

Mr. PRESTMAN resumed and concluded his remarks, (from yesterday.)

Mr. PHELPS offered as a substitute for the amendment offered by Mr. SCHLEY, as the 2nd session of the report; and the substitute offered by Mr. DORSEY; the following:

"Each county in this State and the city of Baltimore, shall be entitled to one Senator, the House of Delegates shall consist of sixty-one members, and shall be apportioned among the counties and the city of Baltimore, as at present, save and except that of deducting one member from each county, and the city of Baltimore;"

Which was read.

Mr. BRENT, of Charles, said:

There is no man upon this floor, Mr. President, who is more desirous than I am that the labors of this Convention should be brought to a close. Its session has now continued for a period of nearly five months. The people of the State are most anxiously, and I confess not without reason, looking for the consummation of the work which they have delegated their agents here to perform. The car of time is passing on in its quiet, though certain and rapid course.—Our moments even are now "precious," and must not be wasted. The adoption this morning of a resolution directing that the debate, on the subject now under consideration, should terminate on Friday next, and the desire of other gentlemen to express their views, all warn me that as short a limit, as is consistent with a proper understanding of my remarks, should be placed upon them. I will therefore be as brief as I possibly can.

Permit me, sir, to say a word or two here in reference to some matters, which gentlemen have thought fit to connect with this discussion. From time to time, from day to day, and from hour to hour, we have heard much said about "the reformers in this Convention." It is claimed that they are the exponents of the public will—that their views are but the wishes of the people of this State, and that their schemes must be adopted if we do not wish to peril the Constitution. The mere listener to some of the debates in this body, would infer that there are members here, who designed to trample under foot the rights of the people, and scatter their liberty upon the winds of heaven, to be borne wheresoever "they listeth." I cannot believe that there is a member in this body who is not most anxious to do all he can to protect and advance the rights and happiness of the people of this State. If they err, the error will be in the judgment and not in the heart. But why this battle cry of "reformers?" Is there any thing substantial in it, or is it mere "tinsel and show" for political purposes, to catch him, who skims upon the surface, or who may be won by a name? Has it here any particular definition, which will divide this Convention into a reform and an anti-reform party? Gentlemen have been asked, time after time, to define its meaning. Yet no two have agreed in their definition. Nay,

from all that I have heard on this subject, I am forced to the conclusion, that if there is any word in the English language more uncertain than another in its import in this Convention, it is this very word "reformer." Gentlemen, claiming to be enlisted under its banner, entertain different views, and are seeking to attain different ends and objects. There was a period, and that not very long since, when general consent gave to a reformer a substantial shape, by which he could be recognised. In the struggle, which has eventuated in the call of this Convention, your State was divided into two parties—the one for conventional reform, and the other claiming that your Constitution could be changed only by the means pointed out in the famous fifty-ninth article.

The advocate of Conventional reform was regarded in the eyes of the people, as "the reformer," while he, who believed that the Constitution of 1776, adopted by patriot hearts amidst the din and strife of a revolution, pointed out the only means of a change, was called the "anti-reformer." The public eye looked to this as the great division. Almost every section of the State differed, the one from the other, as to the particular kind of reform wished for. When this Convention assembled, how widely different were the views of members. But this distinction has been swept away, and can now have no practical existence in this Hall. In obedience to the voice of the people, this Convention has sprung into being, and there is no man, or set of men here who can claim that he or they alone are for reform. I perhaps have been ranked among those, whom gentlemen choose to designate as anti-reformers. Great as may be my veneration for the old Constitution, and the wise heads who formed it, I believe that some of its features are incompatible with the progress and advances of these more modern times. I doubt if there is a single member here, who does not believe that the old Constitution needs some reform and amendment, and who is not ready to do all he can to render perfect, as far as the human mind can attain it, the Constitution of the State in which he lives. I therefore trust that these constant efforts to create the belief here and elsewhere, that there exist in this body two parties—the one for reform, and the other opposed to all reforms—will have ceased. May we not unite in harmony, as sons of Maryland, and frame in this spirit a Constitution for her people! That party feeling, connected with the general politics of the day, has its existence here among us, I cannot deny. Perhaps to this cause may be attributed, in great measure, the difficulties and differences which we have encountered in the progress of our sessions.

Prophecies, or in fact threats, have been made that the Constitution, which we shall make, will not be adopted. I care not to say any thing in reference to them, nor do I regard them, as I have yet to discover that there is any member here, who is either "a prophet or the son of a prophet." I came here with the fond desire to lend what aid I can in the formation of a Con-