

constitution to the people, that it is now all the more important that you support the proposition that the people by petition should have the right to call together a constitutional convention.

I submit that the General Assembly in its self-interest, as in the past apparently, may not want to call a constitutional convention. Why then should not the governor have the right to do so? By the same token, why should the governor have the veto power to reject the calling of a constitutional convention if we otherwise state the General Assembly may call one by law?

THE CHAIRMAN: You have three minutes including time for questions, Delegate Needle.

DELEGATE NEEDLE: As Delegate Boyer has pointed out, GP-8 varies from the commission draft in that it increases the time, the duration in which the question shall be placed on the ballot from twenty to twenty-five years. I would prefer to see that duration even shortened. Maryland is now one of the few states that has such a long period of time but I would like at least to return it to the twenty-year provision as recommended by the Constitutional Convention Commission.

It may be desirable to impose an outside date at which a constitutional convention must convene if none of the provisions provided for the calling of one prior to that are utilized. Such a date would necessarily be arbitrary but I submit fifty years is reasonable under the circumstances.

I also suggest that it is advisable to convene a convention two years after call by whatever means in order to give a commission an adequate chance to do its work. Our commission did a marvelous job. I do not think anybody would disagree with that. But it was short on time, having two years in which to do it.

I will direct more detailed comments to each amendment as it is voted on.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions of the sponsor of the amendments? The Chair hears none. If you will return to your chair, we will take up consideration of each amendment.

The first amendment to be considered will be Amendment B. It will be Amendment No. 1. The Clerk will read the amendment.

READING CLERK: Amendment No. 1 to Committee Recommendation GP-8, by Delegates Needle, Hardwicke and Sollins:

On page 1 in line 5 after the word "Assembly" add the following words: "or the governor".

THE CHAIRMAN: The amendment having been submitted by Delegate Needle and seconded by Delegates Hardwicke and Sollins, the Chair recognizes Delegate Needle.

DELEGATE NEEDLE: Mr. Chairman, as I just mentioned, I think there is good reason for permitting either policy-making branch of our government to call a constitutional convention. Apparently the General Provisions Committee has recognized this insofar as the General Assembly is concerned. I can see reasons why the General Assembly might not desire to call a constitutional convention and therefore I feel that the governor should likewise have the right to call a constitutional convention when he thinks one might be advisable or necessary.

Note that the right to call a constitutional convention would not be delegable to a lieutenant governor as this is specifically prescribed to the governor in this constitution.

The recommendations accepted in the Executive Committee's report would not permit this to be one of the delegable responsibilities to the lieutenant governor.

I did not specify in my amendment nor did the General Provisions Committee, the manner in which a constitutional convention could be called by the General Assembly. I would suggest that it be by a constitutional majority of both houses but I do not think that has to be stated.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Boyer.

DELEGATE BOYER: Mr. Chairman, these amendments are coming too fast. I cannot keep up with them.

May I suggest in answering just the one on Amendment B it would be my humble opinion this should be rejected. First of all, I think that probably it would make for bad language in the Style Committee if we merely adopted Amendment B without considering also Amendment C. It is inconceivable that the intention was that the General Assembly or the governor may by law call a convention because obviously the governor cannot make law in this field.

I would suggest that in Delegate Needle's statement that this should be left to either branch of the policy-making departments of the government, this might be an erroneous assumption.