of the minority. He had, therefore, thought it best to guard against this danger; but, if a majority of the Convention chose to authorise such a state of things, be it so. He could submit with as good grace as other folks. He could not, however, believe it would add much unction to their work—the new Constitution. He repeated his surprise at the opposition, the more particularly, because, when he gave notice of his intention to move it, he thought there were manifestations of approbation from all parts of the Hall.

Mr. McLane said, that the tone rather than the substance of the remarks of the gentleman from Kent, (Mr. Chambers,) induced him, (Mr. McL.,) to trespass a few moments longer upon the time of the Convention. He had not stated, nor insinuated, that the learned gentleman had found a precedent for his motion in the proceedings of any previous Conventions which had been held. He, (Mr. McL.,) was sure that the gentleman could not find a case in which a motion had been successfully made to engraft such a provision on the rules of proceeding. The gentleman was entitled to the merit of an original invention; and he, (Mr. McL.,) freely conceded that merit to him. It was true that a proposition identical, as he understood, with this had been introduced into the Massachusetts Convention, and had been deemed so objectionable on all sides as to have been voted down without a division. If, therefore, the gentleman from Kent, [Mr. Chambers,] had seen the notice of such a proposition in the Convention of Massachusetts, and was aware of the fate to which it was consigned, he must have had some courage undoubtedly to introduce such a proposition here, with any expectation that it would be successful. Surely he, (Mr. McL.,) did not mean to say, that the gentleman obtained his proposition from the Massachusetts or any other Convention. What he had said was, that such a rule never had, so far as his knowledge extended, been adopted in any legislative body or Convention—unless a precedent might be found in the provincial legislatures—a source to which he thought very few would be disposed at this day to go for parliamentary rules, or rules relating to the freedom of debate, or of action.

He had referred the gentleman to the Convention which formed the Constitution of the United States, where it would be found that the right of re-consideration and the practice were alike free.

Some conversation passed between Messrs. Chambers, of Kent, and McLane; after which

Mr. McLane resumed his remarks. He meant to say, that the practice of the Convention which formed the Constitution of the United States was uniform, in daily going back, for purposes of re-consideration, to questions which had been passed upon.

Mr. Bowie, [in his seat.] Without limitation as to time?

Mr. McLane. Without limitation as to time, so far as I know.

Mr. Chambers, of Kent. We will have the authority here, so that we may be certain.

Mr. McLane continued. He thought that if the gentleman would look to the Madisonian papers, or to any other authority professing to give the proceedings of the Convention, he would find that all these strict parliamentary rules were dispensed with. He did not mean to say that there were no written rules. He meant to say, that no question was disposed of at any one time, until the Convention came to take the vote on the close of the whole question.

In relation to the evil spoken of by the gentleman from Kent—the right of a minority to control the majority—he, [Mr. McL.,] did not differ with that gentleman. But he wished that the gentleman would carry the principle a little further into graver matters, rather than into mere matters affecting the rules of proceeding in this body—that he would agree to form a Constitution upon a basis by which the majority, and not the minority, should have the control of the Government. He, [Mr. McL.,] could not, therefore, dissent from the view expressed by the gentleman on this point. He, [Mr. McL.,] meant to say this: if the gentleman was afraid of the rule as it now stood, let him go back to Mr. Webster's rule and provide that a re-consideration shall only be moved by a member voting in the majority. What he, [Mr. McL.,] objected to, was that, after a vote had been taken, no matter how the opinions of gentlemen might have changed, no matter how egregiously they might have erred in the decision they had made, they could not go back and rectify the error, unless there were the same number of members here who voted in the first instance.

Mr. Chambers went into an examination of the proceedings in the Massachusetts Convention, insisting on the marked difference between that case and the one now before this House; and that nothing said by Mr. Webster, was intended to oppose the principle now proposed. The first amendment proposed to the Massachusetts rule, was by Mr. Bliss, "that no vote of the House should be reconsidered, except on motion of one of the majority." It was objected that this "would preclude any one who was absent, or did not vote, from moving a reconsideration." To this Mr. Webster replied, "it was proper it should operate in that manner." "No one should be absent, flattering himself he might remedy any mischief by moving a reconsideration." "He wished every subject to be thoroughly discussed, but he wished it to be done according to the rules of legislative bodies." "Every member conversant with the proceedings of deliberative assemblies, must have observed the inconvenience from the practice of frequently reconsidering votes which have been passed."

The rule was subsequently reported in such a form as to require as *many members of the Convention* to be present when a reconsideration is voted for, as were present when the original vote passed. Was that what is now proposed here? Not at all—nothing like it. What was the objection there? Hear it: "The House is now very numerous—gentlemen would be from inevitable accident called home, and the members of the House regularly decreasing. It