

was kind enough to adopt, requesting the Committee on the Legislative Department to inquire into the expediency of such a provision. We have adopted the principle of codifying the laws of the State. It is obvious that if we are to have every year or two a supplement to this Code, in the course of ten or twelve years the condition of the legislation of the State will be in a worse state of confusion than that in which it stood when the codification commenced. We have already one or two supplements to the Code. The proposition is, that instead of publishing a volume at the end of every session of the Legislature, a volume embracing additions and alterations only, the Legislature should provide by law for re-publication of the Code, so that the last edition of the Code shall always represent the statute law as it exists.

Mr. MILLER. I hope the amendment will prevail. The object of it has been stated by my friend from Prince George's (Mr. Belt) very clearly. The great difficulty under our old system was that the laws were scattered through many volumes, and it was almost impossible for any man who was not a lawyer to ascertain whether the statute found in any particular book was the existing law or not. He had to look through half a dozen indexes to find whether the law was repealed or not. That necessity brought about the adoption, by the Convention of 1850, of the system of codification. The Code was then, of course, only the codification of the laws which existed at the time it was prepared and adopted by the Legislature. From year to year, however, amendments are made in that Code; sections are repealed or modified and new sections are added. If we go on in this way, publishing annual supplements to the Code, without any new codification at all, we shall in a few years find ourselves in the same predicament we were in before any codification was adopted.

The expense to the State will not be very great, because it can be easily enough provided that the Code shall be stereotyped, and the modifications year by year can be made in the stereotype plates. The cost would be trifling, and the new volumes could be published as early as the volume of laws embracing public and local laws both, giving to every man the law just as it stands. I should not like to subject the Legislature to any great expense on that account; but I think the additional expense would not be great.

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. Can any gentleman inform me what is the expense of publishing the volume of laws at the end of the session of the General Assembly?

Mr. SCHLEY. How large an edition?

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. Of course the edition would be nothing like so large as the annual edition of the laws, because it is simply for one year's consumption. Enough would be

printed merely to meet the demands of the year; for when the Legislature meet again we should have another edition.

Mr. BELT. It would be scarcely any expense at all. It would only be necessary to change the laws which were altered.

Mr. STIRLING. This is a very important matter. I do not like to vote against anything so useful in its intention as this proposition; but unless I can have more light on the subject I must vote against it. If it is only practicable it seems to me that it will be very desirable to have the statutes of the State something like a kaleidoscope, so that the moment you push one out you have another one in. But I doubt whether it is practicable always to represent the existing state of the legislation of the State. The Legislature sometimes will pass not more than five or six acts amending the Code. Is the whole Code, a book of eight hundred pages, to be printed over again for the purpose of including five or six changes? I do not think the last Legislature made any material alteration in the Code, except in the addition of new sections. All that is necessary is to look at the Code and two or three volumes of laws for the new matter?

Mr. MILLER. There may be some years when slight alterations will be made. Perhaps it will be better if my friend from Prince George's would modify his amendment so that the code should be reprinted every five or six years.

Mr. STIRLING. I have no objection to it, if a sufficient time elapses. But it seems to me it would be better to leave the matter in the hands of the Legislature itself. Public convenience will require a republication of the code, and I think it would be done as often as every ten years at least.

The PRESIDENT. The cost of printing the volume of the laws at the last session was about \$1,700.

Mr. MILLER. The publication of the code would cost scarcely anything more than the paper and binding.

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. Of course whatever it would cost to print the entire volume of the code would be so much additional to printing the laws. The laws must be printed; otherwise the private laws would never find their way into print at all.

Mr. SCHLEY. It has been suggested that this is an important matter. Nobody here seems to be informed what will be the cost of republishing the code every few years. I feel certain that it will involve a serious expense and is unnecessary. If it be necessary, the General Assembly has the power to republish the code whenever in their judgment they deem it expedient. I should therefore defer to its judgment of the expediency and of the expense.

The PRESIDENT. I should not suppose the stereotype plates could be readily changed.