

THE GUARDIAN

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DUNSTAN'S BUSH FIRE GUILT

WARNING OF 1939 IGNORED BY STATE MINISTRY

TWENTY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN BURNT TO DEATH, 700 HOUSES DESTROYED AND THOUSANDS MADE HOMELESS IN ONE OF THE WORST FIRE CATASTROPHES IN VICTORIA.

About 1,000,000 sheep, 50,000 cattle and a large number of pigs and fowls have been lost at a time when meat is urgently needed for our fighting men and our Allies.

Yet the Country Party Premier of Victoria, Mr. Dunstan, declares: "No good purpose will be served by holding post-mortems regarding the disastrous fires."

Coming soon after the 1939 bush fires, when 71 men, women and children were burnt to death, this new tragedy clearly shows the guilt of the Dunstan Government.

The 1939 fires swept timbered, hilly country, trapping many people at timber mills where no precautions had been taken.

After these fires, a Royal Commission under Judge Stretton, was appointed to find causes of the fires and make recommendations.

This Commission showed that settlers, miners and graziers were the most prolific fire-causing agents.

COMMISSION IGNORED.

The Commission found that there was no permanent fire authority and "the law relating to the prevention of fires has failed because it is not fitting for the widely diverse conditions and circumstances which obtain in Victoria."

A real solution for control of bush fires was recommended by Judge Stretton, who urged a State Fire Authority with subsidiary local fire authorities to prevent and suppress fires.

THROUGH THIS REPORT PUBLISHED NEARLY 5 YEARS AGO, NO

Munichers At It Again?

Foreign Office denial of meeting between "two leading German personalities" and "Hitler" does not relieve British Government of the responsibility of investigating charges.

of the reported meeting in the Pyrenean city of the Pyrenees obviously within or near the Spanish border.

ambassador to Spain ("Soapy Sam")

of Britain's arch-enemy. He was co-author of the Laval pact for the independence of the independent State.

prominent part behind France's German naval pact with Hitler's U-boats in England as "the guilty of traf-

ACTION HAS BEEN TAKEN BY THE DUNSTAN GOVERNMENT TO CARRY OUT ITS PROPOSALS. WORSE THAN THAT, THIS GOVERNMENT ACTUALLY REFUSED TO CARRY OUT THE RECOMMENDATIONS.

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TITO NEEDS AID

Lt.-Col. Dedier, now at Cairo, who has been attached to Marshall Tito's staff for 2 1/2 years, reported on January 14 that the Yugoslav Army was facing 36 German satellite divisions on seven fronts: "More German divisions are engaged in Yugoslavia than on any front, except the Russian," he said.

"The Yugoslavs are fighting without heavy artillery, anti-aircraft guns or tanks."

Allied planes are apparently in use on this front, but they must be backed up with a continuous stream of vital war materials of all kinds.



Leningrad Front.—One of the Soviet women medical officers who have played a heroic part in the war.

BIG CAMPAIGN FOR SOCIALISM

Victorian Trade Unions at a conference last Sunday decided to set up Socialist Education Committees in the 14 main union groupings.

This is the most ambitious yet taken by the Australian Trade Union movement to campaign for Socialism.

More than 200 union delegates and members of the A.L.P. Executive, attended the conference which was called by the Melbourne Trades Hall Council.

The Conference was unanimous on the need to carry on Socialist education among the workers in preparation to meet the problems of the post-war world.

"The Conference shows that men of diverse religious and political groups can come together inside the Trade Union movement," said Mr. Don Thomson. "As a member of The Communist Party, I am willing to join forces in any United Front to help along the road to Socialism."

(Full report page 2).

THE URGERS



EDITORIAL

WHY WE SEEK UNITY WITH LABOR PARTY

The Australian Communist Party has decided to apply for affiliation to the Australian Labor Party.

Every worker is anxious to see the forces of Labor closely united. Here is the chance to unite them and create one single political party of the Australian working-class.

If affiliated to the Labor Party, the Communist Party would abide by the Australian Labor Party Constitution and Programme, and support Labor Party candidates in elections. It would at the same time have a voice in Labor Party conferences.

The affiliation would enable Communists and Labor Party members to work together far more closely and would therefore enormously strengthen the Labor movement.

It would benefit the Labor Party as well as the Communist Party. It would put vigorous new blood into the Labor Party and would help to strengthen Labor Party policy, so that Labor Governments would not disappoint the working-class as they have often done in past years.

Labor unity is urgently needed to back up the 1944 offensives that can destroy fascism. It is urgently needed to beat back reactionary forces at home.

Affiliation of the Communists to the Labor Party is a simple, fair, and practical proposal for achieving Labor unity.

WE WANT YOU TO GIVE IT YOUR ACTIVE SUPPORT.

Union Challenge To A.L.P. Expulsion

The Central Executive of the Victorian A.L.P. last week advised the State Railways Union that it had "forfeited" its affiliation with the Labor Party by permitting its chief officer, Mr. J. J. Brown, to speak as an individual on any political platform he desired.

This further attack on democratic rights inside the A.L.P. was immediately challenged by the A.R.U. State Council.

At its meeting on January 22-23, the Council disagreed unanimously with the A.L.P. Executive and decided to lodge an appeal with the A.L.P. Annual Conference so that the Union could demand its democratic rights.

It was further unanimously resolved that the A.R.U. pay its affiliation fees to the A.L.P. and thus prevent any argument being used against the Union that it was not legally entitled to be present at the Conference. These fees had not been paid pending the decision of the A.L.P. Executive.

FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY.

The A.R.U. decisions should have a far-reaching effect on the fight for democracy inside the A.L.P. as this Union, which is a powerful factor in the A.L.P. in this State, especially in the country, should be able to lead all the affiliated unions in the fight for the right to determine their own affairs.

The A.R.U. by a decision of its Annual Conference does not allow any of its officers to speak against any endorsed Labor candidate as an official of the Union, but neither does it attempt to prevent any of its officers from exercising his rights