

fore. The question now came up directly, (and he wished gentlemen would understand it,) before the Convention, between the friends of a system of general education and those who were opposed to it. It would be recollected that on the 25th of February, the Convention adopted a provision in which the present school fund was apportioned among the counties. Its disposition was firmly fixed—that article was now a part of the Constitution itself. But the report now under consideration was directly antagonistic to that article, for the first proposition placed the present school fund under the direction of the existing acts of Assembly, and this proposition contemplated that the existing fund, together with all accruing funds, should be dedicated to a system of general education, to be devised by the Legislature. So that the question was now directly brought up again before the Convention between a system of general education, and the present local system of distributing the school fund. He should, therefore, vote for the first section, friendly as he was to a system of general education, and opposed as he was to the present unequal mode of distribution of the school funds. He had felt it his duty to admonish the friends of general education, because there was a disposition here to pass over this subject carelessly for the purpose of considering other matters. He was happy to know that many gentlemen of this Convention whose names were found recorded in favor of the previous disposition of the school fund, were now friends of a general system of education. He hoped they would vote now for the establishment of a general system of education, and for applying the school fund to that object, as a nucleus around which they might gather the funds to be raised by taxation for school purposes. He should vote for the first section, and he hoped that all those who were in favor of a general and equal distribution of the school fund would vote in the same way.

Mr. BISER moved to amend the report by inserting, after the word schools, these words: "according to the white population throughout the State."

Mr. BOWIE said, that under the arrangement of the school fund upon the basis proposed by the gentleman from Frederick, there was no county in the State but what would lose, and the only part of the State that would be benefitted by it was Baltimore city. He desired to know if the House was prepared to break up a system which had been in existence so long a time, and under which they had a system of free schools, which he thought in some of the counties was as perfect as could be provided. In his own county, in addition to what they derived from the school fund, they laid a direct tax of \$12,000 upon the people for the support of free schools. This question was not like that of representation according to population. The common free school fund was a peculiar one, and was not raised by taxation upon the people, but by a tax upon bank bonuses, &c., and then a portion of the fund they received from the General Government was appropriated for this purpose.

Mr. ECK stated that the object he had in view was to bring this matter directly before the people of the State, so that they might see the gross injustice of the application of this whole school fund, and he had no doubt that when they come to ratify this Constitution, (which he had no doubt they would do, because it was a most excellent one,) this liberal and just provision would bring to its aid thousands of friends.

The gentleman from Prince George's had spoken of local schools, and he, (Mr. E.,) could speak with some knowledge of these local schools. It was but a small system, an academic system, by which only a few were benefitted, (those who lived in the localities of these schools,) while the great mass of the people received not a particle of benefit from it.

In regard to Carroll county fund, she received it out of the fund of Baltimore and Frederick counties originally, and she now went on as a county of the State, receiving her proportionate part. He would say that the population of Maryland—taking the counties, if they pleased—he could show conclusively, as he did at another period of the session, that Kent county, and other counties in the State, received the best proportion of the school fund for their particular interest, one county receiving annually more than one-fourth of the whole tax paid by it into the treasury of the State.

He desired to see this matter brought fairly before this Convention and the people of Maryland, so that they might vote intelligently, and act in this matter, not with regard to local interests, but on the great principle of justice to the whole people of the State. It was his desire that this section should be amended, and although it might be held up in the obnoxious light of a poll tax, he would say fearlessly, and with all fairness and manly feeling, "Give them a poll tax for the purpose of educating the children of the State." No man would be so unmanly and so unworthy the name of an American citizen as to refuse the small pittance the price of one day's labor, which would be all that would be necessary to sustain the system with the present fund equally distributed. He hoped the Convention would see the necessity, justice, and right of the amendment he had submitted, and that they would adopt it, (for the object of it was a holy and righteous object, based on just principles.) He observed then much would be gained for the Constitution, and he hoped that every friend of the Constitution, as it was now framed, would give it his earnest and willing support.

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

Mr. DAVIS remarked:

That it might be proper for him to state that this report was drawn up before the action of the Convention on the proposition of the gentleman from St. Mary's. He (Mr. D.) presumed that he violated no rule of propriety in saying that it was drawn up as a compromise of the committee. But with a view now of making the report conform to what had been the sense of the House since the report was drawn up, he would