FEDERATION, COLONIAL AND BRITISH, BEING AN EXPOSITION OF THE FEDERAL SYSTEMS OF SWITZERLAND, THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, CANADA AND GERMANY

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Federation, Colonial and British, Being an Exposition of the Federal Systems of Switzerland, the United States of America, Canada and Germany by C. Stuart-Canadell

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C. STUART-CANSDELL

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FEDERATION,

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COLONIAL AND BRITISH.

Being an Exposition of the Federal Systems of Switzerland, the United States of America, Canada and Germany,

in aid of the formation of suitable Constitutions for the effectuation of Australasian and British Federation, with suggestions as to many direct and indirect advantages.

BY C. STUART-CANSDELL,

BARRISTER-AT-LAW, OF THE INNER TEMPLE AND SUPREME COURTS
OF NEW SOUTH WALES, QUEENSLAND AND TASMANIA; AND
PORMERLY JUDGE OF THE WESTERN DISTRICT COURTS
OF NEW SOUTH WALES.



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PREFACE.

The object of this little work is to arouse public interest in a subject of vital importance to the British peoples; whether of one hemisphere or the other. In view of what other nations have done, the British must Federate or fall back in the race. With Federation they will preserve pre-eminence, without it they can never hold their place. Germany with its forty millions of Federated peoples threatens British trade, and America with its sixty millions, who know the value of unity, already outrivals Britain in many productions and industries.

Two great questions depend upon British Union. Defence and Trade. Federation, and Federation only, can secure the integrity of the British Dominions. Federation, and Federation only, can preserve the trade of the British peoples for themselves. The most favoured nations should be those of their own possessions. These ends secured, then, trade following the British alliance flag will secure developments, over Dominions exceeding 10,000,000 of square miles, which can never be approached by any save the United States, themselves British in race, and rivals only in progress.

Colonial Federation is a large, important and needful part of Union, but British-Colonial Federation can alone secure Colonial safety and a continuity of British supremacy. On the other hand British or Colonial indifference will court destruction of British trade and disinfegration of the British possessions.

And yet the movement has but limited support on either side of the world. The Britisher and the Australian-Britisher are equally too intent upon the profits of their own daily concerns to see how nearly the question affects them. One threat of a common foe would doubtless find them united to a man for defence. But a little enquiry would show them, why and how, other great nations have federated, and with what better effect, even for the purposes of defence, than a mere hasty alliance could give. To assist this enquiry, an epitome is here presented of so much of the histories of those countries which have developed their own federation as will teach us what to adopt and what to reject.

Upon a wise determination of these points will depend whether the British peoples maintain their position or degenerate into an inferior power. Every man, aye, and every woman, should study the question—the great question of the day—and conventions of the peoples should alone decide.

C. S. C.

CONTENTS.

			00000000						PA	GR
OI U	he advant	ages of Col	onial a	and Brit	ich Fe	deration	***	***	***	1
The	Title " B	ritish" to b	e pref	erred to	Imp	perial"	***	***	***	. 2
		s possible fo					***		***	ŧ
Brit	ish Feder	ation must	emans	te from	the B	ritish Par	liamen	t	1000	-
Colo	mial Fede	ration mus	t emai	nate from	n the	Colonial I	Parliam	ents	***	•
Hist	tory of the	e Swiss Fed	eral s	ystem	***	***	***	***	4-4	7
		,, ,	. J	udicial	eysten			***		17
	**	,, ,		iscal sy	stem	***		***		15
			ं ा	Defence :	waten	6				13
Of t	he "Refe	rendum" ai	d oth	er peculi	aritie	of the S	wise eve	tem of	3577	238
200.0	governi							***	5000	1
Oft	he Cost o	f the "Swi	e Cou	PATROLAD	+11					1
		e American				***	***	***	***	2
1110	or or one					whom	***	***	***	2
	99	91	+9		ial sy		***	***	***	2
	21	43	**		l syst	епг	***	***	***	
Me v	he Cost o	× 10	**	Defe	3.5		***	***	***	3
			. "	Syste		4.00	***	***	555	34
H180	tory of th	o Canadian	B'eder				***	***	***	3
	19	••	29	Judie	cial By	retem	***	***	***	4
	22	12	50	Fiscs	d	***		***		4
		34	40	Defer	nce	-44		***	***	ŏ
Of t	he cost of		**	Syste	IEL.					52
		e Germanic	Feder							53
20000	And District				cial sy		232	2333	200	G
	31	P*					2223	177	1	6
	100000000000000000000000000000000000000			HINNE						
	**	•	**	Thefa			***			60
Sum	he cost of	the the foregoin	g Rev	Defer Syste isws of t	nce m the for	ir chief F		Astems		7
Sum Tab	he cost of mary of t ulated Str and Exec	the ., the foregoin atement sho utive Powe	g Rev	Defei Syste isws of t at a glar	nce in the fou ace the	ir chief P	ederal s tion an	Astems		69 70 71
Sum Tab	he cost of mary of t ulated Str and Exec	the the foregoin atement sho utive Powe to Swiss Fer	g Rev	Defei Syste iswa of t at a glar system	nce m the for ace the	ir chief P Constitu	ederal s tion an	Astems	ative	7:
Sum Tab	he cost of mary of t ulated Sta and Exec Of th	the ,, the foregoin atement sho utive Powe to Swiss Fer American	g Rev wing rs— leral s	Defei Syste iswa of t at a glar system	nce en the fou ace the	or chief F Oonstitu	ederal s tion an	rystems d Legiel		7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7
Sum Tab	he cost of mary of sulated St. and Exec Of th	the ;, the foregoin atement sho utive Powe o Swiss Fer American Canadian	g Rev wing rs— leral s	Defei Syste iswa of t at a glar yetem	nce m the for ace the	ir chief P Constitu	ederal s tion an	Astems	Intive	70 71 71 71 71 71
Sum Tab	he cost of mary of i ulated Str and Exec Of th	the ,, the foregoin atament sho utive Power to Swiss Fer American Canadian (Jerman	g Rev	Defe Syste isws of t at a glar yetem	nce in the for ace the	or chief P	ederal s	ystems d Legie	I attive	7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7
Sum Tab	he cost of mary of i ulated St. and Exec Of th	the ,, the foregoin atament sho utive Power to Swiss Fer American Canadian (lerman that the Sv	g Revolution of the control of the c	Defer Syste isws of that a glar system	nce in the for oce the 	or chief P Oonstitu	ederal s	ystems d Legie	lative	777777
Sum Tab	he oast of mary of i ulated St. and Exec Of th "" ults show relinquish	the statement should be said to b	g Rev wing rs— leral s visa, t) e of th	Defer Syste isws of that a glar system	nce in the for oce the 	or chief F Constitution and the G lative pow	ederal s	ystems d Legie	have	777777777
Sum Tab Rest	he oast of mary of i ulated St: and Exec Of th "" ults show relinquist not so th	the in the foregoin attement sho unive Power to Swiss Fer American Canadian (Jerman that the Swiss but little Canadian)	g Rev wing rs— derad s	Defensyste iswa of the glass system. The American local system is a second system.	nce in the for oce the 	or chief P Oonstitu	ederal s	ystems d Legie	have	777777777777777777777777777777777777777
Sum Tab Rest But	he cost of mary of i ulated St: and Exec Of th "" ults show relinquist not so th atisfactio	the the foregoin atement sho unive Powe to Swiss Fet American Canadian (lerman that the Sy ned but little to Canadian n of the Ca	g Revolution of the control of the c	Defensyste iswa of the standard system. The American local sections in the section local section in the section local section is section local section in the section local section is section in the section local section in the section local section is section in the section in the section in the section is section in the section in t	nce im the for ace the ican a I legis	or chief P	ederal s tion an	ystems d Legie : States Federal	have	777777777777777777777777777777777777777
Sum Tab Resu But Obje	he oast of mary of i ulated St. and Exec Of th "" ults show relinquist not so th attisfactions to	the interest the foregoin at ement should be recorded by the Fer American Canadian (Ierman that the Syned but little Canadian of the Oa giving axte	g Revolution of the control of the c	Defensyste Syste iswa of t at a glar yetem he Amer heir loca ns powers !	nce im the for nce the ican a I legis	or chief P	ederal s tion an	ystems d Legie : States Federal	have	7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7
Sum Tab Resu But Obje Shor	he oast of ulated St. and Exec Of th ults show relinquish not so the actions to uld be lim	the the foregoin atement sho unive Powe to Swiss Fet American Canadian Carman that the Sw and but little c Canadian n of the Oa giving axt giving axt sited chiefly	g Revolution of the control of the c	Defensystem System System The American	the formace the	ar chief P	ederal s tion an	ystems d Legie : States Federal	have	7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7
Sum Tab Resu But Obje Shor	he oat of mary of i ulated St: and Exec Of th indicates the relinquist not so the atiefactic ections to uld be lim posed Out	the ,, the foregoin atement should be less that the Syned but little c Canadian n of the Caglving axte tited chiefly line for an	g Revolution of the control of the c	Defer Syste is we of the at a glass of the at a	the formace the	ar chief P	ederal sition and	ystems d Legie States Federal	have	70 70 70 70 70 70 70 70 70 70 70 70 70 7
Sum Tab Resu But Obje Shor	he oat of mary of i ulated St: and Exec Of th indicates the relinquist not so the atiefactic ections to uld be lim posed Out	the the foregoin atement sho unive Powe to Swiss Fet American Canadian Carman that the Sw and but little c Canadian n of the Oa giving axt giving axt sited chiefly	g Revolution of the control of the c	Defer Syste is we of the at a glass of the at a	the formace the	ar chief P	ederal setion an	ystems d Legie d Legie States Federal	have	70 70 70 70 70 70 70 70 70 70 70 70 70 7
Rest Diss Obje Shoo	he oost of mary of i ulated St. and Exec Of the not so the not so the actions to uld be lim posed Out Of Equa	the ,, the foregoin atement should be less that the Syned but little c Canadian n of the Caglving axte tited chiefly line for an	g Revolution of the control of the c	Defer Syste is we of the at a glass of the at a	the formace the	ar chief P	ederal stion an	ystems d Legie:	have	7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7
Rest Diss Obje Short	the cost of mary of i ulated St. and Exec Of the show relinquist not so the street of	the ,, the foregoin attenuent she utilive Power to Swiss Fee American Canadian Canadian and that the Syned but little Canadian of the Cogiving axte giving axte tited chiefly line for an Italy in Stattform Tariff	g Revolution of the control of the c	Defer Syste is we of the start	ican a legis	ar chief P	ederal stion an	ystems d Legie	have	7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7
Rest Dist Obje Short Proj 1. 2.	he oast of mary of i ulated St: and Exec Of the notes of hotiefactio ections to uld be lim posed Out Of Equa Of a Uni	the ,, the foregoin atement sho unive Powe to Swiss Fer American Canadian German that the Swied but littl to Canadian n of the Ca glwing axte tited chiefly line for an lity in Stat iform Tariff ppointment	g Revolution of the control of the c	Defer Syste is we of the task a glar system of the American series of training laws of trai	ican a ce defend	and the Glative povential goves	ederal stion an	ystems d Legie	have	7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 8: 8: 8:
Rest Dissorting Objective 2. 3. 4.	he coat of mary of i ulated St. and Exec Of the coat of the can of the c	the the foregoin atement sho unive Powe of Swiss Fer American Canadian Clerman that the Swisd but little c Canadian n of the Ca giving exte sited chiefly line for an lity in Stat iform Tariff appointment reme Court	g Reversion of the control of the co	Defensystem System Syst	ican a legis	nd the Galative poventral gover	ederal stion an	States Federal	have	77 77 77 77 77 77 85 85 85 85
Rest But Diss Objes Short 2. 3. 4. 5.	he cost of marry of i ulated Strand Exec Of the cost of marry of i ulated Strand Exec Of the cost of t	the ,, the foregoin atement she utilive Power to Swiss Fee American Canadian Canadian of the Canadian of the Canadian of the Canadian in for an ility in Statiform Tariff, ppointment Court plidation of	g Revolution of the control of the c	Defensystem System Syst	ican a defended	and the Galative povential goves	ederal etion an	ystems d Legiel	have	77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77
Ress But Diss Objes Shoot 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.	the cost of the mary of i ulated St. and Exec Of the cost of the c	the ,, the foregoin atement shounive Power to Swiss Fee American Canadian German that the Swied but little consideration of the Capital Switch and the Capital	g Revolution of the control of the c	Defei Syste isws of it at a glar system process in the American powers in the process of tralian lasters of	ican s l legis of defendence	and the Galative poventral govern	ederal stion an	States Federal	have	77.77.77.77.77.77.77.77.88.88.88.88.88.8
Ress But Diss Objes Pro. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.	he coat of mary of i ulated St. and Exec Of the standard of the standard of the standard of the standard of a United St. St. Of Canac Of a United St.	the the foregoin atement sho unive Powe of Swiss Fer American Canadian Clerman that the Swiss do the Canadian of the Ca giving axte sited chiefly line for an lity in Stat iform Tarifi appointment reme Court plidation of teral Capits iform Railw	g Revolution of the control of the c	Defei Syste Syst Syste Syste Syste Syste Syste Syste Syste Syste Syst Syst Syst Syst Syst Syst Syst Syst	ican a legis	nd the Galative poventral goves	ederal stion an	States Federal	have	7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7: 7
Rest But Diss Objes Short 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.	he oost of mary of i ulated St and Exec Of the "" ults show relinquist not so the actions to uld be lim of Equa Of a Uni Of a Conse Of a Uni Of a Uni Of a Uni	the ,, the foregoin attenuent she utilive Power to Swiss Fee American Canadian Canadian of the Canadian State of the Canadian	g Revolution of the second of	Defensystem System Syst	ican a ll legis	and the Glative povential goves	ederal stion an	ystems d Legiel	have	77.77.77.77.77.77.77.85.85.85.85.85.85.85.85.85.85.85.85.85.
Rest But Diss Objes Short 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.	the cost of amary of i ulated St. and Exec Of the Cost	the ,, the foregoin atement shounive Power to Swiss Fee American Canadian Canadian of the Cana	g Rev wing rs— dered s risa, ti s madia. milia. s Ares i to G Ap Publia A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A	Defe Syste iswe of it at a glar a gla	ican a ce defended acceptant	ar chief F Constitution of the G lative poventral govern	ederal stion an	States Federal	have	77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 88 88 88 8
Ress But Diese Objes Shori 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9.	he coat of mary of i ulated St. and Exec Of the standard of the standard of the standard of Equa Of a United Of a Fed Of a United Of Trans of Forest Of Forest Of Forest	the the foregoin atement sho unive Powe of Swiss Fer American Canadian Clerman that the Swiss do the Canadian of the Ca giving exte sited chiefly line for an lity in Stat iform Tariff appointment preme Court plidation of the call of the call the call of the call the ca	g Revwing graderal state of the making to making to making to first tof Graderal state of Appendix of	Defensystem System Syst	ican a ll legis	and the Glative povential goves	ederal stion an	ystems d Legiel	have	77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 88 88 8
Rest But BDiss But Proj 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11.	he oost of marry of i ulated Strand Exec Of the control of a Unit of Trans of Trans of Force of Natio	the ,, the foregoin atement she utilive Power to Swiss Fee American Canadian Canadian of the C	g Rev wing gra- leral s wing g	Defe Syste iswe of it at a glar a gla	mee m the force the cost the c	ar chief F Constitution of the G lative poventral govern	ederal stion an	States Federal	have	77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77
Rest But Proj. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 111. 112.	he cost of marry of i ulated St. and Exec Of the Cost	the ,, the foregoin atement shounive Powes to Swiss Fee American Canadian Canadian of the Canadian Canadian Canadian Canadian Canadian of the Canadian	g Rev wing great state of the s	Defei Syste Syst Syste Syst Syst Syst Syst Syst Syst Syst Syst	nce much the formation and the	nd the Galative poventral gover	ederal stion an	States Federal	bave	77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77
Ress But	he oast of mary of i ulated St. and Exac Of the state of	the ,, the foregoin atement she utilive Power to Swiss Fee American Canadian Canadian of the C	g Rev wing	Defei Syste is we do not a glar system for a glar system for a glar system for a glar system of the	nce m the force the control of the c	ar chief F. Constitution of the Glative poventral govern	ederal retion an	ystems d Legiel	have	77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77 77



FEDERATION,

COLONIAL AND BRITISH.

The federation of the Australasian Colonies having been brought into prominence by proposals for a fitting scheme, the publication of an Exposition of the various methods of Federal Union now in operation and capable of development, seems to be the necessity of the hour.

And more especially so, because, while no question of greater importance ever engaged the attention of the present generation, there is perhaps no proposal of equal weight which is so little understood, even by some who affect to lead upon the question.

Much misunderstanding of the matter has been induced by the terms, Colonial and Imperial Federation, being commonly treated as identical. Few seem to realize the truth, that though allied subjects, they are actually distinct. And yot, while, so distinct, that either might exist without the other, they are nevertheless the natural complement of each other. Unfortunately however, the whole subject has been so much discussed under the title of "Imperial Federation" as to have favoured objections which would otherwise never have been raised.

Some look upon it therefore as covering a scheme, by which much of the parliamentary rights and privileges of each colony to govern itself, will be taken away and given to an Imperial or at least a Federal Senate, forgetful of the fact, that no such sacrifice can be enforced save with their own assent.

Some regard it with favour, but with only a vague idea of the advantages it will give, or of the unreasonable price at which, if initiated under bad counsels, it may perhaps be purchased. Some look upon it with disfavour but for no more weighty reason, than that they possess an overweening confidence in the power of their own particular colony to bear its own burdens and protect itself against any focs.

Some regard it as promoted by sister colonies who see in it a means of keeping out British goods, by imposing heavy duties thereon, and then by a system of intercolonial free trade, to compel the purchase of their own manufactures at advanced prices.

And some fancy they see in the proposal, a scheme on behalf of and in the interests of the Mother Country, by which her rulers hope to resume a supremacy, which she long since most generously relinquished.

Of all these objections none are more absurd than this last. The Mother Country has freely given her Colonies full ownership of their lands and the privilege of self-government under their own independent parliaments and she is glad to be relieved for ever, of the responsibilities of directing their local affairs.

The Mother Country has really no interests which are antagonistic to those of her Colonies. Imperial interests, about which sometimes, much is vaguely urged, as if they were matters exclusively advantageous to Britain, are really chiefly centered in the preservation of its commerce, and that necessarily includes the commerce of its enormous and widely scattered dominions. In this duty, Imperial and Colonial interests are reciprocal and their joint action, is a fitting subject for Federal Union.

The unemployed capital of the Mother Country, in swelling colonial investments by constantly increasing millions builds up new industries and develops new resources. Her merchants, in importing the varied products of her illimitable possessions must enrich Colonial producers. Her countless ships, which are ever passing between her shores and those of the young nations she has founded, bear to and fro, tens of thousands of her peoples day by day, and rich freights, the products of her mills and works, in profitable exchange, for those of her colonial lands and mines. In that enormous trade, larger than was ever realized at any prior time, within the history of the world, we may see the solid and enduring interests, not less valuable to her colonies, than to herself, which bind them together in the golden bonds of mutual profit. This trade which now totals beyond a thousand million pounds in each year, is destined to a prodigious enlargement in the future.

But the riches which comprise this trade, afloat and ashore, and in which she and her colonists are mutually interested, would afford grand prizes to the rapacity of an enemy. They therefore need to be assured of protection, both at sea and on land. Suppose war to break out, and, unless known to be well prepared, break out it will and just perhaps when it is least expected,—what disasters, what stagnation of trade, what losses will then ensue not only to British merchants but to Colonial producers? And those losses, great though they will be to England, will be greater still to Colonial enterprise. To the merchant princes of the Mother Country, the heaviest losses of even a prolonged war would be but a small part of their great wealth: to Colonial interests they would be overwhelming. For this reason and for this reason alone, even if all others were deemed insufficient, is both Colonial and Imperial Federation needed; since nothing short of that, can secure adequate powers of defence.

But the title of "British Federation" is greatly to be preferred to that of "Imperial", because the prefix Imperial is misleading, as seeming to many, to imply an intention of the Crown to reassume in part, the Government of Colonial affairs. No one who has perused the proposals, of the men of mark, who constitute the "Imperial Federation League," will believe that the Crown desires to take away one jot of the present independence of the Colonies. Still, it cannot be too strongly urged that the word "Imperial," implies a drawing of all together, under one head, which is very different to an union for special purposes only. It savours too much of sovereign power, to sound pleasantly, in the ears of those, who have now the right to govern themselves and know how to value the privilege. And as association of ideas, has much influence in the formation of public opinion, a word, which may but only seem to support the suspicion of ill-wishers, and so invites opposition, is best avoided.

For these reasons it is a matter of regret to many loyal supporters of an United Empire, that the broader and more truly august title of "British Federation League, for promoting an Union of all British races" was not chosen; and it would be well to amend it now. Such amendment would remove the unfounded doubts of many and give a great impetus to the cause.

The British public, by whom the political constitution of the Australian Colonies is still but imperfectly understood, will better appreciate the spirit of this suggestion, if they bear in mind, that those Colonies have each so long enjoyed, the practically unrestricted right to govern themselves, in accordance with the laws of their own separate parliaments, that it may be accepted as certain, they will never yield to the supremacy of any Federal Council or Senate, or even to the Mother Country, one iots of those rights of Self-government, which they have received as her generous gift, beyond what is absolutely necessary to secure an approved system of Federal Union—British and Colonial,