

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 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 nineteen 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 were given in previous issues of the Official Year Book (see No. 18, p. 87, No. 31, p. 67 and No. 35, pp. 60 and 961).

(ii) *Post-war Reconstruction and Democratic Rights Referendum, 1944.* A Convention of representatives of Commonwealth and States Parliaments to consider the reference of powers by the States to the Commonwealth 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 Commonwealth for a period ending at the expiration of five years after the war, and finally approved of a draft bill (see page 62 of the Official Year Book No. 35 for full text) which was passed in the agreed form in only two States viz. :—New South Wales and Queensland. The Victorian Parliament passed the bill in practically the agreed form but attached a condition to it suspending its operation until all the other States had passed identical measures. The Parliaments of South Australia and Western Australia passed the bill but vital amendments were made to the agreed list of powers. In Tasmania, despite repeated requests by the Government, the Legislative Council refused to pass the bill.

Following this failure to obtain the approval of all State Parliaments to the draft Bill agreed to at the Canberra Convention the Commonwealth Government decided to submit the question of transfer of powers to a Referendum in accordance with section 128 of the Commonwealth Constitution (see *supra*, p. 25) and the bill for this purpose, passed by an absolute majority of the members of both Houses of Parliament, was in substance similar to that agreed to at the Convention but contained also certain declarations regarding freedom of speech and expression and freedom of religion. It also contained a provision requiring notice of regulations of a legislative character made under the proposed powers being given to each senator and each member of the House of Representatives. The bill—the full text of which may be found on pages 64 to 66 of Official Year Book No. 35—was submitted to the people at a Referendum on 19th August, 1944, and only two States—South Australia and Western Australia—were in favour of the proposed alteration. The voting in each State was as follows :—

State.	Yes.	No.	Informal.	Total.	Percentage of Formal Votes.	
					Yes.	No.
New South Wales ..	759,211	911,680	23,228	1,694,119	45.44	54.56
Victoria	597,848	614,487	15,236	1,227,571	49.31	50.69
Queensland	216,262	375,862	7,444	599,568	36.52	63.48
South Australia ..	196,294	191,317	4,832	392,443	50.64	49.36
Western Australia ..	140,399	128,303	3,637	272,339	52.25	47.75
Tasmania	53,386	83,769	2,256	139,411	38.92	61.08
Total	1,963,400	2,305,418	56,633	4,325,451	45.99	54.01