

tem of government. He did not mean to be understood as saying that all who had been, or were called reformers, were demagogues or agitators, far from it. He was well aware that many of our ablest and most judicious statesmen had long contended for essential changes in the Constitution of the State, and he was himself one of those who believed material and important improvements might, and should be made. He was, therefore, on this, the only proper course, a reformer himself, and could not with any propriety cast censure upon the whole body of reformers. Though he had not seen the necessity for this Convention though he had not fully acquiesced, after the law authorising it had been passed by the Legislature, he was now convinced of the propriety of engrafting upon the new Constitution an express provision for calling such assemblies hereafter, whenever the deliberate judgment of the citizens of the State may call for them. In this he was most happy to find there was a general concurrence of opinion in the Convention. All seemed to agree that such a provision was necessary to secure the future quiet of the State. All appeared to aim at the same desirable end; but there were some diversities of opinion as to the means of obtaining that end. For his part, he was decidedly in favor of the plan proposed by the honorable chairman of the committee, (Mr. Sollers,) which left with the Legislature the power to make such amendments (by the acts of two successive Legislatures,) from time to time in the Constitution, as the public convenience and interests might require, and also gave them, in express terms, the power to provide for the convocation of future Conventions, whenever the general public judgment should call for them. The essential difference between which and the proposition of the honorable gentleman from Allegany, (Mr. Fitzpatrick,) was that the latter gave no power to any body, *not even to the people themselves*, to make any change or amendment whatever, in the Constitution you are about to submit, for periods of ten years, and at those periods only, through the cumbrous and expensive machinery of a Convention! Between these two modes, he could not, for a moment, hesitate; and he felt persuaded, if gentlemen would lay aside that warmth and vehemence for a few moments, which had been excited by discussion, and calmly compare the two modes, and deliberately judge of the probable, not to say the inevitable operation of each, they would by a very large majority decide in favor of the proposition of the honorable chairman, (Mr. Sollers.) Gentlemen should remember that it was not improbable that much of the reluctance many of them felt to confiding this subject to the Legislature hereafter as proposed, might be attributable to a bias of the mind consequent upon former discussions about the propriety of calling a Convention by an act of the Legislature, when there was no provision in the Constitution giving them such a power; and all attempts to have an act passed for such a purpose was therefore resisted, upon the ground that no power existed for such a purpose, but on the contrary amendments were to be made to

that Constitution by express provision, in the mode prescribed by it, and in no other.

As for these reasons, and upon these grounds, the call of a Convention by act of the Legislature was long and vehemently resisted under the old Constitution. It is not likely that minds which were heated in that contest, may, without taking time to appreciate the important difference of an express grant of power and injunction of duty upon the Legislature in the new Constitution—apprehend a recurrence of the same contest, and he therefore was reluctant to trust the power to the Legislature—a moments reflection will, I think, dispel all such apprehensions, and gentlemen will see that all the grounds upon which resistance to such assemblies was formerly based are intirely removed, by the proposition of my friend from Calvert. (Mr. Sollers,) and no opposition can hereafter be made to the call of a Convention by act of the Legislature, if this provision be adopted, but on the grounds of its inexpediency and the indisposition of the people—legitimate and proper grounds always and fair subjects of inquiry. To this old prejudice or bias in men's minds alone, can I attribute the cause of argument in which some gentlemen have indulged, in which they have seemed to regard the amendment of the gentleman from Allegany as the only proposition making provision for future Conventions, and that the report of the committee as prohibiting or preventing them. Whereas the fact is, that by the plan of the committee, the control of the whole subject is left constantly with the people of the State through their Legislature, and by the other all control is absolutely taken from the people, except simply the right to say by their votes, once in every ten years, whether they will have another Convention or not—the effect of which is to be, should they by their votes in June next adopt this Constitution, to fasten it upon them with all its imperfections for an infinite period—for after the experiment of this Convention, my word for it, the people will bear a great many inconveniencies long and patiently, rather than resort to another. On this, and upon several other occasions during the sittings of the Convention, there has been manifested a strange want of confidence in the future legislatures of the State, and a disposition to fix every thing now by unalterable rule, leaving nothing to the wisdom, discretion, patriotism or virtue of those who are to come after us. For my part, highly as I respect the members of this Convention, I am not one of those who think all the wisdom and virtue of the State, past, present and future, is concentrated here. I think there are as many wise and good men in Maryland out of this Convention as there are in it, and I believe the legislatures that are to come after us will be as capable of judging of the true interests and best means of promoting the happiness and prosperity of the people of the State as we are; and more so, because they will have the lights of further experience and knowledge of the times and circumstances for and under which they are to act, which we cannot have.

Why distrust future Legislatures so much?