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In a few weeks Australia will again be plunged into the turmoil of a general election. It will do us no harm to make a calm appraisal of some of the facts before political arguments obscure facts with emotion.

The question of compulsory unionism may be thought to be a political one but the real issue goes deeper than party politics. In our democratic state some checks on individual freedom are necessary. We have the rule of law, enforced by the police, paid for by taxation and supported by a majority of the people so ensuring the smooth running of the state. Laws pertaining to these things are universal and must be compulsorily enforced.

But when workers of different trades are forced to join unions through political ~~press~~ coercion a form of compulsion alien to our democratic state is introduced. It denies the fundamental civil rights for which we have fought so long. Unions themselves were formed to secure freedom and fairness for the worker. In this the unions have done a great job but now against the will of many of their members they are being used for other ends. The purpose was well expressed by Mr Calwell at the annual conference of the N.S.W. branch of the A.L.P. on June 13th 1953m. He said " We might even live "to see the day when we evolve a one party state in Australia" This clearly implies the denial of civil liberties and the abandonment of true democracy.

No one would deny that the unions have ~~done a~~



secured worth while benefits and conditions for their members. A case can be made for compulsory unionism in that workers outside the unions enjoy the results of union action at no cost of effort by themselves. Such reasoning cannot be sustained. Many unions are affiliated not only with the Trades Hall Council but also with the A.L.P.. Each union so affiliated must pay a fee which is determined by the numerical strength of the union, every one of whose members is thus contributing to the A.L.P.. This is indeed a significant first step to securing a one party government in Australia. If unions were not affiliated with one political party compulsory membership, although bad, would not be so flagrantly against democratic principles. It is not a question whether one should belong to one political party. It is a question as to whether one should be forced to belong to that party. The answer to this must be an emphatic "NO" for the essence of our freedom lies in our ability to dismiss governments through the expression of the popular will. Compulsion denies the possibility of such expression.

Members of every church as well as trade union member<sup>s</sup> have spoken against the bill. Mr Skelton, secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen said "No man claiming to be a Christian could support this bill" i.e. the Industrial Arbitration Amendment Act 1953.

I do not say that each member of the A.L.P. is pledged to compulsion of this kind but it is a <sup>serious</sup> matter when a party has sectional interests in its midst supporting measures of this *kind*.



The compulsory unionism bill is not the only one. Every day one can see fresh evidence that people are working for the one party stats. Such a system could not support the best interests of Australia or of its people and I would ask the electors of Wannon to consider carefully before returning such a party to federal power. Compulsory unionism for Australia is a published objective of the A.L.P..

The time has gone when can go the polls thinking only of the next three years. If our country is to develop peacefully and prosperously into a great and powerful nation we must have men of vision, initiative and courage in our federal parkliament who will at all times make the happiness of every Australian their foremost aim.