several times to change, but our efforts have been defeated by the Democrats.

Mr. CLARK of Missouri. I will tell you about that, too, a little later.

Mr. CAPRON. That was repealed years ago.

Mr. CLARK of Missouri. Wait; I am making this speech. I yielded for a question; not for a speech.

Governor Davis stated further that under the present unfair and inefficient system, which is shown by mathematical demonstration that about 36,000,000 of over 400,000,000 are a majority of both branches of the legislature, and thereby absolutely control the political affairs of the State.

Yet, we hear loud lamentations about unfair election laws in the South.

In Rhode Island they still have that relic of barbarism known as a "property qualification." If a man owns $134 worth of real estate, he is a voter for all purposes. If he does not own that much real estate, but owns and pays taxes on $134 worth of personal property, he is a voter for all purposes. The almighty dollar and not intelligence is the qualification for full suffrage.

Then they have what they call registered voters, who are voters for certain purposes and are not voters for certain other purposes. Yet we hear a great deal of hypocritical whining about the suppression of voters down South.

I commend to these philanthropic doctors the Scripture, which says, "Physician, heal thyself."

Under this outrageous Rhode Island apportionment for legislative purposes, the Democrats would have to carry the State by 23,000 or 30,000 majority. The Orator in joint ballot in the legislature, whereby they might elect a Senator of the United States, and by a much larger majority in order, to control both houses of the State legislature.

I was told by Mr. Green, chairman of the State Democratic committee, that the Republican supreme court judges had given the Republican governor an opinion to the effect that there is no power lodged anywhere to authorize the people of Rhode Island to hold a constitutional convention to frame a new constitution to cure the outrageous apportionment and other ill oppressions from which the people of Rhode Island now suffer.

The only way they can secure a constitutional convention to form a new one is to submit and adopt an amendment authorizing the calling of such a convention. Here is the peculiar modus operandi of adopting a constitutional amendment. The proposed amendment must be passed by a majority in each house of two different legislatures and then be adopted at the polls.

As the little towns now elect a large majority of each house of the legislature, and as such amendment would deprive the small towns of a large portion of their present unjust power and unfair representation, they are not likely to frame an amendment that such an amendment can be passed through each house of two succeeding legislatures. If it looks like nothing short of a revolution would give Republican Rhode Island a fair and modern system of voting—such as we have in New York.

I was told that in the city of Woonsocket 400 men begged the assessor to put them on the tax list, offering to swear and to prove that they possessed the $134 of property necessary to entitle them to vote under Rhode Island’s medieval constitution. The assessor, who was a Republican, refused to put them on the tax list. They were Democrats and undertook to mandamus the assessor and compel him to do so, but the judge, a Republican, decided that they were too late in their application, as the tax lists had already been done.

The next time they endeavored to compel the assessor by mandamus to put them on before he completed his lists, but the judge decided that the assessor was not required to put them on on any particular day of the year, and that he might intend to put them on the next day or the next day after that, and the prayer of their petition—the right to be taxed and to vote. Once they were too late. Next time they were too early. [Laughter.]

I guess that is the only instance in the entire history of the human race where men asked, begged, and instituted a lawsuit to be permitted to be taxed.

The gentleman from Connecticut says that the government of the District of Columbia is a model government—the best in the United States, as I understand that proposition. It is a carpetbag government, for the most part. I am not criticizing the individuals who compose it. They may be good and efficient men, or they may be the reverse; but the negroes, the colored citizens, the colored officials, but the local offices—ought to be bona fide citizens of the District and not broken-down politicians from the States fastened upon these people to eat up their substance.

Congress sits here two days in the week as a common council for the city of Washington—a duty for which it is unfit by reason of ignorance of the wants of the people and of the proper relation of one thing to another.

The fact that under the shadow of the nation’s Capitol 300,000 American citizens, white and black, are completely disfranchised, that the government votes under the sun, are reduced to the low estate of being, chiefly of the negro citizens, has no more voice in the government under which they live than have the inhabitants of Africa, is the saddest commentary to be found anywhere in the representation of the government.

Why should they not be heard? Is it a moving spirit? I would like to be here the day they elect the first Delegate to Congress. It would double discount a Donnybrook fair. There would be 500 candidates at least. [Laughter.

During the Fifty-fourth Congress there was a meeting down-town to agitate for the restoration of self-government. I was invited to speak. I accepted the invitation. It was so announced in the papers. A delegation composed of Democrats and Republicans united to have the people decide whether the people of the District should not enjoy the right of suffrage. A Republican answered: "The damned negroes and poor whites would vote us into bankruptcy!"

A Member. Do you say that a Republican said "darned negroes?"

Mr. CLARK of Missouri. Yes; I was told by one who claimed to know that he was a Republican.

I appeal to you this rash statement in our history is apt to color to the absurd and unjust proposition that a poor white is not fit to vote by disfranchising a whole population of a great city and district.

The refusal of the right of suffrage to the people of this District turns the hands of the clock more than a century. It is a dangerous innovation that marks the disapproval of some other part of the Union and in every other part. It is an open confession in the face of the world that pro tanto our experiment in representative government is a failure.

I want to say here that if a colored man is good enough to vote in the Ninth Congressional district of Missouri, he is good enough to vote in the District of Columbia and to say how his taxes shall be levied and disbursed—to take a hand in running his government.

I am in favor of making an experimental governmental political station of the Sandwich Islands, as you are making one out of the District of Columbia. The truth is that for sixty years we have failed at legislation that Congress wanted to adopt was first tried on the helpless people of this District.

If it did not destroy them, then they extended the experiment to the rest of us. [Laughter.] I agree fully with my distinguished friend from Illinois [Mr. Hitty] that we can not bind the future. I wanted to bind the future when we annexed the Hawaiian Islands. We can not bind future Congresses by saying that we will not make a State out of them; but we can say that those people, being ours now, shall have a chance to educate them- selves, and to be able to vote, to make it a republic and a self-government, and that we will not treat them in the outrageous manner in which we treat the people of this District.

I want to say further that the same time we take in a new island, so far as I am concerned, you will have to extend it to the Constitution of the United States and the liberties that we enjoy. [Applause.]

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Missouri [Mr. CLARK] asks unanimous consent to print as a part of his remarks the bill in regard to the District of Columbia and to extend his remarks in the RECORD. Without objection, it will be so ordered.

There was no objection.

Mr. Sperry. Mr. Chairman, I should not arise at this time to discuss a proposition in a manner altogether different, but I want to set one thing right which has been said by the gentleman from Mississippi [Mr. Williams] about the State of Connecticut.

The State of Connecticut has been alluded to here, and so has the State of New Haven. When the State of Connecticut was formed, it was formed of the great monopoly which made up the State. Those little towns were unlike any other towns that I know of in the United States. Those little towns were little republics of themselves, and when the constitution of 1818 was formed a provision was made for the people of the whole town to vote on privileges, and immunities which the people of Connecticut had received from their ancestors were vouchsafed to them under the new constitution, besides all of the original towns were given two representatives in the general assembly.

Now, some towns have increased largely in population. At the time our constitution was formed the towns were substantially equal in population. There was but little difference; but since then a town here and there has arisen, like New Haven, like Hartford, the course of events has been such a conviction. Those towns have increased, but the original towns have their two representatives in the general assembly. The small original towns which have not greatly increased in population still have their