

from pilots to whom warrants were last given, have been admitted, amounts now to eighteen.

The Maryland Institution for the instruction of the Blind, incorporated in 1853 was opened on the first of December 1854. By the Act of 1854, chapter 224, the annual appropriation for the instruction of the indigent Blind, was increased from two to four thousand dollars, and authority given to the Executive to have placed in said Institution for education such indigent Blind persons "as may thereafter be educated at the expense of the State, or so many of them as he may deem expedient." An additional sum of five thousand dollars was authorized, upon certain conditions, to be paid to the Institution. These conditions having been complied with, the above named sum has been paid to the Treasurer of the Institution. There was a warrant issued to State beneficiaries for admission into this Institution; seven only have been admitted. There remains in the Pennsylvania Institution for the instruction of the blind four beneficiaries from this State. After consultation with the Officers of both Institutions, I have deemed it advisable to allow them to remain and complete their education. No warrants have been issued to this Institution for the last two years.

I deem it my duty to furnish you with some facts in relation to the sales of the State Lands, and the laws regulating such sales, with a view to equalize their proportionate valuation.

The prices as now fixed by the old laws which still prevail, are as follows, viz: In Allegany County the price of vacant lands is 10 ³/₄ cents per acre, of this 8 ³/₄ cents is to be paid at the time of taking out the warrant. In Washington County 25 cents per acre and 12 cents to be paid when warrant issued. In all the rest of the State, including even the City of Baltimore 50 cents per acre and 24 cents to be paid at the time of obtaining the warrant.

For escheat lands, the Surveyor is required by law to value the land and improvements, on oath, at the time of returning his certificate; one third of the value of the lands is deducted and the purchaser pays two thirds into the Treasury and the whole amount of the value of the improvements, if any. I would suggest as the fairest way to equalize the value of these lands to the State and purchaser, that hereafter the value of all vacant lands should be placed on a footing with escheated land, viz: the purchaser to pay two thirds of the value of the land and the whole value of the improvements, to be ascertained by the oath of the Surveyor, to be appended by him to the certificate at the time of its return to the Land Office, giving the power to the Commissioner of the Land Office to ascertain the true value, if he should deem it necessary.

While upon this subject, I would call your attention to the condition of the unrecorded certificates of survey in the Land Office and some of the record books. There are old bundles of unrecorded certificates of land in every County of the State, many of them too much defaced now for record, and all subject to some decay in time. These certificates are the foundation to title to all the lands covered by them and indeed contain the only evidence of title. If the holder of these lands can prove possession under Act of Assembly for more than twenty years, they can attain the legal evidence of the lines only from these certificates.

Some of the old record Books are so rotten from age that they cannot be handled without injury, and in many cases cannot be copied. The State having sold these lands and received the purchase money, is bound to guard title when called on, and as matters now stand this cannot be done in many cases, and the longer the recording these certificates is put off the greater will be the number of such cases. This subject demands your early attention.

The report of the Commissioners appointed by the Legislature, under the 3^d article of the