

until it had first been ascertained that that doctrine could not be carried out. He referred to the long delay which had taken place in the British Parliament, before a similar question could be settled there. And was he to be told that he was not to urge a principle which he believed to be right, because the effort to establish it might be defeated? Or was that principle entitled to less respect and consideration, merely because it might not command the votes of a majority of the Convention?

Mr. DENT interposed to a point of order. The gentleman was gradually sliding into the discussion which it was the object of every motion to avoid.

The PRESIDENT decided that the question was debateable only to the extent of the propriety of a postponement.

Some conversation followed

Mr. GWINN resumed and briefly argued that whether these resolutions were abstractions or not, the course of proceeding indicated here was precisely that which had been adopted in the Virginia Convention and in the Convention which framed the Constitution of the United States. These resolutions contained within themselves all the elements of calculation, and if they were abstractions, he knew not what an abstraction was.

The two great issues which this Convention was sent here to try, were the questions of representation, and the election of officers. They had assembled for the purpose of making reforms. And he would ask what single reform, of all those, which, for fourteen years the people had agitated, had yet been made?

Mr. DENT again interposed to the question of order.

The PRESIDENT satisfied Mr. GWINN what the limit of debate was.

Mr. GWINN resumed. I have only followed in the track which other gentlemen have marked out. I have not made a comment that was not attacked by the remarks of the gentlemen who have preceded me. The friends of this reform are entitled to have this question brought up at an early day. And the best and wisest course, in my judgment, is first to take up a question about which there is so much dispute and feeling, and to leave all other matters to be disposed of after that shall have been settled.

Mr. HARBINE said that he did not concur in the opinion expressed by the gentleman from Baltimore city, as to the propriety of taking up this question at the present time. He believed it would be better for the Convention, and better for the people whom they represent, that the consideration of so important a subject should be postponed at least for a short time. Whether these resolutions were abstractions or concretions, was a matter of little moment to him; but he was satisfied that if the Convention should take up this great principle of representation, it would be discussed from day to day, and from week to week, for a length of time which no one could predict. He differed with the gentleman from Charles county, as to the chances of a speedy vote upon the proposition, whether or not it was

expedient to adopt federal numbers in fixing the basis of representation. He (Mr. H.) thought that the discussion of that question would occupy as much time as any other. So, in relation to representation according to population. That matter was not going to be passed over slightly. How long might this single proposition occupy the attention of the Convention? So with the restriction as to Baltimore city, there might be another protracted debate. It was manifest that all these questions, from their intrinsic importance, were going to occupy a good deal of time. He was willing to fix that time. But as much local feeling might probably be excited, and as the discussion was going to be prolonged, he believed that it would be politic and prudent to postpone the consideration of the matter for the present. The Convention, he suggested, should take up the report of the Committee on the bill of rights. As to the propriety of referring the resolutions back to the committee on representation, he disagreed with the gentleman from Baltimore city. He, (Mr. H.) thought there was as much propriety in sending this subject to a committee as any other.

Mr. STEWART, of Caroline, referring to the journals of the Convention, briefly recited the history of the proceedings of the Convention hitherto, in reference to this subject, for the purpose of shewing that there was some conflict in the action of this body, and of illustrating the propriety of some remarks which he had formerly made in reference to this question. He was proceeding with some remarks in reference to the subject matter, when

Mr. BRENT, of the city, called the gentleman to order.

The PRESIDENT reminded the gentleman from Caroline, that the question was on the postponement of the subject.

Mr. STEWART resumed—suggesting that in order to show the propriety of postponement, it was necessary to understand what had been done. The committee to which the subject had been committed, had reported certain resolutions. And now, when these resolutions come up for consideration, a motion is made to postpone them. He stated that he was ready to go on now, and should vote against any postponement. He was prepared to vote for the resolutions of the Chairman of the Committee, if brought before the Convention in a proper manner. The report on the elective franchise had been discussed, and if the Convention had rejected it, there would have been an end of it, unless it was re-committed. He was fearful that such would be the effect of the postponement of this question. The gentleman from Baltimore, had said that he was in a minority on the principle of making population the basis of representation. Others were in favor of a different basis. He thought it right that we should come to immediate action on the subject and settle the principle. He thought it was the duty of the committee to report some basis of representation, upon which the Convention might act. If it would be in order, he desired to move a substitute, as follows: