

SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC QUEENSLAND.

THE DENHAM GOVERNMENT.

When war was declared, a Liberal Government led by Mr. Digby Denham, was controlling the destinies of that country. All the Cabinet Ministers with the exception of one were merchants of the Stock Exchange. They were all financiers and money lenders. They were all successful business men. They all regularly attended church. They were elders, churchwardens, and some of them had been Sunday school teachers. In fact, they were outwardly everything that gave polish, pomp, respectability and tone to good aristocratic religious Statesmen. The Denham Government were no ordinary, common garden variety of politician. They were held in high esteem and supported by a good majority of the people of Queensland.

They told the people when the war broke out they were the men to save the country and beat the Huns, and the people in their innocent simplicity believed in, and trusted, them.

When war was declared the Denham Government, in order to beat the Huns and to save the country and themselves, toured Queensland and bought up all available food-stuffs as well as large herds of fat cattle and fat sheep. They then cornered the market and lifted the prices of food-stuffs over 50 per cent. In their spare time they held recruiting meetings and eloquently implored Henry Dubbs to at once enlist and go to fight for his King and country, and slay the atrocious Huns that were a menace to civilisation. Some played bands others beat the big drums. Meetings were held everywhere and great excitement prevailed.

AND THEIR FOOD PRICES!

To sum up during the first ten months of the war, while the great excitement lasted, food prices in Queensland soared higher every day until they reached 100 per cent. above pre-war prices. The Cabinet Ministers and their friends made millions of pounds by profiteering.

This went on until a General Election took place in Queensland on the 22nd May, 1915. Before the election campaign started Mr. Thomas Joseph Ryan, the leader of the Labour Socialist Party in Parliament, investigated the deals in foodstuffs made by the Cabinet Ministers.

RYAN'S FIRST VICTORY.

He stumped the country; made specific charges against Cabinet Ministers, and proved to the satisfaction of the people that individual Cabinet Ministers had made over 50 per cent. clear profit on their deals. So disgusted were the people of Queensland with their own Huns, that when the polls were declared it was found that all the Cabinet Ministers with the exception of the Attorney-General had lost their seats in Parliament and Mr. T. Ryan and the Labour Socialist Party was returned by a majority of 17.

The Liberal Government were then compelled to resign and on the 1st June, 1915, the Governor of Queens-

land sent for Mr. T. J. Ryan to form a Ministry. The Ryan Government was formed the same day, and the following day they set out to reduce the cost of living and to emancipate the workers of that country.

STATE SUGAR MILLS.

Straight away the Ryan Government built State sugar mills and State sugar refineries, and manufactured the sugar for the people of the country. The retail price of sugar was immediately reduced to 3d. per pound for the best quality. This amounted to a reduction of about 50 per cent. on the Capitalist prices.

The Ryan Government by different Acts of Parliament resumed, conscripted, or confiscated — whatever one may care to call it — about 9,000,000 acres of land hitherto belonging to the Queensland squatters big land-owners. The Government put young sheep and young cattle upon that land started to breed more. When the cattle and sheep were reared and fat they were driven to the different towns and killed at Government abattoirs, and the meat and mutton hung up for sale in State butchers' shops.

By buying up hundreds of thousands of fat cattle and fat sheep and cornering the market, members of the Denham Liberal Government had lifted the retail prices of meat and mutton in Queensland to over 1s. per pound. This was called good business men, and the Queensland Capitalist Press said the high prices proved the country was very prosperous. When the Ryan Government put the State meat and mutton on the market for sale in the State butchers' shops they reduced the average price of meat and mutton from over 1s. per lb. to an average of about 5½d. per pound. This was hailed with delight by the workers of Queensland. It was a bit of that pure, unadulterated Socialism which the Press had assured the workers would ruin them! It was a touch of that 'atheistic Socialism' which would 'damn their soul for an eternity.' But the workers of that country today smile at the pious warnings and take the risk.

STATE BUTCHERS' SHOPS

These State operations caused a sharp and immediate fall in the price of meat in the private butchers' shops. The private butchers were forced to bring their prices down both by direct Government control and by Government competition. But, notwithstanding the great drop in prices of meat in private butchers' shops, meat was selling at the beginning of this year in the State butcher shops 30 per cent. less than the prices charged in private butchers' shops. The Ryan Government (paying full Trade Union rates for Labour in every department) last year made a net surplus profit on the State Meat Industry of £137,913. By entering the meat retail business the Ryan Government has benefited the community to the extent of 4s. per week

per family of five persons.

A TRUE FAIRY TALE OF FISH.

The Ryan Government built large State steam trawlers, and equipped them with the best up-to-date appliances. To-day they catch the fish with their own State steam trawlers, and sell them in State fish shops. They have organised the fishing industries so thoroughly that they have eliminated all waste and overlapping of labour. As a consequence they have been able to reduce the retail price of fish 66 per cent.

Salmon was reduced in price from 9d. to 3d. per lb. All other fish was reduced in price accordingly. The fish, like the meat, under Socialism is obtained and distributed by the State for the use of the people and not to make a profit out of it for idle shareholders. According to official figures since the reduction in the price of fish the people are consuming double the quantity.

STATE HOTELS & TIMBER MILLS

The Ryan Government, built and established a large number of State Hotels and State Refreshment Rooms. These are far better conducted than any hotels or refreshment rooms run by private enterprise.

The Timber Industry has also been taken over by the Ryan Government. Last year there was a profit of the State Timber Mills of £8,746.

STATE COAL MINES AND IRON WORKS.

The Ryan Government has opened up State Coal Mines, and to-day employs large numbers of State coal miners, and pays them a far higher hewing rate for the coal than the private coal companies, and sells the coal to the consumers far cheaper than the private coal dealers.

The same Government also opened up State Iron Mines and built large State Iron and Steel Smelting Works. Both have turned out a success. The rolling stock for the State Railways is now manufactured in State Foundries, as well as the most up-to-date agricultural implements. The Ryan Government have established a State line of Steam Boats to trade around the coast of Queensland. State Oil wells have also been opened up. State Chilling Works and State Freezing Works have been established. State Printing Works were established two years ago, and the Ryan Government made a net surplus profit on them last year of £13,574. The Ryan Government has also taken over the Life, Fire, and Accident Insurance. Last year by a Statutory reduction in premiums they saved the insuring public over £50,000, and made a net surplus profit of £57,000. The same Socialist Government has built State Workers' Dwellings, and shown how to house the workers in good houses and cheap rent.

FOR THE BLIND AND DEAF AND DUMB.

The Ryan Government have socialised the hospitals, blind asylums, and deaf and dumb asylums. Before the Ryan Government took over the hos-

pitals they were run by charity. The aristocrats who gave the largest donations controlled them, and charged private patients £2 2s. per week. And the workers who could not pay the charges were branded as "paupers" on notice boards hung over their beds.

This has all been changed. Under Socialism all patients are now treated free of charge (just as in the Military hospitals in Britain) with the best doctors and nurses. The same Government established Baby Clinics for the treatment of children free of charge. The blind, deaf and dumb are all properly cared for. The Ryan Government passed an Act and gave every widow, regardless of age, when she lost her husband, 15s. a week of a pension, every orphan child under 15 years 8s. to 10s. per week of a pension, and every mother £5 of a bonus at the birth of every child. Last year they gave £40,000 to returned soldiers to start them in life again, and £15,000 to maimed and wounded soldiers. It is the duty of the Federal Government of Australia to look after the returned and maimed and wounded soldiers.

THE SCHOOL TEACHERS' SALARIES.

Last year the Ryan Government increased the school teachers' salaries £56,000, and so made possible for them a good standard of living. Last year the Ryan Government increased the unskilled workers' wages employed by the Government £759,825 per annum. All State workers are now raised to a good standard of living.

THE ELIMINATION OF THE CONTRACTOR.

All railways and roads are now constructed, harbours and rivers improved, and public buildings erected by men employed directly by the Government on the day labour principle.

The Government are paying their employees 9s. per week more wages than the private contractors paid their men, and are doing the work 25 per cent. cheaper than the lowest tenders received from the contractors.

An act was passed to establish a Statutory Eight-Hour Day by law in all callings. The Ryan Government in their official Red Book states that they intend to nationalise the liquor trade with the ultimate object of abolishing it.

A popular Initiative and Referendum Bill is now before the Queensland Parliament. This Act, when passed, will make Queensland the most Democratic country in the world.

Thus in three years the Ryan Government Socialised a great many of the most important industries in Queensland and controlled the price of foodstuff in others by law. They thereby reduced the cost of living for the workers to pre-war prices. Wages, at the same time, have been greatly increased and the standard of living raised. Hours of labour in nearly all callings have been reduced