

secure the full enjoyment of the right of suffrage to those who are entitled to it, not to throw obstacles in its way. A citizen entitled to his vote in one county, ought not to be deprived of his suffrage because he has removed his residence over an imaginary line.

Judge CHAMBERS stated that it was impossible in the most perfect system of legislation so to regulate its operation as to prevent the occurrence of cases of individual hardship. In the application of principles it is necessary to keep in view the interests of communities. It is owing to the unavoidable defectiveness of all human legislation, that no rule can be adopted which will work with its general equity in every individual case. He insisted on the necessity of requiring a residence of six months in a county to entitle the resident to the right of voting in that county. Without such a provision, what was there to prevent a portion of the voters of one county from passing over the line to give their votes in another county? He did not mean that we were purer or better now than we have been. Frauds were perpetrated, and their was little difficulty in obtaining witnesses to sustain them, and to screen the perpetrators. It should be our aim to adopt every mode in our power to preserve the purity of the ballot-box. He requested the gentleman from Harford to withdraw his amendment.

Mr. BROWN said it was admitted that this was a question of time; and he put it to the experience of gentlemen, whether the most stringent laws we could authorize would be sufficient to prevent the perpetration of frauds. Where you would shut out one person from the ballot-box to prevent a fraudulent vote, you would exclude two honest voters, who are entitled to the exercise of their privilege. The gentleman from Kent and himself, differed on every principle connected with this question, and at a proper time he might offer an amendment to reduce the time.

Mr. McHENRY asked if he had understood the gentleman from Kent as requesting him to withdraw his amendment.

Judge CHAMBERS replied that he had done so for the purpose of expediting the business by permitting a vote to be now taken.

Mr. McHENRY said he had no objection, if there was a general understanding to that effect.

Judge DORSEY expressed a desire to make an amendment.

Mr. McHENRY declined to withdraw his amendment.

An indistinct and irregular conversation followed, which was sustained by a number of members, as to the phraseology of the amendment of Mr. CHAMBERS, the result of which was that—

Mr. CHAMBERS read the amendment in the form in which he desired it to be submitted to the Convention, and offered it as a substitute for the first section of the Report.

The question, therefore, recurred on the amendment of Mr. McHENRY (the vote requiring that a motion to perfect a proposition shall have precedence over a motion to strike out.)

Mr. McHENRY said, that the Convention had listened to so long a discussion on this subject, that he felt no disposition to protract it, especially as he felt that he could throw no new light upon it. He explained the object of his amendment to be to substitute a residence in the district for a residence in the county. He thought that it would effectually guard the purity of the ballot box, by making it impossible for a stranger to palm himself off as a resident. He was as anxious to promote the purity of the ballot box as any man in the Convention, but at the same time he was indisposed to place unnecessary restrictions upon it.

Mr. DORSEY (interposing.) Does the gentleman designate any length of time—any number of days?

Mr. McHENRY. I have not done so. I preferred to leave it to the experience of other members of the Convention to specify what a proper limit would be.

Mr. CHAMBERS would be willing, he said, to vote with all his heart for the proposition of the gentleman from Harford (Mr. McHENRY), if he (Mr. C.) could persuade himself that there were any thing in the proposed modification of the Report of the Committee, calculated to improve the chances of a pure election. He thought it probable that the suggestion made by the gentleman might in a certain degree effect such a result. But why not engraft it on the other? If the gentleman would superadd his proposition as a requirement, and the Convention would concur in it, he (Mr. C.) would gladly go with him. It need not displace any of the other qualifications.

Mr. McHENRY said he had already disavowed very distinctly any desire to impose unnecessary shackles on the exercise of the elective franchise. He referred to the injurious restriction which it was the object of his amendment to remove, and contended that it contemplated the substitution of something useful for that which was at present useless—that its adoption would prevent frauds and would lead to the detection of men who held themselves out as denizens when in fact they were strangers.

Mr. M'LANE asked if the gentleman from Kent had any distinct purpose in view in desiring this change from the phraseology of the old Constitution.

Judge CHAMBERS replied that he had none.

Mr. M'LANE. In that case he would move, by way of amendment to the proposition of the gentleman from Kent, to adopt the provision on this subject contained in the old Constitution, *totidem verbis*.

Judge CHAMBERS thought that the language ought to be rendered a little more explicit, or there might be some difficulty in ascertaining what sort of officers would be elected.

Mr. M'LANE did not apprehend any difficulty as likely to arise on this point by the adoption of the language of the old Constitution. Unless the Convention should desire for some distinct purpose a variation of the phraseology from the old article, he should feel some unwillingness to make a change. He would confess that he felt