

seems to me not. I should be very glad to know that we could transfer the duties to some other officer without costing the State what it now costs; but as at present advised, unless the gentleman can show me some way of doing it, I do not see how that officer can be dispensed with.

Mr. BRISCON. Upon reading over this clause I find one point that I wish to understand. I wish to inquire, whether under the construction of this section, the fees of the commissioner of the land office are to be paid into the treasury, and the fees as keeper of the chancery records also? I should think from the wording of the clause that his fees as commissioner of the land office only are to be paid into the treasury.

The PRESIDENT. I understand that the commissioner of the land office receives a stipulated salary, as keeper of the chancery records, under the existing law, of \$500; and that all the fees are to go into the treasury.

Mr. DANIEL. It was the intention of the committee that all the fees should be paid into the treasury, and he should receive the \$1,800 as a substitute.

Mr. STOOKBRIDGE. From the report to the last general assembly, it appears that the amount of his fees as keeper of the chancery records for the last two years was \$161.47; less than \$100 a year.

Mr. DANIEL moved to amend by inserting after the word "office," in line sixteen, the words, "both as commissioner of the land office and keeper of the chancery records."

The amendment was agreed to.

The question recurred upon Mr. BRISCON'S motion to strike out the second section.

Mr. BRISCON. I have no doubt that at the time of the adoption of this constitution, and just at the time that court was abolished, the duties of the office of keeper of the chancery records was of some importance. Therefore I think that when the legislature undertook to designate the sum of \$1,000 as the salary, it was probably a very proper sum. But that court having expired ten or twelve years ago, under the facts stated by the gentleman from Anne Arundel (Mr. Miller,) and only four or five cases having been transmitted to the counties during the last year, it seems to me that the duties now required of that officer, or of the party who holds both of these offices, would not require the time of one man for a day in the week. From all the information I can obtain, the duties we are about to impose upon this officer would not consume eight hours in any one week throughout the whole year. I ask the convention if they are prepared to constitute such an office, and to designate a salary of \$1,800 a year, to stand for the next ten or fifteen, or it may be twenty years?

I agree with my friend from Anne Arundel (Mr. Miller,) that there is no necessity for abolishing the other office; or rather there is

very likely a necessity for retaining both of them; but the duties to be performed are of such limited extent that I cannot see how it should be necessary to give a salary of \$1,800. You give the executive officer of the State \$3,800. I do not know what change the executive committee may propose in that. I merely ask, is there the necessity for these two offices with that salary? I am not prepared to sustain it, with the light I have upon the subject. I have no doubt you could get an officer in this town, or anywhere in Anne Arundel county, who, for \$600, would come here and perform the duties of these two offices efficiently and well.

I do not say this for the purpose of touching the interest of the present incumbent. I have no doubt that, being now here with his family, he should be paid for the time for which he was elected a suitable compensation, to furnish him, as he expected when he accepted the office, an ordinary support. But I see no reason why we should create this office and designate such a salary for a permanent office. For that reason I moved to strike out the section. As the house have already voted not to substitute \$1,500 for \$1,800, it was my only alternative to strike out the whole section. If it is stricken out I will offer a proposition requiring the legislature of Maryland to provide hereafter for these offices at a proper salary.

Mr. PURNELL. I think the subject was fully examined by the committee, although the question before them was not so much of the curtailment of the expense, or as to curtailing the labors imposed upon this officer, as of making him a salaried officer, and requiring whatever perquisites might come into his hands to be paid into the treasury of the State. The gentleman holding the office at this time submitted to the committee a statement, running some four or five years, of the fees received, and there had been an average perhaps of \$2,200 or \$2,300 paid into his hands as receipts; and the scale ran from above \$1,500 up to \$2,700, for his fees and salary for his two offices of commissioner of the land office and keeper of the chancery records. I was under the impression that perhaps a greater number of fees would come into his hands by receiving fees rather than a salary; but he preferred having a certain sum to this uncertainty; and we thought the State's interest would be fully protected even in increasing the salary to the amount now proposed, and what he claims, \$1,800. If the State receives \$2,800 as the average of a certain number of years, according to his data, certainly we could not pay him out of that a less sum than \$1,800.

The PRESIDENT. I understood the commissioner to say that he had received \$2,000 on the average; that the fees had amounted to \$2,000.

Mr. PURNELL. There is another important reason, and I think a very valuable one, why