

son assigned by certain gentlemen in his county, for advocating the Convention was, that it would be a means of getting rid of biennial sessions of the Legislature, and returning to annual sessions.

Mr. T. read from the election returns of 1846, to show the vote upon the biennial bill. Allegany county gave a majority against the bill of 73; Carroll 704; Baltimore county 133; Baltimore city 694—while the majority for it in Washington was 751, and in Frederick only 8; the Western Shore gave a majority against the bill of upwards of 1200 votes; the large majorities for the bill were on the Eastern Shore. The majorities in Prince Georges and Charles were 140 and 159—while the vote in Calvert and St. Mary's shows a majority against the bill of 354. It was a mistake, therefore, to assume that this biennial bill had passed by such large majorities as to leave no room to doubt what the vote of the people would be at this time. On the Eastern Shore it was passed as an anti-reform measure—a device to keep off this Convention. The design having been frustrated, it might be reasonable to say that even there, it was still an open question.

Mr. Brown said that a question had been put to him by the gentleman from Worcester; and the use which that gentleman had made of the answer, rendered it his, (Mr. B's.) duty, to make some reply. The gentleman from Worcester did not appear to him to understand the Constitution. The session of the Legislature is limited to the tenth of March, and the Governor has the power to call an extra session. The question was agitated in the Legislature and obtained only a few votes. It was said that the Governor would have no objection to call the Legislature together, as much business of importance was laid over, which was proper and necessary to carry on the operations of the Government. Such was the fact in relation to that matter. The particular part of the State from which these biennial sessions are urged, made him somewhat suspicious as to the object in view. The effort comes from the Eastern Shore. And he would ask those gentlemen if they intended to vote for the Constitution if these biennial sessions were provided for in it?

Mr. PHELPS said, if the gentleman asked him, he would say "yes."

Mr. Brown resumed. If the population basis had prevailed, the gentleman would not. Another project has been agitated in this Hall. Yesterday, he began, from what he had heard, to think that we were to have no sessions of the Legislature at all, but that it would be merely necessary to send a joint committee here annually to transact all the Legislative business. We say we have too much legislation, the people do not think so; he supposed therefore it was intended by way of compromise, to have none at all, except what could be done by a committee. Never, until now, had he heard it laid down as Democratic doctrine, that elections might be too frequent. All the Constitutions which have been framed from the time of Jefferson, contain the clause in favor of frequent elections. He re-

peated what he had before stated as to the industry of the last Legislature, and particularly of the Baltimore delegation; and concluded with stating that he intended to sustain the Democratic principle of frequent elections and representation by members.

Mr. DRICKSON said:

He did not desire to detain the Convention but a single minute, in reply to the remarks which had just fallen. He was always gratified to receive information from any source, though in this particular instance, it was certainly unnecessary for the distinguished gentleman from Carroll, to have given evidence of the possession of such profound Constitutional lore. Wonderful and mysterious as the erudition might seem, he had long been aware of the fact, that the present Constitution contained no provision giving to the legislature the right to call an extra session. Nor did he believe any other gentleman upon the floor, had for an instant, understood him as expressing any opinion or idea inconsistent with that fact.

He was discussing the amendment which had been presented by the gentleman from Queen Anne's, (Mr. Spencer,) proposing to give this power to the legislature, and was arguing as to what might have been the consequences, had a similar clause have been inserted in our present Constitution. After the information which had been as to the feeling of many of the body that last occupied these halls, it was not difficult to imagine that had there have been no organic or constitutional barrier—an extra session might this moment be holding its sittings and additional thousands flowing from the Treasury.

In regard to what he had said in reference to the confusion of our statutes produced mainly by too frequent legislation, he begged leave to adhere to his original opinion. The most eminent jurists of that body had sustained him by the expression of similar sentiments; and however trifling and unimportant that objection might seem to the powerful intellect of the gentleman over the way, he should not be turned aside from his course in seeking to eradicate the difficulty. He could not refrain from congratulating the country and the Convention, that genius had at length been found, before which, that mystery and obscurity of the laws, hitherto baffling so many, would vanish away; and it was possible it might be the evidence, that the age of perfection—the very millennium—was well-nigh upon us.

Mr. Brown said, he did not mean to say that the gentleman from Worcester, did not understand the Constitution, but only that he overlooked some of its provisions.

Mr. RIDGELY said he had but a few words to urge against the amendment of the gentleman from Queen Anne's, (Mr. Spencer.) He should confine his remarks to that subject, and not follow the discussion, which had wandered into a consideration of the merits of annual or biennial sessions; a question which he had supposed was determined by the vote of yesterday. Before, however, he proceeded, he would put a single question to the gentleman from Queen Anne's.