

corrupting purse of wealth might be increased beyond what it is now. Poor tenants might be turned out, so as to prevent them from exercising their legal right to vote. The gentleman from Calvert, (Mr. SOLLERS) had said that every State had adopted this principle.

Mr. SOLLERS explained. He had said that every State had acknowledged the right to impose restrictions on the Elective Franchise by a Convention.

Mr. STEWART, resuming. So had every State acknowledged the principle of representation. One gentleman had referred to the language of the Constitutions of some of the States. Gentlemen are in the practice of quoting just so much of an authority as sustains the position they assume, while they reject what is not in conformity with their particular views. He indicated his intention at a proper time to introduce a homestead exemption in order that every man might have an interest in the State, as was designed by our original Constitution, and which would tend much to purify the ballot box, by elevating the citizens. The gentleman from Calvert, said, that the Constitution required a residence of twelve months in the State, and of six months in the county. Did the gentleman know why this residence restriction was inserted in the Constitution? It was not so much to prevent frauds, as to give every voter an interest in the State. A citizen of Delaware would not be permitted to vote in Caroline, because he had no interest in the county.

He then adverted to the distinction which exists in consequence of the division of Baltimore city into two districts, and of the arrangement of Howard District and Anne Arundel county into districts, contending that this exception to the general rule in the State, was a convenience, and did not change the result of an election, no matter in which of the districts the voter cast his vote. The fact of his residence gave him an interest there. The law of Congress prescribes five years as the term before foreigners can be naturalized, that they may acquire an interest in the country, and he was opposed to any distinction between naturalized foreigners, who had resided in the State and county the required term, and native citizens. He was aware that there were conflicting opinions on this point, some gentlemen being desirous of restricting foreigners from the enjoyment of the Elective Franchise, not reflecting that some of these may be allied by blood to some of the original framers of our Constitution.

He knew not how the five days restriction could prevent frauds, unless on the ground that by excluding all voters, you exclude the illegal. We are engaged in framing an organic law; and while we are doing this, we should secure the legal voters in their rights, and prevent those who have no legal right from participating in the Elective Franchise.

Mr. PRESTMAN was willing to acknowledge that frauds had been committed upon the Elective Franchise in the city of Baltimore, but the great question was, is the proposed remedy likely to abate the evil? He thought it would rather

tend to increase than diminish the evil. In making the admission, that election frauds had been perpetrated, he did so because he believed, to deny that would induce the Convention to receive any future statement of his in a spirit of doubt and cavil; and he was unwilling to lose even the small influence he might enjoy in that honorable body. He claimed to be well acquainted with public sentiment in the city of Baltimore, but any thing he should say was upon his own responsibility. Each member of the city delegation was alike responsible for what he should say, to his constituency. You could not find any individual in Baltimore city who would say that no fraud was committed on the ballot box, but he denied the extent to which it is alleged to be carried on there, the vigilance of party prevented. The citizens of Baltimore are not alone responsible for the fraudulent abuse of the Elective Franchise. It has been frankly admitted by honorable gentlemen on this floor, that there are fraudulent practices in the counties, and that large sums of money are contributed for electioneering purposes. Money is raised in the city of Baltimore to be used throughout the State. He believed his friend from Calvert had honestly introduced the Registry Act, and intended it not to operate in Baltimore city alone, but through the State.

Mr. SOLLERS. Through all the State?

Mr. PRESTMAN said he so understood, and when that subject should come up he would endeavor to show that a Registry might be made a mere instrument of fraud in the hands of the party to which the Registers might belong. He adverted to the practice of bribery as the present source of evil, and which existed in the counties to a great extent. He could put his hand upon honorable gentlemen in the Convention, who had admitted the existence of this species of corruption.

Mr. SOLLERS. The gentlemen will speak for himself; he has no right to put his hand on me.

Mr. PRESTMAN. Honorable gentleman around me have frankly made the admission, and it cannot be denied, though he believed that some few counties were not obnoxious to the charge.

He went on to state the requirements of the law as it now exists, and denies that a mere temporary residence entitled a party to vote in an election district. The residence must be *bona fide*, without the *animus revertendi*. The amendment proposing five days residence, would open the door to fraud, and render it more easy of perpetration. He was opposed to experimenting upon the right of suffrage. Like in many cases of sickness, it was better to rely upon the healthful re-action of the system, than resort to nostrums. Entire purity was not to be expected—the church itself was not pure. He regretted that the discussion had led to any disagreement between the gentleman from Calvert and the gentleman from Cecil. He did not believe that the former had intended to impute unworthy motives to the latter. In a Maryland Convention, when a gentleman designed to be personal, he would find language so to express himself as not