

FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND ?

" 'Tis done, the great transaction's done," as the old soul-saving hymn said. Not only has the Pact beaten Smuts (which was all we immediately cared about) but it has appropriated the spoils of victory, and all the officers have been nosing around like Town Councillors for their share of the swag. (It always was the officers, not the rank and file, that got the best of the war loot). They say it was quite remarkable at last Sunday's Labour Party Conference how very mild and gentle after all was most (if not all) of the opposition to the Cabinet proposal, as though each delegate said to himself: "If I am too violent, I shall put up the backs of Creswell and Boydell, who will control the patronage, and will leave me out in the cold."

And so they plumped for loaves and fishes—first for the chiefs (who, to be sure, had been the principal propagandists in the Cause), then for selected satellites, and then—a fat lot the five thousand, not to say the five hundred thousand, or five million, will get out of it! Creswell and Boydell, even if they give away a cool thou' of their screw to Party funds (what a hope!) will still sleep free at last from financial embarrassments, and wake up daily to ham and eggs for breakfast; while the captains and the lieutenants and the favourites will be suitably "recognised" with secretaryships or inspectorships and other appropriate billets, in the traditional style, as already practised by Labour too in the Johannesburg Town Council. Cabinets or forests, it's all the same.

But what about Smith, and Van der Merwe, and Sixpence? What are they going to get out of the miracle? Twelve basketfuls of bombs again from the Minister of Labour and Defence (with headquarters at the Rand Club still) if they strike too violently, as one of the capitalist papers infers from that combined office. "Law and order" maintained, by the denouncers of former loranorderites with extra severity to show that "Labour" can "rule" with the best! Jettison of Party "fads and fancies" in the great cause of "the nation," just as J. H.

Thomas has avowedly sunk his "scap-box propaganda" of earlier days in favour of the great cause of the Hemptah? Cheaper cablegrams for Reuter and the Stock Exchange, perhaps, from our comrade of the Posts and Telegraphs? In the name of common-sense, what do all those devoted men and women who worked so hard or voted so "straight" in the Election expect to get out of it?

Look at the Labour and Socialist Governments in Europe, and ask whether one of them has even mitigated the rigours of capitalism, or brought the working-class a single step nearer emancipation? German Social-Democracy with snob Ebert, butcher Noske, Herriot who is already emulating Poincare in his treatment of starved Germany; Italy under a tyrant "Socialist" who has also shed his "fads and fancies"; MacDonald and Co., whose principal achievement has been to salaam the King, boost the Empire, threaten the subject races and shadow Communist meetings—and no promise or hope of better? And note that none of these "Labour" Governments really rest on Labour alone: being of the character they are, they all depend directly or indirectly on Coalition with some capitalist group. By all means take this chance, as in England, to strike. But the one country in the world where the condition of the masses is definitely and continuously on the up-grade is the country which has given short shrift to its Imperialists, its Nationalists and its (Menshevik) "Labourites" alike, for good and all. It will not be long now before the masses of the rest of the world will be compelled to recognise the contrast between their retrogression in "their own countries" and their fellow-workers' amazing progress in Russia, and will act accordingly. But why wait so long to be disillusioned?

The Pact was a necessary stage. Perhaps the Coalition is necessary too. But both are only stages in the unmasking of those last strongholds of capitalist power, the Yellow Labour Parties, leading to their overthrow and the setting of the stage for Communism. These Cabinet "jobs," too, are but "instruments of destiny." Speed the day! S.P.P.