee of two
delegates from the conference, two from the Parliamentary Labour party, and two from the Labour Council to prepare a case to place before the public concerning the conditions under which dole workers live and work.

Mr Kelly said that in the Matraville district there were 1000 families on the starvation line.

Mr Dalton (Canterbury) said that dole workers had been thrown on to the industrial scrapheap. The unions had dumped them.

One delegate suggested that while the rank and file of the Labour movement were assisting the unemployed, Labour Parliamentarians had done nothing.

Mr J Stewart (Electrical trades) said that unions had provided £50,000 among the unemployed. It was not the duty of the unions but of the Government to assist the unemployed. The position of the dole workers was a disgrace to civilisation.

The resolution was carried unanimously. Messrs Kelly and Dalton were elected members of the committee to represent the ALP.

At this stage the leader of the Opposition (Mr Lang) entered the hall and was given a rousing reception.

**Resolutions**

Mr Packwood (Tramways) moved the first motion on the agenda paper which urged that the next Labour Government should take immediate steps to investigate conditions at the Sydney Industrial Blind Institution as a preliminary to the complete nationalisation of the Institution and similar institutions.

The motion was carried.

The conference carried a motion that the Early Closing Act should be amended to make provision for the finishing and closing time from Mondays to Fridays (inclusive) to be 5:30 pm and 12 noon on Saturdays.

Mr Byrne (Auburn) alleged that one member of the printing industry had worked 50 hours overtime.

Mr Holden (Bathurst) moved that it should be an instruction to the next Labour Government to restore immediately the awards applicable to the rural industries with the basic wage as the minimum rate to be paid. The motion was carried.

Mr Nicholson (Miners) moved that membership of unions should be compulsory and that all labour should be engaged through a union office.

Mr Holden (Bathurst) asserted that if this was done city unionists would secure preferential treatment over country unionists. He moved as an amendment that labour should be engaged through a labour bureau.
Alderman Garden said that all unions were opposed to the labour exchange, because it threatened their existence. He suggested that all labour should be engaged through the local union office.

“It would be impracticable to apply the motion in country districts”, said a delegate representing the theatrical employees.

The motion was carried.

Mr Hayes (Leichhardt) moved to increase the payments of old-age pensions to within 50 per cent of the Federal basic wage, or an adequate sustenance, and to make old-age pensions payable to both men and women at 60 years of age.

Nurse Francis moved as an amendment that women aged 55 years and men aged 60 years should be eligible for the old-age pension. The amendment was carried.

Mr Lang’s Address

Mr Keller, in introducing Mr Lang, said that the metropolitan Press would feature that Mr Lang dominated the conference. If they were fair, they would say that Mr Lang still retained the confidence of the Labour movement. Once the Press commenced to pay compliments to Labour leaders the delegates could believe that those leaders were slipping.

“When I was a boy aged five I was compelled to read the papers to my father, stricken on a sick bed”, said Mr Lang, “I had to read the leading articles in the Sydney Morning Herald. What the Herald said then is it is saying now. Because of that, old Labour leaders say, 'Read the Herald'. Whatever they say do the opposite. (Laughter.) It is because of their unfairness, their bitterness, and their injustice that Labour, right down the years, has made enormous sacrifices to obtain a vehicle for the expression of its views in a daily newspaper.

“It is probable that both a State and Federal election will be held before the next annual conference”, said Mr Lang, “Each of us fervently hopes that these elections will result in Labour Governments in both Federal and State Parliaments. Whether or not that hope is realised must depend largely upon the deliberations of this conference.

“Unity is a word that is being very much overworked by all political parties in the present situation. We will understand it better if we examine the existing political situation. Some weeks ago a conference of the Federal Labour party met in Sydney to discuss unity. There was much window-dressing and public posturing before this conference ultimately got down to the real issue.

“After a number of preliminaries, this conference informed the Labour movement of New South Wales it had resolved, by a majority decision, that, if the New South Wales Labour movement would guarantee to restore certain jobs to personal friends of members of the conference composing the majority, it would allow the Labour movement of
New South Wales to assume the title of Federal Labour party and so achieve unity. This done, the delegates who at great expense, had been brought from Western Australia, Tasmania, Queensland, South Australia, and Victoria, were allowed to return to their homes.

“Within the next month this Federal Conference proposes to again meet our delegates. We can go to that meeting determined to concede in the most generous terms, provided our democratic principles are not frittered away.

**Appeal to Youth**

“If, within a very short time, these people cannot see their way to make an agreement, then the Labour movement of this State must itself draft a platform and constitution under which hundreds and thousands of good Labour men and women in our sister States can combine their efforts in a nation-wide Labour movement”, Mr Lang said.

“This ever-widening generation of youth must be served. It is impatient of the old men sitting in control of the political parties – the old men manipulating the financial system. These old men, old in the sense that their ideas belong to a previous age more than that their years are many, are barring every door through which the youth of our country might hope to enter into full manhood. This new and neglected generation is the one which is forcing repeated and rapid changes in every country in the world.

“It will do the same in Australia if those who occupy positions of power and responsibility continue to ignore it. There was a time when the young people turned naturally to the Labour party as soon as they became of age. It was the party that, with courage and vigour, fought privilege and tradition and made the opportunity that enabled the rising generations to enter into their heritage. Unfortunately, there is a feeling abroad today that the Labour movement is no longer the instrument of progress and advancement that it was, because it, too, has got into the hands of the old men. In New South Wales alone has Labour retained its virility, its ideals and its courage. The movement in this State is the only movement capable of becoming that instrument of progress which can make the opportunities which this rising generation demand. The financial system, which is the most powerful factor in the economic system, must be taken out of the hands of the old men if the young man is to be allowed to live. An ordered system of planned economy would give youths a chance where the present system of industrial anarchy condemns them to starvation. The men who grow the food we eat and the material to make the clothes we wear are not earning enough to feed and clothe themselves. Mothers who were haunted with the fear of their boys drifting into the dead end of unskilled work are now terror-stricken
at the prospect of their sons and daughters finishing in a dead-end of idleness and starvation.

**Lang Party’s Programme**

“We believe that we can plan that national reconstruction which is the only hope the Australian youth has of enjoying the heritage of his manhood”, said Mr Lang. “But everywhere the load is barred by the dead hands of the old men in control. They cannot think in the future they can only live in the past – and my friends the past is dead.”

“We must look to new methods, new ideas, new economic truths built on the bitter experience of this depression. In the policy of our movement the people can find what they are seeking – in the system of social control of the credit facilities of the nation, in the regulation of the banking system to meet the necessities of consumption as effectively as the needs of production; in the stabilisation of markets for primary products; in the removal of excessive interest burdens and the nationalisation of capital; indebtedness in the expansion of commodity purchasing power to a reduced working week and increased wages; in short, in the planning for national economy to eliminate waste redundancy and private exploitation.

“These are the chief ingredients which when employed simultaneously will make for that national recovery that Australia so badly needs. Even now we should be out among the people explaining our proposals to them and when they are understood we will have such a following that no political party has had in Australia before. Instead of that we are marking time wasting valuable time waiting for the old men of the party to decide which allocation of lobs provider a formula for unity.

**“Mountain of debt”**

“Three years ago the Labour movement in New South Wales was the only one of all the political movements which recognised what it was that was causing all the trouble. In clear and unmistakable terms we pointed out that the mistakes of the old men and the weaknesses of a worn-out financial system had built up a mountain of debt which the generations of today could not carry, even if they wished to. We pointed out that there was not enough money in the world to pay the interest on this debt, let alone repay the principal. Then, we were a voice crying in the wilderness. We were not listened to; we were derided, abused, and scoffed at. But what a difference today.

“Week after week we read of clerics and Church dignitaries condemning the financial system and pleading for relief from indebtedness for their people. Nation after nation has admitted the truth of our attitude by refusing to meet their indebtedness on the ground of their inability to
pay. Farmers’ organisations, home-buyers’ organisations, and similar gatherings are demanding a writing-down of indebtedness. In every section of the community you will find an overwhelming endorsement of the analysis of the position which we made three years ago. This general recognition of the correctness of our attitude then will make the public more receptive of our message now.

“Our work no longer lies in the conference room, we must get out among the people. It is preferable that that work be done within the existing interstate organisation, but if the vested interests of the old men continue to obstruct the path of progress, then we must carry the torch to the people themselves. The Labour movement has not lost its virility, it has not lost its courage, nor has it lost its ability to pioneer the path of progress.

“Young Australia is calling for its opportunity to live, and the Labour movement of this State is determined to see that that opportunity is granted.

“This is your duty”, said Mr Lang, referring to his proposed nationwide Labour movement. “This is what you must do. Don’t humbug. Don’t dilly dally. Take the fight on.” (Cheers.)

“Your Poor Servant”

“What did the Labour movement in other States say about your poor servant?” asked Mr Lang, referring to his criticism of the financial system three years ago. “What did the newspapers say about me? They treated us as voices crying in the wilderness. They thought I would weaken if they emptied the bucket on me.” (Laughter.)

Mr Lang said that it was preferable to carry out their plans through the existing Federal organisation. If the Federal officials said ‘no’, they would do it in their own way.

Unity Debate

The president, amidst laughter, read a letter from the secretary of the Federal Labour party (Mr DL McNamara, MLC), setting out proposals for the restoration of unity in the Labour party. The proposals provided for the recognition of the Federal authority of the party, consideration of all expulsions, an equitable basis for merging the existing Federal ALP organisation with the State body, the conserving of the rights of all persons, and the appointment of a committee to draft proposals for another unity conference.

Mr A McNamara, MLC, moved the principal motion, embodying the Lang party’s proposals for unity. The resolution provided, among other things, for the establishment of a Federal secretariat, to replace the existing Federal ALP executive. After detailing the Lang party’s scheme, details of which have already been published, the resolution continued:
“Conference further declares its readiness to rejoin the Federal Labour party, and its willingness to grant full continuity of membership to all those persons automatically expelled for the part they took in the 1931 Federal elections, and in this event, conference declares that it is prepared to sanction the reopening of all ballots for Federal selection in New South Wales, to enable readmitted members to nominate for selection should they desire to do so.

“In the event that it is not possible within one month to secure a general agreement to unity on the basis already indicated, the central executive is instructed to convene an all-Australian conference, comprising all State organisations for the express purpose of determining a Federal constitution, organised upon the basis of the Victorian-New South Wales basis, on which a unified Federal party shall be established to give expression to the views and aspirations of the rank and file of the Labour movement in every State of the Commonwealth.”

Mr JB Martin, MLC, in a report on his recent visit to South Australia, and the negotiations between the Lang party and the Federal ALP officials, said that the Victorian Labour conference had endorsed the proposals contained in Mr A McNamara’s motion, notwithstanding the opposition of Mr Scullin. Mr Martin claimed that at the recent interstate conference Mr Scullin was responsible for the rejection of the Victorian Labour party’s proposals. Referring to his visit to South Australia, Mr Martin said he was astounded at the enthusiasm displayed. Union secretaries had decided that unless the Federal Labour party agreed to the Lang party’s proposals they would support the Lang party in South Australia. Victorian Labour members intended to call upon Mr Scullin to explain why he opposed the decisions of the Victorian Labour Conference.

Alderman JS Garden asserted that the wharf-labourers at Port Adelaide had unanimously endorsed the Lang party’s proposals. Amidst cheers, Alderman Garden said that the rank and file in South Australia were united behind “the greatest man Australia ever produced – JT Lang”.

There was considerable amusement when Mr Kilmartin (Randwick) said that “If there were 50 Ted Rileys, Jock Garden would still win Cook, even if I have to do all the voting myself”.

Mr A McNamara, replying to criticism of the motion, said that Mr J Coates, MLC, and Mr PE Coleman would not be readmitted in the event of unity being achieved.

The motion embodying the Lang party’s proposals for Labour unity was carried by an overwhelming majority.

Election of Officers

Mr P Keller was re-elected president unopposed for 12 months, and Mr JJ Graves, MLC, general secretary for three years. The following three
nominations were received for the positions of two vice-presidents: Messrs E Boland, T Sheehan, and T Lannan. A ballot will be held today.

Mr Beasley’s Speech

Mr Beasley, MP, said that some of Mr Scullin’s supporters were more Tory than the present Government. He said that an autocracy had been set up by the Federal ALP, and claimed that if he and his supporters were in a position some time ago to embark on the interstate campaign now in progress they would have beaten delegates to the recent Federal Conference to their knees. “From this day onward the fight is on in every other State”, said Mr Beasley amidst applause.

The conference carried a motion protesting against the alleged withdrawal of pensions to 29 widows at Broken Hill.

At 10.30 pm the conference adjourned until 10 am today.

Day 2, Saturday, 31 March 1934


Sweeping changes in the policy of the Lang Labour party were embodied in reports on tariffs and the basic wage adopted by the Easter conference of the party at the week-end.

The recommendations will form the basis of the policy of the Lang party at the next Federal elections.

The decisions of the conference with regard to the tariff include an elaborate scheme designed so to control industry that, in the event of the decisions being embodied in legislation, manufacturers would be compelled to submit to the constant supervision of the books and accounts by Government auditors, to a fixed quota of employees in proportion to turnover, and to regulate the amount of capital to be employed in every manufacturing concern.

The Conference

The tariff proposals provide for the compulsory signing of a Labour convention by concerns benefiting by the tariff, the convention to provide for:

1. A fixed quota of employees in proportion to gross turnover;
2. Automatic variation of the percentage of protection in proportion to the variation of the base rates of wages in the industry;
(3) heavy automatic cash forfeits for every conviction for any breach of legal labour obligations;
(4) automatic suspension of tariff protection during the currency of an illegal lock-out in the industry, whether general or local;
(5) the Federal registration of every manufacturing concern, and a review of the capitalisation of each and the economic employment of such capital;
(6) the compulsory liquidation of surplus and ‘watered’ capital where the dividend requirements of such are a factor in uneconomic production;
(7) the fixation of a statutory limit of reserves of such concerns, and the compulsory application of surplus reserves for the purpose of reducing production costs;
(8) regular inspection by Government auditors of all books and accounts, including wages sheets, all production costs, disbursements, and net profits, dividends, and reserves.

The report also recommended regional tariffs, protected shipping, an inheritance tax, reserve profits tax, and an anti-trust tax.

The report on the tariff was submitted by Mr GE Gibson, who said that it had been drafted by a special committee, and had already been adopted by the Lang party executive.

The Basic Wage

Alderman JS Garden submitted the report on the basic wage, which also contains many drastic proposals. These provide for a complete revision of the basic wage, a stabilised minimum wage, the regulation of prices, a planned national economy, an extension of social insurance to cover unemployment, health, accident, maternity, marriage, child endowment, old age, and death, and adequate representation for employees upon anybody dealing with wages, hours, and prices.

The report submitted by Alderman Garden was carried, and the conference also endorsed the principle of a 30-hour week.

Anti-War Declaration

Delegates approved what was described as “an anti-war declaration”. Mr W Burnett presented the declaration to the conference. It declared that the Labour party was opposed to “capitalist and Imperialist” wars, and suggested that leagues and unions should send a copy of the declaration to the Federal and State Parliaments.

“The executive supports the principle of armed resistance to foreign invasion”, the report read. “It is of the opinion that an efficient and well-equipped army is necessary for self-defence”.

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The declaration set out that a happy and contented people constituted a first necessity to an effective defence scheme, and consequently recommended the restoration of real wage levels and pension rates, the development, as a nationised industry, of the distillation of petrol and oil from shale and the hydrogenation of coal, manufacture of weapons of war to be carried out solely by the Government, the elimination of professional soldiers. It was urged that the defence force should be placed on an honorary basis.

Mr Spooner Criticised

When the conference was resumed at the Trades Hall on Saturday morning the suspension of standing orders was granted to discuss the action of the Minister for Local Government (Mr Spooner) in appointing an administrator to conduct the business of the Bankstown Municipal Council. Mr Spooner was criticised also for appointing a Mayor at Waverley and an engineer at Katoomba, and for having allegedly interfered with the affairs of the Manly Municipal Council.

Mr Amour (Bankstown), in moving the motion protesting against the action of Mr Spooner, described him as “the Fascist dictator of the State”.

Mr J Donovan seconded the motion, which was carried.

Mr A Balkin (Tramways) moved a motion that any non-member of the party opposing an endorsed Labour candidate should be ineligible to join any branch for four years. The motion was carried.

An amendment of the rules was proposed, to make it obligatory for municipal or Parliamentary candidates to be financial members of both an ALP branch and a bona fide trade union for three years before the date of nomination.

“If you carry the resolution you disfranchise half the members of the ALP”, said Mr Lawson (Tramways). “The proposal is an unjust one”.

The motion was rejected on the voices.

The conference approved a number of alterations to the rules recommended by the Lang executive. Mr CH Matthews (vice-president) said that the alterations were designed to facilitate the application of the rules. They would not interfere with the rights of the rank and file.

The conference decided to insist on the observance of the local government rules, making it obligatory on Labour aldermen to satisfy the responsible ALP official that they had supported the Labour candidate for any vacancy on the Water Board, Fire Board, or any other office.

Day Labour Principle

A long discussion took place on a motion from the metropolitan conference concerning Rule 9 of the Local Government rules which enforces day labour, with preference to unionists, in all municipal work. The rule
compels Labour municipal councils to adhere to the day labour principle, unless exemption is granted by the Lang executive in regard to contracts. The motion sought to delete the clause in the rule giving the executive the right to grant exemptions.

“This contract system lends itself to graft”, said Alderman Whelan (Paddington), supporting the motion, which was rejected.

New Officials

Mr EM Boland was elected vice-president of the Lang Labour party. Mr Boland is a native of West Melbourne, and was educated at the Coburg High School. He is a pledged follower of Mr Lang, and a prominent member of the Lang executive. He is also president of the ALP younger set. Mr Boland is 32 years of age. Mr T Lennan (Forbes) was also elected a vice-president.

Surry Hills League

Mr A McNamara, MLC, on behalf of the appeals committee, reported on the faction fight in the Surry Hill branch. He said that charges of disruption had been made by the chairman of the league (Mr L Logue), against a prominent member of the league, Mr WL Webster. Mr McNamara said that the committee had sustained the charges, and recommended that the executive should proceed with the annual election of officers of the league for 1934, under the supervision of the general returning officer. Other recommendations were that Mrs Shiels and Messrs Webster, E Atkins, and J Albany should be censured for disruptive tactics, and that Messrs Logue and Webster should be debarred from holding any office in the organisation for 12 months.

In moving for the deletion of the section of the report debarring Messrs Webster and Logue from holding office in any league, Mr CH Matthews said that the Surry Hills branch had been ‘cleaned up’, and the members were now capable of dealing with the two members concerned. He agreed with the committee’s report, that Mr Webster had been responsible for disruption. “Why, our general secretary, Mr Graves, was unanimously re-elected general secretary yesterday by the rank and file, yet we find Mr Webster referring to him as “Jimmie Goo Gan”, and imputing suggestions concerning unemployment funds”, said Mr Matthews. “We all know Mr Graves had nothing to do with unemployment funds”.

Mr McNamara, in reply, heatedly attacked Alderman Garden, who had supported Mr Matthews's amendment. “Alderman Garden has attempted to place evidence before this conference in support of Mr Webster”, he said. “Such evidence should have been placed before the appeals committee. This is no place for it.”
The amendment deleting the recommendation that Messrs Webster and Logue should be debarred from holding office for twelve months was carried by a narrow majority.

**Country Matters**

The conference discussed 11 notices of motion from the country provincial conference dealing with a number of subjects relating to rural subjects.

Mr K Hoad moved the first motion urging the creation of a Federal wheat pool, with one handling, marketing, and chartering authority. The motion was adopted.

Other recommendations of the country conference that were adopted, were:

- “That the next Labour Government review the question of soil erosion, to adopt a more practical method of application.
- “That the maximum interest chargeable against all primary producers, business men, traders, and home builders be 3 per cent.
- “That travelling stock reserves and camping reserves adjacent to State highways be made available for settlement, and that suitable land be resumed on secondary roads for reserves before the cancellation of the present reserves.
- “That the Pastures Protection Boards be abolished within six months of the formation, of the next Labour Government, with an exemption from the stock tax in respect to all holdings up to a living area in extent.
- “That banking be nationalised and credits socialised, and that a land and agricultural development committee be set up to have the power to acquire compulsorily, on just terms, land holdings for subdivision.
- “The consolidation of all Crown debts into one account to induce land improvements, funded arrears, etc., investigation of all State forests with a view to having those most suitable for land settlement made available, and an extension of the Minister’s powers enabling him to carry out the party’s policy in this regard.
- “That the Crown Lands Act be amended to provide that, in cases of forfeiture where the value of the improvements exceeds the amount owing to the Crown, the balance be credited to the settler.
- “That the next Labour Government commence immediately the extraction of oil, benzine, etc., from coal.”

**Unemployment**

Notices of motion were submitted to the conference relating to the unemployed. They urged that the socialisation of credit should be accomplished and that the next Federal Labour Government should institute a national unemployment insurance scheme.
The president (Mr Keller) ruled that the motions were already part of the policy of the party.

The conference approved the decisions of the unemployed labour workers’ conference providing for full work or sustenance for the unemployed, and instructed unions and leagues to give effect to the policy.

One woman delegate suggested that members should withhold one week’s rent to assist the unemployed.

Mr Holden (Bathurst) informed delegates that in his centre the unemployed were provided with bootmaking and hairdressing facilities and had a wireless set placed at their disposal.

**Tramway Employees**

It was alleged in a statement issued by tramway delegates that tramway employees were being politically persecuted because of the support they had given to Mr Lang.

A motion was moved demanding among other things the restoration of railway pass concessions and the recognition of the principle that service in the particular department broken or otherwise should be the only consideration in determining seniority.

The motion was carried.

**Poultry Industry**

The poultry farmer is in the worst position of all, said Mr A Finlay (Waterside Workers) when moving a motion for the creation of a Federal wheat and egg pool, the fixation of a standard of pollard and bran, and the control by some authority of poultry for human consumption. Mr Finlay alleged that the Sussex-street merchants were making tremendous profits. He said that there was no check on poultry sold for consumption and that diseased poultry had been sold for human consumption. The poultry farmers controlled 40,000 votes and the Labour party would need their support to win such seats as Auburn and Parramatta.

Alderman JS Garden said that the poultry farmer had always been behind the Labour party.

Mr Hoad: They could not have been at the last State election.

The motion was carried.

**A Lively Scene**

There was a lively scene during a discussion on a motion eventually rejected for the registration of chain store organisation. Mr Conway (Amalgamated Engineers) accused the chairman (Mr P Keller) of attempting to gag the debate.
Amidst the clanging of the conference bells, Mr Keller asked Mr Conway to resume his seat.

Mr Conway: I will not. You have ignored me.

Mr Keller: Resume your seat.

Mr Conway: I won’t. I will walk out.

Mr Keller: Well, walk out.

Mr Conway then left the room. Later in the session, however, he took his seat again.

**Miners’ Loan**

A heated discussion took place on a motion from the metropolitan conference that the matter of reimbursing the Miners’ Federation for money advanced in connection with the ballot box case should be referred to the executive who should be asked to refer it to the annual conference.

Mr Nicholson (Northern Miners) asked the secretary (Mr JJ Graves, MLC) whether steps had been taken to repay the debt which amounted to £3250.

Mr Graves said that most of the unions had contributed to the liquidation of the ballot box debt although some shirked their responsibility. Union secretaries gave two guineas, and union organisers 30/-.

The ALP was only partly responsible for the money. The miners’ contribution was by way of a loan, but the other unions made voluntary donations. He considered that the party was morally bound to pay the money but the present time was inopportune to do so. There was nothing in the ALP office with which to pay the debt. At the first available opportunity the debt would be repaid.

Alderman JS Garden said that the total amount collected from the unions was £2368. The expenses of the ALP in connection with the case amounted to £2000. The miners had received £750 in repayment of the debt. He was one of the seven union secretaries who had given a bond that the loan would be repaid. If the members desired to do so they could sue those secretaries. What they were morally bound to pay would be paid.

Mr Nicholson (Northern Miners) moved an amendment requesting the ALP to repay the debt at the rate of £100 a month. He said that for many years the Miners’ Federation had given much money to the Labour movement. It had sunk £40,000 in Mr Lang’s paper. If this money had not been so invested the paper probably would not have been in existence today.

Seconding the amendment Mr G Hindmarsh (Lithgow) said that if the money was repaid the Federation would be able to pay the strikers at Wonthaggi strike money each week. There were at present 15,000 unemployed members of the Federation.
An amendment was submitted by Mr Gard (Engineers) that a committee should be appointed, consisting of one representative each from the ALP and union guarantors to draw up a scheme.

Mr Anlezark (Miners) emphasised that the miners had not adopted a hostile attitude.

Mr Gard’s amendment was carried.

The conference carried a resolution urging the abolition of the Aborigines Protection Board, and demanding that full rights of citizenship should be granted to aborigines.

There was a lively interlude during consideration of a motion to give the Women’s Central Organising Committee the right to submit motions to the conference.

“We will do the same as the men do – go on strike”, said Nurse Francis. “We are not going to take a back seat any longer. We will run candidates against anyone who opposes us”.

Amidst protests from women delegates, the vote on the motion was declared to be in the negative. On a show of hands, the motion was later carried.

**Parliamentarians Attacked**

Mrs Crofts (South Coast) moved that the next Federal and State Labour Governments should compile a bill to compel Labour members of Parliament to resign if they changed their policy.

Mr Byrne (Auburn) seconded the motion.

Mr J Cahill opposed the motion “on the ground of common sense”. Amidst uproar, Mr Cahill declared that the 54 men had stood by Mr Lang because they were “not game to do otherwise”.

The motion was adopted.

**Disputes**

The conference adopted a report by the appeals committee that Labour aldermen should be required to observe the day labour clauses of the party’s platform, to obey decisions of the caucus, and to recognise the authority of municipal assemblies.

Mr F Roels (Bondi) was censured for bringing “unsustained charges” against Messrs Kay and March, of the Bondi branch.

**Religious Freedom**

“The position is being side-stepped by the ALP”, said Mr Ryan (Dubbo), supporting a motion that the following words should be added to the objective: ‘and to secure to the people complete political, religious, and cultural freedom in accordance with the ideals of the Australian people’.”
Mr Lawson (Tramways) said that the word religion should never be mentioned in the constitution; the party would be flogged by its political opponents.

“The introduction of religion into our objective will cause dissension in our ranks”, said Mr J Stewart (Electrical Trades).

Mr Cahill (Dubbo), who moved the motion, said that if it was not carried they would be accused of being opposed to religious freedom. Religious institutions were used by their political opponents to gull the people. The motion was carried.

**Other Decisions**

Other decisions of the conference included: That the executive should consult the unions and present a report to next conference concerning the inadequacy of the provisions of the Railway and Tramway Superannuation Act; that the action of the executive in establishing a fighting fund for the elections be endorsed; that members of affiliated unions within the railway and tramway departments who resigned to derive the benefits of the 44-hour week by becoming non-unionists, be excluded from the seniority lists; that the next Federal Labour Government abolish all fire brigade boards and set up a Commonwealth board to control the service.

It was also resolved: That all retired Public servants whose pensions amounted to more than the basic wage as laid down by the Labour party should forfeit their pensions if they accepted a paid position; that the next Labour Government should introduce legislation to prevent the sale or lease of any State or Federal owned concern until the proposed sale or lease was submitted to the people at a referendum; that old-age pensioners and unemployed persons should not be obliged to pay radio licence fees; that the next Labour Government should acquire and operate all bus services and provide for absolute preference of employment to members of bona fide land transport unions; that betting shops and totalisator agencies should be licensed in the principal centres of population situated more than 20 miles from Sydney.

At 10.15 pm the conference adjourned *sine die*.

**Unity Proposals. Federal ALP’s Attitude. Statement by Mr Coleman.**

Mr PE Coleman, president of the New South Wales branch of the Federal ALP, issued a statement last night concerning the decision of the Easter conference of the Lang Labour party to reject the proposals to bring about unity among the warring factions in the Labour movement.

Seeing how the unity proposals were misrepresented their rejection by the hand-picked Lang Easter Conference which is under the domination of
such former enemies of the Labour movement as Mr Garden is not surprising, said Mr Coleman. At the interstate conference Mr Garden as chief spokesman of the Lang delegation sought to dictate impossible terms like a conquering foe.

The interstate conference was in effect asked to sacrifice and repudiate those who had remained loyal to their party pledges and to the platform and rules of the Australian Labour Party and in conceding the whole of the Lang demands to forget the action of the Beasley group in voting out of office the Scullin Government and to overlook the manner in which Mr Garden had in the past played into the hands of Labour’s enemies.

In endorsing Mr Garden’s disruptive policy the Lang Easter Conference has rendered Labour unity impossible. It was stated that the interstate conference negotiation failed because immunity was sought for certain Federal Labour politicians. This is incorrect. The unity negotiations failed because Mr Garden and others wanted them to fail, because they are after the Federal Labour politicians’ jobs. It is they who put jobs before the unity of the Labour movement.

They very humorously offer to hold fresh selection ballots which they will control reserving the right to withhold endorsements from those who have incurred their displeasure. He would be a very foolish political fly who would walk into their parlour in view of the manner in which their ballots are conducted and the charges of corrupt and irregular practices which have been made and remain uninvestigated.

After all the Easter Conference decision is nothing more than that of a dominant clique which has a stranglehold on the Lang party that cannot be broken under the present rules. If the rank and file were allowed to hear both sides and pass judgment in a secret ballot there is little doubt that the interstate conference would be strongly supported. It is known that many union officials are opposed to the inner group control of the Lang party but are afraid to declare themselves publicly for fear of victimisation. The gesture to those who supported Mr Willis in the Bulli by election is only made because the Lang party are becoming alarmed at the growing disintegration of their party.

Mr Garden and his disciples, in spreading their gospel of discord in the other State branches of the ALP, showed a characteristically reckless disregard for political facts. They referred to the treachery of electors who at the Federal elections used their own discretion in extending their preferences and disregarded the voting instructions which at that election was to give the Lang candidates the second preferences although at the State elections the extension of preferences was left open.

Lurking in the background Mr Lang fired shots at the interstate conference through his debenture controlled newspaper instead of coming forward to frankly discuss the position with the Labour leaders from other States. No doubt Mr Lang’s usually elastic conscience would
not permit him to confer with the representatives of a united Labour movement which he had done his best to destroy.

It is amusing to hear 58-year old Mr Lang asking of the need for youth in politics when during his term in office he recalled to active public service more than one superannuated septuagenarian public servant whilst he sought to except Mr Piddington from the judicial retiring age of 70 years. In the past few months he was responsible for selection by the executive (without local selection ballots) of two retired miners’ union officials both in their seventies for the Bulli and Hamilton seats. Were Mr Lang in furtherance of his new youth movement to retire like Cincinnatus to his farm at Ebenezer his action would do more to unify the Labour movement and restore confidence in it than any capacious and obstructive unity formula devised by him in collaboration with his friend Mr Garden. If he could persuade Mr Garden to retire with him it would further strengthen the position.

The New South Wales Federal ALP looks to the interstate conference and the Federal Parliamentary Labour party to take up the gauntlet so contemptuously thrown in their faces. Once the workers are made conversant with the facts they will recognise that the Garden-Graves domination spells disaster for Labour. We propose to ask the interstate committee to collaborate with us in preparing a State-wide campaign in New South Wales. We appeal now to all Labourites to rally behind the unity proposals of the interstate conference and to join in the rebuilding of a Labour movement in New South Wales based on the old ideals of Labour and unpolluted by either Fascism or Communism.
CHAPTER 13
Australian Labor Party,
New South Wales Branch
Annual Conference, 19 April 1935

Report in The Sydney Morning Herald

With some pride, Lang and his assistants proclaimed this as the shortest Conference ever, lasting barely one day. The excuse was that many MPs were already involved in the campaign for the State election due on 11 May. However, given some of the stormy debates of previous Conferences, the main reason was to suppress any show of dissent that would be taken up eagerly by the press.

The Executive Report goes into considerable detail about the negotiations between the Federal Executive and three members of Lang’s State Executive, convened after the 1934 Federal election and anticipating the State election of May 1935. The terms of a settlement were agreed, except for one detail that was the sticking point – the acceptance back into the State party of EG Theodore. Otherwise the Lang party had made significant concessions. Sadly, negotiations were doomed as long as the two main combatants were Scullin and Lang. It would require the resignation of Scullin as leader in 1935, and the electoral failure of Lang in the coming NSW election, before a deal could be done to heal that split.
Executive Report of NSW ALP for 1934-35

(Mitchell Library Manuscripts, 329.3106/3)

Australian Labor Party, State Of New South Wales
Annual Report, 1934-1935

The Central Executive, in reviewing the work of the Movement during the period since the last Annual General Conference, wish to express their appreciation for the goodwill shown by all sections of the Movement.

The assistance and cooperation rendered towards the carrying out of the policy and platform have been encouraging and inspiring.

We have to particularly thank the Labor Daily for its continuity of effort in placing before the community Labor's policy, and the publication of the Movement views on current political events. By means of our newspaper all sections have been able to keep in direct contact with our Movement in general, and have thus prevented the misunderstanding that occasionally leads to sectional strife within our Movement.

Because of the almost entire absence of disputes within the Movement during the period under review, the Central Executive have been able to concentrate upon organisational and propaganda work, and because of this our Organisation has not only been strengthened, but it also allows of a state of preparedness to face any sudden election or the necessity for quick mass action.

Federal Campaign

During the term the Movement as a whole took part in a Federal election campaign, and in this State we achieved a fair measure of success; increasing our representation in the Commonwealth Parliament from five to nine members. Had the other States been equally successful, a Labor Government would now be in office in the Commonwealth Parliament.

Municipal Campaign

In the Municipal and Shire elections within the State we were able to wage a fairly extensive campaign, and, despite the property franchise, we were successful on this occasion in having elected a greater number of Municipal and Shire Councillors than in any other period in our existence. Appended to this report are the names of the Labor Aldermen throughout the State, in addition to the names of our representatives in the Federal and State Parliaments.

The Stevens Government, by its amendment to the City Corporation Act, in removing the lodger vote, aimed at preventing Labor having representatives on the City Council. Labor accepted the challenge and
concentrated upon winning two of the Wards in the City Council, and succeeded in returning eight endorsed Labor Aldermen in the new Council; and, with the assistance of our eight Labor Aldermen, the Stevens Government nominee for the Lord Mayorship was defeated, and Labor in the new City Council is a strong balancing power.

Unity
The Central Executive had been in almost continuous negotiations since the last Annual General Conference with the various sections of the Movement throughout the Commonwealth for the purpose of bringing about Unity within our ranks, and as a result of these negotiations four States demanded a Unity Conference being convened during the month of January, and if the Federal Executive had observed the Constitution of their Party the Unity Conference would have been held with full representation from each State, but the Federal Executive defied the constitutional demand of their constituent branches by neglecting to convene a Unity Conference, and have generally sabotaged the efforts of the Movement throughout the Commonwealth to consolidate Labor’s forces.

In place of convening a Special Conference, as demanded by their own organisation, the Federal Executive met in Sydney, and invited three representatives from our Party to discuss with them terms of unity. We accepted the invitation.

The General President (Mr PJ Keller), the General Secretary (Mr JJ Graves), and the Organising Secretary (Mr JB Martin) acted as your representatives before the Federal Executive. After discussing the matter for some days, the following terms were accepted by your representatives:

The New South Wales State Party Executive will agree to recommend to the next State Conference that the Conference:

1. (a) Unreservedly accepts the Federal Conference as the supreme authority on all matters relating to Federal policy, and the interpretation thereof as provided in the Constitution, Platform and Rules of the Federal Conference.
(b) Automatically admits as members, with full continuity of membership and without necessity of application, all persons who are members of the NSW Federal Branch of the ALP and who:
(i) Were not previously members of the State Labor Party;
(ii) Though previously members of the State Labor Party have not since January, 1931, been specifically expelled for association with other political organisations, or for corrupt practices or for disruptive tactics, not associated with the differences between Federal and State Labor Parties;
(iii) Were excluded or expelled since January, 1931 because of differences between the Federal and State Labor Parties;
(iv) Were excluded or expelled for joining the Federal Labor Branch or for opposing State Labor Party candidates at Federal, State, or Municipal Elections.

(Nothing in the foregoing shall be taken to annul or alter expulsions which took place prior to January, 1931.)

Each such member admitted shall, on production of the current year’s ticket of membership of the Federal ALP – subject to the right of renewal as set out in the rules of the respective parties – become a member of the proper local branch without the necessity of rejoining.

(c) It is hereby agreed that the following question be submitted to the Federal Executive of the ALP for final decision: “Whether, in the interests of Unity, those who ceased to be members of the State Labor Party as the result of their actions in the Bulli by-election should be re-admitted with full continuity of membership”.

2. 

(a) Upon these recommendations being agreed to by the Annual General Conference of the State Labor Party, the Federal Executive will convene an Interstate Conference at the earliest practicable moment, and will recommend to it that the State Party be readmitted as a Branch of the Party, and that contingently upon the acceptance of that recommendation the delegates selected as provided for in paragraph (b) of this Clause shall be accepted as delegates to the Interstate Conference instead of the delegates to Conference from the previous Federal ALP Branch of NSW.

(b) The basis of representation at the reconstituted Interstate Conference consequent upon the acceptance of this recommendation shall be two representatives elected by the NSW Federal Branch and four from the State Labor Party, provided that on all constitutional items on the agenda paper or on questions arising from such items the said representatives shall vote in such manner as may be determined by a majority vote of the six representatives of the State.

(c) The Federal Executive will place upon the agenda paper for this Conference any item submitted in accordance with Federal Conference Rule 3 or by the NSW State Labor Party. The date of the Federal Conference shall be fixed at a time which will permit of items on the agenda paper being considered by the State authorities.

3. The foregoing items shall be placed before the State Executive of the NSW Labor Party, and also the Metropolitan Conference, and, if endorsed, the State Executive of the NSW Labor Party undertakes to inform the Annual General Conference of the State Labor Party that, in the interests of Unity, the State Executive had pledged the NSW State Labor Party to the acceptance of these provisions.
In order to expedite finality, the State Executive of the NSW Labor Party also agrees to bring the Annual General Conference forward to March 23, 1935. As the Conference of the NSW Federal Labor Branch will take place on February 23, 1935, it is mutually agreed that if the foregoing is accepted by the parties concerned, the Federal Labor Party candidates will be withdrawn not later than February 25, 1935.

Unfortunately, at the very last moment, when all matters had been agreed upon and the terms were being reduced to writing for ratification, Messrs Kenneally and Chifley introduced and insisted upon the automatic readmission of Mr EG Theodore without permitting the Conference that expelled him having the right to consider the matter. The Federal President (Mr JJ Kenneally) said that no Unity would be complete that did not automatically include Mr EG Theodore. He stated that he would not inscribe his name to any document that did not allow of Mr Theodore being automatically readmitted to the Movement with full continuity.

As your representatives could not agree to ignoring the unanimous decisions of the Annual General Conference which expelled Mr Theodore we requested that this matter be referred to our Annual General Conference.

The Federal President (Mr Kenneally) stated that if we did not there and then agree to the automatic readmission of Mr Theodore, the Unity negotiations would be broken off immediately. Further, he stated that the whole of the terms as set out above must be agreed to by our Central Executive and the Metropolitan Provincial Conference without amendment or modification, otherwise there would be no Unity. As the parties would not come to an agreement with regard to the automatic readmission of Mr Theodore, Mr Kenneally declared the proceedings at an end. Your representatives retired, and submitted a full report to the Metropolitan Conference.

The terms as accepted by your representatives were agreed to by the Metropolitan Conference, with the exclusion of the automatic readmission of Mr Theodore.

The Metropolitan Conference, in adopting the report of its representatives, carried the resolution as follows:

“Having heard the report of our representatives who attended the recent Unity negotiations, this Conference compliments their representatives on the forbearance, pertinacity and sincerity that they exercised throughout the discussions, and regrets that the extremely generous terms of settlement offered by them did not succeed in overcoming the prejudice against Unity on the part of certain interstate representatives which has for so long kept the Labor Organisations of the Commonwealth divided.
“Being convinced of the necessity of achieving unity throughout the Commonwealth at the present juncture, we make the following declaration:

“All former members of the ALP, State of NSW, who, because of the dispute which occurred between the Federal and State bodies in 1931, incurred automatic exclusion from the ALP, State of NSW, because of this action, and who have since joined the NSW Branch of the Federal ALP, are hereby invited to renew membership of the ALP, State of NSW, with continuity from the date they became members of the NSW Branch of the Federal ALP.

“Any person who has been expelled or excluded by a specific resolution of Conference is invited to apply to Conference for readmission.

“Members of the NSW Branch of the Federal ALP who were not formerly members of any political party will be granted continuity from the date they joined the Federal ALP.”

Since the Metropolitan Conference the Federal Secretary (Mr DL McNamara) visited our office in furtherance of the Unity proposals, and to particularly press the claims for the re-admission of Mr Theodore. The Federal Secretary (Mr DL McNamara), after reviewing the whole position, suggested that we consider the referring the matter of Mr Theodore to an Interstate Conference. We then pointed out to Mr McNamara that apparently the only point at issue at the moment was as to which Conference should consider the matter of the readmission of Mr Theodore, our Annual General Conference or an Interstate Conference, and we told him we were prepared to again confer with the parties on this matter if we had a reasonable guarantee from the Federal Party that arrangements would be made immediately for the withdrawal of their candidates in the coming State elections.

Mr McNamara left with these proposals, and we have not heard from, or seen, him since.

The matter of Unity is now having the consideration of the Emergency Committee of the ACTU.

Organisational Work
Considerable attention has been given by the Organising Secretary and the Organising Committee to organisational work. A good deal of the Organising Secretary’s time has had to be diverted from his ordinary work to permit of his services being utilised on other work of particular importance.

It was necessary for him to visit South Australia and Victoria, where he addressed many meetings throughout these States on matters affecting Unity in our endeavors to effect a reconciliation.

During the Federal Elections the greater part of his time was devoted to the mapping out of itineraries throughout the State, so as to assure a fair distribution of speakers in as many electorates as possible, in view of
our limited facilities, and his work in this direction had material result in the gain of four seats, nearly doubling our “small in number but powerful in judgment” representatives in the Commonwealth Parliament, and the almost complete annihilation of one of our opposing parties.

Following upon the Federal Elections, he was obliged to concentrate the whole of his services on the Leichhardt by-election, and again the Movement was successful in returning Labor’s candidate by an increased majority.

He participated in the formation of a number of Branches and many others that were resuscitated, the principal of which are: Kanwal, Cooma, Picton, Muswellbrook, Girraween, Brewarrina, Newbridge, Glenreagh, Orford, Tingha, Etalalong Beach, Dulwich Hill, Bendick Murrell, Mayfield, New Lambton, Kincumber, Wallsend, Wauchope, Rankin Springs, Glen Innes, Wyong, Richmond, West Wyalong, Barellan, Speers Point, Cambridge Park-Kingswood, Boggabri, Lugarno, Sidebottom, Etalalong, Springwood, Albert, Charlestown, Bellbird, Wallendbeen, Berry, Dunghog, Wentworth, Gwabegar, Minto, Boorowa, Lansdowne, Lindfield, Rydalmere, Casino.

During the latter part of last year a ‘Campaign Educational Class’ was formed for the purpose of instructing members of the Movement in all matters affecting the campaign work, but particularly instructions and explanations of the Electoral Act, and the powers and duties of scrutineers.

These classes have been very well attended by representatives from Councils and Branches, the information given by the Organising Secretary to these classes being both interesting and instructive, and the students attending have expressed their gratitude for the establishment of such a useful and much-needed method of training our people in all branches of campaigning work. It is anticipated that the work of the Organising Secretary in this direction will be the training of a number of competent tutors in campaign work that they may in turn set up classes in their own electorates.

The Organising Committee is now arranging for continuous visits by Executive members to the various Branches, and it is hoped by this means to further the efficiency of our organisations, and to allow our Branches to at all times be in direct contact with the work of the Central Executive.

The new Boundaries Committee, which is an adjunct of the Organising Committee, is now endeavoring to compile a record of all Branch Boundaries, and Branch Secretaries are requested to forward their defined boundaries to Head Office at the earliest possible moment.

Commonwealth Parliament
Because of the failure to finalise the Unity negotiations, our nine members in the Commonwealth Parliament are accepted as a separate party,
and have separate accommodation both at Parliament House and the Federal Members’ Rooms at the Commonwealth Bank Chambers. When the Parliament is not in session the whole of the nine members are in attendance at the Federal Members’ Rooms, Commonwealth Bank Chambers, Sydney, and are kept particularly busy attending to matters brought under their notice by their constituents. Complete satisfaction is expressed by the very large number of callers they have during the day for the prompt attention given to their requirements.

In Parliament they are respected for the capable and courageous manner in which they deal with all matters submitted by the Government.

They are to be commended for their successful attacks on the attempt made by the Lyons Government to repeal the Industrial Peace Act. Had it not been for their efforts in this direction the way would have been made clear for mine owners to attack the wages and conditions of the miners; because of the tactics of our representatives the Bill has been withdrawn, and has not since been reintroduced.

Every opportunity was taken by our representatives on the adjournment of the House to direct attention to many important matters, including the high rates of overseas conversions and introducing loans, the monopoly of transfer upon the Treasury Bill issue, export of stud sheep from Australia, etc., and they were particularly successful in their attacks upon the political bias of the Australian Broadcasting Commission in their attempt to give the High Commissioner (SM Bruce) and other anti-Labor speakers the sole right to lecture over the ‘A’ Class Stations on the UAP policy, their efforts in this direction resulting in Labor’s speakers being allowed the right to also lecture on ‘A’ Class Stations.

Our Party was also successful in influencing the amendment of the Navigation Act, which will undoubtedly result in the installation of wireless on all ships trading on the Australian coasts.

Their repeated efforts to have the Government equipment manufactured in this country, so as to increase employment, are now bearing fruit. They have been consistent in their efforts to have the industry for extracting oil from coal shale established in this country. They have been untiring in their endeavors in demanding justice for pensioners and the cessation of the harassing tactics employed by the Government against the occupiers of war service homes. It was because of their efforts in the interests of the citrus growers that the Mandarin Growers Relief Act was passed.

Our representatives have displayed a very wide and intimate knowledge upon matters concerning both primary and secondary industries, as well as international affairs, and have been singularly successful in compelling a Nationalist Government to adopt many amendments to their legislation that are consistent with Labor.
Women’s Central Organising Committee

The Women’s Organising Committee have been associated with the Labor Movement for the past twenty-eight years, and have displayed their usual activities during the period under review. The work rendered by the WCOC in their Federal and Municipal campaigns was of material assistance in the success achieved.

This Committee, in its quiet and unobtrusive manner, gave particular attention to the social welfare of the members of the Movement, and have taken part in many deputations to the Ministers, with considerable success, and in this way have been able to deal with very many matters referred to them in connection with the children that are wards of the State, and obtaining special relief concessions for the unemployed. They also have succeeded in raising funds to relieve acute distress caused by unemployment, and have aided the homeless women and girls by the establishment of their hostel. This hostel has sheltered 1960 unemployed women, and has provided for 6840 meals. The hostel is now situated in Sussex Street, having been removed from Elizabeth Street to permit of the street-widening operations.

Nurse Francis, the Secretary of the WCOC, is the honorary secretary of this hostel, and is assisted by a number of members of the committee in its management.

Similar work is being performed at the Men’s Hostel at Redfern by another member of the WCOC, Mrs Caffrey, and under her capable management a very large number of men have not only been provided with meals, but have also been provided with lodgings.

This hostel continually shelters eighty men, and has provisions for twenty casual visitors. It also provides approximately 300 meals per day, in addition to which they purchased boots and clothing for quite a large number of the men for whom relief has been afforded.

The Women’s Organising Committee are now proposing to centre their activities on the forthcoming State elections.

Younger Set Movement

The various competitions arranged in connection with the Sports Section of the Movement has again demonstrated the very high standard achieved by the members of the Movement, particularly in football, tennis and vigoro.

In the football competition there were two grades, ‘B’ and ‘C’. Ten teams were entered, six in the ‘B’ Grade and four in the ‘C’ Grade. The competition commenced in May, and was finalised in August, and resulted in St Peters being the winners of the ‘B’ Grade and Camdenville being the winning team in the ‘C’ Grade.
The Winter Vigoro Competition commenced on 25th March, and terminated on 15th July. Thirteen teams competed, five in 'A' Grade and eight in 'D' Grade.

The 'A' Grade teams were Alexandria, Camperdown, Beaconsfield, Phillip, and Darling Harbor. The 'B' Grade teams were Daceyville, Phillip, Paddington, Rozelle, Summer Hill, Surry Hills, and Waverley. Arrangements are now being made for the forthcoming Winter Competition.

An interchange of visits from teams in the country and metropolitan areas was arranged for during the term, the most important of which was the visit by the team from Kurri Kurri, who played two very interesting games at Moore Park.

The Tennis Association is handicapped by the fact that many of the clubs have players registered with the NSW Hardcourt Tennis Association, and if they were to take part in the ALP Competition they are liable to incur the penalty of disqualification for two years from the Hardcourt Association.

Application was made by the ALP Tennis Association for affiliation with the Hardcourt Association, but the application was dismissed. They are now seeking affiliation with the NSW Lawn Tennis Association, and if successful in this direction the progress of our Association will be very much improved.

During 1934 the Association conducted two competitions – Summer and Winter. The winners of the Winter Competitions were Ashbury, Alexandria, Marrickville, and Arncliffe’s Nos. 1 and 2 teams; and the winners of the Summer Competition were Marrickville, Clovelly, Ashbury, and Waverley.

During the year the Association held two very successful social functions, which took the form of presentation dances.

The Association is now arranging for its Winter Competition.

These sporting sections are part of the Younger Set Movement, which continues to meet with a fair measure of success.

The Younger Sets, with the assistance of all sporting sections, conducted very successfully Labor's Annual Ball in September. This ball was not only a social success, but, on the perusal of the balance-sheet, will show that the Younger Sets were able to materially assist the funds of the Party.

In addition, our Younger Set Movement conducted a 'Popular Lady' Competition, resulting in a substantial amount being raised for the Party funds. Younger Set Movements in conjunction with the sporting sections have inaugurated the ALP Sports Federation, which will supervise and direct the whole of the social and sporting activities of the Younger Set Movement.

The executive officers and members of the Executive extend the grateful appreciation of the Movement to the office staff for the very
efficient manner in which they carry out the multitudinous duties pertaining to their positions.

All members of the staff have been regular and punctual in their attendance. Their attentive interest in the Movement’s work has given complete satisfaction, and has materially assisted in all the successes achieved by the Movement during the term.

PJ Keller, President. Jas J Graves, Secretary

Federal Members

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<tr>
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<th>Constituency</th>
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<tr>
<td>A Beasley</td>
<td>West Sydney</td>
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<td>JJ Clark</td>
<td>Darling</td>
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<td>JH Gander</td>
<td>Reid</td>
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<td>JS Garden</td>
<td>Cook</td>
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<td>B James</td>
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<td>HP Lazzarini</td>
<td>Werriwa.</td>
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<td>D Mulcahy</td>
<td>Lang.</td>
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<td>JS Rosevear</td>
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<td>E Ward</td>
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Members of Legislative Assembly

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<tr>
<td>JM Baddeley</td>
<td>Cessnock.</td>
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<td>H Booth</td>
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<td>M Burke</td>
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<td>D Clyne</td>
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<td>P Connolly</td>
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<td>MA Davidson</td>
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<td>RD Gorman</td>
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<td>TM Keegan</td>
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<td>H Knight</td>
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<td>JT Lang</td>
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<td>CC Lazzarini</td>
<td>Marrickville.</td>
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<td>J McGrr</td>
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<td>WJ McKell</td>
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<td>CH Matthews</td>
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<td>JT Sweeney</td>
<td>Bulli.</td>
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Labor Aldermen

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<tr>
<td>ALEXANDRIA (Labor)</td>
<td>ERSKINVILLE (Labor Continued)</td>
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<td>S Chennall.</td>
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<td>F Green.</td>
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<td>AUBURN (Labor)</td>
<td>CITY (9 Labor).</td>
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<td>WH Lamb.</td>
<td>EC O’Dea.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C Wall.</td>
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<th>HA Ward.</th>
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<tr>
<td>W Ross.</td>
<td>C Emblem.</td>
<td>A McNeill</td>
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<td>C Stapleton.</td>
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Annual Conference of NSW ALP, 1935

(The Sydney Morning Herald, 20 April 1935)

Single Day, Friday, 19 April 1935

State ALP Conference. Shortest on Record. Caucus not to elect Leader. Mr Lang’s Dictatorship.

The annual Easter conference of the State Labour party, which was held at the Trades Hall yesterday, unanimously carried a resolution which abolishes the right of the Parliamentary Labour Caucus to elect its own leader and agreed that Mr Lang, alone, should select the members of his Ministry.

The agenda paper of the conference was rushed through with unprecedented rapidity yesterday, it being argued that the gathering should be terminated quickly in view of the approach of the State elections. The conference adjourned sine die at 9.30 o’clock last night.

Labour leaders stated last night that although the elections were given as an excuse for the speedy termination of the conference, party managers had been anxious to conclude the proceedings to ensure that no awkward or embarrassing statements were made. It was recalled that at a previous Easter conference, Mr Garden, MP, made his celebrated “Lang is greater that Lenin” utterance and it was considered imperative, in official Lang party circles, that no similar indiscreet declaration should be made on this occasion.

One of the chief decisions reached last night was that the next Labour Government should license starting-price bookmakers throughout the State.
Leader's Powers

It was pointed out last night that the right of the selection of a Parliamentary leader by the caucus was one of the oldest democratic rules of the ALP, and that the practice was still followed by the Labour parties in every other State.

The decisions of the conference went further than those of any previous gathering in conferring dictatorial powers on Mr Lang. It was stated at the Trades Hall that until the establishment of Inner Group domination, the right of the caucus to select its own leader had never been questioned.

The decisions of the conference caused a sensation in Labour circles, and the opinion was freely expressed that the move was made for the purpose of preventing the caucus from electing a new leader in the event of the party losing the next State elections. The position now is that the Parliamentary party cannot have a new leader unless an annual conference, which is under the control of Mr Lang, agrees to the proposal.

The motion dealing with the leadership occasioned practically no debate, and was carried unanimously. It was brought before the conference as a recommendation from the metropolitan conference, and was as follows: “That the annual general conference shall elect the leader of the State Parliamentary Labour party”.

The motion was moved by Mrs Richards (Newtown), and seconded by Mrs Houlahan (Newtown). The addendum which authorises Mr Lang to select his Ministry instead of allowing the caucus to do so was sponsored by Mr J Pullin (Amalgamated Printers). It was suggested during the brief discussion that, while members of Mr Lang’s last Ministry had been loyal to him, the conference should take steps to ensure that “future Ministers” would be faithful to him. Speakers asserted that Mr Lang was the greatest leader they had ever had, and his position should be consolidated. Members of the party should remember what had happened in 1927, when a section of the caucus had attempted to remove him, and to guard against the recurrence of such a move in the future.

The motion was carried amidst cheers.

The Proceedings

The conference opened at 10.30 am, and delegates were present from all parts of the State.

Mr Keller announced that he would not delay proceedings with his customary presidential address. “It is in our interests that the conference should be the shortest on record”, he said. “I will consequently ask the agenda committee to expedite the business”.

The election of the conference officials indicated that the gathering was completely under the control of the Inner Group. Their nominees
were returned to all positions without opposition. Mr J Payne was elected time-keeper, and Mr R Downing minute secretary. The Press was again excluded. Only non-controversial notices of motion were dealt with during the morning session.

Coastal Shipping Trade

Motions carried included the following:

That the next Federal Labour Government should place on the Statute Book an Act to provide that ships flying the Australian flag should not be allowed to trade on the Australian coast unless such ships had been built in Australia.

That the Labour Governments, Federal and State, should be requested to amend the Electoral Act to include on the ballot paper, beside the candidate’s name, the name of the party he represented in all Parliamentary and municipal elections, and that municipal candidates should be grouped.

That the next Labour Government should review the Superannuation Act, after consultation with the Public Service.

That the Arbitration Act should be amended to abolish all systems of overtime, bonus, and piecemeal, and task systems.

The conference also decided, by a large majority, to adopt a policy that, until such times as oil was produced commercially in Australia, existing protection should be withdrawn and no further tariff protection should be afforded to Australian manufacturers using foreign oil for power purposes. It was also agreed that a prohibitive duty should be imposed on all foreign coal brought into Australian waters.

Tramway Espionage

Delegates unanimously adopted a proposal that a competent committee should be appointed by the Government, with full representation from the Tramway Union, to investigate the system of espionage and other objectionable conditions said to prevail in the tramway service. It was also agreed that the department should be directed to produce all files and documents applicable to service conditions which were required by the committee for its information. The opinion was expressed that previously victimised men should be reinstated.

Another resolution carried was that in cases where a garnishee order was issued by the Court, it should operate only in those cases where the net weekly wage was above the ruling basic wage, and that such order in any circumstances could not take into consideration child endowment or any form of pension in the computation of the net weekly wage.
Delegates claimed that at present the families of the poor were often left destitute because of garnishee orders.

A motion from the country conference, which advocated that the planks of the State platform should provide for the extension of educational facilities in rural districts, and should include elementary agriculture and gardening in the primary courses, was carried.

Rural Policy

Many matters which will probably be included in the rural policy speech of Mr Lang were discussed by the conference. They emanated as recommendations from the recent country Labour conference, and were adopted.

One proposal was that power should be vested in the Minister for Lands to permit Crown tenants to pay interest only in lieu of instalments of purchase money for limited periods. Another suggestion was that in the case of forfeiture or abandonment of Crown settlers' lands, the Lands Department should make such holdings available for purchase or lease only to those holding less than a home maintenance area. The conference also agreed that the possibilities for the establishment of a producer controlled marketing scheme for the handling and disposal of citrus fruits should be investigated by an incoming Labour Government, and that where a practical scheme could be evolved, legislative effect should be given. Delegates also decided that the interest paid on mortgages under the Government Assistance to Homes Act should be reduced to the maximum paid on Crown settlers' holdings.

On the question of large estates, the conference decided that the next Labour Government should investigate restricted title holdings leased to large pastoralists with a view to having them made available to new settlers. Dealing with mortgage debts, delegates resolved that there should be a reduction of the debts on a basis that would achieve for private debtors a similar measure of concessions to those given to Crown tenants by reappraisal under the Crown Lands Amendment Act, 1931.

It was also decided that Crown settlers whose payments of instalments and interest were in arrear should not be called upon to pay more than one-third of their net income in any year to the Lands Department.

The last recommendation of the country conference adopted was that the Western Lands Act of 1934 should be repealed.

During the afternoon session the suspension of standing orders was granted to deal with a suggestion that the Labour party should press for amendments to the Lunacy Act to curtail the powers of the Master in Lunacy. Speakers alleged that at present it was possible for the authorities to take the furniture out of a poor man’s home, leaving his wife and children destitute. A motion was carried that on Parliamentary ballot
papers the name of the political party should be placed after the name of each candidate.

Mr Lang's Address

Mr Lang made a short address to the conference during the afternoon. Departing from his usual practice, he did not speak from notes, and described his address as a friendly chat. He suggested that the delegates should terminate the proceedings expeditiously, as much work had to be done in the electorates. The party was confronted with a difficult fight, and every effort should be made to ensure success.

Mr Lang said he was glad that the conference had been held, because the enemies of the Labour party would have attempted to make much capital out of any postponement or abandonment of the gathering. He had made extensive tours through the country, and was confident of success at the polls.

The leader of the Lang party in the Federal House (Mr Beasley) declared that it was the duty of every delegate to fight wholeheartedly for the return of the Lang Government.

The people in the country had demonstrated their dissatisfaction with the present Government, and would strongly support the Lang party. He was confident that Mr Lang would be returned.

Miners' Dispute

There was a spirited discussion on the long-standing dispute between the Miners' Federation and the Lang Labour party, regarding the repayment of the £3250 allegedly loaned by the Federation to the party to assist in defraying the expenses in connection with the sliding panel ballot box case.

Mr W Crooks (Miners) moved a long motion to the effect that the conference should instruct the State executive to formulate a definite proposal for the early repayment of the money.

Mr Graves, MLC, general secretary, declared that no official of the party had ever received the miners' money, which had never been paid direct to the party. The miners had already received £750 in repayment of the loan, which had been raised through levies and donations. The party had made every effort to repay the loan. It had to be remembered that about 50 per cent of the membership of the party were unemployed, and could pay no fees at all.

The chairman (Mr Keller) suggested that the question of repayment should be postponed until after the elections.

Mr W Crooks (Miners) read a letter allegedly written by Mr Graves to the secretary of the Miners' Federation (Mr D Davies) in which he enclosed a cheque for £500, and promised that £200 a week would be
forwarded until the money was repaid, and that the last repayment would be made on August 8, 1931.

In the course of a bitter attack on the miners, Mr Gould (Glebe) declared that the miners had contributed only a “dollar” to the fighting fund for the Federal elections.

A voice: That was a dollar too much. (Uproar.)

Dealing with the position of the miners generally, Mr Gould said that the miners would never get oil from coal.

A voice: They will get oil from coal before the miners get their £3250 from the party.

Mr S Bonar (Miners) said that it was the responsibility of the ALP to repay the money.

Mr G Hindmarsh (Western Miners) submitted an amendment that the agreement reached recently between the miners, the Lang party, and the Labour Council should be adopted. This agreement, it was asserted, provided that a levy should be struck for the repayment of the money and that membership fees should be doubled for the purpose.

Mr Crooks caused a stir by alleging that the miners had always been “a good milking cow” for Mr Lang’s paper.

Later in the debate Mr Keller gave an assurance that any undertaking given by the party would be honoured, and the amendment was then withdrawn and the motion carried.

**Unity Position**

The conference endorsed a long declaration of unity policy formulated at the last metropolitan conference with regard to negotiations with the Federal Labour party for the restoration of Labour unity. Regret was expressed in the declaration at the failure of the unity negotiations. The general secretary (Mr Graves) indicated that the All-Australian Council of Trade Unions was still endeavouring to bring about a settlement, and “that South Australia and Tasmania had already supported the Lang party”.

Mr W McNamara (North Sydney) attempted to speak on the subject of unity, but a motion that the question should be put was carried, and he had to resume his seat amidst uproar.

**Decisions Rushed Through**

When the afternoon session had concluded more than half the agenda paper had been disposed of.

Notices of motion were discussed and adopted or rejected with record speed. There was little or no discussion on the majority of them. When dissentient voices were raised the ‘gag’ was promptly applied.

Among the many decisions of the conference were the following:
That a committee of inquiry should be set up to investigate the speeding-up system by the transport authorities with regard to the running of trams and trains which, in the opinion of the conference, was dangerous to the public and the employees.

That the Industrial Arbitration Act should be amended to provide that increased powers of inspection should be given to union secretaries.

That the Federal Government should be requested to issue a proclamation under the Customs Act declaring that it was harmful for sheepskins to be exported unless they were first offered to fellmongers in Australia at current market rates based on world’s parity.

That moneys deducted under the Salaries Reduction Act from single and married men in the tramway service should be restored as from July 1, 1934.

That no member of Parliament shall be eligible to contest any selection ballot for municipal honours or for any other semi-governmental body.

**Control of Police**

The police force was subjected to some criticism when a motion was discussed from the country conference, dealing with the control of the police. The view was expressed in the motion, which was carried, that by taking the control of the police out of the hands of Parliament “a military dictatorship was being established by constitutional means in New South Wales”.

“As the franchise of the people has been nullified by the establishment of a permanent anti-Labour Legislative Council, the conference considers, as a matter of urgency, that ways and means should be devised of restoring the franchise and democratic Government to the people of New South Wales”, the resolution added.

Mr AW Thompson (Milk and Ice Carters) claimed that the measure was designed to give the police Fascist control.

**Starting-Price Betting**

After a short debate, the conference decided that the next Labour Government should license all starting-price bookmakers operating away from racecourses throughout the State.

Mr Ryan (Dubbo) submitted a notice of motion from the country conference which stated that the conference urged upon the next Labour Government to license starting-price bookmaking in the country centres.
Mrs Carver (Darlinghurst) moved an amendment to make the proposed legalisation apply to the whole of the State.

During the debate, delegates advocated that the legislation should be based on the regulations operating in South Australia.

One delegate declared that the present regulations in New South Wales had failed to prevent newspapers from publishing pre-post betting.

Another member said that the present system provided for the persecution of the small starting-price bookmakers by the police, while the men operating in exclusive clubs were given immunity.

The amendment was carried.

**Final Decisions**

Before the conference concluded, a resolution was carried protesting against “the monopolistic development of huge city stores”, which, it was asserted, was tending to make country towns a “string of sample rooms”.

“This party declares that this development is economically unfair and socially dangerous to those who must exist in the country districts”, the resolution read. “We further declare definitely in favour of zone freights to allow country districts an equal wage benefit with those nearest the cities”.

Another decision was that reproductive works should be started and the unemployed should be placed in constant work at award rates and conditions.

Other motions agreed to were:

That the State Labour members of Parliament should cooperate with Federal Labour members in a demand for an open inquiry regarding the enormous cost of explosives to the miners of Australia.

That the next Labour Government should be instructed to place on the Statute Book the Land Boiler and Machinery Inspection Bill.

That the age limit for old-age and invalid pensions should be reduced by five years so that women can receive the pension at 55 years and men at 60 years of age.

That the nationalisation of the Sydney Industrial Blind Institute be a plank of the Labour party’s platform.

That a law be placed on the Statute book compelling the Transport Commissioners to instal wind-screen wipers and tail lights on all tram cars.

That the Protection Act should be amended to provide that children should not be permitted to give evidence in divorce court proceedings.
That the Immigration Act should be amended to provide for the elimination of the dictation test.
That all employees working on outside Government works should be paid full time for wet weather providing they turn up for work.

The conference then adjourned.
CHAPTER 14
Australian Labor Party,
New South Wales Branch
Annual Conference, 10-11 April 1936

Report in The Sydney Morning Herald

At the NSW election in May 1935 Lang’s State Labor had won only 29 of the 90 seats in the Legislative Assembly. It was clear that Labor would be in exile as long as the split between Federal and State Labor lasted. This led to genuine negotiations to heal the split, which are detailed in the Executive Report and approved by Conference. The issue hanging over from previous negotiations – the position of Mr Theodore – was left for a future Conference to decide in the event that Theodore applied for re-admission. By 1936, however, Theodore had abandoned politics and turned his attention to his business enterprises.

In the report on the summary two days of Conference there is very little mention of the other developing split in Lang’s party involving the Socialisation Units. They had not gone away. A few months later, a Special Conference was convened in August to deal with a wave of expulsions that was designed to solve that problem. That Conference is the topic for the next chapter.

One significant decision was a resolution to disband the Women’s Central Organising Committee that had been an important part of the ALP machinery since 1904. The Executive Report had praised the WCOC in unqualified terms, but the tone of discussion on the Conference floor was in marked contrast. One delegate suggested that the alternative to a central committee – allowing women to form special committees at branch level – might be even more disruptive for the movement!
Executive Report of NSW ALP for 1935-36


In submitting the annual report of the activities of the movement for the past twelve months we wish to point out to members that only the principal matters are referred to in reports from all sections.

Our members have been and still are going through very distressing times, and in spite of circumstances they remain loyal and fight with one end in view – the return of Labor Governments.

Campaigns

During the term under review, we took part in a State campaign and gained many seats, while others showed considerable improvement and a slight swing would have resulted in a Labor Government.

Newcastle Federal by-election campaign was also held, and in this campaign we wish to thank the many members of the movement for their valuable assistance.

In the municipal sphere considerable gain was made, campaigns resulting in the control of many of the councils.

Conferences

Both the Country conference, held at West Maitland, and the Metropolitan conference were very successful, delegates being interested and attentive, and many items of vital importance to our movement, as you will see by the present agenda were given full discussion and consideration by the delegates.

Unity

Pursuing the attitude that has been adopted since 1931, the executive in the year freely participated in further negotiations for the consolidation of the movement, with the result that a basis of unity was finally achieved in Melbourne at the conference which began on February 24.

As a result of the failure of the unity negotiations last year the executive sent three representatives – Messrs Keller, Graves and Martin – to Canberra in October last to confer with the Federal executive, and at these negotiations a basis of agreement was reached and signed by both parties.

Prior to the meeting of the Federal executive, however, our representatives conferred with duly-accredited representatives of the Labor
Party in Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia, at which conference an agreement was reached for concerted action to reform the constitution of the party in several particulars that were held by all four States to have been the causes of most of the friction and disunity in past years. It was in consequence of this conference that the delegates from the three other States pursued a unity settlement in the subsequent meeting of the Federal executive.

When the recent conference assembled in Melbourne our representatives were distressed to find that it had departed in some particulars from the formula agreed upon at Canberra, but in the light of the tremendous advantages to the workers of the Commonwealth that would accrue from unity, our representatives considered that the minor amendments that had been made were not of sufficient importance to justify them in rejecting the proposed settlement.

Accordingly they intimated that as soon as the resolution of expulsion had been rescinded and our six representatives accepted at the conference table they would accept the formula on behalf of New South Wales. The conference complied with these requirements, and unity was effected upon this basis.

The time remaining was too short to permit adequate consideration being given to the proposed measures of constitutional reform and upon receiving assurances from the delegates of Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia, who participated in the Canberra four-State conference, that they would cooperate in giving effect to the decisions of that conference, our representatives agreed to allow the questions to be made items for the agenda of the triennial conference that was brought forward from October until July to meet our representations of urgency.

Our representatives have the greatest confidence that the delegates from these other States will at the July conference give effect to the document which their representatives signed at Canberra, in which case the unity settlement now concluded will be consolidated on a basis of permanency and efficiency that will remove for all time the fruitful causes of disharmony that have arisen previously. We found that delegates from practically every State were as anxious and jealous to preserve their own local autonomy rights as were our representatives from New South Wales.

The executive, in adopting the report of its delegates to the Melbourne conference felt that they had done a real service to the workers of this State, and expressed the opinion that the settlement would lead to a new era of progress and achievement by the Australian Labor movement. We believe that subsequent developments will vindicate this confidence.
Organising

The organisational work for the past year has been very satisfactorily carried out in an efficient manner by our organising secretary, Mr JB Martin.

During election and by-election campaigns he devoted the whole of his time to the return of Labor candidates, quite early in the year he concentrated on the State elections, and accompanied by the selected candidate toured many electorates. In Namoi electorate he visited and addressed meetings at: Gunnedah, Boggabri, Narrabri, Bingara; Barwon electorate, Inverell and Moree; Temora electorate, Junee, Temora, Marrar, Ganmain, Coolamon, Ariah Park; Ashburnham electorate, Canowindra, Eugowra, Parkes, Forbes, Peak Hill, Tomingly; Castlereagh electorate, Coonabarabran, Collarenebri, Baradine, Gwabegar, Pilliga, Burren Junction, Walgett, Lightning Ridge, Coonamble. Gilgandra; Dubbo electorate, Wellington, Dubbo and Naromine; whilst Young, Orange, Bathurst and Cootamundra electorates were also included.

During the campaign extensive itineraries were drawn up, and an endeavor was made to send speakers to all electorates. During weekends our organising secretary transported speakers by car and addressed meetings in many places unable to be visited by train without considerable loss of time.

Numerous council and branch meetings were attended in both metropolitan and country areas. Councils included Monaro, Ashburnham, Parramatta, Hunter, Kogarah, Bankstown, Balmain, Hume, Eden-Monaro, Wollongong, Newcastle, Dubbo, Hurstville, North Sydney and Calare; amongst the branches Hillston, Bulli, Dee Why, Blacktown, Muswellbrook. Orange, Cambridge Park, Auburn, Harcourt West, Albury, Tumbarumba, Cootamundra and Galong.

Following on the scrutineers’ classes which were held every week at the Trades Hall, Kiama, Goulburn and Lithgow were visited for the purpose of instructing scrutineers that they in turn could instruct those in charge of out-lying centres of the electorate.

As well as organising work it was necessary to impose many other important duties in connection with the Movement on our Organising Secretary, also in the capacity of a member of the Legislative Council he carried out good work especially in connection with the unemployed. On account of his close contact with them he was able to ventilate their grievances and in many cases has been instrumental in bettering their conditions.

The Organising Secretary wishes to thank all members of the Movement, particularly country members, for the valuable assistance rendered to him when visiting their electorates, in arranging meetings, and generally tending to make his visit successful.

Amongst the newly formed and resuscitated branches are:
Euston  
Taemas  
Lockhart  
Jindabyne  
Kinchela  
Teralba  
Bomaderry  
Berridale  
Bowral  
Pagewood  
Gerringong  
Kingston  
Singleton  
Tomingly  
Milperra  
Cammeray  
Berrigan  
Dalgety  
Scarborough  
Wyee  
Raby  
Wallerawang  
Wilcannia  
Old Bar  
North Wollongong  
Chipping Norton

Also the Sulphide Corporation Empl Union, Cockle Creek, Port Kembla Ironworkers, affiliated with the Party.

Commonwealth Parliament

During the past twelve months our nine Members in the House of Representatives have continued to make their presence felt, not only as a debating force, but because, by well-thought-out coordinated tactics, they have on many occasions created embarrassing situations for the Coalition Government.

Perhaps the most outstanding evidence of this was provided when, during the Sanctions Debate after the Prime Minister and Attorney-General had delivered their speeches, disclaiming the most outstanding possibility arising from their policy – the participation of Australia in an overseas war – our Leader, Mr Beasley, divulged the contents of Mr Hughes’ book, which were a complete contradiction to his Leader’s professions.

The immediate result was a demand by the Prime Minister for the resignation of Mr Hughes, which resulted in considerable dissension in the anti-Labor forces both inside and outside of Parliament.

During the last session, the Government introduced through the Senate some further obnoxious amendments to Section 2 (a) of the Crimes Act, of which perhaps the most savage provision was to permit of any person over the age of seventeen who was a member of an organisation declared under the well-known provision of the Act to be an ‘Unlawful Association’ to be committed to gaol even if a first offender, and retained in gaol for an indeterminate period in much the same fashion as an habitual criminal is treated.

This Bill was not proceeded with in the House of Representatives, partly because of the threatened hostility of the Opposition and partly because of the desire of the Government to get into the security of a recess, because of internal dissension in its ranks that was outwardly manifesting itself in angry scenes between Members of the Government.
groups and the defeat of the Government in Committee on several occasions during the latter portion of the session.

During the session the Government which had in three years remitted 9 million pounds in taxation, mostly to wealthy interests, brought forward a further Relief measure of a similar nature.

The Opposition moved an amendment that the Bill be withdrawn and redrafted in order to make provision for the complete restoration of the reductions in old-age and invalid pensions.

After vigorous debate the amendment was defeated and the Government continues to repudiate the definite pledge given by the Scullin Government in 1931 and subscribed to by the members of the present Government that immediately the Budget was balanced pensions would be restored.

Every opportunity has been taken by our Members to urge a complete restoration of pensions.

Mr Beasley moved the adjournment of the House to draw attention to the rapid trustification of the Steel Industry in Australia by the BHP, and demanded a Government investigation into its operations.

He drew attention to the fact that the BHP had drawn a million and a half pounds in subsidies and bounties from the Government during the past thirteen years and had been fostered and protected by Australian Governments, and now that it was firmly established returned the compliment by ordering two 8000-ton steamers to be built overseas, regardless of the fact that the men and materials and dockyards to do the job were available in Australia.

The motion was defeated, but it is felt that the publicity given to the operations of this industrial octopus, both in the House and at public meetings, and by wireless broadcasts, will have a steady effect.

During the last session the Party supported a motion of no confidence in the Government for:

1. Its failure to meet the House on more than thirty-nine days during the year.
2. Its failure to evolve any effective scheme to deal with unemployed and to evolve a permanent scheme of Rural Rehabilitation.

On this, as on all other occasions, when the matter of unemployment and the demand for a nation-wide reduction of the hours of labor has been raised by the Party, we were defeated on a purely party vote.

During the session the Repatriation Act was further amended with particular reference to ‘burnt-out’ men, that is, ex-soldiers who are considered by the Tribunals to be not 100 per cent efficient because of war service, and also broadened the scope of the Act to deal with soldiers suffering from TB, not necessarily attributable to War service.

The Party was successful in having one clause withdrawn, which contained all the worst features of the Crimes Act and the Old-Age
Invalid Pensions Act regarding the inquisition into the affairs of applicants for pensions and their relatives.

It is pleasing to record that during the past twelve months complete harmony and cooperation has existed between all Members of the Parliamentary Party. Each Member has individually shared the work and responsibility placed on him by the Party both inside and outside of the House and has at all times been prepared to assist the State Parliamentary Party and the Executive in any organisational work or public speaking necessary to place before the people the policy of the Australian Labor Party.

The members of the Party feel that this report would not be complete did we not place on record the splendid services of ex-Senator Dunn since his unfortunate defeat in the Senate elections. He has kept in the closest touch with the Party and has assisted in its research work and propaganda with the same zeal and enthusiasm as he displayed when a Member of the Commonwealth Senate.

State Parliament
Organisational work has occupied the attention of members of the Parliamentary Party since the State elections.

Two committees have been set up, one to deal with publicity and propaganda, the other to deal with organisational work in the electorates, chiefly in the country districts.

After much preparatory work, the committees commenced to operate in the electorates towards the close of the previous recess. Preparations are well in hand for an active campaign as soon as the present session of Parliament closes.

Members of the Party have taken an active part by assisting in organising relief for the wives and families of the workers who took part in the Seamen’s and Port Kembla industrial disputes.

The Leader and members of the Party have carried the fight for the Port Kembla men into Parliament.

Legislation introduced by the Government has been of a particularly vicious nature. The Government has closed down most of the Government unemployed works, and under the Farmers’ Relief Act many evictions of farmers have taken place.

Repeated attempts to compel the Government to introduce legislation to regulate house rents have failed. The Government is determined not to assist those occupying rented houses.

The Parliamentary Party hopes to make the coming year a good one from an organisational point of view and confidently anticipates early Labor victories in both Federal and State Parliaments.
Women's Central Organising Committee

The Women’s Central Organising Committee has been a very active factor of our movement for the past twenty-nine years, and they have rendered valuable assistance by their constant attention to matters affecting the welfare of our movement.

During election campaigns the committee can always be relied upon to concentrate their activities on the return of Labor candidates.

In municipal campaigns they also display a great part, and at present two members occupy positions in council – Mrs L Fowler, Newtown Council, and Mrs M Dunn, Glebe Council – both of whom are in their second term.

In regard to pensions, endowment and humanitarian proposals, the committee have held many deputations to the responsible Ministers, and in most cases they have been successful in remedying grievances and restoring conditions.

The hostel work of the committee is deserving of great praise. The hostel in Sussex-street provides a good home for unemployed women, and has given shelter to over 11,680, and 35,196 meals have been provided.

At Redfern a hostel for men not only provides food and shelter, but makes provision for tobacco and clothing. At these hostels all who are unable to assist themselves are welcome.

A successful reunion was held during the year in honor of Mrs K Dwyer and Mrs E Seery, first president and secretary of the women’s organising [committee], also a grand social was held last Easter, and, due to the hard work of the committee, it was a great success, both financially and socially.

ALP Sports Federation

From results achieved in the past by the different ALP sporting associations, it was apparent that the further development of these bodies would prove of great value to the movement, for, by extending the scope of those particular sporting associations already in existence and developing those sports as yet in their infancy within the ALP movement, the younger generation would be given greater inducement to compete in our competitions which we hope to conduct on lines compatible with the size and strength of those controlled by outside organisations. Contact made in this way with the young people would, to some extent, familiarise them with the political workings of the Party, and perhaps eventually they would become active members of our branches, or at least strong supporters of the Party’s policy.

It was recognised that to achieve this objective, it would be necessary to coordinate in some way the various ALP sporting associations, and it was with this object in view that the ALP Sports Federation was formed.
Functioning under the direct control of the central executive, the Sports Federation consists of delegates appointed by that body and the affiliated associations, and in the short time that has elapsed since its establishment, a solid foundation has been built upon which will grow one of the most powerful sporting organisations in the State. It only remains now for the various branches to recognise the benefits which the Party will derive from having sport successfully organised within its ranks and for every member to give the Sports Federation their whole-hearted support and cooperation.

**Vigoro and Tennis**

ALP Vigoro and Tennis associations have been operating for some time, and with plans now in hand for the winter competitions, the expansion of these two bodies is becoming most pronounced. The ambition of the officials is to secure sufficient entries to allow competitions to be conducted in districts, as this will eliminate, to a great extent, the expense and the time lost in travelling over wide areas. Immediately the district scheme comes into operation, the ALP competitions will become more popular, and the growth of the associations more rapid.

**Golf**

The Golf Club, which was formed only recently, proved to be a success from the time of its inception, and the membership, which is increasing every week, is representative of numerous metropolitan branches. Competitions are conducted regularly, and the standard of play has already reached a particularly high mark.

The facilities which the club is able to offer beginners have been freely availed of, and as a result the ‘B’ graders include many players who received their initiation into the game through the ALP Golf Club. Newcomers receive every encouragement and assistance, and the committee extends an invitation to anybody interested in this game to join up.

**Swimming**

Affiliation with the NSW Amateur Swimming Association was recently effected as the first step towards the formation of an ALP Swimming Club, which will have as its main event each season a relay race for the “JT Lang Challenge Cup”, between teams nominated by the different ALP branches.

It is not difficult to visualise the keen interest that this event will create in ALP circles, as previous experience has shown that a swimming relay race is one of the most spectacular of aquatic events.
Fighting Funds

The Sports Federation, as an organising unit of the Party, has concerned itself not only with the promotion and development of sport but also with the raising of finance to supplement the Party’s Fighting Fund. A considerable amount was raised for this purpose by means of the recently-conducted Miss ALP Competition, the successful issue of which ensures its institution as an annual affair.

When the conditions under which the “Miss ALP, 1935” competition were to be conducted were framed, consideration was given to the need of finance by our branches, and provision was made whereby each branch received a refund of 25 per cent of the amount contributed by their members. It is apparent from the following list, which shows the amounts received from each branch, that the refunds in many cases were by no means inconsiderable sums, and that the branches will derive material benefit from their participation in future similar competitions.

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Labor Literary and Debating Society

On the recommendation of the Central Organising Committee, this important addition has been made in the past year to the organisational activities of the Movement.

The formation of the Society (constitution, rules, procedure, adjudication, etc.) was undertaken by Mr R Johnson (Central Organising Committee) and Mr N Hannelly (President, Haberfield Branch).

The broad objects of the Society being to stimulate increasing interest in Branch meetings and to develop the public speaking talent of the Movement, its inaugural activity was the conducting of a metropolitan debating competition, for which a handsome and valuable cup was donated by the management of the Labor Daily for presentation to the winning team. The competition has been organised and controlled most efficiently by the Management Committee, with the cooperation of participating branches and their teams, and of the official adjudicators, and the generally smooth manner in which the arrangements have been carried out reflects credibly on all concerned.

The competition, in which 35 teams have participated, has reached its final stages, the following teams having emerged as the winners in their respective divisions, viz.:

- Petersham.
- Stanmore.
- Punchbowl.
- Pyrmont ‘A’.
- Willoughby-Chatswood.
- Rockdale.
- Waverley Trams ‘A’.

These teams, which are to be congratulated on their success so far, are now engaged in the knock-out round, the contests in which are exciting the greatest possible interest amongst the branches concerned. The winning team in this round will have the honor of holding the Labor Daily Cup for the ensuing 12 months, or, alternatively the duration of the next competition. Special arrangements are in hand for the final debate, and if possible this will be broadcast from Station 2KY. A special word of praise for the successful conducting of the competition is due to Mr R Johnson (Secretary
of the Society) on whom a heavy burden of work and solicitude for
detailed arrangements has fallen throughout the competition.

The reports submitted by the official adjudicators indicate that a
generally high standard of debate has been exhibited in the competition
contests, many of the debaters having shown outstanding merit. The
subjects selected by the Management Committee, while covering a wide
and comprehensive field of political, economic, and educational ques-
tions, bear in a great measure on the policy and platform of the Move-
ment. The Society is, therefore, developing a large body of capable
speakers, competent to expound or defend the policy of the Movement in
general election campaigns. The importance of this cannot be too greatly
emphasised.

The Society is fortunate in being able to secure the services of a
sufficient number of experienced and capable adjudicators, and their
helpful criticism and advice have been much appreciated by the less-
experienced debaters participating in the competition. The Society is
grateful for the valuable assistance which is thus being rendered by the
adjudicators. The interest and encouragement of the Management of the
Labor Daily is also very much appreciated.

This Society, having been established and conducted on the best
practicable lines, is destined to be a permanent and valuable unit in the
Movement. As soon as the current debating competition is finalised,
arrangements will be taken in hand for the 1936 competition for the Labor
Daily Cup.

We wish to thank all sections of the movement for their valuable assis-
tance, which materially assisted to facilitate the large amount of work
attempted and accomplished during the past term.

The Labor Daily is worthy of special mention, as by means of our
newspaper all news appertaining to the movement has been correctly
placed before our members, and having proved its worth is deserving at
all times of the whole-hearted cooperation and assistance of members of
the movement.

In concluding the report, mention must be made of the loyal and un-
tiring efforts of the staff for the very capable way in which they performed
their duties, which are of an arduous and confidential nature, and in the
fulfilment require more than ordinary discretion and discernment.

PJ Keller, President.
JJ Graves, General Secretary
Annual Conference of NSW ALP, 1936

(The Sydney Morning Herald, 11, 13 April 1936)

Day 1, Friday, 10 April 1936

In Control. Lang Faction. Garden Case Deferred.

Easter Conference.

Voting at the Easter conference of the State Labour party yesterday indicated that the Lang faction was in complete control of the proceedings.

One subject that would have provoked an angry debate was a demand by Mr T Lynch (Public Utilities Group) for an inquiry into the charges of Mr JS Garden, MP, that executive officers of the party had endeavoured to coerce the Federal caucus of the party to move an amendment in the Federal House favouring the shipment of munitions to Italy; but on the block vote of the Lang faction the suspension of standing orders to enable the matter to be discussed was refused.

Representatives of the Miners' Federation objected to the exclusion from the balance sheet of a debt of £3250 allegedly owing to the federation because of a loan made to the party in connection with the ballot box case.

There was much talk of the violation of the basic union principle of 'one man one job' when the rules were amended to enable Mr Shannon, MLA, who represents Phillip in the State House to remain an alderman of the City Council.

Mr Lang in the course of a defence of his action as Premier in raising the unemployment relief tax to 1/ in the £ admitted that it was a direct tax on wages but claimed that he had increased the tax to maintain widows' pensions, family endowment and other social services.

The Proceedings

Delegates from all parts of the State attended the conference which is the governing body of the State Labour movement. The chairman of the conference was the president of the State Labour party (Mr PJ Keller) and the visitors included a number of State and Federal Parliamentarians.

The election of the conference officials revealed that the Lang faction was in complete control of the management of the conference, and that
the majority of the delegates were pledged supporters of the plans of the faction.

Contrary to expectations several stormy scenes occurred at the opening session which is usually a formal one.

The proceedings were conducted with an unusual amount of secrecy. Press representatives were excluded and visitors were subjected to rigid scrutiny before they were allowed admission to the conference hall.

**Mr Garden’s Charges**

Addressing the conference the chairman (Mr PJ Keller) outlined the negotiations which had led to the drawing up of the unity proposals and gave a detailed report on the unity proceedings in Melbourne. He hoped that when the actual terms of the settlement came up for consideration by the conference they would be adopted.

Trouble developed when Mr T Lynch moved the suspension of standing orders to discuss the question of Mr JS Garden, MP. He suggested that a committee should be set up to inquire into the charges made by Mr Garden against members of the Labour movement. He claimed that the attempt to send munitions to any country for the conduct of warfare was not in accord with the principle of the movement. He was of the opinion that the hush up policy being adopted in this direction was not the correct one. The movement as a whole, he said, should be informed of the true position, irrespective of whether it was hurtful to certain people. He claimed that the matter should be brought before the conference.

The chairman said that the Labour party had appointed a special committee to inquire into the question of Mr Garden’s allegations. Until that committee had made its report it was not within the province of conference to discuss the matter.

Mr Lynch replied that as far as he could see the conference which represented the rank and file of the Labour movement was being overridden by a committee set up by certain people. Uproar followed. Bells rang while delegates shouted recriminations. It was some time before order was restored. The discussion was then gagged by the block vote of the Lang faction.

Another rowdy scene occurred when Mr C Townsend suggested that the executive officers at the next day’s session should present a statement giving full details of the doings of the party. It appeared, he said, that whenever accurate information was wanted one had to read the *Sydney Morning Herald*. He asked that information should be provided setting out the financial position of the various unions and the party and the representation that these unions were entitled to.

The general secretary (Mr JJ Graves, MLC) presented his annual report embodying the financial statement and balance sheet.
**The Miners’ Money**

Mr J Duffin (Miners) said that no mention was made in the balance sheet of the £3250 owing to the Miners’ Federation in connection with the ballot box case. This amount represented the balance of a loan by the miners to the Lang party which had not been repaid. He could not understand why this amount had not been specifically mentioned on the balance sheet as a liability. He wanted to know whether the controllers of the party were attempting to repudiate the debt.

Mr Graves replied that the party had never assumed liability for this money. It had never been placed on the balance sheet as a liability.

Another miners’ delegate, Mr W Crooks, strongly protested against the explanation given by Mr Graves and claimed that it was a responsibility on the party.

The chairman admitted that the Labour party was responsible for this money and that it would repay it when it could. He pointed out that a previous conference of the party had decided that although this money had not passed through the hands of the ALP it had been agreed that it would be repaid when funds allowed. The matter was then dropped.

The balance-sheet submitted to the conference disclosed a deficit on the year’s operations of £1062/11/7.

**Wages Tax**

Alderman Whelan, of Paddington, moved that under no consideration should any tax be inflicted upon employees who were receiving the living wage or less.

Mr Lang made a long explanation why he increased the unemployment relief tax from 1/3 to 1/ in the £. He admitted that his act amounted to a reduction in wages of 1/9 in the £. He said he had done it to preserve the margins and pensions and family endowment. He had been responsible for a small reduction in wages, but the Nationalist Government had placed a greater burden on the workers. The motion was carried.

Mr Burnett, a member of the executive, moved that the rules of the party should be amended to enable Mr Shannon, MLA, the member for Phillip, to remain an alderman of the City Council. He claimed that it would be disastrous if Alderman Shannon were compelled to vacate his position in the council. Being a Parliamentary representative of a city seat, with his headquarters in the city, he was capable of discharging both duties.

A voice: What about one man one job? The motion was carried.

Mr Craig (Northern Miners) moved that the extraction of oil from coal should be made a fighting plank of the platform of the Labour party.
at the next State elections. Mr Craig declared that the Australian production of oil from coal was essential. The motion was carried.

**Compulsory Retirement Scheme**

A long discussion took place on a motion that the next Labour Government should be instructed to proceed immediately with a scheme for the compulsory retirement of all workers at the age of 60 years on a pension equivalent to the basic wage, such pension to be a charge on industry. One delegate said it was a tragedy to see old men hobbling to work with the assistance of a walking stick, while young men were unable to secure employment. Another delegate declared that under present conditions the strong and healthy youth of today had no chance of getting into industry while old men remained there. The motion was carried.

**Other Decisions**

A protracted discussion took place at the afternoon session on the amendments introduced by the Government to the Railway and Transport Act. It was decided to cooperate with the campaign of the unions and the Labour Council in opposition to the proposals. The conference carried a motion that immediately upon the return of a State Labour Government all Government banking business and all accounts of departments, boards, and Government institutions be done through the Commonwealth Bank, thus following Labour’s policy of national control of credit. Another decision was that in cases where the landholder was in need of financial help from the State, and had a private loan from a bank or private moneylender, there should be a provision that would compel the moneylender to come to a revaluation of his loan and compromise with the State and farmer.

Other decisions were: That the movement work actively for the State to take over the control and proper working of the coal, shale, and oil industries; that the extraction of oil from coal and shale be made a plank of the platform of the Labour party; further, that Newnes, with its complete plant and large basin of rich shale, be made a pivotal point of such production; that no more loans be floated, and that credits be made available through the Commonwealth Bank to finance all public works and social services, thereby utilising the social credit of the nation; that the next Labour Government repeal the Returned Soldiers’ Employment Preference Act; that the conference direct that sustained agitation by the central executive and the Parliamentary party be engaged in to ensure those employees who were retrenched in the railways and tramways and are now designated as ‘casuals’ being restored to a permanent status, and that men employed after 1930 should have the same privileges and concessions as enjoyed by those in the Commissioners’ employ prior to
1930; that the produce of small woolgrowers be sold on the same footing as that of the large grower, and that the star lots that are now sold be eliminated; that a vigorous policy of land settlement be adopted, a revaluation of all lands be immediately made, and large holdings adjacent to railways and rivers be subdivided, and that the title be one of perpetual tenancy, the annual rent to be assessed at not more than 3 per cent on the capital value of the land, with a residence clause included in the tenure; that the Pawnbrokers Act be amended to provide as follows: - That the licence fee be doubled, the fixation of a maximum rate of interest on loans, that where any article is pawned and sold for more than the amount of the principal money and interest thereon, plus the charges of such sale, the surplus shall be paid into consolidated revenue, and that the Government appoint an auctioneer to conduct all auctions under the above Act.

During a debate on the present educational system, Mr Gould, of Glebe, declared that High schools were dens of snobbery. The teachers of today, he said, were recruited from a class opposed to the workers. The system of education was deliberately organised to drive the workers’ children in the industrial areas out of the schools.

A motion was carried that the next Labour Government should appoint a committee to investigate the system of education, such committee to have the power to coopt teachers.

Nominations for official positions disclosed that the chairman (Mr P Keller) would be opposed for the presidency by Mr T Hartley, and that the organising secretary (Mr JB Martin, MLC) would be opposed by Mr T Lynch.

Unity Proposals Adopted

The unity proposals drafted in Melbourne recently, under which the Lang party is granted reaffiliation with the Federal Labour party, were approved by the conference. A detailed report of the negotiations was submitted by Mr JB Martin, MLC, organising secretary, who moved the motion adopting the terms of settlement.

Mr J Duffin: I do not want to interfere with the unity proposals, but I am going to ask an awkward question. Where does Mr Theodore stand in the matter?

The chairman replied that if Mr Theodore made an application, it would be dealt with under the rules and constitution.

At 10.30 pm the conference adjourned until today.
Day 2, Saturday, 11 April 1936

State Labour Conference ends. Disciplining Labour Members.

Mr Lang’s speech.

The Easter conference of the State Labour party, which concluded its sittings on Saturday night, adopted a number of new rules designed to compel Labour members in the State House to vote in accordance with the official Labour ticket in Upper House elections.

Proposals for disciplining recalcitrant members were drafted, including seven years’ expulsion for members adjudged guilty of offering or accepting “gifts, bribes, or inducements”.

Other decisions were to form anti-conscription committees in the various leagues, to compel Labour-controlled municipal councils to give preference to members of the Labour movement when appointing solicitors and auditors, and to instruct the next Labour Government to guarantee £20 funeral expenses for persons who had not averaged £260 in wages during the twelve months preceding their death.

Mr Lang, in a speech to the conference, revealed his plans for the creation of a company to control the Labour Council’s broadcasting station, 2KY, and referred to whisperers who were endeavouring to disrupt the Labour movement. He forecasted that, with the achievement of unity, the Labour party would be successful at the next State and Federal elections.

Mr Lang, in his speech to the conference, declared that the leaders of the ALP and the unions had agreed upon the formation of a company to control 2KY, such company to issue 7000 shares, the Labour Council to get 4000 and the ALP 1000, and Mr Lang’s newspaper 2000. Each party would have a director for each 1000 shares. While the ALP and Labour Council shares would be free, the directors of Mr Lang’s paper would pay £2000 cash for theirs. The scheme would be submitted to a meeting of the Labour Council in a fortnight’s time. The directors of his paper had decided that the Labour party must have a wireless chain after they had reviewed the coordination in the Commonwealth of ‘anti-Labour’ newspapers and wireless stations. Plans had been prepared for this development, and a company had been formed. Negotiations were begun to acquire a metropolitan station and several country stations. A number of unions affiliated with the Labour Council believed it unnecessary for the newspaper to go to the expense of acquiring a metropolitan station when the movement had 2KY. So a move was begun by those unions within the council to coordinate the 2KY station and Mr Lang’s paper, thus rendering the purchase of another station unnecessary. In view of this, the directors of his paper had temporarily suspended their negotiations for acquiring a metropolitan station. The Press had referred to it as a bitter factional fight within the movement allegedly over the ownership.
of 2KY. “When we discussed the matter with the secretary of the Labour Council”, Mr Lang continued, “we found that there was no faction fight, and that there was an earnest desire on the part of everybody to coordinate both organs of publicity for the good of the Labour movement. As a result the Labour Council secretary and a member of the wireless committee, with the president and secretary of the ALP, met the party leaders, Mr Beasley and myself, in conference. We discovered that this coordination could be brought about without putting the movement to the extra expense of purchasing and maintaining an additional wireless station.”

**Question of Control**

Mr Lang stated it was quite clear that the proposal would not involve any question of ownership. Control of the station must remain with the Labour Council because it held a majority of shares and would have a majority on the directorate. Coordination would be provided by drawing additional directors from his paper and the ALP.

It was to carry out this agreement that Mr King, secretary of the Labour Council, and Mr JS Garden, MP, went to the council a fortnight ago and gave notice of the rescission of the resolution setting up the existing control of the station so that the new control might take its place. In a fortnight’s time Mr King and Mr Garden would move for the adoption of the proposal in the Labour Council.

**“Not a Goldmine”**

Mr Lang claimed that the proposal was simple and constructive. The Council would retain the ownership of the station. It was not a goldmine and last year had lost £900. The financing of station 2KY had been shared by many sections of the movement. Originally founded by Mr Voigt, later Mr Beasley, Mr Graves, Mr Sinclair, and other union officials pledged everything they had to finance the station properly. Later the unions found more money. In 1927 when the station was in difficulties Mr Lang said that he put up £1000 to enable them to carry on. The four years preceding 1935 were good trading years and the station was able to wipe out most of its liabilities to the members of the movement, including himself. The station had been established by cooperative effort and it was to continue this cooperation that leaders of the party entered into their arrangement.

**Mr Lang’s Hopes**

Referring to the recent unity negotiations Mr Lang stated that they had achieved real unity. We should let it be known that there is a real welcome
within the movement for all those covered by the unity terms, Mr Lang said. I am sure the merging will go as smoothly as it went at Canberra. There Mr Beasley led his party into the unity caucus claiming no other rights than as a member of the caucus. Unity will lead the Labour party into government at the next Federal and State elections. There are immense problems that concern thousands of you that can only be solved by victory at the next elections. The whole of your wage levels have been destroyed. They must be restored. Overtime and speed-up methods which have broken down industrial conditions must be eliminated. Licences must disappear along the waterfront.

**Women’s Committee Abolished**

After an animated debate the conference decided to abolish the Women’s Central Organising Committee of the party, which for a number of years has taken a prominent part in the affairs of the movement.

The conference decided that in place of the central committee women’s committees should be set up in each ALP branch.

The attack on the committee was launched by Mr AW McNamara (United Labourers) who moved the motion for the abolition of the committee. He was bitterly criticised by many women delegates who defended the administration of the committee. Charges were made by supporters of the motion to disband the committee that the proceedings at committee meetings had become unruly and had reflected upon the prestige of the movement.

Women delegates retaliated by declaring that the debates of the committee were orderly compared with those of recent Labour Council meetings. Many delegates expressed doubt whether the conference in abolishing the central committee and agreeing to the formation of branch committees was achieving the purpose of the motion. They contended that the smaller committees would probably provide more trouble than the existing central committee.

The operations of the central committee in connection with its hostels came in for much criticism. There were many heated and rowdy scenes in which the women delegates predominated. At one stage the chairman, Mr P Keller, threatened to adjourn the proceedings. Suggestions of mal-administration were made, and these were met by counter-charges concerning the administration of the party itself, and the leaders of the trade union movement.

“**Gifts, Bribes, Inducements**”

Another decision of the conference was the adoption of a long recommendation from the Metropolitan conference, designed to provide disciplinary measures for recalcitrant members in Upper House elections.
Reference was made to the last Upper House elections, in which the plans of the ruling faction to organise the Labour vote by the circulation of official tickets were ignored, and in some cases, openly flouted. The recommendation provided that “any Labour candidate offering, or any Labour member accepting, any gift, bribe, or inducement to influence the vote of any member, or failing to record his vote as instructed by the executive, shall be expelled from the Labour movement for a period of not less than seven years”.

It was also provided that members of the Labour party should support only those candidates who had been endorsed by the ALP central executive, and should exercise their preference votes as directed by the executive.

The following new rules were incorporated in the recommendation:

That Labour candidates for election to the Legislative Council must be financial members of the ALP in the area in which they reside, and shall be eligible in accordance with the rules and constitution of the ALP, State of New South Wales, and must be nominated by not less than six financial members of the ALP.

The credentials of such nominators shall be certified to by the general secretary. The candidate must also give his written consent to such nomination, and, before going to the ballot for election, shall be endorsed by the ALP executive. The central executive shall meet prior to the date of such election to consider nominations and make endorsements where candidates are eligible in accordance with the rules of the ALP – such business shall take precedence over other business.

**Government Burials**

Much interest was aroused by the adoption of a motion submitted by the Metropolitan conference that the Government should provide a fund and should guarantee funeral expenses, at a minimum of £20, to any deceased person who had not averaged £260 in wages during the previous 12 months.

**Anti-Conscription Committees**

The suspension of the standing orders was granted to enable the conference to carry a motion that the executive should immediately take steps to organise anti-conscription committees in each ALP branch, the work of which would be “to oppose all attempts, in the event of war, to foist conscription upon the manhood of Australia for oversea service”.

The conference also carried a resolution that all municipal and shire councils, where Labour had a majority, must, when appointing solicitors and auditors, give preference to those applicants who are financial members of the Labour movement, and who observe union conditions in
their offices. “This principle shall apply absolutely to all appointments in the Labour movement”, the resolution added.

Delegates from the country supported a motion that the Labour Minister for Agriculture in the next Labour Government must see that all wheat owned by wheat speculators is removed from Government silos one month from the date of purchase. The motion was carried.

The conference also decided that the law respecting cheques should be altered to make it a criminal offence for bank depositors to draw cheques for an amount in excess of their bank balance, and that free railway transit should be granted to the unemployed when seeking employment in suburban or country districts.

**Medical Examinations**

Standing orders were again suspended during the afternoon session to enable the conference to deal with the question of medical examinations under the Workers’ Compensation Act. A resolution was carried, that the conference should protest against the action of the insurance companies in instructing employers to send employees to insurance company doctors in contravention of Section 10 of the Workers’ Compensation Act. The conference adopted a resolution that the representation from metropolitan branches to the central executive should be increased from four to eight.

During the debate the Australian Railways’ Union made strenuous attempts to obtain direct representation on the ALP executive.

**Mr Lang on Propagandists**

Mr Lang spoke against a motion from the Metropolitan conference dealing with the appointment of private secretaries to Labour Ministers, and was responsible for its defeat. It was suggested in the motion that “publicity officers, propagandists, or private secretaries” should be appointed from members of the ALP with three years’ financial membership. The resolution proposed that any Labour member violating the rule should be removed from office by caucus, and his ALP endorsement withdrawn.

Mr Lang said that the procedure was for private secretaries to be allotted to Ministers by the Public Service Board. “I have no doubt”, he added, “that Ministers see they get the kind of secretaries they want. If men are brought in from outside they would be immediately dismissed by the first anti Labour Government in power. Labour does not employ propagandists. This Government does, but this Government has the backing of wealthy outside interests who can afford to pay for such service as propagandists and direct telephone lines. Labour has no wealthy Interests behind it.”
“A Commercial Success”

Mr Lang described his paper as being the greatest achievement not only in the Labour movement and in Australia, but in the English-speaking world. There was nothing to compare with it. All other Labour papers had either closed down or sold out to anti-Labour Governments. His paper was union owned and controlled, and was a commercial success. It was necessary to expand the paper, and there was a demand and a need for a Sunday paper.

“As far as the whisperers are concerned”, said Mr Lang, “they will have to come out into the open. Anyone who tries to involve the party in a faction fight is definitely working to destroy the possibility of a Labour Government”.

Mr Beasley, MP, announced that he was definitely behind Mr Lang in the matter of his coordination scheme. Anybody who opposed the scheme would be treated as an enemy within the movement, and would be fought.

In supporting a vote of confidence in Mr Lang which was carried, Mr F Kelly said that Mr Beasley by his statement was behind Mr Lang. He pointed out that the militant section of the Labour Council commanded between 38 and 48 votes, and was well organised. After the leader spoke, they voted in a solid block. ALP supporters on the Council, however, were divided and were often to be seen voting with the militants.

Defeated Candidates

The conference also carried a resolution that any Government employee elected to Parliament should be re-employed if defeated at a subsequent election.

Another decision was that the policy of the next Labour Government should be to put into operation a scientific method of dealing with sewage and that the discharge of sewage near the beaches should cease.

Election of Officers

The election of officers resulted in the re-appointment of Mr PJ Keller as president, Mr J Gibson vice-president, and Mr JB Martin, MLC, as organising secretary.

Other Decisions

Other resolutions carried by the conference included the following:-That employers advertising vacant positions in the Press must state their business, name and address, wages, hours, and conditions; that the garnishee of wages be abolished; that rights given or sold to land-holders to put
gates across the main roads running through their properties be withdrawn by the next Labour Government; that a vigorous policy of public works be adopted for the construction of river locks, water conservation, irrigation, bores etc. to retrieve wastelands; that no persons shall in future be endorsed for any Parliamentary, shire or municipal council whose record shows that such person, having been a member of any Parliamentary or local government body, has failed without just cause or excuse, to record his or her vote for or in defence of Labour legislation; that the next Federal Labour Government shall legislate with a view to full and free dominion status, by the immediate ratification of the Statute of Westminster by the Commonwealth Parliament.

The conference adjourned *sine die*. 


CHAPTER 15
Australian Labor Party,
New South Wales Branch
Special Conference, 22 August 1936

Report in The Sydney Morning Herald

The opposition to Lang and his Inner Group had reached a critical stage in 1935, with Lang politically weakened after his defeat at the recent State election. The revolt had its base in the Labor Council, and involved the support of the Socialisation Units and the unions supporting them, along with Communists inside and outside the ALP. When on 1 August 1936 the Labor Council organised a special conference of trade unions and members of the ALP hostile to Lang the Inner Group had a special committee of the State Executive prepare a report recommending expulsion of five MPs and numerous members of the party associated with dissident unions. An imminent threat to the Lang machine was the likely loss of control over the Labor Daily and radio station 2KY, where Labor Council equity was crucial. The MPs included the Secretary of the Labor Council, RA King, MLC, and four Lower House members, Heffron, Lazzarini, Horsington, and Davidson. The list of unions mentioned in the Executive Report as at war with Lang was a roll call of industrial unionism in the State: “bricklayers, plumbers, breadcarters, hotel, club, and restaurant employees, sugar employees, blacksmiths, boilermakers (Sydney branch and Redfern branch), amalgamated engineers, Australasian engineers, ironworkers, stovemakers, moulders, boot employees, wool and basil workers, fire brigades, gas employees, Water Board employees, Postal employees, hairdressers, amalgamated printers, printing industry employees, railway employees, stewards, furnishing trades, Barrier District Assembly, northern miners, and western miners”. Others, such as the Barrier Miners, were in a similar situation, but were not members of the ALP at the time. The AWU, hostile to both Lang and the militants, also sat on the sidelines. Needless to say, the expulsions did not put an end to the problem for the Langites.
Special Conference of NSW ALP, 1936

(The Sydney Morning Herald, 24 August 1936)

Single Day, Saturday, 22 August 1936

Labour Party Expulsions. Mr Lang Attacks Communists.
Mr Baddeley Opposes Miners’ Federation.
Uproarious Scenes at Conference.

Addressing the special conference of the State Labour party which on Saturday expelled five members of Parliament and 16 union leaders, the leader of the Opposition (Mr Lang) made a bitter attack on the Communist party, which he blamed for the present trouble in the Labour party.

There were uproarious scenes when the deputy leader of the State Labour party (Mr Baddeley, MLA) stated that he supported Mr Lang and was opposed to the leaders of the Miners’ Federation.

Representatives of the Federation attempted to reply to Mr Baddeley, but were refused a hearing.

Mr Lang’s Speech to Conference

Mr Lang, who was loudly cheered, said that many delegates in the Labour Council were not supporters of the Labour party. They took every advantage to defeat any move which would advance the fortunes of the party. Fanned by ‘anti-Labour’ newspapers, the discussion in the Labour Council had become very bitter. Because of differences, the Labour party had no chain of wireless stations radiating from 2KY. The station’s chief purpose seemed to be to carry on a campaign of vilification against the ALP. The same sections which had opposed the wireless coordination proposal had also opposed the proposed publication of a Sunday Labour paper. The same individuals had set up an organisation which was determined to prevent the Labour party from expanding.

Those individuals hoped by destroying its propaganda agencies to destroy the party itself.

“Propaganda Agencies”

Mr Lang claimed that the proposal to establish a separate Labour newspaper company, which was to produce a Sunday Labour paper, had met with a remarkable response. The ALP was the workers’ party, and the fight which was going on for the control of its propaganda agencies had been staged by the Communist party. The Miners’ Federation and its
executive officers had been responsible for the opposition to the official organ, and had recommended, as a director of the paper, a leader of the Communist party in New South Wales.

“Secret Junta”

Mr Lang caused a sensation at the conference by stating that, when the next ballot for the election of directors of the paper took place, the Communists expected to be in control of the organ. He said that Mr C Nelson, the president of the Miners’ Federation, and a leader of the Communist party, had been selected by a secret junta as the next chairman of directors of the paper. When Mr Nelson was defeated, the Labour movement would be asked to retain their confidence in those who were seeking to capture control of the Labour movement, because, if they failed this time, they would succeed next time.

“Wait”, said Mr Lang. “That is what they will tell you. But you will wait for a long time. They are only attempting to mislead you.”

Expulsion Report

The decision of the conference to impose the expulsions was reached after the submission of a report by the senior vice-president (Mr G Gibson), who was the chairman of what was described as the special investigation committee.

The committee was appointed by the State ALP executive, and was instructed to draft a report on the activities of the delegates who attended the banned conference of unions affiliated with the Labour party, which was convened by the Labour Council.

Mr Gibson had a mixed reception when he declared that officials had been merciful whenever mercy was possible. Every individual who had been expelled had merited it.

“In seeking to interrogate the position of unions concerned, the committee met with organised hostility and non-cooperation from a section of officials”, the report said. “This was designed to defeat the purpose of the committee, which was to safeguard the interests of individual members. An attempt was made to have the committee’s questionnaire answered in a negative and stereotyped manner, but this attempt failed, even some of the most hostile officials departing from the agreed form of rejoinder. We find that in no case was the question of defying the executive’s decision referred to the rank and file of the affiliated organisations.”

It was claimed in the report that those who opposed Mr Lang had attempted to cause a cleavage that would result in a schism under Communist leadership.
Mr Garden Mentioned

The findings of the committee on which the Labour Parliamentarians and union leaders were expelled were set out in the report of the investigation committee in this way:

“We reached the conclusion that the purposes of the Labour Council bogus conference were (a) to try and intimidate the State executive and the delegates to the Federal ALP conference in Adelaide to facilitate the readmission of Mr Garden to the Labour movement without his having to appeal to the annual conference in accordance with the rules; (b) to endeavour to organise a disaffected group within the party for such purposes of intimidation; (c) to secure the disaffiliation of certain groups in the interests of the Communist party.”

The following officials were specifically named in a special report to the conference, but, while it was held that they were under suspicion, it was decided that no action should be taken against them for the time being:


A feature of the report submitted by the investigation committee, in which the expulsion recommendations were contained, was an attack on the secretary of the All-Australian Council of Trades Unions (Mr C Crofts), who, it was stated, merited the strongest possible censure.

Referring to the five expelled Parliamentarians, the report said, “Their defiance of the executive was deliberate and provocative, and made with a full knowledge of the penalties involved. They were in a position of trust.”

There was a noisy scene when Mr W Cochrane made a bitter attack on the administrators of the party. He said that the Labour movement belonged to the masses, and should not be made the plaything of the executive. The last Easter conference seemed to hold out hopes of unity, but the ink on the unity terms was hardly dry when the 2KY dispute occurred. He said that 2KY was always at the disposal of the executive, but the officials of the party had not availed themselves of this opportunity of utilising the station. The executive had not even thanked the controllers of 2KY for the part which they had played in previous elections. He deplored the fact that the ALP executive had seen fit to expel giants of the Labour movement such as the secretary of the Bricklayers’ Union (Mr H Kilburn), the secretary of the Furnishing Trades
Union (Mr O Schreiber), and the secretary of the Labour Council (Mr R King, MLC).

The adoption of the investigation committee’s report to expel the Labour Parliamentarians and union officials was carried by 67 to 24.

**Position of Unions**

The report to the conference indicated that the following unions had rendered themselves liable to expulsion, but were not disaffiliated for various reasons: bricklayers, plumbers, braidcarters, hotel, club, and restaurant employees, sugar employees, blacksmiths, boilermakers (Sydney branch and Redfern branch), amalgamated engineers, Austral-asian engineers, ironworkers, stovemakers, moulders, boot employees, wool and basil workers, fire brigades, gas employees, Water Board employees, Postal employees, hairdressers, amalgamated printers, printing industry employees, railway employees, stewards, furnishing trades, Barrier District Assembly, northern miners, and western miners.

It was also announced that the following unions which were represented at the bogus Labour Council conference were outside the jurisdiction of the ALP: southern miners, postal electricians, brick, tile, and pottery employees, blind workers, engine-drivers and firemen, jewellers, and the Barrier miners.

**Federal Elections**

It was announced at the conference that the ballots for the selection of candidates in the next Federal elections would be held on November 21, and that nominations would be called for on August 24, and would close on October 2. The ballots for the executive would be conducted on or before November 30, and the nominations for the annual general conference would open on December 24.

The first decision of the conference was to carry a long resolution criticising the decision of the Government to abolish relief work. It was suggested in the resolution that a special session of Parliament should be held to review the action of the Government, and the opinion was also expressed in the resolution that the proceeds from the wages tax should be devoted exclusively for the relief of the unemployed.

**Stormy Scene**

A stormy scene developed during the debate on the relief position when Mr Matthews, MLA, claimed that the chairman of the Labour Council (Mr Pullen) had sabotaged the work of the ALP unemployment committee, of which he was a member. Objection was taken by a delegate to the right of Mr Matthews as a politician to make an attack on an
industrial leader. Mr Pullen, amid much disorder, appealed to the chairman, Mr PJ Keller, for a hearing, and said that the ALP executive and Mr Matthews particularly had misrepresented the position.

*Report in The Sydney Morning Herald, 25 August 1936*

**Labor Fight. Another Union Conference. Expelled Members Confident of Reinstatement.**

Union leaders who were expelled by the special ALP conference at the week-end have decided to convene another union conference to make the expulsions ineffective.

Union officers said that the meeting would probably be held at the end of the week, and would include union officials who were in revolt against the Lang faction. Efforts would be made to induce union officials who are supporting Mr Lang to attend the conference.

The expulsions by the Lang faction caused a sensation at the Trades Hall. The subject was the sole topic of conversation yesterday.

The expelled union officers displayed no agitation; they expressed confidence that they would be able to reinstate themselves in the Labour movement.

A curious position has developed in some unions as a result of the expulsions. In the case of the Amalgamated Printing Trade Union, the president (Mr JE Pullen) has been expelled, but the secretary (Mr THC Bell), who also attended the banned Labour Council conference, has been allowed to remain within the party. The State secretary of the Printing Industry Employees’ Union (Mr JF Wilson) has been expelled, but the Federal secretary (Mr EC Magrath, MLC) has escaped the ‘axe’.

Union secretaries regard as important the forthcoming poll of shareholders in the official Labour paper. It will be taken between September 1 and 8.

They point out that the result of the poll will probably have an important bearing on the dispute. The poll is being held to decide whether the proposals of the directors to form a new company to produce an official Sunday Labour organ should be supported.

**Mr R King’s Comments**

The secretary of the Labour Council (Mr R King, MLC), who is among the expelled union officials, said yesterday that the Lang faction was panic-stricken. The expelled men were unconcerned about the expulsions, he added.

“This is a rank and file rebellion against dictatorship by a small political oligarchy”, Mr, King said. “The expulsions of trades union officers will hasten the day of reckoning. The unions will quickly demonstrate
that the rank and file is behind the officers of their organisations. The expulsion bluff will be called.”

The decision of the conference to expel Messrs Heffron, Lazzarini, Horsington, and Davidson, MsLA, means that they will now be debarred from attending any meetings of the State Labour caucus. They will also be ineligible to hold any position in the State political movement, but they will not be debarred from attending industrial gatherings, at which they have recently taken a prominent part.

Suggestions were made yesterday that the State Labour Parliamentary party would probably hold a meeting to discuss the expulsion of the four Labour members, and that attempts would be made to persuade other State Labour members to support the rebels.

The Undercliffe branch of the State Labour party, at a meeting last night, carried a resolution disagreeing with the decision of the special conference to expel 21 Labour leaders. The opinion was expressed that the expulsions would not bring about unity.

The Cook electorate council also carried a resolution condemning the decision.
By 1937 one great split (between State and Federal Labor) had been healed, while another (between Lang and the Socialisation Units) was gathering force. This was the opportunity for Lang and his Inner Group to make some concessions to bring the Labor Council back into at least passive support. It was an opportunity lost. The Herald correspondent was probably correct in suggesting that the public manifestations of agreement at this Conference between Lang and Federal Leader John Curtin convinced Lang that he was in a position of strength and that there was no need to make any deals with the left. Time was to prove him wrong if that was the case. The Executive Report provides a useful summary of the situation with regard to both divisions in the party.

Other than major speeches of the Federal and State leaders, and discussion of the expulsions of supporters of the Labor Council, very little business was conducted in the two days of this Conference.
Executive Report of NSW ALP for 1936-37

(Australian Labor Party, State Of New South Wales
Executive Report, 1936-1937)

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Since the Annual General Conference of last year many momentous matters engaged the attention of the officers and members of the Movement; the most important achievement was the consummating of the Unity terms and the coordination of the forces of the Movement.

Immediately upon the finalisation and acceptance of the terms of Unity by the Special Federal Conference of 1936, leaders and officials of the Movement in this State met and considered plans for the coordination of their various departments, for the purpose of propaganda and organisation in furtherance with the policy of the Movement, and ensure the return of Labor Governments in both Federal and State Parliaments.

The plan agreed upon by the representatives of the Federal and State Parliamentary Parties, the Central Executive and the Trades and Labor Council, as the first step in the coordination proposals was the control of 2KY by representatives of the Trades and Labor Council, Labor Daily, and ALP. In this way three important sections of the Movement — Industrial, Political, and the Press would be directly associated for propaganda purposes and the establishing of a chain of Labor stations throughout the State; the second step agreed upon was the launching of a Sunday newspaper.

These plans, on being made public, were seized upon as the battleground for disruptionists both inside and outside the Movement. Leading Communists in this State were the leaders of the forces opposed to these methods of coordination and they had allied with them a number of very prominent members of our Movement. This opposition seriously interfered with the agreed-upon plans.

An alternate method of strengthening the propaganda section of our Movement was therefore put into operation, hence the reason for the new Sunday Express Newspaper Company, and the obtaining of radio stations throughout the State, by other organised efforts, so that Labor will be able to radiocast its policy at the coming elections.

The disruptionists, in furtherance of their policy to control the Movement for the purpose of destroying it, came out into the open and arranged for a Conference to be held on August 1, 1936.

This Conference was called for the purpose of compulsorily altering the Constitution of the ALP, and was attended by delegates of Unions,
irrespective as to whether they were members of the ALP, quite a number of them being avowed and leading Communists.

**Executive Statement**

On July 3, 1936, one month prior to the Conference, the following statement was issued by the Central Executive, which clearly set out the decision of the Movement:

“In connection with the decision of the Trades and Labor Council of June 25 last, to call a Conference of Unions, to draw up a constitution for the ALP, the Central Executive regards the proposal with the same degree of derision as it is generally regarded throughout the Movement, were it not for the fact that the Labor Council is being used by certain politically disappointed individuals as the spearhead of a campaign of disruption throughout the Movement.

The Labor Council embraces members of various political parties, and it is unthinkable that such an organisation should be allowed to interfere with the control of the ALP.

The ostensible reason given for the move made by the Labor Council is that the existing ALP rules do not permit free expression of opinion by the rank and file, and that rules in operation before 1926 should be restored.

The real reason, however, is that the basis of rank and file control existing in the present rules does not permit the small coterie of disappointed and disgruntled persons to seize control of the Movement.

A cardinal point in the Rules drafted in 1927 was that they made specific provision for the calling of special conferences to discuss any grievances that may arise between Annual General Conference. If these who are disgruntled had any reasonable amount of support behind them, there is ample machinery under the present rules to obtain a Conference.

It is remarkable that the very people who are now suggesting more representation for the Unions are those who threw themselves last year behind the agitation for greater representation for the branches.

This fact alone indicates that not only is there no sincerity in this new move, but that its purpose is purely disruptive and designed to split the Movement, on the eve of the forthcoming Federal elections.

It is the same coterie which is directing all the disruptive moves that are being aimed at the Party, but the Central Executive is determined that all disruptive moves, whether they are organised by Communists or Capitalists, or both in conjunction, will be rigorously destroyed.

The attempt by the Trades and Labor Council to call a Conference is a direct attempt to disrupt the Labor Movement.

The Central Executive therefore determined:
That the alleged Conference called by the Trades and Labor Council to deal with the Rules and other matters affecting the ALP is hereby declared “bogus”.

That any Union affiliated with the ALP which accredits delegates to such “bogus” Conference will become automatically disaffiliated with the ALP.

That any member of the ALP who attends such “bogus” Conference will become automatically expelled from the ALP.

Following the holding of the “bogus” Conference on August 1, 1936, the Central Executive on August 7, issued the following statement:

“In approaching the question of the ‘bogus’ Conference held under the auspices of the Trades and Labor Council on Saturday last, the Central Executive are mindful, not only of their duty, but their responsibility as custodians of the Movement between Conferences.

“The Central Executive represents the entire Movement and not any one section of it, and it is obliged under the Rules and Constitution to fearlessly take whatever steps it considers necessary to protect the interest of the whole of the Movement against the intrigues and machinations of any section that for the time being might believe itself to be stronger than the Movement as a whole.

“A point that is important to remember is that this ‘bogus’ Conference was assembled when the Executive Officers and other members of the Central Executive were absent in Adelaide working for the consolidation of the Unity Agreement that was effected at the Melbourne Conference in February last, and that insistent capitalist press propaganda, fed by the organisers of ‘bogus’ Conference, made the task of the NSW delegates more difficult and arduous than it need have been.

“There is no doubt that the Conference was organised deliberately to try and embarrass the NSW delegates to Adelaide.

“It will be found that the ‘bogus’ Conference was dominated by a group of officials who have been carrying on a guerilla warfare against the Movement for some years, under the label of ‘Industrialists’, despite the fact that it is many years since most of them have ever worked in industry. In recent months these individuals have been working in close collaboration with self-acclaimed members of the Communist Party to build a minority organisation within the ALP to combat every constructive move that is made by the Central Executive or any other section of the Movement.

“It must be remembered that the ‘bogus’ Conference was only convened when those responsible for the present disruption discovered that they were unable to obtain the support of sufficient Unions and Branches to have a Special Conference convened under the Rules.”
Special Conference
The Central Executive then determined to convene a Special Conference to consider the action to be taken in connection with those members or organisations who took part in the 'bogus' Conference.

This Special Conference was held in the Trades Hall, Sydney, on Saturday, August 22, 1936, and as time would not permit of the election of fresh delegates from all over the State to this Conference, delegates to the Annual General Conference held four months earlier, and who had been elected by the rank and file throughout the State, were the delegates summoned to attend this Special Conference.

The Special Conference took advantage of the opportunity afforded, and dealt with matters of urgent and public importance associated with the policy and organisational work of the Movement, after which it considered matters for which it had been convened, viz., disruption within the Movement.

Conference, after a very critical and analytical examination of the whole of the facts surrounding the attempted disruption, found that some of the leaders of the disruptionists were prominent officials of the Communist Party and were associated with prominent members of the Movement who, apparently, had some interest to serve and had become disgruntled and hostile and readily fell in with the organised attempt by the Communist Party to disrupt the Movement.

The Special Conference therefore decided not to enforce the automatic expulsions of the individuals and organisations who were associated with the 'bogus' Conference, but determined to expel from the ALP the following persons:—

Messrs NW Burke; F Connors, ex-MLA; MA Davidson, MLA; WE Dickson, ex-MLC; J Duffin; A Ewin; T Falkingham, ex-MLC; HA Fountain; RJ Heffron, MLA; EM Horsington, MLA; J Kilburn, ex-MLC; RA King, MLC; CC Lazzarini, MLA; J Moloney; E Mara; AS McAlpine; OSchreiber; G Sinclair, ex-MLC; JE Pullan; JF Wilson; S Wyatt.

Sunday Express Newspaper
The Central Executive are actively co-operating with the establishing of a Sunday Labor newspaper, to be known as the Sunday Express.

The original proposal was for the Labor Daily to be published on Sundays as well as week days, but this necessitated altering the Articles of Association to permit the necessary capital being raised for the publication of the Sunday paper. Influences opposed to Labor’s progress immediately set out to prevent this advancement, and in cooperation with disgruntled individuals within our Movement and Communist organisation, were successful in preventing this step.

It was therefore necessary to set up another organisation to obtain the essential machinery and funds to publish the Sunday Express, and Mr
F Kelly, who had been a member of the Central Executive for many years, was appointed organiser, and the drive for funds throughout the Movement for this purpose has been most successful.

The Central Executive decided to take 250 shares, and for the raising of funds for these shares a very successful Motor Drive and Picnic was held at the Playground on December 6, 1936. Some three thousand people attended, being conveyed by a huge fleet of cars and double-decker buses. Socially and financially the picnic was a wonderful success, the amount of £100 being cleared. An interesting sports programme was arranged, and the children were specially catered for. Many requests have been received for a function of a similar character.

**Federal Conference**

The triennial Federal Conference of 1936, held in Adelaide, was fully represented from all States, and was one of far-reaching importance. It not only completed the terms of Unity, having for its purpose the consolidating of Labor forces throughout the Commonwealth, but also brought prominently before notice the methods to be adopted for the purpose of returning Labor to the Treasury benches at the next Federal election.

A very comprehensive policy in regard to Defence, Anti-War, Unemployment, Finance, Tariff, Education and Immigration was adopted; the details are to be found in the official report obtained from the Federal Secretary, Mr DL McNamara.

Matters determined at Conference included:

“That Conference requests the Governments of Australia to introduce legislation to implement a forty-hour working week, and, further, that the representatives of the Labor Governments referred to who will be present at the forthcoming Premiers’ Conference be requested to urge the adoption of the forty-hour working week at such Conference.”

“That Conference expresses its opposition to any scheme of contributory payment in connection with Invalid and Old Age Pensions.”

“Owing to the mechanisation of industry and the inevitable result of the dismissal of men at an early age, Conference recommends a reduction in the age of eligibility for old-age pensions.”

“Old Age and Invalid Pensions be increased to not less than £1 per week.”

“Until such time as the nationalisation of health is given effect to, the Commonwealth Government accept responsibility for a reasonable proportion of the cost of the public health services in the various States.”

“That the Commonwealth Government accept responsibility for a reasonable proportion of the cost of education in the various States.”

“An adequate housing scheme.”

“That the maternity allowance of £5 be restored, with no restriction as to income.”
Unemployment

The problem of adequately feeding, clothing and housing the unemployed workers, in default of provision of remunerative employment, is primarily the duty of Governments.

The obvious failure of Governments to safeguard the people is an unanswerable argument for the urgent replacement of unemployment-creating capitalism by security-giving socialism.

In the Unemployment Report which the 1930 Australian Labor Party Conference adopted, it was pointed out that the immediate problem was twofold in character, viz.:-

1. Subsistence relief work; and
2. Scientific treatment towards prevention and elimination;

and stated that with regard to these, the restoration and freeing of credit was an indispensable condition. Further, that the Commonwealth Government should take all available measures to establish the necessary credit.

That the following plank be added to the Social Reform section of our platform:

“National Insurance, including provision for sick, accident, life, and unemployment insurance.”

The Banking and Monetary Committee has submitted a monetary policy which provides in its ‘purpose’ for:

“The utilisation of the real wealth of Australia to ensure a maximum standard of living consistent with the productive capacity of the Commonwealth through national control of its credit resources and the establishment of an efficient medium of exchange between production and consumption.”

And in its ‘principles’:

“2. The ensuring of essential community purchasing power by the organisation of employment and the expansion of social services to enable Australian primary and secondary industries to operate at their maximum capacity.”

And

“The financing by the Commonwealth Bank at the actual cost of issuance and service of public works at not less than Award rates to aid national development.”

And the building of homes, agricultural development and extension of Australian secondary industries are noted among the ‘Objects to attain’.

We consider that, with the advent of a Federal Labor Government, immediate steps will be made towards the translation of these planks into actual facts, and the problem of unemployment will thereby be considerably lessened.

Pending the consummation of this policy, we recommend the following relief measures:
1. Overtime and piecework should be abolished.
2. Immediate legislation or administrative action to provide a shorter working week.
3. Payment of family endowment to include the first child and payment to be made up to 16 years.
4. An increase in the assistance given by the Federal Government to the States for the relief of unemployment in order to enable the State Governments to provide sufficient work to the unemployed to meet the basic human needs of food, shelter and clothing in accordance with the accepted Australian standard of living.

We condemn the present haphazard method of fixing sustenance payments to unemployed workers in the different States of the Commonwealth, and demand that the Commonwealth Government shall accept full responsibility to feed, house and clothe its people.

**Fighting Platform**

That a Fighting Platform be adopted and that the final drafting be entrusted to the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party, subject to the approval of the Federal Executive, and, further, that the following at least be included in such Fighting Platform:

(a) Extension of the functions of the Commonwealth Bank and the utilisation of national credit for the planned development of the Commonwealth.

(b) Such extension of the powers of the Commonwealth as are necessary for the carrying out of Labor's policy.

(c) Planned marketing of Australian produce.

(d) Unemployment insurance.

(e) Reduction of the working hours of industry and the development of a higher standard of living.

(f) Adequate home defence against possible aggression, and the Government monopoly of manufacture of arms and munitions.

(h) Repeal of all anti-civil and anti-social legislation and enactments.

(i) General extension and improvement of social services.

(j) Unification of railway gauges and the provision of adequate Commonwealth shipping service between Tasmania and the mainland.

**Crimes Act**

“That Conference appreciates the efforts that have been made by the Industrial and Political Movement to secure the repeal of the repressive, anti-working class provisions of the Crimes Act, which, in the opinion of Conference, are primarily designed to hinder and suppress Labor's
political and industrial activities, we, therefore, instruct the Federal Executive to continue its efforts to educate the people on the far-reaching and dangerous provisions of the Crimes Act, so as to ensure the return of a Labor Government and the repeal of the objectionable clauses.”

At the conclusion of the Conference the following officials were elected: President, Mr N Makin, South Australia; Vice-Presidents, Mr C Fallon, Queensland; Mr JJ Graves, New South Wales; Secretary, Mr DL McNamara, Victoria. Mr JJ Kenneally, past President, did not nominate for re-election.

This is the first occasion for many years that a delegate from New South Wales has been elected as a Federal officer.

Consequent upon the Federal Conference the Interstate Labor Women’s Conference was held in Hobart, Tasmania, on February 1, 1937; Mrs Houghton and Mrs Steel represented New South Wales.

The Conference was the most representative Labor Women’s Conference yet held, Queensland being the only State not represented. The Conference was opened by Mr AG Ogilvie, Labor Premier of Tasmania, and it lasted for three days, during which time some very important decisions were arrived at in connection with Anti-War, Health, Education, Sex Equality, Social Legislation and Organisation.

Provincial Conferences

The two Provincial Conferences held in February of this year, country and metropolitan, were an unqualified success. The Country Conference was held at Lithgow and the successful clearing of the Agenda Paper of that Conference was due, in a very large measure, to the efficient organising of the local branch officials at Lithgow.

The Labor Mayor tendered a civic reception to the leaders, officials and delegates prior to the opening of the Conference.

The Mayor, assisted by his colleagues on the Council and in cooperation with the branch officials arranged a number of social functions and visits, including one to Newnes, which were at once interesting, instructive and pleasant.

The Metropolitan Conference was a very representative one and sat for two days and dealt with the whole of the items on the Agenda Paper.

Debates on all matters were very keen and critical and of a higher standard than for some years past; there was a complete absence of rancour and bitterness. The Conference adjourned sine die on the unanimous vote of the delegates.

The decisions of these Conferences are to be found in the Agenda Paper for Annual General Conference.
**Legislative Council Election**

The triennial election of the Legislative Council was held on December 9, 1936; fifteen members of the Council retired, four of whom were Labor members; the election resulted in four Labor members being returned: Messrs JJ Graves, J Culbert, AW McNamara and GB Archer.

With one or two exceptions the whole of the Parliamentary Labor members loyally supported the Labor ticket; if the exceptions mentioned had remained loyal to their pledge, Labor would have won a fifth seat, Mr W Brotherson, the fifth Labor candidate being narrowly defeated.

**Selection Ballots**

Towards the end of 1936 the selection ballots were conducted for the Senate and House of Representatives. The ballots that have been finalised resulted in the following being elected as Labor candidates for the coming Federal election:

*Senate.* — Messrs SK Amour, CE Anderson, J Armstrong, W Ashley, Four NSW vacancies are to be contested at the next election.

*House of Representatives Candidates*

Cook — T Sheehan.
Dalley — JS Rosevear, MHR.
East Sydney — EJ Ward, MHR.
Lang — D Mulcahy, MHR.
Martin — SC Taylor.
Reid — JH Gander, MHR.
Watson — WJ Dignam.
West Sydney — JA Beasley, MHR.
Calare — W Folster, ex-MLA
Darling — J Clark, MHR.
Gwydir — WJ Scully, ex-MLA.
Hunter — R James MHR.
Macquarie — AS Luchetti.
Newcastle — D Watkins, MHR.
Robertson — CE Cross.
Werriwa — HP Lazzarini, MHR.

The selection of Labor candidates for the remaining twelve constituencies has not yet been finalised.

**Executive Elections**

In the ballot for 1937 Central Executive, held at the end of 1936, the new Groups came into operation, eight Groups of Metropolitan Branches taking the place of the four Groups of previous years.
Because of irregularities reported in connection with the Land Transport Group, a new ballot was held, the candidates successful in the first ballot were also successful in the second.

The following members represent the various Groups on the Central Executive for the current year.

**TRADE UNION GROUPS.**
- D Downey Building Trades.
- S Shelton Food.
- S Weston Manufacturing.
- LJ Stevenson Metal Trades.
- SA Sutton Metal Trades.
- AE Lewry Metal Trades.
- W Cunningham Western Miners.
- WJ Dwyer Public Utilities.
- C Hackett Public Utilities.
- RH Esam Public Utilities.
- A Simmons Printing, Non-manual.
- J Hughes Land Transport.
- EA Yeo Land Transport.
- AJ Young Land Transport.
- W Donnelly Water Transport.
- A Welfare Wood.

**METROPOLITAN GROUPS.**
- VF Christensen No. 1.
- AJ Murphy No. 2.
- PJ O’Grady No. 3.
- TO Johannessen No. 4.
- DL Rees No. 5.
- S Gould No. 6.
- WC Barnett No. 7.
- S Howey No. 8.

**COUNTRY DIVISIONS.**
- GR Johnson Southern.
- LGE Moreman Southern.
- W Beynon West Central.
- Mrs MA Edmonds West Central.
- W Brown Northern.
- WH Read Northern.

*New Grouping of the Metropolitan Electorates.*

*No. 1 Group.*

Arncliffe Georges River
Kogarah Hurstville
No. 2 Group.
Canterbury Bankstown Lakemba
(Excepting Chipping-Norton, Lansvale, Liverpool, Mt Pritchard, Cabramatta Branches which are included in No. 3 Group.)

No. 3 Group.
Auburn Parramatta Granville
(Inclusive of Castle Hill, Quakers Hill, Riverstone, Chipping-Norton, Lansvale, Liverpool, Mt Prichard, Cabramatta, and Liverpool.)

No. 4 Group.
Ashfield Concord
Croydon Balmain
Burwood Hornsby
(Excepting Castle Hill, Quakers Hill and Riverstone Branches included in No. 3 Group.)

No. 5 Group.
Drummoyne Willoughby
Ryde Mosman
Lane Cove North Sydney
Gordon Manly

No. 6 Group.
King Bondi
Paddington Vaucluse
Woollahra Coogee
Waverley Randwick

No. 7 Group.
Glebe Redfern
Phillip Botany

No. 8 Group.
Newtown Petersham
Marrickville Leichhardt
Dulwich Hill Annandale

Organisation
The organisational work has progressed favorably during the past year, in spite of the vigor and bitterness used by our opponents. Many Branches and Councils were visited in both the metropolitan and country areas, including Bathurst, Cowra, Grenfell, Young, Narrabri, Katoomba, Tamworth, Muswellbrook, Werris Creek, Woy Woy, Hunter, Calare, Ashburnham, Gwydir, Newcastle and Broken Hill.

The loyalty of the country members to the Party is clearly demonstrated by the great distances delegates are prepared to travel to attend meetings and assist generally in organising work. Many requisitions
have been received for the establishing of new Branches, which augurs well for the forthcoming election campaign.

This support and interest is even exhibited in Municipal and Shire spheres. Amongst our recent successes are D Warnock, Adamstown; W O’Hearn, Maitland; D Cummings, Burragong Shire; NJ Keile and FC Schindler, of Auburn.

The affiliation of many Branches and Unions was endorsed during the past term, viz.: Croydon Park, Sutherland, Lismore, Kogarah, Mayfield East, Maroubra Bay, Maroubra North, The Rock, Zetland, Gulgong, Fargo, Tullamore, Woy Woy, Tarberton, Quaker’s Hill, Elong, Homeville, East Maitland, Lake Cargellico, Ungarie, Woronora Dam, Erskineville Branches. The Unions include Moulders, Marine Stewards, Postal Workers, Postal Electricians, Bread-carters, Hospital Employees, Water and Sewerage (Hunter District), and Enginedrivers. Some of these are re affiliations due chiefly to the consummation of the terms of Unity, finalised by the Federal Conference held in Adelaide in July, 1936.

Municipal Elections

In addition to the activities now being undertaken by the Movement in connection with the Referenda and the Federal elections, interest has been concentrated upon the selection of Labor Candidates for the Municipal and Shire elections. Quite a number of Municipal assemblies have already arranged for selection ballots.

An influential committee has been set up to conduct the City Council election, consisting of representatives from the City Council Municipal Caucus, the Central Executive, Municipal Employees’ Union and a representative from each of the Municipal Assemblies within the City of Sydney Municipal Area.

Arrangements are well in hand for the setting up of canvassing committees and the raising of funds; a motor drive has already been held, which resulted in a substantial sum being raised.

Amended By-Laws

The Central Executive during the term found it was necessary to amend By-laws 5 and 6 as follows, with the addition of a new by-law:

By-law 5, Clause (c) amended by adding the following words after the word “organisations”—“or have not been suspended, expelled or otherwise deprived of full rights of membership in the Party”.

By-law 6 amended by adding the following words after the word “organisations”:—“Or have not been suspended, expelled or otherwise deprived of full rights of membership in the Party”.

New By-Law 22.

“Promulgation of the decisions of the Central Executive or Annual General Conference may be made by advertisement in the Labor Daily.

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The appearance of such advertisement over the signatures of the General President and the General Secretary shall be sufficient and valid intimation to all members, Branches, Councils and Unions that such decisions have been made.”

**State Elections**

The Annual General Conference should give some attention to the coming State election and direct the Movement to make the necessary and early arrangements for the selection ballots so as to permit of candidates being in the field with plenty of time to organise their electorate by forming Campaign Committees and raising funds to fight the elections.

**Gwydir Electorate**

There is every possibility of a by-election for the Federal seat of Gwydir in NSW to be held possibly in April. The sitting UCP member, Mr Abbott, is to retire and take over the duties of Administrator of the Northern Territory. Mr WJ Scully will be Labor’s candidate in this by-election, and there is no doubt that Labor will succeed in winning this seat from the Country Party.

**ALP Sports Federation**

The operations of the ALP Sports Federation and the Sporting Associations which functioned under its control during the past twelve months, attained a high standard of success, and the advertisement which has been derived from the many deeds performed in this sphere, together with the interest created among the members of numerous Branches, has proved of great value to the Movement generally.

The development of the sporting side of the ALP, although becoming pronounced, is still in its infancy, but requires the support of more Branches to place the ALP on a footing with most of the other big sporting organisations in this State. The work already performed in this direction has been the means of establishing a political nursery from which the future members and supporters of the Party will be drawn.

**Tennis Association**

The Tennis Association which, little more than two years ago was on the verge of extinction, owing to lack of support, has since been taken in hand by competent officials whose untiring efforts have now placed the Association on a higher plane than ever attained before.

The competition just commenced, attracted a record entry of thirty-four (34) teams, for which 272 players were registered. This number represents an increase of sixty (60) on that received for any previous competition.
The fame of the Association is spreading rapidly, and the friendliness which is strongly in evidence in all competition matches has been, time and again, favorably remarked on by both players and spectators, and is proving a big attraction to newcomers. The existence of this spirit between the teams can be attributed to the capable management of the Association’s affairs, and probably to the fact that a tie exists between the players because of the similarity of their political thoughts.

Branch officials are urged to consider the question of organising the young people in their respective districts, and to adopt the formation of tennis clubs as the means of achieving this object.

**Golf Club**

The ALP Golf Club made such rapid strides shortly after its inception, as to cause slight embarrassment to the officials, who were compelled to limit the size of the Club owing to the fact that sufficient accommodation could not be secured on metropolitan courses to cater for the numbers applying for membership.

The Club continued to function, however, during the summer months, when it was found possible to lift the restriction on the membership list, with the result that the latter has now grown to a figure closely approaching the hundred mark. Provided that negotiations, which are now being made for the conduct of the winter competitions, are successful, that number should be exceeded, and a very successful season, during which a number of major events, including championships, will be decided, is anticipated.

The most important achievement of the Club to date was its win in the South Sydney District Golf Association Competition, which was conducted last winter between the clubs which function at Eastlake. This success against clubs which have been long established, not only brought prominence to the team, but attracted attention to the entry of the ALP into this popular branch of sport.

The personnel of the ALP team included Russell Perkins, president and captain of the club, Laurie Lambert, Les Freeman, Fred Labelle, Johnny Stevens, Wal Smith and Stan Gribble, all of whom are deserving of congratulations on their many fine performances.

**“Miss ALP 1936”**

The result of the “Miss ALP 1936” Popular Lady Competition clearly indicated that this method of raising Campaign Funds is becoming increasingly popular, and that the Branches are beginning to realise the benefits which can be derived by their participation in each year’s quest.

Last year’s competition attracted entries from twenty-three candidates who were supported by active committees, and whose efforts bore surprisingly good results. The total amount subscribed represented an
increase of almost 100 per cent over the amount received for any previous competition.

The first prize was won by the nominee of the Newtown-Erskineville Branch, Mrs N Gow, who, after being credited with the votes of the candidates whom she defeated in a preliminary competition in the Newtown electorate, had a big margin to spare.

The prize for the best individual effort went to Miss Hilda Gordon, who represented the Clovelly ALP Younger Set, the members of which have been prominent in each of the competitions conducted to date.

The work performed by the country candidates and their committees is commendable, and their chances of success in future competitions are considerably enhanced by the interest which has now been created in these quests.

Owing to the strong possibility of the Federal elections being held at the end of the year, arrangements are now well in hand for the “Miss ALP 1937” competition, which will be conducted on lines similar to last year, except that preliminary competitions will be deleted, and each candidate will represent the area covered by the Branch responsible for her nomination.

Every Branch participating in these competitions receives a refund of 25 per cent of the amounts they subscribe, together with prizes which are awarded to the Branches responsible for nominating the successful candidates.

The following list shows the support accorded the 1936 quest:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Amount (£ s d)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clovelly Younger Set</td>
<td>47 11 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newtown</td>
<td>44 10 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erskineville</td>
<td>36 15 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camdenville</td>
<td>35 0 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tumbarumba</td>
<td>31 10 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastwood-Central</td>
<td>27 1 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakemba</td>
<td>23 1 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rockdale</td>
<td>21 1 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enmore</td>
<td>15 18 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glebe</td>
<td>15 16 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jindabyne</td>
<td>15 5 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rosebery</td>
<td>13 11 7</td>
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<td>Harbord</td>
<td>12 11 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burwood</td>
<td>11 8 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Punchbowl</td>
<td>9 18 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hillston</td>
<td>5 19 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rozelle E. Younger Set</td>
<td>5 15 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ryde</td>
<td>5 8 5</td>
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[Cont ...]
Referenda

The Federal Conference held in Adelaide in July of last year fully considered the matter of the amending of the Commonwealth Constitution by means of referendums, and had before it the three Bills introduced by the Scullin Government in 1930.

The unanimous decision of Conference on matters concerning referendums is as follows:

“That the question of how and when referenda shall be held for carrying of the Party’s policy in regard to the Commonwealth’s powers shall be decided by the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party.”

This was interpreted by the Federal Parliamentary Labor Caucus to mean they had the right to determine the Party’s attitude in the present referenda, and Caucus decided to oppose the Lyons Government proposals.

The Queensland Central Executive refused to accept Caucus decision and instructed the Queensland Labor members in the Federal Parliament to support the Lyons Government proposals, stating that irrespective of the Queensland members would be required to take the platform in support of the Referenda. A second meeting of the Caucus was held, and the Leader, Mr J Curtin, MHR, was instructed to make representation to the Leader of the Labor Party in Queensland, Mr W Forgan-Smith, with the
object of obtaining a review of the instructions issued by Queensland to its members, but Mr Forgan-Smith was adamant; a third meeting of the Caucus was held and it was agreed to leave the matter an open question to obviate the possibility of a split in the Party.

The Federal Parliamentary Labor members from all States, with the exception of Queensland members, vigorously opposed, in Parliament, the Referenda proposals of the Lyons Government.

Caucus decision resulted in Mr J Curtin, MHR, Leader of the Federal Parliamentary Party, and other prominent Federal Parliamentarians, refraining from taking part in the Referenda Campaign.

NSW Labor members were recognised as the leaders in the ‘No’ Campaign, Mr JA Beasley, MHR, being accepted by all parties and State instrumentalities as the leader in opposition to the Lyons Government proposals.

This was confirmed by the Broadcasting Commission taking a vote of every member of the Federal Parliament who opposed the Lyons Government proposals, as to who the Commission should recognise as the Opposition Leader. The result of the vote favored Mr JA Beasley, MHR.

The Commission’s attitude in this regard arose out of persistent and determined agitation of Mr Beasley, and the Campaign Committee for the right to radiocast Labor’s case over the ‘A’ Class Stations. Negotiations with the Commission were numerous and protracted, and resulted in the Labor Party being conceded the right to use ‘A’ Class Stations with the right of Mr JA Beasley, as the recognised Leader of the ‘No’ Campaign to nominate all radio speakers in opposition to the Lyons Government proposals.

The Movement of this State has been keenly active in the Campaign. The Labor Daily has been used extensively to submit the case for Labor, aided by the radio and public meetings.

The Campaign was opened by Mr JA Beasley, MHR, in the Town Hall, Glebe on February 11, 1937.

Labor Campaign Committees quickly came into operation in every section of the State, and arrangements were made for the manning of the 3057 booths throughout New South Wales.

The committees successfully canvassed the hospitals for the purpose of obtaining postal votes from the sick and infirm, who would not be able to attend the booth to record their vote.

A very comprehensive itinerary of speakers was drawn up and successfully carried out. The Parliamentary members of both the Federal and State Houses willingly carried out duties imposed on them in this direction, and almost every part of the State has been visited by these members.

A million ‘How-to-Vote’ slips were despatched from Head Office, and as was anticipated, early in the Campaign an emphatic ‘No’ vote was recorded on March 6, in opposition to the Lyons’ Government proposals.
The activities of the Labor Movement in the Campaign was responsible for the defeat of the Referenda, and must be accepted as an indication of the defeat of the Lyons Government at the next elections, and with the return of Labor to the Federal Parliaments.

**Labor Prospects**

With the opening of the year 1937, there is evidence of Labor meeting with a series of successes, a better financial year is already apparent and improved methods of organisation are meeting with success.

In conclusion, mention must be made of the loyal and untiring efforts of the staff to carry on the ever-increasing work of the Movement, also many thanks to the numerous voluntary workers who each year faithfully and earnestly come forward to assist, and a lesson that many can learn is that, with Labor united and all sections working in harmony and ably led, our Party is almost invincible.

There is already a large influx of new members into Branches, and with the many requests for the resuscitation of the defunct Branches and the establishing of the new Branches, and the anticipated new affiliation from Trade Unions, coupled with the revival of the enthusiastic interest of members of the Movement, there is little doubt that Labor will be successful in both the Federal and State elections.

**Labor Daily**

The Labor Daily during the term has again proved of immense value and importance to the Labor Movement as a newspaper and advertising medium. It is recognised as one of the most influential and reliable organs in the State.

As a means of propagating the ideals and policy of our Movement it was our greatest asset, and its articles on political current events are accepted by all sections as authentic.

The Movement is justly proud of its paper and its administration, and we appreciate the work that it has done for the Labor Movement, and congratulate it on its very successful year.

**Appreciation**

In conclusion mention must be made of the loyal and untiring efforts of the staff to carry on the ever-increasing work of the Movement, also many thanks to the numerous voluntary workers who, each year, faithfully and earnestly come forward to assist, and a lesson that many can learn is that with Labor united, and all sections in harmony and ably led, our Party is almost invincible.
Annual Conference of NSW ALP, 1937

(The Sydney Morning Herald, 27, 29 March 1937)

Day 1, Friday, 26 March 1937

Mr Curtin Declares for Mr Lang. Labour Conference Speech.
State Party Supreme Within State.
Rebel Leaders Seek Readmission.

It was made clear at the annual Easter conference of the State Labour party yesterday that the leader of the Federal Opposition (Mr Curtin) had allied himself with Mr Lang.

Mr Curtin approved the actions of the Lang faction in New South Wales throughout the recent Labour split by declaring that the State Labour movement must be supreme within the State.

Proceedings at the conference showed that Mr Lang was in complete control of the State Labour movement, and that the opposition rebel union movement was hopelessly divided.

There was surprise early in the conference when it was announced that among those who sought readmission to the party were Mr JS Gar- derden, MP, Messrs Heffron, Davidson, and Horsington, MsLA, and a number of union officials prominently identified with the rebel movement. A move to have their applications dealt with at once was defeated.

Mr Curtin Greeted With Cheers

Thunderous applause erected Mr Curtin when he walked into the conference hall, accompanied by Mr Lang. The deputy Federal leader (Mr Forde) followed with Mr Beasley, MP. Lusty cheers were given for the Labour party, and some time elapsed before the excitement had sufficiently subsided to enable the conference to proceed.

When Mr Curtin rose to speak he was again cheered.

Introducing Mr Curtin, the chairman announced, amid cheers, that if Mr Curtin was not the next Prime Minister it would not be the fault of the State Labour party. His presence had broken a long sequence of conferences from which the Federal Labour leader had been absent. Party leaders were mindful of the great assistance Mr Curtin had given
in the preliminary unity negotiations, and how he had come to the conference to amplify the policy of unity. (Cheers.)

Mr Curtin's Declaration

“I say that the State conference must be supreme within the State arena”, said Mr Curtin, amidst loud applause, “and that the Federal conference must be supreme in the Federal arena. I say definitely and decisively that no one State executive anywhere in Australia must presume that they are a Commonwealth Labour party. If we are to go forward we can only do so by a close sensing of each other’s likes and dislikes. It is impossible for me to lay out in the Federal Parliament the decisions of two State executives. No man can do that. Only a fool would attempt to do it.

“I believe that we can do better with the Labour movement of Australia than we have done. I believe that we would do better by displaying a little more of that tolerance which is an essential part of Labour’s outlook. This applies not only to the executive but also to those who may be disposed to be disgruntled. I say this not in any critical spirit but because I have always realised that a paramount feature of the Labour movement is its fellowship. No man in this Labour movement can serve the movement by trying to score off his mates. No man or woman can give his or her best service to the movement and the people while persons are taking points on them.

“No man makes himself leader no matter how much he believes he has done so. He has got only one vote that matters. No man can make himself either Federal or State leader. Therefore, I put it to you that if you do not like the way things are going, tell him so. Until you bring about a change by the ordinary process that man is entitled to the respect and the support of every man in the movement.

Mr Curtin then spoke on the policy of the Labour party and criticised the administration of the Federal Government. A report of his speech appears on another page.

Mr Lang in moving a short vote of thanks to Mr Curtin said that it was one of the finest orations he had ever heard at a Labour conference. (Applause.)

Lang Party in Control

The election of officers indicated that the followers of Mr Lang were again in complete charge of the proceedings.

Leaders of the rebel unions did not even nominate a candidate for the various conference positions, and the nominees of the Lang faction were elected without opposition.
The absence of opposition to the ruling faction came as a surprise and was regarded as an admission by the rebels that they had abandoned the fight so far as the Easter conference was concerned.

The following conference officials were elected: Tellers, Messrs A Paton, W Draper, R Johnson and AE Lewry. Mr J Payne was elected minute secretary, and Mr CE Anderson timekeeper. The appeals committee comprised Messrs AW McNamara, A Roberts, J Upton GA Byrne, and S Weston. Those on the agenda committee were Messrs J Stewart, J Walker, L Leece, W O’Hearn, and T Sheehan. The Press as usual were excluded.

**Expelled Members**

There was a lively scene when the general secretary, Mr JJ Graves, MLC, moved the adoption of the annual report of the executive and the balance sheet.

Mr R Quintrell (Barrier Assembly) submitted an amendment that references in the report to the expulsion of a number of individuals by the special conference on August 22 should be considered by the appeals committee at once.

Mr Quintrell said it was imperative that the appeals against the expulsions should be dealt with at once. If unity was to be achieved, the question whether the expelled members were to be readmitted should be disposed of immediately.

The chairman (Mr P Keller) said that Mr Quintrell had spoken much about the interests of the movement. Unfortunately however, Mr Quintrell had gone to Broken Hill after the metropolitan conference and had delivered a report which was just a “hymn of hate” against what he described as “the inner group”.

Mr Quintrell heatedly replied that he considered some of the actions of the executive were improper and he would not go back on anything he had said.

The senior vice-president (Mr G Gibson) said that the appeals committee was the best body to deal with the expulsions. The question of who was to be readmitted could safely be left in its hands.

“We have unity already”, said Mr W Paton (Ironworkers), replying to remarks made by Mr Quintrell.

Mr W Lyons (Storemen and Packers), supporting the amendment moved by Mr Quintrell, explained that he did not approve the attack made on the executive but he felt that discipline must be preserved in the party. The expulsions should be dealt with and the conference should decide the matter.

Mr JB Martin, MLC, organising secretary, said that the conference was merely wasting time discussing the expulsions. The appeals committee could well deal with the situation.
Amendment Defeated

Mr Graves then informed the conference that appeals for readmission had been lodged on behalf of Mr S Wyatt (ARU), Mr J Duffin (Northern Miners), and Mr E Mara (Western Miners). Others who had lodged appeals were Messrs WJ McDicken, WE Dickson, JH Ewin, J Kilburn, RJ Heffron, MLA, MA Davidson, MLA, E Horsington, MLA, JE Pullan, J Sydney, and JS Garden, MP.

When the vote was taken the report was adopted and the amendment was defeated by an overwhelming majority.

State Labour Conference. Mr Curtin’s Speech.

“Rejuvenate Labour”.

The rejuvenation of Labour in the Australian nation was declared to be the object of the Federal Labour party by the leader of the Federal Opposition (Mr Curtin) in his speech at the Easter conference of the State Labour party.

Mr Curtin said that the rights of free speech had been filched from the people by anti-Labour Governments, and that Labour must ensure that its policy was not misrepresented, by “freeing the air” from “the present Government monopoly of radio”.

“I would not say this outside this conference”, he said, “but for the last 25 years the Labour movement has been largely a stand-pat movement. During the last 10 years the States have been financially crippled, and therefore unable to carry out the social benefit part of their programme. As a consequence, you have had Labour Governments in quite a number of States, all the time working under rigorous obstacles. They have been unable to balance their budgets, and deficits have been soaring, whereas the Commonwealth Government, having easy fields of taxation at its disposal, has shown surpluses, and has embarked on extravagant proposals which have given no relief to the masses of the people.

Federal Government Criticised

The Commonwealth has set out to exasperate the States, chiefly because from 1917 to 1929 and from 1931 to the present day every Commonwealth Government has set itself up as the bulwark of capitalism and not as a representative Government of free people. It is not the Labour movement which has failed. The democratic principles of this Commonwealth have been used to buttress and support a plutocratic dictatorship. The Governments have not only taken the form of dictatorship, but have displayed the actuality of despotism. The rights of free speech and free public assembly have been filched from the people by successive Governments.
Between the censorship and the present Government monopoly of radio, the public mind is at present the centre of a given capitalistic focal point. Labour must ensure that no misrepresentation of its policy is possible. It must not allow itself to be the victim of distortion, and it must free the air from the monopolies which are now setting out to control it. Labour must demand the air.

“Pretty Uniforms”

Referring to the present defence policy, Mr Curtin said that it must be made responsive to Australian economic conditions. Lacking the development of essential industries, it was no use having men marching round in the pretty uniforms Sir Archdale Parkhill has designed.

“Aeroplanes might be bought in large numbers, but what is the good of our buying aeroplanes if no petrol is available for them?” Mr Curtin said. “We may have shore batteries along the Australian coast, but what is the use of them if there are no munitions available to serve the guns? Until we have developed our own petrol resources and satisfactorily established our munition industry, we cannot look to the future with any sense of security.”

It was useless, he said, to talk about Imperial cooperation and reliance on Great Britain and the League of Nations in defence, in view of recent developments in other parts of the world.

Shorter Hours

“I would not reduce to the absolute limit the fixation of hours”, Mr Curtin continued. “I stand against the idea that we should all work as little as possible”.

Mr Curtin said that while he stood for a reduction of hours he would prefer to see the people receiving a real money wage and living in comfortable homes in preference to slum areas and hovel conditions that prevailed in many of our industrial suburbs today. You may succeed in reducing hours to a lower minimum but when a crisis comes again and the present system prevails you will find industrial tribunals again cutting real wages as they did before”, he said.

“It is impossible for a Labour government to reorientate the economic life of a country in a day or a month or a year, but its duty is to start that reorientation the moment it takes office. Mechanisation is being used for the betterment of only a section of the community and not for the advantage of the people as a whole. Statistics show that both the primary and secondary industries are employing less people than formerly, with the result that there will continue to be a gradual increase in the army of unemployed.
“It is essential that the national finance and credit system should be reorganised to enable Labour’s policy to be carried out. It is also essential that the nation should control its resources.”

Mr Curtin said that the Federal Labour party contemplated not only the mobilisation of votes but the rehabilitation of the spirit of Labour. The party needed a majority in both houses of Parliament but the unstinted confidence of the people was necessary.

**Debt to Official Organ**

During the discussion of the annual report of the executive Mr O Neill of Hurstville asked for details of the sundry creditors mentioned in the balance-sheet. Mr Graves replied that most of the amount outstanding was money owed to the official organ but the company in control of the paper was not pressing the movement for the money. If the amount outstanding had been a bank overdraft interest would have had to be paid on it, but this was not done in the case of the official organ. (Applause) In reply to further questions Mr Graves said that a big increase had taken place in branch and union capitation fees compared with last year.

**Many Resolutions**

A resolution approving the policy of the nationalisation of the production of oil from coal and shale, and condemning the State Government for proposing to hand over valuable shale leases to Commonwealth control was passed.

The conference also passed a resolution condemning the action of the metal trade employers in dismissing 3000 metal trade workers. “We call upon the Labour movement”, the resolution read, “to assist the locked-out workers morally and financially”.

On the motion of Mr TV Ryan (Dubbo) the conference instructed the next Labour Government to provide work for the unemployed at full award rates and conditions. An addendum to the resolution demanded the abolition of the permissible income regulations and the inclusion of all children under the age of 16 among those eligible to collect family endowment.

Another resolution passed urged the next Labour Government to place the wages staff of all Government departments and semi-Government departments on the same basis as the salaried staff in regard to hours and privileges. Supporters of the resolution declared that country settlers and other outside railway employees were equally entitled to the concessions enjoyed by the salaried staff.
Criminal Assault Cases

The conference urged that in cases where young girls had made charges against men for criminal assault, all cases should be heard in camera. It was suggested that the Government should employ fully-trained women to act in conjunction with the girl and her solicitor and that the police handling the case should not be allowed to take written statements from either the girl or the man before both had gone before a magistrate.

The conference adopted a recommendation from the country conference that the Coal Bill drawn up by Mr Baddeley, MLA, when Minister for Mines should be put into operation immediately on the return of a Labour Government.

Another decision of the conference was that steps should be taken by the next Labour Government to erect maternity hospitals in all country centres, and also that the State Government should provide medical aid through health centres for pre-natal cases.

Applications for Readmission

Most of the time of the night session was spent in considering applications for readmission, apart from those lodged by the rebel union leaders.

The conference rejected an application by Mr AC Willis, a former Agent-General during the Lang administration. Mr Willis applied on the ground that under the unity terms he was entitled to readmission. The conference held that his application did not come within the terms of the unity agreement.

The conference agreed to readmit to the movement without continuity a former organising secretary of the Labour party, Mr AJ Macpherson, who was expelled for the support he gave to Mr Theodore against Mr Lang several years ago.

A former member for Concord, Mr McDicken, also sought readmission but his application was rejected on the ground that it was not lodged in accordance with the rules. Mr J Bugler was also refused admission on similar grounds. He was expelled because he opposed the selected and endorsed Labour candidate in the Newtown municipal election.

Decisions Today

It was ascertained last night that a general application had been lodged by the Labour Council for the readmission to membership of the 21 expelled political and industrial leaders. Personal applications for readmission were made by Mr Garden, MP, Messrs Heffron, Davidson, and Horsington, MsLA, J Pullen, and J Sydney.

Applications for readmission were lodged by the Australian Railways Union for Mr S Wyatt, the Northern Miners’ Federation for Mr J
Duffin, the Western Miners’ Federation for Mr E Mara, and the Bricklayers’ Union for Mr Ewin and J Kilburn. It was stated last night that the decision of the appeals committee in relation to these applications would be announced to the conference today.

*Day 2, Saturday, 27 March 1937*

**Labor’s Future. Election Victory Forecast. Leaders Optimistic.**

**Conference Decisions.**

Both the Federal Labour leader (Mr Curtin) and the leader of the State party (Mr Lang), in addresses on Saturday, predicted a victory for Labour at the next Federal election.

Mr Lang told his followers that he could not impress on them too often the importance of intensive organisation, ample propaganda, and party discipline.

Mr Lang delivered his address at the Easter conference; Mr Curtin spoke at the annual dinner held in the Australian Hall after the conference.

**Governments Attacked**

“We opened our conference this year by proclaiming it a year of Labour victories”, Mr Lang said.

“We promised ourselves that we would do the hat trick. We got the first on March 6 in the referendum. We will have the second at Gwydir in May. The third will come to us with the Federal elections at the end of the year, and, for good measure, we will sweep the polls at the State, whenever those elections are held.

“Both the Lyons and the Stevens Governments favour a low cost of living in London and a high cost of living in Sydney. The Australian people do not believe in that policy and they are turning to the Labour party because only the Labour party can correct it. The policy of Lyons and Steven all the time is to penalise Australia for the benefit of the people who give them banquets when they go to London. So far as these Governments are concerned, the Australian is the forgotten man.

“The Commonwealth Bank is adopting a policy of deflation because it says that it does not want the present prosperity to become a boom. But where is the prosperity? Wages are still almost on the depression level. In all directions social services intended to help those in need have been curtailed. The people can tolerate these conditions no longer, and are anxiously awaiting an opportunity of putting Labour Governments in power both in the Federal and State Parliaments.
“The Lyons and the Stevens Governments are against the people, and that is why the people are opposed to them”.

**Spreading Propaganda**

Mr Lang said that a change was taking place in the methods of fighting elections. The popularity of wireless had created a propaganda problem for the Labour party. The position was illustrated in Gwydir, he added. On the border of the electorate were three of the highest powered commercial stations in Australia. Two were owned and controlled by the Country party. The third, Tamworth, was owned by a company in which the Tamworth *Daily Leader* was a shareholder, and the editor of the *Daily Leader* was Mr Thompson, the Country party member for New England. The Labour movement must grapple with the problem.

“We feel confident”, Mr Lang said, “by the time the Federal general election campaign opens we will have newspaper and wireless facilities that will ensure the spreading of Labour propaganda throughout this State.

**Mr Curtin’s Address**

Mr Curtin, in his speech at the dinner, summarised the policy which he said he would put before the people as embracing the promotion of international friendship, the organisation of Australian industry so that nothing essential to national security would be missing, the granting of the maximum of generosity to those who were unable to provide for themselves, and cooperation with the States for the right use of the Constitution.

Mr Curtin said that the Lyons Government had mismanaged the affairs of Australia; it had endangered the safety of the country and had shown too much regard for the interests of selected classes. It had failed the States just as it had failed the primary producers and the workers.

Mr Lang introduced Mr Curtin as “this great Australian leader”.

**Conference Decisions**

During the conference proceedings Mr K Brown of Muswellbrook obtained the suspension of standing orders to move a resolution, which was carried, protesting against the action of various censorship boards in banning importation, exhibition, and sale of books, films, and plays of an intellectual and working class nature. It was urged in the resolution that the amendment of the censorship laws should be one of the first duties of the next Labour Government.

References to the socialisation policy of the party were made when a motion was submitted providing for the introduction of legislation to tax
all machinery designed to eliminate labour to create a fund for the maintenance of the displaced workers.

Mr R Quintrell (Broken Hill) moved an amendment that the conference should recommend to the next Federal Labour Government to set up machinery to attain the Labour party’s socialisation objective.

The president (Mr Keller) declared that socialisation remained a plank of the Labour party’s platform. The trouble in the past had been that some persons advocating socialisation had wanted to become an organisation unto themselves.

The amendment moved by Mr Quintrell favouring socialisation was carried.

The conference also decided to urge the Federal ALP executive and the Parliamentary party to keep the socialisation objective in the forefront of all campaigns.

“Under the present law the Police Commissioner is in a position to flout the Government”, said Mr V Rees (North Sydney) in moving that steps be taken by the next Labour Government to secure full Ministerial control over the police force. The motion was carried.

A long discussion took place on a motion designed to amend the rules to make it necessary for members to have three years membership before they could sit on the ALP executive, or act as a delegate at the conferences.

The motion was strongly opposed by many delegates who claimed that it would debar such organisations as the Australian Workers’ Union, in the event of their return to the party, from being represented.

At the morning session the motion was declared carried by 48 votes to 32. The vote was challenged and on a division it was carried by 42 to 38. Immediately the conference resumed in the afternoon the motion was recommitted and defeated.

**Expelled Members. Why They Sought Readmission. Federal Request. Fight to Continue.**

Mr Heffron, MLA, whose application for readmission to the Labour party was refused by the State party conference on Saturday, said that the expelled members had applied to the conference for readmission at the request of the majority of members of the Federal ALP executive.

Personally, he said, the expelled members had been opposed to making an appeal.

The result of the appeals, Mr Heffron said, was a foregone conclusion.

Federal executive members, he added, had expressed strong opinions against the Fascist actions of the inner group in New South Wales in expelling Labour members for having attended a trade union conference.
The rebel Labour leaders will continue their fight against the ruling faction. It was announced yesterday that another industrial conference would be held in defiance of the State Labour machines.

Efforts will also be made to induce the Federal party to overrule the decisions of the State conference, rejecting the appeals of a number of expelled members.

Leaders of the Lang party made it clear last night that now they had Mr Curtin openly allied with them they could afford to ignore the rebels and could win elections without them.

Expulsion Decisions

The decisions of the conference in the cases of the expelled men were embodied in a report submitted by Mr AW McNamara as chairman of the appeals committee.

The appeals of Mr Garden, MP, and Mr Heffron were rejected. Mr Horsington and Mr Davidson, MsLA, will be allowed back on August 1, 1937, provided they do not indulge in disruptive tactics. A former Lang party member of the Upper House, Mr WC Dickson from Broken Hill, was readmitted on the same condition.

The only rebel leader who was unconditionally readmitted with full continuity of membership was Mr JE Pullan, president of the Labour Council, who will shortly leave as the delegate from the Australian trade unions to the Geneva conference.

Applications for readmission were lodged on behalf of Messrs S Wyatt (Australian Railways Union), E Mara (Western Miners), J Duffin (Northern Miners) by their unions, but it was decided that before they would be readmitted they would have to make personal applications to the executive. They would then be readmitted with full continuity subject to their complete acceptance of the rules.

A general application for readmission was lodged with the conference by the secretary of the Labour Council (Mr R King, MLC) on behalf of himself and the other political and industrial leaders who were expelled, but this application was ruled out of order.

Those Still Outside

Labour leaders who will continue to remain outside the party include Messrs JS Garden, MP, RJ Heffron and C Lazzarini MsLA. R King, MLC, A McAlpine, assistant secretary of the Labour Council, G Sinclair, secretary of the Sydney Boilermakers, T Falkingham, secretary of the Redfern Boilermakers, J Kilburn, secretary of the Bricklayers, A Ewin, president of the Bricklayers, J Wilson, State secretary of the Printing Industry Employees’ Union, O Schreiber, president of the Union Secretaries’ Association,
J Maloney, secretary of the Boot Employees’ Union, and JF O’Reilly, secretary of the Hairdressers’ Union.

It was stated last night that the Barrier District Assembly, which largely controls the political activities of Mr Davidson and Mr Horsington, would probably instruct the two members not to return to the party until they had been unconditionally readmitted. It will probably direct them to appeal to the Federal conference.

Mr Davidson said last night that he could not understand the decision of the conference. He considered that he had not been guilty of any breach of Labour principles in attending an industrial conference when invited to do so by the Labour Council and the Barrier District Assembly.

**Secret Rebel Meeting**

A curious aspect of the developments at the conference was that Mr Pullan the only rebel leader unconditionally readmitted presided at a secret meeting of the rebels in the Labour Council office a few hours before the report of the appeals committee on the expulsions was submitted. He occupied the chair as president of the Labour Council.

At the meeting it was decided that the continuations committee which had been in charge of the rebel campaign should continue to function and should make immediate arrangements for another special industrial conference to review the decisions of the Easter conference and determine future plans.

The secret meeting was attended by the expelled members, sympathisers with the rebel leaders who are members of the State ALP executive, and delegates from Newcastle and Wollongong.

The following resolution was carried: “We declare our determination to use every possible means of bringing about a reform of the party rules which will eliminate the cause of discontent in the party. We also intend to direct this struggle in an organised way and will do everything possible to defeat the Lyons Government”.

**Decisive Action**

Delegates were astounded at the swift decisive way in which the expulsions were dealt with at the conference. The report was not submitted until 20 minutes before the conference concluded and was disposed of in that time. It had been awaited with much expectancy and the findings were kept a close secret.

Mr AW McNamara, as chairman of the appeals committee moved the adoption of the report which was carried on the overwhelming vote of the ruling faction.
Mr Hartley, of the Australian Railways Union, attempted to protest against the report, but the gag was applied and the conference abruptly ended.

**Mr Lazzarini Charges Mr Curtin.**

"Pathetic Exhibition at the Conference".

"Mr Curtin’s open flirtation with Mr Lang at the Easter conference on the eve of the Federal election demonstrates to me that he has no moral courage", said Mr Lazzarini, MLA, one of the expelled members, last night.

"His exhibition at the conference was pathetic. In my opinion, he has destroyed his chance of ever becoming Prime Minister. His alliance with Mr Lang will spell disaster for the Labour party in the other States.

"Mr Curtin must know that Mr Lang is regarded as the best asset the UAP ever had. I made no personal application to rejoin the party, and I have no desire to be in the official Labour party until it reverts to the democratic principles and ideals of the Labour movement.

"Mr Curtin’s talk about the need for tolerance, and then his statement that the State Labour movement is supreme, makes his exhibition of fine sentiment absolute nonsense. Every cardinal principle of democracy was broken by the State Labour party, and Mr Curtin has refused to admit what he knows to be right.

"I remember how he opposed Mr Lang in the early years of the fight. We now see him answering to Mr Lang’s tune.

"Mr Lang had a wonderful opportunity at the conference to close up the ranks, but he again ran true to form, and revealed that he is not a leader with constructive ability."
CHAPTER 17

Australian Labor Party, New South Wales Branch
Annual Conference, 6–14 April 1938

Report in The Sydney Morning Herald

This Conference was held only a fortnight after the NSW election of 26 March 1938, at which Lang had once again failed, for the third time in a row, to even make a significant impression. The reason for this defeat was that his party was once again at the centre of a Labor split. The Industrialists of the Socialisation Units, in cooperation with disaffected members of Caucus, and with the active cooperation of Communists, had formed an ‘Industrial Labor Party’, led by RJ Heffron, to contest against Lang’s Party. The new party won only two seats, but their presence had been a political gift for the ruling UAP and the daily press, which were able to hammer the themes of a divided labour movement and a Communist threat. As the Premier, Bertram Stevens, had proclaimed, “Mr Lang is the Government’s best asset”.

By the time of the election and the Conference Lang had lost control over the Labor Daily and radio station 2KY, had virtually no trade union support, and had proved that his continuation at the head of the NSW Labor movement would prevent any possible victory of the Labor party either at Federal level or in NSW. His days were numbered.

One interesting development noted at the end of the Conference was the report of Lang’s determination to get Labor members to contest trade union elections against Communist leadership. The ALP policy of setting up the Industrial Groups in 1945 to defeat Communism in the unions was there in embryo.
Executive Report of NSW ALP for 1937-38

(Australian Labor Party, State Of New South Wales Executive Report, 1937-38)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 1937-38 period under review will go down in the history of the Labor Movement in NSW as one of the most important since the Labor Party was established. Not only was it a period during which the party achieved signal victories, but it had to face the bitter opposition of Labor’s natural opponents on the one hand, and a concerted ‘United Front’ drive on the other.

This ‘United Front’ attack upon the Labor Party represented a desperate attempt by the Communist Party and dissident factions to seize control of the movement.

As we emphasised in our last Annual Report, the concerted effort to smash the movement, which was materially assisted by the anti-Labor forces, commenced with the announcement of Labor’s coordination plans, the effectiveness and necessity of which has been proven by subsequent experience.

Commencing with the conference on August 1, 1936, the Communist Party and those individuals styling themselves ‘Industrialists’, conducted an insidious campaign against the Labor Movement, the only effect and purpose of which could be to weaken the party’s appeal to the people.

The Federal Executive of the ALP, which met in Sydney on April 22, 1937, declared in specific terms its strong disapproval of the manner in which the Sydney Labor Council was being used to try and override the constitution of the Labor Party in an effort to foist certain individuals, including JS Garden, upon the Labor Movement.

The Federal Executive declared its opposition to the August 1 conference that was called to try and establish the ‘United Front’ and to secure the reinstatement of Garden in the Labor Party.

While it readmitted those expelled from the Labor Party in this State for attending the banned August 1 conference, the Federal Executive did so with censure upon those concerned and on condition that the Continuations Committee was disbanded and the proposed United Front Conference, to have been called on May 14, 1937, was abandoned.

In addition, Mr CC Lazzarini was readmitted only after he had made a complete apology for his utterances in Parliament.
'United Front’ Excuses

While Mr Garden’s expulsion was made the excuse for the ‘United Front’ attacks upon the Labor Party, the Federal Executive’s attitude towards Garden was summed up by Mr PJ Clarey (Vic.) in his declaration that: “Garden is a peculiar mixture of emotionalism and theatricalism. He is not always aware of what he says when he gets up before an audience.”

Mr Calwell (Vic.) declared: “I would not vote for Garden. Politically, I think he is an undesirable person to be in the Federal Parliament.”

But this was the same Mr Garden that was used as the excuse by the ‘United Front’ to continue the white-anting drive against the Labor Movement and to sabotage the workers’ cause.

The Federal Executive left no doubt as to where it stood in respect to NSW Labor’s refusal to be a party to the Communist ‘United Front’. A motion was unanimously carried repudiating the Communist Party and rejecting as spurious its ‘United Front’ approaches.

While the so-called ‘Industrialists’ purported to accept the decisions of the Federal Executive, the Communist Party issued an official declaration that “The fight must go on”. And the Communist Party’s control of the Labor Council has since been used to see that the fight did go on.

The attempt to undermine the Labor Movement has never been abandoned. Rather has it been intensified with the consistent support of the anti-Labor newspapers.

Just as the ‘United Fronters’ launched their first attack on the eve of the Gwydir by-election in an effort to rob the party of victory, so did they call another conference on the eve of the general municipal elections. At this conference at the Trades Hall on November 18, 1937, a number of candidates were endorsed to contest the municipal elections against the selected and endorsed Labor candidates. Thus, the ‘United Front’ became a new political party.

But the real significance of the ‘United Front’ was made clear by the declarations of support by leading members of the Communist Party. Mr William Orr declared: “I am a Communist and proud of it”, while the foundation secretary of the Communist Party in NSW, Mr HL Denford, demanded that a purge be conducted in Australia “similar to those being conducted in Soviet Russia”.

It was on this basis that the Communist-Industrialist ‘United Front’ drive proceeded. Every opportunity was seized upon to try and hamper the work of the Labor Party.

Provisional Executive

While the movement in this State was making preparations for the State elections on March 26, the ‘United Front’ called another conference on January 22, and it was at this gathering that all pretence was swept aside
and the ‘United Front’ party was officially formed, with a ‘Provisional Executive’ taking the place of the former ‘Continuations Committee’.

On this ‘Provisional Executive’ we find Mr HL Denford sitting side by side with the former general-secretary of the Communist Party, Mr JS Garden, Dr Lloyd Ross, advocate of the Communist policy, and Mr W McNamara, whom members will remember tried to establish a dictatorship of the movement through the medium of the Socialisation Units.

The secretary of the ‘United Front’ conference was RA King, who was selected immediately afterwards as delegate to attend the celebrations in Moscow in connection with the anniversary of the Russian revolution.

On January 28, the Central Executive of the ALP outlawed the Communist ‘United Front’ party and its ‘Provisional Executive’ and declared that the continued association of any member of the party with the ‘United Front’ would involve automatic expulsion from the Labor Party.

It was at this meeting of the Central Executive that Mr J Connell (Northern Miners) declared that Mr F Bonar, a member of the Miners’ Federation, had been induced to accept a position on the ‘Provisional Executive’ by certain officers of his organisation. He had not attended any meetings of the ‘Provisional Executive’ and had no intention of doing so.

The president, Mr Keller, pointed out that under the terms of the motion, Mr Bonar’s membership in the Labor Movement would remain intact. This applied also to other members who did not become parties to the activities of the Communist ‘United Front’ and the ‘Provisional Executive’.

While functioning as a political organisation, the ‘United Front’ party nominated six candidates in State electorates, in opposition to the endorsed candidates of the Labor Party. The Communist Party opposed the endorsed Labor candidates in four other electorates.

This situation was seized upon by the anti-Labor newspapers as a means of dividing the Labor Movement. The propaganda was the most intense that has ever been experienced, but despite this the members of the movement stood solidly together, as was demonstrated by the splendid response that was received to the appeal for campaign funds.

**Labor Daily Control**

On February 21, the ‘Industrialists’, by mortgaging the funds of a number of unions to a guarantee fund, and by the accommodation provided by the Bank of New South Wales, assumed control of the *Labor Daily*.

What had been the official organ of the Labor Party was turned against the movement and its leaders, in the same way that the anti-Labor Press were turned against the movement.
The Central Executive of the ALP withdrew the imprimatur of the movement from the *Labor Daily* and it ceased to be the official organ of the party. The paper’s influence in the movement ceased from that day.

Members will appreciate how well the activities of the ‘Industrialists’ have seemed to fit in with the election plans of the Stevens Government.

The propaganda that there was a division in Labor’s ranks was hollow until ‘United Front’ candidates were placed in the field, while negotiations in respect to the control of the *Labor Daily* very conveniently concluded as the election campaign commenced in earnest. The whole thing could not have been timed better to hamper the Labor Party’s campaign.

But instead of demoralising the movement, as it was obviously hoped, this ‘United Front’ opposition from the Stevens Government, the anti-Labor Press, the Communist Party and the ‘Industrialists’, strengthened the resolve of members throughout the State to intensify their efforts.

*State Elections*

The magnificent vote recorded for the Labor Party and the crushing blow administered to the Communist-Industrialist ‘United Front’ at the State elections on March 26 was the most effective answer to the vicious attempts to smash Labor in NSW and to crucify its leaders.

In the 51 electorates contested by Labor, the primary votes polled for the selected Labor candidates totalled approximately 450,000.

In respect to the remaining 31 seats, with ten Labor candidates returned unopposed, an analysis of the 1935 figures and a comparison with the Federal election results last year show that Labor improved on its 714,000 Senate votes which gave the party such a splendid victory.

Another 1000 votes would have given Labor at least ten more seats. For the loss of these we can look no further than to the sabotage of the so-called ‘Industrialists’ and their ‘United Front’. Prior to and throughout the campaign, the anti-Labor newspapers and the Stevens Government, made full use of the propaganda of the ‘Industrialists’ and in every contested electorate the Labor Party had to fight this ‘United Front’s attempt to confound and divide the electors.

It was a strange ‘United Front’ this. It was a case where the Stevens Government, the anti-Labor Press, the Communist Party and the ‘Industrialists’ all spoke with one voice in their opposition to Labor.

But Labor emerged, not only with its organisation stronger than ever, but it commanded the support of more than half a million voters, stamping the movement in this State as the strongest political force in the Commonwealth.

The Communist Party nominated four candidates and the ‘Industrialists’ six. There was not only an exchange of preference between these ‘United Fronters’, but an exchange of support within the electorates.
The Communist Party emerged from the poll tattered and torn, with public contempt heaped upon it. For the ‘Industrialists’, Mr Heffron was returned in Botany largely on the votes of the UAP, while Mr Lazzarini in Marrickville was saved only by the preferences of the selected Labor candidate.

Possibly the best answer to the whole of the attacks upon the party was provided by the electors of Auburn, who returned the leader of the Labor Party, Mr Lang, with an enhanced majority, despite the concentrated effort that was directed behind the campaign of his Industrialist opponent.

The regaining of the Granville seat was a splendid victory. The successful Labor candidate, Ald WH Lamb, was formerly Mayor of Auburn.

Disclosures that have been made in the count at Petersham, where the sitting UAP member has been returned with a small majority over the selected Labor candidate, may have widespread repercussions. It is possible that a close investigation in some other seats where the margin is small may reveal an equally interesting position.

Once again, this demonstrates the necessity for Labor establishing thorough polling booth organisation. Every table should be manned with scrutineers; every vote should be scrutinised before it is admitted to the count.

That is organisation upon which the movement will concentrate between now and the next election.

**Federal Elections**

The outstanding feature of the Federal elections on October 23, 1937, was the return of Labor’s Senate teams in every State except South Australia. It is no exaggeration of the position to say that the party would have secured the hat-trick and, incidentally, virtual control of the Federal Parliament, but for disruptive influences that split the Labor vote in South Australia. What that means to the Labor Movement is hard to estimate, but it would certainly have changed the whole complexion of Australian politics.

Labor in NSW had a signal victory by securing the election of its four Senate candidates, Messrs SK Amour, J Armstrong, T Arthur and W Ashley.

In the House of Representatives the Labor Party slightly improved its position. The gerrymandering of the electorates, however, made the position of the party extremely difficult.

The Senate vote clearly showed that Labor had the support of a majority of the electors, but this expression of opinion was not reflected in the returns for the House of Representatives.

In the election campaign, the Federal Leader, Mr Curtin, had the active and wholehearted support of the party throughout the Commonwealth. Dissident fractions on the fringe of the movement and individuals who
had failed in their hunt for jobs did their utmost to sabotage the movement’s efforts.

So far as NSW was concerned, these elements were given expression through the Sydney Labor Council that carried its campaign of sabotage to the extent of launching a separate campaign fund. The fact that only £200, of which £100 came from the Miners’ Federation, was subscribed to this fund, showed the contempt of the rank and file for this form of blatant disruption.

It was significant that while the so-called ‘Industrialists’ sought to sabotage the Labor Party in its drive for funds, which are the very life-blood of our organisation in an election campaign, the Communist Party also conducted a ‘Defeat the Lyons Government Fund’, although it did not have a candidate in the field in NSW. It was therefore a further demonstration of the ‘United Front’ sabotage.

**Federal Referenda**

The crushing blow that was suffered by the Lyons Government in its Marketing and Aviation Referenda on March 6, 1937, would have caused any self-respecting government to have resigned.

Labor in NSW took the leadership of the fight against the Government and the nationwide broadcasts were delivered by Mr JA Beasley, MHR.

It was unfortunate that the Federal Leader of the party, Mr Curtin, was unable to participate in the campaign, particularly because of the fact that the general elections were approaching. His neutral attitude on such vital questions was forced upon by the policy that was adopted, independently of the Federal Parliamentary Caucus, by one of the State Executives.

There does not seem to be any doubt that had the party throughout the Commonwealth spoken with a united voice on this issue, the victory itself would have been still more decisive, while the effect of the defeat of the Lyons Government could have been carried with much greater effect in the Federal election campaign.

It was obvious that the Federal Conference of the party held in Adelaide in July, 1936, had visions of such a situation when, at the instigation of Mr Curtin, the following motion was carried.

“That the question of how and when referenda shall be held for carrying out the party’s policy in regard to Commonwealth’s powers shall be decided by the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party.”

This resolution was given effect to by the Federal Caucus in respect to the Lyons Government’s referenda proposals, but the State Executive in question insisted upon exercising its local autonomy rights and instructed its Federal members to carry out the decision of the State and not that of the Federal Caucus.
While the observance of State autonomy rights is a vital matter, experience has shown that it is very largely a question “Which State is doing the observing”.

The Federal Conference sought to bring about coordination of effort through a single instrumentality. There is no doubt that coordination of all the movement’s activities in all the States would be a valuable contribution to a splendid victory at the next Federal elections.

**Gwydir By-Election**

The magnificent victory of the party in the Gwydir by-election on May 8, 1937, was a triumph against sabotage and demonstrated in a striking manner what can be achieved by concentrated organisation.

In addition to the splitting tactics of the so-called ‘Industrialists’, the party was also faced with the fact that the Federal Executive was called together in Sydney in the midst of this vital by-election. There is no doubt that the propaganda that came out of the Federal Executive and which was seized upon by the anti-Labor Press, robbed the party of a considerable number of votes, but the combined efforts of the enemies of the Movement were unable to rob the party of a signal victory.

Federal and State members worked as one man throughout the campaign. Zone organisation under the immediate direction of the organising-secretary, Mr JB Martin, was established in the electorate on a basis that had never previously been attempted. For the first time every polling booth, even those in remote centres, were fully manned and every vote was counted under the supervision of scrutineers.

The Federal leader, Mr Curtin, the leader of the party in NSW, Mr Lang, the Deputy-Federal leader, Mr Forde, and Mr JA Beasley, MHR, actively campaigned in the by-election.

Mr Lang confounded his opponents by taking the gloves off and campaigning on the so-called ‘Lang bogey’. And in every centre that he spoke the Labor vote was materially increased.

Throughout the by-election the Federal Government canvassed support on the basis that the result would be taken as a vote of confidence or of no confidence in its administration. And what a censure the result was!

Labor’s candidate, Mr WJ Scully, defeated the three endorsed Country Party candidates in a decisive manner. The voting gave Mr Scully an absolute majority of 2265.

**Local Government**

The Labor Party emerged from the general municipal and shire elections in December, 1937, with strong representation. Two of the most signal victories were in Paddington and Auburn.
In the former municipality, two candidates that had been endorsed by the ‘Industrialists’ opposed the selected Labor candidates in Middle ward. Under the leadership of Ald Thomas Whelan, the selected Labor candidates had a splendid victory.

For the first time in history, Auburn returned a full Labor Council. It was a tribute to the organisation that had been established and to the splendid record of service of the retiring alderman.

It might well be mentioned here that Ald WH Lamb, who won the Granville seat at the State elections on March 26, was one of those largely responsible for the Auburn municipal victory. It was a clear demonstration of the value of organisation and public service.

Another outstanding feature of the municipal poll was the election for the first time in the history of the Commonwealth of an Alderwoman as Mayor of a Municipality.

This is the unique and honorable position that is occupied by Alderwoman Mrs Fowler at Newtown. And at the by-election on April 2, necessitated by the death of Ald Roberts (Labor) Mrs M Swift, the selected Labor candidate, was successful. The movement is proud of the achievements of both these women stalwarts.

A determined effort was made by the party to capture control of the City Council at the general election. While an improved vote was secured, the Labor representation was not increased.

However, Labor exercises a strong influence in the civic government of the city. Every opportunity will be taken to extend that influence.

Greater Newcastle

On January 29, elections were held in connection with the Greater Newcastle scheme, under which a number of municipal councils were grouped.

The branches in the Newcastle Division took keen interest in the election and nominated a strong team of candidates. The arrangement of the wards and the franchise, which was the work of the Stevens Government, however, made a Labor victory very difficult indeed.

In the new council Labor is represented by Ald A McLagan (East Ward), Ald ERJ Peters and Dr R Pittar (West Ward).

Branch Charters

While the expulsion of JS Garden was made the immediate excuse for the launching of the ‘United Front’ attacks against the Labor Party, the position of the branches in the Botany and Marrickville electorates was used as the excuse for continuing these insidious activities after the Federal Executive had branded the August 1 conference as disruptive, and the movement that it represented as a deliberate attempt to smash the Labor Party.
The Federal Executive declared that the granting or withdrawal of charters to branches in the Botany and Marrickville electorates was a matter entirely for local autonomy determination by the NSW Executive of the ALP.

The State Executive conducted an exhaustive inquiry into the position of the branches in both these centres in a determined endeavour to bring about complete unity among the members.

Where the charters of old branches were withdrawn and new branches set up, the whole of the former members were invited to resume their membership, with full continuity and rights in the movement.

But what happened? In Marrickville, while the sitting member, Mr Lazzarini, resumed his membership in the movement, a group of members supporting Mr Lazzarini was organised to try and frustrate the work of the Central Executive.

The same thing happened in Botany. Mr Heffron resumed his membership in the party, but he continued to associate himself with disgruntled elements that had set themselves up as an organised body to defy the authority of the movement.

It was around these dissident factions that the ‘United Front’ campaign was continued or, at least, that was the excuse employed.

When it came to the selection ballots, both Mr Heffron and Mr Lazzarini submitted their nominations. But they withdrew these nominations when the ‘United Front’ party decided to carry its insidious campaign into the State election fight. The ‘Provisional Executive’ appointed Mr Heffron as the ‘leader’ of the ‘United Front’. Mr Lazzarini either became deputy-leader or the caucus.

Mr Orr, Dr Lloyd Ross, Mr Denford, Mr Garden and the Communist Party extended their active support to the ‘United Front’, but the new party came out of the election campaign only with its ‘leader’ and its caucus of one.

The only glory that it can claim is that it robbed the Labor Party of at least 10 seats and possibly of a Government. That is the position that faces the workers and it is a position that no unionist or member of the movement can quietly accept or ignore.

Country Conference

The Country Conference held at Parkes on February 26 was one of the most successful that has yet been held. The delegates dealt with the business in an expeditious and business-like manner and struck a splendid keynote on the eve of the State elections.

A fine reception was accorded the leader of the party, Mr Lang, and Mr JA Beasley, MHR, who addressed the gathering.

Keen appreciation was expressed by the visiting delegates at the manner in which the Parkes members had completed arrangements. A social function on the Saturday night was a huge success.
It is well to mention here that the proceeds from the function enabled the Parkes branch to pay in full for its shares in the Sunday Express.

**Metropolitan Conference**

Due to the intervention of the State election campaign, the Central Executive decided to abandon the Metropolitan Conference that was to have been held on March 5.

All agenda items forwarded by affiliated unions and branches have been placed upon the agenda for Annual Conference.

**1938 Executive**

A splendid vote of confidence was recorded in the retiring Central Executive members at the elections for the 1938 Executive. It was a striking indication of the manner in which the rank and file approved the work of the Executive during the past year and it was a renewal of the mandate to continue those activities.

The Land Transport group was reconstituted to include the AWU which had reaffiliated on 7000 members. While the president of the AWU, Mr CA Dalton, was elected as a member of the group, he resigned the position at the instigation of his union so that an appeal could be placed before Easter Conference on the question solely of whether the AWU was entitled to representation as a separate group.

The runner-up in this ballot, Mr J Hughes (ARU), automatically filled the vacancy.

It is with regret that we record the death in the early part of the year of Mr TH Mendham, who was one of the representatives of the West Central Division on the Executive.

The members of the Executive for the various groups are:

**Trade Union Groups**

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<td>Building</td>
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<td>Metal Trades</td>
<td>LJ Stevenson.</td>
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Land Transport  J Hughes.
Water Transport  W Donnelly.
Wood            AJ Dowd.

Metropolitan Groups
No. 1           VF Christensen.
No. 2           AJ Murphy.
No. 3           PJ O’Grady.
No. 4           TO Johannessen.
No. 5           DL Rees.
No. 6           S Gould.
No. 7           WC Burnett.
No. 8           SH Howie.

Country Divisions
Southern        GR Johnson.
Southern        LGE Moreman.
Northern        W Brown.
Northern        WH Read.
West Central    Mrs MA Edmonds.

Organisation
The organisational work of the party during the past 12 months has resulted not only in the formation of many new branches, but in the metropolitan workshops active committees have been formed to counteract the insidious propaganda of Labor’s enemies.

New branches were formed at Bingara, Temora, Spring Ridge, Finley, Baradine, Coonabarabran, Moree, Barmedman, Tuggerah Lakes, Kogarah Bay, Urra, Jingellic, Deniliquin, Walgett, Abbotsford, Blakehurst, Lawson, Waverley South, Dumbleton, Manildra, Tottenham, Hay, Riverstone, Thornleigh, Nundle, Manilla, Barraba, North Parramatta, Daceyville, Waterlo, Jambrero, East Tamworth and Epping.

In the railway workshops large and active committees have been formed at Eveleigh (Loco. side), Eveleigh (Car and Waggon Stores side), Clyde Waggon Works, Darling Harbour Goods Yard, Electric Car Shop (Chullora), Signal Branch (Chullora), and Enfield Loco.

The Central Railway ALP Committee is comprised of guards, ticket examiners and other grades of employees from Central and other stations in the metropolitan area.

A similar Central ALP Committee has been established in the Tramway service, while steps have now been taken to extend this form of organisation to other industries.

During the State election campaign these committees did splendid work. In addition, they are publishing journals that are providing a
means of expression for the rank and file that is not possible in their own organisations because of ‘United Front’ control.

The work that is being performed is of a practical character and it will assist materially in strengthening the position of the Labor Movement. It will weld the industrial and political wings still more firmly together.

**Future Plans**

Labor faces the future with a courage and determination that is undaunted. Its organisation in all electorates is sound and the membership has stood a test of loyalty greater than ever before imposed upon it.

No political organisation in the world has been able to maintain mass support as has the Labor Party in NSW, nor has any political organisation been subject to more vicious attacks.

The movement in NSW will continue to march forward. It will continue to exercise a greater influence in the government of the country and it will assume power despite all the sabotage directed against it.

There is much immediate work that will be undertaken and in which the loyal support of every member is required.

First of all, plans are well in hand for providing the movement with an official organ that will take up the work where it was suspended when the Labor Daily ceased to represent the Labor Movement.

In addition, the movement will continue to extend its influence in other directions, including the establishment of radio stations and other means of propaganda. These activities will all be coordinated to ensure their efficient use at all times on behalf of the people.

It is because its house is well in order that the Labor Party looks with complete confidence to the future, and it is fortified with the knowledge that the half-million people who stood with the party in the depth of the depression are steadily increasing their numbers and losing none of their determination to conquer oppression and misrepresentation.

**Appreciation**

This report would not be complete without a sincere expression of appreciation of the efforts and loyal cooperation of the staff throughout the year.

The movement also owes a debt of gratitude to those voluntary workers whose services are always at the disposal of the party. In fact, it is in this way that much of the real work of the movement is performed.

It is this spirit of sacrifice that demonstrates the depth of Labor’s cause and its tremendous appeal to the people. If it were otherwise, the Labor Movement would have been overwhelmed long ago. Instead its vast army is marching with greater determination than ever towards its objective.
Annual Conference of NSW ALP, 1938
(The Sydney Morning Herald, 16, 18, 19 April 1938)

Day 1, Friday, 15 April 1938


Delegates from all parts of the State attended the annual Easter conference of the State Labour Party, which opened in the Trades Hall yesterday. Many Federal and State Parliamentarians were on the platform. Mr P Keller, president of the ALP, was in the chair.

Tumultuous applause greeted Mr Lang when he arrived at the conference. For several minutes the business of the conference was interrupted while delegates sang “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow”.

The attendance of five miners’ delegates was acclaimed as a victory for Mr Lang, as that union is one of the main anti-Lang bodies in the Labour movement.

In opening the conference Mr Keller said that statements had been made in the Press that it was the desire of the ALP to encourage non-unionists within its ranks.

“I say this is a deliberate lie”, said Mr Keller. “Such statements are in keeping with the malicious campaign now being conducted against us. I hope that this conference will give the lie direct to the people responsible for these statements. I hope this conference will declare where the ALP stands.”

Mr JJ Graves, MLC, general secretary of the ALP, in presenting the annual report and balance-sheet, gave a long explanation of every item on the balance-sheet. Mr Graves stated that ALP funds had often been criticised. The so-called inner group had been criticised. He told delegates that the executive officers of the party had nothing to hide. Any member of the party could inspect the books within office hours upon reasonable notice.

A long discussion took place on a motion from the Punchbowl branch that the Hospital and Asylum Employees’ Union should be given representation on the Hospitals Commission. The motion was carried.


**Bread-Baking Hours**

The conference carried a motion that the Factories and Shops Act should be amended to provide for a prohibition of the making or baking of bread, pastry, cakes, and biscuits except between the hours of 6 am and 6 pm on Mondays to Fridays, and 6 am to noon on Saturdays.

“That the next Labour Government make it compulsory for all bread to be properly wrapped before leaving the bakehouse for delivery to the public” were the terms of another motion carried.

“All of our employees at Newtown are now working a 36-hour week”, said Alderman Fowler, Mayor of Newtown, in moving that the next Labour Government should inaugurate a 30-hour week. “We are hoping that at Newtown eventually we will have a 30-hour week. It is the only solution of unemployment.”

The conference decided on a 40-hour-week.

**Homework of Schoolchildren**

“If you do not give the children homework they will turn up dunderheads”, said Mrs Rose (Newcastle) in opposing a motion that homework should be abolished. “A little homework will do no child any harm”.

Mr Walsh (Molong), in moving an amendment that homework should be restricted, said that if homework were abolished, pupils in public schools would be placed at a disadvantage. It had to be remembered that pupils in private schools indulged in excessive homework.

“The boys who do no homework are left hopelessly behind in life’s race”, said Mr Thomas (Postal Workers). “If you restrict education, you are playing into the hands of the wealthy. Fascism is based on ignorance. Hitler has succeeded only because he has exploited the ignorance of the workers. He does not give them homework to do. He sends them to labour camps instead.”

The amendment providing for the restriction of homework and the motion for the abolition of homework were both defeated. The conference also rejected a motion that a free library movement should be part of the Labour Party’s policy.

**Dispute About Delegates**

Five delegates from the Miners’ Federation were refused admission, and they were told that, before they could attend the conference as delegates, they would have to appear before the appeals committee.

It was explained that the delegates could not attend because their union secretary had not given the personnel of the Miners’ delegation to the ALP before the conference opened, in accordance with the rules. The
delegates were subsequently admitted to the conference on the recommendation of the chairman of the appeals committee, Mr AW McNamara, MLC, who submitted the following report, which was carried unanimously:

“It was found by your committee that the reason why the secretary of the Northern Miners had not conveyed to the general secretary of the ALP the names of the delegates selected by the Northern Miners was because of shortage of time. Your committee found the credentials of Messrs W Simpson, Crook, Craig, Logan, and Bonar to be in order from the secretary and president of the union.

“In connection with the position of Mr Bonar, who was elected as a member of the provisional executive of the Communist United Front, Mr Bonar assured the committee that he was not now a member of the provisional executive of the Communist United Front having been withdrawn by resolution of his union, and that he was a pledged supporter of the Labour movement. Mr Bonar said that he had not at any time attended a meeting of the provisional executive, and could not attend a meeting unless he did so in opposition to the determination of his union. The other Miners’ delegates supported Mr Bonar’s statement that he had been withdrawn by his union, and that the Northern Miners had decided to support the Australian Labour Party, and to have no association with the Communist United Front.

“Your committee, therefore, recommends that badges of admission to the five delegates credentialled by the Northern Miners should be issued upon them signing the necessary pledge.”

**Mr Lang Cheered**

The report of Mr McNamara caused a stir at the conference. Lang supporters considered that they had achieved a victory when the delegates from the Miners walked into the conference after Mr McNamara’s report had been heard. It was said to be significant that five delegates from one of the main anti-Lang unions, of which Mr W Orr is secretary, should be anxious to take part in the proceedings.

Tumultuous applause greeted Mr Lang when he arrived at the conference. For several minutes the business of the conference was interrupted while delegates cheered and sang “For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow”.

A similar ovation was given to Mr Thorne, a member of the New Zealand Government, after he addressed the conference.

The conference decided to appeal to leagues and unions to provide funds to enable the defeated Labour candidate for Petersham, Mr W Sheehan, to challenge the result of the poll.

The motion was sponsored by the organising secretary, Mr JB Martin, MLC, who made many allegations regarding the conduct of the poll.
Day 2, Saturday, 16 April 1938


The Leader of the State Labour Party, Mr Lang, in his address to the annual conference of the party, which was held during the week-end, blamed Communist influences for the party’s failure in the recent State elections.

He foreshadowed a Commonwealth-wide conference, probably under the chairmanship of the Federal Labour Leader, Mr Curtin, to evolve plans for eradicating Communists from the Labour movement.

He announced that within a month a weekly Labour newspaper would be published in Sydney, and it would be the official organ of the movement. The present Labour paper and broadcasting station, he declared, were under the control of Communists.

The conference decided by an overwhelming majority that Mr Lang should continue to be leader of the party. His was the only nomination received for the position.

The Hand of Communism

Mr Lang, in his speech said the Labour party was in office in the Commonwealth, New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia during the depression, and the anti-Labour parties had been in office during the six years of improving conditions. The newspapers had branded the Labour party as the party of depression. “There were all sorts of suggestions as to how the position was to be met”, he said. “Some wanted to change the leader of the party. That had been tried in the Commonwealth, Victoria, and South Australia, but it had no effect. Some thought the party should move further to the left. South Australia had almost achieved the united front, but their position had not improved. Other sections of the party had proclaimed that they were moderates, but this had not solved the problem.

Lessons of Elections

Mr Lang said that the party had to profit by lessons of the recent State elections. “Several electorates had been lost by narrow majorities, but better organisation would have changed the position. In some of these our organisation and propaganda was sabotaged by the conduct of a so-called Industrial Party, which nullified to a certain extent the work put into the winning electorates”, he said. “This disruption must be dealt
with by the Labour movement. It is organised Communist infiltration that is proceeding throughout the Commonwealth.”

Mr Lang referred to the position of the ARU, and asked whether there was an occasion on which the secretary, Mr Lloyd Ross, had not been continually attacking the ALP, and he said that hundreds of members of the union had walked out of the organisation. These people should remain within and fight.

“During the struggle to gain control of the Labour newspaper”, he said, “many of the Industrialists fought side by side with Communists. While they have admitted this position they claimed that after they had secured control of the paper, they would elbow the Communists out.

“They did obtain control of the Labour newspaper, and there has been an elbowing out, but not of the Communist Party. If you want to know what interest the Labour newspaper now serves don’t go looking among the directors. Get a copy of a frankly Communist paper, and compare its contents with that of the so-called Labour newspaper. You will find they are following identical lines.”

“The Hand of Death”

Communism brings turmoil in its train. The unions that are now under Communist control are in the throes of internece strife and disintegration, for instance the Miners’ Federation.

“The hand of Communism is the hand of death. It destroys everything it touches. Wherever the Labour party has agreed to a united front with Communism, Fascism is in control.

“The fight against the Communists has to be taken up on a Commonwealth wide basis by the Labour party. Every Communist influence has to be eradicated.”

Broadcasting Plans

Mr Lang said that the proposal to publish an official Labour weekly newspaper had been carefully considered. It was expected that publication would be commenced within a month. The Sunday newspaper would not be published immediately. The party’s broadcasting plans included the making of arrangements for regular broadcasts on a State-wide basis. The purchase of additional stations was also under consideration.

Mr Lang was loudly cheered at the conclusion of his address when he forecast a Labour victory at the next Federal elections.

Mr Forde, MP, who spoke after Mr Lang, said the Labour Party in Queensland had been bitterly assailed by the Communists in the recent State election. But it had taken effective measures to prevent the white-anting of the movement.
It was unfortunate that the Labour Party had not won the Senate elections in South Australia because this would have given Labour control of the Senate.

Mr Forde expressed his concurrence with the proposal to fight Communism, and said that the Federal Parliamentary party would cooperate in action to secure a Labour broadcasting station in every State.

Dealing with Australian defence, he said the Labour party stood for adequate defence. Side by side with this, however, the party insisted that the living standards of the people had to be improved and no provocative trade diversion policies had to be put into effect. The Labour Party was also definitely opposed to the manufacture of arms and munitions by private enterprise. This work must be undertaken by the nation in order to stop profiteering in the instruments of war.

Mr Beasley, MP, made a vigorous attack upon the Industrialists. He said that it was because of their influence in the recent State elections that the Labour Party had failed to win a number of additional seats. He was confident that the Federal Parliamentary Party would cooperate with New South Wales in its efforts to drive the Communist influence out of the movement.

**Ruling on Foreign Policy**

There was a stormy scene during the Saturday afternoon session when the president ruled out of order motions from the Waverley branch and the ARU seeking a declaration of the party’s attitude to the position in Spain and the Far East, a boycott on Japanese goods, and restriction of exports of iron ore to Japan.

The president ruled that these were matters for a Federal conference to deal with, and were outside the scope of any State branch of the party.

Mr R Byers (Amalgamated Engineers) dissented from the ruling. His motion was defeated in the voices.

The president also ruled out of order a motion moved by Mr R Johnson (Ironworkers) which sought to amend the rules embracing the admission of financial unionists to the party. Mr Johnson’s motion sought to remove the responsibility from branches of deciding which was the _bona fide_ union covering a prospective member’s calling.

During this discussion Mr L Kable (ARU) said that several hundred members had resigned from the ARU and the Ironworkers’ Association. These members would be debarred membership in the ALP unless they had the right to join any other _bona fide_ union.

Mr F Craig (Northern Miners) referred during the debate to a threat to expel a number of Lang supporters from the rebel unions. He said he did not stand for victimisation of any kind, and he would address meetings on the northern coalfields in opposition to any such proposal.
**ARU Motion Repudiated**

Amusement was caused when the delegates from the ARU repudiated a motion submitted by their union expressing no confidence in Mr Lang and Mr Beasley. The motion lapsed.

On a further motion from the ARU calling for the closing of the ranks of the party and establishing unity, Mr Craig, the Northern Miners’ delegate, moved an amendment to set up a committee to confer with the industrialists.

Mr Craig said he did not want to be misunderstood in his action. He had no time for the Communists but he believed that some action should be taken to bridge the disunity in the trade unions. Both the motion and the amendment were rejected.

Mr McGrath (Redfern Boilermakers) said the members of his union had recently taken a greater interest in the organisation’s affairs and had reversed decisions to support the industrialists.

**Firemen’s Demands**

Delegates evinced considerable surprise at the session on Saturday night when the secretary of the Fire Brigades Union, Mr J McNamara, declared that the firemen would go on strike unless they secured a 56 hours’ week.

If the firemen went on strike and anything serious happened, the onus would be on the Government, Mr McNamara said.

It was stated that an application for a deputation had been made to the Premier. It was also expected that the Board of Fire Commissioners would give a decision in the matter tomorrow.

On the motion of Mr J Stewart (Electrical Trades) the conference pledged its support to the firemen.

A motion that the constitution of the Water Board should be amended to provide for representation of employees was carried by a large majority.

A motion that a socialisation educational committee similar to that of 1930-33 should be set up lapsed. “We do not want anything more like that”, said one delegate.

**Labour in New Zealand**

During the session Mr Robertson, a member of the New Zealand Parliament, addressed the conference. He said that in New Zealand Labour had been a long time gaining power but now that it was in it looked like staying a long time.

“We had great difficulty in getting a Government owing to the fact that most of our seats are rural”, he added.
He complained that little New Zealand news was sent to Australia. “Most of it is obviously from a politically tainted source at that”, he added.

The conference decided to convey fraternal greetings to the New Zealand Labour Party through Mr Robertson who is one of the first New Zealand Labour members of Parliament.

**Free Fight at Labour Conference Hall. Critic of Mr Lang Attacked.**

The concluding stages of the State Labour Party conference last night were marked by a free fight which developed in the corridors outside the conference hall.

One delegate to the conference who criticised Mr Lang was attacked, and two others were thrown down the steps.

One union president who is associated with the Industrialists was punched, and left the hall with his face bleeding. Some of the men were described as “muscle men”.

It was stated last night that the Miners Federation and other unions intended to call for an investigation of the attacks.

*Report in The Sydney Morning Herald, Tuesday, 19 April 1938*

**Labour party strife. Inner Group’s Plan. “Capture” of Unions. Industrialists’ Charges.**

According to the leaders of the Industrialists and Trades Hall officials, the State ALP ‘Inner Group’ proposes to launch an immediate State-wide campaign to capture all official positions in trade union organisations.

The leader of the political section of the Industrialists, and ‘rebel’ ALP members, Mr Heffron, MLA, said last night that Mr Lang, at the Easter conference of the State ALP, had said that “the hand of the Communists was the hand of death”.

But Mr Lang had forgotten to say that the hand of Lang was the hand of death to the Scullin Government, to two State Labour Governments, and to a number of prospective Labour Governments.

**Reply to Mr Lang**

Mr Heffron said last night that Mr Lang’s charges that the defeat of Labour at the last State general elections was due to the disruption of the Industrialists, and Communists were not true.

“Perhaps Mr Lang will give some reasons for the consistent failure of Labour at many other elections when he has led the Labour Party to ignominious defeat”, he said. “Perhaps he will explain the necessity for
the assassination of the Scullin Government, and why, during Mr Lang’s 16 years of leadership, Labour has been in office for only three and a half years, The Premier, Mr Stevens, no doubt supplied the answer to these questions on the eve of the last election, when he said ‘Mr Lang is the Government’s best asset’.

“The latest move by the ‘Inner group’ to disrupt the membership of the trade unions, by inducing members to resign from their organisations, and also by attempting to capture the official positions in the unions, will fail, just as did its attempt to disrupt the Miners’ Federation, and other large industrial organisations.”

Industrialists and leaders of the ‘rebel’ movement have decided to organise the unions with the object of counteracting the alleged ‘Inner group’ move.

**Meeting Tonight**

A meeting of delegates from various industrial organisations has been called for tonight at the Trades Hall, when the decisions of the recent State ALP annual conference will be reviewed, and arrangements made for a counter conference to be held on June 25.

Intervention by the Federal Labour Party may be again sought by a section of Industrial leaders in an attempt to end the faction strife.

An important trade union conference has also been convened for April 30 in Sydney, when matters affecting the welfare of workers generally will be discussed. It was stated yesterday that discussion of the faction fight would not be permitted at this meeting. Among the items on the agenda are: national insurance, hours of work, unity in the Industrial Labour movement, the Pan-Pacific trade union conference, Labour’s attitude towards the Commonwealth Government’s defence plans, improvement of the trade union organisations, and workers’ compensation.

The official journal of the Miners’ Federation, which was issued at the weekend, refers to alleged action by the State ALP ‘inner group’ to capture the trade unions.

“The ‘Inner group’ of the Labour Party in New South Wales”, it states, “has travelled far since its representatives stumped the coalfields in a vain attempt to induce members of the Miners’ Federation to appoint the ALP ‘Inner group’ heelers to the leading executive positions of the organisation.

“Rebuilding the unions, according to the ideas of the ‘Inner group’, is to undermine the leadership of the various industrial organisations, split the ranks on sectarian and political grounds, and stimulate resignations, and the formation of bogus unions.”
CHAPTER 18
Australian Labor Party,
New South Wales Branch
Annual Conference, 7–8 April 1939

Report in The Sydney Morning Herald

This report from the Herald telescopes commentary on the two rival Conferences being conducted on this weekend – that of the Lang party, opposed by the smaller sessions of the Heffron party. There is an air of farce in the situation, moderated only by the request from the Heffron party for the ALP Federal Executive to intervene in NSW – which they did within months.

Executive Report of NSW ALP for 1938-39

[As in 1932 and 1934 a printed copy of the Executive Report for the previous year has not survived. However, unlike in those years, there seems no evidence that a report and balance sheet was presented to the conference or debated. A Report may exist, but I have not encountered even a mention of it.]
Annual Conference of NSW ALP, 1939
(The Sydney Morning Herald, 8, 10 April 1939)

Day 1, Friday, 7 April 1939

The annual Easter conferences of the two rival Labour parties in New South Wales began in Sydney yesterday. They will be continued today and tomorrow, and may extend until Monday, as large agenda papers are before both conferences.

There were about 500 delegates at the Lang party conference, which was held at the Australian Hall. Tributes were paid to the “strong and virile leadership” of Mr Lang.

The Heffron party conference, which met at the Trades Hall, was attended by 139 delegates. The president, Mr F O'Neill, claimed that the party was “the strongest State branch of the movement in Australia”.

Lang Party’s Policy. Leader’s Speeches.
An effort to prescribe a formula of consultation in the preparation of the leader’s policy speeches was defeated at the conference of the Lang Labour party.

An unusual departure at the conference this year was the decision to allow Federal and State Parliamentary members to sit in the body of the hall and take part in the debates. Formerly they had occupied seats on the platform as spectators.

The president of the ALP, Mr P Keller, presided.

There was a lively scene when a delegate from Lithgow objected to the presence in the conference of Mr J Kilmartin, as a representative of the Railway Operatives’ Union. Mr Kilmartin was charged with not representing the union of his calling.

Mr Kilmartin heatedly repudiated the charges, and many points of order were taken. Eventually, on the recommendation of the chairman, Mr Kilmartin’s case was referred to the appeals committee.

“A Virile Leadership”
“The Labour movement at all times expects attacks as long as it is prepared to carry out the ideals of the Labour Party”, said Mr Keller in his presidential address. “For many years the movement fought for a
leader who would give expressions to the ideals of Labour — a leader who would not be hobbled to the powers that be. But the enemies of Labour are endeavouring to get within and corrupt the movement. They are attacking our leader because they want a selected leadership — a leadership selected by the Communist Party and the Bank of New South Wales.

“The Heffron Party conference has been a complete flop”, said Mr JJ Graves, MLC, secretary of the Lang Labour Party. “I am informed they have only 30 delegates there, and yet this breakaway movement attempted to keep us out of the Trades Hall.

A long discussion took place on a motion from the Petersham branch that local returning officers should conduct all selection ballots. It was also suggested in the motion that if necessary, the general returning officer should be allowed to check the results. At present the general returning officer controls all ballots.

Mr WF Sheahan, in moving the motion, said that if the motion was adopted much friction would be removed. Unless a change was made in the system the party would lose control of the Labour movement.

Mr C Dalton (AWU), seconding the motion, said that there was a stigma on selection ballots. Trouble had occurred in the Macquarie selection ballot because the local returning officer was not in charge. The local results differed from those compiled at ALP headquarters. He would not stand for ‘crook’ selection ballots.

The motion was carried by 230 to 38, and will now be embodied in the rules of the party.

The new rule will read: “That all Parliamentary selection ballots, Federal and State other than Senate, shall be conducted and finalised by the returning officer appointed by the Federal and State Electorate Councils, and that the Tramway, AWU, AFULE and other similar ballots be made available to council’s returning officer for that purpose. That on completion of ballot all ballot papers, voting lists etc., be sealed in the presence of scrutineers and forwarded to the general returning officer for the purpose of a check if necessary.”

Mr Lang’s Policy Speech

Animated debate took place on a motion from the Hunter Electorate Council, which urged that the policy speeches of the party and any proposed laws should be submitted to the Parliamentary Party for its adoption or otherwise before being made public. The motion was moved by Alderman Saxton, of the Hunter Federal council.

Mr A McNamara, MLC, moved an amendment that the caucus should elect a committee of five to consult on matters to be included in the policy speech.
Mr Lang said that the policy speech was not framed to meet the wishes of the caucus, but the wishes of the rank and file as determined at the Easer conference. A Labour leader, if he was a leader, would never go outside the constitution of the ALP.

“No policy speech of mine has ever transgressed a rule of the ALP”, Mr Lang said. “I have never made a policy speech without consulting members of the caucus. If a caucus member says he was not consulted, it was probably because such a member was incapable of constructive suggestions.

“Many times I have had to launch a censure motion”, he added. “People have asked why I did not consult the caucus before I entered the house to move the motion. I say that if I did so the world would know what I had to say before I entered the House.

“I have never delivered a policy speech without consulting my colleague, Mr Dunn, MLA, who is an authority on rural subjects and Mr Baddeley, MLA, who is an authority on mining matters. It would be wrong to tie the leader down as suggested in the motion.”

The conference then rejected both the motion and the amendment.

Alterations to Rules

The secretary of the rules committee, Mr WF Sheahan, submitted a comprehensive report on alterations to rules, which, he said, were designed to make the Lang Party’s rules the most democratic in Australia.

Provision was made for direct representation on conferences, and executive members were given the right to contest selection ballots provided they first resigned from the executive.

“These rules are the true blue rules and not the so-called Red rules of 1927”, said Mr Sheahan. “I feel that the new rules will provide a basis for Labour unity at an early date.”

The new rules propose that persons over the age of 14 years should be entitled to membership. The old rules fix the age at 16 years. It is also proposed that the president, general secretary, and organising secretary should be given the right to attend meetings of the parliamentary caucus. It is also provided that in future members of affiliated unions must also belong to a Labour league before they will be allowed to participate in the business of the party.

During the evening session Miss D Cartwright (Enmore branch) obtained the suspension of standing orders to move a motion, which was subsequently carried, urging the Minister for Health to make diphtheria immunisation wholly free to poor patients without the necessity for making special application for the remission of fees.
Day 2, Saturday, 8 April 1939


Both the Lang and Heffron Labour Party Easter conferences were continued at the week-end.

The Heffron Party decided to ask the Federal Executive of the Labour Party to call an “all-in” conference of the rival parties in an attempt to achieve unity.

Mr Lang, in his address to his party’s conference, urged the utilisation of credit for development of Australia. He criticised the recently formed National Council as a step towards Fascism.

A proposal at the Lang Party conference that the leader should be elected by Caucus instead of by the conference was overwhelmingly defeated.

Expansion of Credit

The leader of the Opposition, Mr Lang, in his address to the Lang Labour Party conference yesterday strongly urged credit expansion for the development of Australia.

“It is criminal to bring even one foreigner to this country until we have provided for our own people but we cannot provide for Australians until the question of credit expansion is properly handled by a competent Government”, he said. “The Sydney Morning Herald says the risk of inflation must be taken to go on with defence works.

“What are defence works?” he asked. “One of them is a railway bridge over the Hawkesbury River, and if it is worth taking the risk of credit expansion to build a bridge over the Hawkesbury River, why is it not worth taking whatever risk there is to build the huge irrigation schemes that would make this country a grand place to live in?

“Why is it not worth while taking whatever risk there is to go ahead with the big national undertakings that will develop Australia and make it a place fit for Australians to live in?”

Mr Lang said that attempts to destroy the Labour movement to prepare a way for a dictatorship form of government would increase in the future, and that resistance to such attempts would have to be intensified. However, Labour must not allow itself to become wholly absorbed in that struggle. The constructive programme of the Australian Labour Party must be emphasised and promulgated so that all Labour people can rally under its banner.

Mr Lang said that for the past few years the Labour Party had been subject to a coordinated sustained campaign of disruption, but it had survived.
During its history Labour had had to face two major crises – the war and the depression. It faced up to conscription and fought it on principle. Government was lost for a time but the movement remained strong and intact.

In facing the depression sections of the movement chose the line of expediency, causing confusion which lasted for many years.

European countries met the situation with dictatorship governments; the struggle between Communism and Fascism invariably resulting in the triumph of Fascism. That European struggle was imported into the Australian political situation, and on the one flank the Communists made an attack for the united front, while on the other the Fascist drive was begun with the demand of the newspapers that there should be a national one-party Government. That was followed by the Fascist campaign calling for leadership. A later step was taken of setting up last week a supreme council.

“Though some of the people who took part in its formation have no wish or inclination to participate in Fascism, it is a fact that the organisation that was created could quickly facilitate the change over to a dictatorship”, he said.

“Sensing the danger to the people from these two movements”, he continued, “the Labour Party found itself in the position of fighting a purely ‘anti’ campaign. It was anti-Communist and anti-Fascist.

“Now without weakening in our fight against two forms of dictatorship that threaten our system of government we must re-emphasise the constructive part of our programme.”

**Utilisation of Credit**

Unlike any other country, he said, Australia was the only one whose legal constitution permitted the free working of democracy. But the capacity of any Government to legislate rested upon its capacity to finance its proposals.

“In this country, he said, the note issue and the Commonwealth Bank are the property of the Commonwealth Government. A Labour Government in using the public credit which would be available to them through these institutions has no longer any need to pioneer the way. The Federal Government and the *Sydney Morning Herald* have done that.

“When Labour faced the depression it proposed to use this credit for the benefit of the people. Inadequate as those proposals were they brought such a storm of protest that even Labour voters became afraid. But the people and the newspapers who so roundly condemned credit expansion when it was needed to help the people through a depression are now calling for that same credit expansion when money is required to purchase guns and munitions.
“If a risk must be taken with credit expansion to defend Australia, why can’t it be taken to develop Australia?”

Mr Beasley, MP, said that a close watch would have to be kept on the proposed National Council. Much of the defence material being imported could have been manufactured in Australia.

**Selection Ballots**

In opposing a proposal that persons aged 15 should be allowed to participate in a selection ballot, Mrs Smith (Tempe) said 15 was a ridiculously young age. A school teacher could buy such children an ice cream and take them as ALP members to vote in a selection ballot for a Parliamentary candidate. There were many lively scenes during the discussion on the proposal. When the uproar subsided Mr W Sheahan, secretary of the rules committee, said that some juveniles at the age of 15 displayed more intelligence than adults aged 46.

It was eventually decided that members must be 16 years of age before being allowed to participate in a selection ballot.

A lively debate took place on a motion from the Petersham branch that all officials should be elected annually by the Easter conference.

The chairman, Mr PJ Keller, ruled the motion out of order, but Mr N Garth (Petersham) moved dissent. The chairman’s ruling was upheld amidst considerable excitement. The rules at present provide that the secretary and the organising secretary are elected triennially and other officers each year.

A motion was carried that the delegates to the Federal executive and to the triennial interstate Labour conference should be elected by the Easter conference instead of by the central executive and that members of the Federal and State Parliaments should be eligible for election.

**Isolation Urged. Mr Lang’s Policy. Australia and War.**

A policy of isolation for Australia, which he said should not be embroiled in any foreign wars, was announced by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Lang, in his first declaration on the present international position, made at the annual Easter conference of the Lang Party in the Australian Hall yesterday.

It is expected that his declaration will form the basis of the State Labour Party in the event of war.

Mr Lang did not refer to the need for defence either for internal or external purposes. “We do not want anybody’s territory, and nobody wants ours”, he said.
“Live at peace”

“There is no reason why the Labour Party of any Australian political party should be drawn into the European quarrel over foreign affairs”, said Mr Lang. “The only foreign policy Australia wants is to live at peace with her neighbours and trade with those who will trade with her.”

“European countries with their teeming populations follow policies which may or may not lead them to war. But why should the Australian people be dragged at the heels of any set of quarrelling European nations?

“The only contribution that we could make to European problems is to assist in absorbing some of the surplus population, but we cannot even attempt that. It is criminal to bring one foreigner to this country until we have provided for our own people.”

Mr Lang said that one of the major crises the Labour Party had had to face was the European war, when it had fought conscription on principle.

Mr Lang described the formation of the National Council as a step in a Fascist drive. “Though some of the people who took part in its formation have no wish or inclination to participate in Fascism, it is a fact that the organisation that was created could quickly facilitate the change over to a dictatorship”, he said.


Unusual scenes marked the conclusion of the Lang Party conference in the Australian Hall last night. The conference was officially declared closed by the president, Mr PJ Keller, at 11 pm.

At this stage counting was in progress of the ballot for the appointment of two delegates from New South Wales to the Federal ALP executive and six delegates from New South Wales to the interstate ALP conference to be held in Canberra next month.

Mr T Dalton (Water Board Union) claimed that the conference should receive the report of the returning officers.

The chairman however said that the conference had closed but that delegates could remain in the hall to hear the results.

At 1 am the delegates, including prominent members of the Federal and State Parliaments, were still waiting.

It appears that two tickets were run for the various positions, one being sponsored by the Inner Group, and the other by opponents of the ruling faction. It was reported that the opposition had achieved a victory with regard to the appointment of the two delegates to the Federal ALP executive. Early unofficial returns indicated that Mr W Sheahan will replace Mr JJ Graves, MLC, as a representative for NSW on the Federal executive of which Mr Graves is at present its senior vice-president. Mr JB Martin, MLC, retained his position as the second delegate.
CHAPTER 19

Australian Labor Party,
New South Wales Branch
Unity Conference, 26–27 August 1939

_Report in The Sydney Morning Herald, 28 August 1939_

After the fiasco of the 1938 election the split between Lang’s party and the Industrialists intensified. MA Davidson (Cobar) and EM Horsington (Sturt) rejoined the Heffron party that they had been associated with before the 1938 election. In March 1939 Clive Evatt won Hurstville for Industrial Labor from the UAP in a by-election, and in April Clarrie Martin did the same in Waverley. Both contests saw Lang’s party easily outvoted. In June, F Burke (Newtown) defected from Lang to Heffron. Given what appeared to be the growing electoral impotence of Lang, the Federal Executive acceded to the request of the Heffron group and decided to intervene in the NSW Labor Party. The Unity Conference of August, convened and controlled by the Federal Executive, was the result. With the return of delegates from most of the disaffected unions, and the loss of control by the Inner Group, the result was never in doubt. Clearly, the 1927 rules of the party, and the issue of whether Caucus or Conference should elect the Leader, were central to debate.

Although the Caucus was once again in control of its own destiny and could elect and dismiss its leader, there was still chaos in the extra-parliamentary machine. Federal intervention was needed in 1940 to get rid of the Communist-dominated Hughes-Evans State Executive, while Lang once more tried to go his own way. As the 1941 State election approached there were three groups claiming to represent the true Labor Party in NSW. Only after the victory of McKell in that election was Lang effectively pushed to the sidelines as a mere irritant to the party.
Unity Conference of NSW ALP, 1939

(The Sydney Morning Herald, 28 August 1939)

Days 1-2, Saturday-Sunday, 26-27 August 1939


The New South Wales Labour Party will be called upon to elect a new leader as the result of the defeat of the Lang faction at the Labour unity conference held at Newtown during the weekend.

The consensus of opinion among delegates is that if Mr Lang is defeated he will be succeeded by Mr W McKell, MLA, who was Minister of Justice in the last Lang Administration. Other names mentioned for the leadership include Messrs W Dunn, J McGirr, and J Baddeley, MLAs.

The conference resulted in a sweeping victory for the Heffron Party which will now become the official Labour Party in New South Wales.

The conference decided that within a fortnight the Parliamentary Labour caucus at a secret ballot should meet to elect the new leader. The ballot will be under the control of the new ALP executive, the majority of whom are expected to be pledged supporters of Mr Heffron.

After a heated debate the conference also decided to elect the executive and officials of the party. Members of Mr Lang’s inner group – which has been in charge of the administration of the party since 1927 – were decisively defeated. The ballot resulted in the election of the following officers: President, Mr J Cranwell, vice-presidents, Messrs J Hughes and J McNeill, secretary Mr W Lyons, organiser, Mr F Graham.

Mr Lang Will Fight

Mr Lang, however, is expected to fight to the last to retain the leadership. Union officials fear that if he is defeated in the caucus election the Lang faction will continue to regard him as their leader and will run candidates for all seats at the next elections.

There were many exciting scenes at the conference when the vital vote was taken. A Lang Party proposal that the conference and not the caucus should continue to elect the leader was defeated by 204 votes to 186.

Mr Lang has been leader of the Labour Party for the last 17 years. He was originally elected leader at a caucus election, but since the Red rules were introduced in 1927 he has been re-elected leader at annual conferences without opposition.
Labour Unity. Conference is Opened. Mr Lang Faces Defeat.

Nearly 400 delegates attended the Labour unity conference which sat throughout the weekend at the Majestic Theatre, Newtown. Heffron and Lang Party delegates attended.

Interstate Labour leaders of the ALP were in charge of proceedings. The Federal president, Mr C Fallon of Queensland presided. Mr Lang attended all sessions. He sat in a rear seat of the public gallery.

“There should be no personalities and side issues”, said Mr Fallon in opening the conference. “New South Wales is the soundest Labour State. The rank and file are solid.”

A voice: “And so is our leader too.”

Mr Fallon: “Whenever there has been unity Labour has won in New South Wales. The eyes of the Labour movement in all States were on the Unity conference.”

Mr Fallon read messages of goodwill from the Federal Labour leader, Mr Curtin, and the Labour Premiers of Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania. Mr Fallon appealed to delegates to forget factional differences. He appealed to the “mercy of delegates” on behalf of the growing army of unemployed.

“If you fail to secure unity you will stand condemned in the eyes of the people”, said Mr Fallon. The public will turn against you. They will turn to Fascism, Communism or some other -ism.”

The first business was a motion pledging loyalty to the Australian Labour Party and pledging the conference to strive for unity. The motion also set out that the conference represented the official branch of the ALP in New South Wales.

In Wilderness Too Long

Mr J Cranwell (Amalgamated Engineers), in moving the motion, said that the Labour Party in New South Wales had been in the political wilderness too long. The majority decision of the conference must prevail.

Amidst cheers the motion was carried unanimously.

Mr McSweeney (Ironworkers) moved that the State executive should be elected by secret ballot. He said that a secret ballot would prevent intimidation. There was a rowdy scene when the State president of the Lang Party, Mr P Keller, attempted to address the conference. A point of order was taken that Mr Keller was not a delegate. The chairman ruled that Mr Keller was not a delegate and was ineligible to speak. Mr Keller had to resume his seat amidst uproar.

Mr S Guhl (Bondi) then moved a further amendment that the officials and executive should be elected under the rules and constitution of the Lang Party. Mr Guhl said that unless they accepted the rules of the Lang Party there would never be unity.
Mr McSweeney at this stage withdrew his motion in favour of an amendment by Mr J Hughes that all officials as well as the executive should be elected by the conference, and that such officers should hold office until the next Labour conference.

“The End of Lang”

Mr Guhl’s amendment urging that the election should be held under the Lang Party’s rules was taken first. On a division the amendment was defeated by 216 votes to 169.

The vote disclosed that the Heffron Labour Party and the Lang Party rebels combined to defeat the official Lang faction.

While the vote was being taken the crowded public gallery caused much confusion by shouting comments at the delegates. There were cheers for ‘Jack Lang’, and counter cheers for ‘Democracy’.

“The end of Lang” a delegate cried when the vote was taken.

The motion authorising the conference to elect officials and the executive was then carried by 221 votes to 153. [numbers indistinct]

A long discussion took place on a motion that the basis of unity should be the Victorian rules, which could be amended by the conference if carried.

“Jack Lang would sweep the polls tomorrow”, said Mr Balgan (Tramways) in opposing the motion. “The conference should not go to Victoria for its rules. The Victorian Labour Party has joined forces with the Country Party.”

Mr Guhl (Bondi) declared that if the Victorian rules were adopted Mr Lang would be politically assassinated.

Mr Carney (Lakemba) declared amidst uproar that the Lang party rules should go. “Mr Lang has been in opposition for seven years”, said Mr Carney. “It is about time he took a tumble and got out.”

If speeches by delegates on the New South Wales Trades and Labour Council were broadcast half the delegates would be in Long Bay”, said Mr Thorby Johnson (Coal Lumpers) in the course of an attack on the Labour Council because of its opposition to Mr Lang.

The motion for the adoption of the Victorian rules and an amendment for the acceptance of the Lang Party rules were both defeated. On a division, a further amendment by Mr W McNamara for the appointment of a committee of seven to investigate the rules was carried by 188 votes to 182.

A free fight developed in the public gallery while the vote was being taken. Until it stopped proceedings were held up.

The Vital Vote

Amid stormy scenes the conference spent most of yesterday’s session in debating the question of the leadership and the future control of the ALP.
The final decision of the conference was that the leader, the deputy-leader, and officers of the New South Wales Parliamentary Labour Party should be elected at a caucus meeting of all members of that party at its first meeting after the next State election, and that it should be an instruction to the Parliamentary party that it should meet within two weeks of the rising of the conference to elect a leader and party officials to carry on in office until the first caucus meeting after the next general election. It was also decided that the meeting should be called by the executive, and that the right to elect Ministers should be vested in the caucus and the portfolios allotted by the leader of the party. The proposal was carried on a division by 205 to 166.

Before the commencement of the debate Mr J Ormonde unsuccessfully moved for the suspension of standing orders to discuss the international situation.

There was uproar when he suggested that the Labour Party should carry a resolution expressing abhorrence “with the onward march of Fascism”, and viewing with disgust the signing of the German-Russian pact.

Speaking in support of the election of the leader by caucus, Mr Lazzarini, amid much noise, declared that Mr Lang had secured his dictatorialship through the decision of a packed conference. Caucus members were never consulted by Mr Lang. They were merely told that “the big fellow” wanted them to vote “this way or that way”. Mr Lang enjoyed too much power. Caucus members were merely sycophants under his rule.

“The only way to keep politicians in their places is to make them answerable to the annual conference”, said Mr L Leece (Leichhardt).

Mr Moloney (Boot Employees) declared, during cheers and jeers, that Mr Lang was led by men who did not belong to the Labour Party. Mr Lang had wrecked every Labour Government with which he was associated, including the Scullin Government. (Uproar.)

It was reported last night that the Heffron party would have a majority on the new executive which will govern the Labour party until the next Easter conference.

The conference concluded yesterday afternoon.

**Lang Party Charges. Ballot Papers Missing**

Late last night the Lang Party announced that it intended to protest to the Interstate Labour Executive against the alleged disappearance of 31 ballot papers during the counting of the poll for official party positions.

“The days of the ‘sliding panel’ are apparently not over”, said Mr JB Martin, MLC, organisng secretary of the Lang Party.