

he would not trespass on their patience by any further discussion of the subject, unless such discussion should be rendered necessary by others. He believed the merits of the question had been fully elaborated by previous debates, and he would therefore now content himself with simply recalling to the mind of the Convention the true nature of the question at issue.

It was this: It was admitted by all, and had been several times stated by himself and others, that a great change was about to take place in the monetary affairs of the world. To what extent this change was to go, none could foresee or calculate with any certainty—it was certain only that the change was in progress. That from the action of ordinary causes, as well as because of the great and unexpected augmentation of the amount of precious metals, the relative value of money was to be greatly depreciated, to be accompanied and followed, as the shadow follows the sunbeam, by a low rate of interest—possibly in a few years as low as three per cent. even in this country.

The State of Maryland has a large outstanding debt, bearing interest at the rate of six per cent. If the state of things anticipated should arise, the State, if the amendment prevails, would have the power, through her Legislature, to exchange her outstanding debt, which bears this high rate of interest, as it becomes redeemable, for a debt at the lower rate of interest—say three per cent.; and thus secure to the State the difference between the two rates of interest, three and six per cent. upon the amount of her debt so converted. The saving would be, supposing the whole debt could be so converted, three hundred thousand dollars per year, and in the same proportion upon such a commission of any amount of said debt less than the whole. Without this amendment, under the sweeping restrictions imposed on the power of the Legislature, by the section as it now stands, the Legislature will have no power to do this; and you will be obliged to continue the payment of six per cent. per annum, upon all that part of your outstanding debt which is now or may become redeemable, when you have not the cash in hand to pay it off, although thousands of others may be ready and anxious to lend you the amount at three per cent. interest. Would it not be wise to give the Legislature power to turn to the advantage and relief of the people of the State, this condition of the money market, should it arise as anticipated—taking care, as the amendment does, that the gross amount of the State's debt, shall not be increased, by providing that the new stock to be issued, shall not be for any greater amount than the amount of debt redeemed, and shall bear a less rate of interest. It is a power which cannot be abused, and if used can be used only for beneficial purposes. The case is precisely similar to that of an individual who owes on his land some fifty thousand dollars, bearing six per cent. interest. He has not the money to pay off this debt, but he has other neighbors or friends, who are willing to lend him the fifty thousand dollars at three per cent., would not every one say he was blind to his interests,

if he did not take the loan at three per cent. interest, and pay off the debts bearing six per cent. interest? It is not proposed to require the Legislature to do this, but to leave them the power to do so, if that state of things should arise which will enable them to do so; and the circumstances and condition of the State is such, as to make it wise and proper at the time. In my judgment, this salutary power should be left with the Legislature; and this is the whole question the Convention have now to decide. They must understand it; can judge of it; and, therefore, I forbear any further remarks.

Mr. McLANE spoke at some length on the subject of financial operations. The remarks will be published hereafter.

Mr. MERRICK said:

He was glad to find so few points of difference between himself and the honorable gentleman from Cecil, (Mr. McLane,) and the wonder was that there should be any, after the statements and admissions of the honorable gentleman. He admits that by the operation I have before explained we shall save three per cent. per annum upon the amount of State debt which may be so converted. That is the great and the single object of the amendment. If circumstances arise in which that object can, in whole or in part, be accomplished, the amendment proposes to give power to the Legislature to accomplish it—should those circumstances not arise, then the amendment will be inoperative, and can do no harm. It is one of those rare propositions which will give power for good but none for evil. The gentleman admits the good, if it could be accomplished; he also admits the approach of that state of things which will favor its accomplishment—why not then give the power? The honorable gentleman has gone into a long argument upon general subjects of finance, and the fluctuations in values and exchanges about which there is no dispute, no differences of opinion, and upon which we may discourse as long and as eloquently as we please, and at the end, find ourselves just where we started. I have proposed to bring the mind and judgment of the Convention to bear upon a single and plain proposition in the science, (if you so please to call it,) of finance: which is, that if you can exchange a six per cent. bearing debt for a three per cent. debt, you save three per cent. by the operation. Nothing could be plainer nor more simple. And believing, for the reasons assigned, that that state of relative values and exchanges is about to arise which may enable you to effect such an operation, I propose to give the Legislature power, if they can accomplish it, to do that most desirable thing. The correctness of my facts are admitted—the approaching depreciation in the value of money is admitted—the consequent fall in the rate of interest is admitted, and the great probability that the object might in whole or in part be accomplished is not controverted. And yet the measure is opposed; and we are told that the approaching season of prosperity, is to be followed by another period of revulsion and distress, when money will again become high and scarce, and the productions of labor and industry low. Well, sir, I