

on the Treasury department, would doubtless take all these things under their consideration, and report proper safe-guards. In other States, however, whose Legislatures convene but once in two years, we hear of no frauds upon their Treasuries, and no difficulty in regulating properly their finances; yet it is contended, that for these purposes we must hold annual sessions. Is it possible, that we are so much inferior to them? It could not be—for surely the people of Maryland, are as able to govern themselves as any other people; and if others can regulate and properly conduct their fiscal officers under the biennial system and thus effect a considerable saving of the money of the people, we can do the same.

In regard to the economy of this matter, he would say something. He believed that the rights and liberties of all would be, at least, as well secured and protected by the present system, as by any other: while, at the same time, it would save to the tax payers of this State, some *thirty or forty thousand dollars annually*. No one would be less willing for the sake of saving money, to sacrifice the rights of the humblest citizen; but firmly believing, as he did, that the rights of all would be well defined and protected, he could not withhold his support from that system which would economize the public money.

Annual sessions of the Legislature were productive of one of the greatest curses that could befall a people—instability of the laws. That people are indeed afflicted, whose laws, like the quicksands of the ocean, are not to be relied on. Where the people are unable to tell what their legal rights are, how can the order and interest of society be preserved? Yet, under the annual system, all must admit, that the changes, by amendments and supplements, were so frequent, that even the wisest might be ignorant. Continue the present system, and there would be fewer changes and more stability, because more time would exist to ascertain the precise wants of the people, and if laws worked evil, their defects and the required remedy could be better ascertained before the law making power was again convened.

He could see no good reason to return to annual sessions. Whatever might be the opinion elsewhere, the people of the county he represented, were satisfied with the present system. Change it to annual sessions, and if it does not doom the new Constitution, we may, at least, have some fears of its rejection by the people.

Mr. THOMAS said he came here, believing that if any question was settled, it was the very question now under discussion; and the manifestation on this floor, proves how different is the attitude of the man who has been a legislator and the attitude of the people. The discussion has been all on one side. He had been led to anticipate directly the reverse, and he had gathered this opinion from the expression of the people in his section of the State; for he did not know, in the community from which he came, a single man who had supposed that we were about to disturb this question, which was regarded as the founda-

tion stone of this Convention; and he could not believe that those who were anxious to devise any plan by which annual sessions of the Legislature might be fastened on us for ever, as standing in any other position than that of enemies to the new Constitution. This question is looked at differently by the people and legislators. While, on the one side it is believed that the citadel is not safe, unless the sentinel is always on the tower; on the other, it was the sentiment throughout his part of the country, that there was too much legislation, and the people were all disposed to regard the proceedings of the Legislature as resembling the witches' cauldron in Macbeth:

“Double, double,
Toil and trouble,
Fire burn
And cauldron bubble.”

He did not stand here to censure the Legislature without cause. Laws were speedily repealed, because they were hastily enacted, and led to the multiplying of suits and other evils. He intended no charge against gentlemen who were members of the Legislature. He was aware that the mass of public men were unable, without great sacrifices, to leave their private and professional business, and that they were only induced to come to the Assembly from a disposition to benefit their fellow citizens. Scarcely had a law passed and gone into operation, when lawyers have just begun to settle down on the true construction of its provisions, before some philanthropist gets a supplementary law enacted, which has the effect of perplexing the lawyers and dividing public opinion. He believed the great evil we have to complain of is too much legislation, and on coming into this body to meet it, he found gentlemen clogging the question as to a remedy for the evil, with all kinds of matter the most irrelevant. He came first to the Legislature in 1822, and he would ask, whether from that period up to the time when the biennial system was established, it had not always occurred, that a budget of bills was brought forward at the close of every session. He had been a member of the Legislature three times, and he had always found this to be the case. This pressure of business was not the result of the biennial system, but was owing to the indisposition of members themselves, at the beginning of a session, to go to business. During the last four days of the session, more business has been done, than in a month at the commencement. This fact then can be no argument against biennial sessions. If gentlemen who think that the biennial system will not allow sufficient time for legislation, when they come to the proper section which fixes sixty days as the length of the session, should be so disposed, they may so amend it, as to make it ninety days. He would vote against such extension. But he did not wish this section to be put in peril by referring to questions which have nothing to do with it. He would leave them to be considered in their proper place.

He did see some difficulty growing out of the financial condition of the State, until now. The remedy proposed, that the Legislature shall as-