

man from Frederick (Mr. Schley) brings up at once the question of sale or no sale.

Mr. JONES, of Somerset. There is nothing more usual in legislative assemblies and other deliberative bodies, when a question has been discussed, and various amendments have been offered thereto, and it is apparent that there is great diversity of opinion upon the subject—there is nothing more common than to refer all the pending propositions to a committee, in order that they, judging from the discussion which has been had, and their own view of the whole matter, might report their judgment to the house, enlightened as it will be by the discussion and the amendments presented. Nothing is more common than this. And I think, therefore, it is usually the most direct and speedy way of getting rid of a vexed subject and prolonged debate.

The gentleman from Frederick (Mr. Schley) proposes to give instructions to this select committee, for the purpose of taking the sense of the house upon this question of sale. I have no objection to the house making a test question upon this motion to instruct, and voting aye or no on that as they may deem proper: The people of our counties are quite as much interested, to the extent of their contributions in the way of taxes, and in proportion to population, as are those of Baltimore city, or Baltimore county, or any other part of the State. They have looked to these works of internal improvement as some day to become remunerative.— They have considered that there was not only a sort of implied, but also an express pledge on the part of the State, when the public debt was paid off, that the stock of the State in these counties should be set apart to the several counties in proportion to the taxes which have been raised from them, to be held as a permanent fund for the promotion of education and works of internal improvement in those counties. I think that is about the purport of provisions incorporated in some of the acts for the appropriation of money for these internal improvements. My own judgment is that we might as well allow the matter to remain as at present, as to invest the legislature with a power to sell.

The PRESIDENT. The motion is to report a provision for the sale.

Mr. SCHLEY. It is not that the sale shall be made by the legislature, or that this convention shall appoint the agency to make the sale. My object is merely to test the question whether the convention desires to make this sale or not.

Mr. CHAMBERS. It has been said that this house has not acted upon the naked abstract question of sale. Now, I venture to say that a different state of facts exist. It will be found, by reference to page 244 of the journal of proceedings, that when this subject was under consideration on the 19th of July, a motion was made by myself to erase all the

words relating to the disposition of this property except the word "sale." In the printed journal of that day my proposition is stated to be a motion to strike out the words "otherwise dispose of." But upon the reading of the journal the following morning attention was called to the error, and the journal was corrected to read, "strike out the words lease or otherwise dispose of," leaving the naked question of sale before the house. When the motion was made, a very brief statement of the reasons for making it were given, in which it was stated to be made expressly and solely for the purpose of bringing before the house the question of selling the State's interest in these institutions. That motion was decided in the affirmative. The convention therefore determined that it was advisable to sell, but not to lease or otherwise dispose of the State's interest in these institutions.

With regard to this select committee, I have but a word or two to say. I believe that in the experience of all legislative bodies, whenever a subject has become complicated by the expression of differing sentiments to an extent at all equal to what we have witnessed here upon this subject, it has been found that the only mode by which dispatch can be attained is to submit the whole subject to an intelligent committee, and to receive their report, reconciling as it usually does as far as practicable the various opinions apparently entertained, and adopt it as a matter of compromise. I believe that will be the case here. If an intelligent committee is appointed they will arrive at a conclusion which will be accepted by the house, and voted for by gentlemen, who, although not agreeing to every particular in the report, will find it the only means of extricating themselves, involving, as is evidently the case here, such a vast variety of sentiment. I shall of course vote for the appointment of a committee without instructions.

Mr. NEBLEY. I do hope the house will not give the instructions proposed by the gentleman from Frederick (Mr. Schley.) I positively am at sea, and do not know what is best to be done in the matter. I do not want to commit myself for or against the sale. I want the light of the committee that I may act intelligently upon this subject. I hope this matter of instructions will not be adopted, especially in the present instance of empty seats here, but fifty-two members present out of ninety-six. This question involves one of the most important interests to the State. I hope the committee will be appointed without instructions.

Mr. KING. I am under the impression that the gentleman from Frederick (Mr. Schley) will not attain the object he desires to attain, viz: a test of the sense of this house upon the question of sale. There are only some fifty members here to-night, when of late there have generally been some seventy odd.