

COMMONWEALTH RESIST OPPRESSION

NORTH AND SOUTH TABLE THEIR DEMANDS

WONDERFUL PROTEST MEETING AT WAGGA

Secession in the Air

RIVERINA DEMANDS

Assembled on Saturday in the picturesque Wagga Reserve, which forms a rural amphitheatre admirably suited for a great open-air gathering, the largest and most representative meeting which has ever been held in rural New South Wales delivered an ultimatum to the Federal and State Governments, and declared with remarkable unanimity that, if its demands were not granted by the end of this month, steps would be taken to hold a referendum on the question of secession from the State of New South Wales and the creation of a new and independent State of Riverina. The meeting brought to a climax a series of similar gatherings which have been held at many country centres in Riverina in the last month. The opinion of residents of Riverina is that for too long they have patiently suffered under crushing burdens imposed by the high costs of government, increasing interest charges, unnecessarily high taxation and onerous industrial legislation. They contend that, with drastic reductions in government expenditure, taxation and interest charges, and other urgent reforms, there will be more money available for productive development, more work, a greater standard of living, and increased demands for primary products. They also contend that in the past too much money has been spent in the cities, and that the country has been neglected.

CROWD OF 8000 PEOPLE

The meeting on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River on Saturday was attended by considerably more than 8000 farmers, graziers, business men, tradesmen, and representatives of a large number of organisations throughout Riverina. A special train brought a great number from Coolangubra and intervening districts, and every place within a radius of 100 miles of Wagga was strongly represented. Many delegates came from more than 200 miles away. There had been much talk among supporters of the Premier of New South Wales (Mr. Lang) intended to organise a disturbance at the meeting. A special force of policemen, under Inspector Moroney, was on duty, and members of the Wagga branch of the Returned Soldiers' League formed a bodyguard around the platform. However, there was no disturbance, the only interruption being the continued cheering which was the chief mark of the speakers, especially those who criticised the Administration and policy of Mr. Lang. The enthusiasm of the people outside the hall, who called upon the people of Riverina to pledge themselves to give unwavering support "to those who insisted 'that the Government would not give us the £1, and would never countenance repudiation,'" and strongly to oppose those who advocated infidelity in any State. The speakers, who were in great number and broadcast, and talking films of the meeting were made. All business was suspended for the afternoon. At the close of the meeting from the leader of the made for small contributions to defray the cost of organising further meetings to be held in less than 10 minutes, more were raised there to raise their voices a greater united meeting of protest against the State Government, and to endorse a motion of definite plan of action. The farmer's margin of safety and gradually grown

less. The collapse of the primary product would involve the whole country in ruin. Yet, while the Government is trying to stave off ruin, the Governments of the country were scheming and intriguing with each other and trying to carry out a policy for one class only. If the Governments refused to recognise the Riverina movement they would establish a new sovereign State under the British Crown, (Cheers.) They had the right to say how Riverina should be governed. Was there any reason why Riverina should not be given the right to govern itself? (Shouts of "No!") No part of the Commonwealth was more loyal, law-abiding, and ready to uphold the Constitution than Riverina. (Cheers.) If one of their Parliamentary representatives endeavored to voice their cause New South Wales Government was not acting constitutionally. Everything was made for Sydney, which was like a large customer, the Government was blocking the country. Sydney was the stumbling block in the Riverina's path to progress. Now was the time for plain talk. They were entitled never to pay their taxes; surely they were entitled to representation. Even those who had voted for Labor had been betrayed. The Labor Governments were dominated by men who were determined to undermine Australian sentiment and loyalty. Secession was the extreme remedy only to be adopted when all others failed, but the road to prosperity had to be opened. (Cheers.)

Mr. George Wilson (Lake Cowah) said the people of Riverina would take notice of the demands of such a great gathering. Many requests had been made, many requests had been granted, many requests had been refused. The farmers of Australia were the chief source of the nation's wealth. That was why they asked for relief for their farms. The system of government was entirely wrong. Never was a more disastrous measure inflicted on the farmer than the export tax on wool. It was a tax on the life of the farmer, and should be removed immediately. Parliament met. (Cheers.) It was the height of madness to put the tax on the farmer's back. He asked for a suspension, not the abolition, of arbitration awards, revision of wages, and tariff, reduction of rates of interest, and said that he would give the wheatgrower a fairer return. Party politicians would do nothing that would cost their votes (Hear, hear.) While they prevailed there was little hope of recovery.

CRITICISM OF MR. LANG

"The trouble is that we have no constitutional Government," said policy of Mr. Lang. The enthusiasm of the people outside the hall, who called upon the people of Riverina to pledge themselves to give unwavering support "to those who insisted 'that the Government would not give us the £1, and would never countenance repudiation,'" and strongly to oppose those who advocated infidelity in any State. The speakers, who were in great number and broadcast, and talking films of the meeting were made. All business was suspended for the afternoon. At the close of the meeting from the leader of the made for small contributions to defray the cost of organising further meetings to be held in less than 10 minutes, more were raised there to raise their voices a greater united meeting of protest against the State Government, and to endorse a motion of definite plan of action. The farmer's margin of safety and gradually grown

"TIME FOR PLAIN SPEAKING"

Ald. Lasher said that they were there to raise their voices a greater united meeting of protest against the State Government, and to endorse a motion of definite plan of action. The farmer's margin of safety and gradually grown

Mr. E. M. Hamblin (Gannam), who spoke of Riverina, said that the

economic position of party politics had brought the State to its present parlous position. There was no longer a standard of living for the farmer. Mr. W. M. Hammond (Harfield) interrupted by continual cheering when he spoke warning against a fluctuating currency and other forms of inflation.

Remarkable scenes were witnessed when the motion was put to the meeting. Men and women shouted in acclamation, hats, sunshades, and even eggs were thrown into the air, and the shouting from the hundreds of motor cars around the park was deafening.

"BOLD ACTION NEEDED"

Mr. Charles Hardy, jun. who has taken a leading part in the Riverina movement, received a deafening reception when he moved the following motion—

"That in the event of the Governments concerned refusing to recognise, or failing to give effect to, the resolutions at the Wagga meeting by March 31, immediate steps be taken to hold a referendum on the question of the right of Riverina to determine its own affairs and control its own destiny as a free people under the British Crown, if necessary by secession, with effect from the date of the resolution from existing Governments."

"Communists are playing an active part in the New South Wales Government, and are rapidly sending the State to ruin," declared Mr. Hardy. "Farmers especially should beware of Mr. Lang's proposal to compel all to work as an industrial union. I have nothing against the union system, but I have the utmost contempt for those who are prostituting the union movement and borrowing in 1928 the financial agreement was concluded, providing for sinking funds to wipe out State debts in 53 years and making the Loan Council a constitutional body to eliminate competition by the six States and the Commonwealth borrowing authorities. In 1924 I transformed the Commonwealth Bank and placed it under the control of a non-political electorate, composed of representatives of Australia's big industries. But to-day we find the sinking fund raided, the Loan Council defied, the Bank Board threatened, and the policy of repudiation openly advocated."

pay Australia's total debt in 50 years. In 1924 I formed the Loan Council to coordinate State and Federal debts and borrowing, and in 1928 the financial agreement was concluded, providing for sinking funds to wipe out State debts in 53 years and making the Loan Council a constitutional body to eliminate competition by the six States and the Commonwealth borrowing authorities. In 1924 I transformed the Commonwealth Bank and placed it under the control of a non-political electorate, composed of representatives of Australia's big industries. But to-day we find the sinking fund raided, the Loan Council defied, the Bank Board threatened, and the policy of repudiation openly advocated."

EXAMINATION OF CAUSES

Now this has come to pass can be seen by an examination of the causes of the present depression, and unemployment in Australia and throughout the world, by the cause of the war and its destruction with the huge legacy of war debt and the burden of the war debt settlement, which causes the expropriation of wealth in U.S.A. and France. Prices have fallen throughout the world especially wholesale prices. Wool, wheat, butter, fruit, etc. are selling for half their values paid for three years ago and are less than pre-war prices. Yet the prices of finished goods, such as suits, boots, bicycles, etc. are as high as when the war was on. The national income was £150,000,000,000 in 1914. To-day, Trade recovery is dependent on it. The price of those finished articles being brought down to the level that the farmer is getting for his produce. That price is determined by the market of the world which we in Australia cannot control.

BUTIN AND BANKRUPTCY

Britain cannot supply all the machinery we desire and this gives us an opportunity of making most favorable nation treaties with France, Germany, Italy, etc. The only countries of the world, by offering their concessions on their machinery in return for concessions on our meat, wool, fruit, etc. thereby we would be friendly instead of enemies our present policy makes. The policy of the Federal Labor Government is a policy of ruin to the country, which is wholly by the huge industrial population of Sydney and Melbourne, and especially by the end extremists of the Labor Party. The Labor Government of N.S.W. and the Commonwealth are destroying national

SPEECH BY DR. EARLE PAGE

THE REMEDY—RIVERINA INDEPENDENCE

COUNTRY LEADERS ADDRESS

Addressing the quarterly meeting of the Country Party Council on Monday, Dr. Earle Page, M.H.R., leader of the Country Party, outlined the movement, as advanced by the Country Party, to form the new

Page, has experienced as sharp a decline in her position as Australia during the past 15 months. The country packed with wonderful resources—filled with great productiveness, with the highest standard of living in the world, which has been reduced in this period to a state verging on bankruptcy by the folly of its political leaders. To-day the Government of N.S.W. is advocating repudiation of inflation as a prelude to general ruin. What wonder that Australian stocks have fallen from £98 in this period to £56 in London and New York.

This position is almost inconceivable when one remembers that for the seven years previously constant plans had been developed, which, under ordinary conditions, would have rendered our credit unassailable. In 1923 I established the National Debt Sinking Fund—through which I paid off £45,000,000 in seven years—to re-

advancing repudiation in the State sphere and inflation in the Federal. The Victorian Government, which had £100,000,000 in the State, had to make £2. The Lang plan is to make £1 of debt look like nothing. The Theodore plan has been tried in many countries with the same inevitable result—ruin and bankruptcy. The Lang plan has also been tried with the identical inevitable result—ruin and bankruptcy.

INFLATION AND REPUDIATION

Inflation is like liquor. The victim takes a little. It induces intoxication. The desire to continue the exhilaration induces the victim to take more liquor. The process continues. The victim becomes drunk and, as the cold sets in, he freezes to death more easily than the man who refrained from indulging. Repudiation is like a dose of cocaine. It deadens the victim to the thoughts and feelings of the outside world, brings a feeling of temporary satisfaction followed by an agonising withdrawal, mental debilitation, weakened character, and a knowledge that the honest world abhors the practice, and ostracises those who follow it.

Both these policies have been brought into operation by the Comintern of Sydney industrialism. There is no doubt that the dominant force in the Government will be the Comintern. A change of government will not alter the position, because for the last 30 years we have seen industrialism protection forced on Australia despite continuous changes of government.

APPLYING THE REMEDY

What is necessary is to "increase rural representation in the Commonwealth Parliament to give the farmers and country dwellers more power to control the country whose power largely is derived from the products of the country. This can be done by constitutional amendment which will place the Commonwealth Parliament in the hands of compact rural areas like New England and Riverina, a process which will make them, with their full Senatorial and House of Representatives representation, the natural allies of the primary producing States of Queensland, W. S., and Tasmania. These States are threatened to secede from the Commonwealth because of the treatment they have received. The rural remedy is not secession, but the creation of such natural allies in New England and Riverina into self-governing units of the Federation with full Federal representation. With such representation, the Senate would be self-sufficient for the great producing life of the country."

We in N.S.W. at the present time are faced not merely with the problem, but with the determination of Mr. Lang and the N.S.W. Government to repudiate the debt of the people of the State. This raises the question whether we desire to have any further development of the public estate in N.S.W., because Mr. Lang's attitude will destroy N.S.W. reputation as a borrower and no loans at a reasonable rate will become available during our lifetime.

The separation of Riverina and New South Wales from N.S.W., with an appeal to the Federal Government to recognise the Riverina to recognise those areas as units of the Federation with full Federal representation, which would restore the reputation of British communities. Such action would have an enormous effect on Australian affairs, and would bring the whole of the State into a small and comparatively insignificant area. The new governments of New England and Riverina would give the people of the State a new life, and the primary producing States; give hope to the people in the State of N.S.W. in their fight to retain their place alone in the interests of that Australia at heart is sound.

EXTREMIST DOMINATION

The northern area, now named New England, will leave no stone unturned to free our race from the domination of Sydney extremist industrialism. We must be able to control the whole of the whole rural area of Australia, but in the interests of all the sane, honest and sincere people whether in the rural or the city, who are the employer, farmer or manufacturer. We act in the interests not only of ourselves to-day, but to safeguard the future of our race and in the country, preserve the honor and integrity of the State.

(Continued on next page.)

