

bers of the General Assembly were enabled to escape from the responsibility of injurious legislation.

The constitution of 1776 permitted the Senate to give only their assent or dissent to all money bills. This restriction was removed by the constitution of 1851.

In Maryland until 1841 divorces were granted by the legislature, and no court had power to grant them. By an Act of 1841, ch. 262, for the first time, jurisdiction over applications for divorce was conferred upon equity courts. But it was held that this did not divest the legislature of its power to grant divorces.²⁷ The constitution of 1851 gave the equity courts the exclusive power to grant divorces. This change was made on the ground that it consumed too much of the legislature's time, and because it is properly a judicial act. The legislature in 1849, it was said, granted twenty-one divorces, and that generally upon *ex-parte* testimony.²⁸

The constitution of 1851 prohibited the legislature from contracting debts, unless authorized by a law providing for the collection of an annual tax sufficient to pay the interest of the debt contracted, and to discharge the debt within fifteen years. The amount of debt contracted should never exceed one hundred thousand dollars. The credit of the State was not to be given in aid of any individual, association, or corporation. The General Assembly was prohibited from involving the State in the construction of works of internal improvement, or making appropriations to works of like character.²⁹

The office of attorney-general was abolished. Judge Chambers, of Kent county, one of the delegates to the convention of 1850, fourteen years later said that the reason for the abolition of this office was purely from personal considerations, having relation to an individual,

²⁷ See Wright's Case, 2 Md. 429.

²⁸ Debates, vol. i, p. 247.

²⁹ Const. 1851, art. iii, sec. 22.