

United States with the leading Powers which would guarantee non-interference on the part of ambitious Powers.

#### Australian Labor party conference.

From Australia (p. 307) have come more or less unintelligible dispatches regarding the regular conference of the Labor party of that Commonwealth, which met at Melbourne in July. Reports of the local press are now available by mail. At this conference strong efforts appear to have been made to inject into the platform a protection plank, but they failed. It was decided, however, to take a referendum vote of the party on the question of making protection a party doctrine. The most important thing about the conference was its dubious attitude toward socialism. Its "objective" had previously been stated to be "the nationalization of the means of production, distribution and exchange." For this familiar socialist formula, the conference substituted a demand for "the securing of the full results of their industry to all producers, by the collective ownership of monopolies and the extension of the industrial and economic functions of the State and municipality." This clause might be interpreted to refer only to public monopolies, or to include competitive industry, according to the interpreter's attitude toward socialism; but a resolution which the conference adopted, by a vote of nearly two to one, indicates that probably no reaction from or concealing of the socialistic purpose of the party was intended. The resolution was proposed by Mr. Watson, the party leader and recently the prime minister (p. 307), and was as follows:

That the Australian movement be brought into organized relationship with the international movement, and that, with that object in view, steps be taken to secure Australian direct representation at the next international conference.

It is not easy to understand the allusion in the above resolution unless the international socialist movement was meant. And yet Mr. Watson in his speech on the resolution seems to have limited his advocacy of socialism to monopolies; and other important speakers in support of the resolution agreed with him. One of these

was Senator De Largie, from West Australia, who argued that the nationalization of monopolies only, is the practicable policy; and another, Senator McGregor from South Australia, is reported to have —

found it difficult to approach the question coolly. Members were not here to represent the socialist society of Sydney, but the Labor party. They had only been called socialists two years ago, and they had nothing to do with the international socialist movement, but with the Australian labor movement. The true interests of the workers would be advanced by the nationalization of monopolies, and the extension of State or municipal functions.

Not alone were these speeches against the socialist programme, but a plank suggested by the Melbourne branch of the party, which recited that "capitalism is the enemy and destroyer of essential private property," and affirmed "fidelity to the principles of international socialism, as embodied in the united thought and action of socialists of all nations," received no support from the delegates, not a single vote being recorded in its favor.

The platform as finally adopted declared the following "objective":

1. The cultivation of an Australian sentiment, based upon the maintenance of racial purity, and the development in Australia of an enlightened and self-reliant community.

2. The securing of the full results of their industry to all producers by the collective ownership of monopolies, and the extension of the industrial and economic functions of the State and municipality.

The "fighting platform" declares for—

(1) Maintenance of a White Australia; (2) nationalization of monopolies; (3) old-age pensions; (4) tariff referendum; (5) progressive tax on unimproved land values; (6) restriction of public borrowing; (7) navigation laws; (8) citizens defense force; (9) arbitration act amendment.

The "general platform" advocates

(1) Maintenance of a white Australia; (2) nationalization of monopolies (if necessary, amendment of constitution to provide for same); (3) old-age pensions; (4) referendum of Commonwealth electors on the tariff question when the report of Tariff Commission has been completed. Parliament to give legislative effect to the

decision of the referendum vote; (5) progressive tax on unimproved land values; (6) restriction of public borrowing; (7) navigation laws to provide (a) for the protection of Australian shipping against unfair competition; (b) registration of all vessels engaged in the coastal trade; (c) the efficient manning of vessels; (d) the proper supply of live-saving and other equipment; (e) the regulation of hours and conditions of work; (f) proper accommodation for passengers and seamen; (g) proper loading gear and inspection of same; (h) compulsory insurance of crews by ship-owners against accident or death; (8) citizen defence force and Australian-owned navy; (9) amendment of Commonwealth Arbitration Act to provide for preference to unionists and exclusion of the legal profession; (10) Commonwealth Bank of Deposit and Issue and Life and Fire Insurance department, the management of each to be free from political influence; (11) uniform industrial legislation, amendment of constitution to provide for same; (12) civil equality of men and women.

The following independent resolutions, in addition to those already quoted, were adopted:

That this Conference favors the abolition of the maximum age limit of applicants for government employment where ability to do the work in question is shown by the applicant.

That the Conference requests the Federal Labor members to urge the Federal ministry to nationalize the iron industry instead of granting bonuses, as we consider the nationalization of such industry would be to the best interests of the Commonwealth.

That this Conference repudiates with indignation the charges leveled against the Australian labor movement of endeavoring to weaken the sanctity of the marriage tie, and to sap the foundations of religious belief; and we furthermore declare our firm conviction that the success of our efforts to improve the material condition of the community would result in the elevation and not the degradation of marriage, and would enable the sublime teachings of the Founder of Christianity to be brought home as a living reality to those members to whom, owing to the misery and privation in which society, as now constituted, has engulfed them, they remain but a mere abstraction.

That this Conference urge, through their organizations, the support of Australian productions by our own workmen, and that our various governments and municipalities be urged to give preference to the products of the Commonwealth.

The next conference of the party is to be held at Brisbane in 1908.