

PARTNERS WITH ENGLAND.

INSPIRING SPEECH BY MR. BRYCE.

THE FEDERAL SYSTEM. EXPERIENCE IN AMERICA.

Melbourne, July 12.

The Right Hon. James Bryce, British Ambassador at Washington, was the guest of the Federal Government at luncheon at the Federal Parliament House to-day. The Prime Minister presided. The State Governor (Sir John Fuller) was on Mr. Fisher's right, and the distinguished visitor on his left. There were also present leaders in political, commercial, industrial, educational, and civic life, among them being Senator McGregor (Vice-President of the Federal Executive Council), Mr. Tudor (Minister of Customs), Mr. McKenzie (State Minister of Lands), Mr. Hughes (Federal Attorney-General), Mr. Justice Isaacs, Mr. E. Magelssen (Consul for the U.S.A.), Mr. Thomas (Minister of External Affairs), Mr. W. N. McNeilage (president of the Chamber of Manufacturers), Mr. O'Malley (Minister of Home Affairs), Mr. G. M. Prendergast, M.L.A., Mr. G. T. Mead (president of the Political Labor Council), Mr. W. T. Appleton (chairman of the Steamship Owners' Federation), Mr. H. Berry (president of the Chamber of Commerce), Senator Findley, Mr. W. F. McNamara (chief president of the A.N.A.), Admiral Creswell (Naval Director), Mr. McDonald (Speaker of the House of Representatives), Mr. Deakin, M.H.R., Dr. McFarland (Vice-Chancellor of the Melbourne University), Senator Pearce (Minister of Defence), Sir A. Taylor (ex-Lord Mayor of Sydney), Mr. D. Mackinnon, M.L.A., Mr. Frazer (Postmaster-General), and Mr. D. H. Ross (Canadian representative in Victoria).

Mr. Fisher proposed the toast of "Our Guest." He said Mr. Bryce's name and fame had preceded him not only to Australia, but to every part of the world. He hoped Mr. Bryce would long live to wear the honors that he had so well earned—(hear, hear)—and that when he returned to the centre of the Empire he would be able to speak of Australians as he had seen them, and do something to help to spread the knowledge of the people and resources of the country. (Cheers.)

Mr. Deakin said Mr. Bryce represented the whole Empire in the new world of the west, one of the greatest countries of the present and one of the most promising of the future. A man occupying such a position was tried by a treble test of quality, efficiency, and suitability, of high aims and high ideals. Mr. Bryce, who had been tried, had emerged triumphantly. (Hear, hear.) He had a part, and a considerable part, in laying the foundations of the Constitution of Australia. (Cheers.) He hoped Mr. Bryce would draw their American cousins nearer to them, and that when he again placed his foot on his native soil he would with greater warmth and greater force assure the people of Australia's absolute loyalty to the Empire, her confidence in its principles of liberty and justice, and her decision to do her part in increasing and strengthening the bonds of Empire. (Cheers.)

Mr. Bryce Replies.

Mr. Bryce, who was received with cheers, said he was deeply sensitive of the honor of being invited to such a gathering. It was an unprecedented honor to him to have such a reception from the Parlia-

ment of the Commonwealth, and to receive such assurance as the leaders of two parties had been good enough to give him, of the good feeling that existed between Australia and Great Britain. He almost took these references to himself as being more of an act of personal kindness. He was perfectly certain that nothing could more conduce to the unity of the Empire than more frequent intercourse between those who shaped affairs here and those who shaped affairs there. (Cheers.) A mutual understanding of that kind was a basis of the friendship which must reign between all parts of the Empire, and everyone who came here and went there was adding one link more to the bond that was tying them together. He could assure them that if he was to return, as he hoped he would, to the United States he would convey to the people there a full assurance of the friendly sentiments which were entertained in Australia towards them. (Hear, hear.) The Pacific was a wide ocean when one travelled, but with more rapid communication and more frequent intercourse they would be linked more closely together. (Cheers.) He would tell the people of the extraordinary growth of Australia, of the great industrial, agricultural, and commercial future which lay before it, and about the spirit which animated the people. Nothing would give him greater pleasure and enjoyment than to report the sentiments that had been expressed, and which he knew were felt by everybody in Australia of devotion to the Empire as a whole, and the perfect sympathy and understanding which existed. (Cheers.) It was a great pleasure to an old politician and an old parliamentarian like himself to meet a body of parliamentarians, and it was a particular pleasure to be asked to talk to politicians, but not about politics. Parliamentary life contained its joys, its sorrows, its pleasures, and its drawbacks. His Excellency the Governor could bear him out in that. One of the drawbacks was that there were under some limitations as to what they were allowed to say. One's time was very largely devoted to showing up the mistakes and errors of one's antagonists, and sometimes there was an irresistible temptation to say something in a kindly spirit of the mistakes that were being made by one's colleagues. (Laughter.) He had sometimes thought they could make a more scathing indictment of their own side.

Mr. Fisher—Hear, hear. (Loud laughter.)

Personal Friendships and Politics.

Mr. Bryce said the thing he looked back upon with most pleasure was the personal friendships he had formed, friendships which were almost as frequent and close with men of other parties as with members of his own. An agreeable feature of British political life was the fact that no element of personal hostility or animosity entered into the relations of members one with another. He remembered in a fine speech delivered by Mr. Gladstone in 1881, after the death of Lord Beaconsfield, a sentiment which touched them all, when he said that among all the passages of arms that had taken place between Disraeli and himself, he did not think any feelings of animosity had entered into the minds of either. That was generally the tone of British politics. This was also a great political benefit. It was a very great advantage that one could be on terms of personal friendship with one's opponents, as it showed that there did exist a community of aims, purposes, and a desire that the greatness and wellbeing of the country should be maintained. (Hear, hear.) He knew nothing about Australian politics, and, therefore, could say nothing. He could also say nothing regarding American politics, about which he knew a great deal. (Laughter, and hear, hear.) He might say things which were better unsaid. One could not live in a country like that without seeing and knowing a great deal that did not appear in the newspapers.

England Watching Australian Legislation.

Neither could he say anything with regard to British politics. He would not even take the opportunity of contradicting any unfounded statements regarding anything he had done. All he wanted to say was entirely outside that sphere. It was to tell them, although they knew it already, with what interested sympathy the people in England were watching everything that happened in Australia. The people of Australia seemed to be engaged at this moment on two very interesting lines of political experiment. One was in the working of the Federal system, and in determining the relations between the

States and Federal Governments, which had been established by the Constitution, but the full nature and compass of which could only be determined when the machinery had been working for some time, and when various questions had arisen and brought out points which had escaped the notice of the able and careful men who constructed the Constitution after long debate, and after, as they thought, having explored every question which might arise. The greatest wit and wisdom of men could not possibly see all the questions that would arise. (Hear, hear.) That was proved in the United States, when within fourteen years after the inauguration a large number of contentious questions arose. On the whole the Federal system of the United States worked very smoothly. Several important points, of course, had arisen, but the Constitution was so well drawn, and the decisions of the court were so carefully and impartially given by men of such consummate ability, that the limits of Federal and State powers had been very accurately determined. When they considered how many questions might arise between two such authorities—the Federal authority covering the whole country, and coming into frequent touch, even collision, with State authority—it was surprising that nearly all the points had been determined. (Hear, hear.) The limits of the Constitution originally determined in 1788 had been very little altered. There were, he thought, only two sets of questions now which had caused considerable difficulty as to the relative powers of the State and Federal Governments. Great corporations, operating in every State and under State laws, had, as they knew, acquired enormous powers, and there were always proposals being made for Federal legislation which would enable them to be dealt with more adequately than it was contended they could be dealt with under State laws. He thought they would continue to occupy attention for some time to come.

The Railways.

The other question was one relating to railways. It was a question which had only a secondary interest for Australians, as their railways were the property of the States. The right of the Federal Government to control commerce between the States extended to the regulation of railways. A great many decisions had been given, and more were expected, and they would have to be given before the question was solved. Apart from those two questions everything worked smoothly. This had been due to the universal respect felt for the Federal judiciary, in whose hands the ultimate determination of these questions rested. They were fortunate in having had able and high-minded men who had laid the foundations. Nothing would contribute more to the success of a federation than the character of men placed in the Supreme Court.

Australia and Its Judiciary.

He was delighted to think that there was no part of the noble traditions of the British Constitution, which was more closely preserved in Australia than the respect of the people for its judiciary. (Hear, hear.) The whole of society rested in the long run upon the prompt, just, and impartial administration of the law. (Hear, hear.) The other line of experiment which Australians were taking was for the people in England of even greater and more practical interest. It was the experiment they were making in economic and social legislation. A movement which would improve the conditions of the masses of the people and settle the economic basis of society on its proper foundation, was one that was passing over the whole world. Australians, like the people of the United States, were rendering a great service to the world in the experiments they were trying, for politics, after all, was an experimental science. Progress in this most difficult of all arts was rendered more difficult because it had to harmonise and subdue the divergent interests and passions of men and make them work in a common service. The constitution under which they lived, and their legislative system, was the result of a succession of experiments, during the whole of which their ancestors had wisdom not to try very large experiments, but to move step by step, and then, if an experiment was not succeeding, to drop it and try for success in some other direction. (Hear, hear.) It was owing to that mixture of boldness on one side, and caution and prudence on the other, that Great Britain had become a model for other countries which desired to realise the same high standards by similar methods. He was perfectly certain that that spirit had been developed in Australia, and he felt proud and joyful that they had been giving the privilege of establishing self-government in this great Dominion. (Cheers.)