

the portion of the population which it is proposed to educate, the white population, is as low as 5,000; while in other counties, it amounts to 50,000. Now, where is the wisdom in legislating here and providing five commissioners for 5,000 white population, and only the same number for 50,000? Why not allow that matter to be left to the discretion of this able man who is to be the State superintendent? Why not allow his report to the legislature, of course embracing all these minor matters, to be acted upon by the legislature, according as the wants of the several counties may require? In our county (Howard,) we have a comparatively small white population.

Mr. STIRLING. This article authorizes the State superintendent to prepare and report a uniform system of public schools. I do not suppose that authorizes him to report upon the officers under that system.

Mr. SANDS. Well, I should suppose it would. If the superintendent is to report a system for the whole State, will not a legitimate part of that report be that county commissioners are necessary to the working of that system? And after considering the population of the counties, and the necessities of the people, may it not be for him to report that Baltimore county, with a white population of fifty thousand, may require ten school commissioners, while Charles county, with one-fifth of that population, will need but two county commissioners? I suggest to my friends that this is a matter of very grave consideration, inasmuch as we do not propose, in this system of public education, that any volunteer work shall be done. We must fix the duties of these county commissioners, and fix their per diem for the discharge of those duties, if we would have them properly discharged. Then I say, why fix upon one county with a white population of five thousand, the same burden of paying five school commissioners, that is fixed upon Baltimore county with a white population of fifty thousand? Where is the necessity for that number in Howard county?

In my opinion the report of the State superintendent ought to embrace all these matters. He cannot create officers, but the legislature must do it, or under this article by default allow him to do it. But it ought to be his business to report to the legislature whether county commissioners were necessary, and if necessary what number each county would require. Then it would be for the legislature to say whether those officers should be created or not. I think myself that this making a constitutional provision requiring five school commissioners to be appointed for each county, irrespective of its population and necessities, is very unwise and not at all economical. I shall, therefore, be very glad to vote to strike out these sections, and to leave all these matters of detail to the State superintendent, and

to the legislature which is to consider his report.

Mr. EDELEN. I have no disposition whatever to prolong this discussion. I never read this report until this morning when it was called up. I have listened with some attention to the arguments upon this subject. And if there is one thing more than another which I have gathered from the remarks of gentlemen and from this report, it is that this proposes to create a general superintendent of public school education for the chief and main purpose of reporting, in the language of the section already passed, "a uniform system of free public school education" to the next general assembly of Maryland. There his duties stop, until the legislature steps in and imposes upon him such duties pertaining to his office as from time to time may be prescribed by law.

Now, it seems to me that the whole of this matter is referred to the general superintendent of public instruction. And if we now attempt by sections two, three and four, to tie up and restrict him in the work which we have committed to his charge, we will be doing with one hand and undoing with the other. If we put these sections in the constitution, the hands of this State superintendent, and of the legislature when they come to act upon his work, will be tied and trammelled. There must be, if this section two is adopted, an assistant superintendent of public instruction in every county of the State. Yet, for aught we know, this intelligent officer, for whom we have provided a salary, in the language of gentlemen here, "sufficient to command the best talent and the best administrative ability in the country," might entertain the opinion that under his system it was not desirable to have an assistant superintendent in each county of the State. Yet by this section he would be tied down to that, whether he thought it necessary or not.

So under this third section we require a board of public education, and under section four we provide five school commissioners for each county. Now I cannot conceive—for the chairman of this committee has failed to enlighten me upon this point—what the duties of this assistant superintendent in each county are to be, as contra-distinguished from those to be exercised by the school commissioners of each county. It strikes me that the whole object and scope of this article should be that the general superintendent shall originate some uniform system of public education for the State, and, therefore, I think that the whole of the machinery, and all the details of the system should be left to him and to the general assembly when they come to act upon his work.

A great deal has been said about this superintendent travelling all over the State. The gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. Cushing) says you might want some one in