

sight of our court-house who are anxious that their district should make a part of our county. Residing within a stone's throw of one court-house, they have to ride twenty or thirty miles to go to another. If the question were taken to-morrow in those three districts which lie a'long the eastern border of the Patapsco, whether they should be cut off from Baltimore county and made a part of Howard county, the vote would be almost unanimous.

There are other portions of Baltimore county that might perhaps object. There are ten other districts of Baltimore county, lying more contiguous to their public buildings and courts of justice, who might choose, not because they had any real interest in doing so, to vote to take from them the right to annex themselves to the county of Howard, where for civil purposes they would be almost within sight of their public buildings. The section as reported here, that the legal voters residing within the limits of the territory desiring to make the change shall decide the question, it seems to me is the true principle. What business have the voters way off the other side of Baltimore county, lying along the eastern border of the county, to say that the people of the western portion of the county shall not make a change which will so greatly conduce to their interest? It is a question that does not interest them at all.

My friend from Allegany (Mr. Greene) suggests that it may have something to do with taxation. The people living along the stream are willing to pay their own taxation, to pay their own part of the expenses, and they expect everybody else to do the same.

I say that this amendment takes away from the people immediately interested the settlement of the question and gives it to those who are not interested. I have merely cited this illustration. The principle will hold good everywhere, under all circumstances. Suppose one portion of a county wishes to make a change of county lines. Is it to be that portion situated around the public buildings, that portion of the county contiguous to them, where they are easy of access, without trouble, labor and cost? They are not going to make such change of county lines. The people who are going to change the county lines are the people who are so situated that time, and expense, and trouble, and travel are required of them in attending their courts.

Now, the people along the Patapsco river that live within sight of the court-house at Ellicott's Mills, have to go across on horse-back, or in a buggy, if you please, to Townsontown, ten or twenty miles off, in all sorts of weather, because that is the county seat of Baltimore county. There is no other reason. They have a court-house in sight of them, in which they would be very glad to have all their legal difficulties settled for

them, without travel, without trouble. Why not do it? Why allow the people located about the county court-house at Townsontown to decide whether the people living in a remote part of the county shall ask the general assembly to have new lines made to accommodate them?

I do hope this amendment will not prevail, for the reason that it is a violation of principle to take from the people immediately interested, the settlement of the question, and give its decision to those who do not labor under the difficulties imposed upon those upon or near the county lines. Why not let the people who are interested decide? Why give the power to those who may choose to exercise it arbitrarily and to the detriment of the people interested? I cannot imagine why this amendment was offered, but it seems to me that it certainly does contravene the rule that the people interested in a question are certainly those who should be allowed to decide it.

Mr. CLARKE. It seems to me that the amendment offered by the gentleman from Montgomery (Mr. Duvall) is a very proper amendment to be embodied in this article. The result without that amendment will be this: that whenever one particular section of different counties may desire it, and the majority of the people living within particular lines so vote, they can separate themselves at will from the counties to which they may belong. The argument of the gentleman from Howard (Mr. Sands) proceeds upon the assumption that if these people should vote to cut themselves from the counties to which they now belong, they are the only people interested. That is not so. The rest of the county, the other inhabitants of the county from which they propose to separate themselves, are just as much interested in the question whether their county shall be subdivided, as those who wish to go off and form a new county. There are questions of taxation, of county debt, of support of county officers to be considered. As soon as you subdivide a county, you throw upon that part of the county which remains, the support of all these public officers. It is a question in which these people are interested.

You change, furthermore, the political complexion of the county. One portion of the county says, we want to join another county. They are not the only persons interested. You leave the rest of the county to constitute thereafter another county. By the action of a small minority, you may control the entire organization, and the entire future of the rest of the county. It is in other words, carrying out the idea that whenever the people of one particular section of a county or State choose to say, we want to go off by ourselves and form an independent community; we are the only ones who are to be consulted. That is not the theory at all.