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Conference, and sponsored by the Inner Group, that the AWU would need to pay the three years of back fees since it had withdrawn from the party.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  Hunter’s Hill
Toongabbie  Eastwood
Burwood  Rydalmere
Darlington  South Hurstville
Blues Point  Edgecliffe
Sans Souci  Stanmore
Waverley West  North Marrickville
Randwick North  Enmore
Parramatta  Thornleigh
Moorefield  West Kogarah
Gordon  South Campsie
Yagoona  Carramar
Blakehurst  Pitt Row
St George  Naremburn
North Lidcombe
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 benefited 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JJ Graves</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Bird, Gen Sec.</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJ Macpherson, Org Sec.</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Anderson</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Briggs</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Browne</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs Barrett</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M Connaghan</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE Charters</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Carley</td>
<td>– [sic]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Green</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G Gibson</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Hutt</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J Hancock</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Resigned)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA Hill</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WD Jones</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EA Knock</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Luchetti</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mrs J McGowan 31
H O'Regan 26
G Pickford 22
F Roels 11
W Swadling 27
J Smithenbecker 8
(Sick Leave)
A Wolstenholme 30
R Black 23
D Cunningham 18
F Simpson 11
F Saidy 11
G Sinclair 7
(Elected August)

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”.

240
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, Drummoyle, 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 relief to the value of £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 overestimated. 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 NSW – 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


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 Bagnoll. 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! (Irical 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 countercharges, 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 contribution 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 executive 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 Schwik, 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.

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 7½, 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 aboli-  
tion 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”.
“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
ALP NSW ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1930

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 (Boilmakers), 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


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 recommitted.
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.