

could happen in this Convention. He did not believe the people would endorse it. They were not here to form a constitution of a utopian character, and according to the views of Mr. A, B, or C, but to frame one which would be acceptable to the people of the State of Maryland. The arguments which have been advanced in favor of this tax are that it will be used for the improvement of the public roads or for educational purposes. Did gentlemen wish to impose a property qualification upon the right of suffrage? If so, let them march boldly up to the issue, and not attempt to accomplish their object covertly.

He did believe that poll-taxes were grievous in 1776; grievous in 1851, as declared, and grievous in 1864, when declared so by the illegal convention which then sat here, and as he hoped to be declared grievous by this Convention. It was said that in case the Congress of the United States should enforce universal suffrage, it would be in our power, by the imposition of this poll-tax, to restrict very much the exercise of it. Such an attempt would utterly fail, it could not possibly be done. An attempt to impose a tax on voting would prove a nullity. This Convention, which was assembled here to correct the errors of that body which disgraced the State House in 1864, would, if it went on in its innovations, present an instrument more shocking and revolting than that of its predecessor, and the result of its labors would most certainly be rejected by the people and scorned by them.

Mr. Keating denied that the Convention was here for the sole purpose of redressing the wrongs perpetrated upon them by the Convention of 1864. It was in the power of the Legislature by a three-fifths vote to pass amendments to the constitution, and yet this Convention was called together by more than a two-thirds vote. They were here to expunge the false theories promulgated in the constitution. The gentleman from Kent, (Mr. Wickes,) asked him to come up squarely to the issue, and was he in favor of property qualification for voters? He would come up to the issue and answer the gentleman, and say he was not in favor of a property qualification, but he was in favor of every man who claimed the high and exalted privilege of exercising the suffrage of paying for it, and he would go with this issue in his mouth not only