

in establishing annual sessions, (in preference to other terms which had been proposed,) was the principle of responsibility; for in the language of Jefferson, "where annual sessions ceased, tyranny began." That was the ground upon which yearly convocations of the legislature had been originally placed, and upon which they ought to rest now.

He denied that any evidence had been brought to show that such annual meetings were not necessary. As regarded the fact upon which the gentleman from Dorchester, (Mr. Phelps,) had dwelt, that many of the States had adopted the biennial principle, he, (Mr. S.,) thought the gentleman would find that they were for the most part young States to which speculators had flown—men whose interests would best be promoted by biennial sessions, or rather by no sessions at all. He hoped that the new Constitution would be left on the original ground.

Mr. SPENCER said, that there were some difficulties surrounding this question, but which might probably be overcome, so as to secure the vote of the Convention upon some acceptable proposition. He had voted at the polls against biennial sessions. He had voted against them, because, at the time, he considered them a violation of the fundamental principle upon which our government rested.

So long as the people were sovereign, he considered it right and proper that the meetings of the legislature should be annual, and any departure from that rule, would be a departure from the recognised rights of the people.

What was the inducement for biennial sessions? Every one knew it, and it was not necessary, therefore, for him to explain. The State had been led into a system of improvident legislation. He laid the responsibility of that system at no particular door. He spoke merely of the fact. The result was, that the people were about to be burthened with heavy taxation. Every possible devise was resorted to, for the purpose of alleviating the burthen, and among others, this measure of biennial sessions.

The question which presented itself to the consideration of the Convention was—did that necessity exist now? The people of the State of Maryland had as yet given no expression of opinion, to show that they were dissatisfied with biennial sessions.

The Convention was framing a Constitution, which the people might accept or reject, and if this provision was incorporated in the Constitution, the people themselves might adopt or reject it. There was undoubtedly, a large portion of the people in favor of biennial sessions; and it was a point which gentlemen must consider—whether, by adopting the principle of annual sessions, they might not drive men to vote against the Constitution who would otherwise have voted for it. This was the difficulty which remained to be overcome. On the other hand, the Convention had to determine whether it was necessary to incorporate a provision binding the people to biennial sessions.

To meet this difficulty, he intended to propose an amendment. He would vote in favor of the

proposition of the gentleman from Charles, (Mr. Merrick,) provided that the amendment of which, he, [Mr. S.,] now gave notice, should be adopted.

[This amendment is not on Wednesday's journal. It was offered the next day, and will be found among the proceedings. It gave the legislature the right to provide by law for biennial sessions.]

If his amendment was not adopted, Mr. S. said, he would experience great difficulty in departing from the system of legislation, as at present existing.

Mr. BROWN had not intended to take any part in this debate, but he thought that the gentleman from Dorchester had expressed himself strongly in reference to the course of the legislature. As he, [Mr. B.,] did not belong to the Senate, he could not say what took place there. The gentleman from Dorchester had a peculiar knack of turning the blame from himself upon others. He appeared to complain of the great number of acts of incorporation that passed last year. Now, the gentleman was on the committee on incorporations in the Senate, and I would be glad to know whether he reported unfavorably upon one single act of incorporation during the session, or voted against one in the Senate? If he did, it never came to his knowledge.

He, [Mr. B.,] was opposed to biennial sessions. He thought that possibly, if we were free from all embarrassments, there might be no need of annual sessions, but while we have an expenditure of \$1,200,000 a year, it was right that the legislature should meet annually. He became sick of biennial sessions during the last winter, when there were about eight hundred bills reported, and five hundred and sixty-one passed, besides nearly one hundred joint resolutions, he had never known such an amount of labor performed as was performed by the House of Delegates, last session, in the same length of time. But there he would stop.

By the provisions of the Constitution, any bills, with the exception of money bills, may originate in the Senate. But we were very little troubled by bills originating in that body. While we were laboring, the gentleman from Dorchester was sitting in this hall, amusing himself by talking and laughing with the ladies.

Near the close of the session, the House sat from nine o'clock in the morning until late at night, and there was a continual scramble to get bills through. He believed that the question of biennial sessions was passed in 1846, for the purpose of getting rid of the reform movement. He was in favor of frequent elections, and of a rigid responsibility of the departments to the people.

If the house of delegates could have had time at the last session, there would have been a re-organization of the treasury. The present system is too lax, and does not enforce a proper responsibility. And if this had not been the most fortunate State in the Union, and we had not had the most honest men in the world in the administration of that department, there might have been great frauds perpetrated. The bills concerning