

AND

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

Debate on the Convention Question. CONTINUED.

Mr. GASTON had foreseen the difficulty of discussing the proposition before the committee, without exciting unpleasant sectional feelings...

The proposition before the committee, said Mr. G. is of a peculiar character, and of no ordinary consequence...

It is assuredly incumbent on those who maintain the affirmative of the proposition before us, to show, not merely that defects exist in the Constitution, but that such defects exist as produce practical and serious evils to those who live under it...

When an individual is thoroughly persuaded of the excellence of the end which he seeks to accomplish, and which cannot be effected but by the cooperation of others he may determine in his own mind, not only the reasons which influence his own mind, but those which may hope will have influence with others...

It is said that the Representation is greatly unequal and highly unjust, and that the Constitution ought to be amended so as to render the representation conformable to the principles of Republican Government.

What does the gentleman lay down as just and Republican principles? Is it at numbers alone shall govern? If he deny its correctness, the object of every Political Association ought to be the happiness and well-being of its members...

Our seats? Not on the principle of numbers. No man but he who owns 50 acres of land has a voice in our election. Is this institution; this branch of the Government, a fungus on Republicanism which must be torn away?

The whole revenue thus collected is \$85,426. The eastern counties furnish \$36,798 & the western counties \$24,183. The average of a county is about \$894. This multiplied by 27 gives \$24,138—but \$4 short of that which the western counties yield.

Where, then, is this monstrous inequality so abhorrent from all notions of justice, so repugnant to the principles of republican freedom? Take the principle of numbers, and it is admitted that the western counties have not their rightful portion of political power.

The principle of numbers alone is not a correct principle of representation. The principle of wealth, taken alone, would furnish a basis of representation equally, if not more objectionable.

The inequality of representation is alleged to operate with ill effect against the western section of the State. Let a true North and South line be drawn through the city of Raleigh.

Under the modification which prevails in the representation of the people in the House of Representatives of the United States—under that modification, which this State has adopted in her federal compact with her sister States, and which they have agreed to allow as correct.

It is not practicable to gain as definite a basis for the representation of property. One however would be taken which the friends to the western claims ought not to object to.

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Immediately dependent on popular suffrage? It may give the office a factitious consequence which it needs not, and which ought not to possess.

That this scheme will not increase the actual weight of the people in the government, the gentleman from Orange has been good enough to prove to us.

That the Constitution has its defects, no one can doubt. But has it been shown, can it be shown, that it operates oppressively or unequally?

Much seems to be hoped for in the improvement of our Constitution, from the tranquillity of the season in which we shall set about its amendment.

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which more excited my astonishment and regret than that which seemed to have viewed a subserviency of the Judiciary to the Legislative Department of the Government.

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