

on the article in a masterly speech of several hours duration.⁸⁸ He began by offering an amendment in part declaring "allegiance to the Constitution and Government of the United States within the limits of the powers conferred by that Constitution," and giving to the State of Maryland sovereignty in so far as it is not restricted by the Constitution.⁸⁹ The gist of his argument was that the states were sovereign as states, but that they had yielded up a sufficient amount of their sovereignty to the General Government to deprive them, among other things, of the power of seceding from the Union, and that the article as reported specifically deprived the states of that measure of sovereignty which was inherently theirs. This may be taken as the average position of the minority on the question, for although some, as above stated, went further in their assertion of state's rights, yet others stopped short of it, while all protested their personal loyalty to the National Constitution.

The position of the majority is so well given by the article itself that there is no necessity of restating it. Mr. Stirling closed the entire debate on this question with one of the finest speeches in the Convention,⁹⁰ his aim being to vindicate the position of the majority, not only by upholding the doctrine of absolute national sovereignty, but by stating that the "paramount allegiance" set forth in the article as reported was merely an old and commonly recognized principle of government restated, perhaps in a novel form, but given in this way in order to meet the questions as to its very being which had been raised during the last few years in consequence of the momentous events that had happened. The declaration of this principle should be placed in the "Declaration of Rights" since the relation of the person to the National Government was one of the dearest rights pertaining to the individual. The majority tenaciously held to the article as reported, and would take

⁸⁸ Deb., i, 273-92.

⁸⁹ Proc., 144-5.

⁹⁰ Deb., i, 521-32.