

speeches to which he had just listened. He did not understand that anybody wanted today a poll-tax. About 220 years ago the levying of taxes by poll was declared to be grievous, and no poll-tax had been levied here since 1654. Poll-taxes never had been levied in the State of Maryland, nor in the Province of Maryland for one hundred years before she became a sovereign State. This Convention might as well say that the good people of Annapolis shall not eat their oysters shell and all. [Laughter.] What good would it do? No one supposed they would eat their oysters shell and all, but they might as well be prohibited from doing it. You say paupers ought not to be taxed. What difference did it make if you did tax them? Could you collect it? [Laughter.] Then why put it in? There is no question here whether you have a poll-tax or not; it is only whether you say poll-taxes are grievous. He was for striking the clause out, but was not to be responsible for any grievances that might follow. It was a windmill which they were now tilting at.

Mr. Stoddert said the gentleman from Allegany had taken the correct position. This was not the time or the place to discuss the wisdom, justice or expediency of a poll-tax. The proper body to consider that question was the Legislature. The people had the power to prevent the tax if it is of the grievous character it has been described. The discussion which has taken place was wrong and ill-advised, and would have the tendency to array the poor man against the rich man. Every State but Maryland and this had abandoned the abstraction contained in Ohio article. The property of the people of his county (Charles) had depreciated immensely, and the taxation was imposed on but a small proportion of them. They had a population of 12,000 negroes who, while enjoying the benefits of the government, contributed nothing to its support. As the gentleman from Baltimore (Mr. Brown) had said, the landed interests had to bear the burden. The people of his county were in favor of a poll-tax, and while they did not wish to impose it on the other counties, they desired the privilege of coming to the Legislature to ask it for themselves.

Without coming to a vote on the amendment, the Convention, at 2 P. M., adjourned.