

THE
"Mandate of the People"

AND
THE REID FRAUD.

BY
SIR HENRY PARKES.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE exposure which I here give to the world has not been written in my personal interests, but for far different ends. My object is to lay bare the character of political quacks, tricksters, and hypocrites ; and by exposing the false to try to vindicate the true. Unless we rise to a true sense of Ministerial responsibility, and a brave adherence to the living principles which are rooted in the foundation of Parliamentary government, we are a lost people. In Carlyle's withering words—"We must find wiser, wiser, or else we perish."

If Mr. Reid had disappointed me by proving himself a capable man, I would have given to him the best support in my power ; it is because he has proved his glaring incapacity that I believe he ought to be driven from office at the earliest moment.

I repeat that I have no personal concern in the matter. No man can honestly say that I have ever shown an eagerness for office ; it was ten years after the introduction of Parliamentary Government before I took my place in a Ministry—in that of Mr. James Martin, who gave me the highest place he had to give. During that period I was invited to accept office several times. I have never hesitated to retire when there was clear evidence of the withdrawal of confidence. Since 1872 I have been at the head of five Ministries, and the country was fairly prosperous under them all. I believe that if I had been the leader of the Federation movement during the last three years, the triumph of the new Nation would now be near at hand. I confess I should rejoice in having a share in completing the glorious work of Union ; and in having an opportunity, by an enlightened endeavour, to extinguish the national scandal of the "Unemployed."

But if my time is come ; if my eighty years have brought me to the shambles, be it so. If it be alleged that the People whom I have faithfully served for more than forty years are tired of my service, I must have that confirmed by the People themselves. If it be so confirmed, then let my ostracism, designed by the Reid faction, be openly confirmed by the Legislative Assembly ; and I shall ask none to remember the past, but retire into obscurity and silently accept my reward.

One parting word in answer to the scattered libels concocted by men who draw their inspiration from the gutters, or from fouler sources. For more than three years I have publicly

avowed that I would give my support to none, and accept the support of none, who would not make the Federation of the Colonies the first question of national policy. Let the secretly engendered libels be tested by that public and unqualified avowal. About three years and a half ago I issued (I was still in office as Prime Minister) a skeleton platform of leading principles for a National policy. I reproduce it here, and I have dwelt upon its chief features in my first letter to the *Daily Telegraph*.

The Federal League of Australasia.

1. The Federation of Australia to be held first, above, and before all other questions.
2. The Trade between the Australian Colonies to be absolutely free.
3. The Customs Tariff of Australia to be left unconditionally to the Federal Parliament, without reference to or in any way fettering the opinion of individuals.
4. Their Territorial Rights and Possessions to be secured by the Federal Constitution to the respective Colonies.
5. The Colonies separately to have the rights of taxation over land, personal income, negotiable instruments, and individual property of all kinds.
6. The main trunk lines of railway to be at the service of the Federal Government for Federal purposes.

IN RESPECT OF NEW SOUTH WALES AS ONE OF THE UNION STATES:—

- (a) Compulsory Local Government embracing the whole territory under Divisional Councils.
- (b) Labour Colonies to be founded and governed on the principle of remunerative improvement, where all persons in want of employment may earn, by regular labour at equitable rates of wages, the necessary means to support themselves and families, while establishing, in the interest of the State, industrial communities.
- (c) The gradual cessation of public borrowing outside the Colony.
- (d) In the Civil Service, the inhabitants of the Colony to have the preference, all other things being equal, in all appointments and promotions.
- (e) The Defence forces—under whatever designation—to be formed from the young men of the Colony.

* * * It seems hardly necessary to say that the above, both Federal and Provincial, are only leading provisions, leaving numerous matters of detail and of principle to be fully considered and determined.

This privilege of explanation may be extended to a man who is about to be banished from public life.

“The Mandate of the People”

AND

THE REID FRAUD.

TOWARDS the first days of May, 1894, Members of the late Assembly began to talk much about the near approach of the dissolution, and the appeal to the single electorates constituted by the new Electoral Act—a field before them in which the experience of the past was but a feeble guide. I, of course, knew much more about what the Freetrade side was doing than of the doings of the side which supported Sir George Dibbs and his Ministry. I sat on the bench below the Opposition gangway, with Mr. McMillan, Mr. Brunker, and others who had acted together for some years past, and who certainly at that time ridiculed the pretensions of Mr. Reid. Various proposals were started and privately discussed in regard to some organisation to conduct the coming elections in the interest of the Opposition. One evening Mr. Sydney Smith came to me with a written list of the Freetrade Members of the Assembly, and explained to me that it was proposed to form a Committee of thirty-six persons—eighteen from his list of Members and eighteen from Freetraders outside Parliament; and he requested me to mark eighteen on his list for the purpose. In explaining all this to me, Mr. Sydney Smith was particular in asking me *not to mark Mr. Reid's name*. His request in regard to Mr. Reid struck my ear as a little odd, but I thought no more of it. I declined to mark the eighteen names, and urged that any such Committee would be too large, and would be found by experience to be too unwieldy. I further urged that it would be far better to have a compact Committee of eight or ten gentlemen who were good organisers and knew the kind of business they had to do. In support of this suggestion I eventually sent a printed list of the Assembly to Mr. Smith, with the names of eight or ten Members who seemed suitable for such work marked off.

In the course of a few days the big Committee was elected, and my fellow Members did me the honour to include me in the

number chosen. I believe the eighteen gentlemen outside were never added; but some were chosen, notably Mr. Alexander Kethel, and Mr. H. J. Brown, of Newcastle. I declined to act on this Committee—though I was repeatedly urged to re-consider my decision—because I considered that it had been injudiciously and unwisely constructed; but I never suspected that it was intended to be only the machinery to carry out the purposes of Mr. Reid's personal ambition, and not an honest organisation to promote the election to the new Parliament of the men who had been acting together on the left of the Speaker in the expiring Assembly, together with new candidates of similar professions of opinion.

I found out afterwards that Mr. Reid was never a member of this Committee himself from first to last—that he was never elected to it by anybody, unless he was elected by Mr. Sydney Smith. The Committee itself at once assumed the full-blown title of "The Freetrade Council," and began the gingerbread business of manufacturing the "Mandate of the People."

But how did Mr. Reid get there if not elected by somebody? How did he become Chairman of the Committee, or "Freetrade Council," if not chosen by that body itself? One of the English Kings has left behind him a memorable story—a lesson of wisdom for Englishmen and their descendants for all time. Charles the First claimed to rule England by his prerogative of *Divine Right*, and for doing it he lost his head at the block. When the Committee, to which attention is called, was formed and in readiness, Mr. Reid walked in and took possession of it as his own. Our George the Second claimed to rule by his prerogative of *Divine Right*, and as his reward he is in a fair way to lose his head by his own vanity.

All this time a well-acted hypocritical show of friendliness towards myself was kept up, and continuous efforts were made to secure my name and influence on the side of the plotters who had already secretly determined to ostracise me from the higher walks of honourable service to the country. Mr. Reid himself wrote to me the following letter, and let it be noted that in this epistle, by the total number of thirty-seven, he admits the eighteen Members of the old Assembly, the eighteen outsiders, and the one great man who took possession by *Divine Right*:—

SYDNEY, 10th May, 1894.

DEAR SIR HENRY PARKES,

I enclose herewith official notification of the action taken by the Party on Wednesday evening in deciding to establish a Freetrade Council, and in electing you one of the members of the proposed Council.

It has been unanimously considered of the greatest importance that steps should be taken to prepare for the coming contest, which is one involving issues of grave importance to the people of this country. One of the most serious dangers ahead of those who advocate Freetrade principles is, evidently, the multiplicity of candidates. Many seats will be endangered—and perhaps wholly *lost to us*—unless Freetraders have some guidance before polling day. Of course, in the first instance, our energies on that point will be directed to the effort of inducing candidates to settle their differences and claims in their own way.

The Council will, when complete, consist of about thirty-seven members.

Sub-committees will take the active work.

I intend to convene a meeting soon, and hope that you will at least be willing, in the interest of the Freetrade cause, to consent to retain the position to which you have been elected.

Your faithful servant,

G. H. REID.

THE HON. SIR HENRY PARKES, G.C.M.G., M.P.

I have shown that Mr. Reid was never a member of the so-called "Freetrade Council," of which he impudently acted as Chairman. I ask his friends and apologists to show me a case in any part of the British Empire, where a political organisation of thirty-six members did not elect their chairman from among themselves, to say nothing of allowing a person not a member of the body to assume the presidential position. It may be said that Mr. Reid did all this by virtue of his standing as "Leader of the Opposition," which the newspaper scribes, who have made him, used to din into our ears continually while the old Assembly existed. Let us see what his position really was. The party that crossed the floor with the retired Parkes Ministry in October, 1891, numbered half the Assembly; *minus* the dissatisfied Labour Members, who up to that time had supported the Ministry. I had good reasons (which have yet to be made public) for not taking a factious course as leader, besides which I was ill, and did not recover my health for many months. No consideration for me was shown, and the Sydney Smiths hunted about for a new leader at once. Mr. G. H. Reid was elected by fourteen votes out of a party of sixty members. He was a makeshift leader in the beginning, and his leadership naturally came to an end with the dissolution; but he has managed, by the jugglery which I here expose, to project himself into the life of the present Parliament, and his conspiracy has succeeded so well that, for some inscrutable cause of punishment to this people

he is now our Prime Minister, with his beggar's wallet stuffed full of makeshift measures, not one of which is marked by any harmony of principle or any vitality of thought. Sydney Smith, Joseph Cook, and Jacob Garrard, led or followed by George Houston Reid—it hardly matters which—are ruling the country. It is no wonder that the country is so prosperous!

But Mr. Reid is ruling by the "Mandate of the People," so say his parrot friends, and he is never tired of saying so himself. As the "Freetrade Council's" operations proceeded through June and the first weeks of July, the design against me grew a little bolder, but it never dared to show its head above the surface. Liberal candidates who presented themselves to the "Council" were told that they were too much of the *Parkes colour*, or that *Parkes men* were not wanted. With delicate touches of manipulation the *Divine Right* of Reid was exhibited to raw neophytes. But none of these over-clever plotters were bold enough to confront me before the People. I fought the battle of Liberal progress, genuine freetrade, and Australian union single-handed, and wherever I went I received, in a more marked manner than at any former period of my life, the unanimous and enthusiastic approval of the electors. If my words need confirmation, I will put a present-day enemy in the witness-box. After my return as Member for St. Leonards on the 17th July, some members of my committee proposed to drive me home. We crossed the harbour and drove to the Exchange to see the results of the elections. I was received with round after round of enthusiastic cheering. We then decided to see the later returns as posted at the newspaper offices, and with that view we drove along Pitt Street, up King Street and down Market Street in the direction of my home. The people in the streets through which we passed could not have been fewer than 30,000 to 40,000. This is what two of the journals, which are now yelping at my heels, said in their issues of the following day, July 18th. They had not then taken the recruiting sergeant's shilling.

Speaking of the cheering which greeted the names, as posted, of favourite candidates, the *Daily Telegraph* said:

"When the excitement was at its highest last night, Sir Henry Parkes, who was apparently returning from St. Leonards, drove up in a carriage and pair to the outskirts of the throng in King Street. This was the signal for an outburst of renewed enthusiasm—enthusiasm more unrestrained, too, than had preceded it. The people made room for the carriage to pass along the street. Scores rushed to grasp Sir Henry by the hand. The veteran rode through with his hat off, becomingly acknowledging the ovation, and before he got clear of his admirers, it was with difficulty that he restrained some of the more ardent spirits from unharnessing the horses and drawing the carriage through the city."

The *Evening News* had the following :

* * * "The repeated record of victory for the Free-trade party elicited vociferous cheers, and as Sir Henry Parkes went slowly by in an open carriage, a tremendous shout went up."

If the "Mandate of the People" came to any man, it came to me. But common sense repudiates the interpretation which Mr. Reid and his friends have put upon the result of the late elections. The "Mandate" certainly did not mean Reidism. It meant plainly enough—a change of Government, liberal progress, Free-trade and Australian union, all combined. Mr. Reid has simply contrived to chouse the electors out of their verdict. He must be clever after all.

Whenever we try to look enquiringly on the career of Mr. Reid, we are reminded of a chilling verse by Robert Browning. The poet wanders by the Seine, and stumbles upon the "Doric little Morgue," where three unfortunate men lie stretched on their copper beds. He addresses the first :

How did it happen, my poor boy?
 You wanted to be Buonaparte,
 And have the Tuileries for toy,
 And could not, so it broke your heart?

But I hope it will not come to that in the case of poor Reid. I suppose it is his misfortune; Nature made him so.

Political leaders are not fashioned after the model of Mr. Reid; they are not self-summoned from the ranks. "I am the Chap to save the country," would have a discordant as well as a ludicrous sound to English ears. "Give a youngster a show," (the youngster being a short, portly, bald-headed gentleman of over fifty years of age), is not a stirring watchword for free men. The most notable, endurable, time-honoured "show" known to the English populace, which our grandfathers enjoyed, and which in all probability our grandchildren will still laugh at, could not be endured if unreasonably protracted. We could not stand even Punch and Judy for twelve months; how, then, are we to stand Mr. Reid and his poppinjays?

To speak soberly, political leaders are not made to order, however coddled they may be by newspapers. They rise in growth by evidence of fitness, by proved strength, by the possession of that forecast which sees the right thing to be done, and the right way to do it; by the power to grasp the conditions that affect the public welfare, by claims founded on solid service. And they are very seldom elected. Earl Grey was not elected, Sir Robert Peel was not elected, Lord Melbourne was not elected, Lord Russell was not elected, Mr. Gladstone was not elected, Mr. D'Israeli was not elected. In this country, neither Watson Parker, nor Cowper was elected; neither Martin nor Robertson was elected.

Mr. Reid has been struggling with his task for over eight months, to his own discomfort and the misery of all about him. He cannot have the Tuileries for his plaything; he must content himself with toadying to a lord for a smile, or pandering to a labour Member for a vote. Meanwhile, he has succeeded in getting the country into a state of unprecedented distress, and the Parliament into a condition of almost irremediable confusion. I conclude in the stern language of Carlyle, addressed to far better men, at a time of far less disaster: "Indisputable enough to all mortals now, the guidance of this country has not been sufficiently wise; men too foolish have been set to the guiding and governing of it, and have guided it *hither*. We must find wiser—wiser, or else we perish! To this length of insight all New South Wales* has now advanced; but as yet no farther. All the people of New South Wales stand wringing their hands, asking themselves, nigh desperate—What farther?"

* I substitute "New South Wales" for "England."

Letters to the "Daily Telegraph."

FREETRADE AND FEDERATION.

SIR,—The inelegance that disfigures the paragraph headed "The Political Situation" in your issue of Saturday, the 16th, sufficiently proves that it was not supplied by any of the gentlemen professionally employed on your journal. If I were to describe it from beginning to end as an unscrupulous and impudent falsehood, I should not use language in excess of your offence against me and the public.

I am very unwilling to speak of Sir George Dibbs, and I can hardly believe that he has allowed you to use his name as you have done. I, however, have only to deal with your gross misrepresentation of myself.

In the first place, I state distinctly that the thought never crossed my mind to seek any interview with Sir George Dibbs. What did occur is quite different, and there is no reason why all the world should not know it. Soon after the assembling of the new Parliament, on the formation of Mr. Reid's Ministry, one of the late colleagues of Sir George Dibbs (who had been on friendly relations with me for years) came to me and urged me, more than once, to confer with that gentleman on the situation. I immediately replied that some time back Sir George Dibbs, without any cause that was known to me, had broken off the ordinary courtesies of life between us, and that until I received such explanation of his conduct as I felt I was entitled to, it was impossible for me to meet him. I was still urged to confer—to go "to Sir George's room," where everything could be explained. I repeated my statement of the obstacle that existed to my going anywhere to meet Sir George Dibbs, and I believe I expressed my surprise that Sir George had a room "all to himself," as the children say, and I innocently asked what he did in it. But I still declined to walk into the spider's parlour.

At that time all that was suggested was that I should confer with Sir George Dibbs, but as I have explained, the suggestion fell to the ground. I now come to the time of Sir George Dibbs's vote of censure. Here, again, so far as I am concerned, there is nothing which it is necessary to hide from the world. A short time ago, in consequence of appeals made to me by many members of the Assembly, I framed a resolution expressing concern and dissatisfaction at the confused state of public business and the hopelessness of the political prospect. I have good reason to believe that this resolution expressed then, and expresses now, the opinion and feeling of more than half of the Legislative Assembly. The resolution so framed was shown by me to a member who sits on the Opposition bench, an esteemed personal friend with whom I often consult. He asked if my intended action was known to Sir George Dibbs. I replied that I did not know, and that I had taken no steps to inform him. He proposed that he should show the resolution to Sir George, but I refused to allow him to take either the resolution itself or a copy of it, at the same time telling him

that he was at liberty to explain the substance of it. I may explain here that at no time has any resolution or written paper been sent from me to Sir George Dibbs. What Sir George did on this occasion is known to many, and strongly condemned by many of his own supporters. He kept my friend on a string all the evening, and the next day forestalled me in my wicked plot by giving notice of his own celebrated vote of censure.

I now come to what I hold is a very painful matter—not to me, but to the *Daily Telegraph*, always assuming that you profess to make your paper a vehicle of truth. That I may not do you an injustice, I will quote your libel upon me in your own words. You publish to the world, without making any effort to verify the truth of your accusation, that I submitted to a member of the Assembly "a series of resolutions which were duly handed to Sir George Dibbs. These resolutions were, so our authority states, couched in terms somewhat as follows:—'1. That in the present state of the finances, the revenue duties on grain, sugar, butter, and cheese should be retained. 2. That stricter economy in the public finances is insisted upon by this House. 3. That the foregoing resolutions be conveyed by message to His Excellency the Governor.'"

I repeat that I never sent any paper to Sir George Dibbs, and I now declare that I never saw or heard of the resolutions here quoted. The whole facts of my life are sufficient to refute even the supposition that I could be a party to any such resolutions. I cannot allow this scandalous charge to rest in your columns in its present state. I call upon the "member," or whoever the author of this libel may be, to come forth from his hiding place and confess his ignominy in the open daylight if he cannot substantiate his charge.

As my pen is in my hand (which I take up reluctantly now-a-days), I shall proceed to vindicate my own position in public life. Amidst the political confusion now prevailing, mine has been the only broad, intelligible, consistent course. What is more, my avowed and open course is stamped with the approval of my constituents. More than three years ago I issued a clear statement of leading principles to form the basis of an Australian policy. The principal features of that platform may be thus summarised: (1) Federation above all questions, with due attention to the affairs of the colony; (2) the trade between the Australian colonies to be absolutely free; (3) the federal tariff to be left, as it must unavoidably be left, to the Federal Parliament, reserving the struggle for Freetrade or Protection to its proper field in electing that Parliament; (4) the separate colonies (or future states) to have the rights of taxation over land, personal income, negotiable instruments, and individual property of all kinds; (5) compulsory local government, embracing the whole territory of New South Wales under divisional councils; (6) labour colonies to be founded and governed on the principle of remunerative improvement, where all persons in want of employment may earn, by regular labour at equitable rates of wages, the necessary means to support themselves and families, while establishing, in the interest of the State, industrial communities, from whence labourers might be drafted off into the ordinary channels of employment; (7) the gradual cessation of public borrowing outside the colony; (8) in the civil service the inhabitants of the colony to have the preference, all other things being equal, in all appointments and promotions.

These views of public policy I have steadily advocated in different places whenever occasion presented itself during the last three years. At the last general election I issued an address to the electors of St. Leonards, dated July 2. In that public address I supported the cause of federation, and urged its necessity in these words:—

“ If any of us would favor delay, we do not possess the power to ward off the pressure of the great national questions which challenge our capacities of statesmanship as a united people, and which no one of the provincial Governments is competent to solve, to legislate for, or to touch. The inviolability of the soil as the home of one Australian people, the restriction of the influx of inferior races, the opening of new fields for the employment of our people and for the investment of capital, the lighting of our coasts, the improvement of our harbors, avenues of enterprise in connection with the commerce of the South Seas and of neighboring markets, the name and influence of Australia among the nations of the earth : these and a crowd of other federal questions are waiting for the consummation of the union.”

I then proceeded to argue exactly as I argue now—that it was worse than folly for any man who sincerely desired to hasten the advent of a united Australia to waste his time and energies in “ tinkering ” the provincial tariff, which the breath of life infused into the beautiful form of federal Australia would instantly destroy. My words were the following :—

“ As that work advances the unwholesome conflict between Free-trade and Protection, as we now witness it, must grow less and less until, with the advent of complete success in the federal cause, it will disappear altogether from the provincial stage. Absolute Free-trade will be established between all the sister states of Australia, and the character of the future tariff in respect to other countries will be remitted to the electors of the Federal Parliament. The State Legislatures, as such, will have no direct voice in framing the future Customs laws. It will thus be seen that no sincere advocate of Australian union can be at the same time a provincial Protectionist.”

I then stated fully and distinctly the course I should pursue in Parliament in the event of my being returned as member for St. Leonards :—

“ If I am honored by a majority of your votes, I shall do all within my power to hasten the work of Australian union, while yielding no jot of ground in my exertions for the good government of New South Wales. One clear and inevitable consequence of Australian federation will be to compel the State Governments to resort to direct taxation (the most honest and economical of all forms of raising revenue) to meet the State expenditure, and it is a duty incumbent upon all to consider how the burdens can be most equitably apportioned so as to conform to the doctrine of Adam Smith—that ‘ every tax ought to be so contrived as both to take out and to keep out of the pockets of the people as little as possible over and above what it brings into the public treasury of the State.’ ”

I mention that in this address I stated what formed the principal objection to an income tax, as it presented itself to my mind. The example of England in no sense applies to this colony. These were my words :—

“ Attempts have been made to impose an income tax ; but in new conditions of society a special odium attaches to the inquisitorial power which, in giving effect to the principle, there is danger of placing in incompetent and untrustworthy hands.”

I also expressed my views on a land tax in these words :—

“ In dealing with land taxation, a strange confusion appears to distract some minds in confounding the taxing privileges conferred on municipalities with the undoubted and inherent rights of the State Government in raising revenue for general purposes. A land tax is recognised as sound by the highest authorities, and it possesses the twofold advantage of raising revenue, and at the same time assisting to make land more productive for the general community. But I need hardly add that I would not join in throwing an undue burden upon the owners of land or any other class of taxpayers.”

These, then, have been my principles for three years; these were my principles at the general election; these are my principles to-day. I received many expressions of approval on my address of July, but none, Mr. Editor, more pronounced than your own. The *Daily Telegraph* of July 3 opens its leader on my address thus:—

"The address to the electors of St. Leonards, which Sir Henry Parkes publishes to-day, is a calm, dignified, and statesmanlike document. It deals only with great questions of public import, is free from the personal element which so largely disfigures colonial politics, and without entering into details, sets out the author's opinion so clearly and concisely that he who runs may read."

Finally, I come to the existing travesty of government in New South Wales, and the two master principles which must force themselves into our public life in the early future. It must be held as an incontrovertible axiom that provincial fiscalism (either freetrade or protection) and Australian federation cannot co-exist. The principles centred in the two things are fatal to each other. The principal places in the existing Ministry are filled by Mr. Reid and Mr. Want. These two gentlemen, in a more pronounced way than any other, have declared themselves uncompromising disunionists. Both profess to be freetraders, but both have declared that, rather than see the colonies federated, they would prefer to have a protectionist policy established in the country. The other members of the Government have no settled opinions on the great question. Mr. Young confessed that that was his condition only a month ago. How can any sane man expect the true cause of union to be advanced by political pretenders. Then, as to freetrade, federation would, in one day, open all the markets of Australia to all her producers and manufacturers without let or hindrance; and there would be a better chance of fighting the fiscal battle fairly on the federal battlefield.

I make no secret of my desire in the lasting interest of good government to get rid of the present incompetent Ministry, and I invite men from all sides who believe in the great objects herein set forth to join me in rendering this service to New South Wales and to Australia.

Yours, etc.,

March 17.

HENRY PARKES.

ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO ELICIT THE TRUTH.

SIR,—Your article this morning is characteristic, but not creditable. But I must not allow you to set fire to a heap of rubbish, and in the smoke you so contrive to spread abroad make your own escape from my direct charge against your honesty and truth as a journalist. Wantonly and without any attempt to ascertain the truth, you publish to the world that I wrote a resolution to be submitted to Parliament in favor of the retention of the present duties on grain, sugar, and other products, and that I sent this resolution to Sir George Dibbs for his approval. I denounce the whole story as a gross invention, without an atom of fact for its foundation, and I call upon the author, whoever he may be, to come forth into the daylight and show himself. To this damaging charge against the character of your newspaper, you have neither the candor nor the courage to say a word. But you indulge in a column of misleading words on other and quite foreign topics, in which, in your own peculiar way, you go on with the congenial work of misrepresenting me. Every journalist with any claim to public respect is bound to vindicate the truth. But instead of guarding

that living principle, you prefer to allow the truth to be stabbed in secret, and to shelter the moral murderer. I sweep away your calumny

In vain,
The creature's at his dirty work again.

I again challenge you to give the name of the author of the defamation of me which you published in your issue of the 16th, or to stand convicted of being the inventor of the falsehood yourself.

One word on a smaller matter. In my election address of July 2, 1894, I spoke thus: "As the work of federation advances, the unwholesome conflict between freetrade and protection, as we now witness it, must grow less and less, until, with the advent of complete success in the federal cause, it will disappear altogether from the provincial stage." In your article on the following day you expressed your approval of my address, which included this passage. Can you explain now in what the enormity consists between the "unwholesome conflict" in July, 1894, and the phrase "wretched fiscal squabble" which I have since applied to the same thing?

I again point out that the logic of federation does not admit the existence of a provincial tariffist in a true friend of Australian union. No man can serve two masters in the great and holy cause of making an Australian nation. He cannot be sincere in seeking to unite all the colonies in one national bond, and at the same time seeking to delay the final removal of provincial Customs duties, each day of which nourishes the seeds of disunion between the communities whom we seek to bring together. Mr. Pulsford, Mr. Want, and Mr. Reid would keep up the barriers on all the borders for the mere sake of playing their Quixotic game, like children making mud pies, in their own corner of this continent.

Every sincere friend of federation must see that the mockery of the "Conference of Premiers" is only a device to block the way to union.

Yours, etc.,

March 19.

HENRY PARKES.

MR. REID AS A MAN OF TRUTH AND JUSTICE.

SIR—In your very fair report of the short discussion on my motion of adjournment last Wednesday, the following passage, very deliberately spoken in the otherwise scolding speech of Mr. Reid, occurs:—

Mr. Reid: The hon. gentleman (Sir Henry Parkes) had not been remarkable for doing much work during the last twenty years. He did not think it was unfair to say that much.

Sir Henry Parkes: I do, because it is untrue.

I am sure your sense of justice will allow me to say a few words in reply to this characteristic example of Mr. Reid's truthfulness and fair play. Your report of what both he and I said appears to me to be excellent, and so long as I get justice at the hands of your reporter, I am quite content that you should say whatever may appear to the editorial mind most fitting. Indeed, I always succeed best under the abuse of the newspapers.

Now for Mr. Reid's estimate of my public work. I will not go back twenty years, nor farther back than the year 1879, and I will take only the short period from that year to the year 1888. In that period of nine years, several other Governments intervening and taking up fully half the time, I carried through Parliament in my name the Bills enumerated below, all being in the first rank of legislative measures:—

1. The Act to secularise the Church and school lands. For twenty-three years Ministry after Ministry had brought in bills to deal with this vexed question, and had failed.

2. The Act to provide for the water supply and sewerage of the City of Sydney and its suburbs.

3. The Act to establish a system of water supply and sewerage for country towns.

4. The Electoral Act of 1880, which was a great improvement on the electoral system then existing.

5. The Act to provide for the acquisition by the Government of land for public purposes.

6. The Public Instruction Act, with its result of 2,500 schools, its army of 4,500 trained teachers, and its promising multitude of 182,000 pupils.

7. The Act to regulate the boarding out of destitute children.

8. The Chinese Restriction Act of 1881.

9. The present Licensing Act.

10. The Act for more stringently protecting the colony from the disturbances and national dangers of Chinese immigration.

11. The Act to place the national railways under a system of non-political management.

12. The present Public Works Act.

Several of these Acts were successfully passed against an opposition both inside and outside of Parliament, unprecedented in its fierceness and determination. I might add to these a crowd—to use Mr. Reid's words—of "good, useful Acts," which I do not turn aside to notice. Nor do I make any allusion to my last Administration, which came to an end in October, 1891.

This is my answer to Mr. Reid's silly attempt to ignore my services to this country. And I think I may ask, with pardonable pride, both friends and opponents to point to the man who has an equal record standing to his name, and this record of a few years might be more than doubled.

Yours, etc.,

HENRY PARKES.

March 22.

THE CAUSE OF FEDERATION AND ITS MASKED ENEMIES.

SIR,—If any man has borne the brunt and burden of Federation in its earlier vicissitudes, I think I may lay claim to be that man. Even in my last Administration, with the honorable exceptions of Mr. McMillan and Mr. Bruce Smith, I had no sympathy in this cause from my colleagues. This was made manifest to the world on my retirement from office by their eagerness to elect as their leader the most unscrupulous and determined opponent of Federation. At all times, whenever I have had occasion to address the public, I have warned the friends of union against being too confident or accepting too lightly proffered support. As your reports will abundantly show, I have said that the cause would meet with reverses, failures, desertions, reactions, professed advocates who could not be trusted, misleading and false friends. It would be strange if no Judas appeared among its apostles. But I never expected to see Mr. Reid turn up as a Federalist. He surely cannot be "the lion in the path" of which we have heard so much at times from tongues of ill omen. In the midst of all, the cause has steadily advanced, and it has now so completely taken hold of the mind of the electorates, not only here, but in the other colonies, that no candidate for a seat in Parliament dares openly to avow his opposition.

One compliment to its success is the host of Federation quacks which its progress has called into life, each with his nostrum for its certain consummation.

In the multitude of doctrinaires, and the perplexing dazzle of false lights, there is one rock which towers high above all other objects. The Convention of March, 1891, is the only body which has the elective principle for its foundation, and which speaks with the authority of all the Parliaments. When we are asked to pass by this great representative body, and to listen to its defamers, surely it is only wise to inquire who it is that speaks. If the voice is one which hitherto has only been heard among the detractors of the union cause, common prudence tells us to be cautious. Our fathers bade us beware of sudden conversions, and all over the world we are told to view them with suspicion. In the palpable case before us, when did the arch-heretic recant his heresy? And is there any obvious gain to himself to be secured by intruding into our ranks? Has he got dynamite in his possession? What is his dark business among us? Every true friend of Australian union will be prepared to take up the question where it has been left by the only representative body which has dealt with it, and which was clothed with authority direct from the people's representatives. Lycurgus or Alfred could not make a Constitution for the Australian people without the stamp of Australian authority. Let not her free Parliaments loosen their control over this heroic work, or supinely transfer to inferior hands the duty which by nature and by right rests with them. Let them turn a deaf ear to the masked enemies of union; the men who, we know from their own mouths, and from their own actions in the market-place, are ruthless disunionists. The cause is too holy to be hazarded in their keeping; they must not touch it. The members who told their constituents in the last election that they were sincere friends of Federation have no room to pause. With them, to hesitate is to be lost.

I now turn to Mr. Reid's new plot to block the progress of Federation. On the return of Mr. Reid from his holiday and feasting in Hobart in the second week of February, your morning contemporary commented upon the result of the labours of the "Conference of Premiers" with sound argument and much truth, and with that severity which is necessarily a part of such treatment. In its issue of February 11 the opening sentences of the *Herald's* leader were:—

"The Federation Enabling Bill may, we think, be described as a bill to postpone the Federation of the colonies indefinitely. It breaks absolutely with the past, and it makes inadequate preparation for the future."

In these pregnant sentences the design is disclosed of the self-styled Freetrader, who, a little over three years ago, surrounded himself with leading Protectionists in opposition to Federation, and who declared that he would rather see a Protectionist policy established in New South Wales than see the Australian colonies federated. Of course, what Mr. Reid aims at is to "break absolutely with the past," and it is equally palpable to the unclouded vision that it is part of his design to make "inadequate preparation for the future." To gratify his personal vindictiveness against one man he is trying to discard the wisdom of the most memorable assemblage of the leading men of Australia that ever was brought together in our history, and which was constituted by election by all the Australian Parliaments for the one express purpose of framing a Constitution for the Federal Government. What status had the self-constituted "Conference of Premiers" against this great historical Convention? Can the lesser overrule the greater? Can a coterie of mice claim for itself the mastery over a gathering of lions? Who were the men, each elected by the Parliament of his own colony, who formed the Convention?—Here are the names—

Sir George Grey, Sir Harry Atkinson, Captain William Russell, *New Zealand*; William M'Millan, Sir Joseph Abbott, Edmund Barton, Sir George Dibbs, William Henry Suttor, Sir Patrick Jennings, *New South Wales*; John Macrossan, John Donaldson, Sir Samuel Griffith, Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith, Arthur Rutledge, A. J. Thynne, Thomas Macdonald-Paterson, *Queensland*; R. Chaffey Baker, J. H. Gordon, Sir John Cox Bray, Dr. Cockburn, Sir John Downer, Charles C. Kingston, Thomas Playford, *South Australia*; Alfred Deakin, James Munro, Colonel W. C. Smith, Sir Henry Wrixon, Duncan Gillies, Henry Cuthbert, Nicholas Fitzgerald, *Victoria*; Sir John Forrest, W. E. Marmion, Sir James Lee-Steere, J. A. Wright, J. W. Hackett, A. Forrest, W. J. Loton, *West Australia*; William Moore, Adye Douglas, A. Inglis Clarke, W. H. Burgess, N. J. Brown, B. S. Bird, P. O. Fysh, *Tasmania*. The elected Convention contained not only all the Premiers of the time, but eight other gentlemen who had formerly held the post of Premier. Are we likely to have a more competent and representative body than this, or one more constitutionally authorised to frame a Federal Constitution? And how was this Convention called into existence? Not by the will of any one man, but by a conference of all the colonies, including New Zealand, which came to a unanimous vote that the time was come then (1890) to invite the several Parliaments to elect a body to do this one work of framing a Constitution for the new National Government. What comparison can be drawn at any stage between the process by which this representation of the Australian populations was brought about, and the self-convened conference of the six Premiers at Hobart—one of whom, at least, dissented from their proceedings? What status has the so-called conference? Who gave it authority? What wisdom has it exhibited? How can its work be regarded with trust? But we shall be told that the "Enabling Bill" of the conference, which was so correctly described by the "*Herald*," as a "Bill to postpone the federation of the colonies indefinitely" is not a bill to inaugurate a constitution, but a bill to enable the people themselves to elect a body to frame a constitution. Let us examine this proposal by the rule of common sense, which is exercised in other transactions of approximate similarity of character. The directory of a bank in communication with other banks propose to obtain the sanction of the whole body of shareholders to a scheme of amalgamation, in order to found one great powerful institution. Do they invite the shareholders to elect a separate body to formulate the proposal, or do they not use their best intelligence in drafting the proposal themselves, to be submitted for the approval of the shareholders? Or we will take the case of a trades-union which is desirous of amalgamating with other unions, in order to form one strong organisation. Are the scattered members invited to elect a separate body to frame the proposal, or do they not appoint a sub-committee to prepare it for submission to the members for consideration and approval. The constitution drafted by the Federal Convention of 1891 is before the electors of all Australia, with the proposal concurred in by all parties that each Parliament shall revise it and submit amendments to be considered by another Convention, and that finally the constitution so revised shall be presented to the whole people for adoption or rejection. Some of the highest authorities in the world have approved of the convention's draft constitution, and everybody admits that it must supply the foundation of whatever constitution may be ultimately adopted by the Australian people. But we shall be further told that I have myself proposed that the people should elect a body specially to do this work—a "Council of Founders" I think I called it. I have no time to refer back just now. The pettifoggers who delight in being called "statesmen" have very often snatched at some part (which suited their purpose) of a series

of utterances or a written proposal or scheme of mine, and have tried to twist it to their own "ignoble use," regardless of or not being able to see the whole scope and range of my thoughts. Coleridge, in his "Vindication of Southey," spoke of "that most venomous of all the forms of calumny, the lie by omission. Compared with the cobra or hooded snake," said he, "the adder is an innocent beast." What was true of the scribblers who attacked Southey a hundred years ago is true to-day of the brawlers who attack me, George Houston Reid amongst them. What I have said in one or two speeches, and in the second volume of "Fifty Years" (chapter 13), if intelligently read, amounts to this, that if political leaders continued to temporise and palter with the great question, and if the Parliaments persisted in setting it aside in favor of petty provincial projects, then in the last resort the people should take the matter out of the hands of their spineless representatives and act for themselves. But I hold that the Parliaments constitutionally are the right bodies to give life to the forthcoming nation, if they would only rise to the height of the great argument, to the imperative call of their new and glorious duty, and the world will hold that they cannot neglect their august work without dishonor.

In my comments in the Assembly on the 20th inst., on the strange rambling Ministerial statement of the previous day, I said that Mr. Reid's unseasonable boast of his tariff proposals afforded strong evidence that his mind had never formed any true conception of federation. In his reply, like an angry schoolgirl, he blurted out confirmatory evidence of my accusation. He is going (so he says) to sail into the port of Federation with the flag of freetrade flying. Let us test this choice bit of childish swagger. Suppose the great colony of Victoria could by any possibility be equally foolish with Mr. Reid, and declared that she was going to sail into the port of Federation with the flag of protection flying. In such a promising state of circumstances I ask the gentlemen who continue to extend their support to the Reid Ministry on the back Treasury bench, what chance would remain for federation on any terms? I say once more that no man, whatever he may profess and wherever he may sit, can be a provincial tariffist and a genuine friend of Australian union. The two things are irreconcilable. If he is still a provincial freetrader, or a provincial protectionist, let him raise the standard of disunion, and stand by his single province against the other Australian provinces as if they were foreign States. Mr. Reid, indeed, not very long ago used to revel in exhibiting his policy in this form of allegory. He said New South Wales, with her freetrade tendencies, was the only sober man, and that the other colonies, with their leanings to protectionist duties, were all drunkards. This is a beautiful device to inscribe on his freetrade flag when Mr. Reid sails into the port of Federation.

But Mr. Reid, in his scolding speech of the 20th, told me, with as much offensiveness as a person so ridiculous is capable of, to walk over to the other side of the House. Let me politely tell him, in reply, that I have taken my seat on the benches to the right of the Chair, and that I intend to remain there until I see him and his fellow-conspirators driven across the Chamber to their proper place. Suppose I had voted the other night with the protectionists, I should only have done what he and his Attorney-General (Mr. Want) actually did against my Government in 1891, when, with only two other nominal freetraders (both since defeated), they voted for Sir George Dibbs's motion of censure. I am not likely to follow Mr. Reid's evil example.

Let it be known to all men who care to know, that I am a Free-trader body and soul. I am no turncoat, no backslider, no doubter on the question. But the question of a fitting Government for an intelligent,

rapidly-growing, aspiring people, is far above any fiscal considerations, or the adjustment in a code of policy of any economic principles. Government itself is the one overmastering question which transcends all others that can occupy the human mind in relation to human affairs. A sound fiscal policy is simply one of many subordinate organisations or issues, as, for example, a sound system of jurisprudence, which flows, so to speak, from a sound Government. When we approach the province of nation-making it is difficult for Mr. Reid, and men who grope in his narrow track of thought, to comprehend the situation. We might as well expect a guinea-pig to take a correct survey of the stars. The poor guinea-pig can never rise to the occasion.

In the Australian case, six separate political communities, each with a Constitution and a system of civilised life of its own, seek to unite their powers and their fortunes in founding a national Government to overshadow, protect, and strengthen the resources of all. In such a sublime enterprise there is no room for rash, narrow-minded men to shake hostile flags at each other. The young States, if they mean to achieve success, must meet in the spirit of brotherhood, each respecting the other, and all admitting the ground of equality. There cannot be any attempt to stipulate for some special advantage, or to lay down conditions of favor to one or more of the States, who meet as equals. So far as I am concerned, I have held this language from the first. In my first words to the assembled delegates at the Melbourne Conference in 1890, I appealed to all to let "the crimson thread of kinship" bind them together.

One word in defence of my own position and attitude at the present time. I say to Freetraders, to Protectionists, to all men alike, this is no time for the "unwholesome conflict between Freetrade and Protection as we now witness it." These are the very words I addressed to my constituents at the last election. The issue is slipping out of our hands as States in the coming Federation, and it must of necessity be remitted to the national government. Let us, as comrades in the noble cause of Australian union, whether Freetrader or Protectionist, reserve our strength on the subordinate fiscal issue for the broad battlefield which will soon open to us—the sooner the better—in the election of the Federal Parliament. My own course is clear enough, and perfectly straight. When the Federal battlefield lies before us, and if we wake up to action it must soon come, I shall use all my faculties of mind and body, all my energies, and all my courage to fight the good fight of Freetrade, and to crown the struggle with victory in the House of Representatives. Of course, I shall expect no less than that those who take an opposite view on the Federal tariff will do the same; nor shall I, on that account, cease to be grateful for their loyal companionship in the cause of Australian union.

Yours, etc.,

HENRY PARKES.

March 24.