



*Personalities, Pragmatists & Visionaries*

*The Origins and Federation of Australia*

Cameron Archer

Public address given on 8 July 2001  
at St Ann's Presbyterian Church Paterson  
to mark  
The Centenary of Federation

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New South Wales  
Centenary of Federation



It's what we make it.

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Visionaries***

***The Origins and Federation of  
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## **Introduction**

This project has enabled me to achieve a long held ambition to learn more of the Federation of Australia. Having grown up near Canberra and witnessed the growth of Australia's national capital from a large country town to a bustling modern city with suburbs named such as Barton, Deakin, Griffith, Forrest and Turner, I was always intrigued about how this all came about. Fortunately a few books were published leading up to the Centenary of Federation in particular Bruce Pennay's 'Placing Federation' and Brian Matthews' 'Federation'. These treatments albeit relatively brief whetted my appetite to learn more.

During 1998 and 1999, Brian Walsh and I were writing the history of Maitland and I came across the links of Samuel Griffith and Edmund Barton to Maitland and the Hunter. Reading Joyce's biography of Griffith showed me what a tortuous political path Federation must have been.

I was well aware that most Australians were apathetic about Federation and really did not care either way about celebrating it. Contemporary Australia's view of the country's history is largely a preoccupation with wars in other countries and not the development of our own modern and successful democracy.

John Hirst's book 'The Sentimental Nation' enabled me to put Federation into context and understand how it all came to be. I found that there are many links to our local area and the Hunter. A trip to the Isle of Maddalena, Sardinia, Italy in pursuit of James Webber's history taught me more about Guiseppe Garibaldi and the unification of Italy. In fact James Webber was a neighbour of Garibaldi's on the Isles of Maddalena and Caprera in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Garibaldi's successful influences on the unification of his country did not go unnoticed and no doubt had an influence on Federation in Australia.

This address was originally to be delivered to what we thought would be a modest group of members and friends of the Society in the Courthouse Museum. The event however created much more interest and the Society prudently organised for the address to be given in St Ann's Presbyterian Church. This proved to be a good move as the church was full for the address. It was also appropriate that it be given in a building linked to the administration of the Presbyterian Church in Australia by John Dunmore Lang. Lang was an early and great supporter of the unification of Australia.

Paterson Historical Society's general charter is to care for, conserve and promote the history of the Paterson region. Members however felt that the Centenary of Federation should be acknowledged and celebrated by the Society. This is our acknowledgment of this important event in the history of Australia.

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## Personalities, Pragmatists and Visionaries The Origins and Federation of Australia

I am proud to stand here today and speak about the origins and Federation of Australia. Not only am I proud to be an Australian but it is with pride that we can look upon how those who founded Federation were able to weave a constitution which has worked so well for the past 100 years.

At the time of Federation there was apparently no debate about what the name of the new country would be. We were already fielding cricket teams under the name 'Australia' and it was therefore clear that the new country would be called Australia.

The word Australia comes from the Latin 'austral' meaning south. In 1756, the French navigation writer de Bross wrote about a land, which was to the south of Asia and referred to it as 'Australasie'. The word continued to be used in the context of the Great South Land. Matthew Flinders and later Lachlan Macquarie were great proponents of Australia as the name for the island continent and promoted the concept during their periods of influence. Their vision for the continent to be one country helped to mould a union of colonies to become Australia<sup>1</sup>.

The idea of the colonies federating was first put forward around the 1850s. Earl Grey, the British Colonial Secretary felt it would be far easier for the Colonial Secretary's office to deal with a federated group of colonies rather than all the individual colonies. William Wentworth, NSW politician, also suggested the federation should be considered. The Reverend John Dunmore Lang, Presbyterian Minister, maverick, politician and public figure also suggested federation<sup>2</sup>. Lang was either loved or derided by the people and because it was him suggesting it, the idea was not generally adopted by many. The colonies continued to go their own ways.

At this time there were issues which would have been assisted greatly through the colonies federating.

These included problems of inter-colonial tariffs, gold regulation as the gold rushes were underway, at times chaotic postage and mail services between the colonies, the rise of railways and the need for consistent coastal navigation signalling systems. Despite this there was no move to federate but the colonies did tend to cooperate on many issues – except rail of course.

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<sup>1</sup> The Constitution refers to Australian Colonies and allows for others to join eg New Zealand, New Guinea, Fiji

<sup>2</sup> Lang and St. Ann's, Paterson. It was Lang's influence that saw this church built so early in the Colony's history (1840).

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Henry Parkes was NSW Premier and became a prominent politician during the 1880s. Many years earlier he had served as John Dunmore Lang's campaign manager and was imbued no doubt with Lang's vision for the country. Parkes boldly proposed that NSW be renamed Australia and this certainly caused much consternation to the other colonies. At one of the inter-colonial meetings he proposed a Federal Council between the colonies and later, when this was set up, he did not let NSW join. He waxed hot and cold during the 1880s on the idea of federation but in 1889 delivered his now legendary speech in Tenterfield in favour of federation.

By now there was a fear of external threats to the colonies by other countries. These included the ambitions of the Germans in New Guinea, the Russian interest in Asia, the continued mistrust of China and a plan for the French to send convicts to the New Hebrides.

The issues for federation of the 1850s were still with the colonies in the 1880s. No doubt they were exacerbated through the 1880s boom times, with both wool and gold industries continuing to provide great economic growth, particularly for Melbourne and Sydney. Sydney and Melbourne were joined by rail with the Albury rail station being a terminus for the respective rail gauges. By now over three-quarters of the population was native born. The Bulletin was strongly nationalist and it was promoting the concept of Australia to its readers. This was enhanced further by the Centenary of Settlement in 1888.

For those watching world events, they had recently seen the success of American unification after the civil war and its rapid rise to be a world power. They had also seen the influence of Garibaldi in Italy resulting in the unification of Italy<sup>3</sup>. The death of Garibaldi was marked by 10,000 mourners in Sydney's Exhibition Building in 1882.

The time was right for Federation.

*Parkes reading – Appendix 3*

In February 1890, Parkes called a conference in Melbourne which was attended by representatives of all colonies and New Zealand<sup>4</sup>. They agreed to hold a convention to develop a federal constitution. The key issues for debate were trade and tariffs.

NSW generally supported free trade whereas Victoria was staunchly for protection. The Victorian position was strongly supported by David Syme of The Age newspaper.

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<sup>3</sup> Garibaldi's influence in the NSW Parliament was through former Morpeth butcher and state politician, David Buchanan. Garibaldi spent his final years on the isle of Caprera, a few kilometres from James Webber, formerly of Tocal on the Isle of Maddalena, Sardinia, Italy.

<sup>4</sup> The convention was held in Sydney because Parkes was virtually immobile due to a carriage accident. The convention was plagued by various illnesses of its delegates including key players Griffith (QLD), and Clark (TAS). Macrossan of Queensland died during the convention.

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The first convention was held in Sydney in March 1891. Parkes was the President of the convention and Samuel Griffith, Premier of Queensland, was elected Vice President.

Parkes proposed a toast at a dinner during the convention stating: 'One people, One destiny' – a saying which was later to become part of the Federalists' catchcry. Griffith was to play a major part in the framing of the Constitution and our system of two houses of Parliament (bicameral) is largely due to Griffith's influence at this time. Griffith had the Queensland government steamship 'The Lucinda' moored in Sydney Harbour and he entertained delegates on it. The convention lasted for five weeks and they agreed on a Constitution including Parkes' insistence on the name 'Commonwealth' for the Federation.

Griffith hosted a working party of delegates on 'The Lucinda' to draft the Constitution. 'The Lucinda' sailed out through the Heads and up into the Hawkesbury River for a weekend. The working party consisted of Griffith, Kingston (SA), Thynne (Qld), Downer (SA), Wrixon (VIC) and Barton (NSW). A key player who could not attend was Clark (TAS) due to illness. It seems that the Australian Constitution as we know it today was largely framed and written during this voyage.

The Federation initiative collapsed soon after this convention. Parkes lost office in NSW as Premier and was replaced by Dibbs who was anti-federalist. NSW was a key to the federal cause and unless there was strong support there, nothing would really happen. This period also saw the rise of George Reid, a populist NSW politician who strongly criticised the federal cause and Parkes. By now Parkes was an old man and his political career and influence was over. He died in 1896, aged 81. His third wife, aged 23, survived him.

During the 1890s drought hit much of the country and this caused major hardship throughout the land. There was also a financial crisis which developed and hit all the colonies. Coupled with this, there were major shearers strikes, particularly in Queensland. The whole idea of Federation slipped from the minds of politicians and was in limbo.

Edmund Barton of NSW, lawyer and politician, was strongly for Federation. He was also supported in VIC by Alfred Deakin, Premier and former 'Age' journalist. VIC tended to support Federation throughout this period largely through Deakin's leadership. The issue of tariffs between NSW and VIC across the Murray was a major element in the debate and caused the local communities much frustration – hence their interest in Federation. Barton promoted the formation of Federal Leagues and these developed in NSW and VIC. Another influential group was the Australian Natives Association, a locally grown friendly society, largely in VIC. This organisation was influenced by Deakin and became a strong supporter of the federal concept.

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Barton coined the saying 'A nation for a continent'.

*Barton reading – Appendix 3*

A conference was held at Corowa in 1893 hosted by Federal Leagues and supported by the Australian Natives Association. At this conference Ballarat lawyer, John Quick, proposed that there be a people's convention to draw up a constitution for Federation. The conference adopted this and agreed to return to their states and lobby for an act to elect delegates to the people's convention. The rallying cry for Federation became 'Federation by the people and not by politicians'.

As a result of this, most states passed acts for election of delegates to a people's convention. In 1894 George Reid was elected Premier and by then showed some support for Federation. Reid was a former adversary and after Parkes died he took up the free trade movement. Barton and Deakin continued to lobby for Federation, as did the various Federal Leagues.

The first people's convention was held in 1897 in Adelaide and was attended by 50 delegates; all but one had a parliamentary background. Half were lawyers and the remainder were businessmen and pastoralists. They agreed to a bill for a constitution, which would be put to a referendum. The second convention was held in Melbourne in early 1898, which approved the draft constitution. The first referendum was held in 1898 but failed to get enough votes in NSW, probably due to Reid's lukewarm support. Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania supported it. Queensland and WA took no part in this referendum.

It is difficult to fully understand the politics and issues in Queensland and WA at this time however it would seem that they were largely bound up with their own affairs and local political turmoil. WA was really operating in two sections, the area around Perth and the Kalgoorlie goldfields. There were major divisions between the two and it was not until Kalgoorlie sought to secede from the colony that WA came together and supported Federation.

The Queenslanders were still tied up at this time with turmoil in the wool industry, the shearers strike and the issue of Kanaka labour in the sugar industry.

There was also a separatist movement in Queensland but the presence of the Germans in New Guinea caused them some angst and interest in the Federal cause.

The issues that were debated (particularly in Sydney) regarding Federation included the site for the Federal capital, the fate of customs revenues and the resolutions of deadlocks between the houses in the proposed Federal Parliament. Sydney obviously felt that it should be the site of the Federal capital and it was not until the States agreed that the Federal capital should at least be 100 miles from Sydney that the issue was resolved.

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Those arguing against the proposal for Federation included the 'Bulletin' and 'Sydney Daily Telegraph'.

The 'Bulletin' was seen as radical. It was advocating a republic not a Federated Australia and continued to be very critical of the Federal cause even after the referendum was passed. The 'Sydney Daily Telegraph' and other Sydney patriots continued to agitate for Sydney to be the capital.

In 1899 the referendum was put and passed in all States but WA. WA did not put the referendum to a vote until 1900.

Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary for the Colonies requested that a delegation travel to London to discuss the Bill in early 1900. The format of the Constitution was that of an Act of the British Parliament. The plan was that once it was passed by the colonies, it should be accepted and passed without alteration in London.

The delegation in London included Barton (NSW), Deakin (VIC), Kingston (SA), Dickson (QLD) and Fysh (TAS). Forrest (WA) did not go, as WA had not voted<sup>5</sup>.

Forrest undermined the delegation directly to Chamberlain and made it more difficult for the delegation to convince Chamberlain of its importance and that it should go through unheeded.

Chamberlain felt that the Bill would cause the Empire to disintegrate and would not support it. He wanted to alter it with respect to Privy Council appeals. It seems there was tremendous lobbying of the British Parliament and the British people by the delegation. They were finally successful and the Bill passed in July 1900.

Queen Victoria appointed the Earl of Hopetoun as the first Governor-General of Australia. Hopetoun, aged 40, had been Governor of Victoria. He travelled to Australia via India arriving in Sydney on 15 December 1900. By now Lyne was the Premier of NSW and Reid was the Leader of the Opposition.

Barton was not in government. Hopetoun invited Lyne to form a government to commence the Federation of Australia. Lyne being an Anti-federalist and not particularly well regarded could not get support. Barton was asked on Christmas Eve to form a government and within a week had a ministry together, which Hopetoun accepted as the first Australian government.

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<sup>5</sup> Barton, Dickson and Kingston travelled by mail steamer to London. It called in at Albany, WA and Forrest was there to meet them, travelling out on a pilot boat and trying to keep them away from the WA Separatists League (Forrest's opponents and sympathisers to the Federal cause). The group later met the Separatists League.

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Barton's ministry included Deakin from VIC as Attorney General, Turner (VIC) as Treasurer with Kingston (SA) as Trade & Customs, Dickson (QLD) as Defence, Lyne (NSW) as Home Affairs and Forrest (WA) as Postmaster-General. Barton had known all these politicians and clearly had the numbers and support nationwide to form a government.

On January 1 1901 Hopetoun officially assumed office as Governor-General and the Commonwealth of Australia was proclaimed<sup>6</sup>. Barton and his ministers were sworn in.

*Manning Clarke on Hopetoun reading – Appendix 3*

On 17 January Barton delivered his first policy speech as Prime Minister in the West Maitland Town Hall<sup>7</sup>.

This must have been a tumultuous period for the media and the people as Aboriginal bushranger Jimmy Governor was hanged in Darlinghurst Gaol the next day – the 18<sup>th</sup> and Queen Victoria died on 22 January 1901. Dickson had died on the 10<sup>th</sup> and Barton moved Forrest to Defence and Drake (QLD) went to Postmaster-General.

On March 30 1901, elections were held and Barton's Protectionists Party won the House of Representatives with the Free Traders dominating the Senate. Barton was elected unopposed for the seat of Hunter. Labour held the balance of power. On 9 May the Duke of York and Cornwall, later to become King George the V, opened Parliament. The first items to be debated were the White Australia Policy and tariffs and protection. At that time, customs were the main source of revenue for the new government and income tax was yet to be formulated and implemented.

Parallel developments during this period included the campaign for female suffrage. This was first won in SA in 1894 and the Commonwealth granted it in 1902. A strong proponent of female suffrage was Mayebank Anderson, a former resident of Maitland<sup>8</sup>. Also during this period we saw the rise of the Australian Labour Party, which was established in late 1891. Another issue dominating the news and politics was Australia's involvement in the Boer War.

The Constitution specifically excluded Aboriginal people in Section 127.

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<sup>6</sup> Hopetoun caught Malarial Dysentery in India and was not well. He did not attend the celebratory banquet in the Town Hall on the evening of January 1. Some histories deride him for this and also for the Hopetoun blunder in first approaching Lyne to be Prime Minister. In fact the politics of his actions probably avoided a political crisis.

<sup>7</sup> Barton was accompanied by Deakin, Kingston and Lyne and he spoke to a packed and enthusiastic crowd in the West Maitland Town Hall. Barton, Deakin and Lyne spoke – Kingston had to leave early to catch a mail train to Brisbane.

<sup>8</sup> Mayebank Anderson married into Maitland's Wolstenholme family and lived in Hannan Street for a few years. She was later to divorce and become a leading figure in the suffragette movement in Sydney.

One may well ask: who were the real fathers of Federation? This is difficult to answer but one suspects the concept of one Australia was well founded within the first 50 years of European settlement. No doubt the influence of Flinders and Macquarie should not be discounted.

The maverick clergyman and politician, John Dunmore Lang also had a major influence on thought and politics during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. His influence carried through to Parkes whose influence then went onto Barton<sup>9</sup>, Deakin and others.

Deakin was an extremely important element in supporting Federation from VIC. The support in NSW by Barton was particularly important. At one stage he was nearly destitute in promoting Federation at a great personal loss to himself. He was a gifted lawyer and he could have done much better materially through working with the law.

Other important players were Kingston (SA) who promoted Federation strongly, Clark (TAS) and Griffith (QLD). Griffith's influence diminished during the late 1890s as he was by then Chief Justice of Queensland. He was later appointed the first Chief Justice of Australia by Barton<sup>10</sup>.

Perhaps the most important influence on Federation was the Australian people who knew the time had come and eventually voted for Federation using the political process to do so. To think we can change how we govern ourselves without politicians and the political process is foolhardy.

The mantra of 'people not politicians' was probably an appropriate saying for the time but the day was finally won through Australia's skilful politicians.

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<sup>9</sup> Barton lived alone in Melbourne for a while, as his finances were not sound enough to move his family from Sydney. He lived in a poky bachelor flat in a turret within the Victorian Parliament buildings and would sit up late at night with his Cabinet friends (Deakin, O'Connor and Forrest) and cook chops and boil the billy on the open fireplace. Barton enjoyed food and was a regular in Sydney's Athenaeum Club.

<sup>10</sup> Barton asked Griffith to be the Chief Justice when Griffith was outback in Roma, Queensland. They communicated by telegram in Latin to avoid leaks. Both had excelled in their classical education at the University of Sydney.

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## **Appendix 1**

### ***Biographies of some key individuals influencing Federation***

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#### ***Barton, Sir Edmund (1849-1920)***

Born, Glebe, Sydney. Fourth child of William and Mary Louisa Barton. William had arrived in Sydney from London in 1824 as an accountant to the Australian Agricultural Company. He resigned in 1832 and worked as a financial agent and sharebroker in Sydney. Edmund was educated at Fort Street Model School and Sydney Grammar School.

Barton attended the University of Sydney in 1865 and graduated BA in 1868 and MA in 1870. He worked in law and was admitted to the Bar in 1871.

Barton won the seat of University of Sydney in the Legislative Assembly in 1879. He was a member of State Parliament in 1888s and early 1890s serving as Speaker for a period and in a number of Ministries. He took a strong interest in the Federal cause and for a period was strongly allied with Parkes. Barton was an influence on many of the Federal conventions and deliberations on the Constitution. He however, left Parliament in the 1890s and worked on the Federal cause using his own resources which had disastrous consequences on his personal finances. His financial situation did not fully recover until well after Federation.

He was back in Parliament in 1898 as Leader of the Opposition to Premier George Reid. Barton was pro-Federation and was also a protectionist against the free trade supporter, George Reid. Later Reid and Barton campaigned together in the second referendum for Federation. When it came time to appoint Australia's first Prime Minister Barton had Australia-wide support. No one doubted his commitment to the Federal cause, his legal and political skills, nor his ability to bring together politicians from throughout Australia to govern for the first time.

Barton had an outstanding legal mind and oratory skills. His recreation pursuits included fishing, cricket, and the company of others interested in the Federal cause and good food and drink. His nickname from his school days was Toby and the Bulletin later referred to him as Toby Tossopot. Barton served as Prime Minister from 1901 to September 1903. He resigned and was appointed to the High Court. He served in the High Court until his death in 1920. Barton refused a knighthood in 1887, 1891 and 1899. He accepted the G.C.M.G. during his visit to London in 1902.

Barton died suddenly of heart failure at the Hydro Majestic Hotel in the Blue Mountains on the 7 January 1920.

*Deakin, Alfred (1856-1919)*

Born, Collingwood, Melbourne. Youngest child of William and Sarah Deakin who had immigrated from the UK in 1849. They spent some time on the Gold Fields, however, later settled in Collingwood where William worked in a variety of businesses and was later a manager of Cobb & Co in Victoria. Alfred Deakin attended Melbourne Church of England Grammar School matriculating in 1871 to the University of Melbourne where he studied Law.

In 1877 he passed his final examinations and was admitted to the Victorian Bar. Deakin's early career was influenced by David Syme of the Melbourne Age who encouraged him to develop his journalistic and writing abilities. Deakin became interested in politics and was elected to Parliament in 1880. He was an active parliamentary member through the 1880s. His achievements included the commencement of irrigation in Victoria with the Chaffey Brothers. He was Victoria's principal representative to the Colonial Conference of 1887 in London. In the early 1890s the boom of Victoria burst and Deakin lost much of his money and credibility, as he was involved in many investments.

Deakin was active in the Federal conventions and worked closely with Barton and others for the Federal cause. Deakin was Victoria's main proponent for Federation and was successful in uniting Protectionist forces in Victoria for the Federal cause. He became Attorney General in Barton's first Ministry and proved to be an able administrator with an innate ability to develop compromises when political issues were difficult. Following Barton's resignation he became Prime Minister, serving on three separate occasions. Many of the foundation Acts to constitute and develop the administration of the Commonwealth were passed through Deakin's administration.

Deakin was a dominant figure in the first decade of Federation. A complex character; charming, confident and intelligent, however at times morose. He was a strong spiritualist and philosopher and in later life lived as a recluse, his memory and mind failing.

Deakin was a great supporter of the British Empire but also a great supporter of Federal issues and a Nationalist Australia. He never accepted a knighthood.

### *Forrest, Sir John (1847-1918)*

Fourth child of William and Margaret Forrest. William and Margaret arrived in Western Australia from Scotland in 1842 as servants, later settling at Picton where William became a farmer and millwright. As a young boy John became a splendid rider, attending government school in Bunbury and later Bishop Hale's School in Perth, doing particularly well in arithmetic. In 1863 he became an apprentice surveyor, successfully completing his training in 1865 when he was appointed to the Surveyor General's office.

Forrest became a competent surveyor and bushman. In 1869 he led an expedition to search for clues to the fate of Leichhardt. This was through 3,200 km of unchartered Western Australian wilderness. In 1870 he led a west-to-east expedition from Perth to Adelaide and led another well publicised expedition into the western interior in 1874.

Public accolades flowed to the young Forrest and he was given leave to visit London. In 1876 he became Deputy Surveyor General and in 1883 Surveyor General and Commissioner of Crown Lands. Forrest became actively involved in the governance of the Western Australian colony as a senior public servant and member of the Executive Council.

The colony was granted self-government in 1890 and Forrest was elected as its first Premier, a position he held continuously until 1901. Forrest represented Western Australia throughout the 1890s in the Federation debates and conventions. He ruled the State unchallenged, having not formed a political party but governed through a coalition of personal support. Western Australia boomed during this period, unlike the eastern colonies.

Western Australia was divided on the issue of Federation; Forrest cautiously in favour of it, with strong support from the eastern goldfields (Kalgoorlie) but with strong opposition from the Legislative Council. Western Australia was split between the goldfields and the coastal region at Perth.

Forrest led Western Australia to the Federation, albeit joining later than the other states. He became the first Postmaster General for a few weeks and then Minister for Defence in Barton's government. He was later to serve as Treasurer in five ministries through to 1918. Forrest was a big man by achievement, reputation and personality. He weighed almost 20 stone and was one of the wealthiest of the first generation Federal politicians.

Forrest was close to the Prime Ministership on a number of occasions but did not have the support of his colleagues.

In March 1918 he resigned from the ministry and later that year left Albany with his wife and nurse on the troopship *Marathon* bound for London. He was seeking medical aid in London. Forrest died on board the ship in 1918 when it was anchored off Sierra Leone. His estate was valued at £45,160.

Forrest dominated Western Australian government and politics for many years. He was a successful politician in a small colony and successfully led it to Federation. However, he is not seen as a visionary or a statesman by history.

### *Griffith, Sir Samuel Walker (1845-1920)*

Born in Glamorganshire Wales, Samuel Walker was the second child of Reverend Edward and Mary Griffith. Reverend Griffith and Mrs Griffith immigrated to Australia, settling in Ipswich, Queensland as a Congregational minister in 1854. In 1856 the family moved to Maitland, NSW where they stayed until 1860.

Young Samuel attended Reverend William McIntyre's School in Maitland 1856-1859. McIntyre inspired in Griffith a love of the classics, Griffith becoming dux of the school.

He attended the University of Sydney gaining a BA in 1863 and MA in 1870 with first class honours in Classics and Mathematics. He also studied Law and became an article clerk in 1863. In 1866 he won the Mort Travelling Fellowship which enabled him to travel to England and Europe. He gained a reputation for his drinking and often being broke. He was admitted to the Queensland Bar in 1867 and worked on a wide range of legal cases. In 1870 he married Julia Janet Thompson at St Stephen's Presbyterian Church, East Maitland.

He successfully stood for the Queensland Parliament in 1872. He first served in Opposition and became Attorney General in 1874. Griffith held a number of portfolios and carried them out with distinction in the 1870s and '80s. He was Premier from 1883 to 1888 and again from 1890 to 1893. Griffith was a dominant force on the preparation of the draft Constitution at the 1891 Sydney Convention where he hosted delegates on the 'Lucinda'. He left politics and became Queensland's Chief Justice from 1893 to 1903. He was appointed Australia's first Chief Justice, a position he held until 1919.

Griffith was pro Federation and his greatest input was at the 1891 Convention.

It seems, however that he did frustrate the final developments of Federation and the passing of the Bill by the House of Commons where he lobbied from a distance for appeals to the Privy Council to remain. Griffith's outstanding legal intellect has left its stamp on the Australian Constitution. He retired from the High Court in 1919, returning to Brisbane where he died in 1920. His estate was valued at £27,335.00.

### *Kingston, Charles Cameron (1850-1908)*

Born in Adelaide, Charles Cameron Kingston was the younger son of Sir George and Lady Kingston. He was educated at JL Young's Adelaide Educational Institution. Kingston became an article clerk and was admitted to the Bar in 1873. In 1888 he was appointed QC.

Kingston was over 6 feet tall and of great strength, being a formidable athlete in his younger days. He was also a member of the Volunteer Military Force of South Australia, reaching the rank of Sargent. He joined Parliament in 1881 and remained a member of the South Australian House of Assembly until 1900, serving as Attorney General in 1884 and 1885. He became Premier in 1893. Kingston, through his long service in the South Australian Parliament, was involved with all of the Federation activities from the late 1880s. He was a strong supporter of Federation and had a key role in the drafting of the Constitution with Griffith. Kingston was a radical in comparison with many of the conservative politicians of the day. His support saw South Australia become the first Parliament in the world to provide a vote for women.

One of the most dramatic and colourful episodes was when Kingston traded insults with conservative member of the Legislative Council, Sir Richard Baker. Kingston challenged Baker to a duel, sending him one of a pair of matched pistols with a letter appointing the time for the duel in Victoria Square in Adelaide. Baker informed the police who arrested Kingston shortly after he arrived holding a loaded pistol. He was tried and bound over to keep the peace for 12 months, a sentence which was still in force when he became Premier in 1893.

Kingston was totally preoccupied with politics. His family life was unhappy and he gained a reputation for lechery. He dominated South Australian politics during the late 1890s and was seen as a bullying and vindictive foe. In 1898 he insisted that his former friend and later critic, E. Paris Nesbitt QC be kept in a lunatic asylum despite the Medical Superintendent's opinion that Nesbitt should be released.

Kingston became the first Minister for Customs and Excise in Barton's Government. Kingston's autocratic style made him a poor administrator. However his rigour laid the foundations for a system with high standards. Poor health plagued Kingston through his Federal parliamentary career and at times he sided with the newly formed Labour Party in the Federal Parliament. Kingston died of cerebro-vascular disease in 1908.

The radical magazine, 'The Bulletin' summed Kingston up as 'Australia's noblest son.... A good Australian all the time and a good Democrat all the time. He was one of the first radicals in Australian Parliament, an initiator of reform with a wild personality'.

Kingston had profited from various mining interests through his earlier days but was devoid of all money sense, leaving an estate of less than £2,200.00

### *Parkes, Sir Henry (1815-1896)*

Born Warwickshire, England, Henry Parkes was the youngest of seven children of Thomas and Martha Parkes. Thomas was a tenant farmer who through debt was forced from his farm and moved to Glamorganshire in 1823. Parkes had little formal education although he attended Stoneleigh Parish School and Birmingham Mechanics Institute. He worked as a labourer in a brickpit and rope walk before being apprenticed as a bone and ivory turner. In 1836 he married Clarinda Varney and in 1837 started his own business. The business failed and Parkes later pawned his tools and left with Clarinda for New South Wales as a bounty migrant.

He worked in various labouring and other jobs in Sydney and in 1845 set up as an ivory turner and importer of fancy goods. He opened branches in Maitland and Geelong but both failed and by 1850 he was in financial trouble.

Parkes became involved in journalism and politics, writing for various newspapers and later produced a number of books. He joined a radical group in Sydney agitating for franchise extension and land reform. In 1850 he was chief organiser and canvasser when JD Lang stood for a vacant seat on the Legislative Council. In 1854 Parkes won a seat in the Legislative Council and in 1856 won a seat in the first Legislative Assembly. He later resigned to give full attention to his newspaper 'The Empire' which was in financial difficulties.

Parkes re-entered Parliament in January 1858 but had to resign in August of that year because of insolvency - 'The Empire' had collapsed. By 1859 he was back in Parliament.

Parkes' political career was plagued by financial hardship and at times insolvency. For the next 20 years he was in and out of Parliament and represented a number of country and city seats. He was declared bankrupt in 1870 but later was back in Parliament, becoming Premier in 1877.

Parkes most notable contribution to the New South Wales Parliament was the Public Instruction Act as he was a great supporter of equal educational opportunity. Parkes promoted free trade and had the support of the Free Trade Association of New South Wales. In the late 1880s he represented the seat of Tenterfield.

On 2 February 1888 his wife Clarinda died. On 6 February 1889 he married his pregnant mistress, Eleanor Dickson, offending his family and provoking social censure. She later died and in 1895 he married Julia Lynch, aged 23. By now Parkes was 81.

Parkes and his followers dominated New South Wales politics for many years, Parkes being equitable about Federation until the late 1880s. Ill health plagued him in later years in Parliament and during the period leading up to and during the Conventions for Federation. Parkes died suddenly in 1896 of heart failure after an attack of pneumonia. He was survived by his third wife and eleven children. Parkes has been described by some as the father of Federation. More recently history indicates that he probably prepared the way for Federation but others who led the campaign for Federation were its true fathers.

### *Reid, Sir George Houstoun (1845-1918)*

Born at Johnstone, Renfrewshire, George Reid was the youngest of five sons of Reverend John and Marion Reid. The family immigrated to Melbourne in 1852 and later moved to Sydney in 1858, Reverend Reid working with JD Lang.

Reid spent some time at the Melbourne Academy (Scotch College) and when he arrived in Sydney aged 13 he was placed as a Junior Clerk in a merchant's counting house. In 1864 he became an assistant accountant in the Colonial Treasury. He was active in the Mechanics School of Arts Debating Society and the Young Men's Presbyterian Union. He had a rapid promotion and by 1874 was chief clerk of the correspondence branch of Treasury. He apparently enjoyed life and was something of a ladies' man.

Reid became interested in politics and also studied law. He was appointed secretary of the Attorney General's Department in 1878 and admitted to the Bar in 1879. He was active in public debates on free trade and protection. In November 1880 he was won the Seat of East Sydney and was a supporter of free trade and the Public Instruction Act. While having similar views to Parkes, they clashed frequently a relationship, which was not reconciled until Parkes was on his deathbed. He spent a period out of parliament but joined again in 1885.

Reid became leader of the Opposition in 1891 and Premier in 1894. His government has been seen as being reformist and liberal, supporting free trade. He did, however, give mixed support for Federation, particularly in his legendary 'Yes/No' speech of 1898. He could see both sides of the argument and wanted to ensure a good deal for a large colony like New South Wales.

His 'Yes/No' speech sealed the fate of the referendum in New South Wales, causing it to be lost. It can be argued that the result ended up giving Australia a better Constitution than if the 1898 version had been passed. Reid however, lost credibility and public support due to this speech. He resigned as premier in 1899.

Reid was elected to the Federal Parliament in 1901 and became the first leader of the Opposition. He did this quite effectively with the support of conservatives. Reid served as Prime Minister in 1904 and early 1905, leading a coalition ministry brought down by Deakin in June 1905. Reid was leading a free trade platform and Deakin was protectionist. Reid was appointed as Australia's first High Commissioner in London in 1909, a position he held until 1916.

Reid was offered and took a seat in the House of Commons. He died in London in 1918 of cerebral thrombosis, leaving an estate of £8,340. Reid had an important influence on the Federation debate and the ultimate passage of the Federation referendums. He was an obese figure with a droopy moustache, an eyeglass and a wisp of sandy hair, making him easy prey for cartoonists. Reid was a pragmatist rather than a visionary. He was a great orator and highly skilled in public debates.



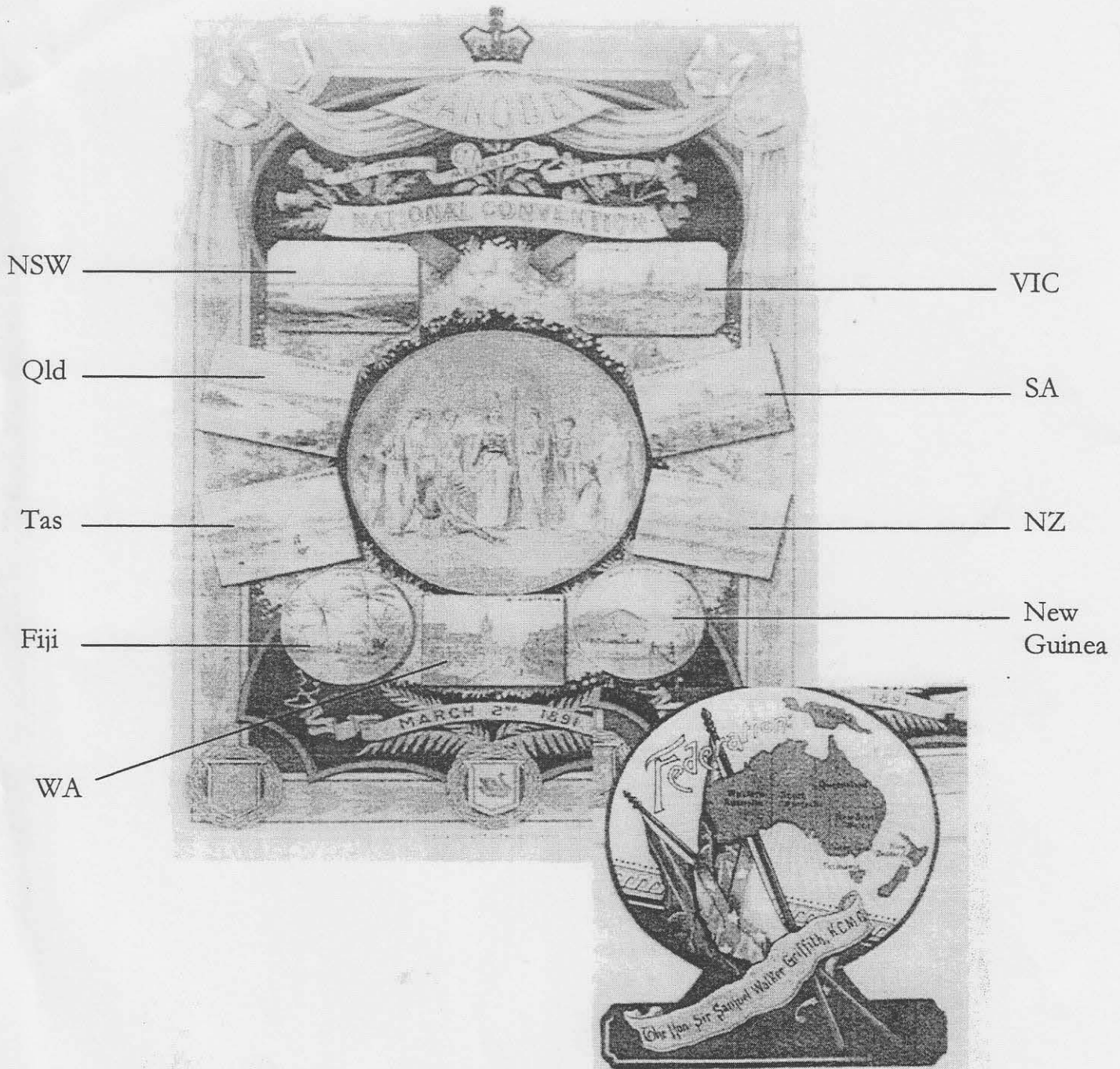
*Celebration of the Centenary  
of Federation*

*Personalities, Pragmatists & Visionaries*

*The Origins and Federation of Australia*

These notes accompany a talk given by Cameron Archer, President  
in St Ann's Presbyterian Church, Paterson on 8 July 2001

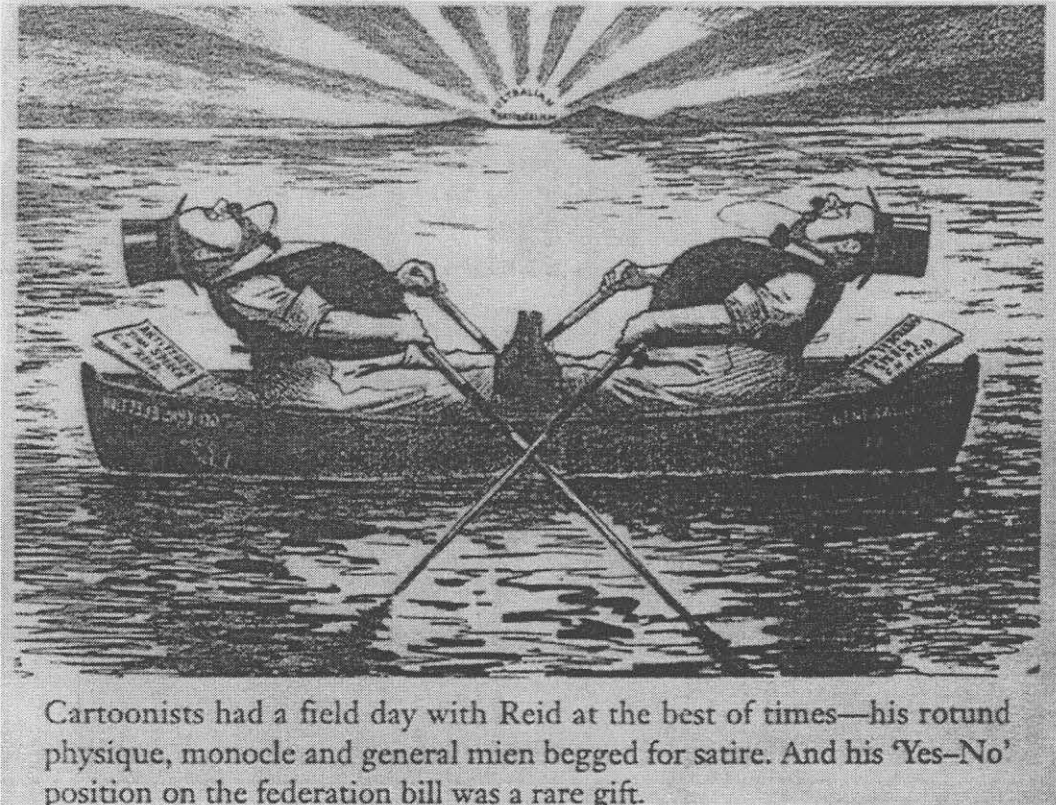
## 1891 Convention Banquet Menu



The menu (left) at the 1891 Convention banquet depicts an Australasian union with New Guinea, Fiji, and New Zealand included. On the place-markers (right) New Zealand is brought close to Australia.

*Source: Hirst, John (2000) The Sentimental Nation – The Making of the Australian Commonwealth. OUP Page 220.*

George Reid



Cartoonists had a field day with Reid at the best of times—his rotund physique, monocle and general mien begged for satire. And his 'Yes-No' position on the federation bill was a rare gift.

Source: Matthews, Brian (1999) *Federation*, Text Publishing, Victoria. Page 106.

## The Western Australian Referendum

All the Federated Canadian States now Prosperous. Newfoundland stood out now Bankrupt.

WEST AUSTRALIANS Complete the Union by voting YES!!!

377,000 AUSTRALIANS have voted YES

FEDERATED AUSTRALIA

ONE PEOPLE ONE FLAG ONE DESTINY

BRISBANE SYDNEY

NOTE THIS

Every adult, resident 12 months in W.A. is entitled to Vote if not on 1899 Roll a Voters Certificate must be obtained All Ladies must obtain Certificates on or before 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1900 Personal application is absolutely necessary. See Advertisements in Daily Papers for Registrars Offices Obtain your Certificate and Vote YES!!!

Existing Customs collected in Colonies already Federated (average) per head £1:15:4. Collected in Western Australia per head £5:0:5.

The referendum in Western Australia: the appeal not to be left behind.

Source: Hirst, John (2000). *The Sentimental Nation – The Making of the Australian Commonwealth*. OUP.

### *State Voting in the Second Referendum*

1899 Month	State <sup>1</sup>	% Yes <sup>2</sup>	% of eligible males who voted	Total <sup>3</sup> population 1901 Census
April	SA	79%	44%	358,508
June	NSW	56%	48%	1,354,846
July	VIC	93%	48%	1,201,885
July	Tas	94%	30%	172,475
September	Qld	59%	40%	503,266

### *Some NSW Voting Patterns in the Second Referendum<sup>4</sup>*

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Location	Percentage - Yes
Maitland East	51%
Maitland West	67%
Durham (includes Paterson)	57%
Sydney – Pyrmont	37%
Murray	92%
Tweed	78%

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<sup>1</sup> WA did not vote until 1900

<sup>2</sup> Source: Baker A (2000) *What Happened When? A Chronology of Australia since 1788*, Allen & Unwin

<sup>3</sup> Source: Vamplew W (1987) *Australians Historical Statistics*. Fairfax, Syme & Weldon

<sup>4</sup> Source: Pennay, Bruce (1988), *Placing Federation*. Charles Sturt University

## Appendix 3

### Readings

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*Parkes' Speech in Tenterfield was paraphrased by a newspaper reporter.*

It had been suggested that the Imperial Parliament should be asked to pass a measure authorising the troops of the colonies to unite in one federal army; but still, even if this were done, there would be an absence of the necessary central executive government. The colonies would object to the army being under the control of the Imperial Government, and no one of the colonies could direct it. The great question which they had to consider was, whether the time had not now come for the creation on this Australian continent of an Australian Government, as distinct from the local Governments now in existence. (Applause.) In other words, to make himself as plain as possible, Australia had now a population of three and a half and four millions when they formed the great commonwealth of the United States. The numbers were about the same, and surely what the Americans had done by war, the Australians could bring about in peace without breaking the ties that held to the mother country. (Cheers.) Believing as he did that it was essential to preserve the security and integrity of these colonies that the whole of their forces should be amalgamated into one great federal army, whenever necessary, - feeling this, and seeing on other means of attaining the end, it seemed to him that time was close at hand when they ought to set about creating this great national government for all Australia. This subject brought them face to face with another subject. They had now, from South Australia to Queensland, a stretch of about 2,000 miles of railway, and if the four colonies could only combine to adopt a uniform gauge, it would be an immense advantage in the movement of troops, as well as in the operations of commerce and the various pursuits of society.

*Geoffrey Bolton, Australian historian and biographer of Barton writes in the introduction 'Edmund Barton, 'The One Man for the Job'*

Edmund Barton first seriously entered my life on the evening of 13 September 1952 at the Port Hotel in Derby, Western Australia. An inexperienced post-graduate student, not quite 21 years old, I had for the past three months been researching the history of the Kimberley pastoral industry and thought that a spare Saturday night might usefully be spent yarning at the bar with some old timer about his experience.

I soon found my old timer. He was a station cook, 73 years of age, battered and leathery with years of outback living; Russel Ward would have been proud of him. We talked while I sipped my beer and he drained his crème de menthe from five ounce glasses and, presently he said: 'Do you know what was the greatest moment of my life?' No, I said, I didn't, but I'd like to hear. I thought he might relate some epic of droving or some anecdote of Gallipoli or the Somme. But he told me that when he was 18 years old he was a kitchen hand at Petty's Hotel in Sydney, and that night after night Edmund Barton would bring some of the delegates from the federal convention to dinner after a session. 'I seen them all', he told me, Reid, Deakin, Forest – I seen them all. But the prince of them all was Edmund Barton'.

### *Manning Clarke writes of Hopetoun*

Lord Hopetoun, a member of the ancient nobility of the United Kingdom and one time successful aspirant to political honours in the conservative party in the mother country, was a not a stranger in the midst. He had served with distinction as Governor of the Colony of Victoria from 1889 to 1895, where he had won his way into the hearts of the people by his compassion for the victims of the depression. He has also caused tongues to wag by his generous hospitality, and his somewhat eccentric methods of cushioning the aftermath of over indulgence in the bottle from his well stocked cupboard by sending a courier bearing draughts of ale with which to comfort and relieve those guests afflicted in mind or body or both. At Centennial Park he was resplendent in black and gold full court dress, nature having endowed him with a height that impressed and a temperament to match his high position. He had all the graces of the nobleman and had taught himself to employ with colonials the non-stop bow achieved by rocking backward and forward on the soles and heels of his feet. He possessed in abundance the 'tranquil consciousness of an effortless superiority'. On his face he wore the smile of the man whose very career depended on his public face. At times the smile lapsed into a tortured grin, for a he had a sensitive side to his nature, which was never quietened by all the tricks he had learned to play in public places. His wife, a noblewoman in her own right, the Honourable Hersey Alice Evelbigh de Moleyn, a daughter of the fourth Lord Ventry, was accomplished in the art of avoiding the eyes of men and women hungry for a smile of recognition. Not enjoying good health and having no fondness for colonial cheerfulness, she had arrived on Boxing Day in Sydney where, to the consternation of all the society women of Vacluse and the wives of the country gentry, she had declared herself in no fit state to receive visitors.

The nobleman himself did not feel the best on a day which sweltering humid heat had driven away the splendours of a summer's morning. Ever since his arrival in Sydney in December 1900 he had been more preoccupied with his bowels than with the concerns of Australia. In Sydney observers noted his bright but somewhat haggard face. (p 170).

*Manning Clarke writes of the press at the time of the inauguration of the Commonwealth*

Once again the visionaries were dismayed by the power of Mammon in Australia. Our country, the *Tocsin* wrote on 10 January, perished on 1 January 1901. On that day Victoria and Australia were slain on the altar of the false God 'Federation'. Federation was the high priest of Mammon. A community which was denied the right of managing its own internal affairs was no longer free. The object of the conservatives in founding a Commonwealth was to end abruptly the advance of the Labour Party and to take 'the political power out of the hand of the moilers of this vast continent'. The federal constitution had given new life to a patrician caste, to nobility and to royalty. Federation would foster militarism. Federation under the Crown was the price Australians paid for belonging to a 'piebald Empire'. The inauguration ceremony had been a striking manifestation of this spirit of militarism. The martial music, the hymn to the god of battles, the presence of the imperial troops portended a growing military spirit in the country which was being deliberately fostered by the ruling class to protect their interests against the encroachments of Australian labour. The workers of Australia were in danger of swimming with the tide of 'blood and booze'.

To the *Bulletin* inauguration day was distinguished by its 'falsities and crudities'. It was a day when servile Australian politicians toasted Queen Victoria, the representative of the monarchy which stultified national freedom. The *Bulletin* called on Australians to adopt their own watchword: Australia for Australians: and turn their backs on 'Queen Victoria's nigger Empire'. Ada Cambridge, still searching for a society in which women might have life and have it more abundantly, found such an aim quite 'ignoble'. She was also not happy about all this talk of Asians as vermin to be stamped out like rabbits. Down at Shepparton in Victoria 'Tom Collins' (Joseph Furphy), the sage of the Riverine (sic), was revising those sections of *Such is Life* in which he professed his attachment to the Australian idea of equality: 'I acknowledge no artisocracy, except one of service and self sacrifice, in which he that is chief shall be servant, and he that is greatest of all, servant of all'. But Mr Deakin and Edmund Barton could not see there was anything amiss in what they had done, or understand why poets and visionaries should believe Australia had been betrayed or enslaved to Mammon. Mr Deakin was exhausted, but it was the exhaustion of a man who saw himself as one of the architects of a great federation under the Crown. (p 183).