

REPEAL OF THE TAX TO CREATE A PERMANENT SCHOOL FUND  
OF SIX MILLION DOLLARS.

So much comment has been made and so much misapprehension exists concerning the Act of Assembly, ratified by the popular vote at the last general election to repeal the section of the Constitution requiring a tax to be levied to create a permanent School fund, that the facts and principles of this decision ought to be recorded.

I recommended the repeal and sustained it by my vote, as a friend of Free Public Schools. Such was the sentiment which controlled those who voted for the repeal in both houses of the General Assembly. The desire then was, and if I do not greatly err, is to devote all the available resources of the State to the present support of Public Schools. There is a present, pressing need of good School houses, qualified teachers, and more complete appliances for work. We cannot without gross injustice to the children of the present generation, devote one dollar of their money to those who will fill the Schools 30 years hence.

When it is remembered that we are now building School houses which are permanent structures and will be used by our children's children, we are doing something for the benefit of posterity, and can claim that to this extent we are their benefactors.

But apart from the present need of every dollar which can be secured, grave doubts may be urged of the utility of such a permanent fund as will do away with the necessity for direct taxation. The nearer such public interests as those connected with the Public Schools are brought to the people the better for the Schools. If they be supported without direct taxation; negligence, apathy, indifference may be the lamentable consequence. But while Schools depend upon revenue derived from the annual levy, the people who pay will take care to have the work well done. Officers and teachers will be held to strict accountability, and the children profit thereby.

For these reasons the repeal of the 6th section of the 8th Article of the Constitution was proposed by the General Assembly and ratified by the people. Nor can any harm come to the cause of universal education. With full confidence in the progress of Maryland in wealth and general intelligence, we can safely leave future generations to provide for themselves in this matter of Public Schools.

That these views are correct, further evidence is given by the fact that in many Counties, among them Allegany, Baltimore and Washington, the question of a local tax for the continuance of Schools longer than the 6 months provided for by the State revenue, was submitted to the popular vote. This local tax for present use was carried by majorities as large as that which repealed the tax for a permanent fund!