

freemen of the province, had been personally present at such General Assemblies, and had consented to and approved of the making and enacting such laws”

It has here been clearly shown that in the first attempt to establish a house of Burgesses, the freemen at their option might vote for a representative, or that, if they pleased, they could represent themselves in person; thus proving, that throughout the early history of this State, there was no inequality of political rights, and that each freeman had his equal and incontestable right to participate equally with all the rest in the enactment of the laws of the province.

This charter granted by Charles, whilst he was despoiling his own people in England of their just liberties, planted those sacred rights of freedom here in an age when republican government was but little understood in Europe.

I would ask are the people entitled to less consideration now than then? Are we less intelligent than our ancestors were upwards of two centuries ago? Are a republican representative government less understood or less appreciated now than then? He hoped not; he did not believe it to be so, although many on this floor hold a very different belief.

Having demonstrated that those who thought with him were not innovating upon the past but were only trying to restore to the people their just participation in government as it formerly existed. He would now advert to the second branch of enquiry, and prove conclusively that the single district plan which he now and had for long years advocated, was not contrary too, but in accordance with the early usage and laws of this State.

In turning to another part of the venerable old volume of Francis Bacon, he would show that this system was adopted in the formation of the first house of Burgesses long after the settlement of the Maryland colony.

“Act and orders, enacted, made and ordered, by William Stone, Esqr., Governor, with the consent of the upper and lower Houses of Assembly, at a general session thereof, begun the sixth and ended the twenty-ninth day of April, 1650.

“N. B. To this Assembly, Burgesses were sent as delegates or representatives of the freemen of the several hundreds, there being then only two counties, viz: St. Mary's and the Isle of Kent county; that part of the Province, then called Providence, being erected into a county, by the name of Anne Arundel, this present session, chapter 8. The number of delegates were fourteen, viz:

“For St. Mary's Hundred,	2
St. Inigoe's,	1
St. Michaels,	2
St. George's,	2
Newtown,	3
St. Clements,	1
Kent Island,	1
Providence,	2
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“The separation of this Assembly into two distinct Houses, was confirmed by an act passed the first day of their sitting, a copy whereof is here inserted; and the lower house chose Mr. James Cox, one of the Burgesses of Providence, to be their Speaker, and William Bretton for their clerk.

CHAPTER I.

“An act for settling of this present Assembly, passed 6 h April, 1650. Be it enacted by the Lord Proprietary, with the advice and consent of the Council and Burgesses of this Province now assembled,

“That the present Assembly, during the continuance thereof, be held by way of Upper and Lower House, to sit in two distinct Houses, apart, for the more convenient dispatch of the business therein to be consulted of: And that the Governor and Secretary, or any one or more of the Council, for the Upper House; and Mr. John Hatch, Mr. Walter Beane, Mr. John Medley, Mr. William Brouge, Mr. Robert Robins, Mr. Francis Posie, Mr. Philip Land, Mr. Francis Brooke, Mr. Thomas Mathews, Mr. Thomas Sterman, Mr. George Manors, Burgesses for St. Mary's county; Capt Robert Vaughan, commander and Burgess for the Isle of Kent county; Mr. George Puddington, and Mr. James Cox, Burgesses of that part of the county now called Providence, or any five or more of them, for the Lower House, together with the Clerk of that House for the time being, who shall from time to time assemble themselves at the time and place to be by the Governor, (or whomsoever of the Council he shall, by writing under his hand, depute for that purpose,) from time to time appointed, during this present Assembly, shall have the full power of, and be, two Houses of Assembly, to all intents and purposes.

“And all bills, which shall be passed by the said two Houses or the major part of both of them, and enacted or ordained by the Governor, shall be Laws of the Province, after publication thereof under the Hand of the Governor, and the Great Seal of the Province, as fully, to all effects, in Law, as if they were advised and assented unto by all the freemen of the Province personally.”

It is plainly proven here that the district plan and the division of counties entered into the very organization of the first house of Burgesses as well as regard for the population of the several hundreds. Whilst St. Mary's county was divided and represented by hundreds, some hundred sent but one member, some two, whilst St. George's sent three.

Thus the plan which I have proposed and advocate has this high and ancient example to sustain and justify it. The plan I advocate is to divide all the counties and city of Baltimore into single districts of contiguous territory as nearly equal in population as may be, and each district to send one member. The same principle with some slight variation was proposed in the North Carolina Convention in 1835, by Mr Gaston—the most distinguished lawyer and statesman of that day in his State. As it may be interesting to this Convention to hear the views of one who