CHAPTER 2
Australian Labor Party,
New South Wales Branch
Annual Conference, 2 – 15 April 1926

Report in The Sydney Morning Herald

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

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

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

Executive Report of NSW ALP for 1924 and 1925

(Mitchell Library Manuscripts, 329.3106/3)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

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

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

Following are the new branches formed:
Ballina  Tarcutta  Canbelego
Narrabri  Coramba  Gordon
Wilga  Waratah  French’s Forest
Tweed Heads  Repton  Penshurst
Arncliffe  Casino  Wallsend
Tea Gardens  Orange  Hermani
Ward’s River  Manildra  Matraville
Wingham  Molonglo  Girraween
Stroud  Enfield  Moss Vale
Macleay District  Bungendore  Tighe’s Hill
Fairy Meadow  Walgett  Corrimal
Urunga  Hume Reservoir  Glen Innes
Byron Bay  Upper Bankstown  Buckaroo
Coolamon  Port Kembla  Walcha
Mathoura  Manilla  Goolma
Rhondda  Earlwood  Henty
Wyong  Long Bay  Balmoral
Tingha  Denman  Kyogle
North Lismore  Merrylands  Martin’s Creek
Belfield  Singleton Deniliquin  Perthville
Wallenbeen  South Lismore  Attunga
Kandos Quarries  Brighton-le-Sands  Heron’s Creek
Greenthorpe  Lambton  Cardiff
Undercliffe  Glenreagh  Picton
Sylvania  Kahibah  Wickham
Belambri  Queanbeyan  Cadia
Belmont  Watson’s Bay  Rundle
Tirana  Langley Vale  Barraba
Morrissett  Boggabri  Carlingford
East Moree  Mandurama  Thurgoona
Moorebank  Maclean
Botany  East Bankstown
Tullibigeal  West Wallsend

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

Bedstead Makers  Radio Telegraphists.
Fire Brigade Employees  Furnishing Trades
Loco. Enginedrivers and Firemen (Newcastle).
Federated Gas Employees.
Executive Meetings

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

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Sixty-two Meetings were held from 9/6/’24 till 19/2/’26.

(A) – Denotes: Alternate. (R) – Denotes: Resigned.

In Memoriam

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

A Senate Appointment

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

Selection Ballot Regulations

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

**Municipal Elections**

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

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

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

**State Elections**

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

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

**Legislative Council**

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

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

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

**Presidential Changes**

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

**Legislative Council Appointments**

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

**Federal Elections**

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

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

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

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

**Postponement of Conference**

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

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

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

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

**Special Conference Requisitioned**

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

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

**Federal Conference**

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

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

**Communist Affiliation**

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

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

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

**Conclusion**

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

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

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

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

**Report of the Parliamentary Labor Party**

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

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

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

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

Forty-Four Hours’ Week Bill

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Widow’s Pensions Bill**

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

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

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

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

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

**Constitution (Amendment) Bill**

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

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

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

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

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

**Mines Rescue Bill**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Fair Rents (Amendment) Act 1926**

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

**Juvenile Migrants’ Bill**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rural Workers’ Accommodation Bill

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the case of incapacity the rate of compensation payment has been increased, providing payment of 66⅔ per cent of earnings during the previous twelve months, up to £3 per week (the adult minimum being £2 per week), and, in addition, in the case of a married worker, of £1 per week for wife and 8/6 for each child totally or mainly dependant upon him, with a limit of the average weekly earnings of the worker, or £5 per week, whichever is the smaller.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Administrative Acts of the Government**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Prison Reform**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conclusion

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

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

Report of Federal Parliamentary Labor Party

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Arthur Blakeley, Secretary, Federal Parliamentary Labor Party.

**Sydney Municipal Labor Party, Annual Report**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wages of Employees

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

Charge for Electricity

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

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

Electricity Sales

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

**Coal Supplies**

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

**City Improvements**

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

**Health Matters**

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

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

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

**Office Accommodation**

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

**Building Act**

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

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

W Clapham, Hon. Secretary, Municipal Labor Party.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Signed) H Greville, Hon. Secretary WCOC

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

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

*Day 1, Friday, 2 April 1926*


Sydney Electorate Dispute

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

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

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

*The Attendance*

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

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

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

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

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

**Afternoon Session**

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

**Late Mr Hordern**

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

**Delegates’ Credentials**

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

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

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

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

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

Credential Committee’s Report

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

Voices: At the Barley Mow. (Laughter.)

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

**Sydney Electorate**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Disorderly Scenes**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scenes at Labour Conference. Sitting Dramatically Adjourned.

Alleged Faked Ballot at North Sydney.

Downfall of Executive Likely.

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

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

Credentials Trouble

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

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

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

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

The Chairman: I will not allow anybody to impute motives.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

After some minutes had elapsed the delegates resumed their seats.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr Bates’ Position

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

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

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

**Country Delegates**

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

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

**North Sydney Delegation**

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

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

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

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

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

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

The report as amended was adopted.

**Night Session**

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

Chairman Challenged

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Disorderly Scene**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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**Day 3, Monday, 5 April 1926**

**ALP Conference. Executive Faction Decisively Defeated. Upper House Members. President Forced to Vacate Position.**

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

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

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

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**Conference Resumed**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Mr Beasley's Challenge**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr Buckland: I give that a flat denial.

Mr Magrath’s Speech

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

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

**Mr Willis’ Views**

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

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

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

The Division

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

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

Afternoon Session

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sydney Council Delegates

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

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

Night Session

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Election of Officers**

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

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

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

**State Ministerialists Perturbed.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“I intend to carry on the fight for the abolition of the nominee House. I do not recognise the right of an imported Governor, who is here today and away tomorrow, to interfere with the functions of Parliament, and I do not recognise the right of a non-representative nominee Chamber to censor and destroy Labour legislation.” This declaration was made by the Premier during the course of his speech.
The Address

Mr Lang said: “Every constitutional means at the disposal of the Government will be exhausted to make the people’s Chamber paramount, and I rely upon the incoming Executive, however constituted, and the movement as a whole, to give me the support and assistance which I have so much appreciated in the past and will need in the future. My hand is on the plough, and I am not going to turn back.

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

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

Appeal for Unity

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

Labour’s Opponents

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

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

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

**Intentions of the Government**

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

**Enthusiastic Scenes**

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

**The Attendance**

Mr F Conroy, vice-president, was in the chair, and there was a full attendance of delegates. Visitors to the Conference during the evening were the Premier, Mr Lang, the Chief-Secretary, Mr Lazzarini, the Minister for Lands, Mr Loughlin, the Minister for Justice, Mr McKell, Minister for Health, Mr Cann, Minister for Mines, Mr Baddeley, Messrs D Murray,
Cahill, Murphy, MsLA, J Keegan, and EJ Kavanagh, and Grayndler, MsLC, Messrs Blakeley and Riley, MsP.

The arrival of the Premier shortly after the Conference resumed was the signal for an outburst of enthusiasm, which lasted for some seconds. Mr Lang took a seat on the platform, and followed the proceeding with interest.

**Vote of Condolence**

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

**Election of Officers**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Interstate Conference**

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

**Application for Readmission**

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

The application was refused.

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

**Labour Party. New Scheme. Provincial Councils.**

**Discussed by Conference.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The motion was carried unanimously.
Decentralisation

Mr Bell (Albury) moved: “For the purpose of electing future Executives, the State be divided into four parts, to be known as provincial districts, based on the 24 State electorates. viz. nine electorates with five members, 15 electorates with three members; districts to be as follows: No.1, city district, the nine electorates of city and Newcastle; No.2, northern district, comprising five State electorates; No.3, central district, comprising five State electorates; No.4, southern district, comprising five State electorates. Each provincial district to have a provincial conference meeting annually, also an Executive. The State electorates would consist of Newcastle and Metropolitan electorates, viz., Balmain, Botany, Eastern Suburbs, North Shore, Ryde, St George, Western Suburbs, Newcastle and Sydney; No.2 north, Byron, Northern Tablelands, Namoi, Oxley and Maitland; No.3 central, Wammerawa, Bathurst, Wollondilly, Cumberland, and Parramatta; No.4, southern, Goulburn, Cootamundra, Murrumbidgee, Sturt, and Murray. Upon the reversion to single electorates, the boundaries as submitted above to be followed as near as practicable.

The State Conference would consist of 108 delegates, viz., 86 delegates from No.1 city, 12 delegates from No.2 northern, 12 delegates from No.3 central, 12 delegates from No.4 southern, 86 delegates from affiliated unions. The State Executive would comprise nine members: three representing No.1 city, three representing, affiliated unions, one representing No.1 northern, one representing No.3 central, and one representing No.4 southern. The Executive members representing city and country districts to be elected by each provincial conference, and to remain under the control of, and be subject to recall by, each provincial executive. The provincial conference to comprise 80 delegates, viz., four delegates from each electorate council in each electorate, making a total of 20, and 10 delegates from affiliated unions, resident within the provincial district.

To be optional to conference to double or treble its representation, similar to rule 11. Each provincial executive to consist of five members to be elected annually by the provincial conference, such representation may be doubled or trebled as the conference concerned so desires. Electorate councils to consist of delegates elected by sub-councils on the basis of rule 11. Where no sub-council exists, the branches may elect delegates to electorate councils. Each electorate council to be subdivided into sub-electorate divisions, as geographical or other considerations may determine. Each sub-council to elect delegates to electorate councils. The representation on such sub-councils to be on the basis of rule 11.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Mr Considine Readmitted**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Conference adjourned at 10.30 o’clock till today.
ALP President Elected. Mr W Seale. Combined Faction Wins

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Mr T Walsh Readmitted**

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

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

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

**Decentralisation**

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

**Election of Officers**

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

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

Conduct of Ballot

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

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

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

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

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

Alternate Delegates

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

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

The Conference adjourned at 10.30 o’clock until today.

**Mr Garden’s Comments**

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

**Day 7, Friday, 9 April 1926**

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

**Day 8, Saturday, 10 April 1916**

**Labour Party. Members Expelled. Five MsLC. Annual Conference.**

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

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

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

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

The motion for the suspension of standing orders was carried.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr Magrath: I refused to see Mr Bailey.

The motion was carried by 163 votes to 71.

Upper House

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

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

Mr Beasley suggested that the five members concerned should be given an opportunity of being in attendance at the night session. It was pointed out that one or two had attended on Friday night – the date originally fixed for the hearing of their cases.
Mr Magrath urged that action should be taken immediately. A motion in favour of the matter being dealt with immediately was carried.

Mr Magrath moved that for failing to record their votes for the abolition of the Legislative Council in the recent session this Conference expels Messrs Lyons, Ackhurst, Smith, Kelly, and Murray.

Mr Magrath said that no excuse could suffice to absolve the five members for their negligence. Second Houses, he said, were the stronghold of Conservatism. The abolition of the Upper House was the first plank of the party’s platform. It must not be impeded by the action of pledged supporters.

Mr T Falkinkham (Boilermakers) said that if the members concerned had any Labour principles they would resign from the Upper House.

Mr G Buckland, opposing the resolution, said that action should be taken against those who had been responsible for the appointment of the defaulting members.

Mr Buckland then accused Mr Magrath of having been absent from the House when the vote on the 44-Hours Bill was taken. Mr Buckland suggested that a committee should be appointed to investigate the appointments to the Upper House.

Mr P Connolly (Northern Miners) caused a stir by stating that if Mr Buckland would move another resolution for the expulsion of Mr Magrath and Mr Grayndler and other MsLC, who had not been present at all divisions, he would second the motion.

Mr Ryan, MLC, moved as an amendment that Messrs Smith, Lyons, and Murray should be expelled, and the cases of Messrs Kelly and Ackhurst should be given further consideration.

Mr R Bates suggested that a vote of censure should be moved against those responsible for the appointment of the defaulting members.

Mr McNulty, supporting Mr Buckland’s suggestion for the appointment of a special committee, said that some of the Upper House appointees were never Labour men.

Mr Magrath, in reply, explained that he had not been absent when the 44-Hours Bill was under consideration. He added that it the members in question were freed on this occasion there was no guarantee that they would vote with the Government on other issues.

The amendment was defeated on a show of hands, and the motion in favour of expulsion was carried by a large majority.

**Night Session**

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

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

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

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

**Senator Gardiner**

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

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

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

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

**Application for Re-Admission**

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

At 10 pm the Conference adjourned until 7 pm today.
Day 9, Monday, 12 April 1926

Mr Lang’s Powers.

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

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

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

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

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

A voice: What are your charges?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Upper House Appointments

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Day 10, Tuesday, 13 April 1926

Effort to Close ALP Conference Results in Scene of Disorder.
AWU Representatives Take Control.
Executive Supporters Leave Meeting.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The delegates then dispersed quietly.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mrs K Dwyer replied at length to recent criticism of the Women’s Workers’ Union which she represents at the Conference. Mrs Dwyer took particular objection to an attack upon her organisation by the delegates from the Federated Clothing Trades Union. She denied that her union was not bona fide, and contended that it complied with the rules of the ALP. Mrs Dwyer explained that she refused to give evidence before the select committee appointed by the Conference to investigate the bona fides of her union on the ground that she did not have an opportunity to get her witnesses. She said that if the new industrial commissioner, Mr Piddington, inquired into her case she would abide by his decision. Mrs Dwyer heatedly denied a charge that she had been responsible for labour "sweating".
A vote of sympathy with the families of the lost crew of the Dorrigo was passed. Mr Parke (Postal Electricians), in moving the resolution, stated that charges had been made that the Dorrigo had been overloaded, and he hoped a full inquiry would be held.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A motion for the adoption of the report was carried.

Mr Griffith Explains

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

Day 11, Wednesday, 14 April 1926

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

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

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

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

Orderly Meeting

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The amendment was carried by 114 to 4.

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

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

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

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

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

**Mr Seale’s Statement**

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

**Militants’ Attitude**

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

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

Sydney Morning Herald, 16 April 1926

Labour Party. Campaign Launched for Another Conference.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Threat Ridiculed

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

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

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

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

The Fusion

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

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

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

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

“The agitation carried on in the unions and leagues, and in the columns of The Worker, against the dictatorship to which the State movement had been subjected, was abundantly justified by the decisions of Conference, and the campaign of the AWU, which had for its object the ejectment of Messrs Tyrrell and Magrath from Executive positions, was decisively successful.”