

official patronage of the State, as will accrue directly to the people, the right to elect all local and county officers, not strictly of a judicial character. The centralization of power, by means of patronage, is dangerous to the liberty, inconsistent with the doctrine of popular sovereignty, and the theory of representative government. The obstruction of a free and fair expression of the public will: the too frequent selection of incompetent, unscrupulous and faithless officers; the multiplication of unnecessary public trusts; the depreciation of the standard of official qualification, and the subjection of the liberty of opinion and discussion to the relentless ban of party tyranny, are not the least among its corrupting and inevitable tendencies.

The Constitution of Maryland, in this respect, is in flagrant violation of that sacred maxim which accords to the people, the capacity for self-government. If the people are sufficiently wise, honest and discreet, to be entrusted with the election of a President, a Governor, a Senator or a Sheriff, it is difficult to conceive by what system of reasoning it can be shown, that they will prove, less wise, less honest or less discreet when empowered to elect a Register of Wills, a county clerk, or any other ministerial officer.

A thorough revision, also, of the judiciary, in all its departments, for many and cogent reasons, is deemed to be imperatively requisite. The official tenure which distinguishes this department from all others, equivalent, as it is, to a term for life, is not in accordance with that well-settled maxim which regards frequent accountability to the course of power, by those in the exercise of public trusts, as among the most conservative principles in popular government; nor has it a justification in the objects of its adoption, in that country, from whose institutions it appears to have been borrowed.

In England, the end obtained by the appointment of Judges for life was the security afforded the life, liberty and property of the subject, against the arbitrary power of an hereditary executive. But in a government founded on the public will, the effect of judicial life tenure is to defeat that will, by rendering the incumbents wholly independent of it.

The extraordinary expense attendant upon the administration of justice, furnishes another and conclusive reason in favor of judicial reform. The annual cost incurred by Maryland for the maintenance of her judicial establishment, in the item of salaries alone, exceeds by thousands of dollars that of many other States of the Union, far more populous and of much greater territorial extent. If, to this, be added the emoluments of clerks and Registers, affording in several instances, incomes infinitely disproportioned to the value of services rendered, it will appear that the cry of retrenchment, which of late years has been heard in every section of the State, is no idle or unmeaning sound.

That the judges are upright, impartial, learned in the law, and faithful in the discharge of their duties, is, on all hands conceded. That their salaries are exorbitant, or at all too large, is not pretended. It is admitted that the compensation of public officers, without being profuse, should always be liberal. The objection lies to the number of officers now on the bench, and the opinion is confidently entertained, in quarters entitled to consideration, that a system may be devised, requiring the services of fewer judges, not only without detriment, but with considerable advantage to the public interest.

A reduction in the number of judges - a limitation upon the income of county clerks, registers of wills, and other officers, either by an alteration of the tariff of fees, or by requiring payment to be made to the treasury of whatever surplus may remain in