

gentleman will so amend as to confine the judges to the objections set forth there, and to those alone. If that is done, then it will be specific; the judges will then have no power, except what is given them by the constitution; and they will have to exercise those powers within a proper construction of this portion of the constitution. And then the word "loyal" in the first section should be stricken out.

And there is another objection to this first section, which I may as well consider while I am on the floor; because, as it is very warm to-day, I do not desire to exert myself, and weary the house with any extensive arguments. I object to this portion of the first section:

"And every free white male person of twenty-one years of age, and upwards, who shall have been one year next preceding the election a resident of the State, and for six months a resident of the city of Baltimore, or of any county in the State, and being at the time of the election in the naval or military service of the United States, shall, when the United States are actually engaged in war, be entitled to vote wherever they may be, for any and all officers to be elected under the constitution of this State, or of the United States, and the legislature is hereby required to provide the means necessary to carry this provision into full and complete operation and effect."

That introduces a new feature into our constitution, and, if adopted, will open the widest door imaginable for the practice of frauds in our elections. It has been the policy of the government of the State of Maryland from the time of its first organization to require all votes to be recorded at home in the several precincts where the citizens offer to vote. If that is done, then the citizens of that particular district or precinct who are entitled to vote can be easily determined. But how will it be when whole regiments in other parts of the country are allowed to vote—regiments, too, not formed entirely of Marylanders, some of them not consisting one-half of native born or even naturalized citizens? Those regiments are composed partly of foreigners, of citizens of other States. And yet you propose to allow them to vote wherever they may be found on the day of election. I say if that provision is put in the constitution it will open a wide door for frauds in our elections, the extent of which it is impossible to foretell. I hope, then, that portion of the section will be stricken out. I think I speak correctly, from recollection of the history of the past, when I say that such a system was never known to prevail at any other period of our country's history, in any State of the Union. It has been adopted, I grant, since this war commenced, in some of the northern States.

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. In all of them.

Mr. BERRY, of Prince George's. In all of them, the gentleman says; that may be. But it is inaugurating a new system, one which will be dangerous to the institutions of our country. And I am astonished that gentlemen here are willing to run wildly and without due consideration into these things, without endeavoring to throw all the safeguards around the ballot box which its importance demands at our hands. Regiment after regiment, in any part of the country, and from other States, might vote for Maryland, and carry our elections by fraudulent votes, and from the distance at which the votes were cast it would be impossible to prove the frauds. We would be in the hands of the military; they would control our elections on all occasions.

I say this is a dangerous precedent to establish, and I hope the members of this convention will consider it calmly and maturely before they vote for it. I do not know how it has operated in the north; but I will venture to assert that more frauds in elections have been committed since this system was inaugurated than were ever known before. And if this is put in our constitution, you will find the same thing exemplified in our own history. I hope therefore this provision will not be sustained here, but that we will hold to the old principle that every man who casts a vote for an officer of Maryland shall cast it in Maryland, in the precinct where he is entitled to vote, then we may be sure that none but those who feel an interest in the welfare of the State, and who are proper participants in our elections, will vote.

I am prepared to vote for the amendment of the gentleman from Queen Anne (Mr. Brown,) because it contains all the wise provisions which are now in the constitution of our State, and which have been found peculiarly applicable to our condition. I trust this convention will see that it will be wise to strike out this portion of this section. There are objections to other portions of this report; but as the first section is the one now under consideration, I will reserve what I have to say on the other sections, until they come up.

Mr. STIRLING. I have one or two amendments to offer to the first section, not of much importance, except to make the meaning more clear.

Mr. MILLER. What is before the convention now?

Mr. STIRLING. The first section.

Mr. MILLER. The motion of the gentleman from Queen Anne (Mr. Brown,) was to substitute the minority for the majority report.

Mr. STIRLING. But the convention has a right to amend and perfect the majority report before the vote is taken upon the motion to strike out and insert.

The PRESIDENT. The gentleman is cor-