

every twentieth year thereafter, the question of calling a Convention was to be submitted to the people. Thus we see that the slow conservative methods provided in the old Constitution were done away with, and the final right of the people to change their mode of government whenever it pleased them so to do, was fully recognized.

It should be said, to sum up at this point, that as far as the organic law was concerned, the new Constitution was a decided advance toward modern methods and systems of government, and showed distinct results of the evident wish on the part of the Convention, to have the Constitution of Maryland conform, as far as possible, to the best features embodied in the Constitutions of the other states of the Union.²⁰⁶

We now come to a most unpopular feature of the Constitution, which contributed largely to the intense opposition that was aroused against it, and which caused it to be ratified only by a very narrow majority. This was, the method and regulations under which it was to be submitted to the people for their ratification.

As prescribed by the new Constitution,²⁰⁶ the Governor within five days after the adjournment of the Convention was to issue a proclamation, calling for an election to be held in the city of Baltimore on October 12, 1864, and in the counties of the state on October 12th and 13th. At this election the vote was to be by ballot, and the question to be decided was the ratification or rejection of the Constitution. But it was further provided, that the test oath prescribed in the Constitution for all future elections after the Constitution should be adopted, was to be required of all voters in the election on the ratification of that instrument itself. Again, we have seen that the article on the Elective Franchise required²⁰⁷ the General Assembly to "provide by law for taking the votes of soldiers in the army of the United States serving in the field." In order

²⁰⁵ See Deb., i, 360, 394-5; ii, 1034-5, 1056, 1267, 1317-8, etc.

²⁰⁶ Art. xii, secs. 8-10. ²⁰⁷ Art. i, sec. 2. See page 71.