

curing in the report of the committee on revision in relation to the article on the elective franchise.

Mr. CHAMBERS. I will state in a few words what has occasioned all the difficulty. I objected to the course being pursued as being contrary to what the rules of the body required. A committee on revision has been appointed. An article adopted by this body has been referred to that committee for revision. They have made various changes in the language of that article, and, except in one instance, without the slightest objection on the part of any individual, so far as I know. But in one instance they have undertaken to erase a word which by a positive vote this house refused to have erased. I voted with those of this house who voted that the word should be erased, in order to carry out the sense which was intended to be given to the section. The committee, under the name of revising, have undertaken to go contrary to that vote of the house, and to strike out what the house voted to retain, which, I think, is wrong. I have no material objection, however, to that verbal alteration.

The committee, however, have gone further. They have made a specific amendment, a substantial amendment to one of the sections. Now I say that the fifteenth rule directs how to dispose of the report of a committee; if this is to be regarded as a valid report. I say this committee on revision have no business to suggest new matter. But if this house adopt the idea that the committee have acted within the range of their authority, and this is a report of a committee of this house, then upon that subject the fifteenth rule is just as precise as language can make it. That is my idea; that there is no mode consistently with our rules by which any provision can be inserted in the constitution in the manner now suggested.

The PRESIDENT. The chair has no difficulty in regard to this question. The work of this convention has, in effect, been accomplished, and all the provisions of the standing rules have been complied with, by the reports of the committees having been made in regular form, read the first, second and third times, and finally passed by yeas and nays. The work contemplated by the standing rules of the house has, therefore, been completed.

For the purpose of ascertaining that the constitution is complete in all its parts, the convention has appointed an additional committee, called the committee on revision, for the purpose not only of revising any verbal or other errors which may have occurred, but also for the purpose of suggesting for the consideration of this house any matter which the committee may deem important and necessary to perfect any article or section in

that constitution. That the chair regards as coming strictly within the purview of the committee. If the suggestions made by this committee meet with the sanction of this house, they will stand; if not, they will be of no avail. This whole subject depends upon the will of the majority. The convention has the right to reject or adopt any suggestion of the committee, whether the particular subject has been acted upon by this convention or not. In other words, the work of this convention resolves itself into the will of the majority.

Mr. BELT. Allow me to state a point to the chair, in order that I may understand this matter more clearly. I suppose nothing has given more trouble or anxiety to this convention than our judicial system. We have decided in favor of an elective judiciary. Suppose that the committee on revision should undertake to strike out all that establishes the elective principle, and to insert the appointive principle. Would that come within the proper scope of the committee on revision?

The PRESIDENT. The chair has no doubt upon this question. The committee on revision has the entire control of the constitution, and can make any suggestions it pleases in regard to it. It can suggest to this convention to strike out this or that paragraph or section; but that does not strike it out. It is still left to the judgment of this body whether it shall be stricken out or retained. The whole matter resolves itself into the judgment of the house. If the house determine to make any change, they can do so. They can do so in concurrence with the action of the committee, or contrary to the action of the committee. Of course there is a limit to the proper prudence to be exercised by a committee of this character. It is not to be supposed that the committee, in direct violation of the judgment of the house, would strike out any important provision or principle. But in the hurry of business the convention may overlook some important provision, which may be brought to the attention of the committee on revision, who may bring it to the consideration of the convention in the shape of a report. When they do that their work is complete. They can suggest the striking out of a provision, or the insertion of an additional provision; but no provision is stricken out or inserted except by the deliberate judgment and action of the house. In other words, this is a short mode of enabling the convention to perfect its labors, relieving them of the necessity of going through all the formalities required by the standing rules.

Mr. CHAMBERS. Can you by this process avoid or evade a rule which requires that no section or paragraph shall be incorporated into the constitution except in accordance with a certain course of action?