

whole question was fully debated; and the public decision that sent me here to vote upon this question was an instruction to me that the argument was through. Believing this, I am here to-day to vote to sustain the previous question. I vote "aye."

Mr. THOMAS said: I have had no opportunity to express my views either upon the subject now before the convention, or upon the subject that has been already decided by the convention, to wit: emancipation. I had desired to express my views to this convention upon both subjects. So far as I am personally concerned, I do not ask to be heard. My mind is fully made up, and I believe the mind of every other member of the convention is made up on the subject. I am perfectly ready to vote. For these reasons, with no intention of casting a slur upon gentlemen upon the other side of the convention, who disagree with me upon this subject, by cutting them off in the debate, because I am cut off as much as they are, I vote "aye."

Mr. TOMP said: For reasons very well expressed by the gentleman from Washington (Mr. Negley,) I vote "no."

Mr. VALLIANT said: I have favored the free and full discussion of all those subjects which the people of the State have sent us here particularly to consider. We did fully discuss the 4th article and 23d article of the declaration of rights. Although sometimes the debate became irksome to me, I would not call the previous question, and would have voted against any call of the previous question, for the reason that I want the debate on all these subjects to go before the people. It is for the people to adopt this constitution or to reject it. Our adoption of it here is not the final adoption of the constitution. Believing it to be proper that the people should be put in possession of all the arguments, *pro* and *con*, with reference to those existing causes which called this convention, I shall now vote against the previous question. I vote "no."

So the call for the previous question was not sustained.

Mr. CHAMBERS. I rise with the leave of the majority of this body to express my views upon this article, which, as I have already stated, I regard as the most offensive article in the present constitution, and furthest from those principles of honesty and justice which lie at the foundation of all proper government in all time. This convention, carried away, as I think many of them are, by feelings necessarily and naturally consequent upon the existing state of things around them, may well be disposed to emancipate the negroes. I am not surprised at that. I came here prepared for it. I knew the feelings of excitement that agitated the country. It affected those portions of the State, particularly, which sent delegates here to carry out that feeling of excitement.

But I think there are considerations that

should lead to a very different conclusion with regard to this question. When gentlemen tell me that the question of emancipation covered all that is here, I can conceive of no greater error. Emancipation is not a new thing in the history of the world. We know of emancipation elsewhere. Maryland is not the first to inaugurate this change from slavery to freedom in a State. We are familiar with that. But I say this is a novelty. This is a departure from what has everywhere, on such occasions, always been regarded as a necessary consequence of that change or alteration in condition from slavery to freedom. From the first commencement of this change of policy down to the present moment we find this feeling.

To-day talking about compensation? Has there been anything to the contrary ever heard of? Taking property is one thing. The right of the government to take property is recognized; but to refuse to pay for it is just as widely different from the practice we have been accustomed to, in all time, as darkness is from light. Gentlemen make a great mistake, therefore, when they say that the whole question is covered by the provision already adopted.

I can hardly expect to have much attention paid to what I say, when the majority have expressed such decisive feeling upon the subject as they have here; but I do ask a patient hearing of one or two suggestions that seem to me to be entitled to some weight at their hands.

With regard to the great and eternal principles of right and wrong, we need expect no time, no circumstances, no condition of the country to make any change or alteration in them. With regard to the principle of emancipation, freedom from slavery in a State, I am willing to admit that there is something like a principle involved. If gentlemen have made up their minds to the adoption of a principle upon this subject which leads to emancipation, let them adopt it. If it be right to-day, it was right yesterday, and will for all time be right. Great principles do not change. Truth is eternal. The great principles of honesty and integrity are just as lasting as the throne of the universe.

But there are other questions not involved in those fundamental principles. Is there any principle in this? I ask gentlemen with candor, if they will for one moment divest themselves of a determination not to hear anything, or to consider anything said upon the subject, whether this is a question of principle or of expediency? I do not see how any man can say that there is any principle, which is to last, involved in it. Certainly there has been a great mistake all over the world, if there was not a propriety under circumstances where emancipation has existed, if it was not right, expedient and proper to make compensation. This has never been