

the constitution of the United States, in regard to this question of currency, let them now, without interfering with any vested rights, without interfering with any rights that have grown up in the State, let them now determine that no charters of banks shall hereafter be renewed, and that no new charters shall be issued. I believe that this is the best time for this State to meet and determine this question.

Mr. STIRLING. I have an amendment to suggest to my colleague (Mr. Cushing,) which I hope he will accept. I desire to vote for his proposition, because I think the principle it involves is a proper one. As a declaration on our part I think it is important, though as it does not affect the issues of banks already in existence, I do not think it can have a vast amount of practical effect. I suppose that under any state of affairs, whether the national government provides a currency or not, no one will object to banks of discount and deposit. I do not regard it as by any means certain that the United States will retain the present system as a permanent one. I am not willing to rest the banking institutions of this State upon a political majority in Congress. And it is perfectly well known that if the democratic party obtains a majority in Congress, they will repeal this United States banking system, if possible.

Then there is the question of issuing greenbacks. The scarcity of greenbacks is owing to the fact that the government is endeavoring to keep up the system of national banks, and is not issuing greenbacks.

I propose as an amendment to the amendment of my colleague, to insert, in place of that portion of this section which he proposes to have stricken out, the following:

"With power to issue notes to pass as money, so long as the United States shall provide by law a national paper currency."

The section will then read as follows:

"The general assembly shall grant no charter for banking purposes, or renew any banking corporation now in existence, with power to issue notes to pass as money, so long as the United States shall provide by law a national paper currency."

Mr. CUSHING. I will accept that amendment.

The question was upon the amendment of Mr. CUSHING as modified.

Mr. CHAMBERS. I had hoped that some gentleman from Baltimore city would have undertaken to relieve the banks of that city from the very serious imputation we have heard here, that they are all insolvent. I do not think there is the slightest foundation for any such assertion. I have been intimate with some of those banks; I have had the honor to be a director in some of them. I do not believe there is a bank in Baltimore, which, if it wound up its affairs to-morrow,

would not be able to pay largely over one hundred per cent. to its stockholders.

Mr. CUSHING. Does the gentleman believe they would be solvent, if called upon to redeem their issues in gold and silver?

Mr. CHAMBERS. That is not the gentleman's proposition.

Mr. CUSHING. I beg the gentleman's pardon; that is exactly my proposition. Any redemption but in gold and silver would be insolvency. The issues of the bank must be redeemed for that for which it was given to be redeemed; or they are not redeemed at all.

Mr. CHAMBERS. What sort of a syllogism is involved in the gentleman's argument? He says that the government paper has taken the place of gold and silver, and that the banks are full of that which is equivalent to gold and silver, and still they are not solvent.

Mr. CUSHING. Why did the legislature of the State pass the stay law?

Mr. CHAMBERS. I do not know. I do not believe there was any necessity for it.

Mr. CUSHING. What does the gentleman suppose to have been the reason?

Mr. CHAMBERS. A pressure was brought to bear, and it was adopted because it was supposed that it would relieve the people. But I do not believe any such law was required. I believe the State would have done better without it. Farmers had abundant crops generally, and received large prices for them. It is true they received government paper in payment, but the gentleman has just told us that government paper has taken the place of gold and silver.

Now, I am very unwilling to have the statement go abroad that the banks of Baltimore are all unsound, for the gentleman's reasons will not go along with the statement. We have heard some strange things here in regard to this business of banking. If I understood the gentleman correctly, his statement really goes to this extent; that the laws of the State of Maryland, relieving the banks of this State from the necessity of paying gold and silver for their issues has caused a rise in the price of gold in New York to 270 or 280 per cent. Now, if that be so, our banks are more important than I had supposed; their paper has more influence in the commercial world than I had any idea of. Now, I think the rise in gold is owing to a very different cause.

I hope the Convention will require some better reasons than have yet been given, before they will indorse this effort to strike at an interest in our State which is so large, and which involves such an amount.

Mr. STIRLING. The amendment only affects the issuing of new bank charters; it affects no bank now in existence.

Mr. CHAMBERS. It does not affect banks in existence for the terms for which their char-