

ment of the test oath, and other tactics, certainly intimidated non-Unionists, particularly on the Eastern Shore. It was claimed that Federal soldiers went further and actively assisted the Unconditional Unionists while impeding the conservative, or regular, Unionists, although the extent of such interference is open to debate.<sup>3</sup> In any event, the "radical" Unconditional Unionists won the day, gaining control of the General Assembly and electing four of the state's five congressmen as well as their candidate for state comptroller. Gov. Augustus W. Bradford, recognizing the great victory, joined the call for immediate measures to end slavery. This entailed, of course, a constitutional convention.

The new legislature met on 6 January 1864. Heeding the governor's call and its own popular mandate, it enacted on 3 February a bill submitting the question of calling a convention to the people. At the election, to be held on 6 April, the voters were also to select the convention delegates. Should the vote favor a convention, one was to be called three weeks later. Once again the Unconditional Unionists were successful. The call for a convention was approved by a nearly two-to-one majority, and, of the 96 delegates elected, 61 were Unionists. The other 35 were Democrats from southern Maryland.<sup>4</sup> When the convention met and organized, it elected as president the Unconditional Unionist state comptroller, Henry Goldsborough of Talbot County.

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Once again the question arose of what to do about the state's interest in the various internal improvement companies. Much of the groundwork had been laid in the 1850-51 Constitutional Convention, and there was little dispute about the general policy to be followed. The restrictions against lending the state's credit to private entities or becoming involved with any new works of internal improvement were reaffirmed with little dissension or debate. The decision to have the state divest at least some, if not all, of its current investments in the improvement companies was also confirmed. The real issues were the mechanical ones: (1) which of these investments would be liquidated, when and under what circumstances or conditions, and who would superintend the disposition; and (2) who, in the meantime, would protect the state's interest? These two issues were handled by different committees, although the results eventually coalesced.

There was not a great deal of debate about the second issue—the function then committed to the Commissioners of Public Works. On 12 May, John R. Sneary of Washington County moved that the Committee on the Tenure, Duties and Compensation of All Civil Officers Not Embraced in the Duties of the Standing Committees (a special standing committee designated by the convention) "inquire into the expediency of abolishing the office of Commissioners of Public Works." The committee chairman, Daniel Clarke of Prince George's County, responded that the matter was already before the committee "and is under consideration."<sup>5</sup>

Two weeks later, on 25 May, the committee made its report. It proposed that "the Governor, the Comptroller of the Treasury and the Treasurer, shall constitute the Board of Public Works" but shall receive no additional compensation for that service. The duties established for the board were essentially those then committed to the commissioners—exercising a "diligent and faithful supervision of all public works in which the State may be interested as stockholder or creditor," appointing directors in the canal and railroad companies, and using its powers to adjust the toll rates of the improvement companies to avoid injurious competition and to promote the agriculture

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3. *Ibid.*, p. 375.

4. *Report of the Constitutional Convention Commission* (Annapolis, 1967), p. 52.

5. *The Debates of the Constitutional Convention of the State of Maryland, 1864* (Annapolis, 1864), 1:74 (hereafter *1864 Debates*).