

I have here a letter dated the 16th of March, 1927, from the Prime Minister of Australia which reads as follows:

PRIME MINISTER,
MELBOURNE, 16th March, 1927.

DEAR DR. KAISER:

With reference to your letter of the 8th January, I have very much pleasure in forwarding you herewith copy of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918-1925, and copy of the Electoral and Referendum Regulations, Statutory Rules 1926/201.

I am also enclosing a graph which shows in respect of each election and referendum held since the inception of the Commonwealth:

- (a) the number of electors enrolled;
- (b) the number of electors to whom ballot-papers were issued; and
- (c) the percentage of electors to whom ballot-papers were issued to electors enrolled.

I cannot recall press criticism of any consequence against the introduction of compulsory voting. At the 1925 Federal Elections the Government was returned to power with a very strong majority in the House of Representatives and it secured every vacant seat in the Senate. In the press after the Elections there was much comment as to whether compulsory voting had been responsible for the Government victory.

Some sections of the press took the view that the introduction of the compulsory voting did not affect the proportion of votes in favour of the Government, while other sections claimed that it had materially assisted the Government. The outstanding feature of the voting, however, was the large number of electors who recorded their vote, the percentage for the last Election being 91 per cent. Prior to the introduction of the compulsory voting in 1917, the percentage of federal voters was 78.30 and in 1922 it fell to 59.36.

It is rather difficult to gauge the effect of the compulsory voting at the last Federal Election, as at the time owing to the activities of the communistic element in Australia there were many people who had previously voted for the Labour Party but who did not do so on the last occasion.

I very much appreciate the remarks which you have so kindly made regarding my recent visit to Canada.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) P. M. BRUCE,

Dr. F. E. KAISER, M.P.,
House of Commons,
Canada.

I do not think it is necessary to say anything farther.

By the Chairman:

Q. In that letter, or from any other place, have you any statistics showing how many people were prosecuted for not voting?—A. No, I have no figures on the results.

By Mr. McPherson:

Q. Would it not depend a great deal on how the laws were made up?—A. I suppose so. Another section here deals with the matter of registration. A number of days were assigned for registration, and the people were told about it, and if they did not go and register, they were fined.