

nounced persons who held sympathy with the south, the gentleman from Baltimore city goes further and requires them to swear that never hereafter will they enter into any political combination, no matter what the state of circumstances may be, whereby a severance of the Union shall be effected.

We cannot tell what may be the course of events. We do not know in this day of revolution what a moment will bring forth. Does the gentleman desire that persons standing as we do, in our relations towards our government, should swear that under no state of circumstances will we change our political relations to the government? I do not know, if things continue to progress as they have done, in destroying our institutions, but what I may get up an organization of a social character to remove to England as the only government now existing where the citizen is protected in all his rights. There is a fealty under the government of England due to the Queen; but in every respect is the citizen respected in his rights, a great deal more, and there is more stability in that government, than any government now know.

Under no state of circumstances would I vote for either one of these propositions. They are both obnoxious and must be to every reflecting mind. To attempt to bind down the citizen forever hereafter, no matter what change may take place in our government, is a thing which I hope every reflecting mind will at once reject; and I hope the convention by voting it down will show their condemnation of it.

Mr. JONES, of Somerset. The convention is not full this morning and this subject now pending is of vital importance. I have been necessarily absent from my seat for several days, and have not been able to examine this question. If there is any other portion of the report not liable to so much exception as this, I would most respectfully suggest to the chairman of the committee (Mr. Sands,) and to the convention that this section be informally passed over, until we can have a fuller house and can give it a more mature consideration than we now can upon the spur of the moment. I suggest it as a matter of courtesy. The amendment now pending is not even printed yet, and certainly it deserves some careful consideration. The minority report has not been printed. I think under all the circumstances it will not do any harm; and it may be some satisfaction.

The PRESIDENT. The minority report is upon the journal.

Mr. JONES, of Somerset. It is in the journal, but has not been printed in bill form. I think this is a matter for the most grave consideration; how far, in the very midst of such a revolution as this in which we now find ourselves, in view of all the uncertainties which have attended the military operations since this war began, in view of the

many disappointments which have followed very confident predictions of success, in view of the very grave responsibility which this convention assumes, it shall attempt to put into the oath of office, amid the wild bitter feelings arising from civil war, qualifications for holding office. It does seem to me that there is ground for appealing to the convention to pause and consider the matter distinctly, at least so far as the circumstances of the case will allow, understandingly at least; to let us know the scope of the amendments which are presented, and of the propositions which are proposed to be embodied in the constitution.

The theory upon which constitutions are formed, is that they are for all time to come. If we are so acting, and not for the unhappy, excited moment, full of all incertitude and of all danger—if we are acting for the future—if we hope that this work is to stand, and that we are to have a permanent constitution for the people of Maryland—if the purpose of this convention is to establish truth and justice and right, and to invoke all those principles in the constitution which is to be presented to the vote of the people, we ought to act upon the petition in our Lord's prayer, "lead us not into temptation."

I think that of all the mistakes which have attended the operations of our government during this unfortunate war, that of requiring continual and repeated oaths from every person arrested on the most trivial expression overheard by some detective of the government, or by some false-hearted personal enemy, perverted and taken out of its true meaning and made the basis of complaint and arrest—of all the mistakes which have been made, this is one of the most grave. Its tendency has not been to repress what is called disloyalty. While interfering with the right of freedom of speech, which the convention has uniformly asserted as one of the natural rights of man, its tendency has not been to the peace, quiet and good order of the community—to establish the government in the affections of its citizens, but its tendency has been to irritate, to alienate, to exasperate, to demoralize. And after three years of experiment the wonder is that it should be persisted in.

I regret very much that I have not had an opportunity of examining these oaths that I might in detail examine the particular provisions which are attempted to be introduced, I have no doubt, very honestly and patriotically on the part of those who have presented them to the consideration of the convention. Yet, sir, we should distrust ourselves. I feel a consciousness of the necessity of invoking the injunction for myself, and I very much fear that my friends in the convention, upon both sides, are under the like necessity of impressing upon themselves a like injunction of caution, of forbearance, of deliberation