

INITIATIVE IS PUT THROUGH SENATE

Upper House Passes Measure to Revolutionize Government of State.

FINAL VOTE IS 32 TO 7

Members Admit Bill Is Against Their Beliefs, but If People Want It, "Let Them Have It."

(FROM A STAFF CORRESPONDENT.)

OLYMPIA, March 1.—By a vote of 32 to 7 the senate today practically completed the legislature's part of the program for revolutionizing the government of Washington from that of a representative government of delegated power to the legislature, to a government by the direct vote of the people. This afternoon the upper house passed the initiative and referendum bill, known as H. B. No. 153, after several hours of debate, in which all attempts to place safeguards around the measure failed to receive serious consideration.

Many of those who voted for the bill practically admitted during the debate that they did not believe in the principles set forth by the measure, but were voting for it under a feeling that if the people want it "let them have it."

The fight for the measure was under no particular leadership. It was a general free-for-all debate and nearly every member entered into the discussion of the various provisions of the bill. Among those who made speeches in its favor were Senators Bryan of Kitsap and Falconer of Snohomish. The fight against the bill was carried on by Senators Nichols of King and Rydstrom of Pierce.

How They Voted.

The vote on the final passage of the measure was:

Yeas—Allen (F. J.), Anderson, Arrasmith, Bassett, Bowen, Brown, Bryan, Chappell, Collins, Cox, Espy, Falconer, Fishback, Hall, Hammer, Hewitt, Hutchinson, Huxtable, Jackson, Jensen, Landon, Metcalf, Myers, Piper, Rosenhaupt, Smaefer, Stephens, Stevenson, Troy, Whalley, White, Mr. President—32.

Nays—Lavis, Eastham, Nichols, Roberts, Rydstrom, Ruch, Stewart—7.

Absent—Allen (P. L.), Smithson, Whitney.

The first fight on the bill was made over the amendment proposed by Senator Fishback that the petitions calling for the initiation of measures or the referring of bills be filed at the offices of the various county auditors where they must be signed in the presence of the auditor or his assistant.

Senator Fishback pointed out the revolutionary step which the proposed law makes in the existing government and urged the senate to safeguard it as much as possible. He said that if 10 per cent of the people of the state do not take enough interest in initiating legislation then there is no demand for the enactment of such a law. This amendment almost carried, the vote being 18 for and 12 against.

Before this vote was secured a call of the senate was demanded. Doors were locked and the senators kept in the chamber until the final vote was taken. The roll call showed that three were absent and they were excused.

Collins Gets Amendment.

The next amendment fought over was that proposed by Senator Espy, requiring that 10 per cent of the signatures needed to initiate legislation must be secured from two-thirds of the counties of the state. In making this amendment he called the attention of the rural legislators to the fact that in the city of Seattle the required number of signatures could be secured for special legislation at any time and the passage of this bill might thus become dangerous to the welfare of the small counties. His motion was lost.

Senator Collins of King tried to safeguard the rights of minority by requiring that a majority of all the votes cast at an election be necessary before a bill initiated by the people become a law. This was defeated, but he finally secured an amendment requiring that at least one-third of the voters vote on proposed legislation before it become a law by having secured a majority of the votes cast in its favor.

This amendment was passed over the protests of the majority, when Senator Collins told the senate that unless some reasonable safeguard was placed within the bill that it would lose one vote. Since a two-thirds vote was needed to carry the bill its friends, fearing that the loss of a few votes might result seriously, accepted the amendment.

Warned Against Mob Rule.

Senator Rydstrom moved to strike the entire section of the bill designating the manner in which legislation could be initiated and while speaking on this motion told the senate what he had observed of the workings of a similar law in Oregon. In reviewing the case he said:

"Pass this law and you put Washington back 10 years in a business way. Pass it and you make a dead loss to the state of millions of dollars and stunt its growth in that degree."

Senator Ralph Nichols, while speaking on the final passage of the measure, called attention of the senate to the history of representative government and compared it with the democracies of Athens and other early states. He warned them of the possibilities of mob rule, which this law makes possible and picturesquely told of the pendulum character of public opinion as shown in the life of the Savior, who just a few days before he was nailed to the cross by the mob on Calvary, was hailed with hosannas by that same rabble when it scattered palm before him as he entered Jerusalem. He pictured vividly the mob's applauds of one day and its scorn of the succeeding. The senators, however, went through with the measure without a hitch.