

limitation. Never forget what has passed in the course of this brief controversy. It is another evidence that the real link is good will, and that the root and foundation of that goodwill is the local freedom which you give so freely everywhere except in one small part of the Empire. I do not think Pan-Imperial Parliamentary federation is within the bounds of possibility. And this conviction it was which made it impossible for me, with every sympathy, to join in the efforts of the late Imperial Federation Leagues. I do not in the least degree think this Bill is a step towards Imperial Parliamentary federation. On the contrary, I believe it is distinctly a step the other way. Because the greater the power, the larger the success, the higher the ambition of united Australia, the less the likelihood of her surrendering to a Parliament sitting on the other side of the globe, in which her representation would now be scanty, the powers you give to her to wield at home. That great problem of finally reconciling the national aspirations, as they may develop, of these distant communities with British connection, the great problem of reorganisation remains inscrutable. Let us maintain, at any rate, the essential element of good will. I believe the condition to be not as the Colonial Secretary said in his speech on the First Reading. I do not believe, as he said, that the links that bind you to your colonies are slight and slender. I do not believe, as he said, that they could be snapped by a touch. I believe them to be strong and real. But I believe them to be absolutely impalpable, not founded on costly appeals, not on your clauses of reservation, not on your powers

of disallowance, and not on the paramount legislative power of this Parliament. I am not complaining of these things. But they are not the real links that bind the whole. You frankly agree that if the great colonies say "Let go," you will let go. Thus your coercive powers, useful in their little measure, are useless here. What then are these impalpable links on which alone you can depend? I warn you once again, from the deepest conviction of my soul, that while these links are strong and real, they are links of good will, founded on local freedoms. That this is so is exemplified to-day in the concessions you have freely made to the principle of nationality, the principle of self-government and of local freedom, which will enable this people, under the aegis of the Empire, to go their own way according to their own view in all those matters which concern their own interests. Let us then guard that essential element. Let us deal as best we can with the problems of the hour, taking care above all things to keep a free hand for those of the future; for grave problems there are which certainly loom before us. Let us give a warm welcome to the Australian Commonwealth, and hope its glorious fate may be to set

"The bounds of freedom wider yet," and that West Australia now, and distant New Zealand later, may find adequate common ground to justify their accession to the Union. May I repeat as a last word the hope that the day may come when the eyes of Her Majesty's Government will be opened, and they may see fit to apply at home the principles which have ruled their treatment of Australia to-day.