

vorite measure. Thus the Legislature may occupy months afterwards.

I think the true plan is to adopt the principle which the last Constitution adopted, and to enlarge the time if three days is not sufficient. The Congress of the United States are in the same fix. They have their rules, which are suspended at the termination of every session for such a purpose and such another purpose, until the suspension becomes the rule, and the refusal to extend becomes the exception; and the rule amounts to nothing. Three days is not sufficient. I would suggest, therefore, that the expedient course, in my humble judgment, would be to extend the limit to ten days, at the termination of the session, as suggested by the gentleman from Anne Arundel (Mr. Miller,) within which new business should not be introduced.

How long the session shall last I do not care, whether it be to the end of March, May, June or July. That is a matter for the Convention to decide. I should think that until the last of March would be sufficient to do all the business. I think if the Convention adopt the course of prohibiting the introduction of new matter within the last ten days of the session, although they will not perhaps prevent the mischief, they will lessen it as far as any plan which can be proposed.

Mr. PETER. I am very willing to accept the gentleman's suggestion that no new business shall be introduced within ten days before the close of the session of the Legislature; but by the amendment I think the object will be accomplished. I do not think that the Legislature would sit here with a view of expending the public money. At the same time I believe the Legislature should have full and ample time to deliberate upon all the matters before them. It was with that view that I was willing to extend the time to the 20th of May. I concluded that by limiting the introduction of new business to the 1st day of March, the sessions might be brought to a close at an earlier day than the 20th of May; and at the same time they would have ample opportunity to discuss and to deliberate upon all matters before the body introduced up to the 1st day of March. I think ample opportunity should be given to all legislative bodies to discuss all questions and matters arising before them. For this reason I have always been opposed to calling the previous question. Legislative bodies assemble not to be governed by the wisdom of each individual man contained within his own brain, but that they may interchange ideas and thus may arrive at correct conclusions. I give them ample time, from the 1st of March to the 20th of May, to discuss all matters calmly and deliberately, and arrive at such conclusions that they may have no opportunity afterwards to screen themselves by saying, these matters were hurried through our body without the op-

portunity of examining into their effect or bearing. Believing as I do that this is the correct principle that ample time should be given, and yet that some definite time should be fixed when their sittings should come to a close, I shall insist upon my amendment.

Mr. RIDGELY. I dissent entirely from the proposition and the amendment. I agree with my friend from Montgomery (Mr. Peter) in his declaration that time should be given to the Legislature to mature the public business. I believe that we have a precedent in the theory of the Congress of the United States which is adapted to the exigency of our State. I think we can adopt a system by which all limitation may be taken from the period of the session of the Legislature, provided you limit the compensation. The idea seems to be general that it is this per diem which is the cause calculated to lengthen the session. I believe that idea, for the most part, is well founded. If that influence be withdrawn, there can be no objection to giving the Legislature unrestrained limit as to time, the utmost opportunity for deliberation.

So far as regards the idea suggested that new business shall be limited to a certain period of the session, I think that is liable to a very serious objection; because it is possible that business of the utmost importance might arise before the Legislature which might be thrown over to the very last days of the session. There appears to be a controlling idea of fettering the Legislature. I cannot see why a body coming directly from the people at frequent intervals, immediately accountable to the people, should be distrusted, and there should be so many restraints thrown around them. I hold that they ought to have a liberal latitude of jurisdiction; and that the great convenience of the people, in the public business, requires that the Legislature should be frequently and easily approached, and that they should have the opportunity of approach to the people at all times.

I have prepared an amendment in accordance with these views, which I will read. It seems to me that it will better avoid the disadvantages of hasty legislation and promote the convenience of the people; and that it will impose such restraints upon the Legislature against too protracted sessions as would probably meet the exigency. I propose, when it shall be in order, to move to amend by striking out the whole of the section except the last sentence and to insert:

"The General Assembly shall sit so long as in its judgment the public interest may require; and each member therefor shall receive the annual compensation of \$400 and no more."

By that amendment I propose to leave the sessions of the Legislature unrestrained as to time, but limited as to expense. The views