ONE KING TO BIND THEM ALL:
THE IMPERIAL FEDERATION MOVEMENT, THE IMPERIAL MONARCHY
AND THE TRIUMPH OF SENTIMENT

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‘For this a man might stand against a world – alone, ready to toil, to sacrifice, aye, to die – this is sentiment!’

On 5 June 1885 ‘citizens of Melbourne’ crowded into the Town Hall, after ‘besieging’ its doors ‘for some time’, responding to the Mayor’s call for Victorians ‘to maintain the integrity of the British Empire and to bring its parts into closer union’. The assembly was presided over by the Mayor himself and included the Anglican bishop of Melbourne, professors from the university, schoolmasters, councillors, and members of parliament, as well as representatives from the Australian Natives Association and a large number of ladies ‘and their escorts’, for whom the balconies and south galleries ‘had been considerately reserved’. Amid ‘patriotic tunes’ and speeches the Victorian branch of the Imperial Federation League was thereby founded to ‘rouse the people’ and ‘spread the gospel of Federation throughout the whole of Australia’.

Their vision was of an empire united under a representative parliament, most often presumed to be in London, which would be elected by all the dominions. It ran parallel to, and often complemented, the movement for a federation of the Australian colonies and many of its leading figures, such as Alfred Deakin, were active in both. Australian federation was in some regards the ‘lesser’ goal on the path to a greater federation of the whole empire, but the success of Australian and failure of imperial federation have often been interpreted as a sign of burgeoning ‘nationalism’ in the dominions. The imperial federation movement in Australia has subsequently faded into obscurity along with a myriad of other lost causes. In his 1967 article ‘Australian Nationality and Nationalism’, C.S. Blackton cast the movement for imperial federation as an ‘interlude’, an aberration from the natural development of the colonies from dependence to separation.

Indeed, the citizens of Melbourne who gathered to form the Victorian branch of the Imperial Federation League saw before them a stark choice between closer union of the Empire and its eventual disintegration. It was a choice made more urgent by a sense of external threat. For Australians forever scanning the blue horizon for the sign of enemy ships, nothing roused the spirit of patriotism like the tide of fear.

1 Henry D’Estere Taylor, Australian Arguments for Imperial Federation, Address to the Australian Natives Association, 1890.
2 Report of a Meeting to Establish a Victorian Branch of the Imperial Federation League, Melbourne Town Hall, Friday June 5, 1885, 1, 13.
3 Ibid., 1.
4 Ibid., 14.
Thus in 1885 the Bishop of Melbourne reminded his audience at the Town Hall that ‘bravely as our handful of men would fight [against an invading army from France or Russia], the chances are they would be beaten’. Only with imperial help could Australians hope to defend their tenuous claim to the continent. It was also not merely enthusiasm, but frustration, which drove the cry for imperial federation in Australia, its imperialist designs in the Pacific so often thwarted by the much maligned Colonial Office. Thus ‘one might talk to the winds about colonies maintaining their independence’ when ‘a host of enemies has been allowed to surround her’. Safety for the Australian colonists meant not only a unified system of imperial defence, but more importantly, effective colonial control of imperial foreign policy.

These were the more practical sides of the impetus for imperial federation. The generally accepted reasons for the movement’s failure however tend to be couched in emotive terms, particularly in the context of ‘nationalism’. It is to this aspect of the movement that this paper is devoted. This work departs from the nationalist historiography in interpreting the failure of the movement not in terms of a triumph of a distinctive or separatist Australian nationalism, but in terms of the triumph of an alternative form of Australia’s imperial or Britannic nationalism.

My previous work, ‘Tethered to the World’, disputes the victory of an independent Australian nationalism in 1901, and this current piece seeks to expand the analysis by exploring the significance for the movement of the ascendancy of the imperial monarchy as the keystone of empire unity. ‘Tethered to the World’ presents a critique of Blackton and his nationalist reading of the imperial federationists, and draws particularly on the analysis of Douglas Cole, whose 1971 article ‘The Problem of Nationalism and Imperialism in British Settlement Colonies’ sought a more rigorous definition of nationalism and patriotism in the empire. Cole argued that nationalism in the colonies was a Britannic nationalism based on race, tempered by a ‘home ruler’ patriotism, and centred on local responsible governments. Thus it can be argued that the reason for the failure of the Imperial Federation movement was not nationalism (which tended to favour empire unity), but the resolution of defence concerns by means other means an unwieldy ‘parliamentary panacea’, which threatened local governments, including that in London. Time spent studying royal tours to Australia has also added another, more symbolic, dimension to that analysis. Edward Said’s theory of ‘orientalism’ in the imperialist imagination is well known, and David

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6 Ibid., 4-5.
7 Langton Rivers recalled ‘that business of New Guinea’ which had ‘put a strain on the loyalty of these colonies’ in Report of a Meeting etc, 1885, 7.
8 Ibid., Henry D’Esterre Taylor, The Advantages of Imperial Federation, Prize Essay commissioned by the Victorian Federation League, 1888, 5.

Admittedly ease of terminology is complicated by the variety of its past usages from time to time, most notably by Richard Jebb in his work Studies in Colonial Nationalism (1905), which came to be oft-quoted by proponents of a co-operative, rather than organic, model of ‘federal’ empire.
Cannadine’s most recent work, *Ornamentalism*, has added to our understanding of how the British saw their empire through the ‘ornamentalışm’ of class – a hierarchy parallel, and at times superior, to that of race. The research into the Imperial Federation Movement upon which this article is based suggests the existence of another way of imagining the empire along ‘rational’ and democratic lines, struggling at the outset to reconcile its democratic impulse with the pseudo-science of Social Darwinism that divided the empire along racial lines. It also suggests a tale not only of a different way of imagining the empire, but of that vision’s interaction with other understandings of the empire and its ultimate surrender to a force more powerful which it at first had tried to use to its own ends – that of sentiment. In terms of national sentiment the imperial monarchy became the overarching and seductive cipher, drawing all others towards it and subsuming them within the widening ambit of its symbolic power. The following sections discuss the imperial federation movement’s alternative rational and democratic view of empire, its reliance on sentiment or Britannic nationalism, and finally the harnessing of that imperial sentiment or Britannic nationalism to the fortunes of imperial monarchy rather than imperial federation.

**CITIZENS OF THE CROWNED REPUBLIC: SHADES OF A RATIONAL AND DEMOCRATIC EMPIRE?**

In 1885 the imperial federation movement and the imperial monarchy operated on different conceptual planes. The later equation of empire and monarchy can be seen as evidence of the success of royalty in appropriating the symbolic government of the empire over the period of study. In 1885, however, a future separation of the two could still be entertained, even if for rhetorical purposes. Thus Henry D’Esterre Taylor, in his address to the Australian Natives Association (ANA) claimed:

> Every such consistent republican [who would rather see a strong republic comprising all the British dominions than a number of petty ones scattered over the globe] as a national federationist, as it would be to the advantage of his cause to throw his whole weight into the cause of British unity, leaving the question of government [monarchy or republic] to be decided afterwards.

Earlier in 1867, the occasion of the first royal tour of Australia, Queen Victoria’s second son Prince Alfred had been feted as a contender for the crown, that is as ‘King of Australia’. Even upon the coronation of King Edward VII, in the country town of Kilmore controversy erupted when it was suggested that the war in South Africa was more important than the

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13 D’Esterre Taylor, *Australian Arguments for Imperial Federation*.
14 Proposal for a Confederation of the Australian Colonies with Prince Alfred as King 1867. State Library of Victoria Rare Books Collection. This proposal was also taken up in the press, particularly by the Adelaide Advertiser.
crowning of kings who ‘will come and go’. By then, however, such refusals to honour the unity of monarch and empire were the exception proving the rule.

In 1885 the Imperial Federation movement drew its inspiration and ‘federal’ language not merely out of race nor out of class, but out of a strong parliamentary tradition that saw Great Britain as a ‘crowned republic’. This tradition imagined the people first and foremost as citizens rather than subjects, as individuals in a civil society rather than parts of an organic race. In 1885 the tensions between this democratic impulse and a rising ‘Darwinian’ racial fear, which were to be the death of racially egalitarian visions of empire, were already evident in a reluctance, and in increasing cases ardent opposition, to admit India to any imperial federation upon any basis of equality. By this time the exclusion of parts of the Empire could be rationalised away through the pseudo-science of race, which served to intensify the fears that made survival in ‘an age of universal empires’ seem reliant on national and racial expansion.

This did not however preclude the adoption of ‘Her Majesty’s dark soldiers from India’ to intimidate other European empires. In 1885 the millions of India were already a source of anxiety, yet they also proved an irresistible temptation to those keeping tally of the relative strengths of the global empires. For Australians, the ‘empty places’ and what race should colonise them were of more immediate concern. Survival of the fittest was thereby translated into a scientific rationale for aggressive imperialism and, ironically, the subjugation of diversity to greater uniformity. Part of this quest for unity and uniformity was the rationalising impulse of the imperial federationists.

Imperial federationists were affronted by the ‘anomalies’ of the empire, and dissatisfied with its ephemeral symbols and ad-hoc organisation (whereby Britain ruled through a collection of residents and local princes, governors and disparate parliaments). The organisation, or lack thereof, of the defence forces was a particular concern for the rational mind. Thus Langton Rivers told his fellow ‘citizens of Melbourne’ that through federation:

An anomaly in our system would be removed, and ... throughout the British Dominions there would be one navy and one army, in which the status and discipline of all branches would be similar.

In this vein Imperial Federation was a call for a rational scheme, a rationalisation as much as an expansion of Empire. Consolidation would likewise prevent the devolution of the various communities into disparate

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15 This story, as related in the Kilmore Advertiser is retold in M. Tucker, Kilmore on the Sydney Road, Shire of Kilmore, 1988, 155.
16 This ‘Post-Darwinian’ racial fear and the ‘hardening of racial attitudes’ which accompanied it are raised in Hyam, p.329, 95.
17 Langton Rivers referred in particular to Lord Beaconsfield’s ‘masterly stroke’ at Malta and asked ‘if it is possible for this little island in the North Sea to bring 7,000 of these people here, why not 70,000?’, Report of a Meeting etc., 6.
races. Thus the Bishop of Melbourne declared his support for greater unity:

You all know that the British Empire is composed of many widely-dispersed communities ... whoever votes for this resolution will signify his belief that these communities, as they increase in population and expand in power, should not fall away from each other, ... but should combine for common objects, and for those interests which combination makes common. (Loud cheers)

In these pronouncements by imperial federationists the tension between the rational democratic and racial ideas were marked. Unity meant uniformity, which must mean equality - but an equality of the settler dominions necessitated the exclusion of the native empire, or at least a denial of difference in the constitution of the empire.

The appeal of imperial federation as an idea however is strong evidence of a Britannic nationalism freed at this stage at least from the monarchy and tied to a sense of racial and linguistic solidarity. As an idea, ‘imperial federation’ has been traced back to before the American War of Independence, an event that still stirred regrets among the colonists in Australia even in 1885. Thus Langton Rivers laid the blame for the irrational sundering of the race upon ‘party influences’, in reference to that disastrous severance [which] took place, once and forever, between two sections of the British race. By a majority of 270 to 78, the House of Commons preferred the retention of Lord North’s government in power to the preservation of the Empire; and by doing that, what did they do? They sacrificed to the British people one half of a great continent, and sent adrift to shift for themselves millions of the very pick of our own kith and kin.

Connections to the monarchy could, it seemed, be temporarily forgotten, as federationists looked forward to a future ‘union of the English-speaking peoples’, another hope greeted with loud cheers from the Town Hall audience at the inauguration of the League in Victoria. As a kind of utopia, the ideal of racial unity welded disparate communities together as partakers in a common destiny, an integral part of the construction of nationalism.

The desire for greater federation also signified a belief that parliament was superior to the crown in the organisation of the ‘commonwealth’ at its most meaningful level. It was not considered good enough in 1885 that ‘we have unity in a Crown and nothing else’, for imperial federation promised that ‘we may feel that every colony is

19 Bishop of Melbourne, *Report of a Meeting etc.*, 1885, 4-5.
21 Report of a meeting, 4.
22 Cole, 45-6.
not only in name and sentiment, but also in fact a part of the British Empire’. This kind of statement belied the anxiety that their Britannic nationalism was fragile without a rational and concrete structure to hold the constituent parts of the empire together. Diaspora and difference thus heightened a sense of anxiety, that the empire might be less ‘fact’ than ‘name’. In this early stage the monarchy, as another such name or cipher, was less than satisfactory for alleviating the fear of dissolution.

In 1885 Langton Rivers based his appeal for Empire unity upon the famous Tennysonian quotation, ‘Our crowned republic’s crowning common sense/ That saved her many times’. In this imagery the monarchy was a lovely ornament, but imperial federationists were not happy to be seen ‘as ornamental people who have no work in us’, rather seeing democratic parliamentary institutions as a means of realising their goals for the Empire through self-empowerment. In this vision of empire the attributes of republicanism were closer to liberty than those of monarchy.

In this respect the currents of imperial federationism and federalism itself, in Australia at least, were latently and often blatantly anti-class and based on a recognition that the monarchy was, for all practical purposes, irrelevant. As Justice Holroyd declared to the League’s inaugural meeting:

We have the same Queen, but beyond that, what have we? We all reverence our Queen (cheers) We all delight to think that we in the colonies have the same Queen over us as they who live in England, and we are proud of Her, and we wish ever to remain loyal subjects of the Crown of Great Britain. (cheers) But at the same time we wish to draw closer the bond ... We desire that whilst there shall be as heretofore one Crown, there shall also be one Sovereign power – not using the word ‘sovereign’ in the sense of the Crown – which shall have supreme control of the Empire as a whole, and which shall have the determination of peace or war. Of course, it is a fiction to say that the Crown now has this power... the real power rests with the responsible ministers of the Crown at Westminster.

Just as Imperial Federation would mean more representation and power for colonists over the workings of the Empire, it also fit comfortably into any number of centralising and rationalising tendencies of the time, from military training, to uniform education and trades unions. Thus Murphy, ‘a Unionist by conviction’, having done something ‘for the Federation of

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23 Justice Holroyd, Report of a Meeting, 16.
24 Justice Holroyd, Presidents Address to the Imperial Federation League, Melbourne Town Hall, 29 March 1900.
25 In 1885 ‘hear hear, cheers and ironical laughter’ greeted the dissenting H. Leonard’s observation that ‘English statesmen can see that there is a glorious nation rising in the south with many grand institutions, many of which they have not had the pleasure of enjoying yet’. Many imperial federationists in Australia were eager to claim federation would mean an expansion rather than diminution of democratic rights and even improvements to those in the Old Country. See also Murphy below.
26 Report of a Meeting, 16.
the working classes’ threw his support behind the movement because of his conviction that ‘the federation of the labour organisations is only the stepping stone to that greater imperial federation’.27 In this context the movement also suited the ends of social campaigners like LV Biggs who in 1908 linked it with social reform, ‘the touchstone of actuality and sincerity’ for every ‘subject in the world’s politics ... the present unjust distribution of wealth and opportunity’.28 In this as in other respects the movement served a utopian function from the outset, ‘keeping alight the lamp of political idealism’29 for reformers and traditionalists alike.

Such idealism may have stirred its ideological opponents amongst those republicans in Sydney and around the colonies, but as the twentieth century approached the desire for ‘union’ would grow, just as the cable and the steamer ended Australia’s isolation from world affairs, drawing England closer and ever raising the fear and thence imperial nationalism of Australians to greater heights. Looking at Australia and the Empire in 1901, while no Imperial Parliament yet existed, there had come into being the system of Colonial (renamed Imperial) Conferences, colonial contributions to naval expenses, and their participation alongside British troops in Sudan, the Boer War and Boxer Rebellion.

The whole empire would participate in the communion of grief for the death of Queen Victoria, proving that ‘one touch of nature’ could ‘make the whole world kin’.30 One could be pardoned perhaps for thinking at the time that the purpose, if not the means, of those citizens of Melbourne who gathered in the Town Hall on 5 June 1885 had been realised, that they could be assured

that they may know there are thousands of hearts beating in unison and sympathy with theirs, and ready to stand with them whatever may come, determined that whether it be war, or peace, our Empire shall stand, and nery be beaten down by any foe. (Loud and prolonged cheering).

A little over ten years after the foundation of the movement, another meeting at the Town Hall was asked, ‘Is not the sentiment of unity stronger in Canada, South Africa, and Australasia today than it was ten years ago?’32

The Hon. Brassey put this ‘revolution of popular sentiment’ down to the efforts of the movement and ‘the teaching of history in the public schools’. In 1900 the League’s president, Justice Holroyd, reflected that while in 1885 ‘we were styled visionaries in pursuit of an impossible chimera’, a ‘light has dawned in the minds of our fellow colonists ... now the great majority amongst all classes has been aroused to a sense of danger impending over all the communities that thrive under the British

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27 Report of a Meeting, 22.
28 Biggs, ‘Imperial Federation and Social Reform’, Address to the Imperial Federation League, Melbourne 23 October 1908.
29 Ibid.
30 The Leader, Jan 26, 1901.
31 Murphy, Report of a Meeting, 26.
32 The Hon. T.A. Brassey, Principles of Imperial Defence, Address to the Imperial Federation League of Victoria, 19 October 1896.
flag’. In 1901, however, the light that showed the unity of the Empire came not from a parliament, but from the King’s ‘beautiful home at Sandringham’. The federation of the Australian colonies in 1901 saw the work of the imperial federationists eclipsed by the sentimental power of monarchy.

FROM SENTIMENT OF EMPIRE TO EMPIRE OF SENTIMENT

The poets are doing it [the work of imperial federation], the ministers of religion are doing it, the merchants, the engineers, the soldiers, the sailors, the great trade societies, and a host of private correspondents are all engaged upon it. The Empire is being federated along the lines of least resistance. ...It is in the departments of Government and administration alone that no effort has hitherto been made to organise and to arrange upon a reasonable basis the necessary work of the Empire.

Having succeeded in raising the goal of imperial unity across the imagination of the colonists, the Imperial Federation Movement had its greatest success. Yet the imperial sentiment that was supposed to drive the Empire to federation at once became, in itself, a proof that federation was unnecessary. Derided as sentimentalists, imperial enthusiasts raised the cry that ‘sentiment rules the world’, and that practical ‘difficulties are nothing but things to be overcome’:

‘Man is never so irresistible as when he appeals to the imagination’ it would be much easier (and perhaps, more satisfactory in its immediate results), to appeal to the grandeur of the conception and the emotions of our countrymen to arouse an enthusiasm which would brook no opposition, but achieve a nineteenth century revolution, to be looked back upon in after years as the greatest Britain had ever accomplished.

On the level of sentiment alone the tide of imperialism, the work of poets, writers, and public men and women did affect a revolution in thought, convincing great numbers of colonists that the Empire was a thing worth fighting for, that it was not some association waiting to pass away as had been fashionable among the Manchester School in the mid nineteenth century. Thus Alfred Deakin declared in 1905 that:

The time has past when colonies were thought likely to drop off like ripe fruit, if they were not thrown away as millstones from her

33 Justice Holroyd, Presidents Address to the Imperial Federation League, Melbourne Town Hall, 29 march 1900.
34 Australia’s Preparation for Imperial Federation, Imperial Federation League of Victoria pamphlet, 1910, 4.
35 The Mercury, reproduced in Imperial Conference 1887, IFLV.
36 Dr. Moorhouse, Report of a Meeting, 12.
37 Taylor, 1888.
neck by an impatient parent. There is safety, both for parent and children, in union, and only in union.

Similarly Edmund Barton, Australia’s first prime minister, could announce with confidence: ‘touch one of us and you touch us all’. Imperial sentiment was harnessed and promoted by the imperial federationists, who contributed in their own ways throughout their public careers to the forging of links and communities across the Empire, from the exchange of scholars to the training of boys for the coming war.

In the years after Queen Victoria’s death the League promoted Empire Day on the birthday of the late Queen, linking yet more tangibly the symbolism of Empire with that of monarchy. This was but one event in which imperial sentiment was transformed into an empire of sentiment, over which the imperial monarchy, rather than any imperial parliament, was best suited to hold sway.

As a symbol rather than a debating house, the monarchy was well placed to represent anything to anyone. As a cipher it could be a point of consensus rather than, as was feared for an imperial parliament, a point of contention. This was the paradox of the achievement of the imperial federationists. For they were men who strove for imperial solidarity not only within the movement, but throughout society. The success of their work finds no better testament than the sacrifices made by young Australians in the long promised Great War, the struggle that nationalist Australians of all persuasions had long awaited and feared and for which they had long prepared.

The practical difficulties of Imperial Federation proved insurmountable so long as the ‘line of least resistance’ was to be the modus operandi of imperial and colonial authorities alike. Nonetheless the dream was kept alive through the mantra of ‘a matter for the future’, and the appeal to faith, ‘who wills the end will find the means’. The tension in imperial federationist rhetoric between democratic and racial ideas could also never be resolved without one or other giving way. The monarchy however, as a familial rather than democratic institution, allowed for subordinate members of the family. Nowhere was this better expressed than in the claims of Deakin, and later of Menzies, that Australians could find equality under the crown as ‘fellow subjects’. In empire-wide terms, the monarchy gave perfect expression to the familial form of Britannic nationalism, allowing a natural hierarchy to be laid across the democratic framework of its parliamentary institutions.

The rationalism and parliamentarianism which so characterised the earliest calls for a ‘federal’ empire, were thus submerged and overtaken by a celebration of diversity overlaid upon the racial hierarchy. That is to say, under monarchy difference could finally be admitted and recognised without threatening the racial and linguistic core of Britannic nationalism.

38 Alfred Deakin, Presidents Address to the League, 1905.
40 Some of these were recounted in the League’s own pamphlet on The Imperial Conference 1887, speeches, and in the work, among others, of J.E. Kendle The Colonial and Imperial Conferences 1887-1911: A Study in Imperial Organisation, Longmans, London 1967.
The sheer scale of the Empire, its particularity and diversity precluded an egalitarian federation along democratic lines. Instead, the King would be the keystone of imperial unity:

Though one might industriously explore the whole realm of history and tradition, it would be impossible to find an example approaching the circumstances of the noble and majestic Empire of GB, well called ‘the Mother of Empires’ with her numerous progeny of Colonies, Dependencies, and Territories, presenting to the salt sea waves a coast line of 28,500 miles, with an area of nearly 12,000,000 square miles, and a population of upwards of 410,000,000. Has the human race ever seen such a spectacle? A scheme founded on and expressing unity and relationship between so many communities, recognising allegiance to one King, must be beyond the sphere and anticipation of precedent.

For separatists the ‘light’ of a new nationality had failed to arrive with the new century - instead the nation’s dreams of unity came out of the eastern sea to open Australia’s first federal parliament, in the form of the Duke and Duchess of York, ‘carried across the globe by the royal steamer Ophir and escorted by British battleships’.

THE SENTIMENTAL POWER OF ROYALTY

The death of Queen Victoria came close to preventing the planned royal visit to Australia for the opening of its first federal parliament by the Duke of York. Yet through the presence of the Duke and his wife the memory of Queen Victoria was cast as the ‘noble influence that binds our nation firm and fast’. Australia rose to welcome... the envoys [commissioned by] the greatest empire the world has known in an affirmation of Australia’s identity as one of all those Britains that one isle has sown, One faith imperles in world-wide union. The opportunity of the occasion for binding the colonies closer to the imperial monarchy was not lost on the future George V, who worked determinedly to persuade the King not to cancel the tour to both Australia and Canada. In a letter to Chaimberlain the Duke of York related:

Both the Duchess and myself have been deeply impressed by the invariable enthusiasm and loyalty... Old colonists with whom I have talked admit that this spirit did not exist anything like this extent, even a few years ago.

They are good enough to attribute this partly to our having paid them a visit, but in my opinion the three great causes may be found in - the personal influence of and love for the Queen, the South African Wars and if you will allow me to say so, your own

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41 Sir John Quick, 1908.
42 The Argus, 7 May 1901.
44 The Argus, 7 May, 1901.
45 Evans, The Age, 7 May 1901.
indefatigable work and sympathy with the wants and aspirations of this young country.

The sentimental power of the ‘Great White Queen’ has already been the object of much study. Nowhere was this more evident than in the sentimental outpourings for the old Queen whose charisma was cemented by her emotional sacrifices to the nation:

We are reminded, and justly so, that the consummation of union in this continent is to be honoured by a sacrifice; and when we remember how her Majesty has suffered, as one after another of her loved ones has gone, it is not to be wondered that the dispatch of the Duke and Duchess of York across two oceans would take such a shape.

The young Duchess of York, as another mother whose children were left behind in England was accorded the same accolades:

Yea, for thyself and her who comes with thee,
The youthful mother of our kings to be, -
Since with self-sacrificing love to us
You come across the perils of the sea,
We greet you thus!

....while round the world, as in a crimson flood,
Surges the mighty passion nought may stay
Of British blood!

Sacrifice provided the solid evidence of the effectiveness of sentiment in the power of the Empire. As royal mothers sacrificed their children to the nation, so the far-flung families of the empire might sacrifice their sons to the King in war. Not only was imperial sentiment strong - its basis under the aegis of monarchy was not the fraternal federalism that might feed into a grand federation of free British men, but that of a family.

For the Duke of York the family and state were drawn together in a sacred chain of loyalty, illustrated by his appeal to the students at the University of Melbourne to ‘Be loyal, yes, to your parents, your country, your King, and your God.’ The sentiment of the family was not democratic, but rather embodied the virtue of loyalty to natural hierarchies tied to bloodlines, age and experience.

A Royal Tour not only provided the opportunity for an outpouring of ‘sentiment’. It also gave voice to the power of that sentiment as a substantial force, just as it had been the sentiments of the local parliaments, which had lately sent contingents to imperial wars, and sentiment that now transformed the physical landscape with arches,

46 Royal Archives, GV A.1A 32.
47 Brisbane Courier, 19 Sept 1900.
48 Sydney Morning Herald, ‘Welcome!’ 27 May 1901.
49 Crawford.
decorations and grand spectacle. The future George V had a keen appreciation of their value, his circle explicitly proclaiming that:

this sending forth of the King’s son was no mere empty compliment, but rather a pledge to them from England of her imperial love; a token that the mother country recognises and appreciated the loyalty and devotion of her colonial children drawn closer by the recent bereavement which had made them alike partners in a common sorrow.

The presence of royalty to preside over the birth of the new nation established the meaning of the ‘national’ event, indicating to its audience that the separatist impulse had been superseded by the victory of replication - that rather than continue on a trajectory of separation, the Australian colonies, united, would return to stand as one with those other Britains that composed the Empire. It was perhaps Australia’s most triumphant and confident moment within the Empire, sealed within a chain of being that had at its apex the imperial monarchy that served, though its ‘chain of loyalty’ to bind the Empire together ideologically. As the Municipal Arch erected at the ‘gates of the city’ of Melbourne declared, the new century saw the determination of ‘One life; one flag; one fleet; one throne.’

Hence the Argus echoed the determination, citing the new constitution itself, that it would be ‘no idle phrase’ that royally blessed, the ‘union would be indissoluble under the Crown’.

The role of the Crown in unifying the Empire, given the difficulties in achieving parliamentary union was ‘the part which sentiment and enthusiasm play in the government of men;

and no one who knows England will question that the Throne is the strength of a great personal attachment which is wholly different from any attachment to a party or parliament. In India and the colonies this is still more the case...

The physical manifestation of the empire of sentiment around the Royal tourist made it possible to claim, as Chamberlain had in 1899, that the Empire was a:

Federation, which may not, indeed, be distinctly outlined, but which exists already in spirit. The Royal Tour thus soothed anxieties over the future direction of the Empire, embodying not only a union in space but also a union in time, representing in familial form ‘one glorious and beneficient destiny.

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51 *Argus*, 6 May, 1901.
52 *Argus*, 6 May, 1901.
53 *Argus*, 6 May 1901.
It wove the history borne by the monarchy into the fabric of the nation and imprinted itself upon the rising generation who would be called upon to preserve their ‘magnificent heritage’.

When the Duke and Duchess are King and Queen of England, our children will remember that they were once the guests of our young nation. We have looked upon our future rulers, and it is well. It is “only sentiment.” Aye, but sentiment rules the world, and the British are to-day the freest race on the earth, because of our sentiment. God Save the King!

Langton Rivers’ speech to the Imperial Federation League of Australia following the Coronation of George V was testimony both to the imperial federationists susceptibility to the magic of monarchy, and to the imperial monarchy’s ascendancy as guarantor of imperial unity:

Never in the annals of the world has there been a spectacle more splendid or more impressive – splendid as a display of banners and plumes, glittering uniforms and court magnificence – splendour surpassing that of an ancient Roman Triumph. Impressive, too; there were assembled Princes, Ambassadors, and the noblest of the land, and, amongst them the chosen men of the oversea Dominions – a grand procession passing before the eyes of a great, loyal and rejoicing people, proud of their nationality, proud of their mighty Empire, with its ennobling associations. As part of this goodly procession march soldiers of Britain’s oversea Dominions, a novel and noteworthy sight, splendidly typical of imperial unity, a striking evidence that the life currents of these realms are throbbing in unison. What ampler proof can we have of the imperialistic spirit of our people?

In 1909 the League heard J Castell Hopkins rank highest the ‘personal influence of the Sovereign in promoting loyalty and appreciation of the Throne as the pivot upon which rests the constitution and unity of the Empire’ and ‘the influence of the visits paid by the Prince of Wales to Canada’.\textsuperscript{57} Not all imperial federationists were content with the state of affairs, particularly those who remained true to egalitarian and democratic parliamentary traditions, who were still citizens before they were subjects. This current found expression again in Alfred Deakin, who in 1905 was President of the Imperial Federation League of Australia, yet here sacrifice and equality too were now justified in relation to and subsumed within the metonymy of the Crown:

The spirit of our political life and its constitutional principles are the same, and should in course of time assert their identity.

\textsuperscript{54} Langton Rivers, \textit{The Coronation and its Lessons}, IFLA, Melbourne, August 1911.
\textsuperscript{55} \textit{The Stock and Station Journal}, 31 May 1901.
\textsuperscript{56} Langton Rivers, \textit{The Coronation and its Lessons}.
\textsuperscript{57} J Castell Hopkins, \textit{Canada and the Empire. A study in History and Sentiment}, reproduced in addresses and proceedings 1909 p 3-4 IFLA May-June 1909, p.15.
Citizenship is like civilisation in that it yields its privileges only in return for sacrifices. ... Every development towards [Empire citizenship] means more power for Australia, and more power for our race. We must define our responsibilities in order to obtain our share of the control of the Empire. The Crown is now the one symbol of imperial unity, since it enables every man and woman beneath its sway to claim an equal recognition as a fellow subject. The self governing peoples of the Empire will not have entered into or fully possessed their heritage until they also become fellow-citizens. (Applause)

CONCLUSION
When the citizens of Melbourne met in 1885 to form the Imperial Federation League they felt assured of their place in history as part of a great movement, yet they were equally unsure about the future path of Australia, believing that they were at a juncture in which separation or unity were the only paths. Ironically they are a movement now largely forgotten and when remembered, recalled as a ‘failure’ so often explained away through recourse to ideas of nationalism.

In drawing together the imperial federation movement and the imperial monarchy in the one paper I have suggested another possibility - that the failure of the movement can be tied to the triumph of another form of Britannic nationalism as embodied in the imperial monarchy and Royal Family. With the Crown as the ‘one symbol of imperial unity’ Australia’s Britannic nationalism would be familial before it was democratic, tied to notions of bloodline but allowing for diversity within the imperial hierarchy. Perhaps most significantly imperialists thereby escaped the direct confrontation with racial equality and difference to which their earlier calls for empire-wide federation would have inexorably led.

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28 Deakin, President’s address to the Imperial Federation League of Victoria, 1905.