90th.

ANNIVERSARY

HISTORY OF A.N.A.

A·N·A

1871-1961

90

Australian Natives' Association

1871-1961

BY BRIAN FITZPATRICK

A HISTORY OF A.N.A. SINCE FOUNDED 90 YEARS AGO

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ILLUSTRATIONS

PANORAMA

YOU might find it of interest that Mr. J. S. Hall, aged 92 years and living in retirement in the Melbourne riverside suburb of Heidelberg, started work 79 years ago as a telegraph messenger at Ballarat East, on 10/- a week, and four and a half years later joined one of the benefit clubs — friendly societies — of the time. Interesting, but without very much to do with the history of the nation. You could have discerned a little more "history" in the announcement last June of the death, at 105 years, of Mr. J. R. Rundle — who must have been born therefore within a few months of the fighting between troops and miners at the Eureka Stockade in December, 1854. But it is not that wide life's span, almost from Eureka to today, or that connection with the old Victorian (not yet Commonwealth) P.M.G.'s Department, that makes men like those part of the living texture of our country's history. No. Rather, a significant thing about them is their common membership of an Association which for 75 and 72 years in their respective cases, and for 90 years overall, has had to do, not only with sickness and funeral benefits to individual members, but also with the making and maintaining of the Australian nation.

The Australian Natives' Association joined Mr. Hall to its membership in 1886, the late Mr. Rundle in 1888. The A.N.A., in three-quarters of a century since (as, in a lesser way, during 15 years *before* 1886), has made unique contributions to our national institutions and our "way of life" (which we may take to mean our characteristic accepted attitudes, and modes and standards of conduct).

That is a proud claim, which must be justified by reliable authoritative testimony, or else invite dismissal as mere vaunting. The testimony, however, is readily available, and no knowledgeable person is likely to reject it as either spurious or partial.

We can call first, out of a cloud of witnesses, Professor Walter Murdoch. He merits priority because of his unchallenged eminence in Australian intellectual life, during more than half a century and now, and also because his observations, to be quoted, relate to what is both a major Australian achievement and, in a special sense, an achievement of the Australian Natives' Association.

Professor Murdoch, biographer of Australia's second Prime Minister, Alfred Deakin, describes in his book the long and difficult approach to the eventual federation of the Australian colonies on the first day of the 20th century, January 1, 1901. Federation had been in mind for nearly half a century, but intercolonial rivalries, and a multitude of practical difficulties such as differences on tariff policy, had kept the issue in the background of politics. In the 1890s, most citizens of the six self-governing colonies were uninterested in it, apathetic. By the 1891 census, one Australian historian has pointed out, two-thirds of the people were Australian-born; but there was no general feeling of or impulse towards Australian *nationalism*. And when at length the federation issue was discussed at a Constitutional Convention, in 1891, only 16 of its membership of 45 were Australian-born. That is to say, nearly two-thirds of the colonial leaders came from the non-Australian one-third of the people. A dynamic, a vital spark, was lacking.

But, at length, what was missing was supplied from what seems an incongruous source, a relatively insignificant body set up in Victoria and for many years not extended beyond that colony nor over any great segment of the people within the colony.

The A.N.A. (at first, the *Victorian* Natives' Association) had been founded with the prudent object of members' mutual help to meet costs of sickness and death, and with a second object also.

This second aim was, like the benefits system, admirably typical of the 19th century when Samuel Smiles's moralizing book *Self-Help* (1859) was much more influential than Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* published in the same year. The second object of the new Friendly Society was

"to promote the moral, social and intellectual improvement of its members".

From such modest pretensions, such humble strivings, sprang *the* force making for the federation of the Australian colonies — and the "improvement" of more than three million people then living in Australia. Walter Murdoch writes:—

The great part played, in Victoria at least, by the Australian Natives' Association — the members of which, it may be mentioned for the benefit of readers outside Australia, were not black-skinned — has been done justice to by all the historians.

That body, founded in 1871 by a handful of young enthusiasts, and at first ignored and then derided, had made wonderful progress, and by 1890 had become a potent factor in Victorian politics. . .

The A.N.A. was a League of Youth, and it put its shoulder to the wheel with enthusiasm. It was at the suggestion of this body that the Australasian Federal League was formed in Sydney in 1893. . . These two organizations — the A.N.A. and the Federation League — working in close co-operation, held meetings everywhere as long as the issue was undecided. . .

The decisive event was the annual conference of the Australian Natives' Association which opportunely took place at Bendigo on March 15 [1898]. . . On that day the Board of Directors . . . recommended acceptance [of the Commonwealth Convention Bill] by the Association. The Association had for years made Federation the one plank of their political platform; and the conference welcomed and unanimously approved the decision of the directors. . .

A dramatic account of that "decisive event" — which, indeed, cleared the road to federation — was given by an eye-witness, James Hume-Cook[1], in his 32-page booklet, "Australian Natives' Association: Its Genesis and History", published for the A.N.A. Diamond Jubilee in 1931.

He recalled that, meeting on Monday, March 14, in Bendigo's famous Shamrock Hotel, the Board of Directors had at length, in the small hours, decided unanimously to recommend approval of the Commonwealth Convention Bill. (If the A.N.A. conference should accept this recommendation, then — such was the influence generated in the Association's short career — so would the Colony of Victoria).

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[1] Victorian M.L.A. for East Bourke, 1894-1901, M.H.R. for Bourke, 1901-10, member A.N.A. Board of Directors from 1894, Chief President, 1896, Treasurer, 1904-42. Oddly enough—but it was Australasian federation that had been hoped for in the 1890's—this stalwart of the Australian Natives' Association was born (1866) in Auckland, New Zealand.

Next day, March 15, the conference met to hear what the Directors had determined upon. J. Hume-Cook wrote:—

When the Board's representative, the Hon. J. Hume-Cook, rose to speak, the silence was absolute! Not a hand moved to welcome him! Was this the presage of hostility? . . .

Mr. Isaac Isaacs, a member of the Convention and Attorney-General of Victoria, had very grave doubts about the value of the Bill. He came to Bendigo hoping, apparently, to prevent an acceptance of it at that stage. But the further he proceeded with his speech, the less favourably it was received, and when the late Mr. J. L. Purves loudly interjected, "Are you for the Federal Bill or against it?" it became clearly evident that the patience of the audience was almost exhausted.

Mr. Alfred Deakin had arrived late. . . He was to follow Mr. Isaacs. Just before he rose to speak, an intimate friend, the Hon. J. Hume-Cook, hastily wrote upon a scrap of paper, "The fire is lighted, fan the flame!" The handwriting was recognized. With friendly flashing eyes and a nod to the writer of the note, this master orator . . . swept away all doubts and fears. . .

The members of the Australian Natives' Association everywhere rallied to their side additional support, and the Bill was accepted by an overwhelming majority. . .[2]

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SO much, for the purposes of a general view or conspectus of the 90-years march of the A.N.A., for the days when the world was wide — when, as Professor L. F. Crisp puts it in his book, *The Parliamentary Government of the Commonwealth of Australia,* our political life was "most vigorous":—

Those were the days when trade union meetings were well attended in most industries, rather than in a few; when the Australian Natives' Association debates and gatherings drew crowds; when people of all classes still came eagerly and frequently to hear serious speakers on political subjects

That hopeful, active, tumultuous, above all *formative* period of Australian politics perhaps came to an end about the time of the outbreak of the first world war in 1914. But the

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[2] All three of those great personalities of the early A.N.A.—Isaacs, Purves and Deakin—were born in Melbourne and played prominent parts in Victorian colonial politics. Deakin and Purves went to Melbourne Church of England Grammar School and Deakin and Isaacs graduated from the University of Melbourne. Purves, a founder of the A.N.A., and Isaacs, an A.N.A. office-bearer, became Queen's Counsel. Deakin and Isaacs both became Commonwealth Ministers, Deakin being three times Prime Minister of Australia, and Isaacs Justice and then Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia and subsequently the first native-born Governor-General of the Commonwealth. J. L. Purves, b. 1843, d. 1910; Sir Isaac Isaacs, b. 1855, d. 1948; Alfred Deakin, b. 1856, d. 1919.

A.N.A. which had been in the midst of the ferment of nation-making and constitution-making — the A.N.A. continued as a community force.

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AUSTRALIAN federation having been achieved (and the erstwhile Victorian regional A.N.A. itself having extended its influence and organization through all States), the A.N.A. as J. Hume-Cook's "Historical Survey" emphasizes went on (from 1906) to press for Australian measures of self-defence: a Royal Australian Navy, which was brought to pass; a Citizens' Military Force likewise (with distinctive colours, of shirts and hatbands, for Light Horse, Infantry, Artillery; purple for the Fortress Companies (Engineers); emu plumes nodding on the hats of the Bush cavalrymen; a rank of Colour-Sergeant; "form *Fours!*"; compulsory military training for Junior Cadets from 12 years of age, Senior Cadets from 14, Citizen Forces from 18; detention camps or *H.M.A.S. Tingira* for recalcitrants. . .)

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AGAIN, through those early years of the Commonwealth and then in succeeding decades, the non-party Australian Natives' Association concerned itself with wider powers for the Commonwealth, more power to the Nation, less for the Sovereign — the still too-Sovereign — States. Expressing this policy, that stalwart of the earlier A.N.A., Sir Isaac Isaacs, resumed political controversy (if from an eminence above party politics) after relinquishment in 1936 of the Governor-Generalship he had filled since 1931 (A.N.A. Diamond Jubilee year, you recall).

An address by him to the Prahran branch, to which he had been attached since the stormy days of the 1897-98 Convention (and the Bendigo A.N.A. conference), on May 19, 1937, indicates at once the little diminished *Australian* fervour of the old battler, and the continued consciousness of Australian *mission* which pervaded the A.N.A. He was 82, and the A.N.A. was 66, when in 1937 the two latest of many unsuccessful proposals for increased powers for the Commonwealth were submitted to a referendum of the people; but

after defeat of the Aviation and Marketing proposals of the (Lyons) Government, G.C.M.G. and local branch of the A.N.A. could still meet together and find unity of spirit and purpose: —

> For a good forty years I have had the honour of membership, and in that time many treasured memories. . . In my opinion the view taken by the Association during the Referendum was right. The necessity for wider national power goes far beyond Aviation and Marketing. . .
>
> The members of this Association look to measures not men, to progress not party. . .
>
> The courageous and persistent exposition of our ideals, and the spread of the necessary information free from any party bias, are the special functions assumed by this Association. . .

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STILL, today, now that the A.N.A. moves into the tenth decade of its effort, the Association shows its special interest in youth — "While there's youth there's hope" could be its motto— by its encouragement of debating, and essay- and short story-writing, by endowing scholarships, and so on. So it is of interest to glance back on the Victorian Legislative Assembly of 1910 as reflecting a Victorian Royal Commission on Technical Education of nine years earlier still, and see the A.N.A. already in the mirror, together with Education. Together, more especially, with Technical Education, since the A.N.A., long concerning itself with Made in Australia movements to foster Australian manufacturing and technology, has long pressed for the pre-requisite: more and higher *skills* in the community.

In an August 23, 1910, speech in the Victorian Parliament, George Swinburne (with John Monash, perhaps the most renowned of our public men who were also great engineers), himself English-born and not resident in Australia until he was 25, reported this tribute by the Royal Commission nine years before: —

> On page 189 of their report the Commission say, "Another essential to the success of technical education is the awakening of local interest. . . The recent work of the Australian Natives' Association in stimulating public opinion upon educational reform is worthy of commendation, and the interest shown by this organization for some years past in the cause of technical education cannot fail to be beneficial." . .

We pick up the thread, a few years further on, in 1915 when the Board of Directors resolved to found a scholarship to commemorate F. C. Wainwright, A.N.A. member from 1879 and first General Secretary for 36 years.

The annual conference of 1917 established the scholarship, for junior technical school boys — and lately, June, 1960, we find young James Tutt, of Middle Brighton, Victoria, studying, as current Wainwright Scholar, for a diploma of civil engineering.

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THOSE are some enduring features seen in a Panorama of the A.N.A.: the making of the Commonwealth, political *and* technical education, improvement of the Constitution, organization of Australian armed forces.

Another is the Association's long-standing policy for selective immigration, which took its rise originally in an Australia struggling, last century and up to the early years of the Commonwealth, with social-economic problems created by the presence of low-paid Asiatic and "blackbirded" Pacific Islands labourers, in tens of thousands especially in Victoria and Queensland.

A change of emphasis on these situations, which formerly seemed to the A.N.A. to call for specific restrictive government policies, is shown by the following statement of policy (and government adoption of it) reported in the inaugural number of *Anapress*, December, 1948, soon after the institution in 1947 of large-scale refugee and other immigration: —

> Nationality and Citizenship Bill (1948) — Naturalization Ceremony — Government Adopts Association Policy: Recognizing the need for immigration . . . the Association adopted the view that a suitable naturalization ceremony, calculated to impress . . . the privileges and the obligations of Australian citizenship, be introduced to replace the hitherto perfunctory and entirely unsatisfactory naturalization procedure.
>
> The Minister for Immigration, Hon. A. A. Calwell, expressed complete agreement with the Board's representations and has included in the Bill a clause providing that the oath of allegiance be taken in open court accompanied by proceedings designed to impress upon the applicants for Australian citizenship the responsibilities and privileges associated therewith. . .

It would seem to put the A.N.A. Panorama into a proper 1961 perspective, to focus, finally, on the very latest (*Anapress*, January, 1961) Association submission to the Prime Minister: that a Parliamentary Select Committee having examined questions of amendment of the Commonwealth Constitution, the A.N.A. submits that the Government place the Select Committee's proposals before the people at a referendum to be held as soon as possible.

Much had been achieved, in 90 years' effort. There was more to be done. . .

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FOUNDATION

REPORTS in the "Argus" newspaper, in the Melbourne autumn of 1871, introduced the A.N.A. to a community in which it was to cut a figure — but not, so laggard was the body in its childhood, until it was well into the teens. Indeed, those few who awaited the expected birth, due at Grimwade's Hotel in Elizabeth Street, on April 24, were unsure even of the shape the infant might manifest on delivery. The "Argus" of the 25th reported: —

> A meeting of persons, natives of Melbourne, was held last night at Grimwade's Hotel in answer to an advertisement calling them together for the purpose of forming a society for the promotion and protection of their interests. Mr. S. Lyons occupied the chair. Mr. [W. A.] Robins, the only one of the persons convening the meeting who was present, explained that the object of calling the meeting was to form a similar society to that formed by the natives of Sydney, called the Australian Patriotic Society.
>
> There seemed to be considerable doubt in the minds of those present what the object of the society was to be; some, from the loose wording of the advertisement, thinking it was a society for promoting protectionist principles — the "Argus" was for free trade, and would have recoiled from a tariff-protectionist infant as from a monster — others taking it to be a new benefit society.
>
> The opinion of those present was strongly in favour of forming a society of Victorian natives, and a committee of eleven persons was appointed to call a meeting at a future day, and to give a full explanation of the objects of the proposed society.

Samuel Lyons, chairman, and W. H. Leahy, secretary, who had inserted the original advertisement, were to remain closely associated with the body that now came into being, for the first ten years of its inconspicuous, uneventful career. We can never know what their feelings were when in 1881 they could look back over the first decade of the association they had started; did a membership of 430, then, and funds of £1120, measure up to their original expectations? And how would they have viewed the body ten years after *that*: no longer a struggling little Friendly Society among many of the kind, but a powerful force in intercolonial politics, a forum for Queen's Counsel and ambitious Members of Parliament, a workshop of
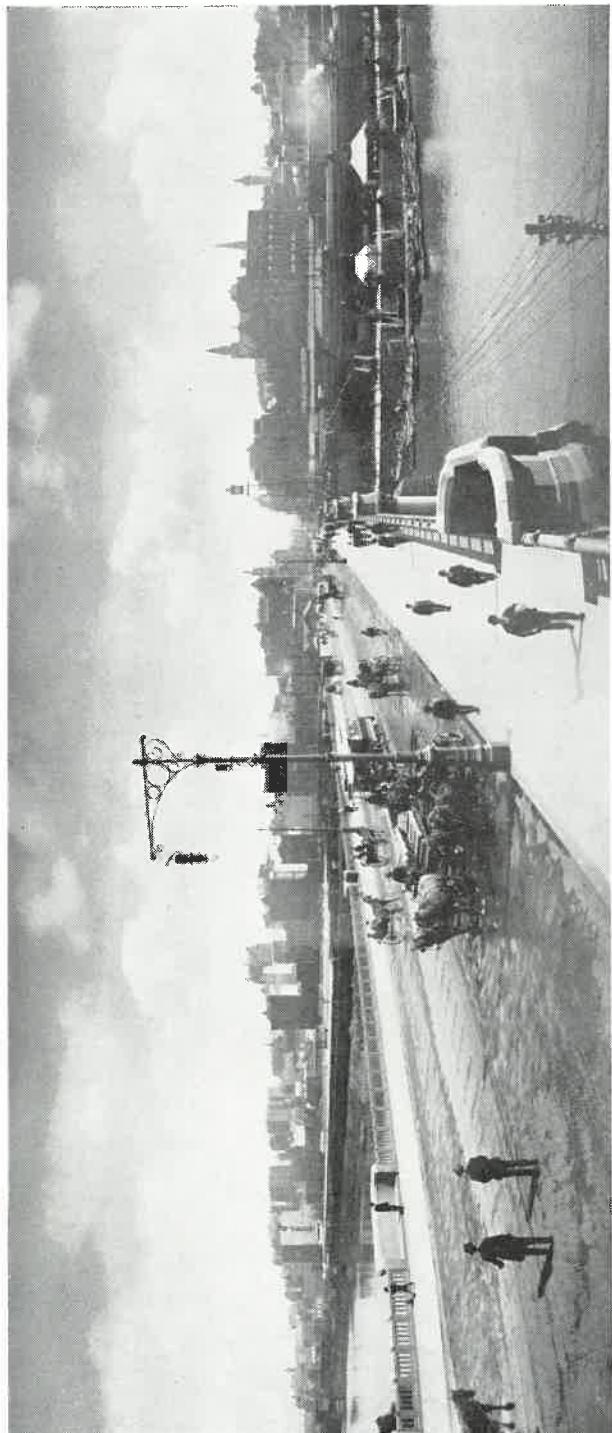
Melbourne Shortly After Federation

Constitutions, a nursery of Judges, of even a Prime Minister, a Governor-General?

What is certain is that nothing of this glittering future, not even a notion of the *kind* of development which their creation was soon to take, was in the minds of the creators when again ("Argus", 5.5.1871) a newspaper took note of what was moving: —

> A meeting favourable to the formation of a Benefit Society for Victorian natives was held in the Mechanics' Institute last evening. Mr. S. Lyons, J.P., occupied the chair. It was decided to form a benefit society to be called "The Victorian Natives' Association'. A sketch of the contemplated rules was adopted and a committee was appointed to prepare a code of laws to be submitted to a meeting to be held on Thursday, June 1. About fifty members enrolled themselves at once. The entrance fee previous to the 1st of July was fixed at 5/- and 10/- after that date. Members can be enrolled at the office of the honorary secretary, 79½ Collins Street East.

The first officers were elected at a July 6 meeting. J. W. Fleming, J.P., said to have been the first white child born "in the Port Phillip area", was elected president; vice-presidents, J. H. Levien, M.L.A., and S. Lyons, J.P.; "permanent secretary", W. A. Robins, and "elective secretary", T. P. Devine; and committee: J. T. Brown, T. F. Butler, J. Colgan, W. H. Leahy, P. D. Tracey (later spelt "Treacy"), G. H. Burns, S. V. Winter, W. D. Oliver and T. Jennings. (Apparently no need was felt as yet for the services of a treasurer). But the V.N.A. met again on July 31 "to elect a chemist" and revise its rules, and on October 14 registration of the Victorian Natives' Association was completed under the Friendly Societies Act.

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MODEST BEGINNINGS

EXTENSION of the organization, through "branches" each of which was separately registered, and self-governing, was slow and uncertain. However, the qualification for membership was widened at a meeting on April 26, 1872, when a majority resolved for "the admission of *Australian* natives as benefit members". (Change of name to "Australian Natives' Association" was registered on July 16 next year, 1873). The first A.N.A. Conference was held on Melbourne Cup Day,

November 9, 1874, delegates from Melbourne, Ballarat and Victoria (Collingwood) branches taking part. The second Conference, held in Christmas week, 1875, was attended by Geelong delegates also. The first Board of Directors was now elected, consisting of: president, James M. G. Mackintosh; vice-president, S. Cadden; treasurer, James Colgan; secretary, T. P. Devine.

Under this direction, the A.N.A. pursued during its first decade a policy strictly in accordance with the limited charter of a friendly society, qualified only by the sort of activity proper to a body professing the additional object of promoting the moral, social and intellectual improvement of its members. Obligations arising out of this responsibility were discharged, from time to time, by the holding of such functions as a concert and ball (decided upon in April, 1872); a discussion, a few months later — "a very long and animated discussion" — upon a "proposed school of music"; a dinner given, late in 1873, to Mr. Robins, who had been secretary, and a narration by the incoming president of 1873-75, Mr. James M. G. Mackintosh, of his experiences on service in the Maori war. (Mackintosh was also grand secretary of the Order of St. Andrew). Early in 1874, it was decided to request Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, the former Irish rebel and Victorian Premier (1871-73), to give a lecture, before his projected trip overseas, "in aid of the funds of the Association"; but it seems Sir Charles did not respond. On October 1, 1874, Mr. W. Gaunson (brother of David Gaunson[1] who in 1880 was to

defend the bushranger Ned Kelly, on trial for murder) lectured for the A.N.A. at the Athenaeum in Collins Street, Melbourne, his subject being "Sketches from Australian Authors". The Acting Chief Justice of Victoria, Sir Redmond Barry (who six years later condemned Ned Kelly to death), presiding, spoke in commendation of the A.N.A..

But the "Argus" of October 5 referred to "the nonsense Mr. Gaunson talked on the duty of the colonial press to act as wet nurse to sucking colonial authorlings".

William Gaunson, presiding at the 1876 annual dinner — "They sat down to an excellent dinner" was a repeated theme of the early days — predicted that in a few years the Association would count its membership in thousands. But it is doubtful whether in April, 1876, or indeed at any time for many years to come, A.N.A. enthusiasts took this notion seriously, except at dinner. For the four branches in existence in 1876 (besides Prahran, which did not record its membership) mustered no more than 156 members, and funds aggregating £365, and four years later the five branches had 235 members, and £814 in the bank.

Building the A.N.A. was an uphill task, to the point in 1886, fifteen years after foundation, when there were 45 branches (including 13 in Melbourne and its suburbs). The Victoria branch at Collingwood was the first extension, in June, 1872; it lapsed in three years, and was not revived until the exciting year 1889, when the Board of Directors in Melbourne ("acting on a suggestion from South Australia", J. Hume-Cook reported in his "Historical Survey") called an intercolonial conference for January, 1890, and there resolved "that the time has now arrived for the federation of the Australasian colonies". A North Melbourne branch was instituted in September, 1873; it acquired 40 members, merged with the Melbourne centre in 1874, and was reinstituted in 1886. An effort in 1875 to form a Richmond branch was not successful; a branch was formed there in 1885. A Geelong branch formed in 1874 soon lapsed; it was revived in 1886. A Prahran branch was in existence in 1876-80, and was revived in 1884. However, it was not in the metropolis or its neighbourhood, but in the goldfields, still after more than twenty years humming with activity, that the shape of things to come for the A.N.A. appeared.

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[1] The connection of David Gaunson with the A.N.A. may have been tenuous, but he fairly rates a footnote because of a newspaper item, belonging to that period when the A.N.A. was growing up, which reflects vividly the turbulent character of the times. James Grant and Geoffrey Serle, in their book, "The Melbourne Scene, 1803-1956", quote on pp. 158-9 an extract from the "Sydney Morning Herald", 11.11.1880:—

"Just now the larrikin element is much exercised in the matter of Edward Kelly. He mustered in his strongest force on Friday night [at the Lyceum Theatre] to sympathise with Kelly. Very appropriately, the chief speaker was Mr. David Gaunson, who entered into a long argument to show that Kelly was ill-used, and misunderstood, and that it would be the most proper thing in the world to set him at liberty. If, by some good accident, that meeting could have been swallowed up, or burnt, or drowned, or asphyxiated, Victorian society would have benefited for many years to come, for nearly all the infamy of Melbourne was gathered together. . . . Mr. Gaunson's sentiments were loudly applauded, and the resolution declaring Mr. Kelly an ill-used person was carried with no dissent. . . . Yesterday there were petitions at the doors of many of the churches in favour of this brutal murderer whom they seem to have adopted, and they were numerously signed, many of the names attached being those of young women. There was a rumour that a conspiracy was afoot for seizing upon Mr. [Graham] Berry [the Premier] and carrying him off into the Strathbogie Ranges as a hostage until Kelly should be released."

To make a mark on the two-fisted citizenry of those vigorous times evidently called for vigour in the Founding Fathers of the A.N.A.

HONORABLE
ALFRED DEAKIN

THE FIRST GENERAL
SECRETARY
FRED. C. WAINWRIGHT

At the end of 1874 the A.N.A. consisted of four branches: Melbourne ("No. 1" as it was styled then), Victoria (Collingwood) — and Ballarat and Sandhurst (Bendigo). The two goldfields branches enlisted 40 and 33 members respectively, in that year, compared with a Melbourne membership of 64 and Collingwood 38. An Eaglehawk branch functioned in 1876-79, and was revived in 1885. Other goldfields branches— Creswick and Stawell (1880), Clunes (1881), Ararat, Buninyong, Maryborough, Kerang and Maldon (1882) — maintained themselves, and marked the emergence of the A.N.A. as a force in the Victorian community.

Branches were formed in 1883 at Horsham, Kingston, Murtoa, Port Melbourne and St. Arnaud; in 1885 at Avoca, Charlton, Dunolly, Hamilton, Mount Prospect, Richmond, Smeaton, South Melbourne, and Wycheproof; and in 1886 at Bairnsdale, Ballarat East, Brunswick, Carlton, Clifton Hill/ North Fitzroy, Echuca, Euroa, Fitzroy, Flemington, Footscray, Great Western, Nhill, Preston, Sale, St. Kilda, Warracknabeal, and Windermere. Taking into the picture again the revived branches at Prahran, Eaglehawk, Geelong and North Melbourne, we see that at the end of the first 15 years the A.N.A. wore the air of a flourishing organization at the capital and on the goldfields, and had made a start in other parts of Victoria, including the Western District and Gippsland.

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GROWTH — AND IMMINENT CHANGE

FAR from being a political force in the first fifteen years including the period 1885-86 when no fewer than 25 branches were organized and three lapsed branches revived, the A.N.A. in its first phase was above all a mutual benefit and mutual improvement association of the native-born, non-party and undenominational in its affiliations, as it continued to be. At that early stage, to the directors of the A.N.A. "non-party" signified "non-political". As has been pointed out[2]: —

[2] The quotation is taken from a typescript prepared in 1937 by Mr. J. S. Weatherston, Chief Parliamentary Reporter at Canberra, "Australian Natives' Association : The Earlier Years", which gives an account of the first dozen years of the A.N.A. from the files of the "Argus" and the annual reports to State Parliament by the Victorian Government Statist. The typescript is a valuable collection of information, much of which was availed of for the purpose of the present narrative.

In a summary of the early history of the A.N.A., it is well to pay some attention to the kindred body called the Australian Natives' Democratic Association, the title of which was quite easily to be confused with that of the A.N.A., and the objects of which were likely to be mistaken as those of the A.N.A. That this possibility was recognized by the latter is evidenced by a letter which Mr. James Colgan wrote to the "Argus" on August 21, 1880, as follows:—

"With reference to the political associations now being formed in Melbourne, Sandhurst and elsewhere in Victoria under the name of the Australian Natives' Democratic Association, Australian Natives' Liberal Association, and other such names, I beg to state that they are in no way whatever connected with the Australian Natives' Association, which was established in April, 1871, to promote the welfare and protect the interests of persons born in any of the Australian colonies, and which is purely a benefit society, non-political and unsectarian."

Coming from one who had been with the Melbourne A.N.A. from the beginning, a member of the original committee and treasurer of the original Board of Directors, this statement must surely be accepted.

Nevertheless, a major change was imminent. The change, not indeed to partisan activity in the ordinary sense of party, but certainly to acceptance of political responsibility and emphasis on political activity, was less a Melbourne than a goldfields development. True, a member of parliament, J. H. Levien, M.L.A. for South Grant in the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, had been a vice-president of the original organization; and the junior partner in the legal practice of Samuel Lyons, the other original vice-president, was George Turner, who was appoined auditor to the Melbourne A.N.A. in 1875, when he was 24 years of age, elected to the committee, and then vice-president, in the same year, and was subsequently treasurer for many years. But No. 1 Branch, as the Melbourne body was styled from 1874, remained small in membership, and probably most of the members would have been in accord with James Colgan's conservative view of the proper functions of the A.N.A. Melbourne was reported to start, in April, 1871, with "about fifty members"; in 1874 the membership was still only 64; in 1876 down to 49, up to 94 next year — but in 1884, down to 50. By 1884 the numerical strength, and the funds of the A.N.A., were elsewhere, as the following table shows:—

Branch	Member-ship	Total Funds	Branch	Member-ship	Total Funds
		£			£
Melbourne	50	92	Maryborough	33	23
Sandhurst	66	183	Ararat	48	71
Ballarat	458	1309	Murtoa	20	35
Creswick	109	351	Kingston	60	122
Stawell	92	218	Horsham	21	22
Clunes	90	183	Haddon	53	54
Richmond	24	1	Donald	21	18
Buninyong	61	165	St. Arnaud	18	25
Kerang	51	113	Port Melbourne	69	182
Maldon	14	19	Prahran	45	17

Twenty branches had an aggregate membership of 1403 and funds of £3103, and no more than six of the 20, in Ballarat and neighbourhood, embraced more than 55 per cent. of the membership of the A.N.A., and nearly 69 per cent. of its funds.

Conference in the early years was held in Melbourne, and again in 1882 and 1886. But one or another goldfields city was the scene of Conference on many occasions in the strenuous years of the 1880s and 1890s when the A.N.A. made its mark. Conference was held in Ballarat in 1881 and 1887; in Stawell in 1883, Creswick 1884, Bendigo in 1885 when Alexander Peacock was Chief President; 1889, J. L. Purves, Q.C., Chief President, and 1898, Dr. C. Carty Salmon, Chief President; Maryborough, 1890; Ararat, 1891, G. H. Wise, Chief President; Kyneton, 1893, when Alexander Peacock, by then M.L.A. for Creswick, was again Chief President; Daylesford, 1896, J. Hume-Cook, Chief President; Castlemaine, 1897, R. F. Toutcher, M.L.A., Chief President. The generous sprinkling of political notables in the leadership of the A.N.A. in the last twenty years of the century indicates an organization which, continuing to be a benefit society, was now of significance in the wider community of the State of Victoria and in the nascent Commonwealth of Australia.

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HONORABLE
HUME-COOK, C.M.G.

(Companion of the Order
of St. Michael and
St. George)

HONORABLE
SIR A. J. PEACOCK
K.C.M.G., M.L.A.

(Knight of the Commander
of St. Michael and
St. George)

NATION-MAKERS OF THE A.N.A.

OF the A.N.A. notables who were important figures in the wider colonial scene as well, J. Hume-Cook and J. L. Purves have been referred to earlier in this narrative. Purves, it may now be noted, cut a great dash in Melbourne of late last century and early this, and both his reputation and performance as a forensic wit, and merciless cross-examiner, were of prestige and practical value to the A.N.A. when he made the Association his principal forum. He had been M.L.A. for Mornington in 1872-80, refused offers of places in more than one Victorian Ministry, and, when he was elected Chief President in 1888 at the Geelong Conference, and again next year at Bendigo, as his younger contemporary George Wise said long afterwards "his utterances attracted a lot of attention and the Association throve". Known as "the emperor of the A.N.A.", Purves we are told "threw his whole soul into it". J. S. Weatherston's account of the early days of the A.N.A. records Purves — here his status at the Victorian Bar was of direct service to the A.N.A. — as introducing a deputation from the Association which on August 19, 1881, waited on Mr. Justice Williams, a life honorary member of the then dormant Victoria (Collingwood) branch, to offer their felicitations (and "an illuminated address") on his elevation to the Bench. The Premier of the time, Thomas Bent, who was the subject of perhaps as many anecdotes as the great Purves himself, was a member of this same A.N.A. deputation.

George Wise tells us ("Argus", 21.3.1939) that it was Purves who "gave the Association its second big lift. Alec Peacock had done the spade work in establishing branches, and Purves inspired public confidence in the movement".

Sir Alexander Peacock (1861-1933), three times Chief President, was M.L.A. for Creswick, 1889-1933, a member of the 1897-98 National Convention of the Commonwealth Constitution, Premier of Victoria in 1901-2, 1914-17 and 1924. He was 35 years of age when he steered through the Victorian Legislative Assembly a Factories and Shops Act 1896 which set up the wages-board minimum wage system which still operates in the State. But already a dozen years earlier, and before his election to Parliament for his native Creswick, the

redoubtable Peacock had begun to make a name for himself — and for the A.N.A. which he metamorphosed.

He joined the A.N.A. on March 22, 1882, was elected to the Board of Directors in 1884, elected Chief President at Bendigo in 1885, when he was only 24, again next year at the Melbourne Conference, and, for the third time, at Kyneton in 1893. "The A.N.A.", George Wise recalled in 1939 " . . . had a hard struggle for existence until Alec Peacock became president in 1885-86. What an enthusiastic young fellow he was ! I remember that his boss, a legal manager named Jones, at Creswick, was very decent, and let Alec get off whenever he liked to attend to A.N.A. matters". Peacock was as precocious, in his way, as Alfred Deakin, that A.N.A. member who entered Parliament at 22, refused the Attorney-Generalship before he was 24, entered the Berry-Service Ministry in 1883 when he was 27, two years later put through Victoria's Factories and Shops Act 1885 for the better regulation of conditions of work, at 30 became Chief Secreary, "equal in all things" with the Premier, Duncan Gillies, entered the first Commonwealth Parliament when he was 44 and was Prime Minister at 47.

Peacock for his part transformed the slowly moving A.N.A. when he was but half-way through his twenties. No new branches had been set up in the last three years of the 1870s, in 1880 only a branch at Stawell and one at Peacock's birthplace, Creswick, one more in 1881, five in each of the next two years, and, except for the reappearance of Prahran branch, none in 1884 when young Peacock joined the Board of Directors. Then, in the two years of his first incumbency of the Chief President's office, three lapsed branches were revived and 25 new branches formed — a more spectacular performance than in any other two-year period, though another 24 branches were formed in 1898-99, when Salmon, and after him E. E. Roberts, filled the Chief Presidency.

"Among the branches that Alec started," Wise said more than fifty years later, "was one at Sale, formed in June, 1886. I knew nothing about the A.N.A., but they came and asked me to join and become president, because I was mayor of Sale and they thought it would give the new branch a lift along. In February, 1887, the late R. S. Overend, proprietor of the 'Gippsland Times' and I were delegates to Ballarat. That was the first big conference. We had about 90 delegates."

George H. Wise (1853-1950) was himself one of the most remarkable, and long-lived, of the several remarkable, and remarkably long-lived, pioneer giants of the A.N.A. He was elected to the Board of Directors in 1887 and served on it for 59 years continuously, until 1946 when he was 93 years of age. Chief President in 1891, he was elected a Trustee in 1896 and remained one for 53 years, until he was 96.

Another notable of the formative period was Sir George Turner (1851-1916) who as young George from Founder Lyons's office became A.N.A. auditor in 1875 and during many years held a succession of other posts in the Association. Turner entered the Victorian Parliament in the same year, 1889, as Peacock, who was ten years his junior. M.L.A. for St. Kilda until 1901, and then for another six years M.H.R. for Balaclava, he was in several Ministerial posts before becoming Premier and Treasurer in 1894 — until 1899, and again in 1900-1. It was under his Premiership that Peacock in 1896 introduced the State wage-fixation system; and, like Peacock, he was a delegate to the Constitution-framing National Convention of 1897-98. In the new Federal sphere he was Treasurer in the first Commonwealth Ministry, Edmund Barton's, and then in Deakin's first Ministry and the Reid-McLean Ministry — a coalition including that Allan McLean whom the A.N.A.'s George Wise defeated, by 97 votes, for the Federal seat of Gippsland at the 1906 election. "Yes," Wise recalled 33 years later, "I beat him by 98 votes — it turned out afterwards to be 97, but that witty lawyer Field Barrett sent me a telegram that delighted all the Irishmen who had voted for me — 'Who fears to speak of 98?' " Barrett, a Melbourne lawyer, like Peacock and Wise, was a delegate to the 1887 A.N.A. Conference at Ballarat.

Carrying comparable weight in their time in the A.N.A. were Dr. Charles Carty Salmon (1861-1917) and Fred C. Wainwright (1854-1916). Salmon was M.L.A. for Talbot and Avoca from 1893 to 1901 and a member of McLean's 1899-1900 Ministry, Chief President of the A.N.A. elected at the 1898 Bendigo Conference which put ginger into the Federation campaign, from 1901 to 1913 M.H.R. for Laanecoorie, House

chairman of committees, 1904-6, and Speaker, 1909-10. Wise said in his 1939 reminiscences published in the "Argus", "Hume-Cook has said that there were four pioneers of the A.N.A., and he pays glowing tribute to the labours of Fred Wainwright" — of the Ballarat branch; succeeded T. P. Devine as A.N.A. secretary in 1879, becoming first General Secretary, and holding the office for more than 36 years until his death — "J. L. Purves, whom we affectionately knew as 'the emperor', and 'Alec Peacock'." The fourth was Wise himself. Veritably, there were giants in the earth in those days...

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TOWARDS AUSTRALIAN
FEDERATION

IN Victoria where the A.N.A. had its genesis, and whence in the last dozen years of the 19th century its pressure made a lasting impression on the Australian nation-to-be, the number of branches was increased from 20 by the year 1884 before the Peacock-Purves injection of vigour and exhilaration in 1885-89, to 142 in 1901; the number of members, from around 1400 to 19,000; the funds, from a little over £3000 to more than £126,000. The growth of the Association, in those springing years, seems the more remarkable because the decade of the 1890s was a period of decline of trade, economic depression, widespread unemployment, and severe reverses to trade unions including the new intercolonial organizations. However, the depression of the 1890s did not set back every movement of the hopeful constructive eighties, and it is interesting to observe how much that survived, from that end-of-century creative ferment, came out of the little goldfields town of Creswick: Alexander Peacock and his achievements in social legislation, and with and through the A.N.A.; W. G. Spence and his "industrial unionism" (the A.W.U. and the Miners' Federation were fathered by him at Creswick); John Curtin who was Prime Minister in the war years 1941-45; the Lindsay artist-family (and at Beaufort, nearby, Bernard O'Dowd, the poet, parliamentary draughtsman, and social incendiary). Of such was the fecund generation that made a national consciousness in the Australian communities. Wherever and by whomever the various impulses towards nationhood were mobilised and conserved and directed — the republicans of the Sydney "Bulletin", and also the protagonists of working-class politics in several colonies, to mention other influential groups besides the A.N.A. — what was generated was *Australian,* no longer colonial; and the method was *federation,* whether a federation of Australian Natives' Associations in several colonies; or of the new Labour Parties;
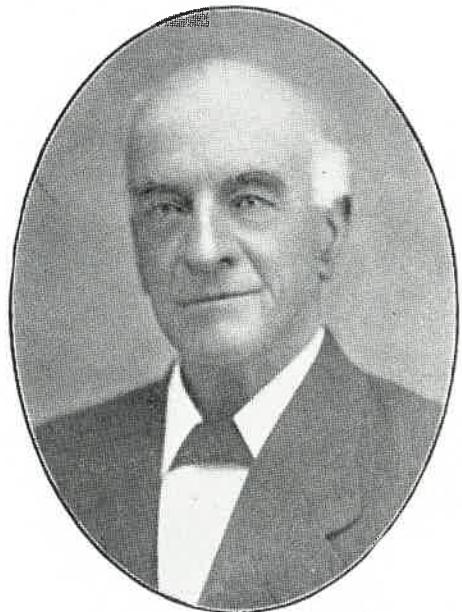
**RT. HONORABLE
SIR ISAAC ISAACS
K.C., P.C., G.C.B., G.C.M.G.**

(King's Counsel, Privy
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Knight Grand Cross of the
Order of St. Michael and
St. George)

**HONORABLE
G. H. WISE**

or of older unions like the Seamen's Unions in several ports, or newer unions like those of the shearers. These different movements towards Australian federal organization were all consonant with, and derived strength from and gave of their strength to the master movement, the Federation of the Australian Colonies.

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GATHERING FORCES

APPRECIATIONS by Deakin's biographer Walter Murdoch, and others, of the significance of the A.N.A. in the campaign for Australian federation have been noticed. Giving further testimony, J. Hume-Cook, the A.N.A.'s historian and its standard-bearer for nearly half a century, wrote (1931) thirty years after the achievement of federation:—

> Before official conventions were called into existence to discuss the project and to devise ways and means for its accomplishment, the Association had held unofficial ones and had put forward its plans. Thirty-four years ago the "Argus", in a leading article, said: "No page in the records of the Australian Natives' Association is more honourable than that which recounts the service done to the cause of federation. The subject is always prominent at their annual gatherings. The members themselves take their platform training by talking federation. . .
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> "The scheme of bringing the colonies together, which is now being tried, bears a close resemblance to one which first germinated in the brain of a representative of the A.N.A."

The A.N.A., Hume-Cook finds, took three important steps towards a public opinion which could be decisive for federation. The first was a January, 1890, A.N.A. intercolonial conference held in Melbourne, which resolved that the time for federation had come. Then in 1896 the Chief President and two other members of the Victorian Board of Directors visited Queensland to rally support for the federal idea. The third step taken was ratification by the A.N.A. 1898 Conference at Bendigo of the federation proposals of the 1897-98 National Convention.

All mainland colonies were represented at that January, 1890, intercolonial conference held in Melbourne town hall. Sir John Bray, who presided, had been a South Australian member of parliament since the first year, 1871, of the A.N.A., a Minister or Opposition Leader from 1875-81, and thereafter

Premier or holder of an important portfolio for most of the time to mid-1887. Shortly after the A.N.A. conference in Melbourne he was knighted, and in 1891 took part for South Australia in the first National Convention called to canvass prospects of federation of the colonies.

Such was the stature of the man who told the Melbourne conference, "I am induced to believe that the views of the Australian Natives' Association, and of the people generally, are in advance of those held by the Governments of the different colonies".

Resolutions reached at the A.N.A. conference seemed to bear this out. The proposals were for a popularly elected federal House and a Senate consisting of equal numbers from each State, and transfer of Defence, Customs and other functions (the A.N.A. in 1890 would have included Railways also) from colonies to Commonwealth. It was 14 months before the first National Constitution Convention agreed on a Commonwealth of Australia Bill after the A.N.A. pattern, seven years more before the second National Convention agreed on *its* bill, and 10½ years before the bill was enacted by the British Parliament to be the basic law of federated Australia.

The 1896 A.N.A. crusade in Queensland does not seem to have been so rewarding, except in terms of status, for Queensland of the time was concerned less with federation movements than with demands from central and northern Queensland interests for political separation from Brisbane; and Queensland was not represented at all at the 1891 National Convention, nor held a referendum in 1898, on the Commonwealth Bill, as did New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania.

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CLIMAX AT BENDIGO

IT was in 1898 that the A.N.A. expressed itself at a time, and in a manner, that called for and in fact evoked a strong expression for federation. A.N.A. life-member Alfred Deakin had prepared in 1888 a paper, "The Aims and Objects of the Association", which Walter Murdoch records "was printed, and treated much as a manifesto"; in this manifesto he had

"pointed to federation as an object for which the Association ought to fight with all its strength". But even ten years after 1888, it appears that Deakin, Turner, Purves, Wise, Peacock, Hume-Cook and the other A.N.A. crusaders for federation had still to *move* "the country" — the country in the sense of newspaper editors and proprietors who were in a position of advantage for creating and manifesting a strong public opinion in favour of federation, and the politicians who by and large perhaps preferred following public opinion to leading it. By 1898, in Melbourne the "Argus" was friendly; but of the 1890 A.N.A. resolutions for federation it had asked, "Who are the people . . . who have been foisting these crude ideas and unreasoned notions on the public?" — Change to praise of the A.N.A. was quite recent. And the other Melbourne morning newspaper, David Syme's all-powerful "Age"[1], was denouncing the 1897-98 National Convention's proposals, before the 1898 A.N.A. Conference met at Bendigo. In Sydney the respected "Daily Telegraph" was vehement against federation. So it fell out that a poor Press was accorded even Deakin's rallying speech (referred to earlier) to the A.N.A. Conference at Bendigo on March 15, 1898. Murdoch noted[2] that—

> though it was perhaps his very highest flight of oratory, and almost certainly the most decisive in its results, only a few sentences are given in the Melbourne newspapers of next day; without any indication that it was anything more than a commonplace perfunctory after-dinner utterance, and with no hint of the wild and fierce enthusiasm it aroused in those who listened to it.

The Constitution-maker and historian B. R. Wise[3], a leader at the time of the federal cause in New South Wales where public opinion was not yet stirred as it was south of the Murray, took a similar view to Murdoch's of the speech and its effects. He wrote, years later, that Deakin—

> dislodged the doubts which had overclouded temporarily the hopes of federalists, and struck the keynote of the popular campaign which followed. This meeting of the Australian Natives' Association at

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[1] Professor Walter Murdoch writes ("Alfred Deakin", p. 187), " 'The Times' in its greatest days was not more influential in London, nor the 'Tribune' of Horace Greeley in New York, than was the 'Age' in Victoria before the coming of federation."

[2] Walter Murdoch, "Alfred Deakin" (1923), p. 182.

[3] Not to be confused with the A.N.A.'s George H. Wise, Bernhard Ringrose Wise (1858-1916), born in Sydney and educated at Rugby School and Queen's College, Oxford, was prominent in N.S.W. politics in the 1890's. The quotation is from his book, "The Making of the Commonwealth" (1913), p. 338. His "The Commonwealth of Australia" was published in 1909.

Bendigo became the turning-point in the Victorian campaign, and the success of the Bill in that Colony was assured when Mr. Deakin sat down.

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THE PEOPLE'S VOTE

QUICKLY the "Age" changed its tune and made chorus with the A.N.A.; and when a referendum was taken on June 3, Victoria voted 100,520 for the Commonwealth Bill; against 22,099. Pro-federation opinion elsewhere took a little longer to express itself decisively; but "Deakin, A.N.A., Victoria" were the words of the spell which soon determined the issue: Deakin because of his arguments, oratory, activity and community stature; the A.N.A. because it had supplied him with a forum at the crucial moment, prepared the wider audiences and now proceeded to improve the occasion with intensive and extensive advocacy of the cause; Victoria, because it was the vantage-point of Deakin and the A.N.A.

The modern historian Brian Fitzpatrick gives[4] a succinct account of the fortunes of the Commonwealth Bill after the Bendigo coup: —

When the bill was submitted in 1898 to a referendum of the electors in each of four colonies whose parliaments had decided to hold one, each colony returned a "Yes" majority. In Victoria the majority was more than four to one (though not half the electors voted). In New South Wales nearly 72,000 voted "Yes", as against 66,000 for "No". But the affirming majority there was less than the figure of 80,000 (even that being only a quarter of the whole number of electors) which the New South Wales parliament had stipulated as the least which would be determinative. So the effect was the defeat of the federation proposals in the main colony. Only 44 per cent. of nearly three-quarters of a million electors in the four colonies voted, 229,000 for and 108,000 against the bill.

Afterwards a premiers' conference made some amendments of the draft bill, "in a democratic direction", as Deakin put it; and George Reid of New South Wales, whose attitude towards federation as declared on the eve of the first poll had reasonably been described as "Yes-No", and who was mainly responsible for the changes now made in the bill, agreed that "the momentous question is now fairly narrowed down to an issue between those who really desire federal union and those who do not".

A second referendum was taken in 1899, this time in five colonies, only Western Australia, where John Forrest still ruled, holding out.

Sixty-three per cent. of enrolled voters cast votes this time, 378,000 for and 141,000 against the bill; 73 per cent. being "Yes" votes as compared with 67 per cent. at the much smaller poll of 1898. All that remained to do was to coax into line Western Australia, whose leaders were much worried at the expected injurious effect of a uniform tariff on their colony, and to obtain the approval of the imperial parliament. . .[5]

So the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia became law, on July 9, 1900. Five colonies were federated, by an instrument which allowed that Western Australia also, if the people there should agree within a year, might join the federation as an "original State". They did so. . . The Commonwealth of Australia began on January 1, 1901.

It could fairly be said that federation would not have been achieved when it was, if it had not been for the devoted work, over many years preceding, of the Australian Natives' Association.

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[5] Results of the various referenda on the Commonwealth of Australia Bill:—

June 3, 1898 (S.A., June 4):

	N.S.W.	Vic.	S.A.	Tas.	Total.
FOR	71,595	100,520	35,800	11,797	219,742
AGAINST	66,228	22,099	17,320	2,716	108,363
Majority	5,367	78,421	18,480	9,081	111,349

1899 (N.S.W., June 20; S.A., April 19; Vic., Tas., July 27; Qld., Sept. 2):

	N.S.W.	Vic.	S.A.	Tas.	Total.	
YES	107,420	152,653	65,990	13,437	339,500 plus Q. 38,388	= 377,988
NO	82,741	9,805	17,053	791	110,390 plus Q. 30,996	= 141,386
Majority	24,679	142,848	48,937	12,646	229,110 plus Q. 7,492	= 236,602

Western Australia voted, July 31, 1900: Yes, 44,800; No, 19,691; Majority, 25,109

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[4] "The Australian People" (2nd ed., 1951), pp. 232-4.

TWENTIETH CENTURY A.N.A.

AUSTRALIA DAY, January 26, is celebrated in all the communities of our ten million people scattered over the continent's three million square miles, and particularly in the capital cities all (except Canberra the national capital) established at points along the twelve thousand miles of coastline. Perhaps three features of this universal public holiday stand out. First, Australians were slow in arriving at their festival day, which is becoming as characteristic and "traditional" as August Bank Holiday in England or Thanksgiving Day in the United States of America. And secondly, Australia Day is the realization of a notion of the Australian Natives' Association that there *was* a political, a national Australia to celebrate. Thirdly, what the people celebrate on Australia Day is not the coming into being of the Australian Commonwealth, for that befell on New Year's Day; and not May 9, when the first Parliament of the Commonwealth commenced its sittings; but January 26, the day in 1788 when the first permanent white settlers, being Captain Arthur Phillip's officials, marines and transported convicts from England, landed on the shores of Sydney Cove.

Known in Victoria for many years as A.N.A. Day, and in different times in different States as Foundation Day or Anniversary Day, this day of national celebration seems to have been effectively propounded in the first instance by a Metropolitan Committee of the Melbourne A.N.A. soon after the Committee's establishment in 1887. Having gripped this bone of contention between its teeth, with typical tenacity the A.N.A. never let it go; and indeed it required effort over a period of about sixty years, before the Day was generally and uniformly accepted. For example, in Melbourne where the worthies of the 1880s had agitated for official acceptance of such a commemoration, as late as January, 1947, the Chamber of Commerce "Record" was reporting:—

In the belief that the community in general desires that the anniversary of the foundation of this country should be celebrated in a worthy manner, a representative public meeting of citizens and representatives of organizations was held in the Melbourne Town Hall under the chairmanship of the Lord Mayor (Cr. F. R. Connelly) on October 31, 1946. The meeting was sponsored by the Australian Natives' Association.

The meeting set up an Australia Day Celebration Committee (which later settled down as the Australia Day Council) with Australia's first Field-Marshal, Sir Thomas Blamey, in the chair.

The stated aims of this Melbourne standing committee are appropriate for mention here, for the principal aims are similar to some of the main objects of that A.N.A. which began as a friendly society of Victorian natives for mutual material benefit and moral improvement, transformed itself in the 1880s so that the original objects were given a national scope, had a major share in creating the Commonwealth, and flourishes today both as a benefit society and as a guardian and mentor of an Australian national consciousness. Three aims of the 1946 committee are:—

To educate the general public in the history and geography of Australia and its development both physically and culturally.

To foster an interest in Australian industry, commerce and rural pursuits.

To encourage the healthy development of Australian youth.

These aims are compatible with what spokesman J. Hume-Cook thirty years ago described as "three great principles" of the A.N.A., viz.:—

The maintenance of a White Australia.

The Made-in-Australia movement.

The broadening of the Commonwealth Constitution.

"The present policy" of the A.N.A., J. Hume-Cook found, was "centred round" these concepts.

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THE A.N.A. AFTER 60 YEARS

THE Diamond Jubilee Conference of the A.N.A. is a vantage-point from which to survey the Association as it stood after thirty years of Australian nationhood, sixty years of its own activities.

Conference was held at Warrnambool on March 9-12, 1931, when A.N.A. life-member Sir Isaac Isaacs was Governor-general and life-member J. H. Scullin Prime Minister of Australia. Chief President J. Howlett-Ross presided, and S. H. Watson was General Secretary and J. Hume-Cook Treasurer. Apologies for non-attendance were received from the first (1877-78) Chief President, T. O'Callaghan, but the two other surviving Chief Presidents of the 1877-93 era were there. They were Sir Alexander Peacock (1885-86 and 1893) and George H. Wise (1891), who, with J. Lemmon (Chief President, 1911) were Trustees of A.N.A. funds which now exceeded a million pounds. In all, 22 former Chief Presidents attended, among 317 delegates of 169 Victorian branches, out of a 1931 total of 219 branches with 34,118 benefit and 2,590 honorary members, and branch funds totalling £615,331 — and, for the record, fourpence. Members' dues totalled £13,809/0/8, and during the year a total of £95,791 had been distributed in funeral benefits, endowment (£10 to each of 434 members on reaching the age of 65 years), sick pay and (more than half of the total) medical benefits.

Such was the magnification, after sixty years, of a Victorian A.N.A. which in 1884 had shown membership of 1,403 and funds of £3,103; in 1900 when the A.N.A.'s federation cause had been won, 17,843 members and £110,993 funds; and in 1909 when the Royal Australian Navy advocated by the A.N.A. was coming into existence, 26,500 members and £280,000 funds.

The goldfields branches formed in the 1870s and 1880s, which had set a quickened pace for the A.N.A. of the Peacock-Purves expansion era, still bulked large in the Association's organization although nowadays little gold was mined. Ballarat (1874) was still the richest branch, with funds of £33,520, and with Ballarat East (1886) having £12,879 funds and 528 members, the two Ballarat branches aggregated 1559 members. Bendigo had £28,454 funds and 1209 members. The Melbourne parent (1871) showed a modest membership of 65 benefit and 15 honorary members, and funds of £2,907. But by now it was in industrial suburbs of Melbourne that larger concentrations of members were most usual. Footscray had the largest membership, 1510, of any single branch, and £22,895 funds, while other strong suburban branches were Brunswick

(1886), £15,096 funds and 871 members; Carlton (1886), £11,781 and 379 members; Clifton Hill and North Fitzroy, £10,525; 771; Collingwood (1889, but the Victorian branch had functioned there in 1872-75), £21,877, 1025; Fitzroy (1886), £12,995, 541; Flemington (1886), £16,388, 957; Prahran (1884, but a branch had functioned there in 1876-80), £16,515, 673; Preston (1886), £4,109, 550; and Richmond (1885), £19,188, 723.

However, by this time there were flourishing branches in more middle-class suburbs like Camberwell, Elsternwick and Caulfield, Essendon, Hawthorn and so on; and the Western District, Gippsland and other country areas housed strongholds of the A.N.A.

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MATTERS OF MOMENT

A WIDE variety of subject-matters set down by branches for consideration by the Diamond Jubilee Conference indicates the breadth of the public (as distinct from the benefit) interests with which the A.N.A. concerned itself. These were public affairs which were controversial, part of the stuff of national or State politics itself. Matters raised in 1931 included child endowment, the basic wage, the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, hire purchase, immigration, petrol tax, State lotteries, and the National Anthem — to mention only some. These things were of common concern, and subsequent years saw child endowment introduced by Commonwealth statute; the principle of the basic wage subjected to more than one radical revision; the Arbitration Court disbanded (as Collingwood branch had urged); hire purchase the subject of legislation by the States and indirect control by the Commonwealth; immigration questions now subject of Commonwealth international agreements and of controversies fought to the High Court; an issue of petrol tax providing the main reason (as many thought) for the displacement of an 8-year Labour Government of Australia by Menzies Governments which was to rule for at least twelve years; institution of a Victorian State lottery to help hospitals (as Mildura branch had advocated, against Conference majority, in 1931); and, although indeed no departure was made from *God Save the King* (as it was then *the Queen*), adoption by the

Australian Broadcasting Commission first of one and then of another specifically Australian anthem, to introduce and round off each session of the News.

Canvassing of such issues of continuing import indicated that the A.N.A. was as responsive to the blood beat of the general community, and as anxious to regulate it for the best, as ever it had been in the exciting days when the nation was conceived, developed in embryo, and born. Nor was the Association unresponsive, in its friendly society function, to social changes affecting the membership together with the rest of the community. For example, from its growing surplus funds the Victorian A.N.A. allocated £15,000 to meet the contributions due from members on service in the 1914-18 war, and later when large-scale disemployment began in the 1930s, £7,000 to keep up unemployed members' payments.

In happier times the A.N.A. Insurance Company Limited was registered on 16.7.1948, with a nominal capital of £100,000 in £1 shares. The Company's latest report, 22.2.1961, shows continued progress.

However, overshadowing all these relatively minor public and private concerns were those three "great principles": White Australia; expansion of Australia as a manufacturing nation so that recurrent difficulty in meeting overseas payments should not be the determinant of national economic policies; and the modernising of the "horse-and-buggy" Constitution which withheld essential powers from the Commonwealth, and tended to make the High Court of Australia, even the Law Lords of the Privy Council in England, competent to prevent change, rather than repose in the Australian people an effective power of changing the Constitution by popular referendum. ✶

RESTRICTIVE IMMIGRATION

A.N.A. insistence on Australia's need for restrictive immigration policies recurs, as a theme of debate, resolutions, and representations to Governments, from time to time throughout most of the ninety years of A.N.A. history. Back in 1885, for example, Samuel Griffith as Premier of Queensland (he was afterwards Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia) had his parliament pass an act forbidding the importation after 1890 of "blackbirded" indentured "kanaka" labour — virtual slave labour, procured by a virtual slave trade — from Pacific Islands, for Queensland sugar planta-

tions. But in 1892 the prohibitory act was repealed; and the A.N.A. protested against the system of importing low-wage, low-standard labour. Again after the dawn of the Commonwealth, the A.N.A. was a strong advocate of a policy, amounting to exclusion of "coloured" labour, which was put into effect by the "dictation-test" clause in the Commonwealth Immigration Restriction Act 1901.

Successive waves of immigration, in the second quarter of the century, were closely scrutinised by the A.N.A., which looked askance at large-scale immigration from non-British countries. An influx of Southern European immigrants in the 1920s alarmed Conferences in that decade, and the 1939 Conference, after the introduction of a refugee immigration scheme in 1938, "expressed doubt as to the wisdom or desirability of the existing scheme of alien immigration", suggesting a quota-system, more or less after the United States model, under which immigration of foreign nationals in any year should be limited to 2 per cent. of the numbers of that particular nationality resident in Australia in 1900.

These resolutions of 1939, and 1929 for that matter, were reached against a background of widespread unemployment in Australia — census returns showed 161,000 (9.6 per cent. of wage and salary earners) unemployed in 1921 and 563,000 (25.8 per cent.) in 1933; and in 1929 11.1 per cent. of Australian trade unionists were unemployed, and in 1939, 9.7 per cent.

An anxious eye was kept on the third, and by far the greatest flood of migrants, many British but a majority alien, that has been continuous, managed by Labour and non-Labour Governments alike, since 1947. In 1960, the Ballarat Conference resolved, on a motion from the Board of Directors (in which the phrase in bold type was inserted by leave):—

This Conference reaffirms its adherence to Australia's established national policy of restrictive immigration and declares:—

(a) Its uncompromising opposition to any departure from such a policy, and in particular to any suggestions for the introduction of a system of quotas designed to permit the entry into Australia for permanent residence of non-European people.

(b) Its strongest opposition to the policy of selling land to Asians or other foreign interests, as land held by foreign interests could hinder the proper development of Australia, and could be a serious

handicap to defence measures in the time of war. It also points out that purchase of land by Asians **or other foreign interests** could be used as a means of bringing pressure on the Commonwealth Government to relax Australia's traditional immigration policy.

(c) This Conference therefore authorizes the Board of Directors to combine if possible with other organizations to obtain greater publicity for the Association's policy on immigration which can save the Australia of the future being torn asunder by racial hatreds so much in evidence in other countries today.

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"MADE IN AUSTRALIA"

A DEPUTATION of the Federal Council of the A.N.A. to the Prime Minister, on December 16, 1954, submitted views of the Association on a number of matters. The list includes an item (the third) — Australian industries protection — which has been a preoccupation of the A.N.A. from its early years when Australian secondary industries were for the most part in a rudimentary stage.

The primary-producing Australia of last century, the Australia of wool, wheat, meat, dairy produce, fruit, gold, silver, coal and base metals, has been replaced this century by a national economy in which primary produce remains the major part of Australian exports, but in which by far the major proportion of capital, labour and technology is applied to secondary industry.

That transformation is attributable to a number of factors, including the utilization of mineral resources by British-Australian capital undertakings like the B.H.P. and Collins House companies; the management of policies of tariff protection, import licensing and the like; demands made and met under exigencies of the 1914-18 and 1939-45 wars; and the high profitability, in Australia of the last fifteen years or so, of overseas investment in Australian oil refining, chemical, motors and other processing and engineering industries. But less tangible considerations have also played an important part, notably the untiring "Made in Australia" campaigning, decade after decade and generation after generation, by such bodies as Chambers of Manufactures, and the A.N.A.

This combination of public education, or propaganda, and private enterprise changed the face of the economy — so that in Victoria of the late 1950s, for example, the weight of manu-

facturing production was two and a half times what it had been twenty years before, and was a much higher multiple of factory production in times still earlier, when the A.N.A. effort was first made. The value of that prolonged effort can scarcely be realized by anyone who cannot recall the days when any article of "local" manufacture would be sniffed at by local buyers, and "imported" was synonymous (such was the anti-Australian propaganda) with "fine quality". Devoted practical patriotism brought about the change.

In the constitutional sphere, similar untiring effort, by devotees of the A.N.A., has had less success to date.

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CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

HARDER to crack than most problems, bringing the Commonwealth Constitution up to date, has so far baffled the repeated endeavours of governments, political parties, economic groups and citizens' organizations. The six State Parliaments can, in theory, pass uniform statutes to transfer a particular power to the Commonwealth — but have hardly ever got beyond *agreeing* to agree (as in the 1942-44 issue of wider powers to the Commonwealth for purposes of post-war reconstruction then being planned). The alternative method of altering the Constitution in order to give to the Commonwealth powers which a national government needs, is by passage of a Commonwealth act, and then its endorsement at a referendum by a majority of persons voting in a majority of States.

The referendum method has in practice worked not much better than the uniform-legislation method — of 24 proposals or groups of proposals for constitutional amendment submitted so far, only four have been affirmed — and as a writer in *Anapress* pointed out in 1949, an effect has been to make the Constitution a thing of lawyers and law-courts, instead of an instrument flexible to national purposes and felt needs. The almost unalterable Constitution presents a perennial poser, one aspect of which is the difficulty of obtaining *nonparty* approaches to specific amendments which are generally agreed to be desirable. So the A.N.A., which from early in the Commonwealth era has taken the view that wider powers

are required by the national government, could have felt in 1954 that at last the constitutional sky was less overcast — for, at last, Parliament had decided to set up an all-party constitutional committee to consider and report on amendments deemed desirable.

For its part, the A.N.A. would have preferred a popularly elected convention to be charged with formulating "essential amendments". This was the declared policy of the 1930 Echuca Conference. But in the event the policy could not be pushed to campaign-point, because of national preoccupation, for fifteen years following, with pressing situations of economic depression and war. However, now in 1954, at least the setting up of an all-party committee could presage a non-partisan tackling of anomalies long neglected.

But the years passed, and in *1958* the Lorne Conference of the A.N.A., still expressing gratification that an All-Party Constitution Review Committee had been appointed, asked that its report and recommendations be expedited. Next year, the Lakes Entrance Conference noted that an apparent step forward had been taken. Government and Opposition members of the Committee had *reached* conclusions. Conference was "pleased that the recommendations of the All-Party Committee indicate the need for amendment of the Constitution", and hoped "that the recommendation will be placed before the people by referendum as soon as possible in a simple form and in the same non-party political atmosphere in which the recommendations were framed".

But these recommendations of the 1950s, like those of the Constitution Conventions of 1891 and 1897-98 which did not become law until 1900, continue to be left dormant. So the A.N.A. Ballarat Conference in 1960, contemplating inaction, resolved somewhat urgently: —

> This Conference, whilst affirming the policy of the Association, viz., "That the Commonwealth Constitution should be remoulded on the principle that the Commonwealth Parliament should have power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of Australia with respect to all matters, and that such Parliament should delegate legislative and administrative powers with respect to matters of purely local importance", is pleased that the recommendations of the All-Party Committee call for amendment of the Constitution to give greater power to the Commonwealth Parliament, and we urge

that the Committee's recommendations be placed before the people by referendum at a very early date and in the same non-party political atmosphere in which the recommendations were framed.

The event is still awaited.

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PAST AND FUTURE

THE Australian Natives' Association in 1961 has nearly 43,000 members and funds of more than two and a half million pounds. The battles it fights are, like all strivings that go to the heart of things, never won. Only, some *ground* is won, now and then, from which to undertake fresh campaigns with fresh heart and strength reinforced. So it seems now, and so it seemed to the pioneers (400-odd of them, with £1,000 or so at the command of the A.N.A. of 1881); so it seemed to the progressing A.N.A. of 1891, by then with more than 8,000 members and more than £32,000 funds — and their successive efforts had effect in lifting the community up and on.

What serves as an apt reminder of the fruitful past of the A.N.A. and also a stimulus to renewed attack on national problems outstanding, was voiced by the Association's famous life-member, Sir Isaac Isaacs, in 1944. It appears in a Foreword to the 1944 booklet, "Wider Powers for Greater Freedom", by J. V. (now Justice Sir John) Barry, Q.C., which was published in support of referendum proposals put to the people that year. The words remain relevant and inspiring: —

> Mr. Barry's appeal makes it clear that Australians are not asked to **give** powers to anyone else to govern them in their national concerns; that they are invited to **take** for themselves as a nation powers they do not yet possess, to deal with matters that are nationwide and beyond the competency of the States to deal with justly and effectively either separately or collectively. . .
> In the compromise of almost half a century ago [the original Constitution], as Mr. Barry forcibly points out, these emergencies were not and could not be envisaged. Time and events have given birth to them. They cannot be avoided; they cannot without danger be neglected. . .

As in 1884 or 1944, as in 1901, so now in 1961, the Australian Natives' Association applies itself to its chosen task of pointing out contingencies that *can* be envisaged, and emergencies that *can* be avoided, in the conduct of Australian

affairs. Time and events have vindicated grand causes the earlier Association undertook — and reforms still outstanding can be achieved yet by the A.N.A., whose members, as Isaacs said on another occasion, "look to measures not men, to progress not party".

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