

making the whole proceedings of the body partake more or less of a quasi revolutionary character.

He took this occasion to say, that so far as he was concerned, he would not again vote to postpone the consideration of any business. He desired gentlemen to recollect that the first of May was rapidly approaching, and yet, in his judgment, the Convention was not through one-third of its business. He hoped that the previous question would not only be adhered to, but that there would be a deep, abiding determination on the part of the Convention, to enforce it on all occasions. Matters of no sort of interest to the people had been debated here over and over again. And what were the debates? Not worth a groat, in his judgment. None of the great questions which this Convention had been called to consider had yet been discussed, and all these questions had to be debated and disposed of between this time and the first day of May. He hoped that the Convention would stand by the rule. If he could have his own way, he would make it still more stringent. He was amazed that the gentleman from Anne Arundel, (Mr. Dorsey,) should desire to reverse or destroy the rule. Great latitude of debate had been allowed. He hoped that hereafter it would be arrested, or at all events greatly restricted.

Mr. NEILL said he concurred fully in the views which had been expressed by his friend from Prince George's, (Mr. Bowie,) and he, (Mr. N.,) was glad to hear them from a quarter so experienced. It was a fact too manifest to escape the attention of any member of the Convention, that a long time had been consumed in unnecessary and irrelevant debate. Was there a gentleman here who could look back upon the past proceedings of this body without a blush? What had been done? How had the time been consumed? In debate—he might almost say in idle debate. We owe it to ourselves, [continued Mr. N.,] we owe it to the constituencies whom we represent, to be more active in the discharge of the duties before us—we owe it to them to go to work speedily and steadily to dispatch the business for which we have been called together. I hope, with all due deference to the mover of this amendment, that no restriction will be placed on the previous question. The efforts which this bench, [alluding to the range of seats occupied by the Washington county delegation.] have made to apply the previous question, have been attended with no success. And not only so, but it has almost become an evidence of discourtesy and a mark of opprobrium for any member to move it. He was unwilling, at this late day in the session, to place any limit or restriction upon the previous question. And he gave notice that, however much obloquy might attach to the motion, he should hereafter demand the previous question on every occasion when, in his judgment, the business of the Convention would be expedited by its application.

Mr. Biser said:

He had never on any occasion, been so puzzled how to cast his vote as upon this. It was true that great latitude of debate had been al-

lowed. In assenting to this remark, he did not mean to be understood as complaining of any gentleman who had participated freely and frequently in the discussions of this body. If he had not availed himself of the opportunity to participate equally often, the fault was his, and he had no right to complain. He was as anxious as any man could be to facilitate the transaction of the public business.

The only question to be decided was, whether the application of the previous question would accomplish that object. What had we seen from time to time? Every gentleman who had been present had witnessed the discouraging effect of the previous question. The Convention in good faith, and from an anxious desire to expedite the transaction of its business, had drawn the cord a little tighter than it was elsewhere drawn, and what had been gained?

Mr. B. proceeded to show the effect of the amendment which had been made to the rule relating to the previous question, and to trace to its operation the constant motions which were made to reconsider, by which the whole merits of questions which had already been discussed, were again thrown open to debate.

He declared his unwillingness to vote, merely for the sake of trying an experiment, in favor of the motion of the gentleman from Anne Arundel, (Mr. Dorsey.) He, (Mr. B.,) thought that the experience of all gentlemen must satisfy them, that the only mode by which to make progress with the public business was a plain, and very different mode. It rested with a majority of the Convention. Whenever a majority was disposed to act upon the matters before them, with as little debate as possible, then, and not till then, the progress of the Convention would be rapid and steady. He meant nothing unkind or offensive to any gentleman, but a physician might as well try to pen up a disease in a human body, and pronounce the patient convalescent, as gentlemen here try to cut off debate, if the Convention itself was willing. If the debate was penned up in one quarter, it would, like the disease, break out in another. Even the Washington county screw, which was perhaps as forcible as any other, would fail of success.

Mr. DORSEY said, that if the proposition he had offered had been correctly understood by the gentleman from Prince George's county, (Mr. Bowie,) there might be some ground for the objections which the gentleman had raised against it. From the remarks of that gentleman, it would be supposed that he, (Mr. D.,) had introduced a proposition to put an end to the previous question. He had done no such thing. Nothing could be further from his intention, or desire. He was as anxious to see it applied, where its application was proper, as any other gentleman. And, as to terminating the session by the first of May, he was not without hope that it might be brought to an end long before that time. To no member of the body was its protracted duration a matter of more inconvenience than to himself, and no member could be more anxious to be relieved from its labors. But he conceived that the adoption of this amendment was necessary, in order to