

Mr. BISER said it was evident that a quorum was not present, and he would, therefore, move a call of the Convention.

The motion was agreed to.

The Secretary called the roll.

A quorum having in the *interim* appeared, all further proceedings in the call were dispensed with.

The Journal of yesterday was read and approved.

The President laid before the Convention a communication from the Treasurer of the State, (for which see Journal) in reply to a resolution heretofore adopted, calling for certain information.

On motion of Mr. BROWN, the communication was ordered to be printed (the reading having, on his motion, been in part dispensed with.)

The President also laid before the Convention a communication from the Governor of the State of Louisiana, in relation to the system of education in that State.

Mr. BROWN said, if there were no other business before the Convention, he would move that the Convention resolve itself into committee of the whole on the order of the day.

Mr. BRENT, of Baltimore city, requested him to withdraw the motion for a short time, to enable him (Mr. BRENT) to offer a resolution.

Mr. BROWN withdrew his motion.

#### ABSENTEES.

Mr. BRENT then offered the following order, which was read:

Ordered, That on and after Monday next, the Secretary shall enter on the journal of each day, the names of all members absent at the call of roll without leave, unless they shall on the same day before adjournment, report themselves in person to the Secretary; which was twice read.

Mr. BRENT said he had not offered this proposition with any sort of reference to Buncombe, and he believed he could conscientiously say that he had not, during the entire session of this body given one single vote with reference to that object. But he was impressed with the necessity of the Convention taking some action, with a view to enforce the attendance of its members. Before the holidays it was declared on every side that, after their termination, the Convention would, on resuming its duties, go earnestly to work. What was the actual state of facts? The Convention had been in session fourteen days after the holidays; and yet, on Saturday last, when a vote was taken upon one of the most important questions on which the Convention would be called to act, some thirty members were absent. Yesterday, he believed, a still greater number were absent. Could they all be sick, or have a valid excuse? His proposition was, not to deprive them of their *per diem*, but simply to record their names upon the Journal. If any gentleman had just cause of absence, it could not be doubted that the Convention would excuse him. He hoped that the Convention would put a stop to this system, at least so far as the object could be effected by this resolution. The people had to vote upon

the adoption or rejection of the new Constitution, in June, and time ought to be allowed them to canvass its various provisions. With this view, the Convention ought to adjourn by the first of April, or, at furthest, by the fifteenth; and this would allow but little time for examination. The new Constitution would contain more than one hundred sections; yet, for fourteen days, the Convention had been engaged upon one. At that rate, when would the labors of the Convention terminate? He called upon the reformers in the body to expedite its business; and, with that end in view, he gave notice that he should follow up the resolution he had now offered by another, providing for the application of the one hour rule, at least for the present, to the speeches of members.

Mr. JENIFER said, that if the resolution of the gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. BRENT) had been offered at an early period of the session, it might have met with his (Mr. JENIFER's) support; but that, coming upon the Convention at this time, it seemed to him to be rather a reflection upon it. And it occurred to him as somewhat remarkable that those gentlemen who had been most often absent, and who had themselves indulged in the broadest latitude of debate, should be the first to turn round and read Puritanical lectures to the Convention upon the delay in the transaction of its business. He thought that, previous to the recess, his friend from Baltimore city had been absent as much, perhaps, as any other member, and yet nothing was said about that. In what instance had his friend ever expedited the public business by calling for the question, or withholding, for the sake of allowing it to be taken, any remarks which he might have desired to make? He (Mr. J.) protested against these *ad captandem* arguments to bring this body into disrepute. Enough had been said about this Convention in the newspapers. If the gentleman intended that the whole of the Convention should be reflected upon by this resolution, then he (Mr. J.) hoped that the gentleman would go back to the commencement of the session. He (Mr. J.) moved that the resolution be laid upon the table.

Mr. BRENT said he had been as faithful to the attendance of his duties here before the recess as after, and explained that he had never been absent except in one case of imperious necessity—an occasion upon which the Convention would have been willing to grant him leave. But he insisted that if gentlemen were to be permitted to absent themselves by thirties and forties, it was his right to reflect upon them and his duty to do so if such a proposition as this could be viewed as a reflection. He believed that the public interests would have been promoted if such a resolution had been passed long ago.

The gentleman (Mr. JENIFER) was mistaken in saying that he (Mr. B.) had not called for the question. He had often done so—and this was, therefore, an unnecessary attack upon him.

Mr. JENIFER (interposing) disclaimed any intention to attack the gentlemen, and stated that his intention was to defend him.