

MR. BRYCE.

THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION.

THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING NATIONS.

Melbourne, July 16.

The Premier (Mr. Watt) presided at the luncheon given in honor of the Right Hon. James Bryce at the State Parliament House to-day. The Governor (Sir John Fuller) was present, and there was a large gathering of State legislators, Ministers, and officials.

Mr. Watt, in proposing the toast of "The guest," was supported by the President of the Legislative Council (Mr. J. M. Davies) and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly (Sir Frank Madden).

Mr. Bryce was cheered on rising to acknowledge the toast. After thanking the speakers and the people of Victoria for their hospitality, the distinguished visitor touched on matters Parliamentary. He said it was a pleasure to meet gentlemen possessing the experience of his hearers. There was something entrancing in Parliamentary life. There were kindly friendships and the various considerations and plans which those outside called intrigues, but which members called negotiations. (Loud laughter.) Unrivalled opportunities were presented in Parliament for the study of human nature, and the way one character acted on another. He did not think it was the best place for the study of abstract truth. (Laughter.) In some respects those who took part in Parliamentary life did not get all the credit they deserved, and were, with the difficulties they had to meet, sometimes unappreciated. Parliament was one of the hardest places in the world for a man to know what he should do. He had been at the bar at one time, and people thought there were difficulties in arguing for a client, no matter whether he was right or not. Yet it was very easy for a barrister if he followed the rules, to represent his client to the best of his belief and ability, and there was no difficulty in being an honest lawyer. In Parliament, however, it was really difficult to know the right course to pursue. A man was sometimes summoned by his party to support a particular decision, when if he followed his own views he would go into the opposite lobby. Government could not be carried on without party. He had not been able to discover how Government could be carried on without considerable party cohesion. There were times when one thought that the public interests were above party. To decide between the two was an exceedingly difficult thing. Those who had lived longest in Parliament or had sat in Cabinets would say that, taking human nature as it was, members of Parliament came out of the ordeal pretty well. In the Parliaments of Great Britain and the Dominions were shown a high ideal of conduct and a strenuous desire to do the right thing by the nation by following the party wherever possible, and departing from it where it was thought public interest demanded such action. His impression of the standard of honor attained in the House of Commons, and the way members did their duty, was that it was a high one, and he had no doubt the same could be said about the Parliaments of the Dominions.

The Federal Constitution.

Referring to the Federal Constitution, Mr. Bryce said Australians had to face an extraordinarily difficult position. The line had to be drawn between Commonwealth and State functions, and he was glad to learn that the difficulties that had arisen were comparatively few, and that the creation of a new Parliament had in no way lowered the level of the State Legislatures, and the desire of public men to enter State Parliaments. It would be a great mistake if the creation of the Federal Legislature diminished the interest and respect for State Houses. These things gave great satisfaction to men in England.

He hoped to tell his friends that not only was there a universal sense of attachment to England and of loyalty to the Crown, but that there was a desire to maintain the Empire as a united power. There remained the good result of the Federation that local political life in the States went on supported by the confidence and interest of the people, and working, as it did, for the good of the State as a whole, that made the people believe that the creation of the Commonwealth had not those results that some feared in depressing the importance and vitality of the State Parliaments. From the experience of the United States he did not think Australia would find much difficulty in adjusting the relations of the State and Commonwealth Governments. There must, of course, be a certain amount of debatable ground. All constitutions spoke in general terms, and cases must arise where it was doubtful whether questions belonged to the State or the Federal power. Such cases arose and were dealt with by the courts in America, and it had been found possible to fix limits that had been acquiesced in by Congress and the State Legislatures. It was seldom now that questions arose that gave trouble. Of course some must arise in the constant change of human affairs, but they had not affected the general strength or utility of the American federation, and he did not see any reason to doubt that the Australian State Parliaments would be able to continue their usefulness and discharge their functions.

Developing the Country.

There was an immense amount still to do in developing Australia. The population in rural districts was not so dense as it might be. Water seemed to be the most important element to Australia. Parts had been rendered more prosperous by artesian wells. In Victoria there were large tracts capable of development by irrigation, and there was nothing that could add more to the area of a land that could be cultivated than the storage of winter rains. Irrigation was a subject that would most repay the thought given to it. He was glad to know that Victoria was interested in the systems of dry farming that had been tried in North America, where the people had shown great energy in regard to irrigation and dry farming, and had reclaimed great areas and largely increased the production. He would be pleased at any time to supply any information in his power as to what was being done in Canada and the United States. It would give great pleasure if Victoria continued to send a representative to the annual congress held in America on dry farming and irrigation.

America and Australia.

He was really pleased to say how cordial was the feeling existing in America towards Australians. There was a growing feeling that all people of British stock ought as far as possible stand together, because they were better able to understand one another, and apart from political alliances there might, too, exist a unity of feeling and sentiment that ought to keep them to-

gether as fellow-guardians of the institutions and traditions received from their ancestors many years ago in England. He thought he would be justified in telling the people of the United States that Australians entertained a like feeling for them. (Cheers.) There was only one feeling in England regarding Australia, and that was a feeling of pride for what Australians had accomplished, and a hope for what they could do in the future. (Cheers.)

AMBASSADOR ENTERTAINED

Another Thoughtful Speech.

MELBOURNE, July 16.

Prior to his departure for Adelaide to-day Mr. James Bryce was entertained at luncheon at the State Parliament House by the Victorian Ministry. The guests included the State Governor. The Premier submitted "The health of our guest," and the toast was supported by Mr. Davies (President of the Legislative Council) and Sir Frank Madden (Speaker of the Legislative Assembly).

Mr. Bryce, on rising to respond, was given an ovation. He said that to him Parliamentary life had been very interesting. It was with the greatest regret that one bade farewell to it, even if one's duty called one to some other work. There was something entrancing in the surroundings. Parliament was one of the most difficult places in the world in which to know exactly what to do. He was at the bar for some time, and he knew that the layman thought there were great moral difficulties in a lawyer's life, but there was really no difficulty for the man who followed the rules of the profession. A lawyer should never state an untruth, or cite a case that had not been decided in Parliament. It was entirely different. (Loud laughter.) He had not completed his sentence yet—(laughter)—and he intended to say it was often extremely difficult to decide which was the proper course to pursue. (Cheers and laughter.) Sometimes there was the question of party to be decided, and at others there were the claims of public interest to be considered. He thought, on the whole, taking human nature to be what it was, Parliamentarians came pretty well out of the ordeal. His impression of the House of Commons was a high one, and he had no reason to think that the standard was any less high in the dominions. In Australia the position for the past 11 years had been full of interest. Legislators had been confronted with the task of endeavouring to draw lines between Commonwealth and State functions. He was pleased to learn that the difficulties that had arisen had been comparatively few, and that the establishment of a new Parliament had in no way lessened the status or the calibre of the men who entered the State Legislatures. It would have been a great misfortune had the Federal Parliament so far affected the State Parliaments as to destroy the ambitions of the best men to serve in them, or to diminish the public interest in them. The Federal Constitution provided that the States should retain much of their legislative independence, and that, supported by the confidence and interests of the people, it should work for the good of the State as a whole. It must be a matter of great satisfaction to all that the creation of a new Parliament had not had the result of depressing the vitality and lessening the importance of the State Legislatures. (Cheers.) He did not think there would be much difficulty in drawing distinctions between the functions of the two bodies. He saw no reason to doubt that the State Parliaments would be able to retain their usefulness, as before. There were still many opportunities of developing the States left to them. The population in the rural districts was not what it might be. The increase of production should be one of the first matters. Water was of supreme importance to Australia. In Victoria irrigation had been undertaken, and there was no more important work ahead of the Legislature than the development of the resources of the State by that means. (Cheers.) If the winter rains were stored large tracts of country could be fertilized. He was pleased to say how cordial were the feelings that existed in America towards Australia. There was a growing feeling in Canada that all the people of British stock should stand together. The British people were able to understand one another in a way that other nations could not understand each other. Apart altogether from political considerations there was a community of sentiment which should make them all feel that they were fellow-guardians of the same institutions and traditions which they had received from their ancestors. Many years ago there was only one feeling in England regarding Australia—a feeling of pride in what had been accomplished, and the feeling of hope and pride in regard to what would be done in the future. (Loud cheers.)