

## PARLIAMENTS.

FROM the nature and composition of the population of Australia at and for some time after its first settlement, the government and direction of affairs naturally rested in the hands of the Governor alone, and it was not until the year 1824, during the time of Sir Thomas Brisbane, that any attempt was made to provide the Governor with recognised advisers. In that year the first Legislative Council was appointed, consisting of six gentlemen, of whom five held the principal official positions in the colony, the sixth being Mr. John Macarthur, the founder of the Australian wool industry. The first Act of Parliament ever passed in Australia was a measure dealing with the currency, in 1824. Four more members were added to the Council in the following year, by Governor Darling, and further additions were made from time to time. On the 6th June, 1838, the public were first admitted to hear the debates, for up to that time even the representatives of the Press had been excluded. Thenceforth the proceedings were more or less fully reported.

Until 1843 the members of the Legislative Council were all nominated by the Governor, but in that year the principle of election was introduced, in conjunction with that of nomination. The nominated members were twelve in number, six being official and six non-official. The elected members comprised a number of men whose names have become historic, such as W. C. Wentworth, William Bland, William Lawson, Charles Cowper, Terence Aubrey Murray, W. H. Suttor, Francis Lord, Richard Windeyer, Alexander Macleay, Roger Therry, Charles Nicholson, and John Dunmore Lang, the two last mentioned being among the representatives of the Port Phillip district, now known as Victoria. Mr. Alexander Macleay was the first Speaker of this body, succeeded by Sir Charles Nicholson in 1846.

Partial representation in the Legislature did not altogether satisfy the colonists, for as far back as the year 1845 the question of Responsible Government was publicly discussed. The agitation once awakened was never allowed to slumber, and aided by a vigorous and outspoken Press, as well as by the talented oratory of some of the patriotic members of the Legislature, it continually became more active until in the year 1855 the Imperial Parliament passed a measure to sanction the new Constitution that the colonists sought. On the 22nd May, 1856, the first Australian Parliament under Responsible Government was opened by Sir William Denison in Sydney. It consisted of a nominated Upper House, called the Legislative Council, the number of members of which

was not definitely fixed ; and a Legislative Assembly, consisting of fifty-four elected members, of whom Sir Daniel Cooper was chosen the first Speaker. The first Ministry consisted of Sir Stuart Alexander Donaldson, as Colonial Secretary and Premier ; Mr. Thomas Holt, Colonial Treasurer ; Sir William Manning, Attorney-General ; Mr. J. B. Darvall, Solicitor-General ; Mr. G. R. Nichols, Auditor-General ; and Mr. W. C. Mayne as Representative of the Government in the Legislative Council. From that period the principles upon which the government of New South Wales is based have never altered, though there have been some changes in the details. Various amendments of the Electoral Act have taken place from time to time, by which the number of representatives to the Legislative Assembly has been largely increased, and alterations have taken place in the direction of the removal of restrictions, and the extension of the liberties of the people. The Legislative Council now numbers fifty-eight members, and the tenure of a seat in that body is for life. The only qualification required of members is that they shall be 21 years of age, and natural-born or naturalised subjects. The qualification for a member of the Assembly is the holding of an elector's right. Members of the Lower House receive a remuneration of £300 a year, but members of the Council are unpaid. Free passes by rail and tram are received by members of both Houses.

A new Electoral Act, assented to on the 13th June, 1893, remodelled the whole electoral system of New South Wales. The number of members of the Assembly is fixed at 125, and the colony is divided into 125 electoral districts. No elector can have more than one vote, or, in other words, the "one man one vote" principle is enforced. Every person entitled to vote must see that his name is inscribed on the electoral roll and must provide himself with a document called an "elector's right," without the production of which he cannot demand a ballot-paper. The suffrage is manhood, the only conditions being twelve-months' residence in the colony in the case of an immigrant, and three-months' residence in the electoral district in which the right to vote is claimed. In the case of removal from one district to another, the qualifying residential period is reduced to one month, and the elector may vote in his old district until he has acquired the month's residential qualification in the district to which he has removed. In 1896 the franchise was extended to the police force. The duration of Parliament is limited to three years. There have been seventeen Parliaments in New South Wales, the average existence of which has been two years three months and five days. At the general election for the eighteenth Parliament, which took place on the 27th July, 1898, there were 324,338 electors on the roll, 316,819 of whom were in 122 contested constituencies. Of the latter, 178,717 exercised their right to vote, forming only 56·41 per cent. of the electors enrolled. It must be pointed out, however, that the number of names enrolled is largely in excess of the number of electors entitled to vote, and that the true proportion would be about 64·75 per cent.

The example of New South Wales was not without effect on the other Australasian colonies. Victoria, after its separation from New South Wales, was legislated for by a Council, some of the members of which were nominated and others elected; but on the 21st November, 1856, the first Parliament under the new Constitution of the colony was opened. This Constitution differed from that of the parent colony in that the Legislative Council as well as the Assembly was elective; it consisted of thirty members, while there were fifty-eight in the Lower House. Mr. W. C. Haines was the first Premier. There are now forty-eight members in the Council, and ninety-five in the Assembly. Members of the Upper House must be of the full age of 30 years, and for one year previous to the election have possessed a freehold estate of the value of £100 per annum, free of encumbrance. The tenure of office is six years, and there is no remuneration attached to the position. Electors must possess a £10 freehold or a leasehold of £25, or be mortgagors in possession of property rated at not less than £10 per year. Graduates of British or Colonial Universities, legal and medical practitioners, clergymen, certified school-masters, military and naval officers, and matriculated students of the Melbourne University are entitled to the franchise. Members of the Assembly must be 21 years of age, natural-born or naturalised subjects, and have been resident in the colony for two years. The reimbursement is £300 per annum, with a free railway pass. Three years is the limit of the duration of a Parliament. The suffrage is practically manhood, with residence in the colony of twelve months' duration. There have been sixteen complete Parliaments in Victoria under the present Constitution, the average duration of each being two years and five months. The general election for the seventeenth Parliament took place in October, 1897. There were at that time 254,125 electors enrolled, of whom 225,000 were in eighty-two contested constituencies. Of these, 158,225, or 70·32 per cent., voted.

Tasmania, on its separation from New South Wales at the end of 1825, was provided with a nominated Legislative Council, under which it was governed for some thirty years. Following the lead of their neighbours, the colonists of this island also agitated for a Constitution, which was eventually granted to them, and came into force on the 2nd December, 1856. Tasmania now possesses a Legislative Council and a Legislative Assembly, both of which are elective. The Council consists of eighteen members, who hold their seats for six years, three members, or one-sixth of the whole number, retiring every year. In the case of *ad interim* elections, the incoming member holds his seat only as long as his predecessor would have held it. Members must be 30 years of age, and natural-born or naturalised subjects. Judges of the Supreme Court, placemen (except Ministers of the Crown), and Government contractors are disqualified from sitting in either Upper or Lower House. Members of both Houses receive a reimbursement of expenses, which was originally fixed at £100 per annum, but has since been reduced to £50. Electors

for the Council must possess a property qualification of £20 per annum freehold or £80 leasehold, beside which there are professional and educational qualifications, coupled with a condition of residence. There are thirty-seven members of the House of Assembly, who must be 21 years of age and natural-born or naturalised subjects. The duration of the Assembly is now limited to three years. Adult males are qualified to be electors if their names are on the assessment roll of the district as owners or occupiers of any property ; or if they are in receipt of income, salary, or wages to the amount of £60 per annum, and have resided in the district for twelve months, rations and house allowance being included in computing wages. The eleventh Parliament expired by effluxion of time in December, 1896. The actual term of existence of Tasmanian Parliaments has averaged three years five months and sixteen days. At the general election for the twelfth Parliament, which took place early in 1897, there were about 30,300 electors on the roll. Of these, 19,850 were in fifteen contested constituencies. The number who voted was 11,950, or 57·68 per cent.

South Australia, like most of the other Australian colonies, was at first subject to the nominee system of appointment to the Legislative Council but in 1848 it obtained the boon of adding elected members to those nominated. Constitutional Government was granted to the colony in 1856, and the first Parliament under the new order of things assembled on the 22nd April in the following year. The South Australian Legislature consists of a Legislative Council of twenty-four members and a House of Assembly of fifty-four. Both Houses are elected by the people. Eight members of the Council retire every three years, but are eligible for re-election. Members are not required to have a property qualification, but they must have resided in the province for three years, and be not less than 30 years of age. An elector must have a freehold of £50 or a leasehold of £20 annual value, or be an occupier of a dwelling of the clear annual value of £25; and he must have been registered six months prior to the election. The principle of "one man one vote" has long been in existence in South Australia; and for some time there has been in force a provision by which absent electors may, under certain restrictions, record their votes. Members of the Assembly, as well as electors, are qualified by being 21 years of age, and having been enrolled for six months before the election. Female suffrage was granted in 1895, and women voted for the first time at the general election held on the 25th April, 1896. Members of each House receive £200 per annum. The duration of a Parliament is limited to three years. There have been fourteen complete Parliaments, with an average duration of two years four months and twenty-one days. At the general election for the fifteenth Parliament, which took place in April, 1896, all the electorates in the colony were contested. The number of enrolled voters was 137,781, and of these 91,348, or 66·30 per cent., voted.

Queensland, which formed part of New South Wales until the end of the year 1859, was never under the nominee system as a separate colony,

but commenced with Responsible Government, under which its first Parliament was opened on the 29th May, 1860. Its Legislative Council consists of members nominated by the Governor. There are forty at present, but no limit is fixed to the number. The tenure is for life. The qualification for members is that they must be 21 years of age, and natural-born or naturalised subjects. They receive no remuneration. The Legislative Assembly, of which there are seventy-two members, is elected by the people. Electors are enrolled under what is practically manhood suffrage, the only condition being six months' residence. Persons who possess freehold property of the value of £100 or house property of an annual value of £10, or who hold property on lease at an annual rent of £10, or a pastoral lease or license from the Crown, are entitled to vote in every district within which such property may be. Any person on the electoral roll is qualified to be a member of the Assembly. The duration of Parliament is limited to three years, and members of the Assembly receive £150 a year, with a free railway pass, and travelling expenses in the case of those members who are not in receipt of official salary. There have been eleven complete Parliaments, the average duration of which has been three years and six days. The general election for the twelfth Parliament took place in March and April, 1896. Six out of seventy-two seats were not contested. The total number of electors enrolled at the time was 86,882, of whom 79,971 were in contested electorates, and of these 62,363, or 77·98 per cent., voted.

In New Zealand, as in the other colonies, the form of government in the early days was of a mixed description, but in the year 1852 an Act was passed by the Imperial Parliament conferring upon the colony a Constitution. New Zealand was divided into six provinces, which were subsequently increased to nine, each governed by a Superintendent and a Provincial Council elected on a franchise which was practically equivalent to household suffrage. The provincial system, however, did not give satisfaction, and was abolished in 1876, when a system of Parliamentary Government for the whole of the colony came into existence. The Legislature now consists of two branches. There is a Legislative Council of forty-four nominees. Prior to 1891 the members held their seats for life, but in that year an Act was passed under which all new appointments to the Council are made for seven years only, though members are eligible for re-appointment. The honorarium is £150 per annum, with a deduction of £1 5s. per sitting in case of absence exceeding five sittings in one session, except from illness or some other unavoidable cause. The qualification for membership is that the person must be 21 years of age, and a natural-born or naturalised British subject. One-fourth of the total number of members is required to form a quorum. The House of Representatives consists of seventy-four members, of whom four are Maoris, elected to represent the natives. The qualification for membership is simply registration as an elector. Persons of either sex who are not less than 21 years of age are entitled

to vote, provided they have resided in the colony for one year, and in the electoral district for three months prior to registration, or hold freehold estate of the value of £25, and have held such for six months. Maoris are entitled to be placed on the European roll if they possess the latter qualification; if not, they are entitled to vote in one of the four native electorates, provided they are of age and reside therein. The principle of "one man one vote" has been in existence in the colony for a number of years. The honorarium of a member of the House of Representatives is £240 per annum, with travelling expenses to and from Wellington; and a deduction of £2 per sitting is made for all absences from the House exceeding five days per session, unless due to sickness or other unavoidable cause. The duration of a Parliament is three years. Twenty members are required to form a quorum. There have been twelve complete Parliaments since constitutional government was conferred upon the colony, their average duration being three years one month and twenty-five days. At the general election for the thirteenth Parliament, which took place on the 4th December, 1896, all the constituencies were contested. In the seventy European electorates there were 339,230 electors on the rolls, of whom 258,254, or 76·01 per cent., exercised the franchise. In the four Maori electorates a total of 13,008 votes was recorded.

Western Australia, which was proclaimed a British colony on the 1st June, 1829, was the last of the group to enjoy the privilege of Responsible Government. At an early stage of its existence the colony possessed a Legislative Council, consisting exclusively of officials nominated by the Governor. Subsequently, elected members were added, representing the principal districts of the colony, and this state of things continued until the end of 1890, when the new Constitution came into existence. Under it two Houses of Legislature were established, the Upper House consisting of fifteen nominated members, and the Lower House of thirty members, representing the thirty electorates into which the colony was divided. An amended Constitution Act, however, came into force in 1893, when the total population of the colony was found to exceed 60,000 persons. Under this Act the Legislative Council was increased to twenty-one, and the Legislative Assembly to thirty-three members. A further amending Act came into force in 1896, under the provisions of which the Legislative Council consists of twenty-four members, elected for six years; and the Legislative Assembly, of forty-four members, elected for four years. A member of the Legislative Council must be 30 years of age and free from legal incapacity, and must have resided in the colony for at least two years. A member of the Legislative Assembly must be 21 years of age and free from legal incapacity, and must have resided in the colony for at least twelve months. Members of both Houses must either be natural-born subjects of the Queen, or have been naturalised five years, with residence in the colony for the full period of five years in the case of a member of the Council, and for two years in the case of a member of the Assembly.

An elector for the Upper House must have resided in the colony for twelve months, and for that time have held a freehold estate of the clear value of £100, or have been a householder occupying a dwelling of the annual value of £25 for the same period; or he must occupy a leasehold estate of the annual value of £25, with eighteen months of the lease to run, or have held a similar leasehold for the past eighteen months, or be a holder of a Crown lease or license of an annual value of not less than £10; or he must be on the electoral roll of a Municipality or Roads Board district in respect of property of not less than £25 annual value. To qualify a person as an elector for the Assembly, he must either have resided in the colony for one year, and in the district for which he makes his claim for six months, or for that time have held a freehold estate of not less than £50, or a house of an annual value of not less than £10, or a leasehold estate of similar value, or a pastoral or running lease of not less than £5 per annum, or be inscribed on the roll of a Municipal or Roads Board district within the electorate. Members of the Legislature are not paid for their services, but they travel free over the railway lines of the colony. The first Premier was the Hon. Sir John Forrest, K.O.M.G. There was one Parliament under the constitution of 1890; and there has been one under the constitution of 1893. Their average duration has been two years seven months and twelve days. The third Parliament was elected in April and May, 1897, when the total number of electors on the roll was 23,318. Contests took place for only twenty-six out of forty-four seats, the number of electors in the contested constituencies being 17,114, of whom 9,016, or 52·69 per cent., exercised their right to vote.

The following table shows the number of members of each of the Houses of Parliament in the various colonies, with the remuneration which they receive in consideration of their services:—

Colony.	Legislative Council.		Legislative Assembly.	
	No. of members.	Remuneration.	No. of members.	Remuneration.
New South Wales .....	58	None .....	125	£300 per ann.
Victoria .....	48	None .....	95	£300 „
Queensland.....	40	None .....	72	£150 „
South Australia.....	24	£200 per ann.	54	£200 „
Western Australia .....	24	None .....	44	None.
Tasmania .....	18	£50 per ann.	37	£50 per ann.
New Zealand .....	44	£150 per ann.	74	£240 „

#### FEDERATION.

The federation of the Australian colonies having at length been brought so near to accomplishment, this chapter would be incomplete without a brief history of the movement. The question did not escape

the attention of those who drew up the outlines of the first free Constitution for Australia ; for, indeed, they sketched out a fairly comprehensive federation scheme. Unfortunately, however, the proposition was mixed up with others that were unpopular, and was allowed to sink out of sight with them. Still, from time to time the evil of want of union among the Australian colonies was made forcibly apparent, and the idea of federation gradually became more and more popular. Discussions of the subject took place in the Australian press, and conferences were held, the result of which was that the question came before the Imperial Parliament, which passed a measure permitting the formation of a Federal Council, to which any colony that felt inclined to do so could send delegates. The first meeting of the Federal Council was held at Hobart in January, 1886, the colonies of Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania, Western Australia, and Fiji being represented. New South Wales, South Australia, and New Zealand declined to join, but South Australia sent delegates to a subsequent meeting. The Council held seven meetings, at which various matters of intercolonial interest were discussed. It was, however, a purely deliberative body, and possessed neither funds nor powers to put its legislation into force. The Council is still in existence.

A more important step towards the federation of the Australasian colonies was taken in February, 1890, when a Conference, consisting of delegates from each of the seven colonies, was held at Parliament House, Melbourne. The members held seven meetings, the result being the adoption of an Address to the Queen, submitting certain resolutions which affirmed the desirableness of an early union under the Crown of the Australian colonies on principles just to all ; suggested that the remoter Australasian colonies should be entitled to admission to the union upon terms to be afterwards agreed upon ; and recommended that steps should be taken toward the appointment of delegates to a National Australasian Convention, to consider and report upon an adequate scheme for a Federal Constitution.

In accordance with these resolutions, delegates were appointed by the different Australasian Parliaments, and on the 2nd March, 1891, the National Australasian Convention commenced its sittings in the Legislative Assembly Chambers, Macquarie-street, Sydney. There were forty-five members of the Convention altogether, each colony sending seven, with the exception of New Zealand, which had only three representatives. Sir Henry Parkes was unanimously chosen as President, and Sir Samuel Griffith as Vice-President. Resolutions were adopted affirming the following principles :—

1. The powers and rights of existing colonies to remain intact, except as regards such powers as it might be necessary to hand over to the Federal Government.
2. No alteration to be made in State boundaries without the consent of the Legislatures of such States, as well as of the Federal Parliament.



3. Trade between the federated colonies to be absolutely free.
4. Power to impose Customs and Excise Duties to rest with the Federal Government and Parliament.
5. Military and Naval Defence Forces to be under one command.
6. The Federal Constitution to make provision to enable each State to make amendments in its constitution if necessary for the purposes of Federation.

Further resolutions approved of the framing of a Federal Constitution which should establish a Senate and a House of Representatives—the latter to possess the sole power of originating money bills ; also a Federal Supreme Court of Appeal, and an Executive consisting of a Governor-General and such persons as might be appointed as his advisers. A draft Constitution Bill was adopted by the Convention, but no steps were taken by any of the colonies towards the adoption or rejection of the scheme.

Another scheme, and one which promises a more speedy realisation of the hopes of federationists, because based on the popular suffrage, was formulated at a Conference of the Premiers of the Australasian colonies, summoned by the Premier of New South Wales, Mr. G. H. Reid. At this Conference, which was held at Hobart in the opening months of the year 1895, the five Australian colonies and the colony of Tasmania were represented. It was decided to ask the Parliament of each colony to pass an Enabling Bill permitting the election of ten persons to represent the colony on a Federal Convention. The duties of this Convention, it was determined, should be the framing of a Federal Constitution, to be submitted, in the first instance, to the local Parliaments for suggested amendments, and, after final adoption by the Convention, to the electors of the various colonies for their approval by means of the referendum. In accordance with these resolutions, Enabling Acts were passed by the Parliaments of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania—Queensland holding aloof from the movement after several attempts to agree on the question of the representation of the colony ; and delegates to the Convention were elected by the popular vote in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania, and by the Parliament of Western Australia.

The first session of the Federal Convention was opened in Adelaide on the 22nd March, 1897, Mr. C. C. Kingston, Premier of South Australia, being elected President ; and Sir Richard Baker, President of the Legislative Council of South Australia, Chairman of Committees ; while Mr. Edmund Barton, Q.C., one of the representatives of the mother colony, and a gentleman who had taken a deep interest in the movement, acted as Leader of the Convention. The Convention did not formally adopt the 1891 Bill as the basis of its work, but followed the general arrangement of that Bill, and accepted many of its provisions. The final meeting of the session was held on the 23rd April, when a draft

Constitution was adopted, and at a formal meeting on the 5th May the Convention adjourned until the 2nd September, having decided to hold its second session in Sydney. During the four months which intervened the Bill was considered by the Parliaments of the various colonies, and numerous amendments were recommended. These were considered at the second session of the Convention in Sydney, which extended from the 2nd to the 24th September, 1897, when, in order to meet the convenience of some of the delegates, a further adjournment was made, under the terms of which the Convention met for a third and final session in Melbourne on the 20th January, 1898. During this session the remainder of the proposed amendments were discussed, and the Draft Bill was finally adopted on the 16th March, for submission to the people of the colonies by means of the referendum.

This Draft Bill provides for the federation of the colonies under the Crown, with the designation of the Commonwealth of Australia. The executive power is vested in a Governor-General—to be appointed by the Queen—assisted by a Federal Executive Council; and it is provided that the seat of government shall be established in federal territory. The Parliament is to consist of two Houses—the Senate and the House of Representatives—both to be elected by the people on the franchise existing in the various States for the popular body at the time of union—the Senate for a period of six years, and the House of Representatives for a period of three years. Every State joining the Federation at its inception is entitled to an equal representation of six members in the Senate; and it is provided that half the number of Senators shall retire every three years, but shall be eligible for re-election. The number of members of the House of Representatives is to be, as near as possible, twice the number of Senators, the States to be represented in proportion to population, and it is provided that no State entering the Federation at the time of its establishment shall have a smaller representation than five members. Although the Federal Parliament will have power to alter the franchise on which its members will be elected, yet it can only do so in the direction of the extension of the voting powers of the people, so that in New Zealand and South Australia the right of women to vote cannot be withdrawn by the central authority so long as adult suffrage prevails in those States. Both Senators and Representatives are to receive an annual payment of £400 each.

It is proposed that immediately on the establishment of the Commonwealth the Federal Government shall assume the administration of the departments of Customs and Excise, and, on dates to be afterwards proclaimed, shall also take over from the States, Posts and Telegraphs; Naval and Military Defence; Light-houses, Lightships, Beacons and Buoys, and Quarantine; and shall have exclusive powers of dealing with these services. Power is also given to the Federal authority to deal with a large number of other matters of government, but only the services specified are to be transferred without further legislation. In the event of the Federal law conflicting with an existing State law, it

is enacted that the Federal law shall prevail. Within two years of the establishment of the Commonwealth a uniform Customs and Excise tariff is to be imposed by the Federal Government, and intercolonial trade will then become absolutely free. As the transfer of the services specified will leave the Federating States with a large deficiency in their local finances, a provision has been inserted in the Constitution making it incumbent upon the Commonwealth to raise from Customs and Excise duties four times the sum actually needed by the Commonwealth for its own purposes in the exercise of the original powers conferred, and to return the excess to the local Treasuries. Other sources of taxation are left open to the Federal Government, so that the Federal Treasurer is not absolutely compelled to raise the whole of his requirements through the Custom House. For the first five years after the imposition of the uniform tariff the surplus revenue raised will be returnable to the colonies in the actual proportions in which it was contributed by them, and thereafter in such manner as the Federal Parliament may deem fair. To meet the special circumstances of Western Australia, so largely dependent upon its Customs revenue, that colony will be allowed to retain its intercolonial duties, in gradually diminishing proportion, for the first five years of the uniform tariff. With the consent of the States, the railway systems of the colonies may be taken over by the Federal authority; and the Commonwealth is also empowered to take over the whole or a portion of the State Debts, applying the surplus revenue collected from Customs and Excise in payment of the interest thereon. An Inter-State Commission is to be established for the proper administration of the Federal laws relating to trade and commerce between the States of the Union. The Federal Parliament will have power to forbid the imposition of preferential or discriminating railway tariffs by the federating States should such tariffs be unjust to other States of the Union, due regard being paid to the financial obligations resting upon the States by whom the railways were constructed. The right to a reasonable use of the waters of a river for the purposes of irrigation or conservation will be reserved to the people of the colony through which that river flows.

The Senate and the House of Representatives will have equally the power of originating Bills, with the exception of Bills appropriating revenue or imposing taxation, the right of originating which is reserved to the House of Representatives. The Senate will not have the power of amending these appropriation or taxation Bills, but it may return them to the House of Representatives suggesting the omission or amendment of any of their provisions, and the House of Representatives may deal with such suggestions as it pleases. In the case of Bills, other than taxation or appropriation Bills, which have been passed twice by the House of Representatives, and have been twice rejected or shelved by the Senate, it is provided that the two Houses may be simultaneously dissolved, and if, after the election, they should still disagree, the members of the two Houses will require to meet at a joint sitting, and the Bill can only

become law if adopted by a majority of three-fifths of the members present and voting at the joint sitting.

The judicial power of the Commonwealth is vested in a High Court of Australia. This Court may hear appeals from all federal Courts or Courts having federal jurisdiction, from the Supreme Courts of the States, and from the Inter-State Commission. Appeals to the Privy Council in matters involving the interpretation of the Federal Constitution or of the Constitution of a State are forbidden; but the right of appeal to the Privy Council in other cases is not withdrawn, although the Federal Parliament may make laws limiting the matters in which such appeals may be made. The Federal Constitution can only be amended by an absolute majority of the members of each House of Parliament. It is provided that the amendment shall then be submitted to the people by means of the referendum, and shall become law only if accepted, first, by a majority of the people of the Commonwealth, and, second, by a majority of the States.

In the month of June, 1898, the Constitution Bill was submitted by means of the referendum to the people of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania. The Enabling Acts provided that in the case of New South Wales the minimum affirmative vote should be 80,000; in the case of Victoria, 50,000; and in the case of Tasmania, 6,000; while in South Australia a bare majority of votes was sufficient to secure the acceptance of the Bill. In Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania the Bill was adopted by large majorities; while in the case of New South Wales there was a majority of 5,367 for the Bill, but as the affirmative vote only reached 71,595, the Bill was regarded as rejected. The results of the voting were as follow:—

Colony.	For the Bill.	Against the Bill.	Total Votes, excluding Informal.
New South Wales .....	71,595	66,228	137,823
Victoria .....	100,520	22,099	122,619
South Australia .....	35,803	17,320	53,123
Tasmania .....	11,706	2,716	14,422

The Bill was not submitted to the popular vote in Western Australia, as the Enabling Act of that colony provided that Western Australia should only join a federation of which New South Wales formed a part. The other colonies also, although legally empowered to federate without New South Wales, tacitly admit that the adhesion of the mother colony must be secured before the final steps are taken. In New South Wales, politicians of all shades of thought are united in their desire for federation, only differing upon the question of the extent to which concessions shall be made for the purpose of securing the desired union, and it is confidently anticipated that within a very short time the Commonwealth of Australia will be called into existence.