

matter. As that basis was forwarded by the Conference to the Imperial Government, it is for our Parliament to accept it or repudiate it—to take it with all its faults, or reject it because its faults are essential and incurable. The action of the Conference leaves no other course open with safety.

[Extract from *Daily Telegraph*, 26th March, 1884.]

SIR JOHN ROBERTSON ON FEDERATION.

In the Assembly last night Sir John Robertson took advantage of Mr. Heydon's motion *re* the Federal Council Bill to make a speech which may be described as an exaggerated expression of the anti-Federation sentiment of the colony. Sir John's views on this subject are in no sense and in no degree determined or coloured by the accident of his leading the Opposition to a Government which rashly committed itself, not only to the principle of Federation, but also to a scheme for its realization. We have little doubt that, if a popular vote could be taken, it would be found that the Ministry are either ahead or behind the vast majority of the people in regard to this question. The Federationists, with natural vanity, believe they are ahead of the anti-Federationists. They have a blind sort of faith in an inevitable union of these colonies. How or when or why federation should take place they cannot exactly say, but they evidently find much consolation in circulating sonorous generalities about what Sir Henry Parkes, with befitting magnificence of language, has called the British States of Australasia. They are the advanced dreamers of the southern world. They are the large souls who are ever seeking to expand the sentiment of patriotism. They have the prophetic instinct which anticipates the future. But the people who possess uncommon sense are not always ahead of the people who possess only common sense. Sir John Robertson exhausted his uncommon sense over his land law, and brings nothing more than common sense to the criticism of the recent Federation movement. To his clear and practical mind the hollowness of the whole business cannot be disguised. He has always resisted, with characteristic vigour, the blandishments which thinly cover the intended encroachments of Victoria. There is always war in his eyes when he looks across the Murray. He ridicules the comparative poverty of the sister colony, and pricks the pride of her public men. He sees bumptious pretenders to pre-eminence strutting about in a cabbage-garden or a vineyard, and he cannot withstand the temptation to "poke fun" at them. He believes that Victoria blundered when she separated from New South Wales, and he is just as sure that New South Wales would blunder if she were to federate with Victoria. Few persons in this colony would follow the veteran throughout his protestations and denunciations; perhaps there are not many who do not think that his anti-Victorian sentiment is in danger of becoming a bitter prejudice: but we believe that he has almost the whole population at his back when he declares that Messrs. Service and Berry want to smuggle Federation into our political system because they want to annex Riverina and control our tariff to suit their protected industries. New South Wales certainly does not want Federation. We have much to lose and little to gain by joining the proposed union. We are satisfied with the present adjustment of boundaries and our present measure of independence; and therefore, without indorsing Sir John Robertson's contempt for Victoria and Victorian public men, we can heartily wish him absolute success in his determination to defy and defeat Victorian diplomacy.

No. 2.

His Excellency the GOVERNOR to the SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES.

MY LORD,—

Government House, 3rd April, 1884.

In reference to my Despatch No. 52, of the 27th ultimo, on the question of Mr. Heydon's motion in relation to the Federal Council Bill, I have the honour to enclose to your Lordship the resolution as presented to me by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

I have, &c.,

AUGUSTUS LOFTUS.

Enclosure.

(1.) THAT the proceedings of the delegates at the late Intercolonial Conference, including the Federal Council Bill prepared and sent by them to the Secretary of State for the Colonies for enactment in the British Parliament, have not yet been submitted to this House for its consideration, and it is stated in the London telegrams that the British Cabinet is about dealing with the said Bill: This House resolves that in its opinion it is desirable, before the said Federal Council Bill, or any Bill based upon it, be passed into law by the British Parliament, that such Bill should be submitted to the Parliament of this colony.

(2.) That the above resolution be communicated by address to His Excellency the Governor, with the request that he will transmit the same to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

No. 3.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES to His Excellency the GOVERNOR.

MY LORD,—

Downing Street, 9th May, 1884.

Her Majesty's Government have not lost sight of the resolutions adopted by the Convention of representatives of the Australasian Colonies at Sydney in December last, and have considered the provisions of the draft Bill for constituting a Federal Council which the representatives pledged themselves to submit to the Legislatures of their respective colonies. I had been led to believe that addresses in favour of this Bill would be adopted by the Colonial Legislatures in time to enable Her Majesty's Government to introduce the measure during the present session of Parliament with a good prospect of its being passed; but the necessary action does not appear to have been yet taken in any colony. As, therefore, the probability of legislation during this year is