

## Our Australian Letter

From A. G. HUIE

### WHAT'S WRONG WITH LABOR?

The Labor Party in Australia came into the political arena as an outcome of the great strike of 1890. Since that time there have been Labor Governments in all the States and the Commonwealth. At the present time we have Labor Governments in the Commonwealth and in four States, while in a fifth there is a Labor supported Government. It is therefore somewhat of a shock to find Senator Don Cameron, a member of the present Federal Government, proclaiming that there has been no real improvement in the position generally of the workers since 1907.

Another authority, Mr. Brian Fitzpatrick, in "A Short History of the Australian Labor Movement," makes two significant statements. "Probably the worker more than doubled his real wage in the half-century between 1840 and 1890." He then proceeds to show that "in the next 50 years to our own day, though production continued to increase, the workers' real wage remains (allowing for unemployment) much what it had been in 1890." Neither of these authorities appear to have any logical explanation for this condition of affairs or to suggest any remedy for them—or to point out the relation between free land and rising wages in the earlier period, and appropriated land and relatively low wages in the latter period.

It appears to me that there are three main reasons for the failure of the Labor Party to secure justice for the workers. It has not removed the taxes imposed upon the labor of the workers. In fact, it has been responsible for the worst taxes ever imposed upon them. The most oppressive tariff taxes, the sales tax, the shilling wages tax in New South Wales were all imposed by Labor Governments. A true Labor policy would have been to exempt Labor from taxation. Second, the economic advantages of the past 50 years' progress have gone to benefit the owners of land while the Labor Party looked on and let them appropriate huge unearned increments. Third, the party has failed to support equality of the franchise. We gained this in New South Wales and a Labor Government took it away from us. The Labor Party will not make real progress while its members continue to be obsessed with Marxian fallacies.