

a number of the minority members. Edward W. Belt, also of Prince George's, was an exceedingly strong man, in many ways one of the most advanced of his party, as his course on the "usury" question will show.<sup>10</sup> A third man from the same county, Samuel H. Berry, and also Oliver Miller, of Anne Arundel; James U. Dennis, of Somerset; James T. Briscoe, of Calvert, and John F. Dent, of St. Mary's, were all of great force and influence. With them should be mentioned Ezekiel F. Chambers, of Kent, who always acted with the minority, and at last definitely identified himself with them, although at first claiming to represent no party. Though elderly and usually of too great conservatism, yet his prominence is apparent when we observe that he had been sixteen years in the State Legislature and in Congress; had been a member of the Convention of 1850-1, and was about to be the Democratic candidate for Governor in the fall of 1864.

The minority, in addition to opposition in debate and by vote, showed great ingenuity in falling back from one position to another, as soon as the former was made untenable. A good instance of this will be seen in the emancipation question, where a continuation of slavery, state and national compensation, and negro apprenticeship were advocated in turn. Both parties were very ready to call for the yeas and nays on leading questions, especially the minority, who desired to put their opponents individually on record as favoring the extreme measures which were passed. They also used tactics of delay in some instances, but with little success, as the majority could usually outvote them. Hence they did not carry this sort of opposition very far, knowing the final futility of any such attempts. At times vigorous complaint was made against the use of the previous question by the majority in order to shut off debate. This was largely during the latter half of the session of the Convention, when the work was being pushed with great activity.

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<sup>10</sup> See pages 82-83.