

sioners shall provide for any vacancies happening in their respective counties, between regular periods of election as aforesaid."

Mr. BRENT, of Baltimore city, moved for a division of the question on the amendment, being in these words: "one wreck-master for Worcester county;"

And the question was accordingly taken on the first branch of the amendment, and

It was agreed to.

The question was then taken on the second and last branch of the amendment, and

It was also agreed to.

The fourth section of the report was then read, as follows:

Sec. 4. The county authorities, now known as levy courts, or county commissioners, shall hereafter be styled county commissioners, and shall be elected by general ticket, and not by districts, by the voters of the respective counties. Said commissioners shall exercise such powers and duties only, as the Legislature may from time to time prescribe; but such powers and duties, and the tenure of office, shall be uniform throughout the State; and the Legislature shall, at or before its second regular session, after the adoption of this Constitution, pass such laws as may be necessary for ascertaining and defining the powers, duties, and tenure of office of said commissioners; and until the passage of such laws, the present county authorities shall have and exercise all the powers and duties now exercised by them under the laws of this State.

On motion of Mr. CONSTABLE,

Said section was amended by inserting after the word "counties" in the fourth line, these words:

"On the first Wednesday of November, 1851, and on the same day in every second year forever thereafter."

The question then recurred on the adoption of the section as amended.

Mr. McHENRY moved to amend the section as amended, by substituting the following, being the first three sections of the report of Committee No. 7.

Sec. 1. On the first Wednesday of November eighteen hundred and fifty-one, and the same day every second year thereafter, the qualified voters of each county shall, by general ticket, elect from amongst themselves, the same number of persons, to constitute the board of commissioners for such county as it may then be entitled to representatives in both Houses of the General Assembly. The term of service of these commissioners shall commence on the first Tuesday in January next, succeeding their election, and shall continue for two years thereafter or until their successors shall have entered on the discharge of their duties. Each such board of commissioners shall possess all the powers and perform all the duties heretofore possessed and performed by the commissioners or levy court of the county, until otherwise provided by law; and it shall be the duty of the General Assembly, at its first session after the adoption of this Constitution to pass an act, prescribing and defining the

powers and duties of the boards of commissioners, so as to render these uniform throughout the State. The legislature shall confer on these boards full power to regulate the municipal affairs of the respective counties, including the opening, altering and closing of county roads, the building of county bridges and edifices and the management and control of all county property, together with such additional local legislative and administrative powers as may be deemed expedient.

Sec. 2. Every commissioner of a county shall receive out of the county treasury three dollars per diem, besides three cents for each mile travelled over in going to and returning from the county seat, for each day of his attendance at the sittings of his board.

Sec. 3. The commissioners of each county, as soon as may be, after their first election, under this Constitution shall proceed to divide such county into election districts compact in form and nearly equal in size so that no such district shall contain more than five hundred voters. A distinct description of the metes and bounds of the districts so established shall be recorded in the office of each board and published for the information of the inhabitants of the county. And whenever, after any election, it shall appear that more than five hundred votes have been cast in any election district, it shall be the duty of the existing board of commissioners for the county in which such district may be situated, to divide the same into two others in the manner above prescribed.

Mr. JOHN NEWCOMER said:

That in his county they had three commissioners now, and this would impose five upon them, and he was opposed to it.

Mr. BROWN was opposed to it, for two reasons. In Carroll county the number of commissioners would be even, and they would find difficulty in acting when equally divided. He was also of opinion that the whole subject should be left to the legislature.

Mr. JOHNSON asked for a division of the question—to be taken section by section.

Mr. McHENRY stated that he had dissented in some respects from the report which he had now moved as an amendment. It was a matter of considerable difficulty to determine the number; and they had hit upon the plan of giving each county the same number as the number of delegates in the General Assembly, as the plan most likely to be acceptable to the Convention. It was only adopted as a matter of compromise, and they would be satisfied to have the numbers changed. The matter could hardly be considered as complete until some number should be specified.

Mr. BUCHANAN agreed with the gentleman from Washington, (Mr. Newcomer.) He was utterly opposed to increasing the number of the commissioners. He had had a little experience upon this subject. He had had the honor, some years ago, of introducing the first bill which ever was introduced in relation to the election by the people of these agents, in lieu of the levy court.