

here until Thursday night before I left. This has occupied the time of the convention upwards of a month; and the time of the body has been consumed in that way.

Mr. PUGH. I understand that the gentleman tried his best to get away, but was unable to do so.

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. I did. When I came here I found it was unnecessary for me to be here. I saw the president and had a conversation with him upon the subject, and I saw other members; and they said they had had an informal understanding of some sort to meet again on Tuesday. I thought it unnecessary to be here, and understood that the rebels were in my county, and I wanted to get home.

Mr. PUGH. That was precisely my case.

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. Now, with reference to this very important subject, does the gentleman recollect that this very subject occupied the attention of the convention of 1850, at least five or six weeks—longer perhaps than any other subject brought to the notice of the convention? Are we to consider and act upon a question of this momentous importance in a day? Gentlemen are too anxious to leave here. They are too anxious to return home. I am equally anxious with them; but I am here to discharge the duty I owe to my constituents, and I shall remain here if it is until Christmas, if it becomes necessary to do so in the discharge of the duties which devolve upon me.

My friend from Howard (Mr. Sands) says that he does not, and the majority do not intend to impose any rule upon the minority they do not come under and submit to themselves. Let me tell the gentleman they stand in a different position from the minority of the convention. We are here to try to convince those gentlemen that they are wrong in their premises and their conclusions.

Mr. SANDS. That is exactly what we want—to convince you that you are wrong.

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. We are here to try to show the gentleman by reasoning, by bringing to their minds lights which perhaps they have not yet received, to show them that they are in error, to convince them that we are right and they are wrong.

Mr. ECKER. I do not like to interrupt the gentleman, but I rise to a point of order, that according to an existing order no gentleman can speak more than once on the same question.

The PRESIDENT. There is a rule of the convention that no member shall speak more than once until others desisting to speak shall have had an opportunity. The chair does not interpose when a member rises the second time, unless some member objects.

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. I was not aware of such an order, so many orders and resolutions are adopted in my absence. Really

I am not responsible for anything done in my absence. I have only to say that although this is an important question—I think at least half an hour ought to be given to any one who desires to participate in the discussion of this question—it is not a question which admits of very extended debate. The considerations to be brought to bear in considering the question are limited, and I should suppose no one would occupy over half an hour. I should be perfectly satisfied with a speech of that length. But certainly in fifteen minutes, a man cannot, no matter how he may condense, consider this question in all its bearings. I hope therefore that the convention, in consideration of the importance of the subject, whether they consider us or not, whether they consider the courtesies which ought to characterize conventions or deliberative bodies, or not, will give us the power of addressing the convention on this important subject at least thirty minutes.

Mr. SANDS. Will my friend compromise between ten and thirty minutes, and say twenty? I will be as liberal as he is.

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. I will.

Mr. SANDS. Then I will withdraw my amendment and move twenty minutes.

Mr. DAVIS, of Charles. I move to insert thirty minutes.

Mr. THOMAS moved the previous question.

The PRESIDENT. The chair has not yet ruled upon the question of order.

Mr. CHAMBERS. I am very sorry to see this continued, if not increasing disposition to arrest debate upon subjects of such vital interest in the community. I beg the attention of the convention to the fact that they themselves, on a former occasion, considered thirty minutes too short a time to discuss this subject. It is a matter involving statistics to a very considerable extent. Does not every gentleman familiar with the subject see at once that this is a matter in which the facts necessary to elucidate a proposition are spread over a surface which will necessarily require a very considerable time?

It is claimed that it places us all in the same category. I think that is a great mistake, an entire mistake. There is known to be a large majority here who can assemble at any time. Upon an intimation from the chair a particular portion of the convention can remain in session and can discuss questions without any reference to time. If my friend from Howard (Mr. Sands) confines himself to ten minutes in those discussions, I shall be very much surprised to hear it. There they discuss questions, form conclusions, and then come into the house to tell us what they have agreed upon.

Mr. THOMAS. Have not the minority the same privilege?

Mr. CHAMBERS. We have the privilege of a man standing at the bar before his judge. You may just as well tell me that the counsel