

MESSAGE.

GENTLEMEN OF THE SENATE

AND OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES:

I cordially welcome you to the discharge of the high and important duties which devolve upon the General Assembly, after the long interval which the Constitution has placed between its sessions. The fast increasing population of our State, the rapid extension and variety of her interests, the development of her resources, and the protection and encouragement to enterprises, needed for progress in her commerce and manufactures, in her mining and agricultural interests, seem to require the more frequent assistance of the Legislature, whose attention is, from the peculiarities of our system and position, constantly taxed by the needs of local legislation and private laws, to the postponement, and even exclusion of great public measures, affecting the interests of the whole State.

Since the adjournment of the last General Assembly, the question of calling a Convention to amend or alter the Constitution of the State was, in pursuance of the law passed to that effect, submitted to the people, who, on the 26th day of May, 1858, by a majority of 8,924 votes, decided against the propriety of that measure.

The votes in favor of calling such Convention were 15,352, against it 24,276, in the aggregate making 39,628 ballots, and showing, from the whole number, that there were many citizens who did not think it worth while to express an opinion upon so important a question.

This resolution has, therefore, made more than ever important the short period prescribed by our fundamental law, at long intervals, for the grave duties of the law making power. The experience of the past renders economy in the use of that short term indispensable; and all dispatch that is consistent with proper deliberation in passing laws, is made more than ever imperative by the acknowledged necessities of the public service.