

The article dealing with the Legislative Department (III) showed a number of changes, most of them in the line of improvement. In this connection, the most important question of all was that of basis of representation, concerning which there had been much complaint throughout the state, especially on the part of Baltimore City and the northern and western counties. In 1851 the principle of representation according to population had been adopted for the first time,¹⁵² but with the restriction that Baltimore City should have only four more members than the largest county. At the same time the entire population, white and black, slave and free, was made the basis. The above-mentioned parts of the state justly condemned all this, which gave to the southern, slave-holding counties an unfair measure of power and the practical domination of the state.¹⁵³ As can be well imagined, the majority members of the Convention, particularly those from Baltimore City, were determined to change this system entirely. The minority, coming altogether from the more-favored section of the state, naturally fought the move with all their might, particularly as they would be helped in some measure by the county members of the majority, who were evidently unwilling to have the basis placed entirely on population, for the reason that in this case Baltimore City would be given too much power for their liking. Under these circumstances, the compromise was effected according to which the basis of population was applied by an artificial rule, limiting Baltimore City and the larger counties, but with the result of allowing the city a larger representation than heretofore. The entire majority, however, joined together in a shrewd political move and increased the reduction of the political power of the southern

¹⁵² A constitutional amendment in 1837 had only partially incorporated this principle.

¹⁵³ See Nelson, "Baltimore," p. 157, for a quotation on this subject from a speech of Hon. Henry Winter Davis; also see newspapers of 1863-4.