

long course of years in which tobacco has been so low as not to pay the expense of production, continued the cultivation of it, to abandon the cultivation now, when the article has become very high and will rapidly enrich its producers. I illustrate by tobacco planters, because it is apt to the purpose, and there are many gentlemen around me engaged in its cultivation.

Tie the hands of the Legislature as fast as you please, in regard to contracting *further* debt, or engaging in other works of internal improvement, but leave them the power to take advantage of the coming change in affairs, by paying off as much of her existing debt as they can, by new stocks bearing a less rate of interest. Every dollar we can save, is important to the people, and if the opportunity offers, as I believe it will, I wish to see the Legislature have the power to substitute for our present six and five per cent. stocks, stocks bearing only three or three and a half per cent., thus saving several hundred thousand dollars annually, until the whole debt is paid off.

Mr. JENIFER desired to offer an amendment, (which was not now in order.)

Mr. J. gave notice of his intention to offer it at the proper time. He believed that the time might come when it would be extremely important that such a power should be in the hands of the Legislature. Its exercise might be important to the prosperity of the State. At the same time it was necessary to guard such a power as rigidly as possible. The past experience of the State demonstrated the necessity of this. It might be possible that danger might be apprehended to the State from the very prosperity which would result from these works, if the state of things which gentlemen anticipated should be realised. He would therefore place proper restrictions upon the power, though he believed that its judicious exercise might be attended with benefit to the State.

Mr. J. then read his amendment.

Mr. SPENCER said, the gentleman from Charles, had indicated no opposition, by his argument, to any portion of the proposition of the gentleman from Anne Arundel. The proposition met with his entire opposition. He looked upon it, as one of the most dangerous he had encountered. It positively opens the door to further speculation in works of internal improvement, and is advocated by the mover, for that very reason. In the Constitution which we are about to amend, no such express power is found. It was assumed by construction. And now when the people are sore upon the subject, and wholly opposed to all such schemes, and actually expect at our hand, a restriction on the legislature in this particular, the gentleman from Anne Arundel proposes, by express provision, to give the Legislature the power to do so. Adopt his section, and the Legislature will have the power to subscribe to any work, and to provide the ways and means at their discretion, to support it. I beg the gentleman to turn to the Constitution, and lay his finger, if he can, on any part of it, which authorized the Legislature to embark in such works. From the very beginning of this system of legisla-

tion the power had, by many, been denied. He, [Mr. S.] had at all times denied that the Legislature could make appropriations of money or State credit, for such purposes. And when the Legislature found it necessary to impose a direct tax upon the people, the unprecedented outrage was practised of inserting a provision in the law, denying to the people the benefit of the wisdom and learning of the court of appeals, on the constitutionality of the law. Yes, sir; by the act of Assembly imposing the tax, the court of appeals were directed not to entertain any question as to the constitutionality of the law.

The gentleman from Cecil, had eloquently pictured the delusions under which the people voted when this system was imposed upon. He had beautifully painted its evils, and he, (Mr. S.) would not follow in the same field. He would content himself, by saying, he was opposed to the whole system of internal improvements, whether there be a surplus in the treasury or not. He was opposed to it because it opened the door to abuse and corruption. It was well known, that they had already assumed a party cast, and were used for party purposes by the legislature. Originally, the Governor had the appointment, with the advice of the Senate, of the State's agents. The power was taken from him and given to the legislature, and in order to prevent it from passing out of the hands of the party then in the ascendant, by an act of the legislature, the agents then in office were to continue in, until removed by a concurrent vote of the Senate and House of Delegates. Every body understands the effect of such legislation.

It was not his purpose now to dwell on the evil of the system. He had been always opposed to it. It needed no argument now to expose it, and he was well satisfied that this Convention, instead of authorising the legislature to encourage them, would inhibit the authority of the Legislature altogether.

Mr. THOMAS expressed his readiness to vote for the amendment of the gentleman from Queen Anne's, (Mr. Spencer.) To that extent he was willing to go; but nothing less than that would satisfy the people he represented. If there was any one sentiment against which, over all others, they felt an unmitigated hostility, it was that of the power exercised by the legislature to make appropriations for the construction of roads and canals. And in this sentiment he had fully and uniformly concurred, from the year 1827 to this hour; and such was the feeling of the leading men of the part of the State which he represented. And the confidence which his constituents felt in the accordance of his sentiments with theirs, had been the cause of the honor he now enjoyed in being their organ on this floor.

He had never considered the construction of roads and canals as coming within the legitimate duties of government. To cherish the interests and protect the rights of the people constituted its great duties. And in the performance of those duties, he would ever be ready to render all the assistance in his power. But never would he give his consent that the legislature should