

their hands over and above a fair & liberal compensation: and the abolition of all such offices as experience may have shown to be unnecessary, will, it is believed, afford sensible relief to the tax payers of the State, and contribute essentially toward the payment of the public debt.

Such are some of the changes and improvements in the fundamental law, with the reasons in support of them which appear to be contemplated by the Reformers of Maryland. That a majority of the people are decidedly favourable to the call of a Convention, as the only feasible plan of obtaining so desirable an end, there can be but little doubt. At the same time it would be disingenuous to disguise the fact, that there is a considerable class of citizens, and among them, many who recognize the necessity of reform, some of whom maintain that the Legislature, in the exercise of its ordinary constitutional functions, is competent to effect whatever alterations may be required; whilst others not only question the power of the General Assembly to enact a law for the call of a Convention, but expressly deny that the constitution can be altered, amended or abolished in any other manner, or by any other authority, than that prescribed in the instrument itself.

The formation of a written constitution, the embodiment of the political science of a nation, designed to define the powers of government, to limit and control the action of its various departments, and to guard, protect and perpetuate the liberties of a people and of posterity... is a work of the gravest import, invoking the wisdom of enlightened statesmen, demanding the utmost singleness of purpose, and the most unlimited opportunity for inquiry, deliberation and debate.

Whatever may be the qualifications of the Delegates to the Legislature for such a work, it is a known fact that they are not elected with a view to constitutional amendments, and cannot therefore, be considered as reliable exponents of the public will; nor have they the leisure, apart from the current business of legislation, for the consideration of matters involving a change in the organic law. The legislative sessions are limited to a period of less than ninety days. To suppose that a body of men, however constituted, could, within that time, in connexion with other and important duties, originate and mature a comprehensive and well considered scheme of constitutional reform, is to ascribe to the members of the General Assembly faculties both physical and intellectual, with which individuals similarly circumstanced are rarely, if ever, endowed.

In support of the position assumed by that class of persons who deny the power of the people to remodel the constitutional charter whenever they may deem it proper to do so, it is asserted that "the government of Maryland is a government founded in compact by and between the people themselves - one with the other - all with each, and each with all, by which they have agreed for the good of the whole, not only to be bound, but to remain bound, so long as the original ends of the compact are preserved; and that as the existing constitution has provided a particular organ for its amendment, the original right of the people is thereby divested; and any alteration produced by a process different from that prescribed, would be violative of the compact, and therefore illegal and void.

Not to remark upon the well-known fact, that in every political community like our own, there is always found a considerable minority of qualified persons, who instead of yielding their assent, have vehemently opposed the form of government established by the people, it is sufficient to say that the compact theory of government is a theory which has never been able to establish itself in any community.