

8/Introduction

stitution had to deal with such issues that were of concern to so many of the state's citizens.¹¹

Legislative apportionment, the topic that had for more than three decades kept the General Assembly from calling a constitutional convention, understandably received close attention by the delegates. Representatives from rural areas pleaded with their colleagues to adopt some mechanism to allow their constituencies a voice in the General Assembly, despite the inevitability of redistricting following Supreme Court decisions mandating implementation of the "one man, one vote" principle. The Constitutional Convention Commission had recommended reducing the overall size of the General Assembly to promote more efficient operation of that body, but one Eastern Shore delegate reminded his fellow delegates that they would "have to keep this House and Senate large in order for us to even have a squeaky voice."¹² The sentiment for streamlining government was too strong for proposals to enlarge the General Assembly to succeed, so the rural representatives then proposed allowing non-voting legislative agents for those former districts that would no longer warrant representation in the legislature. With one delegate from extreme Western Maryland arguing that he represented "20,000 people living on the Mississippi River Watershed, who are trying to remain part of the State of Maryland,"¹³ the move for non-voting legislative agents failed by just two votes.

The mid-1960s was a period of unprecedented social and political upheaval throughout the United States, and neither Maryland nor the delegates to the Constitutional Convention of 1967-1968 were immune from the effects. One delegate listed some of the alleged causes of this social turbulence as "population explosion, inferior schools, congestions, unemployment, racial hatred, the hippies and flower children, H. Rap Brown and glue sniffing,"¹⁴ a list that as much as anything in the *Debates* places the Constitutional Convention in historical perspective. The question of race, and how to ensure the protection of all the state's citizens, figured prominently in the convention debates. Though small in number, the black delegates strove valiantly to have a positive impact on the draft of the new constitution, and they produced some of the most eloquent oratory of the convention in promoting the cause of minorities and the oppressed. One black delegate reminded the convention that just the preceding summer civil disorders had occurred in more than eighty U.S. cities, including Baltimore and Cambridge, "promoting death, destruction, sorrow and confusion."¹⁵ Another delegate pointedly reminded his colleagues that the problem of racial inequality was far from solved, noting that advertisements for rooms for rent in the local newspaper in the state's capital city still specified "white" only.¹⁶ Should these examples not suffice to establish that the *Debates of the Constitutional Convention of 1967-1968* and the proposed constitution that resulted were both a product of the times, the statement of another delegate on the topic of federal enclaves should prove the point. Arguing that the new constitution should not impair the state's ability to cede land to the federal government, the delegate com-

¹¹ Consumer protection was dealt with in section 9.07, *Constitution of Maryland*, p. 44.

¹² Del. Frederick C. Malkus, Jr., *Debates*, p. 512.

¹³ Del. William W. Grant, *ibid.*, p. 507.

¹⁴ Del. Earl Koger, Sr., *ibid.*, p. 1219.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Del. John W. White, Jr., *ibid.*, p. 1348.