



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

THE SENATE,

MELBOURNE

Augt. 5. 09

R. S. Ross Esq.
Editor 'The Herald'

Dear Sir,

I beg
to acknowledge the receipt of your request
to be furnished with a copy of my
work on "Australian Socialism". At
present 'the block' has not reached
Melbourne but on its arrival I shall
ask the Agent of the London firm to
forward you a copy for review & use.
I am glad to find from all the
reviews so far forwarded to me

It would be but a trumpery effort
if I allowed myself to think that
my book contains no error in principle,
facts or inferences. Fair criticism
from opponents - and especially opponents
of that class - may come then to me.
I have deemed my sketch of Australian
Socialism to be as honest, as fearless,
and - within its limits - as strong as
Laurie's own advocacy of the principles of
Socialism. My own view of these
great questions is that humanity will
benefit only by a patient & earnest
search for the truth, untrammelled with
the selfish desire to gain political
honour or to realize political ambitions
by a time serving suppression & expediency
& above all by indulging in blatant
personalities for the purpose of influencing
the passions with the only purpose of
getting into Parliament. May I add also
that no author can refuse to undergo the
same ordeal of criticism to which he
subjects others. He has only the right to ask
that the criticism be it above or it may,
is well informed & free from personal bias.
Yours truly
A. S. Hedger

that my necessarily limited sketch of Lane & his work has been very well received both from a literary & historical point of view. The only note of disparagement is from the 'Age' on this point. I think (though I may yet be shown to wrong) that Lane was the real founder of the Labour Party - as a Parliamentary Party - & that he never would have founded it, except to make it the political expression of Socialism as he so strongly & ably outlined its meaning & its objects. The Labour Party has become something quite different, though professing outwardly to attain that objects. This is the thesis of one portion of the history. I knew William fairly well & had the privilege of being often a Saturday & Sunday evening guest at his house where we used often (I was but little more than a youth then) ^{discuss} these great questions involved in his propaganda work. His brother John, who accompanied him to Paraguay, I knew intimately. A more unselfish earnest & ^{better} good man, I never knew. The brother was twin spirits in many things. One purpose I had in view in dealing with Lane's work was to while condemning his policy, to do full justice to their earnestness & sincerity & brilliant abilities. You will not of course agree with me when I say, that no more powerful condemnation & proof of the inherent weakness & inevitable failure of Socialism & Communism could be given than the disastrous results of the attempt to realize them under the leadership of ten such men. William Lane was to a large extent to blame for the bleedings of the two great strikes in 1890 & 1891. He forced the pace & the horse got out of hand. May I say that this letter is the considered & personal study. I write it because it is a pleasure to exchange a line & a thought with one who knew Lane.