

time of their commencement, unless the same shall be closed at an earlier day by the agreement of the two houses. And when the General Assembly shall be convened by proclamation of the Governor, the session shall not continue longer than thirty days."

Mr. STROCKBRIDGE submitted the following amendment, to strike out all before the word "when" in the seventh line, and to insert:

"The General Assembly may continue its sessions as long as in the opinion of the two houses the public interests may require it; but no new business shall be received after the 20th day of February succeeding the commencement of the session."

Mr. STROCKBRIDGE said: This section as reported by the committee limits the sessions of the General Assembly to the last Thursday of March next ensuing the time of commencement. The experience of every gentleman who has been a member of the General Assembly is, that the latter part of the time in every session is very much crowded, and that measures are passed in the haste and crowd of the end of the session which could never be got through, and which would never meet the approval of the Legislature if they had time to investigate and examine them. It has seemed to me better that the duration of the General Assembly should be unlimited, and that the time during which they should receive business should be limited. I therefore propose to leave the time of final adjournment indefinite, and that no business shall be received after the 20th of February. I should have no objection to making that the 1st of February, if the Convention prefer. I give the General Assembly time to mature the business before them, to deliberate upon, investigate and perfect it, and to pass in each House the bills from the other House. It has occurred year after year, I believe without exception, that from twenty to one hundred and fifty bills passed by one branch have been laid over in the other for want of time. I prefer to limit the time for commencing business, and allowing ample time to mature the business.

Mr. PETER moved to amend the amendment by striking out "as long as in the opinion of the two houses the public interest may require it," and inserting "until the first day of May next ensuing," and by striking out "20th day of February" and inserting "1st day of March," so that the section should allow the session to continue until May 1st, but prohibit the introduction of new business after March 1st.

Mr. MILLER. I think the section as it stands is the best provision that can be made. We have determined by the vote of the House, as I understand it, upon biennial sessions of the Legislature. Either of the amendments that are offered would prevent any new bill being introduced between the 1st of March and the 1st of May, or between February 20

and the last Thursday of March. In the old Constitution there is a provision that no new bill shall originate in either House during the last three days of the session; and the 18th section of this report incorporates that provision. I should be willing to see that extended to five, six, eight or ten days of the termination of the session; but to allow the Legislature to continue its session from the 20th of February up to the last Thursday of March or longer without having the privilege of introducing into the body any new matter of legislation, is a provision I cannot vote for.

Mr. SCHLEY. I wish to ask if the adoption of the amendment or the amendment to the amendment, will exclude the provision about subsequent regular sessions after the first.

Mr. STROCKBRIDGE. My amendment covers all sessions; the first and all others.

Mr. SOMER. In that view of it I shall certainly oppose it. I am in favor of the section as it stands, except that it has been suggested, and I thought the suggestion a good one, that the words "as long as" were entirely too indefinite, and too apt to produce procrastination in legislation, and therefore it ought to be amended by inserting a reasonable time of sufficient duration such as may be required. But if the amendment is to extend subsequent sessions beyond the day specified in the report, the last Thursday of March next ensuing the date of assembling, I dissent from it. I adhere to the section as it stands. If it should be thought proper to introduce the provision to limit the first session to the 1st day of May next ensuing the date of assembling, I would accede to that, or any other specific time that the Convention may select. But as to extending all sessions to the first day of May I am opposed to it. I think it an unnecessary length of time, and a waste of the public money. Hence I shall be compelled to oppose the amendment and the amendment to it.

Mr. CHAMBERS. I have had some experience as to the operation of rules of that character. I have served some sixteen years in the Legislature of the State and of Congress. It is perhaps impossible to effect the very desirable object aimed at by the gentleman from Baltimore, to prevent the hasty passage of improper bills, and the hasty rejection of bills perhaps the most proper to be passed of any presented. The nearest approach to the accomplishment of that will be to limit the time, as proposed, within which new business may be offered. But if there be no limitation of the time of the session, I think the result will be a total failure to accomplish the purpose. Ingenious members can always find room in the shape of amendments to introduce new matter. A bill comes from the other House of which they can take advantage, to incorporate upon it their fa-