

PERILS OF DEMOCRACY.

"The attitude taken up by certain men is that they will not allow the commerce of the country to go on until something is done to reduce the cost of living, and if the Government accepted that position at the moment it would abandon all the principles of democratic government."

In those words, addressed to a deputation of exporters of foodstuffs to overseas markets, the Prime Minister put the one all important point as regards the industrial position in Australia today. He said much more to which every supporter of Official Labor will take strong exception, and he said one or two other things against which a section of the anti-Labor press did straightway take objection. But in the passage quoted a principle is stated on which all sensible and patriotic citizens will agree. Our Federal constitution is the most democratic in the world; it would hardly be an exaggeration to add the most democratic conceivable. There is adult suffrage, without suspicion of dual or plural voting in any shape or form, the electorates are approximately equal in number of electors; there is no special representation of wealth, as in the Legislative Councils, of culture as in the giving of members to British universities, of the Church as in the House of Lords. The people made the present Parliament, put power into the hands of the present Government on the 5th May; they can reduce Ministers to the ranks at the next general election. And the people possessing authority to do that, can control Parliament whenever they choose to assert themselves, for every politician knows that to run counter to the feeling of the country is to sign his own death warrant.

For about a century the English speaking people have fought to secure and to retain democratic rule; now a section is ready to fling away all that has been so painfully won, and that in order that a narrow class rule may be established. The matter Mr. Hughes had in view when he uttered the words

had in view when he uttered the words quoted above was the decision of the wharf laborers in relation to the export of wheat. The wharf laborers hold that the price of wheat, and certain other foodstuffs is too high. They are fully entitled to their opinion. They think food is too dear, just as many employers think wages are too high, workers too slack. But neither wharf laborer nor capitalist is at liberty to flout the law, to substitute the rule of his class for the rule of the nation. The question which concerns the community at the present moment is not whether the exploiter is pocketing dishonest gain, whether the card system introduced by the Sydney Railway Commissioners is just; but whether government is to be by Parliament or by clique. If the men who work the transport system, on which our modern civilisation, with its massing of hundreds of thousands of people in great cities depends, are at liberty to strike and to create artificial famine, the people as a whole are no longer free men.

It is at first sight well nigh inexplicable that a move towards anarchy should be made whilst the country is engaged in a life and death struggle. But there are pro-Huns, Sinn Feiners, hare-brained anarchists here as elsewhere. As Mr. Hughes said in speaking of the wharf laborers, the majority of them knew no more about the economic question than Adam. "They are simply tools of a clique, which in its turn is the mere instrument of more designing men." If they choose to reflect at all, the great body of wage-earners must realise that such action as the wharf laborers threaten, such action as various bodies of workers are taking, is making not for the prosperity of any class here, but for the triumph of the German. It must go far to undermine democracy if, in the greatest crisis civilisation has faced, the most democratic country in the world is torn by internal strife.

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In the most efficient of organisations there are always some minor defects, and it is only fair to assume that, in a big movement like the State recruiting campaign, some things are bound to be overlooked, and that sundry mistakes cannot possibly be avoided. It is hard to reconcile, however, the action of the State Recruiting Committee in leaving Maryborough, the chief recruiting centre of the Grampians, unattended by a military organiser, with their oft published policy of forceful, thorough, and consistent canvass. For nearly a fortnight now there has been no one in attendance at the local depot, and any man visiting there with the purpose of enlisting has been doomed to disappointment. Only the other day two stalwart specimens of manhood from Talbot put in an appearance at the depot, but there was, unfortunately, no person there to attest them, and they had, perforce, to return home without having their ambitions gratified. Similar fortune, we are given to understand, has attended the visitation of others, and fully half a dozen intending recruits have been missed during the past three days. There are at least four military organisers in the Grampians at the present time, all of whom are away in other small centres endeavoring to secure recruits. It appeals to us in the light of a fair business proposition that one of them should be left in charge of the central district office whilst the others are away. To go to the expense of sending men to look for recruits who come looking for recruiting officers appears to us to be somewhat at variance with a policy which has for its object the securing of every available man.

The following accounts are awaiting payment at the sub-treasury:—Carlebrook Water Works Trust, Johnson and Party, Maryborough School of Mines, Borough of Maryborough, R. F. Britt, and H. Grigg.

The postal staff at the local post office has had to be augmented by the

office has had to be augmented by the employment of four casual hands. Mr. L. J. Watts, a mail room officer, and W. Oliver, a telegraph messenger, are at present doing duty in Mildura.

Mails for the following places will close at the G.P.O. at the times stated:—New Zealand (parcels), Saturday, 9.30 a.m.; U.S.A. (parcels), Saturday, 9.30 a.m.; Tasmania (all ports), Saturday, 12.45 p.m. Letters and packets for the United Kingdom, via America, must be so endorsed. In anticipation of changes in shipping conditions, clearances of mails for America, specially endorsed letters for United Kingdom, Raratonga, Papeete, and New Zealand, have been varied. Should shipping and train service permit, the former clearances advertised will be adhered to. The following arrangements have been made for the despatch of English mails:—Letters for the United Kingdom, endorsed via America, will be sent from G.P.O., Melbourne, by mail closing there at 2 p.m. on August 14, for letters only. The hour for closing at the local post office will be 8 p.m. on August 13. Letters for the Expeditionary Force must be posted by 8 p.m. on Sunday, August 12.

Mr. D. A. B. Court (formerly of "The Advertiser" staff) has been elected captain of the Fitzroy Rifle Club. In recording the fact the "Age" remarks that Mr. Court is one of the club's best and most consistent marksmen.

Mr. H. Mason, the well-known poultry breeder, of Maryborough, is being very successful this season with his Leghorns. At Bendigo recently he secured third prize in the winter test for single birds, his pullet putting up the wonderful score of 91 eggs in 110 days. He has also a team entered for the egg-laying competition at present in progress at Burnley, and is at present seventh on the list. Mr. Mason has undoubtedly bred a strain of poultry wonderful for their egg production. He is now booking orders for eggs for hatching, and also for day old chicks.

The "Ballarat Star" on Saturday last

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The "Ballarat Star" on Saturday last published a portrait of a group of Australian soldiers interned as prisoners in Germany. One of the group is Calvin E. Briant, son of Mr. and Mrs. A. H. Briant, of Ballarat, and formerly in business in High street, Maryborough, writing to his mother, he speaks very highly of the work done by the Red Cross Society in looking after the needs of prisoners.

The committee of the Maryborough Progress Association will hold a meeting at the Council Chambers to-night at 8 o'clock, when some important business will be considered.

Death bereaved the district of a very fine old personality when Mr. Jacob Oliver passed away at Timor early on Friday morning. Deceased, who was seventy years of age, had spent the majority of his days in this district, and followed the avocation of a miner, but latterly has been in the employ of the Tullaroop Shire Council. He had a large circle of friends, and was well known and popular throughout the district. He took great interest in, and was prominently associated with, the old North-Western Coursing Club. Deceased was the father of Mrs. Harry Deady, wife of the well-known representative of the Ballarat Brewery, and Mr. Frederick Oliver, of the firm of Rolfe & Oliver. He leaves a widow and many descendants. The funeral will leave his late residence at Timor at 4 o'clock this afternoon for the Timor cemetery.

When nominations closed at 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon for the Tullaroop Shire Council, only three out of the four retiring councillors were nominated for a further term. They are as follow:—Borough riding, Cr. A. H. Dowie; East riding, Cr. J. Kaye; West riding, Cr. E. McKinley. The representative whose nomination was not forthcoming was Cr. G. Fiegehen, of the North riding. An extraordinary vacancy now exists, which will have to be filled by another election. Since the above was written, Mr. Fiegehen called at this office, and stated

that the reason his nomination was not lodged was because he made a mistake in the date.

Mr. J. M. Hewitt the representative of the South Ward in the Borough Council, announces in this issue that he intends to seek re-election at the annual election, which takes place on the 23rd of this month.

The forthcoming "Hard Times" ball is creating considerable interest, and there appears every prospect of the function being an outstanding success. Prizes are to be given for the most original costume consistent with the stress of the times, and as no money need be spent on appare, to make it appropriate, the ball should be largely attended, and competition for the trophies will doubtless be very keen. A meeting of the Comforts League, under whose auspices the ball is to be conducted, was held the other day, and a committee was chosen to undertake the supervision. The arrangements for the grand march were left in the hands of Mrs. E. Casey, who will, as usual, see that everything is done to make it a success. The march will commence at 8 o'clock sharp, and all those who intend competing for the prizes will be required to take part. The original intention of the committee to have the costume competition judged from the balcony has been abandoned, and judges will be appointed to adjudicate. The function, as most are aware, comes off on Wednesday next.

A concert was given on Wednesday evening by the Boys' Brigade at the Presbyterian Church, and it was warmly praised by all who were present. Rev. H. Erskine presided, and thanked Misses Flossie Taylor and Faith Merritt for having carried the work through so well. He also thanked Mr. and Mrs. Henderson for assisting the programme. The programme was:—Overture, Miss Dossie Watson; chorus by boys, "Sing Us a Song of Australia"; song, "A Sol-

Us a Song of Australia"; song, "A Soldier and a Man," Master Don Watson; recitation, Miss Kathleen Green; song, Mrs. Henderson; chorus by boys, "Anzac Marseillaise"; duet, "The Two Dolls," Misses Lorna Hellyer and Edie Oman; song, Miss Chrissie Swann; song, "Won't You Buy My Pretty Flowers?" Miss Lorna Hellyer; camp fire concert, by the boys; song, "Why Can't a Girl Be a Soldier Too?" Miss Gwen Swann; duet, Mr. and Mrs. Henderson; recitation, Miss Nellie Carlyon; song, Master D. Sinclair; chorus, by the boys, "We Don't Want to Fight"; tableau, "Keep the Home Fires Burning"; soloist, Miss Edie Oman; tableau, "Bound by Honor."

The local branch of the P.L.C. will hold a euchre party and dance in the Masonic Hall to-morrow evening, when an enjoyable time is promised all who attend.

On Wednesday evening next a euchre party and dance will be held at St. Augustine's Hall, when cards will commence at 8 sharp.

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from Pole to Pole,
I thank the Almighty of Powers that be
For my unconquerable soul.
But stay, there's yet one other gift,
A treasure, that we all treasure;
I breathe its name with heart uplift,
For 'tis the Woods' Peppermint Cure.

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