

Britain from some other country? I shall vote against the paragraph.

Paragraph agreed to.

Paragraph H, clauses 2, 3, and 4, and schedule, agreed to.

Paragraph E recommitted and verbally amended.

Resolution reported.

Standing Orders suspended; resolution adopted.

Ordered—

That Mr. Greene and Mr. Laird Smith do prepare and bring in a Bill to carry out the foregoing resolution.

Bill presented by Mr. GREENE, and read a first time.

Mr. GREENE (Richmond—Minister for Trade and Customs) [3.58]. — I move—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Bill incorporates the resolution of the Committee of Ways and Means, and contains in addition two or three machinery clauses necessary to give effect to it, but there is nothing in it new in principle.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time, and passed through its remaining stages without amendment or debate.

CONSTITUTION CONVENTION BILL.

SECOND READING.

Debate resumed from the 1st December (*vide* page 13479), on motion by Mr. HUGHES—

That this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. CHARLTON (Hunter) [4.2].—I shall deal with the measure as briefly as possible, in view of the fact that there is so much business we are desirous of getting through by the end of the week.

Mr. FLEMING.—And in view of the fact that the Bill is already as good as dead.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I did not like to say that. It is a pity to intervene with it now when we have so much important business to deal with. Its consideration could have been left with advantage to a later date. In moving the second reading of the Bill, the Prime Minister (Mr. Hughes) said that he had not heard any expression of approval of it, and that he was under the impression it had not a friend in the House outside

himself. It was a unique position for a Minister to find himself in. When a measure is introduced by a Minister, it has, usually, the support of honorable members sitting behind the Government, but the Prime Minister seems to think that this measure has no friends at all.

Several attempts have been made to secure greater powers for this Parliament by an amendment of the Constitution, but so far they have been unsuccessful. It is a very difficult matter to secure an amendment of the Constitution, because it is necessary not only to get a majority of the people of the Commonwealth in favour of any alteration to the Constitution, but also to get the approval of a majority of the States. However, the fact that we have not hitherto succeeded in getting the people to approve of any alteration to the Constitution in order to give the Federal Parliament greater powers is no reason why, at the present stage, we should depart from the constitutional method of submitting such questions to the people at a general election. I believe the people have become educated to the necessity for amending the Constitution.

Mr. ATKINSON.—It does not look like it.

Mr. CHARLTON.—I believe that the next appeal to the people will be successful.

Mr. STEWART.—That was said on the last occasion.

Mr. CHARLTON.—It will be successful if it is made in the right way. Honorable members in this House have been very much divided on this question, but let them decide definitely what powers it is necessary for this Parliament to have and then submit the matter to the people with determination and as the unanimous wish of the House. If they do so, I believe the effort will succeed. The time has arrived when we should come to a definite conclusion on these matters. The men in this Parliament are the best judges as to what is necessary. We have had experience of the legislation already passed, and of what we find it necessary to pass, and also of the effects of the limitations of the Constitution upon our activities. We are, therefore, in a position to advise the people as to the powers they should give us, and if we do that