

Bathurst: The Ideal Federal Capital.

**Notes on Its Historic Interest, and Its Scenic Beauty; with a
Statement of Its Claims as a Suggested Site for Federal Capital
and Territory.**

Warung, Price (1855-1911)

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BATHURST: The Ideal Federal Capital

Keppel Street, Bathurst.

Glyndwr Whalan

1901

Acknowledgment

THE Publisher of this work desires to acknowledge the courtesy of Messrs. BEAVIS BROS., of the Royal Studio, Howiek-street, in placing at his disposal their magnificent range of Photographs, many of which are reproduced in the following pages.

Thanks are also tendered to these amateurs who have so kindly allowed their pictures to be used.

Note Prefatory.

THE following pages—those reflecting the beauty of the photographer's art not less than those which clothe more or less pertinent words with the dignity of type, are really An Argument.

They constitute together an argument Why Historic Bathurst, with its gracious neighbourhood of mountain, and hills, and plains; with its suggestive associations with a not undistinguished Past; with its promise of a splendid Future; with its salubrious climate and its scenic beauty, should be chosen by the legislative wisdom of Federated Australia as the site of its Capital; An Argument Why this fair City, already notable for much that men value, should be made immeasurably more notable still by being elevated into the position of

“The Treasure-house of the Nation's Heart.”

And if it be said that the Argument is superfluous, because Bathurst is excluded by reason of “the one hundred miles radius” from the sites open for choice, the rejoinder must be made, that it has yet to be determined by the ultimate Authorities whether Bathurst is definitely thrust out by the Constitutional provision (Sec. 125 of the Constitution Act) defining the distance-radius, from any possibility of selection.

Is it to be supposed that a nation of free men, working through their free institutions, would afflict themselves unnecessarily for all succeeding generations by choosing a site of only secondary interest and importance, when the enlargement of the area of choice by a few miles would provide a site of transcendent value, whether considered from the point of view of practical importance, or sentimental interest? The one hundred miles' radial limit cuts off part of the suggested Bathurst Federal Territory from superficial consideration, but does any reasonable being doubt that if it can be shown that the Bathurst Federal Territory and Bathurst Capital site possess a supreme advantage, the Federal Legislature would not obey the Spirit and the Principle of the Constitution, and make choice accordingly, even though the letter of the law would insist that, for the sake of a mile or two, the superior location should not be regarded?

To assert that the Federal Legislature would choose an inferior site, from a pedantic rigidity of interpretation, would be to declare that that august body would be lacking in some of the first elements of statesmanship.

To choose the place whereon to erect a stately city, worthy to become the Shrine of a Glorious National Ideal, will be a duty demanding the consecration of the highest powers of our National Legislature. Insight, Largeness of View, Boldness of Conception, Mastery of the Practical Problems of Sanitation, Building Construction, and Transportation, all moulded by and subject to a sense of Beauty in Architecture, will require to be the qualities brought to bear in the performance of that ennobling and enthralling task.

The men whom the Nation calls to that task will surely not lack either the

judgment or the courage to say, if need be, to the people of Australia: “*Enlarge the radial limit from Sydney by a fraction, and we will give you a perfect site for Territory and Capital!*”

And the enlargement of that limit by a mere fraction would remove, I do not hesitate to say, almost every objection to

Bathurst as the Capital of the Commonwealth.

THE PUBLISHER.

Note.—Since the foregoing was written, it has been pointed out in the public press that the New South Wales statute in reference to distances directs that these are in all cases to be determined by the nearest practicable road, and that by such measurement Bathurst is 124 miles from Sydney. It is further contended that, had the Commissioner taken his measurement from the usual starting-place—viz., the obelisk in Macquarie-place—instead of from “the west boundary of the city of Sydney.” Bathurst would be found to be outside the 100 miles' radius “in a straight line on a horizontal plane,” to quote the Imperial Interpretation Act.

Historic Bathurst.

OF all the claimants for the distinction of the Federal Capital, Bathurst is the one place which possesses the subtle charm of historical association. Indeed, save Sydney itself, it is the one place in Australia whence cluster legends and traditions that cover the whole scope and period of Australian life. Dr. Johnson, in his tour through the Western Isles of Scotland, apostrophised Iona in undying words. "To abstract the mind," he said, "from all local emotion would be impossible if it were endeavoured, and would be foolish if it were possible. Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses—whatever makes the past, the distant or the future predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me, and far from my friends, be such rigid philosophy as may conduct us indifferent or unmoved over any ground that has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue." Bathurst, like everything else that goes back to the beginnings of things Australian, has its own memories of sin, and shadow, and sorrow. But it has also, and more vividly recallable to-day, traditions of men and deeds that helped to make Australia what she is: an Australia great, prosperous, buoyant; the Australia of the Free Commonwealth. Actually founded in 1810, and named by the finely-energetic Governor Macquarie, on May 7th, 1815, in honour (as the fashion of the age was) of Lord Bathurst, Secretary of State for the Colonies, she was for a generation the lone outpost of Empire. From her went out expedition after expedition to conquer the wild. Men like Evans, and Mitchell, and Sturt walked where her pleasant streets now run, while they planned those longer journeys which were to link the halo of fame to their own names—while winning for spirits as bold and resolute as themselves a larger field for adventure and enterprise. With Bathurst is associated indelibly, as we have seen, Macquarie. The Founder and Father of the Settlement, it is one of the best monuments to his vigour of conception, and, in an age of official littleness, his statesmanlike ingenuity. In Bathurst moved men also of dissimilar types, but each in his way a Builder of the Commonwealth: Samuel Marsden and Robert Cartwright, Fathers Therry, Ullathorne, McEncroe. Here, too, some of the first men who guided the tender plant of Education till it strengthened, and bid fair to reach the luxuriance it now enjoys, lived, worked, died. Bathurst has not only had as its teachers and its preachers, those among the prominent in Australian annals, but it has bred men who have made history in other parts of the continent, in Tasmania, and in New Zealand. Linked with it are great names in our legislative annals and in those of science. Wentworth—Deniehy—W. B. Clarke: these men worked for Australia; and their work lives. Then, the long list of men who have spoken here from public platform: a list we must not forget at the epoch of the Commonwealth founding—Lowe, the great Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lang, Dalley, Martin, Parkes! And then the wonder-working gold! Fifty years ago Bathurst *was* Australia to many hundreds of thousands in the Old World. The discoveries on the Turon, the "First Nugget"—these were incidents which were the commonplaces of talk in London,

Glasgow, Liverpool, Dublin, Paris, in 1851, and they centred in Bathurst! And so the continuity of a history more notable than of another in its effect in Australian development went on till Bathurst, when the Federal movement, then all but dead, revived it in 1896. Within four months of that Bathurst action, what was done? More than had been achieved within two years before! The People's Convention at Bathurst in November, 1896, Mr. Reid's visit to Queensland, the elections for the National Convention, the assembling of the National Convention in Adelaide, all followed in rapid succession, the impelling power being that of Bathurst. And then came the series of later conventions, of referendums, of conferences, and now the holding of the first Federal Parliament! The revival of Federation at the instance and cost of Bathurst, in 1896, led by immediate and direct steps to the noble fruitage of to-day. Had Bathurst done nothing else than achieve what she did in connection with Federation, she would be justly entitled to the proud cognomen of

“Historic Bathurst.”

Bathurst's Claims to the Federal Capital Site; OR, “The Case for Bathurst.”

Bathurst: The Ideal Federal Capital.

The Federal Capital and Territory.

The Claims of Bathurst.

By "Price Warung."

It is not contended that in the remarks that follow the whole case is presented which it is possible to make out for the choice of Bathurst as the Federal Capital or some spot in its immediate vicinity as the site for the Capital City. Other and subordinate considerations remain to be discussed, and the whole series of arguments will have to be stated before the full force and validity of Bathurst's position can be understood. But, admittedly imperfect though it is, the following statement is submitted as a cogent and unanswerable plea for its selection by the Federal Parliament as the seat of Government of the Commonwealth.

The Principal Desiderata

of a Federal Capital, as defined by Sir Samuel Griffith, Chief Justice of Queensland, in his "Notes on Federation, are:

- I. CENTRALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF SITUATION.
- II. SALUBRITY.
- III. CAPACITY FOR IMPREGNABLE DEFENCE.

With regard to the Commonwealth at large, these considerations must be determined in favour of any place before it can have the least pretension to be regarded as a desirable site; it must be central, it must be healthy and subject to agreeable climatic conditions, it must be either impregnable or capable of being made so at a minimum of cost to the nation.

But these are not all the points which demand attention, inasmuch as the claims of any site must be weighed also with reference to New South Wales only. Such other considerations are:

- IV. THE COMMERCIAL RELATIONS OF THE FEDERAL TERRITORY TO SYDNEY.
- V. ITS SOCIAL RELATIONS,
- VI. ITS RELATION TO NEW STATES TO BE FORMED OUT OF NEW SOUTH WALES TERRITORY.

Furthermore:

- VII. THE PROCESS OF NATIONALISING THE TERRITORY MUST NOT

INVOLVE EITHER NEW SOUTH WALES OR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN DIFFICULTIES OF A LEGAL NATURE.

And other considerations to be taken account of are:

VIII. THE FEDERAL OR ANTI-FEDERAL SYMPATHIES OF THE PRESENT POPULACE.

IX. THE CAPACITY OF THE PLACE FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION.

Let us see how Bathurst, Bathurst district, and the people of the district stand with relation to the whole of these points.

Centrality.

Whatever may be the progress of Australia under Federation in settlement and wealth, and whatever its growth in population, it is certain that the centre of gravity, so to speak, for the whole Commonwealth for the first hundred years of national existence will be in some spot not far removed from Bathurst. At present, as a recent calculation has shown, nineteen-twentieths of the whole population of Continental Australia, with Tasmania, occupy an area, the geometric centre of which would fall within an hour's railway communication from Bathurst railway station. When it is seen that the area in question embraces the whole of New South Wales, of Victoria, of Tasmania, and the most populous portions of South Australia and Queensland, it also appears that Bathurst is situated so near to the exact centre that for all practical purposes of communication and transit it can be declared the central point of the populated territory which the Commonwealth would control were it established forthwith. During the next two or three generations it is exceedingly unlikely that there can be any concurrence of circumstances that will shift the point of centrality west of New South Wales borders, for though settlement must inevitably spread through great tracts of country as yet in their prairie state, yet it cannot overtake within a century the preponderance already gained in population by the southern, eastern, and western provinces. If the west, then, cannot gain upon the south, east, and north in population, it is impossible that it can reduce to any appreciable extent the ratio of disparity now existing between the two sections of Australia in point of social development, monetary status, and industrial expansion. To-day Bathurst stands at almost the mathematical centre of the provinces that have federated, whether they are viewed with respect to populousness, or to the mass of their wealth, industry, and culture. There is nothing to indicate that her position as the

hundred-year-old Capital of the Commonwealth would be any more than fractionally altered, relation being had to the same classes of facts and to normal conditions of development. In the future she will remain as she is in the present: Central.

Accessibility.

Because she is central, she is by the very nature of things, accessible from all quarters of the compass. It would seem indeed as if Nature had provided in Bathurst a site for the Federation. Trade and commerce, and agriculture and pastoral settlement, have so ramified from her, and through her and her neighbourhood, that her lines of communication and traffic with the inland centres on the one hand and with the metropolis on the other, are not arbitrary and artificial, but have been framed in accordance with that sound law of material growth and prosperity: "Follow natural conditions." Sooner or later trade and passenger traffic force the adoption of "short cuts," and it is singular to perceive how the necessities of the internal development of this State, and of the commercial relations existing between Queensland and Victoria, have either compelled or are compelling the adoption of such routes and methods of inter-communication as pass by or converge upon Bathurst and its neighbourhood. Already there is a demand for more rapid transit for passengers and mails between Bathurst and Sydney, and between Bathurst and Melbourne, and that demand will become insistent long before the Federal Capital can be established. Place the seat of Government in Bathurst or vicinity, and Sydney will be brought within four hours' distance, and the journey between Melbourne and the Federal Capital, *via* Harden, will be correspondingly expedited. Representatives for the Federal Legislature, and people who have to transact business with the various departments of the Government must flock to the Capital from all parts of the Commonwealth. Where—due regard being had to *all* comers, to travellers from the North, South, East, and West—is there a spot entitled to challenge comparison with Bathurst in this particular of ease of access? on which point the New South Wales Commissioner justly lays stress!

Salubrity.

Of other main things to be desired in connection with the Federal Capital we proceed to consider the quality of salubrity and climatic agreeableness. Bathurst is central and accessible. But what are the climatic conditions which govern life in her homes? Are they such as render mere existence a

burden or a pleasure? Are they favourable to general health, to convalescence after illness, and to longevity? Here again the answers are not derived from impressions and inferences, but are supplied by facts as clear and unmistakable as are the data referring to Bathurst's centrality and accessibleness of situation. Bathurst's mean temperature is 56 degrees, and her height above sea level 2150 feet. She has, of course, her hot days and her boisterous and inclement days; but the variations of temperature are seldom extreme and unreasonable, and, unlike the experiences of other places, are so far from being dangerous and depressing that the constitutionally weak sooner recuperate than under similar temperature conditions elsewhere. It is within the experience of almost every medical man in Australia that invalids can live and recover soundness of health through residence in Bathurst who have abandoned hope after residence in the sanatoria of the other colonies, and of the southern portions of New South Wales. The district indeed has secured, thanks to the health-giving attributes of its site, its scenic surroundings, and its atmosphere, a more than Australian renown. *According to Fagge's "Principles," one of the most recent and authoritative of medical works, Bathurst is given first place among the health resorts in the Southern Hemisphere for cases of chest disease requiring the purest atmosphere.* Finally, the longevity of her residents makes the town and district phenomenal in New South Wales. It has a long list of centenarians, nonogenarians, and octogenarians—men and women who lived and worked in the vicinity for fifty, or sixty, or seventy years; while the city to-day numbers among her people scores of persons who have seen the allotted threescore and ten of mortal existence, and still are hearty and hale, and these have been resident for many years. If the Federal Parliament has to meet for summer and autumn sessions, then there are numerous less desirable places than Bathurst, even among so called summer resorts, in which to pass the hot season, and if the winter and spring months witness the assembling of the Legislature, then the conditions that make for health, comfort, and enjoyment, are more readily to be obtained in Bathurst than in any other place that is putting forth claims to be chosen as the site for the Capital. In legislating for a nation, it is of the highest degree of importance that the men engaged in the work shall live in circumstances favourable to the maintenance of a high standard of health; for it is apparent to every reflecting person that legislation performed by men irritated and depressed by unhygienic surroundings must be crude and imperfect compared with that proceeding from men whose mental powers are not prejudiced by physical illness or discomfort.

Impregnability.

The capital of a nation is almost invariably the objective of attack to its enemies; and it is well within the bounds of possibility that from Australia's alliance with the mother country, the first great war in which England is engaged will lead to attack by flying squadrons on Australian cities and coastal towns. If the Capital be near to the seaboard, then its liability to danger will be enormously increased, and will prove a source of extreme anxiety to the Federal authorities. The commonest motives of prudence dictate the policy of placing the Capital of the Federation inland. Now Bathurst is protected by the natural fortresses of the Blue Mountains from inimical expeditions starting from the coast to the westward and southward, while the advantages of her central position designate her as the Arsenal of the Interior. When the railways projected and in progress are constructed, military forces can be converged upon her from the north, and south, and west without risk of interference with her communications from an external enemy. So, too, should necessity arise from the rapid transmission of troops from, say, Victoria to Queensland or *vice versa*. Complete the designed railways, and mobilization of the whole military strength of the Commonwealth, at any given spot from the north to the Victorian coast, would be possible, assuming the efficiency of military organisation, within three days. *With the Capital placed in some spot contiguous to the Great Southern Line of Railway, it cannot be safely predicted that operations of the kind could be conducted with the same probability of immunity.* Between Goulburn and the metropolis it would be possible for a small body of an enemy landing on the eastern seaboard to cut the rail communication in half-a-dozen places, and to retire unmolested, effecting its purpose and its return to the coast within twenty-four hours. A similar danger would menace the northern railway at three or four spots. No like risk would threaten the lines of communication which would converge upon and would ramify from Bathurst. To reach Bathurst direct from the coast would necessitate a foe conquering mountain passes which could be rendered impregnable at small cost; to reach it from the northward or southward would require an invading force of such overwhelming strength that it would require a combination of the military, naval, and commercial-marine forces of the three greatest European powers to effect its transport; for no one power alone, the exigencies of a general war being considered, could contemplate with possibility of success the seizure of the Federal Capital, if it were placed at Bathurst. While the Federal Capital remained untaken, Australia could never be subjugated, and Bathurst could be made absolutely impregnable at a cost to the

national exchequer less by millions than would be required for the defence of any spot that has to depend for its safety of communication upon the integrity of the great southern trunk line of railway. A collateral issue of defence is that concerned with coal supply. Create the Capital at Bathurst, her coal supply, and that for her great inland communications, would be furnished by Lithgow, the defence of the coal mines of which place would form part of the scheme for the protection of the Capital. Place the Federal City in such a position that it must depend upon the perfect maintenance of the railways to the northward or southward, the interruption of these lines would deprive the Capital, in the matter of coal supply, of one of her main sources of power. With respect to defence, as with respect to situation and sanative characteristics, it can be fearlessly asserted Bathurst presents a claim at once comprehensive and irrefutable.— (See note as to the Bombala-Eden case).

The Capital, and Trade with Sydney.

Passing from the consideration of the principal “things to be desired” in connection with the site for the Capital City, which must be determined by arguments originating in the necessities of the Commonwealth at large, we come to the discussion of points which more particularly affect New South Wales in this question of choice of a Federal territory. It is conceivable that a spot may suggest itself as a suitable site regarded solely from the point of view of the Commonwealth, the selection of which might yet radically injure the mother province. New South Wales makes a sacrifice of territory in order to endow the Federal Government with a home, and it is too much to ask that in addition, her trade and social interests shall suffer. With the Capital on the border of New South Wales and Victoria the natural source of trade supplies for its population would not be Sydney, but Melbourne. At Bombala, it would still be Melbourne for many years, with the additional certainty that a new port would be created at Twofold Bay before long, to serve the Capital, but to add to the provincial expenditure of New South Wales, while diverting trade from Sydney. For it must be perceived that while the trade of the Capital, if situated at Bombala, which would pass through Twofold Bay, would not in any sense be monopolised by New South Wales, it must inevitably follow that the port would have to be improved at the cost exclusively of this province. With the Capital at Bathurst, there is no possibility of similar direct or indirect loss being inflicted on Sydney. Sydney must ever be the importing and supplying port, not alone for Bathurst, but for the greater portion of the Western Division that cannot have its wants met by the river trade. The erection of

the Capital in the West, and its organisation with all its machinery of political, administrative and industrial life, would mean a large certain addition to Sydney trade, and it is not by any means certain that were the Capital situated elsewhere than in the West, the metropolis of this province would secure an equal increment to its volume of business. With the settlement of the Capital at Bathurst there would be a stimulus to the enterprise and industry of the whole West. The Western Division, indeed, would prove a contributing area to the commerce of the Capital—would form, so to speak, “its back country.” No place to the southward of Sydney has a like proximity to an extent of country, the trade of which it could ensure should contribute to the prosperity of Sydney as a port and distributing centre. This is an argument that must appeal to Sydney merchants and importers. The Capital in the West will stimulate settlement, consumption, and trade, almost the whole volume of increased business adding to Sydney's profit and importance; the Capital in the South would lead, in the case of Albury and Bombala, to the diversion of trade from New South Wales, and if it be at Goulburn, there is behind that town no vast body of settlers and consumers, commanding an enormous area of land in course of settlement to be stimulated to increased activity and production. IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WEST LIES THE KEY TO THE FUTURE PROSPERITY OF THE MOTHER PROVINCE.

The Capital, and Social Relations with Sydney.

The Capital of the Federation will be a centre of social and fashionable activities, as Washington has proved to the United States. In Bathurst or its neighbourhood there are already in existence all the agencies of complete civilised life. These would expand naturally and gradually to the needs of the life of a Federal Capital. The legislature, from its introductory sitting, would not be meeting in a crudely organised town, but in a city where it could be accommodated with ease and dignity, and would not have to spend the years it is waiting for the erection of the Capital in paltry surroundings, such as was the fate of the early Congress meeting in Washington. The Judiciary and the department of administration could also be accommodated during the same intermediate period; and fitting housing for the Governor-General could also be readily obtained. More than one of the many noble mansions in the vicinity of Bathurst would be at the disposal of that high officer. Now the relation of these facts to the social life of Sydney is easily seen. There would be no breach of continuity or identity between the social arrangements which now so contribute to the business prosperity of Sydney and to its prominence as a centre of “light

and leading.” while on the southward at Bombala and Albury the whole character of the society of the Capital would have interests and sympathies remote from Sydney, if not antagonistic to it. Again, Bathurst is on the direct line of route for the thousands of visitors who annually visit Sydney to make a stay in the Blue Mountain townships, and the trip to the Jenolan Caves. These would almost all pass on to the Federal City as a mere matter of curiosity, and pleasure seeking, and Sydney Harbour, the Blue Mountains, and the Capital would be insensibly grouped together as identical in scenic interest. On the other hand, visitors from the southern provinces to the Capital, were it to the southward, would require to be under special inducement to visit the Harbour, the Mountains, or the Caves. Their visit would probably terminate at the Capital, and Sydney and the mountain region would be deprived of that advertisement and that substantial gain, which would accrue were the Capital at the Western City or in its vicinity.

The Capital and new States.

Cognate considerations with respect to new states which may be formed out of New South Wales territory must present themselves to the contemplation of Sydney merchants and its people generally. It is inevitable that in a generation or so, at least two new States will be carved out of the mother province: one to the west; the other that of the Riverina. With the Capital in the West, it would still be the link and meeting point of the new Western State interests and those of the great Eastern seaport. But, if some other place be chosen, it is within the bounds of probability that the Capital of the new State would be so situated that it would prove a contributory to the aggrandisement of Adelaide. With Bathurst as the Federal Capital, it would naturally act as a converging centre for all Western interests for the period which will elapse before a new State is created. Lines of trade and connections of business will be formed in that time which cannot be uprooted even if there were the desire to do so; and these would, of course, be in large measure subserving also the interests of Sydney seaboard. Free the West from that centripetal force which would cause it naturally to concentrate on Bathurst as the Federal Capital, and there would be no strong gravitation of interest towards Sydney. It is more than likely the tendency will be towards Adelaide. Again, we repeat that far-sighted policy will take into account the obvious deduction from the facts, geographical and industrial, of Western life and settlement, that IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WEST LIES THE KEY TO THE FUTURE PROSPERITY OF THE MOTHER PROVINCE, AND ITS

METROPOLIS. With Bathurst as the Capital, Sydney and New South Wales as a whole could contemplate the severance of territory in the West for the purpose of forming a new State with equanimity.

The Possibility of Legal Difficulty.

In the choice of any site for the Capital, it must be borne in mind that the Federal territory will in its relation to the States in general be a neutral power. Immediately governed by the Executive, it must, in all its bearings, have a position of neutrality and impartiality in the conflict of state interests—that is, if the true spirit of Federal institutions be allowed to sway, as it should do, the organization of the Union. Consequently, in the choice of a Capital City, care must be taken that the very fact of that choice will not complicate and confuse Federal interests and the relation of the Federation and the States. Now, the settlement of the Rivers question will prove one of the main difficulties in the adjustment of State interests. The final decision will be one for the Federal Judiciary, in other words, for one of the departments of the Federal Government. But the Federal Judiciary is peculiarly an appanage of the Federal Territory, and thus, if the Federal Capital be situated on one of the great rivers, the rights to the waters of which are, sooner or later, bound to be brought to issue in the Federal Judiciary, the Federal territory would be at once a party *to* a cause, and a judge *in* it. Suppose Albury, for instance, were chosen as the Federal City. Then there would be three parties to any dispute as to the riparian rights over Murray headwaters, namely, New South Wales, Victoria, and the Territory itself. Very patently the choice of Albury would thus most seriously defeat the intent and design of the chief of the Federal Institutions, the Executive and the Judiciary; and the principal function of the latter—to hold the balance evenly between State and State, and Federal Government and States, would be destroyed at the outset. No such certainty—not even the possibility —of legal difficulty can arise in connection with the definition of Bathurst and its vicinity as the Federal Territory.

The Question of Federal Sympathy.

In the nationalisation of any territory for the purposes of the Federation, most unquestionably a factor to which full value should be attached is the present and past relation of the people of the district to the whole Federal movement. Submitted to this test, there is no place in the whole of Australia that can make the same emphatic and satisfactory response as

Bathurst. It was, as we have already said, the energies, and the money, and the public spirit of Bathurst men that took the question of Federation when it was virtually a dead issue and gave it new and vigorous vitality by the People's Federal Convention held in the city in 1896. Moreover, by the very method pursued by Bathurst in the organisation of that Convention, it placed the Federal movement in such a position that the people of the several provinces became the propelling and guiding agents, and not the politicians. The force of the impulse communicated by Bathurst has never been lost. On the contrary, the impulse has gained volume and potency till, at each successive stage of the movement, the popular voice has become more plainly the determining power. Before the People's Convention, the movement was one for the politicians to juggle with—to use or not for the ends of personal ambition as they pleased. That body made the issue the dominant one of Australasian politics, and to it, and to it alone, is ascribed, even by the very politicians whom it compelled to march along with it, the resurrection and the revivification of the Federal Ideal. To the magnificent service thus rendered to the cause of national unity, there is no parallel in the records of other communities. The Bathurst people thus have proved their Federal sympathy in a way and a degree to which no other of the towns competing for the distinction of the Federal territory can approximate. Bathurst proved its loyalty to the Federal principle when to be federal was to be deemed to be erratic and to be the target for derision; and it has the gratification of knowing that other centres which were foremost in ridiculing the preliminaries of the Federal Convention, are now loudly professing the Federal feeling whose mere existence they laughed to scorn four years ago.

Royal Commission on Sites for Federal Capital.

The Commissioner's Report.

By Commission under the Great Seal of the [then] Colony of New South Wales, dated 14th November, 1899, Mr. Alexander Oliver, M.A., President of the Land Appeal Court, was authorised to make full enquiry "as to the suitability for the seat of the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia of such tracts or areas as he might be invited to consider," and to report the result of such enquiries. The Commissioner, a gentleman of trained legal powers and of large literary experience, made an exhaustive investigation. He received invitations to consider the claims of forty places, of which he personally inspected twenty-three sites; at fourteen of the twenty-three he held public enquiries, and took evidence on oath. He moreover called to his aid expert witnesses on problems of civil engineering and architecture, and, as a result, he published an exhaustive report of his conclusions, with summaries of the evidence and expert testimony. This document, which, while it will be, in all probability, set aside by the Federal Legislature as to its conclusions, must prove of considerable value in any future investigations because of the important facts it furnishes as data, was signed by the Commissioner on 26th October, 1900, the term of enquiry thus covering a period of almost a year. In this report the Commissioner rightly classifies the several suggested sites into three groups: (1) Western; (2) South-Western sites; and (3) Southern sites. As a rational unit of enquiry he assumed the proposed Federal Capital to be a city of 40,000 inhabitants, and put prominently into the front of his investigations the question as to the provision of water-supply for such a city. Another determining factor he held to be ACCESSIBILITY; a third CLIMATIC CONDITIONS; other factors were transportation of coal to the Capital, proximity to deposits of good building stone and to timber forests, and the quality of the soil. Reviewing these factors, and on the evidence before him, the Commissioner declared his judgment was in favour of the site suggested at Bombala-Eden or Southern Monaro sites as prominent among all the Southern sites; that of Canoblas (Orange) among the Western, and that of Yass among the South-Western. The Commissioner's report was ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be printed, on 30th October, and was shortly afterwards made available, with an interesting series of maps, for public information.

Note as to Bombala—Eden Claims.

While it is no part of “The ‘Case’ for Bathurst” to argue deprecatingly the claims of other places, it seems to us remarkable that the Royal Commissioner has laid such slight stress on the all-important point that to properly utilise the Bombala (Southern Monaro) site a deep-water port will be necessary. To provide proper port facilities at Eden would involve an enormous expenditure which he does not take into account. Therefore it is not surprising he fails to take into account the enormous cost of FORTIFYING and DEFENDING the port of the Federal Capital, if Bombala be chosen! In the case of Bathurst, the main defence has been provided by Nature.

On the most important point of the value of coal in National defence, let the Royal Commissioner speak (page 10 of Report):—

“In the case of the Bombala-Eden site, the only one which gives promise of a port always accessible to considerable tonnage, the carriage of coal by sea from Newcastle or any Southern port to Eden, and thence by rail to the Monaro Tableland, would make the relative cost of land and sea carriage of coal to the Capital a very important question.”

So very important, we make bold to say, as to cause genuine surprise that the fatal obstacle it imposes to the selection of the Bombala-Eden site was not seen by the Commissioner.

Still in this connection we quote from the annexures to the Commissioner's Report (page 30):—

“Sydney, 17th September, 1900.

“Dear Mr. Oliver,—

“In accordance with your request, we have reconsidered the matter of the Bombala site; and we are of opinion that if the Eden-Bombala railway were constructed, and deep-water port formed, the cost of building there would be about equal to the cost of building at either Millthorpe or Yass, viz., I.04, as compared with Bathurst and Goulburn, which, as before, were taken to represent Unity for the purpose of comparison.

“We are, &c.,

(Signed) “G ALLEN MANSFIELD, F.R.I.B.A.

“W. L. VERNON, F.R.I.B.A.

“JOHN BARLOW, F.R.I.B.A.

“GEO. KNIBBS.”

“If the . . . railway were constructed, and deep-water port formed”! That is to say, if Millions were spent for purposes, which as compared with Bathurst, are purely preliminary!! There is no occasion to build a railway

to Bathurst: one is built; and Sydney is the natural deep-water port for the West. There is no occasion to build another for the Federal Capital, if it be placed in the West. There would be, if it were placed in the South. Yet the Commissioner omits reference to the necessity of this enormous expenditure when he decides for Bombala-Eden!

Notes in Favour of Bathurst.

(From the Commissioner's Expert Witnesses.)

Cost of Building.

The following indicate the relative cost of the different sites, Bathurst being taken as unity:—

Bathurst	1.00.
Goulburn	1.00.
Millthorpe-Yass	1.04.
Orange	1.05.
Albury	1.05 (if supplied from Melbourne)
Albury	1.12 (if supplied from Sydney)
Wagga Wagga ...	1.10.
Bombala	1.15. (Could be reduced if Eden were provided as a port).

(Report of Messrs. Mansfield, Vernon, Barlow, and Knibbs).

Water Supply.

Sites which can be supplied by gravitation:

Buckley's Crossing.

Bombala.

Tumut.

Carcoar-Garland.

Bathurst.

Orange.

(Report of Mr. C. E. Blomfield, Resident Engineer, Department of Works).

Mr. Blomfield adds: "I have examined Campbell's River, . . . and find that a large and pure gravitation supply can be obtained for Bathurst."

Thus, both as regards Cost of Building Material and Water Supply, the Expert Evidence places Bathurst before Orange (Canoblas).

Bathurst the City of Beautiful Environment.

With many evidences in the architecture of her buildings that she is still progressing, still in a period of transition, Bathurst presents within her bounds and her environment fine models of architectural beauty and of the perfection of the gardener's art, of the just combination of elegant taste and utility in her public buildings, of foresight and proportion in her street planning. Than Machattie Park, where can a lovelier recreation reserve be found of its size? Than the District Hospital, a nobler building, site, and accommodation and convenience, being considered? Then the great houses and charming villas, the stately cathedrals, churches and colleges,—they manifest in themselves the attributes of refinement and a cultivated civilisation, and, in their situation, an admirable sense of the dignified and well-proportioned. The undulating downs on which the city is built, the sweeping curves of the hill-united horizons, the pellucidity of the atmosphere, the largeness of aspect in every direction, the umbrageousness that shelters mansion and cot alike, all combine to make Bathurst A City Beautiful, one of which its citizens and its neighbours are justly proud. The centre of large and numerous social and political activities, it is equally the converging point of great industrial and agricultural and pastoral interests. A city wisely planned, it has in process of gradual evolution grown carefully and been moulded carefully. Always expanding, it would seem indeed as if in its beginnings its Founder had contemplated some such Future for it, and as if the men of the later generations had thought after him and followed in his steps so as to make their city a fit shrine for any distinction—even for the supreme distinction of being **“The Treasure-house of the Nation's Heart.”**

Commercial Bathurst.

Any account of Bathurst that did not give some prominence to its commercial life would be incomplete. Nature, undoubtedly, has done much to make its situation pleasant and its surroundings desirable; but it is not too much to assert, that whatever the place is, in addition to what it is naturally, is the result of the enterprise and foresight, the push and pluck, of its business inhabitants. Men of sterling qualities, of grit and of grip, pinned their faith to “the settlement” in its earliest days, and laid the foundations of many of those houses whose names have become “household words” throughout the State. Consequently, no apology is offered for presenting a few illustrations—and only a few can be presented here—of some of the foremost of these. It would be easy to fill pages with ordinary advertisements, which would give, perhaps, a better idea of the diversified activities of the city; for there are but few industries that are not represented in it. But that is not the object of this publication: its object is, rather, to indicate generally what Bathurst is like—giving the intending visitor sufficient to whet his desire, and leaving him to discover for himself, upon arrival, how complete its business resources are.
