

Mr. CRISFIELD said that he should prefer that the rule should not be suspended. He should have occupied but a very few moments longer, and he should prefer to waive the little that he had further to say rather than to have the rule suspended.

Mr. BROWN hoped the Convention would not suspend the rule. They had been now nearly six months in session, and these important questions had been examined by gentlemen who had made up their minds as to how they should vote. If they should suspend this rule, he did not know whether they would ever get through with their business.

Mr. BOWIE thought there was no occasion for remarks, as the gentleman had refused to proceed.

Mr. MERRICK did not believe that the gentleman would refuse the courtesy of the Convention.

Mr. STEPHENSON demanded the year and nays on the motion to suspend the rule.

Mr. CRISFIELD hoped the Convention would not suspend the order. He had but a few words more to say, and it was not worthy the attention of the body. He hoped his friend from Charles would withdraw the motion to suspend.

Mr. MERRICK replied that he would not insist on the motion. He was desirous of hearing the gentleman, as he was giving him useful and valuable information, which he as well as other gentlemen stood in need of. He, therefore, withdrew his motion.

Mr. BOWIE then said: I did not wish this question to come up to-day. My health is such as will not permit me to go into an examination of the question as fully as I desire. I was in hopes that some other gentlemen of the committee, who were prepared to take up this feature of the report, and to have submitted their views upon the subject, would have done so. The Convention, however, have thought proper not to gratify me in the desire which I expressed, to have this matter postponed until tomorrow; and I find myself forced at this time to express to them what opinions I may have formed upon this question, and to vindicate the report of the committee upon this subject.

I consider that in this whole matter of judicial reform, it is our bounden duty to carry out, as nearly as we can, the great fundamental and cardinal principles which you have incorporated in your bill of rights, and which, when the government was first established, was incorporated in the bill of rights of 1776.

Mr. SPENCER. The gentleman seems to express a desire not to discuss this question on account of indisposition. I intend myself, as the gentleman from Somerset has done, to give some facts upon the subject. It is my intention to speak upon this question, as I have offered an amendment. If the gentleman is too indisposed to proceed, he can yield the floor to me.

Mr. BOWIE. You intend to speak against it, and therefore I will go on. I ask no favors of my friend from Somerset on this point, nor do I mean to ask the further indulgence of this House.

I conceive it to be our solemn duty to come as nearly as possible to the great requisition contained in our bill of rights in forming the judicial system, and I ask the attention of this body to the emphatic language contained in the 17th article of that instrument, which we have reaffirmed by a unanimous vote of this Convention. It is as follows:

"That every freeman, for any injury done him in his person or property, ought to have remedy by the course of the law of the land, and ought to have justice and right freely, without sale, fully without any denial, and speedily without delay, according to the law of the land."

*Speedily without delay*—this is the most important enumeration in the whole catalogue. We agree, then, as a cardinal principle, that in forming a system of judicature, it is our duty to establish such a system as will admit us to justice most speedily and without delay. Then, let me ask how the system of my friend from Somerset (Mr. Crisfield) will work and compare with this great principle in the bill of rights? He proposes to divide the State into eight judicial districts, in some cases to put three counties together, and in other cases to put four in one district. He proposes to have one judge for each judicial district. One judge to attend to the orphans' court business, the common law business, the equity business and the appeals from the magistrates' decisions in that district. This is the proposition submitted by the gentleman from Somerset. The whole to be done by one judge, who is to be elected by the people of a district, to be composed of three counties in some cases, and four in others. Now, it seems to me that my friend is superadding to the evils under which the people of the State are already suffering. Your State is already divided into six judicial districts. You have now three judges to ride the circuits, who do all the judicial business in a judicial district composed of counties. But as the system now stands, you have a separate orphan's court, and you have a high court of chancery to assist them and relieve them of much of these duties. My friend from Somerset proposes that there shall be eight judicial districts, with one judge to each district, and that this one judge shall discharge all these duties. I say, in the onset, that the proposition is too plain to be argued; that if the present system shows that the judicial administration in this State has not been satisfactory to the people, if justice has not been speedily enough administered under a system which is not clogged by these additional labors, how much worse will it be under a system of judicial districts by which it is proposed to superadd to these judges additional labors, and at the same time to reduce the number of agents to be employed? If three judges in a judicial district do not satisfactorily discharge the duties now imposed upon them by existing laws, when they have not the orphans' court jurisdiction, when they have not even the exclusive chancery jurisdiction, how, in the name of common sense, are we to be bettered in our condition by cutting down the judges to one, and superadding