

Letters of Interest from Australia

Political Parties in Australia

Melbourne, Australia, Oct., 1919.

IT MUST be exceedingly puzzling to American readers to know exactly what the designations applied to the various political parties in Australia actually stand for. Political leagues, societies and associations are so multitudinous as to be confusing even to Australians themselves; and if that which these organizations and the parties to which they are attached claim to represent is not in accordance with the names they sail under, how bewildering it must be to foreign readers when they attempt to follow political happenings in this part of the world upon the scrappy and biased information that is usually contained in cable messages.

It is for this reason that readers of an international newspaper should be informed as to precisely what each party stands for and what its name implies.

From the time that self-government was conferred upon the six British colonies of Australia (called states since the establishment of Federation) there were two distinct political parties in each colony—Conservative and Liberal. Under these names candidates were elected to Parliament. In the latter days of these Colonial Parliaments, a Labor party came into existence; and in the State Parliaments of the present day the three parties are still to be found.

When the first Federal Parliament came together in 1901 it was composed of three parties—Conservative, Liberal and Labor. When in 1916 the Labor party expelled Mr. W. M. Hughes and other members because they proposed and supported conscription, Mr. Hughes formed a coalition with the Liberal and Conservative parties, and that admixture has remained in power ever since, under the double cognomen of the "National" and "Win-the-War" Government.

Practically, there are still three parties—Conservative, Liberal and Labor. The latter has always been opposed to coalescing with any other party, and at all elections the Conservatives and Liberals combine their forces against it, and in Parliament the Conservatives and Liberals sit on certain benches while the benches of the opposite side are occupied by Laborites.

At the next election there will be candidates of four parties in the field—those of the Conservative, the Liberal, the Farmers' Union and Labor. Of the four, Labor will be representative of democracy, the other three representing either Conservatism, so-called "Nationalism" or equally misleading "Liberalism." There is absolutely no "national" attribute in that misused term, nor is there anything of a truly national character in a body called the Australian Women's National League, whose members are entirely representative of conservative or so-called "national" or "Liberal" interests. Like the candidates they support, they have no time for democracy or the promotion of Australian nationalism, but are always ready to preach imperialism and to advocate legislation in support of their own class interests and privileges.

By effluxion of time, the triennial life of the present Parliament will not end until May of next year, but the general belief is that the federal elections will take place next December. A very strenuous effort will be made to restore the Labor party to power. From all parts of the Commonwealth urgent requests have been made to Mr. Ryan, the Premier of Queensland, to enter the federal arena of politics.

As Premier of the extensive northern state, Mr. Ryan has afforded abundant proofs of his exceptional qualifications as a statesman. He is a scholarly man, having filled the position of classical master at several of Australia's principal educational institutions. Since his entry into state politics he has earned a high reputation as a sound and trustworthy democrat, and is responsible for the introduction and successful carrying out of several state enterprises which have conferred immense benefits upon the people of Queensland, especially with regard to land tenure and settlement, government insurance, and profiteering. In a previous article I stated how successfully his government has controlled the meat question in the interests of consumers, and by the end of the present year there will be state butcher shops established in every center of population in Queensland reached by railway service. If Mr. Ryan consents to resign the premiership of that state in order to become a candidate for the federal House of Representatives at the forthcoming elections, several seats will be offered to him, and his election will be a certainty. Moreover, his return will mean his selection as leader of the Labor party in the Commonwealth Parliament.

Visit of the American Pacific Fleet

Sydney, Australia, Oct., 1919.

THE federal government has received official information of the announcement made by the United States Consul-General in Sydney, Mr. J. L. Brittain, that the American Pacific Fleet is desirous of paying an early visit to Australia. To say that the people of Australia are heartily pleased with this announcement is to but feebly convey the universal feeling of gratification that is felt throughout this great island continent. The fleet is assured of a most cordial welcome from all classes. The forthcoming event is looked forward to with the greatest enthusiasm by those who were in

Australia on the occasion of a former visit by an American fleet as well as by those who have passed through America on their way home from the recent war, and who speak in the highest terms of the attention and hospitality they received in the great western republic. Apropos of the approaching visit of America's Pacific Fleet, and of the special reasons that will insure it a most popular reception, it is interesting to quote what Mr. and Mrs. Gratton Grey wrote in the preface to the London and Australasian editions of their book entitled "With Uncle Sam and His Family." Here is what they wrote in 1909:

"The geographical positions to which we have adverted indicate clearly that the time must come when the control of the Pacific will be shared between America, Canada and Australia. The main reason for this assumption is the community of interest which exists between them with regard to the Asiatic question. Their policies are identically the same. The people of America are becoming more and more clamorous in their demands for the exclusion of Asiatic races from the mainland and their Pacific possessions; and from the earliest stage of its career the Southern Commonwealth has wisely insisted on the policy of a White Australia.

"In her infancy, and before the lapse of sufficient time has enabled her to place herself in an effective condition of defence, there has necessarily been much uneasiness and apprehension as to whether comparatively defenceless Australia would be able to preserve her purity of race; but the recent developments of American naval policy in the Pacific have strengthened the attitude of Australia on the Asiatic question, and, in a great measure, dispelled the fears which previously existed as to her ability to maintain the policy on which she has embarked. Uncle Sam has, to all practical purposes, interposed himself as a buffer between Australia and the nations of the East; and while his presence in the Pacific is a substantial guaranty of the immunity of Australia from Asiatic invasion, Australia enjoys the gratifying assurance that she can proceed with her preparations for effective naval and military defence without the fear of molestation by an enemy before she has perfected the necessary measures for her own protection.

"That Australia feels that a great load of care and apprehension has, in the meantime, been lifted off her shoulders, was demonstrated by the unprecedented outburst of national enthusiasm which the visit of the American Fleet, under Rear-Admiral Sperry's command, evoked throughout the Commonwealth last year, and by the warmth and cordiality of the greetings which were exchanged between our own people and the officers and men of that fleet. It was an historical event which cemented the bonds of friendship and good will between the older and the younger democracy, and our most ardent hope is that the cordial relations thus established between the two countries will endure for all time, as it is to their mutual advantage, as well as to that of the white races of mankind generally, that they should."

American Scientists

Melbourne, Australia, Oct., 1919.

THE hookworm disease has become such a menace to the extension of settlement in the tropical portions of Queensland that the federal government and the government of that state are co-operating in the efforts which are being made to eradicate it. They issued an invitation to Dr. Waite, who is on the staff of the International Health Board of the Rockefeller Foundation, to visit Australia and New Guinea to initiate ways and means of combating the disease, which is prevalent in all those areas of New Guinea where, in addition to tropical heat, there is a moist soil. Dr. Waite was accompanied from America by Dr. S. M. Lambert, and together they worked with a considerable measure of success. This year Dr. Waite returned to the United States, and recently Dr. Lambert was joined by Dr. W. A. Sawyer, who is also on the staff of the Rockefeller Foundation. It is estimated that the campaign may cost \$500,000, spread over five years.

Outside of scientific circles very little is known as to the nature of this peculiar disease and how it lays hold of its victims. Since his arrival in Australia Dr. Sawyer has thrown a good deal of enlightenment on the subject. He says that along the northern coast of Queensland over 20 per cent of the inhabitants suffer from the disease; which could be successfully combated only by introducing improved means of sanitation and by the intelligent co-operation of the inhabitants.

Usually, the infection is through the feet, the worm lying in wait on the ground for anybody walking round with naked feet. The popular name of the disease is "ground itch." It may be introduced into the system by infected mud touching any part of the body.

Hookworm disease, says Dr. Sawyer, is not often fatal in itself, but anyone who has contracted it is liable to succumb easily to other diseases. The patient becomes what is usually characterized as "run down." In severe cases there may be great emaciation, sometimes accompanied by dropsical symptoms. There will be marked pallor, and besides these physical effects the sufferer's power of mental concentration and effort will be reduced. With hygienic education, proper sanitation and medical treatment, there should be no great difficulty in stamping out hookworm. But it will be necessary to absolutely stamp it out, for a few "carriers," who were careless in their habits, would cause it to rapidly spread again.

Who's Talking of War?

By HUGH WOODSTOCK

WHERE is the source of this ominous murmur of war—war in the Pacific, war in Europe, war in South America, war under the water, war in the air? It buzzes on every hand—"the next war"—"the next war"—"the next war." You can hear it flowing smoothly from the lips of statesmen, shouted in meetings, grimly uttered in the press, always with the same refrain: "What should be done in readiness for the next war?"

London bristles with it, Paris is tremulous with it, Rome is full of it, Tokio catches it up and China de-liberates it in her parliament. Where does it come from?

The men who are covering sheets of white paper with their hectic jeremiads and provocative plaints, are the identical men who preached the war that has just closed; *they are the men who did not fight.*

The men who fought are not talking war; they are throwing themselves wholeheartedly into the problem of life and their citizenship. They did their part—well. They are through with it. If it should be war again, they would do the same part again. But they are not looking for it. They have work to do. They want to do it—millions of fine men anxious to help reconstruct the work of peace, by which alone human progress can be judged.

They are not turning the microscope on this spot and the other, and shouting out their discovery: "Ah, here's a good chance for a war. This looks as if there will be a war. There is going to be a war here before long."

It is the warriors of the pen and ink, the typewriter militia, who are discovering these new wars in prospect. Look 'em over. Do a little reminiscing on our adventures of the past five years. Think of these one or two facts.

In how many of the hearts of men was there the thought of war in the spring of 1914? Among the hundred millions in America, how many thought of war? In Britain's forty millions, how many? A thousand—five hundred—fifty thousand? A handful at most, experts, so-called, men of the pen and men of the bureau who looked close at nations and saw the possibilities of trouble. In those states, or any one of them, which contained these possibilities of trouble, how many contemplated war? One per cent? A liberal estimate. Then, if only this meager handful in each country thought and talked in terms of war, and the millions of plain citizens—who ultimately did the fighting—did not, how did it happen that these millions went out to battle their lives away and wreck their civilization? Who told them their state contained the possibility of war?

The handful, of course; the "experts" who saw that circumstances made a possibility of war, and so explained to each peaceful citizen—who was quite unconscious of trouble—that his state contained the essentials for war.

Mark this! Ninety per cent of the people of the world have never known they had a cause for battle until that cause was made for them, and set forth to them as an accomplished thing. Half the discontent in the world doesn't become discontent until someone persuades the mass of ordinary folk to be discontented.

There are some predictions that come true by force of their own impetus. Of such are the predictions of war. Tell the nations loud enough and long enough that they have got an argument soluble only by a war, and in time they believe it as a fact and spring at each other's throats.

The average man—you, for instance—wishes peace. The average man, everywhere, wishes peace. This is true not only of you, but of the average Austrian, Italian, Briton, German, Pole, Belgian, Frenchman and every other nationality. The average man makes up the controlling bulk of the world's population. How, then, could this peace-loving majority kill each other, unless they were skillfully persuaded that they didn't really want peace, but war?

The greatest seed of war is the grating voice of selfish men, men selfish for their ambition, or selfish for their love of their own ego. They are the warriors who lead the world into terrible wars; warriors who fight their battles on paper, who seek out the possibilities for trouble, hint at it, gossip about it, whisper it unctuously from one to another, drop a sinister word here, and a covert sneer there, harp on it, harp on it, harp on it, until the mischief is done and friends have become enemies, and the prophecy is borne out by war.

They did this in 1914 and for years before that. Then they moralized on "balance of power," decadence of nations, racial resurrections, and the other experiments of their cynical laboratory until peace came.

And then with peace, like vultures, they soared the better to see the prey for their next swoop of self-exploitation.

Hear them in the press, in their parliaments, in their speeches. They're talking war—not the people, not the soldiers, but the parlor warriors, the men who did not fight.

Watch them!

Danger in Overexercising

ALTHOUGH in the main, physical exercise is beneficial, there is a point beyond which it ceases to build up the system and becomes dangerous. The value of exercise lies in the physiological adjustments which it induces. If these adjustments tend toward the strengthening of the muscles and organs, the exercise is beneficial. Otherwise, it has the opposite effect. If the heart reduces its rate of beating and is less sensitive to exertion, the training is commendable. Training should make the heart work better and endure fatigue. Consequently, if the heart reacts excessively as a result of the work, if there is a rapid rise in the pulse rate, which continues for some time, the fundamental aim of exercise for health has not been accomplished. The symptoms of an overtaxed mechanism are found instead, and should be heeded.