

This has been suppressed

The Lottery of Death

The "Worker" and a Melbourne Printing Firm were recently prosecuted for printing this Article

WE are to have in Australia, if the people's enemies can get their way, the ghastliest gamble ever conceived in the brain of man.

Conscription is to take the form of A LOTTERY. Lives are to be drawn for on Tattersall principles; souls to be made the subjects of a hideous sweep.

The equivalents of eligible males are to be tossed into a hat or something; then someone—Death, who knows?—plunges in a hand, and all who are drawn are doomed to be the victims of bloody war.

It is the most immoral of all forms of gambling. It is fraught with tragedy; red with murder and foul with abomination.

If Australia accepts the scheme of military compulsion formulated by the Prime Minister at Bendigo on Monday night, it will abandon every pretension to be a democratic nation, and reduce its citizens to the level of cannibals drawing lots for an obscene feast.

A CALCULATED PESSIMISM.

The Government demands seven thousand men per month, and what voluntarism will not supply it proposes to secure by means of a game of chance viler than any played in the hells of Monte Carlo.

In order to lend some color of justification to this outrageous measure, the Prime Minister paints the military situation in the gloomiest colors.

The position of the Allies is represented as desperate. Russia is outed; Italy is in process of being crushed; we are asked to contemplate the possibility of the English and French forces on the Western Front being driven back to the sea, and the whole world brought under the Teutonic heel.

But the picture is overdone. By its own grotesque exaggerations it **DEFEATS THE PURPOSE AIMED AT**. If matters on the battlefields were as bad as represented, the proposals of the Government would be so **HOPELESSLY INADEQUATE** that the Devil might well laugh at them as the latest joke.

It would be like trying to extinguish a mighty conflagration with a penny squirt; Australia's 7000 a month being the merest drop of water on a mass of roaring flames.

We have reached that stage in the war when **NOTHING** that this Government can do with arms will affect the **FINAL ISSUE**. If we are winning, conscription in Australia will not hasten the overthrow of militarism by a single day. If we are losing, as the howls of the jingoes and junkers suggest, conscription in this country would ruin Australia without rendering the smallest material assistance to the Allied nations.

The Government is on the horns of a dilemma. Its scheme of compulsion on the one hand is **UNNECESSARY**, and on the other hand is **USELESS**.

THE REAL PURPOSE.

Personally, I don't believe that the crowd of whom

Hughes is the mouthpiece and the catspaw harbor any delusions on this score.

They know, just as well as you or I, that the imposition of conscription here will have no effect whatever on the fortunes of Europe.

It is not with that impossible object in view that they seek to trick the people into voting "Yes."

What they want is the **MILITARISATION OF LABOR**. They want to break the independent spirit of the Australian workers, and accustom them to being disciplined like chain-gangs and sweated coolies. The Government, this significantly announced, will establish a tribunal to decide what men are necessary to carry on our industries.

That is why the Employers' Federation, and the Chambers of Commerce, and the Millions Club, and the whole bent-up crew of price raiders and food fakers, are instigating the Government to this monstrous ballot.

They know that from the military standpoint it is absolutely futile. They know that there are **NO SHIPS TO CARRY LARGER NUMBERS OF MEN AWAY**, or, if there are, that they would do infinitely more good carrying wheat and meat to the multitudes of England threatened with famine.

They know that **MILLIONS** of soldiers are being rapidly trained and equipped in America, and that six shiploads of these troops can be put on the battlefield in the same time and with the same transport facilities that would be needed for a single shipload from Australia.

They know, too, that it is false to say that the voluntary system has failed. They know that the latest casualty lists show our losses since the beginning of the war to total 112,000, or 37,000 a year, while Hughes himself has to admit that from January to October recruits were being enrolled at the rate of nearly 48,000 a year.

They know that they themselves have discouraged it by their neglect of returned soldiers, and the dishonoring of their promises to them; by their refusal to lend their money except at high rates of interest; by their persistent agitation for compulsion when voluntarism is the declared policy of the country; by their shameless fleecing of the soldiers' dependents through the increased cost of living; and by their scarcely veiled attacks upon the organised workers of the Commonwealth.

They know all that, and knowing it, they have nevertheless forced the Government to violate its pledges and make a bid for this grisly gamble with the flesh and blood of men, because they intend to utilise it for their own mercenary interests.

THE ONE SAFE WAY.

All manner of exemptions are being promised to seduce those who imagine they would be exempt to vote their fellows into the toils.

But the people of Australia have not forgotten the experience they had with the exemption courts last year. Once they give their consent to conscription, **EXEMP-**

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TIONS WILL BE RUTHLESSLY DEALT WITH, and every section of the working-class community brought under the Iron Heel.

When Hughes was reproached last year with ignoring his pledge, not "under any circumstance" to send men out of the country to fight against their will, he answered with a thoroughly Prussian disregard of the binding nature of every honorable undertaking: "WHAT DOES IT MATTER WHAT WE THOUGHT YESTERDAY?"

The only safety for Australia lies in the emphatic defeat of the Government's proposal as one that is steeped in iniquity.

We have been described as a nation of gamblers, and

undoubtedly the magical powers of the goddess of Chance allure us. There is a fascination in the startling vicissitudes of those who worship at her shrine.

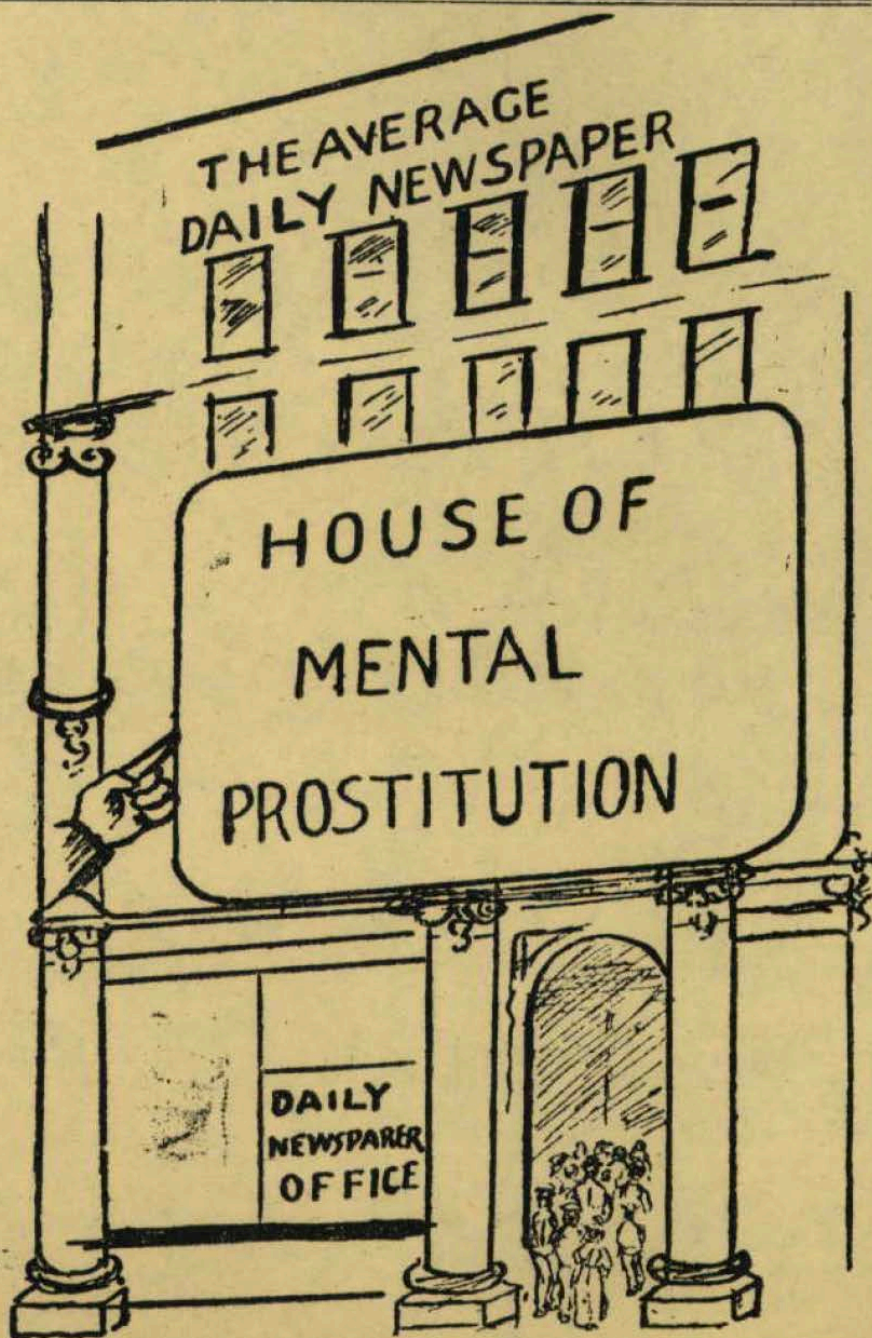
But are we willing to gamble with DEATH? Are we going to make a lottery of THE LIVES OF MEN? Are we ready to be the dupes of the gang of capitalistic spielsers who will control the game?

A few thousand men will be despatched to the shambles of the old world. And the many who remain will be robbed of their industrial liberty and forced to become mere conscripts of toil.

Are we unworthy of a better fate?

Answer, people of Australia, with a thunderous "No!"
Henry E. Boote, St. Andrew's Place, Sydney.

VOTE NO



And Save Australia