

the Act. In Australia a series of Conventions produced a series of drafts, the last Convention completing its work in 1898. The scheme was then submitted by the parliaments of each colony in the form of a carefully drafted bill to the electors themselves. And just because the scheme was cut and dried to the last detail, the people of Australia were able to adopt it knowing exactly what it was they adopted. In South Africa the same procedure was followed so far as Natal was concerned. In the other colonies the scheme for union was accepted by each Parliament without a referendum or general election. But the principle was the same in every case. A popular decision, whether given indirectly through parliaments, or directly by general election or referendum, was impossible until a Convention had sat and had framed a scheme upon which public opinion could register a decision.

The process by which public opinion is brought into existence, rendered articulate and enabled to control the action of government is a question of procedure, that is to say, of method. Constitutional writers have recognized this, and have lavished their attention upon the parliamentary procedure whereby ministers are rendered amenable to popular control. But they have failed to realize that when two or more different electorates are called upon to revise the relations of their several governments to each other, a different procedure must then be called into play if the issue is to be settled by public opinion instead of by some form of political conjuring. Where a political decision involves one electorate only, it can be agitated for until it

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