

puts the white and black races upon a political equality. Such an idea should not, in my opinion, be entertained here.

Sir, the simple result of fixing upon numbers as a basis, is recognizing to that extent, political equality between the negro and the white man, which has not been done in any State of the Union. I will not call your attention to the basis of representation adopted in all the various States.

But it is right and proper that we should look to the example of Southern States, having the same classes of population which we have. We find that Alabama, Mississippi and Texas, have adopted white population as the basis of representation in the popular branch; Louisiana, Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee and Kentucky, the qualified voters or the white male inhabitants; South Carolina, white inhabitants and taxation combined; North Carolina, federal numbers; Georgia, the white with three-fifths of colored, slave and free; Florida, white population with three-fifths of slaves, excluding the free negroes entirely. And in the present Convention of Virginia, the contest now waging is not between total numbers and federal numbers, but between white population and federal numbers.

Sir, I speak for myself, but I doubt not that I express the sentiments of my colleagues, when I say that we are prepared to compromise this question in reference to the basis and other particulars.

We have had several propositions of compromise, before us, and two are now pending. I shall glance at several of them, and point out the one which I think embodies a basis and apportionment fair and equitable to all parts of the State.

Sir, the first question in order is, I believe, the proposition submitted by the gentleman from Washington, (Mr. Schley,) whom I regret, is not in his seat. I regret it, because I must raise my voice against his proposition. It does seem to me that it is of such a character that it ought not to have emanated from Washington county, and that it ought not to command the vote of any member from Western Maryland. Had it come from one of the counties where there is a large slave population, I should not have been surprised. I would have appreciated it, in view of the peculiar interests and circumstances by which gentlemen from those counties are surrounded; but I was surprised to see it come from Washington.

My first objection to it is the one already adverted to, which exists against all propositions that make numbers, irrespective of color, the basis of representation. But this is not the only objection. It operates more unjustly towards Allegany and Washington—the two counties in the State having the largest proportionate white population, and the first, if not both, the most rapidly growing. It leaves but three counties which will have unrepresented fractions; and the counties which will have the largest unrepresented fractions, are Allegany and Washington. I feel a particular interest in both. By the good will of the people of the former, I am honored as

one of its representatives on this floor; the latter is my native county, and I am endeared to it by many recollections.

I repeat, sir, that the proposition does injustice to Washington and Allegany counties, which will be apparent upon a comparison of the representation they receive with that given to the other counties of the State. It cannot, therefore, receive my vote.

The proposition next in order, is that submitted by the gentleman from Anne Arundel, (Mr. Dorsey.) It is liable to the same objections urged against the other proposition. But the gentleman from Anne Arundel has been more particular in providing for his immediate constituents, than the gentleman from Washington for his. He asks for them seven representatives—four for Anne Arundel proper and three for young Howard—whilst he yields four to Allegany; Allegany having more voters than the present Anne Arundel.

The distinctive and favorite feature of the proposition, is that of districting the city of Baltimore. I am in favor of the single district system, believing it to be the proper system in a representative government; but it should be general throughout the State. Such a system would be most likely to secure a full and fair representation of all interests and sections, and minorities as well as majorities would thereby be represented in the legislative body. But I cannot, by my vote, assist in cutting the city into single districts, and permitting the counties to elect their representatives as counties. There are always large minorities in the counties, and if these minorities are not to be represented, then ought not the minority in the city to be represented. I am prepared to go for a single district system throughout the State. I prefer it above all others.

The proposition submitted by the other gentleman from Washington, (Mr. Fiery,) although not now before us, I hope will be. Notice of a motion to reconsider the vote by which it was rejected, has been given. I maintain, sir, that that proposition presents a fair compromise. Instead of making federal numbers the basis, I would prefer the Georgia basis, which places the slave and the free black on the same platform, for I see and feel the force of the objection to federal numbers in a State having so large a free colored population as we have in Maryland. For the sake of compromise I would even go a step further, adopt the Florida basis, and thus cut off the free negroes altogether from the calculation. But these changes in the basis would make but little difference in the apportionment or practical results of the proposition.

Now, I will endeavor to show by figures that a proposition leading to results similar to those flowing from that of the gentleman from Washington, (Mr. Fiery,) would be a fair and proper settlement of this question of representation. To enable me to do so, I have taken the trouble to make some calculations. I have looked to the fact that there are different sections of the State having conflicting interests; and, for the purpose of adjusting and arranging those conflicting interests, we are met here together as brethren.