

main argument on the desire to expedite business. It should be added, that during the consideration of the report the minority made every possible attempt to have a large vote of those elected to the Convention required on all important questions, but their amendments to that effect were regularly voted down.¹⁹ They thus lost all opportunity for delaying proceedings by absence from the Convention and like expedients.

Almost two months were consumed before the Convention had perfected its organization and passed the Declaration of Rights which contained the very important provisions in regard to slavery and allegiance. During the first five weeks of the session the debate was unlimited, both sides indulging in speeches of great length, but on June 2 the time was limited to one hour, the minority voting in the negative, as it seems to have been particularly desired that absolute freedom be allowed until the Declaration of Rights was disposed of.²⁰ The majority again urged expediency, and the usual arguments were successively brought up later, when the debate was further restricted, on July 7,²¹ to thirty minutes, a two-thirds vote of the members present being necessary to allow the speaker to proceed. On July 29 a limit of fifteen minutes during the discussion of a basis of representation was imposed,²² and definitely placed at twenty minutes on all questions on August 24.²³ On August 31 the absurdly small limit of five minutes was attempted but voted down, the negative vote being cast by the solid minority and several majority members. On July 7, Mr. Belt, of Prince George's, had offered the sarcastic motion that "there shall be no debate on any subject whatever," which was of course lost.²⁴

The Convention adjourned over from June 4 to the 9th, on account of the Republican National Convention, to which several of its members were delegates. That body

¹⁹ Proc., 75-6.

²¹ Proc., 230-2.

²² Proc., 356.

²⁰ Proc., 146-7; Deb., i, 293-300.

²³ Proc., 562.

²⁴ Proc., 232.