

Delegate Hanson has the floor. Delegate Hanson.

DELEGATE HANSON: Mr. Chairman, the issue posed by Amendment No. 18 is whether or not the General Assembly in its own discretion shall have the right to determine the length of the session.

We who support this amendment believe that it will greatly improve the legislative process by making it possible for the leaders and the members of the General Assembly, either prior to the convening of a session or shortly thereafter, to make an assessment of the amount of legislative time necessary to consider adequately the budget, the governor's program, and other major legislative matters likely to come before the General Assembly.

It will permit the General Assembly to schedule its time so that the time of the members can be most expeditiously employed.

This is very important because it avoids freezing into the constitution a time which may be adequate for the present, but most inadequate for the future.

Leaders of the General Assembly tell us now that they need at least 90 days in which to consider the business and to act upon it in good fashion. The leaders of the General Assembly elected in 1970 may need 100 days or 110 days. They should have the right to set that time. We may come to a point in twenty-five years when the General Assembly will need half a year in order to efficiently carry out its business, and the constitution should not restrict the General Assembly from having that kind of time.

The constitution should make it possible for the session to be flexible in terms of its duration and in terms of its scheduling so that, given the membership of any one General Assembly, the members thereof can make an effective determination of how long it will take them to do the job for which they were elected, and not to be put in a constitutional straitjacket, or not to be necessarily involved with a whole series of cumbersome procedures of going to a particular time, extending the time by majority, extending that time by $\frac{3}{5}$ ths, asking the governor to call a special session, and if he won't, getting $\frac{3}{5}$ ths to get a special session or having the two leaders of the houses convene as proposed in the Majority Report.

We believe that this language simplifies the Constitution, that it does what is neces-

sary, setting a date for the legislature to convene and leaving to the legislature itself the job which ought to be the legislature's job of deciding how long it needs to conduct its session and how long it needs to consider the business of the state.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Hanson, you have one minute.

DELEGATE HANSON: This is the issue before you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Gallagher.

DELEGATE GALLAGHER: Mr. Chairman, I yield three minutes to Delegate Adkins.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Adkins.

DELEGATE ADKINS: Mr. Chairman, in opposing this proposed amendment, I should like to make two brief points:

If the amendment is adopted, it leads to professional legislators. I suggest that Maryland is not ready for professional legislators. Many persons in this state will run for public office if they are in a position where they can devote part-time and at the same time still preserve other private activities in order that they may have adequate income for the education of their children and support of their families. If we are prepared to have full-time legislators, then I suggest we must be prepared to pay them at least \$20,000 to \$25,000. There is no middle ground in my judgment. If we are asking men to serve on a 365-day potential basis, we should be prepared to pay them on a 365-day potential basis.

One of the strengths of this Assembly, when it meets as a legislature, is the fact that it brings men with varied backgrounds together in a common meeting place. They have, however, drawn their experience outside of these legislative halls. If we look to the professional legislator, I suggest that we will lose the benefit of the combinations of those experiences.

May I make one further point?

It seems to me that the pressure of time can be a benefit. The legislative process is a process of compromise. It is a process of arriving at a reconciliation of diverse views to achieve the best that a majority of the people can agree on.

This process is in many instances aided by pressure. We have seen that it has been aided by the pressure on this body, and I dare say before we are finished, it will be further aided by this body. If unlimited