

In the Constitutional Convention of 1846, a resolution was passed early in the session for a "provision to be engrafted into the Constitution, making it imperative on the Legislature to provide the necessary means, by taxation or otherwise, for placing a common education within the reach of all children of the State." An article was incorporated into the Constitution, in most respects similar to the one included in our present Constitution, adopted in 1848, creating free schools. Considerable discussion arose in regard to establishing the office of State Superintendent, some favoring the old system of New York, in which the Secretary of State performed the duties of this office. No other provision awakened much interest or opposition in the body. The time of the Convention was taken up in the consideration of other exciting questions, such as banks, negro suffrage, elective judiciary, the death penalty, and the rights of married women in respect to property.

At an evening session of this Convention, Hon. Henry Barnard, now in charge of the United States Bureau of Education, gave an address upon the advantages of supporting our public schools by a tax on the property of the State, and upon the necessity of the office of a State Superintendent of the schools.

In the second Constitutional Convention, 1848, nearly the same general topics were under discussion; and some features in the article on education, included in the Constitution afterwards adopted, received greater attention. We have failed to discover proofs of any opposition to the section which provides that "district schools shall be free, and without charge for tuition to all children between the ages of four and twenty years;" or to a section which requires a sum to be raised by tax annually for the support of common schools to the amount at least, of one-half the income of the School Fund. Some changes were made, admitting the youth over sixteen and under twenty years, dropping the provision for the maintenance of County Academies and County Normal Schools, and making the basis for the distribution of the school income the number of children resident in the several towns and cities, instead of