

The fight for equal representation took many years, and it is now history, of course, but it seems to me that the adoption of single-member districts as we have already done is a furtherance of the one-man, one-vote principle because all we are talking about on this whole subject is that people be represented in a representative form of government, and the single-member district guarantees as best we can that every section of the State will have a chance to have a member in the House of Delegates who will look after their interest. Therefore, it seems common sense to me that we should maintain the position that we have taken and that it will not allow a situation that I can see developing in my county, for instance, where a city is being built and which in a few years will have about two-thirds of the people of the county. I want those people to have the representatives which they are entitled to, but I do not think they should have the right to dominate the whole county and have all of the representatives. This is a situation which would be repeated in many parts of the State.

Therefore, I urge the rejection of this amendment.

THE PRESIDENT: The Chair would like to recognize the presence in the gallery of the Honorable Herbert R. O'Connor, Jr., former Delegate to this Convention and now alternate Delegate to the Assembly of the United Nations.

*(Applause.)*

Delegate Lord.

DELEGATE LORD: Mr. President, I would like to yield three minutes to Delegate Clark's seat mate, Delegate James.

THE PRESIDENT: Delegate James.

DELEGATE JAMES: Mr. President and fellow members. I would like to direct my remarks to two points: first the problem of redistricting.

I served for a couple of years as Chairman of the Reapportionment Committee of the Legislative Council and I found that there were several factors which militated against an efficient legislative redistricting. One, of course, is that every member has a built-in selfish interest in his own district. This is reenforced by the fact that his own constituents want him to have this selfish interest, because they become used to the district; they do not want to change, and so it is comfortable.

Thirdly, because of friendship there is not the willingness on the part of the mem-

bers to do drastic things to other fellows' districting.

The problem of redistricting is compounded in the General Assembly as you increase the number of districts. Now, it is even difficult to draw 40 senate districts, but when you attempt to skyrocket that to 120 districts, you are really giving the General Assembly great problems. You almost slant things in favor of the commission plan because if they have to draw 120 districts it is almost going to be a legislative impossibility to change the commission plan.

This matter should be a legislative responsibility. The single member districts would be advisable in large geographical areas where counties are combined. On the other hand, where the population is impacted, your multi-member districts would be advisable.

THE PRESIDENT: You have half a minute.

DELEGATE JAMES: The main thing is visibility and availability. The General Assembly, if given proper discretion, can provide visibility and availability by a combination of districts.

THE PRESIDENT: Delegate Gallagher.

DELEGATE GALLAGHER: I yield three minutes to Delegate Hanson.

DELEGATE HANSON: Mr. President, I believe that Delegate James has given better reasons for single member districts than for multiple-member districts. The amendment before us provides for the incumbent political leaders a do-it-yourself apportionment kit which is kind of a gerrymander's delight. What it permits is for the incumbents to decide whether or not they are better off with two-member districts, or one-member districts, and adopt them for the counties. Because of the legislative courtesy Delegate James described, the plan developed by each individual delegation will be the plan adopted, and the plan adopted will be the plan which has as its central rationale the perpetuation in office of the people who drew the plan.

The reason for this is to permit the members of the General Assembly to remain instead of to change when when the character of the population changes. The plan proposed is one which has as its central functioning rationale the retention of the political status quo, no matter how much the state or political jurisdictions in that state may change.