

soluto discretion within the ordinary safeguards of constitutional liberty, than to place any restrictions upon them.

My objection to this matter is upon principle. I think this whole system of attempting to bind the legislature is wrong in principle, and will be injurious in effect.

Mr. RIDGELY. In reply to what has been said by the gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. Stirling) in objection to this particular proposition, in reference to its possible interference with local systems of school regulation, and of school funds, I beg to say that the farther reason why I shall vote for this proposition is that it has for its object a powerful auxiliary in support of a general and uniform system of public education. It is within the knowledge of the house, that we propose to establish a general system of education; a system that shall be uniform throughout the whole State. And as auxiliary to the support of such a system, it is well provided here that no power shall exist in the legislature to authorize any local systems of education; that the power shall be denied to the legislature to pass any special act, which shall in the slightest degree interfere with a general and universal system of public education. And for that reason this particular branch of the proposition offered by the gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. Stockbridge) will receive my support.

Upon the general theory of the gentleman from Baltimore city (Mr. Stirling,) in his objections to a distrust on the part of this Convention of the legislature, and the results of limitations upon the power of the legislature, I am somewhat surprised; because I had reached the conclusion, from the general course of that honorable gentleman in this Convention that he was one of those who was inclined to be extremely stringent in the granting of powers to the legislature. I find throughout this whole article, from beginning to end, that it is one continuous limitation and restriction upon the power of the legislature. There is scarcely a section in this article reported by the committee on the legislative department, that does not impose a restriction or a limitation upon the general power of the legislature. It is full of limitations; it is full of restrictions.

And it appears to me to be eminently proper, if we design to establish a uniform system of public education in Maryland, that we should deny to the legislature the power to interfere with that uniform system by authorizing local systems or local appropriations, or levying of taxes for the support of local systems. And the adoption of this very provision will, in my judgment, preclude the possibility of any conflict on the part of county systems with a general and uniform system of public education throughout the State.

Mr. KING. I am sorry to differ in opinion with my colleague (Mr. Ridgely) in regard

to this amendment. Every county in the State, I believe, has its local laws in regard to school-houses. In regard to our own county (Baltimore) we have our school-houses, and our local fund and local taxes in support of schools. Now, until there is a general system provided, which we have not at this time, our system must go down, if this amendment is adopted. If there was any general provision made, then I should have no objection to this provision. But at present, as we have been to the expense of building school-houses, and have our taxes, as have every other county in the State, until there is some general system provided, I must vote against this proposition.

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. I would ask the gentleman whether the system in his county is regulated year by year by the State legislature, or by the school commissioners of the county?

Mr. KING. At present it is regulated by the school commissioners. But we require additional legislation every now and then in regard to it.

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. For what?

Mr. KING. I do not know as I can specify now. On two or three occasions we have had to increase the taxes, and we have had to call upon the legislature for that.

Mr. STOCKBRIDGE. If the information be correct as given by the gentleman from Baltimore county (Mr. King,) then it is but asking the legislature to register the decrees passed by the authorities of Baltimore county. It is asking the gentlemen from Worcester and Allegany counties to register a decree passed by the authorities of Baltimore county, which they might just as well register for themselves.

Mr. DANIEL. I would call the attention of the gentleman from Baltimore county (Mr. King) to an error into which I think he has fallen. I understood him to take the position that if this provision was adopted, then the legislature could not do anything—or that nothing could be done for schools and other local purposes in the counties. Now, in Baltimore city, where we have certainly the best school system in the State—I was about to say in the United States, certainly as good as any—we do not depend upon the legislature for our school system.

Mr. STIRLING. Where did the city of Baltimore get the right to levy taxes for public schools, if she did not come to the legislature for it?

Mr. DANIEL. I will answer that question. The legislature has conferred certain powers upon certain local authorities to do these things, and that is just what we propose to have done by this amendment. I am meeting the objection of the gentleman (Mr. Stirling) who says—suppose we fail to get a public school system, what will we do? Why, the legislature will still have the power to confer upon local boards the authority to do certain