

our public works of internal improvements occupied most of the time of the Legislature. But for these, the sessions might be terminated in six weeks. He had no objection to the amendment proposed by the gentleman from Queen Anne's, (Mr. Spencer.) He was not entirely satisfied that the State had yet got through her pecuniary difficulties. The failure of two or three crops would disable the farmers from paying the taxes, and in that case, we may find that the "dark clouds" spoken of by the gentleman from Dorchester, might still be hanging over us. He was opposed to all extravagant expenditures, and he was against some of the expenditures which had been incurred by this Convention.

Mr. WELLS rose to make a few remarks, and in the outset he would express his regret that the gentleman from Dorchester should have deemed it necessary to make any party allusions. He did not think that party considerations should at any time be connected with the subjects before this Convention. He was himself a party man, but he intended to vote on every proposition submitted here, on its own intrinsic merits, regardless of all party obligations. As he had been anticipated by the gentlemen who had preceded him on his side of the question, in most of the points of argument which had suggested themselves to his mind in reference to this subject, he would not attempt to repeat what had been argued with so much superior ability by those gentlemen, but would confine his remarks to a very few thoughts connected with one or two aspects of the case, which had not, he believed, been discussed by any one. Much stress, Mr. President, has been laid by the gentleman from Dorchester, on the fact that by biennial sessions some money would be annually saved to the Treasury. I will not stop to argue that this is a very narrow view of the subject, or to shew, that if it was right to be governed by such considerations here, that a mere saving of money is not the true principle that should direct the operations of an intelligent economist, who will always act with reference to the truth of experience—that a judicious expenditure of money is the true and only economy. I will not stop, sir, to shew, as I think I could shew, the injurious tendency to which such a doctrine would lead in all the pursuits of life, but I must protest against the application of such a rule as this to our proceedings. Does not the gentleman see, that the necessary result of his argument, if it can apply now, will apply to every article affecting every department of the Government, and that the rule by which he must measure the value of the Constitution which we may form is the rule of mere dollars and cents. Sir, the idea of consulting cheapness in the formation of our Constitution, I utterly repudiate, for there is nothing in our political existence of which I have a greater horror, than I have of a cheap Constitution. Is it possible, sir, that gentlemen, who have been placed in the elevated position of members of this Convention are to be governed by pecuniary considerations?—that they are to be influenced in the estimate which they shall place upon the value of the Constitution which they shall make, b considering its value

in money? He trusted not, and hoped, that our action would not be guided by such influences, and that we should rise to the dignity of the exalted position we occupied, not by estimating the value of our work by a standard of dollars and cents, but by the high privileges and the inestimable benefits which it was to confer upon us and upon our posterity whom it was to bind, and by the great security which it was to afford to the lives, the liberty, and the property of our citizens. That was the animating principle with him, and to the obtaining of which, all other considerations should yield. But, sir, the gentleman has told us that a majority of all the States of the Union had adopted the system of biennial sessions of the Legislature.

Mr. PHELPS remarked, that he had said fourteen States had adopted that system.

Well, sir, (continued Mr. W.) there is no great difference in the two statements. The gentleman has said, that because fourteen States of the Union had adopted the biennial system, that we ought to adopt it; but does that necessarily follow? Are there not provisions in the Constitutions of many of the States of the Union that it would be manifestly improper for us to adopt, because they would be entirely unsuited to our condition and in every way injurious to us? Ought not the gentleman then in selecting the examples of our sister States which he would hold up to us as worthy of our imitation, to shew us, in order to make them applicable, that there is a similarity between those States and ours in regard to their commercial and other interests—and in regard to the locality of capital and population? Sir, if he will turn to the Constitutions of States having; like ours, a large commercial emporium, and like ours a large concentrated capital and population, he will find that of those States, New York, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania have annual sessions of the Legislature. And why, sir? Because the relations which those large cities bear to the rest of the State by reason of a great concentration of capital and population, and their great trade and commercial influences affecting as they do every part of the State, render it indispensably necessary for the due preservation, *in equilibrio*, of those diversified interests that make up the sum of human pursuits in those States, that the "meetings of the Legislature should be frequent," as well as for "the redress of grievances and for amending, strengthening and preserving the laws." It has been said that the reason for resorting to biennial sessions when the change was made, was because it was at a time when the State was so deeply involved in pecuniary embarrassment as to cause her failure to meet her engagements, and that this condition of things made it an imperative duty on the part of all to adopt measures of retrenchment in order to wipe off the stain from her escutcheon. But what is our condition now? Our financial difficulties have been overcome, a large surplus is annually in the Treasury, and that reason, therefore, no longer continues to be applicable.

Another reason with me for desiring to go back to annual sessions, and I believe this view of the