

informally passed over, and it was read as follows :

"Section 19. No divorce shall be granted by the general assembly."

The pending question was upon the amendment submitted by Mr. STOCKBRIDGE, to amend by striking out the section and inserting the following :

"Section 19. The legislature shall not pass local or special laws in any of the following enumerated cases, viz :

"For the punishment of crimes and misdemeanors, regulating the practice of courts of justice, or authorizing or directing the trial of any case in any court ;

"For the assessment and collection of taxes for State or county purposes, or extending the time for the collection of taxes ;

"Providing for the support of public schools, the preservation of school funds, the location or the regulation of school houses.

"Granting divorces ;

"Changing the names of persons ;

"Conferring rights of citizenship upon minors or foreigners ;

"Relating to fees or salaries ;

"Relating to the interest on money ;

"Providing for regulating the election or compensation of State or county officers, or designating the places of voting or the boundaries of election districts ;

"Providing for the sale of real estate belonging to minors or other persons laboring under legal disabilities, by executors, administrators, guardians, or trustees ;

"Giving effect to informal or invalid deeds or wills ;

"Refunding money paid into the State treasury, or releasing persons from their debts or obligations to the State, unless recommended by the governor or officers of the treasury department ;

"Or establishing, locating or affecting the construction of roads."

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. This amendment will perhaps need a word or two of explanation. It is an effort to remedy one of the greatest evils in our State legislation as it has existed time out of mind, the evil of excessive local legislation ; action by the general assembly upon matters which can only be properly determined by general laws or by the local powers of the several counties. There are various matters which it has been customary to bring here, which cannot, in the nature of things be understood by the general assembly to which they are submitted. There are other things which if they do not affect the direct pecuniary interests of men, are at least in the nature and form of a litigated case, contested matters which are brought here, and decided in many instances without any sufficient notice to the persons interested, passed as purely local matters, referred to the delegation from the county, which sometimes has really no knowledge whatever with reference

to the matter submitted to them, a matter which cannot be properly acted upon here.

The purpose of this amendment is to extend the provision contained in the section as reported, to both these classes of cases. This provision has been found necessary in other States besides our own. I am sure that many gentlemen here, who have been members of the legislature in years past, have perceived the necessity for it here. I find a provision somewhat similar in the constitutions of several of the States. Perhaps the most full and ample is that in the constitution of Indiana, on page 352 of the book of constitutions. This amendment covers a considerable portion of what is covered there ; but is adapted more fully to what, from careful examination I have found to be the practical difficulty in our own State ; to the points which I have thought here most needed to be acted upon. There is not, I believe, one of these which cannot best be decided either by local boards or by the courts under laws to be framed for that purpose.

Mr. CHAMBERS (interposing). How would you change the names of persons ?

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. It is the easiest thing in the world to give the courts power and jurisdiction in the matter of changing names. They can be changed just as well by a decree of the court as by an act of the General Assembly. The proceedings of the courts are published, and notice can be given to all concerned. This is done, as I suppose the gentleman from Kent is aware, in several of the States already ; and it is found to answer the purpose much better. I see no difficulty whatever in that.

The burden thus taken from the Legislature is a very great and important consideration. Three-fourths of the time of the Legislature is now taken up with these petty things. Men have come here and asked action by the Legislature to save themselves the expense of a single dollar ; taking up hours of time and costing the State hundreds of dollars—considering the matter in committees of both houses, and reading the bills on three several days in each house—perfectly regardless of the expense to the State, and yet the Legislature has acted upon it. It is made a sort of political capital, indeed, by the delegations from certain counties, to be able to show on the record how much local business they have succeeded in getting through the Legislature, and members are sometimes extremely ingenious in devising business in order to show what they have done to accommodate persons of their own counties.

There is one omission which I desire to supply to the ninth provision, with regard to the election of State or county officers, and designating the places of voting. I wish to add "or the boundaries of election districts," that the task of designating those boundaries and fixing the places of voting may not de-