

not once progressed so far as to secure general legislative approval of the principle of federation, or the adoption of even the rudimentary form of a federal constitution by a single colony. There had been a plethora of select committees, federal reports, legislative recommendations, parliamentary discussions, and the nomination of delegates, but nothing more. Each and all of the colonies had at one time or another in different forms taken steps looking towards the formation of a federal union, or the holding of a conference to discuss the matter, but notwithstanding the favorable consideration of the different parliamentary bodies, the active promotion of the scheme never got any further forward than a series of legislative recommendations, and the sporadic appointment of delegates. The principle of a federal union was approved on several occasions, the advisability of holding a conference to discuss the subject and to prepare a draft constitution was also favorably considered but the legislatures refrained from committing themselves to any definite scheme of union. But these proceedings were merely a light curtain raiser to the discussion of the more vital issues of the nature and organization of the proposed central government. In the multitude of counsellors no great law-giver appeared to convert the speculations of thinkers and the resolutions of legislatures into an organic federal law. One of the colonies was unwilling to lend even an appearance of favor to the federal cause by accepting the principle of the expediency of federation, or by the appointment of delegates for its consideration. The question had not yet freed itself from the preliminary academic consideration of the committee room; it had not gone forth boldly onto the hustings to fight for a place in practical politics. No pressing necessity had yet arisen to make the subject a vital issue in all the colonies, to awaken the dormant spirit of national unity, and to confound and supersede the petty local jealousies which played so large a part in provincial politics. In the absence of any such unifying force, the colonies went on living their narrow lives, immersed in the development of their local resources, and forgetful of the higher destiny to which they were called.