

not generally increased, and in fact in many instances have diminished; the volume of new property added, it is believed, will largely overbalance any diminution in value which has accrued. The assessment will, no doubt, be completed in time to be the basis of taxation for the current year. The Act enjoined upon the Comptroller the general direction and supervision of the assessment, and in the execution of this supervision, the labors of this office have been materially increased. The large number of legal questions involved in the execution of the law, has entailed on the Attorney-General, as well as the Comptroller, an amount of labor, of which the public generally has probably a very inadequate conception. It is hoped, that if an uniform and accurate valuation is attained, steps may be taken by the Legislature to perfect a system, by which the assessable basis may be annually corrected and perfected, so as to dispense with the labor and expense of general re-valuations in future. Our system of decennial valuations, I cannot but believe, would be vastly improved, by substituting a plan of annual correction by trained officers, skilled by education and practice, in arriving at true and impartial values. Systems of this sort, have been adopted in other States, with admirable success, and I hope to be able to suggest to the next General Assembly, a plan by which the desired result may be attained in this State.

Some new features, looking to the accomplishment of this end, were introduced into the revenue measures enacted in 1874, and where acted upon by the authorities, have contributed to maintain the integrity of the basis of taxation in those localities. In several of the counties it will be seen, that the assessable basis is larger in 1876 than it was in 1867, immediately after the completion of the last general valuation. In other counties, however, and notably in the City of Baltimore, the falling off in the basis has been very marked since that time.

Many additional guaranties of the maintenance of a correct basis may be adopted, the expense of which will be insignificant in comparison with that of periodical general re-valuations, without incurring the same liability to loss, from omissions on the part of untrained assessors, or involving the whole mass of property-owners in simultaneous confusion over the state of their accounts.

#### STATE HOUSE OF CORRECTION.

The erection of the State House of Correction has been progressing, and the building is considerably advanced towards completion. Although the work will not be accomplished within the time specified in the contract, I have every reason to believe that it is being done