

## **Policy Launch Speech: Matthew Charlton, Opposition Leader (ALP)**

***Sydney Town Hall, 9 October 1925***

“At the last elections Mr. Hughes was Prime Minister, Mr. Bruce was Treasurer, Mr. Page was leader of the Country Party. Mr. Bruce denounced Mr. Page as the leader of a gang of mental paralytics, whose policy would ruin the country, and Mr. Page retorted by describing Mr. Bruce as a balance sheet maker, a man who manipulated loans and revenue accounts in order to make the budget look as favorable as possible. Mr. Bruce informed the public that Mr. Hughes was the only man qualified to lead the country; that he (Mr. Bruce) would be faithful and true to him; that if Mr. Hughes went out, he (Mr. Bruce) would go out with him. The election was no sooner over than Mr. Bruce violated every pledge of fidelity, deserted his leader, entered into collusion with Mr. Page, brought about the downfall of his Prime Minister, seized his place, made Mr. Page Treasurer, and thus brought into existence the reactionary Tammany Clique known as the Bruce-Page Government. Then Mr. Page told the Treasury administration under Mr. Bruce, I do not occupy your time to tell you of these, treacheries, these pledges and violations, those recantations and reversals of form for the more purpose of recounting unprofitable history. It is that you shall remember these things when these men upon the platforms of this country talk of their honor.

Mr. Page claims to be a successful Treasurer. He is what he said of Mr. Bruce – a manipulator of public accounts. He compares years that suit his purpose, adds one or drops one, and acquires the results he desires. By these means he proves reduction in debts, taxation and expenditure. Mr. Page was going to show his predecessor, Mr. Bruce, the way to economise. He increased expenditure from £62,814,000 to £65,020,000. That was economy. In addition, there was an expenditure bill of £15,701,000 paid out of loan money. In June, 1923, the Commonwealth debt was £411,000,000. For the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> June, 1926, Mr. Page estimates total expenditure from revenue and loans of £77,620,000 at against £69,961,000 when he assumed office. This is an increase of over £7,500,000 per year. Mr. Page outspends all rivals and records, and then goes into elaborate thimble rigging to prove that plus 2 is minus 2. Expenditure is nearly £3,000,000 more per year than when he took control of the Treasury. A Nationalist paper has described him a “the weakest and most extravagant Treasurer the Commonwealth has known.

When Mr. Bruce stopped Mr. Page’s criticism by taking him into the Government, the Post Office ceased to have any profits; it became a dead loss. It had no profits to spend in any direction, and this year, for the first time in the Post Office history, £400,000 of Post Office wages have to be paid out of loan money. Prior to Mr. Page, the Post Office made large profits, and the interest on Post Office loans, after twenty-three years as a Commonwealth instrumentality, amounted to only £90,000 per year. Two years of Mr. Page drove this interest bill to £434,000, and this year will land it with additional £320,000 – making a total interest charge on the Post Office of £700,000.

Mr. Page claimed that the Government raised the income tax exemption on children. This question was raised by the Labor party. The exemption was £40 per child. Labor moved for a £60 exemption. The Government opposed, then retreated, and consented

to a £50 exemption. Mr. Page claims that the Government remitted 5 per cent of the tax on the capital value of taxpayers homes. Senator Grant (Labor) raised this question in the Senate. The Government opposed. A few Nationalists supported Labor, and forced it upon the Government. Mr. Page is much more than a thimble rigger, He is a misrepresentor of historical facts.

You are told by the daily press that we are an unworthy party; that the pre-war Labor party was a party all men could admire – ‘a party of noble purposes and fine ideals.’ You are not told that the party under Mr. Fisher was assailed in the same press, in the same language as the party is to-day. To-day, in order to discredit the existing party, it confesses that the previous victims of its ferocity, its perjuries and its falsified history were men worthy of public approbation. The enemies of Labor have only one method of maintaining their authority – to paralyse the mentality of the people with imaginary terrors. In accordance with this policy they organise fakes fears and frights, and conduct elections while the fright is on.

Everything said to-day to stampede the people from a reasoned consideration of the real issues has been said by our opponents for thirty years. The only variation is in the name of the horror doing ‘scarecrow duty’, in this or that place, or time. When one horror ceases to petrify the public, it is moved off the stage and another is moved on. These tactics were not successful in 1910. They were not successful in the recent elections in five states. We are confident they will not be more successful in this contest. This party in office has always proved itself a sound, sane party, falsifying by its actions all the predictions of evil.

The Government as an excuse for its conduct asserts that there are in Australia paid agents of foreign powers, working to subvert the government of this country, and that it has ample evidence of the men, their methods, their machines, and the sources of their tainted money. If that were true, it would be the duty of the Government to arrest treason and produce the evidence. It does not do so. It is, therefore, guilty of either criminal neglect or despicable perjury. It can take its choice.

The policy of the Bruce-Page Government is to import people and export the work: whereby people are employed. It is stated that increased population in itself means increases in work and wealth. That it does not is demonstrated by the efforts of Britain to be rid of a large section of her people, who, under existing conditions, are not an addition to, but a drag upon her resources. Australia at the present time has a large amount of excess labor. There is therefore no need to import it. To do so is not to augment wealth, but to impose an additional charge upon it. The first obligation of a Government is to provide work for its own people. It is said there is in Australia room for the entire population of Britain. There is. It can be found along the 1000 miles of railway from Port Augusta to Kalgoorlie, and along the 700 miles from the same port to Oodundutta. There is the deep-sea port, the railways, the land for the asking, but outside the individuals employed upon the railways hardly a human being moves upon the surface of the earth. It is not a question of room. It is, ‘Can you live in it?’ Without rain the Garden of Eden is a desert.

It is said there are plenty of cheap Crown lands in Australia. Wherever a block of land is thrown open in the rain belt there are hundreds of applicants. At Albury there were 1900 applicants for 09 blocks; at Lake Cowal (N.S.W.), 413 applicants for one block; at Grafton, in August, there were 3200 applicants for three blocks, and this week 1205 applications for one block of land at Moree. The Premier of Victoria (Mr. Allan) has stated that in Victoria there is no land available at a price that a farmer who knows his

business will pay. The Victorian Government has £23,000,000 invested in the holdings of 10,000 returned soldiers – an average of £2000 per farm; £4,000,000 has been wiped off as had yet 2000 men have abandoned their holdings. There has been a similar experience in New South Wales, where the Government has advanced in many cases as much as £3500 with a success. Yet the Bruce-Page Government enters into compact with the British Government that Australia will take British immigrants, put them onto the land, house them, train them, maintain them, and those it can not put on the land it guarantees to provide with permanent suitable employment, and ‘after care.’ The Labor party will give endorsement to any such compact, and it will regard it as a duty that guarantees of employment and ‘after care’ shall be furnished to Australians before being furnished to people from overseas.

If one fifth of our imports were produced in Australia, there would be additional employment, and it is in the expansion of the home production of those products wherein Australia falls short of its requirements, that the ways and means of maintaining new population must be found. Under such a policy of economic expansion labor will flow in naturally to meet the requirements of Industry. Now that there are five states under Labor rule we will cooperate with the States in an endeavour to break up large estates, and make the land available to settlers. Labor regards the expansion of population as imperative and essential, and to that end will develop our secondary industries so as to enable us to find employment for our people, and also provide a market for the products of those who may be settled on the land.

Australian Labor stands for the establishment and expansion of industry in all its forms. Industry furnishes an ever increasing local market for the consumption of local products. Tariff protection is one of the methods by which national economic expansion can be secured. Labor endorses not only protection at the customs but every method whereby the self-sustaining power of the nation can be extended. There is abundant evidence that when a tariff is imposed and local industry established the importers pay the duty and sell at a lower price, and at a lower price than they do in countries where they have no local competition. Imported agricultural machines pay 45 per cent duty, and are sold in Australia 25 per cent cheaper than in Argentina, where they pay no duty. In 1921 the price of imported black fencing wire was £40 to £50 per ton. Australia commenced to manufacture and sell for £30. The importers dropped prices to £22 10/, but kept up the price of galvanized fencing wire. When Australia commenced producing galvanized fencing importers dropped the price of galvanized. Local industry secures commodities for a people at a lower price than they would have to pay if such industry did not exist. The Government claims to stand for sound and safe protection. Its ‘sound and safe’ means the largest flood of foreign goods ever poured into Australia. The Labor party, if returned to power will, as far as Government requirements are concerned give preference to Australian manufactured articles.

The industrial and political organisations of Labor have repeatedly declared in favor of national defence, and it was Labor that gave to Australia the only defence it ever possessed. The Labor government notes that rapacious nations make war upon peaceful nations like China, and that a nation rich in natural resources or with a social system obnoxious to its neighbours may be the victim of unjustifiable aggression. Labor will not permit the economic and social policies of the Labor government in these territories to be interrupted by intervention, or suppressed by any foreign power, without resistances. Therefore it stands for national defence. It has been shown that

Australia could have sixteen submarines for the cost of one cruiser; that these need no expensive bases, and that they are particularly suitable to our needs and resources. It has been shown by the chief of the Australian air staff that Australia could for the cost of one cruiser, have 28 squadrons of airplanes, aeroplanes and flying boats - 408 vessels. The Bruce-Page Government does not want sixteen submarines or 408 airplanes for the cost of one cruiser. They will not buy guns for the defence of our cities, or equipment to keep an army in action. They want two cruisers and they want them built in Britain. The Labor party wants the money spent on forms of defence which in its opinion should have priority, and it wants the money as far as possible spent in Australia. At the earliest opportunity compulsory training will be abolished. Since the last war £27,000,000 has been spent by the Nationalist party on so-called 'defence.' There are no submarines, they are no modern guns for the defence of cities, not a dozen aeroplanes fit to fight. On the evidence of General Monash and Drake Brockman and the reports of Inspector General Chauvel there are not sufficient materials to keep a brigade in action 24 hours. The millions have been spent on officialism and on those naval units, which can most easily be transferred to other parts of the world. Actual shore defences of Australia are non-existent.

In 1923 Mr. Bruce became Prime Minister. Parliament was bludgeoned into recess. The government was handed to departmental heads and Mr. Bruce went on a trip to England. In 1924 he returned to Australia with his two new cruisers programmed. This was the first Australia heard of the necessity. It was decided not only to build two new cruisers – it was decided to build them in Great Britain. When the issue was forced upon it the Government and its supporters voted against the construction in Australia.

One of the reasons advanced by Mr. Bruce for the building of the cruisers was that they were necessary as escorts for vessels bringing from overseas a large part of our munitions. This means that if ships go down we are left a munitionless, defenceless nation. Mr. Bruce said; 'We cannot economically establish munition works to supply our requirements of modern munitions.' The Labor party asserts that it is more economic to provide the production of those essentials within our own borders than it is to run the risk of the loss of those essentials at sea at the very time when the nation is fighting for its life. Lord Jellicoe on the matter said, 'A sound policy must aim at promoting Australia's capacity to make or produce everything essential to its own protection.' That is the Labor party's policy. The Labor party stands for the development of those munitions factories and industries which are capable of being justified for purposes of national defence, while fulfilling definitely useful purposes in time of peace. Australia needs shore guns within range of which no enemy vessel will appeal – an aerial fleet that cannot be outnumbered – an internal means of production and maintenance. Such methods are not only within our resources – they are equal to our necessities. The anti-Labor parties have no policy of economic preparedness. They are bent not upon the defence of these territories, but upon forced contributions to Imperial expansion masquerading as defence. They are free-traders –jingoese, Tories and anti-Australian in every sentiment and deed.

Into this question of economic preparedness is woven the attitude of the great daily newspapers. There is a 40 per cent tariff protection for the internal production of all paper, except newsprint. The annual consumption of newsprint is 100,000 tons, and the money sent abroad for purchase is over £2,000,000 per year. An Australian company (Amalgamated Zinc) offered to manufacture in Australia from Australian raw material, so that the £2,000,000 now going overseas should be spent in Australia.

It is proposed to operate in Tasmania, and the Tasmanian Labor Government gave it cutting rights of over 600,000 acres of forest from which to secure timber for pulping purposes. Paper is essential in the manufacture of cartridges. Apart from the army of men to be engaged in forests, quarries, mines and mills, the industry is a vital necessity from the standpoint of defence. All the company asked for from the Bruce-Page Government was a promise that when it commenced turning out paper – not before – it would be protected against overs cut rates. The Government has now gone to the country, and its conduct towards this industry has placed its candidates in a bad position. In order to save them, the Government, on 1<sup>st</sup> October last, promised that next time – should there unfortunately for Australia be a next time – it will grant a bounty of £4 per ton, the bounty to be reduced if the profits of the company exceed 10 per cent. This proposed bounty is a farce. No industry can be established under its provisions. The very day this bounty was announced the Bruce-Page treaty with Canada came into operation. Under this treaty the £3 per ton duty on Canadian newsprint disappears, and that much protection for Australian made paper disappears. This £1 per ton advantage to Australian industry is equal to about 5 per cent, on the value of production, and to designate it protection or encouragement to local industry is a sham, a delusion and a fraud.

In view of the anti-Australian attitude of this Government the Premier of Tasmania has informed me that the company which contemplated spending £2,000,000 in Tasmania, and would have afforded employment in 5000 men per annum, has definitely decided this week not to proceed any further with the proposed paper pulp industry.

Mr. Bruce has strongly urged that Australia should have a voice in foreign affairs, which if granted, would mean that Australia would be committed to any overseas war which Britain may decide upon or be a party to. Ever since we have had constitutional government we have been free to decide whether we will participate in any overseas war, and it depends entirely on the merits of the case as to whether Australia should become involved. The Labor party stands for an Australian foreign policy, developed in Australia, in the light of day – developed for a people and by a people who are determined to uphold the rights which properly belong to a nation, and honest enough to admit that other nations have co-equal rights. It will prize self determination, not merely for itself, but as the heritage of all men in the lands

The Labor party advocates the promotion and extension of the agricultural and rural industries by the establishment of a Federal bureau of agriculture to co-operate with similar State bodies, with a view to organizing all those engaged in primary production into a unified body, so that they may be able to more effectively place their views before Governments, and to generally co-operate and assist in giving effect to the following policy – (1) The encouragement of a co-operation among primary producers, in order to bring consumers and producers into direct communication. (2) The provisions of more up-to-date methods of marketing our products, both locally and overseas. (3) The provision of a system of research work for the betterment of rural production. (4) The extension of functions of the Commonwealth Bank to provide for rural credit branch, for the purpose of assisting land settlement and development; the granting of relief to necessitous primary producers against the ravages of drought, fire, flood and pests, and the establishment of a grain and fodder reserve against periods of drought. (5) Co-operation between the Federal and State Governments to provide for an effective system under which land will be made available for farmers sons and those able and willing to use it. (6) The

extension of the Commonwealth shipping line for the purpose of securing cheaper freights on the carriage of our products both inter-state and overseas. (7) The establishment of Commonwealth agricultural implement factories for the purposes of providing primary producers with cheaper machinery. (8) A comprehensive system of water conservation and irrigation, with provision – in suitable areas – for the communal supply of water from artesian and sub artesian bores and wells. (9) The encouragement of secondary industries, and the provision of cheap light and power in country districts where practicable. (10) The extension of the benefits of civil aviations and wireless communication to remote country districts. (11) The provision of better facilities for postal, telegraphic and telephonic communication. (12) Assistance and encouragement in the construction of railways, main roads and in the development of the nearest ports as a means of bringing producers in touch with their natural markets by the shortest and quickest routes. (13) Utilisation of the High Commissioner's office overseas for the purpose of providing expert advice in the sale of our products abroad. (14) The provision of increased meteorological facilities of recording and publishing information in regard to weather conditions, rainfalls, and river gauges. (15) Representation of primary producers upon all [illegible]ards affecting those handling any marketing of their products. Provision will be made for the expansion of the markets overseas for Australian products, which depends entirely upon the ability to continuity of supply. We have failed in the matter and we will continue to fail unless we arrange to store large quantities of our products in a position close enough to the point of sale, to allow us to compete with those more advantageously situated geographically. To this end the party advocates the immediate erection near London of a large storage depots for grain, meat, fruit, butter, cheese, eggs and other producers which will enable us to not only guarantee continuity of supply but overcome the violent market fluctuations to which our produce is now subject while in transit.

Farmers co-operative unions in the wheat-producing States have recently declared in favor of a compulsory wheat pool. In our opinion a compulsory wheat pool is necessary in order to reduce the cost of handling and to prevent chaos and confusion. A pool controlled by the Commonwealth Government, if properly managed, would have the advantages of the Commonwealth line of steamers. The pool could be financed through the Commonwealth Bank, and there would also be the advantage of having only one chartering agency. A compulsory pool, controlled by a board providing for ample representation of the growers, would favor the struggling farmer, who often in the open market is compelled to sell in the speculator at a great disadvantage because he cannot afford to hold on for a more favourable market, as the wealthy sections can. It cuts out the non-producing speculator. Before the formation of the opposite Government, country party incliners were staunch supporters of the principle of a compulsory wheat pool. Since they sold their principle to the pact, however, there is a different tale. On 21<sup>st</sup> June last the Labor party moved a definite amendment to the Government Supply Bill in favor of a compulsory wheat pool. In the division which was taken on this amendment all Country party members, with the exception of Mr. Stewart voted with the Nationalists against the proposal. In this connection it is also noteworthy that the composite Government, composed as it is largely of so-called Country party members, is the first Government since the outbreak of the war to refuse a guarantee to the wheat growers, although the Labor party has moved each year in favor of a guarantee of 4/ a bushel. We will immediately enter into negotiations with the State Governments regarding the formation of pools.

Primary producers are constantly being placed in a very serious position by the exorbitant prices demanded by middlemen for their wheat sacks and other jute goods. The present composite Government has looked on while farmers have been fleeced in this direction. We shall arrange through direct Commonwealth agencies for adequate supplies of jute goods from the manufactures, to be retailed to producers at cost prices. Labor will assist cotton growers by replacing the present system of guaranteed prices by a bounty of 2d, per mill, for reed cotton, subject to conditions to be determined as to the grade of the cotton. The annual importation of cotton goods into Australia for many years have varied between £10,000,000 £15,000,000 sterling. We will make inquiry in order to ascertain what assistance will be necessary to enable the manufacture of cotton goods within Australia.

Australia is the only country in the world where cane sugar is produced by white labor, and the importance of this industry as a factor in the maintenance of a "white Australia" cannot be ever estimated. Labor stands for a continuance of the present embargo against the introduction of black grown sugar in Australia and reasonable prices to consumers; the Sugar Pool Board to be vested with adequate powers to arrange a fair basis for the transport of raw sugar, the refining of the product and the distribution of the refined sugar. It approves of a continuance of control by the Queensland Sugar Board under the authority of both States and Federal Governments, and a continuance of the concessions at present given to manufacturers of jams and other products with sugar in them. With a view to endeavouring to produce locally Australia's requirements of liquefied fuel, the party will take the necessary action to encourage the manufacture of power alcohol from molasses, inferior cane cassava, prickly pear and other suitable crops. Realising that the dairy industry is in a serious position, steps will be taken to bring about a more effective system of marketing dairy products, establishing prices and improving the standard of dairy herds. Recognising the special circumstances of dried fruit and fortifying spirit industry, consideration will be given this matter. The necessity for improving the roads in Australia is apparent to everybody. Primary producers living some distance from the railway lines should be provided with proper roads as feeders to the railway. The Labor party will, if elected, take the necessary steps to carry out a liberal and continuous scheme for the construction of roads in co-operation with the State Governments. Mr. Bruce will do nothing to settle the strike of British seamen. This is different to the attitude adopted by the anti-Labor Premier of New Zealand who is endeavoring to bring about a settlement. It would appear that Mr. Bruce is anxious for political reasons to see the strike contained. Should Labor be returned to power we will utilize the Commonwealth line of steamers to the fullest capacity for the conveyance of wheat, wool, mutton, butter and other products to the overseas markets. If this line is not sufficient to cope with trade, we will charter vessels for that purpose, so that the primary producers will be able to market their products as far as possible.

The Commonwealth Bank was made a party to the financial 'hold up' last year, and was made to give to the private banks the money the Commonwealth Bank could and should have advanced directly to the public. The notes were issued in the private banks at 4 per cent and retained at 7 per cent. There was not a farmer or business man, no man who wanted to build a home or purchase products, who could secure from the Commonwealth Bank money on such terms. The privilege was for private banks only. The Commonwealth Bank was not brought into existence for the benefit of a few individuals, or as a buttress to the banking combine. Under a Labor Government, the Commonwealth Bank will revert to its original purposes. It will function for the

public, not for a clique. Its branches will expand, and its activities, including advances for workers' homes on easy terms, will increase. As it is it has been crippled, mangled and hamstrung as a public institution. Political power has been exercised to sabotage its business to leave it nothing but the duty of issuing notes to other banks for them to traffic in and make the profit.

The Bruce-Page Government professes to have established a rural credits bank as a part of the Commonwealth Bank. It is a sham, a delusion. No farmer can borrow a penny from it. It does not exist for that. The farmer borrows from a private bank or mortgage company. Then that bank or mortgage company can deposit the farmer's security in the bank, and raise cheap money to lend again and scale a profit in the operation. That is politics, not for the farmer, but for the man who farms the farmer. The so called rural credits bank is neither a bank nor department of a bank. It is merely a label on a counter, nothing more; absolutely nothing is changed. The Labor party will have a rural credit bank not so much in words as in actual facts - a bank that will do those things a rural credits bank should do for the primary producers of Australia.

The Labor party will legislate for national insurance covering life, sickness, industrial disease, accident, unemployment and the needs of the primary producer. The national system of insurance, apart from its mass benefit, will mean profits for the nation, available for the reduction of taxation, the liquidation of its liabilities or the development of its resources. The party will, if returned, review the many anomalies associated with the present regulation governing the Old Age and Invalid Pension Act. The question of motherhood endowment is one of vital importance. The Australian born is the best immigrant we can have and therefore the greatest assistance should be given to those who have families. Realising this the Labour party will make provision for motherhood employment and not submitting the matter to a conference with a view of shelving it as Mr Bruce is proposing to do. Health matters have been given serious consideration, by the Labour Party, and we have determined that the Commonwealth shall take a more active part in making Australia a healthy nation. We will subsidise the investigation of cancer. Research laboratories will be established for the investigation of industrial and other diseases. We will co-operate with the States in coordination of the present health laws of the Commonwealth, and will accept our responsibility of helping in this regard. The development of the laboratory for the manufacture of serums and vaccines will also receive attention. Should Labor be returned to power, we will get into communication with Spablinger and take whatever means considered necessary, with a view of obtaining his services in the interests of those who have been stricken with tuberculosis. This Party will see to it that every genuine claim for pension by the men who were accepted as fit for war service will receive the sympathetic treatment they deserve. An investigation will be made in regard to all matters affecting repatriation and war service homes with a view to seeing that justice is done to returned men. The party will co-operate with the States and endeavor to have an immediate inquiry held into the hardships under which soldier settlers are at present handicapped. Everything will be done to remove the injustices of which they complain.

The Labor party when returned to power, will amend the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act to abolish cumbersome procedure, so as to provide easy access to the court. We intend to revert to the system which permits one judge to deal with all phases of disputes. Measures will be introduced to give the works in industries a

better standing and representation in the control of industry. We will also make provision for all unions who desire to come under the Industrial Peace Act.

In the interests of the whole of Australia it is necessary that there should be uniform hours of labour throughout the States. As greater powers are necessary under the Constitution for this and other purposes, it is proposed to submit the questions to the people at the earliest opportunity in order to obtain an amendment of the constitution, and to permit the Labor party's platform being given effect to.

It is gratifying to note that all sections of the Commonwealth service are recognizing in a practical manner that Labor will see that no injustice is done to Government employees who have always rendered loyal service to the community. If returned, we will take into consideration the necessity of having an inquiry made with a view to ascertaining the working of the Public Service Act, the Public Service Arbitration Act and the Superannuation Act. We shall also take steps to appoint a representative of the public servants to the Public Services Board, and make provisions for the payment of salaries on the basis of work, value, irrespective of the sex of the employee. In some of the States the public servants have no access to Arbitration tribunals, and have been prevented from going to the Federal Court by legal difficulties arising out of the interpretation of the term "industry." We will give the public servants equal rights of access with other workers.

The Labor party recognizes the isolated position of Tasmania, and, if returned, it will provide a line of suitable passenger and cargo boats to meet the needs of the State. It will also make adequate provision to ensure a continuous service. In addition, we will give further consideration to the financial position of the State, with a view to giving further relief, if deemed necessary. With this end in view, a commission will be appointed to inquire into the financial position of the State. We will also do everything possible to assist the hop industry.

The Labor party recognizes the urgent need of a progressive policy of development of the Northern Territory, and will immediately take steps to construct the North South railway to Alice Springs. We will also take the necessary action in conjunction with the State to have a standard gauge railway, between Adelaide and Port Augusta. These matters are long overdue, and we will take immediate action to give effect to these proposals.

The recent Disabilities Commission found that Western Australia had suffered in consequence of Federation. This party will make a substantial monetary grant of not less than the amount recommended by the commission, in addition to the 26/ per capita payment. In this connection we will consider the position of the gold-mining industry, as it is so essential for the development and welfare of that State.

The Commonwealth Woollen Mills were established by the Labor Government, at a cost of £200,000 for plant and building, and returned to the Treasury in seven years gross profits amounting to £400,000. Even after writing off £100,000 for depreciation at high rates, ranging from 5 per cent to 20 per cent, the return on capital invested averaged 20 per cent. The Bruce-Page Government sacrificed the woollen mills to the greed of Flinders lane. By private arrangement, the advertised conditions of tender were altered. The Government accepted a deposit of one-tenth instead of one-third as advertised, and also agreed to extend the time for paying the balance from five years to ten years. The annual instalments of £13,050 to purchase the mill are actually less than was written off each year for depreciation. Prior to offering the mills for sale the

Government paid 100 guineas to Woodridge and Sinclair, an engineering firm, of 500 Elizabeth street, Melbourne for a valuation of the plant. Their valuation was £207,150. That is £112,000 more than the price for which it was sold. If Ministers were directors of a private company and handled the shareholders' property in this way they would be brought before the courts and indicted.

In 1918, in the most intense period of the war, Australian squatters and pastoral companies were working overtime to avoid their taxes. They secured a suspension of their taxes on the pretence they were going to appeal – but they never appealed. The general body of taxpayers must pay their taxes, and appeal afterwards. They have no right of appeal until they do pay. Three royal commissions could not justify the non-collection of tax. Since the position was exposed by the Labor party, after years of refusals to collect, and after repeated declarations by Mr. Page that the amounts unpaid were 'myths.' Mr. Page proceeded to collect, and on the eve of the elections has drawn on half a million of arrears, which he asserted were uncollectible.

Mr. Bruce states that he stands for a threefold loyalty – loyalty to the throne, the Empire and the constitution. As far any man performs the functions of his office with fidelity, impartiality and courtesy to all, he is entitled to the respect of all, and I know of no man in this party who would withhold it. Loyalty consists in the development of our continent, in the development of our race in body, in mind and social status. In that work our movement plays no small part. In order to discredit the industrial organizations of Labor the Nationalist party discredits the country. It declares that the Australian Labor movement produces more unrest, strikes and industrial dislocation than exist in other countries. When the last census was taken in 1921 the persons out of work in Australia through industrial disputes numbered 4500, while the number put out of action by sickness or accident totalled 45,000. The number out of work because the employers had no use for their services totalled 70,000 – three times as many as at the census in 1911? Of the total number out of work from all causes only 3 per cent were out through strikes. During the two years 1922 and 1923 the average daily number of men out of work through industrial disputes numbered 3300 and in 1924 only 3000. They did not embrace one half of one percent of the organised workers of Australia, and this is far below the strike percentage of Great Britain. In countries where no Labor party exists where union leaders are fiercely sent to the penitentiary, where the employers can call armed troops into the field in defence of their interests, there is not more peace, there is less. Their policy does not diminish disorder- it provokes it. This is Mr Bruce's policy.

In the recent seamen strike Mr. Bruce refused to intervene. He rushed to a meeting of cronies and declared for a 'fight to a finish'. That was his contribution to the cause of Industrial peace. The strike was settled without his aid, in spite of him, to his intense annoyance. As an incentive and excitement for industrial trouble, he introduced and forced into existence his deportation law – his contribution to the policy of leg irons and coercion. This Deportation Act – its jurisdiction and its punishment applies to one class only and to one section within that class – the organized workers. No other class can be trapped or punished under its provisions. Thomas Walsh may commit burglary or robbery with or without violence, but he cannot be deported. This law does not deport the criminal, it deports the Labor leader. It does not deport the garrotter and promoter of fraudulent enterprises- it deports the man who says 'Stop work.' It is not a judge who passes sentence of deportation – it is the partisan Government. This movement does not ask for immunity from the law for any of its members. It demands that trade unionists offending against the law should be treated

as other citizens, and be indicted and prosecuted in the normal way, in the usual courts and should not be treated as a class apart or made the victims of drumhead trials by their capitalist opponents. The processes of the courts and the right of appeal granted to the most violent original in the fund ought not to be denied to a member of a trade union. The Labor movement, when in power, has never set up star climbers and inquisitions to mandandle its opponents, and such conduct on the part of its opponents is unjustifiable iniquity. This Government of reactionaries does not include its woollen unit stealers and its 4 per cent overdrafters in the Commonwealth Bank. It will not exhibit its coffin snip contractors with public money in pocket, in spite of Supreme Court orders to disgorge. It will not present in the public gaze its race stud compatriots, who secure immunity from taxation on the ground of hardship and then bob up as part proprietors of the Commonwealth Woolen Mills. These things it desires to hide in the cellars of oblivion.

The growth of the Labor movement does not mean ruin. It is synonymous with the growth and greatness of your country. Its roots are deep down in the soil of humanity not to slavery and servitude. It stands for the unity of the mass as against the mass power of Mammon. It subordinates the individual to the principle. It moves forward to the point where the section will be subordinate to the movement in its entirety. It formulates unity, discipline, order and united integrity. By those instrumentalities it moves forward to the realization of its ideals, knowing full well that it is only upon the basis of order, unity and discipline that the better and nobler order of tomorrow can rest in safety. We are not the makers of disorder. That iniquity is the prerequisite of our opponents. They have no solution to the problems of modern society. They precipitate the evils they profess to avoid. This orderly disciplined, movement can alone give to the people sanity, safety and security.”

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