

FRIENDS RALLY TO SUPPORT OF INITIATIVE BILL

By WILLIAM H. CURRY

Citizens and organizations in various parts of the state who have for some months last past been planning for a just legislative reapportionment through an initiative bill now are pushing their efforts with greater determination in the face of the adverse ruling Thursday of the attorney-general's office.

They are being advised from all sides by competent constitutional lawyers and by the author of the initiative amendment himself, George F. Cotterill, that the opinion that only the Legislature can redistrict the state is unsound and not supported by fundamental law.

The opinion was asked a week ago by Senators Dan Landon of King and Jacob Miller of Chelan, after a reapportionment conference here in which, in addition to those solons, Senator Fred W. Hastings, Senator E. B. Palmer, Senator Charles G. Heifner, Mr. Cotterill, Phillip Tworoger, Harry Thomas, Henry W. Cramer, Harold Stewart and T. P. Bugge took part.

Bill almost Ready.

Since then Mr. Cotterill and Mr. Tworoger have been working on a draft of the proposed initiative bill. It is expected to be ready early

next week when the secretary of state will be asked for a title.

"The secretary of state will doubtless, under the attorney-general's ruling, refuse our request," said Senator Landon, "and then we will begin court action and carry it through to a final decision by the Supreme Court."

"The first power reserved by the people is the initiative," said former Senator Cotterill. "I cannot agree with the attorney-general that only the Legislature can redistrict the state. Had the Legislature made a pretense of doing its constitutional duty there possibly might be found some ground for such a ruling. The facts are that ten successive Legislatures have refused, neglected and failed to exercise the duty to reapportion the state in accordance with the mandate of the constitution, and the only resort left to the people is the initiative.

"In view of the record of the last twenty years, what hope have the people that the 1931 Legislature—constituted by an apportionment made in 1901, based on a federal census taken thirty years ago—will obey the constitution in this respect?

The measure would increase the House membership to ninety-nine.