

Summary of Policy Launch Speech: Matthew Charlton, Opposition Leader (ALP)

Maitland, 24 October 1922

LABOUR POLICY

MR. CHARLTON'S SPEECH

SOME MAIN POINTS

Mr Charlton delivered his policy speech at Maitland last night.

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He said that the maladministration of this Government in regard to war service homes has entailed heavy additional costs to be met by the returned soldiers.

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During the past five years the Government has borrowed £246,840,052. It is adding £17,250,924 this yr to the national debt.

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Labour publicity broke up the wireless chairmanship appointment, but the half million vote went through, and with it Australia's exclusive rights in local wireless patents.

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The Government paid the Kidman-Mayob firm £166,000 of public money. In return the Government got nothing.

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The Government paid £812,000 for five ships. It paid them for £10,000, involving a loss of public money of £800,000.

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Speculators sold to South Africa wheat and flour unfit for human consumption. To save these men, whose names it refused to disclose, the Government paid out £115,000.

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If Australian industry cannot afford to pay good wages, neither can it afford to pay £40,000,000 every year as subsidy to bond-holders.

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The Labour party will so readjust the law against land monopoly that the land developmental process shall be restored.

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The profits earned by the sugar "monopoly" rose from 8 per cent in 1920 to 17 per cent in 1922.

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Vested interests believe, aided by unemployment and by the Government, they can break the working-class organizations and reduce wages below the standard.

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The Labor party will legislate for national insurance covering life, sickness, industrial diseases, accident, unemployment, and the needs of the primary producers.

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The Labor party will repeal the compulsory clauses of the Defence Act and apply the economies to more humane purposes.

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There are a few men who, by their control of banks, industries, etc., dominate the entire system of industry. Labour is prepared to annual the right to exploitation.

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The National Government is to-day only able to bide its annual deficits by exploiting the note issue profits accumulated as a result of Labour policy.

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The Nationalists have failed to readjust the anti-monopoly law to the new devices of the monopolisers of land.

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The Prime Minister alone amongst all the dominions pledged Australia to a foreign war without consultation with Parliament.

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Labour's splendid achievement in 1910-13 is the best guarantee we can offer as to our future conduct.

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Realising the necessity of the producer and consumer coming into closer contact, we shall assist in the creation of co-operative efforts to eliminate as far as possible the middleman.

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The Labour party does not menace one single shilling earned legitimately, but it combats the methods whereby the few gather the wealth that belongs to others.

Source: The Sydney Morning Herald 25 October 1922 Page 12

