

Commonwealth in which we should necessarily have but a small voice. Here it may be said that, while, as a State, New Zealand would have equal representation in the Senate with every other State, in the House of Representatives her representation would be, on the basis of present populations, fourteen out of eighty-eight members.

(3.) The defence afforded by the Commonwealth would not be sufficient for our protection for many years to come. Meanwhile our only bulwark is the strength of the fleets of Great Britain, and we must look for our security to the power of the Mother Country, and the unity and solidarity of the Empire.

(4.) The initial cost of federation will be considerable, and in a country of so large an extent as Australia, so great a part of which has yet to be opened up and improved, the efficient working of the Federal Government may necessitate directly or indirectly heavier taxation that we have now to bear.

(5.) The alien question.—Probable causes of future trouble and discord are involved in the occupation of the North of Australia. If that part of the Continent is to be colonised by aliens, and its industries carried on by means of Asiatic and coloured labour, and it is questionable whether they can be carried on by other means, then Australia is laying up trouble for herself in the not very distant future, and it behoves us to consider

whether we should involve ourselves in such matters in which we have no immediate concern.

(6.) Centralisation.—In most federations the power of the central government tends to increase, and the local authority to decline. More than any other colony we have to fear this tendency to centralisation.

(7.) The indissolubility of the Union.—The step of joining the federation once taken, there can be no withdrawal. The union is indissoluble. Experience only can prove whether federation in the result will be beneficial or disastrous to this colony. Should it prove the latter, the experience will be dearly bought, and without profit.

In conclusion it may be said that we should both gain and lose by federation, and whether the gain or the loss would be greater is a question only to be determined after the fullest and most searching enquiry into the subject. The ultimate court to whom this question must be submitted is the people of the colony. They must be the arbiters of their own destiny. But before they are called upon to decide, every fact of importance and every argument that throws light upon them should be published, and thought and discussion promoted and stimulated from one end of the colony to the other. Then we may leave the question to the people in the fullest confidence that their decision will be just and wise.

