

right of suffrage shall be six months next preceding the election, but in case any voter otherwise qualified shall have less than six months residence in the district of his then residence, he shall not thereby lose his right to vote in the district in which he may have resided for the six months next preceding his removal."

Which was read.

The PRESIDENT. The chair rules this amendment at the present stage of the proceedings, out of order; from which decision, perhaps, the gentleman from Frederick, (Mr. Thomas,) takes an appeal.

Mr. THOMAS made some remarks, which will be published hereafter.

The PRESIDENT stated that the amendment offered by Mr. JOHNSON being pending, the substitute offered by Mr. THOMAS, was not in order.

Mr. THOMAS then withdrew his substitute.

Mr. GWINN said, that the arrangement in wards as proposed, would work great injustice. They were laid off so as to be equal in population, but they were now very unequal.

Mr. CHAMBERS made a few remarks which will be published hereafter.

Mr. THOMAS made some remarks which will be published hereafter.

Mr. BOWIE made some remarks which will be published hereafter.

Mr. JOHNSON made some remarks which will be published hereafter.

Mr. CHAMBERS I hope the debate upon the second branch of the subject will be deferred, until we take the vote upon the first.

Mr. MERRICK. I rose for the purpose of saying a few words upon the second branch, representing as I do, one of the very smallest counties in the State; at least a county made one of the smallest by the action of the Convention. Dissenting from the views expressed by the gentleman from Prince George's, I feel it becoming and proper in me to express that dissent, and to give succinctly my reasons for it. I have long looked upon this principle of electing delegates from districts, as a great principle of security and protection to the weak, and as a great principle of justice to the different portions of the country. I had the honor to be a member of Congress at the time referred to by the gentleman from Frederick, and I well recollect the arguments and facts which occasioned the adoption of the district system by the Congress of the United States. The same principle and arguments which rendered it necessary to divide the States into districts for the election of Representatives in Congress, apply to the division of the counties into districts for the election of Delegates to the Legislature. I look upon the system as the only means to secure to the smaller counties a just proportion in the Legislature of the State. What was the condition of things in Congress at the time the district system was adopted? It was evident that unless the district system should be adopted, the political influence of the smaller States would be utterly annihilated. New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, and

perhaps one other State, upon the general ticket system, electing by a small majority in each State, would hold the absolute control over the whole Union, even although the opposite party should be unanimous in every other State. Thus a very small minority of the people of the United States would bid defiance to the majority. Now let us apply the same principle to the State of Maryland. If you allow the large counties to elect by general ticket, will it not often happen that a small minority of the State may govern the whole State? Suppose in Charles county we elected our two representatives by five hundred majority; Baltimore sends here ten delegates by five majority, and thus, while the sentiment of the majority of the people of Baltimore city and Charles county taken together, would be in favor of the sentiment of Charles county—a majority of four hundred and ninety-five—yet that political sentiment would be expressed by two delegates, while the opposite sentiment would be represented by ten delegates. Is not that a flagrant wrong and injustice? Is it not violative of the republican principles of our government. Will you refuse to adopt a system which prevents the carrying out of that iniquity and injustice? I should prefer seeing the whole State districted; but I will vote for districting the city of Baltimore alone, if I cannot accomplish the other object also. How much weight will Charles, Calvert, St. Mary's, Dorchester, and Caroline counties have, with two delegates each? No more than the city of Baltimore alone, the delegates of which may be elected by an exceedingly small majority. Certainly, by districting the State we can much more nearly ascertain what the will of the people really is, than by electing *en masse*.

The gentleman from Prince George's speaks of the distinct individuality of the counties. That has all gone, sir, years ago. Formerly you had a compact by which each county stood upon the same platform in the House of Delegates, and the Senate was elected at large as the representative body of the whole State and had no peculiar locality. That was all changed in 1836. The Senate has become a conservative branch, and to the Senate alone are you to look for the individual counties. No one can pretend that the counties stand upon an equal platform here. That is all swept away. When members are elected by districts, they do not cease to become members of the county. This is a matter of detail only, as to the mode in which they shall be selected from the counties. They still remain identical in interest and feeling with the whole county.

The gentleman from Baltimore said that the resort to the district system by Congress was only with reference to popular numbers, and, therefore, these arguments were not applicable here. It is true that popular numbers govern in the apportionment of representatives of the U. States, but that is a mere subordinate matter. It is immaterial how you ascertain the number of persons entitled to elect. The question of districting is entirely distinct and apart from that. Each State in the Union was entitled to a given num-