

Mr. THOMAS. Not more than ten or fifteen.

Mr. DORSEY thought, that if they should have before them a proposition to district the State, they would be here till May.

Mr. JOHNSON said, that the proposition which he had made was spread upon the journal, and its distinct object was to district the State. It might become a question for them to decide, and it was important that they should examine the subject. It was certainly within their power, and they could do it better than commissioners. Where the counties were represented, and where most of the members were familiar with localities, he saw no difficulty with the Convention undertaking the task, provided, they had a map and census. They had the census, and all they wanted was map. He thought it was important that the map should be lithographed. It could do no harm, and might effect its object.

Mr. DORSEY said that he was present when the work was examined and compared. It appeared to him to be a very incorrect one, and he did not think that any advantage could be derived from it. He did not believe that the Convention possessed such information as would enable it to district the State, and do justice in respect to numbers or any thing else; as for example, Somerset county was divided into ten election districts, the number of delegates, four in all human probability; the election districts must, some of them at least, be cut up into sections, which must be attached to different delegate districts; how is it possible by inspection of the plat and census, to ascertain the population of each section of an election district? Divisional lines must be run at random, without regard to calls for roads, creeks, &c., or natural objects of any kind, and without employing the county surveyor to run these lines, and furnishing him with one of the plats before us; no voter living near any such divisional line, could tell to what delegate district he belonged, or where he must vote; and so loose and inaccurate are the plats, that the surveyor whom they employed, could not ascertain within, perhaps, mile or miles the spot, at which the divisional line, which he was called upon to run, should commence or terminate; and endless uncertainty and confusion must be the result.

The lines of the election districts were never run by course and distances, and consequently the plat before us, is the mere guess work of the surveyor, and is incapable of any accurate, or indeed any location upon the ground, by divisional lines, to be prescribed by this Convention. Arbitrary divisional lines of this kind are wholly inappropriate to the location of election or delegate districts. Election districts have always, as the members of this House may well know from reference to their respective counties, been made by persons appointed for the purpose, who ride over the county, or having without the aid of a surveyor, a perfect knowledge of localities; and their limits are defined by county lines, creeks, rivers, roads, &c., objects

well known by the voters in their neighborhood; not as is here now proposed to be done, by running conjectural lines, without knowing their results as to population. This Convention, from the want of local knowledge, are wholly incompetent to accomplish the districting of the counties, by dividing them into delegate districts, with nothing but the plat and census before it.

The counties are divided into a greater number of election districts than they were entitled to delegates. These districts would have to be cut up. He understood that the present census in some counties, was taken in such a way that the number of voters and population in each election district could not be ascertained. He would not be positive, but believed he had heard it so stated by a distinguished member of the Convention, not now in his seat, that the census in his county was not taken in accordance with the existing election districts. Thus it would be impossible for the Convention to district the State. It must be done by persons, competent judges of the population of the counties, who could make as nearly as may be equal divisions in point of population. The lithographing of this map would cause useless delay and expense. The districting of the State should be done by the Legislature, who could appoint proper commissioners for that purpose. Besides, he contended that if this system of districting by this Convention should be adopted, he was convinced that the power would be exercised, not with a view to the objects for which the people desired it, but merely for the promotion of political partizan purposes.

Mr. RANDALL thought that this money would be well spent whether this Convention could district the State or not. He was not prepared now to pass an opinion as to what would be the best mode of districting the State. He desired information on this subject, but it can no where be obtained—there is no mode prescribed by law requiring maps districting the counties to be prepared, and none now exist. He believed, from the character of the gentleman who had prepared this map, that it would give important information to the State as well as to this Convention.

But suppose this map did not contain satisfactory information to enable this Convention to district the State, it would be circulated throughout the State, be subjected to the examination of those who know the boundaries of the various districts in the counties, and thus have the errors of this map, if any exist, corrected. This Convention may confer on the Legislature the power to divide the State into districts. The Legislature would, therefore, come here at the next session with all this information elicited by the circulation of this map, and be prepared with amendments so as judiciously and fairly to district the State—in case this Convention do not perform that duty. Again, this cost is to be only fifty dollars; to the generosity of the gentleman who gratuitously prepared this map for the Convention we owe the obligation of at least making its value known to the public. It will, more-