

it is very proper that this election should be in 1865, so as to have it in a different year from the State officers. We have other officers to be elected. State's attorneys, county surveyors, judges of orphans' courts, &c. We shall elect all these officers in 1865, and every second and fourth year thereafter. I prefer electing the county officers at a different time from the State officers.

Mr. PURNELL. The year 1865 was selected from the fact that the terms of these officers expire in November, 1865, and it was proper to have an election to supply their places at the time their terms of office expire. There will be other elections in the constitution for November, 1865.

Mr. SCHLEY. Have we yet provided for the election of any other officers in the year 1865?

Mr. PURNELL. I am not aware that we have; but the terms of the present incumbents generally will expire in 1865.

Mr. SCHLEY. I will merely remark that I know that those who were elected last fall will hold office, according to the terms of their election until November 1865; and I have no disposition at all to curtail them of any portion of the term for which they have been chosen. On the contrary I provide in that amendment for an extension of their term of office. The gentleman from Allegany (Mr. Hebb) thinks that it would be better to have these elections in different years. I do not perceive that any good purpose can be attained by such an adjustment. On the contrary, I can very well see that great expense will be incurred in holding annual elections, which will be avoided by the proposition which I have submitted. While we are canvassing for the officers of the general election, these county offices can be considered and provided for at the same time.

Mr. TODD. I hope the amendment submitted by the gentleman from Frederick (Mr. Schley) will prevail, for two reasons, which I think very important. First, the saving of expense to the State. Second, the prevention of the frequent occurrence of elections, which I think are highly demoralizing. I think all the interests of the community will be subserved by the adoption of that amendment. I am quite sure that the people of the section of the State which I in part represent, feel favorable to the adoption of a provision of this sort, and would deprecate the occurrence of an election every year.

Mr. PURNELL. I am not inclined to be fastidious about this matter; but it seems to me that it would be legislating incumbents out of office, who are good officers, without a sufficient reason. In the county of Worcester we elected in 1863 county commissioners, sheriff and wreckmaster for two years, and these offices will necessarily expire in November, 1865. If we adopt the amendment as

proposed, we turn those gentlemen out of office.

Mr. STIRLING. No, sir; we extend their term to 1866.

Mr. PURNELL. If that is the fact, I have no objections to it, and perhaps the parties would have no objection themselves. But if the effect were to curtail their term and legislate them out of office, perhaps they would object.

Mr. MILLER. I think it better that our county elections should be held at a different time from that at which our important State officers are elected. The gentleman from Caroline county (Mr. Todd) has said that elections are immoral.

Mr. TODD. I used the term "demoralizing."

Mr. MILLER. Demoralizing to the people. I was very much astonished to hear that assertion, especially as it has been declared in the bill of rights (Article 6) that "elections ought to be free and frequent," as one of the fundamental principles upon which free governments are founded—the assertion that elections are demoralizing to the people.

Mr. TODD. That is my opinion.

Mr. MILLER. The county local officers I think ought to be elected at a time when the people of the county are free from the excitement of party politics, which usually prevails at every general election. We shall probably get much better men into these positions. The expense of the election is but trifling, borne by the county in all cases. Besides that, it leaves our general and important elections free from that combination, that bargain and sale of the vote upon these local offices, which usually prevails in county elections. I have known the vote for governor, or for senator, or for member of the house of delegates, to be bargained away under the present system for a road supervisor or a constable, a justice of the peace, or a county commissioner. I desire to keep the local elections free from such influences as these. I think it is fortunate that it comes at such a time now, that holding their offices for two years, the election comes round to a different period from our biennial State election. I hope the amendment will not prevail. I know that in most of the States the local and the State elections are entirely distinct. And in some of the States where they are not so, one of the great evils attending their elections, in my judgment, is the fact that the general and local officers are elected on the same day and in the same year.

Mr. SCHLEY withdrew his amendment.

Mr. RIDGELY. I will now endeavor to reach my purpose in another form. I move to amend the section as follows:

In the eighth line, strike out the words "but such powers and duties shall be similar, and the tenure of office uniform throughout the State."