

But I say that it is eminently wise and proper, and you cannot otherwise assess every man alike under the laws according to his real means, to adopt some system of this kind. And I think that if there is a tax that men will not complain of, it is a tax to be appropriated to the purposes of public school education. We have found in our experience in the city of Baltimore, that taxes levied for that purpose are more cheerfully paid, and appropriations made for school purposes more cheerfully complied with, than any other taxes and appropriations made in the city. If you levy upon a man a tax of one dollar for the year, it bears upon him very lightly. And there are a great many men who have children to be educated, who have no taxable property, who, I think, would take it as a privilege to pay a dollar a year for the purpose of educating those children; they would pay it most cheerfully, as they are not called upon to pay any other tax.

Now as we are about, I hope, to adopt some provision in this Constitution by which we shall follow the example of other States, and adopt a system of public schools to be uniform throughout the State, whereby the children of the poor as well as those of the rich may be educated, I think it is right and proper for us to confer upon future Legislatures the power to adopt all proper means of raising revenue in order to support that system. And I believe that in no way can you raise such a large revenue, and raise it so easily, and so generally, as by a poll tax, which in other States has been found by experience to work so well. I therefore submit this substitute and hope it will be adopted.

Mr. KENNARD. I shall not vote for any amendment or proposition which looks to the striking out of this article the words—"That the levying of taxes by the poll is grievous and oppressive." I am in favor of the declaration of principle contained in this article, and I do not think that the right to vote should have any pecuniary qualifications attached to it. I think it ought to be above price, and I am uncompromisingly opposed to any price being fixed to it. I hope this Convention will retain in their declaration of rights the recognition and declaration of the principle that "levying taxes by the poll is grievous and oppressive."

Now in reference to the willingness of a certain class, which constitute a large proportion of the people of our State, to contribute their share of expenses for the purposes of education, there can be no doubt about that. But the difficulty here is, and that difficulty has not been reached by any gentleman who has expressed himself in favor of levying taxes by the poll—the difficulty is that that class of people who are not directly taxed yet indirectly contribute more to the revenues of the country than any other class of people. If taxes are very high, every article not only of

luxury but of use and comfort is correspondingly high, and the consumer has to pay the tax; although he may not directly pay it, because he does not own any property to be taxed, yet indirectly he does pay it. I think the right to vote should be above all pecuniary price, and I am satisfied that to-day one-third at least of the people in my own city, independently of any political complexion, abhor the very idea of being taxed by the poll, and I cannot be induced to vote for any amendment that proposes to strike out the clause prohibiting such a tax. I shall adhere to the article as it now stands, so far as it relates to the levying of taxes by the poll, and shall vote accordingly.

Mr. MILLER. Two of the gentlemen from Baltimore city (Messrs. Barron and Kennard) who have recently spoken upon this subject, seem to labor under a great misapprehension in regard to the effect of leaving to the Legislature the right to levy a poll tax. They seem to suppose that in some way or other that will affect the right to vote. Now, if they will but turn back to the 6th article of the Declaration of Rights which we have just passed upon, they will find that we there declare that "every free white male citizen, having the qualifications prescribed by the Constitution, ought to have the right of suffrage." Now, unless we prescribe in this Constitution a property qualification for voting, every free white man will have the right to vote, whether the Legislature imposes upon him a poll tax or not. There can be no doubt upon that point. So, it seems to me, the apprehension gentlemen may entertain in reference to the right of voting should constitute no objection to the proposed amendment.

Mr. BARRON. If the 6th article said—"shall have the right of suffrage"—it would do very well; but it says—"ought to have."

Mr. MILLER. That "ought" there certainly means "shall;" and unless this Convention shall prescribe a property qualification of the right of voting, every free white male citizen will have the right to vote, whether he is called upon to pay a poll-tax or not. Now, I think there is a great deal of force in what has been said by the gentleman from Cecil (Mr. Jones) and the other gentleman from Baltimore (Mr. Daniel) in reference to the propriety of leaving it discretionary with the Legislature, which will be elected by the same constituency which we represent here, to impose this tax in case the public necessity hereafter may require it. We shall probably have to resort to every species of taxation which the Legislature can devise in order to meet the public burdens which are now resting upon the country and upon this State. The history of the State in past times shows that extraordinary legislation has been resorted to for the purpose of raising revenue; the stamp tax, the tax upon collateral inheritance