

the basis of Direct Taxation. On this sum, there is levied \$363,674.10; which, with \$2,282.82, Specific Tax, gives an aggregate of \$365,956.92, less the amount of collection, as a reliable sum to be depended upon annually, under all circumstances, if the existing laws are continued in force.

By Chapter 86, of 1853, all Licenses, with the exception of those issued to Auctioneers and Agents of Foreign Corporations, are required to be countersigned by the Comptroller and furnished to the Clerks of the several Courts, authorized to receive them, upon their requisition. This law was immediately put into operation, but all the benefits to be derived from its provisions, have not yet been fully realized; and it is to be regretted that when this subject was under consideration by your predecessors, it was not thought advisable to subject the entire system to a thorough revision. The various License laws, now in existence, are scattered over the Statute Book from 1823 to the present time. Many of them are susceptible of conflicting interpretations, and are construed differently in different parts of the State, and tend rather to embarrass than aid the Department. If at all practicable, the whole system should be made the subject of a single law, and all Licenses, of every character, issue from this office. It would produce greater uniformity, and prove a convenience to the Clerks, if their returns for Licenses could be made at the same time they are required to account for Stamps, &c. &c. At the semi-annual return in June, this is the case; but the act of 1853, chapter 86, heretofore alluded to, changed the time of making these returns to December, instead of November, as heretofore; while all other accounts are required to be transmitted and settled in the preceding month. Should this subject engage the attention of the Legislature, I would recommend that the semi-annual returns, and payments for all purposes, be made to occur on or before the 15th of June and December, respectively. This would not only divide the year equally, but also afford to the Clerks greater leisure in the preparation of their accounts, as the Circuit Courts most generally complete their sessions, by the first of each of those months.

By Chapter 337, of 1852, it is made the duty of the Comptroller, as early as practicable after he shall have received the returns of the Valuation and Assessment of Property in the several Counties of this State and the City of Baltimore, to prepare a condensed statement, exhibiting under appropriate heads, the amount of such valuation in each of said Counties and City, and the aggregate amount of property assessed, as aforesaid, and report the same to the General Assembly, at its next Session.

Statement N. is referred to as a compliance with the above requisition, an examination of which will show the various classes of property in each County and the City of Baltimore, with the