

do their duty, the state has attornies, who attend to her business in every county, and her civil, as well as criminal cases, should at all times have a preference in court, and the attornies, for their services, should be entitled to receive the amount of commissions forfeited by defaulters; the state would thus be put to no additional expense in recovering debts due from public officers, or the treasurer might be invested with power to issue treasury warrants against defaulters, without the intervention of a court, as is the practice in some instances under the government of the United States.

The late agent, at December session 1824, was requested, by an order of the house of delegates, to report what further measures were, in his opinion, expedient to ensure the speedy collection of the public revenue; he did so, and the system he recommended was in part adopted, and it has had the happy effect of causing a complete change in the operations of the treasury. Instead of a deficit reported at the beginning of the session, as was often the case, there is now a large surplus reported; and if the question is asked, whence this difference? the plain and simple reply is, that the public officers have paid up in time. And why have they done so? Because it was their interest; and few public officers in Maryland will hereafter become defaulters, if they are thereby to lose six per cent. on the amount of the revenue they have collected.

The late agent formerly recommended, that if county clerks and sheriffs did not pay into the treasury all monies they had collected, within three months after the same became due, they should forfeit their commission of six per cent. This has had a good effect, and nearly all the money due to the treasury is paid up in due time; but this principle should be carried still further, and all clerks and sheriffs, who do not make their returns in a limited time, ought to lose the commission of six per cent. And sheriffs, in such cases, ought not to be allowed any deductions for insolvents or nonresidents.

With regard to valid debts due to the state, that is, those debts which became due prior to the year eighteen hundred and twenty-two, the amount is nearly the same as when the agent made his last report, and they may be estimated at about twelve thousand dollars.

These debts are in general well secured, and might all have been recovered, and paid into the treasury before this time, but for the repeated indulgencies granted to the debtors by the legislature, and those indulgencies were in most cases justifiable, they were granted to give suffering securities further time, securities who had been brought into difficulties in part by the state's own neglect, as it has always been in her power to compel her officers to pay, and