

a certain sum—that of a judge, for instance, who is elected for a long period of time, during good behavior—it may occur during the tenure of office that the salary fixed for the term will be totally inadequate. I wish, therefore, to leave it in the power of the Legislature to make that salary correspond to what it really ought to be for our officers; not to give the Legislature the power to diminish, but to give them power to increase it from time to time to meet the exigencies which may arise.

Mr. SANDS. I think the very reason urged by my friend from Anne Arundel, (Mr Miller,) the uncertain value of our currency, is a reason why this amendment should not be adopted. We are going to provide some new officers for this State, quite a number of them. And, as I understand, in fixing their salaries, as some of the committees have done, one great consideration, in fixing the amount which has been designated, has been the present depreciated condition of our currency. Suppose that during the terms for which these gentlemen are to hold office the currency becomes par; why not diminish their salary? why not make the actual salary receivable by those gentlemen to the ends of their terms what it is now? Gold, for instance, is to-day bringing 252. We are fixing the salaries of certain officers, who may hold office for ten, fifteen or twenty years, according to the present standard of our currency. I hope that in the course of five years a paper dollar will be as good as a gold one. And just as soon as it is so, I want to see the salaries of all public officers correspondingly diminished. That is the reason why I shall vote against this amendment.

I prefer leaving it to the Legislature to regulate this matter according to the circumstances of the time. Suppose the next Legislature chose to increase the salaries of officers. If this amendment is adopted no future Legislature will have the power to diminish any salary. How will that operate? I prefer that the Legislature shall have power to change these salaries every year—or rather every two years in this State.

Mr. MILLER. We cannot vote intelligently upon this proposition until we ascertain and know what are to be the salaries of these officers. I would prefer that the amendment I have offered should go over and be considered after the reports of these various committees, fixing the salaries of officers, shall come in. I think that the salaries of officers in this State, especially judicial officers, have been altogether too small, even upon the gold basis; that has always been my idea. I have no doubt that this Convention is going to raise the salaries of officers to a certain degree, but not sufficient to cause any alarm, even if the paper dollar should become worth as much as the gold dollar. In my judgment, the probability is that the depreciation of our cur-

rency will continue to a still further extent. The salaries of officers as fixed will therefore be utterly inadequate.

I should prefer, however, that the amendment I have offered should go over until it is ascertained what the salaries of our officers are to be; what is to be the basis upon which they are to be fixed by the various committees who have charge of them.

Mr. STIRLING. I cannot see what good will be accomplished by postponing this subject. No matter what may be the salaries fixed by the committees; if they are put into the Constitution, the Legislature cannot change them.

Mr. MILLER. If we give to the Legislature the power, they can change them.

Mr. STIRLING. Of course, if we give them the power they can. We might do as the old Constitution did, fix no salaries, leaving the Legislature to fix them all. This section only applies to those salaries which the Legislature has the power to regulate. Other salaries, those fixed by the Constitution, cannot be affected by the Legislature.

Mr. MILLER. Does not this clause apply to judicial officers as well as to others? Certainly it does. It prohibits the Legislature from making them any greater. I think the provision of the Constitution of the United States is a proper one. It gives to Congress the power to increase the salaries of officers whose minimum salary is fixed in the Constitution. If this amendment is adopted, I should think the Legislature ought to have the power to increase.

Mr. STIRLING. But if the Constitution says that a judge shall receive \$2,500 a year, for instance, then the salary will remain fixed; the Legislature cannot increase it.

Mr. MILLER. Then this provision is superfluous.

Mr. PUGH. I do not think that gentlemen get at the point of this matter at all. My understanding is very clear.

Mr. STIRLING. I would vote to strike out the whole section for that matter.

Mr. PUGH. "Nor shall the salary or compensation of any public officer be increased or diminished during his term of office." When he accepts that office he makes a contract; and it is during his term that his salary may not be increased or diminished. In view of the times in which we are now living, I shall be all the time opposed to having any man holding an office in the State of Maryland interested, as he would be without this provision in the Constitution, in depreciating the currency of the country. I do not want him interested in coming here as a public officer of the State and asking an increase of his salary upon the ground that greenbacks are not quite as valuable as money ought to be. You make, by this amendment, all the officers of the State interested in depreciating the currency of the country, for the reason that if it does become more