

SPEECHES

ON

AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION

BY THE PREMIERS OF

VICTORIA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA, QUEENSLAND, TASMANIA,
AND WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

MR. DEAKIN

AND

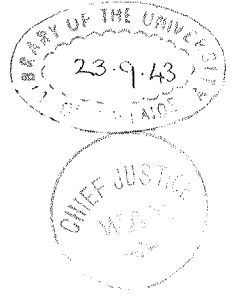
LORD BRASSEY.



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SPEECHES

ON

AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION

THIS celebration of Foundation Day, the anniversary of Australian colonisation, the A.N.A. gave a luncheon in the Exhibition Building yesterday, at which the guests, who numbered about 300, included His Excellency the Governor, the Premiers of Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania, and West Australia, and several other prominent public men. Mr. J. A. Watt, M.L.A., Chairman of the Metropolitan Committee of the A.N.A., presided. On his right were Lord Brassey, Mr. Kingston, Sir John Forrest (Premier of West Australia), the Mayor of Melbourne (Mr. M'Eacharn), the Attorney-General (Mr. Isaacs), Sir John M'Intyre, M.L.A., the President of the Legislative Council (Sir William Zeal), Mr. Dobson (M.H.A., Tasmania), Mr. Deakin, M.L.A., the Minister of Defence (Mr. M'Culloch), Mr. Gillies, M.L.A., Mr. Hackett (M.L.C., West Australia), and Lord Richard Nevill. On the left of the Chairman were Sir George Turner, Sir Edward Braddon, Sir Henry Wrixon, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly (Mr. F. C. Mason), the Chief Secretary (Mr. Peacock), the Minister of Lands (Mr. Best), Mr. Moore (M.L.C., Tasmania), Mr. Barlow (M.L.C., Queensland) and others.

The Chairman proposed the health of His Excellency the Governor, whom he referred to as a visible link between the colonies and the mother country. Australians were at this time more than ever proud of British supremacy, and desirous of assisting in its maintenance. (Cheers.) The people of Victoria honoured Lord Brassey also on

personal grounds. They recognised his interest, not only in their own prosperity, but in the welfare of the empire, as evidenced by his study of naval and other questions.

THE GOVERNOR ON FEDERATION.

His Excellency the Governor, who, on rising to respond, was received with loud applause, said: Mr. Chairman, Sir George Turner, visiting delegates to the Federal Council, and gentlemen,—I thank you for the manner in which my health has been proposed. I am proud to believe you have paid me the honour mainly in my representative capacity. During the remainder of the time I may have the honour of being with you, whatever I may be in a position to do for the good of Victoria in particular, and Australia generally, will always be most cheerfully and gladly done. (Cheers.) I am glad to be present at your anniversary this day, and to have the opportunity of testifying, in the capacity of an Imperial officer, to the great work which has been done for this colony and the sister colonies by the Australian Natives' Association. Your aim has been to create within the British Empire, to which you are proud to belong, an Australian nation, bound together by the free interchange of trade and by unity of government, and possessing the dignity and importance of the supreme power in these southern seas. To promote these noble objects, you have given your warm support to the cause of Australian federation, on which your honoured guests, the Premiers, are engaged, and which we hope, and firmly believe, they will be able to bring to a satisfactory conclusion.

DIFFICULTIES—A SECOND CHAMBER.

I may perhaps be permitted to express the belief that the adjustment of conflicts between the two Houses constituting the Federal Legislature ought not to present serious difficulties. The danger of a collision between two Houses elected on the same popular franchise may be found by experience to have been much exaggerated.

(Cheers.) In Australia the lines of cleavage in matters on which differences of opinion exist are not conterminous with the boundaries of States. You do not find unanimity in large States on one side, and in the smaller States on the other side.

THE CAPITAL—A SUGGESTION.

There is that knotty question of the selection of a capital. It would be good for Australian statesmen if the federal capital were selected as Simla was chosen in India—as the most suitable place for recruiting the energies of worn-out public servants. Having in view chiefly considerations of health, a sanatorium on the slopes of Mount Kosciusko, connected by a branch railway with a trunk line between Melbourne and Sydney, might have much to recommend it. To arrive at a compromise on the question of a customs tariff is no longer so difficult as formerly. Even in New South Wales it has been found that an income adequate to the public needs cannot be raised without the aid of customs duties. The financial provisions of the Commonwealth Bill are perhaps its least satisfactory features. If only it could have been agreed to pool the debts, much complication might have been avoided. Some day it may be possible to arrive at that desirable solution. When all the debts are consolidated under the joint guarantee of the federated States, a saving of interest should be effected falling little short of £1,500,000 a year. Time must elapse before a consummation can be brought about, most devoutly to be wished by Australian Treasurers. Meanwhile, your practical and skilful financiers may be trusted to deal with the situation in fairness and with justice to every interest.

THE NEED OF COMPROMISE.

There are one or two obvious remarks. The federation of Australia can only be accomplished by compromise. All must be prepared to make concessions. A compromise is not necessarily a failure. Systems of government framed upon arbitrary political theories have often been found the least of all adapted to human conditions.

Constitutions, on the other hand, which in every provision and every line of every clause were compromises, and nothing but compromises, have successfully stood the test of time, the test of vast expansion, the test of the widest change of circumstances. As conspicuous examples we have the Republic of the United States and the venerable limited constitutional monarchy under which, as British subjects, we have the happiness to live. (Cheers.) My remaining observation is as obvious as the last. It is vain to hope that a plan of federation can be devised which will never need amendment and improvement. The most skilful politician, the most far-seeing statesman, cannot anticipate nor provide for all the developments and the changes which the next fifty years may bring forth. The statesmen and the free people of Australia must be guided by experience. Where the federal scheme is found to work to the general disadvantage, and contrary to the expectations and intentions of those who framed it, such amendments will doubtless be proposed as are seen to be desirable. Of this power of adaptation a free people can never deprive themselves. Having this power you may, I think, look forward to the experimental stage on which you are about to enter without a shade of anxiety or apprehension.

AN IMPERIAL VIEW.

And now I turn very briefly to Australian federation, viewed from the standpoint of a representative of the mother country. If federation were a step to the dismemberment of the empire, those who have the honour of representing the crown would not be advocates of the cause. We have associated ourselves without misgiving or reserve with the aspirations of the people to whom we have been accredited, because we have the surest confidence that united Australia will never waver in its loyalty. We know that you will stand by us as firmly as we ourselves will stand by you. The vast British Empire has been held together as no other empire has ever been, because the mother country, while giving to her daughter States the protection of an unrivalled navy, and all the advantages of British citizenship, has

long ago, and most wisely, abandoned the attempt to secure to herself any selfish or exclusive advantages from the colonial connection. (Cheers.) It has been wisely recognised that the looser the union between States dissimilar in character, separated by great distance, and existing under different climates and conditions, the longer it will endure. (Hear, hear.) It must be an union which allows each portion of the empire to work out its own destiny, and yet enables all to join together for any great purpose. I am proud to know that thus far the mother country has never appealed to you for help to defend—

That pale, that white-faced shore,
Whose foot spurns back the ocean's roaring tides,
And coops from other lands her islanders.

May the day never come for such an appeal. It would be a prelude to the setting of the star of England's glory. But if we do not want your active help for our home defence, we want to know that your hearts are with us. (Loud cheers.) And when we look further afield, when we look to the outlying territories of the empire, the day may possibly come when it will be in your power to help us. I know you will work shoulder to shoulder in the common defence. (Cheers.) We have lately been confronted with dangers on many sides. We have faced them boldly, and we have emerged scatheless. We have held our own because we are a united people. The union of the mother country and the colonies was proclaimed at the Jubilee. The patriotism of contending politicians at home rose superior to the petty differences of party in the recent crisis in Egypt. In those battles on the Nile we have fought for the point of honour. There was nothing else to fight for. Neither Khartoum nor Fashoda has a serious importance as an entrepot of trade. Each stands in the midst of waterless deserts. But Gordon has been avenged. (Cheers.) The British army has once more shown to all the world that its soldiers, well led, can go anywhere and dare anything. (Loud cheers.) A glorious reputation has once more been worthily sustained. British subjects in every part of the empire will gladly unite in paying the tribute which is due to our brave defenders. My hopes of federation for the future, as I have often said, are not limited to the British Empire alone.

THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE.

I trust that the statesmen of Great Britain, her daughter states, and of the United States—(cheers)—will never rest content until they have established a permanent league between the two countries. The words used by Earl Grey fifty years ago are as true to-day as when they were first uttered. The hopes of the world rest upon the increasing numbers of English-speaking people, scattered in free communities upon the earth, asserting the dominion of the sea, and offering to the citizens of all nations the advantages of freedom and the resources of boundless territories. Among those free communities your federated Australia is certain to hold a great place. Statesmanship and patriotism, as represented, and most worthily represented, by the Australian Premiers, who are now meeting in Melbourne, will not be wanting in this great crisis of Australian history. The feeling in favour of federation has been steadily growing. With no uncertain sound the voice of the people has pronounced in its favour. Failure at this stage would cause intense disappointment. (Hear, hear.) I will not believe it possible. Most heartily do I join in the wish expressed on all sides that the labours of the Premiers may be brought to a successful conclusion. (Prolonged cheers.)

Mr. L. J. Plough, vice-chairman of the metropolitan committee, proposed the Ministry and Parliament.

SIR GEORGE TURNER.

Sir George Turner was enthusiastically received. He said: Once more it is my privilege and pleasure, on behalf of my colleagues and myself, to thank you for the kindly terms in which the toast of the Government has been proposed, and for the cordial and hearty reception which you have given to it. That reception shows that, no matter what adverse opinions may be held with regard to the present Government, the representatives of the native born are not altogether dissatisfied with their present rulers. (Cheers.) I can assure you that it is the manner in which we are received at representative gatherings such as this, and the knowledge we have that a large portion of the people of this colony earnestly desire our success, that have encouraged

us to persevere in the arduous, unpleasant, and thankless task which we undertook some four years ago. (Hear, hear.) As one of the oldest members of this association—(applause)—with a membership dating back now nearly twenty-eight years—(Hear, hear)—I appreciate and highly value the manifestation of respect and good feeling which you have been good enough to accord to me on rising to respond to this toast. When I look back on our early history, and upon our struggles for a bare existence; when I look back on our position in those days, when press and public took little, if any, notice of us—excepting to ridicule us—I am astounded at the progress the association has made, the position it now holds, and the magnificent work it has been able to do. (Cheers.) On other occasions I have had a sad and doleful story to tell.

INDICATIONS OF PROSPERITY.

I have had to tell you of large deficits, of drastic retrenchment, and of heavy taxation, but I am glad to say now that the atmosphere is clearer, our progress is better, and, granted another good harvest, as I hope we will have, we will have little to fear unless we go back to extravagant and unjustifiable expenditure. (Cheers.) Watching closely and anxiously, as I naturally do, the signs of the times, I have no hesitation in saying that we are now on the high road to prosperity—not to our bubble boom prosperity, which was loss, but to a steady and permanent prosperity, which is far better. (Cheers.) Look where you will—to our train traffic, to our tram traffic, to the customs returns, the revenue, banking and mining returns, or to the savings bank deposits—and you will see clear and unmistakable proof that we have at last practically passed, and successfully passed, through all our times of trial, trouble, and tribulation. (Applause.) Some four years ago we were faced with a deficit of £600,000; last year I had the privilege and pleasure of telling the people of this colony that we had not only got rid of that deficit, but had over £200,000 to the good. (Cheers.) And I have no doubt whatever that, in spite of having to provide £200,000 extra expenditure on 30th June next, this colony will show a surplus of at least £150,000. (Loud cheers.) You may rest perfectly assured that the Government is determined to do

all it possibly can to assist our returning prosperity, and to develop and foster our agricultural, viticultural, mining, and other natural resources. (Applause.)

A Voice: It has shown it. (Hear, hear.)

THE FEDERAL COUNCIL.

Sir George Turner: You are aware that during the last few days we have had sitting amongst us the Federal Council. At the institution of this body a great honour was paid to the colony of Victoria, inasmuch as our old and revered federal leader, Mr. Service, was elected as its first president; and a similar honour has lately been paid to this colony in the fact that I, as Premier for the time being, have been elected to preside over the deliberations of that body. As our friend, Sir Edward Braddon, told us, that was not so much in compliment to myself personally as a recognition of the colony of Victoria for its undoubted loyalty to the federal cause. (Cheers.) But, as Mr. Service was the first president of that body, I sincerely trust and hope that I shall be the last. (Applause.) That body has done good and useful work; it has passed beneficial legislation; it has assisted to keep alive the federal spirit amongst us; and it has taught us one lesson—that is, that no federation can possibly be complete unless we have every Australian colony joined with us. (Cheers.) In spite of that, I sincerely hope and trust that before the birth of the new century we will see in the death of the Federal Council the birth of that closer and larger federation which the vast majority of the people of this colony desire to see. (Cheers.)

THE CONFERENCE OF PREMIERS.

At the meeting of the Premiers, which will have to take place in a few days, we will have to deal with matters which vitally affect the future welfare of every man, woman, and child of this our adopted or native land. The question is surrounded with gravest difficulties, and it will require all the judgment and the best wisdom of the Premiers to secure the successful settlement of these difficulties. We must discuss the various questions which will come before us fairly, frankly,



and in no petty provincial, parochial spirit, but with the full determination to do what is fair to all, and best for that Australia which we hope very soon to see united. I am perfectly certain from what I know of the Premiers, with whom I have been associated on many occasions during many years, that they will enter into the deliberations with the full determination that the result of their labours, by compromise and by the federal spirit, will be such that every one of us—including the Premier of our wayward and backward sister colony, Queensland, whom we desire to embrace with open arms—will be able to go back to our Parliaments and peoples, and with no uncertain voice urge upon them the acceptance of the bargain that we will make. (Hear, hear.) We will be animated by one spirit and one desire to bring about the speedy consummation of that which we all desire, so that we may have an Australian charter which will remove all internal barriers, which will protect us against all outside foes, and which will guarantee the supremacy of the national whole. (Cheers.)

FOUNDATION DAY.

To-day we are met to celebrate our foundation day, and I think we have done well in establishing this great national holiday. (Hear, hear.) As this anniversary comes round it affords us an opportunity of meeting together, of reflecting on the past, and of cherishing the idea of having a united and prosperous Australasia, and as we see the consummation of that day which we all desire, and for which we all fervently pray, we will look upon this occasion as the red letter day in Australian history, as our children and children's children may be able to do with equal pride and satisfaction. (Applause.) The future of our colony rests in the hands of our young men, who should esteem it their bounden duty and their glorious privilege to complete the work so nobly taken up by their sires; and if they do their part in the future as well as the old men did theirs in the past, we need have no fear of the result. (Applause.) We must apply ourselves faithfully and diligently to the completion of our past. Some may become weary and fall out of our ranks; but others will willingly take their places, for—

Men may come, and men may go,

but the cause of Australian federation will go on until it is finally completed. Great credit is undoubtedly due to the Australian Natives' Association. I am proud of the work done in its organisation, in keeping alive the interest of the people in our federal cause, and in carrying out our watchword. We look back with bright satisfaction on the work of the pioneers, through whom we derived most of the liberties and advantages which we now possess. (Hear, hear.) I was pleased indeed to see some of the grey-beards and reverend *seigneurs* of what we call, in Parliamentary language, "another place" combining with the young—sometimes very young—natives on one common platform in advocating the acceptance of a very democratic constitution. (Hear, hear, and ironical laughter.) That showed clearly that we were determined to fight together, and that there was no difference between the older and the newer generation with regard to carrying out the great object which we have in view. An overwhelming majority of the people of these colonies have determined to be united, and there is no power on earth strong enough to keep us asunder. (Hear, hear.) I was proud of the vote that was taken on 3rd June last, and I say that the farmers of this colony showed a spirit of self-denial that taught a lesson to the rest of the people, and for which they deserve the warmest thanks and the highest praise. (Applause.)

A FITTING REWARD.

On behalf of the present Government I would ask, Do you desire to mark your appreciation of the work which we have done? Do you desire to reward the Government for all the care, trouble, and anxiety of the last four years? If you do, I would ask you not to relax one iota of your interest in the Australian cause; because the highest, the richest, and the most wished-for reward you can give to us is to enable us in the future to say that during the reign of the Turner Government the federation of the Australian colonies became an accomplished fact. (Cheers.) I would, therefore, strongly urge upon you—and I feel perfectly certain from what I know of you that I need not urge in vain—that you continue the fight you have taken in hand; that every one of you will determine to do something to assist the federal labours; to steer our good bark "federation" through all the

dangerous rocks and shoals that beset her course; over the bar of provincialism, safe into the secure harbour of nationalism. This will be our reward—"that our great, glorious, and well-beloved native land, Australia, united soon shall be." (Loud and prolonged cheers.)

Sir William Zeal, responding to the toast on behalf of the Legislative Council, referred to the inconvenience caused to Parliament by congestion of business at the close of each session. To the Council, at all events, it was a constant source of difficulty.

Mr. F. C. Mason, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, also acknowledged the toast, and congratulated the association on the number of distinguished public men who were assisting at its annual celebration.

AUSTRALIA FEDERATED.

Mr. Deakin, who was most enthusiastically cheered, proposed the toast of Australia Federated. As a private member of the association, he begged to give a hearty welcome to their distinguished guests, the visiting delegates. In its time the Federal Council had done much useful work, and in welcoming its members now they also welcomed the Premiers of all the self-governing colonies, with but one exception, an exception which was due entirely to local circumstances. They welcomed them on an occasion full of significance, and closely associated with the toast, which it was his privilege to propose, Australia Federated. No toast could be dearer to the hearts of their members. (Cheers.) This gathering of Premiers in our city was full of significance, because it proved in the first place that, sundered as the colonies were, they could not escape the necessities of federation. Conferences of Premiers in the past had demonstrated the necessity for a permanent organisation, but the Conference of to-day surpassed altogether all others, because it was summoned wholly and solely to deal with the federal question. On this occasion it would necessarily assume exceptional importance. It was a conference summoned at the call of the mother country, and upon an assertion of the ardent desire of the people of that colony for the creation of a Federal Government. It was meeting to consider the bill which, in three colonies, had been accepted by overwhelming majorities. It was meeting to consider a

small number of amendments strictly defined; to consider them at once, with the intention, he believed, if agreement were arrived at, of proceeding to instantaneous action. (Cheers.) Comment had lately been offered to them in this city upon the silence which, throughout Victoria and Australia generally, had been observed, except in the one colony where the federal question had been under Parliamentary discussion. That silence, in his opinion, had been golden. (Hear, hear.) It had been the silence of expectancy; it had been the silence of courtesy due to the desire to leave to the one colony which had hesitated the opportunity to take federation uninfluenced by any attempt to affect its decision by people outside its borders. In view of the Conference about to assemble, it might be desirable to observe a similar silence now. He would be the last to utter a single sentence which might increase the innumerable difficulties besetting the Premiers; but, perhaps, he might be permitted to remark that the amendments from New South Wales formed themselves at once into two classes. The first might be termed federal amendments, because, if adopted, they would affect all colonies alike. These could be looked upon with a very liberal eye. The other class might be termed provincial amendments. They do not affect all colonies, but were proposed in the special interests of one or more of the number, and, therefore, might fairly be looked upon with extreme caution. (Hear, hear.)

“NO CONCESSION!”

The position taken up by Victoria on the question of this federal union might be regarded as similar to that taken up by England in the cause of peace, and just as the mother country had had occasion to show lately that there were limits even to her powers of endurance in the desire for peace, so the people of this colony were fairly entitled to say that in view of the past records of Victoria, the evidences of their federal sincerity, their enthusiasm, and their willingness to make sacrifices, there was a point at which their watch-word should be, “No Concession!” (Cheers.) He would remind their visitors that Victoria’s attitude towards federation had never varied through the darkest hour of its adversity, and that it maintained the same view

now in the years of its prosperity, when it might challenge comparison with the most prosperous colony of the group. (Hear, hear.) It was because of this unswerving, unwavering loyalty that the people of Victoria were entitled to say they were not prepared to look upon proposals for unity which, as compared with that they had accepted, were either less liberal or less fair. While the Federal Council was accepted and honoured for the service it had rendered, the ideal which it offered was insufficient. It had failed to touch the popular imagination, and so the response to the larger proposal had sprung from the whole body of the people, because it afforded them the opportunity of realising their ideal. At the outset the association had not been without its critics, who asked why they should arrogate to themselves the name of the Australian Natives' Association. The campaign of 3rd June was, however, their baptism of fire. Of all the organisations which took part in that great struggle, not one was so effective as their association in appealing to the hearts of the Australian people on this question, and he ventured to say the title would not be challenged in the future. (Cheers.) They were pleased to have with them Mr. Kingston and Sir Edward Braddon, stalwart champions of the federal cause, and in whose colonies the majority vote had been for federation. They were pleased to welcome two other Premiers, Sir John Forrest, of West Australia, and Mr. Dickson, of Queensland, and they welcomed them with the assurance that, so far as their lights would guide them, they would spare no pains to induce them to cast in their lot with them at once. In the creation of a federated Australia, there was loss for none and gain for all, and they appealed to them to assist in bringing about without delay that consummation for which they all so devoutly wished. (Cheers.)

The toast was received with much enthusiasm, and cheers were given for the visiting Premiers.

AUSTRALIAN PROGRESS.

Mr. Dickson, in acknowledging the invitation tendered him by the A.N.A., said that he once had a political colleague (the late Mr. Macrossan) who always declined banquets and similar hospitalities, on

the ground that they might, if accepted, subject him to suspicions that he was allowing himself to be led away from the strict line of public duty he had laid down for himself. He (Mr. Dickson) was not so sure that his friend was not right in the main. (Laughter.) Yet he admired the man who, while exposing himself to temptation, was not led away by it. It enabled him to show more backbone than the man who adopted the other course. (Laughter.) Passing on to the A.N.A. celebration, Mr. Dickson congratulated the association upon its idea of having Foundation Day as a permanent holiday, and hoped its observance would become general throughout the colonies. The progress of Australia since its foundation had been enormous, how much so could scarcely be realised by the younger generation of colonists. Since he first landed on the banks of the Yarra in 1854, the energy of the Anglo-Saxon race in these lands had been exhibited in a manner so striking as to convince them that there was a still higher and greater destiny to be accomplished by them in the federation of the colonies. (Cheers.) The institutions we already had could still further be liberalised; but there should never be any departure from the true principles of British Government. It had sometimes been said that he was conservative in his views. (No, no.) Well, he, too, thought it was a mistake, for he was never averse to the spirit of the age, with which all public men should keep in touch. He sometimes thought the Australian natives did not sufficiently remember or appreciate the work done by their forefathers, the pioneers of Australian settlement, in the founding of our cities and political and social institutions.

QUEENSLAND AND FEDERATION.

In connection with federation, he hoped he would not be led away by sentimental platitudes. Federation was not accomplished yet. He hoped it might be soon, and would do all he could to forward it. (Cheers.) He would look to what would benefit Australia as a commonwealth. He had come to Melbourne to the Federal Council and the Premiers' Conference with a sincere desire to promote the federal cause; but in doing so he was bound to consider the interests of a great colony, whose internal conditions and possibilities



were so very extensive that they might be injured by a too rigid federation. Queensland had, through unfortunate circumstances, not taken part in the meetings of the convention. That could not now be helped. The time for speechifying was past, in any case, and the time for decisive action had arrived. (Cheers.) He did not want to mislead them as to the attitude of his colony—to offer the word of promise to the ear and break it to the hope. Queensland was favourable to union with the other colonies, but what he would be able to say further could not be said until the Premiers had held their Conference. It was necessary to know what shape the Constitution Bill would take when the Conference had considered it in connection with the amendments desired by New South Wales. Sir George Turner had called Queensland a “wayward” colony in consequence of its hesitation about accepting the present scheme. Had the Premier of Victoria a bill which he could offer as complete?

Sir George Turner: There is one, one I hope you will endorse.

Mr. Dickson: That bill was still in the future, or at all events the amendments to be made in it were. When the bill had been dealt with by the Premiers' Conference, he would be prepared to give it consideration on behalf of his colony—and he thought he could add that his consideration would be favourable. (Cheers.) At least he could assure them that if the bill were fairly such as he could approve, he would lose no time in presenting it to the people of Queensland for their verdict upon it. (Cheers.)

ATTITUDE OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Mr. Kingston said that as far as the suggestion to hold another Federal Convention was concerned he was against it. What would another convention mean? It would mean abandonment of the progress already made—a retracing of the advancing steps of the past few years. Was it the fault of the colonies represented at the last convention that all the colonies were not represented there? The right hand of fellowship was held out to Queensland; the delegates at the Sydney Convention were disappointed that the colony was not represented there, and there was practically an adjournment in order

that Queensland might be admitted. At the Melbourne sitting, too, when the Queensland delegates were expected, they still were absent. In these circumstances, however delighted they should be to allow further consideration of matters which had not yet been settled, he did not favour a re-opening of the work already done. So far as that was concerned, he considered that those who professed to be true friends to federation, and advocated anything in the shape of another convention, were false to their professions. The Premiers had a difficult, delicate, and dangerous task before them. They had a constitution framed by fifty picked men of Australia—the majority of them, at least, elected by the direct votes of Australia—and he trusted that the result of the Premiers' deliberations would be that they might find that no alteration was wanted. If, on the other hand, it were found necessary that some amendments must be made for the purpose of securing the adhesion of a greater majority of votes than had already been recorded in another colony, he trusted that no amendment would be proposed that would not recommend itself to the conscience of the man who proposed it, and that would not meet with public approval. (Cheers.)

TASMANIA TRUE TO THE CAUSE.

Sir Edward Braddon, who was received with loud cheers, proposed "The Day We Celebrate." In doing so, he said the foundation of these colonies would lose all its great significance and importance if they were not to believe that the result of that foundation was to be at a very early date the federation of Australia. (Cheers.) He could not help associating with the toast the Australian Natives' Association, to whose noble and whole-souled endeavours the passing of the Constitution Bill in this colony was so largely due. Just 111 years ago the British flag was hoisted here, and these colonies were constituted an outpost of the British Empire; and while it was the desire of all of them to fulfil their duty to the mother country, they hoped at no distant date to become one in the greatest federation that could be imagined—a federation in the interests of peace more than of war; in the interests of civilisation and progress; a federation of Great

Britain and her colonies and the United States of America. (Cheers.) The time would come, he hoped, when the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes of the United States would be intertwined for all beneficent objects, and make peace a lasting thing amongst us. The delegates were assembled on a most momentous occasion, for the purpose, he hoped, of paying their last duties to the Federal Council and dealing finally with its obsequies. He desired to speak with nothing but respect of the Federal Council, but he felt it was insufficient for the great purpose they had at heart, and that it failed to represent the people in any possible way. (Hear, hear.) Before resuming his seat he should like to say a few words on behalf of the people of Tasmania for the splendid way in which they had supported the cause. (Cheers.) They had a very strong opposition, and the latter necessarily played upon all the small local prejudices and parochial feelings of the people from one end of the country to the other. They even had to meet the opposition of the Government Statistician, who pronounced that federation spelt absolute ruin for Tasmania.

Sir John M'Intyre: Why didn't you give him the sack? (Laughter.)

Sir Edward Braddon said he valued him too highly to do that. The people of Tasmania, notwithstanding this opposition, went in for the brotherhood of Australia, and that brotherhood he hoped they should secure within a very short space of time. (Cheers.)

WARNING FROM WEST AUSTRALIA.

Sir John Forrest said the advantages of federal union of the colonies were so great as to be beyond question, even for so remote a State as West Australia. How far that colony was away from the centre of Australian thought and sentiment was something for which due allowance was not always made. West Australia was really at present as far removed from the rest of Australia in the political sense as if it were an island in the Indian Ocean. None the less, it strongly shared the national desire for union, provided it was accomplished on fairly reasonable terms. He had never been able to

understand the position of Queensland in the matter. That colony might have been expected to see some advantage in at least assisting in the framing of the constitution scheme. He believed that the efforts now being made to bring Queensland into the union would be successful, but at the same time it was as well to say that if one or two colonies claimed to have amendments made in the bill, he, too, would probably want to propose some amendments on behalf of his colony. Many things in the scheme had been carried, as it were, at the point of the bayonet, and he had made concessions. But these concessions related to the bill as it now stood and not as it might be.

