

is permeating through this hall a very great aura of distrust to the people of this State. We are talking about writing a Constitution which will serve the people of this State, and yet we are saying that we should not let them decide major decisions that affect such things as sewerage, transportation, rapid transit systems, et cetera. On the other hand, we want to strengthen the state government, and yet on the other, we want to destroy the people's right to participate in the government. When we note that only 61 per cent of the people of this State are registered voters, we can very readily see that past involvement of the people demonstrated their apathy toward governmental process. I think we ought to strengthen the power of the people and not deprive them of a very important vote in an area where they will choose wisely and not circumvent the will of the legislature. If the legislature adopts a program which is for the benefit of the people of that area, they will adopt it overwhelmingly at the polls.

All I say is, give them an opportunity to speak, so that they may continue to participate in our government.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does any delegate desire to speak in opposition? The Chair recognizes Delegate Gallagher.

DELEGATE GALLAGHER: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the Convention, I rise to oppose the amendment. As I read it, it does a great deal more than it would indicate on its face. It says, "no law providing for the establishment or alteration of boundaries".

I submit that, in effect, this means that no law providing for the creation of multi-governmental units shall become effective until submitted, et cetera, because you cannot establish a multi-county governmental unit without indicating what boundaries are. It seems to me, therefore, that this is much more than a question of the geography of a multi-governmental unit. It goes to the existence or the proposed existence of the multi-governmental unit, and would, therefore, require that there be no law for the creation of a multi-county governmental unit without the referendum.

It occurs to me, as I read this, that one could have a multi-county governmental unit which involved only a part of one county, and that despite the overwhelming support of every voter in the part of that county which would be affected by the unit the vote of the county as a whole, participating in the referendum procedure, could

override their unanimous will. In effect, one portion of a county could completely thwart and make impossible what the people in another area wanted unanimously, and without any dissent whatsoever.

I suggest in opposing this amendment that it is not a question of distrusting the people, because as I would understand the law, the people would still have the right to petition the law to referendum. This merely would make a referendum mandatory with every attempt to create a multi-county government or to change its boundaries including, I might say, making it smaller as well as larger.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Gallagher, you have one-half minute.

DELEGATE GALLAGHER: Consequently, I do not feel that this is anything more than harassment or an additional obstacle to the creation of these units.

I think I detect throughout this debate a fear of the large city government of Baltimore and a general distrust of where its tenacles may go. I do not think, however, that one need to go to this extreme in order to keep the City of Baltimore in check, if that be the idea.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does any other delegate desire to speak in favor of the amendment? Delegate Weidemeyer.

DELEGATE WEIDEMEYER: Mr. President, members of the Convention, I rise in favor of this amendment. It provides for a referendum for any of these bills.

It is true where county lines are being changed under section 7.07, it must be submitted to the people. Under the local government set up that we have in this recommendation, all the power not restricted to the local subdivision by the Constitution would reside in those local governing bodies.

We know also that regional governments and multi-government set-ups can erode the reserve powers of the local subdivisions. If these reserve powers are to be eroded by multi-government laws, you are allowing the legislature to come in and erode the very reserve powers of these local subdivisions.

It is true that any law passed covering more than one county would be considered statewide. However, Mr. President, the other day, by our action, we almost made the referendum prohibitive, and, therefore,