

"In the inevitable reform before us, we have a right to claim the support of the Government. It is useless for them to say that the Trades Halls are opposed to it. Let them be opposed. Every time they withstand an effort which is made with the object of bringing the two contracting parties together in the interest of the peace and security of this community, they are putting a nail in their coffin, and now we shall be putting a nail in our own coffin if we are prepared to allow these men to longer pretend that they represent the workers. They no more represent them than does the Kaiser. The time is eminently ripe for dealing with this problem, and I hope that the Government will do something upon the lines that I have suggested."

### Industrial Unrest

In an excellent article upon the above subject the Sydney "Morning Herald," in a recent issue again points out some of the fallacies underlying the doctrines preached by the extremists among the Labour leaders of the Commonwealth.

Here again is found an advocacy in favour of the practical adoption of the ideas embodied in the report of the British Whitley Committee.

In the course of the article, the "Herald" says:—

"The aim of all Labour agitation is better conditions of living. It is a truism that better conditions can be achieved only by greater production. If production is limited the worker suffers. He may believe that if he receives a higher wage in the money count, he will be able to buy more of that production than before, but he finds it is a vain hope, because the production being the same and the cost higher, a higher price must be charged for the product, in order that the other factors of production, organisation and capital, may obtain their wages. There has been some advocacy of all sharing in the product alike, but that may be dismissed as chimerical. The engineers would be the first to dismiss such a proposition. While men are constituted unequal in talents and in energy there will be inequality in remuneration. It will be looked for even in the most pronounced Labour coteries. The Labour leaders have outstanding talents in one direction, and they aspire to positions and remuneration above those of their fellows not so fortunately gifted. Their aspiration lies in the direction of Parliament and its emoluments. Others gifted not with speech but with foresight and powers of organisation become managers and employers themselves.

"That Labour does not favour increased production is due to the fact that Labour does not believe that any of the increase would accrue to itself. Therein lies the problem. How, if there is increased production, shall Labour be given its share and the other factors of production their share? It can only be done by greater mutual confidence, not by fights in the law court, which is really what the arbitration scheme at present amounts to, nor

by one party determining what the division shall be, but by both meeting in council, studying the facts, and seeking on those facts an agreement. The scheme would be on the lines of the Whitley Report, presented to the British Parliament. We have arrived at a stage when the worker as well as the employer should have a voice in the management of industry. The worker is as much concerned with industry as the employer. It is the livelihood of the worker; he lives in the workshop for practically one-third of his working life. He knows what steps could be taken to improve the amenities of his life there, and he should have some means, some mouthpiece by which he may give utterance to his suggestions for that improvement. At present antagonism is the most marked feature in the relations between employer and workman. Each believes his interests to be diametrically opposed to the other. Yet in reality it is not so. If one suffers the other is bound to suffer too. A badly-constructed workshop, cheap though its construction may have been, entails loss of energy, and no matter how hard a foreman may drive the men, production will not be up to the average. For that cheapness of construction both employer and worker suffer, since the profits are low and employment is probably not constant. If it were found that by mutual discussion an improvement in workshop conditions could be brought about, the way would be open to discuss an increase in production, with a consequent increase in wages when the increased production had accrued. Who will be the first to make this experiment? That a Government Department should be the first to move in that direction would be particularly appropriate, since the suggestions of the Whitley Report have had the strong approval of Government authorities. Though Government Departments are more conservative in these matters than private employers, there are no strong reasons why the leaders of the tramway workers, not the men who do the talking, but the men who know, should not be consulted to ascertain what are the difficulties of the working conditions, and whether there could not be amelioration without extravagance. Of this fact we may be sure that if the community is divided by bitterness between employers and workers, Australia will no longer be a paradise of the workers, as it has been termed. Other countries will produce cheaper than we can, and real wages and real profits, which are the commodities which money, wages, and money profits purchase, will fall."

### The Housing Problem.

(From the New Zealand "Times," 20/12/18).

Sir,—There seems to be an erroneous impression that the increased price of sawn timber is responsible for the present high cost of houses. As a matter of fact sawn timber is quite a minor cost of a building.

The Government has appreciated the fact that the cost of houses is comparatively high and an