

of a successful annual correction of the basis of taxation, and may be made to work a large saving of expense to the State, as well as to the several Counties and City of Baltimore.

A bill to remedy these defects, and to originate a system for the annual correction of the basis of assessment, will be presented to the General Assembly at the present session for its consideration. It is believed that by the adoption of the plan proposed, a large saving of expense to the Counties and City of Baltimore may be attained, and the basis of taxation kept in a more perfect and satisfactory manner, both to the authorities and tax-payers.

TAXATION OF MORTGAGE DEBTS.

By the 15th Article of the Declaration of Rights, it is ordained as a fundamental principle in regard to taxation, that "every person in the State, or holding property therein, ought to contribute his proportion of public taxes for the support of the Government, according to his actual worth, in real and personal property."

No power is given to the Legislature to vary or restrict this rule in any event, or to grant the extraordinary privilege of exemption from taxation, to any person or class of persons, or to the holders of any species of property.

By the Act of 1835, Chapter 395, the faith of the State is specially pledged to the holders of the bonds proposed to be issued by the State for the benefit of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, the Susquehanna and Tide Water Canal Companies, the Baltimore and Susquehanna Railroad Company and the Eastern Shore Railroad Company, that if it should at any time become necessary, to levy a direct tax for the purpose of enabling the State to discharge the interest accruing on said bonds, that then and in that case, every variety of property in the State, including *mortgage debts* by name, shall be taxed for that purpose. Accordingly, when such legislation became necessary, all debts bearing interest, including mortgage debts, were directed to be assessed, (as in fact they had uniformly been previously,) and this provision of law obtained until the Act of 1867, Chapter 341, which exempted mort-