

057.55, and leaving, after payment of commissions, \$61,543.45 in the Treasury still liable to that purpose. The sale of this latter stock was ordered by the Legislature, contrary to the judgment and advice of the Comptroller, and, although bringing a price apparently advantageous to the State, I am still of the opinion that it would have been better for the State to have taken up the old loan, by the sale of a corresponding amount of the new issue, and to have retained the stock until future developments should have manifested its true value. No appropriation having been made for defraying the expense of engraving and printing the new bonds authorized under the Act of 1870, Chapter 275, I caused the same to be paid out of the contingent fund of the Comptroller's office.

MARYLAND PENITENTIARY.

The large amount expended under the appropriations for the support of this Institution, suggests the propriety of considering if some amendment cannot be made to the system which will be advantageous to the State. It is doubted that the labor of so large a number of persons sentenced to confinement for short terms, and congregated in one place, can be successfully turned to proper account. Most of the convicts are incapable of anything more than ordinary unskilled labor, and it is suggested that this could be turned to better account in the counties where the convictions take place.

Instead of confinement in the Penitentiary, the punishment for larceny and like offences might be changed to confinement at labor in the county where the offence is committed. Whether this labor could be best employed on public account, in improving the Public Roads of the counties, (than which, in many of the counties, nothing is more absolutely needed for the comfort and convenience of the inhabitants,) or by contract with individuals, giving bond, to employ the labor according to the sentence of the Court, and paying a stipulated price to the State for the labor contracted for, is a question which may well be considered. The labor of these convicts, ought to be utilized in some way, and it is suggested that it can be employed on the Public Roads with more advantage than in any other way.

At the same time confinement to labor on the Public Roads in the county where the offence is committed, will be much more effective as a punishment, and as a terror to the commission of crime, than confinement in the Penitentiary.