

vention did, for any extra session of the general assembly or prolongation of their first session, while we have made it obligatory upon them to pass certain laws to carry into effect provisions of the constitution. This section is designed to devolve the duty upon some persons selected by the governor to prepare drafts of all the laws we have made it obligatory upon the general assembly to pass, that they may be put in form ready for the general assembly to refer to their committees to act upon as soon as they come together.

Every gentleman knows that after the adoption of the last constitution, though it was made necessary for the legislature to pass certain laws at their first session, some of them were not passed until eight or ten years subsequent to the adoption of the constitution, and some of them have never been passed at all. This provides that certain men, qualified for the purpose, to be certified by the governor, shall in the first place prepare drafts of all such laws.

Since the adoption of the code, there have been a large number of laws passed, modifying the sections of the code. It is proposed further than that these commissioners shall then revise the code, and embody subsequent enactments in it; and shall do what the former commissioners of codification did not do, call the attention of the general assembly to such laws as have become inoperative and ceased to have effect, or need modification, to carry out the existing state of things, and to adopt the code to the existing state of things; that they shall thus prepare a new edition, a revision of the code, and present it to the general assembly as early as practicable. Of course it would not be practicable to do so at the first session of the general assembly, but they might do so at the second. I think the provision an important one; and I therefore offer that section.

Mr. RIDGELY. I would ask the gentleman from Baltimore city how he proposes that the commissioners shall be compensated.

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. I take it for granted that they will be compensated for such services as they render, by the general assembly.

Mr. MILLER. We have had some experience in this matter. I suppose the last codification cost the State of Maryland over fifty thousand dollars. Besides that, the amendment provides that inasmuch as the legislature will be so weak and incompetent to perform its duties, and will not have the patriotism to stay here beyond the time they are paid for, will not stay without pay to carry out the great work they will have to do under this constitution, therefore the State must go to the expense of providing a couple of gentlemen to aid them in their work. That is a new idea at least. The gentleman is mistaken in saying that there is any limit to the sessions of the legislature under the provisions of the legislative article.

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. I did not say there was.
Mr. MILLER. The gentleman said that this constitution does not provide any extension of the time.

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. I say so still.
Mr. MILLER. I say that the first legislature need not adjourn by the 10th of March. They may hold on as long as they please. This proposed constitution allows the members to sit here from January to January if they please; and if the legislature has not enough of the spirit of patriotism to stay and carry out the directions of this constitution, even if it goes beyond the eighty days for which they receive pay, it does not speak very well for the great objects which we suppose will be carried out by this constitution if it shall be adopted. If they are so important that we must call for aid and expend a large sum of money for some other gentleman to help the legislature do their work, I think they might remain in session a little longer.

Mr. SCHLEY. I ask a division of the question. So far as the first object, the preparation of drafts of bills for the general assembly is concerned, I deem it of very great importance.

Mr. CHAMBERS. It occurs to me that in anticipation, at the time at which the code is to be made up, the legislature is to pass various laws, having a very material influence upon the character of our legislation; yet, if this proposition is passed, just before the passage of these laws the acts of assembly are to be codified. I suggest therefore whether this is not rather a precipitate movement; whether the laws should not first be passed, and then the code be made, and the system of laws be passed applicable to the new state of things. I suggest that the code be delayed until the legislature pass the laws which this constitution requires.

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. I confess I do not appreciate the force of the objection urged by the gentleman from Kent (Mr. Chambers.) The amendment provides that two commissioners, who cannot be appointed earlier than the 1st of November, shall prepare a large number of important laws. The general assembly meet on the 1st of January. These laws are to be prepared as soon as practicable; and certainly these commissioners will have as much work in that line as they can do while the general assembly are in session the first time. That is the time when these important laws will be passed. They are then, as soon as practicable, to go on to revise the Code. Of course they will embody the laws just passed. It will be impossible of course to revise the laws at the first session of the general assembly. No one was crazy enough to dream of such a thing as that. If they prepare the laws for the general assembly to pass at its first session, it will be work enough.