

In regard to internal improvements it should be noted that there was a strong sentiment in favor of selling the state's interest in them. The report of the Committee on the Legislative Department had contained a section providing that the General Assembly should take the necessary steps to dispose of the above, and use the proceeds for the payment of the public debt of the state, any surplus to be held as a permanent fund for the support of education.¹⁷³ When this section came up for consideration in the Convention, the variety of plans and ideas presented in regard to it, and the utter lack of any definite policy or party lines among the members, show that the subject was largely a new one. It had been raised by several individuals who brought before the committee the argument that arrangements might be made by which the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, the unproductive state stock in which was the special object of attack, might be leased to the preferred creditors, many of them citizens of Montgomery, Frederick, Washington and Allegany counties, who as citizens were held to have a double interest, both in the usefulness of that particular work, and in its being remunerative to the state.¹⁷⁴

The question of the sale seemed to come as a surprise to the Convention, and though a large number expressed themselves as favorable to the move, yet so many plans and amendments of various sorts were offered that the subject became involved in a veritable sea of confusion. The state owned large amounts of both productive and unproductive stocks, and the sentiment was entirely divided as to whether certain parts or all of these should be disposed of. The great fear seemed to be, that the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad would gain control of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, and use it to discriminate in rates against the western part of the state, and also that the sale would offer a rich field for bribery and political job-

¹⁷³ Proc., 193.

¹⁷⁴ Deb., ii, 815.