

bers the basis of representation to the House of Delegates, and of mixed basis of population and territory as for representation in the Senate."

He would be willing to meet all true reformers at a point short of representation according to numbers and was willing still further to modify his proposition should any suggestion be made by any one in whose attachment to the cause of reform he had confidence. Before proceeding to a discussion of the amendment, he desired to comment upon the course adopted by the committee in presenting an abstract proposition, and endeavoring to force the House to a vote which when taken, could not in the nature of the case accomplish any practical result. He emphatically denied the right of the Committee, to submit such a resolution, under the terms of the order originally submitted by himself and amended by the distinguished gentleman from Queen Anne's, (Mr. GRASON,) requiring the Committee to report by articles. He protested against the right of the Committee to shield any one or more of its members from the responsibility of a report until a decision should be first had upon such interrogatories, as they chose to submit to the Convention. The chief, if not sole object of the formation of Committees, is to expedite the business of the Convention by proposing plans for the adoption or rejection of that body. This was the only Committee which had taken a different course. They seem to think that the task of perfecting a plan was committed to them. Not so. Their usefulness would be better exemplified by bringing forward their plans that the Convention might shape them to meet the views of a majority. If there were no two of them who could agree, let each member report separately as had been done in New York and other State Conventions. He did not charge it as a motive with the Committee, but the resolution seemed to invite a spirit of partyism, an arraignment of county prejudices—the smaller against the larger, and both against the city of Baltimore. So much, sir, as to my objections to the course of the Committee. Let us look to the resolution itself, and its merits. Are gentlemen called upon to commit themselves upon isolated propositions before they had surveyed the whole ground? For himself, he never meant to contend under all circumstances for the principle of representation according to numbers, as a *sine qua non* to be inserted in the new Constitution. He was free to confess, that when he came to the Convention he did not expect to find the opponents of that principle, willing to yield every thing on that point.

The act itself under which this Convention was called, when it fixed the basis of representation in this body, was a virtual acknowledgement that the Constitution was to be a work of compromise. If not, why place us here a minority of Delegates representing an overwhelming majority of the people, "to be laughed to scorn," when setting up such pretensions. He avowed himself unwilling to support a Constitution, however acceptable in other respects, unless much was yielded on the basis of representation. The present basis is in derogation of the equal rights

of American citizens. Let all true reformers unite and fashion a Constitution, which, like the great federal compact of the Union, shall contain compromises to protect the weak, and do justice to the great majority principle which should lie at the foundation, as a corner stone, of all representative government. He desired to say a few words to his friends from Somerset, (Mr. DASHIELL,) and St. Mary's (Mr. BLAKISTONE,) who appear to regard the proposition he had the honor to submit, in relation to a constitutional guaranty upon the subject of slavery, as a sort of Trojan horse.

The gentleman from St. Mary's was fond of speaking of hobbies—*de gustibus non est disputandum*. If he had jostled the hobby (slavery) on which he so gracefully rides, he must beg pardon. In seriousness, sir, that proposition was but one of a series of constitutional guaranties he designed to propose to insure greater confidence in those who represented minority interests, and thereby lead to an honorable adjustment of the question of representation. He announced that he would not pertinaciously adhere to the principle of representation according to population, and he believed the constituency he had the honor to represent in part, would hold any one of their delegates to strict accountability, if by any extreme demands, the Constitution itself was to be defeated. There is a path of duty to be trod within these walls, in which a consciousness of honest motive, and a confidence not feigned but real, in the virtue and intelligence of the people can alone support us. That path is not a hidden one, it is to be reached not by windings, but by the avoidance of extremes. Practical men look anxiously to a radical reform in all the departments of the government. It is in no martyr's spirit, that he avowed himself in favor of a fair and liberal compromise; he expected the cordial support of his constituency, who were a chivalrous and high-toned people, who did not expect their delegates to accomplish impossibilities. The gentleman from St. Mary's had again and again called upon members to show their hands upon the question of popular representation; to use his own language, to "toe the mark."

Why, Mr. President, what does this all amount to? Does it require any peculiar strength of nerve for a gentleman from a small county to cry out lustily against numerical representation? Far from it; to do otherwise might require a high degree of moral courage. Or, what merit should he claim as a representative in part, of one hundred and seventy thousand souls, "to toe the mark," upon the extremest line of popular representation. Let us, sir, act as becomes Marylanders, freed from sectional prejudices and having a single eye to the public good.

Mr. Hicks asked for some information from the chair. Was it competent to offer a substitute to the pending amendment?

The chair replied in the negative, two amendments being now pending.

Mr. Hicks then read a proposition which he intended to offer when he could get the opportunity.