

would also be in the power of persons opposed to reconsideration, to keep out of the House, and in that way to gain their object." Yes, sir, one man by keeping out of the House might thereby prevent a reconsideration, though a number very much larger than that by which the original vote was carried, were ready and anxious to reconsider.

It was this which occasioned the strong remark of Mr. Varnum. A rule was then proposed "to allow of re-consideration, when as many members voted for it as were in favor of the original measure, provided, they were a majority of the members voting on the re-consideration—notice to be given and one re-consideration only to be allowed."

The defects in this rule as stated by Mr. Webster, and which induced him to declare it the most extraordinary of all propositions submitted, were amongst others, that on a question of adopting an amendment to the Constitution "a very small number, for example five, might be in favor of it and all the rest against it, yet in this case, by the proposed rule, the vote was *necessarity* to be re-considered." Again he said: "the rule as proposed was drawn as if *affirmative* votes only could be re-considered." Did these objections, Mr. C. asked, did either of them apply here? Most certainly not. An equal number of members need not be present, an affirmative or a negative vote may be re-considered, and he would add, a majority will have its decision enforced. All that had been quoted from Mr. Webster, was said in relation to the particular rule there discussed. He was for restricting the right of re-consideration, greatly more than it would be restricted by our rule, with the amendment now before us. The language on page 28—too long to quote at large—will be found to design any thing but a commendation on the facilities of re-consideration. But we were not left to grope through an argument to find Mr. Webster's views. After succeeding in convincing the Massachusetts Convention of the correctness of his views, he embodied them in a condensed form in the shape of a rule in the following words—to be found on page 29—"when a motion has been made and carried, in the affirmative or negative, it shall be in order for any member of the majority, to move for a re-consideration thereof, on the same or succeeding day." And on page 30, this rule was adopted, by a vote of two hundred and fifty to one hundred and twenty. This is precisely the rule of Congress, which we have thought it right and proper, greatly to enlarge. This rule, it will at once be seen, restricts the right to reconsider greatly more than the rule here would do, even when amended as now proposed. He trusted, that, however, in the first remarks he had made, without the book to consult, he had misapplied some of the remarks there used, he had now fully satisfied the Convention that he was not proposing a measure which would make a re-consideration more difficult than Mr. Webster's did.

The gentlemen from Cecil does not deny or propose to remedy the evils against which this proposition is directed, but rests his opposition

on the ground of its "novelty." Why certainly it is novel. And why novel? Simply for the reason that the existing rule is novel, entirely novel, not known or adopted in any Convention or legislature, whose history is known to us. And was it not 'of course,' that modifications of this "novel" rule must be "novel" also. He did not suppose that in this presence, the argument *per se*, that a measure was novel, should condemn it.

The gentleman had referred to the rule said to be adopted in the Convention which formed the Constitution of the United States. No other evidence had been furnished of the existence of any such rule, except what was said of it by one of the members in the course of debate in Massachusetts. He could not, of course, admit or deny what was the character or purport of a rule of which neither he or the gentleman were informed. So much for the proposed alteration of the rule, about which he cared but little, but wished it understood.

The gentleman from Cecil had commented on his, (Mr. C.'s,) profession of republicanism, intimating a want of consistency in not carrying out the principle of "the right of a majority to rule." He did understand the allusion, not being aware he had on any occasion here advocated the doctrine that a minority should control the majority. He had expected the majority of this Convention to make the new Constitution. He held they were bound to do so, and he, for one, was ready and constantly had been, to employ himself in this duty. He was every hour of every day in his chair, and intended so to be, to the neglect of other urgent and important duties, to accomplish this very purpose. It was very true that those who were so loud in their demands for reform, cannot now determine amongst themselves, what is the reform needed. That was no fault of his, nor should the fault be at his door, if no Constitution was made. He was always ready to vote, and if out-voted to submit.

He was not, therefore, to be impeached by anything he had done here when he claimed to be a republican. He was one—one of the old stamp—had been so all the days of his life. The first political speech he ever made, the first vote he ever gave, were made and given in and for that school, and there he had remained in it to this day. This was dating, perhaps, beyond some gentleman who had attached themselves to later schools of republicanism, and which, because later, were of course improvements; as the book-makers say of their new editions, "revised, corrected and improved." These new editions sometimes command a higher price, but they do not always contain better matter. He was a republican in nothing more sternly than in the doctrine, that in every question properly for decision, a majority should govern.

Mr. BRENT, of Baltimore city, said that much time had, undoubtedly, been consumed in deciding questions of reconsideration, but still more time, he thought, had been consumed in reconsidering the rules of the Convention, because, no sooner was one set of rules adopted, than it was immediately met by a motion to reconsider. He