

time, and the great stumbling-block in the way of a uniform system of public school education in Maryland, appeared to be that the members of the lower counties—that was the expression—had made opposition thereto. I am a stranger to these halls. I never was here either as a senator or a delegate.

Mr. ABBOTT. I made no allusion to the gentleman. I was speaking in general terms.

Mr. EDELEN. The gentlemen said he was sorry to see that we were met here to-day by similar obstacles; that we of southern Maryland were not willing to appropriate money or endure taxation "to pay for educating the brats of poor white men." That was the gentleman's language.

Mr. ABBOTT. I said that was the language used here in 1856; and we had been ten or fifteen years trying to get something done.

Mr. EDELEN. The whole scope and tenor of the gentleman's arguments, at least its impression upon my mind, was that a delegate of one of the lower counties of Maryland was treading in the footsteps of those who had been here in 1856 and at subsequent periods.

The PRESIDENT. I think the gentleman from Baltimore city only intended to reiterate the expressions used by the legislature when he was a member.

Mr. ABBOTT. That was all.

Mr. EDELEN. I regretted to hear these expressions, for the reason that I thought the day had passed by—I had hoped so—when this bane of party which has been dividing us on other questions, would exert any longer that sort of influence. I had hoped we were ready to bury the tomahawk of strife and smoke the calumet of peace. But the gentleman has seen fit to refer to these topics again. There seems to be against the people of the lower counties a settled hatred, spite, malevolence, or some other passion seated in his heart, which must out in order to give him relief. I was not aware that I had said ought upon this floor to provoke the ire of the gentleman from Baltimore city. I do not know who these gentlemen were in lower Maryland or on the eastern shore in 1856 referred to by the gentleman. I cannot recollect who represented my county here. My friend who sits by me (Mr. Parran,) I know has been in these halls from Calvert since 1852 pretty generally. He can speak upon that point.

I will merely reiterate what I said, to show that my people are not the foes of public school education. We of Charles county have in our small extent of territory thirty school-houses. Out of an annual levy of twenty-five thousand dollars for all purposes, the statistics show that nine thousand dollars has gone to pay the teachers in our public schools, besides the amount levied to build school-houses, &c. So in Prince George's county, one-fifth of the amount they levy for county expenses is to pay their primary school teachers. What say these facts? Are

we of lower Maryland friends or foes of public school instruction? If the gentleman knew these facts and made the statement he did, or if he did not know them and carelessly made the statement he did, he must stand, I apprehend, in the estimation of everybody in the same category as if he had wilfully misstated that which he knew to be the fact.

But I hope the convention will pardon this digression. I desired to correct the gentleman this morning, but he would not give way. I will merely say now that I hope the amendment of the gentleman from Baltimore city will not prevail; that although he has changed the language he still retains the objectionable features. For the reasons that I have briefly endeavored to state, I shall support the amendment of the gentleman from Anne Arundel to strike out all the latter part of this section, and leave the power to the legislature of the State. I am not willing for one, that if the legislature fail to do it, we shall say that A, B, C or D may do it, and that it shall be a law and become the system of public school instruction of this State.

Mr. SANDS. A word or two in reply to the argument of the gentleman upon the other side, and especially to meet the accusation that we were stripping the legislature of power and distrusting it. I say the section does not do that at all. That is apparent throughout. It simply provides for their default; that is all. They may do the thing. They are commanded to do the thing. But in default of their doing it, then another thing shall be done.

Mr. EDELEN. That is distrusting them. It is a want of confidence.

Mr. SANDS. I say that we are not distrusting them. See what we have said. In the first place, we say the general assembly shall provide the details of the system. Is that distrusting them? We say, that is your duty; do it. Is that distrusting them? But in order to make sure of the matter we go further. I am sure my friend is a friend of public education, and his people, from his own statement, are friends of public education and will want to make it sure—we go further and provide that their wants in this respect shall be met. If this legislature makes default, the people of Charles shall not suffer by the default. As to letting A B and C make laws for us, whose fault will it be if that becomes the case? Ours here to-night, who provide that this matter shall go into the hands of the legislature? Or will it be the fault of that legislature who refuse to obey our positive command to act?

As to the difficulty about this matter of legislation, I doubt not that in any body fresh from the people, or representing the people on this subject, in any body constituted as ours is there would be no trouble at all in enacting a uniform system of education. I believe my friend from Charles (Mr. Edelen)