

"Or some other uniform provision whereby the legal and qualified electors may be fully and truly ascertained, and the elective franchise protected from all fraud."

Mr. J. U. DENNIS gave notice of his intention to move, when in order, to amend the amendment of Mr. JENIFER, by striking out the word "may," and inserting the word "shall"—(so as to make the provision imperative on the Legislature.)

Mr. JENIFER turning to Mr. D., and therefore scarcely heard at the Reporter's desk, was understood to express his preference for the language of the original amendment, which had been inserted, he said, after due reflection and upon consultation with friends.

Mr. DENNIS said that if we were to have a Registry law at all, it seemed to him that it would be best to make it imperative. If such a law was to exist, it should be made incumbent upon the Legislature to pass it, and should not be left to the alterations of party in every successive Legislature; as it had been suggested parties alternated every two years on the oyster law.

Mr. RICAUD stated his object, (in his second amendment,) to be to empower the Legislature, by Constitutional provision to pass such a law if they deemed it necessary, and thus take away the objection that the Legislature transcended its Constitutional power, if they should think this the best mode of protecting the elective franchise. If a Registry law should not be the best mode to accomplish the object, then the Legislature would have it in their power to pass such other laws as they might think proper.

Mr. SPENCER. The reason which will induce me to vote against the whole proposition is this; if it is proper that any other restrictions should be imposed upon the voters of the State, beyond those which now exist, let it be done here. I am unwilling to leave the matter to the changes and vacillations which must attend it, if it is referred to the discretion of the Legislature. If it is proper the thing should be done, let us do it. If it is not proper, let it go by the board.

The question was then taken, and by ayes 37, noes 17, the amendment was rejected.

The question was then stated to be on the amendment heretofore offered by Mr. KILGOUR, (which prohibits the Legislature from passing such a law.)

Some desultory conversation followed, as to the fact whether Mr. KILGOUR's amendment was or was not pending before the Committee.

Mr. DAVIS expressed the hope that the final vote on that amendment, would not be taken in the absence of Mr. KILGOUR, as that gentlemen desired to present his views.

After some further conversation,

Mr. J. U. DENNIS offered the amendment indicated by him, (making it imperative on the Legislature to pass a Registry law.)

Mr. McMASTER called for the yeas and nays.

The CHAIR reminded the gentleman that, under the late change of the rules, the yeas and nays could not be taken in Committee.

Mr. MORGAN moved to amend the amendment

of Mr. JENIFER, by striking out all after the words, "the Legislature," and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

"Ought from time to time to pass such laws as in their wisdom may be deemed necessary to ascertain the legal and qualified voters of the State, and to protect the elective franchise from all fraud."

Mr. MORGAN said, he was opposed to the passage of any law for a uniform system of registration. He was opposed to it: First, because he could see no reason why such a law should be passed, where it could have no proper application. He could see no reason why the Convention should incorporate in the Constitution a provision declaring that the voters in his county, where, so far as his knowledge extended, there was no fraud, should be required, simply because frauds were committed elsewhere, to go and register their names in the county town or election district of the State. It had been alleged, and in part, it was a matter of notoriety, that in other sections of the State, frauds had been committed; and wherever they were committed, he desired that the Legislature should have the power to apply the corrective. Hence it was, that he was opposed to the amendment of the gentleman from Charles, (Mr. JENIFER,) because he saw that it would operate unjustly. His (Mr. M's,) amendment, would cover the whole ground, and would give to the representatives of the people, who were supposed to know their wants, a sufficient grant of power to protect the ballot box from fraud, wherever it might exist. If it existed in any of the counties or cities of the State, let them pass laws applicable to those counties or cities; but let them not have the power to pass laws which would act injuriously, and in his opinion wrongfully, upon those portions of the State where no such outrages were committed.

He declared his belief that the opposition to the Registry Law formerly passed with reference to the city of Baltimore, arose from the fact, that it did not operate uniformly; that restrictions upon the elective franchise should operate alike upon all citizens of the State, whether in the city or county, and that therefore, the law itself was unconstitutional, in as much as it imposed upon the citizens of Baltimore, burthens in the exercise of their rights, which were not imposed upon the citizens of the counties. He could see the force of this objection, and he contended it was equally appropriate here, because it was proposed to make the rule apply to a people, in respect to whom the reason of the rule had no force.

He had heard different gentlemen give their testimony in regard to the illegal votes in their counties. He repeated, he had no such experience as to his own. He had no knowledge of a single illegal vote having ever been given there, which, at the time was known to be illegal. He knew that there were other counties of the State that were similarly situated. He could see very great reason why a general grant of power should be given, leaving it to the Legislature in its wisdom, to apply it where frauds existed, and where