

what the later statutes of England may have been about it. The statutes were against it in early times in very broad terms. One of their statutes after premising that usury is by the word of God utterly prohibited as a vice most odious and detestable, practiced only by uncharitable and covetous persons, who thereby exposed themselves to the terrors of God's eternal wrath and vengeance, justly hanging over them, goes on to provide temporal punishment to restrain men from that crime.

To a certain extent modern commerce, civilization and advancement have taken away the odium which originally attached to the system of usury. I have much respect for merchants and traders in their lawful traffic, and in all legitimate gains and profits from the use of his capital, I wish him success. But I have no sympathy with the men who do nothing but sit down in their counting houses and make their contracts for gold and silver.

Mr. RIDGELY. I rise to a question of order; whether it is in order to discuss the merits of the question upon a motion to suspend the rules for the purpose of amendment.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dent.) It is not strictly in order. The chair has not restrained the discussion, because it has been allowed to on heretofore. The question is upon the motion to reconsider.

Mr. CHAMBERS. Can you reconsider the vote ordering the report to its third reading? Is there any way to amend it except by the motion to open the section to amendment? I understand the motion to reconsider not now to be in order. I understand the decision of the president to have been that when an article had passed to the third reading, the only mode by which it could be altered, except by the revising committee, was by moving to open the subject for the purpose of offering an amendment, and we have acted upon that plan.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Dent.) The present incumbent of the chair understands the practice to have been different.

Mr. DANIEL. The forty-fourth rule provides for reconsideration at any time. That is another question, and a different mode of amending from that we have adopted in some other cases.

The CHAIRMAN. It has been the practice of the chair to allow a motion to open the section for special amendments; but the motion now made is to reconsider the vote ordering the section to a third reading, which would bring it back to the condition of the second reading.

Mr. CHAMBERS demanded the yeas and nays, and they were ordered.

The question being taken, the result was—yeas 32, nays 24—as follows:

Yeas—Messrs. Abbott, Annan, Audoun, Baker, Belt, Brooks, Brown, Cunningham,

Cushing, Daniel, Dellinger, Farrow, Greene, Hatch, Hebb, Hoffman, Hopper, Kennard, Larsh, Marbury, Negley, Parker, Purnell, Ridgely, Schley, Scott, Sneyer, Stirling, Stockbridge, Todd, Valliant, Wickard—32.

Nays—Messrs. Carter, Chambers, Crawford, Davis, of Washington, Dent, Duvall, Ecker, Galloway, Hollyday, Horsey, Jones, of Cecil, Keefer, Lee, McComas, Mitchell, Miller, Mullikin, Parran, Pugh, Russell, Sands, Schlosser, Swope, Wooden—24.

The motion was accordingly reconsidered; and the question recurred upon ordering the section to a third reading.

Mr. ABBOTT submitted the following amendment:

Amend by inserting after the word "per annum," in the second line, "but such rates may be contracted for as congress have or may hereafter allow on any loans of the United States."

Mr. BELT submitted the following amendment:

Amend the report by substituting in lieu thereof the following:

"That the legal rate of interest in this State shall be six per centum per annum, except in cases of agreements between contracting parties; and in all such cases parties contracting shall have power to contract, and to recover any rate of interest not exceeding ten per centum per annum."

The question was first upon the amendment submitted by Mr. ABBOTT to perfect the section before a decision upon striking it out.

Mr. NEGLEY submitted the following amendment to the amendment:

Strike out all after the words "contracted for," and insert the words "as shall be agreed upon between the parties, not exceeding eight per centum per annum."

Mr. ABBOTT. If the government goes higher, does the gentleman wish to confine it to eight per cent.?

Mr. NEGLEY. This was so indefinite that nothing would be constitutional but the amount allowed by the government. If that were ten per cent. that would be the constitutional rate. If it were five per cent. that would be the constitutional rate. I think it would be better to fix upon some limit as the one to which the contract may go. I think it would be better to make the legal rate six per cent., with the privilege of contracting to a higher amount, not exceeding eight per cent.

Mr. MARBURY. I am opposed to all these amendments. I was favorable to the reconsideration of this subject in order that I might get further light upon it; but as at present advised I am opposed to the whole thing. It seems to me that it is a blow at the agricultural interests of this country. It may be that it is politic for the government of England to repeal their usury laws. England is in a prosperous condition, at perfect