

Returned Soldiers' No-Conscription League

OF AUSTRALIA--VICTORIA BRANCH.

Head Office, Trades Hall, Melbourne.

MANIFESTO

TO THE ELECTORS OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

Australia is to be again plunged into a state of chaos and dismemberment by the Government submitting a Referendum, and asking you to cast an affirmative vote for Conscription.

It is alleged by the Conscriptionists that the Voluntary System has had a fair trial and failed; no effort is to be spared by the Conscription Party to have a pernicious system of Militarism forced upon you.

We returned soldiers, having proved our loyalty and patriotism to our country by risking our lives daily in the trenches, many having come back crippled for life, have decided on taking an active part in this campaign, and are going to do our utmost to preserve our people's freedom, and resist anything in the shape of Prussian Militarism.

The Conscription Party, in their frantic endeavours to enslave the people of this country, and place the yoke of Militarism around their necks, do not hesitate to make use of statements which are an utter disgrace to any individual claiming the right to Australian citizenship.

They slander the fair name of Australia by asserting that we are not doing our share with other British Dominions, and tell us that we are regarded as disloyal members of the Empire.

They have not the slightest regard for the fact that the great name of ANZAC was not created by them, or any Politician, or set of Politicians, but by the life's-blood of many of our comrades—the sons and brothers of the great majority of the men who are called "Shirkers" by this same crowd, and the sons and brothers of our womenfolk, who conscientiously and with that love of freedom which inspires all true Australians have refused to be a party to any form of coercion or compulsion.

Nor do they recognise the fact that it has been that spirit of independence and freedom which inspired Australian troops to accomplish the heroic feats which stand to their credit.

The resurrection of the conscription cry has been brought about by an organisation in Sydney, the committee of which consists of individuals who have not seen active service in this war, and if conscription were carried would be exempt.

The gentlemen who advocate conscription of human life are, for the most part, men who are rolling in wealth, and it is significant that their patriotism did not lead them to suggest to the Government that much more might be done for the Empire by the Conscription of Wealth.

These great patriots, who lend their money to the Government provided they get $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest, and that such interest derived from their "Patriotic" investment be free from Taxation, have become so imbued with the cry of conscription that many of them are suggesting that there be conscription not only of man power for military service, but conscription for industrial purposes as well.

These alleged patriots are the very class who are exploiting the people of this country through high prices for foodstuffs and other goods. The Government permit them to do this, and say that all profits exceeding 10 per cent. shall be divided equally between the Government and the Exploiter.

To returned soldiers, who imagined we had a country represented by democratic Government, this position is intolerable.

In Tory England the Government exacts at least 60 per cent. of excess war profits, and we say that, as democratic Australians, we should insist on all excess war profits over 10 per cent. being taken by the Government. Surely 10 per cent. is a fair return on capital.

Through the greed of the alleged patriots of England, men of the class who are crying for conscription in this country, the cost of living has reached

such a high level that thousands of women, many the wives of conscript soldiers, are selling their souls on the streets of London and other cities in Great Britain.

Whilst in favour of the voluntary system of recruiting being maintained, we are determined to fight against such conditions coming to Australia.

Every man, so far as we are concerned, shall be free.

If he can see his way clear to volunteer, we honour him.

If the Government want voluntary recruiting to succeed, we will give them the key to the situation.

Let the Government take all excess war profits over 10 per cent.

Make the owners of wealth, who stand a good chance of losing it should we be defeated, lend their money free of interest.

If we are willing to risk our lives, is it too much to ask that Capital shall risk its wealth?

Let the Government give a guarantee that the soldier's pay shall be kept at all times to the standard of a living wage, in order that the wife and family and dependents of a soldier shall not suffer the pangs of hunger or distress while he is offering his very life in the defence of the country; further, that if he come back crippled, he will receive a wage that will ensure his being able to live on a basis compatible with the sacrifice he has made.

That no returned soldier shall be discharged from the forces until he has secured employment at a living wage.

That the promises made to volunteers enlisting shall be honoured in full on their return; that the dependents of men risking their lives shall be treated with justice, and their interests protected.

While opposing the introduction of conscription for overseas service we are not averse to creating a strong citizen army to enable us to maintain a White Australia.

If conscription is carried we see clearly the danger of our White Australia Policy going to the winds.

The only armies that have shown lack of morale have come from conscript countries, and the constant press reports of enemy conscript soldiers being tied to guns, flogged into action, or threatened with shooting, have shown that free men fight best.

We repudiate the dastardly assertions so constantly made by Conscriptionist leaders that the soldiers at the Front who voted against Conscription previously and the citizens who voted for the continuance of a free Australia are pro-Germans, shirkers, disloyalists, and traitors, and point out that anti-Conscriptionist States and communities are those which have most largely responded to the call of duty and sacrifice.

WE WANT AUSTRALIA FOR THE WHITE RACE.

WE WANT OUR PEOPLE FREE!

We do not want a military caste created, and our people enslaved in the yoke of Militarism.

Such an event would be a calamity to Australia, for we cannot stand a wholesale deportation of our manhood.

AS FREE AUSTRALIANS WE FOUGHT ON THE BATTLEFIELDS;

**AS FREE AUSTRALIANS WE WILL STILL FIGHT ON THE
POLITICAL FIELD WITH THE SAME OBJECT IN VIEW-**

**TO PRESERVE OUR PEOPLE'S FREEDOM AND LIBERTY
AND MAINTAIN AUSTRALIA'S ECONOMIC POSITION.**

**WE SHOULD BE TRAITORS TO OUR COMRADES FIGHTING
IN THE TRENCHES IF WE FAILED IN OUR DUTY TO FIGHT
AGAINST CONSCRIPTION, KNOWING AS WE DO THAT WHEN
THE LAST VOTE WAS TAKEN A GREAT MAJORITY OF OUR
COMRADES WERE AGAINST IT.**

IT IS THE LAST VOTE AND THE LAST SHILLING THAT IS GOING TO WIN.

ASSIST US FINANCIALLY TO DEFEAT THE REFERENDUM.

LET THE BATTLE CRY FOR ALL BE "NO CONSCRIPTION!"

**AND MAY GOD SAVE AUSTRALIA AND PRESERVE TO US
OUR FREEDOM.**

(Signed) **R. A. CROUCH, President, 22nd Battalion.**
A. G. BOTT, Secretary, 7th Battalion.



Fraser and Jenkinson, Print.
243-5 Queen St., Melb