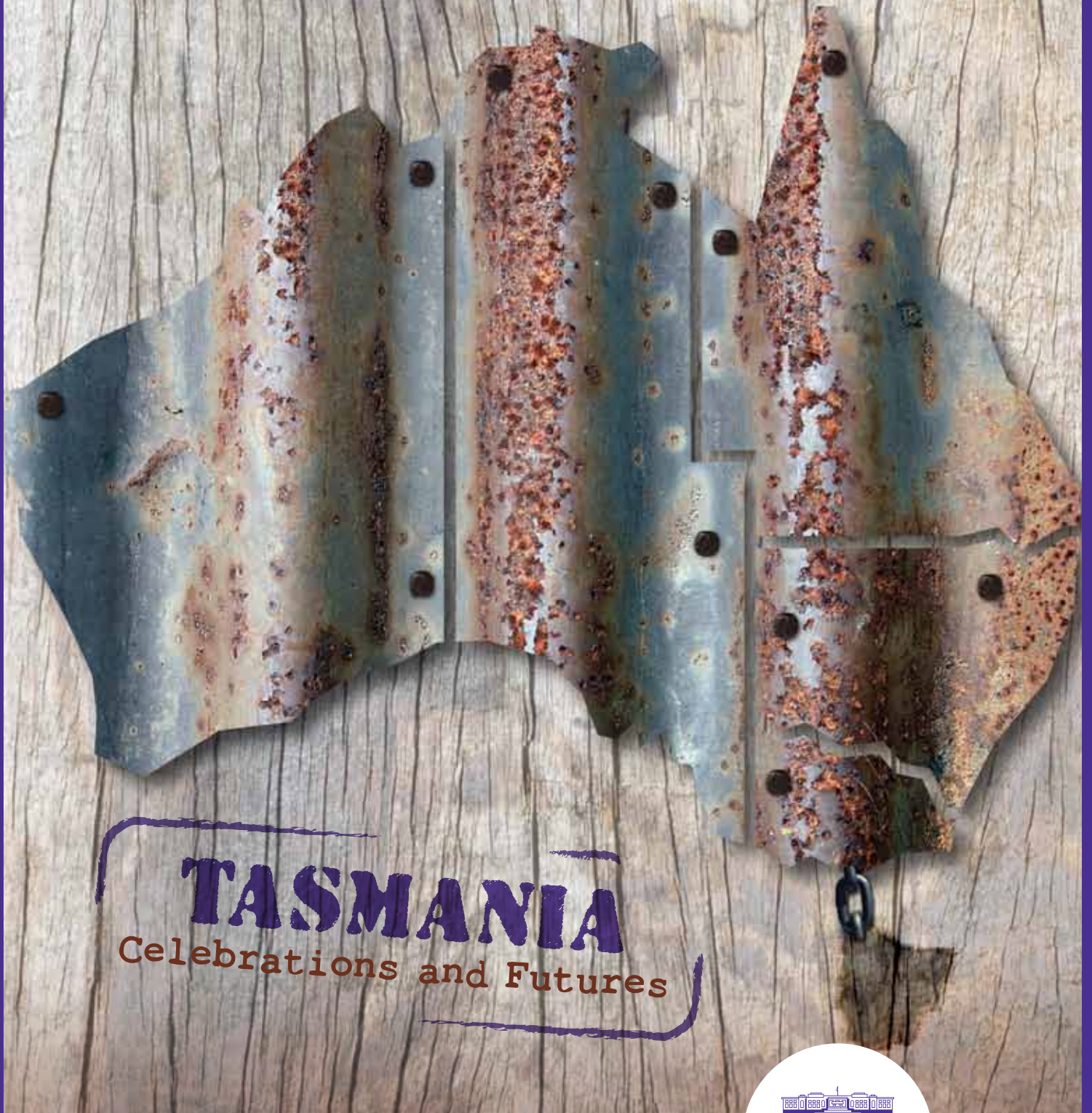


# GETTING IT TOGETHER

## From Colonies to Federation



**TASMANIA**  
Celebrations and Futures



MUSEUM  
OF AUSTRALIAN  
DEMOCRACY

OLD PARLIAMENT HOUSE

INVESTIGATIONS OF  
AUSTRALIA'S JOURNEY  
TO NATIONHOOD  
FOR THE MIDDLE  
YEARS CLASSROOM

**MOAD**  
**LEARNING**

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PO Box 177

Carlton South Vic 3053

Australia

Tel: (03) 9207 9600

Fax: (03) 9910 9800

Email: [info@curriculum.edu.au](mailto:info@curriculum.edu.au)

Website: [www.curriculum.edu.au](http://www.curriculum.edu.au)

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PO Box 7088

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Tel: (02) 6270 8222

Fax: (02) 6270 8111

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Edited by Katharine Sturak and Zoe Naughten

Designed by Deanna Vener



# Celebrations and Futures



New Year's Eve fireworks had a special significance on the last day of 1900 because the beginning of the new year also marked the birth of the Commonwealth of Australia. The six Australian colonies had agreed to federate, and on 1 January 1901 they became States in the new nation. That morning, the newspaper in Hobart reported on the people who had gathered at Tasmania's Parliament House to be part of the celebrations:

When they came Tasmania was a little isolated colony, when they left she was a living member of the Australian United Nation.

*The Mercury*, Hobart, 1 January 1901.

The official proclamation of the Commonwealth took place in Sydney. Tasmania's Premier and many other officials attended this event. However, festivities and ceremonies throughout Australia all highlighted the significance of nationhood – the strengthening of relationships with the other States, the democratic principles that had brought them together, as well as shared feelings of patriotism. Some people even wrote poems and songs to commemorate the journey to Federation and the significance of becoming a nation.

Celebrations also highlighted the part that Britain played in Tasmanian life. The Australian nation was part of the British Empire and this was a source of great pride. For many Tasmanians, the most exciting occasion in the first year of Federation was not Commonwealth Day, but a visit later in 1901 by the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York, who came to Australia to open the first Commonwealth Parliament in Melbourne.

Today, people of every State in the nation still celebrate Australia's democratic traditions. The celebrations encourage us to reflect on the achievements of the past, to consider what we want for the future of our State and the whole nation, and think about which symbols and events represent Australia's history and identity.

Tasmania has seen many changes and developments since 1901. What influence will they have on the way people of the State celebrate Federation today and into the future?

## Investigations

1. What do poems and songs tell us about the significance of becoming a nation?
2. How was Federation celebrated in Tasmania?
3. How and why were public buildings in Tasmania decorated for Federation?
4. How should Tasmanians remember and celebrate Federation today?

## INVESTIGATION 1

# What do poems and songs tell us about the significance of becoming a nation?

Federation wasn't seen as something to be celebrated just for a day or a year. Speeches and newspaper reports of the time make it clear that 1 January 1901 was seen as a milestone that Australians had worked hard to reach. It was also part of a journey that would continue into the future. When the Acting Premier of Tasmania, Bolton Stafford Bird, spoke to the people gathered in Hobart on Commonwealth Day, he reminded Tasmanians to:

*... add a cheer for themselves, remembering that they were now part of the Commonwealth of Australia, wishing it, in its future career, great prosperity. Tasmanians had now realised the position that the people and statesmen had been looking forward to for so many years, and now entered into a larger national life. What the future of the Commonwealth might be no one could tell.*

Many writers of the time were proud Australians who believed strongly in their country's 'claim to nationhood'. Some expressed their feelings about Federation in poems and songs, such as those you are about to read.

### YOU WILL NEED

#### Resource sheet 1

- poem: *Fulfilment* by J Brunton Stephens
- song: 'The Sons of Australia' by WH Dawson

## Your task

Explore the key messages, ideas, values and symbols represented in poems and songs commemorating Federation.

## Activities

1. As a class, read the extracts from the poem *Fulfilment* and the song 'The Sons of Australia'. Discuss or use a dictionary to find out meanings for any words you don't know.
2. In small groups, discuss the following questions and record your answers.
  - What might Dawson have been referring to when he wrote about 'one in race', 'one in speech', 'one in blood' and 'one in fortune'? Which ideas apply to Australia today? Which ideas no longer apply? Provide reasons for your thinking.
  - Underline words or phrases in the poem and song that are about national pride and being Australian. Provide evidence for your thinking.
  - Underline words or phrases in the poem and song that are about pride in a British ancestry and being part of the British Empire. Provide evidence for your thinking.
  - Which words or phrases tell you that the poem and song were written in the past?
  - How might the poem and song be different if they were written today?
3. Using 'think-pair-share', brainstorm examples of when you, your school, local community or nation have experienced challenges and then overcome them. What helped to overcome the challenges and achieve success? How has this had a positive effect on you, your school, local community or our nation?
4. Create a story, poem, speech, song or artwork to inform people about one of the challenges you listed.
  - Set the scene for the challenge.
  - Highlight the values and skills needed to overcome the challenge and achieve success.
  - Talk about the lessons that can be learned from this experience.Perform your writing or display your artwork to your classmates.

## INVESTIGATION 2

# How was Federation celebrated in Tasmania?

In Tasmania, official proceedings to welcome Federation on 1 January 1901 were small compared to those in Sydney and Melbourne. The Premier of Tasmania, Edward Braddon, had gone to Sydney to attend the official ceremonies. Tasmanians were also justifiably upset that Prime Minister Barton had not yet included a Tasmanian minister in his cabinet. After receiving complaints, he did eventually appoint Neil Elliot Lewis, and later, Philip Oakley Fysh.

Tasmanians finally demonstrated their full enthusiasm about being a new nation in the British Empire when the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York visited the island on their tour of the new Commonwealth in May 1901.

But, whether celebrations were large or small on Commonwealth Day, they all showed that the significance of Federation was recognised far and wide.

### YOU WILL NEED

#### Resource sheet 2

- extracts: newspaper

Your task

Discover where and how people living in Tasmania celebrated Federation.

## Activities

1. As a class, read the account of the official ceremony in Hobart to proclaim the new Commonwealth. Discuss or use a dictionary to find out meanings for any words you don't know.
2. Underline the words in the newspaper extract that express how people in Hobart felt about the official ceremonies on Commonwealth Day. Discuss the following questions.
  - Does the report indicate that the people were feeling negative or positive?
  - Why does the reporter say people were feeling that way?
  - When Acting Premier, Bird called the newly appointed Administrator, John Dodds 'one of ourselves', why did that make the small crowd of people cheer?
  - If you had been in Tasmania at that time, how would you have felt about Tasmania being left out of Barton's ministry? What actions could you have taken to change the situation?
3. Working in small groups, read the newspaper extracts about the ways people around Tasmania celebrated Federation. Make a list of the activities and events that took place in each town. Speculate on the reasons why some celebrations may have been more enjoyable and better attended than others. Compare and discuss with other groups.

## INVESTIGATION 3

# How and why were public buildings in Tasmania decorated for Federation?

Federation wasn't only celebrated through special events and ceremonies. People also created pieces of writing, objects and images to symbolise nationhood and their feelings about the colonies uniting. Throughout Australia, one of the main ways of marking the birth of the Commonwealth was the decoration of public buildings.

What kinds of decorations do you think Tasmanians would have chosen? What messages about Federation do you think they would have wanted to convey?

## YOU WILL NEED

Resource sheet 3

- photograph: Parliament House, Hobart
- extracts: newspaper

## Your task

**Investigate how public buildings in Tasmania were decorated for Federation.**

## Activities

**1.** Examine the photograph of the Tasmanian Parliament building and read the newspaper extract describing its decorations. Classify the decorations under headings such as words, places and symbols. Discuss the following questions as a class.

- What messages are the decorations conveying?
- What aspects of Australian identity were important enough to be celebrated at the time of Federation in Tasmania?

**2.** Read the newspaper extract describing the lack of decorations around Hobart. Discuss the following questions as a class.

- Why would it have been difficult for people to think of ways to decorate for Federation?
- What street decorations do you think would have been appropriate at the time? Brainstorm ideas and list them on a large sheet of paper.

**3.** Working in pairs, draw a plan for decorating a public building to celebrate the anniversary of Federation. Remember that you will need to sketch your ideas for all four sides of the building. Take care to include national symbols, State emblems and words.

**4.** Use a box to create a model of your decorated building for the anniversary of Federation.

**5.** Write a short caption for your model explaining the decorations you have used. Display your decorated buildings.

## INVESTIGATION 4

# How should Tasmanians remember and celebrate Federation today?

Federation was an important milestone in the history of Australia and Tasmania. Its significance has been commemorated in many ways over the years. Some landmarks include 'Federal' or 'Federation' in their name in honour of the forming of the Commonwealth of Australia. However, we do not have a national Federation monument or celebrate Federation with a special national day.

Using your knowledge and imagination, think of ways in which Tasmanians could commemorate Federation.

### Your task

Imagine how Federation could be celebrated in Tasmania.

### YOU WILL NEED

internet access  
library access

## Activities

**1.** Days of national importance commemorate people and events that are significant to our history and culture. As a class, brainstorm a list of State and national celebrations and discuss the following questions.

- What do they celebrate/commemorate?
- How are they celebrated?
- Are there any symbols, events or activities used on the day?

**2.** In small groups, use what you have learnt about Federation to discuss why it is important to Tasmania's historical and cultural heritage. Why is it worthy of being recognised and celebrated? Brainstorm, considering issues such as:

- what is special about Australia;
- what is special about Tasmania;
- how Australia has changed since Federation; and
- how Tasmania has changed since Federation.


**3.** Your group is in charge of organising a Federation celebration for a particular place in Tasmania. Answer the following questions.

- What are the most important aspects of Federation to celebrate and remember?
- What symbols, activities, music or events will you use for your celebrations? What is special about the place you have chosen?
- Who will you invite to the celebration? Why are you inviting them?
- How will the celebration be promoted?
- How would you like the celebrations to be remembered five years from now?

**4.** Present your plan to the rest of the class.

You can do this in a number of ways, for instance:

- illustrated program brochure inviting the public to the celebrations;
- report on how the celebrations will be organised and carried out; or
- digital presentation of your plan for the celebration.



## What are you thinking now?

Now that you have completed the investigations in Celebrations and Futures, use your knowledge to explore connections to your life today. Do the following activity.

The Federation movement grew out of a desire to build the best possible future for Australia.

This way of thinking did not begin or end with Federation. In various ways, every new generation of Australians continues to look ahead. What current issues will need to be addressed to build the best possible future for Australia in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

Brainstorm issues that are important to you. Think about:

- water and the environment
- national security, defence and peace
- people, cultures and communities
- caring for the disadvantaged
- health and education
- Australian identity and values
- the economy

Use the following questions to help you reflect upon the kind of Australia you would like to see in the future.

- What decisions have recently been made regarding the issues?
- How do you feel about the decisions that have been made about the issues?
- What positive decisions have been made about the issues? Why are they positive?
- What negative decisions have been made about the issues? Why are they negative?
- What could you, personally, do to help overcome negative decisions about the issues now or in the future?
- How can you summarise your ideas?
- What kind of future do you want for Australia, how might you be able to help make it a reality?

Present your ideas for 'Australia in the Future' as either:

- as a song or rap;
- as a poster or digital presentation; or
- as a play or news report;
- in some other way.

# RESOURCE SHEET 1

## **Fulfilment (extracts)**

***Australia Federation, 1st January, 1901***

***Dedicated, by special permission,  
to Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen***

by J Brunton Stephens

*We cried "How long!" We sighed "Not yet";*

*And still with faces downward set*

*"Prepare the way," said each to each,*

*And yet again, "Prepare," we said;*

*And toil re-born of resolute speech*

*Now triumph, faithful hands and steadfast will,*

*For, lo! whose pomp the bannered orient fills?*

*Whose feet are these upon the morning hills?*

*Ah, now we know the long delay*

*But served to assure a prouder day*

*For while we waited came the call*

*To prove and make our title good—*

*To face the fiery ordeal*

*That tries the claim to Nationhood—*

*And now, in pride of challenge, we unroll,*

*For all the world to read, the record scroll*

*O Lady in whose sovereign name*

*The crown word of Union came*

*That sheds upon thine honoured age*

*The glory of a rising light,*

*Across our record's earliest page,*

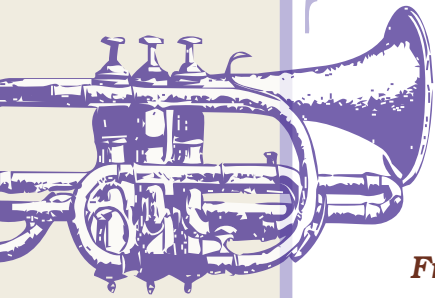
*Its earliest word, thy name we write.*

*Symbol, Embodiment and Guarantee*

*Of all that makes us and maintains us free—*

*Woman and Queen, God's grace abide with thee!*

*The Mercury, 1 January 1901.*



## The Sons of Australia

by WH Dawson

*Air—"The Gallants of England"*

*From the North to the South, from the east to the West,  
The cry has gone forth, from our strife let us rest!  
One in race, one in speech, from the shore to the shore,  
The barriers that part us shall part us no more!  
With Faith for our guide,  
We will not be denied,  
And the Sons of Australia stand fast side by side!  
United we stand, disunited we fall:  
Our safety and pride—"All for each, each for all!"  
We strike off the fetters unworthy the free,  
And our land shall be one from sea to sea!  
With Faith for our guide,  
We will not be denied,  
And the Sons of Australia stand fast side by side!  
We will tarry no more—we have tarried too long:  
We have dared to be weak—let us dare to be strong!  
Be the cost what it may, we will break with the past—  
One in blood, one in fortune—a Nation at last!  
With Faith for our guide,  
We will not be denied,  
And the Sons of Australia stand fast side by side!*

*Launceston Examiner, 25 May 1898.*

# RESOURCE SHEET 2

**Proclaiming the Commonwealth and the swearing in of Sir John Dodds as the Administrator of the Government for the newly federated State of Tasmania on the steps of the Supreme Court building, Hobart, 1 January 1901.**

It was an eventful occasion, being the first official act performed in connection with the new Commonwealth; but the crowd was not a large one, neither was it very demonstrative. The best that may be said of it is that it was a representative gathering of the citizens: Numbers passed by on the trams, in vehicles, and on foot, to enjoy themselves after the usual New Year's Day fashion, just before the ceremony commenced. Mr. Barton having ignored our strong claim to have a Tasmanian Minister included in his Cabinet, is being keenly felt by all classes, and this seemed to have completely damped the ardour of all who assembled ...

There was no animation, and no enthusiasm about the occasion to speak of until Sir John Dodds had taken the oath, and then the demonstration was mainly of a personal character—in appreciation of His Excellency himself. There was only one really exulting moment during the entire proceedings, and that was when Mr. Bird alluded to His Excellency the Administrator as “one of ourselves,” which elicited hearty ringing cheers, some in the crowd ... attempting to start “He’s a jolly good fellow”.

*The Mercury*, 2 January 1901.

## Celebrations in country Tasmania, 1 January 1901

### Launceston

After the demonstrations last night and early this morning the city was comparatively quiet to-day. The weather in the morning was dull and threatening, but that did not deter crowds from joining the various excursion steamers on the river. Showers of rain fell during the forenoon, and beyond the firing of a Royal salute of 21 guns at noon in further celebration of the inauguration of the Commonwealth of Australia, there was no outward demonstration. The principal fixtures in the North were the Caledonian sports and Longford races, and they were both well attended.

### Queenstown

The Commonwealth celebrations were started shortly after eight this evening, two guns manned by T. Goode's artillery men firing salutes of 21 guns each, the Rifle Company following with a feu-de-joie, and bands playing the national anthem. A procession then followed headed by the Queenstown Band and Rifle Company, and proved to be extremely large, volunteers and civilians coming in large numbers from Strahan and Zeehan. The streets and balconies are packed with thousands. The wonder is where did they come from. Numerous private residences and hotels are beautifully decorated and illuminated. The procession terminated at the post office, where Col.-Sergt Douglas, of the Rifle Company, addressed the crowd on the benefits accruing from the Commonwealth, and then called for three cheers for the Commonwealth of Australia, which were given most heartily.

### Gould's Country

The New Year was ushered in here by the usual bands of young men with music visiting from house to house. One settler, in distributing cake, said he was glad to meet them—First, because it was New Year; secondly, because it was the beginning of a new century, which none of them would see again; and thirdly because it was “our first birthday” as a nation. All available flags were flying. Everything quiet.

*The Mercury*, 2 January 1901.

# RESOURCE SHEET 3

## Decorations at Parliament House

It would be impossible to describe in a small space the magnificent display of decoration made at the Parliament House ... endless beauties of leaf, living fern, laurel wreath worked into arches, festoons, and all kinds of artistic designs ... The whole scene was splendid and did credit to those who were entrusted with the decorations ...

*The Mercury*, 1 January 1901.

## Parliament House, Hobart, 1901



Hobart Parliament House: collection of postcards, State Library of Tasmania, au-7-0016-125412775.

## Decorations around Hobart

Of decorations, during the day, there were few in the city, and in the suburbs next to none. In fact, many people, enthusiastic at heart, found it difficult to decide just how to decorate suitably ... So far there has been no authoritative decision as to what the Federal flag shall be, and the inclination to buy State emblems was naturally wanting.

*The Mercury*, 1 January 1901.

