The great question which they had to consider was, whether the time had not now arisen for the creation on this Australian continent of an Australian Government. In other words, to make himself as plain as possible, Australia now had a population of three and a half millions, and the American people numbered only between three and four millions when they formed the great commonwealth of the United States. The numbers were about the same, and surely what the Americans had done by war, the Australians could bring about in peace...

*Sir Henry Parkes at Tenterfield reported by the Sydney Morning Herald 25 October 1889*

Does Sir Henry Parkes forget that we already belong to the greatest and most beneficent Federation the world has ever seen - the Federation of the British Empire? Talk about the ‘birth of a nation’ was high-flown nonsense! ... What has all this talk about the United States to do with New South Wales... Queen Victoria is our Queen and Sovereign, and Ministers and people of England have been our most loving friends. Why, then, are we called upon to ignore them?

*Sir John Robertson, 1890*

**Questions**

1. In his Tenterfield speech, what did Parkes hope Australia could do?

2. In the new federation, what did Parkes believe should happen to the territory held by each colony?

3. How did Parkes see trade, customs and defence operating in a federated Australia?

4. What form of parliament did Parkes want for the new federal government?

5. What was Sir John Robertson’s main fear with the process of federation?
**The Corowa Conference, 1893**

**Modest Town that became a Federation Star**

Today, the townspeople of the wheat and wool centre of Corowa, reposing contentedly on the NSW bank of the mighty Murray, make bacon, from a piggery claimed to be the biggest in the southern hemisphere, and muesli bars, at an Uncle Toby's factory.

But a little over 100 years ago they helped make a nation.

It was to tiny Corowa, on July 31 1893, that delegates from NSW and Victoria converged to promote the cause of Federation among the six separate colonies then constituting Australia.

What happened over the next 48 hours, in a series of meetings at the local court house, the Oddfellows' Hall and the Globe Hotel, was to change the course of history and earn for Corowa its enduring reputation as “the birthplace of federation”.

Why Corowa? It was convenient - the delegates came by special Federation Trains, the New South Welshmen to the local station, the Victorians by their wider-gauge railway to Wahgunyah, on the opposite bank.

Though some of the delegates to the Corowa conference were moved by a vision of new nationhood, the motives of most local people were primarily hip-pocket.

Immigration across the border, especially for Chinese goldfield workers prevented from crossing into NSW, was a problem. But the big issue was Customs. Edmund Barton, a leading proponent of Federation, complained bitterly that when he crossed the bridge into Corowa, he had to pay sixpence duty on a bottle of wine bought in Rutherglen. Even someone from Corowa taking a home-made cake across to a friend in Wahgunyah had to pay duty.

It was dreadfully expensive and it was also degrading.

On a walking tour of Corowa you can revisit the sites that featured in the Corowa conference. Here the station where the NSW delegates disembarked. There the court house where the 72 delegates met. Here the Globe, where the men (women were admitted only as observers) retired for dinner. There the tin-roofed Oddfellows' Hall, where the delegates addressed a large and enthusiastic public meeting...

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**Fill in the missing words to summarise this newspaper article**

On 31 July ____________ delegates from ____________ and ____________ met at the town of ____________ to decide how to promote the cause of _____________. Over the next ____________ hours, this conference was to change the course of ____________ and earn for Corowa the title _____________. The site of Corowa was chosen for the ____________ as it was convenient and while some delegates were moved by visions of ____________, most local people were motivated by the _____________. Chinese ____________ was one concern but the big issue was ____________ which the locals found to be expensive and _____________. In Corowa today you can still see many of the ____________ associated with the conference such as the ____________ where the delegates met and the ____________ Hotel where they had their meals.