

Of the one hundred and three members of the convention, only fifty-five favored the adoption of the constitution.³ The president of the body, himself, the Hon. John G. Chapman, a few moments before he declared the convention adjourned *sine die*, said, that he had witnessed with profound regret many of the features embodied in the constitution. That the salutary changes were so few and light when weighed in the balance against graver and more objectionable features, that he had no other alternative than to vote, at the ballot-box, against its ratification.⁴

While the constitution was before the people for their consideration, the general tone of public discussion in regard to the work was free from strict party spirit. Two of the leading Whig papers: the *Frederick Herald* and the *Hagerstown Torchlight* declared in favor of the new constitution. The Democratic papers generally throughout the State urged its adoption, as well as several of the neutral county presses. The *Cambridge Democrat*, the *Centerville Sentinel* and the *Easton Star* were also in favor of adopting the constitution. These papers, while not entirely satisfied with the instrument, considered it an improvement on the old one. Other papers, as the *Rockville Journal* and the *Port Tobacco Times*, urged the rejection of the constitution.⁵ The *Baltimore American* was very strong in its opposition to the constitution, while the *Baltimore Sun* strongly urged its adoption.

While the discussion on the constitution was free from party spirit, it was not free from the appeals of the demagogues, who sought to array the poor and the rich in antagonistic positions.⁶ The provisions of the constitution relating to the homestead exemption,⁷ and to the abolishment of imprisonment for debt,⁸ gave rise to these unjustifiable attacks.

³ Baltimore Sun, May 14, 1851.

⁴ Debates, vol. ii, p. 890.

⁵ Baltimore Sun, May 23, 1851.

⁶ Baltimore American, June 2, 1851.

⁷ See page 78.

⁸ See page 78.