

of the session, and upon one motion, refer a shoulder turn over, for the consideration of the next General Assembly. This, sir, is common in all Legislative bodies, and need not now, for the first time, be brought in judgment against biennial sessions.

He was astonished to find himself standing alone in the advocacy of this proposition. Not a single friend had come forward to say one word to sustain him.

Mr. GWINN said that he was opposed to the system of biennial sessions. They were attended by a real inconvenience, which was separable from the argument founded on the right to frequent assemblies. The course of practice in this State, and our whole system of legislation brought annually before the House and Senate, a large mass of private business, which necessarily came in conflict with the public business of the body. All who had occupied a seat on the floor of the House of Delegates, know how impossible it is to escape the requirements of private and local legislation. Prohibitions in the Constitution might restrain the General Assembly from considering a large portion of such business. But it cannot close the ear of the Legislature, to the various demands which will, at all times, be made upon its attention. It had been said that much of this petty business would be transferred to the levy courts and county commissioners. There was good and evil both, in such a scheme, but the latter predominated. However, it would depend upon the class of powers transferred. It is not, in general, wise to place private rights at the disposal of a local tribunal. The risk of prejudice is increased, for the examiners are more likely to be partial.

The biennial system does not answer. He could speak for the last legislature, and especially for the delegation from Baltimore, of which he was one. All had been industrious and faithful to their duty, but they could not accomplish the necessary business of the city. More than one hundred city bills remained upon the Speaker's table, when the House of Delegates adjourned. Many were private, but some also were well considered, important bills, submitted to the notice of the Legislature, by able and accomplished jurists—but he could not, in any way, get them fairly before the House.

Perhaps every Legislature did waste time. But does it waste less every two years, than every year? If the accumulation of business always exists at the close of the sessions, whether they be annual, or not—does it follow that there ought to be a double accumulation? He could not see the force of such reasoning.

Mr. MERRICK rose to express his entire acquiescence in the amendment proposed by the gentleman from Queen Anne's, to come in a proper place. Should the annual sessions be found, on trial, not to work well, it would give the people an opportunity to return to the biennial system. But he was desirous to see the amendment inserted in its proper place.

Mr. SPENCER, (in his seat.) "At the end of the section."

He, (Mr. M.,) did not think that the same

accountability of executive officers could be enforced under the biennial system as the annual. The gentleman from Dorchester predicts that the people will not accept of this Constitution if the system be changed from biennial to annual sessions. Now, he hoped, that the Convention would be able to make such a Constitution as the people will approve. And he felt that the only way in which he could act so as to facilitate such a result, was to proceed according to the best of his judgment and under a conscientious sense of duty, in his endeavors to provide for the people a good government, and one which will win for itself the approbation of the wise and the good.

The gentleman from Carroll, (Mr. Brown,) had argued that the large amount of money which was annually expended on account of the public debt, was a reason in favor of annual sessions. That was true; but this debt, he trusted, would be liquidated in the course of a very few years; but still we must expect that very large sums will continue to pass through the hands of the treasurer annually, should our great works of internal improvement realize what is expected from them, and these large sums must be again disbursed, all of which will require the annual supervision of the people, acting through their agents, the General Assembly. He thought, therefore, that it would be wise to return to annual sessions.

Mr. HARBINE rose and said, it was very far from his disposition to take any part in this debate, but as only the gentleman from Dorchester, (Mr. Phelps,) had spoken in favor of biennial sessions, while several had been heard against them, he felt it his duty, as a friend of that system, to present his views. The precedents that had been cited, proved that biennial sessions were no longer an experiment. It was evident that these precedents had not been without their effect upon gentlemen on the other side of the question, from the efforts made by them to do away their force. He would now endeavor to reply to some of the arguments that had been used in favor of annual sessions and against the present system. The gentleman from Anne Arundel county, (Mr. Wells,) when speaking of States that had adopted biennial sessions, said that they were not circumstanced like us; that Maryland had great commercial and moneyed interests which demanded more legislation. But it only required a reference to the population, wealth and resources of some of these States, to prove that position incorrect. It was also said, that in Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania, where the great commercial cities of our country are located, their trade, navigation, and commerce required annual legislation, and that Baltimore having very extensive interests of the same character, we also must have annual sessions. But when, he would ask, under the present system had the interests of Baltimore suffered for want of additional laws? Missouri has the same system, and will any one say that her commercial emporium, St. Louis, has suffered from that cause? There, too, is the State of Louisiana. She adopted the biennial system in the year 1845. Has New Orleans none of these