

subject has not been presented by any of the gentleman who have spoken—is to be found in the new condition of things that must necessarily grow out of the formation of a new Constitution. All the great departments—the executive, the legislative and the judicial departments—are to be broken up, and new systems substituted in their places. The tenure of office connected with all of them is proposed to be changed, and the mode of appointment of many is to be very different from what it is now. Is it not obvious then, that as general principles can only be provided for in the new Constitution, the details of the new system must not only devolve on the legislature, but that the Legislature must have frequent sessions, in order to discharge that duty efficiently? For, in the working of all new systems, experience only can test their value and suggest the necessary requisites to accomplish the purposes designed. Absolute changes in those details, will, therefore, be found necessary to perfect some, partial alterations may answer for others, but all, all, will need the work of time in order to make them effectual in rendering “the greatest amount of good to the greatest number.”

The gentleman from Dorchester has argued that in the election, which is to be proposed, of the judges and clerks and registers, by the people, for long terms, no apprehension exists that the responsibility of these functionaries to the people, will be weakened by the length of service; and I understand him to offer this argument as an answer to the objection which has been made to the system of biennial sessions, that it will have the effect of lessening the responsibility of the representative to his constituent. But the force of this argument is not apparent to me. Few, I presume, would desire that the judges should be elected annually, since it is only by their election for long terms that their independence, and that purity of official conduct which results from independent action, can be secured. As to clerks and registers, their election for long periods will secure better incumbents and more efficient officers, because a proper knowledge of their duties requires a sort of apprenticeship; and if they were elected every year, you would never be able to get one who was worthy of the station. I conclude, then, that a return to annual sessions, will be rendered necessary, as well to make proper provision for those exigencies which will be created by the adoption of a new Constitution, as to secure the enjoyment by the people in their proper sense, of all their rights, liberties and privileges, the preservation of which constitutes the foundation of all republican governments; and I must remark, that it is very singular, that whilst so much has been said about the rights of the people and the paramount duty of all here to protect the rights that the very first attempt which has been made to guard them in their most material feature, by securing to the people the power of annual supervision over their representatives through the ballot-box, should be met by such determined opposition as I have every reason to believe will be found arrayed against it.

Mr. MORGAN replied to the remarks of the gentleman from Dorchester, on the subject of the

course pursued by the Legislature in reference to an extra session. As he was a member of the House of Delegates at the time, and had, perhaps, as great an agency in that movement, as any member of that body now upon this floor, he rose to disavow any purpose of connecting the movement with the question of biennial sessions. The proposition for an extra session was introduced either by himself or an honorable friend of his, then a member from Anne Arundel, (he did not recollect which,) under a sense of high public duty in view of the many important measures which necessarily would be passed over in consequence of the constitutional limits which brought the session to a close. The Legislature found itself within two days of a final adjournment with its tables loaded with bills unacted upon—amongst which was one for the re-organization of the treasury department, which had been urged upon successive Legislatures by the then Governor and his predecessors, and without which there was very little security for the public funds, except in the honesty of the treasurer and other bills, such as the organization of a Board of Public Works, in which the State had an interest of some sixteen millions of dollars, and which interest demanded from the Legislature efficient action. There also was the general assessment law, nearly all the sections of which had been considered and passed upon—the provisions of which, although it did not diminish the amount of revenue to be received by the State in the aggregate, relieved the burdensome taxation now imposed upon slave property by a reduction of upwards of one third of its assessed value—a property in which his constituents were largely interested; and their interest, in his opinion, demanded of him the vote he then gave—the effect of which, if that session had been called, would have been to reduce their taxes upon that species of property one-third. These bills were laying on the table, whilst a multitude of local laws were passed without reading—some members being afraid to vote against a measure of another, lest one of his own should be defeated. It was at this period, he repeated, he felt himself called upon by a high sense of public duty, to sustain the measure adverted to, without his, or any human being of that Legislature that he had heard of, connecting it in its operations either in the present or the future, with the question of biennial sessions; and he declared that he believed that such an idea never had place in the mind of any individual, unless perhaps the very sensitive and fertile imaginings of the gentleman from Dorchester might have induced, upon his part, such an opinion.

The gentleman from Dorchester had said that the members of that legislature, had by concert and protracted speeches delayed the public business, to bring biennial sessions into disrepute. Justice demanded that he should confirm what had been said by the gentleman from Carroll, (Mr. Brown,) as to the untiring industry of the House of Delegates—where from early in the morning, until late at night, the members assiduously devoted themselves to the discharge of their public duties.

The gentleman has been entirely misinformed