

# Greater Britain:

Alfred Deakin's Articles  
for *The National Review*



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(December 1904 to October 1905)



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Historic Memorials Collection, Australian Parliament House, Canberra



Elliott & Fry, Portrait of Alfred Deakin, circa 1900s

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# Illustrations

Frederick McCubbin (1855–1917), *The Hon Alfred Deakin*, 1914  
Historic Memorials Collection, Australian Parliament House, Canberra

Elliott & Fry, *Portrait of Alfred Deakin*, circa 1900s, photograph, National Library of Australia,  
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Charles Nuttall, *Honorable Alfred Deakin, Federal Attorney-General* from his *Collection of portraits:  
representative Australians, 1901–1902?* Dixson Library, State Library of New South Wales, DL PXX 29

# Introduction

On 21 April 1905, Alfred Deakin rose in the House of Representatives to announce his resignation as Prime Minister following his Government's defeat on a critical vote on the Conciliation and Arbitration Bill. Thanking members for their assistance, he noted that leadership of the House was 'among the most onerous and arduous' but also the 'most honourable' of his duties as Prime Minister.<sup>1</sup>

On the eve of his ministry leaving office, Deakin wrote to Leopold Maxse, editor of the London magazine *National Review*,<sup>2</sup> offering to contribute a monthly 'sketch' of Australia's 'experiments in self rule and social legislation'.<sup>3</sup>

Being too deeply engaged in politics to contemplate a return to the Bar, he sought to supplement his income by penning monthly, unsigned articles which would be 'neither personal nor partisan in character'.<sup>4</sup> He had, he noted with no apparent irony, 'a first hand knowledge of public affairs throughout the Commonwealth'. (Deakin had drafted a similar letter<sup>5</sup> the previous year when he contemplated resigning his position of Attorney-General in the Barton ministry, though it seems never to have been sent.)<sup>6</sup>

Deakin was at the time also contributing weekly letters to the London *Morning Post* newspaper.<sup>7</sup>

Maxse and Deakin had 'met in London in the 1880s, and probably again' when Deakin was in London in 1900 to help smooth the passage of the *Australian Constitution* through the British Parliament.<sup>8</sup>

Having received no reply to his letter, and assuming it had somehow 'miscarried', Deakin wrote again on 10 August, asking if the *National Review*:

would care to engage me as a regular contributor upon Aust. affairs of which I naturally possess an intimate knowledge at first hand ... I have been a journalist & am too engrossed in public matters here at present to desire to return to the Bar. I think I could find abundance of material for monthly articles supplying some much needed knowledge of our legislative experiments and political developments.

I am entirely in accord with your fiscal policy & imperial attitudes generally but would need either to adopt a nom de plume or ... veil my identity in order to be able to comment with perfect freedom upon men and movements with which I may be directly associated.<sup>9</sup>

This time, Maxse responded swiftly, first by cable,<sup>10</sup> and then by letter, accepting the offer 'as a very great compliment and distinction', proposing an honorarium of £20 per article, and suggesting that each:

should in the first place deal with some special topic, and should perhaps take their title from that topic, as for instance one quarter 'Australia and Imperial Preference', giving a review of the position of the Preferential Question in the Commonwealth, and the attitude of the different States and Statesmen towards it ... I do think it would be exceedingly interesting if on each occasion that you write you would deal at large with one or other of the greater problems that interest or ought to interest Australians.<sup>11</sup>

Deakin accepted this suggestion and the first article appeared in the *National Review* in December 1904. Maxse announced his magazine's new contributor with fanfare:

Every Englishman who takes an interest in the Empire has long been impressed by the lack of communication between the Mother Country and the Australian Commonwealth ... Australian visitors to England ... have publicly expressed their astonishment at the ignorance prevailing here concerning Australian affairs, while Englishmen visiting Australia are no less discouraged by Australian ignorance of British affairs. We cannot deal with both ends of the problem, but we trust that the monthly letter from our own correspondent in Australia, who is one of the most competent students of Australian affairs, may do something to supply the lacuna at this end of the Empire. We recognise that this arrangement ... is a serious encroachment on our space, as it necessarily overshadows other Colonial topics, but the British public is kept fairly informed regarding Canadian and South African affairs. Moreover, we confidently leave our readers to judge from the first of our Australian Letters ... as to whether the experiment is justified.<sup>12</sup>

'Thus during 1904 there were two London journals publishing regular, well-written and lengthy articles on Australian politics'<sup>13</sup> penned anonymously by its former Prime Minister.

While in the *Morning Post* Deakin adopted the persona of a New South Welshman, as 'CR' (for 'Commonwealth Representative') in the *National Review*, he wrote as a South Australian.<sup>14</sup> The identity of the *National Review*'s 'own Australian correspondent' remained unknown, though his friend and colleague **Bernhard Ringrose Wise** apparently had suspicions.<sup>15</sup>

As was the case with his letters for the *Morning Post*, Deakin seemed untroubled by the conflict of interest intrinsic to writing commentaries upon political events in which he continued to be an important player.<sup>16</sup>

Unaware of Deakin's other journalistic venture, similarity in style and subject notwithstanding, Maxse professed himself entirely delighted in the results:

... it is entirely what is wanted, and ... will have an excellent effect in public opinion. There has never been anything in the least like it, so far as I know, as newspaper correspondence has generally been quite out of touch with Australian politics.<sup>17</sup>

Deakin continued to contribute articles for several months, the last one appearing in October 1905, by which time both the Watson and Reid governments had foundered and he was again Prime Minister. During this time, he moved from handwritten to typewritten copy in response to the editor's pleas.<sup>18</sup> Maxse was less successful in his endeavours to curtail the length of Deakin's articles:

They form an exceedingly interesting and valuable feature of the *National Review* ... though I own, as I have previously confessed ... the length not only compels me to cramp the affairs of the rest of the Empire, but it has also materially added to the difficulties of making up the number. In fact you have set up a general squeeze!<sup>19</sup>

The squeeze notwithstanding, Maxse's response to Deakin's decision to discontinue the arrangement upon his return to the office of Prime Minister was one of sincere regret:

I need not say that I fully understand, however reluctantly, that you should find it impossible to continue your letters for the *National Review*, and I must express the hope in the public interest that it will be long before you are able to resume them. At the same time I trust if there is any unfortunate turn in the political wheel according you a position of greater freedom and less responsibility, that you will once more honour the *National Review* by acting as 'Our Own Correspondent in Australia'.<sup>20</sup>

## Notes on the text

Deakin's articles appeared in the *National Review* between December 1904 and October 1905 under the by-line 'our own correspondent in Australia'. There is a gap in sequence, with no article appearing in July 1905 (issue 270).

With the exception of those published in December 1904 (issue 262) and March 1905 (issue 265), the articles are signed 'CR' for 'Commonwealth Representative'.<sup>21</sup>

The text published here has been transcribed from bound volumes of the magazine.

The letters (undated) are organised chronologically by date of publication.

Original headlines and subheadings have been retained as have, generally, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and other accidentals. Obvious misprints and misspellings have been corrected silently. As published, the March 1905 article 'Australian Views of Preferential Trade' (issue 265) included in the bottom margin truncated citations of parliamentary debates. These have been replaced by standardised referencing.





Alfred Deakin, this drawing was one of a series of studies by Charles Nuttall for a photo-engraving entitled 'HRH the Duke of Cornwall and York opening the 1st Commonwealth Parliament of Australia May 9, 1901'.

Dixson Library, State Library of New South Wales, DL PXX 29



# GREATER BRITAIN

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## THE CRISIS IN AUSTRALIA

(BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT IN AUSTRALIA)

The Australian Commonwealth in its infancy seems subject to a variety of irritating disorders which it is to be hoped are peculiar to the early stages of its growth. Some of its citizens are examining them with fretful self-consciousness, finding vent for their disappointed expectations every now and then in querulous questionings of the wisdom of our having federated. Warwick, the little town centre of the country constituency of the **Premier of Queensland**, affords the latest instance of a plea for secession. The alarm expressed is doubtless premature, arising either among those of little faith in the future, or of little patience with the manifold political activities now in play around them, but is not entirely without justification. It must be confessed that among other trials we are suffering at present from a surfeit of legislation, State and Federal. It used to be alleged that Canada produced more politics to the square mile than any other part of the Empire, but it seems very likely that since 1901 the Dominion has been relegated to a second place. With a much smaller population and at least as large an habitable area, we have at the present moment seven separate Legislatures, of fourteen Chambers in all, guided by seven distinct executives, all in full blast. Every inch of the country and every one of its citizens is subject to the dual control of the federal and the several State governments, besides acknowledging in most instances other instalments of authority, exercised by one or more municipal bodies or boards. Then, though we have no such “campaign” orgie as accompanies a Presidential contest in the United States, and no such organisation as directs their regular elections in the States and for Congress, we more than make up for the absence of these by the instability of our Ministries and Parliaments, whose lives are liable to be cut short at any moment. Rarely do we enjoy a period of prolonged quiet. Our strongest administrations lie open to surprise attacks, and every Session, even in the tamest times, is diversified by guerrilla warfare. At the most our popular Chambers, which make and unmake Governments, exist for only three years, while their elective companion Chambers are limited to a six years’ tenure, half of them going to the country every three years. Members are thus kept in close touch with

their constituents, whose vigilance would require to be sleepless if they followed, even in a general way, the transactions of their representatives and the vicissitudes of their parties. Appeals to the country always possible are often pending, so that we are kept upon the *qui vive* from year's end to year's end. Rarely indeed is the political temple of Janus closed, or are the sentinels of the Press released from watch and ward.

There are special reasons, too, why the Australian people are obliged to be constantly on the alert in politics. The field of legislation here seems larger because it is now, and is always likely to be, more extensively cultivated than in the Mother Country, and is, under our constitutions, actually wider than that of the Central or any State Legislature in the American Republic. Joining New Zealand in the comparison, we find State ownership among us extending not only to great tracts of unoccupied land, to railway and water-supply monopolies, to post-offices, docks, telegraphs, telephones, and tramways, public schools, libraries, museums, and art galleries, but, in single instances, to a coal mine, a clothing factory, a public-house, and a wine depot. These enterprises, collectively of immense industrial importance to the community at large and particularly to special classes affected by them, have an additional influence which extends with their extent directly into the political realm. They are always enlarging the number of State employees having an immediate personal interest in the choice of legislators who will study their interests before those of the general community which employs them. Nowhere is there to be found a democracy in which these industrial and political elements figure so conspicuously as in Australasia. Again, up till recently large sums of borrowed money have been disbursed annually upon public works, either associated with these State undertakings or for the purpose of developing the country districts to and through which settlement is pushing into the interior. To obtain such an outlay in each locality has been a matter of great moment to its residents, whatever the real or relative merits of its objects may be. Naturally those who represent them have not been backward in pressing the claims of their constituencies to what they consider a full share of the money available. Finally, both in the variety and thoroughness of our administrative interventions we have surpassed any State control of private enterprise which can be witnessed elsewhere. Official supervision on the Continent is in many respects much more searching, but even there the business of industry is freer from control. Government and municipal inspectors have been multiplied among us, of many types and for many purposes, including the affixing of Government brands and guarantees for wine, butter, and meat exported. All private factories are visited, not simply for sanitary reasons, but to assure the execution of laws relating to the ages, wages and hours of those employed. Courts of arbitration determine these and all other conditions that they deem necessary to impose upon the conduct of all manufactures and similar undertakings. This overlordship does not exist in every State nor in the

Commonwealth as a whole, but it exists in some and is at hand in all. To own and carry on as public enterprises some of the most important national industries, to inspect and regulate all those which remain, though they continue private enterprises in name and in responsibility, to spend liberally from the public funds upon many matters which profoundly affect particular places or interests, and to carry out all these operations by means of an army of public servants who band together to conserve their privileges and increase their emoluments, amounts to an effective occupation of a sphere of government which has been until recently very little explored. Such legislation has been properly described as experimental, and it may at once be granted that the term implies at least to an equal degree to its administration, which is experimental also. Upon these matters, and upon the innumerable questions of detail associated with them, as upon all the perplexing novelties that arise out of them, our legislators are required to pronounce. Their obligations in these directions, which might appal even those philosopher kings whom Plato foresaw, have to be discharged by average men selected by average electors under the instruction of average newspapers. Is it then any marvel that with such a strain imposed upon us by our complex politics we Australians find ourselves plunged into a gulf of difficulties peculiarly our own, lying beyond that quite sufficiently dangerous and stormy sea of public life which has to be navigated in all other countries under constitutional government?

A likely inference from this rough outline of our position would be that our citizens live a hunted and anxious life, with their eyes rivetted either upon the door by which a Government official may be expected to enter at any moment, upon press reports of parliamentary debates regarding some fresh inroads on their liberty, or upon the latest summons to a party meeting designed to protect the property they are still allowed to possess. No picture could be further from reality. It is doubtful if one man in ten takes serious or consistent heed of the progress of politics in his own State, or if one in twenty concerns himself with the proceedings of the Commonwealth Parliament in Melbourne. A Ministerial crisis always provokes a sporting spirit among the onlookers for the time being, though for most of them it is the event and not its character that attracts notice. The meetings, speeches, resolutions, placards, rallies, and newspaper appeals all told for weeks before a general election rarely induce much more than half those whose names are on the rolls to exercise the franchise. A considerable proportion of these are coaxed into voting by personal canvass or from extraneous motives. Adult suffrage obtains in half the States and also for the Federal Houses; and where it does, possibly because of the novelty, quite as many women as men go to the poll, though their knowledge of the issues involved must be far less. Our papers devote a great deal of space to politics, and its phases are a stock subject of conversation; but our party organisations are weak, have paltry funds at their

disposal, and as a rule dissolve directly the ballot-box has given its verdict. Those who infer that because of our exceptional politics Australians march to the polling-booth *en masse* from packed public gatherings held under the leadership of expert tacticians and recognised chieftains mistake us altogether. Our election meetings are generally small, and the bulk of those who attend them are usually more alive to humour or sentiment than to facts or arguments. Heckling is a favourite practice, and only in the country are long speeches listened to with patience. We have plenty of real politics and of active agitation among a small minority, but for the rest of us they afford but one interest among a number, and that by no means the strongest. We may have more politics than other countries, but then we have also a great deal more sport, more holidays, more amusements and diversions of all kinds. Even the business men who bewail the conduct of their Legislatures take a very occasional part in public affairs. They exercise the prerogative of grumbling little more than other classes, and accept the restrictions placed upon them with only intermittent protests.

Our public men, being free from corruption or its suspicion, are allowed a good deal of latitude in their interpretations of a programme and of party allegiance. The general tone of our Assemblies is neither vulgar nor vindictive, and even between opponents the customary relations are those of respect if not of *camaraderie*. Our State departments and industrial undertakings are, with scarcely an exception, honestly administered, and contain many capable men. When supervision is neglected and deficits have to be supplied from fresh taxation, there are outbursts of wrath, and the pruning-knife is wielded for a time as if it were a sabre. Sometimes, if responsibility can be fixed, it becomes an executioner's axe, but in nine cases out of ten even the aggrieved taxpayer soon allows himself to be mollified. The public servants drop back into their old groove. So long as they make no excessive demands, and exert themselves to give reasonable satisfaction to those whom they have to deal with day by day, all relapse into a jog-trot again. If Australia be visited occasionally by disastrous droughts, and oppressed by unwise legislation, it remains a land of sunshine and of flowers, of great cities pulsing with energy, of wide spaces too thinly peopled, and dense forests too slowly cleared, where the personal freedom and opportunities, the untrodden vistas and transparent atmosphere compensate for everything. They foster a brightness of temper and elasticity of spirit, enabling its people to face the hardships of bad seasons and the harshness of ill-applied restraints with a serenity that is often careless indifference, but often courageously independent too.

Our larger politics to-day take their form from the composite government created by the Commonwealth Constitution, and their colour from the exceptional economic circumstances of our remote continent. The six States which are the constituencies of the Federal Senate have their individual entities thus officially acknowledged in the

Parliament which presides over the destinies of the whole of Australia within the fixed limits of its charter. Besides this guarantee, each State retains its old Constitution and control of its own territory. The Constitutions have been modified in four States because of their altered circumstances since they parted with what might be termed sovereign power nearly four years ago. But they continue sovereign within their own borders in respect to all matters not specifically removed from their control. In three States they have recently reduced the numbers of their representatives, and in all of them are about to consider a reduction of the salary and status of their Governors. Save for the strong pressure of public opinion and the financial necessities induced by bad times, they would not have taken either of these steps, of which the second seems palpably a mistake. The sum to be retained is small and the loss of prestige considerable. Jealous as all the States are of the central Government, it is surprising that they should be so willing to diminish one of the most imposing evidences of their direct relation to the Crown, which is preserved to them quite apart from the Commonwealth and independently of it. Their appeals, when made through less influential representatives of the King, must have less weight in the event of any clash of opinion between their views and those of the Federal Government. On the other hand, the pinch of financial need has already led to reductions in the Supreme Court benches of Queensland and Victoria that are likely to encourage litigants into taking their cases direct to the Federal High Court over the heads of the Supreme Court judges of the States. Having regard to the high attainments and strength of character of Sir **Samuel Griffith** and his colleagues, this departure is by no means to be deplored. Our population is not large enough to maintain six first-class Courts of Final Appeal in Australia, and in some States the Bar is confessedly not strong enough to supply them. One of the last appointments made in Western Australia was that of an English barrister, who was brought from home to fill a vacancy on the Bench. The Privy Council having lately indicated that it does not propose to review the decisions of the High Court except in very special cases, it may be conjectured that there will be a marked tendency to obtain its judgments without the delay of an application to an intermediate State tribunal. With Lieutenant-Governors instead of Governors, with smaller Supreme Courts and Legislatures, and narrower areas of authority, the States, in spite of themselves, are visibly shrinking in importance. Indeed, the electors expressly determined that they should when they carried federation by overwhelming majorities in every State except New South Wales. That they shall submit without a struggle is neither the desire nor the intention of provincial politicians, whose aim has been and is the preservation of all possible powers and distinctions between themselves and the over-shadowing central Parliament. The spectacle of six Legislatures and Ministries each pursuing its own course without reference to its neighbours or to the Commonwealth, especially as the latter makes all State citizens its electors, is certainly calculated to confuse the observer at a distance. He cannot be

expected to discriminate between the parties and principles merely of local interest in each State and those which impinge upon the interests of Australia as a whole. Every separate Legislature has its own rival factions, conducting their wrestle for mastery among themselves with but an occasional influence upon parties elsewhere. Before federation there was scarcely a discernible likeness between their policies, so that a special study of each was essential to their understanding. Some relics of these days of entire independence remain, but they would have been gradually lost to sight when the changed conditions under the Commonwealth came into full play. As it is, their submergence is being principally accomplished owing to another set of causes altogether generated by the rapid growth of the Labour party in every quarter. Still it would be a grave error to undervalue the local Legislatures because they have been to some extent subordinated to a national Government and Parliament. After all, they have only surrendered certain definite powers. The residue is still theirs. They possess enormous territories, the smallest of them exceeding in size the minor European States, while each of the largest covers an area much greater than that in Europe ruled by any nation except Russia. Within their borders they exercise supreme control over the land, mines, waters, railways, education, police and local government, collecting and expending large revenues in the prosecution of great designs for the development of their vast estates. It is impossible to lose sight of them or their operations. To ignore them would be to misread the whole Australian situation and to throw away the key to much of the meaning of federal politics. To understand the whole we must first understand the parts, especially when, as in this case, each part is entitled to exercise, and will insist upon exercising, the independent powers with which it has been endowed, many of them most extensive and valuable.

Commonwealth politics therefore derive their form from the States of which the Commonwealth is composed; for Federal parties are built out of State parties, and federal members almost without exception have been trained in State Legislatures, are known by their past records in them, and have adopted in the wider area the same procedure that existed in the first theatres of their public lives. One consequence of this is that a federal type of legislator and a federal policy have yet to be evolved out of the partially discordant elements supplied by the several States from which the Commonwealth collects its representatives. For similar reasons the colour of federal politics is a blend of the policies of the electors of the States who, taken in the aggregate, constitute the electors of the national Parliament. What the common characteristic of all State politics is has been already indicated. By comparison with the Mother Country, Australia is a shocking example of that over-legislation which Mr. [Herbert Spencer](#) was never weary of denouncing, and of the Government interference and aggrandisement which saddened his forecasts of the future of his

own country. In Great Britain this development appeared to him to consist of a series of encroachments upon the individual liberty which our forefathers had won, and of which they were now being bit by bit despoiled. When Australia was colonised such theories were little known and certainly had no weight with our pioneers, who adopted the measures he abhorred on simple and practical grounds. A handful of daring men were seeking to overrun and exploit a continent. There was no municipal agency available for the making of roads, or no settled population to pay rates to a shire if it had existed across which tracks must be cut and rivers bridged in order that gold-fields might be reached or remoter settlements brought in touch with the ports. The work could not be ignored. It had to be done by the Government if it were done at all. The Government was ready. A Crown Colony Governor of those days exercising semi-despotic semi-parental authority was chiefly concerned with administration. Legislation by ordinance was short and simple. His most important work was the making and improving of means of communication for the wandering wagons of exploring pioneers trickling across arid plains or threading virgin forests towards the easiest utilised lands upon which they could found homes for themselves, though far distant from the coast and from each other. The exceptional demands made by the great influx of immigrants after the gold discoveries and the nomadic movements of great armies of these dauntless men from “rush” to “rush” for some years afterwards necessitated highways of a kind which could only be constructed by the Government of the day. There was no one else to construct them outside the towns. Afterwards, while disbursing huge sums for roads that required to be constantly renewed, it was the most natural thing for the same authority—then practically the sole landlord of the country—to build its own railways, as it had been building its own roads, upon its own property. Thus in a thoroughly businesslike way, and from considerations of mere expediency, what is now described as Australian State Socialism had its birth. The duty of providing for its people fell to the Government, had to be undertaken in a hurry, and was carried out at once under pressure, without the acceptance of any doctrine whatever as to the functions that it ought or ought not to exercise.

It is after this fashion that the present generation received its inheritance of State property in what are elsewhere private enterprises, and in the light of the experience gained in its management has not hesitated to increase its range. What would have been the attitude of our people now if capitalists of foresight had undertaken then the construction and management of the railways, the water-supply works, essential to us in the country as well as in the town, the telegraphs, tramways and harbour conveniences, is now an idle speculation. Government works having been commenced, impatience of delay, together with a dread of monopoly, have led to the

absorption of such schools, telephones, bridges and wharves as were formerly in the hands of individuals or companies. There are still a few short private lines of railway in Queensland and one main line in Western Australia, where the development was much later than in the east. Speaking generally, the appetite for State ownership so far has grown by what it fed upon, and it is now a popular remedy for all kinds of difficulties. What we have escaped in the way of abuses, such as might have attached if we had been dominated by trusts, is often described in an imaginative style by partisans of the existing system, but the verifiable losses actually involved in our experiments are rarely reckoned up. The millions sterling which the taxpayers have contributed to make up the chronic deficiencies of our railways, telegraphs and telephones are a standing warning against the risks inseparable from this class of public investments. Whether these losses are due to defective control, unduly cheapened rates, unnecessarily costly construction, or the expansion of the systems beyond their profitable areas, is hard to determine in any individual State, and impossible to predicate of the whole of them. It must suffice to say that all these causes of loss have operated and are operating everywhere to some extent. What rigorously economical supervision and persistent caution can do has perhaps been best proved for a period of years in South Australia, where unfortunately we are and must remain dependent upon the earnings on the line to the Broken Hill mines in New South Wales to balance the railway accounts. But for this circumstance our position would be more solid than that of the more populous States. Western Australia is excluded from the comparison because of her exceptional gold discoveries, which have made remunerative some lines that under the conditions prevailing at the time of their authorisation could not have possibly paid their way. But unfavourable balance-sheets relating to State industrial investments are usually discounted by the rejoinder that, although a people of yesterday, we enjoy by reason of our expenditure all the conveniences and advantages of civilisation of the older world. This is true particularly of our large cities, and though not applying to the country districts to the same degree, enables even its residents to be drawn much closer to the towns and to each other, whether for business or pleasure, than would be otherwise possible. Comfort apart, it must not be forgotten that the burden imposed could not be borne as lightly as it has been but for our happy circumstances. This is a country of magnificent distances, the whole of whose inhabitants could be without any difficulty housed in the island of Tasmania and yet fall short of the density of population of the smaller European nations. These distances, while they make railways and telegraphs a necessity, also make their construction and maintenance relatively costly. The States could not afford them unless we had been and continue to be remarkably thriving. That relative prosperity has been, and despite bad seasons is still, the normal condition of Australia when measured with other lands. It has enabled us to prolong

our experiments in spite of their expensiveness. State socialism, as it is termed, has not yet been put upon the same trial here as it would have had to sustain in less fortunate communities. Under the pressure of the greatest drought we have ever known, reforms have been accomplished lately in the more extravagant States that have included retrenchments upon their railways and in the public service generally. Whether these economies will be persevered with now that we have enjoyed one good season over the whole continent, and are about to enjoy another, remains to be seen. What must be recollected is that Australia adopted its experiments in State socialism under pressure of emergencies peculiar to herself without discussion of the doctrines since elaborated in defence of them, and that she has made a comparative success of them because her citizens have been exceptionally well to do during the whole term of her experience.

Our politics, federal in form, are becoming federal in character, because the colour which they derive from our social legislation is now being imparted to the whole of the Commonwealth, owing to the prominence attained in all its parts by what is known as the "Labour" party. That title is disputed because, without the votes of the labouring classes, no Ministry, whatever its policy may be, could be returned or sustained in any State. It was originally assumed because the object of its creation, as a political party, was boldly professed to be the capture of the Legislatures in the interest of the work-people. This was to enable them to attain, by means of legislation, the increased wages and privileges for which they began and carried on the great strikes of 1890. Badly beaten everywhere at that time, and particularly crushed in Queensland, where they had not hesitated to attempt to secure their ends by open violence and an approach to civil war, the leaders of the unionists at once commenced to marshal their forces for the polls. A conflict between employers and employed had become inevitable. The precise origin of the strife was an endeavour to bring into line all the trades and callings in Australia possessing unions, in order that they might act together as one union of labour on behalf of any of its component parts, whose demands were refused by its masters. In 1890 the officers of coasting steamers, as an evidence of their acceptance of their obligations as one company of the union army, sought to register themselves under its banner at the Melbourne Trades Hall. Their employers, without objecting to the union as such, insisted upon its remaining apart from other unions, and when this was refused took action, upon which a strike began that extended from the wharf labourers in the ports to the shearers in the farthest interior of Australia. Its failure affected and its after results were affected by our financial vicissitudes. An era of prosperity had resulted in a boom of American dimensions, with Victoria as its centre, that burst in due course with disastrous consequences. Coming upon the heels of this collapse the strike

itself occasioned enormous sacrifices of wages and profits. Between the two, the phenomenal progress of Australia was so gravely checked that it has never since risen to the same rate. That is not likely to be reached again, because undoubtedly a great deal of the apparent splendour of its growth was due to the inordinate borrowing and lavish spending of an epoch whose expectations of continuous increases in the value and earnings of land were destined to be utterly disappointed. The crash of 1893 sobered all classes for some years, during which the worst of the wreckage was cleared away, and a healthier spirit of economy encouraged, lasting until the movement for the union of the States was crowned with success. Then, in anticipation of the prosperity to be ushered in by federation, we suffered from another attack of the loan fever that had proved so injurious before. The great drought came to its climax just when the financial benefits of union were expected to accrue, conveying another severe lesson to the sanguine speculators upon our future and propagating the disappointment with federation which is still extant. We are now passing through another epoch of financial caution, economy, and recovery. This is due, in the more populous States, to the insistence of the capitalists who control the London money market, more than to the prudence of the Treasurers of the States, each of whom persists in his prayer that borrowed money may continue plentiful in his time.

Through these alternations of what are styled at the moment “good” and “bad” times the Labour party has been steadily making its way towards the mastery of the Commonwealth. In 1890 there was not in any State a party of the type now familiar. South Australia came nearest to it, while members in close touch with the unions and who represented their interests were acting under Mr. Kingston. This resolute, forceful and able Radical had already identified himself with the then novel project of submitting all strikes to the arbitration of a judicial tribunal. The defeat of 1890 had convinced him that the triumph of the unions could be brought about in no other way. For some time his scheme made little headway; though it was adopted in a rudimentary form for voluntary use, in this State his Act has remained almost a dead letter. The beginnings of Labour ideals may be most clearly traced in South Australia, but their first appearance upon the parliamentary stage embodied in the programme of a solid party occurred in New South Wales in 1891, when they defeated Sir Henry Parkes and deflected the cause of the federal movement. In 1893 Mr. Kingston commenced a Premiership, which lasted until the eve of federation, with a Labour member as one of his colleagues, and a policy in close accord with their aspirations. In the same year the backwash of the great strike first carried the Labour members into the Queensland Assembly in sufficient strength to commence an active propaganda as avowed State socialists, concurrently with the retirement

of the then Premier, Samuel Griffith, who became Chief Justice of that State. At about this period the party won its first footing in the Victorian Legislature. The four most populous Colonies were thus invaded at almost the same time and in consequence of the same strike. Western Australia shared a similar experience only after her goldfields' populations obtained additional representation at the close of the century. To-day Tasmania alone remains unaffected by their advance. In five out of the six States the Labour party is a dominant force; they have lately held the government of the Commonwealth, still hold the government of Western Australia, and share the government of Queensland. In the Commonwealth, in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, they constitute the direct Opposition, and are well within reach of the executive power. In every State their programme is the same, and also in the federation, where it has been necessarily adapted to the limitations of the Constitution. In the States and in the Commonwealth the Labour organisations and methods are one. Owing to its aggressiveness it has forced upon Australia as a whole its special aims, compelling every Legislature to choose between accepting or rejecting them. The momentum of their onset upon old local differences of opinion and divisions of parties tends irresistibly to crush them out of shape. Soon there will only be room for two parties in the Commonwealth—those who are for the Labour programme and those who are against it. In this manner, for the first time in our history, all our local governments and their parties are being brought into line with each other and with the Commonwealth. The form of our politics is therefore being federalised, our powers of legislation and administration are separated into the national, which have been transferred to the federal Parliament and the local that are retained by the States. The two systems are intended to be complementary, though those who guide them are at many points antagonistic. This unity of principle and disunity of practice require to be kept in mind, for they point to elements inseparable under a federal Constitution, especially in its earliest years. Through, and in spite of, these the expansion of the Labour party is fast imparting a new solidarity to all parties and programmes; consequently, everywhere they are taking the same colour, everywhere Australia is confronted with the same choice.

Our Commonwealth commenced its career in 1901 with Sir **Edmund**, then Mr. Barton, as its first Prime Minister, at the head of a Cabinet representing all the States by including ex-Premiers of every Colony, though Mr. **Dickson**, of Queensland, died almost immediately. Their policy, submitted at the first election, provided for a series of measures necessary to control the departments of trade and commerce, of post and telegraphs, and of defence, which had been transferred to the federation, and for the creation of the new departments of external and home affairs and the

Treasury. Electoral laws were passed, the High Court established, and the whole machinery of government organised. Three contentious subjects, upon which the first elections largely turned, were, first, the proposals to exclude coloured labour, with a view to securing what was termed a **White Australia**; next, to pass one customs tariff superseding those of the States, maintaining the protectionist imposts required by existing industries, and raising sufficient revenue to supply the State Treasuries; and finally to endeavour to prevent “strikes” and “lock-outs” by creating a federal arbitration court competent to deal with industrial disputes between employers and employees in any calling if they extended beyond the boundaries of a single State. The first was accomplished by an Immigration Restriction Act, enabling an educational test to be applied at discretion to all immigrants, though it was intended to be used only in respect to coloured races, and by a Pacific Island Labourers Act, prohibiting the introduction of more Kanakas after 1903, and authorising the deportation of those remaining in Queensland after 1906. Both were passed by large majorities, comprising men of all shades of opinion. The tariff proved a much more arduous undertaking, its schedule occupying almost a year in passing, and when adopted falling far short of the Ministerial aims, both in the encouragement granted to local manufactures and the amount of revenue raised. But it was upon the third part of its policy that the Barton Ministry met with its first check, finding itself then face to face with a Labour party aggravated by its first defeat upon the Arbitration Bill, which of all the measures announced they had most at heart. Sir Edmund Barton immediately afterwards resigned office in order to take his place as a Justice of the High Court beside Sir Samuel Griffith, who became its chief, and Mr. **R. E. O’Connor**, of New South Wales. The post of Prime Minister then devolved upon Mr. **Alfred Deakin**, of Victoria, who reconstituted the Government, reshaped its policy, and appealed to the country last December upon a comprehensive programme, including the resumption of immigration, the taking over of the State debts coupled with restrictions upon their future borrowing, the adoption of a system of rural bounties and the establishment of the iron industry by means of a bonus. He crowned these with an impassioned advocacy of Mr. **Chamberlain’s** projects for preferential trade within the Empire. The policy appeared to be approved by a majority of some kind as to most if not all of these issues, though it would be difficult to define how far members would have legislatively adopted them on their merits. The salient fact was that, whatever their views on these heads, only one-third of the House of Representatives, and an even smaller proportion of the Senate, loyally accepted the Ministry as their own. The Labour party, now increased to an equal strength, pressed their claim to the same industrial concessions which the first Ministry had declined to concede, and by alliance with the Free Importers party defeated the Deakin Cabinet decisively in April last. Then came a novel development in Australian politics. The Labour party

for the first time came into power and took the reins of government. Prior to this it had never won a State, but now at one bound it captured the Commonwealth. So surprising a phenomenon attracted attention all the world over, and for a time focussed public interest throughout Australia upon its attempt to secure supremacy in the Federal Parliament. The Labour Ministry commenced with a minority of declared supporters, and during its four months' term never escaped from that condition of weakness. Nevertheless, when, in the natural course of things, it fell, it was with unspeakable amazement and indignation, as if it had been nefariously deposed from a position which it held by inalienable right. But the event had a much greater importance than attached to the fall of an administration which had been tottering from its first hour, whose conduct had been temporising and feeble ever since, and whose inability to lead in Parliament had gradually grown manifest to every observer. It was accompanied by a disruption of the Protectionist party that had rallied to Sir Edmund Barton throughout the first Parliament, and supported Mr. Deakin at the election for the second. Those who have left it are now blaming the precipitancy of the latter in resigning office because he was outvoted upon a detail on the Arbitration Bill, and censure him still more angrily for joining with Mr. Reid and his New South Wales contingent, against whom the Protectionists as such had been fighting ever since the Commonwealth came into being. The rupture in its ranks reduces, at least for the present, the three parties in the House to two, or more accurately to four, two sitting on each side of the gangway. The distance between them really promises to become much wider than that passage way makes visible. There is a transverse cleavage putting the Labour party and its allies, whether Protectionists or Free Importers, under one flag, and all its opponents, without regard to their fiscal views, under another. The consequence is that the combined federal parties, as they now confront each other, represent in concrete shape and contrasted colour the rival forces of Australian politics as they are and are to be, more distinctly than they have ever been represented in Parliament before.

A great deal has been gained when the true issue of the hour is materialised before all men's eyes. Much more than this has been achieved by the present grouping, not simply because the issue is momentous, but because it is laid bare as if under an electric light, with a distinctness that reveals the very core of the contention between the opposing parties. To see the Labour members with all others who adopt their programme on one side, while Conservatives, Liberals and Radicals are grouped over against them in common dissent from their doctrines on the other, is to witness a transformation or reformation of grouping similar in principle to that which created in the Mother Country the great Unionist party of the present day. Here as there it is the Liberals that have disintegrated rallying into separate folds under the irresistible

pressure of a crisis upon a new national issue, overruling all current catch-words and with a violent fracture rending old political ties. The Labour programme as published consists mainly of high-sounding general declarations, in which most people agree in part, or may agree according to their several readings of its meaning. The Labour party is if anything less concerned for its adoption than it is to insist upon its own fighting efficiency. Its members study their own safety best by studying and serving the unions. They are, indeed, without exception, Unionists themselves, dependent upon the trades unions both for their selection as accredited candidates and for their election. Nominally they owe allegiance to political Labour Leagues, but as these are either unions or consist chiefly of trade unionists their true fealty remains unchanged. The great strike of 1890 was organised in order to bring the union of the officers of coasting ships into alliance with all other unions, including those of the seamen, wharf labourers and engineers. The object was to put and keep the shipowners and all other employers under the control of the whole of their employees, banded together into one legion, always equipped and available either for offence or defence. During that strike all possible influence was brought to bear upon the railway employees of the States to induce them to paralyse the whole traffic of Australia inland, as it was paralysed upon the seaboard. The attempt was not successful. A strike took place upon the Victorian railways two years ago in the interest of its employees, which failed miserably. The imperative need of Labour, if it was to be triumphant in its next great conflict, was, therefore, to control the railways of Australia. The Arbitration Bill of 1903 reached the Federal Parliament, accompanied with the resignation of its draughtsman, Mr. Kingston, then Minister of Customs, because railway servants were expressly excluded and the seamen upon foreign ships omitted. An amendment, authorising the Federal Court to fix the wages, hours, and conditions of employment of employees upon the State lines was carried against the Barton Government in September 1903, which promptly withdrew the Bill upon the constitutional ground that the Commonwealth had no authority to interfere with State departments. The Deakin Ministry went to the country pledged in the most emphatic fashion to uphold the refusal, and when defeated upon the same clause last April instantly resigned. It was upon this all-essential clause to his party that Mr. Watson, the Labour leader, became Prime Minister. The exultation of the unions knew no bounds. But not possessing a majority in the House they had to submit to the mortification of seeing the powers of the Arbitration Court more strictly defined than they had been by Mr. Kingston, instead of being extended, as Mr. Watson intended. To avoid an overthrow of his Government he was forced to accept a prohibition of the right of trades unions to include political objects in their rules, or employ their funds for political purposes if they applied to have a prior claim to employment granted to their members by the Arbitration Court. In spite of this sacrifice Mr. Watson was

ejected from the Treasury benches because he would not explicitly limit the authority of the Court in this regard to cases in which a majority of those to be affected by the preference, whether unionists or non-unionists, were in favour of its being conceded to members of the organisation. His Ministerial tactics illuminate the inner arms of his party. The claim to preference is not essential to arbitration, but it is essential to the unions, and for this reason was, is and will be fought for by them and their representatives with all the energy they command. If unionists can all claim to be employed before any workman, not a fellow member, has a chance of proving his fitness, they can compel the non-unionists to join them, under penalty of losing their work and wages. When the large numbers of these, at present far exceeding the unionists, are enrolled with them, the design is to use them and the increased funds to which they must contribute to carry on their political propaganda. If they could also attach the thousands of railway employees, postmen, and others engaged in the seven public services of our seven Governments they would then be able to return their nominees to their Legislatures in sufficient numbers to enable the Labour party to dominate every one of them. Under such circumstances they would naturally assume the direction of public affairs, which covers in Australia a general control of the whole community and of its private enterprises. In brief, the unions hope to rule the employers and employment absolutely, and though this is a vain dream, the attempt is serious enough to bring the larger half of the Protectionists in the Commonwealth Parliament behind Mr. Reid on condition that a truce in respect to the tariff is preserved until the next General Election. The other moiety of the Protectionists under Mr. Isaacs, a leader of the Victorian Bar, has accepted the leadership of Mr. Watson, and an alliance with his party upon nebulous terms. Their joint forces are now challenging the Reid–McLean Government, on the ground that it is reactionary, and may easily compel a dissolution. Mr. Reid took office with a majority of two in a House of seventy-five members, and at best is not likely to increase his total in the critical division now overdue. Whether he can carry on with such a narrow margin may well be doubted. Either next week, next month, or at latest next year, there must be an appeal to the country. It will be most unfortunate if the one question of supreme moment is not distinctly put and unmistakably answered then. A great deal of educational work will require to be undertaken before this can be assured. The apathy of our electors, especially among those who have something to lose, is notorious; while the energy of the “have nots”, who think they have a great deal to gain, is inexhaustible. These last are but a small fraction of the Labour party, though they really enjoy its active control. Many of them are industrious artisans or tradespeople captivated by wild theories or by love of power. The great mass of those who follow them are, according to old-world standards, fairly well-to-do in their own class. They include small and large farmers, thriving shop-

keepers, and even a certain sprinkling of young professional men. Lacking the experience, knowledge, or training which would warn them against specious social doctrines, they often embrace or tolerate them because they appear living and progressive when contrasted with the dry-as-dust presentation of orthodox political economy that they are proffered instead by out-of-date opponents of the Labour movement. It is a work of conversion which requires to be undertaken, and not a barren declaration in favour of things as they are, made by or on behalf of those who obviously enjoy these without stint. The danger is that, owing to the stirring up of inter-State jealousies, old party animosities, personal feuds, and especially fiscal controversies, the one real issue most needing to be dealt with at the next election will be obscured, evaded and postponed. The task of getting the Australian people scattered over one enormous area into one mind at one time for the purpose of getting their decision at the polls upon one supreme question presents Herculean difficulties. If they can be surmounted the Labour party will receive a set-back for some years, but if not the chances of success are in their favour. As in 1890, the crusade is one of aggressive Unionism against both Governments and private persons as employers in order to obtain that supremacy of the employees which they could not conquer by strikes, but hope to seize by means of Acts of Parliament. The policy of 1893, when the cry of "Capture the constituencies!" first arose, has been brought near to its culmination, and by the powerful assistance of the public servants throughout the Commonwealth may be triumphantly put into force; not if the choice of the electors is made clear and single, but only if their attention is distracted and their strength divided. That is the crisis in Australia to-day.

January 1905<sup>2</sup>

## GREATER BRITAIN

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### THE FISCAL FIGHT IN AUSTRALIA

(BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT IN AUSTRALIA)

Australian politics and parties are not easy to explain, because they have been and are in a state of flux. This is not due to any inherent fickleness in our people, but to the plain fact that up till now the very rapid development of the country has not allowed time for even its institutions to become solidly established. Federation has temporarily complicated and increased the confusion in our public affairs, but by bringing the disorder to a head will probably assist its cure. The whole of our past has been transitional in character, because, though brief, it has been marvellously eventful. We began when a few shiploads of hardy colonisers were isolated in remote regions, beleaguered by the supposed barrenness of their new abode. Their condition for some time continued as hopeless and their progress as slow as that of the seventeenth-century plantations in North America. Half a century ago an immense stimulus was imparted to them with sensational suddenness by the discovery of gold; and ever since they have advanced at such a rate that we are now to-day nearly four millions of Britons enjoying the utmost liberty of self-government in highly organised communities comparable to those which the New England States and Canada attained only after two centuries of struggle. Our intervening period of *Sturm und Drang* has necessarily obliged a continuous series of political adaptations and readaptations. We had to meet the continuous material and social growth of a picked race poured into a virgin continent. The pace has been forced to such a degree that viewed from without evolution has looked like revolution, and has sometimes seemed to have borrowed its methods. But on examination it becomes clear that this was unavoidable if a waste were to be transformed in a trice. When all the circumstances are taken into account, our politics and policies in the twentieth century are palpably the natural outcome of the hurried seizure of the outskirts of a vast, mysterious territory. Some of its conquerors dashed onward with clanging inset from gully to flat, as daring seekers after gold; others more deliberately marched or drove their teams afield, bent upon making homes for themselves in the wilds. In their public affairs as in their private enterprises, our dauntless pioneers had much to improvise

while they were absorbed in the eager task of finding fortunes or transforming untrodden regions into habitable holdings. Such Government machinery as they possessed must be constructed, enlarged or repaired in their spare time, and while kept going. Hastily put together it had to be repeatedly overhauled or amended at short notice, so as to fit it as well as possible to the constantly changing demands of a constantly varying environment. Yet strange and novel as some of the legislative fruits of our transplanted or curiously grafted growths may appear, they are fed from the sap of the ancient British stock, and as time goes on will become more obviously true to their origin. English politics are not foreign to us under any aspect, and often appeal to us with instructive parallels or evidences of singular tendencies. It has been said with some reason that what the Colonies are to-day, the Mother Country will be to-morrow; but Australia's enormous bulk and small population, her sunny but often arid climate, and her far-off place at the antipodes, half hidden under the curving surface of the globe, create a category of contrasts between the parent and the child that must always be kept in mind.

Broadly speaking, Australia has known but two generations—the first that of the Argonauts, a host of daring invaders in the flush of youth, hope and courage, among whom all distinctions of class were swept away. Theirs was the comradeship of common ventures in search of an Eldorado beyond the borders of civilisation; a hazardous and highly stimulating quest, in whose heats and chills their manhood reached its plenitude of power. To such men amid such surroundings Democracy was natural and inevitable and innovation a matter of course.

The liberty, equality and fraternity of the diggers' "claim" or the farmers' "free selection" were breathed into their electoral system, their legislatures and their laws. Not that they were theorists by taste or even politicians by inclination. They were here in the chase of wealth, and pursued it desperately amidst violent vicissitudes. But of course the rudimentary needs of social life had to be satisfied. To protect their rights they required representatives, and to enforce order demanded magistrates' courts. Trial by jury they inherited, and hence there was little attempt at the impromptu methods of Lynch law. The Queen's writ ran everywhere, and justice was regularly, if informally, administered north and south.

The manner in which the early colonists began to utilise the State services in order to accomplish their task of subduing all but impenetrable bush or the thirsty plains under pressure of their expansive ardours was outlined in this *Review* last month. Other issues also emerged at the same time, notably the fight for freehold land against its prior occupants, the Crown lessees of great grazing areas, called "Squatters", and the fight for revenue and for the building up of local industries.

But before these were far advanced a second generation was appearing on the scene, at once resembling and differing from its fathers. Young Australia grew up less reverent and of narrower outlook, with the paternal ideals somewhat altered and the parental energies reduced to a more normal standard. Those who dwelt in the country were content to travel half indolently to the roads and even the ruts that they found made or making for them. More phlegmatic and fatalistic in temper, bucolic in habit and easier in aim, they enjoyed the sunshine and sport of the passing hour more complacently than their strenuous fathers. The city bred were sharper, quicker, less taciturn and less robust. On the whole they were a sober, straight-going clan, more prosaic and commonplace than their picturesque sires, whose indomitable individuality and indefatigable force had made the pace and marked the paths they were to follow. Taking both generations together, though the first has now vanished, they have produced a vigorous and independent people, living in a world very much of their own fashioning. The franchise is theirs, and they use it spasmodically. Their free institutions, acclimatised by their own handiwork, suffice for their needs, though they take no special pains to preserve their relation to the purposes for which they were reared. Their rate of speed has slackened by degrees until it now appears to be dropping to a steady gait. As they quieten down, the more perceptible becomes their likeness to the race from which they sprang. This is already noticeable in South Australia and Tasmania, where what may be considered a static condition has been attained. Victoria too, appears to be entering upon the same stage. The conservative instinct has asserted itself, and will assert itself more in them, its earliest manifestation being a defence of the legal checks and safeguards that remain in our State constitutions. There is a marked rally around the Legislative Councils with the object of upholding their resistance against the aggressiveness of our popular Assemblies. If none of these Second Chambers has been led so as to arouse enthusiasm or has initiated any line of action, their modest séances, as brakes upon the wheels of experiment, are being recognised. There is a distinct reaction against the ruthless revision of our constitutions and institutions, defensible while the conditions of settlement were altering materially from year to year. In this way the appreciation of stability is a growing influence in State politics on all sides. When the population remains without large accretions or migrations, as in the three States named, it has become a prominent factor in their public affairs. Such a control has been unknown to us heretofore, and will assuredly produce unsuspected consequences when it becomes fully conscious. Even if immigration were renewed on a great scale, it is doubtful if the tendency to soberness of mind would be impaired, and indeed, so far as any influx promoted the cultivation of the soil by fresh relays of farmers, would probably lend it greater strength. An exception might be made perhaps where inexperienced colonists essay the task of fighting climatic conditions in the far north or in the arid belts. There they are disposed to appeal to the State

Treasury for aid not needed in the temperate or well-watered districts for the same purposes, and to follow the party which promises them the most. The gain to Canada and South Africa from settlement of this kind discovers no such leaven of unrest. It is the men who engage in uncertain employments, such as alluvial digging, the nomadic “swagmen”, or those who are employed in large numbers by mining companies of a more or less speculative nature, who share the unsettled and unsettling ideas of the systematic agitators of the larger towns. For these last any change seems for the better, as at least capable of discovering opportunities for excitement or advantage. But the bulk of the community have the qualities of their forefathers and also their defects. Expediency, compromise, moderation, practical good sense, the “hot fits” and “cold fits”, the balancing swing from faster to slower, the hesitations and indifference, the trust in “muddling through”, are at least as evident among the born Australians as they were among their grandparents or seem to persist in the Mother Country to-day. The contrasts that can be detected between the islanders at home and their colonists are small if the great differences in their education and opportunities are allowed for. Speaking generally, Britons in the South Seas in the long run and upon large questions may be safely expected to act under similar circumstances in the same way as their kith and kin do. They are perhaps a separate sub-division or may hereafter be so classified, but at present and for practical purposes are clearly recognisable offspring—parts of one people with the same ideals, racial instincts, abilities and foibles. In this of course lies at once the strength and weakness of the Empire.

The fundamental need of the earliest colonists who came to make homes in Australia was to secure the land upon which they could build and from which they could wring subsistence for their families. The soil belonged to the Crown and could only be obtained through its representatives. The first cry of politics was to “unlock the land”. For some time the fee simple outside the hamlets was little sought and rarely granted, but large areas were “squatted” upon by the owners of flocks and herds who paid, or often did not pay, trifling rents. In South Australia, owing to the great energy and ability with which [Gibbon Wakefield](#) had popularised his ideas of making the land bear the cost of its own settlement by picked colonists, the wanton sacrifices of the public estate perpetrated elsewhere were largely avoided. But the Wakefield scheme was faulty. Adelaide and afterwards Port Phillip had their disastrous land booms, and it was only by the passage of a number of amending measures in each State that the applicants for homesteads were satisfied. It was in relation to these measures that political parties here had their beginning. They are still affected by them to some extent. The present aim of reformers is to “cut up the great estates” now utilised for grazing wherever these are fitted for cultivation. Originally far seeing and sometimes unscrupulous men and institutions bought or “dummied” the best and nearest lands to the ports, leaving the seekers after selections to be pushed farther out and into

less fruitful districts. The current policy of the “forward” parties everywhere aims at putting the land to its best uses from a public point of view, bringing all that is arable under the plough or where possible into orchards and vineyards. Nor are they the only active organisers. The lessees of “runs” from the Crown are consistently attempting to drive a better bargain with their landlords, the State Legislatures, particularly in New South Wales and Queensland. Speaking generally, the dividing lines of parties are no longer determined by this question. All policies are now of much the same complexion in this regard, differing from one another principally as to the peremptoriness with which powers of compulsory purchase from private owners may be exercised by the Government when it takes land for the purposes of subdividing and reselling it in farms of suitable size. In South Australia these are let on perpetual lease at annual rentals of four per cent. on the price paid. State advances to settlers are now granted in every colony under precautionary stipulations which have prevented loss, and at rates that have proved a great boon to small proprietors. In addition to this there are Agricultural Departments in all the States upon which large sums have been and are being spent out of their Treasuries in order to educate and stimulate rural industries of every kind. The chief practical work of several of the Agents-General in London has been in connection with the custody and sale of their products to the best advantage. In South Australia depots were established at Port Adelaide and in London that have materially assisted our exports of perishable produce, though it proved a failure in respect to wine. In Victoria large bonuses were given upon exported butter, which, according to the evidence lately submitted to a Royal Commission in that State, were pocketed by the agents, scarcely any of the generous bounty of its Parliament reaching the producers for whom it was voted. In a great variety of ways the land question, when taken to include the measures relating to all interests of those upon the land, is still before our Legislatures Session after Session. The policy of Governmental intervention is nowhere more conspicuous, but each proposal being dealt with ostensibly upon its own merits the measures, like the administration of the great departments which supervise the tenants and conditional purchasers from the Crown, are rarely controversial in a party sense. The occupancy, use and taxation of land, though always liable to kindle burning questions, have become subsidiary of late, filling a substantial place in all programmes, but not distinctively or creatively, since these contrasts are merely those of degree and not of kind.

Political labels are more than ever misleading in this quarter of the Empire, because our parties have not been evolved under the same conditions or even contemporaneously. Though often claiming the same names, they have rarely had the same watchwords or pursued identical aims. To unravel their separate origins and special characteristics was always a tiresome task, and would be unprofitable now that their common interests, furthered by one federal union, are at last bringing them into

line with each other. The main agency in forcing on this uniformity is the military discipline and militant creed of the Labour caucus, which commands the one federal party acting in all the States and in the Commonwealth; the one party with fixed principles and methods, with insatiable ambition and a zeal that among some of its devotees is wholly wanting in discretion. To reconstruct our politics in imagination, as they would have been but for the intrusion of this organisation of the proletariat, is not impossible, though quite uncalled for at this juncture. Its effect has been that of a wedge driven home into an apparently solid piece of political carpentry and joinery. It has shattered the part struck, and by the force of the shock disintegrated the remainder. The wedge is so far uninjured, and ready to split any similar artificial combination, but whether it or those who use it can employ these weapons constructively with anything like equal success remains to be seen. However this may be in the Federal Parliament, there is but one alternative issue that apparently would have held the field but for the irresistible advance of the wage-earners' phalanx—that is the fiscal. There are States as far apart geographically and in every other respect as Queensland and Tasmania, in which it has long since been reduced to a question of pounds, shillings and pence to the revenue. They are Protectionist accidentally and incidentally, rather than by deliberate intent. Western Australia was in a similar mood until the sudden development of her great gold-fields collected a population of consumers whose hostility to those who supplied them from the coast made them antagonistic to all import duties that seemed to affect their articles of consumption. South Australia and Victoria, especially the latter, after oscillations have settled down into Protectionist centres whose manufactures are considerable enough to obtain consideration in every programme. Over against them stands New South Wales, the most populous, prosperous and lavish unit of the union, which has committed itself even more absolutely to free importation than its nearest neighbours have to the encouragement of their industries. South Australia drifted into the imposition of duties much after the manner of Queensland and Tasmania, becoming gradually more determined in her adhesion to them as she witnessed their results. Without coalfields or goldfields, with an arid area that limits her population, and an expensive adjunct in her tropical northern territory, a more unfavourable spot for the founding of factories could not have been selected in Australia. But whether we are governed more by experience or, as critics assert, by vested interests, the Protectionist feeling in this Province is becoming more pronounced each decade. Under the masterful guidance of Mr. **Kingston**, the Labour members in Adelaide were without exception convinced supporters of the policy. Three are Free Traders of eminence, who won seats at the first Commonwealth elections, notably Sir **Josiah Symon**, the present Attorney-General and leader of the Senate, and Mr. **P. McMahan Glynn**, M.P., who might, in his absence, have occupied the same office. At the second election last year two Free Traders, one in each Chamber, were replaced by two Protectionist Labour

candidates, and it is questionable whether if either the Attorney-General or Mr. Glynn retired, men of the same fiscal opinions could hold their seats. In Victoria the growth of Protection was also gradual, but since Sir **Graham Berry**, its most ardent apostle, swept the country in 1877, it has proved more loyal to the principle than any of the other five States. It has the highest duties, the longest free list, and the largest manufactories. There are but three out of its twenty-three representatives who favour freer imports, their antagonism being directed rather against further increases of the tariff than in favour of reductions. In the Senate every one of its members is nominally Protectionist, as are all its Labour members. South Australia and Victoria are responsible for the Commonwealth schedule of duties now in force, which was fathered in the House by Mr. Kingston and Sir **George Turner**, whose partnership appropriately emphasised the dominance of their States in the Protectionist party. The conservation of the businesses which have been built up within their borders was confessedly a chief motive in their demand for the continuance of the duties upon which their existence depended; but they were also strenuous advocates for the extension of the same opportunities and encouragement to the employers and employed of their neighbours. Mr. Kingston's failing health has excluded him from active politics, and Sir George Turner is now Treasurer in a Coalition Cabinet, constituted upon the understanding that the fiscal issue is not to be revived during its existence. But their work remains, and their States will be no whit diverted from Protectionist principles by either the temporary or permanent withdrawal of these two trusted leaders. Any change in their federal representation will strengthen rather than weaken those who uphold what has now become their traditional policy of stimulating and safeguarding their industries. Originally adopted in a casual way, and at first maintained because of its revenue-producing power, it has come to be appreciated for its constructive force, its steady influence, and guarantee of regular employment.

New South Wales became the great antagonist of Protection as much because of a certain inertia in her public men as from any devotion to abstract principles. Her land settlement and fostering of settlers proceeded in the same style as elsewhere, but her industries enjoyed no such patronage. The orthodox doctrines of political economy in the forties were received as gospel from that time forward in "the Mother State", as she is sometimes termed by her direct offspring Victoria and Queensland. The fact that Melbourne adopted the American heresy of Protection was another reason why the leaders in Sydney who had not forgiven the severance of Port Phillip should continue to walk in the accepted ways. Sir **Henry Parkes**, to whom the example of the English Whigs and Liberals furnished abundant precedents, grew firmer in his adhesion to them as he became older. The landed interest was inclined to Protection, while hostility to the ultra-Protestant sentiment of some of Parkes's supporters drove

most of the Irish Catholics into the same camp. A sudden convert in the person of the late Sir **George Dibbs** furnished them with a leader of great vigour and charm, whose last Ministry included as Attorney-General Mr. **Edmund Barton**, as Treasurer Mr. **John See**, as Minister for Works Mr. **William Lyne**, and Mr. **Henry Copeland** as Minister for Lands. A partially Protectionist Tariff was carried by them, but remained in operation for but a short time. In 1894 Mr. **George Reid** became Premier, capturing the Labour party by a Land Tax, and with their aid destroyed the Dibbs duties. After a five years' Premiership he lost his Labour allies, and was replaced by Mr. (afterwards Sir) William Lyne, whose office was filled when he joined the Federal Ministry by Mr. (afterwards Sir) John See, the post of Agent-General being accepted by the late Mr. Henry Copeland. But prior to Federation there was no further fiscal change; public opinion had taken its ply. Sydney and its influential press then as now repeated the maxims of the time of Sir **Robert Peel** with mechanical regularity. The Protectionist vote in the country, though strong, was scattered and helpless. The Labour members in the metropolis and suburbs echoed the Cobdenite creed. As soon as the first Federal Convention sitting in Sydney in 1891 had framed the earliest draft of the Commonwealth Constitution, Mr. Reid, then an independent member, attacked the whole federal project with energy, on the ground that by entering into union with six Protectionist States, including New Zealand, the free import policy of New South Wales was certain to be reversed. When it became necessary for him as Premier to take the lead in the movement for electing a second convention he put these fears aside, not because the prospect was any more encouraging to his party than it had been in 1891, but in order to prevent the leadership of the movement for union remaining in the hands of Sir Henry Parkes, then actively hostile to him, but whose great age soon after reached its natural close. Other changes followed or were foreshadowed. There was a time when it appeared certain that Mr. Reid as head of the government of the most populous State would be commissioned to form the first Commonwealth Cabinet. In Parliament and in the country he announced that under the circumstances New South Wales could not expect to retain her open ports. He was ready to accept a federal compromise tariff, and hinted that a moderate measure of Protection might reasonably be conceded by Free Traders to their erring brethren in the other States. That opportunity passed away from him, and with it all inclination to temporise on the fiscal question.

When the first Federal Ministry was formed by Mr. (now Sir) Edmund Barton in the last days of 1900 there was but one portfolio about the allotment of which there was any public doubt. Every State was to be represented by its leaders, Premiers or ex-Premiers, whose offices and records marked them out for this distinction. The choice wavered only as to the South Australian, because there were two candidates of equal claims for the post, but whose widely differing tempers and tendencies—though

they were old colleagues—made the selection one of policies as well as of persons. Sir **Frederick Holder**, who was Premier at the time, had special claims because of his recent refusal to join Sir William Lyne, to whose hands an astonished public saw the future of the Commonwealth about to be committed, in spite of the fact that he had always been one of its most steadfast opponents. Admired for his abilities as a parliamentarian and administrator of long experience, Frederick also enjoyed a high reputation in religious circles and in private life. The one complaint against his career alleged that he was pliable, that though a theoretical Free Trader, he had sat in Mr. Kingston's Cabinet, and as Treasurer endorsed its Protectionist policy. He succeeded him as head of the Government because he was in disposition and habit almost the exact antithesis of his late chief. Mr. Kingston's obstinate adherence to his demand for household suffrage for the Legislative Council led him first to resign his Premiership and next to contest a seat for the Chamber he wished to reform, in order to personally ensure its submission. With him the aim of the moment, whatever it was and just as he adopted it without qualification or dilution, always became the be-all and the end-all of his ambition for the time being. More uncompromising than **M. Combes**, and like him a leader of the Radicals, more strenuous than Mr. **Roosevelt**, and unlike him a champion of the Labour platform, he rejoiced in the name of democrat, although both in demeanour and action he was always an autocrat of the autocrats. When obeying his Protectionist proclivities he brooked contradiction no better than on any other point of his programme. His motto and his ideal were as "thorough" as **Strafford's**. He often appealed to force as the final arbiter in politics, though necessarily it was the force of numbers and not of armed men upon which he relied. When, therefore, with these two eligible men before him Mr. Barton preferred the despotic man of iron will and insatiate energy to the better-balanced and more open-minded opportunist, and when going farther still placed the man of his choice at the Customs he put a stamp upon his Cabinet and a colour into its policy which it never parted with. South Australia was not the arbiter, but provided him with alternative arbiters for his political future. By sending Sir Frederick Holder to the Speaker's Chair and entrusting the preparation of the first Tariff for the Commonwealth to Mr. Kingston he threw down the gauntlet upon the fiscal question, which at once became the chief issue of the elections, more particularly in New South Wales and Victoria. In this, at all events, he acted wisely, since, from the financial and political points of view, in the interests of the States as well as of the Commonwealth, this was properly the first matter to be determined. Unfortunately, though he put the question, he did not obtain the decisive answer to which it was entitled. The intrusion of the Labour Party, with a very long and sweeping policy of industrial intervention from which the fiscal issue was expressly excluded, enabled its candidates to carry either flag at will, and to snatch many seats where the constituency was evenly divided between Ministerialists and Oppositionists. Queensland, Tasmania, and to a lesser degree Western Australia, saw their electors

go to the poll with their minds full of local prejudices and antagonisms. Even in the three remaining States it proved difficult to concentrate attention upon fiscalism, because it was impossible to exclude other items in the Barton policy from having their effect in winning or losing support. The ballot-box consequently gave a very mixed mandate to our first federal legislature. The Barton–Kingston combination won a majority upon its complete programme, and especially upon its Tariff principles as these were understood. Unfortunately, they were differently interpreted or applied in the several States. Various sets of duties were approved in one and another because they were supposed to be Protectionist, though ignored or opposed in the remainder where they appeared less advantageous. The verdict of the country was vaguely for Protection, but not for any consistent scheme of Protection nor for the same kind or degree of it, nor for its application to Australia regarded as a whole. The unity of the Commonwealth had and has yet to be appreciated and provided for in this and many other national directions. Less than four years old our Union is still a laggard in growth; it can creep but scarcely walk with steadiness even now.

The Commonwealth consists of six Colonies or States, of which the largest, New South Wales, when federated possessed the simplest and smallest tariff upon imports known anywhere; while the next largest, Victoria, lived under an elaborate adaptation of Protection upon a system which in very modified and reduced forms obtained to some extent in each of the other four States. Each had studied according to its lights its own interest and that only. Every one of them prior to federation was sovereign within its own borders; its tariff applying to the goods of its neighbours just as much as to those of the German or the Japanese, and often being specially designed to hit them. The magnitude of the fiscal metamorphosis achieved is rarely realised. Sweeping away the border duties by the new federal tariff meant in itself a revolution to Australian producers, who were thus brought for the first time into unrestricted competition with each other throughout the Commonwealth. It meant another revolution in commerce, because it became unnecessary for wealthy firms to maintain large stores in every State when they could best control their business from a chief centre with minor distributing houses. Certain manufactures, such as tobacco, have been concentrated in the same way. Finally a uniform tariff implied a revolution in every State and in every Treasury of a State, because, in addition to losing their border duties, they have lost certain import duties imposed for revenue. As examples of these I may cite the duties upon tea and kerosene, from which they have been accustomed to receive large sums annually. Add that in New South Wales every federal duty has been practically a new duty, while in Victoria many of her duties of long standing have been much lowered in the Australian tariff, and the severity of the strain imposed by the federal tariff upon the community in general more especially upon business people, can be partly estimated. It could be adequately

appreciated only by those who have some experience of large changes at the Customs. In the purely political arena the conflict of interests without was reflected by a bitter conflict within the walls of Parliament. So far as Mr. Reid and his following were concerned their chief line of attack on the tariff in the first Session was in every respect orthodox. They appealed to the canons of the old political economy as if they had formed an appendix to the Ten Commandments and had received the same divine sanction. According to them every sign of prosperity in a Protectionist country or colony was due to natural causes and had been achieved in spite of its heretical duties. On the other hand, every advance in Great Britain was due to its obedience to the maxims of Cobdenism while any apparent decline was debited either to the neglect of its manufacturers, the cheaper production abroad, or the reckless tactics of its trade unions at home. Australian facts and figures were fitted into little niches provided for them by this most convenient theory. Every possible prejudice was played upon, particularly those against trusts, combines and monopolies, the huge profits of employers, and the alleged under payment of employees, as if these were necessary adjuncts of increased imposts. Pictures of the poor consumer, whose food, clothing, and implements were all burdened by the piratical levies of small bands of greedy factory owners, awakened their inexhaustible pity. The one ideal they held up for imitation was that of a country which bought all it required from abroad and sold what it produced where it could, as if there was nothing but freight worth fighting for. The Barton Tariff was based upon the principle of obtaining sufficient revenue from the Customs to make the loss to the States consequent upon federation as light as possible. Under the Constitution each was authorised to receive at least three-fourths of the sum collected from Customs and Excise within its own territory. The Kingston–Turner draft would have dealt unequally with them in spite of its precautionary character, because their previous tariffs were of such contrasted characters that no one schedule of duties conceivable could avoid great differences in their individual receipts. But if it had been passed as introduced it would have saved them much, and have minimised the heavy losses to which Queensland and Tasmania have been subjected. It was the Free Importers who struck off the revenue duties upon which those States depended. The embarrassment now visible in five State Treasuries is their work. Professing to aim at a federal revenue tariff they insisted upon its being curtailed in the five, because in any event it must over-endow New South Wales. As it is she has received a million and a quarter sterling every year more than she was deriving from her Reid duties. On the other hand, Queensland has lost annually £400,000, and little Tasmania £150,000, just when they were in sore need of cash. The second object of the Barton Tariff was to maintain the industries of the States that had built them up under Protection by retaining duties sufficient to prevent their destruction by imported goods. Here, again, the Ministry were but partially successful. South Australian manufacturers have been injured and many in

Victoria seriously crippled. The extension of their markets by the abolition of the border duties has compensated many of them to some extent, but evidence now being collected in the latter State illustrates the withering influence of the reductions made. The trials of our State Treasurers have been grievously multiplied, fresh taxation forced upon their Legislatures and some of the industries of the southern manufacturing States imperilled in Australia by the Free Importers, in obedience to deductions drawn long ago from formal and abstract studies of the general economics of the old world, although the almost universal practice of its peoples continues to set them aside even there.

Notwithstanding the obvious defects of the Customs Duties Acts, the second election for the Commonwealth held last December showed the Protectionists concerned that it would not be wise to attempt to remedy them at once. For this there were a few good reasons. Parliament had spent twelve months upon the tariff, the duties obtained had been often won by but a vote or two, and might easily be lost if again submitted to a hasty test. Those whose capital was invested in manufactures dreaded the prospect of running the gauntlet again. Much was hoped from the breaking up of the drought and the revival of trade that it was sure to usher in. The New Prime Minister, Mr. Deakin, as a Victorian, must have been aware of the havoc wrought by the lowering of the duties; but speaking for his colleagues and his party he thought it necessary to announce that no revision would be attempted during the second Parliament. While the chief article of his programme was "Fiscal Peace", Mr. Reid went up and down the land breathing fire and slaughter. He declared for "Fiscal War", and asked a mandate from the country to reduce all the Protectionist imposts now in force. This demand was bracketed as usual with a long list of charges against the Government for what they had done and left undone, for their legislation and administration, for what their policy was and was not. Yet with all the aid that their undoubted blunders afforded him he failed to increase his following except in his own State. His appeal for authority to cut down the duties was on his own confession refused. Unsatisfactory as the present schedule of imposts is, the electors gave it their *imprimatur* rather than consent to have it tampered with by the Free Importers of New South Wales. Fiscal peace reigned undisturbed while the Deakin and Watson administrations continued, though directly the probability that Mr. Reid would succeed to the Prime Ministership became patent there were ominous evidences that the truce was in danger. The complaints of the Melbourne industries were listened to even by Labour members, who had hitherto displayed no sympathy with them; the Protectionist Press there and in Adelaide responded to their appeals. When Mr. Watson was overthrown and Mr. Reid stepped into the post of chief adviser to the Governor-General the storm began. His selection of four Protectionists as colleagues,

and his declaration that their senior, Mr. McLean, should be not only Minister of Customs but equal in Cabinet status with himself, could not mitigate the wrath of the offended members, who straightway formed a Liberal–Labour alliance against him. Mr. Watson becoming leader of the Opposition commanded the joint forces, his own because he was the Labour chief, and his allies because like them he was a Protectionist, though it must be admitted his voice and votes had been of a very unconvinced and wavering character. Without the least delay he attacked the Reid Cabinet directly it met the House by a vote of want of confidence. In launching it he relied solely upon the Labour platform and the Prime Minister’s avowed hostility to it. He was supported by his immediate associates and the seceders from Mr. Deakin’s party on the same grounds, and after a four weeks’ battle was defeated by the narrow majority of two, upon which he had lost office. Thereupon, Mr. Isaacs, K.C., as spokesman of the Protectionist wing of the “Alliance”, which had joined in this attack, tabled another motion of want of confidence in the shape of a demand for a Royal Commission upon the tariff, consisting of members of both Houses of Parliament, directed to report upon the requirements of a specified number of industries to be chosen by the House of Representatives. Despite the feeling in favour of such a course, this second assault broke down after one day’s debate. The motion was withdrawn without a division. Mr. Reid, who had previously promised a Commission of some kind, now agreed to consult Mr. Watson as to its *personnel*, and consented to allow it to make progress reports, if it were so inclined, upon any industries whose condition had been so much impaired by the tariff that its revision without delay in regard to them was adjudged urgent. Upon this understanding so far as it goes both parties seem inclined to rest for the moment. The general situation, though less acute than it was, is really more critical because it implies a complete *volte-face*. The Protectionists who went to the country against Tariff Revision in the direction of reduced duties are now themselves demanding Tariff Revision in the direction of increased duties. An inquiry is to be held which will put the whole of the present schedules of imposts back into the melting-pot. They cannot remain there long. Recommendations are sure to be made by the Commission which must be resisted by Mr. Reid and his free importers if they mean higher duties or by his Protectionist colleagues if they mean lower duties. The Ministry cannot hope to survive either of these strains. Instead of being buried for three years the fiscal battle is being revived again. The fight of the first election will be repeated at the third, probably next year. The issue will be precisely the same, the leaders may also be the same as last December, but in every other feature the combat will be waged under conditions altogether different from those in force when Mr. Reid suffered his first federal overthrow at the hands of Mr. Barton and Mr. Kingston, both of whom are now outside the realm of active politics.

Hitherto New South Wales and Victoria have neutralised each other fiscally in Parliament, the small contingent from South Australia giving Protection a majority. Tasmania has been divided. Queensland and Western Australia are represented almost wholly by Labour members, most of whom were Free Importers. Now in their resentment against Mr. Reid they threaten to change their ground. A few of them having fixed opinions may stand apart and withdraw their aid, but the remainder are willing to vote for high duties by way of reprisal and in order to conciliate Protectionist support. The “alliance” between Mr. Watson and Mr. Isaacs has meant little so far, but if it accomplishes this transformation it will have done much. The Labour vote which marred the existing tariff can revise it under guidance in a soundly Protectionist way. Threatened by this unexpected danger Mr. Reid finds himself powerless to do anything in defence of his own beliefs to counteract it. Half his Cabinet is Protectionist, and even with their help he has but a majority of two. His one hope lies in the Senate, where the Arbitration Bill is being made more stringent and all-embracing than it was when Mr. Kingston finished drafting. If battle can be given upon this Bill the opposing ranks will consist of the Labour–Liberal Alliance against the united followers of Mr. Reid and Mr. Deakin. But even at a general election on this measure the Fiscal Question will require to be dealt with by all candidates. Then immediately the arbitration amendments are finally disposed of, before or after the election, it will emerge to sever the Ministry, and if the alliance continues will secure the passing of a more Protectionist tariff. The lesson of the last struggle has been laid to heart by many others interested in Australian production, in addition to the employers and employees affected by lower federal duties. Our farmers have always the imports of the Argentines before their eyes. German and American importers are expanding their trade at the expense of local factories. Tariff revision may be postponed for a while if the two Houses come to blows over the Kingston Bill, but it cannot be buried. If the issue stood alone, Protection would probably carry the country. But it does not stand alone. The cry for tariff revision is already powerfully reinforced by the growing agitation for preferential trade relations with the Mother Country. Mr. Deakin, who at the last election succeeded upon this issue more decisively than upon any other, has lately tabled a comprehensive motion in favour of Mr. Chamberlain’s policy and tendering a formal offer of preference to the Imperial Government. A less definite motion with the same object has for some time been before the House in the name of Sir William Lyne, acting for those who follow Mr. Isaacs. Mr. Watson having declared in favour of the movement if either motion could be reached before Christmas it would probably be endorsed by a large majority. This project may be postponed until next Session, but not longer. Then to all appearances Tariff Revision and Preferential Trade will go hand in hand. No escape is visible at present. The Free Importers alone, though strong as ever in New South Wales, cannot expect to succeed. How can the Ministry hope to retain Mr. McLean

and half the Protectionists when such issues are at stake? They must either keep their party hopelessly sundered, or agree with Mr. Isaacs and the other half under him who have come to an agreement with Mr. Watson. To capture or be captured by the Labour party now that they number half the Senate and a third of the House is equivalent to the capture of Parliament and the executive power. Its organisation in the constituencies is incomparably the most efficient. Its representatives, bound together as if by hoops of steel under their pledges, platform and infallible Caucus possessing authority to excommunicate dissentients, know as little of mutiny as a regiment of the line and act as unanimously at the word of command. Every one of its votes and voices is available at all times every day the Houses meet. Mr. Watson as master of these legions is offering in return for fresh Labour legislation to carry Tariff Revision and Preferential Trade. Can or will the Protectionists refuse to give effect to these first principles of their political existence because they fear some of the planks of the Labour platform? They can reunite their forces and by raising certain duties satisfy substantially, and at once, the eternal want of pence and the equally eternal want of employment of the States. They can bind the Commonwealth together in closer commercial sympathy while recognising the demands of a wider patriotism, favouring British goods by reciprocal arrangement with the Mother Country, and making other advances towards Imperial unity. If the price they will be asked to pay may be gathered from the agreement concluded with Mr. Isaacs, though not approved by all the Councils of the Labour party, it contains nothing unreasonable on the surface, though lacking explicitness of definition. Mr. Reid when Premier of New South Wales by just such a bargain with Labour members there carried his Free Imports Tariff in that State. It will be a coincidence if by precisely the same means his policy is reversed and a Protectionist triumph ensured in the Commonwealth.

C. R.

## GREATER BRITAIN

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### AUSTRALIA AND PREFERENTIAL TRADE

(BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT IN AUSTRALIA)

State Socialism was adopted in Australia because the immense influx of population in the 'fifties demanded immediate governmental action to meet its needs when settling in vast trackless regions. Private enterprise was not available, being absorbed in the search for gold. Out of the character and experiences of the early pioneers working side by side with each other in practical equality came manhood suffrage with its democratic developments. The land agitation in which it fleshed its maiden sword was its first response to the most peremptory condition of getting foothold on the soil. When the alluvial fields were overmanned, the necessity of finding employment for the overplus unqualified for agriculture and including skilled workmen ushered in Protection to save them from starvation. So step by step consequentially out of our environment evolved a policy to match it. But fiscal barriers reared against imports from the Mother Country came into conflict with a deep-rooted sentiment of patriotism which could not be evaded because her manufactures at that time enjoyed a practical monopoly of our markets. Our earliest colonists were in feeling Englishmen first and Australian afterwards. All their hopes and ideals turned towards "home". Yet the obligation of raising revenue from a population of which but the smallest fraction were property owners compelled the imposition of revenue duties. Under the pressure of workless men these became at first incidentally and at last intentionally the means of encouraging local production. But the patriotic sentiment towards the old land of their birth still persisted, and though apparently dormant during times of peace, and while means of communication athwart the globe remained imperfect, steadily revived again. It reasserted itself emphatically even when a new generation born on these shores constituted a majority who were by experience Australians first and Britons afterwards. Formerly, as immigration began, the historic though often clumsy preferences in trade secured to the United Kingdom by its own enactments were just disappearing. After immigration has all but ceased, leaving the native-born masters of the situation, a demand for their resuscitation is being pressed with increasing vigour. Curiously enough it has always come from this side. Two

motives have been operating upon us. The oldest represents a desire to recognise our indebtedness to the Mother Country for the generous endowment of territory and shelter during its acquisition that have made our progress possible and peaceful. The second, of comparatively recent origin, has been the consequence of an appreciation of the value of her market to our agriculturists and pastoralists. The two together are leading to the establishment of an Australian party whose watchword is "Preferential Trade". Formerly the Free Importers were accustomed to taunt Protectionists with their failure to make any distinction between the goods of their fellow countrymen and those of the foreigner. That this was a mere electioneering cry is now proved by the alacrity with which it has been laid aside by those claiming to be orthodox in their political economy. The same missile is now being flung back at Free Importers by men whose endeavour is, while retaining most of the imposts upon British goods, to modify and reduce them in order to enhance our trade with our kith and kin. Whether this shall be done out of gratitude for favours past and present, or from a lively sense of benefits to come by means of reciprocal bargains, remains to be determined. We are still politically unorganised in this regard. It is not yet clear if the Protectionists in these States must carry on the campaign alone, or with assistance from some Free Importers acting upon patriotic impulses, nor what proportions of them will be swayed by either or both of the dominating motives alluded to. All this has to be decided at the ballot-box. The movement, though more than twenty years old, is only now becoming a distinct political force and will require time before its strength or the precise terms of its programme can be positively assessed. For about a quarter of a century in a spasmodic way the aspiration of the Colonies as a whole, and specially of Australia, for a Customs Union within the Empire has been expressed again and again. All the "offers" have come from us. It has been the statesmen and people in the home of our race, the little islands north-west of Europe, who, prior to Mr. Chamberlain's advent, persistently hung back, counselled delay, and refrained from making any explicit reply to our appeals.

Although the coming "party" of Preferential Trade has not yet independently emerged or organised, and will win its recruits as usual by mixed motives, the one permanent source of its power and inspiration in Australia will be always and everywhere the same. It will be patriotic in an imperial spirit but without weakening or eradicating what may be distinguished as "local patriotism". It will tend to enlarge and qualify that most excellent fount of virile energy. Sometimes this feeling is spoken of as "imperialistic", at other times as "British", "national", or "racial", and in a sense it fits all these descriptions. Without analysing or defining it too curiously, it is sufficient to say that in its essence, as in its manifestations in this country to-day, it is just what patriotism in England is felt to be. Australian patriotism springs to the toast of the King, thrills at the sight of the flag, and joins with something like devotional

fervour in the National Anthem. There is nothing local that in any way evokes the same feeling. Nor is this emotion barren of acts when acts are possible. It sent our spontaneous contingents to the Soudan and South Africa without any official stimulus or even encouragement. Its outbursts at such exceptional crises may be dismissed here with the brief comment that nothing has impaired its capacity for ready responses to any similar appeals in the future. It is neither dead nor sleeping. At similar provocation the same sorties would be repeated in a more experienced way. Apart from these the fire burns with a steady flame. When possible commercial relations are concerned it is upon everyday sentiments and business dispositions that it is wisest to dwell. Not that even there the deeper aspiration will not assert itself, but it will probably do so in a less picturesque fashion and by incalculable ways. Australians are not loyal in spasms, although until lately they were often described as emotional to a degree, and believed to be exceptionally effervescent in expression. Since the capture of *Cronje* and the *relief of Ladysmith*, Britons at home have been open to the same criticism. To sum up one's attachment to the throne, the flag, the race, and the Empire is a constant quantity consistently in evidence. It is not merely sensational, but perpetual and prosaic in its manifestations. We have had Governors in Australia, the grounds of whose selection for those honourable and often arduous posts appeared from the outset an Egyptian mystery to those over whom they presided. One or two of them, though they did little personally, did nothing that was helpful and many things that were mischievous; others were pensioners whose one purpose was to make plentiful provision for their heirs. Yet even to the most perfunctory of these, respectful consideration has always been shown. No matter what manner of man a Governor might be, he was treated as a representative of the Sovereign, and in certain instances the tribute to the throne became the more remarkable. Of course most of our Viceroy's have been well chosen, and some of them have done splendid service, recognised slightly if at all in Downing Street. The enthusiasm they evoked may have been partly personal. The three visits paid by members of the Royal Family have been the occasion for spontaneous and universal demonstrations of loyalty from every class in the community. The *attack* of a *maniac* upon the late *Prince Alfred* was due only to his diseased brain. The most brilliant of all these tours was the last, when their Royal Highnesses the *Prince and Princess of Wales* inaugurated the Commonwealth in 1901. The officially organised pageants were memorable in themselves, but to the careful observer the most striking feature of the really royal progress through Australia was the unanimity with which the whole people shared in and sympathised with the display of respect and affection. The bed-rock of loyalty is to be found, not in the more conspicuous personages or prominent classes, but in the mass of the community, including those portions usually silent and taking no persistent part in local public affairs. This is a most significant circumstance. It was from them that the impulses came which coerced many wavering politicians and checked all reckless tongues when

the South African War began. They are the unsleeping guardians of all loyal emblems. Only the other day at a Melbourne meeting a **disparaging allusion to the Union Jack**, made by an **ex-member** of one of the branches of the Victorian legislature, caused him to be promptly and persistently refused a hearing for another word even of explanation or apology. The extent to which this feeling will affect any bargains that may be entered upon by a commercial negotiation the wisest will not seek to forecast. The most affectionate relations are apt, in business dealings with each other, to be guided by business precepts and methods, drawing up their contracts as if no others were to be taken into account. But the existence of a stratum of mutual confidence and attachment supplies a solidarity of sentiment upon which very much is possible. Loyalty to the throne, increased as it is by the marked popularity of the present King, attachment to the Empire as the embodiment of the traditions and ideals of the race, and a sense of our dependence upon the Navy as the safeguard of our uninterrupted growth in the future, are powerful factors in Australia that deserve to be recalled before looking at the strictly business reasons that induce us to favour Preferential Trade.

When the very first movement in this direction commenced to be made may be somewhat uncertain, but the extracts quoted in this *Review* a year or so since, from the proceedings of the Colonial Conference of 1887, appear to mark its earliest appearance in official records.<sup>4</sup> The **Salisbury** Government, in its invitation to the Colonies, expressly deprecated “the discussion at the present time of any of the subjects falling within the range of what is known as political federation”.<sup>5</sup> The Prime Minister (Lord Salisbury) himself, in his opening address, said: “I fear that we must for the present put in the distant and shadowy portion of our task, and not in the practical part of it, any hope of establishing a Customs Union among the various parts of the Empire”.<sup>6</sup> With perfect candour he then proceeded to explain the true nature of the obstacles that severed us. These were: “the resolutions which were come to in respect to our fiscal policy forty years ago set any such possibility entirely aside, and it cannot now be resumed until on one side or the other very different notions with regard to fiscal policy prevail from those which prevail at the present moment”.<sup>7</sup> On our side those different notions have long prevailed and did then. But even at that early date all the hesitancy was in Great Britain and all the offers of reciprocity came from the Colonies. To the then Premier of Queensland, Sir **Samuel W. Griffith**, belongs the honour of having submitted by letter to the Imperial Government before Lord Salisbury administered his cold douche by word of mouth, a specific proposal to this end couched in most unmistakable terms. On March 28, 1887, he said:

I hope that an opportunity may arise during the Conference of discussing the practicability of consolidating and maintaining the unity of the Empire by adding to the existing bonds a definite recognition of the principle that her Majesty's subjects, as such, have a community of material interest as distinguished from the rest of the world, and of considering how far effect may be given to this principle by the several countries forming part of her Majesty's dominions, affording to each other commercial concessions and advantages greater than those which are granted to subjects of other States. Without for a moment suggesting any interference with the freedom of each legislature to deal with the tariff of the country under its jurisdiction, I conceive that such freedom is not incompatible with a general recognition of the principle that when any article is subjected to a duty on importation a higher duty should be imposed on goods coming from foreign countries than on those imported from her Majesty's dominions.<sup>8</sup>

This historic declaration should be placed at the head of any chapter devoted to this great question. Judging by the reference to the subject in the next paragraph of his letter, and the special mention of it in the letter of Sir [John Downer](#),<sup>9</sup> then Premier of South Australia, it had been previously approved by the other representatives of Australia then in London. A variant was independently suggested from South Africa and particularly pressed by Mr. [J. H. Hofmeyr](#) as a special subject for discussion. This was: "The feasibility of promoting closer union between the various parts of the British Empire by means of an Imperial Customs tariff, the revenue derived from such tariff to be devoted to the general defence of the Empire".<sup>10</sup> The two propositions were afterwards debated together and heartily approved by the delegates of all the Colonies. Sir [Adye Douglas](#), of Tasmania, was sceptical, and the Agent-General for New Zealand, Sir [F. Dillon Bell](#), professed to fear that one of the tabooed Imperial Federation schemes was being sprung upon them. Really he had another object in view, being anxious that the Colonies should be enabled to make commercial treaties with foreign Powers directly and individually,<sup>11</sup> a proposition as Sir Samuel Griffith at once very properly denounced as the antithesis of the projects for closer union favoured just before. It was negatived with unanimity, notwithstanding the precedent of the French–Canadian Treaty then in force, and thus helped to put the strong view of the Colonial members of the Conference in high relief. Upon all these questions Lord Knutsford, then Sir [Henry Holland](#), preserved a diplomatic silence, and in his concluding address admitted but the briefest reference to them, though they were much the most important and practical of all the issues submitted. Not that this was taken to be his own leaning. He simply followed his leaders' cue with absolute fidelity. His perfect tact and soundness of judgment gave him a very great influence over all the delegates, who, if the Imperial Government had then been less studiously chilly in their attitude, were undoubtedly prepared to

have gone much further than they did. There were fateful possibilities passed by in 1887. Mr. Hofmeyr's support of the Empire might have been made very much more decided than it was a few years ago if his scheme had been better received by those whom it was intended to benefit, while Mr. Chamberlain's path would have proved shorter and smoother if Sir Samuel Griffith's far-seeing policy had been put into practical effect to any extent or even received with favour.

The Colonies had made this first overture a most definite and unanimous offer without obtaining any encouragement. Then for seven years Preferential Trade discussions slumbered, waking at Ottawa in 1894 when Canada, Australasia, and Cape Colony among themselves, with the **Earl of Jersey** as Imperial Commissioner looking on, gave their undivided attention to a set of practical questions.<sup>12</sup> It is no mere accident that the very first place in the minds of all present was given to trade relations within the Empire, which were recommended to be placed "on a more favourable footing" than trade with foreign countries.<sup>13</sup> The language of the second resolution following this general pronouncement is extremely suggestive because, in spite of the repressive attitude of the Imperial Government of the day still reflecting the unsympathetic attitude of 1887, it contrived with polite firmness to put the responsibility upon the shoulders of the then Prime Minister, who happened to be **Lord Rosebery**. It runs as follows: "*That until the Mother Country can see her way to enter into Customs arrangements with her Colonies*" the utmost that could be done was by mutual agreement to treat each other's products more favourably than those of foreign countries.<sup>14</sup> Taken together these resolutions were unmistakably a second and, if anything, more explicit request for Preferential Trade within the Empire. They included an offer and once more placed upon the Imperial Government the responsibility of accepting or rejecting it. Lord Rosebery's Cabinet, after some months, replied through the **Marquess of Ripon**, its Colonial Secretary, defining the invitation as one implying that Free Trade was to be superseded by "differential duties" in Great Britain in return for the raising or lowering of Colonial duties so as to grant a preference to British goods.<sup>15</sup> The second offer was refused as the first had been, and there the matter ended. It may be urged that some of the Australian representatives, none of whom happened to be men of the first rank in active public life, opposed the chief resolution in the name of New South Wales, Queensland, and New Zealand. Had Lord Jersey's instructions permitted him to have fostered the patriotic feeling of these members it may be confidently assumed that probably only a single vote, if even that, would have been cast against it. The whole weight of the Imperial influence was adverse to the movement then as it had been in 1887. Three years afterwards, when the Prime Ministers assembled in London, constituting a much more influential and responsible body, they were still encouraged to declare by a majority that the purely political relations between the predominant partner

and themselves were “generally satisfactory under existing conditions”,<sup>16</sup> a very vague and colourless approbation to be put on record. However, the ten years since the first Conference had not been barren. The second Jubilee of the great Queen had widened the outlook and elevated the sense of responsibility of England’s statesmen. Lord Salisbury was once more in office; but his representative at the Colonial Office, Mr. Chamberlain, had already commenced to “think Imperially” and though the ideals of the Colonists still seemed to him visionary he realised that they were inspiring, and grasped with his genius for practical affairs at the opportunities they afforded. Speaking for his Government, in a tone very different from that of his predecessors, he commenced with the admission that sentiment was “the greatest of all the forces in the general government of the world”.<sup>17</sup> He wished to utilise and resolved to reinforce it. With the instant appreciation of a trained man of business he reverted not to the original proposal of Sir S. Griffith, nor to the Ottawa resolution, because he was still unprepared to break with the traditional policy of Great Britain to which Lord Salisbury’s unerring prescience had pointed as the real obstacle to progress. But he was stirred by the success achieved in Germany partly owing to the expansion of internal Free Trade under its *Zollverein*, whose history he confessed to be “most interesting and most instructive”.<sup>18</sup>

What impressed him deeply was, that “it commenced entirely as a commercial convention; dealing in the first instance partially with the trade of the Empire, it was rapidly extended to include the whole of the trade of the Empire, and it finally made possible and encouraged the ultimate union of the Empire”.<sup>19</sup> These sentences were a summary and a prophecy—a summary of facts and the conclusions arrived at after scrutinising them, and a prophecy of the proposals which, initiated in accordance with the current orthodoxy of political economy, were to draw him irresistibly a few years later into a vortex of research, out of which he was to emerge quite prepared to better the instruction given him. In 1887 the Colonies as a whole, and Australia most emphatically, had told the Mother Country that the establishment of a *Zollverein*, subject to the maintenance of their existing or modified tariffs, rested wholly with the people of Great Britain. Like Mr. *Barkis*, they “were willing”, but, as Lord Salisbury confessed, their forty-year-old policy forbade the banns. In 1894 Lord Rosebery repeated the same excuse. Mr. Chamberlain in 1897 retorted that political federation depended upon the Colonies, because if they wished to share the management of the Empire they must be prepared to contribute towards its maintenance. A Customs Union except as a means to Inter-Imperial Free Trade, was still beyond his hopes. The first end was partially approached. Australia and the Cape had already contributed by voluntary grants, and five years later the former increased her subsidy to the Navy, though without receiving any share in its management or in that of the Empire. They did not stop there. Once more all the Colonies except New South Wales responded

to Mr. Chamberlain's reference to the Zollverein by expressing for the third time their willingness to enter into Preferential Trade relations. As at Ottawa they asked the denunciation of all treaties hampering the commercial relations between Great Britain and her Colonies. To a certain degree positions were altered. Canada had granted her first preference to British goods. It was Mr. Chamberlain who now pressed for action in Australia, his aim being the reduction of Colonial duties as an act of grace or gratitude in addition to the subsidies. From this his guests recoiled. It was agreed that our Premiers should "confer with their colleagues with a view to seeing whether such a result" (i.e., improved trade relations) "can be properly secured by a preference given by the Colonies to the products of the United Kingdom".<sup>20</sup> This was but a complimentary ceremony. There was no response to this on our side. Mr. Kingston, then Premier of South Australia, both in London and on his return to his own province, made it perfectly plain that no such exemption would obtain his support unless it were met by reciprocal concessions.<sup>21</sup> Still something was achieved. In 1898 the German and Belgian Treaties were terminated while Canada increased her preference from 25 per cent. to 33⅓ per cent.

The 1897 Conference and its results at least emphasised the position previously existing. There has been no direct alteration in the political relations between the Mother Country and her dominions even yet, except that the tone of the Colonial Office has become positive instead of negative since 1897. Mr. Chamberlain's tentative attempt to induce the Colonies to grant Preferential Trade spontaneously without asking any return was diverted by the serious occurrences in the Transvaal which from thenceforward absorbed attention. In the Colonies his appeals were cordially welcomed, and much was hoped from them until the war became imminent. There was no change in the deeper aim cherished. We still sought to induce the British Government to remove the obstacles created by your policy, which forbade the Customs Union that would prepare the way for an Imperial federation, towards which the Secretary for the Colonies had pointed us. From 1897 till 1900 the Australian Colonies were absorbed in the local struggle for a union which should embrace the whole of them in a national government and parliament. This was no detour. On the contrary, it was a further and unavoidable stage towards Imperial union, and was expressly endorsed with encouraging words at the 1897 Conference, which sat in London between two sessions of the National Convention then engaged in drafting a Constitution for the new Commonwealth. Preferential Trade with Great Britain was, of course, possible by arrangement between any one or more of the Colonies, independent of each other in this as in all other matters, but it was felt that this piecemeal method of coping with so great an issue was unsatisfactory, while it was believed to be essential that every thought and effort should be concentrated upon the establishment of a central authority capable of speaking and acting for Australia as a

whole. When this was accomplished the election of the first Parliament and choice of a federal policy under the confused conditions described in a previous letter were more than sufficient to occupy the people and their new representatives in 1901 and 1902. As a fact the Coronation Conference of 1902 came too soon for us and would have been much more effective twelve months later. The Federal Tariff had not been passed when our Prime Minister was obliged to leave for London, and was accepted only a few days before his return. The precarious hold of his Government upon the House at that time prevented him from speaking out at the Conference with the boldness which he would have been able to adopt in 1903. All the circumstances were unpropitious from our point of view, and the wonder is that the increased voluntary grant towards the cost of the Imperial Navy was secured at all. The patriotism of the great body of our people already alluded to, always latent, never became patent more quietly or firmly than when it insisted upon the agreement with the Admiralty, signed by Sir Edmund Barton, being put into effect without the addition or excision of a single word. This, from an Australian point of view, was the one manifest triumph resulting from the meeting in London. A minor disadvantage, which the Coronation Conference shared with the Conference of 1897, was that it was conducted during a season of popular excitement, occasioned by a memorable historic ceremonial and superabundant distractions of a social character. Though visits to the Metropolis of the Empire have hitherto been timed so as to coincide with lofty functions and celebrations, it cannot be contended that the environment is then most appropriate for the calm and searching consideration of questions of great national moment. The unintended but inevitable effect of the choice of such seasons upon the masses here and elsewhere is to suggest, especially to the numerous frivolous and few who are hostile, that the festivals are the chief cause of the gathering. The real magnitude and importance of these "Councils of the Empire", to use Lord Salisbury's famous phrase, is thus obscured and diminished. The handsomely hospitable instincts of the British statesmen who play the host to distinguished visitors from across the seas are appreciated, but then statecraft would be more in evidence if these lavish courtesies were less in the foreground. It is desirable that such assemblages should be not only more frequent but more serious, unbroken and businesslike in every particular.

For all that, the next Conference again surpassed its predecessor. The Conference of 1902, of which the proceedings have only been made public in part, was marked by plainer speaking from Mr. Chamberlain, and by a much more specific response in the shape of resolutions unanimously passed by the Premiers. Wiser by experience in his office, the Secretary of State for the Colonies did not hesitate to allege that a political federation of the Empire was possible, adding that while the Government would welcome any approach to "a more definite and closer union ... the demand, if it comes, and when it comes, must come from the Colonies. If it comes it will be enthusiastically received in this country".<sup>22</sup> He suggested a Council of the Empire, at

first advisory only, but qualifying itself to become executive and perhaps legislative. His attitude towards possible new commercial relations was exactly the same. He would not formulate any proposals, but invited them from the Colonies. The Empire might be made self-sustaining. New Zealand had brought forward the Canadian plan of preferences granted without reciprocity to which that colony afterwards gave effect, and finally this line of advance was approved by the remainder of those represented.<sup>23</sup> Since then many public men in opposition to the Balfour Government have contended that no offer has ever been made by the Colonies to which the people of the United Kingdom or their representatives are called upon to reply. So far, putting aside Mr. Hofmeyr's scheme, there have been four occasions on which distinct offers have been made by Australia and by other Colonies, the first from Sir Samuel Griffith and his colleagues in 1887, next from the delegates to Ottawa in 1894, then from the Colonial Premiers except New South Wales in 1897, and finally the express undertakings of 1902. The first resolution carried at the Coronation Conference declared that Preferential Trade relations would stimulate and facilitate mutual commercial intercourse, and by promoting the development of the resources and industries of the Empire would add to its strength; the second, in order to prevent any misconception, admitted that Inter-Imperial Free Trade was impracticable; the third pledged the Colonies to grant preferences to the products and manufactures of the United Kingdom; while the fourth respectfully urged that reciprocal treatment should be accorded in its ports to the products and manufactures of the Colonies. Read together these amount to an unequivocal offer. The representatives formally undertook to follow the precedent set by Canada in conceding preferences to British goods without waiting for a return, though they respectfully urged one. The Cape, Natal and New Zealand have already done so. Australia is about to follow suit. The condition of flux in which our politics have been replunged owing to sudden changes in the Government have led to some delay, but directly the monsoon season of local party storms is over the promise will undoubtedly be fulfilled. Besides reiterating their former overtures for the fourth time, the definite strides taken in 1902 were two. First, the final repudiation of the earlier ideal of a Zollverein ensuring throughout the Empire a Free Trade as absolute as that now existing within the contiguous territories of the United States and Germany. Mr. Chamberlain had by that time become convinced that the policy suitable for one particular territory, large or small, inhabited by a people of one race was not the policy for many far removed principalities inhabited by peoples of many races and degrees of civilisation. Though the conclusion was negative, it was a pregnant negative. His conception could not stop there. The second distinct step was that of the Colonial Premiers, when they explicitly adopted the Canadian precedent and pledged themselves to seek a preference for British goods in their own markets without other expectation than that the Mother Country would then feel under obligation to return the compliment by reconsidering her policy of cosmopolitan indifference.

New Zealand has been the one colony to fulfil her compact. Since 1897 she has taken pride of place in Australasia in all Imperial movements. Her remarkable Premier, Mr. Seddon, has enjoyed a permanence of administration, and consequent freedom from reversals of policy and *personnel*, which has given his fruitful islands enormous advantages over her gigantic neighbour. The Commonwealth has produced but one statesman comparable to Mr. Seddon in masterfulness, force of character, energy and radicalism. But Mr. Kingston, the member for Adelaide, has succumbed permanently under the physical strain of leadership, leaving him without a rival. The Premier of New Zealand himself has been temporarily disabled. If the Australian had confined his efforts to a similar area, he might have continued to carry his marshal's baton instead of being invalidated at the height of his boldest campaign in federal politics. The Agent-General for New Zealand in the 1887 Conference, who represented what was styled a Conservative section, was the least courageous patriot of those who listened to Sir Samuel Griffith and Mr. Hofmeyr, while Mr. Seddon, who headed the very combination of "Liberals", "Radicals", and "Labour" members which Mr. Kingston spent his strength in constituting in South Australia, has been from the first in New Zealand the most strenuous of Imperialists. The attitude of his colony towards Downing Street was completely reversed when he came into power, and since then he has been easily first in every advance towards a closer union between the land of his birth and the land of his adoption. It has been the practice of the well-to-do classes in the Colonies to sneer at "Digger Dick" and his effusive vagaries, because they were too short-sighted to perceive that these sprang from the superabundant energies of a man of ability, too largely moulded to be confined to the reticences, the subdued tones, and the elaborately correct manners which can be assumed at any time by the emptier, feebler, and narrower conventionalists almost as well as by men of good breeding. Mr. Seddon does not shout at the top of his voice, stamp his great foot, and slap his fellow man on the back when such violent procedures are quite uncalled for; but he has ideas, and acquires them readily, and has organising ability sufficient to outwit his opponents and bridle his friends. He responds to generous emotions, and is not afraid to be governed by them, and possesses a manly fidelity to his old friends that he does not scruple to show and use whenever it is tactical. He is big enough in every way to allow many captious critics to be cut out of his broad bulk and real capacity. His political faith is sincere, and so is his determination not to hide it under a bushel. His devotion to the Mother Country is sincere, but he is none the less a good hand at a bargain with her. Those who love him do not need to disguise his faults or weaknesses. He is not an aesthetic or any other kind of philosopher or theorist, nor an aristocrat nor a university don, but he is a most competent, practical, indefatigable, all-round political leader, who, while chief officer of his colony, has won and kept the confidence of all classes in a turbulent democracy longer than any other living Englishman. The political records of his reign

in relation to social and industrial problems are more valuable than those of any other country, certainly than those of any other colony. In that connection they are marvellously fruitful, and worthy of the closest study. But apart from them, and in order to conclude the review of our Inter-Imperial action down to the present time, the only piece of legislation worthy of note here is the New Zealand Preferential and Reciprocal Trade Act of 1903, passed after the Conference of 1902. This, as its title says, is primarily intended "to encourage trade with the British Empire". It does this by means of three schedules, besides one section which exempts tea "grown in any part of the British dominions" from all import duties. The first schedule doubles the duty on foreign cement, the second raises the existing duties 50 per cent. against twenty-seven classes of foreign goods, including basketware, bicycles, boots, candles, china, earthenware, fancy goods, furniture, glass-ware, hardware, paper-hangings, paper, pianos, plate, and vehicles. The third schedule puts a 20 per cent. duty upon nine classes of imports, including gas and oil engines, iron rails and printing paper. These compose a substantial concession, although many of the lines were previously very largely in the hands of British merchants. It has been a distinct advantage to them already in consignments of boots and shoes, furniture and iron. But the Act does not apply to goods ordered before November 1903, or arriving before the end of March 1904. Rails and printing paper have been exempted for longer periods. It is, therefore, too early to measure its efficacy. What it does prove is that, where local politics have permitted, here, as in Canada and South Africa, the Colonies have made Customs concessions in accordance with their professions in 1887, 1894, 1897, and 1902, and without waiting for consideration in kind.

When Mr. Chamberlain returned from South Africa in 1903, as Kipling's soldier did, to "Ackney Stadt", he was still an Imperialist, as in 1902, "but not the same". Close personal contact with the colonists, who are the advance-guard of our outer Empire, had taught him their side of the problem, and the reasonableness of claims which he had previously too much discounted. The result was that though he spoke at Birmingham, and to Birmingham, he had in mind the vast new territories and their rugged settlers. He really spoke to the whole nation as even he had never spoken before. The echoes set ringing in the British Isles by his proposal for Tariff Reform in the interests of the Empire were loud enough in all conscience, and probably by their very violence drowned the eager echoes further off, which responded from Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand with at least equal fervour and almost unqualified approbation. Foreign nations were stirred by the portent of a Union Jack which might come to symbolise a blending of Britons everywhere as well as in the island kingdoms over which it first flew. The expatriated patriots and their stalwart sons, from the snow-line to the tropic zone, leaped with enthusiasm towards the hope he had heralded that the long-looked-for linking of energies and resources in all lands under that flag had at last begun to arrive. In Australia the answering

welcome was immediate. As it chanced, the first Federal Parliament was coming to a close. Sir Edmund Barton having retired to the High Court Bench, the leadership of the Government and of the Protectionist Party devolved upon his Attorney-General, Mr. Deakin. He at once placed Preferential Trade in the foreground of his Ministerial programme and appealed to the country upon it. The Tariff lately passed, though defective, was, he said, "entitled to a fair trial".<sup>24</sup> It was not "the Protectionist Tariff to which we have been accustomed" (in Victoria), "and for which he hoped", but was "accepted for want of a better".<sup>25</sup> There was only one contingency upon which he would at once ask Parliament to amend it, and this was if Mr. Chamberlain's acceptance of our often repeated proposals for reciprocity were sanctioned by the people of Great Britain. In that event, any project of the kind would receive the "most cordial, most hearty, and most generous consideration at the hands of any truly Australian Government".<sup>26</sup>

He proceeded to point out that:

The difficulty is that while we are willing to make such reductions or increases (in duties) as may be required, we have, instead of the tariff we introduced upon Protectionist principles, a tariff so low that it admits of few reductions ... Our opportunities were not so numerous (as those of Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa). We will gladly take them (the opportunities for reductions) where we can, and where we cannot we will increase against the foreigner, which will have the same effect. This has been the ideal of the Liberal party in Victoria for twenty years. As I pointed out in London in 1887, we have been waiting for the Mother Country. The time is ripe now for the development of our national trade, but to ensure its adoption will be no easy matter.

After citing Mr. Balfour's then recent pamphlet with approbation, the Australian Prime Minister added:

Our maxims are that trade is a powerful tie making for unity, that common investments make Common interests; strengthening us when built up within the Empire and weakening us when transferred to our rivals. As a man's first duty is to provide for his own family, it is a statesman's first duty to provide for his own people.<sup>27</sup>

The present Prime Minister, Mr. Reid, as leader of the then Opposition, expressed an absolutely contrary opinion by which he still stands. His one remedy for all our ills was and is to lower the Tariff to a revenue standard, making no difference between British goods and those which come in competition with them or with our own from

other parts of the world. But his antagonism, he admitted, would be qualified in one event. If the electors refused to alter the Commonwealth Tariff upon general fiscal principles he was prepared to reduce all its Protectionist imposts to a merely revenue standard against British goods providing the majority of members elected would not consent to their equal reduction upon foreign goods as he strongly recommended. That is the case which has occurred. Nevertheless, Preferential Trade being possible only under cover of the mischievous principle of Protection, he believes it to be injurious to all parties, but especially to a free importing country like Britain. He would have none of it except as a mitigation of the higher duties he is willing to pull down should he be unable to get them reduced to a Free Trade level or any other way. In a word, his attitude then and still is exactly what Lord Rosebery's was in 1894 and continues to be in 1904, that of the doctrinaire who prefers to preserve the symmetry of a theory rather than knit together the scattered forces of Empire. In the campaign of 1903 Mr. Deakin toured the Eastern States preaching the value of Preferential Trade to enthusiastic audiences, but did not visit South or Western Australia either for want of time or because he thought our elections would not be deflected by its discussion. Following Mr. Kingston's lead, the former State accepted the scheme on condition that reciprocity was assured. In the West it was welcomed by the Protectionists and rejected by the Free Importers with a gain to the former. The Hon. **B. R. Wise**, M.L.A., of Sydney, though a member of the State Ministry, was the one Free Trader of eminence in the "Mother State", whose eloquence and mastery of the subject made him a power on the platform and in the press. He discussed the whole question soon after in this *Review*. But his enthusiasm was not rewarded in New South Wales though his gallant fight had its effects elsewhere. The elections did not turn upon this issue alone in any State though it was an important element everywhere. The Free Importers under Mr. Reid strengthened their hold upon New South Wales, but lost ground outside its borders. When the second Federal Parliament met, the Prime Minister, Mr. Deakin, was still in power. He devoted the better part of his speech on the address in reply to an exposition of Preferential Trade and its possibilities. Mr. Reid in replying touched these lightly, dwelling most upon the negative attitude of the Balfour Government and the years that must elapse before any possible arrangement could be put into force. He admitted that the Free Importing party had been defeated at the polls, and has just confessed that the greater part of the present House is pledged to some form of Preferential Trade.

To sum up the situation in a few words, Australia in 1904 remains true to the policy of Preferential Trade affirmed and reaffirmed at every Conference held during the last seventeen years. The Deakin Cabinet did not live to give effect to it. The incursion of the Labour party into politics had become serious owing to their gains at the general election. Their entry into power upon an amendment of the Arbitration Bill

to which allusion was made in the December number of this *Review* postponed the larger issue. They lost office upon another amendment of the same Bill which Mr. Reid has only just succeeded in passing into law. Immediately it was removed from the business paper of the House, Mr. Deakin a week ago submitted a comprehensive motion in favour of Preferential Trade to which Mr. Reid has replied in his old fashion and upon his old grounds. Unhappily the close of the session at Christmas is rendering it impossible for the subject to be really debated or distinctly voted upon, though should it by any chance be put to the test in a full House a considerable majority are expected to declare generally in its favour. Australian opinion has ripened and is ripening still in a practical direction. Its sentiment is unaltered, and it is fast preparing for the business stage when precise proposals will be put forward. To unravel their prospects would require an analysis of the party politics and personal influences now in play in the various States and in the Federal Parliament. Suffice it to say that a great deal depends upon the support which the Labour Protectionists give to Mr. Deakin now and next session, for though Mr. Watson has seconded his motion his action in no way binds his followers, who are perfectly free to deal with all fiscal interests as they please. Apparently at present they see nothing in it for themselves. The present House contains a majority in favour of Preferential Trade, but as yet few have defined the nature or extent of the preferences they are prepared to support. It may not long survive and the issue will perhaps be submitted to the people in 1905, more definitely if not more explicitly than it was in 1903. To disentangle the factors and forces operating, and likely to operate upon this one principle it would be necessary to reconsider the whole political position of the Commonwealth of which Preferential Trade with the Mother Country continues to be one of the most potent and living issues to-day. Tariff Reform is promised, and this must be one of its chief features.

## GREATER BRITAIN

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### AUSTRALIAN VIEWS OF PREFERENTIAL TRADE

(BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT IN AUSTRALIA)

Australian opinion is not to be directly ascertained even here, because where it exists it is not expressed, or where it is expressed it is not Australian. This dictum, though true of most subjects, is not quite true of Preferential Trade in its widest sense; for—as Mr. Reid himself admits—this proposal has already been welcomed by an express decision of the whole of our people. But there, too, the particular mode and extent of it that will be approved is open to disputation. The road recently chosen will not be departed from, but the first stage of the journey has not been determined. Under such circumstances an investigator is obliged to fall back upon local opinions. These, when brought together and carefully compared, usually furnish a fairly safe foothold for generalisations embracing the whole Commonwealth. Nevertheless, the hundreds or thousands of miles separating our active centres of political life, the capitals of the States, from each other and from the country districts sustaining them, thinly sprinkled in uneven patches towards the interior, makes any really authoritative expression of public opinion hard to obtain, especially upon national questions. This is in part because the largest metropolitan dailies in Sydney, Brisbane, and Perth speak practically for only one side of politics. In Melbourne and Adelaide both sides are represented, and thus as a rule a much better criterion is provided in those cities. Taking all their circumstances into account a truer insight may often be obtained in the less populous city, where the leaven of Federalism is at least as potent and Imperialism as well understood. For instance, the Adelaide *Advertiser* is on the whole a more faithful exponent of Preferential Trade on its own merits, and the Adelaide *Register* a more consistent opponent of all proposals of that nature, than their rivals of greater size and circulation elsewhere, because South Australian views on this question are less coloured by local partisanship. Mr. Chamberlain has a most consistent ally in the *Advertiser*, since the keynote of its policy is that of his great Limehouse speech, in which he insisted that what we most require in the current campaign is organisation in aid of sentiment. Assuredly we need the former sorely in the Commonwealth among those who agree in looking to closer commercial relations

to prove and reinforce the unity of feeling upon which the Empire is now resting. A recent article in the same paper from an Australian in Canada asserts that ninety per cent. of the available votes in the Dominion were polled in the recent General Election at which Sir **Wilfrid Laurier** triumphed. Our total a year ago was forty per cent. less, half the qualified electors absenting themselves from the poll. These figures tell their own tale. The inertness of our citizens—who include citizenesses—and the inefficacy of existing parties could have no clearer illustration. Besides these general drawbacks, Preferential Trade up to the present has had to depend upon only one of our parties. Mr. Reid himself insists that “all the great leaders who have advocated this cause are Protectionists”. With the exception of Mr. **Irvine**, ex-Premier of Victoria, and Mr. **Wise**, an ex-Attorney-General of New South Wales, the statement is correct. A certain section of the Free Importers in these two States may have been represented by them, but elsewhere the bulk of them appear to have avoided a breach with their old leaders. At all events in South Australia public men seem to have accepted the fiscal dividing line of old as still applying to the new situation. That is not the mood of their constituents, a very large section of whom are swayed by their sympathies towards the opposite camp. Vigorous tactics would enlist them in the cause of union, and, if well-timed, should bring over recruits by regiments. But our politics are paralysed for the time being by a confusion of issues in addition to a weakness of organisation, from which we have always suffered. If an answer could be obtained to the great question put by Mr. Chamberlain to Britain and to Greater Britain it would be clear, but whether it can soon be put to Australia plainly and by itself is very problematical.

There are but two positive programmes in the Commonwealth, the Labour and the Protectionist. The first is incomparably better promulgated. Its articles of faith, framed at Conferences of Labour Leagues, though expressed with unintentional vagueness, are swiftly and effectively interpreted in Parliament by its caucus. All the votes of all its members are available for its service whenever they are required. Of course “Labour” to them covers only those in receipt of wages or small pay, the employed as contrasted with their employers. The former are of course a large majority in every electorate, and it is to them that “Labour” candidates always appeal. They promise “social legislation” for bettering their condition, or, what is supposed to be the same thing, hampering the profit-making potencies of their masters. On the other hand, the Protectionists are, to begin with, hampered by an equally insufficient name, since their policy includes the development of the resources of the country, by bounties to civic and rural industries and by discriminating laws securing other advantages to our people than those obtained by levying duties upon foreign imports. They are not well organised, though Victoria and South Australia “vote the ticket” more consistently than their neighbours, simply because their constituencies have

become fairly unanimous in fiscal opinion. The fact that complicates the situation is that the Labour and Protectionist programmes are in no way directly opposed. Any Labour members are free to adopt the whole Protectionist programme as a supplement to their own, and some have done so who are then reckoned in the Protectionist party. But if a Protectionist adopted the whole Labour programme as well as his own he would not be a member of the Labour party unless he signed a pledge binding him to obey a majority vote of its caucus on all questions affecting its programme. Nevertheless, there are a number of Protectionists who act with and practically are Labour members, though they are returned unpledged and in some instances against Labour opposition. The bulk of these members agree with some of the least aggressive of the Labour aims, while a small minority is entirely hostile to them. These cross divisions are multiplied also by State and local alliances. As a result each of the two positive programmes has plenty of opponents, who are united according to circumstances around a central section adverse to both and containing most of the leaders of what may be termed the third "party". Its one aim is resistance, and though it adopts various practical measures from time to time according to the necessities of the hour, most of its energies are expended in holding back either the Labour Leagues or the Protectionists, or both. It receives a certain support from one when it is making an assault upon the other or *vice versa*, and is thus assisted at various times from unexpected quarters. Its watch-words are negations, and its tactics usually Mephistophelean, since its most familiar function is to deny current affirmative policies. The present Federal Government is of this type, having come into power to put a negative upon the extreme industrial demands of the Labour Ministry of Mr. Watson, and existing only while the action of the Protectionists is suspended pending the report of the Tariff Commission just appointed. A coalition between some of the Ministerialists of the first Parliament and all the direct Opposition its chief, Mr. Reid, holds the Prime Ministership in the meantime by a majority of two. But he can count upon this precarious majority by virtue of his negative attitude, particularly to everything on the Labour platform.

Last month when Mr. Deakin launched his motion in the Commonwealth House for Preferential Trade with the Mother Country,<sup>29</sup> it at once severed not only the Ministerial party but the Cabinet. Mr. McLean, the Minister of Customs, who heads the Protectionist half of the Government, followed his own Prime Minister's negative speech against the motion<sup>30</sup> with a reply emphatically endorsing it,<sup>31</sup> and afterwards divided against him twice in order to bring it to a vote.<sup>32</sup> Probably not even Australian disregard for Parliamentary precedents was ever carried farther. This great national issue is sure to be revived immediately the House meets in June next. If the Reid administration is not sent to the country upon some other ground, Ministers must once more vote against each other upon it, and after that

it will scarcely be possible to keep them together. Just now in South Australia and elsewhere there is a general feeling that the old code of Parliamentary honour, which required a Ministry to resign directly it was defeated upon any question of policy, should not be applied with the same rigour as at home. Some are bold enough to advocate elective Ministries, on the plea that, having no corporate Cabinet identity, these would be bound to obey the behests of a majority of the House without regard to the individual or collective opinions of their members. The futility of Mr. Deakin's resignation exhibited by the passage with his own aid of the Arbitration Bill, including the very clause which he retired from office rather than accept, is dwelt upon by the Press. Mr. Watson escapes with less censure, for up to the last he employed every artifice to defeat the measure while it contained the provision that cost him the Treasury benches. Mr. Reid has adopted the Bill since he became Prime Minister, though he had personally spoken and voted for its emasculation at every stage until he assumed official responsibility for its safe conduct. In so doing he has been going with the tide of opinion referred to, but even this acceptance of a lighter view of his obligations as head of the Ministry cannot be utilised always. There will be no such escape when he comes into direct collision with his colleagues and supporters over the new fiscal question upon which he has recently taken up a most uncompromising attitude. He was glad to close the late Session before a vote could be obtained upon the elaborate motion for Preferential Trade then under discussion. It was debated with force and ability by those who addressed the House, though, according to the Press, with far less than a quorum listening. The orators were either speaking to the public outside or in anticipation of the crisis that may occur when the measure is revived next June. The prospects of its success then are very hard to assess, because the speculations both of public men and leading journals are perverted by their wishes and ambitions. But at least we are now able to approach its consideration intelligently. The last numbers of the *Parliamentary Debates*—published weekly in Melbourne—present an exceptionally interesting if not authoritative expression of the governing ideas of some representative men. The three “parties”, or at least their chief spokesmen, were heard at length, and in fact every considerable section contributed its criticism. Though the members who addressed the Speaker were few, and only one **Senator** entered the fray, their speeches were manifestly the fruit of careful preparation. Very deliberately and very plainly the existing House, through its spokesmen, recorded its general opinion of one of the principal issues upon which it was elected.

Preferential Trade needs no exposition to the readers of the *National Review*, but Australian ideas upon it, even if familiar, are possibly of some interest because they are Australian. The clearest conception of them was conveyed by Mr. Reid, whose great **speech in opposition** to the motion submitted, disclosed most clearly, though

by contrast, what the movement really means and seeks. The version of the mover differed from that of many who followed him because of the emphasis he laid upon it as one part of a larger and deeper development, having as its end a “self-governing Empire”. Mr. Deakin said:

Let us gauge, test, and search the possibilities within the Empire for united action. Let us press to the very last issue in order to discover if there be any means by which we can fairly readjust the trade of the Empire so as to aid in the development of its undeveloped parts, and maintain the wealth and prosperity of its great centre. It is a noble aim, and if it fails we shall all regret it. I believe it feasible and relatively within our reach, but admit that very little will be done at the outset, or for some time.

In Mr. Reid’s judgment nothing at all can be done, or ought to be done, now or at any time, in this direction. He will make no experiment and sanction no bargain. Mr. Deakin proceeded:

We shall have to feel our way. We shall have to judge every scheme by the test of facts, and not by the test of theories. I hope that we shall very largely brush away abstract doctrines. Those who would admit that in the abstract the doctrine “buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market” is the best might be led to consider that the maintenance of the strength, the dignity and prosperity of the Empire count for something, and that if the market in which we buy be not within the Empire itself it may not be the cheapest, even if it seemed so according to current price lists ... We must approach the consideration of this question prepared to make mutual sacrifices, in order to obtain mutual benefits.<sup>33</sup>

He put the same point again when he said:

At the present time Australia and other parts of the Empire trade as liberally and as freely with foreign nations, which may be rivals to-day and which are possible enemies to-morrow, upon exactly the same terms as they do with the Mother Country, which, although she may be a rival to-day, cannot by any possibility be an enemy to-morrow. As far as commerce is concerned we recognise no other consideration than that of dearness or cheapness. If we can import more cheaply from the country which most threatens our liberties and our future than from the country which upholds our liberties and secures our future we buy the cheaper article. That is to say, the price we pay is our only consideration at the counter, notwithstanding the fact that we may be a partner in the shop next door which is selling its wares a little dearer.<sup>34</sup>

The general tenour of his argument was the same as that employed in his speech as Prime Minister, quoted last month, that we should seek to multiply ships, colonies, and commerce by Imperial subsidies, bounties, and other aids, patiently and probably piecemeal, but thoroughly and consistently. His elaborate motion, which was seconded, *sans* phrase, by Mr. Watson,<sup>35</sup> approved an unconditional Preference at once by way of gift to the Mother Country, followed by the offer of a further Preference conditional upon reciprocal concessions from her, to be discussed at Mr. Balfour's proposed Conference, and then sanctioned by Parliament for a term of years. To attain this end he declared for both increases and reductions of our existing tariff. At this point Sir William Lyne diverged saying:

[I claim that] we can increase existing duties against the foreigner. Under present conditions we cannot in any way seriously reduce these duties in favour of Great Britain, and at the same time protect native industries. I claim, however, that Great Britain would be benefited by the increase of production within her Colonies as well as by drawing nearly all her supplies from those countries instead of from other nations. In return the self-governing Colonies would take more from the Mother Country in the shape of manufactures.<sup>36</sup>

In the course of an able speech, in which the only reference during the debate to the initiative of Sir Samuel Griffith appears, Sir William Lyne, after setting out the statistics which proved the value of the British market to Australian growers, summed up the position with terse though possibly exaggerated emphasis when he said: "We arrive here at the vital turning-point—the signpost at the parting of the ways—one hand pointing to a broad well-guarded avenue 'To Imperial Reciprocity', the other to a descending stony path 'To Separation'. I do not think that Australia wishes to separate from Great Britain".<sup>37</sup>

In reply to an interjection, "There was not much fear of separation in 1894", the year in which the Ottawa Conference passed its resolution for Preferential Trade, Sir William Lyne rejoined, "There was no agitation for separation then; but the tie between us was not so strong as it has been made since".<sup>38</sup> He had previously said: "I claim that by entering into a proper scheme of Preferential Trade with Great Britain we shall improve our business relations and increase the attachment which exists between all parts of the Empire. I believe that to-day a stronger feeling exists in favour of the unity of the Empire than has ever previously been entertained".<sup>39</sup>

Mr. Watson, speaking for himself and not for the Labour Party or as its leader, and at a later stage, occupied a middle position, though expressly repudiating Mr. Deakin's ideal.

I have hoped for many years past that some day we shall be able to bring about something approaching an Imperial Zollverein by which the different sections of the people belonging to the British Empire, as a whole, could encourage trade one with the other to their mutual advantage and profit. When the proposal for Preferential Trade began to assume something like concrete form in the Mother Country I expressed from the platform my full belief in the wisdom, from the standpoint of every section of the British family, of establishing Preferential Trade relations. Upon that principle I have not wavered up to the present time.<sup>40</sup>

Answering an interjection, “The honourable member believes in an Imperial Zollverein”, Mr. Watson explicitly **retorted**:

Yes, but such a one as would relate to trade purposes, and have no connection whatever with Imperial Federation, or Imperial defence, as those terms are generally understood. A trade treaty for mutual advantage would have no necessary connection with any proposals that would be involved in Imperial Federation or defence ... In any case I say at once that I have no sympathy with the idea of Imperial Federation at present. I do not know what the future may bring forth.<sup>41</sup>

He is open to consider reductions as well as increases in the Tariff in order to give a preference. “It would be necessary to arrange for a conference of representatives of the self-governing States and of the Imperial Government to consider the shape that preference should take, and how far the Colonies might be expected to forego the principle of Protection that has been so generally adopted.”<sup>42</sup> Apparently Mr. **Ronald**, M.P., would hardly be prepared to go so far. Mr. Watson **adds**: “It seems to me that there will always be a large proportion of goods which it will not pay us to manufacture locally”. He says again: “I should not like to lay down a hard and fast rule, but, speaking generally, I say that our duties for the maintenance of industries are as Protective duties very low. [We] cannot properly speak of a duty of 15 per cent. as a highly Protective duty. To my mind it is merely a shade higher than a revenue duty”.<sup>43</sup> In essence, therefore, he agrees with Mr. Deakin and Sir W. J. Lyne.

There were also two very effective debating speeches from the Protectionist side, made by Mr. McLean, Minister of Customs, who followed and refuted his chief and colleague. Mr. McLean **quoted** figures to show “that whilst our imports from Great Britain are diminishing those from foreign countries are steadily increasing. That is a very serious matter”.<sup>44</sup> The net result of the last four years’ trade “was thus an increase of nearly £4,000,000 in our imports from foreign countries, whilst in our imports

from Great Britain there was a falling off of £1,375,000”.<sup>45</sup> His remedies were, “In addition to increasing the duties upon lines against the foreigner, and allowing the present imposts to continue against the Mother Country, we have a large free list upon which we can operate”.<sup>46</sup> Like Sir William Lyne, he doubts the possibility of any considerable reductions, though he said that “in some instances, however, I have not the slightest doubt that we can decrease the existing duties in favour of the Mother Country”.<sup>47</sup> His conclusion was:

I know that the present ties of sympathy are exceedingly strong. I feel that if Great Britain were involved in any serious war in which our assistance were necessary, every outlying portion of the Empire would help her to its last man and its last shilling. But that is not an argument for refraining from strengthening the bonds which bind us to Great Britain by ties of sentiment. If we can strengthen these bonds by the ties of mutual self-interest it is surely worth our while to do so; and if at the same time we can develop the resources of outlying portions of the British Empire that will surely be in the interest of the Empire at large.<sup>48</sup>

A large part of the Minister’s speech, and the *whole of that* of Mr. Ewing, was devoted to an exposure of the fallacies into which Mr. Reid and his friends had fallen. It was true that Great Britain had progressed under Free Trade, but industrially protected nations had progressed much faster, and while her advances were dwindling theirs were increasing in some of the most valuable manufactures common to both. After a striking analysis of trade statistics Mr. Ewing pertinently pointed out that “the foreigner has never considered British industries”, and that he heavily taxes Australian products. He aptly inquired first, “Where is any friendship exhibited by any European nation towards Great Britain to-day?” Next, “How should we insult the foreigners by doing that which they are doing themselves?” and finally, “Whether it is an insult to an honest man to lock your own door?” concluding that “We are certainly not insulting the foreigner by asking that the British nation shall lock its doors and open them only to its friends. The locked door may be an insult to thieves and robbers, but it is certainly not an insult for one to keep his door closed against persons until they are prepared to deal fairly and honestly”. The kernel of the debate was pithily put in a sentence, “The supporters of Preferential Trade desire to do something, but its opponents wish to do nothing”; and his general attitude outlined in the sarcastic comment, “If there be any individual so demented as to believe that Australia has any future except as a part of the British Empire ... he must possess the sort of intellect that we would expect to find in a free import camp but nowhere else”.<sup>49</sup> It is unfair to the speakers to present slight excerpts strung together in this fashion, but they probably suffice to show the general trend of the argument for Preferential Trade as presented to the Federal House by its Protectionists under circumstances of great pressure, and most discouraging to its advocates who had the subject sincerely at heart.

Of course there are other Preferential Traders not Protectionists who diminish by degrees in the energy or extent to which they give allegiance to the principle. Free importers like Mr. **Robinson**, M.P., **accept it upon condition** that “a substantial reduction” of the Commonwealth Tariff, and only a reduction, should be tendered by us. In return for a Preference in the British market he would be prepared to sweep away every customs impost here, not excluding those sanctioned for revenue purposes:

If a proposal were made that we should abolish all duties upon British manufactured goods conditionally upon that country granting us a substantial preference, I should be quite prepared to fall in with it. Free-trader as I am, I should support the ideal of free trade within the Empire even if it were coupled with the imposition of some duties against foreign nations, because I believe that by acting in that way we should knit the Empire more closely together.<sup>50</sup>

Mr. Chamberlain has never asked more. But, so far as can be judged, Mr. Robinson’s patriotic sentiments find little endorsement among those with whom he is associated in fiscal agitations. Mr. **Joseph Cook**, M.P., an old colleague of Mr. Reid’s, is **prepared to be even more generous**:

If the Empire is good enough to fight for it might be good enough to trade with. Therefore I say that, instead of sending a hucksterer to London to barter and bargain for further concessions from Great Britain, I would here and now, give her a preference—a gift if you like—in the way of Tariff reductions without making any Tariff stipulations whatever.<sup>51</sup>

Even the Free Importers of Great Britain, however bigoted, could scarcely look such a gift-horse in the mouth no matter how stringent they are in their economic principles. Mr. **Kelly**, M.P., **acknowledged** the same creed:

I should have no objection to Australia giving a voluntary preference to Great Britain, but I have the strongest objection to our entering into a bargain, both because I think it would be unworthy of the loyalty under the guise of which we are asked to accept these proposals, and because I think that any bargain which operates unequally will prove a danger to the integrity of the Empire. Honourable members of the party to which I belong would most probably support the giving of a voluntary preference to Great Britain.<sup>52</sup>

They probably would for the reasons given by Mr. Reid at the last election, not because they are Preferentialists but because they are Free Importers. Having been defeated at the polls in their attempt to reduce our Tariff upon the imports of the world they are, as a last resort, prepared to take a reduction upon those that come

from the Mother Country, rather than none at all. They are endeavouring, to use the sentiment inspiring the Preferentialists for their own fiscal ends, to obtain some free imports just as certain Protectionists like Mr. Maloney, M.P.,<sup>53</sup> seek to use it, only to increase existing duties. Neither of them are Preferentialists in aim or in fact, but Fiscalists first and last in masquerade, or rather in disguise, in order to capture one of the forts protecting their adversaries' citadel.

The Protectionists and Free Importers remain as of old at opposite poles upon the fiscal issue. Those who desire Preferential Trade either as an end in itself or as a necessary corollary of Empire should be drawn from both parties, and indeed already are, though in very different proportions. The Protectionists who refuse all preferences involving reductions of duties are comparatively few, but the Free Importers who refuse all preferences involving increases are very many. The Protectionists are nearly unanimous in supporting a voluntary gift of preference by increases or almost wholly by them. The Free Importers are perhaps equally agreed, providing the gift is wholly by reductions. The area of such a preference in either case is limited. Most Free Importers refuse any larger transaction by way of bargain, but all Protectionists are willing to make an effort to arrive at an agreement for reciprocity. The great mass of them recognise that though under our Tariff the opportunities for decreasing duties are relatively few, we must be ready to make them wherever we can, especially if the equities of the case cannot be met by increases. Probably nine-tenths of the Protectionists are Preferentialists of one kind or another, prepared to make some sacrifices for the cause. It is doubtful if half those who vote for Free Imports are Preferentialists, except where they can employ Tariff changes so as to cut down the local duties against which they have been fighting for years before Preference became a practical issue. Those who would be advocates of concessions here in return for concessions by the Mother Country are probably a third of the number, but possibly less. Except for unrequited reductions upon British goods more than this quota could not be counted upon, according to the best estimates formed upon existing data. For the programme of the negativists on this head one must turn from Mr. Robinson and his sympathisers to its accepted leader and his lieutenants, who are the exponents of the true inwardness of the orthodox economic faith of the past. Mr. Reid, the proud possessor of a Cobden medal, appropriately bases his opinions upon a *doctrinaire* Radicalism, as well as upon fiscal theories. He is one of the elect, who, like the members of the Club that bears their master's name, have learned nothing and forgotten nothing since the quarter of a century that followed the abolition of the Corn Laws. The whole of their tenets are founded upon the experience of Great Britain during that exceptional era of expansion when communication by rail or steamship as well as the machinery of manufacture were being revolutionised, while Colonies were being developed and the Empire expanded. At first the new agencies

and opportunities were employed with profitable results by the country which under Protection had obtained a long lead over all her competitors in the industrial sphere. The lessons of the greater growth of the United States, Germany, France and even Canada under the old policy, especially since it has been readapted to modern necessities and conditions, have been entirely lost upon Free Importers here. They rely upon the weapons of sixty years ago to meet the armament of modern nations, whose industrial tactics in the meantime have been as often reformed and as wholly transformed as their rifles, artillery and ironclads. They ignore the fact that the commercial wars of 1846 were as much unlike those of to-day as the invasion of the Crimea was unlike the invasion of the Boer Republics.

For many reasons the chief and most instructive speech upon Preferential Trade was that of the Prime Minister, because he made its alternative perfectly plain. It is from the lips of its most pronounced antagonist and from his medley of artful arguments directed to all sections of the community in turn, that the true nature of the proposal can be best estimated either in its application to us or to the Mother Country. If Mr. Reid did not prove a negative he made the nearest possible approach to it. If he was not quite uncompromising it was because even his hostility had to be mitigated in consequence of two principal admissions. First, that Preferential Trade would be beneficial to Australian producers, and, secondly, that Australia approves of it. He *said*:

I wish it to be distinctly understood that whilst I question the advantage of any of these arrangements so far as Great Britain is concerned, I do not wish to speak in the same way with reference to the advantages which may come to the Australian producers from any such scheme. I do not wish for a moment to underrate what might be the substantial advantage to the Australian producers of some such arrangement with the Mother Country.<sup>54</sup>

Of course, he excludes manufacturers from his list of beneficiaries. For the first time in his life he has become solicitous because he believes that these vested interests can be rallied in order to strengthen his case against any customs concessions that are not cosmopolitan. As to the second point he *said*:

I believe and I honestly admit that a majority of the electors of Australia at the last election pronounced themselves to be in favour in the abstract of a policy of Preferential Trade. I think that it is only fair that I should honestly make that admission. But I believe that the greatest mass were anxious simply to do anything which the Mother Country thought would help her. I believe that a large number more were fascinated by the attractive prospect of an enormous market for Australian produce with a fence raised against other competition.<sup>55</sup>

Mr. Reid's testimony to the fact of the majority for Preference does not make it any more indisputable, nor does his personal theory of the motives of the electors indicate anything except his own prepossessions. But it is hard for the head of a Government, even though he speaks for only half his colleagues, as in this case, to commence by admitting that the interests and the votes of most of the electors of the Commonwealth are against him. He recognises that their motives cannot be challenged, and he may be granted at once his own claim to an equal share in these *generous sentiments*:

I think there can be no sort of difference between the honourable and learned member, and those who support him, and honourable members who take the view which I intend to express, on those great questions of intention, of good faith, which affirm our loyalty to the Empire and our determination to preserve it at all hazards. I claim to be as anxious to promote the welfare and the best interests of the British Empire as is my honourable and learned friend ... Let us give each other credit for an absolutely honest desire to do that which will best promote the welfare of the great Empire to which we belong.<sup>56</sup>

It is not his patriotism but his economic and political theories that are at fault, since they condemn him to adopt a helpless attitude of *laissez faire* in business and in statesmanship. This forces him to oppose any closer union of the Empire either in trade or government. "The real key to the motive for this new departure on the part of Mr. Chamberlain" is in his opinion political. "In my view the motive and the ruling power in this policy is the desire to bring these self-governing States into the intimate responsibilities of the British Empire ... We are called upon to inaugurate an entirely new policy with reference to the relations between these self-governing States and the central authority."<sup>57</sup> At a later stage he pointed to the increase of the cost of the Army and Navy in the last twenty years by £40,000,000, and added:

The genesis of this agitation set going by Mr. Chamberlain rests on the enormous pressure of this naval and military expenditure. I cannot wonder at the people of the Mother Country looking to her children for further help. Some people talk of this £200,000 that we give to the British Navy as a magnificent display of Australian generosity. I say that we are bound to look our responsibilities to the British Empire more squarely in the face, but do not let us mix up two different things.<sup>58</sup>

We are not to add to the present sentimental relationships which bind us together:

Just in the proportion that a more enlightened policy was adopted under which England gave her Colonies the utmost freedom to carve out their own destinies

for themselves, did she earn their affection and afterwards the devotion of the people of the Empire. We must never forget that this loose system of relationship has made the solidity of the Empire a matter for marvel. I suppose that nowhere in the realms of fiction would any one be found bold enough to paint an Empire which would stand so loyally and closely together over all parts of the globe, whilst so free from control and from the domination of officialism.<sup>59</sup>

And again: “There is the basis of a great principle underlying this ... There is the vital principle of each self-governing part of the Empire maintaining its perfect independence”.<sup>60</sup> That is the ultimate ideal of our development in Mr. Reid’s eyes. We are not an Empire except subject to conditions which leave us and our fellow Colonies as constitutionally independent of the Mother Country and of each other as the United States, Mexico and Venezuela. We should act together voluntarily as they would under the Monroe doctrine, but only in obedience to our racial and national feelings of loyalty. These, strangely enough, are supposed to be endangered if we are provided with any means for giving effect to them by prior consultation, for prompt co-operation in crises of national urgency. We must remain content with those that can be improvised during an opening attack if it can be sustained long enough to admit of an extemporised organisation in face of the foe.

In economics also, Mr. Reid conceives that Australia must let alone and be let alone perpetually. Although blood relations and partners in the Empire we must remain separate units in all our business dealings, continuing on exactly the same footing with our own kindred within and the foreigner without our gates. He admits that

the gigantic (trade) deal by the Americans with the people of England is one of the greatest securities for the preservation of the grandest link the Anglo-Saxon race has ever seen. I suppose no candid man will say that the friendship of the United States is not of more importance to Great Britain than is the enmity of all the rest of the world put together.<sup>61</sup>

But apparently the mutual friendship of the Mother Country and the outlying members of the Empire towards each other counts, and must always count, for nothing. We are not to be offended if the great Republic protects herself and her industries, but we are to be fearful of offending her by following the same course. Congress could have no cause of complaint if we did, but our Prime Minister replies feebly enough: “In the management of that complicated marvel, the British Empire, the British Government have anxieties enough and dangers enough ahead of them without cutting into the financial susceptibilities of the great American people”.<sup>62</sup> The “complicated marvel” is to remain weak and disunited in the hope of avoiding ill-will

abroad, instead of building itself up by union into its full strength and stature. Then, and only then, would the Empire become capable of acting freely on its own behalf in matters of commerce and production, as all other first-class Powers have done and are doing. No one expects them to stand still for the sake of British interests, industries, or “financial susceptibilities”. Why should we for theirs? Besides dangers abroad, if we develop ourselves there are, according to our Prime Minister, more dangers at home to be feared should we make any such endeavour:

Business arrangements between close relations do not always present the best method of preserving the peace and harmony of family life ... when difficulties and quarrels do arise they seem to be far more bitter and obstinate than those which occur between others who are not so closely related ... One of the considerations that makes me shrink from entering into close relations of a business character with the Motherland rests upon the fact that without such relations we have been able to develop to its highest pitch that sentiment of loyalty which is the true bond of union between self-governing peoples.<sup>63</sup>

Yet probably even Mr. Reid would scout a resolution proposed by any too zealous disciple rejoicing over the decline of British imports to Sydney and exulting in the increase of foreign imports to the same centre on the ground that this gain abroad and loss at home would tend to heighten our patriotism to the Mother Country, while sowing seeds of discord between us and her successful rivals for our custom. In the same connection the negative note is consistently sounded whenever he declares for sentiment, and in effect for sentiment only, as the bond of union between us. He echoes the Free Importers’ disdain at home of all proposals for multiplying exchange and production within the Empire as the “sordid” ambition of a nation of shopkeepers. Apparently like a *parvenu* the Empire is now to feel ashamed of the business upon which its greatness and prosperity have been built. In a reasonable mood he summed up his case when he alleged: “In the first place the project is one of the most difficult enterprises that has ever engaged the attention of statesmen; and in the second it is a matter of grave doubt whether the policy would be beneficial if adopted”.<sup>64</sup> The first is not disputed, and the second he failed to prove although he descended to appeals to the protected manufacturers. “The little plant which is just struggling out of the ground should not be trampled upon by the Protectionist.”<sup>65</sup> “I quite enter into the opposite views of my honourable friends, and I am not reproaching them. I might have cause to do so if they sacrificed the young industries which have been brought into existence by their policy.”<sup>66</sup> Reproaches from Mr. Reid who in the same speech said, “I would point out that there is a broad distinction to be drawn between a voluntary preference granted by a loyal self-governing State to the profit of Great Britain and a business bargain”.<sup>67</sup> He scorns to sacrifice

our industries if we get any return to our producers for so doing, but is perfectly prepared to sacrifice them himself when assured that we shall get no compensation in a business way. "I believe in a revenue Tariff, and if we had such a Tariff at present the Mother Country would have no grievance against us."<sup>68</sup> That is to say, providing neither the Mother Country nor our own labour receives any protection in our own markets against the foreigner who carefully protects his markets against us both, we ought to be perfectly content. Again: "If this concession is to be made upon the basis of a Protectionist Tariff I am prepared that it shall be substantial, and that we shall, as nearly as possible, apply revenue duties only to the products of the Mother Country."<sup>69</sup> This is the same logician who a few moments before levelled his reproaches at any Protectionist who sacrificed any local duties on patriotic grounds, and who went on to dwell upon the conflict between the interests of our factories and those of our farmers. "I do not wish for a moment to underrate what might be the substantial advantage to the Australian producers of some such arrangement with the Mother Country. But ... the choice must be made between the manufacturers in the towns and the producers in the country."<sup>70</sup> It is on this choice that the Prime Minister took his last stand reproaching the Protectionists and seeking to rouse employers and employed against Preferential Trade because it might injure them while helping the growth of our pastoral and agricultural resources. This was neither a dignified nor a weighty plea, except against his own proposals for a voluntary sacrifice. The conflict need never arise if existing industries are fairly dealt with by the retention of necessary duties, seeing that, as Mr. Watson contended, that will still leave a large margin of manufactures in which we do not and cannot compete or which are now upon the free list and passing into the hands of the foreigner. But British readers will learn with some surprise the real dangers of Mr. Chamberlain's proposals which force the Prime Minister of Australia to reject them despite the advantages they admittedly offer to Australian producers. The electors here are to be asked to refuse these prospects of gain for themselves out of compassion for the Mother Country, whose people, presumably from this appeal, are neither endowed with sufficient intelligence to understand their own interests nor with any powers of self-government enabling them to give effect to their will. "Let us remember that whilst a young country like this, which has illimitable resources, a scattered population and comparative prosperity, can afford to make mistakes, and to try experiments, still to the crowded millions of the United Kingdom—42,000,000 crowded within 120,000 square miles—a mistake means much more. The margin between comfort and want in England is not so great as it is here."<sup>71</sup> Speaking to a Protectionist country of the one free-importing people of the civilised world, even when allowance is made for all differences in area and population, this is a somewhat surprising contention. It repeats in another form Sir [Henry Campbell-Bannerman's](#) plea for the 12,000,000 or more British poor whom his ideal policy leaves upon the verge of starvation. Mr. Reid called special attention

to the English Labour party's manifesto, to which Mr. Watson properly replied that he believed British workmen as competent to decide for themselves as ours are, whether or not a scheme which can only be adopted by the consent of both countries can be made profitable to both. He listens to the "wail of British industries" shut out of our markets without remembering that they have less cause to wail because of customs duties here than in any self-governing Colony except South Africa, and very much less than in the ports of their great competitors. Every time he looks at the country in which Cobden lived, and over which his doctrines reign, he is overcome with grim apprehensions. "When we think of the enormous pressure of human want upon that small speck of earth, as compared with the vast territory of these young nations, cannot we feel an emotion of sympathy with the anxieties of these crowded millions, whose struggles for subsistence and for decency in their homes is already bitter enough?" Of course he is happy to think that "it is not half so bad as it was ... under an artificial policy", but it is still so bad that he recoils from the prospect.<sup>72</sup> This is the climax of his case, the over-mastering motive of his policy, the peril which he sees no means of remedying or of preventing the extension. His followers wisely shrank from endorsing this line of argument except with many qualifications, but for all that abounded in awkward confessions. The ablest among them, Mr. Glynn, safeguarded his philosophic oration by *serious admissions*. "The principle approved in the Colonies, so far as it has been affirmed in Australia by any great body of people—and the same may be said for the other places in which the question of Preference has been discussed—is to impose greater taxation against the foreigner, but not to lower the existing taxation in favour of Great Britain."<sup>73</sup> He grants that

about 28 per cent. of the imports of raw material, food and drink—non-alcoholic—of the United Kingdom comes from British possessions, so that over 70 per cent. comes from outside the Empire. Seventy-seven per cent. of her wheat is imported from foreign countries, and so is about four-fifths of her dairy produce. As regards raw materials, £40,500,000 out of a little over £41,000,000 is imported from outside the Empire.<sup>74</sup>

Then he puts the other side of the picture, that in Australia. "In 1883 all European trade was done with the United Kingdom. In the decade ending in 1891 the increase of trade with the United Kingdom was 27 per cent., and with foreign countries 120 per cent. In the decade ending in 1901 the increase with the United Kingdom was about 5 per cent., and with foreign countries about 74 per cent."<sup>75</sup> These passages read together establish to most of us the necessity for Preferential Trade; but Mr. Glynn, a free importer of the *à priori* school, calmly concludes that in Australia "we have a growing trade with foreign countries, and a profitable one, and it should not be imperilled". Naturally he is opposed to Mr. Chamberlain's political ideal of a

consolidated Empire. “I personally object”, said Mr. Glynn, “as a true Imperialist, to both the means and the end.” “Our loyalty” is to “the system of independent organic growth of free communities united only by a common allegiance and an Imperial reserve of power, to be used at the request of those interested”, which if it can be termed Imperial at all is simply the Imperial Nihilism of Mr. Reid. With perfect frankness Mr. Glynn declared, “I believe that political consolidation is unnecessary, dangerous, and inimical to the cohesion of the Empire”.<sup>76</sup> That is to say, to the only cohesion the negativists allow, though they do nothing to foster it themselves, a cohesion of sentiment—always conceived by them as so brittle that it will break the instant it is handled, no matter with how much deftness or caution. Out of the seven representatives of South Australia the only two Free Importers spoke, Mr. Kingston being absent owing to illness, and his colleagues silent. Mr. Poynton, a Labour member, well primed with quotations and statistics, is clear that the movement aims at Imperial Federation, and is as “Earl Rosebery described it, a gilded pill designed to throw on the British dependencies the burden of Empire”.<sup>77</sup> It is to be hoped that the noble lord admires the imagery credited to him. We are asked, according to Mr. Poynton, “to give up to a certain extent the local autonomy which we enjoy ... to be trammelled to such an extent that we shall not be able to take action in regard to fiscal matters without consulting all other parts of the Empire”.<sup>78</sup>

Australia, so far as Mr. Lonsdale, M.P., could see, had nothing to give,<sup>79</sup> and Mr. Poynton was confident we would get much less than either Canada or New Zealand in exchange. The astonishing thing is that their constituents appear to desire the bargain. The only Senator to discuss the question was Mr. Pulsford of New South Wales, who by means of a motion of his own<sup>80</sup> pleaded in the cause of India, Japan, Egypt, United States, for “a full Free Trade policy” and nothing less. “I want Free Trade; I want British merchants, and all merchants to have access to our markets.”<sup>81</sup> “Senator Trenwith has just interjected that we shall consume more in proportion of foreign goods each year, and I have no doubt that will prove to be the case.”<sup>82</sup> His motion was seconded by Senator Pearce, a member of the Labour Party, but was not debated.<sup>83</sup> The gospel of *laissez faire* having been fully expounded in both Chambers, there was nothing more to be said by those who believe in it. Mr. Reid had completely exhausted all its phases, some of which deserve to be noted, though not replied to.

According to the Prime Minister and his disciples, Preferential Trade is condemned (1) because it makes for the consolidation of the Empire, and interferes with the perfect independence of its parts; (2) because, being blood relations as well as fellow subjects, we cannot bargain for mutually advantageous trade concessions, as their adjustment would breed ill-will and encourage secession; (3) because Australia has

too little to offer, and would suffer foreign reprisals for offering it; while (4) Great Britain would be deeply injured by any fiscal reform either in her own or in our favour, her present system of customs duties being apparently deemed perfect. The condition of her people, though that is painfully critical and depressing, is quite beyond improvement by any act of their own or of ours. Besides (5) we should offend our rivals by developing the resources of our own Empire instead of theirs. It is true that they have already penalised us to the full extent they thought possible in their own interests, but we must trust to their gratitude to us for not emulating their example in order to induce them not to penalise us more. Finally (6), the Labour members adjured their colleagues not to forget that Mr. Chamberlain was the author of this scheme, and Mr. Reid found himself able to echo them in a less personal way when he said: "Behind this great policy, which aims at high Imperial results, we see the privileged, powerful classes of England, we see the great landed interests of the Mother Country, the great manufacturing interests, the great financial interests of the City of London, massive powers which represent everything but the people, crouching behind Mr. Chamberlain. Is that in the interests of the Colonies? No".<sup>84</sup> And why not? Can the interests of the people of Great Britain be severed from those of her landowners, manufacturers, merchants, and financiers? Are they necessarily antagonistic? If so, how does Mr. Reid explain his own attitude to the landowners, manufacturers, merchants, and financiers of this country? These are the very classes on whom he relies for his existence now and all his prospects in the future. He quotes the Labour Party of England while he is denouncing the Labour Party of Australia. He terms them a privileged class here, while joining hands with them there against those who are his allies in the Commonwealth. He is thus his own antipodes. Nor is this a solitary self-contradiction. "I am thoroughly in favour of Mr. Balfour's idea of a Conference, and of the representatives going to that Conference with a perfectly open mind." But seeing that Australia has made up its mind, why should it send home those whose minds are a blank? They would not represent her or any one but the negationists. Again, the climax of his speech was reached when he painted the hopeless condition of the masses in Free Importing Britain, and sternly refused to increase their privations by assisting anything in the shape of Fiscal Reform. The anti-climax followed close after. "If the British people are in favour of Preference my great objection to it will cease."<sup>85</sup> How can it cease if he really credits his own prophecies? Of course if the Mother Country and Australia accept the proposals no Prime Minister dare interpose. It would seem, therefore, that, notwithstanding his alarms, Mr. Reid may yet consent to assist in cultivating the trade of the Empire, and probably after that in consolidating the Empire itself.

## GREATER BRITAIN

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### AUSTRALIAN PARTIES AND PROSPECTS

(BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT IN AUSTRALIA)

Australian politics must always remain a mystery to an English reader who neglects to remind himself that in this country, though the same terms are properly applied to our public institutions and procedures as to his own, they signify different things, or else the same things acclimatised under very different conditions. Sometimes when he may seem to see our situation as clearly as if in a looking-glass, none the less the actual situation may be exactly reversed to his eyes. No one need be surprised at this who considers the transformation of old-world growths due to our youth, remoteness and the vast area over which our small numbers are distributed in communities far removed from each other. For these reasons among others our politics are necessarily immature. After half a century of experiment they continue in a condition of flux, having evolved and still continuing to evolve under the pressure of rapidly changing circumstances, including rhythmic waves of remarkable prosperity. In some States a greater measure of consistency and stability is being acquired either in or by means of the Labour organisations, which possess a special rigidity and rigorous rule, but in all of them the variability of boyhood is still exhibited; we still enjoy its hopefulness, ardours, sudden changes and eagerly fluctuating moods. Our “parties” and their “platforms”, with the exception just noted, are often spontaneous and usually short-lived growths, whose outlines are obscure and relationships uncertain. Local emergencies bring them into being, and with the disappearance or supersession of these they tend to dissolve, unless under the influence of new factors they melt into conglomerates and assume fresh forms. They may, notwithstanding these mutations, persist in retaining the same names, or be reconstituted under their old leaders, or they may merely be re-baptized to slough a sickly reputation that threatens to become a handicap. They are always fluid. Parties in Great Britain have changed and are changing, but with nothing like the frequency or the swiftness that are common in each of our States. How then shall the British seeker after knowledge trace their permutations in each of our seven separate very mobile Legislatures?

Any one of them might be taken as typical. For instance, South Australia affords an illustration of a State that is settling down to business, yet in spite of a comparative Ministerial steadiness in recent years, from a party point of view its history must present innumerable puzzles to a distant observer. The coming general election three months hence threatens more confusion. It seems a far cry now to the days of Sir **William Morgan**, when no one in Adelaide had heard of a Labour League, and when a Free Trade Tariff was adopted unquestioningly; yet they are within the easy memory of active politicians and journalists. Not that Ministries were as permanent then as they have been lately. Sir **Henry Ayers** was a member of six separate administrations in little more than two years, then of two more, all eight of them in the sixties, and of another three in the early seventies. A record of this kind tells its own tale of the conditions that made it possible.

Perhaps Sir William Morgan's *régime* may be held to mark the close of our primitive era. The Protectionist period which succeeded it began in an innocent fashion in the early eighties, and under the dominating influence of Mr. **Kingston** carried high its decidedly Radical colours. But possibly the chameleonlike variations since can be best illustrated by a personal example.

Taking the present Premier, Mr. **Jenkins**, as a typical product of our politics, we find him first ushered into a Cabinet in which Mr. **Playford** and Mr. Kingston commenced their long partnership. He sat with them again for five years, maintained in office by a close alliance with the Labour party and associated with its extreme measures. He then passed to the second place in the **Holder** Ministry, having as a colleague a leading Labour member. When his chief transferred his services to Federal politics Mr. Jenkins became head of a Cabinet consisting with one exception of old colleagues. The Opposition, headed by Mr. **John Darling**, Junior, represented the Conservative element against which he had been fighting during his whole political life. During the last three years Mr. Jenkins has seen his old allies of the Labour party take their seats in direct opposition to him, and has reconstituted his Administration so as to concede his former enemies equal authority in the Ministry. When he retires from active local politics in a few weeks his Government will probably have the late leader of the Opposition as its new chief, or if not as its staunchest upholder. What Premier since **Peel** can match this achievement? Political circumnavigations so complete as his may not be entirely unknown outside Australia, but are rarer and less suggestive of the kaleidoscope. Mr. Jenkins' memoirs if frankly written would prove *inter alia* how faint and ephemeral are the party lines that separate our contending factions—or fractions as perhaps they could be most aptly described.

What happens in South Australia happens in all the States where distinguished careers crowded with divagations have never been uncommon. Occasionally a Ministry has recruited or reformed periodically within itself, like one of those lower forms of life which multiply by fissure, or whose severed parts possess the gift of severally completing themselves as independent units. Whether molluscous politicians have made molluscous policies and parties, or *vice versa*, speaking comprehensively the laws of transformation or transmigration have applied almost universally throughout Australia. Leaders, watchwords, and organisations have all been transient. We have known little permanence except in semblance, even when as in Queensland six different Premiers with dozens of different colleagues posed as a “continuous Cabinet” for thirteen years. The fact is that with us electoral battles were and are waged chiefly as between the “ins” and the “outs”, whose programmes are competitively re-adjusted at each election, or oftener if necessary. Their helmsmen are always keen to catch a capful of wind by this or any similar device that will enable them to draw ahead of their rivals. Yet it would be an exaggeration to proclaim that we are politically constant in nothing except inconstancy, because after all as a rule there can be little flagrant sacrifice of principle when opponents differ mainly about shibboleths and battle-cries. Our irregular groups have blended or separated in order to keep step with public opinion, superseding or recalling their chief or their programmes for the same purpose. They served their country as well as themselves by their flexibility. Official records put the results into figures in a very graphic way. How many Britons at home are aware that the Crown changed its advisers in the States of Australia prior to Federation a hundred and fifty times, and in the Commonwealth four times during the last four years? Our “parties”, collected for the moment and dispersed when their end is gained, or more commonly when the situation has altered, bear about the same relation to the great and well-generalised political organisations of the Mother Country, of the United States, or Canada, as voluntary levies of fickle Highland clans or capricious Boer commandoes would to regular armies taking the field in orderly unity at the word of command.

For this absence of discipline there is one cause which may be deemed a compensation. Nowhere in the Empire or out of it has a political party less to promise to its supporters in the way of patronage; nowhere is so little money spent upon politics as in Australia. Protection appeals to the industries affected but in an effective way even to them only when a revision of the Tariff is at hand. Labour legislation, or the promise of it, has aroused wild hopes of betterment among the wage-earners that are steadily declining as their value is being tested in New Zealand or here. Any administration has but a few gifts, and those jealously scrutinised both by friends and foes, which it is able to confer upon its own members or their supporters, and these are available only at considerable intervals. Our public services are governed by acts

excluding political influence. Interested districts strive against each other to obtain railways or road grants but it is seldom that any private corporation has a motive for attempting to “lobby”; and whether it does intrigue or not the rare concessions made are always closely watched and severely challenged on suspicion. Without any lively sense of favours to come to stimulate their zeal, only small percentages of our electors are dragged to the poll, at small expense and without anything deserving the name of bribery. Our legislators have clean hands; they have no “bosses” or party managers of weight to capture, and are thus compelled to rely chiefly upon public motives when they go to the country. In New South Wales the “roads and bridges member”, returned because of his assiduity in haunting the departments which undertake these works, is dying out. Elsewhere he is dead already, though there will always be some who attempt the *rôle*. Our politics, if not strictly speaking dull, are as devoid of personal pecuniary interest as those of any part of the Empire.

These facts, indicating the degree of efficiency of our State “parties”, after half a century’s experience of constitutional government within relatively minor areas, it may be guessed how much less organised and less effective Federal “parties” are when their operations are sought to be extended over the whole continent and Tasmania. The maps, which show Europe excluding Russia projected upon a chart of Australia, and lying comfortably within its coast-line, are not impressive enough in this regard, because they suggest a density of population and ease of communication, neither of which exist here in any State or any part of a State save at their capitals. In every one of them except Tasmania, and perhaps Victoria, elections are very laborious and representation unsatisfactory, because of the huge size of the electorates and the long journeys which separate their little country centres from each other and from the metropolis. The population is so small and scattered in the three largest States that a thorough canvass of some of the constituencies implies months of constant travelling and incessant speaking. Community of political action over these areas is impossible except to the Labour party, which plants its tiny committees in every hamlet. In New South Wales and Victoria town and country are often opposed, while in Queensland there are three separate geographical zones of interest, north, central and south. The obstruction to political education and co-operation offered by the mere size of the districts in all the mainland States except Victoria, is always underestimated abroad. If the Northern Territory were in Java, it would be little more foreign to South Australia proper than it is to-day. Its only real link with the rest of the State is the telegraph. Perth is divided from Adelaide, its nearest neighbour, by the Great Australian Bight, and from its huge cattle-runs in the north-west by steamer voyages of two or three weeks’ duration.

Again, it has been no easy task to maintain party ties in the States, taken singly, partly because their constituencies were so various in character and interests. The strain upon the allegiance of Federal representatives to their fellows is, of course, proportionately increased. Only by taking advantage of what local organisations there are has it been possible to conduct Federal elections at all. Owing to the fact that almost every candidate for the Commonwealth had served his apprenticeship in the State Legislature, and was known beforehand to his constituents, those returned in 1901 were qualified by experience and enabled to act together. The laxity of the Parliamentary support given to the **Barton** Government, far from justifying the surprise expressed in our own Press, was a perfectly natural consequence of this state of affairs. That any Ministry could hold such a House together, or transact business at all, is amazing when these primary conditions are fairly taken into account. Nowhere, except in an Anglo-Saxon community, could the enormous responsibilities attaching to the self-government of an immense island continent have been so readily accepted and so practically discharged. No doubt quality of legislation and administration suffered, but the marvel is that both were not impaired much more.

The herculean task of organising Federation, undertaken without apprehension and discharged with expedition, during our first three years was unavoidably accompanied by a good deal of friction with the State politicians, though never enough to burst into a flame. That friction caused by the diminution of their importance still exists, and is certain to be prolonged indefinitely. It provokes a great deal of bluster, especially from the advertising type of Premier. There is not yet any "State rights" party worthy of the name, but there is a strong sentiment in respect to them lying to hand for local use as opportunities offer. These must occur frequently during the next six years, or until such time as permanent arrangements are made between the central and local Legislatures for distributing their financial obligations and Customs revenue. The Conference of Premiers now sitting in Hobart is much exercised by reflections upon these problems. No "Commonwealth rights" party exists as yet to counter-balance State jealousies, but the materials are not wanting. The Labour members have from the first been inclined to favour a strong view of the supremacy of the Federal Parliament, since they have seen a hope of dominating Australian legislation by its means.

In the meantime Federal politics remain molluscous. Our two fiscal parties are each subdivided into Conservative and Radical wings. The former are prepared to modify or even to sink their special policies, rather than permit the adoption of the Labour programme. The Radicals, who are mainly Protectionists, have no such rooted repugnance to its extreme proposals, but look upon their adoption as a question

of time and terms. Yet another group might be distinguished between these wings, consisting of Liberals, who vote either with the Anti-Labour, the Radical, or the Labour members, according to the merits in their eyes of the particular issue at stake. But these are simply a shade more opportunist than their fellows, rather than a distinct body. Taking into account the infancy of the Commonwealth, and the sparsely peopled regions of vast extent for which it is answerable, which have proved to be politically unwieldy even in the States, these Federal divisions and cross-divisions among our representatives are in no way extraordinary. The weakness of parties and confusion of policies from which we suffer are natural results. Here is a huge section of the earth's crust, set apart amidst broad oceans, save to the North, where a great chain of great islands and small archipelagoes connects it through the tropics with south-eastern Asia. Its coasts, practically unpeopled for thousands of miles, are, for some other thousands, intermittently and partially settled. That is in the east, south-east, and west, where what population we have is coagulated, mainly in a few cities and some of the fertile districts near them. The interior is penetrated only where rivers run, or where rich mineral fields have tempted daring man to build cities among the sands. Its untrodden expanses probably enshrine treasures untold, but in the main are as yet barely explored. Great as are our achievements in colonisation nearly half the continent continues unknown, and by far the larger part unused. Heat and uncertainty of water supply are the two great barriers to a permanent white conquest of most of the unoccupied tract, but there are thousands of square miles within it which in Asia would be sustaining millions of another breed. All of it, peopled or unpeopled, is under self-government, under Federal and State Governments, framed in the last fifty years.

How, then, are those in England, "who only England know", to catch the true tone of thought of their kinsmen living amid surroundings so absolutely foreign to those which obtain in the United Kingdom? It is not in the least surprising that we detect in the speeches of their best-informed public men, and in the writings of their leading journalists, just the same slips, betraying unconscious misconceptions, which awaken amusement when foreign newspapers undertake to explain British social or political incidents to French or German readers. We are not foreigners, we are of the same stock, and, in some sense, more English than the English; but we are geographically far distant, and are growing under the practical education of physical and political circumstances entirely foreign to those affecting our kinsmen who have stayed in the home of our fathers.

To begin with our new Constitution, intelligible to a citizen of the United States or Canada, while preserving the same constitutional law and practice as the Mother Country, is insensibly transforming these, according to Federal principles wholly inapplicable at Westminster, and as yet little appreciated even there. As a consequence every problem, instead of having one face as is customary in Great Britain, or at

most four facets when on rare occasions Scotland, Ireland, and Wales are severally affected, has always and in every case seven facets in Australia. These separate facets are presented by the Commonwealth and its six States, each living under climatic, productive, and industrial conditions differing far more from those of its sisters than did those of the component parts of your ancient heptarchy. These fundamental contrasts, never to be lost from sight, rarely seem to have come within it when some critics at home take us in hand. We are measured by the standards that apply between Land's End to John o' Groats, so that provinces larger than European kingdoms are judged as if they were counties like Bucks or Wilts, or, what is worse, their aims and interests are weighed in balances bought in the City Road and suitable only for shopkeeping. Many features of Australia are frankly confessed to be unknown, and as to these we are safe. It is in the matters in which we are supposed to be understood, or which are interpreted without hesitation according to the assumptions of a merely insular experience, that we find ourselves most gravely and most persistently misconceived. All things considered it would be a wonder if we were not, even at the moment when we are dwelling persistently on the most striking of the many antitheses which distinguish the new world from the old within the Empire.

The history of Australia up till now has been composed of the stories of the separate States and those alone. It will always continue to include them, but they have been dispossessed of the foreground of the picture, and must be content for the future to form its background, comforted by the reflection that without perpetual reference to them an observer will be liable to be much misled. The Commonwealth, a creation of yesterday, consists actually as well as constitutionally of an union of the States. It has an independent authority of its own that can make it the controlling authority in course of time, but at this stage it acts in many instances rather for the States taken together, than for itself; not, be it clearly understood, for the State legislatures or executives, but for their peoples. The Senators and Representatives of Australia are all chosen directly by their voters in the States; study them alone and respect State members in proportion only to their influence upon Federal electorates, and not for any official status apart from it. We are obliged to look over the heads of the elected to the electors themselves, who return both Federal and State Representatives in order to gather the public opinion of the Commonwealth upon Commonwealth affairs. This is considerably harder to discover, because State affairs keep the first place, while Federal questions have to be examined through clouds of fluctuating provincial policies, and the conflicts of rival parties in rival States. Hence the danger of generalisations and the obligation of picking local politics to pieces in order to discover the trend of feeling upon Federal matters. This implies a tedious preamble; but since Australian opinion is scarcely half formed, it requires to be chased through the labyrinths of its various legislatures if anything like a sound estimate of its tendencies is to be sought.

We can scarcely blame far-away critics for failing to comprehend us when we commence by confessing that we do not yet know ourselves. At all events the chorus of comments that arise from every quarter uttered by professed experts is as diverse and discordant as that of any other country in which the Press is perfectly free and consistently partisan. Few of our journals appear to be able to read their own States even when most assiduous in following every indication of popular sympathy. None of them count beyond their own borders. Those which have asserted their leadership within them have often come to grief in recent years. Their direct sway seems to be diminishing, but within their range their influence is potent. As there is only the germ of a national self-consciousness there is only the germ of a national Press. There is no more than a germ of national power. The centrifugal forces operating from the States upon the Commonwealth as such, and the centrifugal forces operating from it upon them, have been roughly balanced up to date, but those most capable of judging agree that this cannot be long maintained. The seventh system of Government established by an Act of the Imperial Parliament under the sign manual of the greatest Queen of modern times confers upon it a supremacy greater than that of the United States Congress, and not far short of that possessed by the Canadian Dominion over its provinces. That this has not yet been fully acquired or exercised is natural when its age is remembered; but that it should fail to be recognised generally is a somewhat perplexing phenomenon to on-lookers not familiar with the narrow spheres of knowledge and influence of those who set up to be our guides.

One chief reason for this is that the Commonwealth Parliament has been waterlogged from its very birth owing to the weakness of parties, the lack of organisation, and the vagueness of policies to which attention is here drawn. The existence of three parties in the first Parliament, of whom the two principal were nearly equal, placed the balance of power in the hands of Mr. [Watson](#) and his third party, except upon one or two issues, in which Sir Edmund Barton defeated them and Mr. [Reid](#) together by the assistance of some Opposition votes. In the present Parliament the three parties possess an equality of strength; that, from the first, according to Mr. [Deakin](#), made a junction between two of them essential if the business of the country were to be carried on. A Protectionist and then a Labour Cabinet attempted in vain to stand alone. When the Opposition, led by Mr. Reid, whose attitude was principally one of negation, agreed to a coalition with the Protectionists, it was at the expense of half their strength. The present Government, with Mr. Reid as Premier, accepted the task of closing a Session which bade fair to last out the year, and succeeded in holding their own by a majority of two in a House of seventy-five members. They are using the recess to frame a policy that will either commend them to the House when it meets next June, or to the country, to which it is anticipated they will be able to claim an appeal, should the representatives refuse it. It may be assumed that this

Parliament, nominally divided between Ministerialists and Oppositionists in almost equal numbers, but really still divided on many points into three parties of almost equal numbers, will not be any better fitted than its predecessor to assert its pre-eminence in the public affairs of Australia. The further assumption that the present situation will not be seriously altered by a general election, if that should take place this year, is quite tenable. In that case a new but equally divided popular Chamber would leave the Federal authority in much the same feeble position that it occupies to-day. The true character of the constitution would remain concealed, and the relative importance of the States remain to the same extent undiminished. It would continue waterlogged.

Quite recently there was a chance of its getting under way. The Labour party is in opposition, and Mr. Reid in power, because of his resistance to their demands. Yet he passed the Arbitration Act, with an amendment believed to concede them a good deal that had been refused to Mr. Watson when he was in power. Mr. Reid snatched the Act out of the fire by the help of three South Australians, who were not his followers, for it was drafted by Mr. Kingston, and passed by the vote of Sir **Langdon Bonython** in the House of Representatives, and of Senator Playford in the Senate, upon whose favour the fate of the measure depended on several critical occasions. The Prime Minister thus sacrificed his own antagonism to its principles, and secured their passage into law by the help of his antagonists. In so doing, as he very well knew, he parted with the one measure upon which he might have forced a double dissolution. This would have brought the Labour party to bay, and in all probability have wrenched a definite verdict from the country upon their platform. We may yet find that the function of his administration began and ended then and there.

At present Mr. Reid and his colleagues are compelled to engage in the pursuit of a policy which will retain what Protectionist support they have, and yet be appetising enough to retain their free importing majority in the country. The outlook at present is anything but hopeful for them. They are searching diligently, at the Hobart Conference of the State Ministries that has just assembled, for crumbs of comfort, and are eagerly adopting as their own part of the programme, which Mr. **McLean** and his half of the members of the Cabinet accepted at the last election. Sir **George Turner** and Mr. **Drake** were then committed as Ministers to the Deakin programme for consolidating the State debts and encouraging immigration. Mr. Reid will readily do his best to give effect to both, seeing that even Labour members may be expected to cast a friendly eye upon practical proposals in these matters. The insuperable obstacle to his success is due to his omission of Preferential Trade, the fighting plank in his colleagues' platform, and to the possibility that another fighting plank may be added when the next appeal to the people arrives, in the shape of a demand for

further Protective duties. The existing coalition is founded upon the maintenance of fiscal peace. Both Ministers and their supporters must be divided into two hostile camps directly fiscal war breaks out. There are too many people outside, and members inside, the House interested in bringing about a renewal of strife, to make it possible that the Prime Minister can stave off hostilities indefinitely, no matter how adroitly he manoeuvres. The fact that the Commonwealth is waterlogged is in itself a temptation to mutiny, and perhaps engenders disloyal designs, among some of its friends and all its foes, to keep it crippled until they can seize the helm.

His enemies, of course, blame Mr. Reid for his share in prolonging the present situation, but in reality he has had no choice. For three and a half years he spared no exertion to commend his negationism to the country. He was a great deal absent from the House to which he belonged, but was not a loser himself on that account. Most dexterous of opportunists his leadership of an Opposition gives Ministers neither pause nor rest, but at the same time costs him the warmth of those supporters who object to being called upon to vote against a Government at any moment and on any subject without regard to their pledges. He did better for his party and for himself by visiting every State, made many triumphal tours through Victoria for the advocacy of free imports, and allied himself with every section, clique or coterie that found itself from time to time at odds with the Government of the day. These great and prolonged labours were of no avail. His gains at the polls in December 1903 were small, and he only won the much-coveted prize of the Prime Ministership a few months later by agreeing to suspend the whole of his own programme, retaining only that small part of it which was common to the Protectionists and to himself. He has been censured for not strengthening his hold upon them by meeting their wishes in respect to the establishment of Preferential trade relations with the Mother Country. It is forgotten, and even he might have wished forgotten, that emphatic attack upon Mr. Chamberlain's proposals which he sent to England for publication before the coalition was formed; but when Mr. Isaacs and Sir William Lyne, accompanied by nearly half the Protectionists, declined to be associated with his Government on any terms, they left him with his majority of two votes absolutely at the mercy of the free-importing extremists, who have always constituted his immediate bodyguard. With all the Protectionists behind him he could have dispensed with his ultras, for the time at all events, and have lived out the current Parliament by granting alterations in the tariff for the benefit of Great Britain; but he never had any choice. There are three or four at least among his followers who, if he had heralded such a *détour*, would have left him at once. He would have been defeated, and after severing his party in this manner would have had little hope in any venturesome dissolution. He has little hope now, but at least when the hour comes will be able to rally to his standard those who have stood with him in New South Wales for the last ten years or more.

Besides, the Protectionists would have ill-brooked Mr. Reid's headship of their cause; and in States like South Australia, where the Labour members are always reckoned among them, he could not hope for a foothold. It is unfair to blame him for not taking a line which must have led him to disaster; the same disaster that awaits him still, but for which he is far better equipped while he confines himself to negatives without turning his back upon his life-long opinions. As it is he is taken to task by some of his old associates, and has to face the sulky silence or reluctant apologies of the free-importing journals who called upon him to play a much more heroic rôle. Last Session he agreed to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the Commonwealth Tariff, because it is alleged to have destroyed a number of industries in Victoria and other States, by lowering the local duties under which they had been flourishing until then. He also agreed to allow any four of the eight Commissioners to send in progress reports, and thus pave the way for the probable consideration of some of the complainants' cases next Session. He finally consented to consult the leader of the Opposition as to the *personnel* of the Commission, and to make Sir John Quick, a Victorian Protectionist, its President. These concessions were necessary to carry him into recess, but they must imperil his Ministry by providing an easy means of raising the fiscal issue in its most uncompromising shape before the year ends. Any progress report presented is sure to be made in order to recommend an increase of duty for the sake of reviving an afflicted industry. Mr. Reid's Protectionist colleagues, like the rest of their party, went to the country pledged to fiscal peace. Unless the increases are too small or too simple to imply a breach of this undertaking, they will provoke a crisis directly they are discussed. No matter how infinitesimal they might be there are members whose passion for free imports would lead them to treat an advance of a half per cent. upon foreign goods alone as equivalent to laying sacrilegious hands upon the ark of the covenant. An increase upon all goods of a certain class, British or foreign, no matter how trifling in itself, would be very distasteful to the Preferential traders in Parliament if it came unaccompanied by any advantages to British manufactures. All the elements of an explosion are therefore close at hand, and looking forward it is hard to divine how Mr. Reid can avoid it or prevent the wrecking of his Cabinet in consequence. Here again he is not open to condemnation from the zealots of his faith, because, as before, he had no choice. He was obliged to leave office or grant a Commission of the character and constitution of that which is just beginning its researches. He is not personally answerable for this, or for anything he has done, except in so far as he is responsible for taking the Prime Ministership. He accepted office, coupled with the conditions which are being, and will be, enforced by vigilant and remorseless antagonists. They are all but a match for him, even while he retains some Protectionists during their recoil from the excesses of the Labour party, though they can be content only for a time to fall back upon his

negative policy, sweetened by the adoption of part of their practical programme. The fact that stands out menacing his future, despite all tactics, is that directly Sir John Quick asks for a further instalment of Protection at Mr. Reid's hands, the life of his Ministry is not worth the price of a pin.

Tentatively assessing the political future, one is thrown back upon the three "parties" who, either in combination or apart, will face the electors at no distant date, and upon the six States in which their constituencies lie. Not that the Federal situation itself is unprecedented. On the contrary, Commonwealth politics just now exhibit in a very vivid fashion the general characteristics of Australian public life. Its Ministerial majority is formed by a coalition of opponents who may be resolved into their original separateness at any instant. The Opposition is composed of an alliance that has not yet received the official sanction of all the Labour Leagues, and may be terminated without notice on either side. The Ministerial policy, if embodied in a catechism, would consist mainly of "Nos" to nearly every question. Its only positive aims are non-partisan, and might be adopted by its rivals. It could not be more colourless than it is without ceasing to be. There is no organisation behind the Government, and no funds for a coalition campaign. Taking its halves apart, that under Mr. Reid controls the Free Trade Press and committees of the States for what they are worth; while that under Mr. McLean has the assistance of some of the Protectionist Associations, which are still less authoritative, and a part of their Press. Any funds possessed by either half are insignificant. Whether either of them is or is not aided by Anti-Labour subscriptions is unknown, but if either be assisted it is Mr. Reid. Taken together or taken apart, our two fiscal parties are mere sketches of organisations effective for free imports in New South Wales and perhaps Western Australia, and effective for Protection in Victoria and South Australia, though the two Western States are chiefly in sympathy with labour. Queensland is federally Radical and fiscally uncertain. Tasmania is the least Radical, and fiscally leans to preferential trade. But in every instance the candidates will have to be considered, and the last cry allowed for, before the outcome can be predicted. There is another distinction not to be over-looked. Mr. Reid's supporters are united, but the Protectionists sit on opposite sides. Their most influential papers sympathise with Mr. Watson, because of his leaning to them in preference to their permanent foe, the Prime Minister. Unless they come together, the Protectionists will fare badly at the ballot-box.

Should they resume their old relations they would beat the Prime Minister if the Labour party stood on one side. This, of course, is the last thing this belligerent body would allow. It is a well-drilled legion that needs no camp-chest, and, after Napoleon's method, makes the country invaded maintain its forces. Its unchanging tactics are to foster and multiply differences outside its own ranks, so that, by holding

the balance of power, as in Queensland, it can enhance its numbers until it is able to capture the Treasury Benches, as it did in the Commonwealth, and retain them as it does to-day in Western Australia. Its programme may be summed up as an advance towards State Socialism, executed deliberately if the advice of its leaders be followed, or instantaneously, according to the hopes of its less political adherents. The former always aim at piecemeal successes commonly obtained by bargain. The fiscal issue which keeps the other two parties embroiled has been astutely kept quite outside their programme. Every Labour member is free to propound the view which suits his book, either because of the sentiment of his constituency or according to the opponent he has to face. Mr. Watson, their leader, being a mild Protectionist and Preferential trader, *seconded*<sup>87</sup> the *motion* of Mr. Deakin in support of Mr. Chamberlain;<sup>88</sup> while Senator *Pearce*, an ultra-Free Importer and Labour member, *seconded*<sup>89</sup> the *motion* moved by Senator *Pulsford*,<sup>90</sup> pronouncing for absolutely free imports from all parts of the world. One of the most uncompromising *rejoinders* to Mr. Watson's speech came from Mr. *Poynton*, a South Australian Labour man.<sup>91</sup> Their party is, therefore, stationed on both sides of the hedge. It occupies the best possible position for its own ends—always able, acting as a whole, to give the victory to either of the others, and thus allowing its units a free hand, while preserving a strictly non-committal attitude as a party, can demand the lion's share of legislation from either of its rivals. Beaten in South Australia, and about to be beaten again at the coming election; defeated in Victoria and in New South Wales, and powerless in Tasmania; tottering in Western Australia, and paramount only in Queensland, with probably but a third of the Federal House under its flag, the Labour party, by these tactics, may become paramount in the Commonwealth in one way or another, if a dissolution be forced during 1905.

Its weakness lies in its fighting programme, which is diminished in practical attractiveness now that the Arbitration Act is upon the Federal Statute Book, while the declaration of Socialism adopted by its New South Wales Conference appeals only to a portion of its following. But the vaguer the promises of its platform the wilder the dreams of its adherents, and the less adverse criticism affects them. No signs of alarm are visible in the community generally, which appears to have resigned itself to the permanent aggressiveness of the Leagues, and to rely upon the good sense of public men to protect it against any undue innovations. On the other hand, as a condition of increasing influence and experience of office, the Labour leaders are discovering an increasing moderation of tone. They have submitted in the Commonwealth, in Queensland and in Western Australia to the dilution of their strong measures with the enduring patience of old parliamentary hands. Indeed, if their recent rate of reversion be persisted in they may come to be distinguished from our other "parties" mainly by the thoroughness of the martial law under which they

accept a despotic majority rule suppressing all minority freedom within their own ranks. They would then be less conspicuous by the programme to which they seek to give effect in legislation. Of course they will proffer sops to Socialists. The latest includes a scheme for the nationalisation of the tobacco industry, said to be in the hands of a private monopoly, throughout Australia, and supposed to afford means at the same time of raising fresh revenue and of increasing the number of State employees. There is also the perennial proposal for Commonwealth Old Age Pensions upon a more liberal scale than is allowed in the States which have adopted that practice. These baits may keep the party together, but appear unlikely to attract fresh recruits. Mr. Watson and his tacticians would dearly like to obtain them, and the Treasury benches at the same time, by an agreement with the Protectionists for Tariff Revision and Preferential Trade, but the Free Importers are straining every nerve to make a treaty of this character impossible. External influence they cannot exercise openly or effectively because their party is financed and largely dominated by the wealthy negativists who oppose all social legislation, and especially the very measures upon which the Labour Caucus relies to justify its existence. The Free Importers operate therefore within that Caucus by means of Labour members, who continue fiscal negativists while inconsistently enough declaring for positive legislation upon all other questions.

The tug-of-war between opposing Fiscalists in the Labour party seems likely to be fought out in Melbourne at its Federal Conference due to assemble in June next, at the same time as the Commonwealth Parliament. Both time and place are significant of the direction in which the guiding hands desire their party to go. If the Protectionist sentiments of Victoria and the anti-Reid sentiment of the Labour Opposition together cannot be brought to authorise an alliance with the Protectionists, their cunning will be very much at fault. An alliance *de facto* approved by the New South Wales Leagues already obtains, in which Mr. Isaacs for Victoria, Sir William Lyne for New South Wales, Sir Langdon Bonython for South Australia, and Mr. Groom for Queensland, are the influential leaders. Should this become an alliance *de jure*, Mr. Watson will at once become the head of an Opposition powerful enough to oust the Ministry, to carry the country, and to make him Prime Minister for the second time, and, on this occasion, with a working majority at his back. If Mr. Kingston's health had not failed he would have held the position, or, if Mr. Deakin's antagonism to Labour methods had been less pronounced, he might have filled a similar place to that occupied by Mr. Morgan in Queensland. A policy of Protection and Preferential Trade emanating from any quarter would in any case secure assistance from both of them, and some others who at present hold aloof. When the latter endeavoured to obtain a vote of the House

last Session for Preferential Trade he was twice defeated in divisions by the defection of Protectionists in alliance with the Labour members, and by some of the latter, who, for the time at all events, chose to sit with Mr. Reid and vote against Mr. Watson. In the temper of the Labour Caucus then there would probably have been but a small majority for the motion in the House.

The one question in practical and tactical politics now is whether the Labour Party will revise its programme so as to vote for higher duties against the foreigner, and a preference to the Mother Country. If it does, exit Mr. Reid and enter Mr. Watson. If it does not, each of the other two parties will require to consider its plans, perhaps to recast its platform, and certainly to prepare for an appeal to the people upon fresh grounds, if not upon fresh understandings with each other. The present choice of battleground and allies lies with the Labour Conference. If they miss the opportunity in June they may not enjoy the same advantage for a long time afterwards. Though by far the best organised of the three parties, the unwieldiness of Australia leaves even their leaders with an uncertain grip of their followers, and of the programme they are obliged to obey. The organisations of their rivals and the policy of the Free Importers are still less definite. The Protectionists have a real policy it is true practical, progressive, and moderate, but they have nothing else. Otherwise they would not need to wait upon Mr. Watson's pleasure, but could launch out for themselves with confidence even against a union of both their rivals. As it is the Protectionists have an efficient policy without an effective party, the Free Importers a negative policy and a party effective only in resistance, while the Labour Caucus has an aggressive party wedded to a defective policy with a class colouring. That is roughly the present political situation in Australia.

C. R.

## GREATER BRITAIN

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### THE POLICY OF A WHITE AUSTRALIA

(BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT IN AUSTRALIA)

That a “White Australia” is the first and fundamental ambition of our people is probably known to all in the Mother Country who take any interest in us, and to many who take none, except when we furnish sporting or sensational paragraphs to the newspapers. We are British through and through, and wish to remain so. Only 5 per cent. of our people are of foreign origin. It may seem strange to residents of a crowded old world that their kinsmen in a thinly settled new world should be so sensitive to any influx of coloured races of which Europeans have no dread. What they forget is that it is *inter alia* because their country is so densely populated that there is neither room nor the temptation for such incursions. It is the partially peopled regions that tempt the hiving swarms who threaten to submerge the small numbers of their pioneers if permitted to enter without hindrance. Of late some London workpeople have been learning the meaning of one kind of alien immigration, but it is at most a relatively small body among you that is subject to a minor invasion. If the labourers of England as a whole were in any danger of being outnumbered by incoming tides of inferior races, the question would become politically as “burning” with them as it has been with many here. On these and other grounds, what lawyers call a *primâ facie* case can be made out for the seemingly selfish action of barring our doors. Our implied claim to the continent on whose coasts we live may sound audacious, unreasonable and extravagant, but after all is it any more so than the memorable answer of Lord John Russell to the French Ambassador who asked what part of New Holland was claimed by her Britannic Majesty? The same simple sentence in which he asserted the absolute sovereignty of the Empire in these seas conveys the reply of the advocates of a “White Australia” to the similar query of their surprised fellow-subjects at home. In his historic words they confess to claiming “the whole of it”.<sup>93</sup>

The motives of those responsible for our movement of exclusion are varied and of different values. There is the natural jealousy of men whose earnings are imperilled. There are also racial antipathies and democratic or patriotic aspirations; a clash of interests and a clash of ideals generating under pressure a heat capable of fusing our locally hostile parties into one. This has been their effect. If the men and women of Australia know their minds upon any issue, they know them and have expressed them upon this. Every State has been intermittently legislating upon it since its foundation, and those most sternly when the influx has been largest. Their fear may have been premature and excessive, but its influence upon our public life has been unmistakable. There were and are minorities averse, but they have been small and uninfluential. With Federation they have become even less potent, because the opening and shutting of all the ports of the Commonwealth has been confided to the National Government. A “White Australia” was the first plank of the first platform of the first Federal Ministry, and was fervently endorsed at two general elections. It has been supported by both parties in both Parliaments, and by each of the four administrations that have led them. This of itself is proof that the agitation, neither factitious, nor temporary, nor sectional, is almost universal, and represents a permanent policy.

Sir **Samuel Griffith** many years ago summed up the situation from the statesman’s point of view when he said that under representative government the interests of a servile race were not safe in the hands of a majority of the electors, whether constituted of those who employed them, or of those who were rival employers. Sir **Henry Parkes** in this connection uttered the most violent language, and introduced the most extreme measures with which his name is associated. He did this in the heat of political passion, but long afterwards in his *Fifty Years in the Making of Australian History*, elaborately defended those actions and those utterances. It was while he was a resident in South Australia and Victoria, and a Minister of the Crown in the latter State, that Professor **C. H. Pearson**, whom Sir **Edmund Barton** described in 1901 as “one of our most intellectual statesmen”,<sup>94</sup> wrote his book containing the earliest sufficient prophecy of the “Yellow Peril”.<sup>95</sup> Sir Edmund Barton himself and his Cabinet—including Mr. **Kingston**, Sir **George Turner**, Sir **William Lyne**, Sir **John Forrest**, and Sir **Philip Fysh**, who had been State Premiers—passed the statutes, which, framed in the precise form advised by Mr. **Chamberlain** in 1897, are our present safeguards against alien invasion. They do not discriminate in terms between white and black immigration, and are therefore to that extent void of offence to any nation. But administratively they are employed only against coloured aliens, save in a few special cases, as of lunatics or criminals. They will continue to be so employed. No proposal to amend them in principle has yet been submitted. Of their

effectiveness there can be no doubt. In 1902 there were but 35 out of 653 coloured immigrants admitted, and in 1903 only 13 out of 152, though 40,000 Europeans entered or re-entered our ports without challenge in the latter year. They check the influx at the place of shipment, so that few attempt to reach our shores.

Nevertheless, recently there has transpired something which may herald a reaction against our restriction of immigration in its present absolute form. The **Prime Minister**, while holding his Conference with the State Premiers at Hobart in February of this year, received a **deputation** of members of the **Women's Political Association of Tasmania**, who handed him three resolutions passed at a public meeting, requesting (1) "That the compulsory deportation clause in the Pacific Islands Labourers' Act; (2) The clause in the Immigration Restriction Act forbidding immigrants to land in the Commonwealth if they have signed a contract to work; and (3) The black labour clause in the Post Office Act should be repealed".<sup>96</sup>

Two Tasmanian Senators<sup>97</sup> introduced the ladies, and favoured the resolutions—possibly framed on their suggestion and presented by their advice. The circumstance that these asked only for the repeal of existing legislation may have been tactical. Mr. Reid admitted that the second and third resolutions have been openly advocated by him for some time past, though he did not remind them that he was a consenting party to the second and a supporter of the third when they were being passed into law. These two are not important in this connection, because neither the introduction of contract labour nor the employment of Lascars on mail steamers has any necessary relation to a "White Australia", though it is true that both were smuggled into the Statute Book under its glamour. Only the first resolution challenged the principle of the policy. Upon this the Prime Minister's position was especially embarrassing. Not only did he himself ask for the deportation of the Kanakas now in Queensland, but he was prepared to take speedier action with that object than the Barton Government proposed.

One of his former colleagues in his State Cabinet, Mr. **Joseph Cook**, M.P., moved an **amendment** upon the address-in-reply in 1901, condemning the attitude of the then Ministry as half-hearted.<sup>98</sup> If the aid of the Labour Party could have been obtained for this the Government would have been challenged at once by Mr. Reid and most of the Opposition for not purging the Commonwealth of the Pacific Islanders now on the sugar plantations before 1906, the date suggested and afterwards accepted. He had no resource, therefore, except to decline this request. Indeed, he declined them all through. Tasmania, having the smallest percentage of coloured aliens of any of the States, is least sympathetic towards a policy that affects her only by decreasing her receipts from the sugar excise. So, in spite of his surroundings, Mr. Reid, with what

the local paper termed a “cynical, if convenient, shelving of principle”,<sup>99</sup> re-affirmed his loyalty to the doctrine of exclusion, repeating his dissent from the other clauses condemned, with a frank admission of his inability to take any action to repeal them. There is consequently no party, and no leader in the Commonwealth, in 1905, not pledged to the “White Australia” policy. Possibly a growing disposition to separate its essentials from non-essentials may be detected. While the influence of criticism may lead to a more discriminating administration, and perhaps a better definition of its scope, no specific opposition has yet evolved. Mr. Reid has gone the length of promising Mr. Seddon that Maoris shall have a free ingress in future—a privilege very unlikely to be used. It is safe to say that he will not stake his Ministerial life upon it. But the problem presented by our restricted laws cannot be evaded nor postponed much longer. Our current experiences cannot fail to force the whole question to the front, despite the unanimity which seems to prevail to-day.

The factor that cannot be ignored, the governing factor of the situation as a whole, is physical and not political. It must assert itself irresistibly, and soon. Candidates are always declaring that Australia is a white man’s country, and so in a sense it is, almost everywhere, though a third of its 3,000,000 square miles lies within the Tropic of Capricorn. Many countries in corresponding latitudes are ruled by white men and contain others who control its trade and armaments. In this fashion we too can keep Australia white; but nowhere in such latitudes abroad do Caucasians undertake manual labour or constitute more than a ruling caste. Broadly speaking, all the industrial work of the tropics elsewhere is done by the people of the tropics. Our map is not entirely conclusive in its testimony as to where tropical conditions actually obtain, because upon the high plateaux, even in the extreme north of our continent, these are so much ameliorated that men of our own race live and thrive as pastoralists, miners and store-keepers. Queensland, it must not be forgotten, possesses in itself so large a range of climate that it produces apples, strawberries and raspberries in some parts, and cocoanuts, mangoes and dates in others, with olives and citrons in between; all these in apparently low latitudes. On the other hand, the heat and aridity of parts of the central steppes in the Temperate Zone are too severe for most Englishmen to reside there continuously. Aboriginal stockmen and Chinese diggers are freely employed in the northern territory about the Gulf of Carpentaria or in Kimberley, but wherever the wages are sufficient white labour is able to compete with them. As a fact, however, the whole of the northern coast strip, a great part of that on the north-west, and some of the north-east, is very sparsely occupied by white men. Unless unknown mineral wealth is opened up these belts appear likely to remain almost unpeopled and unproductive, except where great stations are lightly grazed by scattered herds of cattle. A huge area, both in the centre and west, practically discovers similar conditions, though there the want of water at present

severely limits all opportunities for its utilisation. Looking at the question from the white work-man's point of view almost all Australia lies open to him. There are exceptions, but they are uncommon. On the long strip between the plateaux and the sea right round the coast and down beyond Kimberley, the whites are few, and will remain few, because they consist only of those who sustain the stress of its prolonged, though even, summers, which have reminded travellers of Southern Hindostan. That is the region of moist heat, and until settlement is established of malaria. Subject to these limitations, and to the occupations pursued, Australia may be fairly termed a white man's country. Hitherto it has always been so styled, colonised and governed, with a single exception in the case of Queensland. Hence our white Australia policy has had time to take firm root.

The earliest Australian settlements were made in the Temperate Zone, where lie the great centres Sydney and Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Hobart. Moreton Bay came last, and for some time neglected to attack its tropic littoral. From various reasons there was a tendency to exclusiveness among all the colonists long before that period. Their first resistance in the south was to the transportation of convicts, and their next attack upon the Chinese when these began to make their appearance upon the "diggings". Repressive laws were soon demanded and obtained against them in State after State. As population flowed northward, the alarm revived in Queensland and in New South Wales in the eighties. The agitation commenced in Sydney, where, on the decline of the goldfields, the Chinese were turning to other occupations. As a consequence the poll-tax of the fifties was revived, and a limitation placed upon the number of passengers of that race allowed to enter by vessel. In 1888 the arrival of 4500 Chinese in New South Wales, 300 of whom came within a month, led to angry demonstrations in Parliament, a refusal to permit them to land, and the introduction of severer legislation. There were then 35,000 Chinese in Australia. The number tended, and still tends, to decline, though by various ingenious frauds and forgeries reinforcements contrive to creep in here and there. Queensland banned them like the rest, perhaps to palliate the unprecedented step already taken of introducing Polynesians. Plantations, principally of sugar, had been started on the coast belt in the sixties, when white labour was not available at all except at great expense. It was then that the planters contracted with small vessels to obtain Kanakas, who were known to be cheap, docile, and fairly industrious field-hands. The "recruiting" which followed in the South Seas, undertaken by rough and unscrupulous men, and conducted far from all observation, was accompanied by a series of outrages and some horrible massacres, such as that of the brig *Carl*.<sup>100</sup> These led to the passage, in 1868, of the Imperial "Kidnapping Act", which accorded much-needed protection in the high seas. But the death-rate of the recruits when they got to Queensland, though they were picked men in the prime of life, was for some time thrice that of

the whites. The reproaches of missionary societies, and desire of the local Parliament to free itself from any complicity with such abuses, led to the passage of a series of Queensland Acts intended to regulate this traffic in human beings. Its evils were gradually mitigated, though never entirely removed. An agitation against it was always more or less in evidence in that State, and more than once a definite date was fixed at which “recruiting” was to cease. Even Sir Thomas McIlwraith, who passed the principal Act of 1880, confessed in 1885 that he could not support the perpetuation of the practice, because it could not be creditably continued. December 31, 1890, having been fixed by law for the termination of the importations, a Royal Commission<sup>101</sup> of three members shortly before that date advised, one that a final five years, and the other two that an extension for “some years”, should be granted to allow the planters time to arrange for white labour. In 1892, when Sir Samuel Griffith became a convert to the necessity for again prolonging the term, he spoke in a public manifesto of ten years as its limit. This meant 1902. Many believed at that time—like the late Premier, Mr. Philp—that the supply of labour would then be ceasing because of the depopulation of some of the islands. It was believed that fresh lands must soon be looked to for labour. The implication from such a conclusion is plain. The Federal Parliament in 1901 fixed March 31, 1904, as the last day for importation, and December 31, 1906, as that upon which the deportation of the Kanakas might begin, except the few hundreds entitled to remain under the law of Queensland. The number upon the plantations to-day is about 8200, all of whom are prohibited from engaging in any other calling than that of agricultural labourers. Already the influences that have been able to wring extension after extension of time from the local legislature are being brought into play to retain or replace them. But the Federal Parliament is a very different body, and so, for the matter of that, is the existing Queensland Parliament, where Mr. Morgan reigns by virtue of an alliance with the Labour party. A further extension could be carried in neither. Whatever may happen, it appears to be extremely improbable that Australia will again seek the introduction of Kanakas, or of any similar aliens. The Hindoos imported into Fiji are not giving satisfaction. Moreover, the Immigration Restriction Act of the Commonwealth, although on its face allowing a large discretion to the Government of the day, was deliberately intended to exclude, has been, is being, and will be used to exclude all coloured labour alike, whether it be Asiatic or Polynesian, or from the Malay Archipelago.

At this point our history brings us face to face with many grave problems pressing for solution, all connected with our fundamental ambition to create a white nation. The population of Australia, excluding 148,000 aborigines and some nomadic half-castes, is now little short of 4,000,000. Of these but 54,000 are coloured aliens. They are irregularly distributed throughout it, for Tasmania has only 3.41 per thousand,

while Queensland has 46.13. Even the latter number is not startling. The Chinese in 1901 were answerable for 33,000, so that, adding the Kanakas, there remain 12,000 Hindoos, Japanese, Malays, Syrians, and of miscellaneous nationalities. There are a few hundred more engaged in pearl-fishing or kindred pursuits, or as the crews of proas and other vessels, who at certain seasons make their camps on Commonwealth beaches, principally at Broome and to the northward. They, of course, are not reckoned, though it is suspected that there is an infiltration from these and other sources. Only in the northern parts of South Australia and Queensland the balance of power is reversed. The *diocese* of the Bishop of Carpentaria, which embraces them, has but 17,000 whites to 45,000 coloured people, of whom, however, 35,000 are Aborigines. Of course, but for our restrictive laws the disproportion would be far greater. Assuming that there are altogether 70,000 coloured aliens out of our 4,000,000 inhabitants, the figures do not disclose any ground for serious alarm. The sentiment of our electors is less swayed by arithmetic than by lurid apprehensions of future inroads and kindred dangers. The question is far from being expressible in numbers. With the wage-earning classes the general motive is a blend of business hostility to a rival who undersells them, and racial hostility to a neighbour with whom intermarriage, civil citizenship, or political fraternity are deeply distasteful.

The coloured alien has not been much limited in his work. As a miner the Chinaman is capable of working, and is allowed to work, ground too poor to pay the European, but in several States he can do no more. In mines of any size he is always a less efficient digger than the white. But as a market-gardener he is without a peer, because of the patience and unremitting industry keeping him among his plants at all hours, and the training which enables him to make dexterous use of water. As a cabinetmaker he undercuts the trade in the rougher lines in Melbourne and Sydney. He is in great request as a cook in the back country, because of his sobriety and the contentedness with which he remains in one place. Chinese merchants and doctors we have always had, but some of the Japanese become bankers and professional men as well. They are cleverer, more adaptable, and more ambitious than any other race, though, like their rivals, they do not by any means represent the better class of their countrymen. The Kanaka, far less intellectually gifted and of weaker character, is qualified only for field work or service of that nature. All three races are alike in that they bring few of their own women, 3 or 4 per cent. in the case of the Kanakas. This leads to unhappy results, especially in the case of the Chinese. Still, as a rule, the aliens are temperate and orderly. They have their own vices, some of which we are not inclined to, and their own quarrels, which at times result in ghastly tragedies, but on the whole their record in the courts is clear; sanitarily it is quite the reverse. As a body they are fairly law-abiding, quick at evasions, and untrustworthy as witnesses. They are hard employers, driving their hands long hours for low wages

in the simplest class of work. Cheap and patient *employées*, within their range they are teachable, mechanical, and obsequious. Their competition is deadly, because they have few wants, fewer luxuries, and no relaxations. They produce wealth in the tropics, where it would not otherwise be procurable because of its labour cost; and with that their value ends. As consumers they are almost a negligible quantity. Their thrift is notorious, even the Kanakas having 4400 depositors in the Savings Banks; but they are the poorest of taxpayers, of householders, and of spenders. Their object, especially in the case of the Chinaman, is to accumulate and remit, or remove if they are fortunate enough. As purchasers a score of Chinese and more Kanakas would barely equal one white working-man's family. They sell their time and strength for a pittance, buy next to nothing beyond the barest food, lodging, and clothing. Except as opium smokers they contribute nothing to the revenue. These circumstances help to account for their unpopularity with our tradespeople, among whom they do no business at all while they can find shops of their own country folk. The European lawyer, medical man, clergyman, schoolmaster, or journalist earns nothing from them. Their charities have a very restricted area, while their share in municipal or general politics, in public movements or amusements, in religious or educational activities, is infinitesimal. As fellow-citizens they are therefore profitless, unprogressive, and undesirable from all points of view. The statesman finds in them no appreciation of public policy, no centres of influence responsive to patriotic ideas, no possible defenders of the flag. Yet taking the wages, they fill the places of men who, when taught to handle the magazine rifle or listed for service in the squadron of the British fleet in these seas, are confessed, both by military and naval experts, to afford the most splendid material.

With mulattoes, Eurasians or other mixed breeds, these disabilities would remain. Then again our aliens form an *imperium in imperio* within the Commonwealth, the Chinaman governed by secret societies, which also intervene as trade unions, and the Japanese acting together for their own advantage. They are not converts either to our churches or civilisations. The Kanakas have no unity or cohesive relationships, but some of them are Christianised while here. Even then the gain is doubtful. The venerable father of the New Hebrides missions, with forty-four years' experience, the Rev. J. G. Paton, and his colleagues, have always protested loudly against the disruption of home ties and the destruction of tribal morality in the Islands, which followed "recruiting". Naturally they maintain that the most effective Christian teaching the Kanakas can receive is that imparted to them among their own people. They are then spared the dangers attendant upon their expatriation for periods which make them strangers when they return. The Hobart ladies who protested against their deportation to their own islands because a recent plantation hand was tomahawked on landing must have been unaware that scores of such

incidents have occurred and must occur under the system of recruiting and returns which obtained for years without any complaint from them. Murders arise not from Federal deportations, since these have not really commenced, but as the unavoidable result of the original importation of the natives, all of whom are due to return and are recruited only upon that condition. Dr. Paton insists but that very few wish to remain in Queensland, and also asserts that there are no risks in returning them if proper precautions be observed. It is the aliens who wish to remain who are our chief anxiety. The aspirations of Australians to establish a community of British blood traditions, abilities and energies apart from any intermixture with races which cannot exercise full rights of citizenship, or discharge its duties, or blend with those who do, without lowering our standards of life, thought, and conduct, cannot but appeal to the sympathy of our kindred in the Mother Country. Sir **William Jones's** poem asserts that "what constitutes a State" is the men and women who compose it, and Australians may be forgiven if they believe that the Commonwealth can never be so well constituted if its people are of mixed colours and contrasted types, instead of being scions of the ancestral British stock. Heredity is the warrant of pride and the substance of hope to Australians.

Having done justice to the popular cause, so far as it is necessary at this stage, it is next desirable to remember that there are still certain broad facts to be taken into account which demonstrate unmistakably that the great problem of the future Australian race has not been disposed of in one of our finest tracts of country. Speaking in the first place generally, in what sense are we to rely upon a "White Australia", while our increase of population, which amounted to 3.85 per cent. in the decade 1862–1871, fell to 1.67 per cent. for the years from 1892–1901, and since Federation has declined to 1.30 per cent.? How can we indulge our dreams while we have been actually losing population in six out of the last twelve years? Even if the loss were of undesirable Asiatics, our stationary position becomes undeniable in Mr. **Coghlan's** comprehensive statistics. It therefore becomes manifest that to speak of a "White Australia", with its garrison of 4,000,000 persons, not sensibly increasing, essaying to control and protect a continent all but as large as Europe with its 373,000,000, or the United States with its 80,000,000 people, is to appear inordinately arrogant. Fortunate as we are in the isolation, which, while it has delayed our growth, has permitted us to become unchallenged custodians of this immense area, and thrice fortunate in that the protection of the British flag and the gallant seamen who bear it to every quarter of the globe have allowed us to give birth and nourishment to vast and vague designs, we cannot look upon our present conditions as permanent. None but the blind can ignore the earth hunger of the great nations of the West, the emergence of new military and naval powers in the Far East, and the presence at our doors of the uncounted millions of Southern Asia. Without resorting

to specific forecasts, it is incontestable that, whatever course our destiny may take, a people which does not replenish its strength from its parent land, and whose birth rate shrinks almost as fast in this new territory as it does in some of the oldest nations, is not capable of fulfilling the aspiration outlined in its watchword. Our great stretches of fruitful land, with a temperate climate and a generous water supply, are not attracting settlers even to their splendid possibilities. How then can we expect our less favoured zones, especially those under a tropic zone, to tempt them? And if our marvellously rich coasts towards the equator are left untilled, how long shall we be able to play the dog in the manger to neighbouring races? They may be in our eyes inferior to ourselves, but are at all events able to make lands reproductive which we leave idle, and, what is more, can keep them so. They could enable some parts of our idle territories to carry the dense populations they would now be carrying if they were in Asia. Surely it is self-evident that Australia can be kept white only on condition that white men occupy it, use it, and establish themselves all round it as the rightful heirs of its resources, and their guardians against aggression, whether from those of their own colour or from men of alien blood.

What then are our prospects of success in this great enterprise? The history of the Northern Territory is that of our first and most gallant attempt to found a tropical settlement of precisely the same type as that established in the true South Australia about 26 degrees of latitude nearer to the South Pole. The anti-Chinese legislation of Victoria and New South Wales was at last courageously applied to Port Darwin and its hinterland of nearly 600,000 square miles, as it had been to the 300,000 square miles of South Australia proper, on the bold assumption that because the exclusion of coloured aliens was possible in summers akin to those of the South of France or North of Italy, it was also possible in the summers of Madras. What has been the consequence? Despite valuable discoveries of gold and of fine pasture lands, both of which attracted daring adventurers, despite the construction of a railway, much Government experimenting, and endless Parliamentary debates, this magnificent province, instead of adding to our wealth, is actually costing the rest of the State £100,000 a year to maintain. It is not a feeder but a sucker. What is worse it is a permanent sucker. The white population, always small, is dwindling. The proportion of Chinamen to Europeans is increasing. The *Jenkins* Government in despair last year endeavoured to tempt private capitalists to construct a transcontinental railway from Oodnadatta, the present terminus from Adelaide, to Pine Creek, where the line from Port Darwin ends; but though they offered land grant concessions of 75,000 acres, carrying mining rights of unknown value for every one of the 1063 miles made, not a single tender was received. Ministers were willing that the works of construction should be done by coloured labour, but could guarantee nothing, as the Commonwealth enjoys sole authority over immigration. There appears to

be no hopeful outlook. The territory owes South Australia proper £3,000,000. The failure of all attempts to turn this costly tropical experiment to some use has yet to be appreciated by our taxpayers, but in time must convince them that it can only be kept white even in name, while southerners are prepared to subsidise it freely. Some would say it cannot really be kept white at any expense.

Notwithstanding the efforts and expenditure of more than thirty years, the sugar industry of Queensland is teaching exactly the same lesson. Since 1902 the Federal Parliament has been allowing growers a rebate of 4s. to 5s. per ton of cane according to its richness, providing it is grown and manufactured wholly by white labour. This is equivalent to a bounty of £2 for every ton of this sugar, since the excise upon local sugar being £3 a ton; this leaves that grown by whites liable to only £1 per ton duty. Foreign sugar pays an import duty of £6 a ton, so that all the Kanakas produce in Australia has £3 a ton, and all white men produce £5 a ton protection. The effect of the bounty has been almost imperceptible in New South Wales, where most of the cane was handled by white labour before the bounty. In 1902 there was 93 per cent. thus grown, while there was only 88 per cent. in 1903, which was agriculturally a bad year. That experience conveys a warning. In Queensland, on the other hand, where only a small fraction of the crop was formerly raised by white farmers, the percentage grown by them rose to 16 per cent. in 1902, and to 27 per cent. in 1903. In 1904, 25 per cent. was harvested by white labour, while 56,000 acres were cultivated by Kanakas or other coloured aliens. But to realise the situation exactly it is requisite to remember that sugar is cultivated in three different zones along the coast. In the most southerly and coolest district there is a white farmer and family to every thirty acres of cane, in the central district about Mackay to every forty-two acres, and in the hottest and most northern districts of which Cairns is the centre, to every seventy-two acres. Plainly it is the temperature that rules. It should be noted that nearly half the sugar comes from the last district, though only £7500 out of £50,000 bounty was paid to white men. The present bounty expires next year, and already Queenslanders are agitating for a further extension. As usual it is to be temporary and probably final. Dr. Maxwell, the chief professional sugar expert of the State, in 1903 recommended that the grant be continued for three years, but last December doubted whether this would suffice even for the Brisbane district-growers, and certainly would not provide for the substitution of white labour further north. He now advises an additional five years, but in no way commits himself to the assurance that even then it can be dispensed with anywhere. The reason is clear. Kanaka labour is estimated to cost 2s. 4¼d. per day including rations, white labour from 4s. 7d. to 5s. 5d. and also rations; or, put in another fashion, the average outlay per acre is 2s. 11d. for black and 3s. 5d. per acre for white labour. The planters insist that this difference in cost must always exist; and that even white farmers, who, with the help of their families, produce most

cheaply, cannot thrive without State aid in competition with black labour. In 1903 the bounty paid amounted to £90,000 upon a yield of 1,048,000 tons, valued at £787,000; in 1904 it will be £120,000. As this season's yield is expected to supply our full consumption and to be worth £1,500,000, the Treasury contribution has risen in proportion. When and where will it stop?

Like the Northern Territory, therefore, the great sugar industry, which employs three thousand whites, and yields large profits in good years to its investors, depends upon subsidies from the South. Queensland has also contributed liberally. Over half a million has been advanced by the State Treasurer for the building of sugar-mills, few of which are financial successes, and now a State Sugar Refinery is declared essential. It is very unlikely to pay. Since not a twentieth of our population are resident in the tropic third of Australia, almost the whole of the sugar bounty is paid by those who have no interest except as consumers of the product. Of late a great stir has been made in respect to cotton, for which we have plenty of land available in the Northern Territory and Queensland. The sea slopes of the former, according to Mr. J. Bottomley, an English expert, afford ideal conditions for raising the South Sea Island variety. In the West Indies profits of £6 to £7 per acre are earned, but are only possible here or there by the employment of black labour. Already a new bounty for cotton is being pressed upon us. Coffee, cocoa, cinnamon, and many other products of the same kind, have been most successfully cultivated in the North, but none of them can endure the cost of white labour. This is partly due to its unreliability. The earnings of sterling men are so good, and the opportunities for taking up land for themselves so numerous, that they remain but for a very short time as or under contractors for cutting sugar cane, though good hands often make from 8s. to 12s. a day. The best whites in the North being rapidly drafted off in this way those who are left necessarily include a large proportion of the unfit and unseasoned—the unruly improvidents who drift to the outskirts, either incapable of steady or strenuous work or very unwilling to face it. The grower cannot afford to take the risks of employing them. Sugar cane is an even more peremptory growth than wool. Both require to be cut promptly at a critical time. But shearing is a skilled employment, carried on in sheds by thrifty, trusty, and enterprising farmers or their sons. It requires much quickness of judgment, but is very much less arduous than “trashing” in the stifling atmosphere of a cane-brake, with the thermometer at 120°, and less laborious than cane cutting in the cooler months. Besides, it pays capable men better. The white sugar gangs collected in the North are only to be compared with our shearers where something like the same material is available, and that is rarely. The fact that cane culture has been and is “black man's work” helps to preserve a prejudice against it. Until a far denser farming settlement is established in the North it will not become altogether “white man's work” or be so recognised. The irony of the situation is that

when our crop is short of our market needs we import black-grown sugar from Java. White-grown sugar is not obtainable anywhere outside this country. We pay for the scruples which forbid us to allow it to be black-grown in our own country. The question is, how long can we continue to pay? The Government of the North-west of Western Australia, the Northern Territory and the tropics of Queensland, is in itself a burden on the people of the three States who reside outside the tropics. But that is not all. Mr. Morgan is asking Mr. Reid for £25,000 towards the expenses of deporting the Kanakas, and Mr. Jenkins is anxious for grants to encourage white-grown cotton. The Northern Territory, with its annual debit of £100,000, added to £100,000 for sugar bounties, rising ultimately to a possible £200,000 a year, swelled further by increased prices to our consumers, amounting, according to hostile critics, to £500,000 a year, in order that this one industry may be partially kept in white hands, offers no comforting outlook to our Treasurers. Our tropics, rich as they are by nature, are made luxurious by our policy, and the more productive they become by white labour the more we shall have to disburse for them. We are certainly proving the *bona fides* of our zeal for a "White Australia" by the way we are dipping into the public purse. It is not inexhaustible; tropic demands may be.

When Mr. **Playford** was Agent-General for South Australia a proposal was submitted to him by the promoters of a Chartered Company for buying out the State Government in the Northern Territory at a price which would recoup all its outlays providing the Company was relieved from any political control except that of the Colonial Office. They intended to have worked the concession by coloured labour, and it would probably have paid them well. The State refused, though many years before it had itself introduced 200 Chinamen to open the mines, and allowed its railway to be built by Chinese imported by the contractors. In 1882 an attempt to arrange with the Government of India for coolie labour failed because of the then disinclination in Calcutta to complete an arrangement of the same nature as that afterwards made with Fiji. After the experience gained there no such propositions are likely to be repeated. Finding our "white elephant" too costly because it was white, the Commonwealth was invited in 1901 to take over the territory at cost, as the Chartered Company intended. Mr. **Solomon**, M.H.R., who moved the motion, however, began by admitting that coloured labour could not be thought of, adding that it was better the North should remain unutilised rather than that "the future happiness and prosperity of our European races should be jeopardised",<sup>102</sup> a doctrine cordially endorsed by Mr. **Watson**, M.H.R., for the Labour party.<sup>103</sup> The South Australian Ministry, hoping for the transcontinental railway, soon after withdrew its offer. Since then the position has become worse. The Territory must have been just as bad a bargain for the Federal Government as it has been for the State, unless a new departure was initiated. And why should it not be?

It contains 523,000 square miles, is rich in copper, tin, silver and pearl shell, has already exported £2,000,000 worth of gold, contains splendid pasture country for horse breeding, and a situation fitting it for raising and exporting frozen beef in great quantity to the Philippines and ports beyond. Wool is also exported, and where the stock go malaria gradually ceases. From Port Darwin Singapore is reached in less than a week, Hong Kong and Japan in a few days more. The coasts, with a rainfall of from fifty to sixty inches, are in many places rich enough for any tropical cultivation. But it is perfectly certain that they cannot be profitable with white labour without subsidies. A white plantation labourer costs 12s. a day, a Chinese 5s., a white miner or tradesman, 12s. 6d., a Chinese 5s. to 7s. The European is the more competent workman of course, but in that climate is heavily handicapped. Under such circumstances this country of great resources lies almost idle. Pastoral areas at nominal rates, with perpetual leases for tropical plantations up to 3000 acres, and rebates for any water supplies constructed, fail as baits. Its population, excluding Aborigines, is less than 4000, of whom not one-fifth are white, and about two-thirds Chinese. The situation in Northern Queensland is in essentials practically the same, except that it is not so isolated from white settlements locally. Beyond them are only coloured peoples. Malaysia is at their door, the most thickly peopled countries in Asia lie a little further. The German colonies in New Guinea and the Solomons are expanding, but it is by means of black labour. Consistently enough our possession in New Guinea, like our far North, lies absolutely unprogressive and without a promise for its future. But at least it is inhabited. How long can we hope to maintain tropical Australia as a white oasis while surrounded by coloured peoples, overcrowded in their own land, to whom it offers a tempting soil and climate, who see it unused but find themselves excluded? How long can we expect to maintain a vacuum? Or pretend that it is "white" while its vast extent is all but vacant? After a lavish public outlay and spirited private investments not enough men of our colour can be kept there to either use or secure a fraction of it.

Australia is a wealthy country, and her Treasuries have yet to face the pinch of real want. But, for all that, the question must soon be put for what period we shall be content to pursue our present policy of paying to prevent its evacuation by our own citizens, and also to prevent its appropriation by other races. There seems to be one road open, but even that is not quite clear. We could, perhaps, plant the North with immigrants from Southern Europe, who would multiply and possess the land. We should part with our purely British character; but they are, or would soon become, able to accept our political, economic and social responsibilities. They are of the same faith, and could blend with us into one nation. But it must be confessed that when they have come in numbers they have not been welcome in the South, and it would be necessary for them to come in numbers to the North, if they are to supply

the sugar plantations of to-day, and the cotton, coffee and cocoa plantations of tomorrow. There have been two Royal Commissions within the last few years inquiring anxiously into their influx into Western Australia, where the British are 93.26 per cent. to 3.06 per cent. of other Europeans, on the ground that they were being brought out under contract, but really because they were supposed to be supplanting the Briton at lower rates of pay. Both inquiries have failed to prove anything beyond a certain favour accorded to the newcomers because of past labour disputes. The fact that in the West, as in the North, the Anglo-Saxon takes unkindly to outdoor work in the hottest weather, to which the Italian or Spaniard is indifferent, was brought out by the earlier Commission, and is to that extent encouraging. Still, it may be doubted whether a scheme for attracting plantation labourers from the warmest climates in Europe will be taken up with any enthusiasm. Mr. Morgan is now arranging with "Austrian" settlers who have expressed a desire to emigrate, and are to be assisted to find farms. Probably the hope is that at first they will accept employment on neighbouring plantations. Other difficulties will arise when they or others arrive. They will usually come "under contract", and if that keeps them under tutelage for a time, they would probably be more easily assimilated. In either case they are badly wanted. Still, it is doubtful if Ministries, or their supporters, are prepared to welcome them. Once here, the newcomers will be free of the country, and free to make what terms they please with their employers. They can, if they please, undercut in labour or in produce. And yet, unless this expedient be adopted, nothing remains except the coloured alien. Of course, Mr. Solomon and Mr. Watson, who are pronounced political opponents, agreed in 1901 that our "settled policy" would not permit the admission of the latter; but it may be safely concluded that neither climatic nor physical conditions, nor world politics, nor the pressure of population in our near neighbourhood, will wait upon their consent indefinitely. On the plateaux white men can live, work, and rear their families; but while the tropical coasts of Australia remain unpeopled and un-productive, our tenure there must be unsatisfactory. They can only be occupied remuneratively by plantations raising special products with cheap field labour. This means in whatever way it is to be met, a considerable addition to our population, either from the South of Europe or from coloured races. The former, though they may take time to adapt themselves to our customs, politics, social life and methods of civilisation, have done so already in all States. The latter never will and never can blend with us within any period that we are required to consider. As rivals to the white working man, as citizens, taxpayers, or relatives by marriage, coloured aliens are, in every respect, undesirable wherever white men can make their homes and develop the country with their own hands. In the particular portions of the continent where that is impossible, and in which they do not compete with the white man, but become employees on his plantations, they will still be undesirable, though perhaps in default of immigration we may have to devise

some means of utilising their labour without retaining them after their engagement. What is patent is that no permanent settlement of any great part of the country can be built upon subsidies from the rest. Sooner or later we shall be compelled either to take white foreigners into the Commonwealth to colonise our tropics for us at wages that will enable them to live in our fashion, or see them pass to other foreigners the first time that the aegis of the Mother Country is, for any reason, withdrawn.

The situation, therefore, resolves itself into a choice. Since subsidies are required for the fulfilment of our ambitions and ideals, had they not better be found, for a time, in order to introduce white labour which will be able to make tropical agriculture pay by normal means? Bounties cannot be scattered in perpetuity to keep up a mere pretence of developing industries by white labour that may never become self-supporting and certainly could not hope to develop an export trade. Consequently, though few here seem to perceive it the noble aim of the "White Australia" aspiration is being confronted in the North by economic conditions which must deflect its application so far as tropical cultivation is concerned. It is idle to kick against the pricks in political pronouncements however sincere, seductive and admirable, if the facts are, as they are, against their prophecies. We want all the British we can tempt here to help us with axe and plough, with chisel and hammer, in our wide stretches of magnificent country, partly settled already, where climate, soil, and earnings are of the best for men of our breed. There is room for far more of them than we are likely to get immediately. There is need for them too if our cities and their industries are to continue to grow. But we want also many thousands more whose physique can triumph over the moist heat and sweltering sun of the tropics along our northern seaboard, in order that we may become independent of the yellow and brown peoples, and prepared to face their invasion either in peace or war.

C. R.

## GREATER BRITAIN

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### SOME PROBLEMS OF AUSTRALIAN POLICY

(BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT IN AUSTRALIA)

Looking at the United States to-day it is hard to realise that a century ago the future of that great nation should have caused the gravest anxiety to its public men as well as to the bulk of its citizens. They saw nothing at home except internal broils devoid of dignity, and nothing abroad except external perils thronging the horizon with prophecies of disaster. But in the lapse of time the alarms of the early years of the Great Republic have utterly vanished except from the pages of the historian. The real trials that came afterwards, testing the spirit and stamina of its people and the stability of its institutions, a bloody civil war, the overshadowing growth of party organisations, of their professional “bosses”, and of gigantic Trusts, were then all unguessed. The new era now opening, embarrassed as it is with the towering pretensions of the “Great Industry”, is chiefly distinguished by its deliberate adoption of a foreign policy befitting a world Power. A century since the States were engaged in unhappy quarrels with the Mother Country, and with the other Powers possessing interests in or near America. Congress was rendered impotent by the bitterness of its factions, and the Executive paralysed by provincialism in its endeavours to make the Union effective. The pessimists were in the ascendant everywhere. Quite a close parallel could be drawn between the first years of the nineteenth century in the Atlantic Colonies federated after their revolt, and the first years of the twentieth century in the Australian Colonies federated during their loyal participation with the Mother Country in the South African struggle. There are physical and other contrasts which forbid the anticipation that we can hope for an expansion in the coming years either as rapid or as immense as that which has been achieved by our relations. We have not the majestic river and lake systems of the interior of North America, nor that contiguity to European markets that has been a powerful factor in promoting production and population. Yet our enemies have been brought nearer in fact than theirs were, while our arid area is much wider and our distance from the largest marts of commerce much greater. The “new world” of renaissance times had

both the start and the advantage of our “newer world” of modern times, yet there are many marked resemblances between our beginnings. The pessimists are having their day on this side of the Pacific now, as they had it in the other exactly one hundred years ago. We, too, have vexed the Mother Country and annoyed great nations, have drifted into a parlous state of political impotency, legislative and executive, and are generally “at sixes and sevens” with ourselves and everybody else. When Fisher Ames, of New England, summed up the condition of the United States in 1803, he was but anticipating the comments of 1903 in Australia. Both appeared to the jaundiced eye “too big for union, too sordid for patriotism, too democratic for liberty”<sup>105</sup>; though, to be quite accurate, “too indifferent” should be substituted for “too sordid” when applying the jeremiad to our case.

Australia may be thought “too big for union”, her settlements being far more scattered than those of the United States at the same period of growth. Certainly our history appears to prove it. Queensland and Victoria were severed from New South Wales, and Riverina once sought to be, on the ground that the area of that Colony was too extensive to permit of the reasonable representation of its outlying districts. A decade or so since there was an active and resolute campaign in Queensland for the severance of its immense territory on the same plea. A Bill was laid on the table of the Assembly in Brisbane, subdividing it into three provinces, to which home rule was to be granted under a Federal Legislature for the whole State. This was only a few years before the same Colonies, that were considered much too large, individually, for effective political control each from its own centre, were united with their fellows into a gigantic Commonwealth, attempted to be governed from Melbourne. It would be a marvel if under such circumstances there was not a general discontent with the new power super-imposed upon jealous rivals because severally inefficient on account of their size. True, the States as they are would not be too large for their local administrations if their citizens were patriotic enough to devote a fair share of their attention to public affairs. Their prevailing mood being indifference, either careless, cynical, or due to preoccupation, even municipal government suffers. Many of the most intelligent and able ratepayers pay not the slightest heed to the regular work of their city, borough, shire, or road board representatives close at hand and always under their eyes. Their interest in them is spasmodic and almost wholly confined to election times, when it is too late for some and too early for other pressing questions. The State suffers more from the same cause, because more power is vested in its Legislature, its domain is more extensive, and it is further from most of its constituents. The Commonwealth, least cared for of all, because of its bulk and entire remoteness from five States, suffers most of all. It commits most blunders because it is imperfectly supervised at its present centre, whence it acts for and over the whole

of Australia. Half our electors neither manage, nor authorise others to manage, their public affairs federally. The likeness to American methods, striking up to this point, fortunately stops here, leaving us free from the scandals which inhere between their corporations and Legislatures.

That we are “too democratic for liberty” is well illustrated by the manner in which a handful of men in our Political Labour Leagues bring a minority of our working classes under their own direction efficiently enough to defeat the majority of the electors who go to the poll. Our present crop of troubles is solely of our own creating. The merits and meanings of the demand for a “White Australia” were considered last month in some detail, though by no means exhaustively from our own point of view. The principle underlying it has never been challenged by his Majesty’s Government, and, indeed, was explicitly approved by Mr. Chamberlain when addressing the State Premiers in London in 1897. He then said:

... Her Majesty’s Government thoroughly appreciate the object and the needs of the Colonies in dealing with this matter. We quite sympathise with the determination of the white inhabitants of those Colonies which are in comparatively close proximity to millions and hundreds of millions of Asiatics, that there shall not be an influx of people alien in civilisation, alien in religion, alien in customs, whose influence moreover would most seriously interfere with the legitimate rights of the existing labour population. An immigration of that kind must, I quite understand, in the interests of the Colonies, be prevented at all hazards, and we shall not offer any opposition to the proposals intended with that object; but we ask you also to bear in mind the traditions of the Empire, which make no distinction in favour of or against race or colour; and to exclude, by reason of their colour, or by reason of their race, all her Majesty’s Indian subjects, or even all Asiatics, would be an act so offensive to those peoples that it would be most painful, I am quite certain, to her Majesty to have to sanction it.<sup>106</sup>

The Secretary of State for the Colonies went on to point to the success in Natal of the educational test, to which he made a fuller reference in a despatch to the Governor of Queensland, dated May 14, 1901. He then wrote:

Disqualifications by educational tests, such as are embodied in the immigration laws of various Colonies, is not a measure to which the Government of Japan or any other Government can take exception on behalf of its subjects; and if the particular tests in these laws are not regarded as sufficiently stringent, there is no reason why more stringent and effective ones of a similar character should not

be adopted. But disqualification for certain employments on the sole ground of place of origin is a measure to which any Government concerned may reasonably object.<sup>107</sup>

He added in another paragraph that placing the Japanese “in the general category of Asiatic races, without any consideration being paid to their state of civilisation” was “peculiarly offensive to Japan”.<sup>108</sup> At that very time no doubt the preliminary negotiations were in progress which culminated in January 1902 in the formal alliance which has been already productive of momentous events of incalculable influence upon the future of the Far East, of Asia as a whole, and upon Austral Asia in which we have our homes. The “White Australia” movement has its inveterate opponents within and without the Commonwealth, principally from those with whom the gospel of cheapness is paramount, but it has never encountered any substantial antagonism from the Mother Country or its statesmen. Our difficulties in regard to it have been and are local.

In the first place it was by no means easy to confine the agitation for a “White Australia” to the reasonable plan of action proposed by the Colonial Offices. When Sir Edmund Barton submitted his Immigration Restriction Bill in August 1901 it was drafted so as to avoid all offence to our present ally or to our coloured fellow subjects. Its prohibition was general, covering the entrance of “any person who, when asked to do so by an officer, fails to write out at dictation, and sign in the presence of the officer, a passage of fifty words in length in a European language directed by the officer”.<sup>109</sup> As a fact, the test is not applied to any Europeans, and is applied to all coloured races unless the immigrants are exempt by the Minister. But in expression the law is all-embracing, and its limitation is an act of administration. This, it might have been supposed, was rigorous enough to satisfy the most exacting, yet it proved too mild to please the Labour Party. Its leader tabled an amendment excluding “any person who is an Aboriginal native of Asia, Africa, or of the islands thereof”;<sup>110</sup> and, although this made in set terms the very discrimination against which Mr. Chamberlain had protested, it was warmly supported by Mr. Reid and the bulk of his following. At one time the defeat of the Ministry seemed probable, for, in spite of the intimate ties which united the Labour members to Mr. Kingston then Minister of Customs, they voted to a man for the objectionable proviso. Mr. Reid carried his section of the Opposition except nine, with whom Imperial feeling was stronger than party discipline. The Ministry had staked its existence upon carrying the education test, and resisting any disqualifications offensive to our coloured fellow subjects or allies, though, in so doing, it risked the Tariff, which it was about to introduce, and upon which alone it commanded its majority. The keenness of the

struggle can be estimated from the voting when, even with the help of nine members of the Opposition, the Barton Government was saved by only a majority of five. The victory was costly, because, while the contest was at its height, and in order to secure it, two amendments were accepted, one in the Immigration and one in the Post and Telegraph Bill, which have occasioned more hostile comment upon the “White Australia” policy than all its other provisions, not omitting that endowing the Executive with practically an absolute authority to open or shut the ports of the Commonwealth to whomsoever it pleases. The division of parties in the first House of Representatives, and the independence of those who were neither Labour members nor extreme fiscalists, left Ministers at all times subject to sudden reverses. Mr. Kingston had been accustomed to carry on in South Australia for lengthy periods with a majority of one or two only, but to Sir John Forrest and other colleagues these experiences were entirely novel. Allowance had to be made for the unprecedented conditions in which an entirely new Parliament found itself, while members of the same political way of thinking were still strangers to each other. The two restrictions that have attracted so much attention were introduced during the crisis of the first Session under circumstances which obscured their character, and forbade their proper consideration.

Mr. Watson’s **second amendment** in the Immigration Bill excluded “any persons under a contract or agreement to perform manual labour within the Commonwealth”,<sup>111</sup> and therefore, in its absoluteness, resembled that which the Ministry had just defeated, aimed in an equally sweeping fashion at all coloured peoples. By a curious confusion of thought the Prime Minister appeared to regard this proposition as equivalent to a measure which, some years before, he had introduced invalidating such contracts in New South Wales. The moment was not favourable for calm reflection. The first Australian Tariff was to be introduced by Mr. Kingston in the following week; he had just escaped shipwreck on Mr. Watson’s earlier amendment, and therefore contented himself with an addition to the **later amendment** preserving Ministerial powers: “Provided that this paragraph shall not apply to workmen exempted by the Minister for special skill required in Australia”.<sup>112</sup> By this means, the admission of contract as well as of coloured labour being made a matter of administration, uniformity in the policy of the measure was preserved. The clause as a whole applies to “manual labour” only, and not to professional or business appointees, as it does in the United States, where there is no proviso for exceptions being made by its Executive, as Sir E. Barton did in the case of the “six hatters” from England. Their employer had neglected to apply for their admission under the regulations, and they were consequently detained on board ship until he had satisfied the Prime Minister that their skill was required in Australia. Up to the present time no contract labourer has been excluded; but none the less the existence

of such a clause, especially as between the Mother Country and a dependency, afterwards aroused a great deal of feeling. Strangely enough there was no opposition to its passage in the House, except that a private member obtained an exemption affecting seamen coming out to take part in the coastal trade. Mr. Reid was either absent or silent then, and remained so for a long time afterwards. He discovered later, what should have been patent to all at the time, that the clause goes much farther than is necessary for its avowed purpose. Mr. Watson **pleaded** for it on the ground that working men abroad were being “inveigled into unfair agreements in ignorance of the conditions obtaining in Australia”,<sup>113</sup> and there were also complaints against men engaged in this manner being brought out to take the places of strikers during industrial conflicts. Mr. Reid continues to approve their total exclusion in the latter case, and, in the former, would follow Sir Edmund Barton’s State precedent by declaring unfair contracts invalid. His antagonism is to the rejection of manual labourers under a just contract, who come in the ordinary course of business to supply a want in a particular trade. At the end of the last Parliament he asked for a mandate from the electors endorsing his view. It was not granted; neither was it refused. Outside New South Wales the question was hardly raised, or if raised in the Senate contests, as in South Australia, was lightly put aside. Our Federation came none too soon to give time for the evolution of a national policy, for that is manifestly still in the germ, and calls for long and patient cultivation; but like the United States in 1803 we seem “too big” to enable its issues to be forced to the front for decision while the local cross currents are still strong and retain pride of place in the several States.

The practical effect of the Immigration Act as now in force is principally felt in connection with our neglected possibilities of tropical agriculture. Mr. **Jenkins**, our new Agent-General is on his way to London by way of his native country, America, with the avowed object of inquiring into cotton-growing in the Southern States, and the half-avowed hope of interesting some of the bolder capitalists of the Union in the construction of our Trans-continental railway. For reasons given last month, it appears that apart from the mining possibilities, which are vast but speculative, the profitable use of the Northern Territory depends upon the importation of either Europeans or Asiatics. The coloured labour necessary to enable a line to be built at lowest cost could be recruited only under contract, and might be withdrawn when the work was completed. But it could not be introduced, even upon this condition, without the assent of the Commonwealth Government and Parliament. The present Ministry, with its uncertain hold upon office, dare not approve the project until it is ready to appeal to the country, if then. Judging by the South Australian representation in each Chamber, any proposal of the kind would be defeated in both. What support for it can be expected, then, from members who come from States without a direct interest

in the development of the Territory? The Southern Europeans, who expected to plant cotton upon its littoral, are not likely to undertake the risks of such a venture unless they are given the security of an engagement for a fixed term, after which perhaps they might become farmers of their own plots. Ministerial assent in their case ought to be less hazardous, but if the experiment were upon an extensive scale it is possible, though not probable, that it would be challenged. Even a Labour Ministry could scarcely defend a refusal of such settlers. But, while any uncertainty remains, Mr. Jenkins is placed at a great disadvantage in opening negotiations with the shrewd, hard-headed promoters of great enterprises in the States. As they are just commencing to feel the weight of possible political control, threatened to be applied to their Trusts by Mr. Roosevelt, they may shrink from entering a country in which the Government of the day probably possesses and exercises more mastery over industries and investments than anywhere in Europe outside of Russia and Germany. Mr. Jenkins's object may be to challenge the Federal Parliament by completing an agreement for the making of the railway, subject to consent being given for the use of coloured or other contract labour. By this means he would oblige members either to allow an exemption for this purpose, or, in the alternative, coerce them into relieving South Australia of the Territory and its annual deficit. It has been appropriately termed our "White Elephant", because it seems bound to be an expensive luxury while it is kept "white" artificially. Unless the Southern European tint can be imparted, it will need, before it can become self-supporting, to adopt the deeper colour of a tropical working breed. Were political obstacles overcome, any contracts for imported labour need be valid only when their terms were endorsed as equitable by a competent legal tribunal. But if a condition were inserted that "ruling rates" of wages must be paid, our tropical lands would continue untilled, because if hired labour were employed the cost of the crop would be raised too high to permit of any sale abroad. We might encourage cultivation up to the limit of our own consumption, but not beyond it, and then only as long as we were prepared to find out of our own pockets the difference between the price of white or black grown sugar, cotton, coffee or cocoa. A possible solution of all these problems might be found in co-operative plantations or groups of farms, but experience alone could justify our reliance upon this or cognate experiments to enable competition in foreign markets. Mr. Jenkins's mission is hampered by these considerations, going beyond the principle of race preservation to the assertion of an economic policy applicable to those of our own race. This aims at maintaining the wages of manual labourers all over Australia, apart from the effect upon the cost of production, and therefore upon all export trade. It figures in the Labour platform quite independently of the "White Australia" ideal.

The other success of Mr. Watson in 1901 was snatched at the height of the crisis upon the prohibition of coloured aliens as such, previously explained. In this instance the Barton Ministry yielded only under compulsion, in an undignified manner, and with a clear sense of risk. During the passage of the Post and Telegraph Bill through the Senate in 1901, in which Chamber it had been introduced, an amendment was moved requiring that all future mail contracts contain a stipulation that the crews of any vessel employed should be comprised of white men. Although there were New Zealand and Queensland precedents directly in support, this was resisted for the Ministry by Mr. O'Connor, its leader in that Chamber, not because the principle of fostering the white mercantile marine was contested, but solely on account of the absoluteness of the condition sought to be imposed, in a matter in which the discretion of the Government ought to be trusted. Despite the strong local precedents in its favour, it was defeated by a large majority. So far so good.

When Mr. Watson first introduced the subject to the House a fortnight later, it was by **motion** merely "to protest against the increasing employment of coloured labour on subsidised mail steamers", indicated by the acceptance of Lascars upon Orient steamers.<sup>114</sup> All members were of course aware of what had been done in the Senate. The Prime Minister **replied** that he was entirely at one with him in the desire to minimise this class of labour, and hoped its employment would be discontinued.<sup>115</sup> Mr. Reid, **speaking** "on behalf of every member upon the Opposition side of the House", assured the head of the Government that he was heartily with him. Though admitting that there were very great difficulties, he said that the knowledge that Sir E. Barton had a united House behind him would greatly strengthen his hands.<sup>116</sup> Mr. Joseph Cook, when Postmaster-General in the Reid administration of New South Wales, had obtained the sanction of the State Ministries to proposals of the same nature, which were transmitted to the Imperial Government. Not a single member spoke adversely to the principle. Up to this point everything was as it should be, and as it would have continued to be but for the party crisis then nearing its height.

When, on the arrival of the Postal Bill, an endeavour was made to impose an unqualified and unqualifiable prohibition against the employment of any coloured labour whatever upon mail steamers, Ministers once more judiciously insisted that so drastic a provision was unnecessary. But by that time effective resistance was too late. Representatives on all sides had already partly committed themselves to the principle of Mr. Watson's motion, while, most unfortunately, the fate of the Cabinet, of the educational test in the Immigration Bill, and of the Protectionist Tariff, were all hanging in the balance. In such an emergency the practical difficulties foreseen and since realised were swept aside. After a vain suggestion that, as a substitute, all future mail contracts should receive the assent of the House, and a solitary declaration

against the whole proposal from Sir **W. McMillan**, which will always stand to his credit, Sir Edmund Barton gave way. Mr. Reid had already specifically applauded the similar proposal of a general character, and his followers who spoke, being of the same mind, the amendment was certain to be carried in any case. It was therefore assented to without a division. The Senate reversed its previous decision by a majority of two votes, further refusing, by a majority of three, to except coloured stokers. Nevertheless, the abandonment of Mr. **O'Connor**, and of its reasonable practical objections, gave a blow to the reputation of the Ministry from which it never entirely recovered. The Labour party triumphed by the **introduction** of a new section of the Act that reads:

16. (1) No contract or arrangement for the carriage of mails shall be entered into on behalf of the Commonwealth unless it contains a condition that only white labour shall be employed in such carriage.
- (2) This condition shall not apply to the coaling and loading of ships beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.<sup>117</sup>

Like each of the three Labour proposals, the requirement is ruthlessly rigid and uncompromising. Just as all coloured men and all manual labourers under contract were to be excluded from the Commonwealth without exception, so all mail contracts allowing coloured crews were forbidden without qualification or regard for circumstances. The condition did not come within the widest interpretation of a "White Australia", because under no circumstances are there, or are there likely to be, Australian sailors engaged upon mail steamers. Their pay is too high. The provision is of no possible advantage to any citizens of the Commonwealth, but benefits British seamen at their expense. So far as the motive was patriotic it was Imperial, not local; its antagonism was racial and sentimental; it was not political, it was not economic, it was not even selfish. It directly affected the P. and O. Company's steamers, manned with Lascars, and to a less extent the Orient Company, that had recently replaced its white stokers by coloured men. Its effect has been to exclude the first Company, and oblige the second to revert to its former practice.

Because the manager of the Orient Company has admitted that the change back to crews wholly white does not affect it financially, some have maintained that the proviso has had no effect in bringing about the existing confusion in our mail arrangements. But this argument ignores the fact that we are still using the P. & O. steamers, which are running as regularly as if under contract. Should they for any reason alter their times, or ports of call, or speed, as they are free to do, we should, apart from any new contract, be entirely dependent upon the dates, departures and route of the various lines of vessels plying to and from Australia, all of whom would

have to be utilised for mail carrying at poundage rates. We should spend less than we have been spending from the public purse, but our bankers and traders would spend more. A considerable share of what we spent would go to swell the receipts of subsidised French and German mail steamers, who for that matter might have obtained a mail contract under the new conditions if they had thought fit to tender. Though they follow the Suez route neither line employs coloured seamen or stokers. As it is they share the poundage rates. Thus an Act intended to strengthen the British mercantile marine has actually assisted to foster its rivals at the expense of the British companies that have served us so long. The policy aimed at having been approved by some very high naval authorities at home was therefore adopted in principle by all parties in the Federal Parliament. It has failed utterly. There have been no offers to undertake the service from any responsible shipowners upon the old terms. It is asserted that both the old companies were losing money even with their contract earnings, and must therefore lose more without them. However this may be, after much negotiation we have patched up a new agreement with the Orient Company, less favourable in several respects than that we discarded, which will cost us £35,000 a year more. Incidentally a handful of white firemen will resume work on their boats and some Lascar stokers will disappear. Our regular weekly mail will continue at the pleasure of the P. & O. Company. Only the fortnightly mail by the Orient is assured. Although in any event better terms would probably have been demanded by the companies, we have precipitated our difficulties, increased our expenses, deprived Adelaide of sundry mails, and harassed our commercial classes to our own loss in an untimely though well-meant attempt to multiply white seamen on the high seas.

These being our experiences to date, onlookers at home will inquire when they may expect an explicit re-definition of our accepted policy, adapting it to the facts as we find them. No immediate action seems contemplated. Mr. Reid remains to-day as much pledged to a "White Australia" as ever. He told his constituents the other day that it was his wish to keep this great continent pure. "They wanted to keep the integrity of their Anglo-Saxon breed right through this great continent."<sup>118</sup> This meant perhaps more than he intended, for it would exclude other European peoples as well as coloured races. But it undoubtedly does mean that the Kanakas will be deported, and no other labourers of the same class imported. Mr. Jenkins will receive no more assistance from the fact that Mr. Reid is Prime Minister than if Mr. Watson continued to fill that post. Of course during the last two years the leader of the coalition has learned the results of the attempt to insist upon white crews for all mail steamers under contract. For all that he will not attempt to repeal the prohibiting section this Session. His intention is to resubmit it at the next election, though whether even then he will make it a Ministerial question is not settled. He takes no unnecessary risks even in anticipation. The Employers' Union, through their

President, Mr. E. E. Smith, at a meeting just held in Adelaide, representing all the Australian organisations, sarcastically excused Mr. Reid for trimming his sails to the wind, because it was not the first time he had done it. The first time he did it in this connection was when, in his hostility to the Barton Government and determination to put them out at any cost, he permitted the section to pass without protest. Now the Nemesis has fallen upon him of undoing the legislation that he condoned until it had become the law of the land. For the chance of submitting a tariff of Free Imports he surrendered as much as Sir Edmund Barton and his colleagues did for the sake of Protection, both being mulcted by the Labour party, which invariably insists upon securing for its clients, at once, and in the most peremptory and unyielding form, the substance of things hoped for. The question of coloured crews is relegated to the future, and a near future. It cannot be postponed indefinitely, since the new Orient Company contract, if sanctioned by Parliament, runs only for three years.

Though the “White Australia” aspiration, however broadly stated, offers little foundation for the contract labour exclusion, or the attempt to substitute white sailors for Lascars upon mail steamers, such is the strength of the sentiment it represents that these departures owe their existence in great measure to radiations from its influence. The Commonwealth suffers from both provisions, and apart from them makes others suffer outside its limits who have interests in common with us. Threatened as we are by foreign bases in the Pacific—German, French, Dutch, Japanese, and Russian—we have, besides neighbouring islands under the British flag, two settlements of our own in whose fortunes we are specially concerned. Of these that in the New Hebrides occupies a position unique in most respects and hard to define. The group belongs to no civilised power, and is under no protectorate except of a mutually exclusive character. Its indigenous tribes are a law unto themselves, save when, to protect Englishmen and Frenchmen respectively, two semi-judicial authorities are exercised over them, neither owing any direct responsibility to them or to its contemporary. The white inhabitants, who, on the whole, agree very well together, though their missionaries do not, are of two nationalities, and plant over their private property their country’s flags, as declarations of the suzerainty appealed to by the alleged proprietors. The islands are colonised a little on their coasts by small planters and consequently improved, but there are no land titles, only land claims, and no tribunal qualified to decide between them. There are two official residents, one French the other English, and a joint court of naval officers that sits occasionally to decide questions that have nothing to do with naval affairs, and very little to do with anything else. The two paramount Powers are not willingly at issue. The British Government never wished for the islands, was anxious to surrender them to France, and endeavoured to persuade Australia to consent. The French Government has always been eager to acquire them as an appanage to New Caledonia, and has

spared no pains to bring them gradually under its control by multiplying its citizens, magnifying their land claims, and spending liberally on their behalf through the agency of State-supported companies, one of whose principal functions has been to buy or crush out or otherwise dispossess British colonists. Notwithstanding the ultimate importance of this group and its splendid harbours for coaling-stations on the new ocean routes *via* the Nicaragua canal to America, the British Government has done nothing to acquire them. Its utmost exertion of responsibility has been to appoint a Resident practically without powers except of observation, though with liberty to report to his heart's content upon the anomalous position of these fruitful islands, and the futility of his own functions.

On the other hand, the Australian Colonies have striven tooth and nail to retain the New Hebrides for the Empire, resisting their surrender, and without cessation calling for their annexation, mainly under the stimulus and largely for the sake of the mission stations. We have been spending £6000 a year to maintain communication, and encourage our citizens to settle on the islands, and are now spending £12,000 a year for the same purpose, practically without any return. We have followed up this necessary preliminary to effective occupation by planting a score or two of our compatriots upon one island, while at the same time proceeding to make it impossible for them to earn a living. French settlers are fostered by the administration of New Caledonia so generously that they are in effect as free of the markets of Noumea as if they already lived there. Customs duties, port charges and other taxes are levied upon them only to be returned at once in another form. The growth of their coffee and copra, their maize and bananas, are encouraged by bounties, and when grown are purchased often on the ground; they are provided with frequent and rapid subsidised steamer accommodation, constant attention, unflagging encouragement and continual visitation. They are allowed to recruit coloured labour within restrictions, and do obtain it readily and cheaply. The sale of arms, ammunition and liquor has diverted to them the trade and the sympathy of the natives. The British settler has no such boons. He can obtain labour for himself only under severe restrictions and expensively. As a rule he has to pay his French rivals to get it. He cannot sell guns, gunpowder or rum without prompt punishment. At every point he is at a disadvantage. The Commonwealth Tariff makes no exemptions in favour of his coffee or maize or bananas, for which, consequently, he has no sale. Without labour, without markets, for the New Caledonian duties are high against him, what is there for the British or Australian settler to do except sell his holding or change his nationality? The Commonwealth spends money upon him, and for him, because he is white, but will not admit his crops because they are grown by black labour. Otherwise they would not be grown at all. The settlers are sent to cultivate, and then the only market they can hope for taboos whatever their cultivation

yields. Did “Alice in Wonderland” witness anything more humorous? It must also be confessed that this distressful country is almost as inconsequentially treated by the Imperial authorities. The Anglo–French agreement of April 1904 disposed of numbers of long-vexed frictions in many parts of the globe, but when it came to the New Hebrides was content with a postscript which was a perfect triumph of pretence and postponement. The high contracting nations **consented** “to draw up in concert an arrangement which, without involving any modification of the political status quo”,<sup>119</sup> should establish some kind of jurisdiction over the natives. This would be all but valueless to the settlers under present circumstances, since it means nothing but a rudimentary police system; but whatever it may be, it has not yet been introduced. The next article bound them “to appoint a Commission to settle the disputes of their respective nationals, with regard to landed property”, its competency and rules of procedure being “the subject of a preliminary agreement”. Even this has not been made. No dates were fixed for the fulfilment of either of these good intentions, and no preliminaries have yet been adopted. The inclusion of such an amorphous, contingent, and practically meaningless paragraph at the tail end of a document of the greatest importance, is a tribute to French diplomatists. Time is on their side, and all they ask is indefinite inaction. But what kind of tribute it is to the British Foreign and Colonial Offices, perfectly aware as they are of the state of the case, it would scarcely be polite to say, unless indeed we express an opinion indirectly in the sardonic compliment that in this particular donkey race they have run us very hard. Between the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office and the Commonwealth Parliament the islands are fast slipping through our fingers.

New Guinea is under our flag, or, rather, that south-eastern strip of it which remained after **Bismarck** outwitted the late **Lord Derby**, by riding roughshod over both British rights and Australian susceptibilities in his unwarrantable annexation of the northern half of its eastern portion. It is the one possession of the Commonwealth outside our borders, a dependency of a dependency, without representation of any kind, continuing to be governed as a Crown Colony from Melbourne, as it formerly was from Downing Street. The attempt to pass a special Constitution more in accordance with its needs has been made twice in our Parliament, and has twice failed. Even while the Colonial Office was the sole ruler of the island, the separate Colonies contributed £15,000 annually to its Government, and were therefore accorded a consultative and really controlling voice in its management. Unhappily, there as elsewhere, this was only used to negative all proposals for the investment of capital. South Australia at an early stage refused to subscribe or accept any responsibility for the possession; but New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria combined under the leadership of the first in matters of policy, and of the second in matters of detail. The last attempt to commence plantation upon a suitable scale,

made by what was known as the *Sir Somers Vine Syndicate*, was blocked in New South Wales. Its then *Premier* was responsible for refusing the compensation to its promoters, recommended upon inquiry by the Agents-General of the three Eastern Colonies. After such a warning, private enterprise on any considerable scale has been discouraged, though our experience to date shows that only in this way are the capabilities of the country to be made known. The territory has been described as one of the best parts of one of the richest islands in the world, with a soil exceptionally fertile, and well watered; large and numerous rivers and goldfields, only trifled with, that have been steadily remunerative for some years. The native population is numerous and rapidly becoming sufficiently civilised to allow of the free development of the country. Labour ample for all plantations would be available without difficulty. Communication with Australia is frequent, as well as with Asia and Europe. The German territory next door is being put to good use, though production is more flourishing upon their adjacent islands; both are served by a fine line of German steamers, and are to be connected with a German cable. Meanwhile, though the tribes are being gradually weaned from their internecine wars and superstitions, our own splendid area, available for copra, coffee, and all other tropical products, lies absolutely idle. The Labour party's ideal of nationalised land is being applied in such a fashion as to prohibit white settlement. The fee simple is still refused to applicants, though for the past fifteen years no planter has been found willing to commence upon a leasehold, no matter how choice its quality. It is needless to multiply details. The experiment of waiting for white labour which has failed in the Northern Territory, and is failing in Northern Queensland, is being repeated in Papua, though it is outside the Commonwealth, and though coloured labour is on the spot, plentiful, cheap, and capable of being employed under thoroughly satisfactory safeguards. These latter are already effective. The present ordinances prohibiting the natives from obtaining alcoholic liquors, for which so far they have no inclination, have been entirely successful, nevertheless a majority of the House of Representatives made the risk to the Papuans a pretext for prohibiting their use by white residents. The incident is apposite in this connection because it shows the lengths to which political interference may go with any settlers prepared to face the task of conquering the dense growths under which great idle areas of fruitful soils now lie buried. British New Guinea is paralysed in its commercial development, just as the New Hebrides are paralysed, as the Northern Territory is paralysed, and as tropical agriculture generally is paralysed throughout Australia. We are maintaining a futile and expensive contest with their physical conditions by the endeavour to apply the principles enabling white men to prosper in temperate climates to torrid areas, where only the coloured man lives and multiplies or labours regularly in the fields without deterioration. Our ideals are being transplanted into regions where they cannot be acclimatised. It is only very slowly that Australians are awaking to the fact, but wake they must under the pinch of necessity.

We are far from being “too sordid for patriotism”. Tens of thousands and perhaps hundreds of thousands of pounds are being spent annually with the consent of our taxpayers to maintain a “White Australia”. A “piebald Australia” would be a disaster. How the one can be secured and the other avoided within the Commonwealth was examined last month. A consideration of the effects of the doctrine as it is now applied beyond our borders powerfully reinforces our former conclusions. Young as we are, with much to learn, we have learned something. The contract labour prohibition may be made a barrier to desirable white immigrants as well as to undesirable black importations. Our white labour condition in mail contracts is obviously premature and expensive. The patriotic ends in view, both at home and abroad, will be better reached by other means. Australians in the New Hebrides will be treated as far as possible, even if only for a term, as are our own citizens who use Kanaka labour in Queensland. The tea, coffee, spices we import are grown by coloured labour, much of it in foreign countries to which we have no such ties, as to the islands we have partly Christianised and ought to colonise for our own protection. The wasted opportunities in New Guinea will be turned to good account as the lessons of our German and French neighbours are laid to heart. We must cut our coat according to our cloth. Like the United States our troubles just now are thick upon us, and seem greater than they are. They will disappear as we become better advised. There is no doubt of the future; even during the last month there has been a remarkable revival of reasonable criticism. Opinion is ripening for a better definition of the home and foreign policy of the Commonwealth. The perils of our present position in an unpeopled continent, with unutilised coasts and islands on our hands, become more conspicuous and menacing every year. The immense opportunities of Australia imply of necessity immense responsibilities and a policy of corresponding magnitude.

C. R.

## GREATER BRITAIN

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### THE ELECTIONS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

(BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT IN AUSTRALIA)

What I said in the April number of this *Review* as to the instability and fluctuations of Australian political parties has just received further confirmation. Once more it has fallen to South Australia to strike a keynote, and this time a keynote of warning, for the rest of the Commonwealth. The elections held at the close of May furnished two striking illustrations—one of the way to conduct, and the other of the way not to conduct an electoral campaign. It is needless to say, in expansion of several previous explanations of their methods, that there was nothing to improve upon in the tactics of the Labour party. They ran not a single candidate in excess of their requirements, or for an unsuitable constituency. Their unity of purpose, enthusiasm for their standard-bearers, and concentration of forces were admirable. Success was deserved by them, though it would not have been anything like so sweeping but for the faults and confusion of the politicians outside their organisation who were destitute of a competent organisation of their own. The contrast between the Baltic fleet, led at immense cost and after enormous preparations into seas where it had to fight just when and where the splendidly-equipped squadron of Japanese ships was waiting for them to strike its decisive blow, was presented in this State last month. The results here were by no means as fatal. They were severe enough in all conscience, seeing that the strength of Socialists in the Assembly was more than doubled. Measured by votes recorded, they were rather under-represented in the late Parliament, but, like wise men, had continued ever since the last election to pave the way for the next by patient preparations in every district in which their hopes had been disappointed. The six members they possessed took their full share of an unceasing canvass. Perhaps the party were entitled to win ten seats this time, though some of them by narrow margins. They have sprung from six to fifteen, partly because of their zeal and untiring activity, but chiefly on account of the series of blunders committed by the factions against whom they sallied, who recklessly refused to stand together or to serve under any one flag. Mr. Price, the leader of the Labour party in this State, claims that the victory is due to their programme, and undoubtedly it played a

principal part in solidifying their efforts. He says nothing of their generalship, of the daily drilling, of the perpetual recruiting, of the summoning of assistance of speakers from the other States, or of the varied character of sundry other influences upon which they relied to win over waverers to their side. These were all of them useful in making up the poll. But it is only the programme that will be credited with the capture of the nine seats. Yet if that were submitted to a referendum by itself, it might be rejected in every one, and undoubtedly would be beaten in most districts.

Critics may reasonably ask, How comes it, then, that the Anti-Socialistic movement in South Australia received such a check at the hands of electors who, outside the city and its radius, have exhibited no tendency to embrace the extreme doctrines approved by the party whose candidates they have preferred? A reply must first define the actual changes accomplished. With all their gains the Labour members have now little more than a third of the Assembly and one-eighteenth of the Legislative Council. They cannot come into power except by the aid of men outside their own body, and if they are put into office by such means cannot attempt to carry out a tithe of the policy they have announced to the public. South Australia is not yet Socialist, nor half Socialist. Notwithstanding these reassuring calculations, the fact remains that the Labour party has grown amazingly, and now possesses a formidable phalanx of impenetrable solidity in the popular Chamber. They will proceed with consolidating work after their victory just as steadily as they did after their former defeat, extending their operations, undermining hostile seats, training new candidates, enrolling fresh voters, and conducting an incessant propaganda so as to ensure a further advance whenever the people are again appealed to. They reap because they plough, sow and water right diligently. Rarely indeed does Labour lose a constituency it has once conquered, and rarely does it sustain a decisive set-back. The reasons why this is its wonted experience are not recondite—are, indeed, familiar to all observers, and yet they never seem to teach their plain lesson to its rivals in a sufficiently convincing way. At all events, experience does not induce them to emulate those arts of victory. Yet they must be adopted in order to avoid the overthrow that parties who do not employ them must see to be preparing under their very eyes. It has been from no lack of warnings, suggestions, or expositions that the anti-Socialists have lost ground in this State. The customary supineness of our general public has not yet been overcome. Only 61 per cent. of the electors for the Assembly, and 70 per cent. of those for the Council, recorded their votes. This means an increase of only 1 per cent. on the 1902 vote for the first, and a decline of 4 per cent. upon the second; by no means creditable records these, though comparing very favourably with those of other States. Now that the fight is over, a pretence is being made that the contest was really between the Labour party in alliance with Mr. Peake's Independents against the Ministry and Mr. Darling's followers. That this is a flagrant invention is shown by the figures. In only

one constituency (Barossa) could it be suggested that there was a common ticket, and there the voting figures lend the theory no support. In these constituencies the whole battle was between Labour candidates and Franchise Reformers, while in the other nine they went higgledy-piggledy to the poll in a triangular duel. Mr. Peake claims nine votes for the Radicals, which, added to the Labour fifteen, gives them a majority in the House of six votes, against Ministers who favour some reform, allowing them all the opponents of a reduction in the franchise of the Council. Such a division may possibly be the outcome of political combinations, but is not the true verdict of the electors upon the real question at issue at the polls. The Labour party made a bold bid for mastery, quite irrespective of any allies. They expected to win, but, though they gained ground greatly, were defeated in their main enterprise. That defeat is the most important result obtained, and ought to govern the situation.

Of course the fact that there were three leaders of the sections outside the Labour legion is in itself almost a sufficient explanation of their disasters. All three of them went to the country pledged against the Labour programme for abolishing the Council, but also to some degree fighting against each other's programme. For the Assembly the Labour party had twenty-six candidates out for forty-two seats, while the several unallied sections apart from them representing not even a triple alliance but a triple antagonism between them ran sixty-four candidates. Frankly recognising their weakness in the country the Labour caucus ran in all cases a smaller number of candidates than there were vacancies in those constituencies—the anti-Labour men took this precaution only in one. None of their number gained a footing in districts in which the majority was favourable to Labour, but three Labour men were returned, one of them for the first time where they ran a lesser number of candidates for unfavourable districts. In nine constituencies there were altogether forty-seven anti-Labour candidates for twenty-six seats, and the marvel is that the consequences were not more serious. Taken in the gross and without discrimination it is easily seen which side earned its victory and which threw many chances away. It may be said almost without reservation that the successes of the Labour men in excess of those to which their voters entitled them were due to tactics and discipline. There can be little apology for those pitted against them who were responsible for so many patent mistakes. A house divided against itself cannot stand. A country divided against itself has never stood long against an invader. A party divided against itself as were the Gladstonians when the Home Rule Bill was tabled suffers the same fate. It is true that our anti-Labour sections have never formed part of one homogeneous party, but have always been coerced into any co-operation they have attained by force of circumstances. They include the detritus of the old Conservative and Liberal parties, compelled to combine by the aggressive onsets made upon both by Mr. Price and his following. The Political Labour Leagues made no distinction between them, attacking Radicals like

Mr. Denny and Mr. Scherk, who preserved the Kingstonian tradition of alliance with them just as readily as their most thorough-going opponents. The Butler Cabinet was a coalition against them, formally endorsed by the original Conservatives, though it succeeded an administration formed by Mr. Jenkins from the old Liberal and Radical Government of which Mr. Kingston was the head. Mr. Butler really represented Liberal–Conservative opinion very fairly, and though to do this he departed a little from the policy of Mr. Darling, who had gallantly led the resistance to Mr. Kingston, he went no further than expediency demanded. The Labour party platform required the abolition of the Legislative Council; a very simple demand, incapable of being misunderstood. The triple sections all declared for its preservation, though differing slightly among themselves as to the best suffrage for the second Chamber. The largest sought to maintain the present £25 a year rental as the franchise qualification of the Council; the Ministry favoured a reduction to £20, coupled with a dual vote for husband and wife; while Mr. Peake, the leader of the Radicals, would lower it to £15. The two last sections united outnumbered the first, and hence without the Labour members, make a majority for reform. These slight divergences appear to have been insisted upon during the election, and will be during the coming session, chiefly because advantage could be taken of them in a reshuffle of the cards. No question of principle can be urged as an excuse for thus displacing the actual issue in view of the avowed aim of the Labour members to destroy the second Chamber. Yet it was for the sake of relatively trifling discrepancies in their views on the Council suffrage that the anti-Labour sections were sundered; fighting each other at the polls quite as fiercely as they fought those whom even adult suffrage without any property qualification whatever would not satisfy. There is but one Labour member in the Legislative Council, while a great majority of the half of the Council, returned a fortnight since at the same time as the whole of the Assembly, is opposed to any alteration of its franchise. There was no need for alarm while these numbers remain. Why, when the path was so clear, and the necessity for union among the moderates so plain, men of the strong common sense of Mr. Darling and his advisers should have permitted the Ministry to face the electors so to speak by itself, is the greatest of puzzles. Mr. Peake, though selected as chief by the Radicals, who looked to an alliance with the Labour party, must have been blind to the risks he was running. That both leaders should fail under such circumstances would have been but a just punishment for their want of patriotism and excess of party spirit. Mr. Darling did fail himself and injure his friends. His bitterest reflection must be that he has weakened the survivors sufficiently to exalt Mr. Price into the position of arbiter of the situation. Mr. Peake too has laid up plenty of anxiety for himself and his handful. The country has lost many useful and well-trained men whose independence of mind and practical experience in business made them valuable in the transaction of public affairs. We have in their place a docile body of the pledged adherents of an extreme programme, little fitted

for the application of what theories they have to the practical issues of the present time, and some of them indifferent to everything else except impracticable projects. For this outcome the opponents of any reduction of the Council suffrage are mainly responsible, though no small number of the Radicals acted upon the promptings of the *Adelaide Advertiser*, which chose to treat the franchise qualification as of more immediate importance than the Labour proposal to abolish the Council altogether. This was a perilous course to steer for the State and the party. It has led to a threat from Mr. Darling that he will oppose its proprietor, Sir **Langdon Bonython**, a member of the House of Representatives, at the next Federal election predicted for July. The Commonwealth situation being reflected in miniature in that of South Australia, such a challenge is not irrelevant. The anti-Labour forces are likely to be severed then, and there too this will tend to the profit of the Labour party.

It may consequently be enabled to achieve another triumph out of proportion to its due share of representation, and thus tend to mislead observers abroad, unacquainted with the extent to which our adverse sections at odds with each other deliver themselves repeatedly into the hands of the Labour Caucus.

A glance at some of the returns in the South Australian constituencies may be useful in order to illustrate the degree to which the Labour vote was supplemented from other classes than that to which its doctrines primarily appeal. It is safe to say that the actual strength of its vote, even after allowing for individual defections, is always below the smallest vote polled for its candidates. Large numbers of the general public support a Labour man if he has been a fair representative, or if his character or personal views are satisfactory, irrespective of the party programme to which he is committed. Many of these candidates are moderate and painstaking men, of good character and some ability, who indulge little in heroics and devote themselves assiduously to their public duties. On the other hand, no elector of the Labour party will neglect to vote for its nominee, whatever his ability or character may be. To pass him by on any grounds would be to become a "black leg" and false to his fellows. Bearing these two facts in mind before looking at the returns, one is not surprised to find in Torrens, where Mr. Darling, together with an old colleague, Mr. **Soward**, and three new supporters of his own colour were rejected, that the lowest Labour candidate was in receipt of 10,150 votes, while the highest, Mr. **Coneybeer**, an old member, obtained 2400 votes more, every one of which came no doubt from those who voted for some of Mr. Darling's bunch. Mr. **Bruce**, his highest candidate, missed a seat by less than 400 votes, being nearly 900 votes above his fifth ally, who found himself at the bottom of the poll. It is quite clear therefore that the two parties in Torrens are practically equal in numbers. Yet Labour carries off five seats, and leaves half the voters wholly unrepresented, because, losing none of its own electors to

its opponents, it gains numbers from them because of their lack of solidarity. In Alexandra on the other hand, where less than one-fourth as many votes were polled as in Torrens, the higher Labour candidate was 1700 votes behind the lowest anti-Labour man who succeeded, though in that district there were seven candidates of the same views for four seats, against two Labour men who had the benefit of the split votes. Though these two constituencies afford striking object lessons, they are fairly typical of the contrast between town and country opinion, when mining districts which vote strongly Labour are allowed for. In Port Adelaide, always a head centre of the ultras, the lowest of the three Labour candidates gave the new *Minister of Mines* [sic]<sup>121</sup> a bad beating by 3600 votes, but in the city of Adelaide as in Torrens the numbers were very close. The Mayor, Mr. *Cohen*, held his seat because of his municipal popularity, only 1100 votes behind the highest Labour man. His next colleague was not 250 votes behind the lowest Labour candidate returned, though there were seven anti-Socialists in the fray against four Labour men for the four seats available. Mr. *Cohen* was third upon the poll, and but for the scattering of votes might have had with him two other colleagues who were close behind. As it is, Labour holds three seats out of four, not being entitled at most to more than two. Skimming through the returns as a whole it appears that there is not more than one extra seat which the Labour party could have won under the most favourable circumstances. There are plainly half a dozen which without any alteration except in the management of the nominations could have been kept from them. With ten seats out of forty-two they would have had their full proportion upon the polling just held. That they are fifteen instead of ten is due to their discipline, or rather the want of it among their opponents. It is not due to their programme, though possibly they are to some extent assisted by the belief that their candidates are more devoted to its principles, whatever they may be, than some of the politicians adverse to it are to the platforms they announce. Labour men are not supposed to be too clever for their constituents, or capable of the unexpected developments experienced partymen occasionally discover, and thus their very want of certain capacities commends them as relatively "safe" men, despite of their venturesome programmes. The average elector understands them better because they take more pains to make him personally aware of their existence, and because they speak to him upon a footing of equality, appealing to his motives and understanding in a familiar dialect. In a democracy it is not well with the representative if he is too far ahead, or above the men and women upon whose suffrages he depends for his political life. Still on the whole it is not such considerations but the organisation and energy applied to electioneering that are fruitful year after year. After examination it becomes plain that it is principally to these, coupled with the neglect of counter strokes by the opponents of Labour, that the stride forward made by the party in this State is properly attributed.

The South Australian election has been dealt with at length in connection with the Assembly because this is in many respects the typical state of the Commonwealth, and the election is held upon the same suffrage. There have been fewer vicissitudes in our economic, financial and political development of recent years than among our neighbours. At the election of 1902 we seemed to have broken the power of the Labour party, and to have returned to paths of steady progress of a satisfactory if somewhat humdrum kind. The recent polling does not negative this assumption, except by showing that, without a proper combination among the sections opposed to risky experiments in State control, they cannot retain the majority in Parliament which their numbers justify. By inept inertia or factious rivalries they can hand the State over to the well-drilled minority, who are always on the alert to seize their opportunities. It pays Labour representatives better to be representatives than to follow their own trades, and it is therefore more incumbent upon them to persuade their fellows that their presence in the Legislature is essential if the interests of the wage earners are to be diligently safeguarded. Our forgetfulness of the necessity for constant watchfulness has led us into the ditch in South Australia, and may lead the Commonwealth after us into a similar pickle. For here again our position is typical. The Federal Labour party, based upon the State Labour parties, supported by their local efforts, and supporting them in turn, is as united and efficient in its broad field as they are in their several parts of it. Mr. Watson really commands the whole of its cumulative resources. Always maintained upon a war footing everywhere, the party enters the arena well prepared for every contingency. Those opposed to it are as divided in the whole federation as they are in this State; and should a federal general election come, as Mr. Darling anticipates, at an early date, what is there to prevent a similar set of consequences? Mr. Reid and Mr. Deakin joined hands last year for the purpose of stopping the Labour advance, but, from the very outset, their endeavour was neutralised by a break away of the Radical Protectionists under Mr. Isaacs, who preferred, like Mr. Peake in South Australia, to enter into an alliance, with the Labour caucus mocking at its dangers. These dangers have been and are being depicted by the coalition Reid–McLean Ministry in sombre hues. Its own future is just as gloomy. Mr. Reid had but a nominal majority when he took office, and nothing in the interval has enlarged it. On the contrary, there have been continuous endeavours to put him in a minority, which either have succeeded or may succeed at any moment. There again it is a South Australian Senator, Sir Josiah Symon, who has imperilled the life of the Ministry from motives hard to divine. Faults of temper, an overbearing disposition, and large resources of vituperation, have left him unpopular in Adelaide, where his supremacy at the Bar has long been unchallenged and his forensic abilities are highly esteemed. The responsibilities of office have not proved sufficient to check his animosities, or prevent him from exercising them upon the High Court Bench with greater freedom than he has heretofore employed them upon any weak Judge

whom his brief required him to browbeat. A petty question of expenses has been made the occasion for some very painful and undignified passages between himself as Federal Attorney-General and the Chief Justice, Sir **Samuel Griffith**. The recriminations seem to have concealed for the time larger issues that may yet be dragged into the light. If these, as is alleged, imply an invasion of the independence of the Court, the rebound of the Minister's assault is certain to be serious. The Court was appointed by the Deakin Ministry under an Act introduced, passed, and launched by the ex-Prime Minister himself, with fatherly solicitude. Nothing could bring about a dissolution of the Coalition following more quickly than an attack upon this "bulwark of the Constitution", revered on that ground by the ardent Federalists now sitting behind Mr. Reid. Unfortunately, he too appears to have been drawn into the fray and to have corresponded with the Judges in such a manner as to produce a public protest from the Chief Justice. No conduct could have been less defensible or more ill-timed from a strategic point of view. The Melbourne *Age*, like the Adelaide *Advertiser*, chafes at Mr. Reid's reign. Putting by its recent warnings against Socialistic advances it is now prepared to risk any of them rather than consent to his continuance in office. The Protectionists in the Cabinet are being alternately irritated and cajoled in order to incite them to revolt. The Tariff Commission is being spurred on to bring in a preliminary recommendation of some kind which will sever Mr. Deakin and his associates from Mr. Reid's Free Trade bodyguard. Advantage is also being taken of a proposed redistribution of seats, adopted by the Government on the advice of Sir Josiah Symon, which will deprive Victoria of a representative and add another to those from New South Wales. These, and every other cause of strife within reach, are being sedulously cultivated, so that when Mr. Reid meets Parliament in a fortnight he will have a hornet's nest about his ears. It may be that he is not unwilling to meet it, his mature conclusion being that the sooner he gets to the country the better. If the House directly by vote, or indirectly by delays, challenges his conduct of its business, it would suit him to dash to a dissolution rather than await the inevitable emergence of the fiscal issue, which must shatter his present combination. The Labour party is feeling the force of his tongue in New South Wales and in Southern Queensland, as it has already felt it in Victoria, in Western and in South Australia, and is becoming more restive the oftener he speaks. It is, as always, ready to employ any dissolution against its divided opponents in the Commonwealth, and quite prepared to copy its last month's tactics in this State. But the Caucus would prefer to deepen the existing Federal confusion for a time in order to grasp the largest possible share of power from the discords of its rivals. Seeing that the Ministry has no majority, that its dual party has no positive policy, that Mr. **Watson**, with the aid of Mr. Isaacs, can bring it down at any moment, and that Sir Josiah Symon has furnished them with at least two opportunities of scattering the supporters of the joint Cabinet, it is clear that the future is more in their hands than in those of the

Prime Minister. In party generalship he is *facile princeps*, and may therefore tempt them to overreach themselves so as to play his game in spite of themselves. Apparently boldness of plan and swiftness of action are his only hopes. Under such conditions prediction is at a discount; it is reduced to guess-work. The fact that Mr. Reid wishes to rush a dissolution may warn the Opposition from obliging so redoubtable a master of manoeuvres with the opportunity he seeks. But it is at least questionable whether they can keep their men in hand long enough and closely enough to refuse him his chance. In any case the anti-Labour parties, though now rallying in New South Wales with a fervour of unanimity that promises great things there, and may spread to the less united States on either border, unless they are knitted together without delay by these or some similar means, will go to the poll with no better prospects than they did in South Australia. The Labour party will not gain a Federal majority, but even if they lose a few seats the probability is that the coalition will either have broken or be at breaking point when the election is over. The three parties would then face each other in a new Commonwealth Parliament under circumstances that would leave Mr. Watson the balance of power if they do not at once put the Protectionist–Labour Alliance upon the Treasury benches. Having had one experience of holding office without authority the Caucus might possibly insist upon keeping the cross benches, offering “support for concessions” in legislation and administration to those whom they would put in power. But even if the present House survives, and Mr. Reid struggles through the session, a feat of skill probably beyond him, he has then to announce his fiscal policy. That must be Free Trade, and must therefore dissolve his Cabinet and his following early next year, if they should live so long. The South Australian precedent, unless in the meantime it is laid to heart as a warning, would then be followed exactly, except that Mr. Reid, like Mr. Darling, would be at the head of a strong section, and, unlike Mr. Butler, who was forsaken in his hour of need, would be able to make a desperate struggle for life. At present Mr. Watson’s chances of an increase of strength are not as favourable as Mr. Price’s were, nor is Mr. Deakin by any means assured of Mr. Peake’s small measure of success. The likeliest outcome would be another almost equally divided Parliament and a prolongation of the present sterility and instability.

C. R.

*[N.B.—Since this letter left Australia the Reid Ministry has fallen, and Mr. Deakin has formed a Ministry.]*

## GREATER BRITAIN

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### THE ELECTIONS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

(BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT IN AUSTRALIA)

Last month's letter began with the remark that once more South Australia had struck a keynote of warning for the Commonwealth, and closed with a sketch of the consequences of the next Federal election. Since that was written exactly the same note has been suddenly sounded in Federal politics and followed by strange events. The Commonwealth has been within an ace of a dissolution, that would have been conducted under similar conditions to those which have left us uncertain of everything in our new State Legislature. If Federal members had been sent to the country they would have gone in three parties and returned in three parties, though doubtless with altered numbers, just as happened in South Australia. The new members who assemble in Adelaide next week will, if the quidnuncs are to be believed, put Mr. Butler off and a Liberal-Labour alliance on the Ministerial side of the House. The probabilities point to a Coalition Administration. In the Federal Parliament a new administration is already installed with a similar combination behind them, though there the Labour Party occupies the Ministerial cross-benches, or corner, while the Protectionists only—though smaller in numbers—fill the Cabinet. The parallel need not be pushed too far, but is sufficiently remarkable to be worth noting because it supplies another illustration of the growing likeness between the politics of the seven Governments of Australia. Nowhere in the world is there so much legislative machinery for so small a population, and nowhere is it more actively employed in exercising its authority. In spite of the local conditions, which differ greatly throughout the immense extent of Australia, by degrees what may be termed general influences are conquering and assimilating the contrasts that stood out in strong relief a few years ago. Our public affairs cannot be called monotonous, but they are becoming uniform.

Perhaps in less time than we suppose they may from this starting-point tend to become national.

The political tipster is so often at fault among us that he is entitled to a little credit for his success during the last few weeks. The fall of the Reid Ministry was not a surprise even to casual onlookers, for it had been on the cards ever since it was formed. It was weak because it was a coalition between conflicting policies, and because its majority was nominal from the first. In the letter which appeared in this *Review* last December, the situation was thus summed up: "Mr. Reid took office with a majority of two in a House of seventy-five members, and at best is not likely to increase his total ... Whether he can carry on with such a small margin may well be doubted. Either next week, next month, or at latest next year (1905) there must be an appeal to the country". In the January number the forebodings were repeated:

The general situation, though less acute than it was, is really more critical because it implies a complete volte-face. The Protectionists who went to the country against Tariff Revision in the direction of reduced duties are now themselves demanding Tariff Revision in the direction of increased duties. An inquiry is to be held which will put the whole of the present schedules of imports into the melting-pot. They cannot remain there long. Recommendations are sure to be made by the Commission, which must be resisted by Mr. Reid and his free importers if they mean higher duties, or by his Protectionist colleagues if they mean lower duties. The Ministry cannot hope to survive either of these strains.

In my March letter it was said of Preferential Trade: "This great national issue is sure to be revived immediately the House meets in June next (1905). If the Reid Administration is not sent to the country on some other ground, Ministers must once more vote against each other upon it, and after that it will scarcely be possible to keep them together". The general fluidity of our parties and programmes, the vagaries of leaders, and suddenness of the transformations that policies undergo were described in detail, and with illustrations, in the April letter. The Ministry, it was explained, were in

pursuit of a policy which will retain what Protectionist support they have, and be appetising enough to retain their free importing majority in the country. The outlook at present is anything but hopeful for them ... The existing coalition is founded upon the maintenance of fiscal peace. Both Ministers and their supporters must be divided into two hostile camps directly fiscal war breaks out ... All the elements of an explosion are therefore close at hand, and looking forward it is hard to divine how Mr. Reid can avoid it or prevent the wrecking of his Cabinet in consequence ... The fact that stands out menacing his future despite all tactics, is that directly Sir John Quick asks for a further instalment of Protection at Mr. Reid's hands, the life of his Ministry is not worth a pin's fee.

Last month's letter pictured the coming crisis as already upon us.

When Mr. Reid meets Parliament in less than a fortnight he will have a hornet's nest about his ears, it may be that he is not unwilling to meet it, his mature conclusion being that the sooner he gets to the country the better. If the House directly by vote or indirectly by delays challenges his conduct of its business, it would suit him to dash to a dissolution rather than await the inevitable emergence of the fiscal issue which must shatter his present combination ... Apparently boldness of plan and swiftness of action are his only hopes. Under such conditions prediction is at a discount; it is reduced to guesswork.

The guess proved remarkably accurate because it was by boldness of plan and swiftness of action that the late Prime Minister dashed towards a dissolution, and being foiled of his aim saw the reins pass from his hands to those of his late ally Mr. Deakin. His overthrow, as the extracts cited show, has been imminent for many months. For the reasons given it was clearly impossible for him to hold his coalition together. When the crisis came the unexpected elements were the time, the manner and the man to whom his destiny delivered him. As a newspaper *Critic* has said, "Each leader was in the grip of circumstances, and was as helplessly carried along to the catastrophe as are the characters in a Greek tragedy".<sup>123</sup>

Looked at from a sufficient distance and in large outline the personal bitterness always evoked by a change of Ministry, though in this instance it is more acrid than usual, appears quite futile. Mr. Reid charges Mr. Deakin with betraying him because in a speech to his constituents he mercilessly analysed the situation and forecast the revival of the fiscal issue at the next election whenever it might occur without first apprising either the Prime Minister or his Protectionist colleagues of his views and intentions.<sup>124</sup> Mr. Deakin first insists that his views had been made known to Mr. Reid and some of his colleagues upon the two important subjects of his speech long before he gave them to the public.<sup>125</sup> Then in his turn he denounces Mr. Reid's treachery because, without notice to his Protectionist allies, he attempted a surprise dissolution<sup>126</sup> in order to bury the fiscal recommendations of the Tariff Commission for another three years notwithstanding his promise to define his policy before May 1906, as under their agreement he was pledged to do. Another breach of faith was also alleged because of his discarding without warning the programme of practical legislation included in the agreement as a chief justification for the coalition.<sup>127</sup> Mr. Reid retorts that the whole of the Ballarat speech discovered such an alienation of mind and purpose on the part of the joint author of the coalition, that the Cabinet must have forfeited its self-respect if it consented to continue to exist under the "contemptuous tolerance" of Mr. Deakin.<sup>128</sup> Their recriminations, prolonged in

Melbourne and likely to be renewed when the House meets there next week, are to be regretted because they lower the tone of public debate, none too high already. We have not yet seen in any of our Legislatures a Minister howled down for an hour or two at a stretch until the fruitless sitting broke up in utter disorder; and in some States, such as South Australia, what are called “scenes” during the Session are almost unknown. But the larger Assemblies of our Eastern States are not always orderly in behaviour or decorous in speech. Impeachments of members by members and imputations of motives are too common even in the Federal Parliament, where the standard of conduct on the whole is above the Australian average. But, no matter how its change of Government has been brought about, the event has been pending for such a time, and had such obvious causes at work to effect it, that as the citations from my letters prove, the occurrence was only a question of time and opportunity. The smoke of controversy between the leaders and clangour of ancient provincial discords between New South Wales and Victoria cannot disguise the inevitableness of some better readjustment of parties. Three Prime Ministers have come from the first State, and now a Victorian for the second time steps to the helm. Four of our five Ministries have had a Protectionist chief, though Mr. Watson’s as well as Mr. Reid’s represented a negative policy.

The *magnum opus* of the first Administration under Sir **Edmund Barton** was a half-and-half Protectionist Tariff. The next three Governments exhausted the energies of their short lives upon the Arbitration Act. Now once more we are back to the Tariff again with a Cabinet including several of the Ministers whose original proposals for Customs duties were mutilated three years ago. They held office then with the help of some Labour members who were Protectionists, and at times of others who distrusted Mr. Reid more than Mr. Barton, though the latter had been a consistent adversary of theirs in his own State. Mr. Deakin, who next succeeded, went out of office somewhat to their regret, because he would not consent to what he held to be an invasion of the rights of the States in the Arbitration Act. The Labour party came in under Mr. Watson, and went out when Mr. Deakin joined Mr. Reid in refusing to support a section of the same Act granting preferential employment to unionists when they were in a minority in the calling in which the preference was sought. Mr. Reid and Mr. **McLean**, an old Protectionist Premier of Victoria, then took the reins, but, owing to a secession of nearly half the Protectionist party, only just contrived to reach the recess by appointing a Commission to examine the working of the Tariff. Mr. Deakin lately announced to his constituents that as the direct result of the appointment of this body the fiscal question must come to the front whenever the next election was held.<sup>129</sup> Thereupon Mr. Reid, who had been proposing a renewal of the existing fiscal truce for another Parliament in order that he might head a joint attack upon the Labour party, cancelled the draft speech partly prepared for

the Governor-General recounting the business measures of a non-party character intended to be dealt with this Session. He substituted another and much briefer speech, asking only the passage of a Bill for the redistribution of seats in New South Wales and Victoria, so as to permit of an early appeal to the country. He did this without consulting his own followers or the Protectionists who had sat behind him. The latter promptly and unanimously resented his action as a complete repudiation of the agreement under which they had sustained him in office, and entrusted Mr. Deakin with the task of moving an amendment regretting the abandonment of the practical measures promised by Mr. Reid a week before. He moved, and the day after the Government was defeated by the very large majority of seventeen votes. Mr. Deakin, with four of his former colleagues and four other Protectionists, resumed the places on the Treasury Benches which they vacated fourteen months before when they possessed the same programme and the same support. Except for the loss of the Protectionists, who having joined Mr. Reid with the approval of their leader remained loyal to him to the end, the general position with which the House commenced its existence has been exactly restored within its walls to-day.

The change of Ministry accomplished in Melbourne, like that which promises to take effect in South Australia next week, means much more than a change of persons and policies. It implies a change of relations between parties, of electoral methods, and of parliamentary groupings. In a sense, it is a change backwards, or by way of reversion. It brings once more the old three parties into the field, and the tripartite competition between them, which Mr. Deakin more than all the other politicians has always deplored. After appealing in vain while he was in office for an open and recognised alliance between the Protectionists and one of the other parties, based upon some programme of legislation upon which they could agree, he retired in favour of Mr. Watson. When the Labour leader made no approaches of the kind and drew all his colleagues from his own ranks, Mr. Deakin entered into an agreement with Mr. Reid, in May 1904, which each now argues has been improperly terminated by the other. Its purpose was to form a united party to carry out a specified programme of useful legislation until the Tariff should be ripe for recommendation in the light of our experience of its working. For the time this would have reduced the three parties to two, though the coalition under Mr. Reid and Mr. Deakin was only to be non-fiscal until May 1906 at latest. Then the Government was to declare its fiscal policy in time for the elections at the end of that year. This ambitious project failed at its very inception. The Protectionists, by large majorities, declined to make any compact with Mr. Reid, or to endorse that submitted by their leader. No new united party came into existence; but when the battle on the Arbitration Act brought Mr. Reid and Mr. Deakin a small majority, the coalition formed under their auspices commenced with the active and open hostility of nearly half the Protectionists. These entered into

a formal written alliance with the Labour party on their own account, so that the effect of Mr. Deakin's effort to reduce the three parties to two was to increase them to four. But the House being divided between them, two parties sitting in alliance on each side, it still seemed possible that before the fiscal issue revived next year, there might be a welding of each couple into two new parties. Then would have followed a clear contest between them in the country for the control of its policy. Surveying this outlook with expectancy in October last, my forecast was that this desirable end might be hoped for as the fruit of an even temporary union of parties if "interstate jealousies, old party animosities, personal feuds, and especially fiscal controversies" could be kept under. To put a plain choice effectively to the people, it was necessary that the attention of the electors should not be distracted nor their strength divided. Their response could not be absolutely final; it would of course have been open to revision at any other election, but at least for the next Parliament the atmosphere would have been cleared by a precise verdict upon the aims and organisation of the Labour party. Without doubt the judgment given under these circumstances would have administered a decisive check to the aggressiveness of the extremists in its Press and upon its leagues now exercising an undue influence upon the mass of the Moderates, who compose its main body. That was the design and the hope last year, since frustrated, first by the split in the Protectionists, and next by the feebleness of Mr. Reid's tactics, due in all probability in some degree to the uncertainty of his tenure—no comprehensive funeral of jealousies, animosities, or feuds was possible. The fiscal controversy was rekindled by the investigations of the Tariff Commission, and gradually spread across the whole outlook in Victoria. The co-operation between the Free Importers and Protectionists, who were keeping Mr. Reid in power, was plainly about to reach its end, as he very well knew. Whether he anticipated that the run of luck upon which he always counts would pull him through, or had any way of escape in his mind, cannot now be determined. Directly the Ballarat speech exposed the true situation and foreshadowed for the coming election—due in December 1906—an independent Protectionist party following its old programme of 1903, Mr. Reid challenged his fate, and found it. The two-party scheme vanished into thin air. The Protectionists re-united at once under Mr. Deakin. The three parties, drawing a long breath of surprise at the rapidity of the transformation, faced each other critically once more. Their pilgrimage in this Parliament began apart. Each since then has had its hour of official pre-eminence, though in Mr. Reid's case it was shared with his Protectionist allies. More experienced and, it is to be hoped, in wiser mood after some rather bewildering adventures, they begin once more where they began in February 1904—with three parties—Protectionist, Labour and Free Importers—watching each other askance, and Mr. Deakin nominally in command.

In the April *Review* the federal situation was summed up in this sentence, “The Protectionists have an efficient policy without an effective party; the Free Importers a negative policy, and a party effective only for resistance; while the Labour caucus has an aggressive party, wedded to a defective policy with a class colouring”. To this has now to be added the important Parliamentary consideration that by the latest shuffle the last has regained the balance of power. The Prime Minister is not strong enough to carry a single measure in either House by his own support; he can expect nothing from Mr. Reid, and must, therefore, rely for everything upon Mr. Watson’s good-will. The land between them is of the slightest, for, unlike the written alliance concluded last year with the Radical Protectionists, and just repudiated by a Federal Labour Conference, no common terms have been agreed upon either for legislation or future elections. Mr. Deakin, in a letter to Mr. Watson, intimated his adherence to his original programme of 1903, whose main features are expressed in the watchwords, “Protection, Preferential Trade, and Population”, and the last sentence of his Ballarat speech, when, after strong references to the urgency of improved defences, he called for the “preservation of Australia for the Australians and for the Empire”. Mr. Watson replied to his letter by sending him a resolution carried in his caucus, agreeing to give a general support to the Government in the transaction of business, and the carrying out of its policy. As a binding contract this is not worth the paper it is written on, and one cannot easily understand why such a bare formality was resorted to, unless it was to safeguard both parties from the suspicion that either had committed itself to the other. At all events, the “understanding” must go far beyond these empty phrases if it is to have reality. The Commonwealth Labour Conference just held in Melbourne has advertised its absolute independence of both its rivals with unmistakable emphasis. My April letter closed with an examination of Labour prospects, concluding that if an alliance with the Protectionists were endorsed Mr. Watson could at once have ousted Mr. Reid and come back from the constituencies with a working majority. In the meantime by his aid Mr. Deakin has replaced Mr. Reid, and now the Conference has positively refused to put Protection into the party programme, or to authorise any alliances beyond those made in and for a particular Parliament. This means that the new Prime Minister may be supported by the Labour party till the next dissolution. It probably also permits Mr. Price, the Labour leader in South Australia, and Mr. Peake, the principal of our Radicals, to make a bargain of similar duration. The plain intimation that though they will remain in friendly relations while it suits them in the House, the Labour members and their comrades will treat Protectionists or Free Importers alike as enemies when they go to the polls, does much more than limit the currency of their treaties. It alters their whole character. The maxim that foes are best treated as possible friends and friends as possible foes hardly expresses their

idea, because their foes can never become more than momentary allies, and while allies know for certain that they must soon become foes. A common basis of mutual confidence cannot be obtained under these conditions, except so far as it may be personal between man and man. Neither Mr. Deakin nor Mr. Peake can afford to rest upon this transient combination of antagonistic forces with any security.

The next point to notice is that when our regular elections arrive in the Commonwealth next year or in South Australia in 1908 we shall be liable to see the recent electoral experiences of the latter repeated in both. While Free Importers and Protectionists are fighting each other at the ballot-box, some other Labour candidates every here and there will slip into the citadel, which they could not otherwise capture under cover of the fray. Until the fiscal issue is settled, this must continue to be the course of affairs. The trend of opinion and of interest in Australia seems to be irresistibly towards Protection, but until that affects New South Wales there is but scant hope of a potent union between the opposing economic camps. Should it occur, it will not be on Mr. Reid's impalpable policy of denial, but on a firm foundation of positive proposals. In the meantime, nothing is solid in the Parliament that has destroyed three federal Administrations in its first eighteen months. The youthful and most vigorous half of its life is over, and it must be a very sanguine person who looks for a genuine reformation at this stage of its erratic career. There is no guarantee that it will be able to reach the maturity of its possible three years. There are sobering considerations of a kind. The prospect of an earlier appeal to the electors may tend to sober some of the unruly but not all. The ambition to acquire a tardy reputation for business ability will doubtless stimulate the thoughtful. But these after all are not the most effective motives of political action. Successive changes of Government have embittered many concerned in them. Each party in turn has been exasperated by the onsets of the other two. The essay to accomplish useful humdrum work at this late hour can scarcely prove successful in the face of such obvious obstacles as these when supplemented by those that are less manifest.

But for the spasm of indignation provoked by Mr. Reid's ambush, it may be doubted whether Mr. Deakin and his colleagues now in office could have been induced to make an effort to redeem the situation, realising, as any dispassionate outsider must, the hopelessness of their quest. Risks as great are not infrequent in Australia. Evidently the breasts in which hope springs the most rapidly are those of politicians, for no dangers and no hardships seem to deter them from the pursuit of power. But until the fiscal ferment expends its energies, and until the provincial cross-currents now active are overcome by an outburst of national feeling, the

Commonwealth's political future will remain perturbed, uncertain, and unsatisfactory. The new Protectionist Ministry in Melbourne, and that about to be formed in Adelaide by a coalition for this Parliament between the Liberal Independents or Radicals and the Labour members, who out-number them by five to three, are after all both of them interim administrations pending a rearrangement of parties. Mr. Morgan in Queensland occupies the same position, and is equally dependent on a number of men around him, who sit in a separate caucus to determine the length of his lease of power. Even in Western Australia, where Mr. Darglish, the Labour leader, holds office, a little group of Independents necessary to his Ministerial existence keeps him in check. The balance of power is to-day in the hands of Labour in the Commonwealth and in three of its States; but it is a small balance in each, which the other two parties can at will transfer to a joint account.

C. R.

## GREATER BRITAIN

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### STATE AND FEDERAL POLITICS

(BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT IN AUSTRALIA)

Australian politics the more they change the more they are the same everywhere within our borders. The sameness is not superficial, nor made up of resemblances fortuitous or fleeting. The stream of tendency is general, all but universal, and it sets steadily one way. The Commonwealth is a real whole, or is becoming one when viewed from the political aspect, its legislatures and administrations acting under a single supreme law of development. Of course, one or other appears exceptional now and then, when it is whirled away by casual eddies or baffling cross-currents for a moment, instead of following the main flow. Uniformity of a broad kind is soon restored. Within the last month South Australia has had a new Ministry, and Western Australia attempted to find one until overcome as if by sheer exhaustion of personal possibilities. The Commonwealth Ministry of Mr. Deakin has passed through its baptism of fire and commenced business in earnest in the face of what threatens to become a guerrilla warfare with exasperating interruptions of business by the Opposition, such as were familiar in the House of Commons this year. Happily the three great eastern States are settling down to their sessions in a fairly businesslike way, and without much prospect of transformations. The promise of another fat season, together with the financial ease produced by accumulating funds, are having their effect in soothing wounded susceptibilities. Hence, for the moment, throughout the whole group our Ministries—both old and new—appear fairly safe against accidents. We have therefore good hope of a brief breathing-space, except that there comes from far off New Zealand the noise of captains and the shouting as the invincible Mr. Seddon meets his adversaries in Parliament in the preparatory encounters leading up to a General Election, which, according to present appearances, will prove the most serious he has ever had to face.

Three Governments out of our seven have their spurs to win and four are fairly in the saddle, but the trend of legislation in all is and will be similar in principle. Even the legislatures in which the Labour Party sits in opposition are extending their already multifarious forms of State action. In New South Wales a Government Land

Bank is projected, by joining its existing institutions which receive the people's savings in order that it may make advances to settlers upon easier terms than existing private agencies. In Victoria, the State has purchased a large clay deposit in order to obtain its bricks cheaper than the local manufacturers, who have combined to fix prices, will supply them. In the former colony the annual subventions from the Treasury for roads and bridges are intended to be reduced by an extension of local government, while in the latter similar bodies entrusted with the control of country water schemes are being displaced by the Government. As in New South Wales, the new municipalities are to be endowed with very large powers of undertaking works at the expense of their ratepayers; the final effect may also be a restriction of the field of private activity. Thus, the two wealthiest and most populous States' Governments that owe nothing to the Labour Party are following in its wake, though with slower and more circumspect paces. Well may the observer conclude that the Australian tendency to experiment with State ownership is universal.

Those experiments embrace the imposition of commercial restrictions as well as commercial enterprises undertaken by the community on its own account. For instance, there has been an unearthing of some egregious scandals in connection with very large payments made by Victoria to foster the production and export of butter. The transactions took place before federation and continued for some years, during which the oversea trade in this commodity marched on marvellously. The figures were frequently cited as an instance of the excellent results obtainable by judicious grants from the public treasury to promote the expansion of a great rural industry. Afterwards the knowledge gradually crept out that of £100,000 paid in bonuses almost all had gone, not as intended into the pockets of the farmers who sold the butter nor of the public who bought it, but of the agents who arranged for its shipment and appropriated the cash to themselves as an unearned addition to their liberal commissions. To see the evil was to determine to remedy it, and now the local assembly has before it a measure levelled at all "secret commissions", which was introduced by a Ministerial speech declaring that the whole of modern commercial life is honeycombed with corrupt payments of this nature.<sup>131</sup> The cure provided is so drastic that it is alleged to be worse than the disease. Though this can hardly be, the promptitude with which a new penal statute is being placed upon the Statute Book is another illustration of the facility with which the powers of Parliament are invoked in this country. A supplementary measure to meet the case of commissions upon business done partly in one State and partly in another has promptly followed in the Federal Parliament. Mr. Isaacs, the Radical Attorney-General, has also fathered a new scheme for a union trade-mark or label, that is greatly perturbing our Chambers of

Commerce. In these proposals the Labour Party has had little part. It has not been in office of late, except in Western Australia and in the Queensland coalition, but its influence there and in the other States is always thrown into the balance in favour of State intervention.

Where the Labour Party are in office the same tendency, though more avowed, is not much more marked in fact, probably because at present they of themselves have not anywhere a majority. In South Australia they take the lead in the new coalition, Mr. Price being Premier in the Assembly and his fellow Labour member, Mr. Kirkpatrick, speaking for them in the Council, where he cannot be said to lead, simply because he has no follower. The other two portfolios go to Mr. Peake and Mr. O'Loughlin as representing the nine Radicals, with whose aid the Price–Peake coalition number twenty-four members against seventeen who sit in opposition in the popular Chamber. This combination was by no means imperative. There was no real reason why the nine should not have supported the seventeen, and by means of a Butler–Peake coalition have left the Labour fifteen to play the part of critics of a moderate policy. A conspicuous want of tact and judgment drove the nine into Mr. Price's arms, but at the same time obliged him to push forward only that portion of his programme which was already theirs. As a result the new Government's policy for the session is in all essentials that which would have been submitted by Mr. Butler if Mr. Peake had been his coadjutor. The two differences are that while the late Premier might have induced our Legislative Council to assist him in compromises of some kind, Mr. Price can have no such hope. The second Chamber as a whole is absolutely antagonistic to him, his proposals, and his party. The outcome will probably be a battle between the two Houses, from which our State will have little to gain. It will turn upon an amendment of the Constitution, affecting the franchise of the Upper House, a body already so hostile to the Ministry that the Address in reply to the Governor's speech was only carried as an act of courtesy to his Excellency in one minute and without a word of comment, on the motion of two professed opponents. The other difference is that Mr. Butler was trusted at the Treasury, where he has shown himself the most vigilant, cautious, and painstaking guardian of the public purse. Mr. Peake's financial quality has to be proved, while Mr. Price's party declarations against borrowing have to be harmonised with his present promises to build a couple of railways and undertake drainage works that cannot be carried out from revenue. So far no increase of taxation is foreshadowed, except upon landed estates of more than £5000 value, a proposal not at all likely to receive the concurrence of the Council. Here, as elsewhere, it would seem that the Labour Party takes the political reins only upon condition of placing the control of the brake in other hands.

Australian parties, for reasons several times previously described, have no such fixity of policy or distinctiveness of organisation as obtain in Great Britain. Changes of Ministry in South Australia or in the sister States mean much less, and in many recent instances imply little more, than the transference of administration from one set of men to another. Even when the Labour Party has come into power in Commonwealth or State, the ordinary limitations have prevailed to such an extent that they have at once curbed and tamed the exuberant energies of its leaders. Of course, they have never been strong enough to take a free hand. Their successes, while in a minority, are due in some degree to their unity, but to a greater degree to the disunity among their rivals. Our more orthodox parties are always hampered by internal dissensions and by a preference for negative platforms which, whatever their merits, do not appeal to our people. Above all things, Australian electors look for effort, activity, resourcefulness, and promises of better things. No matter how frequently they are disappointed, they insist upon fresh experiments. It is politicians like Mr. Seddon who “do things”, or attempt to do them, who win their applause—nursing infants, housing of workmen, life insurance, fire insurance, or coal mining, all come within his scope. Do anything rather than do nothing is in general a fair summary of his policy. That, too, is the popular creed over here. Even to undo something is in the eyes of the masses preferable to a passive acceptance of things as they are. To form and then reform, to make fresh essays and dally with tempting adventures, to be up-to-date, searching for novelties, and seeking to realise the speculations of less self-confident nations, appear to be the highest ambitions of our majorities. Perhaps this is due to the fact that we have a virgin field, and that we can afford to run risks. The difference between Mr. Butler and the South Australian Radicals was relatively very small, yet the most stubborn adversaries of the Labour Party would not allow him to bridge it, as he might have done without sacrificing a single principle. There are not a few of these unwisely obstinate friends of his whose avowed desire is to see the ultras they detest saddled with the responsibilities of power in the hope of an after reaction against caucus control. But this never has come in previous Parliaments, perhaps because the Labour Party has not been actually in power. And in all probability it never will come, because if they were in power they would need to become as moderate as Mr. Watson was in the Commonwealth and Mr. Darglish is in Western Australia. The hypothetical gain alleged to be sought by these desperate tactics with us has covered personal spites and jealousies more often than any nobler aim—Mr. Butler is out of office to-day because of them; Mr. Price is in office to-day because of the unreasonableness of his bitterest opponents. The fallacy of their theory of reaction is shown by the fact that the Kingston administration, which accomplished more for Labour than its own party ever could have done or has done elsewhere, contained no Labour representative, though the Cabinet then consisted of six members instead of four. We have just had another lesson of the same character. Seats were lost at the late election owing to the absence of co-operation

among Ministerialists, and then after that the control of the executive was thrown away because of even worse dissensions among them. The victories of Labour in South Australia, as in Australia generally, have been due to the fatal divisions among its adversaries, and particularly to those brought about by men who are at the very opposite pole of political opinion to that of the Labour League. They are often responsible for the adoption of extreme measures which they first gloomily forebode, next fiercely denounce, and finally bring about by their own unreasoning pose as irreconcilables.

A still better illustration of the provisional experimentalism of our politics has just been furnished by a next-door neighbour. But although Western Australia is more closely allied to South Australia than any other State. Perth is little understood in Adelaide. Perhaps this is because of the entire contrast in the circumstances, and the difference between the stages of growth. Mr. DGLISH, the leader of the Labour Party in the West, has been for some time head of a Ministry consisting solely of members of his own Party, but depending for its existence from day to day upon four "independents" who assisted to bring it into power and keep it there. The price of their support, however, was the laying aside of all the most distinctive and extreme articles of the Labour platform, and the acceptance of some others to which the caucus has always been averse. The purchase of the Midland Railway and its land grants, the proposal to allow a private railway to be constructed in the North-West, and a recourse to borrowing for promising schemes of public works, were being forced upon them. The Labour Leagues and some Unions protested against such surrenders, angry resolutions were passed, and revolts in the party only partially stifled with great difficulty. The administration itself gradually settled down, becoming less and less distinguishable from those that had preceded it. Seeing that Mr. DGLISH was put into office to reverse the policy of the past, and to introduce an entirely new order of things by immediate legislative enactments, this sober course was profoundly unsatisfactory to the ardent believers in the prophecies that a new heaven and a new earth were to appear when the Labour Party took the direction of affairs into its own hands. Depending as he did upon the Independents, it was not possible for the Premier to attempt much, and even with their aid he was allowed to do little to achieve the mildest expectations of his backers.

Besides this ferment education by experience began to affect the more capable—the Premier, Mr. DGLISH, modelling himself upon his Federal leaders. Mr. WATSON exhibited a moderation of tone and reasonableness of demeanour that gained him as much confidence with the public as it cost him enthusiasm among the zealots of the Leagues. His ablest colleague, Mr. JOHNSON, treading the same path with more rapid steps, has frankly told them that the *intransigent* tactics by which the Labour Party

climbed into power were shaped with an eye to Opposition purposes only. They were wholly inapplicable to Ministerial work and its responsibilities, and it was essential that they should be radically reshaped unless the party were to remain content with perpetual opposition, leaving to others the administration of the laws that Labour pressure obliged them to pass. One practical application of the new knowledge gained was the summary ejection from the Cabinet of two Ministers who had failed to exhibit sufficient capacity for their posts. They had been effective agitators outside and orators inside the House, but when weighed in the balances of executive power had proved conspicuously wanting. Naturally this disciplinary authority drove the rejected ones into furious rebellion. The previous revolt in the party outside the Legislature became a revolt among the members themselves, headed by an ex-Minister. Amidst this excitement Mr. Daghish faced the House with a programme in which Labour ideals in very small proportions were mingled with a batch of practical measures such as any Administration would have undertaken. The Independents professed to be dissatisfied, and small as their numbers were the fact that without them the Government would be left in a minority enforced attention to their demands. The Opposition, having united under Mr. Rason, an able and cautious leader, bided its time with excellent judgment, content not to pluck the political fruit until it was ripe. The loss of Mr. James's energy and eagerness for combat was more than made up by the Fabian tactics of his successor, whose opportunist methods exactly suited the situation. His party were growing together—needing but a few votes to make a majority. Ministers had to confess their fairness. Mr. Moran, with his three Independent comrades, ostentatiously held the balance of power, but after all they were only four. It was under such critical conditions that the current Session began.

It would be unreasonable from every point of view to expect that a little assembly of fifty members, many of them with the education of working men, and all of them untrained in public business, should exhibit upon their tiny scale and in novel conditions the same orderly Parliamentary procedure that has gradually been built up at Westminster. But it may help to remove some of the prepossessions with which the story of the legislatures are glanced over at home if the series of incidents that followed the opening of the Western Australian Session by Sir F. Bedford are casually noted. The first shot was fired by Mr. Moran when he privately informed Mr. Daghish of his dissatisfaction with the Ministerial policy as announced, and with the prospects of carrying on business as the Cabinet was constituted. A conference then took place between the Labour Party, headed by its Cabinet, and the four Independents, when a series of propositions were debated of an extraordinary nature. The first was that Mr. Moran should be accepted as Premier without portfolio and without salary. The second that he should take an honorary position as first-lieutenant, leading in the absence of the Premier. Both these suggestions were rejected because they struck at the solidarity of the caucus and its exclusiveness, and, consequently, the conference

separated without result. The second shot was then fired, and again by Mr. Moran, who tabled an amendment to the address in reply, setting out the deficiencies in the Governor's speech. This meant the downfall of the Cabinet, on the assumption that the Opposition would seize the chance of putting Mr. Daghish out by adding their votes to those of the Independents. Then followed the unexpected and unparalleled. Rather than yield to Mr. Moran, whose dictatorship was becoming too manifest, the Ministry and the Opposition met in secret conclave to consider the possibilities of a junction of forces. Nothing just like this has occurred, even in Australian legislatures, though there have been many curious blendings of old opponents and coalitions of rival parties. When, last year, Mr. Deakin negotiated with Mr. Watson, and then with Mr. Reid, for the formation of an alliance in the Commonwealth, he seems to have acted on his own initiative, for his party, as a whole, refused to endorse either union. If an agreement had been arrived at between Mr. Daghish and Mr. Rason it would have been the most astonishing of all possible combinations, because it would have witnessed the merging of the hitherto uncompromising Labour Party with their most uncompromising foes. Of course it failed, but the fact that such a meeting was ever held, and more than all that it should have closed without bitterness on either side, is more amazing still. Of course the dissentients in the caucus raged, as well they might, at the bare conception of a partnership that would have destroyed its identity by dissolving their separateness and forfeiting their programme for a time. The contingency thus brought home to Mr. Moran led him to seek to withdraw his amendment, and, when that was refused, actually drove him to vote against it. The Premier, who had made a manly reply to the attacks from the disappointed members of his party, then met his caucus with the offer of his resignation. This being refused, a peace was somehow patched up between him and his recalcitrant associates that is not likely to possess much permanence. But the little drama of the past few weeks will not soon be forgotten, both because of its unintentionally humorous caricature of what we call responsible government, and its curious illustration of the extraordinary manner in which, under stress, programmes and parties may be mingled with one another. In practical measures a similar solution is always at hand, the differences between opponents being customarily in degree and not in kind. The real contrasts, if one may so express it, are to be found in ideals usually remote rather than in the manner of giving effect to them at a given moment. Another conclusion to be drawn from this and other signs of the times is that the weight of responsibility now being imposed upon the Labour Party by and as the fruit of its successes inclines either to cause a breach between its chieftains and the ruck of their following, or else to transmute the party into a less specialised and more temperate body approaching in type if not in organisation to the ordinary parties with which, in this respect, it has hitherto been in contrast as well as in conflict.

The upshot of a calm scrutiny of Commonwealth politics is that its dominant forces are those whose genesis and development have been described in previous letters. The natural conditions and circumstances under which colonisation has been conducted in Australia coerced us into extensions of the activities of government. These, though by no means a series of brilliant successes, worked well in the early days of settlement, and work well enough now, though the ever increasing complexity of the social, industrial, and political factors in play in this country are exposing the policy to fresh risks and unsuspected dangers. Whether we can adapt our institutions to these new strains remains to be seen. There can be no doubt that sufficient tests will be found before they are abandoned. Our people are still far from being convinced that the expedients which have given us, speaking generally, excellent municipal government, an efficient railway service, and most of the conveniences and comforts of modern European life in a young country distant from the centres of civilisation, have yet exhausted their power. Faith in legislation and administration has had many shocks, but has survived them all. State management has not been discredited because some failures have been recorded. It is still relied upon by the people as a panacea for most of the ills to which we are heirs. Those who come most into line with this national stream of tendency are those who obtain most support and exercise most influence. The Labour Party itself, despite its discipline, its enthusiasm, and its breadth of appeal, could not stem this current, and has gained in power only as it has gone with it. The early attempts at Socialism of the German pattern have been utterly abandoned. State Socialism, at first distrusted and condemned, then endured, has now been fervently embraced. The Labour organisations live and grow to-day not because of their character or appeal to the wage-earners, but because they come closest to the popular belief in State action by their wholesale offers to make further experiments with it.

The fall of the Butler Ministry was not owing to its antagonism to the movement towards State-intervention: nor is the retention of Mr. Dalglish owing to his sympathy with it. The fact that one has resigned while the other remains is almost wholly attributable to political antipathies and attachments and the narrowness of the choice of potent personalities in our small legislatures. But, on the other hand, the sudden exit of Mr. Reid, the late Premier of the Commonwealth, was undoubtedly a direct result of his attempt to rest supine in federal policy. His reign could only have been prolonged while he was consenting to follow the House of Representatives instead of leading it. He would have followed it dutifully if he had realised his position, though then he must have calculated upon implicit obedience on the part of his immediate following among the Free Importers, whose creed compels them to anathematise every mode of State exertion without regard to its appropriateness or efficiency. But the tide had risen so high during the recess that when the late Prime Minister met Parliament he found his retreat cut off. His desperate expedient of plunging into the breakers only hastened his end. The new Ministry, on the other hand, was so far in

touch with public sentiment that it at once tabled a series of purposeful measures. It invoked the law to establish the manufacture of iron by means of bounties, to strike at false or misleading statements placed on goods imported or exported, to give the protection of the courts to labels attached to articles made by union labour, and to render the giving or taking of secret commissions in any form a punishable offence. By administrative action Sir William Lyne has already granted an additional protection to Australian harvesters on the ground that American and Canadian machines have been undervalued for Customs purposes. He has also raised the "flash point" at which kerosene is admissible from 73 to 80 per cent. Both of these alterations are aimed at the products of what are generally believed to be Combinations or Trusts whose operations on our market are on that account suspected by the public. If a Ministry only six weeks in office exhibits this almost feverish energy, although something of the kind occurs at the commencement of every session, the fact is sufficiently indicative of the contrast between Mr. Reid and Mr. Deakin. One reproach is that the particular projects submitted are dictated to the new Ministry by Mr. Watson, its sponsor. So far as the Union Label is concerned, although the Bill passed the Senate during the late administration, and has been modified by the present Government, it represents a concession to unions capable of using labels for which they are keenly ambitious. The wishes of Labour have evidently been studied here. The remaining Bills have their support, though they do not find place in their programme, and are fairly attributable to the general tendency towards State intervention. Nevertheless, quite apart from interpretations on the most conspicuous political stage of the Commonwealth, a Ministry which does not contain a Labour member and does include several politicians who have been in direct opposition to its caucus control, has signalled its advent by a series of important proposals enlarging the sphere of Government supervision and for the encouragement of local production. The Trade Marks and the Commerce Bills were inherited; but the bonus for Iron Manufacture, the prohibition of Secret Commissions and the Customs changes are entirely their own. The session is young, and other measures of a similar kind may be anticipated. Taking a comprehensive view of the whole situation it may be alleged with confidence that whether Mr. Deakin or Mr. Reid, Mr. Butler or Mr. Price, Mr. Dalglish or Mr. Rason holds the helm, very much the same course would be steered. Those who call themselves progressive carry more canvas and attempt a quicker passage; but the men opposed to them, if they move more slowly, sail on the same tack. Mr. Carruthers and Mr. Bent are censured for their increase of the functions of their department in the largest States on the same grounds as Mr. Morgan and Mr. Dalglish are, and Mr. Price will be. They keep on increasing nevertheless. Some of our people travel as herds of cattle do under the stockwhip, while the more timid drift along in leisurely fashion like a flock of sheep; but all are destined for the same market, and all arrive.

C. R.



# Endnotes

## Introductory text

- 1 A Deakin, 'Adjournment: Position of Ministry', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 21 April 1904, p. 1244.
- 2 See JA Hutcheson, *Leopold Maxse and the National Review, 1893–1914: right-wing politics and journalism in the Edwardian era*, Garland Publishing Inc., New York, 1989.
- 3 A Deakin to Leopold J Maxse, 25 April 1904, National Library of Australia, MS 1540/7/19.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 A Deakin to Leopold J Maxse, 1903?, National Library of Australia, MS 1540/7/18.
- 6 J Brett, *The enigmatic Mr Deakin*, Text Publishing, Melbourne, 2017, p. 314.
- 7 D Heriot ed., *From our special correspondent: Alfred Deakin's letters to the London 'Morning Post'*, Canberra, 2019.
- 8 JA La Nauze, *Alfred Deakin: a biography*, Melbourne University Press, London and New York, 1965, Volume 2, p. 348.
- 9 A Deakin to Leopold J Maxse, 10 August 1904, National Library of Australia, MS 1540/7/20.
- 10 Leopold J Maxse to A Deakin, cable, 16 September 1904, National Library of Australia, MS 1540/7/21. Maxse initially proposed quarterly articles, but subsequently agreed that they should appear monthly.
- 11 Leopold J Maxse to A Deakin, 29 September 1904, National Library of Australia, MS 15400/7/23. In this same letter, Maxse apologised for the 'dreadful blunder' which saw Deakin's original letter become mislaid when the magazine moved to new premises.
- 12 'New feature', *The National Review*, 44(1904–5) p. 616.
- 13 La Nauze, op. cit., p. 348.
- 14 Ibid. See also A Deakin to Leopold J Maxse, 11 October 1904, National Library of Australia, MS 1540/7/24.
- 15 La Nauze, op. cit., p. 349. Leopold J Maxse to A Deakin, 10 May 1905, National Library of Australia, MS1540/7/34, and Leopold J Maxse to A Deakin, 27 September 1905, National Library of Australia, MS1540/7/37.
- 16 Heriot, op. cit., p. xi.
- 17 Leopold J Maxse to A Deakin, 1 December 1904, National Library of Australia, MS 1540/7/27.
- 18 Ibid. See also Leopold J Maxse to A Deakin, 11 March 1905, National Library of Australia, MS 1540/7/33: 'I am ... glad to hear that the next paper will be typewritten, as the previous manuscripts have been a considerable anxiety to the Printers and to various other people who have been beaten by some undecipherable passages'.

- 19 Leopold J Maxse to A Deakin, 10 May 1905, National Library of Australia, MS 1540/5/34. See also Leopold J Maxse to A Deakin, 29 December 1904, National Library of Australia, MS 1540/7/30 and Leopold J Maxse to A Deakin, 15 May 1905, National Library of Australia, MS 1540/7/35.
- 20 Leopold J Maxse to A Deakin, 27 September 1905, National Library of Australia, MS1540/7/37.
- 21 A Deakin to Leopold J Maxse, 11 October 1904, National Library of Australia, MS 1540/7/24.

## Deakin's Articles

- 1 *The National Review*, 44(262), 5 December 1904, pp. 739–57.
- 2 *The National Review*, 44(263), January 1905, pp. 916–33.
- 3 *The National Review*, 44(264), February 1905, pp. 1093–1110.
- 4 Colonial Conference, *Proceedings of the Colonial Conference: 1887*, Harrison and Sons, London, 1887, volumes I and II.
- 5 *Ibid.*, I, p. viii, 'Edward Stanhope to the Governors of Colonies under Responsible Government', 25 November 1886.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 *Ibid.*, II, p. 3, 'Sir S W Griffith (Queensland) to Sir H T Holland', *Appendix: Papers laid before the Conference*.
- 9 *Ibid.*, II, p. 5, 'J W Downer, Esq. (South Australia), to Sir H T Holland', *Appendix: Papers laid before the Conference*.
- 10 *Ibid.*, II, pp. 4–5, 'Representatives for the Cape Colony to Sir H T Holland', *Appendix: Papers laid before the Conference*.
- 11 *Ibid.*, II, pp. 135–36, F Dillon Bell, 'Negotiations with foreign powers in matters of trade'.
- 12 Colonial Conference, *Colonial Conference 1894: Held in Ottawa, Canada, from 28th June to 9th July, 1894*, S E Dawson, 1894.
- 13 *Ibid.*, pp. xii–xvii.
- 14 *Ibid.*, pp. xiv–xv.
- 15 Lord Ripon, 'Ottawa Conference, 1894: Reciprocity and commercial treaties', June 1895, in *Dispatches from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Governor of New Zealand, 1895*, Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives, 1896, A2, pp. 8–15, quotation from p. 9.
- 16 *Proceedings of a Conference between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Premiers of the Self-Governing Colonies at the Colonial Office, London, June and July 1897*, HMSO, London, 1897, p. 15.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- 18 *Ibid.*
- 19 *Ibid.*
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- 21 'Mr. Kingston in England', *The Register*, 18 August 1897, p. 7.

- 22 Colonial Conference, *Papers relating to a Conference between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Prime Ministers of Self-Governing Colonies; June to August, 1902*, HMSO, London, 1902, p. 3.
- 23 Ibid., pp. vii, 34–37.
- 24 A Deakin, ‘Motion of Want of Confidence’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 12 October 1904, p. 5502.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Ibid., p. 5507.
- 27 A Deakin, speech delivered at Ballarat, Victoria, October 29 1903, Museum of Australian Democracy Website, <https://electionspeeches.moadoph.gov.au/speeches/1903-alfred-deakin>, accessed 7 May 2020.
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- 34 Ibid., pp. 8100–8101.
- 35 C Watson, ‘Preferential Trade’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 8 December 1904, p. 8110.
- 36 W Lyne, ‘Preferential Trade’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 14 December 1904, p. 8488.
- 37 Ibid., p. 8492.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Ibid., p. 8487.
- 40 C Watson, ‘Preferential Trade’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 14 December 1904, p. 8528.
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- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Ibid., p. 8535.
- 44 A McLean, ‘Preferential Trade’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 13 December 1904, p. 8348.
- 45 Ibid., p. 8348.
- 46 Ibid., p.8349.
- 47 Ibid., p. 8349.
- 48 Ibid., pp. 8349–50.
- 49 T Ewing, ‘Preferential Trade’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 14 December 1904, pp. 8512ff.
- 50 A Robinson, ‘Preferential Trade’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 14 December 1904, p. 8522.
- 51 J Cook, ‘Preferential Trade’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 14 December 1904, p. 8543.
- 52 W Kelly, ‘Preferential Trade’, House of Representatives, *Debates*, 14 December 1904, p. 8545.

- 53 W Maloney, 'Preferential Trade', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 14 December 1904, pp. 8545ff.
- 54 G Reid, 'Preferential Trade', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 13 December 1904, p. 8341.
- 55 *Ibid.*, pp. 8340–41.
- 56 *Ibid.*
- 57 *Ibid.*
- 58 *Ibid.*, p. 8340.
- 59 *Ibid.*, p. 8336.
- 60 *Ibid.*, p. 8342.
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- 62 *Ibid.*
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- 66 *Ibid.*, p. 8345.
- 67 *Ibid.*, p. 8338.
- 68 *Ibid.*, p. 8346.
- 69 *Ibid.*
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- 77 A Poynton, 'Preferential Trade', House of Representatives, *Debates*, 14 December 1904, p. 8497.
- 78 *Ibid.*, p. 8498.
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- 80 E Pulsford, 'Preferential Trade', Senate, *Debates*, 13 December 1904, pp. 8231ff.
- 81 *Ibid.*, p. 8236.
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