

organizing new counties, locating and removing county seats, and changing county lines, but no new county shall be organized without the consent of a majority of the legal voters residing within the limits about to form said county, nor shall any new county contain less than four hundred square miles, nor less than ten thousand white inhabitants, nor shall any county be reduced below that amount of square miles, nor below that number of white inhabitants."

Mr. RIDGELY. I move that the rules be suspended in order to enable me to offer an amendment. I desire to move to insert after the words "legal voters residing within the limits about to form said county," the words "nor shall the lines of any county be changed without the consent of a majority of the legal voters residing within the limits of the lines proposed to be changed."

Mr. STIRLING. That proposition was offered by my colleague (Mr. Stockbridge) upon the second reading of this report, and it was voted down.

Mr. RIDGELY. I cannot help that; I propose to offer it again.

The question being then taken upon the motion to suspend the rules, upon a division—ayes 44, noes 16—it was agreed to.

Mr. RIDGELY. I now move to amend section one of this report by inserting after the words "about to form said county" the words "nor shall the lines of any county be changed without the consent of a majority of the legal voters, residing within the limits of the lines proposed to be changed."

I will in a very few words explain the object of that amendment. The previous part of the section provides that in the event of organizing a new county, the consent of the majority of the legal voters residing within the limits about to form said new county shall be first obtained. It is also proposed that any portion of the lines of a county may be changed; but there is no provision made to consult the residents within the limits of the lines proposed to be changed. Now I understand very well the effect of this provision about changing county lines, and I have no objection in the world to it. I am free to confess that Baltimore city must necessarily, by reason of its constantly accumulating population, find its way within the limits of Baltimore county. It is the result of that sort of law which nothing in the world can prevent. In time it must find its way there; and I do not propose to throw any obstacle in the way of that end.

But I simply ask that the people, residing within the limits of the district proposed to be included within the increased limits of Baltimore city, shall be consulted, for the same reason that you would consult the people residing within the limits of a new county that you propose to form. I ask that the same theory be applied to the people of Baltimore

county, in relation to an increase of the limits of Baltimore city, that you would apply in relation to the organization of new counties in the State. I know that Baltimore city must increase and expand, until in process of time it shall absorb a large portion of the area of Baltimore county, and I say God-speed to it. I do not propose to throw any obstacles whatever in its way. But I simply ask that when they apply to the legislature for an extension of its boundaries, there shall be a limitation upon the power of the legislature to grant, which shall require the assent of the people residing in the portion of the county asked to be included within the limits of Baltimore city. It will have a very serious effect upon our county treasury. The very largest proportion of the taxes received by the county, is derived from the suburban population of Baltimore city; and the extension into Baltimore county of the limits of Baltimore city, of course very essentially affects the financial ability of that county to sustain itself.

And I ask, in view of its importance to our community, that you will at least put in here a provision that the people shall be consulted and their consent obtained before any such extension of boundary shall be granted to Baltimore city.

Mr. STIRLING. So far as this matter applies to Baltimore city, I certainly have no desire that any thing should be done in respect to extending its limits, which would be unacceptable to the people interested in the matter; anything which would be unjust to Baltimore county. So far as I have any personal interest in the matter, it is rather against any increase of the city limits, than otherwise.

But this proposition affects all the counties of the State; it seems to me it is too broad. It says the legislature shall not change the lines of any county, except upon the consent of those who reside within the lines proposed to be changed. Now it may be necessary to change a county line for a few yards, or a few hundred yards. There might be but one or two people residing within the limits of the proposed change. One man might hold the whole of the land within those limits, and thus you would give to him the absolute control over the matter.

This applies more particularly, however, to Baltimore city. I do not suppose there is any prospect of any increase of the limits of Baltimore city for some time to come. It is not needed at present, although the city limits do run about on the line of the houses, and there are a great many streets laid out beyond the city limits. Still, if there should be any extension of the limits, it would not be much, not more than a half mile or so beyond where the limits now are. You could not embrace within the limits of Baltimore city whatever is suburban; only the portion where the streets are built out. Now,