

APPENDIX.

MANIFESTO ISSUED SEPTEMBER, 1918.

IRISH LABOUR AND THE GENERAL ELECTION.

To the Workers of Ireland,

You will shortly be invited, the great majority for the first time, to cast a Vote in a General Election. Nominally, you will be privileged to elect members to represent your interests and wishes in Parliament; in reality, to a greater degree than ever before, you are to choose which of several National Ideas you subscribe to.

THE IRISH LABOUR PARTY sets forth its views upon political and social affairs, and asks for your support.

Economic Power.

For ten years past in Ireland the workers' movement in industry has been growing in power and influence, and Trade Unionism has established itself as the most potent weapon in the hands of the workers. It is upon the power of this industrial organisation that the working masses must in the main rely to win their emancipation. In the right to decide when to sell and when to withhold their labour lies the strength of the workers' position. This has been especially true of Irish Labour since the outbreak of War and will continue for a long period after peace is declared. Whatever part Labour is destined to play in the political life of Ireland its part in the industrial and economic life must always take precedence, since in Ireland as everywhere else economic power must precede and make possible political power.

Political Power.

But we have been taught by experience not to allow the victories of Trade Unionism to be brought to nought by laxity in politics—by leaving the political machinery of the State in the control either of Labour's enemies or of professing friends, who are not themselves of the working class. We must support our Trade Unionism by our politics; we must be ready to use every

weapon that has been placed in our hands, to avail of every opportunity which comes in our way, to strike blow upon blow in the age-long fight for liberty.

Hence it is that the Irish Labour Party announces itself as a combatant in the coming electoral struggle.

The War's Reactions.

The predominant issue before the electorate will be one not of our choosing. We should have preferred the entry of organised Labour into the political arena had been to fight on questions directly connected with the social and economic condition of the people. We recognise, however, that our wishes must take into consideration the realities of the situation in the abnormal conditions now prevailing, and the realities to-day are the War and its reactions. Among these reactions Ireland's national claim stands out boldly demanding satisfaction.

Self-Determination.

On this claim the recent Labour Congress at Waterford again declared itself. We adopt the principle of the Russian Revolution, supported as it is by the pronouncements of President Wilson, and the Premiers and politicians of all the warring and neutral Powers, viz.: "the right of all peoples to self-determination" We mean thereby that Ireland, no less than Belgium or Serbia, Poland or Finland, Bohemia or Esthonia (and these no less than Ireland), shall have the right to decide its own form of Government, to choose its own sovereignty, to determine its own destinies without limitations, except such as are voluntarily conceded or are common to all nations.

We assert before the world that Ireland is denied this right by the power of armed force, and we call upon the Democracies to make good their professions by their actions, and set free the Irish Nation from its involuntary bondage.

To strengthen our hands as representing the workers of Ireland when pressing this demand upon the Labour Parties of other Nations (both of the old world and the new) we ask you to support the Labour Candidates in the coming Election.

Closely allied with the subject of Ireland's status as a Nation, but by no means wholly dependent thereon, is the question of Conscription. In unison with the people as a whole, the Labour Party has taken an active part in the fight against the project to compel Irishmen by force to bear arms. We are resolved to persist in our resistance come what may. We stand firmly on this ground—that no outside authority whatsoever has a right to compel a man to kill his fellow-man. Each individual must be left free to act or not to act in such a matter as his conscience

directs. Holding this principle, the Irish Labour Party will refuse to be bound by any bargain between the British Government and any set of Irish politicians or parties whereby in exchange for an Irish Parliament a Conscript Army shall be provided. We should oppose military conscription even in an Irish Republic for as valid reasons as we should oppose it under any other form of Government or misgovernment. We believe that a well-ordered community will never lack resolute voluntary defenders; the test of good government is to be found in the readiness of the governed to rally to the defence of the Commonwealth.

What is Freedom?

But it is not enough that Labour in Ireland should have an international policy, or that we should be resolute in our antagonism to Conscription.

For the worker living year in and year out, even in so-called prosperous times, with the barest margin between his daily work and starvation, it is not enough to know that his elected representatives stand for the freedom of Ireland as a political state.

On thousands of labourers, artizans, agricultural workers, clerks, shop-workers, teachers, and the vast miscellaneous mass of men and women, who work for wages, the question presses every pay-day: What is to be our lot in the free Ireland of the future, what is to be our portion under the new regime? Must we forever remain hewers of wood and drawers of water for wealthier, but less worthy neighbours, who wield the powers of government through the use of their often ill-gotten wealth? Who is to control and direct the industrial life of Ireland and to what end? Are we to leave the moulding of the future Irish Nation in the hands of those whose ideas and interests demand a continuance of the present servile status of the workers? To the workers a free Ireland must mean an Ireland wherein human personality has been released from bondage; wherein men shall no longer be marketable chattels. To this end we recall the words of our late comrade and leader, James Connolly:—

“Ireland as distinct from her people is nothing to me; and the man who is bubbling over with love and enthusiasm for ‘Ireland’ and can yet pass unmoved through our streets and witness all the wrong and the suffering and the shame and the degradation wrought upon the people of Ireland—aye, wrought by Irishmen upon Irish men and women, without burning to end it, is, in my opinion, a fraud and a liar in his heart, no matter how he loves that combination of chemical elements he is pleased to call Ireland.”

Ultimate Aims.

It is of little use to lay down any detailed programme of reform. The people may propose, but the War God, with the

help of his hand-maiden "Dora," will effectually dispose of all programmes until his thirst for human blood is quenched.

Our ultimate aims may be defined as follows:—

To recover for the Nation complete possession of all the natural physical sources of wealth of this country.

To win for the workers of Ireland, collectively, the ownership and control of the whole produce of their labour.

To secure the democratic management and control of all industries and services by the whole body of workers, manual and mental, engaged therein, in the interest of the Nation and subject to the supreme authority of the National Government.

To obtain for all adults who give allegiance and service to the Commonwealth, irrespective of sex, race or religious belief, equality of political, and social rights and opportunities.

To abolish all power and privileges, social and political, of institutions or persons, based upon property or ancestry, or not granted or confirmed by the freely expressed will of the Irish people; and to insist that in the making and administering of the laws, in the pursuit of industry and commerce, and in the education of the young, Property must always be subordinate to Humanity, and Private Gain must ever give place to the Welfare of the People.

It is to these ideas we ask the workers to declare allegiance.

Every proposal tending towards these objects will have our support, every attempt at retrogression shall be vigorously opposed. We yield to none in determination to win for Ireland freedom, but we intend, so far as in us lies, that in the Ireland of the coming day, Freedom shall be a reality, that Labour shall be assured its rightful place in the social order, that flaunting luxury and waste shall be abhorrent, and hunger and ignorance but memories of the black night of capitalist imperialist domination.

Ireland or Westminster?

In April last the Mansion House Conference on Conscription declared with a chorus of assent from the workers that "the passing of the Conscription Bill by the House of Commons must be regarded as a Declaration of War on the Irish Nation." That this was no frothy rhetoric, but cold, stern reality, let the condition of Ireland to-day testify. A British Army of occupation has its units in every corner of the land, military law is paramount. We read daily of deportations, imprisonment without trial, suppression of public opinion, of free speech, of the right of meeting, of the perfecting of the machinery for enforcing military service.

To join in friendly palaver with the authors of this oppression implies a moral surrender, belying the spirit of the people. The National Executive has therefore decided by a unanimous vote that the members of the Irish Labour Party shall not attend the House of Commons. It is conceivable that altered circum-

stances and the interests of the workers and democracy may however warrant a change of policy which shall be determined by a special National Congress.

If further reasons were necessary to fortify this decision we need only adduce the proved futility of attendance at the British Parliament during the War; the disregard which that Parliament has shown to its own acts and pledges; the importance of strengthening the case of Irish Labour in demanding separate representation as a distinct national unit on the "International," more especially at the Conference of Labour Delegates from all Nations which will assemble at the same time and place as the Peace Conference.

In our opinion the most valuable work for the cause of Labour is to be done in Ireland; in perfecting the organisation of the industrial forces, in consolidating the victories already won, in educating the constituencies in our ideals and programme in obtaining control of the machinery of local government.

A REFERENDUM OF IDEALS.

With the foregoing Statement of the programme and policy of the Irish Labour Party we approach, with confidence, the men and women of the Irish working class—"that numerous and respectable class, the men (and women) of no property," ever to be relied on as the faithful guardians of Liberty.

Wherever Labour Candidates are nominated, having the approval and sanction of the Irish Labour Party, we ask for your votes, your help, your enthusiasm, and your influence; where Labour Candidates are not nominated, see to it that Labour's national ideals, Labour's social and industrial programme are not submerged.

We for our part promise that you the workers of Ireland shall have no cause to regret the trust you repose in the Party of Labour. We shall fight the Election on the grounds of principles and policy, we shall not be drawn into discussions of the merits or demerits of the rival candidates, of their personal foibles, their private virtues and faults. In our view this will not be an occasion for the election of persons so much as a referendum of ideals. We shall try at all times to carry out the contest having that view always before us.

For the National Executive Irish Trade Union Congress and Labour Party—

THOS. CASSIDY, Chairman.

THOS. FARREN, Vice-Chairman.

THOS. JOHNSON, Treasurer.

WM. O'BRIEN, Secretary.