

vote, and introduced a perfectly new class of voters hitherto unknown to the laws. The majority answer to this last was that those citizens barred from voting had already been practically disfranchised by laws of the National Government, and by decisions of the various courts, and that the soldiers were not a new class of voters, but merely citizens exercising their right of franchise under new conditions. The entire debate was to a great extent along these lines, and was sustained with exceptional brilliancy by the minority members, Mr. Miller of Anne Arundel in particular making a speech which showed great power of logical thought and analytical reasoning. As usual, the result was foreordained, and the provisions passed by the usual party vote.²⁰⁹ An attempt of the minority to insert a provision providing for new elections in those districts in which there might be military interference was promptly voted down.²¹⁰

From the entire absence at the time of the April election, as far as we can see, of any such extreme views as to the proper construction of the Convention Bill, it is safe to judge that the people of the state had no idea of the extent to which these measures would finally be carried. The majority members of the Convention, however, with rare acuteness saw their opportunity, and were quick to avail themselves of it. Their action, to say the least, was clearly revolutionary, and its justification or condemnation at the present day depends upon individual ideas as to the legitimacy of such measures in time of war, and whether, as seen in the final results, the end justified the means. It only remains to add at this point, that the final draft of the new Constitution was adopted by the Convention on September 6, by the party vote of 53 yeas to 26 nays, 17 members being absent and not voting.²¹¹ After the usual closing remarks by the President, the Convention adjourned.

²⁰⁹ For above see Proc., 602-4, 611-3, 670-81; Deb., iii, 1708-19, 1724-56, 1758-71.

²¹⁰ Proc., 672-3.

²¹¹ Proc., 770-1.