

7. To regard a matter of this sort as in any sense a party one deprives it of all its special value. The fact of doing so would imply that there is a party in the Colony which is opposed to the objects of the Convention. If such exist, it may of course one day possess the ascendancy, and therefore the voice of a Convention based on party lines would, instead of being a national one, be merely the ephemeral utterance of the dominant party, and could not make the commanding claim to the attention of the Mother-country which a really National Council could assert. Here in Victoria our Parliament is unanimous—without a single dissident. In New Zealand the case seems very much the same. In Queensland I have reason to believe and I most assuredly hope that that Colony will be represented by the leaders of both parties, and I hope that New South Wales and the other Colonies may see their way to follow suit.

I have, &c.,
JAMES SERVICE,
Premier.

No. 49.

Mr. R. Beckwith Leefe to The Colonial Secretary of New South Wales.

Sir,

Sydney, 9 October, 1883.

I have the honor herewith to enclose the original and several copies of a memorial from the European inhabitants of Fiji, to the President and Members of the Colonial Conference about to be held next month, praying for a consideration of their claim to be allowed to participate in whatever arrangements may be determined upon at such Conference, in view of an United Australasian Confederation. See Appendix F.

I have to request you will do me the favour of forwarding a copy of the memorial to each of the Premiers of Victoria, and Queensland, and New Zealand.

For your perusal and information I also enclose a copy of a Petition to Her Majesty the Queen, praying generally for an amelioration of their political disabilities in the direction of federation or annexation to one or other of the Australian Colonies. See Appendix F.

I have, &c.,
R. BECKWITH LEEFE.

Appointed by the signatories of Petition and Memorial to present the aforementioned document.

Submitted.—10/10/83. Forward to the Premiers of Victoria, Queensland, and New Zealand copies of Petitions, and forward to His Excellency for perusal.—A.S., 11/10/83. His Excellency.—A.S. Seen.—A.L., 13/10/83.

No. 50.

The Colonial Secretary of New South Wales to The Colonial Secretary of New Zealand.

Sir,

Sydney, 24 October, 1883.

I have the honor to transmit to you herewith a copy of a memorial that has been received from the European inhabitants of Fiji, addressed to the President and members of the Intercolonial Conference to be held in Sydney during next month, praying for a consideration of their claim to be allowed to participate in whatever arrangements may be determined upon at such Conference, in view of a United Australasian Confederation, together with a copy of a petition from the British subjects resident in Fiji, addressed to Her Majesty the Queen, praying generally for an amelioration of their political disabilities in the direction of federation or annexation to one or other of the Australasian Colonies. See Appendix F.

I have, &c.,
ALEX. STUART.

[Similar addressed to Premier of Victoria and Colonial Secretary of Queensland.]

No. 51.

The Colonial Secretary of New South Wales to the Premier of Victoria.

My dear Mr. Service,

Colonial Secretary's Office,

Sydney, 17 October, 1883.

I have attentively considered all the arguments put forward in yours of 9th instant.

It seems to me that you practically give up the position, when you say that the Government might select from the Opposition gentlemen whose views were known to accord on this matter with those of the Government. This seems to me to be somewhat at variance with the views propounded in your letter of 11th ultimo, in which you considered that all parties in each Legislature should be represented.

If the Members of the Opposition are merely to be echoes of the Ministerial Members (while those holding other views are left out), then I think my argument in favour of only Ministerial Members is greatly strengthened. I would test it thus: If the Convention were to arrive at the conclusion that federation is desirable and ought to be carried out, it can go no further, but has finished its work; and the Representatives of each Colony must then return to their respective Legislatures for acquiescence in the resolutions, and be then armed with powers to carry the same into effect. If the views of the Opposition accord with those of the Government, the acquiescence will be given as readily as if they had been present at the Convention; but if the Opposition views be adverse, it is surely better that the difference be fought out on the constitutional arena rather than in the Conference.

I could agree better with your fourth paragraph, with one alteration, and that is, if it be decided that a Federal Constitution is to be prepared, then I can quite understand that it would be desirable to have men of both sides engaged in raising a common platform on which we could all stand; and this, I think, is the true application of the Canadian precedent. Practically all the Colonies now united in the Dominion had expressed the opinion that the time had arrived for federation, and they were appointed to give effect to that opinion.

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