

system. (Opposition cheers.) Why, it is impossible, and for this reason, that under the British system the Legislature is practically governed by a committee of it who assume the responsibility for all legislation. I am bound to say, sir, that hereafter perhaps that definition will have to be varied by a foot-note to the effect, "Except during a short period before their dissolution when the Government in power in the year 1902 tried to avoid their responsibility." (Opposition cheers.) It is quite possible, Mr. Speaker, for the constitution to be changed so that the referendum would be part and portion of our system, but until that is done it is not any part or portion, and cannot become any part or portion of our British constitution. (Opposition cheers.) Then, my honorable friend's quotations, as I have said, were merely portions of the ideas that had been expressed by the authority he wished to quote.

THE REFERENDUM IN AUSTRALIA.

Then, I want to show you for a minute or two how deeply unfortunate the honorable gentleman has been with regard to the Australian question which he introduced, and I will say this, it is beyond my comprehension why he was so ill-advised as to introduce into this discussion the question of Australian precedent, because it directly antagonizes his position in two most important particulars. In the first place I will just now refer to a gentleman called Pomeroy, with whose existence I did think my honorable friend had a close acquaintance, but of which I am doubtful now. Let us see what Australia gives us. In the case of the Australian Commonwealth as was fully brought out in our debate on the Senate resolutions, what was proposed was that they intended to have, and do have now under the law, two Houses of the Legislature, both of which are elected by the people, and they provided that in case there should be a deadlock between the two Houses they should have what my honorable friend calls a referendum. Here is what is stated about it in an article in the Contemporary Review, consisting of extracts from the leading speeches of statesmen there. The honorable gentleman quoted Australia as an example of the referendum here, and which would justify the establishment of the referendum here. What is said here is:

The great fact about the Australian referendum is that it is not an attempt to constitute the people sovereign, but to substitute their assent for that of the upper House should the upper House continue to reject a bill passed by the lower House.

It distinctly states it is not a submission to the people of a law which the Legislature is not certain whether the people may wish, but it is because there is no other remedy at hand when the two Houses are in a deadlock, and then they say we will appeal to the people in order to get a remedy, because it is the only remedy to be had. Then,

It will be noticed how different the referendum as proposed in Australia is from the referendum in Switzerland. There the voting is chiefly on a bill which has passed both Houses. Only in one case does the law provide for a referendum in case of a dispute between the two Houses—when they disagree as to the necessity for a revision of the constitution. To sum up. The referendum is to be introduced into the Australian Parliamentary system to settle questions of dispute between the two Houses. The people are not to be supreme legislators, but arbiters.

FORMER CONSERVATIVE LEADERS MISREPRESENTED.

In this sense the law is not sent to the people to say whether they like it or not, but to say whether or not in their opinion the dispute should, between the two Houses of the representative bodies be decided in one way or the other, in other words they are arbiters or arbitrators, either of which terms will carry the meaning which is distinctly the legal one in the case of Australia. Now then the honorable gentlemen alleged, and I would like to have