



FIREFIGHTER

Official Organ N.S.W. Fire Brigade Employees' Union

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Priceless

We won't be WALLOPERS

By R. THRELFO

The recent disturbances at the Parramatta Girls' Home was given a great deal of publicity by the newspaper barons. As usual they weren't very particular about the facts and published a statement that firefighters were used to quell the inmates with hose lines. This, of course, is not true.

MY INVESTIGATIONS REVEAL THAT THE POLICE BORROWED THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT FROM PARRAMATTA FIRE STATION AND IT WAS USED BY THEM. I want to particularly stress this point because these papers circulate among other Trade Unions and I would not like them to think that Firefighter was capable of being used as a potential anti-working class force.

This incident should serve as a warning to all our members that attempts could be made to use us to subdue other workers engaging in struggle for economic and political justice.

The Capitalist countries, as a whole, are in the grip of an economic crisis. This is evidenced in our own country by growing unemployment and "the credit squeeze." There are indications that this situation will worsen. Should this happen the workers will be faced with a momentous struggle to maintain the living conditions to which they are justly entitled.

Against this background it is not difficult to imagine the working class demanding sweeping and radical changes, perhaps even hitting at the very foundations of our system of government.

A Government that is tottering will do one of two things— (a) Succumb to the demands being made if able to do so; (b) Unleash the forces of the State in order to preserve their status. It is this second proposition that Firefighters must examine carefully.

There are representatives of Big Business sitting on the Board of Fire Commissioners of N.S.W. In a critical period they would prob-

ably support Firefighters being used as a supplement to the other forces of the State under the pretext of maintaining law and order.

Firefighters must be prepared to meet this situation if it should occur. We must remember that we are workers and unionists, that our living standards are linked with the advance of the Trade Union movement. We must recall the magnificent support given to our various strikes by other unions. We must determine not to turn our hoses on our brothers in the A.E.U., the Waterside Workers, the A.R.U. the F.E.D.F.A., or any unionists engaged in struggle.

In some minds the question will inevitably arise — what about the Fire Brigades Act?

It is true that this Act permits the Chief Officer to take any measures necessary to save life and property, and to extinguish fire. However, the intention and purpose of the Act must be considered and these powers are only intended to be used in connection with firefighting. Any order for firefighters to quell a civil disturbance is outside the scope of the Fire Brigades Act is unlawful, & should be refused.

No doubt many of you are thinking that this could not happen under a Labor Government. Don't be deluded — the Liberals are not the only people who attack the workers.

The Railway workers are having a difficult time trying to extract a wage increase from "The Working Class Government." When they attended a recent Labor Council meeting they were confronted by both uniformed and plain clothes police in and around the Trades Hall.

About eighteen months ago, the State Police clashed with pickets supporting striking Italian seamen. Recently the steelworkers from Newcastle attended the Industrial Commission and many of them were questioned by the police and refused admittance to the hearing.

Within the last few weeks your own Secretary, Jim Lambert, attended a deputation to the Belgian Charge 'de Affairs regarding the murder of Lumumba. Once again they were met by police and the Belgian Official did some of his negotiating through the police.

It would appear that the Police Force of this State, which is under the direction and control of a Labor Government, is being used in a political and anti-working class role. Firefighters must be vigilant and see that they are not used in a similar fashion. We must firmly declare our solidarity and unity with the Trade Unions. It is essential that we use our hoses for what they are intended — Firefighting.

SPECIAL NOTICE

Federal Conference decided to publish a Federal Journal. First issue will be out 1st of May. Contributors may still send material to the N.S.W. Editor. Copy must reach him by the 13th of each month. No days of grace can be allowed in future.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Support for the Federal Liberal and Country Parties declined by five per cent. last year, the latest Gallup Poll shows.

And if "undecided" people voted at a Federal election now as they say they voted two years ago, the decline would be seven per cent....

On the day of the Higginbotham By-election, the Gallup Poll asked people throughout Australia how they would vote "if a Federal election were being held today."

An unusually small percentage was undecided, and support for the A.L.P. rose to 44 per cent. equal to the combined percentages for L.C.P. and D.L.P.

The A.C.T.U. Interstate Executive next month will hold talks on the effects of the recent Menzies-Holt credit squeeze. The Executive will meet on February 6.

The Queensland Trades and Labor Council has asked the A.C.T.U. to urge the Federal Government to lift economic restrictions which are accentuating unemployment. says the number of people receiving

A.C.T.U. secretary, H. J. Souter, says the number of people receiving unemployment benefits have risen by 5,400 to 17,633 between December 3 and December 31.

The term "White Australia" is going out of fashion according to a Gallup Poll. Instead, say researchers, most people like — and prefer — the term "national unity."

Repeating a survey made 20 months ago, people were given four names for Australia's migration policy and asked which they preferred. Five per cent. fewer favored "White Australia" and six per cent. more favored "national unity."

Those who favored the name "national unity" said the name spoke for itself.

This quote comes without comment. It's from Angus Maude, a former Tory M.P. in Britain, now editor of the Sydney Morning Herald.

"I don't much like capitalism either. I do not see how anyone could like it, let alone try to make a political faithout of it.

"But it is one way of trying to get certain essential economic tasks performed, and a way which has on the whole worked rather better than all the most ruthlessly totalitarian forms of socialism.

"There ought to be a third way, certainly, and I am all for trying to find it."

General Motors-Holden's Ltd. has converted to a proprietary company. The company is now registered as General Motors-Holden's Pty. Ltd.

This means that under existing Victorian Companies Act, the company does not have to publish its annual profit and loss account and balance sheet.

The move could flop though. If the projected companies legislation becomes law, this exemption would be nullified.

The proposed uniform companies act requires publication of accounts by proprietary companies. Only those in which no other company holds shares are exempt.

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