

about the provisions and effect of this report. I certainly did not intend to urge anything in regard to the matter which I did not consider a fair argument, and I trust I have presented this as I have other arguments, fairly and candidly to the consideration of the convention.

The remarks I made in regard to the effect it would have upon the adoption of this constitution were in reply to some suggestions that I have heard from gentlemen over the way in reference to the effect some other provisions might have in that direction—the change, for instance, to the appointing power; taking away the election of officers of our State from the people and giving it to the governor of the State; and the suggestion was made that the constitution would not receive the vote of Washington county if the change was made. If these apprehensions exist, I think the provision asked to be inserted into this constitution, this heavy levy of taxation would weigh upon their constituents much more. I do not say that I concur in the opinion that it would defeat the adoption of the constitution. I expressed my opinion on that subject the other day. I do not think it would; because I think the provision with regard to the abolition of slavery, and the great popular excitement upon that subject among the dominant party will carry this constitution through, no matter what else may be put into it.

But I ask gentlemen candidly to consider whether, in adopting this system, they are doing justice to the counties of the State in thus increasing taxation. By these two sections of the report, there must be annually raised \$589,000 a year, for the purpose of supporting this common school system. The section now under consideration imposes a tax of 10 cents on the \$100, raising \$289,000 a year. That is a perpetual tax. There is no provision in the bill that that shall cease when the school fund amounts to six millions of dollars. It is a perpetual tax. I understand that it is proposed to amend the bill in that respect. At any rate the argument I made yesterday evening upon that point must have been a fair argument upon the bill as it stood, inasmuch as the committee themselves now conceive that it should be amended in this particular.

It seems to me that if we are going to establish a system of common school education in the State, we ought to enter into that system rather more gradually than the report provides. I think a longer time ought to be allowed within which to raise the six millions of dollars, and that a less sum should be imposed at first upon the people of the State to support this system. I am satisfied that the amount of taxation imposed by this report, and which will necessarily be the adoption of the constitution be brought upon the people, will increase our State tax beyond what

we have ever had in the State. We shall have a judiciary system, I hope, which will largely increase the annual expenditure of that system. There will be an increase of that system of some 70 or \$80,000 per annum over the present system, if adopted.

The amendment which I have offered is to prevent the going on for a definite period of the existing school tax in the several counties levied by the county commissioners. That is the first object I wish to attain. As the section now stands there is nothing to prevent the county commissioners from going on; it is obligatory upon them to do it—levying year by year for the school system of the State what they have been in the habit of levying. My amendment reaches that feature of the bill in the first place. I hope it will be adopted. And then I shall move to strike out the word "ten" and insert a tax of "five" cents on the \$100.

Mr. CUSHING. I must say that the gentleman has not convinced me of the fairness of his argument in relation to the tax, one particle by what he has said this morning. Not that I mean to say he has intentionally made it unfair, but his mind does not seem to have comprehended the nature of the case. I will take the figures which he has given the convention, and I think I will prove from them that under any probable contingency of circumstances the tax is decreased. According to the schedule, as exhibited to the convention from the different counties, their county school tax alone was over ten cents on the \$100 paid in 1863; and together with the tax on the five millions of bonds of the State destroyed in April last amounted to an average of 21 7-9 cents on the \$100. By the second section we merely put into operation again and continue this last mentioned tax. The old sinking fund if devoted to another purpose does not increase the taxation of this year above the State taxation of last year. The 10 cents on the \$100 provided by the first section is less than almost any county of the State now pays for education. It will make this tax in Baltimore county two cents less, in Allegany five cents less, in Caroline ten cents less, in Cecil ten cents less, in Harford two cents less, and in Somerset two cents less on the \$100; so that actually all the counties of the State will be paying less per cent. on their taxable property under the system proposed in this report than they paid last year for the State and county school taxes.

The very different sums levied in the different counties proves that the legislature has passed the laws providing for their assessments at the instigation of the representatives of the different counties. It is not a supposable case that if those counties desired to discontinue that tax and so represented to the legislature, but that the matter would be referred, as it has always been referred, to the representatives of the counties, and their re-