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M E S S A G E .

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*Gentlemen of the Senate,*  
*and of the House of Delegates:*

Since the organization of the State Government, it has been customary for the Executive to transmit, annually, to the Legislature, a Message, detailing the manner in which the Government had been conducted since the adjournment of the preceding Legislature, and recommending the adoption of such measures as in his opinion would best conserve the honor and promote the interest of the people. The time which I had set apart for the discharge of this duty has been occupied with domestic afflictions; and this Message will be consequently less concise than will be satisfactory to you, or desirable to myself.

Whilst I admit that in our country an enlightened public opinion is the surest criterion of *right*, I should be false to the station I occupy if I should (regardful of a misdirected popular excitement in any section of the State,) omit to recommend the continuance and adoption of such measures, as in my judgment will most surely redeem the public credit, and promote the welfare of our common constituency.

The financial condition of the State well merited the prominent position assigned to its consideration by my immediate predecessor in each of his Annual Messages to the Legislature. With an anxious desire on his part to arrest the "*downward tendency*" of the public credit, it was his painful duty, year after year, to announce to the Legislature the entire inadequacy of the existing laws, if fully executed, to meet the current demands upon the treasury; and to point out the fatal error in the past legislation of the State by which the Executive Branch of the government had been deprived of the power originally vested in it to execute the laws which had been passed. In his last Message he made known to the Legislature, as the effect of the combined causes above assigned, (the inadequacy of the tax laws, and the want of power in the Executive to enforce them,) that the arrears of interest had progressively increased from \$859,656, on the 1st December, 1842, to \$1,171,872  $\frac{27}{100}$  on the 1st December, 1843; and to \$1,450,961  $\frac{1}{100}$  on the 1st December, 1844; and that in seven counties of the State the tax laws were not enforced.

I have, gentlemen, to discharge the more pleasing duty of informing you, that collectors of the State tax have been appointed,

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