

REPORT.

The Special Committee, appointed by the House of Delegates, to examine into the affairs and condition of the State Tobacco Warehouses, beg leave, most respectfully, to report to your Honorable Body, that they have performed the duty assigned them, and have endeavored to ascertain, as nearly as possible, what changes in the present Inspection Laws are needed, if any, to make the system effective in promoting the interests for which it was intended, viz: first, the protection of the planters, and secondly, the promotion of the commercial interest of the City of Baltimore and the State at large.

As is well known, the present system of State Tobacco Inspections was instituted as far back as 1826 or 1827, to correct the abuses to which private inspection of tobacco had given rise. If we have been properly informed, previous to the inauguration of the present system of inspections there existed three different inspection houses, conducted by private inspectors, who, in their competition to get business from the planters, resorted to all means and measures, and, amongst others, (to the great detriment of the planters' interest,) of oversampling and overweighing his productions, endeavoring to secure, by so doing, his favor and patronage. These abuses not only gave rise to immense losses to the parties there engaged in the business, but, as was natural, had a tendency to contribute to many failures in the trade, which, by depressing the article and the market, ultimately reacted very severely on the planters' interests of the State.

To correct the abuses of private inspections, the present system of tobacco inspection was instituted; about 1826 or 1827, a tobacco loan was made, out of which the warehouses were built; for almost thirty years this system was continued, and at the charge of one dollar and twenty-five cents, (\$1.25,) per hogshead, and for storage from twelve months from date of inspection, not only all the expenses incidental to the inspections were defrayed, but the entire debt incurred for the erection of the warehouses liquidated. During the time from 1827 to 1859, the system worked well, gave rise to little or no complaint, and was considered to have greatly promoted the commercial prosperity of Baltimore and the interests of the planters, and the tobacco trade, which formerly had been carried on in other markets, was concentrated in Baltimore City. Owing, however, to the careless and extravagant administration of the system after 1859 or 1860, to within the last few years, has given rise to much complaint. During that period, the inspectors, for one or two years, instead of making returns, drew for funds on the