

having influences upon elections ought not to be promoted to offices? How far that was carried out by him was another matter. The sentiment was generally approved of by the country. He was speaking of the general desire of the public to protect themselves from the improper influences of their representatives. It was to remove from them all inducements to act against what the public good required. It was to prevent agitation and change for the sake of the personal advancement of agitators.

They saw a remarkable instance of this at the last session of Congress. In passing a bill, which which he believed disposed of more of the public domain than any law which Congress has ever passed—he referred to the bounty land bill—Congress declared in that law, that no member of either House should derive any benefit from it. Was this intended to show that they believed themselves more corrupt than any other men? Certainly not. They did it, because they wanted the public to know that they were not influenced, (many of them having served in the Mexican and other wars,) by any personal motives. This principle he would like to have incorporated upon our new Constitution. He would like to have it so inserted, that those who formed Constitutions hereafter, should feel that they were entirely without bias and improper motive; and that the public knew it to be so. There was no foundation for the apprehension that such a provision as this would exclude too many from such public trusts. There was no difficulty in obtaining a sufficient number. He believed, however, that if this Convention had been composed of half its number, it would have performed its duty in one-half of the time. But if you require twice the number they can be had. He had no doubt that the gentlemen who were their opponents, their competitors for seats in this body, were just as able, would have been just as useful as themselves, and if the tables had been turned and those gentleman elected, they might have made just as good a Constitution as themselves, within the whole State of Maryland, there were hundreds of citizens, he believed, just as competent as they were to fill seats in this Convention. Let any man reflect for one moment, and he would find in his own neighborhood, a dozen men just as capable as himself to reform our Constitution. There was no scarcity of such men in the State of Maryland. He would say it with respect—and he had too much self-respect to say any thing that would detract from the character of this Convention—that upon this point there was no danger to the public interest if they disqualified one, two, three, or five hundred men from holding office—enough were to be found in our State for ten times the number of offices every way qualified to fill them. He had no such apprehension.

What was to be the obligatory effect of such an article incorporated into their present Constitution? Some had said that it would have no effect upon those who may be elected to form a Constitution in 1860; because they might, if they chose, exclude from it any article rendering themselves incompetent to hold office under it. Now

his response to that was this. If they incorporated into this Constitution such an article as was proposed, and if these future Conventions to form new Constitutions were called in pursuance of this article, he respectfully submitted that all the members of the new Convention thus called, would take an oath to support this Constitution, under whose authority they acted. The members of the present Convention could not take that oath, because they were not assembled in accordance with the Constitution. But those who would follow them, in pursuance of the article adopted yesterday, would take an oath to support the Constitution of the State. Therefore, it would be utterly inconsistent with this oath, and the duty which they would owe to the State of Maryland, not to incorporate in their proposed Constitution an article to exclude themselves from holding office under its provisions. They might decline to perpetuate this disqualification in succeeding Constitutions, but as regarded themselves, they would be bound by this solemn obligation.

It had been supposed that no man who had become a successful candidate for membership in such Convention, if the Constitution which they would frame should disqualify him from holding office under it. He (Mr. R.) apprehended that no man would stand up in his place and insist that he was qualified to hold office under that Constitution, when he had been elected expressly on the ground that he should not be so qualified. He did not believe any man could do this—certainly not with impunity.

He could see no injury that could result from this restriction; but he saw much good in it. Under it, the Conventions hereafter to be formed would be composed of men who have a single eye to the public good, and have the unbounded confidence of the people.

Mr. TUCK understood the proposition before the Convention to apply solely to members of future Conventions. He could not agree with his friend as to its efficacy. If he would change his amendment so as to prevent any member of this Convention from holding any offices created by this body, he would vote for it. He did not think that they could bind future Conventions. The argument of the gentleman was this. That the members of the present Convention did not take an oath to support the Constitution, because they were assembled here in contravention to that very instrument. He [Mr. T.] thought it immaterial whether this was so or not. It seemed to him not to be altogether right when a Convention was assembling for the purpose of changing a Constitution, to require that its members should take an oath to support it, which meant that they should not alter it; for the moment they attempted to change it, they violated their oath of office. He was decidedly of opinion that in Conventions as well as legislative bodies, persons who created offices should not enjoy them. By the present Constitution members of the legislature could not hold offices created during their terms of service. The reasons was obvious enough. It was to prevent