

able impediment to the realisation of the most likely-looking of federation schemes.

The necessity for complete local self-government, the wish to give local expression to individual wants, and to provide local remedies for local grievances, must always be too urgent in our autonomous Colonies to allow us to suppose that any one of them will ever again permit the interference of any foreign legislative body to regulate matters for the management of which the colony can itself provide a competent directing body. The term 'foreign' may seem misapplied, but it is not easy to see how a Federal Imperial Parliament could occupy any other relation to any single colony than that of a foreign Controlling Board. The extent of its interference would, we are assured, be limited to questions of imperial import, but who can doubt the sheer impossibility of drawing an accurate distinguishing line between imperial and purely local questions, or of adhering to it when sketchily defined. The disputes of a parish vestry may come to have a truly imperial signification, and the most general of measures providing for proportionate rates of expenditure on federal armaments may be justly regarded by colonial populations as grossly interfering with the minutest local rights. A Federal Union, Consulting Board, Parliament, or whatever it is proposed to call it, for even limited, strictly defined purposes, can therefore mean nothing less than a body endowed with competency to intermeddle with the internal details of colonial administration, and as such it could never by possibility be carried into actual practice.

But what is it that the strenuous advocates of Imperial Federation wish to protrude into notice? Is it some new system that has never previously been placed on its trial? or is it an old, old policy which it is sought to rejuvenate under some speciously modern guise? The answer, clear and decisive, I trust, may be found in the following pages, which show by admitted fact, by historical illustration, and by reasoning which, whether it be weak or strong, both fact and illustration spontaneously supply, that the centralisation involved in the principle of federal union has been pertinaciously tried. And