

discretion, may accelerate insolvency, and utter loss of claims of serious amount. It will not be doubted that cases have occurred wherein the state has sustained great losses by too long, not to say prodigal indulgencies; and as true is it on the other hand, that rigour unguided by measured discretion, tends sometimes to hazard the recovery of money otherwise in reasonable safety.

Having thus generally stated his proceedings, and ventured such observations as his public engagements have suggested, the agent begs leave to call the attention of the legislature to a controversy of opinion which has arisen out of the provisions and phraseology of the act of assembly "to provide for the speedy collection of the public revenue," December session 1822, chapter 217, and those of the act of the last session "to regulate the fees of certain officers," chapter 247. It will be perceived by adverting to the second section of the former of the last mentioned acts, that the clerks of the county courts are required to pay to the state the license money, and the fees chargeable thereon, receiving a commission of six per centum upon the whole as their compensation; whereas by the latter act referred to, they are allowed certain fees for issuing the licenses mentioned. It would seem, from the interpretation of some, that they are entitled to receive fees for issuing, and the same fee for the state, chargeable on the licenses, being at the same time entitled to five per centum commission upon the whole amount paid into the treasury. It is therefore respectfully submitted, that some declaratory or explanatory enactment be provided in the premises.

Of the debts outstanding and due the state on the Eastern Shore, the agent begs leave to furnish the summary appended to this report, with such account of his proceedings and such explanations as he has deemed necessary.

The agent, having now to the best of his abilities, discharged the obligations incumbent upon him as a servant of the state, in a very difficult, delicate and laborious trust, most respectfully, and with a becoming sense of what is due to the discretion of the general assembly, take the liberty on this occasion, to invite their attention to the question of compensation to himself, that allowed at present being wholly inadequate to the expenses in money, and consumption of time, absolutely necessary to a proper discharge of the duties of his appointment.

All which is most respectfully submitted,

Jos. Wickes, 4th,
Agent for E. S. of Md.