

REPORT.

The undersigned, a member of the Committee of Ways and Means, to which was referred so much of the Governor's Message as relates to a reduction of the Direct Tax, and a repeal of the Stamp Act—differing in opinion from a majority of the Committee, in regard to the financial policy of the State—begs leave to submit the following views :

The present condition of the Government finances cannot fail to cheer the heart and encourage the hopes of every citizen. Six years since, difficulties, thought by the desponding, insurmountable, and which even appalled the most sanguine, beset the path of the State. Over her borders hung, like a pall, the clouds of gloom and despair; bankruptcy and ruin seemed inevitable. To this dismal and wretched condition of affairs, has succeeded a state of enviable prosperity. The clouds of adversity have passed from the horizon, and the sunshine of happiness now rests on every portion of the Commonwealth. But, this has not been accomplished without great trials and sacrifices on the part of the people. The heaviest burdens have been imposed upon them; taxation has visited them in every shape that the ingenuity of men could devise. With a degree of patience and endurance most commendable, and which a regard for the honor of the State could alone have produced, they have submitted to the impositions with which they have been loaded, looking hopefully forward to the moment when the improved condition of the State would justify their representatives in relieving them of, at least, a portion of their burdens. Has that moment at length arrived? The Governor, entertaining the belief that it has, most forcibly urges upon the Legislature, in his Message, the justice, as well as propriety of reducing the direct tax twenty per cent., and totally repealing the stamp act.

The majority of the Committee of Ways and Means have thought fit to differ with the Executive in this conclusion, and declare it, in their opinion, "unwise to reduce, in any manner, the taxation imposed on the people of the State." The reasoning by which this conclusion has been arrived at, it shall be the duty of the undersigned to investigate; but before proceeding to the task, it may not be entirely amiss to examine the condition of