[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 thatdebate 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 thing 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 Franklyn, 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 justiciary 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.