

these subjects, which came under his supervision whilst acting as President of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, and Governor of Maryland. He would now leave the whole subject in the hands of the Convention.

Mr. THOMAS said that he had not submitted his proposition until after other gentlemen had presented views of such a character that he could not coincide with them. From the commencement, up to the present time, he had been in a position antagonistic to the proposed board of public works, and for this reason: The proposition for a board of public works seemed to be borrowed from other States in which the system of public improvements was entirely different from that of Maryland. New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio had boards of public works, with large salaries to the officers; but in those States, that board managed the whole of the arrangements of the canals and rail roads within those States—acted in lieu of President and Directors. In this State there were no State works to be controlled by State officers. In Maryland the State was merely a stockholder and a lender of money to corporations; a stockholder in the Baltimore and Ohio rail road in the Susquehanna rail road, and in the Chesapeake and Ohio canal, and a lender of large sums of money to various canals and rail roads. The State could not appoint commissioners to supersede the President and Directors of any of these works. All that the State could do was to appoint commissioners to represent the State as one of the stockholders, and to cast the vote of the State in proportion to the amount of stock held by the State. There were now five agents of the State who exercised this very power. It was a power which no one proposed to abandon. In the Chesapeake and Ohio canal the State had invested some seven millions of dollars in stock and loans, and owned a majority of the Stock upon which the interest would be four hundred and twenty thousand dollars annually, to pay which the present system of taxation had been, in a great degree devised. The agents of the State were now elected by the concurrent vote of the House of Delegates and the Senate. The people of the State had an immense interest in the selection of their agents, and his proposition was to submit it to the people. No branch of the government was of greater money power than the management of the Chesapeake and Ohio canal. The office of Governor was connected with far less power; for, upon the management of that canal depended the light or heavy character of the whole taxation system of the State. The Legislature had before them questions concerning money only, more directly affecting the whole people of Maryland than these agents whenever voting upon the choice of officers who are to regulate the toll upon that great thoroughfare. Holding this view, he could not do otherwise than to propose their election by the people. He could not consent that a majority of the Senate of Maryland should have the entire control of this matter. That majority might be formed of members representing little more than one-third of the popu-

lation of Maryland, while the whole tax-paying population were interested. He did not propose to create an office with a large salary. He had left the fixing of the salary to the Legislature. Heretofore the amount had been fixed at one hundred dollars. He did not contemplate, in framing this measure, a salary of more than one or two hundred dollars to pay travelling and other expenses. He was opposed to the board of public works for the very reason that it was a very unnecessary expense. If, as in New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio, this board could not only exercise a supervision over, but manage the works, there would be some reason for a large salary. The duties being only those performed at present by the agents, the salary should be small; but, as the Legislature were to have the power to add such duties as they thought best, the amount of compensation ought also to be left to them.

Again, when the tax upon the whole people was so great, he did not wish to place it in the power of any concentrated local vote to control the whole matter. He had, therefore, divided the State into four districts as nearly equal in population as possible. It was specially important to do this, because of the rivalry existing between the different modes of conveyance from the interior regions of the interior to the seaboard. This rivalry and competition might now or hereafter produce disastrous results, and these he was anxious to guard against. The only efficient mode appeared to be to place the election of these agents in the hands of the whole people of Maryland, divided into districts equal in population.

Mr. MERRICK made some remarks, which will be published hereafter.

Mr. THOMAS said the gentleman from Charles, (Mr. Merrick,) did not attach more importance than he (Mr. T.) did to the necessity of having the supervision of the internal improvements, under the direction of some highly competent and vigilant agents on the part of the State. He was sorry he could not see how this Convention could authorize the Legislature, by joint ballot, to elect a President of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company. The Legislature could pass a law instructing the agents to give a particular vote at the meeting of the board of directors; but the president was to be elected in the mode prescribed by the charter of the Company, and beyond the charter, they could not go one step. The mere fact that the State held a majority of the stock, gave the Convention no more power, except in so far as numbers of votes were concerned, than a private stockholder. The United States held \$2,500,000 worth of the stock, Virginia a large amount, and he believed private citizens a considerable amount also. Then, as a matter of course, and with just as much propriety, Virginia could undertake to name one of the managers of this public work, and the United States another, as that we should do so. If the gentleman [Mr. Merrick,] intended that the Legislature should do nothing else but appoint agents, he [Mr. T.] should say it was hardly necessary for us to take much time in changing the