

best to do substantial justice to all the people and all the interests of the State. That is the matter before us. I am prepared to vote for that which I believe best does substantial justice, because I have found impracticable and impossible that which I believe to be the true basis, and I shall so vote on this occasion.

Mr. PETER. I had not intended to discuss this question at all, but was rather inclined to listen to other gentlemen, and get that information which I need; for really this is a subject to which I had paid but little attention.

But there has been one thing in the discussion of this matter which has forcibly struck me. That was the lack of consistency in the majority of this house in their action in the progress of events as we have passed along through the last three months. The gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. Stockbridge) has told us that really he could not tell whether he was a conservative or a radical—and I must say that from his action here it would be equally difficult for this house to determine whether he was a radical or a conservative.

In the discussion of the subject here whether the slaves in Maryland should be freed or not, we were met by that same gentleman upon the threshold with this declaration of independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, and among those are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness;" "and that to secure those rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." Now, if we are to adopt the principle asserted in the argument upon the subject of slavery, then I ask the gentleman are slaves not to be governed at all now that they are set free? Does he propose that in this State they shall constitute a race to themselves, and shall neither be governed nor have any word or say in the formation of the government of this State?

Now, sir, I like consistency in every man. Had I voted in this house to free the slaves of Maryland, I unhesitatingly say I would have openly advocated the doctrine upon this floor that they should have every right as freemen that whites now exercise. I do not hesitate to announce that principle. I would not say they were the equals of white men, and then say that the declaration of independence, which gave to the white man his rights, did not equally apply to the black man. But believing, as I do, that they were better off in their position as slaves, I voted to let them there remain. But I unhesitatingly say that those gentlemen fear the consequences of such a course. Not that such a course is inconsistent; not that such a course would not carry out their principles as they, as honest men,

should carry them out; but they fear the effect of such a course upon the people of Maryland. That is the reason why they have not been consistent in all their action here.

Now, what excuse did the gentleman offer why the slave counties should not have representation according to their entire population? The simple excuse was that slaves could not vote; that representation truly means representation by an agent selected by the person represented, and that it should be governed by the voting population. Let the gentleman apply that rule to the city of Baltimore, and where does she stand? Take the last election as the basis, and what will be her representation? I have no objection to that. I cheerfully accord that basis to him, and at the same time say that if that basis is adopted the slave counties will consent that their slaves shall have no representation at all as a population.

But he says the blacks are not fit to vote because they have been slaves; or, to use his own language, because they have been subjected. What does he say to the foreigner? He has not been a slave; but in the majority of cases he has been, to use his own language again, a subject—the subject of some king or potentate. He comes here ignorant, unlearned in our institutions, knowing nothing about them. Aye, in nine cases out of ten, I will say that he knows less of our institutions than our negroes. Yet he must be represented in our population.

The gentleman then argued why the women and children, who are non-voters, should be represented, is because that, take the State at large, they are about equally diffused through it. Now I hold that this principle does not constitute the true basis of representation at all. The sound basis upon which we should act is this: that the persons who are to be governed by the laws which are passed in the legislative halls are the persons to be represented. I hold that every man, according to the laws of this land, be he slave or be he freeman, has a right to have his wrongs redressed by sufficient legislation, if they need it. Suppose there have been wrongs perpetrated upon these slaves by their masters; the gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. Stockbridge) will hardly go down into the slave counties and investigate whether they have had wrongs perpetrated on them or not.—Suppose they labor under some difficulties for which they would ask redress from the legislature here assembled. Will the gentleman from Baltimore city go all the way down into these slave counties and inquire what are the wrongs which they labor under, and what remedies or what legislation they need? I humbly apprehend not; I apprehend that he will come here representing his constituents in Baltimore, if he come at all. And as the slave owners are perfect brutes, men without