

nate the amendment. For the undersigned contend that the essential confirmation of the change, is the popular vote in its favor, and not the mere ministerial act of the passage of the same law by a second Legislature.

Having once conceded this right of the people to direct constitutional amendments, the undersigned would inquire where the legislature can with propriety refuse it? Is the decision of the majority valuable upon one question, and worthless upon another,—an imperative law at one time, and an impertinence three years afterwards? Can the legislature say that it understands the public mind as to one part of the constitution better than it does as to another,—and that although it is doubtful whether it can safely decide as to biennial sessions, without providing for a popular vote, it can clearly express the public sense upon other and more vital points?

The right to originate an amendment in such a state of things is no check whatever upon popular reform. It would be a strange proposition that could not find one friend in the General Assembly. That person has the precedent of former reference to the decision of the people to sustain him, and if supported by that voice, however insignificant might be his place and influence, precedent would make his suggestion the organic law of the State.

The undersigned think that great credit should be accorded to the legislature for its desire to accommodate the constitution to the growth of public wants. But notwithstanding this willingness on its part, they are still of opinion that the work of reformation would more wisely and speedily progress if it were entrusted to a body less distracted by local cares and party divisions, than the State Legislature. During some years past the time of this body has been materially taken up by the discussion of such propositions to the injury of private interests and the detriment of the public weal. The brief time, allotted by the law for the session, does not permit that regular, calm, undistracted deliberation, which questions of such importance must require.

The undersigned in conclusion, earnestly hope that the reasons which they have adduced will incline the house to give their bill a favorable consideration. It is so framed as to relieve all sections of the State from the fear of aggression. And they hope that while the smaller interests feel that they have been provided for with a consideration justly due to the influence, which they have always exercised in the legislation of the State, the larger and more populous sections will know that they can entirely confide for their protection, against the improper use of power, in the honor and integrity of the people of the whole State.

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