

was prepared to offer a first section in a form which he thought would embody the various views of the Convention.

The section was read as follows :

“Every free white male person of twenty-one years of age or upwards, who shall have been for one year next preceding the election, a resident of the State, and for six months a resident of the city of Baltimore, of Howard District, or of any county in which he may offer to vote, and being at the time of the election a citizen of the United States, shall be entitled to vote in the ward or election district in which he resides, in all elections hereafter to be held, and at all such elections the votes shall be taken by ballot.”

The section having been read :

Mr. CHAMBERS withdrew his previous amendment, and offered this in lieu thereof.

Mr. WEBER's amendment thereupon fell to the ground under the operation of the Parliamentary Law ; and

The question being on the adoption of the amendment last offered by Mr. CHAMBERS,

Mr. BOWIE suggested to the gentleman, so to modify it, as to insert after the words “a citizen of the United States,” the words “and of the State.”

Mr. CHAMBERS said, the difficulty was that there were some forty members of the Convention, who would express the same idea in different terms. Personally, he had no objection to it, except that it loaded down the section with phraseology which could have no effect upon it.

Mr. BOWIE explained, that the only difficulty he had about the matter, was that, in his judgment, it was not in fact true that every citizen of the United States was a citizen of the State of Maryland for political purposes.

Mr. GRASON said that he thought the amendment, as it now reads, was in conformity with the wishes and opinions of the Convention. He would therefore vote for it.

Mr. CHAMBERS suggested that the gentleman from Prince George's could move his amendment as a separate proposition.

Mr. STEPHENSON moved to amend the amendment by striking out the word “six” and insert “three” before the word “months,” so as to make it read “three months.”

Mr. CHAMBERS expressed a hope that the Convention would adopt the amendment he had offered, as a substantive proposition. He would afterwards introduce another proposition.

Mr. DORSEY rose to vindicate himself against an insinuation that he had been actuated by some sinister design in his conduct on yesterday. It seemed to have been understood by some gentlemen that the object of his amendment was to postpone the exercise of political rights by naturalized citizens, by requiring of them, after they had been naturalized here, to reside twelve months in the State, as well as six months in the county. He was informed by his colleague, after leaving the committee room last night, that such construction had been put upon his course. He was informed this morning at the breakfast table, that a sinister design was imputed to him. He

then pulled out of his pocket an amendment which he had prepared with a view to set himself right before the Convention, and showed it to the gentlemen.

He could not have desired such a construction of his amendment as was charged against him, with any sinister design, because the report would have borne the same construction after, as before his amendment. It reads, “every free, white, male citizen.” Who are these citizens who have come into our State and resided among us, and been naturalized here? They are all residents of the State. The objection would apply to naturalized citizens from other States. He never conceived such an idea as postponing the rights of these citizens for twelve months. He had voted for the present proposition, which carries out that which he brought forward yesterday. And he would not now have said one word but to explain his conduct.

The question was taken on the amendment of Mr. Stephenson, to strike out six months, and insert “three;” and it was rejected.

The question then recurred on the amendment of Mr. CHAMBERS, of Kent.

Mr. CHAMBERS would explain in few words. Originally every man voted in the county in which he resided, and every man in every part of the county voted for the same officers, whether for officers of the General Government or of the State. There was no such thing as a voter in one part of a county or city, voting for a representative of one district, and another voter in the same county or city, voting for a representative of another district. This arrangement was subsequently altered. Now by the act of 1843, the first eleven wards of the city of Baltimore, are thrown into one Congressional district, and the other wards into another. So Howard district being part of Anne Arundel county, forms part of one Congressional district, and the residue of that county forms part of another. Congress having full jurisdiction over the subject, has declared that each State shall be divided into separate and single districts, and it is therefore most probable that this interference between the geographical lines by which the counties are divided, and the geographical lines of the Congressional districts will occur in other instances, as the increasing population of the United States may continue to require an increased ratio of representation. Now then it is apparent that if a residence of six months in the county or city, shall entitle a person to vote in any part of the county in which he has his actual residence, the voters in a divided county or city, have advantages not possessed by those in other counties. Thus, a man residing in Prince George's county for six months prior to the election, must vote for the representative in Congress for the first district, and if at any time less than six months before the election, he removes into the county of Anne Arundel, he loses his vote altogether. But his neighbor, living it may be, not one hundred yards from him, yet on the opposite side of the line which divides the two counties, and thus having a residence in the first district, may by removing into Howard dis-

Citizenship

trict the day previous to the election, obtain his vote in the third district. So a voter residing in the twelfth ward of the city of Baltimore, and entitled to vote in the third district, may by removing into the eleventh ward, over night, claim his vote next day in the fourth district. It is therefore obvious that these persons have advantages and privileges not common to other citizens, and it is admitted that a remedy is necessary to produce equality. The amendment now offered, simply proposes that in all cases a voter shall have resided in his Congressional district or the district for which any officer is to be chosen, for six months previous to the election.

An erroneous opinion seemed to prevail, that he desired to restrain or restrict the right of suffrage. It was not so. His sole object was to secure to legal, honest, fair voters, the just effect of their votes, by preventing false and fraudulent votes.

The amendment he now offered, had a further provision, which would extend the right of suffrage to a considerable class of persons, who had never before enjoyed it, but as he thought ought to have it. Where a citizen now removes from one county to another, although all the time in the same district, he cannot vote unless he has resided six months in the county to which he last removed.

By his amendment, he would have the privilege of voting always in some part of that district, if he had not removed entirely beyond it. This provision would not only remedy the evils which had been suggested as likely to be felt by men in humble life, whose necessities required them frequently to change their place of residence, but would extend the right to quite a considerable number of persons now disfranchised.

Mr. PRESSTMAN said he had a much stronger objection to this amendment than to the five days restriction, as applicable to Baltimore. The ground taken by the Baltimore delegation, was that Baltimore had a population much greater in amount, than other counties; and the hardship of the proposition bore more hardly on them than others. He instanced the operation of the restriction on the residents of Baltimore, to show the effect of the restrictions. He did not wish to encourage or countenance any frauds; and concluded with expressing a hope that the right of a legal voter might not be infringed, lest an illegal vote should be admitted.

Mr. MERRICK could not believe it possible, that this body could put all the counties of Maryland on the same footing. He instanced the inequality to which this would give rise, and contended that laws should not be so made as to have a partial operation. The amendment now offered secured equal rights to all.

Mr. RIDGELY stated that he had voted against the five days restriction; but his difficulty was entirely obviated by this amendment, which broke up colonization, and gave sufficient protection to the legal voters. He would go for it.

The question was then taken on the substitute amendment of Mr. CHAMBERS, and it was agreed to

Mr. CHAMBERS then offered the following amendment:

"And in case any county or city shall be so divided as to form portions of different electoral districts for the election of Congressmen, Senator, Delegate or other officer or officers, then to entitle a person to vote for such officer, he must have been a resident of that part of the county or city which shall form a part of the electoral district, in which he offers to vote, for six months next preceding the election, but a person who shall have acquired a residence in such county or city, entitling him to vote at such election, shall be entitled to vote in the election district from which he removed until he shall have acquired a residence in the part of the county or city to which he has removed."

Which was twice read.

Mr. SELLMAN suggested that a delay of a day or two should be allowed for the consideration of this amendment, as he thought that some difficulty might exist in relation to it. It was a proposition for which all gentlemen would be likely to vote, if they could properly do so; and he cited, in illustration; a case in which difficulty might arise.

Mr. PARKE moved to strike out six months and insert "one," but, on a suggestion from the Chair, that the motion was not now in order, withdrew it.

Mr. CHAMBERS modified his amendment by inserting the word "ward."

Mr. SPENCER said that the proposition of the gentleman from Kent, struck him with great force, but he thought it was not entirely exempt from difficulties. Therefore, he asked a little more time for its examination. As the gentleman from Kent desires to promote the object we all desire in this proposition, it might be desirable to let it lie over until Monday. He stated, in brief, what were his objections, and as he wished to vote for it, if on examination these objections should be removed. He would vote that the amendment might be laid on the table and printed. It can be again offered in the House; or, after we have voted on some other amendments, might be brought up again in committee of the whole.

The CHAIR intimated that the motion was not now in order.

Mr. CHAMBERS made a further explanation, in which he suggested that as in all laws for practical purposes, hardships could not be in every case avoided. So it might possibly be in carrying out this law. The proposition now offered had been deliberated on, and the Committee had come to the conclusion that if we cannot extend the franchise to all, we may to some. He had no desire to press the vote now. It might be postponed until Monday, if the Convention was not prepared to act on it.

Mr. SPENCER did not wish to be understood as opposing the amendment. The gentleman from Kent, had forcibly presented his reasons. But his objections were not obviated. He hoped the amendment would be printed, after which he