

It would be impossible for it to be done, without the knowledge of the aspirants for office. And if it could, by possibility, be done without such knowledge, it would necessarily bring the person so elected, into suspicion and disrepute. But, besides this, each and every man in the community will know, that though he may not for the time be a candidate, yet the time may come, when he may desire to hold an office, by election or otherwise. The oath of qualification will forever stare him in the face. He will ever remember that any violation of the law, in any form, or by any means, either in buying or colonizing voters, will operate a perpetual bar to his success. To cover it, he will have to perjure himself, with all its consequences of exposure, and with all its pains and penalties, inflicted by God and man. He would enter upon his office with a violated and wounded conscience and with the harrassing terror of expected exposure.

Every argument which had been advanced in favor of restriction, had been answered already? He referred to the fact of the obtaining of the right to vote at Baltimore, by sleeping there one night, and was about to remark on it, when

Mr. MERRICK interposed a remark. While a man moving from one ward to another, may require the right to vote in six hours, you and I could not obtain it without a residence of six months.

Mr. PRESSTMAN. Should it so happen that a different arrangement of the districts was to be made, the same evil would occur. What difference did it make in the right to vote, whether a man lived on one side the street or the other? Besides, the gentlemen, if he lost his vote, would do so voluntarily, by leaving his county, where he had a right to vote.

Mr. SPENCER. The gentleman from Baltimore, had given the true construction of the law. The residence in the ward or district, must be real and not fictitious. Sleeping would not afford evidence of the fact. It depended on a *bona fide* intention. His exposition was received with a smile. He put it to the gentleman from Kent, whose smile he had noticed, to say whether, if as a judge, a case came before him, the evidence of which showed that the party had sworn, that he went *bona fide* to reside in a ward, or district, when the evidence proved, that he only slept a night and left it, the next day, he would not inflict punishment on him?

Mr. CHAMBERS. If a jury convicted him, I would send him to the Penitentiary.

Mr. SPENCER. And would not any intelligent jury convict?

Mr. CHAMBERS. They ought to do so.

Mr. SPENCER. The gentleman from Kent had answered. If a man swears he went with a *bona fide* intention to reside, and then went away the next day, he would be guilty of perjury. And how shall we be benefited by substituting five nights for one night. If he would perjure himself in one case, he would in another.

He went on to state that the right of suffrage

was restricted in the early period of the Government. And if it should be the desire of the people to restrict it now, they have a right. But is it expedient? He held it to be inexpedient, and impolitic. He held that every man should have a right to vote. This was the position on which he stood. He would never consent to trench on the right of suffrage. He would vote against all restrictions, except those which are already in the Constitution. He, as he had heretofore said, had seen great injustice practised under the restrictions as they now existed. An election rarely occurred, at which legal voters were not rejected, by the judges of elections, urged by men who stood at their backs, and who knew better. Who knew, at the time, they were doing an act of injustice. Voters were often rejected, for partizan purposes, as well on the ground of residence as age, whose right to vote was beyond question. Other restrictions will inflict greater evils.

Mr. DAVIS said that after the able and eloquent speeches which had been made, he only rose to state a fact. It is well known that the great question of Reform had its origin in Frederick county; that not being able to obtain a convention to revise the Constitution, that county set about the work in her own limits through the legislation of the State. In doing so, she set an example worthy of the imitation of this Convention. In 1838, she petitioned the Legislature for a change in the mode of electing the members of the Levy Court, from the Governor to an election by the people. The county was divided into three Levy Court districts, and, as a qualification for voters to vote for members of the Levy Court, it was provided by chapter 261, section III, "that the voters in each Levy Court district in said county, who shall be qualified to vote for delegates to the General Assembly, and shall have resided six months in said Levy Court district in which they shall offer to vote, shall be entitled to vote for as many persons in said district as Justices of the Levy Court in said county as hereinbefore assigned to such district."

By reference to the journal of the House of Delegates of that session, he found that his honorable friend, Mr. BISER, then before him, and Mr. SCHLEY, now a member of this Convention from Washington county, were then Delegates for Frederick county to the General Assembly. Mr. SCHLEY reported the bill above referred to; and although he had been unable to trace the vote upon that bill, he found that Mr. BISER had introduced another bill to abolish the Commissioners of Tax and refer their duties to this same Levy Court, with the restriction of the six months residence as provided for in the said bill. The people in Frederick appeared to be so much in love with this system, that upon an enlargement of the number of Levy Court districts in 1844, from three to five, it was provided by chapter one hundred and ninety-two, section five, "that every voter in each of the Levy Court districts as described in the the third section of the act, who shall be qualified to vote for Delegates to the General Assembly, and who shall have