



AUSTRALASIAN STUDY OF PARLIAMENT GROUP (Queensland Chapter)

**ADDRESS ON THE CENTENARY OF
FEDERATION**

**Brisbane
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Dr REYNOLDS: Ross needs no introduction from me, because he is a very prominent academic and citizen of Brisbane and has been for many years, although a Melburnian by birth and origin. Ross has written extensively in the field of history and politics; he has written biography; and he has even written novels and fiction. So that makes him a pretty well-rounded scholar. But he is best known, at least most recently, for his work with the Centenary of Federation and his enthusiastic and active promotion of Centenary of Federation activities over the last 18 months, two years.

He has kindly agreed to address us on the Centenary of Federation. I hope that he is not bored with the invitations that flow in and thinks, 'Oh no, not another speech along these lines.' On the other hand, I am sure that it will be entertaining; it will be anecdotal and witty. I am sure that we will also learn a lot as well. Hansard is not able to be with us in person tonight, but the proceedings will be taped. Ross will speak for about 20 minutes and then we will take questions, comments and discussion for as long as it runs. Ross has to get away at 7 o'clock at the latest, so we will bear his time frame in mind. However, Ross, you have 55 minutes; I am sure we can do it that way. Thank you, Ross.

Prof. FITZGERALD: Yes, I do get a lot of invitations, but I was very pleased to accept this one, not least because it was Dr Paul Reynolds who invited me. I just mention that I am doing a documentary and writing a book on the split in the ALP in the 1950s, and actually Paul's book on the DLP is absolutely invaluable.

Last week I was down in Melbourne for the Centenary of Federation celebrations. Not this Sunday but the Sunday before I was at a Centenary of Federation football match between Collingwood and Carlton, and I happen to be a Collingwood supporter. Rather mischievously, I think, the organisers placed the Prime Minister directly in front of me, and John Elliott, who is the president of the Carlton Football Club, next to me. So I gained a great deal of pleasure in calling out, 'Come the pies', in Mr Elliott's ear. You see, 100 years ago Collingwood and Carlton played each other, as did Geelong and Fitzroy. So for those of you who are AFL supporters, you will understand that the game between the Brisbane Lions and Geelong was the other designated AFL Centenary of Federation football game.

I do not mention that gratuitously; I mention that aoristically, as we say, because at the Carlton-Collingwood game, there were 73,000 spectators—73,000 spectators in one of the eight home and away games. That 73,000 spectators was a considerable number more human beings than voted in the entire colony of Queensland to make that momentous decision about whether Queensland should or should not join the proposed Commonwealth of Australia. I do think it is important to understand just how close it was that we had by far the narrowest majority of any of the colonies. We only just sneaked in.

Although Professor Geoffrey Blainey and I disagree about some things, I agree with Blainey that had Queensland voted "No", it is quite likely that Western Australia, the last colony to vote, may under those circumstances have voted "No" as well. Then we would have had a very different Australia from the one that we have at the moment. It is all too easy to take for granted a nation for a continent and a continent for a nation. It really is a remarkable achievement to have had 100 years of uninterrupted democracy and parliamentary government in this nation.

I hope that I am not telling you how to—I never remember what the phrase is—suck eggs. I was going to say "how to grow eggs"—but where we are now, in the south-east, there was a very, very strong vote against joining up. The white

businessmen of Brisbane and Ipswich in particular voted overwhelmingly against joining up the new federation and they argued—rightly, in my opinion—that their infant manufacturing and commercial industries would be swamped by competition from Victoria and New South Wales, which is precisely what happened, and which explains, of course, why we have never had here in Brisbane such a strong middle class. We have never had the manufacturing base of not just Sydney or Melbourne but Adelaide as well, which explains why we have never had the demographic base for a strong state Liberal Party. That is the reason why the Liberals have always been the junior partner in the conservative coalition.

I think that it is also very important to realise that many of us who are sitting here this evening would have been ineligible to vote. Women, of course, were not allowed to vote here in Queensland. Women did not get the vote federally until 1902 and could not vote in a state election until 1905. No Aboriginal person was allowed to vote. No what was called Aboriginal native of India, China or the South Sea Islands was allowed to vote. I am one of those literalists; I dislike the misuse of the word 'decimate', although we can argue about the change in language. But I am one of those people who, when I say 'less than a handful', that is what I mean. So when I say 'less than a handful' of non-whites voted, that is pretty much the case. Kay Saunders has tried to do work to determine the number of non-whites who voted in the entire colony of Queensland. It was probably less than 10.

So there was a very limited franchise. The franchise was also very limited in terms of the labouring class, because in a such a decentralised place like Queensland, with an itinerant work force, with so many navvies and canecutters and so on, because of the very stringent residential qualification, which meant that people had to be actually resident in their electoral district for six months, a lot of the labouring class could not vote, either. So the people down in the south-east who had voted against were white businessmen and, as I said, the white businessmen of Brisbane and Ipswich were overwhelmingly against joining up the new federation of Australia.

So, too, interestingly enough, were the small farmers on the Darling Downs. The situation in Toowoomba is a bit complicated. The city of Toowoomba was pretty much half-and-half, but the outlying areas of the Darling Downs voted very strongly against joining the new Commonwealth and they argued that their businesses would be under threat, especially from competition from South Australian farmers. So we have got the south-east.

If you take central Queensland, it is important to understand that the city of Rockhampton also strongly voted "No". That was for a number of reasons, but primarily I think the reason was economic—similar reasons to the white businessmen of Brisbane and Ipswich. Of course, everyone in this room will know that the railways did not go straight through from Brisbane to Cairns for a long, long time and that the way to carry produce to Rockhampton was primarily via the ports. So the white businessmen of Rockhampton argued that their infant manufacturing and commercial industries would also be under great threat from southern competition, which is precisely what happened.

With the exception of the city of Rockhampton, central Queensland voted about 60per cent in favour. But the only reason that Queensland was able to get a "Yes" vote—a very narrow "Yes" vote—was the four to one vote in favour in north Queensland. The reasons for the 60per cent vote in the centre and the four to one vote in the north are varied. I think that it is absolutely important that we face up to

the truth about our past and the truth is that there was bipartisan support for a White Australia Policy and there was overwhelming support for a white Australia in north Queensland and central Queensland. Reasons of defence played a very important role as well. Many of you will know that in, I think, 1885 Premier McIlwraith annexed New Guinea, which was one of the reasons that got the British moving in terms of suggesting a nationwide system of defence here in Australia. There were very real defence concerns, especially in relationship to Germany and Russia and Japan.

While support for the White Australia Policy and the reasons of defence were important, it is very important to understand just how strong the separation movement was—the separation movement was and still is in many ways, although nowhere near as strong today in north Queensland and central Queensland. The British Secretary of State for the Colonies, Joseph Chamberlain, who was the father of Neville 'The Appeaser' Chamberlain, rather naughtily, to put it mildly, misled the central Queensland separationists and later on the north Queensland separationists by saying—and he wrote it down—that the best way to get separate statehood was to federate first. Yet Chamberlain knew that could not have been the case, because he had seen the draft of the Australian Constitution, which makes it virtually impossible to create new states—extremely difficult, I suppose—because you have got to have the agreement of the federal government and of the state or state governments involved. That is why—parenthetically, I suppose—the United States of America started off with 13 states and now has 50 and we have got pretty much the same boundaries at the time not just of federation but of colonial times as well.

So north Queensland voted four to one in favour and the colony of Queensland just snuck in. Then, as you know, Western Australia was the last colony to vote—and again that is a complicated situation—but owing to the influx of southerners into the mines of Kalgoorlie and other places, eventually there was quite a strong "Yes" vote in the west.

A lot of students, once they learn, for example, that Queensland nearly did not make it, find that of interest. Students who I talk to in secondary schools also find it of considerable interest that our first federal government was not elected at all; that the first federal government was appointed by the Governor-General, Lord Hopetoun. Hopetoun was not feeling particularly well, because he had contracted either typhoid fever or another form of fever in India. He was a fairly puny fellow at the best of times and for a long time he was not operating on all cylinders. As many of you know, he picked Sir William Lyne, the Premier of New South Wales. I notice that on Friday the *Courier-Mail* had him as the Premier of Victoria, but Sir William Lyne was the Premier of New South Wales. Lyne rather embarrassingly could not get the numbers amongst his colleagues and that is why Edmund Barton became our first Prime Minister.

Queensland's great contribution was the Minister of Defence, James Robert Dickson, who was then a 69-year-old diabetic. Dickson took ill. Of course, Cheryl Kernot's seat is named after Dickson. He was recently knighted. So the recently knighted Sir James Robert Dickson took ill at the inauguration ceremonies and died nine days later.

Students find it fascinating to know that from 1 January 1901 until federal parliament first met in Melbourne on 9 May 1901 the first Australian ministry was an entirely appointed one. Students find that of considerable interest. As everyone in this room would know, the federal elections took place throughout Australia on 29 and 30 March 1901. Here in Queensland, they took place on Saturday, 30 March

1901. I find it of interest, because some of you will know that I wrote a little book on the first Labor government in the world. The Premier of the first Labor government in the world, Anderson Dawson, headed the Senate team because the ALP caucus met the day before and for a little while Anderson Dawson, given the fact that he had been the Premier, was afforded the privilege of chairing the first caucus meeting, which took place on 8 May 1901. So there are a lot of things, I think, that we should celebrate.

Things are very different today, of course, from the situation in 1901. I am one of those historians who believes that unless we face up honestly to our past, it is impossible to really understand our present and even more difficult to work out where we ought to be going as communities, as a state and as a nation. Nevertheless, despite all of the difficulties from this perspective, the founding fathers—and they were all men—did something quite remarkable to establish a new nation on the first day of the first month of a new century. This year, the reason that when Premier Beattie offered me this position about 18 months ago I leap at it is that, as an historian, I have been very concerned about the low level of teaching of history and geography and civics in our schools. I thought this was an opportunity to excite and to invigorate people about our history.

Unlike the other states, here in Queensland we divided the state into 12 regions and each region has a month. So the Centenary of Federation celebrations went from 1 January. January's month was the Gold Coast and March's month was Brisbane. It goes all the way through to 31 December, and the month of December is for the Sunshine Coast. There were all sorts of grassroots participation. This month, I am particularly excited about sending this vaudeville troupe out to all the agricultural shows. It just happens that vaudeville is the form of theatre that I identify with the most. As I was mentioning to Paul and a couple of other people—I do not know if you saw that little article in the *Courier-Mail* and the *Sunday Mail* about this troupe that we are sending out—as a result of that, a lot of old vaudevillians contacted me—people like Lucky Grills who, of course, is still performing—Lucky is performing in *Are You Being Served*, I had not realised—Paddy Allen and all sorts of other people. It gives communities the opportunity to participate.

The program, as I said, here in Queensland is quite decentralised. I think that is important. I think the Centenary of Federation is a chance to hear and to share and to value our stories because, as an historian, I happen to believe that is what history is: history is a series, a mosaic of stories. If we look around the room this evening, we can ask each other and we can ask ourselves, 'Where did your family come from? How long have they been here? What brought them here? What were their dreams and hopes and expectations? What were the realities they faced when they arrived?' What difficulties and hardships and achievements do they recall?' Whether our families have been here for one thousand years, or one hundred years, or a single year, the story of those interlocking mosaic of stories is the story of the making of this nation. Our nation is now 100 years old. As L. P. Hartley said in *The Go Between*, 'The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.' And indeed they do. While we may not share some of the views that the fledgling nation expressed in 1901, I think that it is important to bear in mind the progress that has been made. There is a great deal of progress that has been made in this country, although we have a long way to go. The change in attitude between 1901 and today is particularly relevant for any non-white, non-British and, one might say, non-male Australian. As the Premier said, as we move into the second century of peaceful

democracy in this country, with the anniversary, with the centenary of Australia's federation, we do have a remarkable opportunity to create a forum—a space where we can look at our past with honesty and celebrate our future with some form of optimism.

The final thing I feel like saying is that, apart from the events and celebrations that we have organised here in the Centenary of Federation, there are a whole series of community assistance programs. I gather afterwards you are going into the Lucinda Room. I had hoped that we could actually recreate the *Lucinda*, which was really the cradle of our constitution. No other country, I often used to say, would treat the cradle of its constitution in such a cavalier manner. Of course, the *Lucinda*, under 'Red' Ted Theodore, was converted into a hulk and eventually sunk ignominiously off Bishop island. I had hoped that had we might be able to rebuild the *Lucinda*, but it would have cost about \$21million. Although it was a magnificent vessel, it was a coal-burning vessel and it would have created all sorts of environmental problems. So what we were able to do was to re-create the gentlemen's smoking room in the upper floor cabin. Sir Samuel Griffith, Sir Charles Kingston and Edmund Barton were the three main activists who, with the help of all sorts of other people, really wrote what was to be the essential draft of our constitution. We have been able to re-create the gentlemen's smoking room so that students who come to the Supreme Court can also have some understanding of the role of the *Lucinda*.

I think that I have spoken long enough. I would like to have questions. So thank you very much for having me here, Paul.

Dr REYNOLDS: Apropos what Ross has finished on—when we go to the Lucinda bar, have a look on the wall to your right opposite the door. There is a magnificent painting of the *Lucinda*, which I had not actually seen before. I took some students through about three weeks ago. I do not know whether it is a new painting or whether it is something that has been here but has just been hung in a strategic place. You will get a very good idea of the vessel and what it was like. So that is just a little aside.

Mr Hewitt: Ross, I enjoyed your address very much indeed. Thanks so much. I thought that you might be interested to know that my Rotary club is visiting Tenterfield in September and we are having a re-enactment of Henry Parkes' address.

Prof. FITZGERALD: Excellent.

Mr Hewitt: We are looking forward to that very much. Before I ask my main question, I am interested very much in the fact that you are going to write a book on the Labor Party split in 1957. May I just make this comment—it is a brief comment, I assure you—I am of the opinion, although I am not certain, that Clem Jones was at the meeting on 24 April 1957 when the QCE made its decision to sack Gair. Whether or not Clem was actually there, he would be, in my opinion, probably the only person close to that decision still alive. Clem is now in his—

Mr REYNOLDS: Manfred Cross.

Mr Hewitt: Manfred Cross; fine.

Clem is now in his 83rd year. His memory is great. I see him with some frequency. I nevertheless just bring that to your attention and hope that you would seek Clem out.

Prof. FITZGERALD: Thank you very much, and you might mention to Clem that I will be contacting him.

Mr Hewitt: I will be seeing him in two weeks' time or sooner. My question is: last week in that segment each morning on the ABC, someone did a caricature of what we might be like if federation had not taken place. It was no more than that, really, a caricature. I have heard some people say that if we had not seized that golden moment, it could well be that federation would never have taken place. My question to you: could you paint the worst scenario of where we would be if we had not federated?

Prof. FITZGERALD: Goodness me! I certainly think that unless they had seized the moment, it is quite possible that here in Queensland we could have had a separate colony of north Queensland, central Queensland and south-east Queensland, which in a way makes sense. It is very hard for me to paint the worst possible scenario.

Mr Hewitt: What was the worst possibility—foreign intrusion?

Prof. FITZGERALD: One of the major reasons for federation was reasons of defence. I had not realised that the whole of the South Australian Navy comprised of one ship and that we sent a whole group of Australians to the Boxer Rebellion. Did you see that? I had not realised that. The only reason I mention that is that all of the differing colonies had their own little tin-pot armies and navies. I suppose it is certainly true that we would have been very vulnerable. I mentioned that Sir Thomas McIlwraith annexed New Guinea. That really got the British motivated into coming out here to try to organise a national defence system. So I suppose that we could have easily been overrun.

The fact that we do have a nation for a continent and a continent for a nation is a remarkable achievement to have lasted this long when one considers what is happening in other areas. So we could have easily fragmented, I suppose. I am sorry, I cannot think of the worst scenario. By the way, there was a company called The Worst Possible Scenario Company in New York, and whatever you were thinking of doing, you could ring up and they would give you the worst possible scenario, but I am assured that it has gone bankrupt!

Mr Fouras: Ross, it is fascinating that when you just get snippets—and I am not an historian—about the big differences, for example, between Victoria and South Australia, vis-a-vis free trade and protection. Then you get the concerns of the larger states like New South Wales about the power of the Senate. They were concerned very, very much about that. There were a lot of issues that were supposed to be fixed up which had winners and losers all over the place in economic terms, and we have had the result of having federation—the Commonwealth of Australia. Yet the simple question of a republic, which actually has undoubtedly a majority sentiment, we could not get around. Do you give credit to the difference in the conventions that they had, like the people's conventions, electing people to go along? They had them in 1891 in all of the places there. Is that the major difference or is it a lack of leadership, a lack of willingness to go that final step?

Prof. FITZGERALD: In terms of the republic, I do not think that it was a simple question, I have to say, if we are talking about the question about the republic. Clem Jones has been mentioned. There were quite a few republicans who voted "No". There were quite a lot of republicans, and I can see a couple in the room now.

Mr Fouras: Why did they not get agreement, whereas they could have? The complexity in getting to federation was much larger compared with getting everyone in the Australian states to agree.

Prof. FITZGERALD: My answer is that it is at least conceivable that the leader of the nation may not have wanted a resolution to that question, if you understand what I am saying.

Question: Ross, I know that it is not the job of historians to answer hypothetical questions, really, and Bill Hewitt just hit you with a very hard one.

Prof. FITZGERALD: I am hopeless at hypotheticals.

Question: I have another question, which is perhaps a bit less tremendous than Bill's. I think you probably made a good case for the fact that federation worked against the interests of developing a manufacturing industry in Queensland. It quite evidently collapsed in the decade or so after federation. My question is: what would have happened to the manufacturing industry in Queensland if we had not federated? I rather suspect that it would have collapsed, anyway. It would have been faced with a free market to the south—a common market to the south—which would have been protectionist as against Queensland just as much as against the rest of the world. How protectionist would we have had to have been against that common market to the south to keep the manufacturing industry going here? Could we have kept that level of protection going without a general revolt of all the consumers and an upsurge of sentiment wanting to join the southerners?

Prof. FITZGERALD: I have to say that I am not at all good at hypotheticals, but, as Paul Reynolds pointed out, I do come from Victoria originally and it is not an accident that Victoria and the Australian Natives' Association—and I actually belonged to the Australian Natives' Association health benefits system for years and years and years—were one of the strongest proponents of federation and of protection. I happen to be a protectionist about this country and I am in a very small and beleaguered number. So I am not really the best person to ask that question. I think that there is a strong reason for protecting—if we are talking about Australia now—our industries against incursions from overseas. I think that there are very strong reasons for protecting our pineapples and our bananas as well as our manufacturing industries, especially when other nations do not play the game. So I am one of those public figures who find it ridiculous that Australia has accepted unfettered free trade, economic rationalism, when our near neighbours and our big partners have not. So to answer the hypothetical about federation, I can see a situation where Queensland, or south-east Queensland, could have protected its industries. I know that there are all sorts of contrary arguments.

Talking about the split, I did the last long TV interview with B. A. Santamaria. I find it quite fascinating that a lot of the old enemies who were not only members of the Communist Party but people who were bitter enemies came together about the opposition to economic rationalism, globalisation and free trade.

On that particular matter there was a convergence of the Right and the Left. I know that it is an unpopular position, but it is a position that if I am asked the question I always respond by saying that I think that we have been sold a pup about free trade.

Question: Earlier this year, you will probably recall that there was a fairly abysmal federation parade through Sydney. I had just come back from overseas and two icons of the ABC, George Negus and Geraldine Doogue were doing the commentary. As each of the floats went past, they were making what I would consider rather juvenile comments, 'We didn't know that. We didn't have any idea.' It made me wonder why they were doing the commentary. Since the federation proceedings in London and what happened last week and so on, I am wondering: do

you really believe that Australians are any better informed really about federation than they were earlier?

Prof. FITZGERALD: There is no doubt that Australians are better informed about federation, because the level of ignorance was abysmal. When they did surveys about two years ago, you only had something like three per cent of Australians who understood what federation was and what it meant and there was a lot of confusion between federation and the bicentennial. I am not ultra-optimistic, but especially in Queensland, when we are going through the regions and getting grassroots participation, I am finding that people, who had no idea about how Australia became the nation that we are, have some understanding about that. I suppose I am parochial in the sense that I think that the way we are doing it in Queensland by connecting with grassroots communities is perhaps a more useful way of generating interest.

So I do feel that there has been a change for the good. But I am not underestimating the fact that, because of the very low level of teaching about the constitution, about civics, about history and geography in Australian secondary schools, there is a level of ignorance. It is not that students are not interested; it is that they have not had the opportunity.

I often tell the story—and it is not just about Australian geography or history, either—that we had a lecturer at Griffith from Cambridge who gave this fantastic lecture about the great Lisbon earthquake. I remember having a tutorial straight afterwards, and there were 20 in the tutorial. I said, 'Before we begin, would you mind writing down what country Lisbon is in?' I got two out of 20. That is not because those students are stupid; it is because they had not had the opportunity.

Dr Clark: As a migrant from England, I can assure you that you have had some success. I for one know a lot more now than I did 12 months ago. I think that the staff at the schools in my area have taken up the challenge and are using the opportunity to inform students. When I was reading various feature articles last week, I noticed that they revolved around the theme of the vote for women in 1902. One article maintained that, at that time, there was also serious consideration given of the fact that the franchise should be extended to Aboriginal people as well at that time, but it was only because of Queensland and Western Australia that it actually did not get up. I was wondering: is that a fact and, if it is true, how close did it come?

Prof. FITZGERALD: I have to say that I have not seen—Paul may know—evidence that that was the case. I would have thought that at the time, although there were small groups from the missionary society, for example, who argued that—they were in a very small minority. So I have to just say that I have not seen evidence of that.

Question: There is a Centenary of Federation display at the Museum that says that, theoretically, the Aborigines had the vote in Queensland through the property law. Although they did not own property, theoretically they did and they had the vote.

Prof. FITZGERALD: I do not want to pick a fight with the museum, but I would have thought that, here in Queensland, Aboriginal people were specifically excluded by—I can never remember what year that act was. Are you saying that if an Aboriginal person had unencumbered freehold property to the value of 50 pounds, or leasehold or pastoral lease to the value of 20 pounds, that then they would have been eligible?

Question: That was basically it.

Prof. FITZGERALD: That is interesting.

An Unidentified Questioner: Under the 1904 or 1907 act, that ability was actually formally removed from Aboriginals.

Prof. FITZGERALD: That is interesting, because when I talked about less than a handful of non-whites who voted, they were those non-whites who had unencumbered freehold property to the value of 50 pounds or pastoral lease property to the value of 20 pounds. That is interesting.

Question: I was just going to say very quickly, getting back to what Bill said before about what could have been the biggest problem if we had not federated—I suppose we would still be transshipping goods at the border from one railway to another railway, although the simple fact that the federal government did not take over railways in 1901 has been a huge setback to this country. But that is just a personal hobbyhorse of mine. My question is: what is your view of the current federation? Is it working well?

Prof. FITZGERALD: Part of the problem is because of the difficulty of changing the boundaries and creating new states. I would prefer to have an Australia that did away with the states and had a two-tiered system of government. But if wishes were fishes, we would all hunt in the sea. That is not going to happen because it cannot happen. It is not possible to get that form. I had actually hoped that when the republic referenda was put forward it would also open up the debate about a whole lot of other areas, at least for rational discussion, including the possible change to our system of government. For example, Lord Mayor Soorley is an advocate of a two-tiered system of government, although I have not heard him say that recently. I happen to believe that the very large vote for One Nation—that 25 per cent vote for One Nation at the election before—is not to be primarily explained in terms of racism but is to be explained in terms of economic disempowerment and a general sense of disenfranchisement from politics. One way of overcoming that might be to have smaller entities. I often say that, if one came from another planet and looked at the map of Queensland, what a peculiar place the capital is in. As many of you would know, originally our southern boundaries were going to go down as far as the Clarence River, which would have incorporated Grafton, which is the natural hinterland. That would be a natural hinterland for Brisbane, but New South Wales industrialists put pressure upon the British Secretary of State, who I think was the Fifth Earl of Newcastle at the time, who was well meaning but would not have known Australia if he fell over it, and he moved the boundaries up to the Tweed. I always remember A. G. Stephens, who later on became the editor of *The Bulletin*, in 1899, was one of the leading north Queensland separationists, and about the positioning of the capital way down there in the far south-east he said something like, 'What would you say if a man said to you that the circulation of the blood would be improved if the heart were placed in the big toe?' So all I am saying is that you can understand how people in the north and the west and the centre feel so far away, not just from federal government but from state government. It is interesting that Beattie's community cabinets is a way of trying to solve that problem in a way, I think.

Question: With regard to the Whitlam, more provincialist style, there needs to be extraordinary assistance by the state—

Prof. FITZGERALD: Have I missed something? Has not there been something quite recently—an agreement between Victoria and New South Wales? That is right, isn't it? There is an agreement between Victoria and New South Wales

to give Albury and Wodonga more. So that is a way of overcoming a constitutional problem, isn't it? There has not been much report of it up here, has there, but from what I have heard there seems to be quite large-scale community support. Is that right? What do you think of that as a system?

Question: I have two questions. You were talking about two-tiered governments. What would you suggest would be appropriate for that? Local government and federal government, or local and state? The other question is: when do you think Australia would be ready to vote for a republic?

Prof. FITZGERALD: So the two questions are: how would I organise those two tiers of government? It would involve enlarging local governments and giving them much greater power. So you would abolish the states. There is really no point in talking about this, because it cannot happen. But if I was—

Interjector: Dictator of the universe.

Prof. FITZGERALD: If I was dictator of the universe, yes—if we could sprinkle some fuffle dust around—so that there would be a two-tiered system of government: there would be a federal government and, say, 30 regional governments, local authorities. So they would—

Interjectors: (inaudible)

Prof. FITZGERALD: Again, because I come from Victoria, I am more interested in tribe of origin—smaller groups. When do I think we will be ready for a republic? It is hard to tell. I am one of those republicans who voted "No", because I did not want to be short-changed. So there are a whole lot of people like Clem and myself who voted "No" who are republicans but did not want such a watered-down system. But I am not here to give you my views. So when do I think? It is a bit like counterfactuals. I am not very good at counterfactuals and I am not very good at prophecy, but I would have thought that in 10 years' time it is quite likely that we will have a republic.

Question: I cannot help discussing when people might be ready to vote for the republic. Didn't New South Wales refuse to federate at an earlier referendum—

Prof. FITZGERALD: Yes.

Question:—and it was only quite late in the 1890s that they voted again and put it through. What changed suddenly in the late 1890s that made federation possible?

Prof. FITZGERALD: Really, the leadership changed. So 'Yes/No' Reid, who was known as 'Yes/No' Reid because he kept vacillating all the time, was 'Yes'.

Mr Fouras: But it was carried at the time. An amazing number of people voted 'Yes'—50,000 to 70,000. So it was the first time they did not get the 50,000. It took them two goes at it to get the majority. You are right, the leadership was trying to do without it.

Prof. FITZGERALD: So if we get political leadership and if I look into my little crystal ball, it is quite likely after December all the leaders of the major political parties, except the Nationals and One Nation, will be republican. Is that possible?

Mr Timperley: Professor Fitzgerald, I would just like to move a vote of thanks on behalf of the ASPG Queensland Chapter for addressing us tonight—the very interesting address that it was. I just ask everybody to put their hands together again for the professor. Thank you.

Prof. FITZGERALD: Thank you very much for having me. Bill, if you could ask Clem, I would be grateful and I will ring him up.

Mr Hewitt: Yes, I will.

Mr REYNOLDS: Thank you for coming, ladies and gentlemen.