

# MR. HUGHES.

## SYDNEY'S GREAT WELCOME

### A STIRRING SPEECH.

### DEMOCRATIC EDIFICE MENACED.

### "We Must Go On."

SYDNEY, Monday. — For what he has done and what he is expected to do Sydney gave Mr. Hughes a rousing, tumultuous welcome this morning. His drive to the Town Hall was through streets thronged with people, who shouted, and cheered, and waved a welcome. Returned soldiers and enthusiastic civilians trotted alongside his carriage to shake him by the hand. In the Town Hall itself was an immense audience waiting to cheer the Prime Minister, but obviously waiting, too, for a declaration of his intentions. The pointed references of the Lord Mayor of Sydney to the part Mr. Hughes played in the introduction of compulsory military training in Australia were taken as paving the way for Mr. Hughes, and aroused tremendous enthusiasm. Mr. Hughes, however, was content with pointing out how essential it was that Australia should do its duty, and expressing the hope that when the time came Australia would not shrink from doing it. Disappointed in that the declaration was not more explicit, the vast audience made it perfectly clear to Mr. Hughes that he need have no fears on the score of their trust and support. Otherwise the striking thing about Mr. Hughes's speech at the public

about Mr. Hughes's speech at the public welcome was the trouble he took to make clear the grave menace of the war to what he termed our democratic edifice. Obviously it was a note struck to fix the attention of the industrial organisations that are wilfully confusing the issue. Up to now they have persuaded themselves that it is the measures Australia is taking and may take that threaten their paltry interests. Mr. Hughes told them in stirring words that the Allies are fighting as much for the right of Australians to work out their own destiny as for their own cause—that Australians are fighting for Australia and for Australian ideals. Again and again he emphasised the folly of misunderstanding what was at stake, again and again he insisted that it was our interests, our ideals, our existence that were threatened. "Those men who have gone to the front," he cried, "are fighting and dying that we may live here, pursuing our avocations as though there were no war. These men are giving their lives for us. Are we going to leave them there?" From the audience came a thunderous "No!" and tremendous cheering. "We, too, must do our part whatever it may be," said Mr. Hughes. "I feel sure the people of Australia will pay the price of victory, come what may."

Although Mr. Hughes makes no announcement as to his intentions, here, in the very arena, as it were, the position is clearing, and dimly appears a light which may well be the light that the Prime Minister speaks of following, "lead him where it may." The line he adopted in his first address in Sydney is worth noting. Of great interest, too, was his first meeting with the people who would have us believe that they control affairs in his constituency—the West Sydney Federal Electorate Labour Council. About a week ago the W.S.F.E.L.C. was breathing fire, and it gave to the world an anti-conscription resolution. This morning it came jauntily along to see Mr. Hughes at his hotel. Unfortunately, the Prime Minister was busy when the members of the council arrived, and they had a long wait. Later they were ushered into a drawing-room where a number of distinguished folk were making no secret of the fact that they regarded it as something of an honour to shake the Prime Minister of Australia and one of the Empire's leading statesmen by the hand. The atmosphere was coldly formal. Everyone spoke in whispers excepting Mr. Hughes and the person he happened to be addressing. The ceremony

pened to be addressing. The ceremony lacked the rollicking spirit that characterises the meetings of the West Sydney Federal Electorate Labour Council when it is cordially condemning, say, conscription. The upshot of it all was that the members were only too pleased to get a word of recognition from the great man, and they looked somewhat relieved when other people came to claim him, paying him, too, the deference that is due to the position he has made for himself.

The dinner given to Mr. Hughes by the Labour organisations to-night was a function the importance of which, so far as the development of Mr. Hughes's campaign is concerned, cannot be over-estimated. The leaders of the outside organisations came to hear what Mr. Hughes had to say. They listened attentively. They cheered at intervals, but it was noticeable that the cheering was not evoked by the same points that roused the midday audience to enthusiasm. Mr. Hughes was given a fine reception, and so was the Premier (Mr. Holman). In a stirring address, Mr. Holman urged the unions to trust the Prime Minister. Facing an audience that included a strong anti-conscriptionist element, Mr. Hughes boldly attacked his subject, stating clearly and forcefully the issues involved, and the vital importance of Australia pressing forward.

Mr. Hughes said that he looked to the Labour movement to give him the support he had a right to expect from fellow-citizens and from co-unionists who had fought in the battle-line of the movement from the beginning. "I look for that support," he said, "and I believe I shall not look in vain."