

"Yet fines, duties, or taxes may properly and justly be imposed or laid on persons or property, with a political view, for the good of the government and the benefit of the community."

Under that clause you have the right to tax every man in the State, if he has wages amounting to \$100 a year even. Under this provision, if you put a provision in the Constitution conferring this power upon the Legislature, you may tax every man in the State who makes \$50, \$100 or any other amount of yearly income or wages. But you cannot do it from the mere fact of his being a man and not a pauper. You must show the property he has, and the amount that he has, and a tax levied in that way will fall in equal proportion upon the man making \$100 and the man making \$10,000 a year, and that is a fair and just rule of taxation.

And those words which some gentlemen propose to strike out—"with a political view"—those words I think are significant. I believe that the men who framed this Bill of Rights in 1776 had an object and reason for every word they put in them. It was not for any simply local purpose; it was not for any personal object, that they desired that this right of taxation should be exercised. But it was with a view to the general good, some great question of policy, something that was to benefit the community, that they desired to confer upon the Legislature this power of taxation. I say, then, with all due deference to gentlemen who have made so clear an argument on the other side, that these words "with a political view" are, in my judgment, exceedingly significant, and ought not to be stricken out, without stronger and better reasons than I have yet heard assigned for doing so.

I know it may be said that our objection to any change may be for some political reason, for something that we hope to gain before the people, either now or hereafter. But I am conscientious in my conviction upon this subject. I think that this Bill of Rights should be left to stand as it has stood so long. It has the approval of the best and wisest men of our State; men who assembled here in times of profound peace, when there were no jarring elements calculated to distract them; at a time when there was no roar of artillery, no shrill screech of the rifle, no cries of the wounded or moans of the dying to disturb the equanimity of their judgment. They did not meet here at a time when frightened women and children were vainly calling for assistance; when wives were separated by the stroke of death from dear and loving husbands; when the sons of our soil, instead of being permitted to follow their peaceful avocations, were forced to drop the plow in the field and take up the sword. No, sir; they met here at a time when the student over his table could calmly

reflect on what was necessary to develop the resources of the State, and to establish a good government for the people of that State; when he was allowed coolly and calmly to reflect upon all these things; not at a time when he was forced to drop his pen and take up the sword, for such a time as that is no time for men to change an organic law which has stood through calm and storm, fire and sword, peace and war, for upwards of a hundred years.

You must come under proper rules, under proper regulations, if you would arrive at a proper understanding, and a fair, full and free conception of the duties of a general Convention of the whole State. You must come together representing people who have exercised their highest wisdom at the ballot box. You must come from a people who have had ample time for the full consideration of all the questions that will probably come before you for consideration and action. You must come from a people who have told you by the votes of overwhelming numbers that a political necessity has arisen which demands that a State Convention shall be held. You must come, not from a people whose voice has been stifled by the arm of the military; but from a people who have been left free to express their will, and who are anxious, aye, sir, who are vociferous for some change in the present policy of the State. When you so come together, when you so assemble, then, at that time, and under those circumstances you can approach that article of the bill of rights with a calm, clear, conscientious judgment, and with a heart responsive only to the interests and welfare of your State, and not until then.

Mr. Chairman, this is a subject of deep interest to my constituents; it is a subject of vital interest to us all. Those who favor the striking out this provision would strike down our old landmarks; they would tear up from their very foundations all the great principles of American constitutional liberty. This is a question calculated to stir up a man in his inmost soul. And I would to God that I possessed words of living fire that I might brand these solemn facts upon the seared consciences of those who would thus tear up the very foundations of our liberty. I would have them know, and feel, and understand, that if they ruthlessly and recklessly throw down this temple of liberty, they will, Samson like, fall buried beneath its ruins. I would have them know that the people of the State of Maryland, the overwhelming majority of the people of this State, never will tolerate any interference with the present Constitution as it stands, unless it is done fairly and according to the established rule of all the States of this country, the rule that the majority of the people of the State must govern and control the State.

Mr. PETER. The subject of deliberation