

The undersigned respectfully submit the following minority report:

#### MINORITY REPORT.

It was with surprise that we read in the daily press what purported to be the report of the Democratic members of this committee. At the time of the publication of the report, the bill had not yet been received by the committee, and no discussion whatever had taken place as to its merits or demerits. We feel that we were entitled as members of the committee to the courtesy of the consideration of the bill, and that we should have been offered an opportunity to explain in committee what we consider serious objections to its passage before the report of the committee was given out for publication. The bill in its present form is clearly in violation of the spirit and intent of the Constitution and we believe also of the letter of that organic law of the State. It is admitted by the most fair minded men, that prior to 1835 our elections were a mockery and a fraud. It is also acknowledged with gratitude by all fair minded men that under the law passed by the Legislature of 1896, our elections have freely expressed the will of the people. In the published majority report of the committee much stress is laid upon a sentence in the Constitution, (Art. 1, sec. 1), that reads: "All elections shall be by ballot." In fact, the constitutionality of the law is rested upon this sentence. By this simple sentence, expressive of the general method of voting, the people, it is claimed, have placed themselves at the mercy of their servants, designated in the Declaration of Rights as "Trustees of the Public," (Art. 6, Dec. of. Rights.) Although so much importance is placed upon the sentence "All elections shall be by ballot," the majority report deals lightly with the repeated and positive declarations of the Constitution of the right of suffrage. Article 7 of the Bill of Rights provides: "That the right of the people to participate in the Legislature is the best security of liberty and the foundation of all free government; for this purpose elections ought to be free and frequent, and every male citizen having the qualifications prescribed by the Constitution ought to have the right of suffrage." Nothing could be more emphatic than this language. The reason for manhood suffrage is first