

er to the county commissioners to allow what extra compensation they please, to the county clerk, and he possesses a winning address, they cannot say what will be his allowance. It requires a man acquainted with the subject to regulate the fees, and these county commissioners are not learned on the subject, and thus they will be under all these influences and applications in fixing the allowances. The Legislature are strangers, and let them have the arrangement of this matter and not the county authorities. I am afraid the gentleman's proposition would have a very mischievous effect—that is my humble judgment. I will not vote for the proposition, coupled as it is, I would prefer that the Legislature should take the whole subject into their own hands.

Some gentlemen think that the proposition to give these officers \$2,500 a year is not economical enough. When you provide that the salary shall not exceed \$2,500, you do not make it imperative upon the Legislature to give that sum. They can put it at \$1,500 or \$500. This limitation ought not to influence votes one way or the other.

Some of these officers may have as subordinates their sons, nephews, or other personal relations, and it may obtain for them, under the influence of the kindest feelings, and best motives, a very large compensation, even above the amount of services they may have rendered. Therefore, in fixing these salaries, we should leave it to strangers, not to those who are in constant intercourse with the office every hour, and who have perhaps been elected with him, and have co-operated with him. I cannot vote for the proposition.

Mr. MERRICK. The gentleman and myself differ on this subject widely. It is obvious to the Convention that this power must be lodged somewhere. There is a difference in the amount of labor to be performed by the different officers in different parts of the State. In some counties large allowances should be made, and in others small allowances, for that particular service. You propose to give them all an equal amount of compensation. Then the power to judge of the amount of these allowances should be lodged somewhere. The question is, where will you lodge it? The gentleman from Frederick says, that it is not expedient to lodge this power with the local authorities, because they will have common sympathies, having been elected by the same people, and under the same sympathies, and therefore he says this power ought to be left to strangers, to the Legislature. What will be the practical effect of bringing this subject into the Legislature? Let gentlemen look at that. Do you get clear of this sympathy by referring the settlement of these allowances to the Legislature?

Does not every man know that it would be the voice of the delegates from the county which would control the Legislature in fixing the amount of compensation? And the sympathies of the delegates elected will be just as strong, just as necessarily connected with the functionary of

the county, as the sympathies of the local authorities. Will not the delegates to be elected depend as much upon his popularity and influence for support at their election, as the county commissioners? Will not the sympathies be just as strong with him, and stronger, for the reason that the delegate returns at short intervals to the people, and will need the influence of this officer oftener? The commissioners of the county serve for a longer term, and therefore have more independence from the influence of these men. Besides, they are a more numerous body than the delegates from a county; they are responsible to the people, and if they should exercise favoritism to a particular functionary, will it not rise up in judgment against them, before the people? They, too, are to be burdened with taxes. They will have to pay the allowances out of their own pockets, as well as the delegates to the Legislature. They, therefore, have a direct interest to keep the compensation down to a reasonable and proper sum.

There is another reason why these allowances should be made by the county commissioners.—It is their duty, as local authorities, to superintend and see to the manner in which the functions of these offices are performed. It is their duty to attend to the local business, and they have a peculiar knowledge of what is done, and how it is done, and they can judge much more accurately what amount of compensation is to be required than any other person whatsoever. What knowledge will the Legislature have of the amount of labor to be done in Charles county? None at all, except the delegates from that county; and in fixing these allowances the Legislature would have to be under the influence of these delegates, only two in number. Is it not better for the people of the whole State that the local authorities or county commissioners should judge of these questions, rather than the Legislature, who are total strangers to all the facts, except through the two delegates?

Again; the members of a Legislature coming from a county, very often do not themselves know precisely the mode, manner, and amount of business done in these offices. Some of them have nothing to do with these officers, and know not how the business is transacted. The county commissioners have to be on the spot frequently through the whole year, and it is their especial duty to look after the manner in which this duty is done, and what amount of duty is to be done. They will have to inquire into and determine, under the obligations of an oath, and their duty to the people, what is a proper allowance to be made for this extra amount of services. We must leave this to some tribunal. The question is, which is the best under all the circumstances, to decide upon the allowances to be made, and it is for the judgment of the House to determine whether the county commissioners are more to be relied upon than the Legislature, who being entire strangers, will know nothing of the facts in which they are to pronounce judgment.

Mr. JOHNSON. I rose to call a division of the