



WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

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S P E E C H

BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR JOHN FORREST,

P.C., K.C.M.G., LL.D., M.L.A.,

ON THE

FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA,

On the terms proposed in the Commonwealth Bill passed by the Federal Convention, 1898,

AT

ST. GEORGE'S HALL, PERTH,

ON

Friday, the 27th May, 1898.

FORREST, John,
Baron Forrest

PERTH:

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*Speech by the Right Honourable Sir John Forrest, P.C.,
K.C.M.G., LL.D., M.L.A., on the Federation of Aus-
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At St. George's Hall, Perth, on Friday, the 27th May, 1898.

SIR JOHN FORREST, who was received with loud and prolonged cheering, said:—Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,—First of all I have to thank you for the cordial welcome that you have given me, and I thank also my friend the chairman for the friendly terms he has used in introducing me to you this evening. As you all know, the question of Federation is occupying a prominent place in the minds of the people who occupy the Australian Continent. In every part of Australia, to a very much larger extent than in this Colony, the question is occupying the most serious attention of everyone, because in a very few days—on the 3rd and 4th of next month—the people of the other colonies of Australia, including Tasmania, have to decide by their votes whether they shall remain as they are, separated colonies, or whether they shall be bound together in a Federal Union for ever. (Applause.)

No Turning Back.

As you all know, the step that has to be decided upon is not a step that can be retraced. We are to be indissolubly bound together for ever; so that everyone has to make up his mind now, once and for all, in regard to this present opportunity, whether he will join this Federation or remain either separated altogether or at any rate separated for some considerable time from the other colonies.

The Colony's Position.

We occupy a very fortunate position in some respects, inasmuch as we will know whether the other colonies of Australia have agreed to federate or not, before we shall be called upon to

decide the question; and it may occur to some persons that until that time has arrived, that we might have been content to say little, or at any rate not express too decided opinions. But although I have looked at this phase of the question, I do not think that it would be fair not to say beforehand what my views are on this great and important question. (Cheers.)

Not a Special Pleader.

Now, I am here to-night to deal with this question in what I hope will be considered a moderate and reasonable way. (Applause.) I am here to-night in no way as a special pleader, although probably when I have finished some people may think I have dealt more fully with one phase than the other. (Laughter.) I desire to address myself to the people of this Colony, and place before them the views I hold on this question. I do not think my views will be complete, or that I can deal with the whole question, because time would not permit me in one address, in the time allotted to me, to express myself in detail in regard to this great measure. My object is to try to give assistance to the people of this Colony, in order that they may judge for themselves. We do not want people to take their views altogether from others, but to think the question out for themselves and decide on the merits. (Applause.) In considering this question of the unity of the Australian colonies, the questions we have to consider for ourselves are the class of people who inhabit the continent of Australia, the race they belong to, their national character, the conditions under which they live, the climate, and the character of the soil. After we have considered these facts I

think we can ascertain for ourselves whether a people, such as we are, sprung from the same race, occupying the same continent to a large extent under similar conditions, are likely to go very far wrong in federating, for the sole object of mutual relief and benefit, and whether in doing so we shall be likely to do that which will be adverse to our interests, and which, in the future, we shall regret.

No New Idea.

Now, before I go any further I should like to inform you and the people of this Colony, that this idea of Federation, which has been and is at the present time so prominent, and which during the last year has come into the region of practical politics, is not a new idea with me. The views I express to-night are not just obtained out of the street or formed during the last few days, because I will read to you from a book, of which I am fortunate to have a copy, my views on this question expressed at the first meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, held in the City of Sydney on the 30th August, 1888. (Cheers.) The views I then expressed—a long time ago, when I did not occupy, and perhaps had very little thought of occupying a prominent public position in this Colony under Responsible Government, are almost identical, in fact, I think I may say are identical with the views I hold to-night. (Cheers.)

Views and Opinions in 1888.

I said this: "The present divisions of Australia cannot but be a subject of great interest, well worthy of consideration. And in dealing with the question it is necessary that we should ascertain by what rule or method the existing boundaries were determined upon. I fear we must admit that the method pursued was a haphazard one, arrived at without any knowledge or regard for the natural features or the climate of the different territories. The boundaries were as a rule certain lines of latitude and longitude, and as Australia has progressed these lines have been made to divide the people of one Colony from another. The question naturally arises whether it is reasonable that these divisions can or

"should be maintained in the future. "Take, for instance, the Murray River, "which divides New South Wales from "Victoria. On either side we find the "same people, the same language, the "same religion, the same occupation, "and the same interests. Are these "people likely to be content to live under "different laws, to be pestered by different "tariffs, and to be made antagonistic to "one another by having a different Gov- "ernment? The same may be said of "Victoria and the Southern part of "South Australia, and of New South "Wales and the Southern portion of "Queensland, and to some lesser extent "of the Southern portions of South and "Western Australia, though in this last "case they are at present divided by a "considerable extent of unoccupied "country. When we come to Northern, "or tropical Australia, the case is more "unreasonable still. Is it likely that "Northern Queensland, Northern South "Australia, and Northern Western Aus- "tralia, all of which have the same "climate, and are suitable to the same "productions and industries, are for long "to be content to be divided from one "another by lines fixed in a haphazard "manner, by different laws, different "tariffs, and different Governments, with "but little if any voice in their local "self-government?

"And this brings me to another sub- "ject of great importance, viz., the ques- "tion of the federation of the Australian "colonies. The question of Federation "must occur to everyone who thinks of "the future of Australia, and the prob- "lem we have to face is how far we are "to regard ourselves as the people of one "or of different countries. One of the "charms of visiting the United States or "Canada is the feeling that you are "under one flag and one law, and after "visiting those countries as I have re- "cently, the fact that Australia is "divided into five divisions is forcibly "brought before me. Our tariffs wage "war against one another, and even our "laws are dissimilar, and in many re- "spects we are to one another but as the "people of foreign nations.

"No doubt there are great difficulties "and great prejudices to be overcome "before federation takes place, for the "different colonies and the different

“Governments will lose their prominence, and the Dominion Government will alone be known in the world. This is a very serious obstacle to the ambitions of each colony, and will play an important part in preventing the federation of Australia. For instance, we may all know who is the President and Ministers of the United States, or the Governor-General and Ministers of Canada, but how few of us know anything of the local Governments of the State of California or of the Province of British Columbia? The States and Provinces are merged in the central Government and legislature, and it will be difficult to convince the colonies of Australia that it is desirable to sink their individual prominence and become merely a factor in the central Government.

“Yet, if we can overcome these selfish or ambitious feelings we will, I think, be convinced that to be federated will be to our material advantage. If Australia could speak with one voice, how much more important would she be. If her tariffs were identical what a market within herself for free competition would there be. If Australia were federated, how long would the different colonies remain separated for want of railway communication? We should have a railway from West to East, and from South to North; we would be able to enter a railway carriage at Fremantle and in a few days step out of the same carriage at Sydney, in the same way as you may enter a carriage on every Tuesday at Montreal and at mid-day next Tuesday step out of the same carriage on the shores of the Pacific at Vancouver. But a few years ago it was not considered as practicable that the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans would be connected by the iron road; but in these few years a number of routes have been opened by which you may cross from New York to San Francisco. Again, the Canadian-Pacific Railway, connecting as it does the Eastern and Western provinces of Canada, was for a long time looked upon as impracticable, but it is now completed, and has resulted in the Federation of Canada, the Western State of British Columbia, only entering into the Dominion on the condition that

“daily railway communication should be established between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. In a similar manner Federation in Australia would require, as an indispensable condition, daily communication by railway between the colonies of the continent. To be an Australian will then be a prouder title than to be a New South Welshman, a Queenslander, a Victorian, a South Australian, or a West Australian—and so much is this even now felt that it is becoming the practice for persons hailing from any of the colonies to call themselves Australians, feeling, no doubt, that the title of continental Australia sinks all other minor divisions. If we are to become a nation, to be the great power in the Southern Hemisphere it can only be by being federated, to be allied to one another, not only by the ties of nationality and kindred, but also by those material bonds which operate so strongly in our dealing with one another. Our aim should be to make Australia another Britain—another home for the Anglo-Saxon race. In our prosperity, however, I trust we will never forget the land of our fathers, the dear old mother country—to which we owe our existence as a people, from which we derive our laws and our liberties, and from which we have a right to a glorious heritage.” (Prolonged cheers.) Those, gentlemen, were my views expressed and recorded in type in 1888, and I am glad to say to-night that my views, as far as I know them, have not changed during the interval of ten years in any material particular. (Applause.)

Not a Party Question.

What I desire to do to-night is to try and give you—I hope in not too many words—my views on this question. I do not want to unduly influence anyone. As I have just now said, I wish my fellow colonists to consider the whole matter carefully, quietly, and thoughtfully, and to judge for themselves. I shall not be in any way offended or think less of anyone, be he ever so intimate a friend, if he does not come to the conclusion I have come to. (Applause.) This is not, I think everyone will admit, a party question. I regret to say I do not find a great many

of the party to which I belong who are supporters of the views I hold. But I do not regard it as a party question, and I am not here as leader of any party. I am here as one of yourselves, as one of your fellow colonists and a member who was sent by the Legislature to represent the Colony in the Federal Convention.

Parliament has approved of Federation.

We must never forget, in dealing with this question, that as far as the Parliament is concerned, as representing the people of this Colony, they have already agreed that the Federation of Australia is desirable. That is the case with every Parliament on the Australian continent, and also Tasmania. They have decided that the Federation of Australia is desirable, and they have all passed Bills which have become Acts, with the object of sending representatives to the Federal Convention to frame a federal constitution. The objects the Parliaments had in view, of course, were many. They desired to bring the colonies more closely together for many reasons. One great reason was for mutual defence, another for framing mutual laws, and for many other national purposes, and generally the object they had in view was to strengthen the bonds of unity as between the Australian people and also to strengthen the bonds of unity between the Australian people and the Mother country. (Applause.)

The Main Principles of the Bill.

I have no doubt that most of you know the main principles of the Bill which was framed by the Federal Convention. There were three sittings; the first was in Adelaide, the second in Sydney, and the third and final sitting was in Melbourne, and the Convention took as the groundwork of the Bill the work of the Federal Convention presided over by that great man who has since passed away, Sir Henry Parkes—(loud applause)—which sat in Sydney in the beginning of 1891. I will, however, before I go any further, give a few outlines, not complete in any way, but a few outlines of the Bill which has been passed by this Convention, and which is now before the Australian people. Amongst the provisions of the Bill it is provided that the Commonwealth shall

take over the following departments from the States:—The Department of Customs and Excise will be taken over on the establishment of the Commonwealth, that is as soon as it is proclaimed; and the control of the Defences, the Postal Department, the Telegraph Department, the Light Department—that is the light-houses—and the quarantine services will be similarly assumed by the Federal Government as soon as they are declared to pass from the States to the Commonwealth by the Governor-General. Therefore it may be assumed that these departments, too, very soon after the establishment of the Federal Government, will pass over to the control of the Federal Government.

The Powers of the Federal Government.

There is a very common misapprehension in this Colony as to the powers that have been conferred upon the Federal Government. It is generally supposed that all the important matters connected with the government of the colonies will be handed over to the Federal Government, and that we in this Colony—and all the other colonies—will have very little to do, or very little to control, and that we will become nothing more than a vestry board or municipal council. There is nothing further from the fact than that. (Applause.) In fact, if I have to offer an opinion at all in regard to this matter, I think the Convention has erred in the direction of giving too little to the Federal Parliament, and keeping too much for the States Government. (Hear, hear.) I think that if we desire to have a Federal Government it would have been far better to give some more powers to the Federal Parliament even than those which have been given. I will tell you what we have given the Federal Parliament power to legislate on, but, mind you, not exclusive power, and then you will be able to judge for yourselves. The most important are these: Inter-State trade and commerce—that is, the settling of disputes between States when they cannot agree in regard to railway tariffs, etc.—and also the control of foreign trade and commerce. These do not at present interest us very much. Then we give the power of taxation, but not the exclusive power, except in regard

to Customs and Excise. We give the power to the Federal Parliament of taxation for federal purposes; which, of course, is indispensable. It would be no use erecting a Federal Government, unless it had power to tax in order to obtain money to carry on the affairs of the Commonwealth. But there is this provision—that this taxation must apply equally throughout the States; they cannot make fish of one and flesh of another. Then we give the power to grant bounties on production. Then we give the power to borrow on the Commonwealth credit for Federal purposes. Then there are the defences. The whole defences of this continent are entrusted to the Commonwealth. I will be able to show, I think easily, that this is not going to be a very bad bargain for this Colony. (Applause.) Then we hand over the postal and telegraphic services and the lighthouse and quarantine services. I will have something to say about them directly. In regard to the postal and telegraphic services, they are federated now, and we will not notice any difference between the control of the Federal Parliament and the control now, which is really identical. In regard to lighthouses and quarantine, I shall be able to show that it will not be a very disastrous matter financially if they are taken over. External affairs, too, we have not much to do with at present. Races requiring special legislation, that is a matter we have no great necessity for, and there is not likely to be any difficulty about it. Then immigration and emigration are matters in which we shall not, I think, be injuriously affected by handing over to the Federal Government. Then marriage and divorce—everyone desires that laws in regard to these shall be uniform. (Applause.) Invalid and old age pensions; most people will, I think, be of opinion that that matter will be better dealt with by the Federal Parliament, although there was a difference of opinion in Melbourne in regard to it. I voted that any legislation in that direction should be better dealt with by the Federal Parliament than by the States Parliaments. Industrial conciliation and arbitration in disputes affecting more than one State; that will be a matter for the Federal

Government. Census and statistics, bankruptcy and insolvency, copyrights and patents, foreign trading and financial corporations, they can only be dealt with properly by having one law, and therefore, I think it is quite right that the Federal Parliament should have power to deal with them. The acquisition, with the consent of a State, of any State railways—that is, any State wishing to hand over the whole or a part of its railway system to the Commonwealth, or desiring the Commonwealth to make any new railways, will have the power to do so. This provision is in our favour altogether. Matters referred to the Parliament by any States, but so that the referring States can only be affected. Where those States ask the Federal Parliament to deal with a question, and if the Federal Parliament is willing to deal with it, and it does not affect any other State, it can do so. The Federal Parliament will also be empowered to take over and to convert, renew, and consolidate the State debts existing at the establishment of the Commonwealth, or a proportion thereof, on the basis of the populations of the several States; and the States are to indemnify the Commonwealth against the debts taken over. It cannot but be in the interests of the States that the Federal Parliament should have power to deal with the loans of the States, because that would be a great advantage as money would be obtained cheaper, and no one can find any argument, as far as I can see, why such a power should not be given. The Federal Parliament will also have *exclusive* power to make laws relating to (1) the seat of Government, any part of a State surrendered to the Commonwealth, and any territory placed by the Queen under its authority; (2) public departments taken over by the Commonwealth and places acquired by it for public purposes; and (3) *after the adoption of the uniform tariff*, the Customs and Excise duties and bounties.

The Rights of the States.

I also want to say a few words about the rights of the States. The constitution, laws, and legislative powers of the States are not affected, but continue unimpaired except when (1) exclusive power of legislation is given to the Commonwealth, or (2) the State power

of legislation is expressly limited, or (3) the State law is inconsistent with some law made by the Commonwealth under the constitution. No State may (1) coin money or make anything but gold and silver legal tender, nor without the consent of the Federal Parliament raise or maintain any military force or tax any Commonwealth property. Every State is entitled to be protected by the Commonwealth against invasion, and (on the request of the State) against domestic violence. Those are then, I think, the chief matters in this part of the Bill, except a very important provision, and that is that intercolonial freetrade is provided for by requiring the Federal Parliament to adopt a uniform tariff within two years of the establishment of the Commonwealth. (Applause.) This is subject only to the following qualifications: States may grant aids and bounties for mining for gold and silver and other metals, and with approving resolutions of both Houses of the Federal Parliament, for the production or export of goods. Therefore, it does not interfere with the States Governments giving bounties for mining for gold and silver and other metals; and, if the Federal Parliament approves, they can do anything else in the way of fostering production and encouraging the export of products and goods. Then, again, Western Australia may for five years after the uniform tariff comes into force, which will probably be a couple of years—it cannot be more than two years from the date the Commonwealth is proclaimed—Western Australia may, during that time, impose Customs duties on goods the produce of the other States. That is to say, the produce of any other colony coming to this Colony during the first five years after the establishment of uniform duties of Customs and Excise will be subject to the rate of duty existing in this Colony at the time the Commonwealth was established. And those duties will be collected by the Commonwealth, but they will be subject to an annual reduction of one-twentieth during the second, third, fourth, and fifth years, until at the end of the fifth year, after the establishment of uniform duties of Customs and Excise, this Colony will be in exactly the same position as all the

other colonies, and there will then be intercolonial freetrade between this and every other colony of Australia which has joined the Federation. (Applause.) Of course, as you know, this freetrade will only apply to the goods and produce of this and the other colonies. It will not apply to the goods and produce of any other part of the world, which will only be allowed to come into this Colony on the Federal tariff established by the Federal Parliament.

Defects of the Bill.

Before I go any further, I would like to say one or two words in regard to some of the defects which, in my opinion, are in this Bill. The States, it seems to me, have been eager and desirous of conserving what they hold and of parting with nothing to the Federal Government that they could possibly avoid. I myself, however, say that, considering the political feeling which exists in all these colonies—and which I think is a very democratic feeling, and more democratic in others than in this—I think this Bill which has been constructed by the Convention is really a good Bill. It has been carefully considered, and it has this advantage—it has received the attention of some of the most able men on this continent—those who have occupied high positions in the Governments of all the other colonies and also in the Parliaments and at the Bar of the other colonies. And in my opinion, the Bill is a really good one, and quite as good as we are likely to get if we had to go over the work again. (Applause.) There are many parts of the Bill that I do not approve of, and at the Convention I voted accordingly; but, taking the Bill altogether, as I have said, I am now fairly content.

The Senate.

I do not approve of the way of appointing the Senate or Upper House. I think that if we are to have two Houses—and the general feeling is that there should be two Houses—then I do not think they should be elected in the manner proposed in this constitution. It is more radical than there is any necessity for, and I think that the placing of the whole power in the majority of the electors of the Legislative Assembly for

both Houses, and altogether avoiding any qualification for electors of members to the Upper Chamber, was not wise. It will have the effect of making the two Houses too much alike, and, to my mind, they will not have that restraining and reviewing influence which, I take it, is the main object of having two Houses. I also do not like having one electorate for the Upper House. (Hear, hear.) I do not like the idea that the Colony shall have only one electorate for the Upper House, and I fear it may not work out well. Time will however show. It seems to me it will give an undue preponderance to the larger cities and centres of population, and it will be an enticement to persons interested in elections to run candidates on "tickets." In so large a Colony, where the candidates in many cases will be personally unknown to the electors owing to their inability to visit all portions of the Colony, the electors will, it seems to me, be in the hands, to a very large extent, of the promoters of elections, and the elections will, to a large extent, be run on a ticket. Therefore I do think it will work as well as if the Colony, for the purposes of the Upper House elections, were divided into several divisions. (Applause.) Another objection which I see to the Bill as it now stands is that there is not a sufficient bond of union between the central Government and the States Government. There is a probability—and this idea is held by many of those who have gone into the matter—that the central Government, at first, at any rate, will be regarded as a kind of excrescence, and will not have the respect which should be due to it. I sought, as you all know, to get this altered, but I was not able to get my ideas carried into effect. There are other reasons which some may think stand against the adoption of this Bill at the present time by this Colony, and some of them, I must admit, are not without some force.

Is the Time Opportune.

It is said that the time is too early for Federation so far as this Colony is concerned. It is said that we have not sufficient leading men of means in our Colony to go away from us and carry on their parliamentary duties in other parts

of the continent, and that, therefore, the work will be left to those who have neither means nor occupation, but this very argument can be and is used with regard to our own present Parliamentary system. (Cheers.) The principal reason, however, that is given why the Bill should not be adopted, is that the present is not an opportune time. It is said that this is not the time for us to give up the management of our own affairs, and enter into a federal union. My own opinion of this is that it is a matter for the people themselves to judge of. (Cheers.) Everybody knows what the position is, and everybody can judge whether it is well for the Colony to remain as it is or to become federated. No one in this room is opposed to Federation in the abstract. (Cheers.) Everybody approves of the idea generally, but at the same time there are many who say that this is not an opportune time, and yet those who say this also say that they hope to see it in their lifetime. I would ask those persons to carefully examine their own minds, and ask themselves, whether they are in earnest in their professions in favour of Federation. In my opinion the people who say that the present time is not opportune for Federation will have to wait a very long time indeed before they will ever be convinced that the time is opportune. Other arguments used are those which were used by myself when the matter was being discussed, and I was endeavouring to get the best possible terms I could for our Colony, but now that the Bill has been decided upon, and we have done all we could to obtain the fairest terms possible, I see no reason to be other than satisfied with the result that has been obtained. (Cheers.)

Railway to South Australia.

One of the strongest arguments used by myself and others against our entering into the Federation, has been our isolation from the rest of Australia, but after all, that is not a matter that cannot be overcome, for in a very short time we ourselves could construct a line from the end of our present railway system to the South Australian border, a distance of only about 400 miles. (Cheers.) And what is such a work to us considering what we have done during the past few years? When we look

at the undertaking, not long since completed, of running a railway line to Menzies; a distance of something like 500 miles from Perth, what should we think of extending our railway system to the South Australian border? (Cheers.) Comparatively that would be an insignificant work. It has been said that we are doing well and are prosperous, and that under these circumstances why should we seek to alter our present position and enter into a new one? I admit we are a prosperous people, but although we are prosperous there are many advantages which we would have under Federation which we certainly cannot obtain as we are now. It is said that our industries require fostering, and it is thought we are giving up too much and that a little delay will not hurt. I am not going to say for a moment that if we delay entering into this federation for a few years that any great disaster will come upon us. I do not think it would matter very much to us whether we enter into it at once or delay it for a little longer, provided always that our nation continues at peace with the world.

Not a One-sided Business.

But the same argument that is used in regard to the prosperous condition of Western Australia in this matter, I think may very well be used by the people who reside in other parts of Australia. I deny altogether that it will be a one-sided business, and that we will have everything to lose and nothing to gain. I believe if Western Australia has any disadvantages, that the other colonies, especially the colony of New South Wales, will be found to have some, if not all, of the disadvantages we think we have. Only think of the position of New South Wales. She has enjoyed for some time free-trade with all the world, having only five items, I think, on her tariff, her natural resources are so great, her coal, her land, and her mines—in fact it seems the bounty of Providence has been great in regard to that country—she is the most flourishing of all the Australian colonies. She has a revenue of something like £10,000,000 a year—greater than some of the nations of Europe—an annual trade that amounts to nearly fifty

millions sterling, a population of nearly one-and-a-half millions, and altogether a magnificent country which she is going to federate with us, with a population of 170,000. (Cheers.) I will be able to show you later on that a rich man such as I shall liken New South Wales to, with all his great patrimony, with all his resources, all his income, will not, I think, be of opinion that he is under any obligation when he offers to federate with a young gentleman to which I shall liken Western Australia, with a smaller income as compared with him. (Cheers.) Now there is no doubt about it, that whatever decision we arrive at it is a matter which will not be all gain and no loss, or *vice versa*. We will have to take the rough with the smooth, the losses with the gains, and have faith in the future, not looking at it as it appears at the present time only, but also as it is likely to result later on. I will deal with that matter later on. (Prolonged cheers and laughter.)

My Position in regard to Federation.

Now it has been said by some of my friends that they wonder I take up the position I do in regard to this question, and I should like to explain in a few words my reasons. I was elected by Parliament to represent this Colony at the Federal Convention—for what purpose? The purpose is in the statute, in these very words—"for the purpose of framing a Federal Constitution for Australasia." I attended all the meetings of the Convention; I took part in all the discussions; I voted in all the divisions, and influenced with my vote the decisions arrived at, even where the circumstances were of little or no interest, as far as I could see, to this Colony; I did not say at any time—I did not say when I was leaving—that I was dissatisfied with the Bill as passed—in fact I rather acquiesced in it. I was not at the last sitting, but had I been there I would have said we had done well, and had passed a Bill which I thought would generally commend itself to the people of Australia. All through those discussions and meetings I did my very best for Western Australia. I tried to get the fairest terms I could for the Colony, and that being the case I can't

make myself believe I should be acting properly or honourably, if, after we had finished our labours, after I had taken part in the discussions and influenced decisions, I were to come back and say to the people of this Colony that the Bill we had passed, and to which I had given my acquiescence, was such a bad Bill that I would not even allow it to be submitted to the people of this Colony. (Hear, hear.) I don't think it would be acting fairly towards the representative men of Australia with whom I was associated in that Convention, therefore I have decided to take the course of asking the Parliament of this Colony when it meets to approve of the Bill and submit it for the verdict of the people of this country. (Prolonged cheers.) The Parliament of this Colony passed an Enabling Bill authorising the representation of the Colony at the Convention and directed us to frame a Federal Constitution for the whole of Australia. We went there and did our best, and appeared to be satisfied. We have done the work, and my duty is, that having done what I was asked to do, and not having disapproved of the Bill at the finish, my duty is to try and obtain the verdict of the people upon it, calmly and deliberately, and when there is no other excitement. (Applause.) If any delegate from Parliament says he is opposed to Federation, he should be asked, "Why did you go to the Convention? (Applause.) He had no right to be at the Convention and take part in its deliberations unless he was in favour of Federation." Every one of the delegates must have been in favour of Federation or he would not have submitted himself for election, and I would like those Delegates who are now opposed to it to explain what sort of Bill would have satisfied them?—but instead of doing this, all I have heard them say is, "It is a good Bill, and I am prepared to accept it in a few years time." But, surely, that time must not be too remote, in order to keep faith with the people of Australia. (Applause.) We may be certain that whatever difficulties surround the question at the present time—and there are difficulties—still, if we desire Federation, and in a short time, in three, or four, or five years would be willing to accept it, I make bold to say that the difficulties

will not be less than they are at the present time. We talk very glibly, all of us, when we get a chance—(laughter)—about Federation, and it is a common thing to hear people talk of the federation of the English-speaking race. (Applause.) But when we come to close quarters, those very persons who are so anxious to federate with the English-speaking race seem to be unwilling to federate with their own countrymen, inhabiting countries as well off or even better off than we are ourselves. (Hear, hear.)

Financial Considerations.

I am coming now to a more important matter perhaps in the eyes of some. I am coming to the "£ s. d." part of the question. (Laughter.) The first question asked of me in regard to this question by many persons whom I meet is, "What will we lose by it in pounds, shillings, and pence?" Then the next question is, "What will we gain by it in pounds, shillings, and pence?" These are important questions and must be fully considered, as we all know very well that we cannot live on the air, and we are therefore bound to look to the material interests. Still, for all that, there are other questions besides pounds, shillings and pence in regard to these matters, perhaps not so important to some, but still very important indeed, as I will show. Surely there is some question of love of country. (Applause.) Surely there is a question of duty to the Empire which we all say we are proud to belong to. (Cheers.) Surely there should be some idea in our minds of future greatness, some desire in our minds to be a power in the world in the future, and there certainly should be in our minds a desire to be self-sufficing in our own defence. (Applause.) The question of what we will lose is not asked in regard to a few years hence, but is asked in regard to the present moment—"What will we lose at the present time?" As I just now said, the practical part must be thoroughly investigated and looked into, as we cannot live on sentiment—(Hear, hear)—but I think this, that we must not allow our eyes to be blinded by only looking at the "£ s. d." side of the question as it appears at this moment, though

we certainly ought to look at the question as it is likely to affect us in the very near future. (Applause.) But I will deal with it from the "£ s. d." and also other points of view. What will we lose? We all know that we will lose one-fourth, at the most, of the Customs and excise revenue. One-fourth of the Customs and excise revenue which this Colony collects can be taken, if necessary, by the Federal Government to be used for Federal purposes—for our own purposes as well as for the purposes of the other colonies. It will be used for administering the Federal Government, and it will not be used for works in other colonies any more than for works in this Colony. People say that in 1897 £380,000 was paid by the people of this Colony for duty on intercolonial produce, and that we shall lose it all. The people of this Colony will not lose a penny of this amount, though the Treasury will not receive it in course of time, but they forget to say that, under this Bill, the Treasury will not lose any of it for three years, and not all of it for four years longer—seven years in all. (Cheers.)

The Producers' Interests.

We are trying by every means in our power to increase the production of this country, and the more we increase this production the less revenue there will be from the source of intercolonial produce. (Hear, hear.) It has generally been said that, if we give the producers a few years (being a protectionist I have tried to protect the interests of the Colony for a time—I don't say for ever) the Colony will be self-supporting; and as soon as we are self-supporting everyone can see that no revenue will be received from the goods we produce ourselves, which during 1897 came from the Eastern colonies, and on which £380,000 was paid as duty. (Hear, hear.) People won't bring produce to a place where there is plenty of the same article already. (Applause.) You do not hear of coal being shipped to Newcastle—(laughter)—and you will not find flour, chaff, meat, etc., coming to this Colony unless there is a demand for them. What we believe is, that in a few years we will be able to produce enough in this Colony to keep ourselves; and, therefore, that even without Federation

and intercolonial freetrade, the revenue from intercolonial produce will to a very large extent cease. (Applause.) Now, if we take away this tariff question—if we leave it out of sight for the moment—what are the objections to Federation? The whole of the objections to Federation, as far as I can learn, are concerning the tariff. The tariff is the "lion in the path," for if we were self-supporting, and produced more than we required for ourselves, the objections that there are to Federation would, I believe, all vanish. (Applause.)

Intercolonial Freetrade.

I should like to ask everyone to consider, and to be very careful not to unduly magnify the disadvantages of intercolonial freetrade. Some people, I know, desire intercolonial freetrade, and will be glad when the day for it arrives, but to those who think otherwise I ask not to unduly magnify the disadvantages which will arise when there is intercolonial freetrade. There is a good deal of sentiment about it. If I use arguments to prove my case now, I hope my friends will not misrepresent me when I am on another "tack"—(laughter and cheers)—for I desire to be consistent—(laughter)—because I am a thorough protectionist of products, but with only one object, that we shall be self-supporting, and that by that means cheapen these products rather than for ever be dependent on the labour of the people of other countries to supply us with the very food we eat. (Cheers.) We will not always, I suppose, be dependent upon other people for what we require. (Hear, hear.) When we can produce sufficient for ourselves the present duties will be inoperative, as competition within the Colony will be exactly the same in effect as competition from without. Besides, we have some exports of our own already. We have a great product here in timber, which we cannot send to other colonies because there is a considerable tax on it; but when the door is thrown open, no doubt we will find a great market for it there. (Applause.) And we can all see that for ever there must be an advantage to the producer of this Colony; even whatever happens, there must be this advantage,

that there will be the freight and charges, which will always operate in favour of the local producer. (Applause.) Then we must also think a little of the other man besides the producer. We must think of the consumer. (Applause.) He generally has a good deal to say, I think—(laughter)—but at the same time he is fairly entitled to have his say too. (Hear, hear.)

Protection only Temporary.

I have no doubt that those who deal with this question from their side of the picture have calculated on last year's statistics, and may be able to make out a fairly good case against Federation at the present time. But is that a good and reasonable way of dealing with the question? Is the same state of affairs that existed in 1897 likely to continue in this Colony? Is it reasonable that it should? (Cries of "No," and applause.) Is it reasonable to expect that we will for long continue to receive £6 per head through the Customs when other countries only receive about £2, or a little over? (Cheers.) That state of affairs, we know very well, cannot continue when our population is made up of the usual proportion of men, women, and children. Seeing that we have a tariff not higher than the tariff of the other colonies (in fact, it is lower), seeing that we have the same class of people in this Colony as in the other colonies, you may depend upon it that the revenue produced from these persons will not be very dissimilar from the revenue produced from the same class of people in the other colonies. (Cheers.) The reason why we have raised so much revenue has been that our population has been composed of such a large proportion of adult men, who, of course, use a much greater quantity of dutiable articles, including intoxicants and tobacco—(laughter)—than the same number of people—men, women, and children—in other parts of Australia. In a few years' time, however, if we go on occupying and improving the land as we are at the present time; if our production be increased—as we believe and hope it will be increased—where will this £380,000 be which we received in 1897 from duties on intercolonial products? It will not be in the Treasury from that source, and consequently will

be a gain to the people, and in their collective pocket, and some reasonable plan—somewhat difficult, I must say—will no doubt be devised to get it out of the people's pockets. (Cheers and laughter.)

Sentiment and Competition.

As I have already said, there is a good deal of sentiment about the expression that we often hear used, that we cannot compete with the other colonies. (Hear, hear.) I can well understand that if the conditions are not equal it is difficult to compete, but we are not going to have conditions unequal for ever. In a few years time the conditions will not be so unequal, and then I think we certainly ought to expect that the producers of this Colony should be able to compete with the producers—our own fellow-countrymen—on the other side of Australia. This year we can compete in chaff, and at the present time, I believe, we can compete in meat—if we except chilled meat. I think also we can this year compete in potatoes, for we have had a good season, while the other colonies have not had such a good one. There is another thing. This idea of competition has a good deal of sentiment about it sometimes. The grazier who feeds his cattle near Guildford or Gingin does not object to competition from Kimberley, which is about a couple of thousand miles away, because it is in our own Colony, but he does object to competition from Adelaide, which is only one thousand miles away, though the competition is the same in each case. I have, I think, already pointed out that the freetrade that will exist after seven years is only in regard to intercolonial produce, and that it does not apply to produce from other parts of the world.

What will we Gain?

The next question is, What will we gain by Federation? With respect to our present tariff—and I would like the very careful attention of some of my friends who have been cheering some of my remarks to this—I do not think they will cheer so much—(laughter)—though I hope they will—(renewed laughter)—if we are going to federate, if we agree in a few months to federate with the rest of Australia, it will be altogether

foolish for us to interfere with our existing tariff, because it will come to an end itself in regard to importations from places beyond the limits of this Colony so soon as the Federal tariff comes into force; and in regard to intercolonial products, in about seven years time by the operation of the sliding scale provided in the Bill.

An Untouched Tariff.

Our tariff will thus not be touched for seven years in regard to intercolonial produce, except by an annual reduction of 20 per cent., by the operation of the sliding scale after about three years. I think there is no one—and I make this statement deliberately and fearlessly, who is earnestly desirous of federation who should wish to tinker with the existing tariff now. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) We shall, therefore, under Federation, have the present tariff in the interests of the producers and farmers, whose interests I am trying to protect. And will not this be a gain to them? Will not this be a gain to the farmers and graziers? Will they not have for three years longer their present protection untouched, or nearly three years? Will they not have for that period the present tariff untouched, and, after that, a sliding scale of 20 per cent. reduction for five more years? I would ask those men, those farmers and graziers and other producers—my friends—“Will not this be a gain to you? Will you have this protection so long without Federation?” (Hear, hear.) I ask them—“Will you have it so long without Federation?” (Cries of “No, no.”) Well, I do not know. (Laughter.) At any rate it is uncertain. But under Federation it is certain that they will have a sure three years of the present tariff, and four years of a gradually reducing tariff until it is extinguished. I ask the producers of this Colony to think this matter out for themselves, and judge for themselves, and decide accordingly. (Hear, hear.)

The Question of Defence.

Next I will come to the question of defence, and of our fortifications. The Federal Parliament have undertaken, solemnly bound themselves to defend all portions of the Commonwealth from invasion, and Fremantle, Albany, and other towns of importance such as

Geraldton and Bunbury—(laughter and prolonged cheers)—will have to be fortified—(cheers)—by the Federal Government, and those fortifications will have to be manned and maintained by the Federal Government, because section 118 of the Commonwealth Bill says that the Government *shall* protect—there is no *may* about it—“shall protect every State against invasion, and on application of the State from domestic violence.” And surely that will be a great advantage when we consider our long and unprotected coast, absolutely undefended, at the mercy of any privateer from the weakest nation, who could easily come and blow us up. (Cheers and laughter.) And yet we know that the fortification of this portion of Australia is at present scarcely possible, owing to our having so many other pressing works to attend to. Surely there is a gain there. But it is said, and in fact I have said it myself, that Great Britain, the mother land, will protect us. So she will as long as she is able to, but do not let us be lulled into fancied security. We do not know but that the mother country will have enough to do in other places, and may not be able to do what she would wish in regard to us. (Applause.) Let us be up ourselves and look this matter straight in the face and deal with it. Not far from us are the Philippine Islands, which were better protected than we are, for they had fortifications there. They have had a rude awakening. We can easily imagine that even worse may happen to us than happened to them. We have what we are all so proud of—I am proud of it—we have the glorious heritage of being Britons, and we have to follow the fortunes of our mother land for good or for ill. I think I have shown that in regard to defences this Colony has a great deal to gain, for I have shown that the Commonwealth will have to incur large expenditure in regard to the defence of this part of Australia.

The Public Debts.

There is another matter we will receive benefit from, that is the consolidation of our public debts. As our debts fall due the Commonwealth will be able to negotiate new loans at a very much less price than we will have to pay if

we remain a separate State. That is one of the reasons why I think everyone who knows anything about the finances of Australia looks forward with so much satisfaction to the time when there will be Australian consols, with the security of the whole of Australia at their back. Australian consols will be better security and will bring better prices. No one can say that "Australia" at the back of a bill will not be better than a single colony, and it must therefore be apparent to all fair-minded persons that Federation must strengthen the financial position of all these Australian colonies.

Some Losses that are Gains.

Then we have to give up the postal and telegraph services. Some people think this a terrible hardship. I should know something about it. In 1897 we lost £100,000 over the telegraphs and posts, and the present year we are losing £50,000 over them. There will therefore not be very much to lament about at the present time because we hand over the postal services to the Federal Government. Then we will have to hand over the quarantine and lighthouses. I do not think we will lose much by that. External affairs we will have to hand over also. They entail a dead loss. We are not going to give up any of the great sources of revenue, leaving out the Customs, of which we get three-fourths back. We are not giving up control of our gold mines, or of our lands, or of our railways. We have the same as we have now—our mines, our lands, and our railways all intact. We have all the powers of self-government which are material to us. I have told you the powers we are giving up. All the powers necessary for our material growth and prosperity are still ours in the same way as at the present time. Of course, I have told you that the Commonwealth has the power of taxation over everything on this Australian continent, and if it requires money for war, for defence, or any other purpose—that is, a Federal purpose—by this Bill it would be able to tax everything in these colonies for that purpose. I hope, and I believe too, that taxation of that sort will not be resorted to for a long time, and for a very good reason in

regard of the other colonies, because they have already explored many of the avenues of taxation. You may depend upon it that the principal source of revenue for the Commonwealth for a long time will be through the Customs. We will not have the whole of our Customs revenue, but not less than three-quarters of it, and in return we will have a great many things done for us by the Federal Government. We must not forget that all our borrowing powers are reserved to us, and cannot be interfered with by the Federal Parliament without our consent.

Avoid Parochialism.

I think that we are all apt to think too much of our own individual case in dealing with this great question. The man who has produce to sell generally only thinks of how to get a good price for it, and he seldom gives much attention to the man who has to buy it, and *vice versa*. There is no doubt that parochialism has a tight hold upon many of us. We all know that it is not a good thing to be narrow-minded or selfish, but still, for all that, we know that it has a tight hold upon many of us, and if we are not careful it will strangle liberal thought and freedom of us. (Applause and laughter.) There are always in every community people who take narrow views, and who scoff at those who, they think, are too broad-minded or too visionary, and they say, "We are practical men; we have borne the heat and burden of the day; you don't know anything about it, and are too visionary." Although I am not saying a word against them, mind you—(laughter)—because they are useful people, and it would not do for everyone to be of one mind. We want a leavening of men of that stamp, but on the other hand we must be careful not to "take the rustic murmur of our bourg for the great wave that echoes round the world," and we may depend upon this, that exclusiveness will never make a great country, and to help the few at the expense of the many must be only a very temporary expedient. (Applause.)

Some great Examples.

If we were commencing this business *de novo*—if the Australian Colonies were about to federate on their own account,

without any example before them, well some people might say, "Let us be careful; we are taking a leap in the dark." In fact people say now we are taking a leap in the dark, notwithstanding the great examples we have before us—the living examples—of countries that have federated and prospered. Now, we have two great examples, and from their experience we have good hope of success in our enterprise. We have the example of the United States of America—an immense country (applause)—larger even than Australia, which has grown up under the federal form of government. Its constitution was made so elastic that it could expand, and it has expanded in such a marvellous manner until that country in a little over 100 years has become one of the great nations of the world. (Applause.) There they have freetrade within their borders from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. While they place restrictions on trade with other parts of the world, they have no restriction on their own internal trade and commerce. But there is a better example for us than even the United States. There is the example of the Dominion of Canada, a country which had within it elements not so favourably circumstanced perhaps for Federation as Australia, by reason of the fact that it was peopled by two races—the English and the French. That might have been thought an obstacle, but we find that after having been separate self-governing colonies for a long time such as we are in Australia at present, the various provinces of Canada came together, and were federated, and they are now federated from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans, with free intercourse and freetrade throughout the whole of that dominion. Under Federation Canada has increased in wealth, and power, and influence, and is now fast becoming a nation. And what is strangest of all—and I think it will be the same with us—in a very short space of time the people of Canada have almost forgotten all about their ever having been separate and independent colonies. I have had many opportunities of meeting persons connected with the political life of Canada, and I have travelled through that country, and I have been assured that

they never think or talk about having been separate colonies, and that the fact is almost forgotten. (Applause.) And I have heard it stated by prominent persons that there is not one person in the whole of Canada who would be found desirous of going back to the old state of things. (Loud applause.) This great accomplishment of Canada then, I think, gives us great hope and faith in the enterprise in which we are now engaged.

Joining a Partnership.

And there is this to remember—that we are joining a partnership with five other colonies, and that two at least of those colonies are much stronger than we are. We are one of the three junior partners in the great firm. Surely that is not a thing that we should regret. If you were asked to join a partnership with five others, and if two of the partners were much richer than you were, I do not think that you would believe that you would be conferring a very great benefit on the richer of your partners by joining the partnership. I believe you would think that with the new advantages offered to you by the increase of capital and the increase of prestige, the way would be open for you to do better than you had been doing in the past. (Hear, hear.)

A Gain in Importance.

There is another reason which, I think, will appeal to a good many, and especially to those who have had anything to do with political life, and who desire to see the political life of the country exalted. There is, I think, scarcely one person who will say that the political life of Australia will not be dignified under the Federal form of Government; and it is certain that under Federation we shall occupy a higher plane in the world's opinion. We no doubt think ourselves important people, but beyond the limits of this continent there are very few people who know anything about us. (Loud laughter.) I was once travelling from here to South Australia. It is a long while ago—28 years ago, I am sorry to say—and I came to a shearing shed in the Gawler Ranges, between Port Augusta and Streaky Bay, and I said to the first man I met that I had come from Western

Australia with a small party of explorers. He said to me, "Where is Western Australia? Is it in Queensland?" (Loud laughter.) Well, things have changed since then. We occupy a higher and far better place on the continent of Australia than we did at that time, I am glad to say, and we are fast growing in wealth and importance. But for all that, amongst the nations of the world and the great people of the world, I believe we are not very well known even now. That being so, do you not think that by joining the other great colonies of Australia in this Federation we will occupy a higher plane in the world's opinion and be lifted up to a higher and nobler sense of our responsibilities? We will not then feel that we have to place our whole dependence for our safety on the mother country, and continue for all time tied to her apron strings; but on the other hand we will recognise that we have a responsibility to ourselves and to the grand old mother land to which we are all so proud to belong. (Applause.) With the early days of nationhood upon our shoulders, we will, I feel certain, be more self-reliant, and realise more fully our responsibilities.

The Stages of the Bill.

I am not able to-night to review the whole of this Bill. I have, however, tried to deal with the more important parts of the measure, and I hope I have been fair and not too much of an advocate, for I desire to respect the opinions of others. There are many sides to this question, and one would be vain indeed if one arrogated all wisdom in regard to it to one's self. I would ask "Shall we federate with our fellow colonists of Australia now?" or "Shall we delay a little time?" Very few persons go so far as to say they do not desire federation at all, and the people of this Colony will be able to judge whether waiting a little time is really necessary, and whether it would be worthy of the great cause we have in hand. (Applause.) I may point out that all the other colonies of Australia will have given their decision as to whether they will federate or not before our Parliament will have an opportunity of dealing with it, and unless

the people of New South Wales accept the Bill this Colony will not be able to do so. I would like to state, before I conclude, the different stages which this Bill has to pass through before it can be assented to by Her Majesty. It has first of all to be approved of by both Houses of Parliament in this Colony. It then has to be passed by a majority of the electors who vote on it, and there must not be less than 6,000 voters in the affirmative. I myself think—and I make this statement because I desire that we shall only have Federation when the people require it—that the circumstances have changed very considerably since the Legislature decided that there should be at least 6,000 affirmative votes recorded in this Colony before the Bill can be adopted. There are now 40,000 electors, I am informed, on the rolls of the Legislative Assembly, and I really do not think that 6,000 voting for the Bill, out of such a number, is sufficient to obtain the will of the people. I mean that the voting of that number cannot fairly be considered as the voice of the electors of this Colony. After the Bill has been passed by both Houses of Parliament and approved of by the people, it will have to be again submitted to Parliament for both Houses to decide whether it shall be forwarded to England for the assent of Her Majesty the Queen.

Concluding Remarks.

I have nearly come to the end of what I have to say. I am not going to assert that there will be no drawbacks for there must be many, but I think there will be also many advantages, and I believe there will be advantages that we do not at present see. (Cheers.) Let us remember that all knowledge is not vested in you or in me. We must not forget that the great minds in the mother country and in Australia desire this Federation. (Loud cheers.) And why? Because they know that "union is strength." (Cheers.) These great men in the mother country and in Australia think they see into the future, and it may be they fear trouble and difficulty. There is no doubt that we live in a time of change, and that difficulties and troubles have to be provided against.

The time has been when the world in arms has been arrayed against our country, and danger and trouble will come again as sure as the night follows the day. Should we not be prepared for dark days rather than slumber in fancied security? Looking at this matter from the standpoint of experience, from the standpoint of safety, from the standpoint of financial stability, or from the standpoint of patriotism for our own Australian land and for the mother country, we should not, I think, miss this opportunity of trying to knit and weave together more and more closely the interests of the people of this vast continent—a continent encircled by the sea, the whole of it belonging to our own nation, no other flag but the flag of old England having any right to fly over it. Surely, I think, we shall be wanting in our duty not only to ourselves, but also

to those who are to come after us, if we refuse the great opportunity which I believe will be offered to us of joining with the people of the whole of Australia in one everlasting federation. (Loud applause.) I will conclude in the patriotic words of a distinguished lady, the wife of a former Governor of New South Wales, in reference to the union of Australia:—

“ Let us, when heart has responded to heart,
 The future in calmness abide;
 Let us, when hand has with hand taken part,
 Fear God, and fear nothing beside.
 Our Queen has the keys of an Empire to
 keep,
 Where sets and where rises the sun,
 Our brothers, her wardens, are lords of the
 deep—
 One people, our destiny one.”

(Loud and long continued applause.)



