

with the section of the Constitution referred to above, both Houses were dissolved by the Governor-General. Until 1927 the Parliament met at Melbourne: it now meets at Canberra. the first meeting at Parliament House, Canberra, being opened by H.R.H. the Duke of York, on 9th May, 1927. The first session of the seventeenth Parliament opened on 23rd September, 1943. Particulars regarding Commonwealth elections since 1929 are shown in the following table:—

## COMMONWEALTH ELECTIONS.

Date.	Electors Enrolled.			Electors who Voted.			Percentage of Electors who Voted.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
<b>THE SENATE.</b>									
12. 10. 1929	1,773,014	1,769,936	3,542,950	(a)	(a)	(a)	..	..	..
19. 12. 1931	1,827,079	1,822,875	3,649,954	1,741,163	1,727,140	3,468,303	95.30	94.75	95.02
15. 9. 1934	1,954,339	1,948,338	3,902,677	1,862,749	1,845,829	3,708,578	95.31	94.74	95.03
23. 10. 1937	2,043,212	2,036,826	4,080,038	1,963,979	1,957,358	3,921,337	96.12	96.10	96.11
21. 9. 1940	2,113,160	2,126,177	4,239,346	1,989,381	2,027,422	4,016,803	94.14	95.36	94.75
21. 8. 1943	2,164,648	2,301,989	4,466,637	2,132,225 <sup>b</sup>	2,169,430 <sup>b</sup>	4,301,655 <sup>b</sup>	98.50 <sup>b</sup>	94.24 <sup>b</sup>	96.31 <sup>b</sup>

(a) No election.

(b) Includes members of Forces not enrolled.

## THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

## (CONTESTED ELECTORATES.)

12. 10. 1929	1,557,525	1,560,505	3,118,030	1,479,100	1,478,447	2,957,547	94.96	94.74	94.85
19. 12. 1931	1,724,730	1,733,343	3,458,073	1,643,604	1,642,870	3,286,474	95.30	94.78	95.04
15. 9. 1934	1,930,418	1,934,021	3,864,439	1,843,949	1,833,774	3,677,723	95.52	94.82	95.17
23. 10. 1937	1,928,786	1,919,234	3,848,020	1,854,770	1,844,499	3,699,269	96.16	96.11	96.13
21. 9. 1940	2,087,003	2,109,443	4,196,446	1,966,744	2,012,265	3,979,009	94.24	95.39	94.82
21. 8. 1943	2,134,547	2,272,960	4,407,507	2,103,636 <sup>a</sup>	2,141,733 <sup>a</sup>	4,245,369 <sup>a</sup>	98.55 <sup>a</sup>	94.23 <sup>a</sup>	96.32 <sup>a</sup>

(a) Includes members of forces not enrolled.

The percentage of electors who exercised the franchise at each election rose from 53.04 for the Senate and 55.69 for the House of Representatives in 1901 to 77.69 and 78.30 respectively in 1917. The next election in 1919 showed a considerable falling off, and in 1922 the decrease was still more marked, the respective percentages for that year being 57.95 and 59.36, or very little more than those for 1901. Compulsory voting was introduced prior to the election in 1925, and an exceedingly heavy vote (over 91 per cent.) was cast in that year. This high percentage has been exceeded appreciably at subsequent elections, increasing in 1943 to 96.3 per cent. for both Houses.

For the first time two women were elected to the Commonwealth Parliament in 1943. One woman was elected to the Senate and the other to the House of Representatives.

4. Commonwealth Referenda.—(i) *General.* According to Section 128 of the Constitution, any proposed law for the alteration of the Constitution must, in addition to being passed by an absolute majority of each House of Parliament, be submitted to a referendum of the electors in each State, and must further be approved by a majority of the States and of the electors who voted before it can be presented for Royal Assent. So far eighteen proposals have been submitted to referenda and the consent of the electors has been received in three cases only, the first in relation to the election of Senators in 1906, and the other two in respect of State Debts—one in 1910 and the other in 1928. Details of the various referenda and the voting thereon are shown in the following paragraphs:—

(ii) *Senate Elections Referendum, 1906.* A referendum was held on the 12th December, 1906, at which the question of altering from January to July the date at which the term of service of a senator begins, and other details connected with the election of senators, were submitted for decision by the electors. The number who voted in favour of the amendment was 774,011 and of those not in favour 162,470; the amendment was therefore carried. Only 50.17 per cent. of the electors voted.

(iii) *Finance and State Debts Referendum.* Simultaneously with the general election of the 13th April, 1910, the electors were asked to decide regarding the alteration of the Constitution on two points, viz. :—(a) An alteration of the financial arrangements between the Commonwealth and the States; and (b) Giving the Commonwealth power to take over the debts of the States, whenever incurred. The former proposal was rejected, 645,514 electors having voted in favour, and 670,838 not in favour, while the latter proposal was accepted by 715,053 votes to 586,271 votes. Of the voters on the roll, 62.16 per cent. voted.

(iv) *Legislative Powers and Monopolies Referendum, 1911.* The object of the proposed law submitted to this referendum was to give the Commonwealth Parliament “legislative power” to deal with the following matters :—(a) Trade and Commerce, without any limitations, instead of “Trade and Commerce with other countries, and among the States” only; (b) The control and regulation of corporations of all kinds (except those formed not for the acquisition of gain). At present only “Foreign corporations and trading and financial corporations formed within the limits of the Commonwealth” come under the jurisdiction of the Federal Parliament; (c) Labour and employment, including wages and conditions of labour and the settlement of industrial disputes generally, including disputes in relation to employment on State railways; and (d) Combinations and monopolies in relation to the production, manufacture, or supply of goods or services.

The referendum was held on the 26th April, 1911, and the number of votes cast in favour of the proposed law was 483,356, and against it 742,704, the majority against being 259,348. The percentage of electors who cast effective votes was 52.36, and the proposal was rejected in every State except Western Australia.

Under the second proposed law relating to “Monopolies,” it was proposed to insert in the Constitution the following sub-section :—“When each House of Parliament, in the same session, has by resolution declared that the industry or business of producing, manufacturing, or supplying goods, or of supplying any specified services, is the subject of any monopoly, the Parliament shall have power to make laws for carrying on the industry or business by or under the control of the Commonwealth, and acquiring for that purpose on just terms any property used in connexion with the industry or business.” The voting on this question was held simultaneously with that on the preceding proposal, and the proposed law was rejected, 488,668 voters casting their votes in favour, and 736,392 against, the majority against being 248,264. Of the electors on the roll, 52.34 per cent. voted effectively, and the only State which voted in favour of the law was Western Australia.

(v) *Legislative Powers and Monopolies Referendum, 1913.* On the 31st May, 1913, the same proposed alterations were again submitted to the people as five distinct laws, with an additional one whereby the conditions of employment and the settlement of disputes relating thereto in the several State railway services might be brought within the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth. All six proposed laws were rejected. The following table shows the numbers of votes cast for and against each proposed law :—

COMMONWEALTH REFERENDA, 1913.—RESULTS OF VOTING.

Nature of Proposal.	Votes in Favour.	Votes Not in Favour.
Trade and Commerce .. .. .	958,419	982,615
Corporations .. .. .	960,711	986,824
Industrial Matters .. .. .	961,601	987,611
Railway Disputes .. .. .	956,358	990,046
Trusts .. .. .	967,331	975,943
Nationalization of Monopolies .. .. .	917,165	941,947

The percentage of electors who voted was nearly 74, and the States of Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia were in favour of the proposals, while the other three States were not in favour.

(vi) *Legislative Powers and Nationalization of Monopolies Referendum, 1919.* On the 19th December, 1919, proposals were submitted to a referendum of the electors for the alteration of the Constitution in relation to the extension of the legislative powers of the Commonwealth in regard to industrial disputes and to the nationalization of monopolies. In each case the majority of voters was not in favour of the proposed alteration. For the increase of legislative powers, 911,357 votes were cast in favour, and 924,160 against, and for the nationalization of monopolies, the number of votes in favour was 813,880, and not in favour 859,451; therefore both proposals were rejected, the former by 12,803 votes and the latter by 45,571 votes. The percentage of electors who voted on the former question was 64.41 and on the latter 58.72, although ballot-papers were issued to 71.33 of the voters enrolled. The States voting in favour of both proposals were Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia.

(vii) *Industry and Commerce and Essential Services Referendum, 1926.* On 4th September, 1926, a referendum was held in relation to proposed laws entitled respectively "Industry and Commerce" and "Essential Services". The result of the voting was: Industry and Commerce, votes in favour, 1,247,088; votes not in favour, 1,619,655. Essential Services, votes in favour, 1,195,502; votes not in favour, 1,597,793. Both proposed laws were therefore rejected.

(viii) *States Debts Referendum, 1928.* A referendum was taken on 17th November, 1928, in respect of a proposed law entitled "State Debts 1928" and a majority of votes was cast in each State in favour of the proposal, the voting for the Commonwealth being as follows: in favour, 2,237,391; not in favour, 773,852.

(ix) *Aviation and Marketing Referendum, 1937.* On 6th March, 1937, proposals were submitted to the electors for the alteration of the Constitution in relation to "Aviation" and "Marketing". The result of the voting on "Aviation" was, votes in favour 1,924,946; votes not in favour 1,669,062. The proposal was negatived as two States, Victoria and Queensland, only were in favour of it.

The votes on "Marketing" were: in favour 1,259,808; not in favour 2,214,338. All States were opposed to alteration.

5. *Convention of Representatives of Commonwealth and State Parliaments to consider the reference of powers by the States to the Parliament of the Commonwealth.—*

(i) *General.* The Convention met at Canberra from 24th November to 2nd December, 1942, and adopted a resolution that adequate powers to make laws in relation to post-war reconstruction should be referred by the States to the Parliament of the Commonwealth for a period ending at the expiration of five years after the war, and finally approved of the following draft bill:—

A Bill for an Act to refer certain matters to the Parliament of the Commonwealth until the expiration of five years after Australia ceases to be engaged in hostilities in the present war.

#### PREAMBLE.

Whereas it is enacted by the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia that the Parliament of the Commonwealth shall subject to the Constitution have power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to matters referred to the Parliament of the Commonwealth by the Parliament or Parliaments of any State or States, but so that the law shall extend only to States by whose Parliaments the matter is referred, or which afterwards adopt the law:

And whereas at a Convention of representatives of the Commonwealth Government and of His Majesty's Opposition in the Parliament of the Commonwealth, and the Premiers and Leaders of the Opposition in the several States, which was convened to meet at Canberra on the twenty-fourth day of November, One thousand nine hundred and forty-two, it was unanimously resolved that adequate powers to make laws in relation to post-war reconstruction should be referred to the Parliament of the Commonwealth by the Parliaments of the States: