

CHAPTER 6
Australian Labor Party,
New South Wales Branch
Annual Conference, 6 – 14 April 1928

Report in The Sydney Morning Herald

This was the first Conference convened under the new Rules approved by the 1927 Easter Conference and the subsequent Unity Conference of July 1927. The Executive Report contains a useful and detailed account from the Returning Officer of how the ballots were conducted for election of delegates to Conference and the election of members of the Executive. Any attempt to understand the political implications of the so-called Red Rules should start with that account.

The Red Rules had been designed largely to marginalise the AWU, easily the largest trade union in NSW, within the structures of the NSW ALP. Accordingly, the AWU effectively withdrew from the party and was not present at the 1928 Conference. Both the Executive Report and subsequent debate mention unsuccessful attempts to persuade the AWU to participate (and to continue contributing funds), although one could be sceptical about how eager Lang's allies were to welcome back the AWU at this stage. One of the issues was a sum of £805 contributed to the State Executive in 1926, along with a smaller amount from another union sympathetic to the AWU. The AWU claimed that this was affiliation fees paid in advance, which they wanted back, while the new Executive was convinced that the money had been contributed entirely as fighting funds for the Conroy Executive against the Seale Executive.

All institutions of the party were affected by the defection of the AWU from the party, and the associated split. The report of the WCOC complained that the previous Secretary of the Women's Committee, Mrs H Grenville, had refused to pass on the books and accounts to the new Secretary. Another casualty was the redoubtable Mrs Kate Dwyer, who had long been sympathetic to the AWU and was no longer welcome in the WCOC, although she continued as a member of her local branch in Annandale.

The issue of Communism was high on the agenda of the Conference. There were certainly a number of members, or at least fellow travellers of that party, present at Conference. Although Conference re-affirmed its

own policy that Communists could not be members of the ALP while continuing to be members of the CP, there was a strong resistance to agreeing to Federal Executive directions that attempted to push that ban into the area of policy identification between the two parties. Effectively, the 1928 NSW Conference declared autonomy from the Federal ALP on matters of policy affecting the State.

In the dispute with the Federal Executive (where the AWU influence was strong) emphatic use was made in debate over the role of the 'rank and file' of the party. This term had some currency in the party before this, (it figured strongly in the 1919 Conference as part of the rhetoric of the militant OBU faction) but 1928 marks the first time that the Lang forces made explicit use of the concept to defend their positions. It would become an important part of factional rhetoric from that time on.



Executive Report of NSW ALP for 1927-28

(Mitchell Library Manuscripts, 329.3106/3)

Australian Labor Party, State of New South Wales, Executive Report

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The 37th Annual Report and Balance Sheet of the Australian Labor Party, State of New South Wales, is hereby submitted for your consideration.

Since the presentation of the last report, many new Branches have been established throughout the State. This is a clear index of the popularity and virility of the Movement. The Organising Secretary, Mr AJ Macpherson, intends making a visit of inspection to every Branch in the State with a view to consolidating and extending present activities. The Executive have provided him with a motor car to carry out such propaganda.

While our organisation has never previously achieved such a high degree of efficiency, there is still room for improvement, and much can be accomplished in this direction during the ensuing year.

It is pleasing to report that 105 Unions are now affiliated, while our branches number in the vicinity of 500.

Provisional Executive and Meetings

President: WH Seale.
Vice-presidents: WM Webster and AJ Macpherson.
General Secretary: S Bird.
Organising Secretary: CL Thompson.

Executive Committee

AB Berry	TF Morton
J Bollard	B Mullins
WA Clemenston	H Potter
M Conaghan	WT Padgen
Mrs M Dunn	MP Ryan
Mrs M Houghton	A Sherwin
R James	Mrs Smith
WD Jones	Mrs Stapleton
RA King	JH Stone
Miss L Lee	WT Swadling
T Leslie	EW Turner
FE Miller	Mrs E Webster

At the Easter Conference, 1927, the above were elected as a Provisional Executive, and their election was reaffirmed at a Unity Conference held on 23rd July and following days, under the supervision of the Federal Executive Officers and Chairmanship of E Holloway, President Trades and Labor Council, Melbourne.

The Executive held 36 meetings from 25/7/27 till 31/1/28. During that period resignations were received from Messrs A Sherwin, FE Miller, and EW Turner. The vacancies were filled by the following: Mesdames Smith and Stapleton; Messrs Conaghan, Gill, Potter, Lockard, and Pickford.

Resignation of President

After rendering the Movement magnificent services in the capacity of President, a severe breakdown in health necessitated Mr WH Seale tendering his resignation from that position.

Mr AJ Macpherson, who had been acting President during Mr Seale's illness, was now elected President of the Movement.

Organiser Resigns

The resignation of Mr CL Thompson as Organising Secretary was received. The Executive then appointed Mr AJ Macpherson to fill the vacancy.

WM Webster, President

On Mr AJ Macpherson resigning the Presidency to take up the Organising Secretaryship, Mr W Webster, Senior Vice-president, was elected President, and occupies that position in the Movement at present.

In Memoriam

The Labor Movement in this State sustained a great loss in the death of Mr W Carey, MLC. Mr Carey carried out his duties as State Secretary (which position he held for many years) in a very satisfactory manner, and Labor's loss of such a stalwart is deplored by all. His record of achievement will long be remembered.

New Rules

As from July when Unity Conference determined to adopt the New Rules, the Movement has been carried out in accordance with principles laid down therein.

Naturally a Movement of such magnitude, acting under a set of Rules for many years, would take some little time to become accustomed to the many changes demanded under the new system. As to be expected, it has been found necessary to make some alterations, not of vital principles, but for administrative purposes, and profiting by the experience gained, alterations will be suggested for Annual Conference approval. We feel sure, that when the necessary alterations are made and the members become thoroughly conversant with their operation, great good will accrue to the Movement and much of the prejudice connected with them will be removed.

The Executive were beset with troubles arising out of the preselection ballots as many of the branches were in a state of chaos owing to the faction fight which had, in many instances, been waged with considerable bitterness, and owing to the limited time at our disposal there was little chance of getting matters straightened out and in many centres the candidates themselves and officials of branches were not rendering assistance but continued their disruptive tactics and retarded the proper functioning of the new system, as provided in the Rules.

Unity Conference

What is now known as the Unity Conference opened at the Trades Hall on Saturday, July 23, and concluded on July 21 at 5.10 pm.

Mr EJ Holloway presided - the chairman agreed upon by both parties, the attendance being greater than any previous Conference held.

The decisions of Conference were far-reaching and arrived at by overwhelming majorities, the New Rules and Easter Conference decisions being endorsed.

Since Conference an endeavor has been made to adjust the financial matters pertaining to the Movement under the jurisdiction of the previous officers. For some considerable time your Executive were not able to get any of the books and necessary papers to enable an audit being made. After delay books and vouchers were produced but insufficient to allow of a full determination of our financial obligations being arrived at by our accountants which regrettably leaves many accounts rendered and claimed to be due, in a most unsatisfactory state.

Some Unions claimed to have advanced money to the previous Executive in order to allow them to carry on and are now asking to be given credit for such sums, the AWU being the largest claimant.

If we accept the evidence of moneys having been paid, the difficulty of determining, in the absence of vouchers showing how such moneys were expended, and whether they were legitimately expended in the Movement's interest, is such that your Executive feel that they should seek the will of Conference upon.

An endeavor was made to adjust the matter relating to the claim of the AWU, a conference taking place between representatives of your Executive and delegates representing the Union, when matters reached a stage at which your representatives could not finalise matters till such time as an audit had been made, which we regret to report has not been made possible.

Up to the present time the Central Branch of the AWU has not had representation on the Executive, their nominee not being eligible to take his seat, being a person debarred by decision of the Unity Conference. The Railway Construction Branch of the AWU had representation up till the end of 1927 but has not sent a representative for 1928.

State Elections

The result of the State elections unfortunately placed Labor in the Opposition benches, having only a party of 40 members out of a House of 90, and whilst by far the strongest individual Party were unable to control owing to the other parties combining forces against them.

We regret to report that the bitterness caused by the split in the Party, "notwithstanding the success of the 'Unity Conference' and the professed allegiance to its decisions", was carried to the polling booth, and two prominent members of the Party who had strongly professed allegiance to Conference decisions and signed the Party's pledge, failing to receive selection, saw fit to contest Balmain and Botany in opposition to the selected and endorsed candidates, with the result that the Nationalists, seizing the opportunity of defeating the accredited Labor candidates, threw the weight of their organisation behind the renegades and with a sprinkling of disgruntled Labor voters succeeded in having them returned.

We regret the lack of coordination by the AWU officials and the uncompromising attitude of their official organ which, if not desirous of assisting, might have refrained from supplying propaganda for the enemy. The one bright feature being the fact that in very many instances it was made strikingly apparent that the members of that Union were not in accord with the tactics adopted, and contributed liberally to the fighting fund of the Movement; donations being received from the shearing sheds, railway jobs and road jobs throughout the State. Never in the history of the Movement had such a response been forthcoming as that which marked the appeal for funds, and whilst not particularising any one organisation or body we feel in duty bound to mention the Tramway men and employees in the Railway workshops, and regret that the sacrifices made by loyal members of the Movement was not rewarded by a return to power of a Government sympathetic to the aims and aspirations of the Movement.

Abolition of City Council

Immediately the Bavin Government became installed, pressure was brought to bear to take control of the City Council as Labor was well installed and under the extended franchise was sure to continue.

An Act was forced through Parliament to place the Municipal Government of the city under a Commission, thus robbing the citizens of their right to be governed as they so desire, proving conclusively that, it is the intention of Tory Governments to so curtail the rights of the community as to make it impossible for the voice of the people being heard.

Executive Elections

The first election of Executive under the new Rules has been held and resulted in a fully representative Executive being chosen, and to say that the first election under a new code of Rules, of which the members had not become fully conversant with, would be perfect, would be expecting almost the impossible, but the result goes to show that when the members become fully aware of the requirements under them, and some anomalies adjusted, it will be proved that as compared with the old system it is a great improvement and can be made fully representative. The result goes to show that the women representation has nothing to fear as the lady candidates topped the poll.

Country Provincial Conference

The first Country Provincial Conference ever held in the history of the Movement took place at the historic centre of Young, on January 26, and finished its deliberations at 5 pm on the 28th, having achieved a record of work.

As could be reasonably expected that coming so soon on the top of the strenuous election campaign, and taking into consideration the long distance many delegates had to travel, with their Branch funds depleted and unemployment rife, the attendance suffered, but as a 75 per cent attendance was recorded it is most gratifying and augurs well for the future. The conference created marked public attention and will result in giving the Movement a much-needed filip in that district, and it can be confidently predicted that the local branch will considerably add to its membership and will, at the next appeal, certainly return a pledged Labor candidate.

Metropolitan Provincial Conference

The Metropolitan Provincial Conference opened at the Trades Hall, Sydney, on February 11, and continued until February 15. It was attended by 193 delegates, presided over by the President, Mr WM Webster.

Many important resolutions were dealt with and recommended to Annual Conference for final decision.

In concluding this Report it is well for members to bear in mind that never has the Movement been through such a critical period and it is pleasing to know that it has emerged from the ordeal in a better state to render service as required to make it an effective means of giving effect to the aims and aspirations of its members, and if the opportunity which now presents itself is fully availed of, it can be made a wonderful power for good, as whilst allowing full and ample scope for differences of opinions it should not now be possible of being used for ulterior motives.

The wonderful amount of good work done by the *Labor Daily* should not be overlooked, as without its aid we would have not been able to achieve success. Its consistent advocacy of our cause was such as enabled your Executive to combat the misrepresentation of our enemies and made possible the collecting of funds to fight our cause.

I desire to thank all loyal officers of branches and secretaries of affiliated Unions for the whole-hearted support rendered during a most trying period.

The Office Staff are deserving of the best thanks of the Movement for the untiring energy and zeal in furthering its interests.

S Bird, General Secretary

W Webster, President.

State Parliamentary Party's Report

The concluding term of the Labor Parliament was the most important in a Parliament which was remarkable for the placing of so many vital Labor principles upon the Statute Book of the State. The term under review

is regarded as so important as during that time the principle of Family Endowment was woven into the laws of the State.

For many years Family Endowment has been a plank in Labor's Platform, but New South Wales is the first Labor Government that has given practical expression to the principle. The Act, as it finally emerged from Parliament is not as beneficial as the Government intended it to be, or as the Movement hoped it would be. The Upper House was responsible for the most important imperfections, chiefly for the clause which deprived the children of the skilled worker of the benefits of the Act. Although its original Bill was considerably altered, the Government felt that it was justified in making a few sacrifices if only it could get the principle acknowledged. This it did, and with Family Endowment now the law of the land, it will be much easier for future Labor Governments to improve it and make it the beneficial Act it was intended to be.

Most of the session was devoted to legislation benefitting the people engaged in rural industries. Following upon the adoption of the principle of collective marketing by the Bathurst Conference, many legislative Acts were necessary to give the farmer the machinery to give practical expression to that resolution. The full benefits of that legislation were not apparent to some of the farmers immediately, but each month a fuller realisation of what the legislation does is winning many country friends for Labor.

The Upper House was as destructive as it generally is when Labor is in office. Among the measures which did not come back from the Upper House was a Bill to break up the big estates which are land-locking our country towns and depriving our young farmers of land; also the Milk Bill which was intended to give expression to the decisions of the Bathurst Conference on the milk industry.

Unfortunately the life of the Labor Government was prematurely ended owing to the defection of three members who, elected at the 1925 elections as pledged Labor men, left the Party and deprived the Government of its majority.

The trouble which occurred within the Party during the 1926 session was accentuated during 1927. Labor has never found it practicable to govern on sound Labor lines unless it has enough pledged members to give it an absolute majority in Parliament. Being without a majority, the Premier handed his resignation to the Government and asked for a dissolution. This was granted.

The general election occurred in October, and the Party was defeated. Although we lost the right of Government the Labor vote was improved by almost 100,000 votes, which, considering the serious handicaps and the bitter opposition of erstwhile Labor members which we had to fight, was a wonderful result. The Party returned with 40 members, and is the largest Opposition Party that has been in Parliament.

W Davies, Hon.Sec.

Report of Federal Parliamentary Labor Party

On behalf of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party, we have the honor to submit a brief review of our activities during the first session of the new Parliament.

The first measure vitally affecting the workers was the Crimes Bill, introduced by the Attorney-General on January 28, 1926. The main purpose was to replace those deportation clauses of the Immigration Act which the High Court had declared invalid. Clauses in the Crimes Bill give the Government power to imprison for one year, and afterwards to deport, anyone not born in Australia who takes part in a lock-out or strike. Those born in this country are liable, on conviction, to imprisonment for 12 months,

The Labor Party fought this measure for several days, vigorously protesting against the inclusion of breaches of industrial laws in a 'Crimes' Bill.

The Leader, Mr Charlton, placed on record authentic figures, proving that, notwithstanding the repeated statements to the contrary, less working days were lost in Australia owing to industrial troubles than were lost in most of the other countries. He moved that the obnoxious clauses referring to industrial disputes be eliminated, as such clauses associated with the Crimes Act, were an unwarranted affront to the great bodies of organised Labor.

Despite strenuous efforts, however, the amendment was defeated, and the Government majority passed the Bill into law.

On the Tariff Schedule, the Labor Party was solid for the protection of Australian industries against foreign imports. Country Party members bitterly fought every proposal designed to assist our manufacturing industries. On many occasions, but for the Labor Party, the Freetrade section of the Ministerialists would have succeeded in reducing many items, thereby causing industrial stagnation and increasing unemployment.

The tariff amendment, though beneficial, did not go far enough. Several industries must receive further protection if Australia is to make substantial progress.

Another measure introduced by the Government was the appointment of a board of four to deal with Development and Migration. This matter received the earnest consideration of the Party. We pointed out that the time had arrived when the question of immigration should be thoroughly investigated before expending millions of pounds in bringing immigrants to Australia without any definite scheme for their absorption.

In the course of the debate it was pointed out that, whilst immigration had been proceeding, many farmers' sons in this country, with considerable experience, were unable to secure land. In addition, there

was still a large number of our own unemployed who were unable to obtain work.

The Party opposed the Bill, believing that the proposed Commission had little hope of success, hampered as it was by the fact that the Commonwealth Government had already entered into an immigration scheme with the Imperial authorities involving the expenditure of £34,000,000.

The outstanding legislation for the session was the proposal to amend the Constitution. This announcement came as a complete surprise, and the time allowed for consideration was totally inadequate. The Labor Party, believing in extended Federal powers, urged the Government to postpone action until the suggested Constitutional session was held, so that the electors might thoroughly understand the questions to be submitted for their approval.

The Government, however, determined to go on, and two Bills were introduced for the purpose of deciding two questions by Referenda.

As the first Bill, "Industry and Commerce", contained proposals that had been placed before the people by the Fisher Government in 1911 and 1913, and as they were also steps forward towards the "unlimited powers" provided for in the Labor Platform, our Party agreed, with only two dissentients, to support the first Bill.

Conferences were held with the Federal Executive, at which Mr Charlton was requested to interview the Prime Minister with a view to having the Labor Party's previous proposals for increased powers over corporations, trusts and combines included in the Bill. This request was approved by the Parliamentary Party, and Messrs Charlton and Brennan consulted with Mr Bruce and Mr Latham, with the result that the "Corporation" powers, identical with those submitted in 1913, were included.

Owing to instructions from State Executives, however, the Federal Executive delegates were equally divided, but, ultimately, by a majority, they decided to declare the Referendum "an open question".

The Referendum campaign on this question affected, for the time at any rate, the solidarity of Labor. We, therefore, suggest that Conference should make it clear what attitude is to be taken by all members of the Movement on any future proposals that may be brought forward to amend the Constitution.

During the session important amendments were made to the Arbitration Act, and three judges appointed, clothed with powers to interpret and enforce their awards. The most notable decision of the newly-constituted court was the 44-hours decision. We compliment the Union representatives on the splendid case they presented, and congratulate them on the result.

The situation in China has on several occasions appeared serious, and, in order to make the views of Labor known, the following resolution was unanimously carried at our Party meeting on March 3. 1927: "That

this Party, believing in the principles of self-determination, and realising that the present turmoil in China is due to matters concerning their own domestic affairs, is against any intervention by outside powers. We believe that all nations should be entrusted to solve their own internal problems, and will strenuously oppose any action which may be taken to commit Australia to a foreign war."

Parliament was closed from August 13, 1926, to March 2, 1927. Repeated protests had been made by the Labor Party against the prolonged recesses.

The withdrawal of the Per Capita payments from the States was unanimously opposed by Labor, and also by many Government supporters. Apart from the injustice to State Governments, this scheme would relieve companies and individuals with Interstate interests from land and income taxation. The revenue lost would be made up by increased taxes on smaller taxpayers.

The remission of Land Tax and the exemption of bonus shares from Income Tax were again stoutly opposed by our Party.

Every measure brought down received careful consideration, and we kept always in mind the Platform to which we are pledged and the welfare of the people as a whole.

We wish your Conference every success, and trust that the result of your deliberations will strengthen and advance the Labor Movement throughout Australia.

Yours fraternally,
Arthur Blakeley, Sec.
M Charlton, Leader

Report of Women's Central Organising Committee

Fellow Delegates of the Women's Central Organising Committee:

It has been the practice in the past for the Secretary to give a report of the activities of the Committee for the past year, but owing to a change of officers due to the dissension and chaotic state of the Party my term of office as Secretary only commenced on the 16th June, and as the books of the Committee were not restored by the previous officers my Report can only cover from that period.

During that time we have had deputations —

To the Minister for Health concerning the establishing of Maternity Hospitals throughout the State;

To the Minister for Local Government — the protection of dangerous waterholes owing to the increasing deaths of children at those places;

To the Minister for Education *re* the setting apart of 2nd September annually for the appreciation of Australian authors and literature;

To Mr AC Willis *re* more working class educational matter in the Women's Page of the *Labor Daily*.

These matters were endorsed and promised every assistance by the Ministers.

Assisting in the agitation for the release of Sarah Boyd and Mrs Mort from Long Bay Gaol, which was successful in the case of the former.

Special nights were devoted to hearing addresses from the following:-

Father Lockington on "Women in National Life"; Mrs Spears on "Home Occupations and Domestic Training"; Miss Luty on "Conditions of Domestic Workers in Other Countries", all of which were educative and informative.

A stirring appeal from the Blind Workers by Mr Robinson, asking the women's assistance in helping them securing at least a basic wage, was met by an unanimous pledge to do everything in our power by propaganda and petition.

A women's rally held in the Domain protesting against the basic wage was very successful.

Three women candidates were the selected candidates at the last election and contested their various electorates under great disabilities.

Our whole-hearted support was given to the Lang Government and the Seale Executive.

After agitation and two deputations to the Lord Mayor we regret our failure to secure time off for lunch, away from the environment of their occupation, for female attendants employed by the City Council, and the Women's Committee consider it a gross reflection on such a powerful Union as the Municipal Employees in permitting same to continue.

The following subjects have been thoroughly discussed - and will be further reviewed at the forthcoming Interstate Women's Convention to be held shortly.

The forming of a "Federal Organisation of Labor Women", "Maternity Welfare", "War Precautions Act and Its Amendments", "Compulsory Training", "The Absolute Necessity of Women Presiding on the Bench in Children's Courts", "Women's Place in Labor Propaganda and Organisation", "A Better Knowledge of Banking and Finance".

Donations from the following towards the expenses of Interstate Convention were greatly appreciated, viz. Executive of the ALP, £15; Tramway Union, £10; Labor Choir, £9/2/1; Caterers' Waitresses' Union, £1/1/-; Mrs Green, £1/1/-.

A closer collaboration with the Executive, with mutual advice and help, is earnestly desired by the Women's Committee, which will tend to that unity which is essential to the securing of the Treasury Benches -

both Federal and State – and to the Women’s Central Organising Committee. The vindictiveness of the Bavin Government will only act as a further stimulus to that objective.

Lena Lynch, Hon. Secretary.

Organising Secretary’s Report

I desire to submit the following report on my activities since my appointment as Organising Secretary, for the consideration of Annual General Conference.

I was appointed to the position of Organising Secretary in December, 1927.

When I took up duty, I felt that my first task was one of consolidating the Party in the electorates that had been the storm centres of the ‘Easter Conference’ struggle of 1927.

Immediately following the Unity Conference, the Provisional Executive instructed ‘rival’ branches to merge together, and the officers of the branches endorsed by the Provisional Executive should remain officers of the branches until the election of officers for 1928.

Consequently I visited Canowindra, Cowra, Young, Marengo, Junee, Harden, Gundagai. At Canowindra, Cowra, Young and Marengo the fortunes of our Party have been worsened by the machination of P Loughlin, ex-MLA, but since his conversion to the Nationalist Party – whose friends lavished upon him his reward for betraying the Labor Movement – the wool has been removed from their eyes. At Young and Marengo preparations are being made to render the greatest assistance possible to the selected candidate for the Hume Federal Electorate.

At Harden, Gundagai and Cootamundra, there exist strong branches of the Party. Junee was visited by me on two occasions. At my first visit members of both factions agreed that I should visit the branch at its first meeting in the New Year. Mr Crawford, the secretary, undertaking to call for nominations for all officers of the branch.

However, in compliance with the expressed wish of members of both factions I again visited Junee on 7th January. Believing that both factions were desirous of making common cause, I did not think it necessary to ask the Executive for special instructions.

Mr Kenny, President of the Branch, presided over a large open-air meeting, which was addressed by Ken Hoad, MLA, and myself. After the meeting had closed we adjourned to the branch meeting place for the purpose of issuing tickets to all bona-fide members of the Junee branch, and the election of officers. I soon found that the cleavage was as profound as ever and at the conclusion of the meeting a resolution was carried expressing the wish for special intervention by the Executive.

Subsequently I reported the proceedings to the Executive – suggesting that the election of officers of the Junee branch should be conducted

on the lists used at the last preselection ballot and that an Executive officer should be sent to Junee to supervise the election of officers.

My report was adopted by the Executive. The President, Mr WM Webster, was elected by the Executive to proceed to Junee to give effect to the decision of the Executive.

From Junee I proceeded to Blayney and Bathurst. At Bathurst the factions merged together and the election of officers was carried out without a hitch.

On January 14 I went into the Wollondilly Electorate in anticipation of the resignation of Sir George Fuller, accordingly I distributed 1500 enrolment forms at various centres of the Electorate – the work of enrolment being left to the voluntary service of supporters was not carried out effectively.

In Wollondilly the Party organisation was very weak, at the occasion of the by-election there existed only one branch; today, however, there are now nine branches. This was the direct outcome of my two visits to Wollondilly, the last occasion was during the by-election.

Since taking up the duties of Organising Secretary the following new branches have been endorsed: Marulan (Wollondilly), Galong (Cootamundra).

There are several applications for endorsement from new branches, but these have been withheld pending the receipt of reports from Electorate Councils as to the boundaries of branches constituting Electoral Councils.

The following Branches have been resuscitated in accordance with the rules: Bargo, Picton, Moss Vale.

The transcending importance of the next Federal Election is beyond question. In this connection I reported to the Executive at the first meeting of the year the necessity for early preparations and the holding of the preselection ballots for the entire 28 Federal Constituencies – including the Senate. I pointed out that early preselection would tend to eliminate the bitterness usually associated with preselections and that the most effective way to organise the electorates was around the selected candidates.

The Executive endorsed my report and instructed all Electorate Councils to have preselection ballots finalised by April 14, 1928. In this connection the entire machine has responded and every Federal Electorate Council will have made its selection of a candidate to contest the forthcoming Federal Elections.

On February 21 I submitted a report indicating the procedure to be adopted in the calling together of the Trade Union Groups and Electoral Groups to elect delegates to Annual General Conference. The report contained the dates and meeting places of the various groups.

Labor at last is recognising the significance of Federal politics and their relation to the workers of Australia. The Nationalist Party firmly

behind the Central Government is a growing menace to the people of Australia. The army of unemployed is growing apace. Immigrants of extremely diverse nationalities are being dumped on our shore regardless of proper provision being made to assimilate them in industry.

The Bruce-Page anti-Trade Union Bill strikes at the foundation of the Labor Movement. Recognising the extraordinary difficulties that at present tend to obscure our future, the lack of finance – of which the Nationalist Party have an abundance – tends to make the task of organisation a difficult one.

A meeting of representatives of all ALP Branches and Trade Unions is being called to consider the question of raising a substantial fighting fund. This meeting will be called at an early date, immediately following the formation of a Federal Campaign Election Committee.

Labor, however, looks calmly to the future. We possess the will and determination that has assisted us in the darkest hours of travail, that made possible the birth of the Australian Labor Party.

Yours fraternally,
AJ Macpherson,
Organising Secretary.

The Taking Over of the ALP Offices

Immediately following the Unity Conference, Messrs Graves, Bird and Macpherson met in Conference Messrs Buckland, Harrop, Tatham and Conroy. Mr Holloway, the Chairman of the Unity Conference, and Messrs McDonald and McNamara of the Federal Executive were also present.

The following matters were placed before the delegates representing both the Seale and Conroy factions.

The raising of the suspensions upon 17 members of the late Conroy Executive. The officers of the Federal Executive declared this decision of the Unity Conference ultra vires.

The payment of legal cost in connection with the cases then in Court.

The recognition of the £805 paid by the AWU (Central and Railway Industry Branches) and Water and Sewerage Board Emps.

Considerable discussion ensued when these matters were submitted by Mr McNamara. The representatives of the Executive submitted that the question of suspensions had been determined by the Annual General Conference and that it was not competent for the Executive or any other authority to challenge decisions of Annual Conference. With regard to No. 2, no objection was raised but your representatives felt it was a matter for the Executive.

Much discussion centred around proposal No. 3. It was pointed out that the money advanced was used for the purpose of carrying on an internecine struggle inside the party. Moreover, advances to the Conroy

Executive are shown as from April 13, 1927 till the assembling of the Unity Conference. The Executive felt that this was a question for determination by Annual General Conference.

The items I and 2 were the subject matter of a further conference between representatives of the Central Executive and the Federal Executive of the AWU.

Messrs Bird, Jones and Macpherson comprised the sub-committee appointed by the Executive to meet the Federal Executive of the AWU. This conference was called at the instigation of representatives of the AWU on the Federal Executive of the Australian Labor Party. Mr McNamara was authorised to get in touch with the Central Executive of the ALP of NSW and the Federal Executive of the AWU. The Executive awaits the reply of the Federal Executive with regard to the outcome of the conference.

On August 5, 1927, the credentials of PM Lynch of the RWIB of the AWU were accepted. Mr Lynch stated that his branch desired to be represented on the Central Executive of the ALP. Coincident with the submission of the credentials of PM Lynch, a credential was submitted on behalf of Gavin Sutherland. Mr Sutherland's credential was obviously out of order, as he is among the 17 persons suspended by the Unity Conference.

On September 7, the Central Branch furnished the Executive with a credential for G Buckland. Mr Buckland's credential, however, was held over pending a repudiation by Mr Buckland of the bitter attack against the Central Executive on the non-endorsement of Dr Evatt by the official organ of the AWU - the *Sydney Worker*.

In this connection Mr HE Boote was cited to appear before the Executive for actively associating with the Nationalist Party in his desire to see the Labor Government defeated.

Mr Boote defied the Executive, but was subsequently expelled by the Rose Bay Branch of the ALP, and the expulsion was confirmed by the Central Executive.

Balmain Selection Ballot

On the occasion of the second ballot for the selection of a candidate for Balmain, 300 AWU votes were cast on Dr Evatt's behalf. The Executive tested the bona fides of these votes by a house to house canvass of the addresses on the ballot papers with "check slips" attached. It was found that there was not one valid vote.

State Parliamentary Election and the AWU

During the campaign several prominent officials of the AWU were conspicuous by their absence. Their deliberate refusal to support Lang and his party could have been passed by without notice but the treacherous

acts of these individuals in their open attack against Lang and the Central Executive during the period of an election crisis will be remembered by the thousands of unfortunate members of the Labor Movement who have keenly suffered through the wholesale unemployment that made itself apparent on the defeat of the Lang Government.

General Returning Officer's Report

Mr King, the General Returning Officer for the State preselection ballots submitted his report on August 12. He commented strongly on the alleged irregularities made by some candidates. These allegations, after investigation were found to be groundless and frivolous.

On the completion of the ballot for the Election of the 1928 ALP Executive, the General Returning Officer, Mr JB Martin submitted the following report:

Returning Officer's Report
To the President, ALP State of NSW
Dear Comrade,

I present the following report concerning the Executive elections conducted in conformity with the New Rules of the ALP for the State of New South Wales.

In the diagram submitted in book form a detailed statement of all primary votes and preference allocations is submitted.

The following are the representatives elected by the various Electorate Councils and Trades Union Groups:

Metropolitan Representatives:

Mrs Dunn, L Webster, ST Green, F Roels.

Alternates:

Nurse Francis, WA Bennett, GE Gibson, JW Coote.

The Metropolitan Group consists of 45 Electorate Councils of which 41 furnished returns. In this vote 2356 members participated in the ballot. As Returning Officer I afforded every facility for the members of the Metropolitan Branches to exercise their rights as members of the Movement as to who should be their representatives on the Executive of 1928. It would have been a pleasure to have reported that every member in the Metropolitan Area had availed themselves of the franchise. The full significance of the powers of the Branch members under the Rules in the selection of their Executive members has not yet been fully realised.

Country Groups

The Country is divided into three divisions, namely: Northern, West-Central and Southern.

Northern Representatives:

Mrs F Barrett, PJ Goeghan. Alternates: JV Hall, TW Roach.

West-Central Representatives:

Mrs WM Webster, F Finnan. Alternates: J Figg, W Beck.

Southern Representatives:

Miss Lee, H Stone. Alternates: AS Ticehurst, Mrs Smith.

1063 members of the three above divisions voted to select the six representatives. Whilst every effort was made to see that every section in the country had the privilege to cast their vote, I found that the period of the year that the vote was taken made it difficult for the country divisions to get the ballot papers and the machinery to carry out the vote in good working order. This was occasioned by the fact that the PMG's department was overcrowded with mail matter. It is realised that at the festive season of the year parcels are often delayed in the city for four or five days and in the country it can easily be conceived that there would be even a longer delay. For that reason I would suggest to the incoming Executive the necessity of finalising future ballots by the end of November, but the Executive to be declared on the 1st January.

Trade Union Groups

The following are the representatives selected by the various Union Groups.

AWU	No representatives so far submitted
Miners	Now finalising selection of representatives.
Public Utilities	C Anderson (Amal. Postal Workers) A O'Gorman (Gas Employees). MJ Connaghan (Shop Assists).
Transport Water	W Fandlan (Waterside Workers).
Transport Land	WA Clementson (Tramway Union). P O'Sullivan (Fed. Loco Enginemen). MP Ryan (Storemen).
Building Trades Group.	F Morris (Carpenters and Joiners) G Pickford (Plumbers).
Food Group	LF Gill (Sugar Workers).
Metal Trades Group	J Stewart (Electrical Trades). J Hooke (Moulders).
Manufacturing Group	W Jones (Clothing Trades).
Printing Non-Manual	JJ Bollard (PIEU)
Miscellaneous	
Wood Group	W Isley (Timber Workers).

6155 Delegates, apart from the AWU and Miners, attended the various groups to cast their vote on behalf of their organisation. The basis of Union delegates was one delegate for every 1000 members. I personally conducted the ballot in each group apart from the AWU and Miners.

At several of the Group meetings the question arose that votes should be a plebiscite of the whole of the rank and file, but on every occasion that this was raised the delegates assembled voted against such a proposal. It was reasoned (1) that the cost would be excessive, (2) that the delegates assembled would have a better knowledge of the candidates submitting themselves for selection.

During the period of the ballot I was requested to submit ballot papers to the organisation in order that they may distribute same to their delegates; this I refused to do and the Group endorsed my action in this respect. I was quite willing to post a ballot paper to any delegate who was unable to attend, conditional that I was supplied with his name and address. Organisations who supplied me with the names and addresses of their members unable to attend, such persons were posted a ballot paper.

I endeavored to fearlessly carry out the duties assigned to me as Returning Officer, realising that it was imperative that in the first occasion of a ballot for the Executive, under the new Rules, should not be associated with anything of unclean nature.

Every group was satisfied that the ballot was carried out in accordance with the instructions of the Executive.

In conclusion I desire to recommend to the incoming Executive the necessity of making arrangements for a complete record of membership being compiled and kept at Head Office; this would obviate the great difficulty found in determining the number of ballot papers, etc., required for all ballots.

I desire to thank the Office Staff, the DRO's and Scrutineers who ably assisted me to carry out my duties to a successful issue.

(Sgd.) JB Martin, Returning Officer.

Constitution of Groups Under Rules

In accordance with the provisions of Rule 73, the following report was submitted by the then President, A Macpherson, to constitute the Trade Union and Electoral Groups under the Rules.

- (1) The affiliated Trade Unions should at once be formally notified of the Group to which they respectively belong.
- (2) Each union should be informed by the General Secretary that one or more delegates, on the basis of one (1) delegate for each 100 affiliated members, should be appointed to a special Group meeting convened by the General Secretary.

- (3) The business of the Group meeting should be the selection of representatives to the Executive. This selection should be by plebiscite of the delegates elected on the basis of one (1) per 100 by a preferential vote.
- (4) The Organising Secretary of the Party should group the Electorate Councils in Groups of five, as provided under the Rules, and these primary groups should further be grouped into four divisions. i.e., Metropolitan, Northern, West-Central and Southern Divisions.
- (5) A meeting of each Division should be convened by the General Secretary, and a plebiscite of individual league members undertaken to appoint representatives to the Executive.
- (6) Each Primary Group shall be instructed by the Organising Secretary in the manner of election of delegates to the next Easter Conference.
- (7) The Central Executive shall be responsible for convening and conducting the Divisional Group Meetings.
- (8) That any person may nominate providing his nomination is signed by at least six persons and countersigned by Secretary of his Union or Branch.

Organising Policy

- (1) The Organising Secretary should circulate constantly throughout the country and Metropolitan Electorates. His main work should be:
 - (a) To organise new Branches where none exists.
 - (b) To organise and strengthen existing Branches.
 - (c) To collect for Head Office useful data and information re Branches, Councils and live workers in them.
 - (d) To organise financial aid for the Branches, Councils and the General Party Funds.
- (2) For this purpose the Organising Secretary should be provided with a motor van and, speech amplifier.
- (3) The capital cost of this equipment could be covered by:
 - (a) Donations from Unions, Branches and Members of Parliamentary Party and Members of the Municipal Party.

The following is a list of attendances of the Executive:

WH Seale (resigned) 5 meetings.	Mrs Dunn, 36 meetings.
WM Webster, 11 meetings.	FW Yates, 1 meeting.
R James, 13 meetings.	A Berry, 20 meetings.
T Leslie, 9 meetings.	JH Stone, 13 meetings.
JJ Graves, 30 meetings.	Miss Lee, 14 meetings.
WT Padgett, 32 meetings.	Mrs Webster, 36 meetings.

E Turner (resigned), 3 meetings.	PM Lynch, 23 meetings.
G Pickford (alt.), 19 meetings.	M Manion, 3 meetings.
TF Morton, 17 meetings.	J Stewart (alt.), 6 meetings.
A Macpherson, 33 meetings.	A Sherwin (resigned), 16 meetings.
J Bollard, 30 meetings.	L Gill (alt.), 5 meetings.
G Mullens, 35 meetings.	M Connaghan (alt.), 29 meetings.
WT Swadling, 36 meetings.	Mrs Stapleton (alt.), 24 meetings.
WA Clementson, 27 meetings.	H Potter (alt.), 24 meetings.
FE Miller (resigned), 8 meetings.	Mrs Smith (alt.), 9 meetings.
H Lockhard (alt.), 10 meetings.	WD Jones, 24 meetings.
MP Ryan, 34 meetings.	Mrs Houghton, 30 meetings.
RA King, 29 meetings.	



Annual Conference of NSW ALP, 1928

(The Sydney Morning Herald, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16 April 1928)

Day 1, Friday, 6 April 1928

Labour Conference opens. Allegations of corruption. Garden faction in control. Move against Labour members.

The annual conference of the Australian Labour party opened in the Trades Hall yesterday, about 150 delegates being in attendance.

Voting for the officials disclosed that the followers of Mr JJ Garden were in complete control of the gathering.

During the night session allegations of corrupt practices with regard to the Albury group were made.

The conference decided that the Labour party, if returned to power at the next State elections, should introduce an Act making it obligatory for a Labour member to vacate his seat if he fails to carry out the directions of the party.

The Business

Mr WM Webster was in the chair, and those present on the platform were: Messrs JT Lang, J Baddeley, Ratcliffe, Lysaght, Olde, Horsington, M Davidson, F Butler, M Burke, J Cahill, M O'Sullivan, M Flannery, J McDicken, F Stanley, J Quirk, D Clyne, M'sLA; EG Theodore, J West, PE Coleman, H Lazzarini, E Riley, sen., Blakeley, M'sP; and JP Hannan, president of the Reid Federal Electorate Council.

Mr ER Voigt (Clerks) was elected minute secretary unopposed, and Mr A Bennett (Watchmakers) timekeeper. Messrs Ward, Pitt, Carlton, and Hill were appointed tellers for the conference.

A resolution was carried that representatives of all metropolitan newspapers be admitted to the conference, with the exception of the *Evening News* and *Smith's Newspapers*.

The following were appointed delegates of the agenda committee: Messrs JS Beasley (Electrical Trades), W Gibb (Clothing Trades), JJS Willis (Printing Trades), and Mrs J Dunn (Glebe). Mr C Gaylor (vice-president of the Toowoomba branch) was welcomed to the conference.

Mr JB Martin was appointed returning officer.

Mr CE Martin (Newcastle) moved on behalf of the Newcastle EC: "That it be an instruction to the party when returned to office in the Legislative Assembly in New South Wales to bring in an Act to make it necessary for a member of the Legislative Assembly to resign his or her seat should he or she by any act secede or be expelled from the movement of which he or she was a member when last elected to the Legislative Assembly."

The mover said that the movement should be able to get a rat and crush its life out. The position was that when a member went into Parliament he might secede from his platform and the rank and file had no control over him. The rank and file must have control over the member who "ratted" upon them. It was obvious that when any man opposed the platform on which he was elected there was no legitimate reason for him to remain in Parliament.

Mr Dan O'Connor (Newcastle) supporting the motion, said the movement had suffered greatly from men who had fastened themselves on the movement and fattened and 'ratted' upon it. They must stop these thieves, thugs and rats.

Mr F Rosevear (Leichhardt) opposed the motion. If such legislation became law the Independent-member would go scot free. If the conference favoured the recall, he said, it should move straight for it.

"I am doubtful if this is a Labour conference or a mixed Nationalist and Labour conference", said Mr Thompson (Milk and Ice Carters' Union). "We don't want to expel the rats in the National party, we like to see them there. The Labour members of Parliament must be taught that they are the servants of the working class who elected them. When things cease to stink in our own home we may be able to right those in the National party", he added.

Mr E O'Dea (Shop Assistants), moved as an amendment that it be an instruction to the party when returned to office in the Legislative Assembly to bring in an Act to make it necessary for a Labour member of the Assembly to resign his seat if he or she refused to support the policy of the party under which they were elected, and that their seats should be declared vacant. He said that if the Labour members of the last

Parliament had remained true to the principles of the party which had elected them, Mr Lang would have been Premier of New South Wales today.

Mr Evin Davies (Southern Miners), in seconding the amendment, said that it was the duty of the ALP executive to maintain control over the politicians. The amendment was defeated and the motion carried.

Official Reports

The annual report and balance sheet of the ALP executive disclosed that during the year many new branches had been established throughout the State. At the present time there were 105 unions affiliated, while the branches numbered about 500.

"Our organization has never previously achieved such a high degree of efficiency", the report read. "We regret, however, the lack of coordination by the AWU officials and the uncompromising attitude of their official organ, which if not desirous of assisting, might have refrained from supplying propaganda for the enemy. The one bright feature was the fact that in very many instances it was made strikingly apparent that the members of that union were not in accord with the tactics adopted. They contributed liberally to the fighting funds of the movement."

The report of the Federal Parliamentary Labour party contained a suggestion that in future the conference should make it clear what attitude should be taken by all members of the movement on any future proposal to amend the constitution. Reference was made to the split which occurred in the party with regard to the referendum campaign.

Mr JB Martin, returning officer, in a report concerning the last State elections, said that during the campaign several prominent officials were conspicuous by their absence. "Their deliberate refusal to support Mr Lang and his party", said Mr Martin, "could have been passed by without notice, but, the treacherous acts of these individuals in their open attacks against Lang and the central executive during the period of the election crisis will be remembered by the thousands of unfortunate members of the Labour movement who have suffered keenly through the wholesale unemployment that made itself apparent on the defeat of the Lang Government."

Delegate Excluded

Mr M Ryan (chairman of the Credentials committee) stated that Mr J Doyle (Ironworkers' Federation) had been refused admission to the conference because he was a Communist, and had refused to sign the pledge.

Presidential Address

Mr WM Webster, in his presidential address, stated that it was the first conference to be held under the new rules and constitution adopted at the unity conference. Since that time the movement had passed through a trying experience. The functions of the conference were to review the decisions arising out of the two provincial conferences. The principal work which confronted the Labour movement in this and other States was the preparation for the federal elections which he believed would take place about March next year. The Labour party had to consider the most urgent problems of the Australian people, and first and foremost was unemployment. Unemployment, he said, was the natural corollary of capitalism. As the system under which they lived had produced the present chaotic state of unemployment, the first step towards remedying it was that those who were unable to secure work should be given the right of sustenance from the national resources of the country. Legislation, he considered, should be introduced along those lines. The present federal Government was aggravating unemployment by encouraging the flotsam and jetsam of Southern Europe and Asia Minor to come to our shores. By bringing them here in tens of thousands avenues of employment had been closed to Australian workers. The policy of the Federal Government was to flood the country with the unemployed to provide an army of cheap labour in order to reduce the wage standards of the country. If there was no Labour party there would have been no White Australia policy, without which the conditions of the Australian workers would have been intolerable. No Government would dare interfere with the White Australia policy, but the Bruce Government was watering down that policy. Misrepresentation had been in the past and would be in the future the greatest bar of the Labour party towards attaining power. Mr Bruce had declared that he was not able to prevent immigrants coming here because of possible international complications. Mr Bruce knew, however, that the League of Nations had decided that immigration and emigration were matters of domestic concern. When Mr Bruce returned from his visit to England he had a long interview with Mussolini, and that could be taken as an indication of what they could expect in the future. "We should also endeavour", said Mr Webster, "to arrive at a true recognition of the importance of the development of Australian industries. Every day hundreds of thousands of pounds totalling millions in the year of manufactured goods are brought to Australia that should be made here. Only by the development to the fullest extent of Australian industry could avenues of employment be created for the rising generation. The Labour party had to advocate in the Federal Parliament a full development of Australian industry. Today the imports exceed the exports by £20,000,000 a year. We are going downhill in the industrial and financial spheres. General Monash has stated that if

Australia was attacked by an invader it could not defend itself for twenty-four hours. Australian industries, he said, were our first line of defence." Referring to land monopolies, Mr Webster said that in the past there had been a marked apathy displayed by Labour parliamentarians on the question. In future they should see that their representatives understood thoroughly those problems. Mr Webster concluded with a condemnation of foreign borrowing, and an appeal for unity among Labour members.

Lively Scene

It was decided not to accept Mr A Davis as a delegate from the Carpenters' Union for the reason that he was not a member of the league in the electorate in which he resided. There was a rowdy scene during Mr Davis' address to the conference, and for a time the chairman failed to make himself heard or to secure order, when Mr Davis did not deny that he had assisted a candidate against the selected Labour candidates in Parramatta electorate four years ago. Mr A Edwards (Blacksmiths' Union) was also refused admission as a delegate because he did not belong to a league.

Allegations that the ballot held in the Albury group of electorates was one of the most corrupt ever held, were made by Mr Kenny (Cootamundra) when opposing the admission of Mr Elphic as a delegate from the Tumut branch. Mr King (chairman of the appeals committee) said that a plebiscite of the members of the league was taken because of the laxity of the council.

A Voice: Because of the laxity of the executive.

It was decided to admit the Tumut delegate to the conference.

Nurse Francis moved that the blind workers' industry should be nationalised. Mr Rosevear (Leichhardt) seconded the resolution which was carried.

At the instance of the Women's Central Organising Committee motions were carried in favour of equal guardianship of children, female health inspectors for flats, the desirability of women presiding at children's courts.

Mr D Chalker (South Coast) moved that the Crown lands of the State be scientifically divided into living areas, suitable for the various forms of agriculture, and made available to settlers on most reasonable terms. The motion was carried.

A motion from the Liverpool Electorate Council, moved by Mr J Stone, was, to the effect that the question of water conservation, irrigation, and the complete exploitation of all idle and partially idle land adjacent to pioneer railway lines be closely examined with a view to making the lines payable propositions.

Mr Stone said that at present the Commissioners built a railway into virgin country and promptly saddled the community with the expense of this unpaying addition to the State railways. The responsibility of the Government did not cease with the construction of the line. It should open up the land adjoining the new line. He was almost in favour of allowing the land to be handed over to the Commissioners for them to develop it, for the New South Wales railways were at present among the most efficient in the world.

Mr Thompson (Ice and Milk Carters' Union) said the Government must do something to develop the area of partially idle land along the route of new lines. The motion was carried.

Mr Martin, BEc, (Newcastle) moved that the Education Act should be amended to read: "The leaving age of school children be 16 years instead of 14 years". Mr R King (Metal Trades), in seconding the motion, said that the age of children subsidised by the State should be raised to 16 years. The motion was carried.

At 10.30 pm the conference adjourned until half-past 9 this morning.

Day 2, Saturday, 7 April 1928

Communist Issue at ALP. Clash with Federal Executive. Right to advocate socialisation. Wild scenes of disorder.

The Communist issue was keenly debated at the ALP conference on Saturday. The executive, in its report, repudiated a ruling by the Federal executive that individual members of the ALP were prohibited from advocating the policy of the Communist party. It was pointed out by the executive that the socialisation of industry was common to the platform of both Communists and the Labour party, and that the Federal Executive's decision would therefore prevent the State Labour party from advocating its own objective.

The Session

When the annual conference of the Australian Labour Party was continued on Saturday morning there was a large attendance of delegates. The president (Mr W Webster) presided.

Executive's Report

In moving the adoption of the report of the executive, Mr Graves (senior vice-president) said the executive had not tried to please everyone in the movement, but had done its best in the interests of the movement as a whole. The dispute with the AWU had not as yet been settled. The

question of the amount of money advanced by the AWU to the ALP which the former body held was paid in advance, was still unsettled. The executive had also to consider the question of the powers of the Federal executive to issue rulings for the States. The executive contended that each State Labour party was a complete body elected by the rank and file, and should have the right to decide and settle all matters within its own State. If the Federal executive were allowed the power it claimed it would place the control of the whole Labour party in the hands of a small number of men only indirectly responsible to the rank and file through the State executives. It would be able to order anything it liked, and to violate the will of the whole of the party.

Mr F Roels (a member of the executive) referred to the ruling given by the Federal executive of the Party on the question of the non-admission of Communists to the party and said that the State executive did not agree with the wording of the third clause. That clause stated that "Individual members of the ALP are prohibited from advocating the policy of the Communist party". They realised the danger of such a position. They saw in it the practical emasculation of the Labour party in New South Wales in any effective work on behalf of the movement, if they complied with the requirements of the Federal executive.

Mrs Webster said that the State executive's reply to the ruling was not a unanimous report. She was one who had voted against it.

Mr Graves said that the decision was a majority decision.

At the request of a delegate the ruling of the Federal executive and the reply of the State executive were read.

The ruling stated that neither the Communist party nor a branch of it might be or become affiliated with the ALP, and that no member of the Communist party might be or become a member of the ALP. Further, that individual members of the ALP were prohibited from advocating the policy of the Communist party.

Executive's Reply

In reply the executive stated that the executive of the ALP (NSW) was the creation of the rank and file in conference, and in all domestic matters recognised only the authority of the rank and file of the ALP, State of New South Wales, as expressed in conference or by plebiscite. It was contrary to the democratic principles of the Australian Trade Union and Labour movement and to the working class movement in all civilised countries that a small group of officials such as the Federal executive and conference should have the extraordinary power to override the expressed will of the rank and file, to whom they owed their existence. Therefore, the executive of the ALP, State of New South Wales, would maintain the right of autonomy in all domestic matters which the rank and file of the party in New South Wales, in conjunction with the parties

in all other States, had enjoyed since the inception of the Australian Labour party, and the executive would repudiate any ruling or dictum of Federal officials on any domestic matter which had not first received the approval of the rank and file of the party in New South Wales. The dangerous nature of permitting a few officials to abrogate to themselves absolute and final authority over the rank and file was brought into clear relief by the ill-considered third clause of the Federal officials' dictum. In that arbitrary and impracticable clause the rank and file were prohibited from advocating the policy of the Communist party. Should, therefore, the Communist party adopt partially or wholly any Labour party policy or platform, under the Federal officials' dictum the rank and file could be prohibited from supporting their own policy. Further, since the objective of the Communist party and the Australian Labour party was identical in regard to the socialisation of industry, the Federal officials' dictum would prohibit the rank and file from ever realising, as a practical policy, its solemnly declared objective.

Mr Roels said that if the dictum of the Federal executive was accepted the State movement would be a subordinate body, and not the ruling body, as at present. He did not want the eyes of the delegates blindfolded by the Red bogey or by the Red flag. He wanted them to see correctly. There was a great difference between the constitutions of the various Labour parties in the different States, especially between those in New South Wales and Western Australia, and he could not see how the Federal executive could properly control the State movements, nor why it should have any say in the domestic affairs of the States. The Federal executive's claim was "right over the fence". The Federal executive should be told that the State executive respected its decisions, but would accept them if it favoured them, and would reject them if it did not.

Mr WT Morris (Dubbo) asked if it was correct that one of the objects of the Labour movement - the socialisation of industry - was identical with a plank in the platform of the Communist party? If that was so, he said, it was a disgraceful thing, especially as the Federal elections were approaching.

The chairman said that that particular plank only was identical.

Arising out of the balance-sheet, Mr Barker (ARU) asked if it was possible for the executive to supply a list of the amounts of election funds spent in each electorate. He said that in the Ryde electorate, which had been won from the Nationalists by a Labour man, they had received only £50 from the fighting funds, and it would be interesting for delegates to know how much had been spent in 'safe' Labour electorates.

The secretary (Mr Bird) replied that a list could be obtained from the books of the executive.

Mr D Chalker (Wollondilly) said that the report referred to certain moneys said to have been received on behalf of other unions, but he

contended that as there was no evidence where the money was from, who received it, or where it went, claims for it should not be recognised.

Mr Bird said the executive was not accepting the liability for the money, because it had no record of it.

The president said that between March 1, and July 31, 1927, the AWU and its RWI branch between them had paid in advance approximately £1000 to the Conroy-McGarry Executive. Later on the AWU claimed that the money represented affiliation fees paid in advance. As there was no recommendation that the ALP recognised that the money was for fees paid in advance, any delegate would be within his rights in discussing the question at a later stage.

After the president had ruled that there was nothing in the report that could alter the rules or the constitution, the report was adopted.

Consideration of the reply to the Federal executive was deferred.

Cootamundra ballots

Mr Kenny (Cootamundra) said that he desired to make an explanation of his allegations regarding corrupt ballots at Cootamundra selection ballots. He had not alleged corrupt practices at the selection ballot held last month. He was quite satisfied that that ballot was above board, and Mr JB Martin, the returning officer, had done his work properly. The 'corrupt-ballot' was the one held in the Albury group last September.

Wild Scene. Delegates in Uproar

The ALP conference at the Trades Hall on Saturday afternoon was in uproar for half an hour when the question whether Mr Geo Avis (Weston) should be allowed to remain in the conference was discussed.

Mr McNamara (United Labourers) said he understood that one member had taken his seat in the conference, despite the fact that some of the miners who elected him were Communists. In addition he was not a member of a Labour league.

Mr Neilsen (Northern Miners) said that it was a contemptible narrow-minded point to take. It was almost impossible for many of the miners to belong to a league, because of the hours of their work, the lack of transport, and the scattered nature of the settlement. The miners were a solid body.

Mr King (chairman of the appeals committee) said the committee had gone carefully into the matter and found that there was a league within ten minutes of the home of the delegate.

The president ruled that as it had been recognised for years that a miners' lodge was constituted as a league, Mr Avis was entitled to represent his district as a delegate.

Uproar followed, and voices of men and women all over the hall assailed the president, who could not be heard above the din.

Mr Bennett endeavoured to move a motion of dissent from the president's ruling, but a chorus of yells assailed him.

"I am surprised that delegates cannot control themselves", said the president.

Miners' delegates in the past, he said, had always been given admission to the conference, because it was recognised that miners' lodges were duly constituted branches of the ALP. He was not a miners' delegate, and could only be guided by the miners' delegates.

A voice: Where is the rule that says you can admit them?

The president: There is no rule that I know of in the new rules, but custom and usage say that we should admit them.

Mr King: If the miners in the lodges are all members of the ALP, where does the Communist rule come in? Can miners who are Communists come here and belong to the Labour movement when they are not allowed in city unions?

Mr Bainbridge (Northern Miners), amid more din, said that the miners had 14,000 financial members, and all of them, whether Labour, Nationalist, or Communist, had to subscribe the funds of the federation.

Mr Bennett (timekeeper) then moved his motion of dissent.

As Mr Graves (senior vice-president) put the motion of dissent the president called out: Read rule 28. Do you think I am a Mussolini?"

Voices: "Squib. Don't squib it".

Mrs Webster: "I am not squibbing it."

The motion of dissent was defeated by 56 votes to 36, and amid the uproar following the decision, a man in the gallery jumping up and down, kept yelling: "You are a lot of squibs, squibs, squibs".

General business. Mr Theodore explains.

Mr D O'Connor (Newcastle) moved a motion, submitted by the Newcastle Electorate Council, "That the delegates be instructed to request the conference to investigate the credentials of Mr Theodore, MP, in view of his being a director of the Celotex Coy."

Mr Theodore, who was received with applause, said there was an implication that he was connected with a large American company making celotex. He was not a director of the Celotex Company, nor had he ever been a director or a shareholder. The implication apparently had its origin in the fact that those who formed the company approached him with a view to his taking a seat on the directorate of the company. If the conference decided to go into his credentials he would not object. His life was an open book.

Replying to delegates, Mr Theodore said he was a director of the Roma Oil Co., in which he held 100 shares, for which he had paid. It was

a prospecting concern, attempting to discover oil, and was not a profit-producing company.

Mr Morris (Newcastle) moved: "That this conference places its confidence in Mr Theodore".

In reply to another delegate, Mr Theodore denied that he was interested in the Mt Isa mines.

Mr O'Connor asked Mr Theodore if he reduced the wages of workers in Queensland, but noise of the conference interrupted any reply.

An amendment that the conference accept Mr Theodore's explanation was carried on the voices, but there was a pronounced 'no' vote.

Petrol Pumps

Mr W Long (Amalgamated Engineers) moved a motion condemning the failure of the Bruce Government to prevent the contemplated importation of petrol pumps. The motion was carried.

Unemployed

Mr JB Millar (President of the OBU of unemployed).in addressing conference, said there were 32,827 unemployed in New South Wales, 29,000 of whom were registered with his union.

Mr W Gibb (Clothing Trades) moved, "That this conference is of opinion that the unemployed should receive the basic wage".

A motion in favour of unemployment insurance was carried.

Appeals

Mr AJ Cannon, of Young, was readmitted with full continuity of membership. Mr A Duffield, of Marrickville, was readmitted.

Upper House Appointments

The report of the committee appointed by the Unity Conference to inquire into the circumstances of the appointment of Mr Alam to the Upper House was presented by Mr Bollard. The conclusions of the committee, the report stated, were that Mr Alam obtained his appointment by a personal canvass of members of the party, and by the support accorded him by Mr W Dunn, MLA, who stated that had he known the public statements and speeches that Mr Alam would make attacking the Labour movement he would not have supported him. The system of appointment to the Upper House had been unsatisfactory to the Labour movement from every viewpoint. Of the 25 selected many had already left the movement by their hostility. If the present system of a nominee

Chamber was maintained, future appointments by Labour Governments should be governed by the length of service of the candidates nominated. The report was adopted.

Election of Officers

The election of officials, announced by the returning officer (Mr JB Martin) late on Saturday night, resulted as follows: President, JJ Graves (Stovemakers); senior vice-president, MP Ryan (Storemen and Packers); junior vice-president CE Martin (Teachers); organising secretary, AJ McPherson (Clerks); Federal Executive delegates, J Kilburn (Bricklayers) and T Falkingham (Boilermakers); Interstate delegates, J Kilburn, Mrs Dunn (Central group, electoral councils), WE Clemenson (Tramways), WT Adams (Eastern Suburbs group, Waverley branch), AJ McPherson and F Roels (Enginedrivers),

Senate Selection Ballot

On the motion of Mr Tannock, it was decided that despite any ruling to the contrary, the Barrier District Assembly had the right to take the Senate selection ballot for the whole of their affiliated organisations, thus giving them the right to participate in the Senate preselection ballot.

Day 3, Monday, 9 April 1928

Communists and the ALP. Identical Objectives. Decision of Labour Conference. Federal Executive Defied.

The attitude of the Labour party towards the Communists was the principal subject of discussion at yesterday's sittings of the State conference of the Australian Labour party.

An important decision was reached last night, when the conference approved the admission, contained in the reply of the State executive to the Federal body, that the objectives of the Labour party and the Communist party were identical in the matter of the socialisation of industry.

The decision means that the State Labour movement has flouted the direction of the Federal body, which prohibited individual members of the ALP from advocating the policy of the Communist party.

Earlier in the day the conference resolved that Communists should not be allowed to be appointed as delegates to the conference without first signing the ALP pledge.

The Conference

When the annual conference of the ALP was resumed yesterday there was a large attendance of delegates. The president (Mr W Webster) said that an insinuation had been made in a leading article in the *Herald* connecting Mr Voigt with Communism. It was based on the fact that Mr Voigt, as minute secretary of the conference, was asked to read to the conference a supplementary report which was presented by Mr Graves. Mr Voigt was not responsible for the report. The only statements made by Mr Voigt at the conference had reference to unemployment, and no man should be held responsible for any but his own statements.

The Labour Daily

Mr Kelly moved that the movement should unite to establish the *Labour Daily* as an effective organ of the movement. He said business people were averse from advertising in the paper because of its small circulation. They contended that it did not reach the rank and file. That was quite true. Of the 300,000 trade unionists in the State there were barely 18,000 who subscribed to the paper.

Seconding the motion, Mr Cook said that many of the unions had broken their promises to stand behind the paper. Only two or three unions had ever done anything to see that it prospered.

The motion was carried.

Mr Neilson (Northern Miners) moved that the resolution should be recommitted. The motion being lost, he moved that a committee should be appointed by the conference to inquire into the management and administration of the *Labour Daily*.

Mr Neilson said he was sorry to have to admit that the administration of the *Labour Daily* was smashing the miners' organisation, particularly in the north. The men of the northern coalfields were opposed to the system that operated, and if they were not carefully handled the time would arrive when they would put the *Labour Daily* out of existence. They wanted a working man's paper and would readily put their hands in their pockets to assist it, but as a body they were against the administration and management of the paper.

Mr J Beasley said that if the Labour movement was to progress the *Labour Daily* must remain in existence, but the matter should not be discussed in the open - a course which would supply capitalist journals with any material that might be used against the paper.

Mr DJ Davies (general secretary of the Miners' Federation) said that before the northern miners attacked the *Labour Daily* they should realise the harm they would do. If there were any complaints they should be forwarded to the directors.

A delegate: And have them sabotaged when they get there.

Mr JJ Graves moved an amendment that the directors should be requested to convene a meeting of shareholding unions to consider ways and means of assisting the *Labour Daily*.

The amendment was carried by 74 votes to 23.

Expenses of Delegates

Mr CE Martin (Northern Group of Councils) moved the resolution that had been adopted by the Young Conference, and which recommended that the matter of expenses for country delegates on the executive should be discussed, with a view to relieving the financial strain upon individual branches that might have a member on the executive. He moved also that a definite instruction should be given to the executive to pay the expenses of executive members. He said that if country delegates had to bear the cost themselves one of the most important principles of trade unionism would break down. Individual areas could not carry the burden.

Mr Lyons (Storemen and Packers) moved as an amendment, that the matter should be considered by a committee, which should report back to the conference. The executive, he said, should know what it would cost.

Mr D Chalker (Wollondilly), in supporting the motion, said that at present country representatives were representatives simply because they were wealthy men. The best men very frequently could not be sent to represent the country districts, because they could not afford to come.

Mr Roels (a member of the executive) said the cost of country delegates attending meetings would amount to £50 a week, or £2500 per annum. In his opinion each group should pay the expenses of its own delegates.

Mr AC Willis, MLC (Northern Miners), supported the motion, and said that until the principle of paying the expenses of people coming long distances was adopted the new rules could not operate properly. If the burden was spread over the whole movement it would be very light.

President's Ruling Challenged

When the president announced that the time for discussion had expired he came into conflict with Mr Bennett (timekeeper) and uproar followed.

Mr Bennett said that there were still three minutes to go.

The president, amidst further uproar, several times ordered Mr Bennett to resume his seat.

Mr Bennett remained firm, declaring that the conference had elected him timekeeper. The president then gave way.

When quiet had been restored, Mrs McNamara suggested that the difficulty could be overcome if country leagues and unions elected a unionist in Sydney to represent them.

Mr Martin, in reply, said that if the conference wanted the spirit of the new rules carried out they should pass the motion. Were Messrs King, Ryan, or Hook merely trying to find some excuse to keep country delegates from attending meetings of the executive? The party had been able to purchase a motor car and supply sums of money to assist politicians in a campaign. The income of the party for the past 12 months was greater than ever before, and some of the money could be adequately expended in putting the new rules into operation.

The amendment was declared carried on a show of hands by 55 votes to 53. A division was demanded, and the amendment was declared defeated by 56 votes to 52.

Mr Willis's Position

Mr Hook (Iron Trades) objected to the presence of Mr AC Willis as a delegate, because of the rule that Parliamentarians were not eligible to hold positions in the Labour party, but the objection was overruled.

Communist Issue

Nearly an hour was spent by delegates in discussing whether they would deal with the following notice of motion: "That membership of the Australian Labour party be open to all members of industrial trade unions, provided they have not violated any working-class principles, and every union must have the unrestricted right to select its own delegates to the conference and to the controlling body of the Australian Labour party.

Eventually, after several rowdy scenes, the suspension of standing orders to permit the discussion of the motion was carried by 57 votes to 28.

Mr Hutt (Food Group), addressing the conference on the motion, said that certain militants had been allowed to enter the Labour party and usurp important positions. "There is no evidence", said Mr Hutt, that Mr Alam, MLC, is a member of the Labour party".

Mr Tannock, who submitted the motion, said that the impression had been created in the minds of delegates that there was a sinister purpose behind the resolution. He wanted to remove the impression that he desired the affiliation of Communists with the Labour party. The proposal that industrial trade unions should have the unrestricted right to send their delegates to the ALP conference had been affirmed by numerous industrial conferences - at the All-Australian Trade Union congresses held in Melbourne in October, 1921, the congress in 1922, the New South Wales congress in April, 1923, and the ALP conference in June, 1923.

Mr M Ryan (vice-president of the executive), in seconding the motion, said the movement would receive the criticism of the capitalist Press and the Nationalists whether it admitted men now outside the movement or not. Some of the members desired to pander to the middle-class people because of their votes. Such a policy would get the movement nowhere. The only people fighting properly against the Bruce Arbitration Amendment Bill were the Communists, Socialists, and some members of the ALP. We all – Communists, Socialists, and ALP – believe the present system should be overthrown, and the workers must take control of the whole of the industries in the country before they will get a fair deal”, he added. “Our methods, however, differ. If these men are good fellows outside the ALP, let them come in and help us”.

Mr Allpress (Furnishing Trades) moved the following amendment: “That full membership of the ALP be open to all members providing they sign the pledge, and that every union shall have the unrestricted right to elect its own delegates”.

There was a sensation when the chairman announced he would rule the motion out of order, because three months’ notice had not been given to unions and branches, as was necessary in the case of any motion that involved an alteration of the rules.

Sections of the conference loudly protested against the procedure, but the chairman overruled all objections.

Motions expressing thanks to the returning officer (Mr JB Martin) and to the retiring president (Mr WM Webster) were carried.

Reply to Federal Executive

The reply of the State executive to the ruling of the president of the Federal executive (Mr J Kenneally), as contained in a supplementary report of the president, created a bitter debate.

The proposed reply with regard to the Federal executive’s ruling “that no member of the Communist party may be or become affiliated with the ALP, and individual members of the ALP are prohibited from advocating the policy of the Communist party”, stated that “in this arbitrary and impracticable clause the rank and file are prohibited from advocating the policy of the Communist party. Should, therefore, the Communist party adopt partially or wholly any Labour party policy or platform, then under this dictum the rank and file would be prohibited from supporting their own policy. Further, since the objective of the Communist party and the ALP are identical in the matter of the socialisation of industry, the ill-considered dictum of the Federal officials would prohibit the rank and file from ever realising as a practical policy its solemnly declared objective”.

Mr F Roels (Enginedrivers), in moving the adoption of the report, said that it was impossible to stop a member of the ALP speaking on a

certain phase of the objective of the party. If any coterie of officials tried to stifle that expression they must be stopped. The ruling of the Federal president was intolerable and absurd. There was no sinister object behind the reply, but there was a sinister object in the ruling of the Federal executive. If such Mussolini tactics were allowed the movement would end in disaster.

Mr AW Jones, a member of the executive, seconded the motion.

"Any member of the ALP who is not prepared to advocate Communism should be a member of the Nationalist party", said Mr J Kilburn, in moving the following amendment: "That while the policy and methods of the Communist party and the ALP are at variance, the objective of these parties are identical in the matter of the socialisation of industry".

The movement, he said, could not have the Federal executive watering down the ALP. Some of the politicians were afraid to face the platform of socialisation of industry, and they were endeavouring to hide that plank.

"Scheming and intriguing"

Mr RE King (Building Trades) said the scheming and intriguing of certain people had been devoted to sidetracking the plank of the socialisation of industry.

Mr Morris (Dubbo), in opposing both the motion and the amendment, said that if the motion was carried it would be goodbye to any chance of winning the Federal elections. "If you adopt this report it will influence great numbers of votes", he said.

Mr O'Dea (Shop Assistants) opposed the adoption of the reports, remarking that the Federal executive should be the supreme body.

Mr J Beasley, seconding the amendment, said that some of the members of Federal executive did not subscribe to the objective of the party, and were endeavouring to 'water' it down.

Uproar followed a statement by Mr T Brown (Coogee) that he did not want "to see the white flag of Labour replaced by a red one".

Mr F Roels (Enginedrivers) said that there were delegates who would accept blindfolded the bogey of communism. Behind the Federal Executive was a wily move by "Bailey and Co." to erase the brand placed upon them by the Labour party.

The amendment was carried by 82 votes to 19.

Appeal

Mr P Coleman, of Bankstown, was readmitted, with full continuity of membership, by 49 votes to 44.

The conference resolved to establish a permanent propaganda organisation.

Mr Hay Wilson was granted leave to appeal for the necessary continuity of membership in the Australian Labour party, to enable him to hold public office in the Labour interests. The appeal was dismissed and the conference adjourned until tonight.

Day 4, Tuesday, 10 April 1928

Labour party. Mr Lang at the Conference. Delegates' Questions

The leader the State Opposition (Mr JT Lang) devoted his address at the ALP conference last night largely to an appeal for unity and an attack on the Government.

A considerable portion of the proceedings at the conference was occupied in personal explanations by Mr AC Willis, MLC, and Mr Neilsen (Miners' Federation).

Mr Tannock (Ironworkers' Assistants) asked Mr Lang why he showed preference to the Liquor Bill instead of the Railways Bill which affected 70,000 workers.

Mr Lang replied that the Railways Bill was ready for submission to Parliament when the last elections took place. If he were still in power they would have had the Railways Bill in operation today.

Another delegate asked why he did not put his unemployment insurance proposals into effects as promised in his policy speech at Lidcombe.

Mr Lang: If I had been in office three years I would have carried out the whole of my programme. (Applause.)

"Mr Lang says that there are two ways of achieving the Labour objective", said a delegate. "Seeing that all great changes of society have been brought about by revolution is there any reason for believing that the next great change will not also be by means of revolution?"

"I do not believe in revolution", said Mr Lang, "because I believe that you can get and hold more by evolution than revolution".

Asked why he had made attacks on Bolshevik Russia, Mr Lang said he had made it plain everywhere that he was first and foremost an Australian, and there was no need for him to go out of Australia like some other people. He had no concern with foreign Governments.

Mr Lang, in appealing for support for the *Labour Daily*, referred to a report that the circulation was only 18,000. This was incorrect, the figure being 30,000 subscribers, in addition to papers sold over the counter. Sometimes the circulation was 120,000.

Mr AC Willis, MLC, gave a long explanation of his connection with the *Labour Daily*, and denied statements attributed to Mr Neilsen with

regard to a conference of miners' delegates at West Maitland. One delegate asked Mr Willis would it not be better if the *Labour Daily* ceased its eternal bickering so far as the AWU was concerned.

Mr Willis: The *Labour Daily* is not going to lay down and be kicked. On several occasions we have written to the directors of the *World* to meet us in conference to unite the Labour movement. We have had a contemptuous refusal every time.

A voice: You will be kissing Jack Bailey next.

Proposed Labour College

A motion was carried, appointing a committee to formulate a policy of educating the workers regarding capitalistic society and the teaching of economic science. The committee was instructed to confer with the Labour Council, the *Labour Daily*, and broadcasting station 2KY to disseminate information for the establishment of a Labour college.

Conference Resumed

There was a marked falling off in the attendance of delegates when the annual conference of the Australian Labour Party was resumed at the Trades Hall last night. Mr JJ Graves, the newly-elected president, occupied the chair.

Mr Bird, general secretary, said that the conference having decided to pay the expenses of country delegates to attend meetings of the conference, it would be necessary to devise means of raising the necessary funds.

It was decided to appoint a committee of five to investigate the question, and report back to the conference.

Mrs McGowen (Balmain) moved that the conference should make a recommendation to members of the Federal and State Governments that Government Departments should be reorganized to provide relief for children of unemployed workers. The motion was carried unanimously.

Man Ejected

There was an unruly scene while Mrs McGowen (Balmain) was speaking on unemployment shortly after the conference opened. A man in the public portion of the hall, who had previously been warned by the chairman, made an interjection, whereupon one of the delegates was deputed to eject the interrupter. The man, however, resisted, and a scuffle took place. Both men fell to the floor, chairs were knocked over, and a free fight seemed likely when Mr JS Garden, who was in the public gallery, intervened. Under Mr Garden's influence the man was persuaded to walk quietly from the hall, and peace was restored. It was

subsequently stated that the interjector had persistently interrupted the conference.

Mr Lang's Speech

Addressing the conference, Mr Lang said:

"I must confess that when I review the events of the past few years, and note the actions of the men who sought to supplant me in the leadership, I say without hesitation that I am proud to have fought to keep our great party free from the grip of hypocrisy, treachery and charlatanism. All loyal and faithful men and women who love the cause of Labour and all it stands for will now remove their petty differences throughout Australia, and prepare to do justice to themselves and their children by striking such a blow as will not only imperil, but will absolutely shatter, Labour's enemies. The Bavin Government will soon be ripe for destruction, and will crumble to its end. United Labour will once again come into its rightful heritage as the redeeming and regenerating force of Australian democracy. There is our ideal - your work is to be worthy of it and accomplish it. Never forget that you are the protectors of the poor, and that in all times and at all places the Labour movement requires of you that you shall be fearless in your championship of the cause of the downtrodden poor. When the citadel of unionism is assailed remember that it is one of your inalienable rights to resist in legitimate combination the crushing despotism of syndicates and monopolistic rings, even though they be backed and buttressed to the full by all the legal powers of Bavin, Boyce, and Bruce. Given a united party we can beat them all.

Need for Unity

"Two facts emerge from the political history of the past six months. To the casual observer they have no significance, but to him who looks beneath the surface they are fraught with danger to the industrial life of the workers. Observe firstly that, having laid the foundation for superseding Mr Piddington as Industrial Commissioner by a campaign against him which degraded our judicial system, the Bavin-Boyce Government then appointed two Judges with equal powers to sit beside Mr Justice Piddington to see that he made from the Bavin-Boyce point of view no more mistakes in favour of the workers. Observe secondly that the Federal Industrial Arbitration Bill now under discussion at Canberra is designed primarily to destroy unionism, both in its industrial and political functions. Now, why do I say these things to you? I can hear some of you say 'Never mind our troubles, give us the solution of them'. I do not shrink from the burden, nor shirk the work, but I want your help, for without it I can do nothing. We want and must have unity. The

voice of the squealer and the disgruntled and the disappointed must be silenced. With that ideal as their standard to rally round in the greatest political fight that has ever been made in this country, to achieve and cherish a just and a lasting victory over every enemy and every rival, to the end that the people of our country will rejoice in the return to power in the Federal and State Parliaments of a Labour Government, which will preserve the rights and liberties of the people.

"The work of the Bavin Government in the coming session will be based on a financial shriek. As soon as Parliament meets you will hear it all, for it is essential to its purpose that it should put terror into the hearts of the people - terror of an impending financial debacle and disaster; deficits, necessity for drastic economy - the drying up of the springs of oversea finance. All these things and all the dangers which they connote will be dinned into our ears with tedious reiteration, to the end that the work of their masters may be accomplished even to the last farthing. All this at a time when the graziers have been paid fifty million sterling for their wool, and benignant skies pour out their wealth on to a fertile soil to give to the wheat grower, the pastoralist, and the dairyman a season unparalleled in its bounty and beneficence. Yesterday Randwick thundered with the roar of a hundred thousand people in their relaxation, and at Moore Park there is displayed a Show, the greatest in the whole world, and yet this croaking, cowardly Government will come to Parliament, and with its tales of woe and Press backing, create an atmosphere to delude and demoralize the spirit of the people.

"Labour's strength lies in its courage and common sense. It has dared to blaze the legislative track. Everything worth having on the Statute Book today is the product of Labour rule or Labour pressure. Concessions can only be secured in two ways from those in control of our economic system - by revolution and by legislation. Labour is pledged to constitutional action through Parliament, but that instrument of reform is worse than valueless unless you can control it. Our enemies know that, and make the most strenuous efforts to capture the political machine. For the moment they have been successful in this State, and in the Federal sphere. But I venture to say that their reign will now be brief."

A motion was carried that all the unions should be asked to make their organisers available at election time to assist in the campaign.

The conference decided that one of the first acts of the Labour party if returned should be to pass a bill providing for unemployed insurance.

The conference adjourned until 7 o'clock tonight.

Day 5, Wednesday, 11 April 1928

**ALP Conference. Coal Industry. Proposed Pool.
Miners' scheme discussed.**

Soon after the ALP conference met yesterday, Mr AC Willis submitted a motion to deal with the coal mining industry.

The motion proposed that in order to relieve the parlous conditions in the industry that the whole of the coal be pooled, and that private selling agencies should be abolished. It also suggested that a levy of one shilling per ton on all coal produced be paid into a fund to provide work for unemployed miners. The motion also protested against further leases being granted to private enterprise.

The chairman's ruling that the motion was out of order was upheld, but it is probable that the question will be reopened at this evening's session.

The Motion

Mr AC Willis (Miners) moved: Whilst recognising that the socialisation of the mining industry is the logical solution of the prevailing chaotic conditions, however, in order to alleviate the present parlous position of the workers in the industry, we recommend the following: (1) That no further leases be granted to private enterprise, any further development of the coal resources to be done by the State, in accordance with Labour's objective, i.e. the socialisation of industry; (2) that the whole of the coal produced be pooled, private selling agencies to be abolished, and all coal sold through the pool; (3) that one shilling per ton on all coal produced be paid into a fund to provide work or the basic wage for the surplus workers in the industry; (4) that we strongly urge the Government immediately to take steps to establish works in order to obtain the various by-products contained in coal; (5) that the foregoing principles be adopted and applied also to the metaliferous industry.

Mr Willis said that motions dealing with the coal industry certainly did appear in the agenda, but they had not appeared at the instigation of the coal miners' delegates. He repudiated them. "They were placed there", he said, "out of kindness to the miners, or, more than probable, for some other reason".

The chairman ruled that the motion could not be discussed, because the subject matter was already mentioned in the agenda paper.

The question excited the keen interest of delegates, and after a vote on the voices, and then a show of hands, a division was called, and the chairman's ruling was upheld by 51 votes to 44.

Other Business

Mr CE Martin explained that he was not representing the Teachers' Federation at the conference, but the northern group of unions.

Mr Sherringham (Storemen and Packers) moved that a city organiser should be appointed to organise thoroughly the metropolitan area. Mr E Morris (Auburn), commenting on the suggestion that union organisers should do the work, said that apparently they wanted the organisers to work 88 hours a week without overtime.

Mr J Kilburn (Bricklayers), opposing the motion, asked whether the ALP existed only for voting people into Parliament. The members of the party should be able to do all the organising work themselves.

Mr J Kilburn (Bricklayers) moved as an amendment, which was subsequently carried, that the organising secretary should call for bands of speakers to assist the leagues and unions in their organising work.

Executive Expenses

The special committee appointed to devise means of raising funds to defray travelling expenses of members of the ALP executive recommended that a levy of 3d a member on the entire membership should be struck, and that the money should be placed in a separate fund to defray fares, expenses, and lost time of country members. The committee recommended that the executive should consider the possibility of meeting fortnightly, in which case the levy could be reduced to -/1½.

In reply to delegates, Mr CE Martin, chairman of the committee, explained that the levy would be struck on the entire membership - 163,500 - of both leagues and affiliated unions.

Mr A Bennett (Coachmakers) moved as an amendment that a plebiscite should be taken among the leagues and unions with regard to the proposals.

Mr Martin said that if the leagues refused to agree to the proposals they should be put out of existence.

In reply to a delegate Mr Martin said that the cost in respect of the members of the executive resident in the country would be approximately £1770 a year.

Intense excitement prevailed when the vote on the motion was taken. Delegates were not satisfied with a show of hands, but insisted on two divisions. The motion was defeated on each occasion, the final voting being 49 against the motion and 45 in favour.

A motion for the recommittal of the committee's report was submitted by Mr Mara (Western Miners).

A delegate then asked the chairman whether the matter did not involve an alteration of the rules. The chairman ruled that such was the

case, and that two-thirds majority was required for an alteration of the rule. The chairman's ruling was dissented from, but upheld.

The voting on the motion for the recommitment was 42 all, and on division the motion was defeated by 45 to 41.

The Teaching of History

History as taught in the primary schools was severely condemned in the report submitted to the conference by the Labour Educational League.

"We find in them", says the report, "much that is relatively unimportant to an understanding of historical development, much that is misleading, because of one-sided presentation of facts; a great deal that is immensely significant has been excluded, and, to a large extent, there is a lack of scientific method in exposition, and a failure to show adequately the inter-relationship of social changes and events. None of the books we have examined attempts to give a connected account of the series of profound and often tragical social changes which make up the history of the great bulk of the English nation during the period between the Renaissance and the twentieth century; nor do they show at all how the brilliant and ruthless achievements of the ruling class of England have been interdependent with the changing status of the workers. The authors devote much of their limited space to describing in detail the achievements of traders, adventurers, manufacturers, and military leaders. Most of their accounts do no justice to the point of view of other peoples with whom these came in conflict. And the pupil is left with the impression that the welfare of this small and fortunate section of society is the welfare of her whole nation, and its enemies the enemies of the whole nation. This assumption underlies a great deal of present education, not only in the teaching of history, and it is an attitude against which the Labour movement must set its face like flint."

The conference adjourned until tonight.

Day 6, Thursday, 12 April 1928

Labour Party. Former Communist unanimously admitted.

Revision of school history.

The State conference of Australian Labour party last night decided unanimously to readmit Mr TG Payne, who opposed Dr Evatt as a Communist candidate at Balmain in the 1925 State elections

Delegates were unanimous as to his readmission, and the only point at issue which excited keen discussion was whether Mr Payne should be granted full continuity of membership.

It was pointed out by delegates that Mr Payne's only crime was that he was "in advance" of the ALP movement, and that he would be an asset to the party. "Mr Payne is just the type of man that the movement requires", said his sponsor, Mr H Sutherland (Engine drivers). "His only offence is that he has propagated revolutionary ideas. "The future belongs to the men of the type of Mr Payne. The movement would be well advised to readmit him and not to fight against the inevitable". Mr Payne, in his appeal, said he would always advocate working class ideals. The only sin he had committed was that he had been more militant than a number of ALP members would desire. Because of his views he took up an attitude in opposition to them.

Nearly half the delegates were absent when the conference was continued at the Trades Hall last night. Because of the poor attendance it was an hour after scheduled starting time that the conference was commenced.

The chairman (Mr JJ Graves) announced that there was just one delegate present more than the rules required.

An application by Mr Hay Wilson for three years continuity in the party was referred to the appeals committee.

Mr J Mooney was given permission to address the conference on behalf of the Labour Educational League. He asked that immediate recognition should be given to the league by the Labour party. The league considered that the education system should be more in conformity with the principles of the Labour party. He contended that a teachers' appeals board should be established, the decisions of which would be irrevocable.

Mr J Bourke suggested that the propaganda committee should include representatives from the Labour Educational League. He also contended that the objectives of the propaganda committee be extended to include the objectives of the league.

Mr McNamara (North Sydney) moved that the present school curriculum and system be amended in the direction of eliminating imperialistic bias and the substitution of instruction that will give an adequate conception of the place and struggles of the working class in history and in the society of today. For this purpose the motion suggested the appointment of an educational advisory committee to watch the interests of Labour in the primary and secondary schools, and to keep the party advised as to undesirable books and methods of teaching and matter taught.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Appeal for Re-admission

Mr TG Payne was given leave to appeal for readmission to the Labour party. Mr Payne explained that he opposed Dr Evatt, the selected Labour

candidate three years ago for the Balmain seat. Mr Payne said he stood as a Communist candidate, but had not been a member of the Communist party for six years.

It was decided to re-admit Mr Payne to the Labour party without continuity of membership.

A motion, moved by Mr AC Willis (Miners), providing for the pooling of the whole of the output of the coal mines, was carried unanimously.

Day 7, Friday, 13 April 1928

Labour Party. Conference Scenes. Alteration to Rules.

The ALP Conference, which was continued at the Trades Hall last night devoted most of the time of the session in considering alterations to the rules.

There were several disorderly scenes and little business was transacted.

The chairman of the appeals committee said that after investigation into the part taken by Mr Hay Wilson during the strike in South Africa in 1922 the committee felt that he had not acted against the interests of the Labour movement. A motion that Mr Wilson be given permission to address the conference was negatived, and an amendment carried that inquiry into his credentials should be instituted, and the result submitted to the next conference.

A motion was carried that the conference, at its rising tomorrow night, should adjourn until Easter, 1929.

A Disorderly Scene

The president, Mr J Graves, introduced a new method of maintaining order. About an hour after the conference commenced the interruption and noise became so incessant that the chairman adjourned the conference for five minutes, but the experiment did not have the desired effect. When the gathering reassembled there was a scene of confusion consequent upon a number of delegates endeavouring to have their proposals on the agenda paper discussed. Delegates, in their excitement, simultaneously addressed the conference, duet fashion, and the chairman, in his efforts to restore order, indicated that he would have to ask some members to leave the room. The chairman said that delegates had occupied too much time in discussing personal matters, and to enable progress to be made he intended to refuse to accept all motions for the suspension of the standing orders until all items on the agendas paper had been dealt with. In conformity with this Mr Graves rejected a motion, moved by Mr Bainbridge (Northern Miners), that 5 per cent of the salaries of State and Federal members be deducted to defray the

expenses of country delegates attending conference. A motion dissenting from the chairman's ruling was negatived.

Rights of Unions

Delegates discussed at length a proposal that the Australian Union of Locomotive Enginemen, the ARU, and the Cranedriviers should be allowed to conduct their own selection ballots. It was contended that the same privileges should be accorded to all affiliated unions as were given the Miners and the Tramwaymen, who were able to vote in the selection ballots at the pit head, and tram depots respectively. Opposition to the proposal was based on the ground that the scheme, if adopted would sever the industrial wing from the political Labour wing, and would lend itself to corruption.

Mr JB Martin, general returning officer, in reply to certain delegates, said that there were rumours in circulation as to the conduct of certain unions in the Senate selection ballot. "If there is any truth in these rumours I will rule those ballots out". The chairman pointed out that the proposal involved an alteration of the rules, and to become operative would have to be carried by a majority of the credentialled delegates,

During the debate a collarless, unshaven man in the public gallery made several interjections. He refused to leave the room, and was finally carried outside.

An alternative suggestion to the proposal under discussion was that all affiliated unions should be allowed to conduct their own selection ballots.

The conference approved the proposal to allow a limited number of unions to conduct their own selection ballots, and to give all affiliated unions the same right. As, however, the motions in favour of the proposals were not carried by the requisite majorities the chairman ruled that neither could operate.

The adoption of Item 5, providing for the readmission to the Labour movement of Mr Arthur Griffith, who was expelled because of his advocacy of conscription, was rigorously opposed, and the recommendation was lost on the voices.

The conference adjourned until 2 pm today.

Day 8, Saturday, 14 April 1928

ALP Conference. Socialistic Planks Weakening Condemned.

A protest against the action of the Federal conference in watering down the plank relating to the socialisation of industry was carried at the final session of the ALP conference.

It was decided that the conference should take action to have the decision of the Federal conference rescinded.

Mrs Barratt (Northern group) moved that the Federal rules should be so altered that the plank of the party could only be altered by the majority vote of the State conference. This was carried.

(The decision of the Federal conference objected to by the State conference on the grounds that it watered down the objective was really a ruling by the Federal president [Mr J Kenneally] that no member of the ALP could advocate Communistic policy. The State conference contended that the ruling of Mr Kenneally prevented Labour members from advocating the socialisation of industry which was a plank of the Labour party's platform.)

The extremists at the conference sought to have a motion adopted that the ALP should attend the procession and mass demonstration on May 1. The chairman (Mr Graves) ruled the motion out of order, and his ruling was upheld by 24 to 23.

That the application of the tuberculin test to all cattle the milk and products from which are sold for human consumption should be compulsory, was a motion submitted by the Wollongong branch, and carried.

A resolution carried at the country provincial conference, and approved by the conference, directed Labour Parliamentarians not to attend any secret session of Parliament, and also to be ready to give a true account of their stewardship.

At the instance of the Wollongong branch a motion was carried that a market bureau should be established to study supply and demand, and that the next Federal Government be instructed to establish a Federal egg pool.

"That all Labour members be asked to come before their constituents at least twice a year during their recess" was a proposal which evoked much discussion. It was eventually carried.

The Wollongong branch submitted: That the Labour party, if returned to power at the next elections, should amend the Fair Rent Act to provide that a landlord must apply to the Court before he can increase the rent. The motion was carried.

Mr McPhee (Engineers) moved that the abolition of footboards on trams and the gradual substitution of the corridor type of car should be made a fighting plank of Labour's platform. Mr E Cook (Tramways) seconded the motion, which was carried.

Mrs Barratt (Newcastle) moved that the Garnishee Act should be amended to leave an amount equal to the basic wage. Nurse Francis seconded the motion, which was carried.

"That the whole of the Crown lands in New, South Wales be subdivided for the purpose of erection of workers' homes, and the scheme in

operation at the Maitland coalfields be applicable where necessary", was the motion submitted by the Newcastle electorate council. It was carried.

The following motions were also carried:

That a commissioner be appointed for the Homes Department of the Government Savings Bank, and that the legal fraternity be excluded and the whole of the business be solely done through the commissioner.

That in the case of a civil servant retiring on a pension, he or his wife be not debarred from drawing, in addition, the old-age pension, at least to the extent of the basic wage.

That, in order to procure more reliable Labour supporters for appointment to the Legislative Council and other appointments, this conference resolves that the names of all applicants for Council and other appointments shall be submitted to electorate councils and unions, the president and secretary of the councils, and unions be empowered to call a meeting of the whole of the members, precedence being given to the persons polling the highest number.

Country Delegates

Claiming that the ruling faction of the ALP were endeavouring to 'sabotage' the country representatives, a number of delegates from country leagues refused to attend the concluding session of the conference. They remained in the corridors adjoining the conference hall, and aired their grievances to groups of ready listeners. It appears that they presented a request to the president, Mr JJ Graves, that the conference should give a definite decision on the question whether the expenses of the country delegates to the ALP executive should be paid. When the matter was not placed before the conference they claimed that the conference was in the hands of the metropolitan unions, and a number of them withdrew.

The outstanding feature of the concluding sessions was the lack of interest displayed by delegates. Although there were about 150 representative present when the conference opened the previous week, only 47 delegates attended the final session on Saturday night. The attendance at the afternoon session was only five, and the session was abandoned.

A motion was carried that all uncompleted business should be referred to the ALP executive.

Mr Chris J Kelly, delegate from Oatley electoral group to the ALP conference, made a statement at Thursday's conference regarding trades unionists and the *Labour Daily*. Mr Kelly was reported to have said that there were 300,000 trades unionists in New South Wales and 18,000 read the *Labour Daily*. Mr Kelly says that the number of trades unionists who read the *Labour Daily* is 80,000, not 18,000, as reported.