

Letters,

to, and from, the Executive Department of Maryland, under the administration, of Governor Enoch Louis Lowe.

Baltimore January 11th 1851 ~

To His Excellency,

E. Louis Lowe,

Governor of Maryland.

Dear Sir,

At a special meeting of the Board of Directors of the Maryland Penitentiary, held on Friday the 10th instant, the following resolution was adopted unanimously.

"Resolved, That the President of this Board, address a letter to his Excellency, the Governor, requesting his opinion upon the propriety of submitting to him a concise statement of the business affairs of this institution for the past year, in lieu of the usual lengthy annual reports, intended for the General Assembly."

In addressing your Excellency upon the subjects embraced in the above resolution, it may not be improper to remark, that the Board of Directors in soliciting your opinion are not influenced by any desire to avoid the responsibility of an annual expose, but solely with a view to economise, both in time and money, as well as to avoid a work supererogation.

The "act of 1837 Chapter 320 Section 15, are in words as follows. Be it enacted, That the said Directors shall make a report every year, at least ten days before the meeting of the Legislature, to the Governor of the State &c. Now it seems obvious that the design of this section of the law was, to bring before the Legislature at its regular sessions, such statistics and details in reference to the condition of the Penitentiary, as will enable them to judge of the wisdom of its management, as well as of the necessity of further legislation in its behalf, and also to designate a time, as most appropriate for its dissemination among the people.

The preparation of an annual report for the Legislature consumes much of the time of the Officers of the Prison, and if it is to be preserved, and used, as is usually the case, involves no small expenditure of money for its printing. The sessions of the Legislature having been changed from annual to biennial, and the tenure of most official stations being extended by the passage of the biennial sessions bill, it became a question with the Board of Directors as to the necessity and propriety of an annual labor and expense for the accomplishment of what seems clearly to be a biennial purpose. Fearing however that a failure to report might imply a neglect of duty, or want of proper respect to the State Executive, they preferred a delay in their action.