

SOLDIERS AND POLITICS, MEETING AT CENTENNIAL HALL,

PARTY GOVERNMENT DENOUNCED.

SOME REMARKABLE CON- TENTIONS.

A meeting called under the auspices of the Queensland division of the Returned Soldiers' and Citizens' Political Federation was held in the Centennial Hall on January 8 to introduce the political platform of the federation. Printed circulars embodying the proposals were distributed in the hall. The hall was about three-parts filled. Mr. L. R. Montefiore (president of the Queensland division) occupied the chair, and others on the platform included Lieuts. H. M'Martin and Maurice Little, Messrs. A. J. T. Marcowicz (secretary), W. P. Sparkes, and Mrs. Moyes (president of the Ladies' Committee).

The Chairman, in explaining why the federation came into existence, said the soldiers realised in 1915 that things political were in a chaotic state, and they decided to take a hand in trying to cleanse Parliament. It was necessary that the soldiers should have Parliamentary representation—(applause)—and with that object in view the federation had been formed. They were citizens now, but had been soldiers. They were only looking forward for their rights as citizens. All they wanted was to see that the returned soldiers received the treatment which the

soldiers received the treatment which the country should give them—(applause)—and they were going to see that they got it. (Applause.) There had been several attempts at coalition Government in Australia, but none had been successful in giving a lead to the people. The day of party politics was drawing to a close, and politics could be put on a higher level by welding together the returned soldiers and the moderate, fair-minded citizens who had done their best to see the war to the final victory. The old discredited politician would have to go.

Mr. Marcowicz said they had become tired of politics conducted by party political machines, not for the sake of the country, but for the benefit of a clique which might be in power for the time being. They had therefore formed their federation, and their membership in Queensland already numbered 12,000. That was something. (Applause.) Their general objective was to enrol under the flag of true citizenship all those who had the welfare of their country at heart, with the view of obtaining a Government of the people, for the people, and by the people. (Applause.) Their immediate aims were justice to returned soldiers and dependents of the fallen men, and repatriation administered for the benefit of soldiers and their dependents on the principle of national efficiency, and in accordance with the solemn pledges made in the past. They also looked for the application in national life of the principle of co-operation and co-partnership under Government guidance and with Government assistance. They also wanted a comprehensive land settlement

wanted a comprehensive land settlement policy to provide for the opening up of considerable land areas, and the giving of liberal financial assistance and expert advice to settlers. They also asked for improved transport facilities, the uniform valuation of all land for State and Federal taxation, a continuous industrial Arbitration Court, with yearly awards, equal racial, industrial, and political rights for women, vigorous measures to combat venereal disease and other menaces to public health and national efficiency, a national health insurance scheme, the nationalisation of hospitals and charitable institutions, the inauguration of a department of town planning, and a national housing scheme, providing for eventual ownership of homes by workers and selectors. They also stood for the nationalisation of education, and in the matter of finance they held that all loans should be raised within the Commonwealth, and that the national debt should be liquidated out of consolidated revenue by the creation of a sinking fund. They further contended that there should be stringent restriction of expenditure not authorised by Parliament. (Applause.) They also included in their platform effective preferential voting, elective ministries, the initiative recall and veto, embracing complete and unrestricted power for the people to initiate legislation, and to veto or send back for further consideration any Bill which did not meet with the approval of an absolute majority of the electors at a referendum. Some might be asking whether they wanted to create a third party. In reply to that he would say they

party. In reply to that he would say they stood as a separate organisation of men who were ready to continue the fight for their ideal, and were inviting the co-operation of every public-spirited citizen—not drones. (Applause.) There was nothing in their platform to which any fair-minded citizen could object, and they should all co-operate. They were asking for freedom of speech and action as citizens of this country—and the country required it. (Applause.)

Lieut. H. M'Martin said they were now forming a solid foundation for the thousands of men who were returning to work on it. In future no slacker would be eligible as a Parliamentary candidate in the interests of the federation. They did not intend to affiliate with any political party, but others could co-operate with them.

Mr. W. P. Sparkes and Lieut. Little made appeals for support for the new movement.

Sergeant Warren, M.L.A., in moving a vote of thanks to the chairman, said it was time the returned soldiers were united for some purpose. If they were fit to fight they were fit to take their places in Parliament. (Applause.) They intended to fight for the purity of politics.

A Voice: Why don't they join the Labour Party?

Sergeant Warren said there was no need for that. He was returned by a majority of 2000 in spite of the Labour Party. He did not intend to crawl to any party. The soldiers were not being properly treated. They only asked for a

perly treated. They only asked for a fair deal, and would have it. They had stood against the Turk and Hun over there, and they would stand against the Turk and Hun here in Queensland. (Loud applause.) If it was necessary for them to fight for their rights they would be quite prepared to fight again. (Loud applause.) But if the people of Queensland gave them their rights there would be no need for any disturbance in the future. There would be corruption as long as the present political system lasted. They wanted to drop party politics, as they were no good, and they intended to make a machine that would destroy the thing that had been destroying the country for years. (Applause.)

The meeting closed with the **National Anthem.**