

put the hon. member right in this respect—that no committee of ten or twelve has any power to put the recall into effect until they have had presented to them a petition signed by sixty or seventy-five per cent of the electors of that riding. And if that percentage of the electors do not want the member to remain in Parliament I do not see why he should stay there. I can see the fear which some hon. gentlemen entertain. If I may use the expression without irreverence, they have had the fear of God put into their hearts by reason of the adoption of the recall platform. So far as I am concerned, I am perfectly willing to return home when seventy-five per cent of the electors in my riding say so. In conclusion, in order to put the hon. member right upon another point, let me say that I did not sign any recall—I was not asked to.

Mr. D. L. REDMAN (Calgary E.): I am not clear as to what the hon. gentleman (Mr. Halbert) meant by stating that if sixty to seventy-five per cent of the people of his constituency were opposed to him he would not wish to retain his seat. Let me say further that I do not believe that any such percentage of the electors in his constituency voted for that hon. gentleman when he was elected some few months ago.

Before proceeding further with a discussion of this matter, I think it is well that we should clearly recognize the difference between the real or radical recall and the signed resignation with which we are dealing to-day. The recall—which usually goes with the initiative and the referendum—is a matter of legislation, and may form the subject of an Act introduced by a ministry to deal with the election of members of Parliament. That policy is now in existence in many of the states of the American Union. In general terms it provides that sometimes twenty-five per cent, and sometimes fifty per cent of the voters in any constituency may petition for the holding of a new election, and when the requisite petition has been duly filed a new election is held. A majority vote will then elect either the sitting member or any candidate who runs against him. That is the way in which the real, or radical, recall operates. It has been in existence for many years in various states of the Union, and even to-day after years of experience opinion is greatly divided as to the benefit which has been derived from that legislation. Perusing a book of Professor Barnett, of the university of Oregon, written in 1915, dealing with the results of the

[Mr. Halbert.]

operation of the recall in that state, I find he cites three cases which may be briefly stated as follows: First, the case of a mayor who was asked to resign on the supposition that he had diverted public funds from their proper channel; but it was pointed out that the real reason was that he had wished to open certain streets which some property owners had closed, and they taking advantage of the recall had brought these charges against him and had him defeated. In the next case a charge of immorality was brought against the official, and it turned out that the real question at issue was a fight between two banks which had had control of the city for some time. The third case was where an official was accused of diverting public funds but it transpired that the real reason for the demand for his recall was that the anti-prohibition forces wished to get rid of him on account of his stringent enforcement of the prohibition law. Let me say that I am not making an argument against a scientific, radical recall; I am simply pointing out the nature of the first three cases which arose in the state referred to. If you refer to the book in question you will find that the same conditions prevailed in case after case—that is, the recall was practically never used to get rid of an improper official, but was improperly used by people who had special financial reasons for invoking its use, and that its use was accompanied by gross misrepresentations of the character and efficiency of the man who was holding the position and by the inflaming of public passion. It is extremely doubtful whether any good resulted from the use of the system. However, that sort of recall is at least an attempt to give the people greater control over their representatives, and it is necessary that the people should have some way of getting rid of improper officials. As to the value of the real recall we are not to-day asked to vote for that principle; we are dealing to-day with an entirely different thing—the signed resignation. The signed resignation is as far from the recall as the north pole is from the south. The recall is an attempt at radical and advanced legislation; in the signed resignation I can see nothing but an attempt to perfect a political machine. No other conclusion can be come to. It is not an attempt to give the people greater power over their representatives; it is an attempt to defeat the will of the people and to take away from them the representative which they have just elected. In making these remarks I am not speaking of any arrange-