

## 10/Introduction

cover format for ready reference in libraries, law offices, and public and government institutions and agencies. References found in the index could be consulted on the microform edition of the *Debates*, with the records of the commission and convention available for consultation, as before, in the public search room of the Hall of Records in Annapolis.

This alternative proved acceptable, and the work proceeded under the aegis of the office of the secretary of the Board of Public Works and the Hall of Records. While this volume was at the press being printed in a conventional format, the Hall of Records was filming the typeset pages of the *Debates of the Constitutional Convention of 1967-1968* on 16 mm microfilm. Information on purchasing the microform edition of the *Debates*, and on alternative microform formats if required, may be obtained by writing to the Maryland Hall of Records, P.O. Box 828, Annapolis, MD 21404.

Given the length of the *Debates*, stringent guidelines were adopted for preparing the index. The goal was to provide access to all major topics without encumbering the index with trivial detail or minute subcategories. The index does not, for example, cite each time a delegate spoke. Only substantive comments were indexed, with questions asked for clarification, parliamentary inquiries, items of personal privilege, and casual remarks being ignored. Delegate proposals were indexed only when they elicited debate or comment, and discussions about punctuation, phrasing, and other stylistic considerations, which dominated the last days of the convention, were generally passed over.

Users of the *Index* should be aware of the format of the Constitutional Convention. The *Debates* include both the 11 July 1967 organizational meeting and the full transactions of the Constitutional Convention itself, which convened on 12 September 1967 and adjourned 10 January 1968. During the convention proper, the chronology of debate covers the introduction of delegate proposals and the discussion of first reader reports of the various committees, followed by second and third reader reports. Most of the debate occurred on first readings, although with some provisions considerable discussion ensued at the second reader stage as well. After adoption of the proposed constitution, provisions to facilitate a smooth transition from the old constitution to the new were presented, debated, and adopted, and a schedule of legislation was approved. The schedule of legislation constituted proposals for the next General Assembly that would help resolve, by law, certain anomalies and lapses that would occur with the adoption of the new constitution.

Reading the *Debates of the Constitutional Convention* today, nearly a decade and a half after the proposed constitution was rejected by the voters of the state, one is still impressed by the tremendous accomplishments of the men and women who devoted so much time and energy to the task. True, the constitution failed, and the roots of failure are apparent throughout the *Debates*—rural delegates would have lost much of their voice in the proposed new General Assembly, collective bargaining did not achieve the constitutional status accorded to “natural beauty” and a variety of other concepts, the goal of streamlining government by increasing the powers of the three branches of government, especially the executive, were achieved to the distress of many voters. Still, the voluminous research that was conducted at the behest of the commission and convention, the assembling at one place and time