

school fund, to be raised by taxation. Therefore, they were compelled, in view of their consistency, of their duty, to protect their own interests, to go against any system which opened the door thus widely to a continuance of what they believed to be an oppressive condition of things.

The proposition which the gentleman from Washington had offered was attended with the very same results. It proposed that the legislature should establish a permanent and adequate school fund. What did that mean? The legislature had that power now; he proposed no qualification upon the legislature as to what manner they should distribute the fund which it was proposed to raise. They could thus appropriate it in any way they thought proper. He did hope that in view of the fact that they could not agree as friends of general education, upon any basis, which would be fair and equitable to the people of all the State, they would leave the subject in the hands of the legislature, to act upon it at some more propitious day.

Mr. Brown was not willing that the gentleman from Washington county should class him with those who were opposed to education. He, [Mr. B.] had none, and knew the merit of it too much not to be aware of the advantages resulting from it. It appeared that the friends of this measure entertained different opinions. An honorable gentleman of the committee proposed that at some future day, when the exigencies of the State should admit it, that they should resort to taxation for a school fund.

The gentleman from Washington county proposed that the legislature, at its next session, should impose upon the people a tax, for the purpose of raising a school fund. He inquired of gentleman what was the present condition of Maryland? Were her people not groaning under heavy taxation, and had not each county of the State funds to apply to educational purposes? Were they disposed to levy additional taxes on the people just now? He thought this was a bad time, and that they had better be just than generous. Was not the interest of the fund now vested, together with what was to come to them hereafter, to be applied to the school system? He inquired of gentlemen what they intended to do with that money? Were they to contribute to a superintendent out of the fund, and were the people to pay two thousand dollars to a man to superintend schools, about whom, one-half of the people knew nothing? He saw no necessity for it. They had their county systems, which were progressing well. They husbanded their means when Carroll county was created, and invested them, and they were now receiving the benefit from them.

Gentlemen seemed entirely to forget that the people of Maryland were now heavily burdened with taxation, and that the State was fifteen millions of dollars in debt. Another idea was that this proposition would conflict with the article of bill of rights, which said that a poll tax should not be levied. In his opinion the right of suffrage should be as free as the air we breathe.

As for himself, he was very well satisfied that they could get no better system than they enjoyed at present.

Mr. FIERY said, that he had heard a great deal in relation to the people groaning under taxation, but he would inform the gentleman from Carroll that he was one of those individuals who realized some of the evils of which he had complained. When they come to speak of the wants of the rising generations were they to dispute about dollars and cents? When they compared the mind with dollars and cents, and weighed that immortal principle of man in the scale with dross, with filthy trash, they were degrading human nature; and he would say, that whatever might be the opinions of gentlemen in regard to the people of Washington county, it was his firm conviction that they would submit to taxation for purposes of education rather than for any other subject of legislation. He knew this to be so. He had spoken to some of the most prominent men in the county, who declared that for purposes of education, they were willing to contribute liberally. The magnitude of the subject rested above every consideration of dollars and cents. In this, the nineteenth century, he, as a Marylander, felt debased by the very idea that nearly every State had a system of education, while they had a mere local organization of county schools. A few years ago, in Washington county, they had the old system of subscription. Every gentleman contributed voluntarily.

The fund was appropriated for the education of the poor, and that was thought to be the best system that could be devised. Now they had the public school system very inefficient and still incompetent. They were now bringing in competent, qualified teachers. They examined every teacher, and he was obliged to have a certificate before he could teach, and it was a system which was working most beneficially upon the people, and it was his own opinion, that to have an efficient system, it should be uniform. They must have some one to exercise a general supervision over the whole county. They were all Marylanders, and in looking to the education of the youth of the State, they felt as such, and desired to act as such, so far as his feeble exertions could contribute to it, he would heartily and cheerfully do all in his power to establish a uniform and efficient system throughout the State.

He knew there was a doubt in some gentlemen's minds about the propriety of this thing. It was true, as had been said, the State was embarrassed. But he asked candidly, whether it would not be better to put into effective operation a system at once, though it would subject the people to taxation, and then when they should have a surplus revenue, let it be contributed to this purpose. The oppression would be but momentary—the result would be eternal. The inconvenience would be but for a day—the benefit resulting would be for ages. He was sure that the people of the State would think no money misapplied, which should be directed to the performance of this duty. On his own responsibility, he would say it was the great subject of this