

Charles county and Prince George's county for this year, in which it will be found that the largest item of public expense and charge is for the public primary schools. In Charles county, out of about \$25,000 of county expenses, I am informed by my colleague (Mr. Mitchell,) one of the school board, we paid \$9,000 for the salaries of primary school-teachers, besides the money expended in building public school houses, repairing them, buying stoves for them, and books for poor children. And in Prince George's county, out of an annual levy of \$45,545, \$11,000 of it, about one-fourth, were paid to public primary school teachers. I say this much in explanation of my vote, and in answer to the argument of the gentleman from Baltimore city upon that point; and I hope I shall be permitted on some other occasion to answer his remarks of this morning more at length. I vote "aye."

Mr. PURNELL said: I am not much in the habit of explaining my votes upon any question that arises before this convention, but on the present occasion I ask the privilege of doing so. While I will go perhaps as far as any other member of this convention to perfect a uniform system of education throughout the State, I wish at the same time to do that in the manner which will be most acceptable to the people whom I have the honor in part to represent. I certainly do not think the present system would meet their approbation; and hence I wish to perfect it for the purpose of meeting as nearly as I can their expectations and their wishes. I am aware there are many difficulties and embarrassments which surround this question of public schools; and I am well assured that no system we could inaugurate at present would be perfect. Nevertheless I am willing to put the machinery in motion in some form or other, which perhaps will enable us during the progress of time to detect its defects and to remedy them by subsequent legislation. I do not think the present plan would be such as to meet with approbation throughout the State, and commend itself as I think a plan of so much importance should. I shall consequently vote "aye."

The motion to strike out the section was accordingly rejected.

Mr. PURNELL moved to strike out the second and fifth sections and to insert the following:

"That the State superintendent of public instruction shall, as soon as a system of education shall have been adopted by the general assembly, proceed to appoint, by and with the approval of the State board of education, a school commissioner in each of the election districts in the respective counties of this State, who shall perform such duties and receive such compensation as shall be provided for by said board of public education, and who shall hold his office for the period of four years from the date of his appointment, un-

less removed by the State board of education for neglect of duty or other malfeasance in office."

Mr. PURNELL said: The convention will perceive that the principal difference between that amendment and the report of the committee is that it leaves this matter to the board of education of the different counties instead of assistant superintendents; and I think that would be much more acceptable to the people of the counties. The general superintendent who is provided for here, would visit the counties perhaps twice or more during the year, and would be in constant communication with this board of education, and would have opportunities in the interim of conferring with them on the various subjects that might be necessary to be considered and deliberated on. I think that that plan would be much more effective than to have a superintendent in the different counties to co-operate with the general superintendent throughout the State. This is the system which now prevails in many counties—I think in most of them. They are familiar with it, and it would work well. A school commissioner, as provided by the amendment, would be appointed in every election district in the county, who would be cognizant of the wants and necessities of the people represented in that district; and it seems to me, would be much more likely to meet the demand, than a single individual, who would have the control of the whole county, and supervision of the whole county.

For instance, in Worcester there are ten districts. The consequence would be that there would be ten commissioners on the board, distributed throughout the whole county, who would be fully prepared to represent the wishes and feelings of the whole county in their several districts, and would meet the demands and answer the purposes contemplated in the report of the committee in a much more effective way than could possibly be in the plan suggested.

Mr. RIDGELY. The proposition of the gentleman from Worcester (Mr. Purnell,) if I understand it correctly, as to its purposes, has far other objects than those which have been comprehended in the remarks which have been submitted to the house. Indeed it strikes me that the object suggested by him is the least important of the purposes which that proposition would attain if it should be adopted by the house. If I understand the amendment, it proposes a system of public education to be adopted by the legislature.—After a system of public education shall have been adopted by the legislature, then it proposes that that general superintendent shall exercise the power of appointment. That necessarily ignores the section you have already passed, providing for a report to be made by the general superintendent to the legislature, which report, if not adopted by