

from Queen Anne's, (Mr. Spencer,) had carefully examined the section, he would have given no such construction to it. It was the duty of every one in debate to analyze and distribute the elements of a proposition until he had made the whole perfectly comprehensible. And he thought he could, by that process, make it clear as any proposition in Euclid, that the gentleman from Queen Anne's was wrong.

It proposed to confer on the Legislature a power to borrow not exceeding one hundred thousand dollars, on certain conditions touching the taxes that were to be laid to pay any debt that might be contracted in pursuance of that power. This article further authorised the Legislature to borrow fifty dollars, to meet temporary deficits in the treasury, without imposing taxes to pay such debts. In addition to these powers to contract debts, he contended that the section under consideration, gave to the Legislature power to appropriate money without limit, and to pledge the faith of the State without limit, for purposes of education. He conceded that the power to borrow money for any purposes, was limited. But insisted, that as the taxing power was unlimited, and as this section gave an unlimited power to appropriate and pledge the faith of the State for education, that the restrictions touching the power to create a State debt, would not check the wildest extravagance in the expenditure for education to associations, corporations or individuals.

He then took up the section, as amended, read and examined it, and contended that it gave to the Legislature an unlimited power to appropriate money from the treasury for education.— Looking at the construction of the section, he insisted that no language could be clearer. He presumed that the true effect of the proposition would, by and by, be permitted to appear in the action of the Legislature under it; for no one supposed that the sum of one hundred thousand dollars would be sufficient for the establishment of a system of education. The gentleman from Montgomery, (Mr. Davis,) had very frankly told the Convention that his object was to educate every child in the State. Yes, they are all to be educated from this great fountain here. The proposition of the gentleman from Cecil, (Mr. Constable), to limit the taxing power of the Legislature, was rejected, because the Convention could not see what exigency might arise hereafter, to render it necessary to exercise this taxing power. Under the section, as now amended, the Legislature would have the right to pledge the faith of the State without issuing bonds and they might go on to make contracts to build colleges and establish a splendid system of education, and then the people throughout the State would feel themselves called on to sustain this system, based, as it would be, on the plighted faith of the State. If the State House should happen to be burned, the Legislature would not be compelled to create a debt for re-building it, but would pledge the faith of the State and enforce a tax on the people to re-construct the building, and thus redeem the pledge. In like manner they could build colleges, academies and

seminaries of learning, and thus redeem the pledge. They would do this the more readily, because they would know that no man of high principle would hesitate to contribute to a tax to redeem the pledged honor of the State.

Mr. DAVIS felt the peculiar position in which he was placed, but at the risk he knew he had to encounter, in meeting three such able opponents as had taken the floor against his amendment, he would venture a few words in reply.

The gentleman from Frederick, [Mr. Thomas] objected to the amendment, because Frederick county had raised a large school fund, and would contribute her unequal share. So, says the gentleman from Baltimore city, [Mr. Prestman.] has Baltimore done; and he will not consent that Baltimore shall be taxed to educate the children in the counties.

Well, sir, what has the unequal distribution of the present school fund, which the gentleman complains of, to do with propositions now before the Convention? What are we here for, but to reform the past, and provide for the future? My proposition is prospective in its character. It is only to save something from this general locking up of the resources of the State, to aid in carrying out a system of common school education, as is recommended by the committee upon education, of which he was a member.

He had told his people that he should endeavor to introduce into the Constitution a provision for the establishment of a system of education; and if he stood alone, he should strive to obtain it.

Had the gentleman from Frederick read the report on education, he would have seen that a uniform system was provided for, and intended to apply to the whole State alike, not excepting the rich and populous county of Frederick, and the city of Baltimore; and had he have expected this question to come up to-day, he would have been prepared to prove, that it is far cheaper to educate the children of the State, than to maintain them in ignorance. Go to your jails, your penitentiaries, and your alms houses, and you find them filled with the ignorant and unlettered. In a report which he had seen from the penitentiary at Philadelphia, it was stated that the percentage of those who had passed through their common schools, was very small—while that of those, who could not read or write, was overwhelmingly large.

Gentlemen need not fear that the legislature will make any very large appropriation for this purpose. The difficulty was to get them to make any provision at all. At the proper time, if not now blocked up, he intended to indicate a plan for this object.

He was gratified at the large vote in favor of his amendment. He hoped the motion of the gentleman from Frederick to reconsider would not prevail.

Mr. MERRICK made some remarks which will be published hereafter.

Mr. EGE obtained the floor.

And the Convention adjourned, until to-morrow, at ten o'clock.