

public business, growing out of the necessary legislation, to put in proper motion the machine of government. He was disposed to admit the truth of the remark, yet he thought, that exigency amply provided for; first, in the fact that the sixth section of the bill removed all limitation as to the duration of the two first sessions of the legislature, after the ratification of the Constitution; and it was further provided, that the Governor should have the power to call extra sessions, if the public interest demanded it. Certainly it was wiser to trust to the capacity of these means to meet the emergency, to be produced by the accumulation of business for the first two or three years, under the new government, than to venture upon the extreme measure proposed by the amendment of conferring upon the legislature the power of altering the Constitution; and, indeed, it appeared to him, that the very fact urged by the gentleman from Queen Anne's, that the increase of business would not extend over two or three sessions, was an admission, that biennial sessions would thereafter amply meet the public interests.

If, then, the absence of all limitation upon the two first sessions, as to time, and the power of the Governor to call a special legislature, will more than probably meet the exigency for the period of two or three years, shall we engraft a principle upon the Constitution which recognizes legislative power over it, and that, too, for a purpose comparatively unimportant?

He had not intended to say a word upon the subject of annual or biennial sessions, considering that question closed by the decided vote of yesterday, but the remarks of gentlemen on that subject, he could not permit to pass in silence.

The honorable gentleman from Prince George's, (Mr. Tuck,) had produced the returns of the election held, by which biennial sessions of the legislature was adopted; and had argued from the meagre vote then polled, that the presumption was fair, that it was not a reliable exponent of the popular sentiment—the vote being some twenty thousand short. He had also analysed the vote, and shown that some of the western counties, which were now loudest in favor of biennial sessions, were then against it, including Baltimore county, which cast a majority of one hundred and thirty votes against the law. He would not stop to vindicate the silent votes, or twenty thousand absentees from the polls, from the inference drawn by the gentleman from Prince George's, that if they had voted, the result might have been against biennial session. It was equally fair to presume the reverse—it might have swelled the majority. Such inquiry was entirely speculative; but he would say, that he did not regard that vote as a reliable expression of public opinion, for another and a very different reason. The biennial session bill was, in the first place, a legislative amendment to the Constitution, and was objectionable to Conventional reformers as such.

In the second place, it was originated by the gentleman from Dorchester, (Mr. Phelps,) whose motive was well known. He had always been

recognized as an anti-reformer, and from an anti-reform county. It was well understood in the larger counties, that the then movement was intended to put off conventional reform, to defer our hopes and expectations of a Convention. In fact, it was known to be an anti-reform measure—hence, the city of Baltimore, and all the large counties, went against it. That was the reason why that vote—although a majority vote of five thousand—was not a reliable exponent of public sentiment. Now that we have obtained a Convention; and have no longer distrust of the movement, but, on the contrary, every reason to to recognize it as a salutary measure of reform and retrenchment, the sentiment of the people is in sympathy with it. For one, as a reformer, it was his theory, never to let go a jot or title of a point once gained, but to struggle on for further acquisition. His friend from Carroll, (Mr. Brown,) had asked the gentleman from Dorchester, (Mr. Phelps,) if he would vote for any Constitution that was formed by the Convention, thereby meaning to test his sincerity in offering the proposition for biennial sessions. That gentleman had answered the question for himself, with frankness. He would now ask his friend from Carroll, to look at the vote of Anne Arundel county, fifteen hundred majority against biennial sessions, and apply the same test to that delegation—all of whom have supported the amendment under consideration, and gone in a body against biennial sessions. It was a pregnant fact, that while every other county in the State, gave a comparatively short vote, Anne Arundel had given fifteen hundred majority against biennial sessions. He repeated, it was a pregnant fact, and he would make no comment upon it. Such was, nevertheless, the infirmity of human nature, that people would vote according to their interests, and if the power was given to the Legislature, to say whether that body should meet annual or biennially, a considerable portion of every session would be employed in the discussion of that question, and the influences—local influences—surrounding the body, would be strung to their utmost capacity; and past experience, and a very superficial knowledge of human nature, indicates very clearly, that annual sessions would soon become the fixed law. His friend from Carroll, had misconceived the meaning of the terms "frequent elections," as used in the bill of rights. The political doctrine meant to be affirmed by that sentiment, was inseparable from all free government. It was proclaimed by our forefathers, in view of the long duration of parliament, without a return of the delegated power to the people. The direct accountability of public servants, and frequent returns of the political power to the constituency, gives an opportunity for change in office, when the people require it. It does not follow that elections should be annual, if the accountability exists, and may be enforced by the public within reasonable periods, so as not to postpone the right to change officers to too great a distance from the appointing power.

He concluded by stating, that for the reasons he had assigned, he should vote against the