

"Rule 39. Every bill shall receive three readings in the House on three different days of the session previous to its passage, unless three-fourths of the members of the House otherwise determine, &c."

In framing these rules we have determined that reports from committees embodying amendments of the Constitution shall go through the same form that bills go through when they are pending before the House of Delegates. There no bill, if it simply appropriates five dollars, or proposes to change a man's name, if it touches the smallest matter of legislation, can be read more than once upon the same day unless three-fourths of the members vote for it. Otherwise it receives one reading on one day, a second reading on another day, when it is considered as subject to amendment, and a third reading on a third day when it is put upon its final passage. All that I propose, therefore, by this amendment, is to place reports from committees containing articles or sections proposed to be made a part of the Constitution in the same position; and I think no gentleman can object to the reasonableness of such an amendment. We are here to form a Constitution for the people of the State; to remodel the organic law. The result of this rule, if it should be adopted by the Convention as reported by the majority of the committee, would be that the majority of the Convention could frame a report and submit it to-day to the Convention, have it read the second time by a vote of a bare majority, and by the same vote put it upon its passage; and the members of the Convention would not even have the privilege of seeing that report in print, or the opportunity to read it through, but must judge of its provisions simply by hearing it read at the clerk's desk.

Now I gravely ask this Convention whether, as representing their constituents here in a sovereign Convention to remodel the organic law of the State, they will be prepared to adopt a report to insert articles in the Constitution of the State in that rapid and informal manner. I can hardly conceive of any report which will emanate from any committee, embodying an article to be placed in the Constitution, which I should be willing to vote upon in this manner, unless I was a member of that committee and had carefully considered its provisions. We are not only to embody our views in the Constitution, but we are to embody them in such a form that it will not afterwards involve the State in litigation. Every man's constituents are entitled to demand, upon a constitutional provision, not only that the views of their representative in reference to the policy of that provision should be considered, but that he should have an opportunity to read over the phraseology to determine whether it may not involve the people of the State in a lengthy litigation from the hasty adoption of some

clause, and to serve his constituents by suggesting a proper modification. Such a rule as this, will enable a bare majority of the House, to put a provision of the Constitution upon its final passage upon the very first day of its presentation to the House, without its ever being printed, or members being allowed an opportunity to read it through.

Not only does reason favor the amendment which I submit, but that amendment is in consonance with the rules of every legislative body, whose rules I have examined. No legislative body, so far as I am informed or have examined, which requires a report embodying articles in a Constitution, or a bill, to be read on three several days, allows a bare majority of the House to put it through upon its final passage upon the first day that it is submitted, without giving members the privilege of reading it through. But the rules of every legislative body, where three days are required upon which a measure shall be read, provide that a vote of three-fourths of the members shall be required to suspend the rules. I offer the amendment, therefore, that we may not, upon so grave a matter as that upon which we are now engaged, the formation of the organic law of the State; proceed hastily, but that we may conform to the rule of justice which in every legislative body is extended by the majority to the minority, to give them an opportunity to consider a proposition three days, first when it is offered, second when it is open to amendment and discussion, and third when the final vote is taken upon it.

Mr. STIRLING. I do not altogether agree with the member from Prince George's (Mr. Clarke) although I am anxious to avoid hasty legislation. I do not want to require too strong a vote to carry through a project at the manifest desire of a large majority of the Convention. I would move to amend so that it may require a vote of "two-thirds of the members present."

Mr. CLARKE. Of course that is better than the report as it emanates from the majority of the committee; but still, inasmuch as the amendment submitted by the minority of the committee embodies the rule which governs all legislative bodies, so far as I have been able to learn, and which has governed the House of Delegates ever since the adoption of the last Constitution, I am not willing to accept of the amendment suggested by the gentleman from Baltimore city. I should be unwilling to place a third of the members of the Convention in that position. I think the rule adopted by the House of Delegates is preferable to that now suggested.

Mr. STIRLING. I will state very briefly why I am willing to go to the extent I have suggested, and why I do not feel disposed to go quite as far as the gentleman from Prince George's. So far as his argument bears upon the question of the hasty consideration of a