

BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS.

which that portion of the State is deeply interested. I do not object to the resolution, but to the motive with which the gentleman seems to have offered it.

Mr. PRESSTMAN, interposing. I do not understand the gentleman as imputing any improper motive to me?

Mr. DASHIELL. No improper motive—only—
(Laughter.)

Mr. PRESSTMAN, interposing. I am surprised that gentlemen representing a section of the State particularly interested in this question of slavery should object to a gentleman, even though he might come from a suspicious quarter, advocating his own views. It is precisely because, I believe that the views of the people of the city of Baltimore are misrepresented, that I am prepared to give this guarantee, and to give it in good faith.

Mr. BRENT, of Baltimore city. I hope that the Convention will adopt this resolution, and that it will be followed up by resolutions to the same effect, imposing restrictions upon the Legislature in respect to debts for works of internal improvement.

Mr. JOHNSON. I am not disposed to give any opinion upon this resolution at the present time; but I object to this mode of proceeding. The subject, I understand, is already before one of the committees of this body. Is it not, sir? (to the PRESIDENT.)

The PRESIDENT. It is.

Mr. JOHNSON, continuing. I cannot see why that committee should not make a report, and bring the subject up in due form for deliberate and proper consideration. Whether one portion of the State owns more or less slaves than another, is a question which I do not intend to discuss here. I am, myself, a slaveholder; and I should be the last man in the State, who would wish to see that question discussed in this Hall or out of it, unless some good end is to be attained. Let then, the regular course of proceedings be adopted, as more in consonance with the usages of a body of this character. I should be glad if the gentleman from Baltimore city, (Mr. PRESSTMAN,) would withdraw his resolution. If he does not, I shall move that it be laid upon the table.

Mr. PRESSTMAN. As I cannot see the propriety of postponing this matter, I must, with all respect to the gentleman who made the suggestion, decline to withdraw my resolution.

Mr. JOHNSON. Does the gentleman object, so to change the form of his proposition, as to make it one of enquiry?

Mr. PRESSTMAN. Yes, I do object.

Mr. JOHNSON. I shall not make the motion to lay on the table, but shall decline to vote on the resolution.

Mr. PRESSTMAN. Very well, sir. I object to making the resolution a mere proposition of enquiry, because it would not at all answer the purpose which I have in view.

The question was then taken and the resolution was adopted.

Mr. MERRICK submitted the following order:

“Ordered, That committee No. 14, be instructed to inquire into the expediency of providing in the Constitution for a Board of Public Works, to consist of a President and two members, to be chosen every third year, one member by the separate vote of each branch of the Legislature, and the President by joint ballot of both Houses, the person thus elected President of said Board to receive always the vote of the State of Maryland for the office of President of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, and the Legislature to provide suitable and adequate salaries for the persons composing said board.”

Mr. THOMAS suggested to the mover of the resolution, (Mr. MERRICK,) to avoid contrariety of opinion by omitting the latter part of it.

Mr. MERRICK replied, that the resolution was simply one of enquiry. It did not in any degree commit the Convention. The specifications in the order were nothing more than an indication of the individual preference of the member offering it.

Mr. THOMAS said, he should then indicate his preference by moving to strike out the latter part of the order.

Mr. MERRICK said, the motion would lead to discussion, and that was precisely what he wished to avoid.

Mr. THOMAS said it was his desire also, by the motion he had made, to avoid the necessity of discussion.

Mr. McLANE said he understood that this was a simple resolution of enquiry. According, therefore, to all courtesy and the practice of the body, it would, under any circumstances, be only proper that the order should go to the committee.

But he had risen for the purpose of saying that an order had heretofore been adopted, not exactly to the same effect or in the same terms, but on the same subject, and having in view the organization of a body similar to that which the gentleman, (Mr. MERRICK,) proposed. The Committee had had a meeting, and, in the absence of its Chairman, he, (Mr. McL.) believed he might be permitted to state, that they had come to a decision, and had directed a report to be submitted to the Convention. He did not make this statement with a view to preclude the order. It was not exactly in accordance with the views of the committee, as he understood the matter. The gentleman from Frederick, (Mr. THOMAS,) would see, however, that the adoption of the order would neither commit the House nor embarrass the committee.

Mr. DAVIS asked that the order might be again read.

The resolution was read and adopted.

INDEXES.

Mr. TUCK submitted the following resolution: “Resolved. That the committee on Printing be authorised to have a suitable index made to the Journal of proceedings, and also to the debates of the Convention.

Mr. McHENRY enquired as to the cost?