

# **Official Report of the Federation Conference**

**held in the Courthouse, Corowa 1893**

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## **Source Text:**

**Official Report of the Federation Conference**

**Held in the Court-House, Corowa, on Monday, 31st July, and  
Tuesday, 1st August, 1893**

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## **Preface.**

IT has been represented to me that a short account of the Federation movement in the Borderland which led to the calling together of the first popular gathering in favour of Australian Unity, and of the Convention itself, will form an appropriate preface to the Official Report of the proceedings, and may be of interest hereafter.

In December, 1892, the Hon. Edmund Barton, the Attorney-General of New South Wales, paid a missionary visit to Corowa and Albury, and addressed public meetings in both towns on Federation, being very well received in each place. At that time he threw out a hint that a League, to be formed among the people on both sides of the Murray on strictly non-political lines, would undoubtedly prove of great assistance to the movement, and would materially strengthen the hands of Federationists at head-quarters in both colonies.

Early in January, 1893, Corowa and Albury made an almost simultaneous move in the direction suggested. Leagues were formed in both towns, and at once became affiliated under the title of "The Australian Federation League." A large number of those interested in both towns enrolled themselves as members, and the movement spread rapidly, insomuch that by the end of May there were 15 branches in existence, and scarcely any town or township of any magnitude in the valley of the Murray was unrepresented.

Early in June the idea occurred to the committee of the branch of the league at Berrigan (a township in New South Wales some way north from the Murray) that a Conference of delegates from all the then existing branches of the League would be a means of ascertaining the views and wishes of the people, and bringing the movement into prominence.

The idea was at once acted on, and after some discussion Corowa was selected as the place of meeting, on account of its central position and its accessibility by road or rail to the majority of the branches concerned. The committee of the Corowa branch at once took up the notion warmly, and worked energetically to make the meeting a success.

Several statesmen from the ranks of those known to be favourable to the movement in both colonies were invited in order to make the demonstration as imposing as possible; but it was never intended that the gathering should be of a political character, and, in consequence, invitations were not issued indiscriminately. The enforced absence from Australia of the Attorney-General (who had expressed strong sympathy with the project) on account of his breakdown in health, was felt to be a misfortune, but the members for The Hume, the Hon. W. J. Lyne (Minister for Works) and Mr. James Hayes, as well as the members for the neighbouring electorates, assisted the committee as far as possible, and arranged for the running of a special train from Sydney. Great interest in the meeting was manifested in Melbourne, and the Premier of Victoria, the Hon. J. B. Patterson, and the leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Sir Graham Berry, K.C.M.G., organised a Victorian Parliamentary party, a "Conference"

special train being run from Melbourne to Wahgunyah railway station. Upwards of 90 persons, members of the Victorian Legislature and prominent Melbourne citizens availed themselves of this opportunity and visited Corowa.

The Hon. R. O'Connor (Minister for Justice for New South Wales) granted the use of the Corowa Courthouse for the Conference, and its spacious dimensions and convenient accessories proved a material boon to the delegates assembled.

The Conference held its first sitting on Monday morning, the 31st July, and either then or subsequently 74 delegates signed the secretary's roll and took their seats. Of these 43 were direct deputies from the branches of the League, and the remaining 31 attended as representatives of other bodies and associations. Both Sydney and Melbourne were prominent in their choice of delegates, and otherwise the area of country represented extended from Cootamundra in the north, to Beechworth in the east, thence to Bendigo in the south, and Mildura in the west.

On Monday night a crowded public meeting was held, at which resolutions in favour of the immediate union of Australia were proposed and spoken to by the Ministerialists in attendance and other politicians, and carried unanimously amidst enthusiastic cheering.

On Tuesday, the 1st August, the proceedings at the Conference were very animated, and resolutions (1) affirming the principle of a Federated Australasia, and declaring that the time was now ripe for immediate action, and (2) enunciating the objects and programme of the League (the title of which was fixed as The Australasian Federation League) were spoken to by many of the delegates, and carried without a dissentient voice, with loud cheers.

It soon became evident that the Australian Natives' Association was strongly represented at the Conference, and that the views expressed by that body met with general acquiescence. In consequence of this some divergence of opinion arose between the advocates of free trade generally and those who favoured a free interchange of colonial products only, and a resolution approving of the latter was finally, and after some discussion, adopted.

The tone of the Conference was unmistakably business-like throughout. There was little or no discursive speaking, and no interruption. At the close of the Fourth Session, on Tuesday evening, the President (Mr. B. B. Nicoll, M.L.A., of Sydney, President of the A.N.A., Sydney,) received a hearty vote of thanks for the ability and tact with which he had discharged his office, and the Vice-presidents (who were for the most part residents of the district), and Messrs. Wilson and Laphorne, received a like token of appreciation.

On Tuesday evening the Hon. A. J. Peacock (Member for Clunes and Allandale in the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, and late Minister for Education,) delivered before a crowded and enthusiastic meeting an address which, with his sanction, has been printed as an Appendix to this Report (see Appendix B.) The hon. gentlemen met with the heartiest reception, and it is not too much to say that his eloquence and practicality, and his "grip" of his subject brought the importance of the great question of Australian union home to his audience in a way which surprised many of them. It was felt that his address was one of the

most important features of the gathering.

On Wednesday, the 16th August, the Hon. Sir Henry Parkes, G.C.M.G., (who had been prevented by other engagements from being among the visitors to the Conference) delivered an address in Corowa, which by his permission is also added to this Report. (See Appendix A.) Sir Henry Parkes, one of the most consistent supporters of the movement in Australia, visited Corowa at the invitation of the Corowa branch of the League, and by his patriotic and statesmanlike utterances did much to strengthen the good impression caused by the previous demonstration.

EDWARD WILSON,

*Hon. Sec. to Conference, and to Corowa Branch, A.F.L. Corowa, 21th August, 1893.*

## **Delegates.**

### **Branches of the Australasian Federation League.**

THE following delegates signed the roll and took their seats on behalf of their respective branches or associations, either at the commencement of the proceedings or subsequently:—

ALBURY—J. Wilkinson, M.L.A., T. Whitaker.

COROWA—Alex. A. Piggin, C. T. Brewer, F. C. Piggin, Edward Wilson, W. A. Clifton, Rev. W. Clarke Hose, George H. Willis.

BERRIGAN—E. J. Gorman, Ernest Laphorne, Dr. Towle, W. D. Drummond.

MULWALA—James Sloane, R. M'Geoch, A. Camplin.

WAHGUNYAH—George S. Smith, James Thorp, George G. Haig, F. P. Whitford.

RUTHERGLEN—W. Taylor, Roderick Kilborn, Allan K. Buckley, Charles O'Grady.

DENILQUIN—A. Jameson.

MOAMA—G. H. Berryman.

SAVERNAKE—D. Gorman, E. D. O'Dwyer.

WODONGA—F. W. Edmondson, John G. Shields.

YARRAWONGA—D. Arnott, M. C. M. Crockett, James Holland.

ECHUCA—D. Stretton.

TOCUMWAL—Andrew R. Brown, Harold P. Whitty.

SYDNEY—R. R. Garran, E. W. O'Sullivan, M.L.A.,

MILDURA—A. J. Peacock, M.L.A.

HOWLONG—W. H. Easterby, H. Bromfield, A. O. Boyle.

KOONDROOK AND BARHAM—J. M. Chanter, M.L.A.

### **Other Associations.**

A.N.A. NUMURKAH—George Russell.

COBRAM PROGRESS ASSOCIATION—Edgar F. Pigott.

A.N.A. MELBOURNE BOARD OF DIRECTORS—Herbert Barrett, vice-president.

A.N.A., SYDNEY—B. B. Nicoll, M.L.A., president, Edward Dowling, hon. sec.

YOUNG VICTORIAN PATRIOTIC LEAGUE, MELBOURNE—F. M. Harricks, W. R. Church.

GERMANTON PROGRESS COMMITTEE—A. B. Brown, John Ross, H. Bridson, Alex. Ross.

UNITED SHIRE OF BEECHWORTH—James Warner.

A.N.A., BENDIGO—John Quick, J. B. Young.

TOOMA PROGRESS COMMITTEE—P. S. Mitchell.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, MELBOURNE—B. Cowderoy, president, C.

Hallett.

IMPERIAL FEDERATION LEAGUE, MELBOURNE—H. D'E. Taylor, O. C. Thomas.

PROTECTION, LIBERAL, AND FEDERATION LEAGUE, MELBOURNE—W. J. Lormer, W. Maloney, M.L.A., James Cook, S. Barker.

COOTAMUNDRA MUNICIPALITY—John J. Miller.

CHAMBER OF MANUFACTURERS, MELBOURNE—C. H. Grondona.

A.N.A., No. 1 BRANCH, MELBOURNE—William Rain.

A.N.A., CLIFTON HILL, MELBOURNE—R. Hemmings.

COMMERCIAL TRAVELLERS' ASSOCIATION, MELBOURNE—W. A. Morris, vice-president.

PROGRESSIVE POLITICAL LEAGUE, MELBOURNE—G. M. Prendergast, president.

Seventy-four in all.

## **Monday's Proceedings.**



**Monday, July 31, 1893.**

**Election of Chairman.**

It was mentioned that the morning session was to be devoted to preliminary business in making arrangements as to order of procedure for the Conference, and this being so, it was necessary to appoint a chairman *pro tem*. It was agreed unanimously that Mr. J. Wilkinson, M.L.A., of Albury, be appointed to the position. The gentleman named took his seat at the head of the table, and in doing so expressed his gratification at the honour (an unexpected one he might say) conferred on him. He congratulated Mr. Laphorne, secretary of the League at Berrigan, upon having originated the idea of the Conference, and also the branch at Corowa, and its able and energetic secretary, Mr. Edward Wilson, for the assistance rendered in organizing the meeting the result of which they saw that day in the large assemblage of business men he saw before him. (Hear, hear.) He could not help but believe that excellent and wide-spread results would follow from such a gathering as the present. (Hear, hear.)

**Appointment of President and Officers.**

This was proceeded with, and resulted as follows:—President, Mr. B. B. Nicoll, M.L.A., Sydney; Vice-Presidents, Messrs. J. Wilkinson, M.L.A., E. J. Gorman, A. Jameson, and Dr. Quick.

Mr. GORMAN proposed that Mr. E. Laphorne be elected to the position of honorary secretary to the Conference, and in doing so referred to the steps taken by that gentleman, and the hard work done by him in the cause of Federation.—Dr. QUICK seconded the motion.

Mr. JAMESON had pleasure in proposing that Mr. Edward Wilson be appointed, at the same time referring in terms of a complimentary nature to Mr. Wilson's labours in bringing the Conference to its already successful issue.—Mr. KILBORN seconded the amendment.

Mr. BREWER pointed out the fact that Mr. Wilson was peculiarly fitted for the position of Secretary to the Conference, inasmuch as he had all the details connected therewith at his finger's ends, including the long list of correspondence which would be made use of during the two days' gathering.

Mr. LAPHORNE mentioned that he had no desire whatever to usurp the position, and he was quite willing to withdraw in favour of Mr. Wilson. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. WILSON suggested that Mr. Lapthorne might be appointed assistant secretary, as he (Mr. Wilson) felt certain that Mr. Lapthorne would prove of great assistance to him during the proceedings.

The motion appointing Mr. Wilson secretary was carried, and Mr. Wilson briefly responded.

Mr. H. P. WHITTY then proposed the appointment of Mr. Lapthorne as assistant secretary.

This motion was also carried, Mr. Lapthorne thanking the delegates for the honour conferred, and stating that he would endeavour to carry out the duties pertaining to the office with satisfaction to the Conference.

Messrs. G. H. Willis, G. H. Smith, and C. T. Brewer were appointed a Finance Committee, and Mr. A. A. Piggin was appointed treasurer.

### **Expenses.**

Mr. A. JAMESON (Deniliquin) moved—"That the expenses connected with the advertising and holding of the Conference, and the Demonstration connected therewith, shall be defrayed from a general fund, to be called the Conference Fund, and such expenses shall be borne in equal shares by all branches of the league which shall be represented at the Conference. A memorandum to this effect shall be prepared, and signed by one delegate from each branch on behalf of such branch, and handed to the Treasurer." The mover did not consider that the motion required speaking to, or that any discussion would arise thereon. So far as he was personally concerned he felt satisfied that the district which he represented would be quite willing to bear their share of the expenses in the matter.—The motion was seconded.

Mr. GORMAN moved as an amendment—"That a levy of 10s be made on each delegate."—Mr. O'DWYER seconded.

Mr. PIGGIN ventured to think that the different societies, associations and organisations who had despatched delegates to the Conference would not object to bear their share of the expense, and he thought Mr. Jameson's proposition a reasonable one.

It was suggested that the agreement partook too much of the "joint and several" order, and one or two delegates remarked that they had had enough of that sort of thing.

A delegate enquired as to what the amount of the expenses was likely to be.

Mr. WILSON replied by saying that he estimated the expenses at about £60, which would include printing, advertising, rent of hall, service, postage, telegrams, clerical assistance, &c.

Mr. JAMESON expressed regret at so much time being lost over what he considered to be a trivial matter. So far as Deniliquin was concerned he felt satisfied that it would raise no objection to bearing its share of the expense. (Hear, hear.)

Seven votes were recorded in favour of the amendment, and the motion was declared carried.

### **Control of Financial Affairs.**

The following motion was agreed to without discussion:—"The Finance Committee shall have absolute control of the financial affairs of the Conference and Demonstration."

### **First Day's Sitting.**

A resolution dealing with this matter was agreed to, as follows:—"After the delegates have decided the necessary preliminaries there shall be an adjournment until 2 p.m., and the Conference shall sit until 4 p.m., to permit of the reception of the Victorian Parliamentary party, which will arrive at 4-15 p.m."

### **Time of Sitting.**

It was agreed that the morning session of the Conference should be from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., and the afternoon session from 2 p.m to 5-30 p.m.

### **Nature of Discussion.**

It was also agreed that the Conference should be conducted free of party or political influences, and that the President should have power to rule anything of a party nature out of order.

### **Delegate Wishing to Speak.**

A motion to the following effect was upon the paper:—"Any delegate wishing to speak to a resolution shall send up his card, or name on a slip of paper, to the President, who shall then call upon such delegate in due course."

It was considered by several of the delegates in attendance that such a motion would have the effect of putting a stop to legitimate speech, also that it would be quite unnecessary to send up a card as proposed. Such a course was opposed to Parliamentary procedure. On the other hand it was

contended that the cases were totally different, inasmuch as the Speaker in the Legislative Assembly, and the President in the Legislative Council, were acquainted with all the members, whereas in the present case a great number of the gentlemen in attendance would be total strangers to the Chairman.

Mr. GORMAN expressed himself as being averse to the proposal.

Mr. H. D'E. TAYLOR favoured it, and expressed the opinion that such a motion would have the effect of shortening speeches.

Mr. JAMESON moved, Mr. O'DWYER seconded, and it was carried—"That the motion be exised."

### **Taking of Votes.**

The following was agreed to:—"All votes shall in the first place be decided upon the voices, but if the chairman's ruling be challenged a show of hands shall be taken."

### **Rules of Debate.**

Regarding debate, the Conference decided that the rules of Parliamentary debate should be adhered to, and that no speaker other than the mover and seconder of a resolution should speak for longer than seven minutes without the consent of the President, who would signal the conclusion of such seven minutes by the ringing of a bell.

An adjournment was then made for lunch.

The Conference resumed its sittings at 2.15 p.m.

Mr. B. B. NICOLL took the chair amidst hearty applause. He said that he had to return sincere thanks to the delegates who had elected him during his absence to the proud position of chairman of such an important gathering as the present Conference. He considered it a high honour, and it was not only high, but altogether unexpected, as it was only within the last hour he had been informed of his appointment. He trusted the result of the Conference would be such as would give a direct impetus to Federation, which all Australians were so anxious to see brought about. Among the many who had worked hard in the matter were Sir Henry Parkes and Mr. Barton, both of whom, he (Mr. Nicoll) regretted to say, were unavoidably absent. Mr. Barton had done yeoman service in the cause, and, were he present that day, he (the speaker) felt certain that Mr. Barton would be deeply pleased and gratified at seeing such a large and influential assemblage. He expressed the hope that the interests of Federation would be furthered in a very large degree by the deliberations of the Conference.

There were a great many subjects to be discussed, and the time set apart for the Conference was, as they all knew, short; therefore he would detain them no longer, but content himself by once more returning thanks.

## Correspondence.

The Secretary then read the following letters, received by him from gentlemen who were unable to be present:—

July 20, 1893.

Kenilworth, Annandale, Sydney.

DEAR SIR,—I have just received your letter of the 18th, inviting me to attend the conference of gentlemen in favour of the Federation of these colonies, to be held at Corowa on July 31 and August 1. Amongst my engagements I have in response to a numerously signed requisition agreed to deliver an address on Federation, its present state and prospects, at Liverpool on the 29th inst. I have also made another engagement for the 2nd August. You will therefore see that it would be difficult for me to be at Corowa at the time of your gathering. I wish your movement, in connection with all other steps taken with genuine purpose, towards the great cause of Australian Union the heartiest success. So far as I am concerned I have done my best in the pioneer work, and have spared myself in nothing in rendering assistance to the accomplishment of the glorious result. I have already declared that for me in future Australian Union will be placed above and before all other questions. I hope to pass through one or more of the border towns on my way to Melbourne in a short time, when I shall be glad to have an opportunity of speaking on Federation as the highest achievement in the progress of these colonies. Again wishing you all success, yours faithfully,

HENRY PARKES.

P.S.—Under separate cover I send for your acceptance a copy of my collected speeches on Federation.

Sydney, 24th July, 1893.

DEAR SIR,—I have received yours of the 21st, conveying invitation to the Federation Conference to be held at Corowa on Monday and Tuesday next. I write to thank your committee most heartily for the invitation, and to say that if it is at all possible I shall be there. In any case the efforts now being made by the Border towns have my strongest sympathy, and should I fail to be present I trust your league will nevertheless reckon me amongst their friends.—Yours faithfully,

W. P. CULLEN.

31 Wentworth Court, July 22, 1893.

DEAR SIR,—Beplying to yours of the 18th inst, inviting me to be present at a conference of the Australian Federation League to be held at

Corowa on the 31st July and 1st August next, it will afford me great pleasure to be present at the same, providing my professional engagements do not prevent it. Hoping your meeting will be a great success, yours truly,

B. R. WISE.

Education Department, Melbourne, 29th July, 1893.

DEAR SIR,—I am requested by the Hon. James Campbell to express his regret that he is unable, through severe illness, to be present at the Federation Conference to be held at Corowa on Monday next, and to say that he has profound sympathy on large and national lines with the Federation movement. He desires me to say that he holds that no Federation is worthy of contemplation which does not lay down as its foundation stone the principle that Federated Australia must be a supreme power, to which the parts are secondary; and not a weak central figure, having only power to legislate upon whatever subjects are thrown to it by its own inferior parts. The mutual jealousies and localism of the colonial legislatures, with their desire for petty independence, has been the real barrier against Federation worthy of the name. We are looking forward to making Australasia a nation and an empire, and this can never happen so long as narrow and parochial views are held by the local legislatures—I am, dear sir, yours very truly,

W. SKEWES.

The Treasury, N.S.W., Sydney, 28th July, 1892.

SIR,—I am directed to acknowledge the due receipt of your letter of 18th inst., and to express the Colonial Treasurer's regret that the state of public business will not permit of his acceptance of your committee's invitation to attend the demonstration which is to be held at Corowa on 31st idem and 1st proximo, in support of the Australian colonies.—I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant.

F. KIRKPATRICK,

Under Secretary for Finance and Trade.

Melbourne Club, Melbourne, 26th July, 1893.

DEAR SIR.—I very much regret to say that I shall be unable to attend the Federation meeting at Corowa on Monday, 31st July. I need scarcely add that my sympathies are heartily with the movement.—Yours truly,

MOLESWORTH GREENE.

York street, Sydney, July 20, 1893.

MY DEAR SIR.—I fully sympathise with your movement *rs* Federation at Corowa, and would like to be present at the meetings, but my partner is at present in England, and I cannot very well leave my business during his absence. I sincerely trust that your action will evoke universal enthusiasm

on both sides of the Border, and that the petty provincialism from which some minds cannot escape will soon be extinguished in a national union of all the colonies. I need scarcely say that I am very anxious that the new Constitution shall be framed upon lines that will make it at the same time permanent and progressive.—Yours truly,

W. M'MILLAN.

Legislative Assembly, July 12, 1803.

SIR,—I have delayed my reply to yours of the 4th owing to absence from town. It appears that arrangements are being made for a special train on Monday, the 31st, and that your Conference will occupy the next day. But my difficulty is whether I shall be able to be with you at all—certainly not according to present appearances, for, unless Speight v. Syme is postponed, it will be impossible for me to leave my post. Unless something unforeseen occurs I fear, therefore that I shall be unable to join in your Demonstration, although it is one at which I ardently desire to be present. There is no issue comparable to the Federal, and none for which we should be more ready to make sacrifices. Trusting to have the opportunity of being with you by some lucky accident,—Yours, very truly,

ALFRED DEAKIN.

Legislative Assembly, Victoria, July 28, 1893.

DEAR SIR,—It is with the greatest regret that I am compelled to intimate to you the impossibility of my being absent from Melbourne on Monday and Tuesday next, owing to the pressure of both public and professional duties on those days. I specially regret it, because of the timeliness of your gathering, the appropriateness of the place of meeting, and the patriotic spirit displayed in connection with it. No nobler cause can arise, no political achievement of more moment to Australia now exists, or can exist until success is achieved by the movement for union which you have embraced. Wishing you a crowded assemblage of representative men, and many practical results from the interchange of thoughts,—I am, yours very truly,

ALFRED DEAKIN.

Imperial Federation League in Victoria, Melbourne, July 29, 1893.

DEAR SIR,—*Re* your Conference. At a meeting of the executive committee of the above league, held at the Town Hall, Melbourne, yesterday afternoon, it was decided to accept your invitation to send delegates to the Conference at Corowa, and the hon. sec., Mr. H. D'E. Taylor, and the hon. assistant sec., Mr. O. C. Thomas, were duly appointed for that purpose. I have also the pleasure of conveying to you the following resolution, carried unanimously at the meeting. Proposed by Mr. E. L. Zox,



M.L.A., seconded by Mr. F. Forrest—"That the Imperial Federation League in Victoria congratulates the Australian Federation League on its action in calling a Conference at Corowa and resolves that its hearty sympathy and active support be accorded to the movement in favour of Australian Federation."—Yours, faithfully,

H. D'E. TAYLOR, Hon. Sec.

Sydney, 26th July, 1893.

DEAR SIR,—I duly received yours of 19th inst, inviting me to take part in a meeting to be held at Corowa on Monday, 31st inst., and on the following day. I find that the mail arrangements are such that I would have to leave here on Friday evening in order to be at Corowa on Monday, and my business obligations are such that I cannot spare that time away. However, my poor advocacy of Australia's greatest cause will not be missed. But let me urge you by every obligation of patriotism to continue the great work you are engaged in till we win for our country that bond of union that can alone develop her true national life, and fit her for the noble destiny that awaits her.—Yours faithfully,

JAMES P. GARVAN.

### **Border District of The League.**

Mr. JOHN ROSS, moved as follows:—"That the Leagues already, or to be, established in New South Wales and Victoria affiliate, and form a Border district of the League, and that the headquarters of such district be Albury." Mr. Ross did not anticipate any objection being raised to the choice of Albury as the head quarters. It was desirable that all petty jealousies and differences upon minor points should be set aside. He trusted that the most suitable place would be selected, irrespective of local prejudices of any description whatever.

The motion was seconded by Mr. WHITAKER, who expressed the opinion that there could be no doubt whatever as to the suitability of Albury as headquarters.

Mr. A. A. PIGGIN remarked that it had been his endeavour to set aside all parochial feeling in the matter. If Albury was the most central place then by all means let Albury be selected; but if, on the other hand, Corowa or any other town was entitled to the honour, then by all means let it be selected. It was difficult in the present instance to speak without giving the idea that it was a case of Corowa *versus* Albury, but he could assure them that so far as he was personally concerned it was not so. He believed that it was the wish of the delegates in attendance to assist generally in advancing the cause of Federation. If it could be shown that Albury were better

situated for headquarters than Corowa, then he would willingly give way. He moved that the name Corowa be substituted for that of Albury.

Dr. TOWLE considered that Corowa occupied the most central position, and for that reason would second the amendment as moved by Mr. Piggin.

Mr. M'GEOCH agreed with what had been said by Dr. Towle and Mr. Piggin.

Mr. JAMESON failed to see where the necessity existed to have any Border District at all. He would suggest that the choice of a centre be left alone for the present. If it was proved that a centre was necessary he would certainly vote for the town which was largest and most accessible, but he failed to see that an independent centre on the Border was needed at present.

Mr. E. DOWLING, at the request of the President, stated that the lines which the Central League in Sydney had adopted had been incorporated in the manifesto of the Conference. If he might be allowed to make a suggestion it was that there should be only one Central League, which should correspond with all branches formed in the country.

Mr. PIGGIN said that even if Corowa was made the centre of the Border Leagues it did not follow that all the meetings of the Leagues would be held there.

Mr. WILKINSON was anxious to see no local feeling entered into in this matter, and he thought it better to avoid the question of this town or that town being headquarters. He would therefore move that all the words after "affiliate" be excised, and the following words substituted:—"With the Australasian Federation League."

Mr. D'E. TAYLOR agreed with Mr. Wilkinson that it was not wise to introduce local feeling. He, as a Victorian, had pleasure in seconding the amendment as moved by Mr. Wilkinson, although it would have the effect of placing Melbourne second to Sydney in the movement.

At this stage Mr. ROSS expressed himself as being desirous of withdrawing his motion.

The amendment proposing Corowa as headquarters was put to the meeting and lost, and Mr. Wilkinson's amendment was carried in the following form:—"That the branches of the League in New South Wales and Victoria affiliate with the Australasian Federation League, and that the rules adopted by such Central League in Sydney be adopted by the branches so far as the same are applicable."

### **Central Organisation for Victoria.**

Without discussion, the following, on the motion of Mr. Edmondson,

seconded by Mr. Piggin, was carried:—"That those interested in Federation in Melbourne and other places be invited to form a central organisation for Victoria on the same lines as that adopted in Sydney,"

### **The Imperial Federation League.**

Mr. TAYLOR read the motion passed by the above body, and which appears in the correspondence.

### **Enrolment and Subscription Fee.**

A motion "that the enrolment and subscription fee of the Border district be retained at the present fee of one shilling," was moved by Mr. JAMESON, but was subsequently withdrawn. The enrolment fee, it was agreed, should be two shillings, as provided by the Sydney Rules.

### **Proposed Federal Newspaper.**

A proposal "that a newspaper shall be founded by the League to be devoted mainly to the cause of Australian Union," gave rise to some slight discussion.

The PRESIDENT failed to see any necessity for the establishment of such a journal seeing that they had the almost unanimous support of the press.

Mr. PIGGIN moved, Mr. WHITAKER seconded, and it was carried unanimously, that the proposal be struck out.

### **Appointment of a Lecturer.**

Mr. JAMESON moved—"That it is desirable, if possible, to appoint a lecturer to advocate the principles and doctrines in districts remote from the Border in all the colonies, and to awaken public sympathy with the movement." Mr. Jameson said that while there were many people well acquainted with and keenly alive to the desirability and advantages of Federation, still, on the other hand, there were many who lacked interest in the subject, principally on account of their want of knowledge. Should a lecturer be appointed there was little doubt but that it would do good from an educational point of view, and lead people to think for themselves, and eventually lend their aid in the consummation of the desired end. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. WHITTY seconded the motion, which was agreed to.

## **Victorian Chambers of Manufacturers.**

The SECRETARY introduced Mr. C. H. Grondona as a representative of the Victorian Chamber of Manufacturers. After being welcomed by the President on behalf of the Conference, Mr. Grondona took his seat.

## **TELEGRAM FROM SIR PATRICK JENNINGS.**

A telegram was read from Sir Patrick Jennings, expressing regret at his unavoidable absence, at the same time assuring the Conference of his sympathy.

## **Australasian Federation League.**

It was decided that the designation or term, "The Australasian Federation League," be forthwith adopted by the branches now in conference, in place of the name "The Australian Federation League."

## **The Evening Gathering.**

A Committee consisting of the President, Mr. Wilkinson, and Messrs. Wilson, Jameson and Taylor was appointed for the purpose of drafting resolutions to be proposed at the evening meeting, and also to fix the movers and seconders of the various resolutions.

## **Receiving The Victorian Party.**

It was arranged that a deputation consisting of the President, the Secretary, and others should proceed to Wahgunyah in order to receive and welcome the Victorian Parliamentary party, and that as many delegates as could make it convenient should attend at the Globe Hotel, Corowa, where the New South Wales Parliamentary Party would be in attendance to receive their visitors from across the Border. The Conference then adjourned until 10 a.m. the following day.

The party from Victoria consisted of the Hon. J. B. Patterson (Premier), the Hon. Sir Graham Berry, head of the Opposition, Messrs. Abbott, M.L.C., Peacock, Stuart, Ferguson, Maloney, Ievers, Wilkins, Beezley, Bromley, W. T. Carter, Reynolds, Vale, Graves, Langdon, Foster, Harris, Clark, Ms.L.A.; Dr. Quick, Mr. Thomas (the Premier's secretary), and others. They were immediately driven to the Globe Hotel, Corowa.

The Hon. W.J. LYNE, of N.S.W., in welcoming the Victorians apologised for Sir George Dibbs' absence, and in doing so said that on

behalf of the New South Wales Ministry, and also as member for the district, he was glad to see Mr. Patterson and those with him. Although representing the Ministry of another colony he (Mr. Lyne) was aware that he was welcoming friends, not foreigners. (Hear, hear.) He likewise extended a cordial welcome to Sir Graham Berry, and trusted that the common cause which had brought so many of them together that day would result in that union which they desired to see an accomplished fact. (Applause.) He had pleasure in proposing the toast of "Mr. Patterson and the Victorian Ministry."

After the toast had been received in an enthusiastic manner,

Mr. PATTERSON said that the kindly feeling as displayed by Mr. Lyne augured well for the success of the Federation movement, and if the same feeling was manifested generally he had little fear as to the ultimate outcome of the object which was the cause of the present gathering. He felt perfectly safe in saying that there was nothing wanting on the part of Victoria to bring about a decisive remedy of the annoyances and difficulties in connection with the Border question. (Hear, hear.) He trusted there would be no dilly-dallying in the matter of Federation, but that those interested, and who had the matter so much at heart, would not rest contented until such time as the desired end was accomplished. He was not in Corowa for the advantage of Victoria alone, but in the interest of the whole of the Colonies.

Sir GRAHAM BERRY, in acknowledging the toast, expressed the opinion that the movement was the greatest which the Colonies could undertake. Whenever the Colonies really federated and spoke the united voice of AUSTRALIA it would not only raise them in the eyes of the mother country, but in the eyes of every nation in the world. (Applause.) Federation should not be delayed a single day. He had come from Melbourne, not as a member of the Ministry, but as an old colonist, who had in his day taken part in building up the colony of Victoria, and he felt that when Federation did come about it would be one of the most glorious achievements of the day. (Applause.)—The proceedings then terminated.

At 6.30 p.m. on the same evening a company of about 160 sat down to a cold collation, tendered to their visitors by the Corowa branch of the League, on the balcony of the Globe Hotel. The only toast honored was that of "Her Majesty the Queen."

Later on a public meeting was held in the Oddfellows' Hall, which was filled to overflowing. Mr. A. A. Piggin, of Corowa, occupied the chair. The speakers were the Hon. J. B. Patterson (Victoria), the Hon. W. J. Lyne (N.S.W.), the Hon. John Kidd (N.S.W.), Sir Graham Berry (Victoria), Mr.

Hayes, M.L.A. (N.S.W.), Dr. Quick (Victoria), Mr. Chanter, M.L.A. (N.S.W.), Mr. A. J. Peacock (Victoria) and Mr. E. W. O'Sullivan, M.L.A. (N.S.W.). The following resolutions were passed:—"That in the opinion of this meeting the best interests and present and future prosperity of the Australian colonies will be promoted by their early federation." "That this meeting accords its hearty support and encouragement to the Australasian Federation League." "That this meeting pledges itself to carry out the foregoing resolutions."

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## **Tuesday's Proceedings.**

## **Tuesday, August 1, 1893.**

The Conference resumed its sittings at 10 a.m., the President (Mr. Nicoll) occupying the chair.

### **Roll Call.**

The SECRETARY called the roll.

### **Welcoming The Victorians.**

The PRESIDENT said he was pleased, on behalf of the Conference, to extend a cordial welcome to the gentlemen who had arrived from Victoria to take part in the deliberations of that day, and he trusted much good would result thencefrom.

### **Young Victorian Patriotic League.**

The SECRETARY introduced Dr. F. M. Harricks and Mr. W. R. Church as representatives of the Young Victorian Patriotic League, Melbourne. The delegates were welcomed by the President.



## Correspondence.

The following additional correspondence was read by the assistant secretary:—

Adelaide, 21st July, 1893.

MY DEAR SIR,—My delay in replying to your letter of the 28th June was owing to my inability to say whether I should be able to attend your conference on the vital subject of Federation. My sympathy with the cause is too well known for any further assurance to be required, and I deeply regret that my parliamentary and other duties will prevent me being with you on 31st July. I may say, however, that the key to the situation is entirely in the hands of New South Wales. The other colonies have already shown their sympathy—not to say anxiety—to bring about complete Federation of the colonies, and if any of them have evinced any half-heartedness it was attributable to their sense of the inutility of proceeding when the senior colony held aloof. Speaking of Australia generally, I think “the people” have shown clearly enough their desire for Federation. The movement originated with New South Wales, and it is for the people of that great colony to show that they desire the completion of the all-important work that they have so wisely initiated. With every desire that the best results may flow from the Conference.—I am, my dear sir, sincerely yours.

JOHN W. DORMER.

Victoria Coffee Palace, Collins Street, Melbourne.

July 5, 1893,

DEAR SIR,—I very much regret that I cannot have the honour you design to confer upon me—that of being the Western Australian representative at the Federal Conference at Corowa on the 31st. Our Parliament meets to-day, and unless I reach Perth on 1st August so much of the session will have passed away that my constituents would consider themselves neglected. Could I have acceded to your kind request it would have afforded me unmixed pleasure to have met so many of the eminent statesmen of Australia, and to have taken part with them in hastening the Federation of Australia. I hope to reach Sydney next Tuesday morning, when my address will be Sydney Coffee Palace, Pitt-street, near Circular Quay. It may be that in some minor way I could help to further your object. I am, however, travelling on behalf of the municipal council of Perth, and my time is very limited.—I am, yours faithfully,

W. TRAYLEN.

240–248 Flinders Street,  
Melbourne, 15th July, 1893.

DEAR SIR,—I am pleased to learn from yours of 11th inst that your league proposes to urge the extension of the numbers and powers of the Federal Council. Depend upon it this is the right course to pursue to ensure early results. I regret to say it will be impossible for me to attend the Conference on 31st inst.—Yours truly,

F. T. SARGOOD.

Stone Buildings, Hobart,  
17th June, 1893.

DEAR SIR,—I am in receipt of your kind invitation to attend the Federal Conference which is to be held at Corowa on 1st August next, and shall make a special effort to be there, but the practicability of my attendance depends very much upon the dates on which steamers leave here, and the facilities for reaching Corowa from Sydney and Melbourne. Kindly let me know what arrangements (if any) have been made by Mr. Barton and others for proceeding to Corowa from Sydney, so that I might accompany them if possible. Not knowing which report you have seen of the address I delivered at Launceston a few weeks ago, I am sending you a copy of the *Tasmanian*, which contains the fullest and most correct report of it.—I am, yours faithfully,

A. INGLIS CLARK.

Urana, N.S.W., July 30.

DEAR WILSON,—I regret exceedingly that I cannot go down to represent Urana at the Federation Conference. I am detained by professional duties. I wish you every success with the Conference and Federation. I have for a long time taken great interest in the movement, and hope something defluite will soon be done to sweep away those wretched Border duties, and let Australia stand united, with one voice in international questions. Again regretting my inability to attend.—I am, yours truly,

CONWAY M. MACKNIGHT, M.B. et M.R.C.S.

P S.—We have not got a branch of the Federation League yet, but intend starting one at once.—C. M. M.

There was a second letter, under date Melbourne, 6th July, from Sir Frederick Sargood, which was read as follows:—

DEAR SIR,—Replying to yours of June 25th, intimating that a Conference will be held at Corowa in connection with the subject of Federation, I have for many years taken a deep interest in this all-important matter, and am glad to see that at last the Border towns are moving in the

matter. But I must frankly own that there appears to me but little hope of there being much immediate practical outcome from this Conference; in fact, I fear it may in reality have the effect of delaying what we all are striving after—the Federation of the Colonies—by encouraging the hope that the full federation is possible in the present state of the colonies. I feel strongly that the only practical course to ensure immediate results is for all the colonies to at once join the Federal Council, and legislate for an increase of the present number of representatives from each colony to such Council. The Council has already done good work, and with an increased number of members from all the colonies is capable, within a few months, of dealing in a practical manner with such federal matters as require prompt action. While, on the other hand, the most sanguine cannot hope that the fuller Federation can become a fact under several years. As you are aware, the Federal Council consists of representatives from Queensland, Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia, and Fiji, while South Australia is pledged to join immediately—hence all that is required to make this Council of great and immediate practical use is, that New South Wales should also join. In the interests of that Federation in which we all heartily believe, let me urge the Riverina branches of the Federation League to devote all their energies and influence in urging the New South Wales Parliament to pass the necessary measures to enable that colony to become members of the Federal Council, then Federation will be an accomplished fact, and the benefits of concerted action will be obtained, with certainty, with safety, with economy, and without undue friction.—Yours truly,

F. T. SARGOOD.

### **Congratulatory Telegrams.**

The following were read:—"From R. E. O'Connor, Moss Vale. Thank Committee high honor proposed. Regret departmental business of two departments now under my control make it quite impossible me to attend Corowa Conference. Am working here."

"From Nathaniel Levi, M.L.C., President Victorian Chamber of Manufacturers. Chamber Manufacturers sends greetings and cordial wishes for success. Regret inability be present."

"From Andrew Winton Jack, President Commercial Travellers' Association of Victoria. Association conveys best wishes for success of Conference and warmest approval of its objects."

### **Early Union of Australian Colonies.**

Mr. R GARRAN, of Sydney, moved the following resolution:

“That, in the opinion of this Conference, the best interests and the present and future interests of the Australian colonies will be promoted by their early union under the Crown, and that such colonies have now increased in population, wealth, and discovery of resources, and in self-governing capacity to an extent which justifies their union under one Legislative and Executive Government, on principle just to the several colonies.”

Mr Garran said that although non-federalists were almost extinct, there were people who said the time was not yet ripe for Federation, but he thought a fair question to ask was, what was to prevent it? History showed that it could be accomplished in a manner which would be satisfactory to all. The prosperity, population, and political freedom of Canada when she federated were not nearly so great as those of Australia to-day. (Hear, hear). Therefore of what had we to be afraid, and why any further delay in the matter? We had nothing whatever to wait for. Federation became a practical matter when taken in hand by practical men, as had been done in the Convention which drafted the Commonwealth Bill. Federation had now taken a definite form and shape, and there were few but hoped that the result would be crowned with success. (Applause). No doubt there were difficulties in the way, but they were not insuperable. The longer the question was delayed the greater would the difficulties become. The federal spirit was not only alive, but active in New South Wales, which colony would join heartily in the movement. It was a question whether the motto on the wall of the building in which they were discussing affairs, viz., “Advance Australia” was to become the guiding star, ending in a unity, or whether like a flock of sheep they were to wander hither and thither in a divided state, just as each colony felt inclined. He sincerely trusted that the former course would prevail, and that the colonies would work in one united body. The great aim was to advance not on provincial but on national lines. (Applause.)

Mr. PEACOCK, M.L.A., seconded the resolution, and in doing so said that the body which he represented, the Australian Natives' Association, had for the past 21 years attempted to forward the great cause of Federation. What he found in travelling through the country was that people did not understand the question, and that there was a great deal of misapprehension in the minds of many (especially those of the younger generation) as to why Federation should be advocated, seeing that it was not so long since Victoria separated from New South Wales, and since Northern Queensland was agitating to separate from the South. It was for such gatherings as the present to educate the people on the question. It

being assumed that Federation was desirable, the great point was to whether the colonies were ripe for it. Let the position of Australia be compared with that of the United States at the time they separated from Great Britain and federated. There was now a population of 4,000,000 in these colonies, and an import and export trade of £106,000,000 per annum. There was owing to the mother country £159,000,000, for which the sum of £5,250,000, was paid annually in interest. If Australia were federated she would be in a far better position financially, and thousands of pounds now paid in interest would be saved. He agreed that this must be made a people's question. Without their hearty approval it would be useless to attempt to federate. (Hear, hear). If the matter were left to politicians it would be a long time before a move was made. He knew what politicians were. He was one himself. (Laughter). It was necessary to keep them moving, and it was for the people to do this. What was wanted was to compel politicians to take an active interest in the question. It was marvellous to see the lamentable amount of ignorance which existed. He believed that at that Conference they were striking a keynote which would reverberate not only throughout the whole of the Australian colonies, but throughout the whole world. (Applause).

Mr. E. W. O'SULLIVAN, M.L.A. (Sydney) said he was one of those who believed that the time for Federation had arrived. He had supported it in Parliament, and the more he considered the subject the more he was convinced of its many advantages. (Hear, hear.) As an illustration of the benefits which would accrue from it, he referred to the recent banking crisis, also to the required combination with regard to naval and military defence. He looked upon federated Australia as a stepping stone to the wider and greater Federation of the English-speaking people—one in language, one in laws, and one in literature—and he sincerely hoped some day to see a wider Federation than the one they were advocating; he desired to see the people of Australia federated, and after that to see the Anglo-Celtic people federated. The speaker referred to the unity of Germany, Italy and Switzerland. In order to keep pace with such great movements as these, it would be necessary for the English-speaking people to ally themselves for defence purposes. (Hear, hear.) A Federation such as this would produce a far greater and more powerful state than the world had ever seen. It mattered little what form of government prevailed in the various Parliaments of such a Federation so long as they were united and under one controlling government. He preferred a Republican form of government, but he was quite prepared to work under any. (Applause.) Australians were equally as progressive as Americans, and equally as

capable of governing themselves by a Federation. He hoped the day was not far distant when his native country would develop into a great united country. The time might come when we would be thrown upon our own resources to defend ourselves, and he asked if we were in a position to do so under present circumstances? The growing power of the Chinese nation was a menace to Australia, and it could only be met by a federated power. (Hear, hear.) So far as Federation was concerned his whole heart and soul were in it. He, along with the association which he represented, might differ on minor matters, but that did not prevent them supporting the principle. (Applause.)

Mr. HEMMING (Melbourne) said he did not hear a single delegate talking practical Federation—it was all in the abstract—and had he known that this was to be the case he certainly would never have left his home to attend the Conference. [A. DELEGATE.—Neither would I.] He lived in a Colony (Victoria) which was supposed to be advanced, but he could tell them that the people of New South Wales were more advanced than those of Victoria, inasmuch as New South Wales had a promise of “one man one vote,” while Victoria enjoyed a plurality. He advised New South Wales to exercise great care as to how they federated with Victoria until a man residing in the latter place was placed upon an equality with one residing in New South Wales.

Exception was taken to Mr. Hemming's remarks. Delegates were there for the purpose of discussing Federation, and not one man one vote.

The CHAIRMAN ruled Mr. Hemming out of order.

Mr. HEMMING said that under the circumstances he would resume his seat.

Dr. MALONEY, M.L.A. (Victoria), said he was one who hoped most sincerely to see the union of the whole of the English-speaking race, which would in all probability have the effect of putting down that curse of all curses—war. (Hear, hear.) He believed that Australia was marching towards a republic. (Cries of “No, no,” “Question,” and “Chair.”)

Dr. MALONEY.—Am I out of order, Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN.—Yes.

Dr. MALONEY.—Then I withdraw freely. Doctor Maloney went on to say that if that sort of discussion was not allowable, he trusted the Federation of Australia would be thorough, and bring about a civilisation which would wipe out all poverty from our midst. (Applause.)

Mr. LORMER (Melbourne) said the question had been placed before them in such general terms that no exception could be taken thereto. At the same time he could not but express regret that a wider scope had not been

allowed in the debate, and that it had not been conducted on broader principles. He would therefore content himself with supporting the motion.

Mr. CHURCH said that as a representative of the Young Victorian Patriotic League in Melbourne, he would be glad to assist the cause of Federation in any way possible. He hoped the resolution would be carried with unanimity, and, judging by the opinions expressed by the delegates who had already spoken, and the general tone of the meeting, it would be. (Hear, hear.) He had been instructed to state that the Young Victorian Patriotic League would assist in any and every direction in the cause of Australian Federation, and would support it most heartily.

Mr. BREWER (Corowa) said he felt impelled to say that they were not wedded to any bill in particular in order to bring about the desired end. He believed it was rather hopeless to expect much from the politicians of the present day in carrying out what was desired, and he was of opinion that the Australian Natives' Association would be the principal factor in obtaining what was required. He had heard a little story about Federation which he considered worth repeating:—"There's Federation in the (h)air, sir," said a barber to an old gentleman. "Is there?" queried the old gentleman. "Yes, sir," replied the barber; "and it ought to be in our 'earts too, sir." That (said Mr. Brewer) was the case exactly. Federation ought to be in our hearts, and there would then be little doubt as to its speedy consummation. (Applause.) His (Mr. Brewer's) brother had upon one occasion remarked to him, "Marry when you are ready." So it should be with Federation, "Federate when you are ready." And who would say Australia was not ready now! No one, he felt sure. He unhesitatingly said that Federation was the one great thing required for Australia. (Applause.)

The motion was then put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN.—Mr. Chairman, I move that the motion be carried with three cheers. (Cries of "Hear, hear.")

The whole of the delegates rose, and gave three hearty cheers

## **Objects of the League.**

Dr. QUICK proposed—

"The aims and objects of the league shall be as follows:—

(a) To advance the cause of the Federation of the Australian colonies by an organisation of citizens owning no class distinctions or party influence, which shall use its best energies to assist Parliamentary action, from whatever source proceeding calculated to further the common aim of Australian union.

(b) To advocate, promote, and (after its attainment) to defend the Federal Union of

Australia, on such lines as may be constitutionally approved by all the colonies concerned after further deliberation and report by assembled representatives or each.

(c) To co-operate fully and earnestly with all similar kindred bodies not influenced by the aims and interests of parties contending on matters of domestic policy, and to promote the formation of such associations throughout the several colonies.

(d) To unite in due course all such bodies throughout the colonies under one organisation with one plan of action.

(e) At the next ensuing general elections in the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria to call upon the electors to vote for such candidates only as will pledge themselves to form a Federation party in their respective Legislatures and to support no Government which will not place the question in the front rank of proposed measures.”

Dr. Quick believed all present would agree with him when he said the time had now arrived when it was necessary to devise ways and means for giving expression to what they all so much desired. (Hear, hear.) This resolution, he considered, embraced the main business of the Convention. In subsection (a) reference was made to organisations of citizens, and this struck the keynote of the whole thing. The main principle was that the cause should be advocated by the citizens and not merely by politicians, and it was not merely a question for citizens in one place or one colony to deal with, but in every place throughout the whole of the Australasian colonies. (Applause.) What they were anxious for was to see enthusiasm on behalf of the cause spread to New South Wales, New Zealand, and every other colony. He would like to see leagues established in Brisbane and Adelaide, so that all could work together in one harmonious whole. (Cheers.) The establishment of such associations would do much towards educating public opinion, and finally when the question had been worked up in a proper and unanimous manner, a general Convention might again be held for the purpose of bringing forward a report as to the progress of affairs. What was really wanted was that men should put the thing in black and white in order that it might be thoroughly understood by every person. He was most anxious to see the question pushed forward, and politicians compelled to face the point. (Hear, hear.) At their next general elections they could get men of action returned to Parliament, and then steps would be taken immediately to bring about an Australian Congress of delegates, whose commission would be directly from the people to formulate a Federal constitution. It went almost without saying that Federation must be essentially a question for the people to deal with. He looked upon the draft bill which was passed in Sydney as being a pioneer bill. Either that or some other bill on the same lines should be considered by a Congress of representatives from the Australian colonies who should agree to the



measure, and then the bill should be introduced into the different Parliaments. He desired to press upon the Central League the advisability—in fact, the necessity—which existed for the establishment of leagues in Brisbane and Adelaide. Enthusiasm existed in all parts of Victoria in connection with Federation, and if the same amount of enthusiasm could be aroused in the other colonies then there could be no doubt as to attainment of the desired end. (Applause.)

Mr. DOWLING (N.S.W.) rose with pleasure to second the resolution. He felt certain that all present were desirous of furthering the cause of Federation, and he was equally certain that the gathering of the last two days would do much in that direction, for a great amount of information had been given by delegates who were thoroughly at home on the subject, and this knowledge would be diffused to the multitude by means of the press. He very much regretted that the gentleman (Mr. Barton) who had drafted the resolutions they were then discussing, was unavoidably absent, but he felt sure the heart of Mr. Barton would rejoice when he heard of the result of that successful conference. He had had the opportunity of travelling through the United States and he was greatly pleased to see the great attention paid to the political training of young men and young women, the result being that they were versed in the questions of the day. Even the girls in schools were well up in matters of a constitutional nature. He regretted very much that the same could not be said of the Australian rising generation, who paid very little attention to the principles of self-government, their education in this respect being sadly deficient. The mission which the proposed leagues would have to perform would be to educate the people on the question of Federation, and scatter the knowledge broadcast (applause), so that every person able to think for himself and herself, would be able to grasp and thoroughly understand the matter. It was necessary to make it a real live question of the day, and arouse the interest and enthusiasm of the people throughout the length and breadth of the Australian colonies (Applause). He felt that we could do no better than emulate the worthy example of our American brethren, who were at the present time enjoying the many advantages arising therefrom. Considering that we were such a young colony, we had made wonderful progress in many directions, and the fact that the country had been opened up for something like one hundred years without warfare was one to be proud of (hear, hear); but he was afraid that if we went on as we were at present a different state of affairs would exist. It must be plain to everyone with common sense that it would be to the benefit of everyone for the colonies to become united instead of as at present divided, one against the

other. (Applause). While such a state of things prevailed it was impossible for harmony to exist, and it was also impossible for them to become one great Australian nation. His life had never been given to politics, having been devoted to literature, science, and the arts, but he had felt it to be his duty to come forward at the present time and do what he could to assist in the matter. He had seen the success which had attended the formation and foundation of federal institutions, and he was confident that by perseverance and unanimity the movement which had been so successfully inaugurated and carried on to the present stage would result in the federation of the colonies. (Hear, hear).

Mr. CHANTER, M.L.A., had pleasure in supporting the motion No one had a keener knowledge of what was required in connection with the matter than Dr. Quick, who had proposed the motion. The resolutions laid before the Conference were in the main drafted by Mr. Barton, and he could assure the delegates present that the Attorney-General was thoroughly in earnest over the matter. He (the speaker) desired to remove any doubts which might exist on that point by reason of Mr. Barton's absence. The main difficulty between Victoria and New South Wales was the question of the Border duties, and they must be removed. (Cheers). He failed to see how Federation could be brought about until such time as this was done, and he would like a resolution to be passed that this matter (the removal of the Border duties) be dealt with at once, and that the various Parliaments be requested to take joint action. (Applause). The Parliaments of the different colonies had been very lax in the matter and no doubt they were greatly to blame for the present state of affairs. The remedy, was however, in the hands of the people, who made Parliament what it was, and it remained for them to declare that an alteration must be made. He favoured the formation of a Customs union, and trusted the matter of Federation would be taken in hand vigorously, and brance after branch of the league formed in every possible place, as it was by this means alone that the interest of the people could be aroused and necessary knowledge diffused. He favoured freetrade between the Australian colonies, and protection against the outer world. (Hear, hear). But the first step towards Federation was the abolition of the Border duties, and he trusted that in the interests of every man, woman and child in the colonies, the Parliaments now in session would be requested to at once take the matter in hand and deal with it.

Mr. H. D'E. TAYLOR (Imperial Federation League, Melbourne), desired to support the suggestion of Dr. Quick, and to carry it still further. He could not help wondering how it was, when the people and Parliament

declared in favour of Federation, they did not get it? There must be something wrong. The Conference which had been held in Sydney was attended by representative parliamentary men, but yet the Commonwealth Bill had not received the attention of Parliament, nor yet the people, which might be expected. He ventured to say that if the present Conference were a Parliament, Federation would, ere it rose, be an accomplished fact. He thought there was altogether too much talk of "Australia for Australians," and what he would like to see was the adoption of the motto "Australians for Australia." (Hear, hear.) He also desired to see higher aspirations on the part of the people in so far as public life was concerned, and the setting aside of petty jealousies and differences which did much to interfere with the consideration of great and more important questions of the day. He would like to see more patriotism displayed, and as most of them knew patriotism consisted of sacrifices, and these they must all be prepared to make. (Hear, hear.) If from that gathering such a feeling could be sent forth this feeling would engender friendly relations and the sentiment "Australians for Australia." (Applause.)

Mr. M'GEOCH (Mulwala) said he was no politician, but a simple son of the soil, possessing, however, the feeling that he ought to do anything he could in order to advance the prospects of the country in which he lived, for the benefit of himself and his fellow men. This was the feeling which ought also to be in the breast of every man. He felt that a country could not advance at a sufficiently rapid rate while there were such things in existence as those cursed Border duties. (Hear, hear.) They ought to be removed, and that at once, for while they were there it was useless talking of that unanimity which would eventually lead on to Federation. If people thought those in Sydney were half-hearted in the matter it was a mistake, for they were in earnest, and they were sincere in their desire to see the whole of the Australasian colonies joined in one harmonious whole. At the same time he felt it a matter of regret that whereas Victoria had been represented the previous evening by the Premier of that colony, and the leader of the Opposition, the leading public men of New South Wales were conspicuous by their absence.

The PRESIDENT.—Mr. M'Millan would have attended had it been possible for him to do so, but he is not in the colony at the present time.

Mr. M'GEOCH did not intend to reflect upon Mr. M'Millan or any others in any way. He simply wished to say it was a pity they were not in attendance. Now that the right hand of fellowship had been held out by Victoria, it was only right that New South Wales should respond in a hearty manner, and in so doing take a step forward in advancing the cause

of Federation.

Mr. HERBERT BARRETT said they had had a great deal of speechifying within the last twenty-four hours, and the delegates would like to hear something practical. So far as he could see nothing practical had been put before the Conference, and if he had had any idea that he was going to hear abstract propositions, such as had been placed before them, he certainly would not have been there. The very first question which the outside public would ask would be, "What have you done at the Conference?" And the answer, so far as proceedings up to the present were concerned, would have to be, "Nothing!" The association which he represented (Australian Natives' Association) had for some time past been assisting Parliament in the matter, and it was their intention to continue to do so. Parliament, however, was proverbially slow-going, and it would be necessary for the people to urge them to take prompt action, otherwise Federation would be little more than a dream.

The motion was then put and carried with enthusiasm.

### **Statutory Convention Act.**

Dr. QUICK then moved:—

"That in the opinion of this Conference the legislature of each Australasian colony should pass an act providing for the election of representatives to attend a statutory convention or congress to consider and adopt a bill to establish a federal constitution for Australia, and upon the adoption of such bill or measure it be submitted by some process of referendum to the verdict of each colony."

Dr. Quick stated briefly that he believed this motion was the best means of bringing the question to a practical issue.

The motion was seconded by Mr. BERRYMAN (Moama), who expressed pleasure and satisfaction that this motion had been brought forward at that stage.

Mr. O. C. THOMAS (Imperial Federation League, Melbourne), said that he had the greatest pleasure in according the motion before the meeting hearty support. It was the want of a motion similar to the present which had caused the failure of the movement in the past.

Messrs. CHANTER, M.L.A., ROSS and PIGGIN supported the motion.

Mr. COOK (Liberal Federation and Protection League) said he had intended moving a motion similar in effect, but that before the meeting suited all purposes.

The PRESIDENT in supporting the motion gave as his opinion that the work done by the Conference would be far-reaching.

The motion was then put, and carried unanimously.

Mr. PEACOCK—One cheer for Dr. Quick.

The delegates rose and complied with the request.

## **A Customs Union.**

Mr. COWDEROY (Melbourne Chamber of Commerce) moved:—

“That while concurring in the objects as set forth in the last resolution, this Conference recognises the special importance of the abolition of all restrictions upon commercial intercourse between neighbouring colonies, and it therefore expresses the earnest hope that the efforts now being made in Victoria and other colonies to bring about the abolition of all Border Customs by means of a Customs Union will be speedily crowned with success.”

Mr. Cowderoy said that the chamber which he represented would be extremely pleased to be associated with the present Conference, and to shake hands with it. (Applause). In February last the Chamber had moved in the matter of Federation and urged upon Parliament the necessity which existed for the bringing about of same at the earliest possible date. They all desired Federation, and the motion moved by him was a step in this direction. He knew the harassing and annoying restrictions which people on the Border were submitted to, and his chamber was anxious to assist in bringing about a Customs Union.

Mr. PIGGIN (Corowa) seconded the motion, at the same time remarking that they were pleased to have among them that day a gentleman representing such an important Victorian body.

Mr. JAMESON (Deniliquin) moved as an amendment:—

“That while fully concurring in the aims and objects set forth in the last resolution, this Conference recognises the special importance of the abolition of all restrictions upon commercial intercourse between neighbouring colonies, and it therefore expresses the earnest hope that efforts be made to induce the Parliaments of the various Australasian colonies to bring about the abolition of all Border Customs by means of a Customs Union, pending a complete Federation.”

Mr. Jameson said that he was sorry to come into conflict with any of the delegates, but he felt that it would be altogether impossible for him to support Mr. Cowderoy's motion. At the same time he thought this amendment would meet the case exactly. He had been in New South Wales for very nearly a quarter of a century, and had felt the difficulties and annoyances of having to reside on the Border with the obnoxious Customs duties. (Hear, hear.) There were present that afternoon many who were

anxious to see some practical outcome of the sittings of the Conference, and his amendment was a stepping stone to the great object they had in view. If they could have free commercial interchange between the colonies it would help in a very large measure towards Federation.

Mr. HEMMING seconded the amendment *pro forma*.

Mr. CHANTER regretted to see the slightest sign of dissension amongst the delegates at this stage of the Conference, as they were all most anxious to crown their deliberations with success. (Applause.) So far as he was concerned he could not see his way clear to support either motion or amendment, and he would move—

“That in order to consummate an early union of the Australian colonies it is essential that the various Parliaments should at once legislate for an assimilation of the various tariffs, and enter into a Customs union, providing for the free interchange of colonial products by land and water.”

Mr. PEACOCK expressed himself as being favourable to free interchange of colonial products, with protection against the outside world.

Dr. QUICK said he would like to assist Mr. Chanter and Mr. Jameson, but he greatly feared that such motions would tend to introduce an element of discord into their proceedings, and be the means of creating an unfavourable impression outside, in addition to which it might be regarded as a counter proposal to Federation. He also feared that the amendment proposed by Mr. Jameson would be a danger in the path.

Mr. BARRETT expressed the opinion that Mr. Chanter's proposal was utterly useless, and they were in fact placing the cart before the horse. He moved—

“That the consideration of the matter stand over until Clause 3 was dealt with.”

The motion for postponement was seconded by Mr. DRUMMOND, and carried.

## **The Federal Council.**

Clause 3 read as follows:—

“That in the opinion of this Conference all the Australian colonies should be represented in the Federal Council, and that the number of representatives of each colony in such Council should be increased.”

Dr. QUICK moved—“That the clause be struck out,” in order that no offence might be given to any of the colonies.

Mr. GORMAN (Berrigan) seconded the motion.

Mr. DRUMMOND moved an amendment—“That the clause be put to the meeting.”—A delegate seconded.

The motion was carried, and the clause was excised.

The Conference then resumed the discussion relating to the proposals of Messrs. Cowderoy, Jameson and Chanter.

Mr. GORMAN thought that just at present it would be as well to simply affirm the desirableness of having a free interchange of products between the different colonies.

Mr. BARRETT said that if Mr. Cowderoy's motion were carried it would undoubtedly weaken their hand. It had been said that the Customs Union was the rock on which the ship of Federation would be likely to strike, and there appeared every prospect that such would be the case, judging by the tone the discussion assumed. He certainly thought the matter ought to be dropped. (Hear hear, and No, no.)

The CHAIRMAN.—Mr. Jameson has withdrawn his amendment.

Mr. DRUMMOND agreed with Mr. Barrett, and considered it would be against the interests of Federation if a Customs Union were established.

Mr. CHURCH (Young Victorian Patriotic League, Melbourne,) said it was evident that the Border duties were the bone of contention, and he thought that it was not advisable to deal with the matter at the present time. (Applause.)

Mr. LORMER—I can tell you that if Mr. Cowderoy's motion is carried, the whole proceedings of this conference will be null and void.

Mr. O. C. THOMAS said he would have pleasure in supporting Mr. Chanter's amendment.

Dr. TOWLE rose to a point of order. They had assembled with one object in view and that object was Federation. If side issues were introduced it would deeply prejudice their cause. (Cheers)

Mr. CHANTER'S amendment was put and carried with acclamation.

### **Official Report.**

On the motion of Mr. JAMESON, it was decided that an official report be prepared and that 1000 copies of same be printed.

### **Votes of Thanks.**

The business of the Conference having terminated, Mr. PIGGIN (Corowa) moved a vote of thanks to the Berrigan League for the active part which they had taken in bringing about the Conference. There had been a great deal of hard work, and many difficulties in the way, but the work had been accomplished and the difficulties overcome, and for this Mr. Piggin felt the Berrigan League deserved credit and thanks. (Applause).

Mr. O'GRADY seconded the motion, which was carried.

Mr. GORMAN (President of the Berrigan League) responded, and in doing so explained the circumstances which led up to the calling of the Conference, in which Mr. Lapthorne had taken a great amount of interest, and performed a large share of the work. He was pleased to say that out of the large number of invitations issued to leagues, Corowa was the first to respond thereto. He was extremely pleased to see that so many influential and intelligent men had gathered together to discuss the all-important question of Federation, and he concluded by thanking the delegates for the manner in which the vote had been passed.

Mr. LAPTHORNE was called for, and received heartily. He remarked that it had been a labour of love to assist in the Federation movement. He was a worker (hear, hear), and not a talker, but he could not resume his seat without saying a few words of thanks to Mr. Wilson, secretary to the Conference, who had at all times and in every possible way assisted in the movement.

Dr. QUICK, on behalf of the New South Wales and Victorian delegates, proposed a vote of thanks to the Corowa people for the kindness shown by them to visitors during the time of the Conference.

Mr. PEACOCK seconded the motion, and in doing so expressed gratification at the kindly reception and courteous treatment as shown by the people of Corowa.

The motion was carried.

Mr. WILSON returned thanks for the kind way in which he had been spoken of. His part in the Conference had consisted of the practical arrangements connected with the meeting, and he had had no time during the gathering to take part in the discussions, to which he had listened with the greatest interest. He felt himself well repaid for the work of the last few weeks when he saw before him so large a gathering of friends to Federation, many of whom had come from great distances. Mr. Lapthorne had spoken kindly of him, and he desired to reciprocate it, and to express his satisfaction that they had collaborated to such good purpose. Mr. Lapthorne and the Berrigan Committee, as the prime movers and the instigators of the meeting, deserved great credit. (Hear, hear.) He felt that they owed a debt of gratitude to Mr. Peacock, who had at considerable inconvenience to himself consented to remain in Corowa and deliver an address on Federation that evening. Having already had the pleasure and the privilege of hearing Mr. Peacock speak in Rutherglen on the same subject, he could assure them that Mr. Peacock was worth listening to, and he felt sure that his address that night would do more to illuminate the



minds of the public on the subject than anything else that had yet been done for the cause.

Mr. PEACOCK having acknowledged the compliment, a vote of thanks was passed to the Chairman, on the motion of Mr. LORMER.

Mr. NICOLL, in replying, said that he had never had an easier lot of men to deal with and control, and his duty had been one of pleasure. He thanked the delegates for their courtesy, also the Corowa people for their kind treatment.

Votes of thanks were passed to the Vice-presidents and the Press, the latter being acknowledged by Mr. James C. Leslie, of the *Corowa Free Press*.

Three cheers having been called and given for "Federation," also for "Her Majesty Queen Victoria," the proceedings terminated.

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# Appendices

## **[Appendix A] Federal Union of Australasia.**

### **Sir Henry Parkes at Corowa.**

THE HONBLE. SIR HENRY PARKES, G.C.M.G., ex-Premier of New South Wales, visited Corowa on Wednesday, 16th August, in order to deliver an Address on Federation. The large hall of the School of Arts was crowded some time before the hour announced. Mr. THOMAS BRAY, J.P., Chairman of the Corowa Progress Committee, presided, and was supported on the platform by a number of gentlemen—most of the Committee of the Federation League in Corowa being present. The Chairman introduced the lecturer in a few complimentary words.

SIR HENRY PARKES, on rising, was greeted with prolonged applause. He said—

Mr. Chairman, ladies, and gentleman, had I known the power of flattery in your chairman before I came here I should hardly have had the courage to come, and I am afraid there will be very few words of wisdom fall from me to-night. I am quite sure that you will be convinced before the evening is over that the chairman has altogether over-estimated my abilities. I have come to invite you to discuss with me the supreme question of Australian Union. In other words I will ask you to consider with me whether the time has come; then whether it is advisable; then whether it is practicable to unite this unequalled continent of separated colonies into one great undivided Australian nation. Now as we well know, it is just 105 years ago since a body of forlorn English people made a gap in the great wilderness of Australia for the infant settlement. Until that time no white man had lived in this large and bountiful country. Until that time there was no trace of civilization upon its face, and up to that time men would not have expected that such an extent of country cultivable by man, and comparatively unknown, was in existence. A country which not only in ancient times but even down to the times of the Georges was not dreamed of. Now it is not surprising that strange anomalies were created in the progress of settlement. The first small forlorn colony formed itself here under circumstances to which it is not now necessary to allude, and which would forbid one painting in very vivid colours the future of that people. That first colony was months, sometimes years, in getting any tidings from the old country—communication was so difficult in those days. Not only communication but the necessary supplies of food were so difficult to obtain that the young settlement was more than once almost reduced to a

state of famine; and the Governor — the representative of the King of England—when he invited his officers to dine, had to request them to bring their own meat and bread. Very well, until a comparatively late period this first colony of New South Wales embraced all of the colonies of Victoria and Queensland. The next settlement in point of time the Western Australia, or, as it was then known, the Swan River settlement, and the next was South Australia. Some of the old maps represent Tasmania as part of the Australian continent, and you will see it projected like a leg of mutton; and it was not until the discovery by Mr. Bass of the strait which divides that beautiful island from the mainland that the maps were made to show Tasmania as a separate island. It is not surprising then that in this rough and ready, this random partition of the territory, the boundaries have been laid so as not to show any foresight of what would follow hereafter. And at this moment the Swan River Settlement, or as we now know it, Western Australia, though it has less than 50,000 of a population, really possesses one third of the entire territory of this continent. Now this small handful of people who settled on the narrow stream which flowed into Sydney Cove in the year 1788, has expanded, multiplied, grown into a population equal to that of some, and largely in excess to that of many, of the old nations of Europe. The ancient kingdom of Greece contains only 2,200,000 persons. The old historic kingdom of Sweden contains only 4,700,000, and the confederation of Switzerland contains only 3,000,000 of a population, and yet the Australian colonies and New Zealand, by the latest returns, show a population of 3,984,629, so that it is a million larger than Switzerland, double that of the kingdom of Greece, double that of the kingdom of Denmark, and nearly as large as that of Sweden. And these countries have brilliant histories. They have not only been separate powers in the world for generations and centuries but their achievements are among the greatest and noblest on human record. So that as far as population is concerned surely the time has come for us to unite and be one people. (Cheers.) But what does population mean? In the case of these countries which I have named it is hardly so pure or so united in its elements as ours, and in the later confederations, such as those of Canada and the United States of America, there are disturbing elements in the population which we do not possess. In Canada, for instance, there are two distinct classes. One so distinct from the other that there flowed from them two nationalities so that the proceedings of Parliament are even now conducted in two languages. I listened to a debate at Ottawa about ten years ago, and the whole of that debate was conducted both in French and English. I know of no more striking evidence of the difficulty in the way of

erection of the dominion of Canada. Now we come to the North American States which revolted, and righteously revolted, from the control of King George III, in 1776—I say righteously because there is no question of historical doubt that these colonies suffered a grievous load of oppression at the hands of the English Government, which no people ought to have borne, and which, I thank God, Americans did not bear. When they went away from England they not only were no larger than we are, but they had the stumbling block of slavery planted there by the old mother country—which, with all her glories, has at times committed many sins, including the planting of slavery in America. They also had to contend with many races amongst the freed population, but here in Australia we are all one family. We are all one family, all one blood, all one faith—speaking, of course, of our common Christianity. We are one in our inheritance of all the achievements of our great forefathers. The rich and comprehensive literature of England is ours as much as it is the possession of the British Islands. The accumulations of all the wealth of science which have been stored up for the world by our countrymen at home is all ours by inheritance; the glory, the incomparable beauty of her traditions are all ours as much as if we had been born on British shores. In all respects we are one and the same people. What then is to hinder us from unity in one form of government, with one form of authority and one flag flying over us. (Cheers.) First and foremost I must guard against anything which may for the moment be supposed to enter into the question of what is called separation from the noble country to which we belong. For this obvious reason, that I can see no form of government on the face of the earth more calculated to give freedom and security to an independent people than the limited constitutional monarchy of England. (Hear, hear). And for this further reason that while men are happy under their governing institutions, if they are wise, if they are prudent, if they are rational, they want no change; and I don't know of a case in all history where persons have rebelled and set up for themselves unless they had justifiable cause. As we have none, why should we think of any new form of government. And I, for my part, believing as I do that the constitutions of the Australian Colonies are as free as any that were framed by man,—when they allow the people who live in them to do the best they can for themselves, each holding his individual liberty and his individual property in profound security,—believing that, I cannot see the causes to justify anyone wishing to disturb the form of our polity. Therefore I want to change on that score; I am content. I am proud through every fibre of my being that I am a member of the great English speaking confederation, over which our noble

Queen presides. More than that, I should say, and defy contradiction, that our Queen has had a reign unexampled in the annals of the world for the benefits which it has conferred upon her people and upon the wide earth. She is the greatest constitutional monarch that ever reigned in England, or reigning at the present time in any part of the globe. I say this so that there may be no doubt whatever of my views in this respect. But suppose I were in the camp of those who think it would be a fine thing to have an Australian republic; in either case, whether I shall prosecute the course that I have marked out for myself, or, if I were sitting in the boat with those who want separation, in both supposable cases the confederation of these colonies is equally imperative, equally wise and equally just. If we are to remain a part of the British Empire it is desirable that we should federate. If at some future time we are to separate from the old country, it is equally desirable that we should federate now so as to be ready when the time shall come. Now I have shown you how superior we are to some of the old Kingdoms of the world in point of population, and in point of consanguinity. For a moment or two I will show what our population already is. To a large extent it is purely Australian. I have got here the latest calculations published at the beginning of this month by that very able man the Government Statist of New South Wales, Mr. Coghlan, as to the elements of our population, and they are so interesting that I will run through them. In New South Wales we have 64.51 of persons born in the country, leaving only not quite 36.00 for the Englishmen, Scotchmen, Irishmen, and foreigners who are of the population, so that you will see at once how that in New South Wales the population is emphatically of native-born Australians—men and women who, born here, have never seen any other land—never seen any other stars shining above them—who know nothing of the old country except what they read or hear from their parents or friends. In Victoria it is nearly as large—62.56 of the population. Going on to Queensland, which is a much more recently settled country, the native population is only 44.96—lower than that of any other colony. Coming to South Australia we find that it is larger than New South Wales, or 67.95. In Tasmania, which, as I observed just now, is contemporaneous with New South Wales, the native-born population is as large as 73.58, and in New Zealand the native-born population is 58.32. So that in all the colonies, with the single exception of Queensland, the native-born population is largely in the majority. But the fact that the majority of the people living in these colonies is native-born is not all. We are of the best population known to history. There is no other people on the face of the earth who have even equalled the stock from which we have sprung in the

noble work of founding nations. England has done more of that work—I mean, of course, the whole of the English people — this grand pioneering work of exploring new countries, founding new nations—than any other power that ever existed in the whole world. Hence, then, we inhabit this land—unknown to our fathers, hidden by the beneficent Creator of all things as if for the very purpose of allowing our men and women hereafter to form a power superior to any that has preceded it. We inhabit this land—one of the richest known in any part of the world—anything can be grown upon the soil—with a climate unequalled and a wealth of mineral treasure that has yet hardly been touched—for we really, with regard to our mineral wealth, stand in the position of persons who have been only scratching on the surface with the great treasures lying undiscovered below—for the fact is that no country is richer in mineral wealth than ours. Again, our timbers, which we thought so little of at first, have proved to be amongst the finest in the world for many purposes. [A voice: What about the river?—Sir Henry Parkes: We have not got over the river yet, but if you cannot be quiet I wish you would go there.] We, being the people we are, in the country which it is, with one of the most genial and pleasure-giving climates in the world, why should we not at once—to-day—date the birth of our national existence? Why should we delay? Is it such a pleasant thing to have the amenities going on across that narrow river so close to you that you love it and must hug it—whereas there ought to be no impediment to the course of this Australian people from one end of the land to the other. (Hear, hear, and applause). An Australian ought to go to any part of Australia, transacting any business whatsoever — to carry with him whatever amount of property he may think fit and—no man ought to have the power to interfere with his operations. (Voice: what about the Chinamen? Sir Henry Parkes: You go and join them! If this impatient gentleman will only be quiet I will deal with everything and everybody in turn. I am not so accomplished as to be able to do two or three things at a time, but I will not leave out of my reckoning even the gentleman's darling Chinaman.) The two colonies which, if I may use the figure, stand side by side where I am speaking to-night—the colony of Victoria and the old mother colony of New South Wales, possess between them 2,336,379 souls—out of, say a total of 4,000,000, leaving for the other four colonies only 1,620,250, so that you will see that the two great colonies of Victoria and New South Wales possess between them by far the majority of the whole population. I quote this fact to show you what a commanding influence these two colonies ought to exert in this supreme question of Australasian Union. And if these two colonies would only come together

as they ought, with a united purpose, all their paltry jealousies trodden under foot, entertaining no low or subordinate object in the presence of that grand purpose of union—if they acted together in that spirit they would have command of the whole situation, and would beyond all question have the power to bring the other colonies into line in this noblest of all enterprises, this union of all into one great national confederation. (Cheers.) Now there are some things in our individual action, in our modes of thought and of argument, in our free aspirations, which must be borne in mind and acted upon if we are to be earnest in this noblest of all works, and that is that we must lose sight of our own provincial affairs, still more of our local affairs. We care not to engross ourselves with the provincial affairs of New South Wales, still less with the local wants of Corowa or Albury, or any of the border towns, if we seek to rise to the level of a view of the future of federated Australia. Remember that it cannot be done by any power of provincial authority; that it cannot be done by any self-assertion on the part of a community, it can only be done after debate, after careful discussion, after reasonable compromise by the whole of these colonies in consultation. No authority of New South Wales, of Victoria, or of Queensland can dictate to the other colonies. We must all meet as equals, and all aim at the same thing—none of us must try to get an advantage over the others, but we must go into this thing—or we shall never succeed—as unprejudiced Australians with a feeling more like brothers than opponents, seeking, only altogether, the advantage of the noble end we want to create. And if we, the older colonies, at all events the more powerful in population—enter into this noble work, in this noble self-sacrificing spirit, there is no impediment left to block the way. It is in our own hands if we will only be manly, if we will only rise to the level of the grand work of laying the foundation of the future nation. (Hear, hear). We have had many able men in the business of Australian government, both in New South Wales and Victoria, both in South Australia and in Queensland, and all the best men who have given themselves to the consideration of this august subject have been on the side of union. And they have been growing up for this last generation, and they are crying out, many of them from their graves, for us to lose no time in uniting to build up this nation. The greatest man we ever had in power in New South Wales was William Charles Wentworth. I don't want to hold him up as a model of a perfect man, but for colossal power, clear insight into the principles of government, and for comprehensive grasp of almost all questions put before him, there have been few superior men, anywhere, in my time. Well, during 1853, two years before responsible government took place,



Mr. Wentworth reported the Constitution Bill for New South Wales from the select committee which framed it, and in that very report, presented on the 28th July, 1853, he says:—"One of the most prominent legislative measures required by this colony and the colonies of the Australian Group generally, is the establishment at once of a General Assembly, to make laws in relation to the Intercolonial Questions that have arisen or may hereafter arise in them. . . . your committee confine themselves to a suggestion that the establishment of such a body has become indispensable and ought no longer to be delayed; and to the expression of a hope that the Minister for the Colonies will at once see the expediency of introducing into Parliament, with as little delay as possible, a Bill for this express object." That was said forty years ago and yet we have allowed that time to elapse and nothing has been done. What is the consequence of this neglect of ours. If there was one reason for union at that time there are ten now. No single colony can attend to these questions. Well, Mr. Wentworth, after reporting the Constitution Bill, which afterwards became the Act under which we live, went to England. While there, an association was formed of prominent men who had been in Australia to facilitate the foundation of responsible Government and he was very naturally chosen as president. When he was in England as chairman of this association he addressed a memorial to the Secretary of State, and in this memorial he said:—"It is not to be wondered that a strong feeling of discontent should be growing up among the inhabitants of these colonies; from their being compelled to resort to indirect, tedious and illegal expedients in substitution of that federal authority without which their several constitutions must continue incomplete, as regards all measures and undertakings which require the joint action and co-operation of any two or more of them." Not only so but in the very early years of responsible government in the adjoining colony of Victoria there was a select committee of the Legislative Assembly appointed to consider the same question. This select committee was presided over by Sir Chas. Gavan Duffy—a most able statesman, a man of singular intellectual power and fine robust imagination, which enabled him to picture what things might be in the years hereafter, which men of unimaginative minds could not understand. And he had, beyond that, a rich fund of historical knowledge, and was profound in his conceptions of questions of government, and we have had very few men indeed better qualified for considering the problems of national government of this present time. He had as his fellows on this committee, Sir John O'Shanassy, a man of wonderful vigour of intellect; Sir Archibald Michie, an accomplished lawyer, as well calculated as most men to deal with

constitutional questions; and the late Sir James M'Culloch and Dr. Evans, amongst others. These were amongst the best men we ever had. They brought up their report on the 8th September, 1857, in the second year after responsible government had been introduced into these colonies. What did they say?—"The time for accomplishing such a federation is a point upon which there are a variety of opinions, but we are unanimous in believing that it is not too soon to invite a mutual understanding on the subject throughout the colonies. Most of us conceive that the time for union has come. It is now more than eight years since the Privy Council reported to Her Majesty that 'the want of some general authority for the Australian colonies began to be seriously felt.' At present a Federal Assembly would not only have the control of a larger territory than any of the great powers possess in Europe, but of a population exceeding that of several of the smaller Sovereign States, and of a revenue which equals or exceeds the revenue of the Kingdoms of Belgium, Sweden and Norway, Hanover, Holland, Naples, Hungary, Turkey, Bavaria, Saxony, or Greece. Some of the most renowned federations in history had less population or wealth, and certainly possessed infinitely inferior agencies for government than belong to an age of telegraphs and railways." After this, on the 3rd October, 1870, the Royal Commission which had been appointed by the Government of Victoria reported on the same subject as follows:—"The indispensable condition of success for men or nations is, that they should clearly understand what they want, and to what goal they are travelling, that life may not be wasted in doing and undoing; and as we are persuaded that the prosperity and security of these colonies would be effectually promoted by enabling them to act together as one people under the authority of a Federal compact they cannot, we believe, too soon come to an understanding upon this fundamental point" Of course time does not allow me to accumulate authorities of this kind in a discourse which must be limited to about two hours, but I have read you the opinions of some of the ablest men that we have ever had in Australia, given at the very commencement of our career of parliamentary government, that this federal authority was an imperative necessity for the purposes of complete Australasian Government. The men of this Royal Commission were the late Sir Francis Murphy, the late Mr. Judge Fellowes, Mr. Edward Langton, and the late Mr. Justice Kerferd, with many others, so that from the earliest years of our self-governing history the ablest men that ever took part in it have taken an interest in federation and have pointed out the necessity of it. Well, things have gone on, and here we are to-day in the year 1893 and nothing whatever has been done. Now let us look at the

injuries which we are sustaining every day that we live for the want of the consummation of this great event. There is an innumerable list of great things to be done, which, as I have just said, the state governments cannot do, which will never be well done unless done by some federal authority. I must ask you for a moment to look at an imaginary map of Australia. The coast line is considerably over 8000 miles while that of New South Wales is only 680 miles, and the laws of the colony extend only as far as that coast line—from Port Danger to Cape Howe. Beyond that boundary on either side the laws of New South Wales are powerless. It is the same with the other colonies as regards their limitations, and so we will all remain powerless beyond our several limits until the establishment of a federal Government—possessing the full power of a national life. Until then no power can control the authority necessary to govern the colonies completely. If some predatory nation were to descend upon us as we are now circumstanced, we would be powerless to protect our universal interests. Any reasoning creature should see that it is absolutely imperative for us to be in that position, so that we should have all necessary power to enact laws that would operate throughout the land, and especially along the whole coast line. No country that is worthy to be owned can be said to be worthy unless it is also worthy to be defended. (Hear, hear). No people are entitled to enjoy a fertile colony unless they are prepared to defend it with their wealth, their arms, and their blood (hear, hear and applause), and depend upon it, while human nature remains human nature, no country is safe from attack; and as it becomes rich and well supplied with the comforts of life, and with all that makes life dear, it becomes in proportion more liable to attack. (Cheers). I have heard men say, the late Dr. Lang amongst the number, that we don't want a soldier in this country, as nobody would ever attack us. (Hear, hear). Read the history of any war in the world and you will find that wherever there is a lamb to be eaten up there will be some powerful wolf to blame it for fouling the clear stream, and it is the very height of foolishness to suppose that because we are here, surrounded by these peaceful seas, and because we don't wish to make aggression upon anyone else, that we have any immunity from attack if war broke out in any part of the world. If an enemy of the mother country, or if a power engaged in war wanted money or assistance of any kind, and that power thought it could obtain it by pillaging one of these rich cities in Australia, they would pillage it if they thought they could do it with impunity. (hear, hear). Hence, then, I for one, (and I don't think there are many more peaceful persons than I am, or many who would do more to promote the peace of the world) don't believe in depending upon any consideration

under the sun for the security of this country except our own right arms. (Cheers). Then let us look at the question of defence. What would be the use of our having a navy unless we have some power to direct its movements on any point of this 8000 miles of coast, if we are limited in our operations, in our executive authority, to the bit of coast which belongs to ourselves. It requires no military skill to say that if we are to have a consummate and successful defence we must be prepared to direct our forces to the weakest and most vulnerable points, and only federal government can give this direction to the united forces of these colonies. (Cheers.) And now I come to my friend who is intimately related to the Chinese — (laughter) — an inferior race, who are counted by hundreds of millions — in fact nearly 400,000,000 of human beings. Besides this powerful people, other Asiatic races adjoining them may be counted by several millions. All these are within easy sailing distance of Australia. They are all cramped for room, and don't know how to stand. The earth-hunger which has built up some of the most powerful despotisms in Europe will seize upon them, depend upon it. There are signs that it has seized upon them already, and that the next thing it would do would be to make a new China in some remote part of Australia. There are some portions of Australia where, if they get a lodgment, it would be a difficult matter to dislodge them, and where they could form the nucleus of a foreign, alien people. What power could deal with them effectively except a federal government? No power can effectively protect these Australian populations, and safeguard their interests, but a federal authority with a federal parliament, and federal executive government. But there are other reasons for union, some of them so real that anyone may see them, and others so mixed up with probabilities that they require the aid of imagination to even guess what they may possibly be, and others again of a highly moral nature. We will take one of these— the preservation of peace in the world. It has seemed to me, and I think you will agree with me, that amidst the vast improvements arising from the development of moral power in the world there will be, and perhaps before very long, some great gathering such as never has been before—some great council of the nations of the earth, to devise means for obviating the necessity for war. All the great powers of Europe—including Russia herself — have acknowledged the presence of these humanising influences. They begin to see the fearful sacrifices made by war, not only the waste of human life and the most unnecessary suffering, but the waste of treasure and of vast energies which might be turned to higher and far better purposes. What more probable then, than that those great contemporary minds that have risen to this high

level may suggest a gathering of representatives of the nations to see whether or not means may be devised to settle international disputes by some plan other than by appeal to arms. And would you, living in this quiet town on the border, would you be satisfied that Australia should be shut out of such a consultation as that? Yet if New South Wales presented herself she would be shut out, and if Victoria, she would also be shut out, and so with each of the other colonies. But if Australia as a united people, under one fabric of government, with one name and one national life presented herself, the most absolute and powerful governments in the world would welcome her to the conference. (Cheers). Well, there are, as I have said, a vast number of questions of inferior moment, but which can only be dealt with by Australia as a whole. One of these is the deep sea fisheries (one of the sources of our food supply)—in which as single states with a limited range of coast line we can do nothing, but which could be dealt with most effectively and properly regulated by a federal body. Then there are the important South Sea Islands. These beautiful and innumerable islands — most of them admirably situated for the support of human life in health and vigour—are sure to become a seat of great commercial activity. Who is so interested in the young commerce of the Pacific as Australia? It is the progress and settlement in Australia which has thrown light upon the value of these interesting islands, and established means of communication with them, and there is no power on the face of the earth that is so well entitled to the benefit of commerce and intercourse with the South Seas as Australia. That, again, is a question which can only be dealt with by a federal authority. Now, in the great cities of Australia at the present time—notably in Sydney and Melbourne—we have thousands of people, I believe, who say they cannot find employment. It would seem incredible to a stranger that in a new country where nothing is so valuable as human labour—and I care not in which direction you may go you will see land lying idle which could be made most valuable by —labour that they cannot go upon it and make it fruitful. I believe that this affliction whose black wings now overshadow the cities of Australia would disappear if we had a federal existence. Not that I am advocating any scheme of what is called state socialism, but there would arise many national works under a national Government— to improve our harbours, to make our navigable waters secure, to thoroughly examine our coasts, and other justifiable and rational labours, which would absorb a considerable number of these people. At any rate, if a federal government could not solve this problem, certainly no isolated state government is likely to do it. These, then, are some of the questions which could be dealt with by a federal government, but which

are quite outside of the provincial governments.

Sir Henry Parkes then turned to review the proceedings of the convention of March and April, 1891, which differed from the Federal Council that had preceded it in this important respect—that the members of that convention were elected by all the parliaments of all the colonies, whereas the Federal Council was a nominee House, created and kept in existence simply by the advice of passing Ministers. This council had no basis of popular election and no executive power at all; yet the questions which they wished the Convention to deal with were of transcendental importance, which no pigmy body of the kind could properly consider. It was a doll's council and ought to be put into a doll's house and sent to the author of that piece of decrepit legislation with the request that he should nurse his doll until he died. They wanted no such aid to federal unity. There was only one help that they wanted—the only help worthy a community of free men—and that was the help of a power which would give them a passport as Australians to every part of the world.

The speaker, continuing, said: The great convention of 1891 was of a different character. Elected by the Parliaments of all the colonies it was the only body which up to that date had ever met representing all the colonies by its picked men, so that you will see this convention had an authoritative basis. This convention of 45 members framed a bill and prepared a draft of the constitution. Of course adverse critics have arisen, but I am chiefly concerned now in saying that the authority from which it arose was the highest you can get. There is one clause in the bill with regard to the office of Governor-General which says that he shall do this and that and which has excited the hostile criticism of at least one learned critic. But instead of this clause limiting the power of the people it actually enlarges it, because it gives to the authority of the responsible office of the Governor a more extensive power than is given under the separate constitutions of the colonies. Well, this bill has been presented to the various Parliaments, and in the Parliament of New South Wales the general principles have been approved, but a general approval is not sufficient. The bill must be subject to the scrutiny of every member, who must have the power of proposing amendments, and amendments must be decided by the Parliament of the country where it is submitted. The bill in the other colonies, is not even in such a forward state as it is in New South Wales, but there is nothing at this moment standing in the way of the Parliaments of the different colonies making such amendments as they deem fit, and those amendments being decided by a parliamentary majority, as they are in other cases. That is the next step to be taken with this bill, and I shall devote all my power to

seeing that this is done in our own colony. (Cheers.) This done, what is the next step? There must be another Convention of the same authority and the same power as that of 1891 to consider these amendments, and this Convention must represent all the colonies, because the idea I want to impress upon every mind in this meeting is that one mind can do nothing in this great work—it must be done by all in perfect accord. No other power on the face of the earth can settle it. The Imperial Parliament ought not to be allowed to settle it, nor would they presume to do so. This authority, having discussed and finally agreed upon these amendments of the constitution it will be a very easy thing to bring this glorious fabric—rising, as it were, from the mist in all light and brilliancy—into one harmonious whole—a beneficent power, offering an eternal home of freedom and civilisation to this fair country. (Loud cheers.) If I have made myself clear at all you will see that this question is comparatively easy and simple and plain if men will only rise to contemplation of it, and throwing aside collateral and inferior considerations, fix their gaze upon the one grand consummation, and determine to have the glory of a system which will bring it about. (Cheers.) The enemies of Australian union are few. I don't suppose that in the community of Corowa you would find ten men who would openly say they were opposed to federation. The only man I have known who says plainly that he is opposed to federation, and that he prefers the colony of New South Wales disunited from the rest, is a gentleman named Crick. Mr. Crick is a gentleman of very large capacity for public life. (Laughter.) I shall stop there. (Laughter.) But he is the only man who has had the courage to stand up in Parliament and say that he is a provincialist. and that he was elected to legislate for the people of New South Wales and for no one else. I have heard him say so. Well, I venture to think that he was elected as I was elected—to use our knowledge, judgment, every faculty we possess, to promote what we think is for the good of New South Wales; and if we think the union of the colony would be good—would serve the highest interests of New South Wales—his argument is disposed of. Again, some say that they favour federation, but not on the lines of the Commonwealth Bill. (Hear, hear.) I thought I should hear that Chinese response. (Laughter.) Others say that they favour federation, but they want it in the form of an Australian republic. (Hear, hear.) I understand that Sir George Dibbs, since he became the guest of countesses and duchesses, denies that he said this. I heard him, but my ears must have deceived me. (Laughter.) I am afraid that there are a great many politicians who belong to the family who say “yes” to-day and “no” to-morrow, or “yes” or “no” according to the audience or votes to be gathered

in. Well, we don't want anyone of this class to assist us. If the time has not come when the great men who proceeded us said it should have come a generation ago, when will it come? Surely it is a logical thing for me, for you, to ask a man who says that he is in favour of federation at the proper time to tell us what is the proper time. I tell you this, that if there are impediments now there will be more to-morrow; if there are difficulties now they will be greater to-morrow. If there is a want of concurrence of opinion it is not likely to grow into harmony by delay, and for this obvious reason—that we see at this moment going on between New South Wales and Victoria a system of border customs houses which is converting the people on each side of the river into foreigners. (Cheers) This system can only irritate the feelings and the passions of one another. As the carrying out of these laws must be entrusted to servants of the Government at a distance, away from strict supervision, and not always by the most discriminating servants, there is sure to be aggression, and if there should be aggression there will be reprisal, until instead of harmony we shall drift into unneighbourly and antagonistic relations. To that class who object to the Convention Bill I would say how are they to get a bill framed by a higher authority. You must have a measure prepared by such a body as that, because no individual though wise as Solomon could do a work of this kind for all the colonies. But, as I have shown, the work there done was good and solid, calculated to preserve the liberties of the people, and it is open to amendment according to the wisdom of your representatives in Parliament assembled; and if anyone says that he is in favour of federation but cannot be wedded to a particular bill, my answer is that he must be wedded to a particular bill, because you cannot federate in a fog. You must have something clear and definite, which the world can read and understand, and upon which you must be all agreed. (Applause.) There remain to be answered those objectors who say they favour a republican form of federation. I see nothing in that form of federation to attract the common sense of any law abiding citizen of a free country. (Hear, hear). We have among the old monarchies of Europe the brightest example of constitutional government, the limited monarchy of England; we have the great republic of the United States, which indeed cannot be called a republic, because in reality it is a Presidency Government, whose chief magistrate has more despotic power for four years than the most absolute King of Europe. (Applause). Then we have the numerous spawn of the republics of South America. Would any man here in his senses like to live under any one of these republics? I don't think he would—not if he valued his property, his name, or his head. But what are we? We are not directly



under a monarchy. We are under the freest form of government that ever was known. (Hear, hear.) We are bound by a tie, the faintest possible—a golden thread. England never seeks to interfere with us in the management of our affairs. I sometimes wish she would, because I don't think they are always managed so as to be above criticism. But England leaves us to do the best we can—leaves us more at liberty than we should be under any republic that ever existed. It was said that change is an ill sound in happy ears. When people are happy and comfortable and possessed of all they need, they don't want change, and it is well-known that the men who founded the great American Commonwealth, George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, were only driven into rebellion by the stupidity and obstinacy of the Ministry of George III., and it wrung their very souls to raise their arms against England. There probably never was a more loyal subject to England than George Washington, who hoped against hope and bore up against the most serious grievances; and it was only when as a man, and a free man, he could no longer endure the insults of the Ministry, that he most righteously drew the sword. But he was not one of those men who are always looking about for a new form of government. You may, everyone of you, rely upon the words I utter to-night — for once, Mr. Chairman, wise words — No good man ever wants to change the form of Government under which he lives if he is free and happy and allowed to possess his own in peace. (Hear, hear, and loud cheers). It is the man with rebellion in his heart, who will never be satisfied, who is always talking about new governments. They are the men who never see a person better instructed than themselves, or wearing a better coat than themselves, but they want to pull him down to their own level of ignorance and rags. (Cheers) I trust in God that we shall long remain an integral part of the great English system of which our present Queen is the head— (cheers)—and I can see no reason in the world why we should not have a flag of our own, an authority of our own, as an Australian people, and yet remain a part of that great system of government. (Cheer,) Now, I don't think that you will be safe if you want the abolition of troublesome custom-houses, and these great national benefits of which we have been speaking, until you get the unqualified assurance of those who ask for your support that they are in favour of federation pure and simple— (cheers)—not of the Federal Council identified with Hobart, nor any makeshift machinery, but a completed government, possessed of control an Executive Council, and a judiciary entirely Australian and apart even from Imperial interference, because I for one believe that the time has come when there ought to be no more appeals to the Privy Council. (Hear, hear.) My subject is really so

large that I could go on if my bodily strength permitted me, but you would not like to sit here till mid-night. [A voice (ironically): "Yes, we would," followed by loud cheers.] Well, my good friend, I will tell you what arrangement we will make. We will go home to bed and you may sit here till mid-night. Well, I think I have satisfied most of you that if the time has not come it never will come. The question is not likely to be more matured. If we do not unite now we will create so much of confusion, and be guilty of dissipating the energies of the different Governments so widely, that we shall become less prepared to do it, because it is not a trifling thing, ladies and gentlemen, for us to have gone to the trouble of bringing about that great convention, composed of most of the gifted men of all the governments—it is not a light thing to have done that solemnly and then to so trifle as not to properly consider the bill of which they are the authors. It is due to them, due to our own reason and common sense, and to the countries they represent to carefully consider their work. Remember, I don't believe it will be accepted in its present form; it must be carefully scrutinised, and, if we can do anything more to safeguard the liberties of the people, to ensure the foundations of law and order and security of every man's possessions; if we can do that under this instrument, we ought to give our mind fully to this matter that the new structure may have a foundation as broad as possible under the democratic form of government in which we live. One word of myself in conclusion. I have been for very many years in favour of drawing the colonies closer together. That would make us one people; and if we are true to ourselves, true to our ancestry, true to the great lessons which have been written in the blood of the best men who have ever adorned the pages of British history; if we are true to these great historic lessons we shall be able to build up a power so just, so free, so thoroughly in accord with the best aspirations of humanity, that as education proceeds and enlightenment spreads we shall have in this part of the world a nation inferior to none and superior to most that have preceded us; and one likely, as time rolls on, to acquire such treasures of all that is best worth having in civilised life as to have a record in another hundred years, equal to, if not eclipsing, that of the greatest ages of the world. (Loud and continued cheering).

Mr. C. T. Brewer, the chairman of the Corowa branch of the Federation League, proposed a vote of thanks to Sir Henry Parkes for his address.

Mr. A. A. Piggin seconded the motion, which was carried with acclamation.

Sir Henry Parkes, in reply, said that he had spoken at a great number of meetings in New South Wales on this subject, and his experience was that

in every case his utterances in favour of federation were received with more acclamation than any other. Wherever the question was plainly and clearly put the heart of the people of all these colonies was sound, and if artificial obstacles were created it was chiefly through the jealousies and narrow views of politicians. (Hear, hear, and applause.) One word to the gentleman who had seconded the resolution of thanks. Sir Henry (continuing) said: It is a good thing to form your leagues, and to ventilate this question in all directions, but what you have to do is to bring your constitutional weight to bear on Parliament, and to refuse your votes to every man who is not sound on this, the greatest of all questions—(loud cheers)—and if you do that, putting aside personal friendship, putting aside all subordinate questions, you will insist that the candidate shall answer straight whether or not he will pledge himself to vote for the full measure of federal government; and depend upon it the thing is done. (Hear, hear, and cheers). It is in your own hands, but through the constitutional channel of your own house of representatives. I have spoken freely of my own course. No persuasion, no temptation, will induce me in the few years I have to live—and they may not be very many—to turn aside from this one grand object. I believe it is the greatest at the present moment, but it is more—it is the one work that can never come to us again. We can only once create an Australian nation, and once done it is to last for ever. In this one work no successor can receive a second ovation. So far as I am concerned. I will turn aside from it for no other consideration. I will, of course fight for my own colony according to my own light, but above all I shall try to bring these colonies into one fabric having within it the potentiality of united national life for all ages to come (Cheers).

The meeting then dispersed, after giving three hearty cheers for the Queen.

## [Appendix B.]

### **Hon. A. J. Peacock at Corowa.**

ON Tuesday night, the 1st August (the second day of the Conference), the HONBLE. A. J. PEACOCK, ex-Minister for Education, and Member for Clunes and Allandale in the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, delivered an Address in Federation in the Oddfellows' Hall, Corowa. The hall was filled to its utmost capacity, and a large number of the delegates who had attended the Conference were present. Mr. EDWARD WILSON, the honorary secretary to the Conference, presided, and introduced the speaker to the meeting in a few words.

Mr. PEACOCK, who on rising was received with applause, said that for the last 20 years the federation question had been warmly advocated by the Press, and it had always been made a strong point at public meetings, and people of every class warmly welcomed the proposal; but when it was desired to get them to agree to the concrete idea it was lamentable to find such a want of knowledge on this great question, and it was surprising what different views of the subject were entertained—for the reason that we as a people were not informed on the federal constitutions of the world. Historical writers in general had given very little attention to this very important question for the reason that it was an entirely new principle. He desired that evening to bring under notice, firstly, a history of the movement as far as Australia was concerned; secondly, a glance at the federal constitutions of the world where the cases seemed similar to our own; thirdly, to slightly touch upon the Convention Bill of 1891; finally, to point out some questions that ought to be dealt with by a federal form of government; and generally to show the enormous benefit it would be to the people should we adopt that form.

First, he would like to call attention to this fact, that during the last few centuries, anyhow, and even previous to that, the tendency of all peoples, whether in the new world or the old, was to come together. Where peoples were of the same tongue, the same race, the same desires, and the same aspirations, we have seen that in the struggle for existence such peoples have been welded together into unions. Even in the time of almost the youngest man present an example had been seen, when the people of Germany were brought together, and instead of being a number of units were welded into one great Germanic Empire; and this was brought about by the adoption of a Customs union—by carrying into effect the principle

that they should not tax one another's products. Italy was welded together by the efforts of Victor Emmanuel, aided by Garibaldi. To the north, in the Swiss republic, they had the purest form of government the world had seen, and which had lasted for six centuries. Coming to the new world, there were our American cousins. They felt that it was necessary for national existence to bind themselves together—that was over 100 years ago. Even in our own time we had seen the people of the northern portion of America—British America—come together and adopt a form of government by which the people could, so far as matters affecting them as a whole were concerned, have a government able to deal with those questions in one parliament. The Dominion of Canada was brought into existence in the year 1867. So whether we examined the history of the old world or the new, the fact stared us in the face that people of similar tongue, ideas, and aspirations had been gradually brought together and had adopted forms of government by which, in the great questions affecting them as a whole, they could have the national will carried into effect.

Now there were three policies which could be adopted—(1) Unification, (2) Separate Existence, or (3) Federation.

The policy of Unification we were already familiar with, it being the form of government of the mother country. There, the Parliament considered the most important questions which could come before a legislature—the existence of the British Empire, or the question of the peace of Europe—and also dealt with the most trumpery details of local legislation. The people in England were beginning to ask why these petty details should not be relegated to local parliaments; in Ireland they were agitating for Home Rule, and the question was being raised in Scotland. The people, were not satisfied, because local questions were overshadowed by the larger issues, and were frequently not dealt with at all. For instance, the people of Wales had for years been urging a policy of disestablishment, and the question had not been able to be brought forward. Today the Imperial Parliament was face to face with the question, and he did not hesitate to express an opinion that it would have to give up some of its power, or very largely extend the principle of local government throughout Great Britain. Coming to our own experience in Australia, we found that in the year 1851 New South Wales included both Victoria and Queensland. The people of Victoria, and afterwards the people of Queensland, claimed what Northern Queensland was claiming at the present day—that money received locally, and matters of purely local interest, should be dealt with by a local legislature. They said that the policy of unification would not meet their case, and they asked for and obtained separation; so that the

experience of the old world and our own experience in Australia and proved that the policy of Unification is not suited to our requirements.

Separate existence meant the founding of an Australian Republic—“cutting the painter,” or, “running on our own hook,” He repudiated the assertion that this course was the aim of the A.N.A., and, speaking with authority (as the President just now of the Association), he denied it *in toto*. (Applause). If they did advocate such a course they would become the laughingstock of the colonies. It was not so very long ago—less than fifty years—that members both of the House of Commons and of the House of Lords were advocating the separation of the colonies, arguing that it would be better both for us and for the mother country. Since then, however, there had been such an immense development of trade between Great Britain and her colonies owing to facilities of communication, the cheapening of freights, the cable, and the improved postal rates, and to many other reasons, that no thinking Australian patriot would even advocate such a course now-a-days. (Cheers:)

We found ourselves therefore reduced to the third alternative, Federation. Now what was “Federation”? He would give his definition of it. Federation meant joint action on all questions that affected the whole of Australia, at the same time leaving to the people of the different colonies as at present constituted, or as they might be constituted when the population grew, all purely local matters. To him, as a student of history, it was surprising how old the question was. In the year 1848 the Government of the mother country brought in a bill for the better government of the Australian colonies. That bill provided, first, for the separation of the colony of Victoria from New South Wales; and, secondly, for the creation of a Federal Parliament whenever the people of Australia wished. That bill passed the Commons with a majority of 98, but was amended in the House of Lords, the part relating to the Federal Parliament being struck out; and the Commons, sooner than jeopardise the remainder by insisting on the passage of the whole bill accepted it in its amended form. In the year 1851 Victoria was granted her desired separation from New South Wales, but Victoria had not enjoyed her Constitution for five years before she began to find on that there were numbers of national matters which could not be satisfactorily dealt with by a local Parliament, and a committee was appointed to report on the matter at the head of which was Sir Charles Gavan Duffy. The documents of that period might have been penned only yesterday the questions involved so closely resembled those agitating us at the present time. In the year 1870 Parliament appointed another commission to report on those great questions. Coming down to the year

1881, the movement was at its height and delegates of the various colonies met in Sydney; but it resulted in what, to use a common expression, might be termed a “fizzle.” Mr. Service was Premier of Victoria at the time, and a bill was prepared and submitted for the approval of the Imperial Parliament providing for the creation of a Federal Council. The Federal Council was created, and is still in existence, though it was not, and never would be, a popular body. New South Wales had never joined it at all. It could only deal with such matters as were specially relegated to it by the Legislatures. It had no power of the purse, and no executive; and in addition, it was a non-representative and a nominee body, which was fatal to its popularity. In short, the Federal Council did not satisfy the wants of the people of the colonies, and did not seem likely to do so. In the year 1890 a Conference was held in Melbourne, and representatives of all the colonies had attended. From that had sprung the Convention of 1891, which met in Sydney and agreed on a draft bill that was to be submitted to the different Parliaments for discussion, and then, after discussion, it was to be remitted to the people for their vote. Other interests had, however, intervened, and though the principle of the Commonwealth Bill had been affirmed in all the colonies by large majorities, it had never so far received detailed consideration from any of them. That, speaking generally, was the position at present. He ventured to say that the Conference just held in Corowa would do more to assist the great cause in which they were so deeply and sincerely interested than any steps taken previously — (Cheers)—and if the good work was (Unclear:)ably continued in the manner in which it had been begun, then there was no question as to the final result. The work done at Corowa during the holding of the Conference would have the effect of causing eyes from all parts of the English-speaking world to be turned towards us, and who could tell whether the Convention just at an end would not prove—as he believed it would—to be in reality the starting point of a people's movement which would speedily accomplish the object which all who had the welfare of Australia at heart desired so earnestly.

Mr. Peacock laid particular stress upon the necessity which existed for the defences of the colonies to be placed in order; in fact it was a matter of duty. Singly the colonies could do little in the way of defence, but united they would cause an enemy to pause before deciding to enter into conflict. The proper mode of defence was to have a strong Federal fleet (applause)—which should be well and thoroughly equipped and manned, in place of the present unsatisfactory mode of dealing with the defence of our shores. The colonies, although at the present time labouring under financial difficulties, were rich in resources, and likely to attract the

attention of those who cared not how much blood was shed, but cared a lot for greed. Therefore, it behoved every resident, old and young, in these colonies to use their best endeavours in bringing about the establishment of a Federal fleet such as would be in a position to hold its own against any enemy. (Cheers.) Regarding the Border duties, he had learned of the many difficulties, annoyances, and hardships which were inflicted upon the people on this side of the river, and the instances related to him during his brief visit here would be treasured up for future use. (Cheers.) The policy of taxing one another's products was suicidal from every point of view, and the sooner an alteration was brought about the better it would be for every one on this side of the Border. (Hear, hear.) It should be the desire of those living in New South Wales and Victoria to work hand in hand, and, instead of blaming one another, to sink all differences and jealousies, which after all were of a petty character, and join hand in hand and work together for the common good. (Applause.) Need he say that the way to bring this about was the consummation of the object which had brought so many of them together the past few days, viz., Federation? At present it was one colony fighting and working against another, instead of being a united and friendly whole. Did not Victoria try to cut the throat of New South Wales, and did not New South Wales try to cut the throat of Victoria? Every man in the hall that night knew that such was the case, and, at the same time, they also knew full well that such a state of affairs was not the way to build up a great nation. Nothing but unanimity and considering each other's interest would bring about the end desired. He had obtained from the Government Statist a return which showed the indebtedness of all the colonies, including New Zealand, and from it he learnt that the united debt was £ 160,000,000, and during the past five years no less a sum than six and a quarter millions had been paid by way of interest. Now, would any sane man say that this fact was one to be proud of? He believed not. At this rate of procedure the colonies would be in an unenviable position, and our working men would be reduced to the level of those in countries where wages were low and a bare existence was eked out. That we did not wish to see, but desired that our working men should earn sufficient, which, while not keeping them in affluence, would enable them to live in comfort and provide for the rainy day which came to most people. (Hear, hear.)

Some people thought the constitution of the United States was framed in 1776, but in reality this was not done until 1789, when the reasons were primarily those affecting us in Australia to-day. After they were recognised as a separate State by England the States found themselves loaded with a tremendous debt. They had a Congress and a loose Federation; but they



had the same defect as our Federal Council—they had no power to enforce their decrees. They floated greenbacks, and made demands on the different States for expenses. Some States paid and other refused to do so. The best men in America clearly saw that this Federation could not last—that the States would gradually break up. But the one great trouble facing them then, which brought them together, was that each local parliament had power of local taxation, and taxed its neighbour's products, with the result that trade was hampered to a remarkable degree, and it became evident, just as it has here, that a Federal Parliament, able to enforce the will of the people, was essential. It became patent that there should be free interchange of products between all the States, so that trade might flow in its natural channels. That was the main reason why the people of America adopted the Constitution in 1789, which was still in existence as far as its cardinal principles are concerned. Of course the basis of the American Constitution was a Republic. Once in four years the whole of America is agitated, and both parties draw up in line to decide who shall rule the destinies of the republic for the next four years. The President is chosen, a native of the States only being eligible. He selects seven ministers to administer the Departments of State, and sends their names to the Senate for ratification. The seven men remain in office for the next four years. Charges can be made against any of them, but these charges have to be proved, and so long as they conduct themselves in a proper manner they cannot be removed. The consequence of this excellent system was that the continuous struggle of the “ins” and “outs,” as we saw it, was unknown in America, and novices did not get into office to bungle the business of the country. The Senate could call the heads of Departments to account. The Congress, or Federal Parliament of the United States, consists of two Chambers—the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate consists of two members chosen by local parliaments and sent in for a period of six years. One-third of the number retire every two years, and are eligible for re-election. Under the American Constitution a principle was recognised which would have to be recognised by us and by every people aspiring to federation, and that was that no federation could exist unless it were agreed not only that there should be one Chamber representative of population, but that what is called the States Right doctrine should be conceded. This was the case under both the American and Swiss Constitutions. The Lower Chamber was composed of representatives according to the population basis of the several States, while to the Upper Chamber each State sent two delegates irrespective of population.

In establishing a Federal Parliament for Australia the same principle

would have to be followed, and in the Commonwealth Bill as approved of by the Sydney Convention that principle had, in fact, been adopted. In the Lower Chamber there must be popular representation, and with regard to the Senate “States Right” must be recognised, and each Colony, large or small, must have equal representation. It would be absolutely impossible to bring about the Federation of Australia until the people recognised and understood that principle. In the American Constitution there was one clause, plain in its language but momentous and wide-reaching:—“One State shall not tax the products of another.” America had adopted the policy that there should be free interchange of products between her different States, but protection against the world. The third branch of their government was the judicial. Eight Supreme Court judges dealt with all questions of appeal from the local courts, and also dealt with all matters of State differences concerning the terms of the Constitution. The parliament of each State dealt with local questions, but all national questions were dealt with by the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Under the Canadian Constitution the Governor-General was appointed by the Government of the day in the mother country. The people, through their representatives, chose the Premier, and he named his colleagues. The Canadian Upper House in the Federal Parliament was a nominee body upon the principle of the House of Lords. The Lower House was elected on the basis of population, and all powers not specially delegated to the State Legislatures were vested in the Dominion Parliament. The Senate in Canada was not regarded with much respect for the reason that (unlike America) the Government of the day owed no allegiance to the Senate, but to the Lower House only, and also because it was of a nominee character, and had all the drawbacks which attach to a nominee House. Since Canada had adopted the form of government indicated she had gone ahead in a marvellous manner, first, owing to the abrogation of the reciprocity treaty with the United States, which had assisted to keep her young men from drifting into the large centres of population, and especially into the factories of the United States. Canada discovered that she was self-supporting, and she adopted the principle of free interchange of Canadian goods, and protection against the world, with the result that in twelve years after she had federated in 1867 her trade had increased to twenty(Unclear:)one times what it was before Federation was established, and her railway property had increased twelve times in amount. In addition, the Canadian Federal Government of the day grappled with the question facing us now—the question of loans. The Dominion Parliament took over the loans of each of the provinces and adjusted them, and came

to the mother country with the security of the whole of Canada on its back. Thus Canada obtained her loans at a very low rate, and saved thousands of pounds annually in interest alone, in addition to being able to speak with one voice to the world, instead of speaking, as in our case, through the mouths of seven different Agents-General, who were each watching one another to see which could get in first with a loan and cut out the others. (Laughter and Hear, hear.) The Canadian Representative in London, The Lord High Commissioner for Canada, held a distinctive and honourable position such as our Australian Agents-General could never aspire to under existing circumstances. At the present time Canada was in a position to borrow money at  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and at one time had even been able to obtain it at 2 per cent. This was different to Victoria, who, he believed, would have to pay  $4\frac{1}{2}$ , or, in all likelihood, 5 per cent. on the next occasion. But, if Canada could do this, why could not Australia? Victoria, New South Wales, or South Australia going to the English market for money, individually, had little chance of obtaining it at a fair rate, but all the colonies, going as a united whole, would make all the difference. (Hear, hear.) If the different colonies continued in their present disunited condition he would tell them that they would have to pay even higher interest than they did now. It was known in England exactly how each colony stood, and England demanded her own figure, the result being that we were quite at her mercy. If we were federated an immense amount of money would be saved in the way of taxes, and every one knew that great debts hanging over the colonies meant the imposing of taxes. It was a question which affected every man, and came home to him the more forcibly because it touched him in the tenderest of spots, namely his pocket.

He now came to Switzerland. By their Constitution the Swiss people were masters of Parliament, and that was what was wanted here. (Loud applause.) The Swiss had twenty-two local parliaments to deal with local matters, and two men were appointed from each Canton to the States Council, or Upper House (whichever it might be termed), the Lower Chamber being elected on a population basis. Seven heads of departments were selected, who were not necessarily members of Parliament, and these men remained in office till the Parliament was dissolved. They were not chosen because of similar political views, but in respect of ability. (Hear, hear.) These heads of departments prepared bills and brought them forward, but they had no other votes than as members of the chamber, and Parliament dealt with the bills, amending or rejecting them. After any Act had passed both Houses, but before it came into force, if eight of the

Cantons, or 30,000 of the electors, by petition demanded it, the Act was remitted to the whole of the electors under a process known as the "Referendum." The principle of the Referendum was an invaluable one. (Hear, hear.) He had heard people inveigh against it; but our bill of 1891 was going to be sent by the different colonies to the people for their decision on the one man one vote principle. This, was the Referendum pure and simple. Fifteen years ago hardly a public man would have advocated such a policy, on the ground that it was "un-English!"

He remembered how in the year 1879 both Federal Houses in Switzerland passed a bill doing away with capital punishment, which was nevertheless rejected by the Referendum. It was brought up in the Federal Parliament again and carried in the amended form that the local Parliaments could adopt it or not, as they thought fit, the people considering that it was a local question. The people in Switzerland in fact were masters of the situation, and could compel Parliament to carry out their will. They knew they had an effective weapon in the Referendum, and it was this very fact which made every Swiss a politician. In Australia how many young men studied political questions! Some old-fashioned people were of opinion that the Referendum placed a great and a dangerous weapon in the hands of the people; but experience in the Cantons of Switzerland had shown that the people were more conservative than the legislators, and it had constantly happened in Switzerland that crude, hasty legislation introduced by irrational radicals had been summarily rejected by the people by means of the Referendum.

He now came to the proposed Australian Constitution as formulated by the Sydney Convention Bill of 1891, in compiling which the members of the Convention had before them the three systems of the United States, Canada, and Switzerland. It was proposed that Australia being still a part of the Empire, the Governor-General should be appointed at home, and he considered this was a proper provision. (Hear, hear.) It was proposed that the Senate should consist of seven Senators from each colony, whether large or small, but some thought there should be a modification of this provision, and that New South Wales and Victoria should have a larger representation than the smaller colonies. However, this was a matter of opinion. All the great national questions which it was proposed to hand over to the Federal Parliament of Australia would be distinctly specified, other questions would be left to the local legislatures. One main point, on which there could be no difference of opinion, was that there would be absolute freetrade between the colonies and no intercolonial tariffs. The fiscal question would be left to the Federal Parliament to deal with.

(Cheers.) The speaker then alluded to the question of differential rates, railway gauges, pointing out the necessity for some concerted scheme with regard to the former, and the immense disadvantages under which we now suffered by reason of the latter.

Mr. Peacock then pointed out the weight of the debt with which Australasia was now burdened, and went on to say that consolidation was a necessity. He stated that in 1892, exclusive of Treasury bonds, the Australian colonies as a people (including New Zealand) owed £160,000,000. That was a staggering fact! We sent out of Australia annually the sum of £6,246,000 in interest alone. When the colonies came together they would save many thousands annually in this direction. Again we were taxing our neighbours to such an extent as to cause retaliation, and it had been seriously proposed to tax all steamers plying on the Murray, which would be felt very much by Victoria, whose territory extended as far only as the south bank, the whole river belonging to New South Wales. The colonies should follow in the footsteps of Germany, the United States, and Canada, and cease taxing one another. It would scarcely be believed that the amount gained in revenue by taxing one another products, and carrying on this miserable internecine warfare, after deducting the expenses of collection, was less than £500,000. We should be able to measure our strength with our fellow-country men and should not be afraid to meet in open competition those who have started under competition those who have started under similar conditions to ourselves. We were Australians by birth and adoption, and when united we should be in the proud position of being able to speak, not with the voice of Victoria or New South Wales but of "AUSTRALIA." We could only boast of an insignificant population of 4,000,000; but statistics showed that in 20 years there would probably be a population of 18,000,000 in Australia, and that Australia would then be the eighth nation in the world so far as the magnitude of her trade and commerce were concerned. We should combine and hand a glorious heritage to the coming generation, who would still be able to boast that they were connected with the great British Empire from which their fathers sprang.

Federation would mean increased prosperity to every one, and it rested entirely with the people; it was purely a people question. He found the people in Victoria "red-hot" for it, when the matter was placed clearly and fearlessly before them, and judging by the cordiality with which his remarks had been greeted that evening, he believed that he was correct in his opinion that his audience were of a like turn of mind, and that no step would of wanting on their part to aid the cause (Cheers.) From what he had

seen and heard in Corowa during his brief visit, he felt certain that they were an enthusiastic and energetic people, and if the same feeling and the same sentiments could only be aroused in all the other colonies politician would find out that they would be forced to deal with the question in a practical and straight forward manner. He thanked them one and all for the patient hearing which had been accorded him, and trusted that his remarks would have the effect of enlightening the minds of those who were not fully acquainted with the subject, and that ere long they would assemble to celebrate the obtaining of that which they were so anxious for, and that was—Federation: (Loud and prolonged cheering.)

Mr. James Hayes, M.L.A. for The (Unclear:)Hume moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Peacock for his interesting and instructive lecture which was seconded in appreciative term by Mr. Chanter, M.L.A. for the Murray.

The meeting concluded with three cheers for Her Majesty the Queen, and Federation.

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