

He desired to see the whole available school fund of the State appropriated, not according to local, county, or sectional interests, but according to population, in order that equality in its distribution might be preserved as nearly as possible. He desired that every child in Maryland should be educated; and, if the school fund should not be sufficient for that purpose, then he was in favor of making every voter in the State contribute to the object, as one of the holiest and most interesting, that could engage the attention of civilized men.

Mr. DAVIS interposed, and desired to ask a question.

Mr. EGE yielded the floor.

Mr. DAVIS. Did I understand the gentleman to say, that every voter in the State should contribute to a school fund?

Mr. EGE. I do say so—and I make the declaration in the utmost sincerity, and under a full conviction of the responsibility which attaches to it?

Mr. DAVIS. I only wished to be sure that I understood the gentleman correctly.

Mr. EGE. You did, sir.

Mr. SOLLERS, (in his seat.) A poll tax!

Mr. EGE. It is immaterial to me by what name it is called; and, I care not what opprobrium may be attempted here or elsewhere to be cast upon me for the principle I have avowed.

Mr. DAVIS. I intended no opprobrium, and expressed no opinion. All I desired was to be certain that I was not mistaken as to the position which I understood the gentleman to assume.

Mr. EGE. I am well aware that this is not a popular doctrine. I care not for that. I believe it to be right, and I am not disposed to yield my own convictions of truth and duty, because they may not chime in with the popular voice, or even with the sentiments of my own immediate constituents. I must act for myself.

I know the responsibility under which I speak, and I shall not shrink from meeting it. The principle is one which, if carried into practical operation would destroy many heart-burnings, and forever save the feelings of honest penury from cruel and unnecessary wounds. The poor man's son could then stand proudly by the side of the rich man's son, and say "I am your equal." It would benefit the poor man by securing education to his children at a much cheaper rate than it can be obtained under the present system. The appropriation of this pittance to so noble a cause, will be an honor to the poor man, and a declaration that no superiority is acknowledged by the mere accident of wealth or station. He should demand it for every reason dear to him as a citizen, father, and patriot—that a pure fountain of truth, justice, and equality, may take the place of the turbid and unequal stream now flowing through the State.

It only remains for me to say that I have not brought forward this proposition upon the mere impulse of the moment. It has been a matter of anxious deliberation with me, and it may not

perhaps have escaped the remembrance of the Convention that, at an early stage of its proceedings, I introduced a resolution embodying the principle I now advocate.

Mr. SPENCER. The motion is to reconsider the vote, and it had nothing to do with the various subjects which were now under discussion. He would not discuss the subject of education, or the manner in which appropriations should be applied. When those questions come up, in their proper order, he would be ready to go into their discussion. His object was to make a few remarks only, in reply to what had yesterday fallen from the gentleman from Frederick. In answer to a remark from the gentleman from Baltimore, (Mr. Presstman,) he, (Mr. S.,) had said that the Legislature would be restricted by the amendment of his colleague, (Mr. George,) from going beyond one hundred thousand dollars, and he had given his views to that effect. The gentleman from Frederick stated that he could show, with the clearness with which a proposition in euclid could be demonstrated, that a different construction was the true one. After all, however, the gentleman from Frederick had not convinced him that he had given a wrong construction. But it appeared that there were differences of opinion on the subject among gentlemen in the House, and this had brought him to the conclusion that something might be done by way of compromise. He intended to give his vote in favor of the motion to reconsider, and if that motion should be decided in the affirmative, he would then be prepared to offer a proposition which he would now indicate, in order that the two sections shall not hereafter stand in opposition to each other. And then he intended to offer an additional section. He briefly stated what would be the effect of the propositions to which he had referred, and which he read.

Mr. DAVIS proposed briefly to state what he thought would be the effect of this motion. He would take the opportunity to explain himself. His amendment was brief and simple, being contained in the few words, "except for purposes of education." Nothing could be more plain. All can understand it. The vote in favor of the proposition yesterday was nearly as two to one. But notwithstanding this decided expression of the sense of the Convention, the potential voice of the gentleman from Frederick is heard this morning, asking that the vote of yesterday shall be re-considered, because he finds himself in the awkward position of having his name on the record as opposed to the education of the people. Here, however, he hoped the gentleman from Frederick would be allowed to stand; and there, as far as he could do it, he, (Mr. D.,) intended to keep him. He called the attention of the House to a very able report on the subject of education which was made to the Legislature some years ago by a gentleman of distinction, who was always regarded as *par excellence*, a Democrat and a Reformer; he meant Judge Legrand. It appears from that report, that in this State of Maryland, there are fifteen thousand seven hundred and fifty-four persons above the age of twenty-one, who can neither read nor write. It