

of my friend, the chairman of this committee (Mr. Schley,) will be met by this amendment, because the first session, like all other sessions, will be wholly unrestrained as to time. The public will have an opportunity of approaching the Legislature more frequently and more opportunely. The rules which my friend from Baltimore city (Mr. Stockbridge) desires to apply to the Legislature, so as to limit the period of the introduction of business, can be provided for by the rules of the House of Delegates, as they are now by the rules of the House of Representatives. The Legislature can fix its own rules to regulate and govern its business, as to the period within which it will permit new business to be introduced. For these reasons I shall vote against both those amendments, and at the proper time, I will offer the amendment I have read to the Convention.

Mr. USHING. I shall vote against the amendments offered to this section; first, because I am opposed to unlimited sessions of the General Assembly. I think that unlimited sessions have a tendency to produce upon the minds of members of both houses a neglect, for a long time after they are assembled, of the business that is before them. I think it has been demonstrated to every member of this Convention that unlimited sessions are not favorable to the disposing of work. I shall vote against the amendment limiting the introduction of business, because I do not think this is the section in which that would properly be placed; but I propose, when the 16th section shall be under consideration, to offer the following amendment: Strike out all after "other" in line 3d, and insert the following: "No new business shall be introduced in either House after March 1st, except said business be reported by a joint committee of both houses."

By that means you will avoid cutting off citizens of the State who may have important interests to present to the consideration of the Legislature, which interests may not have been developed previous to the 20th of February, or until near the end of the session. If their business is sufficiently important to be presented to the consideration of the two houses by a report from a joint committee, it may be acted upon; but unless there is some special reason for the consideration of that business, or unless the General Assembly is disposed to consider it, there will be no report upon it by a joint committee, while by that means you avoid cutting off citizens of the State who may desire to present their wants to the General Assembly, you at the same time prevent the great evil of all legislation, unlimited sessions of a legislative body.

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. I think a little experience would satisfy that gentleman, as it has every one who has had experience, that it is not cutting off the citizens of the State from an opportunity to present their business before

the Legislature, which is the danger to be feared. Those who have business to come before the Legislature know it so soon that the difference of time between the 20th of February and the 1st of March is not appreciable. The great difficulty is, as will appear when we come to another article, that these private matters override and crowd out the public business. Gentlemen who have ever been in Annapolis when the Legislature is in session, know that a perfect avalanche is thrown upon the Legislature by some great private interest to get it through before the session adjourns; so that you can hardly pass through the rotunda to reach your place in the Hall. It is the constant importunity of these men, made at every point, which so operates upon the minds of many men, that in attending to their private business, they utterly neglect the great public business, and they pass upon that private business as the only means, on the part of legislators, of ridding themselves of the importunity.

The question really before us is: How can we best secure the attention of the Legislature to the great public interests that come before it? Usually it happens, especially with those who are not very familiar with the process, that in getting measures through the Legislature, the applications come in early in the session, and they get an early position on the calendar. If dealt with favorably by the committees they are reported in the very earliest days of the session, and come up in their regular order, and are acted upon one way or the other. Then those great public measures, which have no special engineer to prepare them and urge them on, are taken up on the motion of some gentleman whose public spirit has led him to take the pains to prepare them and to bring them before the committees; and these will come in about the middle of the session, seldom earlier than that. There is another class of men who, with an adroitness not possessed by the first class, prepare and digest their measures and come here when the rush begins to come, towards the close of the session, calculating that then they can smuggle their measures through, and get them acted upon by members without their knowing upon what they are acting. It often happens that men vote "aye" or "no" upon important bills, without even knowing the title of the bill. I have seen measures of the most vital importance, interesting certain sections of this State, presented here at a late day of the session with such a lobby influence thrown around them that no member could be free wherever he went, from the lobby agents of these great private interests, who were as thick as the frogs in Egypt in the olden time; and they crowded out other business, so that fifty or one hundred important bills, carefully digested in committees, or sent from the other house, were left over upon the