

The oyster trade has now increased to immense proportions. It is much to be regretted that no reliable data, accessible to me at this time, furnish even a proximate estimate, of its extended ramifications and results. Its value to the State of Maryland may be inferred, however, from the operations of the leading houses engaged in this business in the City of Baltimore. It is fair to assume that eight-tenths of the oysters taken from the Chesapeake Bay find a market in other States, and not one-third of this immense trade makes any return to the public treasury. The entire amount of revenue derived from this source, since the passage of the law, will not exceed \$36,000.

A prompt modification of the existing Act is imperatively called for, not only as a measure of justice to the State treasury, but to our own citizens, who are placed at disadvantage in competition with those who intrude themselves, without license or authority, into our waters. I would recommend the immediate appointment of an officer, whose duty it shall be to exercise a vigilant supervision over this large and daily increasing trade, with the control of a revenue steamer, properly equipped, to be employed under his direction, whenever it may be required, to examine the permits of all vessels engaged in the oyster trade within the jurisdiction of the State of Maryland, and the imposition of the heaviest penalties upon all persons violating the laws of the State. I would suggest, also, that any expense growing out of the proposed change, be provided by a tax upon the trade, and from fines and confiscations, collected in the strict enforcement of such law as the Legislature may enact.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO IMMIGRATION.

The liberal encouragement of our agricultural interests, in view of the inconvenience resulting from the change in our system of labor, will commend itself to your special attention. The majority of our people live by the pursuits of agriculture; and these have depended for development heretofore upon slave labor. The prompt emancipation of the negro race, and the withdrawal of a large class of this population, to do duty in another sphere, render it important that some action should be taken to avert the consequences attending this change, already seriously felt, in many parts of the State. Measures have been adopted in some of the States to supply the wants of the people, by the introduction of emigrant labor from abroad. No State will need an effort in this direction more than our own. A bill looking to this object failed to meet your sanction at the last session of your honorable body. It has seemed to me that the only effective mode of inviting emigrants to our State will be to satisfy them of its facilities for the profita-