

but he maintained that under that common law a negro could not have acted as a juror, but under this provision he contended that it would lead to the negro sitting in the jury box.

Mr. Brewer, of Baltimore city, said this subject was an issue which the people did not contemplate in the convocation of this Convention. If adopted, it was destined to be a firebrand among the people of the State; it gave unusual privileges to a large class of political aliens. He would not discuss the question as to whether the negro was competent to testify—that had already been exhaustively discussed—but would give his reasons why it should not be put in this constitution. They should not do work for the Legislature to undo. They had committed numberless matters now to the General Assembly which this body should have attended to. The whole subject had been revised by the committee on the declaration of rights, and he ventured to assert that if the people had imagined such a provision was to be inserted, this Convention never would have been called.

The business of this Convention was to prescribe the fundamental law, not to grasp at matters which it was for the people alone to settle. It was an experiment which was not demanded by public interests, or justified by any consideration of public policy. He had seen no petition from either black or white asking for the privilege. The inevitable fate of the negro was extermination, and it was useless to deny, as a competitor to the white man he, must go down; his destiny was that of the American Indian. It would not do to place rights in his hands at this time.

Mr. Ringgold had been surprised at some of the arguments from the gentlemen on the other side. They said no petitions had been sent here in favor of this measure, but had any petitions been sent here against it? For months now the subject had been discussed, and the men of the State, almost with unanimity, had come out in favor of it. He did not think it was the right of the negro to testify, but that it was his duty; he thought it was the duty of every man to testify. He thought it was of much more impotence for the white man than for the negro, for the latter to be admitted to testimony. The greatest