Labor's Forward March in Australia

By F. G. TUDOR, M. P.

Leader of Australian Labor Party.

House of Representatives,
Melbourne.

20th July, 1918

Editor of Forward.

Dear Comrade,

I am in receipt of your letter of the 31st May last and, as desired, have much pleasure in forwarding the following message :—

" Prior to 1891 the workers of Australia were not represented in Parliament but after the great maritime strike in this country in that year they decided to endeavour through political action to obtain their just rights. That year the first Labour Party was sent to the New South Wales Parliament and from that time onwards the Labour movement has continued to expand.

In the first Commonwealth Parliament in 1901 there were returned 16 Labour Members in the House of Representatives and 8 in the Senate. In 1904 the first Labour Government in the world came into power and in 1908 Labour again came into Office with Mr. Andrew Fisher (now High Commissioner for Australia in London) as Prime Minister. In the elections of April 1910 the workers of Australia, now fully realising that only through their representatives in Parliament could they hope to have better conditions, triumphantly returned the Labour Party to power with 42 out of 75 in the House of Representatives and 23 out of 36 in the Senate.

From then on to the end of 1916 (when a split occurred on the question of conscription) Labour had full control of the legislative and administrative machinery of the country. A glance at the splendid work performed during that period (the liberalising of the Old Age and Invalid Pensions, the Maternity Grant — which allowed £5 to each mother for assistance upon the birth of a child— the formation of a Commonwealth Bank, the creation of a Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, the granting of Penny Post and the construction of the Transcontinental Railway line) will certainly show that through political action alone can the workers of any country hope for the betterment of their conditions. I have no hesitation in saying that there is no country in the whole world were better conditions prevail for the workers than in Australia.

Owing to the limitation of the Federal Constitution it was impossible for the Commonwealth Parliament to deal with monopolies, trusts and combines. It was also unable to improve the conditions of employment on the railways, they being under the control of the different States. In 1911 the Labour Government submitted to the people a referendum requesting the alteration of our Constitution (an alteration can only be effected by a majority vote of the people) so as to give us the necessary power but I regret to say we were unsuccessful, being defeated by about a quarter of a million votes.

We again submitted the same questions at the general election in 1913 but the alteration was again denied us by only ten thousand votes. When one takes into consideration the fact that nearly two million people voted it must be admitted that the smallness of the minority on that occasion was remarkable when compared with the minority in the first instance.

There has not been an opportunity since 1913 to again submit the questions to the people and until the Federal Parliament obtains these further powers it will not be possible for a Labour Government to do as much as it would desire.

From the time Labour first took Office in 1904 the outlook for the workers has considerably brightened and they now unhesitatingly admit that political action has been of distinct advantage to them."

SOCIALIST QUEENSLAND.

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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 Goverment 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 by law, and large numbers of houses built for the workers. This policy will be pursued by the Ryan Government until all the workers are emancipated and Labour is free. Queensland has every prospect of becoming the first Socialist Commonwealth in the British Empire.

Ryan's Second Victory.

On the 16th March, 1918, a General Election took place in Queensland. During the election campaign the Capitalists of the British Empire subscribed literally unlimited sums of money and sent it to Queensland to beat the Ryan Socialist Government.

Twenty of the most popular Australian Military Officers were relieved of their duties to contest 20 seats against the Ryan Government. All the political parties in Queensland changed their names—but could not change their spots—and amalgamated under the combined name of the patriotic National Party in order to defeat the Ryan Government. **But the country refused to be bought, bribed, bullied, or camouflaged,** and stood solid by the Ryan Government, with the result that Ryan and his Government were returned by 51 to 21 votes. The Agent-General for Queensland informs me the victory was 48 to 24. But Ryan says 51 to 21.

All the Military Officers were defeated at the polls. Queensland declines to be any longer ruled by Capitalists, Jingoes, or militarists. The Ryan Government are International Socialists, anti-war and anti-conscriptionists. They opposed conscription with all their might and main. This angered the Hughes Federal Government, **and W. M. Hughes suppressed the "Queensland Hansard" and tried to jail Ryan.** But so popular and powerful has Comrade T. J. Ryan become that the Federal Labour Sociailst Party have invited him to become their leader. **Labor Leader**

TWO PLEAS — FOR INTERVENTION IN RUSSIA. WHY ?

Toronto Star, Sept. 6, '18

Washington, Sept. 6.—Out of the confusion which is the Russian situation the following facts may be gathered :

The Administration is anxious to avoid official or unofficial hostility towards the Russian people. The President regrets reports that America is at war with the Russian republic.

The beginning of military intervention by the United States, in co-operaiton with the allies, is found in the landing of troops at Vladivostok. How many troops will be sent is unprintable military information, but the number will not be enormous.

The promised civilian intervention under financial and Red Cross auspices has been practically abandoned. After many postponements the State Department announces that it has not been able to overcome the difficulties in getting competent men to undertake such great labors.

All reports agree that the breakdown of industry and the threat of famine in Russia has caused great unrest and made it more difficult for the Soviet Government to maintain itself against **counter revolution fomented by the expatriated nobility and refugee property-owning classes.**

Allied Bankers Act.

The Russian political situation is now beginning to pivot upon the world's speculation in Russian bonds. **When the Bolsheviki Government repudiated the national debt, it invited the concerted opposition of bankers throughout the world. It is the banking interest to-day which has brought about the recognition by France and England of the little self-styled Government which has been set up by the allies on the shores of the Baltic, while these same nations have neglected for nearly a year to recognize the de facto Government of Russia.** . . . . .

There is talk of the necessity, from a military point of view for setting up a new battle line in western Russia to check the German encroachments on Russian territory. Without the co-operation of the Soviets and the Russian people this is conceded to be impractical, and the intervention which is now taking place in Russia is political rather than military.

Menaces All Nations.

Another element which has tended to draw together all nations against Russia, even the Germans and Austrians, is found in the fact that the Russians are attempting to demonstrate to the world that people may live and prosper without any of the ordinary laws of property ownership. This is a form of economic revolution which is disaproved by the rest of the industrial world. Its success would constitute a menace to the existing order in every nation. It will probably not be allowed to succeed.

Daily Telegraph London

"The mistake ordinarly made about Japan is the unjust supposition that her aims are purely material, and that her ideal is nothing better than an Eastern version of Prussian militarism. Japan, like every other believer in Real-Politik, thinks that a nation is respected in proportion to its strength, and that unless the strong man armed keeps his house, his goods are by no means safe from ambitious rivals. Since the era of enlightenment known as 'Meiji' commenced in 1868, Japan has become a diligent pupil of Western civilisation and set herself to the consolidation of a great world-power in the East. But she did not, for that reason, depart from her ancient principles; she only transformed them according to the exigencies of the present. Patriotism is a flaming ideal in new Japan, because her fighting ardour is no new thing, but based on many yesterdays. Whenever and wherever Japan moves we may be sure that she is unlikely to commence any great undertaking without a definite chance of reaping therefrom some solid advantage. But how can the kingdoms of the West blame her for this sincere regard for her own safety? She is an island power, as we are an island power; she depends on her navy, as we, too, depend on ours. It is not only for national salvation that she arms herself, but also for material welfare."

....PARTY ANNOUNCEMENTS...

The Dominion executive committee meets on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month at 397 Spadina Avenue, Toronto, secretary, I. Bainbridge.

The Ontario provincial executive committee meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month at 397 Spadina Avenue, Toronto, secretary, I Bainbridge.

Saskatchewan Provincial Executive Committee—Meets on the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month. All comrades desiring to join party or organize Locals are requested to write,

F. G. Wetzel,
Box 151, Vanguard, Sask.

Locals and Executive Bodies may have their Advts. in the Directory for the sum of $3.00 per year.