I believe that for that reason, and that alone, the Senate ought to send this conference report back to the conference committee and let them bring back a provision for a tax of not more than a dollar a head. The truth is, that with the wealth that has been accumulated in this great country of ours, I have begun to believe and to feel that to collect a tax from a man who has no property, simply because he breathes the air of this free Republic—a tax of even $1 a head—is wrong; that it ought not to be tolerated. None of our States, so far as I know, collect more than a dollar a head of poll tax, and that is enough in all conscience. That is one which has been sanctioned a long time, and I would make no special objection to it, though I would very much prefer to have none. When the proposition is that we shall pass a law here that shall impose a collection of $5 per head of poll tax, I for one am not willing to submit to it under any conceivable circumstances.

Mr. CULLOM. The Senator gets very much excited about a small thing.

Mr. JONES of Arkansas. Five dollars a head is no small thing for a poor man.

Mr. CULLOM. I never thought much of a poll tax; and when that poll-tax provision was stricken out, I supposed, as a matter of fact, that the people there who are entitled to vote would probably have no tax to pay at all; that if they do not own anything they would not have to pay a tax; and if they do own anything on which they should pay a tax, they ought to pay it. That is all there is of that.

Mr. JONES of Arkansas. Yet the Senator admits that there is a poll tax of $5 a head on all those people, as was read from the law here. This is a proposition to keep that in force.

Mr. CULLOM. But it remains for the legislature to wipe that poll tax out, and any other tax that is burdensome to the people.

Mr. JONES of Arkansas. When you allow a handful of men who own the property and are interested in making the poor people pay a poll tax to select a legislature, it is something like submitting the lamb to the tender mercies of the wolf.

Mr. CULLOM. The Senator goes on the theory that if a man owns anything, he is bound to oppress somebody. I do not believe in that doctrine myself.

Mr. TELLER. I wish to ask the Senator from Illinois, if it is agreed that this principle shall be applied only to taxes on property, what is the objection to letting the report go back and have the poll-tax provision stricken out?

Mr. CULLOM. I would abolish the poll tax if I did anything with it. I do not believe in it.

Mr. TELLER. I do not, either. I do not believe that anybody ought to be compelled to pay a tax before he votes. I do not think anybody ought to buy his suffrage in that way.

Mr. CULLOM. The Senator is aware that in some of the States they have a poll tax, and probably the Senator knows how it works. The politicians or candidates run around and try to find everybody who is not able to pay the poll tax to vote for them, and they offer to pay the poll tax.

Mr. TELLER. I want to say to the Senator that is the only objection I have to a poll tax. Since I have been a member of the Senate I was told by a man in public life, holding a high office, that he had bought $40,000 worth of poll taxes in his State. Now, that is an indirect way of purchasing votes.

Mr. CULLOM. Exactly.

Mr. SPOONER. It is not so very indirect, either.

Mr. TELLER. Well, it is just about as direct as when a candidate pays any indebtedness. If a man owes $5 and some candidate desires his vote and pays it and gets his vote, that is a purchase of that vote. I say it is absolutely inconsistent with the principle of good government to make the suffrage conditioned upon paying taxes. I am in favor of striking out all that provision, and I think the Senate would be in favor of it if we could get a vote on that proposition. It certainly is not a wise thing to do. A man may have but little property and not be able to pay the tax. Should he be deprived of his citizenship?

Mr. SPOONER. If the Senator will allow me, we struck out the property qualification.