

being unavoidable. On marriage licenses, the tax is specific; and the Treasurer issues blanks, which are receipted for, by the Clerks. Although, it is not to be presumed that any public officer would be guilty of a dishonest act; yet, it is the theory of our legislation, that, all necessary checks shall be imposed. The great latitude, which exists in the present mode of collecting this important branch of the indirect tax, is a violation of that theory; and, with an unfaithful officer, might subject the State to heavy losses. Licenses vary in amount, according to the character of the business, and the value of the stock in trade. Under the present system of collection, there is no certain mode of ascertaining the amount actually received. Everything depends upon the faithfulness of the Clerk. This is a degree of confidence, which is not reposed, by law, in any collector of the direct taxes in the State; and, cannot be excused, upon the plea of necessity. You may judge, of the importance of this recommendation, when I inform you that, the revenue, derived from licenses, (exclusive of those for marriages,) during the year 1850, amounted, in the aggregate, to the sum of \$114,263,95; and, for the year just closed, to the sum of \$129,765.42. I will, here, mention, an inconvenience, which has been brought to my notice by the Treasurer. Some of these Revenue Officers are in the habit of postponing their final settlements, at the Treasury, until the last day of the fiscal year. The books of the Treasurer are, thereby, kept open and unposted; and heavy accounts are crowded upon him, at so late a period, as to occasion, great delay in the arrangement of his varied and elaborate report. This inconvenience extends to the Executive; who is, thus, for an unreasonable time, deprived of the means of obtaining the financial information, which it may be necessary to use in the Annual Message. It may, perhaps, be well for you to consider, the propriety of changing the fiscal year; which now terminates at a period, too near the meeting of the Legislature.

The three Clerks of the Comts, in Baltimore, City, divide the duties of the former two Clerks of the County and City Courts. Their bonds should be made to suit their present duties and responsibilities. In this connection, I most urgently recommend the adoption of an entirely different system, from that now in force, for the regulation of Official bonds. In one case, (very recently closed, although of long standing,) the State lost upwards of ten thousand dollars, by the utter insolvency of a Collector of the direct taxes, and all of his sureties, excepting one. This one surety, alone, contributed, by the sale of his entire estate, to the payment of less than one sixth of the whole amount due. The records of the Treasury will disclose to you other similar proofs of the inadequacy of the present regulation. It is not to be borne with, that, the taxes, wrung from the hard earnings of the people, shall thus be lost to their Treasury, through the defalcation of their Public Agents. Again, the bonds of the Officers of the new Treasury Department, should be approximated, to the actual responsibilities of each current year. Not that, the penalty should cover the whole Annual income of the Treasury; for, no such bond could, generally, be given. But, an estimate should be made of the cash receipts, periodically within their contract, as the basis of their obligation. You are about organizing a new Treasury Department, which is to last for years; and, which is to receive, disburse and invest the vast and constantly increasing revenues, and sinking fund of the State. Hence, the policy of your legislation should be broad and prospective. Some provision should be made, for the ascertainment of the responsibility of sureties. The appraised value of a man's estate, is no true index of his real condition. His liabilities (of which he alone has full knowledge,) have much to do with the question of his solvency. Every practical