

by its application, of any subject-matter before it, whenever they believed that the discussion had been sufficiently extended, to enable the members to give an intelligent vote.

Some further remarks were made by Messrs. CHAMBERS and PRESSMAN which will be published hereafter.

Mr. BRENT, of Baltimore city, said, that when he called attention to the fact that but few members were listening—although it appeared to be the case that some were listening who were, at the same time, reading newspapers—it was with no unkind motives, and was intended as no reflection upon any member of the Convention. On the contrary, it was intended as a strong illustration of the evil to which he had referred.

Mr. B. proceeded to illustrate his objection to the amendment proposed, by supposing that one hundred and three members, being the whole number, should be present, and that they should be so equally divided that fifty-two should be in favor of the proposition and fifty-one against it. If one of the fifty-two should change his opinion and desire a reconsideration, there would be but fifty-two desiring the reconsideration; and inquired whether it was just and proper that the majority should not have the right, in that contingency, to reconsider.

Mr. CHAMBERS, of Kent, said, that as that was a possible, though not a very probable case, he would modify his proposition so as to allow an equal number of votes to reconsider.

Mr. BRENT proceeded to show that with a less number, the same thing might happen. There being sixty-one members present, for example, if to-day thirty-one were in favor of a proposition and thirty against it; and if to-morrow one of them should change, there would still be but thirty-one in favor of a reconsideration. He was in favor of the rule recommended by all parliamentary experience, and had no doubt that the amendment was carried inconsiderately.

Mr. McLANE, of Cecil, wished to place himself right; not feeling that justice had been done to his argument by the gentleman from Kent. When he had risen this morning to interrupt the harmony of the majority, by whom the gentleman from Kent seemed to suppose that he was supported, he had not the least conception whether there was a majority for or against the proposition. It was not his custom to reflect whether in any proposition he thought it to be his duty to make, he should be sustained by the majority, or should be found in the minority. He arose for the purpose of expressing his views upon the question before the House; and, having done that, he was content to leave the question with the Convention. The gentleman from Kent had greatly the advantage of him, if he deemed it an advantage, in starting much earlier in the career of Jeffersonian republican. They had started very wide apart, and if he were to judge from what he had seen, they were likely to end just as far apart as when they started. Either one or the other had totally mistaken the Jeffersonian policy; and they must remain the antipodes of each other in respect to that policy. They seemed to be upon different radii of a circle, and

their distance seemed to be widening as they go. When they come to leap off from that circle to the great ocean beyond, whatever their lot might be, he suspected that neither would be much inclined to dispute about Jeffersonian politics. They would have other cares to engross their attention.

The gentleman had misconceived his argument, and had not done justice to the authorities he (Mr. McL.) had cited. He had not spoken of the rule as it now stood. He had conceded that the rule was an improper one. He thought it prudent and wise to go back to the original rule—the universal rule of every parliamentary body—and to require the motion to reconsider to be made by a member who voted in the majority. His objection was to the mode of correcting the evil. He would now proceed to call the attention of the Convention to the rule proposed in Massachusetts.

The rule reported by the committee, in the Massachusetts Convention, was as follows:

“No motion for the reconsideration of any vote shall be sustained, unless made on the day on which such vote passes, and a return of the Convention be then made and entered on the journal, when the question was not taken by yeas and nays; every such motion shall lie on the table one day before it shall be taken up for consideration, and shall not be taken up, unless as many members are present in Convention, as were present when such vote passed, and not more than one motion for the reconsideration of any one question shall be sustained.

The record shows that Mr. Dana moved to strike out a clause requiring the same number of members to be present when the motion for reconsideration was sustained, as were present on passing the original vote. He considered the rule too strict, and referred to the Convention which framed the Constitution of the United States, in which the right of reconsideration was exercised with the greatest freedom. Mr. Sibley thought it would be impossible ever to reconsider a motion, if this rule prevailed. It would be in the power of persons opposed to reconsideration, to keep out of the house, and in that way to gain their object. After a long discussion, the restriction was voted down; and then Mr. Morton made the motion to amend “by striking out the whole rule and inserting one which should allow of reconsideration 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 question of reconsideration—notice to be given, and one reconsideration of the same question only to be allowed.”

The proposition, as originally introduced, has been more stringent than Mr. Morton's amendment, since it had required a majority. It was now, however, placed upon the same principle with that amendment, requiring only an equality of votes upon the reconsideration, with the number originally in favor of the measure.

Mr. CHAMBERS suggested that there was still this difference, that his own amendment allowed