

out their wishes thus expressed; and he, for one, must obey their voice.

He understood that it had been stated here yesterday, (when he was not present, for he had been called away by circumstances beyond his control,) that annual sessions were required, because it was necessary that the elections should be frequent—this being a fundamental principle of our government. To sustain this argument, the fifth clause of the bill of rights had been referred to, which declared, "that the right in the people to participate in the legislature, is the best security of liberty, and the foundation of all free government; for this purpose, elections ought to be free and frequent," &c.

Now, what was the meaning of this declaration? Did it mean that elections for the Legislature should be held annually? Surely, that was not the construction to be put upon it. Its import and true meaning evidently was that there should not be a long continuance of the delegated power of the people in the hands of the same Legislators; that there should be no series of sessions of the Legislature without new elections and a fresh infusion, into the Halls of Legislation, of the spirit and temper of the people themselves; it was to secure to this extent, at least, the participation of the people themselves in their legislation; and would not the people participate as freely and fully in their legislation, and have their feelings and wishes as fully reflected in a Legislature, meeting only once in two years (and that early after their election) as they would if that body assembled every year? Most certainly they would, and such was manifestly the only fair and liberal construction which could be given to the article which had been quoted from the Bill of Rights. It meant not to require that convocations of Legislatures should be so very frequent, but that accountability to the constituency should follow speedily upon the exercise of all delegated powers, and each Legislature when it assembled, should come free and fresh from the people, and reflect truly in the lower House, at least, their will and wishes.

Another reason which had been assigned for annual meetings of the Legislature, was that the state of the finances might require it. It was true that the State of Maryland, having been embarrassed from causes to which he need not now particularly allude, had found it necessary to raise from her citizens a large amount of revenue. That revenue went into the Treasury, and it was important that there should be a supervision over the proceedings of the accounting officers—it was proper that the finances should be sufficiently guarded. But what had been the action of the Legislature on this subject? Would the finances of the State be injured or endangered by reason of biennial sessions of the Legislature? The very amendment of the Constitution which had been proposed in 1845-'6, and passed in 1846-'7, required the Treasurer to make to the Governor of the State the very identical Report which he would have made to the Legislature if it were in session. Nor was this Report confined exclusively to the Governor. In the year 1847, the House of Delegates passed a

resolution requiring the Treasurer to have twelve hundred copies of this report printed—ten copies to be sent, for circulation, to each member of the Legislature. What was the character of that Report? The Treasurer showed the amounts of money received and the sources from which they were received; explaining what these sources were. The Report referred to each item, and the different tables accompanying the Report showed the persons from whom the amounts were received, and the amounts themselves.

He (Mr. B.) was in favor of imposing the same obligation under the new Constitution. He would even go further, and authorise the Legislature to appoint a committee to come to Annapolis and examine the accounts and vouchers of the report made by the Treasurer during the recess of the Legislature. It was not necessary that the Legislature should meet for the purpose of supervising the Treasurer's accounts. Gentlemen might be assured that if ever it should be the ill-fate of Maryland to have at the head of her financial department a man who was not honest, she would still be defrauded whatever guards she might throw around her Treasury. The finances could be as well guarded and protected by biennial meetings of the Legislature.

Were the liberties of the State to be endangered by biennial sessions? Truly had it been said, that "the world was governed too much." The history of the past—all experience taught us, that there was no danger to be apprehended under a republican government, by the want of being governed. If evil was to fall upon our institutions, it would come not from the few laws which might be passed, but from the many. He might well refer to our own statute book, to sustain this position. He did not know that any law stood upon it, which directly endangered the liberties of the people. But where was the man to be found, within the confines of Maryland, who was so learned in the law, that he could, without long and laborious examination, tell what the laws of the State were, upon every subject which they embraced? It seemed to him that there was a kind of ambition in every man, who came to the Legislature, to do something in the way of law-making. The brains of men were constantly upon the rack to discover what they could do—what more they could make—what changes they could effect upon the statute book—so that when they returned to their constituents, they might be able to answer the enquiry which met them, "what have you done?" by pointing to some act of legislation, the passage of which they had been mainly instrumental in securing. They were not satisfied with telling the people that they had discharged their duty generally—that they had prevented the passage of this or that law, the operation of which might be injurious. Their constituents would tell them that is not what we want. Tell us what you have done for us—what law or measure you have caused to be adopted. Every country had its peculiar mania; and this was the mania of the State of Maryland. This was a state of affairs which he desired to avoid. He desired that the laws should be free and few, and easily